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British Columbians willing to pay more carbon tax: poll

VANCOUVER — The carbon tax is motivating behaviour changes in British Columbians and many are supportive of further rate increases if revenue is invested in ways that align with their priorities, a new opinion poll has found.

In an online survey of over 1000 British Columbians commissioned by the Pembina Institute and the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS), 79 per cent revealed they are concerned about global warming with 73 per cent agreeing that B.C. should do more to address its causes, without waiting for other provinces to take action.

A majority says they are willing to pay more carbon tax if revenue is directed toward health care and education (71%), projects that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution (67%), personal income tax cuts (62%) and protecting low-income British Columbians (58%). Conversely, over 70 per cent of British Columbians say they are opposed to increases if the revenue is used to reduce corporate taxes.

The poll also found that support for the carbon tax has slipped relative to 2011. While the most common perspective is still that the carbon tax's impacts are neither positive nor negative for the province (28%), the number of British Columbians that think the carbon tax has had negative impacts increased by 13 per cent and the number seeing positive impacts dropped by 12 per cent.

“British Columbians are receptive to the idea of paying more carbon tax if they agree with what the revenue is used for,” says Matt Horne, director of the Pembina Institute's climate change program. “However, we shouldn't overlook that many British Columbians express some dissatisfaction with the carbon tax in its current form. We need to understand those concerns and figure out how to address them.”

“Poll respondents are clearly willing to see the province continue to tax greenhouse gas pollution,” says PICS executive director, Tom Pedersen. “But should the tax increase, British Columbians would place a high priority on investing additional revenue in learning, health, and building a more sustainable society, rather than on further reducing personal and particularly corporate income taxes.”

The results of this opinion poll are based upon a representative sample of 1035 British Columbians. The study was hosted on the Angus Reid forum. The national research firm Strategic Communications Inc. conducted the online survey from 12 to 14 July 2012. The poll’s sample is reflective of British Columbia’s actual regional, gender, education and age composition relative to the 2006 Census. A probabilistic sample of this size would yield a margin of error of ± 3.4 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

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Background

For an analysis of the polling results and to see the raw data see “British Columbians’ perspectives on global warming and the carbon tax,” available at: <http://www.pembina.org/pub/2376>

Contacts

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