

13<sup>th</sup> February 2004

Dear Sirs,

Until the recent publication of the Hutton Report, I would not have considered it necessary to write to the Charter Review Consultation with my views on the BBC. However, I now feel compelled to defend the BBC so that the Charter Review process isn't seen by disgruntled MPs as a chance to develop an official Government news agency.

I have always found the BBC to be impartial, fair, and above all informative. I think that it covers news, local news, sport and more popular arts very well. I also think that, due to its news service and World Service broadcasting, it is a valuable asset for Britain and the rest of the world. It has adapted well to the advent of new technologies.

The two most distinctive parts of its output for me are radio, and children's television. They provide a quality of programming (free from advertising) that one can't find elsewhere. The television channels, especially BBC1, I find have become more similar to other channels now such as Channel 4.

I don't have any objection to the BBC operating a commercial arm, as the profits top-up the funding at no extra cost to the licence-payer.

I also feel that the licence fee remains the most fair and effective way of raising the revenue needed, and still offers very good value.

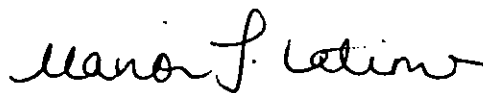
On the question about governance, I think that the board of governors should be freed from their dual role and left to regulate the BBC on behalf of the

public interest. A management board should be appointed to run the BBC internally. This would enable the governors to be properly accountable to the public without fear of conflicting interests. I think that despite the duality of their role they have managed to achieve this over the years, but it now seems politically inevitable that their role should change.

I do not think that the BBC should be accountable directly to Parliament at all as this conflicts with the ability of its news services to question the actions of Parliament. I think that the Prime Minister should no longer be involved in appointing the Chairman of the governors.

In summary, I feel that there is so much more to be praised about the BBC and the services it provides to the public than can be criticised. I think that the Charter Review process should involve only minor changes, and should not be seen as an opportunity to fix what isn't broken.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marion J. Latimer".

Dr. Marion Latimer