

NEW POLL: 89% of Quebecers support a complete reform of the federal environmental assessment before any further evaluation of the Energy East project- The NEB experiences serious trust issues

Quebec, November 7th 2016- A new SOM poll shows a strong majority of Quebecers (73%) have completely lost trust in the National Energy Board (NEB) following the Charest affair. A strong majority (89%) believe that before the evaluation of the Energy East project starts again the federal government needs to completely reform the environmental assessment process.

These are the conclusions of a poll conducted between October 6th and October 17th on 1020 respondents. The poll was commissioned by *Équiterre*, the *Coule pas chez Nous* foundation, the David Suzuki Foundation, GreenPeace Canada, Nature Québec and the *Regroupement vigilance hydrocarbures Québec*.

Credibility issues for the NEB

73% of Quebecers say they don't trust the NEB to evaluate the Energy East pipeline. Three NEB commissioners recused themselves and the president of the NEB resigned after they were exposed by the [National Observer](#) to have been meeting secretly with former Quebec PM Jean Charest while he was working as a lobbyist for TransCanada, the pipeline construction company pushing for Energy East.

"This poll is crystal clear showing that Quebec's population gives no credibility to the NEB when it comes to the evaluation of Energy East," said Anne-Céline Guyon, coordinator at the *Coule pas chez nous* foundation. "Citizens believe the NEB isn't independent of the oil industry it is supposed to regulate, and cannot make unbiased decisions on the projects being studied, whether it's Energy East or Kinder Morgan."

"The poll results show that Trudeau's government cannot restore public trust in the NEB by appointing a couple of new heads," said Karel Mayrand, senior director for Quebec of the David Suzuki Foundation. "Quebecers no longer trust this institution and demand a truly independent process that allows citizen and indigenous communities participation and relies on climate science."

"Before they recused themselves, commissioners Gauthier and Mercier had been chairs for more than two years, and had completely steered the Energy East evaluation, making dozens of important decisions. We have to start the evaluation of Energy East over from the beginning and from a new basis that is credible. This is the only way we can restore confidence of the population and show that there is no longer bias in favor of the industry," said Patrick Bonin from Greenpeace.

The federal environmental evaluation process must be fully reformed before project evaluations resume

A stunning 89% of respondents ask the Trudeau government explicitly for a complete review of the environmental protection laws and a reform of the federal environmental evaluation process before resuming the Energy East process.

“Facing this serious mistrust from the population, the Canadian government should revoke the NEB’s mission to conduct environmental assessments for energy projects and give this responsibility to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the CEA Agency),” says Christian Simard from Nature Quebec.

The Trudeau government has promised to make environmental assessments credible again and thus appointed an independent expert panel to review the current processes. The panel is traveling across Canada to consult citizens, Indigenous people and key stakeholders and is expected to release its report in early 2017. Despite that, TransCanada’s Energy East and Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain projects are still being evaluated under the laws, policies and operational practices of the former government, with only cosmetic accommodations announced last January.

“How can Prime Minister Trudeau imagine that people will have trust in processes that he himself labelled not credible?” asked Carole Dupuis from the *Regroupement vigilance hydrocarbures Québec* (RVHQ). “We ask the PM to let the experts work and only resume the evaluation of these huge pipeline projects when there are credible new processes in place that are actually based on science and serve the public’s interest.”

Methodological notes

The questions were asked as part of a SOM omnibus poll conducted by telephone from October 6th to October 17th with a sample size of 1020 adults from Quebec. The sample was stratified and non-proportional in three large regions. This is a probability sample, randomly generated from valid phone numbers within the territory of the study, 80% landlines and 20% mobile.

Data was weighted to ensure a representative sample of Quebec’s adult population.

The maximum margin of error for the sample is 4.4%, 19 times out of 20.

[Read the poll \(French\)](#)

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Informations

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