



SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

SFI-00001

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2018 Pre-Budget Consultations Submission

Executive Summary

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) is a sustainability leader that stands for future forests. SFI works in the domestic and global market place through our world leading assurances work, and our conservation and community programs. Since 1976, our Project Learning Tree program has trained 700,000 educators in North America and internationally. We believe that the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change should be underpinned by a Canadian framework on green education, and supported by continued investments in green jobs. The framework should include green education with exposure to nature to build an understanding of career paths that lead to placement in green jobs. The benefits of green education are well understood and include increased student achievement, critical and creative thinking, skill enhancement, strengthened communities, healthier lifestyles, and direct links to real jobs.

We encourage the federal government to work with the Council of Ministers of Education to develop a framework for K-12 and post-secondary green education. Federal budget 2017 included investments to expand employment opportunities for young Canadians including investments in green jobs until March 2020. We encourage additional investments in green jobs to support partnerships and placements until 2023 at a cost of \$15 million annually.

Relevancy and Connections

Our organization supports sustainability leadership throughout North America. SFI occupies a unique niche in which we interface with businesses in a global supply chain of forest products, and elevate the conservation and community values of well-managed forests. Our community values include educating the next generation in sustainable development. SFI Inc. is governed by an independent three-chamber board of directors representing environmental, social, and economic sectors equally.

In Canada, over the past decade SFI has:

- Partnered with conservation organizations, governments, community organizations, and academics to fund 25 grants exceeding \$1.8 million in support of projects such as wildlife habitat conservation, species at risk research, and carbon and climate studies. Partners have included organizations such as Ducks Unlimited Canada, FP Innovations, Université Laval, Nature Conservancy Canada, Saskatchewan Research Council, and University of Northern BC.

- Funded youth related programming with Earth Rangers, Scouts Canada, Girl Guides, Forests Ontario, and Envirothon to enhance youth's knowledge of Canada's forests as a valuable natural resource.
- Built partnerships with indigenous organizations and programs including the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) and Habitat for Humanity's Indigenous Housing Program.
- Worked with indigenous businesses, representing 28 communities, to certify more than 3.1 million hectares of forest land under indigenous management to the SFI Forest Management standard.
- Grown its certified lands base from 34 million to 89 million hectares in partnership with more than 60 companies managing forest lands and producing forest products such as EACOM, Interfor, Irving, Miller Western, Resolute, TimberWest, Tolko, and Weyerhaeuser.
- Globally, products certified to SFI standards are sold in nearly 130 countries, and SFI accounts for almost 25% of global certified forests.

Since 1976, SFI's Project Learning Tree (PLT) has trained 700,000 educators to help students learn how to think, not what to think, about complex environmental issues. PLT helps develop students' awareness, knowledge, and appreciation of the environment, including responsible resource management. It builds their skills and ability to make informed decisions, and encourages personal responsibility for sustaining the environment and our quality of life that depends on it.

SFI works with Canadian non-profits and businesses is uniquely positioned to comment on the House of Commons Finance Committee's two key opportunity areas:

1. What federal measures would help Canadians to be more productive? (**Canadians**)
2. What federal measures would help Canadian business to be more productive and competitive? (**Canadian Business**)

Specifically, for **Canadians** SFI has interests in education and training, health, housing, and labour market participation. The three central pillars of SFI's work are –providing supply chain assurances, conservation leadership, and community engagement. We have decades of experience in natural resource management, education and training, strategic alliances in housing, and direct engagement in labour market participation. Our work assures healthy natural environments and human health.

Specifically, for **Canadian Business** our mission intersects and supports research, training and development, and sustainability of global value chains. The research requirements of the SFI standard, and our direct investments make us a strong partner for supporting business interests, in addition to our decades of experience in training and development.

Green Jobs and Education: Transitioning to a Low Carbon Economy

To ensure the green jobs of the future, it is critical to address the challenging circumstances we are facing today. Canada's natural resource workforce is aging and lacking in diversity. Canadians are increasingly urban and today's youth are more isolated from the natural resources upon which much of Canada's wealth and health has been founded. At the same time, Canada's Indigenous youth constitute a fast-growing segment of the population and have a strong desire to engage in natural resource management. A framework which ties green education to green jobs and ensures a path for all youth, whether indigenous, urban, or rural will help ensure this transition takes place. It is through exposure to green education today that our leaders of tomorrow will envision the breadth of career paths available to them. As highlighted by the OECD's (OECD 2017) studies on green growth, the successful transition to a low carbon economy will only be possible by ensuring several trends:

- that today's workers can adapt and transfer from areas of decreasing employment to other greener industries.
- that Canadians are upgrading skills and adjusting qualification requirements to meet new green employment and skill profiles.
- that today's youth are seeking the education and training in new skills to help with the transition.
- that Canadians seek out these new skills to meet the changing market demands.

As Canada transitions to the low-carbon future envisioned by the Pan-Canadian Framework, we will need to ensure that worker support, skills upgrading, and education and training are in place to help with that transition.

