



Jonathan Wilkinson

NORTH VANCOUVER'S MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

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Good to be back “on the perch”

Every Friday for 40 straight weeks, this perch on Page 9 was home.

Some of you said my column leading up to last fall's federal election helped establish a connection. I certainly felt that. The emails and phone calls generated each week helped to build a community conversation – a conversation that is even more important to me now that I am your Member of Parliament.

But there was a challenge continuing the column post-election: money. The communication support provided to MP's is currently geared towards household mailings – not column space in a community newspaper.

Fortunately, donations to the local Liberal riding association have made it possible to now resume the columns on a monthly basis. The goal is to inform, stimulate discussion and generate input from the entire community regardless of political stripe – because my responsibility is to be the MP for all of North Vancouver.

Mr. Wilkinson goes to Ottawa

There's nothing that can prepare you for the first time you step into the chamber of our House of Commons. I'm not embarrassed to admit I was in awe. For a moment, I was again that kid growing up in Saskatchewan inspired by the words of the late Tommy Douglas about the noble calling of public service.

You can't help but be struck by the traditions of the place – some of which are a humbling reminder of the responsibilities and high expectations of the job.

Fortunately, this is a job where you're expected to dive right in and figure out how the place works on the run. Following my appointment as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Catherine McKenna, I had the privilege to plunge into the deep end of what I believe is one of the defining issues of our time and will be one of the defining issues for this government: climate change.

Data is hard-hitting

The urgency for action on climate change hits me harder and harder as I absorb the data crammed into my briefing books.

For example, while we all get the general sense Canada is growing

warmer, did you know that between 1948 and 2013 average temperature in Canada increased 1.6°C - twice the global average?

It's even more dramatic in the Arctic, where the average temperature in that same period has increased 2.2°C - nearly three times the global average.

Clearly, meeting our climate change target will require a thoughtful strategy involving several elements - including carbon pricing, regulatory mechanisms, infrastructure investments and other policy instruments. In addition, a key area of focus will be fostering the development and deployment of clean technology.

Canada is well positioned to be a clean tech world leader and we need to press our advantage. The global market for clean technology has surpassed \$1 trillion and is forecast to rise to \$2.2 trillion by 2022.

As a former clean technology CEO, I've said for some time that Canada's plan to aggressively fight climate change does not have to come at the expense of the economy and jobs.

There is increasingly strong evidence that we can begin the transition to a lower-carbon economy while maintaining strong economic growth.

We've already started to see a reversal of economic growth and emissions growth moving in lock step. From 1990-2013, GDP increased by 70.7%, while GHG emissions increased by only 18.5%. This decoupling has accelerated over time, but needs to continue and further accelerate.

To advance an aggressive pan-Canadian approach to climate change, the Prime Minister will be meeting with the Premiers here in Vancouver in early March to begin to chart an effective path forward.

During the election, the people of North Vancouver told me loud and clear that action to ensure a sustainable environment and a sustainable economy is a top priority.

I'm pleased to be able to tell you that it is also a top priority of the new federal government.

Sponsored by the Electoral District Association of North Vancouver, Liberal Party of Canada

CONTACT INFO:

CONSTITUENCY OFFICE: 102 West 3rd Street, North Vancouver
EMAIL: Jonathan.Wilkinson@parl.gc.ca | TEL: 604-775-6333