



***Perceptions of Lake Simcoe's Phosphorous  
Pollution and the Holland Marsh Highway***

Telephone Survey Report



November 2021

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# Methodology & Logistics

## Overview

The following represents the results of a November 2021 telephone survey of N=900 residents, 18 years of age or older from the provincial Ridings of Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte, Barrie-Innisfil and York-Simcoe. The poll was conducted by Oraclepoll Research Ltd for Lake Simcoe Watch. The objective of the poll was to gather opinions from residents on issues related to Lake Simcoe’s phosphorous pollution and the plan by the Government of Ontario to build the Holland Marsh Highway.

## Reporting

This report contains the executive findings from the survey and presents the results in the order they were asked. Some results presented may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

## Study Sample

A total of N=900 interviews were completed, with residents across the three Ridings. All respondents were screened to ensure that they were 18 years of age or older and residents of each Riding. The sample was stratified to ensure a representative breakdown and the adjacent table provides a breakdown of the total sample by Riding.



A randomized dual sample frame database was used that was inclusive of cellular and land line telephone numbers.

## Logistics

The poll was conducted by telephone with live person-to-person operators at the Oraclepoll call centre facility using computer-assisted techniques of telephone interviewing (CATI) and random number selection (RDD). A total of 20% of all interviews were monitored and the management of Oraclepoll Research supervised 100%.

Interviews were conducted between the days of November 6<sup>th</sup> to November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

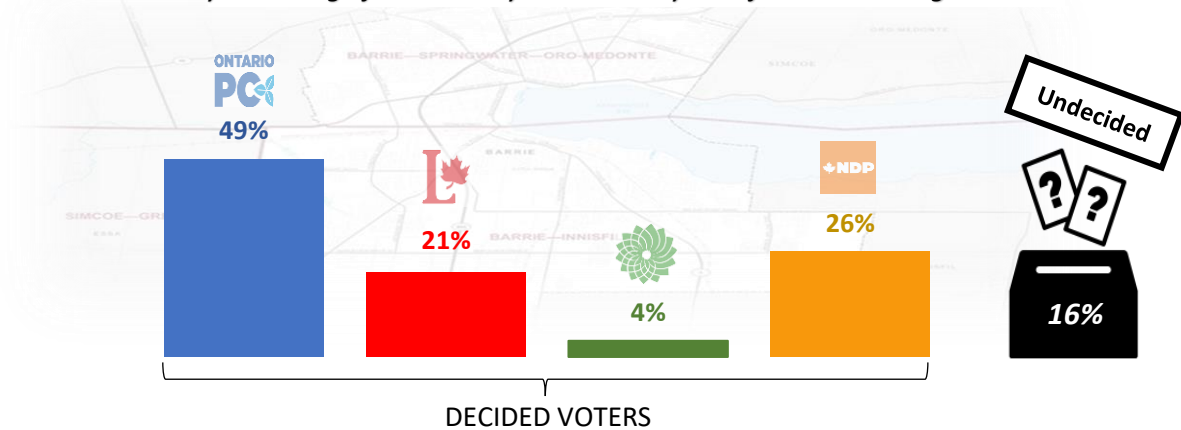
## Confidence

The margin of error for the total N=900 sample is  $\pm 3.3\% \frac{19}{20}$  times. The error rate for each of the N=300 Riding breakout is  $\pm 5.6\% \frac{19}{20}$  times.

# Vote Intent

Respondents were first asked about their provincial vote intent. The chart below illustrates the findings of decided voters, with the undecided result (16%) shown separately.

Q1. If a provincial Election were held today, which Party and its candidate in your Riding of <?> would you most likely vote for or be leaning towards?



	NDP	Green	Liberal	PC
York Simcoe	22%	6%	18%	55%
Barrie Innisfil	23%	4%	22%	50%
Barrie Springwater	32%	4%	23%	42%

The PC's have a solid lead among decided voters across the region at 49% support, with the NDP and Liberals trailing at 26% and 21% respectively. The Green Party is backed by 4%, while 16% said they were undecided.

The Progressive Conservative's have their strongest support in York Simcoe (55%), followed by Barrie Innisfil (50%), while lower in Barrie Springwater-Oro-Medonte (42%).

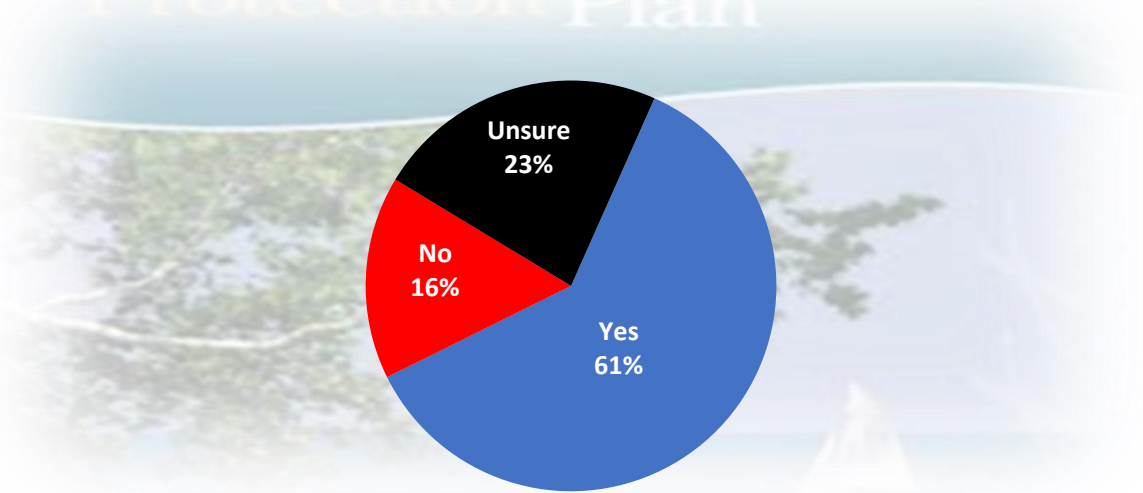
# Reducing Phosphorous Pollution

Respondents were read the following statement about the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan and then asked if they support funding and implementing a plan to reduce Lake Simcoe’s phosphorous pollution to 44 tonnes a year by 2030.

*“In 2009 the government of Ontario released its Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, which called for Lake Simcoe’s phosphorous pollution to be reduced by 50% to 44 tonnes a year. According to the Plan, this is the reduction in pollution that is needed to protect the cold-water fishery and to prevent excessive weed growth and algae blooms.”*

*“The government of Ontario has not funded or implemented a plan to reduce Lake Simcoe’s phosphorous pollution by 50%, rather pollution has increased 30% since 2009”*

**Q2. Do you support funding and implementing a plan to reduce Lake Simcoe’s phosphorous pollution to 44 tonnes a year by 2030?**



	Yes	No	Unsure
York Simcoe	57%	19%	24%
Barrie Innisfil	61%	13%	26%
Barrie Springwater	63%	17%	20%

	Yes	No	Unsure
NDP	86%	4%	10%
Green	100%	-	-
Liberal	80%	5%	15%
PC	40%	31%	28%
Undecided	48%	9%	43%

More than six in ten or 61% said they support funding and implementing a plan to reduce phosphorus pollution. Only 16% oppose the plan, while a significant 23% were unsure or did not know. Younger respondents 18-34 (77%) and 35-44 (75%) most answered yes, as did more females (65%) than males (57%).

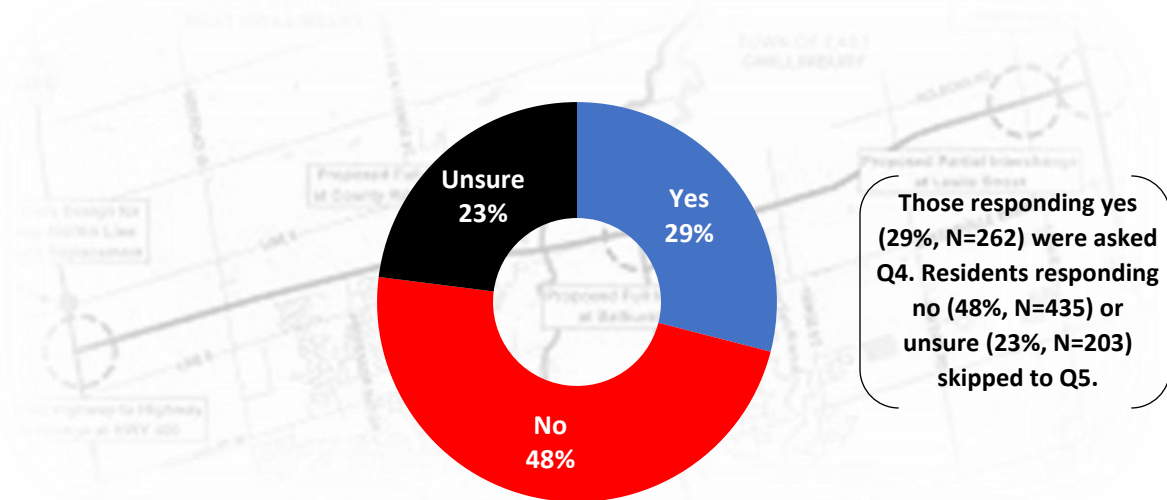
While PC voters were most likely not to support the plan (31%), 40% of Tories do, while 28% were unsure.

# Support for Holland Marsh Highway

Prior to the next probe, another short statement was read about the plan to build the Holland Marsh Highway. Respondents were then asked if they support its construction.

*“The government of Ontario is planning to build a 16 km, four-lane Holland Marsh Highway to link Highways 400 and 404. The proposed highway would increase phosphorous and road salt pollution to Lake Simcoe, endanger fish spawning habitat, eliminate 23 acres of provincially significant wetland, and eliminate 81 acres of wildlife habitat.”*

Q3. Do you support construction of this highway?



	Yes	No	Unsure
York Simcoe	37%	41%	22%
Barrie Innisfil	26%	45%	29%
Barrie Springwater	24%	59%	17%

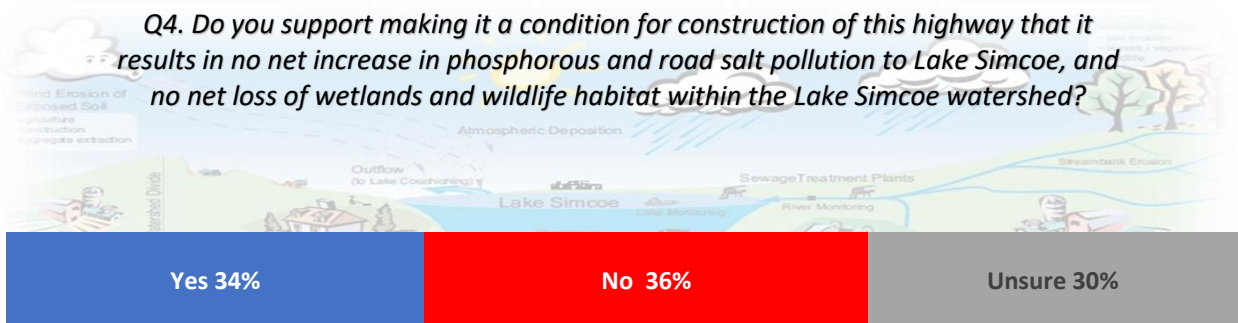
Opposition to the highway is 48% while 29% support the plan and 23% are unsure.

	Yes	No	Unsure
NDP	3%	82%	15%
Green		100%	
Liberal	5%	72%	23%
PC	60%	21%	19%
Undecided	20%	34%	47%

Resistance to the construction is highest among Green, NDP and Liberal voters, while six in ten PCs support it.

Those most opposed tended to be younger 18-29 (71%), 30-39 (65%) and 40-40 (46%), those earning under \$100,000 per annum (under \$50,000 – 63%, \$50,000 – \$74,999 (54%) and \$75,000 - \$99,999 (58%). More females (52%) in relation to males (45%) are opposed.

Supporters of the Holland Marsh Highway or those that answered yes (29%, N=262) to Q3 were asked Q4.



