



REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO RURAL SERVICES COMMITTEE AGENDA

Thursday, January 9, 2025

<u>PAGE NO.</u>		<u>ACTION</u>
	<u>AGENDA, January 9, 2025</u>	Approve
	<u>Supplementary Agenda</u>	Receive
	<u>MINUTES</u>	
2-6	Rural/Agriculture Committee Meeting Minutes - November 7, 2024	Approve
	<u>REPORTS</u>	
7-8	Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services – Letter to Minister Farnworth -Infrastructure Improvements to 700 Rd. in Electoral Areas B and E of the RDBN	Recommendation
9-16	Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services –Grant in Aid Policy Update	Recommendation
17-18	Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services – Grant in Aid Under \$2,500 Approval Update	Receive
19-31	Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services – Reply to Interventions to Part 1 Application to Disclose Certain Broadband and Mobile Annual Facilities Survey Data (CRTC File 800-P114-202404929)	Receive

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO**RURAL/AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MEETING****Thursday, November 7, 2024**

PRESENT: Chair Clint Lambert

Directors Judy Greenaway
Shirley Moon
Chris Newell
Mark Parker
Stoney Stoltenberg
Michael Riis-Christianson

Staff Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer
Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services
Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development
John Illes, Chief Financial Officer
Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services – via Zoom
– arrived in-person at 3:24 p.m.
Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning – left at 3:26 p.m.

Others Linda McGuire, Village of Granisle – left at 3:21 p.m.
Kevin Moutray, District of Vanderhoof – left at 3:21 p.m.
Martin Elphee, District of Fort St. James

CALL TO ORDER Chair Lambert called the meeting to order at 3:14 p.m.

AGENDA & SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA Moved by Director Moon
Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

RDC.2024-7-1 “That the Rural/Agriculture Committee Agenda for November 7, 2024 be approved.

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Rural/Agriculture Committee Meeting Minutes -October 10, 2024 Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2024-7-2 “That the minutes of the Rural/Agriculture Committee meeting of October 10, 2024 be approved.”

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Land Referrals

Crown Land Application
Referral No. 7410343
Electoral Area D (Fraser Lake
Rural)

Moved by Director Parker
 Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2024-7-3

"That the comment sheet be provided to the Province as the Regional District's comments on Crown Land Application No. 7410343 as amended to include: that the Licence of Occupation be contingent upon continued public access to all referenced roads and trails."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Crown Land Application
Referral No. 7410328
Electoral Area F (Vanderhoof
Rural)

Moved by Director Moon
 Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

RDC.2024-7-4

"That the comment sheet be provided to the Province as the Regional District's comments on Crown Land Application No. 7410328."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Pipeline Referral

Prince Rupert Gas
Transmission Project Permit
Extension Notification
No. 240904 – Electoral
Areas G (Houston/Granisle
Rural) and C (Fort St. James Rural)

Moved by Director Newell
 Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2024-7-5

1. "That staff be directed to inform Roy Northern Land Services Ltd. that the Board's October 14, 2014 letter remains valid and contains the RDBN's comments in regard to the Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Project Permit Extension application notifications.

2. Further, that staff be directed to respond to any future extension application notifications for Sections 2, 2a, 3, and 4, and Middle River Compressor Site by informing PRGT's land representative that the Board's October 14, 2014 letter remains valid and contains the RDBN's comments in regard to these notifications."

(All/Directors/Majority) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Road Closure Referral

MoTI Road Closure Referral
 No. 2024-00832-Electoral
 Area D (Fraser Lake Rural)

Moved by Director Parker
 Seconded by Director Greenaway

R.D.C.2024-7-6

"That the comment sheet be provided to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure as the Regional District's comments on Road Closure Referral No. 2024-00832."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

AGRICULTURE REPORT

Food and Agriculture Plan
 -Implementation Update

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
 Seconded by Director Moon

R.D.C.2024-7-7

"That the Committee receive the Regional Agriculture Coordinator's Food and Agriculture Plan – Implementation Update memorandum."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

RURAL REPORTS

2023 Electoral Area Grant in
 Aid

Moved by Director Newell
 Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

RDC.2024-7-8

"That the Committee recommend that the Board approve moving Electoral Area Grant in Aid balances remaining at the end of 2024 to the corresponding 2025 Electoral Area Economic Development Service or other electoral area services that are solely taxed by that electoral area director."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The following was discussed:

- Grant in Aid contributions not requiring Board approval can be made to the end of 2024
- Grant in Aid requiring Board approval must be submitted to the Regional District by December 3rd
- Definition of Economic Development projects
- RDBN Economic Development Service projects, or other organization projects must be approved by the Board via resolution
- Staff will draft an Economic Development Service Policy for Board review prior to the end of 2024
- Moving Electoral Area Grant in Aid balances to other electoral area services solely funded by that electoral area director
- Economic Development Service taxation.

RURAL REPORTS (CONT'D)

Regional Grant in Aid from
 Electoral Area B (Burns Lake
 Rural)

Moved by Director Riis-Christianson
 Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

RDC.2024-7-9

"That the Committee recommend that the Board approve the following applications for Regional Grant in Aid from Electoral Area B (Burns Lake Rural)

- Eagle Creek Recreation Commission – Mechanical Groomer for Arena - \$3,495
- Lakes District Fair Association – Super Dogs Performance in 2025 - \$14,825
- Burns Lake Basketball Association – Jr. NBA Program (bursaries) - \$3,000."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Electoral Area D Economic
 Development Service Grant

Moved by Director Parker
 Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

RDC.2024-7-10

"That the Committee recommend that the Board approve an Electoral Area D (Fraser Lake Rural) Economic Development Services Grant of up to \$10,000 to the Village of Fraser Lake for a White Swan Development Potential Study."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

