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January 25, 2013

Prime Minister Stephen Harper
Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you to express my concerns about defence procurement and military spending under your government. I would like you to know that I am opposed to your decision to spend \$35 billion of Canadian tax dollars on the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy (NSPS), the largest defence procurement in our country's history. I would like you to answer my questions and provide the information that I am requesting.

As you know, the Irving Shipyard in Halifax has been awarded the \$25 billion contract for the navy's new combat vessel package and the Seaspan Shipyard in Vancouver has been given the \$8 billion contract for the navy's non-combat vessel package. Halifax is my hometown and I am not happy that it is the site for the construction of warships.

I would like you to explain to me why combat vessels are a priority over spending tax dollars on urgent environmental and social needs? Why did you introduce the NSPS and not a national strategy for renewable energy, affordable housing, early learning & childcare, First Nations' communities, or municipal infrastructure?

Please tell me what the risk or threat assessment is to justify spending \$25 billion on warships? What are the risks? Who are our naval enemies? Please send the DND briefing that explains these naval threats.

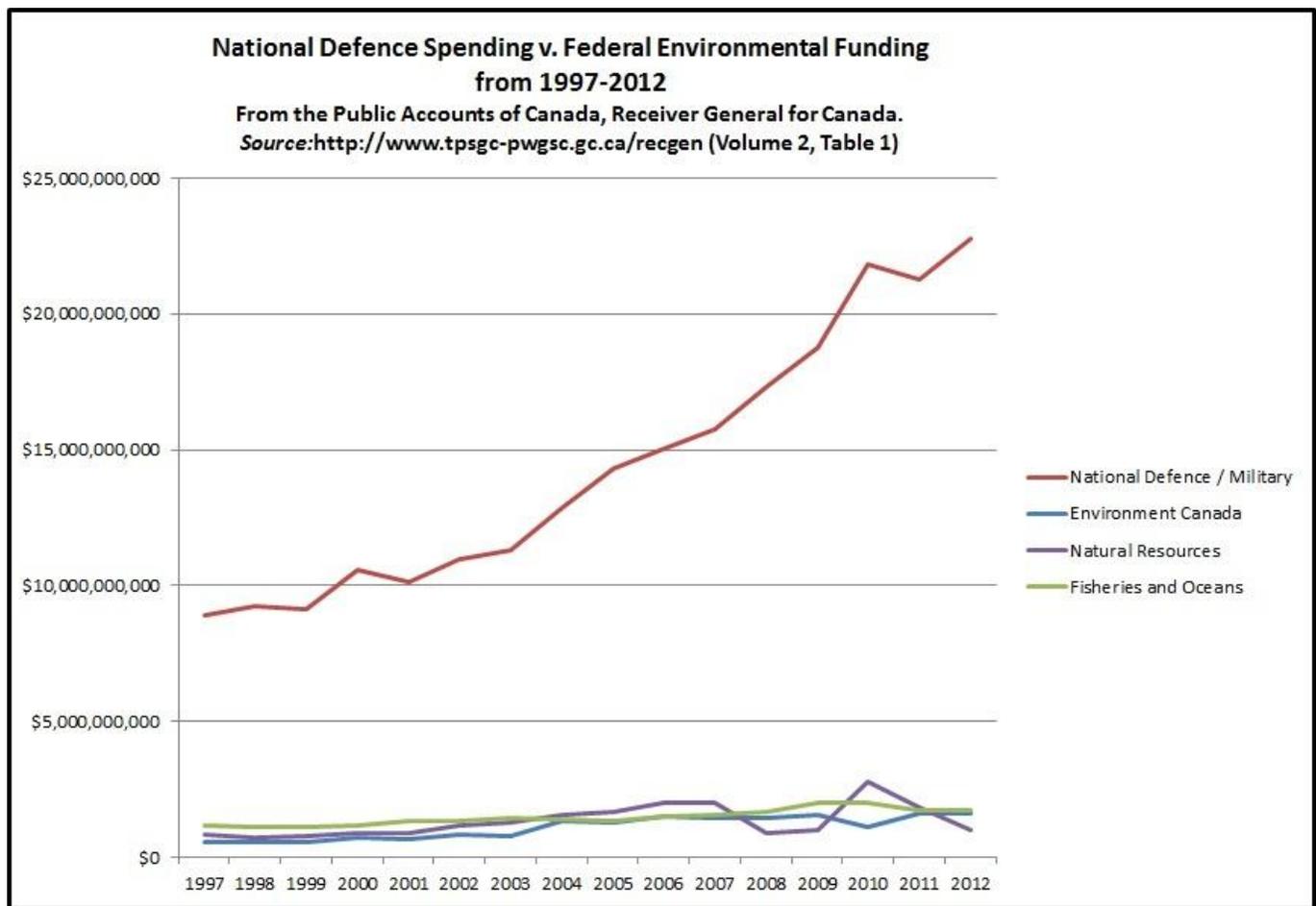
The Department of National Defence is reporting that the cost for in-service support for these new warships will be an additional \$14 billion dollars. I am concerned that the price will be much higher and Canadian tax dollars will be at risk in the same way as the F-35 stealth fighter program. Can you please provide me with the cost information for new Arctic Offshore Patrol ships and the Surface Combatants? What is the expected price per unit?

