

Pipeline Problems? Try Tanker Troubles: B.C. Kinder Morgan opponents want spill response assurances

Slim majority of Canadians, British Columbians now support pipeline project; opposition remains strong

April 18, 2018 – The reassertion of jurisdictional issues in the battle between B.C. and Alberta over the completion of the Kinder Morgan pipeline project is sharpening public opinion on the matter.

But, while more Canadians appear to be losing patience with the B.C. government's delay tactics, British Columbians themselves remain anxious, troubled and alarmed by the risks associated with a tanker spill in Vancouver's Burrard Inlet. They're also largely unconvinced that current spill response plans are up to the mark.

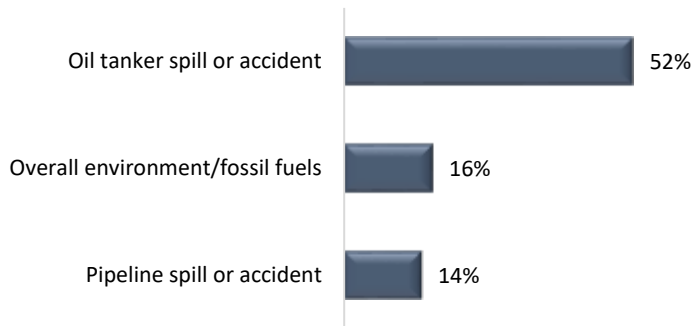
That said, the vast majority of British Columbians – including one-third who currently oppose the project – say a court ruling that its provincial government does not have the constitutional authority to block the project would be enough to give in and allow the pipeline to be twinned.

Political attempts to strong-arm B.C. – such as Alberta cutting back oil exports to the province or Ottawa withholding infrastructure dollars – appear to be less effective in getting those currently opposed to the project to say "yes".

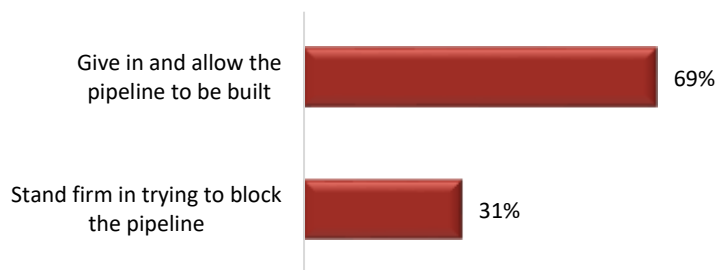
More Key Findings:

- Two-in-three Canadians (64%) now say the B.C. government is wrong to try to block the pipeline, a 9-percentage-point increase since February
- The possibility of an oil spill off the coast Metro Vancouver looms large in the minds of

Which ONE of these risks or dangers are you personally MOST concerned about? (Responses from B.C. only, N=973)



If the courts rule that B.C. does NOT have constitutional authority to block the pipeline, should the B.C. government ... (Responses from B.C. only, N=973)



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from April 16 – 17, 2018, among a representative randomized sample of 2,125 Canadian adults who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#). The sample plan included large oversamples in some regions, weighted back to provide a national snapshot. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size with this sample plan would carry a margin of error of +/- 3.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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B.C. residents, who say by a margin of three-to-one that it is the single biggest concern they have about the TransMountain project

- Asked which leaders in the conflict are doing a good or bad job, just over four-in-ten Canadians say Rachel Notley has done a good job (42%). Fewer say this of the Prime Minister (36%) and B.C. Premier John Horgan (31%)
- British Columbians are deeply divided on the overall risks and benefits of the pipeline. Some 34 per cent say the environmental risk outweighs the economic benefit. The same number (35%) say the opposite, and the rest (30%) say the risks and benefits are about equal

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Part 1 – The national view

Pipeline support is increasing

The events of the past two weeks have arguably done more to focus national attention on Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain pipeline project than the last two years or more. The [company’s ultimatum](#) demanding delays end and hurdles to project completion be cleared by May 31 prompted Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to [reassert the federal government’s jurisdiction](#) on the file, reminding opponents that his cabinet had already approved it. This had little effect on B.C. Premier John Horgan’s legal and regulatory attempts to stop the pipeline that runs from Alberta to the British Columbia Coast from being twinned, however.

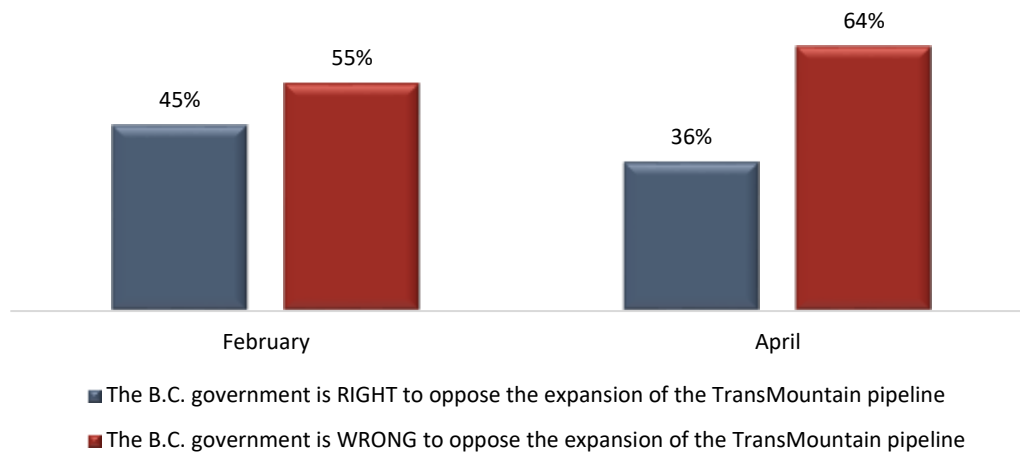
The stakes were further raised at an [unprecedented three-way meeting](#) between Trudeau, Horgan and Alberta Premier Rachel Notley on Sunday. The outcome: continued stalemate – with the added announcement that Trudeau would pursue financial and legislative avenues to keep Kinder Morgan from walking away.

Against this backdrop, the proportion of Canadians who say the government of British Columbia is wrong to oppose the pipeline has risen significantly – by nine percentage points - since the Angus Reid Institute [last asked](#) in February:

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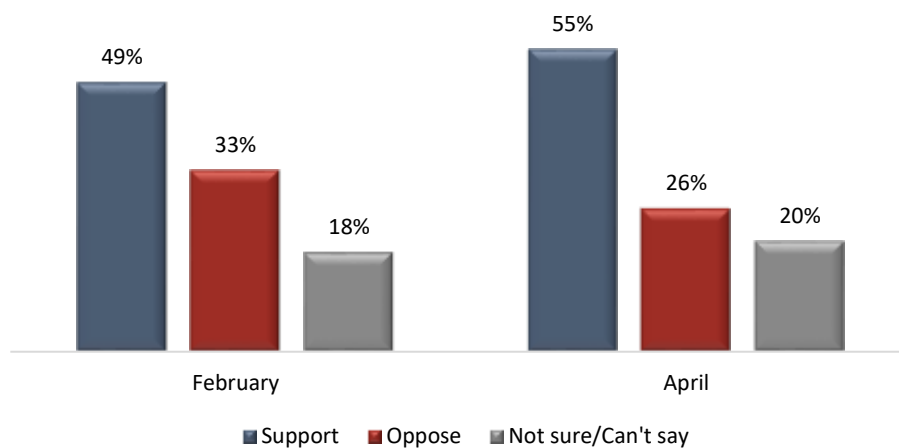
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Which statement best reflects your own point of view, even if you don't completely agree with either one?



Overall support for the TransMountain project has also grown in the last two months, from 49 per cent in February to a majority now:

Would you say you support or oppose the Kinder Morgan TransMountain pipeline expansion project?



Who's doing a good job here?

Each of the major players in this fight – Trudeau, Horgan, Notley, and the company itself, Kinder Morgan – receives mixed reviews from the Canadian public on performance.

More Canadians think Trudeau and Horgan have done a poor job than a good one, while the opposite is true for Notley and Kinder Morgan, as seen in the table that follows.

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Do you think each of the following has done a good job or poor job on their handling of the Kinder Morgan Pipeline dispute?				
	Prime Minister Justin Trudeau	BC Premier John Horgan	AB Premier Rachel Notley	Kinder Morgan, the company building this pipeline
Good Job	36%	31%	42%	38%
Poor Job	46%	38%	29%	27%
Not sure/Can't say	18%	31%	29%	36%

Notably, the Prime Minister gets negative reviews from both British Columbians (60% of who say he has done a poor job on this file) and Albertans (71%). The only province in which Trudeau receives a net positive assessment is his native Quebec, where 45 per cent say he has done a good job, compared to 37 per cent who say he has done a bad one. This, despite the fact that Quebecers are among the least supportive of the pipeline (see [comprehensive tables](#) for greater detail).

For their parts, both Horgan and Notley receive lukewarm ratings from the citizens of their own provinces. Horgan has done a good job on this file in the eyes of 45 per cent of British Columbians, while 44 per cent say he has done a bad one.

Albertans are slightly more approving of Notley. A majority (54%) say she has done a good job, while 39 per cent say she has done a bad one. This is considerably more division than Albertans express on other questions in this survey – such as support for the pipeline itself.

One potential factor in Alberta's mixed feelings on its premier's performance could be its reaction to one of her signature proposals: Using provincial funds to become an investor in – or even the outright owner of – the pipeline.

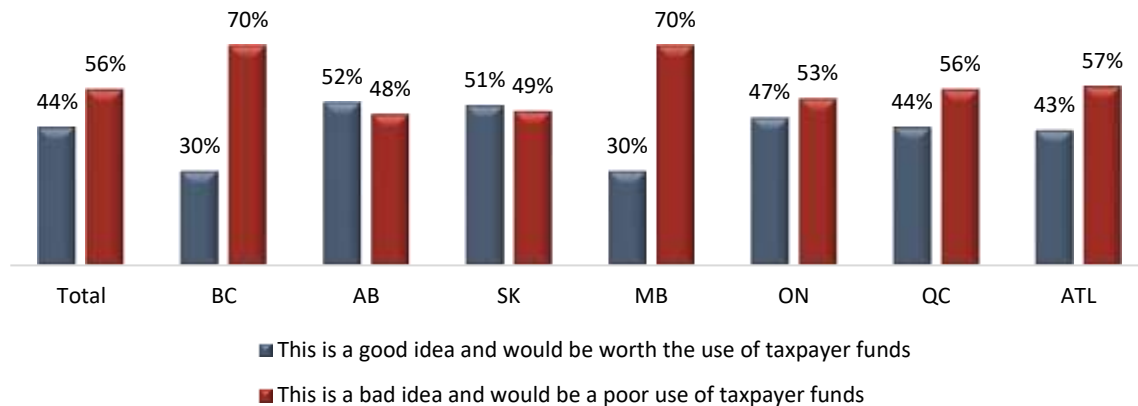
As mentioned earlier, the Trudeau government has signaled its willingness to invest public dollars in the TransMountain project in order to ensure that it is completed.

