



## Green Party of Canada responses to the CTF/FCE election priorities

### Ending Poverty

Questions:

- **What is your party's plan to fulfill the National Poverty Reduction Strategy?**
- **How does your party plan to work with the provinces and territories in order to reach poverty reduction targets?**
- **Where does your party stand on developing national daycare and lunch programs?**

The most recent Canadian Income Survey reveals that 9.5% of Canada's population—about 3.4 million people—lives below the poverty line. Poverty rates are even higher within marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as people living with disabilities, single mothers, and seniors. In a wealthy country like Canada, this is unacceptable.

Of all Canada's social problems, child poverty may be the most shameful. In 1989, the old-line political parties voted unanimously to end child poverty by the year 2000. Despite recent improvements, far too many Canadian children still grow up in poverty. Child poverty rates are especially high among Indigenous peoples, single-parent households headed by women, and new Canadians. Canada now ranks a dismal 25<sup>th</sup> out of 38 countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in terms of relative child poverty rates.

Greens believe reducing child poverty starts with a stronger commitment to guaranteeing that all families have the ability to provide for their children. Research has demonstrated that programs providing a universal basic income reduce expenditure on health care—since poverty is the single largest determinant of ill health—and the justice system, and increase school retention. Such programs are affordable, but the savings and costs of implementation are experienced in different orders of government. To proceed will require cooperation of each province, territory, and Indigenous community through a vehicle such as the Council of Canadian Governments.

Greens will establish a universal Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI) program to replace the current array of income supports, such as disability payments, social assistance, and income supplements for seniors. The negotiation to implement a livable income across the country would take place through the Council of Canadian Governments. Unlike existing income support programs, additional income would not be clawed back. Those earning above a certain total income would pay the GLI back in taxes. We will also establish a national school lunch program.

## Sustainable Climate Action

Questions:

- **How is your party going to address the adverse effects of climate change?**
- **How does your party plan to increase climate change education for all Canadians?**
- **What can the federal government do to support curriculum dedicated to climate change?**

The current federal target is a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 2005 levels by 2030. This was set by Conservative Prime Minister Harper in 2015 and adopted by Liberal Prime Minister Trudeau in 2016.<sup>1</sup> Not only is this too low, the Liberal and Conservative climate action plans will not even achieve that insufficient reduction, let alone the target that climate scientists say we must meet.

A Green government will pass into law a climate change act requiring a 60% cut in climate-changing emissions below 2005 levels by 2030, reaching net zero in 2050. Interim targets would be set at five-year intervals beginning with 2025.

To achieve this, the government of Canada must utilize every tool in the federal toolkit, including regulations, public spending, and pollution pricing.<sup>2</sup> Indigenous leadership is critical to the climate goals of *Mission: Possible*.

## The Green Climate Emergency Action Plan

- Establish a cross-party inner cabinet to deal with climate change to limit the destructive impact of partisan politics which has thwarted strong climate action for two decades. Its mandate would be to ensure that Canada does its part to limit global warming to a level civilization can survive, and mitigate the impacts of climate change on Canadians.

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<sup>1</sup> Baseline year is 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Part 4 of the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* empowers the Minister of Environment to bring in regulated limits of emissions of GHG from any facility in Canada.

- Set legal emissions limits for industries that decline over time, with penalties for exceeding those limits.
- Maintain a broad-based, revenue-neutral carbon fee on all sources of carbon dioxide pollution. Revenues from the carbon fee would be returned to Canadians as a dividend.

## **Energy**

Since producing and burning fossil fuels is the largest source of emissions, we need to keep fossil fuels in the ground, and retool society to run on non-polluting, renewable energy sources. This is entirely possible, according to studies by Stanford University researchers and the Deep Decarbonization Pathways Project.

## **Agriculture**

In August 2019, climate scientists released a report warning that agriculture must be transformed in order to meet climate change goals.<sup>3</sup> Canada has a huge opportunity to become a world leader in reversing climate change through regenerative agriculture practices. The soil will be the unsung hero, a game-changer in fighting climate change.

- Implement national standards for reducing the use of nitrogen fertilizers in crop agriculture, reducing erosion and rebuilding soils to retain carbon, and transitioning away from industrial livestock production.
- Support the transition of industrial agriculture systems to regenerative agriculture.

