

## MEETING NOTE

### Advice to Minister Beare

**MEETING DATE:** 11:30am – 12:00pm, April 13, 2021

**CLIFF:** 114880

**ATTENDEES:** Minister Lisa Beare  
Shauna Brouwer, Deputy Minister  
CJ Ritchie, GCIO & Assoc. DM  
Alex MacLennan, ADM & CTO  
Gary Perkins, CISO & ED

George Kurtz, CrowdStrike CEO  
Justin Malczewski, CrowdStrike  
Regional Sales Manager  
Serge Bertini, CrowdStrike VP of Sales,  
Canada  
Jim Seidel, CrowdStrike VP of Sales,  
Americas

**ISSUE:** Meeting with cybersecurity vendor CrowdStrike to discuss cybersecurity landscape

#### BACKGROUND:

- Cybersecurity has never been as imperative and cybersecurity attacks are more frequent and sophisticated than ever.
- Public and private sector organizations alike must prepare to prevent, detect, and respond to cyber attacks.
- Public and private sector organizations are more connected than ever and poor security hygiene in one organization puts others at risk.
- Impacts from cyber attacks include financial, regulatory, legal as well as loss of ability to provide services.
- The protection of government data and networks is a top priority for this government, especially where it concerns British Columbians' personal information.
- Governments must take steps to protect themselves from online attacks no matter the source or the strategy.
- Cyber criminals are becoming increasingly sophisticated and that requires us to be ever vigilant and up to date with technology.
- In British Columbia, we have the Office of the Chief Information Officer, which provides government with strategic leadership in IT security.

#### DISCUSSION:

- CrowdStrike is a cybersecurity vendor specializing in solutions to protect endpoints such as laptops and servers as well as securing cloud workloads.
- CrowdStrike prides itself on its ease of installation and reports to catch cyber-attacks other solutions do not.
- CrowdStrike successfully signed an agreement to provide endpoint security to Health Authorities across the province for the next 3 years.
- Government continues to invest in cybersecurity solutions to mitigate increasing cybersecurity risks and depends on key vendors to be successful.

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**NEXT STEPS:**

- Meet with CrowdStrike on April 13 as planned.

**SUGGESTED RESPONSE / KEY MESSAGES:**

- The protection of government data and networks is a top priority for this government, especially where it concerns British Columbians' personal information.
- I appreciate that CrowdStrike is an active part of the vendor community and is supporting organizations in implementing strong cybersecurity practices.
- I know CrowdStrike has been working with Health Authorities across the province to improve endpoint security.
- The province will continue to evaluate and evolve its cybersecurity posture.
- Endpoint security solutions are an important part of government's security posture and we expect that government will need to procure cybersecurity solutions and services in the future.
- Thank you for your commitment to developing and maintaining the community of security professionals in B.C. through your involvement in professional organizations like Information Systems Audit and Control Association (ISACA) and events like the Vancouver International Privacy and Security Summit (previously BC Aware).

Appendices:      Biography – George Kurtz  
                         Biography – Justin Malczewski  
                         Biography - Serge Bertini

Contact:           Gary Perkins, Executive Director/Chief Information Security Officer, 250-387-7590

## **Biography – George Kurtz**

### **CEO, CrowdStrike**

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**Biography – Justin Malczewski**  
CrowdStrike Regional Sales Manager

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**Biography – Serge Bertini**  
CrowdStrike Vice President of Sales, Canada

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## MEETING NOTE

### Advice to Deputy Minister

**MEETING DATE:** April 19, 2021

**CLIFF#: 114937**

**ATTENDEES:** Shauna Brouwer, Deputy Minister  
CJ Ritchie, Government Chief Information Officer  
Alex MacLennan, Assistant Deputy Minister, OCIO – Enterprise Services  
Susan Cook, Canadian Public Sector Leader & Partner, Global Business, IBM  
Philip Duffy, Associate Partner, IBM

**ISSUE:** IBM Canada Ltd. requested meeting with DM Brouwer to share a high-level overview of the work IBM is doing with public sector partners across Canada and the world.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

##### *Relationship:*

- The International Business Machine (IBM) has a strong partnership with the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) that began in 2004 with the implementation of a long-term service contract. The contract is managed by the OCIO-Enterprise Services (OCIO-ES) Division's Device Service Branch.
- The Strategic Procurement Office's annual Performance Management Report shows a good satisfaction rating for both Strategic Governance and Relationship.
- IBM has been a solid and reliable service provider during times of crisis, including wildfire seasons, floods and have been a responsive partner with the recent pandemic.
  - Most recently, IBM quickly establishing a call centre to support the provincial vaccine roll-out. s.17
  - All costs will be recovered from the Ministry of Health.
- IBM has a good understanding of our strategic goals, business drivers, culture etc. This allows them to "think" and "act" from our perspective.

##### *Service Contract:*

- The Workstation Support Services (WSS) contract expires on September 30, 2022, with the possibility of two, six-month extensions.
- A Notice of Planned Procurement (NoPP) was issued on March 16, 2021, followed by an anticipated Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to be issued this Spring. The vendor community was informed that the current contract would be split into two separate deals – Managed Workplace Technology Services and the Service Desk.
- Vendors can bid on one or both contracts.
- Services currently delivered under the WSS contract include:
  - Providing equipment, managing, and supporting +40,000 workstations and laptops across government and the Broader Public Sector.
  - Providing and administering government employee access accounts, enabling the use of government resources and technical services.

- Providing, administering, and supporting remote access services for government employees who work outside of the government workplace (i.e. Desktop Terminal Services - DTS)
  - Providing helpdesk services for all OCIO-provided IT services.
- IBM utilizes a subsidiary workforce, Information Systems Management (ISM), while partnering with small and medium-sized local companies, such as Microserve and Tecnet. In total, there are 44 BC companies engaged in providing the services.
- Contract Value:
  - Annually – approximately \$44M
  - Fiscal 20/21 - \$50M, including hardware purchases (\$10M)
  - To date of FYE 20/21 – \$715M
- In March 2021 IBM spun off a new company, Kyndril, to focus on Managed Infrastructure Services. The remaining part IBM Global will focus on Hybrid Cloud Platforms and Artificial Intelligence (AI).
  - The Province will be working with IBM to transition the its current contract to Kyndril in the coming months. IBM “Kyndril” has indicated all terms and conditions will remain the same.

## DISCUSSION:

### *IBM Interest/Concerns:*

- Growing Cloud Services / Hybrid Cloud Platforms and AI Company – Device Services has been advised that IBM is circulating with senior level executives to discuss it’s recent spinoff of Kyndril and to market IBM Global’s change in direction to focus on Hybrid Cloud Platforms and AI. Conversation may focus on the future value, services etc. this new business direction can provide to the province. This meeting may be part of a rebranding strategy.
- Future Service Procurement
  - IBM corporate may be looking for an update on progress of the procurement or cloud procurements. Local company understands our limitations to discuss this confidential matter.
  - It is recommended that any specific questions on procurement strategy, future service vision, or timelines be redirected back to the Procurement Service Branch for response.
- s.14; s.17

Growing Microsoft 365 cloud services - IBM has expressed interest in pursuing work in this area. We are currently working on projects with them already including transitioning our mobile devices service from Workspace ONE to Intune. Multiple divisions in ES are working in this space including NCCS, Hosting, Security and Device Services.

- “Direct Ship” Workstations – IBM has requested several times, at the executive level, to pursue a proof of concept (PoC) with Dell. PoC would allow for the building of workstations at a Dell facility in Ontario and shipping them directly to users for self-deploy. The OCIO initially stated they were interested in pursuing this, but time, resources and the pandemic have indefinitely stalled it.

- Contract Profitability is Decreasing – although, this many have shifted due to the vaccine call centre revenue, IBM local has previously indicated that the automation projects we have engaged in, are resulting in more “savings” than they had anticipated. This coupled with less services being ordered and the s.17 project services fund negotiated during the last extension, may be impacting the profitability of the local office.

Although IBM has been a long and trusted partner, areas that could be improved are as follows:

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- Issues management, the Province would like to see IBM take ownership when an issue is raised and be our main point of contact until it is resolved.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

- Meet with IBM to discuss the current work they are doing with Public Sectors across the country.
- Questions regarding the active procurements should be directed to the ministry’s Procurement Services Branch.

Contact: Kirsten McCaig, Executive Director, Device Services, 250 415-5165

## DECISION NOTE

### Advice to Deputy Minister

**MEETING DATE:** April 14, 2021

**CLIFF#:** 114920

**ATTENDEES:** Shauna Brouwer, Deputy Minister; Susan Stanford, Assistant Deputy Minister Connectivity Division; Howard Randell, Executive Director, Network BC

**ISSUE:** Connecting British Columbia program

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The Connecting British Columbia program, administered by Northern Development Initiative Trust (Northern Development), continues to approve applications until funding is fully allocated.

- Phase 4 \$90M Connecting British Columbia: StrongerBC Economic Recovery Intake (ERI)
- Phase 3 \$50M Connecting British Columbia: a special intake to leverage program funding from the federal Universal Broadband Program (UBF Core Intake)
- As of April 9, 2021, there is approximately \$4.1M (plus \$2.25M from the federal government department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) for Highway 16) combined funding remaining to be allocated to connectivity projects from phases 3 and 4.

Each intake has a set of program criteria unique to that intake.

- Phase 4, or the ERI intake allows funding for cellular expansion projects along highways (\$15M), as well as, for broadband projects in communities (\$75M).
- Phase 3 allows funding for broadband last-mile and transport projects and a small amount of funding has been allocated to projects that support regional planning.
- Per direction from the Office of the Comptroller General in the Ministry of Finance, Northern Development approves projects for funding as government cannot show any control of the funds.

Project completion requirements:

- Projects funded under Phase 4 ERI must be completed by October 31, 2021.
  - Secretary to Treasury Board approved extending the project completion date to October 31, 2022 for projects that leverage the federal UBF and the recent Highway 16 cellular expansion project.
- Under Phase 3, projects are to be completed by March 31, 2023 (amended from the original date of March 31, 2022).
- The federal UBF funds projects to March 31, 2027.

## DISCUSSION:

Available Phase 3 and 4 fund status as of April 9, 2021: \$6.713M (or 4.8% of Phase 3/4 funding)  
As of April 9, 2021, Phase 3 is substantially allocated with \$363K remaining and Phase 4 ERI is also substantially allocated with \$4.1M remaining (plus an additional amount of \$2.25M from ISED for Highway 16). Most applications are approved based on further technical due diligence or required remediation. Approved funding amounts are expected to fluctuate on a project-to-project basis as due diligence is completed and if other factors surface (such as fire or other disaster, expansion to adjacent eligible community or homes, UBF funding decision(s), etc.).

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Project timelines impact our ability to leverage UBF funding  
Phase 3 funding was allocated in fiscal 2018/19 with projects having three to four years to complete. It was originally intended as matching funds for the CRTC application intake, however BC-based service providers did not participate in the CRTC funding program as anticipated, resulting in \$35M of unallocated funds for program matching, and no federal program to leverage until the UBF intake s.13; s.16

s.13; s.16

Reallocation of Funds from Community to Highway projects  
Phase 4 ERI received Treasury Board approval to allocate \$75M to community connectivity and \$15M to highway connectivity projects. The \$15M highway connectivity portion is fully allocated.

Recently received applications include proposals for cellular and/or WiFi at ferry terminals (rest areas).

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The goal to benefit at least 200 communities through the \$75M portion of the Phase 4 ERI funding will be met based on currently approved projects.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Extend the completion deadline for new applications for Phase 3 funding from March 31, 2023 to March 31, 2025; and

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*(please circle)*

**APPROVED**

**NOT APPROVED**



**Shauna Brouwer**  
**Deputy Minister**

April 15, 2021

**Date**

Contact: Howard Randell, Executive Director, 250 415-6867

## Briefing Note

**Meeting Date:** April 22, 2021

**What:** Meeting with Shaw Communications Inc.

**Who:** **Chima Nkemdirim**, VP Government Relations, Shaw; **Kiersten Enemark**, Government Relations Director for BC, Shaw; **Gurpreet Vinning**, Government Relations Consultant, Prospectus Associates; **Geoff Meggs**, Chief of Staff, Premier's Office; **Kassandra Lawal**, Senior Ministerial Advisor, Citizens' Services; **CJ Ritchie**, Associate Deputy Minister and GCIO, Citizens' Services

### Executive Summary:

The purpose of this meeting is to inform the Premier's Office on the proposed Shaw-Rogers merger. Shaw will highlight its profile in Western Canada by focusing on investments, supporting connectivity for vulnerable Canadians, and improved competition because of the merger (see ATT-1).

On March 15, 2021, Rogers announced its intention to buy Shaw for \$26 billion. There are three parallel review processes underway regarding this merger: By the Competition Bureau regarding considerations under the *Competition Act*; by Innovation, Science and Economic Development regarding spectrum transfer under the *Radiocommunication Act*, and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) regarding the transfer of broadcasting licenses.

The Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation (JERI) has prepared a detailed impact assessment of the proposed merger on the telecommunications industry in B.C. (See ATT-2).

From a connectivity perspective, the Rogers-Shaw merger is viewed in the context of (1) the telecommunications regulatory market, including the recent CRTC decision on allowing mobile virtual network operators who own facilities and



spectrum to enter the market and (2) new CRTC decisions expected later this year to reduce barriers to network expansion and to make access to pole infrastructure more efficient and accessible. As well, the results of the upcoming spectrum auction for airwaves that will operate the 5G networks could also promote competition. The proposed merger has the following implications:

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- The Competition Bureau will decide whether Shaw's Freedom Mobile will be divested to another company.
- The merger is expected to create additional new jobs in B.C. and work with internet service providers in rural and Indigenous communities to help expand and maintain last-mile networks in communities.

**Background:**

Shaw has suggested that the merger with Rogers will allow the companies to

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concentrate on building a new generation of networks. Further it claims that alone, it has insufficient resources to make the billions of dollars in future investments that will be necessary for it to build a competitive 5G wireless network.

**Investment in Western Canada** The Western head office and the senior roles to lead the combined company will be based in Calgary, Alberta. Rogers will maintain an office in B.C. Brad Shaw and another director will be nominated by the Shaw family to Rogers board of directors after the merger transaction closes. Rogers has committed to creating 3,000 net new jobs in the West, about 1,800 of them in Alberta, with approximately 500 of those new jobs located in Calgary at Rogers' proposed new National Centre for Technology and Engineering Excellence.

Subject to the merger approval, Rogers will invest \$2.5 billion to build 5G networks over the next five years across Western Canada, and will commit to establishing a new \$1 billion Rogers Rural and Indigenous Connectivity Fund to connect underserved communities to high-speed internet across the four Western provinces. As part of this fund, Rogers says it will consult with Indigenous communities to create Indigenous-owned and operated internet service providers, which would be able to leverage Rogers' expanded networks and capabilities to create sustainable, local connectivity solutions.

**Supporting connectivity for vulnerable Canadians** Rogers will extend its Connected for Success program, which was recently expanded in Ontario, New Brunswick and Newfoundland, across Western Canada, to bring low-cost broadband program to more senior and low-income Canadians in communities where the combined company offers internet services.

**Improved competition** Under the Competition Act, the Competition Bureau has a mandate to review mergers to determine whether they are likely to result in a substantial lessening or prevention of competition. The Bureau is required by law to conduct its work confidentially.

**Recommendations:**

The merger must be approved by the Competition Bureau, the CRTC and ISED. The companies expect to receive approval for the merger by early 2022.

## Rogers and Shaw Joining Forces to Transform Canadian Connectivity

Rogers and Shaw Communications are joining forces to create a truly national connectivity provider that can grow and compete in every part of Canada. The merged company will have the scale, assets and capabilities needed to make the unprecedented investments required to build a national 5G network and connect more rural and Indigenous communities to high-speed internet, particularly in Western Canada. Bringing these assets together will accelerate and expand next-generation investments and affordability initiatives for more Canadians in more communities with a pace and scope that would be impossible for each company to deliver on its own.

### Significant Investment in Western Canada

Together Rogers and Shaw will have the scale to:

- Create a **new \$1 billion fund to connect underserved rural and Indigenous communities in Western Canada** with high-speed broadband internet, substantially reducing the digital divide between urban and rural communities.
  - Rogers will work with Indigenous communities to create Indigenous-owned and operated Internet Service Providers. With 203 First Nation communities, this will be particularly advantageous for British Columbia.
- Accelerate the delivery of 5G across Western Canada by **investing \$2.5 billion in the combined 5G network**, driving economic growth and strengthening the innovation sector by leveraging Shaw's robust and extensive Fibre+ network and the combined spectrum holdings of both companies.
  - The deal will strengthen Rogers' commitment to research and development in Western Canada through existing 5G test site partnerships with the University of British Columbia
- Establish a Western headquarters, with a new President of Western Operations, and add 3,000 new jobs to the combined Western Canadian employee base of 10,000, including British Columbia. Rogers will continue to maintain a major office in B.C.

### Supporting Connectivity for Vulnerable Canadians in Western Canada

- Rogers will **expand their successful *Connected for Success* internet program to British Columbia**. This program is designed to help seniors and individuals receiving disability and income support access to affordable, low-cost, high-speed internet with speed tiers to meet all customers' needs.
- The program is currently in Ontario, New Brunswick and Newfoundland where it offers **low-income plans that include: 25 Mbps for \$9.99/month, 50 Mbps for \$14.99/month, 75 Mbps for \$24.99 and 150 Mbps for \$34.99/month**.

### Improved Competition in Western Canada

- This transaction will help level the playing field. The combined company's coast-to-coast fibre network would create new competition for Bell and Telus for large enterprise and government customers across Canada. By leveraging the strengths of both companies, consumers and businesses of all sizes will benefit from improved competition.
- 80% of Shaw's business is wireline (internet, cable and home phone) not cellular service. There are no communities in Canada where Rogers and Shaw compete in wireline services.

