

## Forward

### Principles, Policy, Platform

Policy is created with the guidance of four words: Vision, Hope, Compassion and Honesty. These words reflect not what we are campaigning for but how we campaign. The Policy and Platform of the Green Party of Alberta are a vision for the future, a vision of hope for a better future. We convey compassion by moving Alberta from where we are to where we would all like to be. We will start from where we are with an understanding that everyone is doing the best they can and develop methods of easing into a sustainable society. The party will campaign in an honest way, attempting in all our endeavors to avoid deceit by being open and transparent.

Policy is developed from the principles of the party. The principles of the party can be found in a number of places. The Charter of the Global Greens: Canberra, 2001, has been accepted by the Green Party of Alberta as representing the principles of the party. These principles are broad value statements that reflect the base values of the party. These 10 key values are listed in their short form below:

- 1) Sustainability
- 2) Decentralization
- 3) Gender Equity
- 4) Non-violence
- 5) Community Based Economics
- 6) Personal & Global Responsibility
- 7) Social Justice
- 8) Grassroots Democracy
- 9) Ecological wisdom
- 10) Respect for Diversity

Policy is further created with the principle that it is reasonable to expect Albertans to accept the responsibilities that accompany their rights.

We will encourage Albertans to:

- Expend the time and effort required for participating in community decision-making processes.
- Take measures to protect their own health.
- Be actively involved in the education of their children.
- Diligently work to protect the environment and thus provide for their children's future

The document you are about to read is a policy document. This policy is the vision of the Green Party of Alberta. There is no timeline to a policy document and some of the ideas may represent an ideal to strive for rather than a practical plan for the immediate future. **This document is**

**different from a platform document.** A platform is a document the party releases at election time specifically stating what the party would do during the current term if elected. A platform document is an immediate plan.

The policy document is a living document. Work on policy continues year round for the Green Party of Alberta. Policy development is only stopped when an election is called. At that time, policy is frozen for the period of the election. A platform document is produced from the existing policy for the current election. Policy work begins again after the election.

Following is the policy of the GPA. We hope that you agree with what you read. If you do not, please join the policy process and help us make it better.

<a href="#">Forward.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">I. Environment.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">A. Air.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">B. Water.....</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">C. Ecological Impact Assessments.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">D. Wilderness.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">E. Energy.....</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">F. Industry.....</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">G. Sustainable Resources.....</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">II. Economics.....</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">A. General.....</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">B. Waste Management.....</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">C. Sustainable Resources.....</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">D. Agriculture and Food Production.....</a>	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">E. Farm Crisis.....</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">F. Industry.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">G. Forestry.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">H. Energy.....</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">III. Society.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">A. Health Care.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">A. General Policy:.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">B. Public Health:.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">C. Health Care Delivery:.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">D. Complementary and Alternative Health Care:.....</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">E. Environmental Health.....</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">F. Hydrogen Sulphide:.....</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">G. Herbicides and Pesticides:.....</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">H. Home and workplace safety:.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">I. Whistle Blower.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">B. Transportation.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">C. I General.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">C. II. Transportation “metrics”.....</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">C. III. Automobiles and Trucks.....</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">C. IV. Rail.....</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">C. V. Public Transit.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">C. VI. Bicycles / Pedestrians.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">C. VII. Urban Transportation Strategies.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">C. VIII. Rural Transportation Strategies.....</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">C. IX. Research.....</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">C. X. Funding.....</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">C. Education.....</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">A. Life long learning.....</a>	<a href="#">22</a>

<a href="#">B Community Participation:</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">C Curriculum:</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">D Finances:</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">D First Peoples Issues:</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">F Culture and Language Issues:</a>	<a href="#">24</a>
<a href="#">G Social Equity:</a>	<a href="#">24</a>
<a href="#">H. Whistle Blowing:</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">I. Child Welfare:</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">J. Seniors:</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">IV. Government:</a>	<a href="#">28</a>
<a href="#">A. Government Reform:</a>	<a href="#">28</a>
<a href="#">B. Electoral Reform:</a>	<a href="#">29</a>
<a href="#">Our Bonzer method:</a>	<a href="#">30</a>

## **I. Environment**

*Preamble:* Environment - The future of all life on the planet is endangered by our disregard for the health of the environment. All the Earth's systems are interconnected and all species, of animals and plants must co-exist. We must preserve the Earth's ecosystems to sustain our own wellbeing. We must begin to Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. We will expect Albertans to diligently work to protect the environment and thus provide for their children's future.

### **A. Air**

1. We will propose and support initiatives which will end production of all ozone-depleting chemicals.
2. We will support any measures necessary to reduce and ultimately eliminate the causes of global warming, including stabilization of atmospheric CO2 by carbon taxes if necessary.
3. We will encourage the use of public transportation, car pooling, bicycling, and walking, in order to reduce urban air pollution.
4. We will look for ways to improve indoor air quality standards and ensure that health is not compromised by the use of energy efficient but harmful materials.

### **B. Water**

1. We will decommission the Oldman Dam as recommended by the Federal Government Environmental Impact Assessment.
2. We will encourage water conservation by placing an appropriate value treatment and distribution on water taken from lakes or rivers for agricultural, industrial, or domestic purposes.
3. We will impose strict regulations on all effluent producing industries, and ensure that the costs of water treatment or purification are borne by the polluter.
4. We will oppose any plan to divert water to the United States.
5. We will take steps to stay within the AB/SK apportionment agreement.
6. We will seek an apportionment agreement with BC on the rivers we share.
7. We will invest in researching better irrigation methods.
8. We will support irrigation methods which are more in tune with the natural world.
9. We will invest in action to tree the banks of existing irrigation canals.
10. We will create a project under the Alberta Research Council that would study weather modification and make recommendations based on the whole of Alberta's interests.

