

September 26, 2008

The Honourable Floyd Roland
Premier of the Northwest Territories
P.O. Box 1320
Yellowknife NT X1A 2L9

Dear Premier Roland:

Thank you for the opportunity to elaborate on the Green Party's priorities concerning the Northwest Territories. The Green Party of Canada is committed to advancing the following five Northern Priorities:

1. Settlement of outstanding aboriginal rights
2. Northern control of Northern resources and a fair share of resource revenues
3. A regulatory regime that allows responsible development
4. A tax regime that encourages people to live and work in the North
5. Development of renewable energy

In accordance with these priorities, I would approach the development, cost of living and governance issues raised in your questions with a coherent vision of the North's future. I believe by actively pursuing these Northern Priorities with the GNWT and other stakeholders, the Green Party can make Northerners full partners in Canada.

Do you and your party support the Mackenzie Gas Project and how will you enable the project to proceed in a timely manner?

The Green Party is neither pro nor anti development but believes in applying a triple-bottom-line analysis to any resource development project. Projects whose economic, social and environmental benefits outweigh the economic, social and environmental costs should be pursued; projects whose costs outweigh the benefits should either be adjusted or avoided.

When it comes to applying the triple bottom line analysis to the MGP, there are several question marks that need addressing:

- The proposed pipeline is going through non-settled land claim areas,
- A fair share of resource revenues between the federal, territorial and aboriginal governments has not been found

- The regulatory agencies are overwhelmed and under-supported and require additional time to review the project.
- There are several environmental concerns that I don't believe have been properly addressed, such as disturbance of protected wildlife sanctuaries, migratory patterns and traditional hunting areas. I am also concerned by the potential subsidence of sensitive ecological areas and lack of proven technology for pipelines in Northern conditions.

Furthermore, how will you and your party ensure Northerners participate fully in opportunities for employment, training and business involvement resulting from NWT resource development?

By pushing for the settlement of outstanding aboriginal rights, advocating for the local control of Northern resources and supporting a tax regime that encourages people to live and work in the North, the Green Party believes that Northerners will be given the best opportunity to maximize the benefits of responsible resource development.

What steps will your party take to make investments in critical infrastructure in the NWT a reality?

Territorial and aboriginal governments need stable and predictable funding so that they can invest in critical infrastructure.

The Green Party will advocate a fair share of resource revenues between the federal, territorial and aboriginal governments that will allow for the long-term planning and investment of critical infrastructure.

The Green Party will continue the gas tax commitment as envisioned by the previous governments to allow for stable and predictable funding. As well, the Green Party will liberate billions of dollars a year through RRSP deductions for municipal bonds.

The Green Party will create a new pool of municipal infrastructure funding by changing tax rules to create a Municipal Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) bond that can be held in RRSPs and self-directed RRSPs.

This would be supplemented by allocating an additional portion of the federal gasoline tax directly to the provinces and territories for transfer to municipalities.

What are you and your party intending to do in support of the construction of a Mackenzie Valley Highway?

From the information currently available, I believe that a Mackenzie Valley Highway would provide tremendous economic, social and environmental benefits to the North.

Until Northerners are provided with a fair share of the resource revenues the Federal Government cannot expect the North to shoulder the economic, social and environmental costs of development. The Green Party would therefore support any infrastructure investment that met the triple bottom line analysis outlined above.

What are you and your party willing to do in support of developing the NWT's huge hydroelectric potential?

The Green Party is a strong advocate for hydroelectric power. We believe it, along with wind, solar, ocean and biomass are essential renewable energies for Canada to use instead of harmful coal, oil, and nuclear energies. We will work together with the hydroelectric industry to ensure that it is the main source of energy in Canada and the NWT.

To promote NWT-specific projects, the Green Party will promote its Northern Priorities, including Northern control of land and resources, a regulatory regime that promotes responsible development, and settlement of aboriginal rights issues.

Given the long-term nature of hydro-electric development, in the short to medium term, what is your party intending to do to advance the development of alternative energy sources, such as wind, biomass and geothermal?

Given the North's reliance on diesel fuel, I believe it's critical that investment is made in alternative energy sources to ensure the long-term economic prospects of the North.

If we assume continued power production from the large hydro plants (67 GW), we need to replace all of the coal, oil, natural gas and nuclear power generation capacity (120 minus 67 GW = 53 GW or, in round figures 60 GW) with renewables. This becomes the goal for power generation by renewables by 2040.

This can be achieved by wind (25 GW), solar (20 GW), tidal/wave (10 GW) and other renewables (5 GW). We will work with the provinces and territories to phase out all power generation from coal, gas and nuclear energy, creating a generating gap of 90 GW firm power equivalent that needs to be filled. Since wind energy generates power 30% of the time, solar 20% of the time, and other renewables 30 – 50% of the time, the planned capacities from renewables need to be larger than capacities from firm power generation.

We will work with Canada's wind industry to achieve CANWEA's (Canadian Wind Energy Association) goal of 10 GW of wind by 2015. Add further goals of 20 GW by 2025, 35 GW by 2030, and 50 GW by 2040. This is the equivalent of 17 GW of firm power.

The Greens will retain the current 1 cent/kWh support for wind energy. Increase the support to 2 cents/kWh for any province adopting the Advanced Renewables Tariffs (ART) (also known as Feed Laws, Standard Offer Contract) as in Europe with prices that deliver a return on investment sufficient to entice investors), net metering, peak power pricing, and plans for renewable grid extensions. (Call it ART Plus.)

