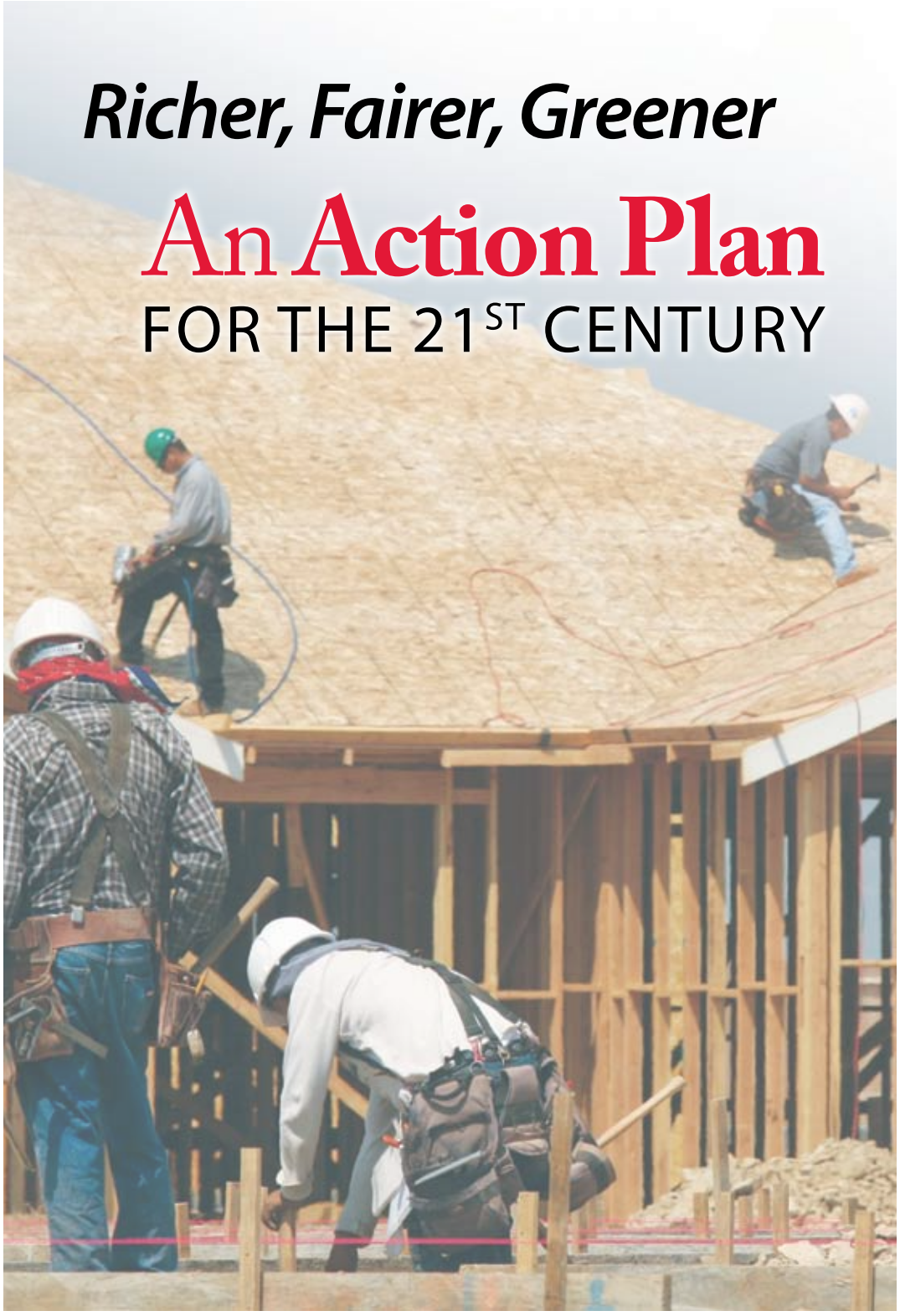
Richer, Fairer, Greener

An Action Plan
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY



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Introduction

Canada is a great country today thanks to the vision and effort of generations of Canadians. From the Aboriginal Peoples who were the original inhabitants of this land to the pioneers who set off from the Old World to build a better life in the New World, to the men and women who formed a federation from coast to coast to coast, fought for universal health care and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We stand on the shoulders of those Canadians who came before, who worked to leave a better Canada to their children and grandchildren.

As we face challenges that our parents never imagined, from climate change to globalization, it's time to ask ourselves important questions: do we have the same courage to meet the demands of our generation, as our parents and grandparents did before us? Can we meet those challenges with the vision, innovation and good government that define our country, leaving a richer Canada for the generation that comes after us? These question are at the core of this election campaign.

Liberals are convinced that the answer is yes. We Canadians are a great people up to a great challenge. What we need is a vision, a plan, a team and leadership. Stéphane Dion is providing the leadership, the Liberal Party is the team, and this platform is translating the vision into a concrete plan – a national project for a richer, fairer, greener Canada.

We will not meet our challenges with Stephen Harper's very conservative government. In fact, we'll go in the wrong direction. They believe in false solutions – a neo-conservative agenda that has failed everywhere it has been tried. We have today the most right-wing Prime Minister ever and the most secretive as well. No long-term plan for the economy. No commitment to the poor and underprivileged. No real investment in education or infrastructure. And no plan to fight the climate change crisis, the single biggest environmental threat facing Canada and the planet. In short, the Conservatives have shown no vision for this country, and no commitment to Canada's future, our children's future.

The last Conservative government, under Brian Mulroney, left Canadians a mess. It took years of hard work, of Canadians pulling together, to put Canada back on track. It has taken just two years for the Harper Conservatives to put us back on the path that Canadians so soundly rejected in 1993. Reckless cuts, irresponsible fiscal policy and divisive politics are the Harper Conservative way.

Liberals have a different way. We believe that the challenges we face, at home and in the world, need to be addressed now. We can't ignore the demands of the climate change crisis or economic competitiveness, or leave them for our

children to solve. Together, we need to turn those challenges into opportunities, so that our children can live better lives than their parents. That's the test of any government—and in this platform, we outline how a Liberal government will make it happen.

What are these challenges we need to face? There are three: growing our economy, fighting the climate change crisis, and helping our fellow Canadians.

The first challenge is ensuring Canada's wealth and prosperity in a time of economic downturn around the world. Our first priority, as individuals and as parents, is being able to pay our bills at the end of the month, to live the life we all want, and to prepare the future of our children. That's why the first priority of a Liberal government will be to enhance our quality of life. In a fiercely competitive global economy, Canadians deserve a government that puts their financial security first.

The second challenge comes from the first. The price of oil is higher today than ever before in history, and growing demand in China and India means that the price may never go back down. Canada's economy was built with the idea that power would be cheap forever, which means that Canada uses more fossil fuels per person than almost any country on earth.

At the same time that the price of fuel is going up, we know beyond any serious doubt that our planet cannot handle the pressure we're putting on it. If the average temperature of the global climate increases by more than two degrees Celsius—a point we will reach by the middle of the century if nothing changes—then our planet could reach a tipping point, and the consequences of climate change could become disastrous.

What should Canada's government do? One answer is to do nothing: let Canadian families continue to suffer high fuel prices, and cross our fingers that someone else will solve the problem of climate change. But that's not good enough, and we all know it. Canadians are better than that.

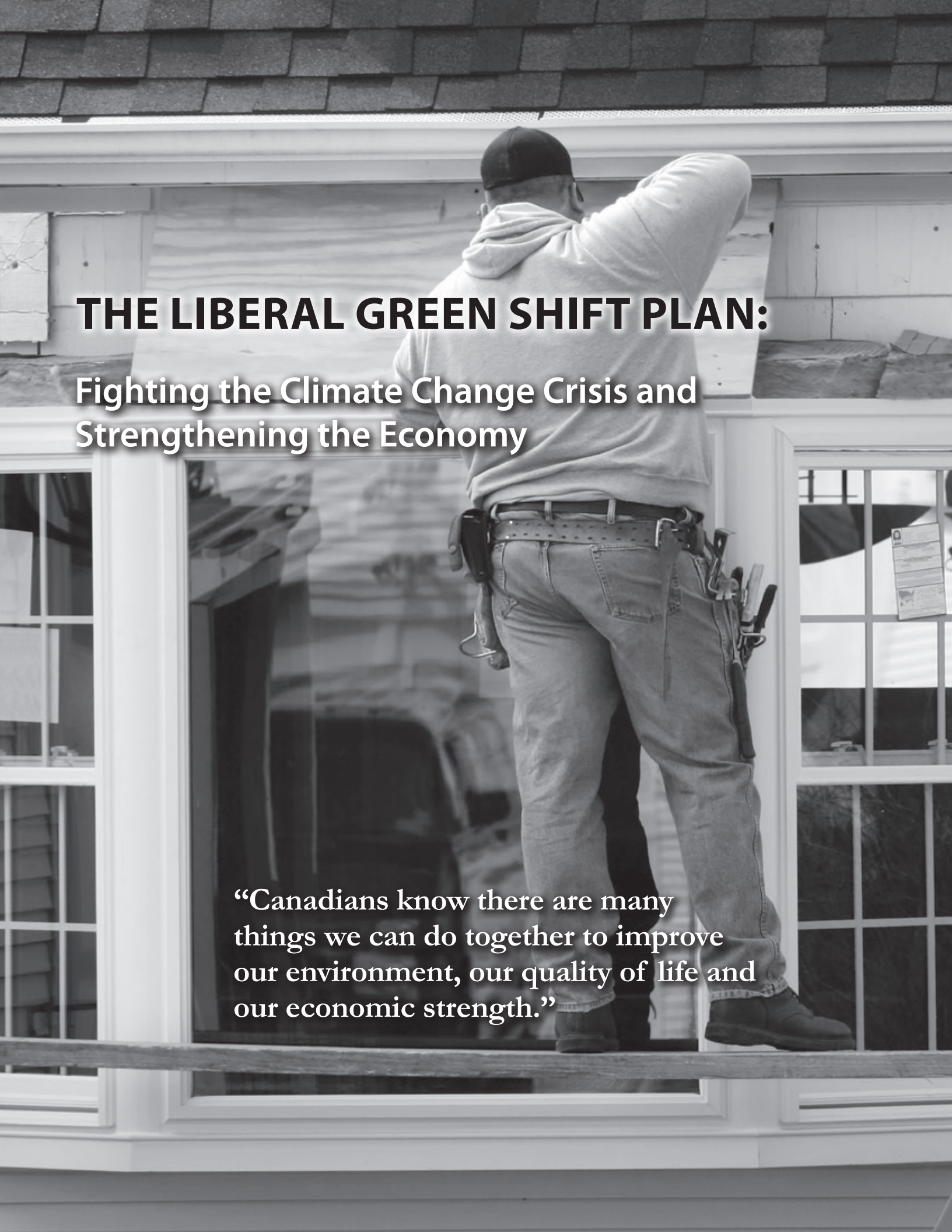
Instead of doing nothing, we can face both these challenges at once. By using the tax system to encourage innovation in renewable energy, we can fight back against the rising price of oil, and use the revenue to cut taxes for every Canadian family. We have put forward the Liberal green shift plan, which makes polluters pay for the greenhouse gases they dump into the atmosphere, with every dollar going back to Canadians in tax cuts.

With the green shift plan and other measures included in this platform, we can help the economy and fight climate change at the same time. But what about our third challenge—helping other Canadians? We know that many Canadians are struggling. To be competitive, we need to tap the talents and skills of everyone—making sure every child has a chance, that newcomers are integrated into the economy, that the gap between Aboriginal Canadians and others disappears.

The Liberal green shift plan will help us bring down the barriers that hold back the underprivileged through a series of tax measures designed to ensure that every Canadian benefits from the plan, even those who don't earn enough to pay taxes. Together with the other social measures in our platform, these changes will reduce the number of Canadians living in poverty by 30 percent, and reduce the number of Canadian children in poverty by 50 percent. We call it the 30-50 plan, and together with a strong economy and fighting the climate change crisis, it will form one of the pillars of a new Liberal government.

Finally, we Canadians understand that our country is not an island. As citizens of the world, we need to be a strong voice for a more prosperous, sustainable and just world. Canada must be a good citizen of the world; one that restores a strong voice for peace and justice everywhere. Our country has played that role before, and it's time we did it again.

A stronger economy. A real fight against the climate change crisis. Lifting more Canadians out of poverty. Only the Liberal Party of Canada has a plan to meet our challenges, to build a Canada that is more prosperous, sustainable and fair. This is that plan. This isn't just a change of government. It's change for a generation. Together, we can make it happen.



THE LIBERAL GREEN SHIFT PLAN:

Fighting the Climate Change Crisis and Strengthening the Economy

"Canadians know there are many things we can do together to improve our environment, our quality of life and our economic strength."

The science is clear: the climate change crisis is the greatest environmental challenge of this generation, and we need to act now to stop it. Tackling this challenge is both a moral obligation and an economic opportunity. Canadians want to take action to avoid the worst effects of climate change, and they want our country to be a good citizen of the world, leading other countries, not lagging behind. Fighting climate change is also an opportunity that we cannot miss—an opportunity to modernize our economy, to make Canada more competitive and better adapted to the 21st century.

Canadians need to reduce our economy's reliance on polluting fossil fuels and we need to become more energy efficient. Doing so will be good for our economy and the environment: not only will we reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and other sources of pollution, but also become more competitive in a carbon-constrained global economy while creating good and lasting jobs.

A consensus has developed among both environmentalists and economists that the best way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is to put a price on carbon. The Liberal green shift plan, a major part of the Liberal Party's bold plan to address climate change while building a more competitive economy, will shift Canada's tax system away from income and towards pollution. This shift will be done in a revenue neutral way – putting it in law that every dollar that is raised from taxing carbon pollution will be returned to Canadians in tax cuts. The Auditor General will ensure the plan's revenue neutrality on an annual basis.

Here's how the Liberal green shift plan will work. We will immediately put a price of $10 per tonne on greenhouse gas emissions. This price will rise by $10 per year until it reaches $40 in year four. It will not apply to the price of gasoline, as the existing excise tax on gas at the pump is already at the equivalent of $42 per tonne of carbon. The tax on diesel and aviation fuel will also not rise in the first year.

Liberals believe that our shared atmosphere should not be treated as a garbage dump, leaving our environment, our economy and our families to pay the real costs. Instead, we believe Canadians should benefit more from the work that they do and investments they make in their future.

The pollution dividend given back to Canadians will be significant. The Liberal green shift will mean:

Lower Taxes on Work: income taxes will go down as the price on pollution rises. By the fourth year of our plan:

- We will cut the lowest income tax rate to 13.5 percent from 15 percent, a 10 percent reduction.
- And we will cut the middle class tax rates to 21 percent from 22 percent and to 25 percent from 26 percent, a five percent and four percent cut respectively.

Help for all Canadian Families: the bigger your family, the more energy you consume and the more help you need to adapt. By the fourth year, we will provide a new annual child tax credit worth $350 per child.

Taken together, these personal income tax cuts mean that a family of 4 making $60,000 will receive $1300 in new tax cuts and benefits while a family of 4 making $20,000 will receive $2,400.

Fairness for low-income Canadians: The Liberal green shift plan will reform the tax system to make it fairer for working Canadians.

We will:

- Make our new child tax credit fully refundable which means real financial assistance for Canadian families whether or not they pay significant income taxes.
- Replace the Conservatives' regressive, small, poorly designed $1,000 employment credit – with a $1,850 refundable employment credit targeted at those Canadians who earn less than $50,000 per year. This will put up to $250 per person into the pockets of those working Canadians who need it most.
- Increase the Working Income Tax Benefit. We will encourage work by having this benefit available on the first dollar earned, $3,000 sooner than the Conservative plan. We will ensure that it benefits more families by phasing it out more slowly.
- Make the Disability Tax Credit refundable, ensuring that low-income individuals who are disabled are able to benefit from the plan.

Additional support for Rural and Northern Canadians: Northern and rural Canadians often face special energy needs. We will provide additional assistance to rural Canadians to help them adjust to higher fuel prices. Every rural Canadian tax filer will receive an annual Green Rural Credit of $150, whether or not they pay taxes.

In addition to the Green Rural Credit, for those Canadians who live in Canada's North, we will immediately boost the northern residents deduction (NRD) to a new maximum of $7,000 per year from just over $6,000, and index it going forward. This represents an immediate tax savings of nearly $150 per year and over $200 per year within four years for those who fully benefit from the NRD.

Broad-based Corporate Income Tax Reduction: We will accelerate and deepen the currently planned corporate tax cuts, reducing the general corporate tax rate by an additional one percent within four years. This will reduce federal corporate tax rates to 14 percent by the fourth year of our plan, making Canada one of the most competitive tax jurisdictions in the world.

Small Business Income Tax Reductions: Small business is the job-creation engine of the Canadian economy. Canada's entrepreneurs will lead the development of new technologies and products for the green economy. We will help our entrepreneurs create more jobs by cutting their taxes by an additional one percent.

New Incentives for Green Technology: Smart tax incentives deliver new investment and jobs. The capital cost allowance system determines how much of the cost of a capital asset a business may deduct each year for tax purposes. By accelerating capital cost allowance rates for green investments, businesses will have a major new incentive to go green.

Emission Reduction Credits: One of the advantages of a cap and trade system is the financial incentives offered to sectors of the economy that are not energy related such as farming and forestry. In the interim, before a cap and trade system is in place, the Liberal green shift plan will set aside $400 million over four years to provide refundable tax credits for industries that are achieving real, verified reductions in their emissions. The plan will make it pay to adopt practices such as low-till or no-till farming, or greener forestry management.

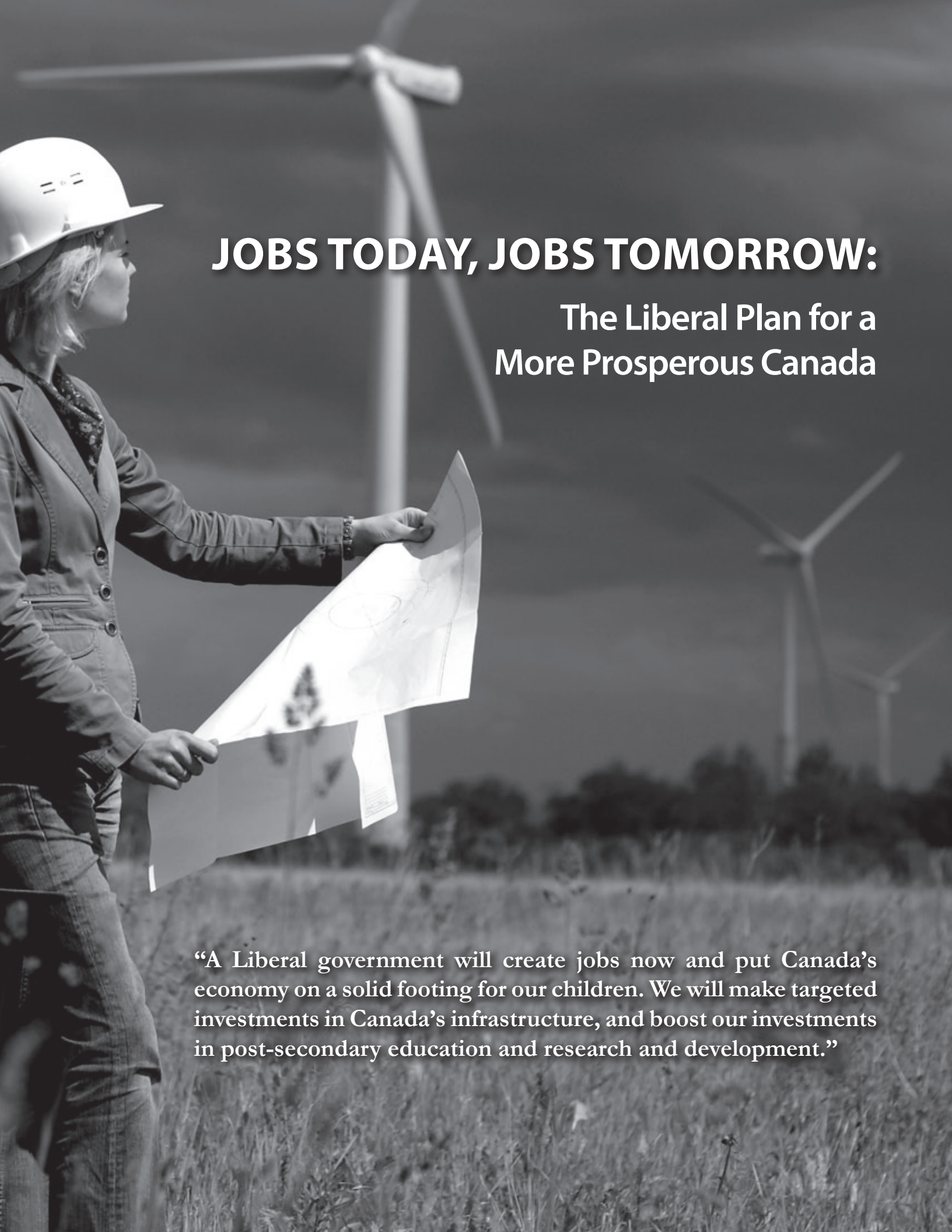
Better Research and Development (R&D): The primary tool that the federal government has to stimulate private R&D in Canada is the Science, Research & Experimental Development (SR&ED) Tax credit. Today this credit is not refundable for all companies that are conducting R&D in Canada. We will make the SR&ED Tax credit 25 percent refundable to spur further innovation, to help create new products and new jobs for Canadians.

Tax Breaks to Help Canadians Go Green: We will double the federal financial incentives to help Canadians make energy-saving home retrofits. We will provide up to $10,000 in direct financial support, in the form of refundable tax credits, for any household that invests in energy saving measures like insulation, weather proofing and efficient heating systems.

Contingency Offset: Funds will be set aside over four years for tax cuts designed to offset the impact of the carbon tax on groups such as not-for-profit organizations and charities.

The Liberal green shift plan is at the heart of our commitment to fight the climate change crisis and improve Canada's environment and economy. It complements other Liberal platform commitments to green our economy, such as the Renewable Power Production Incentive which will more than double the non-emitting energy sources available to Canadians; the $1-billion dollar Advanced Manufacturing Prosperity (AMP) Fund which will stimulate green manufacturing; and the Infrastructure Surplus commitment to upgrade sustainable infrastructure like public transit. In addition, this platform will explain the complementary regulations and incentives we will introduce to help Canadians reduce their own emissions, decrease their dependency on fossil fuels and save money, like interest-free Green Mortgages for home retrofits; incentives to buying energy-efficient appliances and vehicles; hundreds of millions of dollars in rebates and incentives for farmers, truckers and fishermen who invest in technologies that reduce their fuel consumption and emissions; and other ways to help Canadians reduce their environmental footprint.

Canadians know there are many things we can do together to improve our environment, our quality of life and our economic strength. Canadians are looking for a partner to help them make that transition. A Liberal government will be that partner.



JOBS TODAY, JOBS TOMORROW:

The Liberal Plan for a More Prosperous Canada

"A Liberal government will create jobs now and put Canada's economy on a solid footing for our children. We will make targeted investments in Canada's infrastructure, and boost our investments in post-secondary education and research and development."

The Liberal green shift plan described in the previous chapter will strengthen our economy by spurring investment and creating a new generation of green-collar jobs in energy, construction, design, and consumer products. And by cutting the lowest income tax rate by 10 percent and middle-class taxes by four to five percent, we'll make sure that every Canadian keeps more of their paycheque. The Liberal green shift will also boost the competitiveness of Canada's economy through business tax relief that will stimulate investment and green innovations. The general corporate income tax rate will be cut by an additional one percent. To assist small businesses, the engine of the Canadian economy, we will also cut the small business corporate tax rate by an additional one percent. Over $1.7 billion will be set aside for accelerated capital cost allowance rates to encourage investments in green technologies and equipment and the Science, Research & Experimental Development Tax credit will be made partially refundable to ensure that all companies have an incentive to invest in the kind of R&D that Canada will need to compete in the green economy of the 21st century.

But that's just the beginning of our plan to build a more prosperous Canada. A Liberal government will create jobs now and put Canada's economy on a solid footing for our children. We will make targeted investments in Canada's infrastructure, and boost our investments in post-secondary education and research and development.

All of these investments will be made within the framework of fiscal discipline that has become our hallmark as Liberals.

1. A Strong Climate for Growth: Balanced Budgets

We are committed to balanced budgets. All commitments in this platform are within a prudent fiscal framework that includes a contingency reserve of $3 billion a year.

Canada is comparatively well-equipped to face the challenge of an aging population. And this is because we will pass the next generation a burden of debt much lighter than the one we inherited. Thanks to Canadians' hard work and the leadership of the former Liberal government, our country's finances were put on the right path to decrease our debt burden relative to the size of our wealth.

Not long ago, Canada's public debt was one of the highest in the developed world. Now, it's one of the lowest. We are also the only country to put our national pension plan on a sound footing – thanks to the previous Liberal government and the hard work and sacrifice of all Canadians.

A new Liberal government will continue this sound management, the core of which is fiscal discipline. We are committed to balanced budgets, which is why all the commitments in this platform are within a prudent fiscal framework that includes a contingency reserve of $3 billion a year to be applied to the debt if it's not used – a prudent measure irresponsibly abandoned by the Conservative government.

Fiscal discipline is now part of the Liberal DNA. We were the party that turned a huge deficit into eight years of surpluses, and we will continue to put fiscal responsibility first.

There is also a need to consider the larger picture. And this picture includes a large infrastructure deficit that, if our generation fails to act, will be passed onto our children.

2. Jobs Today: Tackling the Infrastructure Deficit in our Cities and Communities

Together with Canadians, Liberals defeated the fiscal deficit. Canada is now facing another challenge, one that could be just as debilitating to our country's potential: the infrastructure deficit. The "infrastructure deficit" means that amount of spending needed simply to bring our existing infrastructure up to acceptable modern standards, without even adding anything new. This infrastructure deficit, estimated at over $100 billion, threatens our economic growth and our quality of life.

Liberals understand that infrastructure is not only the backbone of the Canadian economy; it is the foundation for the cities and communities in which we live. It is our tap water, the roads and bridges that connect us, the buildings that form the faces of our communities. Climate change will add to the challenge, as extreme weather places further stress on our infrastructure.

To tackle the infrastructure deficit, all governments must work together in partnership – and there must be leadership from the federal government. Stéphane Dion is committed to providing long-term, predictable resources through a three-point infrastructure revitalization plan.

A Liberal government would implement a 10-year, $70-billion plan to invest in our country's infrastructure.

First, a Liberal government will implement a 10-year, $70-billion plan to invest directly in our country's infrastructure. As part of this commitment, we will honour all existing framework agreements that the Conservative government has signed with the provinces. We believe that when the Government of Canada puts its name on an agreement, future governments should respect that commitment – a principle that has been violated by the Harper Conservatives who ignored signed commitments on the Atlantic Accords, the Kelowna Accord and the agreements with the provinces on early learning and child care. All specific funding commitments will also be honoured.

We will allocate at least $10 billion for Strategic Infrastructure, particularly green infrastructure such as clean water and sewage treatment, and clean energy grids.

Rather than the unfocused and incoherent approach to infrastructure that we have seen from the Conservatives, a Liberal government will be upfront and transparent about the priorities we will pursue in our discussions with the provinces and municipalities under the framework agreements. To that end, over the next 10 years, a Liberal government will allocate:

- at least $10 billion for Strategic Infrastructure, particularly green infrastructure such as clean water and sewage treatment, and clean energy grids;
- at least $8 billion for a National Transit Strategy that will enable our cities to expand their systems and green their transit fleets;
- at least $3 billion for a dedicated Small Communities Fund, to ensure that all Canadians are able to see strengthened, more resilient infrastructure;
- at least $4.5 billion for our country's Gateways, Corridors and Borders to ensure that Canada's infrastructure facilitates, rather than hinders, our trade and tourism industries while keeping Canada safe and secure; and
- at least $3 billion for Sports and Recreational Facilities because an active society is a healthier society and Canada must renew and expand its arenas and other leisure facilities.

In addition to these clear priorities, our 10-year plan includes the transfer of almost $25 billion to the municipalities through the gas tax transfer. We will index the transfer to nominal GDP growth so that municipalities have the funding certainty they need to keep up with economic growth.

Our ten-year plan includes the transfer of almost $25 billion to the municipalities through the gas tax transfer.

Second, a new Liberal government will invest the entire amount of any future unanticipated surplus that exceeds our $3-billion contingency reserve into Canada's infrastructure. This would have represented $7 billion in 2007-08, and nearly $75 billion if this approach had been taken over the last ten years. The top priority will be investment in sustainable infrastructure: public transit, water systems, green energy, waste management and remediating contaminated sites.

Third, a Liberal government will develop an Infrastructure Bank as an additional tool to finance infrastructure investment. This bank will provide low-cost financing for all levels of government that choose to borrow from it and will help finance long-term green infrastructure projects such as regional energy grids and high speed rail links in Canada's busiest commuter corridors. Canadians across the country would have the opportunity to participate in the Bank's projects through the purchase of tax-free Green Bonds similar to Canada Savings Bonds.

A Liberal government would develop an Infrastructure Bank as an additional tool to finance infrastructure investment.

Our commitment to addressing Canada's infrastructure deficit is strong. Our plan will be good for Canadians now – as it will create jobs and stimulate businesses at a time of economic slowdown – but it is also a commitment for the long term. For example, a Liberal government will be a willing partner for mega-projects like an East-West grid, commit to an Atlantic Energy Corridor and a carbon capture and sequestration pipeline between Alberta and Saskatchewan. The economic opportunities from infrastructure investments such as these are enormous and a Liberal government will seize them.

Infrastructure

The Liberal infrastructure commitment is worth $70 billion over ten years, with additional funding from future unanticipated surpluses and the resources of the infrastructure bank. The table below outlines four and ten year totals for infrastructure spending.

Over the next four years, we will not spend any less that the current commitments of the federal government. With our commitment regarding unanticipated surpluses, we will likely invest more.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMS	INFRASTRUCTURE ($B)	
	4 Year Total 2009/10 to 2012/13	10 Year Total 2009/10 to 2018/19
Pacific Gateway and Corridors	0.6	0.6
Gateways and Borders	1.4	4.7
Strategic Infrastructure	2.4	10.3
National Transit	1.9	8.2
Small Communities	0.6	2.8
Recreational	0.7	3.1
$25 m per province per year	1.3	3.3
Phase-out of existing programs	1.3	1.3
Infrastructure Bank Financing cost	0.3	1.6
GST rebate	3.4	9.6
Gas Tax Transfer to municipalities	8.6	24.6
TOTAL	**22.4**	**70.0**

3. Jobs Today: The Advanced Manufacturing Prosperity Fund

Liberals know that some of our most important industries are facing unprecedented challenges. Unlike the Harper Conservatives, who have turned their backs on Canadian manufacturing, we will be there to help with strategic investments to create new jobs and growth.

We will create a $1-billion Advanced Manufacturing Prosperity (AMP) Fund. The fund will support investments in manufacturing and R&D facilities.

We will create a $1-billion Advanced Manufacturing Prosperity (AMP) Fund to help this key sector, which lost 130,000 jobs in 2007 under the Harper Conservatives. The AMP Fund will help make Canada a leader in green technologies. It will support major investments in manufacturing and R&D facilities, which will serve as an anchor for clusters of economic activity. We will make investments according to following three strategic criteria:

1. The federal investment must leverage significant private investment, and in so doing create jobs.

2. The investment must be in anchor facilities that attract significant secondary industries: suppliers, services, and other support businesses.

3. The investment must help position Canada as a leader in the manufacture of greener technologies and products.

Contrary to Conservatives, Liberals believe in partnering with the provinces to make targeted investments to help spur innovation and create jobs. As other countries like the United States are investing strategically to attract new private investment in order to bring the best jobs and the best facilities to their country, the Conservatives have done nothing. Every day we follow the Harper Conservative approach means lost opportunities for Canada and lost jobs for Canadians.

4. Strong Rural and Northern Canada

No economic plan for Canada would be complete without specific policies for rural and Northern Canada. The Liberal green shift plan and incentives for renewable power will encourage new investments in renewable energy throughout rural Canada, from bio-fuels to wind to solar power. In addition to all other income tax reductions in the Liberal plan, rural Canadians will receive an additional $150 per tax filer every year.

A Liberal government will complete the job of making broadband internet service available to rural communities and keep rural post offices open.

But our plan does much more. We will focus much of our infrastructure effort on rural Canada. That doesn't just mean roads and bridges – it's also about communications. That's why a Liberal government will:

- complete the job of making broadband Internet service available to rural communities; and

- keep rural post offices open, recommitting to the Liberal moratorium on closing rural post offices.

Canada cannot be truly prosperous if some regions are left behind as others flourish. For the past generation, Canada's regional development agencies – the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions (CEDQ), Western Economic Diversification Canada (WED) and the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Ontario (FedNor) – have worked to foster economic development in small rural and urban communities across Canada. Stephen Harper's Conservatives have never understood the valuable work undertaken by Canada's regional development agencies, viewing them as little more than regional welfare agencies. Therefore it is no surprise that they have downgraded the representation of the agencies in their Conservative cabinet and in some cases cut their funding. A Liberal government would reverse this trend and restore funding, including the $6.4 million cut from the Northern Ontario Development Program, which promotes economic growth, diversification, job creation and sustainable communities in Northern Ontario.

A Liberal government will help rural communities attract more doctors by forgiving $10, 000 of student debt in exchange for each year of practice in a rural or under-serviced area.

A high quality of life in rural Canada means having access to high quality services. That's why a Liberal government will:

- help rural communities attract more doctors by forgiving $10,000 of student debt for doctors in exchange for each year of practice in a rural or under-serviced area for a minimum of 5 years; and
- support volunteer firefighters by providing a refundable tax credit of $2,000 for volunteer firefighters and emergency service workers.

For Northern Canadians, the high cost of living is a barrier to prosperity. A Liberal government will immediately boost the maximum Northern Residents Deduction by almost $1,000 and index it going forward.

In order to keep our rural and Northern communities strong and vibrant, we must address the challenges facing the industries that are their economic foundations: forestry, fishing and farming.

The forestry sector is experiencing some major challenges. That's why we will convene a National Forestry Summit with industry, unions, communities, Aboriginal Canadians and other governments to develop a National Forestry Strategy.

Liberals will invest $250 million to fight the spread of the Mountain Pine Beetle.

A new and serious threat to Canadian forestry is the mountain pine beetle – an example of how climate change will impact Canada's economy. The pine beetle has ravaged forests in British Columbia and has crossed into Alberta, threatening jobs and raising the fire risk in rural communities. Liberals will be there to help affected Canadians, with $250 million in new funding to fight the spread of the pine beetle.

We will also help protect and support Canada's fishing industries. We will invest to preserve our fishing stocks and fairly allocate viable fisheries, increasing funding for science, surveillance, conservation and protection. We will also invest to reduce fishing efforts and allow those who want to end their fishing career to do so with dignity by offering to retire core commercial harvesting licenses in areas severely affected by declining stocks. We will also partner with the provinces to fund an early retirement program for displaced crewmembers and plant workers.

We will establish the Green Fisheries and the Transport Fund, which will provide over $250 million for investments to reduce fuel consumption.

We will promote cod and salmon stock recovery by reinvesting in habitat conservation and working to establish the world's first international protected area to protect the vital cod nursery from foreign over-fishing on the Tail of the Grand Banks. We will help fishers improve their assets, by improving access to capital for improvements to fishing vessels and equipment through the establishment of the Green Fisheries and Transport Fund. The Fund will provide over $250 million in rebates and incentives for investments in technologies that reduce fuel consumption, such as anti-idling power devices for the trucking industry and onshore power facilities for the fisheries industry.

We will convene a National Fisheries Summit, bringing together all the key stakeholders and orders of government to address the economic and sustainability

challenges facing the industry. And we will be mindful of the importance of the fisheries industry across the whole country by investing $100 million (including $25 million in Canada's North) in the improvement of small craft harbours, the home base of Canada's commercial fishing industry.

To build a strong future for our agriculture sector, we will introduce a new Regional Flexibility Fund. The agricultural sector faces challenges that are not the same across Canada. A Liberal government will work in partnership with farmers and farm organizations to fund the development of regional specific solutions such as the Ontario Risk Management Program. Adaptation to climate change will also present a challenge for farmers and the Regional Flexibility Fund could help regions develop improvements to crop insurance and environment programs.

To build a strong future for our agriculture sector, we will introduce a new regional flexibility fund.

We will restore a strong, democratic Wheat Board, reversing the damage done by the Conservatives and ensuring that farmers are the ones who direct reforms to the board, through a fair and transparent process. We will defend supply management in negotiations at the World Trade Organization.

We will strengthen business risk management programs, using input from farm organizations to make sure those programs meet the needs of all producers in all regions. We will streamline AgriStability to ensure a simpler application process and easier accessibility. And we will reaffirm the federal government's commitment to provide compensation for losses from unforeseen natural disasters. We will also support the promotion of local farmers' markets, and the branding of Canadian foods. The more that Canadians buy local farm products, the less distance our food has to travel – this is good for farmers and the environment.

To ensure accuracy and fairness in the calculation of freight rates, a Liberal government will quickly launch a full railway costing review. In addition, a Liberal government will acknowledge the commercial, community and environmental value of short-line railway operations, which need to be encouraged as an infrastructure priority. A Liberal government will implement a moratorium on further branch-line abandonment proceedings to allow the new government to assess the appropriateness of the current branch-line configuration.

A Liberal government will implement a moratorium on further branch-line abandonment proceedings.

Risks to farming operations caused by worsening climate change are increasing, including threats to crop production and diminishing fresh water supplies. A new Liberal government will, as part of our $400-million Water Fund described in more detail later in this platform, strongly support the on-farm and community-based fresh water development programs of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA).

Finally, we will give farmers the tools they need to become more energy efficient and less reliant on fossil fuels. Farms that invest in green technologies such as anaerobic digesters or biomass production will benefit from an accelerated capital cost allowance. A Liberal government will also create a $250-million Green Farms Fund to provide rebates that will reduce the up-front cost of these

We will create a $250-million Green Farms Fund to help invest in green technology and research.

technologies and invest in research. This is on top of the Emissions Reduction Credit, part of the Liberal green shift plan, which will provide $400 million over four years for refundable tax credits to industries such as farming that are achieving real, verified reductions in their emissions.

5. Jobs Tomorrow: Investment in Research & Development

A Liberal government will increase the budgets of the three granting councils by 34 percent.

A Liberal government will increase support for the indirect costs of university-based research to $500 million a year, which at full implementation will represent a more than 50 percent increase over current levels.

For researchers and graduate students, a Liberal government will increase the budgets of the three granting councils by 34 percent over four years. Support for the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) will both increase to $1.275 billion a year from the current levels of $960 million. Funding for the Social Sciences and Humanities Council (SSHRC) will be increased to $450 million a year from the current level of $320 million.

We will also create an Interdisciplinary Sustainability Fund of $100 million. This Fund will be available to scientists, researchers and graduate students for projects that reach beyond the barriers of their discipline. Interdisciplinary research is the way of the future. It is how we will address complex scientific challenges – like adaptation to the climate change crisis – that affect our economy and our society.

We will make the SR&ED tax credit refundable to spur innovation and create jobs for Canadians.

A Liberal government will also extend the tax credit for research and development through the Scientific Research and Experimental Development Tax (SR&ED) Program, so that 25 percent of SR&ED tax credits received will be refundable. This means that all innovative companies in Canada will be rewarded, not just those that are already making a profit and paying taxes in the short term.

Building upon our initial proposal to retain income trusts as a high-yield investment option so that Canadians have a diversity of investment vehicles, while ensuring tax neutrality between corporations and income trusts, a Liberal government will repeal the punitive 31.5 percent tax on income trusts and replace it with a 10 percent tax that is refundable for Canadian residents.

6. Jobs Tomorrow: Providing Access to Post-Secondary Education

The opportunity for every Canadian to attend college or university, or to complete a skilled trade apprenticeship, is central to the future economic success of Canada. To succeed in the global economy, replace retiring baby-boomers in existing jobs and fill new jobs created by an innovative, dynamic and sustainable economy, we need to make quality, affordable post-secondary education available to more Canadians.

The only new assistance full-time students have received under the Conservative government is a tax credit for textbooks worth less than $10 per month. As well, a student must earn almost $20,000 a year to benefit fully from existing education tax credits. That's little help to most students, who earn an average of just $5,000.

A Liberal government will help make post-secondary education accessible to every Canadian by boosting and simplifying existing support for students, and offering more tax credits and student loans to apprentices.

Simplifying Tax Support for Students

Currently, our tax system does not work effectively and efficiently for students. Students are not able to qualify for most available tax credits because they typically do not earn sufficient income. For those who benefit from the credits, the refund arrives in a lump sum at the end of the school year rather than during the school year when students need the money most.

A Liberal government will simplify the maze of tax credits for students by replacing them with a Education Grant that will be delivered to all students when they need it most.

To ensure that students benefit from support when they need it, the existing tuition and education tax credits for full-time post-secondary students will be replaced with an Education Grant payable to each student every three months – at the same time as the GST rebate is paid to most students.

When combined with the GST rebate received by most students, this new grant will be worth $1,000 per full-time undergraduate, postgraduate or college student per year. In addition to this, our plan offers an additional a tax credit worth $250 for students who work and are therefore able to benefit from the green shift's refundable employment credit even if they do not earn sufficient income to pay federal income taxes.

An Improved Approach to Student Aid

A Liberal government will create a 20-year education endowment fund worth $25 billion. By creating a fund such as this, the federal government will be able to turn a relatively small investment – which would allow for the borrowing of the initial funds needed to start the endowment – into a significant, long-term investment in students. Over the next four years and in cooperation with the provinces, this fund will allow the government at full implementation to provide 200,000 needs-based bursaries of up to $3,500 per year and 100,000 access bursaries of up to $4,000 per year. Needs-based bursaries will be used to ensure that the barrier of cost will be lowered for students who need financial support to pursue their post-secondary education. Access grants will be used to provide financial assistance to help individuals who are members of groups that are traditionally under-represented in post-secondary education.

Quebec has a long and unique history of a generous and progressive approach to student support. In recognition and support of this approach, a Liberal government will work with the provincial government to meet the shared goal of increasing access and affordability for post-secondary education while providing Quebec with the

option of receiving compensation over a similar 20-year period to invest in its own post-secondary student funding priorities instead of joining any new arrangement.

Reforming Student Loans

We will make all students eligible for guaranteed student loans of $5,000, regardless of parental income.

At present, many middle-income families see their children denied student loans based on existing rules about parental income and assumed levels of parental support. These rules do not match the reality of many of today's middle-income families, who cannot afford to finance their child's education. A Liberal government will make all students eligible for guaranteed student loans of $5,000, regardless of parental income.

In addition to this commitment to a guaranteed student loan for all students, we will also work with our provincial partners to put an end to high interest rates for students by providing all students with a new lower lending rate of only a half a percent above the prime rate – the rate that banks give to their best and most credit-worthy customers. We will also work with the provinces to design new student loan programs that will increase access for under-represented groups such as Aboriginal Canadians. Finally, we will extend the payment grace period for students immediately after graduation from 6 months to 2 years and make this grace period interest-free. We will also extend the time period that individuals have to repay their student loans.

Extending Support to Apprentices and Summer Students

A Liberal government will make available to all full-time apprentices the existing $400-a-month education tax credit.

Canada faces a shortage of skilled trades-people as existing workers retire. To support apprentices, a Liberal government will make available to all full-time apprentices the existing $400-a-month education tax credit. Apprentices will also be eligible for the guaranteed $5,000 student loan.

In addition to these measures, a Liberal government will restore the $44 million in funding to the Student Summer Jobs Program cut by the Conservatives.

7. Supporting Canadian Culture

A Liberal government will reverse recent cuts to arts and cultural programs.

Canada's diverse arts and cultural community plays a vital role in our national identity. Cultural activity fosters vibrant, liveable cities and communities, and supports innovation, helps us understand our past and imagine our future, and stimulates our economy.

Government needs to do a better job of supporting and promoting Canadian books, music and other forms of creativity. Unfortunately, we have a Conservative government that fails to see the value of arts and culture in fostering the richness of our country.

The Harper Conservatives gutted the Public Diplomacy Program, which allows our diplomats overseas to use Canadian artists and cultural products to gain access to and influence decision makers. They cut funding to community museums, and have provided no support for Canadian television, our growing film industry or

"While the Conservatives believe that Canadian filmmakers should be censored, we Liberals believe that Canadian filmmakers should be given more tools to help them succeed."

cultural organizations. Until the Liberal caucus exposed them, the Conservatives were trying to give their Minister the power to censor filmmakers with a few lines buried in a 500-page tax bill. They then slashed at least $44.5 million from critical cultural support programs. A Liberal government will reverse these recent cuts and reinvest the funding cut from the Public Diplomacy Program in 2006.

We will increase the Canadian Film and Video Production Tax Credit to 30 percent.

Liberals believe that Canadian filmmakers should be given more tools to help them succeed. That is why we will increase the Canadian Film and Video Production Tax Credit to 30 percent. Not only will this help our filmmakers produce more great films, but it will also help create more high-quality jobs in an industry that already employs over 125,000 people. This represents a commitment of over $160 million to our filmmakers.

A Liberal government will support our cultural industries, increasing Canada's competitiveness and quality of life, inviting leading cultural figures to showcase Canada to the world, celebrating and encouraging our wonderful diversity.

A Liberal government will double the annual funding to the Canada Council for the Arts.

That support begins at the institutional level. Over the next four years, we will double funding to the Canada Council for the Arts, bringing its annual budget to over $360 million. This will enable the Canada Council to make significant investments in Canada's artists, creators, and arts institutions. With this investment, we are giving Canadian artists the tools they need to create exciting, vibrant products for all Canadians.

In addition to restoring the cuts made by the Conservatives, we will further increase funding for international arts promotion programming by $15 million over three years to help bring Canada to the world.

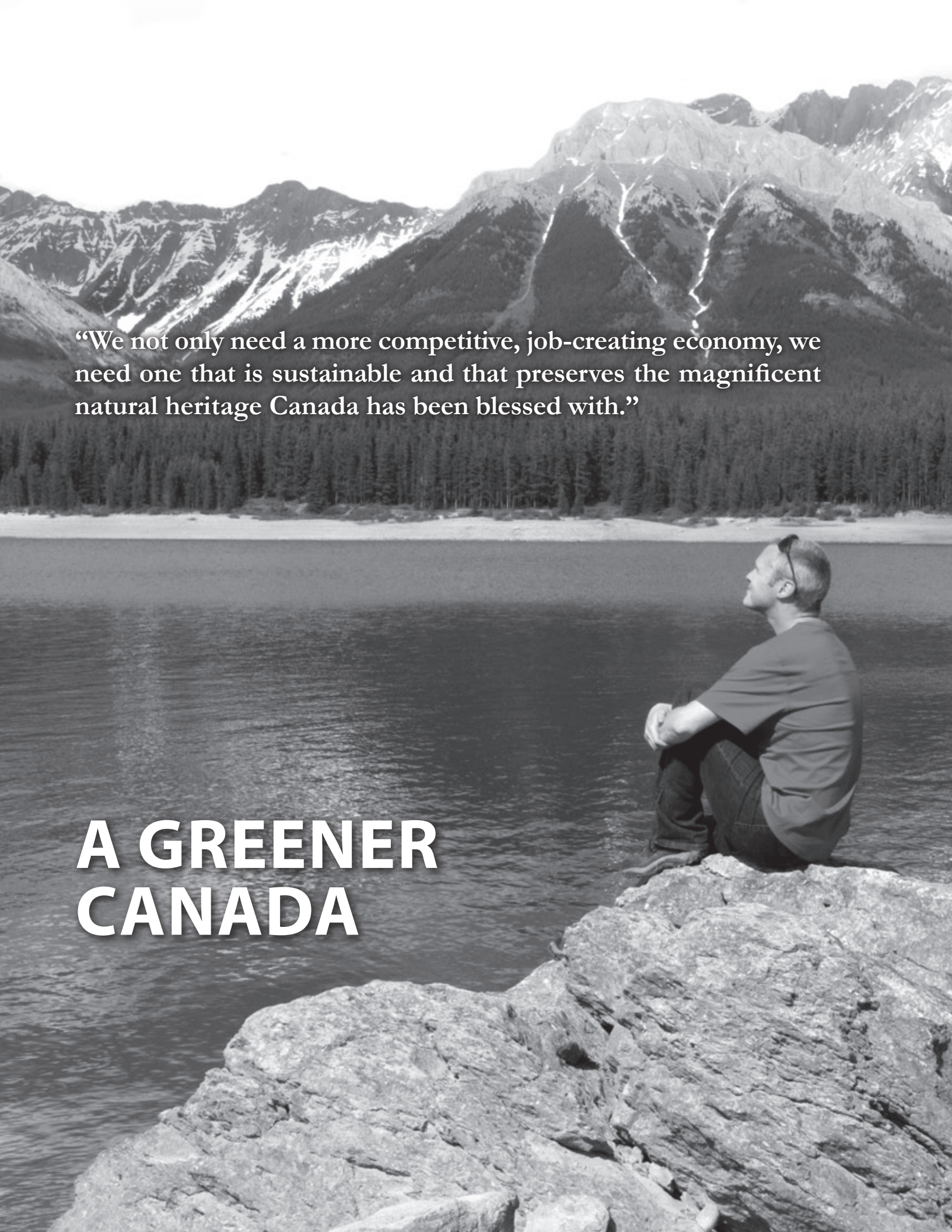
We will increase support for Canada's museums, investing $16 million in the Museum Assistance Program, to help safeguard our precious cultural heritage.

We will support Canadian content, directing the CRTC to continue its requirement of Canadian production and content as a condition of broadcast licensing.

A Liberal government will provide income-averaging for artists, an important tool for helping this country's writers, artists and musicians continue to excel.

Canada has had considerable success in developing a home-grown new or interactive media sector that produces leading edge educational and entertainment projects enjoyed by audiences here at home and around the world. To build on this success and create new, high-skilled jobs in this rapidly growing industry, a new Liberal government will develop and launch a Canadian Digital Media Strategy. The Strategy will focus the government's efforts to ensure that Canadian creators are able to take a leading role in an industry expected to be worth $65 billion globally by 2010.

Support for Canada's arts and culture must also extend to support for artists themselves. That is why a Liberal government will provide income averaging for artists drawing on the inspiration of Quebec's income-averaging provisions. This will ensure that the tax system will better reflect the peaks and valleys of the artistic work cycle. This is an important tool for helping this country's writers, artists and musicians continue to excel.



"We not only need a more competitive, job-creating economy, we need one that is sustainable and that preserves the magnificent natural heritage Canada has been blessed with."

A GREENER CANADA

A Greener Canada

By mobilizing the economy to reduce pollution and find new, cleaner ways of doing business, the Liberal green shift plan will help Canada move towards a greener future. But we need to do more to fight climate change and clean up our air and water, and protect our wildlife and wilderness.

We need our economy to be more competitive and to create more jobs. But we also need it to be sustainable, so that we are able to preserve the magnificent natural heritage with which Canada has been blessed. We need an economy that will be strong today, and for future generations. We need a country able to enhance its quality of life today, and for the decades to come. We need to reconcile our way of life with our environment, our health, and our moral obligation to leave our children clean air, clean water and a healthy planet.

The world today faces an unprecedented global crisis: climate change. The world's leading scientists are telling us that an increase in the Earth's temperature of just 2 to 4 degrees Celsius will lead to a catastrophic disruption of life as we know it, and we must act urgently to stop it.

Humans caused global warming and humans can fix it – we have the know-how and we have the technology, but we need the leadership to mobilize our entire society towards this great task.

The last time Canada faced a challenge of this proportion was at the outbreak of the Second World War: At that time, all elements of society – government, industry, labour and ordinary citizens – responded to the challenge of a country-wide mobilization against a global threat. We can do this again. And just as Canada transformed itself into a major industrial power in the 20th century, Canada today has another opportunity to revolutionize its economy – the chance to design a low-energy, low greenhouse gas emission economy and society suitable for the 21st century. Mobilizing the economy for the fight against the climate change crisis will allow Canada to embrace the world's next industrial revolution.

A Liberal government will make Canada a leader in this green revolution.

Our green shift plan will put a price on pollution and will encourage the innovation and efficiency that will improve both our environment and economy.

Our Advanced Manufacturing Prosperity Fund will help attract investment in manufacturing the greener, more efficient products that will dominate the markets of tomorrow.

Our R&D investments will ensure that research and science continue to inform policy decisions and that we understand the impacts of the climate change crisis on our communities and our economy so we know how best to adapt to what is inevitable and avoid what is not.

And our infrastructure investments will give our cities and communities the help they need to reduce their pollution and build the resiliency to respond to the future impacts of climate change.

The world economy is becoming increasingly energy constrained and competitive. Countries that adopt decisive, sustainable strategies will lead the way. Canada must be one of these countries and the Liberal plan will ensure that it is.

1. A Plan to Fight the Climate Change Crisis

Climate change may well be the most pressing challenge of our time. But it also presents a rare opportunity. By encouraging energy-efficient and clean technologies and practices today, Canada can be a leader in the economy of tomorrow. The Liberal green shift is the foundation of a national climate change plan, one that puts a price on carbon and addresses the carbon pollution that is produced by all sectors of our economy and is stored in our natural spaces.

To set a clear path for ourselves, and be taken seriously internationally, we need to establish firm targets to cut emissions in the short, medium and long term. A Liberal government will:

- respect our commitments and international obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions to at least 20 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, and increasing this goal to at least 25 percent if other countries make comparable efforts;
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 emission levels by 2035
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 60 to 80 percent below 1990 emission levels by 2050.

A Liberal government will reduce GHG emissions to at least 20 percent under 1990 levels by 2020.

These targets are tough but achievable. They are also consistent with those of other leading jurisdictions. Most important, they are what scientific experts tell us is required to avert the dangers of climate change and protect human health. Inspired by that goal, a Liberal government will enact a plan to ensure that Canada reaches these targets, making Canada a world leader in global environmental citizenship.

Cutting Industrial Emissions of Greenhouse Gases

Over half of Canada's total GHG emissions come from large industrial emitters. The Conservative government's approach is so weak and so full of loopholes that it will have very little effect, according to the experts who have studied it.

A Liberal government will act immediately to put a price on carbon that rises to $40 per tonne of carbon emission within four years. That price will start low enough not to cause economic hardship, but will progressively increase over

time, to send industry the clear message that the old ways of polluting production no longer make sense. The price will begin with our very first budget, allowing Canadian companies to start right away on the path to increasing energy efficiency and lowering emissions.

While the economy begins to adjust to a low carbon future, a Liberal government will take the time to properly design mandatory, absolute emissions caps for the largest polluting sectors--oil and gas production, utilities, and energy-intensive industries -- to ensure these companies reduce the emissions that harm our health and environment.

We will create a real carbon trading system to reward companies that reduce emissions more quickly to sell their emission credits to those who will take a little longer to reduce. This "cap-and-trade" system will harness the power of the market to fight climate change, setting an absolute limit on industrial emissions and auctioning emission permits, while letting the market decide how best to make the reductions in a cost-effective way.

We will ensure this cap-and-trade system will be able to interact with international trading systems, and will be integrated with our other measures so that companies who are covered by the cap-and-trade system are not "double taxed" or treated unfairly.

This plan will offer business the predictability and clarity they need to make sound investment decisions and plan for the future, and will offer the environmental certainty that emissions are reduced.

