Unifor intervention on the application by Corus Entertainment Inc. (Corus) requesting approval for a change in the ownership and effective control of all licensed programming services

Re: Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2026-103

Public record: 1011-NOC2026-0103

SUBMITTED VIA WEB FORM

June 25, 2026

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Marc Morin
Secretary General, Corporate Services and Operations
Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada, K1A 0N2

RE: Unifor comments regarding the application by Corus Entertainment Inc. (Corus) requesting approval for a change in the ownership and effective control of all licensed programming services (Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2026-103)

Dear Mr. Morin,

1. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the application by Corus Entertainment Inc. (Corus) requesting approval for a change in the ownership and effective control of all licensed programming services (Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2026-103).

2. Unifor is Canada's largest private sector union, with more than 320,000 members across Canada working in 29 economic sectors. Unifor is one of Canada's largest unions in the media sector, representing more than 9,000 media workers, including 5,000 members in the broadcast and film industries.

3. Our members working in newspapers and digital news publishing work at some of the largest national and provincial dailies, including the Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, National Post, London Free Press, the Toronto Sun, the Vancouver Sun and The Province, the Winnipeg Free Press, Brandon Sun, Thunder Bay Chronicle, Lethbridge Herald, the Winnipeg Sun, and the Hamilton Spectator. Our employers include national media companies like Torstar and Postmedia, as well as regional enterprises like Black Press and Transcontinental.

4. Unifor broadcast members work for radio and television stations serving local communities as well as national discretionary pay and specialty services, and distribution services that include cable, satellite and wireless telephony.

5. Unifor broadcast members are employed by large, private Canadian broadcasters and distributors, including Corus (i.e. Global), as well as Canada's largest Vertically Integrated (VI) firms: Rogers (i.e. City and OMNI stations) and Bell Media (e.g. CTV). In addition, Unifor members work for independently owned and locally based television stations (such as CHCH TV in Hamilton, Ontario and CHEK in Victoria, B.C.) as well as public television stations (e.g. TV Ontario).

6. In addition, Unifor media members also work on independent film and television productions commissioned by Canadian broadcasters through independent producers, who then engage our members to create shows with national and international recognition (such as like *Murdoch Mysteries, Run the Burbs, Law and Order Toronto: Criminal Intent, Late Bloomer, Schitt's Creek, Children Ruin Everything, Heated Rivalry and features such as Brother*).

7. For more than a decade, Unifor has advocated for an update to Canada's broadcasting policy and for new measures that would provide adequate, stable funding for the media sector, and specifically for local news. Our union was heavily involved in the development and passage of the *Online Streaming Act* and the *Online News Act*, and we continue to participate in the consultations related to the CRTC's *Path Forward* hearings.

8. Unifor believes that one important piece of the sustainable funding puzzle is the Commission's tangible benefits policy, and our union has regularly advocated for tangible benefits packages as a condition of approval for corporate mergers or acquisitions in the media sector.

9. In our Intervention for the Rogers/Shaw merger application, BNOC CRTC 2021-281, we wrote:

> 5. Unifor would like to ensure that contributions will not diminish in the 'flexible' funding formula with this transaction. The loss of thirteen ($13)

million dollars in funding for Corus television stations could be disastrous. At best, local news levels would stay the same, but would be redistributed from West to East in this country; at worst flexible funding formulas that aren't adjusted could cause a devastating loss of local news and community content, that won't be able to be recovered if we don't act accordingly.

6. Therefore, Unifor submits that this merger should trigger a tangible benefit package that provides a lifeline to local news equitably across the country. Unifor further submits that beyond the tangible benefit package from this merger, ongoing, annual contributions should be made to support local news as Corus television stations will be affected by loss of a stable funding mechanism that was heavily relied upon.[1]

10. Unifor acknowledges that Corus is facing extremely challenging financial issues, including $1.1 billion of debt remaining on its balance sheet, rapidly declining revenues, and increasing competitive pressures. We believe it is not unreasonable for the Commission to consider some form of relief, especially given the important role its outlets play in providing local programming and local news in a diverse range of markets.

