



December 07, 2022

Mr. Claude Doucet
Secretary General
Canadian Radio-television and
Telecommunications Commission
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N2

Dear Mr. Doucet:

Re. Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2019-392. Described video of prime-time programming broadcast by the services of Bell Media Inc., Corus Entertainment Inc., and Rogers Sports & Media Inc. – Progress Report

Bell Media Inc. (Bell), Corus Entertainment Inc. (Corus) and Rogers Sports & Media Inc. (Rogers) (collectively, the Broadcasters) are pleased to submit our year-end report on the progress made by the licensees to address the issues involved in fulfilling the condition of licence that requires certain prime time programming to be broadcast with described video. We also welcome 0859291 BC Ltd. dba CHEK Media Group (CHEK) to the Broadcaster working group.

In BRP 2019-392, the Commission recognized the practical realities of the program delivery process and the difficulties faced by the Broadcasters in describing late-arriving programming. Some American prime time programs received by the Broadcasters without DV already in place are delivered only shortly before they are scheduled for broadcast. In those cases, the Broadcasters may not have sufficient time within which to produce a DV version of the program in time for its original air date. As a result, the Commission specifically approved an exception whereby US programs delivered within 24 hours of their broadcast date and time are not required to be described for that broadcast.

As reported in our last update in June 2022, while the Broadcasters cannot yet report that all of the required programming in prime time is available in described video, we remain focused on maximizing the amount of described programming made available in the Canadian broadcasting system and have continued to make great strides. We do note

that there will continue to be isolated instances where programming is received live or near-live, and in those cases, we will not be able to provide DV before first broadcast. Unless and until automated AI options progress to the point where the quality of DV on a prime-time program can be assured, we do not see how we can circumvent these isolated instances without removing our ability to air premiere programming during prime time completely. However, as U.S. program providers are increasingly providing DV with their content, we expect these isolated instances to continue to decrease.

As previously reported, many of the issues that caused us to seek relief from the Condition of Licence (COL) in 2019 have since been resolved. Accordingly, the Broadcasters can report that collectively, only a few reoccurring live or near-live programs and/or sporadic and infrequent technical issues have caused programs to go to air without DV on their initial broadcast.

Community Consultation

As was reported in our last Bi-annual report, the Working Group most recently met on June 2, 2022, and at that time, it was established that in keeping with our initial plan of meeting twice annually with the community, the members would schedule another community tele-town hall.

We are pleased to report that a community tele-town hall was held on September 21, 2022, hosted by the CNIB. Approximately 55 people from the community joined the Broadcasters on the call for an update from the Broadcasters as well as an open mic session for Q&A from the community. 14 individuals from the community participated in the Q&A. As in previous town halls, the majority if not all the question/concerns that were raised were not relevant to the mandate of the working group as it relates to required DV in primetime and instead focused on DV of live programming particularly as it relates to News and Sports, and DV of non-linear platforms.

Having said that, many of the individuals who spoke during the Q&A also applauded the Broadcasters for the great strides that have been made including the increase in DV content and the improved viewing experience.

As the Broadcasters have been working to develop and implement inaugural Accessibility Action Plans for their businesses, in accordance with the Accessible Canada Act (ACA), we took the opportunity to consult with the town hall participants regarding their awareness of what broadcasters are required to do under the ACA. It was surprising to learn that the majority of participants were unaware of broadcasters' responsibilities under the ACA and were unaware that we had already launched "feedback processes" as a method of consultation. Thus, the town hall provided an invaluable opportunity for the Broadcasters to broaden awareness of our feedback processes with the very community members whose feedback will be most important to us, and to generally provide them with information about what they can expect in the years to come as ACA requirements ramp up.

The Broadcasters also reminded participants of the dedicated corporate email addresses created as a way for community members to communicate with the Broadcasters directly about any concerns or issues they may have with described video on our stations and services, and encouraged them to continue using this feedback process, or the ones established under the ACA, to communicate concerns with the provision of DV or any other barriers to service.

Conclusion

The Broadcasters have continued to make progress in decreasing the amount of time required to add described video to programming. Incidents of programming requiring DV in prime time, which do not include DV, is low, and the Commission-approved amendment in BRP 2019-392 has provided a helpful measure of flexibility in those rare instances.

Through establishing lines of communication with the Community we have ensured a seamless and direct process for their feedback, and this remains a cornerstone to providing a better viewing experience of our traditional linear services through the resolution of any unknown issues.

It continues to be our experience that having a forum in which to speak directly to the Broadcasters, rather than the turn-around time of US programming, is of more concern to the Community. It has become clear to us that such direct contact appears to be the best way for the Broadcasters to work towards solving the individual issues and concerns we've heard about in the Community Meeting, which have evolved in scope over time.

Sincerely,

[filed electronically]

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0859291 BC Ltd. dba CHEK Media Group (CHEK)

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