



## Hard times don't hurt McGuinty, poll finds

May 01, 2009

**ROBERT BENZIE**  
QUEEN'S PARK BUREAU CHIEF

Ontario's Liberal government is so far weathering the storm over the recession and the harmonized sales tax, a poll released today suggests.

The Nanos Research survey shows that Premier Dalton McGuinty's Liberals enjoy a healthy lead over the Progressive Conservatives, who will choose a new leader next month, and the New Democrats led by newly elected Andrea Horwath.

In the poll of 501 Ontarians conducted April 23 to 25, the Liberals have support of 47 per cent of decided voters, compared with 31 per cent for the Tories, 16 per cent for the New Democrats, and 5 per cent for the Green party.

"In the absence of any opposition, the Liberals are doing well," Nik Nanos, president and CEO of Nanos Research, said yesterday.

"The first step for a government to be in trouble is for there to be a clear counterpoint or alternative to the government. In a way, (McGuinty) is politically coasting on the fact that the New Democrats have a new leader and that the Conservatives currently have no leader," he said.

The survey, accurate to within 4.4 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, found 45 per cent of voters believe the Liberals are headed in the right direction with only 34 per cent feeling they're off in the wrong direction and 21 per cent unsure.

McGuinty's performance was rated as average by 46 per cent, good by 29 per cent, very good by 3 per cent with only 8 per cent saying it was poor and an additional 8 per cent saying it was very poor.

When asked who "would make the best premier," 42 per cent of respondents said McGuinty, 15 per cent said interim Tory leader Bob Runciman, who will be succeeded when a leader is chosen June 27, and 9 per cent said Horwath.

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