

## FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

West Coast Environmental Law	BC Liberals	BC NDP	BC Greens
<p>Priority should be placed on forest conservation both to avoid GHG emissions resulting from logging and to give species and ecosystems a fighting chance in the face of climate change. BC's forestry laws and policies should be reformed to facilitate 'nature for carbon' credits, and to manage for resilience.</p>	<p>"A BC Liberal Government will continue to expand its 'Wood First' policy to require wood as the primary building material in all new publicly-owned and provincially-funded buildings." (p. 40)</p> <p>"We will push for a new national "Wood First" policy to create new demand for renewable 'carbon neutral' Canadian wood products across Canada." (p. 40)</p> <p>"A BC Liberal Government will continue to aggressively pursue ...opportunities for clean energy through new tenures that provide new access to waste wood and to stable fibre supplies for bioenergy." (p. 41)</p> <p>"The new green economy provides new opportunities for BC to build on its expertise in silviculture and plant more trees as 'carbon sinks'.... Our vision for silviculture will include a new tenure specifically designed for growing trees." (p.42)</p> <p>"We are the first jurisdiction in Canada to adopt a ground-breaking Zero Net Deforestation policy." (p. 42)</p>	<p>"Updated forest resource inventory and expanded research and development to help BC adapt to climate change."</p> <p>"By reestablishing value-added manufacturing and exploring opportunities for new forestry products such as wood waste by-products, we can make BC a world leader in the new sustainable uses of biomass and in dealing with the implications of climate change for our forests." (p. 13)</p>	<p>"Maintain the ecological integrity and resilience of forests to reduce vulnerability to natural and human caused stresses." (p. 61)</p>

**Analysis:**

The Liberals commitment to zero net deforestation (i.e., whenever forests are converted to other uses, an equivalent non-forest area must be planted elsewhere) will make a small but very important contribution to addressing this issue. However, neither the Liberals nor the NDP addresses the role of forest conservation in addressing climate change, instead focusing on the controversial use of our forests for bioenergy. Because of the life cycle of trees, using forests for bioenergy will not be carbon neutral during the critical period over the next few decades in which deep reductions to GHG emissions are required to keep global warming under 2 degrees. Furthermore, a recent expert report released by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity found that: "Intact primary forests contain the greatest carbon stocks as well as harbouring the highest biodiversity and have the highest resilience to climate change. Modified natural forests (i.e. those that have been logged or degraded) have lower carbon stocks, less biodiversity and less resilience than primary forests" (2008, UN Environment Programme). The Greens get part way there in addressing the need to manage for resilience. The Liberals' focus on marketing wood as a replacement for more climate damaging products needs to be coupled with promoting eco-certified FSC products (also see forest certification), and ensure that overcutting of our forests is not exacerbated.

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