

Backgrounder: Teddy Waste Awards 2025

Federal

Global Affairs Canada (Winner)

Nominated for: Racking up a \$51,000 per month booze tab.

Cost: \$3.3 million

Global Affairs Canada has been racking up quite the booze tab, according to records obtained by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.

Global Affairs Canada spent \$3.3 million on alcohol between January 2019 to May 2025. That works out to an average booze tab of \$51,000 per month.

The bill included spending \$56,684 on “wine purchases from special store” in Washington, DC.

Other large orders include \$9,815 worth of wine expensed by bureaucrats in Beijing, China, in March 2021, and \$8,912 worth of wine expensed by bureaucrats in New Delhi, India, in May 2022.

Orders flown off to bureaucrats in far flung locales like Oslo, Tokyo, Moscow and London routinely run into the thousands of dollars per shipment.

At times, the records obtained by the CTF indicate the alcohol was purchased for a specific purpose – such as an official event or reception, or in one case, a \$1,024 booze-filled “trivia night.”

But in many cases, the records provide no explanation beyond “bulk alcohol purchase” or “replenishment of wine stock.”

Source:

<https://www.taxpayer.com/newsroom/bureaucrat-booze-bill-cost-taxpayers-51,000-a-month>

Department of National Defence (Nominee)

Nominated for: Spending \$34.8 million on sleeping bags that don't work in Canadian winters.

Cost: \$34.8 million

The Canadian government spent \$34.8 million on a new stock of sleeping bags for the troops.

The only problem: They're not warm enough.

The issue came to light after soldiers deployed on a training exercise just outside of Red Deer in November complained about the cold, even after using the sleeping bags in stove-heated tents. Thankfully, these issues were discovered before the unit was sent to their next posting in Alaska. Instead, the soldiers were sent up north with 60-year sleeping bags that had remained in storage.

Source:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/army-sleeping-bags-arctic-1.7321680>

Parks Canada (Nominee)

Nominated for: Spending four years and over \$10,000 to catch one bull frog.

Cost: \$10,009

Parks Canada decided to remove the American Bullfrog from British Columbia's Gulf Islands National Park

In 2018-19, Parks Canada spent \$1,920 attempting to cull the American Bullfrog from these lands but did not manage to get a single frog.

The following year, Parks Canada spent \$2,000 and again struck out.

The cull took a temporary hiatus in 2020-21, according to the records.

In 2021-22, Parks Canada spent another \$2,207 on the cull, but once again failed to get any bullfrogs.

Finally, in 2022-23, after years of failure, Parks Canada spent \$3,882 and managed to get one frog.

Between the years of 2018-19 and 2022-23, Parks Canada spent \$10,009 on these frog hunts, capturing a single American Bullfrog in the process.

In 2023-24, Parks Canada's annual bullfrog hunt finally hit the jackpot, killing 100 bull frogs at a price tag of \$5,079.

Source:

https://www.taxpayer.com/newsroom/four-years,-10,000,-one-frog-inside-parks-canada%E2%80%99s-costly-frog-cull-en_ca

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (nominee)

Nominated for: Spending tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars on useless research reports.

Cost: At least \$382,627

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council is spending tens of thousands of dollars on, let's say, niche research projects.

For those wondering about gender politics in Peruvian rock music, the SSHRC has made sure to put \$20,000 to solving that question.

The SSHRC spent almost \$8,000 on exploring sexuality and gender in online Harry Potter fan communities.

Another research grant totalled more than \$100,000 and focused on tracking the "birth, life, and death" of urban shopping carts.

Source:

https://x.com/franco_nomics/status/1857081028269019579

Statistics Canada (Nominee)

Nominated for: Spending nearly a million dollars on a podcast with only 229 "estimated" subscribers.

Cost: \$971,417

Dozens of federal departments and agencies have launched podcasts in recent years, with the cost to taxpayers rising to millions of dollars once salary expenses are factored in.

The Eh Sayers Podcast from Statistics Canada includes episode topics that have ranged from gender identity to climate change and misinformation to systemic racism and the arts and crafts movement across Canada.

The podcast has racked up 229 "estimated" subscribers, according to records.

To date, the podcast has cost \$971,417, meaning taxpayers are on the hook for \$4,241 for every subscriber.

