

*Ottawa*

Room 518, Confederation Building  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6  
Tel.: 613-996-1119  
Fax: 613-996-0850



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

*Ottawa*

Pièce 518, Édifice de la Confédération  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0A6  
Tél. : 613-996-1119  
Télééc. : 613-996-0850

*Constituency*

9711 Fourth Street, Suite 1  
Sidney, British Columbia V8L 2Y8  
Tel.: 250-657-2000  
Fax: 250-657-2004

*Elizabeth May*

Member of Parliament / Députée  
Saanich—Gulf Islands / Saanich—Gulf Islands

*Circonscription*

9711, rue Fourth, bureau 1  
Sidney (Colombie-Britannique) V8L 2Y8  
Tél. : 250-657-2000  
Télééc. : 250-657-2004

December 10, 2012

I wanted to write while the analysis of the by-elections is still in the air. There is a lot about which we will never agree. Accusations of vote-splitting fail to meet the unassailable reality that Canada suffers more from vote abandoning than vote-splitting.

The real culprit that allows a party with minority public support to gain a majority of the seats is the first-past-the-post voting system. Until we have proportional representation, Canadian political life will be plagued with calls to vote for someone you don't like much for fear of electing a party you like a lot less. The New Democrats suffered from this fear-based campaign pitch for years, and now Greens are the main target of the argument. There are many calling on us to merge, but I see no sign of that as a realistic option.

I think we have to learn to stop repeating the mistakes of the past. I propose that the New Democratic Party, the Liberal Party and the Green Party agree to a one-time only cooperation pact. What if we found some way to cooperate in the next federal election on the explicit commitment that once the election is over, whichever party forms government – New Democrat, Liberal, or coalition – commit to ensure that the next election is not held under First-past-the-post? What if?

The purpose of this letter is to ask for like-minded Members of Parliament to agree to an informal consultation between now and the next election. Our goal will be to sort through the available options to advance answers to two questions:

1) What kind of electoral cooperation could work? Nathan Cullen's proposal from the leadership campaign of shared nominations? Having each party run candidates everywhere, but agree in advance that the ground game is a joint effort for only one? Or having only a small portion of the 338 races identified for cooperation and run hard for the win everywhere else? This list is not



exhaustive, but merely identifies some of a wider range of options.

2) What kind of system would we agree to after the election? Would we commit to some form of public inquiry or Royal Commission? Hold a referendum? Choose one system as preferable – Mixed Member Proportional? Or Single Transferable Vote? Or the bulking of regional ridings as Stéphane Dion has proposed?

Obviously, our consultations as MPs will not constitute inter-party negotiations. I do not sense any party is ready for that yet. However, I think a cross-party *ad hoc* group could do some very useful thinking to work through the available range of options in answer to both questions. It will take a lot of work, and good faith, to make the idea of cooperation a viable option.

Please let me know if you think you could make some time available for this work. I propose we start in January when we return from the break, but we could get some work started by exchanging ideas on email over the break.

Thanks so much for considering this concept. Have a wonderful time with family over the holidays.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth May". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Elizabeth May O.C., M.P.  
Member of Parliament for Saanich–Gulf Islands  
Leader of the Green Party of Canada