



Updated April 26th, 2011- to date we have received responses from two candidates:

- Ron Cannan, Conservative Party candidate
- Alice Hooper, Green Party candidate

FEDERAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

The Kelowna Chamber of Commerce invited the candidates in the upcoming federal election to provide their perspective on several key federal issues of priority to our business members.

The Kelowna Chamber of Commerce is a non-partisan organization and does not endorse any specific political candidates or parties. Our role is to familiarize you with the candidates in the upcoming election and to help clarify the issues so that you can make an informed decision.

Below are the candidate questions and answers:

Ron Cannan, Conservative Party candidate

1) The Kelowna Chamber urges the federal government to provide funding for the Organized Crime Task Force in Kelowna and remains concerned about the negative impact that crime by chronic offenders has on the local business community. If elected, what would you do to ensure the continuation of this Task Force?

Answer: It was welcome news back in February, 2009 when the Province announced that it would create a 16 member satellite gang unit for Kelowna.

In discussion with Supt McKinnon and various members of our local RCMP detachment as well as members of our community, it's clear the organized crime task force has been a great addition to police enforcement in the Okanagan.

It has been a privilege to have worked with CEO Weldon LeBlanc and the various past Chamber Presidents to advance this issue. They have been great advocates. When Weldon was in Ottawa for his annual visit last fall, we met with

Public Safety Minister senior staff and reiterated the necessity that federal government transfer payments continue to flow to BC to fund the Task Force. We have been assured this funding will continue giving the province the ability to allocate funding toward the Crime Task Force.

2) There is currently a lack of rental affordable housing in Kelowna, and prior to the economic downturn, Kelowna had the lowest rental vacancy rates in Canada. The Kelowna Chamber has put forth a resolution to the Canadian Chamber calling on the Federal Government to amend federal income tax policy to provide incentives for the creation of more affordable rental housing. The recommendations include the following:

- • **Offering a rebate to the Goods and Services Tax (GST/Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) on new rental housing**
- • **Offering deferral of capital gains tax and recaptured Capital Cost Allowance (CCA) upon sale of a property and re-investment in new rental housing within a reasonable amount of time (two years)**
- • **Increasing CCA for new rental housing to line up with the true economic life of the relevant asset**
- • **Restoring soft cost deductibility in the year the costs are incurred for new rental housing.**

What is your position on this?

Answer: I thank the Chamber for their ongoing efforts to find solutions to the affordable rental housing challenges here in Kelowna. I will advocate for the tax incentives the Chamber has put forward by lobbying the Minister of Finance.

Supporting business through tax incentives is a priority for our government and addresses a major component of our Economic Action Plan -job creation. We fully recognize that affordable rental housing is critical to attracting and retaining the skilled labour we need to support our local economy.

While the province has constitutional jurisdiction over housing, housing challenges are best addressed through the partnership and collaboration of all levels of government and the non-profit and private sectors.

We have had a number of successful affordable housing projects completed here in Kelowna-Lake Country. I will continue to work with the Chamber and our local government to provide incentives for the creation of more affordable rental housing.

3) The economic impact of traffic congestion on business/tourism in Kelowna remains a key priority for the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce. If you were elected, what would you do to ensure that additional transportation funding will flow to the Kelowna area?

Answer: Under the Conservative Economic Action Plan, we have witnessed an unprecedented investment in infrastructure through the 7 year Building Canada Fund launched in 2007 and through the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund during the recession. This will remain a key priority for the federal government.

Furthermore, the program is based on a three-way partnership with the province and the municipalities which determine which infrastructure projects should be funded.

That is how we have successfully completed important infrastructure projects here in Kelowna-Lake Country including: Hwy 97/33, the pedestrian overpass, multi-use corridors, the Gordon Rd. Bridge, the airport runway expansion, and local transit expansion.

Infrastructure is a priority for this government because we recognize its critical importance to supporting our business and tourism sectors, job creation and the long-term growth of our local economy.

4) A competitive business tax system is important to foster productivity and economic growth on a long term sustainable basis. According to the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, Finance Canada examined the impact of corporate tax reductions between 2001 and 2004 and found that a one per cent reduction in the cost of capital raised investment by 0.7 per cent. If you were elected, what would you do to sustain this?

Answer: The Conservative Government has taken strong action to encourage long-term job creation and economic growth. As a result of our tax-relief measures to date Canada now has the lowest overall tax rate on new business investment among major advanced economies making Canada one of the best places in the world to do business.

Under a Conservative government, there will be no tax hike on business. As one local employer recently told me, another \$25-35K in taxes means he will be forced to lay off an employee.

We have made a clear commitment to support the businesses that create jobs for Canadians and in consultation with provincial and territorial governments Canada will have a combined corporate tax rate of 25% by 2012/13.

By continuing to support low taxes for individuals, families and business, balancing the budget and restraining growth in spending, we ensure the long-term growth of the economy.

5) According to Kelowna Chamber membership surveys, the business community is still recovering from the negative impact of the economic downturn. If you were elected, what would you do to:

- a. Ensure that Okanagan businesses receive business incentives and access to capital.**
- b. Assist Okanagan businesses with the recruitment and retention of qualified workers.**

Answer: The global recovery remains fragile and many businesses are reluctant to invest and to hire. Consequently, I remain concerned about the number of constituents unemployed.

Local businesses are the engine of job creation. To encourage them to recruit and retain qualified workers we will provide business incentives including: a low tax rate, a hiring credit for small business (a one-year EI break for some 525,000 Canadian small businesses) extension to the effective WorkShare program and helping workers in transition by extending the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers.

We will also continue to ensure access to capital through the BDC, the EDC and Community Futures and are supporting our universities and colleges so they can train the skilled labour local businesses need. This eases recruitment.

By working with organizations like Accelerate Okanagan and supporting the vibrant entrepreneurship and innovation here in the Okanagan, we are well-placed to achieve economic growth.

Alice Hooper, Green Party candidate

1) The Kelowna Chamber urges the federal government to provide funding for the Organized Crime Task Force in Kelowna and remains concerned about the negative impact that crime by chronic offenders has on the local business community. If elected, what would you do to ensure the continuation of this Task Force?

If elected I would support the Federal Government funding for the Organized Crime Task Force because our party platform states that “safe, strong and vibrant communities are at the heart of the Green Party’s vision for the future of Canada”. This commitment shapes our approach to tackling crime, delivering justice and reducing re-offending. The Green Party also strives to get to the root of the problem. Health care, affordable housing and education are part of an integrated approach to justice and security. We will ensure meaningful and appropriate resources are available for communities that wish to use restorative justice and community healing programs in which wrong doers make reparation to victims and their communities. We will press for the creation of a Canadian Securities Crime Unit within the RCMP. It’s worth noting that Al Capone finally went to jail for tax evasion and not for his links to crimes of violence. Tracking down tax fraud can help fight organized crime.

2) There is currently a lack of rental affordable housing in Kelowna, and prior to the economic downturn, Kelowna had the lowest rental vacancy rates in Canada. The Kelowna Chamber has put forth a resolution to the Canadian Chamber calling on the Federal Government to amend federal income tax policy to provide incentives for the creation of more affordable rental housing. The recommendations include the following:

- **Offering a rebate to the Goods and Services Tax (GST/Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) on new rental housing**
- **Offering deferral of capital gains tax and recaptured Capital Cost Allowance (CCA) upon sale of a property and re-investment in new rental housing within a reasonable amount of time (two years)**

- **Increasing CCA for new rental housing to line up with the true economic life of the relevant asset**
- **Restoring soft cost deductibility in the year the costs are incurred for new rental housing.**

What is your position on this?

