

Opening Remarks: Minister O'Regan EN  
RNNR Committee  
June 1, 2022

**Good afternoon, Mr. President, members of the committee**

**I speak to you from my riding of St. John's, on the island of Newfoundland, which is the traditional territory of the Beothuk.**

**Thank you for inviting me here today to discuss my work in the just transition to a low carbon economy.**

**An important part of this work is ensuring that Canada's workers have what they need to succeed.**

**Over the past two years, we have invested considerable funds in training employees and in our companies to prepare them to create these sustainable jobs.**

**This includes more than \$1 billion in workforce training and support for workers, especially in sectors in transition. As we highlighted in Budget 2022 and the Emissions Reduction Plan, this is a big step forward.**

**In the coming year, the government proposes to invest \$2.5 million to launch a union-led consultative table. It will provide advice on priority investments that will help workers cope with changes in the labor market, particularly those working in jobs or working in at-risk sectors.**

**The term Just Transition can evoke strong emotions for some workers, especially those in the energy sector who may have had families in the oil field for generations. For some workers, these jobs are all they've known. And to get this right, we have to recognize that "just transition" isn't just about making sure no one is left behind - its about acknowledging the role that workers will play in leading our energy transition.**

**While we are in the consultation process, the feedback we receive will inform our decisions on what action to take for the climate. We will also ensure that marginalized groups such as racialized Canadians, women and youth have access to new jobs and opportunities.**

**Worker, union, employer and community councils will guide our work, as will the meetings we have had with stakeholders, provinces, territories and Indigenous groups.**

**Our goal is to make sure we're doing it right for the workers who will be critical to Canada's success in this area. They are at the heart of this project. We cannot ignore them, and Mr. President, we will not.**

**In order to help Canadians meet the changing needs of industry and transition to a low-carbon economy, Employment and Social Development Canada has recently completed a Call for Proposals for the new Sectoral Workforce Solutions Program.**

**The program will help workers train and develop. Employers and in particular small and medium-sized enterprises will be able to attract and retain a qualified workforce.**

**A significant part of this funding will be invested in projects that focus on training people for the jobs that we will need to build up renewables and use new technology to reduce emissions. It will support workforce development needs in sectors that are involved in protecting the environment, oceanic or aquatic ecosystems, and sectors involved in managing natural resources and/or contributing to the low-**

**carbon economy. This is all part of Canada's Climate Action Plan and Just Transition.**

**We're also looking at regional tools and opportunities that will help support the transition to a low-carbon future.**

**Here in Newfoundland and Labrador, new market opportunities are being pursued for offshore renewables, and clean fuels. This oil-producing province is building its workforce and energy systems to capitalize on emerging opportunities that will support a low-carbon economy.**

**We'll continue to support provinces and territories as they create jobs and drive economic growth across the country.**

**The point is that a low-carbon economy is both a necessity and an extraordinary opportunity for long-term prosperity—but without workers, there is no transition. In fact, they will lead it.**

**OK, I think I'll leave it there, I now look forward to questions.**