

The Horgan Legacy: Outgoing premier beats B.C. political odds by leaving on a high, but not without criticism

Expected new leader David Eby remains unknown to one-third, others divided over his appeal

October 3, 2022 – In leaving on his own terms and with approval numbers that are the envy of so many of his predecessors, Premier John Horgan bucks a decades-long trend of ignominious exits by B.C. premiers.

In a province where a provincial leader's resignation has traditionally been driven by scandal (Bill Vander Zalm, Mike Harcourt, Glen Clark), or insurmountable unpopularity (Gordon Campbell, Christy Clark), Horgan departs neither under a cloud nor unpopular.

The latest data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds 43 per cent of British Columbians overall say Horgan will be remembered as an outstanding or above average premier – even earning the respect of three-in-ten past BC Liberal voters (29%).

That's not to say he – and his government – have been immune to criticism over significant issues facing the province.

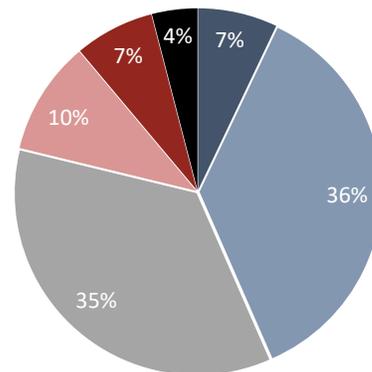
Inflation, health care, and housing affordability, continue to dominate as top issues. And on all three, the BCNDP is viewed as performing poorly by at least 73 per cent.

As Horgan exits, putative new leader David Eby will begin to build his own file for review. He is met with uncertainty by British Columbians, as one-in-three say they don't know him (34%). Those that do are divided between finding him appealing (30%) or unappealing (35%).

Supposing Eby is successful in his bid for leadership – [for which he is still only candidate officially approved by the NDP](#) – voter dynamics in the province may tighten. Two-in-five (40%) say they would support the BCNDP under Eby, while one-in-three (34%) would back the BC Liberals (or whatever the party [ends up being called](#)) with Kevin Falcon as leader. A significant group – 17 per cent – would support Sonia Furstenau's Green Party.

Note: These data were collected prior to the release of David Eby's [B.C. Builds housing plan](#).

**How do you think John Horgan – as B.C. premier - will go down in history?
(B.C., n=656)**



■ Outstanding ■ Above Average ■ Average
■ Below Average ■ Poor ■ Don't know

METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from Sept. 19 - 22, 2022 among a representative randomized sample of 656 B.C. 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 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.

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

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.*

INDEX

- **Heralding Horgan: BC'ers weigh in on premier's legacy**
- **Eby still relatively unknown**
- **Inflation, health care, housing affordability top priorities list**
- **An NDP under Eby would still hold vote intention advantage**

Heralding Horgan: BC'ers weigh in on premier's legacy

“New” is the word of the day in British Columbia. A new premier is forthcoming as a tepid leadership campaign continues. A new party name is also impending, as the BC Liberals – who voted in their own new leader in February – mull a transition to the moniker “[BC United](#)”.

After John Horgan announced that he would depart his post as premier and leader of the BCNDP, many were quick to immediately look forward to succession speculation. Now, with David Eby the odds-on favourite to take over leadership of the province, as his sole rival in the race deals with two [campaign investigations](#) and has [yet to be confirmed](#) as a candidate by the party – Horgan's place in history is worth considering.

