

MOST (44%) ONTARIANS BLAME LOCAL OFFICIALS FOR WALKERTON MISHAP -- DOWN 11% SINCE AUGUST 2001

*But 36% Blame Provincial Government -- Up 10% Since August
2001*



Public Release Date: Friday, March 1st, 2002 - 6:00 p.m. (EST)

Established in 1979, Ipsos-Reid is one of North America's leading market research and public opinion companies. Founded by Dr. Angus Reid, Ipsos-Reid is a \$70 million company which has conducted extensive market and social research in 80 countries and in 40 languages, and serves clients around the world through more than 300-professionals and 1,000 data collection staff in 11 offices. The company is a member of the Paris-based Ipsos Group, ranked among the top ten research companies in the world, with specialties in advertising, media, customer satisfaction, public opinion and market research. Visit www.ipsos-reid.com

*For copies of other news releases, please visit
http://www.ipsos-reid.com/media/content/PRE_REL.cfm*

© Ipsos-Reid

*Washington • New York • Minneapolis • San Francisco
Vancouver • Edmonton • Calgary • Winnipeg • Toronto • Ottawa • Montreal*



MOST (44%) ONTARIANS BLAME LOCAL OFFICIALS FOR WALKERTON MISHAP -- DOWN 11% SINCE AUGUST 2001

But 36% Blame Provincial Government -- Up 10% Since August 2001

Toronto, ONTARIO - In the wake of the recent release of the Walkerton Inquiry Report adding to the available information on the topic, Ontarians appear to place the blame for the Walkerton water contamination on both local Walkerton officials (44%) as well as at the feet of the Provincial government and the Premier (36%) according to an Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail/CFRB/CFTO poll released today. The number who blame local officials has dropped 11 points from a similar poll released in August 2001, while the number who blame the Provincial government and the Premier has increased 10 points since August.

At that time, over half (55%) of Ontarians placed the blame on local municipal officials while only 26% cited the provincial government and Premier Mike Harris. When asked the question in June of 2000, immediately following the mishap, half (49%) of Ontarians felt that the blame for the contamination rested on the shoulders of local officials, while 29% believed that the provincial government and Premier Harris were the most to blame for the problems resulting from the E. Coli contamination.



These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail/CFRB/CFTO poll conducted between February 7th and February 17th, 2002. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1,000 adult Ontarians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Ontario population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Ontario population according to the 1996 Census data.

The release in late January of the Walkerton Inquiry Report into the E. Coli contamination has added to the available information on the causes of the May 2000 contamination of the Walkerton water system. When asked the question “As you may know, in May 2000 the public water system in Walkerton, Ontario was contaminated with E. Coli bacteria. As a result, many residents of the town became ill and some died. Now, thinking of everything you have seen or heard about this issue and anything else you may know, in your view, who is most to blame for the water contamination in Walkerton?” Ontarians appear to place the blame on both local Walkerton officials (44%), as well as the provincial government (31%)/Mike Harris (5%).

As the following ‘Chart of Blame’ indicates, fewer Ontarians see local officials as most to blame for the contamination of Walkerton water, while more say that the provincial government is most at fault, then when asked the question in June 2000, immediately following the incident, and in August 2001.



	June 2000	August 2001	February 2002
	%	%	%
MUNICIPALITY/LOCAL OFFICIALS (NET)	49	55	44
Local officials/bureaucrats/individuals who manage water system	19	30	34
Municipal government	25	19	4
Public Utility Commission in Walkerton	3	4	3
Local/Walkerton politicians/Walkerton mayor	1	2	3
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT (NET)	29	26	36
Provincial government	25	22	31
Mike Harris	4	4	5
All three levels of government	4	3	2
Municipal and Provincial governments	4	2	2
Federal government	2	2	-
Federal and provincial governments	-	-	-
Community/People in town	1	-	-
Farmers	2	-	-
Others	2	6	9
No one in particular	2	2	3
Don't know	6	3	4

Individually, blame placed on local offices is broken down into one-third (34%; up from 30% in August 2001) who blame local officials/bureaucrats/individuals who manage the water system, 4% who blame the municipal government (down from 19% in August), 3% who cite local Walkerton politicians/Walkerton Mayor (August 2001: 2%) and 3% who name the Public Utilities Commissioner in Walkerton (August 2001: 4%) as most to blame for the tragedy.



- Regionally, those most likely to place the blame on local officials / bureaucrats / individuals who manage the water system are those in Northern Ontario (39%) and in the '905' Belt (39%).
- Younger (36%) and older (35%) Ontarians are more likely than their middle aged (30%) counterparts to cite local officials/bureaucrats/individuals who manage the water system as most to blame.
- Decided provincial Progressive Conservative supporters (47%) are more likely than supporters of the provincial Liberals (28%) or the NDP (28%) to cite local officials as those most responsible for the contamination of the Walkerton Water system.

The Provincial Government separately is mentioned by three in ten (31%) Ontarians, while Premier Mike Harris is named by one in twenty (5%) as most responsible for the incident.

- Residents of the City of Toronto (42%) are more likely to place the blame for the water contamination on the provincial government than those in any other region of the province. This compares to 30% of Eastern Ontario residents, 28% of those in the Hamilton/Niagara region, 27% of residents in Southwestern Ontario and Northern Ontario, and 25% of those in the '905' Belt.
- Ontarians 35 years of age and older (34%) are more likely than those who are 18 to 34 years of age (25%) to place the blame at the feet of the provincial government.
- While only 14% of decided PC supporters place the blame on the government, 41% of Liberals and 35% of NDP supporters do. In addition, 9% of decided NDP supporters and 7% of decided Liberal supporters cite Premier Mike Harris as most responsible, while only 1% of decided PC supporters do.



Ipsos Reid

-30-

For more information on this news release, please contact:

*John Wright
Senior Vice-President
Public Affairs
Ipsos-Reid
(416) 324-2900*

For full tabular results, please visit our website at www.ipsos-reid.com. News Releases are available at http://www.ipsos-reid.com/media/content/PRE_REL.cfm

© Ipsos-Reid

*Washington • New York • Minneapolis • San Francisco
Vancouver • Edmonton • Calgary • Winnipeg • Toronto • Ottawa • Montreal*