Premier Silver announces a stimulus package to support businesses and workers

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Premier Silver has announced an economic stimulus package to support local workers and businesses impacted by COVID-19. This money is being made available to help offset the negative impacts of the evolving global situation.

The stimulus package will:

* Support Yukon workers through a COVID-19 related 14 day isolation with paid sick leave;
* Reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 by establishing a grant program to address certain expenses related to cancelled events;
* Stimulate business and the tourism industry by waiving, reimbursing or delaying government fee collection, such as airport landing fees;
* Relieve financial pressures by deferring Worker’s Compensation Health and Safety premium payments and reimburse those paid up-front, waive penalties and interest (with approval by the Board);
* Support the tourism industry with enhanced local advertising efforts;
* Support the cultural industry by honouring transfer payment agreements considering COVID-19 related impacts, and;
* Continue to monitor the economic impacts of COVID-19 by establishing a Business Advisory Council to gather information and share with government.

The Government of Yukon will continue to work closely with the Government of Canada to access all available federal funding, and to maximize existing funds to keep Yukoners working and Yukon projects going ahead.

Yukon Ministers continue to work with federal counterpoints on all aspects of this situation. In the last week, there have been frequent conversations between the Prime Minister, Premiers, Ministers of Health, Public Safety, Tourism and Culture, Education, and Finance. Ongoing meetings are happening between officials at all levels of government, including regular health updates. The Government of Yukon supports the continued collaboration between jurisdictions on measures that support the needs of all regions.

Yukon’s Chief Medical Officer of Health continues to lead the territory’s public health response. Our government continues to follow the recommendations of that office on all health issues related to COVID-19.

This stimulus package will provide necessary support for businesses and workers as the Yukon manages the impacts of COVID-19. We continue to work closely with our local, regional and national partners as part of a coordinated effort to address and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.

**Premier Sandy Silver**

**Quick facts**

* Establish a criteria-based grant program that would address certain expenses related to event cancellations due to COVID-19. Criteria to be established will focus on losses related to perishable goods and cancellation of accommodation and services.
* Waive, reimburse or delay fee collection to either stimulate business or tourist activity or relieve some financial burden on the business community. Initially, government will waive landing fees at Erik Nielsen Whitehorse International Airport and other related aircraft fees. Other fees will be considered in the coming weeks.
* The Yukon Workers’ Compensation Health and Safety Board will defer premium payments to end of calendar year (or preferred date); reimburse if already paid up-front, waive penalties and interest. This relief could be provided immediately through administrative procedures.
* Establish a program to reimburse Yukon employers who are providing additional paid sick leave to employees for COVID-related illnesses.
* Honour transfer payment agreements with artists and the cultural industry considering COVID-19 related impacts.
* Establish a Business Advisory Council to directly inform and advise on COVID-19 related impacts and solutions.
* Federal meetings include (all by phone unless indicated):
  + Premier Silver met with the Prime Minister and fellow Premiers about supports for workers and vulnerable people, as well as federal efforts around employment insurance.
  + Minister Frost is meeting weekly with Canadian health ministers to discuss jurisdictional impacts.
  + Minister Dendys has met with the Canadian Minister of Tourism and other provincial/territorial representatives to discuss tourism impacts both locally and national.
  + Minister Dendys and Minister Streicker met in person with Canadian Heritage Minister Guilbealt regarding COVID-19 impacts.
  + Minister Streicker met with Public Safety Ministers to discuss best practices across Canada, and Emergency Management officials are meeting weekly to review the changing status of COVID-19.
  + Health officials continue to meet regularly (in some cases daily) to discuss the evolving virus and changes in the response.
  + Education Deputy Minister and officials are meeting to discuss the impact on students with Canada Student Loans in relation to the closing of secondary education facilities.
  + Economic Development staff are meeting with federal colleagues in the region to review the economic impact specific to Yukon.
  + Executive Council officials continue to meet with national colleagues to review all federal announcements and subsequent impacts locally.
  + Finance officials met to discuss federal announcements with Minister Bill Morneau.
  + Officials with Highways and Public Works met with Transport Canada to discuss readiness at airports and land borders.
  + Justice officials are meeting with the Supreme Count of Canada and the federal administrator of courts to discuss how COVID-19 will affect courts.