

## Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

### Pre-budget consultations 2012

# Squamish Off-Road Cycling Association

## 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?*

Fitness and recreation are growth industries in Canada. In the Sea to Sky Corridor, we have the natural resources for outstanding outdoor recreation. The forested hinterland of Squamish has an incredible network of over 200km of mountain biking trails. This attracts visitors from all over Canada and from around the world. It is also an attraction for new residents, which contributes to the growth of new housing construction. The tourism benefit to Canada of this resource is strong at present, and has the potential to be huge. An investment in the mountain biking infrastructure will attract thousands of riders. According to the Sea to Sky Mountain Biking Economic Impact Study of 1996 (put together by the Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association), "the trail systems of the North Shore, Squamish, and Whistler are estimated to have collectively generated \$10.3 million in spending from riders that live outside the host community over the three months from June 4, 2006 to September 16, 2006." Since then the Mountain Biking industry in the Sea to Sky corridor has expanded dramatically. Whistler, as a result of the Bike Park, has seen steady growth in visitorship. Squamish has seen three high-end bike shops expand recently, investing in bigger facilities and hiring more employees. It was reported at the National Bike Summit in Washington D.C. this year that the state of Iowa brings in \$370 Million annually from its cycling industry. We believe we have a huge competitive advantage to Iowa in terms of the quality of trails and scenic beauty. With a focus on cycling, there is no reason we cannot, at minimum, match this result. All these facts point to a solid return on investments in mountain biking infrastructure which benefits the biking industry, the service industry, and the tourism industry. A Bike Skills Park can be a central hub to an expansive trail network. It also introduces new peoples to the sport in a safe way. It will act as a draw to visitors.

### 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?*

An epic mountain biking skills park and trail network becomes a destination for visitors to Canada, BC and the Sea to Sky Corridor. This is evidenced by the tourism draw of events like Crankworx in Whistler, the Grand Fondos of Sea to Sky, and the Okanagan, the BC Bike Race, and the Test of Metal mountain bike race series in Squamish. An expansion of cycling in the sea to sky corridor means more growth and jobs in two key areas: • Tourism: Hotel, restaurant, tourism marketing • Cycling industry: bicycle service and retail, trail building and maintenance, coaching and guiding

### **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?*

An increased emphasis on healthy and active lifestyle will help keep older adults more productive. Fitter Canadians will require less healthcare costs, which will also boost overall productivity of the workforce. The “le grand defi du Pierre Lavoie” was a project that was funded in previous budgets and which promoted cycling, health and fitness. This project will do similar things by encouraging people to take up cycling and by allowing them to learn the skills necessary in a safe way. In addition, it will also promote tourism and hospitality in our community.

### **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?*

The fostering of industries like tourism that are well suited to an aging workforce is important to maintaining employability and productivity.

### **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?*

Communities like Squamish have faced challenges with the decline of logging related industry. Yet our natural resources remain an incredible asset and one we can build a new tourism industry around. The Sea to Sky trails are spectacular. Visitors from around the world who ride here rave about their experience. An investment in this infrastructure will attract further private investment in tourism, hospitality, and the cycling industry in Canada. A world class mountain bike skills park will from a central hub to the mountain biking trail network in the Squamish area and will serve as a to attract tourists from around the world and will also serve as a recreation facility for the enjoyment of all Canadians.