

# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



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October 7, 2024

Dear First Nations Chiefs and Leaders,

The upcoming 2024 provincial election is going to be extremely close, and First Nations voters have the power to determine its outcome. The First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) remains committed to changing the course of First Nation-Crown relations in BC in a way that empowers First Nations and results in real, concrete change for our children, families, and communities.

It is critically important that we collectively encourage First Nations citizens to get out and vote on October 19<sup>th</sup>, especially given political party positions related to the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and government to government relationships between BC First Nations and the Government of BC.

To assist you and your community's participation in this year's provincial election, the FNLC has compiled the attached 2024 Provincial Election Package.

The FNLC's 2024 Election Package is being provided to all 204 First Nations communities in BC. Included in the package are:

- Questions posed to the Conservative Party of BC, BC Greens, and BC NDP;
- Responses from the parties; and
- Basic voting information from Elections BC;

We feel it is important to note that the Conservative Party of BC chose **not** to provide answers to any of the FNLC questions and instead, submitted a verbatim copy of their economic reconciliation platform as a response.

Please note that the FNLC encourages not only the further distribution of this information to your community members but encourages each community to pose questions to your respective riding candidates.

If you have any questions, please contact Colin Braker, Communications Director, FNS at [cbraker@fns.bc.ca](mailto:cbraker@fns.bc.ca).

Sincerely,  
**FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

**On behalf of the FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT**

  
Cheryl Casimer

  
Robert Phillips

  
Hugh Braker

**On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS**

  
Grand Chief Stewart Phillip

  
Chief Don Tom

  
Chief Marilyn Slett

**On behalf of the BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS:**

  
Regional Chief Terry Teegee

Attach.

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## 2024 Provincial Election information package for BC First Nations

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**September 2024 FNLC letter to leaders of the Conservative Party of BC,  
BC Greens, and BCNDP with questions on select issues of  
importance to First Nations in consideration of the  
October 19, 2024 Provincial Election**

# FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

September 16, 2024

Via E-mail:

Dear (Party Leader Name),  
 Ms. Sonia Furstenu, Leader, BC Greens  
 Mr. David Eby, Leader, BCNDP  
 Mr. John Rustad, Leader, Conservative Party of BC



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The BC Assembly of First Nations, the First Nations Summit, and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, collaboratively working together as the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC), have worked with First Nations sectoral organizations to bring forward some key issues and questions of importance to First Nations in BC for consideration and response by each of the provincial political parties.

First Nations in BC have inherent title and rights, and treaty rights, and a unique constitutional government-to-government relationship with the provincial government. The passage of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act), unanimously supported by all parties in the Legislature on November 28, 2019, set the current course for the evolution of this relationship that is human rights-based and abounds with opportunity.

First Nations engage collaboratively with the Province of British Columbia in our collective effort to bridge the gaps in socio-economic standards between First Nations citizens and other British Columbians and Canadians, reconcile the prior existence of Aboriginal societies with the assertion of Crown sovereignty, and advance modern government-to-government relationships based on mutual respect and respect of our inherent rights.

First Nations remain steadfastly committed to changing the course of First Nation-Crown relations in BC in a positive way that results in transformative change that benefits our children, families, and communities. First Nations' socio-economic successes will undoubtedly benefit all British Columbians.

As with every election, the 2024 provincial election represents a significant opportunity to assess the political parties' commitments to addressing these matters and effecting change. Recognizing this, First Nation leaders across BC are actively engaging their citizens to encourage and aid their efforts to participate and exercise their vote in the upcoming provincial election.

The FNLC is preparing a 2024 BC Election package to be shared with all First Nations in BC in advance of the provincial election. To inform First Nation voters, we are posing a series of questions to provincial parties on issues of key interest to First Nation voters. The questions, along with the responses we receive, will be included in the 2024 BC Election package for First Nations. The package will also include basic voting information and the various parties' platforms on First Nation issues.

Following are questions relating to First Nations' key issues, interests, and concerns that we are seeking your response to:



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## 1. Implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (*Declaration Act*)

- a. The *Declaration Act* confirms the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) as the framework for reconciliation as articulated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and requires the provincial government to: take all measures necessary to ensure the laws of British Columbia are consistent with the UN Declaration; develop and implement an action plan in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration; and, monitor progress through public annual reporting. The Declaration Act also enables new decision-making agreements between the Province of BC and Indigenous governing bodies.

***How does your party intend to uphold the positive obligation on the Government of British Columbia to ensure that all laws, policies and practices in British Columbia be brought in alignment with the UN Declaration, including creating space for shared decision-making, and transforming the current legislative process to ensure substantive consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples?***

***Does your party intend to repeal the Declaration Act?***

***What does your party envision as key priorities to include in an updated Declaration Act action plan?***

***How does your party intend to ensure accountability for progress on the implementation of the Declaration Act, in full partnership with Indigenous peoples?***

## 2. Education

- a. Through the Declaration Act, the Province is committed to implement the UN Declaration, which recognizes the right of Indigenous peoples to be included in decision-making in matters that would affect their rights, including education. Legislation, policy, and practice reforms are needed to support shared decision-making between First Nations and local public boards of education, between First Nations and public post-secondary institutes, and between First Nations and the Province (including the Ministry of Education and Child Care and the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education & Future Skills).

***If elected, how will your party commit to fully supporting education and First Nations language actions under the Declaration Act Action Plan, including the necessary funding to ensure effective implementation?***

### 3. Children and Families

- a. On January 1, 2020, the federal Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth and Families came into force, in recognition of the inherent jurisdiction of Indigenous peoples over child and family services and establishing national standards applying to the delivery of child and family services. One of the purposes of the Act is to contribute to the implementation of the UN Declaration and to reduce the number of Indigenous children in care.

***How will your party work together with First Nations to fully implement An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth and Families and to support First Nations in exercising their jurisdiction over child and family services?***

- b. The Representative for Children & Youth recently released an investigation report following the abuse, torture and death of a child in the care of the Ministry of Children & Family Development. The report calls for a complete transformation of the child & family service system in British Columbia. "Tinkering around the edges of a colonially designed child welfare system that does not serve children and families well, and that has never served Indigenous children and families well, will not get us where children and families need us to be."

***How will your party respond to the call for system transformation in the child & family service sector?***

### 4. Early Learning and Child Care

- a. The vision articulated in the First Nations Early Learning & Child Care Framework (2019) is of a comprehensive system of services and supports that are "...designed and governed by First Nations; rooted in First Nations knowledge, language and culture; guided by Indigenous practices in childhood development; and strengthened by partnerships with governments, service delivery organizations and community members". Advancing and achieving this vision, in line with the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, requires that First Nations' jurisdiction is acknowledged and honoured.

The first-ever tripartite agreement on First Nations Early Learning and Child Care has been finalized for this region, with signatories representing the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, the First Nations Summit, the BC Assembly of First Nations, the Government of BC and the Government of Canada. This MOU commits parties to collaborate, dialogue, and jointly take action on issues and initiatives related to Early Learning and Child Care as self-determined by First Nations in BC.

***If elected, how will your government continue the ongoing implementation of this tripartite work?***

- b. First Nations leaders have repeatedly identified that capacity is an ongoing barrier to moving forward their priorities for Early Learning and Child Care. Capacity and



infrastructure – including workforce (recruitment, training, retention) and capital (buildings/spaces) – are regularly identified as the most pressing needs. Systemic approaches may be needed, but they must also recognize, reflect and respond to the diversity that exists – there are 204 First Nations in BC, and each has their own context, their own priorities, and their own approaches to this work.

***What does your party see as the critical components of both capital and workforce strategies that will support all First Nations in their jurisdiction and in pursuing their goals for quality, accessible, community-based Early Learning and Child Care?***

## 5. Justice Issues

- a. Since the BC Government's endorsement of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy in 2020, the BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC) has made significant strides in implementation. Advancements include: the opening of 9 Indigenous Justice Centres (with 6 on the way by December 2024) and a Virtual Indigenous Justice Centre; the transition of Gladue services from Legal Aid BC (LABC) to BCFNJC and a massive increase in Gladue reports delivered; work towards the transition of legal aid services for Indigenous peoples in BC from LABC to BCFNJC; the creation of an Elders and Knowledge Keepers Council; the release of an Indigenous Women's Justice Plan; two provincial justice forums; and more.

***If your party is elected, what immediate steps will you take to ensure the progress made in the past 4 years does not slow down? What specific actions to implement the BC First Nations Justice Strategy will you take in the short, medium, and long term to ensure progress towards systemic change in the criminal and child welfare systems?***

- b. The BCFNJC has operated for four years using mainly project-based funding to advance implementation of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy. To date, the BCFNJC has not received core funding for operations.

***If elected, will you commit to funding the BC First Nations Justice Council with long-term sustainable funding for core capacity to ensure organizational stability and to advance the BC First Nations Justice Strategy?***

## 6. First Nations Public Service

- a. First Nation Governments have long been underfunded and there is a significant discrepancy in core and stable funding for First Nations administrations when compared to municipal and other levels of governments in Canada. Strong governance is critical to successful implementation of virtually every Article of the UN Declaration. Articles 3-5 speak to the rights of Indigenous peoples to their own governance of their own affairs.

Article 4 states:

*Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.*

***If elected, how will your party ensure that First Nation Governments are supported and adequately funded to provide sustainable core public administration, in order to be able to exercise their inherent rights of self-determination and self-government as was committed to through the Declaration Act?***

- b. For First Nation governments to implement their inherent right of self-determination, take on increased governmental responsibilities, and effectively participate in government-to-government relationships, strong public servants in First Nation government administrations are required, along with relevant institutions that support First Nations government administrations. Engagement and feedback from BC First Nations have identified the ongoing need for a BC-based First Nation Controlled Institution that supports First Nations Government administrations.

***If elected, will your party support and adequately fund a BC-based First Nation Controlled Institution whose core work supports the development and capacity building of First Nation government administrations?***

## 7. Technology

- a. The role of innovation and technology in all our lives has never been so important, observable, and relevant in a post COVID-19 world. First Nations communities were particularly impacted by COVID-19 due to the vulnerability of remote communities. The pandemic prompted the explosion of a virtual/hybrid work environment. Despite this, many First Nations communities in BC are still struggling with connectivity or are severely under-served by the services they have. Many jobs are also increasingly impacted by the need to use technology, and to access the training required to work in tech-enabled work environments. So many First Nations communities lack adequate connection speeds, and so few Indigenous people work in the tech sector, all during a time where the digital economy is leading the entire economy.

***If elected, what are your plans to ensure BC stays on track to connecting the remaining 20% of remote and rural First Nations to high-speed fibre or an equivalent by 2027?***

***How are you planning to work with the federal government to address the internet affordability problem that many BC First Nations face?***

- b. Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada (ISED) has committed to improving Indigenous access to spectrum through the Indigenous Priority Window (IPW) initiative, which supports Indigenous-led connectivity projects in rural and remote areas. The IPW provides Indigenous communities with priority access to spectrum licenses, and ISED is currently in the engagement phase for this initiative until the fall of 2024.



***If elected, how will your government embrace and support ISED Canada 's Indigenous priority window for access to Spectrum?***

## **8. Fisheries and Aquaculture**

- a. Over the past decade we have observed significant changes in government approaches to engaging with First Nations on fisheries related issues. All too often, governments are more focused on economic growth, at the cost of infringing Aboriginal rights and reducing environmental protections. For these reasons, it is crucial, now more than ever, that First Nations and the Province of British Columbia work together to protect the lands, waters and resources that we hold dear.

If elected:

***What is your plan to align legislation relating to water and watersheds, including the Water Sustainability Act, with the Declaration Act?***

***How will your government prioritize the resources needed to safeguard watersheds and fish habitat in the province? And how will you ensure that First Nations are adequately resourced to manage water and aquatic resources in their territories?***

- b. British Columbia's aquaculture sector will experience significant changes with the federal government's commitment to phase out open-net pen salmon farms.

***If elected, how will your government advance protections for wild salmon and develop land-based fish farms? Additionally, how will your government work with First Nations on aquaculture economies that do not include salmon?***

- c. In recent years, BC's river system has been plagued by rising water temperatures and low stream flow, both of which put BC's wild salmon stocks at even greater risk.

***If elected, what steps will your government take to address rising water temperatures and low stream flow in BC's rivers?***

## **9. Energy and Mines**

- a. Canada developed a critical minerals strategy in 2022 without First Nations input; however, they resourced the development of a First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy which was released in March 2024. The First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy is supported by Chiefs resolutions from the First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. The Province of British Columbia has also created phase 1 of a BC critical minerals strategy which was released by the Premier in January 2024. One of BC's 11 recommendations in their strategy is "the alignment of BC and the First Nations Energy and Mining Council Critical Minerals Strategies and continued engagement with First Nations." First Nations have developed a proposal to align these strategies, but no provincial commitment has been made to support and resource this work.

***Critical Minerals Strategies have been developed by Canada, BC, and First***

***Nations. How will your party commit to providing the necessary resources for aligning these strategies?***

- b. For BC to be a leader in sustainable development, it will be critical for the BC Government to work with First Nations to create certainty required to attract investors. First Nations Guardians are considered to be the “boots on the ground” and will play an important role in providing capacity and technical support to First Nation decision makers and leaders in a culturally sensitive manner.

***How does your party plan to support the contributions First Nations make to environmental stewardship in BC through First Nations Guardians initiatives and First Nations Protected and Conserved Areas?***

- c. With the increasing amount of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from fossil fuel extraction for energy purposes, there is a need to actively move toward a renewable energy system that reduces emissions.

***How will your party reduce GHGs and invest in alternative and renewable energy?***

## 10. Forest Resources

- a. The BC First Nations Forestry Council is dedicated to upholding commitments under the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act).

***How do you plan to ensure the continued advancement and implementation of the Declaration Act, regarding forest sector legislation reform outlined in Action 2.10 of the Declaration Act Action Plan, and in relation to that, do you plan to address amendments to the Land Act?***

- b. The BC First Nations Forestry Council supports Nations in their forest sector activities and has worked with Nations who face barriers to accessing tenure and Nations who are successfully managing it.

***What is your approach to First Nations acquiring and managing tenure?***

- c. With growing recognition of the importance of protecting old growth trees and habitat, and with a shifting global economy, there is a great need to revision BC’s forestry sector to ensure it is viable while protecting the environment for future generations.

***How will your party protect old growth forests? What is your party’s approach to value added forest products?***

## 11. Climate Emergency

- a. The intersecting impacts of industrial and urban development, cumulative impacts, climate change and biodiversity loss can no longer be ignored in BC. First Nations throughout BC continue to face multiple emergency evacuations, loss and damage of infrastructure and land, food and resource insecurity, and death due to changes in weather conditions and unprecedented climate-related disasters such as wildfires,

floods, landslides, drought and irregular and record-breaking summer and winter temperatures. With UN Declaration legislation adopted at a federal and provincial level, there is a unique opportunity in BC to streamline and strategically and cooperatively work with First Nations on climate, emergency management and environmental policy and legislative development.

