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British Columbia's Green Party

**Green Party Platform -
available 11:00 am on Monday, March 26, 2001**

Green Book 2001

- **Good Government**
 - **Electoral Reform & Citizen-Based Democracy**
 - **Reconciliation with First Nations**
 - **More Accountable & Effective Government**
 - **Sensible Budgeting**
- **Stimulating BC's Economy**
- **Improving Quality of Life**

Electoral Reform & Citizen-Based Democracy

- Elect government by a system of mixed proportional representation (electing some Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in proportion to the province-wide vote for a party—i.e., 5 percent vote province-wide for a party translates into 5 percent of these seats in the Legislative Assembly while continuing to elect some MLAs by “the most votes cast” on a regional basis).
- Amend the Recall and Initiatives Act to make citizen-initiated referenda practical and fair. The Green Party of BC does not support referenda that expose minorities to unfair treatment by the majority or referenda on First Nations’ treaties, a woman’s right to abortion or other rights already enshrined in our constitution.
- Decentralize and devolve some powers of the Legislature to municipal and regional elected levels of government (particularly matters of governance for which municipal and regional governments already bear responsibility such as the supply of clean drinking water), in accordance with strict province-wide environmental and social standards.
- Strictly limit behind-closed-door decisions (e.g., “Order in Council” decisions by Cabinet). Require full debate of government decisions in the Legislature.
- Reform political party financing with the goal of eliminating influence peddling. Outlaw political party contributions from large domestic and multi-national corporations, trade unions and financial institutions and encourage more donations from individual citizens by increasing tax rebates at lower donation levels.
- Establish fixed dates for Legislative Assembly sittings.

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Reconciliation with First Nations

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Unlike many other jurisdictions in Canada, BC has not negotiated Nation-to-Nation or Government-to-Government agreements that affirm aboriginal rights over First Nations' traditional territories in much of BC. Current treaty negotiation processes have been ongoing for over a decade. First Nations and the people of British Columbia have borne huge costs in human resources and money in these lengthy negotiations. As long as the aboriginal land question remains unresolved, economic development is impaired and confrontation will increase.

The main recommendation of the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in Canada was the need for mutual recognition of title and rights: that BC and Canada must recognize aboriginal nationhood and the need to reconcile First Nations sovereignty with Canada and BC. The Supreme Court of Canada, in the Delgamuukw decision, further emphasized the need for negotiation and reconciliation, establishing that First Nations' rights are inalienable and cannot be unilaterally extinguished.

The Green Party of BC believes that just and fair settlement of the aboriginal land question will benefit everyone in BC. BC's abundance of natural resources can be fairly shared, so we can all peacefully co-exist.

Reconciliation and Self-Government

The Green Party of BC supports aboriginal self-government based on reconciliation of aboriginal title and rights, not assimilation.

The Green Party of BC:

- Places high priority on proceeding with fair and just processes to reconcile First Nation, BC and Canadian sovereignties. Fair negotiations mean that the Government of BC must stop demanding the extinguishment of First Nations' title and rights as a precondition for any agreement.
- Recognizes that First Nations' histories and self-governments are distinct according to each First Nation and therefore each process of reconciliation must be individually agreed to by the appropriate First Nation.
- Believes that the processes of reconciliation must establish the ultimate goal of First Nations having control over and access to enough resources to bring First Nations out of poverty and into self-sufficiency.

Treaty Process

The Green Party of BC:

- Is opposed to a provincial referendum on First Nations' treaties.
- Supports negotiating in good faith and with the utmost of haste with First Nations who wish to participate in the treaty process. The Government of BC must stop demanding the extinguishment of First Nations' title and rights as a condition for any agreement.
- Supports negotiation of interim measures agreements that provide First Nations the right to review and approve or reject activities that would foreclose opportunities that might be obtained through treaty by irrevocably changing their land or their connection to it prior to the final signing of a treaty.

More Accountable & Effective Government

Government needs to be more accountable to the public, less management-top-heavy, and more focused on direct delivery of needed services.

The Green Party of BC supports:

- Establishing a highly independent agency responsible for determining the salaries and benefits of elected governmental officials, for ensuring that appointments to government tribunals, boards and senior civil service are done through a qualification-based process and are not politically motivated patronage appointments, and for dismissing appointees for just cause.
- Capping the time spent by government staff on paperwork and reports and the percentage of each department's budget spent on senior management to decrease administration costs.
- Allowing departments to carry over budgetary surpluses and/or delaying project funds into the next fiscal year in order to support efficiency and encourage longer-term planning within government departments.
- Shifting from the current executive/top-down models of government administration to more collaborative, team-based systems of management.
- Strengthening the Freedom of Information Act to reduce the time it takes to get information, to eliminate the loopholes used by governments to deny access to public information and to greatly reduce the money currently charged citizens who are exercising their right to access government information.
- Requiring government to meet high environmental standards in its own operations (e.g., in procurements, recycling, healthy building construction and pesticide-free grounds maintenance).

Sensible Budgeting

It is important that the BC government lives within its financial means. This means that the BC government must forecast revenues prudently, encourage a healthy BC economy, spend within a balanced budget and expeditiously pay down the debt accumulated through past government over-spending and mismanagement. To achieve long-term fiscal health, the tax system and government policies must incorporate "triple bottom line" accounting, which takes into account economic, social and environmental costs and benefits. Triple bottom line accounting enables government to make wiser decisions about which types of development to encourage, and ensures that government is not left paying huge social, health and "clean-up" costs as a consequence of allowing economic development that only considers economic outcomes.

The Green Party of BC supports:

- Government budgets that include paydown of debt, are prudent in their forecast of revenues, stimulate sustainable sectors of the economy to generate revenue, reduce the fiscal dependency on revenues generated through the depletion of the province's natural resources and solve budget shortfalls by decreasing spending rather than by incurring new debt.
- Phasing in a comprehensive tax-shifting program to reduce taxes on economic activities beneficial to society and increase taxes on harmful activities e.g. that create pollution or degrade the environment.
- Eliminating government subsidies that involve huge expenditures to maintain short-term jobs (e.g., Skeena Cellulose) at the expense of financial prudence and long-term economic and environmental health.
- Phasing out Provincial Sales Tax (PST) on necessities and products that benefit the environment or our society (such as solar panels, bicycles) and increasing the PST on luxury and non-essential items.
- Requiring triple bottom line accounting practices in all government departments, ministries, budgeting, and all reports to government.
- Switching to economic indicators that measure changes in environmental, economic and social well being (such as the Genuine

environmental, economic, and social well-being (such as the Genuine Progress Indicator), that value unpaid labour (such as parenting) and count the depletion of natural resources as negatives rather than positives.

- Ending corporate subsidies by ensuring resource users pay appropriate taxes for access to natural resources such as fish stocks, forest resources and minerals and that a portion of this money goes towards an insurance fund to support economic transition strategies, including worker retraining, when needed.

Good Government | Stimulating BC's Economy | Improving Quality of Life

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Please send any questions or comments to editor@greenparty.bc.ca