

GOVERNMENT UPDATES – APRIL 16

Current as of 16:00 MDT

Part of the MNP Public Affairs information strategy is to keep the firm up to date on evolving discussions with governments.

Government Updates – April 16.....	1
Current as of 16:00 MDT.....	1
Government of Canada.....	3
COVID-19 Guidance for High-Risk and Essential Workplaces	3
Canadian Securities Administrators Provide Update on Syndicated Mortgage Regime	3
Canadian Securities Administrators Adjust Implementation Date for Client Focused Reforms.....	4
Government of British Columbia	5
Free counselling service launches for post-secondary students	5
New COVID-19 supports for businesses, local governments.....	5
COVID-19 support service launched for B.C. businesses	6
Government of Alberta.....	7
Response plan protects workers, food supply.....	7
Personal protective equipment is reaching Albertans.....	7
Government of Manitoba	8
Updates.....	8
Internet-Based Therapy Service Program to Help Manitobans Cope with COVID-10 Anxiety Now Live	9
Government of Ontario	10
Ontario Enables Auto Insurance Companies to Provide Driver Rebates During COVID-19	10
Ontario Significantly Expands Hospital Capacity to Prepare for Any COVID-19 Outbreak Scenario	10
Government of Quebec	11
The Quebec government invites all students to lend a hand to the health and social services network	11
The SAQ implements initiatives in support of Quebecers	11
Minister Jean Boulet Announces Deferral until September 1, 2020 of Payments to the Registraire des entreprises ...	13
Temporary easing measures concerning the administrative management of supplementary pension schemes	13
Government of New Brunswick.....	14

State of emergency extended to April 30 14

Government of Prince Edward Island 15

 Province announces supports for tourism industry, expansion of Island producers initiative 15

 Prince Edward Island declares a state of emergency 16

Government of Northwest Territories 16

 Restrictions to Northwest Territories Liquor Sales 16

Government of Nunavut 17

 Minister of Health extends Public Health Emergency 17

COVID-19 Cases in Canada 17

News from Other Provinces and Territories 18

For Questions: 18

Government of Canada

Prime Ministers' Daily Announcement

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today announced new measures to support Canadian businesses. The Government of Canada is:

- Expanding the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) to businesses that paid between \$20,000 and \$1.5 million in total payroll in 2019. This new range will replace the previous one of between \$50,000 and \$1 million.
- Announcing its intent to introduce the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) for small businesses. The program will seek to provide loans, including forgivable loans, to commercial property owners who in turn will lower or forgo the rent of small businesses for the months of April (retroactive), May, and June. Implementation of the program will require a partnership between the federal government and provincial and territorial governments, which are responsible for property owner-tenant relationships. The Government of Canada will have more details to share soon.

The Prime Minister has his weekly call with the Premiers tonight, and a key topic will be discussing help for long term care workers. Additionally, Quebec has officially requested assistance from the military for their long-term care homes.

Full release: pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/04/16/prime-minister-announces-additional-support-small-businesses

COVID-19 Guidance for High-Risk and Essential Workplaces

To help high-risk occupations and essential services and industries work safely during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) has developed a series of pandemic guidance tip sheets and made them available for free on their website.

These pandemic (COVID-19) tip sheets offer guidance and good practices for specific occupations, industries and services, for both employers and workers. The sheets are intended to be used and customized by businesses and organizations to help protect workers from illness as well as prevent the spread of infection.

Among the collection are tip sheets for construction, correctional services, daycares, healthcare, mining, retail, and transportation, to name a few. New tip sheets continue to be added.

The tips sheets are available in English and French and can be downloaded from the CCOHS website: www.ccohs.ca/products/publications/covid19/.

Full release: canada.ca/en/centre-occupational-health-safety/news/2020/04/covid-19-guidance-for-high-risk-and-essential-workplaces.html

Canadian Securities Administrators Provide Update on Syndicated Mortgage Regime

In light of COVID-19, the Canadian Securities Administrators (CSA) is adjusting the timeline to implement changes that will harmonize the regulation of syndicated mortgages across Canada.

In December 2019, the CSA published an update on its next steps related to syndicated mortgages, including an anticipated timeline and effective date. The CSA now anticipate the amendments will take effect January 1, 2021, subject to requisite approvals.

Additional details will be communicated later this year.

The CSA, the council of the securities regulators of Canada's provinces and territories, co-ordinates and harmonizes regulation for the Canadian capital markets.

