



GREEN NEW DEAL

Results of the 2019 Green New Deal Meeting

On June 18, 2019 in Fredericton a meeting was held to invite public discussion of the idea of a ‘**Green New Deal**’ to address the climate crisis.

The **Green New Deal** is a concept promoted by Canadian civil society groups to dramatically cut greenhouse gas emissions, respect Indigenous rights and knowledge, create many good jobs in a new economy and build inclusive communities in the process. The well-advertised meeting drew 150 people who spent their evening debating what should be in or out of the plan. Twelve community groups co-hosted the gathering.

You will find here summaries of comments received during the round-table discussions. People were asked what they did (green lines), and did not (red lines), want to see in a **Green New Deal** for Fredericton, New Brunswick and Canada.

We know our society needs to transition away from polluting, climate change-accelerating economic activity. A **Green New Deal** draws on the lessons of the **New Deal**, many of which, during the 1930s put millions of people to work on projects to benefit the common good, which live on today. The concept warrants our attention here in Canada and New Brunswick: in short order we will have to **zero-out carbon emissions** and embrace a **circular economy**¹ if future generations are to have a livable climate.

We invite you to review these findings and reflect on what they could mean in your life and work. **Are you on a municipal council that could adopt these concepts in its operations? Are you a provincial or federal politician crafting programs and policies to safeguard your constituents in the turbulent years ahead? Or are you a private**

citizen, seeking a path forward in uncertain times, wanting to contribute to a community push for a Green New Deal?

Whatever your motivation, if you want to work on projects that promote the **Green New Deal** why not join the local Chapter of the Council of Canadians, or any of the other collaborating groups listed in this brochure. Some have monthly meetings and activities promoting greater awareness and action on the climate crisis and the **Green New Deal**.

¹ Wikipedia defines a circular economic system as one aimed at eliminating waste and the continual use of resources. Circular systems employ reuse, sharing, repair, refurbishment, remanufacturing and recycling to create a close-loop system, minimising the use of resource inputs and the creation of waste, pollution and carbon emissions.



CLEAN ENERGY: BRING IT ON! (72*)

Electricity generation is a major source of GHG emissions in NB. Feedback here shows a marked desire for more renewable energy on our grid, fast. With the exception of two comments in favour of nuclear and waste burning, all comments reflected the growing availability of, and technical/economic feasibility of renewable energy solutions to the climate crisis. Opinion strongly endorsed government investment to transition from fossil fuels and help those negatively affected to reskill, retrain and redeploy in the new green energy economy.



STOP FUNDING FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE (56*)

Response to this category drew the most comments on the red line side, and reflected a deep desire to stop/reverse society’s addiction to fossil fuels (and related infrastructure) as the first step in addressing catastrophic climate change. Comments called for no new—exploration—extraction—fracking—pipelines—coal plants, or nuclear installations. Comments reflected the sentiment, regarding climate change, that “If you want to get out of a hole, the first thing to do is stop digging.”



ENHANCE SOCIAL WELL-BEING (70*)

There was large support for universal/guaranteed basic income for all. This may reflect a desire to rectify social/economic inequality in Fredericton and beyond. Tied to this were desires for a living wage and shorter work-week as means to sharing employment, thus strengthening community. New means to finance social justice measures, lifting up marginalized groups and ensuring indigenous right to self-determination were among the recurring items. New means of measuring economic health (not GDP) and new determinants of public health were mentioned, as was redeploying existing assets to better serve human needs (eg. Canada Post Delivering Community Power).



STOP FUNDING CORPORATE WELFARE (45*)

The second-most cited red line is governments’ continued practice of directing tax dollars to corporations. ‘Corporate welfare’ robs budgets of much-needed funds for social programs and is frequently used for destructive (extractive) industrial projects and/or to enrich already profitable franchises such as those owned by the Irvings in New Brunswick. A **Green New Deal** stops corporate welfare, redirects funds to green employment and penalizes those avoiding paying their fair share of taxes in their home province.



