

## COALITION OF BC BUSINESSES

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### **Small businesses worried about hiring, investment under NDP**

Strong support for changes to B.C. labour laws and employment standards

**Vancouver, BC (September 18, 2012)** – The small businesses who employ the vast majority of British Columbians are nervous about the impact an NDP government would have on their ability to hire and invest.

A survey of more than 600 small businesses found:

- 77% are pessimistic about hiring and investment under the BC NDP
- 68% say the BC NDP would increase challenges and barriers to doing business
- 56% would consider postponing major expansion or investment decisions until after the election if the BC NDP were elected

“Small business employers are worried about the NDP’s impact on business, jobs, and investment,” said Mark von Schellwitz, Chair of the Coalition of BC Businesses. “This is a clear sign that the Party needs to draft policies that will give small business employers more comfort with the NDP platform.”

The survey also found strong support for changes to labour laws and employment standards.

#### **Labour code:**

- 71% would support reversing the law requiring new owners to inherit the previous union certification and collective agreement
- 67% would favour lifting the ban on replacement workers during a labour dispute
- 66% would support making rules for decertification the same as the rules for certification

#### **Employment standards:**

- 75% want more flexibility in averaging overtime hours
- 71% favour a merger of the Labour Relations Board, Employment Standards Branch, and the Human Rights Tribunal into one unified workplace tribunal
- 60% favour linking minimum wage increases or decreases to economic indicators

The online survey by NRG Research was commissioned by the Coalition of BC Businesses and surveyed 616 small business employers who are members of the associations that constitute the Coalition of BC Businesses.

*The Coalition of BC Businesses (coalitionbcbusiness.ca) represents 15 BC business associations. The Coalition's principal focus is the development of labour and employment policies that will help foster a positive relationship between employers and employees and a climate for new economic growth, opportunities, and jobs.*

- 30 -

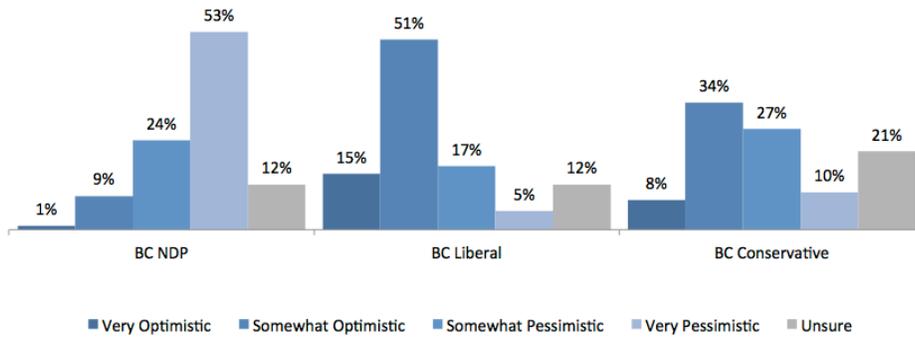
For more information, please contact:

Mark von Schellwitz, Chair      T. (604) 685-9655 | M. (604) 809-5719 | mark@crfa.ca

# ECONOMIC OUTLOOK QUESTIONS

## Anticipated Growth Scenarios with Different Election Winners

**Question:** If an election were held today, how optimistic or pessimistic would you be about hiring and growth under a \_\_\_\_\_ government?

