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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **SSi Stands Firm for Consumers' Rights and Essential Competition**

#### ***CRTC must end continued attempts by Northwestel to deny fair pricing and open access to its fibre network***

**YELLOWKNIFE, February 22, 2017.** SSi Micro Ltd. (SSi) today asked the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to end Northwestel's ongoing attempts to delay complying with Commission orders. These delays thwart competition and cause consumers harm. SSi is seeking to have the Commission act quickly to approve much lower rates for competitors to access the fibre backbone that Northwestel controls on a monopoly basis. SSi's request reacts to Northwestel's latest disappointing response to the CRTC's Telecom Decision 2016-443, "Review of the rates for Northwestel Inc.'s Wholesale Connect service", issued November 8, 2016.

"After years of delays and appeals, Northwestel finally filed new wholesale rates as required by clear direction from the CRTC. Unfortunately, Northwestel also immediately appealed its own filing, continuing a pattern of delay and denial of fair access," noted Jeff Philipp, Founder and CEO of SSi. "This gaming of the regulatory system has to end – it is killing competition and causing real harm to consumers in the North."

#### ***The Yukon and Northwest Territories – denied competition, choice and innovation***

Northwestel, as the only supplier of a fibre backbone in the Western Arctic, has been charging competitors wholesale rates that are unjustifiably high and anti-competitive. The exaggerated rates, delay tactics and abuse of the regulatory process have, so far, blocked all meaningful telecoms competition in the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

SSi has been fighting for several years to open the North to effective telecoms competition. Key to this is fair, open and non-preferential access to the monopoly fibre backbone. Northwestel has effectively refused that access, but competitors cannot offer a choice of retail services without it. Denied the choice, consumers are also denied the benefits of lower prices, variety of service packages and innovation - the hallmarks of a competitive marketplace.

#### ***Competition takes root in Nunavut – unencumbered by Northwestel's backbone monopoly***

This is not just theory. In Nunavut, where Northwestel does not have a monopoly for transport facilities, SSi is building a state-of-the-art 4G-LTE and 2G wireless network in all 25 communities of the



Territory. SSi has already begun offering 4G residential broadband services and will soon offer local mobile voice and an array of attractive value-added services for residents and businesses alike.

For more information and background, please see SSi's November 14, 2016 News Release, *"Hope and Concern for Telecoms Competition in the Western Arctic: Will a CRTC decision on Northwestel's monopoly fibre rates enable fair and real competition in the NWT and Yukon?"* available at: <https://www.ssimicro.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/NR-2016-11-15.pdf>

Telecom Decision CRTC 2016-443, "Review of the rates for Northwestel Inc.'s Wholesale Connect service", is available at: [http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2016/2016-443.htm?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=site&utm\\_campaign=clks](http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2016/2016-443.htm?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=site&utm_campaign=clks)

**About SSi:** Headquartered in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, and with a satellite teleport and network operations centre in Ottawa, SSi designs, builds and operates telecommunications networks around the world. SSi understands first-hand the challenges faced in providing effective and affordable communications services to remote and outlying areas. SSi has launched broadband service into many markets where the Internet previously did not exist, and provides a competitive alternative to the incumbent operator in small and remote markets.

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