

As found in past surveys, perceptions of the economic effects of the free trade deal are strongly related to overall levels of support for the Agreement. In fact, statistical analysis reveals that perceptions of the economic effects of free trade remain an almost perfect predictor of whether the respondent supports or opposes the Agreement (Table 6).

Table 6

FREE TRADE AGREEMENT: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN
PERCEIVED ECONOMIC EFFECTS AND OVERALL SUPPORT

GAMMA WITH OVERALL SUPPORT*

THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IS A
GOOD THING FOR...

The Canadian economy	0.920
Your provincial economy	0.881
Economic well-being of You and your family	0.914

* The larger the Gamma statistic the more closely associated the two attributes, with a perfect correlation being +1.0 or -1.0. The plus/minus sign indicates the direction of association.

Quebec residents remain the most optimistic about the economic benefits of free trade for the nation (73%), for their province (71%) and for themselves (71%). Residents of Ontario, on the other hand, continue to be sceptical about the economic benefits to be accrued from the Agreement (47% say it will be a good thing for Canada's economy; 46% think it will be a good thing for the Ontario economy; and 50% see it as a good thing for the economic well-being of themselves and their families.

Among British Columbians, the number saying they think free trade will be a good thing economically appears to have declined since the Fall of 1987. As compared to the October 1987 results, the May data show that fewer British Columbians think the FTA will be a good thing for the national economy (51% vs 69% in October 1987), for the provincial economy (48% vs 64%), or for their own personal economic situations (54% vs 71%).