

May 8, 2013



The  
**WATERWEALTH**  
Project

## B.C. Election 2013 Report Card – Chilliwack-Hope Riding

The WaterWealth Project Candidate Report card is a tool for voters in the Fraser Valley to use to select the candidate that will do the most to protect our home waters. This report card was generated using three sources: 1) Candidates' responses to a questionnaire sent to the candidates by the WaterWealth Project; 2) The transcript from the WaterWealth Project's All Candidates Conversation; and 3) Each party's official platform. Where relevant, the party positions as outlined in the official platforms are described underneath the candidates' positions. The candidates, along with the party platforms, are graded according to the following scale:

**A – Excellent      B – Good      C – Poor      D – Very Poor      E/F – Fail**

The WaterWealth Project's position is drawn from the WaterWealth Declaration, which almost 1,500 people living in the Fraser Valley have signed since the writ was dropped. You can sign the [WaterWealth Declaration](#) online. For more information on the WaterWealth Project's positions, please visit our website and refer to our [Policy Document](#). Detailed information on the various threats facing our shared home waters are available on our [website](#).

	THE WATERWEALTH PROJECT Position Statement	MICHAEL HENSHALL Conservative Party of BC	LAURIE THRONESS Liberal Party of BC	GWEN O'MAHONY BC NDP
<b>1. COMMITMENT TO WATER</b>				
<b>Priority of Water to Candidates</b>	Our wealth is in our water. Healthy home waters are essential for community prosperity.	Decisions and urgencies take precedence, including, at times, water protection.	Priority is to serve his constituents. Cannot make claim that water is priority.	High Priority.  Environmental stewardship, sustainability, and freshwater protection prioritized.
<b>Priority Given to Water Protection in Party Platforms</b>	Long-term plans for community well-being must place water sustainability at forefront.	No specific commitments for water protection. Support for Regional Agricultural Water Management Plans.	Commitment to modernizing BC Water Act.	Commitment to modernizing BC Water Act. Will work to implement the Cohen Commission recommendations. Review of fracking and oil development impacts on water.
<b>GRADE</b>		<b>C+</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>A-</b>
<b>COMMENTS</b>		Henshall commits to water in times of urgency and demonstrates understanding of its importance. Party makes no mention of water.	Throness has not committed to prioritizing water. Party commitment to reform the BC Water Act allows for passing grade.	O'Mahony has a clear understanding of the importance of protecting water. Party platform makes specific commitments for water protection but not on local control.
<b>2. ACCOUNTABILITY TO COMMUNITY</b>				
<b>Aboriginal Rights and Title</b>	Aboriginal Rights and Title is a fundamental principle and essential for the long-term protection of our shared home	Recognizes Rights and Title as Federal issue requiring resolution.  Party: Does not recognize Title	Supports the BC treaty process.  Party: Proclaimed "A New Relationship" but Liberal	Supports implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

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<b>Local Watershed Governance</b>	waters.  A body co-chaired by local representatives and First Nations with legal responsibility for ensuring the health and well-being of home waters.	and Rights, except to extent where the courts deem that Aboriginals are entitled to private property ownership.  Supports idea of Local Watershed Governance.  Party: No mention.	government criticized by First Nations for failing to live up to spirit and intent of policy statement.  Supports watershed boards in principle. Would act if they are suggested during Water Act Modernization consultations.  Party: No mention.	Party: Will develop four year action plan to "Improve relationships" and "Work towards reconciliation."  Commitment to establishing advisory group on developing local community-based watershed authority board for Lower Fraser Valley.  Party: No mention
<b>Community Consent in Water-Related Decisions</b>	Communities that are most directly impacted should set the direction of long-term water plans and have authority to say "yes" or "no" to projects that impact them.	Supports increased community involvement. Local government decision-making where possible with provincial oversight, but without multiple levels of government.  Party: No mention.	Believes existing structures of a representative democracy have adequate opportunity for community involvement.  Party: No mention.	Commitment to bring decisions on major projects, including pipelines, back to BC and ensure Aboriginal Rights and Title are upheld.  Party: No mention.
<b>GRADE</b>		<b>C+</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>B+</b>
<b>COMMENTS</b>		Henshall supports decentralization of governance structures, but needs to strengthen his understanding of Aboriginal Rights and Title. Party does not recognize Aboriginal Rights and Title.	Throness and the Liberal Party fail to recognize deficiencies in BC Treaty process, which majority of BC First Nations consider "dysfunctional." Throness fails to address democratic deficiencies in present governance system.	O'Mahony makes encouraging commitments to pursue advisory structures for local watershed authority and NDP platform takes positive position on implementing the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous peoples.

