



OTTAWA, CANADA
K1A 0A6

September 3, 2020

Mr. Peter Julian, M.P.
New Westminster—Burnaby
House of Commons
180 Wellington, Suite 203
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Ms. Rachel Blaney, M.P.
North Island—Powell River
House of Commons
Justice Building, Suite 900
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Julian and Ms. Blaney:

Thank you for your letter of August 31, in which you request that the House Administration “...immediately undertake the necessary steps, including testing remote voting [...] to ensure that when Parliament resumes, we are in a position to enact a model which allows all parliamentary powers as well as remote participation of some Members.”

While I am confident in the ability of the Administration to provide this support in a timely way, such measures require the approval of the House. As Speaker, I am duty-bound to follow the rules, conventions, practices and traditions of the House. Therefore, it must be following a decision of the House that I would direct the Administration to undertake the activities you request.

The technological innovations and procedural adaptations the Administration implemented last spring and through this summer were at the order of the House. The motions allowing these initiatives were set to expire on September 21 but have now lost any force or effect as a result of prorogation.

The reports of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs proposing other measures to facilitate the House’s ability to function more fully during the pandemic have not been debated, let alone adopted. With prorogation, these reports have lapsed and are no longer before the House.

As always, the Administration stands ready to carry out any decision taken by the leadership and the House. I therefore encourage you to pursue discussions with your counterparts in the other parties. If a consensus can be reached about how the House should operate once it returns on September 23, I would be pleased to entrust the Administration with implementing any agreement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Hon. Anthony Rota, M.P.

c.c. : Hon. Pablo Rodriguez, P.C., M.P.
Mr. Gérard Deltell, M.P.
Mr. Alain Therrien, M.P.
Hon. Mark Holland, P.C., M.P.
Mr. Blake Richards, M.P.
Ms. Claude DeBellefeuille, M.P.