# Impact Assessment:

## Rogers Communications Inc. Acquisition of Shaw Communications Inc.

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### Industry Overview

- B.C.'s telecommunication sector employs 18,900 people and directly contributed \$5.24 billion to GDP in 2019.
- Of the Big 3 national wireless service providers, only Telus is headquartered in B.C.
- The Big 3 account for all six of the large companies with 500+ employees that provide wired and wireless services in B.C.
  - Telus owns three of the six companies.
  - The other three are Shaw, Rogers, and FIDO, which is owned by Rogers.

### Key Context on Acquisition

- Rogers indicates that 3,000 new jobs will be created in Western Canada.
  - The Alberta government has publicly stated that 1,800 of these jobs will be created in Alberta, including 500 through the newly announced National Centre of Technology and Engineering Excellence that is part of Rogers' acquisition plans.
  - The remaining 1,200 jobs are expected to be created in B.C., Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.
- Employment details from Rogers and Shaw are only available in aggregate from the companies' annual reports, with no breakdown by province. A review of aggregate employment between 2017 and 2020 for the two companies shows that:
  - Employment at Shaw declined by 3,140, due to a business restructuring and productivity initiative.
  - Employment at Rogers declined by 2,600 over the same period.
  - Rogers' commitment to create 3,000 new jobs in Western Canada will restore over half of the jobs lost between the two companies over the past three years.
- With Rogers' acquisition of Shaw, the six large companies employing 500+ people in B.C. will be equally split between Rogers and Telus.

### Key Potential Implications

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## Telecommunications Industry Profile

### Companies

- The large wireless service providers operating in B.C. are Rogers, Telus, Shaw, and Bell.
- Of the Big 3 national wireless service providers, only Telus is headquartered in B.C.

**Table 1:** Key Telecommunications Companies

	Employees	Revenue	Wired subscribers	Wireless subscribers
<b>National Service Providers</b>				
Bell (BCE)	50,700	\$22.9B	8.9M	10.2M
Telus	78,100	\$15.5M	5.2M	10.7M
Rogers	23,500	\$13.9B	3.1M	10.9M
<b>Regional Service Provider</b>				
Shaw	9,500	\$5.4B	5.3M	1.8M

Source: Company annual reports.

- B.C. is home to 182 wired and wireless telecommunications carriers, including resellers and businesses that lease network capacity from the larger service providers.
  - The large businesses, with over 500 employees, include two of the three national service providers – Rogers and Telus – along with regional service provider Shaw, and Fido, which is a subsidiary owned by Rogers. These four companies account for all six businesses.
  - Telus Corporation owns three of the six companies noted in Statistics Canada's Business Register with over 500 employees. The number of employees in each subsidiary is unknown; however, Telus-owned divisions and subsidiaries based in B.C. are Telus Mobility, Telus TV, Telus Communications, and Koodo Mobile.
  - Shaw, Rogers Wireless, and Rogers' subsidiary Fido are the other three large companies.
- In B.C., Rogers and Shaw are primarily active in wired and wireless telecommunications. Rogers is also active in radio and television broadcasting (e.g., Sportsnet), telecommunications resellers, and data processing and hosting. See **Appendix 1** for background information on Shaw and Rogers.

**Table 2: B.C. Business Counts by Workforce Size (Businesses with Employees)**

Industry	<100 employees	100-499 employees	500+ employees	Total
Wired & wireless telecommunications carriers	164	12	6	182
Radio & television broadcasting	125	3	0	157
Telecommunications resellers	417	1	0	418
Data processing & hosting services	163	8	0	171

Source: Statistics Canada's Business Register June 2020 – prepared by BC Stats.

### GDP, Employment and Wages

- B.C. has the third largest telecommunications sector in Canada, by GDP and employment.
- In 2019, B.C.'s telecommunications industry contributed \$5.24 billion (2.1%) to provincial GDP and directly employed 18,900 people.
- Between 2017 and 2019, telecommunications employment in B.C. increased by 20% (+3,200). Nationally, telecommunications employment decreased by 8% (-10,700) over the same period.<sup>1</sup>
- On average, these jobs provide 35 hours of work per week and are paid at an hourly rate of \$46.79, compared to \$37.91 across all industries.

### Economic Interlinkages

- B.C.'s telecommunications industry has many economic linkages – from backward linkages in supplier industries to forward linkages to almost all consumers and businesses.

**Table 3: Telecommunications Industry Economic Impacts, B.C.**

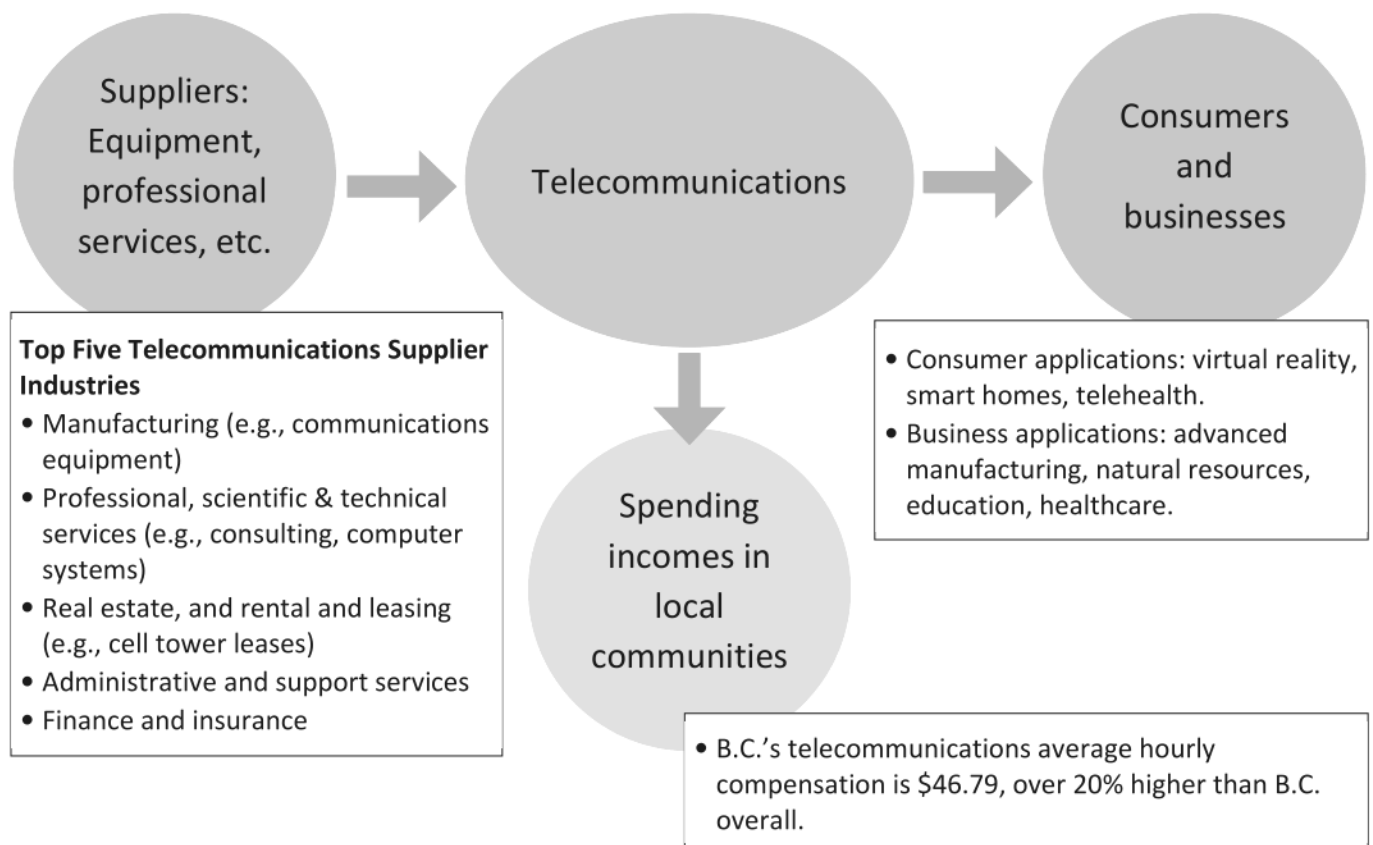
	Direct	Indirect (i.e., suppliers)	Total Impacts
<b>GDP</b> (in billions, current \$)	5.24	1.23	6.47
<b>Employment</b>	18,900	11,400	30,300

Sources: Statistics Canada. Table 36-10-0595-01 Input-output multipliers, provincial and territorial, detail level  
 Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0202-01 Employment by industry, annual.

- As shown in the diagram below, the highly connected nature of the telecommunications ecosystem means that corporate decisions in the telecommunications industry have the potential to create knock-on effects among supplier industries. <sup>s.13</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 2019 is the latest telecommunications employment data available from Statistics Canada's Survey of Employment, Payroll and Hours (SEPH). The 2020 findings of SEPH are scheduled to be released on March 30, 2021.



- Manufacturing companies, like Nokia and Sierra Wireless, supply network infrastructure and other communications equipment used by service providers like Rogers and Shaw.
- New projects, like 5G deployment, generate activity in a range of supplier industries, including professional, scientific, and technical services; administrative support services; real estate, and rental and leasing; and, finance and insurance.

Telecommunications is ubiquitous; forward linkages to consumers and businesses include:

- Recent and emerging applications such as smart homes, telehealth, online learning and advanced manufacturing.
- As a large employer providing well-paying jobs in communities across the province, the industry also provides incomes that drive consumer spending on housing, groceries, etc.

### Community Snapshot

Both Rogers and Shaw have made recent investments in B.C. communities.

#### Shaw

- In fiscal 2020, Shaw, in collaboration with Teck Resources Limited and NOKIA, deployed Canada's first private LTE network using commercial mobile spectrum at Teck's Elkview steelmaking coal mine located in the Elk Valley region. The wireless network will carry many



of Teck's current mission critical applications and is built to also enable future Internet-of-things (IoT) and 5G requirements.

- Fibre network construction is currently underway to extend Shaw's northern network from Prince George to North Vancouver in collaboration with the provincial government's *Connecting British Columbia* program and the federal government's *Connect to Innovate* program.

#### Rogers

- In 2020, Rogers partnered with UBC-Okanagan to launch Canada's first 5G smart city in Kelowna.
- In March 2021, Metis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) and Rogers announced that they are partnering to provide wireless connectivity, services and support to over 340 Metis businesses and communities in B.C.
- In February 2021, Rogers announced expansion of its network to more rural communities in B.C., leveraging funding from the *Connecting British Columbia* program. Twenty-nine cellular towers were upgraded to improve cellular coverage and broadband services to 52 communities in the Okanagan, Cariboo, Central and Northern B.C. and on Vancouver Island.

#### **Economic Implications of the Acquisition for B.C.**

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See **Appendix 2** for background information on Rogers' commitments to Western Canada as part of the acquisition deal.

## Appendix 1: Company Backgrounds

**Table 4:** Corporate Profiles of the Big 3 and Shaw

	<b>Bell (BCE)</b>	<b>Rogers</b>	<b>Telus</b>	<b>Shaw</b>
<b>Headquarters</b>	Montreal	Toronto	Vancouver	Calgary
<b>Geographic Coverage</b>	National	National	National	Western Canada + Northern Ontario
<b>Employees</b>	50,700	23,500	78,100	9,500
<b>Business lines</b>				
Wireless	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wired	✓	✓	✓	✓
Other, e.g., Sportsnet, TELUS Health	✓	✓	✓	x
<b>Annual revenue and % share</b>	<b>\$22.9B (100.0%)</b>	<b>\$13.9B (100.0%)</b>	<b>\$15.5B (100.0%)</b>	<b>\$5.4B (100.0%)</b>
Wireless	\$8.7B (37.9%)	\$8.5B (61.2%)	\$8.0B (51.6%)	\$1.2B (21.6%)
Wired	\$12.2B (53.3%)	\$3.9B (28.4%)	\$7.5B (48.4%)	\$4.2B (78.4%)
Other	\$2.0B (8.9%)	\$1.6B (11.5%)	n.a.	n.a.
<b>Wireless subscribers</b>	10.2M	10.9M	10.7M	1.8M
<b>Wired subscribers</b>	8.9M	3.1M	5.2M	5.3M

Source: Annual reports.

**Table 5:** Historical employment at Rogers and Shaw, 2015-2020

<b>Year</b>	<b>Rogers</b>	<b>Shaw</b>
2015	26,000	14,000
2016	25,200	14,000
2017	24,500	14,000
2018	26,100	10,000
2019	25,300	10,000
2020	23,500	9,500

Source: Annual reports.

#### Shaw Communications Inc.

- Shaw is a mostly family-owned business, which started as a cable company in Edmonton in the 1960s. Today, the company directly employs 9,500 people across Western Canada.
- In 2016, Shaw acquired Freedom Mobile and entered the wireless market. In 2019, Freedom Mobile was the first company in Canada to launch unlimited data plans, disrupting the wireless market by offering consumers a more affordable option to overage fees. In 2020, Shaw expanded its wireless services with the launch of Shaw Mobile in B.C. and Alberta and added over 160,000 wireless subscribers for a total of over 1.8 million wireless subscribers.
- Overall, Shaw's revenue grew by 1.3% in 2020:
  - Wireless revenue grew by approximately 17.4% to over \$815 million, accounting for 22% of total revenue.
  - Traditional wired services (e.g., cable television, broadband internet) totalled \$4.22 billion and accounted for 78% of Shaw's total business revenue in 2020.
- Despite wireless services' smaller proportion of total revenue, media analysts have speculated that Shaw's growth in the wireless market is driving the acquisition.

#### Rogers Communications Inc.

- Rogers is a family-founded, family-controlled company, which was started in 1960 and has its headquarters in Toronto, Ontario. The company directly employs approximately 23,500 people across Canada. Total compensation for employees amounted to \$1.847 billion in 2020.
- Business lines include wireless and wired telecommunications services, as well as a broad portfolio of media properties and sports teams (e.g., Sportsnet, Toronto Blue Jays).
- In 2020, Rogers' total revenue decreased by 7.7%:
  - Wireless revenue decreased by 7.8% for a total of \$8.53 billion. Wireless accounted for 61.3% of Rogers total revenue.
  - Wired (cable) revenue totalled \$3.95 billion in 2020, accounting for 28.4% of Rogers total revenue.
  - Media revenue decreased by 22.5% for a total of \$1.61 billion in 2020. Media represents 11.5% of Rogers' total revenue.
- Rogers is Canada's largest provider of wireless services, with over 10.9 million wireless subscribers and 31% share of Canada's wireless market. The impact of COVID-19 and wireless market disruption related to Shaw's Freedom Mobile unlimited data plans resulted in decreased revenue from international roaming and data overage.
- The company has positioned itself as Canada's leading 5G provider. Their 5G network currently covers more than 170 communities, including Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver.

## Appendix 2: Transaction Details

- On March 15, 2021, Rogers Communications Inc. announced plans to acquire Shaw Communications Inc. in a transaction valued at approximately \$26 billion.
- The transaction is not subject to a financing condition as Rogers has already secured committed debt financing; however, the deal is subject to federal regulatory approval by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, Ministry of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, and the Competition Bureau.
- In a news release, Rogers committed to:
  - Create a regional head office in Calgary and up to 3,000 net new jobs across Western Canada. Alberta Premier Jason Kenney has indicated that approximately 1,800 of these jobs will be in Alberta, including the President of Western Operations and other senior roles.
  - Establish a new National Centre of Technology and Engineering Excellence, located at the University of Calgary, which will drive R&D innovation and support business development. Approximately 500 of the 1,800 jobs for Alberta will be located at the research centre. The remaining 1,200 jobs are expected to be created in B.C., Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.
  - Invest \$2.5 billion in 5G networks across Western Canada over the next five years.
  - Establish a new \$1 billion Rogers Rural and Indigenous Connectivity Fund to connect rural, remote, and Indigenous communities across Western Canada to high-speed internet and to close connectivity gaps for underserved areas.
  - Consult with Indigenous communities to create Indigenous-owned and operated Internet Service Providers that leverage Rogers networks and capabilities.

## MEETING NOTE

### Advice to Minister Beare

**MEETING DATE:** April 27, 2021

**CLIFF#:** 114994

**ATTENDEES:** **Roly Russell**, MLA for Boundary-Similkameen and Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development, FLNR; **Jennifer Rice**, MLA North Coast and Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Preparedness, PSSG; **Michele Babchuk**, MLA North Island; **CJ Ritchie**, Associate Deputy Minister and GCIO, CITZ; **Susan Stanford**, Assistant Deputy Minister, Connectivity Division, CITZ

**ISSUE:** Connected Coast Network Project Update

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The Connected Coast Network project scope involves the installation of a 3,400 km undersea cable and 159 landing sites in proximity to communities. The project is led by CityWest and Strathcona Regional District (SRD). Funding has been secured for the project.

s.13; s.16

The recently announced Rogers Highway 14 Cellular Build project is not a broadband build, and may benefit from landing sites at Port Renfrew and Jordan River delivered by the Connected Coast project. The Rogers cellular project is currently supported solely by a microwave link.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

The Connected Coast Network project is currently in permitting, consultations and final network design with the plan to begin construction in late summer 2021.

The funders agreed to extend the project timeline for completion from March 31, 2021 to March 31, 2023.

s.13; s.16

s.13; s.16

#### **Last-mile projects to benefit from the Connected Coast Network project**

- As a separate undertaking from the Connected Coast Network project, CityWest and other internet service providers have submitted funding applications to the Connecting British Columbia program for last-mile solutions associated with Connected Coast landing sites.
- Fourteen last mile projects have been approved with a total value of nearly \$25 million. An additional 11 projects with a project value of \$12.9 million have been conditionally approved, subject to joint funding by the federal Universal Broadband fund or the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.

