

2007 Manitoba Election Environment Commitments

May 2007

Green Party of Manitoba



Green Party Announcement – May 15, 2007 – ‘Green Party speaks about the Health of Manitoba’s Watersheds’

<http://greenparty.mb.ca/pdf/pr/20070516.pdf>

“If elected, the Green Party would ensure that Manitoba’s waters were restored to health by discontinuing the use of pollution intensive forms of water treatment”

Green Party Announcement – May 14, 2007 – ‘Green Party would make companies responsible for wasteful packaging’

<http://greenparty.mb.ca/pdf/pr/20070515.pdf>

“The Green Party believes that those companies who produce wasteful packaging should be responsible for its disposal.”

Green Party Announcement – May 11, 2007 – ‘Green Party of Manitoba will give a damn, not build another dam’

<http://greenparty.mb.ca/pdf/pr/20070511.pdf>

“Fort Garry Green Party candidate Alon Weinberg . . . was at Jenpeg Dam yesterday to stand with the Pimicikamak Cree Nation in support of their 30 years struggle against Manitoba Hydro and the Government of Manitoba.”

“The Green Party of Manitoba recognizes that hydroelectric development on the Nelson–Churchill River system has destroyed the Cree homeland making their water undrinkable and the waterways dangerous due to shoreline erosion and fluctuating water levels. In addition, a full ecological cumulative–impact assessment of the hydroelectric dams built has never been conducted.

The Green Party of Manitoba points to the recently passed law in Minnesota’s legislature and also calls on Manitoba Hydro to regularly account for the social and ecological impact of their dam construction.”

Green Party Announcement – May 9, 2007 – ‘Making Green Spaces Truly Green’

<http://greenparty.mb.ca/pdf/pr/20070509.pdf>

“Green Party of Manitoba Leader Andrew Basham called for a province–

wide ban on the cosmetic use of pesticides, in line with the precautionary principle.”

Platform – Protecting Living Systems

Manitoba Greens promote a transition away from pesticide use, towards a sustainable localized organic agriculture system in the long-run and short- and medium-term policies to get there, such as tax- and subsidy-shifting, transitional funding for farmers, and consumer education about pesticide-containing products. “

“Schools, hospitals, and other places where vulnerable people can be found need to be targeted for immediate action to prevent harm from pesticide exposure.”

“Greens support such initiatives and would increase funding to programs that seek to educate the public about the benefits of going organic and making our green spaces truly green.”

Green Party Announcement – May 9, 2007 – ‘No More Hogwash: Prudent planning, not political posturing’

<http://greenparty.mb.ca/pdf/pr/20070427.pdf>

“Greens in the Legislature would put the horse of precaution and common sense ahead of the manure-seeping cart and carefully consider any and all impacts of industrial expansion with a thorough investigation of alternative means of production. A Green agriculture review would not assume any expansion to be prudent without first studying its adverse economic, ecological, and social impacts. The precautionary principle would prevail.”

“Greens would diversify and localize the economy, promoting niche marketing, organics and a Made in Manitoba label on food.”

“. . . the GPM will work with local farmers to transition to smaller operations requiring fewer inputs, assuring long-term viability. We would ban sow crates and use the straw bedding, open-barn models already standard in Europe, recognizing hogs' social nature and keeping sows connected to their offspring.

Greens would close ecological loops by investment in the capture of methane as a fuel source, and thus also reducing its effects as a high-impact greenhouse gas.

We will also work to support the transition to waterless sanitation, helping farmers reduce water use, significantly decrease water contamination, and enabling farmers to apply nutrient rich compost to

their fields. This shift would prevent further runoff from semi-liquid manure into our water table, and be part of the strategy to rehabilitate and protect Lake Winnipeg.”

“The Green Party of Manitoba will work with local farmers to keep their farms healthy and prosperous and the province's waterways clean.”

“Finally, the GPM will defend farm and slaughterhouse labourers. Labourers working in intensive livestock operations are still not covered for worker's compensation under the labour laws as the supposedly labour-friendly NDP has failed to discern the difference between traditional small farms and large-scale industrial farming.”

Green Party Platform 2007 – ‘Rethinking Progress: Well-being, not Growth — An Overview’

<http://greenparty.mb.ca/abo-pol3.html>

Six platform pillars:

1. Improving ecological literacy
2. Rebuilding democracy
3. Creating ecological communities
4. Protecting the Commons
5. Bringing the economy home
6. Establishing a sustainable energy future”

Green Party Platform 2007 – ‘Rethinking Progress: Well-being, not Growth’

<http://greenparty.mb.ca/pdf/GPMPlatform.pdf>

page 3-4:

“The Manitoba Greens strongly endorse the precautionary principle:

When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In this context the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof. The process of applying the precautionary principle must be open, informed and democratic and must include potentially affected parties. It must also involve an examination of the full range of alternatives, including no action.

