PLATFORM 2008

Jack Layton

AND THE NEW DEMOCRATS

A Prime Minister on your family's side, for a change.

Paid and authorized by the registered agent of Canada's NDP.

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A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM JACK LAYTON

Dear friend,

The commitments we are putting before the people of Canada in this election are about hope and opportunity for you, your family, your friends and neighbours. They are about a future where you come first.

There are many ways to measure the success of our country. All kinds of statistics. Some are more important than others. For me, the most important measure is the success of ordinary Canadians.

In short, I am proposing real change from the way things have been done in the past. Not just change from the last 25 months, but change from the last 25 years.

It all starts with action on your priorities at the kitchen table, not just the boardroom table.

We'll stop tax giveaways to corporations that don't need them, or who ship our jobs overseas.

We'll support companies that provide training to workers here. We'll invest with companies that are innovating in the new energy economy, and creating new green collar jobs for Canadians.

We'll stop the shameful rip-offs and gouging by cellphone giants, banks and credit card companies.

We'll shorten health care waiting lists by training more doctors and nurses. Five million Canadians don't have a family doctor. One million are on waiting lists.

We'll face the challenge of climate change – not with Mr. Harper's idle words

or by taxing you and your family – but with tough laws that force polluters to clean up the mess they've made.

The government will do its job. We will not stand idly by and wait when tainted meat, or bad water, or any public health emergency threatens your family's health.

Instead of a Canada where growing corporate wealth benefits only a few, we will strive for social and economic equality for all. We will build a strong Canada that is as compassionate at home as it is competitive abroad. We will stand with every man and woman as they seek a better life for themselves and their children.

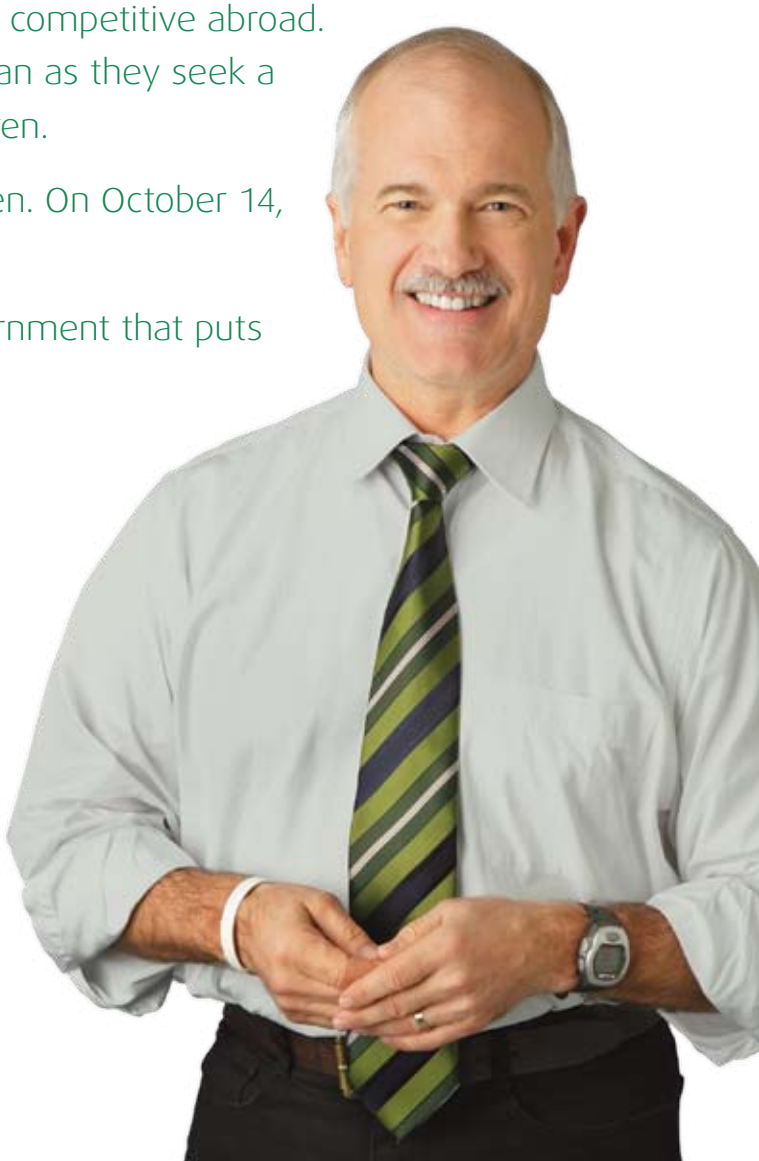
I invite you to join me in making it happen. On October 14, I invite you to vote New Democrat.

I invite you to cast your ballot for a government that puts you and your family first.

Don't let them tell you it can't be done.

Sincerely,

Jack Layton,
Leader, Canada's New Democrats



MAKING LIFE MORE AFFORDABLE FOR FAMILIES - CREATING JOBS

The people who have been running Canada promised to put jobs first.

They didn't.

While they stand by, good jobs are disappearing, and many of our jobs are being shipped overseas.

Thousands of hard-working Canadians are struggling to pay the bills and support their families because they are forced to rely on a succession of insecure, low-wage jobs.

We can do better. Every worker deserves a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, respect in the workplace, and a secure pension.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will act on your priorities at the kitchen table, not just the boardroom table:

- We will provide leadership to keep jobs in Canada, encourage innovation, and help you balance your budget by putting a stop to consumer gouging.
- We will invest in new energy solutions, affordable housing, and education and training for workers and young people.
- We will ensure that opportunities are shared with working families and individuals, not taken away through tax giveaways to those who need them least.

Canadian workers have the ingenuity, work ethic and desire to be successful.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will ensure that every Canadian can share in our country's opportunities and potential. We will put you and your family first.

Creating Jobs and Innovation in a New Energy Economy

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will implement a prudent and sensible plan to keep good jobs in Canada, encourage innovation, and get the Canadian government engaged in creating good jobs in the new energy economy.

1. Create a Green-Collar Jobs Fund of $750 million a year to train new workers and re-train displaced workers. This will provide the skills to install and maintain energy efficient and renewable energy technology. It will support the transition from jobs in older, higher-pollution energy systems.
2. Appoint a Job Protection Commissioner to investigate major layoffs and shutdowns. The Commissioner will work with workers, the affected businesses, stakeholders (such as banks) and communities to maintain and develop good employment for Canadians.

3. Introduce an environmental automobile strategy:

    - Invest in Canadian production of low-emission cars to ensure our auto industry remains viable. This will include aggressive incentives for manufacturers who develop and manufacture in Canada cars with low or zero greenhouse gas emissions.
    - Provide federal government support for pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths in communities as part of our commitment to sustainable transport. In addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure will have health benefits for Canadians who choose to walk or cycle.
    - Bring in mandatory vehicle emission standards for all vehicles sold in Canada based on leading North American standards.
    - Require vehicle fuel consumption labelling so consumers have better information about every vehicle's environmental performance and efficiency savings.
    - Reduce pollution through an *Early Adopters Program* that encourages the purchase of commercial electric hybrid vehicles.

4. Create and support pan-Canadian sector-based strategies. Experts agree we need a pro-active plan to keep our country, our industries, and our workforce in a leading global position.

    - All over the world, industries, government and workers are collaborating to build new opportunities for jobs and innovation. Canada has taken the opposite approach of picking winners, like the banks and oil companies, and losers, like manufacturers and the forest industry.
    - Sector-based strategies will include: lumber; pulp and paper; energy and petrochemicals; tool and die; machinery and equipment; aeronautics and transportation; fish and food processing; steel; mining exploration; environmental technologies; information processing; pharmaceuticals; health equipment and supplies; tourism; telecommunications; shipbuilding and repair; media and cultural industries; and agriculture and food industries.
    - These sector-based strategies will be accompanied by a systematic review of sector-specific tax measures. We will eliminate those that are economically or environmentally counterproductive. We will add new measures to stimulate investment in the broader public interest.

5. As part of our job protection strategy, New Democrats will stand up against our jobs being exported out of Canada by implementing job-focused trade strategies. We will:

    - Make it harder to import from countries with unacceptable environmental, employment and wage standards.
    - Make it easier to export from Canada by supporting industry.
    - Influence competitive advantage by ensuring that the macro-economic environment is growth-oriented.

Additional Measures to Protect Good Jobs and Build Opportunities for New Jobs

Invest the equivalent of one cent of the GST in increased funding of the important priorities of our cities and communities by 2011. This will address the growing infrastructure deficit, and help cities and citizens avoid massive property tax increases. This increased infrastructure commitment, phased in over 5 years, will include increased investment and jobs in:

- Expanded public transit.
- Affordable housing.
- Expanded child care.
- Building retrofits and environmentally friendly renovations.
- Immigrant settlement.
- Roads, highways and border crossings.
- Public libraries.
- Community centres.
- Sewer and water treatment facilities.

