



Green Party
of Canada

2006 Election Platform



WE CAN
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A message from Jim Harris, Leader of the Green Party of Canada



In the 2004 federal election, the Green Party of Canada changed the face of Canadian politics. For the first time, Canadians were introduced to the Green Party's way of doing politics. Defying expectations, we fielded a full slate of candidates and made certain that every Canadian had an opportunity to cast a vote for social progress, environmental sustainability, and governmental accountability. And a record number of Canadians, almost 600,000, joined with us in that vision.

You'll discover as you read our platform that the Green Party, unlike other political parties, is uniquely placed to defend the Canada that we cherish, a Canada that is built on compassion, integrity and accountability. The Green Party can restore Canadian values of fairness, equality and justice needed to bridge the growing gap between government and citizens, and between businesses and the communities in which they operate. And only the Green Party will protect our natural heritage as the foundation of a healthy society.

In this election, our message is simple.

- **We can** have a government that is truly accountable to Canadians, by renewing our democratic institutions to bring integrity back to public office.

- **We can** have a Canada that protects our air, soil and water while developing a strong, sustainable economy.

- **We can** move beyond our basic Kyoto commitments to make Canada a world leader in combating climate change.

- **We can** have a Canada that works for all communities, by honouring First Nation rights to self-government, Québec's rightful place in our federation, and the promise that new Canadians bring to our communities from coast to coast to coast. The Green Party's Canada is inclusive and progressive, where our values of diversity, tolerance and compassion ensure that no one is left behind.

Together, we can meet these challenges. Unlike other political parties who are more concerned with short-term political survival, the Green Party's first priority is the world we will leave for our children and grandchildren.

Not only do we look to improve the quality of life for this generation, the Green Party also has the courage to look further, to where we want to be as a country for generations to come. In fact, no other party in Canada brings this type of far-sighted approach to policy. The Green Party is the only political party that is beholden solely to the interests of each and every Canadian - today and in the future.

What follows in this platform are over two hundred ideas that the Green Party believes will help lead Canada into a better future.

Here, you will find our platform stresses accountability - for elected officials, corporate leaders and Canadian citizens alike.

Our environmental policies promise long-term sustainability and international leadership. We focus not just on health care, but on health, maintaining health, and preventing illness. Our social programs focus on comprehensive approaches and equal access for all Canadians. Our fiscal plan seeks to achieve these results in a prudent and balanced manner. Our foreign policies focus on peace and fair trade.

I have been involved with the Green Party for 17 years and today I am proud of our party's ability to provide you with a real alternative to the old ways of doing things.

Please join with the hundreds of thousands of Canadians like yourself who, in this election, will help elect Green Party MPs to Parliament.

Because together, we can.

Jim Harris
Leader
Green Party of Canada

The Green Party vision

As the new kid on the block, we appreciate that many Canadians want to know more about the Green Party of Canada, who we are and what we stand for. It's difficult to stick old-fashioned political labels on us, because we're neither a party of the left nor a party of the right. For us, good ideas are simply good ideas. So, who is the Green Party?

We are socially responsible and inclusive. That means: health, not just health care, lessening financial obstacles for post-secondary students, affordable housing, working with Aboriginal communities to improve well-being and self-governance, properly funding arts and culture, supporting immigrant communities, and more.

We are environmentally sensitive and innovative. That means: promoting energy conservation, and the conservation of wildlife, habitats, and natural ecosystems, shifting to a green economy, building mass transit and transportation systems that make ecological and social sense, reducing greenhouse gases and achieving Kyoto targets and moving beyond. We believe that those who pollute should pay the full cost of remediation and any damages arising from their recklessness. We have a strong vision for a sustainable society, one that respects all citizens and the natural environment that sustains us.

We are conservationists and trusted guardians of Canada's natural wealth. From depleted fish stocks to contaminated water to clear-cutting old growth forests, poor management of ecosystems has resulted in the loss of species and jobs, as well as the disintegration and displacement of communities built around these ecosystems. We can help strengthen our economy by conserving our ecology.

We will reform the tax system so that our spending better reflects the goals of a healthy and safe Canada. We want to address Canada's fiscal imbalance and we reject red tape simply for the sake of red tape. We believe Canadian sovereignty and the interests of Canadian citizens must always take precedence in trade negotiations.

We are sound financial managers. We know that the full-cost of many activities is not always found in the financial bottom line, we believe in living within our means, we know that Canada's changing demographic reality will place greater burdens on our society, and we know that reducing poverty rates will benefit all Canadians.

We are democratically representative. That means: adopting a proportional representative electoral system, renewing our political institutions, restoring people's trust in government, and connecting with community groups and citizen-based movements that are giving us the progressive tools of a more accountable and participatory society.

We can build healthy communities and a healthy country. And together, we can again inspire Canadians.



We can build a sustainable Canada

Putting the environment first in our platform makes sense, because our environment is at the heart of our well-being. From health care to economic development to quality of life, Canadians are paying a higher and higher price for decades of environmental neglect.

Toxicity

Pollution knows no boundaries, it affects all Canadians. Like sponges, our bodies are absorbing pollution and are developing environment-related illnesses at an alarming rate. From non-stick cookware to pesticides to some things that you wouldn't even think twice about, Canada is becoming a toxic country. In fact, we rate near last in all OECD categories for toxic chemicals including nuclear waste (overall rated 30th out of 30 industrialized countries). Many Canadians are scratching their heads and asking: Are we becoming the world's toxic dump?

Our bodies have become chemical stockpiles for hundreds of toxins that are not properly regulated by the federal government. Flame retardant from our furniture shows up in breast-milk; lead (a known hormone disruptor) from metal smelters causes reproductive defects; and our microwave popcorn wrapper surprises you with cancer-related perfluorooctane sulfonate (or PFOs).

The Green Party does not accept the federal government's inaction in protecting the health of Canadians. The Green Party believes that clean air, soil and water is a basic right for all Canadians.

Green Party MPs will work to:

1. Eliminate the use of the most dangerous toxic chemicals by 2008.
2. Prohibit the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes.
3. Make industry accountable for its chemicals and impose significant pollution taxes on harmful chemicals until they can be eliminated.
4. Regulate chemicals in consumer products through the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA).
5. Mandate a CEPA taskforce to focus on pollution reduction in the Great Lakes basin.
6. Create a Clean Canada Fund to clean up toxic sites.
7. Re-focus the Canadian Environmental Protection Act on pollution prevention.
8. Ban the incineration of imported toxic waste.

Healthy Ecosystems and Resource Conservation

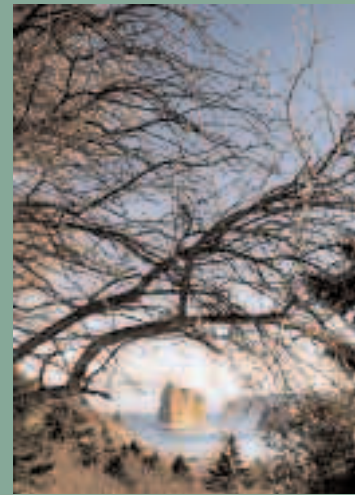
We cannot justifiably separate resources from ecosystems. Canada's forests, water, minerals and energy resources make our economy run, but only as long as they are conserved and maintain their capacity to regenerate. The Green Party's plan will curb the unsustainable consumption of finite resources and help maintain healthy ecosystems and decent jobs.

