

Carbon conflict: two-thirds of Canadians say provinces should have the final say on pricing

Fewer than half support federal government plan, view driven heavily by politics

July 26, 2018 – In the emerging federal-provincial battle over carbon pricing, Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe and Ontario Premier Doug Ford appear to be galvanizing public opinion over which level of government should be the ultimate arbiter of the kind of plan should be in place from province to province.

While a federal carbon pricing plan is poised to come into effect next January and be applied to provinces that are not deemed by the Trudeau government to have a sufficient plan in place, two-in-three Canadians (64%) say it should be individual provinces, not Ottawa, that determine the appropriate path to reduce carbon emissions. The rest, (36%) say the federal government should have the power to implement its own plan if necessary.

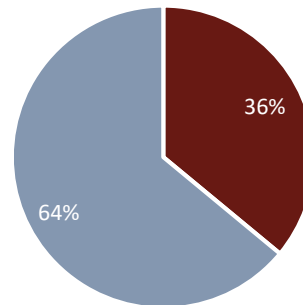
The specific decisions made by Moe and Ford are perceived differently, however.

Seven-in-ten Canadians (72%), including nearly 88 per cent of those in Saskatchewan say Moe is right to challenge the Trudeau plan in court, arguing that his province has its own plan in place. By contrast, half of Canadians (51%), and about the same number in Ontario (55%) say that Ford's recent decision to end Ontario's cap and trade program was the right one.

More Key Findings:

- Four-in-five past Conservative voters (82%) say the provinces should maintain jurisdictional control of carbon pricing. Past Liberal and NDP voters are divided: half among each take each side
- Support for the federal carbon tax sits at 45 per cent. This is relatively unchanged from last year (44%) but represents a significant drop from 56 per cent support for the idea in 2015

Which of these perspectives is closer to your own – even if neither is exactly how you feel?



- The federal government should have the final say on carbon pricing
- The provinces should have the final say on carbon pricing

METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from July 18 - 23, 2018 among a representative randomized sample of 1500 Canadian adults who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.2 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.

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- Just over half of Canadians (56%) say global warming is real, and primarily caused by human industrial activity. One-in-five (20%) say it is real but caused by natural processes. The rest are split between uncertainty (11%) or outright disagreement (14%)

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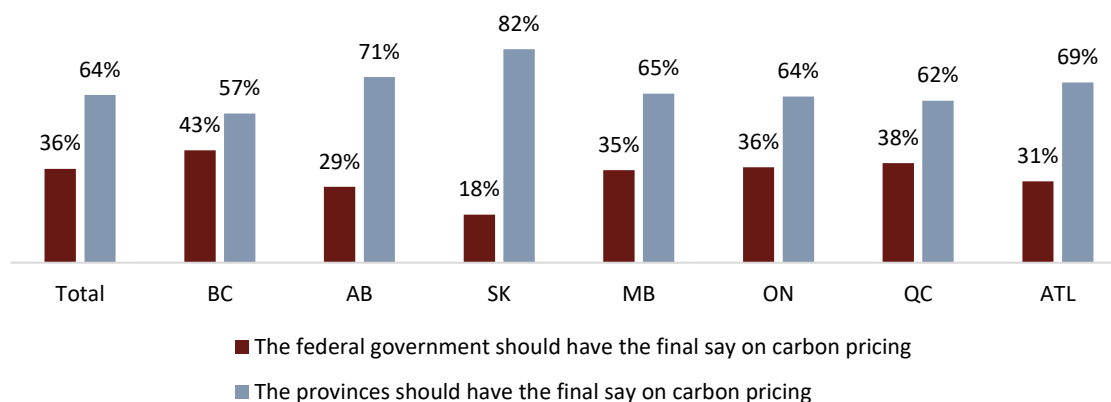
Most say provinces should have jurisdiction on carbon pricing

The conversation around carbon pricing in Canada has taken on a renewed level of urgency and conflict ahead of Ottawa's September 1st deadline for the provinces to submit carbon pricing proposals. British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec already have carbon pricing plans announced or in place, while the four Atlantic provinces have all stated their intention to release plans before the deadline.

In Saskatchewan, Premier Scott Moe - whose government recently launched a reference case in the to clarify the federal government's jurisdiction on this issue - got a new ally June 29th, when Doug Ford was sworn in as Premier of Ontario. Ford immediately announced he would scrap his own province's climate plan and end its participation in a cooperative cap and trade program with Quebec and California. Moe has suggested that his province has its own plan that does not necessitate carbon pricing, while Ford has not announced details of any carbon pricing going forward.

