

New Brunswick Green Party 2010 Election Platform

IT'S ABOUT THE NEXT GENERATION.

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It's about the next generation.

As we enter the second decade of the 21st century, New Brunswick is facing unprecedented challenges. The need to reconcile our relationships with each other and with the Earth which sustains all life has never been more urgent. The opportunity to change direction in our politics, our economics and our communities has never been so apparent.

The Green Party was formed to respond to these challenges and is positioned to seize the opportunities they present. We are honest about the reality New Brunswick is facing. We are not stuck in the past, believing that doing the same things over and over will produce different results. Nor are we idealistic dreamers promoting ideas that won't work in today's society.

People worldwide are embracing new thinking and new ways of doing things to address the growing problems of economic injustice, insecurity, ecological decline and climate change. New Brunswick must not be left behind. This province has the talent, the values, and the means to change. The Green Party will provide the political leadership to make that change happen.

The Green Party will bring New Brunswick into the 21st century. Ours is a vision of sustainability – communities that provide fulfilling lives for everyone, and an economy that works with, not against, the Earth and protects our grandchildren's natural inheritance.

In a sustainable New Brunswick, a lot of things will look different than they do today: the communities we live in; how and where our food is produced; how we will take care of the most vulnerable; how we move ourselves around and power our homes, businesses and public buildings; how we will provide meaningful livelihoods; and what we do in our leisure time.

Central to this vision is the role citizens will play in getting us there. Active and meaningful participation in rebuilding democracy will be the cornerstone of the transition to a sustainable future.

This election platform, our party's first, outlines this vision and the steps a Green government would take towards achieving it. The Green Party's defining issue is the future and the legacy we will leave for our children. We shape our future by the choices we make today.

If we want a viable, healthy future for our children, then we have to start moving in that direction. Otherwise, the destination will elude us.

Take that first step on September 27. Choose the future. Vote Green.



How this Platform Came About

Unlike other parties that worry about polls and newspaper headlines, Green policy is rooted in a set of principles that define who we are and what we stand for.

Our Charter of Principles was adopted by members at our founding convention in November 2008. You can read the full Charter on our website: www.gogreennb.ca. The six principles are:

- Living within our ecological means
- Local self-reliance
- Social justice and equity
- Participatory democracy
- Self-determination and citizenship
- Non-violence

Over the past year, we have held three members' meetings to discuss and adopt policies that relate to each of our principles. Our full policy document, **Vision: A Green New Brunswick** can also be found on the website.

This platform comes directly from member-approved policies. It represents the essential first steps that a Green government would take to put New Brunswick on the path towards sustainability. Where others see our small population and economy as a liability, it is precisely because of our size that we have the potential to make real change. The bigger the ship, the harder it is to turn around.

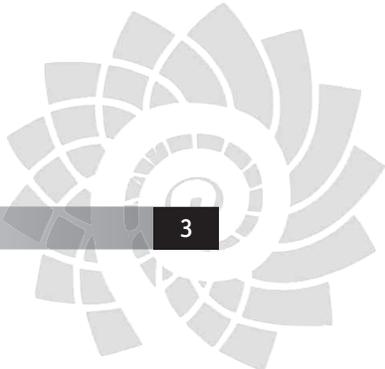
Getting to a Sustainable Future

This platform contains seven themes or planks which together lay the foundation for a New Brunswick where our children and communities will thrive. In the following pages, we describe each theme.

Building a sustainable future will take the active participation of all New Brunswickers. The Green Party's contribution is to be the political voice for that future. Please join us in this essential work.

Platform Themes and Highlights

Real Democracy: We will end media concentration and make MLAs more accountable. Every vote will count with proportional representation.	Page 4
People and Families First: We will invest directly in education, debt relief for students, healthy lifestyles, community health centres, senior care, and in providing dignified living conditions for all.	Page 6
Self-Reliant Communities: We will give communities more control over local natural resources, development decisions and revenue generation. We will invest in public transportation and social enterprise.	Page 14
Building a Culture of Sustainability: We will reduce pollution and discourage wasteful consumption. We will restore and protect habitats, and establish the legal right of all New Brunswickers to a safe environment.	Page 17
A Green Economy: We will revive family farms and support community forests, small businesses and co-ops. We will put traditional industries on a sustainable footing.	Page 21
Energy Self-Reliance: We will invest in energy efficiency and locally-owned renewable energy, ensure natural gas development benefits New Brunswickers, and make NB Power accountable to the people.	Page 26
Living within Our Financial Means: We will roll back Liberal tax cuts on high incomes and corporate profits, reform property tax assessments, toll the Trans-Canada Highway, increase royalties on natural resource extraction, and tax pollution.	Page 29



Theme One: Building a Real Democracy

A healthy democracy is one where people have meaningful opportunities to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. In recent years it has become clear that democracy in New Brunswick is suffering. First, citizens have had to launch several major campaigns to force the government to back away from unpopular decisions. Second, there is growing dissatisfaction with the first-past-the-post electoral system which results in a Legislature which is unrepresentative of the diverse political views held by New Brunswickers. Third, the Irving companies which dominate the economy also own most of the print media in the province. Fourth, First Nations peoples continue to be marginalized and their treaties ignored. These conditions breed cynicism, a distrust of politics and an unwillingness to participate.

The Green Party was formed by people who are not prepared to give up on our democratic institutions as the primary vehicle for giving voice to and pursuing the common good.

A Green government would:

Priority 1: Citizen Engagement and Government Accountability

- Prohibit 'floor crossing' by MLAs between elections, requiring them to sit as independent members until an election is held.
- Create an *Office of Democratic Renewal* reporting to the Legislative Assembly with a mandate to encourage civic participation and to make sure government is accountable to citizens. This Office would (a) Issue rules for MLAs to follow regarding best practices for constituency communications, including requiring regular town hall meetings to be held in every riding; (b) Appoint Citizen Assemblies to deliberate on major new policy initiatives and provide feedback on public decision-making; (c) Provide rules for and oversight of citizen referenda on major decision-making; (d) Enforce a legislated Code of Conduct for MLAs including investigating citizen complaints, and providing remedies including the possibility of recall; (e) Issue an annual report to the Legislature on the performance of MLAs and the governing party in more fully engaging the public in the decision-making process.
- Reform the *Right to Information Act* to empower the Ombudsman to order rather than just recommend the release of information; to dramatically narrow the criteria by which information could be withheld; and to give the RTI Act an override on all other legislation that might restrict information access.
- Protect whistleblowers.
- Protect citizens against malicious lawsuits intended to discourage public activism (SLAPP suits).

