

Albertans' Views on Energy Efficiency in the Province's Building Code

Prepared for



By



January 2010

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M e t h o d o l o g y & L o g i s t i c s

Overview

- The following represents the findings from a public opinion survey conducted by Oraclepoll Research Limited for NAIMA Canada, the Pembina Institute and the Consumers Council of Canada.

Study Sample

- A total of 621 randomly selected residents of the province of Alberta 18 years of age and older were interviewed by telephone.

Survey Method

- The survey was conducted using computer-assisted techniques of telephone interviewing (CATI) and random number selection. A total of 20% of all interviews were monitored and the management of Oraclepoll Research supervised 100%.

Logistics

- The surveys were conducted between the days of January 7th to January 20th 2010.

Confidence

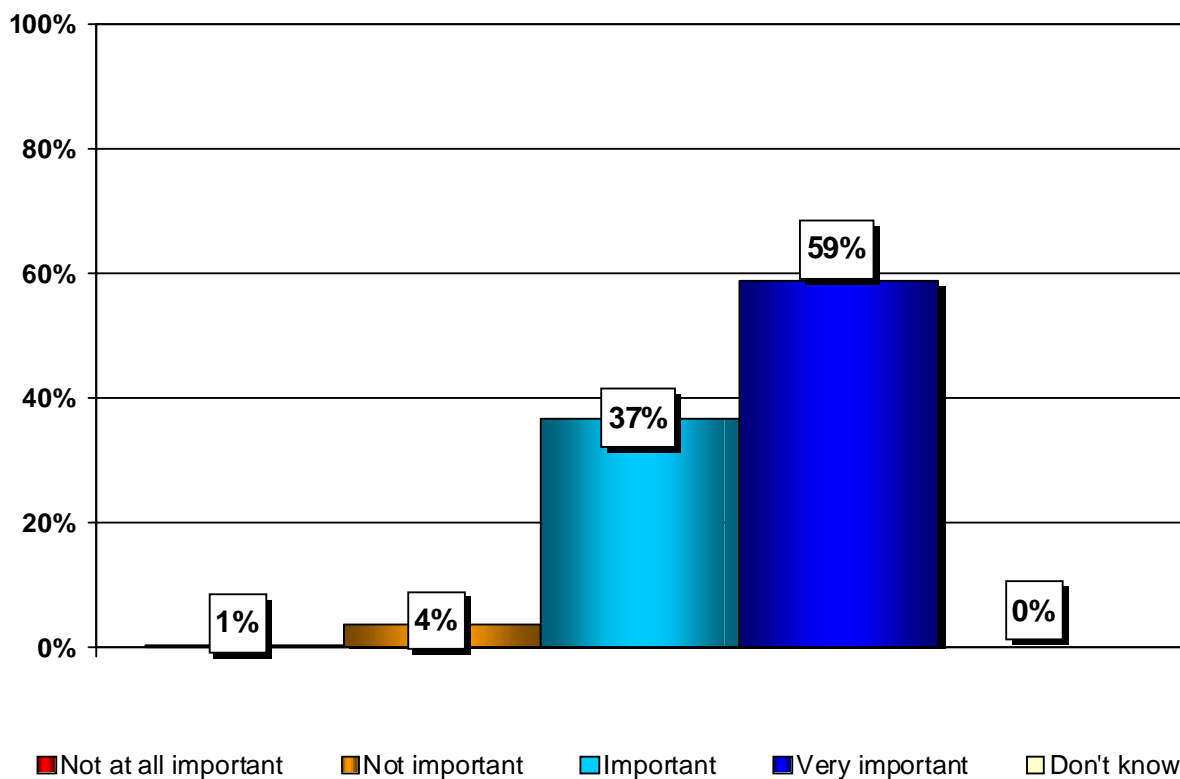
- The margin of error for the survey is $\pm 3.9\%$, 19/20 times.

Executive Summary

IMPORTANCE

Respondents were first asked to rate the importance of energy conservation at their residence.

"Overall how important is energy conservation and energy efficiency in your home?"



A 96% majority of Albertans surveyed were of the opinion that energy conservation and energy efficiency in their home was either important (37%) or very important (59%) in relation to the only 5% that said it was not important or not at all important.

This compares to the 92% of Ontarians (n=600) interviewed by Oraclepoll Research Limited for NAIMA in 2009 that stated residential energy conservation was either important (30%) or very important (62%).

