



Government
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du Canada

Spring 2019 Focus Groups (First Cycle) Final Report

Prepared for the Privy Council Office of Canada

May 2019

Supplier name: Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc.

Contract Number: 35035-182754/001/CY

Contract Value: \$249,535.19 (including HST)

Award Date: 2019-03-20

Delivery Date: 2019-05-31

Registration Number: POR 139-18

For more information on this report, please contact the Privy Council Office at: publications@priv.gc.ca

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This public opinion research report presents the results of a series of focus groups conducted by Phoenix SPI on behalf of the Privy Council Office. The research study was conducted with Canadians aged 18 and older between April 7 and April 27, 2019. In total, 12 focus groups were conducted in six locations across the country: Prince Albert, St. John's, Sherbrooke, Sarnia, Edmonton and Burnaby.

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Catalogue number:

CP22-177/4-2019E-PDF

International Standard Book Number (ISBN):

978-0-660-31504-1

Related publications (registration number: POR 139-18):

Catalogue number CP22-177/4-2019F-PDF (Final report, French)
978-0-660-31505-8

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Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Groupes de discussion printemps 2019 – Premier cycle

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Executive Summary

The Communications and Consultations Secretariat of the Privy Council Office (PCO) provides advice and support to the Government of Canada, the Clerk of the Privy Council, as well as federal departments and agencies on matters relating to communications and consultations. One tool used by PCO in order to fulfil this mandate is public opinion research. Phoenix Strategic Perspectives (Phoenix SPI) was commissioned by PCO to conduct a series of focus groups to explore the views of Canadians on current events of relevance to the federal government.

1. Research Objectives and Purpose

The main objective of the focus groups was to explore the perceptions of Canadians on the state of current events, which included their opinions on the environment, pipelines, immigration, gun violence, and foreign interference in elections. This input was needed because complex issues are often difficult to communicate to the Canadian public in a manner that is easily and clearly understood. The target population for the focus groups was adult Canadians aged 18 and older. By carrying out this research, PCO was able to ensure a better understanding of the views and concerns of the public. This understanding will be used to develop effective communications strategies and products.

2. Methodology

Twelve focus groups were conducted with Canadians in the following locations: Prince Albert, St. John's, Sherbrooke, Sarnia, Edmonton, and Burnaby. The groups in Sherbrooke were conducted in French and the groups elsewhere in the country were conducted in English. In each location, two groups were conducted, one with Canadians who self-identified as 'financially secure', and the other with Canadians who self-identified as 'financially insecure'.

The following specifications applied to this research: eleven individuals were recruited by phone for each two-hour group; groups included a mix of participants by age, education, gender, income and employment situations, and; participants received an honorarium of \$100 in appreciation of their time. All groups were held in a facility that allowed observation of the sessions, either behind a one-way mirror, or via closed-circuit television in a room adjacent to the meeting room where the focus groups took place.

In total, 111 Canadians took part in this research:

Location	Language	Audience	Number of Participants	Date and Local Time
Prince Albert, SK	English	Secure	10	April 9; 5:30 pm
Prince Albert, SK	English	Insecure	11	April 9; 7:30 pm
St. John's, NL	English	Insecure	9	April 16; 5:30 pm
St. John's, NL	English	Secure	8	April 16; 7:30 pm
Sherbrooke, QC	French	Secure	8	April 17; 5:30 pm
Sherbrooke, QC	French	Insecure	10	April 17; 7:30 pm
Sarnia, ON	English	Insecure	9	April 23; 5:30 pm

Sarnia, ON	English	Secure	8	April 23; 7:30 pm
Edmonton, AB	English	Secure	8	April 25; 5:30 pm
Edmonton, AB	English	Insecure	10	April 25; 7:30 pm
Burnaby, BC	English	Secure	10	April 27; 10:00 am
Burnaby, BC	English	Insecure	10	April 27; 12:00 pm

All steps of the project complied with *The Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research*.

The investigators for this study were Philippe Azzie and Alethea Woods. Philippe moderated the groups in St. John's, Sherbrooke and Sarnia. Alethea moderated the groups in Prince Albert, Edmonton and Burnaby. Both moderators contributed to the final report.

3. Limitations and Use of the Research Results

This research was qualitative in nature, not quantitative. Qualitative research is designed to reveal a rich range of opinions and interpretations rather than to measure what percentage of the target population holds a given opinion. As such, the results provide an indication of participants' views about the issues explored, but they cannot be generalized to the full population of Canadians. Specifically, these results must not be used to estimate the numeric proportion or number of individuals in the population who hold a particular opinion because they are not statistically projectable.

4. Summary of Findings

Government of Canada News

Among things participants had seen, read, or heard about the Government of Canada recently, the one most often identified was the SNC-Lavalin affair, with some participants specifically referring to resignations from Cabinet. The 'carbon tax' (or some variation) was also mentioned in almost all locations. Other top-of-mind issues were identified by smaller numbers. These included pipelines, legalization of cannabis, tensions between China and Canada, the Phoenix payroll issue, Canada's garbage dispute with the Philippines, federal funding to Loblaws to upgrade its refrigerators, federal funding for media, the prime minister's travels to Tofino and India, Indigenous issues, a national Pharmacare program, housing for seniors, the federal budget, and the upcoming federal election (fall 2019).

Environment

The price on pollution and pipelines were top-of-mind when participants were asked what they recalled about the environment. Asked explicitly if they had heard about the Government of Canada's plan to put a price on pollution, most participants said they had. Things heard about the plan included it being described as 'a tax', that it is applied to the price of gasoline, that it will affect the cost of many things, that big businesses are exempted, that some provincial governments oppose it, that there is a 'rebate' associated with it, that it has become a political issue, and that there is a lack of clear communication about it.

Many participants were aware that revenues from the price on pollution are returned to individuals via an incentive, but fewer were knowledgeable about how the federal government's plan to put a price on pollution works. To date, the primary or only impact of the federal price on pollution felt by participants has been an increase in the price of gasoline. Looking ahead, however, participants expect to feel the impact in other areas, such as the cost of utilities (e.g., home heating) and any consumer goods transported over long distances.

Views on using a price on pollution as an approach to help reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change were mixed. Positive feelings included the impression that it is a good first step, a belief that the onus is on everyone to play a role in reducing pollution and that polluters have to pay a price for their actions, recognition that it is important to act now to save the environment, and a belief that it is an effective way to get people to reduce their personal carbon footprint. On the critical side, it was suggested that the average Canadian seems to be hit most by this approach, that it will not be effective if other countries do not do their part, and that this approach will increase the overall cost of living in a way that will affect people's ability to manage their finances.

Foreign interference in elections

The expression *foreign interference in elections* brought various things to participants' minds. Often the first reaction was to cite examples of the phenomenon, most often reports of Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Other reactions included references to 'China', 'social media/Facebook', 'cyber attacks', and 'fake news'. Just as often, participants offered descriptions or explanations of the phenomenon, usually variations on the theme of a foreign entity or country trying to disrupt or influence the outcome of elections in another country through illegal or unethical practices.

Participants tended to be divided about foreign interference in Canada's upcoming election. Reasons for concern included the precedent in the last U.S. presidential election, the prevalence of 'fake news', the apparent ease of conducting such interference, and foreign interests in the outcome (e.g., economic opportunities, access to Canada's resources), among others. Some did not provide a specific rationale, but simply felt that because they were hearing discussions about it, it must be an issue. Reasons for lack of concern were most often based on the impression that Canada is not a significant enough actor on the world stage to warrant such interference.

When it comes to Canada's ability to deal with such interference, some expressed confidence, some expressed doubt or concerns, and some said they did not know. Reasons for confidence included the impression that if it hasn't happened yet it must be because the government is vigilant, the impression that security networks have the expertise to deal with it, and the impression that few foreign actors would be interested in interfering in our elections. Reasons for lack of confidence or doubts included lack of faith in government in general, disputes between levels of government preventing a coordinated approach to the problem, Canada being susceptible to foreign interests for economic reasons, lack of dedicated resources, and difficulty detecting/controlling such interference.

There was virtually no awareness of anything the Government of Canada is doing to combat the possibility of foreign interference in Canadian elections and reaction was mixed when participants were informed of the government's plans to deal with this through a federal task force, though

the idea of a task force was seen as good in principle. Concerns or questions about this approach focused mainly on specific points (e.g., how members of the task force are chosen and how the task force will decide if and when an incident is 'important enough' to be disclosed).

Gun violence

At least a few participants in each group said they have heard something related to gun violence in Canada recently. Most often, participants recalled hearing about alleged increases in incidents of gun violence in the country, often Toronto, or recalled hearing about specific incidents (e.g., armed robberies) or increases in gun violence in their own communities.

Opinions differed as to whether gun laws need to be changed. Nearly all those who said gun laws need to be changed think they should be tightened. Reasons for thinking this were based on the impression that gun violence is on the rise, that it is too easy to get access to a gun, that there are too many handguns in circulation, and that no one 'needs' a handgun. Most participants of the opinion that no change in gun laws is needed suggested that the existing rules and regulations are strict enough and rigorously applied. While there were differences of opinion within each group regarding the primary source of guns used in violent crimes in Canada, most participants think they are mainly smuggled in from the U.S. (but also elsewhere).

