

Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC)

10 MHz For Public Safety Use

BACKGROUND

On March 14, 2012, The Honourable Christian Paradis, Minister of Industry, announced that the Government of Canada was allocating 10 MHz of spectrum in the 700 MHz band for public safety broadband use.

A second round of consultation by Industry Canada was completed in 2012 regarding the "D Block" of another 10 MHz of spectrum. A joint submission on behalf of the Tri-Service Chiefs, Canadian Interoperability Technology Interest Group (CITIG), Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Provinces, Territories and Public Safety Canada called upon the Government of Canada to assign this valuable spectrum for public safety use. This will provide Canadian responders and government departments such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canadian Forces, and Canadian Coast Guard access to broadband spectrum across the country. It will also allow Canadian responders along the border to link with their counterparts in the U.S. who already have the same 20 MHz of broadband spectrum.

The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs appreciates the Government of Canada's leadership on this issue and recognizes that the value of 20 MHz represents approximately \$2 Billion. However, we also believe that robust state-of-the-art public safety communications are essential to provide the public with the level of service, protection and security it deserves and expects. Responders need the right tools to protect and save lives. Public safety's voice *must* be heard.

Recent reports estimate that Canadian public safety agencies will be forced to spend in excess of \$2 billion dollars upgrading or replacing aging communications infrastructure during the next decade, at a time when local tax supported funding is under increasing pressure.

The Building Canada Fund (BCF) is meant to advance national priorities that are important to all Canadians: a stronger economy, a cleaner environment, and better communities, while addressing local and regional infrastructure needs. The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs firmly believes that the BCF should be amended to include "public safety communications" infrastructure as an approved funding priority.

WHAT PARLIAMENTARIANS CAN DO

- Support our call to designate the "D Block" of 10 MHz for "public safety use."
- Work with Tri-Service Chiefs and CITIG to ensure the appropriate governance is in place via a new Canadian Not-for-Profit Corporation and ensure Tri-Service and CITIG representation on the Board of such an entity.
- Amend any future Build Canada Funding to include "public safety communications infrastructure" as an eligible expense.