

Alternatives North Federal Election Questionnaire

Michael McLeod (Liberal Party) Replies

QUESTION 1

Background: Emergency mobilizations require social cohesion, but inequality undermines such collaboration. The COVID-19 pandemic has further lifted the veil on the inequities in our society.

Question: How do you propose to tackle the climate crisis and these inequities at the same time? One required element of doing so is referred to as Just Transition – what is the role of the federal government in ensuring no one is left behind in the grand decarbonization transition before us?

- It is essential that we put people first in addressing the climate crisis, and that means including everyone as we move forward with our plan. A re-elected Liberal government will bring forward Just Transition legislation, guided by the feedback we receive from workers, unions, Indigenous peoples, communities, and provinces and territories.
- In recognizing that communities in primarily fossil fuel sector regions will need to be at the centre of a Just Transition, we will establish a \$2 billion Futures Fund for Alberta, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador that will be designed in collaboration with local workers, unions, educational institutions, environmental groups, investors, and Indigenous peoples who know their communities best. We will support local and regional economic diversification and specific place-based strategies.
- Our government will also table legislation to require the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to examine the link between race, socio-economic status, and exposure to environmental risk, and develop a strategy to address environmental justice.
- As well we will identify and prioritize the clean-up of contaminated sites in areas where Indigenous, racialized, and low-income Canadians live. With several of these sites located in the Northwest Territories, I know this will be of specific interest to many Northerners.

QUESTION 2

Background: The path forward has to be one of true cooperation and partnership, and one that honours and respects Indigenous title and rights. We need a path forward that seeks to make right the injustices of the past and fundamentally breaks with the colonial practices that have marked so much of our politics and economic development for centuries.

Question: What are you hearing from Indigenous communities about the climate crisis? How can you and the federal government walk a path forward on climate that respects and honours Indigenous title and rights?

- Here in the North, our Indigenous communities are on the front lines of climate change, and experiencing it firsthand. It is affecting the safety of their homes and communities, their food security, and their health.
- Across the NWT, Indigenous peoples are eager to protect their land and waters from the risks of climate change, and our government has worked with them to support their conservation efforts.
- From the Marine Protected Area in Darnley Bay, to the Edézhíe Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area, and Thaidene Nëné National Park Reserve and beyond, we've partnered with Indigenous communities as part of our goal to protect 25% of Canada's lands and waters by 2025 and 30% of each by 2030.
- We were also the government that launched the Indigenous Guardians pilot, which has been incredibly successful in the Northwest Territories and across Canada. We are committed to helping the program grow by investing in new Guardians projects and networks.

QUESTION 3

Background: During the COVID-19 pandemic, our governments committed to spending what it takes to ensure the safety of our citizens. According to climate and economy experts, we need to spend 2% of our GDP on climate action and green infrastructure and another 2% on just transition and social infrastructure to ensure no one is left behind. That would be about \$80 billion annually.

Question: Given the urgency of the climate emergency, are you prepared to spend what it takes to contribute to the global effort to avoid the worst of the climate crisis?

- In order to meet our ambitious climate targets, including a net-zero electricity system by 2035, I am ready to ensure the necessary investments are made here in the Northwest Territories.
- This will require ambitious investments that build on our clean energy record in the NWT, which includes transmission lines to Fort Providence and Kakisa, the wind project in Inuvik, and the expansion of community-led solar and biomass opportunities.
- To help mitigate the effects of climate change, we introduced the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund, which has already invested \$64 million into NWT projects in Yellowknife, Inuvik, Hay River, and in the Arctic coastal communities. As we move forward more projects like these will be needed to address the increased risks posed to residents by flooding, permafrost melting, and other cli-

mate change-related threats.

QUESTION 4

Background: During World War Two, in order to meet the military production and social needs of its population, Canada created 28 new crown corporations. Within two years, Canada increased manufacturing of aircraft 25 fold. Before the war, shipbuilders numbered only 2000, at the end of the war, there were 30,000 shipbuilders.

Question: Given the scaling up that is necessary to combat the climate crisis, how can the federal government create new institutions to get the job done, or leverage existing institutions?

- Our government has been preparing for the launch of a new Canada Water Agency in 2022, which will work with partners to safeguard our freshwater resources for generations to come, including by supporting provinces, territories, and Indigenous partners, in developing and updating river basin and large watershed agreements. Through it we will implement a strengthened Freshwater Action Plan, including an historic investment of \$1 billion over 10 years. This plan will provide essential funding to protect and restore large lakes and river systems, starting the Mackenzie River Basin and similar systems.
- We will also work with international partners to establish a NATO Centre of Excellence on Climate and Security in Canada, to ensure that Canada and its allies are equipped to respond to threats posed by climate change.
- We will also revive the Law Commission of Canada so it can provide independent legal advice for reforms needed on the complex legal issues Canadians face, such as issues around climate change and establishing a new relationship with Indigenous peoples.

QUESTION 5

Background: The pandemic has seen our governments issue health orders and take strong actions to shut down non-essential parts of the economy when needed. When it comes to the climate emergency, however, actions taken to date have been almost entirely voluntary. We encourage change. We incentivize change. We offer rebates. We send price signals. But what we have decidedly not done is require change. We need to set clear, near-term dates by which certain things will be required. For example, we should mandate that all new buildings will not be permitted to use natural gas or other fossil fuels for heating as of 2023.

Question: Are you prepared to switch from incentive-based and voluntary policies to mandatory measures to combat the climate crisis? What would those mandatory measures be?

- We will need to use every tool in the toolbox in the fight against climate change. That includes creating the incentives necessary so that climate action is more

attractive and affordable to Canadians. When we help Canadians make their homes more energy efficient and make zero-emission vehicles more accessible, we are taking significant steps to decarbonize our economy. To "switch" away from offering these incentives will only make climate action less realistic.

- What is needed is an approach that combines these incentives with strong, enforceable measures and targets. That includes our carbon pollution pricing measures and our legally-binding 5 year national emission targets on the path to net-zero by 2050. We will also Accelerate our G20 commitment to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies from 2025 to 2023.

QUESTION 6

Background: The leaders we remember best from the Second World War were outstanding communicators and orators who walked a careful line. They were forthright about the gravity of the crisis, yet still managed to impart hope. Similarly, that's how our present governments have modelled emergency communication throughout the pandemic. We receive daily press briefings. We hear regularly from public health officials. The media has taken seriously its duty to provide the necessary information on a daily basis. Government leaders and the media have listened to science and health experts, and have acted accordingly.

Question: Are you prepared to implement emergency-level communications about the climate emergency? What does that look like for you?

- I fully support having a greater flow of communication from the federal government to Canadians when it comes to climate change information. Given the severity of the threat of climate change, ensuring Canadians have access to regular updates on the actions our government is taking on this file is important.