

Joan Crockatt – Conservative Party of Canada
<http://joancrockatt.conservative.ca>

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Dear residents of the flood-affected communities in Calgary,

It's been two years and two months since the 2013 flood, and you've surmounted the challenges from this natural disaster with an amazing spirit. I know it's not over. As your neighbour and as the most recent Member of Parliament through this tough time, I've met many of you on your doorsteps, in my office and in your homes. I have also been in regular discussions with the Calgary River Communities Action Group's (CRCAG) representatives. The message from our communities is clear: you're still awaiting a solution that will help mitigate future flood risks in our communities.

We are not by any means there yet, but I'm pleased to report we've been able to accomplish several measures to secure federal funding to help achieve that goal. CRCAG has asked me to provide a review of our progress to date.

1. Damages: When the flood hit, the federal government quickly committed funds to cover basic damages to affected homes. The Conservative government set aside \$2.8 billion for basic damages from the 2013 Southern Alberta flooding that were not covered by insurance. The funds from this program (the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangement) are transferred directly to the Province of Alberta. Once final costs are determined, the province submits its costs to the program. These federal funds also help the City with its important work in rebuilding bridges in Calgary Centre, for example.

2. Mitigation: After making our commitment to recovery, federal funds for flood mitigation followed. This took the form of a \$3.2 billion, 10-year federal infrastructure fund allocated to Alberta in the 2014 federal budget.

While the federal government has provided the funding for mitigation, the actual decision as to what specific mitigation measures are funded is decided by the Alberta government and the City of Calgary.

After meetings with CRACG, and in direct response to requests from affected community members, we successfully advocated to have "disaster mitigation" projects included for funding under the Conservative government's renewed Building Canada Plan announced March 28, 2014. Very few of these dollars have been spent to date, and I continue to encourage the provincial government and City of Calgary to determine the appropriate measures for flood mitigation, in consultation with affected communities and other stakeholders.

3. Declaring a National Natural Disaster: In the days immediately following this disaster, the federal Conservative government declared the Alberta floods a national natural disaster. This meant that principal residences damaged by flood waters were eligible for funding of up to 90 percent of basic repair, restoration, replacement or rebuilding costs from the federal government. The Alberta government is responsible for paying out the funds it deems eligible (which it can top up), and then is compensated by Ottawa. To reduce waiting times and allow repair and restoration work to begin as quickly as possible, the federal government transferred a \$500 million advance to the Alberta government to help get those funds flowing.

4. Weather Tracking: On January 15, 2015 in Calgary, the federal Conservative government announced \$134 million in satellite and weather forecasting equipment upgrades to help forecast extreme weather like the 2013 Alberta flood.

5. Overland Flood Insurance: Calgary Centre residents also told me that given the severe nature of the flooding, they wanted access to overland flood insurance. As the MP for the Calgary riding most devastated by the flooding, I raised the issue with the Minister of Public Safety. In response to those discussions, in the 2014 federal Budget the Conservative government committed to initiating discussions with insurance companies in order to determine the feasibility of introducing Canadian overland flood insurance. The insurance companies reported to us that they needed up-to-date flood maps to assess the risk, and once that assessment was complete, they would then begin offering flood insurance.

In the 2014 budget, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty announced a \$200 million Natural Disaster Mitigation Fund which committed funds to flood mapping in Alberta. The tenders closed in June 2015 and the work is nearing completion now. We have indications from several insurance companies that they will be offering overland flood insurance in Alberta and Canada.

I understand how devastating these floods have been for families in Calgary Centre, across Calgary, and in Southern Alberta. I've been incredibly impressed by the resilience and spirit of community which Calgarians have displayed throughout the flood and recovery periods. I believe that we have made significant progress in ensuring not only that those affected by the floods are able to recover, but also in ensuring that a disaster of this nature isn't repeated.

I strongly urge the residents of Calgary Centre to continue voicing their opinions on this important issue, and calling on their other elected representatives at the provincial and municipal levels to make use of the federal infrastructure funds available to Calgary.

I will continue to make restoration and flood mitigation one of my top priorities if re-elected as the representative for Calgary Centre, and I look forward to seeing these important measures fully implemented.

Best regards,

Joan Crockatt
Conservative Candidate, Calgary Centre