

## **ALL CANDIDATES QUESTIONS - Sean Wood, Green Party of Canada**

### **TAXATION**

- ***With all of your proposed tax cuts, what services will you cut to balance the budget?***

Greens are committed to providing a good living for all within our financial and ecological means and to being responsible stewards of public finances. The Green Party of Canada (GPC) has set out the measures in its platform with an eye to both long-term environmental and fiscal sustainability. The GPC proposes changes in revenues and costs which should reduce the federal budget deficit to zero within five years, and reduce marginally Canada's already acceptable debt-to-GDP ratio, while also making large investments in increasing environmental sustainability and addressing economic inequality.

A balanced budget and low debt ratio are important enablers for fiscal stimulus or other sector-specific actions should they be required. In total, the GPC platform calls for increased spending of \$74 billion in the first year of the mandate. This equates to a 21.5% increase over the Parliamentary Budget Officer's ("PBO") projected spending, a level which is roughly maintained throughout the mandate.

To balance the increases in expenditure, the GPC will make Canada's tax structure more progressive: although most individuals will not pay increased taxes, the GPC will increase the corporate tax rate to make it equal to that in the United States, tax banks at the same rates as other corporations, put in place a financial transactions tax, remove inequities in capital gains and stock option taxation, begin to collect taxes from foreign e-commerce companies, cancel tax and other subsidies for fossil fuel companies, and implement a net wealth tax over \$20 million.

- ***Why are we all not taxed the same in Canada with respect to our income brackets? Certain segments of our population pay no taxes and yet enjoy all the services government provides.***

The growing gap between rich and poor in Canada indicates that something is wrong - the burden of taxation is not fairly distributed, and the impacts of poverty drastically increase the costs of government services such as healthcare and the justice system. A Green government will undertake root-and-branch tax reform by establishing an arm's length Federal Tax Commission to analyze the tax system for fairness and accessibility, based on the principle of progressive taxation where everyone contributes their fair share to the collective wellbeing. The last Tax Commission was in the 1960s, so reform is long overdue.

Greens agree that it is unfair that certain segments of our population enjoy all of the services that government provides without paying their fair share of taxation. We will work to close loopholes and change laws that allow money to leak out of Canada and into tax havens that allow people to unfairly avoid taxation. The Green Party will end offshore tax dodging by taxing funds hidden in offshore havens and requiring companies to prove that their foreign affiliates are actual functioning businesses for tax purposes. Greens will provide adequate funding to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to collect tax revenue hiding in offshore tax havens and ensure that the CRA focuses on people who hide vast wealth, rather than conduct random audits of ordinary Canadians.

- ***Do you plan on eliminating subsidies for oil and pharma? If so, how do you plan on keeping the lack of subsidies from increasing their products?***

Since producing and burning fossil fuels is the largest source of emissions, we need to keep fossil fuels in the ground and retool society to run on non-polluting, renewable energy sources. This is entirely possible, according to studies by the Stanford University researchers and the Deep Decarbonization Pathways Project. Greens will cancel the Trans Mountain pipeline (and its \$10-13 billion cost) as well as other subsidies to fossil fuel industries, totaling an additional several

billion dollars a year. This money will be redirected to the Canadian Grid Strategy and renewable energy transition. This measure will be one of a package of initiatives designed to get Canada to net-zero emissions by 2050 and encourage the rapid uptake of renewable energy technologies while providing a good living for all within our economic and ecological means. Greens will also maintain a broad-based, revenue neutral carbon fee on all sources of carbon dioxide pollution. Revenues from the carbon fee would be returned to Canadians as a dividend, so that Canadians are supported through the transition to a carbon-neutral future.

In order to keep healthcare spending from continuing to skyrocket, we must find a way to control the cost of drugs. Currently, 20% of our health care budget is spent on pharmaceuticals – and this is the area of health care in which costs are rising most quickly. The Green Party supports the recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee on Health to expand the Canada Health Act to include prescription drugs dispensed outside of a hospital. Universal Pharmacare is the best way to accomplish both life-saving and cost-cutting goals. Greens will expand the single-payer Medicare model to include Pharmacare for everyone as well as free dental care for low-income Canadians, create a bulk drug purchasing agency, and reduce drug patent protection periods. By bulk buying prescription drugs, based on a strong evidence-based assessment, costs will come down for the provincial delivery of health care and for individuals.

