



2017 PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS

Submission to the Standing Committee on Finance

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August 2016

Executive Summary

Climate-related natural disasters such as floods, ice storms, wildfires and droughts are increasing in Canada and costing billions to the Canadian economy.ⁱ Recent events, such as the 2013 Alberta Floods show how expensive disaster relief can be, with estimates at five billion dollars for that event alone. Emergencies continue to result in a devastating loss of homes, livelihoods and resources for Canadian families – with lower income families disproportionately affected. It is our obligation to be ready to respond to disasters swiftly and effectively to ensure that affected Canadians can return to their daily lives as quickly as possible.

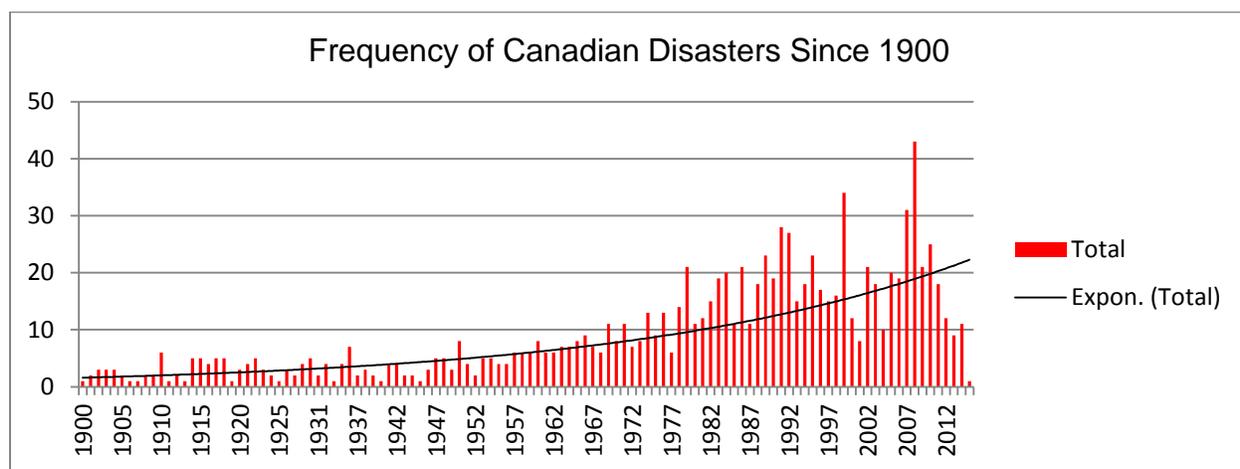
The Government of Canada and the Canadian Red Cross share an appreciation of the evolution of the domestic disaster risk landscape and the need to adopt new and innovative approaches for disaster response. The recent Alberta Fires operation illustrates the success of innovation through Red Cross registration and electronic cash transfers of over \$47.6 million in direct financial assistance to more than 38,000 registered households in under one month. Data collected from online registration was used for comprehensive mapping, needs assessments and on-going beneficiary communications through phone, e-mail and text messaging. Registration is just one area where the Red Cross is leveraging our expertise, relationships with governments, and partnerships with corporate Canada to provide innovative solutions to complex emergency operations.

In light of our joint interest in emergency management, the growing toll of disasters on Canadian families, and knowledge of the current gaps in preparedness and capacity, the Red Cross proposes a strategic partnership with the Federal Government. This partnership will advance Canada's capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies through a \$70 million investment in the areas of community preparedness, improved coordination, catastrophic planning and disaster response. Over the next five years, our collaboration will result in Canadians being better able to help their families and neighbours in the event of an emergency.

Emergency Preparedness: The Time to Invest is now

Disasters are on the Rise:

Canadians are experiencing a rise in both the frequency and severity of disasters. Climate change is causing unpredictable and significant shifts in weather patterns and increasing threats such as terrorism are making it harder to accurately predict risks and reduce vulnerability.