Full release: securities-administrators.ca/aboutcsa.aspx?id=1891

Canadian Securities Administrators Adjust Implementation Date for Client Focused Reforms

The Canadian Securities Administrators (CSA) today published a relief order that provides registrants with an additional six months to comply with the conflicts of interest provisions in the Client Focused Reforms. Registrants will now have until June 30, 2021 to implement these changes.

The CSA also published a second relief order to provide for the relationship disclosure provisions of the Client Focused Reforms to take effect on December 31, 2021, at the same time as all other remaining changes.

The reforms are based on the fundamental concept that clients' interests come first in their dealings with firms and individuals that are registered to give investment advice and trade in securities. They also require that registrants address material conflicts of interest in the best interest of their clients.

The CSA published the Client Focused Reforms on October 3, 2019. At the time, the CSA provided for a phased transition period, with the reforms relating to conflicts of interest and the relationship disclosure provisions taking effect on December 31, 2020, and the remaining changes taking effect on December 31, 2021.

Due to the pandemic, many registrants will not be able to implement the conflicts of interest reforms since they are redeploying their staff to ensure key business functions continue to operate.

Since announcing the reforms last year, the CSA has been working with industry stakeholders through its Client Focused Reforms Implementation Committee. Through these discussions, it has become apparent that the implementation of the relationship disclosure provisions should occur at the same time as the "know your product" and enhanced suitability provisions of the reforms on December 31, 2021, to avoid the need to make adjustments on more than one implementation date.

In granting these relief orders, the CSA has been mindful of balancing investor protection goals of the reforms and the implementation challenges faced by firms in the current situation.

The CSA encourages registrants to consider the reforms when interacting with their clients now, since clients are relying on registrants more than ever to provide them with advice that puts their interests first during these challenging circumstances.

Registrants can view the relief orders on CSA members' websites and are encouraged to contact their principal regulator with any questions.

The Investment Industry Regulatory Organization of Canada and the Mutual Fund Dealers Association of Canada will harmonize their implementation timelines for conforming changes to their member rules, policies and guidance.

The CSA, the council of the securities regulators of Canada's provinces and territories, co-ordinates and harmonizes regulation for the Canadian capital markets.

Full release: securities-administrators.ca/aboutcsa.aspx?id=1890

Government of British Columbia

Free Counselling Service Launches for Post-secondary Students

The Government of British Columbia has launched Here2Talk, a new mental-health counselling and referral service for post-secondary students.

The service offers confidential, free single-session services by app, phone or online chat, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

For the first time, every student in BC has access to 24/7 mental-health services – whether the students are rural, urban, domestic, Indigenous, international, public, private, full-time, part-time or in trades training. Here2Talk will complement other supports on campus and in the community, including new virtual mental-health supports announced April 9, 2020, by the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions.

Chat sessions with a trained counsellor can be accessed by downloading the Here2Talk app or visiting: here2talk.ca

Students can speak to a counsellor by phone, toll-free at 1.877.857.3397 or direct 604.642.5212. Students calling from outside Canada can dial 1.604.642.5212 (international calling charges may apply).

Hundreds of students throughout BC provided feedback and ideas that were used to develop and tailor Here2Talk to deliver the kind of help students felt they needed. The on-demand service, operated by Morneau Shepell, will support students dealing with challenges such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, pressure to perform, crises, racism and relationships. Counsellors will also be equipped to refer students to local resources in their communities.

For the launch, web, phone and chat services are currently available in English and French. Phone services are also available in additional languages upon request.

Government is providing \$1.5 million per year for the service.

Full release: news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020AEST0024-000698

New COVID-19 Supports for Businesses, Local Governments

The province is providing enhanced relief for businesses by reducing most commercial property tax bills by an average of 25 percent, along with new measures to support local governments facing temporary revenue shortfalls as a result of COVID-19.

The province is taking significant new steps to support B.C. businesses, non-profits and other organizations through the COVID-19 pandemic by:

- Further reducing the school property tax rate for commercial properties to achieve an average 25 percent reduction in the total property tax bill for most businesses, providing up to \$700 million in relief. This enhances the 50 percent reduction to the provincial school property tax rate that was originally announced for classes 4, 5, and 6 as part of B.C.'s COVID-19 Action Plan.
- Postponing the date that late payment penalties apply for commercial properties in classes 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 to Oct. 1, 2020, to give businesses and landlords more time to pay their reduced property tax, without penalty.

