

# Defending quality public services

## Six issues for PSAC members

The federal election is about priorities.

The PSAC believes that **defending quality public services** must be a priority.

Ask the candidates where they stand on these six issues.

### Food safety

Protecting our food system is an essential public service.

The recent outbreak of listeriosis in processed meats has put Canada's food safety system to the test once again.

We know the problem is too few inspectors in a system that relies too much on the food industry to police itself. We don't need a federal inquiry to tell us that.

Since March 31 of this year, the focus of food inspectors is on auditing company records rather than direct visual inspections in food plants.

The Harper government's spending plans from 2006-2011 include close to 30% in cuts to food safety programs.

**What will you and your party do to protect and enhance our food safety?**

### Post office

Our public post office currently has a "universal service obligation" to provide basic postal services in all corners of Canada at affordable prices. It's an essential part of our public infrastructure. It facilitates communication between Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

The recent "Strategic Review" of the Canada Post Corporation does not rule out dismantling key postal regulations and opening up the market to further corporate competition.

Abolishing these regulations would lead to price increases, job losses, reduced profits and further cutbacks in delivery services and rural services.

Nothing in this scenario is in the public interest.

**What will you and your party do to stop deregulation of our post office? What will you do to keep our post office public?**

### The environment

Two out of three Canadians view climate change as "very serious" and seven in 10 think Canada's pollution laws are inadequate.

Canada makes up less than one half of one percent of the world's population but we are the eighth largest producer of carbon dioxide, a chief contributor to global warming.

The federal government should lead the way on environmental protection, but we have reneged on our commitments to meet our Kyoto targets.

Successive federal governments have dismantled environmental programs.

Enforcement and protection of the environment are in the public interest.

**What will you and your party do to ensure the federal government leads the way on environmental protection and enforcement?**



### Transportation safety

Canadians who travel by air, rail, sea and land are dependent on government regulation, inspection and enforcement for their safety.

In 1989, it was determined that 1,800 inspectors were required to adequately ensure airline safety. Currently there are less than 900 inspectors even though there has been a significant increase in air traffic. Transport Canada itself admits that one of the key drivers of this decrease is cost cutting. Transport Canada needs more inspectors and more resources to inspect and enforce Canadian air safety.

**What will you and your party do to enhance transportation safety in Canada?**

### National parks

Canadian parks contribute to improving our quality of life by offering recreational activities and green spaces for Canadians to share. They are also a symbol of our commitment to the protection of the environment.

A report from the Fraser Institute – "Can Markets Save Canada's National Parks-2005" – suggests contracting out as a plan to maintain Canadian parks. If put in the hands of private interests, the mission and mandate of Parks Canada to protect our shared, public wealth will take a back seat to the need to generate profits.

**What will you and your party do to maintain public ownership of our national parks and historic sites? What resources will you commit to ensure their future protection?**

### Taxes

Our tax system is the way we pool our money to collectively provide health care, infrastructure, roads, border security, food inspection, firefighting, a coast guard, services to seniors, employment insurance, services to veterans, education... and the list goes on.

Tax cuts have contributed to the growing gap between the rich and the rest of us. Since 2001, federal corporate income taxes have been reduced by 25%. Just a 1% cut in GST costs about \$5 billion, which could have financed a universal early learning and care system for 3 to 5 year olds across the country.

**What is your party's plan to make our taxation system fairer in order to reduce the growing gap between the rich and the rest of us and to ensure we collectively have enough money to maintain our public services?**