- ***Is it true that, if elected, a new Liberal government would institute a Capital Gains Tax on one's principal residence?***

We will leave this question to be answered by the candidate for the Liberal Party of Canada.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE**

- ***How would you respond locally to the warning issued by climate scientists that our oceans are in crisis?***

The world's oceans are in trouble. Despite the 27-year moratorium on cod fishing off Newfoundland, the commercial fishery remains closed. Now, ocean acidification, increased water temperatures, and decreased oxygen levels associated with climate change are fundamentally altering marine ecosystems and threatening all fisheries, even those that are sustainably managed. Unless climate change is arrested, the ocean's ability to produce food for human populations may be permanently compromised. In the face of this threat, we must do everything possible to minimize the stresses that we can control, giving the ocean its best chance to adapt to changing conditions.

Eight to nine million tonnes of plastic enter the ocean every year, the equivalent of one large garbage truck full of plastic every minute. This plastic ends up floating, submerged, or sinking to the ocean floor, often leaching and absorbing toxic chemicals, and harming and killing marine life through either entanglement or ingestion. To reduce and mitigate plastic waste from fishing gear that entangles and kills marine animals, by January 2021 Greens will implement an Extended Producer Responsibility program for all companies making or selling synthetic fishing gear which would fund the retrieval of lost or abandoned fishing gear, commonly known as ghost nets, and the collection and recycling of old, damaged, and recovered fishing gear.

Greens will also ban the production, distribution and sale of all unnecessary or non-essential petroleum-based single-use plastics by January 2022, including: carry-out and produce bags, balloons, straws, plates, cups, lids, cutlery, cotton buds, drink stirrers, cigarette filters, and plastic water bottles (less than four litres); packaging, including multilayer packaging, packing straps, all multipack rings, takeaway packaging, and all expanded polystyrene (styrofoam) packaging; and all single-use plastics that are not easily recyclable or have additives that make them non-recyclable, including thermoset plastics.

Greens will turn off the pollution taps flowing into coastal waters including municipal sewage and industrial effluents, enact climate protection policies to prohibit new offshore oil and gas development, and phase out existing operations to reduce the threat of marine oil spills. Greens will expand marine protected areas from 10 to 30 per cent of Canada's

territorial waters by 2030 and legislate cruise ship waste discharge standards that meet or exceed those of our coastal neighbours.

We must also ensure that coastal communities historically dependent on marine harvesting for their livelihoods are actively involved in fisheries management and derive the greatest possible benefit from those fisheries. Greens will fully implement the co-management provisions of the Oceans Act, protect independent harvesters and coastal communities by entrenching owner-operator and fleet separation policies in the Fisheries Act, and implement the 20 recommendations of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans report, *West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits*.

By 2025, Greens will move all open-net pen finfish aquaculture facilities into closed containment systems on land. As with land farmers transitioning from conventional production, provide financial and extension support to fish pen workers to make this transition. Greens will also increase funding for research on fish stocks to improve management and protect endangered species in the face of rapidly changing ecosystems.

- ***What incentives will your party offer ordinary citizens to help them take personal actions to reduce climate change upheaval?***

Consumerism with a linear consumption-production-waste system, the driver of global warming, depends on disposability – a throwaway culture. A Green economy is built on durability. Products are built to last and to be repaired. Greens will enact Right to Repair legislation that requires producers to provide consumers or repair shops with replacement parts, software and tools for diagnosing, maintaining or repairing their products, for a fair price, and to reset any electronic security that may disable the device during diagnosis, maintenance or repair.

To make a renewable energy transition possible, we have to eliminate energy waste. Greens will launch a massive energy efficiency retrofit of residential, commercial and institutional buildings and finance building retrofits and installation of renewable energy technologies such as solar and heat pumps through direct grants, zero-interest loans and repayments based on energy/cost savings.

