

As Canadians' awareness of Airbnb has grown, so has their desire to regulate it

Nearly half would like to see their community follow Vancouver and Toronto in limiting short-term rentals

April 27, 2018 – As marquee cities around the world struggle with soaring real estate and rental prices and plummeting vacancy rates, policymakers have begun targeting Airbnb and other short-term rental services as part of their housing strategies.

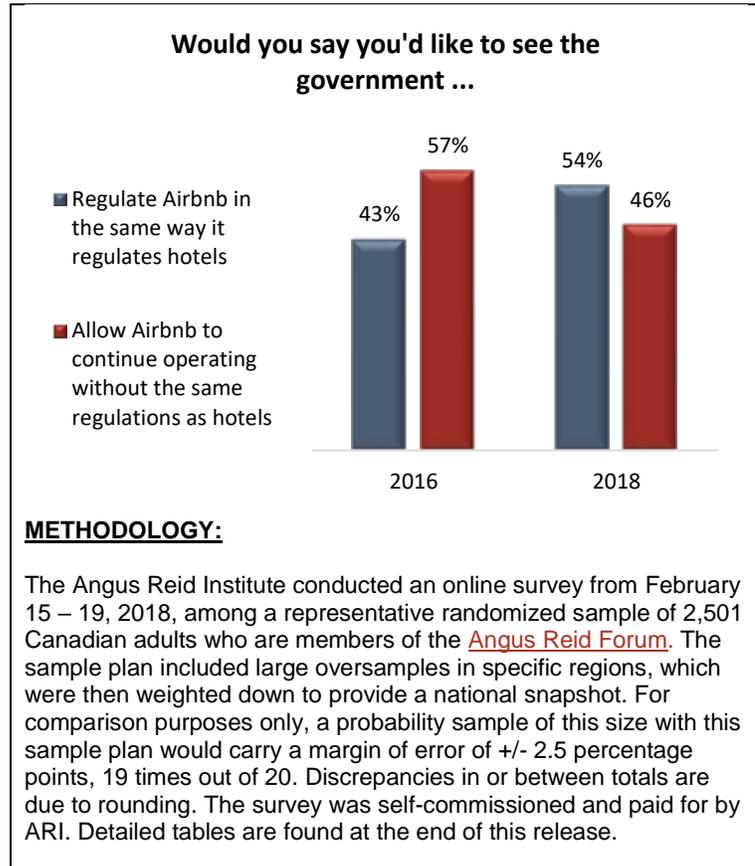
In Canada, Toronto and Vancouver passed laws last year aimed at limiting the proportion of housing stock being used for short-term rental purposes, with Vancouver [releasing new details](#) of their arrangement with Airbnb earlier this month. A new poll from the Angus Reid Institute finds many Canadians – particularly those living in urban areas – eager to see similar regulations where they live.

Overall, some 45 per cent say they support placing limits on short-term rentals that aren't primary residences, while 26 per cent are opposed and the rest (30%) are unsure.

This support for regulation comes as Canadians have grown significantly more familiar with Airbnb over the last two years. When the Angus Reid Institute asked about the company [in 2016](#), nearly four-in-ten (38%) said they had never heard of it, and only 5 per cent had ever used the service. Today, fewer than one-in-seven (13%) have never heard of Airbnb, and the number who have used it has more than doubled (to 12%).

