

Federal rural funding increased in fall update

By Sarah Sobanski

The federal government is investing an additional \$2 billion in rural infrastructure.

Minister of Finance Bill Morneau announced the update to Ontario's fall budget earlier this month. It adds to the \$500 million already promised for rural broadband Internet in the spring budget. Rural broadband is a popular subject with many broadband companies. Consumers who live in those areas are always looking to compare broadband and tv deals as they want a service that can give them both. For this reason, many companies are trying to offer the best deals for them. You can read more about the rural broadband connection effort [here](#).

"In the Spring 2016 Budget, our rural caucus lobbied to secure a much-needed \$500 million investment in rural broadband Internet, which will help us to compete in this highly technical and increasingly globalized market," said Hastings-Lennox and Addington MP Mike Bossio. "The \$2 billion in additional funding for infrastructure in rural and remote communities that was announced in the fall fiscal update is further proof that our government is taking its commitment to rural communities very seriously."

He added, "I've already got a request in with the minister for a meeting to discuss a little more detail into what this means and what kind of infrastructure investments or applications can be put forward."

Bossio said that the rural caucus has focused on digital infrastructure, building infrastructure and economic development resources for small communities.

"A lot of the time most MPs are urban, most ministers are urban, most of the staff is urban. It's very easy to look at everything through an urban lens and then apply that to rural just by shrinking down what they do on the urban side and apply it for the rural side," said Bossio. "They don't come in with a genuine understanding of the unique challenges of rural, but we've been quite effective at communicating what those challenges are."

The government is planning to invest \$180 billion in infrastructure over 12 years. Infrastructure for rural and northern communities is a top priority in the infrastructure budget. It is also focusing on public transit, green and social infrastructure, and transportation infrastructure that supports trade.

Bossio said he would rally for rural needs such as improvements to water and waste systems and roads.

"I heard time and again...in our riding about how challenging it is for our small communities to compete with large communities for funding," said Bossio. "I will continue to work hard to level the playing field."