



MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

OTTAWA, Thursday, November 27, 2025

(7)

[English]

The Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration (CIBA) met this day at 8:00 a.m., in room C128, Senate of Canada Building, the chair, the Honourable Lucie Moncion, presiding.

Members of the committee present: The Honourable Senators Boehm, Boyer, Forest, Francis, Henkel, Housakos, LaBoucane-Benson, MacAdam, MacDonald, Moncion, Moodie, Osler, Oudar, Saint-Germain, Smith, and Tannas (16).

Participating in the meeting: Shaila Anwar, Clerk of the Senate and Clerk of the Parliaments; Gérald Lafrenière, Deputy Clerk, Legislative Services; Pascale Legault, Chief Corporate Services Officer and Clerk of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration; Julie Wellington, Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel; senior Senate officials and other support staff.

Pursuant to rule 12-7(1) of the *Rules of the Senate*, the committee continued its consideration of financial and administrative matters concerning the Senate's internal administration.

WITNESSES:

The Honourable Senator Scott Tannas, Chair, Subcommittee on Long Term Vision and Plan;

The Honourable Senator Éric Forest, Chair, Subcommittee on Senate Estimates and Committee Budgets;

Josée Labelle, Director General, Property and Services Directorate;

Julie Lacroix, Director, Corporate Security Directorate;

Louise Cowley, Director, LTVP & Accommodation, Property and Services Directorate.

The chair made a statement.

The senators introduced themselves.

CIBA/2025-11-27/070(P) — Review of the Senators’s Office Management Policy and Senate Administrative Rules

The Honourable Senator Housakos requested that leave be granted to present a motion.

It was agreed that leave be granted.

The Honourable Senator Housakos made a statement and moved the following:

That a working group of senators be established and authorized to supervise and oversee comprehensive reviews of the *Senators’ Office Management Policy* (SOMP) and the *Senate Administrative Rules* (SARs);

That the composition of the working group be determined by agreement among the Leaders, ensuring representation from all recognized groups and all regions, with priority for membership being given to senators who have served at least three (3) years since their appointment to the Senate, with the chair to be a senator who has served at least five (5) years since appointment;

That the working group also be authorized to supervise and oversee a review and consolidation of all Senate Administration expense-related policies into a single comprehensive policy, to be entitled the Senate Administration Management Policy (SAMP), thereby completing the second phase of the expense rules review process initiated in 2015, of which the first phase produced the SOMP;

That the working group be mandated to conduct its work in consultation with the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel and the Office of the Chief Corporate Services Officer, and ensure coordination between the review processes so that the resulting documents are coherent and complementary;

That the Senate Administration provide the administrative and technical support necessary for the working group to carry out its mandate;

That the Senate Administration submit draft revised versions of the SOMP and SARs to the working group no later than April 15, 2026, and that the working group submit its report, including any recommendations and proposed changes to the aforementioned rules and policy instruments, to the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration no later than September 24, 2026, and may submit interim reports from time to time as required;

That the Senate Administration submit a draft version of the SAMP to the working group no later than September 1, 2026, and that the working group submit a draft policy to the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration no later than December 1, 2026, and may submit interim reports from time to time as required; and

That the motion adopted on October 2, 2025, assigning oversight of these reviews to the Subcommittee on Senate Estimates and Committee Budgets (SEBS), be set aside in favour of assigning this mandate to the working group.

After debate, the question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

CIBA/2025-11-27/071(P) — Consent Agenda

The chair made a statement regarding the consent agenda.

The Honourable Senator Henkel moved that the consent agenda, which is comprised of the following items, be adopted:

- Minutes of Proceedings from November 6, 2025 (In Public);
- It was agreed to deplete the existing inventory of rapid test kits and to discontinue the Senate's Rapid Antigen Detection Testing Program and rescind the *Senate Policy on COVID-19 Vaccination* while maintaining an inventory of N95 masks, three-ply medical masks, hand sanitizer, and sanitizing wipes.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

CIBA/2025-11-27/072(P) — Report from the Subcommittee on the Long-Term Vision and Plan

The Chair of the Subcommittee on the Long-Term Vision and Plan, the Honourable Senator Tannas, presented the First Report of the subcommittee as follows:

Thursday, November 27, 2025

The Subcommittee on the Long-Term Vision and Plan (LTVP) of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration (CIBA) has the honour to present its

FIRST REPORT

Your subcommittee, which was authorized by CIBA to supervise all steps, processes and decisions (excluding those areas that are under the authority of the Speaker of the Senate) relating to the program of work for the Long-Term Vision and Plan for the parliamentary precinct, in coordination with the Senate Administration; and examine the best ways to ensure the rehabilitation of Centre Block, East Block and all other buildings that will be occupied by the Senate in the end state respect the heritage and the best interests of the Senate, without compromising the integrity of security, now presents its first report with a number of updates and recommendations.

