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The Honourable William Morneau, PC
Minister of Finance
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

February 5, 2020

Dear Minister Morneau,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit budgetary suggestions to the Department of Finance and the Privy Council.

On behalf of our parliamentary Green caucus and the Green Party of Canada, I submit the attached brief.

It is longer than what we have presented in the past, but we believe a fundamental re-boot of our approach to budgeting and fiscal projections is required. We can no longer count on a linear progression of a relatively stable economy in a relatively stable world. Non-linear perturbations are more than likely and our budgeting and planning should reflect climate risks.

The first part of our submission is comprised of suggestions in respect of four budget areas relating to climate finance issues:

1. International efforts to incorporate climate risks and mitigation in national budgets
2. Downside risks from inevitable reductions in fossil fuel production
3. Potential risks from shifts in manufacturing/industrial activity
4. Opportunities for government to advance the “new economy”

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The second part consists of more specific spending priorities and responses to some measures included in the Liberal election platform. Where we could, we attempted integration of various promises into larger initiatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to make some proposals. I hope that you will find them useful.

With best wishes,

Elizabeth May, O.C.
Member of Parliament for Saanich-Gulf Islands
Parliamentary Leader of the Green Party of Canada

Submission from the Green Party of Canada
To the Minister of Finance
February 5, 2020

A. Climate Finance

1. International efforts to incorporate climate risks and mitigation in budgets

The international Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action attended the 25th Conference of the Parties on Climate Change ("COP25") in Madrid. There, they presented the latest steps in the ongoing efforts under the "Helsinki Principles" (to which Canada is a signatory):

I. Align policies and practices with the Paris Agreement commitments;
II. Share experience and expertise with each other in order to promote mutual encouragement and promote collective understanding of policies and practices for climate change;
III. Work towards measures that result in effective carbon pricing;
IV. Take climate change into account in macroeconomic policy, fiscal planning, budgeting, public investment management, and procurement practices;
V. Mobilize private sources of climate finance by facilitating investments and the development of a financial sector which supports climate mitigation and adaptation; and,
VI. Engage actively in the domestic preparation and implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.

<u>I. Align policies and practices with the Paris Agreement commitments</u>

Greens appreciate your government's commitment to net zero GHG emissions by 2050. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change is directed both to set out a plan to achieve that and to improve the current 2030 target. We know you recognize that the existing 2030 target set by an earlier government is about two-thirds of our fair share of the Paris Agreement's goal of holding global average temperature to no more than 1.5 degrees. In 2020, the Paris Agreement requires of us that we submit a new and far more ambitious 2030 NDC (Nationally Determined Contribution). Ideally, the NDC needs to be substantially increased and tabled with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat this spring. Early tabling of Canada's enhanced target will restore Canada to a leadership role, increasing positive pressure on other countries to do more and to make a meaningful commitment at the next COP in Glasgow.

But in a number of important respects, your government continues to enact policy that will make it impossible to meet even that earlier government's commitments. While WE understand that projects like the TMX pipeline and the LNG plant in British Columbia are now at the core of your government's industrial policies, it is unambiguously clear from simple arithmetic that either of those projects on their own will make it impossible to meet the current target, let alone an improved NDC.

We urge you to speak strongly at cabinet to reconsider and to cancel both of these projects. And, of course, to reject Teck's proposed Frontier Mine, even if, as seems increasingly unlikely, Teck is willing and able to finance it. If any of these projects goes ahead, Canada will simply, shamefully, have to renege on our existing international agreements.

II. Promote mutual encouragement and collective understanding of practices for climate change

Canada has for years been at the forefront of international efforts to advance transparency and accuracy in national accounts. Your continuing efforts in this direction are laudable. We note in particular your intention to clarify the relatively murky waters of actuarial accounting for pension liabilities. Greens encourage you to take a similar approach to matters relating to climate change, and to use Canada's trusted position to promote such behaviour on the international scene:

a. work with the OECD to incorporate climate measures in national budgets;
b. acknowledge fiscal and monetary uncertainties as a result of climate-related risks; and,
c. encourage financial regulators to make disclosures of climate risks mandatory for publicly listed companies and funds.

