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August 15, 2006

**Chairman, and Members,
CRTC Panel,
Les Terrasses de la Chaudiere
Central Building
1 Promenade Du Portage
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N2**

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members

Re: Northwestel Application

As a member of the Northwest Territories Chamber of Commerce, I had the opportunity to review the transcripts of the hearing and would like to offer the following observation and comments.

After reading the transcripts I was left with the impression that members of the CRTC panel did not grasp the issues that are in question. And that is, that Northerners still do not enjoy the same level of basic services that are readily available to citizens in southern Canada. Not only are these services not available with the monopoly Telco, but also we as northerners do not have the opportunity to avail ourselves of competitive entities that might provide these basic services.

When the NWT Chamber of Commerce suggested that your panel direct NorthwEstTel to utilize a portion of the SIP funding they will receive to install equipment that would allow for the availability of "911" service in the territories, he was made to feel that his suggestion was out of line by the panellist from Saskatchewan. In point of fact, her statement that 911 costs were being borne by the subscribers in her province of Saskatchewan bears little relevance with respect to the Chamber position stated at the hearings.

This hearing is and was about NorthwEstTel and its customers, the regulation of the company, the implementation of financial models and subsidies required to provide a level of service consistent with that in southern Canada, and hopefully a one window approach to address the inequities in the northern market.

With all due respect to the panelist from Saskatchewan, the North has a history of challenging nation telecommunications policy. I would refer her to the past decisions relating to the NorthwEstTel's successful challenge of Telesat's monopoly on the ownership of downlink earth stations, or perhaps something more recent where the Company became the first carrier to enter the cable television market. The North may be coming of age, but make no mistake, it is a long way from a stable competitive environment, and to try and compare Northern customers with those of Saskatchewan misses the mark entirely.

When the NWT Chamber spoke of 911 services, they were referring to the fact that the Company still does not have the installed capability to deliver 911 trunking and data capability to an operator should one materialize. Residents in the north cannot even contemplate whether we would contract the operation of this service to the private sector or leave it with various levels of government until such time as NorthwTel provides the equipment/services at a reasonable competitive rate.

It is my understanding that during the evidentiary process, the Commission disavowed itself from the CRTC administrative letter, sent to myself in 2003, stating that 911 Service was part of the basic service offering. This was the basis for my interrogatory submitted to you in response to the Telecom Public Notice CRTC 2003-7.

In light of this evidence, perhaps the Commissioners wish to explain to me what was meant in Telecom Decision 2003-39 when you state "including access to emergency services". I believe that paragraph 11 clearly outlines the Commission's position when you established the basic service objectives.

11. In Decision 2000-746, the Commission found that Northwestel's proposal to upgrade its toll network and extend individual line service to unserved and underserved customers over its four-year SIP was reasonable. The Commission also stated that it expected NorthwTel to be guided by the goals and priorities set out in *Telephone service to high-cost serving areas*, Telecom Decision CRTC 99-16, 19 October 1999 (Decision 99-16) in developing its detailed annual plans to extend service to unserved customers and upgrade underserved customers. In Decision 99-16, the Commission established a basic service objective (BSO) which sets out the basic components of telephone service that the Commission considered should be extended to as many Canadians as feasible.

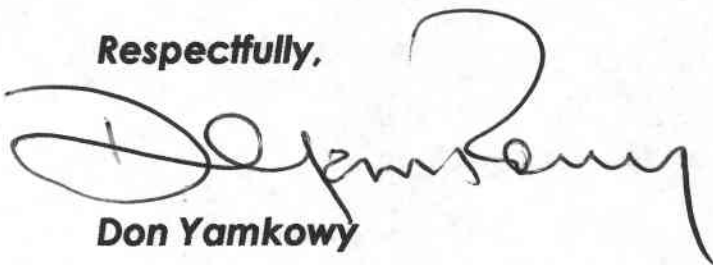
The BSO was comprised of: (a) an individual line local service with Touch-Tone dialing, provided by a digital switch with the capability to connect via low-speed data transmission to the Internet at local rates; (b) enhanced calling features, including access to emergency services, Voice Message Relay service, and privacy protection features; (c) access to operator and directory assistance services; (d) access to the long distance network; (e) and a copy of a local phone directory.

The Transcripts read like the hearings were adversarial and confrontational. This was a public hearing process and not an evidentiary one; therefore, it behooves the Commission to show respect and less intimidation to presenters who are not professionals in the industry.

I was somewhat taken aback by the somewhat aggressive position taken by the Saskatchewan commissioner when challenging NWT Chamber positions- by contrasting them to that of her provincial constituents. I obviously mistakenly believed that the CRTC was an independent body whose judicial responsibility and independence was reflected in the impartiality its members. It now appears that there is a constituency responsibility as well.

I would hope that the above comments are taken in the constructive vein in which these comments are being offered.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Yamkowsky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long tail extending to the right.

Don Yamkowsky