

## Good Investment or Bad Precedent? Canadians pick sides on TransMountain pipeline purchase

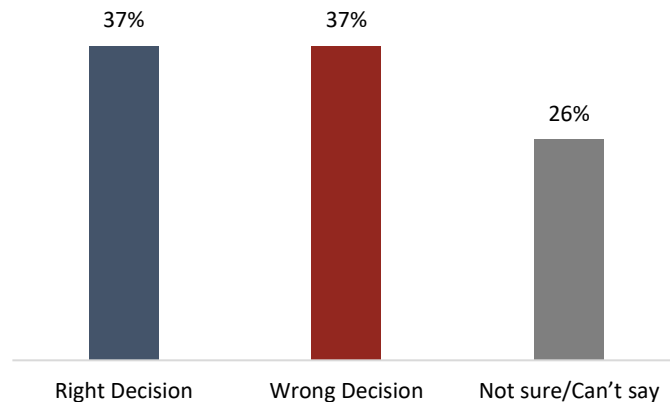
*Majority of those opposed to the decision say it sets a bad precedent for future resource projects*

**June 18, 2018** – The TransMountain pipeline saga has had enough twists and turns to rival its potential path from Edmonton to the Burrard Inlet. The latest – a decision by the federal government to purchase the project from Kinder Morgan – has split Canadians down the middle, according to new public opinion polling from the Angus Reid Institute.

The poll finds equal numbers of Canadians saying the government made the right decision and the wrong decision (37% take each side), while a significant portion of the population is unsure (26%).

The debate rages on. Two-thirds of those who say the government made the right decision in buying the pipeline feel this way because they believe the project will be a good investment for Canadian taxpayers (66%). Opponents, on the other hand, say that the government has set a bad precedent for future resource projects by taking control of this one (64%).

### In your view, did the federal government make the right decision or wrong decision in purchasing the TransMountain pipeline expansion project



#### METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from June 7 – 10 among a representative randomized sample of 1,021 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

#### **More Key Findings:**

- British Columbia residents mirror the national average on opinions of the government's decision to buy TransMountain – 38 per cent say it was right and 38 per cent say it was wrong. Half of Alberta residents (51%) say the Liberals got it right while 28 per cent disagree.
- Overall support for the project is in line with previous Angus Reid Institute tracking. Roughly six-in-ten (57%) support TransMountain, up marginally from 55 per cent in April.
- Canadians are split close to evenly when asked if the government has done a good job on this file. Four-in-ten say they have (39%), slightly more say they have done a poor job (42%). Men are much more positive than women.

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#### **CONTACT:**

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
Dave Korzinski, Research Associate: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)  
Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 [ian.holliday@angusreid.org](mailto:ian.holliday@angusreid.org)

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- **Majority oppose B.C.'s resistance, even in B.C.**

### Right or wrong call? Canadians weigh in on their reasoning

When Finance Minister Bill Morneau and Natural Resource Minister Jim Carr sat in the National Press Theatre on May 29 to announce the federal government purchase of the TransMountain pipeline expansion and related infrastructure, they likely anticipated some political blowback.

It didn't take long for Conservative and Opposition leader Andrew Scheer to seize on the opportunity. He and Shadow Finance Minister Pierre Poilievre were quick to accuse the government of failing to exercise constitutional rights and exhaust other options before purchasing the project. Protestors joined the government in objecting, staging protests across the country in response to the announcement.

