



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Mike Morrice

Member of Parliament
Kitchener Centre

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

January 29, 2024

Dear Minister Freeland,

In advance of the upcoming Budget 2024, I'm writing you today on behalf of folks in Kitchener Centre to raise three critical priorities:

1. Funding the Canada Disability Benefit

With the Canada Disability Benefit Act having unanimously passed into law last June, I continue to urgently encourage you to adequately fund the Canada Disability Benefit at a level that will support the diverse needs of Canadians with disabilities. As I mentioned in this same priority list last year: Canadians with disabilities continue to disproportionately live in poverty in Canada. After years of delay, Canadians expect the benefit to be funded and delivered.

This benefit must meet its intended purpose to alleviate the financial burden associated with medical expenses, specialized equipment, accessible housing, and reduced earnings at a level that is above the poverty line and is accessible through a barrier-free application process. By doing so, the government can significantly contribute to reducing poverty in Canada, enhancing the quality of life for Canadians with disabilities, and fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

2. Doubling social housing and addressing the financialization of housing

Homes should be places people live, not commodities for investors to trade. Yet continued under-investments in social housing and incentives for corporate investors commodifying our housing are fueling the housing crisis facing for Canadians.

I encourage you to invest in at least doubling the social housing stock in Canada, and to put in place a package of measures that would address the financialization of housing. I put forward one example of this last September in Motion 71: an end to the unfair tax exemptions that real estate investment trusts (REITs) currently enjoy. Since tabling this motion, the PBO costed the measure, showing it would generate over \$300 million over 5 years to be reinvested in the affordable housing our communities need.

3. Applying the Canada Recovery Dividend to oil and gas companies

Finally, to help address affordability issues from coast to coast to coast, I urge the Government of Canada to move forward with a windfall tax on the fossil fuel industry's excess profits - as this government has already applied to the banking and life insurance industries through the Canada Recovery Dividend.

This measure aligns with the urgent need to address the economic challenges faced by Canadians, hold major polluters accountable, and contribute to essential initiatives for responding to the climate crisis. Recent analysis from the PBO shows that a 15% tax on profits exceeding \$1 billion would generate \$4.2 billion on 2022 profits alone. This revenue could be directed to proven climate solutions that would help Canadians with the rising cost of living, like expanding the Greener Homes Grant program, expanding programs to fund heat pumps, and investments in public transit.

Fossil fuels are recognized as the largest contributors to climate change, and the oil and gas industry bears a significant responsibility for the climate crisis that has already cost communities and the economy billions. Implementing a windfall tax on excess profits of the fossil fuel industry is not only a moral imperative but also an economic one.

I would be glad to discuss any of the above further with you and members of your team. Thanks for the work you do in service of Canadians.

Sincerely,



Mike Morrice,
MP for Kitchener Centre

Cc: Rachel Bendayan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance