



340 111 Research Drive, Saskatoon SK S7N 3R2
Telephone 306 653 7932 Fax 306 653 7935
Email info@saskwheat.ca

Sask Wheat Support Letter for APAS Submission: Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2023-89

The Saskatchewan Wheat Development Commission (Sask Wheat) supports the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan's (APAS) submission to the CRTC Broadband Fund policy review.

Sask Wheat is a producer-led organization established to grow the Saskatchewan wheat industry, representing 24,000 wheat producers in the province. From 2018 to 2022, Saskatchewan wheat producers annually grew, on average, 80% of Canada's durum wheat and 41% of Canada's non-durum wheat. Sask Wheat provides leadership in identifying and supporting research, market development and advocacy that contributes to profitable and sustainable wheat production for Saskatchewan farmers.

Saskatchewan is a unique region dominated by a rural landscape. Sask Wheat supports the CRTC providing funding for operational support in rural and remote areas. Sask Wheat further supports APAS's recommendation that the CRTC account for regional variations and avoid a one-size fits all approach for eligibility requirements and ensure increased flexibility in the distribution of funding to include existing operations and infrastructure.

Agriculture is a critically important segment of Canada's economy, and Saskatchewan plays a vital role in Canada's agriculture sector, accounting for about 43 percent of Canada's cropland.¹ Rural connectivity is a crucial driver of agricultural growth in our province and subsequently, the Canadian economy. Access to reliable and affordable telecommunication services is increasingly important for the management of farm operations, including accessing and developing markets, as well as the continued adoption and use of new innovative production technologies to increase profitability and efficiency. Sask Wheat supports APAS's recommendation for a broader definition of rural connectivity that reflects the need for connectivity beyond strictly households. Saskatchewan agricultural producers require connectivity throughout croplands and rangelands.

Sask Wheat and APAS often work closely to support each other on initiatives that impact Saskatchewan agricultural producers and their ability to remain competitive in the global market, to be profitable at an on-farm level, and to have their voices heard by government. In furtherance of this commonality of vision, Sask Wheat supports APAS's recommendations and the conclusion of their submission to the CRTC Broadband Fund policy review "strongly urging the CRTC to develop and implement appropriate mechanisms to reinstate a modernized operational funding model that ensures parity between rural and urban services. The CRTC also needs to recognize the unique needs of Canada's regions and ensure that eligibility and expenses are broad and flexible enough to incent investment and support continuous renewal in high-cost areas."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. J. ...", is placed below the word "Sincerely,".

Executive Director

¹ Statistics Canada, 2022. Canadian Agriculture at a Glance. Saskatchewan continues to live up to the title of breadbasket of Canada <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/96-325-x/2021001/article/00008-eng.html>