

Trudeau Prorogues Parliament: What's Happening and Why It Matters



On Monday, January 6th, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that he is proroguing (temporarily closing) Parliament so the Liberal Party can pick a new leader. He also plans to step down once his replacement is chosen. Governor General Mary Simon approved this request, so Parliament will remain closed until March 24th, 2025.

Why Prorogue Parliament?

Proroguing Parliament means all current work in the House of Commons stops. No new laws can be passed, and committees cannot meet. It also prevents opposition parties from trying to defeat the government through a non-confidence vote before the Liberals select their new leader.

This happens at a tricky time for Canada's economy. The Canadian dollar is at its lowest point since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, and investment experts at Bloomberg say Canada's financial risk is higher now than it has been since the 1995 Quebec referendum.

Impact on Bills and Committees

Any bill that has not been passed (received Royal Assent) is canceled. It has to be introduced again in the next session, as if it never existed. Committees, such as the powerful public accounts committee, also stop working. This committee was supposed to discuss a possible motion of non-confidence this week, but now that discussion is off the table until Parliament resumes.

Government Plans on Hold

A number of key government projects are paused. One is a \$1.3-billion border security plan introduced in the fall economic statement. This plan was meant to address demands from soon-to-be U.S. President Donald Trump, who had threatened a 25% tariff on Canadian goods unless Canada strengthened its border security.

Other stalled bills include:

- Measures to combat child pornography and exploitation (part of the Online Harms Act).
- Plans to provide clean drinking water in First Nations communities.
- Updates to the military justice system.

- Improvements to railway and port safety laws.
- Stronger cybersecurity protections.

Additional Insight

Prorogation is a legal tool that leaders can use, but it often sparks debate. Supporters say it gives a government time to set a new agenda – especially when choosing a new Prime Minister – while critics argue it can be used to avoid tough questions and delay important decisions. With economic concerns growing and investment risk on the rise, many Canadians will be watching closely to see how the new Liberal leader plans to address these challenges. Meanwhile, delayed bills, such as those aimed at improving conditions in Indigenous communities and enhancing cybersecurity, may need to start over once Parliament returns. Depending on the new leader's priorities, not all bills may return in the same form, or at all – leaving Canadians uncertain about the government's next steps.