



Telecom Order CRTC 2026-158

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Gatineau, 3 July 2026

Public record: Tariff Notice 600

Bell Aliant Regional Communications, Limited Partnership – Introduction of Fibre to the Business

Summary

The Commission received an application from Bell Aliant Regional Communications, Limited Partnership (Bell Aliant) proposing changes to its General Tariff to introduce business voice access services over fibre facilities, or Fibre to the Business (FTTB).

The proposed changes will enable Bell Aliant to provide voice access services to business customers using its existing fibre network and will extend the current Fibre to the Home framework to include businesses, without changing existing rates. This will enable Bell Aliant to offer additional service options to business customers and support the continued expansion of fibre-based services in Canada.

Accordingly, the Commission approves Bell Aliant's application.

A concurring opinion by Commissioner Bram Abramson is attached to this order.

Application

1. The Commission received an application from Bell Aliant Regional Communications, Limited Partnership (Bell Aliant), dated 27 January 2026, proposing changes to Item 280 – Fibre to the Home (FTTH) of its General Tariff.
2. Specifically, Bell Aliant proposed to amend its General Tariff for FTTH voice access services to include the provision of voice access services to businesses, which would be known as Fibre to the Business (FTTB). Bell Aliant also proposed amending the title of Item 280 to reflect that it will pertain to both FTTH and FTTB services.
3. Bell Aliant submitted that the proposed tariff provisions for FTTB are identical to those previously approved by the Commission for its FTTH services.¹ Bell Aliant also noted that the proposed provisions are necessary because it plans to start providing FTTB services shortly.

¹ The Commission approved Item 280 – Fibre to the Home on an interim basis in Telecom Order 2011-620 and on a final basis in Telecom Order 2011-674.

4. Bell Aliant requested an effective date of 11 February 2026.
5. The Commission did not receive any interventions regarding the application.

Commission's analysis

6. The introduction of a new service or rate falls under the criteria for Group B applications. The Commission considers that the information provided by Bell Aliant satisfies the requirements set out in Telecom Information Bulletin 2010-455-1 for Group B applications.
7. The Commission also considers that Bell Aliant's proposed changes will enable the company to offer FTTB services where they were not previously available and will support the continued expansion of fibre-based services in Canada. The proposed changes are consistent with the Commission's previous approval of similar technology without any rate changes.
8. The Commission considers that the proposed changes will advance the policy objective set out in paragraph 7(h) of the *Telecommunications Act*.² Accordingly, the Commission finds that Bell Aliant's proposal is reasonable and complies with the relevant regulatory policies.

Conclusion

9. In light of all of the above, the Commission approves Bell Aliant's application effective the date of this order.
10. Revised tariff pages are to be issued within 10 calendar days of the date of this order. Revised tariff pages can be submitted to the Commission without a description page or a request for approval; a tariff application is not required.

Secretary General

² The cited policy objective is: 7(h) to respond to the economic and social requirements of users of telecommunications services.

Concurring opinion of Commissioner Bram Abramson

1. I concur in the Telecommunications Committee's approval¹ of the tariff application by Bell Aliant Regional Communications, Limited Partnership (Bell Aliant), which follows a service model the Commission previously approved. I write separately for a narrower reason. The approval carries forward a split reliability profile for tariffed telephone service. The same regulated service label now covers copper-based service that draws power from the network, and fibre-based service dependent on local powered equipment. That distinction matters for a service that, for some customers and communities, remains a lifeline. It should be stated plainly.
2. Telephone service² has been that lifeline for so long that, when Canadians think of landline voice, they often assume it continues to work when household power fails. For generations that expectation reflected how the network was engineered and regulated. As the public switched telephone network (PSTN) recedes, that assumption is fading with it.³
3. Bell Aliant's addition of Fibre to the Business (FTTB) alongside its Atlantic general tariff's Fibre to the Home (FTTH) is, in one sense, routine. It extends to FTTB an approach approved years ago. The decisions that mattered, taken in 2011,⁴ even referred to eight-hour power backup equipment to be provided, though that equipment did not enter the tariff then and does not appear in the tariff before us now.
4. But routine does not mean inconsequential. On copper the line draws its power from the network and rides out blackouts.⁵ On fibre the same service depends on powered equipment near the premises. That is a change in what customers can expect.⁶ The issue is not whether fibre should be replacing copper: it already is. Copper has its own reliability issues, from crosstalk and greater weather vulnerability to theft exposure, but conducts electricity. Fibre is in other ways more reliable, though not against power outages.

¹ On behalf of the Commission: *Telecommunications Committee*, By-Law No. 10 (CRTC), paragraph (e) (“[a]ny act or thing done by the Telecommunications Committee shall be deemed to be an act or thing done by the members [...]”), pursuant to paragraph 11(1)(b) and subsection 12(3) of the *Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Act* (duties delegated to standing committees by by-law, as distinguished from assigning a particular file to a panel: *Shoan v. Canada (Attorney General)*, 2016 FCA 261, para. 6).