For most Canadians, the power to decide what should be done in each province should reside in the provincial governments hands. In every region of the country, more say they prefer provincial to federal authority on this issue:

Which of these perspectives is closer to your own – even if neither is exactly how you feel?



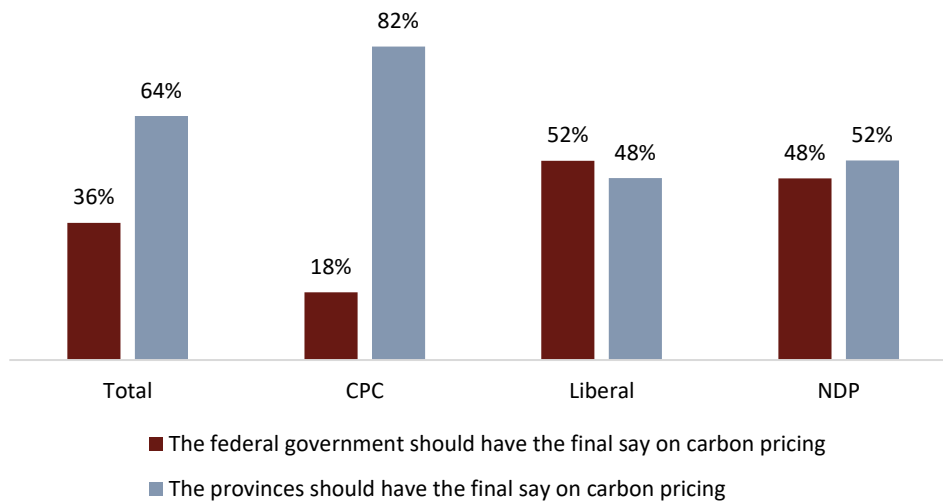
Premier Moe has significant support from his province on this issue, with more than four-in-five (82%) saying the provinces should hold the power. In Alberta, where 2019 election favourite Jason Kenney could join the anti-carbon pricing club, seven-in-ten (71%) agree with this line of thinking.

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Perhaps troubling for the federal Liberals, nearly half of their own past voters (48%) say the federal government should take a back seat on this issue:

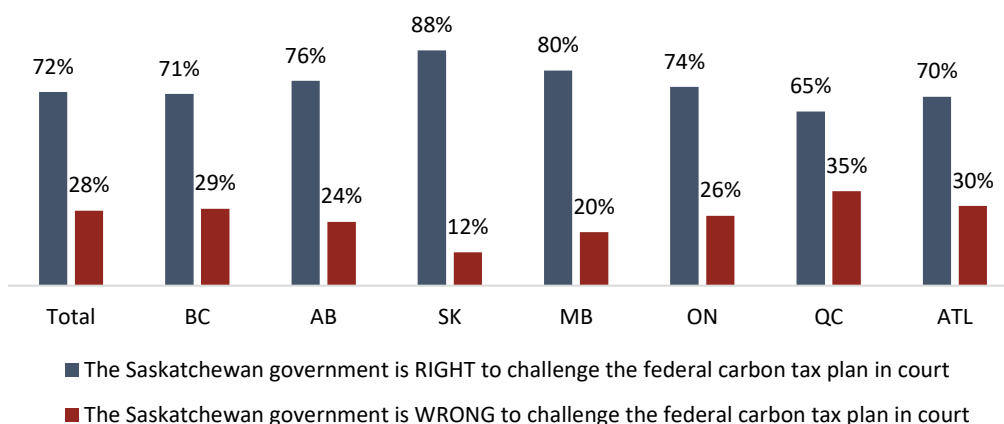
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While the Saskatchewan Party “[acknowledges the science-based reality of climate change](#)” it has also [stated that](#) “a one-size-fits-all carbon tax fails to recognize the diverse nature of our great Canadian economy.” As such, the province would like to avoid being compelled to participate.

Unsurprisingly, the move to challenge federal jurisdiction in the Saskatchewan Court of Appeals receives near unanimous support within Moe’s province. Notably, however support for this approach falls no lower than 65 per cent anywhere else in the country:

Which of the following statements is closer to your opinion on this?