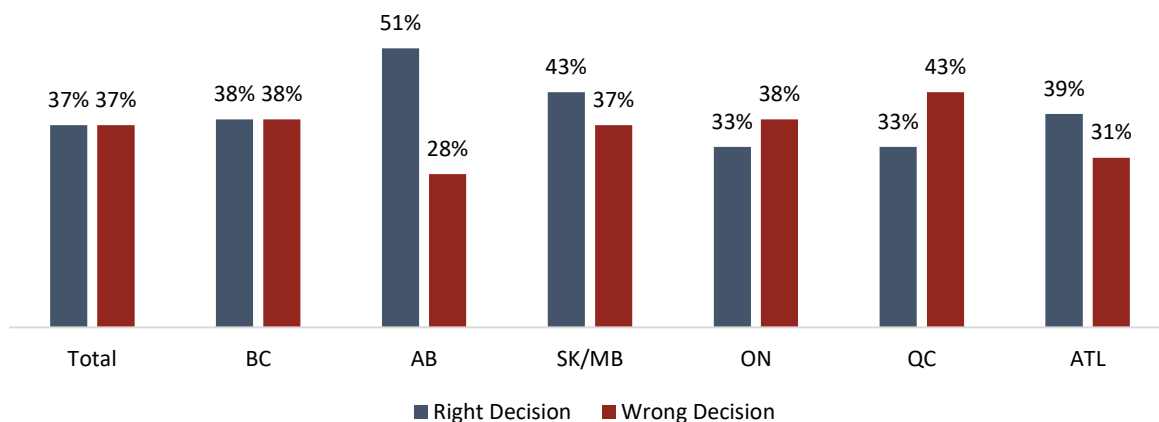
However, not everyone was upset. The government suggested that the project would be a "sound investment opportunity" and would ensure the creation of jobs for Canadian workers. Albertan Premier Rachel Notley praised the plan, and a pro-pipeline rally was also held in Calgary in response to the announcement.

These two sides of the debate apparently have equal footing in the Canadian public discourse. In fact, asked whether the government made the right or wrong choice in going forward with this TransMountain purchase, exactly 37 per cent take each side. One-in-four Canadians remain unsure (26%).

The decision is polarizing across the country, with British Columbians split evenly and at least three-in-ten on each side of the debate in every region but Alberta, as seen in the graph that follows.

Even in Alberta, where this poll finds 82 per cent of residents voicing support for the pipeline project itself, only slightly more than 50 per cent believe the government made the right call.

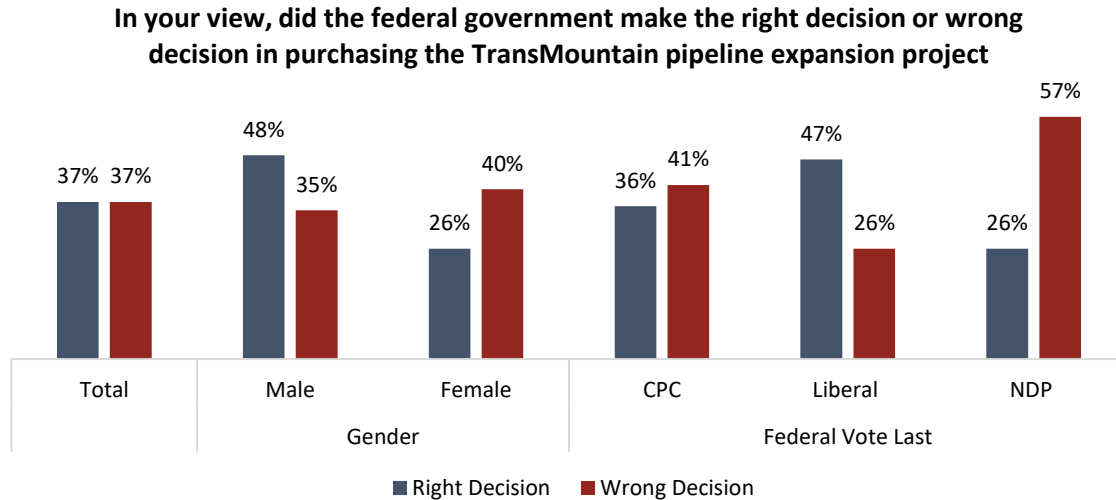
#### In your view, did the federal government make the right decision or the wrong decision in purchasing the TransMountain pipeline expansion project?



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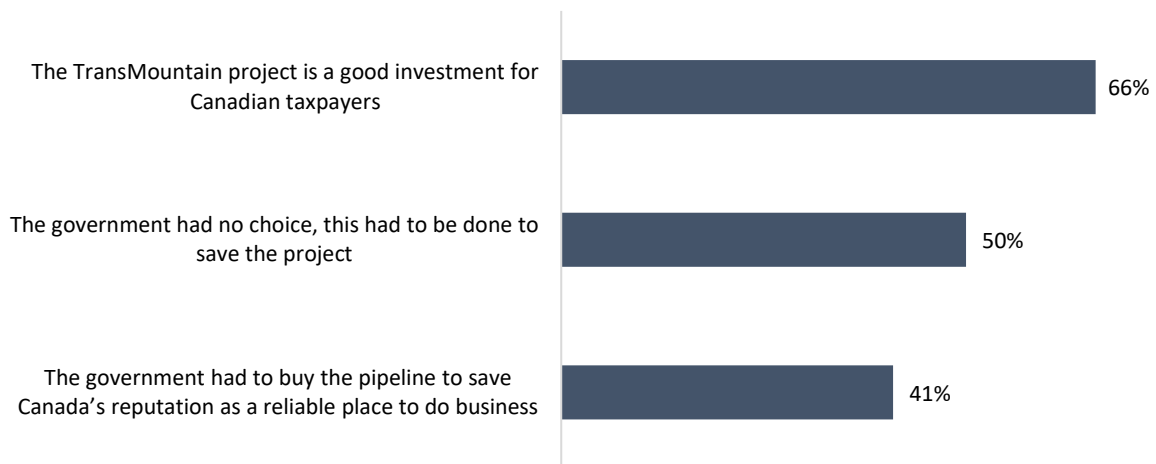
Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
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Notably, just 47 per cent of Trudeau's 2015 Liberal supporters say this was the right choice. Further, men are much more supportive of the decision than women:



For supporters, much of their motivation lies in a belief that the project is a good investment for taxpayers. Two-thirds say this (66%) while another 50 per cent say that the government had no choice but to step in to save the project:

**And, why do you believe this was the right decision?  
(Choose all that apply)**

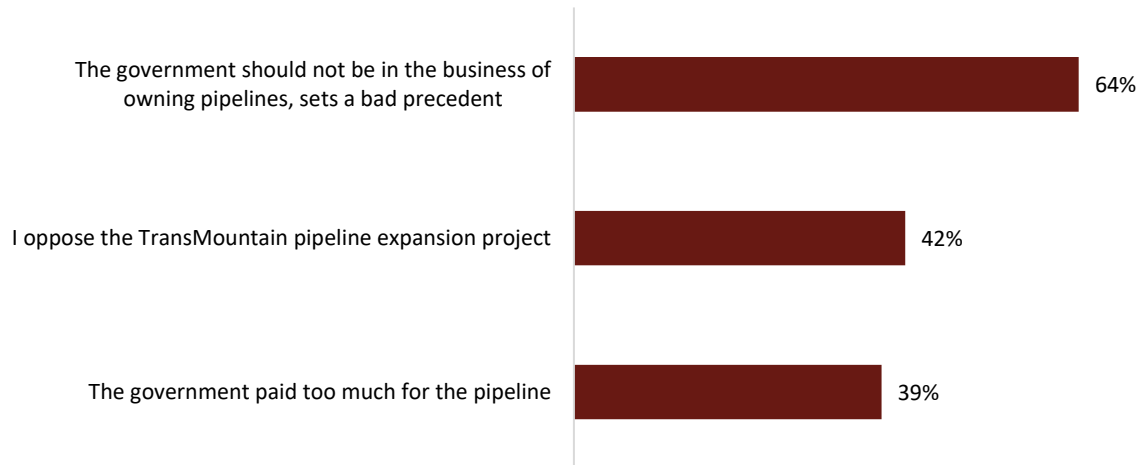


As for those who are opposed, their reasoning is primarily rooted in the precedent that this decision sets. More than six-in-ten (64%) say that the government should not be in the business of owning pipelines, and should not be offering this type of recourse as an option for struggling projects. Another four-in-ten (39%) say that the price tag was simply too high.