11. The costs for above research will be attributed to those who would modify weather for profit.
12. The River Basins System will be expanded to include forest management and soil conservation.
13. We will commence studies to evaluate the water holding ability and productive capacity of the soil.
14. Soil preservation and rehabilitation will become part of a targeted program including watershed and forestry conservation.
15. We will oppose the pricing of water.
16. We will commission a study on the extent of water pollution in Alberta, and the cost of clean-up.
17. We will support the development of buildings and industry that would allow water to be used more than once before leaving a building. E.g. grey water recycling and rain collection.
18. A program of incentives will be set into place to allow homes and industry to retrofit for water recycling.
19. GPA will reduce overall water use in government buildings by at least 50%.
20. Above reductions will be done as part of demonstration projects to show Albertans how water can be conserved. Work will be done through local educational institutions to train workers in new methods of building.
21. We will put a moratorium on coal bed methane test sites until contamination and wellhead issues have been resolved.
22. There will be no drilling in protected areas such as Whaleback under a GPA government.
23. The resources of the current forest management and soil conservation areas will be consolidated into a bio-regional watershed, soil and water conservation board.

### **C. Ecological Impact Assessments**

1. We will require EIAs for all large projects, projects in particularly sensitive areas, projects that involve unproven technologies, and any projects which generate significant public concern. EIAs are part of the cost of doing business and will be paid for by the project proponents. Provision will be made for dividing the cost of EIAs among groups of similar projects.
2. We will require that EIAs be all encompassing in terms of the environment and the people affected by each project, and include the cumulative effect of related projects. iii. We will require that EIA review panels be elected by the citizens of Alberta, have local representation, and have the power to approve, change, or halt any project they review.

### **D. Wilderness**

1. We will introduce policies that will protect animals and plants in the wild, recognizing that they have a right to exist for their own sake and not for their perceived value to people.
2. We will ensure that in the future there will be no net loss of wilderness in Alberta.
3. We will establish a series of wilderness preserves in which there will be little or no human impact.
4. We will recognize the value of parks to society and adhere to the intent of the Parks Act to protect these areas from intrusive activities until the protected lands act is in effect.
5. We will phase out all game ranching and game farming in Alberta.
6. We will ban any trade in wild animals or wild animal parts which could constitute a threat to natural wildlife populations.
7. We will place a 5 year moratorium on the hunting of any endangered or at risk species including big horn sheep, woodland caribou and mountain goats.

8. Top of the food chain predators will be preserved. The AGP will place a 5 year moratorium on the hunting of grizzly bears, cougar, lynx and wolves.

## **E. Energy**

*Preamble:* Energy - Use of non-polluting energy is essential to the security of the environment. Conservation of all sources of energy is vital to the future well being of the province. Modifications to human lifestyles which increase energy efficiency will support conservation.

1. We will encourage efforts to produce energy from renewable and non-polluting sources such as wind, sun, and biomass.
2. We will take the lead in encouraging all energy producers to see the long term need to conserve energy and to set realistic prices.
3. We will support education and research into energy-efficient homes, businesses, and government offices.
4. We will require that building and land use planning codes have high standards of energy conservation, including the energy used in making components and transporting them to a building site.
5. We will encourage small power producers to install power generation units which use renewable energy, and ensure that the electrical grid system buys surpluses at reasonable rates.
6. We will encourage recovery of waste energy through co-generation, such as providing heat for buildings from cooling water at power plants.
7. We consider the negative impacts of the nuclear power industry to outweigh its benefits and we will reject nuclear power as a viable option for energy in Alberta.
8. We will change the mandate of the EUB, to include protection of society and the environment, including the power to fine companies who pollute beyond legislated levels.

## **F. Industry**

1. The Alberta Green Party would ensure the clean up of existing abandoned industry sites.
2. The Alberta Green Party would enact an “environmental recovery bond” for all new or expanded industrial sites to be refunded in part or in whole based on site cleanup cost. Cleanup will include closure of all access routes abandoned by industry at completion of resource harvest.

## **G. Sustainable Resources**

1. We will take steps to ensure that the vital resource of the genetic diversity of plants and animals is preserved and protected.
2. In order to ensure long term management the objective is resource augmentation over time. Resource measures need to be linked to leaving the same amount or better for our children as are currently available.
3. The AGP will enact a Protected Lands Act with:
  - i. Provincial Protected Lands will be managed by the Bioregional Management Boards which will be comprised of stakeholders from the affected communities including the publicly elected members;
  - ii. 12% of Alberta land will be designated as protected. This figure will protect river headwaters and wildlife corridors. This figure includes buffer zones but does not include Federal Parks. Current Provincial protected lands are 4.2% of Alberta;
  - iii. Protection designations will vary from total “wilderness protection” to primarily recreational areas;

- iv. Part of this protected area will include the Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) corridor to ensure the survival of animal species. The Alberta Green Party is committed to the Y2Y project;
  - v. The Protected Areas officers will be given the authority and resources to enforce the legislation;
  - vi. All decisions regarding designations will be made with public participation;
  - vii. There will be a moratorium placed on privatization and development of Alberta's government campgrounds. All private maintenance agreements will be reviewed by the local Bioregional Management Board;
  - viii. There will be a moratorium placed on park fee increases. The GPA will consider the elimination of Provincial Park fees for Alberta Residents so that we can all access our provincial heritage.
4. The Protected Lands Act will designate:
- i. Which land will be protected;
  - ii. A clear long term plan so that land users know what to expect;
  - iii. Clear articulation of the purpose of the designations (why are we protecting a particular land);
  - iv. The uses allowed in each protected designation eg. wilderness, recreation, hunting, fishing, logging;
  - v. The land designations will be consolidated to facilitate clear enunciation of rules and enforcement by all stakeholders.