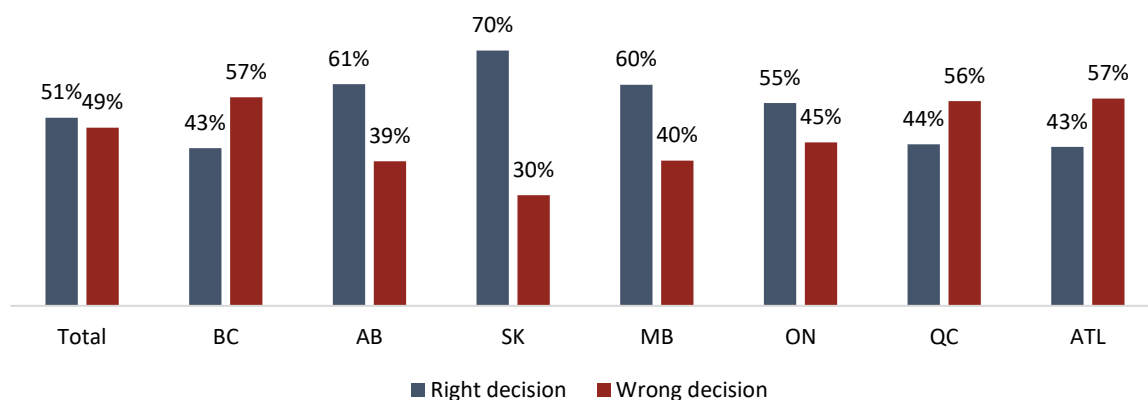
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In Ontario, in addition to cancelling the cap and trade system, Premier Doug Ford has also ruled out a carbon tax. He has instead chosen to set aside \$30 million to challenge the federal government in court – something Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister chose not to do after soliciting an opinion on the issue and the likely failure of such an action.

On this approach, Canadians – and Ontarians themselves - are more divided. In Canada’s most populous province, a slight majority support the move, while nationally – the split is even. Strong support for the Ford stance in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba is countered by opposition in BC, Quebec and Atlantic Canada:

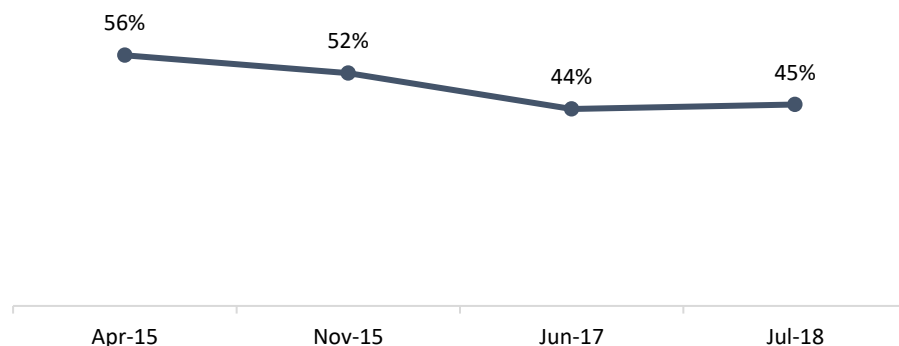
Overall, would you say Doug Ford’s plan to end the cap and trade system is the right decision or the wrong decision?



Support for federal carbon plan below majority

Three years ago, a federal carbon pricing program looked like a good bet for the Justin Trudeau as a campaign promise. In the spring of 2015, a majority of Canadians supported such a plan. Today, however, fewer than half (45%) support the plan which take effect in five months for provinces who do not meet federal standards for emission reduction via their own carbon pricing scheme:

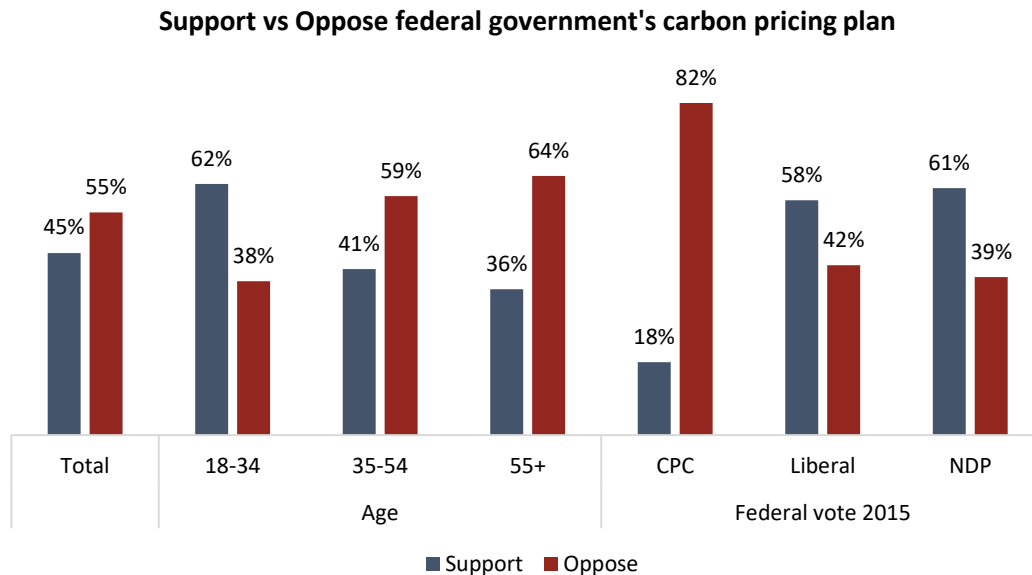
Support for federal carbon tax plan



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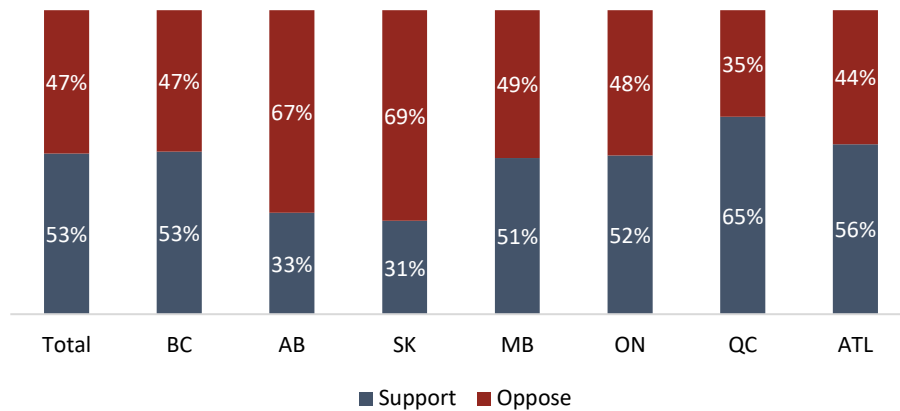
Canadians aged 18 to 34 age group are much more inclined to support the Trudeau government's plan – six-in-ten do (62%). Opposition rises as people age. There are also clear political splits on this issue. Past Liberal and NDP supporters are equally likely to support the plan, about six-in-ten of each do, while one-in-five past Conservative voters (18%) are onside with the Liberal government:



What Canadians support in their provinces

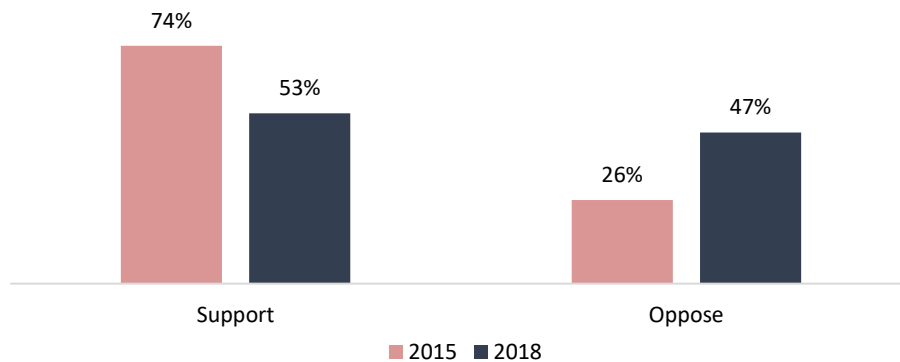
So what would Canadians support within their own province if they had their choice? Overall, 53 per cent say they would support cap and trade in their province. This would mean a limit on the overall level of carbon pollution that industries in the province can commit. Firms are given a defined number of credits that can be bought or sold in the marketplace. Support for such a system is highest in Quebec (65%), which already has one in place, and in Atlantic Canada (56%):