Forests

As an intrinsic part of Canada, forests helped build our identity and economy before we were even called Canadians. Canada boasts 10 per cent of the world's forests and 30 per cent of the world's boreal forests. As difficult as it may seem to put a price tag on a forest, the value of Canada's boreal forest has been estimated at \$3.7 trillion. But in many regions, kilometre after kilometre of tree stumps is what remains of this once great heritage. The Green Party understands that Canada's forests form the foundation of complex ecological systems performing important services that purify the air and water, prevent floods and erosion, and stabilize climate change. Large expanses of forest, especially old growth forests, must remain intact in order to maintain habitats and biodiversity. Industry leaders and conservation organizations understand that forests must be managed sustainably and have - as a first step - set up the Forest Stewardship Council recognizing the full economic, environmental and social benefits of forests. Meanwhile politicians have failed to provide the legislative support for greater protection.

Green Party MPs will work to:

9. Enact product stewardship legislation that would require wood producers to increase the life span of their products and to assume the full recycling and disposal costs of products.
10. Work with provinces, First Nations and the logging industry to create federal standards and best practices that ensure the sustainability of our forests.
11. Replace clear-cutting with selection logging and conserve old growth forest ecosystems.
12. In collaboration with the provinces and territories, pursue Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification of all forestry conditional upon compliance to its 10 principles on crown lands and encourage the same on private lands.
13. Promote alternatives to wood as sources of paper fibre, such as hemp and agricultural cellulose.
14. Renegotiate our trade agreements to restrict the export of raw logs and invest in value added forestry.
15. Promote the use of wood-waste to produce bio-fuels as well as co-generated steam and electricity.



Water

Sadly, Canada wastes more water per capita than any other nation on Earth, except for the United States. Our homes and industries use more water than they should. Water pollution, notably the E. Coli tragedies of Walkerton and Kashechewan, is threatening Canadians' access to safe and clean drinking water. While Europe has considerably reduced its water consumption, Canadians continue to put a heavy strain on water infrastructures and drain our impressive freshwater reserves. Instead of turning Canada into a boiled-water-advisory country, we can protect our freshwater resources, curb our water wasting habits and relieve our municipal infrastructures.

Green Party MPs will work to:

16. Stop any and all bulk water exports by renegotiating or saying no to trade deals that allow corporations to strip our watersheds of freshwater and disrupt entire ecosystems.
17. Amend the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to enshrine the right of future Canadians to an ecological heritage that includes breathable air and drinkable water.
18. Restore ecosystem health to Canada's coastline and inland watersheds by funding improvements to municipal wastewater treatment systems, with particular emphasis on ensuring shoreline communities and industries stop dumping untreated waste into rivers, lakes and oceans.

Minerals

Canada is a major international player in the mining industry. From South America to Southeast Asia, Canadian mining expertise is highly regarded. Unfortunately, more often than not, Canadian mining companies do not employ Canadian environmental and human rights standards abroad. From forced re-settlement of indigenous communities to the contamination of water, Canadian mining companies have perpetrated numerous human rights and environmental abuses. At home, the mining industry continues to plunder our ecosystems with little regard for the environmental waste and damage left behind. The Liberal government's answer has been to write up an inconsequential voluntary code of conduct for the industry. We believe Canadian companies must be held accountable for their international violations and change their environmental ways at home. We can implement legislation that will ensure corporate social responsibility.

Green Party MPs will work to:

19. Rescind all uranium-mining permits and prohibit the export of fissionable nuclear material.
20. Promote life-cycle product stewardship of metals to ensure that once mined, they remain in economic service for generations.
21. End all subsidies to the mining sector to ensure full-cost accounting.
22. Work with provinces, territories and industry to ensure that all mining operations are insured for environmental liabilities and have an adequate pre-funded plan for remediation when the mine closes.
23. Introduce and regulate the mining industry under an International Corporate Social Responsibility Act.

Energy

The world consumes about two barrels of oil for every new barrel it finds. Therefore, we not only need to find new sources of renewable energy to respect our Kyoto engagements, we also need to significantly reduce our energy consumption to avoid economic hardships. With decisive actions and meaningful legislation to back them up, we can stop pretending to end oil dependency and actually do it. The Green Party has the political will to achieve environmental and economic results.

Green Party MPs will work to:

24. End all federal subsidies to fossil fuel sectors and discontinue exploration, drilling and extraction in ecologically sensitive areas.
25. Coordinate with the provinces a \$1.5 billion investment to build 10,000 MW of renewable energy capacity by 2010.
26. Redirect National Research Council and Industry Canada research and development programs towards renewable, alternative, and soft energy technologies that will reduce fossil fuel consumption and phase out nuclear power.
27. Expand existing and institute new energy conservation strategies as a cheaper alternative to new power plants.
28. Assist provincial governments in designing, implementing and monitoring improved energy efficiency programs, through the Office of Energy Efficiency.
29. Work with provinces to accelerate and to facilitate the connection of renewable systems to the electrical grid so as to add small suppliers of clean energy.
30. Amend clauses in trade agreements to enable Canada to protect natural resources and foster fair trade for clean energy technologies.

31. Improve Canadian energy security by implementing a plan to address the economic consequences of higher oil prices.
32. Increase capital cost allowances for green technology such as solar, geothermal, tidal and hydrogen fuel cell development.
33. Work with the provinces and municipalities to promote and support alternative energy initiatives such as sewage co-generation.

Climate Change: Kyoto and Beyond

Canada's climate is changing. We feel it every season. We see it with a melting Arctic ice cap, catastrophic floods, ice storms and droughts. Climate change is estimated to have already cost Canadian insurance companies hundreds of millions of dollars over the last 10 years.

For more and more Canadians, there is a growing sense that something must be done. That something starts with meeting our Kyoto commitments. Canada has pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 6 per cent below 1990 levels by 2012. But instead of meeting our pledge, federal environmental policies have led to a 24 per cent increase in gas emissions beyond 1990 levels. And yet, Kyoto is only the first step to halting global climate change and reducing air pollution.

While most countries in Europe are well on their way to meeting their Kyoto targets, the Liberal government lacks the political courage to introduce long-lasting policies that will meet Canada's Kyoto commitments. The Conservative Party, like U.S. President George Bush, dismisses the importance of Kyoto and even question the very threat of climate change.

The Green Party will push to implement a coherent and transparent environmental policy focused on achieving Kyoto targets and going beyond those goals after 2012. The Green Party will make Canada a global leader in the battle against climate change.

Green Party MPs will work to:

34. Shift taxes on fossil fuels to earlier stages in the production cycle to encourage competition among companies to lower operating costs while reducing emissions.
35. Increase emission reduction targets for large industrial emitters to at least 55 Megatonnes above and beyond other policies and measures that reduce industrial emissions.
36. Targets should be based on actual emissions, not emissions intensity per unit of production, and all data should be available for public scrutiny.

37. Expand the proposed National Emissions Trading System so that it will ensure real emission reductions across sectors.
38. Use revenue from tradable pollution permits to offset tax breaks for increasing energy efficiency and industry initiatives that reduce fuel consumption.

Green Economy, Green Jobs

In many sectors of our economy, the Liberal's pandering to big business and the lack of adequate antitrust laws over the past decade has led to the concentration of decision-making at the top of the ladder. This trend has served to stifle innovation, job creation, Canadian competitiveness and productivity while increasing the health and environmental risks associated with pollution and industrial waste. To get Canada back on track the Green Party advocates measures to shift our fiscal priorities towards sustainable choices, improve corporate accountability and encourage direct local action so that citizens may take a more active role in building a healthy economy.

