



Drug Policy Coalition - Green Party of Canada

1. Strengthening harm reduction services for vulnerable people

Does your party support restoring harm reduction as a key pillar in Canada's federal drug strategy, including support for supervised consumption services as one important component of an overall federal strategy on drugs — and as part of efforts to prevent the spread of HIV and hepatitis C (HCV), associated with unsafe injection drug use?

The Green Party is a strong advocate for harm reduction policies, including life-saving supervised consumption services. The scientific evidence, social policy research, and public health results prove unequivocally that a focus on harm reduction saves lives and make all Canadians safer.

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May [fought vigorously](#) against the reckless Bill C-2, which flies in the face of the Supreme Court's clear decision to allow supervised consumption sites. This bill, and other Harper Conservative crime bills, have shifted our legal system away from meaningful rehabilitation and crime prevention. No administration has demonstrated such disdain for evidence-based decision making as the Harper Conservatives. The Green Party is committed to reversing these harmful and ideological pieces of legislation, like Bill C-2, and returning to reasoned policies that provide long-term solutions to our social challenges.

The Green Party of Canada supports comprehensive reforms to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act that would assist people suffering from addiction and mental health conditions to get the care that they require. Greens will immediately repeal Bill C-2, and boost funding for safe injection sites and other harm reduction, prevention, and education efforts directed towards high-risk populations.

2. Preventing deaths from drug overdoses

Does your party support Good Samaritan legislation as one important component of a comprehensive approach to addressing the pandemic of death by drug overdose in Canada, and expediting access to naloxone by making it a non-prescription drug?

The Green Party supports Good Samaritan legislation to address drug overdoses. Promoting the public interest should be the guiding objective of all public policy. When laws threaten the health and lives of Canadians, they no longer fulfill this goal. Good Samaritan legislation will

help to counteract this life-threatening consequence of existing drug possession laws, and will reduce overdose deaths.

We also support increased access to naloxone, and its removal from Health Canada's list of ingredients that require a prescription. The Green Party is pleased that Health Canada recently initiated a review of naloxone's status, at the request of several provinces. We need to make naloxone widely available. While 85% of overdoses occur in the presence of others, this life-saver is difficult to obtain. Naloxone needs to be made over-the-counter and easy to access. We will continue to advocate for sensible drug legislation that is based first and foremost on health. Green MPs will call for a public consultation on the decriminalization of illicit drugs, considering the current high costs of the law enforcement effort.

3. Federal government approach to the changing landscape of cannabis control

Does your party support considering new approaches to regulating and controlling cannabis production, distribution and possession, as a way of minimizing the harms of the cannabis industry and cannabis use, promote public health, and respect the human rights of adults who use it?

The Green Party of Canada fully supports removing marijuana from the drug schedule. Greens will legalize marijuana, create a regulatory framework for the safe production of marijuana by small growers, and institute a tax rate similar to that on tobacco. When marijuana is legalized and taxed, the Green Party will dedicate a share of this revenue to research and public education about the health effects of marijuana.

The war on drugs has been disastrous for our country. The Canadian government has spent hundreds of millions of dollars enforcing drug laws and the industry has only grown. All we have to show for our efforts is a drug trade that operates underground with impunity, a mistrust of law enforcement among marginalized communities, and a criminalized youth. We need a new strategy for healthy and strong communities.

The Green Party of Canada believes that it is time to have an adult conversation about ending the war on drugs. We need to move towards an understanding of drug addiction as a health problem, not a criminal vice. After years of utterly ineffectual policies, it's time for a new approach to how we deal with marijuana. Legalization and taxation is the only sensible way forward.



4. Mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent drug offences

Given the scientific evidence of the ineffectiveness of mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent drug offences, does your party support eliminating the use of such sentences and again allowing judges to employ discretionary practices for these offences?

The Green Party remains strongly opposed to the omnibus crime Bill C-10, which ignored sound public policy evidence in favour of an ideological approach that will not make communities safer. The research is clear: mandatory minimum sentences do not reduce rates of crime or drug use. When Bill C-10 removed judges' discretion in sentencing, it disproportionately targeted already marginalized communities. The Green Party will repeal the mandatory minimum sentences on non-violent drug offences and all Harper era criminal laws creating mandatory minimum sentences.

5. Modernizing Canada's drug policies and influencing global leadership on drug policy

Does your party support Canada advocating at the 2016 UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs for a comprehensive approach to drugs based on evidence, public health objectives, and human rights standards, including support for harm reduction programs? Does your party support the creation of a mechanism within the United Nations that brings countries and civil society experts together to consider alternatives to drug prohibition as the main strategy for controlling drugs?

The Green Party will continue to advocate for a comprehensive approach to drug policy based on evidence, public health objectives, and human rights standards. Canada should be a leader at the 2016 UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs, to promote progressive and science-based drug policies that accomplish pressing public health objectives. Harm reduction programs must be a priority of any Canadian drug policy framework, as should the aforementioned elements. We fully support a mechanism within the UN that supports sound drug policy. In view of the lack of evidence for the utility of drug prohibition, the Green Party will continue to advocate for alternative strategies to limiting the adverse effects of drug use, for a compassionate view of addiction as a health issue, and for equal access to health and social services for drug users and all Canadians.

