

3 October 2019

Dear Chief Gloade and Chief Sabattis,

Thank you for writing, and for providing us with the opportunity to speak to issues important to First Nations people in Atlantic Canada. We appreciate your advocacy. Please find our responses below.

Best regards,

Julia Redmond
Policy Researcher
Green Party of Canada

1. Please outline your party's strategy to make measurable investments with detailed outcomes to close the socio-economic gaps in funding and basic services for First Nations in Atlantic Canada?

Green Party social policies will ensure robust supports for all Canadians, including and with particular attention to Indigenous peoples, in order to address socio-economic inequality.

Central to our social policies is the implementation of a Guaranteed Liveable Income to replace the current array of income supports. This program will set a “liveable” income level according to the cost of living in different regions. This is one step in addressing the systemic problem of poverty, and its exacerbation by the ongoing legacy of colonialism.

We recognize the need for reform of the Canadian justice system in order to solve social problems, rather than exacerbating cycles of violence and colonialism. With this in mind, the Green Party will eliminate mandatory minimum sentencing, giving courts more latitude to determine appropriate sentences based on the circumstances of each case, consistent with the existing Gladue and Ipeelee principles. We will re-invest in prisoner rehabilitation, in particular for Indigenous peoples, and we will incorporate more restorative justice practices where appropriate. These reforms can address some of the systemic problems that worsen socio-economic gaps.

We will appoint a federal Children's Advocate, who will speak out on issues that often go otherwise unnoticed, such as the disproportionately large number of Indigenous children in foster care. A Green government will ensure that every First Nations, Métis, and Inuit child in Canada, including those without Indian status and/or who are living off-reserve, has access to quality educational opportunities

based on the expressed cultural, political and social priorities of Indigenous governments, following meaningful consultation.

All of these policies will be developed through collaboration among all orders of government, including provincial, territorial, municipal, and Indigenous governments. The formal mechanism for this collaboration is discussed in more detail below.

2. Many First Nations communities in Atlantic Canada do not have access to safe drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. Please outline your party's plan to ensure all communities meet the same, safe drinking water standards as non-First Nations communities across Canada? Will your party support the implementation of an Atlantic First Nations Water Authority?

Greens are committed to ending drinking water and boil water advisories by investing in and upgrading critical infrastructure to ensure safe water access in every community. Safe drinking water is a right and the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority has a well developed plan to provide clean water to an on-reserve population in Atlantic Canada who do not currently have it. Funding this First Nation-led solution is a no-brainer.

We recognize that solutions will not necessarily be the same across Canada. There are over 600 Indigenous communities and they are not homogenous. They vary widely in population, geography, culture, governance and resources. One top-down approach will not address the issue.

The federal government must provide more assistance in clearing the bureaucratic barriers to initial funding as well as a commitment to providing ongoing operation and maintenance funding.

3. What specific measures and strategy will be implemented to ensure a young First Nations workforce can participate in all aspects of the Atlantic economy?

Greens' commitment to youth means we will work towards removing obstacles for young people early in their careers. While too many students right now are graduating from university with significant debt, a Green government will make tuition free and forgive the federal portion of existing government student loans. Removing this financial burden will ease participation in the economy for all.

We will also remove the two percent cap on increases in education funding for Indigenous students, which will support Indigenous students at all stages of education.

A Green government will invest in jobs for youth. We will enhance the federal Youth Employment and Skills Strategy by creating a Community and Environment Service Corps, providing \$1 billion annually

to municipalities to hire Canadian youth. Young First Nations people in the Atlantic region can benefit from increased opportunities in all communities to get quality work experience and start their careers.

4. How will your party support and implement the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples?

As a party dedicated to Indigenous rights, we share your disappointment that Bill C-262 ultimately did not become law, despite the efforts of passionate legislators. The Green Party strongly supported the bill in the House of Commons, with Green Party leader Elizabeth May acting as a joint seconder.

Green Party policy is shaped around meeting our profound commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. We are committed to enacting legislation to enshrine UNDRIP in law, and fully embrace all 46 articles of the Declaration. A Green government will remove all obstacles within the judicial, legislative and executive branches of government to wholly implement UNDRIP.

5. How will you support the full implementation of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action?

Greens take very seriously the responsibility to implement the Calls to Action of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC). These Calls to Action form a roadmap for where the federal government must go in order to change the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Crown.

