

# albertaliberalcaucus

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## Policies

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### ENVIRONMENT

#### The Alternative: Environment Funding Needs to Come Now

One of the greatest things about living in Alberta is its immense natural beauty and its high quality of life. We are lucky to have such an abundance of natural areas and sources of fresh water.

It is essential that we recognize not only the importance of this province's natural areas, but the need for a substantial increase in funding to protect and sustain them.

Of particular importance right now is the protection of this province's water resources. The Alberta Liberal Opposition recognizes the fundamental right of every Albertan and Canadian to have access to a sufficient, safe and affordable supply of water.

To ensure future generations enjoy our generous water supply, there needs to be a significant change in the management of Alberta's most precious resource.

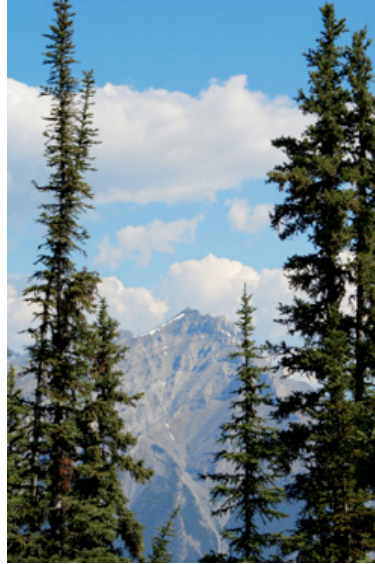
The Liberal Opposition wants to make water conservation a top priority by introducing a bill designed to protect Alberta's water sources.

The Liberal Caucus supports the following measurements to achieve sustainability of our water resources:

- Taking a province-wide water inventory so that we clearly understand how much water we have and where it is located. By understanding how much water is available, we can plan for the future with a long term water management strategy that will ensure water resources are used efficiently and in a sustainable manner.
- Establishing a watershed management plan to ensure water supply considerations are incorporated into development planning decisions.
- Establishing a Standing Committee to develop and implement a province-wide water management strategy and recommend new water management legislation.
- Implementing rigid testing procedures to guarantee that Alberta's drinking water supply is not in danger of contamination and presents no health risks to Albertans.
- Installing water meters to help inform people of how much water they use.
- Prohibiting the bulk sale of Alberta water. The Liberal Opposition believes that Alberta's water supply should not be treated as a commodity to be bought and sold.

Water is a finite resource that is essential to the survival of humans and all forms of life, and protecting this most vulnerable of resources should not be taken lightly.

The Liberal Opposition believes in sustainability and conservation and will take active steps to ensure our water supply is protected for generations to come.



Kevin Taft, Leader

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### Caucus Calendar

- Sunday, 16 September 2007 11:00 a.m.  
[Homeless Awareness Week Launch](#)
- Wednesday, 19 September 2007 7:00 pm  
[Beyond the Shelter: Affordable Housing Forum](#)
- Saturday, 27 October 2007 10:00 a.m.  
[Chat With Chase](#)

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### ENVIRONMENT

#### Restoring Confidence: The Alberta Liberal Caucus Plan for Groundwater and Coalbed Methane

Alberta has a brilliant future in energy development ahead, both non-renewable and renewable. But it must be done right; public health and protection of water must be our first priorities.

There needs to be a long term groundwater management plan with a valid, reliable monitoring and evaluation program that ensures responsible allocation, valuing and protection of Alberta's groundwater. Despite the great need, no long term plan exists.

After five years of coalbed methane (CBM) activity in Alberta and with plans for 50,000 wells in the coming decade, the science and evidence are not fully settled on the risks to groundwater from coalbed methane development. Prudence requires we proceed with caution. Rural landowners in particular are extremely concerned that their lives and livelihoods are threatened in an area already affected by intermittent drought.

Fortunately, there are opportunities for industry, regulators and the public to address concerns and work toward sustainable resource development.

In order to safely manage coalbed methane development and address water problems in the Horseshoe Canyon Formation, the Alberta Liberal Caucus proposed the following plan:

- a) That by September 1, 2006, Alberta Environment and the Energy Utilities Board (EUB), in conjunction with groundwater scientists, set mandatory, valid, reliable baseline testing requirements and protocols for groundwater, prior to the creation of any new CBM wells.
- b) That by August 1, 2006, the EUB require gas analyses to be submitted for all CBM wells.
- c) That by September 1, 2006, Alberta Environment establish a public Technical Committee on Gas Migration and Groundwater, with membership comprised of independent scientists, Alberta Environment, EUB, landowners and industry representatives to oversee the investigation of groundwater problems in affected areas of the Horseshoe Canyon and make recommendations.
- d) That Alberta Environment and Alberta Geological Survey immediately establish accurate groundwater mapping in the Horseshoe Canyon.
- e) That by the end of 2007, EUB review and implement regulations for best available technology for CBM extraction to ensure minimal adverse groundwater impacts.
- f) That by November 1, 2006, the Environment and Energy ministries jointly establish a multi-stakeholder organization on the CASA (Clean Air Strategic Alliance) model, to review implementation of the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Committee recommendations for CBM and monitor the progress on environmental protection and groundwater protection.
- g) That the government immediately establish an integrated complaints process between the EUB, Alberta Environment and industry with full staffing and funding in order for complaints to be dealt with effectively and in a timely manner.

Future generations will judge us on how we manage resource extraction and preserve our environment. We need to learn, quickly, how to profit from our natural resources while at the same time respecting, preserving and protecting the natural world.

"Coalbed methane is an important resource to our province, but it must be developed properly. We don't know what we need to know before proceeding on to the target of 50,000 coalbed methane wells in this decade."

- David Swann, *Alberta Hansard*, March 21, 2006



Kevin Taft, Leader

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