

December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020

To: Mr. Adam Fulford / Ms. Maria Wood, Canacre Ltd. (Agents for Bell Canada)

CC: Mirko Bibic, President & CEO, BCE and Bell Canada  
Blaik Kirkby, Group President, Bell Mobility and Bell Residential & Small Business  
Rizwan Jamal, President, Bell Residential and Small Business  
David Pink, Director of Planning, Township of Muskoka Lakes  
Susan Mazan, Ward B Councilor, Township of Muskoka Lakes  
Gordon Roberts, Ward B Councilor, Township of Muskoka Lakes  
Phil Harding, Mayor, Township of Muskoka Lakes  
Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development  
Scott Aitchison, Member of Parliament, Parry Sound- Muskoka  
Norm Miller, Member of Provincial Parliament, Parry Sound-Muskoka

**Subject: Proposed Bell Tower 'W7716 Skeleton Lake North' at 4300 Aspdin Rd, Township of Muskoka Lakes**

Dear Mr. Fulford / Ms. Wood,

I'm writing to you in my capacity as the President of the Skeleton Lake Cottagers Organization (SLCO). Our organization represents more than 500 owners of waterfront properties and more than 1000 families in our immediate watershed. Our mandate is to preserve and protect our very unique and scenic lake and its environs. We are guided by our Lake Plan and Stewardship Program (the 'Lake Plan'), a copy of which can be found at our website. (<https://skeletonlake.ca/Lake-Plan>)

As you know, members of the SLCO attended Canacre's video question & answer meeting on Nov 19th, 2020 regarding the above proposed tower. I believe hosting that meeting was a necessity under federal regulations to gain approval for Bell Mobility's application for a proposed telecommunications tower, dubbed 'Skeleton Lake North W7716' (the 'Tower'). We only received notice of that meeting on Nov 17<sup>th</sup>, courtesy of our Ward Councilor in the Township of Muskoka Lakes. We expected a meaningful engagement where concerns would be heard and alternatives considered. We were disappointed to find that was not the case, that Canacre was simply passing on a cursory and incomplete outline of Bell's intentions.

If you refer to page 15 of our Lake Plan you will see a ranking of the values that our community constituents decided are most important to them. In particular, you will notice that some 97.5% of our community values "Scenic Views" as the second most important "Valued Feature", behind only Water Quality.

Your proposal for a 60.8m tower, proposed to be erected within 700m of the shore of our scenic Skeleton Lake on the highest pinnacle known as our famous 'Tomelin Bluffs', will tower some 120m (or 393 feet) above Skeleton Lake.

The placement of a tower this size, in this location, is completely incompatible with our community's desire to protect scenic views around Skeleton Lake, designated as an extremely high priority by our constituents.

In addition, we are concerned that Bell may have made a serious omission by overlooking the very important fact that Skeleton Lake has a registered water aerodrome on it. In your presentation of Nov 19<sup>th</sup>, you promised that the tower would not require lighting, however we believe Transport Canada may decide otherwise due to this aerodrome. Dark skies are another highly rated Valued Feature by our community and having a lighted tower will negatively impact this.

While our community, like many other rural communities, is in dire need of improved internet access, we want solutions that do not completely and utterly compromise the most cherished qualities of our lake community. Based on the initial due diligence and research by our Board of Directors, we are aware that other alternatives are becoming available.

We are asking for a delay in the 'Consultation' phase of this proposal until such time as we can have meaningful dialogue with the business team from Bell Mobility responsible for this tower proposal and the general network topology in Muskoka, and have our concerns and our needs duly considered.

We would also like time to consult our own community for their input.

We believe we have grounds to seek this as we were not properly served notice, despite the fact that i) the community shares the lake which is within the 1km notice radius and, ii) the township has been in possession of, and acknowledged, our Lake Plan since 2015 and should have included the SLCO early on in the discussions.

In the meantime, we are seeking some additional information including:

1. When did Bell first notify the township of this application?
2. What engagement has Bell had with the residents and cottagers of Skeleton Lake and when?
3. Why was the SLCO not notified at an early stage, knowing the potential impact on scenic values and sight lines in and around our lake?
4. What is Bell's expected date to have approval to proceed with this tower?
5. When does Bell expect to commence construction?
6. When does Bell expect to commission the tower into operation?
7. Why can Bell not consider lower and less intrusive 'mono-pine' towers for improving our service? These are common practice in Muskoka.
8. How many potential subscribers would be eliminated if Bell used a 30m 'mono-pine' tower, similar to that proposed for W7723 on the south side of the lake, instead of a free-standing 61m steel lattice tower?

9. If Bell cannot, is it because this tower also serves to 'bridge' Bell's fibre optic network available along Aspdin Rd to other towers via a microwave or similar point-to-point link? If so, are these receivers in existence now or planned for the future?
10. Bell has equipment on multiple towers serving Skeleton Lake already, identified as; W1736, W1463, W3418 and LBHONW0093-1S2. Only two of these towers, W1463 and LBHONW0093-1S2 currently have the 3500Mhz WTPP radios installed. What are Bell's plans to install WTPP radios on the other two towers, W1763 and W3418? How many more subscribers will be reachable from these? Will installing WTPP radios on these eliminate the need to reach 61m at W7716 Skeleton Lake so that a 30m 'mono-pine' tower would suffice?
11. We are aware that a 3<sup>rd</sup>-party tower operator that Bell sometimes uses, SBA, is proposing a new tower just 2500m to the west of Bell's proposed site. Why can't Bell lease space on this tower to implement its WTPP service?
12. Is Bell willing to make a binding undertaking that tower lighting will NOT be required on W7716 Skeleton North?
13. At your meeting, we asked for a rendering of the tower from the perspective of the lake. You said it was not possible. We have had several created, to scale. I have attached a few of these for your information and comment. We intend to use these in discussion with our community.
14. Can you establish a meeting for us with the appropriate Bell executives and key decision makers on this project?
15. Finally, can you please provide the SLCO with contact details of the key individuals and business leaders responsible for this project at Bell Mobility and Bell Residential Services. We wish to engage with them on this proposal.

We look forward to receiving your answers to these questions to better understand and give our opinion on this proposal. In addition, we look forward to Canacre Ltd. facilitating a meeting with Bell Mobility.

In closing, we are not against Bell expanding coverage in our lake community. We've been wanting improved service for more than a decade. However, we want to engage with Bell in finding a win-win solution inclusive of the community, the municipality and Bell together. Our community wants better internet connectivity and acknowledges Bell's movement in that direction. We just want to find a solution that fits the values and goals of our very unique community.

Sincerely,

Jeff Crocker  
President - Skeleton Lake Cottagers Organization  
289-221-7903

[www.skeletonlake.ca](http://www.skeletonlake.ca)

cc: Scott May – Vice President, SLCO  
Deirdre Broude - Director Lake Stewardship, SLCO  
Tom Grajnar - Director Lake Partners, SLCO







