



GVAT Climate Justice Survey

Responses from **Laurel Collins, NDP, Victoria, incumbent**

1) The UN, in February, 2021 declared a “code red alert” for the planet, warning that the current plans to cut emissions are not enough to curb a global rise in temperatures.

What immediate changes to federal policy would you endorse to address this emergency?

Answer:

Canadians have witnessed record breaking heat waves, climate fires and extreme weather, and are worried about the future for their children and grandchildren. While we have been dealing with the global public health emergency, the urgency of the climate crisis has not gone away. We need a government that treats this like the emergency that it is, but consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments have continuously failed to meaningfully tackle this crisis. Under Justin Trudeau and the Liberals, Canada has missed every single climate target, has the worst record of any G7 country, and is one of the only G7 countries whose emissions have increased since signing the Paris Accord.

New Democrats have a plan to tackle the climate emergency while creating good jobs and creating a sustainable future for younger generations. A NDP government will cut emissions by 50% from 2005 levels by 2030, reaching further wherever possible to account for Canada’s fair share. We will eliminate fossil fuel subsidies for profitable oil and gas companies and close loopholes that the Conservatives and Liberals enabled to let big polluters off the hook. New Democrats will take a whole-of-government approach to respond to the climate crisis and create a Climate Accountability Office to provide independent oversight and accountability on federal progress for meeting climate targets. We will invest in clean energy, retrofits, green infrastructure at the scale that matches the emergency.

The climate crisis calls on all of us to be courageous, act decisively, and be accountable. Future generations are counting on us. We need climate action now.

2) Wildfires are increasing in intensity, frequency and size, threatening forests, homes and businesses, including in this region.

What do you see as the causes and solutions? What will your party do about it?

Answer:

The cause of the increasing intensity and frequency of wildfires is climate change. When addressing the climate crisis, we need both mitigation and adaptation. In addition to our commitments to reduce our emissions and tackle the climate emergency, the NDP has committed to focused investments in forest management that will help reduce forest fire risk. We will also expand investments in nature-based climate solutions as part of our comprehensive climate plan. And we will support Indigenous-led nature conservation and land-use and climate planning, including by growing the Indigenous Guardians Program.

We will also implement a National Crisis Strategy. We will work with provinces, municipalities and Indigenous governments to make sure that communities have the resources they need to cope safely with extreme weather events. This National Crisis Strategy will help communities plan for and adapt to the changing climate and the weather extremes we are already facing – particularly for vulnerable, remote, and Indigenous communities.

3) Canada's forests have become net emitters of GHGs.

Will your party count GHG emissions from forests in its overall climate accounting formula? How will your party reduce emissions from forests?

Answer:

New Democrats are committed to changing the overall accounting formula to more accurately reflect Canada's emissions from forests. The current formula creates a loophole that makes it more difficult to account for and regulate logging's carbon impact.

In addition, we will expand investments in nature-based climate solutions as part of our comprehensive climate plan. We will invest in our Nature agenda that will include restoring and expanding protections for Canada's watersheds, investing in forest management, and working with farmers to support biodiversity. We will also expand urban national parks and restore urban biodiversity.

The NDP will also pursue a Nature agenda and protect 30% of our land, freshwater, and oceans by 2030. We will launch a 10 year plan to reverse species loss, curb the import and domestic trade of wild animals, and enforce the Species at Risk Act.

4) In the pandemic and during WWII, Canadian governments shut down things that interfered with achieving essential goals. In July, the Capital Regional District (CRD) board unanimously approved a ground breaking new policy on transportation prioritization in the region, which

calls for shifting federal and provincial funding from highway expansion to public transit, walking, cycling and rolling.¹ The 2016 Pan Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate change similarly calls for shifting funds from urban highway expansion to public transit and active transportation.

Will your party stop funding urban highway expansion and instead fund public transit, walking, cycling and rolling infrastructure? Will you personally speak out in support of the CRD's position against highway expansion?

Answer:

Improving how Canadians get to and from work, and how we travel within and between our communities, means investing in better ways to get around. If we make the right choices now, we can create good jobs and build the vehicles and transit infrastructure we need to keep Canadians moving. Municipalities are already making investments in public transit in their communities, but they need a federal partner to champion public transit throughout the country.

We will promote smart community planning and active transportation like walking and cycling, helping Canadians make choices that are healthier and more affordable for everyone. And, we will work with other levels of government to encourage the use of electric bikes and their safe integration into our active transportation network.

5) During the pandemic, the federal government has provided temporary operating funding for public transit. In Canada, federal transit funding has been almost exclusively restricted to capital expenses in the past. Federal operating funding would allow transit agencies to reduce fares and increase bus service, improve HandyDART paratransit service, and provide affordable public highway bus service between communities (such as between Victoria and Port Hardy as well as to smaller communities such as Port Renfrew / Pacheedaht).

Does your party support generous permanent ongoing funding for public transit operations?

Answer:

New Democrats will put in place a permanent, direct, allocation-based funding mechanism for modern public transit across Canada for the long run.