This survey suggests Canadians need more convincing on such an approach. Alberta and Saskatchewan are the only regions in which majorities – and small ones, at that – say investing in the pipeline would be a good idea and worth the use of taxpayer funds:

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There has been some talk that the Alberta and federal governments could become investors in the TransMountain pipeline and the expansion project. What are your views on this?



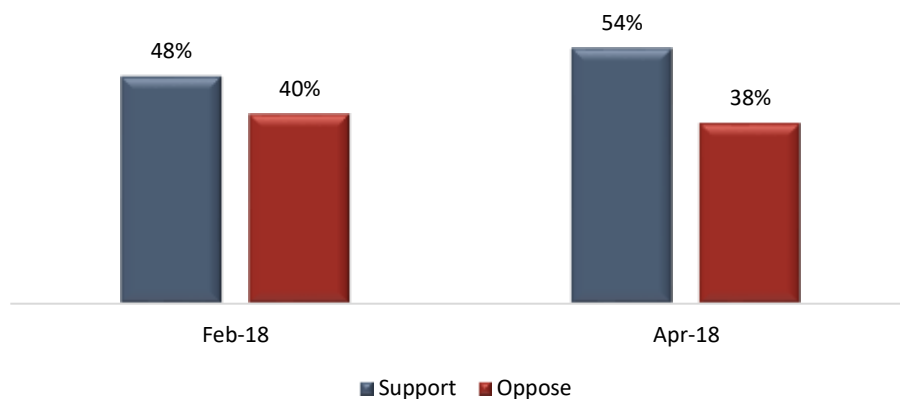
Part 2 – British Columbia's view

More support than opposition for TransMountain

The B.C. government has been steadfast in its opposition to the TransMountain pipeline expansion. The governing NDP campaigned on killing the project, and noted that it would use “every tool” it had to stop the project after assuming office in 2017.

This opposition however, has not been held by a majority of B.C. residents in reporting done by the Angus Reid Institute. In February, 48 per cent of residents supported the project compared to 40 per cent who opposed. Now, as the debate has heated up, support has risen to 54 per cent while opposition has dropped to 38 per cent.

Overall support for TransMountain pipeline expansion: (Responses from B.C. only)

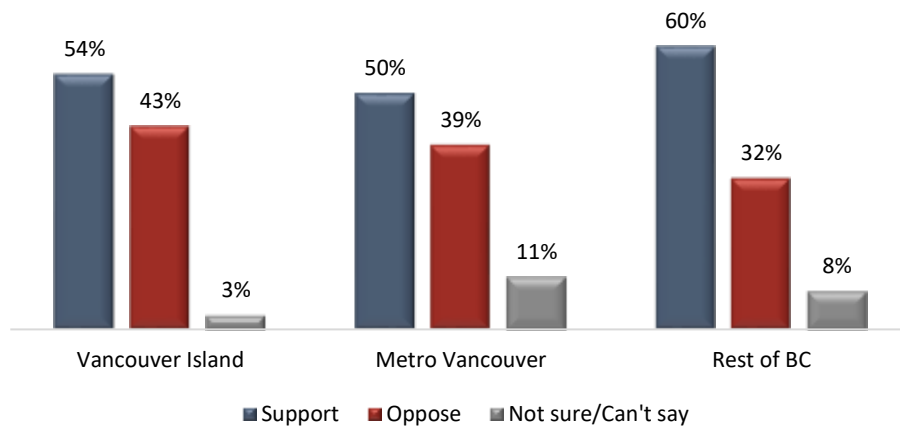


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Support hovers around 50 per cent both in Metro Vancouver and on Vancouver Island, rising to six-in-ten in the rest of the province.

Would you say you support or oppose the Kinder Morgan TransMountain pipeline expansion project?



Concerns are more about tankers than pipelines

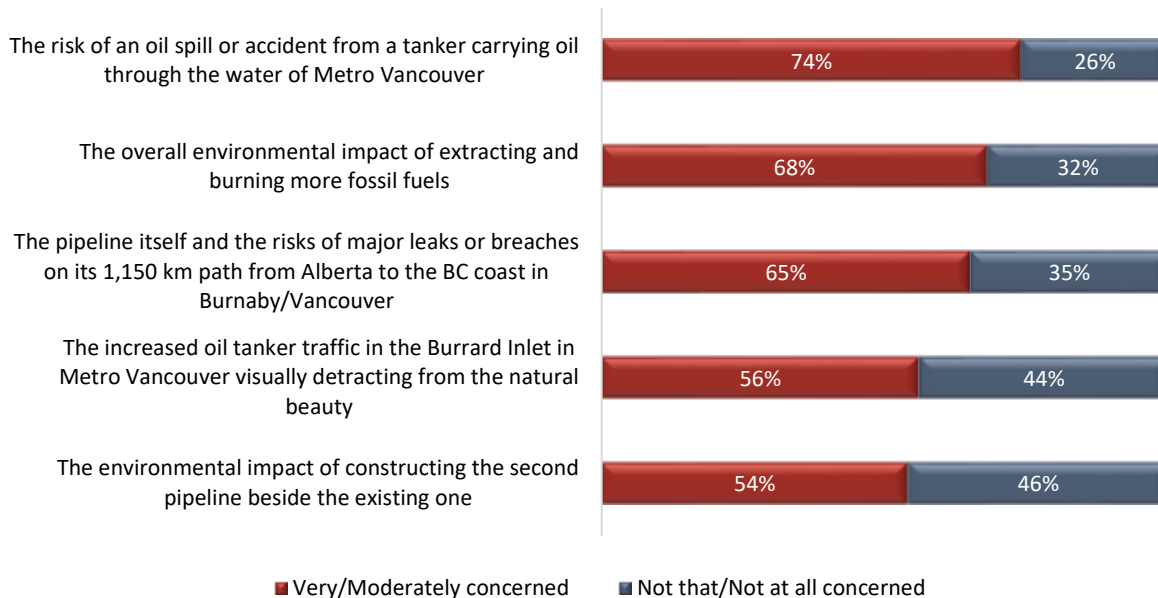
From a British Columbia perspective, this is less about twinning a pipeline than it is about tanker traffic – and a need for a visible and effective emergency response protocol people can see, believe, and have confidence in.

