

# Welcome

## Welcome

***Water is life. Protect it. Don't commodify it.***

### Election Survey Results & Party Platforms on Water

- With the April 23 election fast approaching we are sending out an overview of the positions of the five major parties in the election. We hope you will take these positions into consideration when making the choice of which party you intend to support.
- On April 4th, OWINFS circulated a 10-question election survey to all the parties, but perhaps indicative of the importance each lends to the issue, only the NDP took time to respond. The positions of other parties have been taken from their respective election platforms and/or policy documents.
- The current Alberta election cycle has seen an almost complete absence of debate on environmental issues, which unfortunately means that the very critical issue of the future of water allocation in the province and the potential for an expansion of water markets in the province has largely been absent from the election discussion.
- Whichever party forms government next week, the continued engagement of all Albertans in deciding our water future, and your participation in the ongoing review of the province's water allocation system will be critical, and we look forward to your continued support and engagement as the review moves forward.
- In alphabetical order, here are the positions of the parties with regard specifically to the water allocation review and/or water markets (each party has additional policies regarding other water-related issues that are not included below).
- **Alberta Party**

The Alberta Party's election platform makes no reference to the water allocation review or water markets. However, its [Energy and Environment Policy](#) <sup>[1]</sup> platform does address the issue, stating.

It states, "The Alberta Party envisions a future in which water is viewed as a public good that is responsibly shared amongst all Albertans and conserved as a matter of course."

On water management, its policy states, "moving forward, responsible management and good governance are essential. This is especially true given the increasing pressures put on Alberta's water resources by the realities of a changing climate; increasing population demands; a growing energy industry; and expanding communities."

The policy states that an Alberta Party government will:

- "Develop legislated Conservation Objectives that will offer protection for water sources, and Watershed Management plans for all major watersheds. We will promote and encourage groundwater management

plans.”

- “Develop a water management system that supports the growth of Alberta’s economy; encourages conservation and efficiency; and ensures that conserved water benefits the environment. We see water as a public good and not as a marketable commodity.”

- **New Democratic Party**

The NDP’s election platform, *Because Alberta Belongs to You*, includes a [section on the environment](#),<sup>[2]</sup> which states, “The Conservatives want to change the Water Act to expand the market for water across the province – selling water to the highest bidder – while it has cut water monitoring by 25% since 2007.” The policy states, “We can start today to stop the expansion of water markets and make human and ecosystem needs the priority for water allocation.”

In responding to the OWINFS survey, the NDP indicated that it

**Strongly disagrees that:**

- The establishment of a province-wide water market as outlined in the August 2009 Minister’s Advisory Group report is the right direction for the government to move in when making changes to Alberta’s water legislation.
- The level of public engagement since the water allocation review was announced in 2008 has been adequate to inform and involve all Albertans in the process.

**Disagrees that:**

- The current first in time, first in right (FITFIR) system should remain the basis for allocating water in Alberta.
- The level of engagement and negotiation with First Nations since the water allocation review was announced in 2008 has been adequate to fulfill treaty obligations and First Nation rights.

**Agrees that:**

- Maintaining sufficient science-based instream flows to ensure the ecosystem health of Alberta’s rivers should be the highest priority of water policy in Alberta.
- Alberta should include recognition of water as a fundamental human right in updated water legislation.

**Strongly agrees that:**

- Alberta should include the public trust doctrine as a central concept in updated water legislation.
- The government of Alberta needs to fully explore non-market policy options and present these options to Albertans before making changes to Alberta’s water legislation.
- Broad-based public consultations on the allocation review, which fully and meaningfully explore all policy options, must be conducted before the provincial government introduces changes to Alberta’s water legislation.

- **Liberal Party**

**Yes: The 2012 Alberta Liberal Platform**, available [here](#) [3], makes no mention of water, the water allocation review or water markets.

Progressive Conservatives

The PC election platform, Alberta By Design, available here, states in its Environment and Water section that “A new PC Government will begin the final stage consultation on actions under the Water for Life Strategy, and move forward with stakeholders and recognized experts. No further changes will be made until full and inclusive consultations have been completed.”

- **Wildrose Alliance**

In the environment section of its **Wildrose Policy: comprehensive ideas and solutions for ALBERTA** policy document, available [here](#) [4], the Wildrose Alliance states, “Our province’s fresh water is our most precious natural resource. Not only is it essential for human life, it is vital to the sustainability of our most important industries – namely energy and agriculture. Without it agricultural, residential, commercial and industrial growth are impossible.”

The policy states the Wildrose will:

- “Review and reform our water licensing system to ensure that existing licenses are fully utilized while respecting the principle of first in time, first in right. In cooperation with an effective on and off-stream fresh water storage plan, existing water licenses should be more than enough to address Alberta’s growth pressures for decades.”

## **Make Water An Election Issue - Alberta Election 2012**

With the provincial election campaign underway and public consultations on the future of Alberta’s water promised in 2012, it is critically important that the party leaders and candidates in ridings across Alberta hear now from voters that water is a priority issue and that Albertans don’t support a move by the next government to expand water markets in Alberta.

