

ELECTRICITY IN ONTARIO: PUBLIC PRIORITIES & PREFERENCES

**Clear Majority (60%) Prefer Generating Electricity with Hydro,
over Nuclear (16%), Natural Gas (15%), and Coal (3%)**

**However, 54% Support using Nuclear Power
and Only a Third (34%) are Opposed**

**Among a Divided Public, Protecting the Environment (36%)
is the Leading Public Priority for Managing the Electricity System,
Followed Closely by Ensuring a Stable System (32%) and
Keeping Electricity Bills as Low as Possible (30%)**

From October 12 to 18, 2005, Leger Marketing – the Canadian representative of the Gallup International Association – conducted telephone interviews among a randomly selected, representative sample of 1,000 adult Ontarians. The margin of error for the total sample is $\pm 3.1\%$, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current regional, gender, and age Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of the province. Across the regions, sub-samples are as follows: Toronto (n=250; $\pm 6.2\%$), 905 Belt (n=250; $\pm 6.2\%$), Hamilton-Niagara (n=135; $\pm 8.4\%$), Southwest (n=135; $\pm 8.4\%$), East (n=135; $\pm 8.4\%$), and North (n=95; $\pm 10.1\%$). Discrepancies in totals are due to rounding.

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Top Public Preference for Electricity Generation: Hydro (60%)

- By far, hydro (60%) is the top public preference for electricity generation in Ontario, particularly in the Hamilton-Niagara region and the North (69% each).
- Nuclear and natural gas power are both a distant second (16% and 15%, respectively), and just 3% prefer coal-fired electricity generation.
- The highest preference ratings for nuclear power were in the East (22%), the GTA (19%), and among men (22% compared to 10% of women).

Public Preferences: Current Major Electricity Generation Sources							
<i>Q1/2 [Rotated]. There are a number of ways to generate electricity, but I would like you to think specifically about the existing power generation methods that can provide LARGE amounts of electricity. Now, I am going to read to you the FOUR current major sources of electricity, and I would like you to tell me which ONE you would most prefer be used to generate electricity in Ontario.</i>							
Region	ONTARIO	Toronto	905 Belt (Suburbs)	Hamilton-Niagara	Southwest	East	North
Hydro or Water-Generated	60%	64%	56%	69%	57%	56%	69%
Nuclear	16%	17%	20%	13%	12%	22%	5%
Natural Gas	15%	12%	18%	12%	18%	11%	19%
Coal-Fired	3%	2%	1%	1%	6%	6%	4%
Don't Know/Refused	5%	4%	5%	5%	7%	6%	3%

Majority Support for Electricity Generation via Nuclear Power

- Despite a three-in-five preference for hydro, a majority (54%) of Ontarians support the use of nuclear power to generate electricity – and only a third (34%) are opposed. Notably, those who are strongly supportive (21%) outnumber those who are strongly opposed (16%).
- Support is highest in the 905 Belt (63%) and Hamilton-Niagara (56%), whereas the North (38%) is the only region where less than half are supportive – indeed, 50% are opposed.
- Women (43% vs. 65% of men) and the Under \$40K income bracket (48% vs. 57% of the \$40-\$60K bracket and 63% of the \$60K+ bracket) are also more likely to oppose the use of nuclear power.
- In terms of public priorities, support for nuclear power is strongest among those who say a stable electricity system is the top priority when managing the electricity system (72%). Majority support is also found among those who prioritize keeping electricity bills as low as possible (51%). Among those who prioritize environmental protection, 41% are supportive compared to 48% who are opposed.

Public Support for Nuclear Power							
Q3. And thinking specifically about nuclear power, overall, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the use of nuclear power for generating electricity in Ontario?							
Region	ONTARIO	Toronto	905 Belt (Suburbs)	Hamilton-Niagara	Southwest	East	North
SUPPORT	54%	52%	63%	56%	52%	53%	38%
Strongly support	21%	17%	23%	21%	18%	29%	13%
Somewhat support	33%	35%	39%	35%	34%	24%	25%
Somewhat oppose	18%	18%	19%	19%	17%	17%	22%
Strongly oppose	16%	20%	10%	15%	14%	17%	27%
OPPOSE	34%	37%	29%	34%	31%	34%	50%
Neither support nor oppose [Volunteered]	6%	5%	2%	7%	10%	6%	6%
Don't Know/Refused	6%	6%	6%	3%	7%	7%	6%



Managing Ontario’s Electricity System is a Balancing Act

- Among a divided public, protecting the environment from pollution (36%) is the leading public priority for managing the electricity system, followed closely by ensuring a stable system (32%) and keeping electricity bills as low as possible (30%).
- In addition to the regional differences illustrated below, women are more likely to prioritize environmental protection (42% vs. 30% of men) whereas men (40% vs. 25% women) are more likely to prioritize a stable electricity system.

Public Priorities for Management of Ontario’s Electricity System							
<i>Q1/2 [Rotated]. Thinking about Ontario’s electricity system overall, what is MOST important to you? That is, of the following aspects of the system, what ONE do you feel the provincial government should make their TOP priority when managing the electricity system?</i>							
Region	ONTARIO	Toronto	905 Belt (Suburbs)	Hamilton-Niagara	Southwest	East	North
Protecting the environment from pollution	36%	43%	34%	30%	36%	33%	30%
Ensuring a stable system	32%	28%	34%	32%	28%	45%	27%
Keeping electricity bills as low as possible	30%	26%	30%	37%	33%	21%	39%
Don’t Know/Refused	2%	3%	2%	1%	3%	1%	4%

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For more information, please contact our spokesperson:

Craig Worden
Associate Vice President, Public Affairs
Leger Marketing

416-815-0330
cworden@legermarketing.com

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www.legermarketing.com