

Green Party of Manitoba – Platform 2007
Rethinking Progress: Well-Being NOT Growth

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Green Party of Manitoba is committed to creating an ecologically sustainable, socially just, and economically secure society. Our 2007 election platform is based on ecological literacy (learning from Nature) as Nature has sustained itself for billions of years. Five policy areas stem from our central focus on ecological literacy: Rebuilding Democracy, Creating Cooperative Communities, Protecting Living Systems (including public institutions like health care and education), having a Sustainable Energy Future, and Bringing the Economy Home (localization and diversification of production).

Ecological Literacy: Learning from Nature to Build a Sustainable Society

Nature has sustained itself for billions of years, we can learn how it has done this and mimic or copy it when designing our own human systems (economic, political, and social) so they too are resilient and sustainable. Manitoba Greens will work to:

- Make ecological literacy a core component of all public education, e.g., through programs such as “rethinking school lunch”, and “edible school yards” (see www.ecoliteracy.org)
- Create an ecological cabinet structure so that the connections between different policy areas are not lost by departmental “drawers” effect (separating economy and environment, for example)

Rebuilding Democracy: From the Grassroots

Voter turnouts are low (53% in 2003 provincial election, 38% in 2006 Winnipeg election) and our electoral system (first-past the post) was designed for only two parties when we now have six. We need proportional representation (like most modern democracies have) and other forms of participation that go beyond voting, such as citizens’ assemblies. Manitoba Greens will work to:

- Start a process of voting system reform using a Citizens’ Assembly (see www.citizensassembly.bc.ca)
- Ensure that all Manitobans are able to participate in democratic processes through a Basic Income (BI) to provide for all basic needs and ensure economic democracy

Creating Cooperative Communities

Manitoba has great communities, but right now they are under threat from over-work, under-funded community centres, rising crime and increasing inequality. It is time to overhaul our social policy framework to ensure that all Manitobans are provided with Basic Income, a living wage, and a justice system that focuses on healing and learning and involves the community in finding solutions to the causes of crime, thus going beyond simply putting more police on the streets and people in jail. Manitoba Greens will work to:

- Ensure our local community centres are properly funded and maintained, not abandoned for distant mega-community centres
- Implement restorative justice in Manitoba
- Provide a living wage and basic income for all Manitobans to ensure poverty is eliminated

Protecting Living Systems

We cannot continue to damage our air, water, land, and public health by allowing unsustainable projects, products, and technologies to be released into our living systems. We must ensure that the living systems we are dependant on: forests, water, air, etc. are protected through legislation and independent auditing of government policy- and decision-making that looks out for future generations. Manitoba Greens will work to:

- Establish a provincial "Sustainability Auditor" to audit all budgets, legislation, and departments for their effects on living systems and future generations
- Implement the precautionary principle and ban genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in agriculture and work to reduce and eliminate toxic substances in our food, air, water, and consumer products.

Bringing the Economy Home

An export-oriented and growth-driven economy may sound good in theory, but it is not sustainable in the long-term as it relies on infinite supplies of energy and the ability of our Earth to absorb the impacts of their use. Such an export and trade oriented system reduces our economic diversity and leaves Manitoba reliant on a few industries leaving us vulnerable to market changes. Moreover, the lack of participation in economic decision-making leaves many Manitobans feeling alienated and at the mercy of the economy. Therefore, Manitoba Greens advocate:

- Localizing the production of goods and services used in Manitoba, which will diversify our economic base, reduce economic and ecological costs of transportation, and ensure greater resilience and stability in the face of global changes or shocks (e.g., abrupt climate change)
- Developing a participatory economy involving province-wide goal-setting process, bottom-up, community-based budgeting, and reform of the Premier's Economic Advisory Council to be more representative of Manitoba

Sustainable Energy Future: The Soft Path to Energy Security

- Refocus energy policy in Manitoba from finding new sources of energy (hard path) to controlling and increasing efficiency of our use of energy (soft path)
- Moratorium on hydroelectric development until a single cumulative environmental assessment of all hydroelectric dams and river diversions is completed
- Renaming Manitoba Hydro as "Manitoba Energy" with a new focus on the soft path (demand-side management)
- Fossil-fuel independence commission to get our homes and workplaces off of natural gas, which will be completely gone across Canada in ~90 years according to the Canadian Gas Association's 2005 "Natural Gas Markets Supply Update"