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Nominated Federal Candidate
Leeds-Grenville

Brockville, Ontario,
February 17, 2010

The Honourable James M. Flaherty, P.C., M.P., Minister of Finance
Finance Canada,
140 O'Connor St.
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G5

Dear Minister:

Please find attached the results of citizens' consultations in the federal constituency of Leeds and Grenville. Because the traditional Finance Committee pre-budget hearings were not held, I decided to provide opportunities for members of the public in this constituency to come out and provide their advice.

Meetings were held in Gananoque, Brockville and Kemptville and approximately 175 person-hours of discussions have been documented in the "As it was said" report, which I have attached. The following are the key ideas citizens of Leeds and Grenville would like you to consider for our next budget.

- People were emphatic that the **eligibility requirements for EI and CPP are outmoded**, and not in sync with our workforce. Full time, long term jobs are no longer the norm, whereas self-employment, multiple part time jobs, and contract work are increasingly common. A major re-think of the way workers access these key elements of the social safety net is called for.
- People also want our **system of pensions to be strengthened, and existing pension plans to be protected**.
- People want to see leadership and **stronger action to reduce greenhouse gasses, including restricting industrial emissions, incentives for green technologies** and a better public transportation system. The message overall was that Canada's track record on climate change action is shameful – "yes we have to harmonize with the U.S. to some extent, but we should be leading the way, not lagging behind".
- People were concerned that the manufacturing jobs lost in the cities and towns of Eastern Ontario will not be replaced, resulting in the younger generation moving away and resulting in a downward spiral. **More help is needed for SME start-ups and to attract investment to small cities and towns**.
- People were concerned about the level of student debt, and furthermore felt the prospect of this debt is a significant barrier to young people seeking higher

education. Younger people and retirees alike feel that the **level of student debt at graduation is unacceptable and more generous financing is needed**. As one adult participant said “they will have to pay for our health care and our pensions, we should pay for their education”.

In addition to these five key messages, participants expressed satisfaction with the health care they are receiving, were concerned about un-fair trade, expressed a desire to buy more locally-produced goods (especially food) and supported expanded daycare services as well as transportation options for seniors no longer able to drive.

The discussions were thoughtful and forward-looking – and represented consultations at their best.

I would appreciate it if you would consider these recommendations and provide a response to the citizens of Leeds and Grenville.

Sincerely

M. Loveys

Attach