



October 5, 2011

Mr. James Rajotte, M.P.
Chair, Standing Committee on Finance
Sixth Floor, 131 Queen Street
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Rajotte:

I was heartened to have learned about the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)'s two recent motions that relate to my office. As I understand it, the first requests the Parliamentary Budget Officer's appearance before committee along with the annual provision of the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO)'s economic and fiscal outlook to FINA. The second, asks the PBO to provide costing for private members business.

My office as a whole appreciates the confidence these motions express in the work that it has undertaken to date. The first motion's acknowledgement of the exacting analysis provided with respect to fiscal and economic forecasts is greatly appreciated. The PBO has and continues to do its best to serve parliamentarians and the Canadian public with timely and relevant economic and fiscal updates. I look forward to both providing our updates and appearing at FINA in the future.

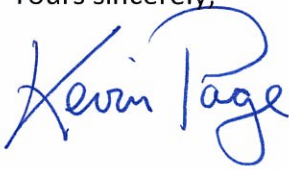
The second motion's request to the PBO to cost PMBs is a welcomed reaffirmation of one of the limbs of the PBO's legislative mandate as laid out in the *Parliament of Canada Act*, 1985. In addition to explicitly renewing its support for the work that the PBO undertakes under s. 79.2(b)(ii), the request expressly highlights the importance of providing not just a dollar amount attached to legislation and programs, but details of the underlying methodology by which such figures are derived. In this respect, as in others, the principles of the committee as laid out in the request and those of my office are in perfect agreement; the PBO has consistently stressed the importance of publishing full and transparent costings for all bills along with methodology and assumptions. This ensures cost estimates are subjected to public scrutiny.

Given the limited resources of my office, I would greatly value the opportunity to discuss the operational parameters surrounding the request. More specifically, I suspect that it would be helpful to flesh out how particular PMBs might be prioritized relative to one another.

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I thank you for the confidence that the committee has shown in my office's work through these two motions. My office looks forward, as always, to more fully serving parliamentarians and the Canadian public through its continued work with FINA, other committees, and members of Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin Page". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kevin" and the last name "Page" clearly distinguishable.

Kevin Page
Parliamentary Budget Officer

c.c.: Guyanne Desforges, Clerk of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance