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Greens (15%, down 1 point)*

Slim Majority (53%) Say BC Heading in Right Direction

*Approval Ratings Steady for Gordon Campbell (50%, unchanged)
and Carole James (52%, down 2 points)*

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Vote Heading Toward May 12th Election*



Ipsos Reid

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***BC Liberals Also Have Largest Potential Voter Pool and Firmest
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Vancouver, BC – With a provincial election campaign set to begin in only three weeks (campaign starts April 14th), a new Ipsos Reid poll shows the BC Liberals (46%, up 2 points from November) continuing to hold a sizeable lead over the NDP (35%, unchanged) among the province’s decided voters. The Green Party trails behind with 15% support (down 1 point).

The governing BC Liberals are clearly benefiting from a positive overall mood in the province. Despite all the recent talk of economic doom and gloom, a slight majority (53%) of residents think that things in BC are generally heading in the right direction, rather than on the wrong track (41%).

Approval ratings for the two main party leaders are essentially unchanged from November. Gordon Campbell has a 50% approval rating as Premier (unchanged) and Carole James has a 52% approval rating as NDP and Opposition leader (down 2 points).

In addition to their current lead among decided voters, the BC Liberals also have the largest potential voter pool. Nearly half (48%) of all adult British Columbians say they are “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to vote for a BC Liberal candidate in the May 12th election. This compares to 39% who say they are “very likely” or “somewhat likely” to vote NDP and 27% for the Green Party.

The BC Liberal vote is also the firmest of the three major parties. Seven-in-ten (69%) current BC Liberal supporters say it is “very likely” they will wind up voting BC Liberal

on Election Day. This compares to six-in-ten (59%) current NDP supporters who say it is “very likely” they will vote NDP on May 12th. Consistent with many previous surveys, the Green vote is the softest of the three main parties. Fewer than half (46%) of current Greens say they are “very likely” to vote Green on Election Day.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid telephone poll conducted between March 10 and 15, 2009. 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.

BC Liberals (46%, up 2 points) Lead NDP (35%, unchanged) and Greens (15%, down 1 point)

The BC Liberals currently have the support of 46% (up 2 points from November) of the province’s decided voters and an 11 point lead over the NDP at 35% (unchanged). The Green Party currently has the support of 15% (down 1 point) of decided voters. These results exclude the 12% of British Columbians who are undecided or express no preference.

There is a substantial gender gap in voter preferences. Men favour the BC Liberals by 22 points (53% Lib vs. 31% NDP), while women are equally split between the two main parties (39% Lib vs. 39% NDP).

The BC Liberals lead by 29 points among higher income households (57% Lib vs. 26% NDP) and by 13 points among middle income households (47% Lib vs. 34% NDP). The NDP leads by 17 points among lower income households (47% NDP vs. 30% Lib).

Decided Vote Tracking

	Mar 09	Nov 08	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	46%	44%	47%	46%	45%	46%	45%	49%	45%	47%	51%	43%	43%	42%	46%
NDP	35%	35%	33%	34%	35%	36%	36%	32%	36%	37%	35%	40%	41%	39%	42%
Green	15%	16%	16%	16%	16%	15%	15%	15%	16%	13%	10%	12%	13%	13%	9%
Other	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%	4%	5%	3%	5%	3%

Slim Majority (53%) Say BC Heading in Right Direction

A majority of British Columbians, albeit a slim one, have a positive outlook on where the province is headed. Fifty-three percent say that things in BC are generally heading in the right direction, while four-in-ten (41%) say things are off on the wrong track.

A right direction sentiment is slightly higher in the Lower Mainland (57%) than in the rest of BC (48%). A right direction sentiment also increases as household incomes increase (45% among lower; 54% middle; 62% higher).

Approval Ratings Steady for Gordon Campbell (50%, unchanged) and Carole James (52%, down 2 points)

Carole James' approval rating as NDP and Opposition leader is stable. A slight majority (52%, down 2 points) of British Columbians approve of her performance, including 10% "strongly" and 42% "moderately". Roughly four-in-ten (38%, up 4 points) residents say they disapprove of her performance (17% "strongly", 21% "moderately").

- James' approval rating is higher among women (56%) than among men (48%). It is also higher among residents with lower household incomes (67% among lower vs. 49% middle, 43% higher).

Voters remain split in their assessment of Gordon Campbell's performance as Premier. Half (50%, unchanged) of residents say they approve of Campbell's performance, including 11% "strongly" and 40% "moderately". A similar proportion (47%, up 1 point) disapproves of his performance, including 28% "strongly" and 19% "moderately".

- Campbell's approval rating is higher with men (58% vs. 44% of women) and with higher income households (63% among higher vs. 50% middle, 36% lower).

Leader Approval Tracking

	Mar 09	Nov 08	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	52%	54%	55%	50%	55%	48%	54%	51%	59%	54%	53%	57%	61%	60%
Disapprove	38%	34%	33%	34%	30%	36%	34%	31%	26%	23%	29%	26%	30%	23%
Gordon Campbell														
Approve	50%	50%	49%	47%	49%	47%	49%	53%	50%	47%	52%	44%	44%	44%
Disapprove	47%	46%	47%	49%	46%	48%	48%	41%	46%	48%	44%	52%	54%	54%

BC Liberals Also Have Largest Potential Voter Pool and Firmest Vote Heading Toward May 12th Election

The BC Liberals have the largest potential voter pool to draw upon. Nearly half of residents (48%) say they are either “very likely” (30%) or “somewhat likely” (18%) to wind up voting for a candidate from the BC Liberal Party in the May 12th election. Slightly more than one-in-three (36%) residents say they are “not at all likely” to vote for a BC Liberal candidate, while 14% say they are “not very likely”.

Four-in-ten (39%) British Columbians say they are either “very likely” (19%) or “somewhat likely” (20%) to vote for an NDP candidate in the May 12th election. Slightly more than four-in-ten (43%) residents say they are “not at all likely” to vote for an NDP candidate, while 15% say they are “not very likely”.

Fewer than three-in-ten (27%) British Columbians say they are either “very likely” (8%) or “somewhat likely” (20%) to vote for a Green Party candidate in the upcoming election. Half (52%) of residents say they are “not at all likely” to vote for a Green candidate, while 17% say they are “not very likely”.

Likelihood of Voting for Various Parties on Election Day

	BC Liberal	NDP	Green
Very likely	30%	19%	8%
Somewhat likely	18%	20%	20%
Not very likely	14%	15%	17%
Not at all likely	36%	43%	52%
Don't know	2%	3%	4%
<i>Total likely (very + somewhat)</i>	<i>48%</i>	<i>39%</i>	<i>27%</i>

BC Liberal supporters are the most committed to sticking with their party up to Election Day. Seven-in-ten (69%) current BC Liberal supporters (i.e. those who chose the Liberals in this survey) say it is “very likely” they will wind up voting BC Liberal on Election Day. This compares to six-in-ten (59%) current NDP supporters who say it is “very likely” they will wind up voting NDP. Green Party support is softest, with fewer than half (46%) of current Greens saying they are “very likely” to vote Green on Election Day.

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For The Record: Recent Ipsos Polling and Actual Election Outcomes

- *US Presidential Election 2008: Ipsos was the most accurate of 22 firms polling the Presidential race: 53% Obama/Biden (actual 52.7%), 46% McCain/Palin (actual 46.0%).*
- *Canadian Federal Election 2008: Ipsos Reid's last poll compared to the actual results was Conservatives 34% (actual 37.65%), Liberals 29% (actual 26.26%), NDP 18% (actual 18.18%), Green 8% (actual 6.78%), and Bloc 9% (actual 9.98%).*
- *Alberta Election, 2008: Ipsos Reid's last poll (conducted mid-campaign) compared to the actual results was Progressive Conservative 49% (actual 52.66%), Liberal 28% (actual 26.37%), NDP 14% (actual 8.52%), Wildrose Alliance 5% (actual 6.77%), and Green 4% (actual 4.58%).*
- *Ontario Election, 2007: Ipsos Reid's last poll compared to the actual results was Liberal 43% (actual 42.25%), Conservative 32% (actual 31.62%), NDP 18% (actual 16.77%), and Green 6% (actual 8.02%).*
- *BC Election, 2005: Ipsos Reid's last poll compared to the actual results was Liberals 47% (actual 45.8%), NDP 39% (actual 41.52%) and Green 11% (actual 9.17%).*