

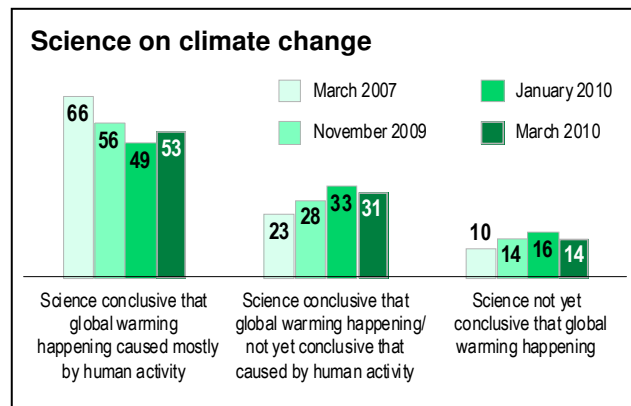
Where the Canadian public stands today on climate change

The following summary provides an overview of current public opinion and trends, drawn from the **Canadian Environmental Barometer**, an ongoing syndicated research program conducted by the Environics Research Group. This material is not intended for general distribution, and should not be reprinted or distributed without explicit acknowledgment of the source.

Climate change has been around as an environmental issue since the late 1980s and finally emerged to capture the spotlight in 2007, helped by a combination of climatic, political and media events (including Al Gore's award-winning documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*). Polls showed the public in most parts of the world starting to take this issue seriously and looking to their governments and corporations to make this a priority. Since 2007, the public's focus on climate change started to subside, and this trend accelerated at the end of 2009 in response to coverage of the COP 15 Copenhagen summit. By early January 2010, Canadians' view of climate change in some respects had returned to pre-2006 levels.

Since January, Canadians' focus on climate change has started to bounce back. In mid-March, the proportion of Canadians extremely or definitely concerned about this issue has started to climb, and a small majority (53%) of Canadians now accepts that climate change is happening and mostly the result of human activity.

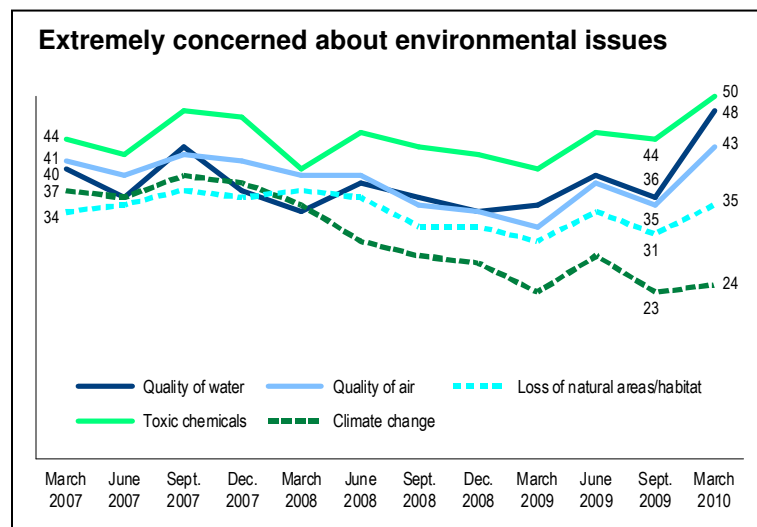
The balance maintain either that climate change is happening but not necessarily due to human causes (31%), or remain unconvinced that climate change is even real (14%).



The so-called "climate-gate" scandal provided significant ammunition to climate skeptics, but has hardly damaged the reputation of climate scientists among Canadians. Close to half (47%) say they have a great deal of confidence in what climate scientists have to say about the issue, well ahead of the degree of confidence expressed in environmental group spokespersons (23%), science journalists (21%), energy industry spokespersons (7%), federal government officials (6%), and provincial government officials (6%).

At the same time, climate change is no longer seen by most Canadians as the central environmental challenge of our time. Canadians' concerns about a number of environmental issues have increased noticeably over the past six months, with the notable exception of climate change

Half are now "extremely" concerned about the manufacture, use and disposal of toxic chemicals (50%) and the quality of water we drink (48%), followed by air quality (43%) and loss of natural areas and wildlife habitat (35%).