ENERGY EFFICIENCY GUIDELINES

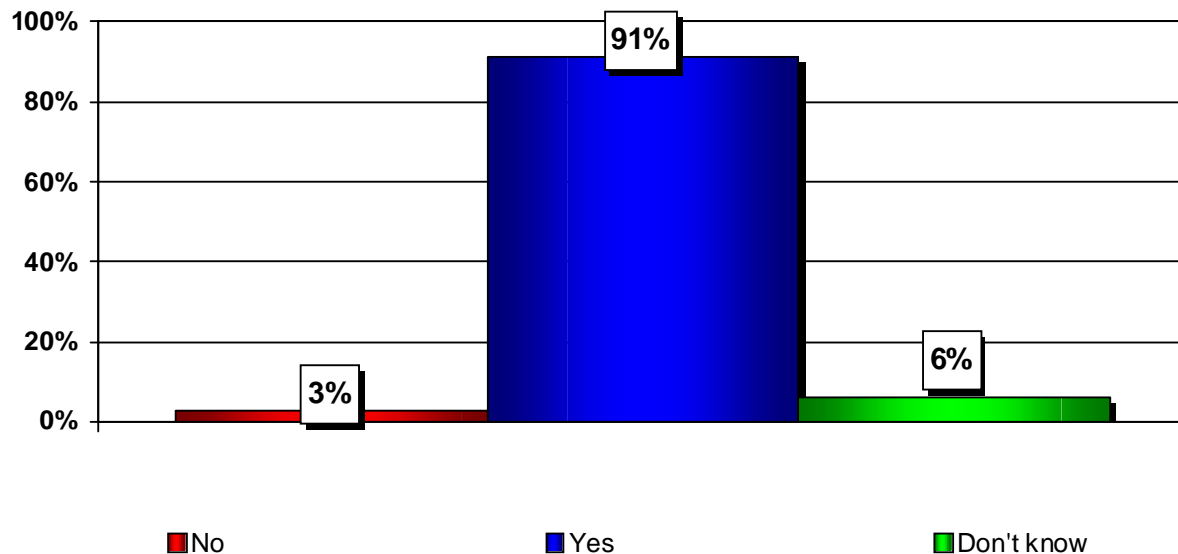
Respondents were first read the following preamble and were then asked a series of questions.

“Provinces including Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and Nova Scotia will be implementing new building codes that will increase the energy efficiency of new homes to an Energuide 80 standard by 2012. The government of Alberta is also considering the implementation of such as code.”

When asked, 32% of those surveyed were aware that energy efficiency guidelines on new homes were included in provincial building codes, 66% were not aware and 1% did not know.

All respondents were then questioned if they thought that these guidelines should be included as part of provincial building codes.

“In your opinion, should energy efficiency guidelines on new homes be included as part of provincial building codes?”



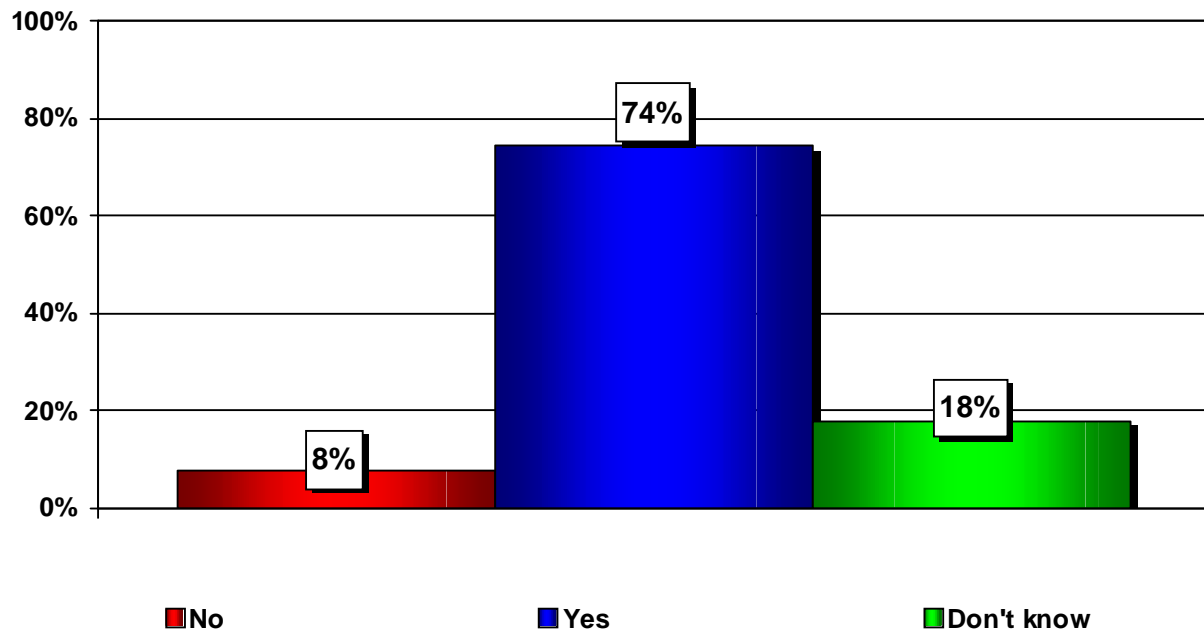
More than nine in ten (91%) Alberta residents were of the opinion that these energy efficiency guidelines should be included as part of provincial building codes, compared to only 3% that did not. When those opposed to guidelines (3%) were asked as to why, 35% of them said it should be left to the private sector, 30% cited cost, 10% a lack of government understanding, 5% more regulation, while 20% did not know or have an opinion.

