

Backgrounder: B.C. Green Party Platform on Indigenous Relations

The B.C. Green Party recognizes that it is time to fundamentally change the dynamic between Indigenous people and the Provincial government.

Respectful Relationships

We promise to be better listeners and to act in good faith with Indigenous partners.

We are committed to addressing the economic and social issues that weigh down so many Indigenous people and communities.

We will engage with Indigenous Peoples to create a positive and collaborative relationship.

We will implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

We are committed to respecting court decisions, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People; and to the resolution of Aboriginal Rights and Title issues.

Life-Long Learning

The B.C. Green Party recognizes the need not only to include more content on Indigenous culture and history, but also to train more teachers from Indigenous backgrounds to teach the curriculum and to be role models.

We have made a commitment to work with Indigenous leaders, teachers, universities and colleges to develop policies and strategies to attract the brightest and best to the profession, and support recruitment and retention, with special attention to be paid to increasing the number of Indigenous teachers.

Natural Resource Management

Natural resources are a major source of income and employment to communities across B.C. However, development of resources without proper engagement with local communities, particularly including Indigenous People, has been a major source of conflict.

Natural resource projects in B.C. are a litany of conflict from which lawyers are the main beneficiaries. Our litigious approach is disrespectful, and a costly deterrent to project development. If we are to successfully and sustainably develop our resources, and support resilient First Nations communities, we need a fundamentally different approach that is inclusive, all encompassing, and without a pre-determined outcome.

The B.C. Green Party approach is to build a respectful relationship with Indigenous People, that builds true partnership through ongoing dialogue.

A B.C. Green Government will recognize First Nations as equals in land management and establish a co-management stewardship model with Indigenous people for the development of provincial resources.

This will include a review of regional resource management structures in cooperation with the First Nations Leadership Council, to incorporate First Nations effectively into decision making, and funding to train First Nations people in resource management trades and professions.

A B.C. Green Government will collaborate with First Nations and the Federal government to renew and re-invigorate the treaty process.

Ultimately, the treaty process will be much more successful once a respectful collaborative relationship is established with First Nations on resource management.

Forest Sector Management

We intend to manage our resources in a collaborative manner. We intend to build a resilient forestry sector that supports First Nations and Rural communities.

We will engage in meaningful consultation and engagement that respects Indigenous resource rights and title, and collaborate with First Nations to build economic, environmental and social

opportunities and commercial partnerships in the forest sector, and support more community forests.

We will also enshrine an approach that embraces sustainable, collaborative management in legislation. We will enact a modern, evidence based, multi-objective B.C. Forest and Range Ecology Act that will implement global best practices in forestry, and be focused on restoring wildlife habitat, improving forest productivity, reforestation, and addressing priority forest health issues. Among other objectives, it will address First Nations rights, resilience planning, and cumulative effects. The legislation will also balance stakeholder interests in the management of rangelands.

A B.C. Green Government will establish a Forest Opportunities Panel mandated to identify opportunities for promoting innovation, value added production, independent regional operations and Indigenous enterprises.

A B.C. Green Government will also review, collaborate, and modernize forest tenures with a view to promoting innovation, value added, independent regional operations and Indigenous enterprises.

We will engage in meaningful consultation and engagement that respects Indigenous resource rights and title, and collaborate with First Nations to build economic, environmental and social opportunities and commercial partnerships in the forest sector; and support more community forests.

Water and Agriculture

Collaborative management will extend to agriculture and water management.

A B.C. Green Government will collaborate with Indigenous people, the not-for-profit sector, and other land interests to enhance access to land for farming. Alternative land access models such as cooperatives and agricultural land trusts and land sharing agreements will be explored.

A B.C. Green Government will initiate comprehensive, province-wide water and watershed planning in collaboration with local governments, First Nations, and other government agencies, stewardship organizations, water use sectors and community stakeholders. The plans will address water supply and demand, protecting drinking water quality, integration of land use planning and water and watershed planning, and conflicting water use demands.

Resilient Communities

We will also face up to issues the other parties would prefer to ignore. We know that Indigenous people will be disproportionately affected by the changing climate. Elders are witnessing the dramatic changes that have occurred within their lifetimes and they are concerned. Communities are facing increasing risks from flooding, wildfire and sea level rise. The health impacts of extreme heat and extreme weather events will affect all British Columbians, but seniors, children and infants, the socially and economically disadvantaged, those with chronic diseases and compromised immune systems, and Indigenous people, will be particularly vulnerable. Climate change will affect traditional food supplies as fish and wildlife populations are impacted, and plants important to traditional food supplies and traditional medicine will be affected.

The B.C. Green Party recognizes the need to build resilient communities and manage the risks associated with a changing climate. Traditional knowledge will help us shape our response to a changing climate.

Truth and Reconciliation

We also recognize that there is an urgent need to address the economic and social conditions faced by many Indigenous people.

Many of the actions we have proposed in our platform coincidentally address some of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The B.C. Greens believe that a focused approach has to be taken to ensure that British Columbia implements all of the relevant recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

A B.C. Green government would develop a plan, in cooperation with the First Nations Leadership Council, to implement all relevant recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Housing and Income Support

We have committed to address poverty and affordability. We have committed to increase assistance rates for persons with disabilities and those on income assistance. We will increase shelter allowance rates, and have put forward an ambitious housing strategy designed to ensure that there is affordable housing available for everyone. We will partner with First Nations,

non-profit developers, cooperatives, and the private sector to support the planning and construction of low income rental units.

Children

We recognize the need to reform our system that disproportionately sees Indigenous children taken into government care.

A B.C. Green Government will, as part of a comprehensive anti-poverty strategy, identify strategies to address all aspects of child poverty in the province, including specific actions to address poverty affecting Indigenous children and families.

We will work in collaboration with First Nations and front line service delivery agencies to implement the recommendations of Grand Chief Ed John's report on Indigenous child welfare, the recommendations made by the Representative for Children and Youth, and the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth, including those regarding adoptions and foster care.