Lethbridge Kyoto Study

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City of Lethbridge

A garden city located in southwestern Alberta, the city of Lethbridge is home to 72,717 residents, 57,674 of which are 18 years of age or older.

The city is divided into six census areas, two each for its South, North and West geographic areas. It is divided north and south by Alberta highway 3, and east west by the Oldman River.

The south side's 27,941 residents represent 38.4% of the city's total population. West Lethbridge (22,429) and north Lethbridge (22,347) represent 30.8% and 30.7% respectively.

Lethbridge residents are caught between many competing views on the Kyoto environmental protocol. One the one hand, their federal government is insistent that it will ratify the accord by the end of 2002.

The federal government is supported by Lethbridge City council, which has passed a resolution in support of Kyoto. On the other hand, the Alberta government continues its crusade against the accord.

As the data below indicates, the Alberta government appears to have the momentum of shifting public opinion on its side.

Methodology

This report is based on data collected by Interdisciplinary Studies students and Communication Arts students enrolled in STS270 – Social Science Research Methods and PSC150 – Local Government at Lethbridge Community College in the fall of 2002. Students conducted telephone interviews during February and October of 2002 using numbers drawn randomly from the Lethbridge telephone directory.

Using this method, the October sample size of 575 yields a margin of error of $\pm$ 4.1%, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data. The February sample size of 413 yields a margin of error of $\pm$ 4.8%, 19 times out of 20.

The demographic data presented on page 10 demonstrate that, within acceptable limits, the sample October sample accurately represents the demographic distribution of the voting age population within the city of Lethbridge. The February sample produced similar results.

These data are part of a larger study of the opinions and attitudes of Lethbridge residents conducted by the Citizen Society Research Lab at LCC.

The following represents a selection of our results.

Ratify Kyoto (October 2002) (%)

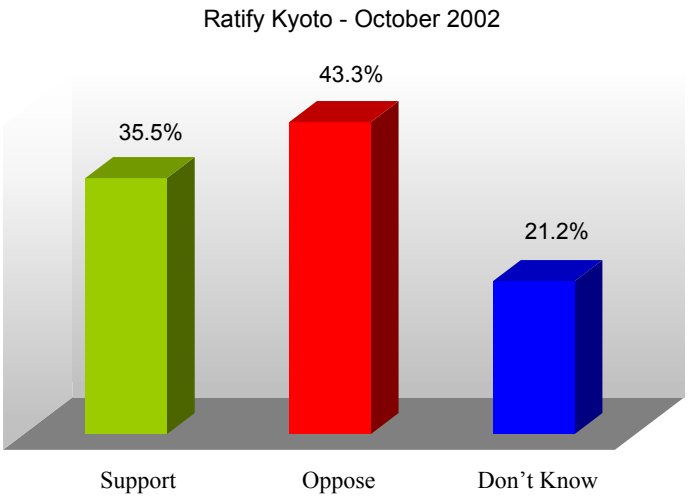
In the ongoing battle for public opinion over the issue of Canadian ratification of the Kyoto Environmental Protocol, it appears as though the anti-Kyoto forces are winning the day. As of October 2002, 43.3% of Lethbridge residents stood opposed to the federal government's intention to ratify the Kyoto accord. Just over one-third (35.5%) of respondents expressed support for ratification. Fully one-in-five (21.2%) stated they are still undecided as to whether or not Kyoto should be ratified.

Men are much more likely to be anti-Kyoto (52.0%) than are women (36.2%). However, women were twice as likely to be undecided (27.9%) than were men (13.9%).

A generational divide was measured in that both boomers (those aged 45-64) and seniors (65 and older) expressed majority opposition to Kyoto while younger voters were more evenly split in their support for and opposition to the Kyoto.

Interestingly, income did not play a significant role in determining opinion differences. Wealthier voters were only slightly more opposed to ratification than were middle income or poorer voters.

Education levels and the area of the city in which respondents live did not alter opinion significantly.



Change in Opinion Since February 2002 (%)

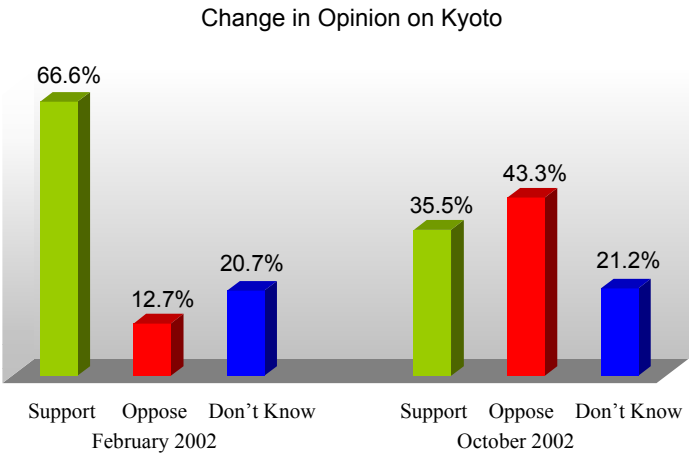
Lethbridge resident's opinions concerning the federal government's plan to ratify the Kyoto Environmental Protocol have shifted dramatically during 2002. As the accompanying graph indicates, in February of 2002 fully two-thirds of all Lethbridge residents (66.6%) expressed support for ratifying the Kyoto accord. With one-in-five residents undecided (20.7%), only 12.7% expressed opposition.

As was indicated above, support levels have been cut in half to only 35.5% while opposition has almost quadrupled to 43.3% with one-in-five remaining undecided (21.2%).

Male opinion has shifted more dramatically than female opinion with men moving from being most supportive in February (69.7%) to most being opposed in October (52.0%).

Similar dramatic shifts in opinion were measures in all demographic categories.

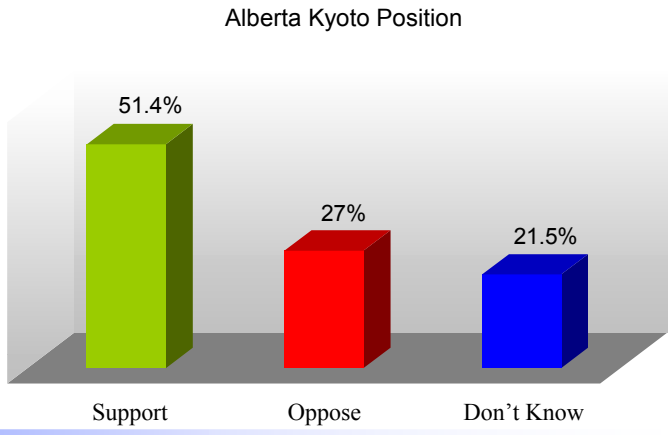
These data indicate that the anti-Kyoto forces have clearly won over many converts to their position and, overall, are winning the rhetorical war on this issue in the city of Lethbridge.



Alberta Government Postion on Kyoto (%)

Lethbridge residents also expressed very strong support for the Alberta government's position on Kyoto. By a two-to-one margin, Lethbridge residents indicated they support their provincial government's position of opposing the Kyoto ratification. Fully 51.4% indicated support while only about one-quarter (27%) indicated opposition.

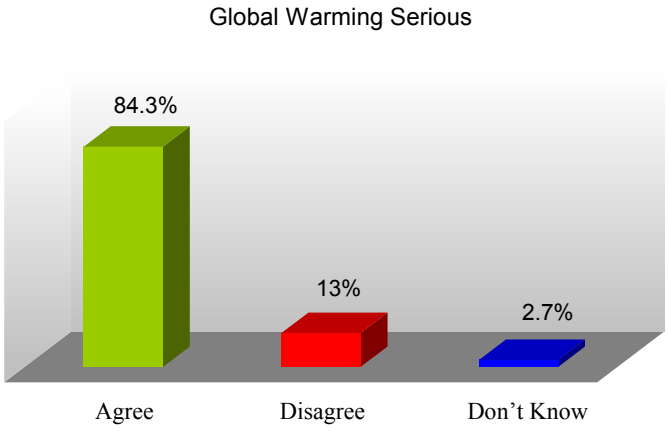
Men and older voters were most supportive of the Alberta government's stand.



Global Warming a Serious Problem (%)

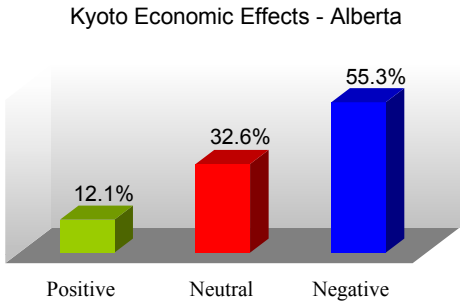
Despite their opposition to the Kyoto accord and their support for their provincial government's opposition, the vast majority of Lethbridge residents believe that global warming is a serious problem. Fully 84.3% believe global warming to be a problem while only 13% disagree.

Women and boomers (aged 45-64) were most likely to view global warming as serious problem.



