

Petition – Broadband Connectivity

To Kyle Seeback, MP Dufferin-Caledon and Honourable Sylvia Jones, MPP Dufferin-Caledon:

Whereas:

- Access to internet is essential in today's economy and society;
- COVID-19 has required many people to work and learn from home, further heightening the essential need of high-speed internet service; and
- Many areas of Caledon continue to have limited high-speed internet service;

Therefore, we the undersigned petition Kyle Seeback, MP and Honourable Sylvia Jones, MPP as follows:

Take action through respective governments to declare broadband as an essential service and help facilitate telecommunication access to existing infrastructure including underutilized or dark fibre optic network and hydro poles in support of affordable and reliable broadband expansion in all communities.

Summary:

We are petitioning our Dufferin-Caledon federal and provincial representatives to work with their respective governments to declare broadband an essential service. Federal and provincial support is needed as telecommunications and utilities are under the federal and provincial jurisdiction respectively.

Similar to telephone and hydro, broadband has become essential for residents, businesses, youth, schools and for municipalities to deliver public services. Most businesses including agriculture require it to operate, and it has become a key component of economic development. Current and future residents expect to have access to high speed internet for both personal and professional endeavors. Much of the school curriculum has become dependent on students having access to internet and a computer at home.

Access to affordable and reliable high-speed internet allows individuals and communities to thrive. COVID-19 has demonstrated the essential role broadband plays in ensuring everyone has access to essential information and services. At a time when family and friends are looking to stay connected through digital means and businesses are updating online functionality, broadband connectivity is increasingly important.

There are unserved/underserved rural communities in Caledon that lack access to affordable and reliable high-speed internet. While the Town of Caledon has taken proactive measures to temporarily fill this gap, there are telecommunication infrastructure networks that have already been built and could be better used to their full potential. Deeming broadband as an essential service will make it more feasible for additional and smaller internet service providers to access conduit and provide service to rural communities.