

Green Party of New Brunswick Policy Proposal: Green Economy

Context

According to the laws of evolution, the environment¹ determines the characteristics and behaviour of a species. If and when the environment changes, a species's characteristics and behaviour must adapt to the new environment if the species is to survive – or, if such characteristics and behaviours cannot be modified, the species, as such, will go extinct.

The environment is the primary context for all life on the Earth. If continually degraded, then all life forms will be degraded and, eventually, threatened to the degree to which they cannot adapt. This includes humanity. Therefore, human society in whatever political or economic form it exists, must, out of necessity, conform to the environment – the environment has no demands upon it to conform to human society. Out of such a society, the economy must conform to the demands of the environment in its ability to sustain a viable and equitable life for all its citizens.

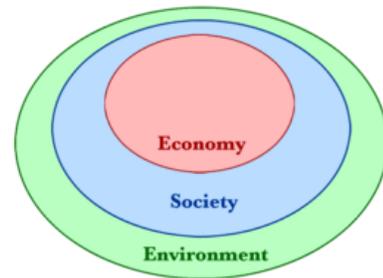
The New Brunswick Green Party has stated in its Statement of Principles²:

Principle 6 “Living Within Our Ecological Means”

“Our primary responsibility is to learn *to live within the ecological and resource limits of the planet*, providing for the needs of all people, *while not threatening the existence of other species and future generations.*”

Principle 5 “Local Self-Reliance”

“New Brunswick communities must be in charge of their own destiny to the greatest extent possible, *meeting local needs that are locally controlled*, minimizing dependency on external forces...this is integral to *the shift from a Consumer Society to a Conserver Society that respects the ecological and social limits of human production.*”



Thus, a **green economy** is defined as an **economy**³ that aims at reducing environmental risks and ecological⁴ scarcities, while aiming for sustainable development without degrading the environment.

¹ The word *environment* is derived from the French word, *environ*, which means ‘surrounding’; as such, our environment is ‘that which surrounds us’.

² http://www.greenpartynb.ca/our_principles

³ The word *economy* is derived from the Greek word, *oikonomos*; a composite word derived from *oikos* and *nemo* by way of *oikonomia*, meaning ‘household management’.

⁴ The word *ecology* is derived from the Greek word, *oikos*, meaning ‘household’ and, *logos*, meaning ‘study’.

Issue

The laws of evolution have designed every living entity to live within a certain environmental context. When this is transgressed, there are severe consequences. Our social and economic life must be within the bounds of the environment or we are dooming future generations due to our indulgence in comfort and the pursuit of profit.

Humanity is a biological entity that has evolved for over two million years. In most of that process we have lived within the bounds of our environment. That does not mean we did not use the resources of that environment or that we did not modify that environment. However, we never changed it to the point where it could not recover within a reasonable time. That has changed over the last 250 years. We are now becoming a technological entity with little or no regard for our biological existence. We are making an impact upon the Earth that may not be reversible and, in that, the Earth is being depleted of its resources to the point where Life itself may be threatened with extinction – not just humanity!

Action Plan

A Green government would assess economic development initiatives using the following guiding principles:

- 1) The integrity of the environment must be respected on its own terms;
- 2) Without a sustainable environment, a sustainable society and economy are not possible;
- 3) Environmental resources and the integrity of the environment for future generations must not be depleted or destroyed below any levels that are presently accepted;
- 4) Individuals, families, organizations, and companies should be encouraged to reduce their consumption, reuse what is still useable, and recycle what can be produced into new forms;
- 5) Production and consumption should not be accepted simply for financial profit without regard for the future; as such, the success of industries should be measured not just by financial profit but also by how little impact the operations and products of those industries have upon the environment; and
- 6) The consumption of the Earth's resources should be strictly limited over and above that which the Earth can regenerate in a year.
- 7) Assessments should include the complete evaluation of all short-, medium-, and long-term environmental, health, social, and economic effects.