Alberta’s NDP
Leadership for What Matters

ELECTION PLATFORM 2015
Dear friend,

Jim Prentice called this early election because – so he says – he needed a mandate from the people of Alberta to pass his budget plan.
He does not deserve that mandate from you, because Mr. Prentice’s plan is about making you and your family pay for his government’s mistakes.

Alberta can do better than that.

In this platform document my colleagues and I set out our agenda for the next five years.

Our top priorities are creating jobs in a diversified, 21st century economy, restoring honest and open government, preserving and building our health care system, preserving and building our education system, and rebalancing government revenues to make them more fair – asking high income earners (the top 10% of Albertan tax filers) and large, profitable corporations to contribute a little more.

With our plan we will balance the budget in 2018.

The Conservatives have taken many years to dig us into the situation we are in today, and it will take time to undo the damage they have done. But we need to start, and to make better choices, as we propose in this plan.

More and more Albertans are coming to the view that it is time for a change in this province, and it is easy to see why.

Mr. Prentice tried to game this election through a deal with Danielle Smith. Albertans could not have been more clear that they don’t approve of the political arrangements Mr. Prentice negotiated in secret with the majority of the Wildrose caucus.

Mr. Prentice has introduced a budget that asks you and your family to pay for bad decisions by the Conservatives – through higher taxes and fees, and through deep cutbacks to your family’s health care and education. In his budget, Mr. Prentice is not asking for any sacrifices at all from all of our province’s large, profitable corporations – the people who need help the least, and can most easily afford to contribute a little more.

Challenged on all of this, Mr. Prentice is telling you and your family to “look in the mirror,” because, in his view, his government’s bad choices are your fault.

Jim Prentice should look into his own mirror.

Alberta can do far better than this.

Together, we can build a diversified, value-added economy. My party sets out proposals in this platform to provide tax credits to help job creators, and to rebalance our tax and royalty system to reward processing and adding value to our resources. It’s time for a government in Alberta that cares about jobs, and that works to build a better economy that serves the needs of you and your family.

We can clean up the Legislature in Edmonton to have honest and open government that isn’t all about gaming our democracy.

We can restore and build on our public health care system, so good health care is always there for you and your family when you need it.

We can invest in our children’s education, so there are schools in your neighbourhood, and teachers in your children’s classrooms.
We can invest in our cities and towns. We can take real steps to help women and families. We can be leaders in protecting our environment. We can build respectful relationships with Indigenous people.

We can do all of these things — if we also set aside the PCs’ worst policies — by returning to a system of progressive income and corporate taxes in Alberta that ask the most fortunate among us to contribute their fair share. The top 10% of wealthiest Albertans and our most profitable corporations benefited the most from PC policies – they can contribute fairly to rebuilding our province.

We can do all of these things while balancing the budget by 2018, by setting the right priorities and making the right choices.

Instead, Jim Prentice wants you and your family to pay for his party’s mistakes.

That’s why Jim Prentice does not deserve a mandate from you in this election.

I know Alberta can do better. So does our whole team of fresh, optimistic and forward-looking Albertans running as candidates for my party in this election.

It’s time for change in Alberta.

All my very best,
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The PCs have squandered Alberta’s resource wealth.

They have done this by neglecting our opportunity to invest in value-added processing and refining – investment that would create more jobs in Alberta instead of exporting them to Texas. The current government under Jim Prentice wants to continue these policies.

The PCs have also refused to implement realistic oil royalties that the people who own the resources — all of us — deserve. The reason for this refusal is clear: Jim Prentice and the PCs are too close, much too close, to a small minority of Albertans who benefit from the status quo under the PCs, while the people of Alberta as a whole are deprived of much of the benefit of our own resources.

The PCs have failed to plan for a downturn in oil prices by building up the Heritage Fund when oil prices were strong – and they want to keep on doing so.

They have ignored opportunities to support more diversification in Alberta’s economy – and they want to keep on doing so.

