



Green Party of Canada Federal Budget 2023 Priorities

The Hon. Chrystia Freeland
Minister of Finance
Deputy Prime Minister
OTTAWA

February 10, 2023

Dear Minister,

We are pleased to offer the Green Party of Canada's submission to your budgetary process for the 2023-24 fiscal year. We would very much appreciate an opportunity to meet before the budget is set in stone.

Before diving into the specifics, let it be clear we do not support a reduction in governmental spending, driven by claims that the economy is over-heated, inflation is the biggest risk, nor that we are fiscally constrained. We take a very similar view to that of economist Jim Stanford in this regard.^[1] As well, British Columbia entrepreneur, President & CEO at Chrysalix Venture Capital, Wal van Lierop, in critiquing US Federal Reserve decisions, makes a number of points that are spot on to our concerns of the Bank of Canada using the wrong tools.^[2]

Nevertheless, we know that politically, you need to show that government spending does not rely on modern monetary theory. To contain deficits, new spending can be off-set by cuts to unnecessary spending and by eliminating perverse subsidies. Delivering on previous Liberal election promises will be very helpful in this regard. Do not purchase the F35 fighter jets. Do not continue with fossil fuel infrastructure expansion. Do not fund additional (post-Paris) fossil fuel subsidies, such as for Carbon Capture and Storage. Do not throw more millions at SNC- Lavalin and the SMR non-solution to climate.

We urge that you implement significant increases in taxation of the one percent through wealth taxes, as well as significant hikes to recover windfall profits through what is essentially "war profiteering." These excess profits are found in the oil and gas sector in particular.

"Canada's 10 largest oil and gas companies claimed \$66.5 billion in pre-tax profit over the last year, more than double their next best one-year period over the last decade."^[3]

The sluggish economy could easily be pushed into recession due to Bank of Canada rate hikes. The rate hikes are the textbook response to inflation; but we are not experiencing textbook inflation. Costs have risen due to our economy's oversized reliance on global markets and the



increase in what things cost due to multiple external factors – climate events, war and supply chain disruptions, *also* due to climate crisis and war.

Only in the housing sector do we see price increases driven by collective concerns such as those that drove the last era of high inflation in the mid-1970s. Your government has taken a number of innovative steps to curb rising housing process. Still, more could be done such as through stricter regulation of Air B and B's and by eliminating Real Estate Investment Trusts. As your government has prohibited foreigners buying homes, is it not time to ensure that homes are bought by Canadians who want to live in them. Prohibiting corporations from owning residential properties would be worth adding to your current measures.

Once again, 2022 set new records for catastrophic climatic events. Hurricane Fiona had devastating impacts in five provinces. Despite an Adaptation Strategy released this year, Canada is not prepared for heat domes, fires, droughts, flood and intense killer storms, from hurricanes to tornadoes to derechos to ice storms.

Real climate action boosts our economic future. Making the national electricity grid a reality is a critical piece of our renewable energy decarbonized energy system. It will take a large investment, but so far no one is even talking about it.

As in previous years, the Green Party submission is long and covers a wide range of concerns. We would appreciate a chance to discuss it with you.

Many thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Member of Parliament, Saanich-Gulf Islands

Mike Morrice
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INTRODUCTION

We present our primary concerns in the following subject headings:

1. Health and health care
2. People and economic well-being
3. Affordable and dignified housing for all
4. Indigenous land stewardship
5. Supporting and sustaining educated and engaged youth
6. Heritage, culture, charities, languages and the arts
7. Investing in the tourism sector
8. Advancing equity in society, addressing anti-racism
9. Environmental science initiatives
10. Meeting our Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework commitments
11. Climate action
12. Overseas Development Assistance

1. HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

The anti-climactic announcement following the February 7, 2023 meeting of First Ministers does not change the ongoing saga of our beleaguered health care system.

Regarding the new proposal to provincial premiers, we all agree on the need for more innovation, better indicators and voluntary national standards but more money is also needed.

Our health infrastructure is insufficient, with one of the lowest number of beds per 1000 citizens in the OECD. According to one former Quebec Health minister, Gaétan Barrette, 3,000 new beds would be needed in the Montreal region at a projected cost of \$28 billion in the first year. The current proposal is far from that amount.

Nevertheless, as Greens, we believe the federal government is our best hope for ensuring we maintain our universal, single payer, non-profit public health care system. Too many provincial governments are deliberately undermining public health care, embracing privatization while provincial governments committed to public health care, such as British Columbia, have created layers of bureaucracy failing to use the Canadian Health Transfer effectively.

All governments must set aside partisan politics and commit to eradicating creeping two-tier medicine and it is not all about throwing more money at the system. The government must

remain firm in ensuring the Canada Health Act is respected and expanded. Indigenous Peoples of Canada must be engaged in the negotiation and implementation of the next federal/provincial/territorial Health Accord. The next Health Accord should establish measurable goals and identify and close gaps in health outcomes for Indigenous people by implementing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

We need a federal/provincial Health Accord based on the demographics and real health care needs in each province, rather than the current formula based on GDP growth.

We must identify the pressures driving doctors out of the profession. Primary health care and doctors committed to longitudinal patient care face enormous economic pressures. These pressures differ depending on the provincial structure for providing health care. Finding a way to provide more equitable opportunities across the country, tying the increased support for health care in transfers to provinces, should be part of a new Health Accord.

Greens urge innovations to expand sustainable health care meeting the needs of all health care workers (from doctors and nurses, to workers in long term care homes, first responders and mental health professionals.) All must be heard and respected in developing new health care models.

Greens see real danger to the entire system as there is no accountability for those seeking to erode the Canada Health Act and single-payer, universal health care with creeping privatization. For example, new private services, such as those promoted by Telus and Shoppers Drug Mart, must be reviewed and understood as a threat to universal single-payer public health care. Tele-medicine *is* health care and the higher profit margins for Canadian doctors create pressure for more doctors to exit our public health-care system.

We offer this suggestion from an innovative public health care model from Saanich-Gulf Islands. Shoreline Medical is a patient-centred, team medicine model. It strives to build a model in which both patient-centred care and work-life balance for staff and physicians are emphasized – housing all within a charity in which doctors are contractors.

In order to create a new source of health care funding, we make the following innovative proposal. It is directly from the innovators at Shoreline Medical. We ask that the 2023-24 budget create an enhanced tax credit for donors who contribute to charities that provide primary care. By providing funding indirectly, donors will direct the funding to one of the areas of health care that the federal government would like to be revitalized, and donors in community will demand accountability from the charities using the funds, easing the need for the federal government to undertake that aspect of funding to primary care.

The proposal is to make the enhancement time limited. With a five-year time-limit charities fit for purpose will have time to form and family physicians and allied health workers to be recruited.

This approach would likely result in funding of between \$5 and \$10 million per clinic (or group of clinics) over a five-year period, which would support a significant proportion of capital and operational needs to enable these charitable, non-profit clinics to grow and become financially sustainable. It would also serve as an incentive to family physicians and allied health workers, who would feel both respected (in terms of funds available to do their work properly) and supported by community.

By providing funding through donations, donors will direct both tax credit (federal government) funding and their own funds (beyond the tax credit) to one of the areas of health care that the federal government would like to be revitalized. Donors in community will demand regular accountability from the charities using the funds, easing the need for the federal government to undertake that aspect of funding to primary care.

To increase our health care workforce, we further recommend providing free university and college education to health care professionals as an incentive. This funding can be directed from subsidies to other sectors such as fossil fuels and military spending with a vision of a creative, capable and ready health workforce. Based on its success, this model can be extended to all other sectors, much like European countries like Germany.

Health care for seniors remains an urgent priority

Budget items for older Canadians will ultimately benefit all Canadians.

We appreciate the release of the two new national standards for long-term care homes but are concerned that the provinces will not implement these voluntary standards without federal financial incentive. As stated on their website <https://longtermcarestandards.ca/> “Both standards have been shaped by the needs and voices of Canada’s LTC home residents, workforce, local communities, and members of the general public.”

Help to those suffering from Long Covid

The burden of disability from COVID-19 including chronic conditions from Long Covid or post-acute Covid, is facing us. This will require re-imagining needs for long-term care. This starts with conducting epidemiological studies across Canada to increase our knowledge supporting development and implementation of care programs from people suffering from Long Covid.

The urgent need to mitigate climate change must now include preparing for climate emergencies. As your government budgets for increasing incidents of excessive heat, floods, fires and storms, you must plan and budget to prevent or mitigate the effects on older and

vulnerable Canadians and include inevitable emergency response. Proactive climate emergency funding could reduce deaths and clean-up costs for all ages.