1. Confederation Building Rehabilitation

Your subcommittee met with officials from Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) on October 22, 2025, at which time PSPC presented swing space options to support the Confederation Building Rehabilitation. The current LTVP sequence has the Confederation Building and East Block undergoing major rehabilitation projects concurrently, commencing in the mid-2030s, once the construction of Centre Block and the Senate Office Complex (Block 2) is complete.

However, your subcommittee was told that further analysis by PSPC indicates that the Confederation Building is in critical condition and at the highest risk of failure within the Parliamentary portfolio. By comparison, East Block is in fair condition with regular maintenance being completed.

Given the House of Commons' approval of a single-phase rehabilitation for the Confederation Building, PSPC is now exploring swing space options to accommodate up to 34 displaced offices for MPs

who will be impacted by the Confederation Building rehabilitation, without the need to build or fit up any additional space.

In November 2024 and again in October 2025, your subcommittee sent correspondence to the House of Commons, expressing the view that it would be premature to select a specific swing space option. Instead, it recommended that both the Senate and the House of Commons continue to work together to identify the most suitable solution.

On October 30, 2025, the Board of Internal Economy (BOIE) of the House of Commons gave their approval of a swing space option that would provide for the shared use of the Senate Office Complex (Block 2, East Tower). Under this option, MPs propose to occupy 34 of the 54 Parliamentary Office Units (POU) in the building, leaving the Senate with only 20 POU in the Senate Office Complex. If the Senate were to support this option, it would need to remain in its interim spaces — the Senate of Canada Building and the Chambers Building (40 Elgin) — for a longer period than originally anticipated, as the rehabilitation of the Confederation building is currently expected to take 7 to 10 years.

Your subcommittee strongly believes that, since the Senate is the primary occupant of the Senate Office Complex, the allocation of POU should ensure that senators retain a predominant presence in the building, at all times. It is regrettable that the House of Commons did not consult with your subcommittee prior to choosing their preferred swing space option. Your subcommittee wishes to emphasize the importance of continued collaboration between the Senate and the House of Commons to ensure that: all planned projects progress in alignment with the established end state; project delays are minimal for either partner; and both institutions' accommodation needs are met using POU located within the existing parliamentary portfolio.

To this end, your subcommittee is prepared to recommend that the Senate offer to accommodate up to 24 POU for temporarily displaced MPs from the Confederation Building within the Senate Office Complex (Block 2, East Tower). Your subcommittee is also prepared to collaborate with the House of Commons to identify temporary accommodations for the remaining 10 POU within other Senate-occupied buildings, such as the Chambers Building, the Centre Block, or the East Block, for the duration of the Confederation Building rehabilitation.

This approach would minimize double moves for senators and avoid new construction or additional fit-ups, thereby helping to contain costs. Under this scenario, the Senate would occupy the majority of POU in the Senate Office Complex at all times.

Recommendation 1 — Your subcommittee therefore recommends that CIBA approve that up to 24 parliamentary office units within the Senate Office Complex (Block 2, East Tower), be set aside for temporarily displaced MPs from the Confederation Building and

That the House of Commons be informed of this decision and that the two Houses work together to jointly determine suitable temporary accommodations for temporarily displaced MPs within Senate-occupied buildings for the remaining 10 parliamentary office units.

2. Centre Block Rehabilitation Program: Cost containment options

Your subcommittee met with officials from PSPC on October 22, 2025, at which time PSPC presented cost containment options for the Centre Block Rehabilitation Program. The presentation outlined that although the baseline project budget for Centre Block of \$4.5 to \$5 billion was established in 2021, your

subcommittee heard that PSPC is currently facing budget pressures due to increased hard construction costs (\$1.4 billion), inflation (\$0.7 billion), and increased design costs (\$0.3 billion), for an estimated escalation of \$2.4 billion.

