

Canadian Opinion on Climate Change Action In Advance of COP-6

This special report on Canadian public opinion on climate change action just prior to the COP-6 meeting in The Netherlands, is based on the results of the nation-wide Environmental Monitor survey of 1,532 randomly selected adult Canadians. The survey was conducted by telephone between October 16-29, 2000. Results are considered accurate within 2.5 percent, 19 times in 20.

Over the last year, Canadians have become significantly more supportive of action on climate change.

In response to a deliberately leading question emphasizing the economic costs and scientific uncertainty associated with climate change, an increasingly strong majority of Canadians (72%, up 12 points from 1999 and up five points from a 1998 survey, fielded closely after Kyoto) believe we should assume the worst and take major action now, even if there are significant costs. One in four Canadians (24%, down nine points from 1999) prefer doing nothing until more is known because of the great costs involved.

Majorities across all regions and demographic groups support major action on climate change. Relative to other Canadians, Quebecers are more likely to prefer proactive and precautionary measures on climate change, while residents of Saskatchewan and Alberta are less likely to share this view. In addition, Canadians with higher levels of education are more likely than those with less schooling to say major action should be taken on climate change now.

Canadians are looking for leadership on climate change

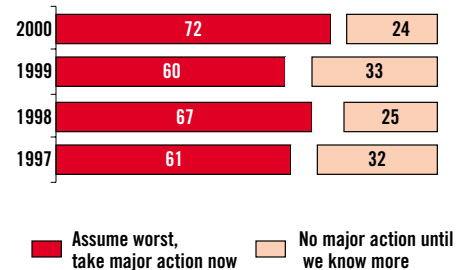
Climate change remains a difficult and complex issue for Canadians. While Canadians are convinced that climate change is happening and that human activities are significantly to blame, there is misunderstanding as to its causes and an inability to identify possible impacts.

Despite the complexity, Canadians increasingly support action on climate change. In addition, people are increasingly pointing to government rather than to individuals for leadership on environmental issues, suggesting that leadership on addressing climate change may be appreciated by the public.

However, without knowing what specific actions may be proposed, it is difficult to predict the extent to which the public will realistically

be willing to support government actions, or to act individually. This and other questions surrounding climate change will be explored in an in-depth study to be conducted by Environics International in early 2001.

Preferred Action on Climate Change, Given Scientific Uncertainty and Economic Costs 1997-2000



Preferred Action on Climate Change, Given Scientific Uncertainty and Economic Costs "Assume Worst, Take Major Action Now" by Region 1999-2000

