



2018-19 BUDGET ADDRESS
"ON TRACK"

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Minister of Finance
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Check against delivery

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Speaker, colleagues, and visitors....

Mr. Speaker, today I have the great honour and responsibility of delivering my first budget as Saskatchewan's Finance Minister.

For the past few weeks, this budget speech has been just about the only thing I could think about.

But then, on Friday evening, that changed.

Everything changed.

Because Mr. Speaker, I'm also the MLA for Humboldt...

And this past Friday, Humboldt suffered its darkest day.

It's the kind of unimaginable tragedy that no community should ever have to endure.

So that's what I have been thinking about these past few days.

I've been thinking about the heroic response of the medical professionals and first responders, who saved lives and prevented this horrible tragedy from being even worse.

I've been thinking about the doctor who said parents were actually happy when he described their sons' serious injuries, because it meant their boy was alive, and they knew others were not.

I've been thinking about all of those parents, the ones whose boys were injured, and the ones who received the worst news they will ever hear.

I've been thinking about my community of Humboldt - how everyone has pulled together to help and support one another.

Mr. Speaker, Humboldt is strong.

And somehow, we will figure out a way to get through this.

But it's going to be tough.

Mr. Speaker, I've been thinking about the overwhelming love and support that Humboldt and the team and the families have received from people throughout Saskatchewan and across Canada and around the world.

But most of all, I've been thinking about the 15 (number may rise) lives that were cut short far too soon.

So Mr. Speaker, even though I haven't thought much about this budget speech in the last few days,...

The business of the province goes on, and it's my job to deliver a budget,...so I will.

But first, I would like to ask the Assembly and all of the guests who have joined us here today to honour the memory of those we have lost in a moment of silence.

I am honoured to rise in this Assembly to present our government's 2018-19 Budget.

... [The Minister acknowledges family, friends, special guests.] ...

Mr. Speaker, it means a lot to me that my daughters are here today.

When I first decided to enter politics back in 1999,...

I was a mother of three young children with absolutely no political experience.

I could not have ever imagined that I would one day have the great honour and responsibility of standing in this Assembly,...

And delivering the provincial budget on behalf of the Government and the people of Saskatchewan.

But you know what would have been even harder to imagine back in 1999?

It would have been even harder to imagine at the time that 19 years later,...

My now-adult children would still be living and working and raising families right here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, that's one of the main reasons I entered politics—so that my kids and everyone else's kids would at least have the chance to stay in this great province.

So it means a lot to me to say that my daughters and their families are not just visiting Saskatchewan today.

This is their home,... and this is their Legislative Assembly.

And this will be the longest they will ever have listened to me without interrupting.

Mr. Speaker, our government has a plan, and that plan is on track.

One year ago, our government charted a three-year course to reduce our province's dependency on resource revenues, and to balance the budget by 2019.

Today's budget keeps that plan on track by controlling government spending,...

By making important investments in health care, education and social services for Saskatchewan people,...

And by keeping our economy strong.

At the same time, we have listened to Saskatchewan people...

We have a new Premier who has listened to Saskatchewan people...

And we heard that some adjustments were needed to the course we charted in last year's budget.

That's why even before today's budget, the Premier made two important announcements,...

Increasing education funding,... and reinstating the PST exemption on life, health, and agricultural insurance.

Mr. Speaker, there is another important issue where our new Premier and our government have listened to the people of Saskatchewan.

As you know, today we face deadlines, threats and ultimatums from a federal government intent on imposing a carbon tax on Saskatchewan families.

There are some who say we should wave the white flag and surrender to those threats.

But the overwhelming majority of Saskatchewan people say no.

Mr. Speaker, our Premier has listened,...

Our government has listened,...

And this budget contains NO carbon tax.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people have told us they want their government to maintain a strong and steady course towards a balanced budget.

This budget accomplishes that—keeping Saskatchewan on track to return to a balanced budget in 2019-20, ensuring that programs and services are sustainable now, and in the future.

It keeps our province on track by carefully controlling spending while balancing the need to support growth in the economy.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has enjoyed a decade of growth that has seen our population grow by about 160,000 people

Our government always has supported that growth by making major investments in much-needed infrastructure.

Once again, in this budget, our government is investing in schools.

We are investing in roads and highways.

And we are investing in hospitals.

In fact, two major new hospitals will open by the end of next year.

In this budget, we are continuing to invest in the priorities of Saskatchewan people—in particular, in health care, education, and social services.

And we are able to make all of these investments in this budget with no increases to tax rates.

That means all provincial tax rates, including those for sales tax, income tax, and Education Property Tax, remain the same.

This budget does remove the PST exemption for used light vehicles, effective April 11.

This aligns the Province's tax treatment of used light vehicles with every other jurisdiction in Canada that has a sales tax.

The trade-in allowance, to allow a deduction for the value of a trade-in when determining PST, is being reinstated.

So PST will only be paid on the difference in price between the trade-in and the purchased vehicle.

PST will not be charged for used vehicles gifted between qualifying family members—spouses, parents or legal guardians, children, grandparents, grandchildren, and siblings.

And unique to Saskatchewan, PST will not be applied to the private sale of used vehicles with a purchase price of up to \$5,000.

FISCAL PICTURE

Mr. Speaker, our government's financial plan is on track to return Saskatchewan to balance, with a steadily improving outlook over the next four years.

A deficit of \$365 million is projected for this fiscal year.

A return to balance is expected in 2019-20—with a modest projected surplus of \$6 million.

Higher surpluses of \$108 and \$212 million respectively are forecast for 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Revenue is forecast at \$14.24 billion in this budget, up about \$80 million from last year—largely due to higher non-renewable resource revenue, net income from Government Business Enterprises, and other own-source revenue.

Revenue from taxation is forecast to be lower—largely due to lower personal and corporate income tax revenue, offset by higher revenue from the Provincial Sales Tax.

Non-renewable resource revenue now accounts for just 10 percent of the province's total revenue, down from a high of 32 percent in 2008-09.

One of the main goals of our three-year budget plan was to reduce Saskatchewan's reliance on resource revenue, and that plan is on track.

Our government continues to control spending, and expense is forecast at \$14.61 billion in this budget, down from last year by \$200 million.

CONTROLLING SPENDING

Many ministries and agencies will spend less in this budget, compared to the last fiscal year, while continuing to provide valued core services and programs.

Controlling compensation costs, the largest single budgetary expense for Government, is key to keeping Saskatchewan's fiscal plan on track.

Employers and unions understand the fiscal environment and continue to bargain in good faith.

Through the bargaining process, fair and equitable agreements will be reached.

Beyond negotiated settlements, we've targeted the achievement of \$70 million in savings over two years—\$35 million in this budget, and another \$35 million in the next.

These savings will be accomplished largely through efficiency initiatives and attrition, as part our government's commitment to return to balance in 2019-20.

An example of positive change that is achieving both savings and efficiencies, while still delivering the best possible service to Saskatchewan people, is the creation of a single Saskatchewan Health Authority.

Consolidating the 12 regional authorities was completed last year to improve front-line patient care for Saskatchewan people.

Greater Health Authority integration and coordination has saved \$19 million in this budget—largely through lower salary and board of director costs and the amalgamation of IT services.

That's a \$19 million a year reduction in administration costs that can now be re-directed to front-line services.

A second example comes from the Ministry of Central Services, which reduced the number of government-owned vehicles—saving more than \$5 million.

Those are just two among many examples of Government improving services while controlling spending to meet the challenge of lower revenue and the needs of a growing province.

Overall, Government expense was down 2 percent in 2016-17 from the previous year.

In the fiscal year just completed, expense is also forecast to be down 2 percent.

And in this budget, expense is forecast to be down 1.4 percent from the previous year's budget, and about the same as projected in the recent Third Quarter report.

DELIVERING HIGH-QUALITY SERVICES

Controlling spending ensures our government can continue to provide Saskatchewan people with the high-quality programs and services they expect and deserve today, and that those services are sustainable into the future.

This budget invests a record \$5.77 billion to improve health care for all Saskatchewan people, up nearly 2.5 percent from last year.

That includes \$3.5 billion for Saskatchewan Health Authority operating funding, up nearly \$72 million from total funding last year to the 12 regional authorities.

This budget provides funding to prepare for the opening of Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford later this year, as well as the 2019 opening of the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital in Saskatoon.

Targeted funding in this budget will improve access to mental health, palliative care, and community-based primary health-care services.