² Here, CRTC 21491, General Tariff, Item 200.

³ Federally, *An Act to incorporate The Bell Telephone Company of Canada*, S.C. 1880, c. 67 and *The Railway Act*, R.S.C. 1906, c. 37, as amended (6 Edw. VII, c. 42); provincially, e.g., *Ontario Telephone Act*, 10 Edw. VII, c. 84 (1910); Telecom Regulatory Policy 2016-496, paragraph 51.

⁴ Telecom Orders 2011-246 (approving Bell Aliant's and Bell Canada's stand-alone FTTH and FTTB tariff additions in Ontario and Quebec) and 2011-674 (approving Bell Aliant's stand-alone FTTH tariff addition in Atlantic Canada: CRTC 21491). Bell Aliant's Ontario and Quebec tariffs (CRTC 21560) were since reabsorbed into Bell Canada's (CRTC 6716).

⁵ Copper lines conduct only limited power sufficient for line-powered telephone equipment. Subscriber equipment with additional functionality may require external power. Cordless telephone base stations, for example, generally require household power, batteries, or both.

⁶ Nor is power the only limit the tariff records. For instance, the same terms provide that the service “will not be available during network outages, including during planned hardware or software upgrades”.

5. Tariff approval should not obscure what is being approved.⁷ Where the Commission approves the same regulated telephone service over a different technical architecture, and that architecture changes the service's practical reliability profile, each such approval should identify that consequence. All the more so where the service, which incumbent local exchange carriers (ILECs) remain obliged to provide,⁸ is still relied on by customers with limited practical alternatives and the retail quality-of-service backstop has narrowed over time.⁹
6. The issue, then, is regulatory candour. That is the clarification I would attach to the approval. The provisions before us are not a promise that FTTB will replicate copper's historical blackout resilience. They approve telephone service delivered through a fibre-based, power-dependent architecture whose continuity the tariff expressly leaves to customer-supplied power. Customers, carriers, and the Commission should be clear about that.
7. While I concur in the Committee's approval, I therefore underline what it carries forward: telephone service delivered over fibre facilities, dependent on local powered equipment, subject to applicable obligations. The technological evolution was inevitable. That its trade-offs are not more clearly exposed is unfortunate. The service has changed. Especially where phone lines remain a service of last resort, the public deserves a clearer discussion of how.

⁷ On the trade-offs involved in an "obscure by design" but expedited approach to tariff review and approval, see my dissenting opinion to Telecom Order 2024-219, paragraphs 12 to 14; Commissioner Anderson's and my dissenting opinion to Telecom Order 2025-74, paragraphs 11 to 15; and my dissenting opinion to Telecom Order 2025-192, paragraph 20: "Silence may well signal procedural barriers or disengagement facilitated by how the Commission now handles tariff filings—in narrow, siloed processes, increasingly opaque to public scrutiny."

⁸ See, e.g., Telecom Decision 79-11, pages 88 to 89; Telecom Decision 86-7, section 4.2; Telecom Decision 99-16, paragraphs 31 to 36; Telecom Regulatory Policy 2011-291, paragraphs 43 (non-forborne exchanges), 46 (forborne exchanges), and 52 (price ceiling in forborne exchanges); Telecom Regulatory Policy 2016-496, paragraph 186.

⁹ Following work beginning with Telecom Public Notice 1979-30, the Commission established a retail quality of service monitoring regime in Telecom Decision 82-13; standardized it across large ILECs in Telecom Decisions 97-16 and 2000-24; and updated it to include retail credits for substandard service in Telecom Decision 2005-17. However, in Telecom Decision 2006-15, the Commission considered, at paragraph 447, that it was not necessary to maintain retail quality of service (Q of S) standards in forborne local voice markets, and eliminated in Telecom Decision 2008-105 both the retail rate adjustment plan and most reporting requirements, retaining a residual three-indicator quarterly reporting regime that Telecom Regulatory Policy 2009-304 later finalized for non-forborne markets. Small ILECs have been subject to a different regime. Telecom Decision 96-6, section X, established a complaints-based regime. Telecom Decision 2001-756 added, at paragraph 147, annual reporting in five retail complaint categories: Telecom Decision 2006-14, paragraphs 196 to 197.

Related documents

- *Approval processes for tariff applications and intercarrier agreements*, Telecom Information Bulletin CRTC 2010-455-1, 19 February 2016
- Telecom Order CRTC 2011-674, 27 October 2011
- *Bell Aliant Regional Communications, Limited Partnership – Ex parte application*, Telecom Order CRTC 2011-620, 26 September 2011