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ENVIRONMENT AND GLOBAL WARMING TOP ISSUES, CANADIANS SAY

Consumers Willing to Pay Green Power Premium

TORONTO, July 25, 2007 – The environment and global warming—mentioned by one-third of the population as top issues—continues to be seen as the most important issue affecting the world today, far ahead of war (7%), turmoil in Iraq and the Middle East (6%), conflict in Afghanistan (5%) and poverty (5%), according to a new survey by TNS Canadian Facts.

Almost everyone thinks that global warming is a serious issue facing us today (91% agree) and supports immediate action (89%). Support for action is driven by a clear sense that global warming is not merely a theory; more than eight in 10 are convinced that global warming has been scientifically proven.

Despite the public salience of the issue, there is a sense that governments of all levels are not doing enough to tackle global warming. Seven in 10 Canadians think the federal government (72%) and their provincial government (70%) are not doing enough. Municipalities, perhaps surprisingly, are more likely to be viewed as doing the right amount (32%) but even here many Canadians would like to see more action (59%) through eco-friendly programs and policies.

“Responsibility is clearly divided with many consumers pointing to government inaction on the global warming file even as they themselves see things they personally can do,” said Richard Jenkins, vice-president of TNS Canadian Facts.

Generally speaking Canadians are most willing to do the relatively easy and cost-free activities to reduce their environmental footprint. The top three actions that Canadians are most likely to take to help the environment are recycling (91% definitely will), purchasing appliances that are energy efficient (66%), and replacing traditional light bulbs with environmentally-friendly ones (63%). Canadians are not as willing, however, to change their driving habits.

The study also found that there is a high level of interest in low-impact renewable, green power. Although availability and methods of purchase vary across jurisdictions, in general Canadians are not aware of the main options when purchasing green power—bundled green power (23% aware), power certificates (16%), or from independent retailers (17%). When it comes to their specific area, few (9%) are aware of the ability to buy green power in their area and fewer still (3%) are currently purchasing green power.

Just over half (55%) of all Canadians say they probably (36%) or definitely (19%) would buy green power if there were a 10 per cent premium for getting half of their power from environmentally-friendly renewable sources. Atlantic and Quebec residents are the most likely to support the purchase of green power.

“Green power options clearly empower citizens to make environmentally responsible decisions and while many claim to be willing to pay the added price, it is clearly only those most committed to environmentalism and who have the financial resources to afford to do so who will carry through on their good intentions,” he added.

For the survey, TNS Canadian Facts interviewed 1,016 nationally representative Canadian adults by telephone between July 9 and 13. The survey results are considered accurate to 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

TNS Canadian Facts (www.tns-cf.com) is one of Canada's most prestigious full-service marketing, opinion and social research organizations.

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