



# ELECTION PLATFORM 2018

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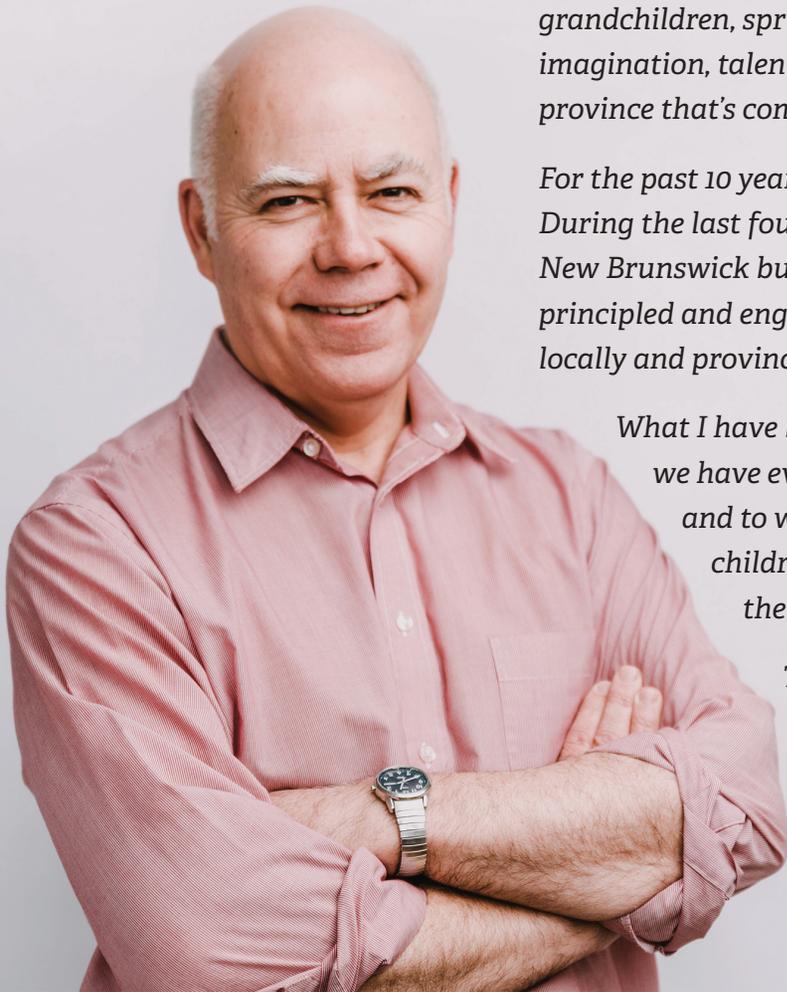
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# A Message from David Coon, Leader of the Green Party of New Brunswick



*The Green Party's vision for the kind of province — the kind of future — we all want for our children and grandchildren, springs from the shared values that define us as New Brunswickers. Collectively, we have the imagination, talent and resources to shape the province we love into Canada's first truly Green province — a province that's community-driven, fair to its people, and economically and environmentally sustainable.*

*For the past 10 years, our party has been giving New Brunswickers the opportunity to vote for this vision. During the last four of these years, it has been my honour to serve not only as the Green party's first MLA in New Brunswick but also as its leader. As leader, I am inspired and excited by the impressive slate of committed, principled and engaged candidates ready to roll up their sleeves to work with you to achieve our vision — locally and provincially.*

*What I have learned crisscrossing the province meeting New Brunswickers from every walk of life is that we have everything we need to make our home a place where our young people will want to return, and to which others will be drawn, to be part of our collective effort to build the New Brunswick our children need. Working together we have the experience, talent, values, and means to overcome the challenges that face our province.*

*This platform — **Our Pathway for Change** — will help transform our vision for the province we love into reality. By focusing on that vision, our energy and our will, we will make New Brunswick Canada's first truly Green province – community-driven, fair and sustainable.*

