

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

SafeTracks GPS Solutions Inc.

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?

SafeTracks GPS Solutions is a supplier of GPS tracking technology systems for both persons and objects. The person tracking applications and the enhanced funding and public safety productivity they deliver are discussed in detail in the response to Question 4 of this Survey. SafeTracks systems also support tracking of physical objects including cargo containers. Expedited clearance of container cargo at the Canada-US border is a stated goal in Chapter 1 of the Action Plan for the Canada-US Beyond the Border Agreement. This includes an Integrated Cargo Security Strategy (ICSS) that features two specific projects for that purpose originating in the marine ports of Prince Rupert and Montreal. Clearly, this Strategy will need to involve harmonized initial screening standards and post clearance GPS tracking of the cargo container until it reaches the Canada-US border and the point of final destination. Cargo container integrity must also be ensured throughout the shipping process for this Strategy to be successful. Both the GPS tracking and cargo container integrity sensor technology is currently available suitable to ensure the Strategy's important trade enhancement goals. SafeTracks GPS Solutions can offer the most accurate, reliable, robust and secure GPS tracking of cargo containers including with a intrusion detection sensor that can be tailored to specific requirements but which can include, time, location and even real time AV evidence. As such, we have made submissions to the appropriate authorities leading the ICSS but it is our understanding that no specific Budget allocations were made to support the Beyond the Border Action Plan. It is recommended that this be addressed in Budget 2013 so that this critically important aspect of international and cross border trade can be resolved. As trade groups have emphatically noted, the economic benefits to achieving the intended 'screened once-cleared twice' approach are enormous which is why express funding action in Budget 2013 is essential.

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?

Unlike all other Electronic Monitoring providers in Canada, SafeTracks GPS Solutions has consciously chosen to operate all of its systems in Canada and to ensure all data is kept in Canada. This includes operation of our fully integrated Monitoring and Emergency Response Center which is also located in Canada. These choices, although more expensive to the company, were originally made to ensure full compliance with Canadian privacy requirements. While that remains the case, it is also noteworthy that this approach creates jobs in Canada which will be expanded as the deployment of Electronic Monitoring in its various applications proceeds. Supporting that deployment through targeted funding in Budget 2013 will support that job growth. The different uses or applications for the SafeTracks systems, described in the response to Question 4, also provide enhanced spending productivity which permits more effective use of resources including the potential of job growth.

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?

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?

Electronic monitoring (EM) of persons as a condition of release from custody is a growing tool used by public authorities to enhance supervision of the individuals in question and also to permit a cost effective safe release rather than expensive detention. It is currently used in Criminal Code applications including bail, sentencing and, especially, in high risk offender supervision contemplated through preventive recognizances known as '810 orders'. It is also used by provincial correctional authorities, albeit with antiquated technology, and most recently, the express authority to use EM was provided to federal correctional and parole authorities through amendments to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act enacted through Bill C-10. EM is also used for releases under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (including on security certificate cases) and the Extradition Act. Modern EM technology as provided by SafeTracks GPS Solutions includes GPS tracking, tamper proof anklets, inclusion of 'no go' zones with automated alerts and real time three way communications. It provides dramatically enhanced supervision of individuals who are released pending disposition of their case or as part of the administration of an imposed sentence. In addition, it generates enormous cost savings both from non custodial supervision and by serving as a force multiplier for law enforcement which eliminates the need for very expensive 24/7 supervision of the person in question. Finally, EM reduces the likelihood of a person under supervision fleeing or committing new offences which also saves money. What is required is a definitive budgetary allocation in Budget 2013 to support the use of Electronic Monitoring by both Federal and Provincial authorities. Whether done as a new program or through modification of an existing funding program such as Public Safety's 'Crime Prevention Program', targeted funding for this specific purpose is needed to achieve the enhanced public safety and systemic spending productivity it provides. Because of our work with law enforcement we are also aware that there are significant funds outstanding owing to the Crown (provincial and federal) for unpaid fines and bail forfeitures which, if collected, could provide funding for expanded EM deployment.

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?