

# THE GREEN PARTY OF QUEBEC



## ELECTION PLATFORM

2014

*The eco-socialist option for Quebec*

Adopted by the national council of the Green Party of Quebec  
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## **1. ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **1.1 Climate Change and Air Quality**

We believe the time has come to take drastic action in order to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in the fight against climate change. It is also important to work towards clearing the air of the toxic chemicals which put our health at risk. The scientific consensus is undeniable: we must act immediately and decisively if we want to make changes before it's too late.

Moreover, we wish to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of scientists and other groups working in the fields of climate change and environmental protection. These key figures allow us to advance our knowledge and inform ourselves on the critical issues which affect all spheres of human activity. This information then guides us in political decisions. We are committed to substantially increasing funding for research and environmental groups, so they can continue their work which is not only essential for our planet, but for our democracy.

The Green Party of Quebec also offers strategies (detailed in this section) to enable us to achieve our environmental goals. These measures may require substantial investment, but they are simple, feasible and economically profitable.

#### *Free Public Transit*

The GPQ proposes a significant expansion of the current public transit system, coupled with the elimination of user fees. Free public transit is the most effective way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions because it reduces the number of cars on the road. Keep in mind that the transport sector in Quebec is one of the main contributors to our greenhouse gas emissions. Our detailed plan is presented below.

### **1.2 Transportation**

The enormous amount of public funds which are allocated to highway maintenance amounts to a direct subsidy for this mode of transport. As it currently stands, public transit users fund the road system through provincial and municipal taxation. We must therefore restore balance to the system by enforcing the "user pays" principle with taxes on gas and parking or by using tolls. These funds would allow us to better fund public transit, which is much more effective system not only in environmental terms, but economically as well.

In order to change our current economic situation, we need to gradually phase out our dependence on oil and on the auto industry. We believe Quebec should work towards the drastic expansion of the public transit system, with the goal of abolishing user fees by 2016. Free public transport will allow us to reduce the number of cars on the road, and in turn reduce the maintenance costs of the road network. We must eliminate subsidies to drivers, and build a

public transit system which is universally free and sufficient.

The GPQ wants to heavily invest in public transportation, not only in urban centers but for inter-city transit as well. For too long, the regions of Quebec have been inaccessible by public means. Access to transportation is a social justice issue; the inhabitants of rural Quebec have no choice but to get around in private vehicles, at their own expense. It takes a toll on individual and family budgets when people are forced to buy, maintain, drive and power a gasoline-powered vehicle in order to get to work, school, or simply run errands. This has a disproportionate effect on the elderly and those who are unable to drive due to illness or disability.

*Solutions: Install Bus Lines on all Highways in Quebec*

We have thousands of miles of highways in Quebec but the vast majority of these vital links are not serviced by busses. To ameliorate this situation, we would gradually create bus lines on all highways and major roads in the province.

Highway busses are an essential part of sustainable development. If there is a need for a highway, there is always an equal demand for public transit on the same route. The frequency of bus services will be based on the customer demand of the route in question. Studies to establish this demand are simple, automated and done with affordable equipment.

*Solutions: Create a Shared Taxi Service*

Although highway buses represent an essential part of our national transportation system, we also need a shared taxi service that will get rural citizens to their closest bus stops. This service will not be free like public transit, but will be highly subsidized (like current public transportation networks).

We also want to encourage the development of networks of shared cars (car-sharing) throughout Quebec, which would stimulate the service economy unlike owning a private vehicle. Bike-sharing networks, like the Montreal's Bixi system, should also be part of the public transportation structure to encourage active transportation for short distances.

*Solutions: Creating Car-Free Urban Areas throughout Quebec*

Car-free zones are a good way to promote sustainable urban development, reduce air pollution, and inspire people to take a critical look at the status quo in the field of transportation, which is currently dominated by the ownership of private vehicles.

Urban planning is primarily a municipal responsibility so the Quebec government cannot dictate development plans within cities. We can, however, promote specific initiatives (like the creation of car-free zones) by subsidizing their creation. Additionally, the GPQ proposes a total ban on advertising vehicles in Quebec.

Several cities in Quebec already have a large number of streets which are closed to traffic during the summer months. This lets us reclaim the space which is usually occupied by cars to foster local artists and performers and enrich our communities.

#### *Improve the Energy Efficiency of Buildings*

One of the most profitable eco-restoration projects, in terms of both economic and environmental benefits, is to improve the insulation of buildings. This allows landlords and tenants to save on their heating and cooling bills and significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions. It is doubly effective in that it also creates more jobs across the province. In our opinion, the Quebec government should act immediately to establish a grant program to upgrade the insulation of the province's buildings.

### **1.3 Food and Agriculture**

Quebec's agricultural heritage must be preserved, not only from environmental degradation, but also from external economic forces in the context of globalization. We need to take precautions in order to protect our small (often family-run) farming operations. This is the best way to promote food security and diversity in Quebec, as well as a way to ensure sustainable use of our land. The GPQ is therefore in favor of full-scale efforts to protect our agricultural land.

The Green Party of Quebec advocates the prohibition of GMOs (genetically modified organisms). It must be understood that although some genetic modifications are potentially beneficial in certain circumstances, their use by transnational agribusiness giants like Monsanto goes against the principles of global food security and diversity. We believe in the use of the precautionary principle on this subject. In the meantime, the GPQ proposes mandatory labeling of GMOs, as well as the launch of a public service campaign to offer citizens the knowledge they require in order to make informed choices when it comes to their food consumption.

Local and organic farming should be supported by clear and controlled labeling and promoted with a comprehensive informational campaign. By using various promotional measures, the GPQ will also encourage urban and local agriculture because of its nutritional and environmental benefits. Locally produced food (which has the advantage of being fresh and high quality) requires far fewer resources than importing foreign food, particularly because of transportation costs. It also provides a measure of support to the Quebec food industry, and is part of a commitment to ensure food security and self-sufficiency in Quebec.

As an example, the Green Party of Quebec supports the development of the network of farmer's markets and community gardens throughout Quebec, especially in areas that are considered to be "food deserts". A "food desert" is a region where there is no immediate access to fresh food. Community gardens and public markets give citizens access to fresh food

at cheaper prices while creating opportunities for small business farmers. We believe that schools could be partnered with these projects for a mutually beneficial experience.

#### **1.4 Forests**

Across Quebec, clear-cutting and many other questionable practices are putting the health of our forests at risk. The Green Party of Quebec supports the sustainable use of our natural resources.

We therefore propose the following plan:

- Consult with First Nations peoples living in the territory and build a consensus prior to any forestry operation. They know the forests much better than we do, and they are the ones who suffer the direct consequences of their abuse.
- Impose a moratorium on logging in areas that are not already monocultures.
- Create a transparent public report on the state of forests in Quebec, identifying intact forests and monoculture forests, whether animal populations are declining, etc.
- Based on this assessment, create a plan for sustainable use of forest resources, focusing on areas that are already being used as monocultures. The exploitation of other areas must be justified according to very strict criteria, making no compromises on the regenerative capacity of the forest.
- Transform wildlife reserves into protected areas by prohibiting the exploitation of natural resources.
- Implement a large-scale recycling program for wood and paper.
- Encourage and subsidize the production and use of wood products in Quebec, while reducing our paper consumption.
- Improve government resources to develop strategies and laws for sustainability.

#### **1.5 Minerals and Royalties**

The Green Party of Quebec proposes a substantial increase in mining royalties.

Whereas:

- These are public resources that belong to all Quebecers- and specifically to the First Nations peoples who often live in the areas where mining sites are located
- Because they are non-renewable, profits from these operations should go to citizens. Companies have the right to make a profit, but Quebecers should be the primary beneficiaries of their own resources. In addition, mining companies should finance themselves, and their infrastructure, decontamination and restoration of sites after the operation must be in accordance with the strictest environmental standards and be paid for in advance.

## **1.6 Water**

Our province's rivers are under attack. Not only did the federal government abolish the protection of our waterways with Bill C-45, but the three major political parties in Quebec have agreed to allow hydraulic fracturing and the injection of toxic chemicals into our soil in order to extract shale gas in the valley of the St. Lawrence and oil shale on the island of Anticosti.

The Green Party of Quebec is radically opposed to this and instead proposes:

- To prohibit any form of fracturing across the province. This includes the exploratory work which is already underway which is just as dangerous as mining operations because the use of hydraulic fracturing is required in both cases.
- To implement an environmental policy which will hold polluting companies responsible for their actions and to apply strict environmental laws.
- To close the door to the bulk water export completely.
- To fight aggressively against all forms of pollution of freshwater and groundwater.

The Green Party of Quebec also proposes better management of our sewage and waste-water. At the moment, most of the sludge from our sewage is incinerated. We believe that Quebec should initiate and subsidize a biogasification industry. This technology would allow us to extract methane from our waste, which would in turn reduce our need for fossil fuels while creating jobs in the recycling industry.

## **1.7 Oil and Gas**

If Quebec wants to succeed in promoting green energy and reducing its dependence on oil, it is absurd to use this dangerous and environmentally unfriendly resource on our land. The Lac-Mégantic tragedy showed that it is impossible to exploit this resource, or transport it, in a manner that is truly risk-free. Quebec must take a leadership role in the development of green energy and energy efficiency, and completely abandon the antiquated technologies of the twentieth century.

The GPQ is against the exploitation of unconventional energy sources like shale gas, oil shale and the tar sands. We believe that during this transition period where we are reaching the end of our oil consumption, Quebec should obtain oil only from conventional petroleum sources that have the lowest possible environmental impact, and should ban the import of hydrocarbons from unconventional sources.

## **1.8 Nuclear Energy, Uranium, and Rare Earth Mining**

The Green Party of Quebec is strongly opposed to all exploration or exploitation of uranium in Quebec, as well as to the nuclear industry globally. We believe that following the events which took place at the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan, the Quebec government should do everything in its power to protect Quebecers from the inherent risks of this type of energy production. Fukushima offers undeniable proof that this technology and its waste are still not safe. Though we closed Gentilly-2, the government is still attempting to continue mining for uranium north of Chibougamau in the Matoush project, which the Cree people of the region resolutely oppose. The PQ has imposed a temporary moratorium on the project for the time that it will take for an impact study be conducted by the BAPE (Bureau d'Audiences Publiques sur l'Environnement), but all signs point towards a re-opening of the project following the study. If we made the decision to close our only nuclear plant and to take a step away from the nuclear industry, why are we still trying to develop this controversial resource?

The extraction of rare earth elements is a critical issue, but one which is rarely discussed. Already, there are several development projects planned in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. Rare earth elements are used to make electronic devices, fluorescent light bulbs, batteries for electric vehicles, etc. But their extraction and processing can generate radioactive waste, pollution from heavy metals and contamination of the soil, water and air in the surrounding areas. We simply cannot allow this type of development in Quebec, and especially not in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, where freshwater resources are already at risk because of traditional mining practices.

## **1.9 Hydro-Quebec**

In addition to being an important source of income for our public services, Hydro-Quebec is a powerful tool for economic and regional development which the government should not risk losing. Furthermore, considering the economic, social and environmental impact that the Crown Corporation can have on local communities, it is imperative that it be under the control of the National Assembly so that elected officials can monitor and control its activities. The Green Party therefore opposes any privatization of Hydro-Quebec.

In terms of Hydro-Quebec, the GPQ proposes to:

- Establish a large-scale program to better the energy efficiency of residential and commercial buildings in Quebec. This program would allow customers to save on their electricity bills, as well as creating jobs in the fields of renovation and insulation, and reducing our energy consumption.
- Prohibit the use of permanent overnight lighting for businesses and industries.
- Continue the development of the wind power industry in Quebec to expand our expertise and reduce the need to harness our rivers in order to meet our energy needs.

- Cancel the Romaine 3 and 4 dam hydroelectric projects, as well as the mini-hydroelectric dam projects.
- Remove Quebec from the oil industry by focusing our future energy development on wind power, and promoting the possibilities of electric heating systems and public transportation.
- Reduce rates for residential customers and abolish fees for schools, public transit companies and community groups.
- Stop the smart meter program immediately. These meters are a waste of money for taxpayers and an invasion of individuals' privacy. Furthermore, their safety has not even been completely proven. Meter reading can be done by smart phone or through the Hydro-Quebec website at a much lower cost.
- Re-launch Hydro-Quebec International to export our knowledge and improve the global competitive edge of the corporation.

Large businesses in Quebec should have fair electricity prices, but we don't think that companies should be paying less than citizens. In terms of prices for individuals, the GPQ proposes to study a form of progressive tiered pricing which would depend on the size and number of residents in a home. The lower the "density" of a residence (the number of people living there in relation to its size), the higher the price per kilowatt-hour would increase beyond a certain level of consumption.

### **1.11 Green Technologies and Recycling**

The Green Party of Quebec does believe that some "green" technologies should be part of the solution to the environmental crisis, but we must keep in mind that our overall energy consumption must be substantially lower in order to attain our targets. Some green technologies complement this push for energy efficiency but others, which label themselves as "green", are really not.

For example, the GPQ is firmly opposed to subsidies for electric and hybrid cars. Why? The production of batteries for electric cars, by the exploitation of rare earth or other hazardous metals may contaminate the Témiscamingue region's drinking water with the Matamec project. Many people are attached to the misconception that private cars can be "green", while in reality improved public transit is the only real transportation solution to our environmental and energy problems.

Additionally, here are five green technologies that the GPQ aims to develop:

- Bio-gasification
- Electrification of public transit with a direct connection to the current
- Wind power
- Geothermal Energy
- Industrial recycling

We also believe in the importance of funding research into new and existing green technologies.

The Green Party of Quebec proposes to introduce an eco-tax, which will factor environmental pollution into the cost of production and the price of consumer goods. In addition, by including the cost of recycling products into their sale prices, we can develop the recycling industry (and create jobs here in Quebec) while reducing our environmental footprint.

The Quebec government took a leadership role on the issue of recycling in 2012 by implementing eco-fees on computers, televisions, cell phones and several other products. The degree of the fees, however, is simply not enough to cover the recycling of all products. Additionally, the current eco-fee program doesn't cover the majority of consumer goods and we think this has to change.

The establishment of a large-scale recycling program would let Quebec:

- Recycle all our consumer goods
- Create quality jobs in a dynamic growth sector
- Position Quebec as a world leader in the field of recycling
- Reduce our demand for unsustainable consumable goods through recycling fees

Ultimately, the GPQ proposes to establish a target of “zero waste” by 2025. Various means would be involved to achieve this: taxing the over-packaging of products and non-recyclable goods, fighting against planned obsolescence, and encouraging the sustainable design of products (extending their lifespan, making parts available for replacement and repair rather than abandonment, etc.), expand and standardize composting in the province (starting with major urban centers), rebuild and stimulate the recycling industry with the eco-tax, boost energy production using biomass technology (food waste, forest, etc.).

We must also focus on working harder to treat and properly dispose of the hazardous waste (heavy metals, PCBs, etc.) which is produced by our industries. The events in Pointe Claire last year, when improperly stored PCBs were released into the environment, have shown that we need to be more vigilant on this issue and establish adequate funding to prevent accidents like this and properly treat them if they do occur.

## **2. DEMOCRACY AND SOCIETY**

### **2.1 The National Question**

The Green Party of Quebec is the only political party in which federalists and sovereignists work openly together toward a united Quebec. The GPQ takes no authoritative stance on Quebec independence. If a referendum on sovereignty is called by another party, the representatives, candidates, and members of the GPQ will vote freely, according to their consciences.

We believe that this is an issue which must be resolved democratically by all citizens, but our party will not take a position and does not favor one option or the other. If sovereignty or federalism are important electoral issues for you, we encourage you to learn more about your local candidate's position on the matter.

### **2.2 Democratic Reform**

Firstly, the Green Party of Quebec proposes to introduce a mixed member proportional representation system to better reflect citizens' diverse political views. To do this, the electoral map would be redrawn so that Quebecers would elect 75 representatives in the traditional way (like in federal elections). The remaining 50 MNAs would be elected from a list, based on the percentage of votes their party received.

The GPQ supports the idea of fixed election dates and believes that the law should in fact be strengthened in order to close the loopholes which allow the governing party to request that the Lieutenant Governor dissolve the National Assembly at any time.

The GPQ supports the idea that without the support of an MNA, a citizen or group may, after obtaining a certain number of signatures (the number will be determined by consensus) put forward a bill before the National Assembly and bring it to a vote.

The GPQ proposes to make political parties entirely publicly funded and therefore abolish individual contributions. Parties would be funded based on two criteria: the number of votes cast for the party in the previous general election and the number of members of the party who are in good standing. Electoral law would prohibit citizens from being members of more than one registered political party at a time. This would give all parties the opportunity to increase public interest, regardless of age or financial means, to discuss their ideas.

