

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

Mike Bray

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?

Receiving fair revenues from non renewable resources and using them to make a rapid transition to a truly sustainable economy is essential to having an economy as we are in the age of consequences regarding climate change. You cannot have enhanced economic growth as it is presently understood by old paradigm thinking. You cannot have finite growth on a finite planet. We have to think of ways to reduce consumption of everything including energy if we want to survive as a civilized society. That is the truth. You have to start thinking beyond an election cycle and the idea of GDP worship. It is an outmoded method of measuring what is important in society. Getting a revenue neutral carbon tax would aid in this process as would outlawing tax havens and getting the rich to pay their fair share of taxes.

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?

Making the transition to a truly sustainable society with clean energy will provide many jobs if encouraged by feed in tariffs and local control of production. Local co-ops and individual ownership has proven effective in Europe. Freeing scientists to once again engage in pure research rather than corporate research subsidized by taxpayers will lead to new breakthroughs. Canada could be a leader in the new paradigm of thinking and interacting with the world if it was not stuck in the old paradigm of increased fossil fuel production and ever increased GDP and growth for the sake of growth. I doubt most of our current politicians have much of a clue of how our life support systems work. Every candidate for any public office should have to pass an exam to prove they understand how our life support systems work. This is essential to making the changes necessary for our survival and having a civilized society.

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?

We can have adequate pensions if everyone, including corporations and tax haven users pay their fair share. Community based home care is a cost effective method of assisting those who are aging. Skills needed in the new paradigm of thinking will require technical training in clean energy jobs and repair people for the non disposable, repairable products to be produced by law. We will not have skills shortages with new thinking, only people who will acquire a varied set of skills based on largely local economies. Dealing with the inevitable effects of climate change due to political inaction will keep many very busy.

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?

Get over the idea that each worker has to produce more. That only means increased use of energy and fewer people employed. We have to cut energy use if we stand a chance of survival, not increase it. We do need to increase the productivity of our scientists by freeing them from the corporate yoke and assisting them develop pure science in the interests of sustainability. I doubt this will register with the current crop of old economic thinking politicians we currently endure.

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?

We are all facing the challenge of accelerating climate change. Agriculture, cities, forestry, coastal communities, northern communities are all affected in particular. There are so many solutions available to mention them all here. The biggest obstacle is the old paradigm thinking and resulting lack of action on climate change. Climate scientists have been too conservative in their predictions of how fast climate change is occurring. We are here- now- in the age of consequences. Quit taking your marching orders and policy direction from the fossil fuel industry and get moving on climate change action- and I do not mean the phony adaptation stuff- reduce our emissions rapidly with a revenue neutral carbon tax for a start. Clear your heads of old ideas and open them to new thinking or we are all in very deep trouble.