

## INFORMATION NOTE

### Advice to Deputy Minister

**DATE:** September 1, 2022

**CLIFF#:** 118079

**ISSUE:** TELUS and PSSG/eComm 911 Engagement

#### BACKGROUND:

- The 911 service in B.C. is the responsibility of municipalities and/or regional districts.
- 98% of municipalities have agreements with eComm 911, a not-for-profit corporation owned by the municipalities and agencies it serves, to operate the 9-1-1 services in their jurisdictions.
- The Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) federally regulates telephone and cell service companies, whose networks are required to connect 9-1-1 calls. However, both emergency responders and 9-1-1 call centres fall under the jurisdiction of municipal governments.
- The contractual agreements for the 9-1-1 services are between the telecommunications companies and the municipalities and/or regional districts.
- The province of B.C. does not have any contractual agreements with the two 911 telecom providers (TELUS and Northwestel (a subsidiary of Bell) in relation with those services.
- Over the last four months, there have been at least five highly publicized outages of telecommunication services affecting the ability of citizens to make 911 calls and the PSAPs to take 911 calls. Those outages have been technically explained by service providers.
- These incidents have triggered concerns both within eComm 911 and Public Safety and Solicitor General (PSSG) about the way these outages are communicated and handled by the different parties.
- PSSG has two seats on the eComm 911 Board of Directors. They have indirect oversight of eComm 911 through this governance structure.

#### DISCUSSION:

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#### **NEXT STEPS:**

- The Telecom Office has provided names of the following TELUS executives to receive a communication from Glen Lewis, Associate Director of Police Services (equivalent to an ADM position at PSSG):
  - Dave Richardson - Senior Vice President - Business Customer Experience
  - Nicole Eltom, Vice President, Customer Success
  - Kyle Marsh - Direct of BC Governance Affairs
- PSSG's intent is to send a communication to TELUS on or before September 2, 2022. The intent of this communication is to request an executive level conference call to discuss the current operational issues at eComm 911, preventing them from providing 911 services that citizens expect.
- The role of CITZ in this matter is to facilitate a connection with senior TELUS executives.
- CITZ Executive Directors Michael Rolston (ICT) and Ivan Rincon (CONN) will be invited to attend the call as observers.

Contact: Ivan Rincon, ED Project Management/PS-EM Telecom support, Connectivity 778-587-5583  
Michael Rolston, ED Contract Management and Negotiations, ICT 250-812-6041

## SUMMARY BULLETS

**DATE:** September 6, 2022

**CLIFF#:** 118093

**ISSUE:** Quebecor to discuss anticipated Freedom Mobile agreement

### About Quebecor:

- Quebecor is a Canadian telecommunications and media (news, sports, entertainment, and culture) family business founded in 1950. Videotron is a subsidiary of Quebecor.
- Former Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, P.C., C.C., LL.D, is Chair.
- Jad Barsoum is now a Vice-President with Videotron (previously Government Relations when they last visited). He will be meeting with connectivity staff while in town.

### Proposed divestiture of Freedom Mobile:

- On August 12, 2022 Rogers, Shaw and Quebecor signed a definitive agreement for the sale of Freedom Mobile to Videotron Ltd., a subsidiary of Quebecor.
- The agreement is contingent on the Rogers/Shaw merger closing and on the necessary approvals from the federal government and the Competition Bureau.
- Shaw's wireless assets include Freedom Mobile and Shaw Mobile. Shaw Mobile is a Mobile Virtual Network Operator and is not included in the agreement.

### Links to the Rogers-Shaw merger:

- Shaw's wireless assets remain a contentious point for the proposed merger of Rogers Communications and Shaw Communications.
- Industry, Science and Economic Development (ISED) and the Competition Bureau have differing viewpoints on the issue.
- ISED issued a statement back in March 2022 saying it would not let Rogers acquire all of Shaw's wireless assets and that it would review the transfer of any spectrum licenses associated with the proposed transaction.
- The Competition Bureau filed an [amended reply to the Competition Tribunal on August 15, 2022](#), remaining firm in its decision to block the Rogers-Shaw merger to protect public interest. It believes that removing a strong regional competitor like Shaw will likely result in consumers paying higher wireless prices. The Bureau is asking the Tribunal to 'prohibit this anti-competitive merger.'

### Other Considerations:

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- Recently the Competition Tribunal ruled that the Rogers' July 8, 2022, service outage is applicable to hearings about its merger with Shaw. Rogers previously stated that the outage was not connected to the Shaw merger.
- The push back from the Competition Bureau could extend the timeline for the merger into 2023 and result in a full trial, possibly appeals, before a clear outcome on the Rogers/Shaw transaction is known.

**Discussion points:**

- A Competition Tribunal hearing has been set for November 2022. Minister should refrain from discussing any aspects of the Rogers/Shaw transaction.
- It would be interesting to hear directly from Videotron on their plans to enter the B.C. market, service areas in the province, any partnerships with broadband providers in B.C. and on the quality and affordability of cellular service issues important to British Columbians.