



# Reimagining Our Future

**RECONNECTED, RENEWED, RESILIENT.**

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# Introduction

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Post COVID-19, let us regenerate the economy with the consciousness [that] all lives are equal, that we are part of the Earth, we are ecological, biological beings, working is our right and is at the heart of being human, and care for the Earth and each other is the most important work. There are no disposable or useless people.

We are One Humanity on One Planet. Autonomy, meaning, dignity, work, freedom, democracy are our birthright.

— Vandana Shiva

”

We mourn the loss of so many of our fellow citizens, so many members of the human family. At this moment, nearly 400,000 people have died around the world; nearly 8,000 Canadians. We know that the death toll will keep growing as the world seeks a vaccine. Each life lost is a tragedy.

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We are at a hinge moment in history. They come along rarely. These moments in time – Kairos moments – change everything.

This is an end to incrementalism. It is time to sweep away the remnants of an unjust, unsustainable world.

It is too soon to speak of COVID-19 in the past tense. The virus is invisible and among us. We must not lose sight of the imperative of observing public health advice. That advice involves keeping physical distance.

We know that one of Canada's huge strengths compared to other nations is our social cohesion. We have a collective sense of well-being. That is why we celebrate our single universal public payer health-care system. Social cohesion makes for community resilience.

Even before the pandemic, we could see the huge advantage of communities that hold together. Just contrast Fort McMurray in the major fires as residents moved calmly through flames, first responders there to guide them, with New Orleans in Katrina where chaos ensued after hundreds of police officers fled the city before the levees gave way.

In this time of physical distance, we need to strengthen our social connections. They are life savers. We must ensure that the isolation of the pandemic does not take a toll on our mental health. All this and more we can do – together.

### **What we learned:**

It is too early to use the past tense to describe the COVID-19 pandemic, but it is not too soon to begin learning from it. The unprecedented events of the past months have reminded us that we value one another and that we are stronger, united. They have also taught us that:

- In an emergency, governments can move – fast!
- In an emergency, we can put aside our differences and work together.
- In an emergency, our heroes are front-line workers, people who have been earning too little for too long.
- Women, in particular, perform vital tasks and have been underpaid and undervalued for too long.
- The globalization of everything allowed the virus to spread.
- The globalization of supply chains made it harder to access what we need.
- What we thought was normal and acceptable is no longer acceptable – a world of deep inequality and unacceptable levels of pollution.
- Billions of people around the world can all respond to share a collective responsibility.

- Governments around the world can decide that life is more important than money.

These are the big lessons, but in every country and every sector within each country lessons are different.

For Greens, much of what we have been calling for years is now becoming mainstream:

- The need for a Guaranteed Livable Income
- More local economic activity
- Local food security
- More teleworking and less commuting
- More universality in health care and universal pharmacare
- A huge shift to renewable energy

As our society reopens there is a strong call not to “bounce back” but to bounce forward. We can start by identifying things that, in spite of the tragedy and horror of this pandemic, suggest a new way ahead.

**These are the things to hang onto:**

- Clearer skies and purer air
- Cleaner waterways
- Less congested roads
- City streets turned over to people and bicycles
- Respect for seniors by providing care that suits their needs.

# Renegotiate our social contract – ending poverty and embracing justice

GUARANTEED LIVABLE INCOME. PAY EQUITY.

It is time to transform our social safety net to meet the demands of our transformed society. Greens have pressed for Guaranteed Livable Income (GLI) for years. Other terms have been used (Universal Basic Income), but the goal is similar. We believe in the importance of a universal payment set at a level that fits each region's specific cost of living. This will eliminate poverty by providing all Canadians with an income that covers the cost of basic needs.

As numerous studies have shown, poverty costs a society. It costs in health care. It costs in correctional services. It costs in a loss of human dignity. We cannot afford poverty.

We need to build on and institutionalize the greater collaboration across orders of government we experienced in the pandemic. A more just society requires a Council of Canadian Governments made in four quadrants: federal; provincial and territorial; local; and Indigenous. The Council must set the relative GLI and identify shame-based programs to be eliminated across government to make the system affordable.

This has started with the nearly universal access to Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB).

We also need to build on and institutionalize the greater collaboration across orders of government we experienced in the pandemic.

- As a first step, convert CERB to GLI.
- Establish a Council of Canadian Governments made up of four quadrants: federal; provincial and territorial; local; and Indigenous. The Council must set the relative GLI and identify current income assistance and support programs which could be replaced by GLI. This would reduce administration costs and make the system affordable.
- Lessons learned from the COVID-19 student payments teach us that we need affordable, if not free, post-secondary education, and protections (financial, health and otherwise) for international students. As part of the solution, students will be covered by GLI.

