

BC Ecosocialist Party

Founding Platform

Introduction

The BC Ecosocialists. A party that is to the left of the NDP and greener than the Greens.

We know that it's not a dream, but a practical reality that we can all live decent lives without having to keep someone else down. We have the resources to house everyone. We can feed everyone, without subjecting them to the humiliation of food banks. We can afford to provide childcare to everyone who needs it.

We want to better tax rich people and corporations to fund better policies, like building tens of thousands of units of social housing, building new green energy and transportation infrastructure while putting a moratorium on all new fossil fuel infrastructure including all LNG.

We oppose discrimination on the basis of race, class, sexual orientation, gender and disability. These values inform our policies from the bottom up; they are part of a framework of material as well as judicial rights that will shape building codes, vehicle design, program delivery and funding as well as employment equity in both the private and public sectors.

We believe in decolonization; that means returning power, land and resources to Indigenous people, not just tearful apologies and photo-ops.

We are a political party registered in the Province of British Columbia, with the primary purpose of fielding candidates in provincial elections. Below is our approach to how we would handle existing government departments and ideas about some of the new departments we would create.

Housing

Housing is a human right, and the market is the reason for, never the solution to the affordability tragedy. Only massive construction of low income public housing will solve this crisis.

Like medical care, housing is a basic human right, not a commodity to be traded and speculated-upon in open markets. This basic understanding guides the BC Ecosocialist approach to housing. We believe that, like other universal entitlements, the state must act as guarantor of people's housing and, when individuals are unable to obtain housing, the state must step in to provide it. We believe it should be our goal to eliminate rent in much the same way we have acted to eliminate medical user fees.

Instead, many *claiming* to be on the left argue in favour of what is called "supply side economics," the economic theory of George W Bush, Stephen Harper and Ronald Reagan. They argue that if we eliminate regulations, democratic processes and other "obstacles" to developers building what they want when they want in search of profits, the increased supply of condos and high-end townhomes will make all housing cheaper and more abundant. After thirty years of this approach, the opposite has resulted: more expensive, less available housing, designed for a narrower and narrower portion of the population. BC must follow the lead of countries like

Singapore and Austria and engage in large-scale building of public housing on public land and the acquisition of private housing stock and its repurposing as public housing, until the majority of all housing is government-owned. This involves a massive expansion in the size and mandate of BC Housing in communities throughout BC.

We also recognize that “home ownership” is often home ownership in name only. Banks own most of the housing in BC and reap the benefits of high housing costs with punishing monthly mortgage payments that leave many putative homeowners in as much danger of losing their homes if they lose their jobs as many renters. Parasitic on this system are realtors who enjoy higher and higher commissions for less and less work as housing prices continue to rise around BC.

The BC Ecosocialists will address these problems with the following measures:

- an immediate and indefinite rent freeze on all private market rental
- a rent control and housing policy that regulates consumer-paid rents to ensure they are affordable as we work towards de-monetizing housing costs, the way medical costs have been
- anti-demoviction and anti-renoviction legislation tying tenants to landlords rather than to specific suites, requiring that the landlord provide alternative housing of the same quality for the same rent in the event of demolition or renovation
- a multi-billion dollar investment in housing construction and acquisition for BC Housing
- prioritizing the creation of the most urgently needed and rarest forms of housing with the housing acquisition budget, i.e.
 - family housing for low-income people with dependents,
 - supportive housing, housing in regions
 - non-discriminatory supportive housing that is supportive rather than punitive of non-exploitive conjugal relationships (currently, many supported housing leases prohibit overnight visits by any person, even if they are a known, long-term romantic partner)
 - government-provided polytechnic training and certification of supportive housing workers, and
 - housing in communities and neighbourhoods that have little or no affordable housing
- ensuring that every community in BC has a healthy income mix, especially those that currently exclude low-income people
- ensuring that no person or family is forced into “supportive housing” arrangements that curtail fundamental liberties like the ability to form conjugal relationships or exercise one’s mobility rights
- increasing the steepness of the new graduated property tax to create additional tax brackets to tax extremely expensive homes at higher levels than the current top brackets permit
- ending all exemptions to the vacant home tax and taxing all second homes, irrespective of location in recognition of the fact that some of the most extreme housing shortages are being felt in areas where holiday property is concentrated i.e. the Gulf Islands, Sea to Sky and East Kootenays
- reinstating the inheritance tax for all property and applying it to all intergeneration home transfer, including antemortem property transfers and those passing through family trusts
- ending the practice of providing shelter allowances for market housing but instead directly providing housing/paying rent for welfare and disability support recipients
- ending the practice of charging rent for any government-owned housing but instead imposing an additional rate of income taxation for those receiving government housing;

- this additional rate of income tax will be assessed to make government housing revenue neutral overall but not to make each individual tenant's housing revenue-neutral based on the principle that housing should be a portion of one's income and not any minimum or fixed cost
- a program of providing compensated expropriation of privately-owned unoccupied housing from persons of families owning more than one dwelling
- a Squatters' Bill of Rights granting alienated title and occupancy rights to occupants of unoccupied residential property as well as unutilized agricultural that the new occupants put back into production
- a cap on real estate commissions at \$20,000 per property sold
- construction of government housing based on principles of architectural diversity, utilitarian, low-ecological impact material use and the creation of common and shared spaces in multi-unit dwellings
 - any new housing constructed must be based on energy conservation practices that include local energy storage and, where possible, passive generation
- the maintenance of income mix criteria not just within communities but within individual large developments
- in developments currently under construction, prohibiting any reduction in the proportion of non-market and social housing following development permit approval
 - a department within the Ministry of the Attorney-General to sue developers breaching those conditions and seek financial penalties and/or the transfer of some or all units to provincial ownership in compensation
- initiating the Land Value Capture Tax recommended by the CUPE-BCGEU report on housing affordability to fund upgrades in services and transportation in areas undergoing significant rezoning,
 - limiting developers' profits to those made by building improvements and keeping value increases caused by government rezoning in government hands
- creating Maintenance/Caretaker Consortiums, requiring that landlords of single or small numbers of rental units to pool their resources with adjacent landlords to pay for full-time caretaker and maintenance professionals to service this group of underserved renters

We have many youth at risk today. Two major reasons for the increasing number of youth at risk are overdose and drug poisoning deaths and a foster care system that ends abruptly at a younger age than child support agreements for other children end. For this reason we support:

- the principle that BC's foster children are not entitled to "bridging" services for housing that phase-in their move to market housing but instead that they are the first generation of British Columbians who will live their entire lives with the housing first principle, that they be the first group of British Columbians who enjoy a lifelong guarantee of their right to housing
- the creation of young adult housing programs for youth formerly in foster care, to be expanded over time to include all youth with a view to locating youth close to postsecondary opportunities in communities that recognize both the need for a diverse population of residents *and* an accommodation with youth noise culture and other differences that render this population harder to house

Public Debt and Finance

How are we going to pay for it? By raising taxes and rents on corporations and the wealthy, not by asking them to lend us money.

The BC Ecosocialists understand that our global financial system is not merely a capitalist one but one based on crony capitalism, one constantly rigged, adjusted and re-rigged by powerful, unaccountable entities. Some of these entities, like the World Bank, are instruments of specific states with specific agendas and are structured to serve those states primarily. Others like Standard and Poors and major bond-rating firms exist wholly in the private sector and are based on parasitic relationships with states.

Consequently, we understand that when a state borrows money through schemes that make it vulnerable to the forces of international finance, it grants power over it to hostile or parasitic forces. Contrary to the views of many of the putative left, we in the BC Ecosocialists believe that organizations like Standard and Poors are not simply dispassionate, profit-seeking actors but groups of people comprising the investor class who collude to achieve financial, social and, most importantly, ideological objectives.

For this reason, the BC Ecosocialists will

- finance all program and operating spending by government using taxes on the income of the province's residents and rent from renewable resources
- finance all capital and infrastructure spending by government using taxes on the capital of the province's residents and rent from non-renewable resources
- not enter into any financial arrangement that increases the province's vulnerability to international bond-raters and financiers

Beginning in 1975, a succession of provincial governments has seized public assets owned by BC residents and sold or given them away to private interests. It is our priority to recover those assets using a variety of strategies depending on how the asset was alienated. In office, the BC Ecosocialists will:

- pass legislation to void the sale of all public assets whose sale was associated with a crime, e.g. BC Rail
- expropriate with compensation, based on purchase price, not present value, public corporations inappropriately but not criminally sold, e.g. BC Ferries
- expropriate with compensation, based on purchase price, not present value, public land sold to private interests
- pursue not only expanded criminal charges and renewed criminal investigation but also filing in civil court to recover costs from individuals and corporations involved in illicit and unethical asset sales, e.g. Rich Coleman

Much land in British Columbia remains in the category of "alienated crown land" on which forestry and mining companies are permitted to operate as owners without having purchased the land. Upon taking office, the BC Ecosocialists will

- void all public land alienation contracts in the form of licenses, leases and claims

BC Ecosocialists agree with the emerging global consensus that billionaires are a thing that should not exist. For the super-rich, taxes on income mean virtually nothing because individuals and lineages monopolize a larger and larger portion of the world's wealth. This wealth is often inaccessible through income taxes and can only be accessed through taxes on capital, inheritance and wealth. In government, we would

- abolish billionaires on the first day of our mandate by seizing all wealth exceeding \$999,999,999.99 from any person living or doing business in our province
- institute rates of marginal inheritance taxation from 0% at amounts under \$50,000 to 100% at amounts exceeding \$10 million

- create a special, well-resourced tax investigation and enforcement unit comprising experts in enforcement, mathematics, economics and the law with a specific focus on collecting taxes from the super-rich
- levy an annual capital tax not just on earnings from capital gains but on capital itself that is invested in securities or other instruments by BC residents, irrespective of the location of the securities, again at marginal rates beginning at 0% for \$100,000 to 50% at \$10 million

This tax plan will produce a massive windfall in its first year. All of that money will be invested in a Green New Deal for BC.

