

OTTAWA, Oct. 16, 2013 /CNW/ - The Canadian Cable Systems Alliance (CCSA) congratulates the federal government on its commitment in today's Speech from the Throne to choice and competition for rural Canadian telecom, internet and broadcasting consumers.

A traditionally underserved market, Canadians who live outside major cities often lack the choice of communications service alternatives that are available in the largest urban centres. That is due to lack of access to communications connectivity at fair prices and the unwillingness of the major companies to negotiate fair contracts with local television distributors for use of their channels.

"As things stand, it isn't fair to Canadians who don't live in major urban areas. As available television and other communications options explode in the digital environment, the urban/rural divide is growing, not shrinking," said Alyson Townsend, CCSA President. "Our members are the small and medium-sized cable and telephone businesses who work in, live in and contribute to the communities they serve. They provide vital communications services to Canadians in high-cost serving areas; communities and regions that the major companies do not serve well. Those smaller, locally-based companies are a critical part of Canada's communications system. We are delighted that the federal government is committed to the principle that all Canadians should have fair and equal access to these services."

In a recent interview on Global TV's "West Block", Industry Minister James Moore noted that the current Government has led the way in making specific proposals to give "consumers more choice in the television and wireless marketplace" and explained that, "we want to move to a pick and pay system because we don't think Canadians should be forced to buy things that they're not interested in consuming." CCSA and its members have consistently supported increased flexibility and choice for TV viewers and welcome the Government's commitment to these principles.

"We look forward to working with the government as it develops policies and a regulatory climate that will increase the ability of small and medium sized cable, internet and telecom providers to provide better choice and more competitive rates to their customers, no matter

where they live," added Townsend.

About CCSA

CCSA represents more than 115 independent and highly resourceful cable, telco and IPTV companies that serve over 700,000 Canadians in communities in all provinces and territories, including many isolated communities across the North. CCSA membership includes television distribution companies operated by many small, family-owned companies, a large number of First Nations and more than 20 not-for-profit community cooperatives.

SOURCE Canadian Cable Systems Alliance Inc.