



October 3, 2008

RE: Questionnaire

Attached please find the response of Canada's New Democrats to your 2008 Election questionnaire. It is the policy of our party to respond on behalf of all New Democrat candidates.

To find out more, we encourage you to consult: www.ndp.ca

Thank you for your interest in the views of Canada's New Democrats on the critical issues facing Canadians.

We appreciate your efforts to help voters make an informed decision on voting day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jack'.

Jack Layton
Leader of Canada's New Democrats

1. Yes. 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.

2. Yes. We will implement *The Climate Change Accountability Act*, proposed by the New Democrats and adopted by Parliament on June 4, 2008. This will establish a long-term target to reduce Canadian greenhouse gas emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 and a medium-term target to bring emissions 25 percent 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, our 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.

We will 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. New Democrats will invest \$4 billion over four years in stable, annual transit funding, combining an extra cent from the existing gas tax with revenue from making big polluters pay. We will also 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. And we will establish a Canadian Renewable Energy Agency responsible for encouraging and developing renewable energy in Canada.

3. New Democrats have spoken out strongly against the Harper Conservative plan to hand over more self-regulatory power to the industry ever since this secret agenda was exposed. We have consistently been opposed to the erosion of our food safety regulation and under the previous Liberal regime had repeatedly called for greater inspection capacity. A New Democrat government will increase the number of inspectors at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to actively cover every plant floor. We will also increase administrative support so inspectors can spend more time on the floor and less time on paperwork. Further, we will 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.

4. Yes. The New Democratic Party is the only party that is clear and unambiguous in our support of a public health care system in Canada. We have vigorously defended the Canada Health Act and have urged past federal governments to take action to prevent its

erosion and undermining by private entrepreneurs or through public-private partnerships. We see the Act as a key lever in keeping our public system viable over the long term. Our election platform pledges to “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.” We will further “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.”

5. Yes. A national drug program has been part of the New Democratic vision of health care since we first introduced public health insurance. It forms a key element in the ‘second phase of Medicare’ – all the more important as drug therapies have increased in use and the cost burden on individuals continues to rise. We will establish a Canada-wide prescription drug program, phasing in drug coverage for all citizens, beginning with catastrophic drug costs, in co-operation with the provinces and territories. We will 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. We will also fund an independent drug therapy advisory service for doctors across Canada, to share best practices.

6. New Democrats have committed to train substantially more health care professionals, including doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and midwives. We will invest \$1 billion over the next five years to create the additional educational spaces needed to increase nurse and physician graduate numbers by 50%. This will mean an additional 6,000 nurses to help meet the health human resourcing crisis that Liberal and Conservative governments have neglected to address. A New Democrat government will also lead in re-energizing the move toward a national health human resources strategy that has waned under the Harper Conservatives.

7. Yes. New Democrats will introduce environmental, human rights and labour standards into all trade agreements. Consistent with our long-standing position on trade agreements, we will ensure that our capacity to regulate in the public interest is maintained in future trade agreements and will, in addition, renegotiate NAFTA’s Chapter 11 that unreasonably limits Canada’s sovereignty in regulating foreign investment in the public interest.

