

# Northern Gateway: Canadians split on federal decision; but majority say pipeline will be built

*Regional results show BC and Alberta are neighbors with little in common on this issue*

**June 18, 2014** – While nearly one-third of Canadians are unsure of whether the Harper government made the right or wrong decision to conditionally approve the Northern Gateway pipeline, people in this country have no doubt: the pipeline will be built.

These are some of the findings of an online survey of Canadian adults by Angus Reid Global (ARG). The poll was conducted and paid for by ARG after the federal government announcement on June 17.

The survey shows Canadians are split over whether the decision to allow energy company Enbridge to build an oil pipeline through northern Alberta and BC – provided it meets 209 conditions – was the correct one. Just over one-third (37%) say they think the decision was right. About the same number (34%) say the decision was wrong and nearly one-third (29%) say they aren't sure.

Asked about those 209 conditions, just over forty per cent (43%) say they are enough to address concerns about the project, while 37 per cent say they're not enough, and one-fifth (20%) say they aren't sure.

When asked what factor should take greater priority in shaping this country's energy policy, the majority of Canadians – 58 per cent – say protecting the environment is the biggest priority, while 42 per cent say the biggest priority is encouraging economic growth.

Regardless of their views on energy versus the environment, respondents had little doubt about the future of the Northern Gateway project. Nearly seven-in-ten (68%) say regardless of how they feel about the pipeline, they do think it will actually be built.

## **Regional results:**

A look at regional responses reveals British Columbians and Albertans are neighbours with nothing in common on this issue.

### **KEY FINDINGS**

- **Right decision: 37% Wrong decision: 34% Not sure: 29%**
- **68% say pipeline will be built**

**Detailed results are at the end of this release.**

*Angus Reid Global conducted an online survey among 1773 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists on June 17-18, 2014. A probability sample of this size carries a margin of error of +/- 2.3%, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.*

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British Columbians see the decision as wrong more than two-to-one over Albertans (40% to 18%). Fewer than forty per cent (38%) of BC respondents say the Harper government's decision was right, while 58 per cent of Albertans say the same.

Further east, the highest levels of opposition to the pipeline are in Quebec (40%) followed by those in Ontario (35%). The highest levels of support outside Alberta are in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (44%).

In BC – nearly one-quarter (25%) say the conditions “don't even begin to address” concerns. In Alberta, about as many (28%) say the conditions are “more than enough” to address concerns.

#### **Pipeline views by partisan allegiance:**

Opinions on the pipeline decision split unsurprisingly along partisan lines. The issue is a winner among past Conservative Party voters (62%), although nearly one-fifth (16%) of past CPC voters say it's the wrong decision and fully one-fifth (20%) say they aren't sure.

Lack of certainty is higher among past Liberal and NDP voters: nearly one-third each (30% Liberal, 29% NDP) say they aren't sure whether the pipeline decision was the right one. More than 40 per cent (42%) of past-Liberal voters say it was the wrong call, as do half of past-NDP voters (51%).

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*Angus Reid Global is headed by Dr. Angus Reid, Canada's best known and longest practicing pollster. He's spent more than four decades asking questions about what people feel, how they think and who they will vote for. He is supported by a team of practitioners conducting high quality research for corporations, governments and non-profit organizations.*

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| Based on what you know or may have heard, do you think the federal government made the right decision or the wrong decision in approving the Northern Gateway Pipeline with conditions? |                 |             |             |                |             |             |              |
|---|-----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
|   | Total<br>(1773) | Region      |             |                |             |             |              |
|   |                 | BC<br>(316) | AB<br>(320) | MB/SK<br>(111) | ON<br>(578) | PQ<br>(345) | ATL<br>(103) |
| Right decision  | 37%             | 38%         | 58%         | 44%            | 34%         | 28%         | 42%          |
| Wrong decision  | 34%             | 40%         | 18%         | 26%            | 35%         | 40%         | 28%          |
| Not sure  | 29%             | 22%         | 24%         | 30%            | 31%         | 33%         | 30%          |

| Based on what you know or may have heard, do you think the federal government made the right decision or the wrong decision in approving the Northern Gateway Pipeline with conditions? |       |                    |               |                      |
|---|-------|--------------------|---------------|----------------------|
|   | Total | Federal Vote Last  |               |                      |
|   |       | Conservative Party | Liberal Party | New Democratic Party |
| Right decision  | 37%   | 62%                | 28%           | 20%                  |
| Wrong decision  | 34%   | 16%                | 42%           | 51%                  |
| Not sure  | 29%   | 21%                | 30%           | 29%                  |

As we mentioned, the decision to allow the pipeline comes with 209 conditions that must be met before the pipeline can be built, such as environmental protection measures, further consultation with First Nations and making sure shipping companies are committed to taking the oil before the pipeline is even built.

Based on what you know or have heard, do you think the conditions are enough to address concerns about the Northern Gateway Project?

|   | Total<br>(1773) | Region      |             |                |             |             |              |
|---|-----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
|   |                 | BC<br>(316) | AB<br>(320) | MB/SK<br>(111) | ON<br>(578) | PQ<br>(345) | ATL<br>(103) |
| More than enough                                    | 13%             | 13%         | 28%         | 19%            | 13%         | 7%          | 7%           |
| Enough  | 31%             | 27%         | 33%         | 31%            | 30%         | 30%         | 39%          |
| Not enough  | 20%             | 20%         | 16%         | 13%            | 22%         | 23%         | 17%          |
| The conditions don't even begin to address concerns | 16%             | 25%         | 8%          | 14%            | 16%         | 17%         | 12%          |
| Not sure  | 20%             | 15%         | 15%         | 23%            | 19%         | 24%         | 25%          |

In shaping Canada's energy policy, what do you see as the biggest priority:

|                             | Total<br>(1773) | Region      |             |                |             |             |              |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
|                             |                 | BC<br>(316) | AB<br>(320) | MB/SK<br>(111) | ON<br>(578) | PQ<br>(345) | ATL<br>(103) |
| Protecting the environment  | 58%             | 64%         | 51%         | 60%            | 59%         | 57%         | 53%          |
| Encouraging economic growth | 42%             | 36%         | 49%         | 40%            | 41%         | 43%         | 47%          |

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| <b>Given the hurdles the pipeline is facing, and regardless of how you yourself feel about the pipeline, do you believe it will actually be built?</b> |                 |             |             |                |             |             |              |
|--|-----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
|  | Total<br>(1773) | Region      |             |                |             |             |              |
|  |                 | BC<br>(316) | AB<br>(320) | MB/SK<br>(111) | ON<br>(578) | PQ<br>(345) | ATL<br>(103) |
| <b>It will definitely/It's likely to be built</b>  | <b>68%</b>      | <b>68%</b>  | <b>73%</b>  | <b>63%</b>     | <b>69%</b>  | <b>70%</b>  | <b>58%</b>   |
| <b>It will never/It's unlikely to be built</b>   | <b>21%</b>      | <b>25%</b>  | <b>17%</b>  | <b>22%</b>     | <b>20%</b>  | <b>19%</b>  | <b>30%</b>   |
| <b>Not sure</b>  | <b>11%</b>      | <b>6%</b>   | <b>10%</b>  | <b>15%</b>     | <b>11%</b>  | <b>11%</b>  | <b>12%</b>   |