



GVAT Climate Justice Survey

Responses from **Sabina Singh, NDP, Saanich-Gulf Islands.**

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?

Jack Layton presented the first Climate Change Accountability Act in 2006, and we have built on that work ever since. We will introduce an Environmental Bill of Rights and fund a Climate Accountability Office to provide independent oversight of federal climate progress. 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. We will also 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. We will create hundreds of thousands of good-paying jobs: investing in clean energy, energy efficient affordable homes, electric transit, zero-emissions vehicles and retrofit buildings across the country. We will set a target of reducing Canada’s emissions by at least 50% from 2005 levels by 2030, reaching further wherever possible to account for Canada’s fair share.

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?

Worldwide GHG emissions are causing climate changes including reduced snowpacks, prolonged drought, more severe thunderstorms and increased temperatures including this summer's heat domes. In addition, deadwood caused by the pine beetle infestation has added to the fuel load, and building in the interface has placed more people in danger from wildfires. Jagmeet Singh announced last Thursday a \$3 billion fund over four years to help municipalities respond to disasters and support communities in building climate resilience infrastructure. In addition it will be important to learn from First Nations how to manage forests to prevent wildfires, they have too often been left

out of fire-planning, yet they have experience that is invaluable and are some of the first people affected when fires break out.

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?

New Democrats will create and fund a Climate Accountability Office to provide independent oversight of federal climate progress. I will advocate for my Party to include these emissions. New Democrats will work with First Nations, all other levels of government and civil society groups to ensure the best possible tracking and reporting of GHG emissions.

To reduce emissions logging practices must change from clear cutting to selective cutting and diverse planting must be increased. Enhancing growth in existing forests helps create and maintain carbon sinks.

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. 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?

New Democrats will modernize and expand public transit within and between communities across Canada, and ensure that federal transit funding flows with an emphasis on scaling up low carbon transit projects like zero-emissions buses and electric trains with the goal of electrifying transit and other municipal fleets by 2030. We will create an inter-city bus system and help expand fair free transit such as that in BC for children 12 and under.

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?

We do. We see transit as an essential service that significantly cuts GHGs. See previous question. One thing any community can count on is that NDP doors are always open and we are always listening and ready to find ways to help.

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?

An NDP federal government will support sustainable agriculture, working with Canadian farmers to promote sustainable land-management techniques and methods to reduce GHG emissions. We'll also work with the agricultural sector to help them access low carbon tools and technology, and adapt to climate-induced weather changes and other impacts of the climate crisis, including the associated increase in pests and invasive species.

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?

We know that workers are worried about the Just Transition because they fear their livelihoods will be lost and they will be unable to feed and house themselves and their families. We would ensure large businesses receiving recovery funding agree to plan for net-zero – and we would ensure those funds go to supporting Canadian jobs, not executives or shareholders. We will work together with labour, employers and the provinces and territories to find solutions for workers and communities. This includes providing dedicated employment support combining access to expanded EI benefits, re-training and job placement services, ensuring companies retain and redeploy their workers when in transition, and ensuring that workers nearing retirement have the retirement security they have worked their whole lives for, without penalties to their pensions if they retire early. We will leave no one behind.

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?

Indigenous communities are rightly suspicious of traditional settler governments. We understand this and intend to work cooperatively to right the wrongs of the past. We will carry out the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and respect UNDRIP. Indigenous peoples are best placed to protect cultural and biological diversity through control over their territory. We are committed to working with indigenous governments, respecting Indigenous knowledge, and upholding Indigenous rights to protect lands, waterways and biodiversity. The means making First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples full and equal partners in Canada's efforts to build a low-carbon future, including encouraging energy sustainability in remote communities and equity opportunities for renewable energy projects. And it means ensuring Indigenous people - as the original peoples and stewards of their territories. - a seat at high-level decision-making tables to help direct Canada's efforts to confront the climate crisis. There is much work ahead of us but by working together we can achieve better outcomes for all. In addition, we will not forget the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, nor the children that suffered and died at the hands of those operating the Residential Institutions. We are determined to root out the racism impedes First Nations health care, education and so much else.

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?

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. As a federal government we will lead by example by modelling change in every department and action. We will review 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 and we will ensure that strict rules are in place to prevent big companies from using the purchase of offsets as a way to escape their net-zero obligations. As noted above we will fund a Climate Accountability Office to measure our progress and make recommendations for improvement.