



REAL CHANGE 2015

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REAL CHANGE

Introduction

This Time, Vote Green

The Green Party of Prince Edward Island thinks long-term: we truly are the politics of the future. We are dedicated to building a thriving and healthy Island for our children and their children. That means we are committed to long-term, completely practical solutions for a sustainable and prosperous future.

To accomplish this, we must have the courage to confront the major challenges we face: a broken political system, fiscal peril, job and food insecurity, growing income inequality, a cumbersome approach to health care, the climate crisis, and ecological decline.

The Green Party represents a new approach: an opportunity to change, for the better, our politics, our communities, and our economy. The Green vision is focused on sustainability, social justice and respect. We believe that Islanders have the ingenuity and the will to build a prosperous and just society, with an economy that provides work for all while respecting the natural world and our place within it.

Real change engages all the possibilities of who we are.

Our priorities are to:

- Govern with fiscal responsibility.
- Overhaul and revitalize politics so government works for all Islanders and their communities.
- Create strong local economies that provide green jobs.
- Support and transform agriculture for the good of our farmers, the quality of our food, the quality of our communities and the quality of our environment.
- Ensure our fisheries are sustainable.
- Deliver preventative health care and provide timely and affordable access to all health care services.
- End poverty on PEI to ensure dignity for all Islanders.
- Improve our Education System to cater to each individual child's needs.
- Become energy self-reliant.
- Envision culture and tourism.
- Respect First Nation Islanders.

What We Stand For

Our priorities advance the six principles that define what the Green Party of Prince Edward Island stands for, in election campaigns and consistently:

- Grassroots democracy
- Living within our ecological and financial means
- Local self-reliance
- A just society
- Active citizenship and self-determination
- A culture of peace

Together these core values work towards building a Culture of Sustainability

The Green Party's defining issue is the future and the legacy we will leave for our children. We believe that Prince Edward Island can be nurtured into one of the best places in the world in which to live, with a responsive and responsible government working cooperatively in true public service. We all want a viable, healthy future for our children, and are ready to start moving in that direction now.

The Green Party stands for the idea that environmental sustainability, social justice, economic development and democracy are not issues that can be resolved in isolation, but must be considered as connected parts of everything we do.

That's why our dynamic economic and social development, environmental protection and democratic reform policies are integrated throughout our policies and platform. Never before has the desire to change direction in politics, economics and communities been so apparent. Never before has the need to reconcile our relationships with each other and with the Earth which sustains all life been more urgent. Real opportunity for substantial, positive change is within each of us. We can make it happen.

Worldwide, people are embracing new thinking, and new ways of doing things, to address the growing problems of economic injustice and insecurity, ecological decline, and climate change. PEI has the manageable scale, the talent, the values, and the means to change. The Green Party provides the vision and the political leadership to make that change reality.



1. Good Government

Our government excels when it represents all Islanders and we are united to accomplish things we can't do on our own. The Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island can be a model of collaboration and decorum working for the good of all Islanders. It can be creative and work collaboratively to deal with issues and spend taxpayers' money prudently. A fair voting system that represents the popular vote can also be introduced to elect MLAs. It is entirely possible that Islanders can be proud of a government that works for them, with realistic policies offering a fully integrated, democratic vision.

The principle that Members of the Legislative Assembly represent their constituents, not their party, is the foundation on which our system is based. Collectively, the Legislative Assembly controls the public purse, and if the taxpayers' coffer is mis-managed, the public is entitled to an inquiry.

Islanders are frustrated when their government lacks transparency, is inefficient and spends wastefully, or fails to take action on critical issues that affect our communities. On top of this, we are tied to an outdated voting system that does not always represent the popular vote, which leaves many Islander's views unrepresented. Many Islanders, especially youth, are so frustrated and disenfranchised that they do not vote. There is ample room, and clear possibility for improvement. A good government fosters a democracy that is participatory, representative and responsive.

The Green Party MLAs will be expected to serve their constituents first, and will put more power in the hands of citizens and communities to help to solve the challenges that we face. This will be done through citizen assemblies, town hall meetings, and Legislative committee hearings.

