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Re: Political Party Questionnaire for 2017 British Columbia General Election

Thank you for your 2017 provincial election questionnaire.

Please accept the detailed survey response attached on behalf of all BC New Democrat candidates in the 2017 provincial election.

For more information on our platform, please visit [www.bcndp.ca/platform](http://www.bcndp.ca/platform).

Thank you.

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## Labour

**1. Statistics Canada reports unionized workers enjoy 14 to 20 percent higher wages than non-unionized workers in the same line of work, as well as stronger pensions, superior health and safety standards, longer paid vacation time, better health and drug benefits, and more rights in the workplace. Does your party believe that unions play a positive role in our economy? If so, what policies will your party implement to create a climate that is easier for unions to organize?**

For the past fifteen years, the BC Liberal have taken aggressive and repeated unconstitutional actions to nullify settlements, hollow out collective bargaining and weaken workers' bargaining power and influence.

In sharp contrast, a BC NDP government will respect Charter jurisprudence protecting collective bargaining by promoting and practicing true good faith bargaining, and honoring negotiated agreements. If elected, we will also convene with all involved parties on how to improve BC's labour relations environment, adjudicative bodies and framework. John Horgan and the BC NDP support workers' freedom of association and will uphold workers' charter rights to organize to better their workplace conditions through the union movement.

**2. Over the past decade in British Columbia, an average of 150 workers die on the job each year, and 17 workers in the province are permanently disabled from workplace accidents every day. What will your party do to guarantee better health and safety conditions to reduce workplace injuries and fatalities?**



Every worker should come home at night. A John Horgan BC NDP government will make workplace safety a priority. That means we will enforce workplace safety rules. Unlike Christy Clark and the BC Liberals, when workers die on the job, we will ensure there is justice for families.

**3. While corporate profits, productivity and GDP have all increased consistently during the past thirty years, Statistics Canada reports that both real hourly wages and median family income have been stagnant since 1980. Why do you think this has happened, and what does your party propose to change the situation?**

For Christy Clark, the economy is about helping her rich friends and donors. And the reality for most British Columbians is that the economy isn't working for them. Under Christy Clark, unemployment is up in every region outside the lower mainland and the Island. People who are working are working harder and longer, and not getting ahead. More and more jobs are part time, and more and more people are working two jobs to make ends meet.

Where industries are succeeding, it's despite Christy Clark, not because of her. She bet everything on natural gas prices and left the rest of BC's economy without support. Resource communities and families have paid the price. BC has had the slowest wage growth in the country under Christy Clark and the BC Liberals. That's got to change.

John Horgan and the BC NDP will tackle this challenge on multiple fronts. We will create 96,000 construction jobs by building schools, hospitals, roads and rapid transit over the next five years. We'll build, directly and through partnerships, 114,000 rental, social and co-op homes over 10 years using BC wood products as building materials. A BC NDP government will increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and tie it to inflation. This will lift wages for all workers, even those not making minimum wage. We'll bring in \$10 a day childcare so parents won't have to choose between work and taking care of their kids. We

We'll revitalize BC's forest industry and make BC a world leader in engineered wood products. We'll spark innovation and growth in BC's tech sector right across the province, by improving investment tax credits, hiring local software developers, and re-establishing the Innovative Clean Energy program cut by the BC Liberals. And we'll support BC small business with a half-point cut to the small business tax rate.

## **The Economy**

**4. British Columbia has become a deeply unequal province. According to Statistics Canada, the top 20% of income earners enjoy 44.8% of after-tax income, the highest in the country, while the poorest earn only 5%. How will your party reverse this trend and reduce the growing levels of economic inequality in British Columbia?**



Under Christy Clark and the BC Liberals, one in five children lives in poverty and food bank use has broken records two years in a row. More than 3,000 children have been added to food bank rolls since Christy Clark became premier.

Five times the BC NDP put forward a poverty reduction plan and five times Christy Clark and the BC Liberals rejected it. We're the only province in Canada that doesn't have one. It's clear Christy Clark isn't working for ordinary people who are struggling to get by.

A BC NDP government will address inequality by bringing in a poverty reduction plan, raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and tying it to inflation, increasing social assistance and disability rates, bringing in a \$10 a day child care plan so that families can afford to work. We'll also make it easier for British Columbians to afford skills training and advanced education with interest free student loans and \$1,000 in loan forgiveness to all students who graduate from their programs.

**5. A recent Environics Research poll showed that 90% of British Columbians think there should be income tax increases for the wealthiest income earners, and 67% believe that major corporations pay less tax than they should. Since the beginning of the new millennium, the wealthiest citizens and businesses have enjoyed tax breaks, supposedly to "create jobs," yet the unemployment rate in BC is the same today as it was in 2000, at approximately 6%. Does your party believe that those who benefit the most should pay their fair share of taxes?**

John Horgan and the BC NDP are firmly committed to our progressive tax system. As part of our platform to make life more affordable for ordinary people we are rolling back Christy Clark's tax break for the wealthiest 2% of British Columbians and bringing up our corporate tax rate to be more in line with other provinces.