PSPC has identified \$430 million in savings through 75 cost containment measures, impacting both the Senate and the House of Commons, plus \$580 million in reductions to associated project costs, for a total cost avoidance of \$1.0 billion. The cost containment review was undertaken with a view to prioritize parliamentary requirements, protect heritage, maintain construction momentum and minimize re-design timelines and costs.

The previously approved Hall of Honour infill will provide approximately 750 m² in shared workspace for the Senate and the House of Commons (e.g., flexible meeting rooms, collaboration spaces and a new parliamentary lounge), compensating for the equivalent space of the 4th floor in Centre Block, which will be lost as part of building modernization efforts (mechanical, electrical, structure, accessibility, and code). Your subcommittee was advised by PSPC that keeping the infill within the scope of the project would cost approximately \$20 million, plus associated design and construction administration expenses. Accordingly, the removal of the infill development was included in the list of potential cost containment measures.

Your subcommittee was advised that the BOIE had endorsed, on October 30th, 2025, all of the proposed cost containment measures with the exception of the removal of the Hall of Honour infill. Your subcommittee strongly agrees with the House of Commons that the infill is of significant business value to the plans for Centre Block and should therefore remain within the scope of the project.

Recommendation 2 — Your subcommittee recommends that CIBA approve the cost containment options for Centre Block Rehabilitation, with the exception of the removal of the Hall of Honour infill and that PSPC be informed of the decision accordingly.

3. Integrated Heritage Design Strategy for Heritage Rooms

PSPC is also seeking approval of the final design direction approach for Centre Block Pearson Heritage Rooms in Monumental Gothic Spaces and Parliamentary Office Units. Following a review of the proposals, your subcommittee supports the proposed design direction as being appropriate and respectful of the Centre Block's architectural and heritage character.

Recommendation 3 — Your subcommittee recommends that CIBA approve of the Integrated Heritage Design Strategy for Heritage Rooms.

4. Centre Block Rehabilitation and Parliament Welcome Centre Design

Your subcommittee met with officials from PSPC on October 29, 2025, at which time PSPC presented the final design intent for the Centre Block Rehabilitation and Parliament Welcome Centre which shows the project advancement from design development phase into the rebuild phase.

Subcommittee members raised concerns that the final Design Development submission was incomplete and failed to capture key Senate requirements. Your subcommittee is prepared to consider and approve the Centre Block Rehabilitation and Parliament Welcome Centre design, but only once the parliamentary partner administrations are satisfied that all essential design and security requirements

have been appropriately incorporated into the plans. Your subcommittee looks forward to an update from PSPC.

5. Parliamentary Campus Tunnels Project

Your subcommittee met on October 29, 2025, at which time PSPC officials provided an update on the Parliamentary Campus Tunnels Project. Your subcommittee was advised that a secure underground tunnel infrastructure, including links to parliamentary occupied buildings south of Wellington Street, is a core part of the LTVP, to provide for the safe movement of people and goods throughout the Parliamentary Precinct.

The Plan includes multiple material handling nodes on both sides of Wellington Street:

- The Triad Material Handling Node will service West, East and Centre Blocks as well as the new Parliament Welcome Centre; and
- The South Block Node will be accommodated via the Block 2 Redevelopment Program

Given the limited requirement to move goods north-south, PSPC presented members with a construction cost saving option, in the amount of approximately \$130 million, that can be achieved by removing material handling requirements and refocusing the tunnel loop for pedestrian use.

PSPC further advised that an additional \$20 million in estimated cost avoidance could be achieved through the construction of an in-bound tunnel connection between Block 2 and the West Towers, instead of including the planned 50-meter portion of the tunnel under Wellington Street, between O'Connor and Metcalfe streets. Your subcommittee considers, however, that the functional and operational advantages of preserving the connection between the East (Senate Office Complex) and the West Towers of Block 2, as well as maintaining the full loop concept between parliamentary occupied buildings, strongly justifies the \$20 million investment required.

Finally, PSPC also proposed to advance the underground connection to East Block for an estimated cost of \$30 million, in light of the potential deferral of the East Block Building rehabilitation.