Preparations for pandemics

Last year we wrote you:

“We need to rethink patent protections and restrictions for generic drugs. It is embarrassing that Canada still has not supported India and South Africa in pressing for a waiver of the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights Agreement within the World Trade Organization. Ensuring vaccine equity is urgent if we are to contain and end the global pandemic.”

It is no longer a source of embarrassment. It is a shocking and shameful reality. Canada must step up and assist the global South in having access to vaccines that were financed by governments in the OECD. Big Pharma is reaping enormous profits. Having taken public money, the vaccines should have been available without Big Pharma taking private profit. We all know that did not occur.

According to Oxfam, Pfizer, BioNTech and Moderna are making millions of dollars every single hour in vaccine profits. Meanwhile most of the developing world remains unvaccinated.

Pharmacare

Implementing and funding universal pharmacare is a top priority. Many Canadians are forced to choose between paying for medications and paying other essential costs, like food and utilities. Without a national pharmacare program, the government is missing an opportunity to lower drug prices. A national pharmacare program is an essential step in completing the universal public health care system and ensuring that all Canadians have access to the care they need.

Universal pharmacare is a top priority. Back in 2019, the Advisory Council on the Implementation of Pharmacare, chaired by former Ontario health minister Dr. Eric Hoskins, reported that pharmacare made sense for Canada. Initially, the government signaled a willingness to move forward with this essential step in completing the universal public health-care system. As was noted in the 2020 Fall Economic Statement, the government was prepared to start with incremental steps. Neither the 2021 or 2022 FES mentioned this commitment. The Hoskins Report recommendations should be implemented now.

We call on the government to begin the process of establishing a formulary of approved medications for bulk purchase, working under the guidance of the Therapeutics Initiative, as Health Canada does not always ensure conflict of interest and undue corporate control over decisions of drug safety are eliminated.

We echo the Canadian Pharmacists' Association's recommendations to provide at least \$200 million over two years for a federal program to support employers providing experience and training to internationally trained health care workers, including pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.

Mental health and addictions

The opioid or poisoned drug crisis, as well as the mental health crisis, is a national health emergency that deserves urgent action from all levels of government.

It is past time to decriminalize simple possession of unregulated drugs, a measure that would save lives and health care costs. The rising death rate is not an overdose crisis as much as it is a poisoning crisis, due to contamination of a wide range of drugs, including non-opioids, with fentanyl. Addressing the poisoned drug supply requires decriminalizing simple possession, coupled with significant funding for addiction counseling and services for those trying to end their addiction.

Adolescents, in particular, are in desperate need of addictions services designed for them. Furthermore, Indigenous communities should be identified as the most at-risk community with the lowest level of adequate care.

We urge the government to treat the opioid crisis as a public health issue, not a criminal issue. We support the calls of The Canadian Federation of Medical Students to expunge the criminal records of those charged with simple possession of unregulated drugs, to ensure these charges do not impact future employment and housing. We urge the government to renew and make permanent funding for the highly effective Substance Use and Addictions Program.

We recommend that the government develop a national strategy on substance use with input from key stakeholders, especially those from racialized and marginalized communities. This should include increased funding for safe supply projects, ensuring universal and low barrier access to treatment and harm-reduction service and implementing evidence-based prevention programs.

To continue, Canadians deserve to have affordable and accessible mental health care, as part of a truly universal health care system. The mental health of Canadians has suffered through the pandemic, creating longer wait times and leaving people in crisis. It is time to place mental health services within the Canada Health Act and to bring in the previously promised Canada Mental Health Transfer to provinces. As a first step toward that goal, we urge that Budget 2023 remove any value-added taxes (GST, HST) from counselling services. As a second step, uninsured low- and middle-income Canadians should be provided with free access to counselling services. As well, low- and middle-income Canadians who don't have private health benefits should be provided with free access to counselling services.

We also ask the government to provide long-term funding to the Canadian Institutes for Health Research to increase mental health research, proportional to mental health's burden of disease.

Post-secondary institutions are in dire need of adequate mental health services for the student population. Even before the pandemic, in spring 2016, the National College Health Assessment surveyed 43,000 students and found a significant degree of stress, depression, and even suicidal thoughts – an alarming 13 per cent had seriously considered suicide. We support the call from the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations for a new fund of \$500 million over five years to hire mental health professionals on post-secondary campuses.

Running in the same at-risk groups is a national suicide crisis. The long-overdue commitment to a Suicide Prevention Strategy must be funded in Budget 2023. Years ago the amount requested was pegged at \$50 million. This is clearly inadequate now, and the government should re-evaluate the funding required to implement an effective strategy.

We also call on the government to invest in supportive housing for people with mental illnesses and substance use problems to ensure that they have safe places to live as they recover. This includes expanded supportive housing units and truly affordable non-market, co-op, and non-profit housing. Many organizations are calling for sustained, reliable operational funding for addiction treatment and health care services that are provided within supportive housing buildings. Integrating health care into housing helps people keep their housing and make progress toward wellness.

Caring for our children

Children need to be protected from advertisements for empty calories and unhealthy food. The Heart and Stroke Foundation is leading a coalition toward this end. We do not need any legislative changes to make this move.

Once again, we urge you to fund a healthy school lunch program for all children. Joining a recent reception supporting these programs were two of your Cabinet colleagues, President of the Treasury Board, the Hon. Mona Fortier and Minister for Agriculture and Agrifood, the Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau. Their words of support gave hope to the over 170 groups in the Coalition for Healthy School Food.

We urge the government to allocate \$2.7 billion in Budget 2023 as the Year 1 investment towards establishing a cost-shared, universal School Food Program for Canada with strong federal standards. For low-income Canadians, healthy and nutritious school lunches will make a huge

difference in providing an equal opportunity for learning. The programme should seek to meet multiple goals, including support for local food from local growers.

Furthermore, the government should continue investments in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement to increase affordability and create more childcare spaces for families in the Region of Waterloo.

Fund urgently needed research priorities

We urge the government to provide support for those with rare diseases. We must invest in urgently needed medical research into such diseases as ALS, Muscular Sclerosis and Muscular Dystrophy to name a few. Those suffering badly need the help.

We strongly support the call from the ALS Society of British Columbia for \$10 million in funding to support the second phase of their initiative, *Project Hope*, which seeks to create a world class ALS Centre at the University of British Columbia. Current ALS treatment infrastructure in BC is inadequate and the creation of an ALS Centre would allow for much needed clinical trials and treatments to be available within the province.

Access to Psilocybin

In pursuing help for those with chronic and severe mental health issues we urge increased research and pilot projects using psilocybin.

Create a fund to support research and compassionate access to novel psilocybin treatment for those with treatment resistant mental and physical illnesses. This is necessary as there is no market incentive to do the research necessary to bring medical psilocybin to market as you cannot patent it. Furthermore, for those who find treatment successful as an alternative or adjust therapy to MAiD, there is no funding for treatment through public or private health care coverage. Canada should allocate funds to this research and compassionate treatment on the basis of reduction and support for health care professionals supporting vulnerable Canadians with treatment resistant illnesses.

2. PEOPLE AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

Budget 2023 must move toward enhanced fairness in Employment Insurance.

Ever since the Harper Administration changed Unemployment Insurance to Employment Insurance, the system has been increasingly unreliable for the people who need it most. Greens support the recommendations of Unifor to expand eligibility for EI (including standardizing the entry requirement to 360 hours and base the qualifying hours and duration for existing claims

on the most favourable time period), improving EI Benefits, increasing the income replacement rate to 75 per cent of previous earnings from the current 55 per cent and raising the ceiling on insurable earnings; and a long overdue repair to EI Administration, reinstating federal contributions to the program.

We must do more to respond to the generational shift to the “gig economy”. An entire generation of precarious workers need supports to maintain their independent contractor status while bargaining for minimum standards. Young people in particular can be trapped in low-wage, precarious work. The federal government can confront this, again drawing on advice from Unifor in convening a federal Low-Wage Commission – a multi-stakeholder approach bringing key stakeholders together and exploring the kind of workforce changes that are necessary. We can help learn the lessons on COVID-19 and the disproportionately larger impact on low-waged workers with far fewer opportunities to work from home.

As mentioned in the climate section of our recommendations, a Just Transition Strategy must be enacted soon. We are running out of time.

People with disabilities

We call on the government to move forward with their commitment to support Canadians with disabilities who are living in poverty by including the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) in Budget 2023. We ask the government to ensure that people with disabilities are meaningfully involved in the creation and implementation of the benefit. The government must work with provincial and territorial governments to ensure that the benefit and provincial/territorial programs work together to support people with disabilities without claw backs.