Priority 2: Electoral and Media Reform

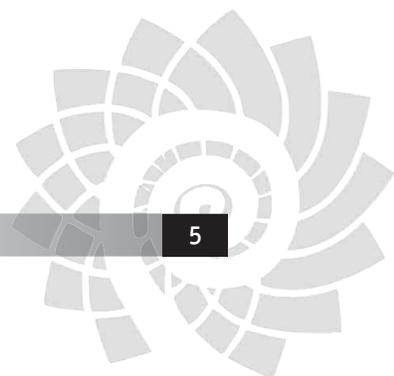
- ☑ Move towards a proportional representation electoral system whereby seats in the Legislature reflects more closely the popular vote. This would be based on the recommendations of the Commission on Legislative Democracy established by former Premier Lord and the Law Commission of Canada. Governments of all European countries except Great Britain are elected through a proportional representation system.
- ☑ Legislate a cap on the concentration of corporate media ownership within each news medium.
- ☑ Reform political financing rules to gradually reduce the maximum allowable donation from private sources while increasing the public financing of political parties. This will prevent undue influence of private interests on the political process.

Priority 3: Transparency and Standards of Behaviour

- ☑ Require a three-year waiting period before retired MLAs or civil servants can work as lobbyists.
- ☑ Establish a lobbyist registry and require lobbyists to divulge any contribution – either financial or in-kind – to any candidate, elected official, political staff person, political appointee or civil servant.

Priority 4: Right Relations with First Nations People

- ☑ Create a forum in which aboriginal and non-aboriginal people of NB come together to explore how the Peace and Friendship Treaties first signed with the British and now recognized in Canada's Constitution can be respected in our province.



Theme Two: Putting People and Families First

Democracy does not work and communities cannot thrive if many citizens do not have the means or the tools to fully participate. Rather than providing tax cuts for corporations and the well-to-do, the Green Party believes that direct investment in our people is the best way to move New Brunswick forward. When we have a healthy, well-educated and engaged population, New Brunswickers themselves will create the conditions for personal and collective success.

We are far from this goal. New Brunswickers are the most unhealthy in Canada. Twenty percent of our children live in poverty. Functional illiteracy prevents many people from contributing to their full potential. First Nations communities are marginalized with less access to services than the rest of the population. The roots of these problems run deep and solutions to them are complex, requiring long term political commitments, legislative and bureaucratic reform, and new, direct investments in people and public services.

The most responsible way forward is to set objectives for improvements in key areas over time and work towards those objectives on a committed, determined schedule. Many parties have made similar commitments but when elected they have put the poverty and illiteracy files at the bottom of the pile. There is never enough money left at the end of the day to do more than tinker at the margins. Social assistance rates, for example, are the lowest in Atlantic Canada and as much as 50 percent below the poverty line as determined by Statistics Canada.

The Green Party will put people and families first. Getting people out of poverty will be our first priority for new spending. We believe the dividends on this commitment will be enormous.

Priority 1: Support for Aboriginal Peoples and Cultures

The Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy peoples are the most marginalized in New Brunswick. This is because their cultures which provide structure, identity and support for their people have been subject to nearly two centuries of policies deliberately designed to undermine those cultures. The issues facing aboriginal peoples are complex and will take generations to resolve. There are measures, however, that the New Brunswick government can take to immediately improve living conditions for First Nations children and assist in the process of cultural revival.

A Green government would:

- Provide native language immersion education for First Nations children for at least the first 8 years of school, phased in one year at a time, and support immersion teacher training to properly deliver this program.

- Implement the recommendations of the Ombudsman and Child and Youth Advocate Bernard Richard regarding the child welfare system on First Nations.
- Pressure the federal government to ensure clean water supplies and proper housing on reserves in New Brunswick.

Priority 2: Providing a dignified income to everyone

Based on the 2006 Census, 100,740 NB citizens were living below the poverty line. Of the 93,000 single people in NB, 49.7% earned less than \$20,000 a year. Close to 45% of single mothers and 11% of seniors are living in poverty. In April 2009, there were 39,097 social assistance recipients. Eleven percent of food bank users have a job. In 2005, the average income of 10% of the richest families with children was \$121,642 while the average income of the poorest 10% of families was only \$7,851 (Source: Common Front for Social Justice). These statistics are unacceptable in a wealthy country like Canada. Everyone should have an income sufficient to allow them to live in dignity.

Green parties globally have long advocated for a guaranteed annual income (GAI), sometimes called a Basic Income Guarantee. The Green Party of Canada and the New Brunswick Green Party have endorsed the GAI concept. We realize, however, that national cooperation is required to fully implement such an idea. A campaign to achieve this is being led by the Canada without Poverty Advocacy Network. In the meantime, we can take steps to move us towards that goal to the extent that provincial jurisdiction allows.

With rare exceptions, people are on social assistance because they have to be. Most need only temporary help to get out of a bad situation. Others have no choice but to depend on social assistance for their ongoing sustenance. It is hypocritical and unethical for a government to profess a commitment to reducing poverty while setting social welfare rates well below the poverty line. The benefits of putting more money into the hands of those who need it most will be realized in healthier lifestyles, better school performance, reduced demand on the health and justice systems, a greater sense of dignity and personal autonomy, and for those who are able, a faster transition to the workforce.

A Green government would:

- Immediately raise social assistance rates to match those of Newfoundland and Labrador, the jurisdiction with the highest rates in Atlantic Canada.
- From there, set an objective of moving the social assistance rates upwards until they reach the low income cut-off (LICO) for New Brunswick as established by Statistics Canada. The rate would be adjusted as Statistics Canada adjusts the LICO.



- ☑ As the social assistance rates rise to meet the LICO, review the piecemeal programs designed to supplement the currently low assistance rates to determine which could be eliminated without harm to recipients.
- ☑ Eliminate barriers that keep people from entering the workforce such as clawbacks on earned income below \$20,000 and premature withdrawal of prescription drug benefits.
- ☑ Engage professional social workers as the designers and implementers of first-point-of-contact assessment and referral systems for people seeking assistance.
- ☑ Develop a comprehensive social housing program which includes cooperative and non-profit community housing.

A segment of the workforce can be classified as the “working poor.” A combination of not enough hours and low minimum wage rates results in take-home pay below the poverty line. As a matter of principle, a caring society must ensure that any person who works full time hours does not earn below the Low Income Cut-Off.

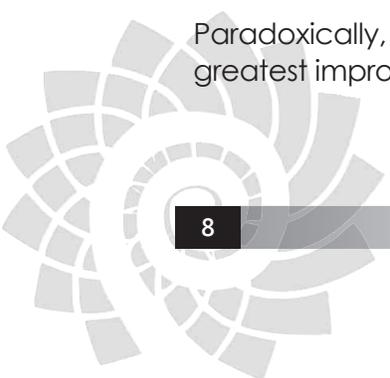
A Green government would:

- ☑ Adopt the concept of a “livable wage” calculated using reliable data on family expenses in our region and taking into consideration government transfers and deductions as the basis on which the legal minimum wage is calculated. This would be phased in over time and indexed to the cost of living.
- ☑ In cooperation with the small business sector, develop measures to ensure that small businesses can remain viable while paying higher wages, based on the principle that society as a whole should support this important sector rather than low-waged individual workers.
- ☑ Legislate pay equity in the private sector.

