

October 2, 2008

RE: Questionnaire

Attached please find the response of Canada's New Democrats to your 2008 Election questionnaire. It is the policy of our party to respond on behalf of all New Democrat candidates.

To find out more, we encourage you to consult: www.ndp.ca

Thank you for your interest in the views of Canada's New Democrats on the critical issues facing Canadians.

We appreciate your efforts to help voters make an informed decision on voting day.

Sincerely,



Jack Layton
Leader of Canada's New Democrats

Public Service Alliance of Canada – Federal Political Party Questionnaire

Questions

An advocate not just for our membership but for all Canadians, the PSAC is working to achieve a compassionate and inclusive society that is free of sexism, racism, homophobia and all other forms of discrimination. We are proud of our commitment to the wider community as expressed through our vigorous defence of access to quality public services across the country. The following questions reflect this commitment.

1. Transparency and Government Spending

a) *Will your party commit to full transparency on any expenditure reviews it undertakes?*

Yes

b) *Will your party commit to a transparent review of all government contracting?*

Yes

c) *In the event of a federal deficit, will your party cut public spending?*

Jack Layton and the New Democrats have presented a fully costed and prudent platform which will result in balanced federal budgets. Our new spending commitments are funded in large part by reversing the deep cuts to corporate income taxes promised by the Conservatives and Liberals. Our platform does not propose cuts to existing public services and, indeed, promises major new investments in federal public services. We note that the Liberal platform includes \$12 Billion in spending cuts, on top of the cuts already imposed by the Conservatives.

2. Health Care

a) Many people in Canada's north are referred south for specialist care and advanced treatment. What specific steps will your party take to improve health care access for remote communities and support publicly delivered health care services?

New Democrats will ensure that Northerners have timely access to primary care professionals– usually within 24 hours. We will reduce wait times for services through hiring new nurses and doctors, investments and innovation through hiring new nurses and doctors, investments and innovation through sharing best practices.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will preserve public health care by enforcing the Canada Health Act and by requiring the provinces and territories to report on private delivery of covered services.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will invest \$5 Billion over 5 years in First Nations and Inuit communities to cover health services among other needs.

3. The Environment

- a) What measures will your party take to ensure the federal government is a global leader in national environmental protection and enforcement?
- b) Will your party commit to actively financing the protection of Canada's fragile northern environment through an aggressive regulatory and enforcement regime?

Climate change is melting the Arctic ice, making the Arctic Ocean a short cut for shipping, including huge oil tankers. An environmental disaster like the Exxon Valdez oil spill in the Arctic would cause irreparable damage to this fragile eco-system.

To protect the Arctic Ocean and all of Canada's waters, Jack Layton and his team of New Democrats will:

- **Assert and defend Canadian sovereignty over the land and waters of the Canadian Arctic, including the Northwest Passage, to ensure Canadian law remains in full force and effect.**
- **Reduce the oil spill response times in the Arctic by completing a response gap analysis and investing in federal and private sector capacity speed up response times.**
- **Deal with toxic industrial effluent by strengthening the enforcement of existing regulations.**
- **Provide national and international leadership to prevent build-up and counteract the harmful effects of marine debris.**
- **Provide the resources to ensure existing legislation regarding oily bilge water discharge and management will be effectively enforced.**

Canada's North has some of the most impressive and pristine wilderness areas on the planet. The ecology is also fragile, however, and without adequate protection these areas could be harmed by poorly planned resource development.

To protect the North and all of Canada's valuable wilderness, Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

- **Work toward a model of sustainable forest management in Canada's boreal forests, in collaboration with provinces, territories and First Nations. This will include the establishment of appropriate protected areas, and the development and promotion of a forest stewardship program that will sustain our boreal forests and our forest industries, with input from stakeholders.**
- **Legislate an explicit ban on bulk water exports. The North has the largest reserves of pristine fresh water in the world. Already there have been proposals to ship fresh water from Great Bear Lake to the United States. These exports would drain Northern lakes and potentially devastate Northern ecosystems.**
- **Implement a parks and wilderness plan that reflects Canadians' strong commitment to preserve our natural heritage. We will:**
 - **Complete the National Parks system.**
 - **Establish a nationally representative system of Marine Protected areas and complete the integrated Management Plans of our three oceans.**
 - **Ensure that the integrity of parks and protected areas is not compromised by industrial activity or inappropriate development.**
 - **Establish a conservation fund to preserve important natural wildlife habitat.**
 - **Improve endangered species protection.**
 - **Develop a plan to help plants and animals to adapt to climate change.**
 - **Implement the National Action Plan on Aquatic Invasive Species and ensure that acceptable treatment for ballast water is implemented and enforced.**
 - **Establish the Environment Commissioner as a separate and independent Officer of Parliament to provide effective oversight of the government's environmental performance.**

4. Food safety

a) What specific steps will your party take to restore public confidence in our national food protection system?

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will take action to ensure the food we sell is safe to eat. We will work in consultation with consumers, workers and industry to:

- **Increase number of food inspectors at CFIA, and increase administrative support so that inspectors spend time on the production floor and not on paperwork.**
- **Reduce worker injuries, increase the quality of the food, and ensure greater product safety by introducing regulations on "line speed" in**

meat processing plants that match existing requirements in the European Union.

- **Improve the system for warning families of potential dangers with consistent policies for immediate public notification of food safety problems.**
- **Require mandatory labelling of farmed fish and genetically engineered food, as is already done in Europe, Asia and Australia.**
- **Require full accuracy and accountability for labels stating “Product of Canada”.**
- **Require labels to inform consumers of the region of origin of food products and ingredients – so they know how far food has traveled to reach their table and are able to choose food produced by Canadian farmers.**

c) Will your party reaffirm the Canadian Grain Commission in its mandate as industry regulator, including properly funding and staffing the Commission and stopping all privatization of inspection services?

Yes

5. Equality and Rights

a) Will your party adopt the recommendations contained in the May 2004 Pay Equity Task Force Report and introduce a new proactive pay equity law that will cover women as well as racially visible workers, Aboriginal workers and workers with disabilities?

Yes, absolutely. New Democrats believe that the right to equal pay for equal work is a basic human right. Although pay equity is protected in Canada by the Canadian Human Rights Act, pay equity in Canada is not a reality for Canadian women. The NDP fully supports proactive federal pay equity legislation. Since the 2004 Pay Equity Task Force report, NDP MPs Jean Crowder (Naniamo-Cowichan), Libby Davis (Vancouver East) and Irene Mathyssen (London - Fanshawe) have all been pressuring the government to implement the recommendations of the report.

d) What will your party do to support women’s reproductive rights?

The New Democratic Party of Canada is the only federal party which has publicly declared support for a women’s right to choose. The NDP has consistently stood for universal access to abortion services for women. We support the right of women to access these services. New Democrats believe that reproductive freedoms must be guaranteed for all Canadian

women, regardless of income or where they live. We will reaffirm women's right to safe therapeutic abortion services.