Canada needs regulations to shift from gasoline-powered transportation. Greens will exempt new and used electric and zero-emission vehicles from federal sales tax and create a national cycling and walking infrastructure fund to help support zero emissions active transportation. A Green government will offer scale-based rebates of up to \$5,000 for the purchase of the most efficient vehicles, including electric vehicles, and scale-based fees on the purchase of inefficient vehicles.

Greens will also maintain a broad-based, revenue neutral carbon fee on all sources of carbon dioxide pollution. Revenues from the carbon fee would be returned to Canadians as a dividend, so that Canadians are supported through the transition to a carbon-neutral future.

- ***How will a proposed energy corridor function in ensuring Canada will be able to meet our greenhouse gas emission targets under the Paris Agreement under UNFCCC?***

We need to keep fossil fuels in the ground, and retool society to run on non-polluting, renewable energy sources. Climate scientists tell us that we risk triggering runaway heating and a climate catastrophe if we do not hold global warming to no more than 1.5 degrees C global average temperature increase above the 1850 baseline. To hold to this critical limit, global emissions of climate-changing pollutants – carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide – must be cut by about half by 2030, and we must get to net-zero emissions by 2050.

To achieve this, the government of Canada must utilize every tool in the federal toolkit, including regulations, public spending, and pollution pricing. Indigenous leadership is critical to the climate goals of *Mission: Possible*. Greens will implement a major ramp-up of renewable electricity. By 2030, 100 per cent of Canada's electricity will come from renewable sources. This includes getting remote and northern communities off diesel generators.

To enable renewable electricity to flow across provincial and territorial boundaries, Greens will implement a national electrical grid strategy, including building connections between eastern Manitoba and western Ontario, and upgrading connections between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. This will be paid for with money now allocated for expanding the Trans Mountain pipeline (\$1.6 billion announced in December 2018, towards an estimated \$10-13 billion), and create thousands of jobs nation-wide.

This IPCC special report contains good news because it says we can do it - we can keep the global average temperature increase to no more than 1.5 degrees C. It says there are no physical, geological or geochemical conditions of planetary existence, technical or economic, that will prevent us from achieving the goal of protecting our children's future. Not future generations in the hypothetical, but the children who are here now. We have one chance, right now, to ensure that in their natural lifespan they enjoy a secure, livable future.

- ***There has been much said about eliminating the use of fossil fuels and converting to alternative sources of fuel. What would you say is a realistic time frame to achieve this goal?***

Climate scientists tell us that if the world does not hold global warming to no more than 1.5 degrees C global average temperature increase above the 1850 baseline we risk triggering runaway heating and a climate catastrophe. To hold to this critical limit, global emissions of climate-changing pollutants – carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide – must be cut by about half by 2030, and we must get to net-zero emissions by 2050.

The current federal target is a 30 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 2005 levels by 2030. This was set by Conservative Prime Minister Harper in 2015 and adopted by Liberal Prime Minister Trudeau in 2016. Not only is this too low, the Liberal and Conservative climate action plans will not even achieve that insufficient reduction, let alone the target that climate scientists say we must meet.

The Green Party has a plan that is bold enough to meet our targets under the Paris Agreement, and will not approve any new fossil fuel infrastructure projects like pipelines for diluted-bitumen and fracked gas. A Green government will pass into law a Climate Change Act requiring a 60 per cent cut in climate-changing emissions below 2005 levels by 2030, reaching net zero in 2050. Interim targets would be set at five-year intervals beginning with 2025.

- ***If elected, what renewable energy projects and renewable energy jobs will you promote in Parliament now, not in 10 or 20 years?***

New opportunities abound in the green economy. In 2017, 268,000 people were already employed in the clean energy sector in Canada. This does not include the 436,000 jobs in the energy efficiency sector, and we have not yet begun a serious national retrofit of buildings and industries or a serious transition away from fossil fuels. Projections put future jobs in energy efficiency retrofits alone at four million. In comparison, 62,000 people worked in the oil and gas sector nationally in 2018.

