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**TOPICS REGIONS** 

OPINION

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**WEEKLY EDITION** 

NEWS TAISSUMANI

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**BUSINESS** 6 NOVEMBER 2020 – 3:00 PM EST

## Due to funding woes, Nunavut internet provider faces "serious risk"

"Without immediate support we will be forced to take truly unwanted actions"



This radome at SSi Canada's offices in Kanata, Ont., encloses one of the satellite dishes the company uses to run its Qiniq and SSi Mobile networks. (File photo)



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#### By <u>Jim Bell</u>

SSi Canada, owner and operator of the Qiniq and SSi Mobile networks in Nunavut, said this week that because their last batch of federal subsidy money ran out in July, they'll have to impose big price increases.

At the same time, SSi said that it has yet to get a response from the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commision to <u>a funding application they submitted in November 2019, in partnership with the Qikiqtaaluk Corp.</u>

"With 67 per cent of Nunavut households outside of Iqaluit connected via Qiniq, the situation has become urgent," SSi said in a news release.

That CRTC's broadband fund makes \$750 million available over five years to improve services in rural and remote regions. SSi says the funding they've applied for would extend and increase Qiniq's service levels for another four years.

But without that subsidy, Qiniq will have to raise prices to survive.

"We won't mince words; without a rapid response from those in charge, the price you currently pay for internet access will increase dramatically," the company said in a notice to all customers issued earlier this week.

So SSi is asking its customers to send an urgent letter of support to three politicians: Navdeep Bains, the minister of innovation, science and economic development; Maryam Monsef, the minister of rural economic development; and Nunavut Premier Joe Savikataaq.

To help customers do that, they've provided <u>a sample</u> draft letter on their website.









"Together, our voices will help ensure that the federal departments with the power to resolve this issue realize just how critically urgent it is," their message to customers said.

Through Qiniq, SSi has offered satellite-based wireless internet access in every Nunavut community since 2005.

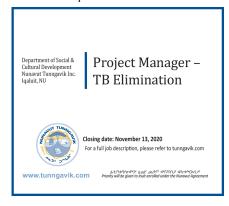
And after investing \$75 million of its own money over three years, the company started <u>the SSi Mobile</u> <u>smartphone service in 2018</u>.

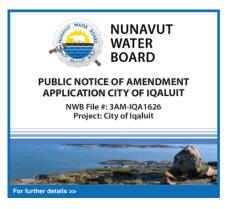
"We are truly sorry to share such terrible news, but we are out of time. We continue to work aggressively to find solutions for the thousands of households dependent on Qiniq service, but without immediate support we will be forced to take truly unwanted actions," Jeff Philipp, SSi's CEO, is quoted as saying in the news release.



Nunavut Senator Dennis Patterson recently <u>raised the</u> <u>issue in the Senate</u>.

"The lack of new funding assistance means that thousands of households are at imminent risk of losing









the internet or having to pay huge amounts," Patterson said on Oct. 28.

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#### Posted by Observation on 6 November, 2020

Why would anyone go with Qiniq if they live in a community with Northwestel? For instance here in Cambridge Bay the performance is not remotely close nor is the pricing. I mean 399 + modem purchase for 55GB of data at miserable speeds?

Yes you have to buy home phone with Nwtel but its still only \$175 for 150GB at nearly triple the speed. I have had both and run them side by side with both new and old Qiniq routers, the same speed test and comparing browsing or buffering speeds, it isn't close.

Businesses and residence are just handicapping themselves using Qiniq. I personally have had almost no downtime.

Ontop of the above. Bell's cellphone 4G unlimited data plan is only 75 dollars a month with unlimited nationwide calling. This gets you 20gb of data at fast rates and any data beyond that at 512kbs. Why on earth would you pay for a 20GB Qiniq service while you can get better speeds wrapped into your sell phone plan / shared plan with family.

The Qiniq service in many Nunavut areas just does not make sense from a consumer standpoint anymore. Businesses that cant compete die, simple as that.

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# PUBLIC NOTICE OF AMENDMENT APPLICATION CITY OF IQALUIT - Nunavut Water Board

NWB File #: 3AM-IQA1626

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Inuit Uqausinginnik Taiguusiliuqtiit (Inuit Uauhiinnik Hivulliqtuijit)

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David Aglukark Sr.

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## REQUEST FOR TENDERS/PROPOSALS - GN Community and Government Services

Go to Nunavuttenders.ca to download new procurement opportunities.

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