Responding to key concerns from local governments, the Province is addressing cash flow and revenue shortfalls with new measures that provide additional support:

- Authorizing local governments to borrow, interest-free, from their existing capital reserves to help pay for operating expenses, such as employee salaries.
- Delaying provincial school tax remittances until the end of the year. This will provide significant relief to local governments facing cash flow issues.
- Providing local governments greater flexibility to carry debt for an additional year.

These measures will provide local governments with the resources to meet their operational costs and required remittances to regional districts, regional hospital districts, TransLink and transit authorities, BC Assessment, the Municipal Finance Authority and other taxing authorities. This will ensure that other minor taxing authorities can count on receiving the full amount they bill to municipalities and the Province's surveyor of taxes before Aug. 1, 2020.

Full release: news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020FIN0020-000703

COVID-19 Support Service Launched for BC Businesses

A new BC Business COVID-19 Support Service will serve as a single point of contact for businesses throughout the province looking for information on resources available during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The BC Business COVID-19 Support Service will be operated by Small Business BC (SBBC), a non-profit organization that is well known and respected by the business community. The service will act as a one-stop resource to answer questions about supports available to businesses from the provincial and federal governments, industry and community partners.

Throughout B.C. there are over 500,000 small businesses that contribute significantly to B.C.'s communities and economy. To respond to the needs of these small businesses, and all other businesses around the province, SBBC will offer expanded services.

Starting on Thursday, April 16, 2020, advisors are available Monday to Friday, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Pacific time) and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 1.833.254.4357. Inquiries can also be emailed to covid@smallbusinessbc.ca, or raised on the live-chat feature available on SBBC's dedicated website: <https://covid.smallbusinessbc.ca>

Support is available in multiple languages and a call-back feature will be in place to help manage high call volumes.

SBBC's dedicated website will include announcements from industry and community partners, as well as a variety of resources, including webinars and practical tools. In addition, SBBC will continue to provide its usual service, like access to expert business advisors, educational services, and free resources in the context of COVID-19.

Support for businesses and their employees is a top priority for both governments. The support service will provide employers with information on resources available that they can share with their staff.

The BC Business Covid-19 Support Service is supported by the BC government and the Government of Canada through Western Economic Diversification Canada. As the situation evolves, both governments will continue to support businesses and take further action as needed.

Full release: news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020JEDC0008-000700

Government of Alberta

Response Plan Protects Workers, Food Supply

The Alberta and federal governments, with the input and assistance of industry and worker representatives, have developed a plan to respond to confirmed cases of COVID-19 in food processing plants.

The goal of this response plan is to protect workers, while ensuring limited impact to our essential food supply during this pandemic.

It is critical to remember that COVID-19 is not a foodborne illness. But essential food industry workers are still susceptible to COVID-19, just like everyone else. Across North America, we have seen a growing number of confirmed COVID-19 cases at food processing plants as the total number of cases throughout society also grows.

In Alberta, the first confirmed case occurred at a beef plant north of Calgary. The facility where the case was confirmed was shut down, halting production. Agriculture and Forestry immediately began working with the plant management, Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Alberta Health Services (AHS) and the Ministry of Labour to resolve the issue. Specific, effective mitigation measures were put in place based on the advice of health and safety experts.

Developments

Since this first case, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry has continued to work with our partners, AHS and the CFIA to protect the health and safety of workers while ensuring a stable food supply in Alberta.

Together, we have established an intergovernmental business resumption protocol for provincially or federally licensed food processing facilities in Alberta. This protocol formalizes the cooperative approach used among the organizations to streamline the process while outlining the roles and responsibilities of CFIA, AHS and AF as we work to keep our food supply strong.

The principles of the protocol were applied at Cargill Beef when the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed there on April 6. We are proud of the fact that this protocol has already proven effective in advance of it being formally signed by all parties. It also complements orders issued by Alberta's chief medical officer of health under the Public Health Act.

In Alberta, facilities already have very strict sanitation protocols and practices. In response to COVID-19, food processors must:

- Implement measures to prevent the spread of infection, including all recommended mitigation and cleaning requirements and adjustments to their work schedules
- Continue to implement enhancements to ensure staff and products are safe as they move products into the supply chain

Interested parties may find a copy of the plan here: alberta.ca/assets/documents/af-covid-19-business-resumption-protocol.pdf

Full release: alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=701052D636D13-FC53-A7E3-70A0A46F02A0E55F

Personal Protective Equipment is Reaching Albertans

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is reaching Albertans across the province as the government continues its procurement and distribution effort amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

While AHS is working to connect PPE to Alberta's health-care workers, the Provincial Operators Centre is working to connect PPE to non-AHS facilities including, but not limited to, optometrist offices, funeral homes, pharmacies, disability service providers and social service and civil society groups. Non-AHS facilities are encouraged to continue requesting PPE through the government's one-stop email address at pessecc-logistics@gov.ab.ca.