The GPQ is also in favor of granting the right to vote to all citizens who are 16 years of age or older, in the interest of empowering youth and encouraging their participation in the democratic system. If citizens begin voting at a younger age, their participation rate is expected to increase.

We also believe that the Chief Electoral Officer, in both municipal and provincial elections, should be responsible for distributing the campaign materials of different political parties and

independent candidates to voters in every constituency. This would promote equal exposure for candidates and help inform voters, while limiting the power of financial influence on politics.

### **2.3 Administrative Decentralization: Power to Municipalities**

On December 22nd, 2012, the city of Gaspé made history by adopting a bill that prohibited oil drilling within 10 kilometers of an artesian well. Despite the fact that Pauline Marois' PQ government promised to grant more power to municipalities, they broke that promise when the courts invalidated the law that Gaspé created. The Green Party of Quebec supports the demands of the city of Gaspé, and would pass a law allowing municipalities to have the last word on projects which affect their own territory.

The GPQ believes in strong communities that control their own development, and have the right to say NO to economic development projects which are not in their interest.

Decentralization of power will allow municipalities to ensure their own development, while respecting their interests and values. Today, municipalities are defenseless in the face of the major economic powers who are looking to exploit their resources, so they need powerful legal resources to protect their populations. The best economic, social and community projects are those which are supported by the local population. We must stop imposing projects on communities who don't want them.

### **2.4 Immigration**

Regarding immigration, The GPQ suggests that before considering any changes to the current immigration laws, the Quebec government should first ensure that immigrants who arrive in Quebec have adequately funded integration programs. Resources are currently insufficient both in terms of employment programs and French language courses. The unemployment rate in Muslim and Maghrebi communities, for example, is strikingly high compared to the provincial average.

One of the biggest issues is that foreign diplomas and credentials are often not recognized in Quebec. In order to fairly integrate new immigrants, the government, as well as educational institutions and professional groups, must recognize these accreditations.

In terms of linguistic integration, the GPQ is opposed to a required knowledge of French prior to immigration. We think that learning French is an important part of the immigration process and believe that the government should allocate more resources to this. We think that forcing immigrants to be able to speak French prior to their arrival would deprive the province of many talented individuals.

## **2.5 First Nations Rights**

For far too long we have treated the First Nations peoples of Quebec with a blatant lack of respect. We have forcefully imposed our views, our way of life, and our economic development projects on them. We have also taken steps to decimate their language, their culture and religion.

We can't forget that First Nations people were the first occupants of Quebec. When we arrived, everything belonged to them. For centuries our government has sought to dominate our native people while taking from them what is rightfully theirs.

Native languages and culture are an integral part of both Canadian and Quebec identity. A nation-to-nation relationship requires consensus and not simply consultation. This relationship must be based on equality between the two nations. We need to recognize that the governments of Canada and Quebec have abused our indigenous population for far too long, and now it is our duty to change that.

We must change our perception of indigenous nations, though the promotion of cultural diversity as well as by offering them the opportunity to continue their traditional way of life, with the help of the government. Every citizen has the right to participate in our modern society, and we should do whatever we can to help those who wish to pursue studies, join the labor market, or move to urban centers. We need to support our indigenous peoples in their efforts, rather than managing them in the traditional colonial fashion.

## **2.6 Minority Rights and Position on the Charter**

Since debates on the Charter began, the Green Party of Quebec has been strongly opposed to any ban on wearing religious symbols as well as any law that undermines freedom of expression or freedom of religion. Religious minorities have the same rights as every other citizen and should have an equal right to proudly display their beliefs and traditions. Both the Canadian and Quebec Charters of Rights and Freedoms state that the Quebec government is secular and does not promote any religion. The Quebec Charter of values is a diversionary tactic which discriminates against religious minorities. Nothing should compromise the equality of all citizens.

The members of the GPQ came out strongly against the charter in a vote taken in September which confirmed the position taken by the party on August 21st, 2012. The right to spiritual well-being, freedom of religion, and respect for diversity are fundamental principles of the Global Greens Charter.

The idea of preventing a student from learning because they wear a religious symbol is discriminatory and has no place in Quebec. As far as elected officials are concerned, the choice is for the voters to make. If they choose to appoint someone who wears a religious symbol, we

must respect that choice. If the government of Quebec is truly secular, it cannot promote a religion within the walls of the National Assembly by prominently displaying a crucifix. The crucifix belong in a museum, as a relic of a bygone era. If Maurice Duplessis put it on the wall for political reasons, we can take it down for the very same reasons. In contrast with the Charter, it would be a real, concrete gesture to confirm the religious neutrality of the Quebec government.

The Green Party of Quebec's position on this issue is as follows:

- We oppose the ban on wearing ostentatious religious symbols for all workers, including judges, prosecutors, police officers and educators.
- We support an inclusive, equal, and multicultural society.
- We are in favor of a putting a program in place to recognize diplomas acquired abroad more quickly and to give advantages to businesses which apply anti-discrimination laws in the workplace, because the debate on the Charter has already contributed to an increase in the discrimination of religious minorities.
- We believe that the best way to fight for gender equality is to provide more resources for women. Pay equity, for example, still doesn't exist in many sectors. Additional constraints on religious symbols will only further marginalize Muslim women in Quebec who are already victims of discrimination in the workplace.

## **2.7 LGBTQ Rights**

The Green Party of Quebec believes that the Quebec government must redouble its fight against bullying and homophobia. The recent outbreak of violence in the Village in Montreal confirms how dire this situation is. This fight begins in the classroom but must continue long after that. Our fellow citizens in the LGBTQ community have the same rights as others, and intolerance against them must be combated as much as possible.

