



June 25, 2020

Dear Local Municipal Partners,

Re: WOWC Appeals for Equitable Broadband Funding for Southwestern Ontario

At the June 23rd County Council Meeting, Council resolved to join the Member Counties and Local Municipalities of the Western Ontario Wardens Caucus (WOWC) in advocating for the region's fair share of the CRTC's \$750M Broadband Fund. WOWC and its Member Counties and Local Municipalities will be advocating for 10% (or \$75M) of the funding as the region represents 10% of the population of Canada. WOWC will also advocate for the region's fair share of the Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) \$1.7B Universal Broadband Fund. Applications are opening this year and WOWC will once again be advocating for 10% (or \$170M) for Southwestern Ontario based on population.

Advocacy will take the form of a letter writing campaign to the CEO of the CRTC and the Hon. Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry. Please find attached the advocacy appeal from the WOWC and template letters of support for your consideration.

Yours very truly,

Julie Gonyou,
Chief Administrative Officer

Enclosure

County of Elgin
450 Sunset Drive
St. Thomas, Ontario
N5R 5V1 Canada
Phone: 519-631-1460
www.elgin-county.on.ca



WOWC Appeals to the CRTC for Equitable Broadband Funding for Southwestern Ontario

Currently more than half a million residents are lacking access to high-speed broadband across Southwestern Ontario.

In the past funding for broadband in Southwestern Ontario has been undervalued and overlooked.

To ensure fair and equitable funding is allocated to support broadband infrastructure projects in rural Southwestern Ontario, the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus, has issued a letter to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission to advocate for the region's fair share of funding to support Southwestern Ontario broadband infrastructure projects.

Your advocacy efforts are greatly needed, and we would encourage you to write to Ian Scott, Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, to ensure that the residents living in our underserved communities do not go unnoticed and that adequate and equitable funding for the region is required.

Attached is a template letter of support for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jim Ginn
Chair
Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus

June 23, 2020

Ian Scott
Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission
ian.scott@crtc.gc.ca

Re: Fair and equitable funding to support broadband infrastructure projects in Southwestern Ontario

Dear Mr. Scott,

As the Warden of Elgin County, I am writing to you today to request the allocation of fair and equitable funding to support broadband infrastructure projects in rural Southwestern Ontario, including in underserved areas of Elgin County.

Southwestern Ontario broadband funding can not be undervalued. It has been estimated that it would cost approximately \$2.5 billion to provide a fibre-based solution to address all Southwestern Ontario's underserved areas, including in areas of Elgin County – wireless could help to reduce these costs in some areas. The region which is 90% rural and represents 10% of the Canadian population has been overlooked in the past for funding.

Connectivity is key to the social and economic success of our communities – we need to ensure that the residents living in our underserved communities do not go unnoticed. Adequate and equitable funding for the region is required to ensure that broadband, an essential utility, is accessible for all. The COVID-19 outbreak has laid bare the challenges our underserved communities in Elgin County and across Southwestern Ontario are facing.

In today's unprecedented times, where children are required to attend school remotely, online ordering is the new norm and virtual meetings are now a workplace requirement, broadband is not a luxury, it is essential.

On behalf of Elgin County, we are respectfully asking the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission to support Southwestern Ontario broadband infrastructure projects.

Sincerely,

cc. The Honourable Steven Guilbeault
Minister of Canadian Heritage
Steven.Guilbeault@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Navdeep Bains
Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry
Navdeep.Bains@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Catherine McKenna
Minister of Infrastructure and Communities
Catherine.McKenna@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Maryam Monsef
Minister of Rural Economic Development Minister for Women and Gender Equality
Maryam.Monsef@parl.gc.ca

Karen Vecchio
Member of Parliament for Elgin-Middlesex-London
karen.vecchio@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Laurie Scott
Minister of Infrastructure, Ontario
laurie.scott@pc.ola.org

Heads of Municipal Council (Western Ontario)



WOWC Calls on Government for Increased Broadband Funding

The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus today issued a letter to the federal government to seek immediate and increased funding to support the expansion of broadband infrastructure in our underserved communities across Southwestern Ontario.

The Caucus is urging the Canadian government to solve a fundamental issue and provide a basic need to all residents currently living without access to reliable high-speed internet.

Your support is greatly needed, and we would encourage you to write to The Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry to urge that the government make a substantial investment to ensure that broadband, an essential utility, is accessible and available for all.

Attached is a template letter of support for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jim Ginn
Chair
Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus

June 23, 2020

The Honourable Navdeep Bains
Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry
Navdeep.Bains@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Catherine McKenna
Minister of Infrastructure and Communities
Catherine.McKenna@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Maryam Monsef
Minister of Rural Economic Development
Minister for Women and Gender Equality
Maryam.Monsef@parl.gc.ca

Re: Urgent and immediate funding request to support the expansion of broadband infrastructure in Southwestern Ontario

Dear Ministers,

As the Warden of Elgin County, I am writing you today to seek urgent and immediate funding to support the expansion of critical broadband infrastructure across Southwestern Ontario, including in underserved areas of Elgin County.

Efforts at the local, federal and provincial level have been underway to provide all Ontarians, no matter where they live, with access to high-speed internet. This is not an overnight process; however, the COVID-19 outbreak has laid bare the challenges our underserved communities in Elgin County and across Southwestern Ontario are facing.

In today's unprecedented times, where children are required to attend school remotely, online ordering is the new norm and virtual meetings are now a workplace requirement, broadband is not a luxury, it is essential.

Connectivity is key to the social and economic success of our communities – we need to invest in the future of our communities. Increased funding is urgently needed to boost the pace and scale of broadband deployment efforts to address gaps in service and provide digital equality for all in Canada. It has been estimated that it would cost approximately \$2.5 billion to provide a fibre-based solution to address all Southwestern Ontario's underserved areas – wireless could help to reduce these costs in some areas. Adequate funding is required to ensure that broadband, an essential utility, is accessible for all.

The message to you is clear. **Southwestern Ontario broadband funding can not be undervalued.** The region represents 10% of the Canadian population and 25% of the

population of Ontario. Adequate and equitable funding for all underserved municipalities within the region is required to ensure that broadband, an essential utility, is accessible for all.

On behalf of Elgin County, we are urging the federal government to solve a fundamental issue and provide a basic need to all our residents currently living without access to reliable high-speed internet. The longer our communities are left without, the greater the people and businesses of Southwestern Ontario and County will suffer from social and economic inequalities. We are asking the Canadian government to take immediate action and make a substantial investment in high-speed connectivity.

Sincerely,

cc. The Honourable Laurie Scott
Minister of Infrastructure, Ontario
laurie.scott@pc.ola.org

Karen Vecchio
Member of Parliament for Elgin-Middlesex-London
karen.vecchio@parl.gc.ca

Heads of Municipal Council (Western Ontario)