We need your help to make sure this message is heard in the leaders’ debate, on the doorstep, in all-candidates forums and in social media during the election. Please take a few moments to take the actions below to let candidates know that their position on water markets is important to you.

### **1. Ask your local candidate for their position on water markets.**

Be sure to ask your local candidates at community all-candidates forums, or when they come to your door, about their position on the water allocation review and the potential move to expand water markets to the entire province. Here are some sample questions you can ask (or modify based on the situation in your area).

- As you know, the Alberta government is considering moving to a province-wide water market as part of its current review of the provincial water allocation system. Do you support the expansion of water markets to determine who will have access to water in Alberta? Please explain why or why not.
- Alberta is currently looking to update what is widely viewed as an outdated water allocation system. What principles do you think should guide the system to determine which users get access to water in Alberta, and what changes do you think are needed to update the Water Act to respond to current and future water challenges?
- Albertans have been left out of the current review of the provincial water allocation system, and have

so far been presented with only one option: water markets. What do you think of how the review has been conducted to date, and if elected, will you and your party commit to fully exploring a range of policy options and presenting them to Albertans in broad and meaningful consultations with the public and First Nations prior to making changes to the Water Act?

- The issue of how best to allocate water is a pressing issue, especially in Southern Alberta. Some jurisdictions have tried to solve similar problems by introducing water markets, while others have implemented allocation systems that focus on the public interest by prioritizing ecosystem health and basic human needs above other uses. What direction do you think Alberta should go in to best update our water allocation system?
- I'm concerned that if Alberta moves ahead with plans to introduce a province-wide water market, municipalities, farmers, First Nations, and industry will be pitted against one another to access the water they need. What is your position on the possible expansion of water markets throughout Alberta?
- Let us know how candidates in your riding are responding to these questions by emailing us at [info@ourwaterisnotforsale.com](mailto:info@ourwaterisnotforsale.com) <sup>[5]</sup> or by posting responses on the Our Water Is Not For Sale Facebook Group at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/136978042996811/> <sup>[6]</sup>
- Our Water Is Not For Sale member group Public Interest Alberta has compiled a list of election events on its website at <http://pialberta.org/content/alberta-election-2012#Election%20Events> <sup>[7]</sup>

## 2. Submit a question on water markets to the leaders debates - April 12 (Global TV) and April 19 (CBC)

- **The Global TV leaders debate will be held on April 12 from 6:30 pm. to 8:00 pm.** Viewers are invited to submit a question to the leaders. Submit your question (using one of the above or make up your own) before April 12 to [karen.unland@globalnews.ca](mailto:karen.unland@globalnews.ca) <sup>[8]</sup>
- Progressive Conservative Leader Alison Redford, Liberal Leader Raj Sherman, Wildrose Leader Danielle Smith and NDP Leader Brian Mason have been invited to participate in the debate. For debate details visit: <http://www.globaltvedmonton.com/Pages/Story.aspx?id=6442614046> <sup>[9]</sup>
- **CBC is hosting the Alberta Votes 2012: the Leaders Forum on April 19, 2012 from 12-1:00pm** at CBC Centre Stage in Downtown Edmonton.
- Join Donna McElligott as CBC Alberta presents a live public forum on alberta@noon April 19 featuring the leaders of four Alberta political parties. New Democrat leader Brian Mason, PC leader Alison Redford, Liberal leader Raj Sherman and Wildrose's Danielle Smith will be at CBC Centre Stage in Downtown Edmonton from 12-1:00. They'll debate the issues YOU say are important to Alberta. What questions do you have for the four leaders? Be a part of the live studio audience, send an email to [albertavotes2012@cbc.ca](mailto:albertavotes2012@cbc.ca) <sup>[10]</sup> or send a tweet to AlbertaatNoonCBC. The debate will be live streamed at [cbc.ca/edmonton](http://cbc.ca/edmonton), and [cbc.ca/calgary](http://cbc.ca/calgary)

## 3. Use social media to engage with your local candidates on their Facebook walls, or on Twitter

- Local candidates contact information, including email, Facebook and Twitter information, can be found on each party's main site. Facebook and Twitter information for all five of the main party leaders is below. Ask them: What is your position on plans to introduce a province-wide water market in Alberta?
- Progressive Conservative Leader Alison Redford
- @Premier\_Redford | <https://www.facebook.com/Alison4Premier> <sup>[11]</sup>
- Wildrose Leader Danielle Smith
- @ElectDanielle | <http://www.facebook.com/ElectDanielle> <sup>[12]</sup>

- Liberal Leader Raj Sherman
- @RajShermanMLA | <http://www.facebook.com/rajshermanmla> [13]
- NDP Leader Brian Mason
- @bmasonNDP | <http://www.facebook.com/brianmasonleader> [14] and
- <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=579026461> [15]
- Alberta Party Leader Glenn Taylor
- @GlennTaylr | <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Glenn-Taylor-for-Alberta/249864515059540> [16] and
- <http://www.facebook.com/people/Glenn-Taylor/636351139> [17]

## Video available - Alternative Water Futures: The need for non-market solutions to Alberta's water crisis

- **\*\*Video now available of Schmidt's presentation: [click here to watch](#) [18] \*\***
- **Jeremy Schmidt**, Trudeau Scholar and author of the Parkland Institute research report, "Alternative Water Futures in Alberta," toured the province, speaking in Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. The tour, which ran December 5th to 9th, 2011, was very successful, generating important conversation and action toward protecting Alberta's water in the public interest
- The "Alternative Water Futures in Alberta" report is available online: [Click here for the Parkland Institute media release](#) [19] with link to the report in PDF

## Tell the U of A that Nestlé Chair Peter Brabeck-Letmathe doesn't deserve an honorary degree.

- **UPDATE:** February 29, 2012 -more than 70 organizations from over 20 countries have signed on to an open letter to the University of Alberta that condemns the Brabeck-Letmathe honorary degree. The letter calls on the university to reverse its decision to award an honorary degree to Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, Nestle Chairman, and instead asks "that other voices be added [to the External Water Advisory Board] which better reflect the importance of water as a commons, human right and public trust."[Read the media release and letter on the Council of Canadians website.](#) [20]
- The University of Alberta has [announced](#) [21] that on March 1, 2012 it will award an honorary degree to Peter Brabeck-Letmathe, the Chair of Nestle, the world's largest multinational food and water corporation and the largest bottled water corporation in the world.
- Nestle has been a leading force in pushing the privatization and commodification of water globally. Nestle has also been pushing water markets in Alberta. Peter Brabeck-Letmathe has bragged that Nestle is "actively dealing with the government of Alberta to think about a water exchange." His comments come at a time when our network and many Albertans have been raising concerns about the serious problems with water markets and pushing for the government to consult with Albertans.
- **On March 1, there will be a [demonstration](#) [22] at the Timms Centre in opposition to the university rewarding this type of corporate record.**
- **Please click [here](#) [23] for the full action alert with more information. Or use the Council of Canadians' [online form](#) [24] to email the University.**

## Special Advance Screening of *Bottled Life: Nestle's Business with Water*

On February 28 & 29, 2012, the Council of Canadians U of A Chapter is hosting two special advance screenings of the new film ***Bottled Life: Nestle's Business with Water***. [Click here to learn more.](#) <sup>[25]</sup>

## Open Letter

- [Click here](#) <sup>[26]</sup> to read our open letter to the Minister of Environment and Water, and to add your name to this call.

## Learn more

- Visit our [Issues & Information section](#) <sup>[27]</sup> to learn more about the threat of water markets in Alberta
- Or browse our [Resources page](#) <sup>[28]</sup> for reports, backgrounders and more.

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### Links:

- [1] <http://pialberta.org/sites/all/modules/civCRM/extern/url.php?u=873&qid=85905>
- [2] <http://pialberta.org/sites/all/modules/civCRM/extern/url.php?u=874&qid=85905>
- [3] <http://pialberta.org/sites/all/modules/civCRM/extern/url.php?u=875&qid=85905>
- [4] <http://www.votePC.ca/admin/contentx/default.cfm?h=10106&PageId=10106>
- [5] <mailto:info@ourwaterisnotforsale.com>
- [6] <http://www.facebook.com/groups/136978042996811/>
- [7] <http://pialberta.org/content/alberta-election-2012#Election%20Events>
- [8] <mailto:karen.unland@globalnews.ca>
- [9] <http://www.globaltv Edmonton.com/Pages/Story.aspx?id=6442614046>
- [10] <mailto:albertavotes2012@cbc.ca>
- [11] <https://www.facebook.com/Alison4Premier>
- [12] <http://www.facebook.com/ElectDanielle>
- [13] <http://www.facebook.com/rajshermanmla>
- [14] <http://www.facebook.com/brianmasonleader>
- [15] <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=579026461>
- [16] <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Glenn-Taylor-for-Alberta/249864515059540>
- [17] <http://www.facebook.com/people/Glenn-Taylor/636351139>
- [18] <http://ourwaterisnotforsale.com/content/video-alternative-water-futures-alberta>
- [19] [http://parklandinstitute.ca/media/comments/new\\_report\\_says\\_markets\\_are\\_a\\_poor\\_solution\\_to\\_albertas\\_water\\_woes/](http://parklandinstitute.ca/media/comments/new_report_says_markets_are_a_poor_solution_to_albertas_water_woes/)
- [20] <http://canadians.org/media/water/2012/29-Feb-12.html>
- [21] <http://www.water.ualberta.ca/>
- [22] <http://ourwaterisnotforsale.com/content/say-no-u-honorary-degree-nestle>
- [23] <http://canadians.org/blog/?p=13478>
- [24] <http://canadians.org/action/2012/nestle.html>
- [25] <http://ourwaterisnotforsale.com/content/special-advance-film-screening-bottled-life-nestles-business-water>
- [26] <http://ourwaterisnotforsale.com/content/open-letter>
- [27] <http://ourwaterisnotforsale.com/content/issues-information>
- [28] <http://ourwaterisnotforsale.com/content/resources>