To succeed, Canada will also need new approaches for identifying and tracking these new developments. As recognized by the Business Council of British Columbia (BCBC 2012), without a comprehensive approach to identification and monitoring, it is impossible to know how many people are employed in green jobs; if current policies and funding initiatives are effective; or if the right skills are being generated to support these jobs. As a nation, we have important aspirations to develop a clean economy, but require a comprehensive approach to ensure success.

To address this, SFI recommends that the federal government develop a comprehensive green jobs and green education strategy that includes monitoring, tracking, educating, transition training, promotion, and other elements to help achieve our clean growth objectives.

Green Jobs and Green Education: Working Together to Build A Green Workforce for Canada

We have the opportunity to positively influence green education for today's youth which in turn will fulfill new demand, and enhance opportunities for green jobs.

SFI and its partners have significant experience in green education and have provided professional development to over 700,000 educators in North America and internationally. We stand ready to help and have put together important partnerships to be effective. But we see gaps.

For example, in Canada there is currently a fractured landscape related to green education and green jobs. A national framework that encouraged youth K-12 and post-secondary to learn about the relationship of their natural environment to human health and the economy would greatly assist in educating the country's future workforce about the importance of sustainability and the significance of Canada's abundant natural resources.

The benefits of [green education](#) (PLT 2017) for K-12 and post-secondary are well understood:

- **Improving Academic Achievement.** Green education improves test scores by providing students with engaging lessons about the natural world that can be applied to all subject areas and grades.
- **Breaking the Indoor Habit.** Green education offers an antidote to the plugged-in lives of today's generation, which is the first to grow up indoors. Children who experience school grounds or play areas with diverse natural settings are more physically active, more aware of good nutrition, more creative, and more civil to one another.
- **Improving Student Health.** Green education gets students outdoors and active, and helps to address common health issues in children today, such as obesity, attention deficit disorder, and depression.
- **Supporting STEM.** Green education offers an engaging platform for gaining and applying knowledge and skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).
- **Meeting 21st Century Needs.** Green education emphasizes skills essential for succeeding in tomorrow's world, such as questioning, investigating, defining problems, analyzing, interpreting, reasoning, developing conclusions, and solving problems.
- **Cultivating Leadership Qualities.** Green education emphasizes cooperative learning with others, critical thinking and discussion, and a focus on action strategies with real-world applications.

- **Improving Focus and Cognition.** Green education increases the ability of students to focus and improves their cognitive abilities. Children with attention-deficit disorder also benefit from more exposure to nature—the greener a child’s everyday environment, the more manageable are their symptoms.

These attributes apply in K-12, as well as in post-secondary settings such as colleges, polytechnics and universities. While our green education and green jobs strategy is focused on youth, we should also be mindful of opportunities to train workers transitioning to new fields in the green economy.

Furthermore, green education can inform youth’s decisions to pursue careers as diverse as architecture, bio-technology, engineering, green education, fish and wildlife biology, forestry, hydrology, microbiology, parks interpretation, solid waste management, and many, many more (PLT 2016).

In support of a green jobs and green education strategy, we strongly recommend the development of a national framework on green education to assist in setting the stage for a workforce to help deliver the Pan-Canadian framework, to help Canada use its natural resources wisely, and encourage innovation.

In Federal Budget 2017, the government announced additional investments to expand employment opportunities for young Canadians. The expanded Youth Employment Strategy (YES) will help more than 33,000 vulnerable youth develop the skills they need to find work or go back to school; provide over 1,600 new employment opportunities for youth in the heritage sector; and create 15,000 new green jobs for young Canadians in fiscal years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. These strategies would be inclusive of all Canadian youth – urban, rural, and Indigenous.

Creating thousands of green job opportunities for young Canadians requires collaboration across federal departments, with partners in other levels of government, and in non-governmental organizations. SFI and our vast network of partners in green education are uniquely situated to help.

While we applaud the current investment for partners outside of the federal government – estimated at \$30 million over 2 years – we encourage an additional three years of funding to result in a sustained level of funding through 2023. While the current level of investment is positive, extending the program for three additional years will ensure that employers can develop positions more broadly across the economy and provide additional work experience for many thousands of youth, ensuring a more substantive base for transitioning the economy.

Specific Recommendations

In order to achieve our clean growth objectives, SFI recommends three specific actions be taken by the federal government:

- a. Develop a comprehensive green jobs/green education strategy that includes monitoring, tracking, education, transition training, and other elements to help achieve our clean growth objectives.
- b. Create a national framework for green education to deepen green education in K-12 and post-secondary education systems by working with the Council of Ministers of Education.
- c. Continue investments in green jobs to support partnerships and placements until 2023 at a cost of \$15 million annually.

Sincerely,



Kathy Abusow
President and CEO
Sustainable Forestry Initiative

References and Additional Background Material

Business Council of British Columbia, Environment and Energy Bulletin, Vol.4, Issue 1, 2012

OECD Green Growth Studies: Greener Skills and Jobs; February, 2014;
<http://www.oecd.org/employment/greeningjobsandskills.htm>

Project Learning Tree. Green Schools Investigation, Washington, DC, 2016.

For more information about SFI: <http://www.sfiprogram.org/>

For more information about PLT: <https://www.plt.org/>