## **II. Economics**

*Preamble:* Economics - We believe that a sound economic system must be built upon sound ecological practices. In the recent past Alberta's financial prosperity has been supported by the sale of our non-renewable petroleum resources. These are now seriously depleted. We must not buy prosperity today by damaging our renewable resources such as forest and water, and leaving little for future generations. Only a sustainable and regenerative economy will provide for the long-term needs of society while preserving the integrity of our natural ecosystems.

### **A. General**

1. We will commence to use the GPI (Genuine Progress Indicator) in place of the traditional GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in making value judgments.
2. We will implement Full Cost Accounting in all government decision making.
3. We will develop a plan for a just transition to a Green Economy.
4. We will develop a system of enforcing corporate responsibility.
5. We will provide incentives for the adoption of energy and materials efficient processes.
6. We will mandate Alberta producers to produce a Waste Management Plan.
7. We will support initiative, cooperation, and accountability in economic enterprises.
8. We will work toward establishing a self-sufficient regional economy, centred upon local ownership and operation of businesses. A high level of foreign interests endangers the security of our resources and environment.
9. We will maintain a balanced annual budget by efficient use of resources in the areas of health care, education, and social services. If this is not possible without introducing serious defects into these services, tax revenue will have to be increased.
10. We recognize that Albertans are required to face the consequences of difficult economic decisions. We will require that elected representatives and government employees accept the same financial realities as the citizens they serve.
11. We will strive to ensure that wealthy individuals and corporations accept their fair share of responsibility for the economic well being of the community.
12. We will introduce a system of full cost accounting for project evaluation and eliminate long-term subsidies, both explicit and hidden. The price of a product should clearly represent its cost in terms of resource consumption, environmental impact, waste disposal, and social services.
13. We will create a complete and simplified accounting procedure so that Albertans are always informed of the true financial state of the province.
14. We will rationalize the position of the Alberta Heritage Trust fund and lottery funds within the provincial financial system. This will open up its administration to normal legislative process, and make its resources available for sensible debt reduction. Governments must no longer benefit from the discretionary use of its revenue while at the same time borrowing money for general expenditures.
15. We will strive to reduce the export of raw materials and increase the production of value-added goods.
16. We will support the elimination of inter-provincial barriers to trade while informing Albertans of the benefits of voluntarily supporting their own economy.
17. We will provide full openness in the awarding of government contracts.

### **B. Waste Management**

1. We will consider the implementation of a variable environmental impact charge on goods and services to fund waste elimination and public awareness programs.

2. We will introduce legislation that will make manufacturers and suppliers of products responsible for the cost of their ultimate disposal, or return and reuse.
3. We will introduce economic instruments which encourage recycling of used materials rather than consumption of new resources.

### **C. Sustainable Resources**

1. As a general principle, The Alberta Green Party will manage all sustainable and non sustainable resources in an integrated manner recognizing the interconnectedness of agriculture, energy, resources, water and the economy.
2. In order to ensure long term management the objective is resource augmentation over time. Resource measures need to be linked to leaving the same amount or better for our children as are currently available.
3. As a general principle, the Alberta Green Party will provide incentives to encourage responsible, small, local, and value added industry.
4. The Alberta Green Party will implement a plan to move to the equivalent of 100% FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) policy of forest management.
5. The Alberta Green Party will change Forest Management Agreements (FMAs) to meet FSC standards and become a world leader in sustainable forest management.
6. All land in Alberta is part of our environmental heritage. The Alberta Green Party will develop and enforce sustainability standards (equivalent to Forestry Stewardship Council standards) for private and public land in Alberta including municipal districts.
7. The Alberta Green Party will strengthen the forestry inspection system to ensure sustainability of public and private lands.
8. The Alberta Green Party will ensure that certification statements are accurate and reliable for all wood and wood products sold in Alberta.

### **D. Agriculture and Food Production**

*Preamble:* Agriculture and Food Production - The practice of agriculture is one of the cornerstones of human civilization. We encourage agricultural practices which are environmentally sound, economically viable, and humane.

Much of the agricultural policy of the Green Party of Alberta directly supports the suggested policies of the National Farmers Union.

#### **How does "sustainable agriculture" differ from "organic agriculture?"**

"Sustainable agriculture," as it is used by the NFU, embraces organic agriculture but also the intermediate steps in the transition from chemical-based, high synthetic-input agriculture to organic. Farmers and consumers would benefit if all agricultural production was produced by ecologically sound and sustainable means. However, the NFU recognizes that it may not be possible for all farmers to farm completely organically. Sustainable agriculture, as used by the Alberta Greens, encompasses agricultural practices that work to increase the availability and quality of food for all Albertans while decreasing dependence on foreign supply lines. Our goal is to distribute goods locally; therefore we must reacquaint the urban population with the rural population who supply their bread and



butter. We must also explore food options native to Alberta that have been long since forgotten but have sustained life on a local level for thousands of years. In following these practices, we would consider it imperative that our agricultural industries move away from chemical based, high synthetic-input agriculture and towards a sustainable system.

"Organic agriculture" is a relative term. Currently, it means foregoing certain practices that are environmentally damaging and pose health risks (use of chemicals, chemical fertilizers, antibiotics, and hormones), while continuing to embrace others (burning fossil fuels). More than this, however, it is a commitment to work with nature, not against it.

"Certified organic" means that the production is strictly regulated according to rules set out in the regulations of certifying agencies. "Certified organic" food has to be produced, processed, and stored according to strict regulations.

1. We will promote regional food self-sufficiency.
2. We will promote mixed farming for local consumption and seek to reduce our economic dependence on specialized crop production for export. We will encourage research in the domestic use of native plants as a food source.
3. We will protect good agricultural land from urban expansion.
4. We will remove subsidies from unsuitable agricultural land and encourage its return to natural prairie, forest or wetlands.
5. We will encourage research and education to help farmers sustain the topsoil on their land.
6. We will adopt a goal of elimination of pesticides and herbicides.
7. We will support a food information act that will require all food being sold, either packaged or fresh, to list the contents and proportions of ingredients and any processing, including irradiation, that the food has undergone. We will support labelling of bio-engineered or genetically altered food products.
8. We will ensure that public land leased for agricultural purposes is managed in such a manner that its ecological and recreational value is maintained. Leaseholders will be responsible for preventing damage resulting from their activities.