Expand employment in our communities, build new markets for Canadian suppliers, strengthen sustainability commitments, and encourage Canadian entrepreneurship by adopting a Made-in-Canada procurement policy for the federal government and its agencies.

- In negotiations with provinces, municipalities and other stakeholders, we will develop Made-in-Canada procurement protocols for federal investments in public transit, infrastructure and other investments.

A Better Buildings Retrofit and Energy Efficiency Strategy:

- Re-vamp the ecoEnergy programs to provide low-interest loans and improved grants for energy efficient home and building retrofits, modeled on the City of Toronto's successful Better Buildings Partnership using revolving funds.
- A new program to retrofit low-income homes, replacing the program cancelled by the Harper government.
- Add energy conservation and efficiency criteria to the Canadian Building Code, working with provinces and territories.
- Establish a target to retrofit 7% of Canada's building and housing stock each year.

Strengthen Regional Development:

- Improve the effectiveness of existing federal agencies for Atlantic Canada, Quebec, and Western Canada.
- Establish and increase funding for FedNor as a fully independent regional development agency with a new mandate to invest exclusively in Northern Ontario.
- Establish a regional development agency for Southern Ontario, with the specific emphasis on areas hard hit by manufacturing job losses.
- Create a new North of 60 regional development agency covering the northern territories.

Employment Standards: Fairness in the Workplace

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Re-establish the National Minimum Wage terminated by the Liberal government. We will set it immediately at $10 per hour, and index it to inflation.

Outlaw the use of replacement workers in strikes or lockouts based on the proposed legislation that was killed during the 2007 Parliament by Stéphane Dion and Stephen Harper.

Protect workers' pensions. Working with provincial governments we will establish a Canadian Pension Benefits Guarantee Fund. This will ensure that workers actually receive the retirement benefits they have earned, even if their employer goes out of business.

Create a new national holiday in February.

Scrap the current complaints-based pay equity system in favour of a pro-active approach. Bring pay fairness to women workers by finally implementing the recommendations of the Pay Equity Task Force.

Respect the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively. Honour the standards and conventions established by the United Nations' International Labour Organization.

Support tradespeople and others who are forced to travel and work away from home with new tax deductions that recognize these expenses.

Consult with stakeholders and develop an action plan based on the Arthurs' Federal Labour Standards Report recommendations. We will act on the crucial issues of work-life balance through leaves to meet family responsibilities. And we will address the non-standard employment relationships like part-time, contract, and temporary work and variable schedules. All of these are especially important to women, who often must shoulder the additional burdens of caring for elderly parents and for children.

Corporate Taxes: Balance and Fairness

During elections, Liberals and Conservatives don't talk much about corporate tax cuts. But come budget time, the biggest priority for Liberals and Conservatives is another round of tax giveaways to Canada's wealthiest corporations.

We will change that and bring a more balanced approach to Ottawa. Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Reverse the Liberal and Conservative giveaways. The New Democrats will not implement Mr. Harper's profligate, wasteful and unproductive corporate tax breaks. We'll restore a uniform 22.12% tax rate – what it was before the Martin and Harper governments began these giveaways.

Simplify the tax code by reviewing and eliminating outdated tax incentives and loopholes.

Tighten-up tax administration so everyone pays their fair share of taxes, and the billions of dollars in taxes currently owed, but not paid, are collected.

End the special tax breaks for the tar sand projects, and the big oil and gas industry.

Eliminate the loopholes that enable Canadian corporations to avoid paying the taxes they owe by running their finances through international tax havens, as spelled-out in the Auditor General's report.

Recover unpaid loans and outstanding taxes from corporations that are doing business with the federal government by deducting such debts from the contract payments.

Fiscal and Financial Stability

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Introduce and maintain balanced budgets each and every year of a mandate.

Report routinely and openly on budgetary surpluses.

Ensure the proper functioning and independence of the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Undertake an immediate top-to-bottom review of how banks, insurance companies, and other financial service providers are regulated in this country.

This review will ensure that:

- Our financial institutions are properly capitalized.
- They fully disclose risk.
- They don't substitute flawed ratings systems for real risk management.
- They function with the due care and prudence expected from the custodians of the savings of working families.

Protecting Consumers, Communities and the Public

Ordinary Canadians are paying too much each year due to price gouging and hidden fees. Jack Layton and his team of New Democrats will stop the rip-offs and strengthen consumer protection:

Reduce overcharging and hidden fees, and ban ATM fees for institutions regulated under the *Bank Act*, by requiring more accountability and transparency from the cell phone companies, the banks, airlines and other companies. This will include ending unfair charges on incoming text messages.

Limit outrageous interest rates and fees charged by "fringe banks". We will enforce existing regulations to limit the interest rates and fees that can be charged for services like "payday" loans, tax refund advances and cheque-cashing.

Cap the interest rates on credit cards to a maximum of 5 percentage points over prime by amending the *Bank Act*.

Help alleviate gouging at the gas pumps through monitoring and regulating fuel prices at the pumps.

Provide greater support to working families that need assistance in managing their consumer and household debt.

Ensure that consumers' concerns are heard by requiring federally regulated agencies such as banks, telephone companies and cable corporations to fund citizen oversight committees to monitor fees, rates and regulatory decisions as part of the formal regulatory and rate-setting process.

Protect families by giving Health Canada and the minister responsible for consumer protection greater authority to:

- Investigate and directly order the recall of unsafe and toxic consumer products including toys, groceries and pet food.
- Increase testing and inspection of imported products, with standards that match those required of Canadian products.
- Require federally regulated agencies to provide better customer services, as well as better complaint mechanisms, and measurable, high-quality customer support.

Based on the "precautionary principle," we will reassess, control and eliminate toxic substances from products used by Canadian families, including children's toys, by implementing the New Democrats' *Toxic Pollution Reduction Act*.

- The Act will expand on the New Democrats' *Phthalate Control Act* passed by the House of Commons in 2007.

Modeled on proposed legislation in the US, New Democrats will take action to stop the import of toxic products and better protect Canadian children. We will make importers responsible for costs of inspecting and ensuring the safety of their products.

End the use and circulation of the Canadian penny, increasing convenience for shoppers and cutting unnecessary costs to the government.

Address the 'leaky condo' crisis with an inquiry into the role and responsibilities of federal agencies (as promised by Stephen Harper, but never done), and tax exemptions for repair and restoration costs.

Respect the right of families and individuals to know what they are eating:

- Mandatory labelling of farmed fish and genetically engineered food, as is already done in Europe, Asia and Australia.
- New labelling requirements to inform consumers of the region of origin of food products and ingredients – so they know how far food has traveled to reach their table.

Establish a more effective "do-not-call" list for telemarketers. We will impose tough new sanctions on telemarketers who violate the list.

Reduce accidents and railroad derailments. We will establish and better enforce high standards of public safety in air, rail, road and marine transport based on carrier responsibility, best practices and recommendations from regulatory and legal investigations.

Combat identity theft and control online computer fraud against innocent consumers and seniors, including spamming and "phishing". We will work with consumers, experts and businesses to implement tough new measures to fight cyber-crime.

Implement "net neutrality" to protect everyday Canadians' right to freely access the internet content of their choice at a flat rate and with clear and transparent rules. We will end price gouging and "net throttling", preventing a two-tiered internet.

Ensure motorists can choose their own mechanic. New right-to-repair legislation will require automakers to make diagnostic software available to all repair shops and technicians.

Bring all consumer-related federal agencies under one roof by naming a Minister specifically responsible for consumer affairs. Canadians deserve a Minister devoted to protecting their interests.

Protect consumers in sectors where only a handful of companies control the entire industry by strengthening the *Competition Act* and the regulatory powers of the CRTC, the Competition Bureau and the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada.

Food Safety

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will take action to ensure the food you buy in the store is safe to eat. We will work in consultation with consumers, workers and industry to:

Increase number of inspectors at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. We will increase administrative support so inspectors can spend more time on the floor and less time on paperwork.

Reduce worker injuries, increase the quality of the food, and ensure greater safety of products by introducing regulations on "line speed" in meat processing plants that match existing requirements in the European Union.

Improve the system for warning families of potential dangers with consistent policies for immediate public notification of food safety problems.

Require labeling of genetically engineered foods and farmed fish.

Require full accuracy and accountability for labels stating "Made in Canada".

Agriculture and Food Security

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Ensure that the preservation of orderly Canadian marketing systems, and the elimination of predatory export practices and subsidies are key priorities – both in domestic policy and in international trade negotiations.

Work with farm organizations and provincial governments to implement income stabilization programs that are consistent with our international trade obligations and approaches, tailored for each commodity sector, and focused on the family farms that most need the support.