A Green government will create a just transition framework for oil, gas and coal sector workers that reflects the unique conditions of each province. This would be modelled on the recommendations of the Task Force on Just Transition for Canadian Coal Power Workers and Communities, which we would implement in full. Greens will ensure locally available supports, including funding the establishment and operation of locally-driven transition centres, and identify and fund local infrastructure projects in affected communities.

Greens will establish a Canadian Sustainable Generations Fund to make critical investments in trades, apprenticeships and education required for the transition to a green economy. These investments in skills training will complement targeted national infrastructure investments in energy efficiency, renewable energy production, digital upgrades, clean-tech manufacturing and emerging technologies, tourism, the creative economy, and the care economy.

- ***Do you and your party support the Federal Grant for purchase of electric vehicles?***

Canada needs regulations to shift from gasoline-powered transportation. Greens will ban the sale of internal combustion engine passenger vehicles by 2030 and exempt new and used electric and zero-emission vehicles from federal sales tax. Greens will offer scale-based rebates of up to \$5,000 for the purchase of the most efficient vehicles, including electric vehicles, scale-based fees on the purchase of inefficient vehicles, and provide incentives for Canadian manufacturers of electric vehicles.

Electric vehicle producers should also be encouraged to ensure the production of whatever additional electrical capacity (from renewable sources) their cars will require, as some producers offer to do. Vehicle batteries can provide useful support for load shifting to and from the grid, powering up at night when demand is low and potentially releasing energy back to the grid if it is needed at times of peak demand. This can make electric vehicles more affordable.

Greens will also expand charging stations for electric vehicles, including all parking lots associated with federal facilities, and will require all passenger ferries to convert to electric or hybrid systems by 2030.

## **HEALTH**

- ***What is your party's position on mandatory medical procedures (i.e. vaccination)?***

The Green Party is committed to the principles and requirements of the Canada Health Act and to extending that model to other aspects of health care. Respecting these principles, we support innovation in the delivery of these services to better meet the changing needs of Canadians. We will work to ensure that every Canadian has a family doctor and that primary care is centred on the patient and is sensitive to issues of social justice, equity, and cultural appropriateness. All Canadians have the right to bodily autonomy and the power to limit or refuse medical intervention and treatment, and all Canadians need access to the best possible health education to promote health and well-being in our population.

Health promotion is about more than health care or health education. It is about recognizing the profound health impacts of determinants of health outside the formal healthcare system and working with many stakeholders (policy-makers, NGOs, health agencies, multiple levels of government, the private sector, and most important, affected communities themselves) to reduce, eliminate, or overcome those factors that harm health or act as barriers to health enhancement, and to promote those factors that enhance the health, well-being, and quality of life of all Canadians.

- ***Do you support changes to Bill C-14 to allow advanced directives for MAID (Medical Assistance in Dying) requests?***

In a unanimous decision on February 6, 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) has reversed historic support for the position that assisting a death was an offence under the Criminal Code. The Liberal response falls short of the SCC ruling. We will continue to work for the reforms, as found in the rejected Green amendments in C-14, to ensure access to physician-assisted death in situations of irremediable suffering.

Greens will amend the Medical Assistance in Dying legislation to ensure that everyone has the choice of dying with dignity. This includes allowing advance directives and guaranteeing the right to draw up a "living will" that gives

individuals the power to limit or refuse medical intervention and treatment. Greens will also educate Canadians about end-of-life issues and increase funding for palliative care hospices in hospitals and our communities.

- ***What are your party's plans to combat drug use, mental disorders and the crime rate?***

Greens believe that drug addictions should be treated as a health problem, not as criminal offences. The War on Drugs has failed to control addiction issues while stigmatizing and criminalizing people who need support, fostering organized crime, and fuelling an opioid crisis which has devastated our communities. Greens will address the opioid crisis as a health-care issue, not a criminal issue, by declaring a national health emergency. Elizabeth May has stated, "the opioid crisis is a national tragedy that is devastating communities and families across Canada. We have to abandon old notions of the 'war on drugs' and join the battle that really matters – the fight to save Canadian lives."