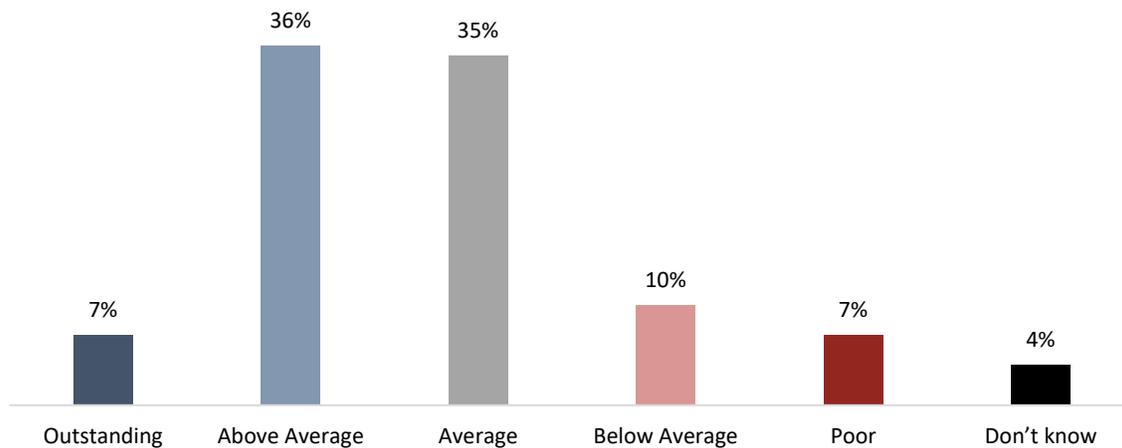
B.C.'s premier since 2017, Horgan leaves the position with an approval of 53 per cent. By contrast, his predecessor, Christy Clark, recorded an approval of [34 per cent](#) in her final quarter as premier. In his final months in the position, Gordon Campbell registered an approval rating [in the single digits](#).

Asked how he will be remembered in history, two-in-five (43%) say Horgan will go down as an outstanding (7%), or above average (36%) premier. One-in-three (35%) see him as average, while close to one-in-five (17%) say he will be viewed as below average or poor:

CONTACT:

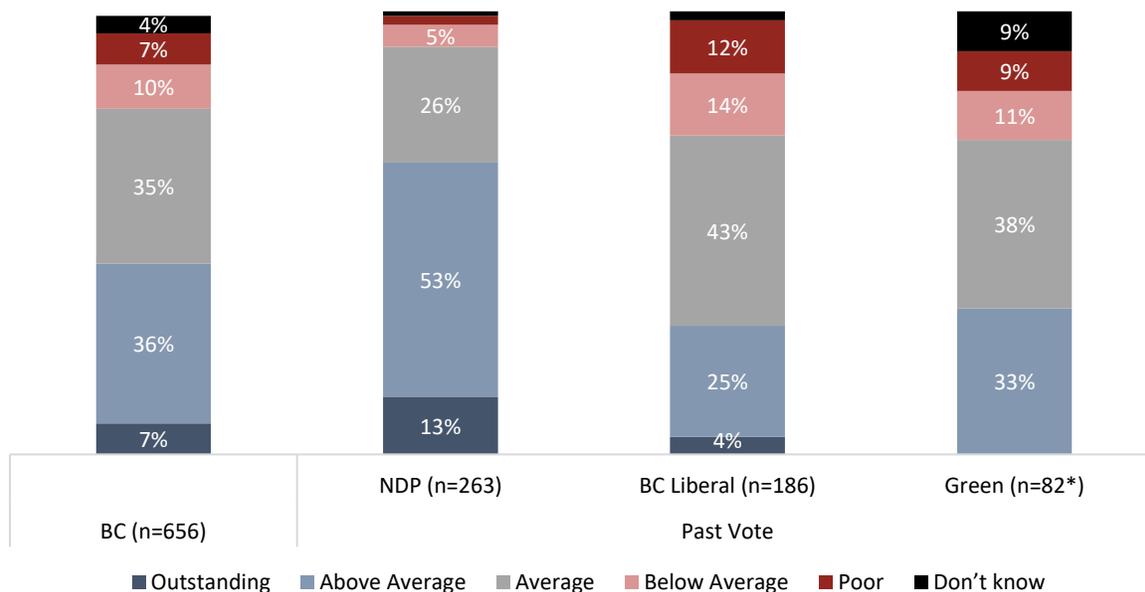
Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

**How do you think John Horgan – as B.C. premier - will go down in history?
(B.C., n=656)**



Among those who voted for Horgan's BCNDP in the most recent provincial election, two-thirds feel Horgan will be remembered as above average. One-in-three past Green voters agree, alongside three-in-ten past BC Liberal voters.

