Canada Activities

Federal Activities
On July 27, Bill C-20, An Act respecting further COVID-19 measures passed through the Senate and received Royal Assent. This bill included:

- support for persons with disabilities;
- an extension of time limits for court proceedings; and
- measures to extend the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) as well as to broaden eligibility;

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), in light of the COVID-19 situation, is extending the payment deadline and applying relief to interest on existing debt. The extension is being made until Sept. 30, 2020. The CRA is also waiving interest on existing tax debts related to individual, corporate, and trust income tax returns from April 1, 2020, to September 30, 2020 and from April 1, 2020, to June 30, 2020, for goods and services tax/harmonized sales tax (GST/HST) returns.

On July 27, the government announced more details on the Safe Restart agreement. The government will provide $4.28 billion to further expand testing and contact tracing capacity, and the associated data management and information sharing systems. This funding will ensure a national capacity to conduct 200,000 tests per day to help manage COVID-19 outbreaks over the coming year. Canada will also provide $7.5 billion towards personal protective equipment.

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) is temporarily reducing service hours at two ports of entry in Quebec, and one port in Manitoba, as follows.

- Clarenceville
  - Current hours of service: 8 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week
  - New CBSA temporary hours of service: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., seven days a week
- Stanstead (Rte 143)
  - Current hours of service: 24/7
  - New CBSA temporary hours of service: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week
- Crystal City
  - Current hours of service: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week
  - New CBSA temporary hours of service: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven days a week

These COVID-19 related measures are temporary and in effect as of July 23, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. EDT. They will remain in effect until further notice.

On July 24, Canada’s Trade Minister, Mary Ng, participated in a virtual APEC trade ministers meeting, in which she announced Canada’s intention to move forward with Phase II of the
APEC-Canada Growing Business Partnership. This aims to help innovative entrepreneurs start up and scale up their businesses and access resources and connections in the Asia-Pacific region with a focus on sustainable development. Phase II will help small businesses by reducing barriers to trade, giving back to their communities, and building economies that work for everyone—including women.

On July 21, the government announced the Essential Services Contingency Reserve, to which essential service organizations can apply for temporary, urgent access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and other critical supplies. To be eligible, the organization must provide essential services in the following areas: energy and utilities, information and communication technologies, finance, health, food, water, transportation, safety, government, and manufacturing.

Businesses can find more details on CEWS and the broadening of eligibility here. They include:

- Allowing the extension of the CEWS until November 21, 2020, and a further extension possibly through regulation until December 31, 2020.
- Making the subsidy accessible to a broader range of employers by including employers with a revenue decline of less than 30 percent and providing a gradually decreasing base subsidy to all qualifying employers. This would help many struggling employers with less than a 30 percent revenue loss get support to keep and bring back workers, while also ensuring those who have previously benefited could still qualify, even if their revenues recover and no longer meet the 30 per cent revenue decline threshold.
- Introducing a top-up subsidy of up to an additional 25 percent for employers that have been most adversely affected by the pandemic. This is noted as particularly helpful to employers in industries that are recovering more slowly.
- Providing certainty to employers that have already made business decisions for July and August by ensuring they would not receive a subsidy rate lower than they would have had under the previous rules.

The Emergency Processing Fund (EPF) continues to accept applications, with a closing date of July 31, 2020. The program is retroactive to March 15, 2020 and is cost shared. The EPF was established to incent strategic investments to maintain and increase domestic food production and processing capacity of goods critical to domestic food security during the COVID-19 pandemic, including supporting food processors to manage new challenges and adapt to health protocols. The program focuses on offsetting costs of more permanent solutions, such as plexiglass dividers and provisions for additional space to allow for social distancing, and not for disposable masks and gloves.

Alberta
AEM continues to monitor updates in the province.
Effective Jan. 1, 2021, Alberta’s government is introducing the Innovation Employment Grant (IEG). This program will promote economic growth and job creation by supporting small and medium-sized businesses that invest in research and development (R&D).

The Premier welcomed the Safe Restart Agreement with the federal government on July 17, and noted that “the agreement also includes new funding for sick leave pay and funding to help offset some of the lost operating revenue facing municipalities, including for public transit. We look forward to working with the municipalities on announcing the details of this new funding in the days ahead.”

British Colombia
AEM continues to monitor updates in the province.

On July 21, the province announced that the state of emergency would be extended until Tuesday, Aug. 4.

Manitoba
On July 23, the province released its Phase Four plan to restart the economy. Items moving forward with more limited implementation on July 25 include:

- maintaining current site capacity at 30 percent for faith-based services, pow wows, but eliminating the need for sub-groups (cohorts);
- allowing stage performances and opening movie theatres to a maximum capacity of 30 percent of the site, up to a maximum of 500 people;
- allowing casinos to open at a maximum of 30 percent of the site’s capacity; and
- allowing retail businesses and indoor recreation sites to use non-permeable barriers when distances of two meters cannot be maintained.

The province has put out a call for feedback on phase four of restoring services as part of the economic recovery roadmap. The survey can be filled out online here, and a teletown hall will take place on July 22.

On July 20, the province and the federal government announced a new $3-million cost-shared Canadian Agricultural Partnership program to support projects that will help agricultural processors mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The new COVID-19 Response Initiative will provide financial assistance to agri-food and agri-product processors, food distributors and agri-food industry organizations for:

- personal protective equipment and sanitation supplies;
- business continuity practices, training and resources to support COVID-19 mitigation; and
- beginning in September, financial assistance will also be available for materials, supplies, and equipment rentals needed to adapt production processes to meet social distancing and other precautions related to COVID-19.
On July 15, the province expanded the ‘back to work’ wage subsidy program. The enhanced Back to Work program will reimburse up to $5,000 for up to 10 new workers to a maximum of $50,000 per business, not for profit or charity. Businesses that have already benefited from provincial summer wage subsidies are eligible for this new wage subsidy benefit to hire or bring back an additional 10 employees.

On July 14, the province extended its state of emergency by another 30 days effective at 4 p.m.

New Brunswick
AEM continues to monitor updates in the province.

Newfoundland and Labrador
On July 24, the province released its 2020-21 Fiscal and Economic Update. The current projected deficit for the 2020-21 fiscal year is $2.1 billion, an increase of $1.35 billion from the original Budget 2019 projection from April 2019 of a $796 million deficit for 2020-21.

Nova Scotia
On July 24, the province announced mandatory masks in most indoor public spaces, starting July 31. This includes common areas of office buildings such as lobbies, elevators and hallways, but not private offices.

Ontario
On July 27, the province announced that, in partnership with the federal government, it is providing up to $4 billion in one-time assistance to Ontario's 444 municipalities. This funding will help local governments maintain the critical services people rely on every day, including public transit, over the next six to eight months. Details on specific allocations will be provided in the coming weeks. This funding is part of the province's made-in-Ontario plan for renewal, growth and economic recovery.

On July 22, the Ontario legislature adjourned for the summer after an extension in response to COVID-19.

On July 20, the province announced that more regions would enter stage 3 of reopening. As of Friday, July 24, the only regions that will not enter stage 3 are: Toronto, Peel, and Windsor-Essex.

On July 16, the province announced an expansion of the Risk Management Program for farmers by $50 million for an annual total of $150 million.

On July 16, Ontario extended its emergency orders until July 29.

Prince Edward Island
AEM continues to monitor updates in the province.

Quebec
The grace period for the mandatory wearing of mask on ferries has now ended. As of July 27, access will be refused to customers who do not comply with this directive, in all installations of all STQ crossings.

On July 23, the province announced that as of Aug. 3, the maximum number of people allowed for indoor and outdoor events will increase from 50 to 250 people.

Saskatchewan
On July 27, the province announced the Saskatchewan Chemical Fertilizer Incentive (SCFI) program. A SaskFirst new growth tax incentive, the SCFI program is aimed to help attract new capital investments in large-scale chemical fertilizer production facilities in Saskatchewan, while creating new construction and operational jobs in the province.