

BRITISH COLUMBIANS: KEEP DRINKING WATER IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT HANDS

*Three-Quarters of British Columbians Oppose Privatization of
Drinking Water*

*71% Trust Their Community's Local Government More Than the
Private Sector to Provide Safe Drinking Water*



Ipsos Reid

Public Release Date: November 2, 2005, 0600 PDT

Ipsos Reid is Canada's market intelligence leader and the country's leading provider of public opinion research. With operations in eight cities, Ipsos Reid employs more than 300 researcher professionals and support staff in Canada. The company has the biggest network of telephone call centres in Canada, as well as the largest pre-recruited household and online panels. Ipsos Reid's Canadian marketing research and public affairs practices are staffed with seasoned research consultants with extensive industry-specific backgrounds, offering the premier suite of research vehicles in Canada – including the Ipsos Trend Report, the leading source of public opinion in the country – all of which provide clients with actionable and relevant information. Ipsos Reid is an Ipsos company, a leading global survey-based market research group.

To learn more, visit www.ipsos.ca

*For copies of other news releases, please visit:
<http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/>*

© Ipsos Reid Corporation

Vancouver • Calgary • Edmonton • Winnipeg • Toronto • Ottawa • Montreal

BRITISH COLUMBIANS: KEEP WATER IN GOVERNMENT HANDS

Three-Quarters of British Columbians Oppose Privatization of Drinking Water

71% Trust Their Community's Local Government More Than the Private Sector to Provide Safe Drinking Water

Vancouver, BC – A new survey shows that British Columbians are very wary of any privatization of community drinking water. In fact, three-quarters (75%) of British Columbians are opposed to privatization of water services including drinking water, with six-in-ten (60%) BC residents saying they are strongly opposed. These results are from a recent telephone survey conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

Only two-in-ten British Columbians (20%) support the privatization of water services, with just 6% saying they strongly support it. Regionally, people on Vancouver Island are particularly opposed to the privatization of water services. On the Island, 78% are opposed, with 62% being strongly opposed.

“As well as strong support, there is solid research in favour of public water management. That is why CUPE in BC and across the country is campaigning to stop water privatization,” says Barry O’Neill, president of CUPE BC. “On Vancouver Island, where there are serious threats to public water, this should be an issue in the November 19 municipal and regional district elections.”

These results show a slight increase in the strength of opposition to the privatization of water services from April 2001. In 2001, 73% of people were opposed to the privatization of water services, which is similar to this year’s result. However, in 2001, only 49% were strongly opposed, compared to 60% today.

Perhaps a large part of the response towards the privatization lies in the issue of trust. When asked who they would trust more to provide safe drinking water to their community, just over seven-in-ten people say they would trust their local community's municipal government more than a private company with 44% saying they would trust the government a lot more and 27% saying they would trust the government a little more. Just two-in-ten (21%) say that they would trust a private company more (10% a lot more, 11% a little more) than their local government.

British Columbians are also more likely to trust the government to provide affordable drinking water than a private company. When asked, almost three-quarters (73%) say they would trust their community's local government more than they would a private company with 46% saying they'd trust the local government a lot more and 27% trusting the local government a little more. Two-in-ten (21%) people say they would trust a private company more (10% a lot more, 11% a little more).

British Columbians were presented with a list of statements regarding the privatization of water services and asked whether they would agree or disagree with each statement. The responses to these statements reflect the attitudes towards the privatization of water services in general. For example, only 33% of British Columbians agree 'that the private sector would do a better job than the government at managing water services' (12% agreeing strongly, 21% agreeing somewhat). In contrast, 64% of people disagree with this statement (39% strongly, 24% somewhat).

Almost nine-in-ten (88%) British Columbians agree with the statement that 'water is a basic public service and should always remain in public hands'. Seventy-two percent of people strongly agree with this statement and 17% agree somewhat. Only 11% disagree (3% strongly, 8% somewhat).

Finally, more than three-quarters (77%) of all British Columbians agree that 'a private company operating the plant would be less accountable to me as a taxpayer than the city would be'. Fifty-three percent strongly agree and 24% agree somewhat, while 20% disagree (9% strongly, 11% somewhat).

These results are based on 1,000 telephone interviews with British Columbians, 18 years of age and older from the BC Reid Express omnibus survey. Interviews were conducted between October 3 and 9, 2005 with residents from throughout the province. The regular monthly BC Reid Express sample of 800 British Columbians has been supplemented with an additional 200 interviews conducted on Vancouver Island (327 total interviews on Vancouver Island) to increase the reliability of the results there. The final data are statistically weighted to reflect the actual age and gender of the British Columbia population and are balanced by region.

With a provincial sample of 1,000, one can say with 95% certainty that the overall results are within ± 3.1 percentage points of what they would have been had the entire BC population been surveyed. The margin of error will be larger for sub-groupings of the survey population.

- 30 -

For more information on this news release, please contact:

Rhys Gibb
Senior Research Manager
Ipsos Reid Corporation
604-257-3200
Rhys.Gibb@Ipsos-Reid.com

Roseanne Moran
Communications Representative
CUPE
604-291-1940 or cell 778-835-7537
rmoran@cupe.ca

*For full tabular results, please visit our website at www.ipsos.ca.
News releases are available at <http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/>.*