



## **BC Public Affairs Omnibus Survey**

**December 8, 2006**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Report for  
Greenpeace Canada**

## **A Note on Reading Polling Data**

In the appendix to this report you have received both the 'topline,' or simple frequency distributions, and crosstabulations ('crosstabs').

The crosstabs allow you to distinguish how responses to your polling question(s) differ across different sections of the population. The crosstabs give important information about how strategies are working or may work with different target audiences or constituencies within the population.

We provide basic crosstabs on demographics (gender, age, family status, income and number of children in household). In addition we offer to our clients extended crosstab information on a number of social/political indicators. These indicators can be important in terms of determining how issues may interrelate, or again in how strategies are working or may work.

**Results**

We fielded three questions regarding the labelling of genetically modified food ingredients (GM foods) for Greenpeace Canada in our November 23-30 2006 BC Public Affairs Omnibus Survey. Details of the survey methods are given in the next section of this report.

The first question is reproduced below, with results:

		Count	Col %
C1. The BC Provincial Health Officer recently recommended that labelling should be provided on all genetically modified foods so that consumers can make informed choices. The Federal government has so far not provided mandatory labelling of genetically modified food in Canada, because the packaged food industry says it would cause them too much trouble and expense. What about you? Do you believe that the BC government should establish mandatory labelling of genetically modified foods before the next provincial election?	Yes	477	79.4%
	No	105	17.4%
	Don't Know/Undecided	19	3.2%
Total		601	100.0%

These data show that a large majority (79%) of British Columbians support mandatory labelling of genetically modified foods before the next provincial election. In the question, we balanced a recommendation from the BC Provincial Health Officer that was in favour of labelling GM foods with an argument from the packaged food industry that was opposed to such labelling. Only 17% of respondents supported the argument that labelling should not be mandated because of the trouble and expense of such labelling.

The next question that we fielded on the topic of genetically modified ingredients measured the likelihood that a voter would support a political party that advocated for the labelling of GM foods.

About half (52%) of BC's voters would be more likely to support a political party that advocated labelling of GM foods. A significant number of respondents said they were neutral (33%), while only 9% said they would be 'somewhat' or 'much less likely' to vote for that party.

		Count	Col %
C2. If a political party advocated the labeling of genetically modified foods in British Columbia, would you be more likely or less likely to vote for that party in the next provincial election? Is that much more or somewhat?	Much more likely to vote for that party	106	17.7%
	Somewhat more likely to vote for that party	204	33.9%
	Neither more nor less likely to vote for that party	198	32.9%
	Somewhat less likely to vote for that party	35	5.8%
	Much less likely to vote for that party	22	3.6%
	Don't Know/Undecided	37	6.1%
Total		601	100.0%

Crosstabulations show that BC Green party supporters are the most likely to say that advocacy on the issue of GM labeling would increase their support for a party (68%). Those who would vote for the BC NDP are also strongly influenced by advocacy for labeling (56%).

BC Liberal supporters are the least likely to be swayed by advocacy for GM labeling, although 45% said they would be 'much more' or 'somewhat more likely' to support a party that did so.

We then went on to ask respondents who support labelling (by responding in the affirmative to the first question) what type of labeling they would like to see on packaged foods. Results are shown in the table below:

		Count	Col %
C3. Given that you've said you would support immediate mandatory labeling of genetically modified foods, which of the following methods of labeling genetically modified foods do you prefer?	A label that identifies a food product as 'free of genetically modified ingredients'	131	27.4%
	A label that identifies that a food product 'may contain genetically modified ingredients'	64	13.4%
	A label that identifies ALL the individual ingredients that have been genetically modified	271	56.9%
	Other	9	1.8%
	Don't Know/Undecided	2	.5%
Total		477	100.0%

Most respondents prefer a greater level of detail about genetically modified food ingredients over less detailed information: 57% said they would prefer to see *all* ingredients that have been genetically modified listed on packages. Just over a quarter, or 27%, said they prefer a label that identifies if the product is 'free from genetically modified ingredients and only 13% said they preferred a label that said a product 'may contain genetically modified ingredients.

### Interpretation

There is very strong support for mandatory labelling of genetically modified foods. As mentioned above, the public favours the strongest form of labelling. Our findings indicate that almost half (45%) of BC Liberal voters say that this issue could influence their vote choice. While it may not concern the government that NDP and Green supporters want this kind of labelling, it should concern them that nearly 1-in-2 of their own supporters are willing to make this an issue of party preference.

## Methods and Sampling

These results are compiled from a Strategic Communications telephone poll conducted between November 23-30, 2006. Interviews were conducted with 601 adult Canadian citizens (eligible voters) who reside in BC. Respondents were selected by the random-household sampling method proportional to actual regional populations. The overall results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 4.0\%$ , 19-times-in-20, of what they would have been had the entire Canadian adult population been polled.

The margin of error will be larger for sub-groups of the survey population.

This data was statistically weighted to ensure that the sample's gender and age composition reflects that of the actual BC population according to the 2001 Census.

## About Strategic Communications

Strategic Communications Inc. (Stratcom) is an innovative Canadian consulting firm that specializes in services to enhance the effectiveness of Canada's non-profit community. Stratcom offers services in the fields of opinion research, communications, and campaign strategy. The company has two full-service offices in Toronto and Vancouver.

Stratcom has conducted public opinion and specialized research for clients such as The Law Society of Upper Canada, the BC Federation of Labour, and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). The company's research has been noted in *The Toronto Star*, *Vancouver Sun*, *Globe & Mail* and Stratcom is the exclusive pollster for *24 Hours* in Vancouver.

Stratcom will soon start publication of an in-depth newsletter focusing on exclusive data from the company's ten years of public affairs research on behalf of Canadian civil society.

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