

Carbon Pricing: Rebate announcement tips opinion in favour of federal plan, slim majority now support it

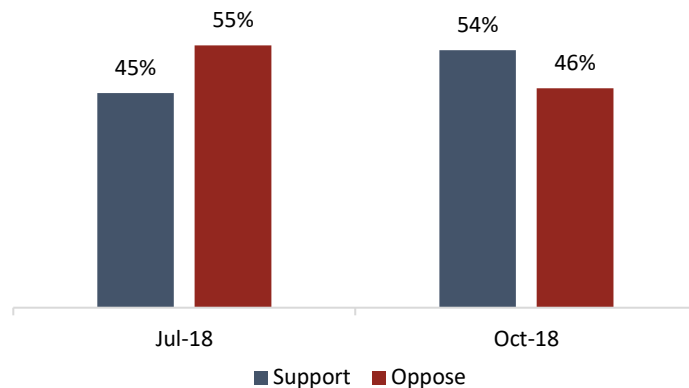
At least two-thirds in both Alberta and Saskatchewan continue to oppose federal carbon tax

November 1, 2018 – Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's October 23 announcement - that revenues from his government's soon-to-be-implemented carbon tax will be returned to households that pay it - appears to have tilted public opinion slightly in favour of the pricing plan.

Over the past two years, support for national carbon pricing has eroded, from 56 per cent in April of 2015, to 45 per cent in July of this year. Now, the latest study from the Angus Reid Institute finds that while the issue remains profoundly divisive – just over half of Canadians (54 per cent) are inclined to back the Trudeau government's plan.

Notably, however, as some provincial governments [prepare their own pricing plans](#) and others [hunker down](#) in anticipation of court battles over jurisdiction, a majority of Canadians would still prefer provincial authority on this issue. Just over half (55%) say they think provinces should ultimately have the final say, though the number saying this has dropped by nine points since July, when 64 per cent held this opinion.

Support vs Opposition to the federal carbon pricing plan, before and after rebate announcement



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from October 24 - 29 among a representative randomized sample of 1500 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 +/- 2.5 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:

- The largest increases in support for the federal plan between July and October are found in Saskatchewan (+18%), Quebec (+13%) and Ontario (+11%). Alberta is the only province where support did not increase over that period (-1%)
- The leading cause of opposition to the carbon plan is the sense that it is a “tax grab”. Among the 46 per cent who oppose the plan overall, two-thirds (65%) say it is the reason why they do. One-in-three (36%) say their opposition stems from a belief it will not help reduce emissions
- Six-in-ten Canadians say they do not trust information about climate change from their provincial government – Quebec residents are most trusting (46%), while Manitobans are least (24%). Canadians are much more likely to trust university scientists (78% do) and international organizations doing work in this field (56%)

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- Residents in Ontario are divided evenly over whether or not the provinces should have the final say on carbon pricing. Half (50%) support federal authority, and half (50%) provincial. This is a stark change from July, when 64 per cent said the provinces should chart their own course.

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Support up nine points after rebate announcement

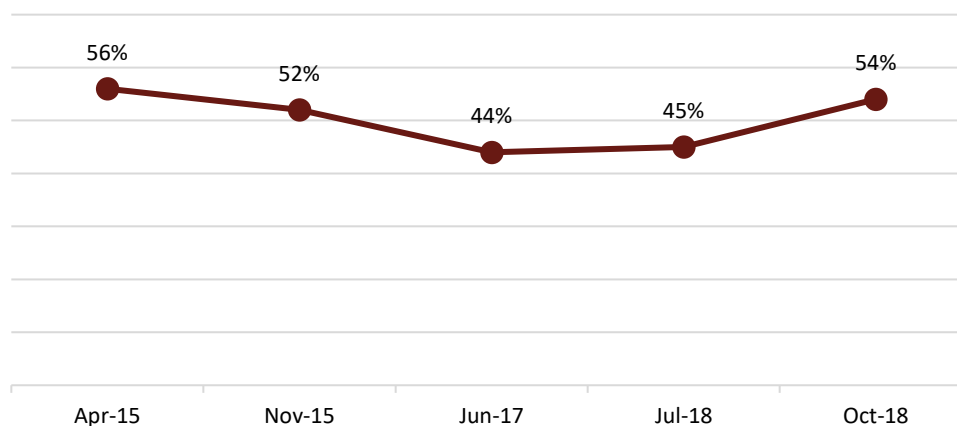
The Trudeau government has faced increasing attacks over its carbon pricing plan in recent months. After the TransMountain pipeline expansion between British Columbia and Alberta was delayed, Alberta announced it would pull out of the pan-Canadian framework to price carbon emissions.

