



May 22, 2020

The Honourable Jeremy Harrison, E.C.S., M.L.A.
Government House Leader
Room 346 Legislative Building
REGINA SK S4S 0B3

Dear Minister Harrison:

Thank you for your letter of May 21, 2020. Your proposal for an abbreviated session represents a significant departure from what was agreed to when all members supported your motion ordering "that when the Assembly reconvenes, the rules of the parliamentary calendar shall apply and the completion day of the session will be set in accordance with the rules." As such, it falls short of the time normally allotted for scrutiny of the budget, for Question Period and for review and oversight of measures your government is taking in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Given our agreement in March indicated clearly that a full budget would be both presented and debated, I would appreciate an explanation for why such a measure, adapted to the physical distancing requirements of the day, is not possible at this time. The 28 sitting days and the Question Period that accompany those days are essential elements of democratic oversight in our province and should not be disregarded lightly.

Question Period is a critical function of the Legislature. A proposal that involves 5 Question Periods is utterly insufficient.

However, because we believe wholeheartedly in the importance of democratic oversight, please see our response to your proposal which includes a total of 14 sitting days:

- That June 15 proceed as outlined in your letter with the adoption of a report from the House Services Committee to modify the rules, Budget Day, a budget motion introduced by the Finance Minister, a vote to follow immediately after one speaker from the Official Opposition, and the confirmation of Mr. Herauf.
- That regular sittings be held on June 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25, 29, and 30 and July 6 and 7 with Routine Proceedings each day. This must include Question Period on each sitting day.
- That Standing Committees consider the Estimates for a total of 60 hours.
- That July 8 be the day prior to Completion Day for the purpose of Rule 34(1). After Routine Proceedings, including Question Period, there will be 3 hours for the consideration of Executive

Council Estimates in the Committee of the Whole, followed by consideration of the Appropriation Bill.

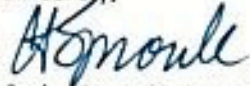
- That July 9 be the final day of the sitting with Routine Proceedings, including Question Period, followed by speeches from members not standing for reelection at Orders of the Day. After these speeches the Assembly will adjourn to the call of the government.
- That each sitting day be attended by 5 members of the Official Opposition Caucus and 10 members of the Government Caucus, in addition to the Speaker and a limited number of Legislative Assembly Service Staff, as outlined in your letter.

This schedule represents a significantly reduced sitting schedule from what was agreed to in March but allows the Official Opposition the opportunity to fulfill our duty to the people of Saskatchewan by submitting your government's choices to the appropriate scrutiny.

This also represents a significantly shorter period than the summer session that was just announced in the Legislative Assembly of Alberta. We continue to be of the view that government has failed to articulate a reason why a legislative sitting that respects physically distancing cannot be conducted with the previously agreed-upon timelines.

I trust you will find this proposal strikes the appropriate balance between the challenges of the current moment and our responsibility as elected members. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Cathy Sproule, M.L.A.

Official Opposition House Leader