More Key Findings:

- As familiarity with Airbnb has grown, so have both positive and negative views of the company. Today, some 50 per cent of Canadians have a positive opinion of Airbnb (up from 35% in 2016) and 21 per cent have a negative one (up from 15%)
- Age is a key driver of both familiarity with Airbnb and views on regulating it, with younger respondents more likely to have used the service and to say it should continue to operate with minimal regulation



CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org

- Residents of Metro Vancouver, where the housing crisis has been most acute, are the most likely to favour regulating Airbnb in the same way hotels are regulated (66% say this, compared to 49% in the rest of British Columbia)

INDEX:

- **Many would like their cities to limit short-term rentals**
- **Familiarity with Airbnb has grown in the last two years**
- **More Canadians now favour regulating Airbnb like hotels**

Many would like their cities to limit short-term rentals

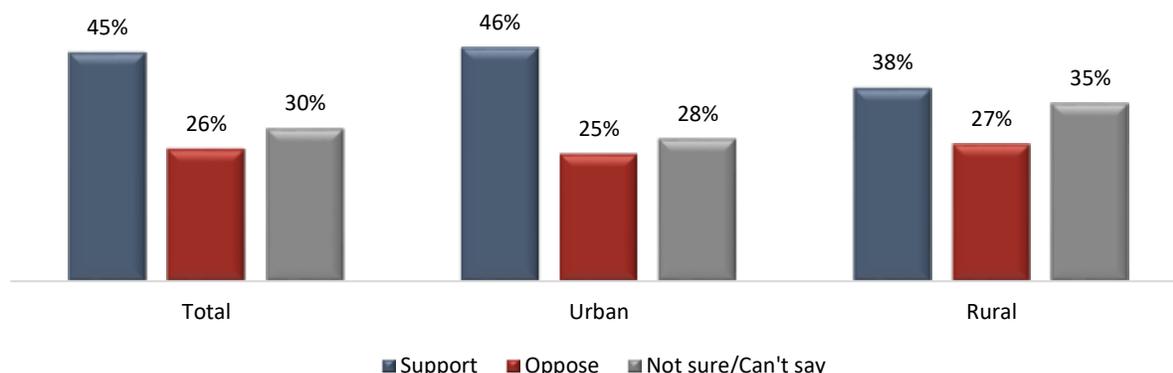
Over the last decade or so, the proliferation of websites offering travelers short-term rentals as an alternative to staying in hotels has caused strain on local housing markets, exerting upward pressure on monthly rents for local residents and removing properties from the available pool as landlords cater to tourists paying a premium for a short-term place to stay.

Last year, a McGill University study found nearly 14,000 homes across the Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal metro areas that were rented through Airbnb for at least 60 days per year, making it highly unlikely that they provided housing for local residents the rest of the time.

The research coincided with movements in Toronto and Vancouver to pass laws limiting the types of properties that can be rented out on a short-term basis and require people seeking to rent their properties to apply for licenses to do so. The two cities joined the province of Quebec, which passed a law in 2016 requiring property owners who offer short-term rentals to apply for licenses and pay hotel taxes.

Asked whether they would like to see their municipality follow Toronto and Vancouver in adopting a law restricting short-term rentals to primary residences only (meaning one can only rent out a place on Airbnb or a similar site if it's the place they normally live in), Canadians are more inclined to say yes than no. Some 45 per cent say they would support such a law where they live, while 26 per cent would be opposed. Residents of urban areas tend to be supportive of such a law, while those who live in rural areas are more likely to say they are uncertain, as seen in the graph that follows:

Some cities have announced that they will restrict short-term rentals of suites that are not principal residences in an effort to open up more long-term rentals. Would you say you would support or oppose this idea in your municipality?

