

Town of Wasaga Beach Residential Ratepayer Telephone Survey Questions

Future of Wasaga Distribution Inc.

The following questions were asked to respondents of the telephone survey undertaken by Innovative Research Group Inc. on behalf of the Town of Wasaga Beach.

NOTES:

1. During the survey, certain questions were presented to respondents in randomized order to prevent order bias.
2. As data collection neared completion, potential respondents were screened by age in order to overcome a potential over-representation of those aged 65 and older in the final sample.

Introduction

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm calling from **Innovative Research Group** on behalf of the Town of Wasaga Beach.

Innovative Research Group is a national public opinion research firm. We have been commissioned by the Town of Wasaga Beach to conduct a survey of area residents.

1. Would you mind if I had **10 minutes** of your time to ask you some questions? All your responses will be kept strictly confidential.
2. Have I reached you at your home phone number?
3. Do you have primary or shared responsibility for paying the electricity bill in your household?
4. Can you confirm that your household receives an electricity bill from Wasaga Distribution Inc.?
5. What is the most important issue in the Town of Wasaga Beach today, in other words, the one that concerns you personally the most?
6. Have you read, seen or heard anything recently about Wasaga Distribution Inc., the local utility that provides electricity to the Town of Wasaga Beach?
7. What, specifically, have you read, seen or heard about Wasaga Distribution?
8. As you may know, the Town of Wasaga Beach is the sole shareholder of Wasaga Distribution Inc. The town is currently considering three options regarding the future of Wasaga Distribution. These options are to retain ownership and try to expand the utility, to merge with another utility, or to sell the utility. How familiar are you with the fact that the Town of Wasaga Beach is considering these options for the future of Wasaga Distribution?
9. Do you support or oppose the Town of Wasaga Beach maintaining sole ownership of Wasaga Distribution? [If support/oppose] Is that strongly or somewhat?

I am going to read you some statements, and for each one, I'd like you to tell me if it leaves you more likely to support or to oppose the Town maintaining sole ownership of Wasaga Distribution. If the statement has no impact, please just say so.

- b. The Ontario provincial government is encouraging small local electrical utilities to merge.
- c. Three independent provincial reviews have estimated that over a billion dollars in distribution costs can be saved by merging local electrical utilities.
- d. The Ontario Energy Board has said that both owners and customers must benefit when electrical utilities merge.
- e. Retaining the utility and attempting to expand it is the easiest, least complicated option.

If the Town of Wasaga Beach determines that it doesn't make sense to retain sole ownership of Wasaga Distribution, would you support or oppose the following options?

10. Merging Wasaga Distribution with another electrical utility.

11. Selling 100% of Wasaga Distribution to a larger utility.

I am going to read you some statements, and for each one, I'd like you to tell me if it leaves you more likely to support or to oppose the Town merging Wasaga Distribution with another electrical utility. If the statement has no impact, please just say so.

- f. There are other examples of local utilities merging in Ontario, such as Parry Sound merging with Lakeland and Tay Township merging with Newmarket.
- g. Typically, mergers result in financial savings for the utilities involved.
- h. Mergers often result in job losses.
- i. Harmonizing rates after a merger means some customers end up paying more than they used to, while other customers pay less than they used to.
- j. When a small utility like Wasaga Distribution merges with a larger utility, the smaller utility may not have much of a say in Board decisions.
- k. The government of Ontario may eventually force smaller utilities to merge, so it's better to do it now at the Town of Wasaga Beach's discretion.

I am going to read you some statements, and for each one, I'd like you to tell me if it leaves you more likely to support or to oppose the Town selling Wasaga Distribution to another electrical utility. If the statement has no impact, please just say so.

- l. If the Town decides to sell Wasaga Distribution, they would make the bidding competitive, bringing in as much money to the Town as possible.

- m. The sale price of Wasaga Distribution must take into account the value of future dividends paid to the Town.
 - n. The sale price of Wasaga Distribution must include a premium which cannot be recovered by increasing the distribution rates paid by customers.
12. Now that we have discussed this issue in more detail, do you support or oppose the Town of Wasaga Beach maintaining sole ownership of Wasaga Distribution? [If support/oppose] Is that strongly or somewhat?

And, again, now that we have had some discussion about it, if the Town of Wasaga Beach determines that it doesn't make sense to retain sole ownership of Wasaga Distribution, would you support or oppose the following?

- 13. Merging Wasaga Distribution with another electrical utility.
- 14. Selling 100% of Wasaga Distribution to a larger utility.
- 15. For the average customer, only 17% of the total hydro bill is paid to Wasaga Distribution, and only this 17% would potentially be impacted by selling or merging the utility. Hearing this, are you more likely to support or to oppose a potential sale or merger of Wasaga Distribution?
- 16. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The cost of my electricity bill has a major impact on my finances and requires I do without some other important priorities

These last few questions are for statistical purposes only and I remind you again that all of your responses are completely confidential.

17. Which of the following age groups do you fall into?

01	Younger than 18
02	18 to 24
03	25 to 34
04	35 to 44
05	45 to 54
06	55 to 64
07	65 or older

18. For approximately how many years have you owned or rented a property in Wasaga Beach?

01	Less than 5 years
02	5 to 10 years
03	More than 10 years

19. With regard to the potential sale of Wasaga Distribution, have you done any of the following?

1.	Attended a meeting where the issue was discussed
2.	Posted a sign on your property
3.	Signed a petition
4.	All of the above
5.	None of the above

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey.