

# PLAN FOR THE NORTH

*Jack Layton*

**Jack Layton**  
 **NDP**





# MY COMMITMENT TO YOU LEADERSHIP YOU CAN TRUST TO GIVE YOUR FAMILY A BREAK

For too long, Ottawa has misunderstood Northern priorities. It's invested in military hardware, while ignoring vital ports and roads. It's rewarded big polluters, while ignoring climate change. And it's abandoned families in the face of skyrocketing prices and doctor shortages.

Now, more than ever, the North needs a strong partner in Ottawa. Someone who will invest in the region's biggest assets – its people and its communities.

My New Democrat team and I are working to be that partner.

Our Plan for the North focuses on practical first steps that matter to you. We'll improve health services, support local mining and fishing, invest in housing and rural infrastructure, and help make your life more affordable.

And we'll do it by building respectful partnerships with territorial governments and Aboriginal communities.

New Democrats are ready to deliver for the North. And we won't stop until the job is done.



**Jack Layton**  
Leader of Canada's New Democrats

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**Fighting for Western Arctic: Dennis Bevington** was successful in pushing for a study on Northern Economic Development by the Northern Development Committee and fought for the committee to include a recommendation to increase the Northern Residents Tax Deduction.

# AFFORDABILITY PRACTICAL NEXT STEPS

## 1.1 Lowering Household Costs on Energy Bills and Renovations

- We will remove the federal sales tax from home heating to give homes in Canada's North and High Arctic a break;
- We will introduce a permanent ecoEnergy retrofit program to cut your home heating bills permanently, reduce greenhouse gases and create jobs;
- We will provide an Inter-generational Home Retrofit Program to help families retrofit their homes to accommodate senior family members.

## 1.2 Cracking Down on Excessive Credit Card Rates and Bank Card Fees

- We will ensure Canadians have access to credit cards with interest rates no higher than 5% above prime;
- We will give federal financial regulators new powers to identify and ban excessive interest rates on credit cards, payday loans, store cards and other forms of consumer credit;
- We will oblige lenders to provide clearer, easy-to-understand disclosure of the real costs of credit cards, store cards and payday loans;
- We will end unfair bank and credit card transaction charges for both consumers and small businesses.

## 1.3 Increasing Northern Residents' Tax Deduction

- We will move to increase the residency portion of the Northern Residents Tax Deduction and have this portion of the deduction indexed to a Northern inflation measurement.

## 1.4 Helping Lift Children and Families Out of Poverty

- As a practical first step to eliminate child poverty, we will combine existing supports like the Child Tax Benefit to create a non-taxable Child Benefit and increase the support steadily by up to \$700 per child over the next four years. This will be in addition to the current Universal Child Care Benefit;
- We will table legislation that will set goals and targets for poverty reduction in consultation with the provincial, territorial, municipal and Aboriginal governments and with non-governmental organizations.

## 1.5 Ensuring Your Employment Insurance Benefits Are There When You Need Them

- We will extend Employment Insurance stimulus measures until unemployment falls to pre-recession levels;
- In practical steps and as finances permit, we will restore the integrity of the Employment Insurance program by amending the Employment Insurance Act to:
  - Eliminate the two-week waiting period;
  - Return the qualifying period to a minimum of 360 hours of work, regardless of the regional rate of unemployment;
  - Raise the rate of benefits to 60 percent and base benefits on the best 12 weeks in the qualifying period;
  - Improve the quality of monitoring of training and re-training;
  - Close the loophole that deprives you of EI support if you lose your job while accessing special benefits such as maternity, compassionate care or sickness leave.







**Fighting for Western Arctic: Dennis Bevington** introduced a Private Member's bill which would accelerate devolution and provide the NWT with greater financial capacity and reduce the amount of control the Federal government holds over Northerners.

# JOBS AND PENSIONS PRACTICAL NEXT STEPS

## 2.1 Strengthening Pensions and Retirement Security

- We will work with the provinces to bring about increases to your Canada Pension Plan benefit, with the eventual goal to double the benefits you receive;
- We will work with the provinces to build in the flexibility for you and your employer to make voluntary contributions to your individual public pension account;
- We will amend federal bankruptcy legislation to move pensioners and long-term disability recipients to the front of the line of creditors when their employers enter court protection or declare bankruptcy;
- We will increase the annual Guaranteed Income Supplement to a sufficient level in the first budget to lift every senior in Canada out of poverty immediately.

## 2.2 Reducing the Small Business Tax Rate

- We will reduce the small business tax rate from 11 percent to 9 percent to support a sector of our economy that creates nearly half of all new jobs in Canada.

## 2.3 Establishing a Job Creation Tax Credit

- We will introduce a Job Creation Tax Credit that will provide up to \$4,500 per new hire;
- Employers will receive a one-year rebate on the employer contributions for the Canada Pension Plan and Employment Insurance premiums for each new employee hired (for new positions created only);
- Companies and organizations that keep a new employee for 12 months or more will be eligible for a retention bonus - a \$1,000 non-refundable tax credit. This initiative will help create 200,000 family-supporting jobs a year;
- We will empower a Jobs Protection Commissioner to step in when there's a major layoff or shutdown, to work with workers, employers, banks and communities to maintain employment;
- We will invest in youth job creation to stem the tide of young people leaving their Northern communities to find work in other parts of the country.





# HEALTH CARE PRACTICAL NEXT STEPS

## 3.1 Strengthening Healthcare with a New 10 Year Accord

- We will negotiate a new ten-year health accord with the provinces and territories in 2014. The accord will guarantee a continued strong federal contribution – including the 6% escalator to Canada’s public health care system – in return for a clear, monitored and enforced commitment to respect the principles of the Canada Health Act and to the integrity and modernization of health care.
- We will work with provincial and territorial partners to:
  - Promote a clear commitment to the single-payer system;
  - Make progress on primary care;
  - Take appropriate steps to replace fee-for-service delivery;
  - Take first steps to reduce the costs of prescription medicines for Canadians, employers and governments;
  - Extend coverage to out-of-hospital services like home care and long-term care.

## 3.2 Addressing the Health Needs of Northerners

- We will replace the Conservatives’ Nutrition North Program with a more fair, balanced and effective food subsidy program to be developed after consultation with Dene and Inuit organizations, public, Dene and Inuit governments, retailers and consumer groups;
- We will support the creation and strengthening of pre-natal and early childhood programs through developing family resource centres and extending the Dene and Inuit Head Start Program to include every Dene and Inuit community;
- We will introduce, An Act Respecting a National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, and work in partnership with Dene and Inuit organizations and public, Dene and Inuit governments to develop, implement and support evidence- based measures to lower the tragically high rate of suicide in Dene and Inuit communities;

- We will work in partnership with the health authorities in each region of Inuit Nunaat to ensure that the required resources are available to allow them to reduce the high rates of tuberculosis in Inuit communities.

## 3.3 Investing in More Family Doctors and Nurses

- We will work with the provinces and territories to address the shortage of doctors, nurses and other health care professionals by training 1,200 new doctors over the next 10 years, adding 6,000 new training spaces for nurses over 6 years and substantially increasing the number training spaces for other health professionals;
- In collaboration with the provinces and territories, we will establish programs aimed at recruiting and supporting low-income, rural and aboriginal medical students;
- We will substantially increase the number of other health professionals including psychiatric nurses, nurse practitioners, midwives, technicians, nurse aides and patient service associates;
- We will grow the pool of new family doctors by forgiving their student loans if they stay in family practice for ten years.;
- We will strengthen equity programs to recruit and support more of the rural and Aboriginal medical students who are most likely to practice in remote areas;
- We will launch a Quality Home Care Plan to help 100,000 Canadians each year get the care they need at home instead of checking into an overcrowded hospital;
- We will launch a Long-Term Care Initiative to work with provinces and territories to substantially increase the number of non-profit spaces for seniors, as part of the next phase of Medicare;
- We will launch a Long-Term Care Initiative to work with provinces and territories to substantially increase the number of non-profit spaces for seniors, as part of the next phase of Medicare.







**Fighting for Western Arctic: Dennis Bevington** fought for Northern voices to be heard during the National Energy Board's review of Arctic off-shore drilling.

# OUR NATURAL RESOURCES PRACTICAL NEXT STEPS

## 4.1 Strengthening Our Northern Resources

- We will develop sector-based strategies for lumber, pulp and paper, steel, mining, tourism and telecommunications, to ensure that industries in Canada's North and Arctic regions have the tools to innovate and compete globally;
- We will support mining exploration in the North with targeted tax incentives and a permanent Flow-Through Shares program in the mining sector — giving continuing support to junior prospecting firms that soften the boom-and-bust cycle of the mining sector;
- We will develop a national forestry strategy that will identify economic measures needed to grow Canada's forestry sector sustainably and support community-based forestry initiatives.

## 4.2 Extending Tax Credits for Job-Supporting Investment

- We will extend the Accelerated Capital Cost Allowance for eligible machinery and equipment acquired before 2016. This would apply to machinery and equipment for primary use in Canada for the manufacturing or processing of goods for sale or lease;
- We will extend eligibility for the mineral exploration tax for an additional three years beyond March 31, 2012. This will apply to flow-through share agreements entered into on or before March 31, 2015;
- We will give tradespeople and apprentices whose job sites are located at least 80kms away from their ordinary residence a tax deduction for their travel and accommodation costs.