- Collaborate to establish a fair, national minimum wage.
- Champion an economy that is just and caring, one not blind to gender or race, thus eliminating structural bias. For example, an economy committed to pay equity.
- We need to value the contribution that each and every individual makes to our society.

## Reinventing our economy – a green energy economy

ZERO CARBON. WEALTH TAX.

We need a healthy economy to support a healthy society. The COVID-19 pandemic has dealt a huge blow to our economy. The 2020 deficit is likely to be in the region of \$260 billion. Greens are committed to seeing our economy open up and to seeing Canadians from coast to coast to coast get back to work.

Two of the world's leading economists, Nobel prize winner Joseph Stiglitz and former Chancellor of the Exchequer Sir Nicholas Stern, say that the investments that will yield the strongest results in restarting the economy are those in renewable energy and energy efficiency retrofits that move us toward a carbon neutral economy. Their recent study<sup>1</sup> involved interviews with over 230 economic experts and members of central banks in all G20 countries. It advises the strongest economic recovery will be green.

As demand for oil and gas plummeted during the pandemic, renewable energy was able to grow. This is a signal rising above the noise. The days of fossil fuels are nearly done. We need a planned and orderly retreat from fossil fuels to ensure workers and communities are part of a just transition. All future public investments must be consistent with climate goals. We need to value the contribution of all Canadians who depend on this fossil fuel industry and invest in people as we move to a sustainable energy future.

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[https://www.smithschool.ox.ac.uk/publications/wpapers/workingpaper20-02.pdf?utm\\_source=POLITICO.EU&utm\\_campaign=991cce3b27-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2020\\_05\\_05\\_04\\_58&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_10959edeb5-991cce3b27-19054841](https://www.smithschool.ox.ac.uk/publications/wpapers/workingpaper20-02.pdf?utm_source=POLITICO.EU&utm_campaign=991cce3b27-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_05_05_04_58&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_10959edeb5-991cce3b27-19054841)

### **Climate lessons from COVID-19:**

- Canada needs a Chief Climate Science Officer to whom we defer, just as political leaders have deferred to chief health officers in every province and federally.
- Scientific advice is not negotiable.
- Set Canada's required 2020 GHG reduction target at a level that reflects Canada's fair share of holding global average temperature increase to no more than 1.5°C, and take into account our emissions relative to other countries.
- Pass legislation committing Canada to reaching net zero carbon by 2050 with five-year increments.
- Canada needs an all-party Climate Cabinet, working together as we did during the pandemic.
- Canada needs a Just Transition Act to protect oil and gas workers as they move to other jobs and careers.

### **Other actions we must take to restart our economy and restore our economic health:**

- Invest in a national electricity corridor – the Canadian Grid Project.
- Ensure that 100 per cent of Canadian electricity is from renewable sources by 2030.
- Cancel the Trans Mountain pipeline and invest those funds in a national electricity grid.
- Convert infrastructure from buildings that are expensive to maintain and create GHGs to buildings that produce more energy than they use.
- Launch a massive program in building retrofits – commercial, institutional and residential – employing millions of skilled tradespeople.
- Infrastructure stimulus spending should be for publicly owned and operated projects (no more P3 projects).

### **COVID-19 bailout payments must be transparent. We demand corporate bailout accountability by:**

- Creating a database of which companies received what level of government funding.

- Tie bailouts to performance requirements to maintain the workforce in Canada, prohibit executive bonus payments or share buybacks based on the standard set by Denmark.
- Ensure that to receive a bailout companies provide plans for reducing GHGs, solid and toxic waste, and plans to contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Bar companies using offshore tax havens from access to bailout funds.
- Institute tax reform – a root-and-branch review of Canada’s tax system is long overdue.
- Institute taxes on wealth, not just income.

## Require evidence-based decision making

BETTER DATA. OPEN INFORMATION.

COVID-19 has revealed and deepened existing inequalities in Canadian society. Any recovery plan must take into account the disproportionate impact COVID-19 has had, and will continue to have, on the most vulnerable in our communities. We are unable to assess these impacts without data. To understand these impacts and how to address them equitably, we must begin collecting socio-demographic data on COVID-19 so we can make evidence-based decisions on recovery investment and provide the right support where it is needed most.

