

***We need to insist that polluters pay for the pollution they cause; find the right balance between environmental regulation, environmental protection, and development; and pursue and promote the development of clean and renewable energy sources.***

### ***Polluters must pay***

It's simple: polluters must pay for the pollution they cause. In today's society, although people are held to account for damage they cause to other people (or to other people's property), polluters can cause damage to our water, our land, our atmosphere, and even our entire climate, virtually without consequence. This is particularly true with regard to the latter – those who emit greenhouse gases and other destructive pollutants are in most cases not paying anything for the damage they are causing.

I was a big supporter in 2008 of imposing a price on carbon. I was also very proud of advocating a policy of offsetting revenue received with a reduction in income taxes. Our slogan at the time was "tax what we burn, not what we earn." It made a lot of sense then, and it makes a lot of sense now – particularly now, as under Stephen Harper we've lost another four years of potential progress. In 2008 Don Drummond, then Chief Economist of Toronto Dominion Bank, said, "The idea itself is very sensible... There is a growing consensus to do something about emissions. We need to put a price on carbon." And by being revenue neutral, our proposal was a fiscally responsible plan that would help us shift our consumption habits so our society can be richer, fairer, and greener.

I believe that such a policy is still excellent policy – the fact that it was badly communicated, and the fact that we allowed Stephen Harper to frame it with such appalling attack ads, should not change our view of what we know is right.

### ***The right balance between the environment and the economy***

Protecting the environment is, of course, good – but we can't just halt economic activity that is critical to the livelihood of Canadians.

Strong environmental regulation is good, but it shouldn't take forever.

Thorough review of potential effects of a project is good, but duplication and inefficiencies – not so much.

I am a business person. I understand the importance of economics and development to increase prosperity for Canadians. I also regard myself as an environmentalist. I am a proud Georgian Bay Land Trust Steward. I have worked with non-profit organizations promoting clean water and advocating control of water-borne invasive species. I do not, however, support those who advocate zero-impact – those who, for example, would

shut down the oil sands, prevent any new pipelines, or prevent any project that has any environmental impact.

In an ideal world, zero-impact on the environment might be wonderful, but that's not what we have. Zero-impact would mean ripping up all of our highways and roads – it will be a long time, if ever, before we have only renewable-energy-powered cars and trucks. Had this attitude been present over the last century, we would never have built the CPR, the St. Lawrence Seaway, the TransCanada Highway. Canada has been built with big projects, in a big country blessed with energy and other natural resources. It is true that some infrastructure and industrial activity created serious environmental damage. But I would argue that we have learned a great deal from our mistakes. Some of that damage has been remediated. Some not, and we should still be doing all we can.

As we look to the future, the innovations, the technologies, the public influence that has encouraged governments to establish and enforce tougher and better environmental regulations, and businesses recognizing the marketing value of good environmental stewardship – and the corresponding marketing nightmare of the opposite – have taken us a long way. Our challenge – our opportunity – is to capitalize on the resources that Canada has, to create the prosperity that benefits all, in a way that prevents or mitigates environmental impacts – and with technologies and processes for remediation and clean-up where that becomes necessary.

### ***Renewable Energy***

Wind, solar, and geothermal power have tremendous appeal, and I encourage their use wherever feasible (I have been a solar power user for over 15 years and am a complete fan. But the reality is that this type of renewable energy will not come anywhere close to feeding our (or the world's) collective need for energy in the foreseeable future. Our task, therefore, is to find a balance, and to understand that although we must absolutely work to increase the use of renewables, we have a long way to go before they can be the only answer.

There are opportunities: as the world calls for more clean energy (even developing nations like China understand the human health and other environmental costs of pollution, and are looking at all ways to generate cleaner energy), the innovations, the new technologies that we can develop, and which we are developing here in Canada, not only can increase our use of renewables, but themselves can be exported to other countries. Canada is already becoming highly respected as a source of clean energy technologies (despite no enthusiasm from the Harper government). These are Canadian successes and strengths on which we must build.