

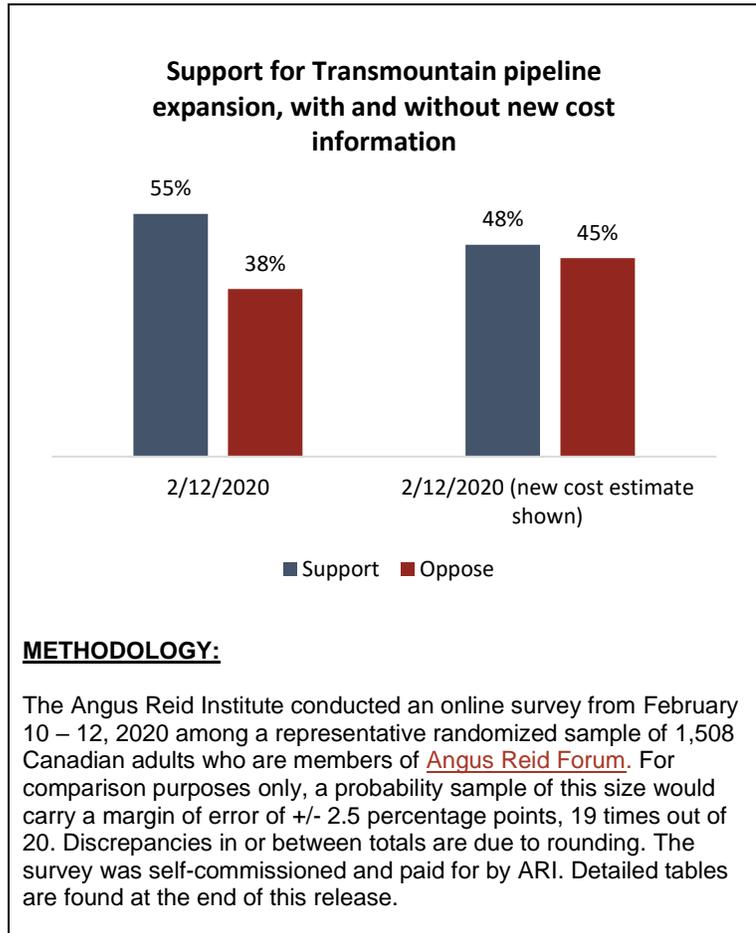
## Reality Check: For first time in nearly 2 years support for TMX below majority, once Canadians learn of rising costs

*\$12.6 billion price tag causes support to drop from 55 per cent to 48 per cent nationally*

**February 19, 2020** – On February 7 TransMountain President and CEO Ian Anderson announced that the company's beleaguered pipeline expansion project between Burnaby and Edmonton would now carry an estimated cost of \$12.6 billion, a considerable jump from the \$7.4 billion initially estimated by the federal government, or the \$5.4 billion estimated by previous owner Kinder Morgan.

A new study from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds that when Canadians learn of the new associated costs, their support for the project drops.

When first asked, 55 per cent support the TMX expansion, a number identical to support found last month. However, after then being informed of the increase in operational costs associated with it, and the increased taxpayer burden, support drops to 48 per cent, and opposition rises a corresponding seven points. Canadians are now close to equally divided (48% support vs 45% oppose).



This represents a two-year low point in support for the project, which stood at 49 per cent in February 2018. Opposition has increased 12-points over that same period.

Key regional elements emerge from this new data. The first is that British Columbians are now more opposed to the project than they are in support of it for the first time in five years. Further, six-in-ten Quebec residents (61%) and half of Ontario residents (47%) now oppose the project, both at their highest levels since the beginning of 2018.

### More Key Findings:

- The new cost estimate does little to sway public opinion in Alberta. Support drops marginally, from 88 per cent to 85 per cent in that province.

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- Younger Canadians, ages 18 to 34, lean toward opposition to the TMX after learning of the cost change. Those 35 to 54 years of age are divided, while older Canadians (55+) still offer majority support

### **About ARI**

*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.*

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The Transmountain pipeline expansion (TMX) route may look relatively straight on a map, but its path to construction has been has alternated at times between meandering, winding and stalled. The project, which would twin an existing pipeline that runs between Edmonton and Burnaby, was purchased by the federal government from Kinder Morgan in the spring of 2018, something that did not appear to affect public opinion of the project. At the time, 57 per cent supported it and just 26 per cent opposed it.

Just last month, after the Supreme Court of Canada [unanimously rejected](#) an appeal from the B.C. government which sought to allow the province to regulate the flow of heavy oil and bitumen through the province, 55 per cent said that they supported the TMX. When initially asked the same question this time around, just one month later, the same number of Canadians supported and opposed the expansion. However, respondents were then provided with information that the cost had risen by more than \$5 billion.

