

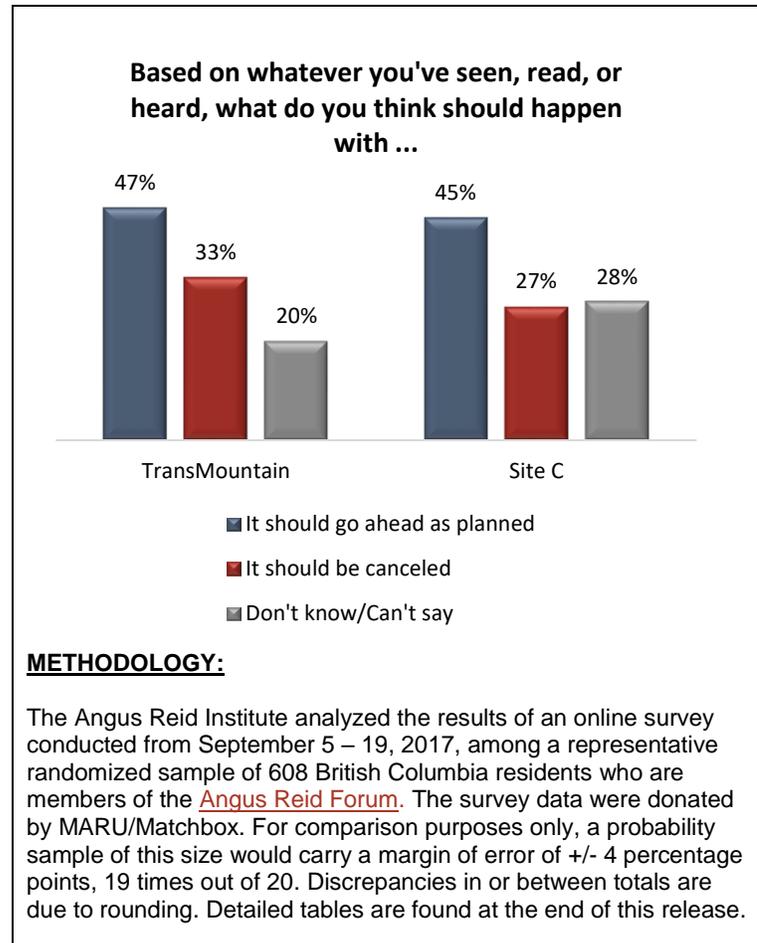
British Columbians call on new provincial government to deliver electoral reform, energy projects

New poll looks at key issues in the province after change in government

September 26, 2017 – British Columbia's first New Democratic Party government in 16 years debuted in the legislature this month with [a bill](#) that promised to make good on a commitment to ban corporate and union donations to political parties, but also drew howls of criticism for either [not going far enough](#), or [going too far](#).

Now, a new analysis of quarterly polling data from the Angus Reid Institute suggests that road for the new government only gets rockier from here.

Nearly half (48%) of British Columbians approve of Horgan's job performance as leader so far – making him the second-most-approved-of provincial leader in Canada – but against this backdrop, British Columbians are more likely to support than oppose two major energy projects the NDP and Greens have promised to fight against: Kinder Morgan's TransMountain pipeline expansion, and the Site C hydroelectric dam. If the government manages to cancel either one, the decision seems likely to anger more B.C. residents than it pleases.



Related: [Premiers' Performance: As Horgan enters office on a high, Wall is set to depart on top](#)

More support is found for the government's pledge to reform the electoral system, with British Columbians favouring a move to proportional representation by almost a two-to-one margin over the current first-past-the-post system. That said, [past Angus Reid Institute polling](#) suggests that this degree of consensus may not hold once a specific alternative voting system is on the table.