Asked about their level of concern over a variety of potential negative impacts of the pipeline, B.C. residents express the most concern over the risk of an oil spill or accident in the water around Metro Vancouver:

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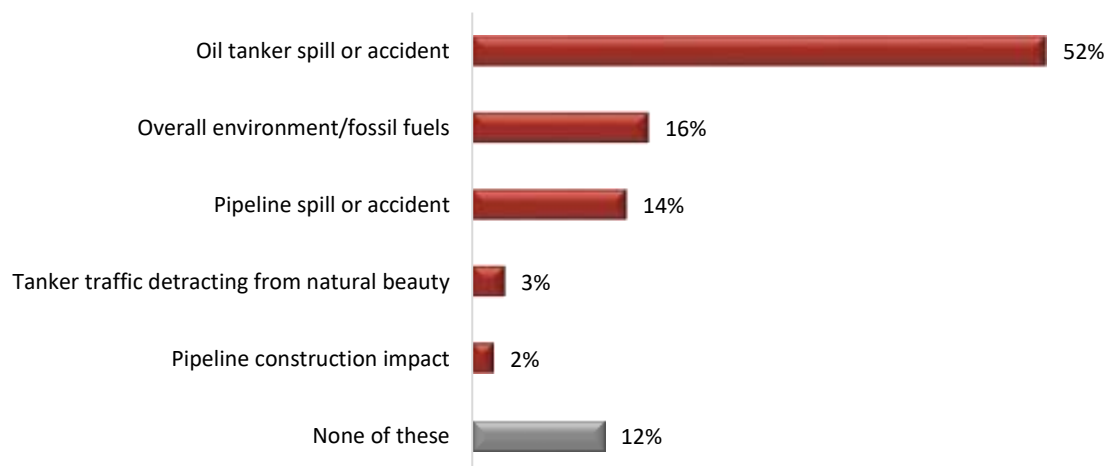
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**When you think about this project, to what extent are you yourself concerned about the potential risk or danger posed by each of the following?
(Responses from B.C. only, N=973)**



The focus on tanker traffic comes into sharper relief when respondents are asked to pick the single issue that is most concerning to them. More than half of B.C. residents say the possibility of an oil spill or tanker accident is most concerning to them, and no other issue comes close:

And, which ONE of these potential risks or dangers would you say you personally are MOST concerned about? (Responses from B.C. only, N=973)

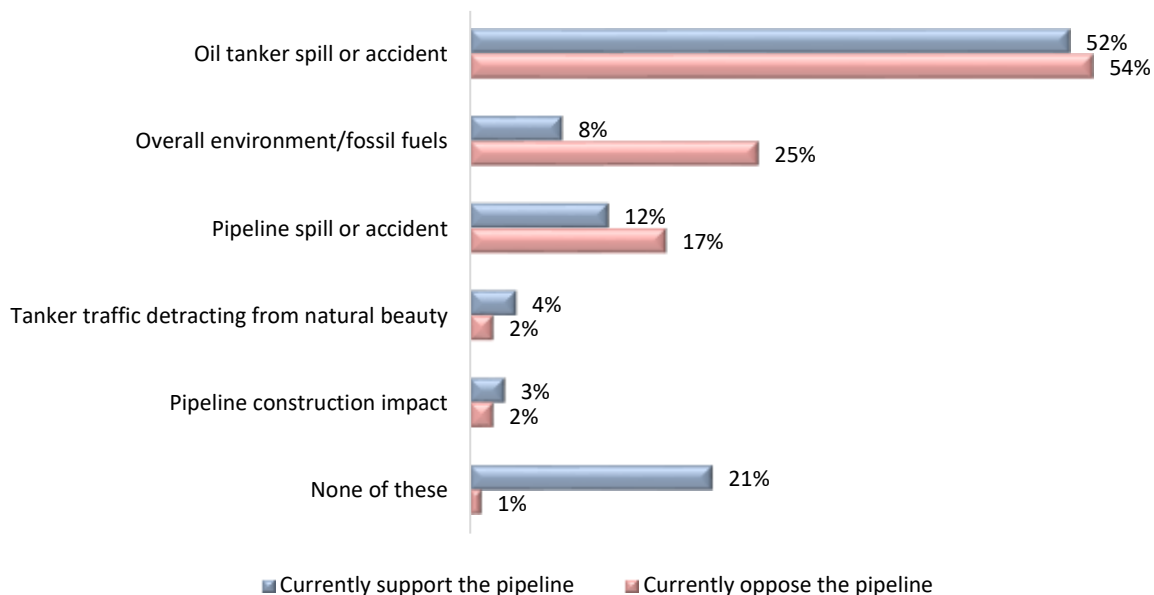


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Oil spills and accidents at sea are top-of-mind concerns for both supporters and opponents of the TransMountain project as more than half of each group choose this as their top concern, as seen in the following graph:

And, which ONE of these potential risks or dangers would you say you personally are MOST concerned about? (Responses from B.C. only, N=973)