– Wingspread Statement on the Precautionary Principle, Jan. 1998.
(http://www.precaution.org/lib/pp_def.htm)

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ECOLOGICAL LITERACY (ECO-LITERACY):

LEARNING FROM NATURE TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

“Manitoba Greens, if elected, will work to:

1. Incorporate ecological literacy (eco-literacy) into elementary, junior, and high school curricula through programs such as the “edible school yard” and “Rethinking School Lunch: Linking Food, Culture, Health, and the Environment” to incorporate local organic food production and skills for preparing healthy and culturally diverse lunches into school curricula (see www.ecoliteracy.org for more information);
2. Develop training programs in eco-trades, such as green building, ecological sanitation, community composting, etc, with the possibility of forming a special Sustainability College under The Colleges Act of Manitoba being considered;
3. Adequately fund community composting and gardening as the main form of dealing with unused organic materials (kitchen waste, etc) with an aim to promoting and implementing urban agriculture wherever possible;”

page 7–13:

PROTECTING LIVING SYSTEMS

“The Green Party of Manitoba would appoint a special Sustainability Auditor working in the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) to audit all budgets, legislation, policies, and departments for their effects on living systems and future generations. “

Forests

“The Manitoba Greens are committed to protecting our forests through policies that would transition us off clear-cutting and export-oriented forestry. Any obstacles to protecting our forests should be dismantled.

Manitoba Greens, if elected, will work to:

1. Cap the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) for all forest management license areas (FMLAs), preventing the expansion of clear-cutting and forestry in Manitoba;
2. Transition from large-scale export-oriented forestry and clear-cutting to localized small-scale value-added selective logging;
3. Immediately stop clear-cutting in provincial parks;
4. Amend The Provincial Parks Act to permanently protect all existing provincial parks;
5. Review how Forest Management Licenses are granted and revise the process to be in accordance with the precautionary principle and approach;
6. Work with the Government of Canada to pull out of free trade

agreements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), that require us to continue clear-cutting and exporting our forests;

7. Immediately protect the East Side of Lake Winnipeg's nominated World Heritage Site from industrial development;
8. Promote the use of hemp for alternative paper and building products;
9. Create a recycled content standard for paper products sold in Manitoba. "

Water

"Manitoba Greens, if elected, will work to:

1. Ensure water is protected through legislated and legally enforceable standards, not just guidelines;
2. Ban the privatization of municipal water systems;
3. Join Quebec City and the many European nations that have stopped the fluoridation of drinking water by banning water fluoridation and providing alternatives such as free toothpaste in schools and at dentists' offices with money saved;
4. Begin implementing ecological sanitation in all urban areas and housed livestock operations through the six essentials of sewer avoidance.
5. Implement low-cost, on-site, excreta recycling technologies giving primacy to dry, composting toilets in all provincial buildings and as a requirement of new developments."

Air

"Manitoba Greens, if elected, will work to:

1. Require all provincial government vehicles, lawn mowers, and other gas-powered machinery to meet the California emissions standards;
2. Promote active transportation options (walking, cycling, skateboarding, rollerblading, etc) as viable and safe forms of transportation;
3. Implement fuel taxes and other initiatives to limit the amount of driving done by Manitobans (polluter-pays principle) along with a basic driving allowance to avoid unduly burdening those who require a vehicle for working;
4. Begin the long process of redesigning our society for mixed-uses by instructing the City of Winnipeg to begin an overhaul of zoning by-laws based on principles of ecology and the New Urbanism (diversity, localization, and clustering of uses)."

Manitoba Greens, if elected, will work to:

1. Create a Toxics Use Reduction Act, to reduce and eliminate toxic chemicals in food and consumer products in Manitoba;
2. Replace the executive-selected Clean Environment Commission (CEC) with a new "Citizens Ecological Health Assembly" that would take over the environmental assessment (EA) of new and existing development projects (forestry operations, mining, hydroelectric dams, etc.) with an expanded

mandate to assess products and technologies that have the potential to cause serious or irreversible damage to human or ecosystem health. This body would:

- a. Be composed of twenty (20) randomly selected, yet representative citizens of Manitoba;
 - b. Be empowered to make environmental licensing decisions and undertake reviews of existing projects (e.g., hydroelectric dams), products (e.g., pesticides), and technologies (e.g., agricultural biotechnologies) in light of new evidence of harm or reasonable grounds for concern;
 - c. Have a well-funded technical advisory committee (TAC) working under it to provide advice on technical issues;
 - d. Allow ordinary Manitobans to influence and control economic development in Manitoba, instead of individuals hand-picked by the Premier and governing party
 - e. Operate following the precautionary principle and approach to policy- and decision-making (see www.sehn.org/precaution for more information);
 - f. Shift the burdens of proof and responsibility to proponents of projects, products, or technologies that have the potential to seriously or irreversibly harm human or ecosystem health to prove that they will not adversely affect human or ecosystem health and to back up their claims of safety with performance bonds, or other accountability mechanisms;
 - g. Broadly include the public in controlling the assessment process and making decisions;
 - h. Ensure that the goals of projects, products, and technologies being assessed would be the first thing considered and all alternative means of reaching these goals would be considered;
 - i. Integrate environmental assessment into development planning processes to ensure sustainability is considered from the outset of a proposal, not just at the latter stages.
3. Place a moratorium in Manitoba on the release of nanotechnological and nanobiotechnological (synthetic biology) products and materials pending a thorough, transparent assessment of same;
 4. Recall of all current commercially available products in Manitoba containing nano-particles especially, but not limited to consumer products;
 5. Place a moratorium in Manitoba on nanotechnological and anobiotechnological research pending the adoption of generally agreed or otherwise stringently safe protocols on such research;
 6. Ban agricultural biotechnology in Manitoba and require labelling of all products sold in Manitoba containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs);
 7. Strictly limit the sale of pesticides in Manitoba with an aim to phasing