Source:

<https://www.taxpayer.com/newsroom/trudeau-government-spends-millions-producing-podcasts>

Provincial

New Brunswick Tourism

Nominated for: Spending taxpayers' money on a tourism-promoting trip to Europe and ending up with error-ridden ad campaign recommending visits to closed buildings.

Cost: \$77,000

New Brunswick Minister of Tourism and other government bureaucrats spent \$77,000 visiting Europe to promote the province as a destination for European tourists.

Much of the trip was supposed to be spent informing tour companies of the province's attractions.

The resulting ads were full of incorrect information about the province and advertised for long-closed provincial attractions.

The ads repeatedly referred to Saint John as the capital and largest city. It is, in fact, neither of these.

Even worse, closed attractions like the Cherry Brook Zoo and the New Brunswick Museum (which is undergoing lengthy renovations) were promoted as open for business.

Source:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/nb-tourism-europe-tammy-scott-wallace-paris-france-ads-1.7186538>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/tammy-scott-wallace-defends-yennah-hurley-trip-1.7182459>

Newfoundland and Labrador Immigration

Nominated for: Spending \$171,000 to sponsor a fourth-tier British soccer team to promote immigration to Newfoundland and Labrador.

Cost: \$171,000

The Immigration Minister of Newfoundland and Labrador, Gerry Byrne, proudly announced he spent \$171,000 sponsoring a fourth-tier soccer team in the United Kingdom.

Byrne said that this was going to put the province on the world stage by putting the provincial logo on the team's jersey, comparing it to a recent purchase of a similar team by Canadian-born actor Ryan Reynolds.

Source:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/barrow-soccer-team-partners-nl-gov-1.7247352>

Quebec Premier François Legault

Nominated for: Buying himself a framed and autographed Guy Lafleur jersey on the taxpayer credit card.

Cost: \$1,282

Quebec Premier François Legault stuck taxpayers with the bill for an autographed Guy Lafleur jerseys for each premier who attended a Council of Confederation meeting that Quebec hosted.

Of course, that included himself. But not content with a taxpayer-bought jersey, he added to the expense by getting the jersey framed, at a cost of \$937.

All told, taxpayers were stuck with a \$1,282 bill for Legault's signed and framed jersey.

Source:

<https://www.montrealgazette.com/news/article560420.html>

Manitoba Health

Nominated for: Spending thousands on a provocative breast cancer awareness campaign.

Cost: \$2,000

For Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Manitoba Health put up posters encouraging Manitobans to "be an early bird ... check your tits, your boobies, your hooters."

After spending \$2,000, the government took down the ads following public backlash that the ads were offensive, and the government was taking the issue too lightly.

Source:

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/breakingnews/2024/11/13/health-minister-cancels-titillating-breast-cancer-ads>

BC Rail

Nominated for: Paying two executives \$500,000 to run a railway with no trains and barely any track.

Cost: \$501,811

BC Rail is a Crown Corporation in British Columbia. The Crown corporation is only in charge of managing 40 kilometers of spur track and doesn't actually oversee any trains.

Despite that, BC Rail still pays two executives about \$250,000 each to run the trainless railroad.

Those government executives also get a transportation allowance of \$12,000, which they can't use on their own trains.... Because there are no trains.

Source:

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10726981/bc-rail-executive-compensation/>

Ontario's Windsor Regional Hospital

Nominated for: Running two Tim Hortons locations that lost nearly \$500,000 in 2023-24.

Cost: \$487,662

The Windsor Regional Hospital has been losing taxpayer money on running two Tim Hortons locations for years.

In 2023-24, the hospital lost \$487,662, which is equivalent to funding three additional heart transplants a year.

The Tim Hortons has cost the hospital more than \$2 million since hospital administrators first went into the donut business starting around 2010.

Source:

<https://nationalpost.com/opinion/canadas-subsidized-tim-hortons-lose-another-500000>

Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Nominated for: Spending taxpayers' money arts that few people would ever willingly buy or pay to see.

Cost: \$15,000

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts has a long history of spending money on “art” that few Canadians would ever willingly buy or pay to see.

It spent taxpayers’ money so an artist could flop around on a futon for a couple minutes and showcase a painting that can best be described as ants on a pop tart.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts gave an artist \$15,000 and she produced a video where she seemed to be playing peek-a-boo from behind big sheets of paper taped to the wall.

Source:

<https://open.alberta.ca/opendata/funding-recipients>

Municipal

Calgary

Nominated for: Spending tens of thousands of dollars to develop a hotline allowing residents to call the Bow River.

