



November 2, 2017
For immediate release

Trudeau Administration's two-year performance: Green Party report card

The government of the Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau was sworn in on November 4, 2015. On the Trudeau administration's second birthday, the Green Party of Canada assesses how his administration is doing so far.

The grading of a new government needs to start by establishing the context of the assessment. Measured against the record of the previous government is too low a bar. It is obvious that the Green Party never graded the Harper administration. A string of F's is not a valuable tool. Rather, we monitored, we reported, and we urged Canadians to take action.

This administration had real potential. On its second birthday, it is increasingly clear that much of that potential is being squandered. We measure the Trudeau administration's performance against the Liberal platform promises and against the Speech from the Throne.

As the broken promises and half-delivered, half-measures pile up, it is time for a mid-course correction.

1. Democracy: F

The major promise for electoral reform was brutally and suddenly cancelled on February 1, 2017. The substantial work of the Special Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reform was trashed without any evidence it was read or considered. The hearings held by the ERRE across Canada attracted thousands of people, as did the online submissions, and overwhelmingly called for proportional representation.

Cancelling the promise that 2015 would be the last election under First Past the Post is a significant betrayal of the faith of millions of Canadians.

2. Climate: C-

Full marks for leadership in Paris at COP21 and for prompt ratification of the Paris Agreement. The commitment to carbon pricing, despite some provincial resistance, brings up this mark.

But it is hard to give a passing grade for a government that maintained the same weak climate target brought in by the former Conservative government. That target – 30% below 2005 levels by 2030 – is *inconsistent* with the Paris Agreement. The Paris Agreement's goal of holding global average temperature to no more than 1.5 degrees C requires much more of Canada than the Harper targets. Meanwhile, as pointed out by Julie Gelfand, Environment Commissioner in the Office of the Auditor General, the Liberals appear to have forgotten about the Copenhagen

commitment to 17% reductions below 2005 levels by 2020. All the planning is geared for the weak Harper target in 2030, and even that weak target is not within reach.

The Liberal platform promised to end subsidies for fossil fuels, but budgets in 2016 and 2017 have left them in place. Liberals promised to restore science, but funding for climate science has stayed at the same level as under Harper. The flat-lining of government support has led to pulling the plug on the cross-Canada climate science network, Canadian Climate Forum.

Approving LNG projects that drive up GHG, as well as the shocking betrayal of election promises in approving Kinder Morgan, continue to undercut the Liberals signature line, that “the environment and the economy go hand in hand.” They do, but only when decisions do not cancel each other out.

3. Environmental law: D

Removing the gutting of environmental law as forced through in the 2012 omnibus budget bills, C-38 and C-45, should have been accomplished as quickly as possible. But the post C-38 and C-45 versions of the Fisheries Act, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, and the Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA) are still the law of the land. The longer they remain in place, the graver the risk that they will remain in place.

The discussion paper released in late June set out the direction of the government, following expert panels on the National Energy Board, environmental assessment, as well as parliamentary committee reviews of the Fisheries Act and the NWPA. It appears the expert panels are to be nearly completely ignored. The only law likely to be repaired is the Fisheries Act. Harper’s version of the NWPA is likely to be set in concrete and environmental assessment will be better than what Harper left behind, but will be a pale shadow of the regime Canada has had since the 1970s, and be nowhere near what existed in 2006. The number of projects reviewed will remain drastically reduced over the pre-Harper law, and the reviews will remain enmeshed in the inappropriate agencies – the National Energy Board, Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and Atlantic Offshore Petroleum Boards.

4. Finance: C

The 2017 federal budget was a mixed bag. Commitments to Indigenous peoples, housing, public transit, waterworks and wastewater funding, relief on student debts and funds for marine protected areas partially met many Liberal promises. The budget fell far short on climate action.

As noted by the Parliamentary Budget Office, it did not deliver financial transparency. Unless corrected in the 2018 budget, the commitment to ongoing LNG subsidies until end of 2024 is a campaign promise broken. We have had very good words on climate action, but the promised low-carbon infrastructure has been postponed. We are still waiting for programs to promote energy efficiency.

Meanwhile, despite better news in the fall 2017 financial update, we are still running \$20 billion deficit. We need to increase revenues to fund urgent public needs. The Liberals must rethink their rejection of increasing the tax rate on large profitable multinationals.

5. Immigration: B+

The Trudeau administration did an excellent job in meeting the goal of bringing in bring 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada. Much more needs to be done to help the refugees settle in their new home. The rule that after 12 months local fundraising is no longer allowed to help families with costs such as rent is overly rigid.

We hope to see an increased level of refugees allowed to come to Canada in 2018. The repeal of much of what Harper did to undermine the fundamental principles of citizenship in C-24 also bring up this mark.

6. Health: B

Former health Minister Jane Philpott was a strong Cabinet member. Her successor, the Hon. Ginette Petitpas-Taylor, will have a large challenge.

Re-orienting Health Canada to put healthy food ahead of corporate profits, to move to protect human health and the environment from toxic pesticides, and to support more rigorous testing of drugs all require a political push on a corporate-oriented department.

