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April 22, 2013

Hon. Megan Leslie, MP  
Environment Critic of the NDP / Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition  
1-2207 Gottingen St.  
Halifax, NS B3K 3B5

Dear Megan,

As you are the Environment Critic for and Deputy Leader of the NDP and the Member of Parliament for Halifax, I am writing to you to express my opposition to the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy (NSPS). This is the federal plan to spend \$25 billion of our tax dollars to build new armed combat vessels for the navy at the Irving Shipyard in our city. It is also the largest defence procurement in our history.

Today is Earth Day and I am reminded about the grave state of our planet due to dangerous climate change and rapid ecosystem decline. Last November, the *United Nations Environment Programme* released a report entitled, *Bridging the Emissions Gap*, which urged states to immediately and ambitiously reduce greenhouse gas emissions to keep the global temperature at or below 2 degrees C by 2020. The *World Meteorological Society* recently provided evidence that showed that the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere reached a new record high in 2011 and that the decade from 2001-2010 was the warmest decade on record since modern temperature monitoring began approximately 160 years ago.

The latest *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment* study, *Living Beyond Our Means: Natural Assets and Human Well-Being*, explained that "Among the outstanding problems identified by this assessment are the dire state of many of the world's fish stocks; the intense vulnerability of the 2 billion people living in dry regions to the loss of ecosystem services, including water supply; and the growing threat to ecosystems from climate change and nutrient pollution. Human activities have taken the planet to the edge of a massive wave of species extinctions, further threatening our own well-being."

I would like to know why Canada is building warships instead of taking urgent action on climate change and poverty – our greatest human security challenges. Why are warships a priority over protecting the earth? Why is Canada building warships before providing housing for the estimated 150,000-300,000 homeless Canadians and investing in our desperate First Nations's communities?

Why did you and your party push for a National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy in 2010 instead of a National Green Economy Strategy? A National Green Economy Strategy would employ Canadians across the country to help our country transition to a low-carbon society instead of building warships. Canadians could be put to work expanding mass transit, installing renewable energy technologies, cleaning up contaminated sites, and building LEED-certified affordable housing.

As you claimed in the House of Commons this past October, "waiting to reduce emissions will cost all of us. The national round table estimates that by rejecting a practical economy-wide approach to tackling climate change, it could cost Canada \$87 billion by 2050." The warship contract will also cost Canadians – it will be at least \$25 billion to build the warships plus \$14 billion for in-service support for the next 20 years. As you know, with all defence procurement, especially ones involving Lockheed Martin, that major cost-overruns are assured.

Worse, Dr. Berkok, a defence economist at the Royal Military College in Kingston, has stated publicly 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 and will partner with Lockheed Martin, the world's largest weapons manufacturer and producer of nuclear weapons based in the U.S.

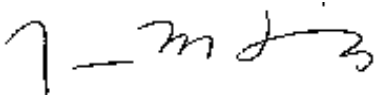
The federal NDP and the provincial NS NDP have both touted the job creation potential under the NSPS. A study by the Conference Board of Canada showed that the \$25 billion combat ship contract would create 11,500 additional jobs in Nova Scotia during the peak of construction in 2020. However, many reports by the Blue Green Alliance, a network of labour and environmental organizations, have showed that many more jobs could be created in 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*, revealed 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 that will address our urgent environmental and social challenges?

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. Please see the graphs attached below. 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* has committed \$490 billion of Canadians taxes 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, and contaminated sites have worsened in this country and are jeopardizing our health and our economy. Further, according to its 2013-2014 Plans and Priorities, Environment Canada's budget will be cut to \$850,000,000 by 2015. However, polls show that the priorities of Canadians are health, education and the environment, not the military.

Faced with catastrophic climate change and increased poverty, I believe that our country cannot waste any tax dollars on warships along with 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 and conflict with international law, such as the United Nations' Convention on the Law of the Sea, diplomacy, and negotiations instead of with warships.

Finally, I would like you to know that I have been protesting outside the Irving Shipyard in Halifax every week since December 2012. I have a web site that I am compiling information about the warship contract: [www.demilitarize.ca](http://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. I look forward to your answers to my questions and an explanation for why you support the warship strategy. Thank you for your time and attention to my concerns.

