

GREEN PARTY TURNS RED OVER HARPER'S BLEAK BLACK OIL AGENDA

Pre-Writ Shipyards Rally Sees Large Enthusiastic Turnout, But Will It Translate Into Votes?

By: Kerry Morris - May 31, 2015

It's 12:00 noon on Sunday May 31, and the crowd at North Vancouver's Lower Lonsdale Shipyards amphitheatre is reasonably large, well informed, and in search of a new direction for Canada. Green Party candidates from all over the Lower Mainland are gathered to promote the party, and it is evident that while the Greens are under no illusion they will form the next government, they look confident that they will elect enough of their slate to broker the balance of power in the next federal minority government.

Indeed winning enough seats to become part of a coalition government appears to be the Green's central campaign strategy, and they're not the least



bit bashful about saying so. And why should they be? It's widely believed that giving Harper a majority government was the principle cause of the most destructive legislation in Canadian History.

Elizabeth May takes the podium last with what has been described as the best oratory skills in the political business and makes an aggressive stand against much of the Harper Governments legislative agenda these past 5 years. At the top of the list, pipeline expansion. She doesn't speak of Northern Gateway, likely because Alberta's Notley appears poised to bury that project without further pressure from First Nations or BC, but she does come out swinging hard against Kinder Morgan's plan to twin the TransMountain Pipeline. She presents a series of arguments in support of the Green Party's position.

First and foremost, Greens oppose pipelines due to the likelihood of spills. They believe that spills are a virtual certainty, the only things in question being timing, size, and magnitude of destruction. On the later point, May makes it clear, Greens believe the amount of destruction will be massive, beyond the scale of any existing or in-plan resources to clean up, and will decimate our eco-systems as well as our economy. After all, how much of that economy is based on the pristine nature of our 'Beautiful BC' experience, which won't be anywhere near as beautiful when stained black by bitumen?

She speaks passionately about the legislative destruction caused by Harper's omnibus Bill's, and in particular the repealing of environmental protection legislation which has long safeguarded Canada's inland and coastal waters. She talks of the 'kangaroo-court' nature of the National Energy Board ('NEB') pipeline approval process now underway to evaluate the pros and cons of Kinder Morgans proposal.

May accuses Kinder Morgan of filing false evidence in the NEB process by taking a 'Draft' US report, containing inaccuracies and false findings of fact, then whitening out the word 'Draft' from each page of that report and submitting it as an authority in the NEB process. She appears shocked by the revelation that Kinder Morgan executives would lie, which for the first time in todays speechifying catches me off-guard. After all, Kinder Morgan's senior management is comprised of a virtual who's-who list of executives from the now de-funked Enron: <http://thetyee.ca/Opinion/2015/01/12/Trans-Mountain-Texas-Profits/>.

The Enron disaster has already cost BC taxpayer over \$750M through a legal challenge brought against POWER-EX by the state of California in relation to price fixing accusations: <http://www.canadianbusiness.com/companies-and-industries/case-closed-on-the-california-crisis/>. May's presentation, while not specifically identified in her speech, raises the question of why we are so damed enthusiastic about getting back in bed with the Enron's crooks now painted Kinder Morgan colours?

Moving to the larger aspects of the Green Party agenda, May makes it clear that Canada must transition from an oil based economy, to one based on sustainable energy. She talks about the destruction of Canada's Boreal Forest, which she calls the largest carbon capture and sink systems in the world, an essential resource in the fight against global warming: <http://mbwatercaucus.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/BorealForest-CarbonMaps.pdf>.

May talks about the fact that Canada spends the equivalent of 1 barrel of oil for every 2 barrels of bitumen we produce, a terrible statistic by any standard. She talks about the use of Canadian Ports to ship US thermal coal, and the global environmental damage caused by the burning of thermal coal.

May speaks about the Harper Government's corporate tax reduction program, which she says has created what Mark Carney described as 'Dead Money', lying dormant in corporate bank accounts. May says the Harper Government rationalizes this strategy by claiming the tax reductions allow corporations to become altruistic corporate donors. May claims the Harper strategy relies on the good intentions of wealthy corporations, as opposed to compelling those intentions through taxation, which thinking she says is flawed. She points to the existence of all that 'Dead Money' to support her position. She says Canada's investment and trade agreements with China are a bad deal and need to be scrapped, as does Bill C-51, which she claims is an attack on Canada's fundamental democratic principles.

May talks about the refusal of Steven Harper to attend most of the planned televised debates, and the fact those debates should and will proceed with or without Harper. She says Harper prefers a series of 5 'boutique' debates, to which the Green's have received only one invitation. A compliment I'd say, and proof that Harpers more than a little scared of May and her debate skills?

The rest of the green troop is highly educated, possesses strong oratory skills, has seemingly good to very good credentials, and appear genuinely interested in making Canada a better place for all Canadians to live. The North Shore's candidate, ex CBC weather presenter Claire Martin, makes points by admitting she has accepted candidacy on the premise that she will not have to lie, and will not be 'whipped' by the caucus to vote in a way she doesn't believe and support.

I found myself liking much of the Green Party's platform, but I also had a problem! They claim that small business provides 30% of the Canadian economy whereas the oil sands provides only 2%.

They did not identify that in Western Canada, much of the 30% relies upon the capital dollar spending habits of the 2%, or that public sector budgets for healthcare, education, infrastructure and other segments all feed at the oil trough. Despite the absents of these facts, I still found many of their arguments compelling. Nor did they discuss or openly admit that by stifling pipeline expansion they were driving up the movement of oil by rail at significantly higher risk to the environment. Nor did they admit that increased oil tanker traffic was already upon us due to the increases in oil by rail shipments.

My take-away from the event was that if the Green's control the 'balance-of-power', they will work to roll-back much of the Harper Governments legislative agenda. What I did not hear, and need to hear, is precisely how we will deal with the economic impacts of the Green agenda. Convincing a homeowner who's job will be lost, due to that Green agenda, will not be an easy sell. That said, unless we begin implementing strategies to save our planet, the house mortgage will likely be the least of our worries!