RURAL REPORT

Electoral Area D Economic
 Development Service Grant
 -Eco Co-op

Moved by Director Parker
 Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

RDC.2024-7-11

"That the Committee recommend that the Board approve an Electoral Area D (Fraser Lake Rural) Economic Development Services Grant of up to \$1,000 to the Fraser Lake Eco Cooperative for the Eco Co-op Roundtable Conference."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Newell
Seconded by Director Greenaway

RDC.2024-7-12

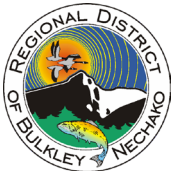
"That the meeting be adjourned at 3:47 p.m."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Clint Lambert, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director
of Corporate Services



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Rural Services Committee

To: Chair and Committee
From: Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services
Date: January 9, 2025
Subject: **Letter to Minister Farnworth – Infrastructure Improvements to 700 Rd. in Electoral Areas B and E of the RDBN**

RECOMMENDATION: **(all/directors/majority)**

That the Committee recommend that the Board approve sending the attached letter to the Honourable Mike Farnworth, Minister of Transportation and Transit.

BACKGROUND

Burns Lake Community Forest has provided details regarding a legacy culvert on the 700 Road south of Burns Lake that threatens the ongoing use of the road. This culvert is at risk of failing, resulting in potential impacts to the 700 Road, the surrounding ecosystem, and potentially other nearby public roadways. While this culvert is a potential liability for road use, other significant improvements to the 700 Road were made during construction of the Coastal Gas Link pipeline that have made the road a valuable corridor for industry and residents.

Burns Lake Community Forest holds the permit for the 700 Road and, due to the cost of replacing the legacy culvert with a bridge over the fish-bearing stream, is seeking opportunities to cost-share the project. The project is estimated to cost \$600,000.

As the RDBN does not have access to grant funding for infrastructure like the 700 Road, staff recommend providing the attached letter as advocacy to the Ministry of Transportation and Transit to support the costs of the infrastructure replacement.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft letter to Minister Farnworth



January 9, 2025

Honourable Mike Farnworth
Minister of Transportation and Transit
PO Box 9055 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2
Via email: TT.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Farnworth:

Request to support legacy infrastructure replacement

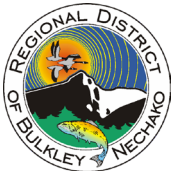
The Burns Lake Community Forest (BLCF) holds road permit R15567-15 (700 Rd) in Electoral Areas B and E of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) for industrial use. The road has become a well-used public access route for recreational as well as industrial and commercial use. When the Coastal Gaslink (CGL) pipeline was being constructed, funding was provided by CGL for safety and infrastructure upgrades until the completion of the pipeline. The only outstanding item for improvement is a legacy culvert/beaver structure that currently threatens to damage the road, as well as the existing fish-bearing stream. The cost to replace the failing infrastructure with a less environmentally invasive bridge is estimated to be \$600,000. BLCF is seeking to cost share this replacement to prevent a reactive response to a potential infrastructure failure.

The replacement is required to prevent erosion/flooding of the road making it unsafe for use. An infrastructure failure would have the potential to cause environmental damage to the local ecosystem, impact recreational access for residents, remove critical access for wildfire response in the area, and eliminate one of the potential evacuation routes for residents of the two Electoral Areas. If BLCF is not able to fund the replacement, they may have to deactivate the road or restrict use to industrial traffic only.

The RDBN encourages the Province to support the cost of replacing the legacy culvert with a bridge, which will protect the environment, local economy, and lower the risk to public safety from wildfires in the area.

Sincerely,

Mark Parker
Chair



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Rural Services Committee

To: Chair and Committee
From: Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services
Date: January 9, 2025
Subject: **Grant in Aid Policy Update**

RECOMMENDATION: **(all/directors/majority)**

That the Committee recommend that the Board approve the changes to the Grant in Aid policy to reflect changes in the program administration.

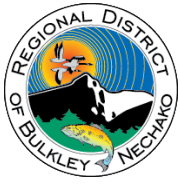
BACKGROUND

In the 2025 Annual Budget, grant funding to Societies will be managed through one grant program, Regional Grant in Aid. Due to the opportunity to support larger projects through this mechanism, staff are proposing changes to reflect the new considerations for this grant program.

The changes, which are highlighted in the attached policy document, include language informing applicants that there may be a need to adjudicate applications through a competitive process to ensure funds are available to support a wide range of projects throughout the year. It also includes language to explain the process for awarding funds when the application is for funding to leverage additional grant programs.

ATTACHMENTS

DRAFT Grant in Aid Policy.



**Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
Grant in Aid Policy and Application**

APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED ON THE FORM PROVIDED

SUBMIT APPLICATIONS TO:

**Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
37-3rd Avenue
Burns Lake, B.C. V0J 1E0**

or via email to: info@rdbn.bc.ca

NOTE TO APPLICANTS:

- Industrial, commercial, individuals, and business undertakings ARE NOT eligible for assistance under this program;
- Please use the attached RDBN Board policies and Application Completion instructions as a guideline and be advised that the Regional Board of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako reserves the right to amend the said policies from time to time as it deems appropriate;
- Please make sure that your application is clearly legible and will photocopy with good results.
- Personal information requested on this form is collected under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act section 26(c) and will be used for the purpose of processing your application. Any information submitted with the application or provided to the RDBN for consideration and in support of the application may be made available for review by any member of the public. If you have any questions about the collection and use of this information, please contact the RDBN Information and Privacy Coordinator at 1-800-320-3339.
- If you have any questions or require assistance, please contact the Economic Development Department of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako at the above address, or:
Phone: (250) 692-3195 or toll free at 1-800-320-3339
Fax: (250) 692-3305 email: economic.development@rdbn.bc.ca

**REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO
ELECTORAL AREA GRANT IN AID ASSISTANCE POLICY**

PURPOSE

To provide grants to community groups, non-profit registered societies, organizations, and Recreation Commissions, for cultural, charitable, sporting, recreational, service activities and special events for the purpose of benefiting the community.

APPLICATION

This policy shall apply to all electoral area Grant in Aid requests being considered for funding from the individual Grant in Aid budgets.

AUTHORITY

Local Government Act Sec. 263(1)(c): The Regional District may provide assistance for the purpose of benefiting the community or any aspect of the community.

Local Government Act Sec. 380(2)(g): A grant may be charged to the electoral area benefiting from the assistance.

PROCEDURE

1. Applications will be referred to the applicable Electoral Area Director to conduct a preliminary review. The RDBN has both statutory and budgetary limitations on Grant in Aid and wishes to ensure that these funds are disbursed as fairly and equitably as possible. The Board delegates the authority to approve grant in aid applications of \$2,500 or less to the Chief Administrative Officer or designate in consultation with the Electoral Area Director. Applications in excess of \$2,500 will be referred to the Board.
 - a) Applications must be submitted on the form provided by the Regional District, with all supporting documentation attached. Applicants must clearly indicate the amount of assistance requested; provide evidence of how the applicant benefits the community generally and how the assistance being requested from the Regional District would benefit the community specifically; and, provide financial information sufficient to identify all other funding sources and to justify the need for financial assistance.
 - b) Applications that are not submitted on the required form will be returned to the applicant.
2. The following factors shall be used in evaluation and prioritizing the Applications for Assistance under Section 263(1)(c) of the Local Government Act.
 - a) Purpose for which the funding is required.
 - b) What funding opportunities have been considered, (ie. fundraising, grants from senior levels of government, etc.).

- c) Benefits to the community as a whole.
 - d) Amount of grant requested.
 - e) Whether or not the applicant has previously received assistance from the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako.
 - f) Whether or not previous grant reporting has been received (if applicable).
 - g) Whether or not there is an opportunity for individuals to make direct contributions.
 - h) The amount of available funding so as to ensure support for a wide range of projects in the area. Applications may be competitively adjudicated to ensure funds can support as many groups as possible.
3. If a grant in aid is approved the following will apply:
- a) A cheque or Electronic Funds Transfer will be issued to the requesting organization. A letter documenting the grant approval will be sent under the signature of the Electoral Area Director. If the application is for partial funding of a large project, approved funds will be issued upon satisfactory confirmation that the remainder of the funding is in place.
 - b) Recipients must acknowledge the RD as a supporter of the project, program, service or special event in publications or marketing. Projects, programs, services or special events may not be represented as an RD event, nor may the society / organization hold itself out as an agent of the RD in anyway.
Approval to use the RDBN logo can be requested for the purpose of recognition.
 - c) If the grant exceeds \$1,000, a report must be submitted to the Regional District inclusive of satisfactory evidence that the goods or services have been obtained (ie. a report from the organization inclusive of receipts and/or a report of the expenditures).
Failure to submit a report will impact consideration of future applications.
4. The Chief Administrative Officer and/or Electoral Area Director may at the time of grant approval:
- a) Impose additional requirements to be met by an organization prior to receipt of grant funds;
 - b) Reduce or modify the requirements to be met for an organization prior to receipt of grant funds.
5. Applications for Assistance under Section 263(1)(c) of the *Local Government Act* will NOT be approved for:
- a) Purposes identified as potentially exposing the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako to risk of unacceptable liability;
 - b) Purposes disallowed by the *Local Government Act*:
Section 273 – As a limitation on section 263(1)(c), a Board must not provide assistance to an industrial, commercial or business undertaking;
 - c) Annual operational expenses of an organization (e.g. insurance, utilities);
 - d) Remuneration (e.g. wages, salaries, other fees);
 - e) No grants shall be approved for individuals or for privately-owned businesses.

ELECTORAL AREA REQUEST FOR GRANT IN AID APPLICATION FORM

Organization Legal Name: _____

Organization Mailing Address:

Contact Person 1:

Contact Name: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

Contact Email Address: _____

Contact Person 2:

Contact Name: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

Contact Email Address: _____

Application Summary

Project or purpose for which you require assistance:

Amount of Grant Requested \$ _____

To the best of my knowledge, all of the information that is provided in this application is true and correct. Furthermore, I hereby certify that this application for assistance is NOT being made on behalf of an individual, industry, commercial or business undertaking.

(signature of authorized signatory)

(Title)

Applicant Profile

1. Please describe the services/benefits that your organization provides to the community. Are these services/benefits available to the community from another organization or agency?

2. Which RDBN electoral area(s) receive services or benefits from your organization?

Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural)

Electoral Area B (Burns Lake Rural)

Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural)

Electoral Area D (Fraser Lake Rural)

Electoral Area E (Francois/Ootsa Lake Rural)

Electoral Area F (Vanderhoof Rural)

Electoral Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural)

3. Is your organization voluntary and non-profit? _____YES _____NO

Please detail any remuneration paid, or funds otherwise made available to members, officers, etc. of your organization.

Please comment on the number of members/volunteers in your organization and how long your organization has been in operation.

Project/Proposal Profile

1. Assistance is being requested for:
 - Capital project and/or equipment
 - Special event
 - Other purpose (explain below)Other purpose:

2. Please describe the project/event for which you are requesting assistance. If you are applying for an exemption from fees and/or charges or other consideration, please provide details or your request here. Attach additional information if required.

