

Election 2015 Candidate Survey from GSA : Entry # 275

Information about you

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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?

Our priorities include ensuring there is adequate capacity to respond to emergencies, ensuring polluters bear responsibility for their actions and ensuring proper environmental assessments of shipments.

Emergency oil spill response capacity is vastly under-resourced and insufficient to face the increased risks that come 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.

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. The Conservative government has failed to give Canadians the protection we need. When it comes to our coasts and waterways, self-regulation in the shipping industry is not adequate.

We need proper environmental assessments of proposals to ship crude through our waterways and along our coast. Governments must give priority to the safety of the public and of our environment.

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 to allow those affected to participate.

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

The proposed TransMountain pipeline expansion cannot be approved in the

absence of a thorough, credible, and complete environmental assessment. The National Energy Board review currently underway is a deeply flawed process that has no credibility.

We are aware of widespread public concern about the Kinder Morgan proposal. Many British Columbians are worried about the increased environmental risks of an expanded pipeline, the protection of value-added jobs and the impact of dramatically increasing tanker traffic in the Vancouver harbour. These concerns need a full hearing.

An NDP government will ensure that development projects are sustainable and benefit Canadians.

We are committed to ensure an effective and efficient review process that is fair, open and transparent.

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

The Conservatives have systematically dismantled environmental protections, arbitrarily limited the National Energy Board's reviews and severely restricted public input. They have run roughshod over or entirely dismantled laws to protect endangered species, to protect our lakes and rivers, and to protect fish and their habitat. An NDP government will rebuild, renew and strengthen the environmental assessment regime to ensure that the public interest and our environment come first.

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 will end fossil fuel subsidies, and implement a cap-and-trade system that puts a price on carbon.

We will restore Canada's international reputation on the environment. Tom Mulcair has committed to showing up at the climate meeting in Paris this November with a climate change targets for Canada and a real plan to achieve them.

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, including 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 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. This legislation would:

- 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.
- Designate the Canadian Coast Guard as a receiver of wreck 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.

New Democrats remain committed to protecting our waters from pollution and other hazards posed by derelict vessels. We will reintroduce this legislation once we form government, and ensure that a permanent and timely solution is found for derelict vessels.