Many participants said they would be in favour of the Government of Canada banning handguns. Only in Prince Albert and the 'financially secure' group in Sherbrooke did most participants oppose a general ban on handguns. Were the government of Canada to do this, nearly all participants think the ban should extend across the country rather than leave the decision up to individual cities and provinces. As well, most participants were of the opinion that people who currently own handguns legally should have them bought back by the government rather than to allow existing owners to keep their guns while allowing no one else to buy new ones. There was also near unanimity among participants that any ban on handguns should be extended to assault rifles, for reasons of uniformity as well as based on a belief that no one needs an assault rifle.

Canada's immigration system

Participants collectively identified a variety of things they had seen, read, or heard recently about immigration. One topic raised in most locations concerned refugees/migrants coming to Canada, but the specific issues related to this differed by region. For example, the focus in St. John's was on the intake of Syrian refugees and specifically the members of the Syrian refugee family who perished in a house fire in Halifax. Participants in Prince Albert, Sherbrooke and Sarnia were most likely to focus on issues involving asylum seekers, with participants routinely referring to migrants crossing the border irregularly into Canada.

Participants across all groups routinely identified the same or similar benefits and challenges of immigration to Canada. Perceived benefits included replenishing the population and the work force, contributing to economic growth and prosperity, expanding the tax base, fostering cultural diversity in the country, and bringing new/needed skills/knowledge to Canada, among others. Perceived challenges included the segregation of ethnic communities, a sense that some immigrants were unwilling to integrate, clashes of values and loss of Canada's cultural heritage, overtaxing of existing resources/social services, and the circulation of misinformation about immigrants, among others.

Asked to focus on their own communities and identify both the positive and negative effects of immigration, participants typically provided concrete examples of effects they associated with immigration in general. For example, positive effects (or contributions) included the availability of more diverse foods and the opening of new businesses in their community, and negative effects (or challenges) at the community level included rising housing/rental costs and limited capacity of social services and resources to support new immigrants in a community.

Energy vision

Participants were asked to provide feedback on three creative approaches or concepts designed to capture an energy vision for the country. Asked which concept explains the initiative the best, participants most often identified the concept that included clear panels overlaid across different images of Canada ('concept A'). This included half or more of the participants in most groups. This concept was also most likely to be identified as the approach whose pictures made participants feel hopeful/inspired about Canada's energy future. When it came to the concept that was most memorable and whose words resonated more, participants tended to be divided between concept A and the concept which included a sphere or dome-shape structure in the forefront and canoers on a lake in the background ('concept C'). Many suggested that the words from concept C be incorporated with the images from concept A. Overall, the concept featuring a dark coloured background with each image ('concept B') was the approach most likely to elicit critical or neutral reactions.

The contract value was \$249,535.19 (including HST).

Political Neutrality Certification

I hereby certify, as a Senior Officer of Phoenix Strategic Perspectives, that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Policy on Communications and Federal Identity of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not contain any reference to electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leader.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'AWoods'.

Alethea Woods, President
Phoenix Strategic Perspectives

Detailed Findings

1. Government of Canada News

Things seen, read or heard about the Government of Canada

Participants collectively identified a variety of things they had seen, read, or heard about the Government of Canada recently. The issue most commonly identified, and often the first issue mentioned, was the SNC-Lavalin affair, with some participants specifically referring to resignations from cabinet. In addition, participants in every location referred to the price on pollution, which they typically termed a “carbon tax”.

A host of other issues were identified by smaller numbers of participants. These included the following:

- pipelines,
- the legalization of cannabis,
- tension between China and Canada over the possible extradition of a Huawei executive,
- the Phoenix payroll issue,
- Canada’s garbage dispute with the Philippines,
- federal funding to Loblaws to upgrade its refrigerators,
- federal funding assistance to media,
- The prime minister’s travels to Tofino and India,
- Indigenous issues,
- a national Pharmacare program,
- housing for seniors,
- the federal budget, and
- the upcoming federal election (fall 2019).

Together with these common issues, a number of things were identified in specific locations only. These included migrants crossing the U.S. border into Canada irregularly (identified in Sherbrooke and Sarnia), Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications hearings about telecommunications sales practices (identified in Sherbrooke), the Atlantic Accord (identified in St. John’s), changes to the National Energy Board and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (mentioned in Edmonton), the housing crisis and foreign-buyers tax on real estate (mentioned in Burnaby), and the economic downturn and unemployment (identified in Prince Albert).

2. Local Issues (St. John’s)

Awareness of the Atlantic Accord

Nearly all participants in St. John’s had seen, read, or heard something about the Atlantic Accord. Things they had heard included that the accord had been recently renegotiated, that there were debates about the extent to which it was a good deal or not for the province that the revised deal will extend over a number of years, that the agreement will bring additional funds to the province, that it will allow for a budget surplus, that the province will receive 60 percent of the total amount negotiated by 2030.

Impressions of the Atlantic Accord

Participants' views on the Atlantic Accord agreement tended to be mixed. Many were either cautious in their assessments or unable to give an informed opinion. There was a relatively widespread impression that only time will tell if this is a good or bad deal because the accord extends over a relatively long period of time. In other words, given the extended timeframe, it is difficult to know for certain whether the Atlantic Accord agreement is a good deal for the province. Some participants also wondered about the timing of the agreement.

In considering whether the deal is good or bad for the province, participants brought up various factors. On the positive side, it was noted that there would be an influx of money for infrastructure projects in the province, and that anything that generates revenue for the province is good because of the current high provincial debt. There was also hope that some of the revenue would be used by the provincial government to help lower the cost of living in the province.

On the critical side, some commented that \$2.5 billion dollars over a period of 38 years, may not be as beneficial to the province as the large dollar value seems to imply. It was also suggested that the amounts of money the province receives are fixed, so that if the price of petroleum increases, the province receives no additional benefits. It was also suggested that the province has a history of 'short-sightedness' or getting involved in deals that look good over the short term, but that are not in the long-term interest of the province (e.g., some referenced Quebec's energy arrangements with the federal government, which they felt were more lucrative than any federal/provincial agreements Newfoundland and Labrador has). Finally, a few questioned whether it made sense to encourage petroleum dependency in a world moving to alternative sources of energy.

Awareness of action(s) taken by the federal government related to fishing industry

There was relatively limited awareness among participants in St. John's about any action taken by the federal government in the province related to the fisheries. The only actions identified by participants were that quotas on shrimp and crab had been lowered and that more processing of fish is now taking place in the province.

Impressions of biggest challenge facing the fishing industry in Newfoundland

Participants in St. John's identified a few definite challenges facing the fishing industry in the province. Key challenges concerned the sustainability of the industry, with a focus on overfishing (particularly foreign overfishing), and climate change and its effects on currents and water temperature. Other perceived challenges included an apparent lack of local control over the industry (e.g., a perception that policies designed by the federal government do not consider the expertise of Newfoundland fishers), fish processing plants moving elsewhere/out of province, farmed fishing (described as too enclosed and susceptible to breeding of bacteria), and the need for more collaboration between fishers in terms of monitoring landings.

Awareness of electricity rate mitigation in Newfoundland

Most participants in St. John's had seen, read, or heard something about electricity rate mitigation in the province, particularly those in the 'financially secure' group. The thing most

frequently identified was that electricity rates would go up and that there was a plan to stabilize rate increases at 13.5 percent. Other things they were aware of included the Newfoundland Power board agreeing to a rate increase, federal/provincial meetings about this issue, and a federal loan guarantee to mitigate the impact of electricity costs. Some suggested that the rate increase is linked to the cost of the Muskrat Falls Generating project—that is, the cost of that hydroelectric project factors into electricity rates in the province.

Impressions of what federal government should do regarding rate mitigation

A variety of suggestions were offered by participants when it came to what the federal government could do regarding electricity rate mitigation. Suggestions included allowing a second power company to operate in the province, providing federal subsidies to help mitigate rate increases, removing the federal portion of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST), and focusing more on long-term solutions to the economic prosperity of the province as opposed to short-term measures.

Awareness of changes to NEB or CEEA

There is virtually no awareness of changes to the National Energy Board (NEB) or the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA), except for one individual who was aware of government legislation, but did not know any details.

Preferred approach to regulations of infrastructure and energy projects

Participants were informed that the Government of Canada has proposed new legislation to overhaul the National Energy Board and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency in order to modernize regulations around major infrastructure and energy projects in Canada. Regarding this, participants were then asked if the new regulations should focus on which of the following: 1) clarifying rules so that the review process can be conducted faster on important projects that affect the economy; or 2) making sure local environments are protected and Indigenous communities are consulted before projects go ahead.

Participants routinely reacted to this by suggesting that both should be possible and that it should not be necessary to choose between one or the other option as a priority. A few leaned more towards environmental protection as a priority, suggesting that the process in the case of the Muskrat Falls project leaned too far towards streamlining the process. It was also noted that, putting off environmental considerations until later ultimately can mean that it may be too late to deal with these issues effectively when they are finally considered.