**Thank you. Let's get to work!**



Our Pathway for Change

## *Our Vision includes a New Brunswick where:*

- ✔ Your Legislature **works for you**, not for political parties or special interests;
- ✔ **Communities** make important decisions about health services, education and economic development;
- ✔ Entrepreneurs take us into the **low-carbon economy** of the 21<sup>st</sup> century;
- ✔ Our beautiful rivers, lakes, forests and coasts are **protected**, and our children breathe **clean air**;
- ✔ Government budgets are **financially sustainable** and promote fairness and equity;
- ✔ We are serious about **tackling problems** of poverty, mental illness and addictions;
- ✔ More of the food we eat and the goods we buy are **produced for and by New Brunswickers**;
- ✔ Homes and businesses are **energy efficient** and powered by **renewables**;
- ✔ You can take **public transportation** to all corners of the province;
- ✔ Indigenous, linguistic and newcomer communities feel **secure and respected**;
- ✔ Artists, actors, filmmakers and musicians flourish, creating a **vibrant cultural scene**;
- ✔ Everyone works together to create a **sustainable future** for our children and grandchildren.



A family consisting of a woman with long hair, a man, and a small child in a yellow jacket are walking away from the camera through a vast, rolling green field. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The sky is bright with some light clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

# Our Pathway for Change



## Right Relations with **First Nations**

The Green Party recognizes that modern-day New Brunswick is located in the traditional territory of the Wolastoqey (Maliseet), Mi'Kmaq and Peskotomuhkati (Passamaquoddy) Nations. In the 1700s, without surrendering any land, these First Nations signed Peace and Friendship Treaties with the British Crown, establishing the legal basis for a relationship of mutual respect and cooperation for all time. Since then, colonial and provincial governments have failed to live up to their obligations under these treaties, with dire consequences for generations of Indigenous peoples. It is time now for reconciliation and moving forward together.

# 1 Right Relations with First Nations

## A Green Government would:

- ✓ Recognize and govern according to the **Peace and Friendship** treaties and in accordance with the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** (UNDRIP).
- ✓ Fully implement the **Calls to Action** of the national **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** (TRC).
- ✓ Help preserve **Indigenous languages and culture in New Brunswick** by securing federal funding for Indigenous language teacher training and immersion programs for Indigenous children.
- ✓ Implement the recommendations of the **New Brunswick Child and Youth Advocate's** 2010 report on the First Nations' child welfare system, and secure equitable funding from the federal government for First Nations education and family services.
- ✓ Fully implement **Jordan's Principle**, which says that Indigenous children should receive necessary public services without regard for jurisdiction.
- ✓ Address the recommendations of the National Inquiry into **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women** as soon as they are released.



Our Pathway for Change



Living within our

# Ecological and Financial Means

The Green Party is committed to a public sector that provides high-quality health care, education and social programs while living within our financial and ecological means.

## 2

# Living within our Ecological and Financial Means

## A. Financing Quality Public Services

We do not support simplistic policies that cut public services to reduce budget deficits while continuing with unjust taxation policies. While past governments only paid attention to the financial accounts, we also consider the ecological balance sheet. We are not getting ahead if we degrade our air, water and land, and endanger wildlife, to reduce fiscal deficits.

### A Green Government would:

✔ **Institute a public inquiry** into the sustainability of the province's financial and ecological deficits. Its mandate would be to recommend a strategy to reduce our long term financial and ecological debt. It would examine the fairness of our tax system; the lost revenue from preferential tax treatment of capital gains, large inheritances, and off-shore accounts; and a means to phase-out the double tax on non-owner occupied

properties. It would also analyze the impacts of non-renewable and renewable resource tax policies on the over-exploitation of limited ecological resources.

- ✔ Remove the industrial **property tax exemption** for crude oil storage tanks, and add industrial machinery and equipment as taxable property.
- ✔ Establish **border tolls** on the four-lane highways.
- ✔ Petition the federal government to increase the **per capita health transfer to New Brunswick** to reflect the needs of our aging population.
- ✔ Produce government budgets that are **financially responsible**, expecting budget deficits during difficult periods and surpluses at other times.