Sincerely,

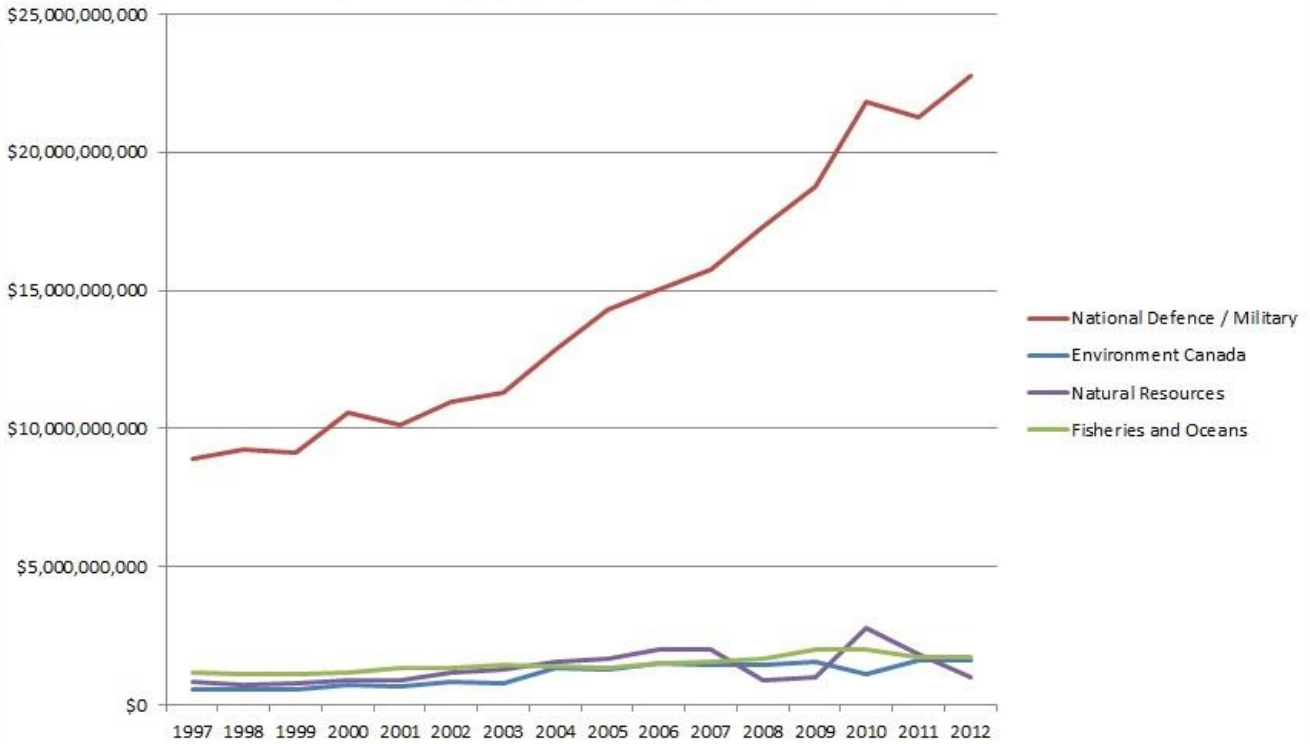


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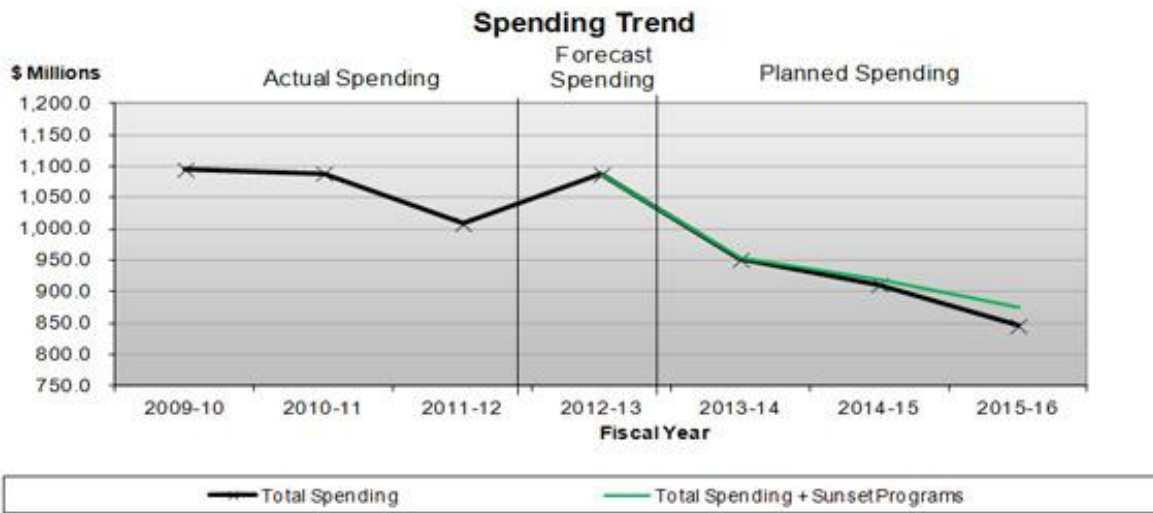
P.S. Can you also let me know why you and the federal NDP unanimously supported, in a minority position in the House of Commons, the federal government's motion to extend Canada's bombing of Libya in 2011? The Harper Conservative majority did not need the NDP's support for their motion to pass. Thanks.

