

National Nuclear Policy Survey

2000 Federal Election

This survey was developed to help the Canadian electorate determine where Canada's political parties stand on a number of national nuclear issues and related energy policy questions—ranging from the export of nuclear reactors to renewable energy options. The survey is divided into two sections:

- A) Canada's Promotion of Nuclear Power - Major Initiatives
- B) Nuclear Phaseout in Canada

Note: Survey results follow at the end of this document

A Canada's Promotion of Nuclear Power - Major Initiatives

Federal government policies intended to support the expansion of nuclear power include ongoing subsidies to the nuclear industry, ongoing financial support for nuclear reactor exports, promoting CANDU reactors as part of a greenhouse gas abatement strategy and the importation of weapons plutonium to fuel CANDU reactors in Canada.

A.1) Plutonium Fuel Imports

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) proposes to import tonnes of plutonium from Russia and possibly the United States over a 25 year period. This plutonium, extracted from nuclear warheads, would be imported in the form of mixed oxide (MOX) fuel bundles (a mixture of plutonium oxide and uranium oxide) to be used in CANDU reactors located in Canada. Without public consultation on the fundamental policy issue or an environmental assessment, and in spite of an all-party 1998 parliamentary committee recommendation and over 200 municipal resolutions opposing the import of plutonium fuel, the federal government has allowed MOX plutonium from the United States and Russia to be imported into Canada for the purposes of a pilot project at Chalk River Nuclear Laboratories in Ontario.

1) Does your party support cancelling the proposal to import mixed-oxide plutonium fuel for use in CANDU reactors in Canada?

Yes No Undecided

2) Before the mixed-oxide plutonium fuel import project proceeds any further, does your party support full public hearings on the fundamental policy issue of importing weapons plutonium?

Yes No Undecided

A.2) CANDU Reactors and Climate Change

The Government of Canada is currently pushing for the inclusion of nuclear energy as part of a CO₂ reduction strategy in various climate change forums. A climate change forum of particular significance for proponents of nuclear power is the 6th Conference Of the Parties (COP6) which will take place in November 2000 in the Hague. At COP6, the decision will be taken on whether nuclear energy is eligible for the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) will allow Canada and other signatories to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gas reductions to receive "emissions credits" for projects undertaken in developing countries.

1) Does your party agree that the proposals put forward by Canada to reduce CO₂ and other greenhouse gas emissions should not include the use of nuclear reactors?

Yes **No** **Undecided**

2) Does your party agree that nuclear energy should not be included as part of the Clean Development Mechanism?

Yes **No** **Undecided**

3) Does your party support Atomic Energy of Canada Limited or its representatives promoting nuclear power and nuclear reactors in climate change forums and in strategies intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

Yes **No** **Undecided**

4) Does your party agree that environmental, safety and economic concerns associated with the operation of nuclear reactors such as radioactive by-products, high-level nuclear waste and the economic unsustainability of nuclear power should preclude inclusion of nuclear power in national greenhouse gas reduction strategies?

Yes **No** **Undecided**

A.3) Export of CANDU Nuclear Reactors

Export of CANDU reactors has entailed extraordinarily high costs, both in financial and in human terms. In order to secure the export of two CANDU reactors to China, Canada loaned China \$1.5 billion. The ethical cost of CANDU exports has also been high, as CANDU sales have repeatedly involved bribery and have contributed to Canada's abandonment of an effective human rights policy. Human rights violations have taken place in countries given top priority for CANDU sales by AECL (e.g., China, Indonesia, Turkey, South Korea). In

addition, reactor exports inevitably contribute to the risk of proliferation of nuclear weapons.

1) Does your party support ending the export of CANDU reactors?

Yes No Undecided

B Nuclear Phaseout in Canada

B.1) Ending Nuclear Subsidies

Total federal subsidies to Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) from its creation in 1952 to March 31, 1997 amount to \$15.8 billion (1997 dollars). The nuclear industry was created through government intervention, and has always relied on public funding. Despite its failure to become financially self-supporting, the industry claims to be providing a net benefit to the Canadian economy. However, the “opportunity cost” (i.e. what the subsidies would have been worth if the government had invested in more cost-competitive ventures) for the accumulating subsidies to AECL is now over \$160 billion.