In addition to regular procurement methods, government is continuing to procure PPE through the Alberta Bits and Pieces Program, which has received about 4,000 offers to date, including 400 specific offers for PPE such as masks, respirators, sanitizer and ventilators.

Full release: alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=7010100C5EDE9-042B-B0D6-38219F57A8936D4F

Government of Manitoba

Updates

The chief provincial public health officer has updated public health orders that take effect on April 17, and will be in effect until May 1, 2020. They mandate that anyone entering Manitoba, regardless of whether it was from another country or another province must self-isolate for 14 days. In addition, travel to northern Manitoba (north of the 53rd parallel of latitude) is prohibited with some exceptions including:

- Residents of northern and remote communities may continue to move within the north;
- Delivery of goods and services may continue; and
- Exceptions include those who travel to the north for employment, medical treatment or to facilitate child-custody agreements.

The new orders build on the current orders, and maintain the gathering size of no more than 10 people at any indoor or outdoor premises. Additional updates include:

- A clarification that businesses not listed as critical may operate, and have customers attend to pick up ordered items, providing social distancing measures are in place;
- A provision to allow farmers markets to operate, providing social distancing measures are in place;
- Hotels may operate, but must close common areas such as pools, hot tubs and game rooms;
- Campgrounds can provide accommodation to recreational vehicles that act as a primary residence;
- Garden centres and greenhouses can operate, providing social distancing measures are in place; and
- Appliance, electronic and furniture stores are excluded, and should not be open to the public, except where orders are placed remotely and orders are delivered or picked up with social distancing measures in place.

The following restrictions remain in place as they were with previous orders:

- All restaurants and other commercial facilities are prohibited from serving food to customers in their premises. This prevents eat-in dining at all facilities. However, restaurants and other commercial facilities can prepare and serve food for delivery or takeout. If this takes place, the operator of the restaurant must ensure that all people maintain the appropriate social distancing from other customers when picking up food.
- All businesses that are not listed in the schedule of critical services that accompanies the order must remain closed.
 - This closure order does not prevent these businesses from operating on a remote basis.

- A business may accept orders on the internet or over the phone for delivery or pickup, as long as the employees are not working at the place of business.
- The order does not prevent employees or others from coming into the business to perform repairs, to provide security services or to take out items from the business premises if the business is going to operate on a remote basis.
- Nothing in the order restricts the operations of delivery of services by the federal or provincial governments or a municipality.
- Nothing in the order restricts any activities of a publicly funded agency, organization or authority that delivers or supports government operations or services including health-care services. This means the order does not affect institutions, agencies and other service providers offering health-care services such as hospitals, regional health authorities and private agencies that provide a range of health services.

In addition, public health officials are expanding testing criteria to include:

- All symptomatic workers or volunteers at workplaces that have been identified as essential services; and
- Any symptomatic person who lives with a health-care worker, first responder or worker in a congregate setting such as a correctional facility, shelter, long-term care or residential facility.

Full release: news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=47544&posted=2020-04-16

Internet-Based Therapy Service Program to Help Manitobans Cope with COVID-10 Anxiety Now Live

A digital cognitive behavioural therapy program to support the mental health of Manitobans and help address anxiety caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is now up and running, Premier Brian Pallister announced today.

The AbilitiCBT program is a free and confidential virtual-therapy platform and has proven to be one of the most effective and efficient therapy methods available, the premier added.

As of this morning, close to 600 individuals have registered for the program, and are now using the virtual-therapy platform with more signing up daily.

The program is guided by professional therapists and addresses mild to moderate anxiety symptoms related to the uniquely challenging aspects of pandemics:

- Uncertainty,
- Physical isolation,
- Caring for family and community members,
- Information overload, and
- Stress management.

The program will help people:

- Learn what anxiety is and how it affects their emotions, mind, body and behaviour;
- Reduce anxiety by learning cognitive behavioral-therapy skills and using them to change responses to triggers; and
- Develop coping strategies to track and reduce anxiety and better manage daily activities.

The premier noted people do not need to be referred to the program by a doctor, they can start at any time by completing the online assessment on the website.