The GPQ also proposes increased support to community members through the creation of LGBTQ youth centers across Quebec, especially in rural regions where there is a lack of resources and the isolation of LGBTQ youth is at its highest.

On the topic of adoption and parenting, we believe that homosexual couples should have the same rights as heterosexual couples. We cannot compromise in terms of equality among citizens and we believe that gay parents are just as capable as straight parents.

## **2.8 The Status of Women**

The GPQ aims to create a national strategy for the right of women, which would be implemented through a renewed effort for pay equity as well as through public awareness campaigns against sexism, rape culture and the sexualization of young girls.

### *Employment and Social Solidarity*

The GPQ thinks the government of Quebec should pay more attention to pay equity and the recognition of diplomas in hopes of improving access to employment. We believe that these are the most important issues in terms of the status of women in Quebec and that the current government must make a more serious effort to achieve gender equality. If these steps are taken, the situation of all women in Quebec will be significantly improved.

The Green Party of Quebec is opposed to the changes in welfare laws that were proposed by the Parti Québécois, which affect women (specifically single-parent families) disproportionately. Our predominant goal in terms of improving the status of women in the province is improving access to employment because that is the primary form of integration for all citizens, but especially for women.

### *Homelessness*

The Green Party of Quebec takes the issue of homelessness very seriously and is committed to working towards a reduction in the number of both women and men in need. We want to solidify the direction of the Quebec Government's latest action plan on homelessness, but with an additional emphasis on the particular needs of homeless women, who are often indigenous.

### *Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women*

Firstly, the Green Party of Quebec calls for a public inquiry to shed light on the alarming number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in the province. We are undoubtedly only partially aware of the reality of this situation and it is imperative that the necessary steps are taken so that justice is brought to those affected.

The GPQ also denounces the patriarchal discourse which encourages biases against feminist groups and women in general. Finally, the GPQ supports initiatives and programs like the Hats off to You! contest and the *École Femmes et Démocratie* which offers leadership programs like *Mairesse, ça m'intéresse!*

## **2.9 Animal Rights: An End to Cruelty**

The two essential laws in Quebec in terms of the abuse of animals are the Criminal Code and the Animal Health Protection Act, which is managed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. These two laws are simply insufficient and the consequences for violations on the law are not severe enough.

Animals are not objects and it is completely immoral that the laws on animal cruelty are located in the property rights section of the Criminal Code. We believe there should be a separate section dedicated solely to animal rights.

The Green Party of Quebec supports organizations and individuals who have demanded changes to the animal cruelty section of the Criminal Code. Even if these advancements fall

within the judicial power of the federal government, they will have a considerable impact on the work done by the officers and inspectors of the SPCA and ANIMA-Quebec. Regulations in other provinces such as British Columbia and Ontario are already much more strict, with more serious repercussions for infractions and more frequent and thorough inspections.

Considering the disturbing animal abuse situation in the province, the Green Party of Quebec proposes the following:

- To devise public awareness campaigns on the environmental, ethical and health impacts of the consumption of meat.
- To impose tougher penalties on those found guilty of the mistreatment of animals.
- To increase the number of inspectors working under the supervision of ANIMA-Quebec and the SPCA.

Considering the fact that animals are not objects, we also encourage federal agencies to remove the section on animal cruelty from its location under part XI of the Criminal Code entitled Willful and Forbidden Acts in Respect of Certain Property. Animal rights should constitute a separate section in the Criminal Code

### **3. EDUCATION AND CULTURE**

#### **3.1 Post-Secondary Education and Free Education**

First, the Green Party of Quebec supports freedom of choice in terms of cégep and university. Students attending these institutions are mature enough to make their own decisions about where they want to study. We believe that learning a second language is not only an undeniable asset but a fundamental right for Quebec students. Moreover, we would expand the selection of courses in indigenous and foreign languages.

In terms of tuition at the post-secondary level, the GPQ has adopted a clear stance in favor of free education. Free education is one of the best ways to ensure access to education regardless of a student's financial situation. The Quebec government has been trying to increase the price of education for far too long. It is this commercialization of education, and the idea that education is a privilege rather than a right, which pushed students to organize, strike, and take to the streets during the Maple Spring. High tuition fees are in the interest of large corporations that rely on a job market that is saturated with deeply indebted new graduates. We stand resolutely against the commodification of essential services like education, transportation and healthcare. Free education is the best public investment that the Quebec government can make to encourage sustainable economic, social, and cultural development.

#### **3.2 Research and Continued Education**

The Green Party of Quebec fundamentally supports the public and transparent funding of scientific research. This responsibility has been neglected by the federal government in recent years. We consider it to be the duty of the state to support scientists in their research, because it benefits society as a whole and sheds light on debate and public policy. The GPQ is strongly opposed to the commercialization of public research. We are in favor of the complete freedom of expression of scientists and vehemently disapprove of any censorship in this area. Finally, we propose to guarantee at least five days of in-service training per year in all businesses, with the goal of improving productivity and the professional mobility of employees. These courses could be offered by the companies themselves or by local educational institutions, Emploi-Quebec, etc.

#### **3.3 Primary and Secondary Education**

In regard to the funding of private schools; although the GPQ supports freedom of choice for citizens and their right to enroll their children in schools of their choice, we believe that public

funds should only be used to fund public schools, which are accessible to everyone.

The Green Party of Quebec is in favor of the abolition of school boards, or at least an extensive change in the role of the existing boards. We believe that the current system does not effectively manage taxpayers' money. We are, however, in favor of preserving regional autonomy for schools, and for a major reform in the way our schools are governed. The GPQ believes in the decentralization of all public services, including schools.

