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**2013-2014 Expenditure Budget**

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**The government is firmly committed to restoring a balanced budget and controlling expenditure growth**

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**Québec, November 20, 2012** – The Minister responsible for Government Administration, Chair of the Conseil du trésor and Government House Leader Stéphane Bédard announced that, despite the state of public finances, the government is firmly committed to meeting the expenditure targets for 2012-2013, as well as the objective of restoring a balanced budget as early as 2013-2014. The growth of program spending will be limited to 1.9% in 2012-2013 and to 1.8% in 2013-2014.

In accordance with government priorities, the 2013-2014 Expenditure Budget pursues the following objectives: resolving the budget deadlock while protecting public services, restoring rigour to the management of public expenditures and investments in infrastructures, fighting corruption in awarding government contracts and regaining the trust of the public in its institutions.

“The first expenditure budget constitutes the cornerstone of our strategy for restoring a balanced budget. It clearly illustrates the rigour with which we will manage the resources at our disposal, for the benefit of all Quebecers”, Minister Bédard said.

**Priority given to health, education and the family**

In a difficult budgetary context, the government chose to carefully target priorities. It therefore intends to grant a significant portion of total expenditure growth to the health and social services sector. The 3.4% increase in spending will bring its budget to close to \$31.3 billion. Taking into consideration the contribution of the fund to finance health and social services institutions, the rate of growth of the health budget will be 4.8% in 2013-2014.

The budget of the ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport rises to \$10.2 billion, an increase of 1.8%, and the budget of the ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie climbs to \$6.3 billion, an increase of 2%, compared with probable spending for the previous year. The budget of the ministère de la Famille will increase 3.2%, compared with anticipated spending in 2012-2013, an expansion to nearly \$2.5 billion.

**Significant effort required by everyone**

“Each and every department and budget-funded body will have to be strict and methodical in meeting its expenditure targets. Bodies other than those that are budget-funded and those receiving special funds will also have to do their fair share by improving their effectiveness and efficiency”, explained the Chair of the Conseil du trésor, Mr. Bédard.

The budget of departments and budget-funded bodies is reduced overall by \$122 million, a decrease of 0.9%, compared with the probable spending for the previous year. Some sectors still have an increase, including the ministère de la Culture, with a 2.1% boost in its budget. Bodies other than those that are budget-funded and those receiving special funds will have to trim their spending by \$200 million for 2013-2014.

**Fighting corruption and better managing public resources**

The government is undertaking structural actions to foster the sound management of public resources. Various initiatives, such as the adoption of Bill 1 promoting integrity in government contracts, will contribute to reinforcing the effectiveness and efficiency of contractual procedures while ensuring better management of public funds.

SECOR-KPMG's report, which was recently made public, severely criticizes the previous government's management of large infrastructure projects. Minister Bédard indicated in that regard that "the report confirms the importance of acting promptly to improve the situation. We must correct the errors of the past as quickly as possible, in an area of public action crucial to our collective future. That is why our government is presenting today a tough and coherent action plan, entitled A Better Way to Manage our Infrastructure.

"We will take the means necessary for Québec to balance its budget, before the federal government or the Government of Ontario. We will review the pace of investments in infrastructures, examine major projects under way and make their management stricter through more rigorous procedures. We are committed to restoring discipline in the management of public funds and protecting Québec's economy. That is the best way to promote greater intergeneration equity so that the Québec of today and the Québec of tomorrow remain a Québec for everyone", concluded Minister Bédard.

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**Source:**

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