The Emissions Reduction Credit

We will set aside $400 million over four years to provide refundable tax credits for industries such as farming and forestry that are achieving real, verified reductions in their emissions.

One of the advantages of a cap-and-trade system is the financial incentives offered to sectors of the economy that are not energy related, such as farming and forestry. But a cap-and-trade system cannot be implemented overnight. In the interim, before a cap-and-trade system is in place, we will set aside $400 million over four years to provide refundable tax credits for industries such as farming and forestry that are achieving real, verified reductions in their emissions. A Liberal government will make it pay to adopt practices such as low-till or no-till farming, or greener forestry management.

A Strategy for Clean Energy

Today, less than five percent of Canada's power today comes from renewable energy. We need to do dramatically better. A Liberal government will ensure that Canada embraces green energy solutions, helping us make the shift from polluting energy to cleaner sources, in order to remain competitive in the carbon-constrained global economy of the future.

A Liberal government will ensure that Canada has access to the technologies it needs to become a clean energy superpower. We will provide a Renewable Power Production Incentive that will more than double the non-emitting energy sources

available to Canadians with a goal of having 12,000 Megawatts – that's 10 percent of Canada's total electricity output – come from low-impact renewable sources by 2015 and 15 percent by 2020. These incentives will generate more than $25 billion in clean energy investment and tens of thousands of new, well-paid jobs for Canadians.

A Liberal government will provide the Renewable Power Production Incentive that will result in 10 percent of Canada's total electricity output coming from low-impact renewable sources by 2015.

A portion of this incentive will be directed to support renewable energy in Northern and remote communities, which currently rely on diesel generators. With projects that could meet about 10 percent of all electricity demand in remote communities, we will eliminate the need for hundreds of millions of litres of imported diesel fuel.

We will also use the purchasing power of federal operations to help accelerate the market by establishing minimum targets across the federal government for the purchase of energy from green sources.

In recent years, companies exploring in the oil sands have been receiving a special tax break on their investments, which was designed to take into account the risks linked to a new and untested technology to develop the oil sands. This can no longer be justified in an era where the technology is well-established, with oil worth over $100 a barrel and billions in oil profits. A Liberal government will immediately end the special tax treatment for oil sands development. However, oil companies that invest in technologies that reduce their greenhouse gas emissions will benefit from our new accelerated capital cost allowance that rewards such green investments.

Helping Canadians Go Green

We Liberals know that Canadians want to help fight the climate change crisis and reduce their energy bills. They need their governments to encourage action, not discourage it. Canadians can help reduce emissions, while saving money, by making our homes, buildings and vehicles more energy efficient.

Greener Homes and Buildings

Home heating and cooling costs a lot of money and takes a lot of energy. Canada was a leader in energy-efficient housing, but this leadership has waned. We are being surpassed by our global competitors who are actively looking ahead to the emerging market for zero-energy housing – housing built to conserve energy and use renewable energy sources so that the home consumes no electricity from the power grid on an annual net basis.

The objective of a Liberal government will be to retrofit 50 percent of all Canada's homes by 2020, and 100 percent by 2030.

A Liberal government will provide powerful incentives for green home renovations that will trigger a boom in home improvement to capture the 20 to 40 percent energy savings that are easily available for most homes. Our objective is to retrofit 50 percent of all Canada's homes and buildings by 2020, and 100 percent by 2030. To help Canadians shield their families from higher energy prices, we will:

- double the federal financial incentives to help Canadians make energy saving home retrofits, providing up to $10,000 in direct financial support

for any household that invests in energy-saving measures like insulation, weather proofing and efficient heating systems; and

A Liberal government will provide up to $10, 000 for any household that invests in such measures as insulation and efficient heating systems.

- introduce interest-free Green Mortgage loans of up to $10,000 per household to help Canadians pay for the up-front costs of major energy-saving home retrofits such as geothermal or solar heating that can provide even deeper energy savings.

Low-income households spend a comparatively large portion of their income on energy bills. The Conservatives cut programs for low-income Canadians, leaving them to face rising energy costs without the help they need to cut those costs permanently.

A Liberal government will introduce a $140-million Low-income Homes Retrofit Partnership Fund to help upgrade low-income housing across Canada, including federally administered co-operative housing, and reduce energy costs for those least able to pay.

We will introduce a $140 million Low-income Homes Retrofit Partnership Fund to help upgrade low-income housing.

A Liberal government will also ensure Canadians have the most energy-efficient products to choose from by increasing the energy-efficiency standards for appliances, such as furnaces, air conditioners, washers and dryers. We will strengthen the Energy Efficiency Act and change the way it is applied, so that Canada's energy-efficiency standards meet or exceed the toughest levels in North America and Europe.

Instead of the minor housekeeping measures that the Conservatives have proposed, we will set tough energy performance requirements for all energy-using equipment, based on the highest level of efficiency that is supported by broadly available technology. These would be updated every 3 years to drive continual improvement and would eliminate from new sales those inefficient products which waste energy and contribute to climate changing pollution. This will allow Canadians to benefit from the very quick payback that increased energy efficiency can bring – reducing energy costs for everyone from homeowners, to commercial and institutional landlords and tenants, to industries.

At the same time, we will upgrade the energy-efficiency guidelines in the National Model Codes for Houses and Buildings. We will work with provinces to ensure the new guidelines are adopted across the country and phase in energy labelling for buildings, so all new builds are green builds.

A Liberal government will provide incentives for green thermal solutions (innovative heating and cooling technology in commercial and residential buildings) by providing Accelerated Capital Cost Allowances so building owners can write off the costs of the needed equipment more quickly.

Greener Transportation

Almost a quarter of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation. A Liberal government will take aggressive measures to reduce these emis-

sions and keep good jobs in Canada by ensuring Canadians are making the green cars of the future.

To help industries to reduce their emission, we will establish the Green Fisheries and Transport Fund, which will assist public transit authorities become more energy efficient and provide over $250 million in rebates and incentives for investments in technologies that reduce fuel consumption like anti-idling power devices for the trucking industry and on-shore power facilities for the fisheries industry.

As consumers begin to demand more fuel-efficient vehicles in the face of rising fuel costs, it will be important for Canadian companies to be at the forefront of their production. To encourage this transition, a new Liberal government will enforce a new post-2010 fuel-efficiency standard and work with U.S. leaders to create a strong North American standard for our integrated automotive industries. We will also use the AMP Fund to make sure manufacturers choose Canada for green automobile production.

A Liberal government will enforce a new post-2010 fuel efficiency standard and work with U.S. leaders to create a strong North American standard.

To assist average Canadians to lower the emissions created by driving, we will introduce a national low-carbon fuel standard that will, by 2020, reduce the carbon intensity of all vehicle fuels by at least 10 percent by requiring next generation bio fuels and other low-carbon fuel additives. We will also dramatically improve car scrappage programs, working in conjunction with provinces, so older cars that pollute more come off the road sooner.

Finally, we will ensure the government fleet of thousands of vehicles is made up of green, fuel-efficient models.

Information for Action

GHG emissions per person in Canada are among the highest in the world – even higher than in the United States. Canadians know that we need to change this and want to do their part. A Liberal government will help Canadians seize the personal and economic opportunity to contribute to a better world as individuals. The first step is to understand our individual impact on the environment—our "ecological footprint."

We will create a Canada-specific comprehensive footprint calculator so Canadians can identify which activities are most contributing to environmental damage, and will provide useful information so individuals can make environmentally sound choices in their lives.

We will create a Canada-specific comprehensive footprint calculator so Canadians can identify which activities are contributing most to environmental damage.

Many Canadians are buying Carbon Offsets – credits from projects that reduce GHG emissions elsewhere – but want to be sure that these offsets represent real reductions. A Liberal government will develop a Canadian Gold Standard for carbon offsets, so that Canadians can have confidence in the credits they buy to become carbon neutral, while they gradually change their lifestyles to lower their emissions.

Adaptation

A Liberal government will coordinate a National Adaptation Strategy so that all orders of government can better understand and prepare for the effects of

A Liberal government will develop a Canadian Gold Standard for carbon offsets, so that Canadians can have confidence in the credits they buy.

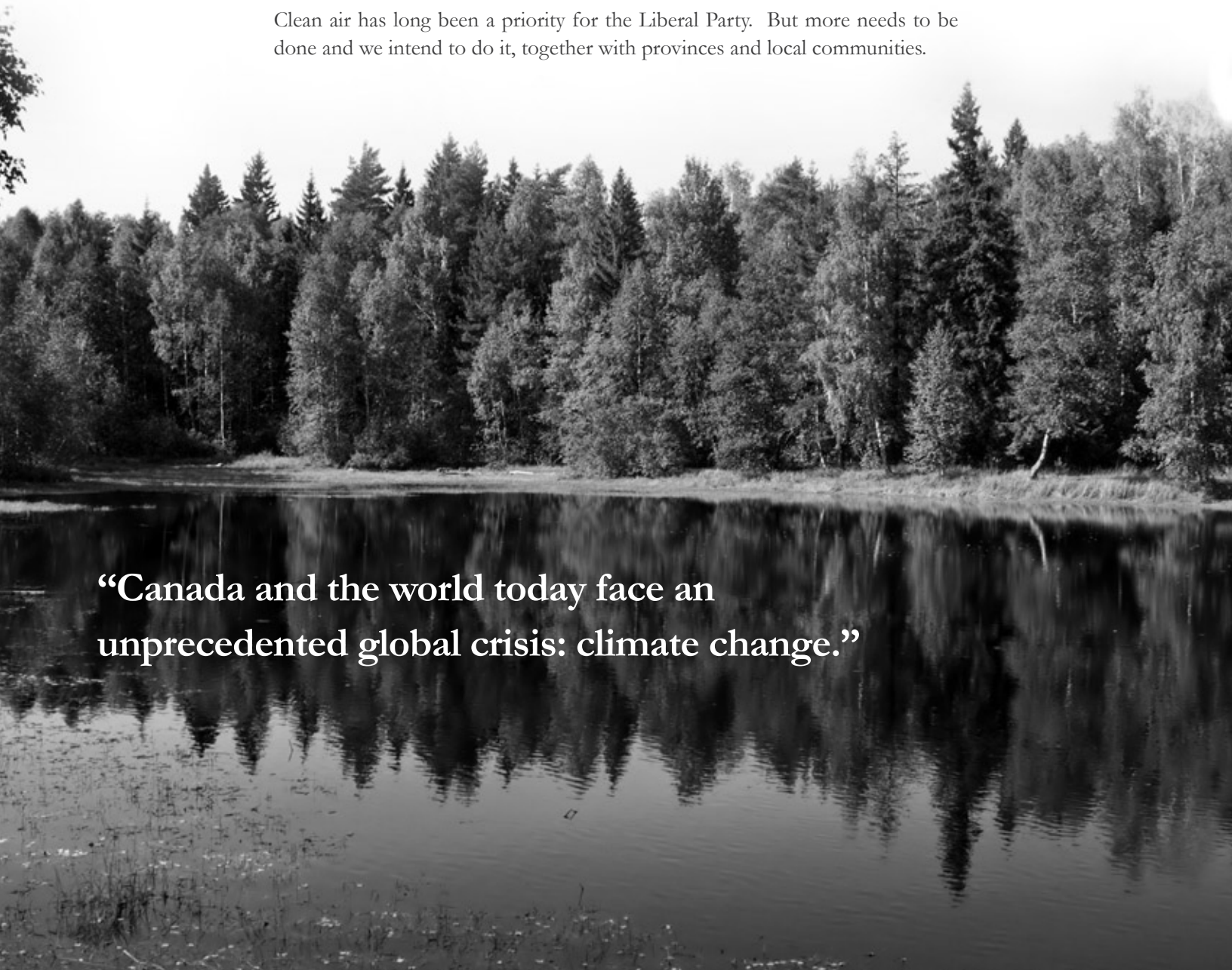
climate change that are already inevitable. Our new Interdisciplinary Sustainability Fund will provide funding for research into these effects and our substantial infrastructure spending will, of course, consider adaptation needs.

2. Clean Air

The Liberal climate change plan will not only help address climate change, it will also help clean the air we breathe because being more energy efficient and using more renewable energy sources mean we will spew less smog and pollution into our air.

Millions of Canadians live in areas where smog, haze and acid rain pose serious health concerns. The link between air pollution and respiratory diseases is well known. We are seeing alarming increases in childhood asthma, and recent research even shows a link between polluted air and cardiovascular disease. Every year, thousands of Canadians die, and tens of thousands of Canadians end up in hospital and miss work and school due to air pollution.

Clean air has long been a priority for the Liberal Party. But more needs to be done and we intend to do it, together with provinces and local communities.



"Canada and the world today face an unprecedented global crisis: climate change."

In addition to our green shift initiatives, a Liberal government will pass tough National Ambient Air Quality Standards to reduce the pollutants that cause smog, haze, acid rain and other problems. These new standards will help to protect Canadians from the sources of air pollution in their regions, using health-based levels of safety for the air they breathe.

A Liberal government will pass tough National Air Quality Standards to reduce pollutants.

We will also help industry to upgrade their technology by making air pollution control equipment eligible for rapid tax write-offs, and implement a comprehensive Mercury Reduction Strategy, which will help to reduce the presence of this potent neurotoxin in our environment.

3. Safeguarding our Water

Canadians expect that when we turn on the tap, the water that comes out will be clean and safe to drink.

We want to be able to play on our beaches and swim in our lakes, without fear of exposure to toxic substances or raw sewage.

We want to maintain our rich agricultural and industrial productivity – which rely heavily on water – and, of course, we want to ensure the aquatic animal and plant life in our ecosystems remains healthy and plentiful.

Despite some important improvements over the past decade, many of our waterways are still degraded because of contaminants and inadequate treatment of sewage. New threats are emerging as toxic substances in products or pharmaceuticals accumulate in our water systems, and as climate change lowers water levels and puts ecosystems under threat. And the water needs of rapidly increasing energy production – particularly in the oil sands -- are huge.

That's why we need bold action to protect our water, and that's what a Liberal government will provide. We will implement a National Water Strategy using regulations, monitoring, enforcement and new investment, to clean up our waterways – and keep them clean.

We will implement a National Water Strategy to clean up our waterways and keep them clean.

Our substantial infrastructure commitments will help our cities and communities to invest in much needed water-treatment infrastructure to manage water demand and preserve a clean water supply.

In addition, a Liberal government will invest $400 million in a Canada Water Fund. This new initiative will:

- increase monitoring and reporting of the quantity and quality of Canadian water;
- clean up our waterways, including "hot spots" in the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence and Lake Winnipeg;
- research the impact of emerging pollutants in water on human and aquatic ecosystem health;

A Liberal government will invest $400 million in a Canada Water Fund designed to protect and enhance the quality of our water.

- fight invasive species, such as the sea lamprey or zebra mussel;
- map Canada's underground aquifers that supply our drinking water, so we know where our groundwater comes from and how it is affected by human activities; and
- support the on-farm and community-based fresh water development programs of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration.

Priorities will be informed and coordinated by a National Water Council, with membership from all orders of government, First Nations, industry, research institutes and community stakeholders.

We will stand up for Canadian control over our waters and bring in legislation to ban the bulk export of water.

A Liberal government will also protect Canada's water supply by standing up for Canadian control over our waters and bringing in backstop legislation to ban the bulk export of water, and taking a strong stand against risky U.S. diversions of water systems that affect Canada. We will ban the dumping of raw sewage into our waterways and fully exercise federal regulatory authority to stop over-contamination of waterways, especially in areas of serious stress like the Athabaska River.

Finally, a new Liberal government will introduce a Water Efficiency Act which, for the first time ever, will set standards for products used in Canada and will create consumer labelling standard for water-efficient products.

4. Protecting our Health from Toxic Substances

Hazardous substances are commonly used as chemical additives in consumer products we use every day. Canadians are exposed to a mixture of chemicals that can cause a wide range of health effects, and yet we still don't know enough about these effects. But we do know that a parent putting a baby down on its crib shouldn't have to be afraid that something in the mattress will harm their child's health.

A Liberal government will introduce a Toxic Substances Reduction Strategy to ensure that only safe food and products are sold in Canada.

A Liberal government will introduce a Toxic Substances Reduction Strategy to ensure that only safe food and products are sold in Canada.

As part of this Strategy, we will encourage producers to stop using harmful substance and look for healthier alternatives. To begin, we will impose a general safety requirement on any consumer product put on the market to ensure that consumer products pose no danger to human health or safety, either through direct exposure or exposure via the environment.

We will also establish a "Hot List" of carcinogenic substances and developmental toxins that should be prohibited in consumer products and establish strict timelines for phasing them out of products. We will ensure, through legislation, that safer substitutes must replace toxic substances in products as alternatives become available.

Companies will be required to share all their research studies on the effects of their products – and not just the positive ones. And, we will increase the enforcement

capacity of Health Canada and ensure products are subjected to a serious testing program that also randomly checks the actual products on the store shelves.

Furthermore, a new Liberal government will ensure that government officials have a duty to act when the government is made aware of a risk from a consumer product. The current approach proposed by the Conservative government doesn't require government to do anything if a risk is identified. This is a signal to industry that Canada is a potential dumping ground for problematic products.

A Liberal government will ensure the Consumer's Right to Know: companies will have to clearly label the harmful substances in their products. And we will expand the Government of Canada's Ecologo certification labelling program to help consumers identify products and services that are less harmful to the environment and human health.

A Liberal government will ensure the Consumer's Right to Know: companies will have to label the harmful substances in their products

Finally, a Liberal government will play a more active role to protect Canadians and to help expand our knowledge of the effects of toxic chemicals on human health, particularly the most vulnerable. We will expand the Canadian Health Measures Survey, created by the former Liberal government, which measures human levels of environmental chemicals, and we will establish a Network for Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research – so critical gaps in our knowledge about the impact of chemicals on our bodies, and especially on our most vulnerable population, our kids, are filled as quickly as possible to help us better regulate substances of concern.

Food Safety

Canadians have been alarmed by the recent tragic events caused by unsafe food making it to our store shelves. The flurry of recalls followed a government decision to have food inspectors spend less time on the plant floor. Furthermore, the Conservatives developed plans to further reduce the role of inspectors. The Liberal Party believes that it is important to learn the lessons of the Walkerton tragedy and put a real focus on ensuring that the food that we all eat is as safe as it can be.

A Liberal government will invest an additional $50 million to build a more robust food safety-net.

To ensure that lunch meats and other foods are safe for all of us, a Liberal government will invest an additional $50 million to build a more robust food safety-net. We want to get inspectors back on floors of the plant, focusing on keeping the food we eat safe rather than paperwork. Through the recruitment of more inspectors, ensuring inspectors have access to the best technology and expanding inspection efforts of both home grown and imported foods, Canadians will be able to have greater faith in the food we all eat. More inspection means more safety for all Canadians.

5. Protecting Our Natural Heritage

Canada is one of the last countries on Earth that still has vast wilderness areas. It is also one of the largest maritime nations in the world. We are stewards of the world's longest coastline, as well as unique ecosystems like the northern tundra

and the Boreal forest – one of the last great intact forests on earth. Canada is home to iconic species like whales, polar bears, grizzly bears and caribou. Our wild forests and peat lands are also globally significant reservoirs of carbon, important to secure in the global fight against climate change.

Liberals are committed to safeguarding this tremendous natural heritage, which contributes to Canadians' quality of life, our collective pride, our national identity and our economic prosperity.

But the great ecosystems that Canadians cherish and that support our economy and our rural communities are becoming more vulnerable than ever before.

Preserving Canada's Wilderness and Biodiversity

We will develop a National Ecosystem Stewardship Strategy to protect a minimum of 50 percent of Canada's intact wild areas.

To protect Canada's ecosystems in the face of climate change, pollution and over-use, a Liberal government will develop a National Ecosystem Stewardship Strategy for Canada, which will be science-based, and will respond to the increasing pressures on our natural surroundings. Our goal will be to protect a minimum of 50 percent of Canada's intact wilderness areas by creating interconnected networks of protected areas, and ensuring that resource development on other parts of the landscape is carried out in accordance with the highest environmental standards.

A Liberal government will make Canada an international role model for ecological conservation by establishing a network of National Parks and protected areas. This network will include new national parks to protect a representative sample of each of Canada's 39 distinct natural landscapes, beginning in the North. We will also establish much-needed national wildlife areas, migratory bird sanctuaries, and marine conservation areas.

As we implement this strategy, we will affirm ecological integrity as an essential priority in their management, working in partnership with provincial and territorial governments in a partnership. We will ensure that these networks of protected areas are planned within larger landscapes, with the involvement of interested communities, to take into account their ecological, social and economic value.

To safeguard the Canadian Boreal Forest as one of the largest intact forest and wetland ecosystems remaining on earth, we will work with the provinces and territories to implement a conservation framework that preserves at least half of the Boreal in protected areas, and allows only carefully managed development on the rest.

Ensuring the Health of our Oceans

A Liberal government will also take bold steps to restore the health of our oceans and support our marine ecosystems and coastal communities. A Liberal government introduced the Oceans Act in 1997 to improve oceans management and the Oceans Action Plan in 2005 to accelerate oceans protection. We created the first marine protected areas in the country. We now need to see this through, by ensuring Canadian seascapes are zoned and managed in an integrated way with the same rigour as Canadian landscapes.

"We need to do more to fight climate change and clean up our air and water, and protect our wildlife and wilderness."

A Liberal government will create a network of at least 30 marine protected areas nationwide by 2012. We will ensure that this network is accompanied by a new, zoning approach to ocean management that engages interested people and communities in decisions about how to reduce risks to ocean health.

We will pursue cod stock and salmon stock recovery initiatives to improve the abundance and diversity of our fish, working in partnership with communities, industry, and provincial and territorial governments.

We will work to improve the health of critical fish stock health, by pursuing cod stock and salmon stock recovery initiatives to improve the abundance and diversity of our fish, working in partnership with communities, industry, and provincial and territorial governments. We will apply a number of tools, such as reinvesting in habitat conservation and creating new protected areas including the world's first international protected area to protect the vital cod nursery from foreign over-fishing on the Tail of the Grand Banks. We will invest in research and controls to ensure Canadian fisheries are managed in a sustainable manner, to protect ocean health, fishing communities, and capitalize on world export markets for sustainable fisheries products.

Finally, a new Liberal government will clean up and prevent oceans pollution by increasing maritime enforcement capacity so that existing industrial pollutants and dumping regulations are respected and penalties applied, and creating a world-leading oil spill response capacity, particularly in Arctic waters where melting sea ice will open northern waters to increasing impacts.

Preserving Canada's Species

We will create a special "fast track" for protecting endangered or threatened species that rely on seasonal ice.

The government is failing to properly protect species at risk of extinction. Habitat protection is instrumental to species survival, yet the Conservative government has refused to even identify endangered species' habitat, despite a clear requirement in the Species at Risk Act to do so, forcing community groups to take them to court to enforce federal law.

A new Liberal government will ensure the timely mapping and protection of habitat for species listed under the Species at Risk Act, and will create a special "fast track" for protecting endangered or threatened species that rely on seasonal ice.

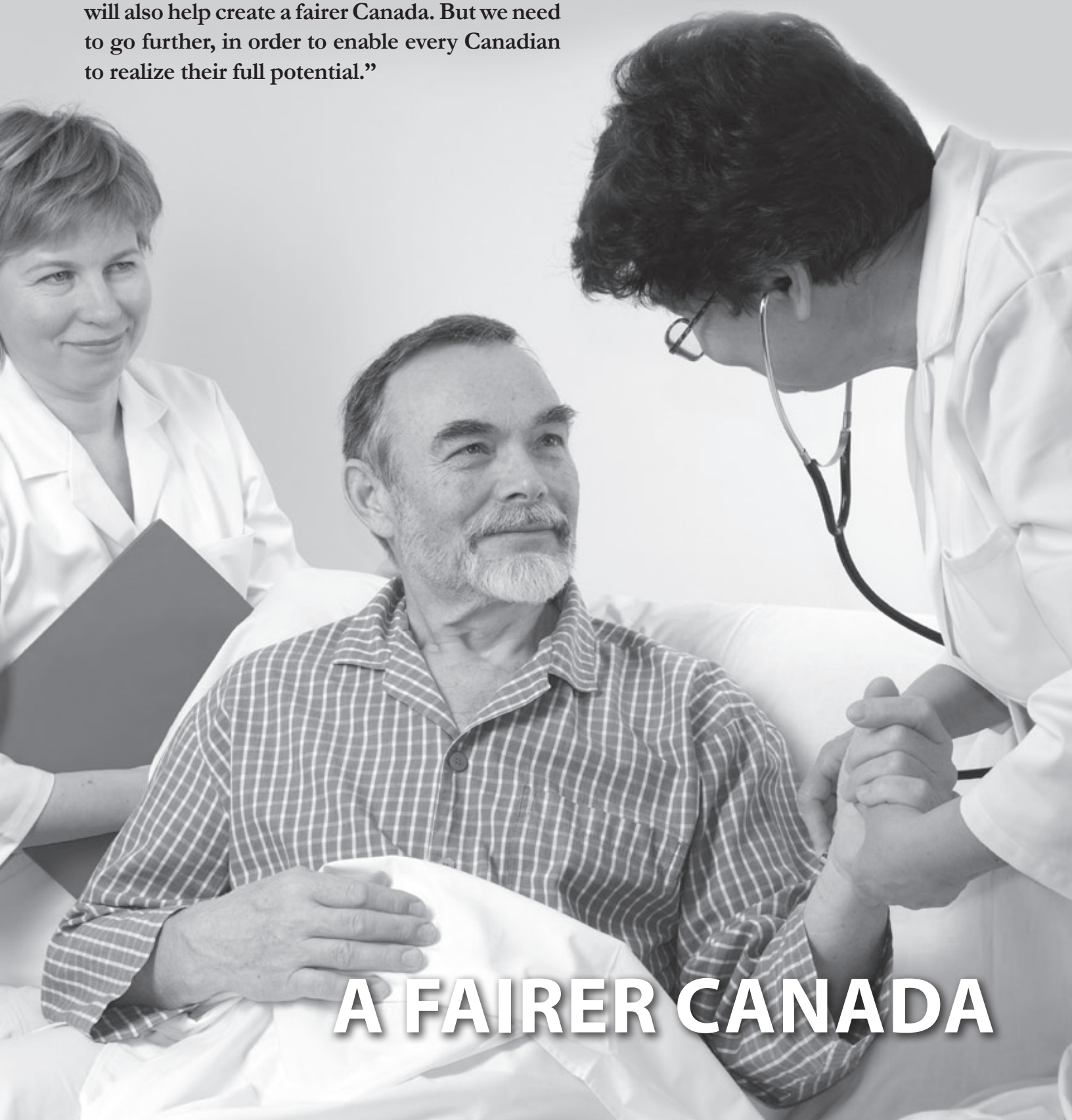
6. Empowering Canadians

A Liberal government will enthusiastically implement the new Federal Sustainable Development Act, a Liberal private member's bill that requires the federal government to set clear environmental goals and measurable targets and to report annually to Canadians on the state of our environment.

We will elevate the role of Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development – Parliament's watch dog - to monitor progress and report directly to Parliament and Canadians.

And we will introduce a Canadian Environmental Bill of Rights to ensure transparency, accountability, and public participation in environmental decision-making. By empowering citizens with better information and tools to hold governments to account, we will better ensure that Canadians' right to a clean environment is respected.

"The measures needed to prepare Canada for a stronger economy and a healthier environment will also help create a fairer Canada. But we need to go further, in order to enable every Canadian to realize their full potential."



A FAIRER CANADA

The measures needed to prepare Canada for a stronger economy and a healthier environment will also help create a fairer Canada. But we need to go further, in order to enable every Canadian to realize their full potential.

A Liberal government will break down the barriers that hold so many Canadians in poverty. Through our 30-50 Plan, we will decrease poverty by one third over five years, and by half for children—the most ambitious anti-poverty program in generations. By full implementation, we will invest $1.25 billion each year to give parents access to the affordable early learning and child care they need. We will work with provinces to reduce the shortage of doctors and nurses that is crippling our health care system, by establishing a Doctors and Nurses Fund. We will create a new plan for catastrophic drug coverage to assist Canadians with staggering costs of prescription drugs in the face of serious health conditions or illnesses.

We will help Canadians who lose their jobs get back into the job market, by making EI work better for those who need it most. We will build a new partnership with Aboriginal Canadians, starting with a return to the commitments of the Kelowna Accord. We will offer better access to Canada's two official languages. And we will give Canadians the security they need for their families and for their communities.

1. The 30-50 Plan

Among the most sacred of Canadian values is this core belief: the true measure of a country is the way it treats its most vulnerable.

When we fail to address the scourge of poverty, we hold back our own potential as a society. By lifting our fellow Canadians out of poverty, we will ensure that they are not prevented from realizing their true potential for the benefit of the entire society. We must ensure that no Canadian is prevented from making their full contribution to our economy and to our communities because of poverty. As we compete with international giants, Canada cannot afford to miss the opportunity of every possible contribution from every citizen.

We will reduce the number of people living below the poverty line by at least 30 percent, so that 1 million more Canadians are better able to realize their potential. And we will reduce the number of children living in poverty by at least 50 percent.

A Liberal government will enact the 30-50 Plan to Fight Poverty, a full-scale attack on poverty. Our strategy to decrease poverty will reward Canadians who want to go to work every day to provide for their families and contribute to Canadians society. Our current tax system does a poor job of ensuring that working Canadians are kept out of poverty, and can live in dignity and provide for their children. We need to do better.

Within our first term, we will reduce the number of people living below the poverty line by at least 30 percent, so that 1 million more Canadians are better able to realize their potential. And we will reduce the number of children living in poverty by at least 50 percent, to give nearly 400,000 children a better chance in life.

We will make this possible through a combination of the initiatives contained in the Liberal green shift plan outlined earlier in this platform and additional measures. Four tax measures included in the Liberal green shift plan are specifically designed to help low-income Canadians:

- the creation of a new, refundable child tax benefit worth $350 per child;
- replacing the Conservatives' regressive, small, poorly designed $1,000 employment credit – with a $1,850 refundable employment credit targeted at those Canadians who earn less than $50,000 per year which will put up to $250 per person into the pockets of those working Canadians who need it most;
- increasing the Working Income Tax Benefit above the level legislated by the Conservatives, encouraging work by having this benefit available on the first dollar earned, which is $3,000 sooner than the Conservative plan, and ensuring that it benefits more families by phasing it out more slowly; and
- making the Disability Tax Credit refundable, ensuring that low-income individuals who are disabled are able to directly benefit from this tax credit.

In addition to these tax measures, we will create the Guaranteed Family Supplement, to help 500,000 of Canada's poorest families with children by providing up to $1,225 a year more per family. To provide further help to lower-income families with children, we will ensure that all families with incomes up to $26,000 keep all of the National Child Benefit Supplement which is currently phased out at incomes of approximately $21,000.

A Liberal government will create the Guaranteed Family Supplement, to help 500,000 of Canada's poorest families with children.

All this means that Canadians who are willing to work every day shouldn't have a tax system that works against them. A Liberal government will encourage work, not penalize it.

In addition to helping working families, a Liberal government will significantly reduce the number of seniors living in poverty so that they can live in the dignity they deserve. To reach that goal, we will:

We will increase the Guaranteed Income Supplement by $600 a year for Canada's low-income seniors, and by $800 a year for low-income senior couples.

- increase the Guaranteed Income Supplement by $600 a year for Canada's lowest income seniors, and by $800 a year for low-income senior couples; and
- change the CPP disability requirements to ensure that those with episodic illnesses – such as Multiple-sclerosis and some mental illnesses – do not jeopardize their ability to collect CPP or QPP disability benefits if they work when they are able to.

In addition to these income supports, we will work with provinces to increase supports for people in need in areas like public transit, child care and social housing.

A Liberal government will tackle the housing crisis, by helping to provide for 30,000 new social housing units, and refurbishing another 30,000 existing units.

A Liberal government will tackle the housing crisis by helping to provide for 30,000 new social housing units, and refurbishing another 30,000 existing units to make them more liveable. As part of this commitment, we will look to expand subsidies for dedicated units for low-income Canadians in federally funded co-operative housing. We will renew the Residential Rehabilitation Program and the Homelessness Partnering Initiative. And a Liberal government will help low-income families pay less on their energy bills: we will support the building and upgrading of affordable housing for low-income Canadians, to help them reduce their energy costs through high environmental standards – because every Canadian deserves to share the benefits of a greener economy.

2. Investing in Our Children

We will allocate substantial new funds, eventually climbing to more than $1 billion annually, to achieve our goal of coast-to-coast high-quality, universal community-based, early education and child care.

Early education and child care is part of how parents are able to achieve a work/life balance and provide early educational opportunities for their children. Unfortunately all too often, children are stuck on waiting lists because of a shortage of spaces. As every parent knows, no space means no choice.

For our children, early education and child care centres are a wonderful environment in which to play. It's a place to make best friends; to feel safe, secure, valued, comfortable and nurtured; to learn and develop new skills; to do interesting and stimulating activities in an environment that complements – not replaces – the family.

For moms and dads, an excellent early education and child care program respects their primary role in raising children and builds on the lessons children learn at home. It is a place where they know their child's daily experience is the best it can be; it is affordable, flexible and available for everyone. It empowers parents to make the best choices possible for themselves and their children.

Parents know – and studies show – that early education and child care helps their children grow physically, socially, intellectually, and emotionally. Canada was making strides forward under the previous Liberal government as all ten provinces had signed agreements with the federal government on early learning and child care based on a nationally-shared vision. One of the first acts of the Conservative government was to abandon this partnership with the provinces on this issue that is so vital to Canada's future. The provinces will find a new partner in a Liberal government as we will work with them to rebuild what was torn down by the Conservatives.

Our long-term goal will be coast-to-coast high-quality, universal, community-based, early education and child care. In pursuit of this objective, we will allocate substantial new federal funds. This investment will increase over a four-year period and at full implementation in the fourth year, the will climb to $1.25 billion annually.

To give families the flexibility they need to bridge to quality child care, a Liberal government will introduce the choice to take a shorter parental leave at a higher benefit level, or a longer leave (up to 18 months) at a lower benefit level. That way, parents who return to work early will still benefit from the full payment allowable, and those who wish to stay home with their children until 18 months – the point at which there are more, and more affordable, child care options – can do that as well.

3. Health Care

In order to build back the confidence that Canadians will get the health care they need when they need it, a Liberal government will work with a renewed spirit of cooperation with all provincial and territorial governments to sustain and improve Canada's publicly funded health system and to build comprehensive policies that prevent illness wherever possible. The provinces and territories will once again know that they have a real partner in Ottawa.

Doctors and Nurses

Too many Canadians are without a family physician. This is unacceptable. Canadians want to know that they can find a medical professional when they need one.

A Liberal government will help address the shortage of doctors and nurses by establishing a Doctors and Nurses Fund.

The average age of Canadian physicians is close to fifty, which means that Canada will be facing a drastic shortage of doctors within the next fifteen years. It isn't just doctors that this country needs. According to the Canadian Nurses Association, if we don't find a way to recruit and train more registered nurses, Canada will experience a shortage of 78,000 nurses by 2011 and 113,000 by 2016. At the same time, our aging population will increase the need for medical professionals.

It is critical that Canada be able to recruit, train, and integrate more health care professionals into the health care system.

In recent years, provincial governments have successfully increased the number of medical and nursing school graduates, but more needs to be done. A Liberal government will work with provinces to end the shortage of doctors and nurses that is crippling our health care system, by establishing a Doctors and Nurses Fund. More health professionals mean more Canadians getting care, and shorter wait times.

The Doctors and Nurses Fund will:

- increase the capacity to train and graduate doctors, nurses and medical technicians by funding actions such as increasing the number of residency positions, including in smaller hospitals, and expanding educational programs;
- remove bottlenecks that currently slow the process of licensing new health care professionals;

- reward medical students choosing needed specialties such as family medicine, rural medicine, and geriatrics; and
- provide financial support to assist foreign-trained doctors and other health professionals in obtaining their Canadian qualifications more quickly.

To help under-serviced communities attract more doctors and nurses, a Liberal government will forgive $10,000 per year of student debt for health care professionals who agree to set up practice in an under-serviced community for a minimum of 5 years.

The Spirit of the Canada Health Act

A Liberal government will enforce both the spirit and the letter of the Canada Health Act so that patients will be confident that they will receive the care they need when they need it, regardless of ability to pay, where they live, or the nature of their illness.

Too many groups of Canadians are still not receiving the standard of care afforded to most, including our First Peoples, minority language communities, those suffering from mental illness, veterans, and our armed forces. To work towards achievement of health equity, we will:

- work with aboriginal communities to close the unacceptable gap in health status of our Aboriginal Peoples;
- help provinces use internet technology to provide health care in both official languages as well as deaf language interpretation;
- establish a Health Ombudsman both within the Canadian Forces and within Veterans Affairs Canada and have the Department of National Defence double the number of spaces that it reserves in medical schools for military personnel who train to be doctors;
- work with the Mental Health Commission to develop and launch a public awareness campaign to reduce the stigma of mental illness.

