**[H&M COFI](https://hmcofi.com/%22%20%5Co%20%22H%26M%20COFI)**

HURON SHORE AND MANITOULIN ISLAND COMMUNITY OWNED FIBRE INFRASTRUCTURE

April 30, 2021

Dear Cottage Association Members of the H&M COFI Region:

For many of you, this is may be the first news to be delivered to you about the H&M COFI Corporation, a federally registered non-profit company. H&M COFI and ROCK Networks are committed to building a fibre-based broadband network for our rural north. This high-speed Internet network will be made available to **all** residents and businesses in every part of the region, between Nairn Centre to Garden River FN, including the City of Elliot Lake, and Manitoulin and St. Joseph Islands.

H&M COFI will own the network and sell wholesale access to individual Internet Service Providers (ISPs). Residents, businesses, and institutions will buy Internet access and services directly from any ISPs operating on the network. This model will ensure that a reliable high-speed network, expected to offer data rates at a gigabit per second or higher, is available for all users in the region while providing a competitive market.

Whereas it has long been recognized that Internet service to the rural north has been below the government declared minimum download and upload speeds of 50 and 10 Megabits per second (Mbps), COVID has shown how our present infrastructure is inadequate to support today’s growing educational, business, health care and personal needs.

Much progress has been made since H&M COFI’s incorporation. The team has completed the first intake application for Stage 2 of the Improving Connectivity for Ontario (ICON) broadband program at the provincial level. A submission has also been made to the Universal Broadband Fund (UBF) at the federal level. We have spoken to numerous Federal and Provincial Ministers and their staff responsible for these programs. They have all met out chair Georges Bilodeau’s presentations with strong interest and support for the H&M COFI project and its proposed scope.

Additionally, we have launched the H&M COFI website [www.hmcofi.com](http://www.hmcofi.com), have an H&M COFI Facebook page [www.facebook.com/HMCOFI](http://www.facebook.com/HMCOFI) and are in the process of launching our LinkedIn profile which will be linked to our website. We encourage you to reference these sites for more information.

H&M COFI is asking that your association actively support our initiative so that it becomes a reality this year. As part of their decision-making process, both the ICON and UBF program teams are currently in the process of assessing the degree of support being expressed within our catchment area.

**The strength of our proposal and its ultimate success in obtaining government funding heavily depends on the support of the entire region. You can make a difference.**

***This is how you can help:***

**Letter of Support:** It is essential that H&M COFI receive a Letter of Support from all groups within its catchment area. We ask that you use the attached template to confirm your approval of H&M COFI’s intention to build a high-speed broadband network to supply Internet coverage to 100% of the catchment area. The template has links to email your letter to:

The provincial and federal ministers responsible for broadband development

Your MP and MPP

And H&M COFI

Simply copy and paste the 5 email addresses below into the “To:” of your email and attach your Letter of Support:

Maryam.Monsef@parl.gc.ca;laurie.scott@pc.ola.org;info@hmcofi.com;mmantha@ndp.on.ca;carol.hughes@parl.gc.ca

**Contact Information**: We have attempted to update our database of contacts through website searches and phone calls. It may not be accurate to allow us to stay in touch. Please forward us the up-to-date name, title, **email address** and preferred phone number(s) of your primary and alternate points of contact within your organization. This will ensure you are kept up-to-date with future email updates.

**Logo:** For all who submit Letters of Support, H&M COFI would like to acknowledge you, with your permission, by listing your group’s name and logo on the *Partners and Supporters’* page of our website. If your organization has a logo and wishes to be recognized in this manner, please attach a JPEG file of your logo when submitting your contact information.

1. **Speed Tests**: It is essential to encourage your executive and members to take the Internet speed tests that one can access via the Home Page of our website. Residential and business speed requirements are often significantly different, so if you also work within the region, take the test at your place of business. Speeds collected from these tests will assist in the funding process by proving our need for faster service and ultimately in the design and construction of the network.

**Forward your emails with the above inclusions to** **info@hmcofi.com****.**

As with all government funding applications, time is of the essence. We therefore ask that you actively support this H&M COFI initiative that is crucial to bringing enhanced broadband services to every residential and business premise throughout our region. Your formal expressions of support at this juncture are greatly appreciated. We are always available for your input and questions.

Respectfully yours

Jo Anne Matheson

H&M COFI Corporation Board Member

Enclosure: Template for Letter of Support