

Line 5: Ontarians, Michiganders want the oil to keep flowing in the contested pipeline; Quebecers are split

Quebecers, Ontarians want cancelled Energy East reconsidered in wake of the cross-border pipeline dispute

July 27, 2021 – Canada's energy independence is in the spotlight again, with a key energy artery in the crosshairs of a transborder dispute.

Enbridge's Line 5 pipeline, which supplies Ontario and Quebec, is under threat of closure from the governor of Michigan, where the pipeline runs through an environmentally sensitive waterway.

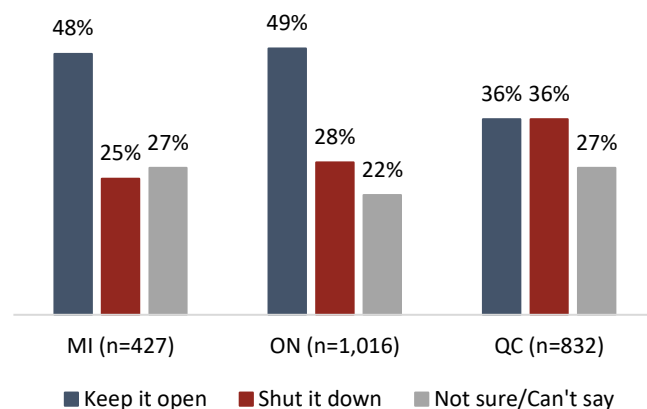
New data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds half of respondents in Michigan (48%) and Ontario (49%) want the embattled pipeline to stay open, while a quarter in Michigan and nearly three-in-10 in Ontario want it shut down. In Quebec, the 72 per cent who have an opinion are split on what the pipeline's fate should be.

Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer issued a shutdown order for the pipeline in May over concerns of a potential spill into the Straits of Mackinac, where the pipeline runs underwater. Nearly all of those who oppose the pipeline in Michigan (95%) are concerned about a potential leak from Line 5.

The potential economic impacts, both regionally and personally, are a key concern for those who want the pipeline to stay open. A majority of the pipeline's supporters in Michigan (65%), Ontario (65%), and Quebec (55%) believe they will be personally impacted either "significantly" or "massively" if Line 5 shuts down.

The dispute over Line 5 also appears to have revived support for a west-to-east Canadian pipeline. Three quarters of Ontarians (76%), and three-in-five Quebecers (58%), believe TransCanada's long-since-cancelled Energy East project should be reconsidered if Michigan turns off the tap on Line 5.

Suppose it was your decision to keep the pipeline open or shut it down. What would you choose to do?



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from June 18 – 22, 2021 among a representative randomized sample of 427 Michigan adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum USA](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The Angus Reid Institute also conducted an online survey from June 2 – 7, 2021 among a representative randomized sample of 1,016 Ontario adults and 832 Quebec adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum Canada](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of each size would carry a margin of error of +/- 3 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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More Key Findings:

- At least four-in-five in all three regions believe a Line 5 shutdown will “significantly” or “massively” impact their respective state or provincial economy
- A slim majority of those in Michigan (52%), and about half of those in Ontario (47%), believe a Line 5 shutdown will massively or significantly impact them personally
- Michiganders approve of Whitmer (52%), but don’t agree with her campaign to shut down the pipeline. And even those who approve of her are split on whether they want the pipeline open (34%) or closed (38%)
- Two-thirds of those in Michigan are concerned about a leak from Line 5, but half believe a tunnel proposed by Enbridge will address the concerns
- Even if Whitmer’s campaign against Line 5 is unsuccessful, two-thirds in Ontario (65%) and half in Quebec think the cancelled Energy East pipeline should be reconsidered

About ARI

*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.*

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Part One: Awareness and drivers of engagement

The Line 5 pipeline is a pivotal energy supply link for Michigan, Ontario, and Quebec. The 1953-built pipeline, operated by Calgary-based Enbridge, carries up to 540,000 barrels per day of propane and light crude from Superior, Wisc. to Sarnia, Ont. overland and briefly under the Straits of Mackinac, a waterway connecting Lake Huron to Lake Michigan. The Canadian government [estimated](#) Line 5 is the source of over half of the crude oil feedstock for Ontario refineries and two-thirds of crude oil used in Quebec. [According to Enbridge](#), it also supplies over half of the statewide demand for propane in Michigan.



Despite its pivotal nature, Line 5 has been a simmering environmental issue in Michigan in recent years; in 2014, [state officials asked for a review](#) of the pipeline after one of the [largest inland oil spills in U.S. history](#) – this time caused by a different faulty pipeline operated by Enbridge. And now, this issue has been brought to a boil by Democratic Governor Gretchen Whitmer, who pledged during her 2018 election campaign to shut down the pipeline due to environmental concerns surrounding the sensitive crossing under the Straits of Mackinac.

Since taking office, she has made that promise a reality with a [shutdown order](#) dated May 5 of this year. Enbridge has promised to [keep the pipeline flowing](#) in violation of the order, while the company and Canadian officials [fight it in court](#).

