



IpsosReid

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Public
Opinion

Ipsos-Reid Fires Back at Critics on Kyoto Polling

Toronto, November 6, 2002 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ipsos-Reid, the country's premier public opinion polling firm, today fired back at critics of a poll sponsored by the Government of Alberta that was released by its Calgary office on Friday, November 1st, 2002. On that day, Ipsos-Reid released the findings of a poll complete with the questions, the methodology and the analysis and posted it to its website at www.ipsos-reid.com. The headline "Canadians Divided on Kyoto Ratification" indicated that Canadians are evenly split on whether Canada should withdraw from Kyoto and develop a "made in Canada" plan (45%) or ratify the protocol (44%).

At no place in the analysis did it indicate that support for the Kyoto Accord had plummeted as noted in the headlines of various media outlets. Instead, what the poll indicated was that there is an emergent view in this country, supported particularly in Western Canada, that Canadians are open to a "made in Canada solution" which may be different than the Accord which is being advocated by the Federal Government.

This is consistent with findings from other publicly released polls by the Globe and Mail and CTV, which are available in their entirety on our website. In particular a poll from October 7, 2002 indicates that 71% of Canadians believe "it is possible for Canada to develop an alternative from the Kyoto Accord that is just as effective but would cost the Canadian economy a lot less."

As for support on the "ballot" question for the Accord, our polls have tracked a decline in support from 86% in June to 74% in October primarily due to a precipitous drop in support in Alberta.

The question that was asked and released is legitimate. While the phrase "made in Canada solution" was used in the question that's been attacked, primarily by those who are Accord supporters, it is part of the on-going debate in this country and deserves to be tested. Other pollsters working for various interests in this country have asked either exactly the same question or similar questions with the only difference being that we've released our complete methodology and results into the public domain while they have not.

Further, the phrase "made in Canada solution", which has come under fire, is not new to Canadian political rhetoric. A simple search of the web will find that Transport Minister, David Collenette is on record for supporting a "made in Canada solution" for Canada's

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airline industry. Corrections Services Canada indicates in its speakers' kit that "we need a made in Canada solution" for the criminal justice system in Canada. Former Environment Minister, Christine Stewart, indicated in the Government of Canada's Technology Partnerships Climate Change Action Fund investment announcement, attended by then Industry Minister, John Manley, and then Natural Resources Minister, Ralph Goodale was an "excellent example of a made in Canada Solution to a global problem...towards lowering greenhouse gas emissions in Canada and elsewhere". On the healthcare front, Federal Commissioner Roy Romanow has stated numerous times that he "envision[s] a made in Canada solution to healthcare". There are numerous other examples on a wide range of issues from corporate governance to drinking and driving regulations where government officials, prominent industry leaders, advocacy groups or others have used this phrase.

To suggest that the phrase is irrelevant to the current debate on the Accord is to deny the importance of rhetoric in shaping public opinion. As social scientists, it is our job to test the impact of rhetoric. That's exactly what the poll in question does.

Now, is it possible for Canadians to continue to support the implementation of the Accord and at the same time hold other views that may appear, on the surface, to be contrary? The answer is yes – particularly in an environment where 59% indicate that they don't have enough information about the Kyoto Accord to fully make up their mind. The debate is complicated, unclear to many in terms of what the Accord and other proposals will do for Canada and for the environment, and has every potential to be volatile.

Therefore, Ipsos-Reid wishes to make it clear for the record the following:

- The question that was asked on behalf of the Alberta Government by our Calgary office and released into the public domain for all to see is a legitimate question and has not been influenced in terms of the results by the sponsor. An identical question asked by any other reputable pollster in this country would find the same results.
- The phrase, "made in Canada solution" is a legitimate phrase because it is part of the debate and represents an emergent alternative to what is currently being proposed by Kyoto advocates. There has been evidence in our polling, publicly released and available, since June that Canadians are open to this suggestion.
- To suggest that the poll results, the methodology, or the findings are "fraudulent in nature" is untrue and borders on libel.
- At no point in time has Ipsos-Reid indicated that support for the Accord has "plummeted". This phrase has been driven by media headlines and not by our analysis or statements on the public record. In fact, it was reported in the media that the numbers from the poll released on November 1, 2002 are not comparable to previously released polls because they are different questions that have been asked and answered.

- Unlike other pollsters in this country who have indicated their findings but not disclosed the questions or methodology, Ipsos-Reid has posted, as it does with all of its publicly released polls, the findings for all to see.

In the next few days Ipsos-Reid will be releasing the findings of its updated tracking questions which it has done so on numerous occasions in the past. We will defend these questions and others and the results and we encourage Canadians to draw their own conclusions.

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