1. Good Government

Green MLA's will:

- create a legislature that truly represents the best interests of all Islanders and supports non-partisan collaboration;
- enact the most stringent conflict of interest guidelines in Canada;
- revise the Election Act to ensure binding fixed-date elections;
- reform election finance rules by eliminating business and out-of province donations, introducing spending limits for political parties, and increasing the per vote subsidy;
- represent their constituents first, without obligation to toe the party line;
- Legislate the end of the first-past-the-post voting system; establish immediately an all-party Democratic Voting Commission to review past research and conduct a public consultation to identify a style of proportional representation that best suits PEI. We will instruct the commission to make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly for the necessary democratic voting reform, including draft legislation within 12 months;
- lower the voting age to 16 (*see pt.7 Improving Education*);
- implement participatory democracy practices in order to get Islanders involved in decision making;
- initiate a public inquiry into the Provincial Nominee Program;
- enact effective whistle-blower protection for public and private sector employees;
- increase transparency and accountability within public institutions by bringing municipalities and post-secondary institutions under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act;
- increase funding to the Freedom of Information Commissioner to ensure public information is recorded and conserved properly, and is accessible by citizens in a timely and efficient manner.



2. Strengthening Local Communities

A strong and stable economy is built using the resources at its disposal. On Prince Edward Island, we are blessed with the foundations on which to build a successful economy based on our traditional strengths in farming, fishing, arts, culture and tourism. A strong local economy is built with a diversity of vibrant small businesses. A strong local economy is also one which is increasingly self-reliant and is protected against growing global instabilities.

The Green Party will strengthen local economies in our cities and in our rural communities by focusing on small businesses, both existing and start-ups, where over 75% of all new jobs are created. Our strategy will foster new employment by creating green jobs supplying local food, retrofitting and constructing green buildings, producing local renewable energy, sustainably using forest resources, and supplying more of what Islanders need. The expansion of the tax base, which will come from such development, is critical to the overall fiscal health of the Province. We will promote the information technology sector as instrumental to growing new greener economies in our cities and rural areas, and we will champion the arts, tourism and recreation (*see pt.3 Better Health: Better Health Care, pt.7 Improving Education and pt.10 Revisioning Culture and Tourism*) as essential to building vibrant new economies in every corner of our province.

The Green Party goal is to create an economy which enhances the quality of life for all Islanders, revitalizes rural PEI, and respects and nurtures the human and natural capital of Prince Edward Island.

Green MLA's will:

- create jobs through targeted investments in: small business, new agriculture, green energy expansion, conservation measures, information and technology development, and forestry resource management ;
- facilitate small business and new employment opportunities by investing in infrastructure to accommodate cutting-edge internet access to all Islanders;
- increase the efficiency and effectiveness of Innovation PEI by reviewing the outcomes of public investments;
- support import substitution as a means to ensure PEI is making more of what is needed locally.



3. Better Health: Better Health Care

While many areas of the provincial health care system are performing to national standards, we have significant challenges with wait times, timely delivery of diagnostics and treatment, mental health and addiction care. We believe that PEI should be a leader in services, not a follower.

We understand that health care is one of the most important issues for Islanders, and that physician-centric primary care models are simply not feasible for optimal outcomes. This needs to change. Through extensive consultations with healthcare industry experts and consumers, the Green Party has devised a comprehensive strategy aimed at prevention and wellness promotion together with, and augmenting, 'in time' collaborative care.

The best health care delivery can be offered to Islanders through a collaborative model that integrates health care providers into networks, delivering a different brand of healthcare known as Primary Health Care. Primary Health Care takes into account the important biological and social indicators affecting health and well-being, fostering the care of health as much as the care of illness. It looks into how a person is living, and advises and promotes changes to avoid health problems, rather than focusing only on what has gone wrong, or reacting to problems after disease occurs.

PEI has a large middle-aged and senior population. We realize that the elderly do not necessarily prefer long-term care, and that quality of life is of utmost importance. The Green Party will develop strategies for Primary Health Care delivery, allowing seniors to be more independent, with preference for at-home care and support where possible, while also offering top-notch collaborative care.


