

CARP Members Speak Out on GST Harmonization

CARP surveys its members through its bi-weekly e-newsletter, *CARP ActionOnline*, which is sent to 70,000 opt-in subscribers. Most of the respondents are between the ages 55 – 74 and retired.

HST Poll November 20, 2009

Ontario and BC are combining their provincial sales taxes [PST] with the GST, to create an HST, or Harmonized Sales Tax. The combined tax will be 12% in BC and 13% in Ontario. Harmonization is intended to ease the tax burden on business but consumers will pay tax on items not previously subject to PST. Manitoba has said it will NOT agree. Saskatchewan and PEI will be pressured to follow suit. Therefore, your answers are important even if you don't live in BC or Ontario.

Total	5150 Votes
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1. How much do you approve of harmonization?

Approve strongly	169 Votes	3.3 %
Approve	572 Votes	11.1 %
Disapprove	1118 Votes	21.7 %
Disapprove strongly	3291 Votes	63.9 %
Total	5150 Votes	

2. Which ONE of the following items would cause you the most economic hardship with an additional tax of 7% or 8% on them?

Taxi, bus, plane, train fares	127 Votes	2.5 %
Gasoline or diesel motor fuel	932 Votes	18.1 %
Residential electricity, heating oil, natural gas, firewood	3370 Votes	65.4 %
Home internet services	74 Votes	1.4 %
Funeral expenses	60 Votes	1.2 %
Accounting, legal, consulting services	46 Votes	0.9 %
Mutual fund fees	203 Votes	3.9 %

Home construction, renovations	110 Votes	2.1 %
Housekeeping, lawn maintenance, snow removal	107 Votes	2.1 %
New home valued over \$400,000 (\$525, 000 for B.C.)	121 Votes	2.3 %
Total	5150 Votes	

3. The following items are EXEMPT from the new tax. Which ONE is the LEAST HELPFUL to you?

Basic groceries	77 Votes	1.5 %
Fast food under \$4	962 Votes	18.7 %
Newspapers	322 Votes	6.3 %
Children's clothes, booster seats, shoes, diapers	1327 Votes	25.8 %
Prescription medicines	62 Votes	1.2 %
Books	74 Votes	1.4 %
Dry cleaning, carpet cleaning, hairstyling and salons	257 Votes	5.0 %
Feminine hygiene products	611 Votes	11.9 %
New homes costing less than \$400,000 (\$525,000 for B.C.)	346 Votes	6.7 %
ALL ARE HELPFUL	1112 Votes	21.6 %
Total	5150 Votes	

4. Do you think this list covers all the items which should be tax-exempt?

No, doesn't cover nearly enough items	3187 Votes	61.9 %
No, doesn't cover enough items	1243 Votes	24.1 %
It isn't perfect but the most important items are covered	569 Votes	11.0 %
Exemptions are sufficient	151 Votes	2.9 %
Total	5150 Votes	

5. Which ONE of the following items would you most like to see exempted from the new PST portion of the HST?

Taxi, bus, plane, train fares	154 Votes	3.0 %
Gasoline or diesel motor fuel	1000 Votes	19.4 %
Residential electricity, heating oil, natural gas, firewood	3326 Votes	64.6 %

Home internet services	70 Votes	1.4 %
Funeral expenses	96 Votes	1.9 %
Accounting, legal, consulting services	36 Votes	0.7 %
Mutual fund fees	168 Votes	3.3 %
Home construction, renovations	98 Votes	1.9 %
Housekeeping, lawn maintenance, snow removal	84 Votes	1.6 %
New home valued over \$400,000 (\$525, 000 for B.C.)	118 Votes	2.3 %
Total	5150 Votes	

6. Ontario recently announced exemptions for fast food under \$4 and newspapers. In your opinion, does this make...?

The HST more acceptable	146 Votes	2.8 %
No difference at all to the acceptability of the HST	4822 Votes	93.6 %
DON'T KNOW	182 Votes	3.5 %
Total	5150 Votes	

7. What would be the effect of an additional tax of 7% or 8% on your home heating and energy costs?

Would have to cut back on other expenditures	2563 Votes	49.8 %
Would have to cut back on heat/energy use	1016 Votes	19.7 %
Would change heating fuel/insulate/retrofit	96 Votes	1.9 %
Would be annoyed but not be strongly affected	1283 Votes	24.9 %
Would NOT be affected	192 Votes	3.7 %
Total	5150 Votes	

8. Which ONE measure is the fairest way to compensate for the increased cost of home heating and energy?

A home heating/energy rebate for everyone	2830 Votes	55.0 %
A home heating/energy rebate for all seniors	1381 Votes	26.8 %
A home heating/energy rebate for low-income seniors only	740 Votes	14.4 %
A home heating/energy rebate is not necessary	199 Votes	3.9 %
Total	5150 Votes	

9. Which ONE measure is the fairest way to compensate for the increased cost of the HST overall?

A permanent HST tax credit for everyone	2884 Votes	56.0 %
A permanent HST tax credit for all seniors	1290 Votes	25.0 %
A permanent HST tax credit for low-income seniors only	658 Votes	12.8 %
A permanent HST tax credit is not necessary	318 Votes	6.2 %
Total	5150 Votes	

11. Ontario has tabled legislation to facilitate the HST, and BC is poised to do so in March, and it will be studied at a legislative committee. Would you say additional province-wide public hearings on the HST are..?

