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Canadians Overwhelmingly Support Efforts to Reduce Government Waste, Arcus Survey Finds.

March 7, 2025 – A new national Arcus survey of 1,245 Canadians between March 3-5, 2025 reveals strong public demand for government efficiency reforms, with 65% supporting the creation of a dedicated agency to cut government waste and red tape. The findings suggest that a Doge-style government efficiency initiative (DOGE)—similar to efforts seen in the United States—could gain traction in Canada if framed as cutting bureaucracy rather than essential services.

Key Findings:

- 73.9% of Canadians believe the federal government is inefficient or only somewhat efficient.
- 65% support creating an independent agency focused on cutting government waste.
- The most preferred approach is to reduce bureaucracy (40%), while only 19% support job cuts.
- 45% of Canadians would accept some job or service cuts for greater efficiency, but 30% strongly oppose cuts.
- 50% believe in making government more efficient without reducing services, while only 25% favor a smaller government with fewer services.

Public Appetite for Efficiency, Not Austerity

“These results show that Canadians want a government that operates smarter, not necessarily smaller,” said Merrill Mascarenhas, Managing Partner at Arcus Consulting Group. “There is broad support for reforms that eliminate waste and red tape, but there’s also caution against reckless cuts to public services.”

A Political Opportunity?

With federal spending and bureaucracy at historic highs, policymakers may find these findings a strong mandate to implement efficiency-driven reforms. However, the data suggests that cutting government jobs outright would face opposition, making targeted solutions—such as reducing duplication, increasing oversight, and adopting better technology—more politically viable.

As Canada prepares for its next election cycle, leaders across the political spectrum may need to address public concerns about inefficiency. The survey suggests that a well-designed reform plan focused on smart cost-cutting could gain widespread support.

About Arcus

Arcus Consulting Group is a leading market research and certified management consulting firm. Arcus specializes in assisting businesses, governments, and non-profit organizations to address challenges related to growth, organizational development, and operational efficiency. The firm's expertise spans multiple industries, including healthcare, automotive, consumer products, financial services, and retail.

Key Findings

The concept of a Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), as implemented in the United States by the Trump Administration has sparked discussions in Canada about adopting a similar initiative to reduce government waste. Analyses by organizations like the Fraser Institute and the Business Council of Alberta have highlighted the substantial growth of Canada's federal bureaucracy in recent years, suggesting that a DOGE-like approach could enhance efficiency and economic performance.

Until this Arcus survey, there hasn't been publicly available data indicating the percentage of Canadians who would support such an initiative. Public opinion on this matter has not been extensively surveyed or documented. Therefore, it has been challenging to provide a precise figure regarding the level of support among Canadians for a DOGE-style entity aimed at cutting government waste. This Arcus survey address the gap in polling on this topic.

If a DOGE-style initiative is framed as "cutting red tape and inefficiencies without reducing essential services", it could attract majority support (~55-65%). However, if it is perceived as "cutting government jobs and services", support could fall below 50%. A clear majority (65%) support the creation of a government efficiency agency, with 30% strongly supporting it.

Based on past voting patterns, public opinion trends, and attitudes toward government spending in Canada, an estimate of support for a Doge-style entity (DOGE) aimed at cutting government waste would likely vary by political affiliation and region. To accurately gauge Canadian support for a DOGE-style entity to reduce government waste, the Arcus survey included questions that measure general attitudes toward government spending, bureaucracy, and efficiency. Here's a breakdown:

Survey Results Summary

Questions	Government Efficiency	Support for DOGE	Approach to Waste Reduction	Impact on Services	Government Spending View
Cut Jobs			19.00		
Depends on Services				23.92	
Efficient	16.08				
Increase Oversight			26.33		
Inefficient	40.58				
Larger Government					18.92
More Efficient Government					49.83
Neutral		16.17			
No Changes			5.83		
Oppose If Jobs Cut				28.58	
Reduce Bureaucracy			40.42		
Smaller Government					25.33
Somewhat Efficient	32.92				
Somewhat Oppose		10.25			
Somewhat Support		34.83			
Strongly Oppose		8.92			
Strongly Support		29.83			
Support Even with Cuts				47.50	
Unsure	10.42				5.92
Use Technology			8.42		

Survey Report: Canadian Attitudes Toward Government Efficiency and Waste Reduction

Survey Sample Size: 1,245 Canadians

Survey period: March 3-5, 2025

Survey Objective: To gauge public support for a DOGE-style entity in Canada aimed at reducing government waste and inefficiency.