**6. The resource extraction-only policies have left this province split. Urban areas are seeing growth and opportunities like no other jurisdiction in Canada, while rural British Columbia is seeing negative growth, increasing unemployment and limited job prospects. What plans does your party have to encourage secondary industries to invest in rural British Columbia?**

A big focus of the BC NDP jobs plan is bringing jobs back to rural and northern communities through a mix of public infrastructure investment, and policies to attract private sector employment. Our technology plan offers encouragement and incentives for local tech companies to invest outside of Metro and the lower island. And our forestry plan aims to bring back the 30,000 good paying jobs that Christy Clark and the BC Liberals lost over the last decade and a half. We will also continue to strongly support industries like tourism and agriculture that employ people across the province.

## Health Care

**7. Medical Service Plan payments are a user fee unlike anywhere else in Canada. This tax unfairly targets low and middle income families. Does your party support scrapping the MSP premiums?**



Yes. The BC Liberals doubled the MSP fees that hard working British Columbians pay, costing most families an extra \$900 a year. Meanwhile, millionaires got major tax breaks. The BC NDP has opposed these unfair BC Liberal MSP increases year after year and has been clear that it is BC families that deserve a break.

John Horgan and the BC NDP will eliminate MSP fees and make sure low and middle-income families come out ahead. We will go ahead with the 2017 Budget's 50 per cent reduction and completely eliminate the fee within four years, saving families as much as \$1,800 a year.

A non-partisan MSP Elimination Panel will advise on how to protect health care funding, while phasing out this unfair flat tax. The panel will be required to ensure low and middle-income families all come out ahead. We will cut the MSP in half starting in 2018, and then we will convene a panel to help us fully transition away from MSP within the first 4 years of our mandate.

**8. Our publicly administered, universal health care system is cherished throughout British Columbia. More of these services, however, are being de-funded and privatized. What policies will your party implement to ensure that health care in the province remains under public control and is accessible to everyone?**

The BC NDP is the party of public healthcare. John Horgan and BC New Democrats will continue to fight for a stronger public health system that works for everyone. A BC NDP government will not privatize our health care system.

**9. There are thousands of people in the province on waiting lists for surgery, home care, and finding a family doctor. What will your party do to fund more doctors, nursing positions and hospital beds throughout the province, and ensure that our health care system is there for us when we need it?**

We will establish Urgent Family Care Centres across BC to improve your access to doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, dietitians, pharmacists, mental health workers, midwives, occupational therapists and other health care providers. These care centres will be located across the province, and will be open evenings and on weekends, to provide families with the one-on-one health care they need with the support of a full medical team.

We will also invest in more paramedics, so that no one is left waiting for an ambulance in their time of critical need.

**Education**

**10. One of the most important policies for creating a better education system is reducing class sizes. With the recent court ruling in favour of smaller class sizes, what specific policies will your party**



**implement to hire more teachers and reduce class sizes in primary and secondary schools in British Columbia?**

We will be working directly with school boards and the BCTF to ensure that the Supreme Court ruling is implemented. We will be restoring contract language to improve class size and composition and to provide our kids with the specialized teachers they need. And we will be boosting education funding even further to ensure schools have the supplies they need to deliver quality public education.

**11. As a result of cutbacks to post-secondary education over the past two decades, average tuition fees in the province increased four-fold between 1990 and 2010, adding to the already-record levels of student debt. What will your party do to lower tuition fees and reduce student debt in the province?**

A BC NDP government will eliminate interest on BC student loans for current, future and outstanding students as well as providing all new graduates with \$1,000 in debt relief.

**The Environment and Resources**

**12. Each year, millions of raw logs and other natural resources are shipped to value-added industries in other countries. What specific plans does your party have to prevent this and instead create high-value secondary industries in British Columbia?**

A BC NDP government will maximize the use of innovative BC wood products in infrastructure projects, like schools, hospitals and rental housing construction and ask the federal government to do the same. We will also offer incentives to BC builders that use engineered wood products and to BC companies starting innovative wood manufacturing operations.

Partnering with colleges and universities, we will train the designers, engineers and tradespeople needed to put these wood products to use. As part of our marketing efforts outside of BC we will support industry in evaluating and meeting building material safety tests for export markets, and in giving the global building industry confidence in these products.

**13. British Columbians care deeply about our environment and believe that climate change is a major issue. What will your party do to reduce our carbon footprint and help lower greenhouse gas emissions?**

Tackling climate change will be a key priority for a BC NDP government. Our Clean Growth Climate Action plan will see us reducing carbon pollution by 30 per cent below 2007 levels by 2030. We will work with a renewed Climate Action Team to implement these goals. Unlike the BC Liberals, our plan protects families from having to bear the brunt of climate action, instead making polluters pay.

**First Nations**



**14. Where does your party stand in relation to indigenous rights? What plans do you have in place that ensure meaningful discussions around the integration of indigenous peoples into the forestry and mining sectors, as well as other areas of the economy that flow from their traditional lands? How are you going to help with social issues facing many indigenous people on reserves across this province?**

A BC NDP government will adopt and implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This commitment will be reflected in ministerial mandate letters, and in government policy. We have also committed to addressing all of the calls to action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report. As part of our commitment to addressing the calls to action we will implement Grand Chief Ed John's report, Indigenous Resilience, Connectedness and Reunification – From Root Causes to Root Solutions, to help keep Indigenous children with their families and communities.