



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

28 January 2020

The Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister  
Finance Canada  
90 Elgin Street  
17th Floor  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0G5

[bill.morneau@canada.gc.ca](mailto:bill.morneau@canada.gc.ca)

Information Request: IR0447

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)(b) of the *Parliament of Canada Act*, which mandates the PBO to prepare reports on matters of particular significance relating to the nation's finances or economy that are listed in an annual work plan.

For this analysis, I am requesting the following information:

- Costs, projections of these costs, analysis and associated financial models in relation to VIA Rail's High Frequency Rail (HFR) project proposal that the Department has commissioned or analysed;
- Revenues, projections related to revenues, analysis and associated financial models relating to the operation of the VIA Rail's (HFR) Rail;
- Communications (including memos, briefs, emails and other forms of communication) in relation to the financial, economic or fiscal considerations of VIA Rail's HFR proposal;
- Risks, related costs and related financial models, associated with the construction and operation of VIA Rail's HFR proposal;
- The report commissioned by the Department of Finance for Ernst and Young to conduct a value-for-money analysis, and any associated analysis, financial models and communications thereof;

- The report commissioned by the Department of Finance for WSP to estimate the capital cost of the HFR proposal, and any associated analysis, financial models and communications thereof;
- Financial valuations and associated models conducted prior to and during considerations relating to VIA Rail's HFR proposal;
- Information pertaining to Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA +) and any analysis conducted thereof as it relates to VIA Rail's HFR proposal.

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 **17 February 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, Étienne Bergeron can be contacted directly at [Etienne.Bergeron@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Etienne.Bergeron@parl.gc.ca) 613-292-7472.

Attached is a reply form. It too should be filled out and returned by 17 February 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 IR0447