
2018 BC Freshwater Public Opinion Insights Topline Report



Results of a public opinion survey conducted June 11-21st, 2018

By McAllister Opinion Research



McAllister is an accredited member of ESOMAR, the international professional body
for public opinion research and market intelligence.



Survey Methodology

Survey results are based on an online survey of 1,619 English-speaking B.C. residents aged 18 years or older, fielded June 11-21st, 2018, inclusive. The online survey platform was programmed for both mobile and desktop response.

Respondents for this survey were recruited from a professionally accredited panel designed to replicate a cross-section of the B.C. population. Weighting is applied to the data according to Statistics Canada figures on province, region, age and gender.

The following table describes the weighted and unweighted sample size in each region, as well as the associated margin of error* for a single parameter in a random sample of the same size.

	Unweighted Sample n	Weighted Sample n	Margin of Error @95 Confidence	Margin of Error @90 Confidence
Lower Mainland	897	995	+/- 3.3%	+/- 2.8%
Vancouver Island / Coast	356	277	+/- 5.2%	+/- 4.4%
Southern Interior	260	293	+/- 6.1%	+/- 5.1%
Northern Interior	106	54	+/- 9.5%	+/- 8.0%
Total Sample	1619	1619	+/- 2.5%	+/- 2.0%

**Online panels are not strictly a probability sample, and therefore Bayesian inference is used here as an analogue of margin of error. Margin of error estimate for 'Total Sample' accounts for design effect of n1500 using the Lohr formula which is more conservative than Kish.*

The following memo includes some but not all of the data that was collected during this survey. The order of questions presented in this document does not reflect the original order of the questionnaire.



3. Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following descriptions of freshwater lakes, rivers, and streams in your region of BC.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
A public resource	72	25	3
A living ecosystem	71	27	2
A life support system	69	28	3
Vital to my quality of life	67	30	3
Clean	64	29	7
A major source of local pride	64	32	5
Abundant	61	34	5
Major economic asset	61	34	5
Healthy	57	35	8
Key to prosperity	54	41	5

4. How concerned you are, if at all, about each of the following issues related to fresh water in your region?

	Total concern	Extremely	Very	Somewhat	Not very	Not at all	Unsure
Pollution of lakes, rivers, streams, or groundwater	85	25	27	33	10	3	3
Loss of fish, birds, plants, & animals	82	25	26	31	13	4	3
Damage to aquatic habitat	81	24	26	31	12	3	3
Urbanization & development	82	23	27	32	11	3	4
Contamination of drinking water	77	26	23	28	17	4	2
Water scarcity & drought	69	18	19	32	22	7	2
Flooding	66	13	17	36	23	8	3

5. How concerned are you about the potential for a major water crisis in your community in the next few years?

	%	Combined %
Already a crisis in my community	3	57
Very concerned	19	
Somewhat concerned	35	
Not very concerned	29	42
Not at all concerned	13	

6. If nothing is done to improve the management of water resources in BC, how serious a problem do you think it will be in 10 years?

	%	Combined %
Very serious	39	87
Somewhat serious	48	
Not so serious	10	13
Not serious at all	3	

- 7. Industrial water users in B.C. currently pay about \$2 for every million litres of water they extract to help cover the cost of fresh water protection. In other parts of Canada, industries pay much more, between \$70 and \$140 per million litres. Please say how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with the following statements on the issue of royalties for industrial water use.**

	Total agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Industry should pay increased royalties for their use & extraction of water to help pay for water protection in B.C.	80	46	34	18	2	1
Higher water royalties create a financial incentive for industries to waste less water, helping preserve it for others.	75	41	34	22	3	1
The royalties paid by industry for water use in B.C. are far too low.	74	48	26	22	2	2
Industry have more than enough money to pay a fair price for water.	70	41	29	24	4	2
Increasing the royalties that industry pays for water use in B.C. will discourage investment & harm our economy.	36	13	23	29	24	11
Canadian-based companies should not have to pay higher royalties for their use or extraction of fresh water.	28	10	18	32	25	15

8. Please say how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with the statements below.

	Total agree	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Fresh water is our most precious resource.	91	67	24	7	2	1
Fresh water is a basic human right not to be denied or sold off by governments or corporations.	85	62	23	11	3	1
Protecting B.C.'s rivers, lakes & streams is one of the most important things we can do to support wild salmon.	87	53	34	11	2	1
Wild salmon are vital to British Columbia's heritage & cultural identity.	82	50	32	14	2	1
Fresh water is a public resource & nobody should be able to own it.	80	52	28	15	4	2
Wild salmon stocks are vital to our food security & the survival of nature.	78	41	37	16	4	2
Rights to use water should be decided according to community priorities and values, not just who can afford it or had access first.	78	45	33	16	4	2
The problems we face with fresh water in B.C. are a management and planning issue, not a scarcity issue.	75	33	42	18	6	1
Recognition of local First Nations' values, laws and customs would result in greater protection for BC's rivers, lakes, & streams.	56	26	30	27	9	8
Adopting stricter rules for protecting our fresh water will harm our economy.	24	10	14	26	31	20
A company that pays for its water should be able to do whatever it wants with that water.	24	7	17	19	24	33
Fresh water is not really an issue in B.C., because we have so much.	20	5	15	19	35	25
Governments should be allowed to let small, endangered runs of wild salmon go extinct.	14	5	9	15	20	50