Recommendation 4 — Your subcommittee recommends that CIBA approve the Parliamentary campus tunnel strategy, with a corresponding reduction in costs of approximately \$100 million which will be achieved by removing material handling requirements, adding the East Block connection and refocusing the tunnel loop for pedestrian use; and

That the connection between the Block 2 East (Senate) and West (House) towers be maintained as an inbound approach, by utilizing connecting corridor space, within the project scope for an estimated cost avoidance of \$20 million.

6. Block 2 Redevelopment Project Update

Your subcommittee also met on November 5, 2025, during which representatives from PSPC provided an update on the Block 2 redevelopment project, including the exterior design concept, the Senate program, and the overall layout, entrances and connections of the Block 2 Redevelopment Project.

Following this presentation, your subcommittee approved the Senate Office Complex Program, which includes parliamentary office space, three committee rooms, a shared parliamentary gym, the Senate's archival space, Senate support spaces, as well as operational services areas.

However, your subcommittee expresses concerns that the exterior design concept presented differs from the original design that won the architectural competition in May 2022. Senators acknowledged that certain adjustments may occur throughout planning and construction; however, they emphasized that the new design should neither compete with nor overshadow the neighbouring heritage buildings, but rather complement and enhance them. PSPC took note of these comments. Your subcommittee therefore expects to receive an updated version of the exterior design concept at a future meeting.

In addition, your subcommittee wishes to highlight that it was not in a position to approve the project's security requirements until the outcome of the campus threat risk assessment is known. This assessment, currently underway, is essential to properly establishing the security requirements.

Recommendation 5 — Your subcommittee therefore recommends that CIBA approve the Senate Office Complex Program, except for the requirements relating to the exterior design concept and security requirements, which must be reviewed by PSPC.

Recommendation 6 — Finally, your subcommittee recommends that it be authorized to communicate all the recommendations contained in this report to Public Services and Procurement Canada, on behalf of CIBA.

Respectfully submitted,

SCOTT TANNAS

Chair

The Honourable Senator Tannas made a presentation and, together with Josée Labelle, answered questions.

After debate, the Honourable Senator Tannas moved that the subcommittee's First Report be adopted.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

CIBA/2025-11-27/073(P) — Report from the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure

The Chair of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure, the Honourable Senator Moncion, presented the Second Report of the subcommittee as follows:

Thursday, November 27, 2025

The Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration has the honour to present its

SECOND REPORT

At the October 23, 2025, CIBA meeting members sought clarification and guidance on the following matters related to the committee's operations and governance:

- The timing of document distribution to members and non-members;
- The frequency of meetings of the Standing committee on Internal Economy, Budget and Administration (CIBA);
- The process for considering exceptions to the *Senators Office Management Policy*.

Your subcommittee considered each issue, taking into account past practices, procedural precedents, and also matters such as efficiency, transparency, and confidentiality.

Further to its deliberations, your subcommittee makes the following recommendations:

1. Timing of Document Distribution

To allow more time for members to review materials in advance, your subcommittee recommends that documents exceeding five pages be circulated as part of a meeting bundle but only for consideration at the subsequent meeting, usually two weeks later. This is similar to an approach which was in place in 2021 for policy reviews, financial statements, and other substantial reports.

Documents intended for non-members will continue to be distributed at the meeting to mitigate the risk of confidentiality breaches and to ensure that sensitive information remains appropriately protected.

2. Frequency of the CIBA Meetings

To promote operational efficiency and effective use of members' time, your subcommittee recommends that the CIBA maintains its current meeting schedule. Should an urgent or unforeseen matter arise requiring timely consideration, an ad hoc meeting will be convened at the discretion of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure in response to exceptional circumstances.

In making this recommendation, your subcommittee assessed CIBA's workload, agenda planning, and the volume of matters requiring consideration. Your subcommittee also noted that the frequency of the CIBA meetings remains significantly higher than that of the House of Commons' Board of Internal Economy (BOIE).

3. Consideration of Exceptions

Pursuant to section 1.6.1 of the *Senators' Office Management Policy (SOMP)*, your subcommittee has the authority to review and consider requests for exceptions. As a subcommittee, any appeals of the subcommittee's decisions are appropriately referred to the CIBA for final determination, consistent with established practice and governance principles.