Our Pathway for Change

# Living within our Ecological and Financial Means



- ✔ Require unbudgeted expenditures to be reviewed by the **Legislature's all-party Standing Committee on Public Accounts**, the recommendations from which would be voted on by the Legislature.
- ✔ Require the Department of Finance to develop and publish a **tax expenditure account** to track losses in provincial revenues associated with tax cuts, tax breaks, deferrals and credits in the New Brunswick tax system.
- ✔ Harmonize our **corporate income tax rate** with Nova Scotia and PEI.
- ✔ Increase royalty rates for all renewable and non-renewable resources in the province to capture their full economic value, and establish a **New Brunswick Heritage Fund** where all non-renewable royalties will be deposited, with the NB government transferring only five percent in any one year to general revenues.
- ✔ Increase the **Auditor General's budget** over three years to be comparable to that of Nova Scotia for the size of our provincial budget.



## 2

# Living within our Ecological and Financial Means

## B. Ecological Stewardship

We have a duty to steward, and where degraded, restore the environmental integrity of our province, so our children and grandchildren can benefit from our rivers, lakes, forest, coasts and wildlife as we do. We must defend everyone's right to unpolluted air, water and food. And we must reduce the plastic pollution choking the oceans. Most importantly, we have a duty to contribute to the global effort to minimize climate change by transitioning away from oil, coal, gasoline, and natural gas as energy sources.

### A Green Government would:

- ✔ Legislate a cap on **industrial carbon pollution**, as part of our climate action plan.<sup>1</sup>
- ✔ Legislate **water quality standards** for rivers, streams, lakes and bays to maintain or improve current conditions.
- ✔ Move towards a goal of **zero-waste** by legislating waste

reduction targets, including phasing out single-use plastic consumer products such as bags, straws, and utensils as well as disposable cups and containers, with exemptions for products for those with special needs.

- ✔ Enact an **Environmental Bill of Rights** to guarantee individuals: (a) the right to information about pollution threats; (b) the right to petition for investigations into environmental risks; (c) access to the justice system to prevent environmental harm; and (d) create a new Legislative officer called an Environmental Ombud.
- ✔ Report annually to the Legislature on the **state of our natural assets** including forests, farmland, wetlands, fresh water and coastal ecosystems.
- ✔ Meet New Brunswick's commitment to to the national goal of protecting 17% of Canada's landscape by **tripling the area of protected habitat** from the current 4.7%.
- ✔ Require the use of "**best available technology**" to control pollution and waste from new industrial projects, including the use of dry waste storage for new mines to safeguard our rivers and streams.



Our Pathway for Change

<sup>1</sup> Other elements of the plan involve changes in public transportation, energy, forestry and agriculture.



# Good Health and Good Care

Vibrant communities depend on healthy, engaged citizens, and take care of those in need. Green health policy takes a community view, encompassing illness prevention, timely access to health services, and compassionate care for those unable to live independently.

# 3 Good Health and Good Care

## A. Prevent illness and protect public health

The government must act to protect individual health and public safety threatened by illnesses such as Lyme disease, and by extreme weather and sea level rise caused by climate change.

### A Green Government would:

- ✔ Make the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the province's top doctor responsible for public health, an **independent arm of the Department of Health**, reporting directly to the Legislative Assembly; and restore the staff and resources that were removed from the Office by the Liberal government.
- ✔ Ask the Chief Medical Officer of Health to establish protocols, based on international best practices, for the **diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease.**

- ✔ Establish a **20 cents/litre tax on sugar-sweetened beverages** and direct the revenue to healthy school food and child wellness programs.
- ✔ **Support walking and cycling lifestyles** by building active transportation infrastructure in communities,<sup>2</sup> and providing cycling education in elementary school.
- ✔ **Reduce public and occupational exposure to harmful chemicals**, including phasing out the release of cancer-causing pollutants by industries.



