



The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, PC MP
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa ON
K1A 0A6

20 March 2020

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

I am writing to express my profound concern regarding the CBC's decision to shut down its local TV news broadcasts in almost all parts of the country.

Many times, you have said that facts matter right now more than ever. In recent days, Canadians have been turning to CBC in record numbers to receive daily updates and guidance about the COVID-19 outbreak from you, the premiers, and public health authorities. These essential broadcasts reduce uncertainty, keep panic at bay, and provide potentially life-saving instruction and information that is specific to each region.

That is why the CBC's decision to effectively eliminate local TV news services is so harmful. Misinformation about COVID-19 abounds online. Older Canadians, the ones most likely to watch news on TV, are also the most vulnerable to this virus. Our national public broadcaster cannot be allowed to abandon this essential audience at their hour of greatest need.

The CBC's editorial independence is sacrosanct, and for that reason; I am not asking you to unilaterally overturn CBC's decision to pull the plug on local TV news. Instead, I am writing to ask you to make an emergency investment so that CBC can afford to put these vital services back on the air without delay. We must move quickly. Lives are at stake.

There are many parts of the country where the CBC TV is the *only* source of local news. Cutting those shows means that important announcements by local mayors or local public health officials about life-and-death matters are less likely to reach the people who need to hear them most. It's that important.

Your government is the first in many years to re-invest in the CBC. But as CBC's announcement this week revealed, it's not enough. Canadians need truthful, professional, locally-relevant journalism at this crucial time, and they're depending on you to restore it quickly.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Bernhard
Executive Director