



February 14, 2017

Dear Eric,

Many thanks for writing to us expressing your concerns about our Federation, Equestrian Canada (EC)

We know that this a very busy time for you and your fellow competitors and you want to focus on the time-consuming part of caring for your horses, training and competitions. It is your dedication and determination and that of all Jump High Performance Athletes, that has made Jump such a successful Discipline, and the source of tremendous pride not only to our Federation, but to Canadians from every walk of life.

There is also no doubt that your efforts are supported by dedicated and committed owners, and by a large group of volunteer experts in your specific discipline. These volunteers form the core of what makes Equestrian Sports work, as they are the foundation on which Equestrian Canada operates.

We count on volunteers from across Canada to support all our sport disciplines in all aspects of Equestrian endeavours.

Eric, Equestrian Canada, if not facing a crisis at the moment.

Equestrian Canada is living through what is hopefully the final adjustment period of the implementation of a major organizational restructure that commenced 2015 mandated by the Non-For-Profit Act. The act demanded radical changes on how NFP entities such as EC govern and operate. EC experienced many challenges and setbacks over a period of four years to devise a modified governance structure that would be compliant with Federal law.

This is the structure of Equestrian Canada today.

We were fortunate to count on the support of many of our most knowledgeable and experienced volunteers and key stakeholders during that lengthy process. These volunteers and stakeholders helped craft the new format under immense pressure from a hard deadline that threatened the dissolution of the Federation.

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Mike Lawrence and Torchy Millar were the two individuals selected to represent Equestrian Sports during this process.

Equestrian Canada provides a structure, essential services, and representation of all things equestrian in Canada at many levels. You would be most familiar with EC's role in representing Canada to the FEI as it relates to FEI standards, competitions, accreditations, results, passports, officials, rules and regulations, collection of fees, and all aspects related to Major Games. You may agree with me that while EC may not be a perfectly run organization these functions are delivered generally very well and in a timely fashion.

Equestrian Canada also deals with Sport Canada, OTP, and the COC. These funding agencies and sport partners are a critical part of how all sports from grassroots to high performance are delivered in Canada. The COC, Sport Canada, and OTP are major sources of funding for our Federation for the benefit of our athletes, coaches, officials, etc. Equestrian Canada plays a major role in dealing with and reporting to these agencies, as well as ensuring that the benefits these funding partners provide such as Athlete Carding are delivered to members of our community.

Equestrian Canada and the Sport disciplines **MUST** work cooperatively. The Sport Disciplines are part of Equestrian Canada.

EC provides a legal, financial and regulatory framework imposed by policies that impact the operations of Sports entities in the Canada. These range from the NFP Act and governance to rules and conditions imposed by the COC, Sport Canada, OTP, the FEI, and provincial bodies.

Karen Hendry-Ouellette would be a prime example of how the relationship between the Federation and Sport Disciplines can work. Karen in her role of Manager of Jumping at EC, does a good job balancing the needs of the Hunter/Jumper industry with the resources available at EC. Karen has a great deal of experience in the discipline and the respect of the hunter/jumper community. She is an employee of EC and works collaboratively with the Jumping committee and a full staff team at EC, who all support her, as well as the other discipline managers, in every facet of their work.

Yes, the Jump volunteer community particularly through the Jump Committee has done an excellent job over the years managing and implementing programmes, competitions, rules,



official etc., but this does not happen in isolation. This happens within the rules and regulations that form the essence of our Federation, the by-laws and policies mandated by Canadian laws and the rules and conditions imposed by entities such as the FEI, Sport Canada, the COC, OTP etc.

Equestrian Canada is not equipped to do the work that your Volunteer committees do, neither does Equestrian Canada have within its staff the full range of technical expertise in the discipline that your volunteers have, but Equestrian Canada does have obligations to ensure that things are done within our sports that are legal, financially transparent, and within the rules, conditions and regulations provided. It is also obligated to ensure that things are done in the best interest of the equestrian community at large.

Eric, you can drive to the barn or to a show in any car you want, at any time you want, with anyone you want, but the rules suggest that you must keep a maximum speed, stop in red lights and yield to pedestrians. You follow this basic rules and you get there, and it works well.

We need to do the same with EC, the Sport Committees, Members and volunteers. We have to work together. There is no other option, we can't exist nor operate without each other. The sport disciplines cannot manage their programmes completely independent from EC any more than EC could exist without the Disciplines and the athletes.

We must listen to each other. It's not good enough for one side to do all the listening.

Yes, we have some dissatisfied members of our community and we will try as we may to make everyone happy. But for now we want to focus on making the organization work to the benefit of the majority of our Participants. We want to focus on working better with our volunteer groups, and focus on creating an atmosphere of respect and cooperation so athletes like you and your colleagues can focus on competing and winning as you do.

Sincerely,

Jorge Bernhard  
President  
Equestrian Canada

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