

## Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

### Pre-budget consultations 2012

# Simon Fraser University, Departments of Geography and Biomedical Physiology and Kinesiology

## 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?*

The Sea-to-Sky highway, part of highway 99, is situated on BC's south-west coast and runs from North and West Vancouver through Squamish, to Whistler. Investing in enhancing safety for cyclists on the Sea-to-Sky highway will have positive impacts on the economy, crossing multiple sectors including health, transportation, tourism, and environmental stewardship. In turn, benefits to the economic growth of the surrounding communities will be experienced, resulting in a model program for implementation in other areas of the country.

### 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?*

Biking in BC is big business. A report by the Western Canada Mountain Bike Tourism Association found that the trail systems of the North Shore, Squamish and Whistler, are estimated to have collectively generated \$10.3 million in spending from riders that live outside of the host community over the period from June 4 to September 17, 2006 (see [http://www.mbta.ca/assets/pdfs/S2S\\_E\\_I\\_Study.pdf](http://www.mbta.ca/assets/pdfs/S2S_E_I_Study.pdf)). Additionally, the RBC Granfondo Whistler is a one day event generated \$8.2 million in economic activity for the Province of British Columbia through spending made by participants, spectators and event organizers (see [http://www.rbcgranfondowhistler.com/January\\_26\\_2012](http://www.rbcgranfondowhistler.com/January_26_2012)). Enhancing the safety of the Sea-to-Sky highway will create jobs through enhancing transportation infrastructure, tourism, and industry.

### 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?*

Physical inactivity is the fourth leading cause of death world wide, thus making its promotion a top public health priority. Improving cycling safety on the Sea-to-Sky highway will provide increased access to safe environments to engage in physical activity. Cycling is an activity that can be enjoyed by people of all ages, and especially an older population due to the fact that it is a non-weight bearing sport. There has been a rise in popularity of road cycling in the middle aged group, leading some to term the packs of cyclists on the roads MAMILS, or Middle Aged Men in Lycra. Increasingly, women too are joining these groups.

#### **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?*

Mitigating hazards to cyclists on the Sea-to-Sky highway could result in increased productivity by enhancing the health of British Columbians. In turn, decreased absenteeism and spending on health care expenses will incur. We are encouraged by the example of "Le grand defi du Pierre Lavoie", who, while raising awareness about lactic acidosis, an illness which took the lives of his two children, also promotes physical activity, health, and fitness to the people in his region. Supporting improved cycling safety in BC is another project that will see similar benefits to M Lavoie's defi.

#### **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?*

Supporting this project will help individuals, businesses, and communities. Individuals will experience personal gains in safety and health, businesses will experienced increased revenue through spending and tourism, and communities will experience growth through increased job opportunities and economic benefits. The specifics of our report can be found at: <http://www.sfu.ca/geog/stsbikesafe/index.html> For a small investment, improving cycling safety on the Sea-to-Sky highway will benefit British Columbians and serve as a model project for other regions in Canada.