

## ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT POLICY



*Alberta enjoys the benefits of abundant fresh water, exceptional landscapes and high air quality. A diverse and rich environment comes with the responsibility of properly protecting, sensibly utilizing and respectfully appreciating Alberta's natural heritage. With good governance; meaningful and collaborative decision-making; and effective leadership; the Alberta Party believes we can advance our resource economy while at the same time honouring and preserving our unique natural ecosystem. .*

### THE ENVIRONMENT

The Alberta Party believes that we can improve our environmental conditions and simultaneously continue to expand our economy. Improved governance of water resources; responsible development of land; high air quality; and reduced GHG emissions are all very achievable goals in Alberta. The Alberta Party believes that with cooperation between citizens, industry, and government we can make the province a healthier and more prosperous place to live in.

### **The Alberta Party's Vision for the Future:**

Alberta will strive to become a global leader in environmental stewardship. The Alberta Party envisions a future in which:

- Integrated environment and energy policies are developed with input from industry and the people of Alberta.
- Water is viewed as a public good that is responsibly shared amongst all Albertans and conserved as a matter of course.
- Albertans are empowered to make sustainable choices to reduce the amount of waste they produce and to conserve more energy and water.
- Land use policy in Alberta is founded upon a sustainable balance of conservation, development, reclamation and restoration.
- The quality of our air is among the best in the world and our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are significantly reduced.

# OUR 4 PRIORITIES

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## 1. WATER MANAGEMENT

The Alberta Party recognizes water as the most important resource we possess in the province, and believe that its intrinsic value should be emphasized. We also recognize that water resources are complex, as they are deeply integrated with their surrounding environments. We believe that, moving forward, responsible management and good governance are essential. This is especially true given the increasing pressures put on Alberta's water resources by the realities of a changing climate; increasing population demands; a growing energy industry; and expanding communities. The Alberta Party encourages economic development partnered with the responsible management of water.

Good governance of our water resources requires a shared governance model that is supported by science (for example, adequate monitoring); public participation in decision-making; a predictable regulatory environment; effective management tools; and incentives for conservation. Albertans also want to be assured that our water resources are equitably distributed to benefit the future growth of the province's communities, local economies and resource development—while protecting the integrity of our water resources. The Alberta Party will develop a stronger and more complete process for setting standards, monitoring, and conserving water. The governance system for water resources is a critical component in ensuring the sustainability of our watersheds and wetlands.

### **An Alberta Party government will:**

- Strive to identify, establish and improve the inventory of wetlands to ensure that highly valuable wetlands are protected. This will include purchasing or using conservation easements and other regulated mechanisms—with compensation where necessary—to protect the most significant wetlands.
- Work with and support municipalities and wetland agencies, which have vast knowledge and experience in wetland management. We will also support and encourage agricultural producers who are willing to protect and conserve wetlands.
- Establish a “Net Growth of Wetlands” or a “No Net Loss” mandate that recognizes ecological and regional differences in wetlands.

- Develop legislated Conservation Objectives that will offer protection for water sources, and Watershed Management Plans for all major watersheds. We will promote and encourage groundwater management plans.
- Develop a Water Risk Management Framework that will guide planning and implementation of water management decisions, and will craft strategies to respond to droughts, floods, and disasters.
- Develop a water management system that supports the growth of Alberta's economy; encourages conservation and efficiency; and ensures that conserved water benefits the environment. We see water as a public good and not as a marketable commodity.
- Create incentives for industry and households to substantially reduce water consumption. We will build stronger partnerships between landowners, industry and land users to protect source water and upstream catch basins.
- Work with industry to reduce the industrial use of water and promote water conservation solutions that address the use of brackish water; eliminate tailings ponds; and promote treatment and recycling.
- Work with municipalities to develop opportunities to use grey water—wastewater generated from domestic activities such as laundry, dishwashing, and bathing—as part of the water conservation solution in the households of Albertans.

## 2. LAND MANAGEMENT

Alberta's landscape is diverse and bountiful. Our province is home to ecologically unique areas that Albertans cherish, and an abundance of resources that have contributed greatly to our thriving economy. Considerations of land use will be very important to Alberta's future as we strive to strike a balance between development and conservation. The Alberta Party believes we can make decisions that support economic growth as well as accommodate both public and private interests, all while ensuring that the land in our province is developed sustainably.

Land use planning is important for responsible development of Alberta's land and resources. If done well it provides protection to areas that require conservation; creates stronger communities; ensures that completed projects are properly reclaimed; and helps foster resource



development in a more sustainable way. The Alberta Party believes significant improvements must be made to the environmental aspects of land use planning in our province.

