

If Canada believes in Canadian content, it must also believe in Canadian media.

Canada's broadcasting system has rules for a reason. Radio and television broadcasters are required to ensure that a meaningful portion of what audiences hear and see reflects Canadian voices, stories, and perspectives. Those expectations exist because, without them, Canadian creators would struggle to survive against global media companies with far greater scale, reach, and financial power.

Canadian broadcasters have accepted that responsibility for generations. What has become increasingly difficult to justify is the widening gap between the obligations placed on Canadian media and the choices governments make when spending public advertising dollars. This issue is often framed as cultural. In reality, it is economic.

Canadian media supports tens of thousands of jobs and contributes billions of dollars to Canada's economy. When advertising dollars are spent with Canadian-owned media companies, those dollars stay here. They circulate through local economies, support Canadian workers, sustain journalism, and strengthen communities across the country.

When those same public dollars are spent on foreign digital platforms, the result is very different. The money leaves the country almost immediately. It does not support Canadian jobs. It does not reinforce Canadian journalism. And it does not strengthen the broadcasting system governments continue to regulate in the public interest. This is not a hypothetical concern—it is already reshaping Canada's media landscape.

It is important to draw a clear distinction. Content regulation and advertising policy are not the same thing. One governs what broadcasters are required to deliver; the other governs how governments spend taxpayer money. But as long as Canadian media is regulated to advance public objectives—cultural, economic, and democratic—governments should not pretend that all advertising choices are neutral or interchangeable. Responsibility and spending should not be working at cross-purposes.

If Canadian broadcasters are expected to deliver meaningful Canadian content, it is reasonable for governments to commit a meaningful share of their advertising budgets to Canadian media. A 35 percent commitment is not radical. It is a familiar reference point within our broadcasting system and one that reflects long-standing public policy. Indeed, one could reasonably argue that 35 percent may be a conservative benchmark, given the significantly higher Canadian content requirements faced by television broadcasters and the distinct French-language vocal music obligations carried by French-language radio broadcasters.

This proposal does not require new spending. It does not require subsidies. It simply requires governments to make intentional, transparent choices about where public dollars are spent and what kind of media ecosystem those choices sustain.

Canadian media has never asked for protection from competition. It has asked for fairness. If public policy values Canadian voices, then public spending should support the system that makes those voices possible.

That is not ideology. It is common sense.

I write this from the perspective of someone who has spent a 40 year career in Canadian broadcasting, who currently serves as President of Pattison Media, and who has the honour of chairing the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' CEO Radio Council. In those roles, I see first-hand the responsibility Canadian broadcasters carry, the investments we continue to make in Canadian content and local journalism, and the consequences of policy decisions that unintentionally weaken the system governments rely on to meet public objectives. This letter is offered in the spirit of constructive partnership, with a belief that Canada's cultural goals and its economic interests are best served when public policy and public spending reinforce one another.



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