House of Commons
Chambre des communes
Canada

House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance – Pre-budget Consultations 2013

This brief is submitted by:

(•) **an organization** **Organization name:** Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada

or

( ) **an individual** **Name:** _____

Topic: Health

*Recommendation 1: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

That the federal government, as part of a comprehensive approach to achieving healthy weights, introduce a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages and use some of the revenues generated from this tax to fund healthy living initiatives.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

$10 million-$99.9 million

Immediately

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

For example, if the federal government implemented a tax five cents per litre of sugar-sweetened beverages, it would generate estimated revenues of $40 million dollars annually. This revenue could then be reinvested in heath promotion. Either a sales or excise tax could be applied to SSBs. An excise tax could be made visible to consumers at point of purchase and would be easier to implement versus a sales tax. A tax on SSBs is an important component within a multi-pronged, comprehensive approach to address SSB consumption, obesity and chronic disease prevention.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

All individuals across Canada would benefit from this new tax on sugar-sweetened beverages, particularly children. It is estimated that obesity costs the Canadian health care system and economy $30 billion annually. A tax on SSBs could be used to help offset the cost/price of healthier foods and drinks, such as vegetables and fruit and low-fat non-flavoured milk. The tax could also help to offset the costs of SSB related health care costs.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Strong evidence supports the association between the consumption of SSBs and the development of childhood obesity. Evidence suggests that children who consumed SSBs between meals from the ages of 2.5 and 4.5 years of age were twice as likely to be overweight compared to children who did not consume SSBs. The consumption of SSBs has also been linked to dental caries among young children. Generally, SSB consumption increases the risk of obesity and associated risks, particularly diabetes, heart disease, stroke, arthritis and cancer.

Topic: Health

Recommendation 2: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

That the federal government establish inter-departmental and federal/provincial/territorial policies to reduce poverty and food insecurity and continue to support and improve the Nutrition North Canada program to ensure affordable pricing of nutritious foods in remote northern locations. A recent report notes that in 2011, 1.6 million Canadian households, or slightly more than 12%, experienced some level of food insecurity. This amounts to nearly one in eight households, and 3.9 million individuals in Canada, including 1.1 million children.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

unknown

Please select from the drop down menu

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

Continue to support and improve the Nutrition North Canada program to ensure affordable pricing of nutritious foods in remote and northern locations. Provide financial, research and policy support to foster growth of local food procurement initiatives and the improvement of food distribution networks that increase access to healthy food, particularly for those living in remote locations.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

Implementing this recommendation will assist those living in remote and northern locations, especially children. A number of studies have shown that low income households do not have enough income to pay for the basic costs of living, including the cost of a nutritious food basket. Healthy eating is also a key element in human development and health throughout life, from prenatal and early childhood to later life stages.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Lack of access to a sufficient quantity of food has extremely important health, economic and social consequences. People who are food insecure eat diets with less variety, consume lower amounts of fruits and vegetables and are more likely to suffer from malnutrition. Efforts to improve food security for remote and lower-income Canadians should address lack of income as well as food pricing and physical access to nutritious foods.

Topic: Health

Recommendation 3: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

That the federal government establish, as part of the new Building Canada Plan, a $250 million infrastructure fund (distributed over three years) that supports active transportation.

Active transportation includes walking, cycling, all other forms of non-motorized transportation and public transit. Examples of infrastructure that supports active transportation (this is not a complete list) include sidewalks, walking paths, cycle tracks, bike paths, paved shoulders, crosswalks, appropriate street lighting, public rest areas, and accessible public transit.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

$1 billion or more

5 or more years

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

Funding for active transportation infrastructure could be allocated from within the Gas Tax stream of the new Building Canada Plan's Community Improvement Fund. Alternatively, funding could come from within the Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Component of the new Building Canada Plan.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

Canadians of all ages would benefit from funding for active transportation. Municipalities that invest in active transportation would also benefit greatly from this funding. Overall benefits related to active transportation include the following:

• Improved local economies (e.g. from increased retail revenue in pedestrian/cycle friendly areas, increased property values, and tourism)
• Improved overall physical and mental health
• Improved safety (particularly for children and older people)
• Reduction in health care costs
• increased workplace productivity

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Availability of active transportation routes will improve the health of Canadians and decrease pollution with less people using cars as their primary mode of transportation.

Major improvements will be made to the health of Canadians as a result of increased physical activity and improved and dedicated safe transportation routes.

Air pollution will be reduced as more Canadians would choose to engage in active transportation if it was more widely available to them.

Please use this page if you wish to provide more explanation about your recommendation(s).

The Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada (CDPAC) is a network of national organizations who share a common vision for an integrated system of research, surveillance, policies, and programs for maintaining health and prevention of chronic disease in Canada. CDPAC's mission is to foster and help sustain a country-wide movement towards an integrated, population health approach for the prevention of chronic diseases through knowledge for action.

Obesity levels among adults and children in Canada are at historically high levels. Obesity has been linked to the development of chronic diseases with overweight and obesity estimated to cost the Canadian health system and economy $30 billion annually and chronic diseases around $93 billion annually. It is widely recognized that in order to effectively address obesity and chronic diseases a multi-pronged, multi-sectoral and whole-of-society approach to achieving healthy weights is required. To that end, CDPAC has called for restrictions on the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to children, increased education, action on food security and community design that facilitates active living. The reality is that SSBs are in a class of their own, they are a discrete category with virtually no health benefits or nutritional value - providing only empty calories, low satiety, incomplete compensation for total energy - with a very strong evidence of harm and high consumption rates. And they are easy to define, unlike some less healthy food and beverage choices. It's time for policy makers to take action.

With regard to food insecurity, a lack of access to a sufficient quantity of healthy food has extremely important health, economic and social consequences. Access to healthy food is, therefore, acknowledged as a universal human right. While Canada is among the most advanced and economically prosperous countries in world, not all Canadians have sufficient access to affordable, healthy food. People who are food insecure eat diets with less variety, consume lower amounts of fruits and vegetables, are more likely to have micronutrient deficiencies and are more likely to suffer from malnutrition. Furthermore, low socio-economic status has been linked to the consumption of higher amounts of unhealthy food, for example, fatty meats, refined grains, and added fats. Food insecurity is associated with a wide variety of health problems including increased rates of heart disease and other illnesses, including adult obesity, type 2 diabetes and poor mental health. In addition, lack of access to healthy food has particularly negative consequences for children. These include anemia, weight loss, infections and difficulty in concentration and performance at school, all of which have potentially very important long term health and social consequences.

CDPAC also fully supports the Active Transportation Coalition's efforts to get federal funding to support active transportation for Canadians.

*Please note that at least one recommendation must be provided