Urgent action is needed at all levels of society and government to address one of the most pressing challenges facing humanity and threatening our ways of living and being. Colonial climate policy is not sufficiently addressing the climate crisis and is deeply disconnected from First Nations worldviews and approaches and continues to reinforce the patterns of inequality, exploitation, discrimination, environmental degradation and top-down and siloed approaches. The FNLC and First Nations in BC require political and financial support to implement the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan and real accountability from the provincial government to address the root causes of the climate crisis.

***If elected, what steps would you and your government take to meaningfully co-develop and engage title and rights holders on climate policy and legislation and advance First Nation-led climate action and leadership? This could include long-term funding to ensure each First Nations in BC can hire at least one dedicated climate staff member.***

***In what ways have you supported efforts toward achieving a just transition away from fossil fuels toward renewable energy sources (i.e., solar, wind, geothermal)? How would you ensure that First Nations title and rights, and treaty rights, are acknowledged and upheld in this process and what steps would you take to ensure First Nations are equity partners in this transition?***

## 12. Emergency Management

- a. Disasters affect Indigenous people disproportionately around the world. As well, First Nations rights and jurisdiction are often not recognized in times of emergency. First Nations in BC are working with BC and Canada on a multilateral emergency management services funding and policy model that recognizes the importance of First Nations' full and equal participation in the four pillars of emergency management and decision-making and implementation processes in their territories and within First Nation communities.

***If elected, how will your party ensure First Nations' jurisdiction is respected and integrated throughout the province in Emergency Management strategies and planning going forward?***

***If elected, how will your party ensure the adequate and equitable resourcing to First Nations to fully participate in the four pillars of Emergency Management?***

13. Housing

- a. First Nations peoples are disproportionately affected by homelessness. In some BC communities, up to 80% of those experiencing homelessness are First Nations. Inadequate and unsafe housing in BC First Nations communities has led to a range of related social issues, including family violence, substance abuse, a suicide crisis, poor health, educational and economic outcomes, and forced migration, resulting in cultural loss. Additionally, the rise in “neo-vagrancy” municipal bylaws, which criminalize the public presence of unhoused and visibly marginalized individuals, has led to increased forced evictions of homeless encampments and supported the use of increasingly militarized measures during decampment operations.

***How will your government address the historic wrongs of colonization to achieve meaningful reconciliation and support First Nations self-determination over housing and homelessness?***

***What significant funding investments will your government make to create a more equitable and just housing system that truly meets the needs of BC First Nations?***

***If elected, what will be your government’s plan to address the increasing criminalization of homelessness in BC?***

Thank you for your consideration and attention to the critical issue of engaging First Nations voters. We are asking for your responses to these questions to be returned by **October 1, 2024**, in order for your responses to be provided to all First Nations communities in BC.

Please reply by email to Colin Braker, Communications Director, First Nations Summit, at [cbraker@fns.bc.ca](mailto:cbraker@fns.bc.ca).

Sincerely,  
**FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

**On behalf of the FIRST NATIONS SUMMIT**

  
Cheryl Casimer

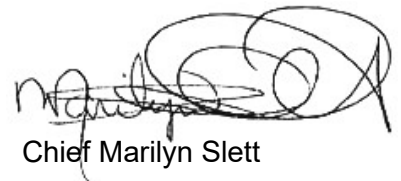
  
Robert Phillips

  
Hugh Braker

**On behalf of the UNION OF BC INDIAN CHIEFS**

  
Grand Chief Stewart Phillip

  
Chief Don Tom

  
Chief Marilyn Slett

**On behalf of the BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Terry Teegee', is positioned above the printed name.

Regional Chief Terry Teegee

CC: B.C. First Nations

## Response from BCNDP



First Nations Leadership Council  
Care of Colin Braker  
Sent via email

October 4, 2024

## **Re: BC NDP Response to FNLC Questionnaire**

Dear Colin Braker and Members of the First Nations Leadership Council,

We appreciate the opportunity to share our plans with you at this pivotal time. If elected, we will look forward to working closely with First Nations members, communities, leadership, First Nations organizations, and the First Nations Leadership Council on the matters outlined below, and much more.

Please answers to your questions from the BC NDP below.

---

### **1. Implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act)**

**a. The Declaration Act confirms the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) as the framework for reconciliation as articulated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and requires the provincial government to: take all measures necessary to ensure the laws of British Columbia are consistent with the UN Declaration; develop and implement an action plan in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples to achieve the objectives of the UN Declaration; and, monitor progress through public annual reporting. The Declaration Act also enables new decision-making agreements between the Province of BC and Indigenous governing bodies.**

**How does your party intend to uphold the positive obligation on the Government of British Columbia to ensure that all laws, policies and practices in British Columbia be brought in alignment with the UN Declaration, including creating space for shared decision-making, and transforming the current legislative process to ensure substantive consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples?**

BC is our home. We all want to build a good life here – and for too long, court rulings have created uncertainty across the province, and First Nations have been denied their rights.

It's why David Eby and the BC NDP are proud of our historic partnership with First Nations leadership to pass into law the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act). We know we are just beginning the hard work of the Declaration Act Action Plan with inherent rights, treaty rights and title holders.

Real reconciliation means working together and finding a path forward that works for everyone.

Working with the Declaration Act Secretariat and all government entities, we are committed to continue the Declaration Act commitments including legislative alignment similar to the changes we've enacted to the Land Title and Property Law Amendment Act, the Police Act, the new Anti-Racism Act, the Athlii Gwaii legacy trust and the Vancouver Charter Amendment Act.

We're neighbours, and we're stronger working together to build a brighter future for everyone. We want to work together to create opportunities and encourage investment opportunities for First Nations, businesses and communities. That's what we've done and will do.

John Rustad wants to take us back to money-first agreements and fighting in court, an approach that didn't work for people or our communities.

### **Does your party intend to repeal the Declaration Act?**

No.

### **What does your party envision as key priorities to include in an updated Declaration Act action plan?**

Reconciliation is a shared responsibility and partnerships between all levels of government are fundamental to improve life for everyone. Nobody wins with the uncertainty, enforced poverty, racism and trauma that comes from our province's shameful history. The costs of not acknowledging that history are carried not only by Indigenous Peoples, but by all British Columbians.

By resetting our relationships as true partnerships and by recognizing and supporting the jurisdiction and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples to govern their own lives, we ensure Indigenous governments have the resources to deliver services to their communities. Not only can we move forward, we can build a stronger and more prosperous future not just for Indigenous Peoples, but for all British Columbians.

**How does your party intend to ensure accountability for progress on the implementation of the Declaration Act in partnership with Indigenous peoples?**

David Eby and the BC NDP will continue, through the Declaration Act Secretariat, to work with Indigenous leadership, communities, and people to implement the agreed upon items of the Declaration Action Plan. By doing so, we will follow the legislated requirements of the Declaration Act, specifically Section 5, which directs the minister to prepare an annual report in consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples to state the progress that has been made towards the goals in the action plan before June 30.

**2. Education**

a. Through the Declaration Act, the Province is committed to implement the Declaration, which recognizes the right of Indigenous peoples to be included in decision-making in matters that would affect their rights, including education. Legislation and practice reforms are needed to support shared decision-making between Nations and local public boards of education, between First Nations and Post Secondary institutes, and between First Nations and the Province (including the Ministry of Education and Child Care and the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills).

**If elected, how will your party commit to fully supporting education and First Nations language actions under the Declaration Act Action Plan, including the necessary funding to ensure effective implementation?**

We all want our kids to have better opportunities than we did. Let's give them the best start possible.

David Eby and the BC NDP will top up funding to advance Indigenous education and training opportunities, including the preservation and revitalization of First Nations languages and cultural heritage.

Additionally, with the Declaration Act and through the Declaration Act Action Plan, a BC NDP government would continue to strengthen partnerships with First Nations across

ministries and service areas, including the Ministry of Education and Childcare and the Ministry of Post Secondary and Future Skills.

The BC NDP government implemented a key action within the Declaration Action Plan this past August where each local board of education will now establish and maintain an Indigenous Education Council (IEC) to provide comprehensive and equitable education and support services for Indigenous students - First Nations, Metis and Inuit.

By making each school board more accountable to communities, they can take a distinctions-based approach, prioritize local protocols and language, honour cultural diversity within schools, and maintain consistent quality of service across the province.

With the First Nations Education Steering Committee we also developed the Indigenous-focused grad requirement to build further awareness and understanding of First Peoples' perspectives, cultures, and histories among all B.C. students and advance reconciliation.

Regarding post-secondary, the Declaration Act Action Plan commits the Province to take the following actions:

- Support post-secondary institutions to be more culturally relevant and responsive to the needs of Indigenous learners and communities.
- Expand the Aboriginal Service Plan program to all 25 public post-secondary institutions.
- Ensure that Indigenous learners have access to student housing that is safe, inclusive and enables them to thrive personally, academically, and culturally.
- Develop mechanisms for Indigenous learners and communities to play an integral role in public post-secondary institutions' decision-making.
- Identify legislative amendments needed to ensure all public post-secondary institution boards include at least one Indigenous person.

David Eby and the BC NDP fully support the actions above and would look forward to working with First Nations leadership to ensure this is done in a good way.

Rustad cut schools before - and he would do it again. That's a risk we can't afford.

### 3. **Children and Families**

**a. On January 1, 2020, the federal Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children Youth and families came into force, in recognition of the inherent jurisdiction of Indigenous peoples over child and family services and establishing national standards applying to the delivery of child and family services. One of the**

**purposes of the Act is to contribute to the implementation of the UN Declaration and to reduce the number of Indigenous children in care.**

**How will your party work together with First Nations to fully implement an Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth and Families and to support First Nations in exercising their jurisdiction over child and family services?**

Nothing is more precious than the children in our communities. Indigenous children and families deserve safe, equitable services that align with their home community's vision for young ones and families.

Upholding our commitments in the Declaration Act will require deep and lasting change to the way we do child and family services in this province. We are glad that national standards will be applied to the delivery of child and family services, and we wholeheartedly support calls to reduce the number of Indigenous children in care.

If elected, David Eby and the BC NDP will establish a cross-ministry group of senior public service officials to pursue a new direction, in partnership with First Nations. The Declaration Act Action Plan commits us to co-developing a fiscal framework to move forward with First Nations' jurisdiction over their own child and family services.

An NDP government would continue this work in close collaboration with Indigenous leaders, Elders, and Indigenous-led community organizations.

John Rustad is planning deep cuts that will mean less services for child and family services. Families and communities can't afford that - that's too big a risk.

**b. The Representative for Children and Youth recently released an investigation report following the abuse, torture and death of a child in the care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development. The report calls for a complete transformation of the child and family service system in BC. "Tinkering around the edges of a colonially designed child welfare system that does not serve children and families well, and that has never served Indigenous children and families well, will not get us where children and families need to be."**

**How will your party respond to the call for system transformation in the child and family service sector?**

David Eby and the BC NDP stand by the statements delivered in July when the *Don't Look Away* report was released. The stories detailed in this report are disturbing and heartbreaking beyond words – anything short of transformation would be inadequate. We're determined to do better for kids and families.

This work must be proactive and thorough. Initial phases will include the following focus areas:

- Developing a child and youth action plan for all of the government that will ensure child and youth wellbeing.
- Developing an outcomes-based framework for measurement and accountability.
- Strengthening information sharing between ministries and service providers.
- Requiring government policy decisions to consider the implications for children and youth.
- Working across ministries to address family and gender-based violence, especially for Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit people and children.
- Examining the separation of child and family supports and protective services so that families can get the help they need without fearing separation.
- Reconfiguring Child and Family Services across ministries.
- Exploring supports for Indigenous governments to resume jurisdiction over their own child and family services.

If elected, we will continue to work closely with First Nations on family system reform.

#### 4. **Early Learning and Child Care**

a. **The vision articulated in the First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Framework (2019) is of a comprehensive system of services and supports that are “...designed and governed by First Nations; rooted in First Nations knowledge, language and culture, guided by Indigenous practices in childhood development; and strengthened by partnerships with governments, service delivery organizations and community members”. Advancing and achieving this vision, in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, requires that First nations’ jurisdiction is acknowledged and honoured.**

**The first ever tripartite agreement on First Nations Early Learning and Child Care has been finalized for this region, with signatories representing the Union of BC Indian Chiefs, the First nations Summit, the BC Assembly of First Nations, the Government of BC and the Government of Canada. This MOU Commits parties to collaborate, dialogue and jointly take action on issues and initiatives related to Early Learning and Child care as self-determined by First nations in BC.**

**If elected, how will your government continue the ongoing implementation of this tripartite work?**



We are honoured to have been involved in the development of the First Nations Early Learning and Child Care Framework alongside First Nations and the Government of Canada.

We're committed to an inclusive, universal childcare system, implemented through a distinctions-based approach, which will move forward jurisdiction over child care at the community level. The model for implementation may not look the same for each Nation or community – a BC NDP government would work closely with Indigenous leadership and communities to understand their vision for early learning and childcare.

We understand that to do this, we'll need to consider that early learning and childcare is not a service or policy area that can be isolated from work delivered by other Ministries, like health care and housing. Increasingly, the Province is supporting projects that span provincial jurisdictions, like developments which combine housing, childcare environments, programming for Elders and healthcare delivery in the same space, for example.

Initiatives like this are an opportunity to do early learning and childcare in a new and more culturally grounded way. If elected, we'll be excited to continue the next phase of this work which will benefit so many families and communities.

John Rustad would make deep cuts to childcare and shift costs to families and First Nations.

**b. First Nations leaders have repeatedly identified that capacity is an ongoing barrier to moving forward their priorities for Early Learning and Child Care. Capacity and infrastructure – including workforce (recruitment, training, retention) and capital (buildings/spaces) – are regularly identified as the most pressing needs. Systemic approaches may be needed, but they must also recognize, reflect and respond to the diversity that exists – there are 204 First Nations in BC, and each has their own context, their own priorities, and their own approaches to this work.**

**What does your party see as the critical components of both capital and workforce strategies that will support all First Nations in their jurisdiction and in pursuing their goals for quality, accessible, community-based Early Learning and Child Care?**

For many Nations, capacity is an ongoing challenge, and this shows up across a broad range of areas, early learning and childcare included.

The incoming government will need to work closely with First Nations leadership in several different ways, from government-to-government agreements, sometimes

including federal and local governments, to province-wide policies (like the requirement for Indigenous Education Councils), to project-level collaboration. We understand that all of these initiatives take time, and this can be especially challenging for smaller communities where Reconciliation Agreements and front-line supports are done by the same circle of leadership.

If elected, a BC NDP government would continue with capacity-building initiatives at a government-to-government level and through specific projects. We would be interested in hearing more about how this might apply to early childhood education – we believe that giving kids a good start in life sets them up for happier and more well-adjusted adulthoods. In this way, early childhood education is an intergenerational investment, and we are eager to come alongside each community to support the implementation of their vision, values, and teachings.

## 5. Justice issues

**a. Since the BC government’s endorsement of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy in 2020, the BC First Nations Justice Council (BCFNJC) has made significant strides in implementation. Advancements include: the opening of 9 Indigenous Justice Centres (with 6 on the way by Dec. 2024) and a Virtual Indigenous Justice Centre; the transition of Gladue services from Legal Aid BC (LABC) to BCFNHC and a massive increase in Gladue reports delivered; work towards the transition of legal aid services for Indigenous peoples in BC from LABC to BCFNJC; the creation of an Elders and Knowledge Keepers Council; the release of an Indigenous Women’s Justice Plan; two provincial justice forums; and more.**

**If your party is elected, what immediate steps will you take to ensure the progress made in the past 4 years does not slow down? What specific actions to implement the BC First nations Justice Strategy will you take in the short, medium, and long term to ensure progress towards systemic change in the criminal and child welfare systems?**

We’re proud to have worked shoulder-to-shoulder with First Nations on a significant body of work to better align our Justice System in BC with our obligations under the Declaration Act.

Updates to the Police Act and BC Provincial Policing Standards are identified as priority items in the Declaration Act Action Plan. In close collaboration with First Nations leadership, we also plan to support modernization of the federal First Nations Policing Program.

We're proud of the First Nations Justice Strategy, which has received FNLC endorsement in principle. If elected, an NDP government would work to reduce the significant overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples impacted by the justice system, and further explore the restoration of traditional justice systems.

We affirm the mandate of the First Nations Justice Council, and would look forward to working with the leadership of the First Nations Justice Council alongside First Nations leadership across the province to develop preventative and restorative approaches to justice that support healing on an individual, community, and systemic level.

**b. The BCFNJC has operated for four years using mainly project-based funding to advance implementation of the BC First Nations Justice Strategy. To date, the BCFNJC has not received core funding for operations.**

**If elected, will you commit to funding the BC First Nations Justice Council with long-term sustainable funding for core capacity to ensure organizational stability and to advance the BC First Nations Justice Strategy?**

David Eby and the BC NDP fully support the mandate and work of the First Nations Justice Council and we understand the challenges of project-based funding. We will commit to working with the Justice Council to find an agreed-upon solution for long-term core capacity funding to ensure organizational stability.

## **6. First Nations Public Service**

**a. First Nation Governments have long been underfunded and there is a significant discrepancy in core and stable funding for First Nations administrations when compared to municipal and other levels of governments in Canada. Strong governance is critical to successful implementation of virtually every article of the UN Declaration. Articles 3-5 speak to the rights of Indigenous peoples to their own governance of their own affairs.**

Article 4 states:

*Indigenous peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions.*

**If elected, how will your party ensure that First Nation Governments are supported and adequately funded to provide sustainable core public administration, in order to**

**be able to exercise their inherent rights of self-determination and self-government as was committed to through the Declaration Act?**

Like other areas of policy and service, a BC NDP government would continue to work collaboratively with First Nations leadership to enable a distinctions-based approach and a service delivery strategy matching the vision and needs of the community. This will include strategies to support self-determination in service provision and improve coordination to ensure that services meet a high quality standard across the province.

This will involve work to understand how service delivery should vary according to differences in governance, culture, geography, and need – with a particular focus on how to improve services across urban, rural, and on-reserve communities. We would look forward to collaborating with First Nations leadership, with support from Indigenous-led service providers who have insights into the needs of some urban Indigenous populations.

For example, trained and experienced staff supporting elected leadership will speed up permitting times to get projects built and support good jobs in their community and neighbouring communities, including generational opportunities where approved large projects provide family-supporting jobs not only in the community but across BC.

David Eby and the BC NDP recognize there is complexity in many areas of service delivery due to overlapping jurisdictional issues with Ottawa. Unlike John Rustad's previous government, where he served as a cabinet minister under the BC Liberals for many years, we prefer partnership-building over fighting in court and transactional agreements. We have demonstrated our willingness to step into areas that aren't neatly in the Provinces jurisdiction, like housing development and asset management planning on-reserve, for example, because we share the same values including meeting the needs of people, families and communities.

**b. For First Nation governments to implement their inherent right of self-determination, take on increased governmental responsibilities, and effectively participate in government-to-government relationships, strong public servants in First Nation government administrations are required, along with relevant institutions that support First Nations government administrations.**

**If elected, will your party support and adequately fund a BC-based First Nation Controlled Institution whose core work supports the development and capacity building of First Nation government administrations?**

The BC NDP is planning for a government that is efficient, modernized, and highly collaborative. This means changing how we work and support each other in many ways.

We will strengthen our commitment to the Indigenous Youth Internship Program for more intern placements, for longer periods in a more diverse range of First Nation governments and organizations.

We also commit to continue working with the First Nations Public Service Secretariat, post-secondary institutions, and like-minded organizations to support First Nation communities as they pursue excellence in their own governments and administrations.

## 7. Technology

**a. The role of innovation and technology in all our lives has never been so important, observable, and relevant in a post COVID-19 world. First Nations communities were particularly impacted by COVID-19 due to the vulnerability of remote communities. The pandemic prompted the explosion of a virtual/hybrid work environment. Despite this, many First Nations communities in BC are still struggling with connectivity or are severely under-served by the services they have. Many jobs are also increasingly impacted by the need to use technology, and to access the training required to work in tech-enabled work environments. So many First Nations communities lack adequate connection speeds, and so few Indigenous people work in the tech sector, all during a time where the digital economy is leading the entire economy.**

**If elected, what are your plans to ensure BC stays on track to connecting the remaining 20% of remote and rural First Nations to high-speed fibre or an equivalent by 2027?**

**How are you planning to work with the federal government to address the internet affordability problem that many BC First Nations face?**

We're excited about the prospect of strengthening our relationship with the First Nations Technology Council, as this group will have unique insights on where the Province can deliver the highest impact right now.

Reliable internet connectivity is critical if we want communities to leverage the various opportunities and expanded services that are now available online. We also know that without intervention, the digital gap will continue to grow – and with it, access to

improved healthcare, economic opportunities, education and training, and much more will be out of reach in underserved communities.

We will continue to stay on track to connecting the remaining rural, remote, and First Nation communities to high speed fibre or equivalent by 2027.

We must continue our partnership to build strong, resilient communities where people can thrive, fully participate in the digital economy, and access online resources.

John Rustad will look out for those at the top and make everyone pay the price. We can't afford that.

**b. Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada (ISED) has committed to improving Indigenous access to spectrum through the Indigenous Priority Window (IPW) initiative, which supports Indigenous-led connectivity projects in rural and remote areas. The IPW provides Indigenous communities with priority access to spectrum licenses, and ISED is currently in the engagement phase for this initiative until the fall of 2024.**

**If elected, how will your government embrace and support ISED Canada 's Indigenous priority window for access to Spectrum?**

We're excited about the idea of Indigenous-led and managed connectivity, which would not only address gaps in telecommunications service, but could also allow people to build skills in a growing field, facilitate economic growth and create more equitable access that would benefit remote Indigenous communities and other rural regions.

Many of the recommendations to come out of the Closing the Digital Gap plan are directed toward Ottawa, but the BC NDP will work and be supportive of First Nations leadership on this initiative. The training and education areas of the Closing the Digital Gap action plan align with our values as a party, and if elected, we will engage further in the upcoming months and years.

## **8. Fisheries and Aquaculture**

**a. Over the past decade we have observed significant changes in government approaches to engaging with First Nations on fisheries related issues. All too often, governments are more focused on economic growth, at the cost of infringing Aboriginal rights and reducing environmental protections. For these reasons, it is**



**crucial, now more than ever, that First Nations and the Province of British Columbia work together to protect the lands, waters and resources that we hold dear.**

**If elected, what is your plan to align legislation relating to water and watersheds, including the Water Sustainability Act, with the Declaration Act?**

We appreciate this point. Your recommendation to work together to protect lands, waters, and resources aligns well with the BC NDP's plans in this area.

We're moving away from bureaucrats in Victoria deciding what's best. Instead, we are moving to local tables with local people setting local priorities. This means First Nations, provincial and local government officials, residents, community organizations, academics, and businesses working closely together to plan for watersheds their communities depend on. By doing this, there are opportunities to share the challenges experienced by each community and opportunities for creative solutions that work better for all. We are committed to expand this collaborative approach, to balance the needs of communities and nature, to other regions in our province.

**How will your government prioritize the resources needed to safeguard watersheds and fish habitat in the province? And how will you ensure that First Nations are adequately resourced to manage water and aquatic resources in their territories?**

We hope you'll take some time to explore the BC NDP's platform, which discusses watershed commitments. We plan to protect and restore watersheds and waterways in the province. We also plan to expand salmon restoration in estuaries, intertidal zones, and spawning habitats.

First Nations are leading the way on this work – for example, kʷikwə́λəm First Nation has seen sockeye salmon return to parts of the river in their traditional territories in a way that hasn't been seen in 100 years. BC Hydro recently committed to funding a 10-year program to design, build, and operate a new hatchery to support their work. It will include technical work experience and training to Nation members so they can assume hatchery jobs in the future.

We hope that through partnership and close collaboration, there will be more opportunities for restoration projects like this.

**b. British Columbia's aquaculture sector will experience significant changes with the federal government's commitment to phase out open-net pen salmon farms.**

**If elected, how will your government advance protections for wild salmon and develop land-based fish farms? Additionally, how will your government work with First Nations on aquaculture economies that do not include salmon?**

Yes, we recognize that the federal government's move to eliminate open-net salmon farms over the next five years will necessitate changes within tenure systems in BC. Since 2022, the NDP government requirements were that salmon farm tenures would only be granted in situations where federal regulators could be convinced of wild salmon protection, and agreements were in place with local First Nations.

Wild salmon are critical to people, fisheries and communities. We will continue to work to restore indigenous salmon runs, support food security, honour the cultural significance of salmon and enable strong local economies and environmental stewardship.

**c. In recent years, BC's river system has been plagued by rising water temperatures and low stream flow, both of which put BC's wild salmon stocks at even greater risk.**

**If elected, what steps will your government take to address rising water temperatures and low stream flow in BC's rivers?**

Climate change is a significant threat to our ecosystems in BC, and we're already seeing the impacts through rising water temperature, low stream flow, drought, flood and fire. There will be some areas of climate change that we can plan for and prevent. Others will be less predictable. We need to be prepared for both.

As part of our Action Plan for You we will commit:

**Driving a made-in-BC strategy to protect BC's biodiversity and ecological integrity.** Our province is home to the richest, most complex and diverse ecosystems in Canada — it is our collective responsibility to act urgently to protect it. That's why we'll work to protect biodiversity and critical ecosystems alongside First Nations, communities, workers, industry, organizations, and the public. Through this collaborative work with local people and communities, BC is breaking from outdated conservation models, and will objectively set and deliver on science-based targets to protect water and natural systems that support all of us.

In addition to building out the framework, we'll work with schools, colleges, and universities to educate young people and make it easier to pursue careers in sustainability science and climate change research.

John Rustad has called climate science “a lie” and says, “we should not be trying to fight climate change.” It’s hard to have a serious discussion about climate change with someone who refuses to admit that it is human caused.

## 9. Energy and Mines

a. **Canada developed a critical minerals strategy in 2022 without First Nations input; however, they resourced the development of a First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy which was released in March 2024. The First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy is supported by Chiefs resolutions from the First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. The Province of British Columbia has also created phase 1 of a BC critical minerals strategy which was released by the Premier in January 2024. One of BC’s 11 recommendations in their strategy is "the alignment of BC and the First Nations Energy and Mining Council Critical Minerals Strategies and continued engagement with First Nations." First Nations have developed a proposal to align these strategies, but no provincial commitment has been made to support and resource this work.**

**Critical Minerals Strategies have been developed by Canada, BC, and First Nations. How will your party commit to providing the necessary resources for aligning these strategies?**

Cooperation between all levels of government and First Nations on mineral projects impacting First Nations territories is not just good strategy – it’s required under the Declaration Act.

We will work alongside First Nations leadership and the First Nations Energy and Mining Council to ensure the BC Critical Mineral Strategy safeguards sustainability, maintains best practices and upholds the economic interests of First Nations communities.

We’re also taking action to quickly move mining projects for critical minerals forward in order to create good-paying resource jobs, and build a clean economy – one that respects First Nations’ rights, works better for all local communities, and protects the climate.

We are committed to speeding up permitting times, supporting opportunities for new jobs in mining and launching shovel-ready projects that support good jobs to ensure BC will be a leader in the clean energy future the world is heading towards. To this, our Action Plan for You states our commitments to:

- Providing dedicated support to advance projects to final investment through the new Critical Minerals Office, including coordination with the federal government to reduce duplication and supporting First Nations engagement and capacity.

- Working with the industry, unions, stakeholders and First Nations on a long term outreach strategy to attract more investment and opportunities — from mineral exploration to advanced processing — in British Columbia’s critical minerals sector.

**b. For BC to be a leader in sustainable development, it will be critical for the BC Government to work with First Nations to create certainty required to attract investors. First Nations Guardians are considered to be the “boots on the ground” and will play an important role in providing capacity and technical support to First Nation decision makers and leaders in a culturally sensitive manner.**

**How does your party plan to support the contributions First Nations make to environmental stewardship in BC through First Nations Guardians initiatives and First Nations Protected and Conserved Areas?**

The BC NDP plans to support more certainty for First Nations by guaranteeing permit review timelines for critical mineral projects, while maintaining environmental and safety standards. We’ll do this by developing a Critical Minerals Office and a strategy to attract investment and create jobs. We’ll also build out the physical and workforce resources needed for operations, and we’ll ensure lasting benefits to First Nations through continued revenue sharing and equity ownership opportunities.

**c. With the increasing amount of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from fossil fuel extraction for energy purposes, there is a need to actively move toward a renewable energy system that reduces emissions.**

**How will your party reduce GHGs and invest in alternative and renewable energy?**

The BC NDP plans to make BC a leader on clean energy through Clean BC. Unlike John Rustad, who continues to deny climate change science, the NDP joins other governments around the world in recognizing climate change as a crisis deserving of immediate action.

Because the BC NDP has taken climate change seriously and planned for prevention and resilience across the province, BC is on track to exceed its 2025 methane reduction target. We’re on our way to achieving a 75% reduction within the oil and gas industry by 2030.

