

# Questions:

## Winnipeg South - 100 Debates on the Environment

On Sept. 8, 2021, Wa Ni Ska Tan and the MB Eco-Network co-hosted (with others) a virtual, all-candidates debate where local federal election candidates from the Winnipeg South riding debated issues of environmental concern. Lynne Fernandez was the moderator. This event was a part of GreenPAC's 100 Debates on the Environment initiative.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5zfD6YURI&t=1s>

### Pan-Canadian Concerns

Covid-19 has brought to light the links between the climate crisis, the human impact on nature, and the rise of global pandemics. Like SARS, Ebola and nearly three quarters of infectious diseases, scientists generally agree that Covid originated in other animal species, and spread to humans in large part because of the pressures on these species brought on by land use changes and unsustainable consumption. These factors are also leading causes of climate change.

This topic has three questions that each deal with immediate measures the government can take to address these inter-linked crises to protect the health of Canadians as we emerge from the worst of this pandemic. I will ask each of you to provide a simple yes/no response to each question:

**Will your party develop a new and credible plan to halt and reverse nature loss, protect species at risk, and meet Canada's commitment to protect at least 30% of land, freshwater, and ocean by 2030?**

**Will you commit to require all sectors to reduce carbon emissions by 60% by 2030, and make it law?**

**Will you push your party's leadership to end all government subsidies for fossil fuels?**

### Canadian Environmental Protection Act

The Canadian Environmental Protection Act is our overarching law to protect the health and environment of Canadians. The Act has not been significantly amended since 1999, despite major changes in our understanding of toxic substances in our environment. A recent bill introduced in the last Parliament did not make it past First Reading.

**Will you support getting this bill reintroduced, strengthened, and made a top legislative priority?**

**Specifically will you amend legislation to prioritize hot spot communities such as St. Boniface, Point Douglas, Weston and hydro-affected First Nations?**

Climate Caucus

**Will you join the All-Party Climate Caucus and work collaboratively with MPs from across the aisle on policy solutions?**

Small Modular Nuclear Reactors – Concerned Citizens of Manitoba

We are in a climate emergency that demands immediate action to change the ways we use and obtain energy.

The nuclear industry is promoting so-called Small Modular Nuclear Reactors as part of the solution, and the previous Liberal government has already been generously subsidizing this as-yet unproven strategy and is openly advancing it, even though the cheapest, fastest and most dependable ways to reduce our carbon footprint are efficiency, wind, solar and geothermal.

The proposed new reactors will be more expensive per unit of energy generated and will produce more radioactive waste per unit of energy than even conventional large reactors. They will be fueled by materials suitable for nuclear weapons proliferation, violating the spirit of Canada's international commitments. Moreover, they are still in the design stage and would not be available for commercial use until later this decade at the earliest, unlike other solutions which are ready to go immediately.

**Should Canadian taxpayers subsidize the design, development, and construction of new nuclear reactors?**

Silica Sand Industry – What the Frack Manitoba

The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada is currently reviewing new information from CanWhite Sands regarding the Vivian silica sand extraction process. Nearly 500 new wells will be drilled each year in southeastern Manitoba to extract the silica sand, which is located 200 feet underground.

Impacts will include massive subsidence (ground slumps), exposure to the aquifers from surface pollution sources and leaching of toxics from acid rock drainage due to large amounts of aerated reinjected water.

**What role would you recommend the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada play in the CanWhite Sands project, given that the current provincial government is not conducting a full blown environmental assessment with a Clean Environment Commission Hearing.**

Electoral Reform – Manitoba Eco-Network

Research shows that voter turnout is higher in countries with proportional systems, especially among youth voters. More countries than not (70%) use a form of proportional representation and according to the Fund for Peace, 8 of the 10 most stable countries in the world use proportional representation. The Pact for a Green New Deal honors the promise of making Canada a Proportional Representation Democracy.

According to Fair Vote Canada, tackling the climate crisis is going to require cooperation between parties and long term thinking and countries with proportional systems tend to act more quickly and do more to protect the environment.

**Will you and your government commit to a full public review of our electoral system with the intent of removing first-past-the-post elections and replacing with a form of proportional representation? Why or why not?**

Lake Winnipeg – Lake Winnipeg Foundation and Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective

Lake Winnipeg is full of spirit – as important as our most cherished relatives. Despite decades of government commitments to heal the health of the lake there has been little follow through. Lake Winnipeg's health continues to decline.

Since 2008, the federal government has made dedicated financial investments for Lake Winnipeg. These investments have enabled phosphorus reduction initiatives, as well as research and monitoring to improve water quality in Lake Winnipeg. The current federal funding commitment, Phase 3 of the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program, will end March 2022.

**Will you and your party renew the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program in Budget 2022? How will you ensure that federal dollars have measurable impact to reverse the decline of Lake Winnipeg?**

Cooperative Federalism – Manitoba Eco-Network

Canada is a federation in which the responsibilities for managing resources and the environment are shared among different levels of government. This shared governance model is a source of strength, but it also creates fragmentation and gaps that adversely affects the health of our environment.

Since the environment is an area of shared jurisdiction with provincial governments often having the most legal control, it can be very difficult to get international commitments made by the federal government (ex. UNDRIP, biodiversity, Paris Accord, carbon neutrality by 2050) addressed at the provincial level.

**How does your party plan to encourage/influence provincial governments to incorporate and help meet Canada's international environmental commitments at the provincial level?**

**Will the commitment to the recognition of Indigenous self-government and legal systems made in Bill C-15 (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act) be a foundational and evolving component of cooperative federalism?**

Canada's Peatlands – Wilderness Committee

Peatlands are the most carbon-rich lands on the planet. Canada has vast expanses of peatlands, with a great portion of them being in Manitoba.

The highly acclaimed international organization Project Drawdown has called the protection of peatlands one of the top actions to halt greenhouse gas emissions and reverse global warming.

IISD has stated there is no way to mitigate the release of carbon from disturbed peatlands.

Right now there are no regulations or restrictions on the destruction, development, or harvest of peat, a huge source of greenhouse gas emissions. We have witnessed the industrial harvesting of peat on the West shore of Lake Winnipeg by at least 3 corporations, and the attendant clear cutting of the forest so the corporations can have access to the peat.

**How will your government regulate the greenhouse gas emissions caused by peat mining and the disturbance of this valuable natural ecosystem?**

Pension Plan Divestment

According to a recent National Observer investigative report, the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) manages the pensions of 20 million Canadians and citing research conducted by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in BC, it was found that the CPP has *increased* the number of shares it owns in fossil fuel companies since Canada signed the [Paris Agreement](#) five years ago.

The CPP's total fossil fuel investments across its entire portfolio have increased from \$9.9 billion in 2016 to \$11.6 billion in 2020.

**What role do you see the government in regulating federal institutions, which includes financial institutions, pension funds and government agencies to make Canada a climate leader?**

Hydroelectricity in Manitoba – Wa Ni Ska Tan: An Alliance of Hydro Impacted Communities

In Manitoba, about 96% of all electricity is generated by hydro dams, with 70% of the total coming from dams on the Nelson River alone. Despite claims that this source of energy is “green”, environmental impacts from the dams are disproportionately felt by Northern Manitoba Indigenous communities, while the majority of power is consumed in Winnipeg without the accompanying impacts.

**What plan does your party have to increase access to alternative forms of renewable energy?**

Just Transition – Manitoba Energy Justice Coalition

Many Indigenous communities in Northern Manitoba continue to face not only environmental impacts related to hydropower, but also social, economic, and cultural impacts. Communities have been relocated due to intentional flooding, traditional land-based economies have suffered, and burial sites have also been disturbed. Despite these impacts, most Northern residents continue to pay some of the highest electricity bills in the province.

**How will your party deliver a just transition that includes Indigenous Peoples and addresses environmental racism?**