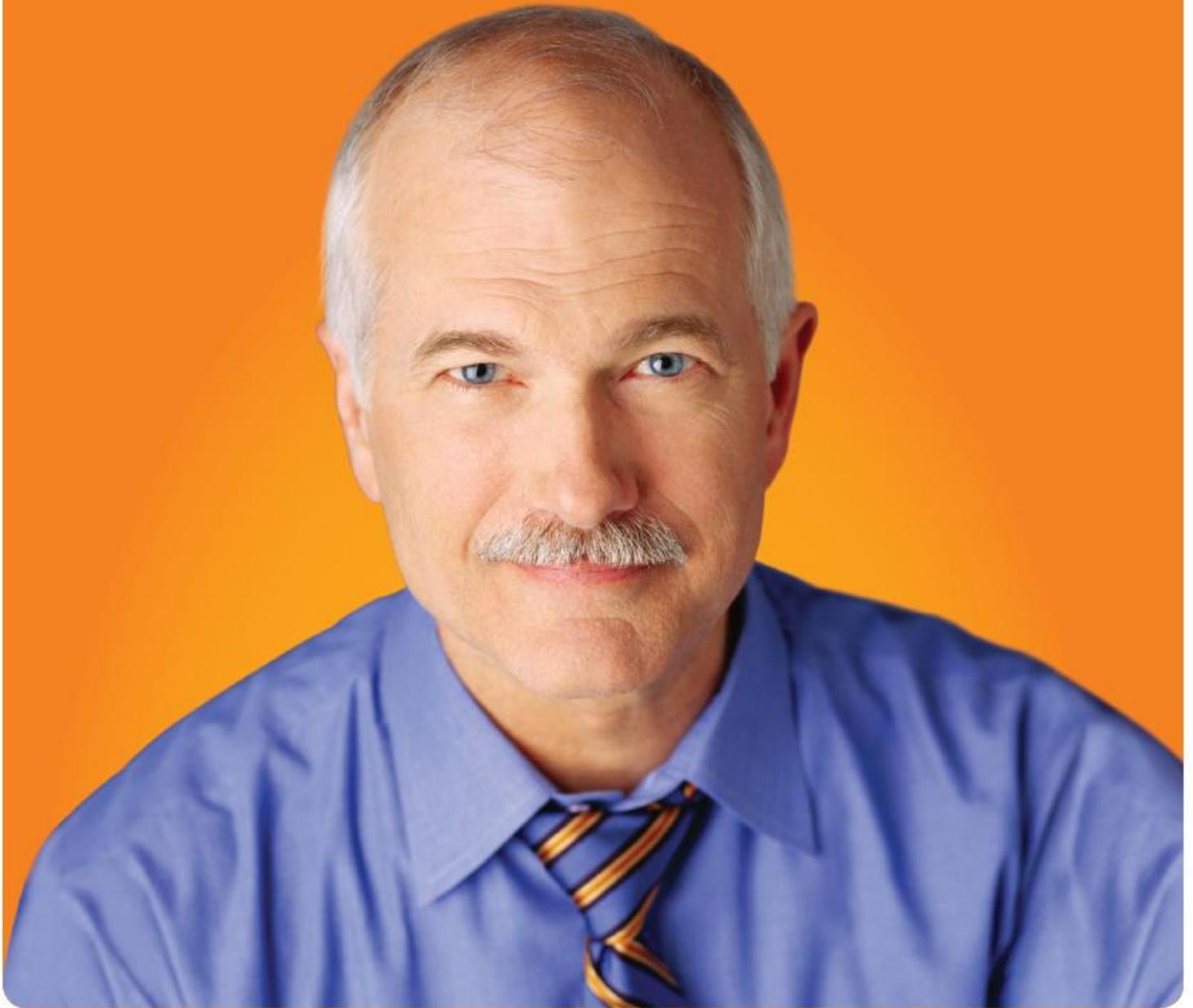


Standing up for **Northern families**  
like yours



**Jack Layton**  
and the **New Democrats**

2008 NDP PLATFORM FOR CANADA'S NORTH





## *A personal message from Jack Layton*

To the people of the North:

Canada's North holds a special place in my heart. Olivia and I regularly vacation in the North. For example, this year we went rafting in the Yukon. Last year we canoed the Nahanni. For us, there's no place on earth like Canada's North.

Since I was elected as Leader of the New Democratic Party, my many visits with people in the North have been dynamic and enlightening experiences for me. Northerners have told me what you need for you and your families to prosper, how you want your territory to develop, and how your issues are unique in Canada.

People explained to me how high costs in the North affect their family and children. They have talked about the impact of living far from services that southern Canadians take for granted. Many feel that they are themselves taken for granted by Ottawa – that the North is treated as a source of resource revenue with more going out than ever comes back to the individuals and families who live in the North.

Through many of these conversations there's a common theme: "Can anyone really hear us down there?"

For all of these reasons, I am very pleased to present the New Democrats' Northern Platform. It was created in the North, by the North, for the North. The initiatives are designed with you in mind. They will provide new opportunities. They will help you build a better life for you, your family and your children.

