

JUST GREEN WELLBEING

A NEW ECONOMIC VISION FOR CANADA AND THE WORLD

THE TIME IS NOW

COVID is our final wake-up call. Canada, and the world, have been living on borrowed time. We must stop what we have been doing to nature and ourselves. We must make a new beginning.

We must move rapidly towards a just and green economy, reorienting our society away from the meaningless consumption of more and more and towards social justice, ecological sustainability and social, cultural and material well-being.

We lay out our economic blueprint here. It addresses in equal measure the economic ills we face and the ecological emergency we are in. Further details on the latter are in 'Responding to the Ecological Emergency.'

Canada's economy has failed the land, its peoples, and the world

Our economy is destroying the foundation of our existence. It despoils the land and the waters, poisons the air, and devastates the natural world. It has created a society riddled with poverty, injustice, inequality, gender discrimination and racism.

Defending, protecting, and nurturing the land and its beings cannot be separated from creating a truly human society and economy. The land cries for a people free of greed and want, united by common ideals of justice, equality and respect. However, no nation will survive unless committed, in word and deed, to its land, the waters upon it, the air above it, and all that lives on or in them and to cooperative relations with other similarly committed nations.

Canada's economy has substituted profit for progress

Canada's economy is organized to pillage nature and to feed the world's financiers. It destroys the environment because financial gain drives it. In 2015, it exported \$181 billion worth of minerals - twenty times what its people consumed at home - and \$56 billion in products of the land - twice what its people consumed at home. Its economy, originating in colonial settlement, is addicted to exploiting land expropriated from Indigenous peoples.

At home, Canada's economy bestrides a rift between original peoples and settlers. Its corporations despoil land at home and abroad. They alienate our natural friends - from the Indigenous peoples on whose territories Canada stands, to the colonized peoples of the world. The Toronto Stock Exchange is the mining world's favourite stock market because it is one of the world's least regulated. It exports settler habits of unaccountable exploitation to the rest of the world.

Most of the fabulous wealth this economy produces goes to a privileged few, leaving Canada unable to afford decent incomes and social services for the many. Most Canadians live a paycheck or two from poverty. As for social services, amid the real-world stress test that is the pandemic, for instance, our health care system has been shamed by those of far poorer countries able to bring the pandemic under control merely by valuing care over profit.

In recent decades, as governments have yielded more to corporate power, our public services and public sphere have deteriorated, and the social fabric has frayed, further.

The Harper government destroyed the agricultural marketing boards that once protected small farmers and consumers from the rapacious forces of world commodity markets. Neither the Liberals nor the NDP have fought to reinstate them.

We will harness Canada's economy. We will cultivate human capacity, caring, creativity, and understanding. We will respect Indigenous sovereignty and create a human society that respects and defends the land it lives on. We will reconstruct food and agricultural sovereignty for ourselves and for our allies.

If we succeed, Canada will be among the beacons of human progress, spearheading green development and research, managing a green, productive and egalitarian economy and creating a society and culture welcoming ideas and people from the world over.

Canada's economy denies its children a future

The millions of young people mobilizing against climate change have sent an urgent message. Our duty to them demands that we *invest in human cultural, social, and intellectual development* - turning the economy from destroying nature to improving human material and cultural life sustainably. We are told the 'costs' are too great, but governments do not hesitate to raise vast sums to wage wars or bail out predatory banks. The money is there. The question is what we will use it for.

Building a new future calls for enormous, transformative investment - in green technology, in schools, colleges, universities, and research: in care, culture, and creativity. These will create many new skilled jobs and entail the revaluation of previously devalued work. They will end poverty, decrease inequality and make Canada a world hub for change and a model of care for all.

We will recognize the genocidal effects of Canada's settler-colonial origins and ongoing colonial practices on Indigenous peoples. We will do everything in our power to repair the damage done and prevent further damage. Key to this will be ending Canada's lifelong addiction to extraction and finance and transforming its economy for the wellbeing of all of Canada's peoples.

We will also open a discussion about the good life and what suffices for it. This is critical if we are going to have an egalitarian and sustainable society. Do we need more and more mindless consumption of resource depleting goods and services financed through ruinous debt that enriches only a few? Does such consumption enhance the quality of our lives? How much is enough? Do we not need more intellectual, physical and cultural development? Do we need to provide opportunities for them to all? Do we need to create new forms of art, sport and new social bonds? Another Canada is possible, one of just, green wellbeing.