Drug possession should be decriminalized, ensuring people have access to a screened supply and the medical support they need to combat their addictions. Greens will increase funding to community-based organizations to test drugs and make Naloxone kits widely available to treat overdoses and provide increased funding to safe injection sites, treatment facilities, and addict rehabilitation.

Greens will negotiate the Canada Health Accord to prioritize expansion of mental health and rehabilitation services, reduction in wait times, access to safe abortion services and access to gender-affirming health services such as hormones, blockers, and surgery. A Green government will establish a national mental health strategy and a suicide prevention strategy to address the growing anxieties plaguing Canadians regarding inequality and affordability, the growing precariousness of work and housing, the climate crisis, social isolation, resurgent racial and ethno-nationalism and other harms and risks.

The criminal justice system criminalizes far too many Indigenous persons, members of visible minority communities and people suffering from mental illness, homelessness and addiction. The adversarial family court system does not address the needs of children and families experiencing the trauma of divorce and separation. The civil justice system disadvantages those who cannot afford lawyers.

A Green government will implement a justice reform agenda that will increase access to justice and fairness in Canada's justice system. Greens will re-invest in prisoner rehabilitation and preparation for reintegration in society, especially for Indigenous people and women.

Greens will ensure that illegal handguns are intercepted and redirect Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) resources to weapons smuggling and reduce pursuit of people living in Canada without proper residency, but who are otherwise law-abiding. We will launch a confidential buyback program for handguns and assault weapons.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- ***What actions would you take to support rail initiatives, particularly passenger rail service, on Vancouver Island?***

While Europeans have highly efficient inter-modal connectivity, with high speed rail linking downtown cores to airports, with bicycle lanes allowing people to move around cities safely, efficiently and pollution-free, with streetcars in the downtowns and even rural areas serviced by bus and rail, Canadian communities are increasingly stranded. A complete overhaul of our rail system is necessary for both passenger and freight to achieve connectivity for our communities. It will mean wherever possible shifting cargo containers off highways and onto freight trains, driving the development of freight distribution nodes (off-loading containers onto local trucks) along new 'green corridors'. An improved rail system will make Canada more economically competitive and provide thousands of new jobs.

A Green government will develop a national transportation strategy with a goal of reaching zero-carbon public ground transportation everywhere in Canada by 2040. Rail will be the hub, with spokes of light rail and electric bus connections. This includes service to rural and remote communities, since everyone in Canada must have access to reliable transportation options at affordable rates. Besides reducing pollution, this measure responds to the findings of the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. A Green government will improve rail infrastructure and intermodal connections, increasing joint federal-municipal light rail investments, as well as improving VIA Rail service nationwide.

- ***Would you support the DFO reducing quotas for the commercial fleet and giving them to the sportfishing community with expanded areas?***

We believe that Canada can restore its wild fish populations and protect Canadian fishermen with strictly enforced regulations governing gear types, fishing practices, and catch limits. Because fish cross international boundaries, we must lead efforts for a global ban on harmful open-ocean fishing practices as part of a renewed commitment to sustainable fisheries management. This requires reforming the federal government's administrative and research priorities.

We must also ensure that coastal communities historically dependent on marine harvesting for their livelihoods are actively involved in fisheries management and derive the greatest possible benefit from those fisheries. While the Atlantic inshore fishery has protections against corporate control, in British Columbia fishing licences and quotas can be owned by investors and fish processing companies. This means Canadian fish can be processed in other countries such as China. A Green government will apply fair and consistent fisheries policies to all fishers, whether in the Atlantic, Arctic or the Pacific and encourage a greater role for fishermen and Aboriginal peoples in managing fisheries through co-management provisions in the Oceans Act.

Greens will protect independent harvesters and coastal communities by entrenching owner-operator and fleet separation policies in the Fisheries Act; and implement the 20 recommendations of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans report, *West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits*. A Green government will increase funding for research on fish stocks to improve management and protect endangered species in the face of rapidly changing ecosystems.

- ***How do you plan to work with other parties to achieve the changes Canadians want?***

We are at a turning point. Politics-as-usual is leading us down a path we simply cannot survive. The Green Party is proposing a course change, and we are ready to take the lead. A Green government will establish a cross-party inner cabinet to deal with climate change to limit the destructive impact of partisan politics which has thwarted strong climate action for two decades. Its mandate would be to ensure that Canada does its part to limit global warming to a level civilization can survive, and mitigate the impacts of climate change on Canadians.

