

## Coquitlam-Maillardville Riding

### **Nicola Spurling, BC Green Party**

#### **1. Environmental Leadership**

**What qualifications or experiences make you a strong candidate for voters who prioritize environmental issues in British Columbia?**

I have dedicated the last decade of my life to addressing social issues, and every issue I work to address is impacted by climate change. I'm not an expert on the environment, so I listen to the experts. That's how the BC Green Party operates as well. To that end, I've educated myself by reading about environmental issues, watching documentaries, taking post-secondary courses, and interviewing experts in the field.

#### **2. Environmental Challenges**

**a) In your view, what is the most pressing environmental challenge facing British Columbia, and how would you address it?**

It's challenging to pick a single environmental challenge facing British Columbia, because we need to focus on a wide range of issues, such as wildlife and forest health, food security, water protection and much more. Because of the crossover with our economy, I'd have to say that fossil fuel infrastructure expansion is one of the most pressing issues, and I would address it by halting all future expansion. Not only are fossil fuels destroying our environment, but they don't make good economic sense either, because it's a depreciating industry. Rather than subsidizing large fossil fuel corporations, flooding valuable farmland to build dams to power fracking, and invading Indigenous lands to force projects through, we could be investing in the renewable energy solutions of the future.

**b) What do you see as the most significant environmental challenge in your local riding, and what steps would you take to address it?**

Locally one of the big issues I've been hearing concerns about is the recent expansion of the Trans Mountain Pipeline and the storage tanks on Burnaby Mountain. Those who are paying attention realize that we

are in a danger zone should a fire or leak occur. Sadly, the steps we can take to mitigate this risk have been reduced since the project was pushed to completion, so now it becomes important to educate residents about the risk and how to protect themselves and the surrounding environment.

### **3. Tree Canopy and Housing Legislation**

**Recent provincial housing legislation (Bills 44 and 47) permits increased density and larger building footprints without tree protections or minimum planting requirements, potentially reducing tree canopy. Metro Vancouver aims for a 40% tree canopy cover to enhance human health and environmental resilience. What role do you believe the Provincial Government should play in achieving this climate-ready target?**

It's incredibly important that we maintain our tree canopy, and expand it where possible. There are so many benefits to having trees around, from cleaner air to cooler temperatures, to better drainage, to improved mental health and beyond. I would love to see the province set requirements for cities that ensure we don't lose any more of our precious tree canopy as development occurs to create more housing, whether that be by protecting existing trees or ensuring replacement when it's necessary to remove trees.

### **4. Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework**

**The Provincial Government has introduced a draft Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework. If you support this Framework, what steps would you advocate for its implementation? If you do not support it, what alternative policies would you propose?**

The Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework is a step in the right direction. I support this framework and I believe in taking additional climate action steps. We also have to recognize that while this framework looks good on paper, it requires major tangible actions from government to achieve, and we have yet to see that action.

### **5. Nature-Based Solutions**

**"Nature-based solutions," such as the restoration, conservation, and management of wetlands, grasslands, coastlines, and forests,**

**are essential tools in mitigating and adapting to climate change while supporting biodiversity. How do you envision the Province promoting nature-based solutions to develop climate-resilient communities?**

As mentioned in your question, nature-based solutions require a multitude of actions, such as better forest management, protection of wildlife, conservation of the lands around us, and maintaining clean waters. The province can promote nature-based solutions by taking significant and meaningful actions now instead of waiting. The inaction of governments signifies that they intend to rely on engineered climate solutions in order to save us from climate disaster. That's a scary prospect, because it's akin to gambling with our existence.

## **6. Climate Change Acknowledgment and Responsibility**

**Do you agree that climate change, including increased temperature variability, droughts, floods, wildfires, and biodiversity loss, is primarily driven by human activity? What responsibilities do you believe all levels of government have in helping communities mitigate and adapt to these changes, and what specific role should the Provincial Government play?**

Climate change is driven by natural shifts that have been happening long before humans existed, however it is now being accelerated by human actions. Without human interference the shifts in our climate would be slow enough that environments and species could adapt more easily. Unfortunately, human interference with this natural process has put us in a position where we are now experiencing, and having to prepare for, mass extinction and relocation events. Every government in the world needs to work together collaboratively to address this crisis.

### **Additional Comments**

Please visit [nicolaspurling.me/coquitlam-maillardville](https://nicolaspurling.me/coquitlam-maillardville) to learn more about me and what I stand for, or reach out to me at [teamspurling@bcgreens.ca](mailto:teamspurling@bcgreens.ca) with your questions or comments.

