

**Suzuki, Pembina, Flaherty and Climate Change:
*Small Plague on All Sides of the Issue***

BDO Dunwoody Weekly CEO/Business Leader Poll

By COMPAS in *Canadian Business*

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1.0 Overview

CEOs and business leaders on the COMPAS panel were asked about their views on the controversies relating to climate change and the recent report from the Pembina Institute and the Suzuki Foundation on the GDP costs to Canada and Alberta of reducing CO₂ emissions.

Panelists were asked to score the degree to which various players have been acting responsibly. No consensus emerges at all. In a variation on the theme of “a small plague on all your houses,” no group or individual is perceived as acting in an especially responsible way while most are perceived as mildly irresponsible. The only group that is perceived as somewhat or slightly responsible consists of those who say that the climate is changing but don’t actually take a position on whether such change is caused by human activity or natural factors.

The David Suzuki Foundation and the Pembina Institute are perceived as acting semi-responsibly or, perhaps, slightly irresponsibly in issuing their recent report. Their report forecasts GDP impacts as a result of reducing CO₂ emissions. Finance Ministry Flaherty, who condemned the Suzuki-Pembina report, is perceived as acting semi-responsibly, perhaps fractionally less irresponsibly than the David Suzuki Foundation and the Pembina Institute.

The debate about the David Suzuki Foundation-Pembina Institute report can be seen against a backdrop of evolving business panel views of climate change and its potential causes. Using a tracking question deployed in previous panel surveys for *Canadian Business* magazine, COMPAS found panelists’ opinions to be essentially unchanged since 2008.

Between 2006 and 2008, panel support for the view that human activity caused climate change fell. In 2006, those who perceived the climate as changing and attributed such change to human activity outnumbered 2:1 (41% vs. 20%) those who believed that climate changes are a normal variation in the



planet's climate. In 2008 and again in November, 2009, these two groups are equally matched, each with support from almost a third of the COMPAS business panel. Over the past year, it appears as if support for the anthropogenic perspective on climate change has remained unchanged.

These are the key findings from this past week's Internet survey of CEOs and business leaders on the COMPAS panel. The weekly business survey is undertaken for *Canadian Business* magazine under sponsorship of BDO Dunwoody LLP.

2.0 Details

Table 2 displays evidence that the business panel views most of the protagonists in the climate change debate as mildly irresponsible in their conduct.

Table 2b shows that there has been a three-way division in opinion among business panelists over the past year with a third or fewer subscribing to the anthropogenic view of climate change, about a third or fewer viewing climate change as a natural occurrence, and the remainder (more than a third) remaining uncertain.



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Table 2a: (Q2) As you know there are charges and counter-charges of being irresponsible on all sides of the issue. On a 7 point scale where 1 means very irresponsible and 7, very responsible, in your view how responsible are...[NO RANDOMIZATION]

	Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
Those who say that the evidence is indisputable that the planet is experiencing climate change and/or global warming	4.5	14	26	19	9	10	10	11	0
Those who say that human activity is the main or sole cause of the climate change and/or global warning that is believed to be taking place	3.8	7	16	20	14	10	18	15	0
Finance Minister Flaherty for saying that Canada-U.S. collaboration can achieve the same level of CO2 cuts with far less harm to the economy	3.8	3	12	22	22	12	9	14	6
The David Suzuki Foundation and the Pembina Institute for saying that cutting CO2 emissions will mean that Canada's economy in 2020 will be 3.2% smaller than under business as usual, and Alberta's economy will be 12% smaller than under business as usual	3.6	6	8	21	16	10	16	16	6



Suzuki, Pembina, Flaherty, and Climate Change

BDO Dunwoody Weekly CEO/Business Leader Poll by COMPAS in Canadian Business for Publication November 9, 2009

	Mean	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	DNK
Those who say that the thesis of climate change and/or global warming is supported by shoddy evidence and insufficient research	3.3	6	8	15	13	20	14	24	1
Those who say that any climate change or global warming is attributable to natural causes like sun spots, not human activity	3.3	7	6	13	16	18	17	22	2

Table 2b: (Q1) As you may know, the environment is an ongoing topic. Which of the following opinions about global warming and climate change is closest to your own? [RANDOMIZE]

	Nov 2009	Sept 2008 ¹	May 2006
There is global warming and climate change, and they are caused by excessive combustion and greenhouse gases ²	33	30	41
There is evidence of global warming and climate change but these are a normal variation in the planet's climate ³	30	31	20

¹ Wording in Sept 2008: As you may know, the environment is an ongoing topic in the election campaign. Which of the following opinions about global warming and climate change is closest to your own?

² Wording in May 2006: "There is global warming and it is caused by excessive combustion and pollution."

³ Not used in the original questionnaire, the letter codes are included to facilitate interpretation of the table that follows.



Suzuki, Pembina, Flaherty, and Climate Change

BDO Dunwoody Weekly CEO/Business Leader Poll by COMPAS in Canadian Business for Publication November 9, 2009

	Nov 2009		Sept 2008 ¹		May 2006	
Global warming and climate change are taking place but it is not clear why	18		26		29	
Whether there is global warming or significant climate change is a legitimate debate	17	37	12	39	9	40
There is almost definitely no global warming or climate change	2		1		2	
Don't know or no opinion	0		0		0	

The following verbatims provide a nuanced sense of panel opinion:

It is a shame that our youth is being brainwashed to believe in man-made global warming and climate change. The likes of David Suzuki are doing a phenomenal disservice by treating science like a religion. Our children need to be taught the principles of the scientific method and to question matters rather than buying in wholesale to these unsupportable and politically motivated theories about man's effect on climate. It's a shame and when they find out how they have been hoodwinked they will become cynical indeed.