The Cost of Medications

We will introduce a plan to ensure that Canadians across the country have access to catastrophic drug coverage.

When the drug costs of an illness become too much for a family to bear, the federal government should be there to help. This need becomes even more pressing with an aging population. That's why a Liberal government will create a new plan for catastrophic drug coverage to cover this cost.

The premiers called on the federal government to do this, and Liberals will respond. We will work with the provincial governments to determine the level of catastrophic drug coverage that should be provided as a national minimum, and we will directly compensate those provinces that are providing that level of coverage. This will make a huge difference, especially for the Atlantic Provinces, which have no catastrophic drug coverage at all.

Prevention and Health Promotion

A Liberal government will honour the original goal of Medicare: to keep Canadians well, not just to patch us up once we got sick. The ever-increasing costs of our health care demonstrate that it is not sustainable for us just to fund a "sickness care" system. The sustainability of our cherished health care system will require Canadians to make healthy choices and use the system wisely.

A Liberal Government will reinstate the popular Canadian Health Network to provide up-to-date, authoritative information on healthy living and disease prevention.

A Liberal government will reinstate the popular Canadian Health Network website to provide up-to-date, authoritative information on healthy living and disease prevention. We will also support work to develop a comprehensive set of evidence-based clinical guidelines, such as for breast cancer diagnosis, which can be disseminated to health professionals and to all Canadians on the site. That way, new research and best practices can be available to all Canadians no matter where they live.

A Liberal government will end the Conservatives' ideological war against harm reduction when it comes to drug policy. All scientific evidence indicates that Insite – North America's first legal supervised injection site located in Vancouver – saves lives. It has won widespread support from the international scientific community, from the Vancouver police and from the residents of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. The Conservative government is killing the project by refusing to provide additional funding for it. The Conservatives even forced Insite to go to the BC Supreme Court to overturn the Conservative government's decision to end Insite's exemption from some of Canada's drug laws – a decision the Conservatives have decided to appeal. A Liberal government will stop the appeal, reverse the short-sighted decisions on funding and ensure that that Insite has the funding and legal protection it needs to continue saving lives. Furthermore, no Liberal cabinet minister will ever question the ethics of Canada's doctors and nurses for supporting harm reduction programs such as Insite – as the Conservative Health Minister did earlier this year – because we believe that it is turning your back on people who run the risk of dying that it is truly unethical.

In order to reach the goal of having the healthiest possible Canadians, we need to be able to properly measure health outcomes. From asbestos related diseases, to the effects of pollution, learning disabilities to brain tumours, we need better data than is currently available.

A Liberal government will work with provinces and territories to begin the process of a pan-Canadian profile of infectious and chronic diseases, mental illness and injuries.

We will also expand the Canadian Health Measures Survey, to provide much-needed information to help evaluate the risk factors for, and extent of, major health concerns such as diabetes, obesity, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, exposure to infectious diseases, and exposure to environmental contaminants.

Promoting good health is just as important as preventing disease. We will invest in community sports facilities so that Canadians across the country can access quality sports facilities in their communities.

And of course, at a time when environmental risks, including exposure to harmful contaminants, are damaging the health of Canadians and causing deaths, the strong Liberal environmental strategy will help protect Canadians – and especially our children – from the harmful health effects of polluted air and water and toxic substances in our products.

4. Women's Equality

The Liberal Party is committed to building a Canada where true equality exists for all, and where the principles of fairness and justice are embedded in all federal government initiatives. Unfortunately, the policies of the Conservative government of Stephen Harper have been detrimental and damaging to women and threaten the hard-won gains made in past decades.

Liberals believe in a different approach. We will chart a progressive course that is essential not only to the advancement of Canadian women, but to the success of our country. Informed by the tireless work of the National Liberal Women's Caucus and its Pink Book recommendations, a future Liberal government will focus its efforts on advancing the equality and economic status of women, and improving the lives of women and families across the nation.

Elsewhere in our platform, we have laid out plans for an Early Learning and Child Care plan and more flexible parental leave, our 30-50 Plan for fighting poverty, our Affordable Housing Plan and an increase to the Guaranteed Income Supplement by $600 a year for Canada's lowest-income seniors. These initiatives will dramatically improve the lives of many women and in particular, aboriginal women, immigrants and women of colour.

While the Conservatives claim that law and order is their biggest priority, they have taken no real measures to combat violence against women. A new Liberal government's efforts to fight this problem will begin with an amendment to the Criminal Code to include "gender" in the hate propaganda provisions to help end societal acceptance for those who would incite hatred against women.

A Liberal government will amend the Criminal Code to include "gender" in the hate propaganda provisions.

We will also propose amendments to the federal Divorce Act, to include consideration of family violence in determining custody and access.

Since aboriginal women are more than three times as likely to report being victims of domestic violence as non-aboriginal women, we will create a nation-wide Violence Prevention Strategy for Aboriginal Peoples, to ensure a culturally-appropriate, holistic approach to helping the victims, their families and their communities.

We will create a nation-wide Violence Prevention Strategy for Aboriginal Peoples.

A Liberal government will take a number of concrete steps to give voice to women's issues and reverse the cuts made by the Conservatives.

The Conservative government conducted a systematic, ideologically-driven campaign to dismantle programs that help give voice to women's issues. We will repair this damage and ensure it cannot happen again by:

- re-designating "equality" as the main goal of the Women's Program at Status of Women Canada;
- over-turning changes to the funding rules of the Women's Program, so that groups advocating for women's rights can again apply for resources;
- reopening the Status of Women regional offices on which women rely for assistance and information;
- reinstating and doubling the funding for the Court Challenges Program to help remove the financial barriers that can stop Canadians from exercising their constitutional rights; and
- creating an independent Commissioner for Gender Equality, reporting to Parliament, to ensure that legislation and policies of the Government of Canada are examined with an equality lens.

Our ultimate goal is a better society for women and families – a society based on our Canadian values of justice and equality. And as Stéphane Dion has pledged, we commit to the women of Canada that the Liberal Party of Canada will not reopen the debate on a woman's right to choose.

5. Immigration: Welcoming New Canadians

Immigration will account for 100 percent of Canada's net labour force growth over the next five years. We are in fierce global competition for skilled and talented people. And our immigration system is currently not up to the task.

A successful immigration plan is built on the sound principles of fairness, accountability and opportunity. The immigration measures contained in the Conservatives' budget bill, Bill C-50, which give sweeping discretionary power to the Minister to pick and chose between classes of people, fail that test and a Liberal government will repeal them.

A Liberal government will invest $400 million to modernize the immigration system and reduce the backlog.

To streamline and improve the immigration system and reduce the current backlog, a Liberal government will invest $400 million over four years to modernize its information, data gathering and processing procedures. A Liberal government will respect Canada's international commitments to refugees while providing a timelier and efficient refugee determination system.

A Liberal government will revamp Canada's immigration points system to give greater weight to skilled trades, to better align our immigration policy to the needs of the labour market. We will create In-Canada Fast Track – a new program to allow temporary workers, international students and live-in caregivers to apply for

permanent residence within Canada, as well as increase the number of landed immigrants into our country consistent with our "immigrant success strategy."

And we will introduce the Welcome Canada Pass – a five-year renewable, multiple-entry visitor visa for individuals sponsored by Canadian citizens and landed immigrants. Under this visa, the financial and personal responsibility for visitors will be borne by the sponsor, not the taxpayer. In addition, we will create a Canada Express Pass for frequent business visitors to reduce processing times and promote trade and commerce.

To help New Canadians reach their full potential, we will invest $200 million over four years in New Beginnings Canada – an enhanced language training initiative designed to help newcomers master the language necessary to get jobs that match their qualifications. We will commit $200 million over four years to Bridge to Work – a new initiative that will better prepare newcomers for the workplace through the use of internships, mentorship and work placement opportunities. And we will help get foreign credentials recognized, by providing direct financial support to assist foreign-trained doctors and other professionals in obtaining their Canadian qualifications.

To help New Canadians reach their full potential, we will invest $200 million over four years in the New Beginnings Canada – an enhanced language training initiative.

To ensure that all parts of Canada share the benefits New Canadians bring, we will work with the provinces while respecting their jurisdiction, to help them attract and retain immigrants by strengthening their Provincial Nominee Program, providing better information about opportunities in all parts of Canada, and enhancing settlement resources for smaller centres. In essence we welcome New Canadians everywhere in Canada to help us enrich our country while we provide and expand their opportunities to succeed.

6. EI Changes

A new Liberal government will make Employment Insurance work better, to ensure that unemployed Canadians won't be punished for working. We will make permanent three measures that were introduced as pilot projects by the previous Liberal government in 2004 and 2005 in areas of high unemployment. Employers and workers have expressed concerns that the Conservative government would not extend these measures.

The three measures which will be made permanent by legislation are:

- workers who accept temporary work while receiving benefits will be allowed to earn the greater of $75 or 40 percent of the benefits without it being clawed back;
- benefits will be based on the 14 best weeks of earnings in the 52 weeks preceding a claim; and
- in order to eliminate what has been called the "black hole" – the time be-

tween the end of benefits and the beginning of many seasonal jobs – we will add five weeks of EI benefits in high-unemployment areas.

A Liberal government will also commit to processing EI claims faster, guaranteeing that EI cheques get delivered no more than three weeks after a completed application is filed.

We will also review and modernize the Labour Code dealing with collective bargaining, dispute resolution, replacement workers, strikes and lockouts. This review – the first since 1995 – will better reflect the realities of today's economy and workforce.

7. A New Relationship with Canada's First Nations, Inuit and Métis

The first people to live on the land we now call Canada made it their home for thousands of years. They built proud communities from the far north to southern Ontario. Early encounters with European settlement were marked by conflict, disease, and inequality, as well as halting efforts at partnership. Treaties were signed, but too often not respected. Restoring civility and understanding to that relationship today is one of the great challenges facing the country.

Too many aboriginal children live lives of poverty and uncertainty. Those members of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities living on and off reserves in rural areas face tremendous challenges. That is equally true for those who have decided to live off reserve in Canada's cities: a rapidly growing community that must experience the security of good housing, challenging and positive education and training, and real opportunities to participate in Canadian life on a basis of real equality.

Canada needs respectful and progressive partnerships with our Aboriginal Peoples—partnerships characterized by trust, with real engagement and participation by Aboriginal Canadians; partnerships that will create real opportunity and a deep respect for the principle of self-government.

A Liberal government will restore the Kelowna Accord.

The Kelowna Accord represented this type of partnership. It was an historic consensus between the federal government, provinces, territories and Aboriginal Peoples, committing nearly $5 billion to clear and reasonable targets to improve aboriginal health, education and housing outcomes both on reserve and off reserve. Unfortunately, the accord was scrapped by the Conservatives.

Over the course of our mandate, a Liberal government will bring back the Kelowna Accord killed by the Conservative government. We will also fulfill the commitments within the First Nations-Crown Political Accord, the Inuit Partnership Accord, the Métis Nation Framework Agreement, and the Accords on Cooperative Development between the federal government and the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples and Native Women's Association of Canada.

Premiers and Territorial Leaders have also committed to build a new relationship and have called for the Prime Minister to hold a First Ministers' Meeting on

aboriginal issues. Regrettably, Stephen Harper has not called such a meeting after nearly three years in office. A Liberal government would hold such a meeting within the first six months of coming into office.

A Liberal government will sign and ratify the UN Declaration on the Rights of Aboriginal Peoples.

On the international stage, the Conservatives demonstrated their lack of concern and respect for Canada's aboriginal population by being one of only four governments in the world that to vote against the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This marked the first time in its history that Canada has failed to commit to a major international human rights treaty. A Liberal government will reverse this historical disgrace, sign and ratify the Declaration and show the world that Canada can be a leader in its treatment of its aboriginal population.

With the Residential Schools Apology and the start of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Canada and its Aboriginal peoples have begun to forge a new relationship. We now have an opportunity to strengthen this relationship and we must not miss it. But restoring Kelowna is only a starting point. Long standing grievances must also be addressed.

We will be committed to renewing the Métis Nations partnership in Confederation.

A Liberal government will be committed to renewing the Métis Nation's partnership in Confederation. We recognize the Métis right to self-government and will convene a table of negotiation for Métis jurisdiction and authority, including lands and resources and economic and fiscal arrangements. We will not ignore our federal fiduciary responsibility for the Métis Nation and all Aboriginal Peoples.

Where modern land claims agreements exist, a Liberal government will respect and uphold the spirit and intent of these agreements. We will also work towards establishment of an independent body to resolve comprehensive claims and to ensure that self-government agreements are respected and fully implemented.

A Liberal government will also work jointly with First Nations, Inuit and Métis to establish an open and transparent process for the joint development of a federal policy for consultation and accommodation. As the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled, the federal and provincial Crown has a legal duty to consult, and, where appropriate, accommodate when Crown conduct may adversely impact established or potential aboriginal and treaty rights.

We would improve access to health care for First Nations children by ensuring children in need of health care are not denied the care they need because of jurisdictional squabbles between different orders of government or different departments within the same level of government. "Jordan's Principle" calls for the needs of the child to be put first, ahead of jurisdictional disputes. A new Liberal government will work with other orders of governments on a policy that would require the agency of first contact to pay and establish a mechanism to resolve the disputes - after the needs of the child are addressed. To resolve these disputes at the federal level, a new Liberal government will enact a Jordan's Principle law, based on an existing Liberal Member's Private Member's bill, which will require the federal department of first contact to pay for the required services and to seek resolution later so that children are not denied the services they need.

Eliminating violence against aboriginal women will also be a priority. A Liberal government will adopt a nation-wide violence prevention strategy that allows for regional and jurisdictional flexibility in policy, programming and funding.

In recognition of the fact that a one-size fits all approach to First Nations, Métis and Inuit populations is unproductive, a Liberal government will work with aboriginal organizations to ensure the green shift takes into account their specific needs and realities. To assist in accomplishing this goal, a Liberal government will re-establish the First Nations' Advisory Committee that the Conservatives abolished. A Liberal government will also create a new Joint National Climate Change Advisory Panel to foster joint initiatives between the Government of Canada and First Nations, Métis and Inuit on climate change mitigation policies.

A Liberal government will ensure that the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy is renewed.

Facilitating the participation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the labour market is key to closing the gap in employment outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. A Liberal government will ensure that the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy is renewed and that the national aboriginal organizations involved in this strategy continue to be its main stakeholders.

We will enhance the Aboriginal Languages Initiative to support the preservation, revitalization and promotion of Aboriginal languages.

As a country we must ensure that we hear the voices of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in their own languages, and that these aboriginal voices and languages continue to enrich the cultural heritage of the world. A Liberal government will enhance the Aboriginal Languages Initiative to support the preservation, revitalization and promotion of Aboriginal languages and restore the unjustifiable cuts to this initiative by the Conservatives.

Aboriginal Peoples, who represent the fastest-growing part of Canada's population and a significant portion of our country's young people, must have full opportunities to help Canada thrive in the 21st century. This is a matter of social justice and a condition of Canada's continued success.

We can not be intimidated by the scale of the challenge or discouraged by the failures of the past. We owe it to our children to pass along an even better country than we inherited from our parents and we will not do so as long as Aboriginal Peoples continue to be left behind.

8. Minority Language Rights

To strengthen minority language communities across the country and give Canadians better access to the richness of our two official languages, a new Liberal government will:

- restore and double the funding of the original Court Challenges Program, ensuring all minority communities have access to protections enshrined under the Charter;
- introduce infrastructure funding for minority language communities;

- provide a new plan to provide federal-provincial support to official languages, especially in education, health care, and culture; and
- increase funding for institutions that teach French or English as a second language.

9. A Safer Canada

Liberals understand that any law-and-order proposal that fails to address the root causes of crime will ultimately fail. The single most effective steps we can take as a country in our quest for safer communities is to make a commitment to eradicate domestic poverty and combine that with support for education and housing. These steps, which we have committed to taking in this platform, will provide the hope and opportunity that is lacking in the lives of too many Canadians today.

For a richer Canada, a fairer Canada, a greener Canada, we need a safer Canada. You deserve a government that will protect your family and your community.

A Liberal government will make communities safer, freeing Canadians from the barrier of fear, and helping them feel safe in their homes and communities. For a richer Canada, a fairer Canada, a greener Canada, we need a safer Canada. Canadians deserve a government that will protect their families and their communities.

Confronting the issue of violence connected to gangs and organized crime requires the most intensive allocation of resources and efforts on behalf of the RCMP and local police agencies. The cost associated with witness protection and relocation, case preparation, electronic and physical surveillance and extensive police hours all put a strain on the budgets of local communities. We do not want these added costs to become a barrier to the effective pursuit of safer communities. A new Liberal government will establish a fund to help ease the burden of these additional costs. The RCMP will administer this fund and will work with the provinces to ensure that it is accessible to police organizations that have a plan to address gangs and organized crime.

A Liberal government will provide additional resources to the RCMP to help deal with violence associated with gangs and organized crime.

To fight and prevent gun crime, a Liberal government will create a $40-million Gun Violence and Gang Prevention Fund, supporting community-based programs and skills development for youth at risk.

We will create a $40-million Gun Violence and Gang Prevention Fund.

We will also ensure that the list of prohibited weapons is updated to include all military assault weapons like those used in the tragic shootings at the École Polytechnique and Dawson College. Military assault weapons are easy to use, have large capacity magazines (in order to limit the time needed for reloading) and are designed so that an individual with limited skill can kill as many other individuals as quickly as possible. The purpose of these anti-personnel weapons is military in nature; they have no reasonable connection to hunting and serve no purpose outside of the military. The federal government has the power to prohibit these weapons and a Liberal government will, while ensuring that rifles with a legitimate connection to hunting and sport-shooting are not prohibited.

A Liberal government will ban military assault rifles while ensuring that rifles with legitimate purpose are not prohibited.

We will take concrete action to address the flow of illegal guns into Canada,

beginning with negotiations on a mutually responsible strategy aimed at curbing gun smuggling from the U.S. into Canada. And we will end the Conservative delay on implementing the international treaties on marking and tracking imported firearms – a tool that law enforcement groups on both sides of the border have identified as a key to both tackling domestic gun crime and combating the flow of illegal guns across the border.

We will create a $75-million Communities At Risk program to help fund security measures at ethno-cultural or religious places of worship, educational institutions and community centres.

To better protect communities that are sadly too often a target of violent hate crimes, a Liberal government will also create a $75-million Communities at Risk program to help fund security measures at ethno-cultural or religious places of worship, educational institutions and community centres.

