



Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2022-267-2

PDF version

Reference: 2022-267 and 2022-267-1

Ottawa, 17 November 2022

Call for comments on an application by Bell Canada, Cogeco Communications Inc., Bragg Communications Incorporated, carrying on business as Eastlink, and Saskatchewan Telecommunications regarding the increase of the maximum retail price of the basic service – Disclosure of aggregated information previously filed in confidence

Background

1. On 5 January 2022, Bell Canada, Cogeco Communications Inc., Bragg Communications Incorporated, carrying on business as Eastlink, and Saskatchewan Telecommunications (hereafter the applicants) filed a joint application to increase the current \$25 price cap for small basic service to \$28, and that it be adjusted on a yearly basis starting on 1 April 2023, based on the annual Consumer Price Index for the period ending 31 December of the preceding calendar year.
2. Following the application, the Commission sent three different requests for information to each applicant to obtain subscribership numbers relating to their small basic service. This information was largely filed in confidence.
3. On 28 September 2022, the Commission published Broadcasting Notice of Consultation 2022-267 seeking comments on the application. The Commission made other broadcasting distribution undertakings (BDUs) currently required to submit annual aggregate returns¹ parties to the proceeding and required them to file the same information it obtained from the applicants through the above-noted third request for information.
4. On 27 October 2022, the Commission published Broadcasting Notice of Consultation 2022-267-1 to extend the deadline for the receipt of interventions to 28 November 2022 and the deadline to file replies to 12 December 2022 in response to a procedural request filed by the Public Interest Advocacy Centre.

Request of disclosure

5. On 24 October 2022, the Forum for Research and Policy in Communications (FRPC) requested that the Commission aggregate the applicants' individual answers to the first two requests for information and place the information on the public record; and

¹ Québecor Media Inc., Rogers Communications Inc., Shaw Communications Inc, and TELUS Communications Inc.

aggregate the applicants' individual answers to the third request for information and the equivalent information filed by Québecor Media Inc., Rogers Communications Inc., Shaw Communications Inc., and TELUS Communications Inc., and place that information on the public record. Additionally, the FRPC requested an extension of the intervention period by one week when the new information is published.

6. The FRPC submitted that the aggregated numbers would provide evidentiary context needed to evaluate the applicant's arguments and evidence in support of their application, as well as the impact of the application whether it be granted, denied or granted with amendments.
7. The applicants and other BDUs made parties to the present proceeding did not oppose the FRPC's request for aggregation and disclosure.

Commission's analysis

8. As this matter raises important public interest and affordability issues, the Commission recognizes the importance of releasing meaningful information to assist in the preparation of interventions and thus ensuring a more robust public record.
9. In regard to the FRPC's request to extend the deadline by an additional week, the Commission notes that in Broadcasting Notice of Consultation 2022-267-1, the Commission established new filing dates for interventions and replies of 28 November 2022 and 12 December 2022, respectively. As such, the Commission considers that this request has effectively been addressed.
10. In light of the above, as requested by the FRPC and agreed upon by the applicants and other BDUs made parties to the proceeding, the Commission places the aggregated information provided by the applicants in response to the first and second requests for information and the aggregated number provided by the applicants in response to the third request for information, and by the other BDUs made parties to the present proceeding on the public record. The aggregated information is set out in the appendix to this notice.

Secretary General

Related documents

- *Call for comments on an application by Bell Canada, Cogeco Communications Inc., Bragg Communications Incorporated, carrying on business as Eastlink, and Saskatchewan Telecommunications regarding the increase of the maximum retail price of the basic service – Extension to the deadlines for the receipt of interventions and the filing of replies*, Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2022-267-1, 27 October 2022
- *Call for comments on an application by Bell Canada, Cogeco Communications Inc., Bragg Communications Incorporated, carrying on business as Eastlink, and Saskatchewan Telecommunications regarding the increase of the maximum retail price of the basic service*, Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2022-267, 28 September 2022

Appendix to Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2022-267-2

Aggregated data submitted by Bell Canada, Cogeco Communications Inc., Bragg Communications Incorporated, carrying on business as Eastlink, Saskatchewan Telecommunications, Québecor Media Inc., Rogers Communication Inc., Shaw Communications Inc., and TELUS Communications Inc.

Important note: a high degree of variability between the parties' responses was observed and may suggest differing interpretations of the requested information amongst the parties in addition to reflecting differently structured market offerings. The percentage of total subscribers listed as "basic package subscribers" varied by respondent from less than 1% to 100%.

Aggregated data submitted by Bell Canada, Cogeco Communications Inc., Bragg Communications Incorporated, carrying on business as Eastlink, and Saskatchewan Telecommunications (hereafter the applicants) based on the request for information dated 25 February 2022

- Number of basic package subscribers: 181,679

Aggregated data submitted by the applicants based on the request for information dated 21 March 2022

- Number of subscribers whose subscription fee is \$25: 174,934
- Number of subscribers who bundle their television service with another service (such as wireline telephone or internet): 610,556
- Number of subscribers who bundle their television service with another service and whose subscription fee is \$25: 156,921

Aggregated data submitted by the applicants based on the request for information dated 13 April 2022 and equivalent information filed by Québecor Media Inc., Rogers Communications Inc., Shaw Communications Inc., and TELUS Communications Inc.

- Total number of basic package subscribers (includes those that are subscribing to one or more traditional programming services a la carte in addition to the basic package): 3,611,374
- Number of basic package subscribers who do not receive a credit to their account: 1,533,488
- The number of basic package subscribers who bundle their television service with another non-television service, such as wireline telephone or Internet: 3,089,793

- The number of basic package subscribers who bundle their television services with another non-television service and who do not receive a credit to their account: 1,090,434