December 15, 2015

Ms. Janice Charette  
Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet  
Langevin Block  
80 Wellington Street  
OTTAWA, ON K1A 0A3

Dear Ms. Charette:

Re: Bell Canada Appeal

I write, in my capacity as mayor of the City of North Battleford to express our support for Bell Canada’s petition requesting that you vary the CRTC’s decision, in Regulatory Policy 2015-326, to mandate wholesale access fibre-to-the-home and to next-generation DOCSIS 3.1 cable networks.

North Battleford is a city of approximately 14,000 people in Northwest Saskatchewan located on the Yellowhead Highway (highway 16), roughly a one hour drive northwest of Saskatoon and four hours east of Edmonton, AB. Our city is home to a large business base including well established industrial companies such as Grit Industries, G & C Asphalt, Kindersley Transport, EnviroSafe Chemicals, Anderson Pumphouse, Unicon Pipeline, Cargill Ltd. and major grain handling companies. North Battleford is located on a fiber optic corridor and we would love to see fibre access deployed throughout our city.

We are aware that, in that decision, the CRTC is requiring that SaskTel must make its fibre access network available to its competitors at wholesale prices. SaskTel has already started building Fibre to the home networks in many Saskatchewan communities and announced intentions to start in several others. But SaskTel has not indicated that it will be building Fibre to the Premise in our community.

We are aware of the benefits of having a Fibre build in our community and are concerned about the potential negative impacts that the CRTC decision might have on SaskTel’s decision to build a Fibre network in our community or not. Competition in internet markets is important, but more important to our community is the availability of a fibre access network in the first place. Having a choice of more than one facilities-based very high speed internet service provider is important to us.

We are aware that Bell Canada has appealed the CRTC decision. We ask that, when considering the merits of the Bell Canada appeal, Cabinet bear in mind the potential harmful impact on smaller communities whose size puts them on the bubble for fibre builds. It is our view that the benefits to the economy of broader fibre availability to
smaller communities such as ours outweigh the possible benefits of competition artificially created through forced wholesale services.

Our community members, whether residents or businesses, are using the internet more than ever and want access to the best networks possible. We urge the Governor in Council to give consideration to Bell's petition as a means of enabling this goal.

Sincerely,

Ian Hamilton,
Mayor