



Telecom Order CRTC 2026-194

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Gatineau, 31 July 2026

Public record: Tariff Notice 7728

Bell Canada – Destandardization of Megalink Service

Summary

The Commission received an application from Bell Canada proposing to destandardize its Megalink Service under its General Tariff. Megalink Service is an access service provided by Bell Canada between a Bell Canada central office and terminal equipment on the premises of an individual, a business, or a competitive local exchange carrier.

Bell Canada's Megalink Service is a mature service that is becoming increasingly obsolete as the costs associated with maintaining the Megalink Service increase, due to the difficulty of sourcing spare or replacement parts, while customer demand for it has begun to decrease. Given these challenges, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Bell Canada to provide Megalink Service in a reliable manner. The service's destandardization preserves service for existing customers while supporting a transition to suitable alternatives. Accordingly, the Commission approves Bell Canada's application.

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

Application

1. The Commission received an application dated 2 December 2025 from Bell Canada proposing to destandardize Item 5201 – Megalink Service of its General Tariff.
2. Bell Canada indicated that its Megalink Service is a mature service that has experienced a decline in demand and revenues between 2022 and 2025. Bell Canada expects that this trend will continue or accelerate in the coming years.
3. Bell Canada added that the network equipment that it uses to provide its Megalink Service has been discontinued by the manufacturer for some time, which makes spare or replacement parts expensive and difficult to source. Bell Canada expects these parts to become increasingly scarce and more expensive over time, making it more difficult for Bell Canada to repair and restore its Megalink Service following future outages. Accordingly, Bell Canada considers that reliable Megalink Service is increasingly difficult and costly to provide. Bell Canada expects that it may become impossible to provide the service in the reasonably near term.

4. Consequently, Bell Canada stated that its Megalink Service should be destandardized, under the following terms:
 - Existing Megalink Service customers may retain their service, and any requests that they submit for moves, additions, or changes to their existing Megalink Service will be processed.
 - Megalink Service will not be available for new customers.
 - The four- and five-year minimum contract periods (MCPs) will be destandardized for existing customers.
 - Bell Canada will withdraw its seven-year MCP, for which it has no customers.
 - Bell Canada will remove the tariff provision that enables customers who have selected a 1-, 2-, 3-, 4-, or 5-year MCP to convert their MCP to one of longer duration during their MCP's last six months.
 - The tariff provisions for extensions will limit the total extension period to two years.
5. Bell Canada noted that the Commission has already approved similar changes in Telecom Order 2024-342.
6. Bell Canada suggested alternatives to its Megalink Service for its customers. To further assist existing Megalink Service customers, Bell Canada proposed to have those who wish to move to an alternative service migrate the terms of their Megalink Service contract to an alternate Bell Canada service contract. In these cases, Megalink Service termination charges would not apply.
7. Bell Canada notified its affected customers and provided the Commission with a copy of the notice.
8. Bell Canada requested an effective date of 2 March 2026.
9. The Commission did not receive any interventions regarding the application. After the close of record date, Bell Canada filed a reply submission dated 6 February 2026 reiterating its request for approval of its application, noting that it received no comments from its customers and that there were no interventions received by the Commission.

Commission's analysis

10. In compliance with the procedure set out in Telecom Information Bulletin 2010-455-1, Bell Canada provided the Commission with (i) the proposed destandardization date, (ii) the rationale for the destandardization, (iii) the number of customers affected, and (iv) a copy of the notice to affected customers. The Commission also notes that Bell Canada highlighted possible service alternatives for affected customers and that those customers have not raised any concerns with Bell Canada or on the record.

11. Bell Canada did not provide a description for its Megalink Service as required by Telecom Information Bulletin 2010-455-1; however, a definition is provided in Item 5201.1.a) of Bell Canada's General Tariff and also in paragraph two of Telecom Decision 2002-40. The information in Bell Canada's General Tariff and the Commission's decision is publicly available and is therefore sufficient for the purposes of this order.
12. The Commission notes that if the Megalink Service were destandardized, Bell Canada would not make the service available to new customers but would maintain it for existing customers.
13. The Commission notes that the network equipment supporting Bell Canada's Megalink Service is over 30 years old and is no longer supported, which impairs Bell Canada's ability to repair and restore service in a timely manner in the event of an outage.
14. The Commission considers Bell Canada's request to withdraw the seven-year MCP, to no longer allow customers to convert to an MCP of longer duration, and to limit the contract extension period to be reasonable.
15. Given these details and the fact that the customer base for Bell Canada's Megalink Service is declining, the Commission considers that Bell Canada's proposal is reasonable and complies with the relevant regulatory policies concerning destandardization.
16. The Commission considers that the proposed destandardization will advance the policy objective set out in paragraph 7(f) of the *Telecommunications Act*.¹

Conclusion

17. In light of all of the above, the Commission approves, by majority decision, Bell Canada's application, effective the date of this order.
18. 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.
19. The Commission reminds applicants to provide service descriptions in future destandardization/withdrawal applications.

Secretary General

¹ The cited policy objective is: 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.

Dissenting opinion of Commissioner Bram Abramson

1. There is some irony in the majority's raised eyebrows¹ over Bell Canada's failure to include, with its application, a description of the Megalink Service it proposes to destandardize and, in practical effect, to place on a withdrawal path.
2. That is because, if any public switched telephone network (PSTN) data service required little introduction, it would surely be Megalink. Publicly specified in 1990,² approved as Bell Canada's integrated services digital network (ISDN) Primary Rate Interface offering,³ Megalink channelized a standard T1 line into 23 digital PSTN-speaking bearer channels and a signalling channel, connecting customer-side equipment to the telco's central office and, from there, to PSTN and other switched or dedicated services.
3. The retirement by Canada's largest carrier of a flagship PSTN digital business service is a milestone. I have consistently argued⁴ that the larger wind-down of PSTN functions should be tackled through a coordinated transition, not tariff by tariff, service by service, and carrier brand by carrier brand. Treating this application as an isolated and routine tariff matter has once again produced an isolated and routine record not adequate to the occasion. The majority relies on the limits of that record to proceed as though nothing larger were at stake.
4. The narrow framing produces the narrow record. The majority now treats that record's silence as evidence there is nothing to say. I dissent.
5. First, the Commission's practice is to treat destandardization and withdrawal as distinct steps. Bell Canada's application sunsets existing Megalink customers at two years after expiry of their current contracts. That reaches beyond destandardization. It sets a timeline for withdrawal.
6. The applicant points to Telecom Order 2024-342, in which TELUS Communications Inc. (TELUS) sunsetted business Centrex services, as comfort. But TELUS had destandardized those

¹ Majority decision (above), paragraphs 11 and 17.

² Terminal Attachment Program Advisory Committee (TAPAC) Bulletin No. 90-07, 14 December 1990, following the 1988 formation of the Private Sector Advisory Committee on Integrated Services Digital Networks (ISDN), on which see generally, [Government Telecommunications Planning Framework and Review](#), Department of Communications, 1990, section 1.3; *Megalink User-to-Network Specification*, Bell Canada Interface Disclosure ID-0005, December 1990, filed in the proceeding resulting in Telecom Decision 92-5.

³ *ISDN User-Network Interfaces—Interface Structures and Access Capabilities*, ITU-T (formerly CCITT) [Recommendation I.412](#), 1988/1993; Telecom Decision 92-5; and *ISDN Primary Rate User-Network Interface Specification*, [NIS-A-2-11-1](#) (Northern Telecom), August 1998.

⁴ Dissents to Telecom Orders 2024-289, paragraphs 3-10; 2025-281 and 2025-282, each at paragraphs 4-5; 2025-310, paragraph 18; and 2026-28, paragraphs 4-8.

services two years earlier⁵ and returned in 2024 with later Centrex transition changes. It did not collapse the two steps into a single routine filing. Its transition terms permitted renewals as long as three years beyond then-current expiry dates. And Centrex presented a different service, customer base, network function, and migration problem. This is not that.

7. Second, hundreds of businesses continue to use Megalink in Canada today. Only a year before the current application, Bell Canada was still identifying Megalink as an offering to which soon-to-be-orphaned Digital Exchange Access customers might migrate.⁶ A service can be obsolete as a matter of network evolution yet remain operationally important to users who have built equipment, processes, and continuity arrangements around it. Migration costs and planning cycles may extend over years.⁷
8. Is the present proposal balanced and appropriate in view of this reliance? Do remaining customers use Megalink for public safety, critical infrastructure, financial, governmental, alarm, or business continuity functions? What migration costs and planning cycles would sunset on this timeline impose on them? In phone-dependent communities where the alternatives are high-latency satellite and microwave connections, is a Low Earth Orbit substitute adequate for all use cases given its cross-border routing, control, support, and jurisdictional dependencies?
9. We do not know and did not ask. Nothing before the Commission, filed in confidence or on the record, tells us. Bell Canada bore the burden of supporting its application and had every incentive to assemble a record sufficient for expeditious approval. Its failure to address concerns like these cannot support a favourable inference that the proposed transition will cause no material difficulty. Nor ought the majority, with respect, treat the record's silence as though it were evidence, especially when that silence is itself a product of the proceeding's narrow framing.⁸
10. I would have issued a request for information to complete the record. Short of that I would have denied the application without prejudice, until Bell Canada came back with a record adequate to the transition it is proposing.

⁵ Telecom Order 2022-250.

⁶ *Tariff Notice 7702*, Part 1 Application (Bell Canada), 23 September 2024, Attachment 1 (letter entitled "Important information about your Bell Digital Exchange Access Service"): "Prior to December 23, we are offering alternative services such as Megalink or SIP Trunking Service."

⁷ Dissent to Telecom Order 2026-179, paragraphs 5-6.

⁸ See, similarly, dissents to Telecom Orders 2025-235, 2025-237, 2026-28, and 2026-50.

Related documents

- *Bell Aliant Regional Communications, Limited Partnership – Withdrawal of residential services with no customers*, Telecom Order CRTC 2026-179, 21 July 2026
- *Bell Canada – Withdrawal of Channels for Wired-Music Transmission*, Telecom Order CRTC 2026-50, 25 March 2026
- *Bell Canada et al. – Withdrawal of Call Break-in service*, Telecom Order CRTC 2026-28, 6 February 2026
- *Bell Canada – Application requesting forbearance from the regulation of Digital Exchange Access Service*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2025-310, 20 November 2025
- *Bell Canada – Tariff Notice 7716 – Destandardization of DS-1 Access services*, Telecom Order CRTC 2025-282, 30 October 2025
- *Bell Canada – Tariff Notice 988 – Destandardization of DS-1 Access services*, Telecom Order CRTC 2025-281, 30 October 2025
- *Northwestel Inc. – Tariff Notice 1234 – Terrestrial Internet Services – Service Charges*, Telecom Order CRTC 2025-237, 11 September 2025
- *Bell Aliant Regional Communications, Limited Partnership – Hospital Patient Telephone Service – Withdrawal and replacement with alternative services*, Telecom Order CRTC 2025-235, 10 September 2025
- *TELUS Communications Inc. – Approval of tariff applications*, Telecom Order CRTC 2024-342, 19 December 2024
- *Determination of costs award with respect to the participation of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre in the proceeding initiated by TekSavvy Solutions Inc.*, Telecom Order CRTC 2024-289, 15 November 2024
- *TELUS Communications Inc. – Approval of a tariff application*, Telecom Order CRTC 2022-250, 20 September 2022
- *Approval processes for tariff applications and intercarrier agreements*, Telecom Information Bulletin CRTC 2010-455-1, 19 February 2016
- *Bell Canada – Megalink service*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2002-40, 12 July 2002
- *Bell Canada – Introduction of Megalink service*, Telecom Decision CRTC 92-5, 3 April 1992