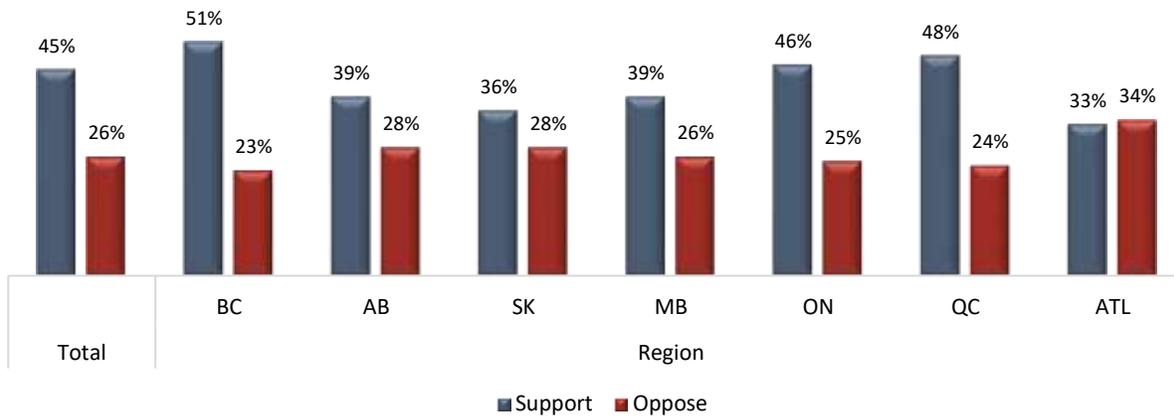


CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org

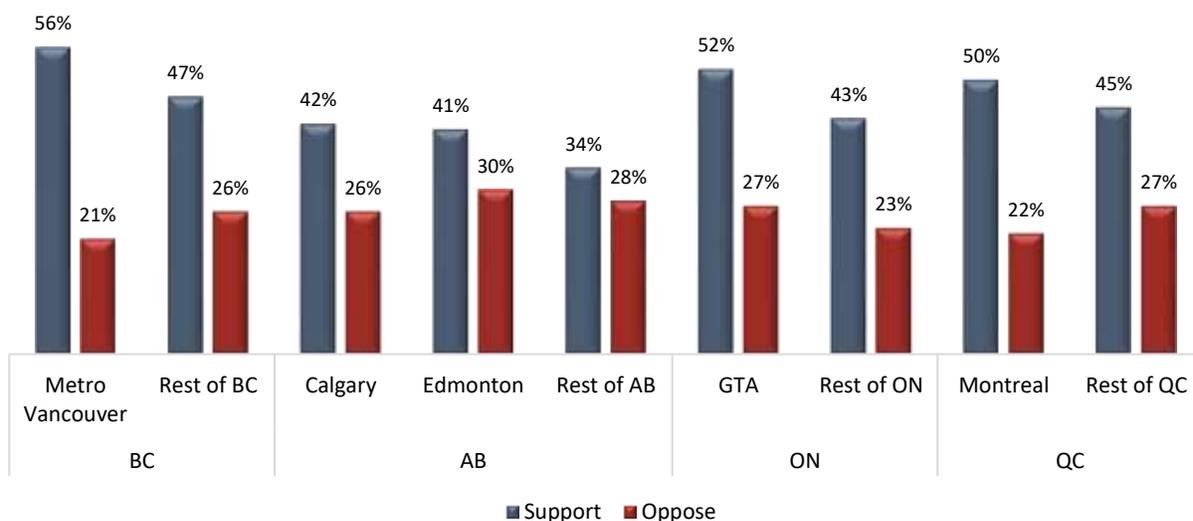
Support for a law limiting short-term rentals to primary residences is fairly consistent across age and gender groups ([see comprehensive tables for greater detail](#)), but there are significant differences between regions, with British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec more supportive than other areas:

Some cities have announced that they will restrict short-term rentals of suites that are not principal residences in an effort to open up more long-term rentals. Would you say you would support or oppose this idea in your municipality?



Likewise, residents of Metro Vancouver, the Greater Toronto Area, Greater Montreal, and the Edmonton and Calgary metro areas are all more likely to support this type of restriction on short-term rentals than those who live elsewhere in their respective provinces.

Some cities have announced that they will restrict short-term rentals of suites that are not principal residences in an effort to open up more long-term rentals. Would you say you would support or oppose this idea in your municipality?