<sup>2</sup> With funding from the Canada-New Brunswick Infrastructure Bilateral Agreement <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/prog/agreements-ententes/2018/2018-nb-eng.html>

## B. Access to health care

Health care is not a business, and the public health system should not be run like one - or by one. Instead, it should be organized to meet citizens' health needs effectively, with decisions about providing care made at the community level.

### A Green Government would:

- ✔ Increase to **nine percent** the proportion of the Department of Health's budget dedicated to **providing mental health and addiction services**.<sup>3</sup>
- ✔ Cancel the contract with the private company Medavie for managing our extra-mural health services, and **return management responsibilities to Horizon and Vitalité**.
- ✔ Place our **ambulance services under public management** and initiate a public inquiry into how they can be improved.
- ✔ **Give hospitals the authority to make decisions** about how best to provide timely access and care to patients and enable all staff to collaborate to implement them.
- ✔ **Create 40 new nurse practitioner positions**, and allow nurse practitioners and pharmacists to bill Medicare for health services to reduce wait times for primary health care.
- ✔ Eliminate the **government-imposed caps** on Medicare billing numbers, so more doctors can open practices in regions where there is a demand for their service.
- ✔ Add **eight new community health-care centres** staffed by collaborative family health care teams, including mental health professionals and nurse practitioners.
- ✔ Integrate **midwives** into each of New Brunswick's health regions.
- ✔ Enable optometrists to work to their **full scope of practice** to prescribe glaucoma treatment, for example.

<sup>3</sup> <https://ontario.cmha.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/CMHA-Ontario-PreBudget-2017-FINAL.pdf>

# 3 Good Health and Good Care

## C. Compassionate, Respectful Care

A growing number of citizens require various levels of public assistance to live in dignity. Most are elderly; others are living with a disability. We need a flexible, multi-faceted system that matches need with the appropriate type of care, and is not profit-driven. We also need a reliable, professional workforce to provide this care.

### A Green Government would:

- ✔ Increase training requirements and salaries for **home-care workers**, and improve standards for in-home care.
- ✔ Ensure existing **not-for-profit nursing homes** have the “**right of first refusal**” to provide additional nursing home beds in the communities they serve.
- ✔ Increase the hours of care for nursing home residents from **3.1 hours per day to 3.5 hours per day**, based on the positive results of the Department of Social Development’s 2010 pilot project.
- ✔ Use the **special-care home model** to establish dedicated facilities, staffed with appropriately trained personnel, for autistic adults who are unable to care for themselves.
- ✔ Ensure people with a disability are able to have **access to affordable housing** with the supports they require to live successfully.
- ✔ Explore **alternate housing models for rural seniors** who find it difficult to remain in their family homes but do not require nursing home assistance.
- ✔ Enable homeowners on fixed incomes to remain in their homes by **de-linking property assessment from the real estate market**. Assessments will increase based on actual improvements made, or when a house is sold.
- ✔ Establish a public inquiry into the **adequacy of retirement income for all New Brunswickers**, and reverse the changes made to the pensions of retired teachers, nurses and public servants.



Our Pathway for Change

## D. Protecting New Brunswickers from Climate Change

In a July 14, 2018, *Brunswick News* article, David Phillips, senior climatologist with Environment and Climate Change Canada, stated, “What we need to do is accept the reality that our climate has changed and it’s going to change even more in the future. It’s not going to be our grandparents’ weather anymore.” Five big New Brunswick climate-driven calamities cost the public purse \$186 million over the past ten years.

### A Green Government would:

- ✔ Immediately implement the recommendations of the **2016 Select Committee on Climate Change** to address the risks and impacts of climate change.
- ✔ **Maintain intact forests, wetlands, salt marshes and flood plains** as buffers against climate change impacts such as flooding and sea level rise.
- ✔ Investigate each **significant flood event** to identify factors that may have aggravated it, and incorporate learning into ongoing adaptation plans.

4 See <https://www.gnb.ca/legis/Climate-Climatiques/SelectCommitteeClimateChange.pdf>.



## Share the Wealth, **Extend a Hand**

New Brunswick will thrive if everyone has the means to fully participate in the economic, social and political life of their communities. Today, difficult living conditions and inadequate incomes are compromising people's futures. One hundred thousand New Brunswickers live in poverty. One-third receive social assistance, most of whom are unable to work. Fully two-thirds are working in jobs that do not pay enough to provide basic needs.