#### **Anchor Tenants along the Connected Coast Network route**

s.13; s.16

#### **Role of Coastal First Nations**

- Coastal First Nations is a unique alliance of nine nations situated along the north and central coast and on Haida Gwaii. Each nation has its distinct culture, governance, and territory.
- The Ministry of Citizens' Services Connected Communities program has been working with Coastal First Nations to support community digital readiness and capacity through connectivity planning. The planning work is focused on communities and their last-mile priorities and solutions in preparation for the new Connected Coast Network.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

The Connected Coast Network project is currently working with Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development's (FLNR) FrontCounterBC Nanaimo office for provincial permitting requirements and with the federal government for federal permitting requirements.

s.13

**SUGGESTED RESPONSE / KEY MESSAGES:**

The successful completion of the Connected Coast project is a priority for the Province. Staff have and will continue to support the project.

The Province has established a permitting navigation team to assist with the provincial permitting requirements should the proponents wish permitting support.

Attachment: ATT-1 Last-Mile project benefitting from Connected Coast Network

Contact: Howard Randell, Executive Director, Network BC Mobile: 250 415-6867



Page 29 of 83 to/à Page 30 of 83

Withheld pursuant to/removed as

s.12

## INFORMATION NOTE

### Advice to Minister Beare

Date: April 23, 2021

CLIFF#: 115017

#### ISSUE: CRTC Approves Mobile Virtual Network Operators for the Canadian Market

##### BACKGROUND:

On April 15, 2021 the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) announced a decision to open the market to Mobile Virtual Network Operators so long as they own cellular networks and spectrum. The new ruling mandates the three national network owners (Bell, Rogers and TELUS) and SaskTel to provide wholesale rates to regional carriers.

The acronym MVNO stands for Mobile Virtual Network Operator. These companies operate their own sales and customer service, but buy service from major carriers (Bell, Rogers and TELUS) at a wholesale rate then sell access to customers. In markets with a lot of MVNO carriers, like in the United States, plans can be cheaper and offer more features when compared to the Canadian market.

The CRTC proceeding on Mobile Virtual Network Operators was first announced in February 2019, a hearing was held in February 2020 (which the Province participated in) and final submissions from telecom providers were due July 2020. Attached are copies of the Province's submissions to the CRTC.

TELUS was the strongest anti-mandated MVNO voice saying that it would cost 5,000 jobs if forced upon the wireless industry and that the company would slice \$1 billion from its spending. Other providers have suggested that a hybrid MVNO model such as what was announced by the CRTC would be welcome.

##### DISCUSSION:

CRTC Decision 2021-130 is designed to open the Canadian market to MVNOs and achieves the following:

##### *Expansion of Offerings*

- Put in place measures to spur more mobile wireless competition for the Canadian market, but only for those companies that already own and operate cellular infrastructure and own spectrum.
- It means companies with existing facilities like Videotron, Eastlink, Cogeco and various independents, can expand their offerings beyond their existing networks.
- Companies with no spectrum or telecom network facilities would not be able to become an MVNO.
- The CRTC's decision also made it clear that the new 'wholesale roaming policy' applies to fifth-generation or 5G networks<sup>1</sup>.
- There is an expiration date on the MVNO provisions after seven years. The CRTC wants the MVNOs to take the time to build and expand their own facilities and migrate their customers to their own networks and then the MVNO provisions would be phased out.

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<sup>1</sup> 5G will support a massive increase in the number of connected devices that require real time connectivity for applications like managing the health response to a pandemic and earthquake prevention using artificial intelligence and machine learning, autonomous mining and smart city applications such as mass drone delivery services. Industry investments in 5G networks are expected to contribute an estimated \$40 billion annually to the Canada's economy and 250,000 permanent new jobs by 2026.

***New Wholesale Rates***

- The CRTC's decision requires the dominant carriers (Bell, Rogers and TELUS) to file wholesale MVNO tariffs within 90 days from April 15, 2021, and then for the carriers and MVNOs to negotiate a deal.
- If the parties cannot come to a deal, they can appeal to the CRTC, which will be the final arbitrator.

***Seamless Roaming***

- The CRTC has mandated seamless roaming between carriers so that calls are not dropped when a customer of one carrier roams onto the network of another with which it has a roaming agreement.

***Resell Wholesale access***

- Regional providers will have the flexibility to resell their wholesale access to mobile virtual network operators, which could enable further competition by allowing smaller companies that do not own cell networks and spectrum into the market.

***Low-Cost and Occasional Use Plans***

- The CRTC is requiring Bell, Rogers, TELUS and SaskTel to offer low-cost and occasional-use plans, as well as promote them on their websites, in person and over the phone, for seniors and others who do not use their smartphone a lot. The dominant carriers must report back to the CRTC every six months on their progress with this.

**SUMMARY:**

CRTC Decision 2021-130 aligns with the government's goals of promoting competition, affordability and consumer interests and innovation.

- The intended effect of this decision is greater choice and affordable options for the consumers as well as cheaper mobile wireless services who rely on their smartphone now more than ever.
- The decision also requires the dominant wireless providers to offer seamless roaming, low-cost plans, and occasional-use plans.
- Equally important is the all wireless providers continue to invest in their current networks and build out their 5G networks.

Attachment: ATT-1 Province's Submission to the CRTC

ATT-2 Province's Submission to the CRTC

Contact: Howard Randell, Executive Director, Network BC, Mobile 250-415-6867



November 22, 2019

File: 1011-NOC2019-0057

Ref: 112334

Mr. Claude Doucet  
Secretary General  
Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0N2

**Re: Further Comments – Review of mobile wireless services, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2019-57**

Dear Mr. Doucet:

Pursuant to paragraph 63 of Telecom Notice of Consultation 2019-57, *Review of mobile wireless services*, the Province of British Columbia is pleased to submit further comments. The comments are attached.

Sincerely,

Susan Stanford  
Assistant Deputy Minister



Further Comments for Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC  
2019-57

## **Review of Mobile Wireless Services**

### **Comments of the Province of British Columbia**

November 22, 2019

## Executive summary

1. The B.C. Government announced in its February 12, 2019 Speech From The Throne that it is taking action to strengthen consumer protections around cellphone contracts and billing, beginning with a public consultation and legislative review. It also stated that the Province would encourage the federal government to deliver more affordable cellphone options.
2. The Province submits these comments in response to Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2019-57. Additional comments are being provided at this time as B.C. recently undertook a large-scale public engagement process on cellphone-related issues. The engagement included a public survey that was completed by 15,549 people, the results of which were not available when the Province initially requested on May 13, 2019 to be added as an intervenor in these proceedings. B.C. submitted a request on September 26, 2019 to appear at a public hearing to present findings from the survey.
3. Respondents to the survey (“Respondents”) expressed frustration, confusion and general unhappiness with the current cost of wireless services and level of competition in the Canadian retail wireless services market. The current lack of affordability and choice negatively impact families’ ability to afford and choose a wireless service that meets their budget and needs.
4. Survey results reveal that there is an imbalance between the needs of consumers and what is being offered in the retail wireless service market. The B.C. Government encourages the Commission to meet its policy objectives and address this imbalance in order to provide families with greater affordability and choice when purchasing a wireless service. B.C. encourages the Commission to promote competition in telecommunications markets to ensure that Canadians have more choice of innovative and affordable services. However, the Province is of the view that a “market-based” approach based on minimal regulatory intervention may not achieve these goals within an acceptable time frame.
5. In addition to advancing overall consumer affordability issues, the Province submits that targeted actions are needed for vulnerable groups, notably seniors. Seniors have unique needs which warrant the mandating of more basic, lower-cost plans. B.C. supports this objective and recommends that the Commission require the provision of wireless service plans specifically designed for, and targeted towards, seniors.

## About the B.C. survey

6. From May 29 to July 5, 2019, British Columbians were invited to complete an online survey on cellphone-related issues. The survey provided an opportunity for people to provide input and recommendations directly to the provincial government on a variety of topics, including: contracts and billing; business practices; value and cost; and consumer rights and responsibilities.
7. Interest in the survey was high. A total of 15,549 survey responses were received during the survey period. People from all regions of B.C. completed the survey, particularly in the higher population density areas of the Lower Mainland/Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island. Individuals from all age demographics and levels of household income provided input. The survey results were analyzed and compiled by Ipsos Reid.
8. The complete public report on the public survey, which contains a detailed summary of the process and all survey key findings, is included as an attachment to this submission.
9. In addition to the survey, meetings with key stakeholders and industry groups took place. The B.C. engagement process has been led by MLA Bob D'Eith (Maple Ridge - Mission), who was appointed by Premier John Horgan to represent the Province in discussions at the federal level regarding cell phone transparency, affordability and consumer protection. MLA D'Eith's responsibilities include advocating on British Columbians' behalf for greater affordability and choice in wireless services and advancing key issues raised by British Columbians and stakeholders to the appropriate federal authorities.

**CRTC Q2. Comment on the competitiveness of the mobile wireless service market(s). Are the mobile wireless service needs of Canadians currently being met? How have competitive conditions changed over the past five years? If the Commission's mobile wireless service regulatory framework remains unchanged, what do you expect the level of competition to be in the future?**

10. Evidence from the survey results reveal that most British Columbians believe there is insufficient competition and choice in the current retail wireless services market in Canada. Survey responses indicate that consumers are highly dissatisfied with the cost of current retail offerings and do not perceive them to be of good value for the services they entail. British Columbians also have articulated the view that greater industry competition is needed in the wireless sector to provide consumers with more options to choose from when selecting a wireless service that is best suited to their needs and budget. Key survey results:

***Perceptions of the cost of cellphone services***

Fewer than one-in-ten respondents (6%) agreed with the statement that 'the cost of my cellphone service is reasonable.' The vast majority (86%) of respondents disagreed the cost is reasonable, while fewer than one-in-ten (7%) were neutral.

***Perceptions of the value of cellphone services***

Only one-in-ten respondents (9%) agreed with the statement that 'I get good value for my cellphone service.' A strong majority (79%) of respondents disagreed with this statement, while one-in-ten (12%) were neutral.

***Additional comments***

The survey asked people if they have additional comments on how to strengthen consumer protections regarding cellphone services. A total of 6,389 respondents (41% of all respondents) provided a written comment, most of which focused on competition in the retail wireless services market. Seven-in-ten (71%) respondents answering this question made a comment related to value and cost. The greatest number of comments were about affordability complaints (43% of all comments) and the need for more competition (27% of all comments).

11. Respondents called for targeted regulatory measures to reduce the cost of wireless services. While different suggestions were made on what regulatory measures would best achieve this end, survey respondents agreed that the guiding principles and goals behind any regulatory changes should be improved affordability and choice for consumers. Key survey results:

***Suggestions to reduce the cost of cellphone services***

The top three suggestions on how to reduce the cost of cellphone services were: more retail competition and innovation (58%), government regulation (50%) and more



choices for low-use and mid-use cellphone plans (47%). Respondents that provided additional comments also specifically called for greater price regulation (7% of all comments) and different/income-based cellphone plans (5% of all comments).

**CRTC Q3. Are there issues that require regulatory measures at the retail level (i.e. beyond current measures such as the Wireless Code and mandatory participation in the Commission for Complaints for Telecom-television Services Inc. [CCTS])? If so, what are the issues and what measures would be required? Explain why these measures are necessary.**

12. Survey respondents shared their experiences shopping for a cellphone service. A concerning number of problems at the retail level were raised, such as misleading advertising, deceptive sales practices and non-disclosure of contract terms and conditions at the point-of-sale. Several of the issues reported in the B.C. survey results parallel findings in the 2019 CRTC *Report on Misleading or Aggressive Communications Retail Sales Practices*. Key survey results:

***Issues when shopping for a cellphone service***

The most frequent reported issues when shopping for a cellphone service included: potential charges not being fully explained (72%), contract terms not being fully explained (65%) and misleading information (59%). More than half of respondents to this question also experienced not having enough opportunity to read the contract (57%) and aggressive sales practices (56%).

13. The prevalence of these issues at the retail level hinder consumers' ability to make informed choices when shopping for a wireless service and warrant consideration of new regulatory measures. For example, many survey respondents requested government to impose advertising standards for wireless service providers to ensure that consumers have access to transparent, accurate and consistent information when selecting a wireless service plan. The Wireless Code contains no provisions to ensure the accuracy of wireless service advertising.
14. An example is the recent introduction of "unlimited" or "infinite" data plans by some wireless service providers. These plans are advertised as entailing unlimited amounts of data with no overage fees. What is not apparent in advertising is that data beyond the plan's maximum allotment is provided at drastically reduced speeds. A customer may not be made aware of this important limitation when signing up for such a service.

**CRTC Q4. Discuss how Canada’s retail mobile wireless service market(s) compare(s) internationally, and provide any studies and reports you have in this regard. Which countries offer the best comparisons with Canada and why? Discuss whether international comparisons are meaningful in the context of mobile wireless service regulation.**

15. Most survey respondents do not believe Canada’s retail wireless services market is sufficiently competitive with other international jurisdictions. Respondents provided additional comments citing their experiences using comparable wireless services in other countries – including the United States, Australia and in Europe – and pointed out that greater competition in these jurisdictions result in lower overall wireless plan costs and better-value services (i.e. more monthly data) than what is currently offered in Canada.

**CRTC Q5. If the retail market, or a portion of it, is found to be insufficiently competitive to protect the interests of users, what regulatory measures (e.g. the application of additional conditions of service or mandating of the provision of lower-cost data-only plans), if any, ought to be applied to ensure that the policy objectives of the Act, as well as the Policy Direction, are met?**

16. As noted, British Columbians have indicated in survey responses that they want federal regulatory measures to improve affordability and choice in wireless services. The Province encourages the Commission to consider regulatory actions that will generally promote improved affordability and choice for consumers. This is in keeping with many of the policy objectives of Order in Council P.C. 2019-803, which directs the CRTC to consider how its decisions can promote competition, affordability, consumer interests and innovation.<sup>1</sup>

17. Evidence from the survey indicates that specific new regulatory measures are needed to protect seniors. For instance, seniors are particularly susceptible to aggressive or deceptive sales tactics that can induce them into signing up for plans and devices that exceed their actual wants or needs. Data from the engagement revealed how seniors can be sold expensive large data plans and the latest devices as part of a two-year fixed-term plan, even though they may have no need for data, already have a device that meets their wireless needs and prefer a month-to-month postpaid plan.

18. The Province submits that the Commission should mandate lower-cost monthly wireless service plans that are clearly designed and branded for seniors. Such plans would provide basic services at a lower price and not require the latest devices or a lengthy fixed-term commitment period. For example, many seniors do not use texting and data services and would be satisfied with a basic

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<sup>1</sup> SOR/2019-227, Order Issuing a Direction to the CRTC on Implementing the Canadian Telecommunications Policy Objectives to Promote Competition, Affordability, Consumer Interests and Innovation.  
<https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2019-227/FullText.html>

voice-only and/or low-data plan. Any new mandated plans of this type should be clearly disclosed to seniors in advertising and by sales staff at the retail level.

19. Further, seniors have a need for paper billing to be included as part of the minimum monthly cost of their plan. Evidence from the B.C. engagement revealed that many seniors experience bill shock when they learn that there are additional costs to receive paper invoicing, something that may not be transparent or disclosed to them at the time the contract is entered into. This is a consumer fairness issue that should be addressed, as many seniors need paper bills since they cannot access free methods of billing via the internet or web-based apps. The option of free paper billing should be made a required feature in any new wireless service plans aimed at seniors.

### **CRTC: Other matters, issues, or proposals that are relevant to and appropriate for a broad policy review of mobile wireless services**

20. The Province recognizes that the Wireless Code and CCTS complaint process are not within the scope of these proceedings. Fulsome comments on these matters are therefore not being provided at this time. Survey responses regarding specific aspects of the Wireless Code and CCTS are contained in the full report.
21. Rather, the Province submits that reviews of the Wireless Code and the CCTS should be undertaken as soon as practicable, as a concerning number of consumer matters were raised in survey responses that are, or could be, contemplated in the Wireless Code and CCTS mandate. Some key survey results on these topics included:

#### ***Clarity and transparency in cellphone contracts and bills***

Only two-in-ten (22%) respondents agreed their cellphone contract was easy to understand and only about one third (36%) agreed their cellphone bill is easy to understand. The top reported issue for both related to inadequate explanation of charges.

#### ***Issues with cellphone contracts and bills***

Only three-in-ten (29%) respondents agreed they have not had an issue with their cellphone contract or monthly bill. The most frequent issues experienced were unexpected charges and included: an unexpected charge for usage (64%), a change to the cost of a plan (47%) and an account service charge (40%).

#### ***Unexpected charges for cellphone usage***

The most common issues experienced by those who indicated having an unexpected charge for usage included: overage charges (71%), roaming fees outside of Canada

(35%), roaming fees within Canada (32%) and long-distance calling overage charges (31%).

***Disputes over issues with cellphone contracts and bills***

Roughly six-in-ten (62%) respondents said they have disputed an issue with their cellphone contract or bill. The methods of disputing the issue included contacting the service provider (96%), filing a complaint with the CCTS (2%) and going through an arbitration process (1%).

***Satisfaction levels with the outcome of dispute resolution processes***

Those who launched a dispute over a contract or billing issue were generally left less than fully satisfied, regardless of the dispute method taken. Satisfaction levels were lowest with the results of an arbitration process (11%), followed by contacting the service provider (22%) and filing a complaint with the CCTS (36%).

