

**Attention:**

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland  
Minister of Finance & Deputy Prime Minister  
90 Elgin Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0G5

Letter by E-mail to: [chrystia.freeland@canada.ca](mailto:chrystia.freeland@canada.ca)

February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dear Minister Freeland,

In a time of unprecedented crises - including climate change, economic impact, loss of biodiversity and a global pandemic - we recognize the importance of leadership and collective action to impact change locally and globally.

Canada is fortunate to contain globally significant, intact ecosystems. Our Boreal Forest is the largest intact forest remaining on earth and contains the world's highest concentrations of large wetlands, lakes and undammed rivers. It supports abundant wildlife and stores hundreds of billions of tons of carbon in its forests, wetlands and peatlands. Canada's Boreal has been and remains a tremendous source of prosperity.

In the critical and urgent need to promote effective and long-lasting stewardship of Canada's Boreal, we recognize a tremendous opportunity to bridge divides between Indigenous Nations and corporations, and together transform the economy so that it fosters both shared economic prosperity and the conservation of lands and culture.

Indigenous Guardians are playing a vital role creating and managing Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) across Canada. These areas are critical to Canada's ability to meet its international climate change and biodiversity commitments now and in the future. They also offer potential for responsible nature-based tourism, helping generate new conservation economies that complement and bolster responsible development efforts across Canada's Boreal.

As Boreal Champions, a cross-sectoral group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous business leaders from across Canada, we are committed to working collectively to create a stronger country and secure a more respectful and prosperous way forward with Indigenous Nations.

We have identified four areas for collective action:

1. Supporting **Indigenous-led conservation and stewardship, including Indigenous Guardians**, as a core part of Canada's efforts to meet its new commitments to protecting 25% of lands & waters by 2025 and 30% by 2030;
2. Promoting **economic reconciliation, community resilience and prosperity**, inclusive of access to capital and business opportunities through supply chain. This includes re-imagining what prosperity looks like, addressing economic inequality, and developing new business models that will also help Canada meet and exceed supply chain targets;
3. Working with governments to **recognize the value of the Boreal and preserve its ability to capture and store carbon**. This includes finding effective ways to create and monetize carbon offsets to provide communities with innovative revenue options for conserving lands and helping Canada meet its biodiversity and climate goals; and
4. **Pioneering innovative financing mechanisms** and untapped sources that ensure ample resources are available for land and resource management, biodiversity conservation, prosperity and climate resilience.

As an early priority, we believe that Indigenous-led conservation and economic reconciliation should be integrated into our country's economic recovery plan and into the heart of Canada's plan to protect 25% of its lands and waters by 2025, and 30% by 2030.

Canada is already taking steps towards supporting these efforts, both through the Canada Nature Fund and the National Indigenous Guardians pilot project. **We believe that new investments in these efforts should figure prominently in your 2021 Federal Budget. This will lead to globally significant climate outcomes while strengthening Indigenous Nations and enabling economic reconciliation.**

These efforts will help us move forward together as a nation to create resilient and healthy economies at the local, regional and national levels, while also helping to position Canada as a leader on the global stage in advancing integrated biodiversity and climate solutions.

Sincerely,

JP Gladu, Boreal Champions Chair, Founder & Principal **Mokwateh**  
Jamie Bonham, Director of Corporate Engagement, **NEI**  
Michael Crothers, President and Country Chair, **Shell Canada**  
Lisa DeMarco, Senior Partner & CEO, **Resilient LLP**  
Teara Fraser, Founder & Lead Executive, **Iskwew Air**  
Ken Fredeen, Senior Partner, **Deloitte**  
Trevor Gladue, Director of Indigenous Strategic Initiatives, **Civeo**

Christopher Henderson, Executive Director, **Indigenous Clean Energy**  
Keith Henry, President & CEO, **Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada**  
Patrick James, Head of Health, Safety, Environment and Risk, **Vale Canada Limited**  
Aaron Lambie, President & CEO, **Social Awareness Group**  
Mark Little, President & CEO, **Suncor Energy Inc.**  
Chris McDonnell, Manager Aboriginal & Environmental Relations, **Rayonier Advanced Materials**  
Karen Ogen-Toews, CEO, **First Nations LNG Alliance**  
Marcel Pelletier, Vice President Indigenous Relations, **AECOM**  
Jean-Jacques Ruest, President & CEO, **CN**  
Crystal Smith, Chief Councillor, **Haisla Nation**  
Kevin Thomas, CEO, **Shareholder Association for Research & Education**  
Gary Wade, President, **Unilever Canada**

c.c.

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C. M.P.

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett

The Honourable Mona Fortier

The Honourable Karina Gould

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault

The Honourable Dominic Leblanc

The Honourable Catherine McKenna

The Honourable Marc Miller

The Honourable Seamus O'Regan

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson