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Nicola Crawhall
Deputy Director
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
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Dear Ms. Crawhall,

On behalf of the Green Party, thank you for giving us the opportunity to share with you and the members of your association our policies on the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence.

Please find below our responses to the questions presented in your survey. Should you or the association's members have any further questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,

Emilia Melara
Office Coordinator
Green Party of Ontario

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 have been delayed and the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Ecosystem has been extended several times rather than reviewed and renegotiated to reflect current conditions. A renewed political commitment to the Great Lakes is sorely needed.

1) If your party forms the next Government of Ontario, how would you demonstrate political leadership in the protection of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence?

The Green Party of Ontario will work to strengthen programs to clean up and protect the Great Lakes

by supporting a Great Lakes Act, implementing the Great Lakes Charter Annex, working to strengthen the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, and developing agreements with neighbouring jurisdictions to prevent invasive species.

We will work with the Federal government and International Joint Commission to bring a coherent vision for the Great Lakes and Great Lakes Water Basin. We need comprehensive policies and targeted investments that address invasive species, mitigate climate change, reduce chemical and biological waste discharge, improve drinking water protection, clean contaminated sites and emphasize water conservation.

Ontario's air, land and water quality are essential to our health and well-being. It's important to recognize that we can have clean air, water and food by making connections across traditionally separate domains. The Green Party is committed to making those connections, bringing improvements to our management of air, water and land to ensure that it remains clean and available for generations to come.

Investment

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence system constitutes the largest source of fresh water in the world. It is plagued by a number of environmental challenges that require dedicated funding to be effectively addressed, including escalating nutrient levels resulting in algae build-up, chemical loadings from products and direct discharges; invasive species, the impacts of climate change, stressed habitat and species, the impact of agricultural and urban run-off on nearshore waters, contaminated sediment, to name a few.

2) If your party forms the next Government of Ontario, after a review of government finances, would your government commit to increasing the provincial financial commitment to the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence (exclusive of infrastructure) next year?

The Green Party's vision for Ontario will ensure clean air, water and food by reducing pollution. We will commit to targeted investments for improving water quality and sewage treatment, and by investing in a program which rewards farmers for providing healthy environmental goods and services.

We believe the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence are important, and will be strong advocates of ensuring appropriate funding to support these efforts.

We will also support a green infrastructure strategy to ensure that our communities have natural spaces to reduce the cost of water treatment and flood water control, and to keep our lakes and watersheds healthy. This includes allocating an additional \$285 million over four years for enhanced water treatment and sewage management programs.

The Green Party of Ontario's Food and Farming Strategy includes \$100 million over four years to compensate farmers and landowners for environmental goods and services that lead to clean air and water, by expanding the Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS). The ALUS program provides an incentive

for farmers who provide stewardship of clean air and water, biodiversity and habitat preservation and carbon sequestration. These are public benefits that improve our health, strengthen local economies and responsibly manage our natural resources.

We strongly oppose the proposed mega quarry in Melancthon Township, which is located near the headwaters of five major watersheds. The project proposes to manipulate about 600 million litres of water every day, which is approximately 25% of the province's average daily water usage. We will amend appropriate legislation to ensure that projects of this scale are subject to a full Environmental Assessment.

Nearshore Water Quality and Stormwater

As a result of climate change and urban intensification, the negative impact of stormwater runoff on nearshore water quality is worsening, becoming one of the primary sources of pollutants to the Lakes. At the same time, many communities are experiencing increasing stormy conditions, basement flooding and flash floods.

3) If your Party forms the next Government of Ontario, what is your plan to help Great Lakes and St. Lawrence municipalities improve and expand their stormwater activities and floodwater conveyance to reducing flooding and reduce the impact of runoff on Great Lakes water quality?

The Green Party of Ontario supports a Green Infrastructure Strategy to help municipalities build strong, safe communities. We will focus on investments that lower stress on our infrastructure, save us money and improve our quality of life. We will prioritize planning for liveable communities with vibrant local economies. Our funding commitments will include a \$285 million fund for water and sewage infrastructure improvements.

Green MPPs will ensure that our communities have natural spaces that reduce the costs associated with water treatment and flood-water control in order to keep our lakes and watersheds healthy. We will also implement Ontario-wide standards for sewage treatment and reform the Waste Diversion Act, making it easier for municipalities to deal with waste.

Beach and Coastal Improvements

Many parts of Ontario are seeing increasing pressure on waterfront lands from increasing population, development pressures, increased erosion and changing water levels. Ontario is also fortunate to have some of the most beautiful beaches in the Great Lakes, and yet these receive little government support to provide a safe, enjoyable family day at the beach.

4) If your party forms the next Government of Ontario, how would you work with Great Lakes and St. Lawrence municipalities to improve lakefront and coastal planning and improved support for beaches?

The Green Party of Ontario's vision is to build a financially, socially and environmentally sustainable

province now and for the future. Preservation, protection, and expansion of our farmland, water resources and natural heritage are essential to realizing this vision.

We will coordinate and consult with municipalities and other stakeholders on ways to ensure that there is proper support for beaches and lakefronts. We will protect municipally-identified agricultural, rural, and natural heritage sites from urban sprawl, highway construction and industrial activities. With proper planning, we can design communities that are pleasant to live in and also protect our green-space and other natural heritage, such as beaches and lakefronts.

Climate Change Prevention and Adaptation

Many parts of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River are already feeling the effects of climate change with lowered water levels in the upper lakes, severe storms causing erosion, less ice cover over the winter months, and increased water temperatures causing increased growth of algae along the shorelines.

5) If your party forms the next Government of Ontario (or if your party is in opposition), how would you assist Great Lakes and St. Lawrence municipalities to address or adapt to the effects of climate change?

The Green Party has a sensible plan to tackle the major challenges facing us today – rising energy prices, the disappearance of good, local jobs, and climate change. We envision a future where Ontario builds on its diverse strengths to become a confident leader in the emerging low-carbon global economy.

We believe it's time to use market incentives to fight climate change in ways that make our businesses more competitive. Our tax plan reduces taxes on the things we want—income and job creation—and to shift them onto to things we don't—waste, pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions. Smart taxes create the market incentives that reward people and businesses for reducing waste and for generating jobs and income.

Our approach not only provides long-term, sustainable savings by reducing demand, but creates jobs and helps our businesses increase their energy productivity, operate more efficiently, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and be more competitive in the twenty-first century economy.

The Green Party understands that we need to ensure that our water, including important resources as the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, is managed properly to ensure it remains clean and freely available for future generations.

For more on the Green Party of Ontario's 5-point plan, please visit www.itstimeforgreen.ca.