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January 25, 2013

Hon. Elizabeth May, MP
Leader of the Green Party of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Member of Parliament May,

I am writing to you to express my concerns about defence procurement and military spending in Canada and the stance of the Green Party. I am troubled by your support of the federal government's \$35 billion National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy (NSPS), the largest defence procurement in our country's history.

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 at all that it is the site for the construction of new warships.

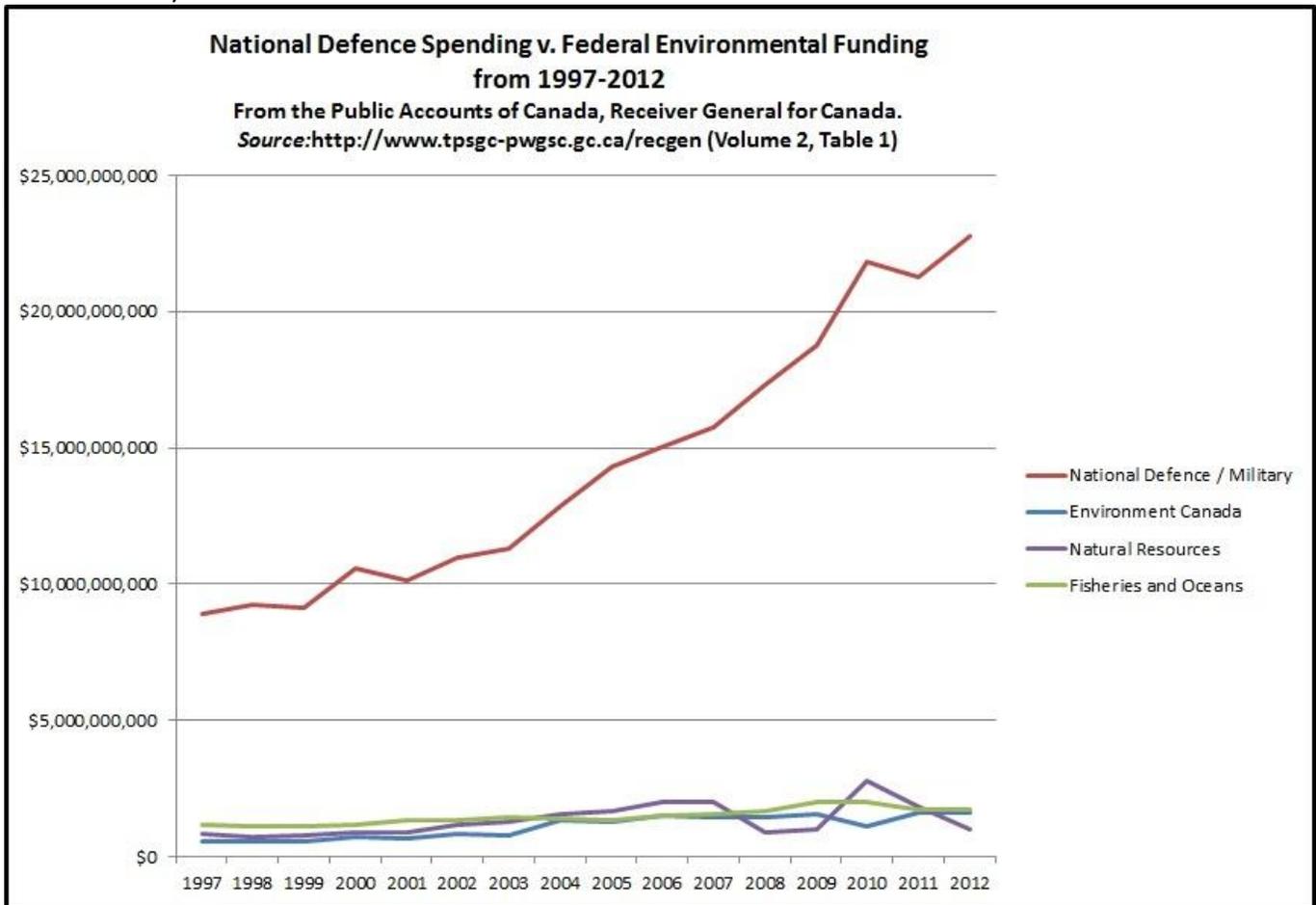
The Department of National Defence is reporting that the cost for in-service support for these new warships will be an additional \$14 billion dollars. I am concerned that the price will be much higher and that Canadian tax dollars will be at risk in the same way as the F-35 stealth fighter program.

Moreover, Dr. Berkok, a defence economist at the Royal Military College in Kingston, has said in the news that only \$5 billion of the total \$25 billion contract will be spent in Nova Scotia. The majority of the money will be spent in Ontario, Quebec and the United States, where contractors will be hired to build the ships' combat systems, weapons, 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. I am concerned that most of the \$25 billion will not stay in Canada and that the Industrial Regional Benefits will not be substantial.

The Green Party, the federal Conservative government, and the NDP Government of Nova Scotia have touted the job creation potential 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 Canada. 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 pushing the federal government to spend our tax dollars to ensure the maximum number of jobs for Canadians?

I would like to know why you supported the NSPS instead calling for an investment in our most pressing human security challenges: poverty and climate change? Instead of the NSPS, we could have a national strategy for renewable energy, green jobs, affordable housing, early learning & childcare, First Nations' communities, healthcare, education, and municipal infrastructure.

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. The *Canada First Defence Strategy* commits \$490 billion on the military over the next 20 years. 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. Polls show that the priorities of Canadians are health, education and the environment, not the military.



We cannot waste tax dollars, time and resources on warships plus fighter jets, tanks, armed drones and military interventions. As the Earth Charter declared, we must “Demilitarize national security systems to the level of a non-provocative defense posture, and convert military resources to peaceful purposes, including ecological restoration” (16c). As well, we can more prudently deal with marine challenges under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea instead of with warships. Will you reverse your support of the warship contract? Will you stand up to inflated military spending and call for a re-allocation of federal spending away from warships to Canadians’ well-being?

Finally, I would like you to know that I have been protesting outside the Irving Shipyard in Halifax 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”: <http://demilitarize.ca/wp/>. 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