Support vs Oppose a provincial cap and trade system



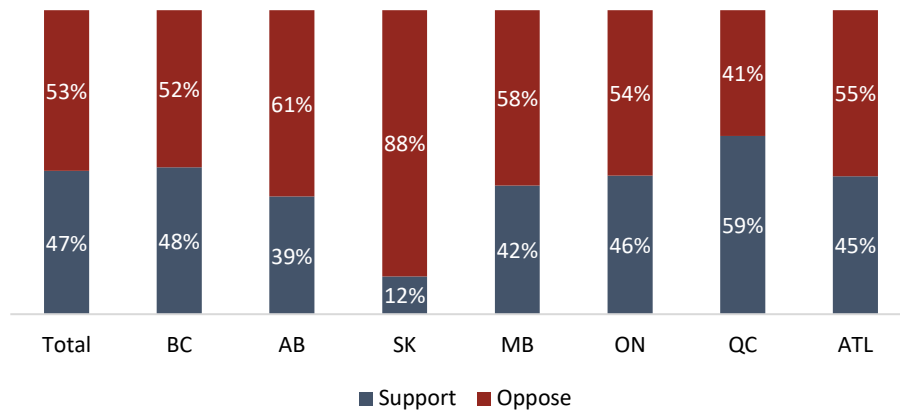
To see just how much this conversation has changed in recent years, it is worth looking at previous Angus Reid Institute data. When asked this same question in the spring of 2015, three-quarters of Canadians (74%) supported their province forming a cap and trade program:

Support vs Oppose a provincial cap and trade system



The prospect of a carbon tax in their province is slightly more prickly for Canadians. While nearly half (47%) would be fine accepting this policy in their region, a slight majority reject this (53%). Even in British Columbia, which has operated with a carbon tax in place since 2008, 48 per cent of residents say they would rather not have one in place. In Manitoba, where a [\\$25-per-tonne tax](#) is set to be implemented later this year, six-in-ten residents (58%) voice opposition:

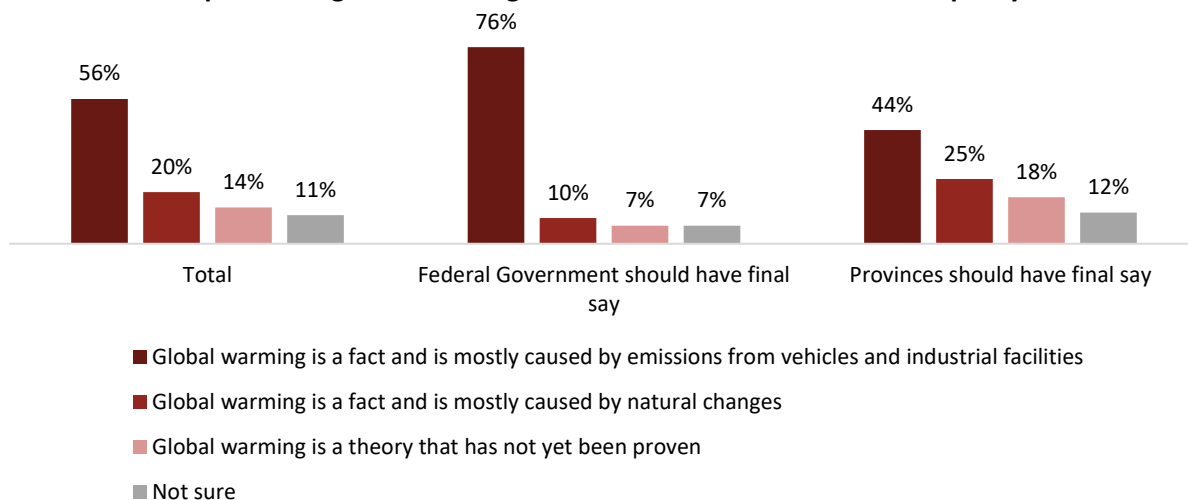
Support vs Oppose a provincial carbon tax



