



September 23, 2011

Mr. Chis Hogan
Executive Director, Newfoundland and Labrador Environment Network (NLEN)
172 Military Road
The Gathering Place
St John's, NL A1C 5V5
Nlen.ed@gmail.com

Dear Mr. Hogan,

I want to first thank you for taking the time to learn more about the Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador and our stand on issues that affect the people that you represent.

There are a number of environmental issues in Newfoundland and Labrador which are affecting the sustainability and well-being of our communities and economy.

A New Liberal Government will enact policies and regulations that protect the environment for us, for our children, and for our children's children. It is no longer sufficient to give this important issue lip service. Instead, it is time to act and demonstrate real action that demonstrates true stewardship and accountability.

The People's Platform, our policy document for the 2011 election, has been formulated. We have taken the time to address the issues that you have brought before the Liberal Party. I am pleased to respond to your survey and hope that my letter addresses your areas of concern.

PROTECTED AREAS

There are a number of ecological and environmentally sensitive areas throughout Newfoundland and Labrador that deserve to be adequately protected. Those areas may exist in the wilderness of our province or they may lie within municipal boundaries. Either way, they need to be properly identified and preserved. We will work the appropriate stakeholders to accomplish our goals.

A New Liberal Government will:

- initiate a province-wide Land Use Planning process that identifies areas of the province requiring protected status in our first mandate;
- work with the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture and Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador to encourage and promote the Wetlands Program;

Liberal Party of Newfoundland & Labrador 205 – 20 Crosbie Place St. John's, NL A1B 3Y8
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- in partnership with the Mealey Mountain National Park Reserve, establish the Eagle River Waterway Provincial Park in Labrador;
- finalize the establishment of the Little Grand Lake and Lawn Islands Ecological Reserves;

SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Our forestry industry is not being optimized for its value. A New Liberal Government believes this resource must be allocated on the principle of best-end use and optimal benefit to the province through economic development, employment, recreational, wildlife and the environment. We are the owners of the Crown forest and all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians must be meaningfully engaged in decisions that affect our common resource.

A New Liberal Government will bring renewed efforts to reviving this very important industry for rural communities and to the provincial economy. We believe that by investing in rural communities, a stronger forest industry and stronger communities will emerge. Our vision to sustain our forest sector into the future is just the beginning.

In carrying out our goal on increased value for the forestry industry, we are very cognizant of the issue of sustainable forest development. In light of that, a New Liberal Government will:

- update and implement the Provincial Sustainable Forest Management Strategy (2003) with particular emphasis on old growth forests and species at risks; and
- expand the Newfoundland Model Forest Program to all areas of the province including the Northern Peninsula to broaden the approach to future forest development activities.

WETLAND PROTECTION

The value of wetlands is significant and efforts must be made to protect these ecosystems. However, they are still disappearing under the pressure of human activity, and are being threatened by air pollution and climate change.

In light of that, a New Liberal Government will:

- produce and implement a wetlands policy that protects sensitive areas from development and degradation;
- develop a wetlands protection strategy to ensure that ponds, rivers and wetlands that are crucial to the area's environmental health are preserved.

FOOD SECURITY

Agriculture is important and we need to ensure that the industry is strong. We have the capability to benefit from its economic potential. In addition, food security exists when all citizens have

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access to nutritious, culturally appropriate food produced in a sustainable manner. As a province, we do not produce enough of our own food. In fact, we import over ninety (90) per cent of the food that we eat. We have enough food in our province to last us five short days.

A New Liberal Government will enhance food security through investments in local producers and implement a food security strategy. We will host a provincial food security summit during the first year of our mandate. Subsequently we will establish, in cooperation with stakeholders including community groups and networks, a Food Security Strategy that sets benchmarks that we must achieve within identified time frames.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Over the past ten years, Newfoundland and Labrador has gone from have-not to have status, all due to revenues from non-renewable natural resources, especially petroleum. The current resources and associated revenue belong to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and need to be shared appropriately with both current and future generations.

As a province we need to leverage our energy resources for future as well as present generations. A New Liberal Government will deal with this by creating a Legacy Fund built through contributions of a percentage of our oil revenues to ensure a better fiscal future.

