

**Ministry of
Municipal Affairs
and Housing**

Office of the Minister

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Ontario

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The Honourable Navdeep Bains
Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry
Navdeep.Bains@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Catherine McKenna
Minister of Infrastructure and Communities
Catherine.McKenna@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Maryam Monsef
Minister of Rural Economic Development
Minister for Women and Gender Equality
Maryam.Monsef@parl.gc.ca

Dear Ministers:

I am writing today to add my voice, and those of Ontario's municipalities, to the call for urgent federal action to provide immediate funding for reliable broadband access across Ontario.

I have the privilege of meeting regularly with Mayors and council members from across Ontario. From the first day I took office, I have heard that lack of access to reliable high-speed internet service is holding communities, people, and businesses back.

We have worked together to partner with our local governments through our Broadband and Cellular Action Plan to support major investments in under-served areas in Eastern and Southwestern Ontario. To support this commitment, we have targeted \$315 million over five years to expand broadband and cellular infrastructure.

Now, as Ontario and our towns and cities are working together to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, there is even more urgency to address gaps in service and high costs. However, we cannot do this alone - urgent investment from the federal government is required.

While in more northern and rural parts of Ontario internet availability can be limited at best, gaps in coverage persist in southern and urban parts of our province. For many in Ontario, the costs to access service are also prohibitively high.

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The lack of broadband access in rural Ontario puts everyone in unserved or under-served areas at a disadvantage – students seeking help on homework while learning remotely, seniors and other vulnerable individuals looking to access critical services, and business owners working hard to keep afloat and compete during challenging times.

Broadband limitations also restrict the services that rural and northern municipalities can provide to their residents. Ontario's municipal leaders and the citizens they serve must be able to embrace digital service delivery now to respond to the pandemic and to deliver public services efficiently and equitably over the long term.

I know that Ontario, our local governments and Canada all share the same goal: that we can bring our full potential to the task at hand to recover from the COVID-19 outbreak and the resulting impacts on our economy. Our Mayors, councils, community groups and citizens are already developing recovery plans and strategies. Broadband infrastructure is an essential building block, and we will need your commitment to invest, without delay, in the future of Ontario's towns and cities.

I have taken the liberty of copying the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development as I know Minister Hussen also has a strong interest in supporting and strengthening communities. As well, I have copied my colleague, the Honourable Laurie Scott, Minister of Infrastructure, under whose purview broadband falls.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Ontario

c. The Honourable Ahmed Hussen
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
Ahmed.Hussen@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Laurie Scott
Minister of Infrastructure, Ontario

Heads of Municipal Council (Ontario)