When it comes to reducing addiction and mental health issues, creating Primary Health Care networks including physicians, psychologists, social workers, counsellors, dieticians, life-coaches and nurses in a collaborative and highly communicative model, our policy will provide a full range of appropriate services that can aid in being well, becoming well and staying well. This strategy is twofold: (1) work to prevent addiction and mental health issues in the first place; and (2) offer in-time, 24-hour appropriate care for those seeking emergency mental health and addictions support. *(See also pt.6 Eliminating Poverty)*

The Green Party will develop an efficient bureaucracy that effectively communicates and collaborates in early childhood education; nutrition education and skills programs; mental health; addictions; and family services. By integrating ministries such as health, social services, and justice, the outcome will be a reduction in overall cost of health care and superior healthcare outcomes (*see also pt.6 Eliminating Poverty and pt.7 Improving Education*).

Green MLAs will:

- acknowledge that economic, social and environmental factors play a profound role in health and wellness (*see also pt.6 Eliminating Poverty*);
- increase emphasis on proactive wellness promotion and prevention rather than reactive-based treatment;
- employ more front-line workers to ensure better access and to decrease waiting times;
- ensure access to appropriate health care services across PEI;
- establish a comprehensive approach to mental health and addiction care focusing on prevention (*see also pt.6 Eliminating Poverty*);
- remove barriers and enhance local, timely and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services.

3. Better Health: Better Health Care



4. Building New Agriculture

Prince Edward Island has many strengths and a rich agricultural heritage is certainly one of them. To support farming, now and into the future, a new agriculture is needed. Shifting priority from high-quantity, low-priced produce for the world's commodity market to a more diverse system of high-quality, value-added products is necessary.

Establishing and promoting an 'Island Made' brand that focuses on healthy, sustainably produced foods opens varied new markets for farmers. Offering supports to those switching to more sustainable and organic practices, as well as supports for artisanal businesses like wine, cheese, microbreweries and other specialized production encourages the diversification of our food systems and enhances tourism possibilities (*see pt. 10 Revisioning Culture and Tourism*).

Additionally, a Local Food Security Act that sets provincial targets for production and consumption of Island food, establishes a labelling system to make local food easy to identify, and implements institutional buying all further support our farmers and the local food movement.

Island Farmland Trust

One of the barriers new farmers face is the cost of land. The Green Party will establish an Island Farmland Trust by purchasing available farmland and making smaller acreages available for lease so that new farmers can get a foothold in agriculture. The emphasis could then move toward a more sustainable, diversified agricultural system. An Island Farmland Trust, as suggested in the Carver report of 2013 is a good model for such a program.

(http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/FEMA_LPA_EN_13.pdf page 50).

New Homesteaders' Plan

Public investment in small business on PEI is important because it is an economic driver representing 80% of current employment on the Island. Businesses which start small empower dynamic young entrepreneurs who can afford to improvise and take risks. This same rationale applies to small-scale farmers. The Green Party maintains that a different, "from-the-bottom-up" approach to Island agriculture is needed, encouraging and facilitating a whole generation of "New Homesteaders" – hundreds of creative small-scale farmers, whether originating from the Island or elsewhere in the world. Such a program could also make an important contribution to the Island's Population Strategy.

4. Building New Agriculture

Green MLAs will:

- establish a Local Food Security Act that sets provincial targets for production and consumption of Island food, requires institutional buying and establishes a labelling system to clearly identify Island produced food;
- vigorously promote an "Island made" brand which represents pure, healthy and sustainably produced food;
- enhance supports for the production of high quality, value-added produce by aiding farmers in transition to organic and other sustainable practices;
- implement a New Homesteaders' Plan with the goal of encouraging new farmers and creating more small farms;
- develop an Island Farmland Trust that will remove financial barriers to new farmers, encourage a more diverse agricultural industry and keep farmland in production.



5. Sustainable Fisheries

Prince Edward Island has some of the best fish products in the world. Our lobster, mussels, oysters and tuna are second to none in quality, yet prices paid to our fishers and growers do not reflect the true value of our products. In fact, we receive an equal, or in many cases, lower price than inferior products from elsewhere. This unjust situation is not the fault of our harvesters or wholesalers, they do not have the resources or the clout to exert influence on the scale required but rather a reflection of a lack of Government vision and intelligent marketing of all PEI fish products as a whole. The government of PEI must recognize the disservice these bargain-basement prices do to our fishers and growers, and to our economy as a whole.

