

CRTC Declares Broadband Access as a Basic Service

On December 21, 2016, the **Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)** officially **declared broadband internet as an essential service for Canadians.**

The declaration includes a number of policy implications, including the following:

- An increase in broadband access speed defined as adequate from the existing target of 5 Mbps download / 1 Mbps upload to 50 Mbps download / 10 Mbps upload.
- The establishment of a **fund** to be used for the development of broadband infrastructure in areas that are currently underserved. The funding will total \$750 million over the first five years of existence, with 10% of overall funding allocated to satellite-dependent communities. It is expected that the fund will be supported in part by contributions from major telecom providers. Access to funding will be application-based.

As the CRTC's decision was released very recently, the AAMDC has not had adequate time to analyze it in detail. Further information will be shared with members in the near future on the implications for rural municipalities.

Upon initial review of the decision, the AAMDC is pleased, as it appears that the CRTC decision supports the majority of the input in the AAMDC's submission to the CRTC on this topic in 2015 (attached).

In combination with the recently announced **Connect to Innovate** program, the AAMDC is confident that the Government of Canada is beginning to prioritize the development of rural connectivity across Canada.

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