

Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce:

What is your party's position on (and why?):

1. Increasing the allowable contribution level to CPP by employees to help encourage further retirement savings?

**NDP Response:** Middle-class families are worried about their retirement. They're working harder and harder, but falling further behind. Too many Canadians won't have enough savings for a secure retirement. As many as 5.8 million Canadians - nearly a third of our work force - are facing a steep decline in their standard of living when they retire, according to the CIBC's chief economist. For many young Canadians, the situation will be worse. The Canada and Québec Pension Plans are proven, reliable savings vehicles. The health of the Plan is closely monitored by the Chief Actuary of Canada. But the challenges facing Canadians who plan for retirement today, are vastly different than those facing their parents and grand-parents, a generation ago. Only about one third of Canadians now have access to a workplace pension plan, down from 41% a little over two decades ago. That is why we need to strengthen the CPP to ensure all Canadians can retire in dignity. Canadians overwhelmingly support increasing the CPP to help them top-up their retirement savings.

Tom Mulcair and the NDP will ensure CPP delivers retirement security. Within six months of forming government, Tom Mulcair and the NDP will convene Canada's First Ministers to develop broad-based agreement on enhancing CPP benefits. We will seek agreement to establish key benchmarks and timelines for enhancements and ensure that any changes are implemented in a way that complements Canada's economic recovery. The process will include consultations with both business and labour and will consider and respect provincial proposals for pension enhancement as well as existing programs.

2. The need for detailed labour market information that is important for businesses, educational institutions and communities to plan for the future.

**NDP Response:** The NDP believes that good data is essential to make government work. It allows government to effectively target and evaluate programs, thus, improving service quality and lowering costs. The NDP fought tooth and nail to prevent the Conservatives from eliminating the long-form census. The NDP believes that the long-form census must be restored to provide social scientists, governments, communities and businesses the data they need. We also tabled Bill C-346 to reinstate Statistics Canada's long-form census and increase the independence of the Chief Statistician.

The NDP strongly supports an evidence-based approach to policy making, which requires robust support for research and data gathering. This federal government has, however, fired thousands of scientists and cancelled the long-form census, hurting our ability to gather information.

3. The Federal component of the funding to upgrade the rail line and reintroduce passenger rail service from Peterborough to Toronto

**NDP Response:** The NDP has been defending VIA Rail services vigorously since the Conservatives starting drastic cuts to passenger rail services in 2012. These cuts have hit Ontario especially hard. Cutting VIA Rail services is pushing us further away from having an efficient and accessible regional rail in Ontario and is impacting our local tourism and business sectors. Eliminating service and driving away current and potential riders is not an acceptable way to modernize a competitive rail passenger service. These cuts did not improve VIA's service offering nor boost its financial performance. Reduced passenger rail service has undercut the economic stability of communities in Ontario. Reducing train service deprives Canadians of safe and affordable travel options. VIA Rail provides a vital service and these routes have allowed our local communities to grow and prosper. Canadians travelling for business, school or recreation rely on VIA Rail to provide efficient, affordable and accessible services. It's shameful that Conservatives are cutting services so recklessly.

Only the NDP has stood up to propose legislation to mandate minimum service levels and an NDP Government will make it a priority to invest in efficient, safe and sustainable passenger rail services.

4. The Energy East pipeline project which, if approved by the National Energy Board, will bring 250 new jobs to Peterborough's GE large motor plant.

**NDP Response:** Canada's natural resources are a tremendous gift and, managed properly and sustainably, can be important drivers for our economy. Refining Canadian oil in Canada makes sense – but we need to ensure that a strong environmental review regime is in place to determine if projects like Energy East are safe and sustainable before they can proceed. Unfortunately, the Conservatives have systematically dismantled environmental assessments and limited public input into major project reviews, meaning that a rigorous and credible assessment just isn't possible under these circumstances. An NDP government will strengthen the environmental assessment regime to restore public confidence and ensure that the public interest and our environment are protected.

5. What is your personal statement to the business community?

**NDP Response:**

The NDP is committed to the success of small and medium sized businesses which are responsible for nearly 40% of Canada's GDP and employ more than 7.7 million Canadians. The NDP have proposed to cut the small business tax rate from 11 per cent to 9 percent to better support a sector of our economy that creates 78% of all new private sector jobs in Canada. The NDP will start with an immediate reduction from 11 to 10 percent, injecting some \$600 million into Canada's small businesses - followed by an additional reduction to 9 percent in the second year of our mandate. Once fully implemented this will cut small business taxes by nearly 20 percent.