

Election 2015 Candidate Survey from GSA : Entry # 276

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?

The Conservative government has failed to ensure that BC's west coast is adequately protected. Our marine emergency oil spill response capacity is vastly under-resourced and the Conservatives' closure of Marine Communications and Traffic Services and Coast Guard offices must be reversed.

The NDP has fought the reckless closures of Coast Guard and search and rescue services; we pushed in Parliament to improve Canada's unacceptably slow rescue response times. As Victoria's MP, I co-sponsored a motion to re-open the Kitsilano Coast Guard and save the Marine Communication and Traffic Services centre in Ucluelet, as well as coastal services in Comox.

An NDP government's top three priorities to improve marine oil spill preparedness and response on BC's coast are, first, to ensure there is adequate capacity to respond to emergencies. Second, to ensure that proposals to ship crude oil through our waterways undergo rigorous environmental assessments; and third, to immediately re-open the Kitsilano Coast Guard base, the Marine Communications and Traffic Service Centre in Ucluelet, and stop the closures of these centres in Vancouver and Comox.

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

A robust environmental assessment process includes meaningful consultation and participation from the public from the local to the federal level of government.

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?

An NDP Government would explore the creation of a citizens advisory council with participation from the public, First Nations, municipal, and provincial partners. Meaningful consultation with local communities would be a priority.

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?

Ensuring public safety from oil spill impacts and protection of the environment would be a priority of an NDP government.

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

There are currently two pipeline proposals underway in British Columbia that are unacceptable: Enbridge and Kinder Morgan. Enbridge's proposal to increase tanker traffic poses far too much risk and that's why the NDP introduced a bill to ban all oil tanker traffic down the North Coast. Kinder Morgan's proposal is also unacceptable; it fails to achieve our climate change goals, it doesn't meet tough environmental standards, and it doesn't respect our legal and moral obligations to First Nations. Projects that don't process resources here in Canada don't create jobs for Canadians.

Before becoming an MP, I was an environmental lawyer and I specialized in exposing how flawed Canada's environmental assessment process is. I advised the BC NDP on its legal strategy on the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline and helped to expose the problems there. Canada needs a reliable, credible, evidence-based assessment process with tough environmental standards and a climate lens. If re-elected, I will continue to work for this and will stand up for our coast, for our tourism economy, and for real action on climate change.

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

The National Energy Board's review process is fundamentally flawed. As I told the House of Commons in February, the NEB is unfairly restricting public input and refusing to allow cross-examination, ignoring upstream and downstream greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, and refusing to subject key documents to public scrutiny.

An NDP government will establish an assessment and review process that Canadians can put their trust in once and for all, a process with sustainability at its core.

We will ensure that projects are reviewed through a climate lens and respect the new international commitments we will make to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

We will build and sustain a real nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous communities.

We will overhaul and strengthen Canada's environmental assessment regime to make it open, fair and transparent.

And we will rebuild public trust by lifting the Conservatives' arbitrary limits on public participation in project reviews and seeking input from Canadians.

Canadians are too often told by Conservatives that we must choose between the economy and the environment. This is a false choice. It's time for a new approach that grows our economy, protects our environment, and ensures sustainable prosperity for future generations.

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

First, the next international climate change conference will occur just six weeks after the federal election; we need a Prime Minister, Tom Mulcair, who will attend this conference in Paris, work with rather than against the international community, and commit to effective climate change targets.

Second, over the years NDP MPs have introduced and re-introduced the Climate Change Accountability Act, a Private Member's Bill that at one point passed the House of Commons but was defeated by the Senate. An NDP government would re-introduce this bill to ensure that the importance of addressing climate change is enshrined in our legislation.

Third, the federal government must implement a concrete plan with targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions pollution by 34 per cent below 1990 levels by 2025. The main mechanism an NDP government will use to meet our targets is a cap-and-trade system that would include all major emitting sectors in Canada.

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 Conservatives have entirely dismantled the laws that protect our endangered species, lakes, rivers, and fish. An NDP Government will restore these laws. We are committed to rebuilding a strong environmental assessment regime that ensures the environmental impacts of each project are looked at individually and in terms of cumulative environmental, regional, and climate 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?

As the Official Opposition, New Democrats introduced legislation to allow for the Coast Guard to take responsibility for derelict vessels which pose a risk to our marine environment.

Bill C-638 was defeated by the Conservative majority in the House of Commons, but New Democrats remain committed to protecting our waters from pollution and other hazards posed by derelict vessels and will reintroduce this legislation once we form government.

This legislation (Bill C-638) would compel the government to immediately take action when derelict vessels are abandoned in our waterways. It would strengthen the requirements relating to derelict and abandoned vessels and designate the Canadian Coast Guard as a receiver of these vessels with the authority to locate the owners of the vessels and take steps for their removal and destruction.

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

Thank you so much for the opportunity to address these issues. My personal opposition to the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline project and the overall dismantling of the environmental assessment process under the Harper Conservatives are what drove me to run for office. I've been honoured to stand up for environmental and social justice in Victoria as a member of the Official Opposition for the past three years, and I'm excited at the prospect of being elected again as part of an NDP government that could implement real action on climate change and other environmental issues.