

## Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

### Pre-budget consultations 2012

## Alison Reid

### 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?*

I believe that environmental and social justice measures must be financially supported by taxpayers in order to have a sustainable economy. Climate change issues must be tackled as a priority - otherwise we will continue to spend large amounts of money cleaning up after weather-created disasters. We must fund and support with planning and research, renewable energy options. We must enhance CBC so that people can be well informed about the issues facing us. We must investigate ways to encourage investment in mining landfills for the resources they contain. We must define a successful economy in terms of people's well-being (health, affordable housing, adequate food, clean environment, happiness) rather than (unsustainable) infinite growth. The budget must limit itself to fiscal measures, and not contain amendments to other bills. No omnibus budget bills!

#### 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?*

Canada needs an educated work force. We must support post-secondary institutions and ensure that they are affordable for all - youth as well as people needing additional training at all ages. We need to develop jobs and industry in renewable energy fields and take a leading role in this area. We need to step away from dependence on fossil fuel industries because China, Brasil and other growing economies are working hard to ensure that they need less and less of these fuels. We need to encourage gender and other equity in pay. We need to encourage all employers, with the federal govt taking the lead, to support job-sharing and part-time work: this way more people can be in the workforce at well-paying satisfying jobs, while having time they need to contribute to their families and communities. We need to promote local purchasing, to reduce transportation expense and fossil fuel use, and to support local industries. We need to factor into free trade agreements environmental costs, so that countries that pollute in the making of goods (including Canada) are not given economic advantages over environmentally respectful companies and goods.

#### 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?*

Make adequate funding available to the provinces/territories so that post-secondary training can be free, and so that good health can be promoted for all. Healthy aging people can continue to contribute to their communities in paid and volunteer positions. Ensure that wealthy old people contribute adequately in taxes, and that poor old people can live well. I imagine that poor old people contribute more to local economies than the wealthy. Support immigrants in having their training acknowledged here, and support everyone's training needs. Encourage people to consume less, grow more food and

recycle as much as possible. Encourage people to decrease their living costs and to live within modest means.

#### **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?*

Support training and make it affordable. Focus on tackling climate change issues and developing renewable technologies - make Canada a world leader. Reduce support for industries that create lots of waste (either thru pollution or excessive resource use, or by their disposable nature), and introduce measures so that appliances and vehicles must contain entirely recyclable components. Define productivity in a way that measures the social, environmental and economic value of the work done. Decrease the number of employees in the PMO's office and increase the number in research and development areas.

#### **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 see climate change as one of the largest challenges facing us all. The federal government must tackle this with deep commitment and across all departments. There are economic opportunities for us, as well as social, economic and environmental challenges. Undisturbed ecosystems must be protected and seen as the valuable savings account that they are. Without them, Canada will continue to slide into environmental bankruptcy, and that will be accompanied by economic and social bankruptcy as well. Federal leadership in these areas could make such a difference! We don't need more stuff, as much as we need quality of life that comes from a healthy environment and functional communities.