



CARRIER SEKANI  
FAMILY SERVICES

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## Full cellular coverage for Highway 16 (west) a welcome announcement

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For immediate release

In a joint provincial and federal effort, yesterday's announcement that Highway 16, from Prince Rupert to Prince George, will have full cellular coverage is welcomed by Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS).

A lack in transportation services and full connectivity have been identified by CSFS leadership for many years. Communities served by CSFS lie along this busy route, and few First Nations and communities remain untouched by the historic and ongoing tragedies and violence associated with this stretch of road, known as the Highway of Tears.

Continuous cellular coverage along this this long and sometimes isolated highway is important for the safety of all who travel along it, and particularly for community members who live in rural and remote areas and are required to travel along this route, despite an historic lack in connectivity and known cases of missing and murdered women. This full cell coverage will form an important link to safety and help for those who need it. It will no longer be possible for potential predators to take advantage of cellular 'dead zones'.

"I'm very pleased that full cellular coverage of this stretch of highway is finally happening," said CSFS Director of Child & Family Services, Mary Teegee. "In addition to supporting the overall connectivity of the region, this commitment also represents a righting of a glaring barrier to safe travel for the people that must use the Highway of Tears. This improved connectivity represents a literal life-line."

Seventy per cent of Highway 16 already has some coverage, but this funding will provide 252 kilometres of new highway cellular coverage, closing gaps along the corridor between Prince George and Prince Rupert. The project is set to begin this spring and Rogers Communications plans to install 12 cellular towers along the highway. The Connecting British Columbia program and the Government of Canada's Universal Broadband Fund will provide Rogers \$4.5 million towards the \$11.6-million cost of installing cellular infrastructure to provide the cellular coverage.

CSFS looks forward to the completion of this project that will support the health and safety of all the people we serve, and staff who travel in and among our communities providing essential health & wellness services and improving Indigenous health in British Columbia.

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