Implement a Canadian organic food and agriculture strategy which will include:

- Ban the use of Terminator seeds and protect every farmer's right to choose, save and control their seeds.
- Provide transition funding for education, equipment and training for farmers who wish to shift to organic or bio-intensive integrated pest management systems of agriculture.
- Support for independent agricultural extension workers to facilitate environmentally friendly farming methods, including low tillage, water conservation and reduced fertilizer and pesticide use.

Redress the imbalances of economic power between producers and agri-business corporations, including limiting meatpackers' ownership of cattle, by adding new provisions to the *Competition Act*.

Support the development of more producer-run cooperatives to act as a counterweight to the power of multinational agribusiness giants, and to encourage more value-added processing and jobs in Canada.

Entrench the Canadian Wheat Board as the single desk marketer for Canadian wheat and barley, and commit Canadian policy to the principle of orderly marketing systems for commodity sectors.

Improve access to farm safety net funding for natural disasters and poor markets, particularly for small farms.

Fisheries

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Reject the Conservatives' proposed *Fisheries Act* and respect Canada's Supreme Court decisions. Canada's fisheries belong to all Canadians, not to private interests. We will focus on the long-term economic and environmental sustainability of our marine resources, not on rewarding special interests.

Support the international initiative through the United Nations for a moratorium on high seas drag nets.

Ensure that all aquaculture operations meet the highest environmental standards. We will promote the use of closed tank technologies. We will work in partnership with provincial governments, stakeholders and First Nations to protect adjacent waters, communities, and wild fish stocks.

Invest more in habitat protection and salmon enhancement. We will increase enforcement by hiring more fisheries officers and updating the *Fisheries Act*.

Reaffirm and enforce the oil tanker moratorium on BC's inland coast, including the North Coast Inside Passage and Hecate Strait.

Maintain the moratoria on oil and gas exploration in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and off the BC coast where the ecological threat is significant.

Forestry

Working with provincial and territorial governments, First Nations, workers and management in the forest industry Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Support sustainability in forest management practices, including incentives for certification, to keep the industry sustainable for communities, workers, and future generations.

End the Conservatives' restrictive 2007 Canada-US softwood lumber agreement, work to re-open U.S. markets based on fair trade in lumber, and develop alternatives to the US market.

Restrict raw log exports to make sure that Canadian jobs come first – a step that Liberals and Conservatives have refused to take.

Maximize opportunities for workers and businesses through value-added development, expanded product exports, innovation and opening new markets.

Overhaul the federal government's inadequate program to mitigate the impacts of the pine beetle and other insect epidemics. We will:

- Develop harvesting strategies and new uses for affected trees, including as clean and sustainable biofuels.
- Emphasize climate change solutions and adaptation strategies.
- Encourage economic diversification.
- Promote forestry industry opportunities and forest sustainability.

Education, Skills Training and Apprenticeships

For Canada's young people and new citizens to thrive and remain competitive economically, we must invest more in education and training, and do a better job with the investments we make. We must also create opportunities for retraining and lifelong learning, as traditional industries face overseas competition and new industries emerge.

Post-Secondary Education

Through Jack Layton and the New Democrats' Education Opportunity Plan, we will:

Enact the *Post Secondary Education Act* as introduced by the NDP in the last Parliament.

Ensure that students don't have crippling debts when they graduate:

- Provide a $1,000 grant to all undergraduate or equivalent students who qualify for student loans, paid at the beginning of the school year.
- Support students and post-secondary education in Quebec and the Northern Territories with financing equivalent to their government's student access and post-secondary development programs.

Keep tuition fees affordable and improve opportunities in post-secondary education by negotiating with provinces and territories improved, dedicated funding to support and enrich publicly funded and administered post-secondary institutions. This will include new initiatives to increase financial support for in-demand

professionals, such as doctors and nurses, linked to them serving in areas where there are shortages.

Reform the Canada Student Loans system, including interest relief, so students are not forced to start repaying their student loans while they are still completing their education through internship, co-op or placement programs.

Encourage the best young minds to stay here in Canada by increasing funding for university and college-based research, and for graduate and post-graduate studies.

Skills Training and Apprenticeships

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will take action to increase skills training and apprenticeship opportunities. We will:

Create more opportunities for training by broadening eligibility for EI training benefits. To make it easier for workers to access full- and part-time training programs we will:

- Open the doors to employed Canadians who take leaves from their jobs to participate.
- Extend opportunities to employed Canadians engaged in full-time training and retraining programs who do not otherwise qualify for EI.
- Waive the eligibility waiting period for EI benefits when tradespeople are entering courses.
- Develop partnerships with provincial and territorial governments, and labour and management organizations, to make EI a key resource for public training strategies and programs.

Make the employment of certified apprentices and journeypersons a condition in federal government construction contracts.

Support skills upgrades in the health sector through training leaves.

Work with the building and other trades, in collaboration with provincial governments, to set Canada-wide standards for apprenticeship entrance requirements, curriculum and recognition requirements.

Create incentives for employers to make sure apprenticeships are completed.

Reach out to aboriginal peoples and new Canadians to encourage their participation in skills training, with recognition of their growing role in the labour force and their ability to fill skills shortages.

Work with provincial governments, industry and the trade union movement to develop a more effective system of job placement.

Expand the number of apprenticeable trades in Canada.

Develop a more effective approach to recognizing prior learning, including for foreign workers and new immigrants.

Literacy Opportunity Guarantee

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Commit to the goal of a fully literate Canada by spearheading a comprehensive literacy strategy.

Invest in long-term, sustainable funding to meet Canada-wide literacy targets, including the creation of a Canadian Literacy Agency to work with the provinces and our community partners to fund, monitor and measure progress in achieving these targets.

Formally recognize the "right to learn" of all Canadians – to develop the literacy and essential skills they need to participate fully in our social, cultural, economic and political life.

Implement a "literacy lens" across federal departments to make literacy a government-wide priority.

Employment Insurance

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Reject Stephen Harper's plan to create a new Crown Corporation for EI. Instead, we will guarantee that 100% of EI premium revenue will be used to provide and improve EI benefits and training for workers. These funds must not be diverted to general revenue as was done by Liberal governments.

Increase the proportion of unemployed Canadians who are covered by Employment Insurance to 80 percent, from the current rate of under 40%, by making changes to eligibility requirements based on insurance principles.

Recognize the realities of seasonal employment by basing EI benefits on the best 12 weeks of employment earnings.

Improve the caregiver benefit to provide up to six months of EI benefits while caring for an infirm or elderly family member.

Children and Child Care: Ensuring a Head Start for Kids

In consultation with the provinces and territories, Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Enact the New Democrats' *Early Learning and Child Care Act* – which has already passed Second Reading in Parliament - to establish the program in law for the first time in Canada.

Establish and adequately fund a Canada-wide child care and early learning program. We will make high quality, accessible, affordable, non-profit and licensed child care available to Canadian families, including aboriginal Canadians.

These initiatives will create 150,000 new child care spaces in the first year, growing to 220,000 spaces per year in the fourth year.

Ensure a healthy head start for kids. We will develop a Children's Nutrition Initiative to support and expand provincial and local programs that provide healthy meals to school children.

Helping Families Make Ends Meet – and Ending Poverty

Ordinary Canadians are rightly concerned about the growing affordability gap, poverty, and economic inequality in our communities. We are one of the wealthiest nations on Earth, but under successive Conservative and Liberal governments it keeps getting worse – the rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer and working families are getting squeezed.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will meet this unacceptable trend head-on, with powerful poverty-fighting initiatives that will restore affordability, fairness and balance to families and individuals, including those who live in poverty.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Introduce a *Poverty Elimination Act* to eliminate poverty in Canada by the year 2020:

- This act will set firm targets, and make the government accountable for achieving these targets.
- The act will make the government accountable for eliminating poverty in Canada by 2020.
- Every five years the government will have to report on its progress and deliver an action plan, to be approved by the House of Commons.
- Initial targets will include reducing child poverty by more than 50 percent and the overall poverty rate by more than 35 percent in the first five years.
- The act will establish a poverty elimination office housed within HRDC to assume overall responsibility for implementing our poverty-reduction strategy and developing concrete poverty indicators.

To help families make ends meet – and to reach out to children living in poverty, we will:

- Phase in a new Child Benefit. This benefit, modelled on the existing Canada Child Tax Benefit, will expand in phases to $5,000 a year per child, and consolidate the current piecemeal system of benefits and tax credits for children into a single, better, non-taxable monthly cheque to parents.
- Work with provinces to eliminate the provincial claw-back of much needed Child Supplement Benefits for families receiving social assistance.
- Make substantial investments in affordable, accessible, child care for all Canadians.
- Provide aggressive incentives help ordinary families and those with low or fixed incomes become more energy-efficient, helping to both reduce rising energy costs and contribute to the fight against climate change.
- Establish a fair minimum wage of $10 and index it to inflation.
- Immediately reform the Employment Insurance system to ensure fairness and support for unemployed Canadians.
- Institute a “Bring Canada Home” affordable housing plan.
- Reinstitute a pan-Canadian affordable housing program.
- Improve workplace standards and protect workers’ pensions.
- Expand literacy and skills training.

Affordable Housing: "Bring Canada home".

To help ensure Canadians will have adequate and affordable housing, Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Implement a durable, comprehensive and fully-funded affordable housing strategy that meets Canada's international obligations, as set out by the United Nations. We will build towards the 10-year goal of the One Percent Solution – with one percent of federal spending allocated for truly affordable housing. We will implement the following programs:

- New homes: Non-profit and co-operative homes for families and single individuals, including students. Specific housing targets will be set for Aboriginals, seniors, women and others who currently bear the biggest burden of housing insecurity and homelessness.
- Special needs: Funding for supportive housing for people with special physical and mental health needs.
- Upgrading homes: Funding to expand federal housing rehabilitation programs to maintain and retrofit existing substandard homes.
- Homelessness services and transitions: Funding to extend federal homelessness programs to ensure that services and transitional housing are available across Canada.

We will fund the "Bring Canada Home" strategy with a combination of new revenues and partial reinvestment of the net income from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, excluding contributions from provinces and territories in cost-shared initiatives.

HIRING MORE DOCTORS AND NURSES AND RENEWING HEALTH CARE

The people who have been running Ottawa have long promised to reduce the waiting times for health care.

They didn't.

And today, five million Canadians do not have a family doctor. One million patients are on waiting lists for care.

In some parts of Canada, private for-profit corporations are allowed to undermine our public health care system.

It's time for a change on health care.

We must improve health care so no-one is left behind. We must be innovative. And you and your family must not be forced to wait because someone with more money is jumping the queue.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will improve health care to give you timely access to primary care health professionals.

We will reduce wait times by training and hiring more nurses and doctors. We will invest in innovation, and share best practices. We will make prescription drugs more affordable for you and your family.

We will expand home care so seniors and people with disabilities can live in dignity in their own homes.

We will ensure that you and your family can get the care you need.

Train and Hire More Doctors and Nurses; Improve and Defend Medicare

Jack Layton and his team of New Democrats will implement a five step plan to cut wait times, train new health professionals and defend Medicare:

1. Train substantially more health care professionals – including more doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and midwives – to ease staffing shortages and cut wait times. We will work with the provinces and territories to make it happen:
    - We will implement a program designed to increase the number of doctors and nurses trained in Canada by 50%. As part of that program, we will offer to forgive the student loans of health professionals who commit to dedicate the first ten years of their careers to family medicine.
    - This program will give Canada up to 28,000 additional nurses, doctors and other health professionals to care for you and your family.
2. Work with the provinces and all public health care providers to adopt "best practices" and implement an innovation strategy – as has already been successfully demonstrated in leading public clinics and hospitals. We will:

- Invest in the expansion of drug and alcohol addiction and prevention programs – including harm reduction programs – in partnership with the provinces and territories.
- Establish Mental Health Crisis Response Centres, modeled after the leading edge one being built by the Manitoba NDP that have successfully diverted people from Emergency Rooms, allowed health care professionals to provide better care, and reduced waiting times.
- Work with the provinces and territories to expand the use of nurse practitioners and multi-disciplinary clinics, taking the strain off other parts of the health care system.
- Expand home care to reduce pressures on families and women who are now providing care, and to further cut hospital backlogs and wait lists.

3. Protect the system and stop privatization. Our health care system is both a cherished Canadian institution and an important competitive advantage we have as Canadians. We will:
    - Prohibit the use of federal funding to support any form of parallel, private for-profit service delivery and fully enforce the provisions of the *Canada Health Act*.
    - Require transparency and accountability by provinces and territories on their compliance with and enforcement of the principles of the *Canada Health Act*, including reporting public and not-for-profit delivery versus private delivery.
4. Work with the provinces to develop long term strategies to better manage chronic diseases, such as diabetes, and lifelong medical disabilities and conditions, such as autism.
5. Reaffirm long-established public policies to ensure that women have the right to safe therapeutic abortion services, in consultation with their physicians.

Home Care: Helping Families Make Ends Meet

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Create a pan-Canadian home care program, as recommended in the Romanow Report on the future of Medicare, including:

- Helping people stay healthy at home and avoid hospital visits.
- Home mental health care case management.
- Post-acute medical care.
- Post-acute rehabilitation.
- Palliative home care.

Our home care program will give 100,000 more Canadian families access to home care. It will significantly reduce wait times for seniors and hospital patients.

Pharmacare: Affordable Prescription Medicines

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Establish a Canada-wide prescription drug program, phasing in drug coverage for all citizens, beginning with catastrophic drug costs, in cooperation with the provinces and territories.

Reduce the cost of prescription drugs for average Canadians and save billions of dollars from provincial health care budgets by implementing a bulk-purchasing plan, in agreement with the provinces and territories.

Introduce measures to ensure that new drugs are evaluated through evidence-based research to be more effective, before they are prescribed by doctors and paid for by Canadians.

Enforce a strict ban on all direct-to-consumer drug advertising, including closing loopholes created by the Conservatives' new consumer legislation.

Fund an independent drug therapy advisory service for doctors across Canada, to share best practices.

Make necessary drugs more affordable by implementing measures to replace high-cost patent drugs with lower-cost generic drugs. We will phase out the "ever-greening" of patent drugs, no longer allowing large pharmaceutical corporations to continually renew their patents with little or no control.

Healthy Living: Promoting Good Health

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Dedicate one per cent of the Health Canada budget to physical fitness and amateur sports promotion, including:

- Investing in the development of more community centres, seniors centres, recreational facilities and playing fields.

Launch a federal Determinants of Health Initiative with emphasis on clean air, safe water, reducing poverty and improving children's health and nutrition. We will ban trans fats and expand other initiatives to promote healthy foods and healthy eating, including:

- Addressing the crisis of childhood obesity by implementing a pan-Canadian strategy, and limiting the exposure of children to "junk food" promotion.

Ensure that all infants in Canada have access to hearing testing, in cooperation with the provinces and territories.

Increase support for provincial and territorial health initiatives, including the Cancer Control System.

Invest in trails associations across the country, joining forces with Canadians who are blazing new trails by walking, cycling, wheeling, skiing and running their way to healthier, more active lifestyles.

A PLAN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT THAT WILL REALLY WORK

The people who have been running Ottawa promised to tackle climate change and protect our environment.

They didn't.

For our children and grandchildren, we must change the way things are done in Ottawa. We must act now so we don't leave them a vastly degraded Canada, and a very inhospitable world.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will tackle the challenge of climate change – not with Mr. Harper's idle words or by taxing you and your family – but with tough laws that force polluters to clean up the mess they've made.

We will stop the tax giveaways that reward corporate polluters. We will seize the opportunity to build a new energy economy – new industries, new jobs for Canadians, new environmental solutions.

We will protect our air, water, land, fish and wildlife.

A Plan That Will Work

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Implement Jack Layton's legislation to achieve deep, science-based reductions of climate pollution in the post-2012 period. The *Climate Change Accountability Act,* proposed by the New Democrats and adopted by Parliament on June 4, 2008, is based on the *Case for Deep Reductions* report by the Pembina Institute, the David Suzuki Foundation, and the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy. This will establish:

- A long-term target to reduce Canadian greenhouse gas emissions to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.
- A medium-term target to bring emissions 25% below 1990 levels by 2020.

These are the medium and long-term targets consistent with the Kyoto process.

To hold government accountable for meeting these targets, Jack Layton's legislation will:

- Provide authority for the government to make regulations in order to meet the targets and set penalties for those who contravene regulations passed under the Act.

Implement our clean air and fighting climate change program:

- Make big polluters pay. We will put a price on carbon through a "cap-and-trade" carbon pricing system which establishes hard limits on pollution and a tough charge on polluters who exceed the limits.
- **All revenue** will be applied to environmental solutions.

- Implement Jack Layton's $3 billion Green-Collar Jobs Plan, including a fund for training. We will invest $750 million into this fund every year.
- Introduce an environmental automobile strategy to:
    - Invest in Canadian production of low-emission cars to ensure our auto industry remains viable, with aggressive incentives for manufacturers who develop and manufacture cars in Canada with low or zero greenhouse gas emissions.
    - Provide federal government support for pedestrian walkways and bicycle paths in communities as part of our commitment to sustainable transport. In addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure will have health benefits for Canadians who choose to walk or cycle.
    - Bring in mandatory vehicle emission standards for all vehicles sold in Canada, based on leading North American standards.

Establish an industry innovation fund to help businesses reduce their energy use. The fund will start with $600 million, and we will invest additional funds after that.

A crucial part of reducing pollution and fighting global warming must be substantial new investments in renewable energy solutions. We need to unite the country behind a strategy for Canada's long-term energy security. We will implement a comprehensive New Energy Economy Strategy. It will be developed through consultation and a cooperative effort of all stakeholders from coast to coast to coast.