#### **An Alberta Party government will:**

- Ensure planning for reclamation is ongoing during the life of a project. This includes working with stakeholders to create a more streamlined and transparent reclamation certification process, and increased financial bonding—deposits of money—to ensure that the scale of trust is appropriate to the level of reclamation liability.
- Address the growing backlog of industrial sites in need of reclamation by introducing regulated timelines for the abandonment and reclamation of oil and gas wells with the flexibility to grant extensions in exceptional cases where the licensee can provide economic or technical justification.
- Recognize the diversity of the seven regional areas identified for land use planning and commit to prioritizing the four headwater regional plans. This would include thresholds, targets, and limits on resource values—all of which consider cumulative effects—within all seven regional areas.
- Contribute a small portion of royalty revenues to creating and maintaining protected areas. This will also involve expanding existing parks and recreation areas to include regions that represent habitat unique to Alberta.
- Establish a system in which operators register a caveat on the title for lands that contain oil and gas facilities to ensure that potential buyers are aware of the presence of these facilities before purchasing their home or land.

### **3. AIR QUALITY**

Whether we are out exploring nature or walking downtown, Albertans expect a high quality of air. As cities grow and our province continues to expand resource development, it will become increasingly important to ensure we manage airborne pollutants. The Alberta Party believes that our natural areas, our industrial areas, and our municipal hubs should have the cleanest air possible.

#### **The Alberta Party will:**

- Create a long-term action plan to reduce commercial and personal vehicle emissions. Provide municipalities incentives to support alternative forms of transportation such as public transit, bicycle infrastructure and high-speed rail.
- Consider air quality in the same context as land and water in regional planning, and develop local and regional air quality management objectives. We will provide further support to existing planning zones. This includes consideration of vehicle emissions in urban settings, industrial emissions in concentrated industrial areas, and unique rural situations such as gas plants and confined feeding operations.
- Strengthen the air quality management system in Alberta, concentrating more on monitoring than on self-reporting by emitters. Provide a transparent monitoring and information system, which ensures that accountability of emitters is timely, informative and proactive, while prioritizing enforcement. Work with industry to provide and utilize the best air quality controlling and monitoring technology to prevent air pollution.
- Support the need to equally emphasize the importance of indoor air quality through the review and enhancement of building codes for our homes, places of work and schools.

### **4. CLIMATE**

Albertans want to be leaders in energy production and GHG emissions management. As we strive to become a leader in energy development we must recognize and accept that growth brings challenges. The energy industry in our province is currently emissions-intensive from the electricity we produce; to the fuel we burn; to the hydrocarbons we export. The Alberta Party believes that by focusing policy specifically on our climate we can turn this challenge into an opportunity to transition to greener energy technologies that will position our economy for a stronger future.

Ensuring GHG emissions decrease, even in Alberta's often booming economic climate, will require ambitious planning and cooperation with many stakeholders. The Alberta Party is committed to strengthening GHG emissions policies by employing evidence-based, cost-effective methods. This will require a mix of legislation and strategic direction. We will employ a number of solutions in order to ensure our emissions decrease while our economy thrives.



### **The Alberta Party will:**

- Ensure that coal-fire electricity generation emission standards match those of natural gas or other viable electricity sources.
- Recognize that there is no single “silver bullet” technology and that in the future we will allow the carbon price to provide the signals necessary to advance solutions.
- Encourage and support the shift of our electrical generation stock to smaller decentralized solar, wind, natural gas, distributed generation, and co-generation facilities.
- Implement a regulatory framework and incentives that reduce per capita electrical consumption.
- Work with stakeholders to implement a strategy that requires electrical generation in the province to meet GHG emissions targets in line with international obligations by or before 2025.
- Work with stakeholders to incorporate a gradually increasing price on carbon that better reflects its environmental costs.
- Reduce GHG reporting thresholds so that more major emitters are covered, and increase openness and transparency of all GHG reporting under provincial legislation.
- Work to identify and protect green spaces, the natural carbon sinks within Alberta.

## **ENERGY**

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Over the years Alberta’s energy sector has created immense value for our province and prosperity for our people. These benefits can continue only if our energy sector adapts to keep pace with the demands of a rapidly changing world. Alberta is in the enviable position of having the potential to be a world leader in developing a sustainable energy sector combining the best sources and practices of our existing energy industry with innovative and creative renewable forms of energy. We can achieve this transition sooner and position Alberta to be at the leading edge of the green energy future by building on the current strengths of a healthy oil and gas industry.

### **The Alberta Party’s Vision for the Future:**

Alberta is a respected global leader in both renewable and non-renewable energy. The Alberta Party envisions an energy future in which:

- Our leadership in energy provides economic prosperity; continuous environmental improvement; and prosperity and wellbeing for the people and the province of Alberta.
- Government policy and regulations are developed in consultation with all stakeholders, reflecting the energy sector’s need for certainty, stability, the need to be competitive on a global scale, as well as an adequate return on investment while committing to continuous improvement in the development of a sustainable and environmentally sound energy industry.



