

January 29, 2016

2016 B.C. Byelection Candidate Survey

Vancouver–Mount Pleasant and Coquitlam–Burke Mountain candidates' responses

Background

The Pembina Institute invited all candidates in the Vancouver–Mount Pleasant and Coquitlam–Burke Mountain byelections on February 2 to compete a brief survey on climate-change issues in British Columbia.

Candidates were asked to complete the survey and submit their responses by January 27.

Survey questions

B.C.'s Climate Leadership Team has delivered a package of recommendations to the provincial government on how to reduce carbon pollution, regain its climate leadership and maintain a strong economy. The team was composed of experts from the business, academic and environmental communities as well as representatives from the provincial government, First Nations and local governments.

1. Do you support these recommendations forming the basis for the province's forthcoming Climate Leadership Plan?
2. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to increase B.C.'s carbon tax by \$10 per tonne per year starting in 2018 (and use the revenue to lower the PST from 7% to 6%, protect low-income households, and implement measures to maintain the competitiveness of emissions-intensive industry)?
3. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to require all new buildings to be super energy-efficient (i.e. capable of meeting most of their energy needs with onsite renewable energy) within the next 10 years?
4. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to require an increasing percentage of light-duty vehicles sold in the province be zero-emission vehicles (rising to 30% by 2030)?

Survey results

Eight of the nine byelection candidates responded to the survey by the deadline:

Vancouver–Mount Pleasant candidates:

- Gavin Dew (BC Liberal Party)
- Pete Fry (BC Green Party)
- Jeremy Gustafson (YPP)
- Melanie Mark (BC NDP)

Coquitlam–Burke Mountain candidates:

- Paul Geddes (Libertarian)
- Joan Isaacs (BC Liberal Party)
- Joe Keithley (BC Green Party)
- Jodie Wickens (BC NDP)

Their survey responses appear on the following pages.

Gavin Dew

Electoral district: Vancouver–Mount Pleasant

Party: BC Liberal Party

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1. Do you support these recommendations forming the basis for the province's forthcoming Climate Leadership Plan?

Under the BC Liberals, our province is recognized as a global leader on climate action, including by organizations such as the World Bank, OECD and IMF. As the first jurisdiction in North America to introduce a broad-based, revenue-neutral carbon tax, and to have a carbon-neutral public sector, we are committed to positioning BC to take advantage of the emerging low carbon economy.

Premier Christy Clark tasked the Climate Leadership Team (CLT) with considering a broad range of actions to help move our climate agenda forward. The team delivered a series of thoughtful and innovative recommendations to achieve this. BC is set to deliver a Climate Leadership Plan this spring, but first we want to know what British Columbians think. A second round of public consultation began on January 25, 2016 and we encourage you to share your thoughts on all the CLT's recommendations.

In a time of global economic uncertainty, BC is projected by the Conference Board of Canada to lead the country this year in economic growth. BC's strength lies in our fiscal discipline, a Triple-A credit rating and the diversity of our economy, which ranges from tourism and film, to the resource sector and clean technology. We believe that building a strong Climate Leadership Plan that reflects BC values will allow us to take advantage of the low-carbon economy of the future, and the thousands of green jobs that goes with it.

2. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to increase B.C.'s carbon tax by \$10 per tonne per year starting in 2018 (and use the revenue to lower the PST from 7% to 6%, protect low-income households, and implement measures to maintain the competitiveness of emissions-intensive industry)?

Today, we are seeing increasing recognition across the world that carbon pricing is necessary to reduce GHG emissions. We are proud that the BC Liberal government introduced North America's first and most comprehensive carbon tax. Since introducing the carbon tax, we have proven that you can reduce carbon emissions and still make BC an attractive place to invest and do business. We've shown that you can grow a diverse economy and keep taxes low for British Columbians while taking effective steps on climate action.

