

2011 PROVINCIAL ELECTION - NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

# ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY QUESTIONNAIRE

August 29, 2011

There are a number of environmental issues in Newfoundland and Labrador, which are affecting the sustainability and well-being of our communities and economy. These issues include rising greenhouse gas emissions, degradation and loss of natural habitat (in both the marine and terrestrial environments), and loss of biological diversity.

Environmental organisations do not have *all* the solutions to these problems, but are actively engaging with the public, governments, aboriginal groups, and industry sectors to seek common ground and make progress. With an aim to encourage public dialogue on these issues, this document compiles questions related to investment in environmental conservation and education, wetlands protection, protected area establishment and food security. The questionnaire will be sent to each political party and all responses from the parties will be published at [www.nlen.ca](http://www.nlen.ca).

The contributors are member organisations of the Newfoundland and Labrador Environment Network, a provincial network of non-governmental, non-profit environmental groups. Please note that the questionnaire does not attempt to address *all* environmental issues and concerns in Newfoundland and Labrador. A companion document to this questionnaire, which outlines a variety of environmental policy recommendations from NLEN members, can also be found at the above website.

## **CONTRIBUTING ORGANISATIONS:**

Ducks Unlimited  
Whale Release and Strandings  
Northeast Avalon Atlantic Coastal Action Program  
Western Environment Centre  
Nature Newfoundland and Labrador

## **COMPILED BY:**

Newfoundland and Labrador Environment Network

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### **Investment in environmental protection**

1. This year, Newfoundland and Labrador is projected to reap a windfall profit from oil production that could boost provincial revenue by \$600 Million. The royalties from oil and gas and mineral development will mean windfall profits for the province for years to come. Will you invest a portion of windfall profits into an environmental trust, to fund conservation, remediation and stewardship in the province? (Note: In 2008, Nova Scotia invested \$25 Million in such a fund).

2. If your party forms the government how will it respond to the cuts in research and environmental protection being implemented by Environment Canada in this province?

Questions from: Northeast Avalon Atlantic Coastal Action Program

### **Investment in environmental education**

3. How do you think the school system can teach students to better appreciate the need for sustaining a healthy environment in Newfoundland and Labrador?

Question from: Whale Release and Strandings

### **Wetland protection**

3. Wetlands are crucial to flood control, clean water and healthy habitats, and are also a major source of stored soil carbon. The carbon storage in the soils and peatlands of Newfoundland and Labrador is equal to 118 years of all of Canada's emissions at 2006 levels. If your party forms the next government will it produce and implement a wetlands policy that protects these sensitive areas from development and degradation?

Question from:

Northeast Avalon Atlantic Coastal Action Program *and* Ducks Unlimited Canada

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4. The Northeast Avalon is experiencing unprecedented economic growth and development. If your party forms the next government how will it set about protecting the ponds, rivers and wetlands that are crucial to the area's environmental health? Will this include establishment of more protected areas within the region?

Question from: Northeast Avalon Atlantic Coastal Action Program

### Protected Areas

5. In 2011, the provinces of Quebec and Nova Scotia unveiled their plans to protect 12% of their provincial landmass by the year 2015. The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity recommends 17% protection as a target for conservation. What is your party's protected areas target, and when will you achieve it? How will your party accelerate the establishment of protected areas in NL?

Question from: Ducks Unlimited Canada, Nature Newfoundland and Labrador and Protected Areas Association of Newfoundland and Labrador

6. Will your party initiate a province-wide land use planning process?

Question from: Nature Newfoundland and Labrador

7. Establishment of the Little Grand Lake Ecological Reserve has been stalled at the "provisional" stage for many years. Will your party commit to full establishment of the Little Grand Lake Ecological Reserve within one year of the 2011 election?

Question from: Protected Areas Association of Newfoundland and Labrador

### Sustainable Resource Development

8. Will your party take measures to insure that ecosystem-based forestry management becomes a reality throughout the Province and the adequate habitat is maintained for all caribou populations?

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9. Will your party oppose concessions to the mining industry that allows the destruction of freshwater ecosystems?

Questions from: Nature Newfoundland and Labrador

### **Food Security**

10. Food security is a challenge in Newfoundland and Labrador. We currently do not produce enough food to feed our population and we are losing important knowledge and skills related to food. Our province also has some of the highest obesity rates, as well as food bank usage across the country. Considering these challenges, how would your party work to support community-based solutions to food security?

Question from: Western Environment Centre

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