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### Conservatives in the Driver's Seat Among Canada's Commuters: 44% Would Vote Tory if Federal Election Held Tomorrow, 31% Would Vote Liberal

Intent to Turn Out on E-Day is Strongest for Long-Distance Commuters;  
Those who Drive Favour Scheer, Transit Users Heavily Favour Trudeau

**Toronto, ON, October 2, 2019** — The latest Ipsos poll for Global News confirms that half (50%) of working Canadians – nearly three in ten (28%) Canadians overall – commute a minimum of 10 km each way by car or public transit to get to work. It's a largely urban phenomenon: a majority of commuters live in heavily populated urban areas, concentrating them within electoral ridings. This means that issues affecting commuters are issues that political parties would do well to address if they wish to retain or win new seats at the upcoming election. But who really are commuters, and what do they want? Using the latest Ipsos polling numbers, this article takes an in-depth look at the role of commuter politics in Canada's 43<sup>rd</sup> federal election and explores the demographics of the typical commuter.

#### How Do They Feel About Trudeau?

With so many commuters among the general population, there are a multitude of opinions about Liberal leader Justin Trudeau and the other leaders vying to be Prime Minister, with some favourable and others less so. When looking specifically at those who commute a minimum of 10 km one way by car or transit to get to work, however, there appears to be a current of dissatisfaction with Trudeau's leadership over the past four years, which is sparking a desire for change.

The clearest difference is in terms of voting intent. If the federal election were held tomorrow, 44% of these commuters would vote Conservative, while only 31% would vote Liberal – a 13-point gap, compared to a 3-point gap when looking at decided voters at large (regardless of commuting status). No matter the length of their commute, those who **drive** to work are significantly more likely to vote Conservative (48%) than Liberal (26%). Conversely, those who use **public transit** for their commute are significantly more likely to vote Liberal (53%) than Tory (25%). But far more working Canadians commute by car (72%) than transit (17%), explaining the overall advantage for Tories among those who commute.

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Regardless of how commuters get to work, the longer they spend travelling, the more likely working Canadians are to say they'll vote Tory:

- 1-9 km: 32% intend to vote Tory vs. 40% Liberal vs. 12% NDP
- 10-24 km: 39% intend to vote Tory vs. 31% Liberal vs. 17% NDP
- 25-49 km: 47% intend to vote Tory vs. 36% Liberal vs. 10% NDP
- 50 km +: 53% intend to vote Tory vs. 21% Liberal vs. 10% NDP

Their decision is likely based on their assessment of the past four years of Liberal rule in Ottawa. Overall, nearly six in ten commuters who travel a minimum of 10 km to work by car or transit (58%) say they disapprove (32% strongly/26% somewhat) of the Liberal government's performance under the leadership of Justin Trudeau, while four in ten (42%) approve (6% strongly/36% somewhat).

Within this, there is a stark difference of opinion among those who favour driving and those who use transit: a majority of commuters who **drive** their 10+ km to work (62%) disapprove of the Trudeau Liberals' performance, while a similar majority (62%) of those who commute 10 or more km by **public transit** take the opposite view and say they approve. Altogether, irrespective of commuting distance or method, commuters' disapproval increases in line with commute length:

- 1-9 km: 51% disapprove of the Trudeau Government's performance
- 10-24 km: 54% disapprove of the Trudeau Government's performance
- 25-49 km: 58% disapprove of the Trudeau Government's performance
- 50 km +: 77% disapprove of the Trudeau Government's performance

Two in three (65%) Canadians who commute by car or transit for a minimum of 10 km feel it's time for another federal party to take over, leaving just one in three (35%) who think the Trudeau government has done a good job and deserves re-election. Again, those who **drive** 10 km or more to work are the most inclined to say another party should take the reins (70%), while public transit use who commute this distance lean more toward saying the government has done a good job (57%).

Time spent on the road also factors into commuter perceptions here: Canadians with longer commutes, regardless of their what means of transport they use, are more likely to think that another party should form the next government:

- 1-9 km: 59%
- 10-24 km: 64%

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- 25-49 km: 62%
- 50 km +: 75%

Commuters and non-commuters also differ on who they think would make the best Prime Minister of Canada: Conservative leader Andrew Scheer has the edge among those commuting 10 km+ or more by car or transit, with nearly four in ten (38%) saying he would be the best choice for the top job, ahead of Trudeau (30%), NDP leader Jagmeet Singh (16%), Green Party leader Elizabeth May (9%), People's Party leader Maxime Bernier (5%), or Bloc Québécois leader Yves-François Blanchet (2%).

**Drivers** are once again more likely to lean Conservative, with 41% of those who commute a minimum of 10 km saying Scheer is best suited to be the next PM, vs. 27% who say it should be Trudeau. By contrast, 44% of those who commute this distance by **public transit** favour Trudeau as best pick for PM, compared to just 25% who think Scheer is the best fit for the role.

Trudeau is also the top pick among non-commuters – regardless of employment status – 34% say he would make the best Prime Minister, just ahead of Scheer (32%), and edging out May (13%), Singh (12%), Bernier (5%), and Blanchet (3%).

