

Green Book 2005

**Protecting the Public Interest
Keeping British Columbians Healthy
Investing in People & Communities
A Better Deal for BC's Economy
Restoring Democracy**

it's about time!

it's about
5 Protecting the Public Interest

Keeping Public Assets In Public Hands.....	6
Increasing Local Control	7
Strengthening Public Oversight.....	8
Upholding Civil Liberties & Justice For All	10
Protecting Our Natural Capital	11
Measuring Genuine Progress	12

it's about
15 Keeping British Columbians Healthy

Adopting A New Model For Sustainable Health Care	16
A Healthy BC Needs A Healthy Environment	19
Ending Poverty	22

it's about
25 Investing in People & Communities

Public Education: Our Best Investment	26
Affordable, Safe Housing For Everyone	28
Transportation That Works For People.....	30
Aboriginal People: Reconciliation & Partnerships	31

it's about
33 A Better Deal for BC's Economy

Building Blocks for a Strong Economy	34
Taxes That Make Sense	36
A Better Deal for BC Workers.....	38
A Better Deal for BC Small Businesses	40
A Better Deal for BC Communities.....	44

it's about
53 Restoring Democracy

Campaign Finance Reform	54
Putting People First	54
Making Every Vote Count.....	55

A Message From Adriane Carr



British Columbia's rich endowment of natural resources makes our province one of the wealthiest places in the world. We have an equal wealth of human resources. People are drawn to live and invest in BC because of our natural resources, unrivalled scenic splendour, great quality of life and economic potential.

But BC can be even better than it is. Too many of our natural resources are being shipped out raw. Too many British Columbians can't access health care, education and other public services, when and where they need them. Our provincial debt, the highest in BC's history, can and must be reduced.

The Green Party of British Columbia, with its solid values and sound ideas, would do a much better job than other parties at managing BC's affairs for the benefit of all present and future British Columbians.

The Green Party is different from the other political parties because we understand the ecological limits to growth. This means we evaluate the long-term social and environmental costs of proposed developments as well as their short-term economic gains. If the costs are too high, a project does not go ahead. We don't think our children should have to pay the economic, social or environmental costs of our mistakes.

Another fundamental difference between the Green Party and the others is that our party believes in local decision making and control. We believe in empowering local governments with the responsibility to keep



It's about time!

their local environments healthy, and giving them the authority and resources they need to protect their drinking water, produce their own food and energy, and develop thriving local economies that serve the interests of local people for generations to come.

The 2005 Green Party platform encourages mutual responsibility and cooperation at all levels of government so that everyone in BC will enjoy a better future. It is founded in compassion, conservation and cooperation for the benefit of all.

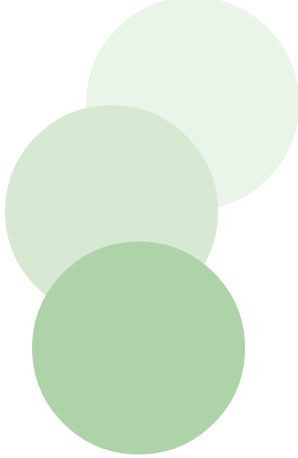
When you finish reading our platform, check both your heart and mind. Consider your children's future. Chances are that you will be excited, as I am, about our Green Party leading the way in bringing your values into the twenty-first century.

Our positive, sensible policies require only one action to become a reality — that you and every like-minded person vote for the Green Party of BC on election day. Seize this opportunity to vote with your heart and your head for what you really believe in. Be part of the breakthrough to a fair, healthy and sustainable BC.

Adriane Carr

Leader of the Green Party of BC





It's about time!

When you read the Green Party platform for 2005, we believe you will agree that our values are also your values, and that they are shared by your friends and many other British Columbians. We all want a stronger British Columbia that offers prosperity and health. We all want more effective and accountable government that makes sensible decisions for the future so our children can grow and flourish. We all want representative government beholden to only one special interest group — British Columbians — no matter where they live, what their economic status is, or which political beliefs they hold.

Green Party of BC

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it's about...

Protecting the Public Interest

We are blessed in BC because we still own most of our natural resources and public services. If we manage them properly, we can achieve prosperity without sacrificing our health, our environment or our children's future. This would be genuine progress.

Keeping Public Assets in Public Hands	6
Increasing Local Control	7
Strengthening Public Oversight	8
Upholding Civil Liberties & Justice for All	10
Protecting Our Natural Capital	11
Measuring Genuine Progress	12

Keeping Public Assets in Public Hands

For decades, BC citizens have invested in world-class public health and education systems, stewardship of our public lands and waters, the largest coastal ferry fleet in the world, highways, hydroelectric dams and power lines. Public ownership of these assets is the legacy of our grandparents. We need to keep these public assets in public hands, so we can pass them on to our grandchildren.

Public Lands & Waters

BC's land and water resources are a public trust. Undisclosed amounts of crown land have been sold, and water rights leased, under the auspices of Land & Water BC Inc. (formerly known as BC Assets & Land Corp.), since the province established this crown corporation in 1997. The Green Party of BC would:

- ask for a **full audit of Land & Water BC**
- maintain the ban on bulk water exports and stop the sale of crown lands in community watersheds
- repeal the *Land Amendment Act* to close the door to **privatization of our publicly owned forests** through so-called "Working Forest" measures



Public Health Care

The contracting out of support services in health care has created many problems in our health care system and compromised the quality of care and privacy of citizens. The Green Party of BC supports:

- **restoring public management of billing and records for the BC Medical Service Plan (MSP)**, including the cancellation of the contract to an American company to maintain BC citizens' health care records
- **restoring publicly managed and delivered food, housekeeping, laundry and security services** in public health care facilities

Public Education

Immense pressure from more than a decade of underfunding, has led to creeping commercialization of our schools. Exclusive vending machine contracts and corporate sponsorships expose our children to junk food and corporate advertising. The Green Party of BC would immediately fund a program to work with school boards to buy out these contracts and **get junk food and corporate advertising out of our public**

"I believe we must start thinking a lot more about our responsibility to the earth and its future. If we sell off crown land for a fast buck — or a quick nickel — we are giving away our ability to make choices about what legacy we pass on to future generations. That's why I'm voting for the Green Party this election."

Doug Cowell
Writer and Photographer
Comox Valley

schools. We would require that school boards use **public delivery of janitorial, cafeteria, food, and other services in our K-12 public schools,** to ensure the public can oversee and uphold high standards of quality and safety.

Crown Corporations

A publicly owned ferry system is the backbone of regional economic development in ferry-dependent communities. Our ferries are just as vital a part of our transportation system as roads and bridges. Privatizing BC Ferries has put both smaller routes and federal subsidies in jeopardy. We would:

- **re-establish BC Ferries as a crown corporation** by rescinding Bill 18 (*Coastal Ferries Act*) with a mandate to serve the BC public as a waterway extension of the public highway system
- require that all BC ferries be built in BC

Public control and regulation of electrical energy has benefitted residents and businesses for decades. Our public utility has provided some of the lowest electricity rates in North America, returned billions of dollars in revenue to the province to fund health care and education, and created thousands of good, local jobs. The Green Party of BC would:

- **reassemble BC Hydro** as a unified, completely public crown corporation mandate that new and existing **electrical transmission lines be publicly owned and operated** by BC Hydro

To ensure British Columbians continue to benefit from BC Hydro's legacy, we would **prohibit the private export of electricity.**

Railroads were vital to the creation of Canada. As energy becomes more expensive, they remain the most economical and energy-effective means of moving large quantities of goods. Public concerns about the connection between the sale of BC Rail and charges laid against government employees deserve answers. The Green Party of BC supports a **public enquiry into the sale of BC Rail.** If criminal activities are uncovered, this sale should be cancelled and BC Rail restored as a crown corporation.

Increasing Local Control

One of the core principles of the Green Party is greater local responsibility and control so people most affected by a decision are fully involved in making that decision. In the 1990s, the government jailed citizens for trying to protect their local drinking watersheds. In the last four years, government has overruled local decisions on greenhouses, energy projects, transit and highways.

The Green Party of BC would immediately **repeal the *Significant Projects Streamlining Act*** (Bill 75) that gives the provincial government the power to impose development decisions on local governments.

The Green Party of BC would grant municipalities and regional governments 999-year leases (equivalent to those held by Vancouver and Victoria) for watersheds that provide domestic drinking water. This would ensure that local governments have the authority they need to provide **all British Columbians with clean, safe drinking water.**

The Green Party of BC would:

- recognize that local decisions on public transit take precedence over provincial plans
- subject provincial crown land sales to approval by affected local governments and First Nations
- require local and regional governments' approval of independent power projects

British Columbia needs to protect its authority and self-sufficiency in the national and global context. We would assert, in court if necessary, the provincial powers granted under the BNA Act to make autonomous decisions in provincial areas of authority, if such powers are challenged by international trade agreements such as the North America Free Trade Agreements (FTA, NAFTA) and trade agreements under the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Strengthening Public Oversight

The public trust is not just about who owns and controls our public services and assets: it's about government being accountable to the public for how it takes care of public resources and services. Upholding the public trust requires adequate staffing and good staff morale. Cutbacks in staffing levels of government watchdog agencies over the past decade have put citizens at great risk.

Requiring Triple-Bottom-Line Accounting

In watching over the prudent use of public resources, government must think about three bottom lines — economic, social, and environmental. The Green Party of BC would **require all government ministries and agencies to incorporate “triple-bottom-line” assessments**, both in government's own operations and when purchasing goods and services. Triple-bottom-line accounting empowers government to make wiser decisions to ensure that the public is not left paying huge social, health and environmental “clean-up” costs as a consequence of only considering the financial bottom line.

Restoring Morale for Government Workers

A 2005 Auditor General report revealed that the morale of public sector employees is the lowest it has been in decades, with the vast majority of public employees citing critically low staffing levels and politically appointed executives as the source of their concerns. The Green Party of BC supports immediate action to:

- **establish good faith bargaining** with public servants and include cost-of-living increases as a minimum in negotiations
- establish an independent agency for ensuring that **appointments to government tribunals, boards and senior positions are done through a qualification-based process** and are not politically motivated patronage appointments

Watchdogs & Whistleblowers

The ability of independent agencies and citizens to act as watchdogs has been eroded over the past two governments. We support taking immediate measures to ensure effective and independent supervision of government processes and spending. The Green Party of BC would **restore staffing in government ministries charged with protecting public resources.**

Budget cuts to the **Auditor General** and **Office of the Ombudsman** have made it impossible to provide oversight of many projects and government agencies. The Green Party of BC supports **restoring funding for both these offices to 2001 levels.** We would specifically instruct the Auditor General's office to:

- **audit all government projects costing over \$100 million**
- **establish regular financial reporting to the public on the status of the 2010 Olympic Games** spending and related projects

The Green Party of BC supports **“whistle blower” legislation that protects the right of employees to speak out** when they believe that the actions of their employers are illegal, threaten public health, or endanger the public good.

