

# HOW TO STOP WASTING MONEY



When I argue that the government should reduce spending, someone often says it wouldn't be right to cut health care or other benefits. I agree, but there is plenty of waste in government spending. Some examples:

- The government will spend \$21.4 billion on outside consultants this year, with little accountability for what is actually produced. (For context, Canada's Defence budget is \$24.3 billion.)



- This might be justified if it reduced the size of the public service proportionately. It hasn't. The public service has grown 31% since the Liberals took office in 2015, from 257,034 to 335,957 employees. Government estimates show it will continue to grow to 409,000 by 2026.
- Interest payments to service our \$1.1 trillion national debt will reach \$38 billion this year, not even taking into account the need to pay back the principal amount of the debt. (For context, federal transfers to the provinces for health care will be \$49 billion this year.)



Calgary hosted the Strathcona Cup, the world's oldest international curling competition. Commissioned by Lord Strathcona in 1909, it occurs every five years between Canada & Scotland. I was honoured to throw the ceremonial first rock and to welcome the visiting Scots.



- The CBC receives more than \$1.2 billion in taxpayer subsidies. Last year, the CBC awarded \$16 million in bonuses to 1,142 employees - an average of \$14,000 per employee. Another \$12.5 million was paid in raises to 6,232 employees - 80% of the workforce. Conservatives believe the CBC should compete with other news outlets on a level playing field.
- Canada sent 276 delegates to the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow at a cost of over \$1 million. (By comparison, the USA, with 10 times Canada's population, sent only 133 delegates.)
- The ArriveCAN app was budgeted at \$80,000 but ballooned to \$54 million. The contract was awarded to a two-person home-based business which subcontracted the work to six multinationals while retaining 15%-30% commissions.
- The Auditor General estimates the government paid \$32 billion to ineligible individual and business recipients in COVID supports, including to businesses that paid bonuses to executives and dividends to shareholders. The Canada Revenue Agency now says it wouldn't be worth the effort to review most of the files and try to recover the funds.

There are dozens more examples, from \$100,000 catering bills on government aircraft, to \$12 million for profitable Loblaws to buy new refrigerators, to \$15 billion in various corporate welfare subsidies. There are plenty of options to cut waste to lower inflation, reduce taxes, help Canadians, and preserve programs like health care. 🍁



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## TIME TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT CANADA'S ECONOMY

As I write this, the federal budget has not yet been released. I will send an analysis next month. In the meantime, here's what I'll be looking for:

### 1. Lower Prices

Cost of Living is the number one concern raised by Rocky Ridge constituents, and no wonder. The rate of inflation is easing modestly (the current 5.9% inflation rate just means prices are going up slightly more slowly than before - but they aren't coming down).

Food inflation remains over 10%. The mortgage interest cost index rose 21.2% in January, the largest increase since September 1982.

The government claims it can do nothing to ease inflation because it is a worldwide problem, but that's just not true. They can - and must - take action.

They must start by pulling back spending. Too much money in the economy causes inflation: too much cash chasing too few goods. It is a vicious circle - government sends cash to Canadians to ease the pain of inflation, but that extra cash causes more inflation. No one wants vulnerable Canadians to suffer, but the government has plenty of wasted spending it could cut instead. I've listed examples on the back page.

### 2. Taxes

The government must also stop raising taxes. The carbon tax, in particular, is actually designed to increase inflation because it adds costs at every stage of the supply chain.

The carbon tax went up 30% (from \$50 to \$65/tonne) on April 1<sup>st</sup>. You'll see that increase on your utility bill and at the gas pump. It will likely cause another spike in food prices due to transportation costs.

They should also cancel the tax increase on beer, wine and spirits that took effect April 1<sup>st</sup>, and repeal the escalator that automatically increases the tax every year.

### 3. Responsible Resource Development

Alberta's resource industry is well aware of their responsibilities and is investing in technology to bring down emissions. Exporting Canada's cleaner LNG should be a priority. Federal regulations like Bill C-69 continue to prevent Canada from helping to meet global demand for energy. These federal regulations mean lost Canadian job opportunities, in favour of foreign producers. 🍁

Pat Kelly

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# GOVERNING THE INTERNET

The government has presented a slate of bills designed to tackle issues associated with the internet. These are at various stages of review, but given the Liberal-NDP partnership, we can expect them to become law.