3. Describe how this proposal will benefit the community.

Funding and Financial Information

1. Attach supporting financial information, ie., budget/financial report. Ensure the following information is clearly itemized:
 - Total cost of project/proposal;
 - Grants/funding from other sources;
 - Funding contributed by applicant through fund raising activities or other sources of revenue;
 - Total expenses for the fiscal year, including any monies and/or benefits paid to members or officers.

2. Have you applied for a grant/funding from other source(s)? _____YES _____NO

If yes, complete the following chart. If not, please comment.

Name of Grant or Funding Agency	\$ Amount Applied for	Status of Grant Application		
		Approved	Denied	Pending

3. Have you received assistance (grant in aid/waiving of fees, etc.), from the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako in previous years?

___YES ___NO

If yes, complete the following chart.

Year:	\$ Amount	Purpose for which assistance was used

4. Does your organization:

a) Offer direct financial assistance to individuals or families? ___YES ___NO

b) Duplicate services that fall within the mandate of either ___YES ___NO
a senior government or a local service agency?

c) Provide an opportunity for individuals to make direct ___YES ___NO
contributions?

d) Is your organization part of a provincial or ___YES ___NO
national fundraising campaign?

Don't forget to attach the required financial report.



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Rural Services Committee

To: Chair and Committee
From: Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services
Date: January 9, 2025
Subject: **Grant in Aid Under \$2,500 Approval Update**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

Receive.

BACKGROUND

The following Grant in Aid requests of \$2,500 or less were approved by Electoral Area Directors via email between July and December 31, 2024.

Community Group	Project	Amount
Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural)		
Smithers Salvation Army	Food Bank Donation	\$850
Smithers Exploration Group	Rock Talk 2025	\$500
Smithers and District Chamber of Commerce	Holiday Soiree	\$1,000
Smithers and District Chamber of Commerce	Trade Expo 2024	\$2,500
Bulkley Valley Arts Council	Arts on Stage event	\$2,000
Bulkley Valley Tool Library	Food Preservation and Leather Tools	\$2,500
Bulkley Valley Otters Swim Club	Timing System	\$2,109
Smithers Men's Shed	Work space improvements	\$2,500
Area B (Burns Lake Rural)		
The Link Food Center	Food Bank Donation	\$850

Area C (Fort St. James Rural)		
Fort St. James Food and Toy Drive	2024 Event	\$2,500
Fort St. James Secondary School	Senior Boys Soccer to Provincials	\$1,000
Music on the Mountain Society	2025 MOM event	\$1,500
Area D (Fraser Lake Rural)		
Autumn Services	Food Bank Donation	\$850
Village of Fraser Lake	Community Wellness Fair	\$1,000
Area E (Francois/Ootsa Rural)		
The Link Food Center	Food Bank Donation	\$850
Area F (Vanderhoof Rural)		
NeighbourLink	Food Bank Donation	\$850
Nechako Valley Secondary	Hundiyin Program travel to Gathering Our Voices event	\$2,500
Nechako Valley Rodeo Society	2025 Rodeo	\$2,500
Nechako Valley Swim Club	2025 Swim Meet	\$2,000
District of Vanderhoof	Community Wellness Fair	\$1,500
Area G (Houston/Granisle Rural)		



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Rural Services Committee

To: Chair and Committee
From: Nellie Davis, Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Rural Services
Date: January 9, 2025
Subject: **Reply to interventions to Part 1 Application to disclose certain Broadband and Mobile Annual Facilities Survey data (CRTC File 8000-P114-202404929)**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

Receive.

BACKGROUND

At the November 7, 2024, Connectivity Committee meeting the Committee received the RDBN's response to Canadian Radiotelevision and Telecommunications Commission -8000-P114202404929-Application to Disclose Certain Annual Facilities Survey Data.

The application is now closed, and 44 interventions were received. The applicant, the Ministry of Citizen's Services, provided the attached reply to interventions to this application. Quotes from the RDBN and District of Fort St. James' responses are found in section 14 of the reply.

ATTACHMENTS

Reply to interventions to Part 1 Application to disclose certain Broadband and Mobile Annual Facilities Survey data (CRTC File 8000-P114-202404929)



December 20, 2024

Ref: 122486

Marc Morin
 Secretary General
 Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission
 Ottawa, Ontario
 K1A 0N2

Dear Marc Morin:

RE: Reply to interventions to Part 1 Application to disclose certain Broadband and Mobile Annual Facilities Survey data (CRTC File: 8000-P114-202404929)

1. The Ministry of Citizens' Services (the "Ministry") on behalf of His Majesty the King in right of the Province of British Columbia, is pleased to reply to the 44 posted interventions submitted in response to the Ministry's Part 1 Application - *Application to disclose certain facilities data* (the "Application").
2. While one intervention submitted no comments¹, of the remaining 43 interventions, **35** support the Ministry's Application, while another **two** telecommunications service providers - TELUS and Quebecor - could be supportive of parts of the Application provided that certain non-disclosure requirements and restrictions are in place.
3. The 35 interveners in support crossed sectors, representing several provincial governments (Governments of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Alberta, and Build Nova Scotia), local governments², law enforcement and emergency management³, Coastal First Nations, associations and interest groups⁴, and a telecommunications services provider⁵. A preponderance of the interventions support the requests in the Application, clearly demonstrating need and public interest in disclosure.

.../2

¹ TekSavvy.

² Regional District of Bulkley Nechako, City of Calgary, Electoral Area B, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, District of Houston, Area H of Regional District of Central Kootenay, Cariboo Regional District, Electoral Area F, Electoral Area Director for Regional District of East Kootenay and co-chair of south east BC regional Connectivity Committee, Village of Valemount, District of Fort St. James, Rural Municipalities of Alberta, Union of BC Municipalities.

