



2 March 2018

The Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister
Finance Canada
90 Elgin Street
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Ottawa, ON
K1A 0G5

bill.morneau@canada.ca

Information Request: IR0355

Dear Minister Morneau:

As you are likely aware, the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) provides independent and non-partisan analysis to the Senate and to the House of Commons about matters related to the nation's finances and the economy, the estimates, certain other documents government documents and the cost of proposals. In carrying out my mandate, I often require information held by government departments and Crown corporations and I am entitled to free and timely access – subject to limited exceptions – to such information under section 79.4 of the *Parliament of Canada Act*.

I am currently undertaking an analysis pursuant to paragraph 79.2(1)(a) of the *Parliament of Canada Act*, which mandates the PBO to prepare reports analyzing the following federal government documents: (i) a budget tabled by or on behalf of the Minister of Finance; (ii) an economic and fiscal update or statement issued by the Minister of Finance; (iii) a fiscal sustainability report issued by the Minister of Finance; (iv) the estimates of the government for a fiscal year.

For this analysis, we would like the following supplementary information for Budget 2018:

1. Details of the underlying factors contributing to recent economic and fiscal developments in direct program spending (excluding new measures), as shown in Table A2.3 (p. 312). Where possible, please categorize the changes between the Fall Economic Statement 2017 and Budget 2018 consistent with the presentation of Public Accounts Volume 2, Section 1, Table 3a.
2. Budget 2018 referenced the more than \$180 billion in infrastructure spending committed

2. Budget 2018 referenced the more than \$180 billion in infrastructure spending committed over 12 years (p. 349). Fall Economic Statement 2016 set out the infrastructure fiscal framework in Table 2.1 (p. 30) and Budget 2018 tables A2.17 and A2.18 reconcile data for Budgets 2016 and 2017. Budget 2018 table A2.16 accounts for only \$21.2 billion of the \$91.1 billion of “existing infrastructure programs” funding (FES2016, Table 2.1). Can you provide updated data on the allocation of legacy infrastructure programs for the entire \$91.1 billion envelope?

3. Data and methodologies for the 2017-18 to 2022-23 fiscal estimates for:
- Artificial Losses Using Equity-Based Financial Arrangements
 - Stop-Loss Rule on Share Repurchase Transactions

Based on the nature of this request and the analysis I am undertaking, I believe a reasonable deadline would be **12 March 2018**. A response must be provided by you, by the appropriate deputy minister or designate, or by the person occupying a similar position if access to the requested information cannot be granted by that date.

Should you or your staff have any questions about this information request, the analyst responsible, Trevor Shaw can be contacted directly at trevor.shaw@parl.gc.ca, 613-698-6568.

Attached is a reply form. It too should be filled out and returned by 12 March 2018, whether or not you provide access to the requested information. Should you refuse to provide access to the requested information, the appropriate deputy minister or the person occupying a similar position must provide a written justification for the refusal as required under section 79.41 of the *Parliament of Canada Act*.

The response letter will be posted on the PBO website and, therefore, it should not be marked “confidential”. As well, the requested information should be attached separately. If this information is confidential, please clearly mark it as such, either on the electronic spreadsheet or the hard copy version.

I want to thank you for your assistance in this matter. Providing timely and effective analysis to the Senate and House of Commons for the purposes of raising the quality of parliamentary debate and promoting greater budget transparency and accountability 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.: Katharine Rechico, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet,
Privy Council Office, Liaison Secretariat for Macroeconomic Policy
Paul Rochon, Deputy Minister, Finance Canada

Attachment: Reply form for IR0355