

Most say governments will agree to new emissions targets, less convinced Canada will meet them

Regional gaps divide country on support & optimism for next round of climate talks

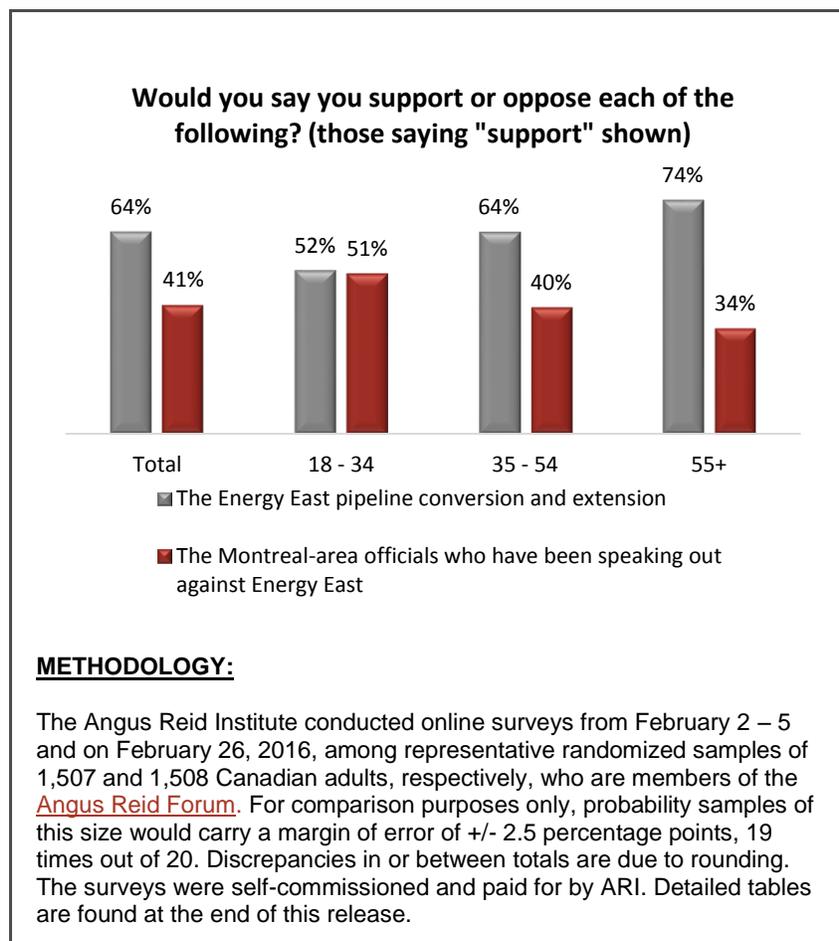
March 3, 2016 – Canadians are broadly supportive of the international agreement on climate change reached in Paris last December, but less certainty exists over the ability of federal and provincial leaders to set new emissions targets aimed at honouring Canada's Paris-related commitments.

As First ministers gather in Vancouver for another round of discussions on Canada's climate change strategy, a new public opinion poll from the Angus Reid Institute finds Canadians skeptical that their country will ultimately meet whatever emissions goals it sets for itself.

This new ARI research also finds a slight majority are supportive of the Energy East pipeline project – and split on the idea of local governments having final say on whether they are built through their jurisdictions.

Key Findings:

- Just over half of Canadians (56%) express confidence first ministers will agree on new emissions targets within the next year; fewer (44%) say Canada will be able to meet those goals
- Two-in-three Canadians (64%) support the extension and conversion of the Energy East pipeline



- Canadians lean toward giving the federal government the final say on pipeline projects (54% say so) but perspectives on this vary significantly by region

PART 1: Canada's climate change policy

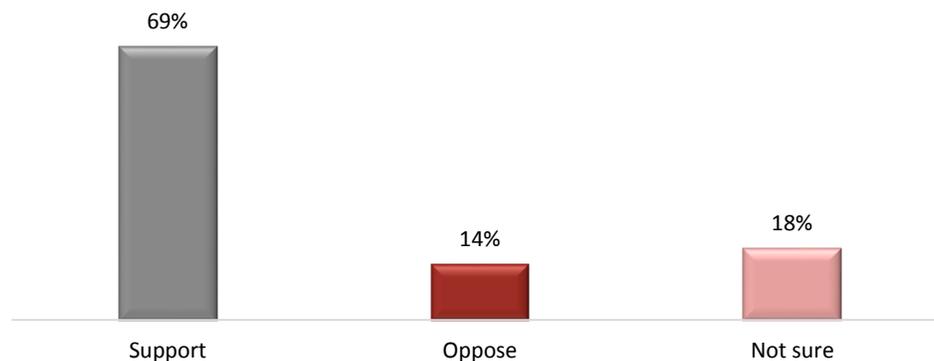
Will Canada succeed in achieving new emissions targets?

One of the Liberal Party's promises during the 2015 election campaign was to convene a first ministers meeting on climate change within 90 days of the COP21 UN climate meetings in Paris.

This week, federal, provincial and territorial leaders will reconvene their talks on a national climate change strategy, one that [Environment Minister Katherine McKenna has said](#) will take time. Indeed, the federal government is positioning the Vancouver summit as one aimed at creating a "foundation" for a pan-Canadian plan to meet existing targets.

Countries setting their own carbon-reduction targets is one of the key components of the international agreement reached in Paris, an agreement seven-in-ten Canadians (69%) say they support:

Would you say you support or oppose Canada's participation in the Paris Agreement?



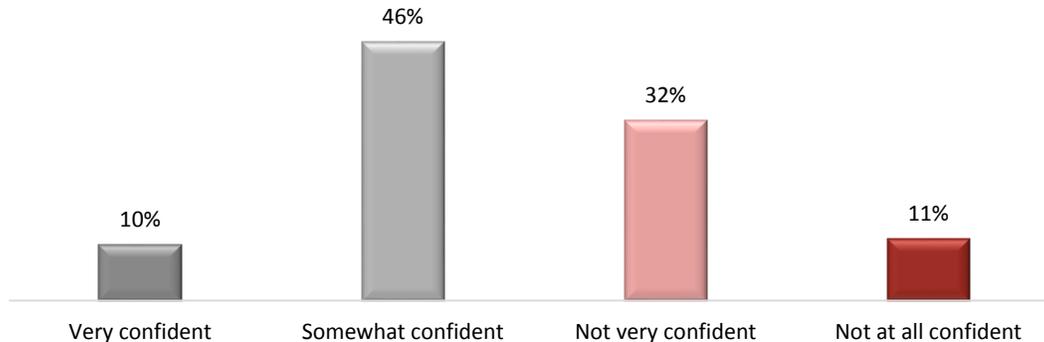
Past ARI polling has also [found strong support](#) for "carbon pricing" strategies – both carbon taxes such as the one British Columbia implemented in 2008 and cap-and-trade systems like the one Quebec and Ontario have joined.

However, when asked if they're confident federal and provincial leaders will actually reach an agreement on new targets within the next year, Canadians are more circumspect. A majority (56%) are confident the first ministers will reach an agreement in the next 12 months, but if them, just one-in-ten (10%) are "very confident":

CONTACT:

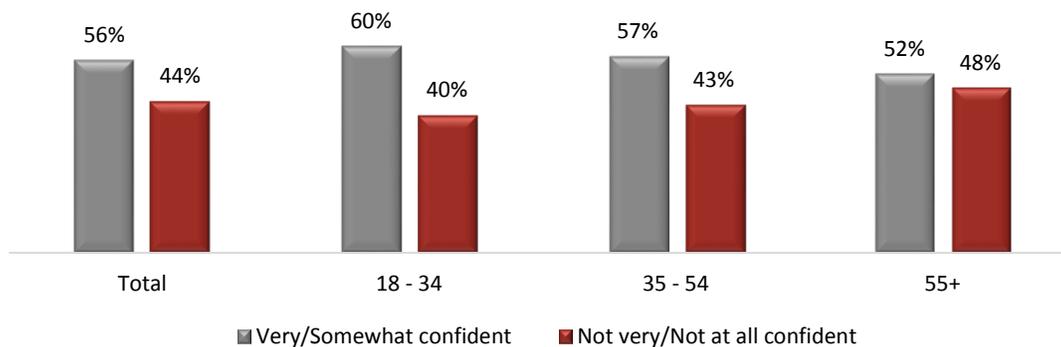
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Confidence in federal & provincial governments to set new targets for reducing Canada's greenhouse gas emissions within the next year?



Quebec is by far the region most confident that new emissions targets will be set (71%). Younger Canadians are also more likely to express confidence in the process than their parents' generation (see graph and [comprehensive tables](#)).

Confidence in federal & provincial governments to set new targets for reducing Canada's greenhouse gas emissions within the next year?

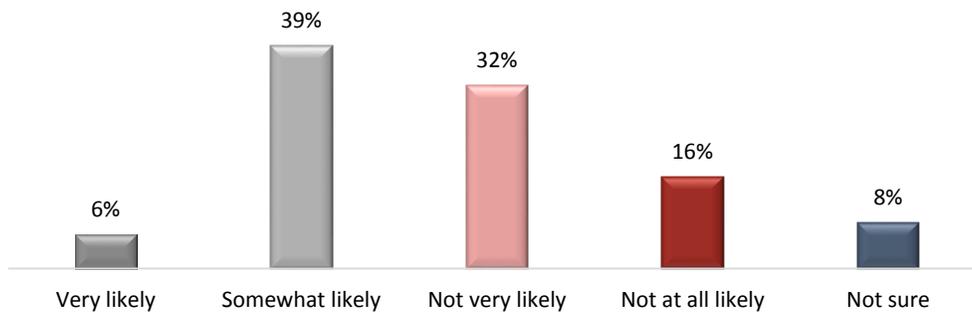


Will Canada be able to meet new emissions targets?

Canada's current goal – [announced by the Harper government in May 2015](#) – is to reduce emissions to 30 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. McKenna has said it represents a “floor” for ongoing negotiations on emissions targets, but [Canada is not on track to meet it](#), let alone exceed it.

How likely is Canada to hit its targets? When confronted with this question, Canadians are best described as divided, and not strongly optimistic. Overall, 45 per cent of respondents say it's likely, and nearly half (48%) say it's unlikely:

Confidence in federal & provincial governments to meet new targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions?

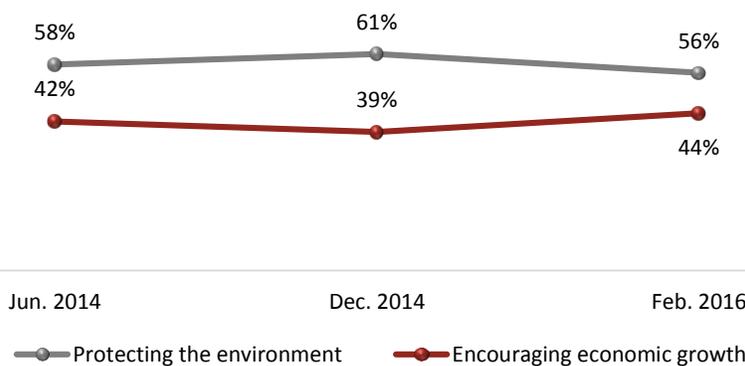


PART 2: Pipelines and energy policy

Environment or economy, which should drive Canada's energy policy?

Conversation at the Vancouver summit is sure to turn to the resource sector, and the balance between protecting the environment and encouraging economic growth. As with previous ARI studies, environmental protection edges economic considerations when it comes to Canadian views on priority:

In shaping Canada's energy policy, which do you see as a bigger priority?