Private citizens who speak out need the same protection. We would:

- **enact anti-SLAPP legislation** (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation) to counter the growing use of SLAPPs by corporations to thwart public criticism through intimidation
- **strengthen the *Freedom of Information Act*** by requiring quicker response time, eliminating the loopholes used to deny access to public information, and reducing the cost to ordinary citizens for access to government information
- allow citizens and public interest groups to initiate **private prosecutions**

Upholding Civil Liberties & Justice for All

It is in the public interest to ensure that all British Columbians have equal access to justice and protection of individual rights and freedoms. Government cutbacks and policies have diminished these protections, putting some of the most vulnerable people in our society at risk. The Green Party of BC supports:

- **re-establishing the offices of the Human Rights Commissioner and the Child, Youth and Family Advocate**
- **reinstating funding for Legal Aid** and modifying the eligibility requirements to include members of the working poor
- **repealing the *Safe Streets Act* and providing better funding for programs that offer counselling, mental illness treatment and rehabilitation for street people and panhandlers**

The Green Party of BC, in cooperation with municipalities, would modify the *Police Act* to allow **direct election of municipal police boards** to ensure accountable citizen oversight of police practices. We would restore the budget of the Police Complaints Commissioner.

The Green Party of BC would expand **restorative justice** processes to resolve cases

Re-thinking the War on Drugs

Each year the government spends millions of dollars enforcing marijuana laws. At the same time, legalizing and taxing BC's \$7 billion marijuana industry — which is the mainstay of many BC communities — could conservatively generate \$1 billion a year in tax revenues. Legalizing marijuana would remove organized crime's involvement in black-market sales.

Following the recommendation of the 2002 Senate Special Committee on Drugs, the Green Party of BC believes it's time to end the war on marijuana and, in concert with the federal government, to **legalize the adult use of marijuana**. We would:

- create a **regulatory framework for the safe production of marijuana** by small, independent growers
- **develop a taxation rate similar to that of tobacco**
- **establish the sale of marijuana** to adults for medicinal or personal use **through licensed distribution outlets, similar to liquor stores**
- **educate the public about the health effects of marijuana**

Recognizing that marijuana is essential in the treatment of some chronic conditions, we would expand Medical Service Plan coverage to include, when prescribed by doctors, the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes.

other than just minor crimes by first offenders. Our present criminal justice system relies heavily on imposing expensive prison sentences that further reinforce anti-social attitudes of prisoners and result in repeat offender rates of over 50 per cent. Restorative justice promotes stronger communities by requiring offenders to understand and take responsibility for the full consequences of their crimes. Repeat crime rates for those who have been through restorative justice processes are as low as five per cent. We would:

- advocate for **new educational programs for justice system staff** on the positive benefits of restorative practices
- require the Ministry of Attorney General, Ministry of Public Safety, and Solicitor General shift a portion of their **funding to restorative justice**

Finally, to protect all British Columbians from invasion of their privacy, the Green Party of BC would **prohibit the contracting out of the collecting and storage of government information to American companies that are subject to the *American Patriot Act***.

Protecting Our Natural Capital

Some of our greatest public assets are the water, land, air and wildlife of this beautiful province. Clean water, fresh air, incredible green spaces, and recreation opportunities are the foundation of our economy, but the protection of these assets is woefully inadequate.

Protecting Endangered Species & Endangered Places

Since the early 1990s, scientists have raised alarm bells that habitat loss and environmental degradation are pushing several species towards extinction. There are now 1,300 species at risk in BC. Our endangered species and places can't wait any longer for action.

The Green Party of BC would place an **immediate moratorium on all logging, road building and industrial development in critically endangered species' habitat** including mountain caribou, spotted owl and marbled murrelet.

We would **ban sport and trophy hunting of grizzly bears**. We would **place a moratorium on offshore oil and gas exploration and maintain the moratorium on offshore drilling** to protect our coastal waters and marine wildlife.

We would **enact BC Species at Risk legislation** that includes identification of species at risk by an independent, scientific body and mandatory protection of critical habitat to ensure species survival and recovery. To provide for the long-term health of our

province's natural capital, we would:

- replace the Ministry of Water, Air and Land Protection with a **Ministry of Environment and Conservation** with the responsibility of ensuring **development is ecologically sustainable** and the authority to review and sign-off on all development permits on crown land
- direct this new ministry to **increase BC's parks and protected areas system over the next 10 years**
- seek park co-management agreements with First Nations
- **expand the Ecological Reserve system to encompass one per cent of BC's land base**, the target originally set when the program was initiated in the 1970s
- **increase funding of the Ministry of Environment and Conservation to 1991 levels** to restore monitoring of pollution, protection of species at risk, and enforcement of fish and wildlife regulations

Safeguarding our Farmland

When the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) was established in 1974, it was one of the most far-sighted pieces of public policy ever implemented in Canada. Retaining highly productive agricultural land near population centres protected our farmlands from non-agricultural development and helped ensure food security for the future. Yet the integrity of this vision has been undermined by the accelerating removal of ALR lands by successive provincial governments. The Green Party of BC would protect farmland by:

- **freezing all further withdrawals of class one agricultural land from the Agricultural Land Reserve**
- **changing the *Agricultural Land Reserve Act* to prohibit land-owners from degrading class one and two ALR lands** by activities such as removing topsoil and depositing sand, gravel or construction wastes on these lands

Measuring Genuine Progress

People want to know that the government they elect is doing a good job of managing public services, public resources and their tax dollars. This means looking at far more than just the short-term financial "bottom line." As we've seen over the past decade, balancing a budget often means incurring long-term debts through the erosion of social programs and destruction of the environment.

The Green Party supports replacing BC's Progress Board with a **Genuine Progress Board** charged with establishing and monitoring a provincial Genuine Progress Index (GPI) in consultation with the public, industry, local governments, First Nations and non-government organizations.

The GPI is a tool that will give a much truer picture of our actual well-being than the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which only measures the quantity of market activity without accounting for the social and ecological costs. The GPI values unpaid labour such as parenting and volunteer work, while subtracting as negatives the costs of pollution and crime, the depletion of natural and non-renewable resources, and other economic activities that cause harm. The end goal is to establish measurable bottom lines for social and environmental indicators that, together with traditional financial indicators, measure the trend in the true well being of BC citizens.

Making Government a Leader in Ethical Purchasing

Instead of buying exclusively at the lowest price, government procurement policy must also be judged by a triple bottom line. Governments must ensure that expenditures are supporting a strong local economy, good labour practices, and environmental protection. **The Green Party of BC supports ethical purchasing that requires government to:**

- use our tax dollars to purchase BC products and services, wherever possible. These purchases would be subject to a triple-bottom-line "screen"
- if imports are necessary, procure **certified fair-trade goods**. Fair prices should be paid for products grown or manufactured by organizations that have good labour and environmental practices
- require all departments and agencies to **meet the highest environmental standards** including full recycling, energy-efficient vehicles and toxic-free buildings and grounds maintenance

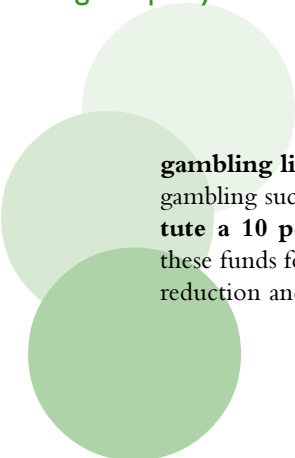
Getting the Government Off Gambling

Making genuine progress means reducing government's dependence on revenue sources that cause long-term social harm to the community. The Green Party supports instituting **a moratorium on issuing new**



"The trend in outsourcing jobs out of the province has been very disappointing to watch. When people of my age and younger hear about those jobs lost, we know that our future has that many fewer possibilities. Efficient, sustainable investment means balancing our province's infrastructure and economic needs with our social, environmental and employment needs. There are thousands of options before privatization and outsourcing. I believe we can be much smarter than that."

Vine Madder
Graphic Designer
East Kootenay



gambling licences and phasing out, over a five-year period, the most addictive forms of gambling such as slot machines and on-line gambling. **The Green Party would institute a 10 per cent tax on all gambling winnings** and use a significant portion of these funds for the **treatment and rehabilitation of gambling addicts** and for harm reduction and educational programs aimed at reducing gambling.

it's about...

Keeping British Columbians Healthy

The Green Party believes in the old saying that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

We support the development of programs that promote healthy lifestyles and tackle the root causes of poor health. Our goal is to reduce preventable illness, which will save tax dollars in both the short and long term.

We can achieve better health care without spending an ever-increasing percentage of the total provincial budget on health care services by using all health care professionals to their fullest capabilities. We believe in helping elderly people stay at home by providing the assistance they need.

A New Model for Sustainable Health Care	16
A Healthy BC Needs a Healthy Environment	19
Ending Poverty	22

A New Model for Sustainable Health Care

British Columbians treasure their universal health care system built up over several generations. However, we are facing a crisis in BC's public health care system that has been more than a decade in the making. It started in the 1990s with decreases in federal government transfer payments and decisions by the provincial NDP to cut the number of health care professionals trained in BC, to reduce funding for mental health, and to eliminate home support for seniors. Then the Liberals closed hospitals, surgical services, and long-term care beds.

The result has been increased wait lists, over-crowded emergency rooms, and increased privatization of services. Two-tier health care was first introduced by the NDP with the opening of the private Cambie Surgical Clinic to serve WCB clients. Since then, we've watched a steady move towards a two-tiered system.

The Green Party of BC is committed to creating a robust public health care system that guarantees our children the same standard of care we formerly enjoyed. The Green Party **supports universal single-tiered public health care**. The Green Party health care platform focuses on:

- easing the short-term crisis by **investing in facilities, equipment and staffing**
- reinstating and expanding support for **wellness and prevention**
- **delivering services in a more diverse, community-based and less expensive way**
- **expanding community care and home support for seniors**

Investing In Prevention

The most efficient dollar spent in health care is a dollar spent on prevention. The Green Party of BC supports the immediate **reinstatement and expansion of Medical Service Plan coverage to include preventative treatments** such as chiropractic, physiotherapy, eye exams, massage therapy and routine physical exams. We would expand coverage for preventative measures such as counselling for addictions, weight control and stress reduction. We would:

- offer **financial assistance for families providing home care** for seniors and disabled family members who otherwise would require more costly public or private assistance in outside facilities
- institute a 10 per cent **provincial junk food tax** and earmark the monies raised for school-based **hot lunch programs and sports activities** for children and youth
- **remove the provincial sales tax on children's sports equipment**

Treatment today saves money & lives for tomorrow

For many years, the Green Party of BC has advocated a four-pillar approach to widespread drug addiction in our communities. Governments have adopted some of these pillars but for the approach to work, they need to include all four pillars: education, enforcement, harm reduction and treatment. Addiction needs to be treated as a medical problem, not a criminal problem and more money needs to go into the education and treatment pillars. We support:

- immediately increasing the number of detox, rehabilitation and long-term care beds
- providing funding for municipalities to develop comprehensive “four-pillar” solutions for drug-affected communities

Community-Based Care

Many provincial and national commissions on the rising costs of health care in Canada have agreed that community-based integrated models of health care work best.