Early Childhood, Primary, Secondary and Postsecondary Education Ending User Fees, Making Education Free at Every Level and Ending Public Funding of Private Schools

The BC Ecosocialists believe that education is a right, not a privilege, and should be available to British Columbians of all ages. We believe that it is a public good to which the principle of universality applies, and which is appropriately delivered by the public sector, to and for the residents of the province. We also recognize teachers and other education workers as the government's *partners* in educating our children and youth and recognize that their working conditions and our kids' learning conditions are the same thing. In the past two decades, education has fallen from roughly one-in-five dollars of government spending to one-in-ten. This is unacceptable.

For younger children, the BC Ecosocialists favour the following policy reforms

- phasing-out the practice of delivering pre-school education through third parties such as private corporations and non-profit societies and, instead, creating a true public daycare system
 - This involves the acquisition of existing pre-school programs through buyouts and other measures
 - This mainly involves creating new pre-school programs with public money
- applying a \$10/day childcare fee cap to all daycare spaces in the province, including those not yet socialized; and
 - working towards a zero-fee system for early childhood education programs
- ending preferential treatment of already-employed parents in the provision of childcare spaces
- expanding and standardizing early childhood education programs at BC's three polytechnic universities to provide a direct pipeline to employment in this sector
- ending all pre-school and elementary school activity, stationery, meal plan and other fees for students and returning to supplying students with necessary paper and other supplies at school for in-school and in-home use
- expanding and standardizing special educational assistant (SEA) programs at BC's three polytechnic universities to provide a direct pipeline to employment in this sector
- initiating an SEA-student partnership program to ensure that SEAs assist a student or cohort of students and move with them through the school system as long as they are needed, rather than forcing disabled students to establish a new rapport with a new SEA every year
- establishing SEA policies and negotiating collective agreements based on treating SEA ratios in the same way class sizes are treated in public policy and bargaining
- ending all government funding of the independent school system

- tying all provincial government funding for school construction to the creation of community schools which integrate municipal and regional community centres, libraries, and seniors' facilities with school campuses, to be more cost-efficient and to reduce the age- and income-segregation of our communities
- joint funding and co-employment of school counselors and other support workers by local school boards, the provincial education ministry, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development, in recognition of the fact that school supports can reduce the need for in-home interventions

We recognize that school curricula are political and we, as a government, will intervene to remove pro-capitalist, pro-liberal, pro-colonialism and pro-patriarchy elements from our curricula beginning at the elementary school level. This means:

- ensuring that school curricula do not merely address bullying at the level of behaviour but with respect to the content of our teaching across all classes from physical education to social studies so that we prioritize the elimination of racism, homophobia, trans-antagonism, ableism and other forms of discrimination ahead of the burnishing of our national mythology
- auditing the rates at which children and youth suffer addiction, mental health problems and homelessness at the school district level and addressing the educational and community failures by schools by providing in-school resources such as additional counseling, child care, meals and after-hours programming

For secondary school children and youth, The BC Ecosocialists favour

- expanded opportunities for home and correspondence schooling for students uncomfortable in school environments
- ending all activity, stationery, meal plan and other fees that schools currently charge and, instead, providing students with sufficient stationery and other on- and off-campus resources necessary to complete their work, including laptop computer loans for low-income students
- free BC bus passes (see transportation policy) for all students to permit them to participate in extra-curricular activities at any place or time
- requiring that any youth sports team using school property either as a rental or part of a school program be zero-barrier and provide participants with equipment and uniforms at no cost to them
- prohibiting school boards from running fee-paying schools for non-BC students either within or outside BC as revenue-generating measures
- tying all provincial government funding for school construction to the creation of community schools which integrate municipal and regional community centres, libraries, and seniors' facilities with school campuses, to be more cost-efficient and to reduce the age- and income-segregation of our communities

For post-secondary students, the BC Ecosocialists favour

- prohibiting profit-driven international student recruitment programs by BC universities and colleges, especially those that involve commission sales
- phasing out tuition fees for all postsecondary programs, including graduate programs
- reducing the proportion of spaces reserved for international students who have been recruited to make up funding shortfalls
- increasing per-student investment in postsecondary education to Cold War-era levels
- changing the formula for grants to universities to set aside a larger proportion of provincial funding to renew the humanities, social sciences and pure sciences and reduce investment in professional programs like Hotel Management

- focusing funding for professional non-graduate programs on colleges and polytechnic universities
- ending the practice of granting university charters to private corporations in BC and offering existing private universities the opportunity of either entering the public system or relocating their campus outside the jurisdiction

At all levels, BC Ecosocialists recognize that education is about endowing students with critical thinking skills to help make them engaged citizens in a wider world and not, primarily, for the purpose of job-training. This means:

- convening an Apprenticeship Dereliction Commission to investigate industries that have off-loaded their employee training expenses onto the state and individuals, and to recommend strategies for increasing employer contributions and sponsorship of employee training to levels seen in the building trades sector in the past
- modifying current curricula, especially of university degrees and college certificates outside the social sciences, to ensure basic critical thinking skills are taught and tested

Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Protecting Food Security, Protecting Workers

British Columbia's food security and biodiversity are both being compromised by related forces. Climate change, ocean acidification, ocean hypoxia caused by carbon emissions are interacting with acidifying and hypoxic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers, which are, in turn, interacting with deforestation, desertification, clearcutting and land clearance to make our food supply increasingly insecure and increasingly unsustainable. A radical course correction is necessary not only to protect our food security but to protect biodiversity and arrest the rapid die-off of bees, other insects and insect-dependent species, along with bears, seals, whales and other fish-dependent species/ as well as food animals on our farms and in the wild.

Our food security situation must be approached as an ecological and security emergency. This begins with the following changes to the management of BC land:

- restoration of the BC Agricultural Land Reserve to its original boundaries
- restoration of the BC Agricultural Land Commission to its original powers
- immediate cessation of conversion of any ALR land to non-agricultural use except in the instance that this land is forming part of a land conservancy designed to preserve habitat and biodiversity
- implementing a Mexican-style amendment to BC's Constitution Act to prohibit land ownership by non-residents and corporations owned outside of BC
- compensated expropriation of ALR lands that have been converted to other uses based on the value of the land under its original agricultural zoning
- a ban on clearcut logging not only on crown forest land but on all private land in BC
- placement of the DeltaPort agricultural lease lands as part of a new BC agricultural land trust administered by the BC government, offering stable, long-term leases for DeltaPort lands and the addition of other public agricultural land to this trust, including the newly expropriated former ALR land
- compensated expropriation of all crown forest land privatized since 2001, based on the original value paid, indexed to inflation, except in instances of criminal corruption and wrongdoing, in which cases expropriation will not only be uncompensated but will seek additional damages

Our tax regime should also reflect these priorities through:

- re-socialization of the land title and property assessment offices based on the principles for expropriation outlined in the Public Finance policy
- creation of a biodiversity tax credit against property taxes, granting substantial tax reductions for private landowners that allocate all or a portion of their property for the purposes of habitat preservation or the rescue and rehabilitation of BC native species

BC agriculture and aquaculture need to change quickly and dramatically to both survive an increasingly unstable environment and to reduce their contributions to this instability. This means

- banning open-net fish farming and giving firms one year to move to closed containment or cease operation
- banning chemical pesticides and herbicides currently prohibited by recognized organic certification bodies and placing new restrictions on permitted fertilizers to ensure not only organic growing but also farmworker safety, except in the event of public health emergencies
- creating a government-sponsored organic certification body built on the existing growers' certification bodies governed by an appointed board of organic growers, scientists and food security activists
- banning the use of the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) designation for BC farm workers; workers on BC farms must either be domestic workers or come on work visas that "count" towards citizenship and include the rights and benefits enjoyed by domestic workers, including minimum wage and collective bargaining rights
- removing "piecework" exemptions to minimum wage legislation for farm workers
- creating an Organic BC marketing board to provide growers with increased price stability for their products, including special programs for permaculturalists and other small producers, hyper-local producers and diverse crop producers
- banning intensive i.e. factory farming of animals in BC, in other words, mandating compliance with the BCSPCA standards already developed, and establishing a provincially-appointed board to maintain and update these standards, similar to the provincial organic certification board, above
- encouraging sustainability and food security in cities by promoting urban agriculture through a revamped municipal zoning categories, waiving small business license requirements for agricultural retail in urban areas, food production tax deductions similar to rural habitat preservation deductions and a prohibition on municipal efforts to ban food plants on residential property`

We also need to take a new approach to the conservation of wild fish stocks. Due to rapidly warming waters, increasingly hypoxic waters, increasingly toxins and runoff, it is unreasonable for a fishery of any kind to continue in the Salish Sea. The few remaining fish in the sea must be set aside for seals, whales and other wild species, many of which are also threatened or endangered. This means

- ending the Salish Sea fishery and the fishery on the interior waterways terminating there, based on the argument that the Salish Sea's rate of water exchange with outside bodies makes it a de facto inland body of water
- working in partnership with First Nations on inland fisheries and North and West coastal fishers to ensure careful monitoring of wild stocks and a triaging of fishery access, granting lowest priority to recreational fishing, next to domestic commercial fishing and, at highest priority, the Indigenous fisheries

- an annual 1% increase in the Nechako River flow and a commensurate reduction in the Kemano River diversion based on mandatory efficiency improvements or production reductions with
 - A similar program for other anthropogenic river systems with a view to replacing macro hydro with micro-hydro, geothermal and solar as BC's preferred electrical generation processes
- a moratorium on key species' fisheries pending annual reassessment, including herring
- a moratorium on the calcifying shellfish fishery on scallops and other species threatened by rising levels of oceanic carbonic acid

We also have to stop organizing certain resources and land uses hierarchically, as well as treating jobs hierarchically. It is unacceptable to "save logging jobs" if that means killing fishing, trapping and tourism jobs. That does not save jobs. It just tells us whose jobs matter more. Similarly, we cannot save our wild fish stocks when irrigation needs are prioritized before the needs of our streams and the creatures that depend on them; and we cannot save endangered species like caribou when our forest practices push them towards extinction. For this reason, we need

- a provincial Ecosystem Use Secretariat whose job it is to adjudicate competing needs for water, forests and other natural systems and ensure that short-term jobs are not exchanged either for biodiversity or longer-term jobs

There currently exists a mix of privately- and publicly-owned storefront marijuana and alcohol vendors in BC, supplemented by mail order businesses run by vineyards and mail order marijuana distribution firms. These systems are incoherent and *ad hoc* and need to be replaced with a single coherent system. To fix this, the BC Ecosocialists will:

- apply a BC government fair wage policy to all storefront distributors, as they are effectively being contracted to provide a government service, ending minimum wage exploitation in sectors where the state defends a monopoly
- create a single Legal Intoxicants Distribution board managing the wholesaling of all alcohol and marijuana in BC
 - using the wholesaling system, through a system of fees and subsidies, to ensure that BC-produced products enter stores less expensively than comparable products produced outside BC
 - using the wholesaling system, through a system of fees and subsidies, to ensure that the products of organic, local, small-scale, cooperative and other modes of production which are more environmentally and socially sound, enter stores less expensively than comparable products produced using practices with less social license
 - refraining from purchasing the products of criminal, environmentally or socially corrosive businesses such as
 - marijuana production conglomerates led by former law enforcement officers who enforced drugs laws in a conflict of interest during decriminalization
 - alcohol production companies that have participated in union-busting activities such as bad faith lockouts

Justice and Office of the Attorney-General

One of the great fictions of liberalism is that the law should not be political. It is always political.

Today, in British Columbia, we operate by the fiction of equality before the law but nothing could be further from the truth. Beginning in 1993, a succession of provincial governments have cut legal aid funding to a fraction of what it was during the Cold War and only a minute fraction of this has been restored. Worse yet, the pretended neutrality of our Attorney-General is highly ideological; that is why we use public funds to assist polluters in securing court injunctions and prosecuting protesters. It is also a political decision that we choose to engage in public prosecutions against some kinds of criminals and not others, that we choose, again and again, not to prosecute major polluters but go after petty crime with vigour. Sometimes we justify our decisions not to prosecute sexual violence and violence against women because of abysmally low conviction rates, even as this same “conviction rates” theory causes us to target racialized people and those with a history of conflict with the law.

The BC Ecosocialists have a different approach. We recognize that all prosecutorial decisions are political and that pretended neutrality is simply code for siding against marginalized people and activists and in support of society’s biggest, most powerful abusers, wealthy people who can pay to avoid the law.

Our new approach to running the Attorney-General’s ministry will be to focus prosecutorial resources based on the magnitude of the social problem the prosecution will address rather than the chances of conviction

- increase resources spent fighting white collar crime, including pollution and attacks on worker safety and wages
- restore funding for legal aid to Cold War levels and permit compensation of lawyers providing these services to levels commensurate with private sector compensation
- move away from a fee-for-service model for legal aid by restructuring the Legal Services Society to employ most of its attorneys as full-time salaried workers rather than fee-for-service contractors
- conduct regular audits of prosecutorial decisions to ensure that the BC government is not targeting racialized groups for disproportionate prosecution
- establish a Transition Protection Program to sponsor spaces in existing transition houses and build additional transition houses to treat persons fleeing domestic violence like protected witnesses fleeing organized crime
- cease funding and conducting contempt of court prosecutions for private corporations in conflict with citizens’ groups
- appoint a special prosecutor to review all contracting-out and privatization deals made by the BC government since 1993, and conduct additional prosecutions for suspected cases of corruption
- appoint a legal team to recover public assets lost as a result of criminal activity, beginning with the BC Rail deal
- lawsuits against opiate manufacturers for opiate injuries and deaths in BC
- lawsuits against oil and coal companies for climate change
- de-fund and end all drug possession prosecutions for all drugs immediately
- establish a Trafficked Worker Taskforce operating at the provincial level investigating and prosecuting violations of the visas used by marginalized people, i.e. domestic worker, temporary “foreign” worker and employment visas for sex work

The Attorney-General is also responsible for ICBC, BC’s auto insurance monopoly. Our approach to this body would be to

- establish differential insurance rates for vehicles based not just on risk but on energy and emissions footprint
 - we would calculate energy footprint over the vehicle's lifetime, recognizing that half of vehicular emissions are associated with manufacture not use, applying lower rates to electric vehicles and to older vehicles
- encourage *actual* ride sharing by facilitating shared vehicles having multiple registered drivers to encourage car owners to share vehicles among persons and households
- resume ICBC's former participation in co-funding road improvements that pay for themselves with net safety improvements
- reopen ICBC vehicle repair centres and end contracting out and private sector price gouging for collision repairs
 - we would include a subsidized vehicular retrofit program to make emission-reducing changes to vehicles already in for post-collision repairs
- return to the ICBC practice of discouraging litigation by pegging initial offers of compensation to the formula of (probable court award – contingency fee) × 110% to re-establish trust with British Columbians in ICBC as a non-adversarial honest broker
- reduce ICBC management staffing levels to Cold War levels; reduce ICBC adjuster caseloads to Cold War levels; increase ICBC adjusting staff to Cold War levels

We often prosecute criminal acts against persons based on an assessment of likelihood of conviction. This leads to unacceptably low rates of prosecutions gender-based and sexual violence among other offenses. An Ecosocialist government would prosecute based on the social urgency of demonstrating that a crime cannot be committed without consequences; practically, this means

- more prosecutions of crimes of gender-based violence
- conducting public education beginning in elementary school to reduce the “perfect victim” stereotype that prevents crime victims from coming forward
- a guarantee that, unlike present times, every rape kit be fully analyzed, irrespective of prosecution in order to better track habitual offenders

Transportation and Highways

Forcing everyone to buy a Tesla is not enough. We need to socialize our transportation system.

We understand that our goal must be a zero-emission transportation sector for BC. This cannot simply be achieved by switching everyone to electric vehicles. Electric vehicles are manufactured using coal and are far too energy inefficient per person-kilometre of transportation to be feasible. Only through pedestrian community redesign and universal, affordable, accessible mass transit can we wean our province off fossil fuels in time.

A BC Ecosocialist approach to transportation is one that understands that citizen mobility rights must be defended even as we work to reduce our carbon emissions by 95%. This means

- ending the GVTA agreement that created Translink and ending the separate administration of Greater Vancouver's transit system from the rest of the province,
- transforming BC Transit into a major provincial agency with two distinct areas of responsibility
 - maintenance and enhancement of local transit systems in cooperation with regional and municipal governments

- creation of a provincial interurban ground transportation system with a unified fare and schedule system from Dease Lake to Cranbook, from Sooke to Fort Nelson
- a program to phase out mass transit fares with funding coming from general provincial revenue
- the re-acquisition of BC Ferries as a full crown corporation either through the anti-corruption civil suits or through compensated expropriation
- earmarked funding for all local transportation systems to maintain on-call, after hours request stop service from major bus loops to ensure safe transportation home at any hour for persons at risk of violence or harassment
- the re-acquisition of BC Rail through civil litigation
- the systematic purchase and restoration of defunct rail lines and their remnants such as the E&N, Kettle Valley and other rail systems, including those currently in use as cycling routes, through a re-invigorated BC Rail crown corporation
- the systematic compensated expropriation of all private rail lines in BC, including the Canadian portions of American lines such as Burlington Northern Santa Fé, and their incorporation into a new BC Rail
- a new BC rail that would make its lines available to both BC Transit divisions for local and interurban passenger rail
 - as an alternative to high-speed rail, which impacts wildlife migration and requires extensive upgrading and double-tracking, the BC Ecosocialists would initiate a “Slow Rail Program” for business travel, featuring stable wifi, sleeper compartments, mini-offices and meeting rooms on long inter-urban runs so that travelers could continue working and meeting while in transit
- ensuring that our proposed BC Transit-Interurban bus and train fleet makes daily stops not merely near but on reserves, a reform necessary both for equality of service provision and public safety
- a prohibition of the trans-shipment of thermal coal and diluted bitumen within BC, i.e. a prohibition on dilbit or coal leaving BC for another jurisdiction
- the cancellation of the Clean BC targets for electric vehicle purchases to prevent major coal emissions in the Global South
- a cap on the total size of the provincial highway system with gradual reductions in the number of square kilometres of pavement as mass transportation alternatives come on line
- the adoption of “do not repair” policies on paved roads in the province’s three main metropolitan areas so as to produce similar effects to mobility pricing but in ways that do not discriminate based on wealth
- a crackdown on illicit commercial “ridesharing” and a ban on Uber, Lyft and other parasitic anti-worker attacks on commercial vehicles

Forestry

No more clearcutting. No more raw log exports. Forests not tree farms.

