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# Advocacy Bulletin 5

Dear Members;

A couple of major political developments have taken place since our last Bulletin. The Federal election campaign has officially begun, and the Manitoba election has come to an end.

## **Federal Election:**

- With Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's recent visit with the Governor General, Parliament has been dissolved and as expected Canadians will vote in a Federal election on October 21<sup>st</sup>.
- There 338 seats in Parliament of which a party needs to win 170 in order to form a majority government.
- But if recent public opinion polls are any indication, a majority government is far from certain at this point as polls show a virtual dead heat between the Liberals and the Conservatives. A battle also continues for third place between the NDP and the Green Party.
- With a little over a month to go in the campaign, an avalanche of polls including several daily tracking polls are expected.
- The major parties have started to roll out campaign commitments, some of which would be of interest to WRLA members.
- For example, if elected Justin Trudeau's Liberals plan to expand its new first-time home buyer program. The program provides interest-free funds to cover up to 10 per cent of the down payment for first time buyers whose household income does not exceed \$120,000. The program is run by CMHC which takes an ownership stake in the home in return for providing the interest-free funds and shares in future price appreciation until the amount is repaid.
- The same day as Mr. Trudeau's announcement, industry associations representing real estate agents across Canada issued a call for federal political parties to promise to change the stress test that has made it harder to borrow for a new home.
- Mr. Trudeau's announcement came the same day industry associations representing real estate agents across Canada issued a call for federal political parties to promise to modify the stress test which has made it harder to borrow for a new home.
- While the Conservative Party has not yet released a detailed platform on housing issues, Party Leader Andrew Scheer has previously said that he would review the stress test and would not require people renewing existing mortgages to qualify under the stress-test rules if they are switching to a new lender.
- Meanwhile, the NDP has not pledged to change the stress test, but has promised to expand the mortgage amortizations to 30 years for first-time home buyers.

- The Green Party has yet to announce a platform, however the Party has emphasized helping the homeless and implementing "a National Housing Strategy to provide every Canadian with a place to call home."
- The WRLA has sent letters outlining our members' priorities to numerous candidates in the four western Provinces, and as well, we have submitted our priorities to the Campaign Platform Committees for both the Conservative and Liberal Parties.

### **Manitoba Election:**

- Perhaps not surprisingly, Progressive Conservative Premier Brian Pallister was re-elected with another huge majority despite going to the polls a year earlier than the fixed election date in 2020.
- Of the 57 seats in the Manitoba Legislature, Premier Pallister won 36 of them (down 4 from the 2016 election), the New Democratic Party won 18 seats (up four from 2016), while the Liberals won three seats (the same as in 2016).
- Once again, the WRLA sent letters outlining our members' priorities to numerous candidates during the election from which we received several positive responses.
- There was a key commitment during the campaign by the Progressive Conservative Party which will be of interest to WRLA members. The new Pallister Government has committed to spend \$ 25 million (annually) to [retrofit homes and buildings](#) for energy efficiencies. The new program is to be carried out by Efficiency Manitoba.
- In making this announcement, PC member for Riel, Rochelle Squires said, "Retrofits will make our buildings more energy efficient, reduce emissions and create jobs for hardworking Manitoba tradespeople that will carry out these renovations."
- Once Premier Pallister's new Government is sworn in, we will be sending congratulatory letters to he and his government. We will also send one to the Minister responsible for this new program seeking an early meeting to learn more details about this important new investment.

I believe that's it for now. Again, I trust you are finding this information useful. Any questions, comments or suggestions, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Best regards,

Liz Kovach  
President WRLA  
Director Prairie Provinces, Building Materials Council of Canada  
Cc: WRLA Board

cc: Andrew Reimer, Chair WRLA Government Relations Committee  
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