3. Local Issues (Burnaby)

Gasoline prices

Everyone in Burnaby had seen, read, or heard something about gasoline prices. In terms of what they recalled, the pump price per litre was mentioned by virtually all participants, with some adding that the price of gasoline in the community has reached a record high. When asked why they thought gasoline prices have been increasing, participants pointed to the following:

- *Limited supply* related to the transition from winter to summer gasoline mixtures and the operation of fewer refineries in Alberta, with the effect being that more refined oil is being imported from the U.S.
- *Increasing demand* for gas resulting from the end of winter and more people taking road trips or vacations in Spring/Summer.
- *Corporate greed*. Some participants attributed the increase at the gas pumps to simple corporate greed. These individuals pointed to the seemingly arbitrary pricing of oil and how its pricing is not a reflection of the actual cost of production, but rather of what the market is willing to pay.
- *A federal 'carbon tax'*. Some believed that the federal pricing pollution system applies in British Columbia (and not only to provinces that do not have their own system), and is thus contributing to higher prices at the gas pumps in the lower mainland of British Columbia.
- *TransLink tax and the provincial carbon tax*. There was mention that these taxes are contributing to higher gas prices in British Columbia.

Most participants think there is something that the Government of Canada could do about the increasing gas prices in their community. Few felt addressing this is outside the control of the federal government.

4. Environment

Things seen, read or heard lately about the environment

The price on pollution (which most referred to as a 'carbon tax'), and pipelines (notably in Edmonton) were top-of-mind when participants were asked what they recalled about the environment.¹ Other things mentioned included a federal subsidy to Loblaws to purchase energy efficient refrigerators, climate change and the impact on weather (particularly in Edmonton), and wildfires (mentioned in Prince Albert). In Edmonton, participants also mentioned the potential changes to Alberta's approach to the environment. Some participants referred to viewpoints they recalled hearing, such as calls to 'eliminate' the oil sands, that Canada is still a heavy polluter (despite efforts to reduce GHG emissions), and that Canada's forest management program is not as carbon neutral as might be thought.

Asked explicitly if they had heard about the Government of Canada's plan to put a price on pollution, nearly all participants in Sarnia, Prince Albert, and Edmonton said they had. Participants had heard a variety of things about the approach. This included:

- hearing it described as 'a tax on a tax';
- that it is applied to the price of gasoline;
- that it will affect the cost of many things;
- that big businesses are exempted;
- that some provincial governments oppose it and are taking the Government of Canada to court;

¹ These questions were asked only of participants in Sarnia, Prince Albert and Edmonton.

- that the money collected will be returned to individuals, which some referred to as a 'rebate';
- that it will come into effect in provinces that do not have their own price on pollution; and
- that there is a lack of clear communication about it.

While participants recalled a wide range of things about the federal government's plan, each of these was mentioned by small numbers. In addition, a few noted that there is a lot of conflicting information based on a sense that descriptions of the plan vary, according to whether a source opposes or supports it.

Awareness that revenues from the price on pollution returned to individuals

Many participants were aware that revenues from the price on pollution are returned to individuals via an incentive, though knowledge of this was lower in Sarnia, with some not certain whether recent news they had heard about an incentive related to the price on pollution. In contrast, most participants in Prince Albert, indeed more than half in each group, said they were aware that the money collected will be returned to them. They noted that this money will only be returned after they file their tax returns, meaning that people will have to absorb higher prices on certain consumer goods upfront, (and they might not be in a financial position to do so).

Understanding of federal plan to put a price on pollution

Overall, participants in Prince Albert and Sarnia expressed limited understanding about how the federal government plan to put a price on pollution works. This was underscored by difficulty explaining the plan (either in general or parts of it), but also by difficulty identifying parts they do not understand (e.g., they don't know what they don't know). In Sarnia, some participants reiterated their impression that there has been a lack of clear communication about the plan, adding that what they heard tends to be sound bites from both proponents and opponents. Several participants in Prince Albert explained that it would be good to know how the revenues raised will be used by the Government of Canada to address climate change and/or GHG emissions.

Participants who tried to explain the plan, or parts of it, indicated that it is designed to help the environment, that costs in general will rise as a result of it, that the plan will increase the cost of gasoline in particular, that the plan pushes Canadians to find ways to conserve, and that the plan includes an incentive. The increased cost of gasoline and the incentive were the only concrete or specific elements of the plan identified by participants. Beyond that, there were general impressions that the plan will adversely affect small businesses and individuals more than big emitters/polluters (though it was also noted that part of the plan is to penalize big emitters of GHGs).

The lack of understanding of the plan was further reflected by the following questions posed by participants: how does the plan work/how is the plan designed to help?, are the taxes that are part of the plan applied to corporations?, why is there a 'rebate', what is being done with the revenues raised?, how will the system benefit the environment?, and what does the price apply to besides gasoline?

Impact of the federal price on pollution on costs of living

To date, the only impact of the federal price on pollution felt by participants in Prince Albert and Sarnia has been on the price of gasoline. Looking ahead, however, participants expect to feel the impact in other areas:

- the cost of travel (e.g., plane fares);
- the cost of utilities (e.g., home heating);
- the cost of public transit; and
- the cost of food and any other consumer goods transported over long distances.

In short, there was a general sense that there would be a ‘snowball’ or ‘trickledown’ effect that would reverberate widely. In both Sarnia and Prince Albert, it was also suggested that there could be an impact on employment, specifically potential job losses due to large companies not coming to their city, or smaller businesses having to close their operation due to increased costs resulting from the price on pollution.

Impact of the federal price on pollution on gasoline

Virtually all participants in Prince Albert and Sarnia felt that the price of gasoline has increased as a result of the price on pollution. That said, participants routinely added that the price on pollution is probably only one factor at play because fluctuating gas prices were a reality even before the price on pollution. For example, in Sarnia, it was suggested that reductions in oil production in Alberta may also explain rises in the price of gasoline.

Asked if they have adjusted their driving habits as a result of higher gas prices, at least a few participants in both cities said yes. In Prince Albert, this included using a lower grade of gasoline to save money, driving their more fuel-efficient vehicle (if a two-car household), and being more strategic in planning errands (i.e., getting groceries while out for a different purpose). The exception was the ‘financially insecure’ group in Sarnia, where none indicated having adjusted their driving habits to date.

In both Prince Albert and Sarnia, at least a few participants who have not yet adjusted their driving think they will do so in the future as a result of the price on pollution. That said, again in both cities, a few participants said they will not adjust their driving habits, explaining that they have no option but to drive as much as they do (i.e., it is a matter of necessity based on the type of work they do or they have limited, or no, access to public transportation).

Awareness of the Climate Action Incentive

While most participants in Prince Albert and Sarnia said they had heard that they would receive the Climate Action Incentive beginning this year, some had not, and several were unsure if they had received the incentive. Among those participants who had filed their taxes, at least a few in each group said they noticed that they could claim the incentive and noted the amount they would receive. Others said they did not notice this because someone else does their taxes for them (i.e., an accountant), and/or that they were informed by their accountant that the claim was filed but not informed of the amount. In Prince Albert, a few participants questioned how the amount of the incentive amount was determined and where the money for this year’s incentives came from given that the price on pollution only came into effect on April 1, 2019.

Plans to use the Climate Action Incentive

When participants who claimed the Climate Action Incentive were asked how they plan to use it (or had used it) some noted that they had not thought of this, as they had not noted the amount on their tax return, or felt the amount was fairly insignificant. After a bit of reflection, they said they would put it towards typical monthly expenses such as gas, food and clothing, or bills, or would deposit it in a savings account. Just a few individuals mentioned using the incentive for something very specific, such as paying off a student loan or making an additional car payment.

Perceptions of pricing pollution

Participants were somewhat ambivalent about the idea of using a price on pollution as an approach to help reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change. On the positive side, some noted that it is a good first step, that the onus is on everyone to play a role in reducing pollution, including having to pay a price for any environmentally harmful actions, and that it is important to act now to save the environment.

On the other hand, it was suggested that the average Canadian seems to be hit most by this approach, especially lower-income individuals who would be disproportionately affected by an anticipated overall increase in the cost of living. A few also felt that pricing pollution was a punitive approach, and thought that some type of incentive-based system would be more effective in encouraging behaviours that limit carbon emissions. In addition, some participants felt that this approach will only be effective if other countries partake similar actions. There was also an apprehension among some that the revenues raised would not be used effectively by the government. These participants suggested revenues should be used for municipal infrastructure improvement, notably environmentally-friendly projects. Finally, in Prince Albert, a few expressed the view that Canada's carbon emissions are relatively low compared to other countries.

Some in the Sarnia 'financially secure' group expressed openness to this approach in principle, but noted they needed more objective information.

Impact of the federal carbon pollution pricing system

Participants in Edmonton were asked what impact they thought the federal pollution pricing system will have on the environment, on the economy, and on them personally. Starting with the environment, many participants said they believe the approach will have no impact, based on their perception that the system is geared towards driving consumer behavioural change, rather than more significant changes at the corporate level. Additionally, they felt a more effective strategy would be to invest in renewable infrastructure as alternatives to Canada's carbon-based infrastructure. That said, some participants felt the proposed system had promise, if its implementation is done effectively and/or if the revenues collected are directed toward renewable or sustainable programs.

Views on economic impacts tended to be mixed, with some participants noting the potential for job losses as well as increased costs of consumer goods. These participants believed that companies will relocate their operations or reduce their workforce to avoid or offset paying a price on pollution. Others were more optimistic, suggesting that the pollution pricing system offers the opportunity for economic growth in new sectors. These participants felt that corporations may be motivated to explore energy efficient alternatives in order to reduce what

they pay. However, related to the latter point, a few believed that using pollution pricing revenues to invest in environmentally-friendly initiatives (e.g. research and development; green energy projects, green-based infrastructure), would be a more effective approach.

When asked what impact this approach will have on them personally, participants, on balance, felt that it would have a limited impact. While it will invariably affect their household spending, the view held by most was that the impact would not be significant enough for them to take notice. At this time, several participants offered that they did not have enough information about the price on pollution to really understand to what extent, if at all, it will affect them personally.

5. Pipelines

Awareness of the Trans Mountain Expansion project

Asked whether they had heard about the Trans Mountain Expansion (TMX) project, all participants in Edmonton and Burnaby acknowledged that they had. While knowledge of the pipeline project was somewhat higher in Edmonton, participants in both locations were readily able to describe the project and various issues associated with it. Things routinely mentioned about the project included that the project will ‘twin’ an existing pipeline to increase capacity to transport oil, that the pipeline will transport oil from Alberta to British Columbia for export to international markets, and that there is a virtual ‘stalemate’ between British Columbia and Alberta, with each on separate sides of the issue.

Other things mentioned by participants included that British Columbia is not cooperating with either Alberta or the federal government on this project (mentioned in Edmonton), that the lack of movement on the project is holding up potential investments in Alberta (mentioned in Edmonton), that the project will increase oil tanker traffic in Vancouver and presents environmental risks (Burnaby), that the TMX pipeline has been bought by the Government of Canada, that concerns about the pipeline have been expressed by Indigenous communities, that there has been insufficient consultation by the federal government with Indigenous communities, that the project is now before the courts, and that there have been ongoing discussions with Indigenous groups in British Columbia.

Ownership of TMX

Most participants in Burnaby and Edmonton were aware the Government of Canada currently owns the TMX. When asked why the federal government purchased the TMX, many participants said that it was necessary for the government to do so. Specifically, they explained that the delays surrounding the approval of the project caused Kinder Morgan to decide not to proceed, leaving the Government of Canada no choice but to purchase the pipeline to ensure project completion. Among participants in Edmonton, there was a near consensus that this was an appropriate decision on the part of the federal government.

Views on this matter were split in Burnaby, however. Participants who self-described as ‘financially secure’ were opposed to the Government of Canada’s purchase of the TMX, while those who self-described as ‘financially insecure’ were generally in favour of the decision to purchase the pipeline. Those who opposed the decision pointed to various reasons to explain why, including the following perceptions: that the Government of Canada does not have the

expertise needed to own and operate a pipeline, that this decision served to further divide/polarize the country over the issue, that it was a lot of money to spend and perhaps not worth the price paid, and that the risks associated with the TMX have now been shifted from a private company to the Government of Canada. Those who favoured the purchase pointed to perceived benefits of the TMX: less risk of spills compared to other ways to transport oil, and the TMX will stimulate the economy by creating jobs and getting Canadian oil to international markets.

Status of TMX

There was widespread awareness that the TMX project is on hold, particularly in Edmonton, although fewer participants had heard of the court ruling requiring more consultation. Awareness of the Government of Canada's deadline of June 18th, 2019, to decide on whether or not to approve the TMX expansion was more limited, especially in Burnaby and in the 'financially secure' Edmonton group.

Views of TMX

On balance, most participants would like to see the TMX expansion go ahead, although some noted their support was conditional on appropriate safeguards being in place to protect the environment, or noted a preference for oil to be refined in Canada or more focus on renewable energy sources. Reasons offered to explain why they want the TMX expansion to go ahead included: for the economic impact (it will be good for Canada's economy), because oil/crude produced in Canada is cleaner than what is produced in other regions of the world, to limit Canada's reliance on oil from countries that have questionable environmental and human rights records, and because pipelines are a safer way to transport oil compared to other methods. While virtually everyone expects the TMX expansion project will go ahead, there was no strong sense of when this will happen, with some noting the upcoming federal election and/or actions taken by provincial governments could impact timelines

Canada's energy and environment strategy

Participants were first read, and then asked to comment on, the following:

The Government of Canada's strategy for energy and the environment includes approval of some pipelines (such as TMX), a national price on carbon pollution, and improved protection for our oceans. Some have argued this strategy only works if all provinces are on board for all aspects of it – so even if the government of British Columbia doesn't want a pipeline approved or the government of Alberta doesn't want to put a price on carbon pollution, they need to be on board so that the entire strategy works.

Most participants agreed that Canada's energy and the environment strategy will only work if all provinces are on board, although some questioned whether this is possible (or realistic) as an objective. However, they felt that whether or not the Government of Alberta has a price on pollution is a completely separate issue and should not factor into any decisions related to TMX project approval.

6. Foreign interference in elections

Perceived meaning of the expression *foreign interference in elections*

The expression ‘foreign interference in elections’ brought various things to participants’ minds. Often the first reaction was to cite examples or instances, with the most frequent one being reports of Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Other immediate reactions included references to China, the Russian president, the U.S. president, social media (notably Facebook), cyber attacks, ‘global elites’, and ‘fake news’ as well as ‘internet propaganda’.

Just as often, participants offered descriptions or explanations of the phenomenon. Usually this involved variations on the theme of a foreign entity or country actively trying to disrupt or influence the outcome of elections in another country through illegal or unethical practices. Examples of such practices included secret financial contributions/support to a particular party or candidate, disseminating misleading or false information (‘fake news’), and trying to influence what information is available or revealed to voters through some form of manipulation. For a few, such practices also included trying to falsify election results and/or voter fraud.

Some did not directly or explicitly associate foreign interference with illegal practices, emphasizing instead entities in other countries commenting critically on Canadian politics and leaders (e.g., criticizing the prime minister), trying to influence opinion, or having a vested interest in seeing a particular candidate or party win an election in another country.

In Sarnia, foreign interference was seen by a few participants as referring to non-Canadian citizens in Canada, or Canadian expatriates voting in elections.

Things seen, read, or heard about foreign interference in elections

Examples of what participants have heard, read, or seen recently about foreign interference ranged rather broadly, and included:

- references to the 2016 US presidential election;
- the U.S. Report on the Investigation into Russian Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election;
- proposals to regulate social media through legislation;
- the federal government being on the lookout for interference in the upcoming election;
- the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) trying to monitor foreign interference;
- the founder of Wikileaks being arrested;
- reports of foreign interference in Brexit in negotiations between the United Kingdom and the European Union;
- various events related to Facebook (e.g. breaking Canadian privacy laws; interviews with its CEO)
- ‘invisible’ actors helping the president of Algeria stay in power;
- Canada and other countries rejecting the results of the Venezuelan election;
- the arrest of a Huawei executive; and
- Influential foreign individuals trying to influence the Canadian prime minister

A few participants did not provide specific examples of foreign interference in elections, but simply voiced general concerns or apprehensions about it.

Some participants said they have heard nothing about this recently.

Concern about foreign interference in Canada's upcoming federal election

Participants tended to be divided when asked if they are concerned about foreign interference in Canada's upcoming election. While many acknowledged being at least a little concerned, an almost equal proportion expressed little or no concern at all. In St. John's, Prince Albert, Sherbrooke, and Sarnia, it was the participants who self-described as 'financially secure' who had little or no concern about foreign interference, while a majority who self-described as 'financially insecure' expressed concern about this.

A range of reasons were provided to explain concern about this, none of which dominated the discussion. They included the following:

- the issue is being talked about; therefore, it must be a problem;
- the precedent of foreign interference in the last U.S. presidential election;
- the prevalence of 'fake news';
- the apparent ease of conducting such interference;
- the impression that other countries/actors have a vested interest in which party wins the election (e.g., economic opportunities, trade deals);
- vested interests in our natural resources (e.g., water, forests);
- the possibility that interference could happen without our knowing about it;
- Russia becoming more aggressive/ interventionist on the world stage; and
- concerns that foreign actors are trying to influence the Prime Minister.

Among a few participants in Sarnia part of the concern was associated with a belief that non-citizens and/or expatriate Canadians are able to vote in Canadian elections (regardless of how long it had been since this latter segment resided in Canada).

Reasons for lack of concern were most often based on the impression that Canada is not a significant enough actor on the world stage to warrant such interference. Other reasons included lack of evidence that it is an issue/problem, confidence in the ability of people to discern false information, and the fact that our system of government does not allow for the direct election of the executive branch, which they felt prevented direct foreign influence.

A few participants noted they may simply have a false sense of security.

Views on Canada's ability to deal with foreign interference in elections

Participants expressed different views when asked how confident they were about Canada's ability to deal with foreign interference in elections. Reasons for being confident included the impression that if it hasn't happened here yet it must be because the government is vigilant about it, the impression that Canada's security and intelligence community has the expertise to deal with it, and the impression that any threats would be minor because Canada has such limited influence on the world stage that few foreign actors would be interested in interfering in our elections.

Reasons for not being confident or having doubts included lack of faith in government in general (including the federal government's ability to deal with any "foreign bullying"), a sense that different levels of government are incapable of developing a coordinated approach to the problem, foreign countries wanting to interfere for economic reasons, , lack of dedicated resources, countries retaliating against Canada due to bilateral disputes, the impression that it is very difficult to detect and control such interference, and the fact that social media is so pervasive.

Some said they simply do not know how confident they are because they have no way to gauge the threat or Canada's ability to deal with it.

GC efforts to combat foreign interference in elections

There is virtually no awareness of anything the Government of Canada is currently doing to combat the possibility of foreign interference in Canadian elections. Indeed, only a few individuals had heard (or thought they had heard) about the formation of a committee or task force to look into this issue.

GC approach to deal with foreign interference in elections

After being asked if they knew about of anything the Government of Canada is currently doing to combat the possibility of foreign interference in Canadian elections, participants were told the following and asked for their reaction:

The Government of Canada has created a federal task force made up of national security and intelligence organizations, who will watch for foreign interference in the 2019 federal election. Under a "critical election incident public protocol," five senior public servants will use information from the task force to decide when an incident is serious enough to warrant going public during a campaign. Only incidents that harm Canada's ability to hold a free and fair election will be publicly disclosed. Another key part of the government's approach will support Canadians in developing skills to help them better understand and identify fraud, misleading information, and manipulation online.

Reaction to this approach was generally mixed. The idea of a task force was seen as good in principle, eliciting general support and positive reactions. This included the view that the approach seems proactive, that it is important to take precautionary measures, and that it is necessary to deal with manipulation of information. Many also reacted positively to efforts to support Canadians online, to help them identify fraud, misleading information, and manipulation online. These participants observed, for example, that awareness building and outreach is important.

Questions about this approach focused mainly on specific points and not on the idea itself. These included:

- How will the task force decide if and when an incident is 'important enough' to be disclosed? Related to this, some wanted to know why the task force does not simply report every incident of interference.
- Who are the members of the task force and what is their background? (e.g., do they have any foreign connections or vested interests?).
- What will be the sources of information (e.g., RCMP, CSIS)?
- Are five members sufficient to effectively deal with this issue?

- What can the task force actually do if it detects foreign interference?
- How much will this cost?
- What happens if task force members disagree about the importance of an incident?
- Is this just a precautionary measure or do they fear an attack? (i.e., why is this being contemplated now?).
- Will incidents of domestic interference be investigated as well?

In addition to questions about the approach, two concerns were raised by some participants: the perception that government committees tend to be ineffective and the apprehension that members of the task force might have their own political biases.

7. Gun violence

Awareness about gun violence in Canada

At least a few participants in each group said they have heard something related to gun violence in Canada recently. Most often, participants recalled hearing about alleged increases in incidents of gun violence in the country, often Toronto, or recalled hearing about specific incidents (e.g., armed robberies) or increases in gun violence in their own communities. Other things participants recalled, or think they remembered hearing about, included efforts to ban handguns altogether, news reports about illegal guns entering Canada, increasing concern over guns in high schools, increased incidents of white supremacy acts of violence involving guns, and a proposal to allow automatic weapons in Canada. While not related specifically to gun violence, a few participants in Sherbrooke recalled hearing about the province of Quebec's fight to gain access to data about Quebec gun owners in the national gun registry.

Opinions on whether gun laws need to be changed

There were differences of opinion as to whether or not gun laws need to be changed, though on balance, more participants reported that gun control laws in Canada do not need to be changed.

Nearly all those who think gun laws need to be changed felt that these laws should be tightened in one way or another. This usually involved conducting more detailed background checks and screening of prospective gun owners (including psychological profiles), restricting the sale of guns to young people, and banning or restricting certain firearms, such as handguns. Participants' reasons for thinking gun laws need to be tightened were based on various impressions. This included the view that gun violence is on the rise (among youth in particular), that it is too easy to get access to a gun in Canada, that there are too many handguns in circulation, and that no one 'needs' a gun, especially a handgun. A few who said that there are too many handguns in circulation, or believe that possession of guns is on the rise, felt that this is a sign that licensing laws are too lax/not restrictive enough.

Most participants of the opinion that no change in gun laws is needed suggested that the rules and regulations regarding possession of guns are strict enough and rigorously applied (e.g., rules regarding prohibited and restricted weapons, rules regarding round capacity, background checks) or that changes to gun laws will not address the root cause of violent crimes in Canada. These participants felt that more social interventions are needed to address the factors that can lead to gun violence. Some others do not believe there is a gun problem that would warrant changing the

laws or do not see it as a 'national' problem (e.g., if there is a problem it is regional). Finally, those who do not think gun laws need to be changed suggested that gun violence is committed primarily as a result of stolen guns, so restricting their legal possession will not solve the problem of gun violence in Canada.

Sources of guns used in violent crimes

While there were differences of opinion within each group regarding the primary source of guns used in violent crimes in Canada, most participants think they are mainly smuggled from the U.S. (but also elsewhere), with participants in Burnaby, Sherbrooke and Sarnia most likely to believe this. Reasons for thinking this included media reports, the sheer number of guns in the U.S. (i.e., their availability), the fact that guns are more easily available in the U.S. and much more severely restricted in Canada (hence harder to get here legally), the proximity of the U.S. border which makes smuggling easier, and the belief in an extensive black market in weapons.

Participants who believe that the main source of guns used in shootings in Canada are stolen from legal gun owners referred to anecdotal evidence, the impression that using a stolen gun to commit a crime makes the crime less easy to trace (e.g., if someone purchased a gun and used it to commit a crime it would be easier to prove), news stories, the number of break and enter crimes involving stolen guns, the use of guns in gang violence (i.e., gang members won't or can't purchase guns legally), and the impression that it makes no sense to purchase a gun legally if one intends to commit a crime.

Participants who believe that the most guns used in shootings in Canada are purchased legally then used in a crime pointed to the frequency of crimes of passion, the use of guns in acts of domestic violence, and the news stories/statistics they have seen on this issue.

Finally, some participants think that guns used in shootings in Canada probably come from a mix of sources (i.e., they believe there is probably no single main source).

Views on banning guns

Many participants said they would be in favour of the Government of Canada banning handguns. To explain their position, participants routinely said that there is no need for civilians to possess these. Only in Prince Albert and the 'financially secure' group in Sherbrooke did most participants oppose a general ban on handguns. The main reason given to explain their opposition was the impression that a ban would not change anything in terms of handgun violence since most handgun owners are law-abiding citizens. Other reasons for opposing such a ban included the impressions that it would establish a precedent allowing the government to ban other weapons (i.e., hunting rifles), that regulations on handguns are restrictive enough, that the 'handgun problem' in Canada is not severe enough to warrant a ban, and that a ban would do nothing to address the root cause of gun violence.

If the Government of Canada did ban handguns, nearly all participants thought it would make more sense to ban handguns across the country rather than leave the decision up to individual cities and provinces. In explaining why, participants suggested that not introducing a uniform law across the country would create a patchwork of laws that would limit the effectiveness of the ban (e.g., if someone cannot purchase a handgun in their community they will simply purchase one in the nearest community that has not banned handguns).

As well, if the Government of Canada did ban handguns, most participants were of the opinion that people who currently own handguns legally should have them bought back by the government rather than allowing existing owners to keep their guns while completely banning the purchase of new guns. Other participants felt that both options should be available to gun owners.

Near unanimous support for extending handgun ban to assault rifles

There was near unanimity among participants that any ban on handguns should also be extended to assault rifles. Underscoring this view was the belief that handguns and assault rifles should be treated the same, as well as the assumption that no one needs an assault rifle. Some participants were unclear as to what constitutes an assault rifle (e.g., is it any automatic weapon?) and some had assumed that a ban on assault rifles was already in place in Canada.

8. Canada's immigration system

Participants collectively identified a variety of things they had seen, read, or heard recently about immigration.² One topic raised in most locations was the issue of refugees/migrants coming to Canada, but the specific issues related to this differed by region. For example, the focus in St. John's was on the intake of Syrian refugees and specifically the members of the Syrian refugee family who perished in a house fire in Halifax. In St. John's, there was also a general reference to people coming to Canada claiming refugee status, and an increase in hate speech directed at immigrants and refugees.

Participants in Prince Albert, Sherbrooke and Sarnia were most likely to focus on issues involving asylum seekers, with participants routinely referring to migrants crossing the border irregularly into Canada.

Other issues related to refugees/migrants identified in Sarnia and Prince Albert included reports of a backlash against the federal government based on a sense that newcomers were receiving significant federal financial supports and benefits (some believed newcomers had access to more benefits than those already living here), costs associated with processing asylum seekers (in Sarnia, this was identified as \$400 million), church sponsorship of refugees, sponsorship of Syrian refugees, and reports that Canada wanted to resettle up to one million Syrian refugees. In Sarnia it was also noted that there is a lot of false information about immigration and refugees (i.e., fear mongering), as well as bullying of refugees.

In Sherbrooke, additional news related to refugees/migrants included reports of the provincial government dismissing a number of refugee claims because of delays processing them, Mexican migrants trying to get into Canada, 'birth tourism', and the arrival in Canada of a woman from Saudi Arabia who had used social media to amplify her calls for a safe haven. The Quebec government's plan to reduce the number of immigrants to the province this year to 40,000 was also mentioned by participants in Sherbrooke.

² These questions were asked only of participants in Sarnia, Prince Albert, St. John's and Sherbrooke.

Assessments of Canada's immigration system

Participants were typically reluctant to, or felt themselves unable to, comment on the viability of Canada's immigration system in general. Instead, they tended to focus on the importance of immigration to Canada (as opposed to the 'system' itself, or aspects/elements they think work well and ones they thought needed improvement).

Statements of a positive nature or things they think work well included the impression that Canada is a welcoming country, that multiculturalism works well in Canada, that immigration is important because of declining birth rates, that integration takes place relatively effectively in Canada, that the process is effective in terms of screening/vetting, and that the rules of the system are generally followed.

On the critical side, or in terms of improvements to Canada's immigration system, a range of things were noted. These included:

- Canada needs to prepare for bigger waves of immigration in a world where there seems to be vast movements of populations.
- There is a need to speed up/streamline processing of immigrants to address the backlog.
- Canada needs to do a better job in terms of recognizing foreign credentials.
- Integration must be facilitated through more resources/services.
- More emphasis needs to be placed on new immigrants integrating into Canadian culture and accepting basic values of a liberal democracy.
- Canada needs to be more vigilant in terms of vetting asylum claims/controlling irregular migration.
- While Canada needs immigrants, Canada needs to ensure that programs and services available to current citizens/permanent residents are not adversely affected by the need to accommodate newcomers.
- Canada needs to take measures to redirect incoming immigrants to smaller centres. There was a sense that newcomers typically gravitate to specific urban neighbourhoods where immigrants from their community have already settled making integration into the larger Canadian society more difficult.
- Crossing the U.S./Canada border irregularly needs to be stopped..

In the course of this discussion of Canada's immigration system, some participants said they felt that Canadians need to be better educated or informed about immigration because there appears to be a lot of false (and negative) information about immigration to Canada, including intake and integration rates.

Knowledge of immigration numbers

Participants expressed different views about whether the number of immigrants coming to Canada was too many, too few, or just right. Every group in which this topic was explored included a range of opinions, as well as uncertainty or inability to answer the question.

Participants who thought, or tended to think, that the numbers were 'about right' or 'too few' explained why by referring to a variety of factors, such as the need to replenish Canada's population (i.e., address Canada's aging population), the value of the Canadian cultural mosaic, the skills immigrants bring, the size of the country, the need to fill employment opportunities and

expand the country's tax base, and the capacity to integrate immigrants. Some participants who felt the number of immigrants coming to Canada is 'about right' explained that they have heard nothing about any problems which suggests the numbers are not too high.

Participants who thought there are too many immigrants coming to Canada tended to explain why by referring to the country's intake and integration capacity. In other words, they pointed to signs or indicators that there is a problem and that the problem has to do with taking in too many immigrants too quickly. Such signs or indicators included the following: the system is overloaded (e.g., there is a backlog/there are too many applicants in relation to processing capacity), a sense that Canada's vetting system is too lax (e.g., accepting asylum claims from individuals who are not actually in danger), integration is not taking place effectively, the resources and services for Canadian citizens are inadequate and/or being stretched to the limit.

The number of immigrants coming to Canada each year was routinely underestimated by participants. That being said, on hearing the actual number³, most participants did not change their mind about whether the number of immigrants was too high, too low, or just right. For most, the right number has to be gauged by various factors, such as intake, vetting, and screening capacity, available resources, economic need, and capacity to integrate, as well as ensuring that services and/or supports for existing Canadians are not adversely affected.

Perceived positive effects or benefits of immigration to Canada

Participants across all groups routinely identified the same or similar positive effects or benefits of immigration to Canada. This included the perceptions that immigrants...:

- replenish the work force/contribute to economy growth and prosperity;
- typically have a very strong work ethic;
- replenish Canada's population;
- help expand the tax base;
- may open small businesses which are a motor of the economy;
- foster cultural diversity (e.g. new ideas, greater diversity of foods); and
- bring new/needed skills/knowledge.

Perceived negative effects or challenges of immigration to Canada

Participants across all groups also tended to identify the same or similar challenges or negative effects of immigration to Canada, including the following:

- segregation of ethnic communities, leading to greater difficulty integrating;
- requests for cultural accommodations that clash with Canadian values;
- loss of Canada's cultural heritage;
- lack of skills recognition;
- overtaxing/stretching of Canada's resources and social services;
- racism/misinformation about immigrants;
- higher unemployment because there are not jobs;

³ Participants were provided the following information: "Currently, Canada aims to admit 330,000 immigrants this year. This is the overall total, and includes all immigration classes – i.e., economic immigrants, family members of people already in Canada and refugees."

- employers taking advantage of immigrants (e.g., paying less than minimum wage); and
- immigrants tending to navigate to larger urban centres, thus straining local programs and services in those communities.

Impact of immigration at the community level

Asked to focus on their own communities and identify both the positive and negative effects of immigration, participants typically provided concrete examples of the effects they associated with immigration. Positive effects/contributions included the following:

- Better/more diverse food;
- New businesses;
- Community growth/more festivals;
- More tax dollars for communities;
- Addresses labour shortages (e.g., physicians, engineers, service jobs).

Negative effects/challenges included the following:

- Cultural clashes (e.g., differing views over gender equality);
- Social services and resources being stretched (e.g. food banks);
- More visible poverty in the community;
- Visible segregation in the community;
- Racism/intolerance on the rise;
- Housing/rental costs on the rise; and
- Fewer jobs available in the community for young people.

9. Energy vision

Participants were asked to provide feedback on three creative approaches or concepts designed to capture an energy vision for the country that reflects the following groups of initiatives:

- Improving energy efficiency, such as incentive programs for homeowners, and updating building codes;
- Switching from coal/gas to solar/hydro/wind/nuclear and using more electricity to power vehicles, homes and industry;
- Using more waste from agriculture and forestry to make renewable fuels such as biodiesel;
- Producing oil and gas more efficiently, using more electricity, and adopting clean technology like carbon capture and storage; and
- Attracting investment to increase clean electricity capacity and building pipelines to get resources to markets outside the US, to diversify exports.

Participants were given three handouts, each one respectively reflecting the words and images used in each approach. The approaches were designated as A, B, and C.

Asked which concept explains the initiative the best, participants most often identified concept A. It was described as 'clean looking' and 'most reflective of all elements of the energy vision'. In

particular, participants reacted positively to solar panels and to its representative of Canada. Concept A was also most likely to be identified as the approach containing pictures that made participants feel hopeful or inspired about Canada's energy future.

When it came to the concept that was most memorable, and which had content (words, phrases) that resonated more, participants tended to be divided between approach A and approach C. In terms of memorability, approach C was described as memorable because of the unique illustrations and graphics. While participants did not tend to favour this concept (it was described as 'too chaotic' and 'not modern looking'), some found the short, direct 'headlines' to be memorable and suggested that the words from concept C be incorporated with the images from concept A.

Overall, concept B was the approach most likely to elicit critical or neutral reactions. It was considered unsophisticated (some said it looked like a set of PowerPoint slides) and lacking in clarity (the symbols did not resonate with participants).

Figure 1: Concept A

This concept contains clear panels, possibly solar panels, overlaid across three different images of Canada: a lighthouse, prairie crops, and the Port of Vancouver.

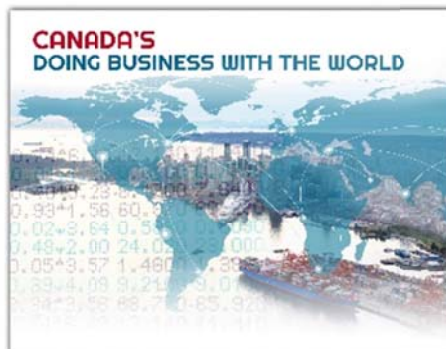


Figure 2: Concept B

This concept contains three self-contained images, each with a set of icons at the bottom to signify clean and renewable energy sources. The top image is of the Port of Vancouver, the middle image is of scientists in laboratory setting, and the bottom image is of someone connecting international locations on a map.



Figure 3: Concept C

This concept includes a colourful sphere or dome-shape structure in the forefront and canoers on a lake surrounded by snow covered mountains in the background.



Appendix

1. Recruitment Screener

A. Introduction

Hello/Bonjour, my name is [INSERT]. Would you prefer to continue in English or French? /
Préférez-vous continuer en français ou en anglais?

I'm calling from CRC Research, a Canadian research firm. We're organizing a series of discussion groups on behalf of the Government of Canada to explore current issues of interest to Canadians. The groups will last up to two hours and people who take part will receive a cash gift to thank them for their time.

[INTERVIEWER NOTE: FOR ENGLISH GROUPS, IF PARTICIPANT WOULD PREFER TO CONTINUE IN FRENCH, PLEASE RESPOND WITH, « Malheureusement, nous recherchons des gens qui parlent anglais pour participer à ces groupes de discussion. Désirez-vous participer à la discussion en français? ». IF YES, CONTINUE. IF NO, TERMINATE AND SAY: « Nous vous remercions de votre intérêt. » FOR FRENCH GROUP, IF PARTICIPANT WOULD PREFER TO CONTINUE IN ENGLISH, PLEASE RESPOND WITH, "Unfortunately, we are looking for people who speak French to participate in this discussion group. Would you be willing to participate in the discussion in English? IF YES, CONTINUE. IF NO, TERMINATE AND SAY: We thank you for your interest.]

Participation is completely voluntary. We are interested in your opinions. No attempt will be made to sell you anything or change your point of view. The format is a "round table" discussion led by a research professional with up to eight participants. All opinions will remain anonymous and will be used for research purposes only in accordance with laws designed to protect your privacy.

[INTERVIEWER NOTE: IF ASKED ABOUT PRIVACY LAWS, SAY: "The information collected through the research is subject to the provisions of the *Privacy Act*, legislation of the Government of Canada, and to the provisions of relevant provincial privacy legislation."]

