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Greens strongly endorse leader Elizabeth May and talk policy

At the Canadian Green Party national convention in Toronto on August 21-22, party leader Elizabeth May received a ringing endorsement—85% support—from party members, voting online from across Canada. May is a resident of Sidney, and the Green Party candidate for Saanich—Gulf Islands in the next federal election.

Members also voted to change the existing four-year fixed leadership term to a process that required members to vote in support of the party leader within six months after a federal election. This passed with a 74% majority, thus avoiding a leadership contest at the convention.

But the real work of the convention concerned a plethora of policy resolutions, each of which had to receive 60% to pass. They covered a full spectrum of serious Canadian issues, and were much debated. Some of the hot topics proved to be the treatment of seniors; strengthening legislation concerning pensions and long term disability benefits; Senate reform; rebalancing relations between the federal and provincial governments; new carbon emissions targets, laws, and taxes; implementation of the precautionary principle; and high speed rail.

A resolution, which received much media attention, seeking to decriminalize 'poly-sexual' relationships received weak 40% support.

Seniors received significant attention, with resolutions proposing a UN Convention on the rights of older persons, supporting a national dementia strategy for sufferers and caregivers, and urging consideration of older persons in emergency and climate-change planning. Closely related were resolutions seeking independent trust structures for registered pension plans and reform of long term disability insurance legislation.

Greens supported an elected Senate, with proportional representation, and also a proportion of senate seats reserved for aboriginals.

They also supported amendments to the *Divorce Act* which would ensure an automatic assumption of equal rights and responsibilities for both parents.

A resolution supporting the development of a high speed rail network between major Canadian centres received 90% support; a proposal for 'Green Bonds' to finance renewable energy facilities received 83.8%.

There were many other resolutions. The Green Party requires member votes to be ratified by the convention, and all those receiving a 60% approval or more were ratified. ☞

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