## **Transportation**

The transportation sector produces over a quarter of Canada's climate pollution and this is growing. A Green government will develop a national transportation strategy with a goal of reaching zero-carbon public ground transportation everywhere in Canada by 2040. Rail will be the hub, with spokes of light rail and electric bus connections. This includes service to rural and remote communities, since everyone in Canada must have access to reliable transportation.

## **Adapting to Climate Change: Investing in Critical Infrastructure**

Even the one-degree warming already reached is producing unusually severe flooding, fires, drought, and extreme weather events. It is essential that public infrastructure and natural landscapes can withstand and protect Canadians from natural and climate change induced disasters.

- Direct the Canada Infrastructure Bank, revamped to exclude private profit in infrastructure, to invest in climate-proofing essential infrastructure, prioritizing upgrades to drinking water and waste water systems to protect against flooding, droughts, and contamination.

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<sup>3</sup> IPCC August 2019 Report on land.

- Using the existing Green Infrastructure Fund, launch a national program to restore natural buffer zones along waterways, and carbon sinks through ecologically sound tree-planting and soil re-building.
- Invoke federal powers for peace, order and good government to develop non-commercial aspects of forest management, such as massive tree planting, creating fire breaks and fire suppression, for climate change adaptation.<sup>4</sup>
- Renew the abandoned process of a National Forest Strategy, with the focus on restoring ecologically sound and climate resilient forests, and restoring forests as carbon sinks, in partnership with Indigenous peoples. Orient federal forest science towards this goal.

## Buildings

- Launch a massive energy efficiency retrofit of residential, commercial, and institutional buildings. To make a renewable energy transition possible, we have to eliminate energy waste. According to trade union research, this will create over four million jobs.
- Finance building retrofits and installation of renewable energy technologies such as solar and heat pumps through direct grants, zero-interest loans and repayments based on energy/cost savings.
- Change the National Building Code of Canada to require new construction to meet net-zero emission standards by 2030 and work with the provinces to enact it.<sup>5</sup>

We are happy to work with teachers across Canada to develop curriculum for teachers, as well as education for general Canadians. We will make sure the curricula are age-appropriate and firmly rooted in the latest research.

## Mental Health

Questions:

- **What does your party plan to do in order to improve knowledge and access to mental health resources, supports, and services to assist students, teachers, and education support workers in publicly funded, K-12 public schools in Canada?**

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<sup>4</sup> Forest management in areas of commercial forest is provincial jurisdiction, but the climate emergency requires that the federal government engage.

<sup>5</sup> Building codes are regulated provincially, based on a national code. Achieving this would require provincial cooperation. A net-zero building produces as much energy as it uses.

- **How can your party make mental health a greater priority for all Canadians?**
- **How can government work to dispel the myths surrounding mental health?**

The Green Party is committed to the principles and requirements of the *Canada Health Act* and to extending that model to other aspects of health care, such as mental health and psychological services for youth. We will negotiate the Canada Health Accord to prioritize expansion of mental health and rehabilitation services, and reorient Health Canada's mandate towards mental health and addictions, health promotion and disease prevention, and the health risks of climate change. We will establish a funding program within Health Canada to support community-based organizations offering targeted LGBTQI2+ youth's mental health and well-being programs, including suicide prevention, peer support, coming out, and counselling.

## Gender Equity

Questions:

- **What does your party plan to do to provide greater economic opportunities to women?**
- **Where does your party stand on implementing a national, universal daycare program?**
- **How does your party plan to increase acceptance and understanding of gender diversity?**

It is a black mark against Canada that, in 2019, Canadian women earn, on average, \$8,000 less per year than their male counterparts for doing the same jobs. We will fight to end gender-based discrimination in the workplace and in Canadian society at large, and ensure that Canada eliminates the gender wage gap once and for all.

Greens welcomed the government's launch of a Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence given that the majority of Canadian women and girls are victims of violence at some point in their lives. We are committed to a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women, which must:

- bring together all levels of government and stakeholders to develop a strategy;
- educate the public about violence against women;
- recognize the unique needs and risk factors for Indigenous women;
- provide increased funding for women's shelters and sexual assault support centres;
- ensure appropriate services for women and children impacted by domestic violence;
- revise laws to increase penalties for domestic violence, and support access to restorative justice processes for Indigenous people.

