

## Three-in-four Canadians call airlines' new checked luggage fees "unacceptable", "money grab"

*Most airline travelers call for foreign competition on domestic routes*

**October 31, 2014** – Canada's major airlines are on the hot seat as a result of recently announced \$25 fees for the first checked bag for flights in Canada.

The most recent Angus Reid Institute online survey of Canadian adults shows they are widely opposed to the baggage fees recently imposed by domestic airlines.

The survey findings reveal 75% of respondents view the recently imposed \$25 fee for first checked bags as "unacceptable" – with frequent fliers and respondents from BC taking the dimmest view of the added costs (see detailed tables at the end of this release).

Respondents also expressed a preference for airlines to just include bag fees in ticket costs, as well as a desire for more foreign competition on Canadian routes.

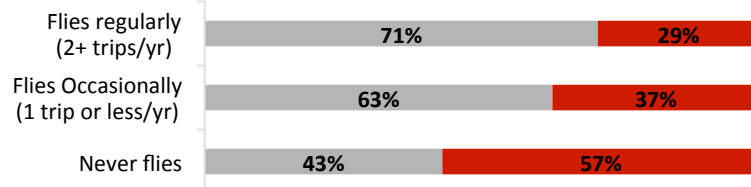
### The \$25 fee: a "money grab"

These new measures are disliked to the extent that a majority of air travelers (58%) would prefer to see the baggage charge folded into higher ticket prices. There is also, however, a sense of resignation when it comes to avoiding these new charges. One-third (34%) say they'll try to avoid the fees, but if they have to check bags, "so be it." Just over one in ten (12%) take a harder line, saying they will do "everything in their power" to avoid checking bags.

Among frequent fliers, the story changes. About three quarters of frequent travelers say they will take steps to avoid checking bags, while close to one-in-five say they will do "everything in their power" to avoid checking bags.

Overall, about forty percent of Canadians say they don't fly enough to be affected by these new charges.

### Which of the following best describes your opinion on the government allowing foreign competition on domestic routes?



- The government should allow foreign competition on domestic routes
- The government should not allow foreign competition on domestic routes

#### **METHODOLOGY:**

Online surveys among 1491 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists from October 21-23, 2014. A probability sample of this size carries a margin of error of +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

This survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI.

Detailed charts, tables and regional results are found at the end of this release.

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When asked whether they see the recently announced checked baggage fee as an acceptable business practice or an unacceptable money grab, almost eighty percent of frequent flyers felt this new fee was a “money grab”.

Whether it is fuel surcharge fees, navigational surcharges, or airport improvement fees, air travel fees are not new to Canadians. In March 2013, the Calgary airport increased its airport improvement fee from \$25 to \$30 to subsidize its new terminal and runway. It is the second highest fee in the country next to Bathurst, N.B. which charges its travelers 40 dollars. Similar fees, such as the Air Travelers Security Charge, which came into effect in 2002, have remained intact since their initial introduction.

### **Open Skies?**

The announcement of new baggage charges has led to calls in some quarters for greater competition in the Canadian airline industry. The ARI survey asked respondents whether or not the federal government should allow foreign airlines to fly on domestic Canadian routes.

Canadians are divided, based on their level of airline use. While close to seven-in-ten travelers who fly more frequently (two or more trips per year) give the thumbs-up to foreign competition, the majority (57%) of those who don't fly are against the measure.

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research organization established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

**Canada's two major airlines -- West Jet and Air Canada -- have announced there will now be a \$25 fee for each piece of checked luggage on all economy fare tickets in North America and the Caribbean. Travelers will no longer get to check their first bag for free.**

**What is your overall view of airlines charging a fee to check baggage? In your view is this:**

	Total (1491)	Region						
		BC (201)	AB (144)	SK (95)	MB (100)	ON (201)	PQ (350)	ATL (100)
<b>Unacceptable – just a money grab</b>	75%	82%	69%	72%	80%	77%	71%	76%
<b>Acceptable – as a business they should charge what they think they need to</b>	15%	12%	15%	18%	12%	15%	17%	12%
<b>No opinion</b>	10%	7%	15%	10%	8%	8%	12%	12%

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Canada's two major airlines -- West Jet and Air Canada -- have announced there will now be a \$25 fee for each piece of checked luggage on all economy fare tickets in North America and the Caribbean. Travelers will no longer get to check their first bag for free.

