

Election 2015 Candidate Survey from GSA : Entry # 286

Information about you

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Party

Liberal

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?

Stephen Harper's cuts to marine safety resources and the closure of Vancouver's Kitsilano Coast Guard Base each undermine our ability to respond to spills like this. A new Liberal government will re-open a full-service Coast Guard station in Vancouver and re-invest in marine safety and oil spill response capacity on the BC coast.

Vancouver has the busiest port in Canada and needs the fast response capability the Kitsilano Coast Guard members were known for. Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau understands this, having studied, lived and worked in Vancouver for many years.

That's why, if elected to form the government later this year, the Liberal Party of Canada will:

- Re-open the Kitsilano Coast Guard base, which was closed by Mr. Harper's government
- Re-invest in marine safety
- Ensure best in the world spill response capability

Liberals believe that protected marine areas are critical to protecting Canadian ecosystems, and also our economic well-being. These areas help fish stocks recover, support eco-tourism, protect coastlines from erosion, and protect species at risk. Unfortunately, the Harper decade has taken us backwards, placing our environment at greater risk and squandering economic opportunities. For example, in 2011 Mr. Harper committed to protecting 10 percent of Canada's marine and coastal areas. While the United States and the United Kingdom have already reached their targets, Canada has only protected 1.3 percent of its marine and coastal areas. The Liberal plan will ensure that Canada can tap into the economic opportunities of our environment and create the clean jobs of tomorrow. It will undo the damage done by Harper and give to our children and grandchildren a country even more beautiful, sustainable, and prosperous than the one we have now.

A Liberal government will:

- Increase the amount of Canada's marine and coastal areas that are protected from 1.3 percent to 5 percent by 2017,

and 10 percent by 2020.

- Reverse the \$40 million that Mr. Harper cut from the federal Government's ocean science and monitoring programs.
- Formalize the moratorium on crude oil tanker traffic on British Columbia's North Coast, including the Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait, and Queen Charlotte Sound, to ensure that ecologically sensitive areas and local economies are protected from the potentially devastating impacts of a spill.

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

We commit to smarter co-management of our oceans, by working with the provinces, Indigenous Peoples, and other stakeholders. We will develop plans that not only make best use of our marine resources, but give coastal communities more say in managing the resources around them.

A Liberal government will provide dedicated funding to invest in a broad range of projects, including but not limited to: local water and waste-water facilities, climate resilient infrastructure, clean energy, and clean-up of contaminated sites to facilitate new construction. We will also support efforts to prepare for changing weather patterns, such as: protections against wildfires, improved storm water systems to diminish the impact of urban floods, additional dams and dikes to prevent overland or coastal flooding, the reinforcement of energy systems in the face of possible ice storms, and the reinforcement of infrastructure to confront melting permafrost in our North. These and other efforts will be undertaken in partnership with other orders of government and based on the best available science. We will boost investment in green infrastructure by nearly \$6 billion over the next four years, and almost \$20 billion over ten years.

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

We believe projects like these must earn the trust of communities, must respect Aboriginal rights, and cannot place our lands, waterways or ecosystems at risk. Liberals, have a plan to get our resources back to market while regaining public trust. A Liberal government will work with provinces and territories to establish a pan-Canadian framework to reduce carbon emissions and fight climate change.

The provinces and territories will have the flexibility to design their own policies to meet these commitments, including the implementation of their own carbon pricing policies. If we do not demonstrate to the world that we have our act together as a country on the environment, we will find it harder and harder to get our resources to global markets.

The Liberal Party of Canada has serious concerns about the review process for the TransMountain pipeline expansion project, which failed to consult adequately with local communities and Indigenous Peoples, and Canadians have not been reassured that the local economy and environment will be protected. The Conservative government has failed to create fair and transparent processes by which industry and civil society can provide input during the National Energy Board Hearings.

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

Liberals recognize that without public trust, Canada's environmental assessment processes are increasingly paralyzed. That means not only are we not doing a good enough job at protecting our environment, but we are not getting our resources to market. We need clear and efficient processes that have reasonable, even-handed rules, clear beginning and ending points, and decisions that can be relied on. We will launch an immediate, public review of Canada's environmental assessment processes. Based on this review, a Liberal government will replace Mr. Harper's changes to the environmental assessment process with a new, comprehensive, timely, and fair process that:

- Restores robust oversight and thorough environmental assessments which have been gutted by this Conservative government of areas under federal jurisdiction, while also working with provincial and territorial governments to ensure

that processes are not duplicated;

- Ensures decisions are based on science, facts, and evidence, and serve the public's interest;
- Provides ways for interested Canadians to express their views and for experts to meaningfully participate in assessment processes; and
- Requires project proponents to choose the best technologies available to reduce environmental impacts.