More Key Findings:

- Some two-in-three British Columbians (65%) say they would prefer a provincial electoral system that assigns seats proportionally, rather than the current first-past-the-post system (35%)

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- Nearly half of respondents say TransMountain (47%) and Site C (45%) “should go ahead as planned,” while approximately three-in-ten say each one “should be canceled” (33% and 27%, respectively). The rest are unsure.
- Significant differences emerge along age, gender, and income lines on the two resource projects. Women, younger respondents, and those with lower household incomes are more likely to say each one should be canceled

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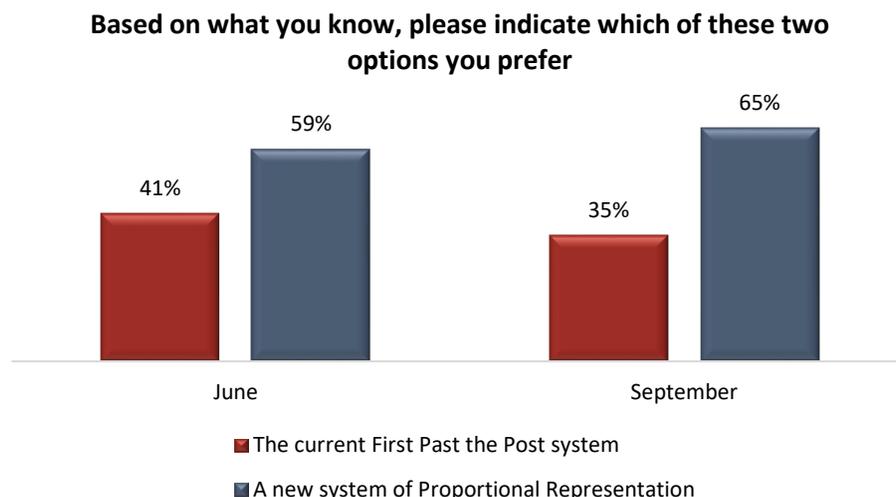
- **Electoral reform: Support for a change, but the devil is in the details**
- **TransMountain Pipeline: To twin or not to twin? Age, gender, and income drive opinion**
- **Site C: Province divided as it awaits commission report**

Electoral reform: Support for a change, but the devil is in the details

Premier John Horgan and Green Party Leader Andrew Weaver have promised [to hold a referendum](#) on proportional representation no later than November of next year, and [the power sharing agreement](#) between their parties pledges that both groups will “campaign actively in support” of a change to the electoral system.

In principle, British Columbians appear to be on board with the change. Asked to choose between the current, first-past-the-post voting system and a new system that would allocate seats in the legislature in proportion to the number of votes each party receives, B.C. residents prefer the latter by a nearly two-to-one margin.

As seen in the following graph, this represents a slight increase in support for proportional representation since June, when the NDP and Greens had yet to form government:

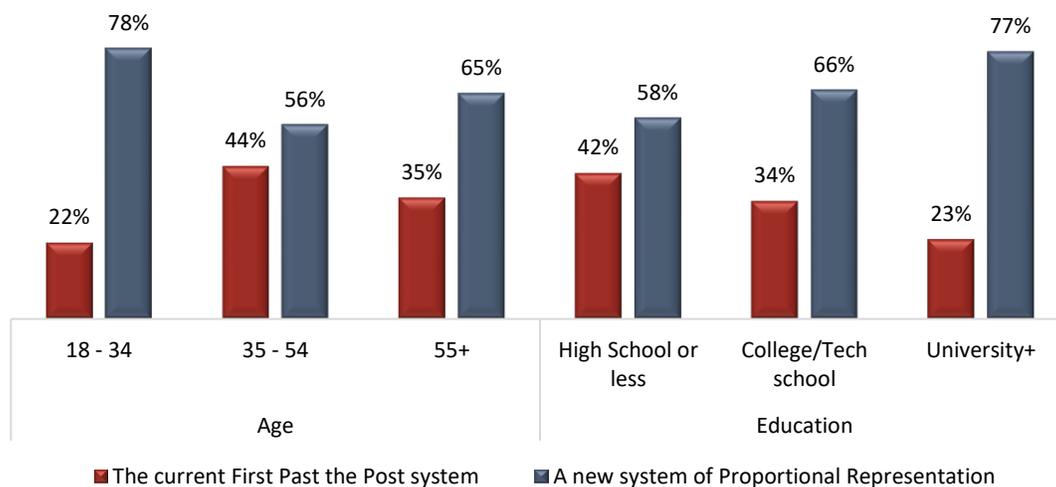


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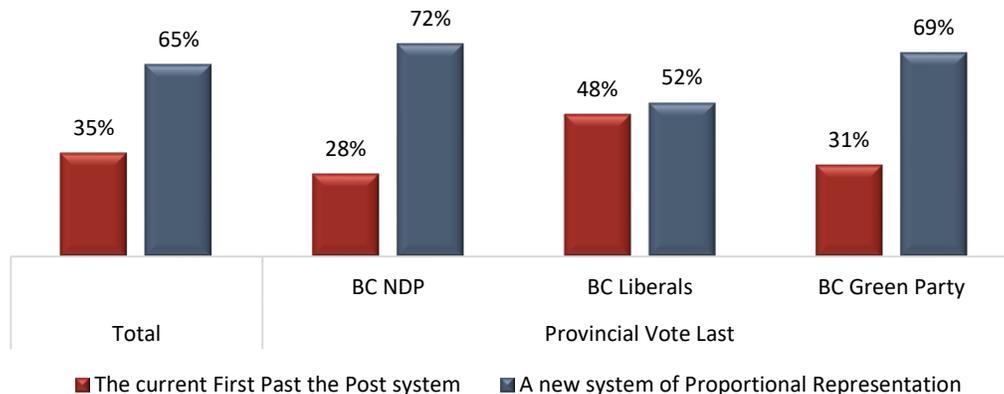
Younger respondents (those ages 18 – 34) are particularly enthusiastic about a new voting system, as are university graduates. That said, proportional representation is the majority choice across all major demographic groupings (see the following graph and summary tables at the end of this release).

Based on what you know, please indicate which of these two options you prefer



Those who voted for the BC Liberals in the provincial election in May are by far the least enthusiastic in their support for proportional representation. That said, fully half (52%) express an interest in a change to the voting system:

Based on what you know, please indicate which of these two options you prefer



While these levels of support bode well for the chances of a pro-change vote in next year's referendum, there are many important details outstanding. Chief among them: What kind of proportional system will be proposed? And what question will be on the ballot?

When the Angus Reid Institute [asked Canadians about electoral systems](#) at the federal level last year, it found significant differences in support for change depending on the alternative to first-past-the-post being proposed. Moreover, no alternative system was strongly preferred to the current one, and significant numbers were unsure of which system they would prefer.

If the question on the ballot asks voters to choose a specific system over first-past-the-post, therefore, public support may not be as high as it appears. If it asks only about a desire for proportional representation, on the other hand, the odds of a "yes" vote may be increased. There is, of course, a lot of time between now and the planned referendum, and advocates on both sides of the issue have plenty of opportunities to try to persuade voters to switch sides.

These findings suggest a significant number of British Columbians will be open to adopting a new voting system when the time comes, but their choices in the eventual referendum are hardly guaranteed.

TransMountain Pipeline: To twin or not to twin? Age, gender, and income drive opinion