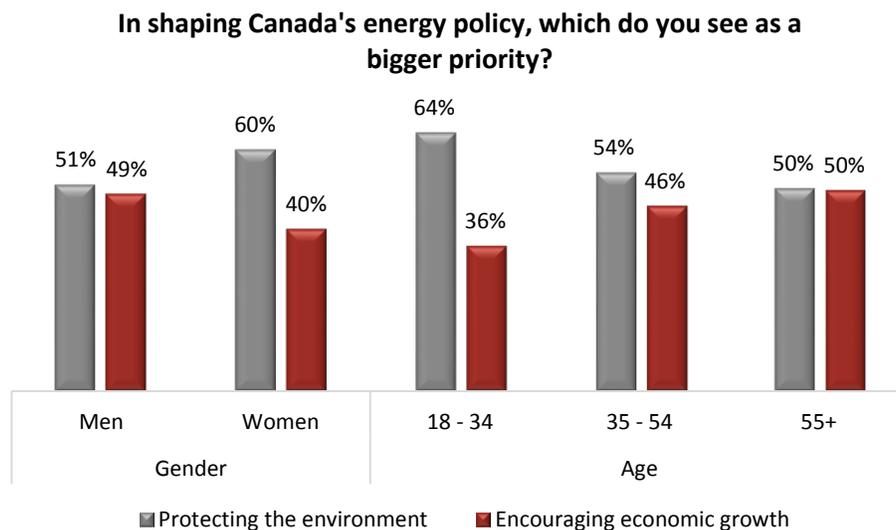


Perhaps as a result of the [economic anxiety](#) that has [dominated the Canadian political landscape](#) so far in 2016, the number of Canadians saying "protecting the environment" is more important has dipped slightly since the last time the question was asked.

As might be expected, there are significant regional differences on this question:

- Oil-producing Alberta chooses economic growth two-to-one over protecting the environment (66% versus 34%)
- British Columbians skew even more heavily in the opposite direction (69% protecting the environment, 31% encouraging growth)
- Quebecers also choose the environment (62% versus 38%), while Ontarians are somewhat more evenly divided (55% protecting the environment, 45% encouraging growth)

Notable age and gender divides are also evident with this question (see the following graph and [comprehensive tables](#)):



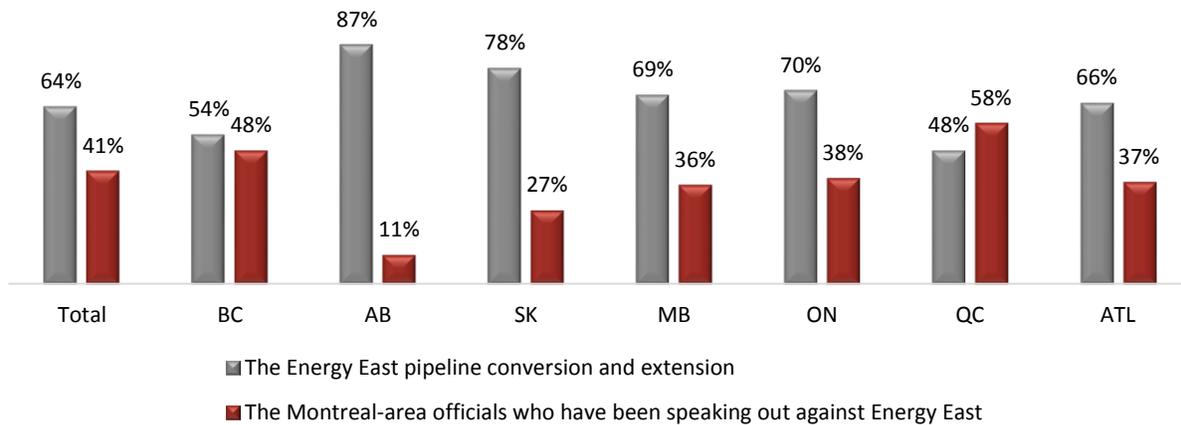
Most support Energy East, except in Quebec

Canadians have a general preference for the extension and conversion of the Energy East pipeline, which would convert an existing natural gas pipeline to carry diluted bitumen from Hardisty, Alta., to St. John, N.B.

