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January 11, 2012

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[Winnipeg Free Press](#) > [Canada](#) > [Breaking News](#) > CUTTING RED TAPE DIDN'T COME CHEAP; N.B. MP AND STAFF COST \$35K OVER SIX WEEKS

BREAKING NEWS

The Canadian Press - ONLINE EDITION

Cutting red tape didn't come cheap; N.B. MP and staff cost \$35K over six weeks

By: [Steve Rennie, The Canadian Press](#)

Posted: 01/11/2012 2:09 PM | Comments: 0 (including replies) | Last Modified: 01/11/2012 2:15 PM

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OTTAWA - A junior cabinet minister and his entourage racked up \$35,000 in expenses over six weeks as part of the government's Red Tape Reduction Commission, new documents show.

Expense forms show Conservative MP Rob Moore and his staff accounted for well over half the travel and hospitality costs incurred by MPs on the commission.

The group, which reviewed the burden on businesses of complying with regulations, released an interim report after consultations and roundtables across Canada.

Moore's meetings in eight cities cost \$22,266. It cost another \$12,793 for three aides to accompany the New Brunswick MP to some meetings.

The sessions occurred between last Jan. 12 and Feb. 25.

Moore was minister of state for small business and tourism until he got dropped from cabinet in a shuffle after the May 2 federal election.

Moore's office declined comment. An aide said Treasury Board arranged the travel. The department was not immediately available to comment.

The red-tape commission was made up of six Conservative MPs and six business people.

The Canadian Press obtained documents detailing the MPs' travel and hospitality expenses under the Access to Information Act.

Travel and hospitality costs for the MPs and Moore's aides totalled close to \$60,000. Nearly all those expenses were incurred between last January and March.

The documents also show Treasury Board questioned why a limousine was needed to take Tory MP Cathy McLeod on a short trip to the airport.

A receipt shows the British Columbia MP took an 11-minute ride to the Winnipeg airport in a luxury car at a cost of \$68.

One of McLeod's aides was required to explain the trip.

"Mrs. McLeod was travelling with the Status of Women Committee in Winnipeg," the aide wrote to an official who questioned the expense.

"She asked the clerk of the committee to arrange a cab for her since their flight was late. The cab sat on the tarmac waiting for her to arrive and the meter was running."

McLeod said she and the other Status of Women Committee members were in the northern Prairies. Their flight to Winnipeg was delayed, so the cab waited for her at a private airport. From there she drove to the main airport to catch a flight to Toronto for the commission's kick-off event with Prime

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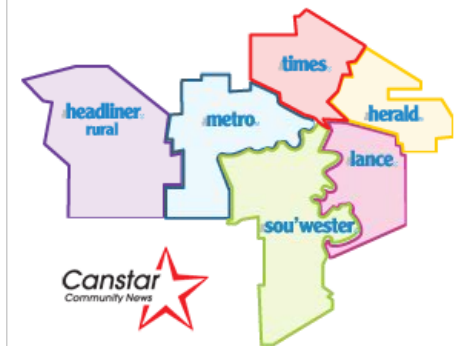
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McLeod said the committee's clerk called the limo company, adding she would have been satisfied with a regular taxi.

"It was still cheaper than missing the flight," she said in an interview.

Records show it cost \$11,550 for Chris Warkentin to attend six meetings; \$4,700 for Dean Allison to attend five meetings; \$3,193 for McLeod to attend five meetings; \$2,809 for Lois Brown to attend three meetings; and \$829 for commission chair Maxime Bernier to attend a single meeting.

Only three MPs had expenses outside the January-to-March period: Warkentin and Brown attended a commission meeting in Ottawa in August, while Bernier went to Toronto in September.

Expenses for other staffers, if there were any, are not included in documents released under the access law.

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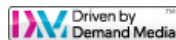
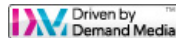
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