## **I. Economic Considerations**

Studies commissioned by the Government of Alberta in recent years have shown that a communication gap exists between urban and rural populations in Alberta, and that these misunderstandings lead to feelings of exclusion and abandonment chiefly in the rural populations. Solutions to these problems were found, and then not universally implemented.

1. We will work to bridge the communication gap between the rural and urban populations in Alberta by providing opportunities for the two groups to discuss their common goals and values.
2. We will encourage mutual understanding between rural and urban dwellers.
3. We will provide information to small farm operators on the benefits of land and machinery co-ops.

4. We will encourage co-operative ownership by allowing favorable depreciation on co-operatively owned machinery.
5. We will allow small scale farmers to lease public land as appropriate in exchange for well defined sustainable stewardship responsibilities.

## **II. Ecological Considerations**

More energy-efficient farming methods, food processing techniques, and transportation systems will increase farmers' profits and reduce environmental damage. For example, trains used in transport are 3 times more fuel-efficient than trucks.

1. We will encourage co-operation between farmers, consumers, and government to create viable and sustainable farming methods and technologies that improve the quality of the soil, water, and air.
2. We will discourage agricultural practices in ecologically sensitive areas, due to their inherent inability to become sustainable and self-renewing entities.
3. We will encourage forest belts, shelter belts, and uncultivated areas by means of property tax adjustments for those who employ such methods.
4. We will discourage the use of erosion-prone soils for cultivation purposes. Such soils should be used in a sustainable manner or left alone.

Farmers use large amounts of fossil fuels. Alternatives include methane from manure, ethanol from grain, bio-fuel, and bio-mass energy from waste-material could provide renewable energy supplies. There is a need to encourage research into alternative energy sources.

5. We will encourage the capture, sale, and utilization of waste heat and products for re-use in rural areas. (I.f.9) ( ie: for the establishment of greenhouses to supply the local market)

## **III. Food and Food Processing**

1. We will financially encourage clear and complete labeling regarding all ingredients, processing, production techniques, and the presence or absence of genetically modified ingredients
2. We will educate the public as to the significance and meaning of existing labeling practices.

Increasing the connections between consumers and producers will increase awareness of food production, nutrition, health, the environment and how they are all interconnected.

3. We will facilitate a “Know your Roots Campaign” the goal of which is to eliminate the barriers to local agricultural patronage. This process may include a direct-delivery system whereby Albertans are able to order directly from their local food producers.  
Note: should there be a minimum of Alberta only food sales?

Organic agriculture and food systems produce safe and wholesome food and, thus, prevent diseases and reduce health care costs.

4. We will acknowledge the links between quality of nourishment and health care costs. .

5. We will encourage the federal Minister of Agriculture to implement in a timely manner national organic standards.

5.1. Once national organic standards are established, it should be illegal to use the word "organic" to describe food unless that food is grown in accordance with those organic standards.

#### **IV. Rural Communities**

1. We will address the social, economic, and ecological impacts of expanding cities and increasingly depopulated rural areas.

2. We will encourage the Family Farm as the primary food-production unit in Alberta.

The Green Party of Alberta defines Family Farm as a farm that is non-intensive, owner operated, and locally owned.

3. We will support land-banks and land-trusts to preserve agricultural land. Land banks are a vehicle to purchase agricultural estate land and re-sell it to Family Farmers.

4. We will encourage research that focuses on agricultural methods and technologies which promote smaller farm size with a higher degree of production efficiency.

5. We will encourage more farmers and smaller farms through a green subsidy shift to give relatively less subsidies to big agri-business.

6. We will endeavor to limit feedlots in size to protect the environment and to assure that livestock remains an accessible and profitable diversification alternative for farmers.

The number of farmers in Canada has been decreasing for 50 years. Canada grew as a country in the first place due to the ability of individual Canadians to support themselves in areas of minimal population or societal support. It is time that farmers, consumers, and government worked together to help Canadians again prosper in farming.

#### **V. Research and Education**

Pre-chemical-era agricultural practices were complex and highly refined. As the farmers with expertise in those practices age, knowledge is lost.

1. We will fund the collection and preservation of knowledge about how to grow plants without chemicals or fertilizers.

2. In order to preserve genetic diversity, we will devote money to saving and cataloguing varieties of plants for all Albertans and future generations. This is specifically to protect plants that may be lost due to loss of habitat and to encourage other options for local food/medicine production.

3. We will support cataloguing and breeding plants which are suited for regions outside Canada's main farming areas. (Pine needle / Stavia tea)

4. We will encourage more on-farm research and applied research in educational programs

#### **E. Farm Crisis**

1. We will support agriculture that is holistically based on social, economic and environmental costs being accounted for.