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<b>3. RESPONSE TO MAJOR THREATS</b>				
<b>Kinder-Morgan Pipeline</b>	Heavy oil (bitumen) from Alberta should not be transported through the Fraser Valley in the existing or a new pipeline. The costs of a bitumen pipeline spill into our home waters are too high.	Concerned about risks of transporting diluted bitumen in 60 year-old pipe. Would only support expanded pipeline if proposal included BC refinery.  Party: No mention.	Supports 5 point plan outlined by Party to determine pipeline feasibility. No mention of addressing existing risks. Maintains environmental assessment on new pipelines with Federal Gov't.	Concerned about risks of transporting diluted bitumen in 60 year-old pipe.  Party: Will establish 'made-in-BC' environmental assessment process for Kinder Morgan proposal. Opposed to tankers in Burrard Inlet.
<b>Gravel Mining, including Aggregate Pilot Project (APP) and in-river gravel removal</b>	APP has deficiencies in consultation and inadequate environmental assessment; In-river gravel mining requires a long-term plan with input/direction from scientific experts, consent from First Nations and local communities.	Opposes APP due to improper consultation; supports the development of a long-term management plan for sediment removal developed with full involvement of First Nations, scientific experts, and community members.  Party: Emphasis on promoting extractive industries.	Supports a process that is sensitive to all parties but within APP structure. Supports long term gravel removal plan involving Fed Gov't and local municipalities.	Acknowledges that addressing APP concerns not part of NDP platform, but expressed openness to learn more and advocate for local interests.
<b>Independent Power Projects (IPPs)</b>	All proposals should require evaluation based on cumulative watershed-level environmental assessments (EAs), consent from First Nations and directly impacted residents.	Henshall supports the essence of a cumulative EA.  Party: Opposes BC Hydro's contractual obligation to IPPs.	Throness maintains that existing review process is sufficient.  Party: is highly supportive of IPPs as a "clean" source of energy development.	Need for improved EA process for IPPs. Does not mention the need to look at cumulative effects.
<b>Position on Other Threats</b>		No taxation, regulation for individual landholders' drinking	Supports liquefied natural gas as source of 'green jobs'.	Implement Cohen Commission recommendations to protect wild

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		water wells.		salmon; independent review of risks to water from fracking.
<b>GRADE</b>		<b>B+</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>A-</b>
<b>COMMENTS</b>		Henshall gives strong consideration to local impact of various proposals and noteworthy attention to risks of transporting diluted bitumen through existing pipeline; Party does not.	Throness and the Liberal Party fail to recognize risks from major industrial development projects and deficiencies in existing review processes. Little mention of ensuring needs of local residents or First Nations in development decisions.	O'Mahony was one of the first MLAs to speak up in the BC legislature about local concerns with Kinder Morgan and the risks of transporting diluted bitumen.
<b>4. PROPOSED SOLUTIONS</b>				
<b>A new B.C. Water Act</b>	A new Water Act should prioritize water for fish and ecosystem needs, regulate groundwater withdrawals, allocate water rights fairly, uphold Aboriginal Rights and Title, and create framework for local watershed governance.	Supports the modernization of the Water Act.  Party: No mention.	Supports new Water Act.  Party: Commits to Water Act Modernization. Would bring in protection for in-stream flows, regulations on groundwater, and incentives for more efficient water use by business.	Supports new Water Act and groundwater regulation.  Party: Water Act Modernization with protection for in-stream flows, regulations on groundwater and reform to water allocation system.
<b>Drinking Water Protection</b>	Comprehensive source water protection legislation that empowers local communities, provides expertise and resources to develop source protection plans.	Cities liable and responsible for sanitation/drinking water; No regulation for individual landholders' drinking water wells.	Province must maintain overarching authority on decisions that relate to water.  Party: New Water Act will protect BC aquifers and drinking water resources while providing industry with a framework for allocations.	Open to discussing the needs for a source water protection plan to ensure safe drinking water.  Party: Platform does not include development of comprehensive provincial source water protection legislation.

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<b>Environmental Assessment (EA)</b>	Province should reform provincial EA legislation to include Cumulative Water Risk Assessments and withdraw from Environmental Assessment Equivalency Agreement with the Federal Government.	Not discussed.  Party: No mention.	Support for the existing processes; No planned reform for EAs.	Reform to EAs but no commitment to ensure assessment of cumulative impacts.  Party: Recognizes deficiencies in existing EAs and plans to improve process to ensure rigorous, science-based environmental standards and meaningful consultation with First Nations. Fails to examine cumulative impacts. Commits to withdraw from EA equivalency agreement and develop made-in-BC EA of any heavy oil pipelines.
<b>GRADE</b>		<b>C</b>	<b>D-</b>	<b>B+</b>
<b>COMMENTS</b>		Henshall supports modernizing the BC Water Act in principle, but neither he - nor the party - offers any specifics. EA is not mentioned.	Throness' party supports the modernization of the Water Act as it did during the last election, however there is a lack of understanding about the shortcomings of the existing EA processes.	O'Mahony's party is committed to modernizing the Water Act and reforming the EA process. It is less clear whether cumulative impacts would be included and there is no mention of source protection.
<b>Did the candidate sign the WaterWealth Declaration?</b>		<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>

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<b>NOTES</b>		Henshall demonstrates concern for water and decentralization in governance. Specific water protection policies and mechanisms for community control would improve grade. Henshall's party platform reduced his grade significantly.	Throness' failure to prioritize water and acknowledge the deficiencies in the BC Treaty process and structures of environmental assessment brought down his grade. Other concerns relate to his promotion of natural gas fracking as future green jobs and his willingness to maintain decision making authority on pipelines in Ottawa.	O'Mahony is clearly committed to water protection and working to address local concerns. It is also encouraging to see her recognize the UN declaration of the Rights of Indigenous people. However, her party platform does not address cumulative impacts in EAs and does not explicitly support local watershed governance.
<b>FINAL GRADES</b>		<b>B-</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A-</b>