Canadians eager to adopt greener lifestyles, *VoxPop* Earth Day poll finds

People are ready to pay more for environmentally friendly products, services

Toronto, April __, 2008 – Almost eight in 10 Canadians (78%) believe that action to limit harmful green house gas emissions should be Canada's highest priority, according to a national poll to mark Earth Day from *VoxPop*, a campaign by the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA) to give voice to Canadians on issues they care about and encourage participation in survey research. The MRIA governs and represents Canada's survey research industry.

The poll found that 94 percent of Canadians believe people should do whatever they can to limit global warming, and 89 percent think all levels of government should be far more aggressive about motivating people to adopt environmentally friendly habits.

"Canadians are changing their personal habits to limit global warming, and they are just waiting for governments to help them do more," says *VoxPop* spokesperson, Brendan Wycks, Executive Director of MRIA. "One factor fuelling this willingness to adopt greener lifestyles is the belief by 77 percent of adult Canadians surveyed that global warming is already affecting every region of Canada."

A striking finding is that women are significantly more optimistic than men about the ability of individuals to make a difference in the fight against global warming. Optimism that people can limit global warming was shared by 94 percent of female respondents, compared to 83 percent among men. Women are also more likely to think governments should do more to help Canadians adopt "green" lifestyles than men – 92 percent versus 85 percent. Also, 96 percent of adult Canadians think action to protect the environment should be a "family effort" involving parents and children in joint activities.

"This *VoxPop* poll examined specific ways Canadians are fighting global warming and found that a strong majority are ready to spend more to protect the environment," says Wycks. "Seventy-six percent of those surveyed said they were willing to pay a premium for environmentally friendly goods and services."

Canadians are also not shy about buying big ticket items to reduce harmful emissions or limit energy consumption. Of motorists surveyed, 29 percent said they were planning on buying a hybrid vehicle and 60 percent of those with decision-making power over home window purchases said they had already invested in energy efficient windows, while 24 percent indicated they plan on doing so. High efficiency air conditioning units are also popular. Of those respondents with air conditioning, 43 percent said they had already acquired energy efficient models and 17 percent indicated purchasing a high efficiency unit was on their to-do list.

Large numbers of Canadians have also gotten the message about conserving gasoline and the need to limit harmful vehicle emissions. Seventy-four percent of respondents who drive reported making a point to limit idling when stopped, and 56 percent of motorists surveyed said they made a point to avoid the "drive through" at fast food outlets.

The survey also revealed that 65 percent Canadians prefer buying locally grown food whenever possible to save the gasoline that would otherwise be used to transport food over long distances.

Here are *VoxPop's* Top Ten Ways Canadians are doing their bit to fight global warming:

1. Turning off the lights when they are not in use (95.9%)

2. Recycling to reduce household waste going to landfills (95.4%)

3. Turning off the TV and other electrical devices when they are not in use (93.1%)

4. Ensuring that household chemicals are properly disposed of (81.1%)

5. Setting the heat a few degrees lower in winter (80.7%)

6. Turning off the faucet when brushing your teeth, shaving etc. (80.3%)

7. Establishing – and sticking to – a regular maintenance schedule for your vehicle to minimize emissions and maximize fuel economy (78.3%)

8. Replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs (77.9%)

9. Bringing reusable bags to the grocery store (71.3%)

10. Purchasing energy-efficient home appliances (67.9%)

"Perhaps the most telling indicator of the willingness of Canadians to embrace greener lifestyles is the eagerness of so many people to encourage others to adopt environmentally friendly habits," says Wycks. "Almost 63 percent of those surveyed said they have engaged people in their personal circle to influence their behavior in favour of the environment."

Findings by region

- **Belief that fighting global warming should be Canada's highest priority** was highest in Atlantic Canada (88%) followed by Quebec (87%), Ontario (77%), the Prairies (70.4%) and British Columbia (70%).

- **Belief that people should do their utmost to limit global warming** was highest in Quebec (97%) followed by British Columbia (96%), Ontario (95%), Atlantic Canada (94%), and the Prairies (86%).

- **Belief that governments should be far more aggressive about motivating people to adopt greener lifestyles** was highest in Atlantic Canada (92%) followed by Quebec (91%), British Columbia (89%), Ontario (87%) and the Prairies (86%).

The *VoxPop* Earth Day survey was conducted for MRIA by TNS Canadian Facts, a member of the TNS global market information and insight group. A total of 1,015 randomly-selected, nationally representative Canadian adults were interviewed between March 24 and 28, 2008. For a survey sample this size, the margin of sampling error is ± 3.1 percent, 19 times out of 20.

This survey is part of a series from *VoxPop*, a campaign to give voice to Canadians and encourage participation in opinion research. ***VoxPop*: You speak. We listen. *Things improve.***