2. We will commit to helping the small farmer in Alberta.
3. We recognize the capital poor position of many farming operations in crisis, and will provide incentives and low cost financing to help farmers make a transition to agriculture that is viable.
4. We will support 100% BSE testing.
5. We will provide incentives and loan guarantees to slaughter facilities that kill cull cows.
6. We will provide incentives and loan guarantees for slaughter facilities built on a holistic model.
7. We will make the feeding of animal-based feeds to herbivores illegal in Alberta.
8. We will encourage municipalities to tax based on service costs rather than on property values. Transition of such tax will occur as houses are sold.
9. We will not allow minimum house size laws in municipalities.
10. We will encourage cities to plan to double their population densities before further expanding into rural areas.
11. We will invest in a grasslands research institute.
12. We will invest in small ventures to make drought-resistant native grasses available to Albertans at a reasonable cost.
13. We will support more and expanded Farmers' Markets.
14. We will implement a GMO label on all foods containing GMOs.
15. We will require that no more than 10% of any agricultural production plant or animal be of the same genotype.
16. We will support the teaching of permaculture in Alberta.
17. We will provide research money to investigate which crops can be grown in conjunction with each other.
18. We will provide transition incentives to farmers to try new sustainable methods of agriculture.
19. Laws regarding H2S emissions by oil wells will also be applied to intensive livestock operations.
20. Right to Farm legislation will not apply to operations that are publicly traded corporations.
21. Intensive livestock operations (ILO) will require approval at the municipal level.
22. No ILO shall be approved at any government level until it has met an environmental impact assessment and presented books from a full cost account perspective.
23. We will strike a committee to convert farm subsidies to reflect full cost accounting for Alberta farmers within 10 years.
24. We will provide incentives to allow farmers to transition to organic and holistic production.

## **F. Industry**

1. We will support manufacturing, processing, and so forth to be controlled by Canadian interests who have an interest in the local workforce and communities, leaving Albertans and Canadians with control when a crisis hits. (eg. BSE-cattle industry).
2. The Alberta Green Party would create, in place of the existing process, open public meetings and government review for the approval of building and operating permits for all construction or expansion of new industrial facilities.
3. The Alberta Green Party would create open public meetings on a yearly basis for communities to voice concerns regarding environmental and social issues caused by all industrial plants and sites, operating or otherwise.

## **G. Forestry**

*Preamble:* Our forests are among our most valued ecosystems. Stewardship of this resource must include the protection of the ecosystem as well as support for the communities which are dependent on forest industries.

1. We will permit only those forestry methods which are ecologically and economically sustainable.
2. We will develop regulations whereby the forest industries will be integrated into local sustainable economies. We will prevent the exploitation of the forest for the export of raw resources by multinational corporations.
3. We will raise stumpage rates to reflect fair value. At a minimum, the stumpage rates should fully cover the cost of administration, inspection and enforcement of forest management agreements.
4. We will promote secondary industry based on Alberta's forestry industry by offering incentives to small secondary producers.

## **H. Energy**

1. We will take a portfolio approach to power, encouraging all forms of power, where they are best suited.
2. We will support distributed generation of power.
3. We will develop a system of net metering to support distributed power generation systems.
4. We will increase oil royalty rates to world standards over a 5 year term.
5. We will provide zero interest loans to retrofit homes for energy conservation, with payback terms equalling less than the savings on the energy loss.
6. We will provide low interest loans to businesses for energy retrofits, with payback terms equalling less than the savings on the energy loss.
7. We will instigate an independent audit of Alberta's remaining low cost petroleum resources, so that Albertans can make informed decisions regarding exports of oil and gas and the long term energy security of the province.

### **III. Society**

#### **A. Health Care**

*Preamble:* Health Care - It is essential that all Albertans have equal access to health care services. A health care program that advocates prevention of illness and personal responsibility for well-being will be more efficient and cost effective than a system which emphasizes illness and technological intervention. We will expect that Albertans will take reasonable measures to protect their own health.

##### **A. General Policy:**

- i. We will use the Precautionary Principle as an ethical underpinning for all decisions that may impact the health of people, animals or the environment.
- ii. We will incorporate population health measurements into a Genuine Progress Indicator for Alberta.

##### **B. Public Health:**

- i. We will encourage health care practitioners to emphasize wellness, self reliance and conservation through preventative approaches to the practice of medicine (2003).
- ii. We will mandate a prevention agency to conduct education campaigns on how to be healthy and provide incentives for people to be healthy.
- iii. We will provide health education as part of school curriculum.
- iv. First Aid will become part of the junior high and high school curriculum.

##### **C. Health Care Delivery:**

- i. We will maintain a high quality public health care system providing essential health care for all Albertans, and preclude any privatization of the health care system.
- ii. We will develop a decentralized model for health care service delivery, assuring local accountability and community participation.
- iii. GPA will provide more points of access to the health care system by following a decentralized model with more, smaller facilities.
- iv. We will encourage dialogue among health care consumers and providers about the allocation of health care resources.
- v. We will give a higher priority to investment in appropriate low-technology interventions that serve large numbers of people rather than expensive, high-risk, high-technology methods which benefit few.
- vi. We will have clinic type facilities opened in conjunction with public school buildings. These school clinics will treat members of the public and provide teaching for students.
- vii. We will assess hospital service requirements throughout the province. Small, underutilized hospitals could be converted to wellness centres serving local communities.
- viii. We will increase the amount of hospice space available in Alberta.
- ix. We will encourage the prescription of generic drugs by doctors.

##### **D. Complementary and Alternative Health Care:**

- i. We will support the inclusion of alternative methods of health care in existing facilities.
- ii. We will support midwives and provide funding under public health care for this service.
- iii. We will provide funding for patients who wish to use approved alternative care.
- iv. We will create processes for assessing alternative medicine in conjunction with industry boards.



**E Environmental Health**

1. We will promote the elimination of pollutants from the environment as a positive instrument of health care.
2. We will provide funding to determine the effects of low level exposure to toxic chemicals, on their own and in combination with other substances.

**F Hydrogen Sulphide:**

- i. We will commission a study on effects on health of low level H<sub>2</sub>S, and enact legislation based on those results.
- ii. We will ensure that Emergency Planning Zones reflect realistic distances, based on dispersion rates of H<sub>2</sub>S.
- iii. We will ensure that all legislation pertaining to sour gas exposure be integrated rather than the current system which stretches across several departments.
- iv. We will ensure that the EUB have the resources and legislative authority to safeguard the health of Albertans with regards to sour gas emissions.

