

# Selected Environmental Commitments Made in the 2021 Federal Election Campaign

September 18, 2021

Two days until the September 20th federal election. For your information we have prepared the following synopsis of the climate change and conservation election promises made by the Liberal, Conservative, New Democratic, and Green parties.

## Environmental Commitments Made in the 2021 Federal Election

The following synopsis of environmental commitments on climate change and conservation are taken from party websites *as of the Labour Day weekend* and, where available, the published platforms of the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, the New Democratic Party, and the Green Party. You may want to visit these websites for the full details:

- Liberal Party: <https://liberal.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/292/2021/09/Platform-Forward-For-Everyone.pdf>
- New Democratic Party: <https://www.ndp.ca/commitments>
- Conservative Party: <https://cpcassets.conservative.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/25132033/5ea53c19b2e3597.pdf>
- Green Party: <https://www.greenparty.ca/en> Please note that the Green Party platform wasn't released until Tuesday September 7th. Therefore, the first set of comments below were based on what AWA found on the party's website and are what you will read in the summer issue of the *Advocate*. The second set of comments highlight some of the party's platform climate change and conservation commitments.

## Liberal Party

### Climate Change:

- in March 2021, the measures introduced by the Liberals in the 2016 Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change were projected to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 588 million tonnes. These promised reductions were 85 megatonnes short of Canada's Paris Commitment (a 30 percent reduction from the 730 million tonnes Canada emitted in 2005 or 511 megatonnes). The December 2020 *Strengthened Climate Plan* promises measures that would meet Canada's Paris Commitment. The platform promises "new measures" to reduce emissions to 40 to 45 percent below 2005 levels.

- the Liberals will introduce a plan to ensure the petroleum industry reaches net-zero emissions by 2050.
- the platform requires the petroleum industry to reduce methane emissions by at least 75 percent below 2012 levels by 2030.
- the Liberals promise to ban thermal coal exports by no later than 2030.

- the platform promises to eliminate subsidies and federal financing for the fossil fuel sector.

- a highlight of the Green Jobs section of the Liberal platform is the commitment to invest \$9.75 billion in a green industrial transformation.

- continue planting two billion trees across the country.

#### **Protecting Nature**

- the Liberals commit to establishing 10 new national parks and 10 new national marine conservation areas over the next five years (and working with Indigenous communities on co-management agreements for these parks/ares)

- support Indigenous-led conservation.

- establish at least one new national urban park in every province and territory.

### ***Conservative Party***

#### **Climate change:**

- hedges on the value of carbon taxes. I think it's fair to say that the message here is confusing. The platform states that pricing mechanisms are the most efficient way to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions but also states that "Canadians can't afford Justin Trudeau's carbon tax hike." The platform says it will "scrap the consumer carbon tax backstop" but then seems to endorse a carbon price "starting at \$20/tonne and increasing to \$50/tonne but no further." Later the platform says that Canada should work with the United States on minimum standards for industrial emissions. The platform also says that Canada's carbon price here would be tied to those of the European Union and the United States. Depending on the level of progress there the Conservatives would "be prepared to set industrial carbon prices on a path to \$170/tonne by 2030."

- will work with the provinces to introduce personal low carbon savings accounts. Canadians will pay into that account when they buy fossil fuels; the money could be used to buy things that "help them live a greener life."

- forcing the sale of zero emission vehicles. Thirty percent of light duty vehicles sold in 2030 must be zero emission.

- investing one billion dollars in electric vehicle manufacturing in Canada and a further one billion dollars in hydrogen technology.

- introduce a "Renewable" Natural Gas Mandate requiring 15% of consumption to be renewable by 2030.

- introduce a tax credit to support the use of carbon capture and sequestration technology in the energy and other industrial sectors. The Conservatives would invest \$5 billion in this technology.

- the Conservatives also promise a multi-faceted National Clean Energy Strategy, a Clean Buildings Plan, and will pursue ideas that will build resiliency and better prepare Canada to address the impacts of climate change.

#### **Conservation:**

- committed to the Harper government's goal of protecting 17% of Canada's lands through protected areas and other area-based measures (currently 12% are regarded as protected). Will seek to increase this goal to 25%. No dates set for the realization of these goals (in 2014 the Harper government committed to realize the 17% target by 2020).

- work with Indigenous communities to create Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs).
- invest \$3 billion between today and 2030 in natural climate solutions focused on forest, crop, grazing land, wetlands management.

### ***New Democratic Party***

#### **Climate change:**

- reduce Canada's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 50% from 2005 levels by 2030.
- create a Climate Accountability Office to monitor federal progress, engage the public, and recommend how to realize climate change goals.
- retain carbon pricing.
- roll back "loopholes this Liberal government has given to big polluters."
- review federal financial legislation to ensure federal financial levers support the net-zero goal.
- eliminate subsidies to fossil fuel companies and redirect funds to low carbon initiatives.
- work with provincial and territorial governments to make Canada a leader in methane reduction.

#### **Protecting Land and Water:**

- establish a Canadian Environmental Bill of Rights.
- strengthen the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.
- strengthen the federal environmental impact assessment process for coal mining.
- ban single-use plastics and ban the export of plastic waste.
- pursue a Nature agenda, the key commitment of which would be to protect 30% of Canada's lands and waters by 2030.
- ensure the *Species at Risk Act* is enforced.
- support Indigenous-led nature conservation and land-use planning.
- focus forest management investments to reduce forest fire risk and encourage innovation.
- force petroleum companies to pay for the cleanup of inactive wells.

### ***Green Party***

Given the Green Party's pedigree, the party's main website and associated webpages are tremendously disappointing. There is no link to a platform per se. You also won't find any information about specific environmental commitments by following the main page's links for: Action Centre, Media Releases, Statements, or Party Documents. The last post on the Media Advisories page was for a statement about Canada's Global Role in the Climate Emergency from Elizabeth May – it's dated **February 10, 2020**. The main page as of the Labour Day weekend invited visitors to "Save the last of Canada's old growth forests" – that page was silent on what the federal government could or should do in that respect. The main page also invited visitors to support the Green climate plan with a donation. There was absolutely no information about the substance of that climate plan if you went to the page where you could donate to the party. It is likely an understatement to say that

the Greens' website presence was disappointing.

After the *Advocate* had gone to the designer/printer, the Green Party published its platform.

### **Climate Change**

- achieve net zero emissions as quickly as possible. Reduce GHG emissions by 60% from 2005 levels by 2030; enforceable targets and timelines will start in 2023.

- end all extraction of fossil fuels. Cancel all new pipeline projects; ban hydraulic fracturing; phase out existing oil and gas operations with tar sands production ending between 2030 and 2035; ensure that companies pay clean up and land restoration costs.

- support a just transition for petroleum sector workers; replace high paying fossil fuel sector jobs with high paying green sector jobs.

- accelerate the increase in carbon taxes.

### **Conserving and Restoring Natural Ecosystems**

- support indigenous-led protected and conservation areas  
- protect a minimum of 30% of freshwaters and lands in each Canadian ecosystem by 2030, 50% by 2050.

- modernize the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

- expedite recovery plans to reverse species loss.

- ensure a legally-enforceable right to a healthy environment.

- protect old-growth forests.



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