GDP cannot capture Canada's social and ecological well being

With economic policy subordinated to the narrow measure of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), government merely serves the corporate destruction of nature and humanity by costing them in dollars.

We will introduce, and plan for, three critical green and social indicators:

- the resource footprint of the Canadian economy which we will reduce by redesigning it for sustainability;
- inequality, which we will reduce by narrowing the gap between richest and poorest to a maximum of 10:1; and
- the quality of human life which we will enhance by providing access to adequate incomes, housing, care, education and creative self-development.

We will set resource footprint and inequality reduction and quality of life enhancement targets for enterprises, government agencies, and the general public, open them up to wide public consultation, and set

in place governing mechanisms guaranteeing public access and oversight, so that Canadians can work together to achieve them.

Corporate finance has failed the Canadian economy

Canadians have mountains of debts. While they cripple the lives of the many, they constitute the assets of Canadian and international financial institutions and high net worth individuals, lining their pockets and, often parked in tax havens, depriving Canadian governments of significant revenues. This combination of the misery of the many and the obscene privileges of the few is the product of a credit system that fails to channel investment where it is needed – into green and socially useful productive investment, transformative technology, human development, and defending the environment – and directs it toward financial extortion and speculation.

We will establish a banking system that serves the people and the environment.

Canada's political parties have failed Canadians and the environment

The Liberal government has failed to deliver on its modest promises; climate-change emissions are hardly lower than in 2013 and fell short of our unambitious commitments to the United Nations by 44 million tons. The Conservatives, meanwhile, resist even these modest reductions. The NDP, whilst campaigning on a laudable promise to protect air, land, and water, has put almost no concrete measures before parliament to achieve this.

We will develop and fight for an eco-socialist programme and unite Canadian progressives around a radical and democratic transformation of economy and society and their relation to nature, eliminating debt, homelessness, unemployment, poverty, climate change and ecological destruction, and challenging corporate greed head-on.

We can do it

The money, technology and skills are readily available. No new rocket science is needed, only resolute political will. Canadians should wrest control of our economy and environment from the hands of their abusers, bring our leaders to their senses and hold them to account.

Canadians want it

A May 2020 poll commissioned by the Broadbent Institute shows that Canadians resoundingly endorse an economic approach that prioritizes social health and welfare, increased government spending, transition to a low-carbon economy, debt relief, and a wealth tax:

- by a 2 to 1 margin (64% to 36%), Canadians want governments to spend whatever is required to rebuild and stimulate the economy, even if it means running deficits;
- many Canadians believe that critical parts of Canada's health and care infrastructure require improvements, especially the long-term care system;
- most Canadians say it is essential that economic recovery make Canada fairer and more self-sufficient; ensure those with the most contribute the most; include investments in the health care system and young Canadians; and help transition to a low-carbon economy;
- 77% support governments providing financial assistance and debt relief to municipalities to help with budget shortfalls;
- 3 in 4 Canadians (75%) support implementing a wealth tax of 1% to
- 2% of the value of assets of Canada's wealthiest people to help pay for the recovery; and
- 8 in 10 Canadians (81%) believe companies receiving government assistance should be required not to use foreign tax havens, and not use the money for excessive salaries, share buybacks, or increasing dividends.

Canadians' political mood is shifting profoundly. The old ways of running the economy and organising our relation to the earth no longer work.

We will give the progressive majority of Canadians a voice in the halls of power.

POWER TO THE PEOPLE: ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY AS A GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Canadians have not been in charge of their own destiny. We are denied democracy in the largest sphere of our lives – our economy. It prevents our concerns about the ecological emergency from being expressed in our economic structures and practices. An economy dominated by private corporations cannot address these problems because they value profit over human need or the protection of nature.

We will address these failures with a system of economic democracy, drawing on modern innovative ideas to bring about a socialist economy which is also a green 'circular' one.

Simply put, it would restore to nature what it takes out. Economic democracy will be expressed in the running of enterprises (as set out in 'Advancing Workers' Rights in a Changing World of Work') and in our system of planning for a Just Green Wellbeing.

Planning: the key to democracy

The surest way to provide for an equitable and just economic democracy is to ensure that all take part in determining its objectives. That means planning, not the top down variety but the bottom up democratic and decentralised planning.