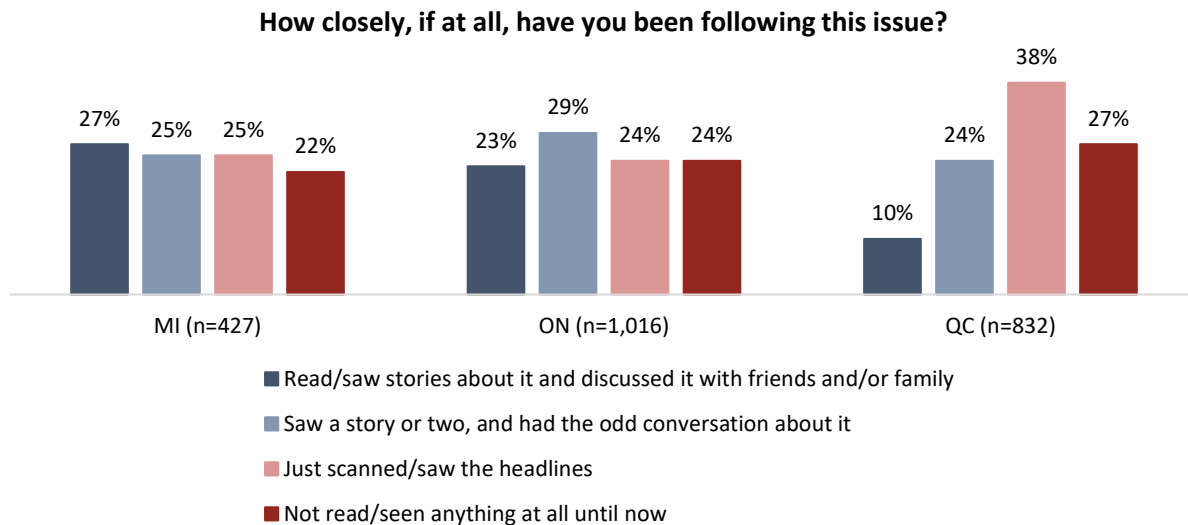
Michiganders, Ontarians following story closer than those in Quebec

Perhaps because of the pipeline's time in the environmental spotlight, those in Michigan are following the story closely. Over half (52%) in the Wolverine state say they've seen stories and had conversations

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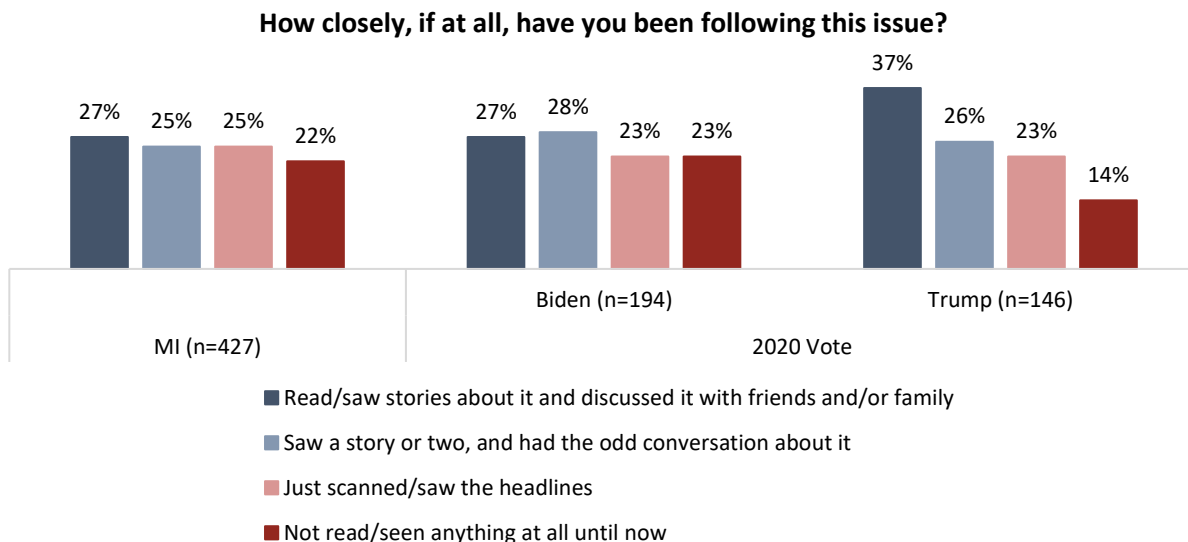
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about the issue. On the other side of the border, Ontarians have had more of an eye on it than Quebec residents. Over half of Ontarians (52%) say they've at least seen stories and had some conversations about the disputed pipeline, while two-thirds (65%) of those in Quebec say they've only seen the headlines or nothing at all:



Varying levels of engagement across the political spectrum

Political leanings seem to be correlated with engagement. First in Michigan: those who voted for former president Donald Trump in 2020 are more likely to have followed the story than those who voted for President Joe Biden, but Biden's voters are still more engaged than the Michigan sample as a whole:



The right is also the most interested in Ontario, where two-in-five past Progressive Conservative Party voters say they've read and saw stories and discussed it with friends and family, more than the double the amount of any other party. In Quebec, the most engaged are past provincial Liberal voters, of whom half (49%) say they've had some conversations about Line 5 (see [detailed tables](#)).

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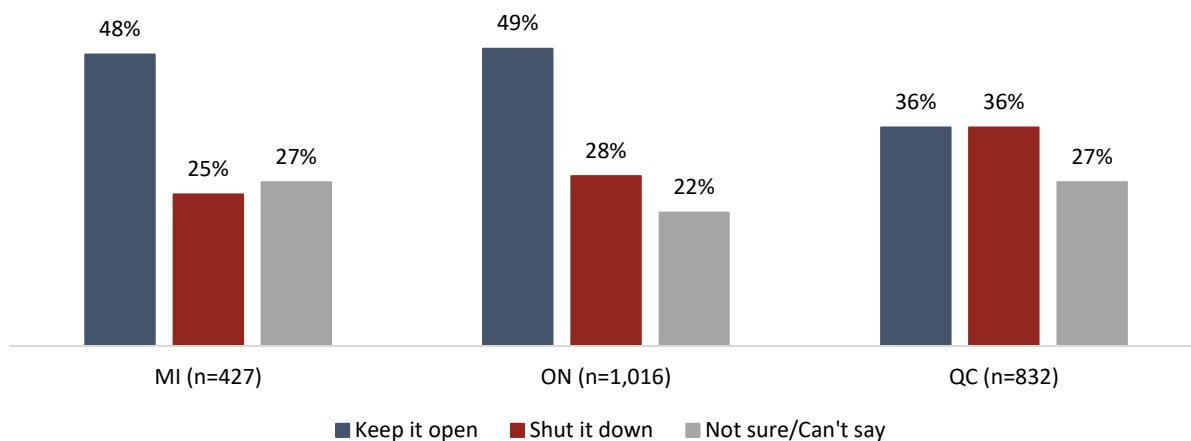
Part Two: Keep it open or shut it down?

