EORN News Release: Funding will Tackle Cellular Dead Zones Across Eastern Ontario

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Mobile Broadband Critical to Regional Growth

The Government of Canada in investing in rural broadband infrastructure, which is critical for communities to engage in the growing digital economy, create jobs and enjoy economic growth.

Today, the Government of Canada announced that it will provide the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) with $71 million for its share of funding to help fill gaps in mobile broadband coverage that are standing in the way of the region’s economic development.

The funding, combined with the Government of Ontario’s commitment of $71 million to the project, clears the way for a $213 million public-private partnership to improve both the reach and quality of mobile broadband services in the region.

All members of the Eastern Ontario Wardens’ Caucus and most municipalities within the Eastern Ontario Mayors’ Caucus are contributing to the $10 million municipal share. Mobile carriers, who will be selected through a competitive bidding process, are expected to provide the balance of the funding.

There are currently significant gaps in both the reach and capacity of mobile broadband networks across areas of rural Eastern Ontario where people live, work or travel:

- 40% of the area does not have access to high-definition services that allows streaming HD video.
- 20% of the area does not have access to standard definition video, typical mobile app use and video app calling.
- 10% has no voice call service.

The gaps are the result of market failure. Rural areas don’t generate enough revenue for mobile carriers to build adequate services. The CRTC recently designated both mobile and fixed broadband as basic services for all Canadians. The public-private partnership will reduce carriers’ infrastructure costs, creating a stronger business case to improve services and meet the CRTC’s basic services goals.
The improvements would unlock significant economic potential over 10 years, including:

- More than 3,000 full-time job equivalents.
- More than $420 million in private sector business revenues.

About EORN

EORN, a non-profit created by the Eastern Ontario Wardens’ Caucus (EOWC), helped to improve broadband access to nearly 90% of Eastern Ontario through a $175 million fixed broadband network funded by the federal, provincial and municipal governments and private sector service providers. It works with governments and community organizations to improve and leverage broadband access to fuel economic development and growth across the region.

The EOWC directed EORN to prepare and submit a project proposal to improve access to mobile broadband services and support the creation of a public safety broadband network. More information is available at www.eorn.ca.

Quotes

“Broadband Internet and increased access to mobile services, supports economic growth and is key for the long-term prosperity of rural Canadian communities. This project will allow Eastern Ontario rural municipalities to be better connected and ensure that residents have improved access to online services and tools whether at home or on the road.”

- The Honourable Bernadette Jordan, Canada’s Minister of Rural Economic Development

“EORN is building on the investment we’ve already made in broadband infrastructure across the region to close the gap in mobile services and improve economic growth, quality of life and public safety. We welcome and appreciate the support of the federal government for this project. Combined with provincial and municipal funding, we can now proceed with the project.”

- EORN Chair J. Murray Jones

“The demand for mobile broadband is growing exponentially, but our region is deeply lacking the needed infrastructure to keep up. This project is our top priority because Eastern Ontario’s economic future is at stake.”
- **EOWC Chair Andy Letham**

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**Attachments**

- [Improved Connectivity for Today and Tomorrow](#)
- [Improving Mobile Broadband](#)
- [Steps to Better Cell Services](#)