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Ipsos Reid

Public Release Date: June 18, 2008 (6:00am PDT)

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Vancouver, BC – On July 1st, British Columbians will begin paying a provincial carbon tax on gasoline and other fossil fuels. A new Ipsos Reid poll shows that while a majority of British Columbians oppose the carbon tax, this initiative has not negatively impacted public support for the governing BC Liberals.

Six-in-ten (59%) British Columbians say they oppose the introduction of a provincial carbon tax on gasoline and other fossil fuels to curb greenhouse-gas emissions (39% support). Opposition to the new tax includes a majority of BC Liberal supporters (56% opposed), NDP supporters (58% opposed) and Green Party supporters (53% opposed).

Cross-party opposition to the new tax has not hurt the BC Liberals in terms of voter support. The poll shows no significant change in voter support in British Columbia. The BC Liberals (47%, up 1 point from March) hold a 14 point lead over the NDP (33%, down 1 point) among decided voters, with the Green Party in third place at 16% support (unchanged).

A slight majority (55%, up 5 points) of British Columbians approve of Carole James' performance as NDP and Opposition leader. This is 6 points better than Gordon Campbell's approval rating as Premier (49%, up 2 points).

The poll also finds that a slim majority (52%) of British Columbians support the recent introduction of spending limits on third party advertising during and prior to provincial election campaigns (37% oppose).

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid telephone poll conducted between June 5 and June 10, 2008. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 800 adult British Columbians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population of BC 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 BC population according to 2006 Census data.

While Majority (59%) of British Columbians Oppose New Carbon Tax...

Carbon Tax: Six-in-ten (59%) British Columbians say they oppose the introduction of a provincial carbon tax on gasoline and other fossil fuels to curb greenhouse-gas emissions. This includes 45% who “strongly oppose” the carbon tax and 15% who “moderately oppose” the carbon tax. Four-in-ten (39%) residents say they support the carbon tax, including 18% “strongly support” and 20% “moderately support”.

Opposition to the carbon tax extends to a majority of supporters from all three of British Columbia's main political parties, including BC Liberals (56% oppose, 41% support), NDP (58% oppose, 40% support) and Greens (53% oppose, 45% support).

Although much of the criticism of the carbon tax has come from rural British Columbians, the level of opposition is similar between residents in the Lower Mainland (61% oppose, 38% support) and the rest of the province (57% oppose, 40% support).

Opposition to the carbon tax has risen by 7 points since an Ipsos Reid survey taken shortly after the tax was introduced in the February provincial budget (52% oppose, 46% support in Feb 19-20 poll).

Bill 42: The survey also asked about public support for the recently passed Bill 42 – the so called gag law restricting third party advertising before and during election campaigns. A slight majority (52%) of British Columbians say they support the introduction of spending limits on third party advertising during and 60 days prior to provincial election campaigns. This includes 25% who “strongly support” the legislation and 27% who “moderately support” the legislation.

Nearly four-in-ten (37%) residents say they oppose the spending limits, including 21% who “strongly oppose” and 16% who “moderately oppose” the limits. Eleven percent are undecided.

Support for the third party spending limits is higher among BC Liberal supporters (59% support, 31% oppose) and Green supporters (54% support, 32% oppose) than among NDP supporters (44% support, 49% oppose).

The Issue Hasn't Shifted Voter Preferences.

Opposition to the carbon tax has not impacted the BC Liberal lead in voter support. The BC Liberals currently have the support of 47% (up 1 point from March) of the province’s decided voters and a 14 point lead over the NDP at 33% (down 1 point). The Green Party currently has the support of 16% (unchanged) of decided voters. These results exclude the 16% of British Columbians who are undecided or express no preference.

- The BC Liberals lead by 21 points in the Lower Mainland (53% Lib vs. 32% NDP) and by a smaller 5 point margin in the rest of BC (40% Lib vs. 35% NDP).
- The BC Liberals lead by 19 points among men (52% Lib vs. 33% NDP) and by a smaller 9 point margin among women (43% Lib vs. 34% NDP).
- The BC Liberals lead is mostly driven by higher income residents. The Liberals lead by a huge 31 points among higher income households (58% Lib vs. 27% NDP), but are statistically tied with the NDP among middle income households (40% Lib vs. 38% NDP) and lower income households (40% NDP vs. 37% Lib).

Decided Vote Tracking

	Jun 08	Mar 08	Dec 07	Sep 07	Jun 07	Apr 07	Dec 06	Sep 06	Jun 06	Mar 06	Dec 05	Sep 05	Vote 05
BC Libs	47%	46%	45%	46%	45%	49%	45%	47%	51%	43%	43%	42%	46%
NDP	33%	34%	35%	36%	36%	32%	36%	37%	35%	40%	41%	39%	42%
Green	16%	16%	16%	15%	15%	15%	16%	13%	10%	12%	13%	13%	9%
Other	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%	4%	5%	3%	5%	3%

Carole James (55%, up 5 points) Narrowly Leads Gordon Campbell (49%, up 2 points) in Job Approval

Carole James' approval rating as NDP and Opposition leader has jumped 5 points from March. A slight majority (55%, up 5 points) of British Columbians approve of her performance, including 12% "strongly" and 43% "moderately". Roughly one-third (33%, down 1 point) of residents say they disapprove of her performance (15% "strongly", 19% "moderately").

- James' approval rating is slightly higher among women (58%) than among men (51%). It is also slightly higher among lower income households (62%) than among middle income (55%) or higher income (51%) households.

British Columbians continue to be split in their assessment of Gordon Campbell's performance as Premier. About half (49%, up 2 points) of voters say they approve of Campbell's performance, including 10% "strongly" and 39% "moderately". A similar proportion (47%, down 2 points) disapproves of his performance, including 31% "strongly" and 17% "moderately".

- Campbell's approval rating is higher in the Lower Mainland (53% vs. 42% rest of BC) and with higher income households (60% higher vs. 43% middle, 44% lower).

Leader Approval Tracking

	Jun 08	Mar 08	Dec 07	Sep 07	Jun 07	Apr 07	Dec 06	Sep 06	Jun 06	Mar 06	Dec 05	Sep 05
Carole James												
Approve	55%	50%	55%	48%	54%	51%	59%	54%	53%	57%	61%	60%
Disapprove	33%	34%	30%	36%	34%	31%	26%	23%	29%	26%	30%	23%
Gordon Campbell												
Approve	49%	47%	49%	47%	49%	53%	50%	47%	52%	44%	44%	44%
Disapprove	47%	49%	46%	48%	48%	41%	46%	48%	44%	52%	54%	54%

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