### National Defence Spending v. Federal Environmental Funding from 1997-2012

From the Public Accounts of Canada, Receiver General for Canada.  
Source: <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/recgen> (Volume 2, Table 1)



### Environment Canada's Plans & Priorities 2013-2014 Expenditure Chart



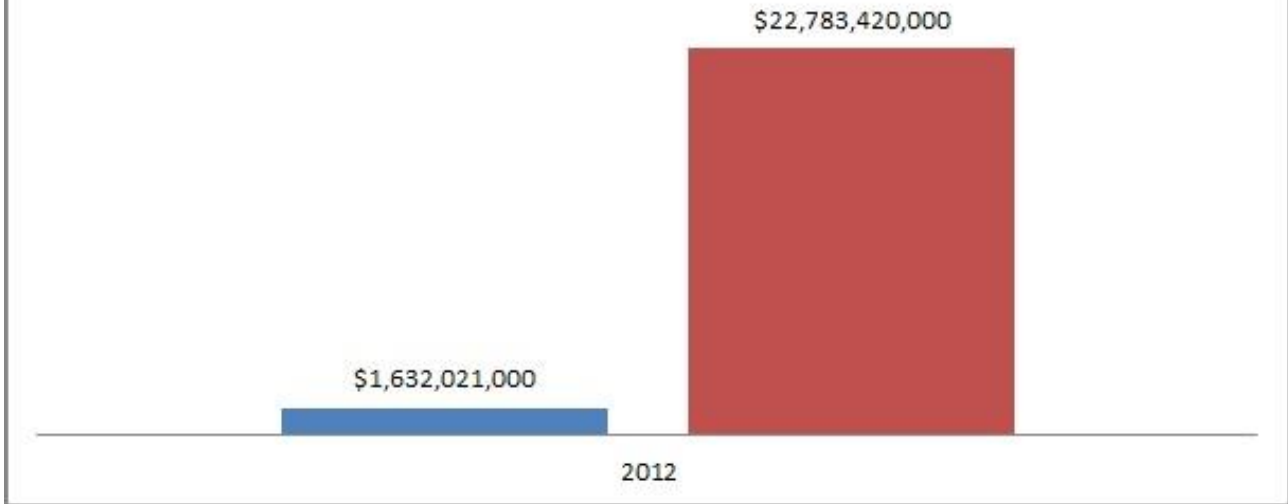
Source: Environment Canada Plans and Priorities 2013-2014, page 12

