

Election 2015 Candidate Survey from GSA : Entry # 271

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?

The Green Party is committed to improving marine oil spill preparedness and response on BC's west coast. Our priorities include a legislated ban on supertankers on B.C.'s coast. With the expansion of the oil sands and corresponding pipeline and tanker schemes, a bitumen spill will be inevitable. No pipelines, no tankers, no spills, no problem. We also want to restore funding for spill response as there are existing vessels that may encounter a problem again in the future, like the Marathassa. Over the last few years, the Harper Conservatives have recklessly cut many programs necessary for effective spill response on our coast, including the closure of the Kitsilano Coast Guard Base. Green MPs will advocate to reopen the three bases closed in British Columbia and preventing the closure of bases across Canada.

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

We should build on the Australian model to bring together various levels of government to identify specific needs in areas of hazards research and to establish a collective emergency management agenda. This model involves the Council of Australian Governments acting through the Standing Council on Police and Emergency Management (SCPEM). The goals of the SCPEM are threefold:

- to promote a coordinated national response to law enforcement and emergency management issues;
- to provide a framework for cooperation and shared strategic directions for the policing and emergency services of Australia and New Zealand; and
- to encourage and share best practice in police policy and operations and in emergency management across jurisdictions.

We envision a similar Council of Canadian Governments, creating policy coherence between all levels of government so that we can all row in the same direction, so to speak.

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?

The Green Party will support the establishment of a Citizens Advisory Council to to facilitate citizen input into and oversight of Canada's marine oil spill preparedness and response regime. While oil companies stand to make a profit from pipelines and tankers, it is citizens that too often pay the price for a spill. The Green Party will support initiatives like a Citizens Advisory Council that give citizens a voice in oil spill preparedness and response.

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?

The Green Party will redress the real fiscal imbalance facing the municipal level of government. Green Party MPs will work to greatly increase funding through Public Safety Canada and the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) for projects that implement municipal, territorial, and provincial emergency preparedness plans, including: public education and training programs and local emergency infrastructure, such as adequate oil spill response systems.

We need to simplify the Public Safety Canada application process and expand the eligibility criteria for funding through the JEPP. Green MPs will work to increase funding for emergency preparedness training programs for emergency responders, including the Canadian Emergency Preparedness College.

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

The Green Party fully opposes the Kinder-Morgan TransMountain pipeline expansion project. The Greens are the only federal party opposed to all existing proposals to expand major fossil fuel infrastructure. We stand firmly against the expanded use of pipelines for the purpose of getting raw bitumen (dilbit) from the oil sands to port. These projects will dramatically increase the number of oil tankers along the British Columbia coast, threatening local ecosystems and economies. The Green Party strongly opposes any such increase in tanker traffic, and has advocated for a legislated ban on supertankers on the British Columbia coast.

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

As the review process has shown, the NEB's pipeline review process is broken. In Bill C-38, the disastrous omnibus budget bill, Stephen Harper repealed the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and placed pipeline environmental assessment reviews in the hands of the NEB – an organization that's denied the public access and refused to include climate change as an issue of concern.

Citizens of BC must have a definitive say about the proposal to dramatically increase bitumen-loaded tankers through our waters. Elizabeth May is an intervenor in the Kinder-Morgan National Energy Board hearing process. I myself am also an intervenor (on behalf of the Hastings Crossing Business Improvement Association) However, the process has been reduced to largely a paper exercise, by eliminating the opportunity for oral cross-examination, the weakness of Kinder-Morgan's evidence may escape public exposure. The exclusion of climate change is also a reprehensible omission in the criteria for review.

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

1. Halt oil sands expansion. Given climate realities and volatile international oil prices, expanding oil sands production is simply not on. Most of the bitumen in the Alberta oil sands must remain in the ground. We will create new jobs in Canada's oil and gas sector by refining the product we already produce, rather than shipping it out raw for refining in other countries.

2. Implement a National Energy Strategy that includes a price on carbon. Climate and energy are two sides of the same coin. We urgently need a comprehensive, science-based national climate strategy to address rising sea levels, drought, extreme weather events, changing rainfall patterns, increased forest fires, melting permafrost and crumbling Arctic infrastructure.

A robust Canadian Climate and Energy Strategy begins with eliminating all fossil fuel subsidies. Canada currently provides more than \$1 billion dollars a year in subsidies to the fossil fuel industry, meaning, on a per capita basis, Canadian taxpayers provide more handouts to the fossil fuel industry than almost every other country in the G20.

Next, we must work together to put a national price on carbon. In the complete absence of federal leadership, the provinces have taken up the challenge of climate change on their own. Although some progress has been made, notably in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec, this patchwork of climate strategies is an inefficient way to tackle an issue that faces all Canadians.

The Carbon Fee and Dividend Plan is the smartest, most efficient, and most effective way to shift away from burning fossil fuels. We will place a fee on carbon, and pay the funds it generates directly to every Canadian over age 18 in the form of an annual carbon dividend. This plan will defend our climate, diversify our energy mix, grow our economy, and ensure energy security for Canadians.

a. A key part of this strategy will be to get provinces off using coal for electricity. As much GHG pollution comes from Alberta's coal plants as from the oil sands. That's why GPC promotes renewables and a major improvement of our east-west electricity grid for the sale of clean energy across Canada while more new renewable energy ramps up in each of the currently fossil-based provinces.

3. Invest in an infrastructure that promotes renewable energy, and a more robust east-west electricity grid to promote renewable energy transmission between provinces, while reducing the enormous waste in our energy systems. We still waste more than half the energy we use. It's time to save money and reduce pollution by going after waste.

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?

Yes. The Green Party will support a cumulative effects assessment for this project.

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

As Paul Manly, Green Candidate for Nanaimo-Ladysmith, wrote:

Derelict and abandoned vessels pose a serious threat to the environment of B.C.'s coastal communities but the federal government has been reluctant to act.

The Transport Canada Ship-Source Oil Pollution Fund can only be used for clean-up after a spill has occurred. That's too late.

The Green Party stands by the principle that polluters must pay and be held responsible for their actions. Registration, insurance and vessel safety codes should be in place to ensure that boat owners are in compliance with the standards necessary to protect our coastal waters.

We also stand by the precautionary principle and would empower the Canadian Coast Guard to take action in situations where vessels have been abandoned in substandard conditions and pose a threat to the environment.

Our local economies depend greatly on the vital role played by our harbours in the fishing, tourism and transportation industries. They must be protected with the full force of federal legislation.

The Green Party will support legislation that holds owners of derelict vessels responsible but which also empowers

Transport Canada and the Coast Guard, providing the necessary funding to be proactive and deal with derelict and

abandoned vessels before they cause environmental disasters.

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

The Green Party is committed to restoring evidence-based decision making and ensuring unfettered access to public science. Public science belongs to the people. It is not for the communications specialists in the Prime Minister's Office to decide what publicly funded information becomes known.