Global Warming? The weather patterns on earth have constantly changed throughout time. We need only look at events like the ice age, the severe drought conditions of the 1930's in North America, the so called threat of a coming ice age when I was a teenager to name but a few.

We need to work on a blended environmental and industrial strategy that makes best use of our location, human and natural resources.

The Government of Canada has decided that the Kyoto Agreement (KA) need not be followed even though we



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BDO Dunwoody Weekly CEO/Business Leader Poll by COMPAS in Canadian Business for Publication November 9, 2009

signed the KA. Not exactly what I'd call the actions of a responsible government.

Climatic change is part of the natural cycle. However, there is a sea of evidence that human activity amplifies and accelerates climatic change. In the actual context of overpopulation in some countries, of damages to agriculture and increased difficulty in accessing potable water resources, it is irresponsible to pretend continuing in the actual status quo. The present situation has an opportunity for change that will benefit the economy through innovation.

A whole world built on dependence of oil consumption is doubtless a major cause of the problems we now face. It will not be easy or cheap to fix these realities. There have always been those willing to offer "scientific" opinion the highest bidder. Any political solution will always sell out to big business interests and be ineffective.

I believe that in time we will find that there are a number of causal elements as yet not associated to climate change and/or that human activity is simply exacerbating a normal cyclic change. Regardless, we need to pay serious attention to the issue in the hopes of reducing our impact on our environment.

The current Government is doing a terrible job on the environment front. Very irresponsible and short-sighted.

What we do is more important than why we do it. The choices need to be carefully considered and not rushed.

I wonder how much money is being spent by lobbyists that are trying to kill the climate change issue.

Instead of whining about recycling plastic bottles we should encourage the dumping of plastic in landfills as a way to sequester carbon. Those who ignore the warnings do so with



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BDO Dunwoody Weekly CEO/Business Leader Poll by COMPAS in Canadian Business for Publication November 9, 2009

the same outcome as the Ancient Romans, the Greeks etc did. We are doomed to repeat the errors of the past the difference today is that we are truly doing messing up our economies on a global scale. As it is pretty well impossible to stop the flow of this mighty river the best thing to do is analyze the future and position ones self to best ride it out.

One thing that never seems to be mentioned is man's interference in weather. I.e. most recently China's seeding the air to make snow. We have micro lasers up there etc., etc., we know from the past that playing the atmosphere has caused severe changes in weather. Perhaps we need to stay out of the sky for awhile and see if this makes a difference?

The glaciers have been melting for 10,000 years...when did global warming really begin?

The root cause of the problem is not greenhouse gas emissions. The root cause is too many people. Until we come to grips with that reality, no amount of greenhouse gas reduction will provide any significant measure of long term benefit.

Here in Saskatchewan we pray for global warming every winter!

Carbon Dioxide is essential to photosynthesis, to life. Atmospheric content of CO2 has changed over the eons; most of the earth's carbon dioxide is now locked up in carbonate rocks like limestone and dolomite which form so much of BC as natural products of erosion.

Climate change is an ongoing phenomenon that Mr. Suzuki et. al. can't do anything about!!

Politically inspired hysteria is rarely a sound base for policy making.



Suzuki, Pembina, Flaherty, and Climate Change

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The planet has survived for eons and appears to right itself on a regular basis. Cause and effect are difficult to verify hence ongoing debate while the earth itself rectifies its ongoing existence.

They were raising cattle in southern Greenland around 1000 AD, was much warmer, the Thames used to freeze, and there is oil in the arctic which came from critters that need warm. Conclusion - it gets warm and cold with out mankind. Whatever we do in the 1st world the 2nd and 3rd won't and they are bigger contributors than we in generation of "greenhouse gas" so even if the theory of manmade global warming is true we can't do anything about it. The human race has had a variety of scares like this over the years – from the witches of Salem to Rachel Carson and Silent Spring to the Japanese on the lower mainland (Richmond) during WW2 which have been raised by people that had a possibility of financial gain (All Gore, Suzuki, Rachel Carson, the people that took over the Japanese property when we good Canadians sent them to concentration camps etc) supported by people that don't think but react emotionally to a good story well told. The outcome has universally been bad for mankind but we don't learn.

There have been indisputable times in the past with much higher temperature occurrences than that which is happening at the present. There appears to be some computer evidence/calculations that appear to have a correlation between the present variations and man's production and release of various gases into the atmosphere. This is by no means definitive or conclusive and may be simply a calculation by computer that is questionable or coincidence. As they say, garbage in garbage out, and people are making money based on the hypothesis which is itself interesting.



An unbiased, apolitical, not self promoting opinion would be highly appreciated. We seem to be living in a dangerously overhyped world, H1N1 as an example.

3.0 Methodology

The COMPAS web-survey of CEOs and leaders of small, medium, and large corporations was conducted Nov 3 - 5, 2009. Respondents constitute an essentially hand-picked panel with a higher numerical representation of small and medium-sized firms.

Because of the small population of CEOs and business leaders from which the sample was drawn, the study can be considered more accurate than comparably sized general public studies. In studies of the general public, surveys of n=125 are deemed accurate to within approximate 8.8 percentage points 19 times out of 20. The principal and investigator on this study is Conrad Winn, Ph.D.