III: Work towards measures that result in effective carbon pricing

Your government has committed to and acted to set a price for carbon. That price is assisting individual citizens and smaller enterprises to adjust behaviour at the margin. We encourage you to make such a carbon price more widely applicable to include all industrial emitters and consumers, and to increase the price more rapidly than now intended so as to promote more significant changes in market behaviour.

IV: Take climate change into account in macroeconomic policy, fiscal planning, budgeting, public investment management, and procurement practices

Your last government took a bold initiative to incorporate measures of gender equity in public matters, made firm for your department with the Canadian Gender Budgeting Act. We applaud your international leadership in this vital area. A framework similar to your Gender Based Analysis + ("GBA+") could be helpful around the world for similar evaluations of climate measures, across the board for all public policy and especially in your budgets.

Staff in your department are aware of and have been participating in the development in Europe of "climate tagging" for national budgets. Greens suggest that you include in the forthcoming budget measures similar to those developed by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (the "Rio Markers") for evaluation of the effects of all forecast expenditures and revenues on climate change mitigation and adaptation, and on reductions in GHG emissions. In addition to the Rio Markers, Greens suggest that you develop similar indicators to evaluate federal government activities and expenditures that are likely to increase GHG emissions.

As you know better than most, governments now face new risks and uncertainties as the climate emergency continues to gain momentum. Greens encourage you in your macroeconomic planning to be cognizant of some of the largest of these. In particular, we call your attention to:

a. the fact that substantial assets now highly valued by oil & gas companies may become "stranded" and lose most if not all of their book value. Should this occur, as seems increasingly likely, the consequent disruption in Canada's and the world's financial markets will be dramatic. Oil and gas companies and their shareholders will of course experience the most direct impacts. Government balance sheets and those of Crown corporations and investment funds also will be substantially affected, and other public and private funds and institutional investors will likewise be at risk. Projected revenues from royalties and income taxes will no longer be available.
b. insurers and re-insurers around the world are less and less willing to take on climate-related risks. To the extent that governments become "insurers of last resort," these risks may have significant effects on your future budgets. And, because history is not a reliable guide to future climate-related damages, actuarial approaches to estimating such risks are not methodologically sound. Greens suggest that you include in your budget increased allowances for

government expenditures where insurers have left the market, and further that you substantially increase the upper bounds around your estimates of uncertainty.

c. Oil and gas companies are nominally responsible for the costs of cleaning up after exploration, development and production activities come to an end. But the history of Canadian resource companies, and current activities in the oil patch, suggest that many companies are likely to default on these obligations, and such expenditures then will have to come from the public purse. The Alberta regulator estimated in 2016 that the unfunded environmental liabilities from oil and gas in Alberta alone likely exceeded $260 billion. Such an amount will certainly not be available over any reasonable time from any government in Alberta. Some, if not much, of this unavoidable cost is likely to be borne by the federal government. A substantial portion of the cost will be to deal with environmental liabilities to First Nations, which are from the outset a federal responsibility and which may have greater political urgency than some others. It is possible therefore that these liabilities could have a significant impact on the federal balance sheet. We encourage you to estimate the likely incidence and amount of such liabilities, to make provision for them and for the necessary resulting expenditures, and of course to be fully transparent in disclosures of same to permit markets properly to react.

d. The potential for international conflict is rising in a number of areas. We note in particular a recent issue of "Diplomat & International Canada," suggesting that eleven of twenty likely "trouble spots" around the world were risky because of some connection to fossil fuels, either potential development, current production, or transportation. As global warming accelerates the opening of northern waterways, the Canadian north is an obvious candidate for such conflicting international objectives. Some unfriendly Arctic neighbours and some of our allies continue to insist that waters throughout the Arctic archipelago are not Canadian, but should be open to international shipping and resource extraction. Responsibility for this of course nominally rests mainly with the departments of Foreign Affairs and Defence, but we encourage you to inquire of your colleagues in those departments what additional costs and risks they might anticipate in event that our northern sovereignty is challenged, and what additional costs they anticipate for surveillance and monitoring even if Canadian sovereignty is acknowledged.

V: Mobilize private sources of climate finance by facilitating investments and the development of a financial sector which supports climate mitigation and adaptation

The Eco-Fiscal Commission recently reported that a price on carbon is the single most effective way of encouraging reductions in GHG emissions, and that neither regulation nor subsidies are likely to result in optimal outcomes. As mentioned above, to meet our international commitments within the limited time available and the accelerating climate emergency, such a price on its own would need to be at such a high level as be nearly equivalent to a "stop-work" order. This seems unlikely.

The Task Force on Sustainable Finance likewise suggested that a carbon price, along with mandated disclosure of financial risk in the oil & gas sector, would encourage enough private sector investment to facilitate a rapid shift from fossil fuel dependency to a more modern economy. Greens are concerned that pricing policies alone will never meet the actions we must take to hold to 1.5 degrees. They are helpful, but insufficient.

Regulatory action along with subsidies and direct expenditures will be essential if Canada is to make a plausible effort to meet its commitments.

Greens suggest that you implement additional measures such as:

a. regulation of the financial sector to mandate disclosure of climate risks;
b. shifting subsidies from oil & gas exploration, development and production to environmental remediation, especially labour costs;
c. regulating fossil fuel consumption out of new construction;
d. more support for private and public sector renewable energy development; and,
e. expenditures on interconnects and transfer point for a functioning national electrical grid.

VI: Engage actively in the domestic preparation and implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement

We urge you to work with the Minister of Environment to update Canada's NDC to meet the requirements of the Paris Agreement. As you know, Canada's current NDC calls for a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas ("GHG") emissions against 2005 levels by 2030. This NDC survives from the commitments made by an earlier government and does not meet our fair share of 2015 Paris commitment to hold to 1.5 degrees, nor the advice from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) advice that a global CO_2 reduction of 45% is required by 2030. Shifting Canada's target to one consistent with our Paris commitment will have significant effects on the forthcoming budget. All governments will be revisiting their NDCs prior to COP26 in Glasgow. Preparing a 2020/21 budget without anticipating such a shift is not likely to be optimal for financial or economic forecasting.

2. Downside risks/opportunities from reductions in fossil fuel production

Economic activity in the oil patch and related sectors will slow down as government moves to meet its commitments to net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Greens suggest that, in line with a "Just Transition" strategy for workers, you might consider shifting the subsidies now given to the industry away from exploration, development, production and transport, towards the labour component of remediation costs. As noted above, four years ago these costs were estimated at $260 billion in Alberta alone – they have only grown since then. Work for environmental remediation and restoration is labour-intensive, rather than capital-intensive. If subsidies were shifted to the labour portion of remediation costs, the funds would have a significantly greater effect on employment and would encourage employers to spend on remediation while still in operations, rather than, as seems likely given history, to default on such liabilities in bankruptcy. We are nearing the end of the period during which these previously profitable companies will be able to contribute much to cleaning up after themselves. Greens encourage you to act quickly.

3. Potential risks/opportunities from shifts in manufacturing/industrial activity

We are sure you are well advised about potential changes in the automotive industry. Many analysts note that younger people in rich countries ("millennials") will be less likely than past generations to purchase automobiles for individual or family use and that demand for such vehicles is therefore likely to decline. In addition, the automotive business around the world is very likely to shift the bulk of production of such individual vehicles to electromotive types. The Canadian auto sector may thus be at a double risk: (1) if overall production declines, Canadian branch plants may well be among the first to be decommissioned; and, (2) given that Canadian manufacturing by major auto companies is still exclusively internal combustion type vehicles, future investments in newer types may well be concentrated in the countries of the head offices.

The employment implications here are more significant by far than in the oil & gas sectors. We suggest that your department change industry assistance to boost current Canadian manufacturers of electric passenger vehicles, utility trucks, and buses, and to facilitate other manufacturers and suppliers shifting more rapidly to electric vehicles and power train components.

4. Opportunities for government to advance the "new economy"

Canada has lost ground in our potential to incubate and launch new, green tech to waiting export markets. Many green and clean tech companies moved away from Canada to nations embracing a post-carbon economy.

We do have some technology winners. Carbon Cure pulls carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to make green concrete. Canada's government does not need to subsidize this technology. It is commercialized and less expensive than standard concrete. What we need to do is use the enormous purchasing power of the federal government to require that this Carbon Cure concrete is the only approved product for federal buildings and projects.

Canada's system of public transport falls somewhere below most developing countries. Bus service has disappeared from most provinces. The threat to marginalized people of hitchhiking was highlighted in the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The lack of predictable, low-carbon and convenient transportation between cities is dangerous for the poor and boosts GHG as people have no choice but to fly or drive. VIA Rail needs investment to purchase more efficient engines, build better track (that it can own) in key pinch points where freight delays travel, and offer a better tourism product for Canadian and international visitors. The only commitment to improve passenger rail outside the Windsor-Quebec Corridor is too have VIA Rail improve access to national parks. Daily service outside of this corridor is much needed. Greens propose that attention be immediately focussed on the Vancouver Island route known as the E and N Railway, improving access to the Pacific Rim National Park (while coincidentally massively improving public transit in the Victoria Capital region) as well as restoring service from Halifax to Sydney, Nova Scotia to assist visitors reach the Cape Breton Highlands National Park and Fortress Louisburg. The most historic route in Canada was given under the Mulroney government to a private operator. Ensuring that VIA Rail can share that track at an affordable price would create access to Banff, as well as the historic spot of the Last Spike and the circular tunnel at Kicking Horse Pass. Along the Highway of Tears, where there is a desperate need for public transit, enhanced VIA Rail service to Prince Rupert would improve access to Gwaii Haanas National Park and Jasper.

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 an electric airplane. The company received some support from NRC, but has invested over $4 million of its own money. In December 2019, Harbour Air demonstrated the first ever commercial, carbon-free flight. Harbour Air needs a $40 million investment to convert its whole fleet. Supporting their efforts will bring Canada a commercially viable world-beating export opportunity.

Short haul flights of 780 km or less make up 85% of flights world-wide. This first breakthrough from a relatively small float plane commercial operation holds the key to significant GHG reductions. Canada's government need to invest and get the first carbon-free airline operational well ahead of schedule.

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B. Specific requests

1. Emergency Economic Relief for the Salmon Disaster

The West Coast salmon season was an economic disaster for fisherman, tenderman and shore-workers and constituted an emergency for many Indigenous Peoples.

Workers in the industry require changes to the EI rules to cover their immediate needs. As well, the sector needs financing to allow the fleet to be prepped for the 2020 season. Indigenous people need emergency funding to purchase food to replace this staple.

As well, salmon rehabilitation requires funding to restore an adequate budget for fisheries stock assessments, provide additional funding for the DFO's salmon enhancement program and increase the salmon conservation stamp to at least $10.

2. Improved access to funds to respond to climate disasters

The Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund has proven effective but 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 an elimination of the $20 million minimum project eligibility threshold so communities of all sizes can access funding.

Many municipalities, from Charlottetown to St. John to the Muskokas face increased flood risks. We desperately need leadership on flood mitigation in New Brunswick and elsewhere. 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 impacted by sea level rise and storm surges, from Charlottetown to the lower mainland of British Columbia.

We note the many references in the mandate letters to enhanced preparedness for flood events. We support this and hope funds will be rolled out efficiently for much needed revamping to flood-proof key infrastructure.

