

From: Michael Dagg

Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 11:26 AM

To: ~Government Operations and Estimates/Opérations gouvernementales et des prévisions budgétaires <OGGO@parl.gc.ca>

Subject: RE: Response

[Additional response for Ms. Vignola.](#)

Ms. Vignola, you asked me to suggest a solution for the delays in processing access to information requests during the COVID-19 pandemic. My suggestion is something that could be useful to your committee both in the context of COVID-19 and for issues with delays in general.

The problem is that there are no consequences for departments that ignore the *Access to Information Act* and its prescribed time limits. This was an issue before COVID-19, and it continues to be an issue to this day. The only way to address the problem is to ensure that a department faces immediate consequences if it fails to provide access within the time limit specified in the Act.

If a House of Commons committee were to hold monthly hearings to which deputy ministers were automatically invited and asked to provide an explanation for late responses to access to information requests, I am sure there would be an immediate reduction in the usual processing times that we have been seeing for many years and that have been exacerbated by COVID-19.

The real possibility of being required to publicly explain the reasons for prolonged delays would help prevent the delays that are currently common and apparently tolerated.

Michael Dagg.