

PRESS RELEASE

Climate Change #3 Issue of Campaign. Trails Healthcare and Affordability

One in Three (31%) Canadians Say Taking Action on Climate is Urgent, Even if it Comes at the Expense of Economy and Jobs

Toronto, ON, Sep 25, 2019 — Climate change is the third-most important issue of the campaign (26%, +1 point from last week), ranking behind only healthcare (37%, +2) and slightly behind affordability/cost of living (28%, +1) as being among Canadians top-three issues that will determine how they will vote on election day. Rounding out the top five are the economy (24%, unchanged) and taxes (24%, +2). This is according to a new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of Global News.

- Quebecers are most likely (32%) to list climate change among their top-three issues, followed by those living in Atlantic Canada (28%), seat-rich Ontario (28%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (27%), BC (19%) and Alberta (11%).
- Climate change is becoming a consensus issue in Canada. There are no significant differences based on generation or gender.
- However, there is a clear difference along partisan lines: while significant proportions of Green voters (52%), NDP (35%), Liberal (34%) and Bloc (32%) voters list climate change among their top-three issues, compared to just 10% of Conservative voters.

Despite climate change moving into a position of relative prominence in Canada, many Canadians have vastly different views of how to handle the situation.

- One in three (31%) believe that **we need to do everything we can to fight climate change immediately, even if the economy slows as a result and jobs are lost.** Quebecers (39%) are the most likely to feel this way, as are those aged 18-34 across the country (40%). Green Party voters (53%) are most likely to hold this point of view, followed by Bloc (43%), NDP (41%) and Liberal voters (34%). Just 17% of Tory voters feel the same way.
- On the opposite side of the spectrum, one in ten (12%) Canadians believe there is **no urgency required to fight climate change if it comes at the expense of our economy and jobs.** Those in Alberta (16%) and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (15%) are most likely to feel this way, as are those aged 55+ (15%) and men (15%). This is also the point of view held by 23% of Conservative voters.

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- Adopting a position somewhere in the middle, a majority (56%) of Canadians are of the opinion that **we need to move towards reducing climate change, but we must balance economic considerations with environmental consideration.** Boomers (60%), Tory voters (60%), and those in Atlantic Canada (63%) are most likely to express this point of view.

But when it comes time to put the money where their mouth is, nearly half (46%) of Canadians aren't willing to spend *anything* more in terms of increased taxation or more expensive goods or services in order to help the fight against climate change, rising to a full majority (56%) of Conservative voters. Given these results, it bears repeating that affordability is the #2 issue of the campaign.

How much more would you personally be willing to spend per year (i.e. increased taxation, goods or services costing more, etc.) in order to help the fight against climate change?

Amount Extra Per Year	%
\$0	46%
\$1-\$100	22%
\$101-\$200	8%
\$201-\$300	3%
\$301-\$400	2%
\$401-\$500	7%
\$501-\$1000	7%
\$1001+	5%

On average, Canadians are willing to spend an extra \$318 a year to help fight climate change, though there are significant differences according to partisanship; Green Party voters are willing to spend the most each year to fight climate change (\$701), followed distantly by NDP (\$375), Liberal (\$326), Bloc (\$254) and Tory (\$206) voters.

Two-Thirds Believe Canadians Will Pay More As Result Of National Carbon Tax

Canadians were presented with a series of statements about climate change and carbon pricing and asked to assess whether each was true or false. In many cases, Canadians admit to simply not knowing what the correct answer is, suggesting that a lack of information, or even misinformation, may be impacting people's views on climate change

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Please answer 'True' or 'False' to the following statements about climate change and carbon taxes.

Statement	True	False	Don't know
Most Canadians will pay more as a result of a national carbon tax	64%	17%	19%
My province currently has a carbon-tax in place	48%	25%	27%
Canada's rate of climate warming is twice that of the global rate	21%	39%	40%
A warmer average climate means more fresh water for Canada	14%	55%	32%
Canada is the highest producer of carbon, per capita, in the world	13%	54%	34%

Regardless of what they believe to be fact or fiction, eight in ten (78%) Canadians agree (30% strongly/49% somewhat) that Canada needs to do more than it is currently doing to address climate change – including 63% of Conservative voters. Moreover, just one in three (32%) agree (10% strongly/21% somewhat) that people who talk about climate change are overreacting, meaning that most (68%) disagree with this sentiment (37% strongly/31% somewhat).