Require vehicle fuel consumption labeling so consumers have better information about every vehicle's environmental performance and efficiency savings.

Reduce pollution through an *Early Adopters Program* that encourages the purchase of commercial electric hybrid vehicles.

Set leading air quality standards for each air pollutant defined in the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* and establish new energy efficiency regulations.

Invest in environmental solutions and incentives to encourage individual Canadians and small businesses to make better choices for the environment, and to reward them when they do. These solutions will include the *Better Buildings Retrofit and Energy Efficiency Initiative*.

Introduce new energy efficiency regulations on energy-using products, such as major appliances and furnaces, that meet or better the most stringent standards in North America.

Establish substantial new point-of-sale rebates on the purchase of EnergyStar appliances.

Invest stable, annual transit funding, combining an extra cent from the existing gas tax with revenue from making big polluters pay, investing $4 billion in transit over the first four years of our program.

Halt any new tar sands development until carbon emissions are capped, significant environmental and health impacts are addressed, and protected areas are set aside.

Introduce Canada Environment Action Bonds, a secure new investment that Canadians can purchase to help fight climate change by raising capital for environmentally-friendly infrastructure and renewable energy.

- The bond will offer a government-guaranteed rate of return.
- As the price of climate pollution increases, these bonds will close the price gap so that the development of renewable energy is price competitive with the development of fossil fuel resources.

Give the Environment Minister the authority to designate "significant areas" such as more heavily-polluting areas or more sensitive areas for specialized information-gathering and targeted action.

Take more poisons out of people's homes, consumer products and communities by recognizing the "toxic use substitution principle." We will require the Minister to assess and identify toxic substances that can and should be substituted with safer products.

Ensure that the federal government and its agencies lead by example in their own environmental practices, including emission reductions, product purchases, recycling, and sustainable development strategies.

The New Energy Economy: Cutting Pollution and Creating Jobs

A crucial part of reducing pollution and fighting global warming must be substantial new investments in renewable energy solutions.

We need to unite Canadians behind a strategy for our country's long-term energy security. We will implement a comprehensive *New Energy Economy Strategy*. It will be developed through consultation and a cooperative effort of all stakeholders from coast to coast to coast, including, but not restricted to, the federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments, unions and energy providers.

We must plan now for a future where our energy consumption is drastically reduced and where all our energy comes from renewable sources. We need to make sure that our energy policies put the needs of Canadians first.

Here's how Jack Layton and the New Democrats will help Canadians succeed in the New Energy Economy:

Make Canadian energy security and environmental standards priorities in trade negotiations, including putting energy front and centre in any new trade negotiations with the United States.

Introduce new financial incentives for clean power, including from solar, wind, water, biomass and other renewable sources for electricity production and from industrial co-generation and small-scale, sustainable community facilities.

Establish the Canadian Renewable Energy Agency. The agency will be responsible for encouraging and developing renewable energy in Canada. It will:

- Work cooperatively with all stakeholders towards meeting 35 percent of Canada's energy needs with renewable energy by 2020, including hard targets for renewable fuels, biomass, wind power and other renewables.
- Provide funding for developing and supporting renewable energy programs.

Stop the massive tax breaks and subsidies to the tar sands, big oil and gas companies, and nuclear power.

Halt any new tar sands development until carbon emissions are capped, significant environmental and health impacts are addressed, and protected areas are set aside.

- We will improve and enforce appropriate federal regulation of all environmental impacts – air, water, land, fish and wildlife – that arise from the exploitation of Canada's oil and gas reserves.
- Because the need for oil and gas will not disappear overnight, we will discourage bulk exports of our unprocessed resources to the US and China, and encourage responsible upgrading, refining and petro-chemical manufacturing here in Canada. This will keep the economic benefits and jobs in Canada and temper the unchecked exploitation of our resources.

Remove bureaucratic barriers to the development, manufacture, and licensing of zero emission vehicles in Canada. In consultation with industry and stakeholders, identify new measures to improve energy efficiency for automobiles.

Increase support for rail transport – including developing high-speed trains in urban corridors such as Edmonton-Calgary and Windsor-Quebec City.

Begin a discussion with the provinces and territories for an East-West Renewable Energy Grid. This nation-building and climate action exercise needs federal financial support and leadership to assist provinces in building the renewable energy infrastructure that will transition Canada away from high pollution and non-renewable energy.

Fighting Pollution and Protecting Our Natural Heritage

We will implement Jack Layton and the New Democrats' comprehensive new *Clean Water Act*. This will:

Establish enforceable guidelines for drinking water quality, starting with standards for First Nations reserves, and working with provinces and territories to make sure that all Canadians have clean, safe water in their homes and communities.

Improve water quality monitoring and the enforcement of water quality standards by funding and implementing a *National Water Strategy*, including a comprehensive ***Water Quality Audit***, in conjuction with provinces, territories and First Nations to ensure clean and safe water for all.

Invest in new municipal water and wastewater infrastructure, and establish national standards to require a minimum of secondary treatment for all Canadian municipalities.

Ban bulk fresh water exports from Canada by federal law.

Improve the *Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement*.

Set mandatory water efficiency standards for appliances and begin to phase out inefficient technologies.

Create a $10 million Safe Water Fund to address issues of emerging pollutants and help communities monitor water quality.

Canada has a responsibility to future generations to protect our waters, lands, fish and wildlife. Jack Layton and his team of New Democrats will:

Reduce the oil spill response times in the Arctic by completing a response gap analysis and investing in federal and private sector capacity speed up response times.

Deal with toxic industrial effluent by strengthening the enforcement of existing regulations.

Provide national and international leadership to prevent build-up and counteract the harmful effects of marine debris.

Provide the resources to ensure existing legislation regarding oily bilge water discharge and management will be effectively enforced.

Enact the New Democrats' *Blue-Green Algae Proliferation Prevention Act*, which addresses the biggest sources of the blue-green algae problem that plagues Canada's lakes and rivers. We will:

- Ban the supply and sale of phosphorus in dishwashing detergent as initiated by Manitoba's NDP

Government.

- Provide compensation to agricultural landowners for expanding "buffer zones" along waterways in which they are prohibited from using harmful nutrients.
- Promote guidelines and best practices for home and cottage owners and for farmers.

Implement a parks and wilderness plan that reflects Canadians' strong commitment to preserve our natural heritage. We will:

- Complete the National Parks system.
- Establish a nationally representative system of Marine Protected Areas and complete the Integrated Management Plans of our three oceans.
- Ensure that the integrity of parks and protected areas is not compromised by industrial activity or inappropriate development.
- Establish a conservation fund to preserve important natural wildlife habitat.
- Improve endangered species protection.
- Work with the provinces and territories to encourage research and develop strategies to minimize the effects of climate change on communities, vegetation and wildlife.
- Implement the *National Action Plan on Aquatic Invasive Species* and ensure that acceptable treatment for ballast water is implemented and enforced.

In collaboration with provinces, territories and First Nations, we will work toward a model of sustainable forest management in Canada's boreal forests.

This will include establishing appropriate protected areas, and developing and promoting a forest stewardship program that will sustain our boreal forests and our forest industries, with input from stakeholders.

We will establish the Environment Commissioner as a separate and independent Officer of Parliament to provide effective oversight of the government's environmental performance.

OTHER KEY PRIORITIES FOR CANADIANS

Canada is one of the most diverse countries in the world.

Canadians share a commitment to fairness, compassion, and equality for all citizens.

Here are highlights of steps Jack Layton and the New Democrats will take to strengthen Canada's position in the world and make life better for you and your family.

Strong Communities and Safe Neighbourhoods

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will implement a five-point plan to tackle violent crime.

Though overall crime rates are falling, violent crime continues to rise. Jack Layton's New Democrats believe the federal government must do more to protect our communities, and attack the roots of violent crime.

1. Support Our Police Officers – and Reinforce Them

Our police officers need the tools and resources to do their job. Their effective work is key to a safe community. We will:

Create 2,500 new police officer positions to make our city streets safer.

Increase resources and co-ordination among all law enforcement and judicial agencies to ensure prompt return to the appropriate jurisdiction of all accused who are wanted on Canada-wide warrants.

Put a new emphasis on "cyber-crime" that targets seniors and young people in particular.

Strengthen witness protection to ensure that young people and members of the community can more readily come forward with information they have about crime in their community, especially crimes involving violence and handguns.

Strengthen efforts to curb and prosecute white-collar and corporate crime.

Initiate a stringent review process to help re-establish the RCMP's public credibility and re-establish its role in providing leadership in policing across Canada.

Fight the growing and unacceptable problem of human trafficking by adding new provisions to the Criminal Code and introducing new immigration regulations.

Implement new legislation to require all Canadian Internet Service Providers to prevent the publication or proliferation of child sexual abuse content on the Internet.