# 4 Share the Wealth, Extend a Hand

## A. Provide Liveable Incomes

Governments must ensure that everyone has enough income to allow them to meet their needs with dignity. Current rates of social assistance and minimum wage make this impossible. The Green Party's goal is to ensure that nobody falls below Statistics Canada's basic standard of living measure for communities in New Brunswick within ten years.<sup>5</sup>

### A Green Government would:

- ✓ Raise the minimum wage by \$1.00 per year to **\$15.25 per hour**, and then index it to inflation, so working people do not have to use food banks to make ends meet.
- ✓ Pilot a **Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) program**<sup>6</sup> in three regions for three years with the objective of phasing it in over time.
- ✓ Immediately **increase social assistance rates** for individuals by **13% for single people** and **5% for other recipients**, and then index the rates to inflation.
- ✓ Eliminate rules that **prevent people on social assistance from improving their living conditions**, such as the prohibition on sharing accommodation, income assistance claw-backs, and the extreme criteria used to determine disability.

- ✓ Eliminate the annual premiums for the **New Brunswick Drug Plan** for individuals earning less than \$25,000 and families of four earning less than \$40,000<sup>7</sup>, and support implementation of a national **Pharmacare program**.
- ✓ Amend the 2009 *Pay Equity Act* to apply to private workplaces.
- ✓ Improve access to safe, affordable housing by implementing **Housing First** strategies in Fredericton, Moncton and Saint John, and providing more rent supplements to individuals, rather than landlords<sup>8</sup>.
- ✓ Amend the *Residential Tenancies Act* to better protect tenants.
- ✓ Increase **funding for community organizations and social enterprises** that provide direct support to people in poverty.
- ✓ Expand the scope and budget of **legal aid services** to be comparable with what is offered in Nova Scotia and PEI.
- ✓ **Reduce the paperwork** required to access public services through the Departments of Social Development and Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour.

<sup>5</sup> This is called the Market Basket Measure.

<sup>6</sup> Another name for such programs is Guaranteed Annual Income (GAI).

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/health/MedicarePrescriptionDrugPlan/NBDrugPlan/Premiums.html>

<sup>8</sup> To be funded by the Canada-New Brunswick Bilateral Agreement on Affordable Housing.

# 4 Share the Wealth, Extend a Hand

## B. Make Public Transportation a Public Service

Mobility is one of the main barriers to gaining and keeping employment, accessing affordable housing, and participating in the community, especially in rural areas. Public transportation is also a central element of a climate change action plan.

### A Green Government would:

- ✔ Set goals for **increasing public transportation** ridership across the province to increase markets for public transportation and reduce carbon pollution.
- ✔ Direct the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure to **develop and maintain a convenient and affordable public transportation system** within and between regions not served by commercial services, including buses, marine and river ferries (restoring the Gagetown-Jemseg run and establishing a year-round ferry to Campobello Island), and rail<sup>9</sup>. Public transportation planning would be the responsibility of Regional Service Commissions, and could incorporate existing assets such as school buses, nursing home shuttles, and dial-a-ride services.
- ✔ Replace **bridges with temporary crossings** when they wash out so no one is left without alternate transportation routes in the event of floods or forest fires.
- ✔ **Subsidize existing municipal transit systems** to allow them to expand their services and keep costs low.



<sup>9</sup> To be funded by border tolls on the four lane highways and by carbon pollution levies.



## Investing in **Education and Culture**

Education and culture should be seen as investments in the future – of individuals, families, communities and the province.

# 5 Investing in Education and Culture

## A. Revitalize Public Education

All children need early access to public education; teachers must have the resources they need to do their jobs well, and schools must be integrated into and responsive to local communities.

