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Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

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Dear Friends,

The economy remains a priority for citizens and governments alike.

Emergency spending measures rescued the economy during the worst of the pandemic and laid the foundation for a strong recovery. Canada has regained 117 percent of jobs lost — the strongest jobs recovery in the G7 — versus 96 percent in the U.S. Moreover, in 2022-23 the federal deficit is expected to drop to \$52.8 billion from \$95.6 billion in 2021-22 and \$314 billion in 2020-21. In the first quarter of this fiscal year, the government recorded a surplus of \$10.2 billion. The IMF predicts Canada will lead the G7 in economic growth this year.

However, global supply-side inflation — the result of bottlenecks, labour shortages, weather events, and the war in Ukraine — is squeezing family budgets. Fortunately, the Canada Child Benefit, the GST credit, the CPP/QPP, Old Age Security, and the Guaranteed Income Supplement are indexed. There are also hopeful signs that price pressures may be easing.

Some have called for tax cuts, especially at the pump, to offer relief. But cutting taxes in the face of constrained supply can

fuel inflation and shift wealth from individuals to large corporations in the form of higher profits. It is also worth noting that the federal price on carbon does not apply in Quebec (the province has had its own carbon-pricing system since 2013).

Instead, the government is instituting structural changes intended to bring down the cost of living in the longer term. Namely, it is moving ahead with national childcare, pharmacare and dental care, all of which will make life more affordable. What's more, this past July the government raised OAS by 10 percent for those 75 and over. It is also enhancing the Canada Workers Benefit to put up to \$2,400 more into the pockets of low-income families. Meanwhile, Bill C-22 paves the way for a new disability benefit. Finally, the government is proposing a tax-free payment of \$500 to low-income renters and to double the GST tax credit for six months.

Long-term care

In 2020, Ottawa invested \$1 billion in a Safe Long-Term Care Fund (\$221 million for Quebec) to protect those in long-term care. This funding was for infection prevention, topping up wages of essential workers and hiring additional staff. The 2021 Budget provided an additional \$3 billion, starting in 2022-23, to support provinces and territories in keeping seniors safe in long-term care. Also, Health Minister Jean-Yves Duclos has been mandated by the Prime Minister to table a Safe Long-Term Care Act to ensure in law that seniors get the care they deserve.

Funds to reduce wait times

In March, Health Minister Jean-Yves Duclos announced the government's commitment to invest \$2 billion (\$450 million for Quebec) to reduce the backlog in surgeries, and other medical procedures, that has accumulated during the pandemic.

National dental care

In Budget 2022, the government committed \$5.3 billion over five years — and \$1.7 billion ongoing — for a national dental care program. This new national program will help those who need it most: families with an annual income less than \$90,000. The program will be available for children under 12 by the end of 2022; expanded to those under 18, seniors and persons living with disabilities in 2023; and fully implemented by 2025.

Canada Disability Benefit

To better support Canadians living with disabilities, the government has introduced Bill C-22, the Canada Disability Benefit Act. Once the act is adopted, Canadians with disabilities aged 19 to 64 will receive a monthly benefit payment modeled on the Guaranteed Income Supplement. In other words, the new benefit will add to existing provincial and territorial benefits and not replace these.

Also, recent legislation was unanimously amended in parliamentary committee to simplify eligibility for the disability tax credit for those with Type 1 Diabetes. These individuals will now be automatically deemed eligible for the tax credit without condition.

Investing in the life sciences

In April, the government finalized a 10-year agreement with Moderna to produce 100 million mRNA vaccine doses per year in Canada (at a plant to be built in the Montreal area) against respiratory viruses, including: COVID-19; seasonal influenza; respiratory syncytial virus (RSV); and other potential respiratory viruses.

In July, the government announced a contract with GlaxoSmithKline to produce 80 million doses of pandemic influenza vaccine doses per year — and a minimum four million seasonal influenza vaccine doses — for publicly-funded programs. The vaccines will be produced at the GSK's Sainte-Foy facility.



Delivering a tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in the House of Commons



At the Saint Anthony Seniors Club Mother's Day luncheon



At the launch of AQVA's (Association québécoise de voile adaptée) sailing season



With members of the Baie d'Urfe Rescue Squad

Greener Homes Initiative

The government has launched two programs to assist Canadians in making their homes (primary residences) more energy-efficient through retrofits: the Greener Homes Loan; and the Greener Homes Grant. Both programs require the homeowner to obtain pre- and post-retrofit EnerGuide evaluations. The government will provide a maximum \$600 contribution toward the cost of these evaluations.

