

Green Party of BC Code of Representative Conduct

The **Objectives of this Code** are:

- (a) to establish a standard of conduct consistent with Green Party Political Association of BC (GPPABC) Constitution, By-law, Rules, principles, policies, and codes including the Code of Ethics;
- (b) to ensure compliance with this Code of Conduct by all Representatives of the Party; and
- (c) to ensure accountability by representatives of the Party for compliance with this Code of Conduct.

Introduction

The Green Party of BC is committed to doing politics differently. We want to move beyond partisan bickering to engaging in respectful and professional debate during campaigns, between elections and within the BC Legislature. Greens believe debate must be focused on issues rather than personalities and partisan ideology.

The childish taunting and arrogance that characterizes Question Period in the BC Legislature is unacceptable given the role MLAs are elected to play and it is deeply embarrassing to the citizens of BC. What is not well known is that Green Party of BC MLAs will work to find solutions to the problems facing British Columbians and seek to inspire a new way of doing politics, and greater public confidence, through our actions and in our words.

The Green Party of BC Code of Conduct is a clear and simple way to help ensure Green Party of BC candidates, municipal candidates endorsed by the Green Party of BC and Green MLAs are polite, courteous, informed and articulate and that they demonstrate that they are qualified for public office during campaigns, in all public discussions, during legislative debates and in all of their interactions with MLAs and officials from all political parties. This Green Party of BC Code of Conduct will let British Columbians know what to expect from Green Party of BC candidates or candidates endorsed by the Green Party of BC who are running for and elected to public office. It is our intent to single-handedly change the political climate in BC and within the BC Legislative Assembly.

A different kind of party discipline

The Green Party of BC Code of Conduct exercises a new kind of party discipline. It is a measure for self-assessment and reporting and it provides standards by which a Green Party caucus could discuss and correct behaviour – both collective and individual. And, it provides a mechanism for excluding Green Party candidates and legislators who repeatedly and deliberately violate the intent and tenets of the code.

The important element within this new kind of party discipline is that, instead of simply making Green MLAs, municipal officials and candidates to toe the party line, it will make the Green candidate more accountable to her/his constituents and the general public. Significant problems in our democracy arise from the fact that party discipline has transferred loyalty of the MLA from his or her constituents and the broader public good to the party. It silences dissent and it contributes to excessive power being transferred to the Premier's office.

Doing politics differently

The Green Party of BC Code of Representative Conduct distinguishes the Green Party of BC from all other political parties in BC and it demonstrates that Greens are doing politics in a more responsible, respectful, and professional manner. The Code is a public document that commits the Green Party of BC to ensuring that all candidates running for the party provincially and endorsed by the party municipally will meet a high standard of professional conduct. Through its adoption, it allows the Green Party of BC to highlight that traditional party discipline is an impediment to good government as well as to demonstrate our ability to raise the level of political discourse in British Columbia at both the provincial and local government level.

1. APPLICATION:

1.01 This Code of Representative Conduct applies to:

- (a) all Green Party of BC candidates;
- (b) all municipal candidates endorsed by the Green Party of BC; and
- (c) all those elected to public office at the municipal (Green Party of BC endorsed mayors, councillors and regional district directors) and provincial (MLAs) level while engaged in their duties as public officials or otherwise in a manner associated with the Green Party of BC.

2. CONDUCT:

2.01 I understand that I have a general duty to act in the interests of the office for which I am running or to which I am elected.

2.02 I acknowledge that I have a special duty to my constituents and I will fulfill these duties to the best of my abilities;

2.03 In representing my constituents, I will demonstrate the values underlying the following principles of the Green Party of BC:

1. Sustainability
2. Social Justice
3. Grass-roots democracy
4. Non-violence
5. Community based economy
6. Gender equality
7. Diversity
8. Decentralization
9. Personal and global responsibility
10. Ecological wisdom

2.04 I will conduct myself in a manner that will maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of the BC Legislature/the municipality/the Regional District. I will never undertake any action that would bring the BC Legislature/municipality/Regional District or its Members generally, into disrepute;

2.05 I will act with integrity and professionalism and submit myself to the highest level of scrutiny appropriate to my position;