Further to feedback received from several CIBA members, your subcommittee recommends that all new exception requests be presented directly to the CIBA for consideration during the public portion of the meeting. This approach promotes transparency and consistency in the application of the SOMP provisions.

Your subcommittee also recommends that a communiqué be issued to inform all senators of this updated practice, which would take effect immediately.

Respectfully submitted,

LUCIE MONCION

Chair

The Honourable Senator Moncion made a presentation.

The Honourable Senator Saint-Germain moved that the report be amended to state that exception requests related to human resources and confidential personnel matters be considered during the in camera portion of the meeting.

The question being put on the amendment, it was adopted.

After debate, it was agreed that the subcommittee's Second Report, as amended, be adopted.

CIBA/2025-11-27/074(P) — Report from the Subcommittee on Senate Estimates and Committee Budgets: Committee Budget Request from the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources

The Chair of the Subcommittee on Senate Estimates and Committee Budgets, the Honourable Senator Forest, presented the Third Report of the subcommittee as follows:

Thursday, November 27, 2025

The Subcommittee on the Senate Estimates and Committee Budgets of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration has the honour to present its

THIRD REPORT

Your subcommittee met on November 18, 2025, the chair, the Honourable Senator Éric Forest, presiding, to consider a budget request of the Standing Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, as follows:

1. Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources (ENEV)

(Special study on Newfoundland and Labrador's offshore petroleum industry)

Activity 1: St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador	\$47,160
TOTAL	\$47,160

(includes funds for fact-finding mission and for 7 senators to travel)

Your subcommittee met with the chair of ENEV during its meeting of November 18, 2025, to discuss this budget request. The subcommittee supports the purpose and rationale of the request and acknowledges the committee's efforts to identify real savings in order to reduce travel costs as much as

possible. However, it was informed that the committee hopes to travel in mid-December and that no funds have been allocated to provide interpretation services for the meetings.

Given that the weeks in December leading up to the winter adjournment are typically a particularly busy period at the Senate, your subcommittee encourages ENEV to reconsider the proposed travel dates in order to identify a period that would have less impact on the work of the Chamber and committees. Your subcommittee also reiterates the importance of official languages and ensuring that services are provided in the official language chosen by senators. During the budget presentation, your subcommittee received confirmation that all ENEV members who plan to travel are comfortable with the absence of interpretation services for the duration of the trip.

Your subcommittee also notes that the budget includes five staff members to accompany the seven senators selected from among the ENEV committee members. In keeping with continued efforts to achieve savings, your subcommittee believes that four staff members would be sufficient to provide the required support and recommends that the budget request be adjusted accordingly.

Your subcommittee therefore recommends approval of this budget request, provided that it is amended to reflect a reduction in the number of staff members. A reduction of just one staff member would represent an 8% decrease from the original budget request, reducing it to \$43,430.

Committee Budget Summary

For your information, the total funds in the budgetary envelope available for Senate committee budgets (except for the Committee on Audit and Oversight) for 2025-2026 is **\$2.2 million**, less **\$320,820** for witness expenses, leaving **\$1.882 million** for release to individual committee budgets.

Today's budget request is the first of this fiscal year.

The budget approved by the Senate for a travel activity reflects the maximum amount that can be spent for that activity. Budgets usually include funds for the full membership of the committee to travel. In general, a reduced delegation travels and efforts are made to find additional savings.

Typically, committees' actual expenditures are closer to 40% of their total budget request. Any funds remaining at the conclusion of a travel activity will be clawed-back and can be made available for allocation to committees for other activities.

A copy of the committee's budget application is appended to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

ÉRIC FOREST

Chair

The Honourable Senator Forest made a presentation and, together with Shaila Anwar, answered questions.

After debate, the Honourable Senator Forest moved that the subcommittee's Third Report be adopted.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

CIBA/2025-11-27/075(P) — Report from the Subcommittee on Senate Estimates and Committee Budgets: Coordinated Travel by Senators

The Chair of the Subcommittee on Senate Estimates and Committee Budgets, the Honourable Senator Forest, presented the Fourth Report of the subcommittee as follows:

Thursday, November 27, 2025

The Subcommittee on Senate Estimates and Committee Budgets (SEBS) of the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration (CIBA) has the honour to present its

FOURTH REPORT

Your subcommittee was mandated by CIBA on June 5, 2025, to examine and report on coordinated travel by senators, with a view to make a recommendation taking into account the principles of integrity, accountability, honesty, transparency and equity.

