

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DION PLAN FOR NORTHERN SEARCH & RESCUE NOT ENOUGH
Liberals short change the North again

OTTAWA – The NDP’s critic for Arctic Sovereignty, Dennis Bevington (Western Arctic) criticized the recent announcement by the Liberal leader to station four military search and rescue (SAR) aircraft in the North.

“Like most Liberal proposals for the North it comes up short,” said Bevington. “Search and Rescue experts will tell you that on average three aircraft are needed to give 24/7 coverage of an area. This would require a minimum of six C-130 Hercules or DHC-5 Buffalo aircraft and about 100 personnel to cover the NWT and Nunavut. This just shows they still don’t get the North and are taking the same top-down approach to the North as Harper.”

Canada has long needed to update its current search and rescue capacity. Plans to buy new SAR aircraft have been in the works for years, but Liberal dithering resulted in no decision being made to replace these valuable aircraft. Stephen Harper’s Conservatives have put replacement of the DHC-5 and the DHC-6 Twin Otter on the backburner to pay for their war in Afghanistan. The Canadian Forces already operates four Twin Otters, which is known as the Northern Workhorse, in the North

“Stephen Dion breezed into Yellowknife and told Northerners what was good for them, without really knowing the facts,” said Bevington. “The NDP’s approach is different; we consult with Northerners first, before making announcements about how to protect our North.”

The Liberal record on the North is dismal:

- They reduced the number of Twin Otters operated by the Canadian Armed Forces;
- They eliminated maritime surveillance flights over the Northwest Passage;
- They disbanded the only military unit capable of quickly deploying to the North,
- They cut back on the enforcement of Canada’s environmental protection laws; and
- They constantly under-funded Northern governments while taking billions of dollars each year from Northern resources.

“Stéphane Dion doesn’t care about protecting the North. If he did, he would have supported NDP initiatives such as mandatory registration of ships with the Arctic Canada Traffic Zone known as NORDREG, an increased investment in municipal infrastructure and an increase of the Northern Residents Tax Deduction to close the Northern prosperity gap,” said Bevington.

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