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Press release

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## Community Broadcasters Seek Clarity in Bill C-10

**Ottawa and Victoriaville (February 16, 2021)** As public interventions into a revamp of the Canadian Broadcasting Act continue, community media advocates seek greater recognition as a vital broadcasting sector with potential to grow and serve the information needs of local communities.

“Community media is the third pillar of Canadian broadcasting, alongside private and public broadcasting, yet there is no description of its role in the new Act that’s been tabled,” said Cathy Edwards, executive director of CACTUS, the Canadian Association of Community Television Users and Stations.

CACTUS has applied for an opportunity to appear before the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, along with the Community Radio Fund of Canada and the Fédération des télévisions communautaires autonomes du Québec. To date, no representatives of the community element in the broadcasting system have appeared before the Committee.

The community sector wants a clear definition of community media as “not-for-profit, community-owned and open to participation by members of the general public,” and greater specificity regarding its role and complementarity with respect to the public and private sectors.

“This definition is vital in an era of technological change,” said Amélie Hinse, Fédération des télévisions communautaires autonomes du Québec director, noting that most cable community TV production studios have been shuttered and cable subscriptions have plummeted to a nation-wide average of just over 30%.

“As commercial broadcasters trim staff and close stations, and the CBC moves to a regional rather than local focus, it is critical that community broadcasting have a place at the table,” said Alex Freedman, executive director of the Community Radio Fund of Canada. “Our mandate includes enabling the voices of Indigenous, francophone,



disabled and racialized communities. If inclusivity is one of the goals of updating to the act, the community sector must be strengthened.”

“Given the resources, community broadcasting really proved itself this past year,” added Edwards. Canadian Heritage’s Local Journalism Initiative, which places journalists in underserved communities, was the first federal program ever to support not-for-profit community-owned TV, and a much-needed boost for community radio as well. “Community broadcasters produced thousands of important local stories that would otherwise not have been told,” said Edwards. “They played a central role in providing information about COVID to rural and remote communities in English, French, Cree, Dene and Ojibway.” \*

“Canada needs community media, and a new Canadian Broadcasting Act must recognize and support them,” said Amélie Hinse.

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Pour plus d’informations :

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Community TV content funded by the Local Journalism Initiative: [ComMediaPortal.ca](https://www.commediaportal.ca)

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