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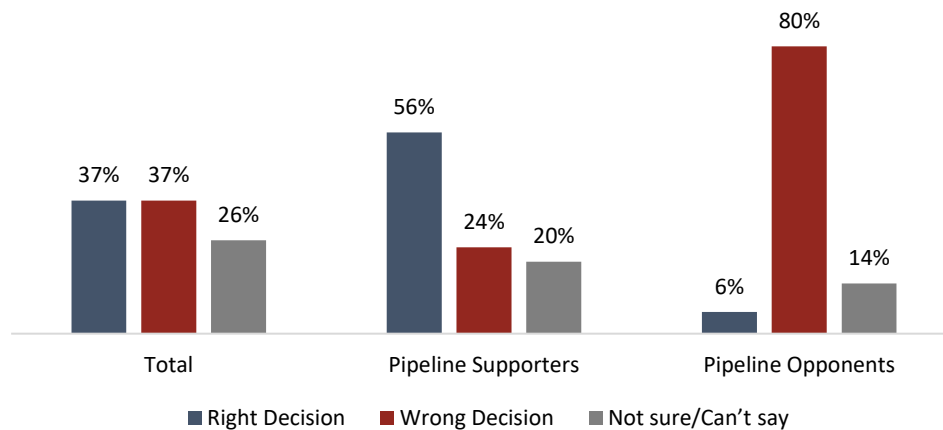
Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
 Dave Korzinski, Research Associate: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)  
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**And, why do you believe this was the wrong decision?**



Perhaps the best exemplification of the tension over this decision is among those who say they outright support the pipeline. While just over half (56%) say that this was the right route for the government pursue, one-quarter say it was the wrong decision (24%) and 20 per cent are unsure. Opponents are much more unified:

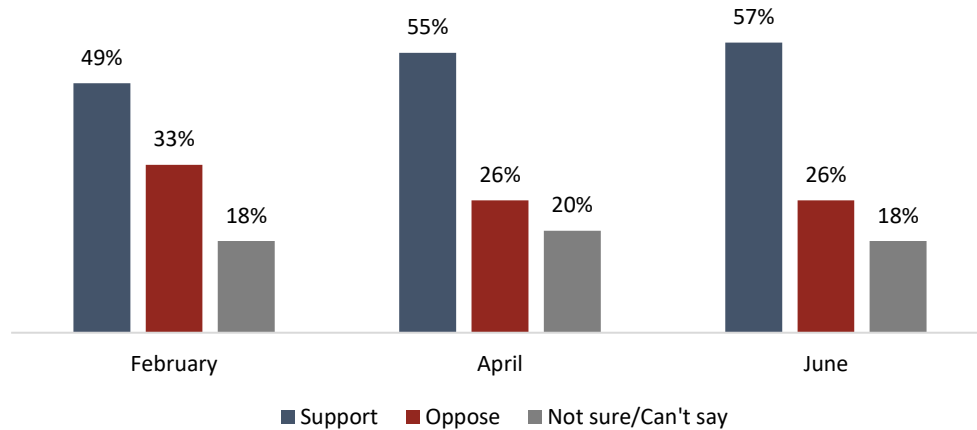
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**Support for pipeline, division on federal performance**

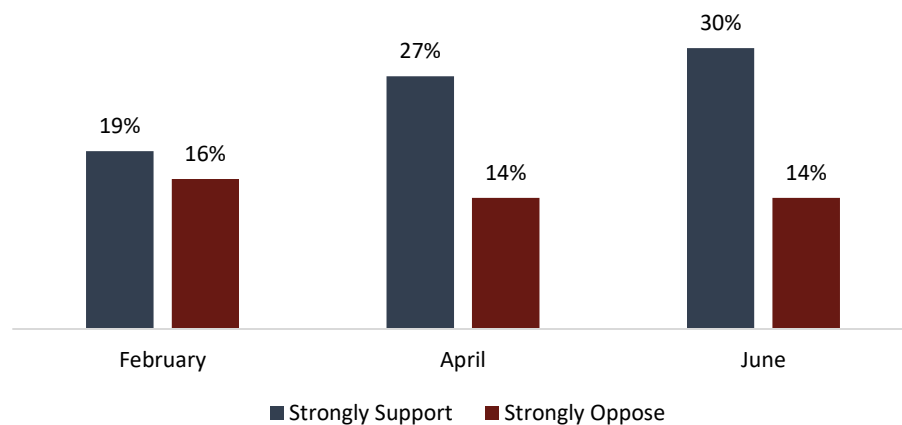
The aforementioned support for the pipeline has grown over the past six months. Since February of this year, support has risen eight percentage points, while opposition has dropped seven:

**Would you say you support or oppose the TransMountain pipeline expansion project**



Further, those who feel strongly in support of TransMountain have seen their ranks grow by 11 percentage points, while those who are most in opposition have seen stagnation:

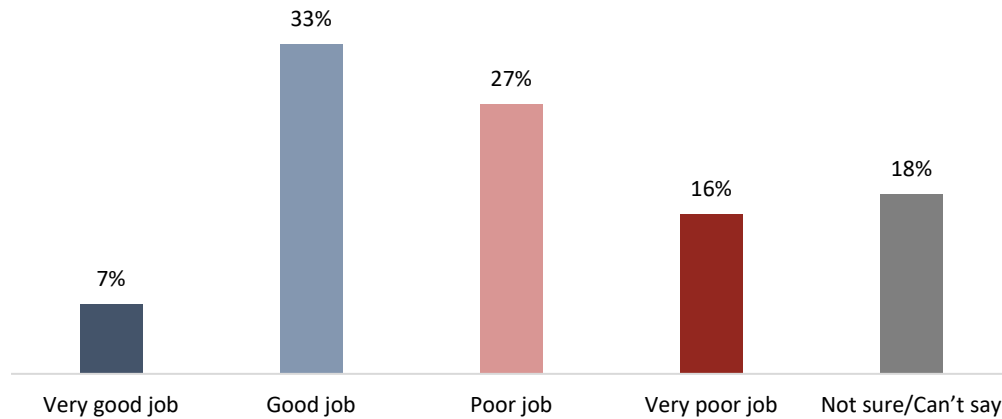
**Would you say you support or oppose the TransMountain pipeline expansion project**



That isn't to say that things are rosy in Ottawa given how events have unfolded. Just seven per cent of Canadians say that the government has done a very good job, compared to twice that many (16%) who say they have handled it very poorly.

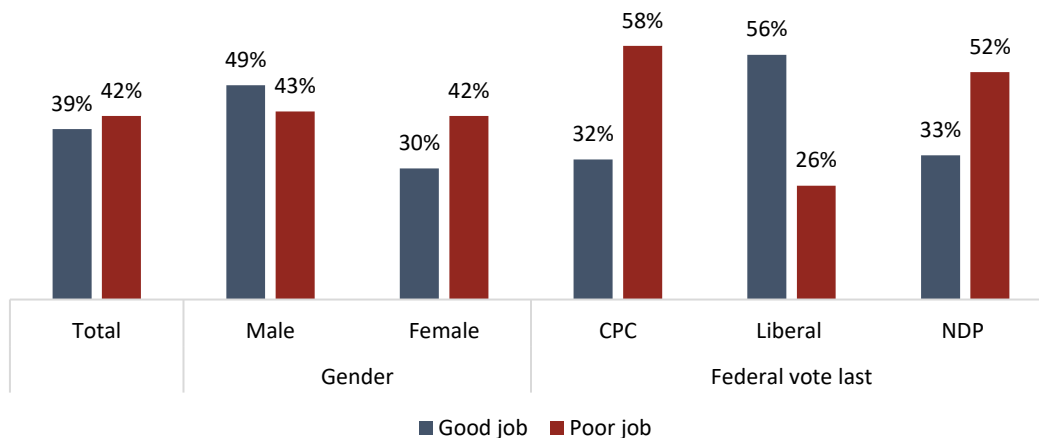
Overall, 39 per cent say the government has done a good job, while 42 per cent say they have done a poor job.

**Do you think the federal government has done a good job or a poor job in their overall handling of this issue?**



Again, there are political and gender differences on this assessment. Men are much more likely than women to say that the government has done a good job, as are 2015 Liberal voters compared to their Conservative and New Democrat counterparts:

**Do you think the federal government has done a good job or a poor job in their overall handling of this issue?**



**Majority oppose B.C.'s resistance, even in B.C.**

The federal purchase of the TransMountain pipeline expansion and assets has apparently done little to change the approach of British Columbia's NDP government. Premier John Horgan announced that his province will [continue its legal strategy](#) to oppose pipeline and address concerns over coastal spills.