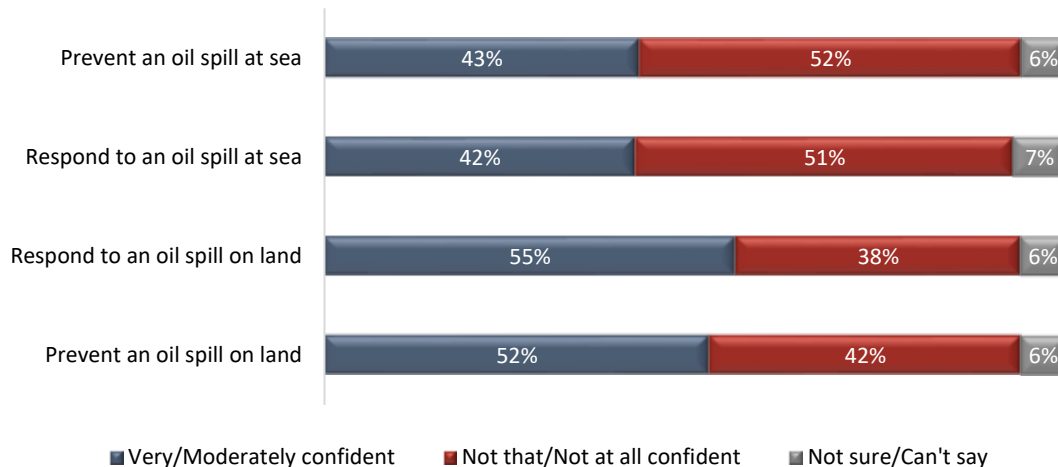
Further, British Columbians are not particularly confident about overall plans and procedures currently in place to both prevent and respond to spills on water.

Although Prime Minister Trudeau has promoted the federal government's [Oceans Protection Plan](#), launched in 2016 to improve marine shipping conditions and enhance environmental protections on Canada's coastlines, the plan has arguably not done enough to alleviate spill concerns:

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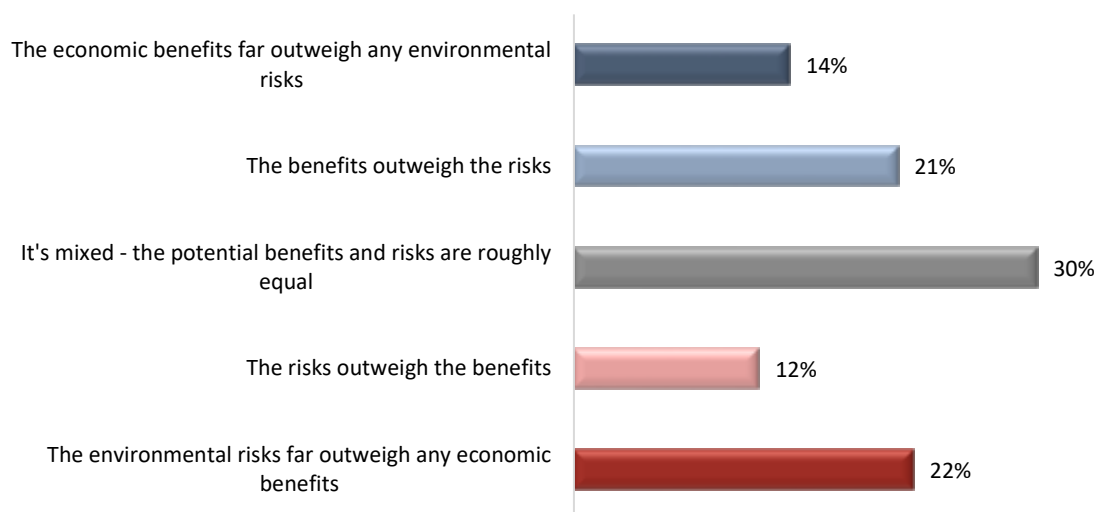
How confident are you in the overall plans and procedures currently in place to ... (Responses from B.C. only, N=973)



Risk versus reward? No consensus

Ultimately, this project appears to represent a battle over the relative weights of economic benefit when compared with environmental risk. British Columbians are truly divided on this question. Three-in-ten (30%) say that the risk and benefit are roughly equal, while a nearly identical number take opposing sides:

Overall, when you think about this whole issue, how do you weight the potential economic benefits versus potential environmental risks? (Responses from B.C. only, N=973)



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Part 3 – Room to move?

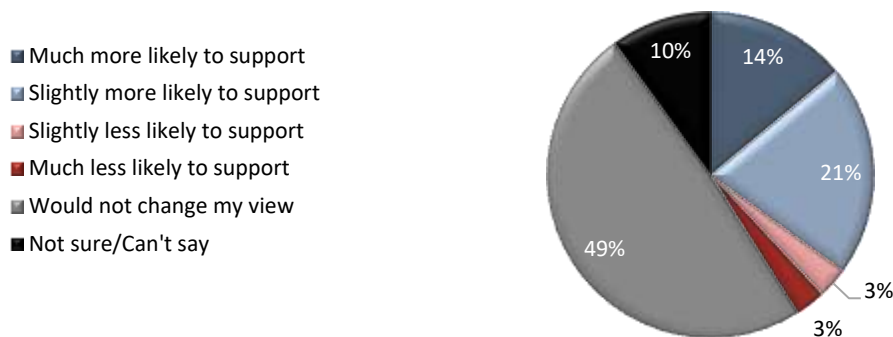
Little support for moving the terminus

British Columbians, overall, are more supportive of the pipeline than opposed to it, but a substantial portion of the population – including, critically, those in and around Metro Vancouver and Vancouver Island – maintain deep reservations. These regions represent crucial vote bases for the NDP minority government in B.C., and the Green Party that holds the balance of power. Given this reality, is there room for B.C. residents to get to “yes”? And what would it take?