On the working conditions of teachers, the Green Party of Quebec favors a traditional style of remuneration. Study after study shows that linking teachers' pay to the performance of their students in standardized tests is not an acceptable solution. We all know that money is not what motivates teachers and that passion and goodwill can't be purchased. We also propose to reduce the pupil/teacher ratio to 20:1, which would involve hiring many new teachers. This would create jobs in all regions and communities of the province.

The Green Party of Quebec is not interested in changing the language laws in terms of the teaching of English. We believe that Quebec students should have access to a second language (which wouldn't necessarily have to be English, it could be an Aboriginal language or another foreign language), but we do not believe that this should be imposed on students. Learning French should take precedence in primary school: we also believe that French courses should be subsidized in Anglophone institutions in order to promote the French language to English-speaking students.

### **3.4 The Protection of French and Minority (including Indigenous) Cultures**

Protecting the French language, the official and common language of Quebec, is an important aim for Quebec society, but the protection of individual freedoms is too. The GPQ is not interested in changing the language laws, and supports the legislation which is currently in place.

Protection of Quebec culture is very important, and the GPQ believes that the best way to promote the arts and culture of Quebec is to subsidize them. These grants should also promote the cultures of minority groups and the First Nations peoples who are an essential part of Quebec society. To this end, we should therefore try to work with the federal government to obtain more funding for these types of projects. We must preserve diversity through culture.

## **4. SOCIAL JUSTICE**

### **4.1 Guaranteed Minimum Income**

We believe that those who receive social assistance, along with all our poorest citizens, should benefit from a guaranteed minimum income. This GMI would cover all basic needs and bring everyone up to the poverty line. We must consider that people looking for jobs need a basic set of resources (like appropriate clothing, access to transportation, etc.) in order to succeed.

Minimum wage and the government benefits infrastructure must be reformed in order to not only encourage citizens to find employment, but to ensure that everyone can meet their basic needs. Specifically, the GPQ aims to increase the minimum wage to \$13 an hour as a medium-term objective.

### **4.2 Working Conditions**

Firstly, concerning trade unions: despite information recently revealed by the Charbonneau Commission, the GPQ believes that union activity is beneficial to the workers of Quebec. Trade unions play a key role in the equal distribution of wealth and help to support the middle class. Moreover, unions contribute to sustainable economic development using worker funds (for which necessary reforms are already underway) which is to the benefit of citizens in all regions. The Green Party of Quebec is in solidarity with the labor movement.

In terms of working conditions in the public sector, the GPQ is in solidarity with Quebec government officials. We believe the best way to have reliable public services, which are proficient and equitable, is to offer desirable working conditions. The Charbonneau Commission revealed the serious consequences of the loss of expertise or "brain drain" which took place in the Ministry of Transport. When working conditions are better in the private sector, the public sector experiences difficulty hiring and has to resort to using private contract companies, which opens the door to collusion and corruption. Job security is one of the benefits that the public sector can offer its employees to engage them and retain them.

In terms of pensions, the same principles apply. People who have retired have the right to an adequate standard of living. They worked for a living, and now they deserve for us to respect the promise we made to them, whether they worked in the private sector or the public sector. The provincial government should ensure that all citizens have the right to a decent retirement.

The GPQ also proposes to establish a 35 hour work week. There are several arguments in favor of this reform. First, distributing work more equally in society ensures that more people can find jobs, which reduces unemployment and diminishes the pressure on public income support programs. By each working a little less, we can ensure that more people are able to work. It's

also a good way to attain a proper work-family or work-study balance. Finally, it is a measure to increase public health. A reduction in work time also reduces the incidence of work related accidents and illnesses (both physical and mental). This plan will be supplemented by the abolition of mandatory overtime.

We strongly oppose any increase to the age of retirement. This neoliberal austerity plan is unacceptable. The Green Party of Quebec believes that we must fulfill the promise we made to our workers and our seniors. Quebecers deserve a comfortable retirement and the state has the duty to provide for them. It would be an unacceptable setback to increase the age of retirement or to reduce benefits.

### **4.3 Services for Seniors**

For far too long we have put the care of our seniors in the hands of the private sector. From one service to another, seniors find themselves dependent on corporations for basic services like prescription drugs, long-term care residences, and dental care. This system works well for the wealthy, but leaves low-income seniors destitute. Here are five concrete steps we can take to better take care of our seniors:

- Improve the CHSLD network of nursing homes and bring the quality level up to that of the best private residences.
- A guaranteed minimum income which would allow us to immediately take all our seniors out of poverty.
- A system of free, universal public dental care.
- The creation of Pharma-Quebec which would introduce free prescription drugs.
- The introduction of free public transit.

Additionally, the Green Party of Quebec supports the development of social economy services that would allow in-home support for independent and semi-autonomous seniors. This would save on the cost of hospitalization while creating jobs in the service sector (housekeepers, collective kitchens, Meals on Wheels, personal care, etc.).

### **4.4 Affordable Housing**

The Green Party of Quebec supports the position of FRAPRU (“Le Front d’Action Populaire en Réaménagement Urbain”), who request that the Quebec government finance the construction of 50,000 new social housing units.

We believe that all Quebecers should have access to safe, quality housing, regardless of their financial situation. This is a basic need that a society as rich as ours should cover for all citizens. The fact that many Quebecers spend 50% or more of their income on housing is an unacceptable situation that requires direct government intervention.

#### **4.5 Public Day Care**

Quebec's affordable day care program has always been a point of pride in the province. In recent years however, funding cuts have resulted in the service being inaccessible unless you're willing to be put on a long waiting list or have a connection to one of the major political parties.