Enbridge estimates shutting Line 5 down would cause a daily shortage of 756,000 US gallons of propane in Michigan, and 14.7 million US gallons of gas, diesel, and jet fuel in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Ontario, and Quebec combined. Some analysts predict shutting down Line 5 will cause a short-term price spike of at least six to eight cents Canadian a litre for diesel and gasoline in Quebec and Ontario, with a larger ripple effect across the country long-term.

Ontarians, Michiganders want the pipeline open; Quebecers split

Perhaps with the prospect of fuel price spikes in mind, half of people in Ontario (49%) and Michigan (48%) want to keep Line 5 open. Those in Quebec, however, are split, possibly due to their propensity to be more concerned about the environment than any other province:

Suppose it was your decision to keep the pipeline open or shut it down. What would you choose to do?



A majority of men and a plurality of women in Michigan want to keep the pipeline open. In Ontario and Quebec, men and women have a greater difference of opinion. Nearly two-thirds of men in Ontario (63%) want Line 5 to keep flowing and half of men in Quebec want the same. Women in Ontario are nearly split between keeping it open (38%) and shutting it down (35%), while a plurality of women in Quebec (41%) want it shut down:

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| Suppose it was your decision to keep the pipeline open or shut it down. What would you choose to do? | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|
| | MI (427) | Gender | | ON (1,016) | Gender | | QC (832) | Gender | |
| | | Male (209) | Female (217) | | Male (135) | Female (177) | | Male (399) | Female (426) |
| Keep it open | 48% | 52% | 44% | 49% | 63% | 38% | 36% | 50% | 24% |
| Shut it down | 25% | 26% | 24% | 28% | 21% | 35% | 36% | 31% | 41% |
| Not sure/Can't say | 27% | 22% | 32% | 22% | 17% | 28% | 27% | 19% | 35% |

The age split is more pronounced in the Canadian provinces. While in Michigan, support for the pipeline is relatively consistent across generations, in Ontario, support among those 55 years of age and older more than doubles that shown by younger residents.

A similar trend is not seen in Quebec, where support does not reach a majority level among any age group:

| Suppose it was your decision to keep the pipeline open or shut it down. What would you choose to do? | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| | MI (427) | Age | | | ON (1,016) | Age | | | QC (832) | Age | | |
| | | 18-34 (125) | 35-54 (132) | 55+ (170) | | 18-34 (285) | 35-54 (370) | 55+ (361) | | 18-34 (232) | 35-54 (270) | 55+ (330) |
| Keep it open | 48% | 45% | 48% | 50% | 49% | 30% | 47% | 67% | 36% | 25% | 34% | 46% |
| Shut it down | 25% | 31% | 19% | 26% | 28% | 44% | 32% | 12% | 36% | 51% | 36% | 27% |
| Not sure/Can't say | 27% | 24% | 33% | 24% | 22% | 26% | 21% | 21% | 27% | 24% | 30% | 28% |

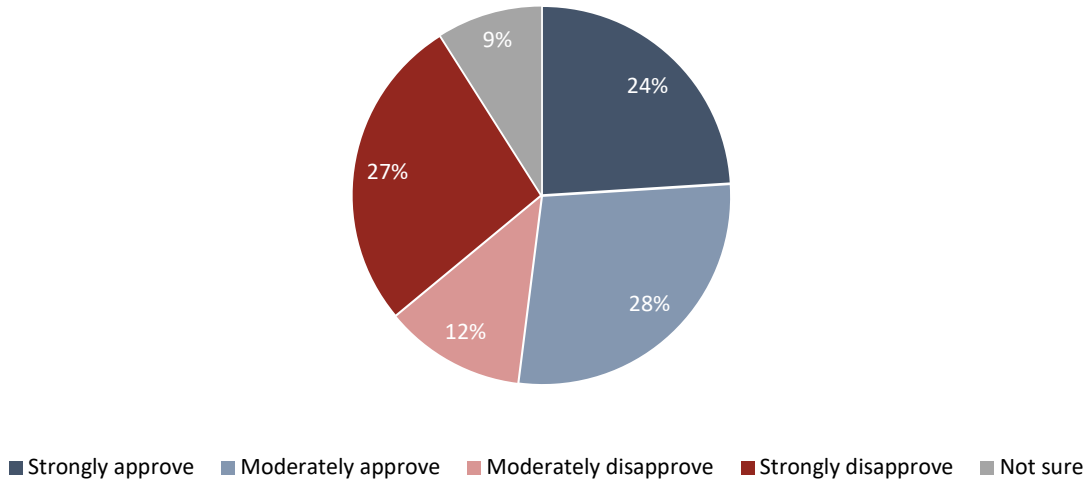
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Despite strong approval for Whitmer, Michiganders break with governor's stance

