



May 11, 2020

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The Honourable Scott Moe, E.C.S., M.L.A.
Premier of Saskatchewan
226 Legislative Building
REGINA SK S4S 0B3

Dear Premier Moe:

Across Canada, premiers are managing this unprecedented global crisis by recruiting non-partisan, cross-sector leaders to populate COVID-19 task forces. In doing so they draw on a broad spectrum of expertise to deliver results, understanding that people of diverse backgrounds can be more successful together than any one of us alone, especially when it comes to addressing the kinds of complex, historic issues that governments are facing today.

Our democratic system is also based on the understanding that the complex needs of society demand the interplay of different points of view. I write to you today to urge you to respect our democratic traditions and reconvene the legislature immediately. Obviously, this will require adaptations to respect the need for ongoing physical distancing. Fortunately, there are many examples across the country to guide this work.

Saskatchewan people have real questions about health care readiness, supports for businesses and families, access to child care, and unprecedented job losses. There are also real concerns about the outbreak in La Loche and the North, and what resources are in place for communities affected by outbreaks.

The people of Saskatchewan deserve oversight and accountability when it comes to your government's choices. Since March, your government has authorized billions of dollars in new spending with no legislative scrutiny. The time is now for your government to present a plan to address the economic and public health challenges we face, and that plan needs to take the form of a budget in the Legislative Assembly.

The budget process is the best tool for your government to be clear about your plans, economic assumptions, and priorities. It also provides the best vehicle for the due diligence that is the lifeblood of our democracy. The opportunity for scrutiny through question period for the required 28 sitting days, combined with committee meetings to examine the estimates, is in the public interest. It is also, I remind you, what was agreed to when the Official Opposition consented to an early adjournment of the Legislative Assembly in March.

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In addition to the important work of scrutiny and financial oversight, we also need to work together to pass changes to The Election Act recently identified by Dr. Boda. We have a duty to ensure the greatest number of voters can exercise their democratic right safely in the upcoming provincial election.

Other provinces and the federal parliament resumed legislative functions and debate while respecting physical distancing. Quebec's National Assembly and Ontario's Legislative Assembly both meet later this week. Alberta's Legislative Assembly met for three days last week. Manitoba's Legislative Assembly will be meeting once a week for the rest of this month. The House of Commons is meeting once a week in person, and twice a week by videoconference. There is no reason why our Legislative Assembly and its committees cannot be reconvened in similar ways to do the important work Saskatchewan people have elected us to do.

Please contact my office at your earliest convenience to arrange for a phone or in-person meeting where we can negotiate an appropriate plan to reconvene the legislature.

I look forward to discussing a framework for reconvening the legislature so that Saskatchewan people can have the accountability and oversight they deserve as we work together to address the challenges of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Meili', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ryan Meili, M.L.A.
Leader of the Official Opposition