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## **LEGISLATION GETS CWB VOTERS' LIST CHANGES WRONG**

**SASKATOON, Sask.**—“If passed into law, Bill C-27 and its changes to CWB voting rules will mean that many people who market wheat and barley through the CWB will not be able to vote in Directors’ elections, but many others who *do not* grow or deliver these crops *will* be able to vote. This is truly democracy on its head,” said NFU President Terry Boehm.

The inclusion of a 40-tonne minimum production cut-off for voting rights is especially ill-conceived. Boehm laid out several problems with today’s legislation, including:

1. The Bill excludes small producers and, thus, some young and beginning farmers. “The Agriculture Committee toured Canada this month asking how Ottawa can encourage young people to enter farming. Most young farmers and new farmers start out as small farmers. Today, Minister Ritz took away the right of those farmers to vote in CWB elections,” said Boehm.
2. The Bill excludes many landlords who market wheat and barley through the CWB. “The 40-tonne minimum production cut-off bites especially deep for landlords. On a one-third crop-share basis, a retired farmer with 160 acres in crop would probably fall below the 40-tonne threshold, even though he or she may market all of his or her share through the CWB. These people are directly affected by the results of CWB marketing, and even though they help pay CWB costs, they will have no vote,” said Boehm.
3. The Bill enshrines in legislation the practice of giving votes to farmers who make no CWB deliveries. “While C-27 deprives many CWB-users of a vote, it validates the practice of giving votes to farmers who do not use the CWB—who produce non-CWB grains or market outside of the Board. This goes against the norm. In elections for canola, pulse-crop, or flax organizations, only the farmers who grow those crops get a ballot,” said Boehm. He added, “What the Minister is doing here is analogous to excluding some smaller cattle farmers from voting in cattle association ballots, but allowing hog farmers to vote.”
4. The Bill runs counter to some 2005 CWB Election Review Panel recommendations. “The Election Review Panel certainly got some things wrong, but they were right in recommending that voting be limited to those who actually deliver grain to the CWB. The Minister claims his legislation is based on Panel recommendations, but in very significant ways, it is not,” said Boehm.

He concluded: “Voting rights should go to those who utilize the CWB, *all* those who utilize the CWB, and *only those* who utilize the CWB. We shouldn’t refuse votes to farmers who make smaller deliveries; and we shouldn’t give votes to farmers who make no deliveries. Minister Ritz has made a number of fundamental errors in this legislation. It must be withdrawn.”

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