Management of PEI fish has always been a federal government responsibility, while the provincial government is responsible for promotion and support. To date, provincial administrations have done little more than ineffective cheer-leading from the sidelines, or attempting to co-market with other maritime provinces, risking being trampled by others with no sincere concern for PEI. The time has come to step up and develop effective, made-on-PEI strategies to ensure we receive appropriate value for our unique fish products.

Another critical issue facing our fishers, and in particular our shellfish industry, is water quality and siltation. We must stop jeopardizing our world-class shellfish and the families dependent on the resource year after year. The Government of PEI must, finally, take the steps necessary to ensure that our water and shellfish resources are never compromised again. Protecting waterways is a responsibility that belongs to all industries.

The coming years will see new threats to fisheries from ocean changes caused by acidification from increased CO₂ in the atmosphere, and increased water temperatures and shifted ocean currents because of climate change. The potential for irreversible damage to key PEI industries like tourism and fisheries posed by potential spills means that we must also place a permanent legislated ban on oil and gas exploration and development in ecologically sensitive areas such as the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

We must do the right thing today to protect our fisheries for tomorrow.

Green MLA's will:

- gather stakeholders together to build an effective, long term strategy for marketing PEI fish products as the best in the world;
- re-focus the bureaucracy on long-term planning and infrastructure development;
- engage stakeholders in both salt and freshwater fisheries and intergovernmental personnel to develop the most enlightened water protection regulations in the world, including a continuation of the moratorium on high capacity wells;
- legislate a permanent ban on oil and gas exploration and development in the gulf of Saint Lawrence;
- support PEI fishers through a local food security act to open up and maintain markets for their produce (*see also pt.4 Building New Agriculture*);
- vigorously promote an "Island made" brand which represents pure, healthy and sustainably produced food (*see also pt.4 Building New Agriculture*);

5. Sustainable Fisheries



6. Eliminating Poverty

The reasons for persistent poverty are complex. Better food banks cannot bridge the growing disparity between wealthy and poor Islanders. Poverty is a systemic problem that arises from low minimum wages, a precarious job market, a shortage of social housing, reductions in EI benefits, and mis-management of social programs.

Poverty impacts health, especially mental health, education potential, law and order, and therefore impacts the whole of society. Poverty occurs when individuals lack the income necessary to provide for themselves and their families. Islanders working in full-time minimum wage jobs continue to live in poverty.

The Green Party believes that an essential first step to escaping poverty is to ensure that everyone has sufficient income to allow them to meet their needs with dignity. Eliminating poverty requires comprehensive solutions aimed at underlying causes and contributors to poverty. A positive first step would be the implementation of a “living wage”. A living wage is the minimum income necessary for an employee to meet all basic needs such as housing, food, utilities and transportation costs. An individual working forty hours a week, with no additional income, should be able to afford the basics for quality of life.

The Green Party recognizes that meaningful solutions require careful consideration of all angles and therefore will work with the small business sector that depends on minimum wage employees to determine how best to assist them during the transition from a minimum wage to a living wage. Those with lower income spend it close to home in local stores and businesses. Money invested in alleviating poverty is spent back into the community and is good for the Island economy (*see pt.2 Strengthening Local Economies*).

Establishing a home energy conservation program to assist the most vulnerable of Islanders in making efficiency improvements is important in helping Islanders make their energy dollars go further. Making poverty history will take time and commitment in many areas, but the results will be well worth the effort.

Basic Income Guarantee (BIG)

The Green Party believes it is time to re-visit a major policy initiative – a negative income tax, or a Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) for all. The use of a BIG eliminates poverty and allows vital social services to concentrate on problems of mental health, addiction and disability supports. The essential plan is to ensure that every Islander's income does not fall below the level necessary to meet their most basic needs. The level of benefit is set at a livable income threshold, but at a bare subsistence level to encourage additional income generation. BIG has the potential to save the government almost \$100 million a year in direct costs, another \$220 million a year through indirect costs (like health and justice,) and gather new income tax from former low income people.

