



April 8, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.  
Deputy Prime Minister and Chair of the Cabinet Committee on COVID-19  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

The Honourable Bill Morneau, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Finance  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister Morneau,

On behalf of the Green Budget Coalition, we would like to acknowledge and thank the government for its extraordinary efforts to protect Canadians' health and well-being in response to the COVID-19 crisis. We are writing to provide input on how the government can align needed stimulus measures with core environmental objectives to maximize benefits to Canadians in these unprecedented times and beyond.

We are compelled by the words of the Acting Director General of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Dr. Grethel Aguilar:

This pandemic is a stark reminder of how our economies and societies are interdependent, and how the well-being of humans, other living beings, and ecosystems, are deeply connected. Only a healthy planet can support healthy people. Once this situation passes, humanity will be called to reflect on its relationship with nature and redouble its commitment to safeguarding the natural world and rebuilding a healthy and equitable planet for all.

While the immediate priority is protecting public health and providing urgently needed financial and social assistance to Canadian families and businesses, it is also important to consider the next steps in Canada's response to COVID-19 in the context of the unrelenting concurrent crises that threaten our well-being in the long term: the climate emergency and the precipitous decline in biodiversity largely driven by habitat loss.

Large-scale financial interventions designed with climate, ecosystem, social and economic resilience in mind will improve Canadians' well-being in the wake of the pandemic, not only in economic terms, but also in terms of the health, social and environmental benefits of reduced GHG emissions, employment in a more equitable and sustainable economy, and flourishing biodiversity.

Many of the Green Budget Coalition's *Recommendations for Budget 2020*<sup>1</sup> can help maintain momentum toward a low-carbon economy and protecting biodiversity now, and can be scaled up to employ tens of thousands of Canadians while charting a course to recovery that transforms the Canadian economy to be more sustainable and resilient. Some prime areas for investment are:

- Green built infrastructure (e.g., electrified public transit, First Nations water infrastructure, zero-emission vehicles);
- Natural infrastructure and nature-based solutions (e.g., wetlands, grasslands, trees and forests) — including ratcheting up investments in existing habitat restoration and protection programs;
- Building energy efficiency — investing in training and retrofits;
- Renewable energy, including:
  - Community energy — mobilizing investment to finance community renewable energy projects, including in low-income and vulnerable communities.
  - Financial support to help renewable energy and clean technology companies survive the COVID-19 economic slow-down and maintain momentum.

Other relevant opportunities outlined in the Green Budget Coalition's *Recommendations* document include clean shipping, environmentally sustainable agriculture, enforcement of pollution-prevention laws, water monitoring, zero-waste business investment, and fisheries data collection, monitoring, and gear innovation.

We also stress the importance of maintaining existing programs and international commitments, as well as a robust regulatory framework, with respect to environmental protection and biodiversity conservation.

To summarize and elaborate on the above, while the government continues to take needed actions to address the current health and economic crises, we encourage you to design the next phases of stimulus to:

- Nurture a sustainable and equitable economy that creates jobs while advancing the path to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and protecting biodiversity;

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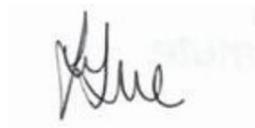
<sup>1</sup> <https://greenbudget.ca/2020recommendations/>

- Support affected workers and communities, including those currently dependent on the fossil fuel sector, while maintaining Canada’s stated commitment to phase out fossil fuel subsidies and transition to a clean energy economy;
- Accelerate efforts to reverse the decline in biodiversity through additive investments to protect and restore land and marine habitat; and
- Embrace the principle that all people and communities are entitled to equal protection of environmental laws and regulations.

Leveraging investments in this way can provide much-needed livelihoods across Canada while accelerating the transition to an innovative, cleaner economy — a down payment for health, well-being and economic and environmental sustainability in the long run.

Should you be interested in further information or discussion, please contact Green Budget Coalition Manager Andrew Van Iterson, at [avaniterson@naturecanada.ca](mailto:avaniterson@naturecanada.ca) or 613-296-3263.

Yours sincerely,



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Senior Research and Analyst, Science and Policy  
David Suzuki Foundation  
Co-Chair, Green Budget Coalition



David Browne  
Director of Conservation  
Canadian Wildlife Federation  
Co-Chair, Green Budget Coalition

Cc. The Hon. Andrew Scheer, P.C., M.P., Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada  
Mr. Yves-François Blanchet, M.P., Leader of the Bloc Québécois  
Mr. Jagmeet Singh, M.P., Leader of the New Democratic Party  
Ms. Jo-Ann Roberts, Interim Leader of the Green Party

***About the Green Budget Coalition:*** *The Green Budget Coalition, active since 1999, brings together 22 of Canada’s leading environmental organizations, collectively with over one million members, supporters and volunteers, to present an analysis of the most pressing issues regarding environmental sustainability in Canada and to make a consolidated annual set of recommendations to the federal government regarding strategic fiscal and budgetary opportunities.*