The Green Party of BC would establish **maximum allowable distances from acute care facilities in rural areas (one-half hour in all but the most remote communities) and maximum density ratios for facilities serving urban areas**. To meet these requirements, money must be provided to the regional health boards to **restore basic emergency, surgical and hospital services that have been closed during the past three years**. In some rural communities, 24-7 clinics staffed by salaried doctors and nurse practitioners, who can perform emergency surgical services, make the most sense.

Community health care centres would include teams of health care workers trained to treat less acute emergency medical problems with primary care and diagnosis provided by a range of health care professionals. This approach alleviates pressures on emergency room services and makes **better use of the full range of trained health care professionals**. A **gradual change from the fee-for-service Medical Service Plan billing towards salaries for doctors** could begin in these centres.

Chronic Care

Community and home-based health services provide better, more patient and family friendly support for people living with chronic care

For almost 40 years I worked at keeping British Columbians healthy. As both an urban and country doctor, I made house calls, delivered thousands of babies and staffed hospital emergency rooms. Adriane Carr and our Okanagan candidates are committed to assisting citizens in being well informed, healthy and prosperous. I heartily endorse the Green Party.”

Dr. Sterling Haynes
Physician (retired)
Okanagan Valley

needs, and at a cost much lower than acute care hospitals. Under both the NDP and the Liberals, these programs have been cut back substantially. The Green Party of BC would:

- **expand the home support and home care programs and assisted-living services** to support people with chronic care needs, including many seniors, who wish to remain in their own homes
- **allocate funds to open or build at least 100 long-term care beds a month** until the shortfall of beds needed by people with chronic health care needs is eliminated
- **increase funding for non-institutionalized mental health patients including children and youth** to provide adequate housing, community-based support, and ongoing outpatient and inpatient care by mental health practitioners

We would **adopt a policy that seniors' care is provided in the communities where they or their families live** and that **couples are accommodated in the same facility**.

The Green Party of BC supports **educating the public about end-of-life issues** including the limits to life support extension, surgical operations and chemical therapies and options for the transition from life. We would **enact "living-will" legislation** that guarantees people the right to limit or refuse medical intervention and treatment so people have the choice to die with dignity. We would increase funding for palliative care hospices, both in hospitals and our communities.

Getting a Handle on ERs, Waitlists & Costs

The Green Party of BC supports an **immediate review of the Ministry of Health budget**. This review must involve front-line health care professionals in developing a plan to increase efficiency in direct patient care. It must require the reallocation of funds to increase direct delivery of health care services that will reduce waitlists and increase access to acute care and ER beds across the province.

We would ensure that the recently announced increase in federal transfer payments for health care is used immediately **to hire staff to service all existing beds, and fully utilize the existing operating rooms in hospitals, and to purchase new diagnostic equipment that will speed treatment and shorten wait lists**.

Recruit, Train and Retain More Health Care Workers

To address staffing shortages in health care, the Green Party of BC would move to immediately establish:

- qualification standards and on-the-job mentorship programs in order

to **facilitate the hiring of foreign-trained doctors, nurses and other professionals**

- **loan payback incentives** for graduating doctors, nurses, paramedics, and other health care professionals who agree to staff rural and other facilities where recruitment is currently a problem

Meeting the Rising Costs of PharmaCare

Recognizing that spiraling PharmaCare costs have now eclipsed all other health care expenditures, the Green Party supports a **public inquiry into the rising cost and over-prescription of drugs**. The Green Party will also commission a cost-benefit analysis on the feasibility of establishing a new crown corporation to bulk purchase and dispense generic drugs to pharmacies in BC.

The long-term answers for our public health care system may exist in other jurisdictions. We support **investigating European models of successful single-tiered, publicly funded, universal public health care systems** that do not have the chronic waitlist and bed-shortage problems that we have in BC including investigating less invasive and less costly herbal, vitamin and other alternative therapies.

A Healthy BC Needs a Healthy Environment

Attacking the root causes of health problems, including poverty, inadequate housing and the degradation of our natural environment is just as important as care of the sick. The Green Party advocates **changing the BC Human Rights Code so clean drinking water, clean air and safe food — all part of a healthy environment — are fundamental rights** guaranteed to all British Columbians.

Protecting Everyone's Drinking Water

Clean and safe drinking water is a birthright of every British Columbian. Yet, BC is the only jurisdiction in Canada that has not improved water protection since the deaths caused by contaminated water at Walkerton, Ontario. The Green Party of BC would amend the *Drinking Water Protection Act* to:

- **protect drinking water at its source** by prohibiting potentially harmful activities in drinking water supply areas including logging, mining, road building, spraying of herbicides and other pesticides, livestock grazing and industrial development

- **keep the management and inspection of domestic water supplies in public hands** and increase mandatory drinking water testing including testing for parasites such as cryptosporidium, toxoplasmosis and giardia
- **phase out chlorination systems**, replacing them with ozonation, ultraviolet sterilization, sand filtration and other safer water purification systems

The Green Party of BC would conduct an inventory of all polluted groundwater and water bodies, and develop and implement strategies for cleaning them up.

Getting Tough on Toxics

Cancer is the leading cause of premature death in Canada and the second leading cause of death in Canadian children. The Green Party of BC would embark on a plan to reduce and ultimately eliminate exposure to toxic pollution, which would include:

- enacting “Toxic-Free BC” legislation to **eliminate the import and use of products containing the most toxic substances**, including carcinogens, endocrine-disrupters and persistent organic pollutants (POPs). This list will include Polybrominated Diphenyl Ether (PBDE) a toxic chemical used in many household products as a flame retardant
- **requiring plain language labelling and warnings on all products** containing toxic substances and introducing a **10 per cent “toxic tax”** on the sale of these items
- **increasing monitoring and enforcement of existing laws** for industrial pollution, **increasing pollution fines**, and creating a **graduated “pollution tax”** that increases with the amount of pollution
- actively assisting municipalities to pass bylaws to eliminate the cosmetic use of pesticides in urban areas and ensuring that provincial health and environmental legislation does not impede the passage of these bylaws
- starting a program to **test homes and buildings in BC’s “uranium belt” for highly carcinogenic radon gas**

The Green Party of BC would require the pulp and paper industry to switch from chlorine-based chemicals to oxygen in pulp bleaching processes, setting 2009 as the deadline for compliance.

In the Lower Mainland, the largest single source of pollution is not an industrial plant but the Iona sewage treatment station. In Victoria, minimally treated sewage is

dumped right into the ocean. It's time to ban the dumping of raw and minimally treated sewage into waterways and use available federal infrastructure money to implement tertiary municipal sewage treatment or better.

To decrease toxics going into the sewage system and landfills we would:

- substantially **increase the number of drop-off and collection depots for toxic household products**
- increase funding to the Recycling Council of BC to improve its **toll-free information number** to include information on the location of toxic waste depots and specific information about toxic substances

Clean Air: Meeting Our Kyoto Commitments

There is no longer any doubt that emissions from vehicles, gas-fired electricity plants, agri-business, burning of wood waste, and other human activities are creating a record number of health problems. A 2003 report by our Provincial Health Officer estimates that air pollution costs the BC health care system \$167 million per year, causing up to 4,800 hospital admissions and ER visits per year. Asthma is now the top reason for children's hospital admissions.

The Green Party of BC would reduce our production of greenhouse gases and clean up BC's air. We would **pass provincial legislation binding British Columbia to meet our fair share of Canada's Kyoto commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions** to six per cent below the 1990 level by the year 2012. This means reducing our current annual consumption of fossil fuels by 30 per cent, requiring a new BC energy plan based on conservation and renewable energy.

To better monitor and improve air quality, the Green Party would establish airshed planning and maximum emission totals per airshed, with permits assessed on the basis of cumulative impact assessments. We would reduce emissions from vehicles and industry, the two biggest sources of air pollution, by:

- requiring emission standards similar to those in California
- working with the federal government and industry to require trucks and marine ships to adhere to low emission standards
- **requiring all wood waste beehive burners to be replaced within one year** with no exceptions

Air quality is impacted in rural BC by slash burning. The Green Party of BC would encourage municipalities to ban burning of slash in backyards and for land clearing.

Ending Poverty

The health of British Columbians is directly and negatively affected by low income. Although they are fully aware of the link between poverty and health, governments spend increasing amounts of money on health care yet enact policies that result in increased poverty. Under the BC Liberals, BC became the province with the widest gap between the rich and the poor.

The Green Party believes that addressing social equality and poverty issues at the source is fundamental to building a healthy and sustainable society. Adopting a **comprehensive anti-poverty strategy** makes good sense economically as well as socially.

We would work with the federal government to **convert all the current income support programs into one comprehensive Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI)** based on Canada's Low Income Cut-Off measure, which provides a minimum income needed for individuals and families to live a life of health and dignity in the mainstream of society. Savings in administering and delivering all the current different income support programs would offset the cost of the GLI program.

Prior to establishing the GLI, the Green Party of BC would move to immediately **eliminate the "two-out-of-five-year rule" for eligibility to collect welfare and the requirement that older income assistance recipients apply for Canadian**

New Help For New Immigrants

New immigrants to Canada are twice as likely to live in poverty as people who are born in Canada. Nowhere is this truer than in BC, where the provincial government diverts a substantial amount of federal dollars intended to fund settlement services for new immigrants into general revenues. As a result, new immigrants who land in BC receive inadequate language training and the other support they need to successfully enter the Canadian job market. The Green Party of BC would **ensure 100 per cent of federal dollars intended for immigrant settlement was used for that purpose**, including:

- **reinstating full support for English as a second language instruction** for school-aged children and youth
- working with community agencies to provide language training for adults
- **providing targeted funding to school districts for multicultural workers** to support home-to-school relationships
- **providing adequate funding for non-profit settlement agencies** and assistance in setting up new agencies in communities where no such support exists

We support the current federal government task force on establishing a better system for **recognizing the credentials and training that new immigrants received in their home countries** so they can practise their skilled trades and professions in BC.

Pension Plan early, a measure that can lead to a 30 per cent reduction in benefits over the long term. We would **adjust income assistance for all recipients to the annual cost of living index**.

Getting people back to work requires transition support that our current income assistance programs don't provide. **We would provide free transit passes for those on income assistance** giving people mobility to find work, shelter and other necessities.

Many jobs available to low-income British Columbians pay poorly and are part time. The Green Party supports **allowing income assistance recipients to keep 100 per cent of the wages they earn, up to the Low Income Cut-Off level**, to encourage people to get back into the job market.