I was also very concerned to read in the news that Dr. Berkok, a defence economist at the Royal Military College in Kingston, said that only \$5 billion of the total \$25 billion contract will be spent in Nova Scotia. The rest of the money will be spent in Ontario, Quebec and the United States, where contractors will be hired to build the ships' combat systems, electronics and propulsion units. Dr. Berkok explained that the Irving Shipyard cannot build these sophisticated components. Dr. Berkok is predicting that Lockheed Martin will likely join forces with Irving Shipbuilding and that these systems will be brought up from the U.S. so the specialized jobs will be in the U.S. Can you please explain how much of the \$25 billion will stay in Canada and can you provide specifics about the Industrial Regional Benefits program under the NSPS?

Your government and the Nova Scotia provincial government often tout how many jobs will be created under the NSPS. A study by the Conference Board of Canada showed that the \$25 billion combat ship contract would create 11,500 additional jobs in Nova Scotia during the peak of construction in 2020. However, many reports by the Blue Green Alliance, a network of labour and environmental organizations, have showed that many more jobs could be

created a green economy. In the alliance’s most recent report released in November 2012, *More Bang for our Buck: How Canada can Create More Energy Jobs and Reduce Pollution*, showed that a federal expenditure of only \$1.3 billion would employ 18,000 workers. The research is clear that more green jobs could be created than shipbuilding jobs, so why are you not spending our taxes to ensure the maximum number of jobs for Canadians?

As well, I would like you to know that for the past several years, I have been tracking federal revenues and expenses through the Public Accounts of Canada. I am very concerned that the budget for the Department of National Defence has doubled from \$10 billion in 2006 to \$22 billion in 2012. By contrast, the budget for Environment Canada has stayed flat at \$1 billion for the past 14 years but environmental problems, such as poor air quality, polluted waterways, contaminated sites, and global warming have worsened and are jeopardizing our health, our economy and our children’s future. Why are you spending so much on the military and so little on the environment? Why did Canadians not have a say in the *Canada First Defence Strategy* that commits \$490 billion on the military over the next 20 years? Polls show that the priorities of Canadians are health, education and the environment, not the military.



Finally, I would like you to know that due to my opposition to the NSPS, I have been protesting outside the Irving Shipyard every week. I have a web site that I am compiling information about the warship contract: www.demilitarize.ca and I have a blog about my weekly protest “Wednesdays against Warships”. I will post your reply on my web site when I receive it. Thank you for your time and attention to my concerns.

Sincerely,

Tamara Lorincz