The Costs of Emergencies Continue to Climb:

Concurrently, the costliness of disasters has also steadily increased with no foreseeable decline.ⁱⁱ

Year Range	Total Disasters	Total Federal Disaster Assistance Costs
1975-1984	139 disasters ⁱⁱⁱ	\$465 million (2014 adjusted dollars) ^{iv}
2005-2014	214 disasters ^v	\$4,096 million ^{vi}
Predicted Emergency	Single Catastrophic Event Vancouver Earthquake Ottawa/Québec City Earthquake	\$75 Billion \$65 Billion

Incomplete Catastrophic Preparedness:

Despite these large numbers, the most concerning possibility is that of a catastrophic event similar to the 2011 Japanese earthquake and tsunami. Recent studies indicate that there is 30% chance that a strong earthquake will hit the southwestern coast of British Columbia within the next fifty years, with a 15% chance of a similar event impacting Québec City, Montréal and Ottawa over the same period.^{vii}

In addition to the rising cost of natural disasters, there is a deficit in our collective capacity to prepare for, and respond to, major events. Large events such as 2016 Alberta Fires and consecutive emergencies such as the 2013 Alberta Floods and Lac-Mégantic disasters have re-enforced the need to build our capacity to reach the increasing number of Canadian families affected by emergencies each year.

Gaps in Personal Preparedness:

We have also noticed a concerning gap in the level of personal preparedness amongst Canadian families. In 2012 we commissioned a study with over 40% of Canadians indicating that they had personal experience with disasters.^{viii} Yet despite the high proportion of the population with experience with some type of disaster, the 2014 Survey of Emergency Preparedness and Resilience found that 53% of Canadians still do not have an emergency kit in their home.^{ix} As such, there is still a significant amount of work to be done. Indeed, research shows that “every dollar spent reducing people’s vulnerability to disasters saves seven dollars in economic losses.”^x

The trends can be reversed and with foresight and strategic investment the current gaps in preparedness and capacity can be bridged.

Strength of the Red Cross

In 1909 it was decreed by an Act of Parliament that the Canadian Red Cross would serve as an auxiliary to the Government of Canada, augmenting government resources to enable the delivery of humanitarian assistance to all Canadians in need. In this capacity, our teams of local volunteers have been assisting Canadians after emergencies for over a century.

Today the strength of the Red Cross comes from our ability to span all components of an emergency operation, from registering and providing assistance directly to disaster-affected populations, to working behind the scenes to mobilize and coordinate across key community, public, corporate and voluntary-sector partners.

Our Capacity

- On average a domestic emergency response every three hours, assisting 128 Canadians daily
- Service provider for every large domestic disaster since the 1950 Manitoba Red River Flood
- Educated 332,499 Canadians about emergency preparedness in the past five years alone
- Partnership agreements with four federal agencies, eight provinces, over 800 municipalities and the Assembly of First Nations
- Currently working in 200 Indigenous communities coast-to-coast-to-coast

- Network includes almost 5,000 emergency responders and over 2,500 corporate *Ready When the Time Comes* volunteers located across the country,
- A Rapid Deployment Hospital and Field Clinic including 100 bed surgical unit and combined capacity to care for a population of up to 60,000, with an agreement allowing for deployment to BC

How We Work

Community-Based Approach

Red Cross volunteers live in the communities they serve and are present before, during and after a crisis. They often work alongside first responders when disaster strikes and will be there for the long term to help their community recover. Local volunteers know best how to comfort and support the affected people, because they are familiar with their community's culture, resources and pre-existing challenges.

Digital Assistance

The Red Cross has the demonstrated capacity to implement digital assistance programming. Once beneficiaries register (online, by phone or in person), the Red Cross is able to map their location, identify their needs, and target digital and on-the-ground service delivery to meet these needs appropriately, in a timely and efficient manner. The Red Cross is the only organization in the country able to implement these services online while also providing support on the ground in disaster affected communities. Our reach across the country and use of innovative technologies is allowing us to support Canadians in emergencies like never before.

Global Expertise

The Red Cross is a global leader in disaster response. Across the country and around the world our first responder network is comprised of some of the worlds top experts in first aid, health in emergencies, disaster response, shelter, disaster risk reduction, emergency supply logistics and post-emergency violence prevention.

Working Alongside all Levels of Government

In recognition of our Auxiliary to Government status, the Red Cross has unique relationships with all levels of government in the area of emergency management. The organization has service delivery agreements with over 800 municipalities (including Toronto and Montréal), eight provinces and four federal agencies. Red Cross also has emergency stock management agreements with Global Affairs and the Government of Québec.

Supporting Indigenous Communities:

Indigenous communities are disproportionately affected by natural disasters, often due to factors such as remote locations, lack of infrastructure, and/or a reduced capacity to effectively manage disaster preparedness and response due to the magnitude of other social problems they are facing. Natural disasters, many of which are annual occurrences resulting in the evacuation and displacement of entire communities, create additional stress and trauma for these communities and exacerbate existing social problems.

The Red Cross is committed to developing respectful relationships with Indigenous individuals, families and communities, and working collaboratively to build on existing strengths and determine the most appropriate approach. These efforts build on existing Red Cross programs to provide a holistic response to issues affecting community resilience and well-being.

Currently the Red Cross is working in over 200 First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities across Canada, building relationships based on trust, respect, and mutual cooperation to deliver programming, including specialized emergency preparedness material and training to reach Elders, youth and those with health issues.

Engaging the Private Sector

The private sector plays a major role in support of disaster response, but unsolicited offers of support can easily become overwhelming. The Red Cross has pre-existing relationships with many of Canada's largest corporations and is able to systematically coordinate the most efficient distribution of in-kind donations.

Working with the Voluntary Sector

The Canadian Red Cross is Acting Chair of the Voluntary Sector Working Group on Canada's Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. As such we have a strong knowledge of, and relationship with, these organizations, and a robust understanding of the valuable role they can play during an emergency.

Mobilizing Canadian Support

In times of emergency, the Red Cross is consistently the organization of choice for Canadians seeking to turn their care and compassion into help for those who need it most. A 2015 Leger poll found that 86% of Canadians agreed that "the Red Cross helps and assists Canadians efficiently when there is a disaster or an emergency in Canada".^{xi} From volunteering their time to making a financial donation, the Red Cross has a strong capacity to help connect Canadians with opportunities to give back.

Pillars of Our Work

Preparedness: Red Cross volunteers reside in communities across the country, giving them the greatest motivation to learn about local hazards and educate others about personal preparedness. Depending on the requirements of a particular community, the CRC may support through community-based assessments, risk prioritization, emergency planning, exercises and drills.

Emergency Response: Following a disaster in Canada, trained Red Cross workers provide vital assistance for people's basic needs, including all seven Emergency Social Services: registration, family reunification, lodging, clothing, food, personal services and safety and wellbeing support.

Recovery: In the aftermath of a disaster, Red Cross volunteers continue to live in the affected community, working alongside their neighbours to recover from the disaster while also developing the ability to resist and recover from future disasters. Throughout this process the Red Cross provides support to self-recovery services, and works with local families, small businesses, community authorities, organizations and agencies to identify and resolve ongoing unmet needs.

The Partnership Proposal

Despite our strong capacity we recognize the gap between capacity and needs continues to grow, driven by the increasing frequency of domestic disasters. The Red Cross proposes a strategic partnership with the Government of Canada that will significantly advance Canada's emergency management capacity through community-based preparedness, response readiness and improved coordination with the Federal authorities. The expected budget of this partnership would be in the vicinity of \$70 million over the next five years, including substantial resourcing dedicated to building capacity in Indigenous communities.

