

Policy Development Process

Introduction

Springing from our core principles, policy defines who we are and how we are different from other parties. Policy is one of the most important and rewarding ways that members can contribute to the party. This document outlines how you can get involved in policy development.

Through conversations with neighbours, seeking out expert advice, and participating in workshops, webinars and other opportunities facilitated by the policy committee BC Green Party members can contribute to our ever evolving BC Green Policy. This process is to ensure policies are developed in a consistent, collaborative manner. The Party policies inform the platform of the Party during election time.

The ProcessAt the 2016 Annual General Meeting of the BC Green Party, a document was presented for ratification by members. This document, BC Green Policy: A Vision for Our Future, had been derived from all the resolutions passed by members over the history of the party. It was supported by a survey of members on important values held collectively by BC Greens and earlier drafts were discussed at webinars open to all members. The document was presented as a living document that would evolve over time with member input and would become an ever stronger statement of who we are as BC Greens. BC Green Policy in 2016 was ratified unanimously as official BC Green Party policy.

Each year members have the opportunity to put forward proposals for revision to BC Green Policy. They will be encouraged to discuss their ideas at the Riding Association and regional level. Through a process of broad discussion facilitated by the Research and Policy Committee, consensus will be reached on revisions to BC Green Policy and a newly revised document will be presented for ratification at each AGM.



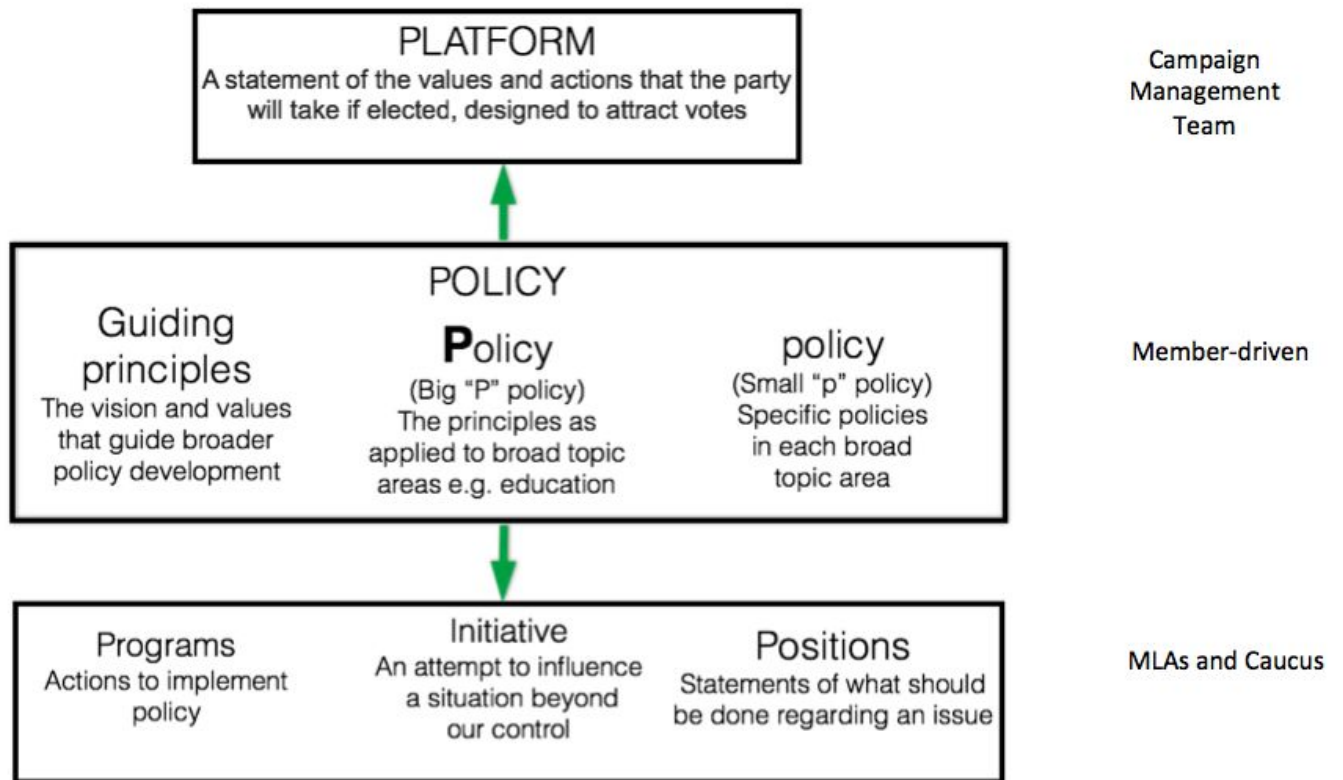
BC Green Policy can be found on our website. There is a full colour version and a print friendly version. If you have an idea that improves BC Green Policy, we need you to engage in the policy process. The end goal is feasible, evidence-based policy and an ever stronger statement of who we are as BC Greens.