Priority 3: Healthy People and Compassionate Care

New Brunswickers are among the least healthy of all Canadians. Twenty years ago, 25 percent of government operating expenditures went for health care; today it is 40 percent. At this rate of expansion, it could double to 80 percent in 20 years. Without immediate attention, health care costs will compromise the government’s ability to deal with other priorities such as literacy and education, social services and the environment.

Paradoxically, investments in these other areas, not health care, would generate the greatest improvement in population health and therefore reductions in health cost. The



direct cost of poverty to the New Brunswick health care system is estimated at over \$200 million annually (extrapolated from an Ontario study). While it would take a generation for investments in poverty reduction to translate into substantial health care savings, without that investment the cost of poverty will only grow.

According to Statistics Canada, obesity rates in New Brunswick are among the highest in Canada. A study funded by the Centre for Disease Control found that in the United States 9.1% of annual medical costs can be attributed to treating diseases caused by obesity, compared with 6.5% in 1998.

The occurrences of certain types of cancers in New Brunswick are among the highest in Canada. A Conservation Council of New Brunswick study found a strong association between these occurrences and exposures to air pollution and workplace chemicals. The Ontario Medical Association found that direct and indirect health care costs of air pollution in Ontario was equal to 24 percent of the 2005 provincial health care budget.

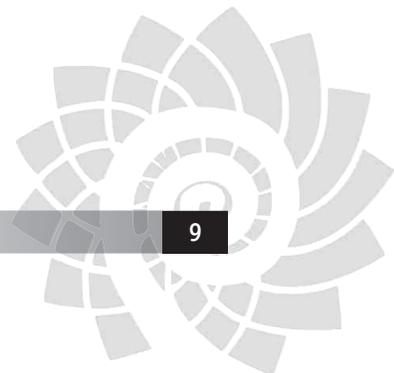
Clearly, having a healthy population requires long term investments in prevention.

Two other factors challenge our health care system. The first is a lack of accountability within health system management. This means there is little incentive to provide the most appropriate level of care to each patient in the most efficient way. The second is the assumption that the system always needs more health professionals and more technology, both of which increase costs. In fact, the number of doctors in New Brunswick relative to population is now at the national average, up from 68% 20 years ago. The current number of nurses per capita is one-third higher than the national average. Rather than constantly increasing the supply, we need to redesign the system so that everyone's medical needs can be met with existing resources.

There is no simple one-time solution to the growing costs of the health care system but we do not have to reinvent the wheel -- "best-practice" performance information is readily available. The right changes will improve population health, patient care, and keep costs from spiraling out of control.

A Green government would:

- Legislate accountability of the Health Minister, senior managers, Health Authority Boards and CEOs for the performance and financial management of the health system with penalties for underperformance including removal.
- Expand the mandate of the Ombudsman to receive and investigate medical/health complaints.



- ☑ Establish a province-wide network of community health care centres accessible to everyone. Centres would offer primary health care, lifestyles counseling and chronic disease management programs (e.g. diabetes, cardiovascular disease and respiratory diseases). They would have extended hours of operation thereby reducing the need for visits to hospital emergency departments and walk-in clinics. Centres would be staffed by family doctors, psychologists, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, midwives, dieticians, respiratory technologists, health educators, physio- and occupational therapists and pharmacists. Alternative health professionals such as naturopathic doctors would also be considered. This would eliminate the problem of people not having family doctors and allocate existing primary care resources in the most efficient manner.
- ☑ Expand home care services and increase wages for home caregivers to minimize hospitalization and nursing home admissions for those who can remain in their homes with assistance.
- ☑ Integrate regulated midwifery and birthing centres into the publicly funded health care system
- ☑ Allow women to choose the option of home birth and to choose their own birth attendants (at their own expense) without legal repercussions.
- ☑ Work with the College of Physicians and Surgeons to devise a plan to reduce over-prescribing of drugs such as painkillers, antibiotics and anti-depressants.
- ☑ Expand coverage of the catastrophic drug program and work towards a universal Pharmacare program as recommended by the Canadian Health Coalition and the Centre for Policy Alternatives.
- ☑ Invest in programs and infrastructure to improve lifestyle such as employee bike parking and fitness programs; K-12 physical education and outdoor education programs; municipal bike paths, parking stations and public bike access programs; and community-based healthy lifestyle clubs.
- ☑ Finance healthy lifestyle and school food programs with a surcharge on processed foods that have high salt, sugar or saturated/trans fats content, or excess packaging.
- ☑ Strengthen pollution regulations and phase-in a ban on industrial releases of cancer-causing substances and developmental toxins affecting hormone function and brain, motor and fetal development.

Priority 4: Early Support for Families

Providing support for families prevents problems from emerging, relieves the strain on limited family budgets and assures equal access to quality care and opportunities to all children.

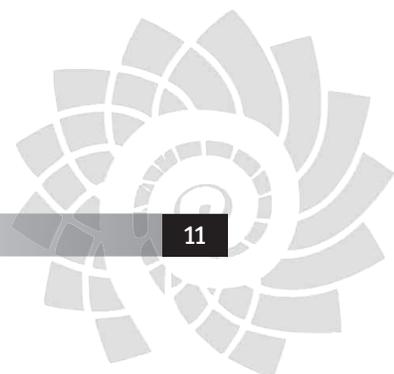
The Green Party would:

- Provide all new parents the opportunity to access a nurse/social worker/life coach to provide early and, if necessary, ongoing parenting support.
- Establish a non-profit, universally accessible quality childcare system and ensure childcare worker wages are commensurate with their training and responsibility.

Priority 5: Support for Seniors and Pensioners

Protection of seniors' rights as their ability to advocate for themselves diminishes is lacking. Too many people have no pension plan and cannot afford to invest in RRSPs, making them vulnerable in their senior years. Workers who have company pension plans are unprotected when the company goes bankrupt.

- Place scrutiny of long-term care facilities under the auspices of the Auditor-General and Ombudsman and make nursing home inspection reports public within 30 days.
- Increase the hours of care per day per nursing home resident and legislate minimum staffing requirements.
- Exempt low income seniors (less than \$28,000/year) from user fees.
- Establish a Seniors Bill of Rights that protects seniors from abuse and guarantees their access to appropriate services.
- Amend legislation to ensure workers' pensions are protected in bankruptcy proceedings.
- Work with the federal and other provincial governments to devise a national plan to ensure a livable income for all seniors, whether through pension reform or a guaranteed annual income.



Priority 6: Education

Education is a primary pathway out of poverty and the best means of developing self-confidence and an understanding of the responsibilities of citizenship. There is also compelling evidence that lack of exposure to nature is linked to the rise in obesity, attention disorders and depression in children. It is critical, then, that our public and post-secondary school systems are comprehensive and accessible to everyone.