One consideration discussed has been moving the pipeline’s terminus point from Burnaby to Delta, which would alleviate the problem of tankers in the Burrard Inlet. However, it would still corral the tankers into a similarly sensitive environmental area at the mouth of the Fraser River.

On this, most British Columbians say their position on the pipeline would not change, but a significant minority (35%) would be more inclined to support the project if it ended in Delta.

**If it were moved to Deltapoint, would this make you more likely or less likely to support the project, or would it not change your view one way or the other?
(Responses from B.C. only, N=973)**

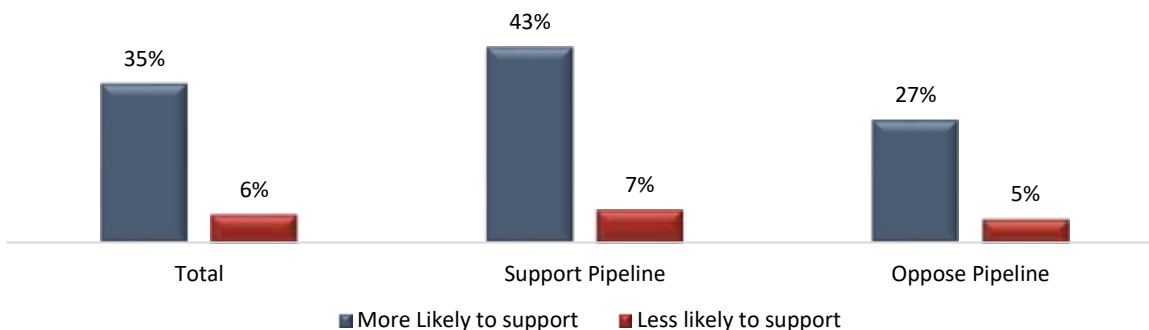


Notably, roughly one-quarter of those opposed to the pipeline (27%) say they would be more likely to support it if the terminal were moved outside of the Burrard Inlet. Few say such a decision would negatively affect their support:

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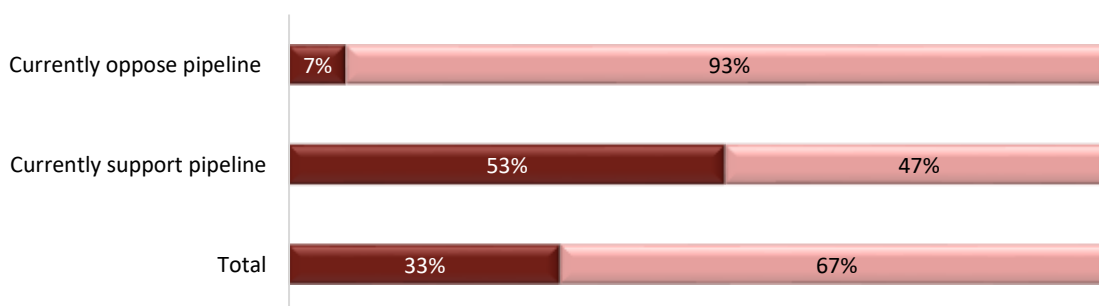
**If it were moved to Deltapoint, would this make you more likely or less likely to support the project, or would it not change your view one way or the other?
(Responses from B.C. only, N=973)**



Opponents say federal government should incentivize, not punish, B.C.

Beyond the company's decision to move its terminus point, much of the national debate has centred on how the federal government should approach B.C. if it wishes to gain support for TransMountain. Those opposed to the project see little value in taking a hard-line with British Columbians, such as withholding federal funding, or cutting oil flow to the province. More than nine-in-ten opponents (93%) say that a softer approach using incentives would be more productive. For their part, supporters of the pipeline are divided:

**Overall, which of the following two broad approaches do you think the federal government should be taking?
(Responses from B.C. only, N=973)**



- A more "hard line" approach threatening BC with consequences if they continue to keep trying to block the project
- A softer approach with incentives and compromises to encourage BC to stop trying to block the project

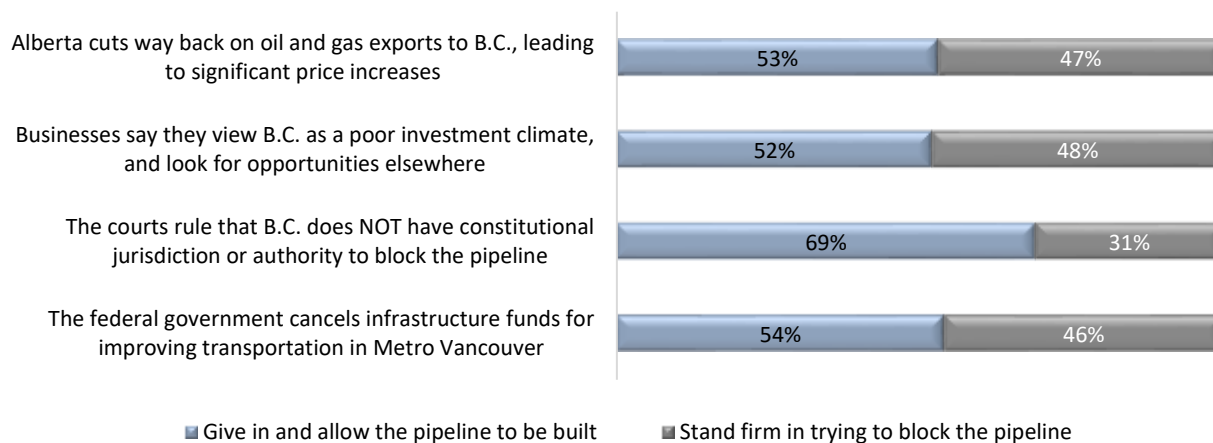
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For many, Supreme Court decision should end opposition