But the fact that part of the line would run through Quebec has had local officials in that province – including Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre – [expressing opposition to the project](#), citing environmental concerns. At the same time, the provincial government is now preparing to [seek an injunction](#) against TransCanada, the company proposing Energy East.

This survey asked Canadians to weigh in both on the project itself and the politicians who have spoken out against it:

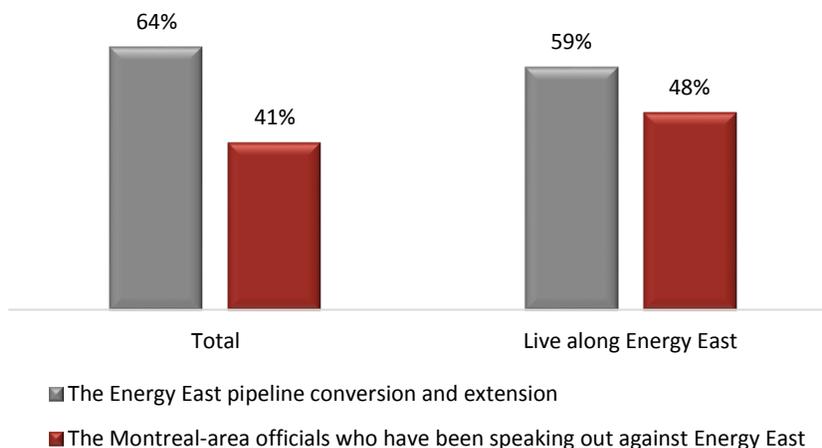
**Would you say you support or oppose each of the following?
("support")**



As the preceding graph indicates, Albertans – whose province is the producer and exporter in this equation – have the most hardened opinions on these questions, while Quebecers and British Columbians are more lukewarm.

In a similar vein, respondents who say they live within 20 kilometres of Energy East route (roughly one-fifth of the total sample) are less supportive of the project and more supportive of the mayors – though it should be noted the majority still support the pipeline:

Would you say you support or oppose each of the following? (those saying "support" shown)



Age is also a factor in Canadians' opinions on Energy East. Canadians over age 35 are considerably more likely to support the conversion and extension of the pipeline, and considerably less likely to support the project's opponents ([see comprehensive tables](#)).

Among those ages 18 – 34, meanwhile, more than half express support for both the pipeline project itself (52%) and the Montreal-area officials speaking out against it (51%), highlighting the fact that some are in favour of both.

Federal Role versus “Local Veto”:

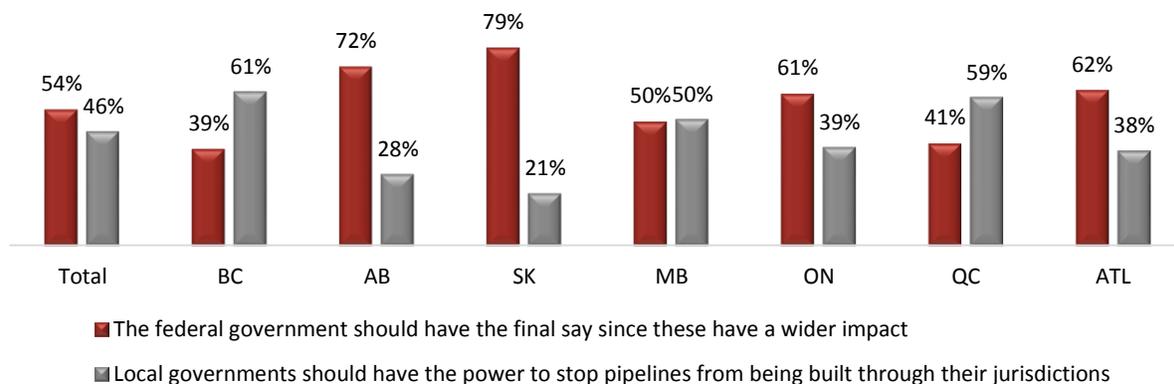
In Prime Minister [Justin Trudeau's own words](#), “even though governments grant permits, ultimately, only communities grant permission.” Trudeau says he is working “constructively and collaboratively” with local governments on the question of what to do when local governments cannot agree on allowing a national pipeline project to move forward.