- 2.06 I will work for the public good and not simply the best interest of the Green Party of BC;
- 2.07 I will avoid conflict between personal interest and the public interest and resolve any conflict between the two, at once, and in favour of the public interest;
- 2.08 I will conduct myself in a professional manner during political and parliamentary debate and focus upon the issues and policies rather than the person or the party;
- 2.08 I will prepare adequately for all debates;
- 2.09 I will give praise and support good ideas and sound policies that will benefit all British Columbians regardless of the political party advancing them;
- 2.10 I will offer constructive comments and well researched, science and evidence-based opinion on how policies and legislation can be improved to better meet the needs of British Columbians;
- 2.11 I will make decisions fairly, impartially and promptly, considering all available information, legislation, policies and procedures;
- 2.12 I will make decisions that I believe are congruent with the 10 Green Principles and that are in the best interest of my constituents and the greater good;
- 2.13 Where necessary and/or possible, I will inform and consult with constituents;
- 2.14 I will not intentionally misrepresent the stated purposes, values, or policies of other parliamentarians or parties;
- 2.15 I will treat other candidates and elected officials and all staff and professional advisors with respect, courtesy, honesty and fairness, and have proper regard for their interests, rights, safety and welfare;
- 2.16 I will not use insulting, harassing, bullying or otherwise offensive language or behaviour;
- 2.17 I will participate fully in all campaign activities and I will maintain a high level of attendance as an elected official;
- 2.18 I will be accessible to my constituents and I will respond promptly to their requests;
- 2.19 I will ensure the responsible use of publicly funded resources, including office facilities and equipment, vehicles, expenses;
- 2.20 I will publicly and voluntarily disclose expenses that I charge the government as a result of my activities as an elected official;
- 2.21 I will respect the confidentiality and privacy of all information as it pertains to individuals;
- 2.22 If I have differences or difficulties with a member of the Green Party of BC or members of the Green Party of BC caucus, I will work to resolve those issues by talking directly in-person to that person(s). If unsuccessful, I will ask for a mediator to assist in resolving the issues. When dealing with interpersonal conflict and personality differences, I will avoid the use of email, social media and other internet based media;
- 2.23 At no time, will I allow internal party difficulties or conflicts with other members of the Green Party of BC to interfere with my ability to undertake my duties as an elected official;

2.24 The only issues on which the Green Party of BC requires caucus agreement on how to vote are explicit votes of confidence. Otherwise, the Green Party of BC has a policy of free votes in the BC Legislature, including the budget.

3. ACCEPTANCE BY REPRESENTATIVES:

3.01 Each representative shall, upon his or her nomination, endorsement, or association with the GPBC, execute and deliver to the GPBC an Acknowledgment and Undertaking in the Form attached as Appendix "A".

4. ACCOUNTABILITY:

4.01 The Executive Council shall have jurisdiction to determine any complaint against a Representative alleging:

- a) a violation of this Code of Representative Conduct;
 - b) serious misconduct prohibited by the laws of Canada or British Columbia; or
 - c) misconduct resulting in severe injustice or irreparable harm to:
 - i) the GPPABC,
 - ii) a member of the GPPABC; or
 - iii) any constituted body of the GPPABC.
- (a "Complaint")

4.02 After reviewing a Complaint, the Executive Council shall have authority to:

- a. refer the complainant and Representative to mediation;
- b. impose an interim suspension;
- c. impose an appropriate learning or other remedial process
- d. recommend that the GPPABC not support or withdraw support for this person as a representative or spokesperson in the future;
- e. require the Representative to issue a written private or public apology;
- f. suspend or revoke the authority of a Representative to speak on behalf of or in association with the GPPABC;
- g. require the Representative to cease or suspend any activities within the GPPABC;
- h. if the Representative is a member of the Party, suspend or revoke the membership of the Representative.

4.03 The Executive Council shall determine any such complaint promptly and communicate its decision to the persons involved.

5. HEARING AND REVIEW:

5.01 Any person directly affected by a decision of the Executive Committee shall have 30 days from receiving notice of such decision to seek a hearing and review from the Provincial Council.

5.02 The Provincial Council may establish rules, and procedures for hearings and reviews.

5.03 On a hearing and review, the Provincial Council may:

- a) make any decision that the Executive Committee could have made;
- b) remit the complaint back to the Executive Committee; or
- c) dismiss the complaint.

6. Confidentiality

6.01 Generally, the complaint process is confidential and, until a final decision is made, no person shall disclose any complaint determination or review by the Executive Committee or Provincial Council, unless the Executive Committee or Provincial Council otherwise orders.

7. AMENDMENT:

7.01 This Code of Representative Conduct may be amended from time to time by the Provincial Council.

NOTE: The foregoing is subject to Structural Rule amendments required in respect of complaints against a Representative who is also a Member.

**APPENDIX A - ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND UNDERTAKING TO COMPLY WITH
CODE OF REPRESENTATIVE CONDUCT:**

1.01 I agree to comply with the Green Party of BC Code of Representative Conduct, as amended from time to time.

1.02 I acknowledge and undertake to submit to the jurisdiction of the Executive Committee/Provincial Council, as applicable, in respect of my compliance with the Code of Representative Conduct and the authority of the Executive Committee/Provincial Council, as applicable, to make any order thereunder.

1.03 I acknowledge and accept that I may be subject to discipline from the Green Party of BC in respect of any non-compliance by me with the Code of Representative Conduct.

1.04 Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, I will also be accountable for any misconduct to the Green Party of BC caucus; my Electoral District Association; the governing body of the Green Party of BC or any committee it designates to act on behalf of the Green Party of BC; and the British Columbian/municipal/Regional District public for which I am running or elected.

Position for which I am running/elected: _____

Governing body: Electoral District Association/Organization or Green Party of BC

Name: _____

Date: _____

Contact Details: _____