Supporting Children, Youth & Families

Child development has a significant effect on lifelong health of individuals. Research has shown that childhood quality of life is the number one determinant of adult health. Despite promises by both the federal and provincial governments to eliminate child poverty, it has increased. Currently one in five BC children lives in poverty. To protect our most vulnerable children, the Green Party of BC would:

- ensure that **the 7,000 children waiting for an assessment** are **evaluated within one year** so they can receive services, by increasing the budget and staff of the Ministry of Children and Family Development
- make sure that children, youth and families at risk receive the services they need
- use a portion of the new junk food tax to provide **funding for school breakfast and lunch programs**
- **invest in programs that partner with the community to support vulnerable children and youth**
- restore the Office of the Child, Youth and Family Advocate

Fair Share for Women

The reason most children live in poverty is because their parents do, usually their mothers. The Green Party of BC supports:

- **enacting pay equity legislation** that would require all employers in both the public and private sectors — over a



“People in poverty are the barometer to measure not only the effectiveness of our social supports, but also the quality of a community’s representation. The Green Party of BC is committed to ensuring that those most affected by poverty are champions in the creation of solutions.”

Raven Bowen
Poverty Activist
Green Party Candidate
Vancouver-Mount Pleasant

phased-in time period of no more than 10 years — to pay women and men equally for work of equal value

- **restoring funding for women’s centres** so women in need have access to community support

Women who are victims of violence often become victims of poverty when they leave abusive relationships. We would collaborate with non-profit societies and **commit adequate funding for emergency shelters** and longer-term transition houses to ensure that all children and victims of violence have a decent bed to sleep in, good food to eat, and support to re-establish their lives.

Re-Thinking the Sex Trade

With rising rates of poverty and drug addiction, more and more women are turning to the streets to make a living, despite the clear dangers underlined by the deaths and disappearances of dozens of sex trade workers in Vancouver and northern BC over the past few years. Disease is an even bigger killer for sex trade workers. A report released in early 2005 by the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDs found that Vancouver is the only city in the developed world where the HIV infection rate among female injection drug users far outstrips that of men, a consequence it says is due to our street level sex trade.

The Green Party of BC believes it’s time to re-think the government’s response to the sex trade. We **would assert provincial jurisdiction over the regulation of the sex trade in BC**, and work with representatives of the sex trade to **develop and establish government programs to protect the health and safety of sex trade workers**. We would fund regular HIV and other STD testing, a 1-800 number to report missing persons, and **a non-coercive program of support and rehabilitation to enable** minors and adults who wish to leave the sex trade.

Providing for People with Special Needs

The Green Party believes that **social services for the disabled should be based on a social model of disability rather than a medical model**. The ongoing failure of previous governments to provide support based on this principle has meant that the unemployment rate for the disabled is double that of the rest of the population and many people with disabilities live in poverty. We would:

- **increase access to independent living services and housing** for people with disabilities and special needs
- **expand education, training and work opportunities** for people with disabilities and special needs
- secure the right of disabled persons on income assistance to **ongoing access to disability benefits**

it's about...

Investing in People & Communities

British Columbians want and deserve a better future for themselves and their children. The job of government is to help create that future by strengthening individuals, families and communities. A Green Party government would invest in education, housing and livable communities. We would work cooperatively with local governments, First Nations, school boards, transit authorities and local citizen groups, sharing mutual responsibility for making the dream of a brighter future for everyone a reality in BC.

Education: Our Best Investment.....	26
Affordable, Safe Housing	28
Transportation That Works for People	30
Aboriginal People: Reconciliation & Partnerships.....	31

Public Education: Our Best Investment

Public education is Canada's longest standing universally accessible social service. Almost everyone agrees that a good education is essential to the future prosperity of our province and to a rewarding life for all British Columbians. However, the NDP and Liberals have seriously eroded our public education system by failing to fund all the costs involved in delivering high quality public education, and by needlessly embittering relations with educational professionals. The Green Party of BC will sit down with students, parents, teachers and elected school board trustees and together re-build trust, and cooperation so that together we can develop a plan to re-establish excellence in BC's public education system.

Restoring Funding

The Green Party places a priority on adequately funding our public education system, from pre-school to post-secondary. Studies have shown that every dollar spent on education results in more than \$7 in savings in later remedial social services costs. In this information age, education is more clearly linked to public prosperity than ever before. The Green Party of BC would **immediately increase funding to our public school system by \$320 million annually**, in order to re-establish the service levels for students that existed before the BC Liberals took office.

We would **establish an education commission**, similar to recent education commissions in Alberta and Ontario, **to examine the problems** created by 14 years of underfunding our public education system, and provide recommendations on the funding levels needed to adequately support the needs of all learners, including:

- **re-establishing targeted special needs categories**, including gifted students, and providing targeted funding for all special needs students
- **adding autism early intervention** as a special needs category
- ensuring that special needs funding keeps pace with funding increases already given for regular per-pupil funding
- providing **greater support for alternative education programs in the public system** to fulfill diverse student learning needs
- **increasing support for technically inclined students** to help them enter a trade
- maintaining BC's progressive home-schooling legislation and integrating, when parents express interest, home-schooled children into public school classes such as physical education, industrial arts and drama

Ensuring that Children Are Ready to Learn

Social changes have placed extra stresses on the education system, including more frequent relocation, fewer parents staying at home, higher poverty levels, more English-as-

a-second-language (ESL) students, and increases in child health problems such as asthma, allergies and attention deficit disorder. More and more children are showing up in kindergarten without the prerequisite skills to learn in a classroom setting. To correct this situation the Green Party would:

- prioritize the spending of federal dollars for **universally accessible and affordable pre-school education** to areas where the need is greatest, such as inner-city schools
- provide **full funding for all-day kindergarten**
- expand **support to non-profit societies that deliver early literacy programs** to engage families with pre-school aged children
- move towards qualification-based pay parity between pre-school and other teachers in the school system

Accountability to Parents & Community

Following the lead of countries that consistently rank highest in student achievement, the Green Party of BC would work with education partners to develop **authentic assessment measures** that schools can put into practice to **measure the education outcomes they deem important for their particular school and local community's needs**. We would legislate a framework of "reciprocal accountability" between the Ministry of Education, local school boards, teachers, students, and the community, so that roles and responsibilities are clearly understood, performance is monitored and reported, and an appropriate level of funding is provided.

We **support greater involvement of the community in schools**, a practice that has shown to have a significant positive impact on educational outcomes. Community schools encourage diverse public use of school facilities after school hours and on weekends such as providing licensed after-school childcare and weekend indoor sports activities. We would **establish a Community Schools Fund** to supplement funding for existing and new community schools.

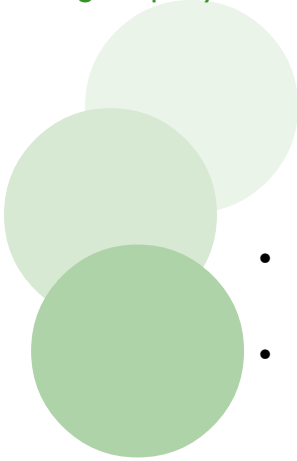
The school learning environment needs to be safe and to nurture healthy physical and emotional development, but cash-strapped school boards have had a difficult time ensuring this. The Green Party of BC would:

- **ban corporate funding and advertising, and abolish the use of curriculum developed by corporations** or



"We know what it takes for kids to grow and thrive, yet provincial wrangling has left our schools underfunded and staff and parents demoralized. As a school trustee I've tried hard to listen and learn from all members of our community. Together we've been able to get better supports into our schools and get bad things like junk food out. People deserve a voice. Green Party MLAs will make sure they have one in Victoria."

Andrea Reimer
Green Party School Trustee
Vancouver School Board
Vancouver - Kensington



their special interest groups in BC public schools. We would work with school boards and PACs to find a way to offset these funding sources

- make schools safe by undertaking **seismic upgrades within the next ten years**, phasing out toxic cleaning products and paints, eliminating herbicides, other pesticides and chemical fertilizers on school grounds
- provide financial incentives for school boards to have cafeterias that serve locally grown and organic foods wherever possible. We would work with school boards to remove junk food from all schools within one year

Strong Relationships Support Better Learning

Relationships are the primary medium for all learning and development. Just as negative and adversarial leadership creates poisoned workplaces in the private sector, the actions of provincial governments can have a negative impact on our public school classrooms. Both the NDP and Liberal governments have undermined relationships with our education professionals and local school boards by taking away fundamental bargaining rights. The Green Party of BC believes that working in collaboration with all those involved as education partners is a fundamental first step needed for restoring full education services. You can't legislate respect but you can legislate a framework that fosters respectful relationships.

A collective agreement is a negotiated document that belongs both to the community and to workers, each represented by their elected representatives. Meeting everyone's needs depends on having the right people at the table. The Green Party of BC supports **re-establishing local bargaining** for working and learning conditions that reflect local needs and include class composition and size. We support full-scope bargaining including maintaining the right to strike and **reinstating the right of education professionals to negotiate classroom and working conditions**.

Affordable, Safe Housing for Everyone

The Green Party considers adequate, safe and affordable housing a basic human right. However, the supply of housing units, especially in urban areas, is inadequate. This has resulted in inflated rental pricing and unsafe, illegal rental units. An adequate supply of social housing units would tend to drive down the market price of private rental units.

Green Party MLAs will advocate for **increased spending on social housing**, including small-scale mixed-income co-op or non-profit housing, **equal to one per cent of the annual provincial budget** (the "one-per-cent solution"). We would com-

Post Secondary: Access & Excellence

The Green Party believes that saddling young adults with massive debts before they even start their careers is wrong. In today's information world, higher education is no longer a luxury but a fundamental requirement for many careers, as well as for a prosperous society. We support moving towards **free tuition for post-secondary education** by:

- **reducing post-secondary tuition fees** by five per cent a year
- increasing funding to **provide more student spaces in post-secondary institutions**
- using half the money currently budgeted for student loans to **provide needs-based grants** (bursaries) **and scholarships**
- instituting a system of forgiving 50 per cent of every student loan when a graduate works in BC for five years after completing his or her degree or certificate program

Post secondary includes trade skills training. We **support expanding industry-based job training and apprenticeship programs** to address massive shortages of trained workers.

mit half of this funding for the construction of **affordable green housing for people with disabilities and mental health problems**, and half for the construction of housing for people on **low incomes**. To secure land for housing we would:

- **provide tax incentives to enable community-owned land trusts** to secure sites for non-profit housing
- allocate provincially owned crown land to municipal governments for the development of affordable housing. We would provide grants in lieu of taxes to **encourage municipalities to retain public land for non-profit housing** rather than sell or develop it

Middle-income earners need help to secure housing too. The Green Party of BC would help these individuals and families by:

- **establishing a co-op housing program** that underwrites mortgages to enable tenants to purchase and own their own apartment buildings
- encouraging municipalities to **legalize secondary suites** and require landlords, on a reasonable timetable, to bring suites up to code

To support the long-term access to healthy housing, Green Party MLAs will advocate changes in the building code to encourage housing that lasts beyond the current

generation. We would regularly review and **revise the provincial building code to ensure buildings are more energy efficient**, standards and materials are **suitable for BC's climate**, and early adoption of new methods and technologies is encouraged.