We're also investing an additional \$700,000 this year to ensure universal 100 percent coverage of HIV drugs for Saskatchewan people, as well as provide additional HIV supports.

We're also investing more than \$520,000 this year in a new program to ensure that babies born in Saskatchewan hospitals are screened for hearing loss.

Another new program will fulfil our government's commitment to provide individualized funding for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Initial funding of \$4,000 per child under the age of six will be provided this year, for a total investment in this budget of \$2.8 million.

Mr. Speaker, the success of Saskatchewan students continues to be a priority of our government.

This budget keeps Saskatchewan on track by providing a high-quality education for all Kindergarten to Grade 12 students across Saskatchewan, and fulfills the Premier's commitment to increase education funding by \$30 million.

As a result, Saskatchewan's 27 school divisions will receive \$1.87 billion in school operating funding for the 2018-19 school year, up 1.6 percent compared to last year.

This will allow school divisions to continue to support the classroom by maintaining or hiring up to 400 teachers and other in-school professionals.

This budget also provides nearly \$77 million in child-care funding, including \$20.8 million in new federal funding through the Canada-Saskatchewan Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

This will support more than 16,000 existing licensed child-care spaces in Saskatchewan, and help create 2,500 more spaces by 2020.

Last year we heard from Saskatchewan people about the importance of our libraries.

In this budget, libraries across Saskatchewan will continue to receive significant support through operating funding of more than \$11 million.

Mr. Speaker, a stable post-secondary education sector is crucial to our plan to keep Saskatchewan on track.

This year's advanced education budget is up 1.5 percent to a total of \$729 million.

That level of funding lets us provide stable funding to post-secondary institutions across Saskatchewan—with operating grants to our universities, colleges and technical schools maintained at last year's levels.

This budget provides more than \$673 million in operating and capital grants to post-secondary institutions, including:

- \$470 million to the University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina, and federated and affiliated colleges.
- \$151 million to Saskatchewan Polytechnic, the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, and Gabriel Dumont Institute.
- \$30 million to Saskatchewan's regional colleges.
- And more than \$22 million for capital repairs and maintenance throughout the post-secondary sector.

Nearly \$88 million is allocated in this budget to the U of S College of Medicine—helping to ensure a successful College that provides quality medical education.

Saskatchewan's post-secondary students will also benefit from \$34 million in direct financial supports provided for in this budget.

That includes \$22 million for the student loan program, to provide repayable and non-repayable financial assistance to about 16,000

students—as well as \$12 million for scholarships such as the Saskatchewan Advantage and Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity scholarships.

This budget also continues the Graduate Retention Program, one of the most aggressive and successful youth-retention programs in Canada—providing up to \$20,000 in income tax credits to post-secondary graduates who live and work in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this budget also keeps Saskatchewan on track by helping people in need.

The budget for social services and assistance will increase by \$25 million to a record \$1.38 billion.

This funding will help support Saskatchewan people who are most vulnerable: children in need, at-risk families, people experiencing disability, seniors, and people with low incomes.

More than \$10 million of this year's funding increase will be targeted to those in communities who provide direct daily care to adults with intellectual disabilities or mental health challenges,...

This includes funding increases for foster families, community-based organizations that deliver day programs and residential services to people with intellectual disabilities, and other CBOs that provide family-focused services.

This year's Social Services budget also contains additional increases that will support at-risk children and adults with intellectual disabilities, including:

- Nearly \$10 million to continue moving people from Valley View Centre to new community-based homes.

- \$9 million to provide services for children with intellectual disabilities aging into adult care, as well as for adults with intellectual disabilities whose needs have increased or who are in crisis.
- \$4.5 million for extended family members who are caring for at-risk children and youth, keeping those young people connected to family, community and culture.
- And \$250,000 to operate a new group home in La Ronge for five adults with intellectual disabilities.

The budget for the Saskatchewan Assistance Program will increase this year by more than \$14 million, to about \$178 million, due to caseload growth.

A further investment this year of \$9.2 million will support the ongoing redesign the Province's suite of income assistance programs.

Our government is working to improve those programs for clients by making them more user-friendly—increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

Given the significant increase in overall social services funding in this budget, we decided to review all current social programs and services to ensure dollars are spent where they do the most good.

One of the things we looked at carefully was the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement.

We decided to keep this benefit in place for people who currently receive it, as well as extend it to those who apply by June 30 of this year and are deemed eligible.

