

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Tories fail to notice their massive spending

Edmonton – The Tory platform costs released yesterday reveal their huge blind spot: they will not rein in their massive spending.

The Stelmach government spends more per capita than any province in Canada, and with \$2.8 billion in platform spending, they're rapidly getting worse yet Albertans remain under-served in health care, education, and critical infrastructure.

Kevin Taft announced today that an Alberta Liberal government will launch a core program review to reallocate wasteful Tory spending and focus Albertans' money on Albertans' priorities. "The Alberta Liberals will keep our commitment to real change through our platform, with no increase in real per capita program spending. It's time to spend right, not more. It's time for an end to Stelmach's tax-and-waste government."

"The Stelmach government is addicted to royalties," said Taft. "They act like the end of the gravy train will never come, like they can continually add spending without consequences. We have to get responsible and provide for the future before it's too late."

"At this rate, the Tories are setting us up for service cuts and rapidly increasing taxation when royalties slow down," said Taft.

"Today, the Alberta Liberals are releasing a comprehensive costing of our platform, including the initiatives we committed to before the campaign began. The Tories' costing ignores their runaway spending in the lead-up to the campaign," said Taft.

"Our plan is for re-allocation—not cuts—combined with a commitment to restraint in the future. This is an attack on misplaced priorities, not public sector jobs."

The Alberta Liberal Action Plan will increase provincial royalties and maintain current spending levels. Re-allocation of \$1.6 billion in current spending through a core program review will address Albertans' priorities identified in the Alberta Liberal Action Plan, resulting in a net impact on program spending of \$0.

"The Stelmach government spends 35% more per capita than the Ontario government," Taft noted, "and Albertans are just not getting value for money." The Stelmach government has failed to implement 145 recommendations from the Auditor General, dating back to as early as 1996-97.

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10247 124 Street NW  
Edmonton, Alberta T5N 1P8

**P: 780.414.1124**

**F: 780.414.1125**

**T: 1.800.661.9201**

**E: [office@albertaliberal.com](mailto:office@albertaliberal.com)**

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[www.AlbertaLiberal.com](http://www.AlbertaLiberal.com)

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Taft also said an Alberta Liberal government will make better use of the provincial Sustainability Fund. It was established as a \$2.5 billion fund to cover the cost of emergencies and disasters, but the Tories have allowed it to balloon into a \$7.7 billion slush fund.

“This is money that belongs to the people of this province – and it should not be used as the Tories’ candy jar to sweeten up the Alberta electorate,” said Taft. “The Alberta Liberals will bring the sustainability fund back under the proper supervision of the Legislature, to ensure it is spent on the properly budgeted, reviewed, and legislated priorities of the people of Alberta.”

The Alberta Liberals will use surplus dollars from the sustainability fund to address capital costs, such as building and maintaining schools, constructing new health facilities and other infrastructure needs, while preserving the \$2.5 billion contingency fund originally intended.

Under the Alberta Liberal Action Plan, overall revenue will increase on the strength of increased royalties. Money will go back into Albertans’ pockets through the elimination of health care premiums, the creation of tax breaks for seniors, and electricity re-regulation.

“It’s time to clean up the fiscal mess of the most wasteful government in Canada, and to get some value for our money, now and in the future. The Alberta Liberals have a plan to get the job done right.”

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For more information contact:

Michael Spears, Media Liaison or  
780-919-2617

Larry Johnsrude, Tour Media  
780-914-7689

Glenn Rollans, platform costs  
780-953-0238

**It's time.**  
*AlbertaLiberal*