

**Nuu-chah-nulth questions for 2017 BC Provincial Election Candidates and
Political Parties**

1. The William/Tsilhqot'in decision changed the landscape in terms of **Aboriginal Title and Rights in BC and across Canada**, what are you and your party committed to doing to ensure that Aboriginal Title and Rights are respected, recognized, and implemented? **The BC NDP is committed to respecting Aboriginal Title and Rights. The Supreme Court of Canada clearly established the legal rights of First Nations in BC. To put it bluntly, these rights are a matter of law and justice.**
2. While many First Nations still prefer to negotiate, what are you and your party committed to do to ensure that negotiations of **treaties, agreements or other constructive arrangements** occur in the Province of BC? **As a priority, we will work with First Nations to reduce conflict on the ground and in the courts. We'll do this by ensuring decisions affecting air, water and land respect the law. Further we'll ensure that all people in BC benefit from sustainable development of natural resources and that our ecosystems are preserved in the process.**
3. What are you and your party committed to doing in terms of implementing the **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released their 94 "Calls to Action"**? **A BC NDP government will adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Further, in Ministers' mandate letters, we will include the requirement that they review policies, programs and legislation in their departments to determine how to bring the principles of the Declaration into action. A BC NDP government also will accept and act on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action.**
4. What are you and your party committed to doing to ensure there is action taken to address the issue so of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls? **The BC NDP has tirelessly fought to see the recommendations of the Missing Women's Inquiry of British Columbia followed, and we will bring that commitment into government. A BC NDP government will also do our part to support the federal Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.**
5. **First Nations Control of First Nations Education** remains a priority for Nuuchahnulth First Nations. What are you and your party committed to doing to ensure that

Nuu-chah-nulth questions for 2017 BC Provincial Election Candidates and Political Parties

the Province of BC advances First Nations Control of First Nations Education with BC First Nations? The BC NDP recognizes that achieving success in First Nations graduation rates starts with ensuring First Nations children see themselves in their studies. Working closely with First Nations, we will establish a curriculum for the study of indigenous languages and history. Further, we will provide support to indigenous communities seeking to revitalize their languages.

6. **First Nations Child and Family Services** remain in a crisis in the Province of BC, with over 50% of all children in care in BC being Aboriginal. Due to inadequate funding from both the provincial and federal governments, the issue still remains at the forefront for Nuuchahnulth First Nations. What are you and your party committed to do in terms of improving First Nations Child and Family Services in partnership with BC First Nations? We will implement the recommendations from Grand Chief Ed John's report and provide supports so Aboriginal children can remain at home rather than in care. We will also ensure that Delegated Aboriginal Agencies are supported to offer core services at the same level offered to non-Aboriginal children. If children are taken into care we will ensure basic care standards are met and that there is a plan for every child to connect with their culture and communities.

7. Although some believe that emergency services are the jurisdiction of the federal government for on-reserve emergencies, Nuuchahnulth First Nations believe the Province plays a critical role in **emergency response, management and preparedness**. What are you and your party committed to do to address emergency response and preparedness with Nuuchahnulth Nations? It's our belief that Indigenous British Columbians deserve the same level of services and supports as other British Columbians. It's wrong for people to be left in the lurch while governments bicker about jurisdiction. Emergencies need to be dealt with quickly and effectively. We look forward to working directly with the Nuuchahnulth Nations to examine how we can better work together on this issue.

8. BC's Ministry of Transportation plays an important role when it applies to **road access for our First Nations**. Are you committed to lobby and promote the paving of roads in and out of our remote/rural communities? (i.e. paving and

Nuu-chah-nulth questions for 2017 BC Provincial Election Candidates and Political Parties

improvements to communities such as Bamfield, Nitnaht, Zeballos and Fair Harbour etc.) As MLA, I have been advocating strongly with the Minister of Forests for substantial improvements to the Zeballos and Fair Harbour Roads. If the BC NDP forms government we will work with the forestry licensee to ensure it respects its social contract and that it maintains these roads up to the level of highway standards.

9. Reducing **poverty** remains a critical element to improving the life of First Nations people in BC. What are you and your party committed to do in terms of developing a provincial poverty reduction strategy and implementing it? Five times the BC Liberals have rejected BC NDP attempts to legislate a poverty reduction plan. Every other province in Canada has one. A BC NDP government would implement such a plan with legislated targets and timelines to get families out of poverty. We will ensure other areas like mental health justice and health care are tied into the poverty reduction plan. Further, income assistance and disability allowances have been frozen for a decade. We will immediately increase these rates by \$100 a month. The BC NDP will also seek partnerships with First Nations as part of our commitment to build 114,000 housing units over the next decade as well as prioritizing First Nations entry into training and apprenticeship programs.

10. Nuuchahnulth communities have been devastated over the past several years in terms of **mental health and addictions**. What are you and your party committed to do to address mental health and addictions? We will establish a Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions to bring together under one roof the fragmented mental health and addictions system that currently exists. We'll work with all relevant jurisdictions, including First Nations, to ensure patients get treatment early and effectively. Investments in early intervention in treating mental health and addictions are shown to result in measurable improvements so we will do that. And where possible we focus on community-based treatment. Specifically on the overdose epidemic, the BC NDP will distribute life-saving naloxone kits around the province and train people to use them. We'll push Ottawa to increase the penalties for dealers distributing death-dealing drugs like

Nuu-chah-nulth questions for 2017 BC Provincial Election Candidates and Political Parties

fentanyl. And we will establish a special initiative with First Nations leaders to provide additional assistance where the impact of the crisis is greatest.

11. Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations want to ensure that resources taken out of their Ha'wiih Hahoulthee (hereditary chiefs territories) is done to the highest environmental and sustainable standards, while also ensuring that **benefits such as revenue, jobs creation and decision making stay within both Nuu-chah-nulth and non-Indigenous/British Columbians within that specific electoral district.**

How will you and your party ensure this happens for the betterment of all British Columbians? The BC NDP will adopt and implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and use those principles to guide our government's approach to working with First Nations to manage resource development and environmental protections. Furthermore, we have committed to working with First Nations, communities, and other interested parties to overhaul our environmental assessment process so it better reflects our commitment to UNDRIP and to better protect our air, land and water for generations to come.

12. Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations want to ensure that there is a **government-to-government relationship between our First Nations and the Government of British Columbia in terms of management.** What are you and your party committed to do to ensure this occurs? We will make building right relationships with First Nations a top priority. We believe that right relationships begin with keeping our commitments. That starts with taking immediate action to address the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as well as moving quickly to implement Grand Chief Ed John's report into Indigenous child welfare.

*****Note***** BC Political Parties have answered BC First Nations Leadership Council questions with answers being seen here (link can be copied and pasted into web browser):

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ubcic/pages/1494/attachments/original/1492782272/2017April20_FNLC_ProvElec_PartyResponses.pdf?1492782272

For candidates that are interested in responding if they could please send their responses to myself(ken.watts@nuuchahnulth.org) prior to May 2nd at 12 noon and we will post responses to the Hashilthsa Facebook page and our website to help our citizens can make an informed decision. Thank you.