RACHEL NOTLEY’S COMMITMENT TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY:

• (1.1) A job creation tax credit: We’ll introduce a Job Creator’s Tax Credit to directly and effectively help Alberta businesses who invest to create new jobs.

• (1.2) A careful review of how Alberta will promote resource processing and fair royalties: We’ll establish a Resource Owners’ Rights Commission to report to the new Premier and the Legislature within six months on measures to promote greater processing of Alberta’s energy resources, and to ensure a full and fair return to the people of Alberta for their energy resources. We’ll act on recommendations within the first year of the next term of the Legislature.

Through these policies, we’ll protect important services by planning ahead for oil downturns and reducing Alberta’s over-reliance on high oil and gas prices.

Through these policies, we’ll implement competitive, realistic royalty rates as prices rise, to ensure full and fair value for Albertans as the owners of the resources.

100% of incremental royalty revenue, above the sums earned by Alberta under the current regime, will be invested into Alberta’s Heritage Fund — an important first step to achieving the original vision for this fund.

Through these policies, we’ll reduce our province’s over-dependence on raw bitumen exports and create more jobs with more upgrading and processing here, rather than in Texas.

“The province has the potential to be a leader in renewable energy, new products based on hydrocarbons and environmental stewardship. In these, Alberta’s economy will find its elusive diversity that will provide prosperity for generations to come.”

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• (1.3) We’ll ensure the benefits of better economic policies are more widely shared, by increasing the minimum wage to $15 per hour by 2018.

• (1.4) As our province’s finances recover, we’ll work to actively support economic diversification in other sectors, including alternative energy (including our proposed building retrofit loan fund), high tech, advanced research, knowledge industries, film and television production, small Alberta brewing, wind power, forestry, value-added agriculture, food processing and tourism.

• (1.5) And we will strengthen Alberta’s rural communities by ensuring better access to transportation, doctors, schools, long term care, post-secondary learning, and other essential services.

“Rachel Notley pleasantly surprised a lot of people with her creative job-creation plan.”
– Edmonton Sun Editorial Board, April 12, 2015
The people of Alberta no longer trust or have confidence in the Prentice government, and they have good reason not to.

Jim Prentice refuses to accept accountability for the PC government’s record, telling Albertans to “look in the mirror” to understand its poor management and bad decisions.

Mr. Prentice’s secret deal with Danielle Smith and the majority of the Wildrose caucus was designed to game Alberta democracy. Taking out the leader of the Official Opposition and much of her team was an attempt to make re-election of the PCs inevitable, whether or not their record justifies it.

There’s more.

The Prentice PCs have been making key infrastructure decisions for their political gain, rather than for people’s real needs. For example, the Ethics Commissioner found PC Education Minister Gordon Dirks engaged in “blatant political opportunism” in rewarding modular schools in his own riding during his by-election. Jim Prentice’s reaction was to stay silent.

The PC government has refused to properly fund the Office of the Auditor-General. When an all-party committee voted to do so, Jim Prentice forced the PC majority to reverse their position, in order to maintain his total control, without accountability.

And the PCs continue to undermine our democracy allowing large corporate donations to political parties.

Albertans deserve better.

RACHEL NOTLEY’S COMMITMENT TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY:

• (2.1) We will ban both corporate and union donations to political parties.

• (2.2) We will make infrastructure decisions and priorities transparent with a public “infrastructure sunshine list,” so that funding goes to build the most important projects rather than to promote the political fortunes of the PCs.

• (2.3) We will strengthen the Conflict of Interest Act to prevent MLAs from using their position to benefit their own financial interests or that of political friends, and to strengthen cooling-off periods for former political staff. We will also expand the application of the Act to apply to all senior staff of all of our province’s agencies, boards and commissions.

• (2.4) We will amend the Elections Act to prohibit MLAs from using government resources during elections and we will ensure the Chief Electoral officer can effectively investigate breaches of the Act.

• (2.5) We will extend the sunshine list to include our province’s agencies, boards and commissions.