Most (73%) Canadians also agree (24% strongly/49% somewhat) that Canada has an obligation to lead on climate change globally. In fact, just 27% agree (8% strongly/19% somewhat) that, since Canada is a relatively small contributor to the world's pollution, there's not much we can do to make a difference. Similarly, only 41% agree (10% strongly/31% somewhat) that no matter how hard we try, we won't be able to significantly reduce carbon emissions over the next decade. Conversely, 59% disagree (18% strongly/41% somewhat) with this premise.

But change often comes at a price – or at least Canadians think so. A majority (54%) agrees (11% strongly/43% somewhat) that in order to combat climate change, the solutions will cause economic hardship in Canada. Conversely, nearly half (46%) disagree (7% strongly/39% somewhat) that this is necessarily the case.

Canadians Split on Federal Carbon Tax

Canadians appear split down the middle when it comes to their views on the federal carbon tax. With half (48%) supporting it (16% strongly/32% somewhat), and the other half (52%) opposing it (27% strongly/25% somewhat). Support is higher among those aged 18-34 (61%) than those aged 35-54 (48%) or 55+ (39%). Support is also higher in Quebec (57%) and Ontario (50%) – where Premier Doug Ford is battling the tax – than in Atlantic Canada (43%), BC (43%), Alberta (39%) and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (36%).

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It is also clearly a partisan, wedge issue. Three quarters (73%) of Liberal voters support the tax, falling steadily to 65% among Green voters, 60% among Bloc voters, 53% among NDP voters and 28% among Conservative voters.

There is no consensus in Canada on what should be done with revenues generated by the federal carbon tax. Nearly three in ten (27%) believe that the money should be invested in green-research initiatives. A quarter (24%) believe that the money should be used to rebate Canadians who engaged in green initiatives. Another quarter (24%) think revenues should be used to retrain workers who have lost jobs in the transition away from fossil fuels towards greener industries. One in ten (13%) believe that the funds should be used to build public-transit infrastructure, while a similar proportion (12%) think the money should be allocated towards some other thing.

Bloc (44%) and Tory (27%) voters favour rebates, while a plurality of Green (35%) and Liberal (33%) voters support the funding of green-research initiatives. NDP voters equally favour research (30%) and retraining of workers (31%) in the transition away from fossil-fuel production.

Regardless of what specific actions they want taken, most (81%) Canadians agree (30% strongly/51% somewhat) that they would be more supportive of a carbon tax if they knew the money collected was going directly to initiatives to combat climate change. Among those who initially said that they opposed a carbon tax, 71% say that if funds went to fighting climate change, they'd be more supportive.

Climate Change Agenda

Canadians were asked to consider which aspects of climate change and the environment they'd most like the next federal government to focus on. Reflecting on their top-three areas of priority, nearly half (47%) believe that taxing businesses that produce too many carbon emissions is a priority, while 45% think that reducing the use of single-use plastics in Canada is a priority. Others believe that incentivizing businesses to produce less carbon (35%) or diversifying the economy away from carbon-producing industries (34%) is the ticket.

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One in three (31%) believe that one of the best courses forward is to incentivize consumers to change their behaviour, while 23% think the focus should be on helping people find jobs in non-carbon-producing industries. Relatively fewer want the next government to focus on better protecting Canada from natural disasters (15%) or taxing consumers that consume too much energy (15%). Just 2% think some other area of focus should be priority, while 6% of Canadians don't believe any of these should be a priority for the incoming government.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between September 20 and 23, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of n = 1500 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed online via the Ipsos I-Say panel and non-panel sources. Respondents earn a nominal incentive for their participation. Quotas and weighting were 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 (weighting efficiency = 63.9%). The precision of Ipsos polls which include non-probability sampling is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 2.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians 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. Ipsos abides by the disclosure standards established by the CRIC, found here: <https://canadianresearchinsightscouncil.ca/standards/>

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For more information on this news release, please contact:

Darrell Bricker, PhD
CEO, Ipsos Global Public Affairs
416-324-2001
Darrell.Bricker@ipsos.com

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