

Kelly Johnson  
President, Confederation of Canadian Unions  
250.365.5309  
contact@ccu-csc.ca  
www.ccu-csc.ca

Dear Kelly:

Thank you for giving us an opportunity to speak to the issues that matter to the Confederation of Canadian Unions. I am happy to respond on behalf of the Green Party of Ontario.

### **Economics**

**1. According to Statistics Canada, economic inequality has been on the rise since the 1970s, and currently, the richest 10% of income earners control almost 60% of all wealth. How will your party reverse this trend and reduce the growing levels of economic inequality in Ontario?**

We strongly support introducing a basic income for all Ontarians as the most effective, efficient, and dignified way to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality. A basic income not only alleviates poverty, it eliminates the red tape involved in navigating a complex set of services, as well as provides economic security to help low-income entrepreneurs start new businesses.

To achieve this, the Green Party will implement a benefit rate at 100% of the Low Income Measure for all Ontarians to provide every person security during times of transition, such as going back to school, job loss, or starting a family. In the interim, the Green Party supports an immediate increase to Ontario Disability Support and Ontario Works payments to match the Low Income Measure.

We need to make investments in our province that will make life more affordable for all Ontarians. We support introducing universal dental care and pharmacare programs, including mental health treatment under OHIP, and utilizing mechanisms, such as inclusionary zoning, that will make housing more affordable.

**2. The partial sell-off of Hydro One has been a boondoggle for Bay Street, Wall Street and the investment class, and a disaster for workers and consumers. Rates have skyrocketed for Ontarians, and the Ontario Financial Accountability Office stated that taxpayers would have saved \$1.8 billion if the government had taken on traditional debt to fund infrastructure projects instead of the sell-off. Will your**

**party commit to fully returning Hydro One back to public ownership and democratic control?**

We believe that the sale of Hydro One traded the province's future wealth and control over its electricity system for a short-term and short-sighted influx of money.

The Green Party publicly opposed the Hydro One sale, however we do not think it is in the financial best interest of our province to buy back the utility in its entirety. We are committed to buying back enough shares to give the government a controlling stake of the company. We also support keeping all remaining shares under public ownership.

In order to make our electricity system more affordable and sustainable, we support purchasing low-cost hydro power from Quebec, prioritizing energy conservation, and investing in community-based renewable energy projects.

We also support using dedicated revenue tools to fund infrastructure projects, such as congestion charges, gas taxes and parking levies, instead of selling off valuable public assets like Hydro One.

**3. According to opinion polls, a large majority of Ontarians support greater funding for social services like health care, child care, housing, and education. What will your party do to ensure these programs are properly funded in both the short and long term?**

Our investments in social programs include moving to a Basic Income Guarantee as the most effective way to fight poverty, as well as increased investments in mental health, preventative health and education. We support a target of 20% affordable housing for all new designs.

We believe in a strong public services, and we are also believe in fiscal responsibility. We want to be honest about how to pay for these programs and are proposing a number of solutions that will generate revenue. Find details of our costed commitments at [www.gpo.ca/platform](http://www.gpo.ca/platform)

**4. Statistics Canada reports that on average, unionized workers in Ontario enjoy 24% higher wages than non-unionized workers in the same line of work, as well as stronger pensions, superior health and safety standards, longer 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?**

The Green Party recognizes the positive role unions have played in the province's economy, particularly in terms of enhancing safety in the workplace, and we encourage opportunities to increase union density. We support both the promotion of democracy in unions and workplaces and the democratic right of unions and workers to engage in determining their dues structures. We will also support and incentivize the organizing of freelance workers to join together in associations that allow them to access group benefits

**5. Last year, Canada joined 164 other countries in ratifying International Labour Organization (ILO) convention 98, which commits governments around the world to respecting union rights and collective bargaining. Will your party commit to protecting the rights of unions to organize and bargain collectively, both in the public and private sectors?**

The Green Party recognizes the positive role unions have played in the province's economy, particularly in terms of enhancing safety in the workplace, and encourages opportunities to increase union density.

### Health Care

**6. Our publicly administered, universal health care system is cherished throughout Ontario. More of our health 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 Green Party of Ontario believes in a publicly funded health care system that is equally accessible for everyone. We are committed to comprehensive primary health care as the foundation of our system, with a strong focus on health promotion, illness prevention, and community well-being. We support a more extensive health care system that includes publicly-funded pharmacare, dental care, and mental health treatment for all Ontarians.

**7. There are more than 30,000 people in Ontario on waiting lists for long-term care beds, and hundreds of thousands are actively seeking but cannot find a family doctor. What will your party do to fund more doctors, nursing positions and hospital beds throughout the province?**

Every person in Ontario should have access to a primary health care provider in a timely manner in order to ensure health promotion, illness prevention, and community well-being. We support a comprehensive view of health care that will utilize smart investments to improve our current system, making health promotion and early intervention a top priority. If we focus on prevention, we can use those savings for acute health care needs.

We would create an integrated funding structure for health care, based on quality outcomes that will ensure that the best care is provided by the most appropriate and cost effective provider. We support prioritizing health care investment in frontline services, including hiring more nurse practitioners, registered nurses, and doctors. We believe in a strong public health care system, but we will be honest about how we are going to pay for it. We are proposing a number of solutions that will generate revenue. You can find the details of our costed commitments at [www.gpo.ca/platform](http://www.gpo.ca/platform).

