

## Port Coquitlam Riding

### **Keenan Adams, BC Conservative Party**

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

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

I participate in the Port Coquitlam Adopt-a-spot program and clean up the Coquitlam river with Web of Life.

I have been through fires during my tours as a train engineer and believe the best thing we can do is align our forest industry with our wildfire efforts to truly solve our massive forest fire issue.

I love nature and have spent a lot of time hiking Burke Mountain.

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

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

Forest fires. We have a great wildfire policy that will soon come out.

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

We should be keeping as many trees standing in our community as possible as we grow and make sure our dykes are ready in case of flooding. I will always advocate for this.

#### **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?**

If this legislation continues into the next government I believe there should be some amendments for tree protections.

#### **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?**

Need more information.

#### **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?**

We should be cleaning up and improving the wetlands and nature we currently have in the urban areas.. I'll be first to put my boots on and go help with the cleanups and make restoration part of our identity as British Columbians.

#### **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?**

I believe in science, but I also believe we need to get the big polluters off of coal and onto our much cleaner LNG. This will also help pay for our services .

# **Adam Bremner-Akins, BC Green Party**

## **1. Environmental Leadership**

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

As a dedicated environmental advocate and current Secretary of the BC Green Party, I have actively pushed for bold, sustainable policies that prioritize climate action, environmental justice, and sustainable development. My academic background in Politics Science and Resource and Environmental Management, combined with hands-on experience organizing climate strikes and advocating for green infrastructure, uniquely positions me to lead on environmental issues. I'm committed to fighting for policies that protect B.C.'s natural beauty, transition to clean energy, and build resilient, sustainable communities for future generations. Environmental leadership is not just a priority for me, it's at the core of why I'm running for office.

## **2. Environmental Challenges**

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

The most pressing environmental challenge facing British Columbia is the climate crisis, compounded by continued LNG development, subsidies for fossil fuels, and destructive practices like fracking and old growth logging. These activities directly undermine our fight against climate change and threaten B.C.'s biodiversity.

We need to end subsidies for LNG and fossil fuel industries, phase out fracking, and focus on clean energy investments that create sustainable jobs. Protecting our old growth forests is also critical; these irreplaceable ecosystems are vital for carbon storage and biodiversity. It is important we have immediate action to halt all old growth logging, while supporting communities with sustainable forestry alternatives. By investing in renewable energy, preserving natural ecosystems, and ending destructive resource extraction practices, we can tackle the climate crisis head-on and build a more resilient and sustainable future for British Columbia.

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

The most significant environmental challenge in Port Coquitlam is balancing rapid urban growth with the need to protect green spaces, waterways, and wildlife habitats. As development continues, we face the risk of overburdening our natural environment, leading to loss of biodiversity and strain on our local ecosystems.

To address this, I will advocate for smarter, more sustainable urban planning that prioritizes green infrastructure, such as parks, community gardens, and enhanced public transit, which reduces our reliance on cars. Protecting the Coquitlam River and other natural waterways will be a top priority, ensuring they remain clean and healthy for both wildlife and residents. I also support stronger regulations on pollution and environmental degradation, particularly as we transition to greener energy sources.

### **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 has a critical role to play in balancing the need for increased housing density with the protection and expansion of our tree canopy. While addressing the housing crisis is urgent, we must also prioritize environmental sustainability to ensure long term resilience against climate change. Tree canopies are essential for cooling our urban areas, improving air quality, supporting biodiversity, and promoting mental and physical health.

I believe the Provincial Government should amend current housing legislation to include mandatory tree protections and planting requirements, particularly in urban development areas. We need to integrate green infrastructure into housing policy, ensuring that density targets are met without compromising the environment. This could

involve requiring developers to incorporate green spaces, preserve existing foliage, tree lined streets, and rooftop gardens as part of new construction projects.

Additionally, I would advocate for increased funding and incentives for municipalities to meet Metro Vancouver's goal of 40% tree canopy cover. Provincial leadership can guide municipalities in developing climate ready urban designs that support both housing needs and environmental targets, while ensuring that future generations inherit a sustainable, livable environment.

#### **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 support the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework as an essential step toward protecting British Columbia's rich biodiversity and ecosystems. To ensure its effective implementation, I would advocate for the following key actions:

- 1. Strengthen Legal Protections:** We must establish stronger legal protections for endangered species and critical habitats, ensuring that biodiversity is prioritized across all sectors, including forestry, mining, and urban development. This could involve creating more protected areas and halting industrial activities in sensitive ecosystems, such as old-growth forests.
- 2. Invest in Restoration Projects:** It is vital to provide funding for habitat restoration projects, especially in areas that have been degraded by industrial activities, urban sprawl, and climate change. Restoring ecosystems, such as wetlands, forests, and marine environments, will help safeguard biodiversity and improve ecosystem health.
- 3. Integrate Indigenous Knowledge:** The Framework should incorporate Indigenous knowledge and leadership, as Indigenous communities have stewarded these lands for millennia. Collaborative partnerships with Indigenous Nations will be key in managing and protecting our natural ecosystems.