A Green government would:

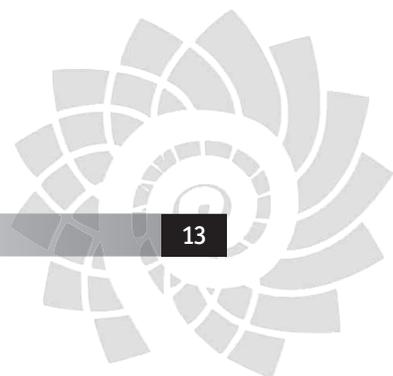
- Reinststate early French immersion programs in the primary level.
- Increase resources and training for teachers and teacher assistants to implement the provincial inclusion policy and provide alternatives for those children who are unable to function successfully in the regular classroom even with increased resources.
- Continually reduce maximum class size at all levels of public school to “best practice” standards. This should be done by retaining existing teaching staff and resources as school enrollments decrease.
- Expand the role of teachers in the development and evolution of educational policy and how it is implemented.
- Restore trades and other skills-based curricula in middle and high schools and expand apprenticeship and co-op placement programs.
- Promote opportunities for experiential learning after high school through programs such as Katimavik, Canada World Youth, and others.
- Introduce K-12 civic education curriculum and encourage civic learning through community service and participation in community and provincial politics.
- Introduce environmental citizenship and outdoor education curriculum, linking this with programs to promote healthy, active lifestyles.
- Introduce peace education studies to counter the culture of violence in the entertainment industry, address bullying, racism, homophobia, and violence against women, and promote peaceful conflict resolution.
- Expand school-based arts programs including visual, musical, folk and dramatic arts.
- Explore Quebec's CEGEP model as a possible way to provide a better transition between high school and post-secondary studies, with the goal of reducing the first year drop-out rate from universities and colleges and reducing the cost of post-secondary education.

- Support adult literacy programs province-wide using existing public education facilities and community colleges and remove any barriers to participation by the unemployed and those on social assistance.

Tuition-free post-secondary education is an ideal towards which any society should strive and is a valid long term goal. In the short term, we must reduce the cost of post-secondary education so young adults are not burdened with insupportable debt when they leave school.

A Green government would:

- Make all provincial student loans interest-free, including all outstanding loans.
- Develop a program whereby university or college graduates could have their student loans forgiven if they choose to work for a set period in a community service job in return for a minimum stipend.
- Apply the current \$26,000 cap on student debt (New Brunswick residents) to all loans retroactively and over time reduce the cap to \$20,000.
- Extend the grace period of six months from graduation to one year before repayment of student loans begins.
- Increase funding for bursaries.



Theme Three: Building Self-Reliant Communities

In recent years it has become increasingly difficult to live and work in communities outside the sphere of influence of our three largest cities. The demise of several large industries has thrown some towns into disarray. Many smaller mills have gone out of business. Other big mills remain open only because of government bail-outs. Thousands of private woodlot owners have lost a good portion of their income, and the number of viable farms continues to shrink.

In political and economic circles, rural communities are considered relics of the past. Depopulation is seen as inevitable. Rather than focus on rebuilding rural communities, the Liberal's Self-Sufficiency Agenda proposed building bigger highways so people could commute to city jobs.

The Green Party believes that our future depends on self-reliant rural communities adjacent to vibrant urban centres. Self-reliance is built on public assets controlled by and dedicated to the service of local communities. Healthy communities also require economies that are locally controlled, minimizing dependency on external forces (see Theme Four: Building a Green Economy).

Priority 1: Governance

New Brunswick communities must be in charge of their own destiny to the greatest extent possible. Currently, the provincial government has total control over sub-surface mineral rights, all Crown land and the scope of municipal powers. In unincorporated areas, local people have no decision-making autonomy and therefore no ability to determine their own priorities.

A Green government would:

- Give municipalities control over Crown land, intertidal zones and subsurface rights within their boundaries including the ability collect economic rents or royalties from any resource development.
- Encourage the formation of rural municipalities in unincorporated areas and provide them with various options for autonomous government so they can make their own decisions about land use and services and benefit from local resource development.
- Establish watershed councils whose responsibility is to control land use within the entire watershed so that it is not degraded. These councils would be made up of representatives of communities within the watershed as well as elected public members.

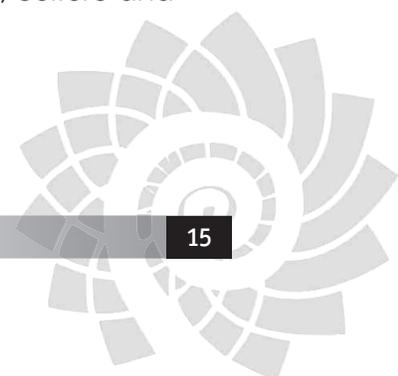
Priority 2: The Social Economy

Research in Canada has shown that the approach of Community Economic Development (CED) in which the community participates in both governance and implementation of the development has no substitute when it comes to long-term social and environmental improvements. Social enterprises figure prominently in CED. These include non-profit organizations, credit unions, farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture, and worker, consumer and energy co-operatives. Now comprising more than 12% of the Canadian economy, the social economy would expand even more with the right government policies. For example, Nova Scotia has attracted over \$34 million in local investment by providing tax incentives for citizens who invest in Community Economic Development Investment Funds (CEDIF).

The Enterprise Network in New Brunswick responsible for enabling economic development regionally, has little or no expertise with social enterprises and CED. The Co-operatives Act is woefully out of date. There are few opportunities for local people to invest in local economies, and the not-for-profit sector is under-supported.

A Green government would:

- Establish the Community Development Agency (perhaps modeled after Efficiency New Brunswick) which would use the social enterprise model to support projects that contribute to meeting local food, housing, energy, environmental and cultural goals, serving the chronically unemployed and underemployed with on-the-job training and utilizing Crown land, land trusts and underused public buildings at no or low cost.
- Establish community economic development investment funds (CEDIFs) and provide tax credits for investment in CEDIFs.
- Reform the Cooperative Associations Act to enable the development of all kinds of co-ops and include co-op development in the mandate of economic development agencies.
- Establish micro-lending programs administered by credit unions and caisses populaires.
- Implement the recommendations of the Non-Profit Task Force led by former Member of Parliament Claudette Bradshaw, especially with respect to providing financial security and access to liability and health insurance, pension plans, and management expertise for non-profit organizations.
- Establish a trust fund to provide sustainable funding for provincial arts, culture and heritage organizations which are a vital part of the social economy.



Priority 3: Sustainable Living and Infrastructure

Affordable housing for everyone is a central element of self-reliant communities. The application of appropriate technology has a great potential to dramatically reduce the ecological footprint of our building stock and communities.