Once people register online, they are asked to download an app, as well as to complete and submit a health-screening questionnaire. A therapist will reach out within three days to book an initial assessment by phone.

People will then complete 10 modules on the app at their own pace, while the therapist tracks and monitors progress. There will be scheduled check-ins along the way by phone, chat or through a video check-in to make sure people are getting the help they need.

Full release: news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=47543&posted=2020-04-16

Government of Ontario

Ontario Enables Auto Insurance Companies to Provide Driver Rebates During COVID-19

The Ontario government is enabling auto insurance companies to provide temporary insurance premium rebates to drivers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The province has amended a regulation under the Insurance Act to help ease the financial pressure on working people and families during this public health crisis.

By amending this regulation insurance companies would be able to provide auto insurance premium rebates to consumers for up to 12 months after the declared emergency has ended.

The Government and the Financial Services Regulatory Authority of Ontario (FSRA) will continue to work together to monitor how the auto insurance sector is responding.

Full release: news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2020/04/ontario-enables-auto-insurance-companies-to-provide-driver-rebates-during-covid-19.html

Ontario Significantly Expands Hospital Capacity to Prepare for Any COVID-19 Outbreak Scenario

Acting on the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other health care professionals, the Ontario government has significantly expanded hospital capacity in preparation for any COVID-19 outbreak scenario. The province has added 1,035 acute care beds and 1,492 critical care beds and taken steps to ensure hospitals have the staff available to care for a sudden surge in patients.

Hospitals across the province have taken steps to make more beds available for COVID-19 patients in every region of the province. As a result, Ontario has a total of 20,354 acute care beds with a potential for an additional 4,205 more acute care beds by April 30, 2020. Of Ontario's 3,504 critical care beds, 2,811 are now equipped with ventilators, up from 1,319 when the outbreak first started.

This bed capacity expansion has been organized in coordination with pandemic staffing plans to ensure each hospital has the physicians and staff needed, including in case of a major surge of cases. Measures include:

- Redeploying surgical nursing staff who can now work with medicine units;
- Sharing highly trained emergency department and intensive care unit nursing staffs across units;
- Sharing physician resources across hospitals in a given region;
- Recruiting family doctors to complete shifts within the hospital; and
- Recruiting retirees, including nursing and support services.

The province continues to focus on what resources will be needed to further enhance capacity quickly, if the need arises. Hospitals have identified additional opportunities to add new beds, including through the use of field hospitals, conference centres, school locations and more. Sites are ready to open based on the needs of the community.

Full release: news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/04/ontario-significantly-expands-hospital-capacity-to-prepare-for-any-covid-19-outbreak-scenario.html

Government of Quebec

The Quebec government Invites Students to Support Health and Social Services Network

The Minister of Health and Social Services, Danielle McCann , as well as the Minister of Education and Higher Education, Jean-François Roberge, announce measures to promote rapid recruitment of workers into the health and social services network. They would first like to thank the students of vocational training centres and the students of CEGEPs and universities in Quebec who are already hard at work in the network. They also invite those who are available and who wish to go and lend a hand to nurses as well as to the attendants to take care of people in need.

First, Minister Roberge asked the directorates general of school boards, CEGEPs and universities to contact their health and social services students today so that they can come and support the health network. Secondly, the request will also be sent to students from all other study programs. All students interested in contributing are asked to reply to the email sent by their educational institution with their curriculum vitae.

The working conditions offered to students who wish to work as beneficiary attendants will be those which apply to temporary employees. Students will be entitled to the same bonuses. The income earned during this period will not be counted in the calculation of student financial assistance that may be received next year.

Special authorization for students of certain professions

In addition, special authorization to practice has been granted to persons enrolled in college or university programs whose diploma gives access to a permit from certain professional orders, provided that they have at most the equivalent of " a full-time session to complete their program. The professions concerned are: nurses, nursing assistants, respiratory therapists, medical technologists, medical imaging technologists in the field of radiodiagnostics or in the field of nuclear medicine, and social workers.

Full release: fil-information.gouv.qc.ca/Pages/Article.aspx?lang=en&idArticle=2804168721

The SAQ Implements Initiatives In Support of Quebecers

The SAQ is adopting a series of measures to aid the collective effort and assist those in need.

- The SAQ is maintaining its donations and sponsorship program and will continue honouring its commitments to the some 300 community organizations, foundations and festivals it supports in every region of Quebec, even if the associated events have to be cancelled due to the current situation. By doing so, the SAQ hopes to continue supporting sectors severely affected by the crisis and ensure the ongoing viability of the cultural offering in Quebec.