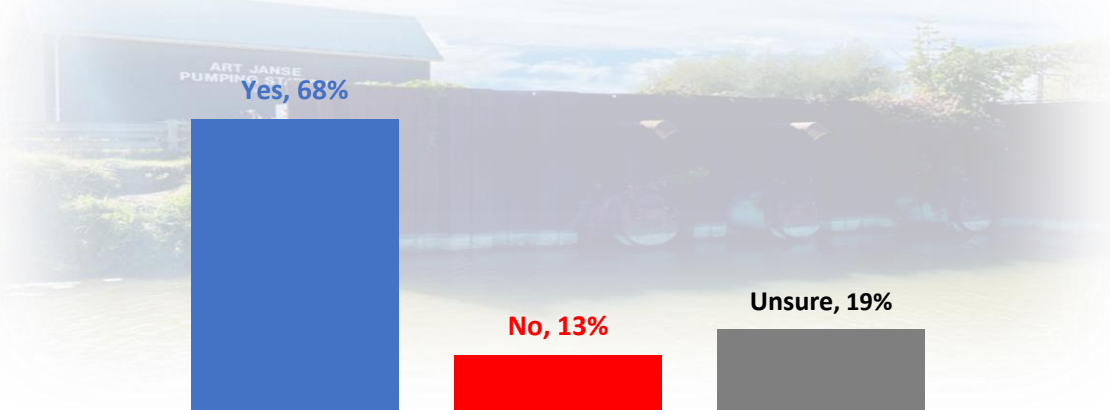
Among the highway supporters asked, 34% would make it a condition that there is no net increase in pollution and no loss of wetlands and wildlife habitat in the Lake Simcoe watershed. There were 36% that would not support making it a condition, while three in ten were unsure.

# Holland Marsh Pollution Reduction Project

All respondents were read the following statement about the Holland Marsh reduction project and the involvement of the three levels of government. They were then questioned if they support the Ontario government working with the federal government to ensure the project proceeds.

*“The Holland Marsh pollution reduction project is the single largest action we can take to reduce Lake Simcoe’s phosphorous pollution. In 2020, the government of Canada pledged to invest \$16 million to fund the \$40 million Holland Marsh pollution reduction project that is designed to reduce Lake Simcoe’s phosphorous pollution. In addition, the municipalities of Bradford West Gwillimbury, Brock, Georgina, Innisfil, and King passed resolutions requesting the government of Ontario to work with the government of Canada to ensure the project proceeds.”*

**Q5. Do you support the government of Ontario working with the government of Canada to ensure the Holland Marsh pollution reduction project proceeds?**



	Yes	No	Unsure
York Simcoe	64%	17%	20%
Barrie Innisfil	69%	8%	23%
Barrie Springwater	71%	14%	14%

	Yes	No	Unsure
NDP	93%	3%	5%
Green	100%	-	-
Liberal	91%	2%	7%
PC	47%	28%	26%
Undecided	56%	5%	39%

Sixty-eight percent support the government of Ontario working with the government of Canada to ensure the Holland Marsh pollution reduction project proceeds. Only 13% do not, while 19% were unsure. Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte residents have the highest support as do all Greens, followed by most Liberals and New Democrats. Almost half of Tories also support the cooperation.

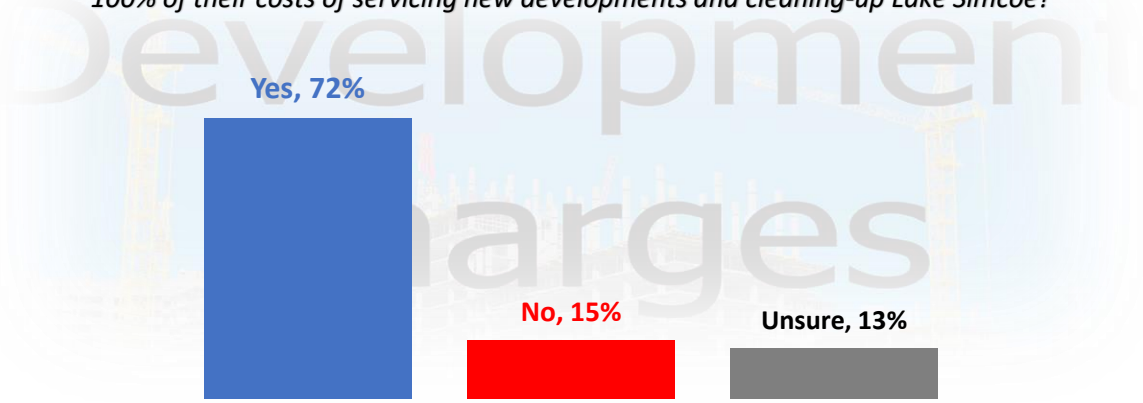


# Development Charges Act

Next, the following final statement was read to respondents after which they were asked if they support amending the Development Charges Act to permit municipalities and the Province of Ontario to levy development charges.

*“The growing population in the Lake Simcoe area has been accompanied by higher property taxes and declining water quality. Homeowners and small businesses pay higher municipal taxes because developers are not required to pay the full cost of the new municipal infrastructure that is needed to service their developments. Water quality is also declining because new development has not been accompanied by the environmental measures that are needed to protect Lake Simcoe’s watershed. If the Development Charges Act is amended, municipalities and the Province could levy development charges to recover 100% of their costs of servicing new developments and cleaning-up Lake Simcoe.”*

**Q6. Do you support amending the Development Charges Act to permit municipalities and the Province of Ontario to levy development charges to recover 100% of their costs of servicing new developments and cleaning-up Lake Simcoe?**



	Yes	No	Unsure
York Simcoe	68%	21%	12%
Barrie Innisfil	73%	8%	19%
Barrie Springwater	77%	15%	8%

More than seven in ten residents or 72% support amending the Development Charges Act. This included a small majority of PCs (52%) and two-thirds of undecided voters.

	Yes	No	Unsure
NDP	95%	3%	2%
Green	100%		
Liberal	92%	2%	6%
PC	52%	30%	17%
Undecided	66%	7%	27%

# Results by Question

**Q1. If a provincial Election were held today, which Party and its candidate in your Riding of <?> would you most likely vote for or be leaning towards?**

	Frequency	Vote	Decided Vote
The NDP	193	21.4	25.7
Green Party of Ontario	33	3.7	4.4
Liberal Party	158	17.6	21.0
PC Party	368	40.9	48.9
Sub-Total	752	83.6	100.0
Undecided	148	16.4	
Total	900	100.0	

**Q2. Do you support funding and implementing a plan to reduce Lake Simcoe's phosphorous pollution to 44 tonnes a year by 2030?**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	546	60.7
No	145	16.1
Unsure	209	23.2
Total	900	100.0

**Q3. Do you support construction of this highway?**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	262	29.1
No	435	48.3
Unsure	203	22.6
Total	900	100.0

IF YES ASK Q4 / IF NO OR UNSURE SKIP TO Q5

**Q4. Do you support making it a condition for construction of this highway that it results in no net increase in phosphorous and road salt pollution to Lake Simcoe, and no net loss of wetlands and wildlife habitat within the Lake Simcoe watershed?**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	89	34.0
No	94	35.9
Unsure	79	30.2
Total	262	100.0

**Q5. Do you support the Government of Ontario working with the Government of Canada to ensure the Holland Marsh pollution reduction project proceeds?**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	611	67.9
No	117	13.0
Unsure	172	19.1
Total	900	100.0

**Q6. Do you support amending the Development Charges Act to permit municipalities and the Province of Ontario to levy development charges to recover 100% of their costs of servicing new developments and cleaning-up Lake Simcoe?**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	652	72.4
No	131	14.6
Unsure	117	13.0
Total	900	100.0

**Q7. Into which of the following age groups may I place you in?**

	Frequency	Percent
18-29	139	15.4
30-39	165	18.3
40-49	187	20.8
50-59	168	18.7
60-69	140	15.6
70 or older	83	9.2
Refused	18	2.0
Total	900	100.0

**Q8. Into which of the following categories does your annual combined household income fall?**

	Frequency	Percent
Under \$50,000	235	26.1
\$50,000 - \$74,999	175	19.4
\$75,000 - \$99,999	207	23.0
\$100,000 or more	192	21.3
Refused	91	10.1
Total	900	100.0

**Q9. Gender**

	Frequency	Percent
Male	442	49.1
Female	458	50.9
Total	900	100.0

