



Green Budget Coalition:

A Unique Asset of Canada's Environmental Community

**by Andrew Van Iterson – Manager, Green Budget Coalition
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Presentation Overview

- Green Budget Coalition
 - Who we are
 - What we do – annual GBC cycle
 - Successes & Strengths
 - Lessons Learned
 - Challenges
 - 2017 Budget Recommendations



GBC membership





Inception 1999



Mission

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.



Ecological Fiscal Reform (EFR)

Ensuring market prices

accurately reflect the true value of the required resources, today and in future,

as well as the full costs and benefits to the environment and human health associated with their development, production, transportation, sale, use and disposal.

- Tools: taxes, fees, rebates, credits, subsidy removal.



GBC Structure

- Consensus decision-making
- Caucuses:
 - Nature Conservation
 - Climate Change & Energy Sustainability
 - Healthy Communities (water, toxics, First Nations communities)
- Funding
- Host org: Nature Canada



GBC's Annual Cycle (part 1)

- April/May – Annual meeting –
 - Assess past year,
 - Identify and prioritize recommendations (within caucuses) and strategy for next budget
 - Address GBC leadership and finances
- April - August
 - Develop detailed recommendations
 - Liaise informally with departments.
- Sept – Compile & circulate preliminary recommendations widely across federal government.



GBC's Annual Cycle (part 2)

- September - October:
 - Meet w Deputy Ministers and Finance officials to discuss recommendations and hear feedback/advice
 - Present to House of Commons Finance Committee
 - Finalize document, translate, lay out, print.
- November:
 - Release final document/send widely across government.
 - Meet with Ministers, political staff, PMO, PCO Clerk, MPs from all parties, senior Finance staff



GBC's Annual Cycle (part 3)

- Dec-Feb: Specific issue follow-up
- February/March: Coordinate around budget.
- (Apr/May – AGM)
- [*Year-round – Fund-raise*]



Overall Budget Success

➤ Annual progress.

- **Over \$25 billion** allocated to environmental initiatives, and
- Strategic advances on ecological fiscal reform.
- *for example:*
 - Budget 2016 included funding for green infrastructure, marine protected areas, national parks, public transit, First Nations housing and water infrastructure, energy efficiency, renewable energy (and more);
 - 2013: Funding for marine conservation, Natural Areas Conservation Program, First Nations infrastructure, ongoing infrastructure plan, SDTC, and two subsidy reductions;
 - 2007, 2011, 2012, 2013: Reductions in subsidies to fossil fuels and/or mining.



Government Relations Success

Developed high level of access to MP's and senior government officials, particularly within Environment & Finance Canada.

- Meet annually with the PMO, the Clerk, Ministers, DMs, and other key MPs.
- Met with most Finance Ministers.
- Received testimonial letters from all major opposition party leaders, 3 DM's, and a former Prime Minister.



Internal Strength

Continues as a unique, cohesive coalition:

- Operates smoothly, on a consensus basis, with a high level of mutual trust, and few internal rules.
- Active participation across spectrum of Canada's leading environmental and conservation groups.
- Provides unique forum in which Canada's major ENGO's work together for common objectives.
- Agreed to prioritize 3-6 recommendations per budget.



Internal Strength II – Co-benefits

- Provides forum to seek consensus and share expertise amongst ENGOs, including where diverging approaches exist within and across caucuses (e.g., use of Carbon-pricing revenues)
- Forum for discussing unexpected events notable to ENGOs, e.g., elections.
- Nurtures cooperation and relationships amongst ENGO staff, including offshoot coalitions & networks.
- Informal training forum.



Affirmations

The Director of Global Policy Forum Europe, Jens Martens, after conducting a study of sustainability budgeting efforts worldwide, wrote in 2014 that,

- “[d]uring our research, we could not find any other initiative [than Canada’s Green Budget Coalition] that works in a similar way towards environmentally sensitive budgets, combining technical expertise, political savvy and actually tangible results anywhere.”

The GBC's annual document of budget recommendations was previously described at the House of Commons Finance Committee by Thomas Mulcair as "*remarkable work*" and the document "*to read to understand the future*".



Positive government feedback

- Valuable
- Comprehensive, detailed document
 - Year-round resource
- Effective
- Constructive



Lessons, Challenges...



Lessons - Importance of...

- Persistence
- Government relationships
- Complementary efforts from individual ENGO's, bureaucrats, MPs, political staff, Finance, & - ideally - the public.
- Balancing annual budget focus with building support for long-term objectives, framing do-able asks towards longer-term objectives.



Lessons Learned - II

- Prioritizing recommendations
- Government's resistance to introducing new fees & taxes, vs. its openness to spending
- Year-round opportunities
- Communications:
 - Importance and challenge of speaking with one voice
 - Challenge of Budget Day



Challenges/Opportunities for Improvement

1. Internal funding/sustainability
2. More extensive modeling & economic analysis of our recommendations
3. Getting sufficient political attention for nature recommendations (a reversal)
4. Analysis of budget measures implementation
5. Comprehensive EA of full budget
6. Mobilizing public support



2017 Budget Recommendations

Nature conservation

- **Direct 30% of green infrastructure funding to natural infrastructure options**, and 10% of annual funding from the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate to help Canada's ecosystems adapt to climate change,
- **Take strategic, nation-wide, multi-year conservation action in three areas:**
 - **Terrestrial protected areas** – Expand and better protect our terrestrial protected areas system,
 - **Working landscapes** – Expand measures to conserve unique and ecologically significant wildlife habitat, and to ensure ecological connectivity,
 - **Oceans and fisheries** – Fulfill Canada's commitments to reach and exceed international marine protection targets, and to ensure ocean health and sustainable fisheries,



2017 Budget Recommendations (2)

Climate/Energy:

- **Implement a well-designed, pan-Canadian carbon price**, starting at a price level that respects the social cost of carbon, with appreciable annual increases for several years, and revenues directed towards: compensating low-income and other vulnerable individuals and families; supporting emission reductions and clean economic growth; and supporting adaptation to climate change, including natural solutions,
- **Phase-out exploration and development subsidies to the fossil fuel industry**

Healthy communities – Freshwater:

- **Renew important freshwater programs sunseting in March 2017**, and invest in improving the quality, comprehensiveness and accessibility of freshwater monitoring data.



2017 Recommendations - Nature

Terrestrial Protected Areas:

The GBC recommends that the federal government invest \$10 million per year for five years for Parks Canada to lead the development, and coordinate implementation, of a pan-Canadian action plan to protect at least 17% of land and inland waters by 2020, and to identify long-term priorities for protection beyond 2020. This initiative should be conducted in collaboration with Canadian Wildlife Service, provincial, territorial and Indigenous governments, and non-governmental organizations.

The GBC also recommends a further investment of \$85 million per year, on-going, plus a one-time \$50 million investment to Parks Canada and Environment Canada to:

- Create at least six new national parks and three new national wildlife areas by 2020, and identify additional new areas for protection through science and traditional knowledge-based plans; and
- Strengthen management of all national parks, national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries to better protect their ecological integrity.



2017 Recommendations - Nature

National Indigenous Guardians Network

- The GBC supports the Indigenous-led proposal to the federal government to invest in a national Indigenous Guardians Network.

Required Investment

- For 2017/2018 - \$26 million
Ongoing – \$500 million over five years (including 2017/2018 expenditures) to support a National Indigenous Guardians Network and create an associated funding program for community-based Indigenous guardians.



2017 Recommendations - Nature

Working Landscapes:

1. Land management and stewardship - this program includes incentives to donate, maintain or restore lost or degraded habitats to provide long term ecological goods and services. This includes matching financial supports for particularly threatened ecosystems such as wetlands, grasslands, and threatened southern forest ecosystems.

Investment Required:

For 2017/18	\$75 million
Ongoing	\$75 million for 4 years (\$375 million total)

2. Biodiversity conservation, including areas of federal responsibility such as migratory bird conservation, freshwater fisheries, invasive species management, and pollinator conservation

Investment Required

For 2017/18: \$21 million (\$5 million bird conservation, \$4 million invasive plant management, \$12 million pollinator conservation)

Ongoing: \$17 million/year over 4 years (\$5 million/year migratory bird conservation, \$12 million pollinator conservation)



2017 Recommendations - Nature

Working Landscapes (contd)

3. Enhancing and Improving Existing Federal Conservation Programs – The

GBC recommends that the Government of Canada enhance existing conservation programs by providing additional funding for the Natural Areas Conservation Program, the Habitat Stewardship Program, the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk, the National Wetland Conservation Fund, and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

a) Natural Areas Conservation Program

For 2017/18	\$22.5 million committed plus \$10 million new
For 2018/19	\$22.5 million committed plus \$10 million new
Ongoing	\$185 million over 5 years (\$205 million total over 7 years)

b) Habitat Stewardship Program and Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk

For 2017/18	\$7 million/year (\$5 million HSP, \$2 million AFSR)
Ongoing	\$7 million/year for 4 years (\$35 million total)

c) National Wetland Conservation Fund

For 2017/18	\$8 million
Ongoing:	\$8 million/year for 4 years (\$40 million total)

d) North American Waterfowl Management Plan

For 2017/18	\$2 million
Ongoing	\$2 million/year for 4 years (\$10 million total)



2017 Recommendations - Oceans

Recommendation Summary

Long-term, stable funding is necessary to support fulfillment of Canada's domestic and international commitments to ocean conservation, and to restore federal leadership for integrated, ecosystem-based ocean management. Achieving successful co-management of Canada's oceans requires investment in governance structures and marine planning, while the completion of Canada's national network of marine protected areas is in need of funding across relevant departments and agencies. Recently restored science funding must be upheld, and additional funding is recommended to fully implement Canada's suite of fisheries management policies and legislation.

Investment Required:

- For 2017/18: **\$146 million**
- Ongoing: **\$146 million per year for five years**



Outlook

- Members – increasingly engaged
 - Interest for new members
- Budget 2017 –
 - Optimistic, though less than Budget 2016
 - Government seems highly climate-focused,
 - Hopeful re reducing fossil fuel subsidies, and for renewed freshwater funding;
 - Opportunities in existing infrastructure and climate funds, i.e., natural infrastructure;





Thanks!