No federal party should be blind to the ongoing problems of violence against women and domestic violence. Our efforts should start with an end to societal acceptance for those who would incite hatred against women. A Liberal government's efforts to address this problem will start with an amendment to the Criminal Code to include "gender" in the hate propaganda provisions to help end the societal acceptance of those who incite hatred against women.

A Liberal government will take steps to stop violence against children.

Modern criminals use advances in technology to take advantage of gaps in the Criminal Code, often as part of an effort to victimize the most vulnerable in our society: our children. For this reason, a Liberal government would move swiftly to introduce legislation that would include:

- Robust internet luring provisions to address explicit on-line conversations with children that intend to "groom" the child for future attempts at luring them;
- Provisions that address the growing problem of cyber-bullying, which can be as terrifying and threatening to today's children as violent schoolyard behaviour.

As previously described, since aboriginal women are more than three times as likely to report being victims of domestic violence as non-aboriginal women, we will create a nation-wide Violence Prevention Strategy for Aboriginal Peoples, to ensure a culturally-appropriate, holistic approach to helping the victims, their families and their communities.

A new Liberal government will take additional measures to deal with violent youth offenders.

A new Liberal government will continue to support the principles behind the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA) which strives for a balanced approach to youth justice. The system needs improvement, but not a radical overhaul that focuses purely on punishment and pays no attention to rehabilitation. We know that a small number of youths are responsible for the vast majority of violent youth crime and that the current regime makes it difficult for the police and the courts to prevent these violent offenders from re-offending while they await trial. Fortunately, Justice Merlin Nunn conducted a thorough review of the YCJA for the Nova Scotia government and paid particular attention to this problem. He proposed a series of common sense changes to the law. For example, he proposed expanding the definition of "violent offence" to ensure that it includes conduct that endangers the life and safety of others. He also recommended

that the government increase a judge's ability to consider pending charges, not just past convictions, when considering pre-trial detention for a young offender. A new Liberal government will implement the recommendations of the Nunn Report which pertain to the federal government.

A Liberal government will also restore the Law Commission of Canada and ask it to perform a full review of the sentencing provisions in the Criminal Code. In many respects, the Code is outdated, reflective of the previous century. We must modernize it so that we have a Criminal Code that can protect Canadians against the criminal realities of the 21st century and ensure that penalties are proportional to the crime. We will also specifically request that the Law Commission evaluate whether there are sufficient provisions in the Criminal Code to protect and prevent violence against women in our society.

10. Respectful Federalism

The Conservatives promised an end to federal-provincial bickering. Instead, we have witnessed nearly three years of a disrespectful and aggressive approach to federalism that has been characterized by broken promises, childish insults and a lack of consultation on major initiatives. This started with Prime Minister Harper's decision to break the Conservative commitment to honour the Atlantic Accords. It continued with Finance Minister Flaherty's attempt to settle old political grudges with his campaign against the Government of Ontario, which resulted in his suggestion that investors should not invest in the province.

We have seen the Conservatives put forward major constitutional changes dealing with fundamental issues like the representation of provinces in the House of Commons without any consultation. Unsurprisingly, the provinces have been left to voice their opposition to these measures through letters and Parliamentary committee hearings since the Prime Minister has repeatedly refused to hold a First Ministers' Meeting. Perhaps most inexcusably, the Conservatives have failed to join the provincial governments as a partner in their efforts to overcome a sluggish economy and combat the climate change crisis.

A Liberal government will take a different approach – one that places an emphasis on consultation, cooperation, partnership and respect for each government's role and responsibility. There will always be competing views in our federation, but these diverse views do not need to result in a combative and unproductive relationship. We will start by honouring the federal government's commitment in the Atlantic Accords because when the Government of Canada signs an agreement, it is the obligation of future governments, regardless of their political affiliation, to honour that commitment. We will not proceed with constitutional changes that affect the provinces without including them. Most importantly, we will work with the provinces to be a true partner for the benefit of the Canadian people as we work to build an economy that is ready for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

Restoring our Voice in the World

Canada's accomplishments are the sign of a truly great nation. We have forged a country whose prosperity, diversity and enterprising spirit are admired the world over. As this platform demonstrates, Stéphane Dion's Liberals also firmly believe that making the world a better place starts at home.

Meeting the challenges of climate change in Canada will make our economy stronger and restore our credibility as a trusted partner in global efforts to reduce carbon emissions. Achieving excellence in green technologies and sustainable development here in Canada will open up new markets and opportunities for our exporters. Helping our workers develop their skills and knowledge will ensure Canadians retain their competitive edge in this global economy. The Liberal record of sound management of our nation's finances will ensure Canada minimizes the negative impacts of a slowdown of the U.S. economy.

Under the Conservative government, Canada has lost its independent, principled voice in the world. Under the Conservatives, Canada has retreated on the world stage. Canada has more influence in organizations like the United Nations and NATO when we speak to our deepest values: democracy, pluralism, religious tolerance, human rights, and the protection of civilians.

From time to time, acting on principle means taking stands that can run contrary to the policies and wishes of other governments. That is why recent Liberal

governments rejected Canadian participation in the Iraq War and the Ballistic Missile Defence project. Those were the right decisions for Canada. They were expressions of Canadian values and national interests, and they were rooted in a firm commitment to multilateralism and the international rule of law. That is also why Liberal governments worked so hard for the Land Mines Treaty and the International Criminal Court.

Canada's capacity to shape the international agenda is clearly linked to the level of our engagement in world affairs. We can influence NATO's direction because we have always been one of its most committed members. The International Criminal Court was created because Canada and like-minded countries pursued this idea determinedly.

In short, our influence cannot come from rhetoric alone – it is also established by the resources we chose to commit to issues.

"Canada has more influence in organizations like the United Nations and NATO when we speak to our deepest values: democracy, pluralism, religious tolerance, human rights, and the protection of civilians."

1. Climate Change and Global Security

Protecting our climate will be integral to the foreign policy of a Liberal government. The Conservative government's approach to climate change was initially to deny its existence. It then decided to sabotage, block or reduce any international efforts for greater action on climate change. In the space of 31 months, the Conservative government has moved Canada from hero to zero, from leader to laggard. Their irresponsible position was an insult to Canada's legacy of moral leadership in the world, and actually counterproductive in the efforts to get developing countries like China and India to take on greater efforts to fight climate change. A Liberal government will return Canada to its leadership role on the environment and restore Canada's credibility as an engaged and committed partner in multilateral efforts to fight climate change.

According to UN estimates, all but one of its emergency appeals for humanitarian aid in 2007 were climate change related. We can increasingly see that the fallout of climate change – competition for natural resources and arable land, water shortages, increased flooding and prolonged drought – drive large-scale population migrations and often lead to violent conflict. While this is a global phenomenon, the problem is often felt most acutely in some of the world's most volatile regions such as the Middle East and Africa.

Under a Liberal government, Canada will bring its expertise in the management and mapping of water resources to developing countries.

This has led many countries to view climate change not just as an environmental challenge but as a threat to global security. The cost of addressing the issue quickly is dwarfed by the cost, both economic and humanitarian, of failing to deal with it. That is why in addition to our domestic efforts and our commitment to lead multilateral efforts, we will also do more to assist developing countries deal with climate change as part of our approach to Official Development Assistance.

The climate change crisis has made the challenge of fresh water management in developing countries even more daunting. Under a Liberal government, Canada will bring its expertise in the management and mapping of water resources to developing countries. Today, more than 1 billion people still don't have access to safe drinking water and another 2.6 billion lack basic sanitation. According to some estimates, by the year 2025, 3.5 billion people will live in places where water is becoming scarce.

2. Diplomacy: Projecting Canadian Values Abroad

We will return to Canada's long-standing position of opposing the death penalty on the global stage.

The execution of a successful foreign policy begins with building a stronger Foreign Service. We will put an end to the incessant cuts and attacks on Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs seen under the Conservative government. We will ensure that our professional diplomatic service has the resources and means to stand up for Canadians around the globe. This commitment will start with a reversal of the current government's short-sighted decision to close consulates in Milan, St. Petersburg, Fukuoka and Osaka.

We will place protection of the rights of Canadians abroad at the centre of our foreign policy. Under the Conservatives, consular rights that Canadians are entitled to have not been extended in all cases. A Liberal government will not pick and choose which Canadian deserves to be treated with justice and fairness. All Canadians deserve that respect regardless of which country it is that seeks to deny a Canadian citizen their rights.

We will return to Canada's long-standing position of opposing the death penalty on the global stage. We will not subscribe to the flawed logic of the current government which believes that the death penalty is acceptable if the execution is carried out by a democracy. We all know far too well that terrible miscarriages of justice are possible in even the most democratic of countries. We will refuse to be timid in standing up for this basic belief. We will vigorously reassert Canada's long-standing position of seeking clemency for Canadians sentenced to death – in any country, anywhere in the world.

We will establish Canadian Centres for Democracy to foster democracy and good governance.

As important as it is for the government to protect Canadians abroad, Canada's foreign policy must be more ambitious. We must seek to make use of Canada's sterling reputation to lead the world on critical initiatives as we have so often done in the past. Canadians are justifiably proud of the leadership Canada exercised in obtaining a global ban on landmines – inventing a new approach to negotiating arms treaties. This process – known as the "Ottawa Process" – was recently used by other countries around the world to negotiate a ban on cluster bombs as Canada watched from the sidelines. While Canada did quietly sign on to the Cluster Munitions Convention in May, the government at no point showed any leadership during the 13 months of treaty negotiations.

A Liberal government will reverse this shameful performance by quickly ratifying and complying with the new treaty and making it a priority in our relations with other nations to encourage ratification and full compliance.

An active foreign policy must also take a long-term view, using Canada's influence to help build better institutions abroad. We will establish Canadian Centres for Democracy, offering training and capacity building initiatives in support of democracy and good governance. The first of these centres will be based in the Middle East. Respected countries such as ours need to help nurture the fragile institutions of democracy and good governance starting to take hold in the region.

3. Development: Sharing Canadian Hope and Vision with the World

A Liberal government will boost the International Assistance Envelope by $500 million.

In 2000, Canada signed on to a world pledge to, among other targets, halve extreme poverty, halt the spread of HIV/AIDS and provide universal primary education – all by 2015. As the UN Secretary General has put it, we can achieve the Millennium Development Goals only if we break with business as usual. We agree. Unfortunately, under the Conservatives, Canada's overseas development assistance has actually fallen as a percentage of our gross national product. This must change.

Following a thorough review of the focus and relationship of the Canadian International Development Agency with other government departments and all of its partners in the public and private sector, a Liberal government will increase Canada's foreign aid spending. We will boost the International Assistance Envelope by $500 million.

A Liberal government will also follow through on legislation proposed by the Liberals and passed in the outgoing Parliament that would give Canada's official development assistance a clear legislative mandate to focus our aid on poverty reduction, as well as improve transparency and accountability.

A Liberal government will lead the world in the battle against Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) which affect 2 billion people around the world. We will propose a new international initiative to eradicate a number of these diseases by, among other, bringing NTDs in the ambit of the Global Fund against Tuberculosis, Malaria and HIV/AIDS, currently the biggest and most effective international instrument to pool resources in the fight against these major scourges.

In the fight against NTDs, a Liberal government will lead by example and challenge other donors. Canada will assume the estimated $15-million shortfall in the Lymphatic Filariasis elimination program in Haiti, helping to eradicate a terrible disease.

Africa

We will focus Canada's conflict prevention efforts in Africa.

Canadians have a special relationship with Africa, one that we must continue to nurture. Unfortunately, the Conservatives have short-sightedly decided to turn their back on the continent.

Conditions in Africa today are the most hopeful in recent memory. Africa, which in 2030 will be as populous as India and China today, can make faster progress and take its rightful place in a globalized world. Canada can decide today to be a real partner in Africa's economic transformation or it can miss that opportunity.

But Africa's challenges are also an opportunity for our country to fulfil Lester B. Pearson's legacy. A Liberal government will focus its conflict prevention efforts in this part of the world. It will also assist the United Nations in better coordinating the resources it is marshalling in support of peace operations in Africa.

In Sudan, the United Nations faces an historic test. January 2008 marked the deployment of the joint UN-African Union peacekeeping mission to Darfur. If fully deployed, it will be the biggest peacekeeping mission in history. Canada has a duty to ensure this mission succeeds and a Liberal government will ensure Canada does its part. As a first step, a Liberal government would contribute resources to the mission so it can contract the tactical and heavy lift helicopters it needs.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Three and half billion people live in developing countries rich in oil, gas and

minerals. Canadian companies are very active in helping developing countries manage these important resources. In fact, in many parts of the world, our mining and exploration companies are the "face of Canada."

In recent years, the activities of some of Canada's mining and prospecting companies in developing countries have come under greater scrutiny. We understand that our efforts to build a richer, fairer and greener future should not stop at our borders. Socially and environmentally responsible Canadian mining and prospecting activities abroad are crucial to both our country's reputation, to the industry's bottom-line interests and, most importantly, to ensuring sustainable development.

A Liberal government will establish and promote a Canadian Corporate Social Responsibility Framework for all Canadian extractive-sector companies operating in developing countries.

A Liberal government will establish and promote a Canadian Corporate Social Responsibility Framework for all Canadian extractive-sector companies operating in developing countries. The Framework, based on the common work of mining companies and non-governmental organizations, will help promote responsible Canadian corporate behaviour abroad and strengthen our country's commitment to sustainable development. This initiative will make Canada a world leader in social corporate responsibility and set a new standard for other countries involved in extractive activities in developing countries to follow.

4. Stronger Relationships

The United States is our closest ally. A Liberal government will work to strengthen that key relationship. At the same time, we will protect Canada's interests and values in the North American relationship. For example, a Liberal government will keep Canada out of the U.S. missile defence shield.

A Liberal government will rebuild the economic and diplomatic relationship between Canada and China.

As globalization shrinks the distances between Canada and the rest of the world, our relationship with Asia is increasingly important. A Liberal government will rebuild the economic and diplomatic relationship between Canada and China, a relationship frayed by Conservative grandstanding and showmanship. We will give this relationship increased priority, negotiating Official Destination Status for Canada so that Chinese tourists can visit Canada more easily.

We will also strengthen our ties to the broader Asian market, investing in infrastructure such as the Pacific Gateway, and in additional measures and initiatives to increase our presence in Asia, and particularly in India. A Liberal government will establish a Canada-South Asia Trade Foundation with an initial endowment of $40 million. This foundation will be similar to the Asia Pacific Foundation, and will focus exclusively on developing trade and foreign policy strategies to strengthen our ties with South Asia.

Afghanistan

The Liberal Party remains committed to helping the people of Afghanistan as they work to build a stable, secure and democratic country. We are proud of the efforts of the men and women in uniform and the civilians who have taken up this

challenge. The Liberal caucus took the lead in drafting and passing the motion in Parliament on the mission in Afghanistan. Our changes to the motion forced the Conservative government to accept our views that: the mission needs to change so there is a greater emphasis on training, security and reconstruction; the military mission in Kandahar needed to have a firm end date of 2011; and the government must go beyond an exclusively military focus in its approach to Afghanistan by increasing efforts with respect to development and international diplomacy.

A Liberal government will ensure that it is understood that Canada's commitment to maintain a military presence in Kandahar will end by July 2011.

The Liberal amendments also imposed a greater commitment to transparency and accountability on the government. Too often, the Conservatives have not been forthcoming with Canadians about developments in Afghanistan, particularly with respect to such crucial issues as the treatment of detainees transferred by Canadians to Afghan authorities. This lack of transparency and accountability has harmed both our international credibility and domestic support for our efforts in Afghanistan. Under a Liberal government, this approach will change and we will be guided by the both the letter and the spirit of the resolution that was passed in the House.

We will also ensure that our international partners understand the nature and extent of the commitment that Canada has made. We will not say one thing to a domestic audience and another to our allies. Although we understand that Canada must maintain a long-term commitment to the people of Afghanistan, we will be unequivocal that we cannot continue to be asked to shoulder the bulk of the responsibility in Kandahar indefinitely. We will ensure that it is understood that Canada's commitment to maintain a military presence in Kandahar will end by July 2011.

5. Trade

At its core, Canada is a trading nation. Our businesses and workers develop first-class goods and services that they are able to export around the world. Those same businesses and workers benefit from competitively priced and innovative technologies that we import from abroad. The Liberal Party, recognizing the economic prosperity and international goodwill such exchange creates, is committed to free trade.

The United States will always be Canada's largest trading partner, and our vital relationship must be strengthened. Nevertheless, as demonstrated by the significant impact the fall in the U.S. dollar has had on our economy, Canada must diversify its trade and investment activities. Emerging markets like China and India continue to grow, which means Canada needs to aggressively increase our export markets and investment ties with those regions of the world.

The Liberal Party is committed to multilateral negotiation through the WTO – nevertheless recent challenges at the Doha round highlight the need to also pursue bilateral trade agreements that reduce not only tariff, but non-tariff barri-

ers. A Liberal government will be guided by the firm conviction that the environment, human rights and corporate social responsibility are all critical considerations in the negotiation of free trade agreements.

6. Defence

Canada's ongoing commitment to the military mission in Afghanistan has depleted our ability to deploy the Canadian Forces elsewhere in the world. When combined with the commitments that will be necessary in order to provide the needed security requirements when Canada welcomes the world to the Vancouver Winter Olympics in 2010, we are severely limited in our ability to offer assistance to other international efforts as they arise. By putting a firm end date on the military deployment in Kandahar, we will regain flexibility with respect to our military to respond to emergency situations both domestically and internationally.

A Liberal government will remain committed to the money allocated in the fiscal framework to the Canadian Forces (CF) over the coming four years – much of which was originally committed in the Liberal Budget of 2005. But the job of supporting Canada's armed forces doesn't end when our troops return home. Military life, overseas deployments, and dangerous missions take a heavy toll. Our soldiers need adequate support services when they return from overseas or leave the service. A Liberal government will support the current members of the CF and our veterans by establishing a dedicated $60-million fund to help them cope with post-traumatic stress disorder and other ailments. As previously mentioned, a Liberal government will also establish a health ombudsman both within the CF and within Veterans Affairs Canada.

A Liberal government will support the current members of the CF and our veterans by establishing a dedicated $60-million fund to help them cope with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other ailments.

The federal government must also ensure that our forces get the most value for money on military contracts. We will abandon the sole-sourcing approach to defence contracts taken by the Conservatives, ensuring that Canadian industry can compete for contracts while guaranteeing the best equipment at the best price. We will also finally act on the purchase of much needed replacements for the fixed-wing search-and-rescue (SAR) planes to replace the current ageing fleet. The previous Liberal government set aside money to make this purchase in 2005 but the Conservatives have failed to act. These SAR planes are needed both for the safety of Canadians but also to promote our sovereignty in Canada's North. That is why we will ensure that some of the new fleet of SAR planes are based in the North.

