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Friday, March 5, 2010

The Honourable James Moore
Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Moore:

I write to you today on behalf of Canada's booksellers regarding the Amazon.com application to establish a new cultural business in Canada. We understand the application is being reviewed by your office, as recommended by the Governor General in Council.

For more than a century, the Government of Canada has had programs and policies to support the production, distribution and promotion of Canadian books, magazines and newspapers that reflect Canada's unique and dynamic culture. This support is premised on the belief that Canadians must have access to Canadian voices and Canadian stories.

As you know, the foreign investment policy for the book trade supports the Canadian-owned and -controlled book publishing industry. The Investment Canada Act requires that foreign investments in the book publishing and distribution sector be compatible with national cultural policies and be of net benefit to Canada and to the Canadian-controlled sector.

As Canadian booksellers, we have appreciated your support in the past for our industry and its essential role in promoting Canadian culture. You have spoken directly to the necessity for support of "uniquely Canadian literature...to ensure that the Canadian literary scene remains strong and continues to produce the stellar literature Canadians know and love."

Canadian Booksellers Association (CBA) does not believe it is in the best interest of Canadians and Canadian culture to open our door to foreign ownership in the cultural sphere.

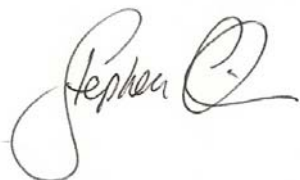
To allow Amazon to enter the Canadian marketplace will detrimentally affect independent businesses and would raise serious concerns over the protection of our cultural industries. Individual Canadian booksellers have traditionally played a key role in ensuring the promotion of Canadian authors and Canadian culture. These are values that no American dot.com retailer could ever purport to understand or promote.

The Canadian government and the Department of Canadian Heritage have traditionally sought to support our unique cultural perspective by placing reasonable limits on American domination of our book market. Given recent upheaval in the book industry these limits are more important today than ever before. In addition, the Canadian Book industry requires active support and promotion so that our regional, local and aboriginal voices are nurtured and celebrated. That is something that Canadian booksellers, including trade, specialty, campus and chain stores, do so well.

Letting foreign retail giants into local Canadian markets under the false guise of Canadian partnership would be devastating to an important Canadian industry employing real book lovers in every community across Canada.

Canadian Booksellers Association strongly requests your continued support of measures designed to protect the unique Canadian cultural component of our retail book market.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Cribar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S' and a distinct 'C' at the end.

Stephen Cribar
President, Canadian Booksellers Association

About Canadian Booksellers Association:

Canadian Booksellers Association (CBA) is the national trade association representing booksellers from coast to coast to coast. Our members include trade, campus, specialty and chain booksellers of all sizes, located in small communities and large metropolitan centres. Since 1952 CBA has been the voice of Canadian booksellers.

cc. The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada
The Honourable Tony Clement, Minister of Industry