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IFAW: Majority of Canadians Do Not Want Tax Dollars to Support the Seal Hunt

TORONTO, ONTARIO--(Marketwire - April 28, 2011) - As Canadians across Canada prepare to file their income taxes, a new poll conducted by Environics Research Group for the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) shows that Canadians remain firmly opposed to the use of their tax dollars to support the commercial sealing industry in Canada.

Canadians continue to say "Not with my taxes" when it comes to government support for the seal hunt, with over two-thirds (68%) of Canadians opposed to the federal government using tax dollars to promote the commercial seal hunt.

Among the findings of the nation-wide poll:

68% of Canadians oppose the use of their tax dollars to promote the commercial seal hunt.

71% disapprove of their tax dollars being used to challenge the EU seal product ban at the WTO. The Conservative government announced last year that it would challenge European Union regulations on the marketing of seal products, at an estimated cost to Canadian taxpayers of \$10 million.

73% of Canadian say that the commercial seal hunt should have its federal government support cut off and left to survive or fail on its own merits. Current estimates show that the seal hunt costs Canadians about three times more in government support than the landed value of the hunt itself.

75% of Canadians disapprove of the use of tax dollars to fund organizations that support the seal hunt.

However, an overwhelming majority (84%) approve of taxes being used on a program to transition sealers into other employment opportunities.

"The hard-earned tax dollars of Canadians should be spent wisely in these tough economic times, not squandered on an industry that benefits fewer and fewer individuals each year and has increasingly bleak prospects," said Sheryl Fink, Director of IFAW's Seal Program, "Not only are markets for seal products disappearing, but the lack of ice due to climate change will make it impossible for anyone to rely on this industry in the future."

"Using tax dollars to support the commercial seal hunt is a total waste of money," said Fink, "Even those who ignore the fact that it's cruel and damages our international reputation cannot ignore the fact that the numbers don't make sense." A 2010 study by Professor John Livernois at the University of Guelph found that ending the commercial seal hunt would save Canada at least \$7 million each year.

"The fiscally responsible thing to do is transition sealers into other activities, stop wasting Canadians' tax dollars on supporting the sealing industry and end the commercial seal hunt." concluded Fink.

The Environics National Telephone Omnibus Survey presents the findings of a telephone survey conducted among a national random sample of 2,140 adults comprising 1070 males and 1070 females 18 years of age and older, living in Canada. The margin of error for a sample of this size is +/- 2.12%, 19 times out of 20. Interviewing for the survey was completed during the period April 12-21, 2011. Results are for respondents offering an opinion.

The Numbers*

Number of commercial sealing licenses	6,000
Number of sealers who participated in 2010 commercial seal hunt	390
Number of companies who process seals	4
Landed value of seal pelts in 2010	\$1.2 million
Landed value of "other" products including meat and oil in 2010	\$60,000
Export value of seal products in 2010	\$2.1 million
Total value of the seal industry in 2010	\$3.4 million
Annual cost for Department of Fisheries and Oceans to monitor the hunt**	\$1 million
Cost to fight the EU ban on seal products at the WTO***	\$10 million
Cost to tourism, other trade areas and Canada's reputation	Unknown, but likely significant

*Unless otherwise indicated, source is Department of Fisheries and Oceans' [2011-2015 Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Atlantic Seals](#)

**Estimate based on information received through Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP).

***Estimate based on McCarthy Tétrault trade lawyer Simon Potter, published in the Globe and Mail, 28 July 2009.

About IFAW

IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare) was established in 1969 and its founding campaign was in opposition to Canada's commercial seal hunt. IFAW has more than 40 years of experience raising awareness, documenting and opposing the cruel commercial hunts for seals in Canada and around the world.

For more information on the campaign read IFAW's [blog](#), visit our [website](#) and follow us on [YouTube](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) or to take action to protect seals visit IF