

Paul Cardegna
Clerk of the Committee
Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates
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Dear Mr. Cardegna:

Further to Minister Tassi and PSPC officials' appearance before OGGO for Supplementary Estimates A on Friday, June 10, 2022, PCO is following up with written responses to the questions asked by Committee Members:

1. **Mr. Gord Johns:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for being here again.

The Auditor General's spring reports found persistent challenges to implementing gender-based analysis plus since 2015. Specifically, it found that the Privy Council Office and the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat didn't share information with Women and Gender Equality Canada that would help it to monitor progress on implementation over time.

Is any of the funding requested by the Privy Council Office intended to support improving the implementation of gender-based analysis plus?

Hon. Filomena Tassi: Again, Mr. Johns, I don't believe that this is my file, but I'm happy to have my team follow up with you after this and provide an answer to that.

Mr. Gord Johns: Thank you. I look forward to that.

Answer:

The Supplementary Estimates A funding was not sought specifically to improve the implementation of GBA Plus. Up to \$18.8 M in funding was requested to support the fulfillment of the mandate of the Public Order Emergency Commission, and \$7.4M was sought to create a new Emergency Preparedness Secretariat to support the Minister of Emergency Preparedness within the PCO portfolio of ministers (\$3.6M) and to enhance PCO capacity to support key government priorities and support an Open and Transparent Government (\$3.8M).

PCO welcomes the OAG's recommendations and is committed to working with WAGE and other departments to enhance the application of GBA Plus.

Discussions under way will inform the development of a plan with new or strengthened actions to improve the quality of GBA Plus in Memoranda to Cabinet.

2. **Ms. Julie Vignola:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Minister, I will ask you for a written response to the following question.

On page 2-27 of Supplementary Estimates (A) 2022-2023, there's a request for \$18,798,000 to support the investigation under the Emergencies Act. It's under the Privy Council Office heading. There's a request for over \$7 million to support emergency preparedness management and enhance departmental capabilities.

Personally, I think that \$19 million to support the inquiry is a lot of money. It doesn't include the inquiry's costs.

Here's my first question: what actions would this funding support?

Secondly, there's a request for \$7 million to support emergency preparedness management and improve departmental capacity. We are not even talking about preparedness itself, or even about emergency management and response, but about actions taken to ensure that it's well managed, and even made possible. We're talking about \$7 million, even though we do not even have the start of an initial emergency response. I think that's a lot of money.

What does this support include? Why does it cost \$7 million?

When we talk about improving departmental capacity, what capacity are we talking about? Which department is it? How much of the \$7 million is going towards improving departmental capacity? What is it about departmental capacity that needs improvement? How much money can improve that capacity?

I'm wondering about amounts that don't seem to lead to any kind of action.

Thank you.

Answer:

The Public Inquiry into the February 2022 Public Order Emergency (Public Order Emergency Commission) operates independently and at arm's length from the federal government. The Public Order Emergency Commission has requested up to \$18.8M in funding through the 2022-23 Supplementary Estimates (A) to support the fulfillment of its mandate, detailed in Order-in-Council 2022-0392 which includes an investigation component, as well as a policy and recommendations component. The funding will support key activities including:

- Investigation and public hearings, which have numerous requirements (i.e., Legal Services, Bilingual Court Reporting, Transcription, American Sign Language Interpretation, venue rentals, etc.);
- Funding for parties granted standing that have demonstrated a need, enabling access to legal counsel to support their participation;

- Expert advisory services and academic report commission; and
- Operational requirements (accommodations, information management, information technology, etc.).

While the Public Order Emergency Commission operates independently and at arm's length, it is supported by the Privy Council Office with respect to corporate administrative services and a small component of the \$18.8 million will be transferred to PCO through a memorandum of understanding based on the actual cost of services provided.

The \$7.4M in funding requested is to support initiatives and create additional capacity under the Privy Council Office (PCO). The funding is requested to create a new Emergency Preparedness Secretariat to support the Minister of Emergency Preparedness within the PCO portfolio of ministers (\$3.6M) and to enhance PCO capacity to support key government priorities and support an open and transparent Government (\$3.8M).

The COVID-19 pandemic and last year's devastating wildfire and flooding seasons highlighted that the capacity to pivot and take urgent action is needed to address the increasing frequency and severity of disaster events in Canada. These events highlighted the need for an all-hazards approach, facilitating forward policy development and planning as a measure of prevention. The recent creation of a dedicated Minister for Emergency Preparedness supported by PCO aims to provide leadership in emergency management. Establishing the Emergency Preparedness Secretariat will support the delivery of various commitments outlined in the Minister's mandate letter, including playing a coordinating and convening role to support the Prime Minister (PM) and Cabinet colleagues through acute phases of rapid emergency responses and provide regular updates to the PM and Cabinet on Canada's preparedness and response across all-hazards. The Secretariat will work with partners on three priority areas: enhancement of federal leadership in emergency management, building national readiness capacity, and investing in disaster risk reduction.

The remaining \$3.8M is for additional human resources and operating costs to enhance departmental capacity on key files, such as Climate Change, Indigenous policy, and to support an open and transparent government resulting from new demands from increasing and more complex Access to Information (ATIP) volumes. The funding will be used to augment analytical capacity to enhance capacity support for policy analysis on indigenous and climate files that are part of the Government's policy agenda; support the PM, PCO and the National Security and Intelligence Advisor for new and emerging intelligence priorities by augmenting policy and operations efforts across the national security and intelligence community; enhance support across the portfolio by providing a uniform approach to all PCO Ministers, and address a backlog in ATIP requests and establish capacity to address increasing volumes of new requests that are also becoming more complex.

I trust this information is helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MShea', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew Shea
Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services Branch
and Chief Financial Officer