



SOCIETY *of*
UNITED PROFESSIONALS
IFPTE 160

CANADIAN FEDERAL BUDGET SUBMISSION

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE
SOCIETY OF UNITED PROFESSIONALS

FEBRUARY 18, 2021

INTRODUCTION

The Society of United Professionals (“the Society”), Local 160 of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, is a union of more than 8,000 professionals working in the public, private, regulatory and not-for-profit sectors. Our members are engineers, legal aid lawyers, scientists, accountants and more. Decisions put forward in the Government of Canada’s annual budget can have a direct impact on the working conditions of the majority of the Society’s membership that work in the broader public sector, and will have a direct impact on the lives of all the Society’s members and their families.

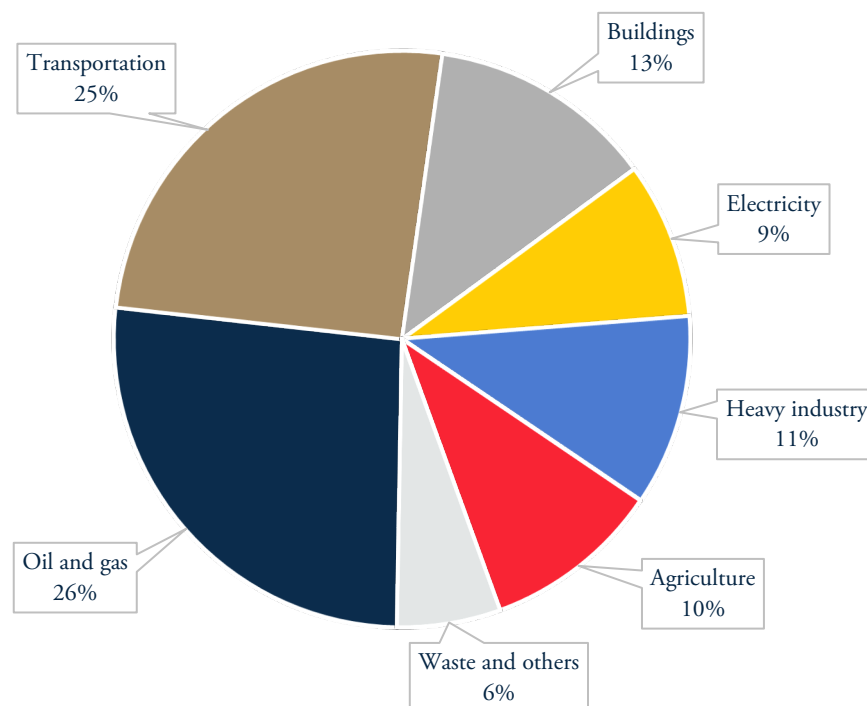
The Society believes the 2021 Federal budget should address the following priorities:

ELECTRIFY THE RECOVERY AND INVEST IN LOW-CARBON POWER

While Canada’s most urgent need lies in addressing the ongoing Covid-19 crisis, the 2021-22 budget provides the federal government with an opportunity to make investments that will provide needed economic stimulus during the recovery, while also reducing carbon emissions and helping meet our climate targets, including net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The transportation sector contributes 25% of Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions. Supporting a shift towards electrification in transportation is a necessary action in the country’s fight against climate change, while also providing a crucial boost to the nation’s manufacturing sector during the economic recovery.