***Awareness of consumer rights and responsibilities regarding cellphone services***

Only about two-in-ten (18%) survey respondents agreed that they know their rights and responsibilities as a consumer when it comes to cellphone services.

***Awareness of the federal Wireless Code***

Fewer than one in ten (8%) respondents indicated being familiar with the Wireless Code and the rights it provides to consumers. It is worth noting that this is a significantly lower percentage than that reported in previous public opinion surveys commissioned by the CRTC.<sup>2</sup>

***Awareness of the Commission for Complaints for Telecom-television Services complaint process***

Only 12% of respondents indicated having familiarity with the CCTS complaint process. Even fewer (2%) respondents have filed a complaint with the CCTS.

22. The results of the B.C. survey indicate that these issues have a direct bearing on overall consumer perceptions of the state of the wireless services retail market, particularly with respect to cost and value.

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<sup>2</sup> The most recent 2019 Wireless Code public opinion research survey found that 44% of polled Canadians do not recall hearing anything about the Wireless Code. Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, *Wireless Code Public Opinion Research – Spring 2019* (2019). <http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpsgc/por-ef/crtc/2019/084-18-e/index.html>

23. The frequency and volume of consumer issues raised in survey responses, combined with the rapidly changing nature of the telecommunications sector,<sup>3</sup> point to a need for timely reviews to be undertaken of both the Wireless Code and CCTS complaint process. It seems reasonable to consider initiating the next review of the code sooner than by 2022.
24. Further, it is the Province's view that the next reviews of the Wireless Code and CCTS should not necessarily be undertaken in isolation or exclusively of each other,<sup>4</sup> given the interrelationship and common issues of concern that exist between the Wireless Code and the mandate of the CCTS complaint process.
25. As part of its other comments, the Province wishes to acknowledge the important role that the telecommunications sector plays in B.C., particularly with respect to industry investments in infrastructure and connectivity. The provincial government recognizes that Canadian telecommunications policy objectives include innovation and connectivity, such as ensuring that affordable access to high-quality telecommunications services is available in all regions of Canada, including rural areas. The B.C. Government is of the view that continued industry growth and connectivity initiatives in B.C. should not be perceived as being incompatible with the goals of improving consumer affordability and choice in the retail wireless services market.

## **Conclusion**

26. The Province of B.C. appreciates having the opportunity to participate in these proceedings and to advance key concerns and recommendations regarding wireless services from the Province's recent engagement process. The Commission is encouraged to carefully consider the evidence presented in this submission and in the attached report on the B.C. cellphone survey as part of its deliberations.
27. The Province is continuing to engage with citizens and key stakeholders as it works to address affordability, transparency and fairness for consumers, and is undertaking a legislative review and other advocacy efforts. B.C. would welcome the opportunity to discuss the survey findings at a public hearing, along with other related matters raised during this engagement process.

## **ATTACHMENT: B.C. Cellphone Billing: What We Heard Report**

**\*\*\*End of document\*\*\***

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<sup>3</sup> During the B.C. engagement process, several telecommunication companies introduced three-year device installment plans that separate the costs of a device from the cost of the wireless services. These device installment plans are not contemplated in the current Wireless Code.

<sup>4</sup> CRTC decision Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2017-200 stated that "The Commission does not consider that it would be appropriate or feasible to combine future reviews of the Code with those of the CCTS."  
<https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2017/2017-200.htm>



# CELLPHONE BILLING TRANSPARENCY

What We Heard



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

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# Background

Cellphones play an important part in British Columbians' daily lives. Ninety-two percent of B.C. households have at least one cellphone, whereas only 59.3% of homes maintain a landline. British Columbians use their cellphones for a wide variety of uses: whether for voice calling, accessing the internet, using web-based applications or for sharing photo and videos with friends and family.

British Columbians are among the country's most active users of cellphones. Mobile devices and plans are widely advertised and available for purchase in locations across the province. It is not unusual to hear about wireless services in advertisements and media reports, including the latest types of plans and newest devices available for purchase. Some British Columbians even get up early and wait in lines just to get those latest plans and devices.

Cellphones are an area of intense consumer interest. If you ask, many British Columbians will have a "cellphone story" that involves an issue observed or experienced when purchasing or using a cellphone service. These sometimes involve a contract issue, an unexpected charge on a monthly bill (i.e. "bill shock") or a dispute with a service provider. A range of consumer issues regarding cellphones appears to persist, despite the existence of the federal Wireless Code<sup>1</sup> and the Commission for Complaints for Telecom-television Services (CCTS) complaint process.<sup>2</sup>

In spring 2019, the B.C. Government announced that it is taking action to strengthen consumer protections around cellphone contracts and billing, beginning with a public consultation and legislative review. Government also stated that it would encourage the federal government to deliver more affordable cellphone options. These commitments were made in the 2019 B.C. Throne Speech.

## About the Survey

From May 29 to July 5, 2019, British Columbians were invited to complete a short online survey to share their views and experiences on cellphones. The survey provided an opportunity for the Province to hear directly from people on a wide range of cellphone topics. It was posted on the government's public engagement website, govTogetherBC, and advertised through social media and a province-wide news release, which was picked up by various media outlets throughout B.C.

While there have been surveys regarding cellphones in other jurisdictions, this was the first province-wide undertaking by the BC government to examine this issue. Questions covered a variety of current issues and topics, including: contracts and billing; business practices; value and cost; and consumer rights and responsibilities.

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1. The Wireless Code is a mandatory code of conduct for providers of retail mobile wireless voice and data services. Established by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) in 2013, and updated in 2017, the Wireless Code provides consumers with rights such as: plain language contracts, unlocked phones, caps on data overage and data roaming charges, maximum two-year contracts, and a 15-day trial period to cancel a contract.

2. The Commission for Complaints for Telecom-Television Services (CCTS) resolves complaints from Canadian consumers and small business retail customers regarding wireless services. Created by the CRTC in 2007, the CCTS is an independent, industry-funded agency.



# Survey Results

A total of 15,549 survey responses were received during the consultation period. People from all regions of the province completed the survey, particularly in the higher population density areas of the Lower Mainland/Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island. Individuals from all age demographics and levels of household income provided input. Survey respondent characteristics, including cellphone user and demographic profiles, are included in the Appendix.

Analysis of the survey results was completed by Ipsos Reid, including the report's key findings and detailed survey results. The key findings highlight consumers' main experiences and issues purchasing or using a cellphone plan. The detailed survey results provide in-depth analysis of the responses to each survey question. These include British Columbians' recommendations on how to enhance cellphone contract and billing transparency.

Respondents could provide other or additional text comments for some questions. These comments have been aggregated, with sample comments included, as they provide rich insights into specific issues and concerns raised by British Columbians.

While the survey results affirm some widely-held perceptions about cellphone services, other responses highlight less-known issues and concerns to British Columbians. This input will help identify ways to strengthen BC consumer protection around contracts and billing, and assist government with next steps and a legislative review. Some of the input concerns areas of federal jurisdiction, which includes regulation of telecommunications in Canada.

## Report Notes

Survey respondents were permitted to skip questions. Only a small number of respondents chose not to answer each question. Those responses are not included in summary statistics.

Because of rounding, some totals may not add up to 100% and some summary statistics may not be the sum of their component parts.

Sample comments in each section have been selected, by relevance, from content provided by respondents in "other" and "additional comments" text fields. Some quotes have been edited for clarity and grammar.

# Summary of Key Findings

## **Key finding 1: Cellphone contracts and bills are not easy to understand**

Only two-in-ten (22%) respondents agreed their cellphone contract was easy to understand. The main issues with contracts were: inadequate explanation of all potential charges, excessive contract length and hard-to-understand terms and conditions.

Only about one-third (36%) of respondents agreed their cellphone bill is easy to understand. Top areas of concern included: inadequate explanation of charges, insufficient explanation of levels of usage and lack of clarity on how to dispute a charge.

## **Key finding 2: People have had issues with their cellphone contract or bill**

Only three-in-ten (29%) respondents agreed they have not had an issue with their cellphone contract or monthly bill. The most common issues included: an unexpected charge for usage (especially a data overage charge), the cost of a plan changing without knowledge or consent, and an unexpected service charge (especially fees to change plan or to connect/reconnect). Additional comments indicated issues with service providers changing contract terms and conditions.

## **Key finding 3: Most have disputed an issue with their contract or bill and few were fully satisfied with the result**

Six-in-ten (62%) respondents said they have disputed an issue with their cellphone contract or bill, with the vast majority (96%) doing so by contacting their cellphone service provider. Very few (3%) filed a complaint with the Commission for Complaints for Telecom-television Services (CCTS) or went through an arbitration process with the cellphone provider.

Those who launched a dispute were generally left less than fully satisfied, regardless of the dispute method. Satisfaction with the result was highest among those who went to the CCTS, at just 36% satisfied. Outcomes were worse among those who contacted their provider (22% satisfied) or who went through an arbitration process (11% satisfied).

## **Key finding 4: Many have experienced multiple issues and concerns when shopping for a cellphone service**

A majority of survey respondents have experienced multiple issues and concerns when shopping for a cellphone service. These included: potential charges not being fully explained (72%), contract terms not being fully explained (65%), misleading information (59%), not having enough opportunity to read the contract (57%) and aggressive sales practices (56%).

## Key finding 5: Cost and value perceptions are very poor

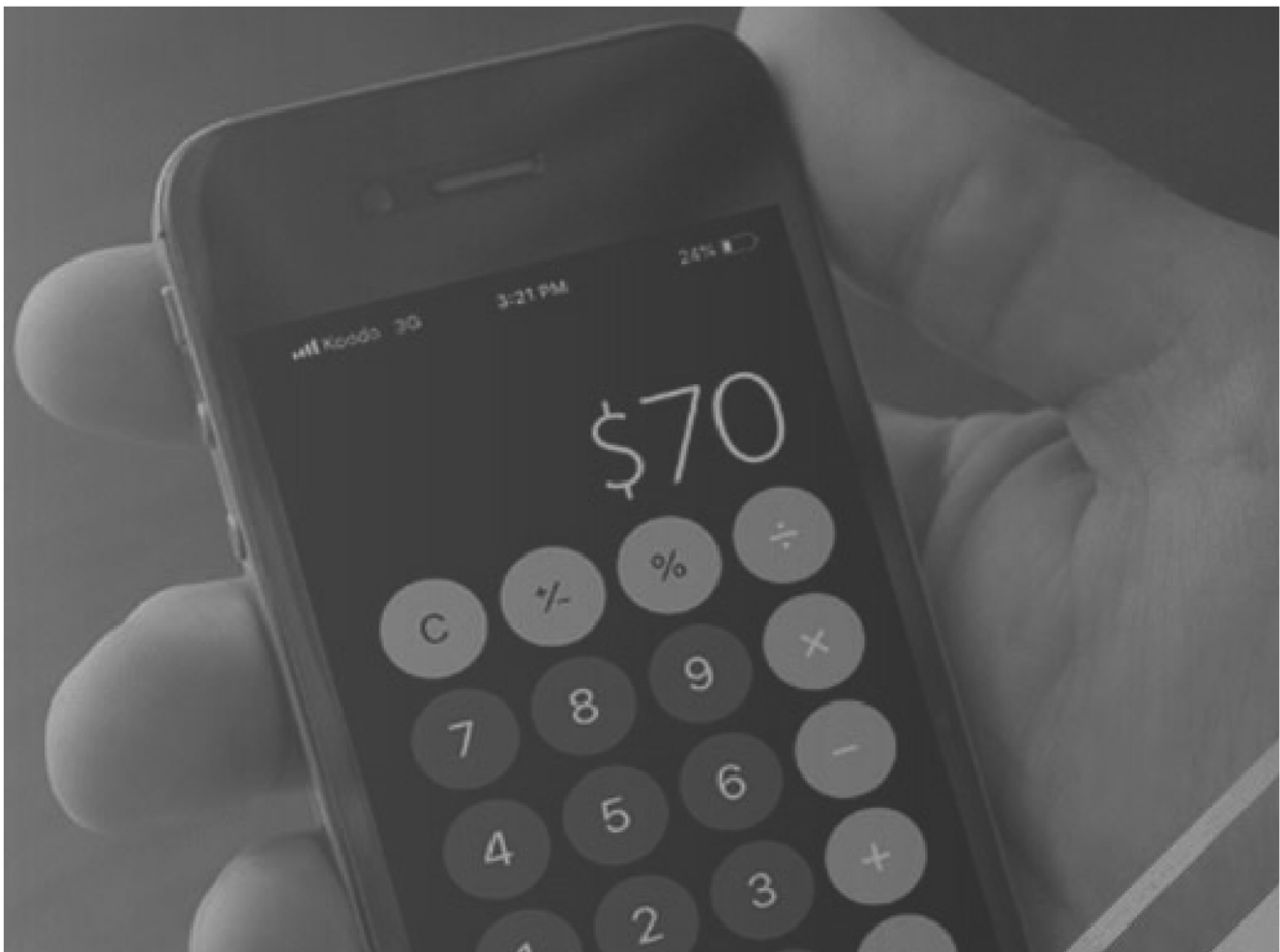
Only 6% of respondents agreed the cost of their cellphone service is reasonable and only 9% agreed they get good value for their cellphone service. Seven-in-ten (71%) respondents also provided additional comments critical of the lack of affordability and the high cost of cellphone services.

Top suggestions for reducing the cost of cellphone services included: more retail competition/innovation, government regulation, and providing more choices for low/mid-use cellphone plans.

## Key finding 6: Most consumers don't know their rights and responsibilities when it comes to cellphone services

Only two-in-ten (18%) respondents agreed they know their rights and responsibilities as a consumer when it comes to cellphone services. Even fewer agreed they are familiar with either the Commission for Complaints for Telecom-television Services complaint process (12%) or the federal Wireless Code (8%).

Top suggestions for increasing awareness of rights/responsibilities included: better information at point-of-sale, better information in cellphone bills, and public education/awareness initiatives.



# Detailed Survey Results

## Contracts and Billing

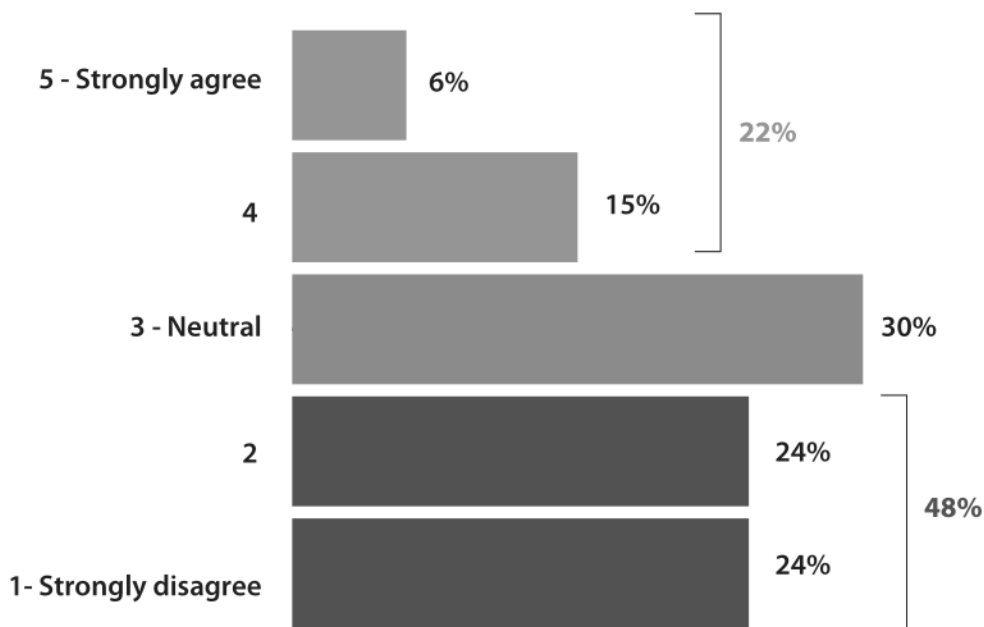
The survey asked British Columbians about their experiences with cellphone contracts and billing. Topics included contract and billing issues, types of disputes and dispute resolution processes.

Several questions asked respondents to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with a statement. All agree/disagree questions were asked on a 1 to 5 scale where 5 meant 'strongly agree' and 1 meant 'strongly disagree'. Throughout this report, answer choices 4 and 5 are summarized as agreement, answer choices 1 and 2 are summarized as disagreement and answer choice 3 is treated as a neutral/neither response.

### Are cellphone contracts easy to understand?

Only two-in-ten respondents (22%) agreed with the statement that 'when I signed up for my cellphone service, the contract was easy to understand.' Almost half (48%) disagreed with this statement, while three-in-ten (30%) respondents were neutral.

***Agreement: When I signed up for my cellphone service, the contract was easy to understand.***



Q: What is your level of agreement with the following statements? (Select one per statement)  
Base: All respondents (n=15,118) excluding not applicable (n=367) and no answer (n=64)

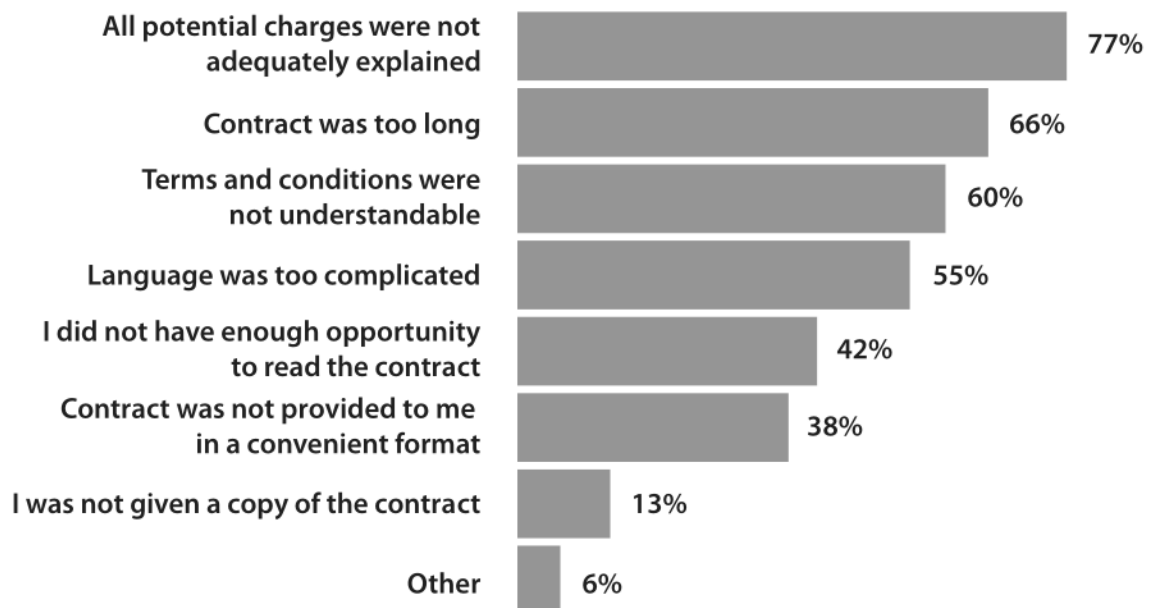
## What parts of cellphone contracts are not easy to understand?

Those who disagreed that the contract was easy to understand were asked to indicate the issue they experienced. They could choose from a list of seven items (multiple responses were allowed) or write in an 'other' response.

The top three reasons why contracts were not easy to understand included: all potential charges were not adequately explained (77%), the contract was too long (66%) and the terms and conditions were not understandable (60%). A majority (55%) of respondents indicated that the language was too complicated.

Other notable reasons were: not enough opportunity given to read the contract (42%) and contract was not provided in a convenient format (38%).

### *Part of contract not easy to understand.*



*Q: What part of the contract was not easy to understand? (Select all that apply)*

*Base: Disagree contract is easy to understand (n=7,243)*

### Sample comments:

*"Consumers can't be expected to understand complicated contract terms, and a system where a simple mistake can result in overage charges which can easily double or triple your regular bill is not reasonable."*

*"My biggest challenges have been not getting a full explanation of charges up front, contracts that are too long and poorly written to understand, and high rates with little flexibility."*

*"I shouldn't need to consult a Rosetta stone to understand what I'm getting."*

*"The contract language needs to be simple, easy to comprehend for everyone from teens to new immigrants to seniors who may sign up for a plan. Full disclosure of costs, hidden costs, and phone subsidies needs to be crystal clear, and data plans and add-ons (and whether they be temporary or monthly fees)."*

*"I was not given a copy of the contract until transaction was made. Sales staff refused to give a copy no matter what store I went to."*

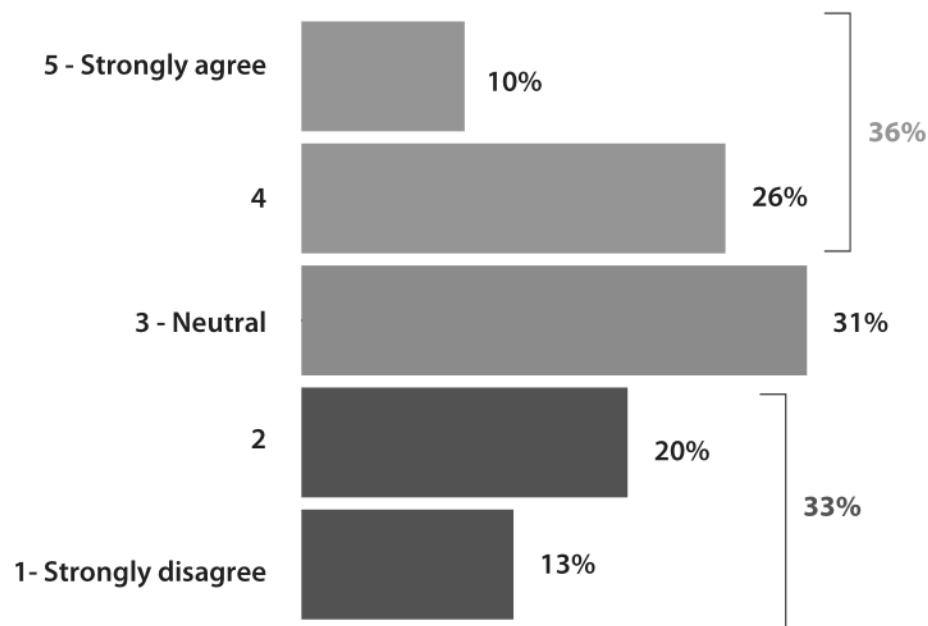
#### Other comments:

Six percent of respondents to this question wrote in an 'other' response. Some of the other themes raised in responses included: service providers changing contract terms during the contract period, contract not being as promised/as expected and customer not being given a copy of the contract to review until after signing.

### Are cellphone bills easy to understand?

Respondents had divided opinions in their level of agreement with the statement 'my cellphone bill is easy to understand.' Slightly more than one-third (36%) agreed their bill is easy to understand, while a similar percentage (33%) disagreed and three-in-ten (31%) were neutral.

#### Agreement: My cellphone bill is easy to understand.



Q: What is your level of agreement with the following statements? (Select all that apply)

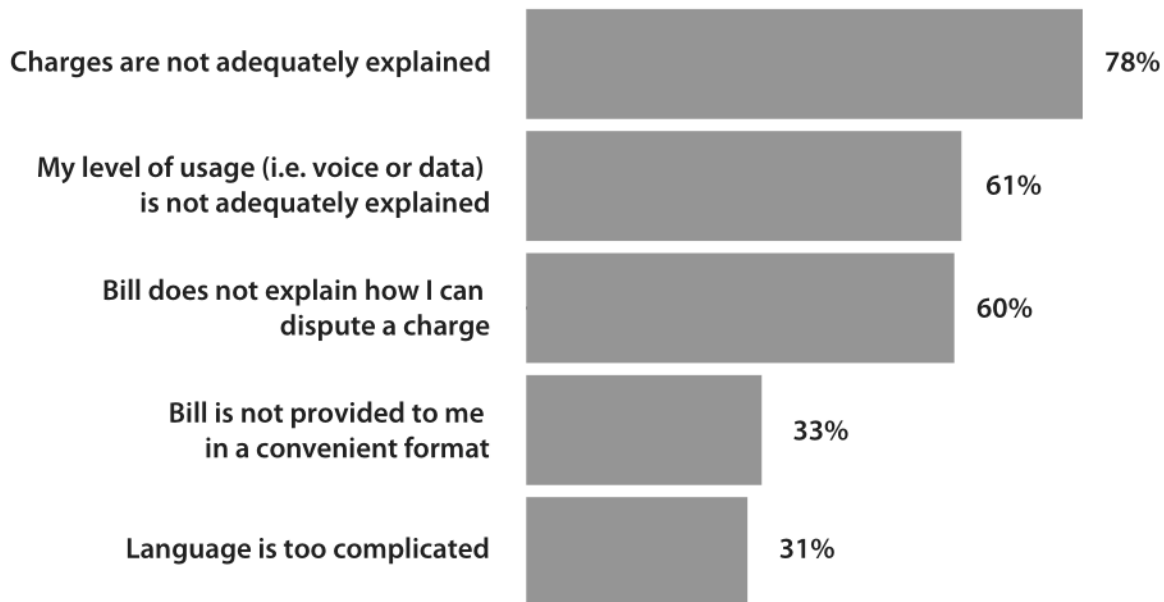
Base: All respondents (n=15,223) excluding not applicable (n=206) and no answer (n=120)

## What parts of cellphone bills are not easy to understand?

Those who disagreed that their bill is easy to understand were asked to indicate what part of their bill is not easy to understand. They could choose from a list of five items (multiple responses were allowed).

Three reasons stood out for why the cellphone bill is not easy to understand: charges are not adequately explained (78%), level of usage is not adequately explained (61%) and bill does not explain how to dispute a charge (60%).

### Part of bill not easy to understand.



Q: What part of your cell phone bill is not easy to understand? (Select all that apply)  
Base: Disagree bill easy to understand (n=5,059)

### Sample comments:

*"[We need] more transparent billing practices. Bills should reflect the most recent charges and credits and changes made to a current bill should be adjusted in the current bill rather than carrying it over to the next monthly bill."*

*"The bill is far too lengthy to review or print."*

*"The information provided regarding cellphone usage in regards to roaming and data usages is for me very confusing and convoluted."*

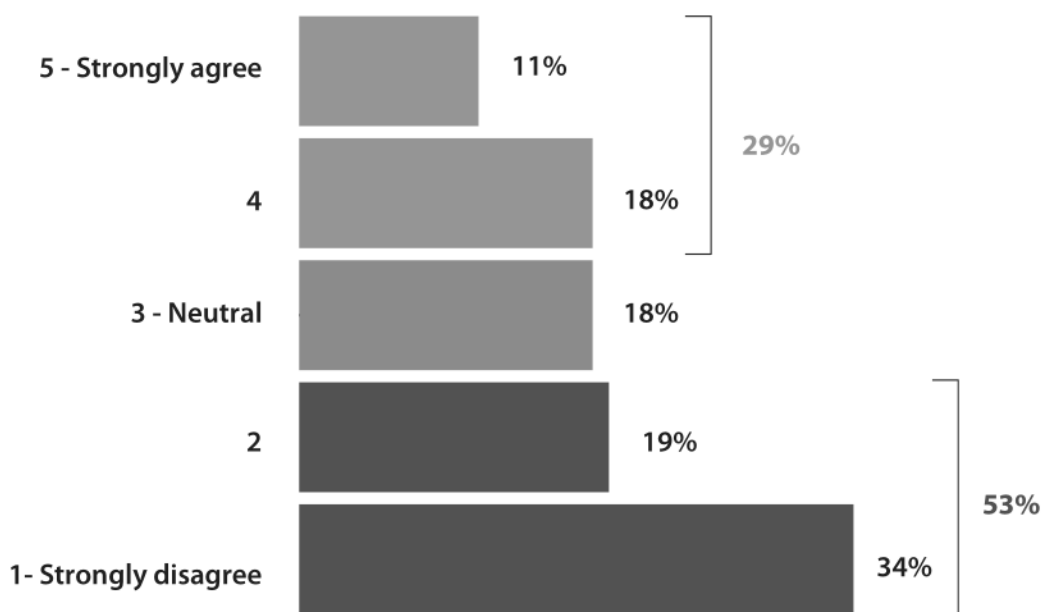
*"Carrier must supply contact information to resolve disputes. A website Q&A is not acceptable."*

*"It seemed like the wording in the contract didn't match the wording used on my bill or in person with the sales associate. Hard to see where it all lined up, or even if it did."*

## Have British Columbians had issues with their cellphone contract or monthly bill?

Respondents were asked for their level of agreement with the statement 'I have not had an issue with my cellphone contract or monthly bill.' Only three in ten (29%) agreed with the statement, indicating that they have not had an issue. A slight majority (53%) disagreed with the statement, which means they have had an issue with their contract or bill. Two in ten (18%) were neutral.

***Agreement: I have not had an issue with my cellphone contract or monthly bill.***



*Q: What is your level of agreement with the following statements? (Select one per statement)*  
*Base: All respondents (n=15,174) excluding not applicable (n=250) and no answer (n=125)*

## What issues have British Columbians had with their contract or bill?

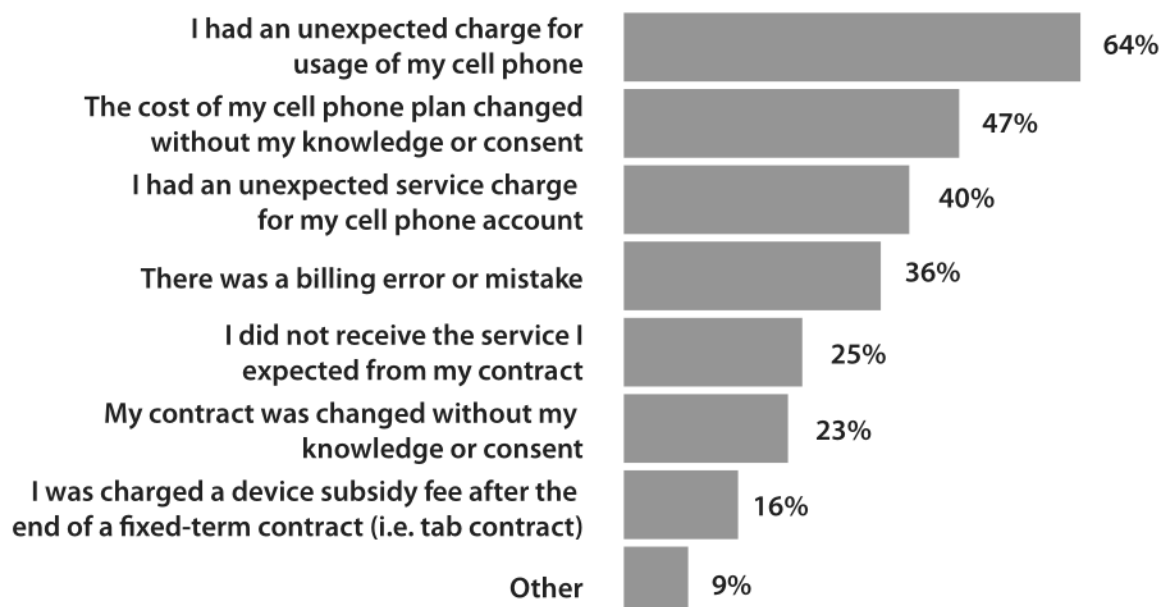
Those who indicated having had a problem with their contract or bill were asked to identify the issue they experienced. Respondents could choose from a list of seven items (multiple responses were allowed) or write in an 'other' response.

The number one issue reported was an unexpected charge for usage of a cellphone (64%). Other top issues included: the cost of cellphone plan changed without my knowledge or consent (47%), an unexpected service charge for the cellphone account (40%) and a billing error or mistake (36%).

Approximately one-quarter of respondents indicated that they did not receive the services they expected from the contract (25%), or had their contract changed without their knowledge or consent (23%).



### Issue experienced with contract or bill.



Q: What was the issue you experienced with your cell phone contract or bill? (Select all that apply)

Base: Disagree not issue with contract or bill (n=8,066)

### Sample comments:

*"Every month we have additional charges which we don't understand and they keep trying to up our plan for coverage."*

*"Company guaranteed a fixed price for a contract term, but upped the base price anyway before it was over."*

*"My cell provider is the only bill I can no longer get sent a paper copy of. The billing fluctuates and I need visibility. If I call them to ask my bill balance I get charged \$10.00 I also get charged this amount if I inquire about my contract terms."*

*"The company made a big billing error and wouldn't readjust my bill until after I paid them the full amount!"*

*"Contract is not binding on the company. Company can change terms whenever they want, but if I want to change anything there are consequences like my bills will be higher or I pay for differences or other charges."*

### Other comments:

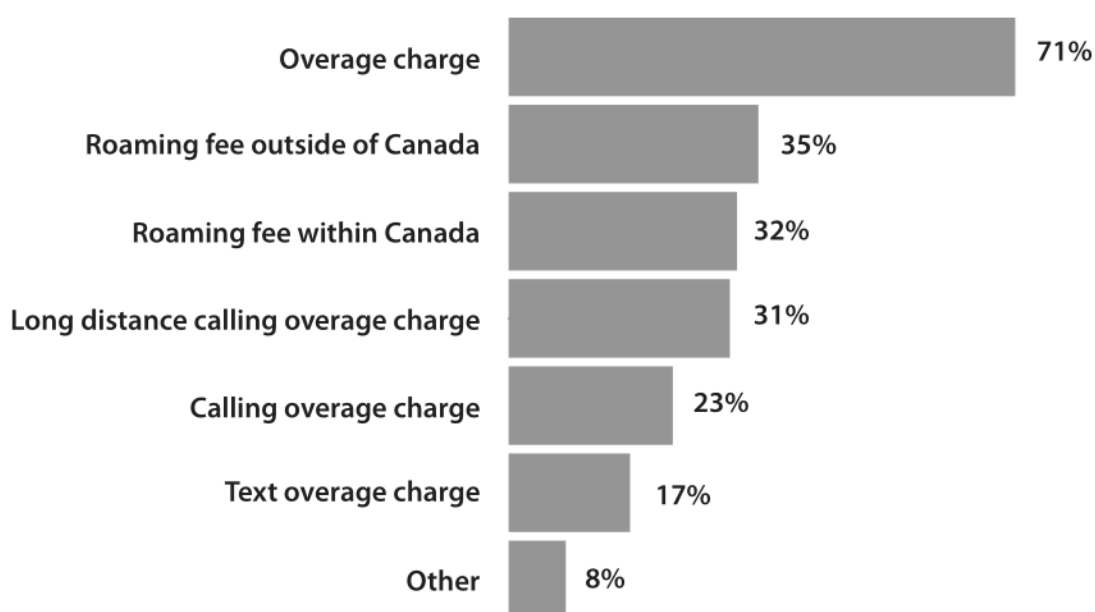
Nine percent of respondents to this question wrote in an 'other' response. Some of the other themes raised in responses included: promotions/discounts not being honoured, issues with cancellation or renewal; and concerns with up-front billing.