What is your overall view of airlines charging a fee to check baggage? In your view is this:

	Total (1491)	Flies Regularly (2+ flights/yr)	Flies Occasionally (1 or fewer flights/yr)	Never Flies
Unacceptable – just a money grab	75%	78%	76%	66%
Acceptable – as a business they should charge what they think they need to	15%	19%	14%	11%
No opinion	10%	3%	9%	23%

Assuming the \$25 fee is coming one way or another, which of the following statements best describes your feelings:

	Total (1491)	Region						
		BC (201)	AB (144)	SK (95)	MB (100)	ON (201)	PQ (350)	ATL (100)
I hate extra fees; I would prefer the airlines just raise the price of a ticket \$25	58%	60%	60%	60%	53%	57%	60%	59%
I prefer a fee like this; after all I can avoid the fee by not checking a bag	42%	40%	40%	40%	47%	43%	40%	41%

Assuming the \$25 fee is coming one way or another, which of the following statements best describes your feelings:

	Total (1491)	Flies Regularly (2+ flights/yr)	Flies Occasionally (1 or fewer flights/yr)	Never Flies
I hate extra fees; I would prefer the airlines just raise the price of a ticket \$25	58%	62%	59%	50%
I prefer a fee like this; after all I can avoid the fee by not checking a bag	42%	38%	41%	50%

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How will you yourself respond to these new baggage fees?								
	Total (1491)	Region						
		BC (201)	AB (144)	SK (95)	MB (100)	ON (201)	PQ (350)	ATL (100)
I will do everything in my power to avoid checking bags	12%	24%	9%	15%	17%	12%	8%	10%
I will try to avoid checking bags, but if I have to then so be it	34%	36%	40%	35%	38%	36%	30%	32%
I don't really care about the new fee and won't change anything	9%	4%	10%	12%	4%	10%	12%	7%
I usually only have a carry-on, so I don't expect to be affected	5%	3%	5%	3%	3%	5%	6%	7%
I don't fly enough to be affected.	39%	33%	37%	35%	38%	38%	45%	45%

How will you yourself respond to these new baggage fees?				
	Total (1491)	Flies Regularly (2+ flights/yr)	Flies Occasionally (1 or fewer flights/yr)	Never Flies
I will do everything in my power to avoid checking bags	12%	21%	11%	4%
I will try to avoid checking bags, but if I have to then so be it	34%	52%	33%	13%
I don't really care about the new fee and won't change anything	9%	13%	9%	5%
I usually only have a carry-on, so I don't expect to be affected	5%	8%	4%	1%
I don't fly enough to be affected.	39%	5%	43%	77%

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**Turning away from baggage fees and thinking generally about the airline industry in Canada.....**

**A proposal that is sometimes discussed is whether or not to permit foreign competition in domestic routes. Which of the following best describes your overall view on this idea:**

	Total (1491)	Region						
		BC (201)	AB (144)	SK (95)	MB (100)	ON (201)	PQ (350)	ATL (100)
The government should allow foreign competition on domestic routes	62%	71%	57%	51%	62%	61%	59%	66%
The government should not allow foreign competition on domestic routes	38%	29%	43%	49%	38%	39%	41%	34%

**Turning away from baggage fees and thinking generally about the airline industry in Canada.....**

**A proposal that is sometimes discussed is whether or not to permit foreign competition in domestic routes. Which of the following best describes your overall view on this idea:**

	Total (1491)	Flies Regularly (2+ flights/yr)	Flies Occasionally (1 or fewer flights/yr)	Never Flies
The government should allow foreign competition on domestic routes	62%	71%	63%	43%
The government should not allow foreign competition on domestic routes	38%	29%	37%	57%

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