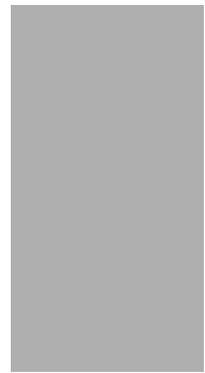


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# Environment

## Alberta's Environmental Action Plan



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## Wildrose Alliance Caucus

Get it Right!

# Environment

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Albertans have always demanded responsible stewardship of our natural environment. However, Albertans also understand that protecting our environment does not mean unnecessarily harming economic progress.

In fact, history clearly demonstrates that those jurisdictions with strong economies are more able and willing to invest in and protect their environment when compared with those areas that have less.

The goals of protecting the environment and ensuring economic prosperity and opportunity are not mutually exclusive; in fact, they are inextricably linked.

This document outlines the Wildrose Alliance Caucus' plan for protecting Alberta's Environment. Our plan focuses on three key areas:



# Clean Air, Land & Water

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## Clean Air

There is nothing more important to individuals than the quality of the air they and their loved ones breathe every second of every day. It is imperative that our province's economic reliance on the production, use, refinement and sale of hydrocarbons never undermines the right of Albertans to breathe clean air. Dangerous pollutants such as nitrous oxide, sulphur dioxide, mercury, lead and other particulates must be reduced. California and Toronto-like smog from vehicle tailpipes and smokestacks are not acceptable to Albertans.

The discussion surrounding global warming has become highly emotional. There is obviously still healthy scientific debate as to the extent manmade emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> are affecting global temperatures – and this debate will likely carry on for many years.

As a province we must strike the delicate balance between promoting out of precaution a practical reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions while ignoring the environmental extremists that would have us needlessly overreact to the severe detriment of our economy.

It is thus important that government avoid enacting CO<sub>2</sub> reduction policies for the sake of simply appearing to be doing something.

The PC Government's reckless insistence on funnelling \$2 billion into various potentially dangerous mass carbon capture and storage projects is one very expensive example of such.



# Clean Air, Land & Water

And more puzzling still, the current government undermines its stated goal of reducing CO2 emissions by their ramming of Bill 50 through the Legislature in 2009.

This legislation actually accelerates the massive overbuild of new transmission lines largely for CO2-intensive coal fire electric generation; this despite the emergence of locally generated, cost effective and clean burning natural gas power plants as well as other renewable alternatives.

Albertans want a government that will implement practical strategies to improve air quality, increase energy efficiency, reduce emissions, and stimulate economic growth while providing tangible benefits for its citizens.

This PC Government has failed miserably in this regard.

## *Did you know?*

- *The proposed new transmission lines will increase our capacity 8-fold. That's like deciding that because there is occasionally too much traffic on the QEII, we should make it a 32-lane highway.*



# Get it Right

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Albertans deserve better. The Wildrose Alliance will implement the following initiatives to ensure all Albertans have clean air to breathe:

- Tighten and strictly enforce the rules and approval mechanisms regulating air quality particularly in and around heavy industrial zones such as Fort McMurray and the Industrial Heartland. New projects should only be approved when a rigorous cumulative effects assessment shows that air quality will remain at acceptable levels for human health and the environment.
- Expand the use of clean burning Alberta natural gas and propane for industrial and residential electricity production and transportation. This can be done by levelling the royalties between coal and natural gas, reviewing energy regulations to ensure on-site residential, commercial and industrial co-generation is promoted, and providing tax incentives for increased use of natural gas and propane powered vehicles.
- Cancel the PC Government's wasteful and expensive \$2 billion Carbon Capture and Storage initiative, and instead focus funding on improving and expanding mass transit and commuter rail. Doing so will reduce pollutants and CO2 emissions while improving the economy and lives of thousands of Albertans.
- Repeal Bill 50 to ensure that the new and costly transmission capacity it approves is subjected to an objective and impartial needs assessment to determine whether alternatives such as locally generated electricity from natural gas would be a more cost-effective alternative.
- Promote industry investment in environmental research, development, equipment and upgrades through tax incentives (i.e. accelerated capital cost allowance) made available to all businesses, rather than permitting the government to pick winners and losers by granting millions of dollars in 'green' money to companies with the most effective lobbyists.

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# Clean Air, Land & Water

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## Clean Water

Our province's fresh water is our most precious natural resource.