It is encouraging to see that all parties supported the swift passage of Bill C-22 in the House of Commons. We would like to see that political will translate into a commitment to funding the CDB in the budget. This must be accompanied by meaningful consultation with people with disabilities, ensuring accessibility and removing the working age clause in Bill C-22. This must be done in the spirit of nothing about us without us.

We support the MS Society of Canada’s call to update the EI Sickness Benefit by reducing the hours needed for eligibility from 600 to 400, removing the one-week waiting period, and eliminating the claw back in the working while on claim provision. This was echoed by the Institute for Research on Public Policy, which recommended policymakers revise current WWC provisions to reintroduce a fixed weekly allowable earnings threshold below which there is no reduction in benefits, while keeping a modest claw back rate for earnings above the threshold. Canadian and international evidence suggests that, under these proposed rules, more people would be encouraged to work while on claim and many would be encouraged to work additional hours.

Better financial support to seniors

We strongly support an increase to GIS to seniors. There are far too many seniors suffering needlessly.

Tax Reform for Single Seniors

This group of seniors includes lifelong singles, widows and widowers, as well as persons who are divorced or separated, and makes up 39% of all seniors in Canada. While senior couples have several tax breaks available to them, such as splitting of pension income and direct transfers of RRSP and TFSA funds, single seniors do not. They consequently pay higher taxes, while also having higher costs of living as singles need two thirds of the income of couples to maintain a comparable lifestyle.

Many of these seniors could be categorized as middle class because they have some type of savings, such as investments or a home. However, others are lifelong renters who have been unable to save much on a single income. In both cases, their taxes are so high that many see themselves pushed into the poverty class within a few years. This has only been exacerbated further by the Covid-19 pandemic and cost of living crisis.

Single Seniors for Tax Fairness (SSTF) is a national organization that advocates for these seniors without partners. They have several recommendations for tax revisions:

- A non-refundable tax credit for senior singles up to \$25,000 to partially compensate for couples' benefits unavailable to seniors.
- A higher threshold for Old Age Security clawbacks for singles since a single's cost of living is two thirds of a couples.
- A higher deposit allowance into a TFSA account for all senior renters who have never owned a home. This would help offset the tax-free benefit homeowners get when selling.
- Upon death, the right to make a one-time transfer of RRSP/RRIF and TFSA portfolios directly into the same portfolios of a beneficiary of choice. This transfer would correspond to the right couples have when the first partner dies.

Single seniors should not be penalized for living by themselves, especially during the already difficult time after the loss of a partner.

Immigration and refugee resettlement

Canada is nation of immigrants. A 2022 stats Canada report highlighted that nearly a quarter of all Canadians and permanent residents immigrated to this country, breaking previous Canadian records. With increased immigration comes a need for an increase in immigrant and refugee

support, to ensure that every newcomer can thrive. In Budget 2023 we request that Canada increase funding for the much needed supports that organizations across our country provide to newcomers.

Organizations like Reception House in Kitchener help newcomers navigate their new community, find services and employment, and more. Reception House in collaboration with the Centre for Family Medicine requests stable and adequate federal funding to continue providing refugee health care at their Refugee Health Clinic. Like many similar organizations serving refugees, having consistent federal funding will help Reception House provide equitable health care that is culturally appropriate and sensitive to the increasing number of refugees in their community.

We believe it is crucial for the Canadian government to recognize climate refugees as a new category of refugee claimant and fund the associated immigration and resettlement services. We ask that the government acknowledge credentials for internationally trained professionals so they can more quickly join the workforce and contribute to Canadian society.

Although the government has already taken steps to improve service at Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), more needs to be done to ensure everyone has received equitable treatment. For example, refugees and permanent residents sometimes wait years for travel documents that allow them to travel outside of Canada while Canadian citizens are served in weeks or months. It is still difficult for many newcomers to navigate the immigration system and get timely updates on their files.

We also request the government make it easier for people to sponsor family members by relaxing the criteria and increasing the quotas for family class immigration, as well as removing the caps and the minimum income requirements from the parent and grandparent sponsorship program.

We urge the government to continue investing in IRCC to speed up processing times and streamline application procedures.

Criminal Justice Reform

Poverty and mental health continue to be criminalized in Canada, with 38% of new admissions to federal prisons reporting serious mental health issues;^[1] 35% of women and 18% of Indigenous youth in Ontario jails experiencing at least two or more severe mental illnesses;^[2] and 70% of persons admitted to Canadian prisons having a literacy level below grade 8.^[3] The over-incarceration of Indigenous peoples continues to rise at an alarming rate, with Indigenous women and youth representing about 50% of new admissions. These realities support what has long been known: in order to reduce crime, we must alleviate poverty, improve education

and mental health, address racism and the impact of colonialism, as well as intergenerational trauma, and invest in community supports and other social safety nets early on.

Yet we continue to rely on prisons, despite the fact that prisons are an extraordinarily expensive and a largely ineffective means of dealing with most offences. Canada must focus on prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration as the primary means of reducing in crime. We call on the Canadian government to amend the *Criminal Code* to decrease the use of prisons, and to deliberately and actively invest in meaningful, transformative restorative justice, which has been shown to reduce recidivism, provide healing to victims of crime, and increase reintegration and rehabilitation rates.

With current discussions about bail reform and gun crimes, we urge the Canadian government to base any decisions on verifiable data and avoid reactionary measures which will serve only to increase the provincial jail populations without providing any benefit to society.

Indigenous overincarceration

Indigenous persons continue to be shamefully and unjustly overrepresented in our criminal justice system. This discrepancy continues to grow, despite *Galdue* and section 718.2 of the *Criminal Code*. Even more horrific is the massive imprisonment of Indigenous persons in provincial jails, with Indigenous people representing 75% of the jail population in Manitoba. Worse still, Indigenous youth and Indigenous women represent 50% of all admissions to correctional facilities in each category. Prisons are 21st century residential schools. And the overincarceration of Indigenous people in Canadian prisons makes a mockery of reconciliation efforts. While Bill C-5 was a step in the right direction, it is not enough.

We urge the government to invest more heavily into early supports in education, physical and mental health, family supports, and the strengthening of cultural connections, and to do all this with Indigenous leaders and communities as the primary leaders and drivers of such programs. Furthermore, we must immediately implement additional legislative and policy changes to keep Indigenous people out of jails. Canada must increase its funding of healing lodges and other alternatives to prisons for Indigenous persons.

To meet these challenges, we call on the government to dedicate an additional \$25 million over five years.

Gender-based violence

In 2020, 160 women and girls were killed by violence in Canada. In 2021, 173 women and girls were killed by violence. In 2020, one in five women killed in Canada was First Nation, Métis, or

Inuit. These levels of violence against women and girls and the heightened levels of violence experience by Indigenous women and girls is unacceptable. In 2021 there were 34,242 police-reported sexual assaults representing 90 incidents per 100,000 population, the highest rate in 27 years. As it is well known that sexual violence is drastically underreported, it can be assumed that this number is even higher. With the rising rates of sexual violence, it is imperative that the government provide stable funding to organizations that work to support victims of sexual violence and gender-based violence.

Organizations such as the Sexual Assault Support Centre in Kitchener, Ontario propose a partnership between Sport Canada and the Department of Women and Gender Equality to address sexual violence in sports. We support calls to provide multi-year grant funding for community-based Sexual Assault Support Centres for this work, especially in light of the federal government withdrawing funding from Hockey Canada. These centres have the expertise and capacity to work with athletes and sports organizations to address sexual violence in sports culture, support the development and growth of Male Allies Programs within community-based Sexual Assault Support Centres, and support those who have been harmed by sexual violence.

Furthermore, we call on the Canadian government to commit to provide more resources and funding to address the rampant levels of violence against Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people.

Fairness to our veterans: Gold Digger Clause

The Superannuation Act continues to unfairly discriminate against veterans and others who served Canada if they married over the age of 60. Former finance minister, the Hon. Bill Morneau, pledged in a letter in early 2017 to eliminate this vestige of the Boer War, known as the “gold-digger clause,” which prevents the surviving spouses of veterans, ex-RCMP and others covered under the Superannuation Act from accessing pensions if their marriage occurred after the age of 60. There is no excuse for this discrimination, yet it persists.

On November 3, 2022, Major (Retired) Charles (Chic) Goodman died at age 96. He and his wife Nancy lived in Saanich-Gulf Islands. They had been married for over thirty years. They married after Chic had turned sixty. His widow Nancy receives none of his survivor benefits. This link is to the Government of Canada website, celebrating his enormous sacrifices and bravery in the Second World War. <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/people-and-stories/faces-of-freedom/charles-goodman>. His widow is now trying to access help for surviving spouses denied pension survivor rights. This was the half a loaf, baked by Bill Morneau, instead of keeping the promise from Finance Canada. It is deeply shameful that this matter persists.