Before we invite you to attend, we need to ask you a few questions to ensure that we get a good mix of people in each of the groups. This will take 5 minutes. May I continue?

Yes	CONTINUE
No	THANK/DISCONTINUE

B. Qualification

1. Do you, or any member of your household or immediate family, work in any of the following fields? **READ LIST**

Marketing research, public relations firm, or advertising agency

The media (i.e., radio, television, newspapers, magazines, etc.)
A federal or provincial government department or agency
A political party

Yes **THANK/DISCONTINUE**
No **CONTINUE**

2. Record gender by observation. **50/50 SPLIT**

Female
Male

3. Are you a Canadian citizen at least 18 years old who normally resides in the [INSERT CITY] area?

Yes **CONTINUE**
No **ASK Q3b**
Don't know/Refused **THANK/TERMINATE**

3b. Is there someone else in the household who is at least 18 years of age?

Yes **ASK TO SPEAK WITH THEM; GO BACK TO INTRODUCTION**
No **THANK/TERMINATE**
Don't know/Refused **THANK/TERMINATE**

4. How long have you lived in [INSERT CITY]?

Less than two years **THANK/TERMINATE**
Two years or more **CONTINUE**
Don't know/Refused **THANK/TERMINATE**

5. We have been asked to speak to participants from all different ages. May I have your age please? **RECORD AND CLASSIFY**

Under 18 **THANK/DISCONTINUE**
18 to 24 years
25 to 34 years
35 to 44 years
45 to 54 years
55 to 64 years
65 to 74 years
75 years or older **THANK/DISCONTINUE**

6. Thinking about the cost of living and your personal financial situation, would you say you are currently...

Falling behind on your monthly expenses **[INSECURE]**
Just getting by, with no savings **[INSECURE]**

Getting ahead, with some savings
Financially secure

[SECURE]
[SECURE]

7. Including yourself, how many people 18 years of age and over are there in your household?

One	
Two	SKIP TO Q9
Three	SKIP TO Q9
Four or more	SKIP TO Q9

IF ONLY ONE PERSON IN HOUSEHOLD AT Q7, ASK:

8. Which of the following categories best corresponds to your total personal annual income, before taxes, for 2018? **GET MIX**

Under \$20,000
\$20,000 to just under \$40,000
\$40,000 to just under \$60,000
\$60,000 to just under \$75,000
\$75,000 to \$100,000
\$100,000 to \$150,000
More than \$150,000
REFUSE/DK

IF A MULTIPLE PERSON HOUSEHOLD AT Q7, ASK:

9. Which of the following categories best corresponds to the total annual income, before taxes, of all members of your household, for 2018? **GET MIX**

Under \$20,000
\$20,000 to just under \$40,000
\$40,000 to just under \$60,000
\$60,000 to just under \$75,000
\$75,000 to \$100,000
\$100,000 to \$150,000
More than \$150,000
REFUSE/DK

ASK ALL

10. Which of the following best describes your employment situation? **GET MIX**

Working full time (35 hrs. +)
Working part time (under 35 hrs.)
Homemaker
Student
Retired
Unemployed

11. What is your current occupation? **RECORD:**

Type of Job: _____
Type of Company: _____

12. Could you please tell me what is the last level of education that you completed? **GET MIX**

Some High School only
Completed High School
Registered Apprenticeship or other trades certificate or diploma
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma
University certificate or diploma below bachelor's level
Bachelor's degree
Post graduate degree above bachelor's level

13. Participants in group discussions are asked to voice their opinions and thoughts, how comfortable are you in voicing your opinions in front of others? Are you...

Very comfortable	MINIMUM 5 PER GROUP
Fairly comfortable	
Not very comfortable	TERMINATE
Very uncomfortable	TERMINATE

14. Have you ever attended a discussion group on any topic that was arranged in advance and for which you received money for your participation?

Yes	
No	GO Q17

15. When did you last attend one of these discussion groups?

Within the last 6 months	TERMINATE
Over 6 months ago	

16. How many discussion groups have you attended in the past 5 years?

Fewer than 5	
5 or more	TERMINATE

17. The discussion group will be audio/video-recorded. These recordings are used to help with analyzing the findings and writing the report. The results from the discussions will be grouped together in the research report, which means that individuals will not be identified in anyway. Neither your name nor your specific comments will appear in the research report. Is this acceptable?

Yes	CONTINUE
No	THANK/TERMINATE

18. There may be some people from the Government of Canada who have been involved in this project observing the session. They will not take part in the discussion and they will not know your full name, only your first name. Is this acceptable?

Yes
No

CONTINUE
THANK/TERMINATE

C. INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

I would like to invite you to attend the focus group session where you will exchange your opinions in a moderated discussion with other Canadians from your community. The discussion will be led by a researcher from the national public opinion research firm, Phoenix SPI. The group will take place on **[DAY OF WEEK]**, **[DATE]**, at **[TIME]**. It will last two hours. People who attend will receive \$100 to thank them for their time. Would you be willing to attend?

Yes
No

TERMINATE

Do you have a pen handy so that I can give you the address where the group will be held? It will be held at **[INSERT FACILITY]**. I would like to remind you that the group is at **[TIME]** on **[DATE]**. We ask that you arrive 15 minutes early.

At the facility, you will be asked to produce photo identification, so please remember to bring something with you (for example, a driver's license). If you use glasses to read, please remember to bring them with you. Participants may be asked to review some materials in **[ENGLISH/FRENCH]** during the discussion.

As I mentioned, the session will be audio/video recorded for research purposes and representatives of the Government of Canada research team will be observing from an adjoining room. You will be asked to sign a waiver to acknowledge that you will be video recorded during the session. The recordings will be used only by the Phoenix SPI research team and will not be shared with others. All information collected in the group discussion will remain anonymous and be used for research purposes only in accordance with laws designed to protect your privacy.

As we are only inviting a small number of people to attend, your participation is very important to us. If for some reason you are unable to attend, please call us so that we can get someone to replace you. You can reach us at **[INSERT NUMBER]** at our office. Please ask for **[INSERT NAME]**.

Someone will call you the day before to remind you about the session.

So that we can call you to remind you about the focus group or contact you should there be any changes, can you please confirm your name and contact information for me?

First name: _____
Last Name: _____
Daytime phone number: _____
Evening phone number: _____

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6
Prince Albert	Prince Albert	St. John's	St. John's	Sherbrooke	Sherbrooke
April 9 5:30 pm SECURE	April 9 7:30 pm INSECURE	April 16 5:30 pm INSECURE	April 16 7:30 pm SECURE	April 17 5:30 pm SECURE	April 17 7:30 pm INSECURE
Group 7	Group 8	Group 9	Group 10	Group 11	Group 12
Sarnia	Sarnia	Edmonton	Edmonton	Burnaby	Burnaby
April 23 5:30 pm INSECURE	April 23 7:30 pm SECURE	April 25 5:30 pm SECURE	April 25 7:30 pm INSECURE	April 27 10:00 am SECURE	April 27 12:00 pm INSECURE

2. Moderator's Guide

INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)

GC NEWS (5 minutes)

- What have you seen, read or heard about the Government of Canada lately?

ASK IN BURNABY ONLY

- And have you seen, read or heard anything about gas prices lately?
- IF MENTION PRICES RISING: What do you think is the reason prices are increasing?
 - Do you think there is anything the Government of Canada could do about this, or do you think this outside their control?

LOCAL ISSUES (25 minutes) ST. JOHN'S ONLY

- Have you seen, read or heard anything about the Atlantic Accord? What have you heard?
 - PROMPT AS NEEDED: How about any news related to Hibernia?

CLARIFY AS NEEDED

The Atlantic Accord is an agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on offshore petroleum resource management and revenue sharing. Recently they renewed this agreement. Under this new deal, the province will receive \$2.5B from the Government of Canada's equity interest in Hibernia. Cash installments will run from this year until 2056, with \$1.9 billion (60%) of the funds to be received by 2030.

- What do you think of this agreement?
 - Do you think this agreement will be good or bad for Newfoundland and Labrador? How so?
- Have you seen, read or heard any actions taken by the federal government related to the fishing industry? What have you heard?
 - What do you think is the biggest challenge facing the fishing industry in Newfoundland?
- Have you seen, read or heard anything about electricity rate mitigation in Newfoundland? What have you heard?
 - What, if anything, do you think the federal government should do regarding rate mitigation in Newfoundland?
- Have you seen, read or heard anything about the Government of Canada making changes to the National Energy Board or Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency? What have you heard?

CLARIFY AS NEEDED

The Government of Canada has proposed new legislation to overhaul the National Energy Board and Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency in order to modernize regulations around major infrastructure and energy projects in Canada.

- Some say the new regulations should be focused on clarifying rules so that the review process can be conducted faster on important projects that affect our economy. Others say there needs to be more requirements included around making sure local environments are protected and Indigenous communities are consulted before projects go ahead. What do you think should be the priority?

ENVIRONMENT (30 minutes) PRINCE ALBERT, SARNIA AND EDMONTON ONLY

- What have you seen, read or heard about the environment lately?
 - And have you seen, read or heard about anything related to the Government of Canada and the environment recently?
- (IF PRICE ON POLLUTION NOT MENTIONED: Have you heard; IF MENTIONED: How many of you have heard) of the Government of Canada's plan to put a price on pollution? (show of hands)
 - PROBE: What have you heard recently?