Our carbon tax is held up across the world as the model to follow, receiving praise in the Economist, the New York Times and the LA Times as a leading environmental policy. As well, BC's carbon tax was described by World Bank President Jim Yong Kim as "one of the most powerful" examples of carbon pricing in 2014.

In 2013, we made a commitment to freeze the carbon tax at \$30 per tonne for five years. We wanted to allow other jurisdictions to catch up to BC to ensure our businesses were not at a competitive disadvantage. While BC remains a global leader, we are beginning to see others bringing in different forms of carbon pricing. After 2018, BC will consider increasing the revenue neutral carbon tax, provided that four conditions are in place:

- Revenue-neutrality must be maintained. Any increases must be offset with tax reductions elsewhere.
- An increased carbon tax must be affordable for British Columbia families, including low income and vulnerable people.
- There has to be a mechanism in place to keep industries that are emission-intensive and trade-exposed competitive with other jurisdictions.
- The competitiveness of BC businesses has to be maintained.

3. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team’s recommendation to require all new buildings to be super energy-efficient (i.e. capable of meeting most of their energy needs with onsite renewable energy) within the next 10 years?

Today, BC is leading the country in demand supply management and has one of the most ambitious conservation programs in North America. Yet, we believe there are significant opportunities to reduce the amount of energy that buildings need, while meeting the remaining energy needs with clean electricity.

That’s why we updated the building code for energy efficiency in large buildings, housing and small buildings. The new requirements broaden the focus for energy efficiency and set minimum efficiency standards. We have seen real results, with an overall 25% improvement in energy efficiency over previous codes.

It’s also critical that we embrace and invest in new ideas. The BC liberal government has invested \$2.25M in Innovative Clean Energy (ICE) funding to strengthen the home energy performance industry, advance technology options for net-zero/Passive House equivalent buildings and accelerate adoption of improved energy management practices in the industrial sector.

We know that buildings can be designed to consume 80 to 90% less energy than conventional construction using Passive House design principles. It is a system of construction that requires training not readily available in Canada. That’s why in February 2015, we provided a \$100,000 grant from the ICE fund to help sponsor and subsidize introductory or certification courses in Passive House design and construction for up to 200 qualified professionals.

Actions such as these have shown our commitment to reducing carbon pollution, and cutting energy and carbon costs in the built environment.

4. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team’s recommendation to require an increasing percentage of light-duty vehicles sold in the province be zero-emission vehicles (rising to 30% by 2030)?

At the recent COP 21 in Paris, Environment Minister Mary Polak announced that BC has signed on to the International Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Alliance. Members of this alliance will strive to make all new passenger vehicles ZEVs by no later than 2050.

Today, transportation represents over a third of BC total provincial greenhouse gas emissions, and nearly half the emissions by the average BC family. BC is a leader clean energy vehicles with the largest public charging infrastructure network in Canada and the second-highest per capita adoption of electric vehicles in Canada.

We are working with industry and all levels of government to help British Columbians save money on transportation costs and while reducing GHG emissions. The BC Liberal government introduced the Clean Energy Vehicle program in 2011 and has since committed \$25 million to make clean energy vehicles more affordable and reduce GHG emissions.

Pete Fry

Electoral district: Vancouver–Mount Pleasant

Party: BC Green Party

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1. Do you support these recommendations forming the basis for the province's forthcoming Climate Leadership Plan?

Yes, as the basis — of course I would hope that we can do even better.

2. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to increase B.C.'s carbon tax by \$10 per tonne per year starting in 2018 (and use the revenue to lower the PST from 7% to 6%, protect low-income households, and implement measures to maintain the competitiveness of emissions-intensive industry)?

I support the recommendation to increase carbon tax, and that has been a long standing BC Green plank (Party Leader, Andrew Weaver helped to develop BC's original carbon tax which was effectively dismantled by the Clark government). I'm not prepared to offer support for the idea of lowering the PST at this time. While I agree that consumption taxes are regressive when they hurt low-income households, I'm not sure reducing the PST is the most effective way to do so, nor should that decision result from the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation alone.

3. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to require all new buildings to be super energy-efficient (i.e. capable of meeting most of their energy needs with onsite renewable energy) within the next 10 years?

Yes, conditionally — given the crisis of housing unaffordability here and throughout the province, this recommendation would need to be in tandem with other measure and policies to protect residents from barriers to affordable housing.

4. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to require an increasing percentage of light-duty vehicles sold in the province be zero-emission vehicles (rising to 30% by 2030)?

Yes, on a related aside I would also like to see more consideration for personal ZEVs (like electric bicycles and compact cars) in the CEVforBC rebate program. I feel that in the urban context especially these are options that reduce congestion and are more widely attainable for a larger population.

Jeremy Gustafson

Electoral district: Vancouver–Mount Pleasant

Party: YPP

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1. Do you support these recommendations forming the basis for the province's forthcoming Climate Leadership Plan?

Yes, I support the recommendations forming a basis for the upcoming plans, with one concern, addressed in Question 2.

2. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to increase B.C.'s carbon tax by \$10 per tonne per year starting in 2018 (and use the revenue to lower the PST from 7% to 6%, protect low-income households, and implement measures to maintain the competitiveness of emissions-intensive industry)?

Yes to \$10/tonne per year after 2018, would prefer dropping PST only 0.5%, using other 0.5% to aggressively develop alternative clean energy sources (wind/solar/geothermal) starting in the communities currently relying on diesel generators.

3. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to require all new buildings to be super energy-efficient (i.e. capable of meeting most of their energy needs with onsite renewable energy) within the next 10 years?

Yes as long as there's no greenwashing and the buildings are actually efficient, designed for our specific environmental conditions.

4. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to require an increasing percentage of light-duty vehicles sold in the province be zero-emission vehicles (rising to 30% by 2030)?

Yes. Some of these recommendations were challenging to accept but ultimately I believe climate change is a real thing, we're causing it, there's never going to be a better time to deal with it, so let's get it done.

Melanie Mark

Electoral district: Vancouver–Mount Pleasant

Party: BC NDP

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1. Do you support these recommendations forming the basis for the province's forthcoming Climate Leadership Plan?

Yes. The Climate Leadership team has put forward excellent recommendations and I support them. The investments this plan calls for will help our province's economy in addition to taking important steps to tackle the climate crisis through reduced emissions and ending our dependence on fossil fuels. These investments will help create jobs, bring much improved transit, better housing and result in healthier communities.

The investments in public transit are particularly important for Vancouver–Mount Pleasant as they will help reduce the number of vehicle commuters travelling through Vancouver–Mount Pleasant's neighbourhoods.

2. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to increase B.C.'s carbon tax by \$10 per tonne per year starting in 2018 (and use the revenue to lower the PST from 7% to 6%, protect low-income households, and implement measures to maintain the competitiveness of emissions-intensive industry)?

Putting a price on carbon pollution must form the basis of an effective climate action plan. Christy Clark froze the carbon tax for five years and climate emissions spiked during that time. The BC NDP believes more needs to be done which is why our 2013 election platform proposed expanding the carbon tax to include pollution from the oil and gas sector, as well as using the carbon tax for increased investments in transit to reduce congestion and fight climate change.

An effective climate action plan needs to include measures to increase equality and economic competitiveness. The BC NDP caucus is investigating ways the carbon tax can be improved and enhanced. I want to bring my voice and experience as a life-long advocate to those discussions and look forward to the opportunity to do so.

3. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to require all new buildings to be super energy-efficient (i.e. capable of meeting most of their energy needs with onsite renewable energy) within the next 10 years?

Yes. By making housing super energy-efficient, reduce peoples' power bills will be reduced and we will fight climate change. As well, we will develop a new export market for our housing and forestry industries.