³ Halton Regional Police Service and Peel Regional Police; E-Comm911 (Vancouver)

⁴ CanWISP, Alberta Rural Connectivity Coalition, North Central Local Government Association, Northern Development Initiative Trust, ICI Society, Public Interest Advocacy Centre, CIRA, Cybera, i-Valley, First Mile Consortium, Blue Sky Economic Growth Corp (Blue Sky Net).

⁵ Coopérative de solidarité de télécommunications d'Antoine-Labelle.

4. Of the six interventions that oppose the Application more or less in its entirety (from Bell Canada on behalf of itself and its affiliates (“Bell”), Rogers Communications, Eastlink, Xplore, the Canadian Cable Systems Alliance/Independent Telecommunications Providers Association, and Sasktel), the Ministry notes that many of their concerns are based on misconceptions of the requests in our Application, while others could be addressed with appropriate non-disclosure obligations, as discussed further below. Failure to address any allegation or point raised in any intervention opposed to any part of the Application should not be construed as acceptance or agreement with such allegation or point.

I. OVERWHELMING SUPPORT OF NEED FROM OTHER PROVINCIAL & LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

5. Generally, the interventions opposing the Application infer that the current level of information available to provincial entities is sufficient. It is clear from the interventions in support of the Application - particularly from the Governments of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Alberta, and Build Nova Scotia (the Crown corporation responsible for cellular and internet infrastructure in Nova Scotia) – that this is not the case. Better data information sharing will further both the administration of connectivity funding programs and establish a common evidence-based foundation for joint provincial-federal strategic planning.
6. “Making do” with information available does not demonstrate in itself that there is not a need for deeper information sharing, or that there are not serious inefficiencies associated with the status quo – e.g. allocation of taxpayer dollars to funded connectivity projects, identification of underserved areas, or barriers to effective collaboration with our federal counterparts. As noted, by Ontario,

Improved data sharing with provinces and territories is critical to achieving our connectivity mandates – from connecting last homes, to expanding cellular services, and responding to emergencies. Provinces often collaborate closely with the federal government on funding programs and funded projects, and lack of ability to share data is a serious hinderance to our ability to maximize connectivity benefits to Canadian citizens.⁶

7. Significantly, the submissions of eComm911 (Vancouver), the Halton Regional Police Service & Peel Regional Police, as well as some municipalities highlight the fact that emergency management and public safety accountabilities will be made easier and more responsive. Sharing of the data requested in the Ministry’s application is key to the ability to make informed decisions critical to response and recovery.

II. THE APPLICATION’S FIRST REQUEST (RE 250 METER ROAD SEGMENT LEVEL DETAIL)

8. The few interventions opposing the Application’s first request appear to either misunderstand the request, submit that the detail currently disclosed on the ISED’s National Broadband

.../3

⁶ Ontario, para. 1.

Internet Service Availability Map is sufficient, or submit it should only be disclosed subject to a non-disclosure agreement.

9. The ISED Map currently allows users to query by address, presenting them with a 25km hexagon of available services, showing telecommunications service providers, and technologies (specifically, mobile, coaxial cable, high-capacity transport (where available), fixed wireless, DSL and satellite). It also shows available speeds by 250m road segment. The Ministry is requesting that the same data at the 250m road segment level be allowed to be made public in a way that can be searched by address in the same way as the current 25km hexagon data is now on the ISED map. Allowing such data to at least cease being deemed designated as confidential and to be made public when searchable in a similar way would allow the ISED Map to display providers and technologies more accurately, while using the same search criteria.
10. To be clear, the Application does not request that telecommunications service providers be required to make any additional information available, whether to the Commission or on their own websites. Contrary to submissions that the request will “create additional data collection obligations”⁷ or is asking for data not provided in the completed Annual Facilities Survey Forms⁸, the Application is not requesting the Commission to collect additional data from the service providers. As explained at paragraph 2 of the Application, the Application is requesting only that Annual Facilities Survey data as may be supplemented and analyzed, or otherwise normalized by the CRTC to fulfill its own mandate, including to fulfil any reporting obligations or routing information sharing with ISED.
11. Nor does the Application broadly request “making the Commission’s Annual Facilities Survey data publicly available, as Bell’s intervention appears to be interpreting the request⁹. There is currently no ability to download Annual Facilities Survey data from the map, and the Ministry is absolutely not suggesting that this be possible.

Demonstration of Public Interest

12. As indicated above at paragraphs 5 and 6, it is clear from the interventions of other governments that there is significant public interest and need for the more granular level data to be made available.
13. A considerable number of interventions supported the first request in the Application, which would enable public searches by address of available providers, speeds and technologies for both broadband internet and mobile wireless at the 250-metre road segment level, for example on the ISED Map. Interventions revealed that:

.../4

⁷ Rogers, para. 3.

⁸ Sasktel, para. 10.

⁹ Bell, para. 19. Also see para. .