Our Action Plan for You states our commitment to:

**Developing a Clean Energy Plan to make BC’s vision of a clean-energy future a reality.** Working with First Nations and communities, we will do the work needed to transform BC’s economy away from overreliance on fossil fuels to sources of

energy that are clean, affordable and reliable — while finding regulatory efficiencies to streamline the permitting and construction of new clean-energy infrastructure and renewable power projects.

Still, there's more to do. As BC's biggest polluters, extractive industries need to foot the bill for clean up, and need to be held to high standards on GHG emissions. Rustad has promised to tear up CleanBC and take us backward on climate change. That's a risk we can't afford. To keep our climate progress going - we need a BC NDP government.

## 10. Forest Resources

### a. **The BC First Nations Forestry Council is dedicated to upholding commitments under the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act).**

**How do you plan to ensure the continued advancement and implementation of the Declaration Act, regarding forest sector legislation reform outlined in Action 2.10 of the Declaration Act Action Plan, and in relation to that, do you plan to address amendments to the Land Act?**

We will partner with First Nations to ensure forests in BC are healthy, productive, and sustainable. These partnerships will continue to drive forestry innovation and good-paying jobs while protecting old growth and ecosystems.

Our Action Plan for You commitment says we will:

**Ensure partnerships for healthy, productive and sustainable forests** to drive forestry innovation and good-paying jobs, protect old growth and ecosystems, and expand working community forests to build a strong future for all forest workers.

As well, through the Declaration Act Action Plan, an NDP government will work with First Nations to reform forest legislation, to reflect a shared strategic vision for forestry. This would mean continued work with the First Nations Forestry Council and First Nations communities that are driving forestry initiatives.

We will do this by creating new Forest Landscape Planning Tables where First Nations, government officials, industry, and communities guide local decisions and priorities in sustainable forest stewardship that increases sustainable harvest levels, drives improved old-growth management, and respects local knowledge and community priorities.

- b. The BC First Nations Forestry Council supports Nations in their forest sector activities and has worked with Nations who face barriers to accessing tenure and Nations who are successfully managing it.**

**What is your approach to First Nations acquiring and managing tenure?**

We're supportive of First Nations acquiring and managing tenure, including First Nations woodland licences.

Our platform commitments states by:

**Securing a more sustainable future for First Nations and communities** that depend on local forests for their economic strength by doubling the land held in BC's new and existing community forests

- c. With growing recognition of the importance of protecting old growth trees and habitat, and with a shifting global economy, there is a great need to revision BC's forestry sector to ensure it is viable while protecting the environment for future generations.**

**How will your party protect old growth forests? What is your party's approach to value added forest products?**

Our public commitment states by:

**Protecting more old growth in partnership with First Nations** by completing the provincial commitment set out in the Old Growth Strategic Review's 14 recommendations.

The BC NDP strongly supports a responsible and sustainable approach to forestry that protects old growth forests while ensuring our forest economy supports jobs, encourages innovation, and makes the most of timber products. Among other initiatives, we'll do that by developing a Forest Value Fund to fast-track wood manufacturing facilities and retool mills to process second growth timber. We'll also work to expand the value-added manufacturing sector.

## **11. Climate Emergency**

- a. The intersecting impacts of industrial and urban development, cumulative impacts, climate change and biodiversity loss can no longer be ignored in BC. First Nations throughout BC continue to face multiple emergency evacuations, loss and damage of infrastructure and land, food and resource insecurity, and death due to**



changes in weather conditions and unprecedented climate-related disasters such as wildfires, floods, landslides, drought and irregular and record-breaking summer and winter temperatures. With UN Declaration legislation adopted at a federal and provincial level, there is a unique opportunity in BC to streamline and strategically and cooperatively work with First Nations on climate, emergency management and environmental policy and legislative development.

Urgent action is needed at all levels of society and government to address one of the most pressing challenges facing humanity and threatening our ways of living and being. Colonial climate policy is not sufficiently addressing the climate crisis and is deeply disconnected from First Nations worldviews and approaches and continues to reinforce the patterns of inequality, exploitation, discrimination, environmental degradation and top-down and siloed approaches. The FNLC and First Nations in BC require political and financial support to implement the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan and real accountability from the provincial government to address the root causes of the climate crisis.

**If elected, what steps would you and your government take to meaningfully co-develop and engage title and rights holders on climate policy and legislation and advance First Nation-led climate action and leadership? This could include long-term funding to ensure each First Nations in BC can hire at least one dedicated climate staff member.**

**In what ways have you supported efforts toward achieving a just transition away from fossil fuels toward renewable energy sources (i.e., solar, wind, geothermal)? How would you ensure that First Nations title and rights, and treaty rights, are acknowledged and upheld in this process and what steps would you take to ensure First Nations are equity partners in this transition?**

People everywhere are seeing firsthand the threat of climate change. We've experienced the worst forest fire season on record, major floods, drought and extreme weather events. The climate crisis impacts people's lives in every way and we must do everything to leave our children and grandchildren with a legacy of climate action, clean air, and protected land.

David Eby and the BC NDP agree that we must work together and listen to First Nations to address climate change. In 2023, we brought the Emergency and Disaster Management Act into law which recognizes Indigenous Peoples as true partners in emergency management and established a framework for agreements between First Nations and other authorities to help advance shared decision-making and coordination. We will move forward with the work of defending people in BC against the threat from a changing climate by:

- helping protect homes, communities and local watersheds by ramping up active forest management. By partnering with communities and First Nations to proactively remove highly flammable woody material and prune tree stands and remove debris, we can slow or stop the spread of wildfires and protect primary water sources for communities – while making better use of all fibre by supplying local mills with fire damaged timber and waste that would have otherwise been burned or decayed.
- Making sure BC communities have secure sources of clean water for the future by putting land use and watershed planning in the hands of local communities, farmers and businesses, in partnership with First Nations, and supporting those communities to identify and prioritize local water use.

While John Rustad continues to say there is no climate crisis, David Eby is putting clean energy at the heart of BC's future. With our CleanBC climate plan setting strict caps on emissions from oil and gas, we are moving swiftly to develop new sources of clean energy — like wind, solar, hydrogen and renewable fuels — to power our province and growing economy. Our clean energy plan includes: Developing a Clean Energy Plan to make BC's vision of a clean-energy future a reality. Working with First Nations and communities, we will do the work needed to transform BC's economy away from overreliance on fossil fuels to sources of energy that are clean, affordable and reliable — while finding regulatory efficiencies to streamline the permitting and construction of new clean-energy infrastructure and renewable power projects.

## 12. Emergency Management

**a. Disasters affect Indigenous people disproportionately around the world. As well, First Nations rights and jurisdiction are often not recognized in times of emergency. First Nations in BC are working with BC and Canada on a multilateral emergency management services funding and policy model that recognizes the importance of First Nations' full and equal participation in the four pillars of emergency management and decision-making and implementation processes in their territories and within First Nation communities.**

**If elected, how will your party ensure First Nations' jurisdiction is respected and integrated throughout the province in Emergency Management strategies and planning going forward?**

Additionally to the response to Question 11a, a BC NDP government will follow the Emergency and Disaster Management Act (EDMA) that defines Indigenous engagement requirements (IERS) for regulated entities to consult and cooperate with First Nations and allows for the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and culturally safe practices across all phases of emergency management.

EDMA is in force, local governments must engage First Nations as part of their response and recovery planning. Once regulations for local governments are in force, they will be required to consult First Nations on risk assessments and emergency management plans.

EMCR is developing a detailed IER guidance document in collaboration with internal and external partners including the Declaration Act Secretariat, First Nations Leadership Council, and emergency management practitioners.

**If elected, how will your party ensure the adequate and equitable resourcing to First Nations to fully participate in the four pillars of Emergency Management?**

David Eby and the BC NDP will continue to assist First Nations and local authorities with supports like the Indigenous Engagement Requirement Funding Program as they begin to implement these new requirements.

We will support the work of EMCR to engage all levels to ensure that there is a strong understanding of their respective responsibilities ahead of the upcoming 2025 hazard season.

**13. Housing**

**a. First Nations peoples are disproportionately affected by homelessness. In some BC communities, up to 80% of those experiencing homelessness are First Nations. Inadequate and unsafe housing in BC First Nations communities has led to a range of related social issues, including family violence, substance abuse, a suicide crisis, poor health, educational and economic outcomes, and forced migration, resulting in cultural loss. Additionally, the rise in “neo-vagrancy” municipal bylaws, which criminalize the public presence of unhoused and visibly marginalized individuals, has led to increased forced evictions of homeless encampments and supported the use of increasingly militarized measures during decampment operations.**

**How will your government address the historic wrongs of colonization to achieve meaningful reconciliation and support First Nations self-determination over housing and homelessness?**

**What significant funding investments will your government make to create a more equitable and just housing system that truly meets the needs of BC First Nations?**

**If elected, what will be your government’s plan to address the increasing criminalization of homelessness in BC?**

There is more work to be done on housing for Indigenous Peoples – urban, rural, remote, and on-reserve. The BC NDP government was the first in the country to step into the development and improvement of housing on reserve – previous governments had put funding and energy into fighting First Nations in courts.

A BC NDP government would expand the Indigenous Housing Fund, which currently has 3,200 homes complete or underway across the province and represents a \$1.7 billion investment over 10 years. The most recent IHF round, announced in August, funded 1,600 new housing units, on- and off-reserve. We'll also continue working with MST on a new housing initiative for the Heatherlands, where the Province will offset development costs and support first-time homebuyers to secure long-term leasehold housing. We're seeing some exciting opportunities for partnerships with First Nations development corporations to create purpose-built rental or long-term leasehold via BC Builds.

First Nations housing needs assessments show that one of the most effective ways to address housing supply on reserve is to protect and maintain the housing stock that's already there. Programs to support asset management planning and improvement projects make sure housing assets stay online. We've completed a round of asset management projects on-reserve, made possible through MOUs with First Nations.

If elected, David Eby and the BC NDP look forward to working alongside you to address housing needs in First Nations communities across BC. We will collaborate with First Nations and Indigenous-led organizations on innovative housing models, design, and projects that increase access to jobs, healthcare, childcare spaces.

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Thankyou again for the opportunity to share these plans with you. The work that you do is of critical importance to us, and we hope to continue working alongside you after the election. We believe it is the only way forward.

## Response from BC Greens

Dear Members of the First Nations Leadership Council,

Thank you for these thoughtful questions. We'd like to start our response by providing some framing of the way that the BC Green Party considers First Nations and Indigenous policy in British Columbia. We agree with the content of the preamble above, and affirm that the rights of Indigenous peoples are inherent, existing, and cannot be infringed upon. First Nations hold rights and title to the land because it was never legally surrendered or ceded, and historic treaties have not been honoured. The BC Green Party aspires to work in true partnership with Indigenous and First Nations peoples, to address systemic racism and empower Indigenous governments. We commit to building a relationship based on respect, trust, and empowerment - not the paternalism, racism, and mistrust that your governments have endured for so long.

We've answered each of your questions below. At times, these have been taken directly from our 2024 provincial election platform, and so the language is more general. This has been done on purpose, to situate the more detailed content. We have then provided detailed answers that more directly address the questions that you've asked. Our full platform is available at <https://bcgreens2024.ca/2024-platform/>, and we're available to discuss at any point.

Thank you for your time, and the opportunity to engage on these important topics.

**1. Implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act)***

**a. How does your party intend to uphold the positive obligation on the Government of British Columbia to ensure that all laws, policies and practices in British Columbia be brought in alignment with the UN Declaration, including creating space for shared decision-making, and transforming the current legislative process to ensure substantive consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples?**

**b. Does your party intend to repeal the Declaration Act?**

**c. What does your party envision as key priorities to include in an updated Declaration Act action plan?**

**d. How does your party intend to ensure accountability for progress on the implementation of the Declaration Act, in full partnership with Indigenous peoples?**

The BC Greens acknowledge that Indigenous peoples continue to experience structural and systemic racism in British Columbia.

Indigenous peoples across British Columbia have been stripped of their land, languages and inherent right to self-determination. The residential school system, systemic racism in healthcare, education and employment—along with ongoing land loss—have resulted in lower life expectancies for Indigenous peoples, who face disproportionate rates of homelessness, substance use challenges, drug toxicity deaths, suicide, police violence and imprisonment.

Instead of supporting Indigenous governments and rights, successive governments have chosen to deny or delay rights, governance, and self-determination. The predominant pattern has been for governments to fight about every aspect of rights recognition, requiring Indigenous peoples to focus much of their limited time and resources towards endless fights against the Crown, instead of the vital nation and government-building work needed.

In the 2017-2020 Balance of Power agreement with the BC NDP, the BC Greens played a pivotal role in advancing the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA). We are committed to advancing the DRIPA Action Plan, and ensuring all rights of Indigenous Peoples in BC are upheld and considered in all decision-making processes in BC.

*BC Greens' Key Priorities from our platform:*

- Recognize all Indigenous governments formed in alignment



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|  | <p>with the principles of Indigenous self-determination, removing limitations related to 'Indian Act' bands and those incorporated under provincial statutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Embed wellbeing considerations into land use planning and environmental assessments by utilizing a cumulative effects framework, prioritizing, expanding, and funding modern land use planning as well as Indigenous land use plans.</li><li>● Enact an amendment to the Interpretation Act confirming that all provincial enactments must uphold the rights of Indigenous peoples, ensuring that no laws abrogate or derogate from those rights.</li><li>● Establish an expert advisory committee comprising specialists in Indigenous rights, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, and constitutional law. This committee will advise both the Provincial Government and Indigenous governments on legislative developments—and their advice will be made public.</li><li>● We will co-develop with Indigenous peoples a clear policy that outlines how Indigenous peoples will be engaged consistently across government during the law-making process, including how the government will provide financial support for their participation.</li><li>● We will co-develop a mechanism with Indigenous peoples for resolving Indigenous-Crown disputes proactively, to foster understanding and avoid litigation.</li><li>● A Parliamentary Committee will be established to examine how the justice system treats Indigenous</li></ul> |
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|   | <p>peoples, racialized communities, and homeless individuals. The goal is to identify and address systemic inequities and improve access to justice for all.</p>  |
| <p><b><u>2. Education</u></b></p> <p><b><i>If elected, how will your party commit to fully supporting education and First Nations language actions under the Declaration Act Action Plan, including the necessary funding to ensure effective implementation?</i></b></p> | <p>A commitment to supporting First Nations Language actions is included in policies (and their designated funding in our proposed budget) related to <u>Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and Education</u>.</p> <p>We will enact an Indigenous Languages Act, which affirms that Indigenous languages are a fundamental and valued part of British Columbia’s heritage. This will guarantee Indigenous language rights and provide communities with the necessary funding and support for language preservation, revitalization, and strengthening.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● We will enable the use of all Indigenous languages on government-issued identification, ensuring that people can reclaim their names in their original language at no cost.</li> <li>● <u>Provide robust learning resources for Indigenous and French languages</u>, as well as American Sign Language, ensuring diverse language education options.</li> <li>● Create a dedicated funding stream for First Nations-mandated institutes, providing Indigenous language programming and culturally relevant education for Indigenous students in rural and remote areas.</li> </ul> |

### **3. Children and Families**

***a. How will your party work together with First Nations to fully implement An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth and Families and to support First Nations in exercising their jurisdiction over child and family services?***

***b. How will your party respond to the call for system transformation in the child & family service sector?***

Since the creation of residential schools, the Crown governments of BC and Canada have been separating children from their families and communities. The current child welfare system remains rooted in the colonial policies of the past. Regardless of intentions, the outcomes are clear: the system is broken and has had a horrendous impact. Far too many children die in government care, and far too many youth go missing from the system. Despite numerous reports, investigations, and recommendations, the system continues to fail children and families across BC.

