

The Real Deal on the Carbon Tax

There have been some highly inaccurate and politically skewed advertisements placed in our community papers recently, specifically about the new carbon tax.

I am troubled by these ads because they are, frankly, untruthful.

When first announced in February to the unanimous approval of climate scientists and the international environmental movement, the objective of the carbon tax was simple: shift our way of thinking as a province, make new choices where we can, and start talking at work and on the soccer field about the impact of our choices.

There was one key caveat, though: this absolutely cannot be a tax grab by government, and low income earners must be protected.

Thus the carbon tax legislation is very specific: Every penny collected at the pump from the carbon tax **MUST** be returned to British Columbians in the form of lower taxes in other areas. It's transparent, it's auditable ...IT'S THE LAW.

This was achieved very simply: the new carbon tax automatically triggered two more cuts to personal income tax totalling 5%, as well as new tax credits worth hundreds of dollars to low-income families and another 2% reduction in the small business tax rate. As a government who has consistently lowered everyone's taxes since 2001 to the point where we're now the lowest tax jurisdiction in Canada, this is very consistent with our belief that you make the best financial decisions for your family.

Clearly, the spike in world oil prices that has driven gasoline prices up over 50% in recent months is frustrating and worrying for all of us. It also makes it easy to forget the original motivation of this bold policy. But the "return every dime to the taxpayer" law is still there, and the commitment to take real steps to leave this province in better environmental shape for our children remains unshakeable.

My NDP opponents are either misinformed or dishonest to suggest this will hurt low income British Columbians. What's particularly troubling to me is that the NDP have repeatedly confirmed they would implement a carbon tax of their own – but their hidden, vague "at source" model cited from Denmark would, by one national expert's calculation, add a DOLLAR – not 2.3 cents – to the current price of a litre of gasoline.

I am prepared to debate the importance of this decision, the specifics of the carbon tax structure and its implementation, and how it will leave the typical family of four ahead by over \$400.

But to do so without responding to the dramatic and misleading claims of the NDP does a discredit to both the problems we are trying to solve, and the future generations for whom we are trying to solve them.

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