



Telecom Order CRTC 2025-199

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Gatineau, 7 August 2025

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Broadband Fund – Change request – Cogeco Connexion Inc.’s Ontario (Algonquin) transport fibre project – August 2025

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 Cogeco Connexion Inc.’s request to postpone the completion date for its transport fibre project in Algonquin, Ontario.

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. Cogeco Connexion Inc. (Cogeco) participated in the second call for Broadband Fund applications. In Telecom Decision 2021-110, Cogeco received approval for its funding application. The approved application supports improving the broadband Internet access services available to eligible areas in Algonquin, Ontario with an 11-kilometre transport link and one point of presence.
3. The Commission later received written acceptance of the funding award from Cogeco and approved Cogeco’s related statement of work in Telecom Order 2021-346, subject to the conditions of funding set out in Telecom Decision 2021-110.
4. Among the conditions of funding is the requirement, set out in paragraph 14 of Telecom Decision 2021-110, that any material changes to the project be approved by the Commission. An application for a material change is known as a change request.

Change requests

5. The Application Guide appended to Telecom Notice of Consultation 2019-372 stipulated the Commission's expectation that projects be completed within three years of the funding award. Telecom Decision 2021-110 was issued on 19 March 2021. This project was therefore expected to be completed by 19 March 2024.
6. In Telecom Order 2024-86, issued on 26 April 2024, the Commission approved change requests from Cogeco to increase the funding for this project by \$37,213 (7.8%), bringing the total funding amount from \$477,678 to \$514,891, and to delay the project's completion to the spring of 2024. These were the second and third change requests for the project, following an initial change request that affected the project's timeline but not the overall completion date expected by the Commission.
7. In Telecom Order 2024-308, issued on 29 November 2024, the Commission approved a fourth change request from Cogeco to further delay the project's completion to the end of 2024.
8. On 26 February 2025, Cogeco submitted a fifth change request. This request seeks an additional year to complete the project, from the end of 2024 to the end of 2025, due to pole-specific delays that Cogeco continues to experience in the aerial permitting and approval process.

Commission's analysis

9. The Commission has reviewed the documents submitted with the change request, including those submitted confidentially.¹ The Commission underlines the importance of addressing connectivity gaps quickly by completing Broadband Fund projects in a timely manner. The Commission also notes that the change request was not submitted until after the project's expected completion date.
10. The delays in aerial permitting and approvals are extraordinary delays. Having reviewed the substantial progress made towards project completion, the Commission is satisfied that these third-party administrative delays were beyond Cogeco's reasonable contemplation and control.
11. The Commission considers that approving Cogeco's change request would satisfy the objectives identified by the approach set out in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2018-377. However, the Commission reminds funding recipients that change requests relating to timing must be consistent with the timelines and deadlines established by the Commission's decisions.

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

Conclusion

12. The Commission approves Cogeco's change request and expects that the project be completed by 31 December 2025. All funding conditions and conditions imposed under section 24 of the *Telecommunications Act*, as set out in Telecom Decision 2021-110, continue to apply.

Secretary General

Related documents

- *Broadband Fund – Change request – Cogeco Connexion Inc.'s Ontario (Algonquin) transport fibre project – November 2024*, Telecom Order CRTC 2024-308, 29 November 2024
- *Broadband Fund – Change request – Cogeco Connexion Inc.'s Ontario (Algonquin) transport fibre project – April 2024*, Telecom Order CRTC 2024-86, 26 April 2024
- *Broadband Fund – Acceptance of statement of work for Cogeco Connexion Inc.'s Ontario (Algonquin) transport fibre project*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-346, 22 October 2021
- *Broadband Fund – Project funding approval for Cogeco Connexion Inc.'s Ontario (Algonquin) transport fibre project*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2021-110, 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