Green MLAs will:

- work toward raising the basic personal income tax exemption to a level above the poverty line. No one under the poverty line should be paying income tax;
- replace a minimum wage with a living wage, phased in over four years so that anyone working full-time will earn enough to keep them out of poverty;
- amend eligibility requirements for adult literacy programs province-wide to ensure all Islanders can participate;
- eliminate barriers preventing people from entering the workforce, such as clawbacks from social assistance income that occur with earned income below \$20,000., and premature withdrawal of prescription drug benefits;
- invest in home energy conservation and efficiency improvements, starting with those most in need;
- establish a Basic Income Guarantee Commission to review past research and conduct a public consultation to identify a style of BIG that best suits PEI. We will instruct the commission to make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly for the necessary fiduciary reforms, including a 10 year strategic plan within 12 months;

6. Eliminating Poverty



7. Improving Education

The Green Party believes that direct investment in our children is one of the best ways to move Prince Edward Island toward a just and prosperous future.

Education is the primary pathway out of poverty and the best means of developing self-confidence and an understanding of the responsibilities of citizenship. It is critical, then, that our public and post-secondary school systems are effective and accessible to everyone. It is essential that our teachers are given the resources they need to ensure that all of their students, no matter their abilities, can reach their full potential.

Tuition-free post-secondary education is an ideal towards which any society should strive, and is our 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.

As with many aspects of Island life, with education here on PEI we have an opportunity to do things our way, not necessarily to mimic the rest of the world. Our size allows us to be flexible and more maneuverable than most jurisdictions. Education is in a state of transformation around the world as we realize that the industrial model of education favoured for over a century is not meeting the variety of needs of many students. The delivery of uniform courses measured with standardized testing, and the recent hierarchy of subjects where the arts and humanities are considered second-rate subjects is not catering to the individual and diverse interests and talents of our students. Education must be more than a delivery system of information. It must be the spark that ignites the curiosity inherent in every child. Music and the other arts are important, not because they improve math scores, but because if they are not a central part of the curriculum, we are failing to speak to parts of many children's core being.

The Green Party envisions an education system with the ultimate goal of producing engaged, informed and enthusiastic young people, who will continue to be lifelong contributing members of society. While standardized testing can provide useful measurements of achievement in a narrow range of subjects, it should not dominate learning, nor obstruct the ability of a teacher to meet their students' varied needs. We imagine a system where every single child's unique talents are nurtured to the utmost, and where close links to the community are engaged. Learning does not only happen within the walls of a school, just as health and wellness do not only occur inside the health care system. Responsibility for the curriculum and running of each school could be devolved to the school level, as that is where the local knowledge of the student's needs is best known.

Green MLAs will:

- provide a prominent role for teachers in the development and evolution of educational policy and how it is implemented.
- introduce citizenship studies, an outdoor education curriculum, and increase the amount of physical education class time to promote healthy, active lifestyles and community engagement;
- restore trades and other skills-based curricula in intermediate and high schools, and expand apprenticeship and co-op placement programs;
- expand school-based arts programs including visual, musical, folk and dramatic arts;
- institute a community-centred literacy program in our elementary schools to provide children time to learn from extended family and neighbours;
- make all provincial student loans interest-free, as was successfully accomplished in Nova Scotia;
- 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;
- extend the grace period of six months from graduation to one year before repayment of student loans begins;
- provide stable funding for post-secondary institutions.

7. Improving Education



8. Fiscal Responsibility

The Green Party is committed to living within our financial and ecological means. With care and diligence, governments can be fiscally prudent, respect nature and still ensure everyone has access to essential public services. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case on PEI, where public funds have been spent carelessly and far too many Islanders who require public assistance live below the poverty line. The previous government produced eight consecutive deficit budgets, and the debt load we now carry from decades of mismanagement will not quickly be eliminated. Servicing that debt is the third biggest expenditure in the provincial budget, costing more than government spends on such things as social services, roads and agriculture. Islanders want to know that every one of their tax dollars is spent with the care and forethought it deserves, and in a way that will benefit the common good. Too often have large amounts of money been wastefully spent with no tangible benefit to the vast majority of Islanders.