As part of this mandate, your subcommittee, consisting of the Honourable Senators Al Zaibak, Carignan, P.C., Forest, Hay and Mohamed met on October 1 and 20 and November 17, 2025. Your subcommittee was also guided by the results of an online consultation with senators conducted over the summer. Following its deliberations, your subcommittee is prepared to make several recommendations for CIBA's consideration that are described in this report.

BACKGROUND

Coordinated travel involving multiple senators using their individual travel points for the purpose of broadening their knowledge of a region of Canada are uncommon activities that fall outside the familiar confines of typical approved coordinated travel, such as fact-finding by committees or travel activities by parliamentary associations, both of which are governed by well-established policies and are funded through budgetary envelopes approved by CIBA for those purposes.

Even though such coordinated travel using travel points is not explicitly referred to in the *Senators' Office Management Policy (SOMP)*, your subcommittee notes that such travel is not restricted by the general travel provisions currently applicable to senators. This matter was brought to CIBA in the context of its mandate to consider all Senate-related financial matters and its exclusive authority to determine whether the proposed use of Senate resources for coordinated travel using individual travel points is a proper use of Senate resources for senators carrying out their parliamentary functions.

At its June 2025 meeting, CIBA set out three separate options for your subcommittee to consider:

1. That the status quo be maintained: Senators can continue to participate in coordinated travel using their individual travel points and seek reimbursement of related expenditures, without any specifically defined framework, structure or constraints.
2. That expenditures for coordinated travel using individual travel points no longer be eligible for reimbursement.
3. That expenditures for coordinated travel using individual travel points be eligible for reimbursement based on a new framework, structure and rules, which would establish specific parameters approved by senators.

Following this meeting, your subcommittee conducted online consultations in which all senators were given the opportunity to provide feedback on these three options. Your subcommittee was encouraged by the high response rate and believes it is reflective of the importance of this issue for senators.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The consultations held over the summer indicated a strong consensus among participating senators in favour of permitting this type of travel to continue to be eligible for reimbursement while also indicating the need to establish a framework to ensure that such travel is justifiable, appropriate, reasonable and well-documented.

Many noted that, due to the size and the varied interests found throughout different regions of the country, such travel is a way for senators to fulfil their parliamentary functions and fully discharge their duties.

Your subcommittee recognizes that there is value to such travel when managed appropriately and believes that it underscores the importance of senators' independence in representing Canadians and their freedom to explore issues in relation to effective public policy. It was clear to the subcommittee that senators see the benefits such travel can bring to broaden their understanding of significant issues facing the various regions of Canada.

That being said, your subcommittee wishes to also remind senators of the existence of the *Senate Administrative Rules (SARS)*, the *SOMP* and other well-established financial policies and procedures, like the *Financial Policy for Senate Committees*, which demonstrate the Senate's long-standing commitment to transparent decision-making when allocating resources to senators for their parliamentary functions. These policies include parameters that have been agreed to through structures that senators have themselves established. They underscore the important historical role played by Senate committees and parliamentary associations in examining complex issues of national and international importance, and in reinforcing the Senate's reputation as a chamber of sober second thought and constructive inquiry. Your subcommittee remains convinced of the importance of adhering to the principles set out in these fundamental governance documents regarding the proper and transparent use of Senate resources.

Recommendation 1:

Accordingly, your subcommittee recommends that parliamentary travel activities that fall under existing frameworks that are already established for committees and parliamentary associations continue to be prioritized over other forms of coordinated travel.

Recommendation 2:

Accordingly, your subcommittee recommends that expenditures for coordinated travel using individual travel points for the purpose of broadening their knowledge of a region of Canada be eligible for reimbursement based on a new framework that encapsulates the principles of sound financial stewardship, integrity and accountability, while at the same time providing senators with sufficient flexibility to explore issues they deem to be necessary to fulfil their parliamentary functions.

Your subcommittee did not arrive at recommendation 2 without hesitation, particularly in light of the current economic context. These concerns were somewhat alleviated by a proposal to implement a

financial cap, which is set out later in recommendation 7, versus the current situation which does not impose limits beyond a senator's use of their 64 points. Subcommittee members also valued the requirement to include a clear purpose for the coordinated travel and well-defined set of objectives and anticipated outcomes. Despite this robust financial framework and oversight mechanism, some members remain reluctant to permit these activities to continue.

