

## Questions posed to candidates ahead of election

Editor's Note: The following article was submitted for publication by members of the Orangeville Climate Action group.

We are Orangeville Climate Action , a group of local youth who helped organize Orangeville's mass Climate Strike on September 26 along with other previous climate rallies. We want to know if Dufferin-Caledon's MP candidates have a sound plan to tackle climate change over the next four years. We asked them 3 questions about climate policy to find out.

We received responses from the Liberal, Conservative, and Green Party. Other parties were contacted but did not respond.

### **Question 1: Is climate change the most important issue facing Canada today?**

Liberal: Michele Fisher

YES: ?I especially believe that it is the most urgent issue that we're facing right now, for our long term sustainability.? Fisher believes, ?the environment and the economy are absolutely equal in terms of what we need to be considering?. She acknowledges that ?climate change is a huge issue and we need to be taking the action on it?, but recognizes that ?[reaching] the net zero emissions goal by 2050 [is] a serious challenge?. As we discussed the importance of climate change in our future, Fisher remarked: ?I don't see any reason why Canada can't be a leader in a green economy.?

Conservative: Kyle Seeback

Note: Candidates were asked to respond with YES/NO answers although some did not. A campaign manager for CPC candidate Kyle Seeback wrote in an email: ?The questions are pretty limiting...unless you are a member of the Green Party.? Instead, Kyle Seeback focused on affordability and technological solutions saying ?Canada's Conservatives recognize the need for prudent climate action that works in tandem with addressing the other major issues on Canadians' minds: affordability and the economy? by creating ?significant investments in clean, green technologies without introducing new, higher taxes." He also emphasized tech incentives to ?fight climate change both at home and abroad [...] Canada is a small contributor to the global problem but we are still facing drastic effects.? Seeback called the Liberal carbon tax ?an ineffective measure that is failing to meet Canada's climate targets that will make everyday life more expensive for all Canadians.? Seeback stated, ?[the conservative] plan has the best chance of meeting the Paris targets?, however; a political analysis by the CBC reports that even though ?the Conservatives have pledged to meet Canada's 2030 target, [they] miss the target by 133.9 megatonnes, getting us further away than the Liberal plan?.

Green: Stefan Wiesen

YES: ?On June 17, 2019, the Canadian parliament followed the example of several other countries, states, provinces and dozens of Canadian municipalities and passed a resolution declaring we are in a climate emergency,? Wiesen said, ?The Green Party has been telling the truth about global warming and climate change for decades. Alone among political parties, the Green Party has a climate emergency response plan that recognizes our house is on fire. We call it ?Mission: Possible'?

**Question 2: Will your party support and act in favour of implementing a Canadian Green New Deal: An ambitious, non-partisan plan to tackle climate change, social equity, and employment security.**

Liberal: Michele Fisher

YES: Fisher thinks that ?there are a lot of things that the liberal values have in common with [the Canadian Green New Deal]?. Although her party would like to see a more finalized plan before they can ?commit to it?. Fisher also believes that as ?wealthier nations, [it] is part of our responsibility to provide foreign aid and assistance to developing nations in a way that's responsible and in partnership with them? as well as providing ?clean tech and green solutions to help those countries adapt.? to solve climate change globally.

Conservative: Kyle Seeback

Seeback deferred to the CPC climate plan saying, ?The Conservative Party of Canada has a real plan to protect our environment - a plan that has been created through endless consultations with key stakeholders and is backed by evidence-based research,? and pointed to investments in green technology within the policy. Seeback concluded that, ?Conservatives will support and act in favour of proposed legislation that is sensible and responsible for Canadians while also playing a practical role to reduce global emissions,? and without the creation of ?new, higher taxes.?

Green: Stefan Wiesen

YES: ?The Green Party has a climate emergency response plan that recognizes our house is on fire. We call it ?Mission: Possible'? Weisen began. ?Green parties [recognize] that the economies of wealthy countries are unsustainable. They depend on ever-expanding extraction [...] and unlimited consumerism. On a finite planet, this strategy, which worked well for much of the 20th century, leads eventually to a dead end.? Wiesen says we have a social-political system that is ?out of sync with nature and people.? He concludes that ?from their beginnings, Green parties have proposed an alternative ? a ?green economy' that respects nature's limits, provides everyone with a dignified, high quality of life, embraces diversity, and responsibly stewards public finances.?

**Question 3: Will you work across party lines**

## to fight for bold climate action?

Liberal: Michele Fisher

YES: We all agree that climate change is a huge issue and we need to be taking action on it. Why aren't we working together? Michele is committed to working across party lines to solve this crisis, but she fears for our environment if the Conservatives get in federally. Fisher expresses her frustration when one party seems to be blocking what another party wants when they actually have shared values. Fisher sees no reason why we cannot be working together to solve this huge issue.

Conservative: Kyle Seeback

YES: Kyle responded that, Our Conservative caucus is absolutely committed to working with all members of the House of Commons to find pragmatic solutions to address climate change both nationally and internationally. Seeback reiterated that We want to ensure, however, that our national plan [...] does not hurt Canadians with higher taxes. Our commitment is to find a real solution that is agreed on by all Canadians, he concluded, and we will work across party lines to make decisions based on the best interest of Canada.

Green: Stefan Wiesen

YES: Weisen stressed the Green's policy that We need a mechanism that convenes all governments to discuss and decide upon issues of national importance. He elaborated, saying the Greens will support the model of collaborative federalism, working with and ensuring fair treatment for provinces, territories, municipalities, and Indigenous Peoples by establishing a Council of Canadian Governments to set higher order policy priorities. It should be noted, however, that Elizabeth May, the party's leader, says the Greens will not officially support any party intending to expand the Trans Mountain Pipeline (CBC, 2019).

We would like to thank all the candidates for their responses and Michele Fisher for her interview.

Regardless of the party you support, making an informed decision based on policy is essential. We believe that environmental issues should be important to all political parties; it is not a partisan issue. If readers have any questions for the writers of this article they can contact [orangevilleclimate@gmail.com](mailto:orangevilleclimate@gmail.com) or on Instagram @orangevilleclimate. Most importantly, if you have the privilege of voting in the federal election, make sure you get out and vote on Monday, October 21!