A Green government would:

- Develop a comprehensive public housing program that includes cooperative and non-profit community housing aligned with LEED housing standards/certification, and built on community land trusts.
- Remove regulatory, financing and planning barriers to the adoption of innovative technologies, techniques, materials, and design that reduce residential energy and resource use and establish energy and ecological footprint standards in the building code.
- Reform property tax assessments so that apartment buildings are taxed the same as primary residences and adopt rent control legislation to ensure that the cost saving is passed on to tenants.
- Provide homeowners with predictability in their annual housing cost and allow people on fixed incomes to remain in their homes by setting property assessments based on actual purchase price or construction cost of the home after a certain base year. The assessment of homes inherited or purchased before the base year would be set at the base year assessment plus the value of any improvements since that time.
- To compensate for reduced property tax revenues, municipalities would adjust the tax rate based on the cost of delivering municipal services, a more transparent and accountable manner of revenue generation, and take advantage of new revenue sources provided by expanded municipal authority (control over Crown land and resources within their boundaries).
- Require direct public ownership of critical infrastructure and prohibit further private-public partnership agreements.
- Require the use of ecological engineering systems for new and upgraded municipal and commercial waste water systems.
- Support integrated urban agriculture which utilizes waste heat and vacant lots or unused space, and produces a local food supply for local markets.
- Reduce vehicle traffic, the source of one-third of New Brunswick's greenhouse gases, and the cost of road building and maintenance by supporting the development of a province-wide public transportation system including bus and commuter rail, and municipal transit, as well as expanded infrastructure for inter-modal freight systems.

Theme Four: Building a Culture of Sustainability

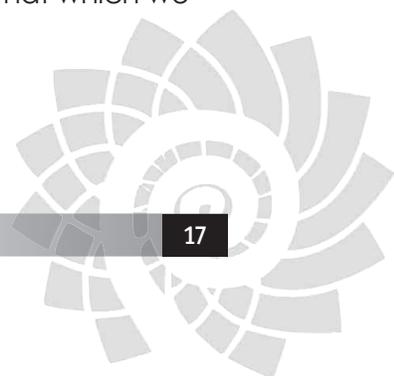
Like all other species, people are part of, not separate from, the Earth's web of life. Our primary responsibility, then, is to live within the limits of the planet, providing for everyone's needs while not threatening the existence of other species or the ability of our children to meet their own needs.

We are failing to meet this responsibility. Species are disappearing at 1000 times the natural rate of extinction because of habitat destruction and climate change. It isn't just large mammals like whales and polar bears that are threatened. Pollinators, especially bees, and insect eaters like birds, bats and frogs – essential links in the ecological web of life - are disappearing at alarming rates. Every human on earth has potentially dangerous levels of many synthetic chemicals in their blood affecting hormone function, reproduction and cell division. Besides our bodies, global warming and ozone layer depletion prove we have changed the very chemistry of the planet, the conditions that make Earth the only habitable planet in our solar system. In short, the Earth is limited in its ability to provide resources and absorb wastes without undermining the life forms that depend on it, and we have overshot those limits.

Why has this happened? First, the conventional approach to economic growth depends on extracting ever more natural resources and consuming ever more energy. When populations were small and resources abundant, this was not a problem. Today, it is different. We are going further afield to find the resources necessary to keep the economy growing, destroying more habitats and spreading pollution literally to the ends of the earth.

Second, our culture is now defined by consumerism. We are what we buy. What were luxuries – or didn't even exist -- 20 years ago are now considered necessities. Over-consumption in rich countries is driving pollution and resource depletion worldwide, including in low-wage countries where much of what we consume is now manufactured. We are also taking much more than our share. If everyone on Earth consumed as much as the average Canadian, we would need four Planet Earth's to support us all. Since there are no new planets on the horizon, we have to reduce our ecological footprint by consuming less. As Gandhi said, there is enough to meet everyone's needs but not everyone's greed.

Third, in this consumer culture, we have lost touch with nature. In the bestseller, *Last Child in the Woods*, author Richard Louv presents compelling evidence that direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy physical and emotional development, and that the lack of nature in children's lives can be linked to obesity, attention disorders and depression. While this is an issue of health and wellbeing, we are not likely to protect that which we do not love. How can we love nature if we do not know it?



Priority 1: Restoring and Sustaining New Brunswick Ecosystems

We cannot change the Canadian or global economy but we can put New Brunswick's economy on a sustainable footing. Our theme, "Building a Green Economy" outlines our economic priorities. We can also restrict activities that degrade ecosystems and restore damage that has already been done.

A Green government would:

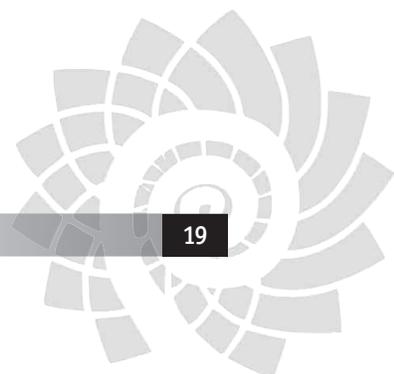
- Establish an *Environmental Bill of Rights* to: (a) guarantee citizens' right to information about pollution threats and hazards, existing and potential, within their communities; (b) provide the right to petition for investigations and guarantee access to the justice system to prevent environmental harm; (c) appoint an environmental ombudsman as an Officer of the Legislature.
- Establish a transition plan and timeline to move finfish aquaculture from open-net pens to closed-containment systems which capture and treat wastes and prevent parasite infestations. In the meantime, prohibit the expansion of open-net pen finfish aquaculture and the use of chemicals to control parasites in open pens.
- Provide technical support and financial incentives to commercial fisheries to achieve Marine Stewardship Council certification.
- Prohibit oil and gas exploration, quarrying and mining on submerged Crown land.
- Require all sewage treatment systems that discharge into water bodies to be upgraded to tertiary levels using ecological engineering approaches.
- Require all industries that discharge effluent into water bodies to adopt closed loop waste water systems according to set timelines based on the availability of technology.
- Restrict the use of clearcutting as a harvesting method on Crown and industrial freehold land and prohibit logging in all remaining old growth Acadian forest.
- Ban aerial spraying of chemical herbicides and insecticides in New Brunswick forests.
- Develop a plan for the restoration of the Acadian forest biodiversity.
- Ensure that biomass harvesting for energy is managed so that wildlife habitat is protected and biodiversity maintained.
- In collaboration with First Nations communities, private woodlot owners, freehold land owners and Crown licence holders, establish a transition plan for all forestry operations on Crown and freehold land to adhere to ecoforestry practices as established by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

- Prohibit field-testing and adoption of genetically modified trees.
- Develop a Genuine Forest Health Indicator that assesses the state of the Acadian forest every decade and measures changes in all forest values.
- Establish biodiversity protection and restoration plans for all provincial parks and protected areas and expand protected areas not large enough to protect vulnerable or endangered species.

Natural gas has only recently been identified as a commercially available commodity in New Brunswick and production is underway in Kings County with very few environmental controls. New proposals to develop shale gas deposits have the potential to industrialize a vast area of rural and forested landscape. Currently there is no regulatory framework to control this development so that air quality, water supplies, ecosystems and quality of life for rural residents are not degraded. New Brunswick's reserves of natural gas should be used strategically to reduce our region's dependence on oil and coal, but they must be developed so that the environment and the quality of life for adjacent residents are not degraded.