I know that Northerners have the skills, ability and desire to succeed, but your hopes have been held back by past Liberal and Conservative federal governments. Their grand announcements about the North tend to be aimed at gaining votes in Southern Canada, not helping Northerners build better lives. That's the way they've always done it. It's unfair and disrespectful. It must change. Northerners deserve a new approach.

That's why I made it a personal priority to have this platform tailored specifically to the unique circumstances of people who live in the North. It underlines the commitment of New Democrats to fight for you in Parliament. Dennis Bevington from the Northwest Territories is a strong Northern voice for you and your family. I know that Paul Irngaut in Nunavut and Ken Bolton in the Yukon will ensure the needs of their territories are also heard when they join Dennis in the House of Commons.

As you read through this document, you find these are initiatives to stand up for you, your family, and your community. New Democrats put people first, and that includes individuals and families who live in the North.

To view our full national platform, please visit [www.ndp.ca](http://www.ndp.ca)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack Layton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jack Layton

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| BUILDING THE NORTH - PROTECTING ARCTIC SOVEREIGNTY.....  | <b>4</b>  |
| BUILDING THE NORTH.....                                  | <b>4</b>  |
| ARCTIC SOVEREIGNTY.....                                  | <b>5</b>  |
| FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS PEOPLES.....              | <b>6</b>  |
| MORE JOBS, FEWER RIP-OFFS.....                           | <b>8</b>  |
| FAIRNESS IN THE WORKPLACE.....                           | <b>10</b> |
| BALANCED BUDGETS EVERY YEAR.....                         | <b>10</b> |
| INVESTING IN THE NORTH.....                              | <b>10</b> |
| EDUCATION, TRAINING & APPRENTICESHIPS FOR THE NORTH..... | <b>12</b> |
| POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION.....                            | <b>12</b> |
| TRAINING & APPRENTICESHIPS.....                          | <b>13</b> |
| LITERACY OPPORTUNITY GUARANTEE.....                      | <b>14</b> |
| HELPING NORTHERN PARENTS AND CHILDREN.....               | <b>15</b> |
| CARING FOR NORTHERN CHILDREN.....                        | <b>15</b> |
| AFFORDABLE HOUSING – A NORTHERN CRISIS.....              | <b>16</b> |
| PROTECTING JOBS IN THE NORTH.....                        | <b>17</b> |
| ELDERS - HONOURNG THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO CANADA.....     | <b>17</b> |
| HEALTH CARE - MORE DOCTORS AND NURSES FOR THE NORTH..... | <b>19</b> |
| REDUCING WAIT TIMES.....                                 | <b>19</b> |
| HOMECARE FOR THE NORTH.....                              | <b>20</b> |
| MAKING THE POLLUTERS PAY FOR NORTHERN POLLUTION.....     | <b>21</b> |
| THE NEW ENERGY ECONOMY.....                              | <b>23</b> |
| PROTECTING THE NORTH’S NATURAL HERITAGE.....             | <b>24</b> |
| HUMAN RIGHTS – A NORTHERN TRADITION.....                 | <b>26</b> |

### BUILDING THE NORTH

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will implement initiatives to recognize the contribution of individuals and families who live in the North. We will ensure Northern communities have the tools they need to grow and prosper. We will protect the unique lands and waters which make this a special place to call home.

As some nations raise questions about Canada's jurisdiction in the Arctic, the best way to assert our sovereignty is to build the North. People who live here must be treated fairly. We must be full and equal partners within Canada.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Provide support to the people of the Arctic so they can build communities which are on par with other Canadians. We will ensure Arctic communities are full partners within Canada. We will negotiate governance structures and devolution of authority and resources from Ottawa to the territories.

- Complete the negotiations and fully implement Aboriginal Land and Self-Government Agreements, and follow Justice Thomas Berger's 2006 recommendations concerning the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.
- Build Northern infrastructure like small craft harbours, highways, water plants and airstrips, including appropriate local renewable energy sources, and a deep water port in Iqaluit.
- Support increased scientific research in and about the North.
- Close the Northern Prosperity Gap by increasing the Northern Resident's Tax Deduction.
- Create an economic development agency for the North.
- Support Northern post-secondary education institutions.
- Invest in essential services – such as health care – based on the true cost of delivering these services in the North, rather than the Liberal and Conservative approach of using pan-Canadian benchmarks that short-change Northern people and communities.

Many countries refuse to recognize Canada's jurisdiction over Arctic waters. As rising temperatures melt the ice of the Northwest Passage and other Arctic waterways, large corporations are looking for new routes for massive oil tankers and other traffic. To protect the sensitive environment of the Arctic, it is more important than ever to ensure that Canada's laws apply to the waters surrounding the Arctic Archipelago.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Assert and defend Canadian sovereignty over the land and waters of the Canadian Arctic, including the Northwest Passage, where Canadian law will remain in full force and effect.

- Increase diplomatic efforts, particularly in light of recent comments by the United States and Russia, to ensure that other countries respect our sovereignty.
- Accelerate the sea bed survey work which supports Canada's claim to an extended continental shelf in the Arctic Ocean so it is complete in time for submission to the United Nations in 2013.
- Increase the number of Northern surveillance flights.
- Expand emergency operations exercises involving the Canadian Coast Guard, RCMP, Indian and Northern Affairs, Fisheries, Environment Canada, Territorial Emergency Measures and the Canadian Forces.

To secure our Arctic Sovereignty, Jack Layton and the NDP will:

Ensure that the Arctic is protected and defended through the Coast Guard and civilian enforcement of Canadian Law along with an adequate—but not excessive—military capability.

- Work to ensure the Canadian Coast Guard has the appropriate tools to protect Canadian Sovereignty in the Arctic. This means investing in Icebreakers, not slush-breakers.
- Position more RCMP, Fisheries, and Environment protection officers in the North.
- Provide modern equipment to the Rangers, including advanced communications technology and improved transportation equipment.
- Station new search and rescue personnel and aircraft in the North.

## FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS PEOPLES

It is time to build a new relationship between Canada's government and Aboriginal peoples. We must build a relationship based on honour and respect, not racism and neglect.

Canada took a step forward with the June 11 apology to residential school survivors.

The apology was very significant. Canada finally acknowledged that it was racist and wrong to take children from their families and homes, leave them vulnerable to abuse, and try to kill Aboriginal cultures and languages. We praise Mr. Harper for making the apology.

Now we must look ahead. Recognizing one of the most hurtful wrongs of the past is not an excuse for ignoring the wrongs of the present, nor for scrapping the Kelowna Accord.

Aboriginal Canadians make up a majority of Northerners. However, the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit have the highest levels of poverty, substance abuse, suicide and preventable chronic illness. These unacceptable living conditions must change.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Invest \$5 billion over 5 years in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. This will improve health services, help provide adequate housing, water, and infrastructure to include traditional healing, nutrition, fitness, addiction treatment and suicide prevention. This commitment alone will meet the standard set by the Kelowna Accord. It will build the foundation to end poverty.

Implement aggressive new efforts in education and training of Aboriginal children, youth and adults. We will respect Ottawa's fiduciary obligations and encourage the participation of public and private sectors with the federal government in skills training initiatives. Federal education funding must recognize comparable levels of funding for non-reserve students.

Address the needs of urban First Nations, Métis and Inuit citizens, with special attention to the appropriate development and delivery of affordable housing, public health care, education & training, and economic opportunities.

Help develop community economies by providing infrastructure so First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people can fully participate in the Canadian economy. We will enhance access to capital, skills training and natural resources, and remove the punitive two percent funding cap instituted by the Liberals and maintained by the Harper Conservatives.

Implement Jordan's Principle to guarantee First Nations children are not hurt by jurisdictional disputes between governments. In 2007, the New Democrats introduced the "Jordan's Principle bill" to ensure that children are not denied medical care. The bill was passed unanimously by Parliament. Mr. Harper has not fully implemented it.

Create restorative justice and healing approaches that provide indigenous youth better opportunities and choices.

Ensure that Residential School survivors left out by the current agreement are fairly compensated.

Respect the inherent right to self-government by accelerating settlement of final agreements, and fairly and equitably implementing existing agreements.

Legally recognize the legitimacy and jurisdiction of indigenous governments.

Immediately ratify the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. We will reverse the Conservative and Liberal governments' refusal to sign the Declaration. We will ensure its provisions are properly respected in Canada and incorporated into Canadian law.

Develop a comprehensive land claims policy that genuinely respects Aboriginal title.

Engage with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women and appropriate organizations to ensure that their rights and personal safety are assured.

Ensure equitable participation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and governments in Canada's stewardship of the environment and resources, and on appropriate boards, commissions and international delegations.

Support the efforts of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities to renew indigenous languages in this generation, and develop a corps of those able to help teach indigenous languages by including it in education funding.

*For further details on New Democrats' Aboriginal initiatives, please see our platform titled "Justice for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, at [www.ndp.ca](http://www.ndp.ca)."*

## MORE JOBS, FEWER RIP-OFFS

Thousands of hard-working Northerners are struggling to pay the bills and support their families because they are forced to rely on a succession of insecure, low-wage jobs.

We can do better. Every worker deserves a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, respect in the workplace, and a secure pension that recognizes his or her contribution.

We must change the way things are done in Ottawa.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will act on your priorities at the kitchen table, not just the boardroom table.

We will ensure that opportunities are shared with working families and individuals, not taken away through huge corporate tax giveaways.

Northern workers have the ingenuity, work ethic and desire to be successful.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will ensure that every Northern family and individual can share in our country's opportunities and potential. We will put you and your family first. That will be a big change. It will be a brand new way of doing things in Ottawa.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will implement these initiatives to support the creation of good, stable jobs in the North:

Create a Green-Collar Jobs Fund of \$750 million a year to train new workers and re-train displaced workers. This will provide the skills to install and maintain energy efficient and renewable energy technology. It will support the transition from jobs in older, higher-pollution energy systems.

Appoint a Job Protection Commissioner to investigate major layoffs and shutdowns. The Commissioner will work with workers, the affected businesses, stakeholders (such as banks) and communities to maintain and develop good employment for Canadians.

Create and support pan-Canadian-based strategies. Experts agree we need a pro-active plan to keep our country, our industries, and our workforce in a leading global position.