We will work with the solar industry to establish a goal for Canada to install 25 GW of solar PV by 2040. [33 million people = 10 million homes. Each home with a 2 kW system = 20 GW. 50% homes with 2 kW = 10 GW + other buildings 15 GW = 25 GW.] Set interim goals: 1 million solar homes by 2020. 3 million by 2030. 5 million by 2040. This is equivalent to 5 GW of firm power.

We will work with renewable energy industries to produce 12 GW of ocean energy by 2040 (40 GW potential), and to set specific goals for production of biomass, and micro hydro energy.

Finally, the Greens will work with the geothermal energy industry and the oil industry (for their drilling expertise) in a well-funded R & D program to develop Enhanced Geothermal Systems (EGS), drilling down to 10 km to extract 25 GW of power by 2040. In January 2007 a major MIT study (*The Future of Geothermal Energy*) reported that the USA's extractable EGS reservoirs contained 2,000 times more primary energy than the USA uses yearly, and that with technology improvements, this could be expanded 10-fold. The resulting energy would have an energy cost in the 6-9 cents kWh range.

What concrete steps will you and your party take to help mitigate the high cost of living in the NWT?

The cost and variable price of energy is one of the main drivers in the NWT's high cost of living; therefore, moving away from the North's reliance on diesel fuel will be a huge step toward mitigating the cost of living in the NWT.

The Green Party understands that the people of the NWT would be some of the most impacted by a carbon tax. The Green Party understands that in the short term, it is unfair to punish individuals that have no viable alternative to non-renewable energy.

By simultaneously introducing carbon taxes, income tax deductions and payroll tax deductions, the Green Party will mitigate the immediate negative effects of a carbon tax but provide incentives to become more energy efficient and reduce reliance on non-renewable energy sources.

The Green Party has also developed a "carbon tax rebate" that mirrors the current GST credit. Northern Canadians will be one of the groups that will receive such a rebate which will help Canadians disproportionately affected by the higher cost of a carbon tax.

How will you and your party help to address the critical shortage of social and affordable housing in the NWT?

The Green Party believes it is the right of every Canadian to have affordable, safe and secure housing. It enhances people's health, dignity and life opportunities. It is an essential prerequisite to an equitable society. The Green Party supports the delivery of social housing dollars to provincial, territorial and municipal governments through the traditional vehicle of the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). The funding for social housing needs to be dramatically increased. CMHC programs must be directed to the communities most in need and fast-tracked to provide homes for people at risk. The housing provided must be designed with energy conservation in mind.

Universal housing will alleviate poverty. Universal housing provides a basis for employment, schooling, community services and contacts. The development and delivery of adequate universal housing and emergency accommodation should be a high priority.

We will create a National Affordable Housing Program that provides sufficient funds annually through the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to community-based agencies across Canada to:

- Build new subsidized affordable homes: 20,000 new and 10,000 rehabilitated affordable units per year for the next ten years using capital grants and changes in tax and mortgage insurance regulations;
- Provide rent supplements or shelter assistance for an additional 40,000 low-income households per year, for ten years;
- Provide credit and loan guarantees to non-profit housing organizations and cooperatives for the building and restoration of quality, energy-efficient housing for seniors, people with special needs, and low-income families;
- Subsidize private developers to include a percentage of affordable housing in their housing projects;
- Extend provisions in the Income Tax Act to offer tax incentives to build affordable, healthy, energy-efficient, multi-unit rental housing and to include tax credits for gifts of lands, or of land and buildings, to community land trusts to provide affordable housing; and,
- Dedicate funding to the co-operative housing sector to enable more new affordable housing projects to proceed.

How will you and your party ensure that the GNWT has the ability to develop the Northern economy for the future of Northern residents and Canadians through a finalized devolution agreement?

The Green Party proposes to make Canada a true functioning Confederation in which the provinces and territories are more empowered and financed to meet the needs of their communities. All parts of Canada must work together as partners, in the true spirit of confederation, and work to solve their fiscal and cultural imbalances. Federal powers to regulate highest standards of environment, health and labour standards must be strengthened as funding and implementation moves to more local implementation. As well, we will rebalance the funding formula to ensure fairness across regions, provinces and territories.

What will you and your party do to ensure that Canada meets its obligations under existing land, resource and self-government agreements in the NWT?

The Green Party will fully implement the recommendations of the 1996 Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, thereby embarking on true nation-to-nation negotiations on a full range of outstanding legal issues and land claims. As well, we will support the restoration of the \$5.1 billion commitment of the landmark Kelowna Accord reached between federal and provincial, territorial and First Nations governments in Canada in 2005, with the proviso that the ensuing programs do not lead to greater infringement on aboriginal and treaty rights.

What will you and your party do to ensure that emerging self-governments will have the necessary resources to fully implement their self-government agreements?

We will honour Canada's fiduciary responsibility and the aboriginal rights, treaty rights and other rights of aboriginal peoples, including their inherent rights of self-government. As well, the Greens will review the existing federal policy on self-government, in consultation with aboriginal representatives, to ensure that it is achieving the goals of aboriginal peoples.

Finally, we will ensure that negotiations of treaties and self-government are not based on extinguishment of aboriginal title and rights and assimilation, but on reconciliation of rights and title, and that negotiations recognize the diversity of traditional self-governance.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to call me at (867) 445-7264.

Sincerely,

Sam Gamble
Green Party candidate
Western Arctic riding

c. Ms. Elizabeth May, Leader of the Green Party of Canada