### A Green Government would:

- ✓ Make the criteria for existing pre-schools to be accredited as **Early Childhood Learning Centres** more flexible, and where feasible, locate them within elementary schools, as a part of a universally accessible childcare system,
- ✓ Restore the system of **decentralized school districts** where decisions are made on resource allocations and policy implementation.
- ✓ Establish a **prominent role for teachers** in the development and implementation of public education policy and curriculum.
- ✓ **Transform underutilized school buildings** into community hubs for learning, training, and wellness, where there is community support.
- ✓ Mandate the study of **Civics and Outdoor Education** in public schools, to promote democratic engagement and healthy, active lifestyles.
- ✓ Provide schools with adequate resources and implementation flexibility to fully meet the goals of the **education inclusion policy**, including a continuum of therapy for autistic students throughout their school career.<sup>10</sup>
- ✓ Raise literacy and numeracy levels to the national average by investing in **after-hours programs** involving students, parents and community organizations.
- ✓ Ensure that all students are provided effective **second language training** in both the English and French school systems.

<sup>10</sup> This would build on the success of New Brunswick's preschool autism program.



## B. Expand Post-secondary Education Access

Post-secondary education should not burden graduates with crushing debt. The Green Party supports the long-term goal of extending the public education system to include post-secondary institutions through universal free tuition. In the meantime, the priority must be to relieve the debt burden carried by many graduates and current students. Adult training for bilingualism must be readily available throughout the province.

### A Green Government would:

- ✔ Eliminate interest on **provincial student loans**, as Nova Scotia has done.
- ✔ Reduce the cap for the **Timely Completion Benefit Program** to \$20,000 and extend the eligibility period to account for special circumstances.
- ✔ Reinstate the **tuition rebate program** for recent graduates.
- ✔ Develop comprehensive, accessible **adult French and English training programs** to increase fluency in the two official languages, in cooperation with the community colleges.

# 5 Investing in Education and Culture

## C. Investing in Culture

Artistic expression and appreciation are centrepieces of who we are and needs to be integral to education and community development. As the groundbreaking Sistema music program has proven, universal access to the arts and culture changes lives and enriches communities.

### A Green Government would:

- ✔ Create a stand-alone **Department of Culture and Heritage** by transferring the responsibility for tourism to a new Department of Community and Rural Development.
- ✔ Expand **school-based arts programs** including visual, musical, and dramatic arts.
- ✔ Enact legislation to create a **professional designation of artist**.
- ✔ Establish a Commission to explore how the arts, including filmmakers, can be **better supported** as a vital part of the economy.



Our Pathway for Change



Grow a

# Green Economy

For too long, successive governments have pursued economic development by degrading the environment, privatizing common resources, and giving hand-outs to large, profitable corporations. This approach enriches a few big companies and discriminates against small enterprises, while the province struggles with financial deficits and ecological decline.

To change our economic prospects, we must retain within our communities more of the economic wealth generated by workers and natural resources. We also have to use natural resources sustainably so that they generate community wealth into the future. And we have to stop the flow of public funds to large profitable corporations.

# 6 Grow a Green Economy

## A. Strengthen Local Economies

Strong local economies depend on three things: (1) a diversity of locally-owned small businesses, cooperatives, and social enterprises; (2) reducing imports of goods and services by producing and buying more locally; and (3) access to essential public infrastructure for communications and transportation. A 10% shift in consumer spending on imported goods and services to New Brunswick-made products would create 14,000 jobs and add \$1.8 billion to the provincial economy annually.<sup>11</sup>

### A Green Government would:

- ✔ **Consolidate the various economic development agencies** into a Department of Community and Rural Development.
- ✔ Develop an **import substitution strategy** that would increase the local production of essential goods and services.
- ✔ Require government departments, hospitals, schools and community colleges to **increase their purchase of local goods and services by at least 10%** and encourage municipalities and universities to do the same.

