



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

September 24, 2020

The Honourable Anita Anand
Minister of Public Services and Procurement Canada
11 Laurier Street
Gatineau, QC K1A 0S5

Anita.Anand@canada.ca

Information Request: IR0542

Dear Minister Anand:

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)(f) of the *Parliament of Canada Act*, which mandates the PBO to estimate the financial cost of any proposal that relates to a matter over which Parliament has jurisdiction at the request of a member of the Senate or of the House of Commons.

For this analysis, I am requesting a breakdown of all incremental costs incurred to date by the Translation Bureau because of interpretation services to Parliament in the context of the pandemic where some members are participating virtually. These costs should include, but are not limited to:

- Costs of the staffing process, compensation of additional interpreters hired, or any other cost related to the increased number of interpreters available during remote parliamentary meetings and the shortened duration of interpreters' virtual assignments to ensure that they have time to rest;
- Cost of the research project aimed at addressing the mental workload and fatigue that interpreters are experiencing during remote interpretation;
- Cost of any audio device purchased to improve sound quality, or any other cost related to providing remote interpretation during the pandemic.

Please also provide any forecast of these costs that you might have prepared for the coming weeks/months/quarters. If calculated costs are unavailable, please include the number of additional interpreters hired, their average compensation, and the number of monthly hours of overtime.

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 **October 9, 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.

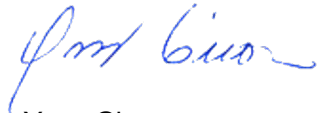
Should you or your staff have any questions about this information request, the analyst responsible, Govindadeva Bernier can be contacted directly at Govindadeva.Bernier@parl.gc.ca, 613-769-4988.

Attached is a reply form. It too should be filled out and returned by October 9, 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
Bill Matthews, Deputy Minister, Public Services and Procurement Canada

Attachment: Reply form for IR0542