

June 22, 2020

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,

**Re: Urgent and immediate funding request to support the expansion of
broadband infrastructure in Southwestern Ontario**

As the Warden for the County of Essex, I am writing you today to seek urgent and immediate funding to support the expansion of critical broadband infrastructure across Southwestern Ontario, including in underserved areas of Essex County.

Efforts at the local, federal and provincial level have been underway to provide all Ontarians, no matter where they live, with access to high-speed internet. This is not an overnight process; however, the COVID-19 outbreak has laid bare the challenges our underserved communities in Essex County and across Southwestern Ontario are facing.

In today's unprecedented times, where children are required to attend school remotely, online ordering is the new norm and virtual meetings are now a workplace requirement, broadband is not a luxury, it is essential.

Connectivity is key to the social and economic success of our communities – we need to invest in the future of our communities. Increased funding is urgently needed to boost the pace and scale of broadband deployment efforts to address gaps in service and provide digital equality for all in Canada.

Urgent and immediate funding request to support the expansion of broadband
infrastructure in Southwestern Ontario
June 22, 2020

It has been estimated that it would cost approximately \$2.5 billion to provide a fibre-based solution to address all Southwestern Ontario's underserved areas – wireless could help to reduce these costs in some areas. Adequate funding is required to ensure that broadband, an essential utility, is accessible for all.

The message to you is clear. **Southwestern Ontario broadband funding cannot be undervalued.** The region represents 10% of the Canadian population and 25% of the population of Ontario. Adequate and equitable funding for all underserved municipalities within the region is required to ensure that broadband, an essential utility, is accessible for all.

On behalf of the County of Essex, we are urging the federal government to solve a fundamental issue and provide a basic need to all our residents currently living without access to reliable high-speed internet. The longer our communities are left without, the greater the people and businesses of Southwestern Ontario and Essex County will suffer from social and economic inequalities.

We are asking the Canadian government to take immediate action and make a substantial investment in high-speed connectivity.

Sincerely,




Gary McNamara
Warden, County of Essex
Mayor, Town of Tecumseh

cc.
The Honourable Laurie Scott
Minister of Infrastructure, Ontario
laurie.scott@pc.ola.org

Chris Lewis
Member of Parliament, Essex
Chris.Lewis@parl.gc.ca

Dave Epp
MP Chatham-Kent Leamington
Dave.epp@parl.gc.ca

 519-776-6441 ext. 1327
TTY 1-877-624-4832

 360 Fairview Ave. W.
Suite # 314 Essex, ON N8M 1Y6

 countyofessex.ca

Urgent and immediate funding request to support the expansion of broadband
infrastructure in Southwestern Ontario
June 22, 2020

Town of Amherstburg

Aldo DiCarlo, Mayor, aDicarlo@amherstburg.ca

John Miceli, CAO, jmiceli@amherstburg.ca

Town of Essex

Larry Snively, Mayor, lsnively@essex.ca

Chris Nepszy, CAO, cnepszy@essex.ca

Town of Kingsville

Nelson Santos, Mayor, nsantos@kingsville.ca

Jennifer Astrologo, Director of Corporate Services/Clerk, jastrologo@kingsville.ca

Ryan McLeod, Director of Financial Services, rmcleod@kingsville.ca

Town of Lakeshore

Tom Bain, Mayor, tbain@lakeshore.ca

Truper McBride, CAO, tmcbride@lakeshore.ca

Town of LaSalle

Marc Bondy, Mayor, mbondy@lasalle.ca

Joe Milicia, CAO, jmilicia@lasalle.ca

Municipality of Leamington

Hilda MacDonald, Mayor, macdonald@leamington.ca

Peter Neufeld, pneufeld@leamington.ca

Town of Tecumseh

Margaret Misek-Evans, CAO, mevans@tecumseh.ca

County of Essex

Robert Maisonville, CAO, rmaisonville@countyofessex.ca