2. Take on Gang Violence

The influence of gangs is growing. We're going to fight back for our communities. We will:

Support dedicated federal/provincial police units to combat gangs and organized crime networks, backed by organized crime prosecution teams.

Ensure first-degree murder charges for gang related homicides.

Make drive-by shootings and firing at a building indictable offences.

Re-classify auto theft as a stand-alone, indictable violent offence.

Create a federally funded permanent youth gang diversion strategy, including:

- Substance abuse prevention and harm reduction programs.
- Stay-in-school programs.
- Employment programs and conflict mediation skills training.
- Expansion of Canadian Crime Prevention Fund pilot projects.

3. Take on Gun Crime

Handguns have no place on the streets of our communities, except in the hands of law enforcement officials. Building on New Democrats' work in Parliament to curb gun violence, which included mandatory minimum sentences for crimes committed with a handgun, Jack Layton and his team of New Democrats will:

Enable cities, communities and provinces to choose to implement an 'absolute ban' on handguns by tightening existing restrictions on handgun possession.

Facilitate a Canada-US Summit of law makers and law enforcement personnel from all levels of government along with stakeholders to tackle the ongoing crisis of illegal handguns being smuggled into Canada.

Halt the illegal importation of handguns from the United States and target the sale of illegal weapons via the Internet.

4. Address The Roots of Crime with Active Prevention

Core to a safe community is the avoidance of crime, and the development of a healthy community. We will:

Increase federal government funding for prevention and awareness campaigns focused on solutions to violence in our communities.

Create a year-round youth employment and skills development program delivered through a pan-Canadian network of youth centres. The program will promote skills enhancement, community development, sports, culture, and recreational activities. It will lead to high quality jobs, career opportunities and active involvement by young people in their communities.

5. Effective Prosecution and Enforcement

The fair and effective administration of justice is a cornerstone to maintaining a safe community. We will:

Act on the need for more effective prison and sentencing programs to reduce the number of repeat offenders and end the 'revolving door' syndrome, to build up restorative justice opportunities, and to increase training, rehabilitation and drug addiction programs within the justice system.

Set national standards for the use of tasers and review the existing standards and practices in place across the country, working with provincial and municipal police forces.

Reinvest the recovered proceeds of crime in the affected communities to reduce crime and increase community safety.

Working with the provinces to ensure swift and fair justice, we will fund changes so an accused's day in court is not many months or years after the crime.

Repeal the use of security certificates, which have led to imprisonment without due process under Conservative and Liberal governments.

Ensure that all provisions of the *Criminal Code* are used effectively to protect Canadians from acts of violence and/or terror.

Establish a House of Commons committee to exercise oversight over all intelligence agencies, including CSIS and the RCMP.

Other Measures to Strengthen Our Communities

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Implement the New Democrats' bill to eliminate racial and religious profiling, in collaboration with federal agencies and provincial and municipal police forces.

In collaboration with provinces and territories, give domestic violence cases higher priority in the administration of justice, and improve counseling and therapeutic services for abused women and other victims of crime.

Aid the victims of crime by ensuring adequate funding for the criminal injuries compensation system, in co-operation with provinces and territories.

Increase federal government investment and support for family shelters for victims of violence and crime.

Protecting Canadian Sovereignty and The North

Canadian Sovereignty

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Stop the hollowing out of Canadian industries by strengthening the *Investment Canada Act*. Foreign takeovers of Canadian companies will be subject to more stringent tests respecting job protection and creation, head office location, and the promotion of research and development in Canada.

Cease Canadian participation in the Liberal and Conservative-driven Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP). This deal would deepen integration with the U.S. and erode Canadian authority in key areas of public policy.

Transfer the Canadian Coast Guard to the Department of Public Safety and increase resources to improve its operational effectiveness, including initiatives that will better protect and strengthen our sovereignty over Canadian waters.

Arctic Sovereignty and the North

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will protect Canada's Arctic Sovereignty, and help the people of the North by slowing and reducing the pace of climate change. To affirm our sovereignty, we will:

Assert and defend Canadian Sovereignty over the land and waters of the Canadian Arctic, including the Northwest Passage, where Canadian law will remain in full force and effect.

- Increase diplomatic efforts, particularly in light of recent comments by the United States and Russia, to ensure that other countries respect our sovereignty.
- Accelerate the sea bed survey work which supports Canada's claim to an extended continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean so it is complete in time for submission to the United Nations in 2013.

To secure our Arctic Sovereignty, Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Ensure that the Arctic is protected and defended through the Coast Guard and civilian enforcement of Canadian Law along with an adequate—but not excessive—military capability.

- Work to ensure the Canadian Coast Guard has the appropriate tools to protect Canadian Sovereignty in the Arctic. This means investing in Icebreakers, not slush-breakers.
- Position more RCMP, Fisheries, and Environment protection officers in the North.
- Provide modern equipment to the Rangers, including advanced communications technology and improved transportation equipment.
- Station new search and rescue personnel and aircraft in the North.

To sustain our Arctic Sovereignty, Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Provide support to the people of the Arctic so they can build communities which are on par with other Canadians. We will ensure Arctic communities are full partners within Canada. We will negotiate governance structures, and devolution of authority and resources from Ottawa to the territories.

- Complete the negotiations and fully implement Aboriginal Land and Self-Government Agreements, and follow Justice Thomas Berger's 2006 recommendations concerning the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.
- Build Northern infrastructure like small craft harbours, highways, water plants, and airstrips, including appropriate local renewable energy sources, and a deep water port in Iqaluit.
- Support increased scientific research.
- Close the Northern Prosperity Gap by increasing the Northern Resident's Tax Deduction.
- Create an economic development agency for the North.
- Support Northern post-secondary educational institutions.
- Invest in essential services – such as health care – based on the true cost of delivering these services in the North, rather than the Liberal and Conservative approach of using pan-Canadian benchmarks that short-change northern people and communities.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Invest $5 billion over five years in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. This will improve health services, help provide adequate housing, water, and infrastructure to include traditional healing, nutrition, fitness, addiction treatment and suicide prevention.

This commitment alone will meet the commitments of the Kelowna Accord. It will build the foundation to end poverty.

Implement aggressive new efforts in education and training of First Nations children, youth and adults. We will respect Ottawa's fiduciary obligations and encourage the participation of public and private sectors with the federal government in skills training initiatives. Federal education funding must recognize comparable levels of funding for non-reserve students.

Address the needs of urban First Nations, Métis and Inuit citizens with special attention to the appropriate development and delivery of affordable housing, public health care, education, skills training, and economic opportunities.

Help develop community economies by providing infrastructure so First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people can fully participate in the Canadian economy. We will enhance access to capital, skills training and natural resources, and remove the punitive 2% funding cap instituted by the Liberals and maintained by the Harper Conservatives.

Implement Jordan's Principle to guarantee First Nations children are not hurt by jurisdictional disputes between governments. In 2007, the New Democrats introduced the "Jordan's Principle" bill. The bill was passed unanimously by Parliament. Mr. Harper has not fully implemented it. The first and only provincial signature is the NDP government of Manitoba.

Create restorative justice and healing approaches that provide indigenous youth better opportunities and choices.

Ensure that Residential School survivors left out by the current agreement are fairly compensated.

Respect the inherent right to self-government by accelerating settlement of final agreements, and fairly and equitably implementing existing agreements.

Legally recognize the legitimacy and jurisdiction of indigenous governments.

Immediately ratify the UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. We will reverse the Conservative and Liberal governments' refusal to sign the Declaration. We will ensure its provisions are properly respected in Canada and incorporated into Canadian law.

Develop a comprehensive land claims policy that genuinely respects Aboriginal title.

Engage with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women and appropriate organizations to ensure that their rights and personal safety are assured.

Ensure equitable participation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and governments in Canada's stewardship of the environment and resources, and on appropriate boards, commissions and international delegations.

Support the efforts of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities to renew indigenous languages in this generation, and develop a corps of those able to help teach indigenous languages by including it in education funding.

Supporting Culture, the Arts and Our Canadian Cultural Identity

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will strengthen Canada's home-grown film and television production. We will:

Ensure Canadian television and telecommunications networks remain Canadian-owned by maintaining effective regulations on foreign ownership.

Refocus the mandate of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to promote and protect Canadian cultural industries, and transfer mandates that conflict with this objective to other agencies.

Provide sustained funding for the Canadian Television Fund and Telefilm Canada, and enhance federal film incentives to encourage film and television production.

Establish targets and a strategy to expand screening and distribution of domestic films in Canada.

Reverse efforts to legislate censorship, as the Harper Conservatives snuck into bill C-10. If passed, this bill would arbitrarily restrict and censor publicly-supported artistic works.

End the federal government's double-dipping, by excluding provincial tax credit increases from the federal government's calculation of film support payments.

Expand the federal tax credit to include the cost of post-production.