[http://www.ec.gc.ca/Content/3/1/D/31D9FF32-8842-4CC6-A008-231DEBE41F40/130311\\_DOE%20English%202013-14%20RPP.pdf](http://www.ec.gc.ca/Content/3/1/D/31D9FF32-8842-4CC6-A008-231DEBE41F40/130311_DOE%20English%202013-14%20RPP.pdf)

# Federal Government Funding

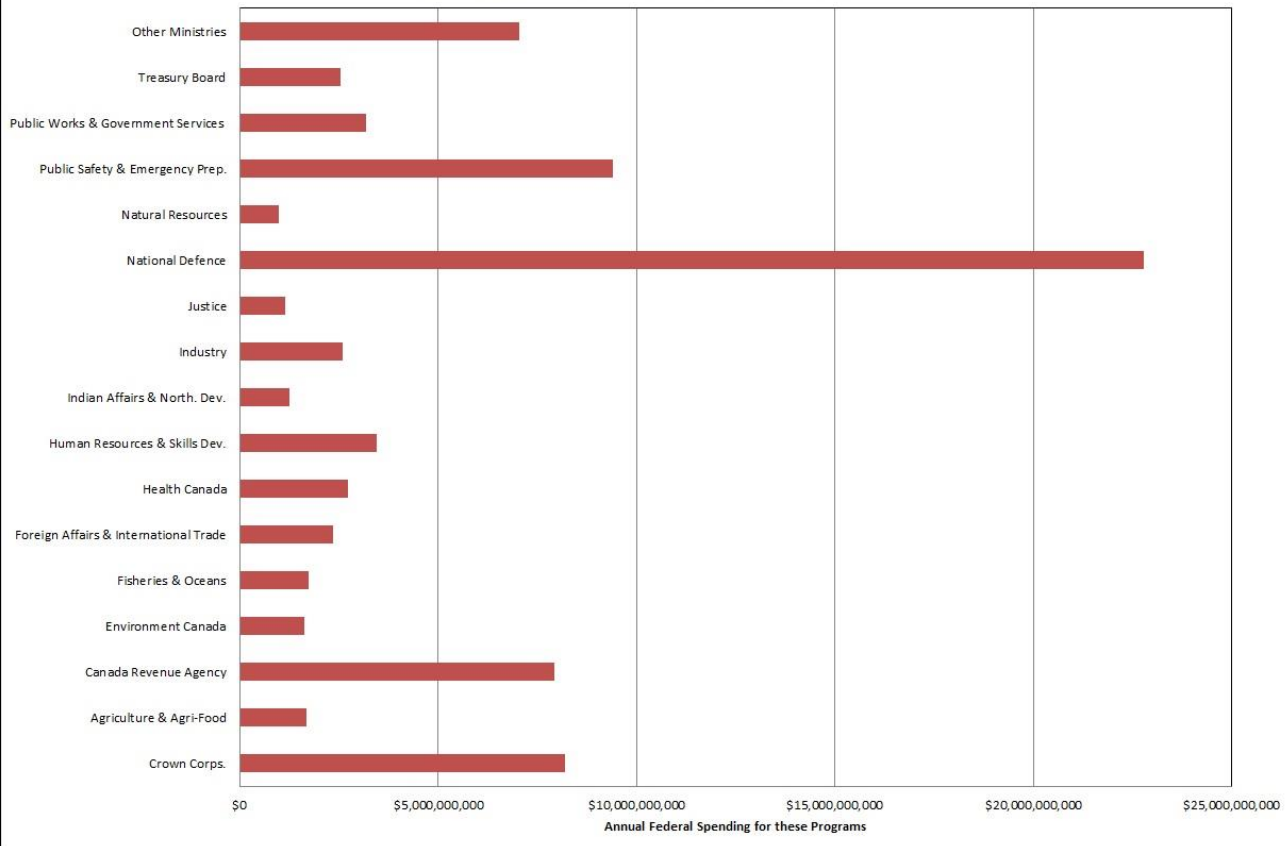
From the *Public Accounts of Canada*. Volume II Table 1. 2011-2012.

■ Environment Canada    ■ National Defence



## Federal Departmental / Program Expenses 2011-2012

Not including Transfer Payments. From the Public Accounts of Canada.



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