



8 July 2015

Mr. Michael Martin, Deputy Minister
Environment Canada
10 Wellington Street
Les Terrasses de la Chaudière, 27th Floor
Gatineau, QC
K1A 0H3

Michael.Martin@ec.gc.ca

Information Request: IR0205 – clarification of requested information

Dear Mr. Martin:

Thank you for your correspondence of June 30, 2015 in relation to our request under s 79.3 of the *Parliament of Canada Act* for the certain financial and economic data related to the implementation of the Deficit Reduction Action Plan.

Unfortunately, your response does not provide the data we requested, which are as follow:

- Environment Canada's Deficit Reduction Action Plan Implementation Status Updates
- Environment Canada's Status Reports for the Treasury Board Secretariat on the Implementation of Budget Savings Measures.

Please find attached examples of those reports.

Your [Report on Plans and Priorities 2015-16](#) does not include any information on the implementation of deficit reduction measures. Your [Quarterly Financial Report](#) only includes the following:

Budget 2012 Implementation

Environment Canada will achieve Budget 2012 savings of \$53.8M in fiscal year 2014-2015 by streamlining departmental operations through better management and by working with partners as well as by eliminating or reducing programs that do not contribute directly to the Department's core mandate.

Examples of Environment Canada's administrative efficiencies to achieve these savings include:

- Domestic travel between major cities has been reduced and replaced, when possible, using communications technology such as videoconferencing, telepresence and webinars;
- The overall size of Environment Canada's vehicle fleet has been reduced with better management of vehicles through their whole life-cycle; and
- The use of professional services has been reduced.

Examples of reductions to non-core activities in 2014-2015 include:

- Reducing involvement in promoting and compiling information about water use as provincial and municipal governments are responsible for water treatment and use; and,
- Similarly, duplication in the area of wastewater research will be eliminated where other levels of government and the academic sector have demonstrated capacity.

In the first year of implementation, the Department achieved savings of \$13.3M. Savings of \$31.5M were achieved in 2013-2014, and \$53.8M for 2014-2015 and ongoing are expected.

There was no incremental funding provided to Environment Canada to complete the work related to the implementation of its Budget 2012 savings measures.

There are no significant financial risks or uncertainties related to the implementation of Environment Canada's Budget 2012 savings measures. The Department has developed detailed roll-out plans for each of its savings measures and progress against these plans is monitored by departmental senior management on a quarterly basis.

The Parliamentary Budget Office needs access to more detailed and comprehensive data than is provided by your Quarterly Financial Reports in order to provide meaningful independent analysis of the sustainability and service level impacts of spending restraint. This falls under our mandate to provide independent analysis to Parliament of the estimates, including the Budget. Those reports provide financial data about the anticipated cost savings as a result of various savings measures and a collection of qualitative and quantitative economic data about the progress of the implementation of those measures.

As you are aware, Parliament is responsible for approving all government spending. The Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) was created to provide independent analysis to Parliament about the spending it is being asked to approve. In carrying out that mandate, I often require access to information held by government departments.

When a department refuses to provide me with the information required for the performance of my mandate, I have been directed to report the matter to the appropriate Parliamentary Committee and ask them to use their power to send for papers and records to compel the department to produce the required information. Specifically, on March 26, 2015, the Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament passed the following motion:

[I]n the event the Parliamentary Budget Officer is unable to obtain documents or records with the information required to act on the duty to provide advice to Parliament, the Parliamentary

Budget Officer may write to the chairs of the Committees outlined in section 79.2 of the [Parliament of Canada Act], and ask them to use their considerable powers to send for papers and records.

Environment Canada has already been found by the Information Commissioner of Canada to have breached its legal obligation by failing to assist us as required under the *Access to Information Act* in relation to a similar request under that Act (A-2013-00850CL3). Unless you provide the requested data by July 30, 2015, the PBO will be reporting your refusal to the appropriate Parliamentary Committees and requesting that they compel the production of those reports.

Your response letter will be posted on the PBO website and, therefore, it should not be marked "confidential". Any confidential information should be attached separately and clearly marked as such.

Should you or your staff have any questions about this information request, the analyst responsible, Peter Weltman can be contacted directly at Tolga.Yalkin@parl.gc.ca, 613-797-5698.

I want to thank you for your assistance in this matter. Providing timely and effective analysis to the Senate and House of Commons is the PBO's primary objective. The degree to which this is possible depends, to a large extent, on free and timely access to quality information held by government departments. In doing so, you are assisting us in better serving the Senate, the House of Commons, and their members.

Yours sincerely,



Jean-Denis Fréchette
Parliamentary Budget Officer

c.c.: Mr. Douglas Nevison, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet,
Privy Council Office, Liaison Secretariat for Macroeconomic Policy

Enclosed: Environment Canada's Deficit Reduction Action Plan Implementation Status Update
Environment Canada's Status Report for the Treasury Board Secretariat on the
Implementation of Budget Savings Measures.