



Press Release

Three in Four (73%) Oppose the Sale of Aecon to Chinese State-Owned Enterprise; Only One in Three (32%) Believe Sale of Aecon Would Be in the National Interest

Majority (75%) of Canadians Want Government to Block Sale of Canadian Companies to Foreign Investors, Especially if Buyer is State Owned (79%)

Ottawa, ON, March 27, 2018 — A majority (75%) of Canadians ‘agree’ (35% strongly/40% somewhat) that the Trudeau government should stop the sale of Canadian companies to foreign investors (up 7 points since a similar poll conducted in 2012), according to a new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of PCL Constructors Inc., Ledcor Industries Inc., and Graham Group Ltd. Conversely, one quarter (25%) ‘disagree’ (4% strongly/21% somewhat) that the federal government should act in this manner (down 7 points).

Opposition towards foreign ownership of Canadian companies grows if the potential buyer is a state-owned enterprise: eight in ten (79%) ‘agree’ (39% strongly/40% somewhat) that the Trudeau government should prohibit the sale of Canadian companies when the buyer is owned by a foreign government’ (up 5 points since 2012), while just two in ten (21%) ‘disagree’ (3% strongly/18% somewhat) with this position (down 5 points).

The federal government is currently considering the foreign purchase of Aecon, a Canadian construction and engineering firm, by Chinese state-owned enterprise CCCC. Only 11% of Canadians say that they have seen, read or heard anything about the planned purchase while 9% indicate that they might have, 17% are unsure and 63% claim to have not heard about the issue at all.

Aecon Group is a major Canadian construction and engineering firm, a leading contractor on B.C.'s Site C dam project and on several nuclear power, oil and gas facilities and pipelines, and Light Rapid Transit projects across Canada. Last October, Aecon Group announced it was being acquired by CCCC International Holding Ltd. (CCCI), a subsidiary of China Communications Construction Ltd., one of the world's largest infrastructure companies. China Communications Construction is a Chinese state-owned enterprise. The deal is worth \$1.5 billion. On February 12, Aecon announced that approval was delayed while the federal government completes a national security review of the deal.

Once they learn of these details, Canadians’ views about the sale of Canadian companies to foreign entities remains largely unchanged: one quarter (27%) ‘support’ (3% strongly/24% somewhat) the sale of Aecon to CCCC, while three quarters (73%) ‘oppose’ (29% strongly/44% somewhat) the sale. Moreover, only one in three (32%) agree (8% strongly/25% somewhat) that the sale of Aecon to CCCC would be in the national interest of Canada, while two in three (68%) disagree (27% strongly/41% somewhat) that it would.

Address: 160 Bloor Street East, Suite 300
Toronto, ON, M4W 1B9
Tel: +1 416 324-2900

Contact: **Mike Colledge**
President, Canada, Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: mike.colledge@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 613-292-0253



Press Release – continued –

Arguments Against the Transaction

Concerns about national security, quality and fairness appear to be on the minds of Canadians, likely informing their overall opinions towards the sale of Canadian companies to foreign entities:

- Four in five (82%) agree (44% strongly/38% somewhat) that they are concerned about a foreign-government owned company being in a position to build critical Canadian infrastructure such as power plants, government buildings, bridges and dams. Two in ten (18%) disagree (3% strongly/16% somewhat).
- Eight in ten (80%) agree (41% strongly/39% somewhat) that if the sale goes through, it isn't fair to other Canadian construction and engineering companies because they will be put in the position of having to bid against a Chinese government-controlled and backed company. Two in ten (20%) disagree (4% strongly/16% somewhat).
- Three quarters (76%) agree (37% strongly/39% somewhat) that they are concerned that Chinese ownership of Aecon would have an impact on the quality of the materials, architecture and engineering used for major construction contracts in Canada, such as power plants, government buildings, bridges, and dams. One quarter (24%) disagree (4% strongly/19% somewhat).
- A majority (77%) believes (36% strongly/41% somewhat) that if the sale goes through, jobs and after-tax profits will flow from Canada to China, while a minority (23%) disagrees (5% strongly/18% somewhat).

Arguments in Favour of the Transaction

Arguments in favour of going forward with the transaction, including foreign relations and economic considerations, leave Canadians more divided in their opinions:

- Nearly two thirds (64%) agree (18% strongly/46% somewhat) that if Canada wants its economy to grow, it needs to attract foreign investment from countries like China. Two in five (36%) disagree (8% strongly/27% somewhat).
- Around half (48%) agree (9% strongly/40% somewhat) that in order to grow and be able to bid on larger and more complex projects in Canada and around the world, Aecon needs the additional capabilities and resources it will get from the deal with the CCCC. The other half (52%) disagree (14% strongly/38% somewhat).
- Roughly the same proportion (47%) agrees (7% strongly/ 40% somewhat) that if the Government blocks the sale of Aecon, it will hurt Canada's relationship with China. A slim majority (53%) disagrees (13% strongly/40% somewhat).

Address: 160 Bloor Street East, Suite 300
Toronto, ON, M4W 1B9
Tel: +1 416 324-2900

Contact: **Mike Colledge**
President, Canada, Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: mike.colledge@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 613-292-0253



Press Release – continued –

About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between March 23 to 26, 2018, on behalf of PCL Constructors Inc., Ledcor Industries Inc., and Graham Group Ltd. For this survey, a sample of 1,000 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadian adults been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

Mike Colledge
President, Canada
Ipsos Public Affairs
+1 613 292-0253
mike.colledge@ipsos.com

About Ipsos Public Affairs

Ipsos Public Affairs is a non-partisan, objective, survey-based research practice made up of seasoned professionals. We conduct strategic research initiatives for a diverse number of Canadian American and international organizations, based not only on public opinion research, but elite stakeholder, corporate, and media opinion research.

Ipsos has media partnerships with the most prestigious news organizations around the world. In Canada, Ipsos Public Affairs is the polling partner for Global News. Internationally, Ipsos Public Affairs is the media polling supplier to Reuters News, the world's leading source of intelligent information for businesses and professionals. Ipsos Public Affairs is a member of the Ipsos Group, a leading global survey-based market research company. We provide boutique-style customer service and work closely with our clients, while also undertaking global research.

About Ipsos

Ipsos is an independent market research company controlled and managed by research professionals. Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos has grown into a worldwide research group with a strong presence in all key markets. Ipsos ranks fourth in the global research industry.

With offices in 88 countries, Ipsos delivers insightful expertise across five research specializations: brand, advertising and media; customer loyalty; marketing; public affairs research; and survey management.

Ipsos researchers assess market potential and interpret market trends. They develop and build brands. They help clients build long-term relationships with their customers. They test advertising and study audience responses to various media and they measure public opinion around the globe.

Ipsos has been listed on the Paris Stock Exchange since 1999 and generated global revenues of €1,782.7 million in 2016.

Address: 160 Bloor Street East, Suite 300
Toronto, ON, M4W 1B9
Tel: +1 416 324-2900

Contact: **Mike Colledge**
President, Canada, Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: mike.colledge@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 613-292-0253



Press Release – continued –

GAME CHANGERS

« Game Changers » is the Ipsos signature.

At Ipsos we are passionately curious about people, markets, brands and society.
We make our changing world easier and faster to navigate and inspire clients to make smarter decisions.
We deliver with security, speed, simplicity and substance. We are Game Changers.

Ipsos is listed on Euronext Paris.
The company is part of the CAC Mid & Small index
and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP
www.ipsos.com

Address: 160 Bloor Street East, Suite 300
Toronto, ON, M4W 1B9
Tel: +1 416 324-2900

Contact: **Mike Colledge**
President, Canada, Ipsos Public Affairs
Email: mike.colledge@ipsos.com
Tel: +1 613-292-0253