

Date: January 23, 2020

Mr. Claude Doucet
Secretary General
CRTC
Gatineau, Quebec

Re: CBC Licence Renewal – Application numbers: 2019-0280-0 and 2018-0282-5

Dear Mr. Doucet,

I'm writing this letter in support of CBC's licence renewal in my capacity as a citizen of Canada, as a full professor in the School of Journalism at Ryerson University, Toronto, and as an award-winning author and journalist with more than two decades of media experience.

In April 1996 I arrived in Toronto as a landed immigrant after finishing my graduate studies in English literature in the United Kingdom. One of my concerns at the time was leaving behind the BBC, an institution that had been central to my understanding of English and global culture and politics. Happily, I discovered the CBC during my first week in Canada, when the kind family that invited me to live with them while I looked for my own place tuned to Radio One on their kitchen and living room radios from morning to night. The first thing I did when I found a shared apartment the following month was to buy a boombox CD, radio and cassette player that, to this date, is a fixture on my nightstand. It has been tuned to CBC Radio One and I've been a dedicated listener for nearly 24 years now.

The CBC has been my window into Canada, my first friend in my new homeland, and my relationship with it is one of the reasons I proudly call myself Canadian. In fact, it was the education about Canadian culture that I absorbed from listening to CBC Radio and watching CBC Television (on a rabbit-ear antenna as I couldn't afford cable) in my early years in this country that prepared me for a career as a culture writer and critic in Toronto. I started as an arts reporter and reviewer at the alternative *Eye Weekly* in 1998 and by 2003 was appointed national theatre critic at the *Globe and Mail*.

As my creative and professional interests moved closer to politics, world news and literary culture, CBC Radio once again provided both an anchor and a platform to debate pressing issues. I've listened to, and had the privilege of appearing on, such shows as *The Current*, *Q*, *Metro Morning*, *The Sunday Edition*, *As It Happens* and *Ideas* over the past decade. These programs represent journalistic excellence. I use many of their podcasts as teaching tools in my various classes — from arts journalism to critical issues in media to features and news reporting. The focus on Canadian stories make these programs (and, by extension, their podcasts and websites) an essential service. There's simply nothing that

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comes remotely close in terms of depth and public engagement anywhere on the Canadian media landscape. As misinformation and news manipulation become facts of life in the 2020s, the CBC's adherence to journalistic standards is fundamental to the survival of our democratic institutions and traditions.

The cbc.ca/news site is my homepage on my laptop and is how I choose to start my day. It's my way of checking in on Canada. This year, I made it a course requirement for my arts journalism students to visit cbc.ca/arts for the best coverage of Canadian culture.

In particular, I wish to stress the value that CBC Books (on the air and in its digital presence) adds to the dissemination of Canadian books and culture at a time when most mainstream news outlets have cut back on their coverage of the Canadian publishing industry and its authors. It's by far the most comprehensive and diverse coverage of books in Canada at the moment. I write this as a reader and as an author of two nonfiction books.

For these reasons, I support CBC's licence renewal application without reservations.

Regards,

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