- All over the world, industries, government and workers are collaborating to build new opportunities for jobs and innovation. Canada has taken the opposite approach of picking winners, like the banks and oil companies, and losers, like manufacturers and the forest industry.
- Sector-based strategies will include: lumber; energy and petrochemicals; aeronautics and transportation; fish and food processing; mining exploration; environmental technologies; and tourism.

- These sector-based strategies will be accompanied by a systematic review of sector-specific tax measures. We will eliminate those that are economically or environmentally counterproductive. We will add new measures to stimulate investment in the broader public interest.
- A Better Buildings Retrofit and Energy Efficiency Strategy that is far more comprehensive than any previous federal actions:
- Re-vamp the ecoEnergy programs to provide low-interest loans and improved grants for energy efficient home and building retrofits, modeled on the City of Toronto's successful Better Buildings Partnership using revolving funds.
- A new program to retrofit low-income homes, replacing the program cancelled by the Harper government.
- Add energy conservation and efficiency criteria to the Canadian Building Code.
- Establish a target to retrofit 7 percent of Canada's building and housing stock each year.

Strengthen community and economic development by creating a new North of 60 Regional Development Agency.

## FAIRNESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Outlaw the use of replacement workers in strikes or lockouts based on the proposed legislation that both Stéphane Dion and Stephen Harper voted against during the 2007 Parliament. Many Northern families have experienced first hand the hardships caused by the use of replacement workers and unfair tactics during strikes. Such tactics can create long-lasting acrimony in the workplace, as well as delay the settlement of labour-management disputes.

Protect workers' pensions. Working with provincial governments we will establish a Canadian pension benefits guarantee fund. This will ensure that workers actually receive the retirement benefits they have earned, even if their employer goes out of business. When Royal Oak Mines went bankrupt close to 150 workers lost their pensions. Workers lost an average of \$900,000.

Respect the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively. Honour the standards and conventions established by the United Nations' International Labour Organization. All workers should be treated with respect at their workplace. We've all heard stories, from across the North, that sometimes workers who try to form unions are treated unfairly by employers.

## BALANCED BUDGETS EVERY YEAR

In the give and take between Ottawa and our territories, it's been much more take than give.

Many Northerners remember how Ottawa's mismanagement forced cutbacks in programs and services from their territorial government. During the 1990s the Liberals forced our territories to pay to Ottawa \$1.25 for each \$1 of revenue generated.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will provide fiscal stability for Northerners:

Introduce and maintain balanced budgets each and every year of a mandate.

Report routinely and openly on budgetary surpluses.

Ensure the proper functioning and independence of the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

## INVESTING IN THE NORTH

The cost of fixing our communities is going up fast.

Recent estimates by GNWT show that inflation is pushing up the cost of community infrastructure projects by 24 percent a year.

We need action. The lack of infrastructure is holding us back.

“Building sound infrastructure supports economic growth and development in areas such as tourism, renewable and non-renewable industries providing for opportunities that can benefit all Yukon communities,” says former Yukon Chamber of Commerce chair Rob Harvey.

In Nunavut, the Conference Board of Canada reported, “An important issue is whether the lack of infrastructure is preventing viable economic opportunities from proceeding for the Territory. Indeed, there are ‘stranded’ resources in Nunavut; that is, economic opportunities that cannot be accessed without the proper capital investments be it physical, human or organizational capital.” (*Infrastructure Planning for Nunavut’s Communities*)

Jack Layton and his team of New Democrats understand the urgent issues facing our cities and communities. We must invest in Northern cities and communities so hard-working families can have communities they are proud to call home. We will:

**Invest the equivalent of one cent of the GST** (a fifth of the GST) in increased funding for our cities and communities by 2011. This will address the massive infrastructure deficit facing our cities and communities and will protect families and individuals from massive property tax increases. This increased commitment, phased in over five years, will include increased investment in:

- Expanded public transit.
- Affordable housing.
- Expanded child care.
- Building retrofits and environmentally friendly renovations.
- Immigrant settlement.
- Roads, highways and border crossings.
- Public libraries and community centres.
- Sewer and water treatment facilities.

## EDUCATION, TRAINING & APPRENTICESHIPS FOR THE NORTH

We have a young population. About half the people who live in Canada's North are below the age of 24. For our young people to thrive and remain competitive economically, we must invest more in education and training, and do a better job with the investments we make. We must also create opportunities for retraining and lifelong learning, as new economic opportunities emerge.

### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Ensure that students don't have crippling debts when they graduate:

- Provide a \$1,000 grant to all undergraduate or equivalent students who qualify for student loans, paid at the beginning of the school year.
- Ensure that no undergraduate or equivalent student who qualifies for student loans will ever have to borrow more than \$4,000 in any given year by capping loans and implementing a new grants system.
- Support students and post-secondary education in the Northern territories with equivalent financing to their government's student access and post-secondary development programs.

Keep tuition fees affordable and improve opportunities in post-secondary education by negotiating with provinces and territories improved, dedicated funding to support and enrich publicly funded and administered post-secondary institutions. This will include new initiatives to increase financial support for in-demand professionals, such as doctors and nurses, linked to them serving in areas where there are shortages.

Reform the Canada Student Loans system, including adding interest relief so students are not forced to start repaying their student loans while they are still completing their education through internship, co-op or placement programs.