GHG EMISSIONS BY SECTOR, CANADA



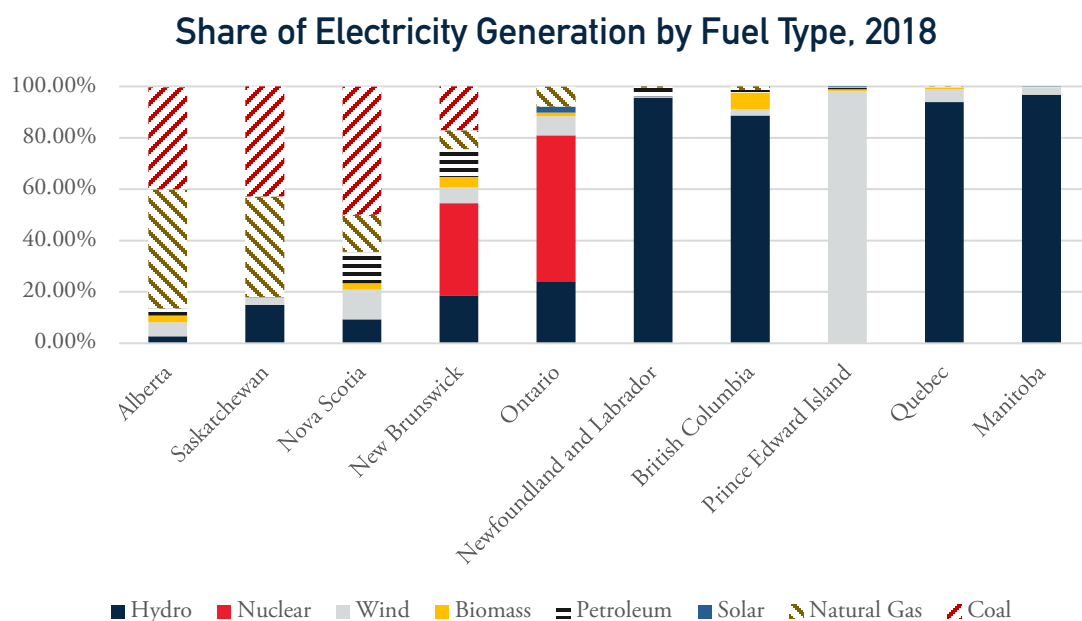
The Society supports the government's announced investment in re-tooling the Oakville Ford assembly plant to produce battery electric vehicles (BEV), and would like to see further action in shifting production away from internal combustion engines towards BEVs. The government should follow the lead of jurisdictions such as Quebec and California and fully phase-out the sale of new internal combustion engine vehicles, nationwide, by 2035.

The Federal government has already implemented a series of incentives to encourage the adoption of zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs), including the Incentive for Zero Emission Vehicles rebate (iZEV) and funding for charging infrastructure for BEVs.

The Society applauds the government for these initiatives, and would like to see the federal government expand on this suite of incentives to encourage widespread adoption of ZEVs. In addition to incentives for ZEVs and infrastructure, the federal government should make significant investment in upgrading government fleet vehicles to ZEVs, as well as providing funding for municipalities to invest in electric public transportation, like electric buses and electric light rail.

The Government, in the Society's view, should focus on achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions through a fair and just transition for all communities and workers. The Government can achieve this in part by supporting a shift towards electrification in the transportation sector, powered by greenhouse gas emission-free nuclear, hydro and renewable electricity.

The emission impact of electrification is only as green as the electricity grid powering the vehicles. Canada has some of the greenest electricity grids in North America. Many provincial power grids are virtually GHG emission-free. However, there are still several provinces relying on GHG-intensive fossil fuels to generate their electricity, with some provinces generating over 80% of their power from fossil fuels.



A report by the 2 Degrees Institute compared the total emission equivalent of an electric vehicle compared to an internal-combustion engine vehicle in jurisdictions across North America. Their analysis included emissions from “vehicle embodiment + maintenance + upstream fuel emissions + fuelcombustion of both



vehicles,”¹ and found that based on the 2017 electricity grid compositions, the total emission equivalent of an electric vehicle powered by Ontario’s low carbon grid was 328 mpg (0.7L/100km). Meanwhile, Alberta and Saskatchewan, which rely heavily on coal and natural gas to generate electricity have an emission equivalent of just 35 mpg (6.7L/100km) and 41 mpg (5.8L/100km) respectively – not much better than a typical economy class car.

For these provinces, and provinces like Ontario that are seeing natural gas creep back onto the power grid, full nuclear generating stations and small modular reactor (SMR) nuclear technology are essential in meeting our climate and net zero emissions targets.