- ✔ Implement a **local food strategy** with targets for increasing the ratio of local food production to food imports, and for increasing organic production.
- ✔ Simplify the establishment of **Community Economic Development Investment Funds** and make them eligible for investments from RRSPs and tax-free savings.
- ✔ **Reduce loan guarantees and payroll rebates by half**, and redirect them from supporting large, profitable corporations, to local enterprises participating in the import substitution strategy.
- ✔ Develop a **bio-economy strategy** - bioenergy, bioplastics, and biochemicals - that would sustainably utilize renewable resources from our forests, farms and fisheries, including their processing wastes, to replace products made with oil and petrochemicals.
- ✔ Increase in-province tourism by **maintaining and restoring covered bridges and river ferries** and establishing interpretive rest stops along New Brunswick's four-lane highways.
- ✔ Implement the recommendations of the Cooperative Enterprise Council in their 2014 report, "**Co-operatives and Social Enterprise in New Brunswick**"<sup>12</sup> to increase the proportion of the economy that is managed for **social goals** as well as profits.



Our Pathway for Change

11 <http://centreforlocalprosperity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/CLP-IR-Study-web-Feb2018-Pages.pdf>

12 See <http://www.cecnb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Press-Conference-Backgrounder.pdf>

## B. Greening the Energy System

A central component of growing a green economy and tackling climate change is transitioning to a green energy system that is based on cutting energy waste and substituting renewable energy for non-renewable fossil and nuclear fuels.

### A Green Government would:

- ✔ Fund **energy efficiency upgrades for homes and businesses** to meet provincial targets to reduce energy demand;
- ✔ Provide financing, incentives and technical advice to homeowners and businesses to **convert from oil and gas to local sources of renewable energy.**
- ✔ Green the electrical grid by requiring that renewable sources (wind, solar, hydro) provide **50 percent of our electricity needs by 2025**, 75 percent by 2035 and 100 percent by 2050.
- ✔ **Prohibit the extraction of shale gas** and any other new sources of hydrocarbons.<sup>13</sup>
- ✔ Support the training/re-training of workers in **fossil fuel industries** and young people to meet the labour needs of the Green economy.
- ✔ Abandon proposals to expand **nuclear energy** production.

<sup>13</sup> The Clean Energy Strategy and the Public Transportation Strategy would be funded by revenue from the federal government's carbon price, to be replaced by a made-in-New Brunswick levy placed on coal, oil and natural gas entering the province by rail, ship or pipeline designed in consultation with New Brunswickers.

# 6 Grow a Green Economy

## C. Transform the Forest Economy

Crown forests – those controlled by the provincial government - are a public trust, and must be managed in a way that upholds treaty obligations to First Nations, provides sustainable livelihoods and economic opportunities for forest-dependent communities, and maintains the ecological integrity of the forest. We have a duty to severely limit clearcutting and end spraying to sustain our water, our wildlife, and the diversity of the Acadian forest, which can adapt to climate change.

### A Green Government would:

- ✓ Enact legislation to immediately **cancel all 25-year contracts** with the forestry companies signed by the Alward government in 2014 and retained by the Gallant government.
- ✓ Amend the *Crown Lands and Forests Act* to replace forestry corporations with a publicly accountable **Forest Stewardship Commission** as manager of the public forest. The Commission

would enter into co-management agreements with First Nations, consult with the public, oversee the allocation of wood to mills, and provide forest-dependent communities with community forest licenses for local economic activity, while ensuring that the ecological features of the Acadian Forest are maintained.

- ✓ Retain the provision in the *Crown Lands and Forests Act* that stipulates that **private woodlots should be the primary source of wood** supply to the mills, ensuring fair access to the wood market in New Brunswick.
- ✓ Immediately **end the spraying of herbicides** (glyphosate) on forest lands and under powerlines, given the risks the chemical poses to natural ecosystems and wildlife.
- ✓ Increase the proportion of the forest that is **managed for conservation purposes.**



Our Pathway for Change

## D. Transition Agriculture

The Green Party sees the expansion of sustainable agriculture as an opportunity for rural community development, and a central component of a local food strategy. There is unused or underused farm land in virtually every region of the province that could be utilized to significantly increase small-scale, low-impact farming. It is at risk, however, from corporate land speculation and foreign ownership.

