

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

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Responses

1. Economic Recovery and Growth

Given the current climate of federal and global fiscal restraint, what specific federal measures do you feel are needed for a sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth in Canada?

Investment in renewable energy sectors to diversify Canada's energy industry is a guarantee against the volatility of carbon-based energy markets and exports. It also increases Canada's energy independence, while helping Canada be a leader in the fastest-growing sector of the energy industry. We must develop the expertise, and the products, for local benefit and for export. Canada has a fantastic educational system and a vibrant scientific community. Do not let it languish from the cuts in funding general research, but invest in pure scientific research across broad disciplines that benefit all sectors of Canadian society and industries (eg in the social sciences, addressing FAS, to physical sciences such as geomorphology for landscape hazards mapping in light of climate change, biological sciences grasping impacts of pollution or climate change on whole ecosystems as well as domestic environments such as farms and communities. This includes having the labs and having the field stations to gather the necessary data at all extremes of Canada's social and physical geographies). Continue investing in the Arts, and in our public broadcaster, to support, and disseminate, the work of our arts community.

2. Job Creation

As Canadian companies face pressures resulting from such factors as uncertainty about the U.S. economic recovery, a sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and competition from a number of developed and developing countries, what specific federal actions do you believe should be taken to promote job creation in Canada, including that which occurs as a result of enhanced internal and international trade?

Please see response #1. Diversify, diversify. Renewable energies, efficiency-inspired transportation technologies (Canadian companies should NOT need to import foreign dirigibles for their remote mining operations...this should be a made in Canada solution that can be exported around the world), state of the art building technologies, regional agriculture addressing food security, recycling systems and technologies, all keeping energy, materials and jobs in Canada. Assistance to Canadian manufacturing to be efficient hence competitive with international markets having much lower wage levels. Maintain or increase support to the arts and Canadian content requirements of Canadian broadcasting and print.

3. Demographic Change

What specific federal measures do you think should be implemented to help the country address the consequences of, and challenges associated with, the aging of the Canadian population and of skills shortages?

Reduce the retirement age to free up employment opportunities for young people; put concerted effort into bringing opportunities to Canadians who are not employed or under-employed; put concerted effort into building policy which understands and supports GHP versus GDP, invest in outstanding education from kindergarten up so that our young generation is informed, creative, skilled and adaptable.

4. Productivity

With labour market challenges arising in part as a result of the aging of Canada's population and an ongoing focus on the actions needed for competitiveness, what specific federal initiatives are needed in order to increase productivity in Canada?

Competitiveness should be measured by the Quality of our goods, resources and expertise for export. And quality should be measured by how we extract and produce goods and materials. Strong environmental legislation so that Canada is a world leader in exports of green (ie sustainably extracted) resources is powerful competitive tool in a market place becoming always more conscious of our footprint. Our scientific research and public education on forward thinking design and environmental stewardship only adds value to the qualitative approach we take to sustainable industries, increasing our competitiveness. Where our own labour market falls short in numbers, we open doors to attract the world's best in science, engineering, etc having this holistic, and hence competitive approach to problem solving.

5. Other Challenges

With some Canadian individuals, businesses and communities facing particular challenges at this time, in your view, who is facing the most challenges, what are the challenges that are being faced and what specific federal actions are needed to address these challenges?

I feel our environment, and all Canadians that it supports and inspires, are being most challenged by the federal budget presented in bill C-38 in 2012. Actions required are the restoration of laws, and of the science that informs those laws, so that Canada's environmental heritage is not a footnote to multinational corporate needs. The economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment, not the other way around.