



OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER  
BUREAU DU DIRECTEUR PARLEMENTAIRE DU BUDGET

November 13, 2020

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland  
Minister of Finance  
90 Elgin Street, 17th Floor  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G5

Chrystia.Freeland@canada.ca

Information Request: IR0550

Dear Minister Freeland:

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 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, I am requesting data regarding existing and future measures that have been taken in response to COVID-19. Specifically, for each measure announced, as well as any future measures, I am seeking data on the number of individuals/organizations benefiting from the measure, where applicable and the associated dollar amounts. If any measures include transfer payments, I am also requesting additional details on the use of funds.

I am seeking this data for the following measures:

- Safe Restart Agreement
  - Amounts transferred to provinces and territories
  - Details on the use of transferred funds
- Support for a Safe Return to School
  - Amounts transferred to provinces and territories to date
  - Details on the use of transferred funds
- Supporting Jobs and Safe Operations of Junior Mining Companies
  - The number of beneficiaries for this measure and the associated dollar amounts

- Temporary wage top-up for low-income essential workers
  - Amounts transferred to provinces and territories
  - Details on the use of transferred funds

We were also informed by the Privy Council Office that they will be transferring fund to your department as part of the COVID-19 Communications and Marketing campaign. Could you please provide data on the dollar amounts used to date?

Ideally, I would like this data to be provided on bi-weekly basis. However, if this is not feasible, please provide as frequently as possible.

In order to provide the analysis to parliamentarians in a timely manner, I ask the information to be provided to my office no later than **November 27, 2020**. If access to the requested information cannot be granted by that date, a response must be provided by you or your deputy minister as soon as possible.

Should you or your staff have any questions about this information request, the analyst responsible, Jill Giswold can be contacted directly at [Jill.Giswold@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Jill.Giswold@parl.gc.ca), 613-297-3856.

Attached is a reply form. It too should be filled out and returned by November 27, 2020, whether or not you provide access to the requested information. Should you refuse to provide access to the requested information, you or your deputy minister 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.

Providing timely and effective analysis to the Senate and House of Commons and promoting greater budget transparency and accountability are the PBO's primary objectives. 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,



Yves Giroux  
Parliamentary Budget Officer

c.c.: Antoine Brunelle-Côté, Privy Council Office, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet,  
Liaison Secretariat for Macroeconomic Policy  
Paul Rochon, Deputy Minister, Finance Canada

Attachment: Reply form for IR0550