4. Monitor and Report: We need robust monitoring systems to track the progress of biodiversity health, ensuring that goals are being met and that there is accountability. This data should be publicly accessible, empowering communities to engage in biodiversity conservation efforts.

5. Climate Change Mitigation: Lastly, addressing climate change must be central to the Framework. I would advocate for policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect carbon rich ecosystems, and build resilience in vulnerable species and ecosystems.

By taking these steps, we can ensure the Framework effectively protects BC's ecosystems for future generations.

## 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?**

Promoting nature based solutions is critical to building climate resilient communities in British Columbia. I envision the Province taking the following actions to champion these solutions.

1. Integrating Nature Based Solutions into Policy: The Province should embed nature based solutions into all levels of land use planning, infrastructure development, and climate adaptation strategies. This includes prioritizing the restoration and conservation of wetlands, forests, and grasslands in urban and rural planning efforts.

2. Incentivizing Restoration and Conservation: To encourage landowners, developers, and municipalities to adopt nature based solutions, the Province could offer financial incentives such as grants, tax credits, or carbon offset programs. This would support projects like wetland restoration, reforestation, and green infrastructure that reduce flooding, store carbon, and enhance biodiversity.

3. Collaborating with Indigenous Communities: Indigenous knowledge and land stewardship practices have long employed nature based solutions. Working collaboratively with First Nations to restore and conserve ecosystems can strengthen both community resilience and biodiversity conservation. Co-governance models should be promoted in all nature-based initiatives.

4. Investing in Green Infrastructure: The Province can support municipalities by funding green infrastructure projects, such as urban forests, green roofs, and rain gardens. These projects reduce the urban heat island effect, improve water management, and provide natural habitats, contributing to both climate resilience and healthier urban environments.

5. Public Education and Community Involvement: Engaging the public through education campaigns and community led restoration projects will foster a culture of conservation and environmental stewardship. Schools, businesses, and local governments should be supported in creating and maintaining nature based solutions in their communities.

By implementing these strategies, British Columbia can effectively leverage nature based solutions to combat climate change while promoting biodiversity and creating sustainable, climate-resilient communities.

## 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, I fully agree that climate change, including increased temperature variability, droughts, floods, wildfires, and biodiversity loss, is primarily driven by human activity, particularly through the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and unsustainable land use practices. Governments at all levels have a critical responsibility to address this crisis head on.

The Provincial Government must play a leadership role by:



1. **Setting Bold Climate Targets:** The Provincial Government should continue to set aggressive, science-based targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and ensure we are not just a follower of good legislation, but a leader on climate action for the world to see.
2. **Phasing Out Fossil Fuels:** We must rapidly end subsidies to LNG development, fracking, and other fossil fuel projects. This includes halting new oil and gas infrastructure and investing in renewable energy sources like wind, solar, and sustainable hydro.
3. **Promoting Sustainable Development:** The government needs to reform land-use policies to prioritize climate resilient infrastructure, green buildings, and sustainable urban design that reduce emissions and protect biodiversity. This also includes protecting old-growth forests, which are vital carbon sinks.
4. **Supporting Communities in Adaptation:** Governments must ensure that communities have the resources to adapt to climate impacts, such as wildfires, floods, and droughts. This could include expanding firebreaks, improving water management systems, and creating climate-resilient infrastructure in vulnerable areas.
5. **Collaborating with Local and Indigenous Governments:** Local and Indigenous governments have firsthand experience with the effects of climate change. The Province should work in partnership with these communities to tailor climate solutions that reflect local needs, values, and ecological realities.

Climate change is an urgent, human driven crisis that requires immediate action from all levels of government, with the Provincial Government at the forefront of developing and implementing solutions that protect our environment and our communities.

### **Additional Comments**

I am a big supporter of Burke Mountain Naturalists and want to thank everyone involved for keeping all of us political people accountable for climate action. Thanks!



## **Mike Farnworth, NDP**

### **1. Environmental Leadership**

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

I have over 40 years of conservation advocacy in our community, including significant accomplishments such as transforming Douglas Island, Burke Mountain, and Colony Farm into provincial parks. I also played a key role in establishing the stream-flow agreement for the Coquitlam River, ensuring sufficient water flow for salmon during the summer

All voters should prioritize environmental issues – in our daily lives and during election season. The BC NDP is committed to protecting land, air, water, wildlife, biodiversity, and cultural diversity in BC. Our province is home to many unique ecosystems which need careful stewardship and planning to protect. All of us are responsible for doing this work.

Local ecologist Suzanne Simard once wrote, “Ecosystems are so similar to human societies – they’re built on relationships. The stronger those are, the more resilient the system.”

That's why we're shifting away from a top-down approach where decisions are made solely in Victoria. Instead, we want more local tables with local people setting local priorities. This means First Nations, provincial and local government officials, residents, community organizations, academics, and businesses working together to plan for their communities. This way, there are opportunities for customized solutions that work better for the local ecosystems – people included.

