



Telecom Order CRTC 2026-50

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Gatineau, 25 March 2026

Public record: Tariff Notice 7725

Bell Canada – Withdrawal of Channels for Wired-Music Transmission

Summary

The Commission received an application from Bell Canada proposing to withdraw Item 4580 – Channels for Wired-Music Transmission of its General Tariff.

Channels for Wired-Music Transmission enable Bell Canada to lease channels for the unidirectional transmission of program materials to loudspeakers located at the premises of the lessee's customers. This is a legacy service with few remaining customers, and the legacy copper facilities through which the service is provided are aging and becoming increasingly unreliable. This makes it difficult for Bell Canada to address service outages and to restore service in a timely manner.

Accordingly, the Commission approves Bell Canada's application.

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

Application

1. The Commission received an application from Bell Canada dated 18 September 2025 proposing to withdraw Item 4580 – Channels for Wired-Music Transmission of its General Tariff.
2. According to Bell Canada, Channels for Wired-Music Transmission appeared as early as January 1980. Bell Canada noted that since that time, demand for Channels for Wired-Music Transmission service has fallen. Additionally, the number of customers decreased most notably between 2019 to 2024. Bell Canada submitted that this decline in demand is due to the aging and increasingly unreliable legacy copper facilities used to provide the service. According to Bell Canada, those facilities provide much lower bandwidth compared to the significantly faster and competitively priced fibre-based data services that have become readily available in the market.
3. Bell Canada indicated that much of the infrastructure it uses to provide Channels for Wired-Music Transmission is old. Bell Canada noted that it expects the frequency and duration of these issues to increase as the underlying infrastructure ages. As a result, its customers may experience service interruptions and other issues. Bell Canada also submitted that manufacturer support for Channels for Wired-Music Transmission was withdrawn many years ago and spare parts are difficult to obtain. It added that the test sets used to diagnose service issues are very old and are

deteriorating quickly. Consequently, Bell Canada stated that it has become increasingly difficult to address service outages for Channels for Wired-Music Transmission and to restore service in a timely manner. Bell Canada indicated that, collectively, these factors have made it very difficult and costly to provide suitably reliable service to its customers.

4. Bell Canada submitted that there are alternatives to Channels for Wired-Music Transmission for its remaining customers in Ontario and Quebec, including Internet Protocol-Virtual Private Network (IP-VPN), Ethernet, and Internet services.
5. Bell Canada requested an effective date of 1 February 2026 to provide time for its customers to migrate to a suitable alternative service.
6. The Commission did not receive any interventions regarding the application.
7. After the close of record date, Bell Canada filed a reply submission reiterating its request for approval of its application, noting that it received no comments from its customers and that there were no interventions received by the Commission.

Commission's analysis

8. In compliance with the procedure set out in Telecom Information Bulletin 2010-455-1, Bell Canada provided the Commission with (i) a description of the service proposed to be withdrawn, (ii) the proposed withdrawal date, (iii) the rationale for the withdrawal, (iv) the number of customers affected, and (v) a copy of the notice to affected customers.
9. Based on the evidence submitted by Bell Canada, the Commission is of the view that Channels for Wired-Music Transmission has had no manufacturer support for some time. As a result, spare or replacement parts are costly and difficult to obtain. The test sets used to diagnose service issues are very old and are deteriorating quickly. The service has few remaining customers and none of the affected customers have raised any concerns on the record or directly with Bell Canada.
10. The maintenance of tariffs for legacy services with few customers creates regulatory burden for both service providers and the Commission. Given that the customer base for Channels for Wired-Music Transmission is very small and has been declining for years, the Commission considers that approving the proposed withdrawal would reduce this regulatory burden.
11. Accordingly, the Commission considers Bell Canada's request to be reasonable.

12. The Commission considers that approval of this application advances the policy objective set out in paragraph 7(f) of the *Telecommunications Act*¹ and complies with the relevant regulatory policies concerning service withdrawal.

Conclusion

13. In light of the above, the Commission approves, by majority decision, Bell Canada's application.

14. 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

¹ 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.

Dissenting opinion of Commissioner Bram Abramson

1. Bell Canada's Channels for Wired-Music Transmission tariff describes a service for sending "program material", presumably music, to loudspeakers.
2. It is clear this tariff frames the service narrowly, and that more modern services now exist outside the tariff's four corners. What is not clear is whether the public interest favours the service's immediate termination altogether.
3. These questions are borrowed from a proposed update to how the Commission reviews applications to destandardize, withdraw, or forbear from tariffing a telecommunications service.¹ That update expressly contemplates greater regulatory flexibility that better aligns with the Commission's statutory duties and with a broader focus on market outcomes.
4. The majority on the Telecommunications Committee² has not completed such alignment. Instead, it has opted for an approach that traps Channels for Wired-Music Transmission in regulatory amber. Channels for Wired-Music Transmission is not forborne. But Bell Canada will now lack a valid tariff under which to deliver it. It must therefore terminate the service for all customers.
5. That result is treated as inevitable. It is not. What if the better approach would have been to step back and forbear, letting the service persist for some under negotiated arrangements? The record does not say. Indeed, the record is so sparse as to tell us virtually nothing about this telephone-era music-to-loudspeakers service at all. Who uses it? What for? In what geographic and serving areas? To deliver music to single locations, or to networks of dozens or even hundreds of sites per customer?
6. Have customers persisted in using this non-Internet-Protocol service because of the high sunk cost of associated equipment? Do they require more time to transition to modern music distribution technologies? What market harms would arise if they are denied that time? Is this the day that, somewhere, the music died?
7. Basic information such as this is required to assess whether it is preferable to terminate the service immediately, as Bell Canada effectively seeks; or to allow a managed decline through

¹ Dissent to Telecom Order 2026-44, at paragraphs 14-22.

² 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).

negotiated arrangements, as policy-led forbearance³ might allow. That information is not before us. Nor is the analysis it would support.

8. When applicants fail to place basic facts before the Commission, they ask us to decide in the dark. That reduces the Commission to a role that can be little more than ratifying, or rejecting, the outcome sought. Maybe, on successful ratification, applicants are happy for a while. But such an approach cannot endure. It does not serve the public interest, which requires that regulatory decisions rest on evidence, not assumption. Nor does it serve applicants themselves, whose goals are better advanced by an expedient proceeding, which in turn requires an adequate record.
9. In the absence of even cursory evidence, I decline to assume and, rather, dissent. I would have issued a Request for Information to complete the record. Failing that I would have denied the application without prejudice and invited Bell Canada to return with the evidence needed to determine whether withdrawal, destandardization, or forbearance best served the public interest.

Related documents

- *Bell Canada – Withdrawal of certain features of Bell Total Connect for Small Business service*, Telecom Order CRTC 2026-44, 12 March 2026
- *Approval processes for tariff applications and intercarrier agreements*, Telecom Information Bulletin CRTC 2010-455-1, 19 February 2016

³ *Telecommunications Act*, subsection 34(1), subject to retaining *ex post* oversight powers under subsections 27(2) and (4).