



Telecom Order CRTC 2025-208

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Gatineau, 15 August 2025

Public record: Tariff Notice 163

Bruce Telecom – Removal of print directory obligation

Summary

The Commission received an application from Bruce Telecom proposing changes to its General Tariff to remove the requirement to provide a printed telephone directory to customers.

In this order, the Commission approves Bruce Telecom's application. The tariff revisions will remove terms and conditions that are no longer required following the Commission's elimination of the basic service objective in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2016-496. The Commission's determinations in the proceeding that led to Telecom Regulatory Policy 2016-496 were in part based on comments from parties which noted that directory information can now be more readily found by digital means.

The changes will therefore ensure that the company's tariff accurately reflects the Commission's previous determinations and the current tariffed services that are available to customers.

A dissenting opinion by Commissioner Bram Abramson is attached to this order.

Application

1. In a letter dated 25 March 2025, the Commission received an application from Bruce Telecom proposing changes to Item 12 – Directories of its General Tariff to remove the requirement to provide a printed telephone directory to customers.
2. Bruce Telecom noted that the Commission approved similar applications in Telecom Order 2024-220.
3. Bruce Telecom requested an effective date of 10 April 2025.
4. The Commission did not receive any interventions regarding the application.

Commission's analysis

5. In Telecom Regulatory Policy 2016-496, the Commission eliminated the basic service objective, which included the requirement to provide printed directories to customers in regulated areas upon request. The Commission noted that there was almost

universal access in Canada to the level of service set out in the basic service objective and that the intended goal of the basic service objective had been achieved.

6. In coming to its determinations in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2016-496, the Commission sought comments on what changes, if any, should be made to the basic service objective, which included the requirement to provide printed directories upon request. During that proceeding, while some parties highlighted the importance of printed directories, many parties submitted that the Commission should no longer mandate the provision of printed directories, and that directory information can be more readily found by digital means. Furthermore, technology has evolved to focus more on mobile and broadband services,¹ and the Commission recognized that it was appropriate to transition its regulatory frameworks and measures from being voice-centric to broadband-centric. Accordingly, among other measures, the Commission eliminated the basic service objective and the requirement to provide printed directories.
7. The proposed tariff revisions would eliminate terms and conditions that are no longer required, as a result of the Commission's determinations in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2016-496. These revisions would ensure that Bruce Telecom's tariff pages accurately reflect the Commission's determinations and the offerings available to customers. Therefore, the Commission finds the proposed revisions to be appropriate.

Conclusion

8. In light of all of the above, the Commission approves, by majority decision, Bruce Telecom's application.
9. Revised tariff pages are to be issued within 10 calendar days of the date of this order. Revised tariff pages can be submitted to the Commission without a description page or a request for approval; a tariff application is not required.

Secretary General

Related documents

- *Saskatchewan Telecommunications – Removal of print directory obligation*, Telecom Order CRTC 2025-207, 15 August 2025
- *Independent Telecommunications Providers Association – Final approval of a tariff application*, Telecom Order CRTC 2025-168, 3 July 2025
- *The Independent Telecommunications Providers Association and TELUS Communications Inc. – Small incumbent local exchange carriers' responsibilities*

¹ This evolution towards mobile and broadband services also means that Canadians rely more on mobile phone numbers and email addresses, neither of which are included in print directories.

and funding considerations in the Next-Generation 9-1-1 framework, Telecom Decision CRTC 2025-63, 28 February 2025

- *Various companies – Removal of print directory obligation*, Telecom Order CRTC 2024-220, 25 September 2024
- *Various companies – Removal of print directory obligation and Service Improvement Plan*, Telecom Order CRTC 2024-219, 25 September 2024
- *Modern telecommunications services – The path forward for Canada’s digital economy*, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2016-496, 21 December 2016
- *Obligation to serve and other matters*, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2011-291, 3 May 2011

Dissenting opinion of Commissioner Bram Abramson

1. Bruce Telecom is one of Canada's Small Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers (SILECs), a group of predominantly rural carriers with limited economies of scale and facing what is likely the highest regulatory-burden-to-business ratio within Canada's telecommunications system.¹
2. Bruce Telecom serves rate centres in Bruce County's Chesley, Kincardine, Paisley, Port Elgin, Ripley, Southampton, and Tiverton, as well as in Owen Sound. After a long line of history as a municipally-owned carrier, it was sold in 2024 to Windsor Private Capital, a Toronto-based private equity firm with related holdings in Ontario's Bruce, Grey, and Northumberland counties.
3. The venerable telephone book has been on a long farewell tour. In 2010, distribution obligations shifted to an opt-in model for forborne exchanges,² and in 2011 for regulated ones.³ In 2016 the obligation was eliminated from forborne exchanges altogether.⁴ Most recently, beginning in 2024, five applications to remove the obligation from regulated exchanges, too, were filed within a year of each another—including Bruce Telecom's.⁵
4. The Commission has approved each of these applications by majority vote of the Telecommunications Committee.⁶ I have dissented in each case, not out of nostalgia or misplaced reverence for the phone book, although it is worth noting that the remaining mandated areas are precisely those with such limited wireline and wireless competition that local telephone service remains regulated. The assumption that broadband and mobile subscriptions have universally supplanted the directory in such circumstances is, at the very least, better augmented with evidence.

¹ See Telecom Decision 2025-63, dissenting opinion of Commissioner Bram Abramson, paragraph 8.

² See [Commission Staff Letter](#), 2 June 2010.

³ See Telecom Regulatory Policy 2011-291, paragraph 44.

⁴ See Telecom Regulatory Policy 2016-496, paragraph 185.

⁵ See Telecom Orders 2024-219, 2024-220, 2025-168, and 2025-207.

⁶ Decisions of the Telecommunications Committee are made on behalf of the Commission. See *Telecommunications Committee*, By-Law No. 10 (CRTC), paragraph (e): “[a]ny act or thing done by the Telecommunications Committee shall be deemed to be an act or thing done by the members [...]” This delegating by-law was, in turn, made pursuant to paragraph 11(1)(b) and subsection 12(3) of the *Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Act*, providing for duties to be delegated to standing committees by by-law. Such delegation to standing committees, whose remit is made explicit through by-law, is distinguished from other forms of delegation, like the assignment of particular cases and of panels to those cases.

5. Rather, though, my dissent rests on procedural and evidentiary grounds:
- These five applications have been processed separately, an inefficient approach that hampers coherent policy formulation and atomizes public participation.
 - Each proceeding, handled under streamlined procedures that limit visibility and participation, had minimal public consultation, leaving us without meaningful evidence from affected rural and remote ratepayers.
 - The majority's rationale, summarized at paragraph 6 of the majority decision, misreads the regulatory history. It portrays a prior, wide-ranging proceeding as having canvassed sufficient evidence on this specific issue when it did not. Indeed, that proceeding declined to invite immediate tariff changes, in a way that ensured we would revisit these obligations more carefully.

I expand on these concerns in my dissenting opinions to Telecom Orders 2024-219 and 2025-207.

6. As further applications arise, these shortcomings will only compound. It is an unfortunate direction on a matter of historic and practical importance to Canadians in rural and remote areas whose continued regulation reflects their limited connectivity, and who deserve to be informed and heard. As subsequent applicants come forward, it is to be hoped they will include some evidence of consultation with the ratepayers and communities they serve.