them out completely;

8. Revoke the City of Winnipeg's pesticide licence for nuisance mosquito fogging until valid scientific evidence of effectiveness in reducing mosquito numbers without harming human or ecosystem health is produced;

9. Develop a precautionary principle-based process to assess products and technologies that have the potential to seriously or irreversibly harm human or ecosystem health (e.g., biotechnologies, nanotechnologies, etc);

10. Legislate extended producer responsibility (EPR) laws that require industry funded product stewardship boards for electronics, hazardous materials, and packaging;

11. Promote the reduction of hazardous waste by supporting closed-loop, cradle-to-cradle manufacturing processes through strategic tax-shifting and investments.

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A SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FUTURE

The Soft Path to Energy Security

"The soft path to energy looks first at what we are using the energy for and then uses appropriate types of energy to meet the particular needs. It is demand-side management with a conservation focus. The opposite of the soft path is the hard path, which emphasizes constantly looking for more and more supplies to meet every-growing demand."

"Manitoba Greens, if elected, will work to:

1. Promote the soft-path (demand-side management, not supply-side growth), to develop a provincial energy strategy;
2. Establish a Fossil-Fuel Independence Commission to examine ways to reduce and eventually eliminate our dependence on fossil fuels such as oil and natural gas;
3. Use principles of progressive taxation in developing conservation and fossil-fuel independence policies and programs to ensure that those of minor means are not adversely affected by sustainability initiatives;
4. Create vibrant and sustainable cities that require less and less resources to be shipped in and wastes shipped out."

Hydroelectricity and Aboriginal Peoples' Rights

"Manitoba Greens, if elected, will work to:

1. Put a moratorium on new hydro-electric dam construction in Manitoba pending a cumulative ecological assessment of the effects of hydro-electric generation in Manitoba;
2. Recognize inherent and Treaty rights of Aboriginal people in Manitoba with regards to the Northern Flood Agreement and sub-agreements and

the responsibilities of Manitoba (as a Crown subsidiary) to Aboriginal peoples;

3. Reconstitute Manitoba Hydro as “Manitoba Energy” with a focus not on producing more hydroelectricity but on conservation and the soft-path to energy (fitting types of energy to their use and emphasizing smaller, diverse, and localized energy sources such as wind, solar, micro-hydro, and others.”

Transportation and Fossil Fuels

“Manitoba Greens would adopt a province-wide transportation policy and fossil fuel independence policy to ensure that essential transportation needs and energy needs could be met from renewable sources, and to ensure that the costs of transitioning to renewable energy would be fairly shared among all Manitobans.

In urban centres Manitoba Greens would promote well-planned public transportation, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly streets, and other forms of low-energy transportation.

Manitoba Greens support reinvestment in railroads, light rail systems, and river transportation and would encourage investment in innovative transportation, such as airships, for northern and remote areas.

Manitoba Greens, if elected, will work to:

1. Develop a comprehensive transportation policy for the province based on localizing (instead of globalizing) production and consumption to reduce the need for transportation;
2. Mandate the use of fuel-efficient vehicles meeting the California emissions standards in government services;
3. Promote compact urban development compatible with mass transit and pedestrian travel;
4. Invest in rail transport;
5. Develop local food systems that greatly reduce the need for transporting our food;
6. Amend the Highway Traffic Act to allow greater use of and safety for human-powered forms of transportation;
7. Open an Active Transportation Office to promote active transportation in Manitoba’s communities through research, programs, and citizen-led initiatives;
8. Adjust MPI fees so that a proportion of fees is paid on a per kilometre basis with a basic exemption and differentiated rates for urban and rural drivers to ensure people are paying insurance in proportion to their chances of causing or being involved in an accident;
9. Create a meaningful fossil-fuel tax (i.e. carbon tax) with a basic exemption for drivers to ensure people are not penalized for basic driving

needs, but only for wasteful driving and gas-guzzling;

10. Entitle cyclists to an entire lane of traffic, rather than only the right hand side, on routes of speed limits lower than 70km/hour and construct segregated bike lanes with priority being given to the busiest streets and highways first;

11. Ensure the government purchased emission free, or at minimum the most fuel efficient, vehicles available;

12. Provide incentives for people, businesses, and municipalities to move towards more ecologically friendly transportation.”