• (2.6) We will respect the independence of all-party committees, and will work to respect and maintain the independence and adequate funding of the Officers of the Legislature, such as the Auditor General.
“This good dog/bad dog treatment of Alberta voters by the PCs is transparent, predictable and insulting. But then again, for a party that feels democracy belongs to politicians and is lent out to voters when it suits them, this should come as no surprise.”

– Calgary Sun Editorial Board, March 31, 2015
Universal, accessible, public health care is one of our country’s proudest accomplishments. It is an expression of values that unite us from coast to coast. And it represents a public service – and a public trust – of vital concern to every family in Alberta. It needs to be there when Alberta families need it, where they need it.

Jim Prentice and the PCs are failing Albertans in health care.

LOOK AT THEIR RECORD, AND LOOK AT THEIR PLAN:

The Prentice budget will take $1 billion out of front line health and hospital services – cutbacks that will mean more crowded emergency rooms, more cancelled surgeries, longer wait lists and more hallway medicine.

They plan to impose a new “health care contribution levy” – a waiting room tax. This levy is an unfair tax that allows the PCs to maintain lower taxes for wealthy individuals and profitable corporations, but has nothing to do with health care.

They are neglecting hundreds of necessary repairs in front line hospitals and care facilities, leading to unnecessary bed closures, pest infestations and sewage leaks – all of which worsen the quality of patient care.

They are short-changing Alberta seniors by not creating enough long-term care beds and relying on expensive, for-profit delivery of inadequate assisted living and homecare.

They are taking no meaningful action on mental health services.

And they are creating havoc in the health care system through disruptive restructuring of AHS, including eliminating and then recreating health regions, wasting tens of millions of dollars.

RACHEL NOTLEY’S COMMITMENT TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY:

• (3.1) We will ensure a stable and secure budget for health care services. We will reverse the reckless Prentice cuts to front line health services and ensure stable, predictable funding for acute care in our hospitals, so that you and your family get proper, timely care.

• (3.2) We will not proceed with Mr. Prentice’s proposed reorganization of our province’s health system. We will use less disruptive ways to ensure regional health care needs are heard and addressed.

• (3.3) We will eliminate the PCs’ proposed health care levy, replacing it with a more progressive income tax for the top 10% of tax filers in Alberta, and fairer corporate taxes.

“We have a crisis in our seniors care system. We don’t have enough long-term care. The care that’s being provided is being cut back significantly... [the PCs are] pairing with private, for-profit corporations, where a lot of the taxpayers’ dollars are being siphoned off.”

– Bill Moore-Kilgannon, Public Interest Alberta, CBC Edmonton, December 16, 2014
• (3.4) We will shorten emergency room waiting times by creating 2,000 public long-term care beds over four years, which will improve seniors care and reduce hospital congestion.

• (3.5) We will phase in a new model for expanded public homecare which will enhance and stabilize the system by directing care to where individuals need it, helping to keep people at home instead of in hospitals.

• (3.6) We will help families get better access to Primary Care Networks by negotiating stronger mandates, including longer hours, more access and expanded access to family doctors for new patients.

• (3.7) We will end the PCs’ costly experiments in privatization, and redirect the funds to publicly delivered services.

• (3.8) We will eliminate Alberta’s growing health infrastructure backlog by properly repairing hospitals and seniors’ facilities and constructing the new facilities needed for proper health care, including immediate action on the most pressing deferred maintenance needs.
• (3.9) We will implement a mental health strategy that modernizes the current broken system to properly deliver badly needed mental health services to Albertans, which will also help reduce hospital congestion.

• (3.10) We will manage provincial capital projects within the framework of the current Government of Alberta capital envelope, reallocating resources to priorities like hospital maintenance and school construction. We will also get better value for capital investments, for example by reallocating funding from the Prentice government’s discredited carbon capture project to higher-priority projects, including transit, health care and education. Our party will have more to say about health care capital projects and priorities over the course of this campaign.
“It is not reaching a crisis, it already is a crisis. As colleagues, we don’t talk about what a great day we had. We talk about, ‘How many did you lose today? How many patients did you have cancelled?’”

