

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BC Chamber of Commerce Unveils Robust Poll Ahead of October Election: Strong Economy Essential to Fund Public Services

Vancouver, BC — August 23, 2024 — As British Columbia prepares for its provincial election this October, the BC Chamber of Commerce is shedding light on the economic and policy concerns that matter most to voters. A recent poll provides a comprehensive look into the electorate's sentiments on various issues, including business climate, natural resource management, public services and voting intentions – including variations at the regional level and among demographics.

“This poll shows the vast majority of British Columbian voters know that a strong economy and a healthy business environment are essential to funding the public services we all rely on,” said Fiona Famulak, President and CEO of the BC Chamber of Commerce. “The only way for the provincial government to build schools, hospitals and roads and hire people to deliver services is to ensure businesses, the backbone of our communities and our provincial economy, enjoy a healthy investment climate.”

Key findings from the survey include:

- **Direction of the Province:** Half of respondents believe the province is headed in the ‘wrong direction’, and fewer than four-in-ten believe the province is headed in the ‘right direction’.
- **Business Climate:** While more than 60 per cent of British Columbians believe a strong economy ensures the provincial government can make investments in public services – only four-in-ten believe the current provincial government recognizes the importance of incentivizing business investment.
- Only 14 per cent believe business opportunities have improved in the province in the last five years. And almost half believe businesses are moving to expand their operations elsewhere as a result of rapid regulatory change in BC.
- Seven in ten employers believe that the cost of doing business in BC is higher than in neighboring provinces.
- **Natural Resources:** Half of BC residents believe the province should expand its natural gas production, because natural gas produces fewer greenhouse gas emissions compared to other forms of energy production – while one-in-four believe natural gas production should be reduced.
- **Voter Intentions:** The BC NDP leads the BC Conservative Party by nine points among decided voters 44% to 35%. The BC United Party and the Green Party are statistically tied at 11% and 9% respectively.
- **Regional and Demographic Variations:** While support for the Conservatives has surged across the province overall, the increase is most profound in the North and Interior. Vancouver Island continues to be a stronghold for the NDP, and their lead holds in the Lower Mainland, Surrey and the Fraser Valley.

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Famulak said the BC Chamber of Commerce commissioned the poll to better understand British Columbians' perspectives on key economic issues in the lead up to October's provincial election. The

survey demonstrates that British Columbians clearly understand the link between a healthy economy and robust public services.

"Only 14% of respondents believe that the business climate in BC has improved over the last five years," said Famulak. "We need the next provincial government to focus on economic growth so that businesses prosper, British Columbians thrive and communities flourish."

Famulak also highlighted that businesses need regulatory certainty and consistency, without which we, as a province, risk scaring away investment and making it hard for businesses to plan for the future. The poll shows that 65% of employers believe that recent provincial regulatory changes are creating investment uncertainty and 64% are considering relocating their business out of BC due to the uncertainty.

"As voters consider their choices in the next election, it is imperative that the parties articulate how they will effectively deliver long-term economic growth and investment stability," said Famulak.

Link to survey results: [BC Chamber of Commerce Pre-Election Engagement Poll 1 Results](#)

About the BC Chamber of Commerce

The BC Chamber of Commerce is the largest and most broadly-based business organization in the province. Representing 100 local Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade and 36,000 businesses of every size and from every sector and region of the province, the BC Chamber of Commerce is uniquely positioned to "Know What's on BC's Mind."

Survey Methodology

Conducted from August 6-14, 2024, the online survey engaged more than 2,000 demographically representative British Columbians aged 18 and older. The survey sample size is the largest undertaken in this pre-election period. Respondents were selected through a double opt-in panel to ensure accurate representation across age, gender, and region. The survey, available in English, utilized quotas and post-survey weighting to align with the most recent census data.

The survey was conducted by Counsel Public Affairs by way of the Leger Opinion (LEO) Panel.

Margin of error is not applicable for online surveys, however, if the survey was a probability-based random sample of the same size, it would be considered accurate to +/- 2% nineteen times out of twenty.

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