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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
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Don Rusnak

Member of Parliament / Député
Thunder Bay—Rainy River

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Dear Mayor Avis,

I am proud to be part of a government that understands that Canadians need access to high-speed Internet to fully participate in our economy, democracy, and way of life. For Canadians in rural and northern regions in particular, access to high-speed Internet can unlock tremendous economic potential, leading to the creation of new jobs, products, and businesses that will benefit Canadian middle-class families.

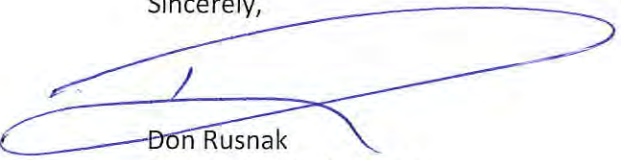
In December, the Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, announced the launch of Connect to Innovate, a new program that aims to bring broadband Internet access to 300 rural and remote communities across Canada.

Connect to Innovate is primarily focused on the construction of new backbone infrastructure (backbone networks are digital highways that move large amounts of data in and out of communities at high speeds) to connect institutions like schools, hospitals, First Nation band offices and libraries, as well as to improve residential, business, and mobile services. The program will invest up to \$500 million by 2021 to help ensure that 300 rural and remote communities in Canada are better positioned to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the digital age.

Connect to Innovate will be flexible in terms of who can apply – essentially any legal entity other than individuals will be able to submit an application. Other federal entities (including Crown corporations) are also excluded from applying to this program.

For more information on the program, please visit www.ic.gc.ca or contact my office at (807) 625-1160.

Sincerely,



Don Rusnak
Member of Parliament
Thunder Bay—Rainy River