Transportation that Works for People

People must be able to get to work, to school, to stores, and to recreation in an efficient and affordable way. It is government's role to ensure that transportation has a minimal impact on the environment. One good way is to increase access to and use of public transit. Unfortunately, both NDP and Liberal provincial governments used up too many tax dollars on ineffective mega-projects such as the "fast ferries" and the Millennium Line extension to Greater Vancouver's Skytrain system. Now there's the proposed \$2 billion RAV line and multi-billion dollar "Gateway" project to twin the Port Mann Bridge and widen Highway 1 in the Lower Mainland. The results of these mega-projects are increased transit fares, less money for transit in other BC communities and huge public debts. Despite the massive amount of money being spent, the Lower Mainland's roads are still clogged with single-occupancy vehicles.

We need to entice people out of their cars with convenient, affordable, reliable and safe public transit and implement smart growth development plans. **Smart growth** strategies integrate and concentrate land use, locating shops, public services and homes within walking distance of each other so that urban sprawl is reduced and the need for vehicular transportation minimized. Local people know their transit needs far better than the provincial government, so we would **democratize transportation governance through direct election** of regional transit boards.

We would work with Regional Transit Authorities to develop a **Green Transportation Plan** that incorporates programs to reduce traffic demand. Proposed projects would be evaluated by triple-bottom-line accounting. In concert with municipal governments, we would reduce dependency on single-occupancy vehicle traffic through **tax-shifting** measures like tolls, increased parking fees and odometer-based automobile insurance on "pleasure-use" vehicles that reward people who use their cars less. The Green Party would:

- use the public money saved by cancelling costly transportation mega-projects to **invest in more flexible, convenient and smaller-scale forms of public transit** including fast buses, mini-buses and passenger-only ferries
- **create bicycle paths** and improve public transit support for cyclists

Aboriginal People: Reconciliation & Partnerships

While senior governments seem to focus on debating each others' responsibilities for Aboriginal citizens, many Aboriginal people face staggering social and economic challenges: poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing, toxic environments, poor access to services, mainstream erosion of traditional knowledge, and poor health status, including a ferocious AIDS epidemic. Both Liberal and NDP governments, have failed to improve the lives of Aboriginal people.



Treaties and Reconciliation with First Nations

After more than a decade, treaty negotiations have produced little more than frustration and huge costs for First Nations and the people of British Columbia. In 1993, BC's participation was deemed essential to bring certainty to resource and economic development – a goal as elusive now as then. This continuing lack of resolution hinders the empowerment of First Nations, and impairs BC's economy. The Green Party of BC believes that a just accommodation of First Nations' aspirations — and an equitable sharing of BC's natural resources — will benefit all British Columbians. The Green Party of BC:

- supports **negotiating in good faith**, in a timely manner, with First Nations who wish to participate in the treaty process; and that the province must abandon its direct and indirect attempts to unfairly limit legitimate Aboriginal rights, access to resources, and the place of Aboriginal people in BC's economy
- will negotiate Aboriginal self-government based on the **principle of reconciliation of Aboriginal title and rights**, not assimilation. The extinguishment of First Nations' title and rights is not a prerequisite to an agreement
- recognizes that the diversity of First Nations' traditional self-governance means each process of reconciliation must respect that diversity, rather than trying to impose the current "one-process-fits-all" approach
- supports **negotiating interim measures** as a fair means to acknowledge and protect First Nations' interests in lands and resources, before there's nothing left to negotiate for
- believes that reconciliation includes **First Nations having access to and control over resources** necessary to move from poverty to self-sufficiency

"The Green Party of BC takes a principled stand that there is more to reconciliation with Aboriginal people than economics and the extinguishment of constitutional rights."

Tom Bradfield
Health Care Administrator
Coast Salish
Saanich South

Real Social and Economic Progress

While fair treaty settlements can play a vital role in restoring First Nations' communities, BC also needs to meet the social and economic needs of all Aboriginal citizens – the majority of whom either live off reserve or are not engaged in the treaty process. The Aboriginal people of British Columbia have practically no access to scant federal programs. Like other residents, they are challenged by the harsh reductions in provincial social programs, which often hit Aboriginal people the hardest. The Green Party:

- believes that BC needs to work with all Aboriginal people to improve the lives of individuals, families, and nations
- acknowledges that not all First Nations see treaties as the best way to improve the lives of their members
- believes in working towards practical arrangements in a cooperative and respectful manner
- opposes consultation ploys, like the 2002 provincial referendum on treaties, as divisive and empty

it's about...

A New Deal for BC's Economy

British Columbia needs a government that builds greater diversity in our economy and reduces our reliance on boom and bust resource industries that have been hard on workers and local communities. It's time to build a Green economy in BC based on conservation principles and taxes that make sense. We support the wise and non-wasteful use of resources, and their local manufacture into the highest value-added products. A Green BC economy will bring about regional economic diversity and self-sufficient communities.

Building Blocks for a Strong Economy	34
Taxes That Make Sense	36
A Better Deal for BC Workers	38
A Better Deal for BC Small Businesses	40
A Better Deal for BC Communities	44

Building Blocks for a Strong Economy

The Green Party of BC believes it is the right of every British Columbian to have a government that provides good public services and ensures a good quality of life for all BC citizens. We have the right to a government that spends wisely, forecasts revenues prudently, encourages a healthy Green BC economy through tax incentives, stays within a balanced budget, and steadily pays down the debt accumulated through past government overspending and mismanagement.

The Green Party has laid out an ambitious plan for creating the kind of province and economy that British Columbians deserve. It will require wise investments in new energy sources and public transportation. It will be based on a tax system that encourages adding more value to our natural resources and generates the money needed to pay the costs of repairing the damage caused by harmful activities in the past. The Green Party would not incur new debt. We would balance the budget by decreasing spending on costly mega-projects and increasing taxes in targeted areas. We would generate sufficient revenue to steadily decrease the provincial debt, which now stands at \$37 billion — the highest debt in BC's history.

Renewable Energy

Energy drives our economy. BC is still reaping advantage from cheap hydroelectric power from the big dams built 40 years ago. However, damage to rivers, fisheries, and wildlife and the loss of forest and agricultural lands, is too big a price to pay. For the last 10 years, BC governments have focussed on greatly expanding the development of fossil fuels. But the burning of fossil fuels brings us health-damaging air pollution and catastrophic climate change impacts, including pine beetle infestations, forest fires, droughts and floods. The new energy sources of the twenty-first century are clean, renewable sources such as wind, solar, tidal, micro-hydro, geo-exchange and geothermal. BC has some of the best sources of renewable energy in the world.

The Green Party of BC believes that BC citizens should be the first to benefit from BC's natural endowment of energy resources. We would legislate an *Energy Security Act* that requires that **BC's short- and long-term energy needs are fully met first before foreign energy sales take place.**

A fiscally smart energy strategy starts by reducing energy waste and overall demand through increased **energy conservation and efficiency.** The Green Party of BC would increase Power Smart conservation targets to reduce electrical energy usage by 2.5 per cent a year. We would re-assess this goal in 2012, the target year for meeting the Kyoto protocol commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To accomplish this, the Green Party will:

- **provide energy conservation tax credits** to BC businesses, landlords and residents who retrofit their buildings to reduce their energy con-

sumption (for example by installing double-glazed and triple-glaze windows, increasing insulation and weather stripping, and installing solar hot water heaters) and who buy energy-efficient appliances and lighting

- **requiring energy conservation upgrades in all public buildings** (including hospitals and schools) when they undergo seismic upgrades and other renovations.

Energy conservation and efficiency measures such as these would stimulate local economies and create thousands of local jobs in the building trades.

The next step is to require that new electricity generation come from renewable sources. The Green Party of BC would replace current voluntary targets for clean and green energy with a **mandatory requirement that 100 per cent of new electrical energy be generated from renewable energy sources** (e.g., wind, solar, micro-hydro, geothermal and tidal). We would **lift the ban on BC Hydro building new electrical generation** so it can use its expertise to build publicly owned, renewable energy facilities. To support the private production of green power we would:

- take maximum advantage of federal renewable energy subsidy programs by immediately **expanding the bidding process for green electrical energy** projects and offering **firm agreements to purchase green power at fair rates** that assure a reasonable profit for the companies undertaking the development
- expand hydrological, wind, and tidal monitoring stations to provide the data needed to encourage investment in renewable energy resources

Globally, the supply of easily extractable cheap fossil fuels is running out and the price of oil and gas will only increase in the future. Burning natural gas to produce electricity and ramping up production of oil and gas for export are not wise uses of these non-renewable resources.

The Green Party is committed to the Kyoto Protocol obligation of reducing our production of greenhouse gases. We would:

- **phase out fossil fuel-fired electricity plants**, and prohibit new ones from being built, including rescinding the approval to build the Duke Point gas-fired electrical generating project on Vancouver Island
- establish a **permanent moratorium on offshore oil and gas exploration** and development as well as on coal bed methane exploration and development, providing adequate compensation to those who have obtained government leases to pursue coal bed methane development. In the spirit of our Kyoto commitment, we would **not permit the construction of any new major pipelines** for oil & gas
- expand the PST exemption on hybrid cars to cover all high fuel-efficiency vehicles (more than 34 kilometres per litre)
- provide subsidies to municipalities so they can purchase fuel-cell

powered and hybrid buses at the same price as conventional vehicles to reduce greenhouse gases and improve air quality in BC cities

- **require all gasoline sold in BC to have a minimum of 10 per cent ethanol content** within the decade, with the ethanol produced from organic wastes

Transportation that Connects BC

The vast size of BC, its diverse geography and isolated communities mean that provincial transportation is a big and costly challenge. The **Green Party of BC is committed to “smart growth”** planning and development that, wherever possible, reduces the need to build new transportation infrastructure. We would re-establish our coastal ferry system as a crown corporation and improve transportation in BC by:

- keeping **public highways under public control** and directing the net revenues from any tolls back into that local area's transportation infrastructure
- supporting municipal and regional governments in their request for the return of a **fair share of the fuel taxes collected by the federal government**
- auditing logging companies to ensure that they spend every dollar they receive for road maintenance on local logging road repairs and upgrades
- **initiating a mini-bus public transportation system in rural and suburban BC** that will provide residents with reliable, convenient and affordable public transportation between communities
- once BC Ferries is brought back into public control, eliminating the reservation fee for BC residents and restricting the number of reservations, so that we do not have a “two-tiered” price structure on the ferry system

Taxes That Make Sense

Everyone agrees that we have to pay taxes to get public services like health care, education, highways and parks. In fact, public opinion polls show that most British Columbians wouldn't mind paying more in taxes if it would bring them a cleaner environment, safer streets, better health care and improved public education, while at the same time reassuring them that people are not going hungry or without shelter in our rich country.