Many who support provincial rights don't want any carbon pricing policy

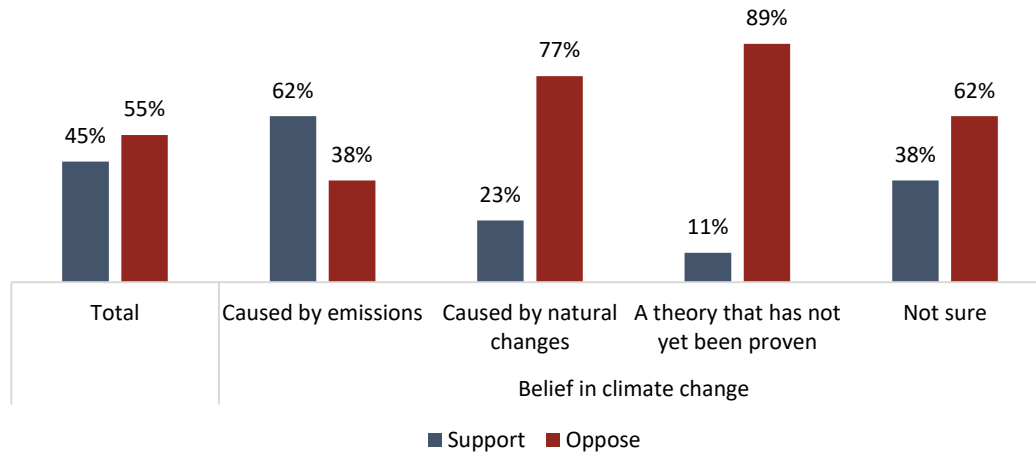
A notable detail emerges when digging deeper into the responses of those who believe the provinces should have the final say in carbon pricing, and their overall views on climate change. While the majority of this group are inclined to agree that “global warming is a fact”, they are divisions between those who say it's caused by vehicle and industrial emissions and those who say the cause is due to natural factors. Further, while still in the minority, more in this group agree that “global warming is a theory”, as seen in the graph that follows:

Opinions of global warming versus who should control climate policy



Further, belief in climate change has a significant impact on one's support for the federal government carbon pricing plan. Six-in-ten Canadians who say that climate change is real, and primarily human caused, support the plan. All other groups oppose it by a ratio of more than two-to-one:

Support vs Oppose federal government's carbon pricing plan

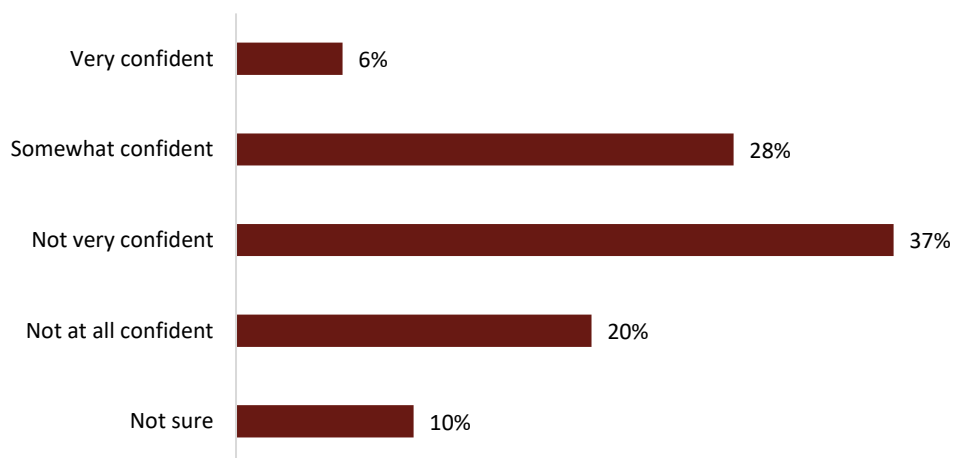


Little confidence Paris targets will be met

Ultimately, more Canadians sense this country will fall short of its emission reduction targets set at the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015. Canada agreed to reduce GHG emissions to 30% below 2005 levels by 2030. However, reporting by the United Nations and Climate Action Tracker, has described Canada's progress as highly insufficient and likely to fall short of targets. The government has stated that further actions will be forthcoming, and it is committed to reaching the goals set in 2015.

For their part, few Canadians have confidence. A handful (6%) say they believe that Canada will make it, while three-in-ten (28%) have some confidence. A firm majority however, look at the landscape and the political conflict emerging and say that they are not confident (56%).

How confident are you that Canada will actually meet Paris climate targets?



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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.

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

Support for federal carbon tax over time				
	Date (sample size)			
	April 2015 (1536)	November 2015 (1508)	June 2017 (5406)	July 2018 (1500)
Strongly Support	24%	20%	11%	16%
Moderately Support	33%	32%	33%	29%
Moderately Oppose	19%	22%	23%	18%
Strongly Oppose	24%	26%	33%	37%

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