Write to your MP – template letter

Dear [insert name of MP]

I am writing, as one of your constituents, to ask you to oppose the Government’s plan to push ahead with the privatisation of Channel 4.

As one of our public service broadcasters, Channel 4 invests in UK talent, supports our thriving independent production sector and encourages creative programming by its ability to take risks, innovate and adapt to new viewing habits.

Testimony to this are shows such as Derry Girls, It’s A Sin, National Treasure, Adult Material, We Are Lady Parts, Ackley Bridge and Hollyoaks (to name but a few), which delight and entertain UK audiences by speaking to them about their own unique experiences.

The channel is funded by advertising revenue and investment from independent production companies, meaning that the high-quality, homegrown TV programmes for which it is renowned, make no demands on public money.

With recent revenues of £934 million and a £74 million surplus the channel is in a robust financial position. Furthermore, its ‘not-for-profit' status means that those surplus funds are all reinvested in UK productions, an investment that would doubtless be lost following a change of ownership.

With its offices in Leeds, Bristol, Manchester and Glasgow, Channel 4 has created thousands of regional opportunities, from senior creative roles to apprenticeships and work for supporting local businesses; all key to the Government’s ‘levelling up’ agenda. It is unlikely that any new owner would have the same impetus to offer such a wide range of roles across the nations and regions.

Channel 4 has also been a champion of diversity across the sector and there is a real risk that privatisation will turn back the very real progress the broadcaster has made in recent years on diversity and inclusion in the arts.

The Government, which is conducting a wider review into the future of public service broadcasting (PSB), is concerned about UK broadcasters competing with international streaming giants, but it is hard to see how selling Channel 4 to one of those same companies would help the UK’s digital competitiveness.

Any new international owner is likely to avoid UK-only programming, posing an existential threat to our broadcasting ecology.

UK pay TV revenues and television advertising expenditure lead the way in Europe, and revenue from our TV industry is projected to expand to over £9 billion. Our TV output is known and loved the world over and Channel 4 is a vital pillar of this.

The channel is also a huge investor in British film and distributes content via its free-to-air platform Film4, which regularly garners international awards.

Privatisation jeopardises all of the above, by shifting emphasis to shareholder interest instead of the current model of public service.

I therefore ask you to write to Nadine Dorries the Culture Secretary requesting she reconsider this policy and protect Channel 4 which is a flourishing national asset.

I also ask you vote against any plans to privatise Channel 4 if the matter comes before Parliament.

If you have any questions, please contact my trade union the Writers’ Guild of Great Britain: email john@writersguild.org.uk

I look forward to your response.

Your sincerely

[Insert your name]