

Liberal Party Response: submitted by Jason Hickey, candidate in New Brunswick Southwest – Open Letter to NB Candidates, Federal Party Leaders, on Nature Protection and Climate Change

1. What will you do to protect wetlands, mature forests, and coastal habitats, which are essential to protecting our communities from flooding, ice storms, sea level rise, and other adverse effects of climate change and rising carbon emissions?

The Liberal Party has taken concrete measures to fight climate change since 2015. The government has invested \$100 billion towards climate action and clean growth. We have laid out a plan to plant 2 billion trees over the next 10 years and support other nature-based climate solutions like the conservation of wetlands, peatlands, croplands, and grasslands that sequester carbon and keep ecosystems intact. Wetlands, grasslands, and peatlands, are a fantastic way to capture and store carbon, and if re-elected, we will continue to restore and enhance these vitally important natural environments. Coastal environments like tidal wetlands, seagrass meadows, and riparian habitats also have the high potential to absorb and store carbon, and we will continue to make investments to protect these areas.

In addition, a re-elected Liberal government will support the building of climate-ready infrastructure. Every project we build—whether a water treatment facility, public transit project, or community rec centre—has to reduce pollution and be built to be resilient to the impact of climate change such as flooding, fires, coastal erosion, and extreme heat to ensure Canadians are protected from ever increasing adverse effects of climate change.

2. What will you do to ensure that the federal government achieve its commitment to protect 25 per cent of land/oceans by 2025 and 30 per cent by 2030?

To protect and conserve nature across the country, the Liberal government made the two single-largest investments in nature conservation in Canadian history— \$1.3 billion in Budget 2018 and \$3.3 billion in Budget 2021—which will allow us to protect a quarter of our lands and marine areas by 2025. We will establish 10 new national parks and 10 new national marine conservation areas (NMCAs) in the next 5 years—doubling the size of the existing national parks and NMCA system in Canada and work with Indigenous communities on co-management agreements of these national parks and NMCAs. If re-elected, a Liberal government will continue to work with partners to ensure Canada meets its goals to conserve 25% of our lands and waters by 2025 and 30% of each by 2030.

3. How will you support environmental organizations to help you achieve Canada's commitments to land and ocean protection?

Environmental organizations are key stakeholders in the fight against climate change, and a re-elected government will continue to engage with environmental organizations and other partners to ensure their perspectives are heard and incorporated into the development and implementation of policies that address climate change.

4. What will you do to empower and incentivize NB landowners to become involved in advocating and managing for conservation and protected areas as a part of community climate response?

We, as a government, need to lead by example. That is why we are investing billions of dollars to support climate resilient infrastructure, transitioning to good green jobs, and protecting 25 per cent of our land and oceans by 2025 and 30 per cent by 2030. A re-elected Liberal government will work with everyone, including NB landowners, to ensure we move forward in a green and sustainable manner.

5. What will you do to further the Canada Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and UNDRIP, particularly the empowerment of Indigenous Nations in environmental conservation? What will you do to invest in Indigenous-led land use planning in NB, including the establishment of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas and their stewardship by Indigenous Guardians, Indigenous-led efforts to restore and steward species at risk and habitat, and recognize and respect Indigenous knowledge in all aspects of nature conservation?

Reconciliation is an integral pillar in our party's election platform. UNDRIP has received Royal Assent on June 21st, 2021 and will chart the path forward on Reconciliation. All mandate letters to cabinet ministers will include a requirement to implement UNDRIP, and ensure their offices and ministers work alongside Indigenous peoples to advance their rights. We will also continue to accelerate implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action*, such as providing funding towards the construction of a permanent home for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, and provide sustained financial support for the Centre for core operations in fulfilling the mandate issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with dedicated support for the work on Missing Children and Unmarked Graves.

Indigenous peoples have stewarded these lands and waters since time immemorial. That's why we launched the Indigenous Guardians pilot in 2017, and helped establish Canada's first-ever Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA). A re-elected Liberal will work with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis partners to support new Indigenous Guardians programs and establish new Indigenous Guardians Networks. We will also support Indigenous communities to build capacity to establish more IPCAs. Indigenous Knowledge has been a part of policy development in the previous Liberal government, and re-elected, we will continue to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge in policy making. Our government will ensure that Indigenous peoples are partners in shaping the path forward on nature protection.