The BC Greens recognize that Indigenous children and youth are disproportionately affected by our system. Although they make up just 10% of the child population, 68% of those in government care are Indigenous. Centuries of government policies have left Indigenous communities grappling with intergenerational poverty, discrimination, violence, and disconnection from land and culture—creating deeply unstable conditions for them to thrive.

The BC Greens will advance Indigenous jurisdiction over child welfare to ensure culturally appropriate services and promote reconciliation.

The BC Greens will:

- Work towards full Indigenous jurisdiction over child welfare, with appropriate funding to support culturally relevant services.
- Promote community-oriented, family-centered care where extended family plays a vital role, ensuring conditions for children to thrive.
- Encourage the broader system to learn from Indigenous approaches, fostering a shift in intention and

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|  | <p>practice within child welfare services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide families in kinship care with the same financial and social resources that foster families receive.</li> <li>● Address the insufficient financial support currently provided, recognizing the importance of familial and kinship care in child welfare.</li> </ul> <p>The BC Greens acknowledge that the child welfare system needs to be severed from its colonial roots in order for it to stop being a mechanism of harm, particularly for Indigenous families and communities. We will ensure that all social work practices within the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) are aligned with professional standards and increase accountability through legislative reform.</p> <p>The BC Greens will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Acknowledge the past and ongoing impacts of colonialism, incorporating cultural safety into all child welfare practices; and shift the focus to trauma awareness, safety, collaboration, and strength-based approaches.</li> <li>● Require anti-racism and anti-stigma education for all Ministry staff, informed by the Provincial Committee on Anti-Racism and individuals with lived experience in the child welfare system.</li> <li>● Establish a comprehensive oversight system for MCFD staff and senior leadership, addressing systemic failures rather than focusing on individual social workers.</li> </ul> |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Enact legislative reforms ensuring families are provided with the necessary resources and services, as guided by the RCY.</li><li>● Implement a public health framework with tiered prevention levels:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <u>Primary Prevention</u>: Family strengthening programs, resource access, and public awareness campaigns.</li><li>○ <u>Secondary Prevention</u>: Home visits, respite care, and family resource centers.</li><li>○ <u>Tertiary Prevention</u>: Around-the-clock mental health support for children affected by violence.</li></ul></li><li>● Redirect Ministry funds to provide families with financial resources, addressing poverty-related neglect and empowering parents to better care for their children.</li><li>● Implement legislative changes requiring anyone using the title “Social Worker” to be registered with the BC College of Social Workers.</li><li>● Mandate a Bachelor’s or Master’s degree in Social Work and BC College of Social Workers registration for any MCFD employee conducting child protection work. A timeline will be provided to accommodate workforce adjustments.</li></ul> |
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**4. Early Learning and Child Care**

**a. If elected, how will your government continue the ongoing implementation of this tripartite work?**

**b. What does your party see as the critical components of both capital and workforce strategies that will support all First Nations in their jurisdiction and in pursuing their goals for quality, accessible, community-based Early Learning and Child Care?**

The BC Greens are committed to upholding DRIPA, and working with all levels of government to advance the full realization of Indigenous rights in BC – this includes the MOU for First Nations Early Learning and Child Care.

We have a comprehensive plan to address the recruitment and retention of early childhood educators (ECEs), as well as continued child care space creation through new investments and streamlining the child care funding model.

Workforce:

- Provide paid final practicums for teachers and ECEs, offering financial support during their essential training periods.
- Develop bursaries for educators who commit to serving in remote districts, and increase funding for rural and remote teacher education programs to address workforce shortages.
- Create a universal Early Childhood Education funding model to reduce administrative burdens for childcare providers, allowing them to focus on care. This model will address wage grids, space creation, licensing, staffing, and fee reduction initiatives.
- Implement gradual increases to the ECE wage grid, and reach \$30-40 per hour by 2026.
- Ensure ECEs have access to pension plans and extended health benefits to improve job security and retention.

Childcare space creation: affordability and accessibility:

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Allocate at least \$250 million to expand childcare space creation for children and infants under 5.</li><li>● Provide ECE and childcare centres with the necessary supports to continue operations and create more spaces to meet demand.</li><li>● Ensure the province remains on track to deliver \$10/day childcare for all, making early childhood education affordable for all families.</li><li>● Provide \$100 million in new funding to create a capital program within the Ministry of Education for renovations and additions to schools to support ECE space creation.</li><li>● Expand the availability of dedicated school-age care spaces across BC schools to meet the needs of working families.</li><li>● Increase before and after school program offerings to provide flexible childcare solutions for families.</li></ul> <p>By ensuring our work is guided by DRIPA – through robust consultations with BC First Nations – we believe our childcare plans will provide communities with culturally-relevant, affordable, and accessible early childhood education options.</p> |
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## **5. Justice Issues**

***a. If your party is elected, what immediate steps will you take to ensure the progress made in the past 4 years does not slow down? What specific actions to implement the BC First Nations Justice Strategy will you take in the short, medium, and long term to ensure progress towards systemic change in the criminal and child welfare systems?***

***b. If elected, will you commit to funding the BC First Nations Justice Council with long-term sustainable funding for core capacity to ensure organizational stability and to advance the BC First Nations Justice Strategy?***

We will:

- Create a specialized taskforce to investigate cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women, children, and two-Spirited people. This taskforce will operate under civilian oversight from Indigenous communities, with a strong focus on women's leadership, and follow the guidance of the *Red Women Rising* report.
- Transform the policing and justice systems to prioritize accountability, equity and community safety. These changes will focus on addressing systemic racism, enhancing transparency, and ensuring fair treatment for all citizens, with particular attention to Indigenous peoples, racialized communities, and marginalized groups.
- A Parliamentary Committee will be established to examine how the justice system treats Indigenous peoples, racialized communities, and homeless individuals. The goal is to identify and address systemic inequities and improve access to justice for all.
- Enhance and standardize police education and training across the province to reflect key values such as cultural competence, de-escalation, and mental health awareness. This training will be integral to shifting police culture toward community-based service.
- Require all police services to collect and publicly report disaggregated race-based and other demographic data. Comprehensive reviews of policies and procedures will be

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|  | <p>conducted to address systemic racism within policing.</p> <p>Absolutely. Sustainable funding is essential to those receiving services, delivering services, and managing services – such as the BC First Nations Justice Council. We're committed to working with BCFNJC to develop a long-term sustainable funding model, to advance and implement the BC First Nations Justice Strategy. This crucial work cannot be relying on sporadic, inconsistent funding.</p> |
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| <p><b><u>6. First Nations Public Service</u></b></p> <p><b><i>a. If elected, how will your party ensure that First Nation Governments are supported and adequately funded to provide sustainable core public administration, in order to be able to exercise their inherent rights of self-determination and self government as was committed to through the Declaration Act?</i></b></p> <p><b><i>b. If elected, will your party support and adequately fund a BC-based First Nation Controlled Institution whose core work supports the development and capacity building of First Nation government administrations?</i></b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The BC Greens will provide Indigenous governments with stable and reliable revenue, comparable to other levels of government, allowing them to carry out their duties and make long-term investment and planning decisions. We consider that this must be a stable revenue source that nations can rely on, can budget for, and can treat in the same manner that other forms of government can do. Having First Nations governments spending time and energy constantly seeking funding and reporting to the Provincial Government is paternalistic, and a poor use of time and energy.</li> <li>● We are committed to ensuring BC First Nations have the tools, resources, and capacity to fully participate in decision-making and governance. We will work with BC First Nation governments to streamline any supports that would facilitate Indigenous jurisdiction and governance in the province.</li> <li>● We will also provide education to all public servants on the history of Indigenous peoples, including the legacy of residential schools, treaties, Indigenous law and Indigenous-Crown relations. By ensuring the BC public service is trained on the history of BC, we can create better outcomes for implementing DRIPA and improving government-to-government relationships with First Nations in BC.</li> </ul> |
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## 7. Technology

**a. The role of innovation and technology in all our lives has never been so important, observable, and relevant in a post COVID-19 world. First Nations communities were particularly impacted by COVID-19 due to the vulnerability of remote communities. The pandemic prompted the explosion of a virtual/hybrid work environment. Despite this, many First Nations communities in BC are still struggling with connectivity or are severely under-served by the services they have. Many jobs are also increasingly impacted by the need to use technology, and to access the training required to work in tech-enabled work environments. So many First Nations communities lack adequate connection speeds, and so few Indigenous people work in the tech sector, all during a time where the digital economy is leading the entire economy.**

***If elected, what are your plans to ensure BC stays on track to connecting the remaining 20% of remote and rural First Nations to high-speed fibre or an equivalent by 2027?***

***How are you planning to work with the federal government to address the internet affordability problem that many BC First Nations face?***

**b. Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada (ISED) has committed to improving Indigenous access to spectrum through the Indigenous Priority Window (IPW) initiative, which supports Indigenous-led connectivity projects in rural and remote areas. The IPW**

The BC Greens are committed to making sure all communities in British Columbia have access to infrastructure - and are especially focused on equitable access to high-speed internet and communications infrastructure. We can see and understand the challenges that this poses for remote and rural First Nations communities in particular. If elected to the Government, the BC Greens would focus on making sure that all communities are able to access what is a necessary piece of infrastructure, at an equivalent price to that paid by communities in urban centres. We understand that fulfilling this by 2027 is a committed action under the Declaration Act Action Plan, and we would maintain this commitment.

Further to this, we are also aware of the gap in the number of First Nations and Indigenous peoples who are pursuing careers in information technology, and have committed to make sure that training and education is available, culturally appropriate, and cost-effective, for students who are interested in pursuing this as an option.

The COVID-19 pandemic also showed the importance of data sovereignty, to make sure that communities - especially ones like First Nations communities who have historically not been well served by governments and large corporations, can retain ownership of their data. The BC Greens are interested in partnering with the First Nations Leadership Council on this important work, if elected Government.

Ensuring that communities can take full advantage of ISED's Indigenous priority window is crucial to make sure that Indigenous communities have access to broadcasting and telecommunications spectrum, to control communications in ways that suit your needs. We understand

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| <p><b>provides Indigenous communities with priority access to spectrum licenses, and ISED is currently in the engagement phase for this initiative until the fall of 2024.</b></p> <p><i>If elected, how will your government embrace and support ISED Canada's Indigenous priority window for access to Spectrum?</i></p> | <p>the challenges of the timing of this program, with the publication of the final IPW spectrum policy framework likely coming close after the 2024 British Columbia provincial election. The BC Greens commit to supporting First Nations to make the most of this opportunity.</p> |
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## 8. Fisheries and Aquaculture

**a. Over the past decade we have observed significant changes in government approaches to engaging with First Nations on fisheries related issues. All too often, governments are more focused on economic growth, at the cost of infringing Aboriginal rights and reducing environmental protections. For these reasons, it is crucial, now more than ever, that First Nations and the Province of British Columbia work together to protect the lands, waters and resources that we hold dear.**

**If elected:**

***What is your plan to align legislation relating to water and watersheds, including the Water Sustainability Act, with the Declaration Act?***

***How will your government prioritize the resources needed to safeguard watersheds and fish habitat in the province? And how will you ensure that First Nations are adequately resourced to manage water and aquatic resources in their territories?***

**b. British Columbia's aquaculture sector will experience significant changes with the federal government's commitment to phase out open-net pen salmon farms.**

***If elected, how will your government advance protections for wild salmon and develop land-based fish farms? Additionally, how will your government work with First Nations on aquaculture economies that do not include salmon?***

The BC Greens see the changing climate and the impact on fish and aquaculture as an area of grave concern. We have a detailed plan for addressing this, but would welcome the leadership of First Nations, who have been stewarding and protecting these lands and waters since time immemorial.

The BC Greens are committed to prioritizing the sustainability of nature as a core priority and to working in partnership with First Nations to achieve wholesale change. If elected, the BC Greens have committed to achieve 30% land and water protection by 2030, in partnership with First Nations. We will work with Indigenous communities to establish new Indigenous Protect and Conserved Area and fully uphold those declared by First Nations. We will also introduce a new holistic, overarching law for biodiversity and ecosystem health, invest in Indigenous-led conservation and Indigenous Guardians programs, and shift to long-term, stable funding for nature-based solutions, to both protect nature and support long-term employment and governance in line with community goals and priorities. We are committed to manage our forests in a different way. By zoning the province's forests into 3 broad categories - primary forests, restoration in secondary forests, and second-growth forests managed for timber production - we will ensure watersheds and critical fish habitat are protected. We are committed to scaling up, funding, and prioritizing Forest Landscape Plans and Modernized Land Use Planning. Furthermore, we will establish a Chief Ecologist as a counterpart to the Chief Forester to ensure multiple values are incorporated into decision-making.

**c. In recent years, BC's river system has been plagued by rising water temperatures and low stream flow, both of which put BC's wild salmon stocks at even greater risk.**

***If elected, what steps will your government take to address rising water temperatures and low stream flow in BC's rivers?***

In our platform, the BC Greens have also committed to supporting the development of systems to address food insecurity in First Nations communities that honour Indigenous knowledge, values, harvesting areas and practices, including supporting Indigenous communities' access to and use of traditional foods.

The BC Greens have announced a plan to create and support watershed boards in every community. These boards will be granted authority over decisions that affect watershed security and will serve as collaborative platforms where First Nations and local stakeholders - farmers, industry representatives, commercial users, and environmental stewards - can collaboratively manage and conserve their local water sources. We will commit \$100 million to fund the establishment and ongoing support of watershed boards across the province, ensuring their sustainability and effectiveness, and ensuring that members are recompensed for their time and expertise in serving on these boards.

We will work with the Federal government to transition all open net-pen salmon farms in BC to land-based aquaculture systems, as well as working to restore and protect salmon habitat to ensure the survival of key species, and regulate the shipbreaking industry to protect coastal habitats from harmful practices.