Require clear, binding and enforced performance standards for broadcasters – including a significant and permanent increase in the production and broadcast of Canadian drama – backed by broadcast, cable and satellite license requirements.

To invest in our shared cultural heritage, Jack Layton and his team of New Democrats will:

Restore arts funding arbitrarily cut by the Harper Conservatives. Increase public funding for the Canada Council for the Arts to better support artists and ensure we can produce high quality made-in-Canada shows for everyday Canadians to enjoy.

Invest in a pan-Canadian broadband strategy to bring high-speed internet to more communities in Canada.

Implement a system of tax averaging to provide fair and equitable treatment for Canadian artists and cultural workers.

Implement "net neutrality" to protect everyday Canadians' right to freely access the internet content of their choice at a flat rate and with clear and transparent rules. We will end price gouging and "net throttling", preventing a two-tiered internet in Canada.

Develop an aggressive pan-Canadian strategy for funding, supporting and preserving Canadian museums, historic buildings and heritage lighthouses.

Strengthen public broadcasting and provide stable long-term funding for the CBC, Radio Canada and other public broadcasters. We will strengthen the ability of CBC and Radio Canada to deliver superior regional programming and new internet-based media services.

Reform the role and structure of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), including enhancement of the role of the CRTC in Montreal so that it better reflects the cultural and linguistic reality of programming for Quebec and the francophone community.

Develop a digital on-line culture service to give ordinary Canadians expanded access to Canadian content.

Increase career transition resources for artists.

Protect children in the arts with minimum standards and trust fund rules for income earned by child performers.

Ensure that new copyright reform legislation fairly addresses compensation for artistic creators and includes proper input from all affected stakeholders including: arts/artist groups, educators, software innovators, consumer groups and ordinary Canadians.

International Trade: Fairness at Home and Abroad

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

End the Conservatives' restrictive 2007 Canada-US softwood lumber agreement.

Ensure that Canadian negotiators bargain in Canada's interests in international trade negotiations. We will:

- Oppose the introduction of extraordinary investor protection into trade agreements.
- Protect existing marketing systems for our agricultural industries.
- Obtain fair and reciprocal access to markets, such as South Korean automobiles, that are now imported into Canada from those markets.
- Introduce environmental, human rights and labour standards into all trade agreements.
- Enshrine the right of nations to defend their cultural industries.

With changes in NAFTA almost certain to be proposed by the next president of the United States, and with reform initiatives also growing in Mexico, it is critical for Canada to be pro-active in working with these powerful new currents and with concerned Canadians. We must ensure that NAFTA is reformed in ways that meet our priorities:

- Renegotiate NAFTA's Chapter 11, which unreasonably limits Canada's sovereignty in regulating foreign investment in the public interest.
- Renegotiate NAFTA's Chapter 6, which unreasonably limits Canadian sovereignty over its energy resources and may prevent Canadian energy security.
- Negotiate changes to NAFTA's dispute resolution mechanisms so Canadian interests are respected—including through the application of international law rather than US law in anti-dumping and subsidy disputes.
- Stop the hollowing out of Canadian industries by strengthening the *Investment Canada Act*. Foreign takeovers of Canadian companies will be subject to stringent tests respecting job protection and creation, head office location, and the promotion of research and development in Canada.

Immigration

Jack Layton and the New Democrats stand for a fair, efficient, transparent and accountable immigration system.

We will repeal the Harper government's new immigration law (C-50), which was passed with the Liberals' co-operation. We opposed the arbitrary, secretive and restrictive measures of the legislation and continue to do so. This legislation means increased exploitation of 'guest workers', more delays and restrictions for family reunification, less effective strategic planning for labour market needs, and more secretive and arbitrary decisions by cabinet ministers.

To increase Canada's productivity, Jack Layton and his team of New Democrats will:

Accelerate and streamline the recognition of foreign credentials, overseas degrees and previous employment experience in conjunction with provinces and licensing authorities.

Review the point system used to assess new applications to match the reality of work in Canada, including specific provisions for blue-collar workers and tradespeople.

Increase financial support for the settlement process for new Canadians to assist with literacy, community integration and orientation, including bridging, mentorship, English and French as a second language (ESL and FSL) programs and resource service centres.

To improve family reunification, Jack Layton and his team of New Democrats will:

Significantly increase resources and support for immigration processes to reduce the huge and unacceptable backlogs that currently exist in processing applications, work to meet Canada's target of annual immigration (1% of population), and establish firm targets for on-time completion of family class and spousal sponsorships.

Stop the decline in family reunification, and maximize the economic and social advantages of family stability.

Implement the New Democrats' *Once In a Lifetime* bill to expedite sponsorship of one family member as a new Canadian.

Eliminate landing fees for new immigrants, as well as processing fees for refugees and people fleeing torture or domestic violence.

To establish fairness in the immigration system, Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Develop credible, accountable procedures and appeal processes for potential visitors to Canada for important family events such as weddings, births and illness, and for the reunification of married couples.

Properly regulate immigration consultants to stop abuse of immigrants and potential immigrants, and crack down on unscrupulous and illegal activities.

Immediately implement the provision in the *Immigration Act* for a refugee appeal division to help facilitate a fair refugee hearing and determination process, and ensure that all vacancies on the Immigration and Refugee Board are filled in a fair and transparent manner.

Eliminate discrimination against people with disabilities in admission processes.

Allow people without status who are living in Canada the opportunity to apply for legal status.

Continue to ensure that all new Canadians have access to the "core" immigration system, rather than expand the Liberal-Conservative temporary "guest worker" and "live-in caregiver" programs. These programs deny basic

employee rights, do not allow application for immigration, and result in longer delays in the entire system.

To create a more compassionate Canada, Jack Layton and his team of New Democrats will:

Through the refugee class of immigration offer new hope to people fleeing persecution, violence and repression.

Based on the recent decision by the Federal Court of Appeal that overruled the "safe third country" approach, abrogate the ***Safe Third Country Agreement*** with the United States so all refugee claimants are granted a hearing outside of Canada.

Establish a special program to allow "Iraq War resisters" from the US to remain in Canada.

Canadian Federalism and Public Institutions

More and more Canadians are looking past the politicians and parties that stand for the old games of division and conflict. Instead, they want federal institutions and the practice of federalism to reflect the maturity and modernity of Canada.

To strengthen federalism for a mature and modern Canada, Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Modernize key federal institutions:

- **House of Commons:** change the electoral system to ensure that every vote counts. We will implement a proportional representation system that mixes constituency representation with party representation. This will result in fairer representation in Parliament, fewer regional differences, and more women in elected office.
- **Senate:** abolish the undemocratic and unnecessary Senate, following the lead of Canadian provinces and other jurisdictions that have abolished their upper houses. A referendum on Senate abolition will be held to put the final decision in the hands of all Canadians.
- **Floor crossing:** Democratic accountability should mean no MP can ignore his/her voters. We will implement legislation so no MP can ignore the voters' wishes and become a member of another party without first resigning their seat and running in a by-election.

The New Democratic Party of Canada supports a respectful, cooperative federalism that is about making life better for ordinary working people. Our progress as a nation must not be mired in jurisdictional disputes that have at their root a failure by previous federal governments to understand or respect the federal nature of our country. Understanding the nature of Canada is why New Democrats recognize the national character of Quebec, something that has been part of our program since the 1960s, and was recently reaffirmed by our party in 2006. Thus, in our view:

- The federal government must obtain appropriate support from provincial governments before spending federal funds on new programs in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction.
- As part of our commitment to "respectful federalism", we support the principles of Canada's Social Union Framework, which requires substantial provincial agreement for such programs, and compensates provinces that choose not to participate.
- We recognize and celebrate the unique role and responsibilities of the Quebec National Assembly. As was the case with public pension plans and many other initiatives in recent Canadian history, further progress towards fairness and equality in Canada requires flexible arrangements that fully reflect and

fully respect that unique role and those responsibilities. The New Democrats' child care legislation provides the latest concrete example of this kind of practical, respectful and effective approach.

Jack Layton will keep the promises made on behalf of the Government of Canada to Newfoundland and Labrador, and the promise made to Saskatchewan.

Improve exchange programs that allow Canadians from one part of the country to study and/or work in other regions.

Ethics and Accountability

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Implement a new, stronger *Access to Information Act* – another broken Conservative promise that resulted in less access to information, less transparency and more government secrecy.

Further improve transparency and bring into force the abandoned sections of the *Accountability Act* to:

- Tighten lobbying rules to finally stop the revolving door between big money lobby firms and the federal government.
- Establish the Public Appointments Commission to finally end the Liberal-Conservative practice of rewarding political friends with patronage appointments.
- Make the Parliamentary Budget Officer an independent Officer of Parliament to provide oversight and advice on the government's spending and surpluses, help MPs do a better job for ordinary Canadians and bring greater accountability to Ottawa.

Strengthen contracting rules to end to the practice of firms giving advice to government while also lobbying it, in order to limit corporate influence over public policy.

