



PUBLIC INTEREST ADVOCACY CENTRE
LE CENTRE POUR LA DÉFENSE DE L'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC

ONE Nicholas Street, Suite 1204, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 7B7
Tel: (613) 562-4002. Fax: (613) 562-0007. e-mail: piac@piac.ca. <http://www.piac.ca>

Media Release

Paper Bill Fees Must End: Wireless Carriers and CRTC Disappoint Consumers; Legislation Necessary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OTTAWA – The Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) and the Consumers' Association of Canada (CAC) reacted today to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's (CRTC) announcement that it had failed yesterday to convince Canadian telecommunications carriers and broadcast distributors to eliminate fees for providing bills in paper format. PIAC and CAC noted that the agreement reached with these companies was unacceptable for the vast majority of customers and noted the CRTC's own displeasure with the outcome, and promise of a public inquiry.

PIAC and CAC also noted the indication from the federal government that it would enact legislation to end the practice of charging for paper bills.

“Consumers are clearly opposed to paying for paper bills and the federal government has clearly committed to ‘eliminating’ these charges,” said John Lawford, Executive Director and General Counsel for PIAC, “it is telling that the telecommunications and broadcasting industries could not be persuaded, even by the CRTC, to respond to the wants and needs of their customers when this much money was at stake.”

PIAC released its report: “How to Pay the Piper: A Primer on Additional Charges to Consumers in Canada for Paper Billing” a day before the CRTC's private, closed-door meeting with the companies. This report estimated paper billing charges cost wireline phone, wireless, cable TV and internet subscribers over \$500 million yearly.

PIAC and CAC also welcomed the tweet of Industry Minister James Moore indicating that the federal government “will introduce legislation to end pay-to-pay billing practices for telecom industry”.

“Consumers need this issue to be fixed now and cannot afford to wait.” said Bruce Cran, President of the Consumers’ Association of Canada, “They don’t care if the CRTC or the Minister solves it, they just want this unfair billing to stop.”

PIAC and CAC will participate in any future CRTC process and urge the public to send their views on the practice to the CRTC, to the Industry Minister and to their Member of Parliament.

For more information please contact:

John Lawford
Executive Director
Public Interest Advocacy Centre
ONE Nicholas Street, Suite 1204
Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 7B7
(613) 562-4002 x25
(613) 447-8125 (cell)
jlawford@piac.ca

Bruce Cran
President
Consumers’ Association of Canada
(604) 418-8359
bcranbiz@telus.net

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