## **Jennifer Blatherwick, NDP**

### **1. Environmental Leadership**

**What qualifications or experiences make you a strong candidate for voters who prioritize environmental issues in British Columbia?**

I've advocated to the province for a consistent plan for public buildings to be built to a Net Zero standard, and supported plans for schools to be constructed with environmentally responsible materials. Together with the other members of the school board, I've overseen the installation of solar panels in locations across the district. I've been a strong advocate for increased, better transit, including participation in the consultation group that led to free transit for children under 12. Getting more people out of cars and into transit is a win for reducing greenhouse gases, and quality of life for Coquitlam residents. I've also participated in smaller, local initiatives, with my family, like stream clean-ups and the removal of invasive plants. Although the individual effect of hyper-local projects is small, working together we can make real change.

### **2. Environmental Challenges**

**a) In your view, what is the most pressing environmental challenge facing British Columbia, and how would you address it?**

Climate-induced forest fires. BC is fighting hard on this, being the only province to employ smoke-jumpers, and developing a comprehensive plan in concert with First Nations. In some areas, this can mean a return to traditional First Nations burning practices which prevent the accumulation of dangerous undergrowth. However, we have to do everything we can to prevent the increase in temperature globally. Personal responsibility is important, but the province has an important role in decreasing consumption of resources, and reducing the production of greenhouse gases. In BC, agriculture is essential to food security and our economy, but is also one of the largest producers of greenhouse gases (GHGs). Initiatives like the Environmental Farm Plan Program can reduce energy and water consumption in agriculture, increase biodiversity, and sequester carbon.

**b) What do you see as the most significant environmental challenge in your local riding, and what steps would you take to address it?**

One of the most significant environmental challenges across the country, including Coquitlam, is food waste. The environmental cost of our current agriculture practices is high, and food wastage, both at the industrial scale and through private consumers, magnifies the costs. Although non-profits like The People's Pantry and Immigrant Link Services Society are stepping into the gap to receive donations, which redistributes food to hungry families and also reduces waste, there is more to be done. Education programs for industry and individuals are in place now, but the government has a further role in larger systemic efforts, like tracking, monitoring, and funding innovative changes.

### **3. Tree Canopy and Housing Legislation**

**Recent provincial housing legislation (Bills 44 and 47) permits increased density and larger building footprints without tree protections or minimum planting requirements, potentially reducing tree canopy. Metro Vancouver aims for a 40% tree canopy cover to enhance human health and environmental resilience. What role do you believe the Provincial Government should play in achieving this climate-ready target?**

The Provincial Government can encourage municipalities to first track their tree canopy coverage, and then increase those goals, recognizing the enormous role that trees and other foliage have in mitigating the effects of extreme heat.

### **4. Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework**

**The Provincial Government has introduced a draft Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework. If you support this Framework, what steps would you advocate for its implementation? If you do not support it, what alternative policies would you propose?**

I do broadly support the implementation of BEHF, with the recognition that some elements will take longer to implement than others. One piece that is implementable quickly is the funding for Health Authorities or school districts to build and retrofit to a standard closer to Net-Zero, and

to continue to create sustainable energy projects within their constructions.

## **5. Nature-Based Solutions**

**"Nature-based solutions," such as the restoration, conservation, and management of wetlands, grasslands, coastlines, and forests, are essential tools in mitigating and adapting to climate change while supporting biodiversity. How do you envision the Province promoting nature-based solutions to develop climate-resilient communities?**

Large geographical features, like wetlands, rivers, and watersheds, cross many jurisdictional boundaries, and managing them requires a collaborative approach. Nature-based solutions have to be implemented with the cooperation of local First Nations and municipalities. The province can recognize in legislation that natural infrastructures like wetlands, forests and coastal systems, create buffer zones against natural disasters, but also increase resilience in the face of climate change for food and resource systems.

## **6. Climate Change Acknowledgment and Responsibility**

**Do you agree that climate change, including increased temperature variability, droughts, floods, wildfires, and biodiversity loss, is primarily driven by human activity? What responsibilities do you believe all levels of government have in helping communities mitigate and adapt to these changes, and what specific role should the Provincial Government play?**

Yes, the current extreme and accelerated rate of climate change is primarily driven by human activity. The most expensive option is to do nothing to prevent further change, or to ignore the coming shifts in our food and resource systems. I believe that governments have a responsibility to educate citizens about their individual responsibilities in a way that empowers them to make environmentally responsible choices. However, the ultimate responsibility of the government is to take larger actions where individuals cannot - creating legislation and policy that reduces greenhouse gases and resource use across industry; participating in large-scale projects that preserve or restore natural

ecosystems; and advocating nationally/globally for participation in projects that fight climate change.