- (1) citizens, particularly those in small communities, are having difficulty discerning which services are actually available to them;¹⁰
 - (2) Internet service providers planning private investments have difficulty identifying underserved areas would benefit from investment;¹¹
 - (3) multiple interested parties have difficulty in assessing which areas are underserved, and hindering participation in provincial and federal funding programs to achieve service in these areas.¹²
14. Despite arguments to the contrary, the Ministry submits that the concrete examples provided by stakeholders from local and provincial governments, law enforcement, and civil society clearly demonstrate that the current granularity of the ISED Map is not sufficient, and that the Commission should allow this data to be exposed at the 250m road segment level. Supporting examples include:
- (1) From Mayor Martin Elphee, District of Fort St. James: *"Access to accurate and detailed connectivity data is crucial for rural communities like ours to address service gaps and expand high-speed internet and mobile services...the current hex-based mapping often misrepresents available services and creates challenges for small communities served by mixed technologies..."*¹³
 - (2) From the Electoral Area Director for Regional District of East Kootenay and co-chair of Southeastern BC Regional Connectivity Committee: *"The current hex is too large and shows service options not available in a location, a circumstance worsened for small footprint communities served by a mix of technologies. Hex's can overlap multiple communities, making it impossible to discern service levels and providers in individual communities."*¹⁴
 - (3) From the BC Regional District of Bulkley Nechako: *"Our inability to access granular-level connectivity data has forced us to spend considerable time, effort, and money gathering information that the CRTC already possesses and ISPs/MWSPs routinely release to potential customers. Armed with only general (and, in some cases, anecdotal) information about existing services and infrastructure, we have been unable to identify all unserved/underserved households or develop effective plans to connect them."*¹⁵

.../5

¹⁰ For example, in #1, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, Electoral Area B's response.

¹¹ For example, in Blue Sky Net's response: *"One of the great difficulties we have as we develop plans and conduct an analysis to prepare a business case for potential Broadband projects is to understand conclusively where service coverage currently exists..."*, paragraph 4.

¹² For example, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, Electoral Area B; Cariboo Regional District; Area H of Regional District of Central Kootenay; District of Fort St. James, Houston, Southeast BC Regional Connectivity Committee

¹³ District of Fort St James, paragraph 1.

¹⁴ Intervention #20, Owen Torgerson, paragraph 4.

¹⁵ Regional District of Bulkley Nechako, paragraph 5.

- (4) From the Alberta Rural Connectivity Coalition: *“BC’s Request addresses long standing concerns with mapping...For example, the importance of publicly available mapping data was highlighted by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada in 2018.”*^[Footnote omitted] *Concerns over the timeliness and quality of mapping data was also underscored in the Auditor General’s second report into rural broadband in 2023.”*^[Footnote omitted]¹⁶
15. While some opposing interventions attempted to distinguish between individual telecommunications service provider websites making information publicly available to search for availability of service by address, there is precedent for public broadband availability maps to show internet service availability at a much more granular level (specifically, by household) as is found in the US Federal Communications Commission’s Broadband Map referred to in PIAC’s intervention.¹⁷ We also note that Broadcasting and Telecom Information Bulletin CRTC 2010-961 states:
18. Note that information that has been made public in other contexts, including information that is disclosed due to securities regulation or put on the public record by the Federal Communications Commission, will generally not be accepted as information designated as confidential.
16. Furthermore, the Commission recently observed in *Making it easier for consumers to shop for Internet services*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2024-318, 4 December 2024, that: “ISPs typically publish on their website information such as maximum download and upload speeds, price, and the Wi-Fi technology of the router being provided.”¹⁸
17. Despite the service provider interventions opposing more granular data on the ISED Map, alleging increased risk of cable theft, vandalism and terrorist attacks, none of the interventions clearly demonstrated that any such actual acts were attributable to any searches by address, whether of the ISED map or more granular information disclosed on other maps or websites of service providers. To reduce any such risk, the Ministry supports measures to protect the underlying data set that feeds the ISED Map and, as explained in paragraph 11, is absolutely not suggesting that the data set itself be made public. The Ministry supports safeguards to ensure users cannot search for bulk addresses.
18. In the event the Commission denies the first request in the Application, then the Ministry respectfully requests that the information be made selectively available, subject to non-disclosure obligations similar to the second and third requests, for the governmental purposes in supporting activities such as Next Generation 911, emergency alerting, evacuation and other emergency management functions as well as existing and future connectivity funding programs.

.../6

¹⁶ Alberta Rural Connectivity Coalition, para 4..

¹⁷ <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home> referenced in PIAC’s Intervention, at para. 7.

¹⁸ Para. 20.

III. THE APPLICATION'S SECOND REQUEST (TO SHARE FACILITIES DATA SETS IN CONFIDENCE)

19. Regarding the assertion that the Ministry's request for facility data to be shared in confidence with the Province is unnecessarily broad, because "the BC Ministry has requested information for the entire country"¹⁹: The Ministry made no such express request in the Application and only has an interest in receiving such data as normalized by the CRTC for the province of British Columbia. The Ministry does note, however, that other governmental interveners appear to have a similar interest in receiving data applicable within their respective jurisdictions, and the submissions of TELUS that "any disclosure should be symmetrical across the country".²⁰
20. Provinces and territories are key strategic partners of the federal government in both joint and independent funding programs. The need for a coordinated strategic approach is made clear by the supporting interventions from Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Alberta, and Build Nova Scotia, as well as supportive interventions from local governments, law enforcement and other organizations and members of civil society.
21. The information in the second request of the Application is critical for a variety of very tangible purposes – to improve allocation of tax-payer dollars to fund connectivity projects in underserved areas, to identify remaining connectivity gaps and underserved areas in the Province and to working collaboratively with the federal government on forward-looking policies and programs, such as increasing resiliency and redundancy across Canada, improving emergency management, and facilitating local adoption of Next Generation 911. For example, as noted by the Halton Regional Police: "...A detailed understanding of coverage gaps will be vital to ensuring the safety of first responders and will enable first responders to coordinate operations."²¹
22. Interventions of the telecommunications service providers tended to support or acknowledge that applicable Annual Facilities Survey data²² could be shared subject to a non-disclosure agreement. For example, TELUS submitted it would be reasonable to share certain facilities data to provinces and territories, subject to a non-disclosure agreement.²³ Xplore submitted:
- Xplore agrees that, should the BC Ministry require a subset of the requested information for the legitimate purpose of managing their contribution programs, efficiencies can be struck by enabling confidential disclosure of this information to the BC Ministry directly, instead of it requesting the information anew."²⁴

.../7

¹⁹ Xplore, para. 5.

