

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?

Measures have to be taken to invest our wealth equitably across Canada. One way is to re imagine how we employ cultural workers like actors, writers, directors, designers, and all the craftspeople working television, film, gaming and web media in Canada. Trusting a wider range of communities to develop their own unique local content creation industries could cost Canada less money than it currently spends and also stimulate local and regional economies in ways never dreamed of. The key involves less centralized vetting of projects - a seemingly counter intuitive veering away from business models advocated by world markets and multinational strategies of the past. It is more like enabling communities to employ their own local artists to work closer to home and focus their story telling skills on serving their own communities first. If it works at this level, the world market side will take care of itself.

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?

One way to stimulate the creation of more content production companies across Canada that can employ more people and also invest less money than Canada currently spends is to change the way TELEFILM distributes public dollars. Rather than funnel money through the same curated process currently used, freely distribute money to the 180 communities in that used to have public access community television channel studios in 1995 before the big cable companies bought them up, amalgamated them and shut many down. \$90,000,000.00 of the TELEFILM budget could be distributed to 180 communities across Canada every year and that money would stimulate local economies as well as start up new production companies and produce more relevant Canadian stories that engage Canadians at the grass roots... This will also lead to more prosperity in the Canadian cultural sectors. Film Festivals will see an increase in attendance and local pride and ingenuity will be inspired to grow. All of this will employ more unionized labor and talent than our current wealth investment system does.

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?

Again you need to take steps invest wealth equitably across Canada in such a way that communities are enabled to innovate and solve problems that are uniquely their own. That means more money may have to go to places where populations are older. It may mean creating opportunities for young families to establish themselves in communities where there are not enough young families. Our cultural industries can help a lot with this sort of thing because they can create stories set in local communities that engage citizens and inspire creative action throughout all business sectors. In essence

this is thinking globally and acting locally through your cultural sector. The key is to create unique community projects that succeed because of cultural diversity. These would make people want to live in these various places and create new businesses and lives there. Think about it. An investment of 90 million dollars can do this.

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?

The key to creating genuine prosperity in communities across Canada is cultural investments. This is important because it is the process of coming together to make and celebrate stories at the local community and regional levels that energizes hope and pride. Without hope and pride we all fall to oblivion. Spreading our cultural investment dollars across our country more equitably is the first step toward generating the new economy Canada needs to prosper long into the future. It is all about regrouping and gaining inner strength so that we can compete better in the global free market economy. Focus on using our cultural dollars to invest in grass root culture across Canada because it can employ people of all ages and abilities. It can bring people together and rally them like no other investment can.

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?

All Canadians are suffering from compartmentalization. The old go in one slot. The youth in another. The able. The disabled. If we are to move forward in any meaningful way, we have to embrace diversity and local living economies. We need to regain a sense of community and social engagement. People have to care! Cultural investments are the best way to achieve this. But not the way it has been done in the past. Our Common Wealth has to be invested equitably from coast to coast. Begin with culture. The rest will follow more successfully. There will be more innovation and more prosperity for all Canadians.