The BC Greens will streamline the *Water Sustainability Act* to set clear environmental and critical flow thresholds to safeguard water ecosystems and ensure sustainable water use across the province.

We will require industries to accurately report their water use and provide



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|  | <p>state-of-the-watershed reporting, improving transparency and resource management.</p> <p>The BC Greens will leverage federal funding to create a \$1 billion endowment for the B.C. Watershed Security Fund. The fund will support community planning, decision-making functions, and natural defenses against floods, fires, droughts, and contamination.</p> |
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## 9. Energy and Mines

**a. Canada developed a critical minerals strategy in 2022 without First Nations input; however, they resourced the development of a First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy which was released in March 2024. The First Nations Critical Minerals Strategy is supported by Chiefs resolutions from the First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs. The Province of British Columbia has also created phase 1 of a BC critical minerals strategy which was released by the Premier in January 2024. One of BC's 11 recommendations in their strategy is "the alignment of BC and the First Nations Energy and Mining Council Critical Minerals Strategies and continued engagement with First Nations." First Nations have developed a proposal to align these strategies, but no provincial commitment has been made to support and resource this work.**

***Critical Minerals Strategies have been developed by Canada, BC, and First Nations. How will your party commit to providing the necessary resources for aligning these strategies?***

b. For BC to be a leader in sustainable development, it will be critical for the BC Government to work with First Nations to create certainty required to attract investors. We plan to engage in a more fulsome conversation with First Nations about the future of critical minerals in the province. We will ensure that transition minerals are prioritized in this new Strategy, and that benefits flow to communities and First Nations, not just shareholders.

When elected, the BC Greens will reform the mining sector, and modernize the mining and mineral staking regimes to respect First Nations and Indigenous rights and reduce risks to our watersheds and communities. We will strengthen environmental oversight through an integrated and independent compliance and enforcement regime for the Ministry of Energy and Mines, and lower thresholds for mandatory environmental assessments and close loopholes that allow projects to avoid assessments.

The BC Greens have committed to modernizing the *Mineral Tenure Act* to reflect Aboriginal rights and title, and ensure it reflects current environmental, social and Indigenous rights concerns. We will enhance oversight of the mining industry through a robust inspection and audit process and establish an industry-levied fund to mitigate the costs of mining pollution and disasters, including the rehabilitation of abandoned mines.

As detailed above, the BC Greens are committed to prioritizing the sustainability of nature as a core priority and to working in partnership with First Nations to achieve wholesale change. If elected, the BC Greens will work with Indigenous communities to establish Indigenous Protect and Conserved Areas, fully upholding those declared by First Nations. We will also introduce a new holistic, overarching law for biodiversity and ecosystem health, invest in Indigenous-led conservation and Indigenous Guardians programs, and shift to long-term, stable funding for nature-based solutions, to both protect nature and support long-term employment and governance in line with community goals and priorities.

First Nations Guardians are considered to be the “boots on the ground” and will play an important role in providing capacity and technical support to First Nation decision makers and leaders in a culturally sensitive manner.

***How does your party plan to support the contributions First Nations make to environmental stewardship in BC through First Nations Guardians initiatives and First Nations Protected and Conserved Areas?***

c. With the increasing amount of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from fossil fuel extraction for energy purposes, there is a need to actively move toward a renewable energy system that reduces emissions.

***How will your party reduce GHGs and invest in alternative and renewable energy?***

The BC Green Party is committed to halt any future investment in fossil fuel infrastructure - marking a major step in addressing the climate crisis and protecting British Columbia’s future. Preventing further fossil fuel development is essential to achieving a climate-safe future, according to a party news release. The BC Greens commit to:

- Ending the permitting of new fracking wells.
- Setting a firm date to phase out gas production.
- Rejecting any new LNG projects.
- Directing the BC Environmental Assessment Office to allow the 2014 environmental certificate for the PRGT pipeline to expire.

Instead, we will invest in renewable energy, including small-scale solar projects with a goal of 15% solar power generation by 2035. We will:

- Mandate a minimum of 50% equity ownership for First Nations in large renewable energy projects.
- Prioritize renewable energy projects under the First Nations Equity Financing Framework, ensuring these projects are not competing with oil and gas industry projects for resources.
- Expand the Community Net Metering program to allow British Columbians to own a share of community-scale solar energy production, receiving credits on their electricity bills for the energy produced.
- Expand funding for the Community Energy Diesel Reduction program to

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|  | <p>help Indigenous communities transition off diesel and connect to clean power and storage solutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Simplify and expedite the permitting process by appointing a single regulatory authority within the Ministry of Energy.</li><li>● Invest in expanding energy storage capacity and improving electricity distribution to support a more efficient and resilient renewable energy grid.</li><li>● Enhance energy efficiency in new buildings by promoting passive solar design, higher insulation levels, heat pumps, and smart thermostats to reduce energy use.</li></ul> <p>B.C. is missing its climate targets, and emissions continue to rise. This plan will not only reduce emissions but also build a clean energy economy that benefits everyone. This shift is essential to ensure British Columbia meets its greenhouse gas reduction goals and protects the health, environment, and economy for future generations.</p> |
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## 10. Forest Resources

**a. How do you plan to ensure the continued advancement and implementation of the Declaration Act, regarding forest sector legislation reform outlined in Action 2.10 of the Declaration Act Action Plan, and in relation to that, do you plan to address amendments to the Land Act?**

**b. What is your approach to First Nations acquiring and managing tenure?**

**c. How will your party protect old growth forests? What is your party's approach to value added forest products?**

The BC Greens will review the *Land Act* to ensure its alignment with the inherent rights of First Nations peoples and the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. This process will be conducted transparently, with opportunities for public consultation across British Columbia.

To develop a strategic vision for forestry with First Nations, we will:

- Implement all 14 recommendations of the Old Growth Strategic Review in partnership with First Nations.
- Amend the *Private Managed Forest Land Act* to ensure basic ecological and cultural protections on private land.

The BC Greens firmly support First Nations acquiring and managing tenure.

For decades, Indigenous communities, scientists and environmental advocates have called for a fundamental change in how we manage our forests. We will actively support communities by ensuring small producers have access to sustainable wood, incentivizing value-added wood products, and encouraging non-traditional uses of wood fibre. Revenue-sharing with First Nations, municipalities and regional districts will ensure that the benefits of these practices are shared equitably.

The BC Greens will:

- Begin a process of tenure reform to redistribute tenures from large corporations. Increase the proportion of tenures held by First Nations and community forests.
- Expand the community forest program by increasing the number and size of community forests to

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|  | <p>promote biodiversity, wildfire protection, rural development, and ecosystem resilience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Empower community forests to set priorities according to local values. The Annual Allowable Cut will be an outcome of community-based processes that incorporate multiple values.</li> <li>● Ensure resource revenue benefits flow directly to local communities by sharing more revenues with First Nations, municipalities, and regional districts.</li> </ul> <p>Protecting British Columbia’s old-growth and primary forests is not just important—it is crucial to securing a resilient future for our environment, economy and communities. To do this, we need a new approach. We must manage our forests holistically, recognizing the full range of values they provide. Through bold action, we can be a leader in forest management, establishing an industry that prioritizes long-term sustainability.</p> <p>In collaboration and partnership with First Nations, the BC Greens will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fully fund the protection of old forests and compensate First Nations for any lost revenues due to deferrals.</li> <li>● Defer harvesting in the most at-risk old growth forests, as outlined by the Old Growth Technical Advisory Panel.</li> <li>● Implement effective targets for old and mature forest retention, and improve riparian protection province-wide, as an interim strategy before Forest Landscape Planning is finalized.</li> </ul> |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Immediately establish conservation of ecosystem health and biodiversity as an overarching priority.</li> <li>● Establish a Chief Ecologist as a counterpart to the Chief Forester to ensure multiple values are incorporated into decision-making.</li> <li>● Zone B.C.'s forests into three broad categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Primary forests</li> <li>○ Restoration in secondary forests</li> <li>○ Second-growth forests managed for timber production</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Dedicate funds for private land acquisition to protect old growth forests on private lands.</li> <li>● Strictly prohibit pellet mills from converting trees logged in primary or old growth forests into wood pellets. Define 'waste' for pellet mills to ensure ecosystem health is protected.</li> <li>● Ensure maximization of value-added production from available timber supply, prioritizing small value-added producers. Aim to allocate 30%-50% of current available volume for value-added production as a short-term goal.</li> <li>● Investigate opportunities to diversify milling and secondary manufacturing to better utilize existing timber resources.</li> <li>● Stop clearcut industrial logging and adopt logging practices that emulate natural disturbance regimes, such as selective logging, commercial thinning, and longer stand rotations; Ban the use of glyphosate and other chemical herbicides; Improve silviculture practices.</li> </ul> |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fund training and upskilling programs to support workers finding new job opportunities.</li></ul> |
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## 11. Climate Emergency

**a. The intersecting impacts of industrial and urban development, cumulative impacts, climate change and biodiversity loss can no longer be ignored in BC. First Nations throughout BC continue to face multiple emergency evacuations, loss and damage of infrastructure and land, food and resource insecurity, and death due to changes in weather conditions and unprecedented climate-related disasters such as wildfires, floods, landslides, drought and irregular and record-breaking summer and winter temperatures. With UN Declaration legislation adopted at a federal and provincial level, there is a unique opportunity in BC to streamline and strategically and cooperatively work with First Nations on climate, emergency management and environmental policy and legislative development.**

**Urgent action is needed at all levels of society and government to address one of the most pressing challenges facing humanity and threatening our ways of living and being. Colonial climate policy is not sufficiently addressing the climate crisis and is deeply disconnected from First Nations worldviews and approaches and continues to reinforce the patterns of inequality, exploitation, discrimination, environmental degradation and top-down and siloed approaches. The FNLC and First Nations in BC require political and financial support to implement the BC First Nations Climate Strategy and Action Plan and real**

The BC Greens see climate change as an existential threat, and have an extremely thorough policy to mitigate and respond to this. Our policy impacts the way in which we use and think about land and natural resources, and as such, needs to be worked through with First Nations governments. We respect the ongoing rights of all nations and treaty rights holders, and hope to work in active partnership to address this challenge.

The World Health Organization has declared climate change the greatest existential threat to global health—and here in British Columbia, we are already living with its devastating consequences: severe wildfires, prolonged droughts, catastrophic flooding and escalating health issues.

We promise a new direction—one grounded in the realities of our climate crisis. We will oversee a managed decline of gas production in this province, recognizing that continuing to expand fossil fuel projects is fundamentally incompatible with achieving our climate targets. Under our leadership, no new liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects will be approved—and fracked gas production will be phased out entirely.

Good climate policies can be powerful tools for improving affordability, creating well-paying jobs and saving businesses and taxpayers money. This shift is not only necessary to ensure B.C. meets its greenhouse gas reduction goals, but it is also essential to safeguarding our environment, our health and our economy.

Further investing in fossil fuels projects is not the future we want for British Columbia. Our comprehensive climate plan will help put our province back on track—providing tangible solutions that reflect the urgency of the climate crisis. It's time to prioritize the

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| <p><b>accountability from the provincial government to address the root causes of the climate crisis.</b></p> <p><b><i>If elected, what steps would you and your government take to meaningfully co develop and engage title and rights holders on climate policy and legislation and advance First Nation-led climate action and leadership? This could include long term funding to ensure each First Nations in BC can hire at least one dedicated climate staff member.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>In what ways have you supported efforts toward achieving a just transition away from fossil fuels toward renewable energy sources (i.e., solar, wind, geothermal)? How would you ensure that First Nations title and rights, and treaty rights, are acknowledged and upheld in this process and what steps would you take to ensure First Nations are equity partners in this transition?</i></b></p> | <p>health of people and communities over fossil fuel profits.</p> <p>Here are some policies from our platform for Climate Change as well as our platform for Powering the Clean Energy Future:</p> <p>When elected, the BC Greens will:</p> <p><u>Ensure First Nations equity ownership and streamline regulatory processes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mandate a minimum of 50% equity ownership for First Nations in large renewable energy projects.</li> <li>● Prioritize renewable energy projects under the First Nations Equity Financing Framework, ensuring these projects are not competing with oil and gas industry projects for resources.</li> <li>● Simplify and expedite the permitting process by appointing a single regulatory authority within the Ministry of Energy.</li> <li>● Invest in expanding energy storage capacity and improving electricity distribution to support a more efficient and resilient renewable energy grid.</li> </ul> <p><u>Commit to a Fossil-Free Future</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stop permitting new fracking wells.</li> <li>● Set a date to phase out gas production in the province.</li> <li>● Prohibit any new LNG projects.</li> <li>● Stop permitting new pipelines. Direct the BC Environmental Assessment Office to allow the 2014 environmental certificate for the Prince Rupert Gas Transmission pipeline to expire.</li> </ul> <p><u>Set Ambitious Climate Pollution Targets</u></p> |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a new Climate Action Plan, ensuring emission reduction targets are supported by measurable actions.</li> <li>● Convene leading scientists and clean energy experts to identify innovative approaches for enhancing B.C.'s emissions reductions.</li> <li>● Review and update climate pollution targets regularly as climate science evolves to ensure effective action.</li> <li>● Fully implement the oil and gas emissions cap as a backstop to upcoming federal regulations to meet or exceed B.C.'s oil and gas emissions targets.</li> </ul> <p><u>Make Polluters Pay</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduce a windfall profits tax on oil and gas companies.</li> <li>● Increase the industrial carbon tax and redirect revenue from industrial carbon pricing to fund climate action in communities.</li> <li>● Eliminate loopholes that allow large industries to pollute and cause climate damage.</li> </ul> <p><u>End Fossil Fuel Subsidies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● End all subsidies and public financing for fossil fuel infrastructure, including capital cost recovery and discounted electricity rates for LNG facilities.</li> <li>● Reallocate subsidies and public financing from fossil fuels towards renewable energy development and production.</li> </ul> <p><u>Reduce Methane Emissions</u></p> |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accelerate B.C.'s target of near-zero methane emissions from the oil and gas sector.</li> <li>● Eliminate venting and flaring, and compressor emissions.</li> <li>● Commit to reviewing the province's methane regulations by the end of 2027 to align with global best practices.</li> </ul> <p><u>Prohibit fossil fuel advertising</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ban oil and gas advertisements in the province</li> </ul> <p><u>Ban Gas in New Buildings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enforce a province-wide ban on gas hookups in all new buildings to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.</li> <li>● Provide rebates for electric heat pumps to support the transition to clean, energy-efficient heating and cooling solutions.</li> <li>● Ensure Fortis' business plan is coherent with the goal of electrifying B.C. and helping homes and businesses transition off fossil fuels.</li> </ul> <p><u>Carbon Offsets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure carbon offsets are not used to expand fossil fuel infrastructure.</li> <li>● Create a carbon offset policy for the province based on the principles of the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi).</li> </ul> <p><u>Establish long-term procurement targets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establish a renewable procurement timetable for renewable energy projects with defined annual procurement targets and parameters.</li> </ul> |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a jobs plan that aligns regional economic development and workforce readiness with climate and energy plans.</li> <li>● Invest in research and development of geothermal energy production. Investigate a technology transfer from oil and gas drilling to geothermal energy production.</li> <li>● Invest \$20 million annually for education and training programs to address the skills shortage in the renewable energy sector and to retrain oil and gas workers. Invest in a BC Clean Energy Institute in Northwest BC to drive innovation and training.</li> </ul> <p><u>Invest in Community-Scale Renewable Projects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Invest \$20 million annually in small-scale distributed solar projects, with a goal of having solar account for 15% of electricity generation by 2035. Ensure these projects are economically viable and accessible to low- and moderate-income households.</li> <li>● Expand the Community Net Metering program to allow British Columbians to own a share of community-scale solar energy production, receiving credits on their electricity bills for the energy produced.</li> <li>● Expand funding for the Community Energy Diesel Reduction program to help Indigenous communities transition off diesel and connect to clean power and storage solutions</li> </ul> <p><u>Prioritize Power for British Columbia. Not LNG</u></p> |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will stop public funds from being used for BC Hydro infrastructure that supports LNG projects. Existing LNG projects will be required to cover their own electricity generation and transmission costs, prioritizing BC's energy resources for residential use and sustainable industries.</li> </ul> <p><u>Accelerate Energy Efficiency and Renewable Technologies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapidly increase the availability of heat pumps, focusing on low-income households to ensure equitable access to these energy-saving technologies.</li> <li>• Enhance energy efficiency in new buildings by promoting passive solar design, higher insulation levels, heat pumps, and smart thermostats to reduce energy use.</li> <li>• Invest in deep energy retrofits of existing buildings, making them more energy-efficient and reducing long-term energy costs.</li> <li>• Revise regulations to mandate the use of low-global-warming-potential (GWP) and PFAs-free refrigerants, promoting safer and more sustainable cooling practices.</li> </ul> <p><u>Increase Transparency at BC Hydro</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a real-time public dashboard at BC Hydro, showing data on electricity production, usage, imports, and exports for British Columbia.</li> </ul> <p><u>Electrify Transportation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance the electrification of medium- and heavy-duty vehicles</li> </ul> |
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|  | <p>(MHDVs) and expand electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Set sales targets for MHDVs and introduce fleet purchase requirements to accelerate the shift towards electric vehicles in the province.</li><li>● Adjust rebates for zero-emission MHDVs to ensure funding goes to small fleets.</li><li>● Expand the EV charging infrastructure across B.C. to support the growing number of electric vehicles and facilitate their use in rural and urban areas.</li><li>● Support the conversion of gasoline and diesel vehicles to electric vehicles by extending financial incentives to EV retrofits, ensuring that older vehicles can also contribute to emissions reductions.</li></ul> |
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## 12. Emergency Management