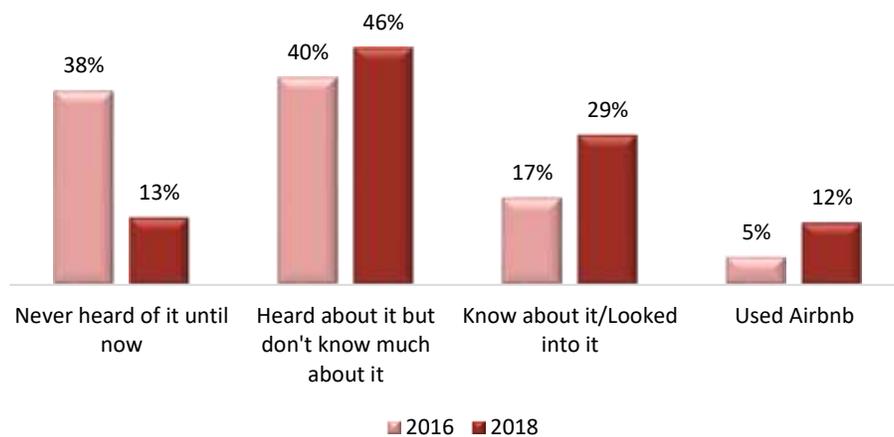


Familiarity with Airbnb has grown in the last two years

Airbnb has been in operation since 2008, offering people the opportunity to rent out extra space – whether a bedroom or an entire home – online. When the Angus Reid Institute asked Canadians about the company in early 2016, however, a significant proportion of respondents said they had never heard of it before.

Over the last two years, this has changed significantly, perhaps as a result of [media coverage](#) of a number of cities – including Toronto and Vancouver – adopting laws aimed at curtailing Airbnb’s influence on the long-term rental market. Today, nearly nine-in-ten Canadians (87%) say they have at least heard of Airbnb, and the number who have used the service has doubled:

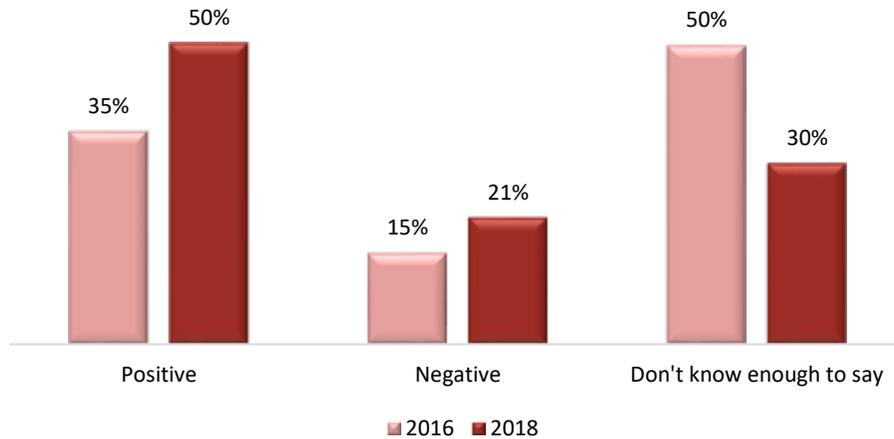
How familiar would you say you are with Airbnb?



As was the case in 2016, younger people are more likely to have looked into or used the website. Some one-in-five respondents (21%) under age 35 now say they have used Airbnb, up from 9 per cent in 2016. Usage and familiarity with the service have also increased among other age groups in the last two years (see summary tables and the end of this release).

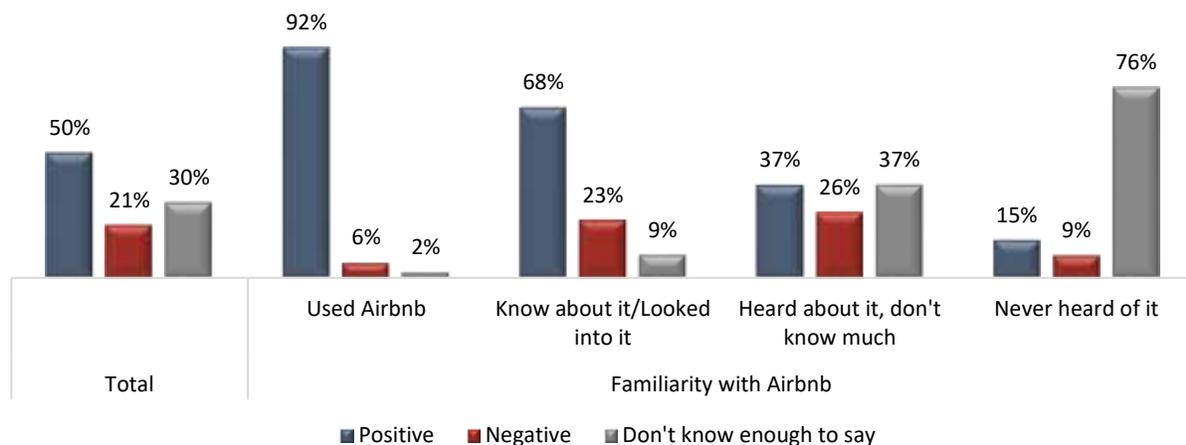
This surge in awareness of Airbnb has also corresponded with an increase in the number of Canadians expressing an opinion – either positive or negative – of the company. Half (50%) now say they have a positive opinion of Airbnb, and one-in-five (21%) now say they have a negative one. Both of these numbers represent increases from two years ago, as seen in the graph that follows.

Thinking generally, what is your overall view of Airbnb?



Perhaps unsurprisingly, familiarity with Airbnb is correlated with a positive opinion about the company. More than nine-in-ten who have used Airbnb’s services to either find a place to stay or rent out their own space say they have a positive opinion of the organization. Those who describe themselves as having heard of the company but not knowing much about it are considerably more divided in their opinions:

Thinking generally, what is your overall view of Airbnb?



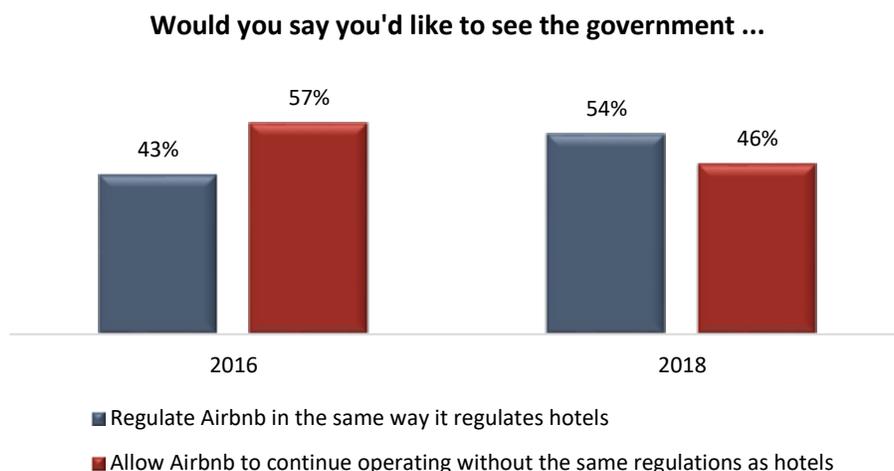
Correspondingly, younger Canadians – who, as previously mentioned, are more likely to have used the service – tend to have a higher opinion of Airbnb than older ones. Some six-in-ten 18-34-year-olds (61%) say they have a positive impression of Airbnb, compared to fewer than half of those ages 35-54 (49%) or 55-plus (42%).

Notably, though Airbnb has been blamed for suppressing the availability of long-term rental housing in Vancouver, residents of the city’s metro area are more positive than negative in their opinions of the service. While 29 per cent of Metro Vancouver residents – higher than the national average – say they

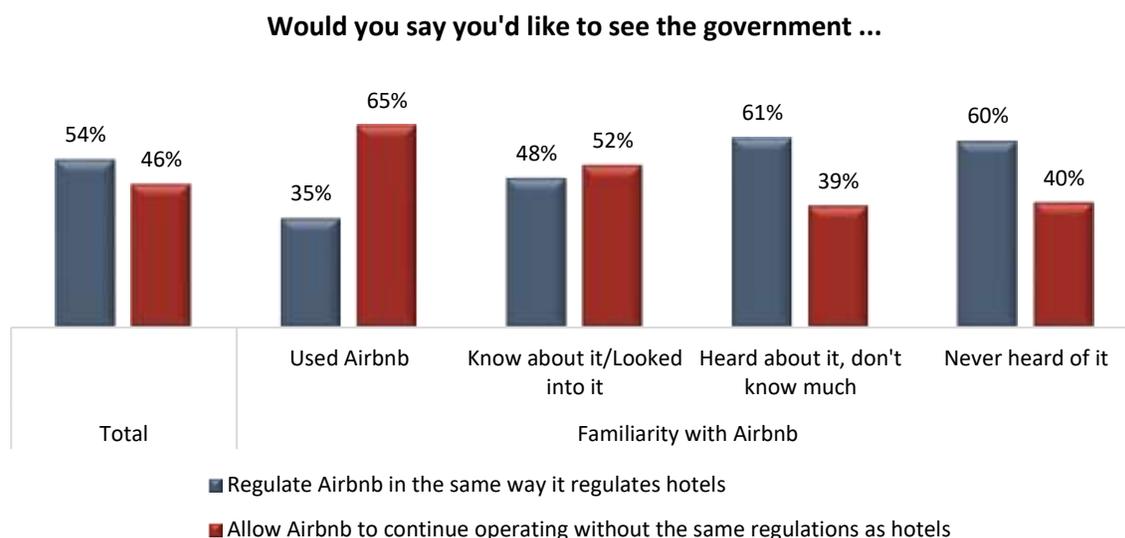
have a negative opinion of Airbnb, some 52 per cent say they have a positive one. A similar pattern can be seen in the Greater Toronto area, where most residents (55%) have a favourable impression of the company, rather than a negative one (20%).

More Canadians now favour regulating Airbnb like hotels

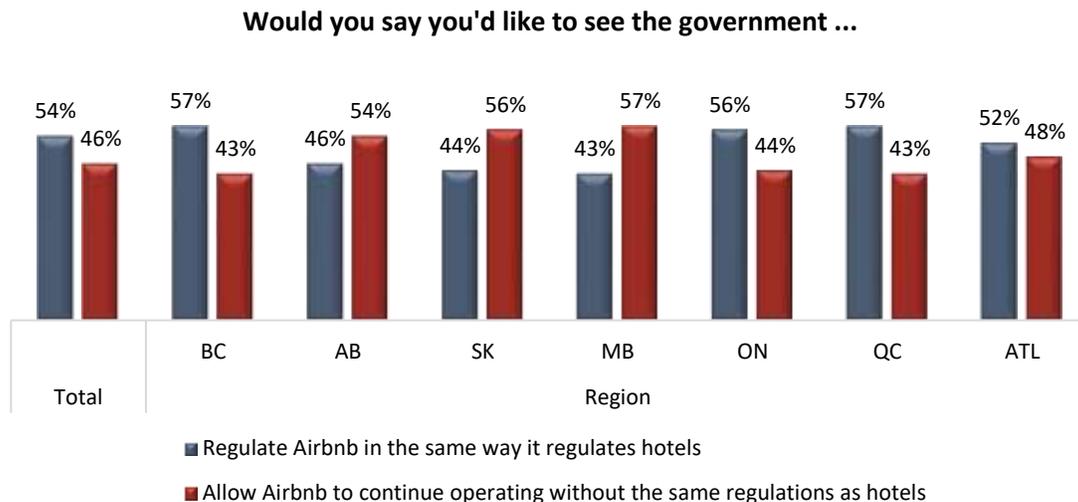
The growth in the number of Canadians who have heard of Airbnb has also corresponded with a change in responses to how governments should approach regulating the service. When ARI asked in 2016, most Canadians (57%) said Airbnb should be allowed to continue operating without the same regulations as hotels. Today, a small majority (54%) lean the opposite direction, as seen in the graph that follows.