They underpin all of our policies and inform our funding choices. We have committed additional funding for programs across subject areas, such as indigenous language revitalization, implementing Jordan's principle for healthcare matters, and reforming treaty and self-government negotiations to better recognize the diversity of governance models and to avoid the extinguishment of Indigenous title and rights. The full implementation of UNDRIP, mentioned above, also affects many of these areas.

Some of the Calls to Actions are outside the scope of the federal government. For these, we look forward to working with other orders of government, civil society organizations, media, businesses, and the Canadian public to live up to the responsibility set out by the TRC.

6. Will your party support the development and implementation of a First Nations designed & driven Atlantic First Nations Housing Strategy?

Green Members of Parliament (MPs) will appoint a Minister of Housing to strengthen the National Housing Strategy to effectively address the specific affordable housing needs across the country. A Green government will support the model of collaborative federalism on this and other higher order

policy priorities, working with and ensuring fair treatment for provinces, territories, municipalities and Indigenous Peoples by establishing a Council of Canadian Governments. It would include the federal government, provincial/territorial governments, representatives of the local order of government with large city mayors and smaller and rural municipalities, and Indigenous (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) governments. This will ensure Canadians in urban, rural and northern Indigenous communities will receive funding and support allocation based on their unique needs.

We believe that an Atlantic First Nations Housing Strategy is an initiative worth pursuing and would be keen to engage with Indigenous communities on the idea.

7. How will your party support a Nation to Nation based relationship with First Nations in Atlantic?

A Green government will welcome a genuine nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples in Canada that is truly grounded in the UNDRIP doctrine of free, prior and informed consent.

We will support the model of collaborative federalism, working with and ensuring fair treatment for all orders of government by establishing a Council of Canadian Governments to set higher order policy priorities, with the goal of policy coherence to optimize public spending. It would include the federal government, provincial/territorial governments, representatives of the local order of government with large city mayors and smaller and rural municipalities, and Indigenous (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) governments.

This model will recognize the right of Indigenous peoples to have a seat at the table as equal partners. First Nations need to be treated like the nations they are in order for us to move forward together in the spirit of reconciliation.

8. What will be your party's strategy to address the implications of climate change on First Nations communities?

Our climate plan, Mission: Possible, will help all communities because of the focus on equality and justice. Our fight against climate change is urgent, but provides an opportunity to address the varied needs of communities across the country.

We recognize the importance of traditional knowledge of Indigenous peoples in fighting climate change. Indigenous people have been stewards of these lands since time immemorial, and for us to move forward we must work together to share our knowledge to keep the environment clean. With this in mind, a Green government will commit \$100 million annually over the next four years to create

Indigenous-led protected areas and conservation areas, financially supporting Indigenous stewardship work.

We will invest in climate-proofing essential infrastructure, prioritizing upgrades to drinking water and wastewater systems to protect against flooding, droughts, and contamination. Our climate plan also involves a shift away from fossil fuel production, and we will implement a just transition program for people employed in the industry. This will include labour supports, retraining and apprenticeship programs, and additional infrastructure funding in affected communities.

9. How will your party support a new fiscal relationship between First Nations and Canada including provinces?

Building on the renewed cooperation enhanced by the Council of Canadian Governments, a Green government will establish a new fiscal relationship with First Nations in which First Nations are treated as equal partners and national governments in their own right.

We aim to do this by allocating appropriate funding for First Nations economic development, particularly when it comes to infrastructure. We will also involve First Nations businesses and individuals in federal government procurement and employment opportunities.

10. What measures will be taken to implement all recommendations made by the National Inquiry on Murdered & Missing Indigenous Women & Girls?

A Green government will implement all recommendations of the Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), which requires engagement across policy areas. We will work with Indigenous organizations to develop a national action plan to end violence against women, girls, and gender-diverse people. This will be complemented by an increase in access to shelters through increased investment in the Shelter Enhancement Program, providing more than 2,100 new and renovated spaces in first-stage shelters and hundreds of spaces in transition houses. Our national transportation strategy will also specifically address the need for affordable and accessible transit, as recommended in the MMIWG report.

We recognize that while a firm commitment is required from any government, policy solutions need to be developed collaboratively. We look forward to working with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people, whether on or off reserve, status or non-status, to make nationwide improvements.