

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?

- Change budget policies that penalizes those that do not spend their entire budget within each fiscal year. This only encourages wasteful spending. - Stop aggressively cutting the public sector. - Invest in our infrastructure, especially when it comes to energy distribution. Combine that with intelligent policies that will encourage investments in renewable energy. - Carbon fee-and-dividend. The fee is to be paid by the fossil-fuel industry for every unit of oil, gas or coal that is extracted or imported. The revenue is then distributed on a monthly basis to Canadians (that's the dividend). This will discourage the purchase energy intensive products while encouraging investment in low-energy alternatives. It will also spur investments in renewables while discouraging further developments in oil, gas and coal. And because families receive monthly dividends, it will not harm families in low-to-medium income levels. We need to address climate change. And a fee-and-dividend policy has been seen by economists (even conservatives) as good market approach to the problem.

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?

- Tax breaks for companies that keep manufacturing jobs in Canada. - Tax penalties for those that ship manufacturing overseas. - We need to create jobs, but we also need to tackle climate change. So why not create policies that will encourage the purchase of turbines and solar systems. Ex: generous feed-in tariff, low interest loans.

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?

- For skill shortages, why not subsidize re-training for people who are unemployed. - For the aging population, how about finding ways of raising revenues in order to help pay for the continuation of services. I do not agree with cutting benefits or raising the age of retirement simply because the number of people is going up. We are a wealthy nation. We should be able to take care of our elderly. I'm willing to pay for that.

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?

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?

- Increasing cost of food and energy and climate change are, in my view, among the biggest challenges that the average person faces today and in the future. Food costs will continue to rise as the impacts of climate change become worse - you can actually expect food prices to spike this summer and fall thanks to conditions in Canada and the US. Energy cost will continue to climb if we do not move Canada onto a sustainable, renewable energy path. Government policies that encourage an aggressive transition to renewable energy will have a wide range of economic advantages. It will create a great number of jobs in the growing "green" economy. It will stabilize, and eventually reduce energy prices for families because turbine and solar systems are reducing in price all the time and the wind and sun are free.