

# Dion says he'll be the 'greenest PM ever'

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GLOBE AND MAIL UPDATE  
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CHURCHILL, Man — Stéphane Dion vowed he would be the “Greenest Prime Minister” ever as he highlighted his concern for climate change with a tour of Canada’s north coast.

After several days of talking up the economic benefits of his plan for tax cuts funded by carbon taxes, he twice used the backdrop of open Arctic waters Sunday to highlight his commitment to fighting global warming.

“There is a crisis of climate change which is by far the worst ecological threat humanity is facing and some countries must take the lead,” Mr. Dion said in Churchill, where he was campaigning for incumbent Liberal Tina Keeper.

With just over one week to go before voting day, a Nanos poll indicated Sunday that the Liberals are gaining ground on the Conservatives.



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Federal Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion walks with local candidate Kirt Ejesiak to a morning campaign event in Iqaluit, Nunavut Sunday. (*THE CANADIAN PRESS/Adrian Wylde*)

## Videos

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Dion, Layton take on each other

The leaders of Canada's two main opposition parties shifted their focus from fighting Prime Minister Stephen Harper to fighting each other Saturday after a new post-debate poll placed them in a statistical dead heat.

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Mr. Dion stepped up his appeal to left-leaning voters, arguing supporters of New Democrats and Liberals share the same values and should unite behind the Liberal banner to replace the Conservative government.

“We all know that the choice is between Stephen Harper and me as Prime Minister,” said Mr. Dion.

The Liberal leader also criticized Mr. Harper for campaigning in “a bubble” with secure campaign events that are closed to the general public. Mr. Dion said the Conservative campaign is undemocratic.

“He’s out of touch [with] the impact the current economic turmoil has on the lives of everyday Canadians,” said Mr. Dion. “He’s campaigning in a bubble. This is unacceptable for our democracy.”

Earlier in Iqaluit, Mr. Dion urged northern voters to keep the hotly-contested riding Liberal red, as ice chunks gathered behind him on the Arctic shore of Frobisher Bay.

Standing beside his candidate Kirt Ejesiak, Mr. Dion attacked Conservative Leader Stephen Harper’s plans for the North. He accused Mr. Harper of being overly focused on resource extraction and military might at the expense of the region’s pressing social and environmental concerns.

“You don’t say to the [Arctic people] ‘Use it or lose it,’ as Mr. Harper has said. This is an insult,” said Mr. Dion. “The people of the North will never lose the North. They are the North. And we need them, all Canadians together, to make the North strong and free indeed.”

Nunavut has become one of the surprise battleground ridings of this campaign.

Sunday's visit by Mr. Dion marks the third time a federal leader has campaigned in Iqaluit, following recent visits by Mr. Harper and NDP Leader Jack Layton.

The Greens are in the race as well with candidate Peter Ittinuar, who, in 1979 as an NDP candidate, became the first Inuit elected to the House of Commons.

The Nunavut campaign includes key issues at local, national and even international levels. They range from the melting polar ice cap to the price of watermelons.

Mr. Ejesiak, the Harvard-educated Liberal candidate, acknowledged the Conservatives are campaigning hard against Mr. Dion's carbon tax plan in a bid to win over nervous northerners.

"The Conservatives are saying the cost of watermelons is going to double if the Green Shift is implemented," said Mr. Ejesiak. "We've tried to ensure the local residents can sift through all the misinformation and the fear mongering."

The price of all goods in Nunavut, be it watermelons or anything else shipped from the south, are already sky high due to the high cost of moving all goods by plane.

Both Mr. Ejesiak and Mr. Dion are stressing the fact that because many in Nunavut have low incomes, they will receive the most benefit from the "Green Shift" in terms of tax breaks and income support.


Nunavut Premier Paul Okalik has listened to what all the party leaders have had to say and is remaining neutral in the race. But he said Sunday that he stands by the position he took with the two other territorial leaders to oppose Mr. Dion's carbon tax.

He said the region is excited to receive so much attention and he hopes it will translate into new services, such as a functioning sea port.

"The fact that they're here is a real improvement," he said. "The last few campaigns, we never had any party leaders come our way and so this is quite something new, and we appreciate it."

**Liberal Party Platform**

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- Green Shift: A \$15-billion carbon tax offset by income-tax breaks to Canadians and businesses, overseen by the Auditor-General to ensure it's revenue neutral
- Carbon taxed at \$10 per tonne, up to \$40 per tonne by fourth year; gasoline at the pump is exempt
- Up to \$10,000 in refundable tax benefits for investments in energy-saving retrofits at home
- Accelerated Capital Cost Allowance rates for businesses that invest in green technologies

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**Week 5 of the campaign**