

## **2013 – MHF Comment**

### **Subject: Environmental Challenges – Economic Opportunities**

***“The gaps identified in this report expose Canadians to potentially significant environmental damages and related costs.”***

This condemning statement is from Scott Vaughan, *Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development*, in his 2012 Fall Report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, released yesterday (Feb 5, 2013).

He went on to conclude that ***“these gaps are preventing environmental stewardship from keeping pace with natural resource development.”***

These are damning results, and reinforce the total disregard, indeed disdain, the Harper government has for the environment and its protection, highlighting broken promises and unmet commitments.

Most worrisome are:

- The lack of preparedness for major oils spills.
- The insufficiency of financial guarantees and out of date liability caps for the private sector, in the case of spills or other environmental degradation.
- That the oil and gas sector is exempted from reporting pollutant releases. Given the relatively new and untested nature of hydraulic fracturing wells (with over 200,000 now in Canada, a number which is expected to double over the next 20 years), the Commissioner stated that ***“the government cannot know if Canadians are adequately protected.”***

***The Harper government must address all three of these issues immediately. It must fulfill the commitments and promises it has made – if not, it will have lied to the Canadian public.***

#### **But here is the opportunity:**

Canada currently suffers the international shame of bad environmental stewardship - and we all suffer from the corresponding marketing and political challenges created by that reputation, in trying to find access to markets. Our prosperity is diminished when we can't sell our energy and other resources to more markets at world prices.

**We can turn these environmental challenges into economic opportunities.**

No development is without risk, we know that. Leaks and spills do sometimes happen. So rather than waiting for a spill for which we are unprepared and which, managed badly, will be hugely costly, Canada should become the world leader in spill containment and clean-up. Canada should become the world leader in spill prevention; the world leader

in pipeline monitoring technology; the world leader in remediation; the world leader in water recycling.

Here is a huge opportunity for the government and private sectors to work together, and I have the vision, and the passion, to turn environmental challenges into opportunities in order to:

- Better protect our environment;
- Develop technological capabilities that we can in turn export for gain – enhancing our economic prosperity at the same time;
- And (no small feat) regain the international respect that we have so badly lost.

If you, like me, believe that we must protect our environment AND our economic prosperity, then please consider signing up to vote for me as Leader of the Liberal Party.