Missing from the mandate letters and Speech from the Throne is a commensurate level of preparedness for increased forest fires. We need funds for the purchase of more water bombers. We need a federal programme, 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 announced in the Liberal platform to plant two billion trees must stay a federal programme – not one managed by handing money to the provinces. This tree planting effort must be driven by a federal response to a climate emergency – not the typical provincial response to industrial forestry. We need urban tree planting and ecologically appropriate species to enhance carbon sequestration and biodiversity.

3. Water

Greens wish to support the creation of the Canada Water Agency promised in the mandate letters. Canada once had this capacity, but it has been lost through years of cuts and neglect. We urge that it be adequately funded and bring a strong cadre of scientists to re-start our federal capacity in water monitoring, water science, and water management. The flood efforts mentioned above can also benefit from this new expertise.

4. Nature, Mental Health and Reconciliation

The commitment to 25% protection of lands and oceans by 2025 is very welcome. We hope that such land based initiatives will recognize the ways in which land conservation can intersect with mental health and wellness. And ways in which conservation and land protection can be integrated with reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. The Indigenous Guardians programme meets all of these objectives. The Indigenous Guardians program and funds for the establishment of Indigenous Protected Areas should both be adequately funded and measures taken to ensure there's a coordinated process connecting the two. There has been overwhelming interest from Indigenous communities for advancing conservation, as shown by the over $800 million worth of proposals to the Challenge Fund, which only had $175 million to disperse.

We urge that this programme be massively expanded to meet multiple objectives to which your government is already committed. Greens propose that one way to meet the promise of teaching Canadians how to camp would be to ask the Indigenous Guardians programme to take it on.

Greens support the Canada Nature Fund which has proven effective. In our view, it will require at least as much money as in its first phase in order to meet second phase targets.

5. Healthcare

According to HealthCareCAN, we have a $15 billion deficit with respect to maintaining hospitals (48% of which are over 50-years old), they use 11% of public infrastructure energy and contribute 5% of Canada's greenhouse gases. We also rely on them to operate in disaster conditions in the event of fires, floods, earthquakes, or viral outbreaks. Yet, despite their climate impact and role in disaster mitigation, hospital and health care organizations are ineligible for federal funding from the Building Canada fund, the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation fund, and the Knowledge in Infrastructure fund. Eligibility for these programs should be extended to include hospitals and health care organizations and funding should be topped-up accordingly.

Health transfer funding should take into account demographic challenges, particularly aging and rural considerations.

The federal government should continue its research investments in women's heart and brain health by renewing and increasing funding to Heart & Stroke's federally funded Women's Heart & Brain Health Initiative.

We urge that the budget remove GST on regulated counselling services.

Increased funding to community-based organizations to test drugs and make Naloxone kits widely available is desperately needed in response to the opioid crisis.

The federal government should earmark significant funding for the implementation of an equitable and universal pharmacare program. Implementation should be in partnership with provinces and be designed to improve access to cost-effective medicines for all people in Canada regardless of geography, age or ability to pay. In collaboration with Indigenous partners, the implementation of pharmacare should include a review of the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Programme.

Lastly, we urge that specific bridge financing be allocated to ensure that Clinic 554 in Fredericton, NB is able to continue providing essential health care, including abortion services and other critical health services for women and the LGBTQ+ community in the area.

6. Municipalities

The Gas Tax Fund's annual escalator should be boosted from 2% to 3.5% to ensure predictable and reliable funding to municipalities. While this should address municipal infrastructure issues moving forward, we also want to underscore two specific needs for key infrastructure that exist right now. New Maryland, NB requires an investment of $10 million for a drinking water infrastructure upgrade and Mission, BC has an urgent need for funding to replace the sewer pipeline under the Fraser River. The latter is old and at risk of collapse. Should the pipe fail, the impact on Fraser River salmon would be disastrous. Earlier funding was approved and then withdrawn when cost estimates proved inadequate. The total cost will be approximately $32 million of which the federal share was to be 50%.

7. Indigenous Peoples

Meeting the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is still an outstanding promise. The new Indigenous languages law is promising but needs adequate funding.