Research, discussion, debate, and evidence are important ingredients in forming good policy.

While our policies are intended to be enduring they are not static and as the evidence changes so does our approach. We believe in the power of collaboration. Our policy development process involves engaging with other members, engaging in research and working with the Policy Committee for guidance on final wording.

What is Policy?

Policy for BC Green Party purposes is defined as the application of values and principles held collectively by BC Greens to specific subject areas. BC Green Party policy is driven by members and is central to informing our party's platform as well as our response in the forms of initiatives, programs and public positions. This relationship is shown below:



Template for a Policy Proposal

Policy proposals should be submitted to the Policy Committee in the following form:

1. **Theme.** Identify the BCGP theme or themes the proposed policy comes under. B.C. Green Party policy is organised under 5 themes. Proponents of new policies should study "BC Green Policy: A Vision for Our Future" to determine the appropriate theme for their proposal and to ensure that their proposal is not already covered by existing policy. The 5 themes are:
 - a. Health
 - b. Safety
 - c. Standard of Living
 - d. Ecological Balance
 - e. Responsible Government
2. **Sub-category.** Under each theme, BC Green policies are assigned to 3 outcomes. Choose the outcome within a theme that you think best fits the policy proposal. Many proposals could potentially fit within more than one theme and outcome.

3. **Objectives.** A clear statement of what the policy is designed to achieve.
4. **Policy statement.** This is the actual proposed policy. A policy should be a single concept. Each different concept should be submitted separately. A policy statement should be self-explanatory, expressed in plain language and use the least number of words possible.
5. **Desired outcomes.** This section should identify the benefits to British Columbia or British Columbians in adopting this policy.
6. **Justification.** This section should say why this policy is necessary and how this policy relates to other BC Green Party policies i.e., it should not conflict with or contradict other BCGP policies and principles. Or if it does, it should identify the reasons why this policy should supersede existing policy. .
7. **Policy title.** A title, no more than one sentence, that succinctly describes the nature of the policy.

Examples of Good Policy

Good policy must have an objective, it must be implementable, and it must not overspecify the means to achieve the objective.

Here is an example of **good policy**:

BC should move towards renewable energy in order to prevent and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Here is an example of **bad policy**:

BC should be completely off fossil fuels by 2030 by switching to solar and wind energy.

Reasoning:

While moving off of fossil fuels is desirable, being overly prescriptive on how narrows the range of options for our platform and positions. Good policy balances good ideas with practical realities.

Guiding Questions

In addition to the Green principles, during research participants are asked to consider several guiding questions to help formulate better policy.

- Is the issue local, or national? Is it covered by another level of government? Is there a deficiency in coverage?
- Does the policy address the issue in total, or is it to complement other policies, either existing or not?
- Is the goal realistic? Are the means intuitive or counter-intuitive?
- Is the proposal in practice elsewhere? What lessons can be learned?
- Is there a reasonable expectation that the policy will be well received?
- Does the evidence justify the policy course sought?
- Will the evidence be enough to use in a policy platform come election time, or will it need to be complemented by engagement and marketing?

Submitting Policy Proposals

Submitting a policy proposal takes time, involves collaboration with others, doing research and responding thoughtfully to an issue affecting British Columbians. Here are some guidelines to think about:

1. The policy must demonstrate how it relates to one (or more) of the 5 Themes of B.C. Green Party Policy
 - a. Health
 - b. Safety
 - c. Standard of Living
 - d. Ecological Balance
 - e. Responsible Government
2. The policy must address a broad-based issue
3. It must have a clear objective and defined desired outcomes
4. It must be consistent with the 6 Global Green Party principles
5. It must have a well-articulated justification
6. It must be implementable/practical
7. It must fall within provincial jurisdiction (anything within federal jurisdiction would be a position)

Research

One of the key aspects of policy development is research. A firm understanding of an issue, as well as the past efforts to resolve the issue, forms the foundation for applying Green principles.

Research can incorporate:

- Advocacy groups
- Think tanks, research institutions and libraries
- Universities and colleges
- Local MLA's office
- First-hand accounts of the issue
- News websites for reader and viewer opinions

Approval Process

Policy proponents should seek the support of their riding association. The idea should then be discussed at the regional level. If further work is required, the proposal may be returned to the riding association level from any level of the process.

Involvement with the Research and Policy Committee can occur at any step of this process. However, the Policy Committee will accept no proposals after January 15 for the annual policy cycle. This gives the Policy Committee time to facilitate member wide review of proposals submitted to that time. The Policy Committee will develop an agenda of proposals to be discussed in a series of webinars or in person discussion forums where possible. These will be open to all BC Green Party members and would serve to gain broad consensus on revisions to BC Green Policy. A revised version of BC Green Policy based on this consensus would then be presented at the next AGM for ratification by members. A new annual policy cycle would begin immediately after the AGM.

BC Green Party
Research and Policy Committee
September 2017