Further, Ontario Premier Doug Ford recently joined forces with Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe to oppose the federal plan, and Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister revoked his cooperation early in October. Nonetheless, Ottawa intends to implement a carbon tax in provinces it deems to have insufficient carbon pricing plans in place, starting January 1, 2019. Consumers in the four provinces previously mentioned would all be subject to the federal tax.

On October 23, Prime Minister Trudeau announced that 90 per cent of the revenue collected in those four provinces would be returned to households within them, while the remaining 10 per cent would be divided between hospitals, schools, and other organizations, to ensure that the tax is revenue neutral.

This announcement appears to have mollified some Canadians. While support for the plan had dipped below a majority in the summers of 2017 and 2018, 54 per cent now say they support the plan:

Support for federal carbon plan



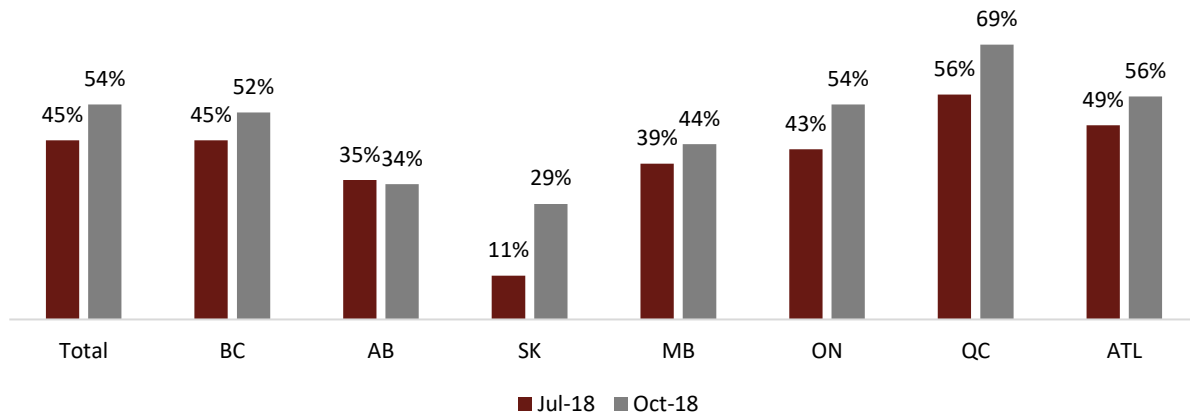
Particularly notable is increased support in each region. In all provinces canvassed, with the exception of Alberta, the number of Canadians saying they support the Liberal plan has risen. In Ontario, where Doug

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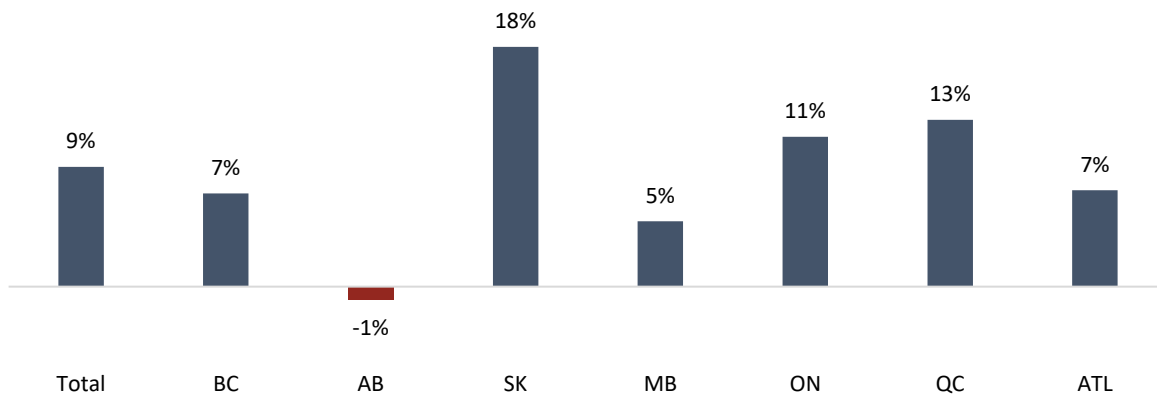
Ford has led the charge against the tax, a slight majority now support its implementation, instead of opposing it, as they did in July.