The Society recommends that funding for SMR development be included in the federal budget. It is supported by the initiatives outlined in the Government’s Pan Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change, the SMR Road Map and subsequent SMR Action plan, which was released by the federal government in December 2020.

By investing \$643 million to develop both on-grid and off-grid SMRs over the next five years, all regions of the country would benefit from the innovation led by Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and New Brunswick. Canada’s development of SMR technologies would not only ensure that Canada is at the forefront of this economic opportunity, it would put us on track to our commitment to NET ZERO 2050.

Such a Pan-Canadian investment would also provide an opportunity to reduce emissions and provide a better quality of life in northern, rural and indigenous communities. It would also enable the reduction of GHG emissions in carbon intensive processes such as natural resource extraction and heavy-emitting industries such as steel, cement and fertilizer.

Recommendation: Continue to support investment in the manufacturing of electric vehicles in Canada, and fully phase-out the sale of internal combustion engines for passenger vehicles by 2035, nationwide.

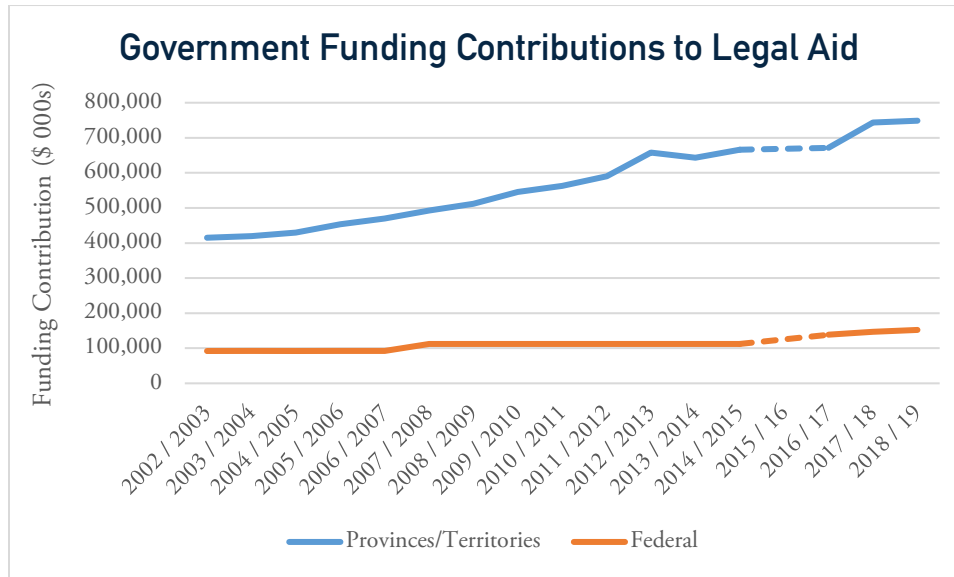
Recommendation: Expand incentives for Zero Emission Vehicle purchases, and ZEV charging infrastructure.

Recommendation: Invest in nuclear and SMR technology to help make all provincial electricity grids GHG emission free.

¹ https://www.2degreesinstitute.org/reports/comparing_ghg_emissions_of_bevs_and_icevs.pdf

INVEST IN LEGAL AID AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Over the last twenty years, provinces and territories have almost doubled their contributions to legal aid funding, from a total of \$415 million in 2002/03 to \$749 million in 2018/19, meanwhile the federal government continues to provide only 16 per cent of all government funding to legal aid services.



Legal aid budget constraints limit access to justice across the country. In Ontario, where the Society represents Legal Aid Lawyers as well as legal clinic workers, these constraints are being felt every day by our members.

Adding to the problem, in 2019, the Ontario government cut \$133 million from the Legal Aid Ontario operating budget. Prior to these cuts, access to justice was already a major concern. The 30% cut to legal aid revenue only made matters worse.

Additionally, the provincial government has directed that the agency may only use federal funds to support its immigration and refugee law program. The federal government made up some of the shortfall on a temporary basis. While the federal funding was an important and appreciated stopgap, it was not sufficient to maintain the 2018 level of service that was already widely acknowledged to be inadequate before the new funding restrictions took effect.