Addressing wealth inequality

It is time to expand and strengthen our social safety net to meet the demands of our ever-changing society. Greens have pressed for Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI) for years. Other terms have been used (Universal Basic Income) but the goal is similar. A universal payment set at a level that fits each region's specific cost of living will eliminate poverty, providing all Canadians with an income that covers basic needs.

As numerous studies have shown, poverty costs. It costs in health care. It costs in correctional services. It costs a loss of human dignity. We cannot afford poverty. In fact, this was another of the trail-blazing recommendations of the 1970 Royal Commission on the Status of Women:

“We recognize in principle the benefits of a guaranteed annual income for all Canadians. [...] One method of providing a guaranteed annual income is through a negative income tax. Under this scheme, those whose incomes fall short of the statutory minimum are entitled to an allowance, just as those whose incomes exceed a statutory maximum have to pay an income tax. ... The negative income tax principle has already been introduced in the Guaranteed Income Supplement paid to old age pensioners ...”

The negative income tax approach is, as the 1970 Commission noted, just one option. Negotiations between all orders of government, along with Indigenous consultation, will be required to set the relative GLI and identify what needs to be reworked across government to make the system affordable, such as implementing a wealth tax or rerouting subsidies from large corporations.

Canada has dipped a toe in the water with COVID emergency responses. The nearly universal access to the now suspended Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) demonstrated that it is possible. As the Parliamentary Budget Officer found, applying for a full Guaranteed Livable Income would be more cost-effective than the CERB. In addition, Report 10 from the Auditor General's office determined that the government's fast and widespread implementation of the CERB had a marked effect on providing stabilizing support for Canadians and helped the Canadian economy bounce back much faster than it otherwise would have. In the current cost of living crisis, a GLI would provide similar stability for the Canadians who need it most.

Domestic tax reform and global economic restructuring

While Canada has made an impressive economic recovery from its pandemic lows, the cost-of-living crisis continues. Canadians struggle to pay for food and rent, while the largest corporations are making record profits. We applauded the government's measure to implement a windfall tax on banks and insurance companies, however we were disappointed that, despite repeated calls to do so, they did not include fossil fuel companies under that tax. We continue to call for a

windfall tax on fossil fuel companies that have used Russia's attack on Ukraine as an excuse to unjustly increase their already inflated prices.

The wealthiest one per cent of Canadians also have continued to benefit unfairly during the current inflationary rise, while costs rise for Canadians with the least. We call on the government to increase the marginal tax rate for the wealthiest one per cent and bring in a wealth tax. We also call on the government to move ahead with automatic tax filing for low-income Canadians, as has been previously committed.

It is vital that the government support employees and better corporate structures. To this end, we call on the government to create an employee ownership trust under the Income Tax Act and provide clear and simple rules that protect taxpayers and employees while encouraging understanding and adoption by the business community. Furthermore, we request that the government ensure the benefits of employee ownership trusts are broadly shared by adopting the approach of both the United States and United Kingdom, which allow and require benefits to be provided to all employees at no cost, as well as following the United Kingdom's model of providing a Capital Gains Tax exemption to owners who sell a majority of their companies to an employee ownership trust as a further way of improving the likelihood of widespread adoption.

We also call on the government to increase funding to the CRA for investigative efforts to support tax compliance for the largest corporations and the wealthiest Canadians. For too long Canada has lagged in corporate transparency and cracking down on tax haven abuse, ranking as one of the countries with the worst records in the G20. In 2021, corporate tax avoidance by over a hundred of Canada's largest corporations doubled the previous year's amount to a total of \$30 billion. We urge the government to provide support to the CRA to tighten these loopholes and to enforce the existing regulations, not unlike a similar measure taken by the US through the Inflation Reduction Act.

To ensure fiscal sustainability, we need bold and transformational tax reform.

Last year we made the case for a global effort to re-think our economic system. The last time the world economies and governments had been through a shared trauma with anything like the recent years of pandemic was at the end of the Second World War. The governments meeting at Bretton Woods put in place international financial institutions designed for a different time.

It is time to revisit those institutions and the mechanisms that grew from them.

We must pursue revenues hiding offshore, close the stock dividend loophole, eliminating business deductions for meals and entertainment, increasing the marginal tax rate for the wealthiest 1 per cent, and bringing in a wealth tax are all feasible sources of revenue to assist the post-pandemic economic recovery.

We also call on the government to implement a minimum tax on corporation's book profits, similar to the one the United States recently passed in their Inflation Reduction Act. It's estimated this would recoup \$11 billion in lost corporate tax revenue. To ensure fiscal sustainability we need bold transformational tax reform.

We propose that Canada lead a post-pandemic global collaboration, engaging the G20 in innovative shared approaches to restore our economies through a 21st century equivalent of the Bretton Woods conference. We are already seeing innovations in shared global response such as the commitment to a floor on corporate tax rates. We can do more multilaterally in cracking down on tax havens, eliminating excess profits to those lending institutions holding government debt, and re-imagining a role for the International Monetary Fund in collecting a tax on currency speculation (The Tobin Tax).

3. AFFORDABLE AND DIGNIFIED HOUSING FOR ALL

The twin crises of inflation and rising housing costs have made it extremely difficult for Canadians to find affordable housing. The cost of homes has skyrocketed, while wages have remained relatively stagnant. The government's response to the housing crisis must treat housing as a human right. Homes should be for people, not commodities for investors.

Several national organizations, including the Office of the Federal Advocate of Housing, have sounded the alarm: the financialization of housing, through which housing is treated as a profit-making commodity and financial investment rather than a human right, is a major driver of Canada's housing crisis. In particular, the financialization of purpose-built rental housing is contributing to the loss of existing affordable housing stock to private actors and investors in the market at a faster rate than adequate and affordable housing is produced or preserved.

Motion 71, currently on the order paper, seeks to tackle one aspect of financialization: tackling tax loopholes used by large real estate investment trusts to avoid paying corporate income taxes. Acorn Canada's studies have shown the government has foregone nearly \$1.5 billion in revenues over the past decade because of these loopholes. MP Mike Morrice's motion calls on the government to revoke this unfair tax exemption as one step to tackle the financialization of housing. We urge the government to use revenue generated through the fair taxation of corporate landlords to construct more affordable housing and co-op units.

Despite the government's promise in last year's budget, we still haven't seen legislation to end blind bidding and unfair practices in the Canadian housing market. Much more needs to be done to address sharp practice in the real estate industry such as "flipping." We need to direct more law enforcement and investigators to money laundering and fraud.

We call on the government to provide funding to increase the construction of affordable housing and non-market housing, including substantial investment in co-operative housing. The

successful Rapid Housing Initiative must also be expanded to ensure that more affordable housing providers are able to access the funds, and made into a long-term permanent program with predictable funding beyond 2024.

The government must also ensure that any new programs to increase housing supply do not exclude non-market housing providers. We echo Habitat for Humanity's call to waive GST/HST for all affordable home sales delivered through charities.

Canada is facing a wave of new homelessness driven by the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. But this wave can be stopped with urgent federal intervention. We support End Chronic Homelessness Alliance's recommendation to create a Homelessness Prevention and Housing Benefit that would house 50,000 people experiencing homelessness and provide rental relief to up to 385,000 households in deepest housing need, at high risk of homelessness.

Most people experiencing homelessness or at risk of losing their homes simply cannot afford the cost of rent. According to CMHC research, three-quarters of households in core housing need have suitable and adequate housing that they can't afford. On top of this, 85 per cent of people experiencing homelessness are only homeless due to poverty and a lack of affordable housing.

Moreover, the initiatives under the strategy were not integrated, and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Infrastructure Canada were not working in a coordinated way. In our view, without better alignment of their efforts, Infrastructure Canada and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation are unlikely to achieve the federal National Housing Strategy target of reducing chronic homelessness by 50% by the 2027–28 fiscal year.

It is possible to slow or stop the wave of new homelessness we are experiencing today. Rent support is the only immediate, cost-effective and targeted option available to do this. While we must continue to build affordable housing, the housing options required to address this problem cannot be delivered fast enough and at the scale needed to be effective on the timeline required to prevent this tragedy.

The proposed benefit builds on approaches proven to prevent homelessness and the success of pandemic supports, like CERB. It will be far more expensive for municipal, provincial and federal governments to cope with rising homelessness, and to try to reduce homelessness after the fact, than it will to prevent it now. Homelessness already costs Canadians over \$7 billion per year – this will only grow as homelessness increases.

Depending on implementation, the benefit would cost between \$1.5 billion and \$3 billion annually and cause a measurable reduction in chronic homelessness, stop the wave of new homelessness, while protecting thousands of Canadians from the life-threatening risk of homelessness.

The Rental Construction Financing Initiative (RCFI) is poorly designed and no longer necessary in its current form. In 2016, following two decades of minimal purpose-built rental starts (only 10 per cent of all new housing construction) there was a solid rationale for a rental stimulus program. However, this situation has changed. Developers have returned to constructing rental, with starts tripling over those of the pre-2016 decades and hitting a historic high of 78,000 starts in 2021 (representing 32 per cent of all housing starts).

We support the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate’s recommendation that the Rental Construction Financing Initiative (RCFI) should be redesigned and refocused to more directly address affordable supply, and its financing mechanism extended to assist in preserving the existing moderately affordable private rental stock through non-profit acquisition.

We hope the government proposes effective measures to combat the housing crisis that are undergirded by the principle of housing for people and not for investors. Clamping down on the financialization of housing, building truly affordable units and mandating a Homelessness Prevention and Housing Benefit would help alleviate some of pressures of a runaway housing sector that has stopped serving the needs of Canadians.

4. INDIGENOUS LAND STEWARDSHIP

Canada’s commitments in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, negotiated at COP15 of the Treaty of Biological Diversity, open a world of innovative possibilities on advancing protections for biodiversity, nature-based climate solutions and Indigenous sovereignty.

The strong leadership of First Nations, Métis and Inuit is already established in investments in renewable energy projects and in protected lands.

In Budget 2023, Greens urge support continue for the Indigenous Guardians program and the creation of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA). The potential of the Indigenous Guardians program is not yet fully realized. The Indigenous Guardians program and Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA) should both be adequately funded, with measures taken to ensure there is a coordinated process between the two.

As well we urge increased funding for the National Association of Friendship Centres. Across Canada, they do extraordinary work on a shoestring for Indigenous people living off-reserve in urban areas. We support the request for \$60 million/year in re-established predictable funding, \$23 million/year for Indigenous youth, \$180 million/year for urban Indigenous infrastructure, and \$16 million/year for training and upskilling to create employment opportunities for urban Indigenous people.

5. SUPPORTING AND SUSTAINING EDUCATED AND ENGAGED YOUTH

Action to make post-secondary education affordable and available to every Canadian – young and old – is overdue. Today’s youth face an uncertain future as a number of points in this brief have already noted – the gig economy, precarious employment, out-of-reach housing, and a looming climate emergency that threaten their future.

One pernicious impact on most university graduates is punishing debt loads. Greens have long called for the abolition of tuition and are happy to endorse the recommendations from the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) for that measure. The federal-provincial funding formula for postsecondary education needs to be restored to the levels of the early 1990s. Canadians are funding very wasteful programs attempting to recoup student loans with interest payments. The CFS estimates the cost to the federal government at \$2.6 billion/year. The burden on international students also needs to be examined. International students need to have access to health care.

Working with the provinces, CFS urges that work be undertaken for an affordability strategy for international students. As a nation, we want to attract bright and committed youth from around the world.

We certainly hope that COVID related supports to students will continue in Budget 2023.

We support University Grad Student Associations recommendations:

- Commit to supporting 2021 campaign promise to introduce a new fund for student well-being. This could help tackle difficult issues such as lack of access to care on post-secondary campuses, limited mental health care professionals, and lengthy wait times.
 - The fund will support the hiring of up to 1,200 new mental health care counsellors, including those who can support the needs of BIPOC students, at post-secondary institutions across Canada.
 - Invest \$500 million over four years.
 - Dedicate 10% annually to support Indigenous-governed and operated postsecondary institutions.
- Explore funding opportunities and partnerships with post-secondary institutions that could relieve the pressure of health care expenses being financed by students, such as mental health services that are currently funded through student fees.
- Increase the level of support for all recipients of federally funded graduate student scholarships and ensure that, at a minimum, federal graduate scholarships remain indexed to inflation over time.
- Explore providing financial aid to graduate students with dependents, as many find themselves in the challenging situation of juggling virtual schooling for children,

employment, other family commitments, and their graduate-level education and research obligations.

- Explore increasing the yearly limit of the Canada Training Benefit (CTB) from its current cap of \$250/year for students enrolling in classes at universities to account for an anticipated uptake in micro-credentials, the cost of which can quickly accumulate as students stack these credentials to achieve a certificate.

6. HERITAGE, CULTURE, CHARITIES, LANGUAGE AND THE ARTS

Charities

Work to respond to the Senate report on the needs of the charitable sector with recommendations to modernize the resourcing of charities was stalled due to the pandemic. At the same time, the charitable sector was subjected to increased workloads and heightened strains.

We also support the goals of the former Senate bill, Bill S-222, The Effective and Accountable Charities Act. In summary, it proposes to modernize charities law by replacing the current language with “resource accountability,” making due diligence the key feature, rather than operational control, to pursue charitable purpose.

Charities would then be able to provide funding to non-qualified donees (non-profits that don’t have charitable status in Canada and charities in other countries), without onerous operational agreements and without having to have “direct control” over how the money is used. We urge Budget 2023 to make these changes to modernize our charities laws.

In the meantime, we support the calls from the charitable sector for a continuation of emergency, COVID-related supports for the sector including investing an additional \$400 million in the Community Services Recovery Fund.

Although not strictly a budget measure, whenever looking at federal policies toward charities and non-profit organizations, it is clear the sector suffers from not having a voice at the cabinet table.

The only minister responsible for the sector is the minister for the Canada Revenue Agency. CRA’s role is policing the sector; but no one advocates for the sector. We suggest following Imagine Canada’s recommendation to create a secretariat within Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada for the work of charities and non-profits to be housed.

The arts, culture, and broadcasting

The arts community continues to suffer from the effects of the pandemic. We appreciate the support provided to arts, culture, and broadcasting organizations, but we would like to see several temporary benefits made available to the arts sector made permanent as foot traffic hasn't returned to pre-pandemic levels.

The Green Party supports requests from the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony and the Registry Theatre to make permanent the funding for the Canadian Arts Presentation Fund (CAPF) and the Building Communities through Arts and Heritage (BCAH) program, first announced in the 2021 budget. Additionally, we call for a further \$30 million per year to each of these two programs (\$21 million for CAPF and \$9 million for BCAH) to support the adaptation and growth of the live performance sector in the post-pandemic era.

We must ensure that the sustainability of the Celebration and Commemoration Program of Canadian Heritage funding program is maintained. This allocation is crucial to celebrating the various identities of Canadians.

The perennial issue of funding for our national public broadcaster requires the kind of investment to allow productions from both the creative and journalistic aspects of the CBC and Radio-Canada. Please ensure Budget 2023 enhances funding for public broadcasting.

Protecting minority languages

Greens strongly support the efforts underway to protect and preserve Indigenous languages and to revitalize the Official Languages Act.

French-language school boards in a minority context are struggling to obtain adequate funding to meet the specific needs of French-language communities in a minority context. We propose that the government of Canada increase its investments in the Official Languages in Education Program (OLEP) by injecting an additional \$455 million over four years for French first language education.

This would bring funding for FL1 to just over \$1 billion under the OLEP. This increase would support the development of francophone and Acadian communities by enabling their children to receive an education in French equivalent to that offered to children of the linguistic majority.

In order to truly meet the needs of French-language schools, the protocol must also require full accountability from the Ministries of Education. Without this accountability, it is impossible for Francophone and Acadian minority communities to determine the purposes for which the funds are used.

7. INVESTING IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

We must provide financial support to the Tourism sector as they continue to rebuild after the damage done during the pandemic.

We support the calls for support from the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC).

The priority areas are:

- Attracting and retaining a sustainable tourism workforce,
- Improving access for visitors to and within Canada,
- Developing and promoting tourism assets, and;
- Building a regenerative and inclusive tourism industry.

Concerted action is needed in each of these key areas.

The tourism sector is confident it can achieve its goals to build forward, boost its international competitiveness and more robustly contribute to building an economy that works for all Canadians if a comprehensive Tourism Growth Strategy is put in place and adequate resources are allocated in support of that new Strategy. We are thus calling on the Federal Cabinet to make tourism in Canada a key policy and budget priority.

8. ADVANCING EQUITY IN SOCIETY, ADDRESSING ANTI-RACISM

The federal government has an important role to play in creating a more equitable society and it is more important than ever to fund initiatives that fight racism and discrimination. Many non-profit and charitable organizations that serve Black, Indigenous and racialized communities struggle to make ends meet. We urge the government to provide consistent operational and program funding for community-based organizations that work with disadvantaged and equity-deserving populations.

These organizations can often reach people who are not currently well served by traditional government agencies and programs, helping to bridge service gaps and make federal services more accessible.

We applaud recent efforts to address Islamophobia and encourage the government to go further to fund programs and organizations who combat Islamophobia.

We call on the government to follow through on its commitment to the UN International Decade for People of African Descent. We support the call by the Network for the Advancement of Black Communities and Foundation for Black Communities for the government to invest \$300 million annually in the Black community sector for recovery and sustainability of Black-led and Black-serving organizations.

The government must increase investments in the business program for Black entrepreneurs and ensure the program is accessible, with a transition from loans to grants considering that many entrepreneurs are not in a position to take on more debt. It is critical that we address the unique needs of Black business owners and entrepreneurs across the country, as a robust collaboration between government, financial institutions, and Black-led business organizations and the businesses themselves.

We call on the government to support community run programs that address anti-Black, anti-Asian, and other forms of racism and that support the economic and social well-being of racialized communities. We also support the call from many Black and immigrant focused organizations that the government continue to provide supports for racialized women, immigrant women, and underrepresented groups to enter the workforce through job training, mentorship and better access to resources and capital.

Increase investments in the business program for Black entrepreneurs – transition from loans to grants considering that many entrepreneurs are not in a position to take on more debt. It is critical that we address the unique needs of Black business owners and entrepreneurs across the country, as a robust collaboration between government, financial institutions, and Black-led business organizations and the businesses themselves.

We ask the government to continue repealing mandatory minimum penalties that disproportionately affect Black, Indigenous, racialized people.

Equity and inclusion support for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community

The 2SLGBTQIA+ community continues to be disproportionately impacted by many intersecting crises such as the cost of living and housing crisis, the healthcare and mental health crisis, and the climate crisis, with BIPOC and racialized 2SLGBTQIA+ persons being impacted disproportionately. At the same time, 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations continue to lack adequate support for the vital services they provide.

While we welcomed the announcement of a federal 2SLGBTQ+ Action Plan, we urge the government to go further in its support and include specific timelines and commitments for the implementation of funding in Budget 2023. As part of the Action Plan’s implementation, we call for an increase in funding dedicated to 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations through the LGBTQ2 Community Capacity Fund from \$15 million over three years to \$25 million annually. We also call for permanent funding for the LGBTQ2 Secretariat.

Gender-diverse persons are especially likely to face barriers and discrimination. This includes online hate, housing insecurity, lack of adequate gender-affirming care, and increased instances of violence and harassment. We call on the government to recognize these issues, both in Canada and in other countries, and commit funding to support gender-diverse persons, such as

increased funding for research on the intersex community led by intersex people, extending the right to gender-diverse persons to claim asylum in Canada by reason of eliminationist laws in their home country, and assisting the provinces in providing universal access to gender-affirming surgeries, puberty blockers, and hormones.

Environmental racism

The inclusion of the passage of the Environmental Racism bill in the mandate letter of the Hon. Steven Guilbeault is very encouraging. As it happens, working in partnership with the minister's office, the Green PMB, C-226 will proceed to complete this mandate.

As C-226 makes its way through parliament to create a federal strategy to confront environmental racism, Budget 2023 should set aside funds to advance the agenda of cleaning up toxic sites adjacent to and on the lands of Indigenous peoples and racialized communities. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has dedicated funds to confront environmental racism for decades. The funds recently allocated by your government to the crisis in Grassy Narrows due to decades of mercury contamination is one such effort. So too was the 2003 commitment of \$400 million to cleaning up the Sydney Tar Ponds on Cape Breton Island. The toxic contamination there primarily impacted the area's only Black community as well as the displaced Mi'kmaq community of Membertou, moved to accommodate the steel mill in the beginning of the 20th century.

Looming clean-up bills will fall due soon for the dump site in Kanehsatà:ke. Clean-up costs at the site are estimated at \$50 million, but illegal dumping has continued on residential properties as well. Examining the supports for Indigenous and racialized communities dealing with environmental racism in the US will help inform our approach in Canada. Funding for cleaning up contaminated sites needs replenishing in any event.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE INITIATIVES

Canada Water Agency

Greens fully support the detailed and thoughtful brief from the Forum for Leadership on Water (FLOW). The Canada Water Agency must be independent from the departments of Environment and Climate Change, Agriculture and Agrifood Canada and Natural Resources Canada.

We support the creation of the Office of the Chief Water Security Officer to deal with interjurisdictional disputes. We need to support Indigenous governance of water resources and far more planning and adaptation to the twin of the climate and water crises. Climate change brings increasingly extreme water events from droughts to floods. This water agenda and funding are a vital part of the promised adaptation strategy.

The government has procrastinated on this critical commitment and the promise of \$1 billion must be fulfilled.

10. MEETING OUR KUNMING-MONTREAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK COMMITMENTS

For Canada to meet the targets we committed to at COP15 to achieving by 2030, considerable policy shifts are required.

We recommend that the government take a whole of government approach to determine how these targets will be met and how progress will be tracked, to avoid reaching 2030 without having met any, or even knowing if we did, which Canada sadly has a history of doing. The various key commitments touch on several key policy areas, as referenced throughout this submission. Key commitments for which your government has already been supportive include the need to ban ocean plastics, to advance Indigenous sovereignty, and to move on protected areas within Canada. Climate action must also be accelerated. New commitments include many impacting agricultural practices, reducing reliance on pesticides, slashing food waste and doing far more to assist the Global South in meeting its COP15 goals as well. The overall commitment to live in harmony with nature globally by 2050 is an enormous challenge and must be assessed by the Government of Canada as a whole.

11. CLIMATE ACTION

Improved access to climate disaster response funds

It is increasingly clear to Canadians that the climate crisis is personal. To the disasters of 2021 - unprecedented levels of prairie drought, floods across the country, heat dome – a killer heat wave stretching across the north-western US and B.C., killing over 600 people in four days, and a summer of wildfires across B.C. but also in Alberta and Ontario – we can now add billions of dollars of more damage and lives lost in Hurricane Fiona.

As we urged last year, the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund must be topped up and improved to fully protect Canadians from climate extremes. It requires a dedicated mechanism for municipalities and First Nations to access emergency funds when responding to extreme weather events such as fires and floods and elimination of the \$20 million minimum project eligibility threshold so communities of all sizes can access funding.

The evidence is overwhelming. More than a year after Lytton, B.C. burned to the ground in minutes, no rebuilding has begun. In some cases, those still homeless are paying their mortgages to hang on to a title for a home they no longer have. The typical one third/one third/one third

funding formulas are not within reach of many small and remote communities. Emergency resources for helping those who are homeless from fires and floods, including Indigenous communities, are desperately needed.

Across Canada, we need funding to help homeowners and business owners adapt to the impacts of climate change. Adaptation to climate change includes the need for assistance to regions affected by sea level rise and storm surges, from Charlottetown to the lower mainland of B.C. We can do much more to reduce fire risks. We need funds to buy more water bombers. We need a federal program, grounded in federal responsibilities in the Constitutional powers under Peace, Order and Good Government, to get workers back in the woods to create fire breaks near vulnerable communities. The ambitious plans to plant two billion trees serve multiple ends, including reducing fire risk.

Tree planting

The government's promise to plant two billion trees needs is a climate and biodiversity commitment. It falls outside the provincial jurisdiction over logging and the forest industry. Provincial governments are not the right partners in this effort. Indigenous governments and municipal governments, both urban and rural, are.

Seizing the opportunity of a low-carbon future

We are presented with the largest opportunity, perhaps ever, to improve Canada's productivity and competitiveness.

Not since the 2020 Fall Economic Statement has there been a strong statement of the urgent priority to address the climate emergency. The long-awaited Adaptation Plan does not meet the urgency of the moment.

Of all the threats facing your government, and indeed humanity as a whole, the climate crisis is the most urgent and, despite encouraging rhetoric, Canada's actions and promises do not align with the scientific advice from the IPCC. We urge you as Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister to demand a briefing by expert climate scientists. Expert climate scientists, not currently within Environment Canada and Climate Change, will confirm.

The stated objective is the wrong goal

Net-zero by 2050 will not guarantee a livable climate. Net zero by 2050 will not meet our Paris commitment to ensure global average temperature is well below 2 degrees C and preferably not

above 1.5 degrees. As a goal, in the absence of an aggressive effort well before 2030, net zero by 2050 is dangerous.

