

THE “GREEN SHIFT”

Opposition Voters Like Carbon Tax Plan, Canadians Want Dion to Debate Harper

Almost half of Canadians believe putting a price on greenhouse gas emissions is a good idea.

[VANCOUVER – Jun. 25, 2008] – Supporters of Canada’s four main opposition parties express positive views on the proposed carbon tax presented last week by Liberal leader Stéphane Dion, but some misconceptions about the plan and its implications remain, a new *Toronto Star* / Angus Reid poll has found.

The online survey of a representative national sample also shows that almost half of respondents support putting a price on greenhouse gas emissions, and that Canadians want Dion and Prime Minister Stephen Harper to participate in a public debate on the carbon tax.

What is the Carbon Tax?

One-in-four Canadians (26%) claim to fully understand what the proposed carbon tax is, while almost half (46%) only have a vague idea of what it entails, and 28 per cent do not know what it is.

In British Columbia and Ontario—two provinces that have discussed carbon taxes over the past few months—more respondents are aware of what the plan means, while one-third of Ontarians (32%) state that they do not know what the proposal means.

Canadians over the age of 55 (28%) and those with at least one university degree (34%) also seem more informed about Dion’s proposal.

KEY FINDINGS

- **26% fully understand what the carbon tax is; 46% have a vague idea; 28% don’t know what it is**
- **65% say the proposal will ultimately lead people to be more mindful of their carbon consumption and change their behaviour**
- **47% think putting a price on greenhouse gas emissions is a good idea; 39% are willing to pay higher taxes on fossil fuels if they also get an income tax cut**
- **69% support a Harper-Dion televised debate on the carbon tax**
- **66% incorrectly state that the carbon tax will increase the price of gasoline**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From June 23 to June 24, 2008 Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of 1,007 adult Canadians. The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.1 %, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

What the Carbon Tax Will Do

Almost half of Canadians (47%) believe putting a price on greenhouse gas emissions—one of the major motivations for the carbon tax—is a good idea. In addition, two-in-five respondents (39%) are willing to pay higher taxes on fossil fuels if they also get an income tax cut, and two-thirds (65%) believe the proposed carbon tax will ultimately lead people to be more mindful of their carbon consumption and change their behaviour.

On the other hand, 68 per cent of respondents believe the proposed carbon tax will hurt low-income families, singles and seniors, due to rising energy costs, and only 28 per cent believe it is the best way to curb climate change.

Political Allegiance

The proposed carbon tax was welcomed by supporters of the four opposition parties, with 66 per cent of Liberal voters, 56 per cent of NDP voters, 51 per cent of Bloc Québécois voters, and 49 per cent of Green voters agreeing that putting a price on greenhouse gas emissions is a good idea. A majority of Liberals (57%) and Greens (54%) are willing to pay higher taxes on fossil fuels if they also get an income tax cut.

Conservative voters are not amused with the carbon tax proposal presented by Dion. Two-thirds of Tory supporters (68%) reject the notion that the plan is the best way to curb climate change, and 61 per cent are unwilling to undergo the tax shift.

Misconceptions

The “Green Shift” policy document states that the proposed carbon tax will not increase the price of gasoline across Canada. However, only eight per cent of respondents were able to identify this particular trait, with 66 per cent believing that Canadians would indeed pay more at the pump as a result of the carbon tax.

In addition, only 15 per cent of respondents are aware that the proposed carbon tax will be revenue neutral—the money generated by the carbon tax will be given back to Canadians in the form of personal income tax cuts and business tax cuts.

A “Green Shift” Debate

Last week, Dion asked Harper to take part in a public discussion about the proposed carbon tax. The idea of holding a televised debate where the opposition leader and the prime minister discuss the proposed carbon tax is backed by 69 per cent of respondents in Canada, and more than three-in-four residents of British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec. Canadians aged 18-34 (77%), those living in households earning more than \$100,000 a year (77%), and those with at least one university degree (72%) also believe a public discussion about the carbon tax between the two politicians is in order.

Climate Change

Across Canada, 62 per cent of respondents are convinced that global warming is occurring, while 31 per cent believe the phenomenon may be happening but are not fully convinced, and five per cent are completely skeptical. These findings allow for a review of how people feel about the proposed carbon tax in accordance with their views on climate change.

Across party lines, more than 70 per cent of respondents who plan to vote for any of the four opposition parties are convinced that global warming is occurring, while only 44 per cent of respondents who plan to vote for the governing Conservatives concur.

Respondents who are convinced that global warming is happening are more likely to see the carbon tax as an opportunity to change the behaviour of Canadians (52%, compared to 43% nationally), and more likely to pay higher taxes on fossil fuels if they also get an income tax cut (48%, compared to 39% nationally).

The “Green Shift”

As you may know, Liberal leader Stéphane Dion presented his carbon tax proposal—also known as the Green Shift—last week. Which of these statements comes closest to your own point of view?

