

CARP Energy/Electoral Poll Report March 21, 2013

Key Findings - Energy Issues

Virtually all CARP members own their homes and they pay, on average, about \$270 a month during the winter in energy costs, or about 15% of their monthly income, on average. Two thirds have time-of-use meters and there is no consensus on whether they save energy or not.

Many think they are paying more than a fair market price for energy, but one quarter believes the cost is fair. Three quarters agree they spent more on energy this winter, while there is a split on whether they are spending more or less or the same amount since they retired. Changes in energy use have resulted in either, more conscientious use, or, in some cases, greater usage because retired members are home more.

Many say they are more concerned about the cost of energy now, but fewer are concerned about the environmental implications. One fifth occasionally have to make economic trade-offs between paying energy bills and other bills, and the strong majority agree governments should subsidize energy costs for low income seniors.

Fair Elections Act

While one half of members initially approve of the proposed Fair Elections Act, far more agree voter participation is a problem than say this of voter fraud. They agree the Act will limit voter participation more than it will prevent fraud. There is wide agreement public hearings should be held on the Act.

While all members have official photo ID, one third voted using the VIC last time, which the Act will forbid, and a twentieth have had to be vouched in the past (also prohibited by the Act), a number which may account for as many as 10,000 or more members.

Electoral Preference

The Liberals maintain their lead over the Conservatives in our latest wave of polling, while the NDP remain a distant third.

Detailed Findings - Energy

The vast majority of CARP members own their homes (91%), and are therefore in a position to manage their energy usage.

Do you own or rent your home?

Own	91%
Rent	9%
Neither (live with family, etc)	1%

On average, members pay about \$270 a month for energy costs during the winter, although one tenth pay more than twice this amount (\$500+ - 9%).

About how much do you spend on energy, including heating and electricity every month during the winter?

Less than \$100	6%
\$100 to \$150	13%
\$150 to \$200	15%
\$200 to \$250	17%
\$250 to \$300	13%
\$300 to \$400	13%
\$400 to \$500	7%
More than \$500	9%
DON'T PAY ENERGY COST	4%
DON'T KNOW	2%
AVG. PER MONTH	\$270

On average, about 15% of members' monthly income goes to energy costs, although about one-in-seven pay more than this (15%).

Overall, what percentage of your monthly income goes to energy costs, both heating and electricity?

10% or less	47%
10% to 20%	27%
20% to 30%	10%
30% to 40%	3%
40% too 50%	1%
More than 50%	1%
DON'T PAY ENERGY COST	4%
DON'T KNOW	8%
AVG. PERCENTAGE	15%

Six-in-ten members have smart meters (61%), and they are evenly split on whether these devices affect their energy usage (30%) or not (32%).

If you have a smart meter or a time-of-use meter, has it affected your energy costs?

YES	30%
A great deal	10%
Somewhat	20%
NO	32%
Not much	18%
Not at all	14%
DON'T HAVE SMART METER	29%
DON'T KNOW	10%

Four-in-ten members say they are paying more for energy than a fair market price (41%), and most say energy prices are artificially high (29%). One quarter say they are paying fair market price (25%), while very few say they are paying less (5%).

Are you paying more or less for energy than a fair market price for energy?

MORE	41%
Energy prices artificially high	29%
(OTHER)	12%
Fair market price	25%
LESS	5%
Energy prices artificially low	4%
(OTHER)	1%
MARGIN IN FAVOUR OF "MORE"	+36
DON'T KNOW	29%

Three quarters of members say they are spending more on energy and heating this winter than in the past (77%), although most say this is “somewhat” more (52%).

Were your heating and energy costs more expensive this winter than in the past?

MORE	77%
Much more expensive	25%
Somewhat more expensive	52%
No more expensive	14%
Less expensive	2%
DON'T PAY ENERGY COSTS	3%
DON'T KNOW	5%

Members are evenly split on whether they use more (29%) or less (27%) energy now they are retired, while about a third say their usage hasn't changed (32%).

How has your energy use changed since you retired?

USE LESS	27%
Much less	3%
Less	24%
Neither more nor less	32%
USE MORE	29%
More	26%
Much more	3%
NOT RETIRED	7%
DON'T KNOW	4%

One third of members are turning lights off and time shifting appliance use now (33%) and a further quarter are actually using more now because they're home more, and these are the two biggest changes to energy usage.

How has your energy usage changed specifically?

More conscientious/turn off lights, etc	33%
Using more because I'm home	27%
Moved to smaller home/apartment/seniors' home	6%
Switched energy/heating source/supplier	4%
Sometimes go without paying bills	1%
Seniors' discounts/credits/rebates	1%
OTHER	3%
HAVE NOT CHANGED ENERGY USAGE	19%
NOT RETIRED	4%

Four-in-ten members are more concerned about the cost of energy today (42%), while about one quarter are no more concerned now (23%). Somewhat fewer have concerns about their home's energy use (16%).

How have your attitudes to energy costs changed since you retired?

More concerned about cost of energy	42%
No more concerned than before retirement	23%
More concerned about how my home uses energy	16%
More concerned about environmental impact	9%
Less concerned than before retirement	1%
OTHER	2%
NOT RETIRED	7%

One fifth of members say they have to make trade-offs between paying energy bills and paying for other things (18%).

Do you have to make trade-offs between paying energy bills and paying for other necessities?

YES	18%
Often	2%
Sometimes	9%
Rarely	7%
NO	82%

Seven-in-ten members agree governments should subsidize energy costs for low income seniors (70%).

Do you agree or disagree governments should subsidize energy costs for low income seniors?

AGREE	70%
Agree strongly	26%
Agree	44%
DISAGREE	21%
Disagree	13%
Disagree strongly	8%
DON'T KNOW	10%

One quarter have switched to high efficiency furnaces (27%), while one fifth have sealed windows and doors (18%) in an effort to update their homes. About a tenth have moved (12%) or re-insulated (10%).

What updates have you made to your home to save energy?

Switched to high efficiency furnace	27%
Window/door sealing	18%
Moved to more efficient home	12%
Re-insulated	10%
Switched fuel	4%
NOT A HOMEOWNER	8%
OTHER	21%

Detailed Findings - Fair Elections Act

One half of members approve of the proposed Fair Elections Act (53%), one fifth “strongly” (20%) and one third less emphatically (33%). Just more than a third disapprove of the Act (37%).

The government has introduced a bill revising the Elections Act in several ways, including putting an end to the practice of one person vouching for the identity of another, and restricting the kind of official photo ID that will be required to vote. Do you approve or disapprove of this bill?

APPROVE	53%
Approve strongly	20%
Approve	33%
DISAPPROVE	37%
Disapprove	17%
Disapprove strongly	20%
DON'T KNOW	12%

While 4-in-10 (42%) agree voter fraud is a problem in Canada (it is not by any measurable standard), almost all agree voter participation is a problem (94%) and fully one half agree strongly (53%).

Do you agree or disagree voter fraud is a problem in Canada/Do you agree or disagree voter participation is a problem in Canada?

	Fraud	Participation
AGREE	42%	94%
Agree strongly	9%	53%
Agree	33%	41%
DISAGREE	36%	3%
Disagree	26%	3%
Disagree strongly	10%	-
DON'T KNOW	22%	3%

Two thirds of members agree the Fair Elections Act will reduce voter participation (34%), the problem all see as pervasive, while just one quarter agree the Act will reduce voter fraud (24%), a problem not seen as important.

The government says this bill will reduce voter fraud by, among other things, ending the practice of using the Voter Identification Card as acceptable ID. Critics say this bill will lead to lower voter participation. What do you think will be the outcome?

Reduce voter fraud	24%
No effect	27%
Reduce voter participation	34%
MARGIN IN FAVOUR OF “REDUCE PARTICIPATION”	+10
OTHER/DON'T KNOW	16%

Two thirds agree public hearings should be held before this bill is enacted (65%).

Do you agree or disagree public hearings should be held before making these changes to the Elections Act?

AGREE	65%
Agree strongly	30%
Agree	35%
DISAGREE	27%
Disagree	22%
Disagree strongly	5%
DON'T KNOW	8%

All members have official photo ID (99%).

Do you have official photo ID with your current address, such as a driver's license or passport?

Yes	99%
No	1%

One tenth of members or their friends have had to be vouched at a poll in the past (10%). If the 4% of members who have had to vouch is projected up to the total CARP membership, this could represent more than 10,000 members.

Have you or has anyone you know ever had to have someone vouch for your identity at a polling place in an election?

YES	10%
Me	4%
Someone I know	6%
NO	90%

One third of members used the Voter Identification Card (VIC) to vote last time (33%), while two thirds used official photo ID (62%).

What form of ID did you use in the last federal election of May, 2011?

Official photo ID like a driver's license	62%
Voter Identification Card (VIC)	33%
Addressed utility bill	1%
OTHER	2%
DID NOT VOTE	2%

Electoral Preference

Since the surge in Liberal popularity noted five months ago, when they peaked at 49%, the Conservatives and the Liberals have converged again, and then diverged, with the Liberals in the lead at 45% and the Conservatives in second at 35%. The NDP are the third party at 14%.

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are needed to see this picture.

More than 2900 CARP Poll™ panel members responded to this poll between March 8 and 10, 2014. The margin of error for a probability sample this size is about plus or minus 2%, 19 times out of 20