



NDP Responds

Note: We have yet to release our full platform but here are the answers to date outlining our commitments.

Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations

1. The Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations has been working on what has been called "source water protection" since FOCA was founded in the 1960's.* Specifically, what commitments will your party make to federal legislation and water research to ensure that water is adequately protected?

In the last ten years, the Conservatives have dismantled the laws protecting our air, land and especially our water. They've hidden their attacks in budget bills, targeting the Navigable Waters Protection Act, the Environmental Assessment Act, the Species at Risk Act, and the Fisheries Act. Under their changes, Canada went from protecting over 2.5 million lakes and rivers to only parts of 159. And, they have failed to address contaminated sites, protect fish stocks, introduce legislation to protect water from bulk exports and enact drinking water standards.

The NDP believe this is unacceptable. We will introduce a federal Safe Drinking Water Act to support provinces and municipalities in their efforts to keep the drinking water of all Canadians safe. We will introduce legislation banning the bulk export of water across international boundaries. We will establish and implement a Pan-Canadian Plan for Water, in collaboration with the provinces, territories and Indigenous governments, and in consultation with the public, to address water quality and quantity across jurisdictions. Our plan will also take into account the impact of climate change on current and future water resources and we will restore legal protections for water that were stripped away by the Conservatives.

2. In recent years, Canadians have experienced first-hand how shifts in climate, precipitation and extreme weather events can overwhelm our urban and rural infrastructure, and wreak havoc on our economy. How will your party address the unsustainable shift in infrastructure costs from the federal government to local governments with small and limited resources?

Our water is the envy of the world. But as our climate changes, we have a responsibility to protect it. Canada is one of the only industrialized countries without a water strategy. Instead of taking action and implementing a water strategy, Stephen Harper's Conservatives have stripped away protections for our lakes and rivers. The Conservatives gutted environmental protections without debate by burying the changes in budget bills. Tom Mulcair's NDP will establish a Pan-Canadian Plan for Water, and protect clean water as a right. We'll strengthen and enforce drinking water standards, pass laws that make polluters pay, and ban bulk water exports.

Tom Mulcair has outlined plans to build a new relationship with municipalities to build the infrastructure Canadian communities need. The NDP will respect provincial and local decision-making, simplify application processes and remove funding barriers through direct, stable and transparent transfers to municipalities and provinces, for their priorities. This will ensure the long-term success of municipalities. We will start by investing the equivalent of one additional cent of the existing gas tax. This will provide additional funding in the first year that will ramp up to an additional \$1.5 billion invested at the end of a first mandate. This NDP initiative will provide annual, stable, long-term investment for infrastructure projects.

3. Ontario borders on 4 of the 5 Great Lakes, and is blessed with over 250,000 inland lakes that all need our care and protection. Describe your party's action plan and funding commitment to meet the targets needed to protect the Great Lakes basin.*

For more than 50 years, Canada and the US have collaborated, through the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, to conduct the world's largest ongoing invasive species control program which is aimed at suppressing sea lamprey in the Great Lakes. The program has contributed to the restoration and support of both commercial and recreational fisheries in the Great Lakes. These activities have contributed \$1.2 billion to the Canadian economy alone. Canada must do its fair share to maintain this program and other initiatives to help manage invasive species in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, and in other water bodies. It is essential that organizations, experts and the public are engaged in setting priorities for action, and that cross-border coordination is facilitated to ensure that our efforts are efficient and effective.

4. Three years after the signing of the revised Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, there has been only modest progress on the provisions to deal with chemicals in the Great Lakes ecosystem which continue to pose a threat to human health and/or the environment.* What is your party's plan to achieve virtual elimination and zero discharge of known toxins and persistent chemicals, and chemicals of potential concern, including pharmaceuticals and personal care products that could adversely affect the health of Ontario's aquatic ecosystems?

Thanks to a motion by NDP environment critic Megan Leslie and the efforts of concerned Canadians, plastic microbeads have been banned by the federal government. We've been saying for a long time that the best way to tackle this pollution problem is prevention. It's about time the government took concrete action to protect our lakes and rivers from this pollution—for the sake of our environment and our health, Canada must do as other countries have done and work to eliminate microbeads from everyday consumer products.

We will also take action to ensure Canadians don't pay the cost of dealing with toxins. We will adopt the principles from the European Union's REACH to make industry responsible for assessing and managing the risks posed by chemicals produced or imported into Canada—instead of imposing the burden on the taxpayer.

5. Over the past five years, the Federal Government made changes to the Fisheries Act that reduced protection for fish habitat and created a "permit by rule" approach that puts all our waters at risk.* Would you work to see the Fisheries Act revitalized and adequately funded to become a strong regulatory regime for all fish species and their habitats?

As mentioned above, an NDP government will bring back habitat and other protections in the Fisheries Act, reverse changes to the deposition of deleterious substances into fish-bearing waters, and implement a Pan-Canadian Plan for Water to help cope with Great Lakes water quantity and quality, and to address climate change impacts on our lakes and rivers.

6. Canada's first environmental law hit the books in 1882: the Navigable Waters Protection Act. Now called the Navigation Protection Act, changes to this act created huge inequity in the way lakes and rivers across Canada are 'scheduled' for protection, leaving many vulnerable to unmanaged development.* Would you reinstate essential protections for our vital waterways, under a revised Navigable Waters Protection Act?

The right to navigation is one of the oldest and most fundamental principles of common law, supporting the ideal of the public trust in Canada. The Conservative government's changes to the Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA), however, mean now only 62 rivers and canals, and 97 lakes are deemed worthy of federal protection under the new "Navigation Protection Act". That leaves thousands of waterways that are not covered, meaning

fewer environmental reviews and no guarantee of access or navigation. Of Canada's 37 designated Canadian Heritage Rivers, only 10 are now covered by law.

A New Democrat government would reverse the changes made to the NHPA, and restore protection and navigation rights to waterways in Canada.