Under what circumstances should British Columbians opposing the project keep up the fight – or give in? The scenario that carries the most weight in that province would be a Supreme Court decision that rules B.C. does not have jurisdiction to block the pipeline. In such a situation, the vast majority in B.C. say their government should concede:

Suppose the following things happen, in each case, would you say the B.C. government should:
(Responses from B.C. only, N=973)

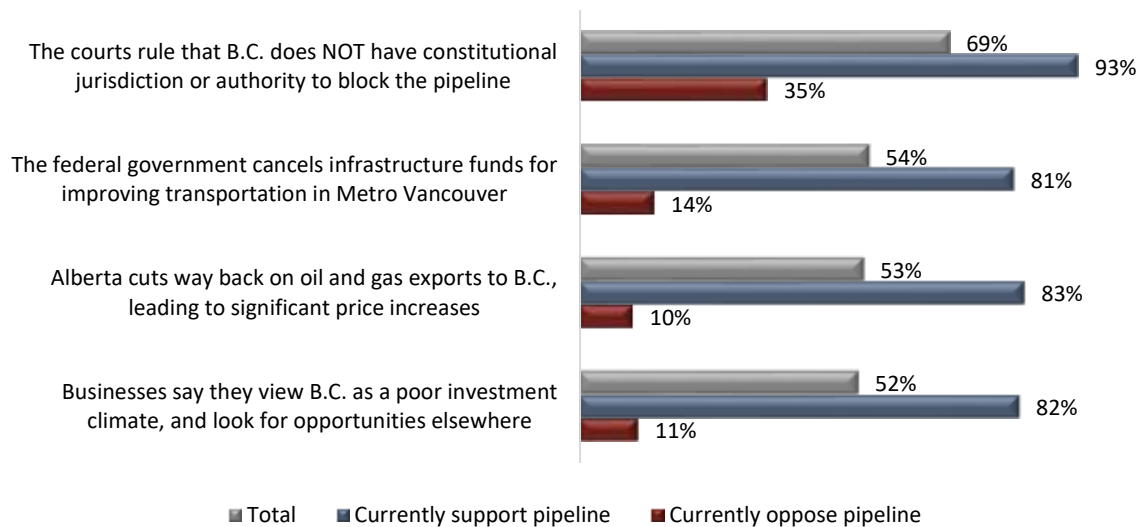


A significant minority of those in opposition to the project (35%) say they too would be moved by a Supreme Court ruling, whereas few say this about the other scenarios presented.

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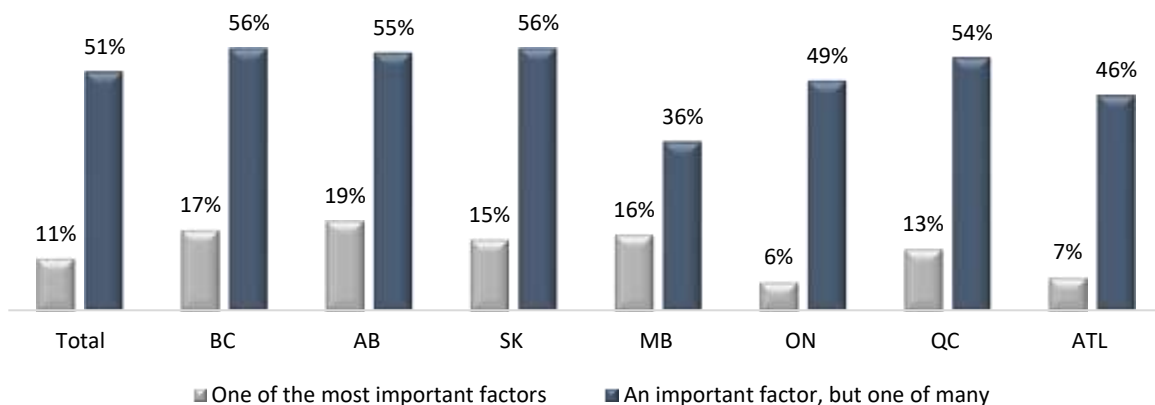
**Percentage of BC residents who say the government should give in and allow pipeline to be built under the following conditions:
(Responses from B.C. only, N=973)**



Part 4 – Political Implications

In the event a federal election were looming, most Canadians say TransMountain would be one of many factors they consider in weighing their vote. And, while B.C. and Alberta residents are most likely to say TransMountain would be “one of the most important factors,” the number saying this in each province still represents one-fifth or fewer respondents:

How important is the issue of the TransMountain Pipeline project when it comes to deciding who you would vote for at the national level