As of July 1 the intake of new applications for the supplement will be suspended.

Social Services will be co-developing a new rental support program with the Federal Government as part of the new National Housing Strategy.

No one who currently receives this supplement will experience any change.

And there's a window of about 12 weeks for those who apply and meet eligibility requirements to receive the supplement.

In making this decision, we noted that Saskatchewan's vacancy rate was about 4.5 percent in 2005 when the supplement was introduced.

In contrast, Saskatchewan now has the highest vacancy rate among western Canadian provinces—at nearly 9 percent in 2017, according to CMHC data.

And vacancy rates in our government owned social housing units are also at an all-time high.

With this improvement in the rental housing market, it makes sense to focus funding in other areas of social services and assistance where the needs are more pressing.

Throughout 2018-19, our government, through the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, will work closely with the federal government and its provincial-territorial partners to ensure that the new National Housing Strategy benefits Saskatchewan people who need housing.

The Seniors' Education Property Tax Deferral Program is now available through Sask Housing.

About 1,600 low- to moderate-income senior homeowners will be able to defer the education portion of their property taxes through a repayable loan—giving them more financial flexibility and helping them stay in their homes longer.

Mr. Speaker, our government understands that many rural residents have very legitimate concerns about crime and safety, and that more needs to be done.

In this budget our government continues to address the problem of rural crime by funding the Protection and Response Team that was launched last summer.

The Team consists of 258 armed officers who will have arrest and detention powers—including municipal police, RCMP, Ministry of Highways Vehicle Enforcement Officers, and Ministry of Environment Conservation Officers.

This budget provides \$4.9 million in new funding from SGI for enhancements to the Rural Crime Strategy.

This includes funding for an additional 30 police positions for phase two of the Province's Combined Traffic Safety Services unit.

This budget also provides continued annual funding of \$1 million from the Ministry of Corrections and Policing to address other recommendations of the Caucus Committee on Crime.

We're confident the Protection and Response Team will prove an effective long-term strategy for crime reduction in rural Saskatchewan.

Since being announced in August 2017, the Team has made significant progress—including the reassignment of 10 RCMP positions to provide relief to detachments experiencing staff shortages,...

And completion of Saskatchewan's first Rural Crime Innovation Challenge, which led to development of an app-based tracking system to alert land owners about irregular activity related to their property.

This budget also supports expansion of the remand initiatives led by the ministries of Justice and Corrections and Policing.

Most of the population growth in our province's jails is driven by remand.

Encouragingly, our government's remand initiatives have achieved positive results.

It makes sense to expand and fine-tune these programs over the next year.

Additional funding in this budget of nearly \$2.4 million will be used to expand the Early Case Resolution program to Regina and add more dedicated staff in Saskatoon who will focus on short-term remand during weekdays.

The added funding will also be used to extend Enhanced Bail Supervision partnerships from Regina to Saskatoon and Prince Albert.

INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Speaker, this budget continues our government's long-standing commitment to investing in infrastructure.

Highways spending over the last three fiscal years has been nearly double the fuel tax collected into our Highways budget—a far cry from the days when the fuel tax actually exceeded Highways spending.

This year, major safety improvements are coming to many of Saskatchewan's busiest highways as part of this year's \$924 million highways and infrastructure budget.

With this year's budget, our government has now invested more than \$3 billion into highways and infrastructure over the past three years.

A decade of growth is changing traffic demands on our province's transportation system.

Our government understands the need to make our busiest highways safer, and we're also committed to getting our exports to market faster and more efficiently.

This coming year, about \$51 million will be invested in several major safety projects:

- We'll begin a series of twinning and passing lane projects on Highways 6 and 39 between Regina and Estevan.
- Work will continue on the Warman and Martensville interchanges, and on twinning Highway 7 between Vanscoy and Delisle.
- Two sets of passing lanes will be built on Highway 4 between North Battleford and Cochin.
- Pre-construction and design work will begin for passing lanes on Highway 7 between Rosetown and the Alberta border, and on Highways 9 and 10 between Melville and Canora.
- And pre-construction and design work will begin for passing lanes, widening, and repaving on Highway 5 between Highway 2 and Saskatoon.

In addition, this year's budget provides for 800 kilometres of highway improvements across the province.

