

**Canadians Assess the 2012 Flaherty Federal Budget:
Three Quarters (73%) View Budget as Good (18%) or a Wash (55%),
Only Some say Bad (24%) or Will Hurt Them Personally (28%)**

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Toronto, ON – Reacting to the federal budget tabled by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty last Thursday in the House of Commons, three quarters (73%) of Canadians view the budget as being good or a wash (neither good nor bad), according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Postmedia News and Global Television. A majority (55%) thinks it's neither good nor bad and they'd symbolically just shrug their shoulders, while one in five (18%) say it's good and they'd symbolically give it two thumbs up. One quarter (24%) thinks it's bad and they'd symbolically give it two thumbs down and three percent (3%) don't know. In contrast, last year more thought the budget was good (19%) than bad (16%).

Jim Flaherty's budget – his first with a majority government – included a reduction in the federal civil service and funding for other federal departments and agencies such as the CBC, laid the groundwork for the increase in the retirement age to 67, and set in motion a plan to get the government's finances back into a surplus position in four years. It also included some surprises, such as an increase in the tax-free exemption amounts for cross-border shopping, and a phasing out of the penny.

Prior to the budget, Ipsos Reid released a poll that revealed that half (49%) of Canadians thought this would be a bad-news budget. Interestingly, the current polling shows that three in ten (28%) Canadians believe this budget personally hurts them, while just one in ten (7%) thinks it will personally help them. Most (63%), though, say it does neither, and 2% don't know its potential impact on them. This is in contrast to last year's budget, when the



proportion of Canadians who thought the budget would hurt them (13%) or help them (10%) was roughly even, while most (62%) thought they wouldn't be impacted either way.

Four in ten (40%) Canadians believe that the budget contains 'too much spending', Conversely, one quarter (26%) believes that there was 'too much emphasis on deficit reduction', while three in ten (29%) believe the Harper Government struck 'just the right balance'. Four percent (4%) don't know. Last year, the distribution among those who thought there was too much spending (32%), just the right balance (31%) or too much emphasis on deficit reduction (22%) was closer, suggesting that this year's budget is more polarizing than last year's budget.

The budget has done little to change Canadians' minds about whether or not they approve or disapprove of how the Harper government is managing the economy. A majority (55%) of Canadians 'approve' (12% strongly/44% somewhat) of 'the Federal Government's overall management of the Canadian economy' (up 1 point since February), while four in ten (44%) 'disapprove' (14% strongly/30% somewhat) of the government's handling of the economy (down 2 points). One percent (1%) doesn't know. Approval is highest in Alberta (74%) and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (66%), followed by British Columbia (61%), Ontario (58%), Atlantic Canada (51%) and Quebec (38%).

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Postmedia News and Global News from April 3 to 4, 2012. For the survey, a representative randomly-selected sample of 800 adult Canadians was interviewed by telephone, and 1,009 interviews were conducted online via the Ipsos I-say panel. Ipsos merged the two sample sources and employed weighting to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflected that of the adult population according to Census data. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of sample of ± 2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error would be larger

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within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to, methodology change, coverage error and measurement error.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

*Darrell Bricker
CEO
Ipsos Reid
Public Affairs
(416) 324-2001*

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