The budget should include funds for compensation of indigenous children in response to the Human Rights Tribunal ruling.

It is urgent that the government address, as noted above, the unsafe conditions for Indigenous women due to a lack of safe public transit in much of Canada.

8. Housing and Real Estate

The National Housing Strategy was a good first step to addressing the housing crisis but to truly get us out of this crisis it requires more near-term funding and targeted solutions to provide culturally-appropriate affordable housing for Indigenous households and supportive housing for those living with mental illness and substance use.

The government needs to provide financing to non-profit housing organizations and cooperatives to build and restore quality, energy efficient housing for seniors, people with special needs and low-income families.

Tax incentives for building purpose-built rental housing should be restored and tax credits should be granted for gifts of lands, or of land and buildings, to community land trusts to provide affordable housing.

Incentives should be provided for landlords to repair and retrofit lower-cost market rental units, to make them more liveable and energy efficient.

Currently, Long Term Care facilities are not considered part of the National Housing Strategy. To ensure adequate care for our growing aging population, Long Term Care facilities should be included as "housing" for funding purposes.

9. Women, Children, and the Elderly

The most recent Canadian Income Survey reveals that 9.5 per cent of Canada's population − about 3.4 million people – lives below the poverty line.

Poverty rates are even higher within marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as people living with disabilities, single mothers and seniors. In a wealthy country like Canada, this is unacceptable.

Families need child care. Universal child care is fundamental for women's equality –the "ramp to equality in the workplace for women." The government should ramp up federal child care funding to achieve the international benchmark of at least one per cent of GDP annually, adding an additional $1 billion each year until this benchmark is reached with a mature early learning and child-care system.

The government should invest $360 million a year in a cost-shared universal healthy food school program. Consultation should be undertaken with the provinces and territories, as well as youth, parents and guardians, and Indigenous leaders.

Seniors comprise a growing proportion of Canada's total population, a majority of whom are women. An essential duty of the social contract between government and citizens is to make sure people can live fulfilling and dignified lives in their senior years. A National Seniors Strategy is required that:

a) Ensures the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) remains robust and adaptive to changing needs and circumstances;
b) Increases over time the target income replacement rate from 25 per cent to 50 per cent of income received during working years;
c) Regulates the CPP Investment Board to require divestment of coal, oil and gas shares and ensure that all investments are ethical and promote environmental sustainability; and,
d) Protects private pensions by amending the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act to establish the pre-eminence of pensioners and the pension plan in the creditor hierarchy during company insolvency proceedings.

Please also refer back to our request under Housing regarding funding for Long Term Care facilities.

10. Veterans

Veterans continue to face longstanding difficulties in accessing support. Further investment in improving access to information and resources, and horizontal communication among departments and organizations that serve veterans and families is required to ensure that they have the well-being, care and benefits they deserve. We urge that you allocate funds in the budget to significantly increase access to trained service dogs for those suffering with PTSD.

11. Education and Canadian Small Businesses and Innovation

Over 90% of Canadian colleges engage in applied research, but they are receiving only 2% of the Federal research funding – as the bulk goes to supporting Universities. We agree with Colleges and Institutes Canada that an investment of $40 million per year in business innovation engagement services based in colleges, institutes and polytechnics would help engage small and medium-sized businesses in research and development, drive innovation for the green economy and foster innovation across all sectors to contribute more effectively to Canada's climate change goals. It would also help provide more opportunities for more Canadians to learn the skills that they need as we transition to a low-carbon economy, given that over 95% of Canadians live within 50km of a college, institute, cegep or polytechnic.

We would also like to highlight one specific project for funding, the new Cyber Centre of Excellence in New Brunswick. The Cyber Centre is a 145,000sq ft, purpose-built, level 2 security building that will become home to multiple corporate leaders in cybersecurity as well as academia and government. The building is designed with the ability to operate in isolation for up to 96 hours in post-disaster scenarios and features several duplicate and backup systems including separate electrical rooms serviced by separate substations as well as two stand-alone power generation sources for backup power. The project will serve national security interests and fits within the federal government's National Cybersecurity Strategy and Innovation Agenda. Furthermore, the Cyber Centre will distinguish New Brunswick as a national leader in cybersecurity, specifically for critical infrastructure protection. By engaging private, public and academic institutions with expertise in this sector into one shared and streamlined operating centre, this infrastructure will also attract new investment, skilled labour, and economic benefit to our region.

12. Canadian Culture, Sport and Heritage

Culture, sport and heritage play an important role in ensuring Canadians enjoy healthy fulfilled lives. We hope that Budget 2020 can remove some of the barriers that Canadians face in accessing them.

There is an infrastructure need in small and medium sized communities across Canada and user fees for cultural and recreation facilities can be a barrier for people living on fixed incomes. A participation fund earmarked to make municipal art recreation facilities more accessible to these communities would be welcome. And while the increased municipal transfers that we have requested will help municipalities with culture and sport infrastructure costs moving forward, two facilities that could desperately use federal funding now are the Fredericton Playhouse and Fredericton Pool. The Fredericton Playhouse has the support of the municipality of Fredericton but is still waiting on both federal and provincial support. The Fredericton Pool, a community-led initiative, is seeking federal funding to ensure the Fredericton region maintains a competitive swim facility. Both facilities are seeking around $14million to complete their projects.

Greens also believe that funding to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) should be increased to replace revenue from advertising on news programming with the agreement that CBC no longer allow advertising on its news programming. In parallel, a digital sales tax for streaming services like Netflix, Spotify and Apple should be implemented and these same services should be subjected to Canadian content requirements.

We also ask that funding to the Canada Arts Training fund, under the Department of Canadian Heritage, be increased by $10M. The fund has been frozen for more than 10 years at around $26 million, but this is no longer adequate to meet today's needs and remain competitive in today's world. Increasing the fund would also enable new entrants to access the fund. Investing more in professional arts training will benefit Canada's presence on the global stage and help foster a resilient economy.

In order to help preserve Canadian's built heritage, we suggest two tax measures: (1) implement a federal income tax credit for restoration expenses to encourage private involvement in preserving Canada's built heritage; and, (2) establish charitable tax credits for the private donation of easements on heritage properties to charitable organizations or local governments.

13. Transportation

Answer the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) and Vancouver Mayor's Council's call for a permanent, dedicated federal public transit fund of $3.4 billion annually starting in 2028, once the existing transit funding program expires.

Eliminate the 15 percent cap on rehabilitation costs under the current Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan. Provide the $2.7 billion in new federal support that FCM says is required to support the conversion of transit fleets to zero-emission transit vehicles.

14. Eliminate the planned 10% tax on boat sales

Under Elizabeth May's signature, we have already submitted a more detailed letter on this issue. We are convinced the tax will fail to produce tax revenue but will decimate an important economic sector in Canada and cause job losses. We urge that a better revenue source, with the added benefit of assisting in preventing the abandonment of vessels creating costs for governments at many levels, would be to collect a $100 annual fee to ensure boats and owners are registered and licensed.

15. Increase Canada's Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) Envelope

The target of achieving 0.7% of GDP to ODA was set as an international goal for donor nations by former Prime Minister Lester Pearson. Many countries have met – or exceeded – that target. Canada lags at 15th in the world, currently committing 0.28% of GDP to ODA. As the Sustainable Development Goals require eliminating world poverty by 2030 – an achievable goal – it is time for Canada to step up. As a down payment on achieving that goal, please include in Budget 2020 a doubling of our current ODA.

16. Revenue to achieve these commitments

Pursuing revenues hiding off-shore, closing the stock dividend loophole, eliminating business deductions for meals and entertainment, and increasing the marginal tax rate for the wealthiest 1%, bringing in a wealth tax are all feasible sources of revenue to ensure fiscal sustainability through transformational tax reform.