

# An open letter to Minister Chrystia Freeland calling for more funding commitments to meet Canada's international protected areas goals from over 100 conservation, environmental and social justice groups representing hundreds of thousands of supporters in Canada.

October 28th, 2024

**The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.**  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

## **RE: Recommendations to make a funding announcement at COP16 for the 2030 Nature Strategy**

Dear Minister Freeland,

We commend the government of Canada's announcement that it will protect and restore biodiversity through the 2030 Nature Strategy and the tabling of the Nature Accountability Act (or bill C-73). As organizations that are concerned about the conservation of nature and wildlife, we are pleased by this recent step Canada has made to meet its international commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In addition, the funding announcements for protected areas in the 2024 Budget demonstrated your government's ongoing commitment to nature protection.

This fall, the international community will gather to share their national strategies for confronting the ongoing biodiversity crisis at the COP16 meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity happening Monday, October 21st, 2024 to Friday, November 1, 2024. We encourage you to seize the opportunity presented at COP16 to make a funding announcement to allow work to begin on the initiatives below as part of your government's Fall Economic Statement.

Canada set ambitious targets in its 2030 Nature Strategy, but most of these will not be achieved without additional funding. The federal government has the opportunity to continue on the pathway of nature conservation by addressing the five key drivers of biodiversity loss, which are climate change, pollution, land conversion/habitat loss, overexploitation of resources including plants and animals, and invasive species. We appreciate the whole-of-government approach in the 2030 Nature Strategy have identified priorities that we feel should be funded as soon as possible for federal departments that have the biggest role to play in biodiversity protection including Environment and Climate Change Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Natural Resources Canada, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

The following priority actions – listed by mission-critical ministerial portfolios – have all received cabinet approval and are already listed in the 2030 Nature Strategy as important next steps in achieving our objectives to protect and restore nature. But existing funding is insufficient meaning your leadership at this juncture is critical to the success of the strategy.

Funding these actions this fall would allow this urgent work to begin as soon as possible. The funding is based on the recommendations of the Green Budget Coalition, but is meant to be a first step in funding these actions with more long-term funding to be allocated in Budget 2025.

#### **Environment and Climate Change Canada:**

By renewing the Enhanced Nature Legacy, the government would demonstrate its ongoing and long-term support for Indigenous-led conservation initiatives (Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas and Guardian programs) and encourage action by provinces and territories. Investing in protected areas can support resilient, diversified local economies, particularly in rural and remote communities while also focusing on areas of high biodiversity and carbon sequestration value.

**ASK:** Provide \$500 million in renewed funding for the Enhanced Nature Legacy to protect 25% of lands and oceans by 2025 as the pathway to 30% protection by 2030 for 2025.

#### **Fisheries and Oceans Canada:**

DFO has been leading a whole-of-government approach to Canada's ocean conservation along with Parks Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service. Previous investments have gotten us halfway to our target of 30% protection, with planning underway to establish a number of other protected areas in collaboration with Indigenous peoples, stakeholders and other governments. These processes require considerable investment to ensure effective engagement, capacity building, consultation, scientific research, and the establishment of new governance structures.

**ASK:** Provide \$200 million to renew funding for Canada's Marine Conservation Targets (MCT) for 2025.

#### **Natural Resources Canada:**

Support a national seed supply for land-based restoration by building an inter-departmental federal leadership to support the creation of a robust seed supply chain. As stated in the 2030 Nature Strategy, a national seed supply chain for native seeds and trees would include providing training, capacity building, and Indigenous leadership in seed conservation and restoration, addressing policy gaps, and ensuring the required infrastructure is in place (e.g., for housing native seed sources).

**ASK:** Provide \$9 million in funding to establish a national seed supply chain in native seeds to support the restoration of degraded landscapes for 2025.

**Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada:**

The conversion of grassland and wetland ecosystems to farmland is a major threat to biodiversity in Canada. However, well managed agricultural lands also have the potential to contribute to halting and reversing biodiversity loss by storing carbon, cycling nutrients, managing water supply, and providing habitat. AAFC's forthcoming Sustainable Agriculture Strategy has the potential to recognize the ecological services that farmers provide while also compensating them for avoiding land conversion in the first place.

