

## High School Essay Contest

In my opinion, the decision of the Federal government to build new combat and non-combat vessels in Halifax for the Canadian Navy and Coast Guard at a price of \$25 billion dollars is senseless. The benefits of this project remain short lived, concern the interests of only a small group of people, and yield regrettable consequences. Although new jobs would be provided, sustaining these positions over a long period a time is certainly a challenge when the contract eventually expires, leaving workers in turmoil once again. After realizing such dilemmas, I think that the Canadian government should be spending our tax dollars toward agriculture in Nova Scotia. Withholding a passionate belief that the nation's smallest communities have potential to build the greatest prospects, I believe that investing in agriculture is essential for a greener, more peaceful, equitable society.

I believe that the \$25 billion dollars should go into initiating Nova Scotia as a province of agriculture, producing food for generations where all citizens can benefit and reap the rewards. If we are agriculturally sustainable, certain food costs would decrease since the cost of shipping from other provinces and countries would no longer exist. Consequently, low income earners could afford fruits and vegetables because it would be less than in our local grocery stores. People would eat healthier by eating nourishing, affordable food because it would be less cost effective to grow. The carbon footprint would be non-existent or minimal in comparison to building ships. Imagine all that diesel fuel that would be used in trucks, ships, and machinery in creating the vessels. How unfortunate that is for our battle against climate change and threat of pollution.

Also, the employment opportunities for farmers, researchers, agricultural maintenance, and entrepreneurs would sustain jobs generation after generation, benefiting the province as a whole, and is a concept in which we should set for all provinces. First, an increase the wages for farmers is priority. Having creative incentives for its growth and planning is instrumental. To combat the problem of seasonal jobs, the creation of numerous green houses to plant and grow through the winter months can be implemented. If good paying jobs were provided, migration of workers in the western provinces of Canada would decrease, tax dollars would increase, money gained from exporting our product would increase revenue, and profits would be spent in our own communities. Providing the opportunity for all Nova Scotians to benefit from the money, not just those from the mainland, is an equitable decision in which all citizens can experience a positive impact.

Money could be issued toward research, creating ecologically friendly products like fertilizer and products to prevent diseases that affect plants. Money could go into developing new alternative technologies and invent new products with a criteria to protect the planet. Jobs for scientific study in agriculture would be available. Wind and solar farms could be built, providing construction jobs and on going maintenance. Not only is the sustainability indefinite, but would reach the needs of everyone's future. An agricultural renewal would not be damaging or depleting our natural resources but encouraging nature to provide in natural way.

There are many ways to farm and harvest food in Nova Scotia with current agricultural successes to build on such grapes used to make wine, apple orchards in Annapolis Valley, and farms that grow varieties of berries, vegetables, fruit, herbs and flowers. Investments can be explored in organic farming, hybrid plants to create new species, and specialized food and plants of all kinds. The choices for those to farm are endless.

We could invest into refrigeration units throughout the province to freeze our products, build packaging plants with environmental delivery systems. We could ship our surplus to other countries which would create more jobs in the shipping terminals. The possibilities are endless. In comparison to ship building, 20 years later, those ships will eventually break and need repairs. Eventually they will have to be replaced. So much for \$25 billion dollars. If we spent it on agriculture, the dream just gets bigger and better for every Nova Scotian.

Food grown in Nova Scotia would benefit our communities by being able to contribute to local food banks and low income families could afford home grown food at a low cost thus feeding the poor in our own back yards. This could be an never ending cycle for generations to come. Unlike the shipyards where there is only 20 years of work, so they say.

Agriculture is an environmentally friendly industry if done right. With the attitude of having environmentally inventions that resolve issues around energy efficiency, recycling, safety, health concerns, renewable resources and cutting the carbon footprint can make agriculture a national industry. According to a recent press release in the Chronicle Herald (Thursday, May 30, 2013), the federal and provincial governments offered a \$37 million growth fund in pursuit of agriculture, stating “The money, to be rolled out over five years, is aimed at improving innovation, competitiveness and markets, as well as adaptability and industry capacity”. The want and need for this industry is apparent, and deserves the chance to make not only a domestic impact, but an international one. Creating and promoting valuable farming communities is the best way to ensure sustainably for future generations of farmers. With resources in our very own ecosystems, education, training, and \$25 billion dollars, agriculture is the best investment toward the future of Nova Scotia. It is time to set an example for Canada, and the rest of the world.

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