MINIMUM STANDARDS

Respondents were read the following preamble about insulation requirements in Alberta and were then asked a series of questions.

“Thermal insulation requirements on new homes first appeared in the Alberta Building Code in 1981 and there has been no increase in the minimum standards required by the province since then.”

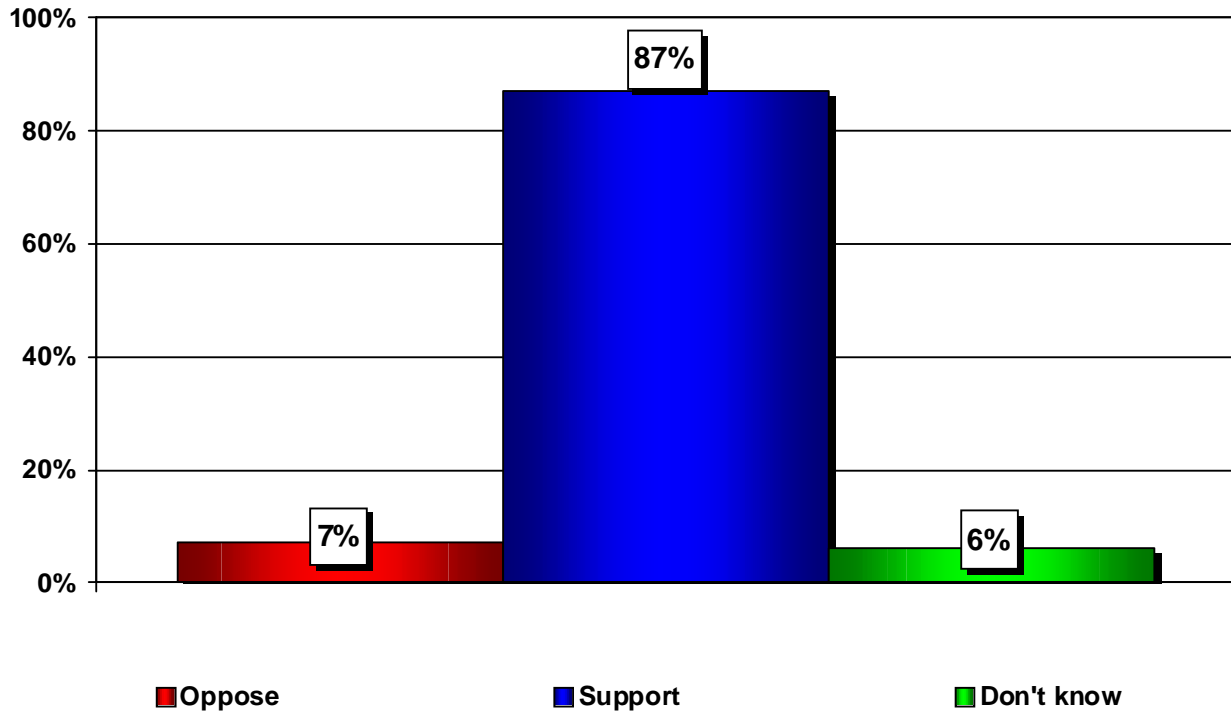
"In your opinion should the minimum thermal insulation requirements on new homes be increased from their 1981 levels?"



Almost three quarters or 74% of those interviewed stated that the minimum thermal insulation requirements on new homes should be increased from their 1981 levels.

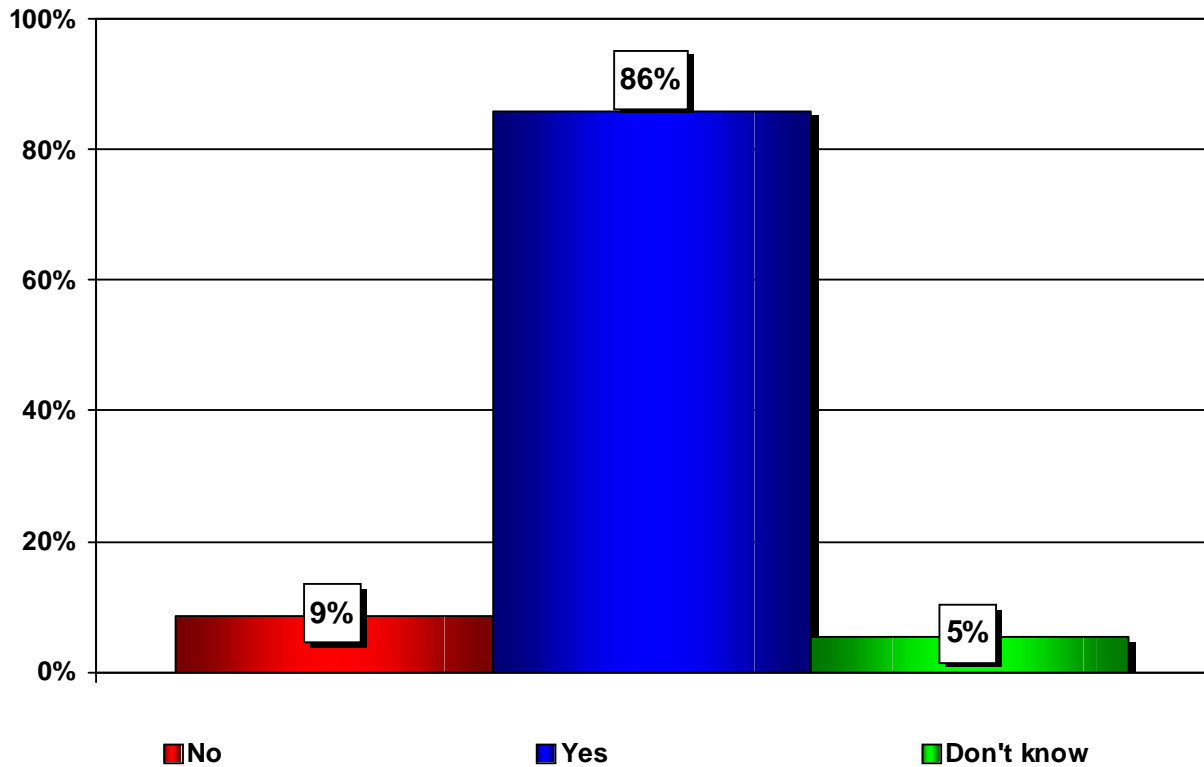
Respondents were then questioned as to whether the province should implement stronger energy efficiency standards on new homes.

"Do you support or oppose a move by the government of Alberta to implement stronger energy efficiency standards on new homes?"



A total of 87% of residents support the move to implement stronger energy efficiency standards on new homes, while 7% oppose the decision and 6% were unsure.

“In your opinion should the government of Alberta enact legislation on new home energy efficiency standards that meet those higher levels established by other Canadian Provinces (such as Manitoba, BC, and Ontario)?”



A similar number or 86% also were of the opinion that Alberta government should enact legislation on new home energy efficiency standards that meet the levels established by other provinces including Manitoba, BC and Ontario.

