



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

August 12, 2020

The Honourable Mélanie Joly
Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages
235 Queen Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H5

ED.minister-ministre.DE@canada.ca

Information Request: IR0520

Dear Minister Joly:

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)(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 data regarding existing and future measures taken by your organization in response to COVID-19. Specifically, for each measure announced, as well as any future measures, I am seeking data on how this measure is being used (e.g. how many individuals/organizations are using the measure) and the associated dollar amounts. If any measures include transfer payments, I am also requesting additional details on the use of funds.

For example,

- Over \$11 million to support innovation in Ontario for a stronger economy
 - The dollar amounts transferred to the recipient tech firms.
 - Details on the use of transferred funds.

Ideally, I would like this data to be provided on 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 **August 26, 2020**. If access to the requested information cannot be granted by that date, a response must be provided by you or your President 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, 613-297-3856.

Attached is a reply form. It too should be filled out and returned by August 26, 2020, whether or not you provide access to the requested information. Should you refuse to provide access to the requested information, you or your President 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
James Meddings, President, Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario

Attachment: Reply form for IR0520