

Dan Vandal, Liberal Party, Saint Boniface-Saint Vital

1. Since 2008, the federal government has made dedicated financial investments for Lake Winnipeg. These investments have enabled phosphorus-reduction initiatives, as well as research and monitoring to improve water quality in Lake Winnipeg. The current federal funding commitment, Phase 3 of the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program, will end in March 2022.

Will you and your party renew the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program in Budget 2022? If not, please explain why you and your party aren't making this commitment.

Yes. If re-elected, we will continue to invest in our freshwater through a strengthened Freshwater Action Plan, which will include an historic investment of \$1 billion over 10 years. This is an important step forward in ensuring that long-term funding is in place to protect and restore our large lakes and river systems, like the Lake Winnipeg Basin.

2. Too often, the scale of Lake Winnipeg's watershed serves as an excuse for inaction or as an explanation for ineffective efforts. In reality, efforts have simply lacked relevant evidence to ensure their success. The Lake Winnipeg Community-Based Monitoring Network (LWCBMN) is a collaborative, long-term monitoring program designed specifically to target phosphorus hotspots to ensure phosphorus-reduction projects funded by the federal government generate results.

Will you and your party commit to using LWCBMN data to target federal dollars to phosphorus hotspots? If not, please explain why you and your party aren't making this commitment.

As you know, the LWCBMN received funding over 4 years, starting in 2018-2019, through the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program. Research is an integral part of our path forward. We need to ensure that we have the scientific knowledge and evidence to make the best decisions for the protection of our freshwater. Working with groups like the Lake Winnipeg Foundation provides us with the most effective path to ensuring the protection of our lake.

3. Indigenous peoples have, over hundreds of generations, developed Indigenous Knowledge specific to Lake Winnipeg. As with written knowledge systems, rigorous and well-maintained processes are critical to generate, verify, and share Indigenous Knowledge. Knowledge holders' ceremonies and protocols require many years of practice and strict adherence to maintain the integrity of Indigenous Knowledge. Just as scientists require resources to gather and synthesize the data that inform policy and management, so too do knowledge holders. Yet there remains a severe lack of balance in supports provided to Indigenous systems of knowledge.

Will you and your party establish and fund an Indigenous-led task force to ensure meaningful inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in all future reporting and public policy processes for Lake Winnipeg? If not, please explain why you and your party aren't making this commitment.

Indigenous peoples have a wealth of knowledge going back hundreds of years, and that knowledge is critical to ensuring the health and sustainability of our lakes. In 2017, we launched the Indigenous Guardians pilot program, which led to the creation of the first-ever Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area. We will continue to work with First Nations, Metis and Inuit partners to support the development of this program and new conservation areas. We are committed to working with Indigenous peoples to ensure that their knowledge is respected and included.