

Canadian Federation of Independent Business
Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association
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Toronto Automobile Dealers' Association
Toronto Real Estate Board

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Torontonians say new taxes should wait for next election: public poll

Toronto, July 12, 2007 – Sixty-nine per cent of Torontonians - including a majority of those who voted for current Mayor and tax proponent David Miller - believe that any new taxes should be debated in the 2010 municipal election before being implemented. These are among the key findings of a new public opinion poll released today.

The Environics Research Group Ltd. poll was commissioned by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), the Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association (CRFA), the Motion Picture Theatre Association of Canada (MPTAC), the Toronto Automobile Dealers' Association (TADA), and the Toronto Real Estate Board (TREB), whose members are very concerned with the proposed new taxes the Mayor and his allies on City Council seem determined to push through, despite strong opposition from citizens and business owners.

When asked about new taxes, 86 per cent of respondents who voted for Mayor Miller say there was little or no discussion of new taxes during the 2006 campaign and 39 per cent of Miller supporters say they would have been less likely to support a candidate who favoured these new taxes. Half the respondents say that City Hall has no mandate to go ahead with its proposed new taxes.

"These are very damning numbers for a Mayor who campaigned on a promise of a more open system at City Hall," says CFIB Ontario Vice-President Judith Andrew. "He didn't run on a platform of imposing a raft of new taxes on the City but now that he's been elected, David Miller has decided that is what the people of Toronto supported in voting for him. The people of Toronto are feeling duped and ill-served by their Mayor."

"The poll shows that people are paying attention," says TREB President Donald Bentley. "More importantly, they are speaking up. TREB is aware of thousands of emails that have been sent to the Mayor and all Councillors, and people are continuing to voice their opposition through our web site," added Bentley. "If they are ignored, they will have tough questions for whoever supports new taxes.

"Monday's vote on the proposed taxes will reveal who supports increasing the tax burden and who protects taxpayers' interests," says Stephanie Jones, Vice-

President, Ontario of CRFA. "When the next election rolls around, we will remind Torontonians of those voting records so that the Mayor and Council are held accountable for their choices."

Beyond the accountability issues, the poll results also reveal scepticism about the City's ability to manage the new taxes in a manner that would actually benefit taxpayers. Fifty-three per cent of respondents believe there will be no improvement in municipal services despite increased tax revenue, and 72 per cent say the new taxes will not solve the City's fiscal problems. The tax proponents have been very vague on just how the additional tax money would be used.

"Of course the Mayor himself continues to claim the provincial government should also be sending the City more money because provincial downloading has put too much pressure on the City's budget," said Bill Davis, Director of Government Relations for TADA. "There is a case to be made for re-aligning services and uploading some costs back onto the province, but the City is defeating its own campaign by refusing to seriously look at spending cuts and by using its new powers to raise taxes. The City is making it very easy for the Provincial government to ignore the whole re-alignment issue."

Toronto's citizens also want Miller and Council to tighten their belts rather than go to the taxpayers for more money. Sixty-nine per cent of respondents said that even if the province does not help Toronto with its fiscal problems, the City should cut spending rather than introduce new taxes.

The Environics poll was conducted between June 28 and 30, 2007 by telephone. It involved 500 Toronto residents 18 years of age or older and is considered accurate to within +/- 4.5 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

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Full results of the Environics poll are available at http://www.cfib.ca/research/surveys/results/environics_071207.pdf