## Bill C-11: the Online Streaming Act

Bill C-11 is intended to give the Canada Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) authority over internet content similar to what they exercise over commercial radio and TV. It would add audio and video, such as YouTube and podcasts, to CRTC jurisdiction. The CRTC could make that content subject to regulations and even taxes; and could compel algorithms to be manipulated so that you see approved "Canadian Content" in your searches or feeds before seeing other content. The CRTC also decides what "Canadian Content" is.

One controversial aspect applies to "user generated content" - audio or video that individuals post. The government says the bill is not intended to regulate that content, but when an amendment was proposed to make that perfectly clear, the Liberals and NDP refused to accept it. Experts testified that the bill will give the CRTC the power to regulate individuals' public postings and may actually harm Canadian content creators.

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"Madam Speaker, if this bill does not affect what Canadians will post, why did the government choose to remove the amendment that would have explicitly said that? ... they have refused to explicitly exclude content posted by Canadians. Why?"

Pat Kelly, MP  
House of Commons, March 9, 2023

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## Bill C-18: the Online News Act

The Liberal government says **Bill C-18** is intended to help finance Canadian news by requiring internet platforms like Meta and Google to pay news producers for content that is "made available" in searches, feeds and indexes.

Who benefits from a link being "made available"? Are the platforms benefitting from displaying news that other people wrote? Or are the publishers benefitting from the free, widespread distribution of their product, and from the people who click through to the publishers' websites?

Another issue is that "made available" doesn't mean anyone reads the content - merely that it is listed in searches or indexes. In other words, the platforms must pay simply to display the links. They may, therefore, choose not to offer Canadian links at all.

This bill may have significant consequences. It may limit what news is made available to Canadians. It may incentivize "click bait" stories or headlines. It will likely funnel most of the funds to the big mainstream media outlets at the expense of local, niche interest or independent journalism. This bill may also result in little or no income for Canadian producers if platforms choose not to pay in order to display their links.

## Bill C-27: Digital Charter Implementation

Privacy is important to our security, but the digital age makes that more and more difficult. Some information we make voluntarily available, but other information is collected by big companies and governments, with or without our consent, and used for their own purposes. The Liberal government says Bill C-27 is intended to give Canadians more control over their digital information by creating three new acts governing consumer privacy, data protection, and artificial intelligence.

The main problem is that Bill C-27 isn't strong enough or clear enough. The need for privacy protection is significant, but this legislation is both vague and weak. 🍁



Representatives from The Health & Social Research Centre (HSRC), who offer Empowering Seniors for Quality Life (ESQ), visited my office. ESQ empowers low-income, disabled seniors who are new to Canada by providing information and services to support healthy aging.



Congratulations to all new citizens in Calgary Rocky Ridge. I welcomed new citizen Alyaa Ammar.



On Feb 24, I joined hundreds of Calgarians for a candle-lit vigil in support of the Ukrainian people, with MPs Jasraj Singh Hallan, Tom Kmiec, and Greg McLean.



Many brave people were "Freezin' for a Reason" in Arbour Lake on Feb 11 at the Polar Plunge to support Special Olympics. Thanks to everyone who showed their support for this well-attended annual event.

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"Does this bill [C-27] cut it? I would say no. This bill is too vague. It has too few details and leaves too many unanswered questions. ... This bill is a missed opportunity to get something right that has long been wrong. The failures of the existing privacy laws have been known for a very long time. The government has had a long time to get it right, and it has not done so. ... Furthermore, if this bill passes, a number of these questions will simply be settled by the minister and departmental bureaucrats rather than through parliamentary oversight. ... I am not going to support it. It is not strong enough to warrant approval."

Pat Kelly, MP  
House of Commons, March 7, 2023

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Read the entire speech on my website at [PatKellyMP.ca](http://PatKellyMP.ca).

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