For Immediate Release

Y4Y Quebec calls on local government to ensure reliable high-speed Internet access throughout the province

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On May 21, the Québec government announced that it will unveil 66 projects selected to provide accessible and quality broadband Internet service to more than 60,000 homes across Quebec. The government contribution paid to enable the projects to be carried out is estimated at $150 million.

This is a positive step to bringing high-speed Internet to all Quebec regions and comes at an opportune time. The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting social isolation punctuate the importance of prioritizing this collaborative project. Access to reliable Internet service is now essential for Quebec citizens to be able to work from home, continue their education and for some, do their grocery shopping.

However, if private telecommunications companies will be responsible for providing high-speed Internet access, the government must hold them accountable by tracking clear reliability performance indicators, to ensure that Internet service in rural areas is consistent and reliable, and that the customer service is customer-oriented. If the service is not reliable and affordable, and if the customer service at big players like Bell or Rogers deteriorates, the government will have to nationalize high-speed Internet infrastructure to ensure its consistency and affordability.

Because the government is subsidizing the infrastructure, it has a responsibility to ensure that the costs to access high-speed Internet are reasonable. Too many English-speaking youth can't afford Internet at home because of prohibitive costs set by the private telecommunications companies, and have had atrocious customer service experiences. The government has to protect us now that home Internet is more important than ever.

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