We will introduce five plans designed and implemented in a democratic and decentralised way with full transparency and participation at all levels of government:

- a plan to address the ecological emergency and eliminate resource dependency;
- a plan to reorient economic management towards a green, productive and egalitarian economy;
- a plan for universal health, drugs and care;
- a plan to eliminate poverty and substantially reduce inequality; and
- a plan to invest in education, research, and the creative economy to promote human cultural, social, and intellectual development.

Economic democracy will be key to avoiding the cronyism, backdoor deals and scandals that plague the management of Canada's economy. Social ownership can match private efficiency *and* meet social and ecological objectives, while avoiding its lack of transparency, accountability and representation.

We aim for a system of planning that puts power in the hands of ordinary people. It will delegate authority to the lowest feasible level of enterprise and government. Public and private agencies alike will divulge clearly what they are doing, be publicly accountable and ensure the public is represented in their governing structures. Such a system has no place for the present private lobbying system and replace it with open public accountability

Take responsibility, take control

Climate change, COVID, crash after economic crash with the loss of millions of jobs and livelihoods, and not least, war, are not 'natural disasters.' Our existing economic model has had a big hand in all of them. We created this mess and we have to get ourselves, and future generations, out of it.

OUR FIVE PLANS

We will create and encourage the implementation of five democratic national plans to:

1. Address the climate emergency and eliminate Canada's resource dependency.

This plan will implement a transition from a resource-depleting, low-wage, underemployment economy to a green, resource-decoupled, smart, high-wage and full employment economy based on localised processing, manufacturing and services. Canada should be a world hub for the new technology concerned – alternative fuels, reusable materials, high-speed rail, and a creative information and cultural economy. Specific measures include:

- achieve net zero emissions by 2030 or come close to it, completing the task soon thereafter, as is prescribed by our equitable share of the remaining global carbon budget. Details are given in the ecology platform, 'The Ecological Emergency: An Eco-socialist Response';
- implementing a circular economy through measures across economic sectors;
- immediate taxes on polluters sufficient to fund a reclamation jobs boom;
- a massive reforestation plan;
- a five-year job guarantee for workers in the fossil fuels industry;
- mass public transportation either free or very low cost, within and between cities;
- extension of public transport and high-speed internet into rural communities and low-income communities to foster a new kind of regeneration based on human well-being, not resource consumption; and
- cooperation with other countries to enable the achievement of similar goals world-wide.

2. Reorient our economic management towards full employment and our financial system away from financialization and towards productive investment.

This plan will implement a just, green and egalitarian economy under social control rather than under the control of the profit motive. It will equalize opportunities to contribute and to benefit. It will eliminate relations of domination and subordination among nations to open the way for genuinely cooperative relations among them, acknowledging the sovereign right of each nation to organize its economy for the welfare of its own citizens. It will reorient our financial system away from speculative, inequality-generating finance and towards sustainable productive and inequality-addressing investment. It will also reform our international trade. Specific measures include:

Economic Management

- reinstating full employment as the goal of fiscal and monetary policy and expanding employment with reduction and redistribution of work, green and reclamation jobs, and expansion of employment in health care, education and skills training and other key sectors;
- implementing capital controls to prevent capital flight to tax havens and reorient the economy away from financialization and toward green productive investment in Canada;
- undertaking a national programme for green and social housing, prioritizing Indigenous housing; and
- rebuilding our public services at all levels of government and collaborating with provincial and local governments to achieve high standards of provision.

Financial Sector and Banking

- establishing three publicly owned not-for-profit banks.
 - A Postal Savings Bank, operated through an expanded network of Canada Post outlets, will offer retail banking services to the public, especially to those underserved by commercial banks and will invest in the expansion of social housing;
 - A Green Investment Bank will encourage green production and innovation; and

- A Social Investment bank will finance local and locally controlled initiatives to address local social needs;
- enhancing banking regulation to reorient Canada's banks from speculative and international activities and towards productive investment in Canada;
- limiting credit card interest rates to a maximum of 5 percentage points above the Bank of Canada prime rate; and
- limiting ATM fees to \$0.25 per transaction and prohibiting financial institutions from charging their own customers ATM fees.

International Trade

- renegotiating Canada's trade and investment agreements to remove the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) provisions that give foreign corporations extraordinary powers to challenge the laws and policies of democratically elected governments;
- including binding human rights, labour, health, safety and environmental standards in our trade agreements;
- re-negotiating the USMCA to eliminate all of the concessions made by the Canada to the Trump Administration such as longer protection for patents and intellectual property, higher content specifications for rules of origin in autos and auto parts, and increases in tariff exemptions for US dairy products; and
- protecting the different resource governance rules of Canada against US encroachment.