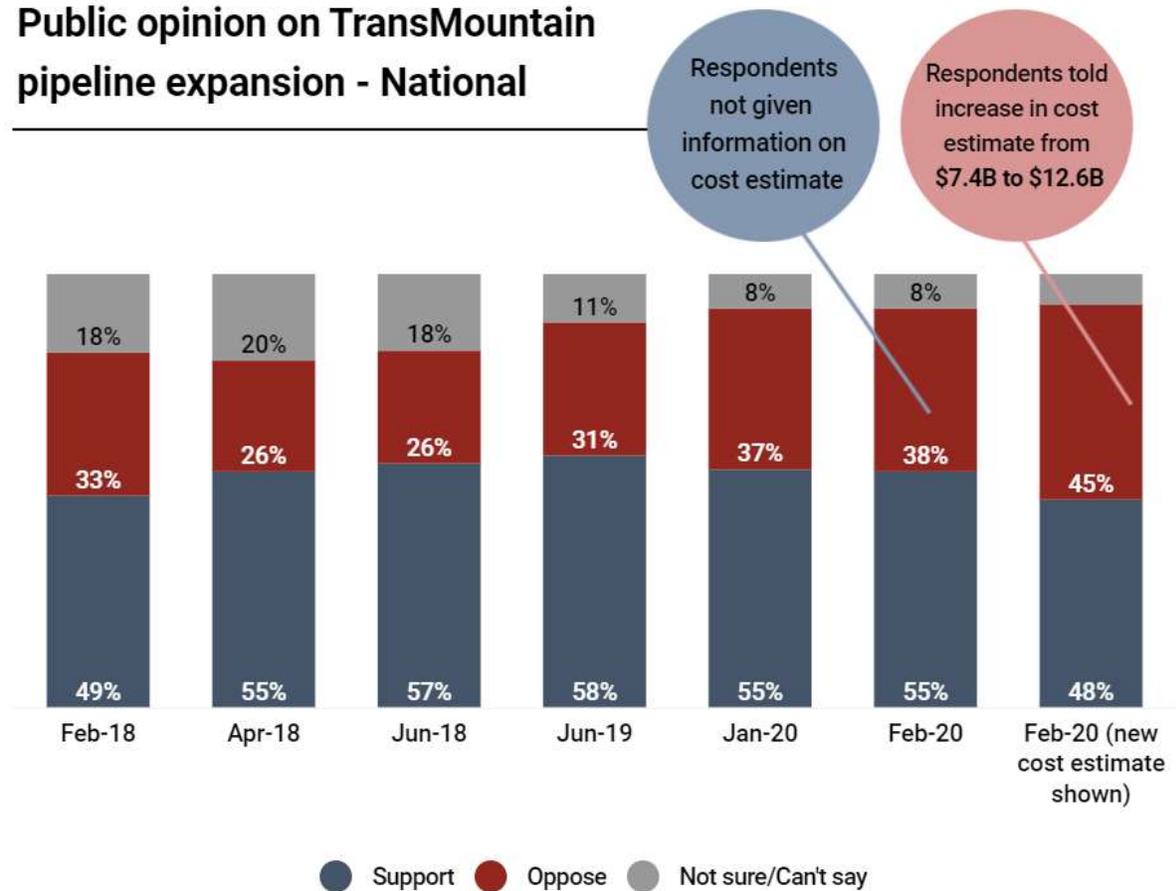
For seven per cent of respondents who were initially supporters, that extra cost is enough for them to jump ship. A corresponding seven per cent increase in opposition suggests that most of that group changed their opinion outright, from support to opposition.

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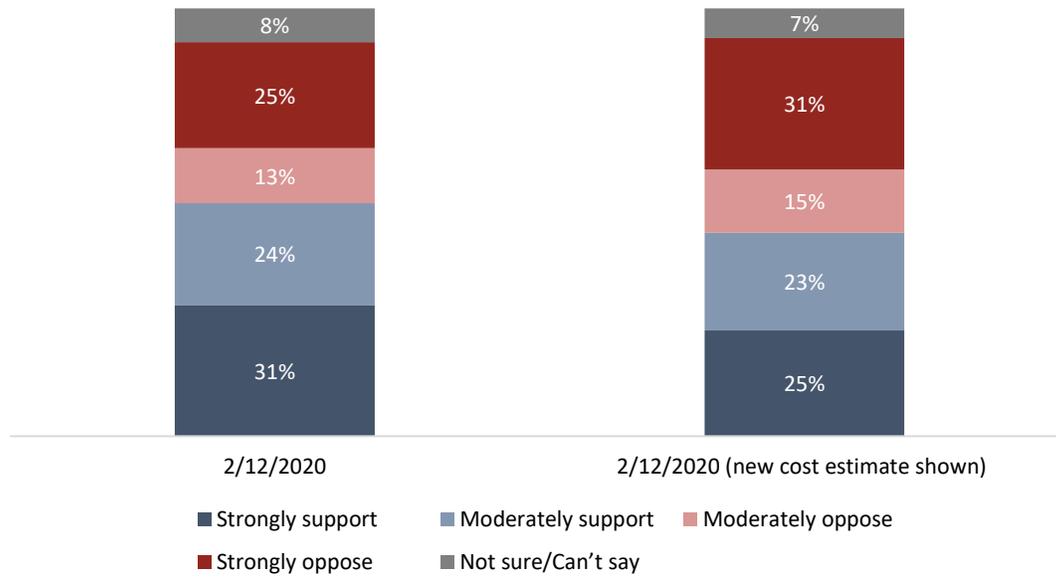
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## Public opinion on TransMountain pipeline expansion - National



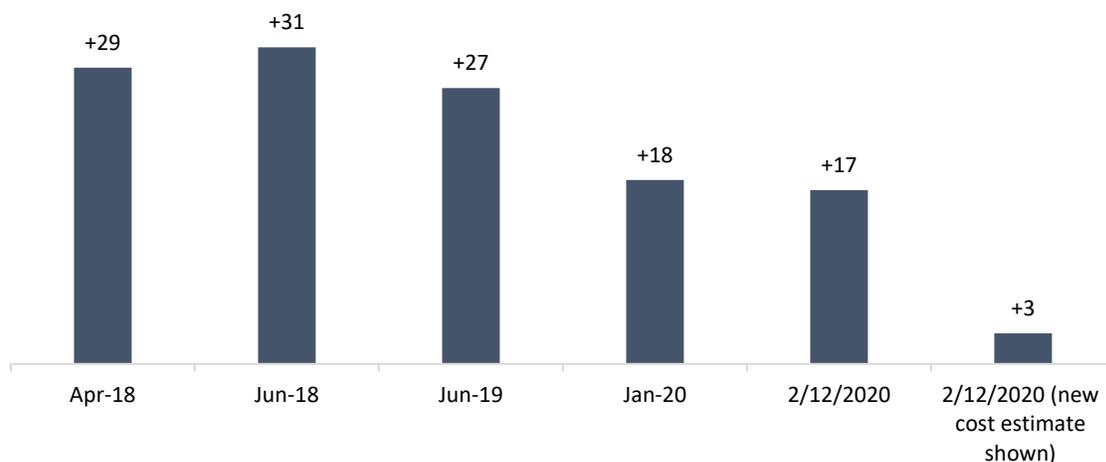
Looking deeper into the marginal data allows one to see just how responses were affected by new cost estimates. The biggest changes were in “strong” opinions. Strong opposition rose from 25 per cent to 31 per cent, while strong support moved from 31 per cent down to 25 per cent, as seen in the following graph:

**Support and Opposition for TransMountain pipeline expansion -  
National**



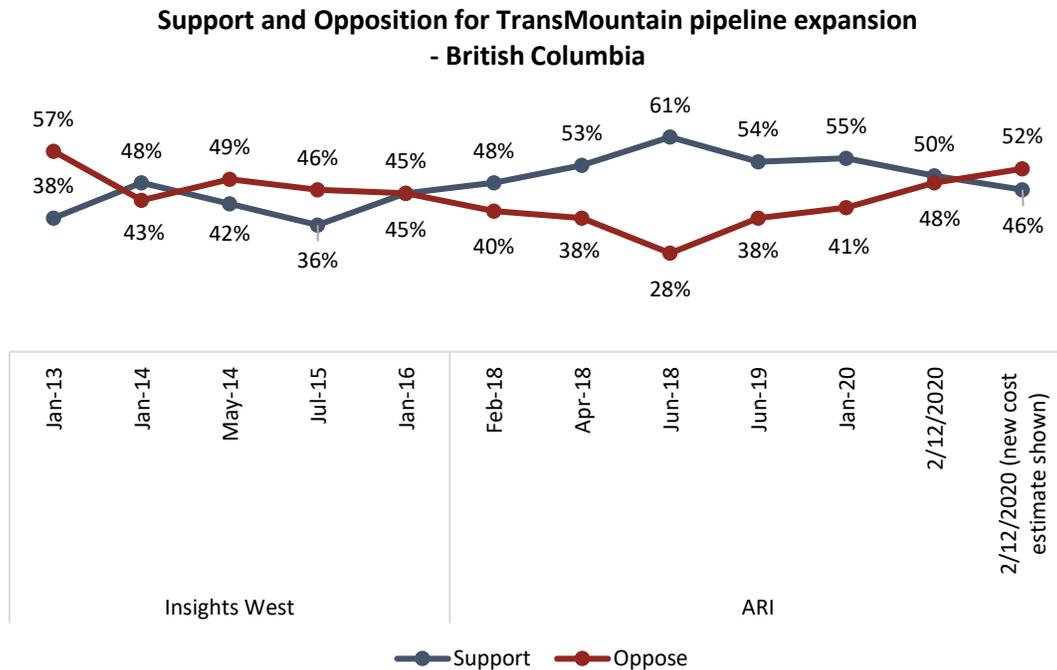
The net support for TMX, taking total support and subtracting total opposition, is now +3. In June 2018, net support was +31:

**Net Support for TMX  
Support minus Oppose  
National**

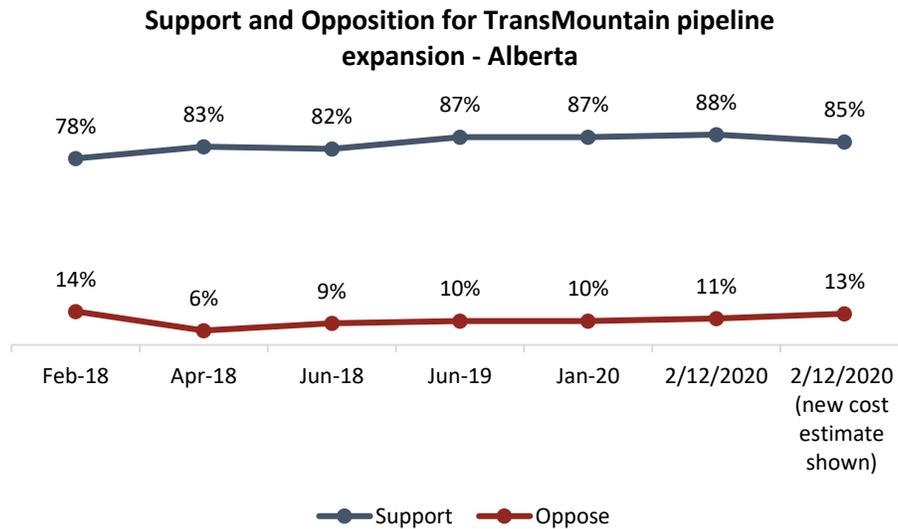


**Significant regional changes**

B.C. residents have been more supportive than opposed to the project since the beginning of 2018. Opposition has been rising in absence of new costs but rises even further once all residents are aware of the new price tag. A slim majority of residents (52%) now oppose the project, compared to 46 per cent who support it. The last time opposition outpaced support in B.C. was in 2015:



In Alberta, residents have been consistent in each study done by the Angus Reid Institute over the past two years. Even with the new \$12.6 billion cost, 85 per cent of residents support the project, by far the highest level in the country:



Opposition continues to rise in Quebec. Since April 2018, at just 32 per cent opposed, Quebecers have been increasingly negative, with three-in-five (61%) now opposing the TMX.

The cost estimate change has a considerable impact in a number of regions, causing between nine and 11 per cent of respondents to shift to opposition from their original position. Opposition jumps nine points in Manitoba, to 40 per cent, nine points in Ontario, to 47 per cent and 11 points in Atlantic Canada, to 40 per cent:

Opposition to the TransMountain pipeline expansion across Canada								
	Total	Region						
		BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	ATL
Feb-18	33%	40%	14%	18%	38%	29%	44%	32%
Apr-18	26%	38%	6%	8%	21%	27%	32%	16%
Jun-18	26%	28%	9%	23%	21%	23%	37%	29%
Jun-19	31%	38%	10%	11%	32%	26%	47%	28%
Jan-20	37%	41%	10%	12%	32%	36%	55%	30%
Feb-20	38%	48%	11%	18%	31%	38%	51%	29%