	Region						
	National	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
I fully understand what the proposed carbon tax is	26%	31%	21%	23%	24%	29%	23%
I have a vague idea of what the proposed carbon tax is	46%	53%	52%	47%	44%	42%	52%
I don't know what the proposed carbon tax is	28%	16%	27%	30%	32%	29%	25%

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	Gender		Age			Income			Education		
	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-99K	\$100K+	HS or less	College/ Tech school	Univ+
I fully understand what the proposed carbon tax is	32%	20%	23%	26%	28%	25%	26%	27%	22%	25%	34%
I have a vague idea of what the proposed carbon tax is	47%	46%	43%	48%	46%	40%	49%	54%	44%	46%	49%
I don't know what the proposed carbon tax is	22%	34%	35%	26%	26%	36%	25%	19%	34%	29%	17%

The “Green Shift”			
From what you have seen, heard or read about the proposed carbon tax, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?			
	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
The proposed carbon tax will ultimately lead people to be more mindful of their carbon consumption and change their behaviour	65%	26%	10%
The proposed carbon tax is the best way to curb climate change	28%	52%	19%
Putting a price on greenhouse gas emissions is a good idea	47%	36%	17%
I am willing to pay higher taxes on fossil fuels if I also get an income tax cut	39%	45%	16%
The proposed carbon tax will hurt low-income families, singles and seniors, due to rising energy costs	68%	16%	16%

The “Green Shift”			
Do you believe the following statements are true or not true?			
	True	Not true	Not sure
The proposed carbon tax will increase the price of gasoline across Canada	66%	8% ✓	25%
The proposed carbon tax will be revenue neutral—the money generated by the carbon tax will be given back to Canadians in the form of personal income tax cuts and business tax cuts	15% ✓	54%	31%

The “Green Shift”

Liberal leader Stéphane Dion has asked Prime Minister Stephen Harper to take part in a public discussion about the proposed carbon tax. Would you support or oppose holding a televised debate where Harper and Dion discuss the proposed carbon tax?

	Region						
	National	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
Support	69%	77%	76%	64%	65%	72%	67%
Oppose	19%	17%	14%	28%	21%	15%	26%
Not sure	12%	7%	10%	8%	15%	13%	7%

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	Gender		Age			Income			Education		
	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-99K	\$100K+	HS or less	College/ Tech school	Univ+
Support	71%	68%	77%	66%	67%	67%	69%	77%	68%	69%	72%
Oppose	21%	17%	10%	21%	25%	20%	19%	17%	21%	18%	18%
Not sure	8%	15%	13%	14%	8%	12%	12%	6%	10%	14%	11%

The “Green Shift”

The term “global warming” refers to a change in the Earth’s climate whereby the surface temperature increases over time. Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view?

	Region						
	National	BC	AB	MB/SK	ON	PQ	ATL
I’m convinced that global warming is occurring	62%	55%	52%	57%	60%	72%	69%
Global warming may be occurring, but I’m not fully convinced	31%	39%	36%	39%	35%	18%	26%
Global warming is not happening at all	5%	4%	9%	2%	5%	5%	1%
Not sure	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	5%	4%

The “Green Shift”

The term “global warming” refers to a change in the Earth’s climate whereby the surface temperature increases over time. Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view?

	Gender		Age			Income			Education		
	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-99K	\$100K+	HS or less	College/ Tech school	Univ+
I’m convinced that global warming is occurring	60%	65%	66%	63%	58%	67%	62%	58%	60%	65%	66%
Global warming may be occurring, but I’m not fully convinced	33%	29%	24%	31%	36%	25%	33%	36%	33%	29%	24%
Global warming is not happening at all	6%	4%	5%	5%	4%	5%	3%	6%	6%	4%	5%
Not sure	2%	3%	5%	1%	2%	3%	2%	0%	2%	3%	5%

The “Green Shift”

The term “global warming” refers to a change in the Earth’s climate whereby the surface temperature increases over time. Which of these statements comes closer to your own point of view?

	Party to vote for in next federal election						
	National	Con	Lib	NDP	BQ	Grn	Oth
I’m convinced that global warming is occurring	62%	43%	71%	72%	78%	78%	51%
Global warming may be occurring, but I’m not fully convinced	31%	47%	27%	27%	15%	19%	42%
Global warming is not happening at all	5%	8%	2%	2%	5%	2%	7%
Not sure	2%	2%	0%	0%	2%	1%	0%

Angus Reid Strategies is a full-service polling and market research firm which is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Strategies team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995.

Angus Reid Strategies, along with its sister company, Vision Critical, is now the largest Canadian-owned market research enterprise. In addition to its four offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices San Francisco, New York and London, England. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Strategies polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum online panel (www.angusreidforum.com), which is recruited via an industry-leading process that incorporates a randomized, widespread invitation approach and a triple opt-in screening procedure. The panel is maintained through state-of-the-art sampling techniques and frequent verifications of personal identity, contact information, and demographic characteristics. This premier online survey platform presents respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses.

Over the last year, Angus Reid has covered five elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes. <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=news&newsid=194>

More information on the way Angus Reid Strategies conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angusreidstrategies.com/uploads/pages/pdfs/ARS.ARF.WP.pdf>

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**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
www.angusreidstrategies.com**