- This will require cooperation with the provinces through the Council of Canadian Governments.
- Evidence-based decisions on public health issues have been key throughout the pandemic, but we need to apply this standard to all public health issues, for example mental health care and the ongoing opioid crisis.
- Government funded research must be made available free to all Canadians.
- Socio-demographic data collection is a must:

- We know from other countries where this data is being collected that Indigenous peoples and people of colour are being hit much harder by COVID-19 than other groups. Canada cannot turn a blind eye to its own inequities. We want to protect our diversity.
- We need race-based data from across the country. Indigenous communities are calling for the data to help determine next steps.
- We need data (race, gender, etc) and front-line information from health-care workers. Who is working when and how much? Do they have the resources they need? Are they being mistreated by patients or employers? Do we have enough personal protective equipment (PPE)? Does it fit?
- From the get-go, we will make sure privacy and security are protected in all data collection. We commit to overall data protection so that personal information is not compromised as the virus is tracked.

# Remember we are all in this together – we need to take care of each other

SENIOR CARE. MENTAL HEALTH.

As we emerge from COVID-19, we hang on to the knowledge that we must take care of each other. Watching the death toll increase in the pandemic, we were outraged to discover seniors' homes were disproportionately impacted. Far too many seniors in Canada were being warehoused in for-profit housing facilities with inadequate levels of care. Reform of eldercare is long overdue.

We rely on evidence in reopening our society; unshuttering our economy. Globally, we are both collaborating and competing in the search for a vaccine. Evidence tells us that search must be grounded in non-profit, non-patented incentives to ensure any new vaccine is proven safe and is available for free globally.

Through the pandemic we have learned that we must urgently strengthen our health-care system for seniors, support for front-line workers, children, the marginalized, and especially mental health-care services. Many Canadians have reported that their mental health has been negatively impacted by this crisis, which will place even more strain on an already overburdened mental health-care network. The threat to mental health is the echo-pandemic.

- Seniors and their caregivers
  - We call for a national inquiry into seniors' care pre-pandemic with possible criminal prosecution.
  - There should be no private ownership of seniors' care and living, rather public ownership and/or non-profit management structures. There should also be a variety of housing options available.
  - We want seniors' care to be under the Canada Health Act.
  - Enforced national standards for eldercare and staffing should be developed.
  - Agreements for care should be negotiated with provincial governments through the Council of Canadian Governments.

- Commit to improve resident safety via standard national guidelines for personal support workers which: cover minimum staffing levels in care homes; require more full-time staff who are properly paid, so there is no need for workers to work in multiple facilities; and improves both continuity and quality of eldercare and provides better working conditions for staff.
- Invest in training and education to support ongoing professional development and specialization.
- Fund transformative dementia care.
- Encourage innovative solutions to increase availability of the following within care homes: space for patients under quarantine; access to rapid testing; and appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Fully fund high-dose flu vaccines and expansion of pneumococcal coverage for all Canadians over 65, especially those in congregate settings.
- A vaccine to protect us all:
  - For a just recovery, a new vaccine must be free – big pharma must not profit.
  - We must prioritize vaccine distribution to vulnerable populations.
  - We must invest in research to develop a vaccine and treatment. Going forward we need to increase funding in essential medical research and related science.
- We need national mental health standards and immediate investments in both community-based service organizations and provincial and municipal mental health services to cope with the trauma and anxiety the pandemic is leaving in its wake.
  - Canada needs a national suicide prevention plan to prevent an increase in death by suicide.
- Universal childcare and early childhood education are crucial components in developing comprehensive care for all Canadians. It is time for federally funded and mandated programs.
- Implement national universal pharmacare.
- We must protect, listen to, and amplify the voices of women, including trans women, girls, femme-identified and non-binary people, racialized women and women of colour, Indigenous women and immigrant women.

- In Canada we must increase the urgency of addressing the ongoing issue of domestic abuse and violence. We commit to fighting misogyny and call for greater funding for community resources specifically for the most marginalized women. We commit to meeting the calls to action in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls inquiry.

## Resilience is local and made in Canada

AFFORDABLE HOUSING. LOCAL FOOD.

In rebuilding our economy, we want to see jobs in every community taking advantage of expanding opportunities in re-localizing.

In staying close to home during the pandemic, it's been much easier to see the strength of our communities and the areas that need reinforcement. Local food, public transit, green spaces – these are systems and institutions that carry our communities forward through crises. Canadians want more food security and energy security. With the proper investment post-COVID, especially for municipalities, we can rely on these necessities for years to come.