A Green government would:

- Impose a moratorium on natural gas development until proper regulations are in place to protect local ecology and communities, and to sustainably extract the resource, with the burden of proof on the developer to prove that no harm will be caused prior to issuing any approvals.
- Require shale gas developers to publically disclose the chemicals and processes to be used.
- Require shale gas developers to set up an escrow account -- money set aside to properly deal with unforeseen issues for local communities and for site reclamation.
- Map and test aquifers prior to shale gas development, paid by the developer, to establish a baseline against which quality and quantity of groundwater is compared during and after development.
- Establish a community controlled planning process to determine the scale, pace and form of natural gas development with the decisions of that process to be final.



Priority 2: Changing from a Consumer to Conserver Society

In a global economy we are often shielded from the direct impacts of our over-consumption of consumer goods and energy, but they are our responsibility nevertheless. We need to shift from today's Consumer culture to a Conserver culture based on ecological and social sustainability.

A Green government would:

- Ban commercial advertising to children.
- Ban the use of public spaces for commercial advertising.
- Establish sales tax differentials for durable goods and essentials versus non-essentials/disposables.
- Expand the product stewardship programs of Recycle New Brunswick (currently for tires and paint) to cover more consumer goods, beginning with electronics. These include a waste management fee paid by the consumer at the point of purchase and the involvement of the manufacturer and/or retailer in the collection and management of the product at the end of its useful life
- Establish a province-wide public transportation system including rail where feasible and support public transit within municipalities.

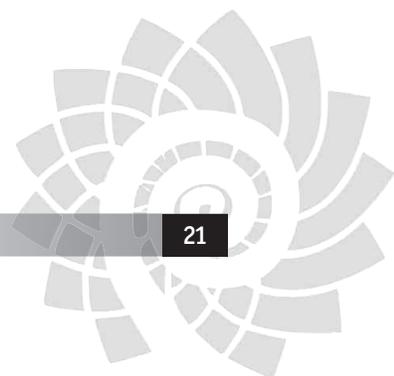
Theme Five: Building a Green Economy

Since the mid-20th century, oil – which when burned releases the greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide -- has fueled economic growth throughout the developed world. The climate crisis, caused by overloading the atmosphere with carbon from burning oil and other fossil fuels, is now forcing us to consider how to reduce our economic dependence on oil. This is a particular challenge for New Brunswick. We are the third most oil-dependent economy in Canada after Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Irving Oil refinery alone accounts for more than half of the total value of our exports. Unless we dramatically reduce our dependence on oil – both production and consumption - our economy will be hit hard as the world moves towards a low-carbon future.

Rather than resist the inevitable changes that are coming, the Green Party will position New Brunswick to thrive in this new reality. A 'green economy' is one that reduces our dependence on fossil fuels and other non-renewable resources. It uses renewable resources sustainably. It augments rather than degrades ecosystems. It eliminates waste and pollution. It is appropriately scaled and does not poison workers and communities. It is controlled by and in the service of communities, not the other way around.

The small business sector is the heart and soul of the New Brunswick economy. Fully 80 percent of all jobs are in this sector, including the self-employed and family-employed. Farmers, fishermen and private woodlot owners are the foundation of rural economies and these are in particular trouble. Much of rural economic decline is the direct result of government policy which favours big industry over local entrepreneurs and primary producers.

The Green Party will reverse such policies. Relying on large companies and export markets to prop up local communities only creates unhealthy dependencies. We will encourage rural renewal by investing in the entrepreneurship and ingenuity of primary producers and putting the right tools in the hands of communities to create their own opportunities. This is the heart of a green economy.



Priority 1: Kick-Starting the Transition

A Green government would:

- ☑ Create an Economic Transition Fund financed by a levy on the import or production of fossil fuels, beginning at \$10 per tonne of carbon and eventually harmonizing with future regional and national pricing schemes. This levy would apply to production at the Irving Oil refinery and the Canaport LNG facility, existing and future in-province natural gas and oil production, coal imports to the Belledune generating station and the Sable Gas pipeline where it delivers gas to the New Brunswick distributor. Estimated initial revenues: \$500 million per year.
- ☑ Use this fund to finance the transition from our current energy-intensive, environmentally damaging energy, forestry, fisheries, aquaculture and agriculture operations to sustainable systems (see below).
- ☑ Establish a Green Venture Capital Fund to support local green business start-ups and provide tax incentives to investors.
- ☑ End subsidies to energy- and resource-intensive industries.
- ☑ Establish a resource depletion tax on non-renewable resource extraction (minerals, peat, oil and gas), the proceeds of which would be earmarked for an economic transition fund.
- ☑ Adjust Crown land stumpage rates and submerged Crown land lease fees to recover the cost of Crown land management and provide a fair return to the public purse.

Priority 2: Reviving Family Farms and Building Food Security

Agriculture renewal is crucial to reviving the rural economy. As the climate changes, our best adaptation strategy to protect local food production from crop failure, disease and changing environmental conditions is to return to mixed farming and integrate habitat and pollinator protection into farm management plans. Since 30 percent of greenhouse gases come from the agriculture sector, reducing dependence on heavy machinery, synthetic chemicals, and long distance transport is essential.

A Green government would:

- ☑ Set a long-term goal of becoming self-reliant in those food staples that are able to be produced in New Brunswick, working with producer organizations to set targets and timetables to achieve the goal.
- ☑ Establish a “School Food Reform” program to provide healthy menus for children and kick-start local food production chains. Regional steering committees of farmers, fishers, nutritionists, chefs and educators would design the program according to local conditions and identify policy and infrastructure changes necessary to make the program work.
- ☑ Phase in a “New Brunswick first” food purchasing policy for all provincial institutions, departments and government-sponsored events whereby New Brunswick sources are sought before purchasing from outside suppliers.
- ☑ Support the establishment of slaughterhouses and food distribution enterprises to serve local markets and reform provincial inspection regimes to account for differences between farm-gate, mid-sized, and industrial-scale facilities.
- ☑ Facilitate the establishment of community land trusts using public lands, donated lands, or lands purchased for that purpose, to be used for community agriculture.
- ☑ Give farmers economic power in the marketplace by supporting growing and marketing cooperatives, collective marketing, single desk initiatives and supply management systems.
- ☑ In consultation with producers, reform supply management rules to allow direct-to-consumer sales within a certain distance from the farm gate.
- ☑ Support federal mandatory labeling of all genetically engineered foods and food ingredients.
- ☑ Provide incentives for on-farm alternative energy production and ban food crop-based ethanol production, focusing instead on the conversion of various farm wastes into fuel.
- ☑ Retain arable land for agriculture purposes either by compensating non-farming landowners for maintaining it, or establishing a provincial land trust which would purchase or receive donations of arable land to be held in perpetuity. Agricultural land in trust could be leased tax-free for farming.
- ☑ Establish a program to conserve and enhance New Brunswick's crop and animal genetic resources, promote heritage seed use and seed exchange programs, and protect the right of farmers to save their own seed. Oppose any trade agreements that would restrict farmers' right to save seed.