3. Build a universal and free health care and education system covering all aspects of socially engaged and creative life from happy childhood to dignified old age.

This plan will repair decades of damage to our health care system and extend it in vital ways to make healthcare genuinely universal and free at the point of use. It must prioritize prevention and social medicine, whose importance the pandemic has tragically underscored. An effective, universal and comprehensive health care system is a critical part of any economy, reducing costs of the care itself as well as of lost production and productivity. An accessible and flourishing education system promotes skills, innovation and human self-development for all.

Specific measures include:

Health Care

- Establishing a pharmacare programme;
- integrating elder care, mental health, dental and vision care into the public health system;
- extending high levels of health care to Indigenous and remote communities; and
- eliminating the scandal of low wages and poor working conditions among healthcare and elder care workers.

Education

- integrating childcare into the education system;
- reinstating public education funding in cooperation with provinces to eliminate extra fees and expenses and ensure a high standard of education across school systems;
- reinstating funding for post-secondary education, including, universities, colleges and vocational and skills training institutions; and
- providing free post-secondary education for all who qualify.

4. Eliminate unemployment, gross inequality, poverty and homelessness.

These goals will be achieved in good part through the overall economic management proposed above but will also require specific measures. An overhaul of the tax system is essential here and will also contribute to our ecological goals. Extreme wealth not only exacerbates all problems of inequality and poverty but reducing it is one of the most effective ways to reduce climate change emissions. As a result of ‘carbon inequality’, the spending of the top 10% accounts for a far greater proportion of emissions.

Here are some specifics:

Ensuring adequate incomes

- expanding employment through a combination of public and private initiative to produce for unmet need and through redistribution of work and its rewards;
- creating a Minimum Guaranteed Income through the tax system to top up incomes falling below a decent livable income to ensure that no Canadian lives in poverty. The MGI will be indexed to inflation and to the cost of living in the community in which the recipient resides;
- enacting Federal legislation granting every Canadian a fundamental right to decent housing financed through the Postal Savings Bank investment and, should it prove insufficient, funded through the Federal government;
- providing decent pensions through a Canada-wide pension system that covers all Canadians of retirement age; and
- establishing a Canada-wide minimum wage and a family-supporting Living Wage that ensures employers carry their fair share of the burden.

Tax Reform

- raising the top marginal tax rate to 75% on income in excess of \$500,000 a year;
- levying a 100% tax on individual net worth in excess of \$500 million and placing a cap on the wealth an individual can own. This will be applied to the worldwide assets and liabilities of all Canadian citizens, regardless of their country of residence. In order to avoid the tax, a taxpayer would have to abandon Canadian residence and renounce Canadian citizenship;
- dropping all preferential tax treatment for capital gains;
- implementing a land value tax in collaboration with provincial governments to tax away the portion of increased in realised real estate value that exceeds a fair return on the investment in buildings and other improvements that typically is unearned and stems from wider social improvements affecting the location;
- raising the corporate tax rate from 15% to 25%, except for small businesses;
- imposing a 45% inheritance tax on estates in excess of \$5 million;
- eliminating tax dodging through tax havens by taxing funds hidden there and requiring companies to prove that their foreign affiliates are actual functioning businesses for tax purposes and not tax dodges;
- empowering the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to collect and seize tax revenues on wealth and incomes hiding in offshore tax havens, and to focus their audits on people who hide vast wealth rather than on randomly chosen ordinary Canadians;
- imposing a corporate tax on transnational e-commerce companies doing business in Canada by requiring the foreign vendor to register, and remit taxes, where the product or service is consumed (rather than allegedly produced);
- reversing the 50% expense deduction on corporate meals and entertainment expenses such as season tickets and private boxes at sporting events;

- preventing the transfer of family trust funds to lower tax jurisdictions. Canadian owned trust funds should remain in Canada and taxed in Canada; and
- removing international investment vehicles from the RRSP tax shelter. The intention of this shelter is to increase savings to be invested in Canada.

5. Invest in a major expansion of education, research, and the creative economy, including in maximum development and use of communication technology.

These goals will be achieved by recognising the value of the uniquely diverse habitats and peoples in Canada and the cultural, artistic and creative talents they foster, removing inequalities of access to communications, education, art and self-expression so every Canadian can take equal and autonomous part in the creative transformation of Canada and the world.

We can learn from models such as Venezuela's Sistema programme. Achieving these goals will involve reforming Intellectual Property (IP).

Originally designed to provide an income for the creator and inventor, it has turned, with US-imposed regime established in 1996, into a *financialized* and *monopolised* protection for corporations, preventing instead of promoting dissemination of knowledge and culture, denying both the economy and the public the fruits of creation.

Specific measures include:

Canada: a world hub for transformative technologies

- establishing a network of Green Creativity Institutes connecting Canadian and international talent to develop ideas for social, technological and ecological transformation;
- creating a unified Ministry for Science, Information and Creativity to develop infrastructures for all three; and
- funding, through the Green Investment Bank and the Social Investment Bank, relevant collaborations between small business and cooperative innovators, educational institutions and community organizations.

Communication, Communication, Communication

- bringing high-speed internet to the remotest homes in Canada, creating a connected community able to develop the creative talent of its peoples;
- taking the communications network into social (Federal, Provincial and local government) ownership to put it within reach of the ordinary consumer; and
- financing and supporting a strong software industry, protected against takeover by multinationals but open to collaboration with the best of the Canada's and the world's developers.

Art for all

- ending cultural inequality to give all Canadians the right to develop their talents to the full beginning with equal and free access to education in the arts;
- funding collaborations between arts organizations and schools to give children access to high-quality practitioners, arts organizations much needed community outreach and artists a secure source of income;
- facilitating the development of the growing range of creative digital industries, such as video games, robotics, web design, and the full use of digital technology for traditional creative industries, as with remote streaming for theatre, opera and orchestral performances, or virtual museums and galleries; and
- developing Canada's fashion brands, paying special attention to Indigenous creations.

- building on the excellent work of the Canada Arts Council in supporting existing organizations and encouraging innovation and experimentation.

Overhaul the Intellectual Property system

- reforming the IP system to provide income to the creators;
- developing redistributive vehicles to channel liveable income to artists;
- halting the use of blocking patents and copyrights;
- shortening the maximum duration of IP to ensure knowledge is rapidly applied and the public acquires free and open access to discoveries and creations; and
- developing a system of technology sharing by incentivizing developers and inventors to put their creations rapidly at the disposal of society.

THE MEANS TO PLAN

To plan effectively and democratically, Canadians need more control at all levels of government than they have in a system based on profit. This will include:

- setting clear, democratically agreed targets for the three green and social indicators, identifying, through consultation and study, how best to achieve them at the relevant level of government or enterprise;
- providing, through legislation or government action, incentives for the changes we envisage and alternatives when change is not forthcoming;
- enabling Canadians to hold their governments and corporations to account for their actions and to collaborate with environmental and social justice activists to do so;
- increasing government revenues and finances through increased taxation on the rich, incomes of crown entities or by borrowing from Canadians;
- directing sufficient funds into protecting the environment and advancing social goals to ensure the transformations needed;
- working with all types of economic units – public, cooperative, and private – to achieve these objectives;
- taking essential goods and services industries, especially the rail industry, broadband internet and telecommunications, and long-term care facilities, into public ownership;
- appointing a Public Economic Interest Commission to identify other firms that would serve Canadian society better in public hands, beginning with natural monopolies such as transport, communications, energy and resources;
- combining public ownership with economic democracy;
- recognising that often there are no silver bullets and that we must combine apparently disparate measures into a coherent whole: for instance, both a Carbon Tax or Cap and Trade may have a role to play in reducing emissions;
- remaining open to radical and exciting ideas from Green, Socialist, Justice and other movements, and from abroad; and
- being prepared to recognise that solutions may require trial and error.

COLLABORATING FOR NEW THINKING; ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE

Change must start now. We will initiate and support campaigns such as those for guaranteed minimum and maximum income, Citizen debt audit, Work-sharing, Green tax reform, firm environmental caps, ending subsidies to polluters, support for the co-operative economic sector, and curbing wasteful expenditure of advertising.

Practical Green and social measures are being developed by a wide network of innovative Green thinkers across the planet. We will work with them at grassroots, party, and government levels.

Our existing economy not only puts profit before people and guarantees spiralling inequality, but it is also the root cause of the ecological emergency. Economy and ecology are inextricably intertwined. To mend our relationship with the earth, we must wrest power from private corporations and bring the economy under democratic control so that it meets human needs without exceeding the limits of our planet. The economic foundations of **Just Green Wellbeing** outlined here provide the framework for ‘Responding to the Ecological Emergency’