



October 5, 2020

Hon. Laurie Scott
Minister of Infrastructure
ministryofinfrastructure@ontario.ca & laurie.scottco@pc.ola.org

Re: Funding to support broadband infrastructure in Southwestern Ontario

Dear Minister Scott,

Increased funding from the Province of Ontario is urgently needed to address Southwestern Ontario's large connectivity gaps, so that we can close the digital divide and restart our economies.

Enclosed is the SWIFT 2.0 GigaProject funding summary which aims to deliver 1 Gbps services to 95% of the population within Southwestern Ontario by 2026. The SWIFT 2.0 GigaProject will ensure that 191,000 people, that are currently underserved, will enjoy fast, reliable, and affordable high-speed broadband connectivity.

SWIFT, which has proven to be an effective and efficient means for implementing broadband within Southwestern Ontario, is prepared to act immediately and aggressively in order to ensure that the project is implemented in the 2021-2026 timeframe and that the shovel-ready projects are kicked-off within weeks of funding being made available.

The WOWC supports the SWIFT 2.0 GigaProject and is requesting direct funding from the Government of Ontario up to \$384 million and from the Government of Canada up to \$460 million. Provided that the CRTC Broadband Fund and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) Universal Broadband Fund each allocate 10% of their funds directly to Southwestern Ontario (based on population share of total for Canada), the requested funding investments would therefore decrease.

Combined with a contribution from the region and ISPs of up to \$307 million, we intend to successfully address the \$1.1B Southwestern Ontario infrastructure deficit and achieve the goal of providing 50/10 broadband services to 95% of the population within the region by 2026.

We support Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) as Southwestern Ontario's funding mechanism to advance the expansion of critical broadband infrastructure across the region.

Sincerely,

Jim Ginn
Chair, Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus

cc.

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
doug.fordco@pc.ola.org

Members of Provincial Parliament, Western Ontario

Wardens of Western Ontario

Heads of Municipal Council, Western Ontario