We can shift to a competitive green economy by employing ecological fiscal reforms (EFR) and freeing markets that are crushed under the weight of bloated multinational monopolies. By using our tax and subsidy system differently, we can guide our choices as a society and progress towards a green economy without heavy-handed government intervention. Trading carbon emissions, for example, encourages companies to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and increase efficiency through market-based solutions.

In addition, we would move towards representing health, environmental and social costs in the prices of goods and services through revenue-neutral taxes on pollution and waste. Not only is this an incentive to advance sustainability, it is also fairer to citizens and businesses alike that make environmentally and socially conscious decisions.

Finally, we can redefine economic well-being with more revealing economic indicators that take a broader approach to measuring our success as a country. For too long Canada's economic focus has been on indicators that tell only part of the story. For instance, Canada currently measures its economic success with the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). But if the GDP keeps rising in Canada, why don't Canadians have more confidence that their lives are improving? Why is the number of children and families who live in poverty increasing? It's because factors such as quality of life, volunteerism, job satisfaction and health are not registered by the GDP.

We can more accurately measure Canada's success by incorporating the Canadian Index of Well-being. The CIW is a measure of our national well-being that includes economic production, financial transactions, quality of life, physical health, mental health, environmental conditions, education, housing, volunteerism, stability - all

elements of healthy communities and a green economy. By fully appreciating where we are going as a country, we are better equipped to set a course for our fiscal and social policies.

Green Party MPs will work to:

39. Pass the Canada Well-Being Measurement Act and implement the Canadian Index of Well-being.
40. Begin a partial, gradual, revenue neutral tax shift from income, consumption and business taxes to resource use taxes, pollution taxes and land value levies reflecting corporate profits.
41. Review the Green tax shift every 3 years in order to monitor progress and readjust fiscal imbalances.
42. Create thousands of new "Green collar jobs" by encouraging the development of low-emission industries in areas most affected by the shift away from natural resource sectors.
43. Legislate stronger, more effective antitrust laws in concentrated industry sectors.
44. Reduce taxes for small and medium sized businesses in their first 5 years of existence.
45. Provide higher risk financial support networks that will encourage people to invest in innovative businesses.

Protecting Canada's Biodiversity

As the second largest country in the world in land area, Canada is home to an amazing diversity of species and life. In addition to its inherent value, this biodiversity provides us with significant advantages. A countless number of species maintain the balance and health of our different eco-regions, sustaining hundreds of thousands of jobs, as well as many Aboriginal communities. Greater biological diversity also means a greater pool of genes, which translates into ecological resiliency and flexible resource bases.

Species extinction and the destruction of ecosystems through uninspired old-school economics threatens our health and hinders our future, long-term economic wealth. For example, clear-cutting an old growth forest will provide fewer jobs and economic opportunities over the long-term than conservation. By keeping that forest intact, we can provide a stable diversified employment base through ecotourism, sustainable forestry, and unlocking its genetic mysteries through scientific research.

Reflecting Canadian values, the Green Party respects life in all its forms and believes in the principle of looking ahead seven generations to envision the consequences of our actions today. It is only through a long-term perspective that we can build a stable and healthy society.

Green Party MPs will work to:


46. Sign and implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, ensuring that the adoption of new products is guided by the precautionary principle, which balances the economic benefits of innovation with public health and ecological integrity.
47. Strengthen and enforce Canada's Species at Risk Act in partnership with the provinces and territories to protect all species at risk and their habitats.
48. Provide Parks Canada with the funding necessary to protect the ecological integrity of Canada's National Parks and, working with provinces, establish compatible-use buffer zones around national parks.
49. Work with provincial governments to eliminate aquaculture practices that damage marine environment and human health.
50. Fast track the establishment of marine protected areas.
51. End federal assistance to the commercial seal hunt and encourage more diverse and sustainable economic alternatives for sealers and their communities.
52. Expand, in partnership with provinces, territories, and aboriginal peoples, Canada's network of land, freshwater and marine protected areas for the maintenance of biological diversity and ecosystem health.
53. Ban bottom dragging and lead efforts for a global ban on harmful fishing practices.

Agriculture and Fisheries: Securing Our Food Supply

For centuries, family farms and small coastal communities have been the pillars of our society and economy. But over the last five decades, federal policies and subsidies have shifted food production from ecologically sustainable farming and fishing families into huge aquaculture and agribusinesses, placing the control and profits of our food supply into the hands of multinational corporations.

Our biosecurity is threatened directly by agribusiness, as factory farms and poultry production crowd bovine and poultry into inhumane and unhygienic conditions creating the conditions for the spread of mad cow disease and the avian bird flu. Further threats to Canadians' health come from the chemicals and hormones that are often pumped into these animals. Finally, much of our crops are now genetically modified and subjected to pesticides without sufficient scientific tests to know the full affect on our health and environment.

The Green Party seeks to restructure our agricultural markets to sustain farming and fishing families in a domestic food economy and provide families with a fair share of the consumer food dollar. A sustainable food economy in a healthy environment requires keeping local small-scale agriculture alive and supporting a rapid transition



to organic agriculture rather than subsidizing costly agro-chemicals, industrial food production, and genetically modified crops. The Green Party will also bring a vision of long-term sustainability to the management of coastal fisheries based on enhancing wild fisheries and harvesting methods that work within ecological limits.

Green Party MPs will work to:

54. Support local, provincial and territorial genetically engineered free zones and pass legislation requiring labeling of genetically engineered foods.
55. Ensure that supply management systems provide stable domestic markets, viable farm income, and easier market access for specialty and organic producers, and permit continued unregulated production by smaller and mixed family farms that sell to local markets.
56. Adapt food safety and other regulations and work with provincial governments to provide area exemptions with locally adopted regulations to support small and medium size farmers and food processors to build and strengthen local food economies.
57. Shift government-supported research away from biotechnology and energy-intensive farming and toward organic food production.
58. Reform the regulatory environment of agriculture to challenge corporate concentration, eliminate international dumping and subsidies, and continue to allow seed saving by farmers.
59. Fundamentally change the management of fisheries by redefining the Department of Fisheries and Ocean's mandate to protect and conserve wild fisheries, introducing adaptive ecosystem and community-based methods that support sustainable fisheries.
60. Work with the provinces to re-establish a wild fish economy based on the precautionary principle in risk management with primary concern going to rehabilitating fish stocks, protecting fish habitats and phasing-out fish farms.
61. Protect animal welfare by phasing out factory farming, reducing distances live animals can be transported, improving conditions of animals in slaughterhouses, auctions, entertainment, and prohibiting trade in exotic animals.
62. Work with provinces to ensure that 100 per cent of livestock waste is recycled safely and no animal by-products are used in animal feed.
63. Pass a law that forbids the patenting of life forms and makes biotech developers of genetically engineered crops liable for damage such crops might cause.

Transportation

In 1900, at the World Exhibition in Paris, Rudolph Diesel unveiled his new engine that ran on peanut oil. In 2006, the fossil fuels that run our vehicle engines in Canada are responsible for nearly 25 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions.

After 100 years of combustion engines, many people still believe that it costs less to fuel a vehicle with fossil fuels than by other methods. But the Green Party looks at the full cost of using fossil fuels and makes a parallel to cigarette smoking. When an individual smokes a cigarette they are placing a future cost on society. When we add the health and environmental costs of driving a vehicle that runs on fossil fuels - the smog alerts, the asthma, the cancer rates, the oil spills - they quickly pile up. Add the cost of instability in the oil industry and it's a wonder why we have continued to pursue oil.

Fossil fuels are creating an ecological and an economic shock. Canadians felt that shock last summer when gas prices rose astronomically. With oil reaching peak production, prices will continue to rise - creating fertile ground for inflation and recessions.

