

Election 2015 Candidate Survey from GSA : Entry # 256

Information about you

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Party

New Democratic Party of Canada (NDP)

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.

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?

The NDP will establish a strong, rigorous independent environmental review process that is based in science, respects local communities, and honours our legal obligations to First Nations. The process should consider the full environmental, social and economic impacts of proposed projects. Projects like the Trans Mountain pipeline proposal must be subject to this kind of rigorous review before the National Energy Board makes a decision, and the federal cabinet should not be able to overturn the National Energy Board's decisions.

Unfortunately, the current review process, which has been severely curtailed by the Conservative government that is currently considering the Trans Mountain pipeline proposal, is far too weak and flawed to allow the application to proceed.

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 vessels, 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 Conservative majority in the House of Commons defeated the NDP bill. 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 an island city, Richmond citizens have already noticed the impact of climate change on our environment and rising sea levels. The bad news is that with the continual increase of CO2 levels, this is only going to get worse. The good news is that we, as citizens, have the ability to change that trajectory.

Despite studies that indicate that more Canadians are becoming increasingly concerned about climate change and its impact on future generations, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservatives have been absent on the issue.

In 2007, Harper said climate change is "perhaps the biggest threat to confront the future of humanity today", yet, Canadians have seen little action on this issue from this government.

Over 9 years, the Harper Conservatives have scrapped environmental regulations, done away with regular environmental reviews of industry projects, silenced scientists, cut funding to the National Foundation for Climate and Atmospheric Research (which led to its doors closing), and eliminated funding for other environmental programs.

Last year, Environment Minister Rona Ambrose announced that Canada is failing to meet targets set for 2020. If our Prime Minister is so concerned with a threat to the future of humanity, why won't he take action to combat risks to the environment?

Instead of relying on antiquated means of meeting our energy needs, Canada must push towards investing revenue and resources into sustainable energy solutions. Wind, solar, geothermal, and a myriad of green energy solutions could provide incalculable benefits for the preservation of Canada's natural resources, as well as pump billions of dollars into our local economy. All of these alternative energy options require highly trained and skilled people to develop, implement, and maintain them. This could create hundreds of thousands of new jobs and help to alleviate some of the stress associated with rising unemployment rates.

Last October, I was pleased to see that Richmond City Council unanimously adopted a declaration in support of the Right to a Healthy Environment. It's time for our federal government to make combating climate change and investing in renewable energy solutions a priority. With a federal election coming on October 19, we must act now to prioritize investment in renewable energy. We owe it to our children and future generations to take action and to demand that our government put the needs of Canadians first by protecting our air, water, and soil from further pollutions and environmental destruction.

I am confident that NDP Leader Tom Mulcair has the skills, knowledge, and experience to get the job done. His record proves it: Quebec reduced its greenhouse emissions each and every year he was Environment Minister.