The Greener Homes Grant provides anywhere from \$125 to \$5,000 to cover eligible retrofits. The Greener Homes Loan provides interest-free loans of up to \$40,000, payable over 10 years.

Eligible retrofits include: home insulation; air-sealing; window and door replacement; adding smart thermostats; switching to more energy-efficient space or water heating; installing solar photovoltaic systems; and resiliency measures (e.g. basement waterproofing) combined with energy-efficiency retrofits. Grants and loans are also available to those who live in low-rise multi-unit residential buildings.

Quebec residents must first register through the provincial Rénoclimat program to be eligible.

High-frequency rail

Efficient public transportation is key to economic growth and combating climate change. The federal government is moving ahead with plans to create a high-frequency passenger rail network in partnership with Via Rail, the Canada Infrastructure Bank and the private sector. The electrified network will include communities already served by Via in the Toronto and Quebec City corridor, as well as expand service to Trois-Rivières, Laval, Peterborough, and Jean Lesage Airport in Quebec City. This transportation infrastructure project will include dedicated tracks to reduce delays and allow for faster rolling speeds. In March, the government formally launched a call to the private sector for input on the project design.

The Online Streaming Act

Today, traditional broadcasters are competing for viewers with digital streaming services that offer on-demand programming. For example, a 2020 study by the Media Technology Monitor found that three in five Canadians over 18 use YouTube to listen to music.

While traditional broadcasters must contribute financially to the Canada Media Fund, which finances and promotes the production of Canadian content, digital streaming platforms, mostly foreign-owned, have not been required to do so. Bill C-11, the Online Streaming Act, adopted by the House of Commons on June 21, will require certain digital streaming services to contribute financially to Canadian content creation in the same way as traditional broadcasters. This will level the competitive playing field while at the same time help support Canadian culture.

Bill C-11 has been the subject of significant misinformation. Once adopted by the Senate, the bill will only apply to platforms — namely web giants — and not to users of social media or creators like those who produce podcasts.



At a press conference on Budget 2022 with Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland



At the official opening of the new John Abbott College Library



Speaking at Montreal's 22nd Ukrainian Festival



With House Speaker Anthony Rota and members of the Lac-Saint-Louis Youth Council

Gun control

In addition to banning 1,500 types of assault-style firearms and committing to a mandatory buy-back program for these weapons, the government is also acting on handguns.

Bill C-21, introduced in May, would impose a national freeze on the sale, purchase, transfer, and importation of handguns. The aim is to freeze the pool of domestic handguns that can be stolen or make their way into the black market through what are known as “straw purchases” (sales to those not eligible to own). In August, the government used a temporary regulatory measure to ban the importation of handguns while awaiting the bill’s coming into force.

While it is true that a great many handguns used in crimes in Canada are smuggled from the U.S., some experts have attested that diversion — a process by which legal guns turn into illegal guns, largely through theft — is an important factor related to the availability of crime guns in this country.

Bill C-21 would also institute “red flag” and “yellow flag” laws allowing for emergency weapons prohibitions and temporary firearms-licence suspensions in specific individual cases.



At the announcement of federal funding for the redevelopment of Beaconsfield’s Briarwood Park



Taking a knee in Valois Park on the anniversary of the death of George Floyd

Canada Summer Jobs

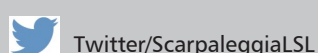
The Canada Summer Jobs program provides wage subsidies to employers — not-for-profit groups, private-sector organizations with 50 or fewer full-time employees, and public-sector institutions — to create quality summer work experiences for young people aged 15 to 30 years. The call for applications from employers occurs around the month of December. If your organization is not currently on our e-mail list but would like to be in order to receive updates about the program, please send us an email with “Canada Summer Jobs” in the subject line. This past summer, the 116 employers in Lac-Saint-Louis were offered a total \$1.7 million in hiring subsidies for 503 positions.



Attending the annual St-Tropez summer street party

Stay in touch

The number of avenues for communication between citizens and their elected representatives has greatly increased. This is a good thing: it is only through open dialogue that politicians can get to know their constituents’ priorities and link these to the business of government. My Facebook page — and Twitter account — are important vehicles for obtaining your feedback on those issues that matter to you. They also allow me to keep you informed of my activities.



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