



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**UNIONS AND GUILDS PRESS TELEFILM ON LACK OF PROTECTIONS FOR CAST,
CREW AND CREATIVES**

Eight major unions and guilds send letter to Telefilm on agency's continued investments in projects that refuse to sign or respect collective agreements

Toronto – In a letter sent today ([click for PDF](#)), a coalition of eight major unions and guilds – groups representing over 87,000 screenwriters, directors, performers, artists, and crew in Canadian film & television – called on Telefilm Canada to stop funding productions that refuse to sign collective agreements, or fail to abide by minimum standards, leaving creative industry professionals unprotected.

On two occasions, on July 11th, and again on November 5th, the unions and guilds listed below met, on their own initiative, with representatives from the leadership of Telefilm Canada. These eight groups asked the agency to adopt the same policy already in place at the Canada Media Fund, requiring that productions funded by Telefilm remain in good standing with industry unions and guilds, and no longer fund productions that outright refuse to sign collective agreements.

On October 31st, Telefilm released updated Production Program Guidelines without addressing these concerns and indicated there would be no such changes for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. On November 5th, Telefilm representatives reiterated this position.

All eight groups respond to Telefilm's decision today ([full letter](#)):

"Unlike the Canada Media Fund (CMF) who has already taken a step forward, Telefilm refuses to adopt language requiring companies to be "in good standing with all applicable talent and industry associations and guilds".

Moreover, Telefilm continues to invest in productions that flat out refuse to sign collective agreements, or that failed to uphold those agreements, while having no equivalent protections or standards of its own for production workers. These lax investment policies even include high-budget productions where signing on to existing industry agreements has long been the norm. These problematic practices undermine the entire production ecosystem in Canada, leaving creative industry professionals unrepresented and unprotected.

"Telefilm has the power to move today to adopt simple measures both to protect workers in Canadian film & television and protect the investments taxpayers make in these projects. This policy allows flexibility for dealing with productions of various scales. It involves no new costs to the agency. And yet, still, Telefilm has failed to act."

The letter goes on to say:

"All of our organizations are steadfast in the belief that taxpayer dollars should not go to fund productions that refuse to sign fair contracts or abide by minimum standards, leaving creative industry professionals both unrepresented and unprotected. The decision of Telefilm to cite labour laws and bureaucratic jargon to punt this issue down the road is unacceptable.

"We are calling on Telefilm to make revisions to its Production Program Guidelines in time for its upcoming Annual Public Assembly on November 28th. Program guidelines should be amended to ensure that, starting in 2025-2026, each funded production remains in good standing with all applicable unions and guilds and be required to sign collective or individual agreements guaranteeing minimum labour standards."

The letter to Telefilm was signed by Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA), Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec (ARRQ), Directors Guild of Canada (DGC), International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), NABET 700-M UNIFOR, Société des

auteur.e.trice.s de radio, télévision et cinéma (SARTEC), L'Union des Artistes (UDA), Writers Guild of Canada (WGC).

Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec (ARRQ)

"Telefilm is often an example when it comes to implementing social policies such as fostering gender equality and diversity. Why can't they be exemplary in ensuring that cultural workers benefit from minimum standards of work?"

-Gabriel Pelletier, Président, Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec (ARRQ)

Directors Guild of Canada (DGC)

"Telefilm is investing taxpayer dollars in these projects. Experienced creative professionals like our members are the boots on the ground to ensure monies are well-spent, not misspent. Taxpayer funding shouldn't go to productions that refuse to sign fair contracts, leaving cast, crew and creatives unprotected."

-Dave Forget, National Executive Director, Directors Guild of Canada (DGC)

International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE)

"As a granter of public funds, Telefilm has a responsibility to ensure that any recipient of those funds acts fairly and ethically. We are pleased that they seem to be taking this responsibility seriously and urge them to act quickly so that going forward, Canadian workers on Telefilm-funded productions have some measure of protection."

-John M. Lewis, International Vice President & Director of Canadian Affairs, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE)

NABET 700-M UNIFOR

"As unions and guilds representing the hardworking talent behind Canada's film industry, we are committed to ensuring that all workers are treated with the fairness and respect they deserve. Our partnership with Telefilm and producers in good standing is vital in shaping a sustainable and equitable future for Canadian cinema. It is essential that Telefilm continues to uphold industry-leading standards for labour practices, ensuring that the funding it allocates supports not only the

creative vision but also the people who make that vision possible. We are unwavering in our commitment to advocating for FAIR contracts and strong protections for our members, we are working together to ensure that Telefilm shares this vision for a just and prosperous industry."

Ryan Pogue – President, Nabet 700-M Unifor

Société des auteur.e.trice.s de radio, télévision et cinéma (SARTEC)

"It's beyond urgent that Telefilm Canada ensures that public funds invested in audiovisual productions are used responsibly, as is the case for other public agencies in many industries across Canada. Could we imagine Canada investing funds in public works projects where tradespeople would be paid below the negotiated minimums?"

-Laurent Dubois, General Director, Société des auteur.e.trice.s de radio, télévision et cinéma (SARTEC)

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