**a. Disasters affect Indigenous people disproportionately around the world. As well, First Nations rights and jurisdiction are often not recognized in times of emergency. First Nations in BC are working with BC and Canada on a multilateral emergency management services funding and policy model that recognizes the importance of First Nations' full and equal participation in the four pillars of emergency management and decision-making and implementation processes in their territories and within First Nation communities.**

***If elected, how will your party ensure First Nations' jurisdiction is respected and integrated throughout the province in Emergency Management strategies and planning going forward?***

***If elected, how will your party ensure the adequate and equitable resourcing to First Nations to fully participate in the four pillars of Emergency Management?***

The BC Greens platform on disaster prevention and management is embedded in ensuring local communities are empowered and funded to lead all four pillars of emergency management. In doing so, we respect and recognize First Nations jurisdiction.

From our policy on Disaster Prevention and Management:

Adopt the United Nations Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction: Mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. We will ensure there are enough paid, trained professionals available to manage disasters from mitigation to recovery, and we will establish and maintain strong relationships between First Nations, local governments and emergency management agencies, including BC Wildfire Service.

For mitigation, we will:

- Shift from reactive disaster response to proactive resilience building and climate action, including habitat restoration and biodiversity protection.
- Utilize nature-based solutions to protect and conserve ecosystems while augmenting natural assets with green infrastructure.
- Implement measures to reduce risks at the local level, linking to Wildfire and Watershed Security planks for further details.
- Invest in initiatives like a Youth Climate Corps and Watershed Security Fund to bolster community resilience and environmental protection.

For preparedness, we will:

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure local authorities and First Nations have the capacity, resources, and authority to prepare and respond effectively to emergencies.</li> <li>● Provide ongoing funding and resources for First Nations and local governments to conduct comprehensive hazard risk and vulnerability assessments.</li> <li>● Foster community engagement and participation before disasters occur to strengthen preparedness.</li> <li>● Utilize local expertise to enhance disaster preparedness and response efforts.</li> </ul> <p>For response, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensure timely and accurate information is communicated to the public during emergencies.</li> <li>● Ensure reception centers are accessible and supports are available for all evacuees. Ensure economic, cultural, and practical needs are met for evacuees.</li> <li>● Identify and address gaps in the emergency support system. Develop a plan to assist individuals facing long-term displacement due to disasters.</li> <li>● Prioritize responses to extreme weather events that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and Indigenous Peoples.</li> </ul> <p>For recovery, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Emphasize the “build back better” approach to recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction efforts.</li> <li>● Rebuild buildings and infrastructure to withstand potential disasters and</li> </ul> |
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|  | <p>climate change impacts. Prohibit construction in disaster prone areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Integrate mental health support and address long-term displacement issues.</li></ul> <p>We will work hard to secure funding by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Negotiate with the federal government to create a dedicated funding stream for community resilience projects, including neighbourhood-level emergency preparedness and resilience-building programs.</li><li>● Connect carbon tax revenue directly to community climate action initiatives, including diking system improvements and wildfire prevention measures.</li></ul> |
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### 13. Housing

a. First Nations peoples are disproportionately affected by homelessness. In some BC communities, up to 80% of those experiencing homelessness are First Nations. Inadequate and unsafe housing in BC First Nations communities has led to a range of related social issues, including family violence, substance abuse, a suicide crisis, poor health, educational and economic outcomes, and forced migration, resulting in cultural loss. Additionally, the rise in “neo-vagrancy” municipal bylaws, which criminalize the public presence of unhoused and visibly marginalized individuals, has led to increased forced evictions of homeless encampments and supported the use of increasingly militarized measures during decampment operations.

***How will your government address the historic wrongs of colonization to achieve meaningful reconciliation and support First Nations self-determination over housing and homelessness?***

***What significant funding investments will your government make to create a more equitable and just housing system that truly meets the needs of BC First Nations?***

***If elected, what will be your government’s plan to address the increasing criminalization of homelessness in BC?***

The BC Greens plan for addressing poverty and homelessness in British Columbia acknowledges the disproportionate impact it is having on First Nations and Indigenous communities. We will immediately raise social assistance and disability assistance to be above the poverty line, and have committed to developing a targeted poverty reduction plan tailored to Indigenous individuals, families, and Nations, addressing the systemic impacts of genocide and dispossession.

We will also fund Indigenous-specific services in social service areas, including reintegration programs for incarcerated Indigenous women, addiction support, and childcare, and incorporate human rights, Indigenous rights, and gender-based analysis into all poverty reduction strategies, policies, and decision-making processes.

We will reduce homelessness by increasing affordable housing availability and providing comprehensive support services. We will expand the availability of deeply affordable housing to prevent inflows into homelessness, offer direct support for individuals leaving hospitals, medical care, and prisons to facilitate successful transitions, and provide housing and wrap-around support in every township in British Columbia to reduce the risk of newly homeless individuals transitioning to long-term homelessness.

We will also provide funds to First Nations to create housing that meets the specific needs of our communities. This funding will be provided without conditions attached, in the knowledge that your communities know what they need.

The BC Greens believe housing is a basic human right, a place where individuals, families and communities can live in security and dignity—not a tool for generating profit. The following policies from our Housing Platform, while applicable to all in B.C. rather than specific to First Nations people, speak to a vision of housing that works to reform practices of commodification and displacement that echo patterns of collusion between the colonialism and capitalism that have been and continue to be particularly harmful to First Nations people.

The BC Greens have committed to strengthening tenant protections and preventing landlords from dramatically increasing rents after a tenancy ends by implementing vacancy control measures. This will ensure rent increases are reasonable and minimize displacement.

We will also provide \$1.5 billion annually to construct 26,000 new units of non-market housing each year, with 3,000 units dedicated specifically for Indigenous Peoples. We will increase funding to the Rental Protection Fund with a \$500 million re-capitalization to safeguard existing affordable rental units and mandate transparency in fund allocation to guarantee equitable distribution.

Finally, the BC Greens have committed to providing \$650 million annually in infrastructure funding to municipal and Indigenous governments to provide necessary infrastructure.

We will transform the policing and justice systems to prioritize accountability, equity and community safety. These changes will focus on addressing systemic racism, enhancing transparency, and ensuring fair

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|  | <p>treatment for all citizens, with particular attention to Indigenous peoples, racialized communities, and marginalized groups.</p> <p>We will carry out the recommendations from the <i>Transforming Policing and Community Safety in British Columbia</i> report, which includes enacting a new <i>Community Safety and Policing Act</i>. This will lay the groundwork for a reformed policing structure and set clear guidelines for community safety and accountability.</p> <p>We have also committed to establishing a Parliamentary committee to examine how the justice system treats Indigenous peoples, racialized communities, and people experiencing homelessness. The goal of the committee is to identify and address systemic inequities and improve access to justice for all.</p> |
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### Final Word::

Policies developed by the BC Greens aim to introduce – notably in areas related to climate, renewable energy, management of natural resources – broad and sweeping changes that will doubtlessly involve conversation and collaboration that may not be entirely anticipated by these statements of platform policy.

With this in mind, we wish to underscore the commitment the BC Greens have to working through issues in respectful coordination with Indigenous sovereignty and First Nations communities and leadership. We are grateful for the level of detail and clarity in these questions and want to be involved in their resolution in any way we can. Thank you.

## **Response from Conservative Party of BC**





September 30, 2024

Sent via email to: [cbraker@fns.bc.ca](mailto:cbraker@fns.bc.ca)

To the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC),

Thank you for your September 16, 2024, letter outlining key issues and questions for BC's political parties. The Conservative Party of British Columbia (CPBC) shares your commitment to advancing reconciliation, including Indigenous economic reconciliation, honoring the legacy of leaders like Dr. Joseph Gosnell, who championed the integration of traditional Indigenous knowledge with modern economic practices to raise the bar for First Nations in British Columbia.

### **Economic Reconciliation, Healthy Communities**

“Economic development is key to our survival. We are redefining our economic future by combining traditional knowledge with modern business practices. This is not about keeping up – it’s about raising the bar for our people.” – Dr. Joseph Gosnell.

Dr. Gosnell was a key figure in the fight for Indigenous rights in Canada and a passionate advocate for First Nations' economic advancement. His leadership underscored the importance of economic empowerment for Indigenous communities.

The Conservative Party of British Columbia is committed to realizing Dr. Gosnell's vision.

We will deliver on his vision of First Nations' economic and social progress, which is realized when communities have the capacity and empowerment to undertake economic development.

John Rustad, during his tenure as British Columbia's Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, signed over 435 agreements with First Nations—more than any

other leader in modern Canadian history. From this place of established trust, Rustad is uniquely positioned to lead the province towards economic reconciliation.

True reconciliation can only be achieved by ensuring First Nations can access the tools required to build their own economic futures. Through policies, investments, and collaboration to unlock the vast potential within Indigenous communities, we aim to support a new era of prosperity and wellness for Indigenous peoples in British Columbia.

### **Economic Reconciliation: Laying the foundation for prosperity and wellness**

The Conservative Party of British Columbia believes that economic reconciliation is the cornerstone of any lasting solution to the challenges faced by Indigenous communities. Historical injustices and government failures have left many communities managing poverty, when they could and should be managing success.

Between 2017 and 2021, average Indigenous life expectancy fell by more than 6 years. The current provincial government is overseeing a crisis in the wellbeing of Indigenous communities.

It is not enough to recognize the need for healing. There is a critical need to advance reconciliation through action and ensure that economic viability is realized in all communities throughout BC. Indigenous peoples have just as much of a right as anyone to achieve real wealth, and move beyond meeting the bare minimum.

Economic reconciliation requires direct engagement with First Nations, respect for their governance structures, and the necessary support to build thriving economies. Our policies will emphasize fostering partnerships between First Nations and the private sector, with a strong focus on key sectors including natural resource management, fisheries, forestry, and clean energy.

Our vision for economic reconciliation is one where Indigenous communities are partners and leaders in BC's economic future, thereby achieving the level of economic sustainability that is necessary for true self-governance.

### **Building the infrastructure of wellbeing**

The federal government is constitutionally obligated to provide housing and clean water to Indigenous communities. Yet, in many instances, these obligations remain unmet. A Conservative government in British Columbia will hold Ottawa accountable for delivering on these commitments.

We will act to secure the well-being of Indigenous communities ignored by Ottawa: Whether it be through providing clean water, adequate housing, or other critical infrastructure. Where the federal government fails to act, the province will step-up; the province will then pursue reimbursement from the federal government through the appropriate legal avenues, ensuring that Ottawa's responsibilities are met. UNDRIP will continue to be the guiding framework for this accountability.

### **Strategic land return for economic empowerment**

Returning land to First Nations is critical for achieving economic self-sufficiency while addressing legal uncertainties surrounding rights and title. This approach will help resolve long-standing issues related to Section 35 of the Constitution, which recognizes and affirms the existing Indigenous and treaty rights of First Nations.

The Conservative Party of BC is committed to the strategic and collaborative return of land to First Nations, enabling bands to forge their own economic future.

### **Indigenous leadership in industry**

Each First Nation has a unique path to economic reconciliation. Among those paths are major opportunities in natural resource sectors: forestry, fishing, energy, and mining.

Indigenous knowledge and stewardship play a vital role in the sustainable management of British Columbia's natural resources. First Nations should be equipped to thrive as not only resource managers, but also business owners and leaders in diverse sectors of the economy. The Conservative Party of British Columbia will:

- Open new pathways to economic reconciliation by working in partnership with Indigenous leaders to identify the unique opportunities in each community for unlocking long-term prosperity.
- Invest in the capacity-building, infrastructure, and regulatory changes required for Indigenous communities to act with confidence and embrace new opportunities, on their own terms.
- Provide loan guarantees to assist First Nations in acquiring equity positions in natural resource and other major commercial projects.
- Return 20% of BC's forests to First Nations, enabling Indigenous groups to manage these resources sustainably and in line with their traditions and values.