A New Liberal Government will create and annually invest in a Legacy Fund. We will invest 10% of oil revenues, which equates to about \$250- Million/year, and this investment will grow over time once the fiscal situation of our province has been determined. Responsible management of the fund shall safeguard and build financial wealth for future generations. While the details of this fund have yet to be determined, the environment and conservation of it will be included in the consultations we do in determining the best way to allocate this funding.

With respect to the cuts in funding for research and environmental protection, a New Liberal Government will aggressively advocate to the federal government regarding these reductions in funding and the significant impact it will have on our province. In addition, it may be necessary to review the current provincial environmental strategy and make adjustments to mitigate effects from this loss of investment into our province.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Today's students are tomorrow's environmental stewards. Allowing students the opportunity to learn about the environment will make them more aware of the environment, the importance of it and afford them the opportunity to make better choices. We are a province surrounded by water and therefore have a right, responsibility and an incredible opportunity to teach them the value of both the land and the sea as well as the organisms associated with each.

In addition to the questions that you have raised, a New Liberal Government will also be following through on several other environmental initiatives as outlined below.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Many of our municipalities in Newfoundland and Labrador have seen dramatic changes in the landscape of their communities, either through erosion, mudslides, flooding, or tidal surge. While some of this phenomenon may be attributed to climate change, community and provincial leaders realize that steps must be taken to mitigate the possibility and frequency of those events.

A New Liberal Government will:

- use the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification program as its guiding principles for construction of government financed infrastructure;
- expedite the implementation of the Provincial Waste Management Strategy, and will ensure the strategy is designed to minimize the carbon footprint;
- offer to establish, in partnership with interested municipalities, Regional Transit Authorities (RTA's) in and around the province's major population centers, including the Northeast Avalon, Grand Falls Windsor/Gander corridor, and the Corner Brook region. These RTAs will examine current transit patterns of use, assess future potential ridership demands, and adjust regional transit systems across the region; and
- support the Multi Material Stewardship Board (MMSB) in promoting all recycling programs, with special emphasis on education throughout the school system.

OIL SPILL RESPONSE

Offshore oil production off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador has been the main contributor to the province's wealth since it began production just a few years ago, and it will continue to be for many more years to come. We must ensure that all necessary steps are being taken to mitigate the impact this industry could potentially have on the environment, especially to marine life and shorelines around our province through oil spills. We must learn from the disastrous aftermaths of the Prestige, the Exxon Valdez, and the Gulf of Mexico.

A New Liberal Government will establish, in partnership with the federal government, a comprehensive oil spill response regime for Placentia Bay.

WILDLIFE

Big game hunting has been, and continues to be, a way of life for residents and non-residents in Newfoundland and Labrador. There has to be a balance between harvesting and conservation so that the herds are not put at risk. Government has an important role to play to ensure that adequate controls are in place that achieves that delicate balance.

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Caribou herds in both Labrador and on the Island portion of the province are at dangerously low levels, and require drastic measures from Government to protect the herd's sustainability.

The moose population continue to escalate, which has precipitated in safety concerns for motorists are our highways. While we do have an aggressive harvesting program for moose in place, there are many animals straying onto our roads that do present problems for motorists, especially at night.

A New Liberal Government will:

- work with organizations like Save Our People Action Committee (SOPAC) to identify "hot spots" on all our highways where moose frequently stray, posing a safety concern for motorists;
- initiate a mitigation program for the identified areas, including moose fencing, to alleviate the possibility of moose/vehicle accidents;
- collaborate with outfitters, Aboriginal groups, and the general public to implement a comprehensive study of the caribou populations in the province and will initiate regulations and controls that will protect the sustainability of the herds; and
- re-establish the wildlife enforcement division back to the Department of Environment and Conservation.

PESTICIDE CONTROL

The commercial use of cosmetic pesticides has a detrimental effect on the environment and is a threat to the health of our residents. There has been a call from several concerned groups that it will not be totally effective unless there is a province-wide ban in Newfoundland and Labrador.

A New Liberal Government commits to the implementation of a province-wide ban for the commercial use of cosmetic pesticides in Newfoundland and Labrador.

I believe I have addressed the issues that you have raised. Should you have any additional questions or concerns please feel free to contact me. Again, thank you for taking to the time to advocate for the people you represent, clarify the points from our policy platform and I look forward to working with you in the near future.

Kind regards,



Kevin Aylward
Leader of the Liberal Party, NL