1) Does your party agree that all federal funding for and subsidies to AECL should be ended by 2002?

Yes No Undecided

B.2) Sustainable Energy

Canada has reached a crossroads in terms of electricity generation. We have a choice to make: to continue down the environmentally and economically destructive path of fossil and nuclear power, or to chose energy efficiency and renewable energy resources. Federal government subsidies still being provided to the nuclear and fossil sectors dwarf those announced recently for renewables. A transition to a sustainable energy future starts with the recognition that renewable energy is affordable and feasible, but that the political will to level the energy sector “playing field” is missing.

1) Does your party support the creation of a level playing field in the energy sector?

Yes No Undecided

B.3) Moratorium on Uranium Exports

While Canada is often portrayed as a peacemaker nation, the reality is that Canada is the world's largest exporter of uranium which can be used to make nuclear bombs. According to many experts, including a federal-provincial panel on uranium mining in Saskatchewan, "no proven method exists for preventing incorporation of Canadian uranium into military applications."

1) Does your party support a 50 year moratorium on the licensing of all new contracts for uranium exports from Canada?

Yes **No** **Undecided**

B.4) Uranium Tailings

As the world's biggest uranium producer and exporter, Canada has a legacy of uranium mining and milling wastes (known as tailings) strewn across parts of Ontario, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories. Some of the mining companies don't even exist any more, so responsibility for clean-up rests with the government. These so-called low level radioactive wastes will remain hazardous for hundreds of thousands of years. In cases where uranium mining companies are required to come up with closure plans, they propose to simply flood tailings areas to help control acid generation. In many areas the tailings remain exposed to the elements, and are accessible to humans and wildlife.

1) Does your party agree that uranium tailings areas should be isolated from the environment using the best available technology?

Yes **No** **Undecided**

2) Does your party support a 50-year moratorium on the licensing of all new uranium mines?

Yes **No** **Undecided**

B.5) Cleaning up Nuclear Waste Hotspots

Canada launched the Chalk River Nuclear Laboratories in 1944 to participate in the Manhattan Project's development of nuclear weapons. Chalk River, now operated by Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL), and AECL's Whiteshell Nuclear Research Laboratories near Pinawa, Manitoba, are both contaminated with radioactive wastes.

In its 1999-2000 annual report, AECL for the first time listed a liability for decommissioning and site remediation, but this amount of \$377.5 million is only a preliminary estimate of the

real cost, which independent critics have estimated at \$1 billion or more. AECL has also refused to release detailed information to the public about the type and amount of wastes located at these properties.

1) Does your party agree that AECL's decommissioning and site remediation plans (including budgets) for the Chalk River and Whiteshell nuclear laboratories should be subjected to public review?

Yes No Undecided

2) Does your party agree that complete details about radioactive contamination at these AECL properties, as well the cost of current remediation and decommissioning plans should be made public?

Yes No Undecided

B.6) Nuclear Pollution Prevention

Although all radioactive substances are carcinogens — they can cause cancer if ingested or inhaled — they are not regulated in the same way as non-radioactive carcinogens. In many cases, Canadians can be, and are, exposed to cancer risks from radioactive substances that would never be tolerated from non-radioactive carcinogens.

In the 1990's the U.S.-Canada International Joint Commission on the Great Lakes as well as two special government committees in Ontario recommended that radioactive substances be regulated as strictly as non-radioactive carcinogens. One committee recommended that drinking-water standards for radioactive pollution should be tightened *several hundred-fold*, to conform to standards for cancer-causing chemicals like benzene, trihalomethanes, and N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA). None of these recommendations has been implemented.

1) Does your party support the recommendation of the Ontario Task Force on the Primary Prevention of Cancer (March 1995) that the government "impose regulatory limits on radioactive contaminants using the same methodology as that used for chemical contaminants, which would result in more stringent standards"?

Yes No Undecided

2) Does your party agree that nuclear power should be phased out in favour of economic, environmentally safe and renewable energy alternatives?

Yes No Undecided

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412-1 Nicholas Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 7B7, Tel: (613) 789-3634 Fax: (613) 241-2292

Overview of Survey Response Results by Party

Legend

Responses

Y	= Yes
N	= No
U	= Undecided
N/A	= Responded to Survey, but did not answer question as posed in questionnaire
N/R	= Did not respond to Survey

Federal Political Party

Bloc Québécois	= BQ
Canadian Alliance Party	= CAP
Green Party of Canada	= GRN
Liberal Party of Canada	= LIB
New Democratic Party	= NDP
Progressive--Conservative Party	= PC

Responses to this survey were received from political parties between November 10th and 15th, 2000.

Questions	Political Party					
	B Q	CAP	GRN	LIB	NDP	PC
A Canada's Promotion of Nuclear Power - Major Initiatives						
A.1) Plutonium Fuel Imports						
1) Support cancelling import of MOX fuel?	Y	Y	Y	N *	Y	N/R
2) Before proceeding, support public hearings on import of MOX?	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N/R
A.2) CANDU Reactors and Climate Change						
1) Agree - Proposals by Canada to reduce CO ₂ should not include CANDU reactors?	Y	U	Y	N	Y	N/R
2) Agree - Nuclear energy should not be part of Clean Development Mechanism?	Y	U	Y	N	Y	N/R
3) Support AECL promoting nuclear power/ reactors in climate change forums and as part of greenhouse gas reduction strategies?	N	U	N	N/A	N	N/R
4) Agree - Environmental, safety and economic concerns associated with the operation of nuclear reactors should preclude inclusion of nuclear power in national greenhouse gas reduction strategies?	Y	U	Y	N	Y	N/R
A.3) Export of CANDU Nuclear Reactors						
1) Support ending export of CANDU reactors?	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N/R
B Nuclear Phaseout in Canada						
B.1) Ending Nuclear Subsidies						
1) Agree - all federal funding for and subsidies to AECL should be ended by 2002?	Y	U	Y	N	Y	N/R

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Summary of Survey Response Results by Party, page 2 of 2

Questions (continued)	BQ	CAP	GRN	LIB	NDP	PC
B.2) Sustainable Energy						
1) Support the creation of a level playing field in the energy sector?	Y	U	Y	N/A	Y	N/R
B.3) Moratorium on Uranium Exports						
1) Support a 50 year moratorium on the licensing of all new contracts for uranium exports from Canada?	N	N	Y	N	Y	N/R
B.4) Uranium Tailings						
1) Agree - uranium tailings areas should be isolated from the environment using the best available technology?	Y	U	Y	N/A	Y	N/R
2) Support a 50-year moratorium on the licensing of all new uranium mines?	U	N	Y	N	Y	N/R
B.5) Cleaning up Nuclear Waste Hotspots						
1) Agree - AECL decommissioning and site remediation plans (including budgets) for the Chalk River and Whiteshell nuclear laboratories should be subjected to public review?	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	N/R
2) Agree - that complete details about radioactive contamination at these AECL properties, as well the cost of current remediation and decommissioning plans should be made public?	Y	Y	Y	N/A	Y	N/R
B.6) Nuclear Pollution Prevention						
1) Support the recommendation of the Ontario Task Force on the Primary Prevention of Cancer that government "impose regulatory limits on radioactive contaminants using the same methodology as that used for chemical contaminants, which would result in more stringent standards"?	U	U	Y	N/A	Y	N/R
2) Agree - nuclear power should be phased out in favour of economic, environmentally safe and renewable energy alternatives?	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N/R

* Note: The Liberal Party of Canada chose to respond indirectly, in narrative form, to the survey questionnaire. Their answers are extrapolated from this response as well as from positions already on the public record.

The 2000 Federal Election Nuclear Policy Survey is a project of:

Campaign for Nuclear Phaseout, Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility, Canadian Environmental Law Association, Centre d'analyse des politiques énergétiques, Centre de ressources sur la non-violence, Concerned Citizens of Manitoba, Concerned Citizens of Renfrew County, Energy Probe, Greenpeace Canada, Inter-Church Uranium Committee, Mouvement Vert Mauricie, Northwatch, Nuclear Awareness Project, Sierra Club of Canada, Women's Network on Health and the Environment.