



**Bill Walker, MPP**  
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound

Hon. Brad Duguid  
Minister of Development, Employment and Infrastructure  
8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Hearst Block  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2E1

Aug. 19, 2014

Dear Minister Duguid:

I am writing today to seek your support of my constituents in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound through expanded high-speed broadband access.

As you're no doubt aware, improved Internet service would make a significant difference to the prosperity of our rural communities. For this reason, Grey County, as a proud and engaged partner of the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC), has been actively involved in a plan to bring rural communities in Southwestern Ontario access to Ultra-High Speed Broadband Internet service.

The WOWC recommendation is to connect households and businesses in some 310 communities to high-quality fibre technology through an initiative called SWIFT (Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology). The SWIFT broadband project seeks to bring high-capacity, universal fibre optic infrastructure to the entire southwest region and promises to level the playing field for service providers, foster competition and drive down the cost to providers and users.

Based on its 2013 feasibility study, the SWIFT project would have an average cost of \$93/per person, slightly less than the Eastern Ontario Regional Network's costs of \$114 per person. The capital cost of building the proposed network is estimated at \$234 million, which could be reduced by up to 30 per cent if existing infrastructure in the region can be used as part of the network.

Funding from all levels of government and the private sector would ensure reliable regional ultra-high speed broadband network is available in Southwestern Ontario, which is one of the province's most important economic hubs. With this investment we will help ensure our economic hub is connected to the rest of the world, from larger centres such as London to smaller rural communities like West Grey.





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A critical part of the SWIFT project is also the hard work and efforts demonstrated by the dedicated WOWC team. With their recently completed feasibility study, I respectfully request a meeting be set up between their team and your office to update about the SWIFT project and to gauge if this important broadband project may be eligible under your Government's infrastructure funds, namely the newly announced \$100-million Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund.

Thank you for your attention with this request, and I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Walker".

Bill Walker, MPP  
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound

Encl.

CC: Hon. Ted McMeekin, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Hon. Jeff Leal, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs  
WOWC  
County of Grey  
County of Bruce  
Local Councillors and Mayors

