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## Telesat under CRTC investigation

Satellite service provider's monopoly status and pricing being reviewed

Karen K. Ho  
Northern News Services  
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OTTAWA

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission has issued a notice of consultation on Telesat's prices for fixed satellite services to Nunavut and other Northern regions.

The government organization recognizes the Ottawa-based company is the only satellite company that covers the entire

country, including remote Northern areas.

Telesat also charges companies like Northwestel and SSI Micro for satellite connectivity in the territory.

A report on satellite services issued last fall also found that prices for fixed satellite services elsewhere in Canada were much cheaper than the maximum amount Telesat can charge those Internet service providers for fixed satellite services.

And while the CRTC said no evidence was provided that the company has abused its monopoly, "given its market power and the anticipated trends ... the Inquiry Officer considers that Commission regulatory oversight is still required."

All of Nunavut's residents and businesses are entirely dependent on fixed satellite services to receive Internet services through SSI Micro and Northwestel because there is no fibre optic connection available.

The report also found that Internet speeds are slower than those available in fibre communities, and that Telesat will likely remain the "dominant provider" of satellite services in the territories "for the foreseeable future."

This isn't the first time the regulatory organization has looked into prices for services in the North. Last month, it ordered Northwestel to cut residential rates for Internet



Satellite company Telesat is currently being investigated by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission for its prices to Nunavut and other communities in the north. - Walter Strong/NNSL photo

services by 10 to 30 per cent last week

As a result of the decision, Northwestel would also not be allowed to raise residential rates until the end of 2017 at the earliest.

At press time, requests for comment from Telesat had not been returned.

The deadline for the company to officially respond to the CRTC is July 20. The deadline for the general public to submit their comments is August 21.

--with files from *Stewart Burnett*



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