

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue

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?

To sustain economic recovery, measures that provide high value to Canadians with a significant multiplier to the federal government on the dollars involved is critical. Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) funding of Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue (RCM-SAR, formerly the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary - Pacific) activities was found to provide a high return for little dollars. In the March 2003 "Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary Evaluation", Sec 2.3 Cost-Effectiveness found that for every dollar invested by the CCG in the Auxiliary (RCM-SAR) \$37 of service was received, in other words "for every dollar expended there is a cost savings of \$37." <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/ae-ve/evaluations/03-04/ccga-gcac-eng.htm> The multiplier would in all likelihood have significantly increased over the last decade with the increased cost of operating marine search and rescue activities.

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?

Recreational boating is a growth industry making a significant contribution to the Canadian economy. A 2006 study undertaken by Discover Boating Canada – "Recreational Boating's Big Splash – The Economic Impact of Recreational Boating in Canada 2006" (www.cmma.ca/cmma/.../EIS_Summary-FINAL-10-Jan-08.pdf), determined that nearly 6 million Canadians took to the water in a boat and that pleasure boats pumped \$15.6 billion directly into the national economy with a significant downstream ripple effect. The activities of RCM-SAR contribute to safer waters, reduced loss of life and reduced property damage. This in turn leads to increased safety of Canadians and visitors on the water and growth in recreational boating and marine tourism. Knowing that help is available in the event of a marine emergency or distress is invaluable to boaters and the volunteer RCM-SAR is an important part of the emergency response network. Members of RCM-SAR receive critical training in vessel operations, first aid, navigation and leadership. Many members have been able to use these skills to transition their careers, find employment within the growing maritime industries and even start their own companies.

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?

RCM-SAR is training boaters and protecting an aging boating population by providing assistance in marine distress and emergency situations. Volunteers come from all walks of life, both actively employed and retired. They have a diverse range of experiences and skills. The common denominator is an interest in serving the community, promoting water safety and providing marine assistance. As a volunteer organization saving lives on the water, RCM-SAR is seeking the same recognition for its members as volunteer firefighters. Specifically, the Volunteer Firefighters' Tax Credit of \$3000, in

recognition of the 200 hours plus in duty, training and other services performed by RCM-SAR members each year to meet the rigorous crew requirements.

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?

Federal support and recognition of Canadian volunteers is a force multiplier. The productivity added to the economy by dedicated volunteers cannot be overlooked just because they don't get paid.

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?

RCM-SAR recognizes the economic challenges of the Government. RCM-SAR is an organization recognized by the Government as a key component in the Canadian marine search and rescue system. The Government receives a very high return for each dollar invested in RCM-SAR and the additional recognition of our volunteers through a tax credit will further reinforce this. RCM-SAR would welcome the opportunity to address the committee to further elaborate on the work of the organization.