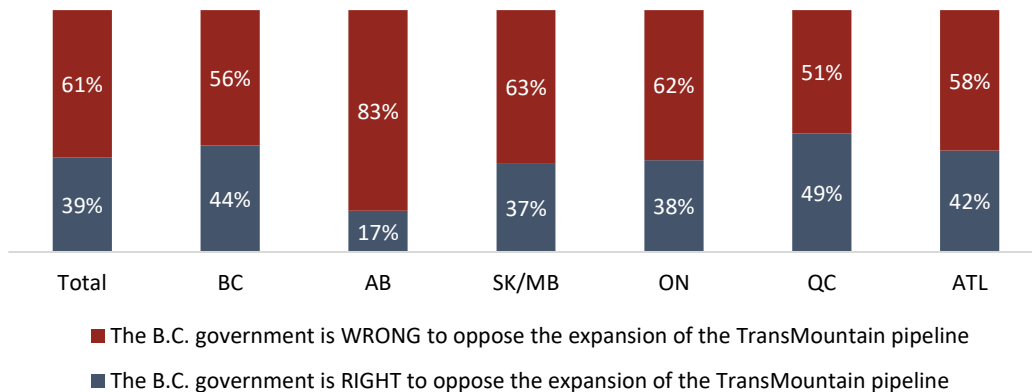
This decision is at odds with a majority of Canadians' views, and indeed, those of Horgan's own province.

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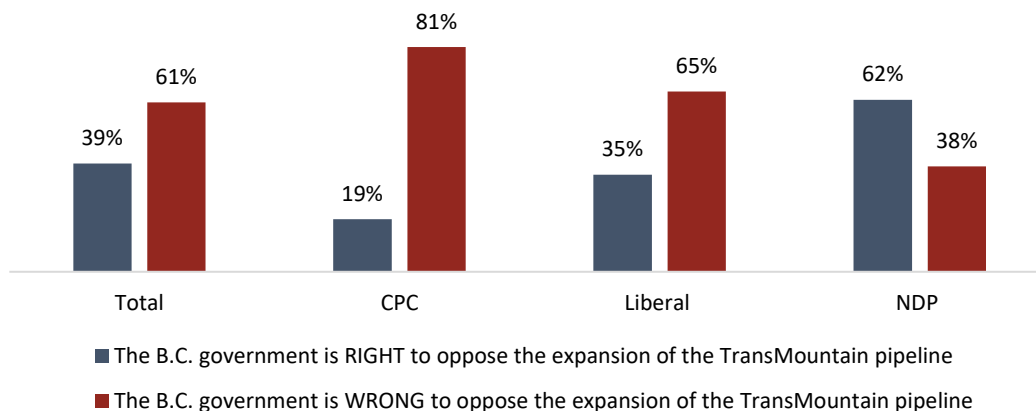
Six-in-ten Canadians say they feel the government is wrong to oppose the expansion, down slightly from 64 per cent in April. In British Columbia, more than half of residents (56%) say the government is taking the wrong stance:

**Which statement best reflects your own point of view, even if you don't agree completely with either one?**



Horgan's provincial New Democratic Party finds support among those who support the party federally. Here, six-in-ten (62%) say that his government is doing the right thing, while two-thirds of federal Liberal supporters and four-in-five Conservatives disagree:

**Which statement best reflects your own point of view, even if you don't agree completely with either one?**



*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*

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*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.*

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

<b>Would you say you support or oppose the TransMountain pipeline expansion project:</b>			
	<b>Date</b>		
	<b>February 2018 (2,501)</b>	<b>April 2018 (2,125)</b>	<b>June 2018 (1,021)</b>
<b>Strongly support</b>	19%	27%	30%
<b>Support</b>	30%	28%	37%
<b>Oppose</b>	17%	12%	12%
<b>Strongly oppose</b>	16%	14%	14%
<b>Not sure/Can't say</b>	18%	20%	18%

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