NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Liberals lead in Northwest Ontario after debate

All incumbents safe; jobs and growth key campaign issue

TORONTO MAY 27th, 2014 - In a random sampling of public opinion taken by the Forum Poll™ among 704 voters in the three northwestern Ontario ridings of Kenora-Rainy River, Thunder Bay-Atikokan and Thunder Bay-Superior North on the evening of the afternoon northern Ontario debate, the incumbents all have comfortable leads.

KENORA-RAINY RIVER

The NDP incumbent, Sarah Campbell, has a comfortable lead of almost half (47%) compared to one third for Randy Nickle, the PC candidate (32%). The Liberal candidate, Anthony Leek, doesn't really contend in this riding (18%), while few will vote Green (2%) or for any other party (1%).

Horwath with highest approval

Kathleen Wynne has the approval of about one fifth (18%), as does Tim Hudak (21%), and both have truly awful net favourable ratings (approve minus disapprove) of - 43 and -42, respectively. Andrea Horwath does scarcely better (31% approval, -15 net).

Andrea Horwath is seen to be the best potential premier (25%), ahead of Tim Hudak (20%) and Kathleen Wynne (15%). Fully 3-in-10 say none of these is appropriate (30%), while one tenth don't know (9%).

Horwath seen to be debate winner

One half think neither leader won the afternoon Northern Ontario debate (48%), but more than twice as many think Horwath did (37%) as think this of Wynne (15%).

Andrea Horwath is seen to have the best understanding of northern issues (24%), followed by Hudak (14%) and Wynne (13%). Again, 3-in-10 thinks none of these have this understanding (31%).

Jobs/growth key campaign issue; also government corruption

The most pressing electoral issue in this riding is jobs and growth (as it is everywhere - 28%), followed by government corruption (18%) and eliminating the deficit (15%). Andrea Horwath and Tim Hudak are equally likely to be seen as the best at jobs and growth (20% and 22%, respectively) ahead of Kathleen Wynne (16%). Hudak leads at dealing with government corruption (25%),

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followed by Horwath (19%) and distantly, by Wynne (11%). Wynne (14%) and Horwath (13%) are equally likely to be seen as having the best transit and transportation plan (Hudak - 10%), but, significantly, half thinks none has a plan (50%). Hudak has a slight lead in being best to develop the Ring of Fire (18%), followed very closely by Wynne and Horwath (13% and 12%).

Three quarters say Hudak should have attended debate

Fully three quarters think Tim Hudak should have attended the northern debate (74%) and just one tenth think he didn't have to (13%). Four-in-ten say they are less likely to vote PC as a result of his absence (40%), including one third of Conservative supporters (35%).

THUNDER BAY-ATIKOKAN

Liberal incumbent Bill Mauro has a substantial lead (52%) over both the PC candidate, Harold Wilson (21%) and the NDP candidate, Mary Kozyros (24%), against whom he eked out a victory in 2011. Few will vote Greeen (2%) or for another party (1%).

Wynne with highest approval; Hudak lowest

Kathleen Wynne has the approval of more than 4-in-10 (43%) and her net is +4. Andrea Horwath has the approval of about 3-in-10 (31%), but her net rating is a negative -18. Tim Hudak fares the worst at one fifth approval (20%), coupled with a net favourable rating of -38.

Wynne seen as best Premier

Twice as many see Kathleen Wynne as the best Premier (41%) as say this of either Horwath or Hudak (19% each). A relatively modest one seventh see none as appropriate for the job (14%).

Two thirds say Wynne Won Debate

Two thirds (63%) say Kathleen Wynne won the afternoon debate (63%), four times as many as say this of Horwath (15%). One fifth say the debate was a draw (22%).

Wynne leads for understanding North the best

Close to 4-in-10 say Wynne has the best understanding of northern issues (38%), compared to about half this proportion who say it of Horwath (21%) or Hudak (17%). One seventh say none has this understanding (15%).

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HIGHLIGHTS:

- In Thunder Bay – Atikokan Liberal incumbent Bill Mauro has a substantial lead (52%).
- Kathleen Wynne has the approval of more than 4-in-10 (43%) and her net is +4.
- Twice as many see Kathleen Wynne as the best Premier (41%) as say this of either Horwath or Hudak (19% each).
- Two thirds (63%) say Kathleen Wynne won the afternoon debate (63%).
- Close to 4-in-10 say Wynne has the best understanding of northern issues (38%).
- As is the case across the province, jobs and growth are seen as the most important issue in this campaign in this riding (36%).
- As is the case in the other two ridings, fully three quarters say Tim Hudak should have attended the debate (76%).

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Jobs and growth key campaign issue

As is the case across the province, jobs and growth are seen as the most important issue in this campaign in this riding (36%), followed, distantly, by government corruption (11%). Twice as many see Wynne as best equipped to deliver jobs and growth (42%) as say this of the other candidates (Hudak - 18%, Horwath -15%). Wynne is also seen to best able to handle corruption (31%) although by a slimmer margin (Hudak - 17%, Horwath - 18%). Wynne leads for her transit and transportation plans (33%) compared to Hudak (12%) and Horwath (13%). Wynne, finally, is significantly more likely to be seen as having the best plan for the Ring of Fire (42%), compared to the other two leaders (Hudak - 13%, Horwath - 9%).

