

100 Debates On The Environment – NL Edition!

100 Debates on the Environment is a national initiative to hold non-partisan all-candidates debates on the environment in 100 ridings across Canada on October 3rd. The initiative now includes debates in over 120 ridings and 3 in Newfoundland! The debates will demonstrate to politicians what the polls and nation-wide climate action are indicating: the environment is front and centre this election and voters are paying attention. The 100 Debates project aims to create a wave of national discussion on some of the most challenging environmental questions facing ridings across the country.

Questions for this debate have been prepared by GreenPAC (marked by *), a non-partisan, non-profit organization working to elect and support environmental leaders of all major parties running for office, and locally with Social Justice Co-operative NL, Too Big To Ignore, Fishing For Success, and several partners at Memorial University, including the Department of Political Science and Department of Sociology (marked by **).

Candidates at the St. John's East and Avalon debate will be asked the following questions at the debates but we want to hear from those who do not have a chance to engage in this exciting event! **We invite all candidates across the province to respond to these questions by video or text by Oct 3** using the hashtag #100Debates and by emailing socialjusticecoopnl@gmail.com to compile responses.

Question 1* *Greenhouse Gas Emissions & Climate Action*

Around the world, we are seeing inspiring examples of leadership to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution and accelerate the shift to a green economy. At the same time, we are seeing a ramp-up of the effects of climate change. We see extreme weather events across the country, including wildfires, flooding, and droughts. These are causing anxiety and worry, given their enormous financial and environmental impact.

Per person, Canadians produce the most GHG pollution of all G20 industrialized nations, including the United States – nearly three times the G20 average and eight tonnes per person. What will you do as an MP to ensure Canada does its share to ensure we have a safe climate? What are the key elements of an action plan that you will advocate for to ensure Canada meets its international obligations to reduce GHG pollution?

Question 2** *Oil & Gas*

In the past year, three spills have let 264,000 litres of oil into our oceans. CEO Scott Tessier of the C-NLOPB, our offshore regulator, has deemed 2018 “a disappointment.” In addition to spill impacts, the seismic blasts used in offshore oil exploration have raised environmental concerns over their effect on fish and plankton.

What will you do to ensure that ongoing production, in existing oilfields, is pursued in a safe and environmentally responsible manner? Just as importantly, how will you approach potential new

exploration and development proposals, given concerns over the sustainability of further fossil fuel extraction in our carbon-constrained world?

Question 3** *Oil & Gas / Fisheries*

There has been criticism of the province's regulator for opening bids for oil and gas exploration in marine refuges, like the Northeast Newfoundland Slope, and on fishing grounds that harvesters and communities depend on for a living. This seems opposed to the spirit of Bill C-68, which aims to ensure greater protections for fish and marine habitat, as well as for fisheries and coastal communities.

As Member of Parliament, how will you ensure the sustainability of our fisheries and fishing-dependent communities in a province that seems to have doubled down on oil extraction?

Question 4** *Fisheries*

Recently, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released their report on oceans in a changing climate, concluding "the global ocean has warmed unabated since 1970 and has taken up 90 percent of the excess heat." Marine heatwaves happen twice as often as they did in 1982 and have doubled in intensity. Since 1993, the rate of ocean warming has doubled.

These changes "are already affecting the distribution and decreases in their abundance and fisheries catch potential due to climate change are projected to affect income, livelihoods, and food security of marine resource-dependent communities. ... Long-term loss and degradation of marine ecosystems compromise the ocean's role in cultural, recreational, and intrinsic values important for human identity and well-being."

Given the risks that climate change poses to our ocean ecosystem, what actions will you take to protect our fisheries and those who depend on them?

Question 5** *Urban Transit*

In Newfoundland & Labrador, transportation accounts for 35 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions, and between 2009 and 2016, per-household emissions increased by 40 percent. Statistics Canada's most recent figures show that, overall, 12 percent of Canadians take public transit to work, but only 3 percent of Newfoundlanders & Labradorians do. Regionally, we still lag behind: in Halifax, 12 percent commute using public transit, while in St. John's only 3 percent do.

What actions would you take as MP to shift modes of transportation away from private vehicles?

Question 6* *Water*

Many Canadians know that our country has the longest coastline in the world. Less well-known is that Canada is home to roughly half the world's lakes, an equivalent volume of the world's fresh water, and roughly one quarter of the world's wetlands.

Canadians are witnessing the impact that industrial development and climate change is having on our water. We are seeing a growing number of pollution hotspots, and the Insurance Bureau of Canada has noted that climate change, as well as the historic loss of wetlands across Canada to industrial development, has led to a 250 percent increase in flooding over the past two decades, as well as a reduction in water quality and wildlife habitat.

What can the federal government do to work with different actors, like municipalities, to reduce both water pollution and the risk of flood events, which have been aggravated by industrial development and climate change?

Question 7* *Wilderness Conservation*

Asked about what they most love about our country, Canadians point first to natural beauty, wildlife and spectacular wilderness areas. Yet we are falling below our international commitments to protect these spaces, and our parks and other protected areas are not funded at the level needed to conserve the diverse plants and animals that live there. A recent study shows that 50% of Canadian wildlife species are in decline.

Ninety-four percent of Canadians value the emotional and physical benefits of spending time in nature. However, 82 percent say that they're concerned that future generations won't have close or easy access to nature. What will you do protect the quality and quantity of wilderness in Canada?

Question 8* *Pollution & Toxic Substances*

Over the last several decades, Canada has made big strides to improve the health of Canadians and our environment by regulating toxic substances. Legal limits on lead in gasoline, restricting chemicals like DDT and ozone-depleting substances, the Canada-US acid rain agreement, and the phase-out of coal-fired electricity have had an enormous positive impact on the health of Canadians and our environment, saving lives, preventing illnesses, and saving billions of dollars in avoided health care costs.

However, air pollution is still the leading environmental cause of death and illness in Canada, and Canada remains the only western industrialized nation without legally binding, national air pollution standards.

In addition, our laws and regulations have not kept pace with emerging threats from newer toxic substances in our environment, including from everyday consumer products. Many of these products have demonstrated links to cancer, genetic damage, developmental problems, chronic illness and many other health effects. These effects are often more severe for children and other vulnerable populations.

Our overarching toxics law, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, has not been significantly strengthened in 20 years. What will you do to ensure that Canadians are better protected from the health and environmental impacts of toxic substances?