**G Herbicides and Pesticides:**

- i. We will mandate and enforce accurate labelling of pesticides and herbicides.
- ii. We will provide incentives to reduce the use of pesticides, as well as provide disincentives for their use.
- iii. We will minimize the amount and toxicity of pesticides used in Alberta.
- iv. We will ban the use of pesticides for cosmetic use.
- v. We will phase out the use of toxic pesticides on farmland.
- vi. The phasing out of toxic pesticides on farmland will coincide with a community development plan to transition the farming economy.
- vii. We will advocate and encourage the use of less toxic alternatives for public health (e.g. management of West Nile virus and other mosquito and tick born pathogens)

**H Home and workplace safety:**

- i. We will monitor and fine or suspend companies which fail to comply with accepted safety standards.
- ii. We will change building codes to ensure adequate ventilation, to minimize exposure to aerosolized toxins in work and public buildings.
- iii. We will change building codes to minimize the amount of toxic emitting and flammable building materials permitted in newly built houses and buildings. (e.g. MDF and glues)
- iv. We will offer financial incentives to retrofit existing homes and businesses to improve air quality.
- v. We will review use of chemicals or materials in manufacturing processes which pose unsafe exposure levels to workers or consumers, or which may be released into nature. This includes the review of all pesticides, herbicides, hormones, antibiotics and other pharmaceuticals, as well as other detrimental toxic materials.
- vi. We will increase the minimum length of vacation to 3 weeks.

**I Whistle Blower**

We will provide an anonymous whistle-blower line to report releases of toxic chemicals and other violations of public safety regulations.

**B. Transportation**

**C I General**

1. We will democratize regional district transportation governance through the direct election of the regional public transit boards.

2. We will develop public education programs to encourage use of public transit.
3. We will ensure accessibility to public transportation for persons with disabilities.
4. We will meet the underlying premise of the Kyoto Protocol that calls for the decrease in greenhouse gas emissions to 6% below 1990 levels.
5. We will meet or exceed international standards for pollution control of all transportation modalities.
6. We will reward organizations that use or implement environmentally friendly modes of transportation such as public transit, bicycles, hybrid vehicles, car sharing.
7. We will use education and incentives to achieve the goals of a transportation system in Alberta that leads to decreasing energy use and the impact on the Alberta environment.
8. We will set up and fund for the long term, transportation chairs in research at publicly funded Universities, SAIT and NAIT with the express intent of making Alberta a centre of excellence in the world for the development of environmentally friendly modes of transportation. These include public transit, bicycles, hybrid vehicles, and car sharing.

## **C.II. Transportation “metrics”**

1. We will compare the real cost of transportation alternatives using full cost accounting. These comparisons will be used to direct government decisions.

## **C. III. Automobiles and Trucks**

1. We will introduce an emissions and fuel efficiency inspection of all vehicles similar to that used in California as of 2006.
2. We will base vehicle registration rates on emissions standards, vehicle weights, engine displacements, and annual mileage. People who impact the environment less will pay lower rates.
3. The Green Party of Alberta will also gradually introduce differential registration rates based on the availability of green alternatives.
4. Registration will require testing and meeting of California emissions standards.
5. We will institute a publicly administered insurance program to cover Public Liability and Damage (PLPD) as is currently functioning in Quebec. The fees would be collected at the fuelling station added as cents per litre to the price of the gas. Everyone in Alberta with gas in the tank would be covered. Insurance for collision and comprehensive would remain unchanged.
6. We would set-up a committee to review the books of vehicle insurance companies operating in Alberta. If excessive profits were recorded the companies would be ordered to rebate the amounts.

## **C.IV. Rail**

*Preamble* As the price of oil increases and the price of steel decreases it becomes more and more important for municipalities and provinces to regard the implementation of railways in new light. Canada is a nation that was built on the efficiency and reliability of railways. Use of rail transit is safer than driving in many of the seasonal conditions Canada has to offer.

1. We will determine and promote the most appropriate method to build an Edmonton–Calgary high speed rail line.



2. We will implement regular affordable mass transit between all cities in the province of Alberta and this service will be linked to mass transit within cities. This will be aimed at reducing overall fossil fuel usage.

3 We will work to ensure that inter-city mass transit will accommodate bicycles.

4. We will research the use of current rail lines for interurban transport with a combination of buses being used on the rails, as hybrid rail/road bus.

#### C.V. Public Transit

1. We will reduce public transit fees with an eventual goal of free public transit within all municipalities.
2. We will implement a tax deduction for all companies that reduce the fossil fuel consumption of their employees' work related transportation.
3. We will ensure that all high employment areas will be serviced by efficient public transit.
4. We will ensure that all public transit buses will accommodate bicycles.
5. We will ensure that public transport connects all city airports to the urban transit system in the timeliest way possible.

#### C.V.I Bicycles / Pedestrians

1. We will support the improvement and development of the bicycle pathway infrastructure both for bicycle commuters and recreational cyclists.

2. We will create separated bicycle paths parallel to major intercity and interregional transportation routes.

3. We will support the improvement of bike and ride facilities. An example of such an initiative would be secure bicycle parking at mass transit stops.

#### C.VII. Urban Transportation Strategies

1. We will reduce taxes on mixed use buildings as they encourage people to shop and engage in recreation where they live.
2. We will allow for changes in the Municipal Government Act to ensure zoning that will allow the development of mixed use properties.
3. We will improve linkages for passengers connecting between different mass transit alternatives by ensuring frequent, reliable connections and interconnecting ticketing systems.
4. We will provide incentives for cities to increase housing density and decrease urban sprawl.

#### C.VIII. Rural Transportation Strategies

1. We will establish minimum public transport standards for the entire province to ensure reasonable access of all Albertans to public transport within each region.

#### C.IX. Research

1. We will fund research on alternative vehicles and greener fuel sources.
2. We will fund research on the most cost efficient and non-polluting methods of public transit between the major population centers.