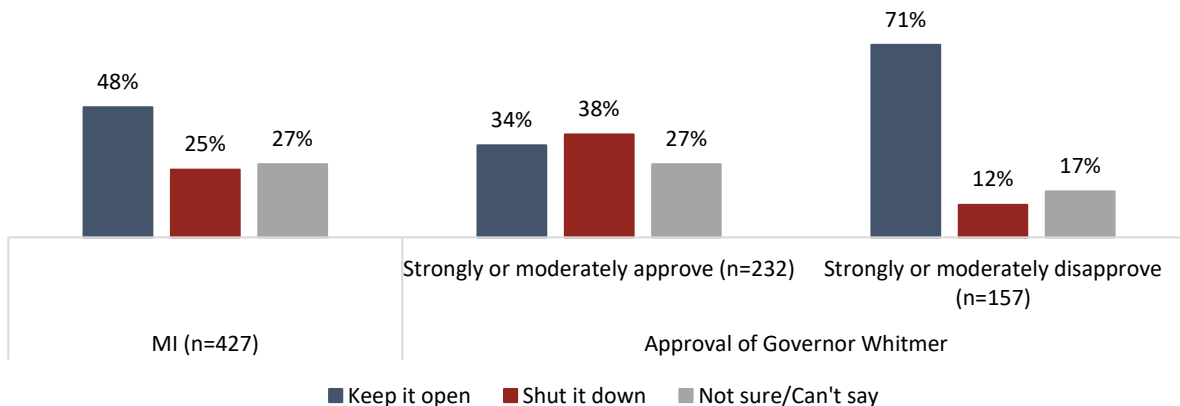
Whitmer's current approval rating in Michigan almost matches the 53 per cent of votes she received [in the 2018 gubernatorial election](#), with 52 per cent of people saying they strongly or moderately approve of the former Democratic state senator:

Do you approve or disapprove of the performance of the Governor of Michigan, Gretchen Whitmer? (MI, n=427)



Despite that majority approval, Michiganders aren't necessarily on side with one of her major campaign promises: shutting down Line 5. Nearly half of Michiganders want to keep it open, while even those who approve of Whitmer are split on the pipeline's fate:

Suppose it was your decision to keep the pipeline open or shut it down. What would you choose to do?



PCPO supporters overwhelmingly want Line 5 open

Supporters of Ontario Premier Doug Ford are vocal in their support of Line 5; nearly four-in-five (79%) past Progressive Conservative Party voters want it to stay open. In Quebec, past Coalition Avenir Quebec voters and Liberal voters both want the pipeline to stay open on the balance, while the left-centre Parti Quebecois and, even more so, left-wing Quebec Solidaire voters want it shut down:

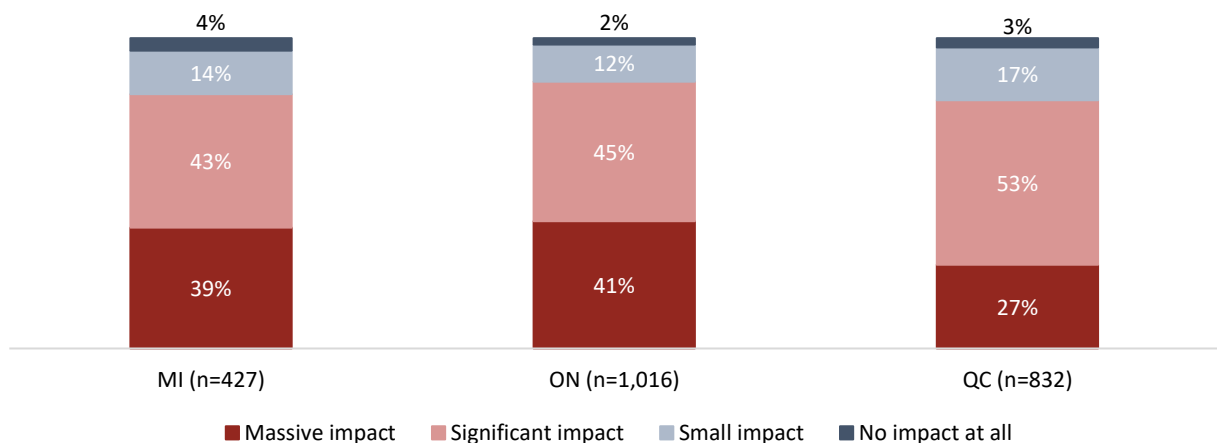
| Suppose it was your decision to keep the pipeline open or shut it down. What would you choose to do? | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| | ON (1,016) | Past Prov vote | | | QC (832) | Past Prov Vote | | | |
| | | PCPO (324) | NDP (253) | Lib (249) | | CAQ (233) | Lib (165) | PQ (120) | QS (117) |
| Keep it open | 49% | 79% | 28% | 43% | 36% | 46% | 51% | 24% | 14% |
| Shut it down | 28% | 9% | 45% | 29% | 36% | 25% | 26% | 50% | 63% |
| Not sure/Can't say | 22% | 12% | 27% | 28% | 27% | 29% | 23% | 26% | 23% |

Part Three: Impacts on both sides of the border

Both sides of the border expect economic impacts, but are split on personal impact

Understanding the potential for fuel price spikes and shortages as outlined above, Michiganders and Canadians in Ontario and Quebec believe a Line 5 shutdown will either significantly or massively impact their own state or provincial economies:

How much impact do you think shutting down Line 5 will have on your state or provincial economy?

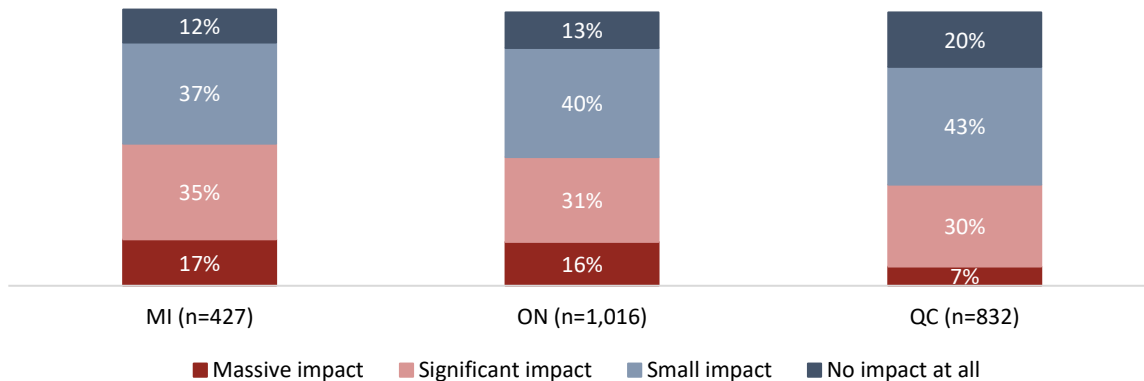


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When it comes to whether they think they will personally be affected, concern is less pronounced. Over half in Michigan (52%) and nearly half in Ontario (47%) believe it will have a massive or significant impact on themselves personally. Quebec respondents are less convinced, though still two-in-five (37%) believe the personal impact will be massive or significant:

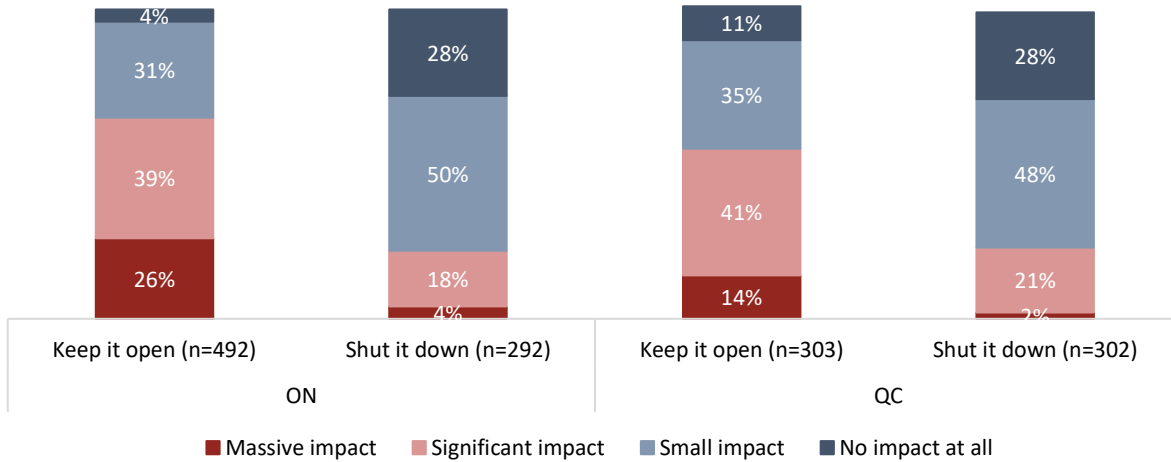
How much impact do you think shutting down Line 5 will have on you personally?



Those who want the pipeline shut down in the U.S. and Canada aren't convinced the decision will ultimately impact them personally. Two-thirds of opposed Michiganders (65%) believe a shutdown will have no or a small impact on them; the same number of those who want Line 5 to stay open believe the impact will be either "significant" or "massive" (65%, [see detailed tables](#)).

Ontarians and Quebecers are even more divided on personal impact when it comes to the split between the keep-it-open and shut-it-down camps. Less than one-quarter of those who want Line 5 to shut down in both Ontario and Quebec (22% and 23%, respectively) believe it will personally impact them significantly or massively, a number much lower than the two-thirds of Ontarians (65%) and over half of Quebecers (55%) who want the pipeline open that believe the same:

How much impact do you think shutting down Line 5 will have on you personally?

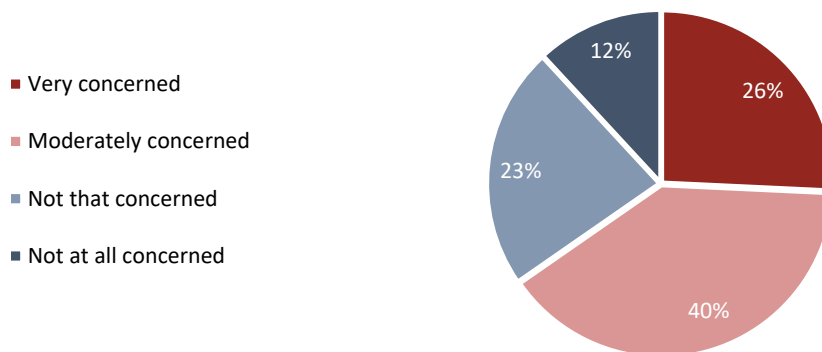


Michiganders are concerned about a leak, but believe proposed tunnel addresses problems

In 2010, a rupture in Enbridge's Line 6B pipeline resulted in 843,000 gallons of oil pouring into a tributary of the Kalamazoo River near Marshall, Mich., [one of the largest inland oil spills in U.S. history](#). The fallout included a \$1.21-billion (US) clean-up effort, [\\$177 million \(US\) in fines for Enbridge](#) and increased scrutiny on pipelines throughout the state.

A decade later, those in Michigan are still feeling the environmental angst; two-thirds say they are very or moderately concerned about a leak:

**How concerned are you about the possibility of a leak from Line 5?
(Michigan, n=427)**



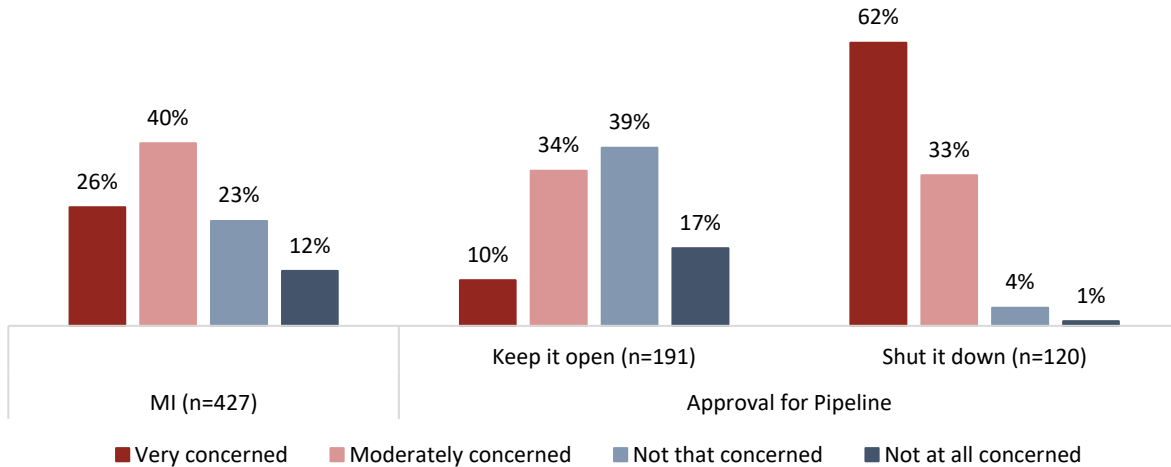
A majority of all demographic groups are concerned about a leak ([see detailed tables](#)), however, there is a significant split between those who want the pipeline open and those who want it shut down. Almost

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everyone (95%) who want it shut down are very or moderately concerned about a leak, while a majority of those who want it open (56%) say they aren't concerned:

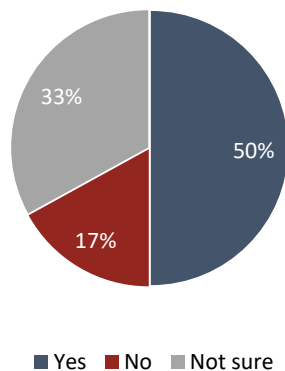
How concerned are you about the possibility of a leak from Line 5?



Enbridge and Whitmer's Republican precursor Rick Snyder reached [an agreement in 2018](#) that would have the pipeline company pay for a four-mile tunnel — [bored through rock beneath the lakebed](#) — to house a replacement for Line 5 to allay concerns about a leak. Enbridge said it plans to finish the tunnel by 2024, but the [U.S. Army Corps announced](#) it would do an extensive review of the plan in May, which could delay the tunnel further.

While half of Michiganders believe the tunnel will address environmental risks, one-in-three aren't sure:

**In your view, does building this tunnel sufficiently addresses the possible environmental risks, if any, posed by the existing pipeline?
(Michigan, n=427)**



Those who want the pipeline to stay open strongly believe (72%) the tunnel addresses the risk of a leak and even three-in-10 of the pipelines' opponents say the same ([see detailed tables](#)).

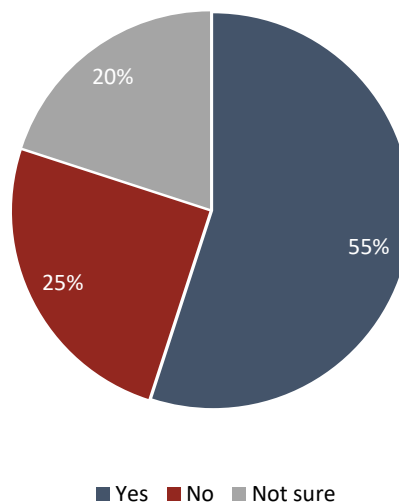
Part Four: Future pipelines — and new support for Energy East

In light of the energy crisis in the 1970s, when oil prices spiked to previously unseen highs after a 1973 OPEC embargo against countries including the U.S. and Canada, the two countries signed [a treaty in 1977](#), recognizing the interconnected nature of the countries’ oil resources and barring either country from taking actions that “would have the effect of, impeding, diverting, redirecting or interfering with in any way the transmission of hydrocarbon in transit.” Canada is taking other legal steps first to fight the shutdown of Line 5 but has reportedly yet to rule out [invoking the treaty](#).

Both sides of the border want the other to have a say, how much is another matter

The spirit of cooperation underpinning the four-decade-old treaty is still alive in Michigan at least, where over half (55%) believe the Canadian government should have a say in the fate of Line 5, double the number that believe it shouldn’t (25%):

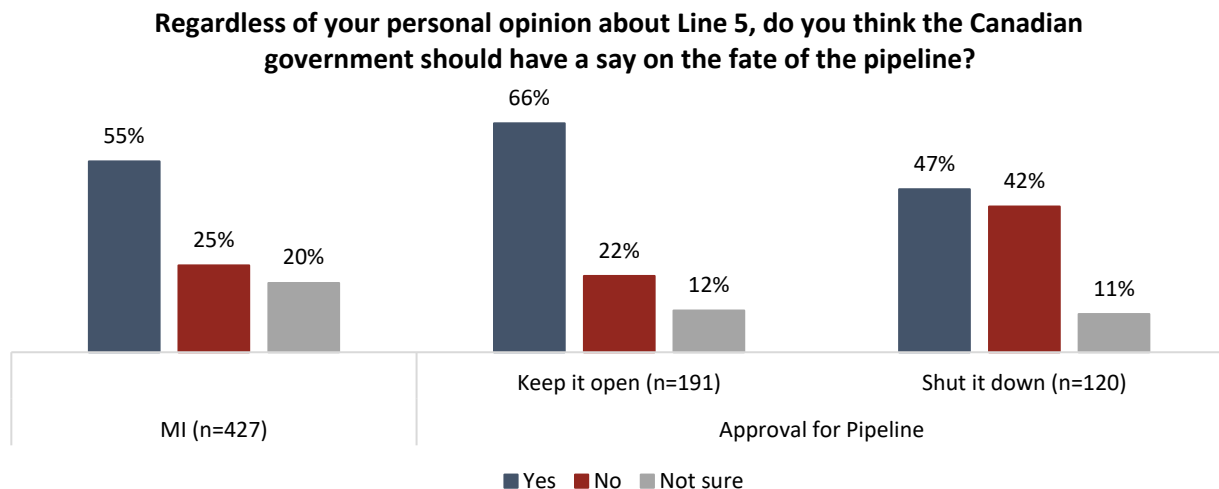
**Regardless of your personal opinion about Line 5, do you think the Canadian government should have a say on the fate of the pipeline?
(Michigan, n=427)**