Three quarters say Hudak was missed

As is the case in the other two ridings, fully three quarters say Tim Hudak should have attended the debate (76%) and just one tenth say he didn't have to (12%). As a result, close to half are less likely to vote PC (48%), and this includes one quarter of past PC voters (23%).

THUNDER BAY-SUPERIOR NORTH

Liberal incumbent Micheal Gravelle has a more than comfortable lead (55%) over his closest opponent (Andrew Foulds, NDP - 25%) and the PC candidate does not contend (14%). Very few will vote Green (5%) or for other parties (1%).

Wynne leads approval

Wynne has the approval of close to half the voters in this riding (46%), and her net score is a comfortable +11. Andrea Horwath has the approval of a third (35%), but a negative net rating (-11). Tim Hudak is the least approved at 18%, and a truly dismal net favourable rating of -50.

Wynne to make best Premier

Kathleen Wynne has a significant lead as best Premier (44%) compared to Andrea Horwath (18%) and, especially, Tim Hudak (11%). One eight think none would do a good job (16%).

Half think neither won debate

One half of those who watched or listened to the debate think no one won it (49%), but twice as many think Kathleen Wynne won (35%) as say this of Andrea Horwath (16%).

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HIGHLIGHTS:

- In Thunder Bay – Superior North Liberal incumbent Micheal Gravelle has a more than comfortable lead (55%).
- Wynne has the approval of close to half the voters in this riding (46%).
- Kathleen Wynne has a significant lead as best Premier (44%).
- One half of those who watched or listened to the debate think no one won it (49%).
- On this important measure, Kathleen Wynne scores among a third (34%), compared to fewer for Horwath (19%) and one third as many for Hudak (9%).
- While jobs and growth is the key issue in this riding too (32%), the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP - 10%), government corruption (11%) , eliminating the deficit (10%) and transit/transportation (12%) are also important to about a tenth.

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Wynne seen to have best understanding of northern issues

On this important measure, Kathleen Wynne scores among a third (34%), compared to fewer for Horwath (19%) and one third as many for Hudak (9%). One quarter think none of the leaders have the requisite northern insight (23%).

Jobs and growth key issue

While jobs and growth is the key issue in this riding too (32%), the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP - 10%), government corruption (11%) , eliminating the deficit (10%) and transit/transportation (12%) are also important to about a tenth. Kathleen Wynne is seen to be best to deliver jobs and growth (34%) compared to the others (Horwath - 18%, Hudak - 12%) and she is also seen to be best to handle government corruption (25%), albeit by a slighter margin (Horwath and Hudak - 18% each). Wynne is three times as likely to be cited for her transit and transportation plans (35%) than her competitors (Hudak -10%, Horwath - 12%). Wynne has an even bigger advantage in developing the Ring of Fire (47% to 10% for Hudak and 13% for Horwath).

8-in10 say Hudak should have attended

Voters in this riding are even more insistent Hudak should have debated (81%), and just one tenth think he didn't have to (10%). As a result, fully one half are less likely to vote PC (50%), including one third of past PC voters (34%).

"The long-time NDP fief of Kenora-Rainy River, once held by party leader Howard Hampton, is secure, and completely different in its electoral preferences from the two Thunder Bay ridings, which are trending even more Liberal than they were in the last election. Although the debate was not that widely watched, it had an impact on those who saw it and most agree the Premier won. The fact that this kind of exposure is important is reinforced by the strong majority who think Tim Hudak should have taken part, and the negative effect his absence has on voting intentions, even among Progressive Conservative partisans," said Forum Research President, Dr. Lorne Bozinoff.

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Methodology

The Forum Poll™ was conducted by Forum Research with the results based on an interactive voice response telephone survey of randomly selected voters who resided in each riding. The poll was conducted on May 26th, 2014.

Kenora-Rainy River:	209 respondents, +/- 7%
Thunder Bay-Atikokan:	260 respondents, +/- 6%
Thunder Bay-Superior North:	236 respondents, +/- 6%

Results based on the total samples listed above are considered accurate 19 times out of 20. Subsample results will be less accurate. Margins of error for subsample (such as age, gender) results are available at
www.forumresearch.com/samplestim.asp

Where appropriate, the data has been statistically weighted by age, region, and other variables to ensure that the sample reflects the actual population according to the latest Census data.

This research is not necessarily predictive of future outcomes, but rather, captures opinion at one point in time. Actual results will depend on the parties' success at getting their voters out. Forum Research conducted this poll as a public service and to demonstrate our survey research capabilities. Forum houses its poll results in the Data Library of the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto.

With offices across Canada and around the world, 100% Canadian-owned Forum Research is one of the country's leading survey research firms. This Forum Poll™and other polls may be found at Forum's poll archive at www.forumresearch.com/polls.asp

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