**Pre- and post-rebate announcement:
Support for federal carbon plan**



Support increased most in Saskatchewan, though that province still remains the least enthusiastic about the idea:

**Pre- and post-rebate announcement:
Change in those saying they support federal carbon plan from July to October**



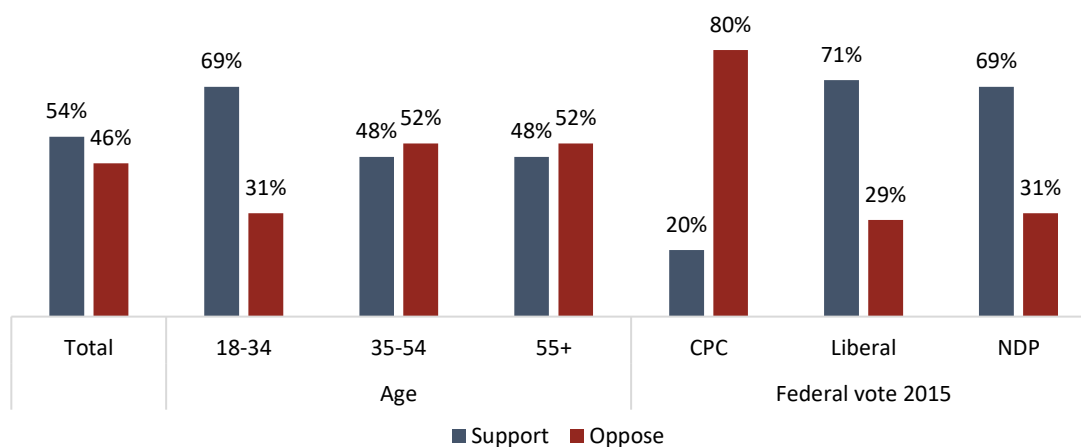
Nonetheless, this issue continues to divide Canadians along political and generational lines. Those between the ages of 18 and 34 are more enthusiastic about the federal carbon pricing plan, with seven-in-ten voicing support. Older people are divided evenly, with 48 per cent opposing and 52 per cent supporting.

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Far more stark is the division between past Conservative Party voters and those who supported the main left-of-centre parties in the last election. Four-in-five past CPC voters oppose the plan (80%), while seven-in-ten past Liberals (71%) and past New Democrats (69%) support it:

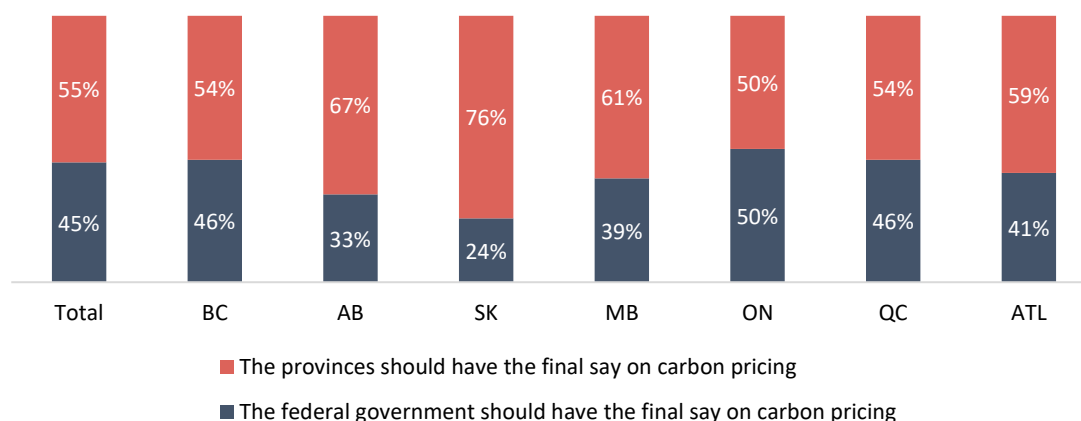
Support for federal carbon plan by age and political affiliation



