



**Blake Richards, M.P.**  
Wild Rose

# Wild Rose Report

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**CLARIFICATION: The CBC has indicated it will not appeal the court ruling against it. Different information appeared in this column at the time of its writing. The CBC had yet to implement the decision of the court as of 9-12-2011.**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DECEMBER 2, 2011**

## **DEBATE OVER CBC ACCOUNTABILITY HEATING UP**

The taxpayer-funded Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is subject to the Access to Information Act, albeit with exemptions designed to protect their journalistic, creative and programming activities. These exemptions are designed to protect the broadcaster's journalistic sources and to safeguard the planning and design process of its programming.

But it is in the interpretation of what falls under the exemptions where the CBC and some Canadians are parting ways.

The CBC has received many requests under the Act from citizens who want more details on how the broadcaster spends its annual \$1.1 Billion appropriation. Some taxpayers feel – legitimately, in my opinion – that any organization receiving such a large amount of tax dollars has a duty to be transparent about how it spends them.

The CBC, however, has refused many of these access requests, claiming they fall under the exclusions in the Act. As a result, Canada's information commissioner received complaints that the CBC was withholding information about topics that are unrelated to the exemptions. When the commissioner asked to review the disputed documents to determine whether or not it had properly applied the exemptions, the CBC refused her request.

The commissioner then won a court judgment ordering the CBC to release the documents, but the broadcaster is still considering an appeal as of this writing.

We may not have to wait for a Supreme Court ruling for answers to some of these questions, however. One of my Conservative caucus colleagues has put several questions on the order paper in the House of Commons related to the CBC's expenses, ranging from how much it spends on programming produced in the U.S., to the salaries and perks it pays its media personalities.

Because the questions have been asked of Parliament in writing, the Heritage Department has 45 days to respond.

I am interested in hearing constituents' views on this dispute.

What do you think?

Should a Crown Corporation that receives well over a billion dollars each year from taxpayers be more transparent in its accounting of those dollars?

Or do you feel a public broadcaster has the right to independently determine what parts of its operations fall under the exemptions in the access act?

**For more information, please contact Blake Richards, M.P., at (403) 948-5103**

Visit my website at [www.blakerichards.ca](http://www.blakerichards.ca) and take the related poll to let me know your thoughts on this matter.

One thing is for sure, whatever your view of the CBC, the debate is just heating up.