

PROVINCIAL POLITICAL SCENE

# Governing BC Liberals Extend Lead as Clark Becomes Premier

*Mike Farnworth is still the most popular choice for British Columbians and NDP voters to take over from Carole James.*

[VANCOUVER – Mar. 22, 2010] – The governing BC Liberals have solidified their position as the most popular party in British Columbia following the election of Christy Clark as leader, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

The online survey of a representative provincial sample of 807 British Columbian adults also shows that a majority of respondents would vote to abolish the harmonized sales tax (HST) in the referendum expected to take place this June.

## Political Scene

The BC Liberals are once again ahead of the opposition, with 43 per cent of decided voters and leaners (+2 since February) saying they will support the governing party in the next election. The New Democratic Party (NDP) is second with 38 per cent (unchanged), followed by the Green Party (10%, -1) and the BC Conservatives (5%, +1).

The BC Liberals hold the upper hand in Metro Vancouver, Vancouver Island and the North, while the NDP is leading in the Interior. The governing party maintains the 14-point advantage among male voters. Among women, the NDP is five points ahead—down from a nine-point advantage last month. The NDP remains the top choice for voters aged 18-to-34 and those living in households earning less than \$50,000 a year.

## KEY FINDINGS

- **Voting Intention: BC Libs. 43%, BC NDP 38%, Green 10%, BC Conservative 5%**
- **Good Choice to Replace Carole James Among NDP Voters: Farnworth 54%, Dix 41%, Horgan 23%, Larsen 17%, Simons 9%**
- **HST Referendum: 54% would vote to abolish it; 33% would vote to keep it; 13% undecided**

*Full topline results are at the end of this release.*

*From March 16 to March 17, 2011, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 807 randomly selected British Columbia adults who are Angus Reid Forum panellists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.5%. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of British Columbia. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.*

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The two parties maintain the impressive retention rates shown in February, with the NDP keeping 82 per cent of its 2009 voters, and the BC Liberals holding on to 77 per cent of their 2009 electors.

About two-in-five British Columbians (38%) say that they will vote for the BC Liberals in the next election (20%) or are leaning towards supporting the party (18%).

### **NDP Leadership Race**

Mike Farnworth remains the most popular choice in this contest, with 43 per cent of BC residents and 54 per cent of NDP voters in 2009 regarding him as a good choice to replace Carole James. Adrian Dix can count on the endorsement of 27 per cent of BC residents and 41 per cent of NDP voters in the last provincial election.

John Horgan is a distant third, with the support of 23 per cent of NDP voters. The level of support among NDP voters is lower for Dana Larsen (17%) and Nicholas Simons (9%).

### **HST Referendum**

A majority of British Columbians (54%) will vote to abolish the HST in the referendum tentatively scheduled for Jun. 24, while one third (33%) would vote to keep it.

Women (60%), respondents aged 18 to 34 (62%) and those living in households earning less than \$50,000 a year (62%) are the groups that voice the strongest opposition to the HST.

### **The BC Place Casino**

Across the province, 47 per cent of respondents disagree with the plan to build a \$450-million hotel-casino development next to BC Place in Vancouver, while 39 per cent of respondents agree with it. In Metro Vancouver, respondents are evenly divided (Agree 47%, Disagree 44%).

Respondents are divided on the two arguments for and against the proposed casino. While 42 per cent of British Columbians think the development will bring tourism dollars and create jobs for union workers, 37 per cent think it will increase gambling addiction and lead to more crime and traffic.

### **Analysis**

The BC Liberals are ahead of the NDP by five points, but still slightly below their total in the 2009 election. The governing party is reconnecting with voters in Vancouver Island, and has increased its share among women voters—although it still trails the NDP in this demographic.

The HST would be abolished if the referendum took place this month, but it is important to note that the level of animosity towards the tax is considerably lower than last year, when three-in-five respondents

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were ready to vote against the HST. It will be important to see if the numbers shift once the new government and the opposition define their campaign strategies.

