



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Future of the Canadian Wheat Board

THE HARPER GOVERNMENT'S INFLEXIBILITY MAKES US FEAR THE WORST FOR SUPPLY MANAGEMENT

Ottawa, Tuesday, October 17, 2006 – “We are really alarmed by the attitude of Stephen Harper's government, which has basically told the Canadian Wheat Board just to ‘shut up and die!’” said **André Bellavance**, MP for Richmond—Arthabaska and Bloc Québécois agriculture and agri-food critic.

Along with the other opposition parties, the Bloc Québécois critic has been extremely critical of Stephen Harper's government for putting a gag order on the Canadian Wheat Board on October 5.

“By banning the Canadian Wheat Board from advocating its continued existence as the monopoly seller of Western Canadian wheat and barley, this government has turned its back on transparency, which it claims is a top priority. This attitude is unacceptable and leads us to fear the worst for supply management,” said **André Bellavance**, following a meeting of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food.

“Like the Canadian Wheat Board, supply management is an important part of collective marketing. Why would Stephen Harper's government mount an effective defence of supply management at the WTO if it is undermining the Canadian Wheat Board?” asked **André Bellavance**.

As far back as November 2002, Stephen Harper was critical of the Canadian Wheat Board's “monopoly powers” in a motion presented in the House of Commons. More recently, Stephen Harper set up the Policy Roundtable on Marketing Choice for Wheat and Barley.

“This roundtable is a farce, and Stephen Harper will not be able to derive any legitimacy from it. It has turned a deaf ear to advice from the Canadian Wheat Board itself and from the *National Farmer's Union*. The discussions were led by groups opposed to the powers held by Canadian Wheat Board. Sooner or later, Stephen Harper will have to explain why he did not want to consult all those involved, starting with farmers themselves,” said **André Bellavance**.

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Information:

Catherine Bourgault, Press Attaché
Bloc Québécois Parliamentary Wing
Tel. : (613) 947-2495
Cell. : (613) 296-1041
www.blocquebecois.org