

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE



COMITÉ PERMANENT DES FINANCES

HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
OTTAWA, CANADA
K1A 0A6

OTTAWA, Friday, May 21, 2004

Subject: The 2004 pre-budget consultations

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance will be holding public hearings on the 2004 pre-budget consultations **from Monday September 27 to Friday November 5, 2004**. There will be hearings in Ottawa **from Monday, September 27 to Friday October 8, and from Monday November 1st to Friday, November 5 and the Committee will be traveling during the weeks of October 18 and October 25** (see appended plan for hearings. The main themes that the Committee would like to discuss are enclosed.

The Committee will also be proceeding with a pilot project, by holding two Town Hall meetings in Saskatoon, on Thursday, October 23 and in St-John's on Monday, October 25. More information on these meetings, which will be televised on CPAC, will be available on due course

Should an election be called, the Clerk of the Committee has been mandated to tentatively organize the public hearings.

If you would like to participate in the pre-budget consultations this Fall, I invite you to submit a written brief **no later than Monday, September 7, 2004**. The name, address and phone number of the association, organization or individual making the submission must be listed clearly on the title page. We would also like you to advise us **no later than Friday, August 6**, whether you intend either to submit a brief, or to submit a brief and to appear before the Committee, indicating the city of your choice.

Briefs must be sent to:

Richard Dupuis, Clerk
Standing Committee on Finance
Room 673, Wellington Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

In order to facilitate and expedite the translation and distribution process, you are encouraged to send your brief and indicate your intentions by e-mail to the following address: www.parl.ca/FINA-e. Information will be updated regularly on our Web site at www.parl.gc.ca/FINA-f.

In your e-mail, please indicate the following:

PBC 2004: the name of your Association; the name of the city where you wish to appear:

Example: PBC 2004: Go Transit; Victoria.

We will attempt to hear from the largest possible number of witnesses in the time available to us.

As in the past, your participation is essential to the success of the consultations, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Roy Cullen, M.P.
Etobicoke North, Ont.
Chair

THEMES FOR THE PBC 2004:

Increasingly, Canadian citizens are concerned about governments' fiscal transparency, accountability and allocation of their tax dollars. Citizens want to know that governments are spending on the highest priorities of Canadians, and that their funds are being spent wisely and carefully.

For governments, the process of developing a budget involves making choices. With limited funds available to address the priorities of Canadians, governments are unable to finance every program spending or tax proposal made by individuals and groups, no matter how worthy they may be.

The federal government's ongoing expenditure review process is one means by which the government can evaluate its fiscal choices to ensure that Canadians are being served as effectively and efficiently as possible, and in accordance with their priorities.

In order to engage Canadians in a dialogue about these priorities, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance will focus this year's pre-budget consultations on expenditure review, concentrating on the choices that Canadians and their federal government must face when evaluating spending, taxation and other proposals.

It is from this perspective that the Committee invites Canadians to contribute their ideas and to discuss their priorities for the federal government. Where possible, it would be appreciated if proposals submitted would include their potential costs, as well as an indication of what trade-offs – or spending or tax re-allocations – might be undertaken in order to finance these proposals.

The Committee invites groups and individuals to focus on the following questions:

- Is on going expenditure review a useful exercise?
- What should be the program spending, taxation and other priorities of the federal government in the next Budget?
- What is (are) the estimated cost(s) of your proposal(s)?
- If program spending reductions and/or tax changes were required to finance the cost of your proposal(s), which programs should have their funding reduced and/or what tax changes would you suggest?
- With the federal government's five-year tax reduction program ending this year, should the federal government institute another broadly based tax reduction program? If so, what taxes should be reduced and by how much?
- How can the federal government, working with the provinces and territories, achieve sustainability in health care, education and social program spending?

- What are your three most important spending, taxation and other priorities, among the following: health, education, infrastructure, defense, social programs, foreign aid, tax reductions and debt reduction?
- How important do you think it is for the federal government to maintain a balanced budget?

**THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE WILL
HOLD ITS PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THE PRE-
BUDGET CONSULTATIONS 2004**

From Monday, September 27 to Friday, November 5, 2004 (No.1)

IN THE FOLLOWING CITIES:

1. OTTAWA: There will be public hearings in Ottawa from Monday, September 27 to Friday, October 8 and from Monday, November 2 to Friday, November 5.

2. During the weeks of October 18 and of October 25, the Committee will hold public hearings in the following cities:

WEST: (WEEK OF OCTOBER 18, 2004)

Victoria: Monday, October 18 and Tuesday, October 19.

Calgary: Wednesday, October 20.

Saskatoon: Thursday, October 21.

- N.B.: Town hall public meeting in the morning.

Winnipeg: Friday, October 22.

EAST:(WEEK OF OCTOBER 25, 2004)

St-John's: Monday, October 25.

- N.B.: Town hall public meeting in the morning.

Fredericton: Tuesday, October 26.

Montreal: Wednesday, October 27.

Toronto: Thursday, October 28 and Friday, October 29.

For any additional information, please contact:

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