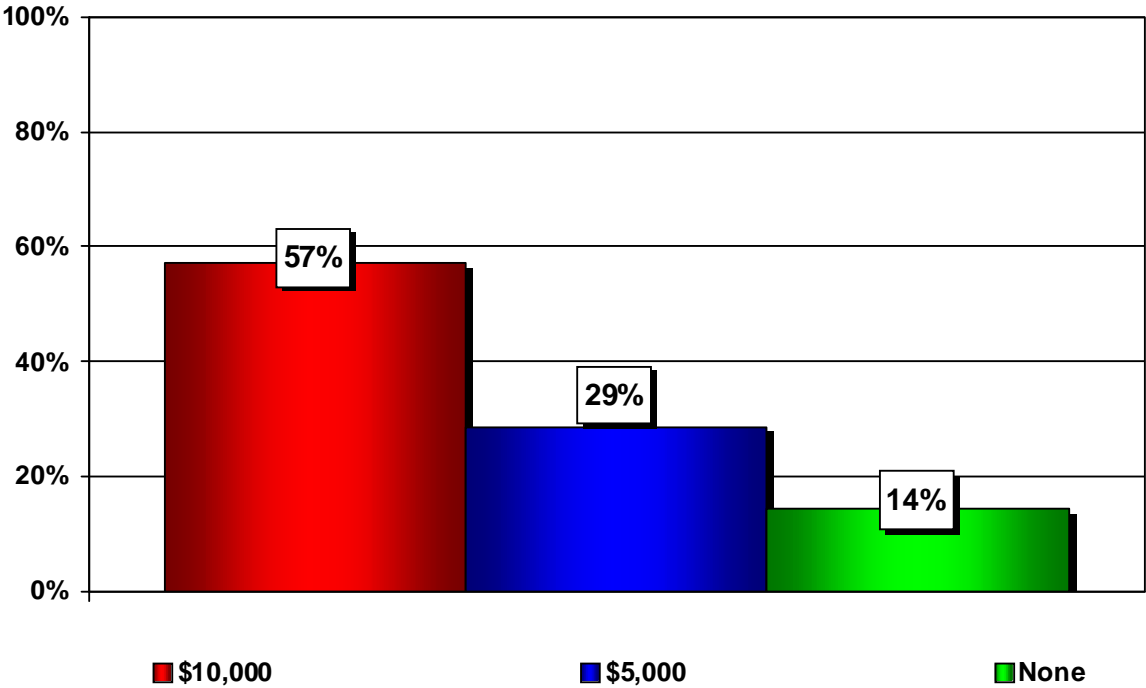
HOME PURCHASING & ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Among survey participants:

- ⇒ 86% were homeowners
- ⇒ 18% have purchased a home in the past 3 years
- ⇒ 17% plan to purchase a home in next 3 years – among these potential buyers 80% said that they will consider purchasing a new home
- ⇒ 16% plan to sell a home in the next 3 years

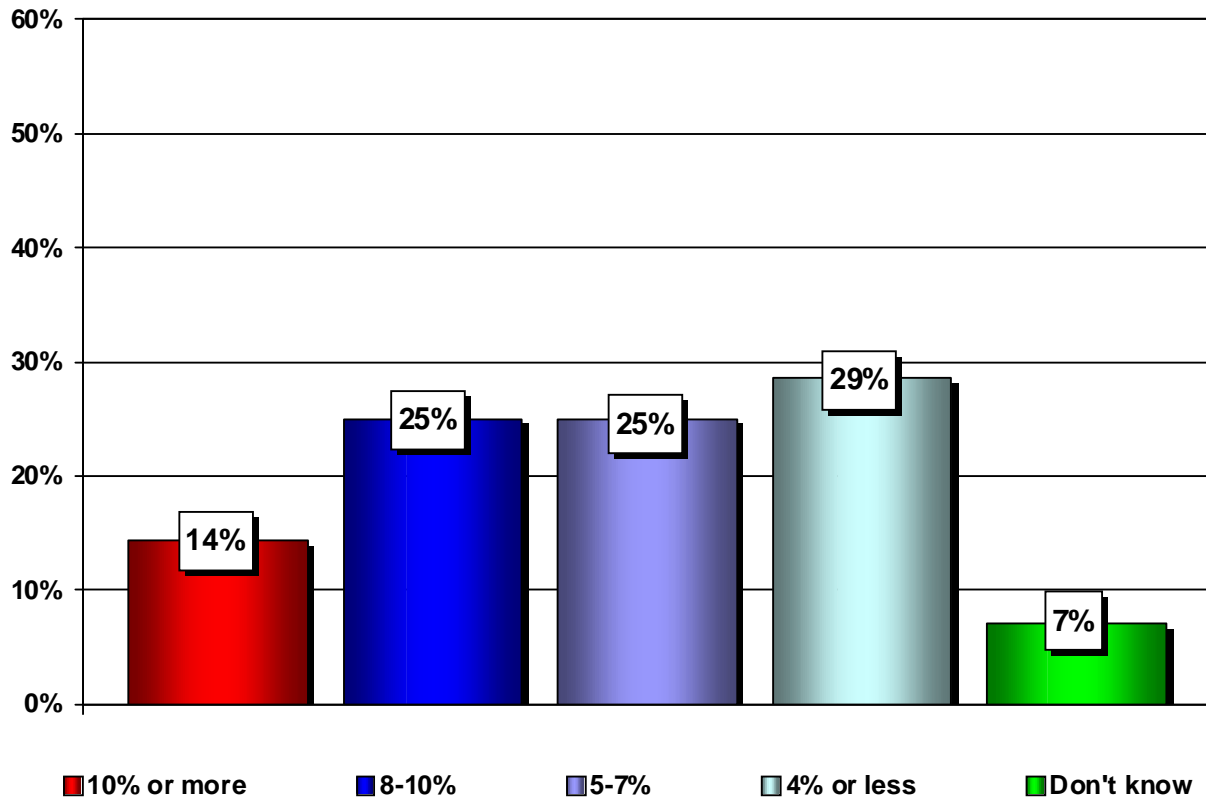
Potential and recent buyers were also asked questions about energy efficiency and what they would be willing to pay for an energy efficient home.

