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BC Residents Open to Range of Options to Meet Electricity Demands

Renewables top list (82%), but majority also supportive of reviewing restrictions on new hydroelectric dams (64%) and nuclear power (58%)

Vancouver, BC, September 6, 2024 – A new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of the Energy Futures Institute shows a majority of BC residents in opposition to the implementation of new-car EV sales mandates. The poll also shows residents are open to a wide variety of options to help meet BC's increased electricity demand over the next few decades.

EV New Car Sales

BC residents are more likely to oppose (53%) than support (38%) the provincial new-car electric vehicle (EV) sales mandate, which will see a \$20,000 penalty applied to sales of non-EVs that don't meet the government's required ratio of EV sales starting in 2026. More than one-third (35%) of British Columbians say they "strongly oppose" the mandate, while only about one-in-ten (13%) "strongly support" the mandate.

Opposition to the new-car EV sales mandate is much higher among older residents (71% of 55+ years oppose) and those in the Southern Interior/North (70% oppose) of the province.

Support for Actions to Meet BC Electricity Demands

Survey respondents were shown the following information and then asked whether they would support or oppose a battery of actions to help meet BC's increased electricity demands over the next few decades.

BC Hydro reports that last year, they imported electricity from the United States and Alberta to meet 20%, or one-fifth, of British Columbia's electricity needs, and that electricity imports are continuing this year. BC Hydro also forecasts that electricity demand in British Columbia will increase by at least 15% between now and 2030, with the trend continuing in following decades. The new Site C dam which should be completed by next year is expected to increase electricity production by about 8%, which means additional new sources of electricity are required.

British Columbians are most supportive of expanding renewable sources of energy such as solar, wind and geothermal.

- Expanding solar and wind power projects, and developing geothermal energy sources (82% support vs. 11% oppose)





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Six-in-ten or more support reviewing restrictions on hydroelectric dams and delaying EV sales mandates

- Reviewing current restrictions on building new major hydroelectric dams in BC (64% support vs. 21% oppose)
- Delaying timelines mandating the sale of electric vehicles, such as 90% by 2030 (60% support vs. 28% oppose)

Nearly six-in-ten also support reviewing restrictions on nuclear power and expanding hydrogen fuel infrastructure.

- Reviewing current restrictions on the use of nuclear power in BC (58% support vs. 27% oppose)
- Expanding the distribution infrastructure for hydrogen fuel (57% support vs. 18% oppose)

A slight majority of BC residents support the following:

- Implementing other policies to reduce electricity usage, e.g. time of day pricing (higher/lower prices at peak/off-peak periods) or higher prices for using over certain threshold (52% support vs. 38% oppose)
- Delaying current timelines for greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, such as a 40% reduction by 2030 (51% support vs. 35% oppose)
- Reviewing current plans to phase out existing natural gas power generation on Vancouver Island and in northeast BC (50% support vs. 34% oppose)

Fewer than half of BC residents support saying 'no' to energy-heavy new industry and most oppose increasing prices or taxes to reduce demand.

- Saying 'no' to new investment by industries that require large amounts of electricity (e.g. mines, LNG facilities, AI/data centres, cryptocurrency operators) (45% support vs. 37% oppose)
- Increasing electricity prices or adding new taxes so as to reduce demand for electricity (23% support vs. 72% oppose)

Support for Energy Futures Institute Recommendations

Most British Columbians support each of five tested recommendations of the Energy Futures Institute to the BC government.

The most supported recommendations are to add reliability to the existing legislated energy objectives, to implement a real-time public dashboard showing BC's electricity production, use and imports/exports, and to mandate cost/benefit analyses for all proposed energy policies.

- Add reliability to the existing legislated energy objectives of affordability, rate stability, self-sufficiency and environmental sustainability to ensure reliability is not overlooked (77% support vs. 9% oppose)



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- Implement a real-time public dashboard showing BC's electricity production, use and imports/exports to promote greater transparency and awareness (77% support vs. 12% oppose)
- Mandate the provincial government undertake comprehensive cost/benefit analyses and economic impact assessments for all proposed energy policies, to help policy makers make decisions that consider both environmental and economic factors (75% support vs. 12% oppose)

A majority of BC residents also support recommendations to reassert provincial jurisdiction over energy policy and to support reconciliation efforts with First Nations.

- Reassert provincial government jurisdiction over energy policy to prevent individual municipalities from making energy decisions such as banning natural gas hookups which can lead to greater electricity use (66% support vs. 17% oppose)
- Support reconciliation by providing flexible options for First Nations to participate in projects related to BC's electricity supply and transmission infrastructure (60% support vs. 23% oppose)

About the Study

These are the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted August 13 to August 18, 2024, on behalf of the Energy Futures Initiative. For this survey, a sample of 801 adult British Columbians were surveyed online with sample sourced through the Ipsos panel. Data was weighted by BC region, age, gender and education, in accordance with Census proportions. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 4.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

Kyle Braid

Senior Vice President
Ipsos Public Affairs Canada
+1 604 788 2417
Kyle.Braid@ipsos.com





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