As Elizabeth May has stated, "Six parties means that it's very likely that there will be a minority Parliament where we will have to cooperate and that is something we've always sought as Greens because we believe in cooperation," she said, likening it to the mid-1960's when a minority Liberal government under Lester B. Pearson worked with Tommy Douglas and the NDP and the result was universal health plan, Canada Pension Plan, unemployment insurance and other policies that Canadians now hold dear. Greens will work across party lines with other parties to ensure that we get real action on the climate crisis and other changes that Canadians want like universal pharmacare and affordable housing.

- ***The NDP leader has indicated that he will give the provinces the right to refuse Federal initiatives such as the energy corridor. Should provinces have the right to veto initiatives that are in the national interest?***

Canada's constitutional division of powers between federal and provincial levels of government, together with the constitutional protection of Indigenous treaty rights and our adoption of the provisions of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, both enable and constrain the federal government in setting national priorities. We need a mechanism that convenes all governments to discuss and decide upon issues of national importance.

A Green government will support the model of collaborative federalism, working with and ensuring fair treatment for provinces, territories, municipalities and Indigenous Peoples by establishing a Council of Canadian Governments to set higher order policy priorities, with the goal of policy coherence to optimize public spending. It would include the federal government, provincial/territorial governments, representatives of the local order of government with large city mayors and smaller and rural municipalities, and Indigenous (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) governments. This is similar to one in place in Australia.

- ***How does legalising narcotics bring about positive change for our youth who are personally affected by drugs & alcohol?***

Greens believe that drug addictions should be treated as a health problem, not as criminal offences. The War on Drugs has failed to control addiction issues while stigmatizing and criminalizing people who need support, fostering organized crime, and fuelling an opioid crisis which has devastated our communities. Greens will address the opioid crisis as a health-care issue, not a criminal issue, by declaring a national health emergency. We recognize that fentanyl contamination is why deaths are more accurately described as poisonings than overdoses.

As Elizabeth May has stated, "the opioid crisis is a national tragedy that is devastating communities and families across Canada. We have to abandon old notions of the 'war on drugs' and join the battle that really matters – the fight to save Canadian lives."

Drug possession should be decriminalized, ensuring people have access to a screened supply and the medical support they need to combat their addictions. Greens will increase funding to community-based organizations to test drugs and make Naloxone kits widely available to treat overdoses and provide increased funding to safe injection sites, treatment facilities, and addict rehabilitation.

- ***What will you do in the next four years to remedy the lack of affordable housing and make tent cities a thing of the past?***

Federal incentives for purpose-built rental housing were eliminated in the 1970s. During decades of encouraging home ownership, federal support for co-ops, rental housing, social housing and supportive housing has languished. We now face a national shortage of affordable housing and as a result, a growing problem of homelessness and housing insecurity.

It is past time that the government of Canada moves to ensure that everyone has access to safe, affordable housing. The Green Party will enhance the federal government's contribution to meeting the housing needs of Canadians through direct investments, changes to tax policies, and lending and granting programs, putting the government's focus where it is urgently needed.

Greens will legislate housing as a legally protected fundamental human right for all Canadians and permanent residents. A Green government will appoint a Minister of Housing to strengthen the National Housing Strategy so that it meets the needs for affordable housing that are unique to each province, and oversee its implementation in collaboration with provincial ministers. This recognizes that housing is provincial jurisdiction. The target would be 25,000 new and 15,000



rehabilitated units annually for the next 10 years, which would be 100,000 new and 60,000 rehabilitated units in the next 4 years.

Greens will include new and existing housing as eligible infrastructure for funding purposes, allowing the Canada Infrastructure Bank to support provincial and municipal housing projects and provide financing to non-profit housing organizations and cooperatives to build and restore quality, energy efficient housing for seniors, people with special needs and low-income families.