<b>Feb-20 New cost shown</b>	45%	52%	13%	20%	40%	47%	61%	40%
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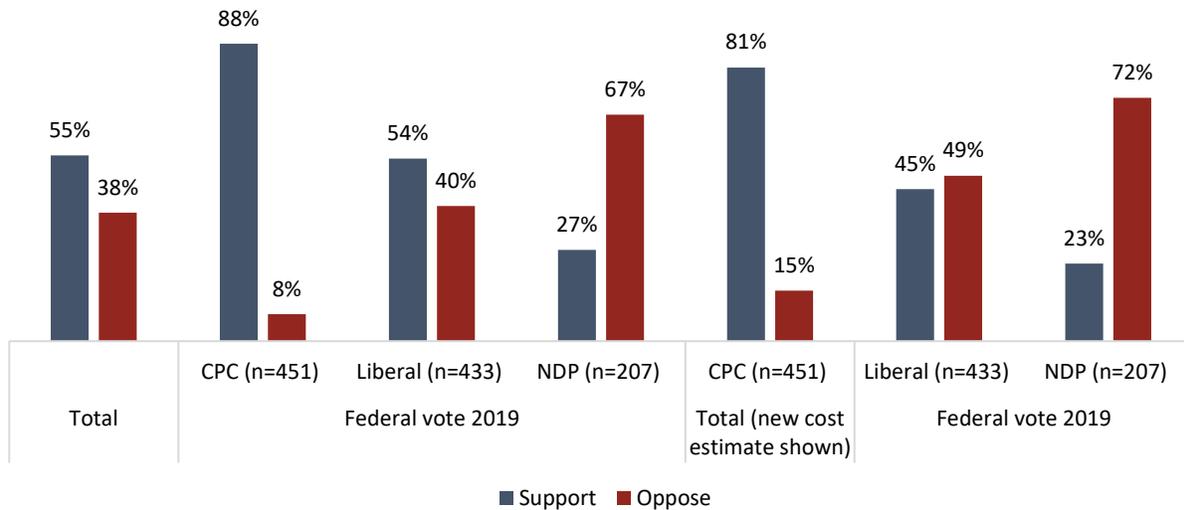
Support levels are relatively unaffected by the \$5 billion cost increase in Alberta and Saskatchewan, but nonetheless, drop in every region of the country with the news:

Support for the TransMountain pipeline expansion across Canada								
	Total	Region						
		BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	ATL
<b>Feb-18</b>	49%	48%	78%	65%	45%	50%	34%	54%
<b>Apr-18</b>	55%	53%	83%	82%	57%	49%	46%	60%
<b>Jun-18</b>	57%	61%	82%	68%	40%	56%	46%	50%
<b>Jun-19</b>	58%	54%	87%	80%	59%	63%	35%	59%
<b>Jan-20</b>	55%	55%	87%	85%	62%	56%	33%	61%
<b>Feb-20</b>	55%	50%	88%	78%	60%	55%	36%	58%
<b>Feb-20 New cost shown</b>	48%	46%	85%	77%	50%	48%	29%	48%

### **Liberal voters' support for TMX drops most**

Perhaps most troubling for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau whose Liberal government made the decision to purchase the project, opposition rises most among their supporters once they learn how much more the project will cost. Initially showing majority support (54% to 40%) Liberal voters shift toward opposition when presented with the latest information (45% to 49%), as shown in the graph below:

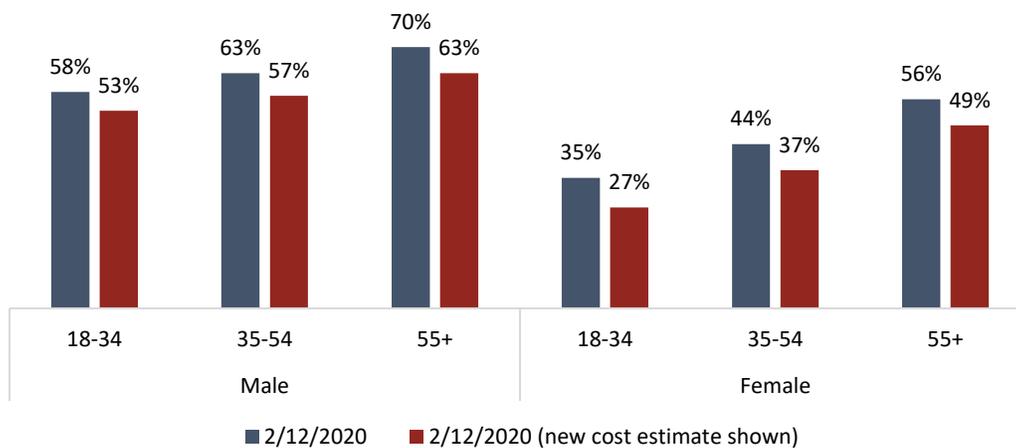
**Support vs Oppose TransMountain pipeline expansion**



**Age and Gender**

Support levels across age and gender vary widely, but the effect of new cost information on public opinion is relatively consistent across each of these groups. In every case, support drops by between five and seven percentage points:

**Support for Transmountain with and without new cost**



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

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