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


Dear Madam Clerk,

I am writing today with regards to the above stated petition concerning a Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) decision announced in July 2015. The decision proposed that Internet resellers have access to new fibre-to-the-home networks owned by telecommunications providers such as Bell Canada, which were significant capital investments made in Canadian communities starting only years ago.

Bell has stated publicly that it plans to invest $20 billion through to 2020, with one objective being to bring fibre-to-the-home service to millions of homes and businesses in communities large and small. My understanding is that the recent CRTC decision would impact their planned investments, leading to significant delays in the deployment of this technology.

These investments would have been greatly welcome by our residents and the business community, given their positive impact on the quality of service as well as their potential for job creation in our city. Unfortunately, I fear that our local economy and the residents of Ottawa – as well as those of other smaller cities, towns and rural areas – will be impacted negatively by these delays in deployment. As you may know, many of them depend on fibre-to-the-home service to run their small business or stay in touch with loved ones across the globe.

In Ottawa, we are fortunate to be a thriving, innovative and knowledge-based city that hundreds of thousands of researchers, scientists and technology start-ups call home. It is important to acknowledge that these innovation and business leaders can greatly improve their capacity and output when given the proper broadband infrastructure.
Furthermore, Invest Ottawa, our city’s arms-length economic development agency, as well as our Innovation Centre board of directors, have set their sights on making Ottawa the most innovative city in Canada. I’m afraid that without the deployment of fibre-to-the-home technology in the coming years, it will be difficult to make that claim when trying to attract companies and young families to Ottawa, especially when we are competing against large international cities, not to mention Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver here in Canada.

I do not want Ottawa’s entrepreneurs, small businesses and residents to be left behind. Therefore, I urge the Government of Canada to revert to longstanding rules that will offer a level playing field to all telecommunications providers and encourage them to invest in new fibre-to-the-home networks in Ottawa and others communities across the country.

Sincerely,

Jim Watson
Mayor
City of Ottawa

c.c. Ms. Pamela Miller, Director General, Telecommunications Policy Branch
Hon. Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science Economic Development
Hon. Amarjeet Sohi, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities