

On being a climate optimist

SPRING IS A TIME OF REJUVENATION, OF HOPE AND OF TRUST IN A BETTER FUTURE.

The scale and potential impacts of the climate crisis are daunting – and can be overwhelming. But if hopelessness dominates, emotional paralysis can make the situation feel even more threatening. “Climate doom is the new climate denial,” it’s been said, because both lead to inaction.

Harvard University’s Mary Franck writes, “Climate optimism isn’t about denying what we can see with our own eyes or ignoring our grief for what we’ve lost. It’s understanding that we know how to prevent things from getting worse and that we’re making progress.”

PROMISE AND PROGRESS



I firmly believe that there are available pathways for limiting climate and biodiversity damage. **The critical question is, can we leverage our collective commitment to travel down these paths as rapidly as science demands?**

I believe we can.

I see important progress that sustains me and acts as a counterbalance to being overcome by the immensity of the gap between where we are and what we need to achieve. **Here are a few of the many reasons why I remain very hopeful:**

- Since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, economic growth has resulted in increased carbon emissions. That link between rising prosperity and carbon emissions has perhaps been broken. Some thirty-three countries have most recently seen a major decoupling of emissions from economic growth... and there will be more going forward.
- World leaders are increasingly focusing on urgent climate action. Today, more than 90% of the world’s GDP and over 80% of global emissions are now governed by net-zero pledges; all are promising to pursue massive decarbonisation at historically unprecedented speeds. Of course, follow-through is key, and time will tell...
- The energy crisis sparked by the war in Ukraine is dramatically accelerating the switch to clean energy – particularly in western Europe.



- In light of the science of climate change, and our own experience of the impact of extreme weather events, public commitment to climate action is now the norm in Canada, such that I think it unlikely that any political party lacking a credible climate plan can be elected at the federal level.
- We are seeing an exponential growth of ever cheaper and more effective renewable and non-emitting sources of energy. Wind and solar now make up 75% of global electricity capacity growth, while coal has fallen to just 4%, according to Bloomberg NEF Research.
- The energy transition presents unbounded economic opportunity. The International Energy Agency reports that more people are now employed in clean energy than in fossil fuel-related industries. Clean Energy Canada points to significant job creation and economic growth if we seize the economic opportunities available in the transition to a low-carbon future.
- Indigenous communities, cities and towns are taking energy and climate issues into their own hands and demonstrating real leadership.
- Brazil’s new president has promised to protect the Amazon and has formed an alliance of nations that are home to the largest rainforests to prevent deforestation.
- February’s announcement of the Greener Neighbourhoods Pilot program launches Canada’s deep retrofit of our buildings stock. This provides the opportunity to make communities more resilient to climate-related impacts, reduce emissions and utility bills, increase energy efficiency and create good-paying jobs in construction and maintenance.
- And perhaps most of all, my sense of hope remains vital and alive because climate activism is thriving around the world – and it is our youth (including my youngest daughter) who are at the forefront.

There are very tangible reasons to be hopeful about climate change response as we forge into a new season of promise and hard work. Let us use that hope to redouble our efforts to address the climate crisis and to ensure a successful transition to a prosperous, low-carbon future.

In The Community



Working together on climate solutions with fellow MPs & Min. Guilbeault

Visiting the NS Veterans Council w/Minister Anand



A joyful child’s response to our IRCC assistance

Help us help you

My office provides assistance to constituents well beyond Canadian flags and pins. Our staff can help to navigate challenges that arise between constituents and government offices such as Canada Revenue, Pensions and Immigration.

Immigration questions are often the most complex and difficult, even heartbreaking. Since taking office in 2015, my staff has dealt with nearly 5000 individual instances where they have helped to find answers for people whose lives are on hold while awaiting immigration decisions.

The need for these skilled staff members has ramped up over the past three years, when the pandemic and numerous international crises have precipitated many into requesting help with their applications. But they are only human, and can only assist people living in my riding.

Neither I nor my staff are able to interfere in any applications. As an elected representative, I cannot influence something that is being processed via a rules-based immigration system. Our office cannot make processing happen faster in specific cases – although we certainly can advocate for broader policy changes. It is the case though, that my office’s assistance does, sometimes, help to unstick things when problems do occur, when communication has not been clear or when some interpretation may be needed. **My staff is experienced and compassionate and is genuinely here to help.** This is an immensely important role carried out by the dedicated staff in constituency offices like mine.



Wishing everyone a warm and active Spring. My constituency staff is here to serve you.

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JONATHAN WILKINSON

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, NORTH VANCOUVER

SPRING 2023

North Vancouver Constituent Update



Pre-budget prognosis

Admittedly, our annual pre-budget consultation is not the most glamorous evening out but if we’re to protect and foster democracy in our country, we require an engaged citizenry and so pre-budget public discussions are necessary.

To enjoy the rights of democracy, we must each individually exercise the responsibilities attached to those rights. That includes voting every few years, and – best case scenario – doing so in a manner that is thoughtful and informed.



That’s why I consider public meetings such as pre-budget consultations to be important and valuable. They provide an opportunity to express opinions, to engage in discussion with fellow citizens, to get informed, and to inform our elected representatives.

Community meetings are an invaluable information touchstone and reality check that enable me to effectively represent your concerns in Ottawa.

HEALTH CARE TOP OF MIND

We covered a lot of ground in our early February afternoon pre-budget discussion session - housing, the rising cost of living, Canada’s response to climate change, Ukraine, Iran...but the most emotional talk centred around health care. It carried an undercurrent of anxiety and urgency that was very real.

Our public health care system has been part of what it means to be Canadian – a kind of birthright promise that it would be there when we needed it. But it was evident from what I heard – and how it was said – that there is a deep uneasiness that this promise has been compromised.

People spoke of wait times for diagnosis and treatment, of shortages of family practitioners and specialists, and of over-stretched front-line providers. Much was said about the lack of mental health services and the suffering of those for whom help is just not there.

There was frustration over insufficient coordination and collaboration between levels of government in our system, where Ottawa provides a good portion of funding while provinces and territories provide health care delivery. There were calls for greater efficiency and innovation, and more accountability and transparency for outcomes.

I was left with the feeling that many attendees feared the system has become too complex to fix. While that may be understandable, we cannot allow ourselves to succumb to that belief.

PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS

2023



NEW HEALTH CARE PROPOSAL

On February 7th, after months of discussion, the Prime Minister met with all thirteen premiers to propose a new health care agreement with the provinces and territories, in an effort to work together to improve health care for Canadians.

The federal government is prepared to provide \$198.6 billion in federal funding over the next ten years. This includes planned increases to the Canada Health Transfer, as well as new funding of \$48 billion over the coming decade. And Canada's premiers have agreed to this as a step in the right direction.

That's a major new investment, but money alone is not the answer. There are some conditions in the agreements we have signed with provinces and territories that will help to ensure that:

- ▶ Canadians have access to family doctors and nurse practitioners;
- ▶ there is support for those who drive our health care system and reduce backlogs;
- ▶ there is access to quality mental health care and substance use supports; and
- ▶ your health information is available to you and your health providers – so you get the best quality care.



BC signed an agreement in principle on March 1st for a federal funding investment of \$27.47 billion over 10 years.

I have no illusions that next year – at our 2024 pre-budget community consultation – anxiety over the state of health care will have vanished. But I am hopeful there will be a more positive prognosis that the system is beginning to heal.

Small homes, big impact

It is no secret that the housing market is top of mind for many Canadians right now, and North Vancouver is no different. Creative and sustainable design principles, using smaller footprints and greener materials, will dominate moving forward into a more densely populated, carbon-neutral world – and we'll have to move in that direction, too.

North Vancouver is home to many small businesses that contribute to the dynamic changes taking place – one of them being **Synthesis Design**. A company born from the idea that architecture and interior design should work cohesively to “create a unified whole,” Synthesis responds to not only the needs of clients, but the current housing crisis as a whole, with a focus on the North Shore.

“Creative and sustainable design principles, using smaller footprints and greener materials”

Born and raised in North Vancouver, founder Curtis Krahn established Synthesis Design early in 1993. The intent was to create an experience for clients that combined the need for innovative architecture integrated with interior design to suit the entire vision of the client and the site. As the years evolved, so did the needs of clients and community. Recognizing the current housing shortage in Vancouver and the North Shore, Synthesis responded in the best way they knew how: architecture and innovation. The goal? To increase accessibility and affordability of housing in an area of burgeoning building costs.



With a design fittingly named ModCube, Synthesis created four floor plans with the use of laneway space in mind, increasing the opportunity for housing on already-established lots, decreasing the need for urban sprawl while responding to the housing shortage. This initiative has taken off in North Vancouver and surrounding areas as communities navigate inventive ways to respond to the current housing market using laneway space.

Beyond housing, Synthesis is looking to expand into serving their community by creating “ModFit” units; individual, small-scale gyms that can be rented by individuals to help increase opportunities for wellness among NS residents, located on both public and private lots.

Synthesis is unusual in the way they assess the needs of the community and respond to them through architecture and interior design. Though considered a small business, their impact has been enormous, particularly as you amble along our alleys in North Vancouver.

Congratulations on 30 years in business, Synthesis.

Electoral boundary changes

In the fall, I wrote about the proposed electoral boundary changes that could affect how this constituency will look in the next federal election. Such electoral boundary changes happen every ten years in response to shifts in population and are precipitated when there is growth or shifts in demographics that affect the fairness of representation in geographic areas.

The BC Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission recently published its “close to final” redrawing of federal ridings, following public meetings and many consultations to determine the way forward. The 2021 census shows our province grew to over five million people, from 4.4 million in 2011.

As the Commission explained, the two big challenges facing BC are a highly uneven and altered population distribution pattern, and our varied and rugged physical geography. Our province gained one riding, and many ridings are being altered to reflect demographic shifts.

“The present North Vancouver riding is to be shifted significantly west”

The new electoral map of the North Shore's three federal ridings demonstrates how challenging it can be to respect community cohesion, reflect geographic realities and accommodate population growth patterns.

While both MP Patrick Weiler and I had argued that North Vancouver and West Vancouver should remain largely intact – rather than splitting communities of interest – the Committee has decided otherwise. I should note that our respective local governments and the North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce also argued before the Commission in favour of keeping a North Vancouver and a West Vancouver seat. However, in the end, the Commission has rejected these representations.

Going forward, based on the Commission's recommendations, the present North Vancouver riding is to be shifted significantly west, with the demarcation line on the eastern border now following the North Vancouver City municipal boundary and up Mountain Highway (meaning much of Lynn Valley will join the Burnaby North-Seymour riding). As part of the proposed changes, the western limit of the North Vancouver riding will move all the way to 21st Street below the highway in West Vancouver (from the present dividing line at the Capilano River).



With respect to the Commission's recommendations, there remains one additional opportunity for discussion amongst MPs. However, given the work that has gone into informing the Commission's report, it is unlikely that the proposed borders will change significantly.

Any boundary changes will take effect in time for the next federal election. Until that time, all MPs continue to be responsible for representing the constituents who live and vote within current electoral boundaries.

The work of non-partisan electoral boundary commissions across the country is far from simple. While I continue to believe that the boundaries, going forward, should have been drawn in a manner that better reflects our local communities, I acknowledge the range of challenges that these folks must address – and overall I think we all support the overriding objective of these Commissions – of ensuring fair and effective representation of the Canadian public.

Ongoing support in a crisis

In September 2022, the world witnessed the citizens of Iran stand up in protest against the brutal regime responsible for the death of Mahsa Amini. Since then, tens of thousands of Iranian citizens have been imprisoned for protesting the regime's violence and egregious human rights violations. **Many hundreds have been killed, including children.**

“Our support for the Iranian people to live their lives free from persecution is unwavering. We hear their powerful voices, and we will continue to amplify them wherever we can.”

POLITICAL SPONSORSHIP

Following the leadership of Parliamentarians in several European countries, members of the Iranian community in BC called for Canadian parliamentarians to commit to doing whatever we can to help prevent the executions of those condemned to death, torture or ongoing imprisonment by the Iranian regime.

All the Liberal MPs in BC and many more across the country have publicly committed to sponsoring and speaking the names – on an ongoing basis – of over 65 individual detainees chosen through organizations which monitor human rights violations in Iran.

We will function as their advocates, keeping track of their lives and welfare on our social media channels and other public platforms – maintaining a sustained spotlight on Iran's ongoing human rights violations and – hopefully – helping to ensure the safety of these brave individuals.



Farzaneh & Hamid Ghareh Hassanlou



Mohammad Rakhshani

We have chosen to sponsor in this way physicians and medical students targeted for their support of protests, as well as some of the thousands of young people singled out with severe penalties for raising their voices.

Here is a list of detained individuals being sponsored by your BC Members of Parliament (with updates):

- John Aldag: endorsing **Dr. Farhad Meysami** (released after 145 days on a hunger strike), and **Mohammad Ghobadlou**, 22 (one execution order revoked; still under execution order a second time)
- Parm Bains: endorsing **Mahsa Mohamadi** (released from prison), and **Amir Mohammad Jaffari**, 17
- Terry Beech: endorsing **Iman Navabi** – Surgery Resident (released on bail), and **Fahimeh Karimi**, mother of three
- Sukh Dhaliwal: endorsing **Amirali Pouramin**, and **Arshia Takdastan**, 18
- Hedy Fry: endorsing **Dr. Zahra Hasani Abiz**, and **Sahand Noormohammadzadeh** (sentence to be investigated by a different branch of the courts after asking for an appeal).
- Ken Hardie: endorsing **Dr. Behnam Ohadi**, and **Ali Rakhshani**, 17
- Ron McKinnon: endorsing **Reza Arya**, father of two (death sentence revoked), and **Tohid Darvishi**
- Wilson Miao: endorsing **Ayat Arefinia** – journalist, and **Aadel Gorgij**
- Joyce Murray: endorsing **Tahereh Bojravani**, and **Amir Reza Mousavian**, 15
- Taleeb Noormohamed: endorsing **Dr. Homayoun Eftekharian Nia** (recently released but remains under threat), and **Amir Nasr-Azadani**
- Carla Qualtrough: endorsing **Ellaheh Mir Mohammadi** – reporter, and **Ghasem Jahangir**, 19 (released)
- Harjit Sajjan: endorsing **Armita Abbasi**, 21 (recently released) and **Mehdi Mohammadi Fard**, 18
- Randeep Sarai: endorsing **Dr. Alreza Eradati**, and **Hossein Mohammadi**
- Patrick Weiler: endorsing **Mehdi Memar Rast** – Medical Student (released on bail), **Mansour Dehmardeh**, and **Mohsen Rezazadeh Gharagholou**
- Jonathan Wilkinson – endorsing **Dr. Hamid Ghareh Hassanlou** (death sentence revoked), his spouse **Farzaneh Ghareh Hassanlou**, and **Mohammad Rakhshani**, 16

STEADFAST SUPPORT

While our sponsorship does not guarantee the safety or freedom of these individuals, we hope by amplifying their plight and story, the message we send to the Iranian regime is clear – **Canada is watching, and we condemn these actions by their government.**

We resolve as Canadians to stand steadfast and united in our support of international conventions on human rights wherever they are suppressed – particularly the rights of women and girls, and rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association.

“Jin, jijan, azadi!”
– Woman, life, freedom!