Majority still say provinces should have final say on carbon pricing

Despite an increase in support for the Trudeau government's plan, most Canadians would still prefer their provincial governments have the final say on setting and implementing a plan to price carbon. Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister has been [explicit in stating](#) that his province does not dispute that something must be done about climate change, but that his government should be the one to decide what to do, when, and how. In every region of the country, at least 50 per cent of resident say their province should ultimately have jurisdiction over carbon pricing:

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



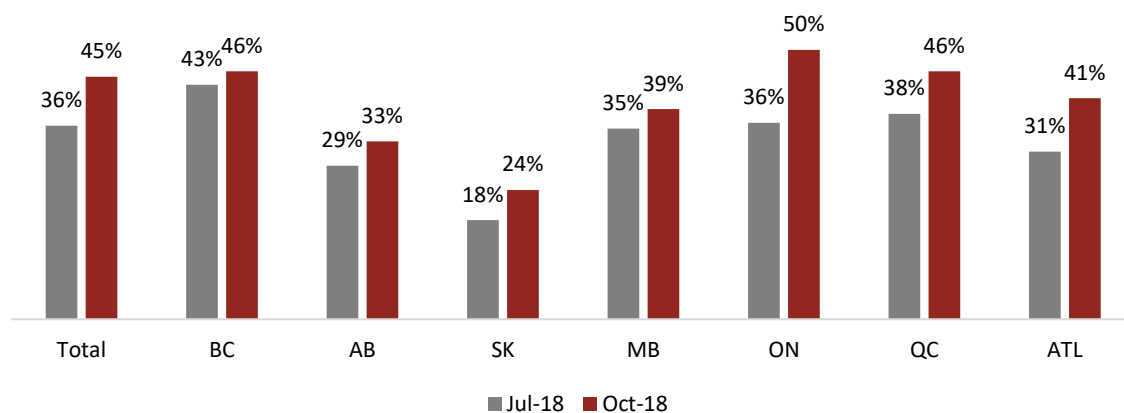
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However, the shift on this question from July to October has also moved in favour of the federal government. When the Angus Reid Institute asked in July, 64 per cent of Ontario residents said their provincial government should have jurisdictional authority.

That support appears to have faded somewhat, as the number of Ontarians now saying the federal government should hold the reins on this file has increased by 14 percentage points. While a majority overall still say the provinces should have the final word, the number of Canadians saying the opposite has increased in every region:

Percentage who say the federal government should have final say on carbon pricing



Leading cause of opposition is feeling that plan is a “tax grab”

While a significant segment of the population says they believe the federal government should abdicate authority on the carbon pricing file to the provinces, jurisdiction is not the primary cause of opposition to the carbon plan itself. The Angus Reid Institute asked the 46 per cent of Canadians who oppose the plan their main reasons for doing so. Of this group – two-thirds say their opposition is driven by the sense that the government is looking for a “tax grab”.

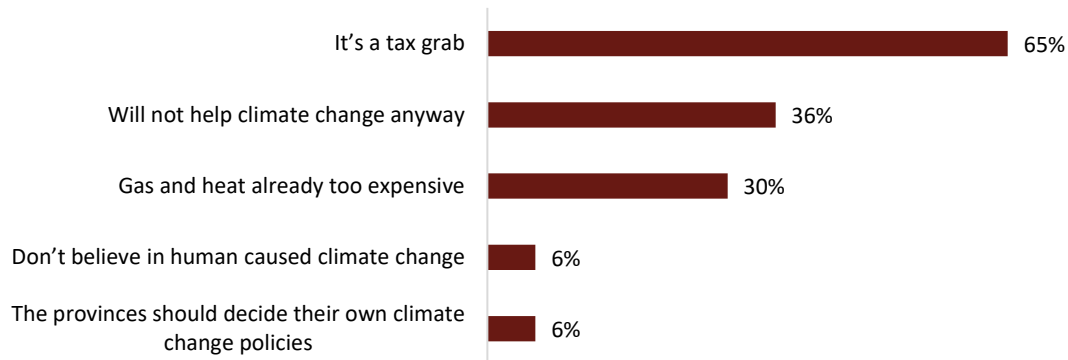
Only six per cent of respondents chose provincial autonomy as one of their top reasons for opposing the plan, while more than one-third (36%) say that they don’t believe it will help lower emissions.

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What are the main reasons you are opposed to the federal government's carbon tax plan?

