

# FONOM

The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities

September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020

Honourable Anthony Rota  
375 Main Street West  
North Bay, Ontario P1B 2T9  
[ANTHONY.ROTA.C1@PARL.GC.CA](mailto:ANTHONY.ROTA.C1@PARL.GC.CA)

Dear Anthony

In 2016, at the FONOM Annual General meeting, the attached Resolution was forwarded to the Northern Federal and Provincial Members, asking that Broadband be declared an “Essential Service.” The ongoing Pandemic has shown that Northern and Rural Ontario and Canada still do not have access to affordable, fast, and reliable Broadband. During FONOM recent Board meeting in Hearst, all the Board shared their frustration with the current state of connectivity in the North. They reaffirmed that Federal and Provincial Governments should deem Broadband an Essential Service.

We wish to recognize the considerable financial investment the upper levels of Governments have made to date to connect Northern and Rural Ontario. The FONOM Board is concerned with the amount of connectivity still needed and how the partners will pay for the remaining work. Municipalities are also aware of the financial pressures placed upon current and future Governments due to the recent Pandemic. We worry that expanding Broadband may not be a priority Governments can afford.

At our recent Board meeting, the Board passed a resolution supporting the Starlink Program by SpaceX. The Board is aware that many companies are looking to bring Broadband to Canadians. But those companies have not been moving quickly enough to address our needs in Northern Ontario. We believe that the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) should allow SpaceX to compete with those presently acting in the communication field, as they have the private financial ability to move forward.

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We would ask you to work with FONOM and others to support the Starlink Program so that citizens in the North can communicate globally. We would be interested in continuing this conversation with you.

Thank you for everything you do on behalf of Northern Ontario and Canada

Sincerely,



Danny Whalen  
President  
Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities

Cc: Honourable Anthony Rota  
Honourable Marc Serre  
Honourable Terry Sheehan  
Honourable Charlie Angus  
Honourable Carol Hughes  
Honourable Paul Lefebvre  
Honourable Scott Aitchison