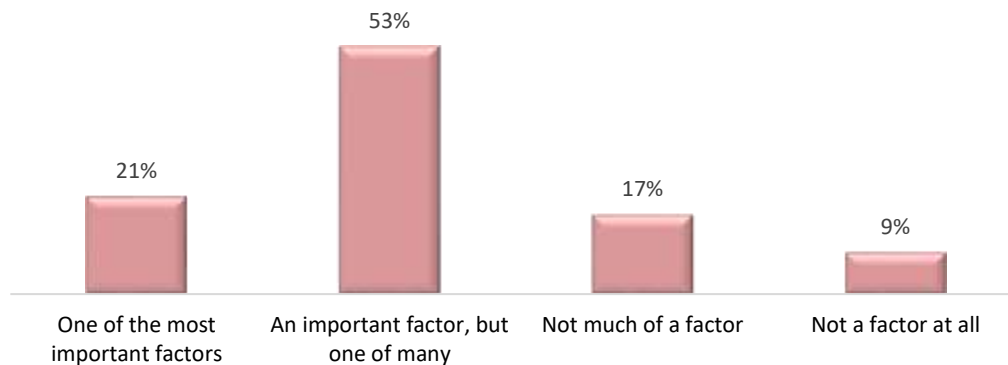


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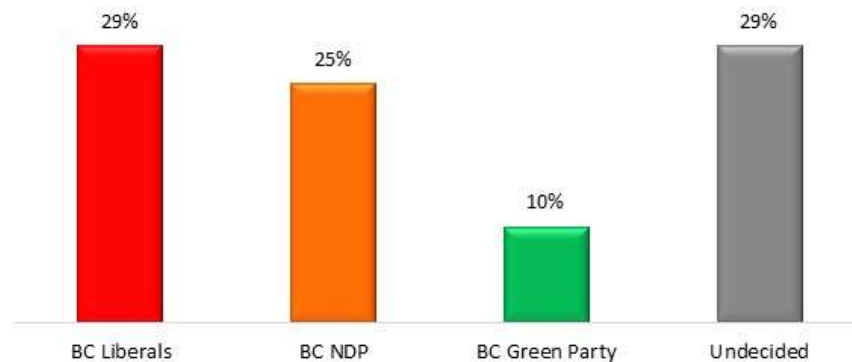
When British Columbians are asked about the weight this pipeline debate will carry for them in the next provincial election, their responses are similar:

British Columbians who say the TransMountain Pipeline will be one of the most important factors in their next provincial vote



Asked to consider how they would vote if the next B.C. election was contested primarily on the Kinder Morgan issue, British Columbians give a slight edge to the pipeline-supporting BC Liberals, though three-in-ten are undecided:

If the TransMountain Pipeline expansion ends up being a key issue in the next British Columbia provincial election, which party's candidate would you support?

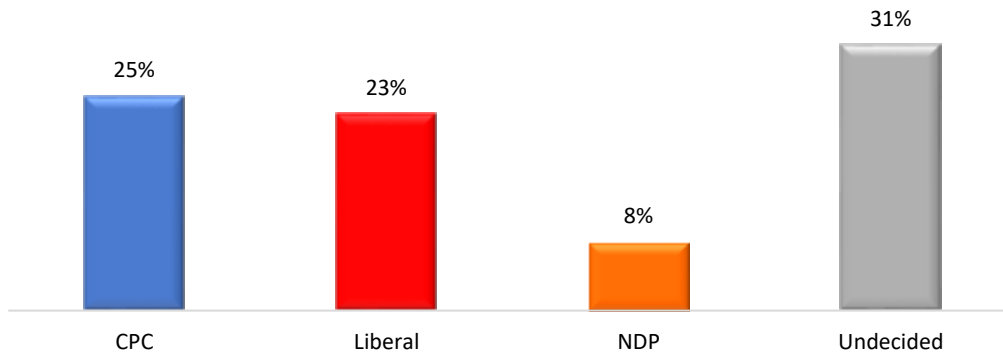


Among all Canadians, considering the same question at the federal level, the Conservative Party of Canada would hold a slight lead, with the same proportion undecided:

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Suppose this TransMountain expansion project were the key issue in the next federal election. Which party's candidate would you support?



*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 foundation 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.*

For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

For detailed results in British Columbia, [click here](#).

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Which one of these potential risks or dangers would you say you personally are MOST concerned about?			
(Responses from B.C. only, N=973)			
	Total (973)	Opinion on Pipeline	
		Support Pipeline (543)	Oppose Pipeline (385)
Oil Spill/breach/tanker accident	52%	52%	54%
Overall environmental/fossil fuels	16%	8%	25%
Pipeline itself leaks/breaches	14%	12%	17%
Tanker traffic detracting from natural beauty	3%	4%	2%
Pipeline construction impact	2%	3%	2%
None of these	12%	21%	1%

If it were moved to Deltapoint, would this make you more likely or less likely to support the project, or would it not change your view one way or the other?			
(Responses from B.C. only, N=973)			
	Total (973)	Opinion on Pipeline	
		Support Pipeline (543)	Oppose Pipeline (385)
More likely to support if moved	35%	43%	27%
Less likely to support if moved	6%	7%	5%

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Overall, which of the following two broad approaches do you think the federal government should be taking? (Responses from B.C. only, N=973)			
	Total (973)	Opinion on Pipeline	
		Support Pipeline (543)	Oppose Pipeline (385)
A more "hard line" approach threatening BC with consequences if they continue to keep trying to block the project to encourage BC to stop	33%	53%	7%
A softer approach with incentives and compromises to encourage BC to stop trying to block the project	67%	47%	93%

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Share who say the government should give in and allow pipeline to be built under the following conditions: (Responses from B.C. only, N=973)			
	Total (973)	Opinion on Pipeline	
		Support Pipeline (543)	Oppose Pipeline (385)
The federal government cancels infrastructure funds for improving transportation in Metro Vancouver			
Stand firm in trying to block the pipeline	46%	19%	86%
Give in and allow the pipeline to be built	54%	81%	14%
The courts rule that B.C. does NOT have constitutional jurisdiction or authority to block the pipeline			
Stand firm in trying to block the pipeline	31%	7%	65%
Give in and allow the pipeline to be built	69%	93%	65%
Businesses say they view B.C. as a poor investment climate, and look for opportunities elsewhere			
Stand firm in trying to block the pipeline	48%	18%	89%
Give in and allow the pipeline to be built	52%	82%	11%
Alberta cuts way back on oil and gas exports to B.C., leading to significant price increases			
Stand firm in trying to block the pipeline	47%	17%	90%
Give in and allow the pipeline to be built	53%	83%	10%

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