



**FREDERICTON
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE**
— The Voice of Business —

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Melissa Fraser – Green Party of New Brunswick

Fredericton-York

1. What are your top three priorities that you will make happen during your term if elected?

My top 3 priorities for this term centre around rebuilding the economy in an environmentally responsible way with the health and safety of every NB'er in mind. Here in New Brunswick we have so much room for growth in the renewable energy sector (this means job creation), funding energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy systems for homes and businesses (this means job creation), transition our electricity system to 100 percent renewable sources by 2035 (this means job creation) are just a couple of ways we, the Greens intend to do this.

Increasing our ability to feed ourselves & decrease our reliance on imports (this means job creation) is one major focus for me during this term as well. COVID-19 has illuminated our deficiencies in this area and they need to be addressed immediately.

Improving access to care in the healthcare system is top priority, with bringing more complementary healthcare services to the rural communities and expanding the midwifery program in the province.

2. What opportunities do you see arising for the Fredericton Region as a result of the pandemic? How can we capitalize on these opportunities?

In crisis and challenge there is always opportunity. In this specific crisis the biggest opportunity I see is in focusing on making NB far more self-sufficient in the re-building of our economy. We need to rebuild anyways, and we may as well rebuild in a way that encourages small business and entrepreneurs to thrive. They are the backbone of our economy!!

3. The private sector, especially small business which is the engine of the economy was severely impacted by the pandemic, how will your government support the recovery of our economy?

Rebuilding the economy is a priority for every New Brunswicker yet, the green party are the only ones ready & qualified to create sustainable economic growth while ensuring environmental protection and the health & safety of New Brunswicker's. We have been raised to believe we need to choose between money and a safe & healthy place to live. This is an outdated mindset. A green government is committed to Supporting, promoting and expanding Community Economic Development Investment Funds as a means of financing local development.

I come from a small business background and have owned and operated a number of small businesses, I understand many of the challenges this sector is dealing with on a very personal level.



4. Prior to the pandemic, an aging and declining labour force was a top concern of businesses in our region. Immigration will be more challenging in the short-term – how can government help labour force participation in the province?

I see this as an opportunity to bring some of our own back home. So many are working on the other side of the country to support their families. When re-training is necessary, programs and assistance can help with these transitions. A few ways a Green Government is working towards these goals

- Restore the Timely Completion Benefit program with a debt cap of \$20,000 and extend the eligibility period to 5 years.
- Restore the Tuition Tax Credit Program for graduates who work in the province upon completion of their studies.
- Eliminate interest on provincial student loans.

5. What natural resource development opportunities are most important to growing the New Brunswick economy? How can government help move these industries forward?

We are in the dark ages in this province when it comes to renewable energy. We NEED development in this area, now. The green party are the only ones ready & qualified to create sustainable economic growth while ensuring environmental protection and the health & safety of New Brunswickers. The people of the province are another natural resource that we need to tap into more! There are many in the tech industry that are moving away from their homes and families for work, when we need to be bringing and helping to create more opportunities in this sector here in NB.

6. The Fredericton Region has been building expertise and capacity in cyber security over the course of several decades. What role can government play in ensuring we remain a global leader in this sector?

This is a sector that is growing exponentially, especially as more and more people are working and educating from home. Creating incentives for our brightest minds to stay and return to this province to work in this area is key.

Cybersecurity spending is driven by cybercrime and we are seeing cybercrime only increasing. This is an important area of focus. We are primed with many experts from UNB, giving us an advantage that we need to really push to utilize more effectively.

Fredericton has an incredible reputation in the IT sector and I think with a bit of push and baking the cyber security sector specifically can expect to see exponential growth and revenue and job creation in our province.

7. How should New Brunswick handle a second wave of COVID-19 in New Brunswick? What are the appropriate metrics to trigger another public health shutdown?

This is a complex question and issue. I believe we do need to keep moving forward, while taking the steps we hope will keep us safe and allow us to re-open society. A close eye needs to continue to be kept on the number of cases. I do not have all the answers here by any means, but I do think teachers and parents need to be prepared to pivot and pivot again as we attempt to navigate these challenges. If



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there is a new case in a classroom, I think it will be wise to require that class to isolate for the set time, to limit spread.

8. What are your views on the New Brunswick's 10-year education plan and Green Paper? How do you intend to ensure consistency in the province's education plans?

I think one of the best things we can do is make the education system non-partisan and change the decision and policy making to a much more consultive and collaborative approach.

My minor was in Adult Education during my Bachelor's Degree and a major focus in this area is literacy, a huge percentage of our population is functionally illiterate. This impacts every area of a person's life, from informed consent for medical procedures, to self esteem and depression. Literacy really does serve as the foundation for success in all areas of life! The better we can equip young people with these skills the stronger our population will grow moving forward.