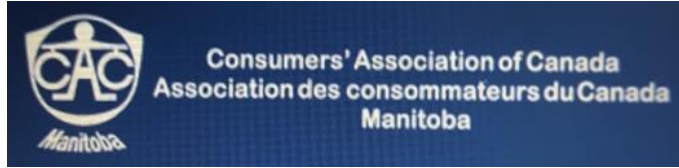




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## **Public-interest organizations ask CRTC to stabilize only fund that supports their participation in its broadcasting proceedings**

Ottawa, 17 April 2023

Following the announcement last week by the Broadcasting Participation Fund/ (BPF-FPR) of the near-complete depletion of its financial base and its plan to suspend its operations in August 2023, six of Canada's non-profit, public-interest organizations have asked the CRTC to enable the fund to continue operations. Since its establishment by broadcasters ten years ago, the BPF-FPR has enabled more than 30 civil-society organizations to participate in over 100 CRTC proceedings on behalf of consumers and the public interest – including in last year's application by Canada's largest TV program distributors to raise the price they charge subscribers for basic cable and satellite service by 12%.

“The CRTC can order public-interest organizations' costs in its telecom proceedings to be paid by the companies involved in those proceedings,” explained John Lawford, the Executive Director of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, “but it does not yet have that same power in broadcasting. Creating the BPF in 2011 with funding from two broadcasters has enabled groups like PIAC to undertake legal work in broadcasting matters, especially when these affect the prices paid by subscribers to cable and satellite TV.” Reimbursing the costs of civil-society organizations such as PIAC, the Forum for Research and Policy in Communications (FRPC), Consumers' Association of Canada (Manitoba) and the Union des consommateurs to participate in CRTC broadcasting matters has meant that its proceedings include a greater range of arguments, evidence such as surveys and recommendations that reflect Canadians' interests and concerns. The near-depletion of its fund has led the BPF-FPR to reduce any payments it approves by 25%.

In March 2022 the CRTC required Rogers Communications Inc. to direct \$725,439 to the BPF-FPR, spread over three unspecified years. PIAC, Option consommateurs, Consumers' Association of Canada (Manitoba), FRPC, and the Union des consommateurs are asking the CRTC to ensure that Rogers directs the full amount set out in its Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2022-76 to the BPF-FPR before September 2023 to ensure that civil-society organizations will be able to continue to advocate on behalf of the public interest in broadcasting. The Part 1 application filed with the CRTC is available from PIAC and FRPC.

Contact:

Monica Auer  
Executive Director  
Forum for Research and Policy in Communications (FRPC)

execdir@frpc.net  
@frpc\_frpc  
frpc.net