- establish a Guaranteed Liveable Income (GLI), to ensure no woman is without the means to flee domestic violence; and
- establish a National Housing Strategy that will end homelessness.

With a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women, we can ensure victims and survivors are supported as we work to end gender-based violence entirely.

Canada also needs a plan—a road map to affordable childcare for all children. A Green government will collaborate with provinces/territories, local communities, Indigenous communities, and the childcare sector to ensure that a comprehensive short-, medium- and long-term policy road map—based on the principles of universality, affordability, quality, inclusivity, and equity—finally becomes a reality.

Canada must dedicate additional resources to making a universal, affordable, early learning and childcare (ELCC) system a reality. It cannot occur without public funding. Canada needs an ELCC system that contributes to a green Canada. Thus, a Green Party government's childcare plan will provide the early educator jobs that sustain local communities. It will also recognize that sparsely and unevenly available childcare services force parents to take out-of-their-way routes to childcare and work, often by car. Green Party plans for childcare take into account not only parents' convenience but also climate goals. Location of childcare must reflect the diversity of family needs and be placed along existing public transit routes, including neighbourhood schools, other local buildings, workplaces, and transportation hubs.

Well-designed ELCC is also fundamental to meeting broader equity and social justice goals, for fighting poverty, as a foundation for children's lifelong learning, and as part of the backbone of a thriving society. Quality childcare yields high social and economic returns in the short and long term by:

- supporting women's workforce participation, education, and training;
- strengthening children's health, development and well-being in the early years to provide a strong foundation for learning and living in later years;
- strengthening inclusion and respect for diversity for children with disabilities, diverse ethnic and racial groups, newcomers and disadvantaged Canadians; and
- countering Canada's slide towards being a more unequal society.

Greens are also committed to counteracting deeply ingrained beliefs and harmful views of gender norms on members of the LGBTQI2+ community. The Green Party called for the legalization of same-sex marriage in the 1980s, the first political party to do so. Greens believe that consensual sexual freedom is a fundamental human right and that acceptance and celebration of LGBTQI2+ people and identities are essential for genuine social justice and equity. We affirm that gender identity is each person's individual experience of gender, that everyone has the right to define and freely express their

gender, and that intersex people have the right to live with complete bodily autonomy. We affirm that all young people deserve access to safe and comprehensive sex education based on a thorough understanding of diverse sexualities, diverse genders, intersex biology, and informed consent.

Greens will:

- fund community-driven education and awareness programs that lead to a greater understanding of intersex realities and the diversity of sexualities and gender identities;
- ensure that the national census is designed to reflect the diversity of sex and gender, and ask appropriate questions to ensure adequate, safe, and effective data collection;
- require accessible facilities in all federal buildings, including gender-neutral washrooms, changing facilities, etc. while also re-affirming trans, non-binary, and Two Spirit people's right to use whichever facilities with which they identify.

## Strong Unions and Labour Rights

Questions:

- **How does your party see unions as central to helping solve many of our societal challenges?**
- **What will your party do to ensure that Canadians are empowered through union membership?**
- **What will your party do to protect pensions?**

Greens believe in the rights of workers to organize and in the free collective bargaining process. Labour rights are human rights.

A strong economy needs a workforce with protected rights. Union members have better job security, higher wages, better health care benefits, and better protection against unfair labour practices. Union members are then able to pay taxes, put money back into the economy, and live healthier lives. That means that union members are able to help pay for public services and also to help grow their local economies. All people in a society, not just union members, benefit from a unionized workforce. We will work to educate the public and employers about the benefits of unionization.

We affirm the rights of Canadians to collective bargaining, and will respect the unionized employees of the federal public service and the bargaining process by rejecting back-to-work legislation as a bargaining tool.

Greens will ensure the Canada Pension Plan remains robust and adaptive to changing needs and circumstances by increasing over time the target income replacement rate from 25% to 50% of income received during working years.

The Green Party will also give pension debts priority during insolvency proceedings by a company, making cash owed to the pension fund and existing pensioners the first to be paid out over other creditors. These amendments to the *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* and *Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act* are needed to protect pensioners, and we will fight for it whether or not our party forms government.