Again, familiarity with Airbnb – and, relatedly, age ([see comprehensive tables](#)) – is a key driver of opinion. Those with less intimate knowledge of the website and how it works are more likely to say governments should regulate Airbnb in the same way they regulate hotels, while those who have looked into the service or used it themselves prefer a more laissez-faire approach:



Regionally, Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia are the provinces most likely to favour regulation, while Alberta and the Prairies tend to take the opposite perspective:

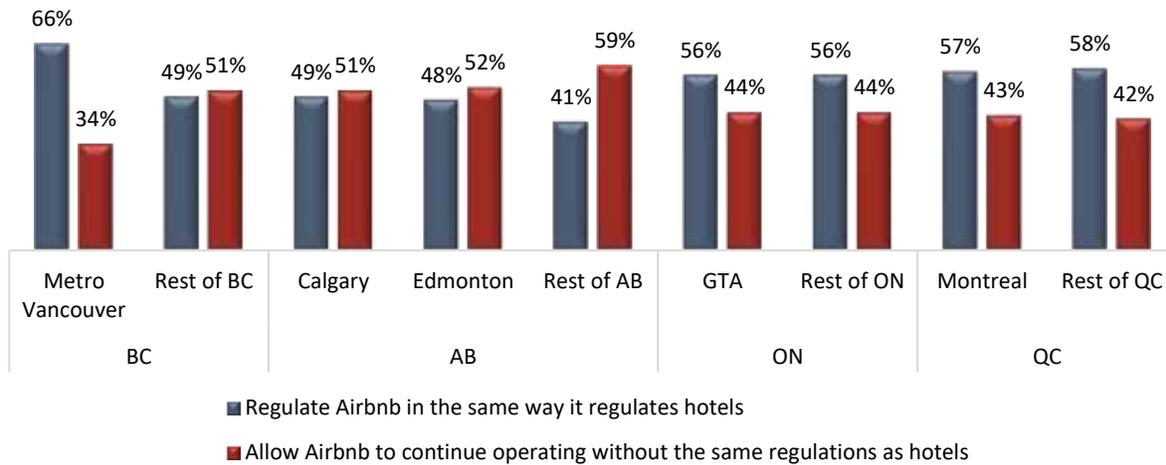


Looking at this pattern, in which the provinces containing the country's three largest cities are also the regions most in favour of treating Airbnb like a hotel chain, it's tempting to conclude that the opinions of urban Canadians are driving regional responses to this question. A closer look at the data, however, reveals that this is not necessarily the case.

Overall, Canadians living in urban areas are not significantly more likely than those in rural ones to take the "regulate Airbnb like hotels" side of this face-off. Some 55 per cent of urban residents do so, compared to 52 per cent of those living in rural areas.

