

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

Wendy Jones

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?

A heavy focus on "Green Energy" alternatives (and hydro does not count as renewable) could create thousands of jobs. Sustainable communities need Federal start up grants for community initiatives like gardens and small retail outlets that carry AFFORDABLE goods and AFFORDABLE housing. Money needs to be poured into electric transit and cars while the oil and mining industry needs more taxation. Industrial pollution needs larger, better enforced fines. Sustainable industry can also create thousands of more jobs, for instance, logging operations could have pellet companies harvesting the slag to manufacture wood pellets, and green waste also goes into pellet making. Pellet furnaces are zero emission and can generate enough electricity to power industries...a complete cycle!!! Alternative building methods and materials are another area that can create jobs, but incentives are needed from the feds and the provinces. The long term and short term gains as all the above can balance the economy by shifting to new paradigm ways.

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?

We need to reinstate F.I.R.A.. Canadian ownership is paramount in reclaiming our economy. NAFTA should be retired. Green is the answer, green alternatives in energy, building, transportation. Sustainability is the key to community living and the backbone of a healthy society. Please see my answers to Question One.

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?

Small, affordable cooperative living in neighbourhoods that are sustained with small retail and services can generate work within one's own community. The Abbeyfield model for geriatrics who need more care would also fit into this model. With affordable living, the ageing population will have more money to spend within their neighbourhoods. Federal grants and incentives can help move us towards micro-economics within community, giving the nation a shift in balance from large facilities with huge administrative costs that also mean transportation (therefore oil dependant) usage for family and friends. Looking towards the 7th generation, the use of new technology in solar, wind and tidal can generate clean, renewable energy that can be created in one's own home. This, along with alternative building methods and materials will not only make for a cleaner, greener Canada but morph many of today's skills into something that will interest today's youth. As it is, youth bucks the skills because they have no interest in modern architecture and building methods. We need the Feds to help make things different and interesting!! Some immigration may be necessary to fill the gap while we transition, so

applicants would have to be flexible about what they're willing to work at and where they're willing to live.

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?

Again, there must be a paradigm shift to true sustainability and adherence to the United Nations Agenda 21. We can't keep bucking the trends to transition if we refuse to follow what the rest of the world is trying to achieve in terms of sustainability. We are stuck on an old model system that only serves to prolong the inevitable in terms of unemployment, the resource sector and energy sector. Another 'again' is the reimplementing of F.I.R.A. so we have control over who's getting what jobs. As it is there are many American firms and companies operating here with their American employees....not good! To be more productive we need our own sense of identity within the labour market. We also need a sense of pride for better industry practices that pay homage to the environment, First Nations and other areas that generate pride. It will take the Feds to lead the way in making our mark on the global front with regulations that promote green and clean and the best all the way on the sustainable front. If industry can keep its products and resources affordable then competition will be less because of the reputation that Canada makes good products the RIGHT way.

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?

Most of the challenges today are economic and based on yesteryear's booms...so the challenges face everyone. Business has a mind-set that's a hang-over from the industrial revolution and likes to play the 'blame game'. Cries are heard about the cost of employees and minimum wages, but in most cases it's due to business having poor business plans. Wages are a fact of life. 'Liveable wages' are an entirely different matter. Our large urban centres are not affordable on minimum wage, so again, it's a matter of creating sustainable communities and neighbourhoods. In some cases it's a matter of some industry moving to smaller cities and towns, creating employment and housing there. But a 'company town' needs diversity to survive so a particular business can't rule the roost. Expectation of business owners is often too high....the 'dream' of being able to go out to golf three times a week and put whatever possible on expense accounts is over. Retirement can be offered earlier with a bonus from the Federal government as incentive and the payback could come to the government in a new type of RRSP for early retirees. Youth would then fill in the gaps of the retirees and an income tax base drawn on that. Again, it boils down to transitioning to sustainable communities and part of that is small business that serves the community. This would make it easier and more affordable to retire early, and create employment in many different ways. Local bicycle shops that both sell and repair bikes....co-operative food stores that have large buying power because the largesse of the co-op members would allow food to be more affordable....the list goes on and on.