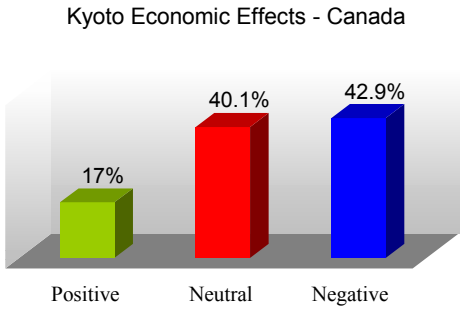
Economic Effects of Kyoto on Canada (%)

Most of the opposition to Kyoto ratification is based on the perception that Kyoto implementation will have a negative effect on the Alberta economy. When asked to rate the potential effects on the Alberta economy of ratifying Kyoto, a clear majority (55.3%) stated negative while one-third (32.6%) stated neutral. Only 12.1% think Kyoto will have a positive economic impact on Alberta.



Economic Effects of Kyoto on Canada (%)

Lethbridge residents are also predicting negative economic effects for the entire Canadian economy if Kyoto is ratified. Although 17% thought Kyoto would benefit the Canadian economy, two-in-five thought it would at best have neutral effects while a similar number thought Kyoto would negatively impact the Canadian economy.



Tabular Data

Canada Should Ratify Kyoto (October 2002) (%)

Ratify Kyoto (October)	(%)
Support	35.5
Oppose	43.3
Don't Know-Unsure	21.2

Ratify Kyoto by Gender (October)

	Male	Female	Total
Support	34.1	36.9	35.5
Oppose	52.0	35.2	43.3
Don't Know-Unsure	13.9	27.9	21.2

Ratify Kyoto by Area of City (October)

	South	North	West
Support	34.2	37.1	37.3
Oppose	44.0	37.9	43.5
Don't Know-Unsure	21.8	25.0	19.2

Ratify Kyoto by Age (October)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 plus
Support	39.4	35.3	31.6	32.1
Oppose	40.6	38.0	50.3	51.3
Don't Know-Unsure	20.0	26.7	18.1	16.7

Ratify Kyoto by Income (October)

	Under $30,000	$30,000-$60,000	Over $60,000
Support	36.3	35.4	36.0
Oppose	41.1	44.6	46.3
Don't Know-Unsure	22.6	20.0	17.6

Ratify Kyoto by Education (October)

	HS or less	Some PS	College	University
Support	31.1	38.9	29.5	40.1
Oppose	39.5	44.3	46.2	42.4
Don't Know-Unsure	29.4	16.8	24.2	17.4

Canada Should Ratify Kyoto (February 2002) (%)

Ratify Kyoto (February)	(%)
Support	66.6
Oppose	12.7
Don't Know-Unsure	20.7

Ratify Kyoto by Gender (February)

	Male	Female	Total
Support	69.7	63.6	66.5
Oppose	18.8	7.2	12.8
Don't Know-Unsure	11.5	29.2	20.7

Ratify Kyoto by Area of City (February)

	South	North	West
Support	66.3	65.2	68.3
Oppose	14.4	11.6	11.0
Don't Know-Unsure	19.2	23.2	20.7

Ratify Kyoto by Age (February)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 plus
Support	75.3	69.6	62.3	65.9
Oppose	9.3	9.4	13.7	15.3
Don't Know-Unsure	15.5	21.0	24.0	18.8

Ratify Kyoto by Income (February)

	Under $30,000	$30,000-$60,000	Over $60,000
Support	64.8	66.1	69.2
Oppose	8.8	16.4	12.8
Don't Know-Unsure	26.4	17.5	17.9

Ratify Kyoto by Education (February)

	HS or less	Some PS	College	University
Support	67.5	68.3	59.9	70.8
Oppose	8.7	9.6	19.7	11.5
Don't Know-Unsure	23.8	22.1	20.4	17.7

Alberta Kyoto Position Correct (%)	
Support	51.4
Oppose	27.0
Don't Know-Unsure	21.5

Alberta Kyoto Position Correct by Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Support	57.7	45.7	51.4
Oppose	28.7	25.7	27.0
Don't Know-Unsure	13.	28.7	21.5

Alberta Kyoto Position Correct by Area of City

	South	North	West
Support	50.2	54.1	49.5
Oppose	28.0	20.3	31.3
Don't Know-Unsure	21.8	25.6	19.3

Alberta Kyoto Position Correct by Age

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 plus
Support	48.2	48.7	58.3	52.6
Oppose	29.4	28.0	21.8	29.5
Don't Know-Unsure	22.4	23.3	19.9	17.9

Alberta Kyoto Position Correct by Income

	Under $30,000	$30,000-$60,000	Over $60,000
Support	48.2	54.1	50.7
Oppose	28.6	25.8	33.1
Don't Know-Unsure	23.2	20.1	16.2

