



**The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne**

Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry

**The Honourable Steven Guilbeault**

Minister of Environment and Climate Change

House of Commons

Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

Canada

September 26, 2024

Re: Right to Repair Consultation

Minister Champagne,

Minister Guilbeault,

I am writing to you on behalf of OpenMedia, a community-based non-profit organization dedicated to keeping the Internet open, affordable, and surveillance-free. We work tirelessly to engage hundreds of thousands of Canadians in protecting their digital rights. Our community comprises approximately 250,000 people across Canada, all deeply passionate about shaping informed and participatory digital policies.

We appreciate your invitation to the public for feedback on the crucial Right to Repair policy in Canada. We welcome the opportunity to amplify the voices of our community to this long-overdue process, and reaffirm what Canadians believe is essential for crafting stronger right-to-repair legislation that truly protects consumers.

From 2019 to spring 2024, over 20,000 OpenMedia community members called on the federal government to introduce right-to-repair legislation.<sup>1</sup> In response to the government's opening of a consultation on instantiating that right, in August 2024, OpenMedia launched a new petition advocating for device ownership and stronger Right to Repair in Canada.<sup>2</sup> In just a few weeks, over 8,500 Canadians signed on, sharing their frustration with manufacturers' intentional strategies of planned obsolescence, and calling for taking back control of devices they own.

The signatures we've collected send a clear message: **Canadians are fed up with being trapped in a relentless cycle of replacing devices and demand full ownership over devices we purchase.** Full ownership means control over repair options, high compatibility with other products, and reasonable durability—without being forced into constantly buying new devices.

Our community's response highlights the urgent need to end monopolistic control over repairs by requiring manufacturers to provide essential support for maintaining our devices for a mandated multi-year period after purchase. Such measures will ensure that we, as consumers,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://openmedia.org/press/item/parliament-must-fast-track-repair-bill-c-244>

<sup>2</sup> <https://action.openmedia.org/page/155170/petition/1>

can keep our devices functional without being dependent on the manufacturer's costly or limited repair options.

The Right to Repair issue touches every facet of Canadian life—our economy, society and environment. We urge you to take bold action on implementing a holistic policy that not only protects individual consumers but also addresses harmful manufacturing practices, fosters sustainability, supports fair competition, and strengthens local repair initiatives that help provide cost-effective means to repair.

We have attached all our community's signatures, along with an elaboration of the demands from our community's petition, as appendices to this submission. We urge you to carefully consider these points as you move forward in shaping a right-to-repair framework that empowers consumers, supports small businesses, and fosters a sustainable, equitable future for all Canadians.

We thank Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) for the opportunity to contribute to the consultation process. We are also hopeful that, in the spirit of transparency, ISED will provide the public with a report back on what you heard during the consultation, including an anonymized version of the full dataset of consultation responses. We look forward to your next steps following the consultation and to further opportunities for public debate and consultation as Right to Repair policy in Canada moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt".

Matt Hatfield  
Executive Director, OpenMedia  
[matt@openmedia.org](mailto:matt@openmedia.org)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenna".

Jenna Fung  
Senior Campaigner, OpenMedia  
[jenna@openmedia.org](mailto:jenna@openmedia.org)

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## **APPENDIX A: Comments submitted by OpenMedia on behalf of our community**

**Take Back Control of Your Own Device!**

**Speak up for your right to repair!**

*OpenMedia is a community-based organization that safeguards the possibilities of the open Internet.*

September 26, 2024



## APPENDIX A: Comments submitted by OpenMedia on behalf of our community

This appendix contains detailed comments that reflect concerns and priorities of OpenMedia community members on the Right to Repair issue. Our community is making it clear that we expect the government to prioritize developing stronger regulations to combat planned obsolescence, protect consumers, and strengthen our full ownership of their devices.