Christy Clark's Site C Dam is costing us over \$9 billion for power we don't need and the bill just keeps increasing. It is compromising our food security through flooding important farm land - protecting ALR land is a critical component of the fight against climate change. By investing in energy conservation and local power creation we will save billions, and create more jobs than under Christy Clark's plan.

Key components of the BC NDP's forward looking Power BC Plan are energy efficient retrofits of public buildings such as schools and hospitals which will be combined with seismic upgrades. I will fight to ensure that energy efficiency upgrades are integrated into seismic upgrades of Vancouver–Mount Pleasant schools.

4. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team’s recommendation to require an increasing percentage of light-duty vehicles sold in the province be zero-emission vehicles (rising to 30% by 2030)?

Yes. As a community that sees large numbers of commuters travelling its streets, a significant increase in zero-emission vehicles will bring direct benefits to Vancouver–Mount Pleasant as well as bringing benefits to the province as a whole.

Past governments successfully phased out leaded gasoline and they can take a leadership role in phasing out emission emitting vehicles. I believe that we need to work with industry and the community to ensure that we can set and achieve realistic goals for achieving this recommendation.

Paul Geddes

Electoral district: Coquitlam–Burke Mountain

Party: Libertarian

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1. Do you support these recommendations forming the basis for the province’s forthcoming Climate Leadership Plan?

No. The market price of energy best reflects consumer’s tastes and alternate possible uses of resources. Having a panel of “experts” trying to guess what is in our economy’s best interest short circuits the many interdependencies and possible innovations that the market can adjust to. This is the path of folly. Our economy is too complicated for “experts” to know where innovations will occur or where innovations produce net benefits. It would be better, as our economy grows and as individuals acquire the know-how to adapt technologies that best suit them, for alternate energy prices to be flexible. Unless there are unforeseen breakthroughs in battery technology, our standard of living is best maintained by listening to the lower market price for fossil fuels.

2. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team’s recommendation to increase B.C.’s carbon tax by \$10 per tonne per year starting in 2018 (and use the revenue to lower the PST from 7% to 6%, protect low-income households, and implement measures to maintain the competitiveness of emissions-intensive industry)?

Not really. I have no idea how a team of experts can figure out the correct price to fix any possible external costs imposed by carbon on our atmosphere. Any such price is clumsily based on speculative guesstimates of unknown unknowns. On the other hand, this type of tax is likely to do less damage than the horrible PST.

3. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team’s recommendation to require all new buildings to be super energy-efficient (i.e. capable of meeting most of their energy needs with onsite renewable energy) within the next 10 years?

Definitely not. Let builders choose what they think is best. Experts have been wrong about the future many times before. Instead of forcing a single solution on all of us (which may be wrong), it would be better to allow choice with the potential of learning from those who estimate correctly.

4. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team’s recommendation to require an increasing percentage of light-duty vehicles sold in the province be zero-emission vehicles (rising to 30% by 2030)?

Definitely not. Again, the future is uncertain. It is a “fatal conceit” to “know” what is best for everyone. We are safer when individuals are allowed to experiment and then learn rather than force zero-emission vehicles on us which may not be suitable for the future.

Joan Isaacs

Electoral district: Coquitlam–Burke Mountain

Party: BC Liberal Party

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That’s why we updated the building code for energy efficiency in large buildings, housing and small buildings. The new requirements broaden the focus for energy efficiency and set minimum efficiency standards. We have seen real results, with an overall 25% improvement in energy efficiency over previous codes.

It’s also critical that we embrace and invest in new ideas. The BC liberal government has invested \$2.25M in Innovative Clean Energy (ICE) funding to strengthen the home energy performance industry, advance technology options for net-zero/Passive House equivalent buildings and accelerate adoption of improved energy management practices in the industrial sector.

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4. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team’s recommendation to require an increasing percentage of light-duty vehicles sold in the province be zero-emission vehicles (rising to 30% by 2030)?

