



25 March 2020

The Honourable Bill Blair
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
269 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0P8

Dear Minister Blair,

The signatories to this letter lead Canadian organizations which represent independent communications service providers across this country, most of which are small businesses and many of which serve Canada's rural communities.

The provinces of Ontario and Quebec have just designated our members' operations as "essential" in responding to the current COVID-19 pandemic. We understand that your office is also putting together a list of "essential services".

Our organizations and our collective members ask that your list similarly include communication services, including those provided by independent operators, and the infrastructure that supports those services.

In making this request, we also note that, in the United States, the Department of Homeland Security's Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce includes the "Maintenance of communications infrastructure - including privately owned and maintained communication systems - supported by technicians, operators, call-centers, wireline and wireless providers, cable service providers, satellite operations, undersea cable landing stations, Internet Exchange Points, and manufacturers and distributors of communications equipment."

We wish to assure you that our members take the "essential" designation very seriously and are committed to providing high quality, robust Internet, telephone and TV programming services to Canadians during these current challenging times.

Over the years, our organizations and our members have worked constructively with all levels of government to ensure Canadians, wherever they live, can actively participate in our digital society and economy. We recognize that, now more than ever, we all need to work together to keep Canadians connected to critical communications services so that they may access necessary, accurate and up to date information and stay in touch with family, friends and colleagues.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact any of the undersigned.

Sincerely,



Chris Allen
President
British Columbia
Broadband Association



Jonathan Black
Executive Director
Canadian Association of
Wireless Internet Service
Providers



Jay Thomson
Chief Executive Officer
Canadian Communication
Systems Alliance



Jeff Brownlee
Executive Director
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Jonathan Holmes
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