

A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Today's 2020-21 Budget Estimates are being delivered at a challenging time in our province, our country and the world.

Given everything that has changed in the past few weeks, some are asking – why go ahead with the Estimates at all today? Why not wait?

The key investments in this spending plan for the upcoming year provide stability and include significant spending lifts in many areas, including health, and significant economic stimulus through capital spending. The people of Saskatchewan need that right now. And if we didn't proceed with tabling the Estimates, we wouldn't be able to move ahead with any of these new spending initiatives or stimulus as we start the new fiscal year. So we need to move forward with the Estimates now.

Is it enough to fully address the impact of COVID-19 in Saskatchewan? Nothing is certain right now. More may have to be done to address both the health and economic impacts of COVID-19. At this point, the full impact of federal measures is uncertain. We may have to make adjustments to address the economic fallout caused by this pandemic. We fully recognize that this may mean a deficit.

Our Government will act to protect Saskatchewan people. We will take the necessary actions, provide the required resources, and provide regular financial updates throughout the year.

This year's Estimates include record spending for the Ministry of Health of \$5.77 billion, an increase of \$211 million or nearly 3.8 per cent from last year. That includes \$3.74 billion, an increase of \$140.6 million or nearly 4 per cent, for the Saskatchewan Health Authority. This funds the doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals who today are on the front lines in the battle against COVID-19, while at the same time meeting all the other health needs of Saskatchewan residents.

The 2020-21 Estimates will initiate \$2.7 billion in infrastructure investment that will be an economic stimulus and create jobs at this challenging time.

Fortunately, Saskatchewan is in a strong financial position to meet these challenges head on.

Saskatchewan has:

- one of the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratios in the country;
- \$1.3 billion in cash reserves;
- shifted reliance on resource revenues from a high of 32 per cent to the current 12 per cent, of which oil has declined from 13.3 per cent to 4.7 per cent.

The 2020-21 Estimates include a significant increase in health funding, it delivers significant capital funding to keep our economy strong, and the province is in a strong financial position to provide further resources as required to address the health and economic impacts of COVID-19.



Honourable Donna Harpauer
Minister of Finance