



To: The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

To: The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne
Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

To: Matthew Boswell
Commissioner of Competition
Competition Bureau, Place du Portage I
50 Victoria Street, Room C-114
Gatineau, QC K1A 0C9

May 7, 2021

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau, Minister Champagne, and Commissioner Boswell:

I am writing to you on behalf of OpenMedia, a community-driven organization that works to keep the Internet open, affordable, and surveillance-free. We operate as a civic engagement platform to educate, engage, and empower Internet users to advance digital rights around the world.

OpenMedia and other civil society organizations in Canada are incredibly concerned about Rogers Communications' proposed acquisition of Shaw Communications. If this deal is permitted to go through, it has the potential to eliminate choice and affordability in Canada's cell phone market entirely. In response to this serious threat, this group has penned a joint letter urging this government to step in and block Rogers from buying Shaw.

The letter can be found below in full. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

[Original Signed]

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Subject: CIVIL SOCIETY JOINT STATEMENT: Block Rogers from buying Shaw, commit to transforming the state of telecommunications affordability in Canada

To: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau,
To: Minister François-Philippe Champagne,
To: Commissioner Matthew Boswell,

As concerned civil society organizations in Canada, we are writing to urge our federal government to step in and block Rogers Communications' proposed acquisition of Shaw Communications. On March 15, 2021, Rogers announced its plans to buy competitor Shaw, including Shaw's mobile subsidiary Freedom Mobile, in a deal estimated to be worth close to \$26 billion. This buyout threatens to further slash consumer choice and affordability in Canada's already-dysfunctional telecom market, at a time when affordable connectivity has never been more important. It cannot be allowed to go through under any circumstances.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, reliable and affordable connectivity has become absolutely essential for almost every aspect of life. Yet people in Canada continue to pay some of the highest prices in the world for both wired Internet and wireless services. Too many in our country already can't pay for the service they need, or are forced to cut back on other essential services to pay their bill. At the root of the problem is Big Telecom's domination of our telecom markets; in an oligopolistic, insufficiently competitive market, many consumers lack meaningful choice of providers, which keeps prices artificially high. The Rogers-Shaw buyout would be a huge step in the wrong direction, especially in Western Canada.



We've already seen the fruits of a large Internet provider buying out a smaller competitor: more profits for the remaining providers, worse prices and less choice for Canadians. After Bell bought out MTS in Manitoba in 2017, Bell-MTS hiked their rates. Rogers buying Shaw would deal the same kind of damage, on a much larger scale.

Our government has lauded recent modest price declines for Internet and wireless services — while ignoring that Canada's connectivity affordability gap with other countries is as wide as ever. Comparable services in other countries are getting cheaper at a similar or even faster rate. The true marker of progress on connectivity affordability in Canada will be our prices coming down relative to other countries across the globe. The question is — what is our government going to do to finally make that happen?

Blocking this proposed buyout is the easiest and most obvious starting point. We've gathered over 61,000 signatures from our communities calling on our government to block the Rogers-Shaw buyout, and the number continues to climb day by day. The message is clear; we need concrete action to completely transform the status quo, not a deal that will make the current system even worse.

Together, we urge our government: **Block Rogers from buying Shaw, and commit to real action to transform the state of telecommunications affordability in Canada.**

Sincerely,

OpenMedia
ACORN Canada
Democratic Socialists of Canada
Justice Internationale
Leadnow
North99
The Fees Are Too Damn High Party