The Green Party of Quebec wants to overhaul the service to make it accessible to all who are interested. The \$7 a day spaces (more so than the \$8 or \$9 a day spaces) are a great way to combat poverty by allowing parents (especially mothers) to return to the labor market. It is important to prioritize families in need but in fact all Quebec families should have access to a subsidized child care system. The GPQ believes in the universality of public services and promises to put a stop to the fee increases.

#### **4.6 Justice and Public Security**

We believe that the best way to fight against crime is to ensure that our society is healthy, educated, prosperous and fair. It all starts with a prevention strategy.

##### *For an Independent Civilian Police Oversight Unit*

As it stands, investigations into unethical police behavior are simply performed by another police force. This reduces police credibility, is detrimental to the law enforcement image, and creates tension between police officers and the citizens they are hired to protect.

The Green Party of Quebec therefore proposes the establishment of an independent investigative department. Ontario already has a similar system in place, we could take inspiration from it while improving it to make it more transparent and efficient.

##### *Address the Problem of Drug Addiction as a Public Health Issue using a Non-Criminal Approach*

The GPQ supports the decriminalization of drugs. By ending this "war" on drugs will end the monopoly that organized crime currently possesses, while depriving them of one of their main funding sources. It would also give the government the ability to regulate products and offer quality control, while eliminating unnecessary police and legal expenses, therefore freeing up resources which could be invested elsewhere, like towards prevention and treatment of addictions. Addiction is a public health issue, the crime associated with it is simply a symptom of a greater problem.

##### *Better Police Training on Mental Health Issues*

All too often, interactions between law enforcement agencies and people who suffer from mental illness end in tragedy. For example, in the last three years in Montreal three homeless people have been shot and killed by the SPVM. This must change, and better police training could save lives. Both the police and citizens deserve that closer attention be paid to this issue.

*Abolish Oppressive Anti-Protest Laws*

The right to protest is entrenched in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Green Party of Quebec believes that certain regulations and laws infringe on these rights, and that the Quebec government must take immediate and concrete action to restore the right to protest to all citizens.

This should include the abolition of law P-6 in the City of Montreal and other similar laws adopted by other cities in Quebec. This should be accompanied by an independent investigation into police conduct during the Maple Spring. The Parti Québécois promised to abolish the Charest government's law 78 and now it's time to finish the job by revoking all similar laws adopted by municipal governments.

## **5. HEALTH CARE**

### **5.1 Universal Health Care**

In terms of the financing of the health care system, the GPQ is in favor of a purely public, universal, and free system. We propose the abolition of the health care tax, which we believe is the first step towards an American style user-pay system. We recognize this tax as an "insurance premium" that Quebecers must pay (in addition to their taxes) just to access the public health care system, which should be free and accessible to all. The health tax is a regressive tax that is to the detriment of low-income households and the middle class. The GPQ would strengthen the progressive nature of the tax system in order to generate sufficient revenue to fund our social programs, including health care.

The GPQ is in favor of the "dying with dignity" law and the progress it represents in the rights of Quebecers. This is a very personal decision which is made by each individual. The state has no right to take a position on this issue and we believe it is the physicians' duty to respect the clearly expressed will of their patients. We also condemn the recent political action in the corridors of the National Assembly which prevented the adoption of Bill 52, a non-partisan bill which was supported by a vast majority of Quebecers.

### **5.2 Prevention**

The Green Party of Quebec will heavily invest in the prevention of health problems, both mental and physical. This investment will be substantially profitable in the long term. The first step is to accelerate efforts to promote a healthy lifestyle, focusing on: healthy eating, exercise, stress management, tobacco control, alcohol and drug abuse, early detection of diseases, suicide prevention, etc. Both through public service campaigns and information which would be integrated into the school curriculum through nutrition courses, physical education classes, sex education, etc., it is possible to improve the health of Quebecers.

The promotion of active transportation (walking, biking, etc.) would also be beneficial to public health. That is why the GPQ supports the development of bike sharing networks (like Bixi in Montreal), throughout Quebec . We can also make our streets and roads more friendly for pedestrians.

### **5.3 Pharmacare**

The Green Party of Quebec believes that all prescription drugs should be covered by the public health system. We strongly support a free and universal health care system which includes Pharmacare. That's why we're proposing the creation of Pharma-Québec, which would be able to offer all the medicines Quebecers need at cheaper prices by leveraging the use of generic medications and bulk buying.

## **5.4 Mental Health**

In Quebec, the fiscal cuts in the last few decades have had a profound impact on our mental health services. More and more, a lack of resources means that patients are treated with medication and then sent home, instead of receiving the proper treatment and care that they need. Today we're seeing the consequences of the wave of deinstitutionalization in the 1980s.

This situation makes it so that people with severe mental illnesses are often left to fend for themselves or are pushed out of treatment centers too early. This has to change, and fast. An aggressive prevention strategy is crucial in the fight against depression, anxiety, burnout and other mental illnesses. Quebec has a very high suicide rate, and more resources must be utilized to make the necessary changes.

A simple measure we can apply now: removing all video lottery terminals (VLTs) from establishments that serve alcohol. These devices are ruining the health and lives of many vulnerable Quebecers and it must stop.

## **5.4 Sport**

Among the measures recommended by the GPQ to increase the safe practice of sport in order to reap its inherent health benefits:

- Insist on a minimum of one hour of physical activity per day in all Quebec primary and secondary schools.
- Include bike-sharing services (like Montreal's Bixi) in the services offered by transit companies.
- Prioritize expanding the network of bike paths and pedestrian friendly areas.
- Improve access to physical activity for low-income individuals and families in every in all Quebec communities.

