

Wildfires

To safeguard our communities from wildfires, we prioritize prevention, build climate resilience and empower our communities

HOW WE'RE THINKING ABOUT THIS

In order to limit the harmful impacts of wildfires, improve wildfire management, and help our communities adapt to living with fire, we need bold and immediate action. Protecting British Columbia's diverse landscapes and communities requires solutions that are tailored to the unique risks and priorities of each region. A one-size-fits-all approach will not suffice.

Restoring the health of our forests and enhancing wildfire preparedness within our communities are essential steps toward building resilience. The BC Greens are committed to working with communities and First Nations to implement strategies that reflect their specific needs, ensuring that provincial programs empower locally-driven solutions.

We recognize that the hidden costs of wildfires—to ecosystems, human health, watersheds and the economy—far outweigh direct firefighting expenses. As such, we will invest in prevention, mitigation, restoration and climate adaptation treatments. By embracing this comprehensive strategy, we can secure a safer, more resilient future for British Columbia and its people.

PROBLEM DEFINITION

British Columbia is in the midst of a growing wildfire crisis. Decades of fire suppression, combined with the escalating impacts of climate change, have led to larger and more intense wildfires across the province. The 2023 wildfire season in BC was the most devastating on record, burning millions of hectares, displacing thousands of people, destroying homes, and exposing countless residents to dangerously unhealthy air.

As climate change accelerates, wildfires are expected to become even more frequent and severe. Polarized responses won't protect our communities. We need to engage and educate communities to build trust and understanding of wildfire risks.

The BC Greens are committed to fostering collaboration among federal, provincial, Indigenous, and local governments, as well as private organizations,

to increase wildfire resilience. Only through strong partnerships and coordinated efforts can we safeguard British Columbia from the growing wildfire threat.

POLICIES FOR ANNOUNCEMENT

When elected, the BC Greens will:

Protect communities

- Dedicate \$100 million in annual funding for preventative and harm-reduction measures, including fuel management treatments to mitigate wildfire risks.
- Improve communication about wildfires through engagement, better live updates, more trusted information and more detailed coverage.
- Fully implement all recommendations from the Abbott Chapman report to improve firefighting strategies and community safety.
- Build on FireSmart and wildland urban interface management programs to foster neighborhood resilience against wildfires.
- Provide funding and technical assistance to private landowners to improve outreach and wildfire preparedness.

Support Firefighters

- Hire additional seasonal and year-round firefighters to ensure adequate staffing.
- Invest \$50 million annually in community safety and firefighting responses.
- Implement strategies to fix recruitment and retention issues within the firefighting community.
- Enhance agency capacity and resources for local firefighting teams to improve response effectiveness. Incorporate local knowledge into first responders' training.
- Ensure access to mental health support for survivors of wildfires and firefighters.

Manage Forests for Resilience

- Increase the scale of fuel treatments, such as forest thinning and fuel removal, to reduce fire hazards.
- Expand the use of prescribed and cultural burning while supporting Indigenous fire stewardship practices.
- Mandate that industry adopt better practices, including fuel thinning and removal, to enhance forest resilience.
- Shift forest management focus to include ecosystem health, biodiversity, climate resilience, and community resilience, rather than solely timber production.
- Expand community forests to enhance local management and stewardship.
- Provide \$50 million for a Youth Climate Corps to engage in year-round mitigation work and forest management.

Community Engagement and Collaboration

- Proactively engage communities to build trust, educate, and empower local decisions regarding wildfire management.
- Invest in initiatives that support communities and build social cohesion to enhance resilience.
- Develop and implement place-based solutions tailored to local needs and conditions.
- Establish a new cooperative and collaborative approach to wildfire management that includes all levels of government—Indigenous, local, and federal.
- Engage industry, civil society, local experts, non-government organizations, and citizens to leverage diverse resources and knowledge for adapting to landscape and wildfire challenges.