The federal government's solution is to subsidize exploration and production with \$1.4 billion of taxpayer dollars every year. However, subsidies should be used when governments believe that an investment is worthwhile. It's why we subsidize daycares, education and health services. So, why are we subsidizing industries that are pulling in multi-billion dollar profits while they continue to pollute Canada?

We can shift gears. Shift to clean renewable fuels, expand public transport and build healthy communities using "smart growth" strategies that won't leave us breathless.

Green Party MPs will work to:

64. Support pedestrian, cycle and car-sharing infrastructure in towns and cities.
65. Work with provinces and municipalities to make a massive re-investment in Canada's public transportation infrastructure.
66. Make transit passes tax-deductible to encourage workers and businesses to use public transport and make employee parking a taxable benefit.
67. Provide fiscal stability for municipal light rail and subway investments by signing a ten-year funding contract with our cities.
68. Improve our rail infrastructure and intermodal connections, increasing joint federal-municipal light rail investments, as well as improving VIA rail service across Canada.
69. Work with Canada's railway companies to improve Canada's rail infrastructure and to restore VIA rail service to all major regional cities.
70. Create a national clean freight initiative that uses both regulatory means and financial incentives to improve fleet efficiency and safety.
71. Enforce a mandatory target of 25 per cent better fuel efficiency for the automobile industry and increase standards over the next 5 years.
72. Employ incentives to increase the percentage of ethanol content in gasoline and the availability of other biofuels.

We can build an inclusive Canada

Canada has always been more than the sum of its parts, but for too long some communities in Canada have fallen behind, been left out, or not given sufficient resources to achieve their true potential. Canada can do better.

Aboriginal Peoples: Justice through Reconciliation

The Canadian government has a grim record of overtly racist policies and consistent mismanagement on issues relating to Aboriginal peoples. Only by acknowledging our past injustices will we be able to move forward. Today, Canada's Aboriginal peoples are overrepresented in infant mortality, school dropout and suicide rates. In Manitoba, 50 per cent of the prison population is made up of Aboriginals even though only 12 per cent of the population is native. The Green Party recognizes Aboriginal rights and title, and supports respectful and timely reconciliation processes.

First Nations have explained that these problems stem as much from a lack of adequate funding, as from a denial of their nationhood. The right to self-government, the right to control their destiny and manage their resources is fundamental in building healthy and confident Aboriginal communities.

The future of Aboriginal land and Aboriginal land claims is the future of Canada's environment. We can share our land and our resources and establish true nation-to-nation dialogue. We can share the objectives and challenges of sustainability to develop new and prosperous economies in Aboriginal communities. We can stop hate crimes and institutionalized racism and recognize the cultural, political and economic contributions of First Nations, the Inuit, Innu and Métis people.

Green Party MPs will work to:

73. Honour Canada's fiduciary responsibility and all Aboriginal, treaty and other rights of Aboriginal Peoples, including their inherent rights of self-government.
74. Implement the recommendations of the 1996 Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, thereby embarking on true nation-to-nation negotiations on a full range of outstanding legal issues and land claims.
75. Negotiate and legislate primary hunting, fishing, trapping and logging rights for Aboriginal Peoples on traditional lands, especially lands under federal jurisdiction, subject to standards of sustainable harvesting.
76. Launch and maintain new processes driven by Aboriginal priorities and legal entitlements, to address governance issues, a just and fair share of lands and resources, legislative inconsistencies, policy inequities, reconciliation and - according to the wishes of First Nations - the phased-out elimination of the Indian Act.

77. Promote Aboriginal culture, language and history as a fundamental source of Canadian identity.
78. Support the development of Aboriginal education curricula that is language and culture specific.
79. Assist the delivery of health care, education and other services in a way that incorporates traditional practices, recognizing the role of extended families and elders.
80. Address the unique issues surrounding the treatment of Aboriginals in the Canadian justice system.
81. Establish a federal-provincial task force to address and investigate the disappearance of Aboriginal women.

Quebec

After the 1982 repatriation of the Constitution and the refusal of Québec to sign the Constitution, after two failed federal accords, two referendums, a beau risque, asymmetrical federalism and a sponsorship scandal, many Quebecers and Canadians don't even want to ask the obvious question: "Where do we go from here?"

The building of Canada has turned into a fascinating epic that has touched every facet of our country's politics and determined the fate of countless politicians.

With the sponsorship scandal, the Liberals have shown us that their plan to keep the country together reduced itself to a vulgar and corrupt marketing strategy. Rather than actively working together with Québec, the Liberals have refused to recognize the legitimate constitutional demands of Québec and other provinces.

The Green Party proposes to make Canada a true functioning confederation in which the provinces are more empowered and financed to meet the needs of their communities. Québec and the rest of Canada must work together as partners, in the true spirit of confederation, and work to solve their fiscal and cultural imbalances.

Green Party MPs will work to:

82. Recognize and correct the growing fiscal imbalance between provincial and federal jurisdictions.
83. Recognize a clear result to a clear question in the event of a future Québec referendum.



Equality and Respect for Women

Sixty years ago, labour activist Madeleine Parent led Québec's famous textile strikes, fought for women's pay equity, the right to abortion and supported the struggles of Aboriginal and immigrant women. The fact that we must include a specific chapter on the rights of women in our 2005 Platform tells us how far Canada still has to go before true gender equality is reached.

Although Canada boasts we are a socially progressive country offering equal opportunities for men and women, real gender gaps persist in government and corporate Canada. For instance, over a six-month period, less than 18 per cent of the appointments announced in the Globe and Mail Report on Business were women. And while the percentage of women elected to various legislatures across Canada has increased, many of the top government posts still seem off limits. For instance, only three women have ever been provincial premiers and at the federal level, Canada has never had a female Minister of Finance. Today, only 21.7 per cent of elected municipal officials are women.

In order for women to have full equality in every aspect of society, governments must ensure that there is pay equity and equality in all our institutions, our public offices and our decisions. We can also help stop the marginalization of women with progressive policy changes and the proper funding of social programs.

And there's still much to be done to change stereotypes in Canada. It starts in Parliament. Stereotypes are dangerous. They contribute to behaviour that can be far more threatening than words. The commercialization and exploitation of women, sexism, and discrimination in the workplace all contribute in a variety of ways - some subtle, some not - to a culture that for far too many condones violence against women. In 2004, 653,000 women encountered some form of spousal violence and nearly one and a half million women were stalked. The Green Party believes it's time to end the fear and end violence against women in Canada.

Green Party MPs will work to:

84. Develop tax incentives for companies to meet the highest standards of gender and pay equity.
85. Increase funding for women's crisis centres and shelters, as well as educational programs that build healthy attitudes toward women by working with provincial and municipal governments.
86. Implement full pay equity for women employed in the federal sector.
87. Sign the UN's global initiative for the elimination of discrimination and violence against women, and review Canada's performance to ensure it becomes and remains a world leader in fighting discrimination and violence against women.

88. Coordinate an action plan with the provinces to ensure women may travel safely to and from work, especially in isolated areas and at night.
89. Support municipalities to make urban infrastructure safe for women.
90. Make eliminating institutional racism a top priority of Status of Women Canada's strategy to end violence and abuse facing Aboriginal women.
91. Introduce laws guaranteeing a proportion of seats for women in government appointed bodies.
92. Mandate the CRTC to regulate and receive complaints about the advertising industry.
93. Recognize and value the unpaid work of women through reforms to our tax system.
94. Ensure adequate funding for national organizations such as National Action Committee and other bodies committed to improving the status of women.