Encourage the best young minds to stay here in Canada by increasing funding for university and college-based research and for graduate and post-graduate studies.

## TRAINING & APPRENTICESHIPS

Across the North there is a pressing need for more skills training to help the people who live here get good jobs. We shouldn't have to watch people fly in to do work we could do ourselves if the training were available. For too long, Canada has had no strategy for training, let alone training in the North.

"For the Inuit, the advance of the industrial frontier coupled with the possibility of the loss of traditional resources, reveals how compelling it is that the Inuit should be able to equip themselves with education and training for employment." (Thomas Berger, "The Nunavut Project")

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will take action to increase skills training, apprenticeship and job opportunities for all Northern families. In addition to the training opportunities provided through our Green-Collar Jobs Fund, we will:

Create more opportunities for training by broadening eligibility for EI training benefits. To make it easier for workers to access full- and part-time training programs we will:

- Open the doors to employed Northerners who take leaves from their jobs to participate.
- Extend opportunities to employed Northerners engaged in full-time training and retraining programs who do not otherwise qualify for EI.
- Waive the eligibility waiting period for E.I. benefits when tradespeople are entering courses.
- Develop partnerships with provincial and territorial governments, and labour and management organizations, to make EI a key resource for public training strategies and programs.

Implement an energy efficiency retrofit plan to combat climate change and create thousands of new jobs for skilled tradespeople.

Make the employment of certified apprentices and journeypersons a condition in federal government construction contracts.

Support tradespeople and others who are forced to travel and work away from home with new tax deductions that recognize these expenses.

Support skills upgrades in the health sector through training leaves.

Work with the building and other trades, in collaboration with provincial governments, to set Canada-wide standards for apprenticeship entrance requirements, curriculum and recognition requirements.

Reach out to aboriginal peoples and new Canadians to encourage their participation in skills training, with recognition of their growing role in the labour force and their ability to fill skills shortages.

Work with provincial governments, industry and the trade union movement to develop a more effective system of job placement.

Expand the number of apprenticeable trades in Canada.

Develop a more effective approach to recognizing prior learning, including for foreign workers and new immigrants.

## LITERACY OPPORTUNITY GUARANTEE

According to the Yukon Literacy Coalition, there are some Yukon communities where 40 percent of people have difficulty reading. In the NWT, about 42 percent of adults do not have the level of literacy needed to get a job today. In Nunavut the figure is about 72 percent.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Commit to the goal of a fully literate Canada by spearheading a comprehensive literacy strategy.

Invest in long-term, sustainable funding to meet Canada-wide literacy targets, including the creation of a Canadian Literacy Agency to work with the territories and our community partners to fund, monitor and measure progress in achieving these targets.

Formally recognize the “right to learn” of all Canadians – to develop the literacy and essential skills they need to participate fully in our social, cultural, economic and political life.

Implement a “literacy lens” across federal departments to make literacy a government-wide priority.

## HELPING NORTHERN PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Across the North – particularly in small communities like Gameti, Old Crow and Clyde River – many individuals and families are living in poverty. With the high cost of living, too many Northern parents find it difficult to meet their children’s needs, even for basics like food and clothing.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will take immediate steps to close the prosperity gap and help Northern families make ends meet:

Phase in a new Child Benefit. This benefit, modelled on the existing Canada Child Tax Benefit, will expand in phases to \$5000 a year per child, and consolidate the current piecemeal system of benefits and tax credits for children into a single, better, non-taxable monthly cheque to parents.

Make substantial investments in affordable, accessible, child care for all Canadians.

Stipulate that territorial governments will no longer be permitted to claw back Canadian Child Benefit Supplement benefits from families receiving social assistance benefits.

## CARING FOR NORTHERN CHILDREN

Finding good child care in the North can be a real challenge. For example, in Nunavut there are only about 1,000 child care spaces. That number includes aboriginal head start programs, pre-school programs as well as full-time and part-time after-school programs. Many more spaces are needed.

In consultation with the territories, Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Ensure a healthy head start for kids. We will develop a Children’s Nutrition Initiative to support and expand territorial and local programs that provide healthy meals to school children.

Establish and adequately fund a Canada-wide child care and early learning program. We will make high quality, accessible, affordable, non-profit and licensed child care available to Canadian families, including aboriginal Canadians.

Enact the New Democrats’ *Early Learning and Child Care Act* – which has already passed Second Reading in Parliament - to establish the program in law for the first time in Canada.

These initiatives will create 150,000 new child care spaces in the first year, growing to 220,000 spaces per year in the fourth year.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING – A NORTHERN CRISIS

Northerners have the highest unmet housing need in Canada.

In the NWT, 29 percent of households have some form of housing problem, while 16 percent or 2,260 households are identified as core need.

In Nunavut the picture is even worse. The *Nunavut Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan* identified a need for over 5,700 new public housing units over the next ten years. An additional 1,000 existing units need retrofits.

The Yukon reports nearly 16 percent of households are in core need.