**About Vision Critical®**

*Vision Critical is a global research and technology firm that creates software and services solutions for over 600 clients, including one third of the world's top 100 brands. The company has offices across North America, Europe and Australia as well as a Global Partner Program that provides other research companies and consultants with access to top-of-the-line technology. Its Sparq™ product is the most widely adopted community panel platform on the planet.*

**About the Vision Critical Public Affairs practice**

*The Vision Critical Public Affairs practice is headed by Dr. Angus Reid: an industry visionary who has spent more than four decades asking questions to figure out what people feel, how they think and who they will vote for. A team of talented and experienced practitioners with a unique and profound understanding of global issues conduct high quality research throughout the world on a daily basis for corporations, governments, academic researchers, and non-profit organizations.*

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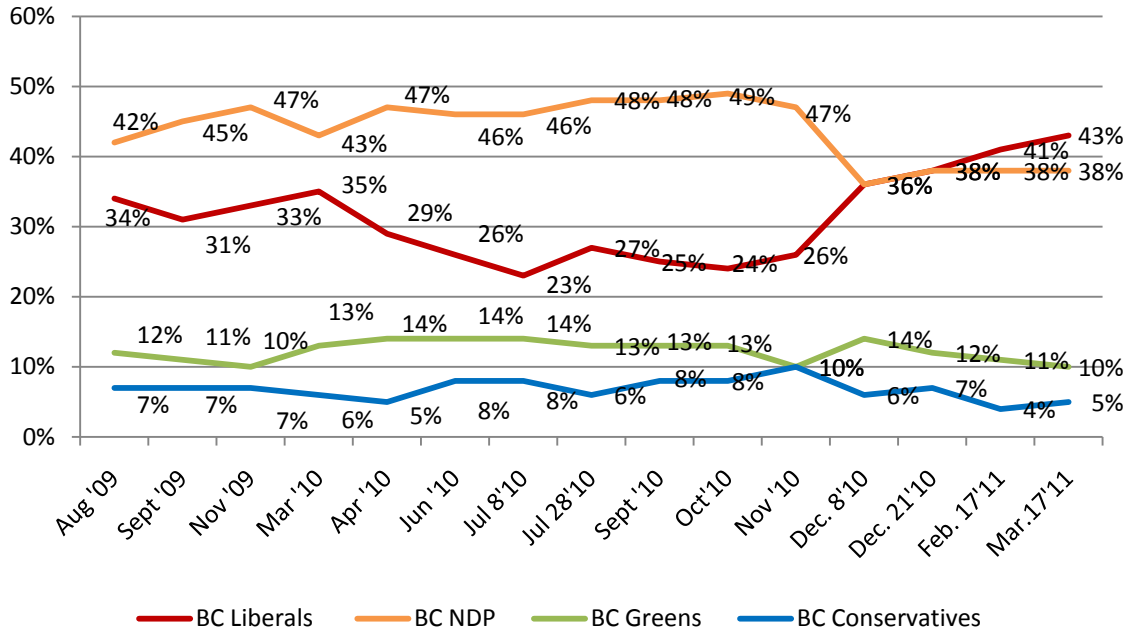
**For more information, please contact  
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

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If a provincial election were held tomorrow in British Columbia, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency? – *Decided voters including leaners*



**BC Political Scene**

If a provincial election were held tomorrow in British Columbia, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency? – *Decided voters including leaners*

	British Columbia	Metro Vancouver	Vancouver Island	Interior	North	May 2009 Election
BC Liberals	43%	44%	43%	37%	55%	46%
BC NDP	38%	38%	38%	43%	24%	42%
BC Greens	10%	10%	11%	9%	9%	8%
BC Conservatives	5%	5%	4%	6%	5%	2%
Other / Independent	4%	3%	4%	5%	7%	2%

**BC Political Scene**

If a provincial election were held tomorrow in British Columbia, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency? – *Decided voters including leaners*

	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-99K	\$100K+
<b>BC Liberals</b>	49%	37%	29%	46%	49%	32%	48%	52%
<b>BC NDP</b>	35%	42%	44%	39%	34%	44%	37%	35%
<b>BC Greens</b>	7%	13%	20%	8%	5%	13%	7%	6%
<b>BC Conservatives</b>	5%	5%	4%	5%	7%	7%	4%	4%
<b>Other / Independent</b>	4%	3%	3%	2%	5%	4%	4%	3%

**BC Political Scene**

If a provincial election were held tomorrow in British Columbia, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency? – *Decided voters including leaners*

