



Telecom Order CRTC 2014-425

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Ottawa, 13 August 2014

File number: Tariff Notice 916

Northwestel Inc. – Withdrawal of Manual Mobile Service

1. The Commission received an application from Northwestel Inc. (Northwestel), dated 13 June 2014, in which the company proposed to withdraw its Manual Mobile Service (MMS) from 19 of 25 mobile service areas. This service enables customers to make telephone calls from fixed or mobile radio units via an operator.
2. Northwestel requested an effective date of 31 October 2014, submitting that this would allow affected customers sufficient time to switch to alternative services.
3. The company submitted that the equipment used to support MMS was discontinued by the manufacturer nearly 20 years ago, and replacement parts are no longer produced. Consequently, it has become increasingly difficult for the company to repair and maintain the service. Northwestel noted that it continues to use parts from previously dismantled sites to maintain service at the remaining mobile service areas. The company also submitted that its customers' use of MMS has declined significantly over the last 10 years.
4. Northwestel submitted that there are reasonable alternatives to MMS, such as satellite phone service, which is available throughout its operating area.
5. The company indicated that, to help mitigate the cost to customers of moving to an alternative service, it planned to offer fixed MMS customers at the affected service areas one of the following:
 - a construction contribution of up to \$2,000 for phone access service that meets the Commission's basic service objective;
 - reimbursement of cellular handset costs (up to \$500); or
 - reimbursement of satellite phone handset costs (up to \$1,000).
6. In addition, Northwestel proposed to fully reimburse customers affected by the service withdrawal for the purchase of a new MMS radio telephone set, if that purchase was made between 1 February 2013 and 30 June 2014.
7. The company stated that it was notifying all affected customers of its proposal by letter, and that it would also notify customers if its proposal is approved. In addition,

Northwestel noted that its customer service representatives would call customers whose services are affected by the proposal.

8. The Commission did not receive any interventions regarding Northwestel's application. The public record of this proceeding, which closed on 28 July 2014, is available on the Commission's website at www.crtc.gc.ca or by using the file number provided above.

Commission's analysis and determinations

9. The Commission considers that Northwestel's application meets the requirements set out in Telecom Information Bulletin 2010-455, in which the Commission set out its procedures for dealing with applications to destandardize and/or withdraw tariffed services.¹ In particular, the Commission notes that Northwestel has informed affected customers of the proposed withdrawal, including how they may file comments with the Commission.
10. In light of the above, the Commission **approves** Northwestel's application.

Secretary General

Related documents

- *Approval processes for tariff applications and intercarrier agreements*, Telecom Information Bulletin CRTC 2010-455, 5 July 2010
- *Mandatory customer contract renewal notification and requirements for service destandardization/withdrawal*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2008-22, 6 March 2008

¹ This bulletin summarizes the Commission's related determinations set out in Telecom Decision 2008-22 and is incorporated by reference in section 59 of the *Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Rules of Practice and Procedure*.