To help ensure Northerners will have adequate and affordable housing, Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Implement a durable, comprehensive and fully-funded affordable housing strategy that meets Canada's international obligations, as set out by the United Nations. We will build towards the 10-year goal of the One Percent Solution – with one percent of federal spending allocated for truly affordable housing. We will implement the following programmes:

- **New homes:** Non-profit and co-operative homes for families and single individuals, including students. Specific housing targets will be set for Aboriginals, seniors, women and others who currently bear the biggest burden of housing insecurity and homelessness.
- **Special needs:** Funding for supportive housing for people with special physical and mental health needs.
- **Upgrading homes:** Funding to expand federal housing rehabilitation programs to maintain and retrofit existing substandard homes.
- **Homelessness services and transitions:** Funding to extend federal homelessness programs to ensure that services and transitional housing are available across Canada.

We will fund the "Bring Canada Home" strategy with a combination of new revenues and partial reinvestment of the net income from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, excluding contributions from provinces and territories in cost-shared initiatives.

## PROTECTING JOBS IN THE NORTH

Many Northerners have seasonal jobs such as working in exploration camps. During the off-season, if there are no other jobs in their communities, they need access to Employment Insurance. Too many workers find that even though they paid into EI, they are not eligible for coverage.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Reject Stephen Harper's plan to create a new Crown Corporation for EI. Instead, we will guarantee that 100 percent of EI premium revenue will be used to provide and improve EI benefits and training for workers. These funds must not be diverted to general revenue as was done by Liberal governments.

Increase the number of unemployed Canadians who are covered by Employment Insurance to 80 percent, from the current rate under 40 percent, by making changes based on insurance principles.

Recognize the realities of seasonal employment in the North by basing EI benefits on the best 12 weeks of employment earnings.

Implement a caregiver benefit to provide up to six months of EI benefits while caring for an infirm or elderly family member.

## ELDERS -- HONOURING THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO CANADA

Elders have a vital role to play in Northern communities by passing on their wisdom, knowledge and experience to younger generations. Unfortunately, the high cost of living is forcing many Elders to live in conditions which do not respect their dignity. This is not honouring our Elders.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will take immediate action to recognize the contribution made by Elders:

Amend the Canada Pension Plan so that Elders who have not applied for pension benefits that they have earned – usually because they don't know about the system – are deemed to have applied when eligible. These Elders will receive their pension benefits accordingly, and retroactively when necessary.

Ensure that every Elder who is entitled to Old Age Security (OAS) and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) benefits receives them automatically.

Ensure that all legal residents in Canada over 65 years are entitled to receive OAS and – where their income circumstances warrant – the GIS.

Reimburse Elders who have unfairly lost millions of dollars in OAS and CPP payments due to the Harper government's accounting error on the Consumer Price Index.

## HEALTH CARE -- MORE DOCTORS AND NURSES FOR THE NORTH

### REDUCING WAIT TIMES

Of the 20 doctors working in Nunavut, only nine call the territory home. All nine live in the Baffin. The Kivalliq and Kitikmeot regions have no permanent doctors.

In the NWT and the Yukon the picture is similar. Part-time doctors from the south are filling vacancies. The North is also suffering from the nationwide shortage of nurses meaning many communities have had to go without staff at the nursing station.

New Democrats will ensure that Northerners have timely access to primary care health professionals—usually within 24 hours. We will reduce wait times for services through hiring new nurses and doctors, investments and innovation through sharing best practices.

### **Jack Layton and his team of New Democrats will cut wait times, train new health professionals and defend Medicare:**

Train substantially more health care professionals – including more doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and midwives – to ease staffing shortages and cut wait times. We will work with the provinces and territories to make it happen:

- We will implement a program designed to increase the number of doctors and nurses trained in Canada by 50%. As part of that program, we will offer to forgive the student loans of health professionals who commit to dedicate the first ten years of their careers to family medicine.
- This program will give Canada up to 28,000 additional nurses, doctors and other health professionals to care for you and your family.
- Work with the provinces, territories and all public health care providers to adopt “best practices” and implement an innovation strategy – as has already been successfully demonstrated in leading public clinics and hospitals. This will include:
- Invest in the expansion of drug and alcohol addiction and prevention programs – including harm reduction programs – in partnership with the provinces and territories.
- Establish Mental Health Crisis Response Centres, modeled after the ones created by the Manitoba NDP that have successfully diverted people from Emergency Rooms, allowed health care professionals to provide better care, and reduced waiting times.

- Work with the provinces and territories to expand the use of nurse practitioners and multi-disciplinary clinics, taking the strain off other parts of the health care system.
- Expand home care to reduce pressures on families and women, who are now providing care, and to further cut hospital backlogs and wait lists.
- Protect the system and stop privatization. Our health care system is both a cherished Canadian institution and an important competitive advantage we have as Canadians. We will:
  - Prohibit the use of federal funding to support any form of parallel, private for-profit service delivery and fully enforce the provisions of the Canada Health Act.
  - Require transparency and accountability by provinces and territories on their compliance with and enforcement of the principles of the Canada Health Act, including reporting public and not-for-profit delivery versus private delivery.

Work with the territories to develop long term strategies to better manage chronic diseases, such as diabetes, and lifelong medical disabilities and conditions, such as autism.

