



Telecom Decision CRTC 2020-135

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Ottawa, 24 April 2020

Public record: 1011-NOC2016-0206

Revision to the relief implementation schedule for area code 506 in New Brunswick

Background

1. In *Relief for area code 506 in New Brunswick*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2018-332, 30 August 2018, the Commission determined that relief for area code 506 in New Brunswick was to be provided by implementing a distributed overlay of area code 428, effective 21 November 2020 (the relief date).
2. In that decision, the Commission also approved the consensus report of the New Brunswick relief planning committee (RPC). The report included a planning document and a relief implementation plan.
3. On 15 January 2020, the CRTC Interconnection Steering Committee approved and forwarded to the Commission, for its approval, the RPC's [NPA 506 Task Information Form \(TIF\) Report #2](#) (the TIF report). The TIF report recommends that the relief date be changed to 23 April 2022.

The TIF report

4. In the TIF report, the RPC noted that the relief date was based on the results of a relief numbering resource utilization forecast (R-NRUF)¹ conducted in January 2018, which projected an exhaust date of December 2021 for area code 506. However, the results of an R-NRUF conducted in July 2019 indicated that the projected exhaust date for area code 506 had moved to April 2023.
5. The RPC indicated that Bell Canada, in a submission to the RPC dated 18 October 2019, proposed that the relief date be changed to 23 April 2022 to reflect the revised projected exhaust date. Bell Canada's submission included a revised draft [relief implementation plan](#) and a revised draft [relief implementation schedule](#).
6. The RPC noted that the current relief date is two years and four months in advance of the revised projected exhaust date, and agreed that it should be postponed to 23 April 2022. Accordingly, the RPC included a revised relief implementation plan and relief implementation schedule in the TIF report. In those documents, activity

¹ An R-NRUF is conducted every six months by the Canadian Numbering Administrator for area codes that are within the relief planning window of 72 months.

dates, including timelines for items such as communications, progress reports, network testing, and the transition from seven- to ten-digit dialing, have been revised to conform to an implementation date of 23 April 2022 for the new area code.

Commission's analysis and determinations

7. The Commission notes that according to the [Canadian NPA Relief Planning Guideline](#) (the Guideline) the implementation date for a new area code should be 12 to 18 months prior to the projected exhaust date of the current area code.² This time frame allows for unexpected central office code demand to be met before the new area code is introduced.
8. Further, the Commission considers that introducing a new area code earlier than necessary can result in the inefficient use of capital and other resources, since telecommunications service providers and customers may make expenditures that could otherwise be delayed with no adverse effects. This is particularly relevant in the current circumstances of a worldwide pandemic.
9. The Commission therefore considers that it would be reasonable to change the implementation date of the new area code to 23 April 2022, 12 months before the projected exhaust date, in accordance with the Guideline.
10. In light of the above, the Commission **approves** the TIF report, including the proposed relief implementation plan and relief implementation schedule, which are based on an effective date of 23 April 2022 for the introduction of the new distributed overlay area code.

Policy Directions

11. In accordance with subparagraph 1(b)(i) of the 2006 Policy Direction,³ the Commission considers that approval of the TIF report will advance the policy objective set out in paragraph 7(f) of the Telecommunications Act.⁴
12. In accordance with the 2019 Policy Direction,⁵ the Commission considers that this decision can promote competition, affordability, consumer interests, and innovation. Specifically, the approval of the TIF report will promote affordability and consumer interests by avoiding inefficient expenditures that could result from the introduction of a new area code before it is required.

Secretary General

² See Section 8.21 of the Guideline.

³ *Order Issuing a Direction to the CRTC on Implementing the Canadian Telecommunications Policy Objectives*, SOR/2006-355, 14 December 2006.

⁴ The cited policy objective is: 7(f) to foster increased reliance on market forces for the provision of telecommunications services and to ensure that regulation, where required, is efficient and effective.

⁵ *Order Issuing a Direction to the CRTC on Implementing the Canadian Telecommunications Policy Objectives to Promote Competition, Affordability, Consumer Interests and Innovation*, SOR/2019-227, 17 June 2019.