



RURAL MATTERS TOO

Canadians for Fair Rural Internet Access

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE 3500 MHZ BAND WOULD REDUCE SERVICE OR DISCONNECT APPROXIMATELY 200,000 RURAL HOUSEHOLDS.

THE ISSUE

Xplornet Communications Inc. is Canada's largest rural broadband provider. Over 900,000 rural Canadians connect to the Internet through Xplornet every day. Xplornet has customers in every province and territory, and our LTE network carries more data per day than either of the cell networks of Bell or TELUS.

Recently, the Government of Canada launched consultations on the 3500 MHz spectrum band, the key band used to deliver Internet service to rural Canadians. The options proposed would take away 3500 MHz spectrum from rural providers in order to make it available for mobile use, primarily in Canada's largest cities.

Unlike previous consultations that sought to auction largely unused spectrum, the 3500 MHz band is in wide use – providing high speed Internet to rural areas that are unserved by the large telco and cable providers.

If these proposals move forward, the result would be devastating: rural providers like Xplornet would lose the spectrum used to connect rural Canadians online, resulting in the reduction and disconnection of Internet service to approximately 200,000 rural households.

Today, Xplornet is the largest active user of 3500 MHz spectrum in Canada, which accounts for over 60% of its total spectrum portfolio. Since there are no alternative spectrum bands available for Xplornet and other rural providers to move their rural customers, the proposal would mean the reduction or disconnection of service to 200,000 or more rural households. It would also indefinitely delay rural Canada's access to 5G services, on track to be available by late 2019.

WHAT IS SPECTRUM?

Spectrum is the oxygen that breathes life into our digital world. Wireless communications signals travel over the air via a radio or "spectrum" frequencies. In order to connect to the Internet wirelessly, spectrum is required. Because most Internet connections in rural Canada are wireless, a disproportionate amount of spectrum is required.

HOW YOU CAN HELP?

Contact the Minister of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development, Navdeep Bains, and your local Member of Parliament, and tell them that existing rural Internet providers should not have their spectrum taken away if they are providing service to rural Canadians.

Hon. Navdeep Bains

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Request a briefing to learn more about the issue: Contact Charles Beaudet