- A percentage of the wealth derived from crude oil, natural gas and the oil sands is continually reinvested in the ongoing development of a sustainable and environmentally responsible energy sector.
- Industry, government and the people of Alberta work together to make it a reality.

## A STRONG ENERGY SECTOR, A GROWING ECONOMY AND A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

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The Alberta Party recognizes the need for an innovative energy sector, a robust economy, and a healthy environment.

### **An Alberta Party government will:**

- Commit to creating integrated energy and environmental policy so industry has clear direction on development activities.
- Ensure that industry and the people of Alberta will always be consulted in developing and amending those policies and accompanying regulations.
- Generate and foster an atmosphere of trust between all stakeholders.
- Create and foster an atmosphere of innovation and continuous improvement through economic and market-based incentives.
- Diversify our energy products and the markets we reach.
- Take a leading role in the research and development of new sources of renewable energy leading to a more sustainable and environmentally responsible energy sector.

## OUR 4 PRIORITIES

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### 1. BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS IN OIL AND GAS

Our province's combination of natural resources and innovative technological expertise perfectly positions our province to take advantage of the Canadian and International need for both conventional and new and pioneering forms of renewable energy. Making the transition from an economy largely dependent on non-renewable resources to one that includes a more balanced approach to environmental

sustainability and responsibility will require the development of a new and innovative expertise. This transition could put Alberta in the forefront of worldwide energy delivery.

**In the past, activity in the energy sector has created huge spin-off benefits, but often the benefits accrue elsewhere. We want to keep more of these benefits here at home in our local communities.**

### **An Alberta Party government will:**

- Provide incentives to industry and businesses to build the capacity of Alberta to foster innovation in the manufacture of equipment, services, and training necessary to support our oil and gas industry.
- Work with the federal government to address the coming labour shortage via the recruitment and retention of New Canadians as permanent residents of Alberta.

**It also benefits all Albertans when the energy sector produces a higher-value product for export to more markets. It produces more skilled jobs and more prosperity. An Alberta Party government will:**

- Undertake a strategic assessment to determine an appropriate level of secondary production for our non-renewable resources that acknowledges market realities and environmental impacts.
- Seek trade, export, and growth opportunities in secondary manufacturing and processing in the petrochemical sector as well as in products sourced from oil and natural gas feedstocks.
- Pursue access to international markets for our oil and gas production by supporting development of a pipeline corridor and a west coast liquid and natural gas facility, while ensuring that the social and environmental issues associated with the project are appropriately addressed.
- Ensure that Albertans' interests are always upheld in the development of any national energy strategy.

**Many of the energy sector's assets can also be leveraged to create economic success in other areas. The knowledge, infrastructure and capital within Alberta's energy industry have already been used to help advance emerging energy technologies and could be used to continue to build success in new areas.**

**An Alberta Party government will:**

- Partner with industry to seek new applications of such technologies outside the energy sector.

**The energy sector is also affected by many supporting industries outside of the energy sector. An Alberta Party government will:**

- Work to bring more of the supporting industries into the province, including the financial sector, as a way to continually increase the benefits that the energy industry provides to Albertans.

## **2. REDUCING GHG EMISSIONS AND TRANSITIONING TO RENEWABLE ENERGY**

Future growth in the energy sector will be coupled with greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) management. Demand for greener energy gives the province an opportunity to develop new technologies here in Alberta that will help make meaningful reductions in GHG's both here and throughout the world, and to take a lead role in offering sustainable energy solutions to the world.

**An Alberta Party government will consider and implement ways to make the Specified Gas Emitters Regulation (SGER) more effective at reducing Alberta's carbon footprint, including:**

- Introducing a gradually increasing carbon price to further encourage low-carbon innovation and greener energy while also ensuring an economically robust energy industry.
- A lower reporting threshold for the SGER, so that more emitters are covered.
- Continuing to enhance a "tech fund" and offer rebates to companies that outperform their carbon performance benchmarks.

We acknowledge the potential of carbon capture and storage (CCS) to reduce our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, but believe there is no single "silver bullet" technology. Therefore, beyond

honoring existing CCS funding agreements, an Alberta Party government will allow the carbon price to provide the signals necessary to advance many different types of solutions.

**An Alberta Party government will also:**

- Work with industry and citizens to develop better transparency, communication and consultation between landowners, local citizens and energy development companies, including oil and gas companies, solar and wind developers. We will foster a more trusting partnership, making it easier for all parties to meet their goals. This includes setting clear rules for the development of wind power and other energy resources on crown land to clearly define where specific developments are appropriate and where development is inappropriate.
- Commission a thorough geothermal survey of Alberta. The last survey was a national effort that took place in the late 1970s. By giving entrepreneurs improved data on the resources, we can kick-start an industry with our abundance of drilling expertise.

Ultimately, the cheapest and cleanest way to meet growing energy needs is through energy efficiency and conservation. There is a strong economic case to be made for advancing energy efficiency and conservation. As a net job creator and the cheapest way to meet future energy needs, energy efficiency initiatives improve the productivity and competitiveness of industry, lower operating costs of public facilities such as schools and hospitals, and reduce household utility bills.

**An Alberta Party government will:**

- Set a target and develop a strategy to upgrade the energy efficiency of half of all commercial and industrial buildings in Alberta over the next 10 years in a way that is cost-neutral for government and provides immediate cost savings for consumers.
- Create a similar strategy to support half of all homeowners in Alberta to do the same.

## **3. ELECTRICITY – TRADITIONAL POWER FOR A NEW CENTURY**

Today, Alberta generates, transmits and distributes electricity using a model in which generators and consumers are connected via an aging high-voltage transmission grid. The need to upgrade Alberta's electricity infrastructure gives us the opportunity to modernize our electricity system to one which is more energy-efficient, more responsive to demand peaks and lows, and lowers GHG emissions.



Working closely with power consumers and producers, an Alberta Party government will create the conditions to advance a more versatile electricity system that takes into account:

- Energy efficiency and conservation.
- Incentives to reduce demand by people and businesses during peak times.
- The distance between proposed power plants and the customers that need it.
- The cost of transmission and distribution.
- The environmental and social impacts of proposed power plants.
- The benefits of people and businesses generating their own power.

Self-generation of power is one area that has a lot of appeal for Albertans. Solar panels, small wind turbines, and units that co-generate electricity and heat for buildings are all currently being used in the province. While these technologies are still maturing, they already help to reduce infrastructure requirements, reduce environmental impact and allow people to be more self-sufficient in meeting their energy needs. The benefits that these technologies bring to Alberta should be acknowledged and rewarded.

Low-impact electricity generation from wind power, sustainably harvested biomass, run-of-river hydroelectricity, solar energy, and geothermal energy also provide benefits to all Albertans that should be recognized and rewarded.

### **To support both self-generation and low-impact generation in the province, the Alberta Party will:**

- Establish a production incentive for low-impact and distributed electricity generation. The level of the incentive will be based on the level of value provided. The incentive will be funded through existing mechanisms such as the Specified Gas Emitters Regulation and will be revenue neutral for government.
- Repeal Bill 50, the Electric Statutes Amendment Act, which allows Cabinet to unilaterally build expensive new transmission lines and encourages centralized electricity generation.
- Modernize the transmission grid by developing a province-wide model that is more efficient and better suited to transmitting sustainable electricity sources.

Rethinking electricity generation and distribution can also provide an expanded, stable domestic market for Alberta natural gas. Natural gas power plants produce much less GHG emissions than traditional electrical generation fuels and can be located close to demand – which lessens the need to build high-voltage power lines.

### **An Alberta Party government will:**

- Regulate coal-fired electricity generating emissions and environmental impacts to ensure that they are reduced to the level of natural gas or other viable sources of power generation.
- Look to low-impact generation to gradually reduce the need for gas-fired generation.

## **4. EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION**

If our goal is to become a respected global leader in sustainable energy, we already have the natural, technological, financial, intellectual, and creative resources to achieve it.

Becoming and remaining a world leader in energy requires a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation. Entrepreneurship means we are able to recognize opportunity, while innovation allows us to respond to a changing world. This begins with building on our existing strengths, and systematically supporting innovation in education, research, technology, business development and environmental science within the energy sector.



### **To do this, an Alberta Party government will:**

- Prioritize and encourage the development and advancement of sustainable technologies and practices in Alberta by committing a portion of non-renewable resource revenues in order to fund more energy innovation and new technology ventures.
- Provide a five-year budget cycle for post-secondary education funding, ensuring certainty for our universities, colleges and polytechnical institutes that are tasked with training and developing the sector's future workforce.
- Attract the skilled labour necessary to complement our knowledge base and contribute to the evolution of our energy sector, so that Alberta can build, service and support new and emerging industries.

## **CONCLUSION**

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The Alberta Party is dedicated to ensuring that Alberta's future is prosperous, environmentally sustainable and productively involves all Albertans. We look forward to working with industry, business and the citizens of our province to build a successful future for our energy sector and our province.

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## **THANKS TO**

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Thanks to the volunteers in the policy and communications committees for producing this policy brief. Their help has been immeasurable.

## **FEEDBACK**

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We are always looking for feedback on Alberta Party policy. If you have any comments or questions, we would love to receive them. Feedback for the Energy and Environment Policy can be given on our website ([www.albertaparty.ca](http://www.albertaparty.ca)), our Facebook page ([facebook.com/albertaparty](https://facebook.com/albertaparty)), or by emailing us at: [policy@albertaparty.ca](mailto:policy@albertaparty.ca).



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common ground. common sense.