

The Idea of Freer Trade has Strong Support

A two-thirds majority (66%) of Canadians support the idea of freer trade between Canada and the United States, which is significantly higher than the level of support found in May, 1992 (57%). The idea of freer trade between Canada, the United States, and Mexico is equally popular, with 67% of Canadians in favour.

1.4 Assessments of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

Most Canadians are Aware of the NAFTA

Awareness of the North American Free Trade Agreement is very high, with 88 percent of respondents reporting they have heard something about the trilateral agreement. The most commonly mentioned facet of the Agreement is the perception of lost jobs and low Mexican wages;

Approximately four in ten (43%) felt that the NAFTA is not an improvement over the current Free Trade Agreement and only one third of respondents agreed that the NAFTA is good for Canadian exports because it clears up problems in the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement.

Similar to the support for the bilateral Agreement, 46 percent support the NAFTA, with 48 percent opposed. Support has risen 16 percent since May 1992, and 17 percent since March 1992, and is the same as that received in September and February 1991 (46% respectively). The primary reason for supporting the NAFTA was that the Agreement opens up new markets, while the primary reason for opposition was lower Mexican wages resulting in lost jobs.

Canadians are Divided as to the Long-Term Benefits of the NAFTA

Canadians are almost evenly divided as to whether "in the long run the NAFTA will benefit Canada." Forty-one percent (41%) believe the NAFTA will benefit Canada and an equivalent proportion believe it will hurt. A smaller proportion (35%) believe the NAFTA will benefit their province in the long run.