Your subcommittee wishes to emphasize that coordinated travel involving multiple senators using their individual travel points should remain infrequent, given the other types of travel available to senators. The online consultations with senators also showed a need to establish a framework to ensure that such travel is justifiable, appropriate, reasonable and well documented. Your subcommittee agrees wholeheartedly.

Your subcommittee is also of the view that a framework will ensure an appropriate degree of proportionality between the cost of the activity as it relates to a senator's parliamentary functions and its value. Furthermore, your subcommittee believes that the proposed framework must place due regard to the need, frequency, purpose and overall reasonableness of such travel. It must also continue to place a strong emphasis on the prudent use of Senate resources and ensure transparency in the expenditure of public funds.

A PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR COORDINATED TRAVEL

In its deliberations, your subcommittee considered a number of factors related to this type of coordinated travel that were raised by senators in the online consultations. While there are a number of possible elements that could be included in a proposed framework, your subcommittee seeks approval for the following general criteria; endorsement of these criteria will allow your subcommittee to establish a complete framework for coordinated travel.

DEFINITION: Your subcommittee considered what parameters would constitute coordinated travel using senators' individual travel points and established the need for a clear definition that would exclude other forms of coordinated travel, such as approved committee or association travel, or other types of travel to locations for more specific purposes and with shorter itineraries, such as caucus meetings, a visit to a factory or travel to participate at a conference.

Recommendation 3:

Accordingly, your subcommittee recommends that in order to be eligible for reimbursement under the coordinated travel framework, the activity must include the following four criteria:

- 1. travel within Canada, outside of the Parliamentary District, using a senator's individual travel points;**
- 2. three or more senators travelling, at their initiative, to essentially the same location and with matching or overlapping travel dates for the purpose of broadening their knowledge of a region of Canada;**
- 3. proposed duration exceeding two nights' stay, preferably on weekdays; and**
- 4. proposed total activity budget exceeding \$30,000.**

ELIGIBLE TRAVELLERS: Your subcommittee received substantial feedback from senators on eligibility for coordinated travel. A clear consensus emerged to limit those who should be eligible for reimbursement of coordinated travel activities.

Recommendation 4:

Therefore, your subcommittee recommends that the eligibility for reimbursement for coordinated travel using a senator's individual travel points for the purpose of broadening knowledge of a region of Canada be limited to senators and authorized staff of the senator who initiated the coordinated travel. Spouses and other designated travelers will not be eligible for the reimbursement of travel expenses.

BUDGET APPROVAL: Your subcommittee believes it is essential to maintain similar procedures to those already in place for the approval of budgets that involve the allocation of resources to senators for their parliamentary functions in order to ensure transparency in the decision-making process.

Recommendation 5:

As such, your subcommittee recommends that CIBA require budget requests for coordinated travel using travel points:

1. to contain an estimate of the total costs for carrying out the travel activity;
2. be submitted to SEBS for preliminary review and recommendation to CIBA;
3. be approved during a public portion of a CIBA meeting before any funds are committed; and
4. that any expenses exceeding the approved budget not be reimbursed.

REPORTING: Your subcommittee believes that public reporting is the cornerstone of accountability. To demonstrate the value of coordinated travel, the subcommittee believes that participating senators must be prepared to report on their key findings, their ability to meet objectives and to highlight what was accomplished on behalf of Canadians.

Recommendation 6:

Therefore, your subcommittee recommends that, within 90 days of the completion of a coordinated travel activity, the initiating senator be required to submit a detailed report to CIBA and that such a report then be posted on the CIBA website. The report must include the objectives of the coordinated travel, the meetings held and with whom, the list of participating senators, areas visited, duration, key findings, outcomes and benefits to Canadians, and final costs, both collectively and individually.

TIMELINES: Your subcommittee recommends that a framework be implemented as a pilot project for the next two fiscal years to allow CIBA to evaluate how it operates in practice and to permit a reconsideration of this matter with the goal of making any necessary adjustments. With CIBA's approval of the overarching principles, as set out in the recommendations in this report, your subcommittee will be equipped to develop guidelines for an approval process, robust evaluation criteria, financial limits and other measures that will ensure the good stewardship of public funds.

