

15 – Impact of Covid-19 on Canadian Support for Carbon Pricing

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The COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to impact public support for climate change mitigation -- but in what direction? Will participation in collective action and embrace of both the regulatory and spending functions of the state reinforce public support for climate policy, including carbon taxation? Or will the pandemic undermine support for climate action by shifting attention to the economy and support for incumbent fossil fuel-intensive industries? In 2019, we conducted a 4-wave panel survey of Canadians' attitudes to climate change and carbon pricing as a federal carbon tax and dividend scheme was implemented, followed by a national election. Having previously polled respondents' attitudes to climate change and carbon pricing, we are in a unique position to assess how the same Canadians' attitudes to carbon pricing have *changed* following the COVID-19 pandemic. In June 2020, we completed a fifth wave of our survey, the results of which will be reported in this paper. We will explore how respondents' experience with COVID-19, both health and economic, affected their support for carbon pricing. We will also report the results of a framing experiment that drew an analogy between collective action on COVID-19 and climate change.

Biographical note

Kathryn Harrison is a Professor of Political Science at the University of British Columbia. Harrison received Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Chemical Engineering before completing her PhD in Political Science. Before entering academia, Harrison worked as a chemical engineer in the oil industry, and as a policy analyst for both Environment Canada and the United States Congress. She has served as Senior Associate Dean and Acting Dean in the UBC Faculty of Arts. Professor Harrison is the author or editor of several volumes, including Global Commons, Domestic Decisions: The Comparative Politics of Climate Change, and has published widely on Canadian and US climate and environmental policy. She is currently working on a book on the comparative politics of carbon taxes in Canada, Australia, France, and Ireland. She is a frequent commentator on climate policy, via op-eds, media interviews, and twitter (@khar1958).