

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NDP Alex Atamanenko Calls on the Prime Minister to repeal his Agriculture Minister's Gag Order to Stifle the Canadian Wheat Board

Castlegar, BC: Alex Atamanenko, MP, BC Southern Interior, NDP Agriculture critic, says he is stunned by the recent gag order which has just been delivered to the Canadian Wheat Board by the Conservative government and is calling on the Prime Minister to repeal it.

“It is inconceivable that democracy can in any way be served by such a blatant abuse of ministerial power,” stated Atamanenko. “By imposing these types of restrictions it makes you wonder what the government’s real agenda is and why they so desperately need to hog-tie the Wheat Board in such a way”

The Minister of Agriculture, Chuck Strahl, requested that an Order in Council be issued to the CWB with the following directives for the conduct of its operations:

- a) it shall not expend funds, directly or indirectly on advocating the retention of its monopoly powers, including the expenditure of funds for advertising, publishing or market research and
- b) it shall not provide funds to any other person or entity to enable them to advocate the retention of the monopoly powers of the CWB.

“Stephen Harper, as past President of the National Citizens Coalition, before he was Prime Minister, spoke against the use of gag laws, calling them unconstitutional. Those of you who have heard him speak regarding this issue should be wondering why he now condones it as an acceptable tool to promote his government’s hidden agenda,” noted Atamanenko.

This current gag order is not the only front in the government’s war against the Wheat Board. On October 30, **Bill C-300** - “An Act to Amend the Canadian Wheat Board” will be the next skirmish in this epic battle. “I am calling on all members of the Liberal Party, the Bloq Quebecois, and those of conscience within the Conservative Party, to unite in opposition when it comes before the House at the end of the month,” petitioned Atamanenko.

“In light of the fact that the Board has been silenced, I would urge all supporters from across the country to e-mail, telephone or write to the Agriculture Minister or to their Member of Parliament, and let them know what you think of the tactics they’ve employed so far in their attempt to destroy farmers marketing advantage. The postage is free,” Atamanenko concluded.

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For more information please contact Alex Atamanenko’s office at 1-800-667-2393 or 365-2793.