### **C. X. Funding**

1. We will dedicate a portion of gas tax revenues will be dedicated to significantly improving public transit systems within and between regions.
2. Funding will favour the improvement of cycling, pedestrian and public transit infrastructure and facilities.  
Improved mass transit can reduce the need for expensive roads and highway infrastructure.
3. We will develop mass transit to reduce the cost of roads and highways. We will also link the expenditures for mass transit to savings on roads and highways.

### **C. Education**

#### **A Life long learning**

- i. We will encourage life-long learning.
- ii. We will encourage life-long participation in both academic and non-academic activities. This will involve a diversity of groupings for learning, such as mixed-age classes, home schooling, and self-directed learning.

#### **B Community Participation :**

- i. We will ensure that schools form a focal point in the community.

#### **C Curriculum:**

- i. We will encourage the creation of an educational curriculum that recognizes the importance of basic skills. It should also include the development of ecological awareness, and respect for diversity, equity, social justice, non-violence and democratic decision-making.
- ii. The following methods of learning will be investigated:
  - a. mixed aged classes to allow more people to attend
  - b. a module type schools program so that students may finish various sections at different times
  - c. evening and weekend classes at junior and senior high school
- iii. We will provide a seniors' honorarium for schools to have qualified elders as part time teachers, guides, mentors, coaches and volunteers.

#### **D Finances :**

- i. We will move to eliminate the influence of business interests in our education system.
- ii. We will implement policies, which ensure that the same funding rate per student applies throughout the province, with extra funding for programs which address special needs programs.
- iii. We will enable Albertans to attend high school classes free of tuition regardless of age.
- iv. We will work towards a situation where post-secondary tuition will be free for Albertans.
- v. We will make having the lowest tuition fees in Canada a priority.
- vi. We will provide more work experience programs and more financial support for career and technology and option programs in schools.
- vii. We will begin a program which offers education incentives to anyone training in desired areas in exchange for a commitment to work in remote or rural communities for a prescribed length of time.
- viii. We will set in motion an active plan to reduce school bussing times.
  - a. The above plan will include a program of reporting on bussing distances and the government's progress in reducing them.
  - b. The above plan will include more funding to open and sustain rural schools.

## **D First Peoples Issues**

*Preamble:* Native Issues - Native peoples have an inherent right to preserve their traditional values and cultural heritage, and must be supported in developing their own economic, social and education systems.

1. We will work with Native groups to achieve a beneficial alliance and understanding.
2. We would advocate
  - i the right to self determination for First Peoples of Canada and we will advocate the same with the Federal Government”
  - ii We will support and advocate for the rapid and equitable settlement of First Nations’ land claims in Alberta
3. We acknowledge that we have much to learn from Native Peoples both ecologically and spiritually, and we will solicit their wisdom on these issues.
4. We will help persons who have abuse claims against residential schools by expediting their cases through the courts in order to reach resolutions as quickly as possible.
5. We will investigate programs to support aboriginal languages as first-class languages in government programs.
6. We will recognize existing privileges of the Métis and First Nations’ people.

## **F Culture and Language Issues**

*Preamble:* Culture and language Issues - It is the right of all Albertans to preserve and practice their culture providing that it does not infringe upon the individual rights of others to an unreasonable extent. We recognize that there are areas where collective rights and individual rights may clash and we will work towards finding equitable solutions.

1. We recognize French as an official language of Canada and support the provision of services in French in areas where the number of francophone warrants it.
2. We support the preservation of areas with special cultural significance, such as archaeological sites, historic buildings, and sacred Native lands.

## **G Social Equity**

*Preamble:* Social Equity - Recognizing our interdependence within society, we have an ethical responsibility to create a community which guarantees the well-being of all people. This includes the encouragement of self-determination by education and employment and the discouragement of oppression of any kind. All life is vulnerable to the actions of human beings therefore we have an obligation to treat all living creatures humanely and with respect.

1. We will actively encourage the creation of a financial support program which recognises the right of all people to an acceptable quality of life, which gives only to those in need, and which concentrates all available resources into one efficient system.
2. We will implement pay equity. Women, minorities and the disabled have the right to equal pay for equal work.
3. We support consolidation of the delivery of all social programs into a single agency focusing on regional community centres.
4. We will work with communities to develop and provide low-cost housing alternatives.
5. We will equalize tax treatment for families regardless of whether one or both parents are working.
6. We will expand the definition of family for the purpose of provincial benefits and tax treatment to include same-sex relationships.

## **H. Whistle Blowing**

1. We will add to the auditor general's duties to investigate suspected environmental and safety violations.
2. We will provide protection against wrongful dismissal and workplace intimidation for people who report safety and environmental violations in good faith.
3. We will create a witness protection program to protect these people and their families, if necessary.
4. We will ensure full public disclosure of whistle blowing cases in a timely manner when the claim is settled.

## **I. Child Welfare**

1. We will allocate appropriate resources to the Child Welfare System.
2. We will implement whistle-blower protection in the Child Welfare Department.
3. We will have the care of persons entrusted to the Province benefit from the independent overseer like the Auditor General.
4. We will remove the Office of the Children's Advocate from Children's Services. The Children's Advocate will become an officer of the legislature in a relationship similar to that of the Auditor General or Provincial Ombudsman.

## **J. Seniors**

The Green Party of Alberta recognizes that seniors have a common desire to maintain their independence that is integral to their sense of well being and overall health. To maintain their independence they need access to a wide array of community services and support. The 1992-93 budget cuts took away a lot of senior citizens benefits. Senior citizens have worked hard to build our society and deserve to be given some assistance in their latter years. Enabling seniors to increase their contribution to their communities will result in greater well being and health of seniors and a more cohesive and intergenerational friendly community. Seniors have a number of unique needs because of their advanced age.

1. We will support seniors and other older adults playing an active role in creating and supporting social and educational programs in cooperation with government, businesses and community groups.