People object to paying more taxes when they see their tax dollars being spent wastefully and when they feel like they're paying more than their fair share. The people of

BC are currently paying more taxes than the corporations that use our publicly owned lands, forests and waters. Taxpayers are being shortchanged when governments virtually give away our natural resources to companies largely owned by foreign shareholders and when our tax dollars are used to repair the damage done by irresponsible industrial practices.

A Fair Return For Public Resources

The Green Party of BC would immediately **end taxpayer subsidies to corporations that profit from extracting BC's natural capital** by ensuring that they pay fair royalties and taxes for access to publicly owned natural resources such as forests, oil and gas, and minerals.

We would base stumpage, the taxes paid on trees cut on public lands, on a competitive **open log market system** that better reflects the true value of the logs. Stumpage paid by large corporate tenure holders under this system will more closely reflect the much higher stumpage currently paid by companies in the small business program.

We would **rescind all government subsidies on fossil fuel energy development** and reform the royalties and tax provisions on **fossil fuels and minerals so the taxes paid for the resources are based on the market value of the resources**. This would ensure that a fair share of profits that come with escalating global prices for oil, gas and minerals accrue to the BC public who own these resources.

Tax Shifting

Tax shifting is the natural companion to triple-bottom-line accounting. The Green Party of BC would phase in a **comprehensive tax-shifting program** through a series of legislative initiatives to **reduce taxes on economic activities that are beneficial to society and increase taxes on harmful activities** such as those that create pollution or degrade the environment. The Green Party will:

- **replace current pollution permits with pollution taxes** that are progressively higher as the amount of pollution increases
- introduce a 10 per cent **junk food tax** on sales of soft drinks and snack foods that are high in sugar or fats
- **place a "clean air" tax** on gasoline and diesel fuel of five cents a litre with a rebate system for those who have to use trucks and other vehicles for work purposes, those



"Some corporations have been allowed to ignore environmental and social damage by offloading those costs onto governments and citizens. Fish farming, industrial forestry, oil and gas, the mining industry — we can't keep picking up the tab for the damage they're causing. The Green Party is the only party that understands genuine progress. They are the thinking citizen's choice."

Isabel Minty
Retired
Vancouver – Quilchena

who live in rural areas and do not commute to cities, and those who are in the lower income levels

- price electricity gradually upward to reflect the cost of new renewable energy sources and to encourage energy conservation and efficiency, with a rebate system for those who have a small business that depends on electricity, and those who are in the lower income levels

Paying Down the Debt

BC's economy and prosperity are being held back by a huge debt that, over the last four years, has grown to \$37 billion — the highest in BC's history. As their first act in office, and despite not knowing the state of the books in BC, the BC Liberals cut corporate and personal income taxes that primarily benefited the wealthiest and created a \$1.4 billion deficit. This was not smart management. **The Green Party of BC is committed to balanced budgets and debt reduction.**

Paying down our debt is the most prudent way to find new tax dollars to pay for government services and, over the long term, ease the tax burden on people and businesses. Interest on debt payments in 2004 alone was \$926 million, more than \$2 million a day. If interest rates rise, the cost of servicing our debt will be even more onerous.

Transition to a more sensible tax system, using tax shifting and other market instruments, takes time to phase in and realize the benefits. In the short term, we have to turn to increased taxes on those individuals and corporations that can most afford to pay them to pay down the debt and pay for needed services.

A Better Deal for BC Workers

The Green Party of BC believes in the equal treatment of all workers, organized or non-organized, and their right to fair wages, equal pay for equal work, fair and healthy work conditions, and hours compatible with maintaining a good quality of life. The Liberals' cancellation of contracts and anti-labour legislation has turned BC into an international embarrassment, being cited by the United Nations' International Labour Organization as having labour practices that are sub-standard under international law. Good labour practices attract ethical investment and are necessary for BC to receive designation as a province that produces "fair trade" goods.

Childcare

The Green Party of BC is committed to working with the federal government to develop a **provincial childcare strategy**, one that includes non-profit, professional daycare, increased support for at-home parents, early childhood education, family health, and basic child nutrition.

Early childhood support benefits children and society as a whole. Access to quality and affordable childhood education and care is essential, especially for ages 0-6. Unfortunately, in BC early childhood development is severely limited by the lack of a national system that acknowledges and supports the educational, psychological, physical and nutritional needs of children and families.

Many women, especially single parents, are forced to spend more and more time away from their children working or studying. In many cases, the combination of low wages and the steadily increasing costs of away-from-home childcare is worsening this cycle. A well planned provincial childcare system would benefit children by giving them the care they need, lowering family stress by reducing the pressures of raising children while working or studying, and reducing absenteeism from work due to lack of childcare. A study of Quebec's universal, \$5-a-day childcare system indicates that it has succeeded in reducing the number of single mothers on welfare by 37 per cent.

Fair Wages

Workers deserve fair compensation for their work. All businesses benefit from productive, healthy and loyal workers and our province benefits when workers have more money to spend in their local economies. The Green Party of BC would immediately **repeal the \$6 "training wage"** instituted by the BC Liberals and **set one minimum wage, based on the full-time wage needed to meet the Low Income Cut-Off** set annually by Statistics Canada. We would:

- extend the definition of minimum wage to commission and piecework payment structures
- require that companies pay wages to workers for mandatory training
- extend tax credits to employers that train workers
- enact successor rights legislation so that any transfer of government service contracts to new contractors would carry with it the obligation to honour employees' collective agreements, including wages, benefits and seniority

Protections for Workers

The role of government is to protect workers. Recent changes that the current government has made to employment standards abrogates that responsibility. The Green Party of BC would **immediately reinstate protection for children to ensure that they are not involved in dangerous or excessive work**. We would **reinstate full funding for the Employment Standards Branch** and extend the protection of the *Employ-*

ment Standards Act to cover part-time, contract and casual workers. We would revise the BC Labour Code to **accommodate the service and high-tech sectors and establish labour conditions** appropriate for them.

Forest industry workers have the highest rate of injury and death in BC. We would designate logging as a mandatory certified trade under the *Industry Training and Apprenticeship Act*, in order to increase worker skills, safety, and security.

When workers choose to unionize, we would ensure that their wishes are respected, by requiring companies to enter into **binding arbitration in the thirteenth month after a successful union certification vote if a collective agreement has not been negotiated** within the first 12 months.

Working Harder Isn't Working

Of all the countries in the developed world, Canada is near the top of the pack for hours worked per week. While that may have a positive impact on the economy it has a very negative impact on peoples' quality of life and contributes to an unacceptably high rate of unemployment.

Working longer hours isn't working. Many European countries have reduced the workweek in order to reduce unemployment. This would be a good strategy to help reduce high unemployment amongst BC youth.

The Green Party will initiate consultation with businesses and unionized and non-unionized workers about **shortening the full-time work week to 35 hours**, in order to foster the sharing of employment and an increase in family and leisure time. In the interim, we would support working families by **encouraging flexible work conditions** and by working with the federal government to **change tax exemptions so that there is no discrimination against parents who both work part time**.

A Better Deal for BC Small Businesses

Small, locally owned businesses are the basis of a healthy and stable economy. In fact, 98 per cent of businesses in BC are small businesses, providing 58 per cent of private sector employment in the province. Small businesses don't just provide employment, they keep money circulating locally and contribute to local economic diversity, community spirit and quality of life. New and progressive business associations, such as the Values Based Business Network in Victoria and the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE) in Vancouver, that focus on triple-bottom-line accounting and social and environmental responsibility, are expanding rapidly and leading the way in new and better ways to do business.

The Green Party of BC supports policies and legislation that result in a diverse business community with more small, locally owned business across the range of industries. Currently, small businesses in the resource-based industrial sector are disadvantaged in terms of access to resources and disproportionately higher taxes. Major companies often have easy access to government, and receive special subsidies and a lower tax burden. The Green Party would support small businesses by reducing the administrative costs of complying with government regulations, providing support for business start ups, and developing special strategies for emerging industries such as advanced technology, arts and culture, and ecotourism.

In 2001, BC's small businesses were the only major group that did not receive a tax break. The Green Party would **reduce the small business tax rate to three per cent** from the current 4.5 per cent over a three-year period.

Reducing Administration Costs

Government bureaucracies assume that companies can afford the people and time to navigate government's inter-ministerial regulatory mazes. The Green Party of BC would mandate the Ministry of Small Business to foster more co-operation between all provincial ministries and other levels of government in order to provide **"one stop shopping" for small businesses**. We would work with the federal government to **harmonize PST and GST collection and reporting so as to simplify accounting for businesses and save them money**.

Supporting Start Up

In order to help get small businesses started, especially in regions that have traditionally relied on one industry, the Green Party of BC would:

- increase incentives to consumers to purchase locally made and grown BC products and encourage local generation of wealth by **removing provincial sales tax from made-in-BC goods**
- establish a **clearing house that businesses can access for information on economic opportunities and resources**, and for regional economic information and analysis
- create a **loan guarantee program** to enable community credit unions to provide higher risk loans to assist small-scale businesses with start-up costs



"From a business perspective, I see conservation practice and technology representing a huge business opportunity going forward in the 21st century. The business of doing more with less is not only morally rewarding, it is very profitable."

Ian Hignell
Entrepreneur (retired)
West Vancouver-Garibaldi

- **develop marketing programs, including funding the “Buy BC” program**, to promote the purchase of local or BC-grown and BC-manufactured goods,

Promoting Advanced Technologies

BC has been a world leader in the development of advanced technologies but we're falling behind. We have shortages of trained professionals to meet current and projected employment opportunities in the advanced technology sector. BC is an especially attractive place to live. The “second paycheck” of a high-quality natural environment, outstanding recreational opportunities and good public education and health care provides an incentive for high-tech firms to locate in BC. To encourage growth of this sector, government must provide the necessary infrastructure and tax incentives, and ensure the preservation of a high-quality environment. We would work to **rapidly develop new renewable energy sources**, as the energy demands of the high-tech sector are very large. In addition, the Green Party of BC would:

- work with other levels of government to provide incentives for industry to **speed up the construction of a province-wide, high-volume, high-speed cable system linking all communities** through a public access communications network
- **reduce taxes on advanced technology businesses to the same level afforded the film industry, in order** to attract investment and the location of advanced technology firms in BC
- **reinstate funding for Discovery BC** to help turn BC research into commercial applications
- establish a **\$10 million research and development fund** for on-the-ground pilot projects to help re-establish our global leadership in this area

Expand Tourism and Ecotourism

Wilderness tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of global tourism. In supernatural BC, tourism could be a key component of every local economy and we should aim to regain our position as the number one wilderness tourist destination in the world. Economic studies show that every dollar government spends on parks generates ten dollars in visitor expenditures. However, in the 1990s, the BC government failed to take advantage of this opportunity. While greatly expanding our park system, it reduced the budget for parks. Since 2001, the Liberals have bulldozed campgrounds, cut services and increased user fees. BC and the state of Mississippi are now the only jurisdictions in North America without park interpretation programs. No wonder park visitorship has dropped dramatically in BC in the last three years.

