

From: Minister of Infrastructure <Minister.MOI@ontario.ca>

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To: Minister of Infrastructure <Minister.MOI@ontario.ca>

Subject: Building Broadband Faster in Ontario | Update/Accélérer le déploiement de l'accès haut débit en Ontario | Point de situation

Our government is committed to ensuring that communities across Ontario have access to high-speed internet by committing nearly \$4 billion funding-based opportunities for unserved and underserved communities. This includes \$2.8 billion in the 2021 Budget to support the acceleration of access to high-speed internet with the aim of connecting all regions in Ontario by the end of 2025.

In addition to regional projects already in process, in July and October 2021, Ontario announced \$16.2 million for 17 projects under the Improving Connectivity for Ontario (ICON) Program, which will bring high-speed internet access to as many as 17,900 households and businesses. Ontario and the federal government also announced over \$1.2 billion in 58 new projects through the provincial ICON and the federal government's Universal Broadband Fund.

On September 9, 2021, we also launched a new innovative and competitive process which will enable qualified ISPs to bid for opportunities to provide high-speed internet access to remaining underserved and unserved communities across the province by the end of 2025. This process is now well underway and is being led by Infrastructure Ontario.

To help remove barriers and support a more streamlined approach to the deployment of high-speed broadband infrastructure, in April 2021, the Government enacted the Building Broadband Faster Act, 2021 (BBFA) along with amendments to the Ontario Energy Board Act through the passage of the Supporting Broadband and Infrastructure Expansion Act, 2021 (SBIEA). On November 30, 2021, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Infrastructure Ontario issued the Building Broadband Faster Act Guideline (Guideline), and two BBFA regulations ("Prescribed Loss or Expense" and "Designated Broadband Projects"), effective as of that date.

The Guideline and regulations support a new, standardized, more coordinated process and sets out the collaboration expected of all partners, including municipalities, to reduce barriers and expedite deployment of broadband infrastructure.

To further support timely progress toward our 2025 commitment, a Statement of Intent was released on November 30 and included in the Guideline, the government is also considering future legislative and regulatory enhancements to remove additional barriers to the deployment of high-speed internet. We will also put in place a Technical Assistance Team to provide project implementation and support to municipalities.

We are actively consulting on the proposed legislative measures, including with municipalities and communities and stakeholders. If passed, these additional measures will provide greater certainty, and ensure expanded access to high-speed internet can be achieved for all homes and businesses in Ontario by the end of 2025.

My ministry will also be reaching out to your officials to provide them with this update

and further details on the Guideline, regulations and future proposals.
Thank you for your support to ensure that the people we serve have the access they need to participate in the digital world, and to help Ontario recover and grow.
Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.
Yours sincerely,

The Honourable Kinga Surma
Minister of Infrastructure