We quickly saw the impact these aggressive cuts are having on front-line services, for example:

BAIL REPRESENTATION

Private bar lawyers performed a significant portion of the bail work prior to implementation of the funding cut in July 2019. After the cuts to LAO, bail representation was provided by LAO-employed duty counsel without additional resources to match the increased caseload. Prior to arguing for bail in court there are a number of logistical details that must be organized, such as identifying a surety and securing the resources to post a bond while the accused is incarcerated. Without sufficient resources to perform this work it takes longer to properly prepare an application



and therefore more accused remain incarcerated for longer than necessary, which creates further overcrowding in Ontario jails and higher custodial costs.

SELF-REPRESENTATION

Due to further restrictions on eligibility criteria for qualifying for LAO services, more Ontarians are unrepresented in court. Self-represented litigants pose a number of challenges to the court system. Due to their inexperience and the nature of self-representation, self-represented litigants take more time to have their matters heard and in criminal proceedings cannot negotiate plea agreements with the prosecutor of their case. Additionally, appeals are more common in cases with self-represented people, as are cases of wrongful conviction. The end result is worse outcomes for litigants, and higher costs to the province.

The impacts of self-representation are especially problematic in plea and Gladue/Indigenous Persons courts. In both instances consequences are very severe – namely, self-represented guilty pleas. And for Gladue/Indigenous Persons Courts, clients are vulnerable and disproportionately represented in the justice system and in the detention facilities and penitentiaries.

IMPACT ON SOCIAL SERVICES

A key function of legal clinics is helping low-income Ontarians advocate for their legal entitlements. This includes assisting people who were unjustly denied social benefits like the Ontario Disability Support Program and workers' compensation, as well as support at tribunals like the Landlord-Tenant Board for people facing unfair eviction from their home. Cuts to clinics mean that they can help fewer people in these circumstances. The result is that vulnerable people at risk of homelessness will unnecessarily lose their housing and place a greater strain on social services as well as the health care system.

The Ontario government's cuts to Legal Aid Ontario have had a devastating impact on access to justice in the province. However, access to justice across Canada has been curtailed due to years of inadequate federal investment in legal aid.

In 2018-19, for every \$1 contributed by the provinces or territories to legal aid, the federal government contributed only 27 cents². Not only would greater investment in legal aid provide access to justice for vulnerable Canadians, it would also be prudent fiscal management. Studies show that, on average, every \$1 spent on legal aid ultimately saves \$6 in expenditures on other social services³.

The issue of insufficient federal funding for legal aid is magnified by the decision to include federal funding for legal aid services in the Canada Social Transfer (CST). A 2016 report by the Canadian Bar Association stated that "current difficulties to Canadians' access to public legal assistance services can be traced from a federal government decision to transfer funds for civil legal aid and other social programs to the provinces under a generalized, "no strings" Canada Social Transfer."⁴

The Society believes that federal contributions to legal aid services should be removed from the Canada Social Transfer, and instead be provided through a separate, dedicated fund for legal aid services.

² <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/aid-aide/1819/p1.html>

³ Canadian Bar Association, 2013. "Reaching Equal Justice Report: An Invitation to Envision and Act".

http://www.cba.org/CBAMediaLibrary/cba_na/images/Equal%20Justice%20-%20Microsite/PDFs/EqualJusticeFinalReport-eng.pdf

⁴ <https://www.cba.org/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=8b0c4d64-cb3f-460f-9733-1aaff164ef6a>



Recommendation: Invest in access to justice by increasing the federal contribution to provinces and territories for the delivery of legal aid services.

Recommendation: Remove legal aid funding from the Canada Social Transfer, and create a separate, dedicated legal aid fund for provinces.

CONCLUSION

The Society appreciates the opportunity to consult on the upcoming federal budget, and would welcome any opportunity to discuss the recommendations proposed in this document, or any other issues affecting Society members, in greater detail with the Government and members of the Standing Committee on Finance.