



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

July 27, 2020

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

bill.morneau@canada.ca

Information Request: IR0508

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 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 the following information:

- 1) Of the total estimated Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) gross costs for 2019-20 and 2020-21, please specify the following:
 - a) How much in each year will be booked as an expense within the Employment Insurance (EI) Operating Account? How much will be booked as expenses outside the EI Operating Account;
 - b) What criteria will determine the categorization of CERB expenses;
 - c) Please share any CERB program data to help us model this categorization.
- 2) If a premium rate increase is required to balance the EI Operating Account within 7-years, will the rate be increased starting in 2021?
- 3) Will EI-eligible CERB expenses be reflected in the Chief Actuary's EI report this August? If the expenses will be included in the report, which policy parameters will be used?

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 **August 10, 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, Trevor Shaw can be contacted directly at Trevor.Shaw@parl.gc.ca, 613-617-5709.

Attached is a reply form. It too should be filled out and returned by August 10, 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 IR0508