Recommendation 7:

Accordingly, your subcommittee recommends that CIBA pause the reimbursement of such activities until it establishes a two-year pilot project, starting on April 1, 2026, that will:

- 1. allow senators to use travel points for one activity per fiscal year to engage in coordinated travel for the purpose of broadening their knowledge of a region of Canada, with the possibility of further points being used if their staff is authorized to travel;**
- 2. set an annual maximum of \$200,000 for expenses related to coordinated travel;**
- 3. authorize SEBS to develop, for CIBA's consideration, specific guidelines for coordinated travel similar to the guidelines used for Senate committee travel (see Appendix for a draft of the proposed guidelines); and**
- 4. ensure that all senators be informed of these guidelines once they have been approved.**

CONCLUSION

In developing a framework, your subcommittee has placed its emphasis on the principles of accountability and transparency, ensuring that the objectives, proposed costs, approvals and detailed expense reports are justifiable, appropriate, reasonable and publicly disclosed. Although your subcommittee maintains that senators should prioritize established and proven structures, such as committee travel and parliamentary association travel, and although some senators remain reticent to support this kind of travel, the subcommittee is in agreement that the proposed recommendations and guidelines contained in this report will provide a robust oversight mechanism for coordinated travel for the purpose of allowing senators to broaden their knowledge of a particular region of Canada, while ensuring the integrity of the decision-making process.

Your subcommittee has developed proposed guidelines for coordinated travel, which are appended to this report.

Appendix

Draft of the Proposed Guidelines

- 1) **Evaluation criteria:** That requests be evaluated based on the following criteria:
 - a. whether the objectives and the extent to which the travel is related to current legislation, studies or other parliamentary functions, and how this benefits the work senators do on behalf of Canadians;
 - b. the extent to which the objectives can reasonably be achieved by this travel and how it will benefit participants;
 - c. whether the objectives of the travel could be achieved through a committee study, which could include travel;
 - d. the extent to which previous similar travel (location or topic) has taken place;
 - e. whether measures were taken to ensure that costs are justifiable, appropriate and reasonable; and
 - f. the value of the travel to Canadians, including the proportionality between the costs of the activity and the value of what is to be achieved by senators.

- 2) **Budget process:** That requests be submitted in the form required by SEBS at least 90 days in advance of the planned travel dates and that, at a minimum, the following information be included:
- a. the name of all participants;
 - b. a detailed itinerary;
 - c. the purpose of the travel;
 - d. well-defined set of objectives and anticipated outcomes;
 - e. a communications plan outlining strategic objectives, key messaging and media outreach initiatives that are to be undertaken before, during and after the period of coordinated travel;
 - f. a detailed budget (including estimates for the total cost of transportation, accommodation, per diems, fees and any other expected travel expenses); and
 - g. what measures were taken to ensure that costs are justifiable, appropriate and reasonable.
- 3) **Participation cap:** That a maximum of 14 participants (12 senators and 2 staff of the senator who initiated the coordinated travel) be eligible for reimbursement and that such participation be coordinated with the leaders and facilitators of the recognized parties and recognized parliamentary groups, with flexibility to allow non-affiliated senators to participate.

Respectfully submitted,

ÉRIC FOREST

Chair

The Honourable Senator Forest made a presentation and, together with Gérald Lafrenière, answered questions.

After debate, the Honourable Senator Forest moved that the subcommittee's Fourth Report be adopted.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted, on division.

CIBA/2025-11-27/076(P) — Other Matters

The Honourable Senator Saint-Germain made a statement regarding the Meditation Room.

After debate, the Honourable Senator Saint-Germain moved that the current Meditation Room located at A428 in the Senate of Canada Building be reassigned to the Independent Senators Group immediately, and that the Administration be asked to find a new space for meditation purposes as soon as possible.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

At 9:42 a.m., the committee suspended.

At 9:48 a.m., pursuant to rule 12-16(1), the committee resumed in camera.

At 9:55 a.m., the committee adjourned to the call of the chair.

ATTEST:

Pascale Legault

*Chief Corporate Services Officer and Clerk of the Standing Committee on
Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration*

Keli Hogan

Recording Secretary