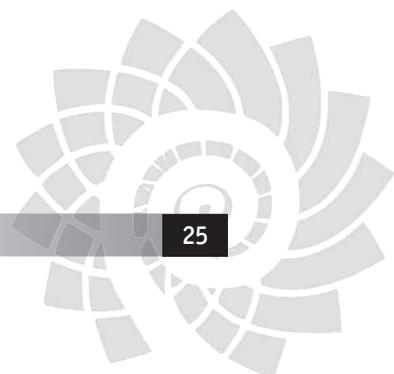
- ☑ Provide tax incentives for farmers to protect biodiversity, wildlife habitat and pollinators, sequester carbon and protect water.
- ☑ Phase out the use of genetically modified (GM) seed in New Brunswick and ensure that developers of genetically engineered seeds are liable for any contamination of non-GM and especially organic crops.
- ☑ Establish provincial goals for the reduction of total pesticides and chemical fertilizers applied to farmland annually and a transition fund to protect farm families' income during a three-year transition period to organic production.
- ☑ Provide an organic transition/production extension service within the Department of Agriculture and re-orient conventional extension services to promote biological pest management and fertilization techniques first, with synthetic chemicals and fertilizers as the last resort.
- ☑ Promote livestock health by increasing the space required per animal and requiring seasonal access to sunlight and fresh air.

Priority 3: Rebuilding the Forest Economy

Rural families have historically depended on their woodlots for a portion of their incomes. In recent years sales from private woodlots have fallen from \$100 million to \$30 million per year, a loss which has forced many to leave the province for work. Meanwhile, the industrial forestry companies want to convert more public forest to single species plantations, and require millions in public subsidies to stay afloat. Successive Liberal and Conservative governments have pandered to this corporate agenda, undermining the viability of private woodlots, local efforts to establish community forests, and the ecological integrity of the Acadian forest which is now considered endangered.

A Green government would:

- Respect aboriginal and treaty rights with respect to Crown forest decision-making.
- Restore the status of private woodlots as the primary source of wood supply to mills.
- Establish a public process to determine conservation, protection and use objectives for Crown land.
- Establish a New Brunswick Forest Service paid for by increased stumpage fees to manage Crown land in accordance with public objectives, removing management responsibility from licence holders.
- Reform Crown land tenure rules to create Community Forests adjacent to and within municipalities and First Nations communities. Each community would hold the licence for that Crown land and have the authority to control the use of forest resources within that licence. Stumpage fees over and above the cost of management by the NB Forest Service would remain in the community.
- Recognize the Community Forestry Alliance as the representative body of the community forest constituency, providing equal access to government support and policy development processes as the New Brunswick Wood Products Association and the New Brunswick Federation of Woodlot Owners.
- End the “revolving door” phenomenon of industry managers assuming management positions in the Dept. of Natural Resources and vice versa by requiring a waiting period of 3 years before assuming such positions.



Theme Six: Building a Sustainable Energy System

Quoting from a report based on data from 160 research groups in 48 countries, the front page of the July 29, 2010 Globe and Mail declared, "Signs of warming earth unmistakable." The news story explained that the earth has been warming for the past 50 years, with the decade of 2000-2009 being the warmest in history. This year is shaping up to be the warmest on record. The result of this warming is an increase in weather extremes (heat waves, cold snaps, violent storms, heavy rainfall, drought), sea level rise, shrinking glaciers, thinning polar icecaps, the spread of insect-borne diseases, and serious disruptions in food production, fresh water supplies, animal habitats, marine ecosystems and coastal settlements.

Over the past two hundred years, combustion of coal, then oil and more recently natural gas has resulted in a build-up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere causing global warming. Like it or not, the future will not look like the past. Global greenhouse gas emissions must be cut by at least 80 percent by 2050 if we are to avert the worst consequences of climate change. That means we must transform the way we get and use energy.

In a sustainable society, nuclear power cannot be a replacement for fossil fuels. When uranium atoms are split inside a nuclear reactor, dangerous radioactive and chemical substances are created, some of which do not exist in nature and which remain dangerous to all life for hundreds of thousands of years. A serious accident at Point Lepreau would render a vast area uninhabitable for centuries. The Green Party believes this is an unacceptable burden to place on our children, especially when there are alternatives.

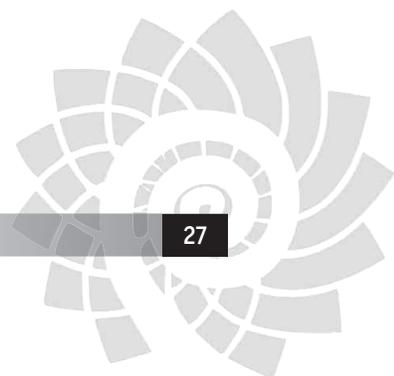
A responsible green energy policy would rapidly shrink our ecological footprint, insulate New Brunswickers against future spikes in oil prices, and create wealth in communities throughout the province.

Priority 1: Build a Green Energy System

We need to phase-out our oil, coal and nuclear generating stations using the Economic Transition Fund to build a new green energy system. Investing in energy efficiency is the first order of business. According to the 2010 report of the Advisory Panel on the Proposed New Brunswick – Quebec Electricity Transaction (the Ganong Panel), an annual investment of \$69 million in energy efficiency alone would leverage more than \$300 million in economic investment and create over 3,000 person years of employment every year. Natural gas, with the lowest carbon content of the fossil fuels, should be developed in a way that maximizes the long-term social, economic, and environmental benefits for New Brunswickers.

A Green government would:

- Reduce in-province electrical demand by one-third (1000 megawatts) through investments in energy retrofits, and off-electric, off-grid and smart grid programs. Off-electric programs would include wood-based fuels, geothermal and solar energy to provide space and water heating in residential and commercial buildings.
- Establish feed-in tariffs – a guaranteed price per kilowatt-hour for electricity generated from renewable sources -- based on a reasonable return on investment to encourage the development of decentralized, community-based wind, small scale hydro, biomass, thermal and photovoltaic solar, geothermal and tidal power projects.
- Increase the capacity of the Grand Falls hydroelectric dam by 200 MW, to serve as a back up to increased wind power generation.
- Use natural gas as a transition fuel to replace the industrial use of oil and electricity, provide space and water heating, and to fuel a gas co-generation power plant if needed for short-term baseload electricity.
- Study the feasibility of building a natural gas pipeline into the north of the province.
- Require the use of Carbon Saver® technology developed by the New Brunswick company Atlantic Hydrogen to remove carbon and other pollutants from natural gas before combustion.
- Reject any new nuclear power proposals whether for domestic or export markets.