## HEMOCARE FOR THE NORTH

Many Northern families find it difficult to access long-term care and home care. Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Create a pan-Canadian home care program, as recommended in the Romanow Report on the future of Medicare, including:

- Helping people stay healthy at home and avoid hospital visits.
- Home mental health care case management.
- Post-acute medical care.
- Post-acute rehabilitation.
- Palliative home care.

Our home care program will give 100,000 more Canadian families access to home care. It will significantly reduce wait times for Elders and hospital patients.

## MAKING THE POLLUTERS PAY FOR NORTHERN POLLUTION

The North began suffering the effects of climate change long before Southern Canada began to see changing weather patterns. While we are experiencing the most dramatic change caused by global warming, the cause of this problem is located in Southern Canada and overseas.

Northerners have also seen our environment polluted by airborne pollutants, including persistent Organic Pollutants like PCBs, and by water pollution from sources like the tar sands.

Jack Layton and the New Democrats will take action against these sources of pollution.

Implement Jack Layton's legislation to achieve deep, science-based reductions of climate pollution in the post-2012 period. The Bill is based on the *Case for Deep Reductions* report by the Pembina Institute, the David Suzuki Foundation, and the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy. This will establish:

- A long-term target to reduce Canadian greenhouse gas emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.
- A medium-term target to bring emissions 25% below 1990 levels by 2020.

These are the medium and long-term targets consistent with the Kyoto process.

To hold government accountable for meeting these targets, Jack Layton's legislation will:

- Provide authority for the government to make regulations in order to meet the targets and set penalties for those who contravene regulations passed under the Act.

Establish an Industry Innovation Fund to help businesses reduce their energy use. The fund will start with \$600 million, and we will invest additional funds after that.

Set leading air quality standards for each air pollutant defined in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and establish new energy efficiency regulations.

Implement our clean air and fighting climate change program:

- Make big polluters pay. We will put a price on carbon through a 'cap-and-trade' carbon pricing system which establishes hard limits on pollution and a tough charge on polluters who exceed the limits. Revenue generated from this system will depend on the market price of carbon each year. It will start out at \$35 per tonne and will likely grow to at least \$50 per tonne by year four.

- **All** revenue will be applied to environmental solutions.
- Implement Jack Layton's \$3 billion Green-Collar Jobs Plan, including a fund for training. We will invest \$750 million into this fund every year.
- Introduce an Environmental automobile strategy to:
  - Invest in Canadian production of low-emission cars to ensure our auto industry remains viable, with aggressive incentives for manufacturers who develop and manufacture cars in Canada with low or zero greenhouse gas emissions.
  - Bring in mandatory vehicle emission standards for all vehicles sold in Canada.

Require vehicle fuel consumption labelling so Northern residents have better information about every vehicle's environmental performance and efficiency savings.

Reduce pollution through an Early Adopters Program that encourages the purchase of commercial electric hybrid vehicles.

Take more poisons out of people's homes, consumer products and communities by recognizing the "toxic use substitution principle." We will require the Minister to assess and identify toxic substances that can and should be substituted with safer products.

Introduce Canada Environment Action Bonds, a secure new investment that Canadians can purchase to help fight climate change by raising capital for environmentally-friendly infrastructure and renewable energy.

- The bond will offer a government-guaranteed rate of return.
- As the price of climate pollution increases, these bonds will close the price gap so that the development of renewable energy is price competitive with the development of fossil fuel resources.

Invest in environmental solutions and incentives to encourage individual Canadians and small businesses to make better choices for the environment, and to reward them when they do. These solutions will include the Better Buildings Retrofit and Energy Efficiency Initiative.

Introduce new energy efficiency regulations on energy-using products such as major appliances and furnaces that meet or better the most stringent standards in North America.

Stable, annual transit funding, combining an extra cent from the existing gas tax with revenue from making big polluters pay, investing \$4 billion in transit over the first four years of our program.

Give the Environment Minister the authority to designate “significant areas” such as more heavily-polluting areas or more sensitive areas for specialized information-gathering and targeted action.

Ensure that the federal government and its agencies lead by example in their own environmental practices, including emission reductions, product purchases, recycling, and sustainable development strategies.

## THE NEW ENERGY ECONOMY

A crucial part of reducing pollution and fighting global warming must be substantial new investments in renewable energy solutions. With the distances we travel and our climate, Northerners are the largest consumers of energy per-person in Canada. These initiatives will benefit Northerners through both lower energy costs and a cleaner environment.

We need to unite Canadians behind a strategy for our country’s long-term energy security. We will implement a comprehensive New Energy Economy Strategy. It will be developed through consultation and a cooperative effort of all stakeholders from coast to coast to coast, including, but not restricted to, the federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal governments, unions and energy providers.

We must plan now for a future where our energy consumption is drastically reduced and where all our energy comes from renewable sources. We need to make sure that our energy policies put the needs of Canadians first.

Here’s how Jack Layton and the New Democrats will help Northerners succeed in the New Energy Economy:

Stop the massive tax breaks and subsidies to the big oil and gas companies, and nuclear power.

Halt any new tar sands development until carbon emissions are capped, significant environmental and health impacts are addressed, and protected areas are set aside.

