



c/o Canadian Association of the Deaf-Association des Sourds du Canada (CAD-ASC)

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**CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF-ASSOCIATION DES SOURDS DU CANADA AND DEAF WIRELESS CANADA CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE WELCOME CRTC'S DIRECTION TO WIRELESS AND INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS**

OTTAWA, Canada - President Frank Folino and Chairperson Lisa Anderson-Kellett welcomed the December 21, 2016 decision of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission that has ruled that fixed high-speed broadband internet is a “basic telecommunications service” that should be universally available to all Canadians, including Deaf, Hard of hearing and DeafBlind Canadians.

Both the Canadian Association of the Deaf-Association des Sourds du Canada (CAD-ASC) and Deaf Wireless Canada Consultative Committee (DWCC) were active intervenors in the CRTC proceedings including the public hearing in April 2016, expressing the accessibility needs and concerns of the Canadian Deaf community through sharing Community members' experiences from survey respondents. DWCC had ten recommendations which included the need to address the promotions of fair and accessible wireless plans and to stop the practise of disparity of pricing within the wireless service providers and instead, provide specifically designed and publicly promoted data packages for Deaf community members. CAD-ASC had three recommendations, where one of three recommendations that addressed the current speeds of 5 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload does not meet our accessibility needs for video transmissions, which led to our recommendation that telecommunication service providers need to increase the speeds to allow a reduction of communication, social and economic barriers to equal participation for Deaf community members in Canada.

We are proud of the Committee's work done by the consultants, analysts and volunteers who contributed to our 97-page survey report, *Deaf Wireless Survey Analysis* published in April 2016. The collaborative and cumulative production of this report was a herculean effort that highlights Deaf community's views and experiences with digital video communications. This report is retrievable from the Deaf Wireless Canada Committee's [website](#).

Lisa Anderson-Kellett, DWCC Chairperson quote:

*"The Deaf Wireless Canada Consultative Committee (DWCC) is very pleased with CRTC's decisions set out in the recently released CRTC Telecom Policy 2016-496. Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind Canadians have been waiting for a long time to have the CRTC and telecommunication companies to recognize the need of video-calling through the internet at home and mobile phones while using various video communication apps. Video-calling with sign languages consume significant amounts of data that Deaf users end up with costly bills. This is not equitable access for the Deaf community and we look forward to what the next six months will bring with easy-to-find and fair data plans for our visual communications. This decision meets some of our Committee's purpose, yet we have more work to do."*

Frank Folino, President, CAD-ASC quote:

*“The Canadian Association of the Deaf-Association des Sourds du Canada (CAD-ASC) recognizes the CRTC’s decisions from Telecom Policy 2016-496 that prepares the transition plan from voice to broadband regulatory policies, which ensures broadband Internet access to be defined as a basic telecommunication service. The CAD-ASC is pleased to learn that one of the CRTC’s decisions will include new speeds of at least 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload, with unlimited data options, that will provide Canadians who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind to have a better two-way digital video streaming experience. This is especially important for our accessibility needs with high-speed and high-quality service that is required for the fluid transmission of our sign language communication. The CRTC’s decision meets some of our recommendations, and we will continue to work with the DWCC Committee’s purposes to address various accessibility issues in telecommunication services for the Deaf community.”*

Frank Folino, CAD-ASC President, and Jeffrey Beatty, DWCC Technical Consultant attended the CRTC lockdown event and press conference on December 21, 2016 where we had an opportunity to learn more about the CRTC’s decision. At the CRTC Press Conference, Jean-Pierre’s speech mentioned us:

*"Canadians who live with a hearing or speech disability stated that it is difficult to find information related to telecommunications plans and services that address their needs. They also indicated that there is no uniformity among wireless service plans for people with disabilities, nor is there consistency in how American sign language and langue des signes québécoise users are informed of these plans.*

*As we can’t depend on market forces to address these issues, all wireless service providers will have to offer and publicize, no later than six months from today, mobile service packages that meet the needs of Canadians with disabilities."*

**Source:** [Jean-Pierre Blais at the Basic Telecommunications Services Press Conference](#)

To learn more about the CRTC’s December 21, 2016 announcement, please check out the following related links:

- [Jean-Pierre Blais at the Basic Telecommunications Services Press Conference](#)
- [CRTC Telecom Regulatory Policy 2016-496](#)
- [CRTC establishes fund to attain new high-speed Internet targets](#)
- [Summary of Key Decision Points – Background](#)
- [New Funding Mechanism – Background](#)
- [Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2015-134](#)
- [DWCC’s CRTC TNC 2015-134 submissions](#)
- [CADASC’s CRTC TNC 2015-134 submissions](#)

For further information, you may check out our website at: [www.deafwireless.ca](http://www.deafwireless.ca) and [www.cad.ca](http://www.cad.ca)

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Organization descriptions follow.

### **About Deaf Wireless Canada Consultative Committee (DWCC):**

The mandate of DWCC is to advocate for fair priced wireless contracts for ASL/LSQ using consumers and to promote the ideal functional equivalency for all Canadian consumers.

The committee is seeking in the following points that Wireless Service Providers must offer:

1. Fair and uniform wireless data plans for ASL and LSQ users
2. Cost reasonable plans for ASL and LSQ users
3. Transparent and clear advertisement of plans offered; and
4. Decreased disparity of product and service provisions.

### **About Canadian Association of the Deaf-Association des Sourds du Canada (CAD-ASC):**

The Canadian Association of the Deaf-Association des Sourds du Canada (CAD-ASC) is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1940 that provides consultation and information on Deaf issues to the public, business, media, educators, governments and others; conduct research and collects data; and community action organization of the Deaf people in Canada. We promote and protect the rights, needs, and concerns of Deaf people who uses American Sign Language (ASL) and langue des signes québécoise (LSQ).