



## **NATIONAL POLITICAL LANDSCAPE: FOCUS ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Environment is Top-of-Mind Issue for  
Canadians (35%),  
especially for Quebeckers (45%)**

**But not Priority over  
Health Care (72%), Poverty (56%) and Crime (53%)**

*From January 9 to 10, 2007, Angus Reid Strategies conducted an online survey among a randomly selected, representative sample of 1,021 adult Canadians. The margin of error for the total sample is  $\pm 3.1\%$ , 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, income, age, language, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of the country. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.*

[TORONTO – Jan. 23, 2006] - The environment has skyrocketed to the very top of the national political agenda over the past few weeks. But a new Angus Reid Strategies online poll shows that while Canadians do consider it to be a top concern, it should not be prioritized ahead of health care, poverty or crime.

The environment is cited as the most important issue by 35% of respondents in Canada, whereas the next highest issue—health care—falls in at 19%. Quebeckers stand out as the most worried about environmental issues: 45% of respondents in this province consider it a top issue. Conversely, only 26% of residents of the Prairies concur, followed by 28% of Ontarian respondents.

In British Columbia and Atlantic Canada, more than 20% of respondents expressed concerns about health care. In Quebec, where discussions about the “fiscal imbalance” have dominated the political debate, 17 per cent believe tax relief is the most important issue facing Canada today. In Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 16 per cent mention crime.

Respondents were asked to position other issues in comparison to the environment and select which one should be the higher priority of the two. 72% of them believe health care should rank higher than the environment on the federal government’s to-do list. Similarly, poverty (56%) and crime (53%) should take precedence over the environment.

Craig Worden, Vice President, Public Affairs, summarized these findings as follows: "The environment may be the flashpoint issue that's on the tip of Canadians' tongues today, but, upon consideration, health care remains a far higher public priority."

Specific topics that were part of the Conservative Party's platform in the January 2006 federal election—such as government ethics and tax relief—are regarded as lower priorities than the environment, along with unemployment, the mission in Afghanistan and terrorism. Only 20 per cent of respondents think national unity should be a main focus for the government, suggesting that Canadians are not particularly troubled by last year's debate about Quebec's place in Canada.

On the other hand, four out of five of those surveyed (82%) blame global warming for the “unusual weather” in Canada, and 95% say the federal government needs to do more to protect and improve the environment. Quebeckers appear to be most sensitive to these issues, as essentially all of them believe to some degree that global warming is to blame for the recent extraordinary weather patterns (99%) and that the Harper administration needs to do more about it (100%).

Residents of Alberta (33%) and the Prairies (30%) are the most sceptical about global warming being responsible for Canada's recent “unusual weather.”

**The Environment Is the Most Important Issue Facing Canada Today (35%),  
Eclipsing the Longstanding Leading Public Policy Issue of Health Care (19%)**

<b>Top-of-Mind Issues</b>							
<i>Q1. First, from the list of issues below, please click on the one issue that you feel is the most important issue facing Canada today.</i>							
Issue \ Region	Canada	British Columbia	Alberta	The Prairies	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Provinces
The Environment	35%	36%	32%	26%	28%	45%	37%
Health Care	19%	23%	11%	15%	21%	18%	22%
Tax Relief	10%	7%	9%	14%	6%	17%	3%
Poverty	7%	10%	9%	14%	7%	<1%	12%
Crime	6%	10%	8%	16%	3%	5%	3%
The Economy	6%	3%	4%	3%	8%	7%	6%

**72% of Canadian Say Health Care Should Still Be a Higher Priority for the Federal Government Than the Environment**

<b>Priority Trade-Offs</b>		
<i>Q2. Now, for each of the following other issues facing Canada, please indicate what level of priority you feel each issue should be given by the federal government compared to the issue of the environment?</i>		
	<b>Higher Priority than the Environment</b>	<b>Lower Priority than the Environment</b>
<b>Health Care</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Poverty</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>Crime</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>The Economy</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>Unemployment</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>62%</b>
<b>Ethics</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>62%</b>
<b>Afghanistan</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>Tax Relief</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>Terrorism</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>Unity</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>80%</b>

**Four in Five Canadians (82%) Blame Global Warming for the Unusual Weather, and 95% Say the Federal Government Needs to Do More to Protect the Environment**

<b>Weather Conditions Caused by Global Warming</b>							
<i>Q3. Thinking about this, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: "The recent unusual weather conditions in parts of Canada are primarily caused by global warming."</i>							
Agreement \ Region	Canada	British Columbia	Alberta	The Prairies	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Provinces
Strongly agree	39%	34%	24%	38%	35%	52%	44%
Somewhat agree	44%	48%	43%	33%	43%	47%	38%
Somewhat disagree	12%	10%	22%	22%	15%	1%	11%
Strongly disagree	6%	9%	11%	8%	7%	<1%	7%

<b>Federal Government Needs to Do More</b>							
<i>Q4. Thinking about this, please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: "The federal government needs to do more to protect and improve the environment."</i>							
Agreement \ Region	Canada	British Columbia	Alberta	The Prairies	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Provinces
Strongly agree	72%	69%	55%	61%	71%	83%	78%
Somewhat agree	23%	26%	36%	30%	22%	17%	19%
Somewhat disagree	3%	3%	5%	6%	4%	<1%	3%
Strongly disagree	2%	2%	4%	3%	2%	<1%	<1%

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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](http://www.angusreidstrategies.com)**