

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?

Clean technology will be a significant contributor to Canada's economic success, job growth, and improved trade opportunities. Canada enjoys a globally competitive advantage as it pertains to the industrial bio-based products component of clean technology due to our very significant biomass resource base, particularly forestry biomass, and the physical infrastructure to harvest and process this biomass. Canada's opportunity is make the forest products that we are presently making but to add these products by turning biomass into advanced biofuels, bio-energy, renewable chemicals, and bio-materials. Of these products bio-materials are of particular interest as they are / will be used in the built economy contributing significantly to achieving net energy building challenges. Success in commercializing and deploying new bio-materials and systems will create new Canadian jobs, increase GDP, and expand export opportunity. Continued investment into entities such as Sustainable Development Technologies Canada which invests in clean technology is desirable. Establishment of energy use intensity regulations in buildings (both embodied and operational) would be beneficial.

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?

With the right set of investments and policies the Government of Canada can help capture, at an earlier date, the economic benefits from the market entry and rapid deployment of bio-materials into the Canadian and global built economy. Measures that are required are: 1. More rapid updating of building codes and standards, 2. Investment in the research and the development of new forest biomass-based construction products and systems 3. Investment in the commercialization of wood-based construction products and systems 4. Programs that de-risk the adoption into the built economy of new wood-based construction products and systems Sustainable Development Technologies Canada can be a mechanism through the SD Tech Fund and through the current funds allocated to the Next Generation Biofuels Fund if that fund was to be redefined as a bio-economy fund versus just being solely focused on biofuels, i.e. inclusive of bio-materials.

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?

As it pertains to bio-materials a significant portion of the innovation is currently European based. Collaboration with European entities with the objective of recruiting entrepreneurs and product developers would be beneficial. Development of building systems products that can be manufactured indoors through out the year and then rapidly deployed / assembled during the building season will make better use of limited skilled human resources.

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?

Being an early developer and deployer of wood-based construction products and systems which are tested and deployed in Canada and as a result are ready for export to markets in other countries will help increase our competitiveness and productivity. Key to this will be the more rapid evolution of building codes and standards and programs that will assist in the de-risking of the use of new products and systems in Canada.

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?

Forest products companies and the communities in which they are located have suffered economically over the last 5 years. Advances in the use of wood-based construction products and systems within Canada and globally will require forest based biomass from these forest products companies improving the economic prospects of the companies, communities and people the living in these communities.