

SUMMARY OF THE JANUARY 29, 2003 PUBLIC MEETING

GETTING IT TOGETHER: Building a Progressive Coalition

Broad Coalition

OVERVIEW

On January 29, more than 125 people attended the first public meeting of the Broad Coalition to listen and share ideas. This document is a summary of everything we heard at that meeting.

The values we share include human rights, economic and social fairness, diversity, participatory democracy, environmental protection, and the common good. Many of the participants suggested policies for political transparency and accountability, triple-bottom-line accounting, a sustainable economy, universal access to education and healthcare, and a strong social safety net.

A discussion of actions that the grassroots could take to promote electoral coalition included building a coordinating infrastructure; reaching out to youth and minorities; organizing forums on particular issues; working towards the 2005 election; beginning dialogue with small groups of New Democrats/Greens/non-partisans; supporting recall campaigns; and growing the Broad Coalition.

Through inclusive processes and respectful dialogue, we can work on building unity at the grassroots and influence the political leadership.

In summary, there was a clear desire to protect the commons (water, environment, healthcare, education, energy) and look after one another. This value distinguishes us from the Liberals "New Era" of privatization of the commons.

This gives Greens, NDP, and the majority of British Columbians a slogan to rally around: *Our Common Value is Our Value of the Commons.*

MAJOR THEMES AND KEY IDEAS

Values (Principles)

The common good

- The good of individuals depends on the good of the collective
- Resources of province to be used or preserved for the benefit of the people
- Environmental sustainability and ecological integrity
- Universal social safety net
- A culture of nonviolence

Participatory democracy

- Political and economic decisions at local level
- Empowerment of people

Respect and human rights

- Respect all ideas/persons
- Fairness and social justice for all

Policies

Political reform

- Improve accountability and transparency
- Reform the political process

Social reform

- Provide universal access to health and education
- Strengthen social safety net
- Develop preventative and holistic approaches
- Reduce economic and social inequality

Financial

- Use triple-bottom-line accounting
- Take back control of the economy from the private banks

Our Common Value is Our Value of the Commons

- Explicitly value the common

Economic

- Develop sustainable economy
- Support decentralized, community-based economics
- Oppose corporatization
- Improve employment opportunities and decent wages
- Oppose NAFTA and WTO

Building Unity

Inclusive process

- Build infrastructure and network together
- Develop constructive communication and decision-making skills
- Include diverse voices (women, immigrants, sexual and visible minorities)
- Encourage and assist people with children to get involved
- Reach out to other organizations and groups
- Involve youth

Forums

- Create venues for honest, respectful dialogue
- Organize forums on particular issues and translate them into political action
- Create working groups of like-minded people around specific issues
- Design discussions to include non-partisans individuals and affected groups

Grassroots Involvement

- Encourage citizen participation
- Organize door-to-door
- Connect grassroots with political process/structure

Electoral coalition

- Start planning for 2005 now
- Figure out what we have in common to bring NDP and Greens together
- Analyze differences
- Develop a position paper that will move beyond both NDP and Green Parties in order to draw in more people

Vote-splitting

- Don't run competing candidates
- Target constituencies where vote splitting is a problem
- Use recall, especially where the election was close
- Analyze gain/loss of doing/not doing a coalition

Organizing

- Work from the bottom up to influence party executives
- Focus on mechanics at constituency level, explore making decisions and seek coalitions
- Form small groups of NDP/Green/non-partisan to discuss common objectives and develop positive pressure

Broad Coalition

- Grow the Broad Coalition
- Use the Broad Coalition's platform to unite various progressive forces

Evaluation

Positive

- Large attendance
- Good structure for participation
- Modelled respectful discussion
- Good brainstorming
- Lots of agreement and a positive tone

To be improved

- Location more central next time
- Have more local meetings/micro-meetings
- Need more diversity, including more people of colour and more youth
- There needs to be "permanent" co-ordination
- Lack strategies for "what next" or who will do all this

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Our Common Value is Our Value of the Commons