Immigration and New Canadians

Canada's multicultural diversity is an essential part of our identity. It's one of the keys to Canada's success in the twenty-first century. But it's also under threat from knee-jerk federal reactions that put the civil liberties of Canadians at risk, to under-funding of integration programs, to doors that remain slammed shut as new Canadians pursue their dreams.

Immigrants and refugees come to Canada in search of a safer, more fulfilling life for themselves and their families, and to be full participants in a uniquely successful and diverse society of cultural communities. The Canadian tradition of welcoming newcomers and embracing social and ethnic differences gives us a unique opportunity to exert a positive influence on the rest of the world. Canada owes it to itself to embrace the energy and creativity of all our cultural communities.

The Green Party understands that Canada must do more than congratulate itself for its "tolerance". Canada owes it to all new Canadians to ensure genuine equality of opportunity and equal treatment of all Canadian citizens, regardless of origin.

Recent reforms to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act have fostered a culture of fear and discrimination. Today, five Canadians are being held under security certificates and are threatened with deportation without any formal charges being laid. Canadian citizens, like Maher Arar, have witnessed their rights as Canadians discarded by allies who are too willing to ignore international law for their own domestic agenda.

Our immigration policy is a multicultural work-in-progress that must focus on ensuring that Canada's image around the world is also its reality, by investing in the incredible human potential that 300,000 new Canadians bring to our country each year.

Green Party MPs will work to:

95. Work to remove unnecessary barriers recognizing the professional credentials of immigrants.
96. Support multicultural communities by assisting cultural organizations to obtain charitable status.
97. Improve cultural and business links with the home countries of new Canadians.
98. Work with municipalities and provinces to improve the integration of new Canadians into the multicultural fabric of our country.
99. Toughen the regulations governing the practices of immigration consultants; ensure enforcement and increase penalties for those convicted of human smuggling.
100. Conduct a full and open review of the Anti-Terrorism Act and the Public Safety Act to eliminate security certificates and the release of the five people detained under them unless formal charges are brought against them.
101. Regularize the estimated 200,000 people living in Canada without official status.
102. Open an investigation into allegations by the United Nations Human Rights Committee of Canadian officials cooperating with foreign agencies known to use torture.

Justice and Inclusion

Canada can implement a fresh approach to our justice system and follow the lead of other countries in being open-minded and fair. We can balance the prudent with the progressive to create a uniquely Canadian way of interpreting and creating new laws. Most of all, our laws must reflect and keep up with Canadian values when it comes to topics as diverse as marijuana, firearms, and first-time offenders. The Green Party believes in tackling the root causes of crime: poverty, unemployment, drug addiction and alcohol abuse.

Green Party MPs will work to:

103. Actively promote the use of restorative justice, rather than prison, for first time non-violent offenders.
104. Decriminalize non-compliance and eliminate registration fees with the national firearms registry for firearms designed specifically for hunting, while strengthening measures to combat gun smuggling and the possession of banned weapons.
105. Upgrade penalties for those convicted of a crime involving a firearm.
106. Regulate marijuana under federal legislation as a product similar to alcohol and tobacco.

107. Support Bill C-50 to "consolidate animal cruelty offences and increase the maximum penalties." Those convicted of abusing or neglecting animals under this legislation would face higher fines, ownership bans and up to five years in jail for repeat offences.
108. Establish a federal program to end "roadside zoos," reduce the number of animals held in captivity, and create clear and enforceable standards for zoos across the country.



Sharing Our Stories: Arts, Culture and Communication

At every level, arts and culture help define our identities and communities, they unlock our individual and collective creativity, and help Canadians share their ideas worldwide. From surreal circus to incisive films to renowned actors and singers, Canadians have been experiencing cultural breakthroughs on the international arts and culture scene. Today, over 600,000 Canadians are employed in the cultural sector. The Green Party wishes to salute their success by investing in our future musicians, dancers, painters, writers, and other artists. Often placed in a precarious financial situation, these up-and-coming artists will benefit from innovative financial tools and increased funding.

The Green Party understands that our future together, our sense of who we are, depends on policies that ensure a thriving, diverse and socially responsible cultural community as part of an inclusive Canada.

Green Party MPs will work to:

109. Increase support for community arts programs and facilities across Canada by establishing stable base-funding at a set percentage of the federal budget.
110. Establish stable base-funding for young artists.
111. Protect Canada's cultural identity during trade negotiations.
112. Expand support for regional arts festivals that bring new Canadian art to a wider audience.
113. Share Canadian history by supporting more educational programming.
114. Provide stable base-funding for the CBC to provide quality television and radio programming in both official languages.
115. Direct the CRTC to reserve more bandwidth for independent and non-profit stations.
116. Introduce a law mandating cinemas and video chains to have 20 per cent Canadian content.

Empowering Cities and Rural Communities

Decentralization is a core principle of the Green Party. Decentralization means that citizens have a more active role in building their communities through direct local action. Rather than relying solely upon politicians, citizens may take charge of community well-being through collective decision-making, which is made easier through government cooperation with local non-governmental organizations and community groups.

With demographic shifts and globalization, Canada's urban centres need greater support in order to appropriately plan for sustainability and build durable infrastructure for future health and shared prosperity. Our rural communities also face a host of new challenges such as water safety and access to adequate health care services. The federal government must provide the necessary tools in order to develop stronger support structures. Local issues in Canada require a clear national focus on shared challenges and a flexible federal government sensitive to local concerns.

Green Party MPs will press the federal and provincial governments to work together to:

117. Create new funding networks for more locally-run housing, child care and health programs.
118. Expand the agreement to redirect a greater share of federal tax revenues toward municipal needs.
119. Establish dedicated federal-provincial-municipal funding arrangements to support municipal wastewater management and safe water supplies.
120. Support "smart growth" transport-oriented development (TOD) to encourage the redesign of urban areas and towns into walkable communities linked by transit to reduce the need for automobile ownership.

We can build a healthy Canada

Political parties keep telling Canadians how they are going to "fix" the health care system. But not only do the same problems persist, they are also getting worse. That's because the Conservatives, Liberals and NDP all focus on treating the symptoms of the problem rather than looking at the overall health of Canadians.

The Green Party believes that if we are to have a sustainable, universal public health care system, we need to focus on keeping well, not just treating patients when they get sick.

Our well-being: Health, not just health care

An overwhelming majority of Canadians see our universal health care system as one of the cornerstones of our country. Regardless of personal wealth or status, every Canadian has the right to the same quality of health care. Canadians have built a visionary health care system and the Green Party firmly opposes any steps that would open the door to two-tier health care. Canada's public health care system must never be undermined by privatizing services.

For the most part, our health care system treats the symptoms and not the causes of our illnesses. Old-line politicians continue to pump money into the system, as if money alone is the solution. Meanwhile, the Canadian Cancer Society is asking the government for \$50 million to develop a prevention plan that would reduce cancer diagnosis by an estimated 400,000 cases. Their miracle cure for cancer is more exercise, healthy eating and no smoking. In Canada, child obesity has tripled in the last two decades, average physical activity has plummeted among office working Canadians and our sugar intake per capita is three times the average recommended by the OECD. In the meantime, the number of cancer cases is growing twice as fast as the population and heart-related illnesses have skyrocketed.

