



NEWS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

September 11, 2020

Auditor general releases report on COVID-19 spending commitments, relief measures

VICTORIA – The new auditor general of British Columbia has released his first report since taking office, [*Summary of COVID-19 Pandemic Funding Allocations and Other Financial Relief Measures*](#).

This information report is a summary of funds announced by the government as part of its response to the pandemic. It includes funding allocations under the \$5-billion Pandemic Contingencies allocation, B.C.'s \$1-billion contribution toward a federal cost-sharing agreement, and other significant financial relief measures.

The information in the report—which was compiled from various government sources—provides a snapshot of known financial information as of August 18, 2020.

“This is timely information that legislators and the public can use to get a broad understanding of the financial aspects of the government’s response to the pandemic,” Pickup said. “It’s important to note, however, that the information in the report was not audited by my office.”

Report highlights include a detailed summary of the **\$5-billion Pandemic Contingencies allocation**:

\$3.5 billion has been reserved for individuals and households, critical services, and business and industry.

Of this money, the office was able to identify allocations totalling around **\$2.6 billion**.

That’s approximately:

- **\$1.9 billion** for individuals and households
- **\$642 million** for critical services, and
- **\$100 million** for business and industry

There’s also roughly **\$0.88 billion** that has not yet been identified.

The remaining **\$1.5 billion** has been set aside for economic recovery, but this money has not yet been allocated.

The Province also approved a **\$1 billion allocation** to participate in a cost-sharing agreement with the federal government as part of the **Safe Restart Agreement**. That money—as well as \$1 billion from the federal government—will go toward supporting recovery needs of transit services and local governments.



Additional financial relief and deferrals

In addition to the \$5-billion and \$1-billion funding allocations, the government has announced other financial relief measures.

“My office has identified approximately **\$1.6 billion** in other financial relief measures, as well as **\$6 billion** in deferrals,” said Pickup.

Those measures include:

- **\$914** million in revenue reductions
- **\$500** million for the one-time B.C. climate action tax credit, and
- **\$203** million in funding presumed to be from ministry base-budget allocations

- **\$6 billion** in deferrals, which includes the postponement of specific payments, fees, taxes or bills for businesses and individuals.

Looking ahead

“Given the emergent nature of the pandemic, the way that government allocates money will continue to shift,” Pickup said. “From here, my office is carefully considering options for future work. We may choose to audit certain aspects of the government’s pandemic preparedness, response, and recovery.”



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Related links

[Video - Summary of COVID-19 Pandemic Funding Allocations and Other Financial Relief Measures](#)

[Michael Pickup - Biography](#)

Auditor General Michael Pickup will answer questions pertaining to the report via a news conference.

About the news conference

Date: Friday, September 11, 2020

Time: 10:00 a.m. (Pacific time)

Dial-in information

From Vancouver: 604-681-0260

From elsewhere in Canada and the USA: 1-877-353-9184

Participant Pass Code: 32915#

During question and answer period

To ask a question: press *1

To exit the question queue: press *2

About the Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia

The auditor general is a non-partisan, independent officer of the legislature who reports directly to the legislative assembly. The *Auditor General Act* empowers the auditor general and staff to conduct audits, report findings and make recommendations.

Contact us

For general questions and interview requests:

Julie Gauthier, Communications Specialist

jgauthier@bcauditor.com

250-419-6204

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