



## Media Release

December 22, 2016

### **EOWC & EORN APPLAUD CRTC RULING ON BROADBAND**

“On behalf of all rural residents across Eastern Ontario and those who travel to and from our region we applaud yesterday’s ruling by the CRTC making access to mobile broadband and high speed internet services an essential service,” said Peter Emon Chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens’ Caucus (EOWC).

“It is what we had hoped they would do,” stated Dave Burton Chair of the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN). “Together both of our organizations have been working hard over these past 8 years to close the gaps in internet services across the whole of our region,” he added.

“When we made our submissions to the Commission last April EORN urged them help ensure that rural people and rural businesses get the same type of access to high speed internet services that our urban neighbours enjoy,” stated Burton. “We asked that the Commission also develop an ongoing fund to help organizations like ours to continue to work with the telecommunications industry and that is exactly what they have done,” said Burton.

EORN estimates that about one-sixth of areas in rural Eastern Ontario where there are homes, businesses or major roads, is a cellular dead zone. This lack of access to mobile calling and data is a risk to the region’s economic vitality, quality of life and public safety.

EORN, which helped expand high-speed internet access in the region, is now seeking federal and provincial support for a public-private initiative valued at about \$200 million. The project would cover some 99 per cent of the region, providing mobile access to 72,000 more homes and businesses as well as those who travel its highways.

“With this announcement and the funds that will be made available we think the time is right to act quickly on our project to improve cellular networks particularly in the rural areas of Eastern Ontario,” stated Chair Emon. “We need to build new towers, improve existing ones as well as add coverage and capacity and we are confident given our experience on the first EORN project

that we can create another success partnership with private sector companies in our region,” concluded Burton, Chair of EORN.

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