

eFlash Report

June 2002

New Poll Shows Canadians Would Condemn Rejection of Kyoto

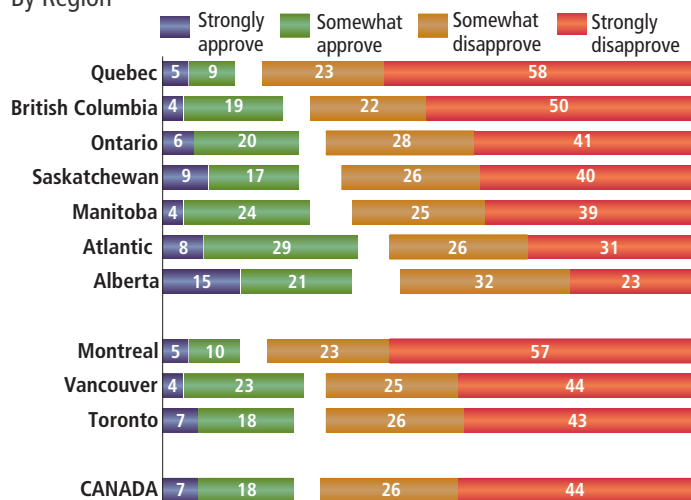
A recent *Environmental Monitor* survey conducted by Environics International reveals that fully seven in ten Canadians would disapprove if Canada were to rescind the Kyoto Accord to limit greenhouse gas emissions like the United States has. The poll illustrates that not ratifying the Accord could involve substantial political risk.

Respondents were told that, along with more than 160 other countries, both Canada and the United States signed the Kyoto Accord to reduce their emissions of climate changing gasses. Upon being reminded that "Canada has not yet ratified the agreement into Canadian law," and that "the US has since said that it will not ratify because of the economic costs involved," Canadians were asked if they would approve or disapprove if Canada were to reject the Accord like the US. Forty-four percent of Canadians say they would "strongly disapprove" of such a decision, while a further one in four (26%) say they would "somewhat disapprove." Just seven percent would "strongly approve," and fewer than two in ten (18%) would "somewhat approve."

While prevailing public opinion clearly supports ratification, the poll reflects the regionalism that has permeated the Kyoto debate. Quebecers (81%), for example, are far more likely than Albertans (55%) to say they would disapprove of adopting the American position. Nonetheless, Albertans are 19 points more likely to say that they would frown on a Canadian withdrawal from the Accord than to say they would approve of such an approach.

Nationally, Canada's best educated are more inclined than others to say they would disapprove of abandoning the Kyoto Accord.

Reaction if Canada Were to Reject Kyoto Accord Like US By Region



Awareness of the Kyoto Protocol appears to have increased from the months immediately following the 1997 United Nations conference and is more than two times higher among the university educated than among those with little education. Canadians who have heard of the Accord are more likely than those who have not to say they would disapprove if Canada were to reject it. Still, a test of Canadian knowledge of the Accord in the current poll suggests that familiarity with the details of Kyoto remains low.

Canada's International Performance Down Sharply

While multilateral environmental and development processes are receiving increased attention in the run-up to G8 meetings in Kananaskis and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, Canadians have become far more critical of the country's environmental performance on the world stage.

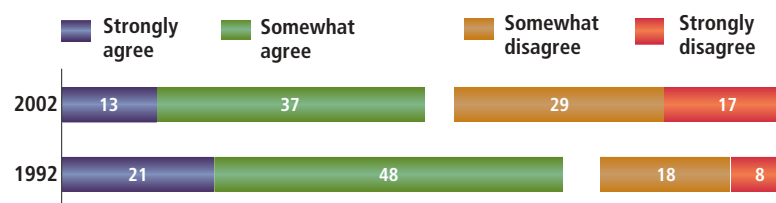
Down nearly 20 points from a decade ago, one in two Canadians now agree with the statement "Canada is currently showing powerful and influential leadership in dealing with world environmental issues." Most in this group agree only tentatively with the statement. Only 13 percent agree strongly that Canada is showing strong international leadership, with Baby Boomers and the university educated being the most critical.

In sum, this latest poll shows that not only would majorities condemn a US-like approach to Kyoto if such a direction were taken, but that ratings of the country's current performance in the area of international environmental leadership have plummeted. With perhaps the largest international environmental meeting ever to occur just months away, a piece of what Canadians consider to be an important part of the country's self-identity may be at stake. Indeed, the WSSD may offer an opportunity for Canada to enhance its reputation both in the international community and at home.

The Environmental Monitor 2002-2 survey was conducted by telephone with a representative sample of 1,502 adult Canadians between May 29th and June 10th, 2002. Results are considered accurate to within 2.5 percent, 19 times out of 20.

Canada Showing Strong Leadership on World Environmental Issues

1992–2002



The *Environmental Monitor* is available on a subscription basis to governments, companies, and NGOs. This authoritative quarterly research service has tracked Canadian public opinion on environment and natural resource issues since 1987.

For more information about this survey or
The Environmental Monitor, please contact:

Eric Whan
Director, Environmental Monitor