

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

Tourism Calgary

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?

Canada needs to make a serious and significant commitment into investing in the promotion and marketing of Canada as a destination for travelers. The travel and tourism economy is the fastest growing economy in the world and one of the most competitive. Canada has lost a considerable amount of its share in international arrivals over the last ten years and our travel trade deficit has reached an all time high because our tourism exports are not promoted enough. The USA has now introduced for the first time in its history a \$200 million investment in marketing the USA. They are targeting Canadians as one of their key markets and therefore our competitive landscape has become further challenged. The Canada brand is strong in the world and our country has what international travellers are seeking - we just need to invest in marketing in order to create awareness and then drive demand.

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?

Increased investment and a stable funding model for marketing Canada as a destination for international travellers through the Canadian Tourism Commission will increase visitation for Canada. Travel and Tourism employs one in every ten working Canadians in every community in Canada. Tourism is labour intensive and therefore increasing visitation to our beautiful destination will increase our visitor economy, help to lower our trade deficit as tourism is an export industry and will increase employment opportunities for all age groups, all ethnic backgrounds and both male and female workers in all parts of the country.

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?

Canada needs to increase its immigration quota's and also have greater ease and access to work visa's. An increase in investment in marketing Canada as a destination for international travellers will increase the travel and tourism economy, reduce the travel deficit, increase employment and attract more of the international community to invest and live in Canada. People are more motivated to invest and live in a country they have visited than one they have not.

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?

Seasonality has a major impact on productivity within the tourism sector. An increase in visitation to Canada through an increased commitment to marketing investment will help to reduce the negative impacts of the "off-seasons" and maintain employment and productivity and business viability and investment. Aging Canadians are well equipped to work in the tourism industry beyond their retirement years and therefore a strong tourism sector will employ Canadians beyond their retirement years reducing the need for social assistance programs.

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?

The Travel and Tourism sector exists in every Canadian community and employs Canadians from sea to sea to sea. The tourism economy is losing market share and is in the most competitive environment it has ever been in. The Canadian tourism product is excellent and world class. Our tourism exports are marketable internationally and we have just not taken this sector seriously enough and invested in a meaningful and competitive way in marketing Canada as a destination.