– Dr. Bryan Dicken, Pediatric Surgeon, Stollery Children’s Hospital, Edmonton Journal, March 19, 2015
The PC party’s broken promises and wrong priorities on education don’t deserve your support.

LOOK AT THEIR RECORD:

Their political game-playing with school construction is forcing parents into lotteries for school spaces.

Mr. Prentice’s government plays politics with the education of children, rewarding friends ahead of Alberta families by awarding schools to help PC candidates while making others wait.

The new budget Mr. Prentice is asking you to support does not set aside a single penny to hire new teachers, even though the school system will grow by 12,000 new students this September. That will translate directly into ever larger class sizes, compounding the problems caused by earlier cutbacks that led to the loss of 700 teachers.

The PCs have done nothing to curtail skyrocketing school fees, a growing burden on working families.

They broke their promises to introduce full-day kindergarten.

They put big loopholes in their college and university tuition “cap.” In the result, tuition has continued to rise in Alberta year after year, making post-secondary education still more unaffordable for Alberta families. Alberta now has the lowest post-secondary education participation rate among the provinces, even as Jim Prentice talks of a “well-educated workforce.”

And they cut the successful Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP) program, which helped thousands of young people to enter the Alberta labour force.

RACHEL NOTLEY’S COMMITMENT TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY:

- (4.1) We’ll provide stable, predictable funding to school boards, colleges, universities and technical institutes that will support Alberta’s growing population and the need for quality education in a modern economy. We will reverse the reckless Prentice cuts.
- (4.2) We’ll invest to reduce class sizes and deal with growing enrollment in the K-12 system.
- (4.3) We’ll reduce school fees for essential services such as lunch supervision and bussing.
- (4.4) We will ensure schools have the people and resources they need to respond to the increasing complexity of Alberta’s classrooms.
“When you talk about 12,000 new students and... a 2.1 percent inflation rate, how are you going to maintain service with this kind of growth?” – Mark Ramsankar, Alberta Teachers’ Association President, Metro News Calgary April 9, 2015

- (4.5) We’ll invest to build the new schools that are needed to lower class sizes, to improve learning conditions for all Alberta kids and to end the chaos created by the PCs continual delays in building those new schools.

- (4.6) We’ll phase in all-day kindergarten as Alberta’s finances permit and school construction progresses, beginning with priority neighbourhoods.

- (4.7) We’ll get the politics out of school construction, ensuring that school construction and renovation decisions are based on need. We’ll end the PCs’ political manipulations of those decisions with public, transparent project priority lists.

- (4.8) We’ll phase in a targeted school lunch program for elementary students in the province.

- (4.9) We’ll restore the successful Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP) job creation program for Alberta youth.

- (4.10) And we’ll implement a real tuition freeze for post-secondary students, including rolling back the PCs’ most recent “market modifier” fees. By imposing a real freeze, post-secondary education will become increasingly accessible and affordable for Alberta families.
Alberta’s potential is unlimited because of our resources, our people, and our communities.

Yet Jim Prentice and the PCs are undermining that potential and neglecting the things that make our province so great.

More children and families in Alberta are facing growing inequality and poverty, despite PC promises. Even the provision for a family tax credit they included in the most recent budget is to be delayed until July 2016 for no good reason. This measure should be better designed and then introduced without delay to include more families struggling with poverty. Child care shortages, violence against women, and the crisis facing children in care of the government all are accepted, year after year, by the PCs.

Growing cities, rural communities and farm families all share a common bond: the Prentice administration has ignored them all. And the same holds for Indigenous peoples, who still face barriers and exclusion too often.

Our environmental quality is declining and the PCs are hastening that decline. Jim Prentice promises action, but corporate lobbyists and his cuts to environmental enforcement make those promises meaningless.

Citizens and communities all over Alberta are now saying “enough.”

