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## **Briony Penn seeks federal Liberal nomination**

Well known Salt Spring environmentalist Dr Briony Penn will seek the Liberal nomination in the Saanich-Gulf Islands riding in the next federal election, expected soon. The nomination meeting is on March 31. Penn has a formidable record of environmental activism, including books, articles, a long-running TV show, and is a co-founder of The Land Conservancy of BC.

Penn has been a stalwart member of the Green Party, and intends to maintain her affiliation with the provincial organization. She says she was approached by the Liberals, the NDP, and the Greens to run federally.

Why choose the Liberals? Penn says she's running 'With my green shirt on' as part of what she sees as an unofficial alliance between the Liberals and the Green Party across the country. She's hoping that voters will choose the best candidate regardless of party, and that Elizabeth May and other Greens are elected.

But the real reason for Saanich-Gulf Islands lies in the

numbers from the 2006 election. The present MP, Gary Lunn, won the riding with only 37.15% of the vote. The Liberals, NDP and Green Party split the vote against him. The Green Party candidate, Andrew Lewis, ran very strongly, particularly on the Gulf Islands; had the Green vote been combined with the Liberals, they would have been very close to winning, with 36.03%. The NDP, with Jennifer Burgis, got 26.54%, so if Penn is nominated, and she is right about the unofficial alliance, it could be a very close race.

Lunn is currently the Minister of Natural Resources in the Harper Conservative government. He has been the Saanich-Gulf Islands MP since 1997, when he ran for the Reform Party; the riding was previously held by the NDP. In 2000 Lunn won under the Canadian Alliance banner; he then joined the Progressive Conservative caucus, was reported to have considered crossing the floor to the Liberals, but returned to the Alliance, and finally ended up with the Conservatives in 2004. ✍

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