For Ontarians and Quebecers, three-quarters (76% and 75%, respectively) believe local opposition to the pipeline in Michigan should have some influence on Line 5. How much, is another matter. A plurality in both provinces believe it should be little (Ontario, 38%; Quebec, 33%), while three-in-10 in both provinces believe it should be a lot (Ontario, 28%; Quebec, 29%):

| How much influence do you think should local opposition carry when making a decision about the future of Line 5? | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| | ON (n=1,016) | QC (n=832) |
| No influence at all | 14% | 12% |
| A little influence | 38% | 33% |
| A lot of influence | 28% | 29% |
| They should have a veto | 10% | 13% |
| Not sure | 10% | 14% |

Michigan survey respondents were told the Canadian government is strongly in favour of keeping Line 5 open. It's unsurprising then that two-thirds of those in Michigan who want the pipeline to stay open want Ottawa to have a say. And despite standing in opposition to the government of Canada's wishes, a slim plurality of those in Michigan who want Line 5 to shut down (47%) still want their northern neighbour to weigh in:



Canadians who support Line 5 are less charitable when it comes to whether or not they want the local opposition to affect the final decision on the pipeline. Fully four-in-five of those in Ontario and seven-in-10 (69%) of those in Quebec who want the pipeline to stay open believe the Michigan opposition should have little or no say in the future of the disputed pipeline ([see detailed tables](#)).

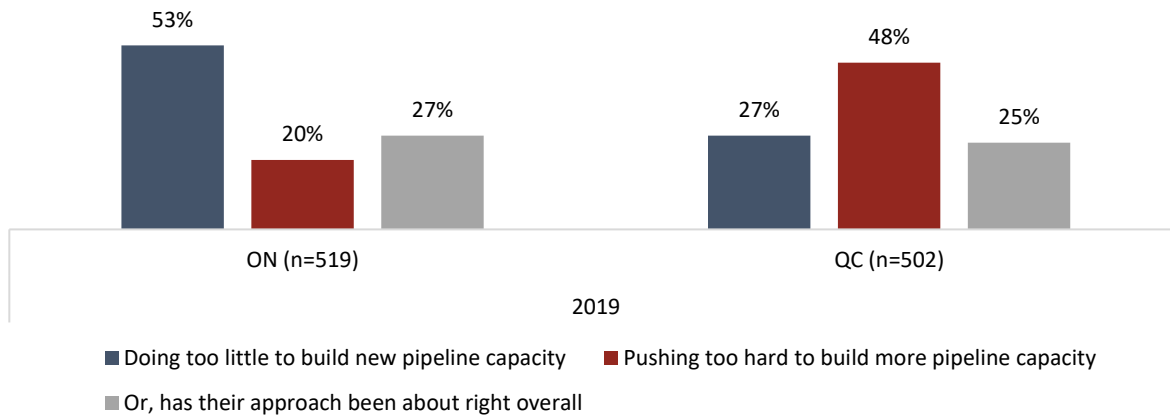
Quebecers, Ontarians much closer on approval of Trudeau's pipeline approach than in the past

When ARI asked respondents from those two provinces how they felt about the actions taken on pipelines of Trudeau's government in 2019, over half in Ontario (53%) said he was doing too little to build new pipelines, while nearly as many (48%) residents of Quebec said he was pushing too hard:

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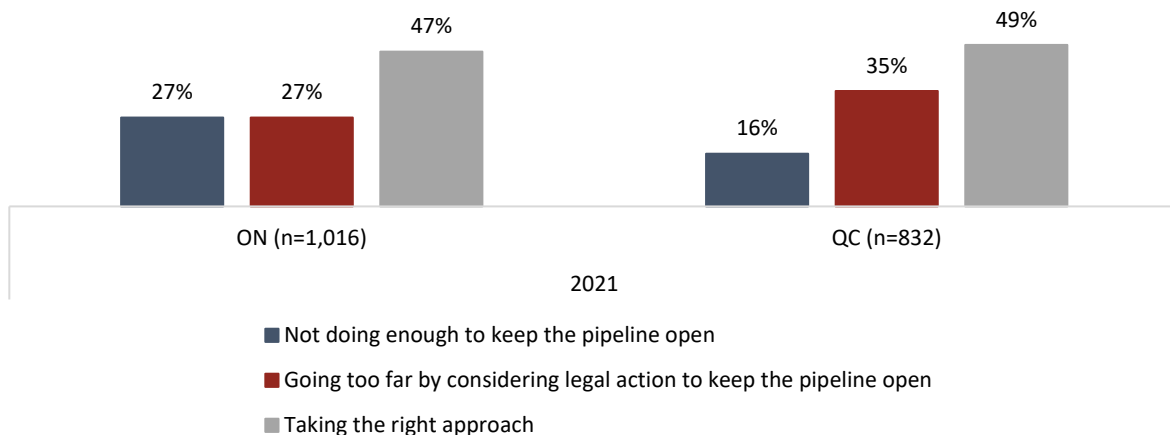
Thinking about the actions and approach to the pipeline issue taken by the federal government under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, would you say it has been:
(2019)



Those data were gathered in the context of the [federal government's 2018 purchase](#) of the Trans Mountain pipeline for \$4.5 billion, the continued opposition faced by [the Keystone XL project](#) prior to its eventual cancellation, and the [2017 cancellation of Energy East](#) — a \$15.7-billion TransCanada project which would have carried crude from the Alberta oilsands to Saint John, N.B.

