



August 18, 2020

Hon. Laurie Scott
Minister of Infrastructure
5th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Scott,

On behalf of Ontario's rural and northern waterfront property owners (WPO) we are writing in support of Xplornet's proposal to the *Improving Connectivity for Ontario (ICON)* program regarding the company's substantial broadband infrastructure project for central and northeastern Ontario.

In 2018, FOCA undertook a research initiative, [Waterfront Property Owners and Rural Economic Development](https://foca.on.ca/waterfront-property-owners-and-rural-economic-development/) (<https://foca.on.ca/waterfront-property-owners-and-rural-economic-development/>); the study speaks to the opportunity of having WPO contribute to and support the local economy. It also confirmed the grim reality that access to reliable high-speed Internet is the number one barrier to a greater economic role of these families, many of whom are multi-generational residents who have significant interest and capacity to contribute to the economy in rural and northern communities. The study also helped to articulate the significance of waterfront property owners (WPO) as vital economic contributors to our rural communities.

Xplornet's project will build 2,650 km of new fibre across the province, adding 66 new wireless tower sites and 192 new wireless micro sites, most of which will be directly connected to the fibre network. Once completed, this project will enable over 170,000 residents across Ontario to enjoy affordable and accessible wireless services of 100 Megabits per second with unlimited data.

The past months have demonstrated the importance of connectivity, especially for rural Canadians. The post-pandemic recovery offers the long overdue opportunity to provide the necessary tools for rural Canada's success in the digital economy. Indeed, Xplornet's project will boost economic development in rural Ontario, facilitate access to eHealth services, and support residents working from home.

Xplornet has a track record of providing broadband access to rural residents in places unserved and underserved by others – we look forward to their increased presence in cottage communities across Ontario through this project.

Via email to laurie.scottco@pc.ola.org

Minister, we know you see the need and the opportunity for expanded Internet services in our northern and rural communities; we need your government's support to help drive the necessary improvements to this critical infrastructure, delivered via the Xplornet fibre project.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terry Rees". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Terry" being more prominent than the last name "Rees".

Terry Rees, Executive Director
On behalf of The Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations
#201 – 159 King Street
Peterborough, ON K9J2R8
trees@foca.on.ca
705-749-3622

cc. Premier Doug Ford
Vic Fedeli
Andrea Khanjin
Norm Miller
Doug Downey
Jill Dunlop
Dave Smith
Todd Smith
John Vanthof

EOWC /EORN Gigabyte Broadband Project

\$200 million Investment



Regional broadband project to provide 1Gbps to 95% of residents and businesses

- \$200 - \$300 million federal funding
- \$200 - \$300 million provincial funding
- \$400 - \$500 million loan from CIB* into SPV**
- \$400 - \$500 million raised from TSP's competitive RFP process

- \$1.2 billion – \$1.6 billion estimated total cost. Range of cost estimates is access to hydro poles and pole replacement costs.

*Canada Infrastructure Bank (CIB)

**Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)

