

Writers Guild of Canada Reports 22% Decline in Canadian Screenwriter Earnings Over Last Five Years

“Our domestic industry is dying,” says Guild President Alex Levine

For immediate release

July 11, 2023 – Toronto, ON – The Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) has revealed that, over the past five years, the aggregate earnings of its Canadian citizen members have declined by nearly 22% in inflation-adjusted terms.

The WGC released the information publicly for the first time this week in its submissions to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), as part of the CRTC’s consultations on a modernized regulatory framework regarding contributions to support Canadian and Indigenous content.

“These numbers demonstrate the dire straits that Canadian screenwriters find themselves in,” said WGC President Alex Levine. “The 22% drop in Canadian screenwriter earnings has been devastating to our members. Out of work writers are switching careers. Others are leaving the country. Our domestic industry is dying.”

The WGC’s data demonstrates that the decade-long boom in foreign service production—Hollywood productions that shoot and crew in Canada but are creatively driven from Los Angeles—does not benefit Canadian screenwriters.

“When a Hollywood show comes here to shoot, that may create jobs for crew, but not Canadian screenwriters,” added Levine. “These series aren’t Canadian, they aren’t written by Canadians, and they don’t have an authorial Canadian voice. We need to make sure Canadian shows get produced too. We can’t just be a branch production plant for Hollywood.”

Screenwriters also do the lion’s share of their work at the beginning of the production process, so things could be even worse than this data suggests. Trends affecting writers take more time to show up in overall production statistics. The WGC’s data may very well be at the bleeding edge of our sector.

“The WGC data should be a wake-up call to the Government and the CRTC,” Levine said. “The Government needs to make sure that the policy direction to the CRTC includes support for the Canadian authorial voice. We can’t have foreign service production count as ‘Canadian content’ through window dressing. Canadian content must be Canadian-written. And the *status quo* isn’t enough. The Government and the CRTC need to actually *grow* this industry, and make sure that Canadian screenwriters have pride of place within it. Otherwise, screenwriting is finished as a profession in this country.”

The WGC’s full submission to the CRTC is available on the WGC’s website [here](#). For more info, contact the WGC’s Assistant Executive Director Neal McDougall at 647-922-5488 or n.mcdougall@wgc.ca.

ABOUT THE WRITERS GUILD OF CANADA

The Writers Guild of Canada represents 2,500 professional English-language screenwriters across Canada—the creators of Canadian entertainment enjoyed on all screens. wgc.ca @WGCTweet