

Q: *In its February 6, 2013 intervention filed in response to Telecom Notice of Consultation 2012-669, "Review of Northwestel Inc.'s Regulatory Framework, Modernization Plan, and related matters", the Yukon Government states at paragraph 66 that:*

"Access to broadband has become more important than basic voice access, especially in the North, where the capabilities of advanced services have the potential to overcome the disadvantages of distance and remoteness."

Does FMCC agree with the above statement of the Yukon Government? Please elaborate.

Response

1. Voice services remain critical for Canadians, including those in remote regions. In our intervention, we did not propose that voice be removed from basic service. Rather, it is our position that broadband should be added to basic service. In our intervention, we stated:

"Community members and community organizations must be able to access a basket of core Basic Services, including:

- Voice telephony (both local and long distance) on individual lines or circuits
- Broadband services with requirements for speed, minimal latency, and quality of service
- Services specified in TD 99-16: access to the long distance network, operator/directory assistance services, enhanced calling features and privacy protection features, emergency services, as well as voice message relay service;
- A directory with contact information for fixed and mobile telephone listings that is available in Indigenous languages and alphabets in regions with significant Indigenous populations...."¹

2. Concerning the reference to the Yukon Government, in its submission to the CRTC in this consultation (CRTC 2015-134) the Yukon Government referred to the basic service elements listed in the CRTC's 1999 decision (CRTC Telecom 99-16) and

¹ Intervention by FMCC in Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2015-134, July 14, 2015, para. 78.

then stated:

“The Government of Yukon submits that the Commission should now revise the definition of basic service to *include* high-speed or broadband Internet access, which is arguably essential to the ability of Canadian homes and businesses to fully engage in the digital world, including not only the opportunities to participate in the global marketplace of goods and services on a competitive basis, but also to take full advantage of the education, government, and health services/ applications that are, or will become available, as well as to fully exploit the potential to build and enhance their identities, communities, and culture, as is consistent with the overriding policy objective of the Telecommunications Act.”² (italics added)

3. We concur with the Yukon Government that broadband should be included as a basic service, and that voice service should be retained.
4. Finally, FMCC notes that broadband connectivity can be unreliable, particularly in rural and remote areas. Short-term or extended power outages can completely disable broadband connectivity, at the residential or community wide-level — problems which do not plague traditional voice services. Maintaining traditional connectivity services is particularly important in the North, and during emergency situations having a telephone lifeline to the outside world can be a crucial to life and limb.

END OF DOCUMENT

² Government of Yukon. Submission to the CRTC in Telecom Notice of Consultation 2015-134 Review of Basic Telecommunications Services, July 13, 2015, para. 35.