

Green Party of Canada Media Kit



History of the Green Party around the World

The first Green Party in the world, the Values Party, was started in the early 1970s in New Zealand. In the western hemisphere, the first Green Party was formed in the Maritimes in the late seventies and was called the Small Party after E.F. Schumacher's book, *Small is Beautiful*. In Britain, the first Green Party was called the Ecology Party, before the name "green" became common. But it wasn't until the West German Green Party -- die Groenen -- crossed the vote threshold of 5% and entered the German legislature in the late 1970s, that the green political movement started in earnest.

Presently there are over 100 Green parties world-wide, and there are Green members elected in dozens of countries. Green parties have served in coalition governments in Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia and Ukraine.

Legislative Achievements of Green Parties

Members of Green parties around the world have been successful in their push for legislation that is consistent with the Global Green Charter, balancing ecological preservation with socially progressive values.

In Paris, Deputy Mayor and Green Party member Denis Baupin, has helped push plans to ban all traffic in its congested downtown core by 2012, when Paris hopes to stage the Olympic Games. The ban will affect a nearly 5 kilometre-square area where only residents, buses, delivery vans and emergency vehicles will be allowed.

In Spain, a Green party inspired bylaw has been passed which obliges builders to install solar panels to supply 60% of the hot water needs in new and fully rehabilitated residential blocks of 14 or more units, in all new heated pools, and for hospitals, clinics, schools, shopping centres and hotels. It was Josep Puig, a Green party city councillor in charge of sustainability in Barcelona who worked with City Hall in 1995 to install panels on city buildings.

In Germany, the Greens have been active in government since the late 1970s. The current Environment Minister, Jurgen Trittin, played a large role in putting the Kyoto protocol into effect in the country. Germany made a commitment to reduce greenhouse gases by 21% and have already reached 19%. Trittin assures that they will continue even after they have reached their objective. The Greens have also had a strong part in phasing out nuclear power in the country, which Germany plans to remove completely by 2020.

Senator Bob Brown of the Green Party in Australia was successful in bringing in a Freedom of Information Act, to increase transparency of government activities to the media and the public. A public apology to local aboriginal people was also made under the leadership of the Australian Green Party.

Global Greens Charter

In April 2001, 800 Greens from 72 countries came together in Canberra, Australia for the second Global Greens Conference. One of the key objectives for Canberra was to construct the first-ever Global Greens Charter. The policies of the Global Greens are founded upon the following principles:

Ecological Wisdom

Social Justice

Participatory Democracy

Non-violence

Sustainability

Respect for Diversity

History of the Green Party of Canada

The Green Party of Canada was founded in 1983, born from a conference held at Carleton University in Ottawa. Under their first leader, Dr. Trevor Hancock, the party ran 52 candidates in the 1984 federal election.

Since its inception, the party has been developing as an organisation, expanding its membership and improving its showing at the polls. The 2004 federal election was the strongest yet for the Greens, with the party fielding a full slate of 308 candidates, up from 111 in 2000. The party captured 4.3 per cent of the vote, nearly 600 000 votes.

Public support for the party is at an all-time high and growing stronger. Recent opinion polls have placed the party at as high as 10 per cent of decided voters.

The Green Party of Canada, like its provincial counterparts in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec, supports green economics, progressive social planning, and responsible, accountable governance.

Green Party Leader - Jim Harris

Born and raised in Toronto (1961), Jim Harris is the eldest of three children. He began his schooling in French, attending Lakefield College (the very school Prince Andrew attended on his Canadian exchange) and Queen's University, where he studied English and political science.

Upon graduating, Jim set out to travel around the world. He sailed from England to Australia on a fleet of tall ships re-enacting the first voyage of British convicts to Australia. It was at this time that Jim rescued an infant from drowning. The ships were docked when Jim heard a splash - a one-and-a-half year-old child had fallen in the water between the boat and the dock. Instinctively, he jumped in the water and saved the baby's life.

Once back in Canada, Jim started working for the Financial Post, where he co-authored *The 100 Best Companies to work for in Canada* (a national best seller). His second book, *The Learning Paradox*, was nominated for the National Business Book Award in Canada, and is ranked as one of the top ten business books in all of North America. Following the recent success of *Blindsided*, Jim is writing a new book aptly named *Going Green*.

Jim met the love of his life through mutual friends in 1998. After a two-and-a-half week courtship they decided it was meant to be, and have been together ever since. These days, his relentless schedule does not allow for much leisure time, which is why Jim's notion of an ideal holiday is staying at home taking it easy with his wife.

In his personal life, Jim is an avid rollerblader who enjoys Indian cuisine and the soothing vocals of Diana Krall. Jim considers himself to be a spiritual person who is powerfully drawn to the wisdom of numerous religions.

Jim is a passionate and committed environmentalist who has been an active member of the Green Party for over 17 years. Since 1990, he has run as a candidate in municipal, provincial, and federal elections in his ongoing efforts to raise environmental awareness.

Jim was elected leader of the Green Party of Canada in 2003 and led the party through its most successful election ever, winning nearly 600,000 votes - almost six times the results for 2000.

Politically, Jim's shift to ecological conservative was motivated by the need to create a positive future for future generations. He was greatly inspired by the book *Green Politics* by Fritjof Capra and Charlene Spretnak, which features the emergence of the Greens in Germany. In the short time that he has been leader, the Green Party has gone from relative obscurity to becoming a major player on the political landscape.

The staggering success of the 2004 election campaign marked a significant point in the party's evolution, and it's why he believes Canadians will soon elect Green candidates to Parliament.

