



## **TORONTO, DECEMBER 2, 2009**

Just days before the United Nation's historic Copenhagen summit the Munk Debates tackled one of the great public policy questions of our time: how should the world respond to climate change?

CO<sub>2</sub> levels in the atmosphere are climbing steadily higher. Some believe this is having a devastating effect on humans and nature, while others argue that the threat has been overstated. Is this the moment for a bold global treaty to curb carbon emissions? Or, are the social and economic costs of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions too high in a world where a billion people live on a dollar or less a day?

The Munk Debates posed the following resolution: ***Be it resolved climate change is mankind's defining crisis, and demands a commensurate response.***

This question was put directly to the audience of the *Munk Debate on Climate Change* both before and after they listened to a debate on the issue between the Green Party's Elizabeth May and best-selling climate change author George Monbiot, both for the "pro" side, AND global opinion leader and author of *The Skeptical Environmentalist* Bjørn Lomborg and former Chancellor of the Exchequer in the UK, Lord Nigel Lawson, both for the "con" side of the argument.

At the start of the debate, six-in-ten of the 1,100 person strong audience (61%) agreed with the statement, while 39% disagreed. After the debate agreement with this statement declined to 53%.

"The record audience turnout for this debate indicates Canadians care deeply about global issues such as climate change and are willing to consider, and re-consider, the arguments for and against aggressive green house gas mitigation," stated Rudyard Griffiths, co-organizer of the debate.

Two additional unofficial votes were conducted during debate. The first polled the approximately 2,000 people watching the live web stream of the debate. At the end of the live web stream 680 people in this group had voted on the resolution with 59% supporting the resolution and 41% opposing it. The second unofficial vote consisted of a text message based survey of the over 1,000 people who watched the debate live in 18 universities across Canada. Of this group 550 people took part in the text message poll of which 76% supported the motion and 24% were opposed.

### **About This Study**

The polling of the live audience at the Royal Conservatory of Music was conducted for the **Munk Debates** ([www.munkdebates.com](http://www.munkdebates.com)) by **Innovative Research Group**, Inc.

([www.innovativeresearch.ca](http://www.innovativeresearch.ca)), a national public opinion research firm, on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009.



Prior to the beginning of the debate, members of the live audience at the Royal Conservatory of Music were asked to fill out a ballot indicating whether they agreed or disagreed with the resolution. Ballots were collected and the results recorded using Scantron readers.

After the debate concluded, the same audience was asked to fill out a ballot where they indicated whether they still agreed or disagreed with the resolution. The ballots were collected and results recorded using Scantron readers. See detailed findings below for the ballot question wording and results.

The results of this poll are based on 902 ballots collected among 1,100 spectators at the *Munk Debates on Climate Change* at the Royal Conservatory of Music. A sample of this size would have an estimated margin of error of  $\pm 3.0$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

### **The Munk Debates**

The Munk Debates is an initiative of the Aurea Foundation, a charitable organization founded in 2006 by Peter and Melanie Munk to support Canadian Institutions involved in the study and development of public policy. The goal of the Munk Debates is to enliven and elevate public discussion of the major global issues shaping the course of world events and Canada's future.

### **Innovative Research Group**

Innovative Research Group Inc. (INNOVATIVE) is a national public opinion research and strategy firm with offices in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.

INNOVATIVE provide critical information needed to assess and overcome public affairs and corporate communications challenges, identify and evaluate potential solutions, and monitor outcomes.

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For more information, or to schedule an interview, please contact:

**Greg Lyle**

Managing Director

Innovative Research Group, Inc.

[glyle@innovativeresearch.ca](mailto:glyle@innovativeresearch.ca)

416-642-6429

**Rudyard Griffiths**

Co-Director

The Munk Debates

[rudyard@munkdebates.com](mailto:rudyard@munkdebates.com)

416-737-9626

## ***DETAILED FINDINGS***

### **Pre-Debate Ballot**

#### **QUESTION #1**

Climate change is mankind's defining crisis, and demands a commensurate response.

AGREE - 61%

DISAGREE - 39%

#### **QUESTION #2**

Depending on what you hear during the debate are you open to changing your vote?

YES - 79%

NO - 21%

### **Post-Debate Ballot**

#### **QUESTION #1**

Climate change is mankind's defining crisis, and demands a commensurate response.

AGREE - 53%

DISAGREE - 47%