

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

West Coast Environmental Law	B.C. Liberals	B.C. NDP	BC Green Party
<p>Strong environmental assessment legislation, guaranteeing public involvement, comprehensive consideration of individual and cumulative environmental impacts, transparency and independence from government.</p>	<p>"We will aggressively push for a "single window" process for environmental assessments and other necessary reviews requiring multiple government approvals."</p> <p>"Multiple assessments by multiple governments often replicate the same work. That adds time, cost and uncertainty to companies wanting to invest. In short, it increases risk and reduces investment."</p>	<p>"The roles of the BC Utilities Commission, Oil and Gas Commission, and Environmental Assessment office will be strengthened to ensure effective public accountability." (p. 23);</p> <p>"Reviewing the Environmental Assessment process to make sure long-term, cumulative impacts of proposed projects are fully analyzed." (p. 43)</p>	<p>"Strengthen Environmental Assessments and Standards and reform the appointment process"(p. 41);</p> <p>"Strengthen the environmental assessment process to make it compliant with watershed-based assessments and to measure cumulative impacts from all activities and proposed projects." (p. 44)</p>

Analysis:

Environmental Assessment, which involves examining and addressing the environmental impacts of a proposed development before it's too late to stop them, is a central feature of environmental law. Amendments to BC's *Environmental Assessment Act* in 2002 made the process less independent and more susceptible to political control, and the environmental community generally views the resulting EA process as weak. Consequently, the NDP and Green commitments to strengthen the process are important. For example, the NDP has committed to do a "full overhaul of the environmental assessment process" so that it is "more comprehensive, inclusive, and puts the needs of the environment first" while ensuring that First Nations "have a full role in the process." In contrast, the Liberal commitment to pursue a "single window" approach, if it does not also address the quality of environmental assessment, could undermine environmental protection.