Priority 2: Regulating NB Power and Natural Gas Distribution

- ☑ Instruct the Energy and Utilities Board (EUB) to order an independent forensic audit of the Point Lepreau refurbishment to determine the financial and safety risks of continuing the project compared to immediately decommissioning the plant and writing off the losses.
- ☑ Change the *Electricity Act* to establish a public mandate for NB Power to meet in-province power needs by maximizing efficiency and social benefits while minimizing ecological impacts.
- ☑ Expand the powers of the Energy and Utilities Board (EUB) to hold NB Power accountable for meeting this mandate.
- ☑ Change the EUB legislation to give it regulatory power over all NB Power capital spending (new power plants, transmission lines, distribution systems) and rate changes, and to remove political override of EUB decisions.
- ☑ Provide financial support to allow non-profit organizations that meet EUB criteria to intervene in EUB hearings.
- ☑ Resolve the problem of the current distribution monopoly on natural gas in which Enbridge Gas, a multinational corporation, is allowed to recover its entire cost of service in New Brunswick from its New Brunswick customers as it builds its customer base. The alternative is to consider a gas public utility.

Theme Seven: Getting our Financial House in Order

The Green Party is committed to the principle of living within our financial means as well as our ecological means while ensuring that everyone has access to essential public services and can live fulfilling lives. The tax system pays for those public services. It should also send the right signals with respect to the long term goals of a healthier communities and a sustainable economy. Our fiscal policy is designed to meet these goals.

Priority 1: Eliminating the Structural Deficit

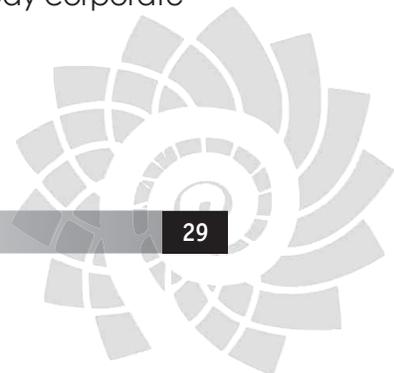
Governments will have some years where they run a budget surplus and other years when, due to particular circumstances, they run a deficit. On balance, surplus years should exceed deficit years and the net debt reduced. This is only possible if two conditions are met: a) the government retains the ability to raise the revenues it needs to pay for the services the public expects to receive; and b) the government makes sure that programs deliver value for money.

The current Liberal government has seriously undermined New Brunswick's financial viability by dramatically reducing the corporate tax rate and income taxes for higher income brackets. This is based on the belief that low tax rates will attract skilled workers, professionals and outside investors to the province. The Green Party believes this theory to be unsubstantiated and reckless. Research shows that the availability of high quality public services is more likely to entice people to move to a town or province.

The Liberal's record-level tax cuts have taken over \$400 million (by 2012) out of our existing revenue base, creating a structural deficit rather than a cyclical one. In 2010 the deficit will grow from \$360 million to nearly \$970 million. We are borrowing money to buy the groceries in anticipation of some future payback that is unlikely to materialize. We need to take immediate measures to eliminate the structural deficit and put the province back on a sound fiscal footing.

A Green government would:

- Roll back the planned corporate tax cuts and income tax cuts to people with incomes greater than \$40,000, restoring revenues of over \$400 million per year by 2012.
- Raise the threshold for the payment of income tax to \$20,000.
- Investigate ways to ensure retail chains operating in New Brunswick pay corporate taxes on their actual in-province profits.



- ☑ Require value-for-money performance audits for each government department and agency every 10 years, beginning with health authorities. Senior managers would be accountable for meeting specific objectives and subject to sanctions should objectives not be met.
- ☑ Require balanced budgets for health authorities and hold senior management accountable for achieving this.
- ☑ End the practice of being the bank of last resort for failing industries.

Priority 2: Fees, Levies and Royalties

- ☑ Establish tolls on the Trans-Canada Highway raising enough in revenues to cover the payment the New Brunswick government now makes to the private corporation that built and maintains the highway. We would provide a free annual pass to every New Brunswick-registered vehicle for one toll booth of their choice.
- ☑ Impose a health tax on food products that contain high levels of sodium, saturated fats and sugar / sucrose/fructose, the revenues from which would fund healthy lifestyle education and intervention programs.
- ☑ Impose a \$10 per tonne of carbon levy on the import and/or production of fossil fuels to create an Economic Transition Fund (see *An Economy that Doesn't Cost the Earth*).
- ☑ Increase stumpage and lease fees on Crown land to finance the New Brunswick Forest Service and provide a return to the public purse.
- ☑ Impose a non-renewable resource depletion tax to support workers and communities once an industry closes.
- ☑ Ensure the royalty regime for natural gas production delivers a substantial benefit to the public.

Priority 3: Sustainability Incentives and Disincentives

- ☑ Provide tax incentives to companies that provide on-site daycare, healthy food and facilities for exercise, bicycle parking, and invest in green energy, building design and other measures to reduce their ecological footprint.
- ☑ End subsidies to energy- and resource-intensive industries.

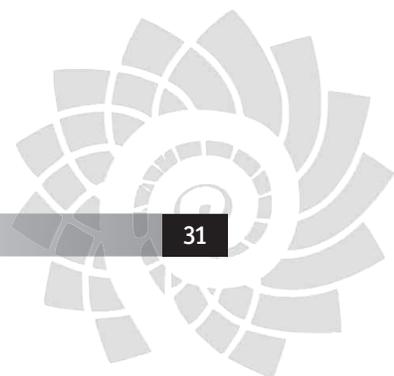
Priority 4: Measuring What Counts and Investing in the Long Term

Our progress as a province is only measured in one way: gross domestic product, or GDP. In determining the GDP, only money transactions are counted. This does not reflect the true value or cost of our economy. Household management, parenting, volunteerism are ignored. Water and air pollution are ignored. The depletion of natural capital such as forests, soils, groundwater, and fish stocks shows up as money earned rather than resources depleted.

We will only know how well we are doing when we start to measure all the contributions to our collective wellbeing, and recognize the long-term costs of short-term decision-making.

A Green government would:

- Implement gender-based analysis in the provincial budget process to ensure that our public expenditures impact all New Brunswickers equitably.
- Augment or replace gross domestic product (GDP) as the sole measure of progress with an alternative such as the Genuine Progress Index which accounts for the value of unpaid work and the cost of natural resource depletion and pollution.
- Rather than cutting taxes, invest in education and poverty reduction to deliver social and economic development over the long term.



Conclusion

The Green Party platform presents a radical departure from conventional politics. It is based on principle and sets as the priority the protection of people, the next generation, and the Earth which supports all life. To argue that we cannot afford to such an approach is to argue that we cannot afford the future. There is no choice but to change priorities. The status quo is not an option.

The Green Party has the people, the expertise and the commitment to participate in governing New Brunswick so that these priorities are realized. Change the politics of the past by choosing the party for the future.

Vote Green on September 27th.

