

New Survey on Canadians' views on Climate Change and the Economic Crisis

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Seven in Ten (71%) Say It is More Important for the Government to Focus on Jobs Than Climate Change at the Moment

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Toronto, ON - As Canadians and their governments try to figure out how best to move forward in this time of economic recession, many have argued that other important issues have taken a back seat to economic concerns. A new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Dominion Institute has revealed that nearly one half (45%) of Canadians 'agree' (13% strongly/32% somewhat) that 'serious action on climate change should wait until the recession is behind us'. Four in ten Canadians (43%) also 'disagree' (12% strongly/31% somewhat) that 'Canada should take serious action on climate change right now, even if it means higher deficits', meaning that a majority (57%) 'agrees' (19% strongly/37% somewhat) with this premise.

- Albertans (57%) are the most likely to believe that serious action on climate change should wait until the recession is behind us, followed by those living in Ontario (48%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (44%), Quebec (43%), British Columbia (39%), and Atlantic Canada (33%).
- Atlantic Canadians (68%) are most likely to agree that serious action should be taken right now even if it means higher deficits, while those living in Quebec (65%), Ontario

(55%), British Columbia (53%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (52%) and Alberta (42%) are less likely.

- Those aged 18 to 34 are more likely (63%) to believe that action should be taken right now, while those aged 35 to 54 (55%) and 55+ (54%) are less likely.

In fact, seven in ten (71%) 'agree' (30% strongly/42% somewhat) that 'it is more important for the Canadian government to focus on jobs than climate change at the moment'.

- Older Canadians (76%) are more likely than middle-aged (71%) or younger Canadians (67%) to say that it is more important for the Canadian government to focus on jobs than on climate change at the moment.
- Albertans (81%) are most likely to say that jobs should be the focus before climate change, followed by those in British Columbia (75%), Ontario (75%), Quebec (66%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (66%) and Atlantic Canada (58%).

With the economy dominating the political landscape, two in three (62%) believe (16% strongly/47% somewhat) that 'the Canadian government is less concerned about climate change than it was a year ago'. However, the survey shows that Canadians don't necessarily see economic stimulus and environmental action as being a trade-off, as three quarters (73%) 'agree' (23% strongly/49% somewhat) that 'the Canadian government should only adopt economic stimulus measures that are environmentally sustainable'.

- Younger Canadians are most likely (79%) to think that only environmentally sustainable initiatives should be adopted with stimulus funds, while middle-aged (72%) and older Canadians (67%) are less likely to think so.

In an interesting measure of their desire for environmental protection vis a vis economic progress, two in three (64%) 'agree' (22% strongly/42% somewhat) that the 'development of

the Alberta Tar Sands should stop until a clean method of extraction can be found', with nearly one half (47%) of Albertans agreeing with this position. Those in other areas of the country are more likely to agree, though: Quebec (73%), Atlantic Canada (71%), Ontario (64%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (59%), British Columbia (58%).

Obama and the Kyoto Protocol...

Seven in ten (68%) Canadians think (19% strongly/49% somewhat) that 'the US will do more to tackle climate change under President Barack Obama than Canada will'. Perhaps as a result, nine in ten (91%) 'agree' (36% strongly/55% somewhat) that 'Canada and the US should harmonize their climate change policies'.

- Younger Canadians are most likely (75%) to agree that 'the US will do more to tackle climate change under President Barack Obama than Canada will', followed by those aged 55+ (68%) or aged 35 to 54 (62%).

The Kyoto Protocol has been a contentious issue in Canada since its inception, and one that divides many Canadians and political parties. Canadians continue to be nearly evenly divided on this topic, with half (51%) 'agreeing' (16% strongly/36% somewhat) that 'Canada should meet its Kyoto commitments even if this results in higher costs of living for Canadians', while the other half (49%) 'disagrees' (16% strongly/33% somewhat).

- Atlantic Canadians (64%) are the most likely to say that 'Canada should meet its Kyoto commitments even if this results in higher costs of living for Canadians' followed by those living in Quebec (59%), British Columbia (50%), Ontario (49%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (45%) and Alberta (34%).

Canadians and Climate Change...

Contrary to their beliefs about the government, six in ten (59%) 'agree' (20% strongly/39% somewhat) that they are 'more concerned about climate change than a year ago', while one in three (31%) 'agree' (5% strongly/26% somewhat) that they are *less* concerned than a year ago.

Eight in ten (85%) Canadians 'agree' (22% strongly/64% somewhat) that they are doing their fair share to fight climate change. Further, seven in ten think (15% strongly/55% somewhat) that they're 'doing more than most people when it comes to helping the environment'.

- Interestingly, younger Canadians are least likely (81%) to say they're doing their part, while middle-aged (87%) and older Canadians (86%) are more likely.
- Atlantic Canadians (88%) are the most likely to agree that they're doing their part, followed by Ontarians (87%), British Columbians (87%), Quebecers (85%), residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba (84%) and Albertans (75%).

Six in ten (59%) agree (9% strongly/49% somewhat) that 'Canada will have an environmentally-sustainable economy within their lifetime', but four in ten (41%) 'disagree' (6% strongly/35% somewhat) that this will be the case.

- Younger Canadians (63%) are most likely to believe that this will be the case, while middle-aged (60%) and older Canadians (53%) are less likely.

Focusing on consumer trends and habits, two in three (66%) Canadians 'agree' (15% strongly/51% somewhat) that they are 'prepared to pay more for an energy-efficient product'. However, nearly one half (45%) says they're less likely to pay more for an environmentally-friendly product than they were a year ago – a change in behaviour likely brought on by tougher economic times.



- Younger Canadians are the most likely (73%) to say that they're prepared to pay more for energy-efficient products, while older (67%) and middle-aged (62%) individuals are less likely.

These are the findings of a poll conducted on behalf of the Dominion Institute from February 17 to February 23, 2009. This online survey of 1003 Canadians was conducted via the Ipsos I-Say Online Panel, Ipsos Reid's national online panel. The results of these polls are based on a sample where quota sampling and weighting are employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data. Quota samples with weighting from the Ipsos online panel provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online polls, however, an unweighted probability sample of this size, with a 100% response rate, would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had the entire adult population of Canada been polled.

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