

# Canada Decides Broadband Internet Access Is a 'Basic Service'

December 22, 2016 10:37am EST 6 Comments

Local regulators want all citizens to have access to unlimited data plans and download speeds of 50Mbps.



It's a Christmas miracle: Broadband Internet has been declared a basic service for all Canadians.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) [wants](#) all citizens to have access to unlimited data plans, and download speeds of at least 50Mbps.

Previously, local landline telephone service was classed as "basic" or essential by the CRTC, [according to CBC News](#).

"Access to broadband Internet service is vital and a basic telecommunication service all Canadians are entitled to receive," CRTC CEO Jean-Pierre Blais said in a statement. "We are doing our part to bring broadband services to rural and remote communities."

This week's mandate also set targets for a minimum of 10Mbps upload speeds, as well as the deployment of mobile wireless technology along major Canadian roads.

Canada is a big place, though, and not every city, town, or municipality can meet these goals. So the Commission is establishing a fund to support projects in underserved areas, where applicants can submit funding proposals to build or upgrade infrastructure for fixed and mobile broadband.

A pot of up to \$750 million—complementary to existing and future private investment and public funding—will be available for spending over the first five years.

"High quality and reliable digital connectivity is essential for the quality of life of Canadians and Canada's economic prosperity," Blais said.

Regulators in the Great White North, meanwhile, urged service providers to make contracts more user-friendly and provide online tools so consumers can better manage their data. And, as of June, all wireless service providers must offer and publicize mobile service packages that meet the needs of Canadians with disabilities.

"Looking ahead, the CRTC will contribute in ways appropriate to its mandate," the Commission said in an announcement. "However, all stakeholders have a role to play to ensure that broadband Internet service is universally available and barriers to adoption are removed."

*Back to top*