CLARIFY AS NEEDED

In 2016 the Government of Canada announced a plan to put a price on pollution across the country, instructing each province to come up with their own plans before the end of 2018.

The federal government has announced that they will apply a price on pollution in the four provinces that still do not have a system in place: Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and New Brunswick.

READ FOR PRINCE ALBERT AND SARNIA

Under this system, what people and businesses pay will be based on the amount of carbon emissions they produce. All revenue collected in [PROVINCE] will stay in [PROVINCE] – 90% will be given directly to residents in the form of an incentive, with the average household receiving about (Prince Albert: \$600; Sarnia: \$300). 10% will go to small businesses, hospitals, and schools.

READ FOR EDMONTON

If Alberta ends its carbon tax, then the Government of Canada will apply a price on pollution in Alberta as well. Under this system, what businesses pay will be based on the amount of carbon emissions they produce. All revenue collected in Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, and potentially Alberta (if it ends its carbon tax), will stay in each of these provinces – 90% will be given directly to residents in the form of an incentive. In Saskatchewan for example, the average household will receive about \$600. 10% will go to small businesses, hospitals, and schools.

ASK THIS SECTION IN PRINCE ALBERT AND SARNIA

- Were you aware that the revenues from the price on pollution are returned to individuals via an incentive?
- Is this system clear – i.e. do you feel you understand how the federal government plans to put a price on pollution works? (show of hands)
 - How would you explain this plan?
 - What parts of the plan do you feel you understand?
 - What parts are unclear?
- As far as you can tell, have you felt any impacts of the federal price on pollution on your overall cost of living? How so?
 - PROMPT AS NECESSARY: What specific items has it had an impact on?
 - If you haven't felt any impacts yet, do you think you will? How so?
- Has the federal price on pollution affected the price of gasoline here? How so?
 - IF PRICE INCREASE: About how much has the price increased?
 - IF PRICE DECREASE: About how much has the price decreased?
 - Have you adjusted your driving habits as a result?
 - IF NO: do you think you will adjust your driving habits?

Now I'd like to talk about the Climate Action Incentive...

- Had you previously heard you would receive a Climate Action Incentive beginning this year?
- Do you know how you will receive the incentive?

CLARIFY AS NEEDED

You can claim the Climate Action Incentive payment when you file your income tax and benefit return.

- Have any of you already filed your taxes? (show of hands)
 - Did you notice that you can claim the Climate Action Incentive payment?
 - Did you note the amount you will receive for the Climate Action Incentive payment?
- For those of you who have not yet filed, do you plan on claiming the Climate Action Incentive payment when you file?
- FOR THOSE WHO HAVE/WILL CLAIM: How do you plan to use the incentive?

Now thinking more broadly...

- In general, how do you feel about the idea of using a price on pollution as an approach to help reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change?

ASK THIS SECTION IN EDMONTON

- What do you like about this proposed system?
- What do you dislike about this proposed system?
- What impact do you think this will have on the environment?
- What impact do you think this will have on the economy?
- What impact do you think this will have on you personally?

PIPELINES (20 minutes) ASK IN EDMONTON AND BURNABY ONLY

- Who has heard of the Trans-Mountain Expansion (or TMX) pipeline?
- Pretend I've been out of the country for the past few years. Explain to me what has been going on with this project.
 - (IF NO ONE KNOWS) The existing pipeline moves a mix of oil products from Edmonton to a terminal in Burnaby, B.C. where it is exported to markets overseas. The expansion project will "twin" the pipeline to increase capacity.
- Who currently owns TMX?
 - (IF NO ONE KNOWS) Does anyone remember the Government of Canada purchasing this pipeline last year?
 - What was their reason for doing this?
 - How do you feel about their decision to purchase it?
- What is the status of this project?
 - PROBE: Did anyone hear of a court ruling last fall requiring more consultation?
 - PROBE: Is anyone aware that the Government of Canada has set a deadline of June 18th to make a decision on whether or not to approve the TMX expansion?
- On balance, how do you feel about this project?
 - Would you rather it go ahead, or not? Why/Why not?
 - Do you expect this project will happen or not? Why/why not?
- The Government of Canada's strategy for energy and the environment includes approval of some pipelines (such as TMX), a national price on carbon pollution, and improved protection for our oceans. Some have argued this strategy only works if all provinces are on board for all aspects of it – so even if the government of BC doesn't want a pipeline approved or the government of Alberta doesn't want to put a price on carbon pollution, they need to be on board so that the entire strategy works.
 - Do you agree with this sentiment?

- Do you think the approval of TMX should depend on whether or not the government of Alberta has a price on pollution, or do you see these are two completely separate issues?
- (FOR PARTICIPANTS OPPOSED TO TMX) Would you feel better about TMX if you knew the government of Alberta continued to put a price on pollution to reduce emissions, or would that not change the way you feel about this pipeline?

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN ELECTIONS (15 minutes)

- When you hear “foreign interference in elections”, what does that mean to you? What comes to mind?

CLARIFY AS NEEDED

Foreign interference in elections refers to hidden, threatening or illegal activity by foreign actors that interferes in an election (i.e., similar to what happened during the 2016 presidential election in the U.S.).

- What have you seen, read or heard about foreign interference in elections lately?
- Are you concerned or not about foreign interference in Canada’s upcoming federal election?
- How confident are you, if at all, in Canada’s ability to deal with foreign interference in elections?
- Have you heard anything the Government of Canada is doing to combat this?

CLARIFY AS NEEDED

The Government of Canada has created a federal task force made up of national security and intelligence organizations, who will watch for foreign interference in the 2019 federal election. Under a “critical election incident public protocol,” five senior public servants will use information from the task force to decide when an incident is serious enough to warrant going public during a campaign. Only incidents that harm Canada’s ability to hold a free and fair election will be publicly disclosed. Another key part of the government’s approach will support Canadians in developing skills to help them better understand and identify fraud, misleading information, and manipulation online.

- What do you think of this approach?
 - What do you think are the benefits, if any, of this approach?
 - What concerns, if any, do you have?

GUN VIOLENCE (20 minutes)

- Who has heard about gun violence in Canada lately? What have you heard?
 - Do gun control laws in Canada need to be changed? How so?

- Where do you think the guns which are used in shootings in Canada come from primarily – are they smuggled from the US, bought legally and used in crimes, stolen from legal gun owners, or some other way? (DO SHOW OF HANDS, THEN DISCUSS)
- How would you feel about the government of Canada banning handguns?
 - If they did this, would it make more sense to ban handguns in all of Canada, or to leave the decision up to individual cities and provinces as to whether or not they want to ban them themselves?
 - If they did this, what should they do for people who currently own handguns legally? The most common options when other countries have done this is to either buy back handguns from people, or to grandfather them in which means existing owners can keep their guns but no one else can buy new ones.
- How would you feel about extending this ban to also include a ban on assault rifles?

CANADA'S IMMIGRATION SYSTEM (20 minutes) DO NOT ASK IN EDMONTON AND BURNABY

- What have you seen, read or heard about immigration lately?
- Overall, how well or poorly do you think Canada's immigration system is working?
 - What do you think is working well?
 - What do you think needs improvement?
- Do you think that there are too many, too few or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada? What makes you say that?
 - Roughly how many immigrants do you think Canada admits each year?

CLARIFY AS NEEDED

Currently, Canada aims to admit 330,000 immigrants this year. This is the overall total, and includes all immigration classes – i.e., economic immigrants, family members of people already in Canada and refugees.

- Now that I've provided this information, does this change your perception of whether you think there are too many, too few or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada? How so?
- What do you think are some positive effects or benefits, if any, of immigration **to Canada**?
- What do you think are some negative effects or challenges, if any, of immigration **to Canada**?
- And now looking at **your community** specifically, what are some of the positive effects, if any, in which your community benefits from immigration?
 - Probe: What contributions do you see immigrants making in your community?

- And what are the negative effects or challenges, if any, **your community** faces because of immigration?

ENERGY VISION (15 minutes)

Over the last two years, the Government of Canada consulted Canadians on the energy future they want for our country. Now, the Government is working to develop an energy vision that reflects this input. It will include 5 major groups of initiatives:

- Improve energy efficiency such as incentive programs for homeowners and updating building codes
- Switch from coal/gas to solar/hydro/wind/nuclear and using more electricity to power vehicles, homes and industry
- Use more waste from agriculture and forestry to make renewable fuels such as biodiesel
- Produce oil and gas more efficiently, use more electricity, and adopt clean technology like carbon capture and storage
- Attract investment to increase clean electricity capacity and build pipelines to get our resources to markets outside the US, to diversify our exports

HANDOUT

The Government has tried to capture these ideas in a graphical way, using words and pictures. We would like your reaction to the three sets of concepts. (MODERATOR DISTRIBUTES COPIES OF THE THREE SETS OF CONCEPTS TO EACH OF THE PARTICIPANTS). Feel free to mark up each of the concepts as we discuss these.

- Which one explains the initiative the best? Which is least clear?
- Which one is the most memorable?
- Which pictures make you feel hopeful/inspired about Canada's energy future?
- Which words resonate more?
- Are there words or phrases that you are not familiar with or that you find confusing?

CONCLUSION (5 minutes)