

November 6, 2023

BC Greens AGM 2023 Policy Committee report

Proposed changes to the [BC Greens policy document](#)

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Introduction

On September 12, 2023 an invitation went out to members to submit policy proposals for inclusion in the BC Greens Policy document. Submissions had to be received by October 5, 2023 in order to be considered.

The Policy Committee received 31 submissions that covered a variety of topics including:

- 8 - transportation
- 7 - resource industries
- 3 - tax policy
- 3 - housing
- 2 - energy
- 2 - agriculture
- 2 - participatory democracy
- 2 - school meals
- 6 - other

Some of the proposals received contained more than one idea, so the number of topics differs from the number of proposals received.

The policy document is designed to provide high level guidance for MLAs, candidates, the party communications team and members and supporters in general. Specific actions, programs, initiatives or positions tend to be developed by caucus or by the campaign team based on the high level guidance and often with input from members and supporters. (Further details on the process followed by the Policy Committee are in the appendix below)

The majority of submissions received included a prescriptive approach to an issue. The policy committee sought to identify the high level policy issue underlying the proposal and where appropriate, update the policy document accordingly.

In several cases, the existing policy was considered adequate and that the proposal concerned implementation, not new policy. Some of these proposals have the potential to be good material for caucus initiatives or for inclusion in the next provincial election platform.

In a couple of cases the Policy Committee considered the issues raised to be too big and important for the Committee to make a determination. We felt that the issue needed more research and consultation with experts and membership. These issues will be brought forward in the New Year.

Policy Committee recommendations

The Policy Committee is not recommending any significant changes to the structure of the Policy document. However, a major rewrite of the document in line with the findings from the “New Politics” series is planned and will be presented to membership in spring 2024.

The proposed changes are mostly policy specific. We have combined ideas where appropriate or integrated them into existing policies. In all cases we have modified proposals in order to make them high level and consistent with BC Greens philosophy.

Eleven proposed amendments to the policy document were discussed by those attending the BC Greens Policy Convention on October 28, 2023. Attendees were invited to provide feedback through a Zoom poll, the Chat or to send comments to policycommittee@greenparty.bc.ca. The Policy Committee took the feedback into account and adjusted the proposed policy changes accordingly. Below are the final versions of those amendments.

These have been incorporated into the policy document. There have been some minor changes to the introduction to eliminate outdated information in the introduction.

The proposed final document which will be voted on at the AGM can be found here: [BC Green Policy: A 21st Century Vision for the Future](#)

Transportation

We are proposing three additions regarding transportation. Of the seven transportation related proposals 3 concerned rail, 4 concerned public transit. The following changes are recommended. (Amendments to existing policies are shown in blue)

Transit (Amendment):

*BC Greens support **the development of comprehensive, integrated, affordable, and accessible community public transit systems, and active transportation infrastructure, to enhance quality of life and discourage fossil fuel-based transportation***

Rural Transportation (new):

BC Greens support the establishment of rural transportation systems for goods and passengers to increase connectivity between rural communities, and with major urban centres, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions

Rail (New):

The BC Greens support the development of an inter-community rail network for goods and passengers running on clean energy, where economically feasible.

Commuting (New):

BC Greens support measures to encourage carpooling and reduce travel in low or single occupancy vehicles.

Resource industries

We received several submissions concerning mining. The proposals were mostly considered to be implementation issues, however, the Committee determined that the issue of meaningful consultation was absent from the current policy document and proposes the following wording addition:

(Amendment)

BC Greens support environmental assessment processes that consider sustainability goals and take full account of greenhouse gas emissions and cumulative impacts, [and input from meaningful and comprehensive community engagement.](#)

Housing

The submissions regarding housing covered various areas including availability, affordability and energy efficiency. It was generally considered that the existing policy covered most of these areas. The following addition is proposed:

(New)

The BC Greens support zoning and bylaw reforms to ensure that the supply of homes is maximised; and that short-term rentals do not reduce the opportunity for people to find affordable long term accommodation.

Energy

The following addition concerning investment in renewable energy research is proposed:

(New)

BC Greens support investment in partnerships and resources towards advancing research, development and infrastructure for carbon-neutral fuel sources.

Agriculture

Submissions on agriculture proposed enhancements to the sustainability aspect and animal cruelty. Two changes are proposed

(New)

BC Green support regenerative agricultural practices.

(Amendment)

BC Greens value animals as sentient beings, and support the humane and ethical treatment of all animals to ensure their welfare.

School meals

In response to submissions proposing “free school meals” the following addition to the policy document is proposed:

(New)

BC Greens support programs to ensure that food insecurity does not impact students ability to learn.

Tax policy

(Amendment)

BC Greens support a simpler, transparent, and truly progressive and fair tax system by eliminating loopholes and frivolous tax credits

No other policy changes are proposed for this iteration of the policy document.

Appendix

The Policy Committee

The BC Greens Policy Committee consists of a Chair and volunteer party members. As of November 2023, the members of the Policy Committee are:

Liz Lilly (Chair)
Kathy Code
Alex Lautensach
Lesley Schimanski

During the course of 2023 the following have also served on the committee

Farrukh Chishtie
William Kelly
Martha Nelems
Judy O'Leary

We would like to thank all of them for their service and their contribution to BC Greens policy.

The role of the Policy Committee

As per the BC Greens Policy Committee website:

The Policy Committee facilitates the member driven policy process by:

- Engaging members and supporters in conversations about policy
- Reviewing policy proposals from members and supporters
- Ensuring that the [BC Greens Policy Document](#) is comprehensive and current
- Preparing new policy and policy amendments for inclusion in the policy document
- Seeking endorsement for changes from the membership
- Presenting the policy document as amended for approval at the AGM
- Reporting on activities to Provincial Council

The 2023 timetable

The following is an overview of the schedule for the current iteration of policy document updates:

Date	Event
Sept 12	Invitation to submit policy proposals sent out
Oct 5	Last date to submit proposals
Oct 5 to 19	Policy committee review of proposals according to criteria
Oct 28	Proposed changes to policy document presented to Policy Convention and sent to membership for comment
Nov 3	Last date to submit comments regarding proposed changes
Oct 29 - Nov 7	Final report for AGM prepared, policy document updates finalized
Nov 8,	Notice of AGM sent out
Dec 8	AGM

This has been a very tight turn around for the policy committee and some issues have had to be tabled pending further review.

The policy approval process

Detailed information on the policy development process can be found on the [Policy Committee website](#).

Once a policy proposal has been submitted, the Policy Committee reviews the proposal according to certain criteria. For inclusion in the policy document, a proposal must:

- Be consistent with our values, 6 Green principles
- Be consistent with current BC Greens' policy & philosophy as articulated in the policy document & by caucus
- Have a clear purpose and justification
- Provide high level direction
- Have the potential to result in tangible benefits that outweigh any negative impacts
- Be implementable

Reasons why a policy may not have been accepted for inclusion in the policy document include:

- Needs more research or consultation with experts
- Needs further consultation with proponent
- Too big an issue for the policy committee to decide on unilaterally
- The existing policy is considered adequate
- The proposal is too prescriptive
- Proposal was considered unrealistic

The Committee may conclude that the proposal is:

- Well thought out, and a good addition to BC Green Policy
- A good idea that could be modified to make a good motion
- An interesting idea that needs more research and evidence
- Already covered by existing policy
- Not ready to proceed at this time
- Not a good fit

Based upon this, they will prepare proposed amendments to the policy document to be presented to members for their endorsement. This may occur through written responses or an online briefing.

Once Member comments have been taken into account, the Policy Committee will finalize an updated version of the policy document. At the AGM the membership votes on the policy document as a whole, not the individual policies.

Other Policy Committee activities

In addition to updating the policy document in 2023, the Policy Committee hosted 6 online events exploring “A New Politics for BC”. These meetings were attended by over 300 different people and featured speakers and breakout group discussions. A full account of the series can be found on the [“New Politics” web page](#).

The Committee also hosted a presentation by Dr Trevor Hancock, and a discussion with Farrukh Chishtie and Liz Lilly on the latest IPCC briefing.

On October 28, 2023, the Committee hosted a day-long policy convention that was attended by over 170 different people. The morning featured speakers and panels on the climate crisis, after lunch attendees discussed the proposed changes to the policy document and the day concluded with the Leadership question time. Sonia, Adam, Lisa and Sanjiv were present. Attendees also responded to several real time polls on various subjects. A recording of the day will be posted shortly.