As part of this review, we will modernize and rebuild trust in the National Energy Board. We will ensure it has broad regional representation and sufficient expertise in fields such as environmental science, community development, and Indigenous traditional knowledge.

We will stop the practice of having federal Ministers interfere in projects while they are being assessed.

We will, in full partnership and consultation with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples, undertake a full review of regulatory law, policies, and operational practices. This will ensure that the Crown is fully executing its consultation, accommodation, and consent obligations on project reviews and assessments, in accordance with its constitutional and international human rights obligations. These include Aboriginal and Treaty rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We recognize the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the land, and will respect legal traditions and perspectives on environmental stewardship

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

As Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau will attend the December 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris, and will invite all Premiers to join him. Within 90 days of the conference, a First Ministers meeting will be held to work together on a framework to combat climate change.

Central to this will be the creation of national emissions-reduction targets, informed by the best economic and scientific analysis. These targets must recognise the economic cost and catastrophic impact that a greater-than two-degree increase in average global temperatures would represent, as well as the necessity for Canada to do its part to prevent that from happening. We believe that Harper's targets are inadequate and meaningless without a plan to achieve them.

We will ensure that the provinces and territories have adequate tools to design their own policies to meet these commitments, including their own carbon pricing policies. As part of the comprehensive emissions reduction agreement with provinces and territories, we will provide targeted federal funding to help them achieve these goals.

A portfolio of actions appropriate for the diverse economies of each jurisdiction is the only way to significantly reduce Canada's emissions; there is no one-size-fits-all solution. But the cost of inaction is too high and the federal government has a responsibility to lead, create the conditions and provide the support required for Canada to meet its climate targets.

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?

We are blessed to live in a country as beautiful and with as much natural capital as Canada. From our freshwater to our oceans, from our mountains to our Prairies our economy benefits from our abundant resources, but also from our ecosystems that filter our air or absorb flood waters. If this beauty and long-term economic benefits are to last, we must be vigilant in protecting what we have today. It is each generation's responsibility to leave a cleaner, healthier environment to subsequent generations. Stephen Harper is failing in that obligation. Better safeguards and stewardship make our ecosystems richer and more productive. They also create jobs as ecological know-how becomes more and more valued around the world.

We will explore, consult, and work collaboratively to move towards a system where federal environmental assessments of projects include an analysis of upstream impacts and the greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the projects being assessed.

The Liberal Party of Canada believes that a credible environmental assessment must be conducted in order to determine whether the proposed coal transport project is in the public's best interests. The safety of Canadians is our priority. Unfortunately the Conservative government has slashed rail safety by 20% and are implementing fragmentary rules rather than having a comprehensive approach to ensure Canadians feel safe.

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

We will ensure that we protect marine areas increasing the amount of Canada's marine and coastal areas that are protected from 1.3 percent to 5 percent by 2017, and 10 percent by 2020. Our reversal of the \$40 million that Mr. Harper cut from the federal government's ocean science and monitoring programs as well as our plan to formalize the moratorium on crude oil tanker traffic on British Columbia's North Coast, including the Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait, and Queen Charlotte Sound, will help ensure that ecologically sensitive areas and our local economies are protected from the potentially devastating impacts of a spill.

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

This government has failed to deliver a sensible, credible approach to the environment and the economy. The simple fact is that in 2015, pretending that we have to choose between the two is as harmful as it is wrong.

Harper is wrong on the environment, and that means he's wrong on the economy too. Canadians cannot afford to let this inaction continue. The cost is too high. The Liberal plan will ensure that Canada can tap into the economic opportunities of our environment and create the clean jobs of tomorrow. It will undo the damage done by Harper and give to our children and grandchildren a country even more beautiful, sustainable, and prosperous than the one we have now.

We believe this election is a clear choice between smart investments that create jobs and growth, or austerity and cuts that will slow our economy further. Only Liberals have a real plan to build a strong economy and middle class. Harper's plan has failed. While middle class Canadians struggle to make ends meet, Harper gives billions in benefits to the wealthiest few and will do nothing to help Canadians get ahead. Canadians want change, and only Liberals are offering a plan that will deliver growth that works for everyone. Our plan will make a real, positive difference for all Canadians. Mulcair has no answers on the economy, irresponsibly supports Harper's plan to give more money to millionaires, and will cut billions of dollars in public investments. This election is about our future, and Canadians know that better is always possible. After a decade of Stephen Harper, only Liberals are offering new leadership and a new plan that will deliver real change so all Canadians can succeed.