## 6. ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

### 6.1 Job Creation

For too long, the Quebec government has tried to create jobs in sectors like the oil and gas industry, which are detrimental to the environment. In our opinion, the time has come to put Quebecers to work by creating green jobs in the fields of transportation, recycling, education and culture.

#### *A Strategy for Industrial Recycling*

Currently in Quebec, the majority of our waste is improperly managed. Electronics, cars, telephones, fluorescent light bulbs and batteries are all examples of this. Despite the fact that the Quebec government introduced eco-fees on some consumer goods in 2012, we believe that the time has come to expand this program to cover all recyclable consumer goods. This will allow us to create jobs across the province in a growth industry and to promote our knowledge and recycling technologies worldwide.

#### *For a Public Transit Expansion Plan*

The drastic expansion of public transportation is central to the GPQ's platform. We believe this is the best way to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions (the transportation sector is responsible for a high percentage of these emissions) and the consumption associated with private cars. It should be seen as an investment that will create thousands of good quality jobs and to build Quebec expertise because we will require qualified workers to make up this sustainable workforce. The expansion of the transit system will also help employers in the private sector to benefit from a mobile population and a reduction in traffic congestion which hurts our economy and our productivity.

#### *For a Large-Scale Eco-Renovation Program*

Buildings in Quebec need renovations. Right now, Quebec faces a major problem: the inefficiency of our buildings' energy consumption. This increases our consumption of hydroelectricity, oil and natural gas.

The Green Party of Quebec would introduce an expansive program which would aim to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings. The first priority is better insulation, followed by the installation of geothermal infrastructures, solar panels, etc. This will create jobs, reduce our energy consumption, and improve infrastructure in Quebec.

#### *Reduce Class Sizes in Primary and Secondary Schools*

Improving the education system is a priority for the Green Party of Quebec. We believe that primary and secondary school classes should be limited to 20 students per teacher. This will ensure a higher caliber of education, especially for students who have difficulty succeeding in the current system and need more one-on-one attention. This measure to reduce class sizes

would require hiring thousands of teachers. We believe that the investment would be returned to taxpayers by increasing the success rate of our students and therefore improving the productivity of our society.

In addition, the GPQ would develop the social economic services which offer in-home support for independent and semi-autonomous seniors. This saves on the cost of hospitalization while creating jobs in the service sector (housekeepers, collective kitchens, Meals on Wheels, personal care workers, etc.).

## **6.2 Tax Reform**

Because of our low corporate tax rate (without even considering tax evasion), the redistribution of wealth between large companies and the rest of society is inadequate. The GPQ proposes to reintroduce the capital tax and to increase corporate tax rates to a higher level so the balance between businesses and individuals can be restored.

We believe in the progressive nature of our tax system and want to support and strengthen it. To this end, the Green Party of Quebec proposes to introduce more tax brackets. In our opinion, it is not right that in Quebec, a person who earns \$100,000 a year pays the exact same tax rate as someone who earns \$10 million a year. We therefore propose to spread the burden more equitably and progressively among Quebec households by adding tax brackets for those who earn above \$100,000 per year to tax the 1% more fairly.

The GPQ proposes to increase the QST on consumer goods, especially those whose production causes the most pollution, by implementing an eco-tax. In return, we would see the taxes on services reduced or even eliminated.

## **6.3 Raise Corporate Taxes**

In recent years, big businesses have seen their taxes reduced by both the Quebec Liberal Party and Stephen Harper's Conservative government. While asking citizens to tighten their belts, we give free passes to the wealthiest companies, who make no commitment to remain in Quebec and create jobs for our citizens.

The percentage that corporate taxes contribute to Quebec's total provincial revenue has all but disappeared in the last few decades. This has resulted in a higher proportion of the tax burden falling on individuals and families. The GPQ proposes to restore balance to this situation by, for example, imposing a capital tax on financial institutions.

#### **6.4 Carbon Tax**

It is high time to force the biggest polluters to take responsibility for their actions by putting a price on pollution. Carbon taxes are recognized worldwide as one of the best ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and decrease our contribution to climate change, while generating large sums of money for the state, which can then be used to subsidize other green initiatives like public transit. On top of all that, the tax acts as an incentive to encourage companies to innovate in order to make their chain of production greener.

#### **6.5 Public Finances**

Of course, we all want a balanced budget. But sometimes it's necessary to run a deficit in order to invest in infrastructure which will create jobs and serve the population in the long-term, especially with a slow economy like we have now. The expansion of our public transportation networks is a good example of an investment in the future of Quebec. The GPQ therefore supports the responsible and meticulous management of public funds, but will not adhere to the neoliberal ideology of austerity and having a balanced budget at any cost.

#### **6.6 Caisse de Dépôt et Placement du Québec**

The Caisse de dépôt et placements du Québec (CDP) is a fund of \$176 billion which is mainly comprised of Quebecers' pension funds and public insurance plans managed by the CSST and the SAAQ.

According to a 2012 report issued by the Institute for Research in Contemporary Economics (IREC), the Caisse had invested over \$5.4 billion in major oil industry corporations including Enbridge, Suncor, and Canadian Natural Resources. Investments in the oil industry accounted for over 14% of the Fund's stock portfolio.

We propose to divest the CDP from Western Canada's oil. It is time to change their mandate to promote local and sustainable development, instead of playing the international markets with our pension funds.

#### **6.7 Free Trade**

The Green Party of Quebec opposes the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union (the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, or CETA). This treaty opens the door to the privatization of public services by promoting European multinationals at

the expense of Quebec businesses and public service. These multinational corporations can sue governments who are trying to boost their local industries which costs billions of dollars in legal fees. Additionally, the protection of our natural resources (like water) will be weakened and the cost of state purchased goods and services (like pharmaceuticals) will increase substantially due to the extension of patents to protect intellectual property.