



WESTERN BARLEY GROWERS ASSOCIATION

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For immediate release

WESTERN BARLEY GROWERS ASSOCIATION URGES MINISTER RITZ TO PRESS ON TO GIVE WESTERN CANADIAN FARMERS MARKETING FREEDOM

AIRDRIE, AB – December 15, 2011: The Western Barley Growers Association (WBGA) sees this latest legal challenge announced yesterday by the “group of eight” CWB directors as a desperate last ditch attempt to create uncertainty and deliberately obstruct the ability of the grain industry to conduct business in an open market next August. “Blocking the implementation of Bill C-18, *The Marketing Freedom for Grain Farmers Act*, will cause needless uncertainty and irreparable damage in a grain industry that is ready to move forward” says Brian Otto, President of the WBGA. “It is time for common sense to prevail, so that farmers and the industry can move forward in a logical and predictable manner in an open market without the constant threat of legal challenges from the outgoing CWB directors,” continues Otto.

“What is completely lost in this whole issue is that it is questionable whether Minister Ritz has violated section 47.1 of the CWB Act,” claims Doug McBain, Past President and Director of the WBGA. Section 47.1 says that the government cannot introduce a bill that will remove wheat or barley from part IV of the CWB Act, **Regulation of Interprovincial and Export Trade in Wheat** - (licensing). “Bill C-18 does not remove wheat or barley from part IV, of the Act; the Minister has removed part IV of the Act! That does not require a vote,” contends a frustrated McBain. “The Minister has gone to extraordinary lengths to ensure that the CWB is able to buy and sell wheat or barley competitively and he has also provided for the ability of the CWB to buy other crops while using the Government guarantee,” continues McBain.

From the Globe and Mail, December 14, 2011: *Mr. Oberg cautioned farmers against trying to strike out on their own. Mr. Oberg stated, “I wouldn’t advise any farmers to break the law or try to not honour any agreements that they have.”* “This is typical of the bullying and intimidation tactics the “group of eight” are willing to use to force producers to accept their ideological perception of grain marketing. It is obvious that these eight directors believe it is acceptable to jail farmers for wanting to market their own grain without the monopoly. This is unacceptable in a country like Canada,” says Otto.

“Once again, the “group of eight” are playing political games with producers’ money to blindly promote their ideological positions with total disregard for Western Canadian producers,” comments Otto. The WBGA encourages Minister Ritz to push on in his efforts to give Western Canadian farmers what they are asking for and the “group of eight” continually try to deny - **Marketing Freedom**. The industry must move forward, and it needs a clear signal that business in an open market will happen by August of next year. Minister Ritz has consistently stated that it is important the industry is giving a clear signal that they can begin conducting business in anticipation of an open market next fall. The “group of eight” can continue to try to impede the implementation of Bill C-18, create an atmosphere of uncertainty, but they will eventually have to answer to the harm they have caused producers. That will be the legacy they leave after they are gone from the board room.

Western Barley Growers Association is a strong voice for a vibrant, market responsive barley industry in western Canada.

For further comment, please contact:

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