²⁰ TELUS, para. 8.

²¹ Halton Regional Police, paragraph 8.

²² Requested in the initial Application as forms 256 (broadband), 267 (transport) and 278 (mobile), with possible addition of forms number 2781, 2782, and 2783 as further requested by the Province of Quebec in their response.

²³ TELUS, para. 16-20.

²⁴ Xplore, para. 18

Quebecor in relation to both the second and third requests submitted:

Ce faisant, nous ne sommes pas opposés aux deux autres demandes du Ministère, soit de permettre à l'équipe de cartographie d'ISED de fournir au Ministère, sous confiance, les ensembles complets de données sur les installations spécifiées dans les formulaires de collecte 256 (large bande), 267 (transport) et 278 (mobile), en plus des adresses de couverture géospatiale et les coordonnées géospatiales des installations de transport.²⁵

23. Rogers submitted that the Application should be denied and that the Ministry should continue to work directly with ISED to facilitate information sharing.²⁶ However, ISED appears to lack the authority under s. 39(3)(c) of the *Telecommunications Act* to share the designated confidential Annual Facilities Survey data information it receives from the CRTC with provincial/territorial government bodies, such as the Ministry, unless the Commission allows or requires its disclosure. Disclosure is addressed further below under section V.
24. The Ministry protects data provided in confidence in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (British Columbia). Although the Ministry is prepared to agree to appropriate contractual non-disclosure obligations with respect to both this and the Application's third request as submitted in the Application, the Ministry notes that due to the Ministry's obligations under that Act and the *Information Management Act* (British Columbia), as well as due to the *Crown Proceeding Act* (British Columbia), not all of the suggested list of terms for a non-disclosure agreement with the Province set out in paragraph 28 of the TELUS intervention would be compliant with applicable laws.
25. As noted in the Application, the Ministry would prefer to avoid the inefficient and unnecessarily burdensome effort of requesting data treated as confidential from individual Canadian carriers and telecommunications service providers.

IV. THE APPLICATION'S THIRD REQUEST (TO SHARE TRANSPORT DATA IN CONFIDENCE)

26. With respect to the Application's third request, TELUS noted that it was not clear to which information "transport data designated as confidential ... as provided and updated from time to time to ISED by the CRTC – including by geospatial coverage addresses and geospatial coordinates where available ..." referred and submitted that the Ministry seemed to be requesting data beyond what TELUS provides to the Commission in Form 267 (transport).²⁷ TELUS also submitted that:

In its Form 267 (transport) submission, TELUS provides ... name of transport end point, latitude and longitude, indication of whether dedicated and non-dedicated capacity is offered at that location, total capacity, remaining capacity, technology,

.../8

²⁵ Quebecor, paragraph 14.

²⁶ Rogers, para. 14.

²⁷ TELUS, para. 21.

indication of whether this location is available to others, and presence of active equipment. ... It would be reasonable for this information to be disclosed by the Commission to the provinces and territories, subject to NDA.²⁸

27. The Ministry wishes to clarify that the transport data in the third request is intended to be limited to the following data currently collected by the CRTC and provided to ISED: name of transport end point, latitude and longitude, indication of whether dedicated and non-dedicated capacity is offered at that location, total capacity, remaining capacity, technology, indication of whether this location is available to others, and presence of active equipment.
28. The Ministry notes the concerns of interveners with respect to fibre routes outside of what is currently submitted as part of Form 267²⁹ and confirms that the third request in the Application does not include sensitive fibre route transport data, whether currently collected or not on the Annual Survey Forms.
29. The Ministry also notes that TELUS was not the only telecommunications service provider submitting it would be reasonable for such information to be disclosed to provincial/territorial governments, such as the Province's Ministry, subject to obligations of confidentiality. Quebecor made a similar submission.³⁰ The Ministry also notes that Coopérative de solidarité de télécommunications d'Antoine-Labelle appeared to be in support of the Application.

V. AUTHORITY TO SELECTIVELY DISCLOSE

30. SaskTel submitted that "section 39 does not (and should not) allow for sharing information designated as confidential with only certain select parties" except to the Commissioner of Competition under s. 39(5).³¹ However, as pointed out in the intervention of Halton Regional Police Service & Peel Regional Police in considerable detail at paragraphs 12 through 16, there is indeed considerable precedent for selected disclosure pursuant to a non-disclosure agreement. Furthermore, as explained in the intervention of the Halton Regional Police Service & Peel Regional Police:

Based on the Commission's analysis in CRTC 2024-141 with respect to subsection 39(4) of the *Telecommunications Act*, the Commission must also have the power under subsection 39(5) of the *Telecommunications Act* to order the selective disclosure of information filed in confidence otherwise than in the course of a proceeding to legitimate parties who sign an NDA.³²

.../9

²⁸ TELUS, para 19.

²⁹ TELUS, s. 3.1; Rogers, para. 15

³⁰ Rogers, paragraph 19, Quebecor, para. 14.

³¹ SaskTel, paragraph 13

³² Para. 23.

