



Cariboo Regional District
File No. 400-20

JUN 04 2018

Referred To CAB/Chair

May 30, 2018

Ref: 108201

Margo Wagner, Chair
Cariboo Regional District
Suite D, 180 N Third Avenue
Williams Lake, BC V2G 2A4
Email: mwagner@cariboord.ca

Dear Margo Wagner:

Thank you for your letter dated March 8, 2018, regarding TELUS' application to the federal Connect to Innovate (CTI) program.

As the Minister for Citizens' Services, one of my main priorities is to help expand connectivity in rural, First Nations and Indigenous communities in BC. Affordable access to reliable high-speed internet is crucial to ensuring all citizens have access to the same level of high-quality healthcare, education, and emergency services. Connectivity is also essential for full participation in our growing digital economy.

The Connect to Innovate program is a federally-led initiative and the investments made in BC to date will help bring high-speed connectivity to rural and First Nations and Indigenous communities across the province. For our part, the provincial government has committed \$40 million to the Connecting British Columbia program. This program, administered by the Northern Development Initiative Trust, has been assisting local and regional internet service providers expand and extend high-speed internet service to underserved regions here in BC.

I do recognize the need for improved connectivity in communities in the Cariboo region. In this day and age, people, businesses and local governments, need to be connected. My ministry will continue to work with the federal government, the national telecommunications regulator and the private sector to find new ways of expanding internet and cellular coverage with a focus on rural, First Nations and Indigenous communities.

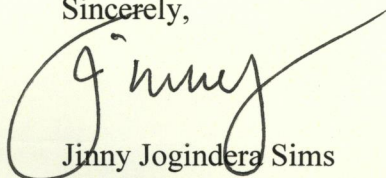
Ministry staff are monitoring Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2017-112 (<http://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2017/2017-112.htm>), where the CRTC is currently examining accountability frameworks, eligibility and assessment criteria for a new regulatory funding mechanism that could include support for the expansion of internet and cellular services. We understand a decision will be made later this year and a program intake will open up next year.

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If you would like to discuss this further or would like to receive further information on the Province's activities to expand high-speed internet connectivity, please contact Howard Randell, Executive Director, Network BC at 250 415-6867, or by email at NetworkBC@gov.bc.ca

Thank you for taking the time to write to me about this important issue.

Sincerely,



Jinny Jogindera Sims
Minister

pc: Honourable Doug Donaldson
Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
FLNR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Donna Barnett, MLA for Cariboo-Chilcotin
Donna.Barnett.MLA@leg.bc.ca

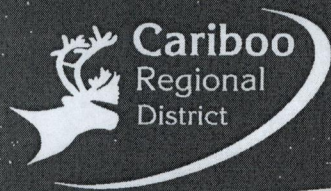
Coralee Oakes, MLA for Cariboo-North
Coralee.Oakes.MLA@leg.bc.ca

Lance MacDonald, General Manager for Northern BC, TELUS
Lance.Macdonald@telus.com

Jill Kot, Deputy Minister of Citizens' Services
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Susan Stanford, Executive Lead, Ministry of Citizens' Services
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File: 400-20

March 8, 2018

E-MAILED
March 9 / 2018

Honourable Jinny Sims
Minister of Citizens' Services
Room 236 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Sims:

Re: TELUS' Enhanced Broadband Connectivity Initiative in Central British Columbia –
Connect to Innovate Program

On April 18 2017, the Cariboo Regional District provided a letter of support for TELUS' broadband expansion applications to the federal Connect to Innovate (CTI) program. These applications are aimed at reducing network disparities for 55 rural communities, including numerous communities within our regional district (see attached list).

Located in the central interior of the province, the Cariboo Regional District (CRD) covers an area of 80,262 square kilometres and serves an estimated population of 60,000 residents. The CRD delivers a wide range of services including fire protection, recreation, library, waste management and utility systems. Reliable and resilient broadband connectivity networks are integral to the effective and efficient delivery of the various services we provide to communities located within our boundaries.

We understand that the federal government intends to make a funding decision very soon. Given this, we would like to restate our strong support for TELUS' proposed projects, which will improve community access to public services and enhance the dependability of essential information and communications systems.

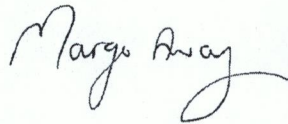
These projects will close the digital divide for impacted rural and First Nations communities resulting in numerous socio-economic benefits, including better health and education outcomes, economic diversification and more competitive businesses.

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building communities together

The CRD urges you to confirm the Province's commitment to reducing network disparities by communicating your support for TELUS' CTI applications to your federal colleagues at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada. We look forward to a positive federal funding decision and a better quality of life for the communities that we serve.

Sincerely,



Margo Wagner
Chair, Cariboo Regional District

cc: Honourable Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
Jill Kot, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Citizens' Services
MLA Coralee Oakes, Cariboo North
MLA Donna Barnett, Cariboo-Chilcotin