We will also permanently double the gas tax fund, now referred to as the Canada Community-Building Fund and provide \$3 billion over four years in disaster relief funding to help communities prepare for climate risks.

¹ www.capitaldaily.ca/news/opinion-crd-must-push-province-to-fund-rapid-bus-instead-of-expanding-highways

In addition, New Democrats will make transit affordable by building towards fare-free transit, develop a public inter-city bus program to replace cancelled Greyhound service, and move towards electrifying transit fleets by investing in scaling up low carbon transit projects like zero-emissions businesses and electric trains. We will aim to electrify transit and other municipal fleets by 2030.

6) The pandemic exposed Canada's vulnerability in the global food system. We rely heavily on global supply chains run by transnational mega corporations. Consumer demand for local food production is growing. Strengthening local, diverse agri-food systems will be key to increasing food security and our resilience and could reduce GHG pollution.

How should the federal government support local and diversified farming in Canada and lower GHG emissions from food and agriculture?

Answer:

New Democrats know that a just and green transition from the pandemic means develop a resilient food system. We are committed to working with farmers and food producers to develop a National Food Policy that will make our food systems stronger all across the country. This includes creating a National Soil Health Strategy for Canada to help maintain, enhance and rebuild the capacity of soils, and also includes food labelling and traceability, so that Canadians can be confident in the food they're consuming.

New Democrats will pursue a Nature agenda that expands environmental protections for animals, ecosystems, and biodiversity. We are also committed to supporting the National Index on Agri-Food Performance and work with stakeholders on common sustainability goals.

In addition, a New Democrat government would work on a long-term strategy for sustainable water management that would support Canadian agriculture.

7) Emergency mobilizations require social cohesion, but inequality undermines such collaboration. The COVID-19 pandemic has further lifted the veil on the inequities in our society.

How do you propose to tackle the climate crisis and these inequities at the same time? One required element of doing so is referred to as Just Transition – what is the role of the federal government in ensuring no one is left behind in the grand decarbonization transition before us?

Answer:

New Democrats have been fighting for a Green New Deal and a just transition plan to support workers, families and communities with training and jobs for the future. We will invest in clean energy and green infrastructure while creating over 1 million jobs to ensure that no workers or the communities they live in are left behind. We will ensure that climate friendly

initiatives use Canadian-made products like wood, aluminum, steel and Canadian-made innovative technology.

Too often the effects of climate change and of pollution are disproportionately borne in marginalized communities. On top of driving us towards net zero, New Democrats will ensure that climate investments are directed towards reducing inequality, honoring Indigenous rights and supporting communities that have been left behind by decades of Liberal and Conservative inaction. And we will create an Office of Environmental Justice to address the disproportionate impacts of pollution and loss of biodiversity on low-income, racialized and other marginalized communities.

New Democrats will also enshrine the right to a healthy environment in a Canadian Bill of Rights that ensures all communities enjoy a guarantee to clean water, land, and air.

8) The path forward has to be one of true cooperation and partnership, and one that honours and respects Indigenous title and rights. We need a path forward that seeks to make right the injustices of the past and fundamentally breaks with the colonial practices that have marked so much of our politics and economic development for centuries.

What are you hearing from Indigenous communities about the climate crisis? How can you and the federal government walk a path forward on climate that respects and honours Indigenous title and rights?

Answer:

We have heard from Indigenous communities about the impacts of the climate crisis and about the need for funding for Indigenous-led stewardship.

The NDP will build reconciliation into the heart of our plan to address the climate crisis. We will uphold Indigenous rights, including rights to protect lands, waterways, and biodiversity, and we will ensure our policies are in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We will tackle environmental racism and ensure that First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples full and equal partners in climate initiatives. This means we will respect Indigenous peoples as the stewards of their territories and the knowledge that they bring to nature conservation, and we will invest \$500 million for Indigenous-led conservation programs.

9) During World War Two, in order to meet the military production and social needs of its population, Canada created 28 new crown corporations. Within two years, Canada increased manufacturing of aircraft 25 fold. Before the war, shipbuilders numbered only 2000, at the end of the war, there were 30,000 shipbuilders.

Given the scaling up that is necessary to combat the climate crisis, how can the federal government create new institutions to get the job done and/or leverage existing institutions?

Answer:

New Democrats will take a whole-of-government approach to respond to the climate crisis and create a Climate Accountability Office to provide independent oversight and accountability on federal progress for meeting climate targets. We will appoint a Climate Emergency Committee of Cabinet and establish a strong Climate Emergency Secretariat in the PMO to ensure a whole-of-government approach to responding to the climate emergency.

We will support Canada's net-zero target by reviewing financial legislation, such as the Bank of Canada Act, the Export Development Canada Act, and the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board Act, to ensure federal financial levers and Crown corporations are aligned with the goal of net-zero.

A new Civilian Climate Corps would mobilize young people and create new jobs supporting conservation efforts and addressing the threat of climate change by undertaking activities such as helping restore wetlands, and planting the billions of trees that need to be planted in the years ahead.