In other parts of this document we have already provided for many of the things that have been taken away.

See free transit

See Energy low interest loans for house improvement

See health care additional hospital stays.

2. We will provide funding and support for a home care program that allows for more effective interaction between family doctors, home care workers, other community agencies and the senior clients they serve.
3. We will provide funding for family care workers in hospitals to help seniors move through the hospital environment with less stress and confusion.
4. We will provide support as part of the graduated welfare program to people who have to quit their job to care for an elderly person.

5. We will would fund family care workers to facilitate transition to home based services.
6. We will fund additional hospice beds to ensure that all Albertans can die with dignity and without undue pain.
7. We will ensure affordable housing adjacent to hospitals so that patients' friends and relatives can afford to visit.
8. We will fund a guardians' commission to investigate and enforce the regulations of the Persons in Care act to protect the integrity and dignity of people who are living in care facilities.
9. We will ensure an adequate number of high quality, affordable, long-term care beds in Alberta.
10. We will ensure adequate, high quality seniors care facilities
- 10.1 We will also ensure that seniors' care facilities are environmentally sound and integrated in the community.
11. We will to maximize residents' health and well being, and provide adequate funding to ensure acceptable patient/staff ratios and quality of care in seniors' care facilities.

The following commitments are designed to allow seniors who wish to remain in their homes longer. We believe that seniors who wish to remain in their homes should be given the support to do so.

12. We will institute rebates for house repairs to seniors on low income who could not otherwise afford it. The rebates will be larger if environmentally friendly technology is added to the house.
13. We will institute funding for low cost home maintenance (eg. Lawn cutting, snow shovelling) to enable seniors to remain in their homes.

## **IV. Government**

### **A. Government Reform**

*Preamble:* Government Reform - Governments must develop systems which provide all citizens with the opportunity to have input into the decisions which affect their lives. We will expect Albertans to expend the time and effort required for participating in community decision making processes.

1. We will create an Independent Assembly of Albertans which will examine and make recommendations on all processes involved in provincial and municipal government. Priority would be given to the following issues:
  - i. Alternative methods of electing our representatives in government, for example, proportional representation;
  - ii. Alternative methods of government which would encourage cooperation between political parties instead of the present adversarial relationships;
  - iii. The right of recall of MLA's;
  - iv. We will support an initiative similar to the Citizens' Assembly in B.C., to implement electoral change;
  - v. We will legislate that employers allow persons who wish to run as candidates to take the campaign period plus one day off without pay.
2. We will ensure that Freedom of Information legislation is extended to all government information, and access is made affordable.
3. We will ensure that all elected representatives participate in the process of government by allowing free votes in most circumstances.
4. We will move to a fixed four-year term for Provincial Governments and we will mandate at least two sittings of the legislature per year.
5. We will establish an independent process for determining current MLAs salaries, benefits and eligible expenses, and for making recommendations for fair treatment of previous MLAs.
6. We will establish an independent process for defining new electoral boundaries. Consideration will be given to bioregional differences, and only a 10% variance in population will be permitted.
7. We will reform the regulations for financial contributions to political parties and electoral campaigns so that only individuals who are qualified to vote may donate.
8. We will mandate that all political party advertising will be paid for by the political party itself.
9. We will establish an independent process for appointing the members of regulatory boards.
10. We will support a funding program for intervener groups at public hearings and commissions.
11. We will increase the power of municipalities to make decisions affecting their jurisdictions, and promote a greater delegation of municipal decision making to local communities.

### **B. Electoral Reform**

**Legislature:** Currently the provincial legislature sits for 42 – 44 days per year. By comparison the Ontario legislature met for 104 days in 2004 and the federal government met for over 100 days. We feel that more days of meeting will increase the probability that issues are fully debated with adequate time for question period to allow opposition members to bring forth issues.

1. We will ensure that the provincial legislature will sit for a minimum of 90 days.

Currently many backbenchers' skills and expertise are underutilized. In keeping with Green Party values of decentralized government and grass roots democracy, we will make structural changes to enable individual MLAs to represent the views of their constituents.

2. All Green Party candidates will choose a portfolio thereby forming a shadow cabinet. Each portfolio will involve multiple candidates, enabling the participation of all candidates whether or not elected. Whether or not elected this portfolio committee will maintain knowledge about an area of policy and will support the elected Green MLA's. These candidates/MLAs will work as a team, supporting each other in policy development and decision making and can if necessary substitute for each other in public process. All other parties will be encouraged to do the same.

3. We will ensure all legislature resources including research funding will be allocated based on popular vote rather than seat allocation in the legislature.

4. We will ensure that seats on legislative committees will be allocated based on popular vote rather than elected seats. Non elected MLA candidates may be appointed by their parties to serve on legislative committees if necessary.

The current voting method in the provincial legislature is confusing to the general public.

5. The parliamentary procedure will be modified to follow our modified Bonzer method.

### **Our Bonzer method:**

The resolution / Bill would be read to the legislature. There would be at least one speaker from each party allowed on the resolution or Bill. A vote would be called using Red, Green and Yellow cards. This vote would not ever be used as a vote of confidence. If the Bill has more than 66% of the voting legislature in agreement or opposition it would pass or fail. If it did not it would go to workshop.

Red Card- I oppose this Bill

Yellow Card – I do not understand, or wish changes to this Bill

Green Card – I support this Bill.

Members of the legislature representing differing views are chosen to go into a workshop and build a consensus. Other members of the legislature may join the committee as they see fit. The member who introduced the bill would approve any changes to the Bill.

The Bill is then brought back to the legislature for a second reading. If this vote does not produce a clear 66% pass or fail, then it is returned to workshop.

At the third and final reading, only questions for clarity are allowed. Each Party would be entitled to 2 questions for clarity. The vote is then for or against and is a Pass / Fail. 50 percent plus 1 is acceptable for this vote and if applicable confidence would be in effect.