The single most effective technology for removing carbon from the atmosphere is forests. The single most effective measure in producing cooler micro-climates that better resist climate change is forests. Since 1843, logging has been a major industry in BC and, often, during that time, *the major industry*. And yet today, we find ourselves with a set of interlocking forestry crises in our province:

- a) a steady forty-year decline in forest sector employment due to automation and declining yields
- b) caribou and other animal populations at the brink of extinction due to the loss of forest habitat through over-cutting, insufficient protected areas, improper reforestation and fire
- c) a continuing decline in the number of viable spawning streams due to failures to protect riparian areas
- d) the export of un- and minimally-processed timber due to the systematic dismantling of appurtenance legislation over the past forty years
- e) increasingly harmful beetle and parasitic infestations as climate change brings the mountain pine beetle and other pests further north and west
- f) an increasingly destructive and deadly fire seasons caused by dangerous and ineffective reforestation policies, beetle infestation and climate change
- g) most of our public forest land alienated to private interests and inaccessible to local communities for their use

The BC Ecosocialists understand that we need to rebuild BC forest policy from the ground up. This begins with:

- an immediate end to the alienation of public land in the hands of private corporations and the return of public land to full public ownership and administration
- a comprehensive land reform program similar to those enacted during the twentieth century in the Global South
 - transferring a portion of provincial public forest lands to the use and management of indigenous governments, worker cooperatives, municipal or regional governments or creatures thereof, with priority given to indigenous governments and cooperatives in their unceded territory
 - continued provincial enforcement of a renewed and amplified BC Forest Practices Code
- a new BC Forest Practices Code produced in consultation with rural communities, First Nations and workers
 - prohibiting clearcut logging
 - prohibiting old growth logging
 - prohibiting the use of any product BC Ecosocialists will prohibit for agricultural land use, such as Round-Up
- a new BC reforestation policy
 - ending the practice of limiting “succession stands” of alder, cottonwood, poplar and aspen and instead encouraging the full forest succession cycle to both reduce fire risk and intensity and to replenish lost forest floor nutrients
 - requiring organic reforestation practices designed to reinforce non-anthropogenic types of regrowth including multi-generational forest succession, encouraging undergrowth and other phenomena to cool the forest floor and increase the soil retention capacity of sloped areas; this includes an absolute ban on glyphosate
 - integrating reforestation costs into stumpage fees to prevent companies engaged in logging from dissolving or fleeing the jurisdiction before reforestation costs are covered
 - a cessation of current anti-succession reforestation projects and the afforestation of recently clearcut areas with appropriate deciduous succession trees and appropriate undergrowth
- an end to the practice of selling BC timber at a loss and a requirement that all sales of cutting rights produce revenue exceeding the cost of administering and reforesting the area being cut

- re-establishment of the Forest Land Reserve and the addition of areas currently not forested or part of the working forest that were previously forested regions, such as abandoned industrial and mining areas
- establishment of a “jobs on the land policy” that assesses the job *losses* in the fishing, farming, trapping and tourism sectors before considering logging projects
- re-establishment of appurtenance legislation along the lines of the Tree Farm License system developed by the John Hart government that established quotas for milling and other secondary manufacturing jobs for any government or corporation seeking to log public land
- meaningful endangered species legislation that applies to all public and private land in BC
- a prohibition on clearcutting private land
- creating a Habitat Protection Tax credit for private lands where significant habitat is protected to reduce or eliminate property taxes
- re-creating the BC Forest Renewal Corporation with a new mandate: to reforest those portions of the Forest Land Reserve not currently forested
- ending private reforestation contracts with preferential hiring of private silviculture workers by the BC Forest Renewal Corporation and placing current silviculture under the authority of the Regularization Secretariat

While India, China and other major countries undertake afforestation programs to mitigate the climate emergency, BC remains in the camp of Brazil, the US and our neighbours in Ontario in gutting afforestation programs and supporting deforestation. An Ecosocialist BC government will enact a system of incentives and penalties to reforest BC landscapes outside monetized forest ecosystems, including:

- a per-square metre lawn property surtax on businesses (e.g. golf courses) and homes that maintain monocrop lawns where trees or complex ecosystems could otherwise stand
- a per-square metre reduction in municipal grants for municipalities and regional districts choosing to maintain lawns on public land that could sustain trees or complex ecosystems with an exemption for zero-barrier facilities for sports such as soccer
- mandating that all municipalities require either green roofs, solar panels, or other appropriate technology to reduce energy use and emissions for all new construction
- a provincial tree-planting program for BC lands outside the working forest/ such as provincial highways, BC Housing residential stock, government office complexes, etc.
- provision of free provincial tree planting services for property owners wishing to reforest but experiencing demonstrable financial hardship (and the deduction of these costs from subsequent property tax credits)

Social Services, Child and Family Protection

Foster care is the new Residential School system. Poverty should never be a reason to apprehend a child from its family. Raise the rates to a livable social floor.

Since the establishment of the Canadian residential school system in 1876, the main purpose of our putative social service and child protection system has been to abduct the children of poor and racialized people and place them in the hands of either the state or wealthier, whiter people. This remains the basis of our foster care and child apprehension systems and is the reason that more indigenous children are currently in care, having been seized by the state, than at any point during the century-long history of the residential school system.

Before the embrace of the global austerity and Third Way movements by the BC government in 1993, our provincial welfare system was designed to meet the basic needs of people experiencing long-term unemployment, to keep them fed and housed and equipped with the resources needed to apply for work. And by providing a basic social floor, it also prevented illicit, off-the-books jobs from attracting desperate people despite paying sub-minimum poverty wages. But in the 1990s, BC slashed welfare payments and restricted eligibility so as to ensure that every person on welfare needed some supplementary source of income to avoid homelessness or starvation, so that everyone in BC's welfare system was criminalized by the end of the century because they accepted loans, accepted gifts, collected bottles, picked up casual work, did survival sex work, etc. without giving 75% of their earnings back to the BC government to a maximum of \$200.

While our provincial welfare and child protection systems claim, on the surface, to exist for the purpose of supporting low-income parents and keeping unemployed people fed and housed, their actual function is to do the opposite: apprehend kids, increase homelessness and drive people into conflict with the law. While many good social workers toil, often outside of work hours, and provide their own funds and resources to support their clients, the reality is that our welfare and child protection systems are broken and require a complete overhaul.

A BC Ecosocialist government will:

- base all social and mental health services on the “housing first” principle whereby housing is understood to be a right, and those requiring government support receive, first and foremost, housing appropriate to their needs, free of charge, paid for by the state
 - we will end the “shelter allowance” structure whereby marginalized people are tasked with finding their own housing in the free market on a budget totally inadequate to obtain it
 - we will apply this principle both to those needing supported housing and to those simply requiring housing
- establish a “Foster Parity” policy; currently once children are apprehended, the government pays the foster parent 300-400% more to look after the apprehended child than what they were giving the parent pre-apprehension; we would equalize these rates and pay birth and adoptive parents the same as foster parents
- create an alternative path for “supported housing/parenting” protection orders that move additional personnel into existing domestic spaces rather than moving the parent and child into an institutional supported housing space
- end the absurd conflict of interest rules that prevent family members from being remunerated for the care of disabled relatives in provincial government trusts
 - creating no new disability trusts and phasing-in direct care provision based on need, rather than contracting-out based on familial wealth
- support the current “delegated authority” system for First Nations and work to continue expanding the program to additional First Nations
- expand the current delegated authority system to include a cooperative opt-in system for indigenous people who prefer to be served by a different delegated authority to whom they are not tied through the Indian Act
- until sufficient government and cooperative housing exists, represent unemployed people seeking housing directly, obtaining housing and paying deposits and rent directly rather than through the unemployed person

- this includes legislation prohibiting private housing providers from refusing or charging differential rates to people seeking housing
- this includes seeking housing based on the material needs of unemployed people, their spouses and dependents, and not on an arbitrary fee structure
- employing specialized “housing officers” whose work is to lease sufficient space for unemployed people from private housing providers until such time as sufficient government and cooperative housing makes this obsolete
- pay a single lump sum fortnightly to people on social assistance with no earmarked prohibited or mandatory uses to cover non-housing expenditures
 - reinstitute the crisis and hardship grant system, granting social workers full authority to provide additional funds to unemployed people to cover large capital costs like new footwear, back-to-school clothes, etc.
- provide all unemployed people with a provincial transit pass covering all local and interurban government mass transit
- raise welfare and disability rates to 75% of forty-hour weekly employment at minimum wage
- an end to contracting out of seniors’ supported and assisted living facilities and the development on a public provincially-owned system of care homes in all regions
- recognize seniors’ assisted living as a universal and necessary program like childcare and provide assisted living for all seniors requiring it without a waiting list
- a housing first guarantee that will end seniors’ rent payments within two years, through the pursuit of provincial agreements with OAS, CPP and private pension funds to directly fund provincial housing with no more than 25% of monthly payments to seniors, the difference to be paid by the province
- a guarantee that no senior must leave the community in which they have historical and familial relationships in order to obtain assisted and supported housing through the provision of direct state-funded in-home care in small communities and a program of a universal provincial seniors housing program in larger communities
- increase the number of care hours in existing seniors’ residential facilities to those reflecting best practices established by elder care professionals and not arbitrarily set either by private providers, non-profit QuANGOs or local provincial government authorities
- reverse current onus on conjugal and family visit, which currently requires that romantic partners’ and relatives’ visits and extended visits demonstrate worthiness before approval, instead requiring that care workers demonstrate visitation is dangerous before being able to disallow it
- impose a \$10/day cap on seniors’ assisted living facilities in BC
 - fund the acquisition by government of assisted living facilities whose owners choose to quit the province as a result of the fee cap
- whenever possible, site new seniors’ living facilities in or adjacent to hospital campuses
- end the current policy of caring for disabled adults through government trusts and return to the direct provision of services so as to
 - maintain a basic standard of care for people with disabilities
 - maintain a basic standard of wages and working conditions for care providers
- enshrine the tort law principle of “in-home where possible” for disabled people and seniors requiring care even if their disability is not the result of another person’s negligence so as to
- ensure that disabled people and elders are cared-for in familiar surroundings with access to family and friends whenever feasible

- end to disparity between the standard of care enjoyed by people with disabilities receiving structured settlements from the courts as a result of a finding of fault in a civil action and those equally disabled but disabled by some agency other than the actionable fault of another person
- wherever possible, site residential facilities for seniors in walkable distance from community schools
- create an equivalent office for elders to the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth to report directly to the legislature and not to government
- implement provincial legislation guaranteeing people with disabilities the same rights as US citizens enjoy under the Americans with Disabilities Act (2009)

We often misunderstand what poverty is. Corporate media will often belittle homeless people charging smart phones or having pets, unemployed people making art or volunteering, social assistance recipients buying streaming TV subscriptions. We in the BC Ecosocialists define poverty differently: **to be poor is to lack the resources needed to participate in the mainstream of your society.** And our job, as a party, is not just to reduce poverty but eliminate it. That's why we favour:

- restoring free broadcast guarantees for media companies wishing to operate in our province that existed before the 1980s so that basic news and entertainment services have a basic service level accessible to all people
- providing free broadband internet in every community and eliminating data fees for everyone, rich and poor
- ending the PST exemption given to Royal Dutch Shell and Big Oil and instead eliminating sales taxes on clothing and shoes

Equity for Racialized Peoples and Newcomers

Fighting racism means fighting racist employment policies, like the Temporary Foreign Worker designation.

The BC Ecosocialists recognize that current efforts to safeguard human rights, educational and economic opportunities and distinctive cultural practices of non-indigenous racialized peoples in BC are administered by a hodgepodge of ministries and departments that are often out of sync with one another. For this reason we propose creating a Ministry of Equity for Racialized Peoples to function in a similar way to the Ministry of Women's and Gender Equality, delivering some programs directly but also functioning as a watchdog of other ministries in their engagement with racialized peoples. As with gender and class, we understand race to be inherently oppressive and arising from the interaction between dynamics of oppression, colonialism and bodily difference. No person naturally has a race and our ultimate goal is to eliminate race from our society.

Like the rest of Canada, BC remains a place where racialized people face significant challenges in employment, political representation and relations with the law. This is not just because of intergenerational trauma and abuse but because acts of dispossession, whether of black workers in Hogan's Alley or Sinixt hunters in the Slocan, mean less heritable wealth and property, causing generations of relative housing insecurity and poverty, on top of the epigenetic damage of intergenerational trauma.

We bring to this an understanding that, for all its post-1967 rhetoric of multiculturalism, Canada was founded as a white settler state two centuries ago by Lord Durham in 1840. Undergirding our country's civic nationalism is the white nationalism on which it was founded, a

nationalism that still unconsciously and historically conditions many of our actions and decisions today. We also must recognize that neither BC nor Canada are siloed places; the rising tide of racial nationalism in the world's biggest democracies, India and the US, is affecting all countries, especially states with close relationships and shared histories like Canada.

We in the BC Ecosocialists, understand that we are part of a global struggle against racism and fascism every day in BC. Our priorities to achieve greater racial equality include:

- the establishment and maintenance of affirmative action targets for the employment of racialized people in all areas of direct and contracted government work
- specific attention in our public inquiry into real estate, gambling and organized crime into corruption in immigrant settlement systems that funnel people into peonage, low wage work and cover for illicit money transfers; this means
 - investigating current MP offices and their handling of immigration files
 - investigating agricultural and building trades enterprises closely linked to immigrant settlement to ensure compliance with employment standards and other laws to ensure voluntary employment with no inappropriate deductions
 - investigating real estate, notarial businesses and law firms whose work is primarily focused on real estate settlement work
- regular audits of the arrest and detention practices used by BC police forces to ensure that racial bias and de facto carding practices are consistently identified and stopped
- using the constitutional provisions utilized by Québec to negotiate with the federal government to prohibit the issuance of Temporary Foreign Worker visas in BC; if BC companies wish to solve their labour shortage problems by employing racialized people from the Global South, they will have to
 - permit them to live away from the job site and have regular contact with other people residing in BC
 - pay them the same or better wages and provide the same or better working conditions to those provided Canadian citizens residing in BC
 - provide them with a path to citizenship currently enjoyed by professional workers and students
- using the same constitutional provisions, prohibit the issuance of special Afro-Caribbean and Filipino domestic worker visas; if wealthy BC residents insisting on using private, rather than government childcare services by importing racialized people from the Global South, they will have to
 - permit them to live away from the job site and have regular contact with other people residing in BC
 - pay them the same or better wages and provide the same or better working conditions to those provided Canadian citizens residing in BC
 - provide them with a path to citizenship currently enjoyed by professional workers and students
 - house any minor children of the worker and facilitate their education at BC schools
- ensuring that the Trafficked Worker Taskforce (see A-G section) be conversant in the languages in which racialized trafficked workers are employed and that, especially in highly racialized areas of trafficking, i.e. sex, domestic and/or agricultural work, investigation and enforcement strategies are culturally-informed

Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Equity

The truth is that BC is still colonizing Indigenous land and people. Stopping it means giving First Nations the power to stop development, and to stop the apprehension of children.

In 1974, in his correspondence with the AFN's George Manuel, the Tanzanian high commissioner to Canada coined the term the "Fourth World," referring to colonized peoples globally who were cut out of the promise of decolonization with the breakup of the old European empires. The BC Ecosocialists understand that, like the Sami of Sweden, the Yakuts of Siberia, the San of Botswana, the Masai of Kenya, the Santals of India, etc. BC's First Nations are part of a global population of people who remain colonized in the modern world. They bear the brunt of the neoliberal agenda of dispossession, privatization and commodification; they bear the brunt of rising nationalist movements through escalating racist violence and political demonization; and they are the most impacted by climate change, pollution and out-of-control development, which leaves their lands destroyed, their waters befouled and their traditional practices and relationships to the natural world annihilated. We share the Fourth World movement's goal of ending colonialism as a practice globally and fighting for a truly postcolonial world.

The term "reconciliation" has already been made a mockery by the Horgan and Trudeau governments, revealing it to be an empty term. This has been combined with a project of hollow public apologies and crocodile tears for past wrongs. The deployment of "reconciliation," apologies and expressions of regret has not merely been useless or purposeless. It has provided cover for a new wave of legal and material assaults against Indigenous people. By saying "our ancestors were black-hatted racist villains but we are decent, caring people," we have enabled a false distinction to be drawn between the seizure of indigenous lands in the past for agriculture and forestry and the seizure of indigenous lands in the present for petroleum, pipelines and hydroelectric development. By using this rhetorical sleight of hand, we have drawn a false distinction between our abduction of indigenous children by residential schools and their present-day abduction by the child protection and foster care systems.

In 2014, the BC Supreme Court found that we are *still* in the process of conquering and colonizing BC, that the conquest is not yet completed. The BC Ecosocialists will not be putting energy into tearful apologies. We will be taking responsibility by arresting and beginning to reverse colonization *now*. This means

- an immediate audit of indigenous children in care and, with the child's consent, their restoration of their custody to relatives; this includes
 - if, as they usually are, children were apprehended because of poverty, lack of housing or the social and psychological effects of these phenomena, provision of sufficient income and housing supports at government expense
 - if, as it sometimes the case, children were apprehended because of the intergenerational psychological effects of colonialism on parents and other caregivers, provision of supervised and supported housing for caregivers to mitigate or eliminate these effects
- an immediate end to games of jurisdictional football and buck-passing and the immediate initiation of a housing, road, sidewalk, electrification and water/sewage infrastructure building program for BC reserves lacking basic infrastructure through the BC government; this includes:
 - subsequent cost recovery efforts directed primarily at the federal government based on constitutional and treaty obligations
 - preferential hiring of reserve residents for this work

- regular checking on and assistance in maintenance of systems in remote areas
- an end to differential welfare payments whereby post-1993 welfare cheques have been reduced for reserve residents
- a BC Land Reform program operating on a parallel track with judicial land claims processes whereby public land previously alienated to private companies is transferred to reserve governments or indigenous cooperative businesses based on a need-based rather than compensation-based case for using rural land; this includes
 - trapping, fishing, hunting, tourism, logging and other land-based activities for the purpose of addressing rural poverty
 - appurtenance measures to ensure local secondary employment in material processing, management and administration, promotion and advertising, etc. associated with the primary industries conducted on the additional land
 - inclusion of Métis communities in Land Reform, irrespective of their legal standing with respect to land claims
- decentralizing the BC corrections system so that indigenous offenders serving sentences of less than five years can serve them in their community;
 - in the case of fully custodial sentences, this will involve the construction of some small rural correctional facilities that will offer preferential hiring to local indigenous people both in construction and in subsequent staffing
- good faith negotiations and court representation in land claims processes with the goal of accelerating the treaty-making process on unceded land
- respect for the authority of both traditional and band council governments over unceded territory
- a procedural definition of the meaning of court-mandated “prior consultation” on unceded territory that includes any recognized indigenous government being able to impose a five-year moratorium on development as an incentive to proceed expeditiously and fairly with consultation
- an Indigenous Safety Audit, in which extensive consultation takes place with Indigenous people both on and off-reserve, with a particular focus on indigenous women to identify points of systems failure that impinge on the physical safety of people

Gender Equality

Patriarchy and gender discrimination are the foundation of capitalism, the original class system. They must be destroyed.

We recognize that foundational to the capitalist system is gender-based oppression and the devaluation of their labour of non-men. We also recognize that the needs of cis women (cis and trans), trans people and other individuals rejecting normative gender identities are non-identical and we will seek to ensure that there exists a diversity and equity of services and supports for all groups especially oppressed by the current gender dynamics of our society. Our efforts to achieve gender equality will include

- free menstrual products and contraceptives for BC secondary school students
- eliminating transition housing waiting lists through the expansion of the transition house system
- ending the contracting-out of transition housing in favour of a fully state-run, state-supported system
- need-based provision of transition housing including

- transition housing eligibility for people of all genders (and their children) fleeing violence and abuse
- recognition of the needs and desires of those seeking transition housing in structuring housing options that provide both safety and a feeling of safety, both of which are crucial to successful transitional housing
- provision of transition housing that permits pet owners to keep this important source of stability and support
- the imposition of a Fair Wage policy for all contracted-out government work that does not distinguish between male-dominated (e.g. building trades) and female-dominated professions (e.g. elder care) but provides the same floor wage for all government work
- a restored Legal Aid funding system that recognizes the standing of non-traditional familial parental and caregiver roles in pursuing support and access to minor children of non-traditional family structures that change or dissolve
- a principle of equal access to health care irrespective of gender; this includes a variety of initiatives including a full range, accessible range of services for transgender, non-binary and pregnant people in all areas of the province; this will require improved health authority busing/transportation services as well as increased and more decentralized services

Multiculturalism, Arts and Culture

Swedish psychologist Abraham Maslow was dead wrong. Art, music and culture are not “extras.” They are fundamental survival needs of all human beings.