Our growing reliance on federal transfers leaves this province in an increasingly vulnerable position. A shift is needed to a more balanced economy, with a clear, long term objective of increasing our financial self-sufficiency. To achieve our objectives, the Green Party of Prince Edward Island believes that we need to focus on policies that will expand the tax base through economic development (*see pt.2 Strengthening Local Economies and pt.6 Eliminating Poverty*) thereby increasing government revenues, and performing a review of all government departments to ensure that spending in every corner of government is efficient and effective. Any thorough review of government spending must also include a study of staffing levels to ensure that we have a civil service that is appropriately sized for our population, but which also that reflects our status as a province within Canada.

Green MLA's will:

- introduce legislation that will require balanced budgets;
- expand tax base through new employment (*see pt. 2 Strengthening Local Economies*);
- expand the tax base by instituting a Basic Income Guarantee (*see pt.6 Eliminating Poverty*);
- commission a review of all government departments to ensure spending is efficient and effective (*see also pt.9 Becoming Energy Self-Sufficient*);
- renegotiate HST to decrease burden on low-income Islanders and to promote sustainable practices.

A background image showing a landscape with several wind turbines in the distance, partially obscured by a green banner.

9. Becoming Energy Self-Reliant

While PEI by itself can have only a minute impact on climate change, we will be profoundly affected by its presence. We can, however, through innovative policy, position ourselves economically for an energy future that is robust, sustainable and affordable. Uncertainty in supply and cost of fossil fuels into the future require that governments move to establish energy supplies that will be secure, safe and affordable.

Responsibility to protect future generations of Islanders from the catastrophic effects of climate change also mandate that new forms of energy must be developed and integrated into our society. PEI has done relatively well in adopting and integrating new, clean energy, but much more can be done. The Green Party strategy is designed to make PEI self reliant in a variety of clean, sustainable energy supplies indefinitely into the future. Wind has been developed extensively while little attention has been paid to other equally viable alternative sources such as biomass and solar.

Government can be instrumental in assisting the transition from fossil fuels, and in ensuring that energy security and affordability is protected and maintained for all Islanders. To facilitate this transition to a more secure energy future a Green government would establish a Fee and Dividend Energy Security Plan.

Fee and Dividend Energy Security Plan

Every tanker of fossil fuels that crosses the bridge or arrives by container ship would pay an importation fee which would then be distributed in a monthly dividend to every Islander. To internalize the social cost of carbon we propose an initial fee of \$15/ton on the CO₂ content of fossil fuels, increasing by \$10/ton every year. Accounting for the true cost of carbon-based fuels creates a level-playing field for all sources of energy, and informs consumers of the true cost-comparison of various fuels when making purchase decisions. A small amount of the revenue from the carbon fee would be dedicated to stimulating alternative energy capacity and enhancing our public transportation system.

Through the Fee and Dividend Energy Security Plan the vast majority of households will receive more than they will pay for increased energy costs. This will stimulate the local economy (*see also pt.2 Strengthening Local Economies*), create good, long-term jobs, protect family budgets, allow households to make independent choices about their energy usage, and position Prince Edward Island to be a world leader in clean energy technologies.

9. Becoming Energy Self-Reliant

Green MLAs will:

- implement a Fee and Dividend Energy Security Plan;
- use a small percentage of the income from Fee and Dividend Energy Security Plan to enhance public transportation systems and stimulate alternative energy capacity;
- legislate new provincial greenhouse gas reduction targets of 20% below 1990 levels by 2020 and carbon neutrality by 2050, in keeping with global efforts to stabilize the climate system through the phase-out of fossil fuels and the shift to renewable energy;
- ban all exploration of oil and gas in Prince Edward Island;
- utilize the potential of our forests to provide biomass for a significant portion of our heating needs, to improve the health of our forests and reduce our dependence on imported fossil fuels;
- remove the HST from all renewable energy sources and water saving devices;
- perform energy audits on all public buildings and implement changes to reduce operating costs;
- use renewable energy to power existing provincial buildings;
- improve building construction standards for new construction to reduce energy consumption;
- offer interest-free loans to convert from radiant electric to air source heat pumps;
- local improvement charges will be used to fund any viable renewable energy installation; solar electric, solar thermal, wind or hydro;
- ensure that Maritime Electric pays electricity producers a guaranteed price for their energy (feed-in tariffs);
- amend the Electric Power Act to allow for alternatives to the current electrical monopoly on Prince Edward Island.