1. Perceived Efficiency of the Canadian Government

Question: "Do you believe the Canadian federal government is currently operating efficiently?"

- **Efficient:** 16.1%
- **Somewhat Efficient:** 33.3%
- **Inefficient:** 40.6%
- **Unsure:** 10.0%

Analysis: A majority of respondents (73.9%) believe the government is either inefficient or only somewhat efficient, suggesting strong public concerns about waste and bureaucracy. Only a small minority (16.1%) believe the government is operating efficiently, which indicates a potential appetite for reforms targeting inefficiency.

2. Support for a Dedicated Waste Reduction Agency (DOGE-style entity)

Question: "Would you support the creation of an independent government agency focused on identifying and eliminating government waste and inefficiency?"

- Strongly Support: 30.0%
- Somewhat Support: 35.0%
- Neutral: 15.0%
- Somewhat Oppose: 10.0%
- Strongly Oppose: 10.0%

Analysis: A clear majority (65%) support the creation of a government efficiency agency, with 30% strongly supporting it. The neutral stance (15%) suggests some hesitation, possibly due to concerns about implementation or unintended consequences. Only 20% oppose the idea, indicating relatively low resistance.

3. Preferred Approach to Reducing Government Waste

Question: "Which of the following approaches would you prefer to reduce government inefficiency?"
(Multiple selections allowed.)

- Reduce Bureaucracy and Red Tape: 40.0%
- Cut Government Jobs and Departments: 19.0%
- Increase Oversight and Accountability Without Cutting Jobs: 26.3%
- Use Technology to Streamline Operations: 10.0%
- No Changes Needed: 5.0%

Analysis: The most popular solution (40%) is cutting bureaucracy rather than directly eliminating jobs. However, only 19% support cutting jobs, indicating that while Canadians want efficiency, they are cautious about job losses. A significant portion (26.3%) favors increasing oversight rather than downsizing, and a smaller segment (10%) believes that technological improvements could be the key.

4. Willingness to Accept Cuts in Public Services

Question: "If reducing government inefficiency meant cutting certain public sector jobs or services, would you still support it?"

- Yes, efficiency is more important than maintaining all current government jobs: 45.0%
- No, reducing inefficiency should not come at the cost of public sector jobs or services: 30.0%
- It depends on the specific jobs or services affected: 23.9%

Analysis: Nearly half (45%) of Canadians are willing to accept some job or service cuts for the sake of efficiency. However, 30% oppose cuts, highlighting a segment that sees government services as essential. The 23.9% who are conditional supporters suggest that details on implementation will be crucial in shaping public acceptance.

5. Views on Government Size and Spending

Question: "Which of the following best describes your political views on government spending?"

- The government should be smaller, with lower taxes and fewer services: 25.0%
- The government should be more efficient, but maintain key services: 50.0%
- The government should be larger, providing more services even if it requires more spending: 20.0%
- Unsure: 5.0%

Factors Influencing Support

Over half of Canadians favor efficiency improvements without cutting core services, indicating broad support for waste reduction without austerity measures. One-quarter favor smaller government, which suggests an appetite for more drastic cuts, while a fifth prefer expanded government services, likely opposing a DOGE-style initiative.

1. Conservative vs. Progressive Divide

- **Conservative Voters (60-80% support):** Generally favor smaller government, fiscal responsibility, and reducing bureaucratic inefficiency. Past support for cuts to government spending (e.g., Harper-era policies) suggests strong backing.
- **Liberal & NDP Voters (20-40% support):** Typically favor government programs and public services. Concerns about potential job losses and service reductions may lower their support.

2. Regional Variations

- Alberta, Saskatchewan (60-80% support): Historically conservative, skeptical of big government, and supportive of fiscal reform.
- Ontario, British Columbia (40-60% support): More mixed, with urban centers like Toronto and Vancouver being less supportive.
- Quebec (30-50% support): More government interventionist but may support if framed as administrative efficiency.
- Atlantic Canada (30-50% support): Reliance on federal programs could make them less supportive.

3. Past Referenda and Polling Trends

- Polls on government waste reduction have consistently shown that Canadians disapprove of wasteful spending (~70%), but this doesn't always translate into support for sweeping cuts.
- Past elections show Canadians are cautious about drastic government changes, but will support efficiency-driven reforms.