Inventory of 94 percent ABV neutral spirit made available to health care establishments

- To help alleviate the current shortage of disinfectant products, the SAQ has frozen its inventory of 94 percent ABV neutral spirit products and made it available to Quebec's Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux. The SAQ had already donated 1,500 bottles of 94 percent ABV neutral spirit to a dozen hospital centres in Quebec.

Food assistance

- In addition to its \$1 million emergency donation to the Food Banks of Quebec network on March 18, the SAQ continues to encourage initiatives for assisting Quebecers who find themselves in a precarious situation. For example, the company has donated another \$50,000 to La Tablée des Chefs, which has launched Les cuisines solidaires, a program aimed at creating an emergency stockpile of around 1.6 million meals to be stored by Food Banks of Quebec and distributed to people in need of prepared meals instead of foodstuffs.

Price increases postponed

- In view of the economic pressure placed on many households, the SAQ has agreed with its suppliers to postpone the retail price increases on wines and spirits normally planned for May. While price cuts are allowed on a continual basis, the SAQ limits price increases to two predetermined periods a year, in May and November. The effective date for the new prices will be based on how the ongoing crisis evolves.

Support for restaurateurs

- The restaurant industry is particularly hard hit by the pandemic and the SAQ is keen to provide support to its partners. Among other things, the company has implemented a new procedure to facilitate product returns and made the payment conditions for permit holders more flexible. In addition, the SAQ is leveraging its various platforms to promote the take-out and delivery services offered by some establishments.

Home delivery service

- Since April 6, customers who are voluntarily self-isolating or want to limit their outings can once again have their SAQ orders delivered directly to their home instead of a postal outlet. The home delivery service for online purchases has been reinstated and is now provided by Purolator. The \$12 delivery fee remains in effect and continues to be donated to Food Banks of Quebec.

Executive salaries frozen

- The SAQ has decided to freeze the salaries of its executives for fiscal 2020-2021. It is also postponing this year's payment of performance-based variable pay to non-unionized employees, which is part of their overall compensation package, until September 2020, which is around the end the second quarter of the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

In the extremely difficult economic and health situation faced by many Quebecers, the SAQ hopes its initiatives and decision to maintain operations will enable it to continue sharing with those in need.

Full release: fil-information.gouv.qc.ca/Pages/Article.aspx?lang=en&idArticle=2804160624

Minister Jean Boulet Announces Deferral until September 1, 2020 of Payments to the Registraire des entreprises

Québec's some 391,000 businesses will have until September 1, 2020 to pay their annual registration fee to the Registraire des entreprises. The Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Solidarity and Minister Responsible for the Mauricie Region, Jean Boulet, made the announcement today to allow businesses to concentrate on restarting their activities.

Businesses are required to update the information contained in the enterprise register every year. The annual registration fee for 2020 ranges from \$36 to \$92, depending on the registrant's legal form. The payment deferral represents \$24.5 million in relief for business owners and organizations. Note that businesses and organization are still required to file their annual updating declaration by the prescribed date.

This measure is consistent with the Revenu Québec measure to extend the deadline for paying any income tax owing for the 2019 taxation year to September 1, 2020.

Full release: fil-information.gouv.qc.ca/Pages/Article.aspx?lang=en&idArticle=2804166641

Temporary Easing Measures Concerning the Administrative Management of Supplementary Pension Plans

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, three temporary easing measures have been put in place to help administrators of supplemental pension plans.

These measures reduce administrative burdens related to pension plans and promote better access for participants to their retirement savings. However, they do not relieve employers of their obligation to pay the contributions provided for in the plan. These measures may be the subject of specific legislative provisions when parliamentary work resumes.

Extension of the deadlines linked to certain regulatory and legislative obligations

With respect to supplemental pension plans, the time limits granted to administrators and pension committees to provide certain documents to Retraite Québec or to members are extended by three months, without penalty.

For administrators of voluntary retirement savings plans (VRSPs), the deadline for filing their annual information return (AIR) has been extended to September 30, 2020.

Update of the creditworthiness to be taken into account in the case of acquittals (transfers and reimbursements) made in a defined benefit pension plan

All acquittals (transfers and refunds) made by December 31, 2020 must be calculated based on the estimated credit worthiness, updated on March 31, 2020 or on the last working day of the month preceding the date on which the value of the participant's rights, if this date is later.