### **2. Environmental Challenges**

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

BC is a great place to live. But, life continues to be tough for many people. When families are worried about affording rent or finding childcare, tackling crises like climate change can feel overwhelming – and some people wonder: Does my family have to choose between a

healthy environment and putting food on the table or a roof over our heads?

John Rustad is happy to stoke these fears, falsely presenting environmental protection as a threat to the livelihoods of people. Unlike Rustad, who called the protection of critical lands and waters “nonsense,” we don’t believe a healthy environment and a sustainable economy are at odds. We plan to preserve at-risk lands, protect watersheds, strengthen partnerships with First Nations, and work together with young people on actions to preserve ecosystems for future generations.

To do this successfully, we have to avoid either/or thinking. We can create enough affordable homes in our neighbourhoods for young people to live near their parents and grandparents, while preserving green spaces. We can make sure people have good jobs with stable incomes without destroying habitat or wiping out biodiversity. One of the most pressing environmental challenges facing BC is division, which can be addressed by pursuing innovative ways to meet the needs of people and nature at the same time. After all, people aren’t separate from the environment. We’re part of it.

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

Port Coquitlam has faced several close calls in recent years, as climate change continues to impact our region. Thanks to the city's responsible management of our watershed and dykes, we were able to mitigate the worst effects of the 2021 floods. However, the recent fire in Minnekhada Park is a sobering reminder of just how fragile our ecosystems are. As a government, the BC NDP remains committed to addressing the climate crisis head-on, investing in wildfire preparedness, and working with communities to protect both residents and our natural environment.

As our population grows and development on Burke Mountain displaces wildlife, we’ve seen an increase in bear activity in Port Coquitlam. That’s why I’m proud to say that the BC NDP has recently partnered with the Grizzly Bear Foundation to reduce human-wildlife conflicts and promote the well-being of grizzly and black bears across the province. Together,

we're committed to finding solutions that protect both people and wildlife.

### **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?**

Bills 44 and 47 will help us build enough housing for our rapidly growing population, without contributing to urban sprawl. Gentle density – made possible by encouraging more duplexes, triplexes, and four-plexes – is one of the best ways to promote sustainability and protect green space in residential neighbourhoods.

Planning early and thoughtfully for densification helps governments avoid planning for population growth in panic mode at the 11th hour – a challenge that is more likely to result in skyscrapers and more significant compromises on green space. There's a saying among local urban planners that holds true for Bills 44 and 47: If you want to avoid towers and blacktops in your neighbourhood 10 years from now, support zoning for duplexes, triplexes, and four-plexes now.

The City of Coquitlam has a robust plan for maintaining residential tree canopy – surely due to advocacy from environmental groups like the Burke Mountain Naturalists, RHCS, the Tree Fellowship, and others. Bills 44 and 47 do not conflict with those bylaws; they will make it possible to uphold them.

### **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 BC NDP government developed the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework, in partnership with First Nations, community

organizations, local governments, scientists, and others. We support this Framework and look forward to further work on it in the upcoming years, if elected. We would seek to implement it the same way it was created – collaboratively, encouraging customized solutions that meet the needs of local ecosystems.

John Rustad would tear up this critical work. We can't afford to let him do that.

## 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?**

David Eby and the BC NDP are excited about nature-based solutions to climate change. The principles within the draft Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework align well with nature-based solutions. These principles prioritize strong relationships; recognize that people, land, and water are interconnected; encourage flexible and targeted solutions to local matters rather than a one-size-fits-all approach; and highlight long-term solutions that are sustainable over generations.

We have plans to protect critical, at-risk ecosystems, take a more sustainable and innovative approach to natural resource sectors, and support more people to choose careers in sustainability and environmental stewardship.

John Rustad has a proven track record of prioritizing profits over people, animals, waters, and lands. He's promised to get rid of the environmental regulations currently in place, help big businesses suck big money out of the land with very little accountability, and resume a reckless approach to forestry and other natural resource industries. Care of the environment under Rustad's watch wouldn't even be sustainable for a decade, let alone generations.

Rustad is an environmental risk we can't afford.

## 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?**

David Eby and the BC NDP take climate change very seriously. Unlike John Rustad, who believes humans have no influence on climate change – past, present, or future – we know that climate change is a global crisis fueled by human activity; it's something we're all responsible and accountable for.

We take it so seriously that the BC NDP has two cabinet positions with a mandate to prevent, mitigate, and respond to the impacts of climate change – the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy and the Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Change Readiness.

Environmental protection is a matter that spans all governmental jurisdictions – local, provincial, federal, and First Nations. The Province should play a role in preserving biodiversity and habitats, facilitating education, spurring innovation and growing clean energy, and strengthening partnerships with First Nations and other governments so that we learn collectively and take action together. Please spend some time looking through our platform when it is released in the coming days.

We should be deeply concerned about entrusting our sensitive ecosystems, at-risk lands, precious watersheds, and all the diverse communities and cultures that depend on them, to a party that takes its cues on climate change and science more generally from the backwaters of the internet. We can't afford to bury our heads in the sand anymore on climate change, which means we can't afford to have John Rustad in charge.