

## **Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the 2021 Budget**

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### **Recommendation 1**

That the government refrain from including in the budget any subsidies, incentives, tax breaks, or other support for fossil-fuel industries.

### **Recommendation 2**

That in place of subsidies, incentives, or any form of support for fossil-fuel industries, the government include in the budget broad and massive investment in:

- a) Canadian businesses and initiatives to develop and distribute alternative sustainable, carbon-free energy,
- b) retraining and transition programs for those working in the fossil fuel industry,
- c) retrofitting existing manufacturing sites to carbon-free production capacity, and
- d) intensive consultation and transition planning with communities impacted by those sites that cannot be repurposed.

### **Recommendation 3**

That the government prioritize the infrastructure and maintenance needed to provide a safe water supply to all First Nations communities.

### **Recommendation 4**

That the government direct the Canada Pension Plan, banks and investment companies to divest from fossil fuel industries and shift our investments into sustainable energy projects that add jobs and services to the economy.

### **Recommendation 5**

That the government forgive post-secondary student debt and participate in collaborative planning for affordable and accessible post-secondary education for all.

### **Recommendation 6**

That the government fund and support collaborative plans on a national level for systemic changes to ensure food security, affordable housing (including retrofit initiatives, carbon-neutral building regulations, and sustainable urban planning), climate emergency preparedness including readiness for large-scale migration, accessible and comprehensive physical and mental health services, and long-term care – for everyone sharing this place we call Canada.

### **Recommendation 7**

That the government support transition to fossil-fuel-free vehicles and mass public transit by making public and personal electric vehicles an affordable option, and modernize and expand national and regional railway systems including high-speed trains.

## Considerations

This submission is an appeal to be bold and make the decisions that intelligent, passionate, insightful experts have been consistently saying are the right decisions to make. I'm asking members of the Standing Committee on Finance to call for and support a federal budget for 2021 that reflects the same urgency and willingness to make drastic changes with which the federal government, and federal representatives from all parties, responded to the COVID-19 crisis.

COVID-19 is only one of many crises we are facing. The speed with which it impacted the global community was unprecedented only for those of us who had not already been directly and daily faced with devastation from severe weather events, armed conflict, famine, abuse in all forms because of our race or gender, or systemic oversight. One lesson the pandemic has made crystal clear is that it is this group of "those of us" that needs to change our habits, our expectations and our entitlement, in order for all of us to survive.

A federal budget can't exist in its own bubble, and that means the government's approach also has to change to:

- stop investing in fossil-fuel industries, including building pipelines, and find a way to work collaboratively with provinces that rely on those industries to transition to alternatives (opening Alberta to open-pit coal mining in formerly protected areas is an environmental, economic, and social disaster),
- listen to and be accountable to citizens, not corporations,
- commit to an authentic learning and working relationship with Indigenous and First Nations communities, focused on establishing trust so that true government-to-government collaboration can happen, and
- accept that climate change, racism, and inequality are crises in Canada, and that they are profoundly impacting our physical and mental well-being.

Support for the public service sector generally increased during the pandemic - because we recognized it is our common support system. At the same time, the pandemic revealed that some links in that chain of support had been eroded over time, in the name of efficiency or prioritizing corporate profits over provision of services. That's where the chain has begun to fail and people from all walks of life have joined the call to strengthen investment in essential public services: health care, long-term-care, child care, housing, education and food security. But that investment has to go hand-in-hand with de-constructing inequitable systems and constructing something better.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input. It would be heartening to know that it will be considered, along with all the voices of wisdom, experience, and passion that have been raised over the past few months, and especially the voices of those who have been systematically shut out of decision-making processes. We're all saying fundamentally the same thing. It's time to be bold.