31. A few interventions submitted that s. 39(5) of the *Telecommunications Act* does not permit the Commission to disclose the requested data except during a specific, ongoing proceeding still open for public comment.³³ Section 39(5) allows the Commission to disclose or require the disclosure of information submitted “other than in the course of a proceeding”, after considering representations from interested persons if it “considers that the information is relevant to the determination of a matter before it and determines that the disclosure is in the public interest”. Although it may typically be the case, the section does not state that disclosure can only be made during a proceeding that is still open for public comment. That would prevent the Commission from disclosing information that might be relevant to a determination as to whether to allow a further opportunity to consider submissions as to a follow up matter referenced in a decision at the conclusion of a proceeding, or as to considering a request for a review and vary application, for example. It would also not make sense that s. 39(5) would prevent the Commission from making a determination as to whether any particular information was or continued to be properly designated in accordance with s. 39(1).
32. Each case is unique. In the case here, the Ministry is not a typical interested party in a single proceeding, but administers a funding program jointly with the ISED in the interests of meeting the universal service objective set by the CRTC, with a Ministry current need to conduct in-depth data analysis to accurately identify underserved homes, analyze available coverage, and make informed funding decisions to expand infrastructure across British Columbia, while avoiding overbuilds. Presumably, the CRTC will continue to make periodic determinations with respect to matters pertaining to the Broadband Fund that the CRTC oversees and meeting the universal service objective by 2030. Thus, it is arguable that the selective disclosure of the information may be relevant to the determination of matters that remain before the Commission until then.
33. As for the submission of CCSA/ITPA that the Application is incomplete “without a similar submission under section 29.3(5) of the *Broadcasting Act* with supporting evidence to show that broadcasters have voluntarily pierced their confidentiality”,³⁴ we can find no such section in the *Broadcasting Act*.³⁵ Possibly, the reference is to s. 25.3(5). Even so, it is not clear why the *Broadcasting Act* would apply to the particular requested telecommunications industry data collected from internet and wireless telecommunications service providers under the *Telecommunications Act*. As noted in paragraph 6 of the Application, it was in Telecom Circular CRTC 2005-4, where the Commission indicated that beginning with the 2005 data collection, most data forms in the Commission’s Data Collection System would be marked “Filed in Confidence”.

.../10

³³ TELUS, para. 39; Xplore, para. 14 and 15; CCTA/ITPA, para. 21-23; Bell, para. 16;

³⁴ CCSA/ITPA, paragraphs 24 and 25.

³⁵ <https://www.laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/B-9.01/page-6.html#h-34439>, as accessed on December 17, 2024, which indicated the Act was current to 2024-11-26 and last amended on 2023-06-22.

Marc Morin

Page 10

VI. CONCLUSION

34. The Ministry was pleased to see such a favourable response to the Application, particularly from other provinces, local governments, emergency response, and other organizations who are able to speak directly to the public interest that would be furthered by these requests.
35. For all of the reasons submitted above and in its Application, the Ministry respectfully requests that the Commission grant all three requests in the Province's Application.
36. Finally, we thank the Commission for their attention to the Application and look forward to continued collaboration with the federal government to improve access to adequate telecommunications services across the province.

Sincerely,



Susan Stanford

Assistant Deputy Minister, Connectivity Division
BC Ministry of Citizens' Services

pc:

Ray Edwards, Assistant Associate Deputy Minister, ISED, ray.edwards@ised-isde.gc.ca

Tom Blackwood, tblackw5@gmail.com

E-Comm911, tony.gilligan@ecomm911.ca

Blue Sky Economic Growth Corp. (Blue Sky Net), susan.church@blueskyregion.ca

Ben Arril, ben.arril@gov.bc.ca

Government of New Brunswick, claudette.innes@gnb.ca

Government of Quebec, Pierre.Desmarteau@mce.gouv.qc.ca

Government of Prince Edward Island, lmacmillan@gov.pe.ca

Cariboo Regional District, mlebourdais@cariboord.ca

Electoral Area B, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, michael.riischristianson@rdbn.bc.ca

Coopérative de solidarité de télécommunications d'Antoine-Labelle, vpanneton@ctal.ca

Build Nova Scotia, jonathan.veale@novascotia.ca

Regional District of East Kootenays, rob11gay@gmail.com

Electoral Area F, Regional District of East Kootenay, director.clovechok@rdek.bc.ca
Government of Ontario, Ministry of Infrastructure, adela.wan@ontario.ca

District of Houston, anewell@houston.ca

i-Valley, roel.coert@i-valley.ca

Village of Valemount, Southeast BC Regional Connectivity Committee,
otorgerson@valemount.ca

Area H, Regional District of Central Kootenay, wpopoff@rdck.bc.ca

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, nellie.davis@rdbn.bc.ca

Northern Development Initiative Trust, ben@northerndevelopment.bc.ca

District of Fort St. James, alexander.bihori@fortstjames.ca

Union of British Columbia Municipalities, rtagami@ubcm.ca

Rural Municipalities of Alberta, warren@rmalberta.com

Coastal First Nations, Great Bear Initiative Society, jhelbig@coastalfirstnations.ca

Canadian Association of Wireless Service Providers (CanWISP), neil@canwisp.ca

North Central Local Government Association, bjohnson@nclga.ca

Alberta Rural Connectivity Coalition, mmcnally@ualberta.ca

CIRA, byron.holland@cira.ca

Halton Regional Police Service, regulatory@tacitlaw.com

Bell Canada, bell.regulatory@bell.ca

Cybera, imran.mohiuddin@cybera.ca

Government of Alberta, Technology and Innovation, richard.bates@gov.ab.ca

ICI Society, smark@icisociety.ca

First Mile Connectivity Consortium, info@firstmile.ca

Bragg Communications Inc. (cob Eastlink), regulatory.matters@corp.eastlink.ca

Public Interest Advocacy Centre, gwhite@piac.ca

TekSavvy Solutions Inc., regulatory@teksavvy.ca

Independent Telecommunications Providers Association and Canadian Communications Systems Alliance, jonathan.holmes@itpa.ca

Saskatchewan Telecommunications (SaskTel), document.control@sasktel.com

Rogers Communications Inc., regulatory@rci.rogers.com

- END OF DOCUMENT-