

ALBERTA VIEWS ON ELECTRICITY



Ipsos Reid

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Calgary, AB – The subject of electricity transmission has occupied a prominent place in Alberta media throughout much of 2008 and 2009. Ipsos Reid conducted survey based research in three communities at the centre of this issue (Calgary, Sherwood Park and Fort McMurray) to explore the views of local residents on some of the matters at the heart of the ongoing debate.

Some of the results include:

- Overall, three quarters of respondents across the three communities feel confident (17% Very, 58% Somewhat) about the organizations managing Alberta's electricity system.
- More than four-in-ten (44%) respondents are concerned that Alberta does not have enough transmission capacity to meet the future needs of the province.
- A majority of respondents support the development of new electricity transmission lines. Two thirds (67%) support the development of new electricity transmission lines to meet the needs of their community while six-in-ten (60%) say they would support routing new transmission lines through their area to service the needs of other communities in Alberta. Fort McMurray has the highest levels support (86% and 79% respectively) and Sherwood Park (45% and 40% respectively) the lowest.
- At the time of fielding, almost half of respondents (45%) were aware of the challenges facing Alberta's electricity system. Among those aware of challenges, most often mentioned were Alberta's electricity supply (43%) and transmission capacity (39%) issues.
- Calgary (34% Probably or Definitely Not) and Sherwood Park (33% Probably or Definitely Not) residents are more likely than Fort McMurray (25% Probably or Definitely Not) residents to feel that Alberta does not produce enough electricity to meet the long term needs of the province.
- The majority (79%) of respondents feel that at least half of Alberta's electricity travels some distance to get to where it needed.

- When asked about potential locations for new power plants, research participants are notably more likely to hold the view that these plants should be built away from communities to reduce the environmental impact on people (60%) than they are to take the position that such development should be closer to the community to reduce the required amount of transmission infrastructure (36%).
- Approximately half (48%) of Albertans in the surveyed communities say they are interested in learning more about Alberta's electricity system. If new electricity transmission projects are required in their area, more than three quarters (77%) are interested in learning more about the potential plan and providing feedback on the ideas.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid study conducted from August 13 to 24, 2009. A total of 1,200 telephone interviews were conducted with residents of Calgary (400), Sherwood Park (400) and Fort McMurray (400). The results for each of the three regions are considered accurate to within 4.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population of each community been polled. The margin of error will be larger within each sub-grouping. These data were statistically weighted to ensure each regions age/sex composition reflects that of the actual community population according to 2006 Census data.

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