The concurrent chronic underfunding and commodification of the arts by successive governments in BC comes from what we term “junk science.” The work of Gilded Age psychologist Abraham Maslow has been interpreted to mean that people have a “hierarchy of needs,” in which they first meet basic material survival needs before they do or should seek out companionship, artistic expression, entertainment, etc. This is nonsense. Starving people need entertainment and companionship more, not less, than those who are fed. Every day in our cities, we see homeless people making art and forming relationships.

Creative expression, companionship and the arts are not luxuries; they are human needs as fundamental as any other. One can travel the world and find homeless people, starving people, people without adequate clothing making art that is not for sale, and composing, playing and singing music together with no financial angle. If anything, material poverty intensifies these basic human needs. This understanding is the foundation of the BC Ecosocialist arts and culture policy; this means:

- separating arts funding from tourism and other commerce-focused departments and uniting it with multiculturalism programs
- major increases in arts funding and the initiation of new government arts programs
- creating a juried Artist Stipend Program for part- and full-time artists who require state support to pursue promising artistic careers that are insufficiently monetized
 - such a program would be characterized by a longer period (a minimum of thirty months) of grant benefits to reduce artist precarity and notice of at least a year of impending loss of funding to permit artists to seek other remuneration or otherwise reconfigure their lives
- creating a Public Arts and Monuments department engaged in regular acquisition of permanent and temporary art objects and installations for government buildings and public spaces

- creating a First Nations College of Art and Design affiliated with the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology and Emily Carr University but independently administered, supported by the BC government with a focus on
 - supporting indigenous artists in BC and
 - formalizing indigenous art credentials as academic credentials to permit more First Nations artists to pursue graduate work in music, theatre and the visual arts outside of BC
- ensuring that the Education Ministry provides programs in theatre, visual arts and music in all schools at all academic levels

We also believe that the arts, like sports, are not the sole domain of professionals and experts. The need to express oneself creatively is not linked to skill or expertise, just as the need to exercise is not linked to skill or natural athleticism. We will therefore offer the same kind of infrastructure supports for community theatre, art and music as we offer for community outdoor recreation and sport.

Mines and Petroleum

The global petroleum industry are not our friends or possible collaborators. They are evil and hell-bent on destroying our planet. It is us or them. No more coal mining, no LNG, no more fossil fuel infrastructure, period.

Of the many important drivers of the global extinction event through which we are living, the single largest and most important is fossil fuels—coal, oil, bitumen and “natural gas.” Since the invention of the steam engine, we have released hundreds of millions of years of stored energy in a matter of decades, transforming our planet’s climate irreversibly, rendering our oceans more acidic and more hypoxic. This has resulted in destabilization of our global climate, resulting in increasingly severe and unpredictable weather events. As a consequence, thousands of species have gone extinct and every year climate change kills hundreds of thousands of people, a figure that will soon enter the millions.

Our carbon emissions have become the greatest crime human beings have ever perpetrated, not just as acts of mass murder against our fellow humans but in permanently destroying cultures, ecosystems and other species. We cannot continue to *literally fuel* this crime. We also oppose the current framework of global climate agreements which seek to protect high-emission countries that industrialized early. We believe every country should have the same per capita emissions caps as every other country. Our goal is a 95% per capita reduction of emissions, a goal to which we will work as quickly as possible.

The only way we can do this is by destroying the fossil fuel industry globally. Our current framework of some emissions being permitted in some places and not in others is a trick, a ruse ginned-up by Big Oil. When BC sends coal or natural gas to China or India to be burned there, we are not somehow no longer responsible for the deaths and extinctions those fuels cause, simply based on which country emissions entered our global atmosphere from. BC Ecosocialists will take responsibility for all emissions both *in BC and from BC*. Our 95% reduction goal applies to both. That means telling fossil fuel companies they are not welcome here, kicking them out and shutting down their operations. Period.

Some cowardly and dishonest politicians argue that dramatic reductions in employment in the mining sector is an attack on working people. We strongly disagree. A century ago, it was not the dream of any coal miner for his son or daughter to work in a coal mine; it was the dream of miners like Ginger Goodwin and Joe Hill that no person should ever have to enter a coal mine

again, that their children would enjoy healthy, clean, dignified work on the land. That is our dream today.

For the BC Ecosocialists, this means:

- an immediate ban on coal mining, export and trans-shipment
- an immediate ban on fracking
- an immediate ban on diluted bitumen in BC
- the immediate eviction of all BC mining companies with pending charges and un-discharged penalties for environmental and labour crimes
- declaration of the Salish Sea as an inland waterway based on scientific assessment of its rates of water exchange with the Pacific Ocean and the imposition of a tanker ban in the Salish Sea
- a requirement that mining companies operating in BC purchase clean-up bonds/clean-up insurance so that all reclamation, remediation and cleanup work from either accidents or shutdown are funded from the outset, even in the event of corporate bankruptcy
- immediate cessation of Site C
- the establishment of remediation and local power development trusts like the Columbia Basin Trust for all regions in BC impacted by hydroelectric megaprojects
- an immediate cancellation of all LNG tax breaks and of the Woodfibre and Kitimat LNG developments
- an end to “pulp mining” practices whereby mineral claims are used to log commercially useable wood outside of the oversight and stumpage fee system of the Ministry of Forests

Tourism, Lands, Parks and Protected Areas

We need areas protected for people. But even more, we need areas protected *from us*.

For too long, we have conflated the recreation interests and opportunities of human beings with the protection of ecosystems and other species. This has been one of two of the premises of our parks system. The other premise is that if land lacks harvestable timber and extractable minerals, the best way to maximize economic and human activity on it is to declare it to be a park. The result has been an intensification of human activity in sensitive and endangered glacial and alpine regions while focusing industrial activity in regions with the highest-value resources. It has also historically resulted in the disinhabitation of indigenous people’s traditional territory, resulting in an end to controlled burning, sustainable hunting and trapping and other human activities that have helped to maintain diverse, productive ecosystems and habitat with lower fire risks and more stable food supplies for large animals.

Under a BC Ecosocialist government, much of BC’s provincial land base will remain in the Forest Land Reserve but outside of protected areas. This region will be available for land-reform projects by First Nations, Métis communities, and others. Métis and First Nations are not the only rural communities facing poverty, underservicing, unemployment and other challenges because they are cut off from the land base. Many rural BC communities face significant challenges and are de-populating as a result. This disinhabitation is part of an agenda to make our vast and ecologically diverse province a place reserved not for local residents but for the investor class. Our deliberately poor fire suppression system that has eliminated traditional indigenous controlled burning as well as the growth of succession trees like aspen and alder (through intensive toxic herbicide use) which normally suppress fire is part of this agenda of pushing long-term residents and communities out of rural BC.

A BC Ecosocialist approach to public lands involves

- seasonal reinhabitation of key regions as part of our Land Reform program, similar to current fishing and trapping practices in BC's federally-regulated national park-reserves
- creating a division in two types of protected areas: areas protected *for* humans (parks) and areas protected *from* humans (nature reserves), based on expert opinion as to the most effective ways of maintaining biodiversity and viable populations of threatened and endangered species
- major increases in the size of current parks to increase habitat for threatened and endangered species and to protect the remaining old growth forest canopy
- abolition of all user fees for entry and camping in BC parks and an enhanced first come-first serve reservation system to ensure maximum diversity of park access
- transit service for all major BC park entrances as part of the new BC Transit interurban system to ensure that low-income people, youth and non-drivers enjoy equal park access
- increasing the number and quantity of activities and locations in provincial parks accessible to disabled people
- a land reform program for which municipal governments and worker cooperatives can register to use public land in a form of tenure similar to Community Forests but with a less forestry-intensive, more diverse set of land uses, with the same secondary employment and appurtenance provisions as the Land Reform system for First Nations and Métis

For too long, we have used our natural biodiversity and beauty as an excuse for coddling and subsidizing industries that are profoundly environmentally destructive and productive of economic inequality. BC Ecosocialists will end those unhealthy partnerships by

- shutting down BC cruise ship terminals and ending our parasitic relationship with the highest-emission sector of non-airborne transportation until such time as the industry solves its major grey water and carbon emission problems
- ending heli-assisted recreation in BC
- imposing a traffic reduction quota on all BC airports, requiring that they land 5% fewer fossil fuel-powered planes per year every year
- establishing an "oversized recreational vehicle" license surcharge for all non-BC-licensed large RVs entering the province seasonally
- abolishing provincial campground user fees and restoring, increasing amenities and increasing the number of Ministry of Forests campsites on working forest land, including on-site caretaker and interpretive staff to reduce risks of fire and habitat disruption and increase public ecological knowledge

We need to recognize that an unregulated real estate market does not just impinge on people's access to housing but to the spaces needed for arts and cultural activities. For this reason, BC Ecosocialists will

- establish provincial arts facilities stock to ensure the availability of practice, production, exhibition and performance spaces in all regions of BC

Land use is, ultimately, an entitlement of every person in BC. We believe that rights to freedom of association and assembly are under threat throughout the world. The idea that people cannot sleep or assemble on public land is a dangerous idea that stands in sharp contrast to the explicit text of our Charter. BC Ecosocialists will pass legislation to:

- prohibit municipalities from fining people for sleeping or protesting on publicly owned land
- prohibit the eviction of people from land within BC's working forest, whether alienated land held by corporations or part of BC Timber Sales

- prohibit the eviction of people from residential property for which no tenants are currently paying rent

Jobs, Trade and Technology

Corporations and wealthy people don't create jobs. We need a Green New Deal for BC.

The current NDP-Green government's jobs ministry understands its role as attracting predatory transnational corporations to base more of their operations in BC. For this reason, our current Jobs minister has given public speeches praising predatory, monopolistic, exploitive firms like Lyft, Amazon and Telus, beseeching them for more business. This stands in sharp contrast to the British Labour Party which has put Amazon on notice that it plans to drive the firm from the UK for its poverty wages, brutal working conditions and zero-hour shifts.