Implement *Ed Broadbent's Ethics Package* to improve Canadian democracy and make the political parties – especially leadership races – more transparent.

Defending Human Rights

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Immediately ratify the UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. We will reverse the Conservative government's refusal to sign the Declaration. We will ensure its provisions are properly respected in Canada and incorporated into Canadian law.

Restore the court challenges program, eliminated by the Harper government, which funded equality seeking groups to go to court to protect their rights and establish fair jurisprudence.

Work with affected multicultural communities to appropriately redress historical issues arising from governmental actions, including options such as recognition of wrongdoing, official apologies, and compensation.

Work with the trade union movement to ensure full respect for labour rights in Canada, including for non-Canadians working legally here as well as for workers in Canadian-owned industries abroad.

Immediately implement the United Nations *Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

Amend the *Canadian Human Rights Act* to include gender identity and gender expression and identity among the prohibited grounds for discrimination. Support gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans-gender and transexual equality internationally, as per the Montreal and Jakarta Declaration on Human Rights.

Women: Moving Forward on Equality

Jack Layton and the New Democrats – with a caucus team that is 40 percent female, the highest of any party in Parliament - are helping to lead the struggle for equality for women at home, at work and in society.

To address the crucial needs of Canadian women, Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Improve fairness for women at work:

- Implement full pay equity in the federal public service, and strengthen pay equity provisions in the Canada Labour Code for workers in federal jurisdiction covered by the Code and called for by the Pay Equity Task Force.
- Reintroduce a minimum wage, initially set at $10 per hour, and indexed to inflation.
- Increase access to Employment Insurance for women, and improve parental and maternity benefits.
- Institute a national child care program.

Help stop violence against women:

- Restore funds cut by Liberal governments throughout the 1990s for shelters and transition houses for women who are victims of domestic violence.
- Support native women's efforts to develop healing centres and educational and training opportunities, including those that target the root causes of violence and violence directed at sex trade workers.
- Build more affordable housing to assist women trying to escape violence.
- Re-institute the annual consultation between the Department of Justice and women's groups to monitor progress on ending violence against women, and progress on improving women's access to the justice system and legal services.

Empower Status of Women Canada and other appropriate federal agencies to work to implement the recommendations of the report on Canada by the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Support Stephen Lewis' call for international action on women's equality. Work for the creation of a UN Women's Agency to ensure that women's voices and concerns are represented at the highest levels of the international community.

Reaffirm women's right to safe therapeutic abortion services.

Properly fund Status of Women Canada, re-investing in women's programs and organizations who had their funding cut by the Harper government.

Re-open regional Status of Women offices and strengthen their mandate to achieve equality for women.

People with Disabilities: Opportunities for All

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Implement a *Canadian Disabilities Action Plan* based on the vision of an inclusive and accessible Canada. Our goal is to ensure the full participation of all persons with disabilities in every aspect of life.

Develop and implement accessibility standards and laws for all areas under federal jurisdiction.

Use federal government funding to leverage improvements to employment, public transit and services. For example, we will use universal design principles in federally-funded infrastructure initiatives.

Make the federal disability tax credit fully refundable and accessible to all CPP disability pensioners.

Establish a Canadian Disability Employment Fund to assist employers under federal jurisdiction with the costs of providing reasonable accommodation.

Establish specific targets within labour market agreements negotiated with the provinces and territories to assist those with disabilities.

Create a Canadian Disability Accommodation Commissioner to advise Parliament and the responsible minister on issues affecting persons with disabilities.

Support a pan-Canadian strategy to stop violence and abuse of disabled persons.

Establish nation-wide goals to ensure that every Canadian in need of non-acute care will receive an appropriate level of care, including home care.

Immediately implement the UN *Covenant on the Rights of People with Disabilities*, which Canada signed.

Canada: Global Leadership in Peace and Justice

Promoting Peace, Defending Canada

Canada's military has a proud history, built on the principles of defending human rights and promoting peace. New Democrats believe there are three main priorities for the Canadian military today and in the years to come:

1. **Assist people facing natural catastrophes, including floods, earthquakes, forest fires and other emergencies, both at home and abroad.**
2. **Provide support for peace-making, peace-building and peacekeeping around the world.**
3. **Defend Canada from potential attack.**

The Canadian Forces must be properly staffed, equipped and trained to effectively cover the full range of possible military operations arising from these three priorities. Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Equip the Canadian military to resume leadership in United Nations peacekeeping operations, with major new missions reviewed and approved by the House of Commons.

Reform defence procurement so Canada gets good equipment for good value. We will require tendering of all major contracts and maximize Canadian content.

Support military families, veterans and ordinary Canadians by making fair pay, good health care, fair benefits, veterans' services, emergency readiness and good equipment top priorities for military spending.

Implement the New Democrats' *Veteran's Charter* and *Veterans First Motion*, both endorsed by a majority vote in the House of Commons. When fully implemented, these New Democrat initiatives will ensure that Canadian Forces personnel and their families are taken care of not just during their service days, but throughout their lives.

Fairness for Our Veterans

New Democrats will support veterans and their families with quality medical care and excellent pensions. We will also remove loopholes that discriminate against spouses and families. Despite Liberal and Conservative promises, the system of veterans' benefits remains bureaucratic and unfair.

Eliminate the hated "gold-digger" clause that prevents pension benefits going to spouses who have married after the veteran is more than 60 years old.

Extend the Veterans Independence Program (VIP) to all widows of veterans.

Increase the Survivor's Pension Amount upon death of a Canadian Forces retiree to 66% from the current amount of 50%.

Eliminate the unfair reduction of SISIP (Service Income Security Insurance Plan) long term disability benefits for medically released members of the Canadian Forces.

The War and Combat Mission in Afghanistan

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Withdraw all Canadian forces from the Afghanistan combat mission, with reasonable advance notice and in consultation with our allies.

Ensure that Canada delivers on the aid and development assistance commitment made through the *Afghanistan Compact*.

Ensure that women and human rights groups in Afghanistan can access Canadian development dollars, and that corruption at all levels of government is addressed effectively.

Ensure that the United Nations, not NATO or the US, becomes the lead organization in the provision of security and development assistance in Afghanistan.

Explore and promote opportunities for negotiating peace at the national, regional and international levels, in line with proposals made by the President of Afghanistan and leading security experts.

Canada's Role in the World

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Provide robust support to the United Nations and its work in conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and global co-operation.

Participate in international efforts to bring peace, justice and stability to the Darfur region of Sudan and to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Re-establish Canada as a leader for global peace and disarmament by renewing efforts to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons, ban cluster bombs, and control trade in small arms and light weapons.

Work with partners for peace and justice in Israel and Palestine, within a framework of respect for UN resolutions and international law. This means recognition of the right of both Israelis and Palestinians to live in peaceful co-existence in viable, independent states with negotiated, agreed-upon borders; no settlements remaining in the Palestinian state; an end to Israeli occupation of Palestinian land; an end to loss of life of innocent civilians; and an international peacekeeping presence.

Fighting Global Poverty

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Accelerate and broaden Canada's pledges to forgive the debt of the world's poorest countries.

Work to ensure that Canada does its part to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, including our commitment to meet the foreign aid target of 0.7% of gross national income within ten years, in keeping with the Make Poverty History campaign.

Ensure that the concerns of developing countries are addressed in international trade negotiations.

Ensure Canadian development assistance focuses on poverty alleviation and that priorities are determined in collaboration with those living in poverty and their legitimate representatives.

Ensure that development assistance is not used to force privatization of developing countries' public resources, assets and services, such as water.

Channel aid through local civil society groups whenever possible.

Implement the *Pledge to Africa* legislation immediately to send generic, affordable drugs to developing countries and support the fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

Triple Canada's contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Recognize the massive negative impact of climate change on developing countries and support their efforts at adaptation and mitigation — while working hard to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions.

Human Rights and a Democratic Global System

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Immediately ratify the UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. We will reverse the Conservative and Liberal governments' refusal to sign the Declaration. We will ensure its provisions are properly respected in Canada and incorporated into Canadian law.

Continue the strong New Democrat leadership for policies that prevent the abuse of any individual taken into the custody of the Canadian Forces abroad, for example in Afghanistan, regardless of whether that individual remains in Canadian custody or is transferred to the custody of another country.

Ensure that Canadian companies abide by international human rights law and environmental standards when operating overseas, and develop and enforce sanctions if they do not.

Work with international partners to create a United Nations agency to promote and support women's equality throughout the world.

Ratify the UN *Optional Protocol on Torture*.

Fight against impunity for all those who commit war crimes and crimes against humanity through support for the International Criminal Court, and through an increased commitment to using the 2000 *War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity Act* to prosecute alleged perpetrators in Canada.

Make international institutions like the United Nations, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund more democratic, transparent and accountable by opening up Canada's role within them to public and Parliamentary examination and oversight.