Old-line political parties say the health care crisis is mainly a crisis in hospital funding and rising drug costs. The Green Party understands the bigger picture. The real answer is to go beyond a health care system to develop a fully-integrated health system, one that focuses on solving the underlying problems affecting our well-being, not just treating the symptoms. We can shift our way of life, we can shift away from our fast food consumption culture and towards physical activity. We can build a sustainable public health system by fostering illness prevention through healthy and active living.

But healthy living is only a part of what will keep Canadians healthy. The other part is a healthy home. We need to start making the connection between a healthy environment and a healthy life. Canadians can no longer afford to be complacent in the face of mounting evidence that degradations in their environment are causing



degradations of their health. Governments estimate that air pollution is responsible for thousands of premature deaths every year as well as causing asthma in 1 out of 5 children. In the last decade, skin cancer has increased by 30 per cent. Pesticides that release powerful carcinogens and cause reproductive problems are still widely used and unregulated.

Protection of the environment will translate into a greater balance in our health and will reduce pressure on our public health system.

We can reduce waiting times for medical procedures, make family doctors more accessible, increase the number of doctors and nurses and enforce the Canada Health Act by reforming delivery systems and allocating funding where it is needed. For instance, over the last 20 years, drug prescriptions have risen from 8.7 per cent to 16 per cent of total health care costs. It's estimated that billions of dollars are lost every year through inappropriate prescription drug treatment.

A sustainable health care system needs more than just increased tax dollars. It needs:

Support - through health-conscious environmental policies.

Relief - through practical promotion of healthy lifestyles, especially for children.

Nourishment - through health-conscious regulation of the food industry.

Coordination - through a broader focus on health in all our social programs.

The Green Party has the vision to make health a reality in Canada.

Green Party MPs will work to:

121. Use the full force of the Canada Health Act, federal spending power and the notwithstanding clause of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to oppose any steps that open the way to two-tier health care in Canada.
122. Coordinate with the provinces a national pharmacare plan so that effective medications are available to all Canadians.
123. Include coverage for effective health care treatments such as chiropractic, acupuncture or herbal medicines.
124. Support a public health framework to reduce the use of psychoactive drugs through rehabilitation and prevention especially for children.
125. Involve mental health clients and psychiatric survivors in research planning, policy development, program evaluation and other decisions that affect their lives and communities.
126. Assist provinces to increase the number of detox and treatment beds for drug and alcohol rehabilitation, create safe injection clinics, needle exchange programs and access for certified addicts to prescriptions for safe doses.

127. Health professionals being considered for immigration will have the licensing requirements for their profession clearly explained before entry. Landed immigrants with professional qualifications will be supported and given the opportunity to obtain Canadian licenses consistent with public safety.
128. Provide incentives for companies to reduce stress in the workplace and promote emotional health.
129. Increase taxes on tobacco products, alcohol and junk food.
130. Rapidly reduce the release of carcinogens, mutagens, neurotoxins and endocrine-disrupting chemicals into the food chain.
131. Introduce mandatory labelling of all foods containing genetically modified organisms.
132. Ban the sub-therapeutic use of agricultural antibiotics and hormones.
133. Provide more information to Canadians about healthy food choices and lifestyles.
134. Assist provinces and municipalities to implement urban agriculture and food share programs to reduce the cost of healthy food.
135. Target programs to reduce and eliminate systematic health inequities facing First Nation communities, new Canadians and other marginalized populations.
136. Commission Health Canada to do a nationwide body burden study identifying the presence of carcinogens, neurotoxins, hormone disruptors, and the toxicity levels of Canadians.
137. Ban all non-natural pesticides and insecticides by the year 2010 and provide alternatives for farmers.
138. Ensure clean drinking water for all Canadian communities by 2008.
139. Initiate consultations with Canadians about end (and quality) of life issues.
140. Support the Children's Clean Air Act for Canada.
141. Prohibit reproductive cloning and require a Health Canada license for any organization or institution that performs genetic manipulation for commercial or scientific purposes.

To promote active living Green Party MPs will work to:

142. Implement the pan-Canadian goal, agreed to by all 14 Ministers responsible for physical activity, of increasing physical activity by 10 per cent over 5 years.
143. Make a strategic investment of \$500 million over 5 years to aggressively address inactivity and obesity, through Health Canada and through school-based physical and health education as well as community-based programs and facilities.
144. Introduce a national standard of daily, quality participation in sport and physical activity in schools.

145. Support the development of high-performance athletes both by encouraging broad-based participation in sport, and by contributing to the provision of essential facilities, coaching and medical support for high-performance athletes, as outlined in the 2003 Canadian Sport Policy.
146. Endorse and promote the Olympic Movement's Agenda 21 for Sport, which advocates sustainable sport and recreation management practices.

Child and Family Well-being

Of all of Canada's social problems, child poverty is probably the most shameful and humiliating. In 1989, the old-line political parties voted unanimously to end child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. Since then, the rate has remained unchanged at around 15 per cent, or 1 million children. As a result of short-sighted cuts to our social programs that stripped away basic income support for families, child poverty has been a Canadian reality for far too long. Canada now ranks a dismal 26th out of 29 'developed' countries in terms of child poverty rates.

There's no single silver bullet to eradicate poverty. Simply stocking food banks cannot bridge growing disparities between wealthy and poor Canadians. Poverty is a systemic problem that reflects low minimum wages, a precarious job market, lack of commitment to social housing, changes to Employment Insurance benefits and cuts in social programs. Poverty rates are even higher among new Canadians, Aborigines and single mothers.

We can eliminate child poverty by making a commitment to have a just society that is built on a progressive and fair social safety network. European countries, such as Denmark, Finland and Norway, who have made a similar commitment, have kept child poverty rates below 3.5 per cent. Unlike the old-line parties, the Green Party believes reducing child poverty is more important than hoarding wealth. The Green Party believes reducing child poverty starts with a stronger commitment to guaranteeing every family has an equal opportunity to provide for their children.

Green Party MPs will work to:

147. Create a "Comprehensive Anti-Poverty Strategy for Canada," which will:
 - Toughen regulations to ensure fair treatment and better wage standards for all working Canadians.
 - Raise benefit levels and increase eligibility under the Employment Insurance Act.
 - Remove GST on education supplies and specific family products.
 - Expand child tax credits and benefits.

148. Support provinces that adopt a basic income strategy to ensure the benefits of a living wage are available to every citizen through existing federal programs.
149. Enforce measures to ensure that corporate pension plans are adequately funded.
150. Take adequate measures to ensure seniors are aware of available federal income supplements.
151. Create tax incentives for businesses to implement flexible schedules and on-site childcare.
152. Implement a managed reduction in the standard workweek to thirty-five work hours per week.
153. Establish a Canadian mentorship network that will enable seniors to connect with youth, to share the benefit of their experiences and to pass on their skills.
154. Support a nation-wide healthy lunch and snacks program from Kindergarten through to Grade 12.
155. Boost funding for early childhood education and work with other governments to link local childcare and education centres into a national network.
156. Support child-focused programs that boost self-confidence and foster a love of learning.
157. Implement affordable housing programs.
158. Combat racism in hiring practices and give greater recognition to foreign qualifications.

Affordable Housing and Community Services

Affordable housing and community services are an integral part of Canada's social safety network. When all the social programs and services in the network work together there is less pressure on other traditional fallback institutions such as health care and food banks. We can reestablish an efficient, open-minded network that includes affordable housing projects and community services that were scrapped by former governments.

Affordable housing and community services play a major role in social inclusion of otherwise stigmatized and marginalized social groups. The Green Party understands that in the long run, investment in affordable housing and community services provides us with healthier communities with less social inequalities. This in turn leads to greater independence, reduction in poverty and a reduction in crime. With its short-term vision, the Liberal government seems unable or unwilling to make such connections.