11. Unifor accepts that there could be exceptions to the tangible benefits requirement in some rare cases, and the Corus' application as outlined in BNOC CRTC 2026-103 is one such case.

Support for Corus Application

12. Unifor supports the Corus application including the request for exemption from the tangible benefits requirement, with the following caveats and conditions.

13. As noted in Corus' application requesting approval for a change in the ownership and effective control of all licensed programming services operated by Corus and its various subsidiaries, the company plays a unique role as the largest independent broadcaster in Canada.

14. In addition, the company controls a significant number of broadcast television, radio, and online undertakings, and has spent approximately $2.5 billion on Canadian programming since 2018, including over $1 billion spent with independent Canadian producers.[2]

15. Specifically, Corus operates important local news outlets in a variety of small, medium, and large markets across the country. Unifor recognizes the company's ongoing investments in local news, and we value the presence of independent voices in Canada's news landscape.

Approval with Conditions and Guidelines

16. Unifor believes the Commission should approve the Corus application, while setting some conditions and guidelines to protect the ability of viewers and audiences to access vital local news and programming, especially in those markets that have moved closer to becoming news deserts.

17. As always, Unifor draws a direct connection between the creation of local news and the employment of boots-on-the-ground journalists and media workers. Simply put, the best way to ensure that Canadians have access to local news is to require the employment of trained, professional journalists and media workers in local markets.

18. To this end, Unifor respectfully recommends that the Commission sets conditions on Corus that the company will not implement any outlet closures, lay-offs, operational downsizing, or reductions in head count. Further, Corus should be prohibited from any further operational consolidation or centralcasting, where locally created news is consolidated into regional broadcasts.

19. In fact, since an exemption would save the company a significant amount of money, Unifor respectfully suggests the Commission could require additional investment in local news operations that are located in currently under-served markets.

Some Notes of Caution

20. Here, we would like to express some caution regarding the company's future plans, based on our union's historical experiences. In July 2024, Corus implemented deep cuts in its operations in Kingston, Ontario, eliminating roughly 95% of staff at the local CKWS-TV and local radio stations 96.3 BIG FM and Fresh 104.3.

21. Corus announced the replacement of the dedicated Kingston newscast with a regional newscast with only a few reporters remaining on the ground in Kingston. The local morning news cast was cancelled and the station building closed, leaving CKWS a shadow of its former self.

22. Rather than hollowing out its operations in Kingston, the company could have sold its holdings to another buyer, a decision that could have maintained local news access for the residents of Kingston. We refer to this unfortunate story as a cautionary tale: an exemption from the tangible benefits requirement should come with basic conditions that protect the ability of Canadians to access local news, and not hollow out existing local stations, especially in medium and smaller markets.

23. Finally, Unifor would like to raise the issue of artificial intelligence (AI), a subject that has become increasingly important to our media membership. Unifor continues to argue that AI must not be used to create news content, replace journalists and media workers or fact check without human oversight, although it will continue to be used as a valuable tool by journalists and media workers.

24. In cases where news businesses face extreme financial pressures, there might be a temptation to turn to AI to boost content creation while decreasing labour costs. As we have argued elsewhere, the news business relies heavily on audience trust, and Canadians will continue to look for high-quality, fact-based news created by professional journalists and media workers.

Conclusion

25. Unifor is grateful for the opportunity to provide comment on the application by Corus Entertainment Inc. requesting approval for a change in the ownership and effective control of all licensed programming services (Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2026-103).

Sincerely,

Randy Kitt

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[1] https://applications.crtc.gc.ca/DocWebBroker/OpenDocument.aspx?DMID=4092666

[2] https://applications.crtc.gc.ca/DocWebBroker/OpenDocument.aspx?AppNo=202600345&_ga=2.4161328.1852451041.1782416270-958085681.1782416270

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