

SECURITY OF CANADA'S SMALL PORTS

Stakeholders Feel That Canada's Small Ports Are Vulnerable



Public Release Date: - March 30, 2005 –10:00 a.m. (EST)

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Halifax, NOVA SCOTIA– Canada's smaller commercial ports are vulnerable to terrorist and criminal acts and the federal government needs to do more to help secure them. These conclusions emerge from the findings of a new Ipsos Reid report that surveys the opinions of leaders who run, fund and police Canada's secondary ports.

The report finds that a majority of those interviewed doubt that their communities could prevent terrorism, drug smuggling and other criminal acts at their ports:

- Half of small port officials lack confidence that their community could prevent terrorists from reaching a target in North America through their port (52% not confident vs. 45% confident).
- Three in five lack confidence that their community could prevent drug smuggling coming into their port (62% not confident vs. 35% confident).
- Over two in three lack confidence that their community could prevent waterside access to vessels, leading to terrorist or other criminal activities in their port (68% not confident vs. 30% confident).

The survey found that two in three respondents consider the federal government's efforts to improve the security of Canada's ports overall as effective (67% effective; 33% ineffective) but that officials are more divided in terms of satisfaction with federal efforts to secure Canada's small ports (56% satisfied; 43% dissatisfied).

When it comes to their own communities, wide majorities believe that the federal government is not providing enough resources to ensure adequate security:

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- Nearly two in three respondents say the federal government focuses too much on the large ports, leaving small ports vulnerable (63% compared to 33% who say federal government should focus on larger ports).
- Nine in ten respondents say the federal government needs to do more to help secure Canada's small ports (90% agree; 10% disagree).
- Four in five respondents say their community doesn't have the necessary resources to meet new, tighter port security standards (80% agree; 17% disagree).
- Few respondents believe that small port communities' police departments are adequately funded (13% agree; 80% disagree) or that they have the watercraft necessary to secure their ports (10% agree; 88% disagree).
- While two in three respondents say small port security has improved since 9/11 (67% better; 3% worse), a minority say the resources for policing have increased since then (38% agree; 58% disagree).

When asked to choose among priorities to improve port security in Canada, respondents most often say the Minister of Transport should establish an effective and efficient container screening program (42%), while an additional 33% say the improving waterside security in Canada's ports is the most important priority. Only one-in-ten think Ottawa should expand criminal background checks on port workers.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/Canadian Maritime Workers' Council poll conducted from February 22 to March 3, 2005. For the survey, Ipsos-Reid interviewed 60 senior-level officials with a stake in the security of Canada's small ports by telephone in both of Canada's official languages between February 22 and March 3, 2005. The 60 respondents interviewed consist of 31 municipal officials (including senior mayoral staff, police chiefs and other police and fire department officials), 16 port officials, as well as 13 representatives of associations and corporations (including organizations

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operating at a national level, but with a significant interest in the operation of small ports). In total, officials from 25 small port communities are represented, hailing from British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and PEI. With an overall sample of 60 respondents the results are considered accurate within ± 12.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results might have been had the entire population been surveyed. In several questions in this survey, base sizes are lower than 60 respondents, diminishing this level of statistical reliability. In these instances, the results should be viewed as directional in nature.

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