Not only is it essential for human life, it is vital to the sustainability of our most important industries – namely energy and agriculture. Without it agricultural, residential, commercial and industrial growth are impossible.

Given the critical importance of clean water to all Albertans, it is not something that should be used to wield control over those without adequate access to it. It is unfortunate the current PC Government has allowed access to water to become a stumbling block for regional cooperation between communities. With proper planning and management, this need not have occurred.

The quality of our water supply is a very emotional issue as well. There has been no greater black eye for the province of Alberta over the last decade than the images of tailings ponds sitting next to the Athabasca River by Fort McMurray.

Although it is yet unclear as to the affect these ponds are having on the local water supply, there is no doubt they have, at the very least, had an adverse affect on local wildlife (i.e. the duck incident) and have attracted damaging media coverage that threatens to devastate our most financially important industry.

The PC Government has utterly failed to be proactive on this issue; they continue to talk without showing any ability to act.



# Get it Right

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Albertans deserve better. The Wildrose Alliance will employ the following policies to ensure all Albertans have access to clean water:

- In cooperation with industry, implement a strategy that will substantially accelerate the reduction and reclamation of new and existing tailings ponds sites.
- Develop a comprehensive on and off-stream fresh water storage plan to ensure Alberta's agricultural producers, developers and residents have access to the clean water needed for quality of life and economic growth.
- Review and reform our water licensing system to ensure that existing licenses are fully utilized while respecting the principle of first in time, first in right. In cooperation with an effective on and off-stream fresh water storage plan, existing water licenses should be more than enough to address Alberta's growth pressures for decades.
- Promote improved water conservation by eliminating regulations that make it impossible for developers to implement new conservation technologies such as grey water recycling for residential or commercial use.
- Ensure that all Alberta municipalities are able to provide safe and reliable drinking water to their population and that proper sewage treatment practices are followed.
- Strictly enforce existing regulations on effluent producing industries.
- Support the federal ban on bulk water exports to the United States from Canada.



# Clean Air, Land & Water

## Clean Land

Alberta's land is a treasure trove almost without rival.

With our world renowned mountains, fertile prairie soils, rolling grasslands and massive northern forests, Albertans have come to revere this land and are overwhelmingly committed to protecting it.

Albertans want to know that environmental challenges arising from our province's growth are handled professionally, quickly and with common sense.

The current PC Government is far too worried about regulating mole hills while leaving weightier matters largely unaddressed. This does nothing to protect the environment, but does create unnecessary bureaucratic costs for Alberta residents and entrepreneurs.

### *Did you know?*

- ***Bill 19** allows the Provincial Cabinet to freeze land for extended periods without compensation?*
- ***Bill 50** allows the Provincial Cabinet to approve of massive power lines across the province without an independent assessment of whether it is necessary and where it would be most efficient?*



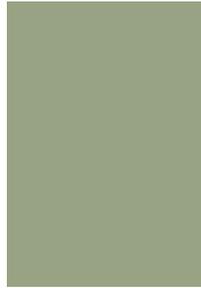
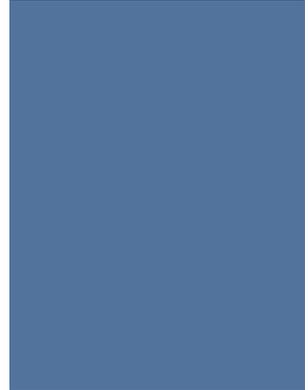
# Get it Right

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Albertans deserve better. The Wildrose Alliance will employ the following strategy to strengthen our province's commitment to clean land while addressing the environmental-related concerns of Alberta residents and businesses:

- Establish an Environment Ombudsman to facilitate better communication between the public and the provincial government on emerging environmental issues, and to see that such issues are resolved in a fair, timely and effective manner.
- Within the Ministry of Environment create a one-window application for all provincial environmental approvals. When it takes two years in Alberta to gain regulatory approval for the same project it took two months to approve in Saskatchewan, it is clear our environmental approval processes must be streamlined.
- Ensure all oil and gas development conducted on privately owned land is done in an environmentally responsible fashion, and that such properties are returned to landowners in essentially the same condition and value as they were previous to development.
- Recognize our national and provincial parks as vital provincial ecosystems and strictly protect these areas from development and other environmentally intrusive activities while enabling safe recreational use of them by the public.





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For more information, please visit: [www.wildrosealliancecaucus.ca](http://www.wildrosealliancecaucus.ca)