RACHEL NOTLEY’S COMMITMENT TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY:

Support for Alberta families:

- (5.1) We will invest in child care, creating new spaces and improving affordability, quality and access. We will move toward $25-a-day care in quality child care centres as Alberta’s finances permit.
- (5.2) We will immediately implement enhancements to the Alberta Family Employment Tax Credit and the Alberta Working Family Supplement so low income families do not have to wait more than a year to benefit. We will also adjust the Supplement to ensure all low income families can access it.
- (5.3) We will create a Women’s Ministry to lead initiatives for greater gender equality in Alberta.
- (5.4) We will review employment standards to support family-friendly work standards, including improving compassionate care leaves and providing time off for family responsibilities.
- (5.5) We will properly and effectively “smart regulate” Alberta’s electricity retail system to give Alberta families more stable

“Resolving the child care crisis — a key part of women’s struggle for gender equality whether at home, at the workplace, or in the public sphere — is, and should be, more than just a matter of numbers.”

– Irehobhude O. Iyioha, Assistant adjunct professor, University of Alberta John Dossetor Health Ethics Centre. Calgary Herald, April 25, 2015
electricity prices and to protect the public interest from financial manipulation.

- (5.6) We will reverse the cuts made to services for children in care to ensure that our most vulnerable children receive the support and services they need. We will also implement reforms to the child intervention system to make sure that when tragedies do occur they are properly investigated so we can prevent the same thing from happening again.

- (5.7) We will increase funding to Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) to enhance important community-based services and programs.

- (5.8) And we will create more spaces in women’s shelters province wide, and increase support for organizations taking initiatives to end violence against women and within families.
Strong families, strong communities, healthy environment.

Action on the environment:

- (5.9) We will establish a green retrofitting loan program that will assist Alberta families, farms and small businesses to reduce their energy usage affordably, which will reduce environmental impacts and create jobs in the construction industry.

- (5.10) We will phase out coal-fired electricity generation to reduce smog and greenhouse gas emissions and expand cleaner, greener sources, including wind and solar and more industrial co-generation in the oil sands, all of which will improve both the environment and the health of Albertans.

- (5.11) We will end the PCs’ costly and ineffective Carbon Capture and Storage experiment and reinvest the 2015/16 component of this project into construction of public transit, which will help reduce families’ transportation costs and reduce greenhouse gases and other air pollutants.

- (5.12) We will strengthen environmental standards, inspection, monitoring and enforcement to protect Alberta’s water, land and air. We will build standards based on independent science and international best practices, designed transparently in careful consultation with Albertans.

- (5.13) We will take leadership on the issue of climate change and make sure Alberta is part of crafting solutions with stakeholders, other provinces and the federal government. First steps will include an energy efficiency strategy and a renewable energy strategy.

- (5.14) We will ban gas drilling in urban areas.

- (5.15) And we will protect the Castle Wilderness Area.

Cities and towns:

(5.16) We’ll provide stable, predictable funding to both large and smaller municipalities and ensure they have resources they need to fulfill infrastructure priorities, such as transit. We will maintain the Municipal Sustainability Initiative.

- (5.17) We’ll ensure rural communities have access to needed health care, education and infrastructure services. As part of this commitment, we will sit down with local government stakeholders to review the question of linear assessment.

- (5.18) We will work with bus companies to reinstate more bus services to rural communities to ensure greater transportation access.

“It’s grilled into [the PCs’] minds that they’ll never lose, and that bothers me.”

• (5.19) We’ll expand the powers available to municipalities to allow them to mandate affordable housing in new development projects, expanding the supply.

• (5.20) And we will work with Alberta’s cities to ensure the City Charter process is mutually developed and respects cities as economic and social drivers for Alberta, giving them the tools to build the services their residents expect.
A RENEWED PARTNERSHIP WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES:

• (5.21) We will implement the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and build it into provincial law.

• (5.22) We will support a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, which will have at its centre Indigenous women and the families of the missing and murdered women.

• (5.23) We will work with Alberta Indigenous Peoples to build a relationship of trust and ensure respectful consultation.

