

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

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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?

Sport Manitoba feels investment in innovation is key to economic growth and sustained economic recovery. Research and innovation create new markets and new delivery systems that will improve efficiencies and create new products and markets. Sport Manitoba is conducting research into sport and wellness delivery that will create best practices through our Sport for Life Centre. The Sport for Life Centre and its applied research will provide leadership and expertise in the application of sport principles to guide population health initiatives as well as being a catalyst for new development and economic recovery in an underdeveloped part of the inner city. In addition, investment in sport creates tourism opportunities. The sport industry has tremendous potential for growth resulting in ancillary economic activity. As Rick Traer, CEO, Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance said, "sport tourism (is) a critical economic driver in communities across Canada... As the domestic tourism industry continues on its path to recovery, sport travel continues to lead the way, acting as a stabilizing force during times of volatility within the tourism industry." Manitoba's record of hosting large sport events will continue to support economic recovery through sport travel. Each year in Canada, more than two-thirds of deaths result from four groups of chronic diseases—cardiovascular, cancer, type 2 diabetes and respiratory. These chronic diseases share common preventable risk factors including physical inactivity, unhealthy diet and tobacco use. In 2005, the Conference Board of Canada indicated that healthcare spending due to physical inactivity range(s) from \$2.1 to \$5.3 billion annually, representing as much as 4.8% of total healthcare costs in Canada. Research and facilities are required in sport and physical activity. Investment in sport-delivery research and infrastructure will increase wellness and decrease healthcare costs. In times of austerity, governments tend to reduce spending in areas of sport and physical activity. This type of reaction does not take into account the benefits of sport and recreation including job creation, health benefits, reduction in crime amongst youth, programs for high risk and marginalized populations and mentorship and leadership programs.

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?

Sport Manitoba believes job creation programs should be both short- and long-term to ensure stability. Short-term programs might include infrastructure funding injections to create much-needed infrastructure and facilities, including for research and training. Infrastructure spending also creates facilities, the basis for long term job creation and tourism. In discussing the issue of generating full and productive employment, one of the major instruments that is being recognized is the medium of sport. Sport significantly strengthens the economy and society. It develops skills that individuals can use to become more productive at work and it builds social cohesion and generates economic capital, keys to development and prosperity. But more importantly, sport has an important role to play in employment

generation – in recreation and professional settings. The Sport for Life Centre model, specifically, creates opportunities for specialized job-training and opportunities for job growth. Sport research and innovation will create greater demand throughout our province for leadership, training, coaching and technical opportunities in communities, schools and healthcare facilities, especially those fields relating to sport science and medicine. With adjustments to the Canadian Pension Plan and the slow growth in capital markets and interest rates, it is imperative that we address the challenges of our aging population by ensuring people are healthy and active, and able to work as in many cases retirement age has been prolonged. Aging does not need to mean a decline in health or obesity. A healthy lifestyle can be achieved through sport and recreation participation. By providing opportunities to our population to attain healthy lifestyle, they can stay employed, engaged and contribute to our society. This can have a very positive impact on the adjustment to the CCP program to 67 years of age.

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?

A key to addressing the challenges of Canada's aging population is keeping people active. Aging does not need to mean a decline in sport participation, performance and agility. By keeping people active they stay engaged and can volunteer, gain new skills and stay employed and productive. This can be a significant contributor to assisting with the Federal Governments adjustments to the CPP Program to 67 years of age. Investment in creating long-term athletic participation and appropriate sport-delivery mechanism will create a model that can be used across the country to keep people active. Volunteerism is also a critical component of keeping Canada's aging population engaged and active. Skill sets that are required in a number of different aspects of sport, recreation and physical activity including the hosting of major events are often those skills found in today's aging population. Sport delivery is heavily dependent upon volunteers so the resources available through our aging population and Sr. citizen's in invaluable. A key to addressing the challenges of Canada's aging population is keeping people active by increasing economic investments in sport and recreation by supporting development of facilities and programs to ensure access to all Canadians. Programs such as the New Horizons for Seniors Program identified in Canada's Economic Action Plan are critical.

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?

Participation in sport and physical activity increases social well-being, reduces absenteeism and increases productivity. Sport provides athletes and volunteers with the leadership skills needed to succeed in the labour market. It's also important that all communities be engaged in employment opportunities. Sport and physical activity participation as well as leadership development provides a basis for community engagement for marginalized, immigrant and Aboriginal communities. Economic investment in innovative delivery models will provide platforms for these communities to become engaged and see opportunities.

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?

Marginalized communities are facing challenges as they are not participating or not able to participate in the economy, resulting in poor health, addictions as well as social problems, such as gang participation and crime which can perpetuate. Aboriginal, immigrant and low income families are facing major challenges at this time. These communities need to be engaged, which can be achieved through sport and physical activity programming as well as leadership development within the marginalized individuals and communities. Quality, accessible infrastructure is critical to the provision of programming and services. Sport and recreation not for profit and charitable organizations play an important and key role in Canadian society and our communities through services provided, economic prosperity and quality of life. Economic investments to ensure that quality, accessible facilities with trained leadership is available are critical to the provision of programming and services. Tax incentives for charitable donations and increased deductions for corporations to support community projects and not for profit organizations is essential. Sport and models such as the Sport for Life Centre can contribute as a catalyst for change in a number of key areas of the Federal Government's initiatives including; keeping an aging population healthy, active and productive; providing healthy options for marginalized youth, which prevents crime and gang activity; breaks down barriers and engage immigrant communities; develop capacity and wellness opportunities and partnerships within the aboriginal community; job creation in the sport programming, coaching and sport science and medicine field; promote activity to decrease healthcare cost; develop community leaders.