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Thursday, November 7, 2002

Kyoto support cools off

Poll shows 55% want to hold off ratification until economic impact understood

By BILL RODGERS, OTTAWA BUREAU CHIEF

OTTAWA -- The Kyoto Express is leaving the station, but a new Sun Media poll indicates most of us aren't on it.

A national phone survey of 1000 Canadians, completed this week, shows 55% believe the government should not ratify the accord on climate change until the economic impact is clearly understood.

The poll, conducted by SES Canada Research, shows 32% support ratification while 13% are unsure.

SES included the Sun Media question in an omnibus poll conducted between Oct. 25 and Nov. 3.

The question stated: "Some people think Canada needs to ratify the Kyoto Accord as proposed by the federal Liberal government because it will have a positive impact on our environment. Other people think that Canada should not ratify the accord until there is a better understanding of its impact on the economy. Which of these two opinions best reflects your view?"

In every region of the country more Canadians opposed ratification until they had more information than supported it.

In Ontario, 57.3% opposed ratification compared to 30% who believe the feds should proceed. Opposition is highest in the West at almost 62%.

SES managing director Nik Nanos said, unlike other polls that focus on whether Canadians supported the principle of

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reducing greenhouse gases, this poll also includes economic concerns.

A University of Guelph economist said the poll reflects that Canadians don't have the information to make an intelligent decision.

"We just have these ridiculously vague things like encouraging Canadians to turn down the thermostat at night or reduce driving volumes by 10 per cent," he said.

McKittrick said it's astonishing that we are a month away from ratification "without even basic information about what's going to happen, who's going to pay for it, which industries are going to disappear and how many jobs are going to be lost."

Environment Minister David Anderson this week trashed an Alberta poll, which showed plunging public support for the protocol, calling it "fraudulent" and "distorted."

Asked by Sun Media if Canadians had enough information to make an informed decision, Anderson said, "you cannot predict everything."

Under the accord, Canada must cut the pollution that causes greenhouse gases by 6% below 1990 levels by 2012.

POLL RESULTS: REGION BY REGION

* RATIFY KYOTO

Atlantic: 41.0

Quebec:40.8

Ontario:30.0

West: 25.1

Total: 32.1

* NOT RATIFY

Atlantic:47.0

Quebec: 45.2

Ontario: 57.3

West: 61.7

Total: 54.8

*** UNSURE**

Atlantic: 12.0

Quebec: 14.0

Ontario: 12.7

West: 13.1

Total: 13.1

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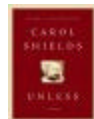
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