**Respondents choose up to two options
Among those who oppose the plan, n = 692**



Results of the carbon tax in B.C. have provided mixed evidence for supporters and detractors. After implementing its program in 2008, the province reduced emissions by 4.7 per cent over the next seven years. However, emissions have now risen in four of the last five years, leaving greenhouse gas output down just two per cent from 2007 levels overall.

Skepticism towards federal and provincial government on climate information

One of the key issues with government initiatives in this sector is trust. As noted in the section above, the sentiment that policy makers are simply trying to bolster government coffers at the expense of the consumer is pervasive.

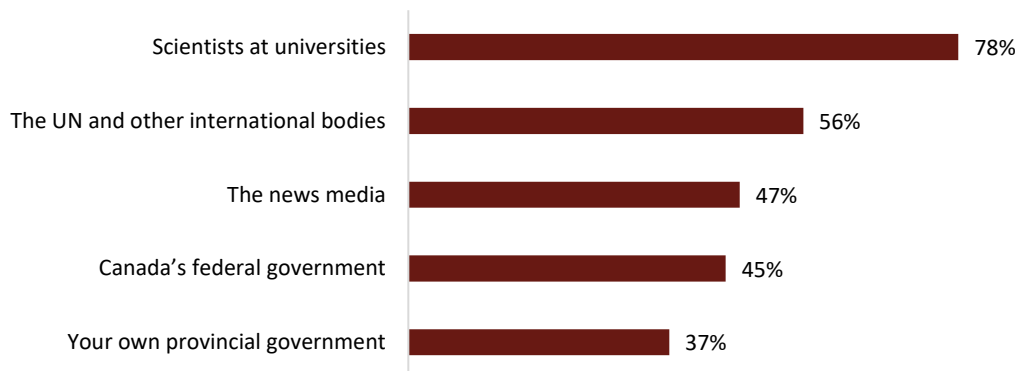
Asked who they trust on this issue, Canadians are most likely to pick university scientists – eight-in-ten (78%) do. Proponents of action on climate change have often cited the scientific consensus, which suggests that warming trends are extremely likely due to human activity. A majority of Canadians (56%) also say they trust international bodies doing work on this topic.

However, fewer than half say they trust the news media (47%) and their federal government (45%) on this subject, while under four-in-ten (37%) say they have faith in their own provincial government:

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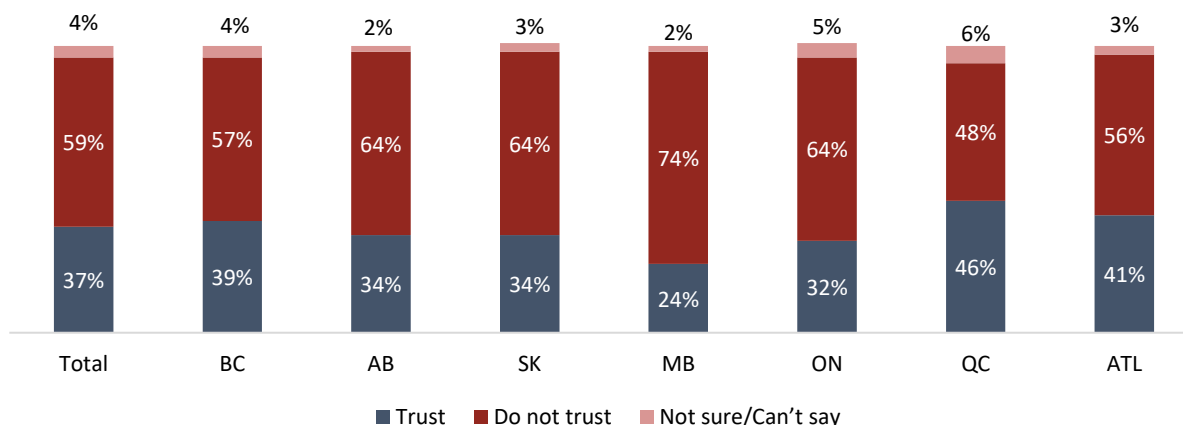
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When it comes to information about climate change and global warming, how much do you personally trust each of the following:



Quebeckers are most trustworthy of their provincial government, while Manitoba residents are the most skeptical. No provincial government has the trust of a majority of their constituents on this file, underscoring the difficulty both levels of government face on this file:

When it comes to information about climate change and global warming, how much do you personally trust your own provincial government



*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](#).

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