### A Green Government would:

- ✔ Ensure that farmland ownership remains in the **hands of farmers** – not corporations or investment firms.
- ✔ Encourage new entrants to farming by creating and supporting a continuum of **education and training opportunities** through community-based organizations and public institutions.
- ✔ Amend the *Topsoil Preservation Act* to effectively **prevent the stripping of topsoil**.
- ✔ Give farmers greater power in the marketplace by supporting **marketing cooperatives and supply management systems**, while exempting direct-to-consumer sales from supply management or quota restrictions.
- ✔ **Reform provincial food inspection** regimes to enable small- and medium-scale food production, abattoirs, and food storage, processing and distribution enterprises.



## Revitalize **Democracy**

Democracy is in crisis, at home and abroad. Too many people have lost trust in politics. Without civics courses in public schools, many New Brunswickers are unfamiliar with how parliamentary democracy works, and how they can participate. Political power has become concentrated in a few hands. Partisanship has gummed up the effective functioning of our public Legislative Assembly. Political leaders have undermined the effectiveness of our public service in pursuit of electoral success. Governments have allowed themselves to be captured by corporate interests. We need to reclaim our democratic institutions and the values they represent.

## A. Local Governance

Good governance begins at the local level. Both urban and rural communities need more autonomy to shape their futures, and citizens need more opportunities to participate in local decision-making directly.

### A Green Government would:

- ✔ Amend the *Municipalities Act* and *Community Planning Act* to **increase the authority of municipalities**;
- ✔ Replace the current system of Local Service Districts with **local elected governments** designed by citizens to best meet their needs.
- ✔ Replace those Regional Service Commissions that include the three largest cities with **Metropolitan Service Commissions** to encompass the suburban and extra-urban commuter-based communities.
- ✔ Require Regional Service Commissions to carry out **planning on a watershed basis**, respecting ecological features of the region, and take on the responsibility for public transportation planning.

# 7 Revitalize Democracy

## B. Restore Authority to the Legislature

Real democracy is participatory, representative, and responsive. Citizens must have meaningful opportunities to contribute to public policy discussions before decisions are made. The Legislature must reflect the real distribution of votes, and young people must be brought into the process. The first allegiance of elected Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) must be to their constituents, and then to their party. Transparency in government affairs and independent media are essential to establishing accountability.

## A Green Government would:

- ✔ Implement **proportional representation** where seats in the Legislature will more closely reflect the popular vote, following the recommendations of New Brunswick's 2004 **Commission on Legislative Democracy** established by Premier Bernard Lord.<sup>14</sup>
- ✔ Lower the **voting age to 16**.
- ✔ Require **all-party representation on Legislative committees**, and aim for gender parity.
- ✔ Give all Legislative committees the **power to call witnesses and hold public hearings** on matters of public interest, and give citizens the right to present to those committees.



<sup>14</sup> See <http://www.electionsnb.ca/content/dam/enb/pdf/cld/CLDFinalReport-e.pdf>.

- ✔ Institute a **mandatory public comment stage** in the early phases of developing major legislation and policy proposals.
- ✔ Establish a **fixed legislative calendar** which includes the number of sitting days for elected members and a schedule of Legislative committee meetings.
- ✔ Require all **government contracts to be posted in their entirety** in a public registry. The business of the government is public business and should be open to public scrutiny by citizens.
- ✔ Amend the *Right to Information Act* to make **publicly-financed policy research and consultants' studies available to the public** as soon as the studies are completed.
- ✔ Amend the *Public Interest Disclosure Act* to increase protection for government whistleblowers, and impose sanctions on those who might retaliate against them.
- ✔ Require all businesses registered in New Brunswick to **reveal the names of all their actual owners** (not business agents) in the publicly-accessible corporate registry.
- ✔ Legislate a **40-percent cap** on the **concentration of print media ownership**, and prohibit cross-ownership of media and non-media businesses.
- ✔ Require a **three-year waiting period** before (a) former MLAs or public servants can work as lobbyists; and (b) senior managers can move from corporations to government, and vice versa.