A Green government will restore tax incentives for building purpose-built rental housing and provide tax credits for gifts of lands, or of land and buildings, to community land trusts to provide affordable housing and re-focus the core mandate of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) on supporting the development of affordable, non-market and cooperative housing, as opposed to its current priority of supporting Canadian lenders to de-risk investment in housing ownership. A Green government will also create a Canada Co-op Housing Strategy that would update the mechanisms for financing co-op housing, in partnership with CMHC, co-op societies, credit unions and other lenders.

- ***How will you improve services, pensions, health care and benefits for all of Canada's veterans?***

The Green Party values the work and sacrifices of all Canadian Forces and RCMP veterans and active personnel and will ensure that veterans and their families are well cared for. The fact that suicide rates among veterans are climbing is a clear indication that they are not getting the services and supports they need. A Green government will step up to provide long overdue comprehensive services for veterans.

A Green government will launch a national re-examination of veterans' issues in December 2019 based on good-faith engagement with military families and veterans, including issues relating to pensions and benefits. The goal is to identify necessary reforms and changes to programs to better meet veterans' needs.

In the meantime, Greens will restore periodic payments to veterans at pre-2006 levels and provide support for all veterans, including disabled veterans, that allows them to live in dignity. Greens will ensure that services to veterans and their family members are fully integrated and funded.

Greens will ensure that all veterans have access to health care, mental health support and treatments. Military personnel with PTSD must be treated as highly valued people whose health needs to be restored, rather than as liabilities who need to be removed.

- ***Will you push for a comprehensive "Seniors Strategy" to address pensions, health care, caregivers, home support, etc.?***

A Green government will also develop a National Seniors Strategy that will ensure the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) remains robust and adaptive to changing needs and circumstances by increasing over time the target income replacement rate from 25 per cent to 50 per cent of income received during working years. Greens will protect private pensions by amending the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act to establish the pre-eminence of pensioners and the pension plan in the creditor hierarchy during company insolvency proceedings.

Green Party policies will create age-friendly communities, where active living and well-being are promoted, where seniors have financial security, and where housing and transportation needs are met. In accordance with a Canadian Senate report in April 2009, the Green Party recognizes the need for improved support for mental health, and palliative care, and the need to combat ageism, abuse, and neglect.

Long-term care should not be the only housing and care choice. In a Balance of Care model, more care can be provided in a cost-effective manner by home and community support services. Greens will support innovative home-sharing plans and other measures to allow people to stay in their own homes as long as possible, as well as creating more long-term care beds in neighbourhood facilities.

In collaboration with health professionals and provincial/territorial governments, a Green government will develop and fund a national dementia strategy. Within 25 years, the number of Canadians living with a form of dementia could reach 1.3 million, imposing the highest economic, social, and health costs of all diseases. The strategy would support research, improve quality of life for patients and care givers, and educate the public to increase awareness and reduce stigma.

- ***What is your party doing to ensure seniors have a “living wage” in their retirement?***

The most recent Canadian Income Survey reveals that 9.5 per cent of Canada’s population – about 3.4 million people – lives below the poverty line. Poverty rates are even higher within marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as people living with disabilities, single mothers and seniors. In a wealthy country like Canada, this is unacceptable.

In 2018, the government of Canada developed its first poverty reduction strategy, *Opportunity For All*, which has adopted the Market Basket Measure (MBM) as Canada’s official poverty line. The MBM is a measurement tool that considers what an average basket of goods costs for a Canadian and can vary regionally. Using existing income supplements like the Old Age Security and the Child Tax Benefit, the Liberal government boasts that it has lifted several hundred thousand Canadians out of poverty by nudging them from a few hundred dollars under the poverty line to a few hundred over it. While hundreds more dollars a year can definitely help individuals and families, this current effort can and should go much further.

Greens will establish a universal Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI) program to replace the current array of income supports, such as disability payments, social assistance and income supplements for seniors. Building on the MBM, payment would be set at a “livable” level for different regions of the country. The negotiation to implement a livable income across the country would take place through the Council of Canadian Governments. Unlike existing income support programs, additional income would not be clawed back. Those earning above a certain total income would pay the GLI back in taxes.