	Respondents who voted for the NDP in the 2009 Election	Respondents who voted for the BC Liberals in the 2009 Election
<b>BC NDP</b>	82%	12%
<b>BC Liberals</b>	9%	77%
<b>BC Greens</b>	5%	2%
<b>BC Conservatives</b>	2%	5%
<b>Other / Independent</b>	2%	4%

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**BC Political Scene**

As you may know, Christy Clark is now British Columbia's Premier and leader of the BC Liberals, and Carole James has announced her resignation as leader of the BC New Democratic Party (NDP). Thinking about the 2013 provincial election in British Columbia, which of these statements comes closest to your own point of view?

	British Columbia	Metro Vancouver	Vancouver Island	Interior	North
I will vote for the BC Liberals	20%	21%	24%	16%	21%
I am leaning towards voting for the BC Liberals	18%	19%	12%	19%	19%
I am leaning towards voting for the BC NDP, but it depends on who they pick as leader	19%	19%	17%	20%	22%
I will vote for the BC NDP, regardless of their leader	15%	13%	17%	21%	0%
I will vote for a party other than the BC Liberals or the NDP	11%	11%	10%	12%	13%
None of these / Not sure	17%	17%	20%	13%	24%

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**BC Political Scene**

Thinking about each one of these politicians, do you think they would be a good choice or a bad choice to replace Carole James as leader of the BC New Democratic Party (NDP)? - **“Good Choice” listed Changes since Feb. 17**

	British Columbians	Respondents who voted for the BC NDP in the 2009 Election
Mike Farnworth	43% (+1)	54% (-5)
Adrian Dix	27% (=)	41% (-4)
John Horgan	15% (+3)	23% (-1)
Dana Larsen	11% (+2)	17% (-1)
Nicholas Simons	6% (+1)	9% (+2)

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### BC Political Scene

As you may know, a referendum on the HST is expected to take place on Jun. 24, 2011. The people of British Columbia will be asked to vote Yes or No on the following question:

*Are you in favour of extinguishing the HST (Harmonized Sales Tax) and reinstating the PST (Provincial Sales Tax) in conjunction with the GST (Goods and Services Tax)?*

If this referendum took place tomorrow, how would you vote?

	British Columbia	Metro Vancouver	Vancouver Island	Interior	North
Yes – to abolish the HST	54%	56%	53%	54%	39%
No – to keep the HST	33%	33%	29%	36%	36%
Undecided	13%	11%	18%	10%	25%

### BC Political Scene

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*Are you in favour of extinguishing the HST (Harmonized Sales Tax) and reinstating the PST (Provincial Sales Tax) in conjunction with the GST (Goods and Services Tax)?*

If this referendum took place tomorrow, how would you vote?

	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	<\$50K	\$50-99K	\$100K+
Yes – to abolish the HST	48%	60%	62%	55%	47%	62%	53%	39%
No – to keep the HST	41%	25%	24%	32%	41%	23%	36%	46%
Undecided	11%	15%	14%	14%	12%	15%	11%	15%

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**Casino**

From what you have seen, read or heard, do you agree or disagree with the plan to build a \$450-million hotel-casino development next to BC Place in Vancouver?

	British Columbia	Metro Vancouver	Vancouver Island	Interior	North
<b>Agree</b>	39%	47%	29%	35%	25%
<b>Disagree</b>	47%	44%	50%	48%	59%
<b>Not sure</b>	14%	9%	21%	17%	16%

**Casino**

Some people believe that the \$450-million hotel-casino development next to BC Place in Vancouver will bring tourism dollars and create jobs for union workers. Other people believe that the \$450-million hotel-casino development next to BC Place will increase the number of gambling addicts and lead to more crime and traffic around the area. All things considered, which side do you agree with the most?

	British Columbia	Metro Vancouver	Vancouver Island	Interior	North
<b>The development will bring tourism dollars and create jobs for union workers</b>	42%	46%	35%	41%	27%
<b>The development will increase gambling addiction and lead to more crime and traffic</b>	37%	33%	42%	38%	44%
<b>Neither of these</b>	11%	12%	11%	9%	21%
<b>Not sure</b>	10%	9%	12%	12%	8%

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