## What are the most common types of unexpected charges for cellphone usage?

Those who indicated they had an unexpected charge for usage of their cellphone were asked to identify the issue they experienced. Respondents could choose from a list of six items (multiple responses were allowed) or by writing in an 'other' response.

By far the number one unexpected charge was for data overage (71%). Other unexpected charges included a roaming fee outside of Canada (35%), a roaming fee within Canada (32%) and a long distance calling overage charge (31%).

### Type of unexpected charge for usage.



Q: What was unexpected charge for usage of your cell phone? (Select all that apply)  
Base: Had unexpected charge for usage (n=5,199)

### Sample comments:

*"Data charges should be better regulated and include a limit on how much a provider can charge for data overage fees. My current plan charges me \$20 if I use an additional 1 gigabyte of data than what is included in my plan. Why can't we have unlimited data like the US for a reasonable price?"*

*"I was recently charged \$7.00 for incurring 149 kilobytes of data, which actually occurred in the minute it took me to turn on my phone and text my agreement to purchasing a data top-up."*

*"I paid an extra fee ahead of travelling out of country to avoid roaming fees but when I received my statement, I was charged both the extra fee and roaming charges."*

*"Long distance calls are incredibly expensive. No one should have to pay \$37 for less than a half-hour call to a relative in the USA."*

*"All overages should be capped and require consent like data. Far too many times people are capped at \$100 roaming data but have hundreds or thousands of unbilled roaming voice and text charges."*

#### **Other comments:**

Eight percent of respondents to this question wrote in an 'other' response. However, most of these comments were either off-topic or repeated the answer choices provided to respondents. Only a few additional unexpected charges for usage were mentioned including:

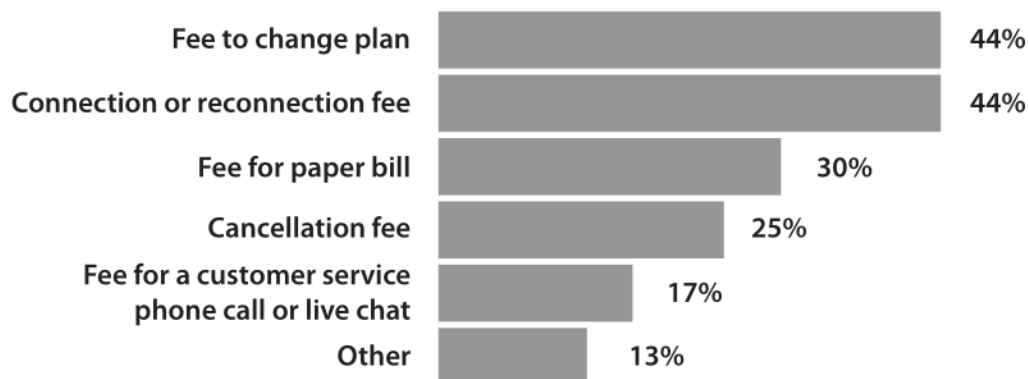
- ▶ 411
- ▶ 911
- ▶ Call forwarding
- ▶ Late charges
- ▶ Incoming calls and texts
- ▶ Texts to land lines
- ▶ Text from outside Canada

### **What are the most common types of unexpected service charges for cellphone accounts?**

Those who indicated they had an unexpected service charge for their cellphone account were asked to identify the issue they experienced. Respondents could choose from a list of five items (multiple responses were allowed) or write in an 'other' response.

The top three unexpected service charges included: a fee to change plan (44%), a connection or reconnection fee (44%) and a fee for a paper bill (30%). The next highest responses were: cancellation fee (25%) and fee for a customer service phone call or live chat (17%).

#### ***Type of unexpected service charge for account.***



*Q: What was unexpected charge for your cell phone account? (Select all that apply)*

*Base: Had unexpected service charge for account (n=3,226)*

### Sample comments:

*"To change my plan is a hassle and confusing. The bills are not straightforward and the cost went up without my consent at the end of a contract."*

*"I wasn't told when I purchased multiple devices there would be connection fees for each one of them!"*

*"Charges for paper bills and not being able to opt out of e-billing is another cost passed on the consumer. Billing type should be a consumer choice."*

*"Cancellation fees should be restricted to only the subsidized cost of the phone. Penalties for early cancellation are exorbitant, tying you to length of term and restricting consumer choice."*

*"If I call my service provider for something you can take care of online or their app they charge \$10. Why don't I get paid when they make an error and use 1.5 hours of my valuable time?"*

### Other comments:

Thirteen percent of respondents to this question wrote in an 'other' response. Some of the other themes raised in responses included: fees for services not requested/subscribed to; and fees for cancelled services.

Other unexpected service charges included the following:

- |                          |                          |                         |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| ▶ 411                    | ▶ Activation fees        | ▶ Changes to plans      |
| ▶ 911/emergency services | ▶ Change of phone        | ▶ Insurance             |
| ▶ Access fees            | ▶ Change of phone number | ▶ Maintenance fees      |
| ▶ Monthly fees           | ▶ Unlocking fees         | ▶ Upgrades & warranties |
| ▶ Late charges           |                          |                         |

## How many British Columbians have disputed an issue with their cellphone contract or bill?

Roughly six-in-ten (62%) respondents indicated having disputed an issue with their cellphone contract or bill.

### Ever disputed issue with contract or bill



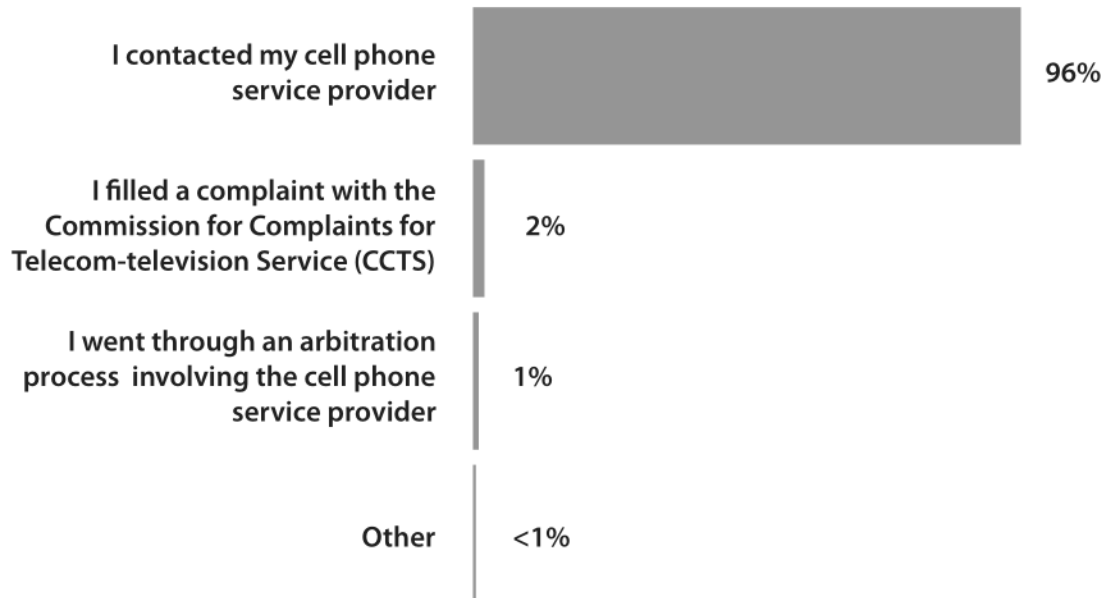
Q: Have you ever disputed an issue with your cell phone contract or bill? (Select one)

Base: All respondents (n=15,504) excluding no answer (n=45)

## How was the issue with the contract or bill disputed?

Almost all (96%) of those who disputed an issue with their cellphone contract or bill did so by contacting their cellphone service provider. Very few filed a complaint with the Commission for Complaints for Telecom-television Services (2%) or underwent an arbitration process involving the cellphone provider (1%).

### *How disputed issue with contract or bill.*



Q: How did you dispute the problem? (Select all that apply)  
Base: Disputed issue (n=9,683) excluding no answer (n=10)

## What was the result of the disputed issue with the contract or bill?

Those who disputed an issue with their contract or bill indicated having little satisfaction with the result, regardless of the dispute mechanism taken.

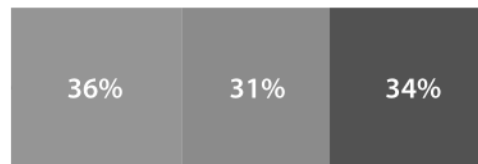
Of the 96% of respondents having contacted their cellphone service provider, only 22% were satisfied and an additional 44% were somewhat satisfied.

The highest satisfaction was among those who filed a complaint with the Commission for Complaints for Telecom-television Services, with 36% reporting they were satisfied and an additional 31% saying they were somewhat satisfied.

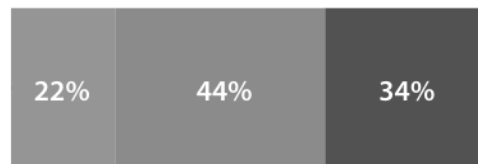
The lowest satisfaction was among the segment that underwent an arbitration process with their cellphone service provider. Only 11% of this segment were satisfied and an additional 40% were somewhat satisfied.

### *Satisfaction with result of dispute by method.*

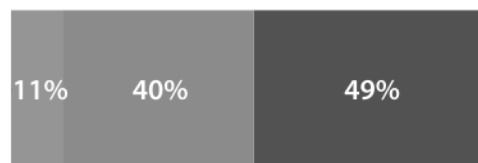
**Were you satisfied with the result(s) of filing a complaint with the Commission for Complaints for Telecom-television Service (CCTS)?**



**Were you satisfied with the result(s) of contacting your cell phone provider?**



**Were you satisfied with the result(s) of the arbitration process?**



Yes Somewhat No

*Base: CCTS Complaint (n=202)*

*Base: Contacted cell provider (n=9,317) excluding no answer (n=4)*

*Base: Arbitration process (n=107)*

## Business Practices

The survey asked British Columbians about their experiences shopping for a cellphone service, including their views on cellphone sales and advertising.

Survey respondents could indicate how often they have experienced six different issues when shopping for a cellphone service. All issues were asked on a 1 to 5 scale where 5 meant 'very often' and 1 meant 'never'. Answer choices 4 and 5 are summarized as often, answer choices 1 and 2 are summarized as not often and answer choice 3 is treated as neither.

### What issues have British Columbians had when shopping for a cellphone service?

Roughly seven-in-ten (72%) respondents said they often experienced potential charges being not fully explained while shopping for cellphone services. Additionally, about two thirds of (65%) respondents felt that contract terms were not fully explained.

A majority also said they have often experienced: misleading information (59%), not having enough opportunity to read the contract (57%), and aggressive sales practices (56%). Slightly less than half (46%) indicated that sales staff were not knowledgeable.

#### Frequency of experiencing issues when shopping for cellphone service



Q: How often have you experienced the following when shopping for cell phone service? (Select one per item)

Base: Varies by item (n=14,674 to n=15,160)

## Sample comments:

*"The whole process of buying a phone is confusing and one comes away from the experience wondering if they were ripped off."*

*"I believe that contracts need to be explained better and with more time to not rush the customer. I think there should be a fine or a penalty to the carrier for failure to explain the contract to an acceptable level."*

*"Employees are not taught how to properly relay to customers the actual contract details. Instead, they are pushed for sales quantity, not sales quality!"*

*"We need advertising to show real full cost, and not some imaginary unattainable low number."*

*"Plans should be standardized so it's possible to compare between competitors. Companies should be forced to use plain English."*

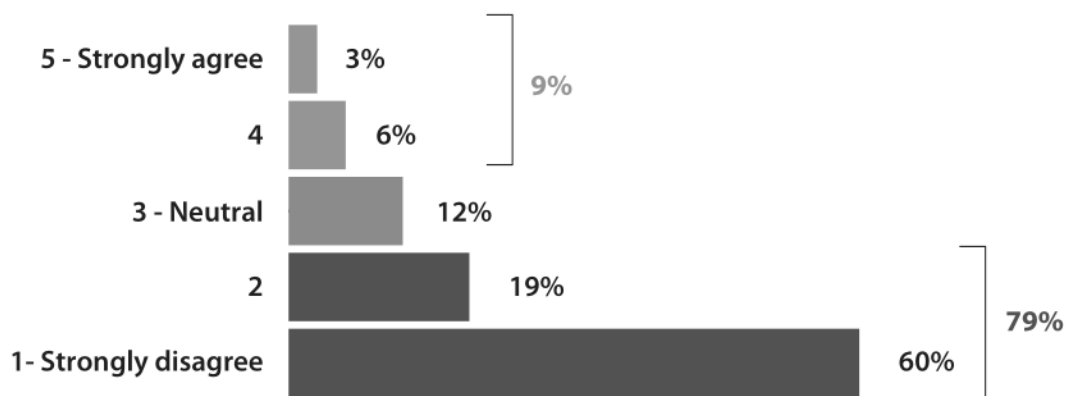
## Value and Cost

The survey asked respondents to agree or disagree with two statements regarding the value and cost of their cellphone service.

### Do British Columbians think they get good value for their cellphone service?

Only one-in-ten respondents (9%) agreed that with the statement that 'I get good value for my cellphone service.' A strong majority of eight-in-ten (79%) respondents disagreed with this statement, while one in ten (12%) was neutral.

#### **Agreement: I get good value for my cellphone service**



Q: Please identify your level of agreement with the following statements. (Select one per statement)

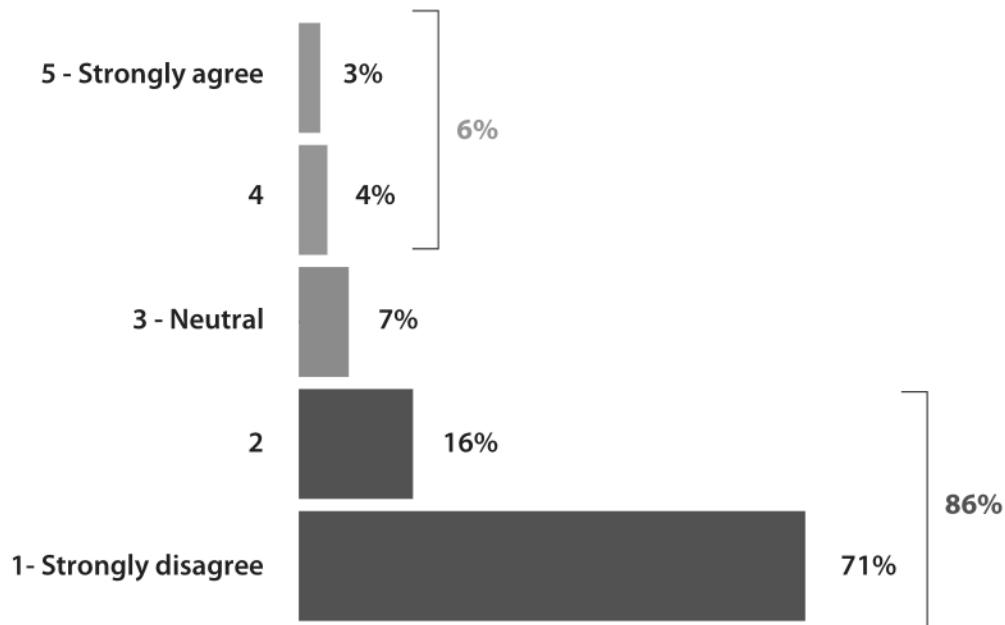
Base: All respondents (n=15,400) excluding not applicable (n=73) and no answer (n=76)



## Do British Columbians think the cost of their cellphone service is reasonable?

Fewer than one-in-ten respondents (6%) agreed with the statement that 'the cost of my cellphone service is reasonable.' The vast majority (86%) of respondents disagreed the cost is reasonable, while fewer than one in ten (7%) were neutral.

**Agreement: The cost of my cellphone service is reasonable.**



*Q: Please identify your level of agreement with the following statements. (Select one per statement)*

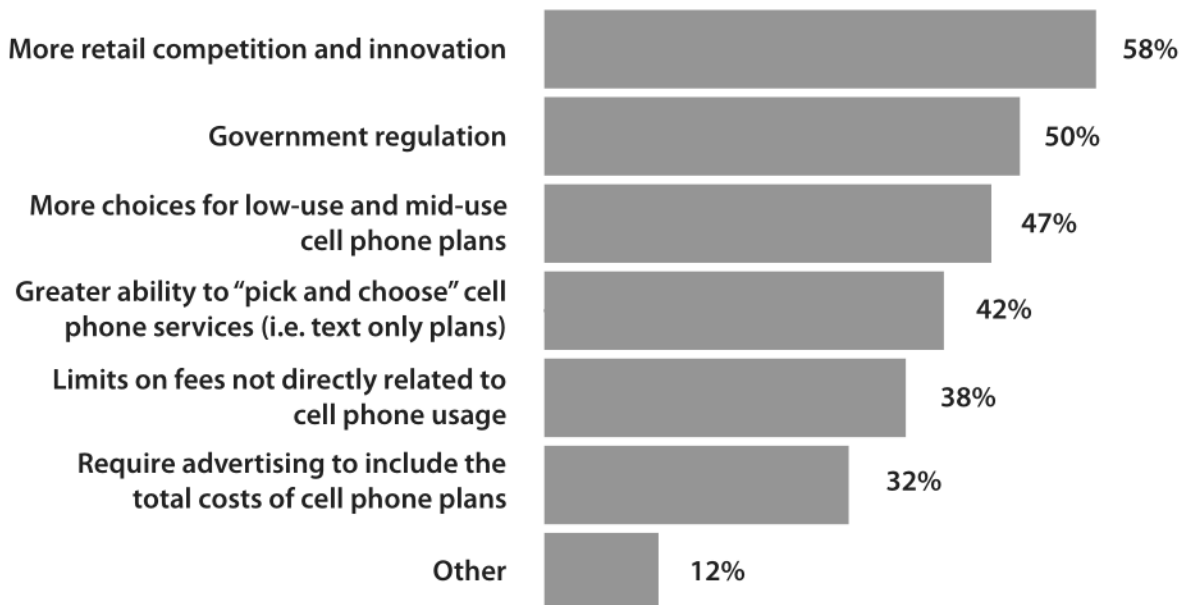
*Base: All respondents (n=15,391) excluding not applicable (n=64) and no answer (n=94)*

## What top suggestions were made to reduce the cost of cellphone services?

All respondents were asked to select up to three suggestions (from a provided list of six suggestions) on how to reduce the cost of cellphone services for British Columbians. They could also write in an 'other' response.