7. Arctic Sovereignty

A Liberal government will secure our claim to the Arctic. We will promote the sovereignty and interests of the Arctic not only through military or marine infrastructure, but also through environmental protection, surveillance, search and

A Liberal government will also commit the necessary resources to complete the mapping of the seabed in Canada's arctic by 2013.

A Liberal government will work with Northern communities and Territorial governments to find ways to mitigate the effects of climate change and to support innovation and research on cold climate technologies.

rescue, and by encouraging the sustainable use of the Arctic's natural resources by our Arctic peoples. We will create comprehensive policies and agreements – with circumpolar governments and indigenous peoples of the North – on security, transit routes and environmental protection in the Arctic.

Again, this is an area where Canada's traditional multilateral approach is so crucial and one the Conservatives have decided to ignore by refusing to send senior representatives at meetings of the Arctic Council, an intergovernmental forum of all eight Arctic countries. A Liberal government will reverse this trend and return to the practice of sending senior ministerial representation to the meetings. We will also re-establish the position of the Ambassador for Circumpolar Affairs which the Conservatives have abolished.

A Liberal government will also commit the necessary resources to complete the mapping of the seabed in Canada's arctic by 2013 to strengthen our Northern sovereignty.

A Liberal government will work with Northern communities and territorial governments to find ways to mitigate the effects of climate change and to support innovation and research on cold-climate technologies. This includes a commitment to be a significant financial partner with the Yukon government in funding the proposed Yukon Cold Climate Innovation Cluster in Whitehorse and to look for similar opportunities to nurture research and development in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Conclusion

This platform began with the following questions: do we have the same courage to meet the demands of our generation as our parents and grandparents did before us? Can we meet those challenges with the vision, innovation and good government that define our country, leaving a richer Canada for the generation that comes after us?

Liberals are convinced that Canadians want to tackle these challenges and will be successful in creating a richer, fairer, greener Canada. We know where Stephen Harper's very conservative agenda leaves us: a Canada that slips further away, year by year, from the ambitious and progressive country we love. But imagine the Canada we could build if we choose to work together for the future.

Imagine a Canada that leveraged its economic surpluses into more education, more jobs and better infrastructure. We can achieve that vision through our Advanced Manufacturing Prosperity Fund, targeted spending on infrastructure, and closing the affordability gap that keeps low-income Canadians from going to college or university.

Imagine a Canada where opportunity is a not a privilege but a right, backed by the government's commitment to break down the barriers that impede that opportunity. We can achieve that vision through our 30-50 plan to reduce poverty, our commitment to the Kelowna Accord, and universal child care.

Imagine a Canada that leads the world in green technology, importing jobs and exporting solutions. We can achieve that vision with our Liberal green shift plan, stimulating investment in the next generation of energy technology and making Canada a world leader in new products and ideas and in fighting the crisis of climate change.

Above all this, imagine a Canada where the success of the next generation is the objective of our own. This is the easiest change of all—we only need the courage to believe in a better future.

Liberals believe this kind of Canada is worth more than just imagining—it's worth fighting for. The proposals outlined here explain how we can build a richer, fairer, greener Canada. Only the Liberal Party of Canada has a plan to build this Canada together with Canadians. And only the Liberal Party of Canada can provide the leadership and team to make it happen.

All that's left is to decide that we want to reach that goal. In the end, this election is about one simple question: What kind of Canada do you believe in?

Canadians Demand Fiscal Responsibility

As we confront the economic challenges of today and work to build a richer, fairer, greener Canada, the Liberal Party offers a government that is a partner Canadians can trust.

In 1993 Canadians entrusted Liberals with the challenge of fixing years of Conservative deficits and economic mismanagement. Jean Chretien and Paul Martin asked Canadians to slay a deficit that threatened to end Government's ability to act for current and future generations. Canadians rose to the challenge.

An unprecedented eight consecutive years of surpluses and sound management of Canadians' finances allowed Canadians to again believe in what we can do together:

- Liberals were privileged to deliver the largest personal and corporate tax cuts in Canada's history.
- Liberals committed to the largest ever investment in the health of Canadians.
- Liberals paid down more than $75 billion on our national debt
- Liberals committed to re-building where we live with the New Deal for Cities and Communities.
- Liberals began to invest in fairness for our first peoples, hope for our children and better education to build and thrive in the economy of tomorrow.

Under Jean Chretien and Paul Martin, Liberals refused to risk returning to deficit. Stéphane Dion was a leader within the Liberal Governments that restored fiscal discipline to our country, and a Dion Government will continue this proud tradition.

The measures outlined in this platform will move Canada towards a richer, fairer, greener future. They are fiscally sound.

Liberals will continue to put fiscal responsibility first:

- Our budgets will be balanced;
- We will restore the annual $3 billion Contingency Reserve to protect against the unforeseen;
- If this annual reserve is not required, it will go towards reducing our debt;
- Unanticipated surpluses in excess of the Reserve will be invested in our country's infrastructure; and
- We will accelerate the delivery of our commitments as Canada's fiscal capacity improves.

The Liberal Four-Year Plan – Revenue

The Conservative Government has not released the most recent projections of Government revenues despite the fact that this information is usually ready by the middle of September.

This platform builds upon the most recent official estimates of the Government as found in Budget 2008. Lower GDP growth for the current and next year will impact revenues.

This will be offset to some extent by lower interest rates on Canada's debt and the fact that commodity prices have been higher than projected. The Government should release the most current estimates immediately.

Budget 2008 projected total revenue for the period 2009/10 to 2012/13 of $1,073 billion.

Since the Budget the Federal Government has announced new un-budgeted revenues from the sale of wireless spectrum and exploration rights in the Beaufort Sea which will add $2.2 billion over four years.

The Green Shift Plan is revenue neutral to the federal government. Every penny raised through taxes on pollution will be returned to Canadians in the form of significant tax cuts and benefits for households and businesses. In fact, as shown below, the Green Shift actually reduces net revenue by $90 million over four years.

This platform also includes tax changes that will add an additional $1.29 billion over four years in net new tax revenue. Combined with the Green Shift this means $1.2 billion in net new revenue is projected. This is equal to the revenue raised by immediately eliminating tax subsidies for oil sands development that are no longer required.

This platform does not increase the GST.

This platform does not eliminate the Universal Child Care Benefit of $1,200.

As shown in Table 1, this platform projects total 4 year revenues of $1,076 billion.

TABLE 1 - PROJECTED REVENUE	**4-YEAR TOTAL** *($ Millions)*
Budget 2008 Projected Revenue	**1,072,600**
Post-Budget Revenue	**2,240**
Green Shift net Tax & Benefit Changes	**-90**
Platform Tax Changes	**1,290**
Canadian Film and Video Production Tax Credit	-165
Income Averaging for Artists	-50
Rural Emergency Workers Credit	-95
Extend Education Credits to Apprentices	-600
End Oil Sands Tax Subsidies	1,200
Income Trusts	1,000
TOTAL PLATFORM REVENUE	**$1,076,040**

The Liberal Four-Year Plan - Expenditures

Budget 2008 identifies $487.1 billion over four years in planned transfers to other governments, people and infrastructure commitments. A Liberal Government will honour these commitments and increase Federal support for provincial partners, Canadians and infrastructure.

A further $438.1 billion in direct program spending is projected.

Operating costs thus total $925.3 billion.

In addition, four-year debt servicing is projected to total $133.1 billion.

The current fiscal frame thus anticipates total expenditure over the four years covered by this platform of $1,058.4 billion.

As noted in Table 1, this platform project revenues of $1,076 billion.

The projected operating balance is thus $17.64 billion over four years as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE PLAN	4-YEAR TOTAL	GROWTH/YR
Transfers to Provinces as planned	$204,576	4.8%
Transfers to People as planned	$264,870	3.9%
Infrastructure as planned	$17,696	6.1%
Direct Program Spending	$438,158	4.5%
Debt Servicing	$133,100	1.3%
TOTAL PLANNED EXPENDITURE	**$1,058,400**	**4.0%**
TABLE 1 REVENUE	**$1,076,040**	
OPERATING BALANCE	**$17,640**	

This platform contains new programs totaling $16.335 billion over four years as shown in Table 3.

It is not meaningful to project precise year by year profiles for every commitment in this platform since, in many cases, actual annual outlays and the start of new programs will depend on discussions still to be held with other governments. For planning purposes this platform reserves more than $5 billion over four years for such programs.

In addition, major infrastructure spending cannot be accurately predicted until specific projects are identified. This platform reserves $10 billion over four years for projects to be identified in partnership with municipal and provincial partners.

A Liberal government commits to accelerate the delivery of commitments as resources permit and further commits to conclude all necessary implementation negotiations within the first three years of our mandate.

TABLE 3: THE LIBERAL FOUR-YEAR PLAN 2009/10 - 2012/13	PLATFORM ($Millions)			
	Total	Spending Plan	Tax Changes	The Green
A RICHER CANADA	**32,525**	**4,600**	**-1,290**	**29,215**
Personal Income Tax Reductions	16,325	-	-905	17,230
Corporate Tax Reductions	7,360	-	-1,200	8,560
Manufacturing & Transportation	4,415	875	-	2,150
Primary Industries		1,390	-	
Agriculture	840	840	-	-
Forestry	250	250	-	-
Fisheries	300	300	-	-
Arts and Technology	530	315	215	-
Support for Students	1,150	550	600	-
Investing in research	1,945	670	-	1,275
Integrating New Canadians	800	800	-	-
A FAIRER CANADA	**20,250**	**9,700**	**-**	**10,550**
Supporting Low-Income Seniors & Disabled	2,520	2,270	-	250
Family Support and Children's Tax Benefits	9,900	1,500	-	8,400
Tax relief for Low and Middle Income Workers	1,900	-	-	1,900
Social Housing	620	620	-	-
Health Care	1,320	1,320	-	-
Child Care	1,500	1,500	-	-
Aboriginal Canadians	2,100	2,100	-	-
Safe Communities	230	230	-	-
Advocacy	160	160	-	-
A GREENER CANADA	**1,735**	**1,435**	**-**	**300**
Clean Energy	370	370	-	-
Green Mortgages and Home retrofits	575	275	-	300
Clean Water, Oceans and Natural Environment	690	690	-	-
Protecting Our Health	100	100	-	-
RESTORING OUR VOICE IN THE WORLD	**600**	**600**	**-**	**-**
GREEN SHIFT POLLUTION TAXES	**-39,975**	**0**	**0**	**-39,975**
TOTALS	**15,135**	**16,335**	**-1,290**	**90**

Using 2008/2009 as "Base Year"

Under a new Liberal Government, every program funded in 2008/2009 will continue unless specifically cancelled. This means current programs such as Affordable Housing initiatives, the current "Dion Plan" for Official Languages and existing Regional Development Programs that "expire" after 2008/2009 will continue. It also means that future cuts to programs announced by the Conservatives to such areas as the Arts will NOT occur.

Restoring the Contingency Reserve and Expenditure Discipline

A Liberal Government will restore the annual $3 billion Contingency Reserve.

Liberals know how to manage program spending. Between 2002/03 and 2005/2006 Liberal budgets held program spending growth – including transfers for infrastructure -- to an average of 6.7 percent/year.

This was fully 1.3 percent lower than the 8 percent/year growth of the Conservatives between 2005/06 and 2008/09.

A new Liberal government will undertake a thorough expenditure review to identify savings across all non-transfer spending plans. This will start modestly and rise to $5 billion in year four. (Approximately 1.8 percent of total planned government spending) These savings, as and when they are secured, will be available to reinvest in the priorities of Canadians.

We will achieve a cumulative total of at least $12 billion of "reinvestment savings" over four years by limiting currently planned total direct program spending to an average annual increase of 3.4 percent/year. As shown in Table 2, the current expenditure plan anticipates annual growth of 4.5percent.

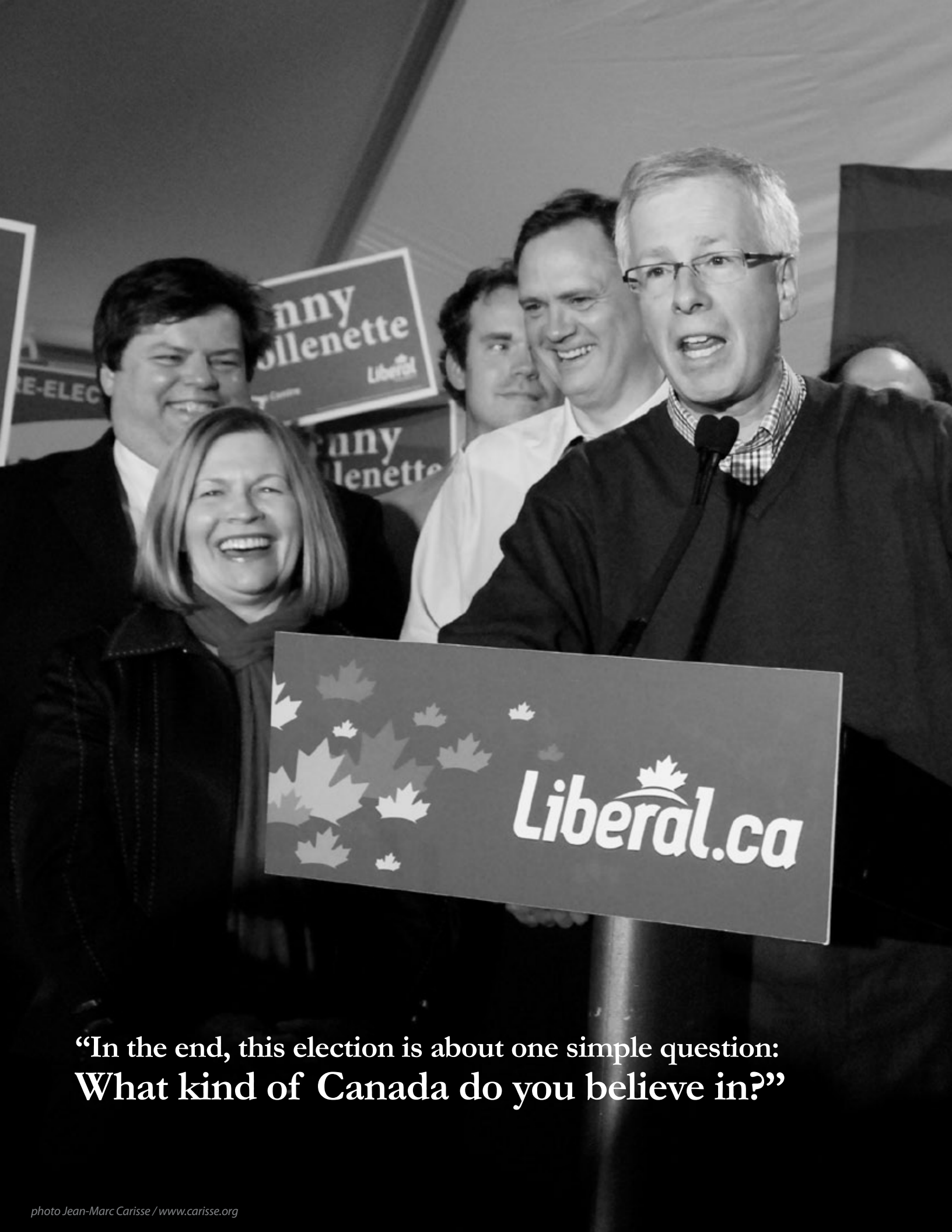
TABLE 4: PLATFORM OVERVIEW - 4 YEAR TOTALS	*($ Million)*
Revenue From Table 1	1,076,040
Current Expenditure Plan from Table 2	1,058,400
Platform Initiatives form Table 3	16,335
Reallocation	-12,000
Operating Balance	13,305
Contingency Reserve	12,000
BALANCE	**1,305**

As shown in Table 4, the Liberal Plan has a four year $13.3 billion operating balance which creates a cushion to ensure Canadians can address the current economic challenges ignored by the Conservative Government. This cushion also provides resources to allow a new Liberal Government to negotiate in good faith with provincial partners.

We encourage you to share our Action Plan with your family and friends. To receive a PDF version, please send an e-mail to action@liberal.ca.

Victory
victoryfund.ca

In order to implement the Liberal Party's Action Plan, Stéphane Dion and his team need your help. We invite you to demonstrate your support by joining the Victory Fund at **www.victoryfund.ca**.



"In the end, this election is about one simple question:
What kind of Canada do you believe in?"

photo Jean-Marc Carisse / www.carisse.org

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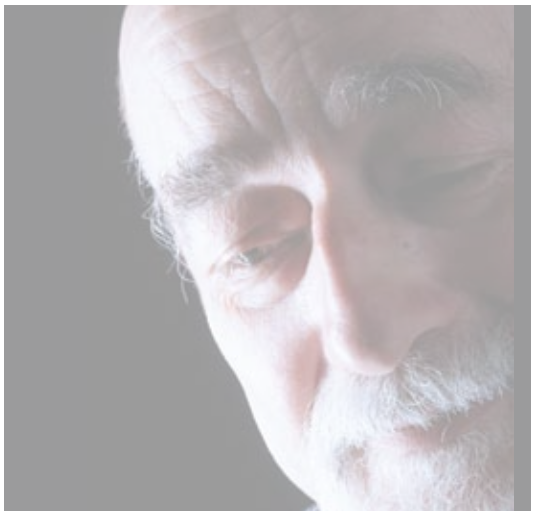

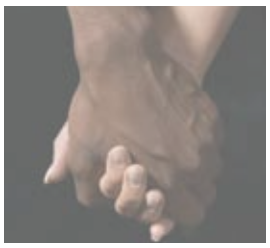

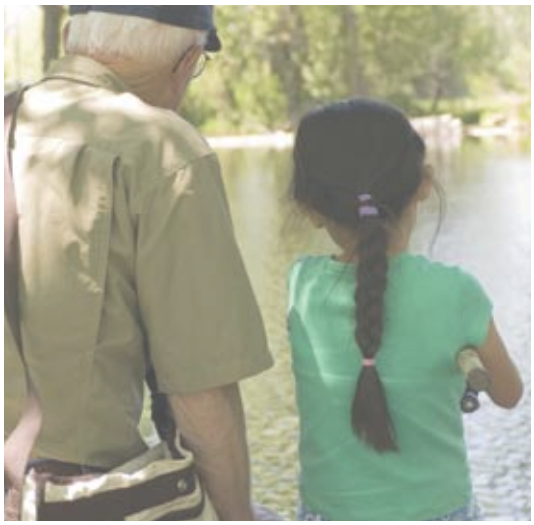

An Action Plan
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Authorized by the Federal Liberal Agency of Canada, registered agent for the Liberal Party of Canada