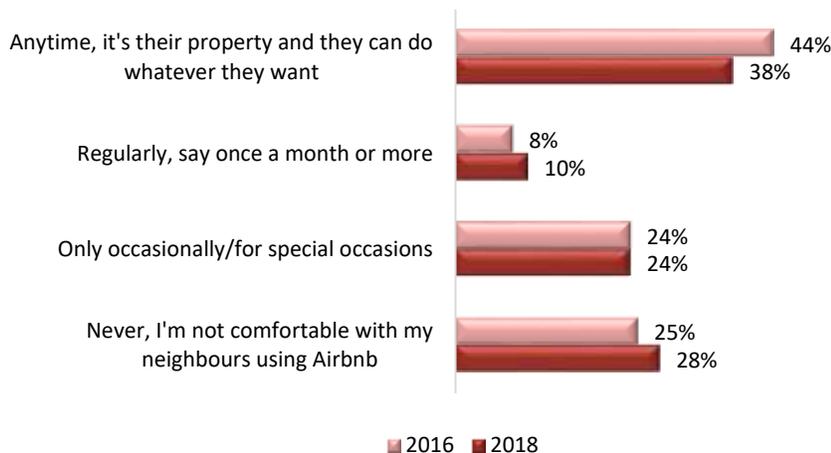
Likewise, sub-regional data shows significant differences between Metro Vancouver and the rest of B.C., but minimal differences between the GTA and the rest of Ontario, or between Montreal and the rest of Quebec. And, at the same time, neither of Alberta's major urban centres expresses a strong preference for regulation, following the overall pattern for the province:

Would you say you'd like to see the government ...



The increase in awareness of Airbnb since 2016 also corresponds with a slight uptick in the number of people expressing reservations about their neighbours renting out their properties on a short-term basis:

Thinking about your immediate neighbours, would you be comfortable with them renting out their space ...



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

For detailed results by urban/rural community size and subregions, [click here](#).

How familiar would you say you are with Airbnb?		
(weighted sample sizes)	2016 (1503)	2018 (2501)
Never heard of it until now	38%	13%
Heard about it but don't know much about it	40%	46%
Know about it/Looked into it	17%	29%
Used Airbnb	5%	12%

How familiar would you say you are with Airbnb?						
(weighted sample sizes)	2016 (1503)			2018 (2501)		
	18-34 (435)	35-54 (524)	55+ (543)	18-34 (724)	35-54 (873)	55+ (904)
Never heard of it until now	38%	36%	39%	16%	12%	12%
Heard about it but don't know much about it	29%	43%	47%	31%	46%	58%
Know about it/Looked into it	23%	17%	11%	33%	31%	23%
Used Airbnb	9%	4%	3%	21%	11%	7%

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org

Thinking generally, what is your overall view of Airbnb?		
(weighted sample sizes)	2016 (1503)	2018 (2501)
Very positive	7%	10%
Mostly positive	29%	39%
Mostly negative	12%	16%
Very negative	3%	5%
Don't know enough to say	50%	30%

Would you say you'd like to see the government ...		
(weighted sample sizes)	2016 (1503)	2018 (2501)
Regulate Airbnb in the same way it regulates hotels	43%	54%
Allow Airbnb to continue operating without the same regulations as hotels	57%	46%

Thinking about your immediate neighbours, would you be comfortable with them renting out their space ...		
(weighted sample sizes)	2016 (1503)	2018 (2501)
Anytime, it's their property and they can do whatever they want	44%	38%
Regularly, say once a month or more	8%	10%
Only occasionally/for special occasions	24%	24%
Never, I'm not comfortable with my neighbours using Airbnb	25%	28%

Thinking generally, what is your overall view of Airbnb?					
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (2501)	Familiarity with Airbnb			
		Never heard of it (327)	Heard about it but don't know much (1148)	Know about it/looked into it (716)	Used Airbnb (310)
Very positive	10%	4%	3%	12%	40%
Mostly positive	39%	12%	34%	55%	52%
Mostly negative	16%	5%	21%	17%	4%
Very negative	5%	4%	5%	6%	2%
Don't know enough to say	30%	76%	37%	9%	2%

Would you say you'd like to see the government ...					
(weighted sample sizes)	Total (2501)	Familiarity with Airbnb			
		Never heard of it (327)	Heard about it but don't know much (1148)	Know about it/looked into it (716)	Used Airbnb (310)
Regulate Airbnb in the same way it regulates hotels	54%	60%	61%	48%	35%
Allow Airbnb to continue operating without the same regulations as hotels	46%	40%	39%	52%	65%

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org