The top three suggestions included: more retail competition and innovation (58%), government regulation (50%), and more choices for low-use and mid-use cellphone plans (47%).

### Top suggestions for reducing cost of cellphone services (pick 3)



Q: What are your top three suggestions on how to reduce the cost of cell phone services for British Columbians? (Select up to three)  
Base: All respondents (n=15,549)

#### Sample comments:

*"More competition and government oversight would help with transparency and keeping costs down."*

*"Regulate how much cellphone companies can charge for plans and have variety of plans to choose from."*

*"The total cost of having a basic family cellphone plan should not be equivalent to a car payment. The cost is exorbitant. There should be much more competition in the market instead of the 'big three' [service providers]. People on low income should be able to have access to phone plans that are reasonable."*

*"Plans should include choices to pick what you need and be more customized. For example, a customer might like to have a mailbox but no long distance. Or they may not have the need for a mailbox, but want to have more data and long distance."*

*"Cellphone companies/providers need to be much more transparent about their costs (plans, fees, potential charges, etc.). It is usually unclear exactly why and by how much you will incur extra fees, or what is not included in your plan."*

#### Other comments:

Twelve percent of respondents to this question wrote in an 'other' response. Some of the other themes raised in responses included: limits/caps on fees related to cellphone usage; and nationalization or more government ownership of wireless services.

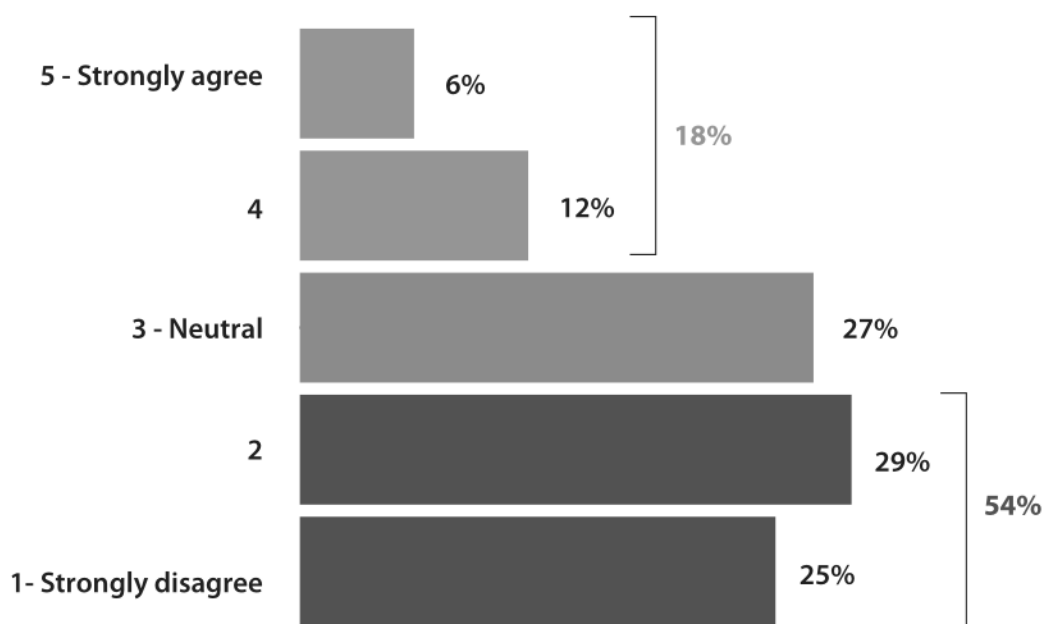
## Consumer Rights and Responsibilities

Survey respondents were asked to agree or disagree with three statements regarding their rights and responsibilities as consumers when it comes to cellphone services.

### Do consumers know their rights and responsibilities when it comes to cellphones?

Only about two-in-ten (18%) respondents agreed with the statement 'I know my rights and responsibilities as a consumer when it comes to cellphone services.' A slight majority (54%) disagreed that they know their rights and responsibilities, while about a quarter (27%) were neutral.

**Agreement: I know my rights and responsibilities as a consumer when it comes to cellphone services.**

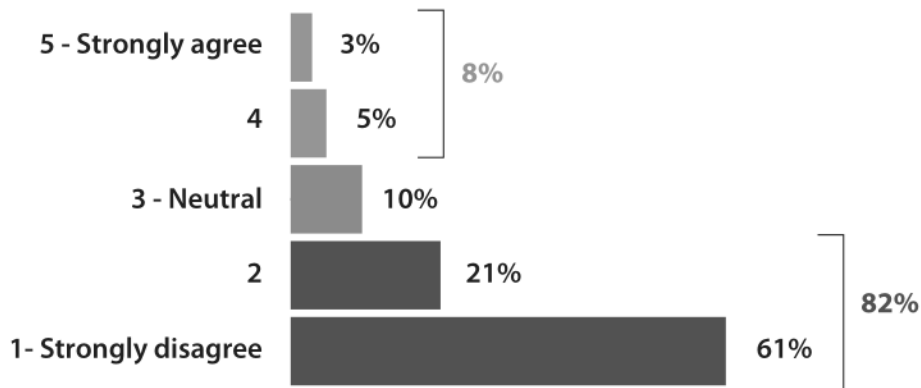


*Q: Please identify your level of agreement with the following statements. (Select one per statement)*  
*Base: All respondents (n=15,473) excluding not applicable (n=55) and no answer (n=21)*

### Are consumers familiar with the federal Wireless Code?

Fewer than one-in-ten (8%) respondents agreed with the statement 'I am familiar with the federal Wireless Code'. Eight-in-ten (82%) respondents disagreed they are familiar, while one in ten (10%) was neutral.

**Agreement: I am familiar with the Federal Wireless Code.**

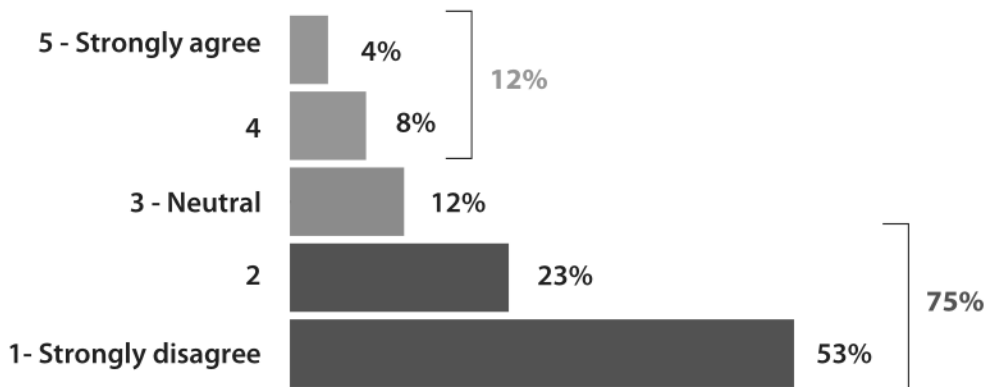


Q: Please identify your level of agreement with the following statements. (Select one per statement)  
Base: All respondents (n=15,417) excluding not applicable (n=95) and no answer (n=37)

**Are consumers familiar with the Commission for Complaints for Telecom-television Service (CCTS) complaint process?**

Slightly more than one-in-ten (12%) respondents agreed with the statement 'I am familiar with the Commission for Complaints for Telecom-television Service (CCTS) complaint process.' Three quarters (75%) disagreed they are familiar with CCTS process, while about one in ten (12%) were neutral.

**Agreement: I am familiar with the Commission for Complaints for Telecom-television Service (CCTS) complaint process.**



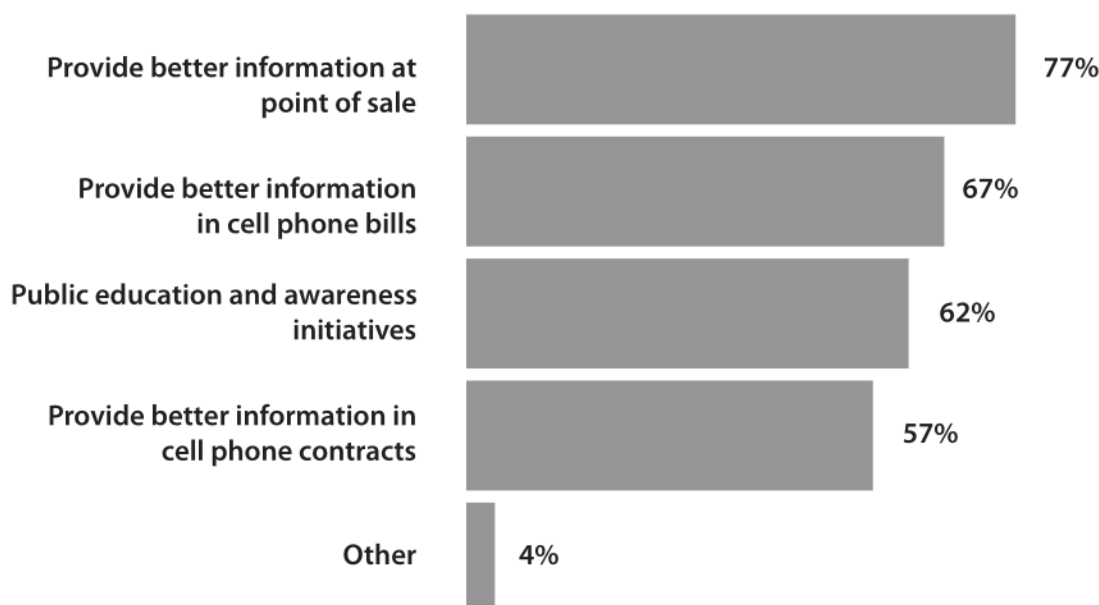
Q: Please identify your level of agreement with the following statements. (Select one per statement)  
Base: All respondents (n=15,405) excluding not applicable (n=92) and no answer (n=52)

## What top suggestions were made to increase consumers' awareness of their rights and responsibilities?

Respondents who disagreed with one or more of the three prior statements were asked to select up to three suggestions (from a provided list of four suggestions) on how to make British Columbians better aware of their rights and responsibilities when it comes to cellphone services. They could also write in an 'other' response.

The top three suggestions included, provide better information at point of sale (77%), provide better information in cellphone bills (67%) and public education and awareness initiatives (62%). A majority (57%) also stated preference for better information in cellphone contracts.

### ***Top suggestions for increasing Awareness of cellphone service rights/responsibilities (Pick 3)***



*Q: What are your top three suggestions on how to British Columbians better aware of their rights and responsibilities when it comes to cell phone services? (Select up to three)*

*Base: Disagree with one or more prior statements (n=13,375)*

### **Sample comments:**

*"There is a lack of explanation of contracts and consumer rights given at the point of sale which should be addressed."*

*"Links to the Wireless Code, CCTS, etc. and a short explanation of what they are and when you should consult them should be provided at the end of all contracts and bills."*

*"Everyone needs to be buyer aware, but there needs to a point of reference where people can go to tap into the sources, references, resources, policies, regulations, etc. available to help them for their consumerism education and understanding their rights."*

*"Each cellphone provider should have a section on their websites that outlines consumer protection."*

**Other comments:**

Four percent of respondents to this question wrote in an 'other' response. However, most of these comments were either off-topic or repeated the answer choices provided to respondents.

## **What additional comments were made to strengthen consumer protections?**

All respondents were asked to provide any additional comments to strengthen consumer protections regarding cellphone services. A total of 6,389 (41%) of all survey respondents provided additional comments. These comments were provided on an open-ended basis and were then coded into categories based on several broad themes.

The most frequent theme in comments related to value and cost. Seven-in-ten (71%) respondents answering this question provided comments concerning the affordability and cost of cellphone services. Many of these called for greater competition in the cellphone service provider market to reduce prices for consumers.

Other common themes related to business practices and to contracts and billing issues. Many comments repeated issues and concerns raised in responses to other survey questions and additional comments fields.

## **Conclusion**

Government will analyze the survey results and continue to engage with stakeholder groups. Next steps include a legislative review of B.C.'s laws and consideration of options to enhance consumer protections around cellphone contracts and billing.

In the future, Government will also be taking citizen input to advocate on people's behalf in the federally regulated telecom sector for better affordability and transparency.

# Appendix: Respondent Characteristics

## Cellphone Profile Questions

Almost all (99%) respondents said they have a personal cellphone. Most (70%) have an individual plan, while three-in-ten (29%) respondents have a shared/family plan. Most (75%) of those with a shared/family plan reported that they are the primary account holder.

The vast majority (91%) of respondents said they have a month-to-month or fixed term plan. Only 6% have a pay-as-you-go plan. Most respondents (71%) purchased their cellphone at a retail store or kiosk, while some purchased online through a website (12%), over the phone or via an online chat (10%), or from their employer (4%).

### CELLPHONE PROFILE QUESTIONS

Have a personal cellphone? (n=15, 490)	
Yes	99%
No	1%
Individual or shared plan? (n=15,500)	
Individual	70%
Shared (family)	29%
Prefer not to answer:	2%
Primary account holder (if shared)? (n=4, 437)	
Yes	75%
No	25%

Type of plan? (n=15,517)	
Month-to-month or fixed term (i.e. postpaid)	91%
Pay-as-you-go	6%
Other	2%
Dont know	1%
Where purchased? (n=15,520)	
At a retail store or kiosk	71%
Online through a website	12%
Over the phone or via an online chat	10%
From my employer (i.e. employee purchase plan)	4%
From a door-to-door salesperson	<1%
From a telemarketer that called me	<1%
Other	2%
Don't know	1%

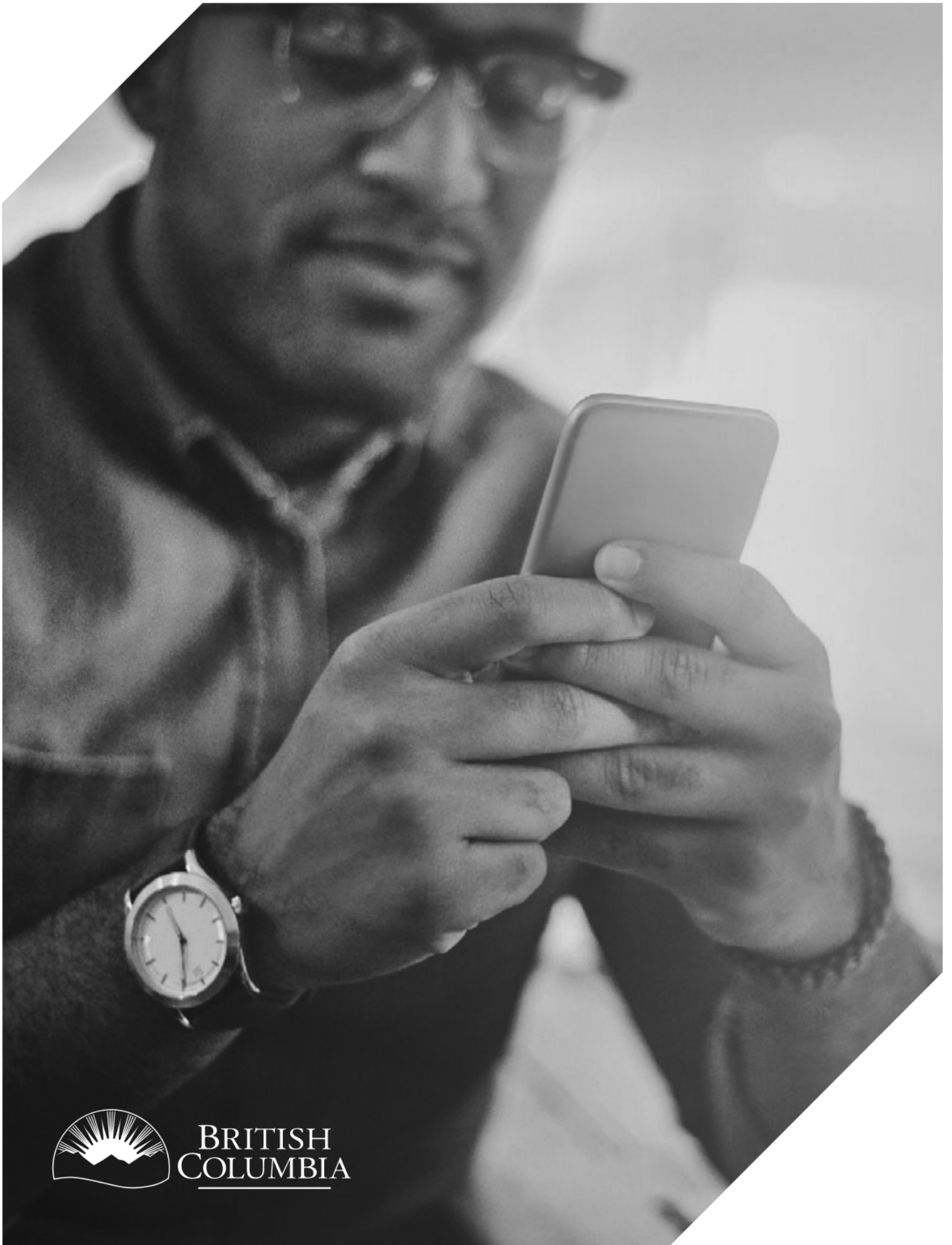
## Demographic Profile

The age, regional and household income characteristics of the sample of survey respondents is shown in the chart below. Nearly six-in-ten (58%) respondents live in the Lower Mainland/Fraser Valley, nearly one-quarter (23%) live on Vancouver Island/Coast and one in ten (11%) live in Thompson/Okanagan.

### DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE QUESTIONS

Age (n=15, 501)		Region (n=15,519)		Household Income (n=15,368)	
Under 19 years	1%	Lower Mainland/Fraser Valley	58%	Less than \$24,999	9%
19 to 29 years	21%	Vancouver Island/Coast	23%	\$25,00 to \$49,999	18%
30 to 39 years	27%	Thompson/Okanagan	11%	\$50,000 to \$74,999	20%
40 to 49 years	16%	Kootenay	3%	\$75,000 to \$99,999	16%
50 to 59 years	14%	Cariboo	2%	\$100,000 to \$124,999	12%
60 to 69 years	14%	North Coast	1%	\$125,000 to \$149,999	7%
70 years or over	7%	Nechako	1%	\$150,000 to \$174,999	4%
		Northeast	1%	\$175,000 or more	5%
		Outside BC	<1%	Don't know	9%





BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

# **Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2019-57**

## **Review of mobile wireless services**

### **Presentation by the Province of British Columbia**

**February 21, 2020**  
**Gatineau, Quebec**

#### **Presenters:**

Bob D'Eith, Member of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia (Maple Ridge - Mission)

Toby Louie, Executive Director, Corporate Policy and Planning, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Roman Mateyko, Executive Director Information Communication Technologies Division, Ministry of Citizens' Services

## Introduction

1. Good afternoon Commissioners. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for inviting us here today.
2. My name is Bob D'Eith and I am the MLA for the BC constituency of Maple Ridge - Mission. Today, I am joined by:
  - Toby Louie, Executive Director of Corporate Policy and Planning in the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
  - Roman Mateyko, Executive Director of Information Communication Technologies Division in the Ministry of Citizens' Services
3. Together, we are here representing the Province of British Columbia in these proceedings.
4. I was appointed by Premier John Horgan last year as BC's federal lead on telecommunications. I was tasked with leading a public engagement on cellphone-related issues, and representing British Columbians in federal discussions regarding certain telecommunications matters.
5. I am here today to present key findings from a public survey BC held last year on cellphones. 15,549 people completed the survey and the results were included in BC's further comments to the CRTC.
6. The survey was the first ever undertaken by the Province regarding cellphone services. It was similar to other citizen engagement initiatives that the Province regularly undertakes on programs, policies and services that affect citizens' lives.
7. The survey provided an important opportunity to hear directly from British Columbians on a variety of cellphone-related issues.
8. My comments and recommendations today are based on the input we received. Much of what we heard concerns the matters under review by the Commission and are the focus on my comments.

## **Consumers want more affordability and choice in wireless services**

9. The survey results affirmed what many Canadians have been saying for some time: people are highly frustrated and unhappy with the current cost of their cellphone service.
10. For example, 86 percent of respondents do not think the cost of their cellphone service is reasonable. Seventy-nine percent do not think they get good value for their service.
11. The survey included space for people to provide additional comments on any topic they wanted. Over 4,500 respondents provided additional comments criticizing the cost and value of cellphone services.
12. The greatest number called for more affordability and competition. Frequently used terms included: “expensive”, “gouging”, “unfair” and “monopoly”.
13. The high costs of cellphone services have a significant impact on people. Now more than ever, cellphones are a necessity for families, a way to keep safe, stay connected and receive services. These costs are a staple expense, much akin to a monthly transportation or utility cost. Cellphones are no longer a luxury item.
14. For example, one person stated the cost of their family’s cellphone service was as high as their monthly food bill. Others described only being able to afford pay-per-use services depending on how much money they have left to spend each month.
15. The anger and frustration expressed by people should not be underestimated. A clear and simple message was conveyed by almost everyone: more affordability and choice are needed in the retail wireless service market.
16. The Province of BC fully supports this goal, as reflected in BC Throne Speeches. Our government committed to work to improve cellphone billing transparency for British Columbians, beginning with a public consultation and legislative review.

17. BC also committed to encourage the federal government to deliver more affordable cellphone options, which is why we are here today.

### **British Columbians want government action to improve affordability and choice**

18. Citizens want their governments to take meaningful steps to ensure that wireless services are affordable and that there is sufficient choice in the retail market.
19. Within survey responses were a variety of suggestions on how to accomplish this. The top four were:
  - More retail competition and innovation
  - Government regulation
  - More choices for low-use and mid-use cellphone plans
  - Greater ability to “pick and choose” services in cellphone plans
20. The key message to draw from this input is that a significant number of people are unhappy with the current state of affairs and want government action to improve affordability and choice.

### **There is need for more lower-cost/low-usage plans**

21. The Province of BC provided information requested by the Commission regarding “occasional-use or emergency-use” wireless plans.
22. The evidence from BC’s engagement shows that there is sufficient need for these types of plans. This need is most felt amongst seniors and other vulnerable groups who have affordability issues and/or lower-usage needs.
23. Additional evidence was also presented showing that prepaid plans are prone to other issues. These include confusing contract terms,

disproportionately high costs for services and restrictions on those services.

24. Other notable complaints we heard on this topic included:

- Unused credits expire at the end of the service coverage period of a prepaid plan
- Prepaid plans provide less billing transparency
- Aggressive or misleading sales tactics undermine the intent and effectiveness of existing lower-cost/low-usage plans

## **Recommendations**

25. There is currently an imbalance between the needs of consumers and what is being offered in the retail wireless service market. This applies generally to wireless services, as well as to specific lower-cost/low-usage cellphone plans.
26. The Province of BC therefore encourages the Commission to address this imbalance and meet its policy objectives, to the benefit of all Canadians. The guiding principle should be facilitating greater affordability and choice for families.
27. Achieving this goal will require the Commission to take meaningful and effective actions that give Canadians more choice of affordable and innovative services.
28. Furthermore, the Province wishes to restate its recommendation for the Commission to exercise its powers to mandate the provision of lower-cost, low-usage plans for all Canadians, both rural and urban.
29. We also respectfully encourage the Commission to support expediting the next reviews of the Wireless Code and the CCTS mandate.

30. We understand that these matters are not under consideration as part of this review. However, we want to note that a disconcerting number of contract and billing-related issues were raised by survey respondents.
31. The survey results also show that there is a very low level of awareness among consumers of both the Wireless Code and the CCTS complaint process. As a result, people do not know what rights they have or what options are available to address complaints.
32. All of these things point to a need for future reviews aimed at making improvements.

## **Conclusion**

33. To conclude, I have come here to represent the overwhelming number of people who said they are frustrated with the lack of affordability and choice for the cellphone services they need.
34. British Columbians know exactly how much they pay for their cellphone services each month. They are asking for our governments to do more.
35. That's why I'm here today, with three key recommendations:
  - Increase competition in the market to help decrease costs for Canadians
  - Mandate lower-cost, low-use cellphone plans for people who need a basic plan without the bells and whistles
  - Strengthen consumer rights by working to expedite changes to the Wireless Code
36. Together, these actions would promote the kind of affordability and choice in cellphone services that British Columbians have long been seeking.

37. We encourage the Commission to use all of the tools at its disposal to achieve these goals as soon as possible.
38. The Province of BC was pleased to see the federal Throne Speech commit to cut the cost of cell and wireless services by 25 percent. We think that goal is a step in the right direction.
39. In closing, I'd like to thank the Commission for allowing the Province to intervene and present at these important hearings.
40. I hope that our comments and submissions will assist the Commission in the work that lies ahead.
41. Thank you.



## INFORMATION NOTE

### Advice to Minister Beare

Date: April 29, 2021

REF: 115073

#### ISSUE: Connectivity Overview Briefing for May 5 & 6 Local Government Calls with Minister Osborne

#### BACKGROUND:

- It is anticipated that questions and issues raised during the May 5 and 6 local government calls could range from specific municipal concerns to insights and recommendations emerging from regional district planning exercises. A sense of urgency may underly comments due to pandemic stresses, and awareness of recent actions by governments in other jurisdictions.
- MUNI requested "Guiding Questions" in advance to help shape the conversation (approved by DMO)

#### CONNECTIVITY GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR SESSIONS:

1. *"If your community had full broadband internet connectivity speeds of 50 Mbps + or similar to a major centre such as Vancouver, how would you leverage that investment to achieve your priorities and objectives i.e. investment attraction, job creation?"*
2. *"If your community currently does not have broadband internet connectivity speeds of 50 Mbps +, what barriers need to be addressed to achieve this goal?"*

#### DISCUSSION:

The information below is a summary of the key concerns expressed by regional districts and communities across the province, primarily in areas that do not have sufficient connectivity and are actively working towards achieving this goal.

#### ***Provincial Connectivity Funding***

Province has committed only \$40M over the next 3-years which may be able to fund broadband and cellular infrastructure projects. Discussion may include:

- The amount committed is less than the priority as suggested in the Throne Speech
- Compared to British Columbia, other provincial governments have recently committed substantial dollars and poised to leverage significant investments from the federal Universal Broadband Fund (Quebec); making strategic policy changes to reduce deployment time and cost barriers (Ontario), and negotiating contracts on behalf of rural areas (Nova Scotia):
  - Federal Government - \$1B in Budget 2021 (in addition to \$1.5B previously committed)
  - Quebec - \$826M (with \$413M allocated from the Universal Broadband Fund)
  - Ontario – Government is introducing the *Supporting Broadband and Infrastructure Expansion Act, 2021* which, if passed, would help connect more communities to reliable, high-speed internet sooner. This legislation proposes to reduce costs to broadband providers associated with attaching broadband wirelines to hydro utility poles and would provide timely access to poles and to municipal rights of way to install broadband on municipal land. As part of the 2020 Budget, the Ontario government announced a historic investment of almost \$1 billion to improve broadband and cellular services, which is an additional \$680 million on top of its previous commitment.

***The Province's role in in partnering and market intervention:***

- **Province-led service delivery models** in areas where a private-sector business case is unlikely to materialize (i.e. Provincially owned and operated open-access infrastructure, provincially negotiated and funded service contracts.)
- **New operational funding mechanisms** to support ongoing regional connectivity coordination, infrastructure investment and to supplement where user-pay will not create viable business case.

***Connectivity Planning:***

Municipalities and some regional districts may assert that connectivity planning is a responsibility being downloaded onto local governments without sufficient resources, and in the absence of a BC connectivity strategy. Discussion may include:

- **Development of a BC connectivity strategy**, regionally focused, developed through a participatory policy development process to recognize unique regional differences.
- **More funding for development of local and regional connectivity plans** in addition to that available via the Connecting British Columbia Program. Alternatively, there have been suggestions for the Government to undertake a province-led regional infrastructure gap analysis to support local connectivity planning.

s.13

***Accuracy of National Connectivity speed data:***

- **The National Broadband Internet Service Availability Map Data**, which determines Universal Broadband Fund eligibility and which BC communities are eligible for federal funding (current service is less than 50/10Mbps). Some communities are reporting maximum available speeds that are different than what is published on the National Broadband map.
- **Internet Speed Study Update:** The Ministry of Citizens' Services, UBCM, and Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) are responding collaboratively to concerns regarding federal mapping data with an independent study of differences between the broadband Internet speeds experienced in some BC communities, and the 50/10 Mbps speed identified by the federal government.
  - The study will produce information on maximum available Internet speeds in rural and remote communities, informing dialogue between NDIT, Indigenous and local governments, Internet service providers, the Province, and the federal government.

- Data gathering and analysis will occur over the spring and summer months, with a report expected in the fall.

## Key Regional Concerns

### NORTH:

- **Redundancy:**
  - Over the Easter Weekend, services in Northeast BC were interrupted, disabling electronic business transactions for a day, resulting in lost revenue for local businesses already stressed by the pandemic.
  - Lack of regional redundancy is identified as a concern in the Peace River Regional District's draft connectivity study, which is expected to be presented to the Board in late April.
  - Rogers recent national outage on April 19<sup>th</sup> supported these concerns.
- **Provincial Policy:**  
s.13

- **Northern Rockies and Peace River Regional Municipalities:**  
s.13

### VANCOUVER ISLAND:

- Multiple Connected Coast landing sites have been proposed, some local governments with proposed landing sites have provided letters of support (Mount Waddington)
- Some communities along the Connected Coast route do not have landing sites and are calling to be added to the project with last mile connectivity (Denman and Hornby)

### SOUTHEAST:

- At a recent SE Regional Connectivity Committee meeting (Columbia Basin region) there was interest around how better understanding how Quebec successfully secured \$413 M in Universal Broadband funding to connect 150,000 households in the province.

### SOUTHWEST/CENTRAL INTERIOR:

- Towns in transition (Clearwater) require improved connectivity for economic transition and cannot access more due to funding ineligibility due to federal data mapping status.

Contact: Susan Stanford, Assistant Deputy Minister, Connectivity Phone: 250-580-7459

## MEETING NOTE

### Advice to Minister Beare

**MEETING DATE:** April 15, 2021

**CLIFF#: 114716**

**ATTENDEES:** Lisa Beare, Minister; CJ Ritchie, GCIO and Associate DM;  
Alex MacLennan, ADM; Hayden Lansdell, ADM  
Jesse Dougherty, AWS Vancouver Vice President and General Manager Application  
Integration Services; Rejean (Ray-zhaw) Bourgault (Boor-goh), AWS Public Sector  
Country Leader

**ISSUE:** Meeting with representatives from Amazon Web Services (AWS) Canada.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Access to cloud is a key part of government's digital transformation and supports the development and optimization of digital services. Amazon Web Services (AWS) is a global market leader for cloud infrastructure (storage) and solutions (software applications) and is a significant player in the B.C. technology sector. AWS first established a presence in Vancouver in 2013 and has recently announced the creation of capacity for an additional 3,000 positions in B.C.

AWS has established the University of British Columbia (UBC) Community Health and Wellbeing Cloud Innovation Centre (CIC). The AWS CIC program provides an opportunity for non-profits, educational institutions, and government agencies to work collaboratively on pressing challenges, test ideas with Amazon's innovation process, and access the technology expertise of AWS.

AWS is also a member of the provincially funded Quantum Algorithms Institute at Simon Fraser University (SFU). The institute helps SFU collaborate with research universities throughout B.C. to position the province as a world leader in the emerging field of quantum computing technology.

The Province's collaboration with AWS is an important aspect of the acceleration of the adoption of cloud-based tools, cybersecurity and services. AWS is looking to provide an overview of their work in B.C., learn more about the Ministry's mandate and explore opportunities for further collaboration.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

The Province's relationship with AWS has further solidified through the onboarding to the Government of Canada's Cloud Brokerage. As a Client under the Cloud Brokerage, the Province can order cloud compute and storage services that are compliant with Government of Canada's Protected B security level as well as the Province's privacy and security requirements. The Province has worked with AWS to gain access to their cloud services under this brokerage, securing access as of December 2020. It has onboarded four ministry teams to a secure environment on AWS.

The Province has worked closely with AWS to establish an environment with privacy and security protections that are compliant with provincial legislation and policy. AWS has provided an excellent level of support, collaboration and training that is allowing the Province to safely accelerate the use of cloud services in government.

Topics that may be of mutual interest include:

**Digital Enablement during the COVID-19 Pandemic:** AWS has been instrumental in enabling the Province's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Province's Enhanced Traveller Screening Application supports British Columbians returning from out-of-country to self-isolate. The digital service allows travellers to complete a self-isolation plan and is hosted on AWS.

**Digital Transformation:** The AWS Institute partnered with the Public Policy Forum to produce a policy paper on the risk of the digital status quo, centring around how governments can enable digital transformation. The paper identified key risks of maintaining the status quo, including risks around legacy systems, cyber security, culture and people and service failure. The Province's Digital Framework sets out key priority areas for embracing digital government.

**Adoption of Cloud Services:** Access to the cloud is essential for digital transformation. There has been an increase in the need and urgency for digital service delivery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. AWS operates Canada-resident data centres in Montreal and Toronto that support compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA)*.

#### SUMMARY:

- The Province values its partnerships with AWS and the current services and products that the company provides to government and the broader public sector.
- The Province recognizes AWS's significant contribution to the BC tech sector and specifically acknowledges the high level of collaboration, support and training provided to the Province by AWS staff.
- AWS activities in British Columbia - such as efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic; the growth and commercialization of BC tech; and overall digital skills development - closely align with provincial priorities.

#### SUGGESTED RESPONSE / KEY MESSAGES:

##### Digital Enablement during the COVID-19 Pandemic:

- Can you share examples of how AWS has helped governments launch new apps and services for citizens in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

##### Digital Transformation:

- The Province has published Digital Principles and a Digital Framework, which outline our plan for embracing digital government. Can you share your thoughts on what is working and what could be improved to support better digital services for British Columbians?

##### Adoption of Cloud Services

- One of my key mandate letter priorities is to continue improving government's public sector data security and privacy practices to ensure that British Columbians' personal information is safeguarded. Can you share your perspective on how this priority intersects with the adoption of cloud services?

Attachment: Appendix A – Bios  
Contact: Genevieve Lambert, 250 217-6296

## APPENDIX A

### BIOS

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**Jesse Dougherty, Vice President and General Manager, AWS**

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**Rejean Bourgault, Public Sector Leader, AWS**

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