- We will improve and enforce appropriate federal regulation of all environmental impacts – air, water, land, fish and wildlife – that arise from the exploitation of Canada’s oil and gas reserves.
- Because the need for oil and gas will not disappear overnight, we will discourage bulk exports of our petroleum resources to the US and China, and encourage responsible processing here in Canada. This will keep the economic benefits and jobs in Canada and temper the unchecked exploitation of our resources.

Introduce new financial incentives for clean power, including from solar, wind, water, biomass and other renewable sources for electricity production and from industrial co-generation and small-scale, sustainable community facilities.

Establish the Canadian Renewable Energy Agency. The agency will be responsible for encouraging and developing renewable energy in Canada. It will:

- Work cooperatively with all stakeholders towards meeting 35 percent of Canada's energy needs with renewable energy by 2020, including hard targets for renewable fuels, biomass, wind power and other renewables.
- Provide funding for developing and supporting renewable energy programs.

Make energy security and environmental standards priorities in trade negotiations, including putting energy front and centre in any new trade negotiations with the United States.

Remove bureaucratic barriers to the development, manufacture, and licensing of zero emission vehicles in Canada.

## PROTECTING THE NORTH'S NATURAL HERITAGE

### Safe Water

Having a clean source of water is vital to maintaining good health, but people in many Northern communities must regularly boil their water. In the NWT, for example, there have been nine boil water advisories in the last three years, two of which are still in place.

To improve access to clean drinking water for you and your family, Jack Layton and the New Democrats will implement a comprehensive new Clean Water Act. We will:

Establish enforceable guidelines for drinking water quality, starting with standards for First Nations reserves, and working with provinces and territories to make sure that all Canadians have clean, safe water in their homes and communities.

Improve water quality monitoring and the enforcement of water quality standards by funding and implementing a comprehensive Water Quality Audit, in conjunction with provinces, First Nations and territories to ensure clean and safe water for all.

Invest in new municipal water and wastewater infrastructure, and establish national standards to require a minimum of secondary treatment for all Canadian municipalities.

Ban bulk fresh water exports from Canada by federal law.

Set mandatory water efficiency standards for appliances and begin to phase out inefficient technologies.

Create a \$10 million Safe Water Fund to address issues of emerging pollutants and help communities monitor water quality.

## **Clean Waters**

Climate change is melting the Arctic ice, making the Arctic Ocean a short cut for shipping, including huge oil tankers. An environmental disaster like the Exxon Valdez oil spill in the Arctic would cause irreparable damage to this fragile eco-system.

To protect the Arctic Ocean and all of Canada's waters, Jack Layton and his team of New Democrats will:

Assert and defend Canadian sovereignty over the land and waters of the Canadian Arctic, including the Northwest Passage, to ensure Canadian law remains in full force and effect.

Reduce the oil spill response times in the Arctic by completing a response gap analysis and investing in federal and private sector capacity speed up response times.

Deal with toxic industrial effluent by strengthening the enforcement of existing regulations.

Provide national and international leadership to prevent build-up and counteract the harmful effects of marine debris.

Provide the resources to ensure existing legislation regarding oily bilge water discharge and management will be effectively enforced.

## **Protected Wilderness**

Canada's North has some of the most impressive and pristine wilderness areas on the planet. The ecology is also fragile, however, and without adequate protection these areas could be harmed by poorly planned resource development.

To protect the North and all of Canada's valuable wilderness, Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Work toward a model of sustainable forest management in Canada's boreal forests, in collaboration with provinces, territories and First Nations. This will include the establishment of appropriate protected areas, and the development and promotion of a forest stewardship program that will sustain our boreal forests and our forest industries, with input from stakeholders.

Legislate an explicit ban on bulk water exports. The North has the largest reserves of pristine fresh water in the world. Already there have been proposals to ship fresh water from Great Bear Lake to the United States. These exports would drain Northern lakes and potentially devastate Northern ecosystems.

Implement a parks and wilderness plan that reflects Canadians' strong commitment to preserve our natural heritage. We will:

- Complete the National Parks system.
- Establish a nationally representative system of Marine Protected areas and complete the integrated Management Plans of our three oceans.
- Ensure that the integrity of parks and protected areas is not compromised by industrial activity or inappropriate development.
- Establish a conservation fund to preserve important natural wildlife habitat.
- Improve endangered species protection.
- Develop a plan to help plants and animals to adapt to climate change.
- Implement the National Action Plan on Aquatic Invasive Species and ensure that acceptable treatment for ballast water is implemented and enforced.

Establish the Environment Commissioner as a separate and independent Officer of Parliament to provide effective oversight of the government's environmental performance.

## HUMAN RIGHTS – A NORTHERN TRADITION

Many advances in the recognition of Aboriginal rights have been won through court action. Many Aboriginal organizations accessed the court challenges program so they could afford these court battles. Stephen Harper cut this vital program. Jack Layton and the New Democrats will:

Restore the court challenges program, eliminated by the Harper government, which funded equality seeking groups to go to court to protect their rights in order to establish a fair jurisprudence.

Immediately ratify the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. We will reverse the Conservative and Liberal governments' refusal to sign the Declaration. We will ensure its provisions are properly respected in Canada and incorporated into Canadian law.

Work with the trade union movement to ensure full respect for labour rights in Canada, including for non-Canadians working legally here as well as for workers in Canadian-owned industries abroad.

Immediately implement the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.