When it comes to Trudeau's comments, one may argue he is speaking more about social license than jurisdiction. It is the latter issue the Angus Reid Institute put to Canadians.

On this question, a slim majority of Canadians (54%) say it should be the federal government's call, since such projects have a wider impact and scope beyond city limits. The rest (46%) say “local governments should have the power to stop pipelines from being built through their jurisdictions.”

Majorities in Quebec and British Columbia take the opposite perspective. As the graph shows, these are the only regions in which a majority favours local governments having the final say:

When the federal government approves or supports a pipeline, but provincial or municipal governments are opposed, which of the following statements is closer to your point of view?



This survey asked only about “local governments” in the general sense – not respondents' own specific municipal or provincial governments. That said, the regional findings still correlate heavily to local pipeline

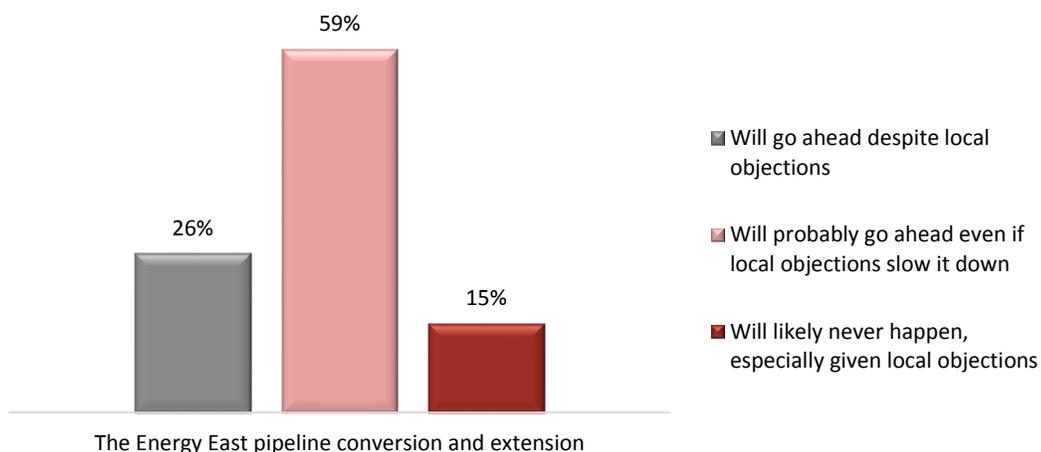
politics, with regions [where elected officials are opposed to pipeline projects](#) more inclined to favour local veto power.

Meantime, Alberta and Saskatchewan – two resource-producing provinces not exactly known for supporting federal intervention in the energy sector – come down on the side of the national government ([see comprehensive tables](#)).

Will the pipeline ultimately go ahead?

Regardless of their own perspectives, most Canadians think the Energy East proposal will eventually be built, even if local opposition slows it down:

Regardless of how you personally feel about each of these pipeline projects, what do you think will ultimately happen with each of them?



*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 organization 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.*

Summary tables follow. For detailed results by region, age, gender, education, and other demographics, consult the comprehensive tables for [the Feb. 2 – 5 survey here](#) and for [the Feb. 26 survey here](#).

In shaping Canada's energy policy, which of the following do you see as a bigger priority?			
	June 2014 (1773)	December 2014 (1504)	February 2016 (1507)
Protecting the environment	58%	61%	56%
Encouraging economic growth	42%	39%	44%

Would you say you support or oppose each of the following? (Summary of "support")				
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (1507)	Proximity to pipelines		
		Live along Energy East (292)	Live along Kinder Morgan (128)	Live along neither (1087)
The Montreal-area officials who have been speaking out against Energy East	41%	48%	45%	39%
The Energy East pipeline conversion and extension	64%	59%	56%	67%
The protests against the expansion of the Kinder Morgan pipeline	49%	54%	53%	47%
The expansion of the Kinder Morgan pipeline through Burnaby, British Columbia	54%	53%	46%	56%