The BC Ecosocialists believe in creating local jobs through local government, cooperative and private sector employment. As a party that understands Dependency Theory, we know that local elites who make their money by exporting un- and minimally-processed resources to industrial regions see remanufacturing jobs as an existential threat and will seek to bring down any government that challenges their privileged position as brokers of raw materials, motivated, in part, by a desire for power and profit, and, in part by fear of industrial empires like the US and China and the consequences they might visit on BC in retaliation. This is why the investor class staged a capital strike in BC in the 1990s in response to government efforts to kickstart a local shipbuilding industry.

An Ecosocialist approach to job creation would focus on two key areas:

- a Green New Deal to massively overhaul BC's transportation grid, energy systems and public buildings to dramatically reduce our carbon footprint through
 - conservation technology and retrofitting for all government buildings
 - creating an electrified, province-wide double-tracked freight and passenger rail backbone
 - converting large portions of BC's road system to mass transit-exclusive transportation corridors
 - geothermal, wind, solar and microhydro energy development
- an Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) policy to provide startup funds and incentives for secondary manufacturing in key BC export sectors, especially forest products and minerals through
 - local production quotas for key materials used in building the Green New Deal
 - provincial investment of startup funds in worker cooperatives in secondary manufacturing fields
- a prohibition on the export of raw logs and raw log cants, along with minimally processed lead, aluminum and copper

Ministry of Public Health, Mental Health and Health Services

Let's finish the mission of Tommy Douglas, the father of Medicare, by putting every aspect of health under the public system. Use the Portugal model to legalize, decriminalize and regulate ALL drugs to stop the overdose epidemic and save lives.

To any socialist in Canada, the proudest achievement of our movement is Medicare; but many do not realize that Medicare, as we know it, was a compromise between the socialist

government of Saskatchewan and private medical practices, hospitals and clinics. As a result, while our medical insurance system was socialized, the actual delivery of our healthcare outside of government hospitals is mainly through private businesses owned by doctors and members of the investor class. It is our plan to complete Douglas's original mission: create a fully public healthcare system in which doctors are public servants, doctor accreditation is supervised by a public body, not a guild, and medical school fees are eliminated for students agreeing to practice in BC following graduation. A fully public health care system will improve patient care, health professional working conditions, and reduce the costs of medical services.

A fully public system will also resume the coverage of the whole human body in place of our absurd system that refuses to treat eyes, feet or teeth unless the condition is life-threatening and the patient is under general anesthetic. A fully public system would also cease co-managing or co-owning public health facilities and services with religious organizations, especially when religious rather than medical criteria are used to make decisions about women's reproductive health. A fully public system will also respond to the lethal epidemic of unregulated, untested opiates being distributed to vulnerable and marginalized populations like the public health emergency it is.

A BC Ecosocialist healthcare system will look like this:

- the mass recruitment of psychiatrists into the provincial health care system to provide a level of state-funded psychiatric care equivalent to that enjoyed by Ontario and Quebec residents
- the hiring of salaried provincial dentists as the vanguard of a larger project to eliminate the current semi-private fee-for-service model we have in our health care system; this team of dentists would be drawn from current fee-for-service dentists in BC, dentists from elsewhere in Canada and international medical graduates who would be certified by a state-appointed dentistry college
- while phasing out the private contractor medical system in BC, we would re-enact the Bennett government's legislation restricting MSP billing numbers for new doctors to the regions most in need of additional doctors
- hire all new doctors in the BC healthcare system as salaried employees, not independent contractors
 - in the event of a quasi-strike/boycott by some portion of the non-unionized private contractors, they should be rapidly replaced through an expansion of the International Medical Graduate system, attracting salaried employees from medical schools around the world.
- establish a state-run, science-based medical certification system based on expert knowledge completely separate from the College of Physicians and Surgeons and the BC Medical Association
- end the current system of regional provincial health authorities and remove their parasitic managerial class, eliminating senior bureaucrats and concentrating provincial health management in the hands of the provincial health ministry
- abolish Providence Health and fire every worker currently in the system who makes medical decisions that prioritize religious doctrine over human health including:
 - declining to perform necessary surgery or otherwise endangering human health to avoid committing the mortal sin of causing a miscarriage,
 - sectioning pregnant women and incarcerating them in psychiatric wards until birth and then releasing them onto the street without housing, and

- discharging new mothers into forced religious labour systems disguised as recovery houses, and holding their children hostage to force compliance with labour regimes
- Consequently, we support
 - prosecuting Providence Health managers, doctors and Catholic Diocesan officials for decades of criminal negligence and hate crimes against women
- replace the Aboriginal Health authority system with an Indigenous Health Authority system that includes direct accountability to elected and traditional indigenous governments
- adopt a triage-based system of patient referrals and access to treatment in place of the Community Health Centre approach which prioritizes long-term residency in a community over need or urgency
- provide provincial coverage of counselling and psychiatric care to the standard enjoyed in urban Ontario and Québec
- suspending any doctor found to have received gifts from pharmaceutical companies or other healthcare profiteers
- institute a provincial Pharmacare program to fully cover all prescription drugs
- phase-out private pharmacies in the spirit of delivering a fully public health care system by
 - not licensing new pharmacies and ending the transferability of licensing for private pharmacies
 - opening a network of government pharmacies as either stand-alone facilities or part of the government agent service package offered in smaller communities
 - applying a government fair wage policy to all pharmacies and place them under the authority of the Regularization Secretariat
- encourage salaried doctors to form a provincial union to, over time, take the place of the BCMA both in representing doctors and in helping to maintain professional standards
- sue social media implicated in spreading dangerous and unscientific information such as the bleach treatment for autism in which parents are encouraged to force bleach down the throats of their autistic children until the lining of the intestines is excreted
 - and enact legislation requiring that social media not circulate as “news” false medical information leading to injury or death

Discontinuing the Drug War is not just about law enforcement. An Ecosocialist BC would

- de-fund Attorney-General’s ministry prosecution of drug offenses and Solicitor-General ministry incarceration of drug offenders
- adopt the principles of the Portuguese model of drug legalization and regulation, which has resulted in reductions in addiction, overdose deaths and medical costs, and encourage the federal government to change the Criminal Code to reflect the de-funding above
- focus funding for substance abuse on methodologically atheistic and evidence-based treatments that have empirically demonstrable track records of success in harm reduction and do not rely on the existence of God or any other “higher power,” recognizing that the 5% success rate of twelve-step programs is not good enough for people seeking treatment for addiction
- guarantee a safe drug supply, delivered through a combination of government dispensaries, agencies and safe use sites for all currently criminalized drugs
- file a pre-emptive injunction against federal efforts to prevent the provision of a safe drug supply based on the “security of the person” provisions of the Canadian Constitution

Just as with childcare, Canada’s federal parties have been promising a national Pharmacare program since the mid-1980s. Whether it is coming at the national level or not,

nearly two generations of British Columbians have suffered through a provincial politics of waiting for national leadership that will never come. We need a provincial Pharmacare program. It is unacceptable for British Columbians going through day patient cancer treatment, needing daily pharmaceutical intervention for mental illness, making their way through changing their gender or struggling with chronic respiratory problems to need to pay private companies for essential medical services. BC Ecosocialists will

- implement a complete Pharmacare program and establish government-run pharmacies to offer a public option to compete with private, profit-driven storefront pharmacies
- prohibit the receipt of gifts by all prescribing physicians from pharmaceutical companies and establish a Pharma Corruption Review Panel with investigative powers to examine financial transactions between industry and prescribers and powers to strip prescribers of medical licenses and corporations of license to conduct business in BC
 - this includes a review of the sponsorship of journals, conferences and other activities in which practitioners participate both inside and outside BC
- As long as the federal government fails to act on a National Pharmacare program, work directly with other provinces to expand this program into an inter-provincial Pharmacare program
- the creation of a provincial Pharmacare system providing all pharmaceuticals prescribed by doctors within the public health system for free and the creation of a purchasing and distribution branch of the BC government that would
 - work to phase out private pharmacies in favour of government pharmacies staffed by provincial employees
 - work with governments in India, East Africa and elsewhere that are currently contesting the global intellectual property rights of the pharmaceutical industry internationally and actively participate in reverse engineering and other project being used to defray extortionate pharmaceutical costs in the Global South

Currently, post-operative support is not covered by the medical system. Many medical procedures required long-term and sometimes-costly postoperative support, such as gender transition and cancer treatment. Some necessary post-operative treatments are long-term and involve mental as well as physical health services. A BC Ecosocialist government will

- provide full Pharmacare coverage for long-term and lifelong medicated regimes, including but not limited to those related to immune suppression such as autoimmune disease, cancer treatment and transplants and those related to gender transition
- provide full medical coverage of long-term and maintenance interventions dealing with life-long medical issues through physiotherapy,
- provide long-term psychiatric and psychological treatment for post-operative and post-traumatic experiences

We recognize that gender is an inherently oppressive category that must not be affirmed by any movement that opposes oppression. We recognize that the idea of a gender binary as an ahistorical lie and part of the complex of conservative junk science of a piece with climate denial. It is our view that the destabilization of gender categories is inextricable from the necessary challenging of class oppression, which originates in the exploitation of women's labour by men. This means:

- full medical coverage of all pharmaceutical and medical services to which transitioning people are referred by their healthcare practitioner

- recognition that not all science concerning gender transition is settled and continuing to draft government policy based on best scientific practices
- prohibition on “conversion therapy” as a class of treatment provided to queer and/or trans people
- removing the requirement for third party documentation to change gender designation on government documents
- applying a gender universality lens to analyze the provision of necessary health services based on gender and apply additional government funding to ensure equal access to healthcare province-wide irrespective of gender or reproductive condition (i.e. pregnancy)

Work and Workers

Our economy is made of workers and their work. The idea that the super-rich are “job creators” is a bald-faced lie.

Today, workers face threats on all sides. Corporations like Lyft, Uber, Skip the Dishes and a host of others undermine wage and working-condition legislation through what they call “the sharing economy,” which is actually just deregulated Victorian labour practices straight out of Charles Dickens (the reporter-turned novelist who exposed the barbaric exploitation of children in nineteenth-century London) with no minimum wages, no workplace insurance and no regulation of working conditions. Meanwhile, Canada’s Temporary Foreign Worker visa and childcare/domestic worker visas bring racialized people from the Global South into Canada, imprison them in their workplaces and exempt them from minimum wage and working-condition legislation too. In both rural and urban BC, former employees are forced to purchase their tools and return to work as “independent contractors” now paying interest on loans to maintain “their” computers, vehicles and heavy equipment that are a payment or two from reverting to the bank.

The government is in on this too, increasing rather than reducing the amount of work contracted-out, placing the province’s interurban public bus system and childcare facilities in the hands of private companies and QuaNGOs (quasi-non-governmental organizations) with no requirement to pay a fair wage or offer consistent or secure employment to workers. And while the Green Party was not willing to threaten to bring down the government to stop the Kitimat LNG project, they were willing to put everything on the line to force workers who have already voted to join a union to vote a second time, following management pressure and greater management scrutiny.

The BC Ecosocialists understand that workplace democracy, living wages and the ability of workers to organize together are absolutely central to creating a fair economy. Our labour policies include:

- restoring sectoral bargaining to the building trades sector as originally enacted by the Glen Clark government in 1999, creating regional building trades bargaining agents in sectors decimated by union-busting
- enacting the card-based certification process for creating and joining unions, as promised by the BC NDP in 2017
- scrapping the Horgan government policy of keeping the minimum wage below Alberta’s until 2021 and possibly indefinitely and instead immediately raising it to \$16/hour indexed to inflation
- repealing the tort limitation provisions of the legislation governing Worksafe BC, permitting workers to have the same right to sue over insufficient settlement offers as drivers and

passengers do over low ICBC offers, and compensating workers for workplace injuries based on the same court assessments used to craft auto accident settlements

- imposing a provincial fair wage policy until contracted-out work is eliminated, one that applies equally to all employee groups irrespective of the predominant age or gender of any group
- creating a Regularization Secretariat to identify areas of government employment that are not unionized or delivered through contracting-out that can be brought fully within government work
 - empowering the Secretariat to enact regularization plans in any area of government business that is not unionized or is contracted-out
 - empowering the Secretariat to enact regularization plans in any area of work that needs to be brought fully inside the provincial government e.g. childcare facilities and pharmacies
- enacting a Workers' Bill of Rights that includes the right of every worker to unionize, to purchase ownership equity at least once per year, to work free of discrimination and to have workplace grievances and injuries adjudicated outside of tort-limited processes like Worksafe BC, should a tort limited process fail to produce satisfactory outcomes

All over the world, in more and more economic sectors, we see an increasing proportion of salaries going towards unproductive work. In postsecondary education and health care, the proportion of money we spend on administrative positions versus service delivery increases every year, as do the wages of managers relative to frontline workers. In the industrial sector, in computing, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, upper management and CEOs receive a larger and larger share of the pie and their wages, relative to frontline workers, have reached cartoonish proportions of inequality. In every sector, from the arts to industry to education to health, we need fewer managers and more workers; we need fewer bosses with wages tied to that of their workers. For that reason, BC Ecosocialists will

- implement a Maximum Wage for any company operating in BC of \$400,000 per year
- fix a Maximum Wage Ratio of 20:1 of the greatest permissible difference between the hourly wage of a company's lowest-wage worker and its highest-wage worker
- establish annual management and frontline reinvestment targets for every health authority and university in BC
- establish ceilings on management spending as a proportion of total spending in any sector receiving government grants such as the arts
- abolish employee bonus programs that are accessible only the management

We need a Green New Deal like the one proposed by Bernie Sanders in the US. This means

- a substantial one-time infusion of funds that takes place through the introduction of wealth taxes in their first year
- a program to create a BC manufacturing, energy and transportation grad that achieves carbon-zero targets by 2030
- the employment of a minimum of 150,000 industrial workers over a ten-year period in all regions of the province to build
 - charging stations on every provincial highway to permit the complete electrification of BC's transportation grid
 - small-scale reservoir stockpiles, battery power, hot water storage and other energy storage facilities in every BC community

- a double-tracked, electrified provincial rail grid providing passenger and freight service to every significant community
- a forest jobs guarantee program to
 - build value-added remanufacturing facilities for BC timber owned by the BC government for gradual transfer to worker cooperatives
 - including tertiary manufacturing such as furniture-making
 - replant areas where reforestation has been unsuccessful or has not taken place, using aspen, alder and other succession trees to restore the long-term biodiversity and viability of ecosystems
- a domestic retrofitting program to
 - retrofit residential homes to take them off fossil fuels, improve insulation and install solar and wind generation at the local level
- a training and apprenticeship program to increase the size and expertise of BC's industrial workforce through an expansion of BC's polytechnic universities and colleges in every region of the province with a goal of graduating a minimum of 20,000 additional industrial workers with new qualifications each year

Democratic Reform

Our politics is based on the faith that humanity will rise to the occasion and meet its greatest challenge. So we want everyone's vote to count, and count equally.

A succession of governments has conducted a series of rigged votes to crush the movement demanding a fair voting system for BC that counts every person's votes equally. Gordon Campbell demanded a 60% supermajority support abolishing a system that permits parties to form a majority government with 39% of the vote. John Horgan simply put opponents of fair voting in charge of the "yes" campaign and let them **simply** cart off the proponent funding to their consulting businesses. And he used postal voting, a system that discriminates against young people, college students and those most affected by the housing crisis.

But this misses the point: while people have voted in referenda for women's suffrage or gay marriage, that does not mean that the equal rights of citizens should *ever* be subject to a referendum. The equality of all persons is inherent, not something based on popular opinion. Any voting system that makes a person's vote worth less because of where they live or what they believe in is wrong and no referendum needs to take place to overturn an unequal system and replace it with an equal one.

The BC Ecosocialists believe that all people are equal, all votes must be equal and unnecessary barriers to voting must be torn down. Our policies on BC's voting system and democratic reform are as follows:

- immediate enactment of a proportional representation system by an act of the BC Legislature,
 - using regional lists in multi-member constituencies, as Norwegians do, a system appropriate to a geographically large jurisdiction with a relatively small and concentrated population
 - ending the current system of weighting certain regions' (those with the fewest first-generation immigrants) votes more heavily and instead requiring that the number of MLAs per capita be the same irrespective of where people live
- legislating a minimum aboriginal representation in the BC legislature, similar to New Zealand legislation that permits aboriginal voters to cast votes in either settler or aboriginal electoral districts based on individual voters' strategic considerations

- replacing current symbolic unenforceable “fixed election date” legislation with legislation making election day a statutory holiday with no required or voluntary overtime shifts exceeding 50% of the voting hours
- ending direct election of the office of mayor in BC municipalities and making the office the same as that of school board chair, premier or prime minister: i.e. the mayor serves at the pleasure of council based on sustained majority support
- imposing the single transferable vote system on all BC municipalities
 - granting additional implementation time and local consultation on consolidating ward boundaries for the two BC municipalities currently electing their councils by in single-member wards
- reinstating door-to-door enumeration of voters in addition to the current “motor voter” system which consistently fails to enumerate low-income, marginalized and young voters
- instituting US-style oversight of political party membership and budgeting with government maintaining party membership lists and abolishing political party membership fees, permitting voters to register as members of parties through checkboxes on tax, ID and license renewal forms
 - prohibiting the charging of fees for individuals to seek party nominations
 - prohibiting “vetting” processes and instead permitting all party members to seek that party’s nomination as in the US
 - administering party nomination contests through Elections BC, as per the US system
- ending the current system of subsidizing political parties through the income tax system based on the wealth of their donors and instead funding political parties through quarterly money transfers based on its number of registered members

The BC Ecosocialists support decentralization of decision-making in our province. Often, local governments are the leaders when it comes to confronting our interlocking crises. For this reason, we

- support efforts by municipal governments to regular firearm possession and storage within their boundaries
- would permit municipalities being able to levy additional sales and income taxes from 0.5% to 2% on top of provincial sales tax to fund local initiatives

Cooperatives and Community Ownership

We believe that a healthy, unionized workforce is just the first step in a process of democratizing our workplaces. Ultimately, Ecosocialism is a way of life based around cooperative and community ownership, in which workers will regain ownership of the tools they use, the businesses they work for and the gains those businesses make.

A BC Eco-socialist government would restore the Ministry of Cooperatives, which was disbanded in 2000, which would work with the Regularization Secretariat to identify areas of both government and private sector employment in which worker cooperatives could be encouraged and seeded by the BC government.

It would also enact a program of legislation to facilitate this transition including:

- measures similar to US anti-trust legislation to break up large, non-participatory cooperative institutions into smaller, community-based institutions; obvious targets for such legislation would include
 - Vancouver City Savings Credit Union and Mountain Equipment Cooperative

- provisions in the Workers' Bill of Rights to include an option to purchase equity in an employer company, at a share price adjudicated by a neutral third party, including
 - a guarantee of voting rights proportional to equity
 - requiring a minimum of 1% of equity each year to be available for purchase
- provisions for any company to convert its management and ownership structure to a cooperative at any point those favouring this transition achieve a majority share
- a reduction in income tax rates on worker-owner income in frontline i.e. server and labourer employment to encourage genuine worker cooperatives, as distinct from conventional employers incorporated as co-ops
- provisions for all equity to be available for purchase by workers in the event of sale, inheritance or other drastic ownership transfer in individual-owned, family-owned and limited partnership businesses
- a provincial Cooperatives Startup Bank to provide zero- and low-interest loans to employees seeking to turn their workplace into an owner-operated cooperative