



Telecom Order CRTC 2025-244

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Gatineau, 18 September 2025

Public record: Tariff Notice 427

NorthernTel, Limited Partnership – Destandardization of residential services

Summary

The Commission received an application from NorthernTel, Limited Partnership (NorthernTel), proposing to destandardize 13 of its legacy residential services and/or rate elements.

These services are either technologically obsolete, underused, or costly to maintain. Additionally, modern alternatives are available for some of these services. By removing these services from general availability, NorthernTel will be able to streamline its offerings, which will allow it to focus on newer and more efficient technologies while reducing dependency on outdated infrastructure. Current customers will be grandfathered through this change and permitted to retain these services until they cancel, modify, or move their service. Accordingly, the Commission approves NorthernTel's application.

Application

1. On 9 May 2025, the Commission received an application from NorthernTel, Limited Partnership (NorthernTel), proposing to destandardize 13 residential services and/or rate elements under its General Tariff, Items N140, N260, and N490.
2. These legacy residential services include a mix of individual calling features such as speed calling, multi-number ringing, and intercommunication between phone sets, as well as older bundles combining telephone and Internet services, inter-building connectivity options, and residential bundles that have been available for many years.
3. NorthernTel submitted that some of the impacted services are supported by aging infrastructure that is becoming technologically obsolete, and most have been replaced by less expensive, modern alternatives. These services have very few subscribers, and no future demand is anticipated. Additionally, many of these services are available through other providers.
4. NorthernTel proposed to streamline its offerings by removing these legacy services from general availability. This destandardization will allow NorthernTel to focus on newer and more efficient technologies while reducing dependency on outdated infrastructure.

5. NorthernTel emphasized that no existing customers will lose access to their services once they are destandardized. Customers currently subscribed to these services will be grandfathered and will be permitted to retain them until they cancel, modify, or move their service. NorthernTel provided customers with notices to explain the destandardization process, the grandfathering approach, and the customer's right to comment. NorthernTel also provided a customer service contact and noted that alternative services are available for those interested in transitioning voluntarily.
6. NorthernTel requested an effective date of 1 October 2025.
7. The Commission received one intervention from a customer regarding the application. NorthernTel also received two additional interventions from customers, which were not submitted to the Commission, but were addressed by NorthernTel in its submission.

Positions of parties

8. In their interventions, the customers opposed the proposed destandardization of legacy home phone bundles. They raised a number of issues, including concerns about losing access to home phone services, affordability of existing packages, and individual service matters (such as repairs or customer service).
9. NorthernTel responded to the intervening customers by phone and in writing, explaining that grandfathered customers would retain their current services unless they move, change, or cancel their plans. NorthernTel also emphasized that alternative home phone packages would remain available, including through future fibre-to-the-home deployments. The company noted that all of the intervening customers expressed satisfaction with the clarification provided during these direct follow-ups.

Commission's analysis

10. The services proposed for destandardization are technologically obsolete, and alternative services are available to customers. The shift toward more flexible and user-friendly alternatives is consistent with broader industry patterns, and the technical sustainability concerns mirror those raised in other approved destandardization applications. Accordingly, the Commission considers that the continued operation of these services is neither efficient nor in the public interest.
11. The Commission also considers that the proposed destandardization will advance the policy objectives set out in paragraphs 7(b) and (f) of the *Telecommunications Act*.¹

¹ The cited policy objectives are: 7(b) to render reliable and affordable telecommunications services of high quality accessible to Canadians in both urban and rural areas in all regions of Canada; and 7(f) to foster increased reliance on market forces for the provision of telecommunications services and to ensure that regulation, where required, is efficient and effective.

12. NorthernTel's proposed transition strategy for customers aligns with Commission precedent and meets the expectations outlined in Telecom Information Bulletin 2010-455-1. By issuing tailored notices more than 120 days in advance of the destandardization, NorthernTel has demonstrated a proactive and customer-centric approach. The decision to maintain pricing and service for grandfathered customers ensures stability. Accordingly, the Commission finds the proposed transition plan to be appropriate.
13. The Commission acknowledges that the concerns raised by customers, particularly those related to affordability and access in rural areas, are valid and aligned with broader policy considerations. However, NorthernTel engaged with customers directly and ensured that they were satisfied with the company's mitigation measures. This is consistent with Commission policy,² and the Commission considers that the issues raised by interveners have been reasonably addressed by NorthernTel.

Conclusion

14. In light of all of the above, the Commission approves NorthernTel's application.
15. 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

- *Modern telecommunications services – The path forward for Canada's digital economy*, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2016-496, 21 December 2016
- *Approval processes for tariff applications and intercarrier agreements*, Telecom Information Bulletin CRTC 2010-455, 5 July 2010, as amended by Telecom Information Bulletin CRTC 2010-455-1, 19 February 2016
- *Mandatory customer contract renewal notification and requirements for service destandardization/withdrawal*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2008-22, 6 March 2008

² Customer notification and mitigation expectations are outlined in Telecom Info Bulletin 2010-455 and Telecom Decision 2008-22. Broader service access principles are outlined in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2016-496.