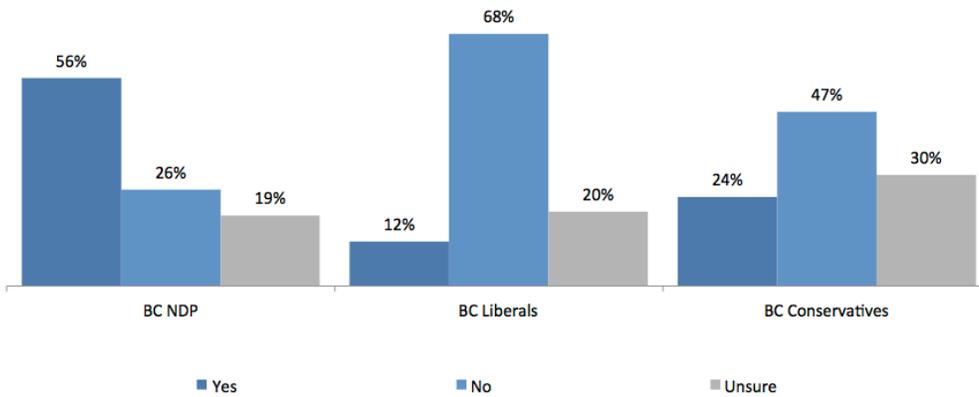


Respondents expressed more pessimism about future hiring and growth if an NDP government were to be elected in BC today rather than a BC Liberal or BC Conservative government.



Base: All respondents (n=616)

**Question:** If the \_\_\_\_\_ were favoured to win the next election, would you consider postponing any currently planned major expansion or investment decisions until after the election on a wait-and-see basis?

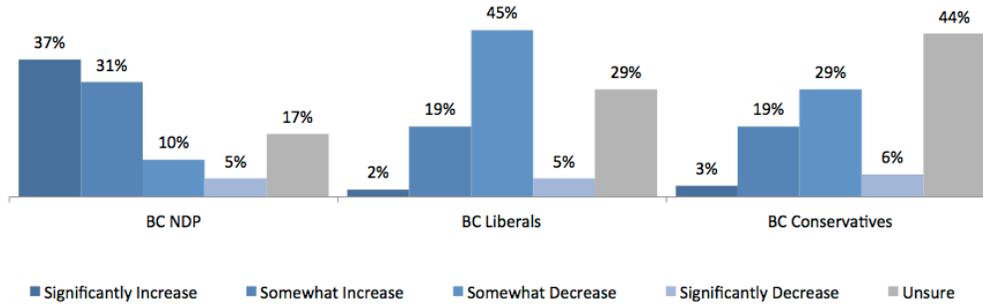


Over half of respondents (56%) said they would “consider” postponing any currently planned major expansion or investment decisions in favour of a wait-and-see approach if the BC NDP were favoured to win the next election. The percentage of “Yes” response to a potential postponement or wait-and-see if the BC NDP were elected is higher than if the BC Liberals or BC Conservatives were favoured to win.



Base: All respondents (n=616)

**Question:** Do you think a \_\_\_\_\_ government would increase or decrease challenges and barriers to doing business in BC?



Sixty-eight percent (68%) of respondents felt an NDP government would increase challenges and barriers to doing business in BC. This is higher percentage than those that felt either a BC Liberal or BC Conservative government would increase challenges to doing business in BC.



## Desired Changes in BC Employment Standards

Question: Would you like to see changes in any of the following specific (Employment Standards) areas?	% (n=616)		
	Yes	No	Unsure
Create more flexibility in averaging overtime hours	75	17	9
Merge the Labour Relations Board, Employment Standards Branch, and the Human Rights Tribunal (for workplace related disputes only) into one unified workplace tribunal	71	11	18
Maintain the change to decrease the minimum call in from four to two hours	71	20	9
Link minimum wage increases or decreases to economic indicators	60	27	13
Create more flexibility for employers and employees to mutually agree on statutory holiday dates	60	31	8
Support a new first job wage policy	58	23	19
Extend the qualifying period for statutory holiday entitlements for employees from 60 to 90 days	56	38	6
Maintain liquor server wage differential	35	24	41
Other changes (please specify what other changes you would like to see if you click on yes)	11	32	57

