



September 16, 2020

To: Ms. Jeanne Harfield
(jharfield@mississippimills.ca)

Dear Ms. Harfield:

I hope this email finds you and your loved ones well and safe. I am writing to respond to your correspondence regarding the resolution adopted by the Corporation of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills to support funding for reliable high-speed Internet access across Ontario.

As Minister of Rural Economic Development, I am the federal champion for rural prosperity and quality of life, and my role includes capitalizing on the enormous opportunity that exists in rural Canada.

Our government is committed to ensuring that federal investments effectively grow local economies, improve social inclusiveness, and safeguard the health and environment of rural communities. To maximize our results, I have been mandated to implement the Government of Canada's [Rural Economic Development Strategy](#), launched on June 27, 2019. Informed by comments from the government and consultations across the country, the strategy commits the federal government to work with provincial, territorial, and municipal governments; Indigenous groups; businesses; civil society groups; and other rural stakeholders to ensure that our policies and programs reflect rural realities and are accessible to Canada's rural communities.

Increased high-speed broadband coverage is a crucial need in rural Canada, and the COVID-19 pandemic has only reinforced the importance of access to high-speed Internet as Canadians are working, learning, and communicating from home. The government has put in place a national broadband strategy, [High-Speed Access for All: Canada's Connectivity Strategy](#), for the connectivity of rural regions and communities across the country. I am committed to meeting the goals laid out by our government in Budget 2019 and through this strategy. The strategy aims to deliver Internet speeds of 50 Megabits per second (Mbps) download and 10 Mbps upload to 90% of Canadians by 2021, 95% of Canadians by 2026, and the hardest-to-reach Canadians by 2030. We know we need to find ways to accelerate this timeline.

We recognize the commitment the Government of Ontario is making to expand high-speed Internet and mobile wireless infrastructure under Ontario's Broadband and Cellular Action Plan, and we look forward to collaborating closely with Ontario as we launch the UBF. I have asked my officials to keep you updated on the development of the UBF process.

In addition, we are looking at all options to connect Canadians as quickly as possible and accelerate our progress toward this goal. Providing Canadians with access to high-speed Internet will help close gaps caused by geography and increase equality of access to health, education, and employment in a digital economy. The Government of Canada is committed to connecting all Canadians, and we have created the conditions to accomplish this objective.

This is a challenging time for our country and the situation surrounding COVID-19 continues to evolve, I encourage you to consult the Government of Canada's COVID-19 [webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information. I want to assure you that we will continue to deliver for the Canadians who are counting on us, both to respond to the current situation and to achieve our long-term goals.

Thank you again for taking the time to write about this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Maryam Monsef', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

The Honourable Maryam Monsef, P.C., M.P.

c.c.: The Honourable Navdeep Bains, P.C., M.P.

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The Honourable Catherine McKenna, P.C., M.P.

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