**8. Canada remains the only country in the world with a universal health care system that doesn't include prescription medication. Drug prices continue to skyrocket for Ontarians and more people have to choose between getting the medications they need and paying for necessities like food or rent. Will your party commit to creating a universal, comprehensive, publicly-administered and sustainable Pharmacare program in the province of Ontario?**

Yes. We support a provincially funded pharmacare program to provide all Ontarians with access to medicine without co-payments or means testing, with the long term goal of pushing for of a federally funded pharmacare program.

## **Education**

**9. Only 20% of young children today have access to regulated child care spaces in Ontario. What will you do in government to create more child care spaces? Also, will you commit to creating a universal, public child care program for all children in the province?**

We support phasing-in funding for a comprehensive early childhood education and care program in order to offer free daycare to working parents with children under age three, support stay-at-home parents, and implement additional ECE supports. We also support incentives to offset capital costs for businesses so they can set up onsite daycare with matching work hours, as well as increased funding for licensed child-care spaces.

**10. What specific policies will your party implement to hire more teachers and reduce class sizes in primary and secondary schools in Ontario?**

We support integrating the public and separate school boards into a single school system with one French and one English board. This will end duplication and strengthen the classroom experience for students and teachers by streamlining the delivery of services and reinvesting the money saved back into the classroom.

We will also eliminate the EQAO assessment as it is expensive to implement and wastes valuable resources and ensure that the average class size for grades 4 to 8

does not exceed 22 students, which is the current average class size for secondary students.

We need to establish a comprehensive evidence-based review of the education funding formula every five years to determine its effectiveness in supporting high quality public education.

**11. Ontario university student debt is now over \$850 million, and our province has the highest undergraduate tuition fees in the country, more than twice as high as Quebec and Manitoba. What will your party do to lower tuition fees and reduce student debt?**

The Green Party supports funding higher education with public subsidies, with the eventual guarantee of full public tuition for all Ontario residents attending public colleges, trade institutions, and universities.

In addition, we would regulate tuition fees by indexing any increases to Ontario's Consumer Price Index (CPI), freeze tuition within the program span of each student cohort, and provide interest-free student loans for students with financial needs.

## **The Environment**

**12. What policies will your party implement to reduce climate change and protect the environment, and how will you pay for them?**

Climate change will cost Canada's economy at least \$5 billion by 2020 and up to \$43 billion by 2050, according to the National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy. Climate change is a threat to our health, well-being and quality of life. Here are some of the ways that we will address climate change:

- Transition Ontario to a revenue-neutral carbon fee-and-dividend system where money collected from a carbon fee on the largest emitters is distributed directly to individuals and households as a dividend cheque.
- Improve and expand Ontario's home energy savings program to provide grants and other incentives for individuals and communities to improve the energy efficiency of buildings to help businesses, homeowners and renters make money by saving energy.
- Phase out funding for infrastructure that relies on fossil fuels and increases Ontario's GHG emissions.
- Set a target date for phasing out internal combustion engines in Ontario so that Ontario can meet a carbon neutral target by 2050.
- Support rapid electrification plans for all transit systems.

- Reorient business development grants to provide funding incentives for businesses to innovate and invest in low carbon equipment, products, and processes
- Set a target and develop a Long-term Energy Plan for Ontario to be powered with 100% renewable energy
- Apply a climate lens to all planning decisions, environmental assessments and planning laws to help transition our communities to a fossil fuel free future.
- Support Forest Ontario's tree planting goals and expand the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program to reward landowners for planting trees.
- Reward farmers for stewardship practices that provide environmental and community benefits such as clean water, habitat preservation, soil health and carbon storage.
- Increase funding to Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Environment and Climate Change to better carry out their responsibilities after decades of underfunding.
- Increase oversight for industry development that affects our land, water, and wildlife.
- We will raise levies and royalties for aggregates, water, and mining to fully recover the costs of monitoring, managing these essential resources, and protecting our environment.

**13. One of the best ways to reduce our carbon footprint on the environment is public transportation. What will you do to make public transportation throughout the province more affordable and accessible to Ontarians?**

A properly funded and thoughtfully planned transportation system is good for the environment, local communities and our economy. It is essential that Ontario make transit affordable and reliable. We plan to do this by:

- Ensuring urban rapid transit projects feature effective integration with local transit services.
- Establishing transparent, expert-recognized standard methods for making transit investment decisions and publicly sharing business case analyses, including all associated assumptions and data.
- Prioritizing low-cost high-performance rail in the short-term as the province plans long-term for higher-cost, high-speed rail projects.
- Providing permanent operational funding support for municipal transit services in order to reduce fare increases for users, as well as funding for cycling and walking infrastructure.
- Implementing dedicated revenue tools to fund our updated transportation systems that are fair and progressive, such as congestion charges, gas taxes and parking levies. For example, a \$2 per day parking surcharge on all

commercial parking lots in the Greater Toronto area would raise \$2 billion per year for transit in the region.

- Allowing municipalities to implement road tolls, including granting Toronto's request for road tolls on the Don Valley Parkway and the Gardiner Expressway
- Ensuring urban rapid transit projects feature effective integration with local transit services.

You can find the rest of our Vision for Ontario at [www.gpo.ca/vision](http://www.gpo.ca/vision) and our costed platform at [www.gpo.ca/platform](http://www.gpo.ca/platform).

Sincerely,

Samantha Bird  
Director of Operations  
Green Party of Ontario