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## **CTV/NATIONAL ANGUS REID GROUP POLL**

### **-- CANADIANS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE FAIRNESS OF GAS PRICES AND GOVERNMENT REGULATION --**

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This National Angus Reid Poll was conducted by telephone between September 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, 1997 among a representative cross-section of 1,503 Canadian adults.

These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1991 and 1996 Census data.

With a national sample of 1,500, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population.

## **CANADIANS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE FAIRNESS OF GAS PRICES AND GOVERNMENT REGULATION**

In response to recent increases in gasoline prices, the majority (76%) of Canadians feel that the oil industry sets gas prices unfairly. However, over one-half (52%) of Canadians are opposed to government regulation of the industry, according to a National Angus Reid Poll conducted among 1,503 Canadians between September 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

The highlights of the poll findings include:

### ***Oil Industry Sets Gas Prices Unfairly***

- ◆ Over three-quarters (76%) of Canadians feel that “gas prices are unfair because the oil industry sets them as high as they can get away with, regardless of real market forces”. In comparison, two in ten (20%) Canadians believe that “the prices that oil companies charge for gas are fair, because they reflect real market forces, such as supply and demand and the cost of oil”. (Table 1)
- ◆ Residents of Atlantic Canada (84%) are more likely than other regions of Canada to feel that gas prices are unfair.
- ◆ On the other hand, Albertans (35%) and the most affluent (25% among those with annual household incomes of \$60,000 or more) are disproportionately more likely to believe that the prices that oil companies charge for gas are fair.

## ***Opposition to Government Regulation of Gas Prices***

- ◆ Just over one-half (52%) of Canadians believe that “the government should not directly regulate gas prices and should leave it up to the marketplace”, compared to under one-half (44%) who feel that “gas prices should be directly regulated by the government to protect consumers from unfair pricing”. (Table 2)
- ◆ Opposition to government regulation of gas prices is predominantly stronger among Albertans (64%), British Columbians (61%) and the most affluent (59% among those with annual household incomes of \$60,000 or more).
- ◆ Conversely, support for government regulation of gas prices is more likely to be found among Atlantic Canadians (58%).

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Table 1

<b>CANADIANS' VIEWS ON THE FAIRNESS OF GAS PRICES</b>										
	REGION							INCOME		
	Canada	BC	Alberta	Man/Sask.	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic	<\$30k	\$30-59k	\$60k+
(Weighted Bases)	1503	196	135	105	567	377	122	429	507	418
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Fair	20	20	35	17	17	20	14	20	18	25
Unfair	76	71	61	80	78	76	84	77	79	69
(Unsure)	5	9	4	3	4	4	2	3	3	6

*“There has been some discussion lately about gasoline prices in Canada. (ROTATE STATEMENTS). (Some/other) people say the prices that oil companies charge for gas are fair, because they reflect the real market forces such as supply and demand and the cost of oil. (Some/other) people say gas prices are unfair because the oil industry sets them as high as they can get away with, regardless of real market forces. Which of these two broad statements best describes how you feel about current gasoline prices?”*

Table 2

<b>CANADIANS' VIEWS ON GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF GAS PRICES</b>										
	REGION							INCOME		
	Canada	BC	Alberta	Man/Sask	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic	<\$30k	\$30-59k	\$60k+
(Weighted Bases)	1503	196	135	105	567	377	122	429	507	418
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Support	44	34	28	45	45	46	58	46	47	38
Oppose	52	61	64	51	51	50	41	51	49	59
(Unsure)	4	5	8	4	3	4	1	3	4	3

*“In response to recent increases in gasoline prices, some people have said that gas prices should be directly regulated by the government to protect consumers from unfair pricing. Other people say the government should not directly regulate gas prices and should leave it up to the marketplace. Generally speaking, would you, yourself, support or oppose direct government regulation of gasoline prices?”*