

For Immediate Release
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Local Governments Should Have a Bigger Piece of the Pie

VANCOUVER - Local government officials meet at the Union of BC Municipalities the week of September 24th through 28th. Climate change, increased social challenges and aging infrastructure will be hot topics.

The public is on their side. Polling by the Columbia Institute Centre for Civic Governance shows that British Columbians trust their local politicians twice as much as federal politicians and one and a half time times more than provincial politicians. The numbers are even stronger in Ontario.

The polling also shows that 65% of people in BC and 53% in Ontario are prepared to pay more taxes to support action on climate change. 69% of people in BC and 71% of people in Ontario want senior levels of government to give local governments more regular and more flexible funding.

“Local governments right now get only 8% of tax revenue in Canada. 92% of tax revenue goes to Provincial and Federal coffers, and yet local governments make decisions that impact at least 50% of carbon emissions: the most serious threat to global warming”, said Columbia Institute Executive Director Charley Beresford.

“Local governments are dealing with the impact of sky-high housing costs, aging infrastructure and changing economies. They’re the closest to the ground and very well positioned to take steps against global warming, but they’re hamstrung by lack of resources. They need a better deal”, said former BC Premier and Chair of the Federal Government’s recent task force on cities, Michael Harcourt.”

Polling was conducted by Strategic Communications March 15th –27th, 2007 and June 5th – 11th, 2007 in BC and Ontario. The results are accurate within plus or minus 4 percentage points 19 times out of 20.

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