Absolutely necessary	3130 Votes	60.8 %
Necessary	667 Votes	13.0 %
A good idea	609 Votes	11.8 %
Not absolutely necessary	241 Votes	4.7 %
Not necessary at all	334 Votes	6.5 %
DON'T KNOW	169 Votes	3.3 %
Total	5150 Votes	

12. Which ONE of the following actions would be the best way to deal with the HST?

Drop the Harmonization and leave things as they are	2511 Votes	48.8 %
Exempt consumers from the new PST burden	466 Votes	9.0 %
Exempt consumers from the new PST burden and have the federal government reimburse the provincial treasury	339 Votes	6.6 %
Home energy tax rebate for low income seniors based on income	464 Votes	9.0 %
One-time substantial household grant based on income	156 Votes	3.0 %
Hold a provincial referendum on the HST	902 Votes	17.5 %
OTHER/DON'T LIVE IN BC/ONTARIO	312 Votes	6.1 %
Total	5150 Votes	

13. If the government in your province doesn't take the action you just indicated, will you deny them your vote?

Yes, would have voted for them but not if HST passes	2579 Votes	50.1 %
No, will still vote for the government	705 Votes	13.7 %
No, wouldn't have voted for government anyway	1386 Votes	26.9 %
DON'T KNOW/DON'T LIVE IN BC/ONTARIO	480 Votes	9.3 %
Total	5150 Votes	

14. If you live in BC or Ontario, which party's candidate would you vote for if a provincial election were being held tomorrow?

Liberals	883 Votes	17.1 %
Conservative	2275 Votes	44.2 %
NDP	967 Votes	18.8 %
Green Party	505 Votes	9.8 %
DON'T LIVE IN BC/ONTARIO	520 Votes	10.1 %
Total	5150 Votes	

16. How old are you?

Less than 45	11 Votes	0.2 %
45 to 54	145 Votes	2.8 %
55 to 64	1697 Votes	33.0 %
65 to 74	2522 Votes	49.0 %
75 or older	775 Votes	15.0 %
Total	5150 Votes	

17. Where do you live?

Atlantic	171 Votes	3.3 %
Quebec	67 Votes	1.3 %
Ontario	3621 Votes	70.3 %
Prairies	349 Votes	6.8 %
BC/Territories	942 Votes	18.3 %
Total	5150 Votes	

18. What is your gender?		
Male	3225 Votes	62.6 %
Female	1925 Votes	37.4 %
Total	5150 Votes	

19. Are you retired or not?		
Retired	4155 Votes	80.7 %
Not Retired	995 Votes	19.3 %
Total	5150 Votes	

20. What was your approximate household income last year?		
Less than \$40,000	1542 Votes	29.9 %
\$40,000 to \$79,000	2404 Votes	46.7 %
\$80,000 or more	1204 Votes	23.4 %
Total	5150 Votes	

August 31, 2009

Ontario and BC are proposing to harmonize their provincial sales tax with the GST. To offset any additional taxes on consumers, BC proposes a gas tax rebate and Ontario proposes to increase the sales tax credit, income tax relief and a one time payout of up to \$1000. Both provinces are depending on businesses to pass their savings through to consumers to offset the rest of the tax increase.

Do you believe that such rebates/credits are enough to offset the tax increase?		
Yes	379 Votes	10.2 %
No	2573 Votes	69.1 %
Don't Know	769 Votes	20.7 %
Total	3721 Votes	

Do you believe that businesses will pass through their savings to consumers?		
Yes	208 Votes	5.6 %
No	3184 Votes	85.6 %
Don't Know	329 Votes	8.8 %
Total	3721 Votes	

September 14, 2009

The federal government has offered financial incentives to all provinces to harmonize their provincial sales taxes with the GST to boost investment and cut costs for manufacturers. The provinces are expected to use the federal money to offer rebates, tax credits and grants to partially offset the additional taxes on consumers. Business is expected to pass on their savings to consumers. BC and Ontario already accepted the offer. The rest of the provinces are under pressure to follow suit.

Do you support or oppose Ontario and BC harmonizing their sales taxes with the GST?		
Support	825 Votes	27.5 %
Oppose	2178 Votes	72.5 %
Total	3003 Votes	

Do you think harmonization is good for the Canadian economy overall?		
Yes	762 Votes	25.4 %
No	1747 Votes	58.2 %
Don't Know	494 Votes	16.5 %
Total	3003 Votes	

A number of items which had not been subject to provincial sales tax will now be subject to HST. These include fuel, memberships, real estate and other services. Which ONE action should governments take to offset increased taxes on these items?

Home heating credit/rebate	465 Votes	15.5 %
Household grant based on income	444 Votes	14.8 %
Increase sales tax credit to offset full provincial tax increase	449 Votes	15.0 %
Real estate tax exemption	312 Votes	10.4 %
Point of purchase rebate for all new provincial taxes	495 Votes	16.5 %
Federal rebate – it's their idea	492 Votes	16.4 %
Nothing, rebates etc. are not necessary	346 Votes	11.5 %
Total	3003 Votes	