

Alternatives North Federal Election Questionnaire

Jane Groenewegen (Independent) Replies

QUESTION 1

Background: Emergency mobilizations require social cohesion, but inequality undermines such collaboration. The COVID-19 pandemic has further lifted the veil on the inequities in our society.

Question: How do you propose to tackle the climate crisis and these inequities at the same time? One required element of doing so is referred to as Just Transition – what is the role of the federal government in ensuring no one is left behind in the grand decarbonization transition before us?

I think as Northerners and as Canadians we are all interested in a Just transition to build a future of a low carbon economy. Through a process of economic, environmental, and social policy the federal Government can certainly create a framework to engage Canadians in this transition. As Northerners we know that consensus is a proven method to arrive at decisions through cooperation and discussion that is said to reflect a traditional northern solution to ensure no one is left behind.

QUESTION 2

Background: The path forward has to be one of true cooperation and partnership, and one that honours and respects Indigenous title and rights. We need a path forward that seeks to make right the injustices of the past and fundamentally breaks with the colonial practices that have marked so much of our politics and economic development for centuries.

Question: What are you hearing from Indigenous communities about the climate crisis? How can you and the federal government walk a path forward on climate that respects and honours Indigenous title and rights?

We have all heard the voices of our Indigenous communities over the last year as the climate crisis has impacted the lives and communities in all parts of the NWT. From flooding along the Slave and McKenzie Rivers, record water levels on great Slave Lake to the continuation of erosion up and down the McKenzie River to the coast of Tuktoyaktuk. The Indigenous peoples of our territory see these changes in their lives and changes in their hunting /gathering traditions. They are and will be an integral partner in the consensus that will be required to deal with a path forward to reconciliation .

QUESTION 3

Background: During the COVID-19 pandemic, our governments committed to spending what it takes to ensure the safety of our citizens. According to climate and economy experts, we need to spend 2% of our GDP on climate action and green infrastructure and another 2% on just transition and social infrastructure to ensure no one is left behind. That would be about \$80 billion annually.

Question: Given the urgency of the climate emergency, are you prepared to spend what it takes to contribute to the global effort to avoid the worst of the climate crisis?

All the national parties running in this election have comprehensive, and for the most part, costed platforms on their commitments to climate change. As an independent I will have to ability to work with whatever party comes to power to ensure that they live by those commitments and to advocate for the NWT.

QUESTION 4

Background: During World War Two, in order to meet the military production and social needs of its population, Canada created 28 new crown corporations. Within two years, Canada increased manufacturing of aircraft 25 fold. Before the war, shipbuilders numbered only 2000, at the end of the war, there were 30,000 shipbuilders.

Question: Given the scaling up that is necessary to combat the climate crisis, how can the federal government create new institutions to get the job done, or leverage existing institutions?

In answer to this question, I refer to the first question and my response about a Just Transition. The Government can create policies that can guide and or direct Government entities to combat the climate crisis. These policies will need to be created in collaboration with the provinces, territories, and indigenous governments to ensure consensus.

QUESTION 5

Background: The pandemic has seen our governments issue health orders and take strong actions to shut down non-essential parts of the economy when needed. When it comes to the climate emergency, however, actions taken to date have been almost entirely voluntary. We encourage change. We incentivize change. We offer rebates. We send price signals. But what we have decidedly not done is require change. We need to set clear, near-term dates by which certain things will be required. For example, we should mandate that all new buildings will not be permitted to use natural gas or other fossil fuels for heating as of 2023.

Question: Are you prepared to switch from incentive-based and voluntary policies to mandatory measures to combat the climate crisis? What would those mandatory measures be?

This is a complex question and the comparison to emergency health orders and the mandating of a free-market system are not necessarily equivalent. I am in favour of a Just Transition and the work that would be required to fulfill that mandate. Consensus building and education is the way forward in creating societal change.

QUESTION 6

Background: The leaders we remember best from the Second World War were outstanding communicators and orators who walked a careful line. They were forthright about the gravity of the crisis, yet still managed to impart hope. Similarly, that's how our present governments have modelled emergency communication throughout the pandemic. We receive daily press briefings. We hear regularly from public health officials. The media has taken seriously its duty to provide the necessary information on a daily basis. Government leaders and the media have listened to science and health experts, and have acted accordingly.

Question: Are you prepared to implement emergency-level communications about the climate emergency? What does that look like for you?

First let me recognize that in the event of any crisis or change communication is essential to build consensus and a credible action plan to address the situation. The North faces many important challenges from health, housing, education, and climate change. I commit to keeping climate change in the forefront of my communications with government leaders, indigenous governments, and the people of the NWT.