- Safe, affordable housing is a human right. We must protect this right by:
  - Ensuring the policy of “housing first” is utilized.
  - Building more affordable housing.
  - Increasing funding for cooperative and supportive housing.
  - Encouraging provinces to continue the eviction freeze until the end of the pandemic.
  - Demanding a rent freeze post-pandemic, by extending what is already in place and not allowing rent to be hiked for at least a year.
  - Ensuring all housing in Indigenous communities is built following principles laid out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

- We must increase people's confidence in their communities by:
  - Supporting small local businesses.
  - Investing heavily in affordable, green public transit and healthy transportation that suits the region's needs.
  - Supporting municipal investment in new wastewater infrastructure.
  - Encouraging continued pedestrian usage of streets, fewer cars, green travel and bike lanes.
- Encourage Canadians at all levels to embrace a "grow local" mentality by:
  - Reinforcing local food supply chains such as farmers' markets.
  - Encouraging individuals to source locally or grow and make their own food, like the victory gardens of WWI and WWII.
  - Providing funding to agriculture and farmers, especially small and ecological farms.
  - Supporting local food production and tackling the huge problems we saw with Cargill and our current corporate controlled and centralized food processing system.
  - Move away from the massive, monopolistic and unsustainable industrial livestock model. Re-localize food production and processing capacity
- Partner with municipalities for relief funding distribution, allying with organizations like the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.
- Develop urban partnerships with all orders of government to re-energize our urban cores across the country.
- It is evident funding should be spent on strengthening communities, not police departments. We call for race-based and gender-based data on all policing action taken during the pandemic. We also support municipalities and provinces reorganizing their budgets to put money into community developed and community led support systems.
- Proudly made in Canada:
  - Make public investments provide returns to the public. No public money for public-private partnerships (P3s).

- Increase in-Canada manufacturing of essentials (such as medical PPEs) by implementing an import substitution strategy to reduce dependence on global supply chains.
- Do more value-added and secondary manufacturing in Canada to put an end to such practices as shipping raw logs offshore to be sold back to Canadians as furniture.
- Support local and within-Canada tourism.
- Support employment in the arts, particularly in the infrastructure and tax policy that support film and television production.
- Invest in high-speed rail starting with Windsor-Quebec and Edmonton- Calgary.
- We also saw the benefit of fewer cars on the road - now is the time for green infrastructure to keep it that way.

# Respect Indigenous self-determination and Canadian decolonization

UNDRIP. SOVEREIGNTY.

Indigenous peoples across Canada have waited too long for justice. Truth, justice and reconciliation must be at the core of our post-pandemic recovery. Indigenous sovereignty must be respected.

There will be a need for specific health care support and food security programs. We must pass UNDRIP and ensure compliance with UNDRIP throughout Canadian legislation and policy-making. We must implement the recommendations of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry.

- Enshrine in our recovery plan:
  - the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) articles;
  - the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Calls for Justice; and
  - the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.
- Fund the programs Indigenous groups identify as required to return to a new reality after COVID-19.
- Increase government support to Indigenous people living off reserve.
- Recognize the sovereignty of remote and fly-in Indigenous communities over who is able to enter their communities.
- Make air travel an essential service to the many communities that rely on air transport for all their supplies, an issue made even more vital throughout this pandemic.
- Establish a nation-to-nation relationship via the Council of Canadian Governments.
- Continue to work towards the needs that have already been raised, so Indigenous services in health care, education, housing and water are equivalent to similar services for non-Indigenous Canadians.

# Recommit to strong action on climate adaptation

PLANT TREES. CLIMATE INFRASTRUCTURE.

This year's spring flood season and summer forest fire season have been made more worrying by the strains of the pandemic, which have reduced volunteer power for sandbagging and increased trouble for those needing to leave home due to a natural disaster. Restoring our natural environment can help mitigate some of the damage that will be done by natural disasters.

Our natural resources are crucial to the health of our economy, our ecosystems and our communities. We must prioritize protecting our water sources and mitigating fire and flood risks. These goals are opportunities for job creation in a just transition away from fossil fuels.

- Plant billions of ecologically appropriate and fire-resistant trees:
  - in urban spaces to create livable microclimates;
  - on steep hillsides after fires to secure hillsides and protect water quality;
  - to create large fire breaks around at-risk, remote communities to save lives; and
  - protect old growth forests for biodiversity, ecosystem functioning, and carbon sequestration.
- Transition to a low-waste economy to reduce the use of finite resources.
- Encourage research into alternate materials to use in manufacturing.
- Reduce or ban single use plastics other than those required for public health protection.
- Accelerate the use of plastics made from biological materials.
- Reduce the impacts of climate change on shoreline communities by:
  - enhancing docks and wharves to adapt to storm surges and sea level rise in consultation with fishing communities;
  - building dikes to protect communities already built in floodplains;
  - and preventing future building in floodplains.