Proposed activities would include but not be limited to the following:

Disaster Response & Catastrophic Planning:

- Increase the number of trained local responders from 5,000 to 10,000, with a higher concentration in high-risk areas, including 500 Indigenous community-based responders
- Pre-position equipment and stock in high-risk communities
- Improve the sophistication of the Red Cross digital platform to register, locate and communicate with beneficiaries in need
- Strengthened response capacity to reach 500,000 disaster-affected people with help through a combination of digital assistance and mass distribution

- Capacity to shelter up to 25,000 disaster-affected Canadians, including accommodation for people with disabilities and special cultural requirements

Personal & Community Preparedness:

- Development of community preparedness through engagement tools, training, and planning support, including substantial capacity-improvements in Indigenous communities
- Enhancement of personal preparedness capacity including education and other disaster risk reduction initiatives

Improved Coordination:

- Improved coordination with the Federal Government during times of emergency
- Formalized role within the National Emergency Management Framework
- Designated responsibility for the Emergency Social Services during emergencies

Endnotes

ⁱ Stone, Laura. "Natural Disasters, Rising Costs Are Canada's Biggest Public Safety Risk: Documents." *Global News*. Global News, 20 Aug. 2013, <http://globalnews.ca/news/791811/natural-disasters-rising-costs-are-canadas-biggest-public-safety-risk-documents/>. Accessed 5 Aug. 2016.

ⁱⁱ Schreiber, Shane, and Dave Galea. "Emergency Management in Alberta Making Communities More Resilient." Alberta Emergency Management Agency, p. 4, http://www.aema.alberta.ca/documents/B5_Emergency_Management_in_Alberta_Making_Communities_More_Resilient.pdf. Accessed 5 Aug. 2016.

ⁱⁱⁱ Public Safety Canada. *Canadian Disaster Database*. Public Safety Canada, 12 Sept. 2013, <http://cdd.publicsafety.gc.ca/srchpg-eng.aspx?dynamic=false>. Accessed 5 Aug. 2016.

^{iv} Story, Rod. *Estimate of the Average Annual Cost for Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements due to Weather Events*. Ottawa: Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 2016, p. 19, http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/web/default/files/Documents/Reports/2016/DFAA/DFAA_EN.pdf. Accessed 5 Aug. 2016.

^v Public Safety Canada. *Canadian Disaster Database*. Public Safety Canada, 12 Sept. 2013, <http://cdd.publicsafety.gc.ca/srchpg-eng.aspx?dynamic=false>. Accessed 5 Aug. 2016.

^{vi} Story, Rod. *Estimate of the Average Annual Cost for Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements due to Weather Events*. Ottawa: Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 2016, p. 19, http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/web/default/files/Documents/Reports/2016/DFAA/DFAA_EN.pdf. Accessed 5 Aug. 2016.

^{vii} AIR Worldwide. *Study of Impact and the Insurance and Economic Cost of a Major Earthquake in British Columbia and Ontario/Quebec*. AIR Worldwide, Oct. 2013, <http://assets.ibc.ca/Documents/Disaster/IBC-Earthquake-Economic-Study-Summary.pdf>. Accessed on 5 Aug. 2016.

^{viii} Canadian Red Cross. *Social Media During Emergencies*. Canadian Red Cross, Oct. 2012, http://www.redcross.ca/cmslib/general/pub_social_media_in_emergencies_survey_oct2012_en.pdf. Accessed 5 Aug. 2016.

^{ix} Canada. Statistics Canada. *Survey of Emergency Preparedness and Resilience in Canada, 2014*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 28 Nov. 2015, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/151028/dq151028a-eng.htm>. Accessed 5 Aug. 2016.

^x United Nations Development Programme [UNDP]. *Putting Resilience at the Heart of Development: Investing in Prevention and Resilient Recovery*. UNDP, 27 Jun. 2012, p. 1, <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/crisis-prevention-and-recovery/putting-resilience-at-the-heart-of-development.html>. Accessed 5 Aug. 2016.

^{xi} Leger. *Perceptions of Canadians Regarding the Canadian Red Cross*. Leger, Oct. 2015.