The Green Party of BC would **eliminate user and parking fees for day use of provincial parks**. We would **immediately invest in BC Parks** and expand tourism's resource base by:

- **increasing interpretive services, rangers, and conservation officers**, and funding so that BC parks are on a par with national parks
- **re-opening public campgrounds and upgrading aging infrastructure and trails**
- **expanding BC's protected areas system over the next ten years**

To increase opportunities for tourism, we would:

- **license backcountry and marine tourism tenures** through locally elected Ecosystem Management Boards
- offer long-term leases to small-scale tourist operators to **build lodges and other tourism facilities outside existing parks on crown land** provided that there are no conflicts with wildlife and that local citizens and First Nations approve
- **ban the construction of new private resorts in provincial parks**

To ensure that tourism does not degrade the land, we would undertake a comprehensive review of land use plans to identify existing backcountry and tourism uses and tenures, to define areas of BC appropriate for further tourism activities, and to identify and protect BC's sensitive wildlife areas from inappropriate use and negative impacts. We would work with BC tourism operators to **develop and adopt codes of conduct for ecologically and socially sustainable tourism practices**. The Green Party will ensure that existing legislation against highway billboard advertising is enforced.

Finally, we would work to provide two of the most important assets for any tourism business: trained staff and access to markets. The Green Party of BC would:

- increase **funding to educational institutions** to upgrade and expand interpretation, guiding, hospitality, and management programs
- **increase investment in the "Super, Natural BC" advertising campaign**, support the marketing and coordinated packaging of BC tourism products, and develop more targeted marketing opportunities for BC's ecotourism operators
- **promote cultural and Aboriginal tourism industries** to aid local economies in diversification
- **expand the BC Heritage Sites program**, in cooperation with local governments and interested citizens, to revitalize historic communities in BC and attract tourists to these destinations

Arts and Culture

Arts and culture enrich the social fabric of communities and preserve cultural traditions. They are important contributors to many local economies in BC. Along with ecotourism, cultural tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the global tourism industry. Yet government support for the arts and artists is much lower than in other jurisdictions and extremely low compared to the subsidies granted to resource industries.

The Green Party of BC would support this fast growing economic sector as a vital component of virtually every community in BC by establishing effective relationships with other levels of government and **increasing funding to the BC Arts Council** so that it best benefits artists and the arts community of BC. We would cooperate with other levels of government to provide **funding for the Aboriginal people of BC to develop an indigenous peoples culture and arts plan**. We would **establish a separate Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture** to expand and enhance this important segment of BC's economy.

To ensure that the intellectual property of artists is protected so they can make a decent living, we would cooperate with all levels of government to support and **enhance protective regulations and controls for Canadian creators and the Canadian cultural industry and** to vigorously promote Canadian arts such as film, music, art, theatre, dance and literature.

A Better Deal for BC's Communities

BC's communities are the focus of our natural resources, and of the skilled labour and local services that attract economic investment. Communities have historically benefited from this investment in terms of jobs and economic growth, but they have not always profited as much as they should have from the value of publicly owned resources.

Communities need to be empowered as full partners in the economic development and stewardship of their local resources, including the environment. We would establish:

- **locally elected Ecosystem Management Boards** with the mandate to review all development decisions and assume a management role over local lands and waters using ecosystem-based principles

Value-adding Forestry

BC's forest industry has immense potential to create jobs making a wide range of high-value products and to contribute to the economic, social and environmental well-being of BC's communities. But as a result of shortsighted government policies, the industry is heavily dominated by too few companies that remain focused on producing

high volumes of low-end products rather than making high-value products. Bad government policies and disastrous bug infestations have put BC's forest industry into a state of crisis. Employment in the forestry sector has steadily declined. Mills have closed even as raw log exports have increased.

The catastrophic pine beetle epidemic resulting from global warming and slow-to-react policies, is now out of control and will kill 80 per cent of the merchantable trees in BC's interior and north. Carefully researched solutions are needed to **help forestry and forest-dependent communities** survive this crisis.

British Columbians deserve to be fairly compensated for the use of their public forests. **Setting stumpage rates at fair market value** would not only increase government revenues from the cutting of public forests, it would greatly help in avoiding US countervailing duties on exports under a softwood lumber agreement. The Green Party of BC will work with communities to:

- **accelerate tenure reform to require no less than 50 per cent of public forest tenures be held by small local forestry companies**, including First Nations, by the year 2010
- **establish competitive log markets** that sell all logs from public land through open auction and replace the current stumpage tax system with the payment of a percentage tax on the logs sold in the interim
- **establish a "funding reserve" to enable increased forest restoration activities** under local Ecosystem Management Boards during times when market prices for wood products drop and the forest economy experiences a downturn

Early in 2001, researchers discovered that BC citizens were losing hundreds of millions of dollars in government revenues due to the evasion of stumpage through an unethical corporate practice called "grade setting." This scam was made possible by a government decision that left it up to the companies to let us know how much they owed taxpayers. The Green Party would:

- **reinstate government log scalers** to assess the revenue payable to the BC taxpayer from logging on public land
- set up a **formal inquiry into stumpage manipulation** If legitimate stumpage was not paid, take action to recover the lost revenue, which is estimated to exceed \$1 billion

Specific strategies are needed to deal with the crisis that the **mountain pine beetle epidemic** is creating in our interior forests. By vastly increasing the rate of cut, the provincial government is turning an environmental catastrophe into a social and economic catastrophe as communities harvest decades of wood supply in a few short years.

The Green Party of BC would:

- mandate that in forests suffering from severe pine beetle damage, harvesting must focus on **only beetle-killed pine** and no other healthy species, in order to retain mature wood for future harvest
- re-focus our Pine Beetle Strategy on how to maximize value added, how best to reforest the devastated areas, and how interior communities can survive when 80 per cent of merchantable wood in their area is gone and there is no mature wood left to harvest
- **establish an emergency fund** using revenue generated from stumpage taxes paid during the overcutting of the pine beetle killed forests to **facilitate the economic transition** of affected communities when forestry operations close

The health of the forest industry ultimately depends on our ability to manage the resource for the long term. Existing **provisions to protect fish and wildlife habitat and biodiversity** are based on politics not scientific analysis. According to the government's own figures, the background (prior to beetle kill) rate of cut is at least 30 per cent higher than is sustainable. Logging at unsustainable rates shortchanges future employment in the sector, the future health of communities, and the environmental integrity of the province.

We need to **institute watershed-by-watershed ecosystem-based management plans** and cut calculations based on sustained-yield eco-forestry that enhances and protects all forest values, including fisheries, cultural, ecological, tourism and recreation values. In line with ecosystem-based management, the Green Party of BC would replace clearcutting in second-growth stands with frequent light thinning and longer rotations to produce higher-quality wood resulting in more local jobs, more revenue from less wood cut, and sustainable continuous forest harvesting.

We must designate as off-limits to logging our remaining intact watersheds, watersheds that provide drinking water, endangered ecosystems, habitats of endangered species, and areas where First Nations have not given their approval to log.

To further manage the long-term health of the forest, we will:

- support companies in their efforts to gain **Forest Stewardship Council eco-certification** for their wood products and help market eco-certified BC wood products internationally
- **ban the use of pesticides and synthetic chemical fertilizers** in publicly owned forests
- set the **same standards of environmental protection for logging** on private lands over five hectares, as are established for public lands

The key to long-term sustainability in the forestry sector and in forest-dependent communities is to increase the value we create from each tree cut. Far too much of BC's

wood supply is shipped out of the country with minimal processing or no processing at all. We would **expand BC's production of value-added forest products** to diversify from low-value "commodities" such as pulp and minimally processed logs by:

- **prohibiting the bulk export of raw logs**
- ensuring small and value-added BC-based businesses have **access to a reliable wood supply through regional log markets**
- providing low-interest start-up loans to encourage small, labour-intensive eco-forestry logging companies and value-added forest product firms
- developing a licensing system and enforceable rules for **sustainable commercial harvest of non-timber forest products** by local people
- **changing the beachcombing (marine salvage) regulations** to provide a financial incentive for beachcombers to sell wood on the open market, making use of wood that is a hazard to marine navigation and frequently damages important fish habitat

Organic Agriculture & Food Security

The Green Party believes in a "feed BC first" policy. We should encourage and expand local organic agriculture and promote traditional genetic diversity in all crops and foods with the goal of producing healthy and tasty, locally grown foods.

Current prices paid by BC consumers for agricultural products are artificially low because so much of our food is imported from other jurisdictions that heavily subsidize industrial agriculture and employ methods of production that sacrifice quality for quantity. To compete with these markets, much of BC has turned to the industrial agri-business model resulting in the large-scale contamination of ground water aquifers and surface water systems with nitrates, bacterial pathogens and other contaminants from agricultural run-off. Intensive agri-business methods make our food supply susceptible to large-scale disease outbreaks, such as BSE (mad cow disease) and avian flu.

Organic farming is the fastest growing sector of agriculture, and the most profitable. To put BC on a sustainable and healthier food path, the Green Party of BC would provide incentives to farmers to practice soil and water conservation techniques, phase out chemical pesticides, **move to organic and genetically-modified-organism-free (GMO-free) agriculture**, and to institute humane standards for animal husbandry.

We would encourage and support the development and expansion of small-scale, organic and natural agriculture, including value-added agriculture through:

- enabling small organic producers to raise and sell, independent of the marketing boards, an economically viable number of livestock
- limiting any further establishment of marketing boards or expanding marketing board jurisdiction over small farm production

- removing PST on value-added BC agricultural products such as juices and wines
- working with the livestock industries to establish slaughterhouses in BC and help market BC range-fed livestock internationally
- establishing **locally grown food procurement policies** for government
- lowering tax rates for organic farms
- re-establishing a **publicly funded “Buy BC” program** to identify BC-grown agricultural products and promote agri-tourism and farmers' markets through Tourism BC
- providing small grants to support municipalities and school boards that wish to **maintain and expand community gardens**

The viability of BC agriculture is being made more difficult by the loss of traditional genetic biodiversity in crops as multinational seed companies buy up heritage seed stocks and irrevocably engineer the genetic structure of cultivars. We would:

- pass legislation to ban the production and use of genetically modified organisms in BC
- require that foods containing genetically modified organisms be labelled so consumers can make an informed choice in their food purchases
- set up a **heritage seed bank and seed exchange program** and heritage botanical gardens on Vancouver Island, in the Fraser Valley and in the Okanagan

The provincial government's legislation (*Meat Inspection Regulations* under the *Food Safety Act*) that is intended to deal with crises like the mad cow disease by tightening the inspection of every animal slaughtered is placing such undue burden on smaller and organic farmers that many will be forced out of business. Their practices are not the ones placing food and public health at risk. The Green Party would:

- exempt smaller producers from the *Meat Inspection Act* and **re-establish regional independence and authority in setting regulations** for slaughtering to enable smaller producers to slaughter on-site under conditions inspected by local health officers
- work with the federal government to change regulations on slaughterhouses and food processing facilities so as to encourage small community-owned and operated facilities, through interest-free loans, and tailored inspection and safety measures
- enact legislation that completely outlaws the use of any spinal or central nervous system byproducts in all animal feed and fertilizers

To address the increasing concern about animal-based epidemics that threaten hu-

man health we would **investigate successful measures instituted in other jurisdictions** such as those used in Europe to combat avian flu and, if deemed appropriate, pass legislation to set minimum distances between farms, maximum number of birds per farm, and the level of concentration allowed in intensive farming practices.