We urge you to carefully consider our comments and recommendations, which outline key measures such as: (1) establishing minimum durability standards, (2) expanding repairability laws across all sectors, (3) creating comprehensive federal policies that empower consumers, (4) fostering fair competition, and (5) supporting a more resilient and sustainable repair ecosystem. Below, we provide a detailed explanation of each of these essential measures. As you develop Right to Repair legislation, we demand you ensure that these laws prioritize repairability, durability, and consumer rights for all Canadians.

### 1. End planned obsolescence

One of the key issues that must be regulated is growing planned obsolescence. Current manufacturer practices often force consumers to purchase expensive new devices instead of repairing functional ones. This trend not only affects consumer wallets but also burdens future generations with an escalating environmental crisis.

Manufacturers are denying consumers real ownership of our devices, and further strip us of our rights and prevent us from fully exercising ownership over our purchase devices through restrictive warranties and product design. This practice has been shifting our economy from durable, single-purchase products to a growing number of infinitely renewable services that require constant renewal of subscriptions or licenses—and can be canceled or altered by companies at any time. This shift is degrading our rights and autonomy as consumers, and tilting our economy towards churning out products that are soon to be e-waste.

We urge you to **mandate minimum durability and repairability standards**, starting with home appliances and consumer electronics, and further expanding to other sectors. This will build our effective ownership of our devices by giving us real options on how to extend their life and functionality.

The crucial role of **dropping impediments to interoperability** should also be made more explicit in Canadian competition law, with the Competition Bureau empowered to investigate violations and complaints. We also demand you to establish back these standards with a **clear labeling system**, similar to the repairability scoring system in France and adopted by the European Union.<sup>3</sup> This system would incentivize companies to compete constructively in a “race to the top” on environmental and consumer standards, competing for higher repairability and durability ratings within a transparent, consumer-facing scoring framework.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/product-bureau/product-groups/447/home>

These proposals are mutually reinforcing. A minimum “floor” set by standards would improve some products, while helping consumers distinguish which products are exceeding these standards not only gives consumers the transparency we deserve and helps consumers to make informed decisions, but applies competitive pressure to innovate on producing better repair and durability performance.

By promoting open standards and discouraging proprietary designs that restrict compatibility, the government can empower Canadian consumers, businesses, and innovators to enhance existing products that reduce the need for frequent replacements and foster a more sustainable approach to technology.

## **2. Promote full device and data ownership**

Canadians have a rightful expectation of being able to use, upgrade, repair, lend, and resell our devices for their full, natural lifespan. Yet, Many tech companies today, offering a reusable physical product is seen as an inconvenient necessity. They actively undermine this fair relationship by diminishing product’s functionality with mandatory subscription services as the core of their business. These services not only collect and exploit our personal information for resale on the data broker market but also give companies the power to arbitrarily raise prices or reduce device functionality. To help correct this unfair and asymmetrical relationship, we urge you to **establish strong standards for data collection, processing, sharing, and monetization**. This will ensure all products are not only private by design, but promote consumers’ data ownership.

As devices become more digital and interconnected, the role of software in repairability is more crucial than ever. We ask that you mandate manufacturers to **provide a guaranteed support window**, including access to diagnostic software, firmware updates, and all necessary tools, parts, and information for repairs. Additionally, the ownership and control of data generated by devices, such as repair histories or diagnostic information, must be addressed to empower both consumers and independent repairers. This is crucial to ensuring that our devices remain safe, secure, and fully functional for the long term.

While comprehensive Right to Repair legislation is crucial to protect consumers, **modernizing existing laws** is just as important to keep pace with evolving consumer needs and rapid technological advancements. Privacy, data ownership, and device ownership are increasingly interlinked, making data ownership a crucial pillar of device ownership in the digital age.

Today, many digital devices and home appliances, such as smart refrigerators and robot vacuum cleaners, collect vast amounts of data every time we use them. While data privacy concerns for these appliances may seem minor and underestimated, the stakes are much higher for essential products like automobiles, which have undergone significant digital transformation, especially with electric vehicles gaining popularity in recent years. To truly protect consumers and ensure they have full control over their devices, **we need updated privacy laws and regulations that address these new realities**.

The impact on consumers of weak repair and data protection laws does not stop with digital devices we personally use, but also involves commercial and industrial equipment, such as farming machinery and medical devices. These products are deeply integral to essential services that significantly impact many aspects of our daily lives, including food security, medical care delivery, public safety, and public education. Therefore, **repairability laws must extend beyond home appliances and consumer electronics to include commercial and industrial equipment**

### **3. Implement Holistic and Collaborative Solutions**

An effective right to repair the economy won't happen overnight. To truly defend and promote consumers' full device ownership over the products we purchase, the government must approach this issue broadly and holistically. Canadian consumers need federal policies that ensure that repairability, durability and interoperability become not just a right but a standard practice embedded in our economy and society.

A natural temptation would be to engage ordinary Canadians briefly when considering the reasons for entrenching the right to repair, but focus on industry feedback during the lengthy implementation process. We encourage our government to find ways of maintaining an ongoing dialogue with consumers to ensure repairability standards meet their evolving needs, alongside necessary consultation with industry stakeholders. Too many well-intentioned initiatives are doomed by a failure to understand how consumers will respond to them. Keeping consumers in the consultation loop will prevent this type of failure.

Given the global nature of the electronics and appliance markets and Canada's important but small role within them, it's crucial that any federal policy on repairability and durability is **harmonized with international standards**, particularly those set by the European Union. Aligning Canada's policies with global best practices will not only facilitate cross-border trade but also ensure that products entering our market meet the highest standards of repairability and sustainability. By taking this approach, Canada can both lead and learn from international norms, ensuring that its policies are effective and forward-thinking in building a more sustainable and consumer-empowered future within a global context.

#### **4. Empower consumers and support repair industry**

Wherever possible, governments should **invest in public awareness campaigns and educational tools** that inform consumers about the importance of repairability, interoperability, while teaching them how to choose products designed for longevity. Governments should also develop curricula, provide resources and create materials to educate consumers how to better handle and protect their data to ensure consumers have the capacity to exercise device ownership fully. Without these initiatives, the public will remain unaware of the environmental and economic benefits of repairing and controlling their devices, and continue to be influenced by companies' marketing strategies that promote product replacement.

Lastly, repair rights will need to be backed by a vibrant repair industry. While this should be driven first and foremost by the private sector, the government can create a favourable environment for and supplement its activities, such as by assisting with startup costs for small businesses and community repair initiatives like repair cafés and tool libraries. This support could include funding for training programs, grants, and certification assistance, especially in communities where affordable, accessible repair services may not naturally emerge. This can play an important 'priming the pump' function, ensuring that all stakeholders—manufacturers, repairers, and consumers—are actively engaged and empowered to foster a more sustainable, equitable, and resilient repair ecosystem.

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## **APPENDIX B: Petition text and signatures**

**Take Back Control of Your Own Device!**

**Speak up for your right to repair!**

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September 26, 2024







**APPENDIX B: Petition text and signatures. OpenMedia and 8,618  
community members demand action to establish durable ownership and  
repair rights for Canadian consumers.**

To: Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED)

Companies in Canada must respect my full ownership of the devices I purchase. This means I should have control over who repairs my devices, what other products they are compatible with, and expect reasonable durability without being forced to buy new devices constantly.

Manufacturers should be required to provide necessary support for maintaining my devices for a mandated multi-year period after purchase, including access to manuals, repair parts, and software security updates.

Consumers should not be the victim of planned obsolescence, because it is our right to have affordable repair options to keep our devices functioning in our everyday lives. We can no longer tolerate this monopolistic practice that also contributes to a massive e-waste problem. I urge you to take action now to entrench durable ownership and repair rights for Canadian consumers.

Sincerely,

8,618 undersigned

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[Pages redacted to preserve the privacy of OpenMedia community members]