

The BC Greens believe that technology must be designed and operated to benefit and respect people, communities, individuals and the environment

New technologies provide incredible opportunities for British Columbia to improve our quality of life, help solve the biggest problems facing us, and connect people across distances. But technology also comes with big risks and challenges - especially frontier technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI).

At the forefront of a new technology, governments around the world have responsibilities to set the parameters for the use and design of these technologies - including how they interact with public services, personal information, and the built and natural world. In the case of AI, this is not only the systems themselves but the infrastructure they rely on, particularly electricity and water¹. A single AI data centre can consume 438,000 to 700,800 megawatt-hours of electricity annually, equivalent to the electricity consumption of roughly 40,000 to 64,000 Canadian households². Communities are also reporting that AI data centres are noisy for residents and provide few stable jobs or benefits locally³.

We have seen in other sectors the challenges of trying to regulate once norms are in place and industry has become established, and we are quickly running out of time to not make the same mistakes with AI. This is especially pressing when technologies are targeted towards children and youth, or when they're used to inform government decision-making.

Algorithms can be biased black boxes that increasingly shape our thinking, lives, and decision making. Whilst they have many potential benefits and uses, they are also difficult to challenge or scrutinise and can potentially amplify misinformation, cause harm to people, compromise privacy, create dehumanising outcomes, and diminish livelihoods. The BC Greens are concerned that government isn't taking these responsibilities seriously. When even AI companies are warning that their sector is unregulated, the pace of their development is too fast, and their products pose a risk to humanity and the climate⁴, we must act faster.

The BCNDP has moved faster on AI adoption than regulation, and still has no standards or privacy protections that make sure the rights and privacy of British Columbians are fully protected.

¹ <https://unu.edu/inweh/news/environmental-cost-of-AIs-Enrgy-use-carbon-water-and-land-footprints>

² <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ai-data-centre-opposition-explained-9.7225796>

³

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/662fe7a3d2aa94403d829e56/t/6a5128b7a9a891460148951d/1783703735062/2606-UCL-AI-summary-03-v1.pdf>

⁴ <https://darioamodei.com/post/we-must-pace-the-frontier#why-pace->

These challenges extend to technologies that are already part of our daily lives too. Social media algorithms, while useful, are often optimized to keep you on their app longer, to feed you paid content, and to provide you a curated experience rather than one of your own choosing. Australia is proposing legislation to force social media companies to give people an option to opt in or out of their algorithm so you choose your experience. We believe British Columbians deserve the same freedom, and will push the federal government to regulate social media companies accordingly.

Premier Eby may believe that AI and other social media companies can set their own rules, but the BC Greens believe you deserve better.

The BC Greens will:

- Put a moratorium on the construction and operation of AI data centres, until a detailed public-interest audit is developed and appropriate regulatory regime implemented. This will include consideration of access to electricity and other public resources, the economic value created in BC alongside electricity and water use, impacts on communities and the environment, and demands on other public infrastructure.
- Introduce legislation within the first 100 days to ban retailers from using consumers' personal data to increase the price of goods for a specific consumer ('surveillance pricing'), following the 'Manitoba model' led by Premier Kinew⁵.
- Work with the federal government to create an independent AI oversight commission so new AI is properly tested for safety and regulated before it's used in B.C., because even the companies building it now say things are moving too fast.
- Ban the use of AI for surveillance of workers at all jobsites. Work with labour groups to develop a comprehensive plan to address unemployment related to AI automation.
- Enact a moratorium on the use of AI in classrooms from K-12 in order to develop a comprehensive response to AI in the classroom, and direction on safe, ethical use of AI with students. This includes protecting privacy, enforceable safeguards, digital literacy support for all educators, and working with the federal government to hold tech companies accountable for ensuring that systems are safe before they reach the classroom.
- Develop a labour market impact assessment and strategy, in conjunction with business, unions, young people and academics, to respond to the structural employment challenges of AI and new technologies. This will include supports for workers displaced by new technologies, strategies for ensuring roles are available for young and inexperienced workers, and review of how our employment insurance and social assistance systems need to adjust, such as moving to Universal Basic Income.
- Work with the federal Government to ensure social media companies allow an easily accessible option to opt out of their algorithms⁶ - your feed, your choice.
- Strengthen the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to make privacy, security, transparency and accountability mandatory, including requirements for

⁵ <https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=73120&posted=2026-03-17>

⁶ <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/my-feed-my-way>

privacy-impact assessments for use of AI, disclosure when AI is involved in decision making, and opportunities to challenge or correct an AI-assisted decision.

- Work with First Nations to ensure data sovereignty is protected.