**ASK:** Provide \$25 million in financial incentives to producers for the avoided conversion of native and tame grasslands, wetlands, and forested areas in 2025.

Canada demonstrated tremendous leadership at COP15 in Montreal, helping to bring the world together to agree on the Global Biodiversity Framework. Now, as the world reconvenes in Colombia, we hope you will remind Canadians of our leadership by committing the support and resources needed to protect and restore nature.

Thank you for taking our recommendations into account.

Sincerely,

Cc: The Right Honorable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada  
The Honorable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change

# SIGNATORIES

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## SIGNATORIES

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Abbotsford Mission Nature Club  
Against Port Expansion in the Fraser Estuary  
BC  
Alberta Mycological Society  
Alberta Wilderness Association  
alliance of Canadian Land Trusts  
Anarres Natural Health  
Association pour la protection du lac  
Taureau - APLT  
Atlantic Salmon Federation  
Barrie Nature  
BC Nature  
Bee Ambassadors Canada  
Bert Miller Nature Club  
Biodiversity and Climate Action Collective  
Niagara  
Bird Friendly Lions Bay  
Bird Safe Guelph  
Burke Mountain Naturalists BurlingtonGreen  
Environmental Association Calgary Climate  
Hub  
Canadian Biosphere Regions Association  
Canadian Environmental Law Association /  
Association canadienne due droit de  
l'environnementsociation  
Cariboo Heights Forest Preservation Society  
Citizens Climate Council (C3)  
Clayoquot Action  
Climate Action for Lifelong Learners Climate  
Legacy  
Climate Network Lanark  
Conservation Council of New Brunswick  
Conservation Ontario  
Delta Naturalists Society  
DoorNumberOne.org  
East Coast Environmental Law  
Edmonton River Valley Conservation Coalition  
Friends of Ecological Reserves  
Friends of Elk Island society  
Friends of Kingston Inner Harbour  
Friends of Semiahmoo Bay Society  
Friends of Shoal Harbour  
Friends of South Shore  
Friends of The Spit  
GentleWays for OurPlanet  
Georgia Strait Allaiance  
Go4ECO  
Grandmothers Act to Save the Planet (GASP)  
Great Blue Heron Nature Reserve  
Green Ummah  
Greening Sacred Spaces London  
Hamilton Naturalists Club  
Hike Mtl  
IFAW Canada  
Kamloops Naturalist Club  
Kamloops Naturalist Club  
Kingston Field Naturalists  
Lake of Bays Heritage Foundation  
Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia LTABC  
LEAF - Local Enhancement and Appreciation  
of Forests  
Living Oceans Society  
Mayne Island Conservancy Society  
Mind Your Plastic  
Nature Chilliwack  
Nature London  
Nature Miramichi  
Nature NB  
Nature Nova Scotia  
Nature Regina  
Nature Saskatchewan  
Nature Vancouver

## SIGNATORIES

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NECAPA - New England Canadian  
Provinces Alliance  
Neighbours United  
Okanagan Similkameen Conservation  
Alliance  
Ontario Biodiversity Council  
Ontario Nature  
Ontario Rivers Alliance  
Ontariogreen Conservation Association  
OPBC  
Ottawa Riverkeeper | Garde-rivière des  
Outaouais  
Pesticide Free Edmonton  
Pollination Guelph  
Prince Edward County Field Naturalists  
PUBLIC PASTURES-PUBLIC INTEREST  
rare Charitable Research Reserve  
Regroupement national des conseils  
régionaux de l'environnement du Québec  
Rocky Mountain Naturalists  
Sargeant Bay Society  
Saskatoon Nature Society  
Saskatoon Zoo Society  
Sauvons la Falaise  
Shake Up The Establishment  
Stanley Park Ecology Society  
Sudbury Naturalists  
Sustainable Milton  
Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary  
Swim Drink Fish Canada  
The Couchiching Conservancy  
The Kensington Conservancy Thickson's  
Woods Land Trust

Toronto Field Naturalists  
Totem Roasters Inc.  
Trees Please Winniepg  
UFV - Wildlife Protection Club  
UrbaNature Education  
Water Watchers  
York Region Environmental Alliance  
York Simcoe Nature Club  
Yukon Conservation Society