



The Honourable / L'honorable
Tony Clement, P.C., M.P. / C.P., député
Minister of Industry / Ministre de l'Industrie

10 SEP. 2010

Ms. Xihon Lin
Chair, Committee of Presidents of Statistical Societies
Professor of Biostatistics
Department of Biostatistics
School of Public Health
Harvard University
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Dear Ms. Lin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the 2011 Census of Population. This government recognizes the importance of this issue for Canadians and appreciates the time you have taken to share your views on this matter.

As you are aware, the Government of Canada has made the decision to conduct the census as the short form only, which will be sent to all Canadian households in May 2011. We believe that these recent changes to the Census, along with the introduction of the voluntary National Household Survey (NHS), strike a better balance between the need to collect information on households to inform public policy and protecting the privacy rights of Canadians.

The 2011 Census of Population will consist of 10 questions: the same 8 questions that appeared on the 2006 Census short-form questionnaire plus 2 questions regarding the ability to speak in one of Canada's two Official Languages and the language spoken at home. I assure you that the addition of these questions will support the implementation of the *Official Languages Act* and its regulations. The Government of Canada remains committed to official languages and to supporting the vitality of official language communities.

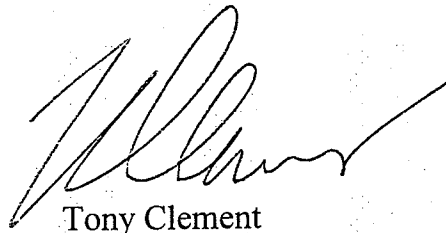
Census information previously collected by the long-form census questionnaire will be collected as part of a new voluntary NHS.

The NHS will be distributed to 1 in 3 households, which represents approximately 4.5 million households, an increase from 2.9 million households surveyed in 2006. Statistics Canada has extensive experience in conducting voluntary surveys and will apply its same rigorous methods and standards to conduct and release survey data. While the government understands that this change could have an impact on data quality, we have sought Statistics Canada's advice on how to structure the NHS to mitigate this risk. Statistics Canada will conduct extensive outreach, in conjunction with its efforts on the Census, to encourage Canadians to participate in this survey. The Chief Statistician has indicated that this new approach will provide useful and usable data that can meet the needs of many users.

Beyond the provision of limited and essential information, we do not believe it is appropriate to demand extensive private and personal information from Canadians under threat of imprisonment. That is why our government announced its intention to introduce legislation this fall to remove threats of jail time for persons refusing to fill out the Census and all mandatory surveys administered by Statistics Canada. An additional legislative amendment will also be made to require respondents' consent on whether personal information from the NHS questionnaire can be released after 92 years.

I encourage all Canadians who receive the 2011 Census form to complete it and participate in the National Household Survey if their household is selected.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Clement', with a stylized, flowing script.

Tony Clement