



The Broadcasting and Telecommunications Legislative Review Panel  
c/o Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada  
235 Queen Street, 1st Floor  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0H5

January 11, 2019

Dear Mr. Grant and Members of the Review Panel,

On behalf of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC), I would like to provide you with our feedback for the review of the *Telecommunications Act*. We appreciate the opportunity to partake. Our feedback is summarized in one key message: that we believe public safety should be enshrined as one of the purposes of the legislation as it is in the US Telecommunications Act. We are pleased to provide our rationale and would like to begin with an introduction to the CAFC.

Founded in 1909, the CAFC is an independent, non-profit organization representing approximately 3,500 fire departments across Canada. The primary mission of CAFC is to promote the highest standard of public safety in an ever changing and increasingly complex world to ensure the protection of the public through leadership, advocacy and active collaboration with key stakeholders.

Please note that we are not legal experts nor are we necessarily experts in telecommunications. We have however been alerted by trusted colleagues in the legal and telecommunications industry that as currently drafted, neither the *Telecommunications Act* nor the *Radiocommunications Act* contain any reference to public safety. Instead, the *Acts* rely on language like: "foster increased reliance on market forces" (section 7 of the *Telecommunications Act*) as the default mechanism for the delivery of telecommunications services in the absence of any specified users or uses. Currently subsection 7(a) and (h) refers to "social" requirements.

This is in contrast to the equivalent law in the United States, in which the concept of public safety is listed as a purpose for the regulation of both wired and wireless communications in the original law of 1934 (section 1) and in the 1996 amendments which introduced, among other reforms, the concept of universal service (section 254) which reforms the term "public safety" (254(b)(7)(c)(1)(A)).

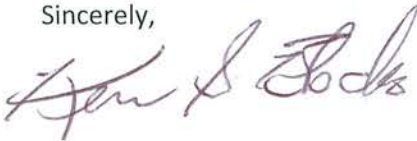
An inclusion of the concept within the enabling legislation creates ultimate political accountability through Parliament, which inevitably has an effect on the regulatory and policy environment. There is a

sound argument to be made that this is beneficial, if not required, in the case of a public resource that is as important, finite and valuable as wireless spectrum, especially in the 21st century in Canada.

The notion that public safety and first responder considerations need to be identified and protected separately is a theme that is recurring in other areas of science and technology. We have made the same point to the Building Codes Commission that public safety intervention in a building requires different considerations. We also see this with the Public Safety Broadband Network. We would encourage this consideration in the review of the *Telecommunications Act* as well.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our feedback. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this submission with us, please feel free to contact the CAFC's Executive Director Dr. Tina Saryeddine at 613-695-8462.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ken Block". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ken" and last name "Block" clearly distinguishable.

Chief Ken Block,  
President CAFC

CC: Chief Bryan Singleton, Chair CAFC Interoperability Task Group; Members of the Interoperability Task Group; Members of the National Advisory Council;