

Election 2015 Candidate Survey from GSA : Entry # 262

Information about you

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Party

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Survey Questions

1. In light of the recent Marathassa oil spill in English Bay, what do you see as the top three priorities for improving marine oil spill preparedness and response on BC's west coast?

Emergency oil spill response capacity is vastly under-resourced, and there are increasing risks with growing tanker traffic. The Conservatives' closure of Marine Communications and Traffic Services and Coast Guard offices must be reversed to ensure that we have adequate capacity to guide tankers, and to respond quickly in the event of an accident. Furthermore, New Democrats believe that polluters should pay the full cost to clean up and compensate for their oil spills, and that there should be no cap on their liability. Conservatives have failed to give Canadians the protections they need - when it comes to our coasts and waterways, self-regulation in the shipping industry doesn't cut it. We need proper environmental assessments of proposals to ship crude through our waterways and along our coast - the Government should be putting the safety of the public and of our environment first.

2. What specific actions can the federal government take to ensure that local communities are meaningfully involved in oil spill planning and response?

We would explore the idea of citizens advisory councils with the public, municipal, first nations, and provincial partners. We believe that a fundamental principle of sustainable development is public participation in decision making. Furthermore, before any project can proceed, there must be a robust environmental assessment process that includes meaningful consultation that includes assistance for those affected to participate.

a) The establishment of a Citizens Advisory Council to facilitate citizen input into and oversight of Canada's marine oil spill preparedness and response regime?

Yes, I would support the establishment of a Citizens Advisory Council for the reasons state above.

b) Federal funding for local governments to ensure that they are adequately prepared to play their part in a coordinated spill response, and manage the impacts of an oil spill on their community?

Yes, I would support this funding to ensure we will always have a coordinated response to oil spills.

3. Do you support or oppose Kinder Morgan's proposed TransMountain pipeline expansion project?

We know that a Stephen Harper government would ram through this proposal with a deeply flawed process that completely ignores the community. That's why it's so important to replace Stephen Harper. Tom Mulcair and the NDP are the only party that can do that. We cannot proceed with this application because the Harper Conservatives have gutted the environmental review process to the point where no one can trust it. A Tom Mulcair government would protect the environment while growing the economy. We would overhaul and strengthen Canada's environmental assessment process for projects to make it rigorous and credible by including things like the impacts on climate change. We need a process that openly and meaningfully listens to communities and respects First Nations. We know that the Conservatives just want to rubber stamp these projects, but the NDP will fix the environmental assessment process to ensure that bad projects do not proceed.

4. What are your views on the National Energy Board's pipeline review process, including its current TransMountain review?

No one trusts the National Energy Board to protect the environment and properly manage Canada's resources because the Conservatives gutted the legislation that used to provide for a credible environmental review process. The Conservatives have put BC's coast, environment, and economy at risk, and I will have no faith in the NEB's pipeline review process until we are able to bring in effective legislation to change it. In 2015, an NDP government would set aside the approval of this project.

5. What are the three most important steps the federal government should take to tackle climate change?

On climate change, the NDP will reintroduce the Climate Change Accountability Act, the only federal legislation that requires government to set emissions reductions targets, and to hold government accountable. We will begin work to reduce Canada's reliance on fossil fuels by supporting renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation. We'll end fossil fuel subsidies, and implement a cap-and-trade system that puts a price on carbon. We'll restore Canada's international reputation on the environment. Only Tom Mulcair and the NDP have committed to showing up at the climate meeting in Paris this November with climate change targets and a real plan.

6. Would you support a cumulative effects assessment to provide information on the combined impacts of all oil, coal and LNG projects currently proposed for the Georgia Strait region?

The Harper Government has used omnibus budget bills to gut Canada's environmental laws protecting our fisheries, lakes, and rivers. The NDP will restore these laws. We will reinstate our environmental assessment laws and ensure that the environmental impacts of major projects, including pipelines and oil and gas, consider the cumulative, regional, and climate change impacts of the project before they are approved.

7. How should the federal government address the chronic problem of derelict vessels spilling fuel and releasing other contaminants into the marine environment?

A New Democrat government would introduce legislation to deal with derelict vessels. In fact, we introduced legislation in the last Parliament, bill C-638, to allow for the Coast Guard to take responsibility for and clean up derelict vehicles which pose an environmental risk to Canada's waters.

The bill would have done the following:

- Obligate the government to act when derelict vessels are abandoned.
- Strengthen the requirements relating to derelict vessels and wreck by ensuring that regulations are made to establish measures to be taken for their removal, disposition or destruction.
- Provide that the Canadian Coast Guard shall be designated as a receiver of wreck for the purposes of Part 7 of the Act, and requires receivers of wreck to take reasonable steps to determine and locate the owners of the wreck.

Unfortunately, the NDP bill was defeated by the Conservative majority in the House of Commons. However, New Democrats remain committed to protecting our waters from pollution and other hazards posed by derelict vessels, and we will reintroduce this legislation once we form government, and ensure that a permanent and timely solution is found for derelict vessels.

8. Do you have any additional comments or activities you would like to share with our supporters?

As a thirty-six year old father of twins who runs a small farm with my wife, I am very passionate about the world we are leaving for future generations. I want a government that responds to climate change in a way that acknowledges it as the defining issue of the 21st century, and this is what I am hoping to do if elected as Member of Parliament for Cowichan-Malahat-Langford.