



**JONATHAN WILKINSON**

Candidate – North Vancouver  
FEDERAL LIBERALS

*Please note that these responses from each Candidate to questions posed by the North Vancouver Chamber are complete and unedited.*

**ECONOMIC RECOVERY FROM COVID-19.**

***Q: What will you do to support economic recovery from COVID-19 in the hardest hit employers, business sectors and members of our community in North Vancouver?***

No one wants further lock downs – and our economy will suffer if further lock downs are required. This is why vaccinations are so important. Getting as many people as possibly vaccinated will help us build consumer confidence and provide a sense of safety in the workplace.

To finish the fight against COVID, a re-elected Liberal government will make vaccines mandatory on planes, trains, and in the federal public service. We will support proof-of-vaccination credentials, safer indoor spaces - like schools and businesses - with better ventilation and free vaccine boosters, for everyone.

Beyond vaccines, the economy has already made a remarkable recovery – 1 year ago we announced supports and investments aimed at creating 1M jobs

We are now 3/4s of the way to that goal. Canada has restored 92% of the jobs lost at the height of the pandemic. The US, by contract, has restored only 75%

Going forward economic recovery and growth beyond recovery will require a number of things – not just to offset the impacts of the pandemic but also to adjust to an aging demographic and to the transition that is occurring to a low carbon future

Key elements of a successful economic strategy must involve:



- Continuing to provide supports for hiring staff in the short term through the Recovery Hiring Benefit and additional support for key industries that continue to be significantly impacted such as tourism;
- Winning in the global race for talent – immigration target of 1.2 million over the next three years;
- Getting everyone who wants to work into the labour force – removing obstacles to work – which is why accessible \$10/day childcare is so important.
- Equipping Canadians with the skills they require as they move through transitions in employment – which is why we introduced the Canada Training Benefit and other measures;
- Ensuring a competitive tax environment rates for small businesses – and Canada has the lowest combined tax rate for small business in the G7;
- Continued focus on areas poised for significant growth including the work of the digital supercluster here in Vancouver and programs to enable smaller businesses to incorporate digital technologies; development of a pan- Canadian Artificial Intelligence Strategy; and working hard to position Canada’s traditional industries – such as mining and steel – as leaders in a low carbon economy.

**EASE OF DOING BUSINESS (regulations, taxes, supply chain, access to capital).**

***Q: If elected, what would you within your role as the federally elected official to help remove these barriers and support our local business and employment sectors?***

A re-elected Liberal government will extend the Canada Recovery Hiring Program to March 31, 2022, so businesses can hire more workers and Canadians can get back on the job and we will provide Canada’s hard-hit tourism industry with temporary wage and rent support of up to 75% of their expenses to help them get through the winter.

We will help unleash investments by improving the Canada Small Business Financing Program. This will increase annual financing by an estimated \$560 million, supporting approximately 2,900 additional small businesses. We will Increase the maximum loan amount from \$350,000 to \$500,000 and extend loan coverage from 10 to 15 years for equipment and leasehold improvements.

We will move forward with our plan to implement the Canada Digital Adoption Program which will provide microgrants of up to \$2,400 to smaller businesses so they can afford the costs of new technology and offer zero-interest loans to small and medium-sized businesses so they can finance larger technology adoption projects.

As North Vancouver’s federally elected official, my constituency office will continue working hard to ensure members of the local business community are aware of the avenues of federal support available to assist in a successful post-pandemic restart and provide assistance where required.



## **CLIMATE CHANGE/ENVIRONMENT.**

***Q: What is your personal position on climate change, and your party's commitment on the most important steps that need to be taken to address climate change and the environment?***

I entered politics in 2015 because I care deeply about climate change. As former “Green Tech” CEO, I felt I had some relevant skills that could be put to public service in the fight against climate change – the defining issue of our time.

The current government introduced Canada’s first-ever national climate plan in 2016, becoming the first government to set a climate target and lay out a path to meeting it.

We have invested over \$100 billion towards climate action and clean growth, taken action to get to net-zero emissions by 2050 and enshrined Canada’s net-zero goal into law. We made sure pollution isn’t free anywhere in Canada and laid out a plan to plant 2 billion trees over the next ten years and support other nature-based climate solutions.

We have committed to ensuring 100% of vehicles sold in Canada are zero-emission by 2035 and invested over \$25 billion in public transit.

But for these investments to deliver, Canadians need a government with a real plan to meet our climate goals.

Among the measures a re-elected Liberal government will implement:

- Pay for 50,000 more zero-emissions vehicle charging stations, mandate that half of all car sales be net-zero by 2030, and ensure the electricity grid is net-zero by 2035.
- Make sure the oil and gas sector reduces emissions at a pace and scale needed to achieve net-zero by 2050 with a particular focus on methane emissions;
- Accelerate our G20 commitment to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies from 2025 to 2023;
- Ban thermal coal exports from and through Canada no later than 2030;

The commitment of the Liberal Party of Canada to this issue is paramount, unwavering and resolute.

## **STAFF – ATTRACTION & RETENTION OF SKILLED STAFF.**

***Q: What is your position on this, and what steps would you take to get the underemployed back into the work force and support the social and economic potential this holds for our community?***

One of the signs of the strength of our recovery is that, in some sectors, businesses’ growth is outpacing their ability to find workers. In the spring, we made the largest investment in training for workers in Canadian history to help them reskill to meet the needs of employers.

We will make it easier for workers to connect employers, attract global talent, and provide the training workers and businesses need to succeed.



The winding down of remaining COVID supports – in tandem with measures to increase vaccination rates - should stimulate a post-pandemic return of Canadians to the workplace – hence our focus on the Canada Recovery Hiring Program over the coming months.

Immigration was extremely difficult during COVID. Canada was unable to bring the number of new immigrants to this country as had been planned pre-pandemic. This has created significant challenges in a number of areas – certainly businesses such as those in Whistler that rely on young travelers have felt this impact quite severely.

A re-elected Liberal government will reform economic immigration programs to expand pathways to permanent residence for temporary foreign workers and former international students through the Express Entry points system; build on the Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot and work with employers and communities across Canada to welcome 2,000 skilled refugees to fill labour shortages in in-demand sectors such as health care.

Our accessible \$10/day daycare program will help reduce barriers to employment for thousands of women.

We will introduce a Career Extension Tax Credit to help seniors who want to stay in the workforce, stay in the workforce. The tax credit will let people 65 and over, who earn a working income, reduce their taxes.

Action to address labour shortages will make sure businesses can grow and capitalize on the opportunities of our recovery. And create even more opportunities for workers.

## **TRANSPORTATION.**

***Q: What would you do to ensure public transportation investments are made that provide better access to and across the North Shore to support the needs of North Vancouver, but also ensure the future of our local employers and the regional, provincial and national interests they support?***

This is a significant challenge which requires active collaboration between all three levels of government. Important work has been done over the past few years including the nearly-complete \$200 million Highway 1-Lower Lynn Improvement Project, additional public transit capacity including express B-lines, another Seabus and improvements in cycling infrastructure.

But the long-term answer is rapid transit to the North Shore. All three levels of government have been working on this through the Integrated North Shore Transportation Planning Project with economic impact and alternative route assessments complete.

As a re-elected Member of Parliament, my priority will be to work ensure that a rapid transit link to the North Shore or Translink’s next project after the Broadway and Langley extension projects.



## HOUSING.

***Q: Do you support additional housing in North Vancouver? In what form and density should it take, and what would you do to ensure active and urgent federal support for these housing challenges in North Vancouver?***

This is a critical issue. It's important to recall that, until 2015, the federal government had been absent from any significant involvement in housing for decades. In 2016, the current government announced the National Housing Strategy – a \$72 billion, 10-year plan to increase housing supply – with a significant focus on affordable housing. Since implementation of the strategy began in 2017/18, it has helped more than 2 million Canadians find places to call home through new builds, repairs, renovations and rental subsidies.

More than 300,000 lower income Canadians are being helped to pay their rent through \$ 4 billion Canada Housing Benefit Agreements we signed with every province and territory.

The current government announced Canada's first national tax on vacant property owned by non-resident, non-Canadians, which will go into effect on January 1, 2022. We tripled the federal government's investment in homelessness prevention and reduction. And we launched the Rapid Housing Initiative, investing \$2.5 billion to create at least 9,200 new units of affordable housing across Canada.

However, even with this work the housing market has continued to rise and it is clear more needs to be done. There are a number of important measures in the Liberal election platform.

Overly complex, backlogged, and under-resourced municipal zoning and permitting systems are slowing the pace of building much-needed homes. A re-elected Liberal government will invest \$4 billion in a new Housing Accelerator Fund which will grow the annual housing supply in the country's largest cities every year, creating a target of 100,000 new middle-class homes by 2024-25.

A re-elected Liberal government will double our existing Budget 2021 commitment to \$600 million to support the conversion of empty office and retail space into market-based housing. We'll convert space in the federal portfolio and commercial buildings.

We will introduce a new rent-to-own program to help make it easier for renters to get on the path towards home ownership while renting as well as a tax-free First Home Savings Account will allow Canadians under 40 to save up to \$40,000 towards their first home, and to withdraw it tax-free to put towards their first home purchase, with no requirement to repay it.

Housing affordability is an issue of particular important to young Canadians but, more broadly, it is also a social justice issue if we are to be a society that aims to provide reasonable equality of opportunity.

