

# **Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta**

## **CRCAG Election Questionnaire to Candidates**

**To the candidates of Calgary-Elbow, Calgary-Buffalo, Calgary-Mountain View, Calgary-Bow and Calgary-Fort:**

Please find below a questionnaire from the Calgary River Communities Action Group (CRCAG). CRCAG is a non-partisan organization that has been advocating for upstream flood mitigation since the 2013 flood. We believe that flood mitigation should continue to be priority in this province so that our great city has a comprehensive plan to not only protect against the financial cost that will result from the next flood, but most importantly, the human cost. Implementing upstream mitigation is a matter of public safety and therefore cannot be ignored. As we approach the second anniversary of the 2013 flood, implementing upstream mitigation strategies and infrastructure must be pursued with a sense of determination so that Calgary will be more able to withstand the next inevitable flood.

**We ask that your responses be sent to us no later than 5PM May 1, 2014 at [info@crcactiongroup.com](mailto:info@crcactiongroup.com).** Your answers will be posted on our website and emailed to our membership for them to review.

Thank you,

CRCAG Board

### **ELBOW RIVER MITIGATION**

- 1) Are you supportive of building upstream flood mitigation infrastructure for the Elbow River? If yes, what is your understanding of the infrastructure projects for the Elbow River and their current status? As an elected MLA, what do you intend to do to ensure that these projects are completed as soon as possible?

Yes. In fact this government has demonstrated the political will to move forward with The Springbank Offstream Diversion project as well as fund improvements to the Glenmore Dam. Collectively these projects are designed to retain flows equivalent to the flows experienced in 2013.

The Springbank project is on track to be completed by 2018. Landowners are in conversations with the government; these are ongoing but moving in a positive direction. The money for this project is in the capital plan and that the Premier and cabinet want this project is complete before the flood season of 2018. While adhering to regulatory and legislative requirements, they have asked the GOA to move as quickly on this as possible. There is no other potential government that is as supportive of this project as the Prentice PCs.

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The McLean Creek Project and the Glenmore Tunnel are both more complicated and more expensive endeavors. While neither of them have been dismissed, at this point in time our focus has been on getting the Springbank diversion project complete. It is the most effective, environmentally sensitive and timely project. Moving ahead with this project reflects Premier Prentice's commitment to protecting Calgary.

As an MLA I will continue to push the GOA to keep the complicated schedule of this project on track and moving towards completion as soon as possible.

- 2) Do you believe that more than one upstream mitigation infrastructure project is needed for the Elbow River? If so, which ones? If not, why not?

Springbank Off Stream Diversion will provide communities along the Elbow River significant protection. If Calgary experienced a deluge similar to 2013, the Springbank Off Stream Diversion would avert disaster for communities along the Elbow River. This doesn't mean that we should not continue to examine other projects or additional measures.

### **BOW RIVER MITIGATION**

- 1) Are you supportive of leveraging existing infrastructure along the Bow River system for flood mitigation? If yes, what is your understanding of how the existing infrastructure can be leveraged and the current status of such an endeavor? As an elected MLA, what do you intend to do to ensure that a timely agreement is put into place to utilize existing infrastructure along the Bow River system for flood mitigation?

It is possible to reduce flows on the Bow River through water level reductions at the Ghost Dam, a Transalta facility. In the past the GOA and Transalta entered into an agreement to decrease water levels during instances of high flow. Transalta and the GOA have been having productive discussions about creating a longer term arrange to reduce water levels and thus flows. We are looking forward to a successful conclusion of these talks.

The urgency of the matter is self-evident and there are no quick fixes that is why we are seeking to advance projects that can be ready in the earliest possible time frame – in this case, it would mean before the flood season of 2018.

- 2) Do you believe that additional upstream mitigation measures need to be pursued for the Bow River? Is so, what additional measures should be considered? If not, why not?

Like the Elbow, it will be important for the GOA to continue to assess flood risk and possible mitigation solutions on the Bow. Additional mitigation possibilities should be explored as they arise and given rigorous review.

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## **FLOOD POLICY**

- 1) What is your current understanding of the status of the Provincial Floodway Development Policy?

Development in the floodway is being limited in order to prevent future flood damage. Homes that were in the floodway were offered a buy-out and this caused a great deal of strife for homeowners in the area. The Prentice government recognizes that the policies need to be evaluated, especially as mitigation projects are finalized and implemented.

- 2) Considering the current revisions to the Provincial flood hazard maps and the impact upstream flood mitigation will have on reducing inundation, how do you propose that the Provincial Floodway Development Policy take these two items into account?

Floodway mapping does not account for mitigation. And so policies need to be established that will reflect the impact of mitigation. It is for this reason that the GOA is currently in the process of creating what are called Special Policy Areas. These "SPA" s will set out development policy in areas where mitigation changes the risk of inundation. These SPAs will not be a one size fits all proposal. It is important that the community be at the table for the discussions on the SPAs and it is proposed that an organization much like the successful Water Collaborative be established to ensure the community is engaged in policy development.

## **BUY-OUT POLICY**

- 1) Do you believe that the buy-out policy achieved its stated goal? What should be done with the vacant lots that have resulted from this policy?

The buy-out policy was controversial. In some areas it worked well (such as in Wallaceville, High River) and in other areas the policy created tension among neighbors and frustrations in the community. It is important that as we move forward we do so with well established policies and science before us. It is also crucial that we involve the community in finding solutions. The way forward on this issue is to make sure that we do not institute knee jerks policies but create clear and sensible policy objectives that reflect accurate mapping and real mitigation.