Protect and Enhance Wild Fisheries

A century ago our coastal economy was a wild fisheries economy. We need to rebuild that economy. If well managed, wild fisheries are sustainable and can provide good, healthy food and jobs in many smaller communities. Wild fisheries in BC have dramatically declined in recent years. A great many salmon runs have gone extinct due to poor logging practices, road building, and urban development. Many ocean species are under heavy pressure and threatened and certain fishing grounds have been completely depleted of fish stocks due to federal government mismanagement. The problems include overfishing, inappropriate methods of fishing, environmental degradation, and the expansion of salmon farms to replace wild fisheries.

The Green Party of BC would develop a **wild fisheries first policy** by negotiating with the federal government to take over management of coastal marine fisheries. Fisheries would be managed with the following priority action:

- adopt the precautionary principle approach to risk management
- rehabilitate stocks and protect habitat first
- fulfill First Nations' constitutionally guaranteed right to food fish second
- allocate the surplus to recreational and commercial fisheries

Key actions under this policy are to:

- **ban new open-net-cage salmon farms and cap the production levels of existing farms** with a gradual phase out of open-net-cage salmon farms over a ten-year period
- **implement stream-by-stream plans** to rejuvenate wild salmon
- **phase out bottom trawling and less-selective seine and gillnet fishing** and replace them with more selective methods
- **phase in terminal salmon fisheries** to replace open ocean interception salmon fisheries
- **institute transition plans** for workers and First Nation communities to cope with fisheries closures that are needed to rebuild wild stocks

To put fisheries back in the hands of coastal communities, we would initiate **commercial fisheries licence reform**, breaking up the corporate concentration in big seiner licences and reallocating them back to small-scale fishers primarily involved in

local and terminal fisheries. We would eliminate licence-stacking and licence-leasing.

Marine protected areas are as important as terrestrial parks for conserving core biodiversity. We would work with local communities and stakeholders to designate 300 large no-take marine protected areas, designed to establish an ecologically sound and sustainable marine protected area system, including key ground fish “nursery areas” and open ocean mixed migration routes that are closed to all sport, troll, net fishing and Aboriginal food fisheries.

In freshwater areas, we would **prohibit the construction of new dams on rivers and streams** in BC and ensure that flow regimes below existing dams are managed to protect fish and their habitat.

A Zero-Waste Future

Adopting a goal of zero waste requires a shift in attitude from our current thinking that waste is a problem, to a new way of thinking, where waste is a resource. Our failure to manage waste properly represents a huge loss of resources and revenue. Setting a goal of zero waste provides direction and inspiration. We may never reach absolute zero waste, but we know the direction and can approach it through continuous improvement in our waste prevention activities.

A zero waste goal protects the environment on which our economy depends, but it is also a major part of our economic strategy, since reuse and recycling have been shown to generate 10-15 times more jobs than incineration or landfilling.

Zero waste should not be limited to municipal waste. Municipal waste is only the tip of the “waste berg,” since it has been calculated that a very significant amount of the waste is created before a product is sold.

Strong incentives must be in place for companies to be truly committed to product stewardship. A key part of stewardship is “producer responsibility” where manufacturers are responsible for the entire lifecycle of their product — for the cost of wastes associated with manufacturing and for the costs of recycling the product at the end of its usefulness.

The Green Party of BC will consult with stakeholders, experts and the public on the creation of a Zero Waste Strategy for BC. The strategy will include:

- in cooperation with the federal government, expanding the scope of **producer responsibility programs** and providing financial assistance to major waste reduction activities such as centralized composting facilities
- providing financial assistance for innovative waste reduction activities and encouraging such generators to follow the example of firms who have reaped considerable economic benefit by achieving zero waste
- ensuring that government procurement policies support purchasing products

- that are designed to be free of toxic elements and easily reusable or recyclable
- establishing an **inspection and certification program** to allow the use of recycled and reclaimed materials in new and renovated buildings
- creating demand for recycled pulp by **mandating a minimum of 50 per cent** post-consumer recycled paper content for all newspapers
- targeting full reclamation of all metals, plastics, paper, cardboard, batteries, dangerous materials and other recyclables by phasing in **recycling deposits to be paid when purchasing all manufactured goods**

Minimizing the Environmental and Social Costs of Mining

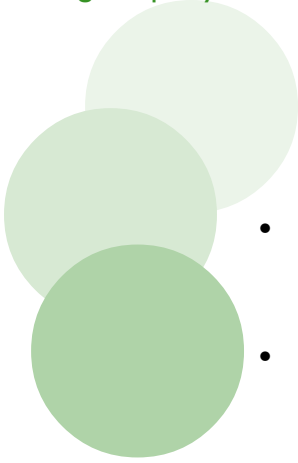
After 20 years of decline, mining is on the upswing in BC, generating more investment, more jobs and increased revenue for the government. The average wage is over \$80,000 a year, the highest of any industry in BC. Although the government would like to claim this upswing is due to lowered environmental standards, streamlining of approvals and reduced taxes, the biggest reason for the mining boom is the surge in metal prices due to increased world-wide demand, especially in Asia.

Volatile international markets mean mining booms and busts. When the mines close, the pollution remains. Many areas mined decades ago are still toxic waste sites. In most cases, taxpayers are the ones left holding the bag for enormous clean up and reclamation costs. A prime example is the \$27 million earmarked by the provincial government just to begin the \$70 million clean-up of acid drainage from the old Britannia mine on Howe Sound. Due to the extremely high environmental and social costs, the Green Party would **maintain the current regulations that prohibit all mining of uranium**, radioactive elements, and minerals found in association with radioactive elements.

It's time for the mining industry to start paying its fair share of taxes, which factor in the full cost of reclamation and cleanup when mines are exhausted. We would **eliminate all subsidies** for mining and mineral developments including the Mining Exploration BC tax credit and the New Mine Allowance exception to the *Taxation Act*, and establish a tax on mining profits that gives the people of BC, the owners of the resource, the windfall profits when metal prices sky rocket.

Mining needn't come with the high environmental and social price tag it has in the past. Planned right, many of these negative impacts could be avoided. We would:

- **require that mining proposals incorporate triple-bottom-line accounting** (calculating environmental, social and economic costs and benefits) and full environmental assessments, including public hearings, regardless of the scale of the mine
- ensure that **reclamation plans, including plans to deal with acid**



mine draining, are in place before active mining begins

- **expand the Mine Reclamation Fund** with monies garnered from increased taxes on the profits of active mining operations and spend these funds to clean up and reclaim old and recently abandoned mine sites and decommission mine access roads
- move to **cost-based compensation** (based on the monies actually spent on developing the property not possible future profits) in cases where mineral claims are expropriated in the public interest, such as for parks or drinking water watersheds

it's about...

Restoring Democracy

Democratic rule is the foundation of our free society. But in order for democracy to work, citizens have to participate in the political process. There has been a steady decline in the percentage of people voting, and in the last provincial election, only 55 per cent of eligible voters voted. There is no simple answer as to why this is happening. People distrust politicians, deplore influence peddling and corruption, and decry strict party control.

The Green Party has a comprehensive program to strengthen and restore democracy in BC, and build a more cooperative and effective government that works for the benefit of all British Columbians.

Campaign Finance Reform.....	54
Putting People First	54
Making Every Vote Count.....	55

Campaign Finance Reform

The Green Party of BC will:

- amend the BC *Elections Act* to **extend the time covered by spending limits** on provincial elections to five months prior to the fixed date of the provincial election
- **ban all donations to political parties from corporations, unions and societies**, and limit individuals to donating a maximum of \$1,000 per year to a political party. Tax rebates of 75 per cent for the first \$400 and 33.3 per cent for the next \$600 donated will be given
- introduce legislation that provides **public funding of political parties** similar to that recently enacted federally

Putting People First

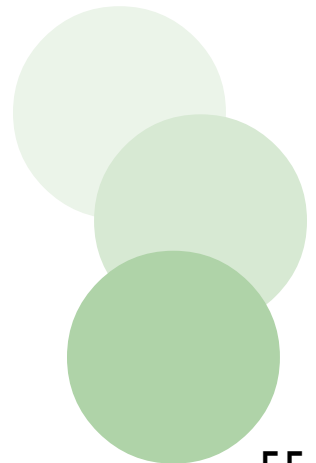
The Green Party of BC will:

- require by law that political parties use **democratic means to nominate candidates** and that these democratic rules be publicly registered and available for inspection
- institute a system of **free votes** in the legislature for all matters except explicit votes of confidence in the government, including the budget
- **provide funding for all opposition parties**, no matter how few elected members they have, so that they can conduct research and provide well considered opposition to government.
- institute a **one-hour question period every day the legislature sits**
- **require that all-party parliamentary committees hold public hearings on draft legislation** and provide that these committees be delegated the power to modify the legislation under consideration, and have their modified version voted on in the legislature
- **limit the use of orders in council** to only non-substantive legislative enactments
- **amend the *Recall and Initiatives Act*** to make citizen-initiated referenda practical and fair. Initiatives receiving seven per cent of the registered voter endorsement over a six-month period should go directly onto the ballot at the next provincial election and, if passed by a 50 per cent plus one majority, become law. (The Green Party of BC does not support referenda on rights enshrined and guaranteed in the Canadian constitution or on treaties with First Nations.)
- **lower the voting age to 16 years**

Making Every Vote Count

For people to fully participate in democratic elections they need to have their vote count towards representation of their political viewpoint. Most democracies have some kind of proportional representation where the percentage of popular vote a party receives is closely reflected in the number of seats that party gets. Since its founding in 1983, the Green Party has strongly advocated adopting a proportional representation voting system.

The Green Party of BC urges citizens to become fully informed on how the BC-STV system would work before voting on the May 17, 2005 referendum question on the Citizens Assembly's recommendation that BC voters adopt their BC-STV voting system. Green Party candidates and constituency associations are free to take a position either for or against the proposed BC-STV system.





It's about time!

When you read the Green Party platform for 2005, we believe you will agree that our values are also your values, and that they are shared by your friends and many other British Columbians. We all want a stronger British Columbia that offers prosperity and health. We all want more effective and accountable government that makes sensible decisions for the future so our children can grow and flourish. We all want representative government beholden to only one special interest group — British Columbians — no matter where they live, what their economic status is, or which political beliefs they hold.

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