

April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011

## Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Campaign 2011 Questionnaire

### Investment

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence constitute the largest source of fresh water in the world. The US Federal Government committed \$475 million to Great Lakes restoration and protection initiatives in 2010 alone, exclusive of infrastructure investments, and likely will appropriate between \$200 and \$300 million in 2011. Only \$8 million was committed to non-infrastructure Great Lakes protection programs in last year's federal budget and only \$ 16 million was committed by the Federal Government to the St. Lawrence Plan last year. Canada's declining investment in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence is not keeping pace with American investments and is insufficient to maintain and enhance the quality of this global resource.

**i) If your party forms the next Government of Canada (or if your party is in opposition), would you increase the federal financial commitment to the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes (exclusive of infrastructure) next year, and if so, by how much?**

The Green Party believes that the Great Lakes must be a focus for any incoming federal government. As they supply roughly  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the fresh water used in Canada, they are integral to our health and our economy. We are proud to support aggressive initiatives to reduce the pollution levels in the Great lakes. We would establish a CEPA taskforce to focus on pollution reduction in the Great Lakes – Saint Lawrence Basin. Moreover we would strengthen the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement to ensure it deals with emerging issues such as endocrine disruptors and pharmaceuticals.

**ii) In its pre-budget submission, the Cities Initiative proposed the creation of a \$50 million/year Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Sustainability Fund for locally-directed nearshore protection measures in any communities within the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin. If your party formed the next Government of Canada (or if your party is in opposition), would you create such a Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Sustainability Fund?**

A Green Government would restore ecosystem health to Canada's inland watersheds by funding improvements to municipal wastewater treatment systems, with particular emphasis on ensuring shoreline communities and industries stop dumping untreated waste into rivers, lakes and oceans. We will work with the coastal communities of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence basin to ensure that local-directed nearshore initiatives are well funded and supported at the national level.

### Infrastructure

**New federal waste water treatment standards are expected to come into effect later this year. The regulations will require communities to rebuild or replace more than 25 per**



cent of Canada's 3,500 waste water treatment systems. The necessary infrastructure upgrades are estimated to cost \$13 billion over the next 3 decades, and an additional \$30 billion if upgrades to bring systems into compliance with current standards are factored in.

**iii) What is your government's plan to help cities meet federal waste water standards?**

The Green Party of Canada has pledged to create six municipal superfunds that cities can tap into to better maintain and develop their infrastructure. One of these funds will allocate 1.8 billion dollars over the next three years for water and waste treatment facilities in municipalities. The fund will allow cities to upgrade water treatment, sewage treatment and recycling facilities to make them efficient, safe and sustainable. This will allow communities to develop the necessary capacity and infrastructure to meet federal water standards.

**Leadership**

**Over a number of years, action on Great Lakes and St. Lawrence protection has been delayed on several fronts. Negotiations on the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Ecosystem and the St. Lawrence Plan have all been delayed. Investment in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence has not been made a priority. And very little political attention has been given to the greatest source of fresh water in the world. Political leadership on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence is sorely needed.**

**iv) If your party formed the next Government of Canada (or if your party is in opposition), would you commit to demonstrating political leadership in the protection of precious water resources in Canada, including the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, and if so, how would you do this?**

Yes, the Green Party believes that we must give renewed attention to national water policy, and this must include the Great Lakes. A Green government will work in partnership with provinces, territories, First Nations, NGOs and municipalities to ensure that our water resources are protected. This will require inspired leadership on the part of the federal government, something only Greens can provide.

Firstly we would protect the fundamental right to clean freshwater for all Canadians today and in future generations by amending the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to enshrine the right of future Canadians to an ecological heritage that includes breathable air and drinkable water. Green MPs would also push government to strategically implement the 1987 Federal Water Policy to meet the requirements of sustainable water management - equity, efficiency and ecological integrity - by:

- Passing federal legislation to prohibit bulk water exports and immediately remove water from the scope of the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) currently being negotiated.
- Take action to prevent radioactive waste shipments such as the highly radioactive worn out steam generators from nuclear reactors approved to be shipped out the Owen Sound harbour, through the St. Lawrence seaway and to Sweden.



- Establishing regulations and product standards to promote water-efficient technologies in Canada.
- Conduct an inventory of all polluted groundwater and water bodies. Develop and implement strategies for cleaning them.
- Enhance the capacity of federal departments and agencies to protect and restore the health of aquatic ecosystems.

### **Spills Prevention**

**Last year, Canada's Environmental Commissioner, Scott Vaughan, released a report in which he concluded that that Canada's spills prevention and preparedness regime is outdated and lacks a formal framework with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for responding to chemical spills.**

**v) If your party forms the next Government of Canada (or if your party is in opposition), would you update Canada's spills prevention and preparedness regime? Including**

- **a special focus on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Region;**
- **a formal framework for responding to chemical spills;**
- **a prevention and response plan to address new and changing products in maritime cargo on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, including light petroleum products, new chemicals, and other new cargo materials**

Yes. The Green Party will work with communities along the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes to develop a spill prevention and preparedness regime that would protect both the local environment and Canadians.

### **St. Lawrence River**

**The St. Lawrence River is already feeling the effects of climate change with severe storms and tides causing acute erosion in the St. Lawrence estuary and gulf areas as well as lower water levels in the Montreal region.**

**vi) If your party forms the next Government of Canada (or if your party is in opposition), would you create an assistance program for cities along the St. Lawrence to address or adapt to the effects of climate change?**

Yes. A Green Government will take aggressive steps to combat climate change. Should Canadian communities be affected we will take the necessary steps to repair and restore damaged ecosystems and communities. Where necessary we will also pursue adaptation strategies to mitigate potential harms to Canadians.