Now, Ontarians and Quebecers have found some common ground when it comes to Enbridge's Line 5. Half in both provinces believe Trudeau is taking the right approach by taking Michigan to court to keep the pipeline open:

Based on what you've seen, read, or heard, and your own views on the Line 5 issue, would you say the Trudeau government is...



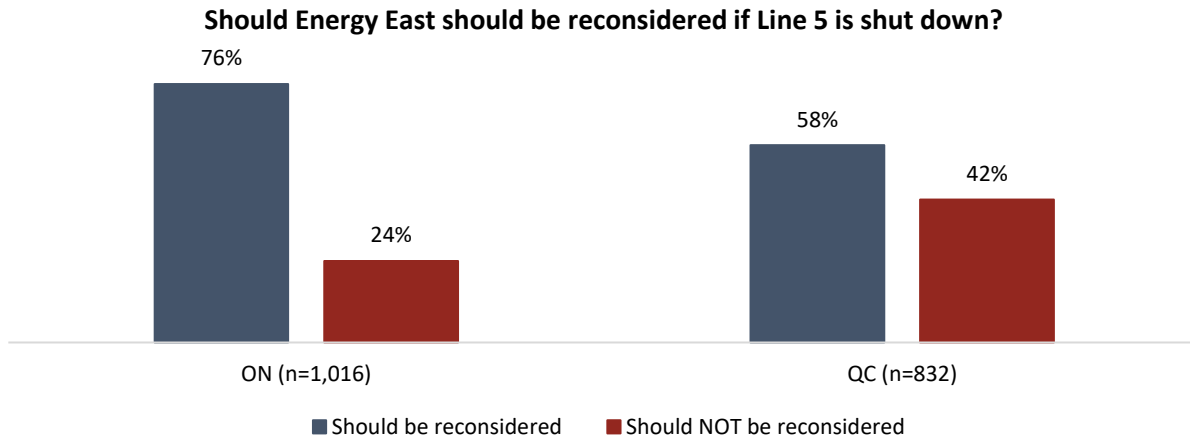
Most want Energy East reconsidered even if Line 5 shut down

So what of Energy East? It has been four years since the project's cancellation, but [proponents still point](#) to the west-to-east pipeline as a way to shore up Canada's energy self-sufficiency.

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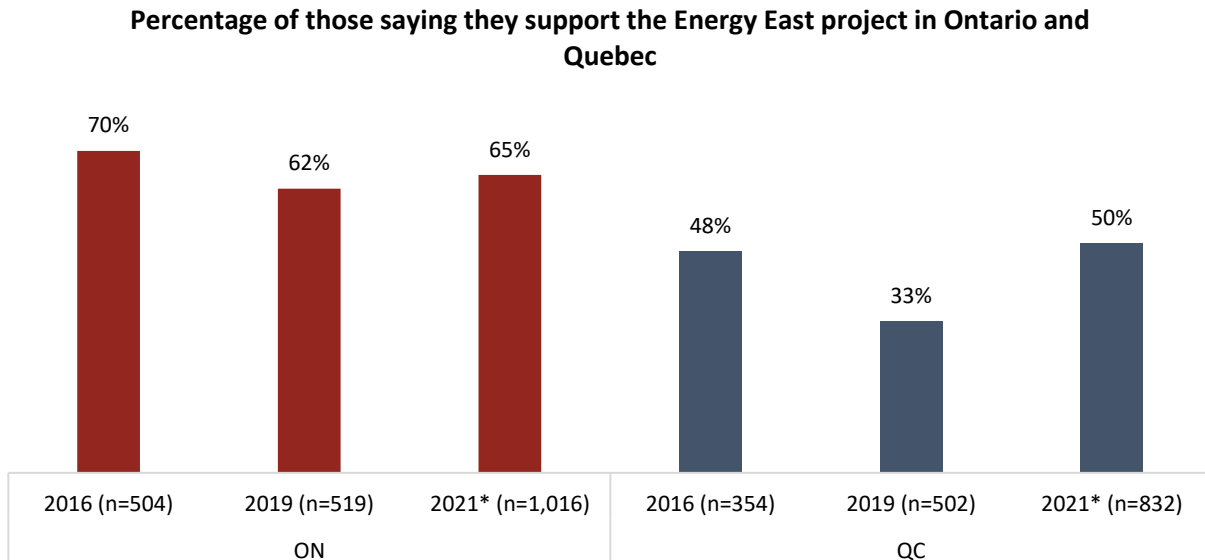
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Now, three-quarters of Ontarians (76%) and three-in-five Quebecers (58%) believe Energy East should be revived if Line 5 dies:



And, even if Line 5 survives Whitmer’s campaign against it, many in Ontario and Quebec want Energy East to be reconsidered regardless. Two-thirds of those in Ontario (65%) and half of those in Quebec think Energy East should be reconsidered even if the contested Michigan pipeline remains open.

Though in both scenarios, Quebecers are less warm to Energy East than Ontarians, it still represents a rebound of support in Quebec to pre-cancellation levels. When ARI asked about the Energy East pipeline [in 2016](#), seven-in-10 Ontarians supported it while just half (48%) in Quebec did. After it was officially cancelled by TransCanada, support cooled in La Belle Province. [In 2019](#), 62 per cent of those in Ontario said they supported the pipeline, while just one-third of Quebecers said they did:



**Respondents were asked if Energy East should be reconsidered if Line 5 were to stay open*

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

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

For detailed results in Quebec and Ontario by support for Line 5, [click here](#).

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

For detailed results in Michigan by approval of Gov. Whitmer, [click here](#).

For detailed results in Michigan by support for Line 5, [click here](#).

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