Alberta Kyoto Position Correct by Education

	HS or less	Some PS	College	University
Support	46.7	60.0	57.4	43.0
Oppose	21.7	24.0	17.8	40.1
Don't Know-Unsure	31.7	16.0	24.8	16.9

Global Warming a Serious Problem (%)

Global Warming Serious	(%)
Agree	84.3
Disagree	13.0
Don't Know-Unsure	2.7

Global Warming Serious by Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Agree	80.0	88.0	84.3
Disagree	17.8	8.6	13.0
Don't Know-Unsure	2.2	3.3	2.7

Global Warming Serious by Area of City

	South	North	West
Agree	81.3	88.8	85.3
Disagree	14.2	9.7	13.7
Don't Know-Unsure	4.4	1.5	1.0

Global Warming Serious by Age

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 plus
Agree	83.6	85.4	89.2	73.1
Disagree	14.6	12.6	8.3	19.2
Don't Know-Unsure	1.8	2.0	2.5	7.7

Global Warming Serious by Income

	Under $30,000	$30,000-$60,000	Over $60,000
Agree	83.9	84.6	86.8
Disagree	13.1	14.4	9.6
Don't Know-Unsure	3.0	1.0	3.7

Global Warming Serious by Education

	HS or less	Some PS	College	University
Agree	81.7	83.3	89.4	82.7
Disagree	14.2	14.7	7.6	15.0
Don't Know-Unsure	4.2	2.0	3.0	2.3

Economic Effects of Kyoto on Alberta (%)

Economic Effects on Alberta	(%)
Positive	12.1
Neutral	32.6
Negative	55.3

Economic Effects on Alberta by Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Positive	13.2	10.9	12.1
Neutral	26.5	38.5	32.6
Negative	60.3	50.6	55.3

Economic Effects on Alberta by Area of City

	South	North	West
Positive	11.5	15.8	10.3
Neutral	33.7	28.1	33.7
Negative	54.8	56.1	56.0

Economic Effects on Alberta by Age

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 plus
Positive	8.6	11.5	12.8	17.6
Neutral	35.8	38.8	20.6	35.3
Negative	55.6	49.6	66.7	47.1

Economic Effects on Alberta by Income

	Under $30,000	$30,000-$60,000	Over $60,000
Positive	9.0	13.3	15.4
Neutral	34.0	31.7	27.7
Negative	56.9	55.0	56.9

Economic Effects on Alberta by Education

	HS or less	Some PS	College	University
Positive	12.9	10.9	12.9	11.9
Neutral	40.6	31.9	31.9	28.3
Negative	46.5	57.2	55.2	59.7

Economic Effects of Kyoto on Canada (%)

Economic Effects on Canada	(%)
Positive	17.0
Neutral	40.1
Negative	42.9

Economic Effects on Canada by Gender

	Male	Female	Total
Positive	20.0	14.0	17.0
Neutral	31.4	48.8	40.1
Negative	48.6	37.2	42.9

Economic Effects on Canada by Area of City

	South	North	West
Positive	17.2	14.0	19.5
Neutral	41.1	44.7	35.1
Negative	41.6	41.2	45.4

Economic Effects on Canada by Age

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 plus
Positive	23.7	12.3	12.7	17.9
Neutral	35.5	43.5	36.6	49.3
Negative	40.8	44.2	50.7	32.8

Economic Effects on Canada by Income

	Under $30,000	$30,000-$60,000	Over $60,000
Positive	19.4	16.1	16.2
Neutral	42.4	38.9	39.2
Negative	38.2	45.0	44.6

Economic Effects on Canada by Education

	HS or less	Some PS	College	University
Positive	16.0	19.9	14.4	17.6
Neutral	50.0	37.5	40.7	35.2
Negative	34.0	42.6	44.9	47.2

Demographics

Gender	(%)
Male	47.6
Female	52.4

Area of City	(%)
South	40.4
North	24.1
West	35.5

Income	(%)
$30,000 or less	33.6
$30,001-$60,000	39.1
Over $60,000	27.3

Age	(%)
18-29	30.7
30-44	27.1
45-64	28.3
65 or older	13.9

Education	(%)
High School or less	20.8
Some post-second	26.1
College-tech grad	23.0
University grad	30.1

Questionnaire

- Canada should ratify the Kyoto protocol.
- The Alberta government is doing the right thing by opposing Canadian ratification of the Kyoto protocol.
- How would you rate the potential economic effects on the Canadian economy of ratifying the Kyoto protocol?
- How would you rate the potential economic effects on the Alberta economy of ratifying the Kyoto protocol?
- Gender
- Age
- Education
- Income
- Area of city