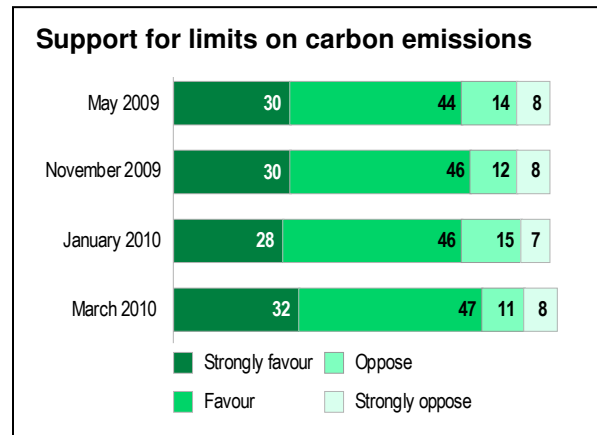


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In contrast, only one in four (24%) Canadians are now extremely concerned about climate change; this is essentially unchanged from last September, although represents a recovery from the low point in January (just after the Copenhagen summit) when only 19 percent expressed this level of worry about climate change (not shown on the graph above).

Despite the stagnant public concern about climate change, support for policy action has strengthened over the past few months. Eight in ten (79%) Canadians support setting limits on greenhouse gas emissions and making companies pay for emissions even if this may mean higher energy prices (up 5 points since January). Support is strongest in Quebec, but also shared by almost three-quarters of Albertans.

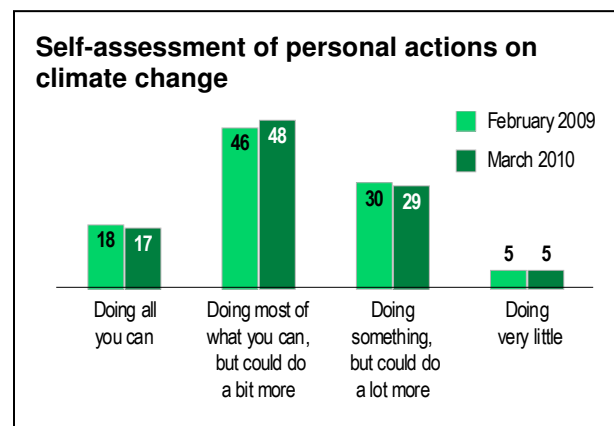
Canadians are also expressing increased willingness (in principle) to pay their share to help fight climate change. A majority (56%) think it is reasonable for each household to pay an additional \$100 per year in higher taxes and prices to help do their part for climate change (up from 49% who expressed this view in November). Canadians continue to be divided in their opinion of carbon taxes such as the one now in B.C., but the degree of opposition is nowhere near as strong as many pundits claim.



How well do Canadians believe they are doing themselves to help address the climate change challenges about which they are concerned? Despite good intentions, only a modest majority (54%) of Canadians claim to have taken any actions in the past 12 months, and for many this amounts to a limited range of steps, most of which are token efforts (e.g. turning off lights, recycling household waste). The public expresses a willingness to do more, but many also believe they are already doing most of what they can do to reduce their personal impact on climate change.

Canadians know what they should be doing, but are not ready to take ownership and personal responsibility to push themselves beyond what is comfortable and within accepted community norms.

Despite the growing range of “green” products and services, the public is becoming increasingly skeptical of the claims that these are actually better for the environment. Only 15 percent of Canadians believe that most of the green products and services on the market today are actually better for the environment.



The bottom line is this: The Canadian public continues to be aware of and concerned about the climate change challenge, despite the absence of federal government leadership and limited media coverage. And this issue ranks higher in relative priority among Canadians than it does among Americans. But the momentum gained just a couple of short years ago has disappeared. Canadians in their role as citizens recognize that something significant needs to be done to address global warming, but in their role as consumers are not yet prepared to change much in their own lives. Feeding this ambivalence is an absence of leadership from institutions and elected officials, and a lack of clarity on what actually needs to be done. This dynamic is unlikely to change without some type of dramatic change, either political or climatic.