

Mary-Jane Bennett, Liberal Party, Kildonan-St Paul

I am pleased to respond to your request for the Liberal Party position on the very important questions dealing with the health of Lake Winnipeg.

A re-elected Liberal government will not only continue its efforts towards protecting its freshwater and its ecosystems, it will take a strengthened and more ambitious approach. To protect Manitoba's fresh water, a re-elected Liberal government will:

- implement a strengthened Freshwater Action Plan, including \$1 billion commitment over 10 years to protect large lake and river systems;
- continue its strong support for the Experimental Lakes Area;
- modernize the *Canada Water Act* to address climate change and indigenous rights;
- establish and fund the Canada Water Agency to consolidate federal efforts to combat floods and droughts and build research and knowledge, all the while collaborating with provincial, territorial and First Nations partners;

For fuller details, I enclose today's Liberal Party announcement.

In closing, I take the opportunity to thank you for your continued commitment to Lake Winnipeg.

September 2, 2021

Liberals move forward to protect Canada's freshwater, including Lake Winnipeg

Winnipeg, Manitoba - A re-elected Liberal government will move forward to protect Canada's invaluable freshwater, including right here in Manitoba.

Manitobans know the importance of clean freshwater. It is essential to our health, well-being, and livelihoods, but as our lakes and rivers face increasing threats from climate change, toxic chemicals, invasive species, and new pollutants like plastics, we have to tackle the health of our water so we can build a cleaner Manitoba and Canada for everyone.

Canadians have a strong connection to water and that is especially true in Manitoba. With over 100,000 lakes, Manitoba communities rely on freshwater for healthy ecosystems, agriculture and other industries. Lake Winnipeg is Canada's sixth-largest lake and the eleventh-largest freshwater lake in the world. Its watershed is the second-largest in Canada and includes parts of four provinces, four U.S. states and where seven million people call it home.

"This major investment in freshwater protection will result in a big step forward in restoring and protecting the health of Lake Winnipeg. In addition, investments in Winnipeg-based International Institute for Sustainable Development Experimental Lakes Area (IISD-ELA), which the Harper Conservatives tried to shut down, will allow us to be global leaders in freshwater research" said Terry Duguid, Liberal candidate for Winnipeg South. "In order to protect these precious natural assets, create good jobs, support our communities across the province and fight the effects of climate change and

habitat loss, we need a real plan to protect our vital freshwater resources. The Liberals are the only ones who can deliver on this.”

“Our Liberal team understands the importance of protecting our valuable freshwater resources in Manitoba, and across Canada. Our country depends on its availability and this historic investment will ensure our freshwater is protected for our children and grandchildren,” said Paul Ong, Liberal candidate for Winnipeg Centre.

To protect Manitoba’s fresh water, a re-elected Liberal government will:

- Implement a strengthened Freshwater Action Plan, including a historic investment of \$1 billion over ten years, to restore and protect large lakes and river systems across Canada;
- Invest in freshwater research through further support for the International Institute for Sustainable Development’s Experimental Lakes Area (ELA);
- Modernize the 50-year-old Canada Water Act to better address climate change and Indigenous water rights and other emerging issues; and
- Establish and fully fund a Canada Water Agency in 2022 to consolidate and coordinate federal freshwater efforts to combat the debilitating cycles of floods and droughts brought on by climate change, and build research and knowledge while collaborating with provincial, territorial, and First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation partners to better protect and manage Canada’s freshwater.

This plan will build on the Liberals’ environmental leadership since 2015, including:

- Working with Manitoba to support the protect the water quality and ecosystem health through a new MOU Respecting the Lake Winnipeg Basin;
- Standing up to support the Experimental Lakes Area with over \$5 million after Stephen Harper’s Conservatives planned to silence scientists and shut down research at the facility;
- Banning harmful single-use plastics and creating a plan to end plastic waste by 2030; and
- Making historic investments in nature to support provinces, territories, Indigenous partners, and other partners’ to protect and conserve species, lands, and freshwater including the Freshwater Action Plan.

“Manitobans take great pride in our lakes, and many of us depend on them for food and jobs. Building on our past investments in protecting the Lake Winnipeg Basin, and our recent funding for the North End Water Pollution Control Centre, today’s announcement provides a clear plan to further protecting our freshwater lakes for generations to come,” said Dan Vandal, Liberal candidate for St. Boniface-St. Vital.

“Protecting Manitoba’s freshwater isn’t just the right thing to do, it’s also critical for the health of our communities, our farmers and our economy,” said Jim Carr, Liberal Candidate for Winnipeg South Centre. “Only we will protect this vital resource while creating good jobs here in the prairies. Erin O’Toole has no plan to protect our environment or build a cleaner economy. While we know what it takes to move forward, the Conservatives will only move us backward.”