LET’S GREEN THE ECONOMY (68*)

Comments here reflect a desire for clean, green jobs and fewer damaging, non-renewable resource jobs. Comments skewed towards wanting a ‘circular economy,’ one where waste products are turned into new products which continue to circulate, without polluting, for a long time or forever. Consistent with this is the idea of designing for durability, and extended producer responsibility (for taking back electronics, packaging, etc.) and the right to repair goods as a means of combatting planned obsolescence and goods going prematurely to landfill.



STOP ERODING PUBLIC WELFARE (19*)

Growing concern over economic inequality and the exclusion of whole sectors of society from decision-making gave rise to nineteen comments regarding gender equity, religious inclusion, murdered and missing indigenous women, immigration and corporate capture of universities. Essential services are being privatized for profit under the current economic system. People want these services to remain in the public realm, enhanced, and funded fairly.



DEMAND RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT (54*)

Imagine having a government that actually listens, and act on, what the people want. This desire was strongly expressed in calls for proportional voting systems and credible programs of public participation, the results from which could not be ignored by government. Ensuring respect for the rights of nature, gender parity in government, and strong environmental laws that are actually enforced, were all favoured. Paying for this would require cracking down on offshore tax havens and reforming taxation laws.



STOP MANIPULATING THE MESSAGE (16*)

This section might best be summarized by the phrase, “**Stop Lying.**” This applies to the media in NB (almost all owned and operated by one corporation); participants expect that their politicians, scientists and social media will all tell the truth about the reality we are living in. Comments suggest that to address the climate crisis, people must recognize they are part of nature, and it is the truth of Earth’s limits that must guide us as we go forward, not non-scientific economic theories or politics.

* Number of times the comment was recorded at the meeting

GREEN LINES

RED LINES

GREEN LINES

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GREEN LINES

RAMP UP GREEN TRANSPORTATION (50*)

Participants desired political support for, and infrastructure to enable, more electric vehicles and transit, along with incentives to purchase or utilize these. Vehicle sharing, innovative methods for active transportation and generally greening the transportation sector were favoured. More public transportation, especially in rural areas, was mentioned repeatedly.

RED LINES

STOP POLLUTION & POISON/SPRAYING (16*)

Key concerns are the spraying of rural New Brunswick by agriculture and forestry interests, as well as continued reliance on internal combustion engines. People fear the cumulative impacts of a burgeoning global population and industries that continue to degrade ecosystems, accelerate climate disruption and cause biodiversity loss.

GREEN LINES

MODERNIZE AND DEMOCRATIZE LAND & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (38*)

After many years of being shut out of the land management process in New Brunswick, frustrations focused on forestry and the generous allocations to corporations over the objections of –and obligations to– indigenous governments and the public. A better deal for small woodlot owners, enforcement of laws dealing with cutting around watercourses and a desire for community forestry were mentioned. Nurturing and using our forests for CO2 sequestration, the demand for the stopping of aerial spraying and water protection featured prominently in comments. “Moratorium” was used numerous times in reference to resource extraction.

RED LINES

ELIMINATE WASTE (15*)

Waste concerns reflect growing malaise over our consumerist lifestyles, and persistent marketing of items that are over-packaged, non-repairable, and nonessential. North American consumption patterns are responsible for filling the ocean with plastics and depleting resources. We must redefine the meaning of the “good life” as recommended by the IPBES scientists in their 2018 report on biodiversity loss. The biosphere can no longer assimilate all our waste products.

GREEN LINES

IMPROVE PUBLIC AWARENESS/EDUCATION (36*)

Recurring themes here were the need to expunge worn-out narratives concerning poverty, ‘elitism’ of environmental work and indigenous rights (by promoting the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the *Peace and Friendship Treaties*). Education is needed on the potential benefits of universal basic income programs, coping with the climate crisis and embracing indigenous ways of seeing and protecting nature.

RED LINES

STOP EXPLOITING THE COMMONS (13*)

These concerns reflect the exploitation of unceded Indigenous territory, (typically known as Crown, or publicly-owned land) comprising half of New Brunswick, by mining and forestry companies. The means and scale of exploitation are also of great concern. Increases in timber allocations, or extension of long leases of public/unceded land must stop or be seriously curtailed.

GREEN LINES

PRIORITIZE INDIGENOUS RIGHTS (32*)

Half of the comments received on this referenced the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) by name. While some governments have embraced UNDRIP, New Brunswick shows reluctance to uphold the more specific treaties signed with Aboriginal people. Free Prior and Informed consent was mentioned several times, as were autonomy of indigenous communities to oversee education and determine their futures. The *Truth and Reconciliation* recommendations also featured in this discussion.

RED LINES

STOP IGNORING INDIGENOUS RIGHTS (15*)

Comments here were emphatic in their support of inherent Indigenous rights. Indigenous land was stolen through title being given to settlers, in spite of nation-to-nation treaties that explicitly promise (to this day) sharing of land and resources. Treaties also promise that indigenous communities who find their rights abrogated, will receive ‘satisfaction and reparations.’ Many Supreme Court decisions have confirmed indigenous rights embodied by the Treaties, but governments do not honour these. The infringements must stop and reconciliation begin in earnest without delay.

GREEN LINES

GREEN RESIDENTIAL SPACES (31*)

Boosting resilience to food shortages/shocks and planning for unpredictable weather were main features here. Comments called for improved urban planning that includes better public transportation, more green space, increased density, energy efficiency, expanded (to apartments and in terms of materials) recycling and composting. Upping building codes for longevity and autonomous energy generation were popular ideas. Preserving green infrastructure, safeguarding the commons (public land for public purposes) and rewilding urban spaces were common themes.

RED LINES

STOP STALLING POLITICAL REFORM (10*)

The electoral system is past its ‘best before’ date. Democracy needs constant care and maintenance, yet many necessary improvements have been denied by politicians with agendas and clear, but unacknowledged, conflicts of interest. These concerns apply to all levels of government. Proportional representation, greater gender and cultural diversity and greater transparency are called for in a **Green New Deal**.

GREEN LINES

MORE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS (29*)

Most of New Brunswick’s food is imported. Advances have been made in food security programs and facilities (*NB Food Security Network, NB Community Harvest Gardens*, etc.) but more needs to be done. Local food investments and programs to reduce “food miles” were common ideas, as were support for organic, plant-based diets, and small scale enterprises (such as the *Hayes Teaching Farm*). Turning rooftops into green, food-producing spaces or solar arrays mean more thought must go into building design and specifications.

RED LINES

OVERHAUL CANADIAN FOREIGN POLICY (6*)

Canadians’ conduct abroad cannot be overlooked as it has in the past. Our corporations’ and governments’ practices and policies (especially in trade deals) are often harmful to the environment and human rights; we tolerate them only because they are out of sight, and out of mind and even though Canadian-registered companies account for upwards of 75% of mining interests worldwide. This invisibility is changing because of the internet and greater information transfer.

GREEN LINES

GREATER CORPORATE OVERSIGHT AND REGULATION (25*)

In order to achieve a greener future, corporations must pay their fair share of taxes. There was near unanimity demanding regulation of big polluters who exploit the commons (air, land and water) to dispose of their waste. In addition, participants want a stop to subsidies going to fossil fuel companies, and repatriation of tax revenue going to offshore tax havens. Big monopolies, especially those operating in disadvantaged regions of the world, need to be reined in and forced to pay their taxes where they make their profits. Overall there needs to be greater accountability and responsibility for the full life-cycle of products and the activities (especially lobbying) of corporate actors.

We are grateful to the following co-hosts who allowed their names to be listed as co-hosts for this important gathering:

- Council of Canadians, Fredericton Chapter
- RAVEN (Rural Action and Voices for the Environment)
- Conservation Council of NB
- Nature Trust of NB
- Fredericton Anti-Poverty Organization
- No One is Illegal
- Canadian Postal Workers Union Local 54
- Three Nations Education Group
- Environment Working Group of the United Church of Canada, Eastern Regions
- Wolastoq Grand Council
- NB Community Harvest Gardens
- NB Anti-Shale Gas Alliance

This publication was coordinated and compiled by volunteers from some of the above organizations.