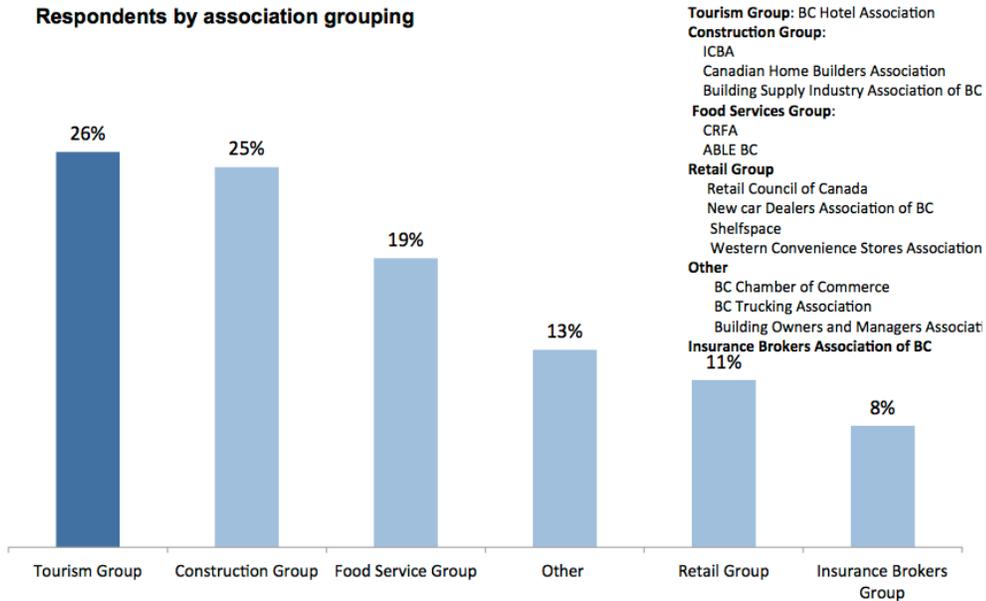
# Desired Changes in BC Labour Laws

Question: Would you like to see changes in any of the following specific (BC Labour Law) areas?	% (n=616)		
	Yes	No	Unsure
Reverse the law requiring new owners to inherit the previous union certification and collective agreement	71	11	18
Lift the ban on replacement workers during a labour dispute that is designed to paralyze a business.	67	14	19
Make rules for decertification the same as the rules for certification.	66	3	31
Give employees the choice about union representation when a bankrupt business is restarted	65	12	23
Implement a dues check-off system that would enable employees to authorize whether they wish to have their union dues spent on any activities other than the administration of a workplace's collective bargaining relationship.	61	7	32
Create an Employee Advisor Office to assist employees before the Labour Board to ensure access to fair representation and labour relations advice.	59	20	21
Remove the provision that requires an employer to terminate an employee because the employee has been expelled or suspended from a union for a reason other than failure to pay periodic union dues or initiation fees	55	13	33
Other changes	3	31	66

Responses to suggested changes indicated 65% to 71% supporting changes to previous certification or decertification, replacement worker and business bankruptcy union choices. There was support ranging from 48% to 61% for other provisions.

## Characteristics of Survey Participants

**Respondents by association grouping**



- Tourism Group:** BC Hotel Association
- Construction Group:** ICBA, Canadian Home Builders Association, Building Supply Industry Association of BC
- Food Services Group:** CRFA, ABLE BC
- Retail Group:** Retail Council of Canada, New car Dealers Association of BC, Shelfspace, Western Convenience Stores Association
- Other:** BC Chamber of Commerce, BC Trucking Association, Building Owners and Managers Association
- Insurance Brokers Association of BC:** 11%

Base: All respondents (n=616)

**Sample:**

This survey was administered to all the members of the associations who belong to the Coalition of BC Businesses. The individual associations were each responsible for emailing the survey link to their members. By clicking on the link, individual respondents accessed the online survey hosted on a secure NRG server. A separate open link was used for participating member associations. There were a smaller number of responses from some of the associations, which makes for questionable comparisons for statistical significance between them, however, examination of the data generally shows consistency in responses between associations.

**Questionnaire:**

The survey was composed by the Coalition of BC Businesses with some suggestions from NRG on wording and ordering of questions.

**Administration:**

The survey was emailed to Coalition members starting on August 7th, 2012 with the final cut off on August 31, 2012. Times for the initial and reminder emails were staggered for different associations to best fit their schedules and member communication programs.

Data tabulation and report preparation was undertaken by NRG:  
[www.nrgresearchgroup.com](http://www.nrgresearchgroup.com)