## 4.3 Ensuring Foreign Investment Delivers Quality Canadian Jobs

- We will strengthen the Investment Canada Act by:
  - Reducing the threshold for investments subject to review to \$100 million;
  - Providing explicit, transparent criteria for the “net benefit to Canada” test, with an emphasis on the impact of foreign investment on communities, jobs, pensions and new capital investments;
  - Requiring public hearings that allow for community input into decisions on both the assessment of “net benefit” and conditions to apply to the investment;
  - Ensuring public disclosure and enforcement of all commitments undertaken by potential investors.

## 4.4 Protecting our Fisheries

- We will require aquaculture operations to meet highest environmental standards with meaningful community input;
- We will redirect DFO funding toward habitat protection, monitoring and enhancement of wild Pacific salmon populations;
- We will legislate and enforce tanker moratorium on BC's inland waters, North Coast (specifically the Inside Passage, and the Hecate Strait);
- We will prohibit the breeding and import of genetically modified fish and their introduction into the Canadian food system for human consumption.





# NORTHERN COMMUNITIES THAT WORK

## PRACTICAL NEXT STEPS

### 5.1 Addressing the Northern housing crisis

- We will enact the NDP's legislation to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for all Canadians;
- We will restore funding for the homeowners Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP), and the Affordable Housing Initiative to increase the supply of affordable housing, in partnership with provinces and territories;
- We will provide significant new funding for affordable and social housing;
- Program to help families retrofit their homes to accommodate senior family members.

### 5.2 Investing in Northern Infrastructure

- We will develop a stable, predictable Canadian infrastructure plan, to include:
  - Create a Northern Highways investment fund and begin with completion of the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk link, followed by eventual completion of the Mackenzie Valley Highway;
  - Federal Investment in major green energy projects across the country;
  - Clean water treatment upgrades;
  - Continuing current federal infrastructure funding commitments, like those under the Building Canada Fund.

### 5.3 Ensuring all Northerners Have Access to Broadband

- We will apply the proceeds from the advanced wireless spectrum auction to ensure all Canadians in Northern and Arctic communities will have quality high-speed broadband internet access;
- We will expect the major internet carriers to contribute financially to this goal;
- We will rescind the 2006 Conservative industry-oriented directive to the CRTC and direct the regulator to stand up for the public interest, not just the major telecommunications companies;
- We will enshrine “net neutrality” in law, end price gouging and “net throttling,” with clear rules for Internet Service Providers (ISPs), enforced by the CRTC;
- We will prohibit all forms of usage-based billing (UBB) by Internet Service Providers (ISPs).

### 5.4 Hiring More Police to Protect Northern Communities

- We will keep our communities safe from crime by investing in a balanced, effective approach based on prevention, policing, and prosecution;
- We will ensure that communities have the resources they need to invest in crime prevention programs, particularly those targeting youth, by increasing federal support of crime prevention initiatives from \$65 million to \$100 million per year;
- We will work with the provinces, territories, and First Nations communities to provide stable, multi-year funding to eventually put at least 2,500 new police officers on the streets, and keep them there permanently.





# FIRST NATIONS, INUIT AND MÉTIS PRACTICAL NEXT STEPS

## 6.1 Building a New Relationship


- We will build a new partnership on a nation-to-nation basis with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people across the country to restore a central element of social justice in Canada and reconcile the hopes of Aboriginal people with those of all Canadians
- We will establish this new partnership by forging a new relationship with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, fostering economic opportunity and lasting prosperity, ending the discrimination still faced by Aboriginal people in Canada and supporting the process of healing the harms of past injustices. We will begin by:
  - We will remove the punitive 2% funding cap on Indian and Northern Affairs Canada transfers to aboriginal communities;
  - We will increase access to capital for aboriginal business development so that First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the North and High Arctic can fully participate in the Canadian economy;
  - We will improve Northern and Arctic infrastructure such as housing, drinking water facilities, roads and other essential services;
  - We will improve health in First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities by investing in adequate housing, clean water, traditional healing, addiction treatment, mental health support and other services;
  - We will work in partnership with the health authorities in each region to ensure that mental health services are significantly strengthened, with a particular focus on addressing the intergenerational transmission of historical trauma;
- We will work in partnership with the language authorities in each region of Inuit Nunaat to help them preserve and promote the Inuit language;
- We will address the education deficit with a \$1 billion per year investment over the next 4 years in education funding and learning services provided to First Nations children, youth and adults in both K-12 as well post-secondary levels;
- We will support the initiative known as Shannen's Dream to ensure that all First Nations children get the same education chances as non Native children.
- We will respect the right of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities to be consulted on and to share in the management of natural resources on their traditional lands;
- We will accelerate the process for land claim settlements and self-government agreements with proper implementation funding;
- We will work in partnership with the language authorities in each region of Inuit Nunaat to help them preserve and promote the Inuit language;
- We will work in partnership to fully implement the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.







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