

December 7, 2021

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
Senior Director, Regulatory Policy, Spectrum Licensing Policy Branch
235 Queen Street (6th Floor, East Tower)
Ottawa ON K1A 0H5 Via
email to: spectrumauctions-encheresduspectre@ised-isde.gc.ca

Reply comments to: “Consultation on New Access Licensing Framework, Changes to Subordinate Licensing and White Space to Support Rural and Remote Development”.

The following Reply Comments are necessary given the superficial consensus of most respondents as it relates to the subject matter.

Many respondents views were restricted to being self serving and without the background and understanding of the Consultation. For example, most respondents from central and eastern Canada had no insight into the capabilities of RRBS.

There, however, was an extremely insightful succinct response from the Seaboard Group, a consultancy that the Government and the Telecom incumbents relied on for over 40 years with insight into RRBS and with a stern quote, ***“The Ministry suggests that RRBS should be eclipsed in favour of unlicensed WS approaches. We consider this to be an imprudent allocation of spectral resources and a dangerous course for the Ministry; to attempt to dictate the direction of technology is a perilous endeavour and doomed to fail.”***

Furthermore, Seaboard Group point out in their submission quoted below:

“The benefits ascribed to WS by ISED suggest that WS is “more nimble” and that there is a broad base of equipment that drives down service provider costs. These benefits are specious. The only nimbleness advantage that WS has over RRBS is the licensing process, every other step of deployment is identical: site surveys, topographic surveys, tower installation, backhaul provision, radio infrastructure deployment. Given that the licensing process advantage of WS is something fully in the control of ISED we would suggest that this is a synthetic advantage.”

Is there a real advantage of TVWS over RRBS or is it merely an attempt by the Ministry to minimize its work load given they would have to license specific base stations?

Further, ISED suggested that more equipment is readily available for TVWS which again is disputed by SeaBoard Group. See quote below:

“ISED also refers to the greater universe of equipment available to WS service providers (which ISED argues would reduce system costs and therefore user fees). In our review of the industry we can find several suppliers of WS equipment in North America, but all are proprietary systems, there is no compatibility between systems. Current implementations of RRBS, by

contrast, rely on cable industry standards (DOCSIS 3.x) which are supported by a multitude of manufacturers and take advantage of the cable industry's commitment to R&D."

Making specious statements to support its claims that TVWS is superior to RRBS is a massive disservice to Canadians that rely on ISED to provide them with advice that is footed on sound scientific principles as supported by the "S" acronym in ISED, "Science". There are no valid scientific claims to what ISED is saying regarding TVWS and RRBS. We would recommend all interested parties to read the full submission made by SeaBoard Group and evaluate for themselves if ISED is making authoritative recommendations based on scientific reasoning or just making claims that are self serving.

Does the Ministry have the standing to be able to eliminate RRBS? Should they consult internally to understand prior covenants from their employees? Should they consult with their internal unit, The Competition Bureau? They are an independent law enforcement agency that ensures markets operate in a competitive ***innovative*** manner...they are the "I" (Innovation) of ISED! Why does ISED want to stifle a competitive innovative solution like RRBS in the rural Canadian market in contradiction of their own mandates? Perhaps they should consult with the Mergers & Monopolistic Practices Branch, who investigate practices that could negatively impact competition.

ISED has a conflict-of-interest tornado brewing. They have invested \$2.29 Billion in Telesat Canada for their Low Earth Orbit ("LEO") initiative which projects the ability to offer satellite connectivity to Canadians. The most cost-effective terrestrial solution to compete with LEOs is RRBS. ISED also coerced Canadian Pension Funds into investing in Starlink! The Monopolistic Practices Directorate detects, investigates and deters business practices that have a negative impact on competition, such as ***abuse of dominance!*** The Cartels Directorate detects, investigates and deters genuine cartels to ***allocate markets and restrict supply.*** Is this not what ISED is affecting through this Consultation? Certainly, the Competition Promotion Branch should be notified. Their job is to encourage the ***adoption of pro-competition policies and the behaviour of regulators and government!***

We would all have to admit that the LEO initiatives are fantastic science experiments, but not at the expense of connecting rural Canadians. A few years ago when One Web, founded by Richard Branson and Softbank, was the front runner in the LEO race, we predicted with insight from the prior LEO disasters and from engineers from the originally iconic Canadian company MacDonald Dettwiler, who were very experienced in space, that the LEO companies would either go bankrupt or turn into a calamity. One Web did go bankrupt and as Starlink continues to expand its constellation, the odds of a Kessler Syndrome event or Solar Storm disaster increases. This is what ISED has bet on.

Wasting Canadian taxpayer money is one thing, but restricting essential communications of its people is another. An expansive study titled "Broadband Solutions Analysis" of broadband expansion to the four contiguous counties around Edmonton Alberta was undertaken by the Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board in 2020. They determined that 100 Mbs (downstream speed) Broadband connectivity throughout those counties would realize a Billion Dollar annual increase in GDP to the Region! Imagine if we project the same around just the top 20 Canadian cities. Forty or so RRBS base stations could support this projection and be built in 6 months to achieve annualized GDP growth of 20 Billion Dollars for those markets! The point is Broadband connectivity is not just critical for lifeline communications, it is a significant engine for economic growth.

It is ironic that significant support for RRBS is coming from First Nations. The federal government must ensure that Broadband lifeline services can be utilized by communities in need. RRBS can meet those needs with efficient, contemporary systems with the spectral support of ISED. We would urge the Ministry to desist its bias to dictate the direction of technology and abandon its deceitful hoarding of the necessary spectrum through this Consultation and endorse RRBS as a viable solution to accelerate Canadian Broadband connectivity.

Respectfully yours,

/s/Daryl Burge

Daryl Burge

SVP Wilson Engineering Ltd.

m. 403.390.2334

email: admin@wilsonengineering.ca