

**August 2, 2017**

**Whitecourt & District Chamber of Commerce  
4907-52 Ave, Box 1011  
Whitecourt, AB T7S 1N9**

Re: Letter of Support for Digital Broadband: The Essential Utility

To the Delegates of the 2017 Canadian Chamber of Commerce Policy Convention,

Please accept this letter in support of the policy resolution advanced by the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce and the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce recommending that the Government of Canada declare Digital Broadband an essential utility. We recognize and affirm the following facts:

1. Canada faces unique geographical challenges in implementing the digital inclusion and benchmark goals as set forth by the CRTC for a national digital broadband service.
2. There are deep economic and social divisions being caused in both rural and urban areas by the availability or inaccessibility of digital broadband. Economic and social opportunities are being missed.
3. Under the current system, there is little incentive for private industry to innovate or invest in order to overcome the obstacles and costs of last-mile delivery of services to excluded areas.
4. Canada would benefit immeasurably, both economically and socially, from achieving, within as short a time period as possible, 100% digital inclusion with reasonable benchmarks for upload and download speeds, both within urban and rural areas.
5. That declaring Digital Broadband an essential utility is the best option for moving this important project forward to a timely implementation.
6. That doing so will drive innovation and economic activity while making Canadian businesses more competitive in the global market.

It is our hope that the Canadian Chamber of Commerce will adopt this resolution and advocate for the implementation of this policy by the Government of Canada. Thank you for taking our support into account as you deliberate.

Sincerely,



**Rand Richards, President  
Whitecourt & District Chamber of Commerce**