



Canada's Coalition for Wireless Competition calls for auction rules to allow new entry in wireless

Ottawa, May 25 – An important debate about Canada's wireless industry is about to commence as interested parties respond to Industry Minister Maxime Bernier's call for consultations on the future of advanced wireless services.

The Industry Minister released a consultation document in February 2007 asking for commentary on rules for the auction of Advanced Wireless Spectrum ("AWS"). This will be an important step in the future of Canada's advanced wireless services. The deadline for responses is midnight, May 25. Members of the Coalition for Wireless Competition are among those making representations. Industry Canada will invite intervenors to debate each other's arguments over the next month and the consultation will close at the end of June.

In the autumn of 2007 the Minister is expected to release a policy framework under which his department will conduct the spectrum auction to decide which providers will have access to this important market. Industry Canada has indicated it expects to conduct the spectrum auction at the end of the calendar year.

Canada's lagging performance in wireless denies Canadian consumers and business the competitive advantages enjoyed by other countries, while consumers face prices much higher than those charged to users in neighbouring countries, the Coalition says.

Recent research indicates heavy wireless users may pay 50% more for services than similar U.S. users. Meanwhile the advanced services commonly available in Europe and Asia are still rare in Canada.

Coalition members each will submit individual responses, but all recommend the government create the conditions for competitive entry by arranging the spectrum auction and enforcing market rules which are pro-competitive.

Coalition members have asked the government to designate part of the spectrum auction for new entrants only, thus ensuring it will not be bought and hoarded by the incumbents.

The Coalition for Wireless Competition was established to advocate policy changes to help make the most advanced mobile telecommunications services, known as 3G for third generation, available to Canadian consumers, organizations and businesses. Founding members of the coalition include MTS Allstream, Mipps and Quebecor. www.wirelessfuture.ca

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