10. Envisioning Culture

We are extremely blessed to live in such a breathtakingly beautiful province. Virtually tip to tip, a twenty minute drive is all that stands between you and an inviting coastline. From lupines and lighthouses to our red soil and rich cuisine, our Island culture and landscapes are trademarks worth protecting. Our rich rural lifestyles and welcoming communities draw tourists who wish to escape the hustle and bustle of their busy lives. Our distinctive history and culture, including the uniquely rich contribution of our Indigenous peoples and Acadian Islanders, is as much a tourism assets it is an essential part of our quality of life.

One of Prince Edward Island's greatest natural resources is its people and their expressions of identity and place. Experiential tourism is a rapidly expanding market on which PEI is uniquely positioned to capitalize. Our small size and proud history lends itself to countless rich Island experiences. A thriving and genuine arts and culture sector is as important for our visitors as it is for our residents. While it is important to clearly quantify the major contributions made by arts and culture to the Island economy, the Green Party recognizes that the qualitative, long lasting impact of arts and culture to our society is priceless.

Arts and culture activities define who we are. They articulate our identities and enable us to share them with the world. From culinary excellence, artisanal food producers, perceptive films, cutting edge contemporary visual art and renowned performers and musicians, Islanders are experiencing breakthroughs on the national and international stage. This success is being driven not by government investment, but rather through the resilience and dedication of our cultural makers. It is time for the government to lead and present a long-term, sustainable vision supporting our history, arts and culture. The Green Party recognizes that arts and culture must be fostered and approached as an essential asset to the quality of life and prosperity of our Island.

Green MLAs will:

- work with provincial arts, culture and heritage organizations to develop a long-term plan for preserving, sustaining and fostering a thriving arts and culture sector on PEI;
- develop a long-term, cohesive vision and strategy for tourism that recognizes the value of an unspoiled environment to our provincial identity;
- invest in both human resources and infrastructure to support artists and the cultural industry;
- increase promotion and supports for experiential and eco-tourism as a means to advance cultural activity and pristine natural landscapes as tourism assets;
- develop transparent procedures for the distribution of Culture and Tourism funds (*see also pt.8 Fiscal Responsibility*).

11. Respecting First Nations

The exception to everything one loves about Canada can be found in the profound inequality of life on First Nations Reserves, and life for off-reserve urban Indigenous people across Canada. Our federal government has failed to put an end to policies of assimilation, and to ensure that Canadian Indigenous peoples prosper. However, Prince Edward Island can lead the way by taking charge of our own aboriginal affairs.

The issues impacting Indigenous people in Canada are complex and cannot be assessed without a full sense of the violence of generations of occupation and assault upon their traditional cultures and values. No Canadian should be satisfied with the failed policies of the Indian Act, the huge bureaucracy of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and the enormous outlays of funding for lawyers and “experts” in the interminable comprehensive claims process.

Something fundamental needs to shift. That shift must begin with dignity for all Indigenous peoples; and if the federal government refuses to lead in this area, the provinces must take charge. The Green Party of PEI promises to lead with respect, allying with First Nations leaders to end negligent policies of assimilation, and ensure strong support through health and education in our jurisdiction.

Green MLAs will:

- recognize and respect the treaties signed with first Nations as the legal basis for the relationship between the Province of Prince Edward Island and First Nations peoples;
- legislate the duty to respect the 1990 Supreme Court of Canada Sparrow decision upholding Indigenous rights within our jurisdictional authority;
- launch a public education program to build awareness about our historic and current treaty relationships with First Nations, to be coordinated by the department of Aboriginal Affairs;
- serve as an ally to PEI First Nations in their dealings with Ottawa;
- advocate that the federal government finance native language immersion education for First Nations children phased-in one year at a time, and support immersion teacher training to properly deliver this program;
- pressure the federal government to commission a public inquiry into missing and murdered women and girls in Canada.



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