Green Party MPs will work to:

159. Fund a national housing program to build energy-efficient co-ops and affordable housing units.
160. Reorient Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation programs to provide credit and loan guarantees to non-profit housing organizations and cooperatives for the building and restoration of quality, energy-efficient housing for seniors, people with special-needs, and low income families.
161. Expand R-2000 housing programs, ensure that new housing meets the standard, and offer tax incentives to owners who are willing to renovate existing housing to meet the standard.
162. Subsidize alternative heating systems including solar, geothermal, and high efficiency wood stoves.
163. Improve support for community based self-help groups, social service agencies, independent living centres and advocacy projects.
164. Introduce a Disabilities Act based on consultation with disabled Canadians.
165. Subsidize private developers to include a percentage of affordable housing in their housing projects to increase social inclusion and lessen gentrification of neighbourhoods.

Education and Employment

For the last twenty years, federal government policies have increasingly turned post-secondary education into a privilege. In response, college and university students have marched in the streets and launched campaigns calling for quality, accessible education. Student demands have been heard by Canadians who see education as a top priority. But in Ottawa, these demands have fallen on deaf ears as politicians and bureaucrats instead create convoluted funding schemes, such as the Millennium Scholarship Fund. These programs have been criticized by Auditor-General Sheila Fraser for their lack of accountability.

Accountability, accessibility and adequate funding are what Canada's education system demands. The Green Party recognizes the need to freeze and subsequently reduce tuition fees across the country, as well as creating needs-based grants to address the student debt crisis. We can fund an accessible post-secondary education system, help foster research and innovation and assist workers by providing flexible training and education for life-long learning. The Green Party sees education as instrumental in developing creativity and equality as the foundation of safe and healthy communities. Education is not an expense, it's an investment.

Green Party MPs will press the Government to:

166. Work with provinces and higher learning institutions to reduce post-secondary tuitions.
167. Boost participation in cooperative education programs and apprenticeships.
168. Encourage more hands-on learning in our post-secondary education system.
169. Harmonize government programs such as the Millennium Scholarship Fund to provide a single need-based grant program to reduce student debt.
170. Increase investments in post-secondary education and ensure that public funding plays a major role in research and development initiatives.
171. Increase the availability of full-time employment positions and quality of life by implementing a gradual reduction in the standard work week to thirty-five work hours per week.



We can renew our democracy

Reviving Good Government

Canadians believe in a participatory democracy in which they elect representatives to carry out the will of the people. They also demand a public sector that is capable and efficient in implementing these programs. But Canadians no longer feel they are in control of the democratic process and have lost confidence in those who claim to represent them.

The Liberals promised to clean up government, yet Paul Martin continues to defend an ineffective lobbyist registration system, pushed aside government ethics monitoring and passed Bill C-11 legislation that has whistleblowers reporting back to the government. Canadians haven't been fooled.

The Green Party's vision of reviving good government is to make federal institutions accountable and transparent, to set up checks and balances for politicians and public sector employees and to redistribute the power that is too often concentrated in the hands of the Prime Minister's Office and his cabinet.

The Green Party offers Canadians a fresh and new direction. Most importantly, rather than piecemeal gestures, a fundamental principle of the Green Party is to plan for long term, integrated programs rather than focusing solely on the next election.

Green Party MPs will work to:

172. Create a Government Accountability Act to ensure that all those who monitor government are selected at arms length from those they monitor, and to guarantee transparency and openness for all government activities.
173. Strengthen the mandates of Independent Officers of Parliament, including the Auditor General and the Information Commissioner.
174. Replace the current Ethics Commissioner, who reports privately to the Prime Minister, with an independent Ethics Commission who would report to Parliament appointed through a merit-based process with strong powers to investigate government officials and lobbyists.
175. Support effective whistle-blower protection for public and private sector employees.
176. Institute a code of conduct and independent complaints process to ensure that tax dollars are not used for pre-election partisan purposes.
177. Limit the amount of donations to candidates to no more than \$1,000 annually from any donor, with the full identity of donors clearly disclosed.
178. Provide parliamentarians with independent regulatory audits on the effectiveness of government regulations in meeting their stated public purposes.
179. Institute mandatory training in ethics for MPs and their staffs and require all MPs and staff to take in-house training on the basics of good management and ethics in Parliament.
180. Make service improvements a higher priority for all agencies and departments, with systematic citizen feedback and a schedule for periodic program review.
181. Reinforce the political independence of public sector employees - especially scientists and professionals with responsibility for such areas as fisheries science and drug licensing.
182. Require long-term public departmental service plans to report on government program purposes, costs, reforms and performance.
183. Reform the appointments system to discourage patronage.
184. Strengthen the rules of conduct for lobbying. The Auditor General, in auditing these activities will determine if these rules are in the best interest of individual Canadians and make recommendations to the Attorney General where changes are needed so that lobbying does not unduly skew parliamentary decisions.

Renewing our Democracy

In Sweden's last election, voter participation was at a forty year low with 80 per cent of registered voters casting ballots. Canada also experienced a historically low turnout, but our voter participation barely made it over 60 per cent. Voter apathy is tangible in our country especially among young adults who sadly and maybe

justifiably subscribe to the "it-doesn't-matter-anyway" philosophy. This electoral indifference is spreading among Canadians who feel that their vote simply doesn't count. And who can blame them? While 583,000 Green Party voters did not elect a single MP in 2004, 500,000 Liberal Party voters elected 22 MPs in Atlantic Canada.

The Green Party proposes to implement what numerous political parties have promised Canadians: proportional representation. Canada's democracy is ready to evolve, to become a fairer, more accountable and truly representative electoral system. Such electoral systems also encourage the election of women and visible minorities to Parliament. The Green Party believes that it's time to get past the first-past-the-post system and build a House of Commons that reflects Canada's multifaceted population.

The Green Party's vision also encompasses citizen participation in government decision-making by greater use of popular consultations and referenda. Decentralized decision-making and participatory democracy are core principles of the Green Party.

Green Party MPs will work to:

185. Create a broad-based, result-driven public consultation process to determine the form of proportional representation that best serves Canadians for the next federal election.
186. Support the legislative changes required to introduce the proportional representation electoral system recommended by the public consultation.
187. Introduce fixed election dates permitting political stability and fair elections.
188. Require a mandatory series of open leaders' debates during an election organized by an independent agency such as Elections Canada.
189. Move from the current partial ban on corporate and union donations to political parties to a full ban on such donations, modeled on Québec and Manitoba provincial legislation.
190. Reduce the mandatory \$1,000 candidate deposit to encourage more Canadians to participate in the democratic system.
191. Lower the voting age to seventeen.

We can build a sustainable fiscal framework

Fair taxes

Taxes are one tool governments have to shape society. For instance, both the Conservatives and Liberals have used our tax system to benefit corporations. Just in the last 5 years, federal corporate taxes have been reduced by almost 8 per cent as corporate profits hit record highs.

Meanwhile the cost of living for ordinary Canadians has increased. Canadians are spending more and saving less, which means working Canadians are having a harder time covering the groceries and providing for their families. Instead of more corporate tax cuts, our tax system should guide the economic priorities of Canadians by lowering taxes for working Canadians and reducing poverty rates. We can do this by shifting taxes away from jobs and employment, and onto pollution and non-sustainable products, thereby freeing up funding for social programs while encouraging new infrastructure.

