



Alternatives North

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Alternatives North Releases Devolution Polling Results

Alternatives North today released the full results of an EKOS Research Associates poll of NWT citizens' attitudes towards devolution of powers from the federal to territorial governments.

Poll results indicate the public is very much dissatisfied with consultation on devolution. Respondents are twice as likely to describe prior consultation efforts as inadequate (61% feel it inadequate and 34% think efforts so far have been sufficient).

There is overwhelming support for a plebiscite. Just over 7 in 10 respondents in NWT think that residents should have a vote on the proposed deal with Ottawa on devolution of powers.

"Given that only two MLAs voted in favour of holding a plebiscite, this finding shows how far out of step Cabinet and Assembly Members are with the wishes of the public," says Alternatives North spokesperson Gordon Hamre.

The most significant overall concern for NWT residents is for the environment, followed closely the economy and then the cost of living. Devolution is well back in the list of issues that are top of mind. Aboriginal residents are twice as likely to select the environment as the most significant issue over non-Aboriginal residents.

"Also notable is the public perception of the economic fairness of the devolution deal," Hamre says, "Significant numbers of respondents are uncertain whether the NWT is getting a 'fair deal' in the re-division of resource revenues and control over lands and waters." There is very strong public support for some further process of public consultations – nearly three quarters of the 400 survey respondents think further consultation is required.

On the devolution deal, more men than women think it is a good deal and non-Aboriginal residents support it more strongly than Aboriginal citizens. Those that consider themselves well informed on the deal also think it is a good agreement compared to those who say they are not well informed. Non-Aboriginal and newer residents tend to think the deal is a fair one.

"Clearly GNWT has not done an adequate job consulting with NWT residents on devolution. The majority support devolution but the real issue is how will it be implemented and how the GNWT will use those new powers. Is the current deal in the interests of corporations and the federal government or in the interests of sustainability and the residents of the NWT? The clock is ticking and we still have no consultation plan or schedule and we are very worried," said Gordon Hamre, Alternatives North.

The margin of error associated with the total sample is +/-4.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as sex, age and education). All the data have been statistically weighted to ensure the samples composition reflects that of the actual population of the Northwest Territories, according to Census data.

See the Alternatives North website www.alternativesnorth.ca for the full summary report and tables of the results for each question asked.

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