



Legislation Text

File #: RFD 16-302, **Version:** 1

AAMDC Resolution - National Broadband Strategy

Proposed Motion

That a resolution be submitted to the January 16, 2017 Pembina Zone meeting for the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties to request broadband be declared an essential service both Provincially and Federally, direct funding and support to rural, remote and northern communities to ensure affordable access to, or the development of, high speed community network infrastructure, develop a National Broadband Strategy, and involve rural municipalities, internet service providers, education and health professionals, public safety organizations, and research and economic development authorities in the preparation of the Strategic Plan, as presented.

Administration Recommendation

Administration supports the motion.

Purpose

To request the Government of Canada and Alberta to fund, support, and prepare a National Broadband Strategy.

Summary

Despite different provincial and federal programs, many rural, remote and northern communities (RRNC) remain unserved or underserved in terms of access to high-speed internet. With vast geographical expanses and low population densities, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) do not have a business case to invest in these communities. Residents and businesses in RRNC with internet service often contend with slower speeds and pay higher costs for service than their urban counterparts.

Access to high-speed, high capacity internet service at an affordable price is vital to facilitate local economic development and for the provision of cost-efficient and effective public services. It is crucial that RRNC have the mobile networks, broadband connections and open data platforms that allow stakeholders to advance their individual needs and for the betterment of the community at large. Increased broadband speed with high capacity will help existing local businesses grow and become participants in the digital economy. Unfortunately, policy discussions on broadband have been focused on increasing access, not investing in and leveraging broadband for economic, social and community development.

High-speed, high capacity broadband also enables all levels of government to deliver public services in the most financially responsible manner. Governments need higher bandwidth to serve evolving video, image, data and voice requirements to provide the numerous services residents expect.

Strategic Plan/Policy/Legal/Staff Implications

Parkland County strives to meet the service needs of its residents by being a leader in collaboration with regional partners.

To improve collaboration efforts with regional partners to promote the long term economic prosperity and quality of life for all citizens and ensure the region remains sustainable and vibrant for future generations.

Financial Impact:

Cost: 0

Source of Funding: n/a