If elected I would say that the Green Party believes it is the right of every Canadian to have affordable, safe and secure housing. We also support the delivery of social housing dollars to provincial, territorial and municipal governments through the traditional vehicle of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). I would urge the government to appoint a Minister for Housing to oversee development and implementation of a National Affordable Housing Plan. In Kelowna we need more affordable housing. A Green government would subsidize private developers to include a percentage of affordable housing in their housing projects. It would also extend provisions to the Income Tax Act to offer tax incentives to build affordable, healthy, energy-efficient, multi-unit rental housing and to include tax credits for gifts of land and buildings and to community land trusts to provide affordable housing. The above mentioned tax credits could include your recommendations.

3) The economic impact of traffic congestion on business/tourism in Kelowna remains a key priority for the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce. If you were elected, what would you do to ensure that additional transportation funding will flow to the Kelowna area?

If elected, I would emphasize that more roads don't solve the problem! They make it worse. Gridlock means more air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Transition to efficient light rail transit and co-ordinated buses will take cars off the road, breaking the cycle of multiplying cars on increasingly crowded roads to make our cities more liveable. We need "smart growth" infrastructure. The federal government must take the lead in funding the "greening" of Canadian cities. The Green Party will: Increase funding for pedestrian, cycle and car-sharing infrastructure in towns and cities. It will double existing funding to stimulate a massive re-investment in public transportation to make it convenient, safe, comfortable and affordable.

4) A competitive business tax system is important to foster productivity and economic growth on a long term sustainable basis. According to the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, Finance Canada examined the impact of corporate tax reductions between 2001 and 2004 and found that a one per cent reduction in the cost of capital raised investment by 0.7 per cent. If you were elected, what would you do to sustain this?

If elected, I would note that taxation and spending policies shape society by sending signals about which sectors of society governments think are important. Over the last 6 years, both the Conservatives and the Liberals have used our tax system to benefit large corporations, reducing federal corporate taxes by almost 8% even as corporate profits hit record highs. Meanwhile, the cost of living has increased. Canadians save less, carry more debt and work more hours for the

same money. Even before the current recession hit, people were having a harder time providing for their families and paying for a decent place to live. The Green Party will reduce taxes on things we all want like income and employment and increase taxes on things we do not want – things that harm people and our environment. All these taxes will be “revenue neutral”. This generation has the potential to capitalize on the single biggest business opportunity in human history – the shift to a low-carbon economy! That should improve investment in this country by far more than 0.7%!

5) According to Kelowna Chamber membership surveys, the business community is still recovering from the negative impact of the economic downturn. If you were elected, what would you do to:

a. Ensure that Okanagan businesses receive business incentives and access to capital.

If elected I would suggest that research and knowledge are mobile. They can pick up and move – out of town or out of Canada. An easily accessible and integrated system for business development and growth must be made available in Kelowna to create a business climate that will entice home-grown entrepreneurs to stay. We have a great example of that here in Kelowna with the Landmark Technology Center. Most successful applied research and commercialization is done by small and medium-sized businesses and these business “clusters” attract new businesses seeking the direct and indirect networking and collaboration. The Green Party will establish a federally- funded Small Cities Green Venture Capital Fund to support viable local green business start-ups. We will also set up a Green Venture Capital Funding Program providing matching federal funds for locally raised venture capital up to a set limit per community. And, reduce the paperwork burden on small businesses by eliminating duplicative tax filings and red tape.

b. Assist Okanagan businesses with the recruitment and retention of qualified workers.

If elected I would suggest that one way would be to recognize that new Canadians are a source of incredible skills and potential for our community. The Green Party will eliminate the valuation of foreign credentials for immigration purposes, except those cases where such credentials are recognized in Canada or a clear and expeditious path to Canadian credentials is established, and in place establish realistic criteria for immigrants based on existing job opportunities for immigrants in Canada. The Green Party would also press professional societies to remove unnecessary barriers hindering the recognition of valid professional credentials of immigrants. So then, when people in general, move to Kelowna and find affordable housing, well paying jobs and time for friends, family and community engagement, why would they leave?