This measure aims in particular to:

- Protect members and beneficiaries who remain in the plan and prevent the payment of excessively high transfer values;
- Avoid an increase in the balance contributions to be paid by employers following excessively high cash outflows;
- Maintain the possibility for members to transfer their plan rights and thus access them in the event of a need for liquidity through the disbursement of a life income fund (LIF).

Relaxation of the rules for the disbursement of sums immobilized in life income funds

To allow additional flexibility, it is possible to disburse a single amount of the amounts accumulated in a LIF corresponding to 40 percent of the maximum eligible earnings, or \$23,480 in 2020, regardless of income from other sources.

This temporary measure only applies for the year 2020 to all people who were under the age of 70 on December 31, 2019.

Full release: fil-information.gouv.qc.ca/Pages/Article.aspx?lang=en&idArticle=2804165915

Government of New Brunswick

State of emergency extended to April 30

Premier Blaine Higgs announced that the declaration of emergency under the Emergency Measures Act was formally extended today. A state of emergency was declared on March 19, however such declarations expire after 14 days unless extended by the lieutenant-governor in council. Both cabinet and the all-party cabinet committee have approved the extension.

Some parts of the emergency order have also been clarified to ensure that residents and business owners understand what they can and cannot do. For example, the government clarified that restaurants offering take-out must ensure physical distancing of customers who are on the premises waiting for their food, and that property owners must take steps to prevent gatherings.

The latest version of the declaration is available online.

Gardening and agricultural retailers to reopen

Since gardening and agricultural retailers are an important part of the food supply, Higgs announced that this sector will be allowed to reopen starting today.

Public drug plans

Higgs addressed the issue of medical coverage under New Brunswick's public drug plans. He said the government encourages all pharmacists to remove the extra dispensing and co-pay fees associated with the new limits of prescription refills.

More flexible rules for restaurant owners

Higgs also announced that, for the duration of the state of emergency and at the request of restaurant owners, restaurants with a licence will be allowed to sell liquor off their menu for take-out or delivery. Owners will also need to ensure they do not sell liquor to minors.

Closed borders and cottage owners

The government is asking non-residential cottage owners from outside the province to be patient and not to visit their cottage in the coming weeks.

Full release: gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2020.04.0209.html

Government of Prince Edward Island

Province Announces Supports for Tourism Industry, Expansion of Island Producers Initiative

Today, the Province of Prince Edward Island announced initial supports for the Island's tourism industry in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Initiatives include new financing options, interest relief and additional funding for marketing. In total, up to \$66 million in support will be provided to meet the immediate needs of the tourism industry.

Minister of Economic Growth, Tourism and Culture Matthew Mackay announced a new \$50 million tourism assistance loan facility through Finance PEI, with maximum financing of up to \$1 million at 4 percent interest available for working capital. Both the principal payments on the loan, as well as interest, will be deferred for the first 18 months.

Additionally, Minister MacKay announced that the province will provide interest relief on existing loans to tourism business for up to 18 months.

Recognizing the need to support the tourism industry's quick recovery, Minister MacKay announced \$1 million towards expanded marketing. As well, the province is waiving the licensing, inspection and Tourism PEI advertising fees for the 2020 operating season.

Non-profit organizations that have received funding from Tourism PEI and/or the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) for events that have been canceled as a result of COVID-19 will be fully compensated for all eligible expenses.

The Province of Prince Edward Island continues to work with its federal counterparts to initiate new programs and expand existing programs to support seasonal workers, including those in the tourism industry.

Minister of Agriculture and Land Bloyce Thompson announced the expansion of the successful Island Producers Helping Producers initiative to support rural Islanders in need. The initiative is a partnership of the province of Prince Edward Island, Amalgamated Dairies Limited (ADL) and the PEI Potato Board.

To support physical distancing, Islanders are asked to remain in their vehicles while volunteers place the care package in the trunk.

The province is reaching out to community groups that support vulnerable Islanders who may not have transportation and will work with them to set aside packages for those in need, when possible.

The Island Producers Helping Islanders initiative is intended to help Islanders and families in need; however, it is open to everyone. Islanders interested in making a donation in light of the free care package may do so online to a local charity of their choice.

Minister Thompson reminded Islanders that at any time, littering and dumping is illegal. While Island Waste Management Corporation sites continue to be closed to the public, regularly scheduled garbage pick-up continues. Islanders are able to include two additional bags with their carts, as always, and blue bag collection is still on schedule.