Looking at the last two years, the federal strategy for Lyme disease was disappointing and barely adequate to earn support. Funding is needed and a serious effort to meet the goal of improved physician education in the diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease.

The mandate letter calls for bulk-buying of pharmaceutical drugs to bring down the price. Far preferable would be an actual Pharmacare plan.

7. Foreign Policy: C

It appears that our Minister of Global Affairs never left her previous Trade portfolio. The focus on Trump and NAFTA may have distracted Canada from critical global issues. We will need to adopt a stronger international stance in support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals as Canada takes the chair of the G7.

Support from the Trudeau Liberals for arms sales to countries with dubious human rights records has been disturbing. So, too, has been the failure to close loopholes on legislation to implement the treaty on trade in conventional arms, to meaningfully engage in peace-keeping, and to engage in and ratify the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty.

8. Trade: C-

With Minister Chrystia Freeland trying to protect NAFTA and Trade Minister Francois-Phillipe Champagne pressing for the implementation of CETA, trade files dominate. The promised consultations have been paper exercises and any environmental review of proposed changes to NAFTA have been shallow. The most significant environmental and health threat in those

agreements (and in the TPP which Liberals appear to want to revive) are the investor-state provisions.

Canadians have never been granted a full debate about any of the deals that enhance corporate power at the expense of domestic environmental and health regulations. All the investor-state agreements need to be reviewed and assessed before entering new ones. Chapter 11 of NAFTA has cost us millions and reduced environmental protections. As it is secret, we have no idea how much the Canada-China FIPA may have already impacted our laws. CETA and TPP increase the number of countries from which foreign corporations will have a right to bring monetary claims in arbitrations – with varying degrees of transparency.

Greens will continue to oppose both deals on the grounds that they pose increased regimes for corporate rule and reduce national sovereignty. Credit to the new minister for pursuing Canada's appeal against the anti-democratic NAFTA Chapter 11 arbitration decision, in support of Bilcon, a U.S. corporation.

9. Justice for Indigenous Peoples – First Nations, Metis and Inuit: Incomplete

The novel approach of breaking the Department of Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development into two departments, with two strong ministers, may make a difference. It is too soon to tell.

The litany of failed efforts and broken promises stretches into the past. We are not funding Indigenous children for basic needs equitably compared to non-Indigenous children; we have too many boil water advisories; too many inadequate homes on reserve; and not enough housing for Indigenous people living off reserve. The challenge of true reconciliation and implementing the TRC report is an urgent one.

It is time to repeal the Indian Act. The presence of this racist and discriminatory act is at the root of 150 years of colonialism and oppression.

10. Justice: C

Much remains to be done to tackle the legacy of Harper's reworking of Canada's criminal justice system. The mandatory minimum sentence laws require review and repeal; the need for restorative justice needs to be implemented and the minister needs to move forward to meet commitments to honour the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

11. Fisheries: B

The Fisheries Act remains broken without restoration of the provisions to protect fish habitat. However, Minister Dominic Leblanc has committed to restoring habitat protection and to hiring more fishery scientists. Recent moves to protect whales on Atlantic and Pacific coasts also bring up the grade. Amendments to the Oceans Act, C-55, are needed, but overall the act is welcome.

The promise to implement the Cohen Commission recommendations for controls on aquaculture remain unfulfilled.

12. Science: C+

Scientists are no longer muzzled and Minister Kirsty Duncan has succeeded in increasing funds for basic research from granting agencies and appointing Canada's Chief Science Advisor, Dr. Mona Nemer. That's the good news.

Unfortunately, the government has not yet restored fundamental science capacity to key science-based departments. Fisheries and Oceans, Parks Canada, Environment and Climate Change have not received funds to hire the needed scientists to deliver on core public service science.

13. Agriculture: D

There is currently a consultation on food policy with no indication of deadlines or plans to respond. There was virtually nothing in the platform on agriculture. Here's hoping the Trudeau administration decides to take up the issue of helping family farmers, local agriculture and food security.

14. Transportation: F

When Trudeau made Marc Garneau the minister of Transport, he instructed him to review changes made by the previous government to the NWPA and to "restore lost protections."

But Transport Canada seems to like doing less work. Department officials testified at the Transport Committee that Harper's approach, a schedule listing a handful of our millions of waterways, is working just fine. And Marc Garneau appears ready to ignore Liberal promises to fix what Harper broke.

It appears that Transport Canada has no intention to put in place proper regulation and setbacks for LNG tankers and proposed transit routes. The LNG project in Squamish, B.C., should never have been approved without a clear regulatory framework for setback zones for LNG tankers.

Transport Canada also appears poised to cut support for our cross-country VIA Rail passenger service.

15. Public Safety: B-

Minister of Public Safety Ralph Goodale, working in tandem with Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, have delivered substantial improvements to Canada's national intelligence and security regime in C-59. The effort substantially reduces the most anti-democratic aspects of Harper's Bill C-51. The bizarre prohibitions of online promotion of "terrorism in general" have been removed. All of Canada's spy agencies will now have oversight from a revamped security agency.

Unfortunately, some aspects of C-59 completely miss the mark. Information sharing is a disaster and No Fly Lists require significant improvements. Key amendments will be required, so this grade is generous, hoping for those improvements.

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