



Asian Carp

One of the greatest threats ever from aquatic invasive species to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence is Asian carp, including silver, bighead, black, and grass. If these species were to establish a population in the Great Lakes, the region's \$7B commercial and recreational fisheries would be seriously threatened. Asian carp have been migrating up the Mississippi, Illinois, Ohio, Wabash, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and other rivers over the past 40 years.

Grass carp have already been found in the Grand River in Ontario. Only days ago, two carp were found in ponds connected to Lake Ontario on the shoreline of Toronto. This evidence of Asian Carp entering Canadian waters is extremely alarming.

At the Cities Initiative Annual General meeting, mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence declared that time is of the essence to reach a regional consensus on a long term solution. December 15, 2015 should be the outside date for accomplishing that goal. Furthermore, it is essential that the necessary short and mid-term actions to reduce the risk of Asian carp reaching Lake Michigan proceed on an expedited basis.

If your party forms the next Government of Canada, what actions will you take to ensure that a regional and bi-national consensus is reached with our American partners by the end of 2015 on short, mid-term actions and a long term solution to this threat to our shared waters?

The Green Party is committed to the conservation of wild aquatic populations. Greens have led on Great Lakes issues for many years. As Senior Policy Advisor to former federal Environment Minister Tom McMillan, Green Party Leader Elizabeth May worked on the previous iteration of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement in 1987.

Invasive species wreak havoc on our ecosystems, and have major economic costs. The Ontario Invasive Plant Council reports that just sixteen invasive species have cost the Canadian economy up to \$34.5 billion annually. We are committed to strengthening the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement to protect wild aquatic life from invasive species like the Asian Carp.

The Green Party will reinstate funding to Environment Canada's Invasive Alien Species Partnership Program, which was terminated in 2012. The current government's drastic cuts have cost Canada programs that are important to biodiversity. These front-line programs are more necessary than ever, as the climate crisis leads to changes in species distribution. The

Green Party will also address invasive species in the Great Lakes by developing stringent protocols for ballast water flushing prior to entering the St. Lawrence waterway. Following the election, we will work to establish a regional and bi-national consensus with our American partners by the end of 2015 on short, mid-term actions and a long term solution to this threat.

Transportation of Oil by Rail

Transportation of oil by rail has increased 40 fold in the past five years, now standing at over 500,000 cars annually. The derailment of a train carrying crude oil from the Bakken oilfield on July 6, 2013, in Lac-Mégantic, Québec, causing the tragic death of 47 people, destruction of half of the downtown area and the release of 1.3 million gallons of oil, was a wake-up call for both Canada and the United States about the dangers posed by this mode of transportation.

Despite introduction of new safety measures following this tragedy, there were five serious derailments of trains carrying oil in the first ten weeks of 2015, averaging one every two weeks, in Gogama, Ontario (February 14, 2015), Mount Carbon, West Virginia (February 18, 2015), Hornepayne, Ontario (March 5, 2015), Galena, Illinois (March 5, 2015), and again in Gogama (March 7, 2015).

This summer, the Canadian and US Governments adopted further safety measures to reduce the risk of derailments of trains carrying oil. While these new rules provide some improvement in the safety of transporting oil by rail, further measures are needed.

At its 2015 annual general meeting, the mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative called on Canada and the US to immediately adopt additional measures to provide the highest level of security for our communities and for the water resources of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin.

If your party forms the next Government of Canada, will you commit to further strengthening safety measures for the transportation of oil by rail, particularly in the five following areas:

- i. Expediting mandatory scheduling for introducing enhanced standards for new and existing tank cars and phasing out old, unsafe tank cars;**
- ii. Requiring the mandatory use of electronically controlled pneumatic brakes on all cars transporting crude oil;**
- iii. Adjusting speed control regulations to all situations requiring risk management, not only in highly populated areas, where speed limitations are already part of operations;**
- iv. Requiring more frequent inspections of rail lines and tankers;**
- v. Imposing heavy fines for violations of the above rules.**



Rail safety is of utmost importance to Canadians, particularly given the recent dramatic increase in the transport of hazardous materials. Unsafe rail shipments endanger local communities and surrounding ecosystems. We need to reform our rail system to ensure safety is a priority.

Shipping diluted bitumen is dangerous and cannot continue. The Green Party is committed to refining oil product at the source and thus creating high-skilled work for Canadians and stabilizing oil for shipment, while shifting our economy toward sustainable jobs.

There are two major gaps in contemporary rail safety regulation. The first lies in the move to safety management systems, which are essentially a form of deregulation. According to the 2007 report by the Canada Safety Council, the system is one that “allows rail companies to regulate themselves, removing the federal government's ability to protect Canadians and their environment, and allowing the industry to hide critical safety information from the public.” The Green Party will implement strict rail safety regulations to shift away from the trend of self-management and deregulation. As well, Transport Canada should have the supervisory authority to review these safety management systems.

The second major threat to rail safety is the government cutbacks to Transport Canada, which have led to fewer engineers doing the crucial work of reviewing rail safety. We need to reinvest in rail safety, and expand our passenger rail system to create thousands of new jobs and increase our economic competitiveness.

To improve rail safety, the Green Party strongly advocates for positive train control. Positive train control involves on-board computer systems to monitor and analyse key information, prevent collisions and control speed. Canada has not yet adopted this approach. It's time to catch up to the US and implement this safety system immediately.

It is also critical that first responders have the information they need to respond to a derailment. Currently, they do not have sufficient resources. The Green Party supports strengthening the Canada Transport Emergency Centre to be an active participant in regulatory activities. This, in tandem with positive rail control, will improve the quality of information provided to first responders.

With regard to increased transparency and accountability, I supported Bill C-52, The Safe and Accountable Rail Act, which increased minimum insurance for class 1 railways to \$1 billion. But the bill did not go nearly far enough to respond to disasters like Lac-Mégantic, which would have required nearly six times that amount of insurance coverage.

Lac-Mégantic highlights the need for accurate, thorough, and public risk assessments before a route carrying hazardous materials is finalized. In addition, the concerns of the local community must be taken into account when considering these routes, especially densely populated areas



and First Nation communities. Municipalities need to be consulted and at the table with Transport Canada to find better and safer ways to transport goods. The Green Party is committed to funding the re-routing of tracks for freight and rail yards away from populated areas. To facilitate federal leadership in rail safety, a [Council of Canadian Governments](#) – representing the provinces, territories, municipalities and Indigenous governments – would meet to draft a comprehensive strategy.

In order to ensure tragedies such as Lac-Mégantic can never occur again, Canada needs clear, strict and world-class rail safety regulations that safeguard our communities and ecosystems. We must do more to address this emerging crisis.

Nutrients

Harmful algal blooms have a direct adverse impact on the Great Lakes aquatic ecosystem, drinking water, water quality, quality of life and economy. Harmful algal blooms can contain microcystin, a neurotoxin to humans and wildlife that ingest it. A harmful algal bloom in the western basin of Lake Erie caused the Toledo drinking water utility to advise over 400,000 citizens not to drink the water for two days in August 2014.

If broad and swift action is not taken to reduce phosphorus and other nutrients entering the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence and their tributaries, harmful algal blooms will continue to proliferate and threaten the health and vitality of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River system.

Under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (WQA), the US and Canadian governments have committed to setting nutrient reduction targets by 2016 and completing action plans by 2018 to reduce nutrient levels in Lake Erie. Draft targets were released this summer for comment. While this process is welcome, it is proceeding on a slow schedule and no deadlines have yet been set to reach phosphorus reduction targets.

Meanwhile, the States of Michigan and Ohio, and the Province of Ontario have set a bold target of 20% reduction in phosphorus loadings to Western Lake Erie by 2020 and 40% reduction by 2025 under the Western Lake Erie Collaborative Agreement, signed in June of this year.

At its 2015 Annual General Meeting, the mayors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence urged the Federal Governments of Canada and the United States to develop and implement short term actions for nutrient reductions in advance of their 2018 Action Plan.

- 1. If your party forms the next Government of Canada, will you commit to the expedited targets in the Western Lake Erie Collaborative Agreement, as adopted by the States of Michigan and Ohio and the Province of Ohio, to reach 20%**



phosphorus loading reductions to Western Lake Erie by 2020 and 40% reduction by 2025?

Nutrient enrichment poses a serious threat to the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes are experiencing more frequent and more intense blooms of blue-green algae, which produce potent human and brain toxins that are harmful to people, pets, and wildlife. The growth of algae threatens the survival of fish in the Great Lakes and the lakes themselves. Problems related to algal blooms are intensifying as a direct result of climate change.

We need to act now to protect Canada's freshwater. Unfortunately, the Harper Conservatives have made many changes that will have a negative impact on the health of our waters: the gutting of the Fisheries Act so that it now protects certain fish rather than all habitat; the destruction of the Environmental Assessment Act, and replacing the Navigable Waters Protection Act with the Navigation Protection Act. That last change alone removed federal protection from more than 98% of our internal freshwater rivers, lakes and streams across Canada.

The Green Party will act swiftly to establish a National Water Policy and a Canada Water fund to focus on long-term waterhead health, alleviating the problem of runoff pollution and nutrients. We will reinvest in water quality research and ensure Canadian water policy is informed by the best available science. We will establish a task force to focus on pollution reduction in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin. If elected, the Green Party will adopt the expedited targets in the Western Lake Erie Collaborative Agreement.

2. Will you expedite the review of Health Canada's microcystin drinking water standard and protocol, particularly with respect to its application to children?

Microcystins in drinking water pose a threat to human health, and to infants and children in particular. The Green Party supports expediting the review of Health Canada's microcystin drinking water standard and protocol. However, increased regulation is not enough. We have the capacity to address toxins in our water now, by investing in improved water treatment processes.

Canada is lacking federal leadership in both water and infrastructure policy. Our water infrastructure deficit is, sadly, only a portion of our total \$350 billion infrastructure deficit. The gap between the infrastructure funding our cities and towns need, and the funding they receive, is reaching crisis levels. Drinking water advisories have touched far too many communities, in a nation with 7 per cent of the world's renewable fresh water. A shocking 126 First Nations communities are affected. Many First Nations' communities are on virtually permanent "boil water" advisories. We know all this, yet we remain confined to inaction. We are failing our



communities, especially remote First Nations communities, whose rights to basic services are constitutionally protected. We must do better.

The Green Party will work to implement a National Water Policy to address the current drinking water crisis in Canada. We have committed \$6.4 billion annually - one point of the GST - to municipal infrastructure. This funding will provide for needed upgrades to water management systems, emphasizing innovation in green technology that supports water conservation and sanitation goals. We will create a Canadian Infrastructure Bank to provide more robust and innovative financing and investment partnerships, in order to build world-class water treatment facilities and put thousands of Canadians to work in the process. We need to invest in communities resilient to the impacts of climate change.

