**Implementing Canada’s COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan**

On March 25, 2020, Bill C-13 (COVID19 Emergency Response Act) was passed by both the House of Commons and Senate, and subsequently received Royal Assent.

Bill C-13 introduces Canada’s Emergency Response Plan, which is designed to provide immediate help to Canadians and businesses who are most in need as a result of COVID-19. At the same time, Bill C-13 ensures that the Government of Canada has the tools and flexibility to respond to any emerging challenges.

The measures included in Bill C-13 now represent a total federal support package of $107-billion, which signifies an increase of $25-billion in new spending since last week.

**Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)**

To support workers and help businesses keep their employees, the government has established the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). This taxable benefit will provide $2,000 a month for up to four months for workers who lose their income as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The CERB is a simpler and more accessible combination of the previously announced Emergency Care Benefit and Emergency Support Benefit.

Eligible recipients include:

* workers who must stop working due to COVID19 and do not have access to paid leave or other income support.
* workers who are sick, quarantined, or taking care of someone who is sick with COVID-19.
* working parents who must stay home without pay to care for children that are sick or need additional care because of school and daycare closures.
* workers who still have their employment but are not being paid because there is currently insufficient work and their employer has asked them not to come to work.
* wage earners and self-employed individuals, including contract workers, who would not otherwise be eligible for Employment Insurance.

The Canada Emergency Response Benefit will be accessible through a secure web portal starting in early April. Applicants will also be able to apply via an automated telephone line or via a toll-free number.

The government anticipates that Canadians will begin to receive their CERB payments within 10 days of application. The CERB would be paid every four weeks and be available from March 15, 2020 until October 3, 2020.

**Additional Emergency Relief Measures**

Bill C-13 includes several emergency relief measures which have been previously announced by the federal government. These include:

* Introducing the Canada Emergency Response Benefit to provide $500 per week to Canadians who lose income due to COVID-19. This is a simpler more streamlined benefit comprised of both the care and support streams announced on March 18, 2020.
* Increasing the Canada Child Benefit by $300 per child for the 2019-20 benefit year. Qualifying parents will receive the extra amount as part of their May payment.
* Providing a special payment under the GST credit to low- and modest-income families.
* For individuals (other than trusts), the Income Tax return filing due date will be deferred until June 1, 2020.
* Any new income tax balances due, or instalments, will be deferred until after August 31, 2020 without incurring interest or penalties.
* Reducing the minimum RRIF withdrawal to help protect seniors’ retirement savings.

* Providing a temporary wage subsidy for three months to eligible small employers. Eligible employers include small businesses (including co-operative corporations) eligible for the small business deduction, unincorporated employers, non-profit organizations and charities.

* Helping prevent shortages of patented drugs or medical devices.

* Introducing a pause on the repayments of Canada Student Loans for six months.
* Supporting provinces and territories with a COVID-19 Response Fund including one-time funding of $500 million through the Canada Health Transfer.
* Providing additional flexibility to support businesses as necessary through EDC, BDC, Farm Credit Canada and the Canada Account.
* Supporting the mortgage financing market in Canada through enhancements to the CMHC.
* Increasing the protection of Canadians’ savings by providing the Minister of Finance with the flexibility to increase the CDIC’s deposit insurance limit.
* Allowing the Government of Canada to respond rapidly to COVID-19 developments by providing the Minister of Finance with additional flexibility to provide financial support.

Additional information on the federal government’s economic response to COVID-19 can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>

The text of Bill C-13 can be found here: <https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/43-1/bill/C-13/royal-assent>

**Emergency Order under the *Quarantine Act***

On March 25, 2020, the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health, announced an Emergency Order under the *Quarantine Act* that requires any person entering Canada by air, sea or land to self-isolate for 14 days, whether or not they have symptoms of COVID-19.

The Government of Canada will use its authority under the *Quarantine Act* to ensure compliance with the Order. Maximum penalties include a fine of up to $750,000 and/or imprisonment for six months.

Further, a person who causes a risk of imminent death or serious bodily harm to another person while willfully or recklessly contravening this Act or the regulations could be liable for a fine of up to $1,000,000 or to imprisonment of up to three years, or to both. Spot checks will be conducted by the Government of Canada to verify compliance.

All individuals permitted to enter Canada are subject to this Order, with the exception of certain persons who cross the border regularly to ensure the continued flow of goods and services, and those who provide essential services. Individuals exempt from the Order will still need to practice social distancing and self-monitoring and contact their local public health authority if they feel sick.