The Province also announced that in consultation with the Fire Marshal's Office, all outdoor burning is prohibited on Prince Edward Island effective immediately. This includes recreational campfires unless the fire is contained in a fire pit with spark arrester screen or has a chimney with spark arrester.

The ban is in place to keep volunteer and government fire fighters safe as they are essential workers and almost all wildland fires on Prince Edward Island are the result of fires that have escaped from a controlled burn.

Existing 2020 burning permits issued by the Department of Environment, Water and Climate Change and the Fire Marshal's Office are also suspended until further notice and no new permits will be issued.

Full release: princeedwardisland.ca/en/news/province-announces-supports-tourism-industry-expansion-island-producers-initiative

Prince Edward Island Declares a State of Emergency

To further enhance and support existing efforts to protect the health, safety and welfare of Islanders, the province has today declared a state of emergency and renewed the state of public health emergency.

Premier Dennis King extended the state of public health emergency initially declared under the Public Health Act on March 16 for an additional 30 days to ensure Prince Edward Island's Chief Public Health Officer continues to have the necessary authority to lead the province's ongoing public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

To further support the provincial public health response to the global pandemic, and following discussions with Dr. Morrison, Justice and Public Safety Minister Bloyce Thompson today confirmed that a state of emergency is being declared across the province until the end of the month under the Emergency Measures Act. This additional state of emergency complements the existing authority set out in the public health order and enables a more efficient deployment of resources that will assist the Chief Public Health Officer's guidance to protect Islanders, particularly through enhanced controls and screening at points of entry.

The Emergency Measures Organization, under the direction of the Minister of Justice and Public Safety, will support the Chief Public Health Office in controlling access at various points of entry to the province, along with any other access points to the province and, where applicable, direct individuals to leave Prince Edward Island. This includes, but is not limited to, the Confederation Bridge, the Charlottetown airport, ferry terminals at Wood Islands and Souris, as well as any port, harbour, wharf, launching, beach and any part of the provincial shoreline.

Full release: princeedwardisland.ca/en/news/prince-edward-island-declares-state-emergency

Government of Northwest Territories

Restrictions to Northwest Territories Liquor Sales

Minister of Finance, Caroline Wawzonek, today announced changes to the Liquor Regulations to put limits on the amount of liquor that can be sold daily to individual customers in territorial liquor stores. The restrictions are in effect as of April 16, 2020.

These changes are being made in response to requests from Members of the Legislative Assembly, as well as community and Indigenous leaders across the territory, in an effort to deter bootlegging activity in the NWT's communities.

This amendment does not apply to the liquor store in Fort Simpson, as the community has previously implemented purchase restrictions.

- As of Thursday, April 16, the following restrictions have been put in place:
 - A maximum daily purchase of no more than six 375 ml containers of spirits; or
 - A maximum daily purchase amount of \$200 for individual customers; however
 - Those individuals who wish to purchase a single item with a price point above the daily \$200 limit will continue to be allowed to do so.

- The new restrictions do not apply to the wholesale purchase of liquor by a license or permit holder.
- All NWT liquor stores remain open with the following limited hours.

Full release: gov.nt.ca/en/newsroom/restrictions-northwest-territories-liquor-sales

Government of Nunavut

Minister of Health extends Public Health Emergency

Nunavut’s Minister of Health George Hicke has extended the territory’s public health emergency until April 30, 2020.

Full release: gov.nu.ca/executive-and-intergovernmental-affairs/news/minister-health-extends-public-health-emergency-0

COVID-19 Cases in Canada

Areas in Canada with cases of COVID-19 as of April 16, 2020, 11:00 a.m. EDT

Province, territory or other	Number of confirmed cases	Number of probable cases	Number of deaths
Newfoundland and Labrador	247	0	3
Prince Edward Island	26	0	0
Nova Scotia	549	0	3
New Brunswick	117	0	0
Quebec	14,860	0	487
Ontario	8,967	0	423
Manitoba	231	15	5
Saskatchewan	304	0	4
Alberta	1,996	0	48
British Columbia	1,561	0	75
Yukon	8	0	0
Northwest Territories	5	0	0
Nunavut	0	0	0
Repatriated travellers	13	0	0
Canada	28,884	15	1,048

Source: canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html?topic=tilelink

News from Other Provinces and Territories

The following provinces and territories have been monitored, but have not given any significant COVID-19 updates as of 16:00 MDT:

- Saskatchewan
- Nova Scotia
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Yukon

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