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Joe Keithley

Electoral district: Coquitlam–Burke Mountain

Party: BC Green Party

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1. Do you support these recommendations forming the basis for the province's forthcoming Climate Leadership Plan?

Yes.

2. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to increase B.C.'s carbon tax by \$10 per tonne per year starting in 2018 (and use the revenue to lower the PST from 7% to 6%, protect low-income households, and implement measures to maintain the competitiveness of emissions-intensive industry)?

The BC Green Party has led the way in supporting the increase in BC's carbon tax, so the answer is yes to the first part of the question. But now is not the time to reduce the sales tax, it would only spur a cut in services by Christy Clark and that would hurt lower income families the most. We should use the carbon tax increase to pay for transit improvements.

3. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to require all new buildings to be super energy-efficient (i.e. capable of meeting most of their energy needs with onsite renewable energy) within the next 10 years?

Yes.

4. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to require an increasing percentage of light-duty vehicles sold in the province be zero-emission vehicles (rising to 30% by 2030)?

The answer is yes and I would also propose that the BC government move to have all BC Gov. vehicles and all city and municipal vehicles running on renewable energy by 2025. The provincial government must take the lead, Christy Clark is doing nothing in this critical area.

Jodie Wickens

Electoral district: Coquitlam–Burke Mountain

Party: BC NDP

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1. Do you support these recommendations forming the basis for the province's forthcoming Climate Leadership Plan?

Yes. I want to thank the Climate Leadership team for their thoughtful and ambitious recommendations. The climate crisis is real, and it will take bold leadership from every one of us to tackle climate change, reduce emissions, and end our dependence on fossil fuels. The exciting thing is with these recommendations our province's economy will grow, diversify, and become more resilient with more jobs, better transit, better housing, and healthier communities. I support these recommendations forming the basis of BC's climate leadership plan.

2. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to increase B.C.'s carbon tax by \$10 per tonne per year starting in 2018 (and use the revenue to lower the PST from 7% to 6%, protect low-income households, and implement measures to maintain the competitiveness of emissions-intensive industry)?

I believe putting a price on carbon pollution, while implementing measures to increase equality, and economic competitiveness must form the basis of an effective climate action plan. Unlike Christy Clark who froze the carbon tax for five years while climate emissions spiked we believe more needs to be done. That is why in the 2013 election the BC NDP proposed expanding the carbon tax to include pollution from the oil and gas sector, as well as using the carbon tax for increased investments in transit to reduce congestion and fight climate change.

Over the coming months, the BC NDP caucus will be exploring all options to enhance and improve the carbon tax, which is an essential component to a successful climate action plan. I believe that I can bring an important voice to the caucus table on these discussions.

3. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to require all new buildings to be super energy-efficient (i.e. capable of meeting most of their energy needs with onsite renewable energy) within the next 10 years?

Yes. We can make housing super energy-efficient, reduce peoples' power bills, fight climate change, and develop a new export market for our housing and forestry industries if we embrace this recommendation. As Coquitlam–Burke Mountain grows and develops there will be exciting opportunities to bring energy efficiency to homes and public buildings.

Instead of building the \$9 billion and counting Site C Dam, we could invest in energy conservation and local power creation, save billions, and create more jobs in every corner of the province than under Christy Clark's plan. We'd also be protecting critical ALR farm land from the flood waters, food growing land critical to our food security in the time of climate change. That's the NDP Power BC plan.

4. Do you support the Climate Leadership Team's recommendation to require an increasing percentage of light-duty vehicles sold in the province be zero-emission vehicles (rising to 30% by 2030)?

Yes. While I support large scale investments in mass transit, I also believe zero-emission vehicles will help the climate fight in every corner of the province and will benefit Coquitlam–Burke Mountain residents. Just as government's phased out the use of lead in gasoline, we need to phase out climate change emissions from vehicles. A requirement for an increasing percentage of zero emission vehicles makes sense to me, though the exact percentage by what date needs to be worked out with industry, and the community to ensure we can achieve it.