• (5.24) We will work with federal and Indigenous governments to resolve land claims.

• (5.25) We will work with the federal government to ensure jurisdictional conflicts do not prevent children from receiving services they need.

• (5.26) We will work with the federal government to ensure Indigenous communities have reliable access to clean and safe drinking water.

• (5.27) We will improve the representation of Indigenous culture and history in Alberta’s school curriculum in consultation with Indigenous leaders and Elders, and improve availability of First Nations language programs.

• (5.28) We will repeal Bill 22, which was passed without consulting First Nation groups and imposes requirements on First Nations Bands not required of other business arrangements. We will work collaboratively and respectfully with our province’s First Nations to replace this legislation.

ALBERTA’S AGRICULTURAL FUTURE:

• (5.29) We will conduct a review of federal rail and transportation policies, and their effect on Alberta’s agricultural food producers, and advocate for reliable, sufficient, and fairly priced rail service to markets.

• (5.30) We will strengthen landowners’ rights for fair compensation and due process in surface rights issues.

• (5.31) We will stand up for farmers’ rights to save and sell their seed.

• (5.32) We will work with small producers to eliminate barriers to local food production and marketing.
A new fiscal plan, where everyone contributes fairly.

The PCs failed to earn Albertans’ full and fair value for their oil and gas by maintaining one of the world’s lowest oil royalty rate structures, even when prices were very high.

They squandered Alberta’s natural resource wealth, failed to achieve greater value-added processing in Alberta, and have focused only on more export pipelines for unprocessed bitumen – sending our jobs to Texas.

They are handing out hundreds of millions in unnecessary corporate tax breaks, calling any changes “extreme.”

There is a better way.

**RACHEL NOTLEY’S COMMITMENT TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY:**

- **(6.1)** Large profitable corporations will contribute a little more. We will cut the PCs’ wasteful corporate tax breaks, by increasing Alberta corporate tax to 12% (from 10%), retaining the current small business tax rate and no sales tax.

- **(6.2)** The top 10% of income earners will contribute a little more. We will introduce a high income, progressive tax system, that asks the top 10% of tax filers to contribute to public services based on their ability to pay.

  - **To that end,** we will introduce a set of new high-income tax rates that will ask the top 10% of Alberta tax filers to contribute according to their ability to pay: 12% on taxable income over $125,000 to $150,000; 13% on taxable income over $150,000 to $200,000; 14% on taxable income over $200,000 to $300,000; and 15% on taxable income over $300,000.

- **(6.3)** Under our plan, everyone else – 90% of tax filers – gets a break from the tax and fee increases Jim Prentice is proposing in his budget.

To that end:

- We will eliminate Mr. Prentice’s regressive health levy, saving working and middle class Alberta families up to $1000 a year per tax filer.

- And we will roll back Mr. Prentice’s new user fees that affect Alberta families the most, including motor vehicle registration, marriage, death and birth certificates and their 600% increase to the mortgage registration tax that will make buying a new home much more difficult. These steps will save Albertan families an average of $214 a year.

- Low income families will also benefit from our proposals regarding the Alberta Working Family Supplement and the Alberta Family Employment Tax credit (p.16).

- **(6.4)** We will reverse the PCs’ cuts to the charitable donation tax credit.

- **(6.5)** And we will boost efforts to collect delinquent, unpaid corporate taxes and will increase the railway fuel tax, aligning it with other provinces.

As set out in the appendix, we will balance the budget in 2018 – without making Alberta families pay for Mr. Prentice’s bad choices.
“THE DECLINE IN NATURAL GAS REVENUES HAS BEEN DRAMATIC AND THE DEGREE TO WHICH WE ARE DEPENDENT ON OIL REVENUES, IT IS TIME FOR US TO CONSIDER AN INCREASE IN CORPORATE AND PERSONAL TAX.”

– Peter Lougheed, Premier of Alberta (1971-1985)
Edmonton Journal, May 11, 2011
Appendix: Balancing the books.

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Leadership for what matters.