



# Telecom Order CRTC 2026-81

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Gatineau, 5 May 2026

*Public record: 1011-NOC2022-0325*

## **Broadband Fund – Acceptance of statement of work for TELUS Communications Inc.’s mobile wireless project in Quebec (including routes 204, 232, 234, and 277)**

### **Background**

1. In Telecom Decision 2024-192, the Commission awarded up to \$7,479,320 to TELUS Communications Inc. (TELUS) for its project to build cellular towers to serve approximately 27 kilometres of highways in Quebec, a significant step in addressing public safety concerns by providing cellular coverage along major transportation corridors.
2. In accordance with the conditions of approval set out in Telecom Decision 2024-192, TELUS confirmed in writing its acceptance of the funding award. TELUS subsequently submitted its completed statement of work for Commission approval.

### **Commission’s analysis**

3. The statement of work included a reduction in total eligible costs, including a \$923,628 decrease in project funding from the Broadband Fund. This decrease is associated with minor coverage changes and modifications to the project’s road coverage and technical solution.

### **Conclusion**

4. The Commission approves, by majority decision, the finalized statement of work, including the decrease of \$923,628 to the approved funding amount, for a new total of \$6,555,692.
5. The Commission will provide the statement of work separately and in confidence to TELUS.
6. Provided that TELUS complies with all conditions of funding set out in Telecom Decision 2024-192, the Commission will direct the Central Fund Administrator to make payments to TELUS for its mobile wireless project. Failure to comply with these conditions could result in funding being delayed or not being disbursed.
7. The Commission reminds TELUS of the following condition of funding set out in subparagraph 40(i) of Telecom Decision 2024-192: Where a risk of adverse impact on an Aboriginal or treaty right becomes known and a duty to consult exists, TELUS must advise the

Commission within **20 days** and submit a plan detailing the form and process for fulfilment of the duty. Release of any additional funding will be contingent on TELUS demonstrating that any necessary consultations were held to the Crown's satisfaction.

8. TELUS is required to submit quarterly progress reports and expense claims beginning no later than **4 August 2026**, or as otherwise approved by the Commission, until the project is completed.
9. Finally, in accordance with the Commission's determinations in Telecom Decision 2024-192, TELUS must file for Commission approval a final implementation report within **90 days** of construction being complete and broadband services being offered. In the report, TELUS must confirm that project construction is complete and that broadband services are being offered. The date on which the final implementation report is submitted will be considered the project completion date. TELUS must also demonstrate in the report that the project has met the requirements set out in all related decisions.<sup>1</sup>
10. A dissenting opinion by Commissioner Bram Abramson is attached to this order.

Secretary General

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<sup>1</sup> See subparagraph 40(k) of Telecom Decision 2024-192.

## Dissenting opinion of Commissioner Bram Abramson

1. Canadian icon Stompin' Tom Connors famously sang about a potato truck driver “rolling down the highway smiling”. Today Bud’s smile and peace of mind likely depend on something Stompin' Tom never had to consider: whether the mobile phone in his rig can actually find a signal.
2. The Broadband Fund funds the extension of mobile coverage to remote highways where the market will not. TELUS has modified its Quebec project<sup>1</sup> by trimming subsidy by 12 percent, reducing eligible highway kilometres by 15 percent, and delaying delivery by one month. These changes are not the reason I dissent. I dissent because the Telecommunications Committee majority<sup>2</sup> failed to ask whether this project will, in practice, take “a significant step in addressing public safety concerns by providing cellular coverage along major transportation corridors”.<sup>3</sup> Subsidized mobile coverage should be assessed by who can use it, not just where a signal exists.
3. Outside 9-1-1 situations, Broadband Fund mobile subsidies currently ensure direct benefit only for the proponent’s own retail customers. Our review does not check for clear, low-friction pathways for competing carriers to access this infrastructure, nor create public accountability about any proponent efforts to seek inbound roaming, tower tenants, or other forms of shared access. This is an oversight we should correct.
4. Fixed service is location-bound; mobile service is nomadic. Some drivers, like Bud, know their routes well and plan coverage accordingly. Most do not. A driver in a dead zone cannot pull over and switch carriers to make a call: they are captive to whatever coverage exists then and there. Because transient users cannot make market choices in the moment, universality is a necessity, not a luxury. The Commission must therefore be clear about what we are subsidizing: a shared safety net, or a series of carrier-specific mobile connectivity islands?
5. We cannot manage what we do not measure. Our review should disclose the steps proponents take to facilitate access for subscribers of other carriers. Transparency is not a substitute for policy, but it is a precondition for it. Without such visibility we cannot know whether we are building a coherent telecommunications system or a fragmented patchwork that excludes Canadians based on their service provider.

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<sup>1</sup> To numbered roads in the Municipalité de Lac-des-Aigles, Municipalité de la paroisse de La Trinité-des-Monts, Municipalité de Saint-Malachie, Municipalité de Saint-Narcisse-de-Rimouski, and Municipalité de Sainte-Perpétue.

<sup>2</sup> On behalf of the Commission: *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 [...]”), pursuant to paragraph 11(1)(b) and subsection 12(3) of the *Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Act* (duties delegated to standing committees by by-law). In contrast to a panel charged with inquiry into a particular matter: *Shoan v. Canada (Attorney General)*, 2016 FCA 261, para 6.

<sup>3</sup> Majority decision, paragraph 1.

6. Regulatory tools for roaming and tower-sharing already exist. But their existence alone does not guarantee their use in remote, subsidized corridors, where the business case for competitors to seek access is often weak. Even as satellite-to-mobile technology expands, no universal obligation exists to ensure these gaps are filled. Without addressing this asymmetry, we risk using contribution dollars to support infrastructure that fails to deliver the broad public benefits used to justify the subsidy.
7. A modest but necessary step would be to review Broadband Fund statements of work to determine (a) what steps have been taken to secure coverage for other carriers' subscribers; and (b) which carriers' subscribers can actually expect to be covered. Because this decision fails to do so, and consistent with my approach on Telecom Orders CRTC 2025-116, 2025-117, and 2025-158, I dissent.

## Related documents

- *Broadband Fund – Acceptance of statement of work for Sogetel Mobilité inc. 's mobile wireless project in southeastern Quebec (Saint-Augustin-de-Woburn)*, Telecom Order CRTC 2025-158, 23 June 2025
- *Broadband Fund – Acceptance of statement of work for Bell Canada 's mobile wireless project in Newfoundland and Labrador (Gander Bay South)*, Telecom Order CRTC 2025-117, 23 May 2025
- *Broadband Fund – Acceptance of statement of work for TBayTel 's mobile wireless project in northwestern Ontario (Highway 527)*, Telecom Order CRTC 2025-116, 23 May 2025
- *Broadband Fund – Project funding approval for TELUS Communications Inc. 's mobile wireless project in Quebec (including routes 204, 232, 234, and 277)*, Telecom Decision CRTC 2024-192, 28 August 2024