



Toronto and Vancouver, October 20th, 2020

The Honorable Marie-Claude Bibeau MP
Minister of Agriculture

The Honorable Jonathan Wilkinson MP
Minister of the Environment and Climate Change

Regarding \$10 billion for 100,000 nature jobs

Dear Ministers Bibeau and Wilkinson,

Following our previous correspondence describing Nature Based Solutions for a green and just recovery,¹ we are writing to ask that you move forward with an ambitious “nature jobs” agenda to help address the current economic, health and environmental challenges Canadians are facing.

Specifically, we are asking that your government invest at least \$10 billion to create at least 100,000 nature jobs in the Fall economic update.

Unfortunately from our perspective, a number of lacklustre environmental policies and promises from the 2019 election platform were recycled in the recent Throne Speech, underscoring a disappointing lack of progress on the environment. Over the last few weeks, we have also heard a host of dirty and concerning false solutions including expanding fracking (natural gas), commercial energy from forests, maintaining our dependency on fossil fuel-derived plastics over reuse systems and rolling out risky nuclear reactors. The federal government has also just announced a \$320M bailout of Canada’s offshore oil industry.

In contrast, investing in nature jobs would deliver extensive social, economic and environmental benefits.² The government of New Zealand, for example, has committed to investing CAN \$1 billion to create at least 10,000 nature jobs as part of their response to Covid-19 and the parallel ecological crisis.³ New Zealand's population and GDP are around one eighth the size of Canada's, for comparison.

Jobs created under the Government of New Zealand’s programme include restoring wetlands and other natural ecosystems, protecting forests, stabilising river banks, controlling invasive species and conserving wildlife habitat. The funding will support employment across New Zealand and intends to “accelerate regional economic recovery and advance national and regional environmental priorities.”⁴

Here in Canada, your government has committed to protecting 30% of our lands, oceans and freshwaters by 2030 in order to tackle the “interdependent crises of biodiversity loss and

¹ <https://storage.googleapis.com/planet4-canada-stateless/2020/07/541cbcf3-wilkinson-critics-nature-based-solutions-letter.pdf>

² https://academic.oup.com/oxrep/article/36/Supplement_1/S359/5832003

³ <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/11-billion-investment-create-11000-environment-jobs-our-regions>

⁴ Ibid.



ecosystem degradation and climate change.”⁵ Achieving this urgent national priority will require significant resource mobilisation and job creation.

Such jobs could include protecting forests and peatlands, restoring wetlands, rebuilding shorelines, replanting native tree species, restoring fish habitat and removing invasive species. Nature jobs benefiting local communities could further involve environmental monitoring, ecosystem service accounting and recovering abandoned or polluting fishing gear and ocean debris. In cities and towns all across Canada there is tremendous potential for job creation in growing our urban canopies, parks and food forests, with a focus on those communities most in need.⁶

An investment in nature jobs could also support farmers transitioning to regenerative/organic practices,⁷ for example through fencing and replanting of streams, wetlands and marginal land in and around existing farmlands or ingenerating trees (agroecology) into farms.

Article 8(j) of the *United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity*, to which Canada is a signatory, recognizes Indigenous knowledge as a system of thinking and original science of the land in its own right. This knowledge needs to be integrated holistically and widely, with adequate funding for Indigenous Peoples to engage equally and as decision-makers in all land-use planning processes. Indigenous protected and conserved areas (IPCAs) would be a perfect target for public funding and job creation.

Regarding the government’s 2 billion trees commitment, it is essential to note that planting trees is no substitute for protecting intact forests.⁸ Rather than monoculture plantations to be logged in a few years’ time, this programme should exclusively be used to protect and restore natural forests. Trees for the logging industry are not nature jobs.

In addition to these nature jobs, we also recommend ambitious and targeted financial support for Canadian farmers decarbonising our economy by shifting to organic and plant-based food production, as well as for Indigenous and urban agriculture initiatives supporting local food security and sovereignty with a focus on BIPOC-led projects.

Where spending is expected to create a significant number of jobs, we want to see those jobs created in an intentional and planned fashion so that they support a just transition for resource-dependent or single industry communities, and target employment for marginalized groups who are often excluded or who have been especially impacted by the Covid crisis (e.g. women, racialized communities, Indigenous people, youth).

We look forward to discussing these recommendations in detail with your offices and staff.

Sincerely,

⁵ https://www.leaderspledgefornature.org/Leaders_Pledge_for_Nature_27.09.20.pdf

⁶ Access to shade is often unequal, e.g. https://twitter.com/faisal_moola/status/792068861310930946

⁷ <https://globalnews.ca/news/7378381/nitrous-oxide-climate-change-fertilizer/>

⁸ <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/368/6491/580>



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah King".

Sarah King
Head of Oceans and Plastic
Greenpeace Canada

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shane Moffatt".

Shane Moffatt
Head of Nature and Food
Greenpeace Canada

CC:

Marlo Reynolds, Chief of Staff, Environment and Climate Change Canada

Kelly Torck, Acting Director General for Environment and Climate Change Canada

Niall O'Dea, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Canadian Wildlife Service at Environment and Climate Change Canada

Laurel Collins, NDP Environment Critic

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Alistair MacGregor, NDP Agriculture Critic

Monique Pauzé, Bloc Québécois Environment Critic

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Elizabeth May, Green Party