- Support activities that bring both economic and environmental benefits for Indigenous communities, such as the use of forestry byproducts in local power generation.

### **Honouring UNDRIP as it was intended**

DRIPA legislation was intended to represent a shift towards reconciliation and the recognition of Indigenous self-determination in British Columbia. However, its implementation and interpretation by the NDP has stalled Indigenous-led development in industries like mining, forestry, natural gas, and other sectors.

Our government will honour the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as it was intended: the central set of guiding principles for how governments can recognize and strengthen the rights and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples.

Our government will work in partnership with First Nations to develop new legislation that advances, not stalls, economic reconciliation and Indigenous autonomy. This is a process that will be grounded in the aspirations and rights of Indigenous peoples.

### **Strengthening Indigenous wellness and cultural autonomy**

True reconciliation cannot happen without addressing the social and wellness challenges facing Indigenous communities. It has been common practice for governments to acknowledge these challenges, then fail to elevate them to the level of action and resolution.

One of the most pressing issues is the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the provincial foster care system: for generations, First Nations youth have had to endure neglect, abuse, and weakened cultural ties to their community. Rectifying this injustice is a top priority for the Conservative Party of British Columbia.

These changes will reverse the harmful effects of state intervention and ensure that Indigenous children grow up in strong, healthy communities. We will work with First Nations to build capacity to provide culturally appropriate support for children. When parents are unable to provide adequate care, we will support the community in taking the lead for the future of its children.

We are committed to transferring authority for child welfare and family services to First Nations, enabling communities to raise their children according to their cultural

values and traditions. The Matriarchs and rights holders that are identified by First Nations leadership will lead the change.

The legacy of trauma and ongoing challenges that face Indigenous peoples have contributed to addiction and mental health struggles. These experiences have created a critical need for culturally-appropriate care and recovery services, which are often not available within First Nations communities.

Economic reconciliation aims to address the root causes of wellness challenges in the Indigenous community. However, this will take time, and action must be taken today to improve access to care and build healthier communities.

We will work with Indigenous leaders to develop treatment and recovery programs available within First Nations communities. Individuals undergoing treatment for health challenges including addiction, should have the option of receiving the support they need close to home, in a familiar and culturally appropriate environment.

### **A vision of progress and prosperity**

The Conservative Party of BC envisions a future where Indigenous peoples continue to be defined by their deep rooted culture, and not only their aspiration, but their right to achieve prosperity from the vast economic opportunity available in British Columbia.

Through real partnerships, economic development, and respect for Indigenous governance, we are dedicated to a bright future for First Nations where communities thrive, children grow up in healthy environments, and cultural traditions are preserved for generations to come.

Sincerely,

John Rustad  
Leader, Conservative Party of British Columbia

**Elections BC info for the  
October 19, 2024 Provincial Election**



# VOTER'S GUIDE

**2024 Provincial General Election**

**Saturday, October 19, 2024**



[elections.bc.ca](http://elections.bc.ca) / 1-800-661-8683

I VOTE.



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# 2024 PROVINCIAL ELECTION

**The British Columbia provincial election is on October 19, 2024.**

You can vote if you are:

- A Canadian citizen,
- 18 or older on October 19, 2024, and
- A resident of B.C. since April 18, 2024.

Voters will elect 93 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). Each Member represents an electoral district (or riding) and has a seat in the provincial Legislature. The political party with the most seats in the Legislature will form B.C.'s next government.



There are new electoral districts for this election.

Visit [elections.bc.ca/mydistrict](https://elections.bc.ca/mydistrict) to find yours.

## IMPORTANT DATES

|   |                                |
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| Official campaign period begins   | Saturday, September 21         |
| Candidate nominations close at 1 p.m. (Pacific time)  | Saturday, September 28         |
| National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (district electoral offices closed)                         | Monday, September 30           |
| Online and telephone voter registration closes at midnight (voters can still register when they vote) | Monday, October 7              |
| <b>Advance voting</b>   | <b>October 10-13 and 15-16</b> |
| Last day to request a vote-by-mail package online or by phone   | Sunday, October 13             |
| Thanksgiving Day (advance voting places and district electoral offices closed)                        | Monday, October 14             |
| <b>Final Voting Day</b>   | <b>Saturday, October 19</b>    |

## REGISTER TO VOTE

Register now to save time when you vote. You can register or update your information at [elections.bc.ca/register](https://elections.bc.ca/register) or by calling **1-800-661-8683**.

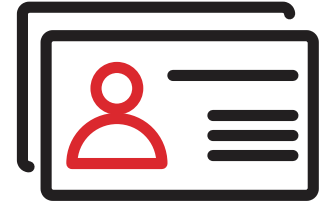
Voter registration closes online and by phone at 11:59 p.m. (Pacific time) on **October 7**. You can also register when you go to vote.



## VOTER ID

Before voting, all voters must prove who they are and where they live. You can show:

- A BC driver's licence,
- A BC Identification Card (BCID),
- A BC Services Card (with photo), or
- A Certificate of Indian Status.



You can also show two documents, both with your name and at least one with your current home address.

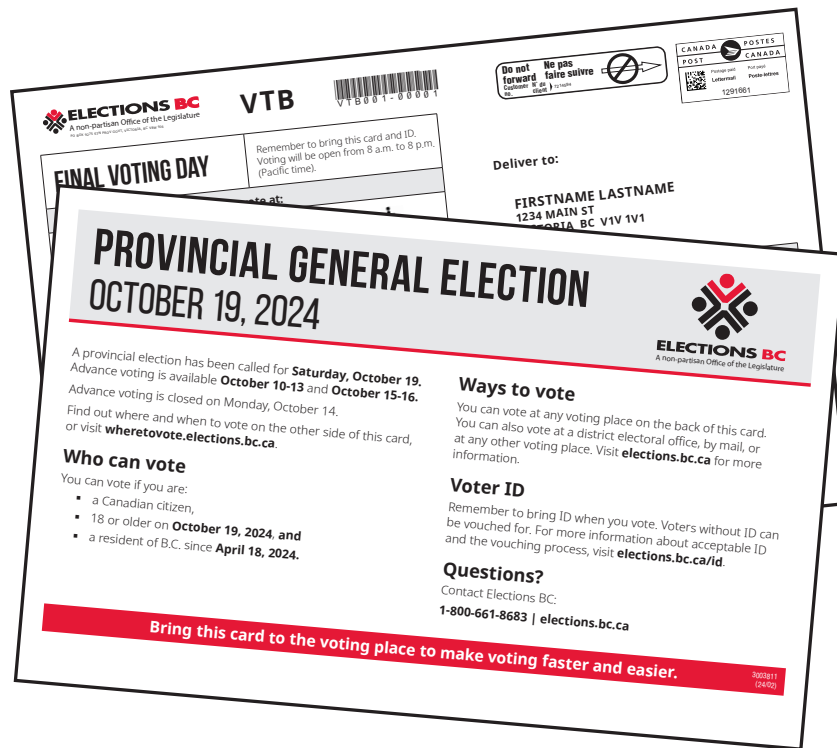
Voters who don't have ID can be vouched for. Visit [elections.bc.ca/id](https://elections.bc.ca/id) for more information about vouching and a complete list of acceptable ID.

### Voters without a fixed address

If you don't have a permanent residential address, you can use the address of a social services agency where you regularly receive services as your address when you vote. Visit the agency and ask to complete a confirmation of residence form before you go to vote.

## Where to Vote card

Elections BC will send a Where to Vote card to every registered voter before advance voting starts. Your Where to Vote card lists your assigned voting place on Final Voting Day and advance voting places in your electoral district. You can use your Where to Vote card as one of two pieces of voter ID.



## VOTING OPTIONS

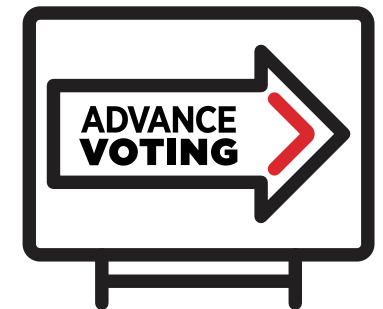
**All eligible voters can vote at any voting place in the province.**

### Vote at advance voting

**October 10-13 and 15-16 | 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (local time)**

Closed Monday, October 14

You don't need a reason to vote at advance voting – it's an option for all voters. Not all advance voting places are open on every day of the advance voting period. Make sure to check your Where to Vote card or visit [wheretovote.elections.bc.ca](https://wheretovote.elections.bc.ca) to find advance voting places and the dates they are open.



## Vote on Final Voting Day

**Saturday, October 19 | 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (Pacific time)**

Voters have an assigned voting place on Final Voting Day, but you can vote at another voting place if it's more convenient to you. Find your assigned voting place on your Where to Vote card or visit [wheretovote.elections.bc.ca](https://wheretovote.elections.bc.ca).

## Vote at a district electoral office

**From September 21 until 4 p.m. (Pacific time) on October 19**

District electoral offices open the day the election is called, September 21. You can vote at any district electoral office in the province.

### Hours of operation:

Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Advance voting days, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Find a list of office locations at [elections.bc.ca/offices](https://elections.bc.ca/offices).



## VOTE BY MAIL

You can ask for a vote-by-mail package by:

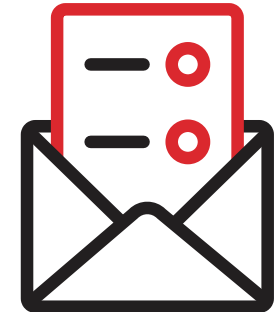
- Visiting [votebymail.elections.bc.ca](https://votebymail.elections.bc.ca)
- Calling Elections BC at **1-800-661-8683**

Your vote-by-mail package will be mailed to you. The last day to ask for a package online or by phone is **October 13**.

Starting September 21 you can also pick up a vote-by-mail package in person at any district electoral office.

Visit [elections.bc.ca/offices](https://elections.bc.ca/offices) or call Elections BC for a list of office locations.

Completed packages can be returned by mail or dropped off at a district electoral office, voting place or another authorized location (see Elections BC's website for a complete list).



**Elections BC must receive your completed vote-by-mail package by 8 p.m. (Pacific time) on October 19.**



# TECHNOLOGY AND THE VOTING PROCESS

Elections BC uses proven and secure technology to administer provincial elections. Technology helps make the voting process faster and easier, and enables most absentee ballots to be counted and recorded on election night.

## Digital voters list

Laptop computers are used to check voters in, record voter registration information and strike voters off the voters list when they vote. This ensures that only eligible voters vote, and that they only vote once.



## Tabulators

Tabulators are used to count paper ballots that voters mark by hand. Tabulators are faster than counting ballots by hand. They have been used successfully in B.C. by-elections since 2022, in other provincial elections in Canada since 2014, and in municipal elections in B.C.



After voting closes, election officials will print a results tape from the tabulator. Results from the tape are phoned into the district office and entered into Elections BC's results system.

You can view results as they come in on election night at [elections.bc.ca](https://elections.bc.ca).

Tabulators are tested before and after voting to make sure they count ballots accurately. Candidate representatives (also called scrutineers) can observe this testing. Results are also validated through an audit process after voting closes.

Tabulators are secure. They are never connected to the internet, and paper ballots are kept in case of a recount.



## What are the benefits of using technology in the voting process?

### Better service

Election officials can serve voters faster and more efficiently, which means less waiting in line-ups.

### Election integrity

Once you have voted, election officials will strike your name off the voters list electronically. This lets other voting places know who has voted so no one can vote twice.

### Faster, accurate results

After voting closes, election officials will report results quickly and accurately by using electronic tabulators to count paper ballots.

### More votes counted on election night

Technology allows most absentee ballots to be counted and reported on election night. All votes cast in the election are counted, whether that's at initial count (on election night) or at final count (about a week later).



## SERVICES FOR VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES

Elections BC is committed to a safe and accessible voting process for all voters, and we have services available to assist. Election officials are trained on how to assist voters with accessibility challenges to vote.

### Voting place accessibility

All advance voting places and most final voting places are wheelchair accessible. Voters who can't enter a voting place can vote outside the building at the curb or in the parking lot. Ask the election official at the door of the voting place if you need assistance with voting.



### Translators

Voters can bring a translator to help them at the voting place. The translator must make a declaration that they are able to act as a translator and will do so to the best of their abilities.



## Assistance marking the ballot

Voters who have difficulty reading, writing or marking their ballot can ask for assistance from election officials in voting places.

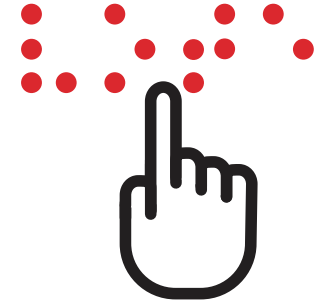
## Assistive technology

Assistive equipment will be available in district electoral offices to allow voters to mark their ballot independently. Voters can listen to an audio recording of candidate names and affiliations and indicate their vote by using a hand-held selector device, sip-and-puff straws or paddles. The voter's ballot paper will be printed and fed into the tabulator, just like any other ballot.



## Resources for voters with sight loss

Braille candidate lists, large-print ballot posters and plastic ballot templates are available at all voting places.



## Assisted telephone voting

Assisted telephone voting is available to voters with sight loss, disability, or an underlying health condition that prevents them from voting independently or that would make it unsafe or impossible to vote in person. For more information about assisted telephone voting, contact Elections BC at **1-800-661-8683**.



# ELECTION INTEGRITY

Provincial elections in B.C. are safe, secure, free and fair. You can be confident that your vote will be counted accurately and that election results will reflect the will of B.C. voters.



Some safeguards that keep our elections secure include:

- Voters must prove their identity and address before voting
- Voting is always done using voter-marked paper ballots
- Tabulators are tested before and after voting to prove ballots are counted accurately
- Candidate representatives can observe all voting and counting processes

Elections BC enforces the rules that protect election integrity. These include:

- Rules about campaign spending, raising money, and election advertising
- Protections against spreading false information about election processes and results
- Making sure that only eligible voters vote, and that they only vote once

There are serious penalties for breaking these rules.

You can help protect election integrity in B.C. One of the easiest ways to do this is fact-checking election information that you see online or in person. Remember, Elections BC is your trusted source for accurate and up-to-date information about how to vote in the provincial election and the electoral process in B.C.



For more information about how Elections BC protects our electoral process and what you can do to help, visit [elections.bc.ca/integrity](https://elections.bc.ca/integrity).







## QUESTIONS?

Visit our website or contact us for more information about where, when and how to vote.

**elections.bc.ca | 1-800-661-8683**

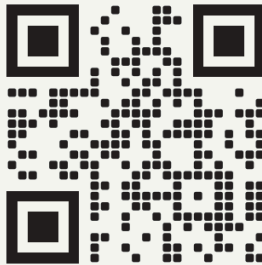
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