# Restore the natural world

GREEN SPACE. PLASTICS BAN.

During the pandemic, people all over the world have marveled at the natural world and how rapidly it became cleaner and healthier. We relied on parks and green spaces to improve our mental health. We can and must hang on to cleaner air. The death toll of COVID-19 was worse where people lived with air pollution.

We know that before the pandemic hit, we were dealing with a biodiversity crisis. We were dealing with a crisis of plastics in our oceans. Post pandemic, we must accelerate the work to address these crises with a renewed commitment to the protection and restoration of nature.

- Provide more public access to nature and green spaces through:
  - increasing national parks;
  - increasing accessibility of national parks; and
  - working with municipalities to create local, urban green spaces accessible by public transit.
- Reduce or ban single use plastics.

# Rebuild for better

**BROADBAND ACCESS. FREE TUITION. FLEXIBLE WORKPLACES.**

We made a voluntary decision to shut down our economy in order to save lives. We made the decision, without hesitation, that life is more important than money. As we restart our economy we have the opportunity to build it better than before. We know that many people will want to continue teleworking to cut down not only their carbon footprint, but the time they spend commuting. It is time to look at what people and businesses want and need so they don't bounce back, but bounce forward.

We will also need to look at changes in how we perceive education. What is needed to support students and the future of learning? We want to hear from those in the arts, especially the performing arts, who are questioning what the future holds for live performances. We need to provide a level playing field for local journalism by ensuring digital giants like Google and Facebook are treated as publishers, not "platforms," to abide by the same rules as newspapers.

University will likely be online in the fall. We need it to still be accessible to those who desire to study but must now do so from home. Being on campus is an equalizer in the world of post-secondary education as not everyone has the privilege of a home life conducive to studying. Ensuring quality internet access will help ease the burden for those with higher stress away from school.

- Reimagine the world of work by:
  - providing shortened work weeks;
  - encouraging people who wish to work from home to do so, or work flexible hours, and;
  - supporting unions in a wider variety of work spaces and on issues of workers' rights.
- Continue to support the arts by:
  - dedicating funding for live performances;
  - increasing support for the Canada Council for the Arts;
  - creating an ad-free CBC; and

- creating a tax structure for Google, Facebook and streaming services that support local journalism and Canadian content creation.
- Increase high-speed internet access to all Canadians by:
  - enacting a universal broadband strategy to give Canadians across the country and in remote areas access to reliable internet; and
  - continuing to push for affordable, consistent rates for internet access.
- Increase the access all Canadians have to a quality education by:
  - eliminating tuition;
  - eliminating existing student debt above \$10,000;
  - removing taxes on sales of textbooks;
  - ensuring students have access to tablets or computers in the home;
  - ensuring high speed internet is available to every school; and
  - exploring avenues to increase access to education and online learning, particularly in Indigenous and rural communities.

# Reimagine a safer, fairer world

FAIR TRADE. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING.

The COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc globally. That havoc can be measured in human lives, businesses in crisis and economies in turmoil. Canada's recovery is inevitably tied to a global resurgence of healthy and sustainable communities. Achieving the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals is more important than ever.

Canada should convene a global summit similar to the Bretton Woods discussion at the end of the Second World War. We need to rethink critical global financial institutions.

We need to re-examine monetary policy. Canada can rely far more on the Bank of Canada and quantitative easing in building back to our pre-COVID enviable debt to GNI ratio. For too long, we have been driven by a deep-seated fear of inflation while, according to the Governor of the Bank of Canada, deflation is the larger risk. We need to re-examine the post-COVID world economy and move to investments, domestic and global, that will deliver the strongest results.

We need to strengthen multilateral institutions. Despite attacks on the World Health Organization, we desperately need global information sharing. We had never encountered this virus. We had to work and must keep working at a global level.

It is time to imagine a new world of economic policy:

- keep our economy healthy and stable;
- anticipate expanded artificial intelligence (AI) and an economy that is increasingly digital;
- guarantee a good job for anyone who wants one;
- abandon unending economic growth as a goal and replace it with a goal of maximizing human and environmental health and well-being;
- restore the Bank of Canada as a lender to all levels of Canadian governments;
- introduce a broad wealth tax and close tax loopholes that benefit the most wealthy.

We should recommit to article 10 of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and modernize it to explicitly recognize climate goals as

superior to any trade deals. We must eliminate and rewrite all investor state dispute settlement (ISDS) agreements. The world's central banks and international financial institutions must cancel the debt of developing countries.

We must also make global commitments to peace keeping, conflict resolution, ending human slavery and protecting migrant and refugee populations as part of our global response.