

Kent Hehr – Liberal Party of Canada  
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Calgary River Communities Action Group

To Whom It May Concern,

Please accept this as my response to your questions for all Calgary Centre candidates in the October 19, 2015 federal election.

I am supportive of building upstream flood mitigation infrastructure for the Elbow River. I have committed to making flood mitigation a personal priority. In fact, I've already called our party leader and told him that preparing for future flooding is the most crucial issue facing this city. Justin Trudeau came to Calgary on September 16 and announced that a Liberal government would provide significant funding to help Calgary with the costs of flood mitigation as part of our infrastructure investment plan. Each year over the next decade, we will steadily increase federal infrastructure investment. At full implementation, this will represent an annual additional investment of \$9.5 billion per year. This will almost double federal infrastructure investment to nearly \$125 billion – from \$65 billion – over ten years, which will be the largest new investment in infrastructure in Canadian history.

Yes, we will run a deficit for the first three years of a Liberal government, but we are the only party that has the capacity to deliver on these strategic investments that will make the economy more productive and the city of Calgary better protected from flooding. By comparison, the current federal Conservative plan is to make \$3.2 billion dollars worth of infrastructure money available to Alberta over the course of the next ten years: none of it earmarked for flood mitigation. Much of this funding extends to later in their mandate. In my view, you have a clear choice: you can elect a MP and a party who is committed to building infrastructure now or elect a MP whose party made no official announcements on flood mitigation and minimal pledges on infrastructure dollars.

To date Mayor Nenshi and City Council have submitted three applications to the federal government for flood mitigation funding. Two have been outright rejected and a third is still under evaluation. I have a good relationship with our municipal

government and the new Alberta government having served in the legislature for the last seven years, five of which I sat immediately to the right of Premier Notley. I would work collaboratively with both of these essential partners to ensure successful flood mitigation projects move forward.

My understanding is that there are two options on the upstream side of the Elbow River – McLean Creek Dam and the Springbank Off-Stream Reservoir Project. The Springbank project is the preferred option but the new provincial government is continuing to review the studies. My preference is always for evidence-based decision-making. I'll listen to the engineers and scientists on this one because I'm not an expert on what is needed. That said, flood mitigation should not be done on the cheap because we cannot afford another flood like 2013 or possibly worse.

I can't imagine any other answer than "yes" to the question, am I supportive of leveraging existing infrastructure along the Bow River system for flood mitigation. For two flood seasons now, the provincial government has worked with TransAlta to lower the Ghost Reservoir. But a longer-term arrangement needs to be considered to give residents security and peace of mind.

There are other measures being studied, including flood storage opportunities, some involving existing infrastructure and others requiring new facilities. I do know that we need to look for comprehensive solutions, not piecemeal approaches. I've always been approachable as an elected representative in the provincial Legislature and I would continue this as the federal representative for Calgary Centre. I would work closely with community groups such as the Calgary River Communities Action Group, advocating to the provincial and municipal governments to move studies and projects forward in a timely way. I commit to making flood mitigation on both the Elbow and the Bow River my personal priority.

I hope this clarifies my thoughts and positions on this matter. As always, if you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours,

Kent Hehr