Green Party MPs will work to:

192. Reduce taxes for Canadians earning less than \$45,000 per year.
193. Establish an all-party task force to study corporate tax rates between Canada and the United States, taking into account the differences in and provision of various social programs.
194. Close all loopholes that permit the establishment of offshore tax havens by Canadian companies.
195. Establish a new Parliamentary Budget Office to provide independent public estimates of government revenues and expenditures. Simplify reporting in order to identify how government initiates new policies, the creation of budgets and the design of programs through to the actual results achieved.

Intergovernmental Relations: Fixing the Fiscal Imbalance

In 1867, Canada's largest expenditures were made at the federal level to build a nation-wide infrastructure of transportation and communication. In 2006, our biggest investments are at the provincial level in health, education and servicing our \$570 billion debt. But we still divide government revenues up as if we were back in 1867, creating a fiscal imbalance between Ottawa and cash-strapped provinces. The Green Party will push to allocate our financial resources efficiently and ensure that provinces have adequate financial resources to deliver the services that they deliver.

Over the years, successive federal governments have recognized the growing funding needs of the provinces to manage social programs by transferring billions of dollars to health, education, child care and affordable housing. In the last decade, however, the federal government has slashed provincial transfers while federal surpluses continue to rise. Recent injections of funding haven't even brought social program transfers back to 1995 levels.

This fiscal imbalance between the federal and provincial governments is the cause of a growing disconnect between the priorities of Canadians and the priorities of the federal government. By attaching conditions to its social transfers, the federal government is centralizing power and dictating how the provinces should govern.

The Green Party understands that as a federation, Canada and the provinces must work together in order to build a truly cooperative country without coercive funding strategies. Canada must build public support for concerted action, not bully other governments, impose uniformity on provincial diversity, change the rules on a whim, or put its own lofty ambitions ahead of the needs of Canadians. Flexibility and fairness must be the key values in federal-provincial-territorial relations.

Green Party MPs will support:

196. The federal government's participation in the new Council of the Federation established by the provincial first ministers and a commitment to address the fiscal imbalance openly in Council deliberations.
197. A transition to Legislative Federalism: a democratization of intergovernmental relations, bringing federal and provincial elected representatives together to help guide the discussions of intergovernmental decision-making bodies, such as the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment.
198. Transfer federal tax points to sustain specific social services such as health care on strict provincial guarantees that these funds will be allocated to such services and that such funds will be used to reduce the dependency provincial governments have developed to revenue from gambling.

Foreign Policy: Keeping the Peace

The Green Party believes in the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Since 1996, worldwide military expenditures have exploded 27 per cent reaching \$932 billion annually. Most of this budget was spent by countries that represent only 16 per cent of the world population. In contrast, these same countries spent just \$68 billion on international aid. This gross misallocation of funds underlines the widely held belief by governments that their nation will be secure through force rather through cooperation.

For the Green Party, a philosophy of international cooperation and peacekeeping leads to greater global security. We can seek new interdependent relationships with emerging countries by creating fair economic relationships and by promoting human rights and sustainability. In times of conflict or international emergencies, we can continue Canada's reputation as peacekeepers and add programs for ecological preservation to protect vulnerable ecosystems.

Green Party MPs will work to:

199. Declare Canada a military nuclear-free zone and abstain from participating in the development or usage of space-based weapons.
200. Work to establish a standing international peacekeeping force under UN control.
201. Create an International Affairs and Comprehensive Security Agency to coordinate activities between Foreign Affairs, National Defense and CIDA.
202. Create a Rapid Response Force with a mandate for peacekeeping and environmental restoration in both international crisis situations and domestic catastrophes like floods, earthquakes, storms and fires and ensure that this Force has the training and the means to deliver its support.
203. Deliver humanitarian aid and assistance effectively and efficiently.
204. Provide security for international aid and development groups on the ground as well as assist international aid agencies and local authorities in implementing environmental protection and restoration measures.
205. Propose a reform of the UN Security Council, eliminating vetoes and expanding membership.
206. Support the provision of royalty-free and low-cost AIDS medicines for Africa, Asia and South America.
207. Work with other nations to eliminate unsustainable fishing in international waters and create a system of marine sanctuaries. Press for custodial management of fish stocks on the Grand Banks.
208. Increase foreign aid spending to 0.5 per cent of GDP by 2010, and meet Canada's commitment to spend at least 0.7 per cent by 2015.
209. Work to increase the influence of the International Court of Justice.
210. Advocate a viable and secure state for Palestine and a secure state for Israel.
211. Actively engage with the Chinese government to advance a federal model "Middle Path" approach, to the Tibet issue.
212. Initiate a review of Canada's current international security alliances.
213. Promote and support the international missions of the United Nations.
214. Erase debts with emerging countries that have been in default for over ten years.

Fair trading with our global neighbours

There's an old adage that good fences make good neighbours. The Green Party supports fair trade, not free trade - trade that puts Canadian sovereignty first.

Over the last fifteen years, international free trade agreements have become an important part of Canada's economy, but most of these agreements contain clauses that too often put foreign business interests first. Trade isn't just about shipping goods and services. Trade agreements also impact on human rights, labour standards, cultural diversity and environmental laws.

Canadian corporations flock towards free trade zones to bypass environmental regulations and exploit cheap labour. In trade agreements such as NAFTA, a foreign investor has the right to seek compensation from our government if Canada enacts a law that results in the loss of revenue for the investor. These agreements essentially put a foreign company's rights over those of Canada. It limits our sovereignty and can paralyze our government's will to enact new environmental and human rights laws. Canada's interests have also been harmed by the United States' refusal to respect NAFTA and WTO trade rulings in favour of Canada over the softwood lumber dispute. It makes one wonder why the U.S. signs free trade agreements, if they don't believe in free trade?

To address some of these issues, citizens around the world have set up international networks to create their own brand of trade - fair trade. International fair trade networks build direct links between producers and consumers ensuring that labour standards and environmental laws are respected. The Green Party's vision of trade articulates itself around innovative policies like fair trade. We can make sure that when Canada trades with other countries it also shares its vision of a just and sustainable society instead of trading away our rights for foreign interests.

We must renegotiate these trade agreements and put Canada's interests and the environment first.

Green Party MPs will work to:

215. Renegotiate our multilateral trade agreements, such as NAFTA and the upcoming FTAA, to include fair trade tariffs that work to protect human rights and our ecosystems, as well as terminate investor-state dispute mechanisms that erode Canada's sovereignty and environmental laws.
216. Propose a reform of the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank, placing these institutions under the authority of the UN general assembly, and shift the direction of international trade away from "free trade" to "fair trade" focusing on the global protection of human rights, labour standards, cultural diversity, and ecosystems.



Conclusion

As you've read in the preceding pages, this election is about solutions. For Canadian aboriginals, providing economic solutions for the nearly one in two Canadian families who spend more than their pre-tax income, and hope for the nearly 4 million Canadians who don't have enough to eat or worry whether they will.

It's an election about 900 communities in Canada that are losing friends, family and neighbours to urban cities. It's about sustainability - economic and environmental. It's about new Canadians who still find doors slammed shut as they pursue their individual dreams in their new land. It's about a health care system that needs to look a lot less like 'Let's Make a Deal'.

It's an election about Canadian sovereignty - in the Arctic, in culture, in our social values and trade. It's an election about the very essence of Canada.

Canadians don't carry their pride on their sleeves, but in their hearts. We believe that our civic responsibility transcends individual interests for a collective good where we care for the aged, educate our children and provide for the less fortunate. We see a role for Canada in the world. And it's time to restore and build upon our identity, our collective responsibilities and what it means to say proudly "I am Canadian".