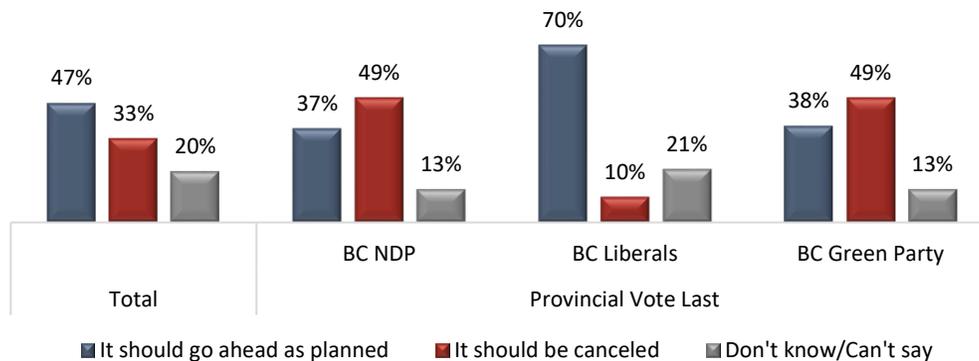
The new government has [joined a lawsuit](#) against Kinder Morgan's plan to "twin" the existing TransMountain pipeline that runs from Alberta to Burnaby, B.C.

The fate of the suit will be determined at hearings in Vancouver in early October, but the issue is likely to cause trouble for the NDP and the Greens no matter what the outcome.

If the court rules against it, the new government will have to decide whether to continue [refusing to allow construction](#) on public land in the province – and invite further legal battles – or give up the fight that both parties made central to their electoral campaigns.

If the court rules in favour of the groups opposed to the pipeline project, the new government will have scored a victory, but one that British Columbians – including significant numbers who voted for the NDP and the Greens in May – aren't necessarily longing for:

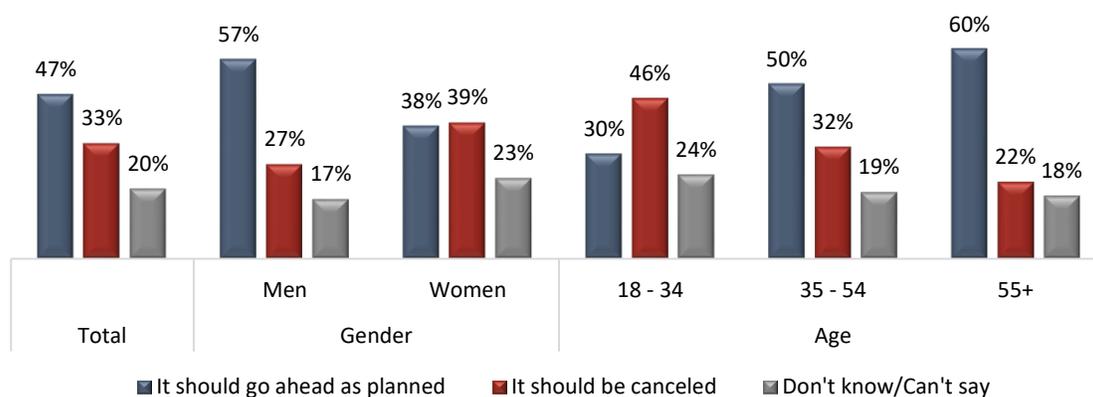
Based on what you have seen, read, or heard, what do you think should happen with the TransMountain Pipeline?



This finding continues a pattern seen in previous Angus Reid Institute polls, which [have found](#) more support in B.C. for the Kinder Morgan project than opposition.