The hard truth is that net zero by 2050 could be achieved and still fail to ensure that human civilization survives through this century. We could be locked into 3 to 5 degrees global average temperature increase while still reaching net zero by 2050.

The critical finding of the IPCC Working Group 3 report in the Sixth Assessment Report (April 2022) confirms that it will not be possible to hold to 1.5 degrees C, nor to stay below 2 degrees unless global emissions peak and begin to drop rapidly *before* 2025.

Failure to achieve deep cuts well before 2030 will make any 2050 goal irrelevant – too little too late. Too little too late is Canada’s new climate target. On Earth Day 2021, the Prime Minister announced that Canada’s new Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) is 40-45 per cent below 2005 GHG emission levels by 2030. This is inconsistent with the IPCC advice.

This year at COP28, Canada must be prepared for the first “Global Stocktake.” Our international reputation will take another hit. Chances of a livable world for our own children will have been worsened due to the decisions we make today.

Prior to COP28, we must update our NDC to a 60 per cent cut below 2005 levels by 2030, with a significant commitment to leave fossil fuels in the ground. We have the potential to create momentum globally.

As we recommended in our 2022 submission, the following steps are essential:

- Just transition for fossil fuel workers.
- End subsidies for fossil fuels, immediately.
- Reject any expansion in fossil fuel operations or infrastructure.
- Rebuild a network of affordable ground transportation between communities across Canada.
- Provide predictable, ongoing funding for a renovation wave of deep retrofits to all buildings in Canada.
- Game changing investments to zero carbon aviation.
- Supporting solar roofs and other renewables in residences and across institutional buildings.
- Encourage renewable energy installation in distributed systems across Canada.
- Engage Indigenous communities in renewable energy and pumped storage.
- Carbon sequestration through soils and prairie long grass management.

- Build a national electricity corridor for 100 per cent renewable power.

Just transition legislation and funding

We are encouraged by ministerial statements in December 2022 that a Just Transition Act is in the works. It must adhere to the principles of the Coal Sector Workers Just Transition study commissioned in the previous parliament. Its core principles include:

- Full inclusion of impacted individual workers and communities in decisions about their future.
- Pension bridge funding for workers near retirement.
- Up-skilling for workers who require some additional training to move to clean industries.
- A jobs bank to ensure all workers have a job at a pay level that allows them to maintain their quality of life through the transition.

Bearing in mind that tens of thousands of workers have been laid off in the interest of automation in the fossil fuel industry with none of these supports, it is no wonder employees in the sector are fearful. Government leadership to protect the interests of the communities and workers dependent on fossil fuels is a key commitment. The accelerated Canadian exit from fossil fuel dependency must have public support from the sectors and regions most impacted.

End fossil fuel subsidies

The German environmental think tank Perspectives Climate Research has issued a detailed analysis of Canada's financial support which found that Export Development Corporation (EDC) has been the primary route for funds to fossil fuels: "Export Development Corporation officially reported share of 'carbon-intensive' activities provide the best available proxy of support for fossil fuel value chains, including upstream oil and gas, but also mid- and downstream phases of the fossil fuel value chain like thermal power generation, metals smelting or airlines. In total, the exposure of EDC's portfolio to carbon-intensive activities stood at 26 per cent – equaling a total exposure of about US\$16 billion by the end of 2020."

In contrast, EDC reports its activities in clean tech at only at about US\$2.33 billion per year (average over the past three years). Those funds likely include investments Greens would not label as "clean tech."

The red ink flowing from the Trans Mountain (TMX) pipeline should lead to the wise and overdue decision to cancel any further construction and transform the TM Crown Corporation to a climate resilience and infrastructure corporation. It could play a significant role in expanding our national electricity grid, among other large nation-building projects.

However, an open exploration of how the assets of the Trans Mountain Corporation as a Crown corporation could be best mobilized in community resilience, empowerment and economic development could be very worthwhile in both reconciliation and climate action.

To be clear, no public funds should be used to increase or sustain production of fossil fuels. Even though the industry is legally responsible for cleaning up abandoned oil wells, we supported the allocation of federal funds to assist workers in the sector through the clean-up of abandoned wells. It could have been viewed as an industry subsidy, but it did not increase or sustain fossil fuel production.

The 2023 budget must end fossil fuel subsidies, which include:

- Cancel supports for LNG.
- Cancel subsidies for fracking.
- End the last ACCA for the oil sands.
- Wind down or redirect the TMX project and avoid wasting another \$10 billion plus on building a pipeline to drive up GHGs.

The analysts in Finance Canada would benefit from seeking independent assessment from climate policy experts to determine whether climate programs are viable.

Follow the first rule of holes: stop digging!

Commit that the federal government will not permit or allow a single additional project, whether terrestrial or offshore, to expand fossil fuel production.

Invest in affordable, modern low carbon inter-city ground transportation

As we referenced in last year's submission, from coast to coast to coast, Canadians lack access to adequate public transit outside of metropolitan areas. Canada's system of public transport falls somewhere below most developing countries. Bus service has disappeared from most provinces. The danger to marginalized people of hitchhiking was highlighted in the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls as a key recommendation: "The need for more frequent and accessible transportation services to be made available to Indigenous women."

The lack of predictable, low-carbon and convenient transportation between cities is dangerous for low-income Canadians, while boosting GHG emissions as people have no choice but to fly or drive.

We urge that Budget 2023 significantly invest in VIA Rail. The Greens' private members bill, C-236, should be converted to government legislation to provide a legislative framework for VIA,

just as Amtrak in the US has legislation protecting its mandate. The PMB will require a Royal Proclamation, so it is only feasible as a government bill. It is much needed.

Greens propose a national transportation strategy with a goal of reaching zero-carbon public ground transportation everywhere in Canada by 2040. Rail will be the hub, with spokes of light rail and electric bus connections.

We must find a way to maintain the coach bus sector, such as Wilson's and Maritime Bus, as well as those in Ontario (Greyhound, Great Canadian Coaches, 417 Bus Lines, McCoy Bus lines), in Alberta (Pacific Western, TRAXX Coach), Manitoba (Beaver Bus and Moose Mountain) and Saskatchewan (Prince Albert Northern).

Funds are urgently needed to keep the coach lines afloat so that they can be part of the larger transportation strategy. They could be part of the climate funding already announced.

A national strategy must include service to rural and remote communities. Every Canadian must have access to reliable, low carbon transportation options at affordable rates.

VIA Rail needs investment to purchase more efficient engines, build better tracks (that it can own) in key pinch points where freight delays passenger travel, and offer a better tourism product for Canadian and international visitors.

Hydrogen Strategy

Canada needs a hydrogen strategy to ensure hydrogen is available from non-carbon sources. Only green hydrogen should be funded, otherwise we are creating yet another subsidy to fossil fuels. The recent developments in Newfoundland and Labrador are encouraging. This will take some time to develop from hydro, wind and solar. Failure to plan for the need for green hydrogen could unintentionally lock in fossil fuel emissions in the production of hydrogen fuel.

Game changing investments to zero carbon aviation

While much of the government focus will be on how to assist large airlines and airports coping with the financial hit of the pandemic, we also have an opportunity to tackle one of the world's largest sources of unregulated GHG emissions – air travel.

Vancouver Island's Harbour Air has pioneered the development of a fully electric airplane. While it cannot provide air travel over long distances, it could have a huge impact globally. Short haul flights of 780 km or less make up an astonishing 85 per cent of flights world-wide.

Canada's government needs to invest and get the first carbon-free airline operational well ahead of schedule.

Expand and strengthen building retrofit programs – Invest \$10-15 billion annually over the next 20 years to retrofit Canada's housing stock by 2040

While we applaud your government's existing residential retrofit programs, far more investment and effort will be required to decarbonize Canada's homes and buildings in order to reach our climate targets. We call on the government to provide predictable funding of at least \$10 billion a year through to 2040 to completely retrofit Canada's homes and buildings. Though this investment is significant, it is unmatched in the economic, social and environmental returns it will yield.

Comprehensive deep retrofit funding, including fuel-switching to clean electricity among other efficiency measures, will provide long-lasting, well-paid jobs and will more than pay for itself in economic development and tax revenue. Above all, this will improve homes and save costs for Canadians, while making unprecedented gains in reducing Canada's emissions while growing our economy. We encourage the government to provide more comprehensive retrofit subsidies for lower-income households to ensure the benefits of this program are shared across Canadian society. This includes following through on the commitment to create a zero-interest loan program to help all Canadians have funding to complete retrofits.

The ability for buildings, whether residential, commercial, or institutional, to generate their own electricity – to become carbon zero or even carbon negative – is a major opportunity. The obvious and relatively easy option is to encourage the installation of solar panels on any and all roofs across Canada. Depending on location, some building owners may be able to install wind, geothermal or small-scale hydro. The goal should be to engage as much home-grown, distributed renewable energy as possible, so the program should be flexible enough to encourage a range of renewable energy investments.

Renewable energy investments in Indigenous communities have already been demonstrated to be an excellent fit in economic development and should be encouraged. Indigenous communities on lands that already have empty pits or reservoir capacity should be encouraged to develop battery storage in hydro capacity. Pumped storage in as many locations as possible will convert intermittent renewable energy to baseload.

Build a national electricity corridor for 100 per cent renewable power

The Canadian Infrastructure Bank has been making key investments in much-needed inter-ties to ensure green, renewable energy can be easily wheeled from one province to another, including

to the territories. This major national infrastructure will need significant planning to deliver a fully integrated grid, east-west and north-south by 2030. Consultations with Indigenous peoples are critical. The link between eastern Manitoba and western Ontario, for example, will require advanced review and free, prior and informed consent from a number of First Nations. Siting and approval will be a long and difficult process, but it is necessary to ensure the modern functioning of a grid delivering 100 per cent renewable electricity to an increasingly electrified economy. As the internal combustion engine is replaced with EVs, we must ensure our infrastructure is ready.

No to Small Modular Reactors

The federal investments in small and modular reactors are an unjustified waste of public funds. These reactors do not exist as a commercial reality. The beneficiary of government largesse is a consortium led by SNC-Lavalin. The money spent on these reactors, even without producing a kilowatt of power, represent an opportunity cost. Known and available technologies will win on any cost-benefit analysis compared to SMRs.

Please halt the funds to SMRs, and conduct an evidence-based review in which public money will only be committed based on set criteria:

- Per dollar invested, how many tonnes of GHG are avoided/reduced?
- Per dollar invested, how many jobs will be created?
- From when the first dollar is invested, when will benefits accrue?

On this basis, it will be quickly apparent that the SMR investment is the worst possible choice. Existing commitments in energy efficiency and renewable energy will be far effective in each category.

In 2022, the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainability held exhaustive meetings with many stakeholders to gauge the state of oversight systems for Canada's nuclear waste. Their report reads as follows:

Recommendation 1:

The Committee recommends that the Auditor General of Canada conduct a public audit of Canada's radioactive waste governance."

Spent CANDU high level waste contains a greater percentage of plutonium than that of other reactors. Plutonium is used in nuclear bombs. Canada must not be the staging ground for a new wave of nuclear technologies that puts this world-destroying man-made element in the hands of developing nations. And yet, that is exactly what is happening via government funding towards experimental new designs, dubbed "SMRs" aimed at Point Lepreau, Chalk River, and

more. Reprocessing for plutonium extraction has been banned for decades. Canada's current government and industry language masks this dangerous process as "recycling" - a misdirection towards the Canadian public that should be discouraged, not promoted. The danger of Canada fomenting a plutonium economy is before us.

It is likely that if an audit as suggested by the ENVI committee were to occur, it would likely be found that for-profit companies under the moniker Nuclear Waste Management Organization, including companies that work in nuclear weapons industries in other countries, should not control the decisions regarding our nation's nuclear waste management. Monetization of nuclear waste is a danger, not a priority; it must be altogether disallowed.

It is recommended that the "Go-Co" model (government owned, company operated) model for Canada's nuclear regime not be renewed in 2025. If it is renewed, it is recommended that Canada not put nuclear waste management, nuclear power development, or nuclear experimentation decision making power in the hands of companies like SNC-Lavalin, world-renowned for corruption and bribery. It is recommended that the Go-Co arrangement whereby private for-profit companies lead on nuclear designs and decisions be ended. The Crown via Atomic Energy of Canada Limited must regain sole control of these dangerous, harmful industries.

The report recently released by the Net Zero committee directly contradicts the recommendations of the ENVI nuclear waste committee. The ENVI committee's second recommendation states:

Recommendation 2:

The Committee recommends that any research and development work related to small modular reactor (SMR) technology rigorously document and categorize in their analyses the radioactive waste that will be generated, and that a plan be developed to manage this waste as part of *Canada's Policy for Radioactive Waste Management and Decommissioning*.

Planning for new waste streams of experimental SMR nuclear waste, hereto unseen on this planet, is not forthcoming. The safety of Canadians and our biodiversity must come before profits, particularly with respect to uranium fuel chain industries. Despite this dangerous lack of safety planning, the Net Zero committee report cites the "SMRs roadmap" document as first in the list of "strategies specifically focused on growing net zero industries" (page 36). More than eight billion dollars waits in the "Net Zero Accelerator" of the Science and Innovation fund. We strongly urge that none of these dollars be granted towards new nuclear development in Canada. Dollar for dollar, existing technologies that are ready for deployment now, outperform new

nuclear as viable greenhouse gas replacements. We do not have time to waste on experimental new nuclear extravagance.

Funding for development of state-of-the-art Early Warning System for climate and natural disasters

We further recommend that Canada invest in both research and development of state-of-the-art, publicly accessible and useable Early Warning Systems (EWS), for both climate change impacts and natural disasters. The research-based development of the EWS will increase lead times and save lives from climate catastrophes such as heat waves, floods, droughts, landslides, and wildfires. The design of these EWS will help with decision-making across a spectrum, ranging from our citizens to policy makers. With investment in research and development for better forecasting and lead times, Canada can safeguard, respond better and minimize losses to its vulnerable citizens and environment from climate impacts and natural disasters.

Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership

We call on the government to phase out all subsidies to industrial animal agriculture. Agriculture is the fifth largest contributor to Canada's national GHG emissions, with animal agriculture responsible for over half of this contribution. We ask the government to recognize this impact and reallocate these subsidies to supporting farmers transition to producing less environmentally impactful crops.

We recommend that the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership earmarks \$60 million to remove barriers for Canadian farmers to access high-value domestic markets, and improve food security in our communities; \$200M to fund research and development on agroecological practices with an emphasis on sectors important to food security and food sovereignty in Canada; and \$100M, in addition to any amounts allocated by the Food Policy for Canada, to fund the adoption of innovation that addresses climate change adaptation as well as mitigation, protects local ecosystems and communities and is appropriate for small and medium scale producers and processors.

We recommend that government departments and agencies (CFIA, AAFC, and HC) stop injecting money into developing and promoting questionable concepts like "value creation" and "plant breeding innovation" (euphemisms for royalty collection schemes and loosening regulatory assessments of biotech crops), and use those funds instead to maintain and enhance regulatory capacity to ensure that farmers have access to high-quality seeds and there are safeguards to protect the ecosystem and human health.

Strengthening federal oversight on aquaculture

The federal government has committed to creating a national Aquaculture Act and supporting the transition from open net-pen salmon farming in coastal BC. However, no final decisions have been made and at times Fisheries and Oceans Canada seems to be working cross-purposes. Under its Sustainable Aquaculture Program, the Department is committed to delivering science-based decision-making related to sustainable aquaculture activities but apparently, it lacks the resources to do so. For example, a recently released report concluding that there is no significant association between the level of sea lice in juvenile wild salmon and infestations at salmon farms contradicts overwhelming scientific evidence and has raised serious questions about industry bias, and part of the problem may be that the research is based solely on industry-reported sea lice counts. There is also evidence that within DFO science is suppressed and not shared with the Minister. We recommend that the government remove the entrenched conflict of interest in having the department both promote and regulate the industry.

12. OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

When surveyed, most Canadians believe we are a generous country when it comes to playing our part in international assistance. After all, the target to eliminate global poverty was set by our former prime minister, the Rt. Hon. Lester B. Pearson. Achieving development assistance at 0.7% of our Gross National Income (GNI) is still called the Pearson target.

The reality is that Canada is far behind our donor nation allies. Many have achieved 0.7%, some have exceeded it and have reached a full one percent.

Canada is committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but the world is far from reaching these targets. Globally we are seeing more poverty, more gender inequality and gender-based violence, and more people at risk of starvation, among many other developments and humanitarian setbacks. Canada must support the global effort to invest in global solutions to the challenges.

Calling for an increase from the current \$8.15 billion aid budget to reach \$10 billion by 2025. This will still not reach the percent of GNI dedicated to ODA under the Mulroney government. It will, if achieved, place Canada at less than halfway toward the Pearson target by 2025. We urge the Canadian to live up to their reputation of generosity and commit to meeting the Pearson target in Budget 2023.

CONCLUSION

Please consider each of these proposals, ranging from high level and long term to rather short term and granular.