### But Will They Vote?

Yes. What's more, commuters are significantly more likely to say they'll head to the ballot box on October 21<sup>st</sup> than employed Canadians who don't commute: two in three (64%) – rising to 67% of those who commute a minimum of 10 km or more by car or transit – say they're absolutely certain to vote. This absolute certainty even becomes slightly more prevalent among those with a longer commute, rising from 62% of those who travel 1-9 km, to 64% of those travelling 10-24 km, 67% of those travelling 25-49 km, to 69% of those travelling long-haul distances of 50 km or more. By contrast, only half (50%) of working Canadians who don't commute say they are absolutely certain they will go to the polling station on October 21<sup>st</sup>.

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### What Issues Do They Care About?

Commuters are much like other Canadians when it comes to the issues that matter: asked what will be the most important issues in determining how they will vote, they are most likely to pick the same issues as everyone else: health care (33%), climate change (32%), affordability and the cost of living (26%), taxes (26%), and the economy (25%). Interestingly, despite the common perception of commuters as being overly fond of their gas-guzzling cars, they are significantly more likely than employed non-commuters to cite climate change as a top issue of importance (32% vs. 23% of those who work but don't commute), perhaps recognizing the impact that their long commute is having on the environment.

While the latest numbers don't indicate a massive difference by commuter status in terms of concern about energy or gas prices, those who commute very long distances (50 km or more) are significantly more likely to say that infrastructure – such as public transit, bridges and roads – is an important issue for them: 14% say it could play a role in determining how they will vote, compared to 5% of Canadians who don't commute. These very long-distance commuters are also significantly more likely to highlight taxes as an issue of importance (41% cite it as such, compared to 22% of non-commuters).

### Commuters: A Profile

Eight in ten employed Canadians (80%), and nearly half (44%) of the adult population at large can be described as commuters, meaning they travel a minimum of 1 km to get from home to their place of work. Navigating long distances is a reality for many, with more than half of employed Canadians (52%) commuting a minimum of 10 kilometres one way, by any means, to get to work, whether it's a journey of 10-19 km (23%), 20-49 km (22%), 50-99 km (5%), or 100 km or more (2%). About one in four employed Canadians (27%) have a shorter commute of less than 10 km, while two in ten (20%) are lucky enough to avoid the commute altogether.

Among those who do commute, driving is the most popular means of getting to work by some distance: seven in ten commuters (72%) say that driving is their typical means of going to work, far ahead of those who commute by public transit (17%), walking (5%), carpool (4%), or bike (2%).

- Public transit is an exclusively urban phenomenon: The survey finds that no commuters in rural areas use public transit to get to work, with nearly all either driving themselves (82%) or carpooling with others (15%).

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- Carpooling is most popular among commuters aged 18-34 (10%), with far fewer of those 35-54 (2%) or 55+ (1%) getting to work in this way.
- Driving is most prevalent among commuters in Alberta (80%) and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (80%).
- Public transit is more widespread among commuters in Ontario (23%) and Quebec (17%) – home to Canada’s largest urban hubs.

Overall, commuters in Canada are fairly evenly divided between men (52%) and women (48%), but men make up a majority (67%) of those who travel very long distances of 50 km or more each way to get to work. Nearly half of commuters (47%) are Gen X’ers, aged 35 to 54, with Millennials (31%) and Boomers (21%) making up the rest.

At first glance, commuters appear to be spread out in line with the population of each province. For example, significantly more commuters are based in Ontario (36%), which occupies 38% of Canada’s population, than are based in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (6%), which together make up just 7% of the national population.

However, a closer look at the numbers reveals two distinctly different dynamics in Canada’s two most populous provinces:

In Ontario, there is a heavier trend toward long-distance commuters, while in Quebec, their profile skews toward shorter commuting distances. This in itself can have a huge impact in terms of what issues are at play: for long-distance commutes, the car is king. By extension, Ontario commuters may prioritize ballot-box issues like the price of gas and the state of the roads. In Quebec, commuters may be more eager for solutions like improvements to public transit, which is better adapted to suit the needs of shorter-distance commutes.

	Commute Length			
	1-9 km	10-24 km	25-49	50 km +
British Columbia	12%	13%	14%	12%
Alberta	13%	11%	10%	19%
Saskatchewan/Manitoba	7%	8%	4%	3%
<b>Ontario</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>Quebec</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>14%</b>
Atlantic Canada	9%	6%	7%	7%

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### About the Study

*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between September 27 and 30, 2019, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of n = 1489 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed online via the Ipsos I-Say panel and non-panel sources, including n = 719 commuters and n = 447 who commute a minimum of 10 kilometres one way by car or public transit. 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  $\pm 2.9$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians been polled. The credibility interval for n = 719 commuters is  $\pm 4.2$  percentage points, and for n = 447 commuters who travel at least 10 km one way by car or public transit, it is  $\pm 5.3$  percentage points. 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:*

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***<https://ipsosintelligence.ca/canadiancontext/>***



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