100 kilometres of rural highways will be upgraded including:

- Highway 4 between Val Marie and Cadillac.
- Highway 36 between Highway 18 and Willow Bunch.
- And Highway 255 south and west of Tobin Lake.

And 700 highway kilometres will be renewed through seal coats, microsurfacing and other types of medium paving, as well as 280 kilometers of full repaving on highways such as:

- Highway 2 south of Chamberlain.
- Highway 35 south of Weyburn.
- And Highway 4 north of North Battleford.

This year's budget provides \$330 million for continued work on Phase II of the Regina Bypass, to be completed in late 2019.

\$61 million has been allocated for 30 bridge rehabilitation or replacement projects and numerous culvert projects.

This budget also provides \$21 million in grants to support municipal transportation infrastructure—including \$6.7 million to urban municipalities such as Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, and Melfort through the Urban Highway Connector Program.

\$13 million will be used to repair or prevent flood damage, including:

- Landslide and erosion repairs on Highway 11 near Lumsden and Highway 9 north of Whitewood.
- And the installation of larger culverts on Highway 1 near Wolseley.

This budget also includes more than \$123 million in provincial support for municipal infrastructure, including:

- Nearly \$74 million for the provincial portion of the New Building Canada Fund, and \$12.5 million for the provincial portion of the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund.
- \$15 million to complete our government's \$50-million commitment to Saskatoon's new North Commuter Parkway Bridge—which will open this fall, improving traffic flow and safety in Saskatchewan's largest city.
- And \$14 million for the Municipal Roads for the Economy Program.

We are also continuing to build and upgrade schools, with school infrastructure investments totaling \$76.4 million in this budget, including:

- Nearly \$50 million for preventative maintenance, renewal and emergency funding, up almost 15 percent compared to last year.
- More than \$22 million to fund two ongoing major school consolidation projects in Rosthern and Weyburn.
- And more than \$4 million for relocatable classrooms and school facility assessments.

Also in this budget, we're continuing to fund the construction and maintenance of hospitals and other health facilities.

This budget provides more than \$99 million in health capital funding, up more than \$15 million, or nearly 18 percent, compared to last year.

That includes \$20 million as the final installment of our government's total \$235.5 million construction commitment for the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital.

An additional \$6.6 million is being provided to the Children's Hospital for information technology needs.

And more than \$7 million has been allocated for electrical renewal projects at other provincial hospitals.

This budget also provides \$34 million to complete construction of a unique 284-bed psychiatric care facility, Saskatchewan Hospital North Battleford, scheduled to open this fall.

The hospital replaces a facility that is more than 100 years old, and includes secure beds to provide mental health care for people in custody—a step forward in breaking the cycle of crime and victimization.

KEEPING OUR ECONOMY STRONG

Mr. Speaker, this budget also provides stable, predictable funding for municipalities and nearly a quarter-billion dollars in Municipal Revenue Sharing—an increase of nearly 90 percent since 2007.

This amount is set through an established funding formula of one point of the PST collected in 2016-17.

Due to the recent expansion of the PST base, the one-point Municipal Revenue Sharing formula will need to be revised.

As announced at the recent SUMA and SARM Conventions, government officials will conduct a thorough review of the current Municipal Revenue Sharing program in consultation with SUMA and SARM.

The government remains committed to providing predictable and stable funding to municipalities.

In total, this budget provides nearly \$413 million of direct provincial support to municipalities including revenue sharing, infrastructure funding, and other community services.

Municipal Revenue Sharing of \$241 million in this budget remains on track at near-record highs, with the following allocations:

- \$155 million to urban municipalities;
- More than \$68 million to rural municipalities;
- And \$18 million to northern municipalities.

Our government continues to support programs and initiatives specifically targeted to First Nations and Metis people.

The 2018-19 budget provides about \$200 million for targeted program funding for First Nations and Metis organizations and individuals.

Much of this funding is provided for educational and career-training programs to ensure First Nations and Metis people have every opportunity to succeed and be full participants in Saskatchewan's growing economy.

Mr. Speaker, our government also remains steadfast in our commitment to Saskatchewan's petroleum and mining industries—recognizing that they play a major role in keeping our economy strong.

This budget will help ensure our energy and resource sectors continue to thrive and contribute to Saskatchewan's economic growth.

