

February 28th, 2011

By email to: Spectrum.Operations@ic.gc.ca

Manager, Mobile Technology and Services,
Industry Canada,
300 Slater Street,
Ottawa Ontario K1A 0C8.

RE: Canada Gazette, Part 1, December 4th, 2010, Consultation on a Policy and Technical Framework for the 700 MHz Band and Aspects Related to Commercial Mobile Spectrum –SMSE-018-10

Dear Sir,

The Canadian Electricity Association (CEA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on Gazette Notice SMSE-018-10 outlining the Consultation on a Policy and Technical Framework for the 700 MHz Band and Aspects Related to Commercial Mobile Spectrum.

As the Canadian industry association representing electricity generation, transmission and distribution companies across Canada, the CEA is very much encouraged by Industry Canada's Initiative to seek comments on general policy considerations related to commercial mobile broadband spectrum use, competition issues and on the use of the 700MHz band. CEA believes the optimal use and effective management of the soon to be available spectrum is critical to public safety.

CEA supports public safety access to a dedicated portion of the 700MHz bandwidth. Inaction poses significant risk as the upcoming allocation of spectrum will directly impact Police, Fire, EMS and the government's ability to protect life and property. The energy and utilities sector has long been recognized by Public Safety Canada (PSC) as part of Canada's critical infrastructure, "those physical and information technology facilities, networks, services and assets which, if disrupted or destroyed would have a serious impact on the health, safety, security or economic well-being of Canadians or the effective functioning of governments in Canada."¹

The electricity sector is part of Canada's critical infrastructure. The sector provides the underlying electricity resources that allow public safety agencies and first responders to operate when needed. Electricity powers the telecommunication networks that provide the base from which fire, police, and ambulance services operate. As noted by the Utilities Telecom Council of Canada (UTC)², *the great blackout of 2003 and Hurricane Katrina, has caused attention to be focused — and properly so — on the telecommunications needs of public safety agencies whose life and property saving activities were too often compromised by inadequate telecommunications. At the same time, too little attention has been directed at the equally pressing needs of the electric utilities whose distribution of power throughout the land is essential to the smooth operation of these agencies and, of course, to the functioning of a digital economy.*

Under the existing framework, Industry Canada has based the electricity industry's priority at a level 3 category. Given that many electric utilities within their respective province are recognized as agencies contributing to public safety, CEA strongly recommends that Industry Canada acknowledge the

¹ Definition of Critical Infrastructure (<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cpip-pclcpi/vf/app4-eng.php>)

² UTC – Proposed Spectrum Utilization Policy for Critical Infrastructure Entities, 2007.

electricity sector as critical to the protection of life and infrastructure, and therefore consider moving the industry's priority to category 2. At the current level 3 category, utilities are permitted access to public safety systems in emergency situations only, and with access controlled by the system's existing major users. The re-categorization will aid in the prevention of injuries, property damage and death associated with power failure.

CEA strongly urges Industry Canada to identify the electricity sector as critical to the protection of life and infrastructure and thus part of the public safety imperative. Electricity underpins the operations of virtually all other critical economic services, both in the marketplace and with regards to sovereignty, society and public safety.

The CEA appreciates the leadership shown by Industry Canada on this issue. We would like to thank the department for the opportunity to comment on the 700MHz Band Consultation.

Regards,

CANADIAN ELECTRICITY ASSOCIATION (CEA)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F Bradley', with a horizontal line underneath.

Francis Bradley
(Vice-President)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Yvan D'Auteuil', with a horizontal line underneath.

Yvan D'Auteuil
(Chair, CEA Telecom Task Group)