



Telecom Order CRTC 2025-276

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Gatineau, 17 October 2025

Public record: Tariff Notice 590

TELUS Communications Inc. – Change to support structure tariff

Summary

The Commission is taking action to help ensure that Canadians benefit from more choice of high-quality Internet services. One way it supports this is by making it easier for companies to deploy new telecommunications networks across Canada.

This order focuses on access to the millions of telephone poles owned or controlled by large telephone companies. These poles, amongst other things, carry a significant amount of the cables that connect Canadians to high-speed Internet. The Commission allows other providers – like cable companies – to use these structures to deploy their own networks. This makes it easier for them to bring new choices to market, because it removes the need for them to build their own structures where it is not cost efficient to do so.

The Commission received an application from TELUS Communications Inc. (TELUS) proposing a new tariff rate for the company’s poles in its Alberta and British Columbia serving areas. This new rate takes into account changes made in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2023-31 and TELUS’s updated costs.

In this order, the Commission approves a final rate of \$2.29 per billing unit per month.

The Commission considers that this new final rate will allow TELUS to recover costs for its support structure facilities, which will facilitate the deployment of broadband networks and help ensure that Canadians benefit from increased competition, lower prices, and high-quality Internet services.

Background

1. The current tariff rate charged by TELUS Communications Inc. (TELUS) for access to its poles in Alberta and British Columbia is \$1.61 per billing unit per month, which was established nine years ago in Telecom Order 2016-228.
2. In Telecom Regulatory Policy 2023-31, the Commission made several determinations to facilitate access to poles owned or controlled by Canadian carriers. In that policy, the Commission anticipated that adjustments to the existing rates may be warranted, given some of the new responsibilities of the incumbent local exchange carriers

(ILECs) resulting from the policy. Specifically, the Commission stated in paragraphs 50 and 51:

50. While the Commission acknowledges that ILECs may not be fully compensated for their maintenance costs solely through the attachment rates, it considers this appropriate, because a portion of the costs can be allocated to the pole owner's operations as well. It therefore follows that attachers should not bear the full burden of the pole maintenance costs.

51. Moreover, ILECs can file a new cost study for support structure services if they believe that rates are no longer just and reasonable. Failing to do so, ILECs cannot impose additional charges to attachers in order to increase the compensation for a category of costs already covered in the tariffed rates.

Application

3. On 26 April 2024, the Commission received an application from TELUS proposing a new tariff rate of \$2.49 per billing unit per month for its poles in its Alberta and British Columbia serving areas. This application included a cost study for the company's proposed pole attachment rate.
4. The Commission issued two requests for information (RFIs), on 20 September 2024, and on 30 January 2025. In these RFIs, the Commission requested further information from TELUS to clarify elements of its cost study and to support the company's proposed rate.
5. In response to the RFIs, TELUS corrected several issues identified in the information submitted in support of the proposed rate, which resulted in a revised proposed rate of \$2.52 per billing unit per month.
6. On 17 February 2025, Bell Canada filed a procedural request related to its Tariff Notice 981 for immediate approval of an interim rate following the issuance of Telecom Order 2025-21. In this order, the Commission approved, with changes, the terms and conditions that facilitate access to support structures. TELUS submitted a letter in support of Bell Canada's request for the immediate approval of the pole rental unit rate and asked that the Commission consider its request simultaneously with Bell Canada's interim rate request, adding that the request is equally applicable to TELUS.
7. On 25 February 2025, TELUS filed a procedural request for immediate approval of an interim rate. The Commission approved making TELUS's current rate of \$1.61 per billing unit per month interim as of 11 March 2025 in Telecom Order 2025-77.
8. The Commission received interventions from Bragg Communications Inc., carrying on business as Eastlink; Quebecor Media Inc., on behalf of its subsidiaries Freedom Mobile Inc. and Videotron Ltd.; and Rogers Communications Canada Inc. (collectively, the cable carriers). The Commission also received interventions from

the British Columbia Broadband Association, CityWest Cable & Telephone Corp., and Lytton Area Wireless Society.

Issues

9. The Commission has identified the following issues to be addressed in this order:
- What should the rate be for support structures?
 - Should the revised rate be applied on a retroactive basis?

What should the rate be for support structures?

10. The current tariff rate charged by TELUS (\$1.61 per billing unit per month) was established nine years ago in Telecom Order 2016-228, based on a submission in the proceeding leading to Telecom Decision 2010-900. In that proceeding, TELUS submitted a cost study that led to a proposed monthly rate of \$3.05 per billing unit per month, although this was adjusted by the Commission to arrive at a rate of \$1.44 per billing unit per month. In 2016, that was adjusted to the current rate of \$1.61 per billing unit per month due to a change in the treatment of service poles, which decreased the number of poles over which TELUS could recover its costs.
11. In this application, TELUS initially proposed costs that equate to a rate of \$2.49 per billing unit per month, which was subsequently revised to \$2.52 per billing unit per month following RFIs issued by the Commission.
12. TELUS noted the length of time since the current rate was set, stating that it is based on costs submitted in the proceeding that led to Telecom Decision 2010-900. Additionally, TELUS noted that the costs to provide the service have substantially increased, thus rendering the rate no longer compensatory or just and reasonable. Specifically, TELUS named labour, materials, and tools as the primary drivers of cost increases for the company.
13. TELUS also noted that there have been considerable changes to the provisioning of support structure service, citing Telecom Regulatory Policy 2023-31, which introduced additional charges that were not previously applicable to the company (e.g., corrective work).
14. With its application, TELUS submitted the requisite cost study report outlining the costing methodology employed, inputs and assumptions, and associated data demonstrating the cost details and how it arrived at the proposed rate. All documents were produced and submitted following the pricing methodology introduced in Telecom Decision 95-13, which was subsequently upheld in Telecom Decision 2010-900.

Commission's analysis

15. In this application, TELUS initially proposed a new rate of \$2.49 per billing unit per month.
16. Through the two RFIs mentioned above, the Commission carefully analyzed each cost study item considering the previous submissions, interveners' comments, and TELUS's submission and replies to interveners.
17. The Commission approves a rate of \$2.29 per billing unit per month. To reach a just and reasonable rate, the Commission applied adjustments to several cost study categories. The following table outlines the Commission's adjustments:

Cost item	Commission adjustment	Rationale for adjustment
Depreciation	Decreased depreciation by amount of productivity loss. Adjusted historical estimate timeframe to five years.	Excluded double counting of productivity loss. All historical costs should be based on a consistent period.
Maintenance	Adjusted historical estimate timeframe to five years.	All historical costs should be based on a consistent period.
Removal	Adjusted historical estimate timeframe to five years.	All historical costs should be based on a consistent period.
Indirect labour	Adjusted calculation methodology.	Applied indirect labour loading factor to depreciation only.
Vegetation and tree trimming	Adjusted historical estimate timeframe to five years.	All historical costs should be based on a consistent period.
Corrective work	Adjusted the ratio of corrective work to make-ready work in total.	Revised the ratio following responses to RFIs.
Percent-utilization factor	Disregarded addition of pole-height allocation factor.	Applying a height-based attribution factor would be inappropriate because the cable carriers have no control over the height of TELUS poles to which they attach.
Embedded pole rental cost per unit	Disregarded addition of pole-height allocation factor.	Applying a height-based attribution factor would be inappropriate because the cable carriers have no control over the height of TELUS poles to which they attach.

Loss in productivity	Adjusted methodology used to calculate cost.	The number of attachments is a more appropriate proxy for number of strands.
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Should the revised rate be applied on a retroactive basis?

18. During the proceeding under consideration in this order, TELUS requested that its proposed rate be made interim.
19. The Commission did not make TELUS's rate interim at the time of its application because the terms and conditions had not been approved. On 28 January 2025, the terms and conditions were approved with changes by the Commission in Telecom Order 2025-21.
20. On 25 February 2025, TELUS filed a procedural request for its current wholesale support structure rate to be made interim immediately. The Commission approved making TELUS's current rate interim in Telecom Order 2025-77 on 11 March 2025.

Commission's analysis

21. The Commission considers that making the final rate retroactive to the date of Telecom Order 2025-77 would recognize the increase in TELUS's costs, while not significantly burdening smaller carriers. Therefore, the Commission approves making the final rate effective as of 11 March 2025.

Conclusion

22. The Commission approves a final rate of \$2.29 per billing unit per month for TELUS's poles in its Alberta and British Columbia serving areas. This rate is based on the adjustments outlined in paragraph 17 and detailed in the appendix to this order.
23. Additionally, the Commission approves that the final rate be made retroactive to 11 March 2025.
24. 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

- *Bell Canada and TELUS Communications Inc. – Interim wholesale support structure rates*, Telecom Order CRTC 2025-77, 11 March 2025

- *Bell Canada, Saskatchewan Telecommunications, and TELUS Communications Inc. – Amended support structure service tariffs*, Telecom Order CRTC 2025-21, 28 January 2025
- *Regulatory measures to make access to poles owned or controlled by Canadian carriers more efficient*, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2023-31, 15 February 2023, as amended by Telecom Regulatory Policy 2023-31-1, 22 March 2023
- *TELUS Communications Company - Application to modify monthly pole attachment rate*, Telecom Order CRTC 2016-228, 16 June 2016
- *Review of the large incumbent local exchange carriers' support structure service rates*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2010-900, 2 December 2010, as amended by Telecom Decision 2010-900-1, 9 December 2010
- *Access to telephone company support structures*, Telecom Decision CRTC 95-13, 22 June 1995

Appendix to Telecom Order CRTC 2025-276: Commission-adjusted costs¹

	Amount
Embedded and net embedded costs per unit	
Total number of poles	996,810
Embedded cost (original cost)	\$768.93
Net embedded cost (net book value)	\$375.04
Annual embedded costs per unit	
Depreciation	\$22.71
Maintenance	\$5.09
Removal	\$2.63
Property tax	\$2.03
Revenue charge	\$0.35
Debt interest	\$8.42
Return on equity	\$22.69
Income tax expense	\$7.91
Other costs (warehousing and distribution)	\$0.01
Other costs (indirect labour)	\$0.57
Other costs (joint use management)	\$1.01
Other costs (vegetation and tree trimming)	\$1.69
Other costs (corrective work)	\$1.58
Total annual embedded cost per unit	\$76.69
Percent-utilization factor	40.01%

¹ Amounts may not add up exactly due to rounding.

Embedded cost per unit attributed to third parties	\$30.69
Number of structures to which third parties attach	430,352
Total embedded cost attributed to third parties	\$13,206,124
Embedded pole rental costs	
Embedded pole rental cost per unit	\$32.73
Number of rented poles to which third parties attach	35,134
Total pole rental costs for third parties	\$1,149,799
Annualized prospective incremental costs (annual equivalent cost)	
Loss in productivity	\$485,403
Administration	\$215,244
Total incremental costs	\$700,647
Total annual costs	\$15,056,570
Number of annual billing units	547,642
Annual cost per billing unit	\$27.49
Monthly cost per billing unit	\$2.29