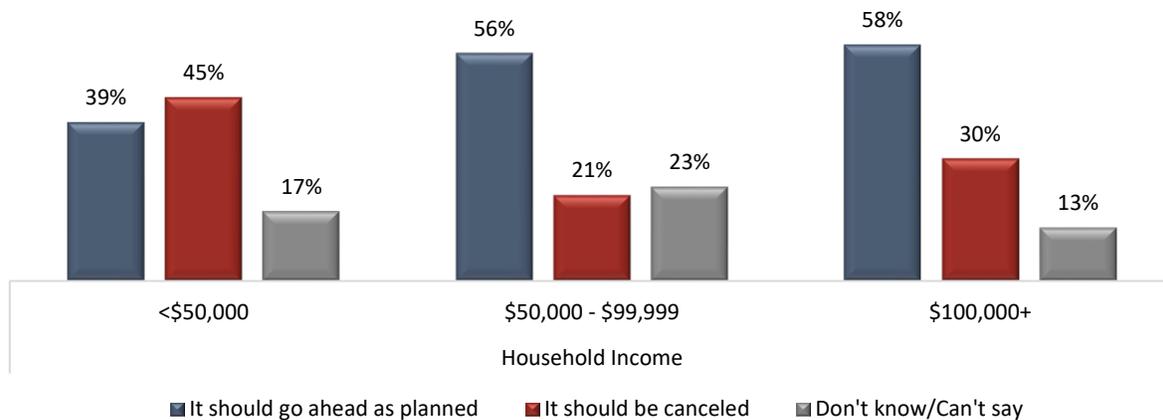
In addition to political differences, clear age and gender divisions can be seen in responses to this question. While men say TransMountain should go ahead as planned by more than two-to-one, women are divided almost evenly. Likewise, Respondents under age 35 – who [formed a key part of the NDP base](#) during the May election – are one-and-a-half times as likely to oppose the project as to support it:

Based on whatever you have seen, read, or heard, what do you think should happen with the TransMountain Pipeline?



There are also significant economic divisions on this question. Those who live in households earning less than \$50,000 per year are more likely to say the project should be canceled than to say it should go ahead, while majorities in the higher income brackets support the pipeline:

Based on whatever you have seen, read, or heard, what do you think should happen with the TransMountain Pipeline?

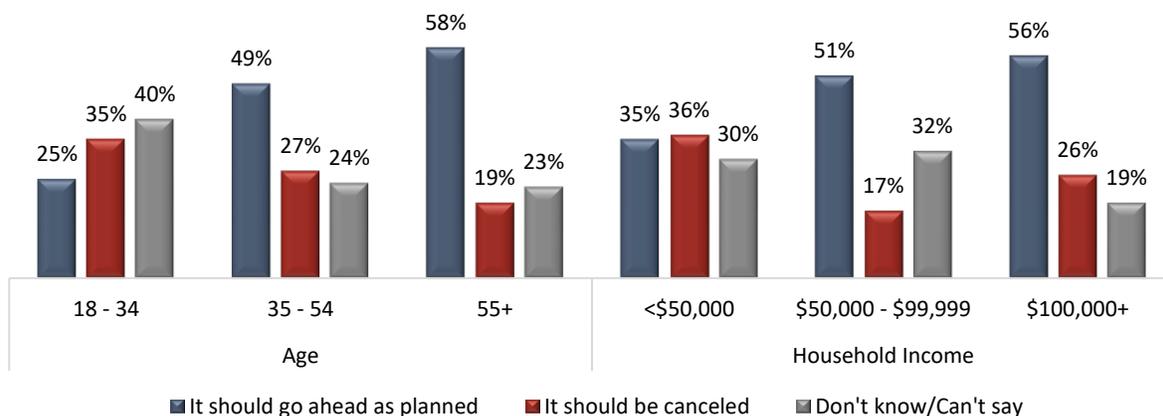


Site C: Province divided as it awaits commission report

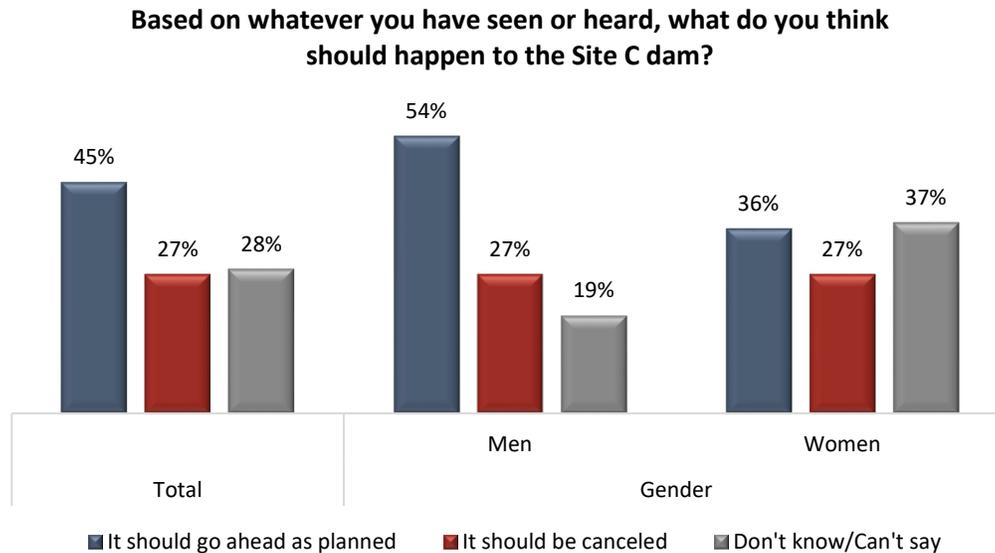
British Columbians' views of the Site C hydroelectric dam follow roughly the same pattern as their views on the TransMountain pipeline. More respondents support moving the project forward than canceling it, with younger respondents and those with lower incomes more likely to be opposed, as seen in the graph that follows.

Overall, 45 per cent say the dam should go ahead as planned, 27 per cent say it should be canceled, and 28 per cent are not sure.

Based on whatever you have seen or heard, what do you think should happen to the Site C dam?



Women are again less enthusiastic than men about this project, though more of them say it should go ahead than be canceled. Notably, women are almost twice as likely as men to express uncertainty about Site C:



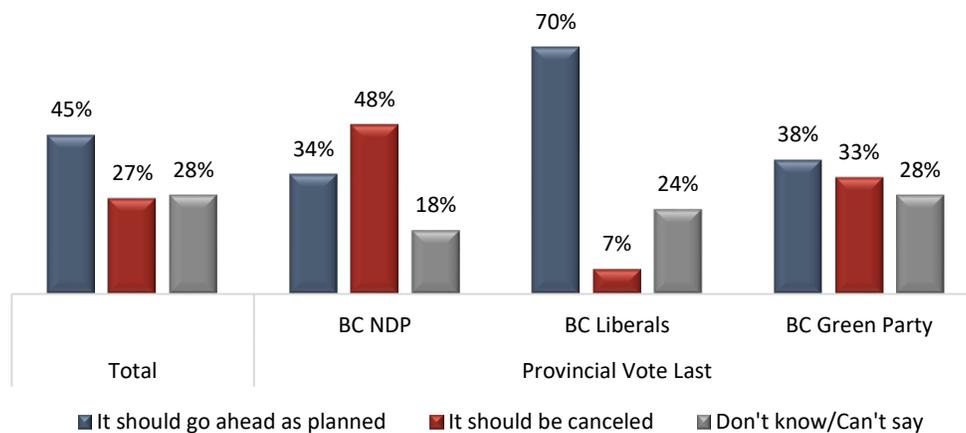
The provincial government has ordered a review of the Site C project by the B.C. Utilities Commission, which [issued a preliminary report](#) last week questioning some of the assumptions BC Hydro made in planning for the dam.

Approximately \$1.8 billion has been spent on the dam project since site preparation began two years ago. All-told, Site C is expected to cost \$8.8 billion to complete, but there would also be an estimated \$1.1 billion in costs to take down the worksite and remediate the area if the government killed the project.

At [a town hall in Vancouver](#) this week, opponents of the project argued that it is not yet “past the point of no return” in terms of cost, though the commission says it [needs additional information](#) from B.C. hydro before it can complete its assessment.

Regardless of the fiscal costs, this poll suggests potential political costs for the New Democrats and Greens, whose supporters are – again – far from unified in opposition to the project:

Based on whatever you have seen or heard, what do you think should happen to the Site C dam?



