

Liberals take aim at 'Horwath Hudak PCs'

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The Ontario Liberal Party is aiming to link its two rivals together, painting the NDP and Progressive Conservatives as parties with similar agendas that would both destabilize the province.

"The Horwath Hudak PCs will take Ontario off track," a Liberal press release states. The release, sent on Saturday, charges that the NDP have "lost their way" and are aligning themselves with the policies of Tory Leader Tim Hudak.

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The Liberals consider Ms. Horwath a threat because she could draw centre-left voters away from them. With polls showing the Tories and Liberals in a tight race to become Ontario's governing party, vote-splitting on the left is a real concern for the Liberals.

According to a Forum Research poll, commissioned by the Toronto Star and published Saturday, the Liberals and the PCs were separated by just 107 respondents, with each party at 35 per cent. The NDP was at 23 per cent and the Green Party was at five per cent.

The survey sampled 40,750 people across the province and the results are considered accurate within 0.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Facing off against each other in a debate on Northern Ontario, held Friday in Thunder Bay, Ms. Horwath and Mr. Hudak frequently sounded similar notes. They each took aim at Liberal Leader Dalton McGuinty, who declined to attend the event, citing a scheduling conflict.

Both promised to repeal the Far North Act, legislation brought in by the Liberals to protect half of Ontario's north from development. They also said they would remove the HST from home heating and work to preserve jobs in the north.