“On an average priced home in Alberta of \$355,000 how much more would you be willing to pay for a new home with better energy efficiency?”



Among those considering the purchase of a new home, 57% would pay \$10,000 more for an energy efficient residence based on one valued at \$355,000, 29% would pay \$5,000 more, while only 14% would pay nothing more.

“How much more would you be willing to pay for a new home with superior energy efficiency?”



Recent and those planning to buy a new home were asked in percentage terms what more that they would pay for one with superior energy efficiency. A total of 29% would pay 4% or less, (25%) 5-7% more, (25%) 8-10% and (14%) 10% or more, while 7% did not know.

Finally, both recent buyers and potential ones were questioned about the importance of a home's energy efficiency in their past decision/future decision to purchase a residence. A high 83% said it was important (40%) or very important (43%) compared to 15% that claimed it was not important (11%) or not at all important (4%), while 3% did not know.

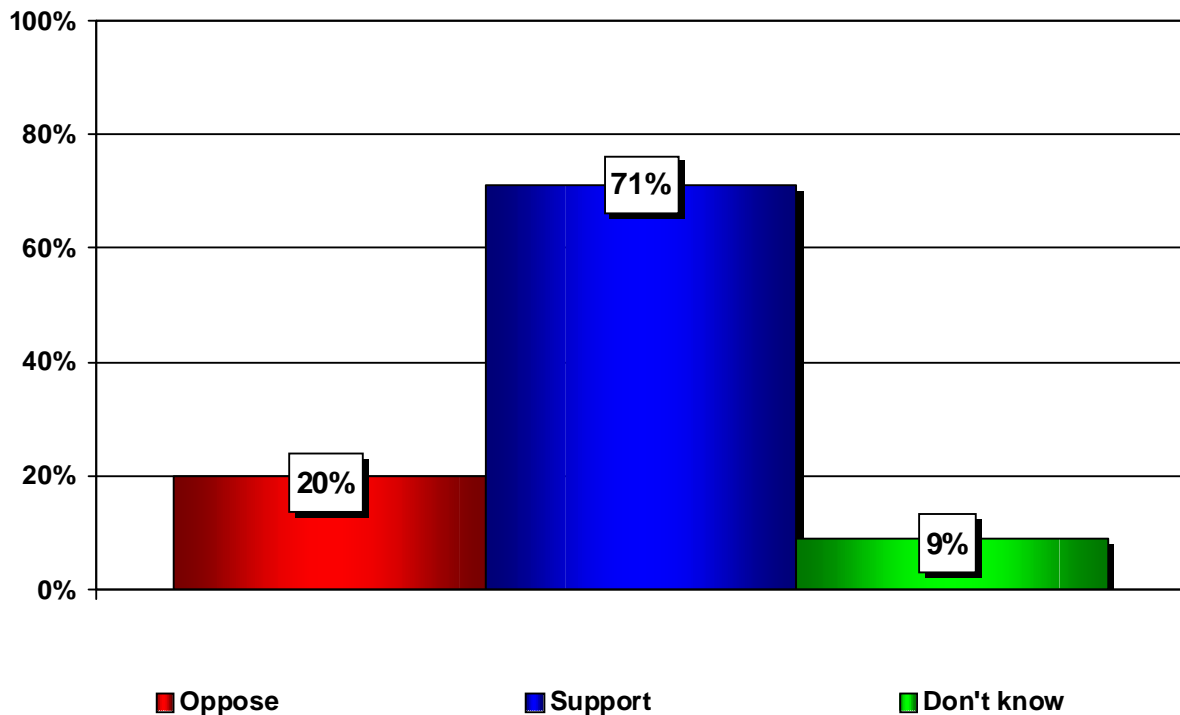
ENERGY LABELING

All respondents were then read the following preamble and asked a series of questions.

“In some jurisdictions including Ontario, new and existing homes are required to have an energy efficiency rating at the time of sale.

For homes that get an energy efficiency label, these owners and buyers would not need to make energy efficiency upgrades or changes.”

“Would you say that you support or oppose required standardized home energy labeling?”



When asked about their support or opposition to standardized home energy labeling, more than seven in ten respondents or 71% stated that they support the measure, while two in ten or 20% oppose it and 9% did not know. This compares to results from Ontario where a lesser 62% supported labeling, 29% opposed it and 9% were unsure.

A follow up question was asked to opponents of labeling as to the reasons for their resistance. The most named reason by 37% related to the cost involved, followed by 11% that were of the belief that the buyer should be responsible, 8% that said they just dislike it, 8% named government interference and 8% that older homes should be exempt. Other responses included the belief it is a tax grab (6%), that they will be forced to upgrade (6%), that there are too many regulations (5%), that it is flawed (4%) and that they may not be able to sell their home (3%).

MOTIVATORS

All respondents were then asked about the following scenarios and what impact that they would have on them supporting labeling.

“Would each of the following make you more likely to support home energy efficiency labeling, less likely or would it have no impact on your decision.”

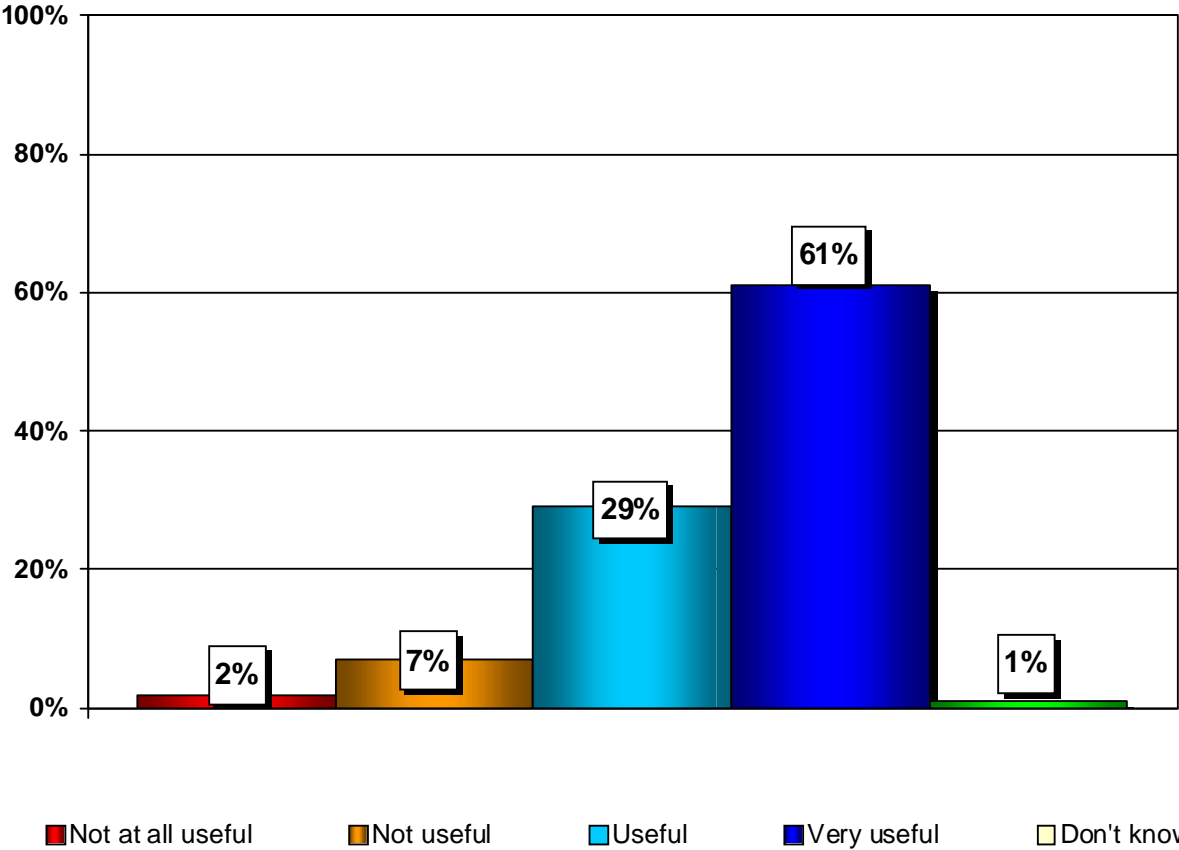
	LESS LIKELY	NO IMPACT	MORE LIKELY	DON'T KNOW
If superior energy efficiency would increase the value of your home	1%	11%	87%	1%
If it identifies ways in which a home could be made more energy efficient	2%	11%	86%	1%
If the standardized labeling system allowed consumers to accurately compare the energy efficiency of all homes	2%	15%	78%	5%

The strongest motivator for having energy efficiency labeling by 87% related to having superior energy efficiency increasing the value of the home (77% in Ontario), closely followed by 86% that identified increasing the energy efficiency of the home (71% in Ontario). A lower but still very high 78% would be more likely to support labeling if it would allow an accurate energy comparison of all homes (63% in Ontario).

ENERGY EFFICIENCY & RESIDENCES

All respondents were then asked about how useful a rating and labelling system would be when purchasing a home.

“Currently most home buyers calculate residential energy efficiency by looking at the past few months utility bills. As a buyer, how useful would it be to get full disclosure by way of a rating and labeling system of a homes energy efficiency at the time of purchase?”

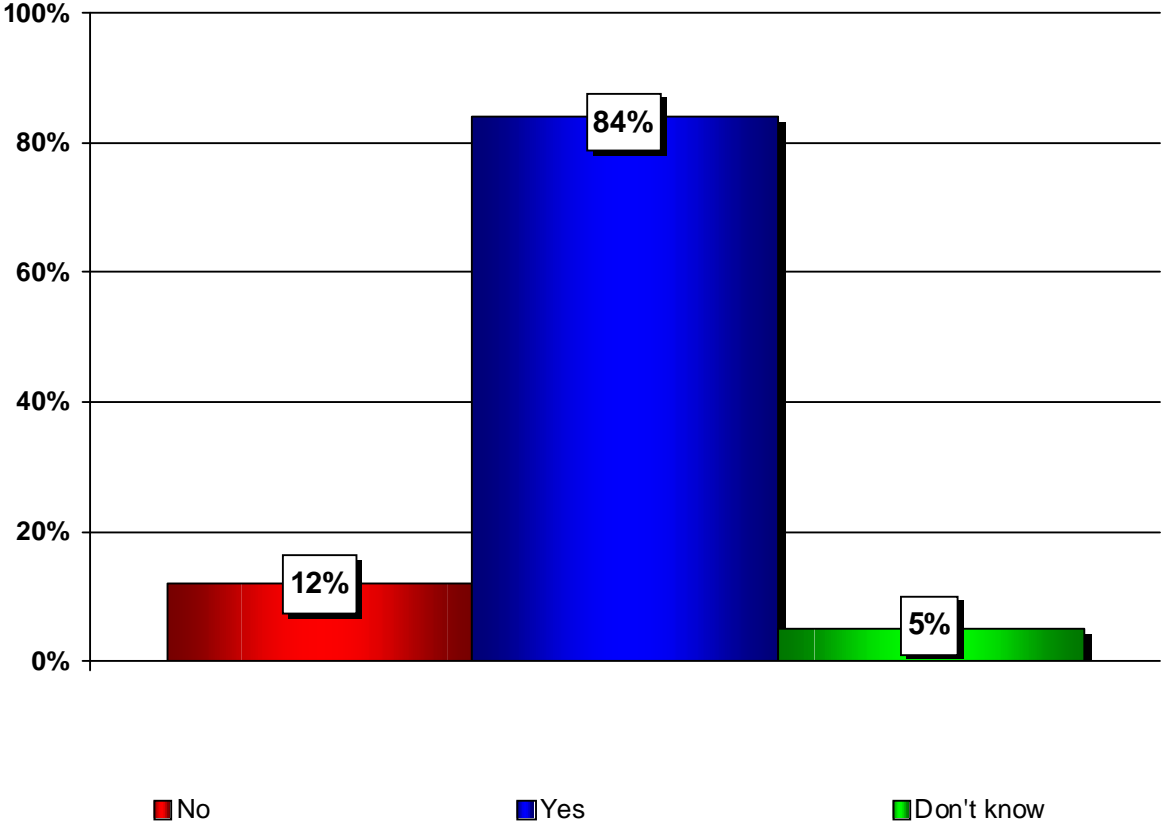


Nine in ten or 90% of respondents in the province said that a rating and labelling system would be useful (29%) or very useful (61%), while only 9% stated that it would be not useful (7%) or not at all useful (2%). This compares to the 77% of Ontarians that said that a rating and labelling system would be useful, while 8% stated that it would be not useful.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY LABELING ACROSS NORTH AMERICA

All respondents were asked the following.

“As governments are looking for ways to reduce the use of energy, do you expect that mandatory home energy efficiency labeling will become common in jurisdictions across North America?”



A total of 84% of Albertans are of the opinion that mandatory home energy efficiency labelling will be common in jurisdictions across North America, 12% do not feel it will and 5% did not know. A lower 58% of Ontarians were of the opinion that mandatory home energy efficiency labelling will be common in jurisdictions across North America, 33% did not and 9% were unsure.