A final report with estimates of the cost of completing the project, suspending it, or cancelling it is due to the province by November 1.

*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.*

Summary tables follow.

Based on what you know, please indicate which of these two options you prefer.		
(unweighted sample sizes)	June 2017 (810)	September 2017 (608)
The current First Past the Post system	41%	35%
A new system of Proportional Representation	59%	65%

Based on what you know, please indicate which of these two options you prefer.

(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (608)	Gender		Age		
		Men (307)	Women (301)	18 – 34 (141)	35-54 (244)	55+ (223)
The current First Past the Post system	35%	31%	39%	22%	44%	35%
A new system of Proportional Representation	65%	69%	61%	78%	56%	65%

Based on what you know, please indicate which of these two options you prefer.

(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (608)	Household Income		
		<\$50,000 (210)	\$50,000 - \$99,999 (187)	\$100,000+ (113)
The current First Past the Post system	35%	35%	29%	38%
A new system of Proportional Representation	65%	65%	71%	62%

Based on what you know, please indicate which of these two options you prefer.

(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (608)	Education		
		High School or less (274)	College/Tech school (217)	University+ (117)
The current First Past the Post system	35%	42%	34%	23%
A new system of Proportional Representation	65%	58%	66%	77%

Based on what you know, please indicate which of these two options you prefer.				
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (608)	2017 Provincial Vote		
		NDP (209)	BC Liberals (199)	Green Party (74*)
The current First Past the Post system	35%	28%	48%	31%
A new system of Proportional Representation	65%	72%	52%	69%

Based on whatever you have seen, read, or heard, what do you think should happen with the TransMountain Pipeline?						
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (608)	Gender		Age		
		Men (307)	Women (301)	18 – 34 (141)	35-54 (244)	55+ (223)
It should go ahead as planned	47%	57%	38%	30%	50%	60%
It should be canceled	33%	27%	39%	46%	32%	22%
Don't know/Can't say	20%	17%	23%	24%	19%	18%

Based on whatever you have seen, read, or heard, what do you think should happen with the TransMountain Pipeline?				
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (608)	Household Income		
		<\$50,000 (210)	\$50,000 - \$99,999 (187)	\$100,000+ (113)
It should go ahead as planned	47%	39%	56%	58%
It should be canceled	33%	45%	21%	30%
Don't know/Can't say	20%	17%	23%	13%

Based on whatever you have seen, read, or heard, what do you think should happen with the TransMountain Pipeline?				
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (608)	2017 Provincial Vote		
		NDP (209)	BC Liberals (199)	Green Party (74*)
It should go ahead as planned	47%	37%	70%	38%
It should be canceled	33%	49%	10%	49%
Don't know/Can't say	20%	13%	21%	13%

Based on whatever you have seen or heard, what do you think should happen to the Site C dam?						
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (608)	Gender		Age		
		Men (307)	Women (301)	18 – 34 (141)	35-54 (244)	55+ (223)
It should go ahead as planned	45%	54%	36%	25%	49%	58%
It should be canceled	27%	27%	27%	35%	27%	19%
Don't know/Can't say	28%	19%	37%	40%	24%	23%

Based on whatever you have seen or heard, what do you think should happen to the Site C dam?				
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (608)	Household Income		
		<\$50,000 (210)	\$50,000 - \$99,999 (187)	\$100,000+ (113)
It should go ahead as planned	45%	35%	51%	56%
It should be canceled	27%	36%	17%	26%
Don't know/Can't say	28%	30%	32%	19%

Based on whatever you have seen or heard, what do you think should happen to the Site C dam?				
(unweighted sample sizes)	Total (608)	2017 Provincial Vote		
		NDP (209)	BC Liberals (199)	Green Party (74*)
It should go ahead as planned	45%	34%	70%	38%
It should be canceled	27%	48%	7%	33%
Don't know/Can't say	28%	18%	24%	28%