

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?

Regional economic diversification; development of 'green energy' alternatives; reversal of Bill C-38 changes to environmental law to ensure thorough regulation and oversight of industrial impacts on the environment (to reduce long term costs resulting from negative impacts and remediation); investments in support of university education to ensure a competitive contemporary work force; respect for workers and unions to ensure certainty and reduce labor unrest; investments in municipal infrastructure; settlement of outstanding land claims agreements to ensure greater certainty for First Nations with respect to land and resource management initiatives.

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?

Promote regional economic diversification so that jobs are available across Canada rather than primarily in resource rich areas; investment in infrastructure; pull out of CETA and other so-called trade agreements that will override national sovereignty and undermine the regional flexibility required to create the conditions for regional development and meaningful job creation; create the conditions for more secondary processing of resources in Canada rather than direct shipment to other countries (both China and U.S.); promote a science-based economy and stop laying off our best researchers as they will pursue opportunities in other jurisdictions.

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?

Support and encourage university/college education through tuition incentives and other means; make greater effort to diversify the economy so that a wide range of opportunities are open to youth; stop laying off civil servants during their most productive years; repeal the changes to the EI program that force workers into jobs that they are overtrained for; increase efforts to improve education and training levels among Aboriginal peoples, particularly youth; allow and encourage people to work later into life in those areas that job shortages exist; encourage immigration in areas where there are skill shortages and allow immigrants to work in jobs consistent with their training and education, rather than forcing them into low paying jobs.

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?

Encourage employers to allow for greater creativity and input in the workplace; encourage and reward innovations in the workplace; encourage industry to invest in worker training and technology to improve productivity; encourage governments and industry to strengthen the relationships between employers and unionized (and other) workers rather than treating workers as adversaries; diversify the economy to create a range of employment suitable for all worker interests and allow people to work closer to their preferred regions.

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?

First Nations are facing the most challenges and the governments have to invest more in meaningful community development initiatives and allow for greater FN control over resources to mitigate these challenges. Youth are also facing challenges as the federal government cuts jobs, particularly jobs in the environmental science fields, with the apparent expectation that everyone wants to work in the resource development sector. The economy cannot rely on any one sector, but has to be multi-faceted, regionally diverse, and worker friendly. Industry, given its increased tax breaks, needs to be firmly encouraged to invest in training and technology, particularly green technology, to make this country competitive on the world market but also self-sufficient where that world market fails.