



April 26, 2006

Mr. Larry Shaw
Director General
Telecommunications Policy Branch
Industry Canada
300 Slater Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C8

Re: CAFC Position Paper Proposals to the Spectrum in Certain Bands Below 1.7 GHz

Dear Mr. Shaw;

We were recently made aware of Industry Canada's proposal to provide private users access to the 150 MHz bandwidth, and we wish to state our genuine concerns regarding this proposal.

Our municipality, Red Deer County, is located in Central Alberta, and covers an area of 1,575 Sq. miles. Fire protection to the County is provided directly by County services from four fire stations surrounding the City of Red Deer, and a 5th fire station located in the Hamlet of Spruce View. The County contracts fire services to five other municipalities including Town of Sylvan Lake, Town of Bowden, Town of Innisfail, Village of Delburne, and the Village of Elnora.

In 1998, the County recognized a need to provide a communications network between it's own and the contract fire services to improve fire ground control and command, and to assist in improving mutual aid responses.

In 2000, the County applied for, and received, a grant from the Provincial Government to conduct a study in how best to implement a communications network that would not only benefit it's fire services delivery system, but would benefit other emergency services delivered by the County.

In the year July 2000, the County was struck by a disaster when an F3 tornado tore through the Green Acres Campground at Pine Lake, killing 13 persons and injuring another 140 people. The tornado caused the County to declare a State of Local Emergency in order to obtain assistance from local, Provincial, and Federal resources in handling the disaster. Because the area in which the tornado struck was in a very low area, communications between the County's Emergency Operations Center and the Command post at the scene was often difficult or impossible, and greatly hastened the planning and implementation of an improved communications system for the County's emergency services.

The new system was installed in late 2001, using the 150 MHz bandwidth, and at a cost of over \$300,000, and has greatly improved the County's ability to effectively and efficiently handle not only the day to day emergency situations which arise, but has also benefited the County in other States of Local Emergency that have been called since the tornado.

The County chose the 150 MHz bandwidth for a number of reasons after meetings with our communications consultants. One was the reasoning that the 150 MHz bandwidth was protected from outside interference from users other than emergency services. Another was that the 150 MHz bandwidth has an exceptionally long range requiring fewer repeaters, and that the signal could penetrate building walls and glass, making it ideal for communicating with fire fighters who have entered burning buildings to save lives and property.

In a quick review of the Alberta Frequency Listing, there are over 1000 emergency services in Alberta using the 150 MHz bandwidth. This includes fire, local and municipal police, RCMP, ambulance services including air ambulance, forestry and other Provincial Government emergency services. It is unclear as to why Industry Canada would want to open up the 150 MHz bandwidth to other than emergency services at this time, and particularly to the general public who have to rely on these emergency services during a time of need. Protecting the lives and property of all Canadians is the number one priority of all emergency services, and it should be an equal priority for the federal government. Giving up bandwidth ideal for addressing this priority will place Canadians and Canadian emergency workers at unnecessary risk.

We fully support CAFC's position and strongly urge that an announcement NOT TO PROCEED with these proposals be made as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D.A. Bardonnet', with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Donald A. Bardonnet
Fire Services Manager

c.c. Bob Mills, MP
CAFC