



Telecom Order CRTC 2024-142

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Broadband Fund – Change request – Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation’s British Columbia (Highway 95/95A corridor) transport fibre project – June 2024

Summary

Canadians need reliable, affordable, and high-quality Internet and cellphone services for every part of their daily lives.

Through its Broadband Fund, the Commission contributes to a broad effort by federal, provincial, and territorial governments to address the gap in connectivity in underserved rural, remote, and Indigenous communities across Canada.

With this order, the Commission approves Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation’s request to receive additional funding and to postpone the completion date of its transport fibre project in British Columbia. Both the additional funding and the revised timeline will support the continued effort to complete this project and ensure connectivity.

Background

1. In Telecom Regulatory Policy 2018-377, the Commission set out objectives and governing frameworks for the Broadband Fund. In the Application Guide appended to Telecom Notice of Consultation 2019-372, which initiated the second call for Broadband Fund applications, the Commission defined a material change as including a major change in the cost or scope of a project.
2. Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation (CBBC) participated in the second call. In Telecom Decision 2021-107, CBBC received approval for that application. The approved application supports building transport infrastructure to serve the communities of Meadowbrook and Ta Ta Creek in British Columbia.
3. The Commission later received written acceptance of this funding award from CBBC and approved CBBC’s related statement of work in Telecom Order 2021-347, subject to the conditions of funding set out in Telecom Decision 2021-107. Among the conditions of funding is the requirement, set out at paragraph 14 of Telecom Decision 2021-107, that any material changes to the project be approved by the Commission. An application for material changes is known as a change request.

4. In Telecom Order 2024-7, the Commission approved a change request from CBBC for an additional seven and a half months to complete its project. The additional time was needed to ensure that construction of the project would not impact any archaeological sites.

Change requests

5. On 15 February 2024 and 10 May 2024, CBBC submitted further change requests for its project approved in Telecom Decision 2021-107.
6. Specifically, CBBC requested additional funding due to unexpected costs incurred to ensure that construction of the project will not impact sites that were since identified as potential archaeological sites, contractor delays from a nearby forest fire, and a general increase in costs since 2021. CBBC requested an increase of \$131,255 (+7.7%), bringing the funding amount from \$1,708,000 to \$1,839,255.
7. CBBC also requested an additional six months to complete the project originally expected to be completed by the summer of 2024. CBBC cited permit approval delays, including those relating to archaeological considerations, that took longer than initially estimated. The company now expects the project to be complete by the end of 2024.

Commission's analysis

8. The Commission has reviewed the materials submitted and factors described. The Commission underlines the importance of addressing connectivity gaps quickly by completing Broadband Fund projects in a timely manner.¹ However, the Commission considers that, under the circumstances, approving the change request would satisfy the objectives identified by the approach set out in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2018-377. In this respect, it is relevant that the delay is due to circumstances CBBC has confirmed were beyond its reasonable control and contemplation, and that the materials it provided showed evidence of why the funding increase was required.

Conclusion

9. The Commission therefore approves CBBC's change requests. All funding conditions and conditions imposed under section 24 of the *Telecommunications Act*, as set out in Telecom Decision 2021-107, continue to apply.

Secretary General

¹ Detailed operational information in respect of funded Broadband Fund projects is generally treated in confidence. See Telecom Regulatory Policy 2018-377, paragraphs 405–408, and section 11 (“Confidentiality”) of the Application Guide cited in paragraph 1 of this order.

Related documents

- *Broadband Fund – Change request – Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation’s British Columbia (Highway 95/95A corridor) transport fibre project*, Telecom Order CRTC 2024-7, 11 January 2024
- *Broadband Fund – Acceptance of statement of work for Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation’s British Columbia (Highway 95/95A corridor) transport fibre project*, Telecom Order CRTC 2021-347, 22 October 2021
- *Broadband Fund – Project funding approval for Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation’s British Columbia (Highway 95/95A corridor) transport fibre project*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-107, 19 March 2021
- *Broadband Fund – Second call for applications*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2019-372, 13 November 2019; as amended by Telecom Notices of Consultation CRTC 2019-372-1, 20 March 2020; and 2019-372-2, 27 April 2020
- *Development of the Commission’s Broadband Fund*, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2018-377, 27 September 2018