Major initiatives include \$750,000 for a new four-year Mineral Development Strategy to create an incentive program to encourage mineral exploration and increase the amount of available geophysical data.

The new Strategy will focus on base and precious metals and on diamond commodities, for which there is significant unrealized potential—to help grow and diversify Saskatchewan's mineral sector.

The new Strategy will encourage industry to conduct more exploration in Saskatchewan, as well as protect jobs in our current mining centers in the north.

A key emphasis will be to encourage base metal exploration in the Creighton-Denare Beach area, which has a long history of base metal mining and processing.

In addition, this budget provides \$1 million to continue enhancement of IRIS—the Integrated Resource Information System—for the Pipeline Regulation Enhancement Program.

IRIS is a custom-built, online business system that supports the development and regulation of Saskatchewan's oil and gas industry.

This continues our government's commitment, announced last year, for a multi-year program to strengthen pipeline regulation in Saskatchewan.

With the changes announced today, our government is on track to deliver on our commitment to significantly improve Saskatchewan's oil and gas regulatory programs.

This budget also creates opportunities for increased trade, business investment, and job creation.

Our province has the highest goods-exported-per-capita of all Canadian provinces.

STEP—the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership—is responsible for increasing Saskatchewan’s exports to existing markets and tapping into new markets by initiating sales, contracts, and projects for our exporters.

This budget allocates an additional \$250,000 to STEP.

This funding will go to programs that support the efforts of Saskatchewan exporters to increase activity in both new and existing markets.

This will create jobs and further expand Saskatchewan’s access to trade markets around the world.

New business incentives in this budget include the Saskatchewan Technology Start-up Incentive, which aims to create the conditions for continued rapid growth and success of newly-emerging technology companies.

This incentive bolsters our government’s Innovation Strategy by helping to retain technology start-ups in Saskatchewan.

This two-year pilot program will offer a 45 percent non-refundable tax credit for individual and corporate equity investments in eligible technology start-up businesses, capped at a maximum annual benefit of \$140,000 per investor.

The tax credit is also available to eligible Venture Capital Corporations that invest in eligible technology start-ups.

To be eligible, start-ups must be early-stage technology-based companies located in Saskatchewan, with fewer than 50 employees and at least half of those employees located in the province.

Another new business incentive in this budget is the Saskatchewan Value-Added Agriculture Incentive—which will improve investment attraction and retention outcomes in our province’s value-added agriculture sector.

The Incentive creates a 15 percent non-refundable tax credit for new or existing value-added agriculture facilities that make a minimum capital investment of \$10 million to expand productive capacity.

To be eligible, a project must demonstrate that capital expenditures were made for the purpose of creating new productive capacity, or for increasing existing productive capacity.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture continues to be a pillar of Saskatchewan’s economy.

This budget invests more than \$378 million to help ensure our agriculture sector remains strong.

This budget includes record investment in agricultural research, and more than \$258 million to fully fund business-risk management programs such as Crop Insurance, AgriStability, AgriInvest, and Western Livestock Price Insurance.

The agriculture research budget of nearly \$32 million includes support for programs that foster the adoption of new technologies, and increased funding for Ag-West Bio, the Food Centre and for livestock

and forage research through support for the Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence.

This budget also provides \$3 million to support the irrigation sector, as well as increased funding, through a new, three-year funding agreement, for Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to fostering growth and supporting Saskatchewan's business sector, including small business and farmers.

We are therefore encouraged that the federal government's tax changes affecting small businesses have been modified from their original proposals.

Nevertheless, the impacts that these changes could have on Saskatchewan businesses remain unknown and we'll continue to assess the situation.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker, the 2018-19 Budget keeps Saskatchewan on track by:

- Controlling spending.
- Delivering high-quality programs and services for Saskatchewan people.
- Investing in infrastructure.
- Keeping our economy strong.
- And returning to balance in 2019-20.

Our government's vision is to ensure that Saskatchewan is the best place in Canada—to live, work, to start a business, to get an education and raise a family, and to build a life.

Our 2018-19 Budget keeps our government's plan and our provinces finances on track by controlling spending and reducing our reliance on volatile non-renewable resource revenue.

While at the same time making important new investments in priority areas like health, education and social services.

Saskatchewan has enjoyed a decade of growth.

This budget sets the stage for a new decade of growth by keeping Saskatchewan's finances and our economy on track.