

**B.C.'s Carbon Tax:
Good Intentions, Bad Idea**

Survey among >1300 British Columbians for the *Vancouver Sun*



**COMPAS Inc.
Public Opinion and Customer Research
March 7, 2008**

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B.C.'s inauguration of a carbon tax is a bad idea adopted for a good cause, according to a survey of more than 1300 British Columbians undertaken by COMPAS Research for *The Vancouver Sun*.

Most (55%) British Columbians believe that over-use of oil & gas and other carbon fuels is the cause of climate change, as shown in table 1. A small minority (20%) doubt that the climate is changing any more than ever. Very few believe that the climate is changing because of sun spots (6%). Respondents were asked: "With respect to climate change, do you think the climate is changing because of over-use of oil & gas and other carbon fuels, not changing any more than it ever has, or changing because of sun spots."

Table1: (Q13) With respect to climate change, do you think the climate is [RANDOMIZE] n=1320

	%
Changing because of over-use of oil & gas and other carbon fuels	55
Not changing any more than it ever has	20
Changing because of sun spots	6
[UNPROMPTED] It's changing but we don't know why	10
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know if it's changing	2
[UNPROMPTED] It's not changing	1
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know or no opinion	6

Although most British Columbians blame carbon fuels for climate change, most consider the carbon tax a bad idea. Only 12% believe that the carbon tax is good in order to fight climate change, as shown in table 2. Another 13% believe that the carbon tax is a good idea to fight pollution in general. But most think it a bad idea—33% because carbon fuels are already heavily taxed and 26% because federal and provincial governments should be collaborating on this rather than seeing B.C. take an initiative on its own.

"It as if B.C.ers' concern about the green house gas effect were a mile wide and an inch deep," said COMPAS President Conrad Winn. "British Columbians are not *doubting Thomases* when it comes to carbon fuels and climate change.



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But they are not worried enough about climate change to embrace the idea of a carbon tax.”

Table 2: (Q14) The B.C. government announced a new tax on carbon fuels in order to help fight climate change while saying other taxes will go down accordingly. Do you think this idea of a new carbon tax is [RANDOMIZE] n=1320

	%
Bad because carbon fuels are already taxed heavily	33
Bad because all the federal and provincial governments should work together on this	26
Good in order to fight air pollution	13
Good in order to fight climate change	12
[UNPROMPTED] Bad because carbon fuels do not cause climate change or do not cause pollution or do not cause both	2
[UNPROMPTED] Don't know or no opinion	13

Opinion appears homogeneous across the province on all these issues. If residents of the 21 municipal components of Metro Vancouver are different from other British Columbians, they may be fractionally more opposed to the carbon tax because of a feeling of being overtaxed.

British Columbians who favour the carbon tax are fractionally younger than those opposed but the difference is minor.

Interviews were conducted by professional interviewers using computer-assisted telephone interviewing systems in the period February 26-March 5, 2008. By convention, the representative sample of 1320 respondents is considered accurate to within 2.8 percentage points 19 times out of 20.