Cost: \$65,000

The city of Calgary spent \$65,000 on “art” that allows people to phone the Bow River.

Calgarians could call the toll-free line to hear different recordings of the river, depending on the time they called.

Now Calgarians can hear what wasting tax dollars truly sounds like.

Source:

<https://www.taxpayer.com/newsroom/calgary-taxpayers-forced-to-pay-for-art-project-that-telephones-the-bow-river>

Ottawa

Nominated for: Hiring a “night mayor” to reinvigorate the city’s nightlife.

Cost: \$160,000

Ottawa is not exactly known for its nightlife.

The city’s solution to make Ottawa’s nightlife more vibrant?

Hire another bureaucrat!

The city hired a nightlife commissioner, or “night mayor,” to improve the city’s nightlife. The night mayor’s budget is \$160,000.

Thanks to taxpayer money, Ottawa becomes the first city that can get nothing done 24-7.

Source:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/how-ottawa-s-new-nightlife-commissioner-aims-to-boost-the-social-scene-after-dark-1.7248711>

Saskatoon

Nominated for: Spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on consultants to come up with a name and “feel” for the new Bus Rapid Transit system.

Cost: \$317,757

The city of Saskatoon paid consultants \$317,757 to come up with the name and brand LINK for the city’s Bus Rapid Transit system, according to documents obtained by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.

The project took almost three years to complete and 27 “engagement sessions” were held to determine the name.

The cost included \$25,000 directly for the name itself and \$40,000 for brand “look and feel.” After all this time and money spent, the new logo looks almost identical to the previous one.

Source:

<https://www.taxpayer.com/newsroom/saskatoon-spent-more-than-300,000-to-name-new-bus-system>

Montreal Transport

Nominated for: Buying transit managers electric Mustangs.

Cost: \$1.2 million

Managers at Montreal Transport are riding around in taxpayer-funded electric Mustangs.

The \$1.2 million purchase was defended on the grounds that the government has a buy electric mandate and that the electric muscle cars were a better fit for managers, some of whom are “larger” and “taller.”

These Mustangs were bought at a time when the transit authority cut hundreds of jobs.

Source:

<https://www.noovo.info/video/la-stm-se-paie-des-voitures-electriques-de-luxe-des-ford-mustang-mach-e.html>

Metro Vancouver

Nominated for: Wasting money on meetings that were supposed to save money, but didn't save a dime.

Cost: \$20,000

At a time when B.C. local governments are under scrutiny for high spending, Metro Vancouver decided to be proactive and look for ways to save money.

Unfortunately for taxpayers, the meeting cost \$20,000 and no savings were found.

Maybe next time, they can at least save money by ending these pointless meetings.

Source:

<https://www.taxpayer.com/newsroom/province-must-reappoint-auditor-general-for-local-governments>

Lifetime Achievement Award

Former prime minister Justin Trudeau

The Lifetime Achievement Award for Waste is the most prestigious of the Teddy Waste Awards.

Past recipients have included everyone premiers to Bev Oda and Bombardier.

This year, the award goes to the Wayne Gretzky of Waste: former prime minister Justin Trudeau.

It took nearly two dozen prime ministers and 150 years for the federal government to rack up \$600 billion of debt.

Trudeau did that in less than a decade!

Trudeau also ballooned the bureaucracy. Taxpayers are now paying for 99,000 more federal bureaucrats today than they did in 2016.

Trudeau never met a problem he didn't try to fix by wasting more tax dollars.

As inflation reached a 40-year high, Trudeau took his cabinet ministers on three “affordability retreats” in a single year. Those retreats cost taxpayers [more than \\$1 million](#).

Trudeau also wasted taxpayers’ money all around the world.

He spent [\\$61,000](#) on Manhattan hotel rooms during a two-day star-studded anti-poverty conference. He fought poverty the only way he knew how: with selfies and room service!

Trudeau also spent [\\$220,000](#) on airplane food during a six-day trip to the Indo-Pacific region and billed taxpayers for a [\\$6,000 per night hotel suite](#) during the Queen’s funeral in London, England.

Because he doubled the debt.

Because he ballooned the bureaucracy.

And because he was the GOAT of Government WASTE, Justin Trudeau is a worthy recipient of this year’s Lifetime Achievement Award for Waste.