

Wayne Emmerson
Chairman and CEO



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Mr. Raymond Louie, President
Federation of Canadian Municipalities
24 Clarence Street
Ottawa, ON K1N 5P3

Dear Mr. Louie:

On behalf of the Regional Municipality of York, I am pleased to share our thoughts on the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' final submission regarding *CRTC 2015-134: Review of basic telecommunications services*.

The Regional Municipality of York strongly supports the efforts of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to ensure that broadband access becomes a basic telecommunications service for all Canadians. We urge you to convey our support with the CRTC as we are very closely aligned on this issue.

Improving high-speed broadband access is a strategic priority for York Region. Access to broadband is an economic development imperative that creates jobs, reduces traffic congestion, and fosters innovation. Empirical evidence indicates that increasing connectivity speeds directly impacts gross domestic product output in communities. Investing in broadband infrastructure creates a significant return on investment for communities and senior levels of government beyond the investment made by service providers.

With a population of 1.2 million residents and nearly 50,000 businesses, York Region is one of the largest and fastest growing municipalities in the country. Yet, a study undertaken in 2013 of broadband accessibility in the Region identified a significant disparity in service between our urban communities and the more rural areas of the Region. The issue of rural connectivity exists, even on the fringes of our largest and most prosperous cities.

Some challenges include:

- Insufficient broadband capacity was the top issue raised by rural based businesses during recent consultations on the Region's Economic Development Action Plan; businesses cited a competitive disadvantage due to a lack of affordable, reliable high-speed broadband. They indicate that this negatively impacts their ability to grow and attract highly skilled talent

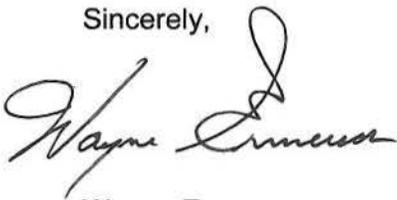
- In rural communities many of our residents say their children cannot study and complete assignments at home due to insufficient broadband capacity, forcing them to travel to places where adequate Wi-Fi services are available
- Residents in rural subdivisions have partnered with internet service providers and their local municipality to develop solutions. To date applications by these groups to access the “Digital Canada 150-Connecting Canadians” funding have been unsuccessful
- Our businesses have expressed that greater emphasis needs to be placed on servicing key business centres, employment areas, and industrial parks as well as near-urban locations that depend on small and home-based operations. This is in keeping with Ontario Chamber of Commerce findings, whose recent resolution calls for:
 - benchmarking Ontario’s internet speeds and access versus competitor jurisdictions
 - considering a 5 year target of 1Gbps (Business) and 50 Mbps (Residential)
 - a 10 year target of 10 Gbps (Business) and 250 Mbps (Residential)

To help address these issues, Regional Council approved a Broadband Strategy in 2014 with a stated vision to: “Establish York Region as a Gigabit Region, recognized for its leadership in fostering an eco-system of collaboration and business innovation within a connected lifestyle community”.

Regional Council approved an advisory taskforce in 2015 to address the challenges of meeting the goals of our Broadband Strategy. Members of our Broadband Strategy Advisory Task Force are also working closely with the Province of Ontario through the Premier’s Economic Working Group (Broadband Sub-committee) to explore ways to enhance connectivity in communities.

High-speed broadband connectivity is as fundamental to today’s economy as Canada-wide postal service was following Confederation. Like the legislation that framed universal postal service nearly 150 years ago, a strong federal commitment is required to ensure no community is left behind.

Sincerely,



Wayne Emmerson
Chairman and CEO

cc Mayor Tony Van Bynen, Chair - Broadband Strategy Task Force
Mayor Geoffrey Dawe, Vice Chair - Broadband Strategy Task Force
Bruce Macgregor, Chief Administrative Officer