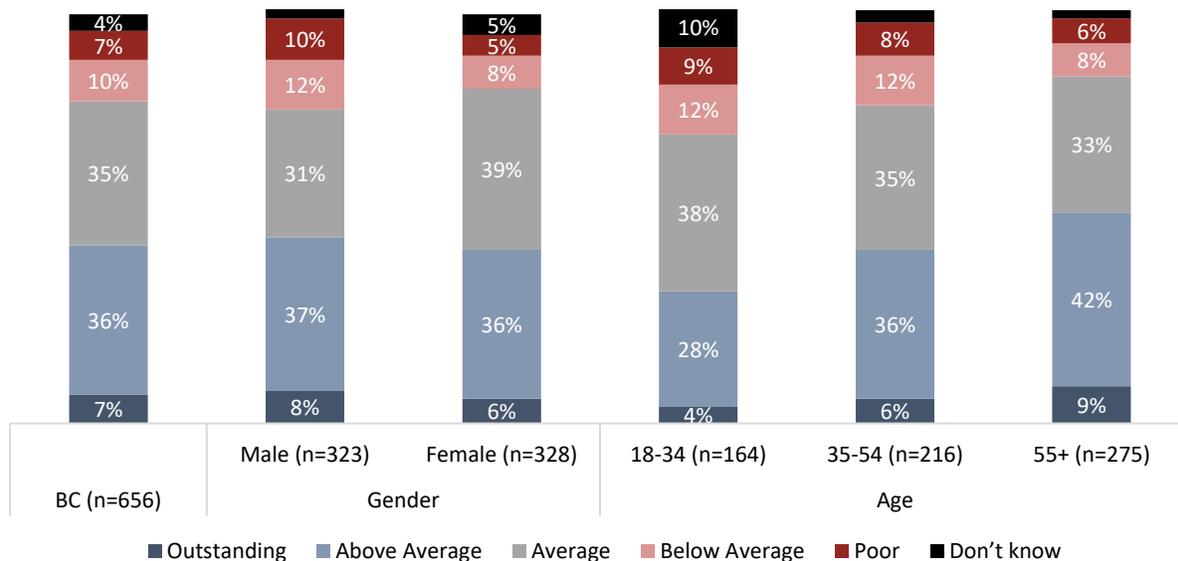
How do you think John Horgan – as B.C. premier - will go down in history?



**Smaller sample size, interpret with caution*

Those who have lived long enough to remember more of B.C.'s colourful political history are most positive about Horgan. Half of B.C. residents over the age of 54 say he will be remembered as outstanding or better than average:

How do you think John Horgan – as B.C. premier - will go down in history?



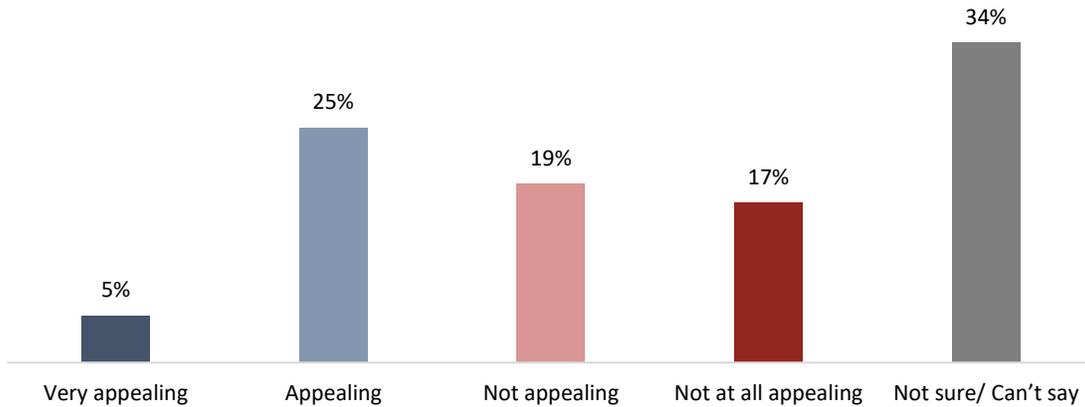
Eby still relatively unknown

If he does take over the party and the provincial leadership later this year, David Eby will have to introduce himself to a large portion of the province. The former attorney general and minister responsible for housing has served as an MLA for Vancouver-Point Grey since 2013 but is still unknown to one-in-three (34%) British Columbians. Close to the same number say he makes an appealing option for premier, while 36 per cent disagree:

CONTACT:

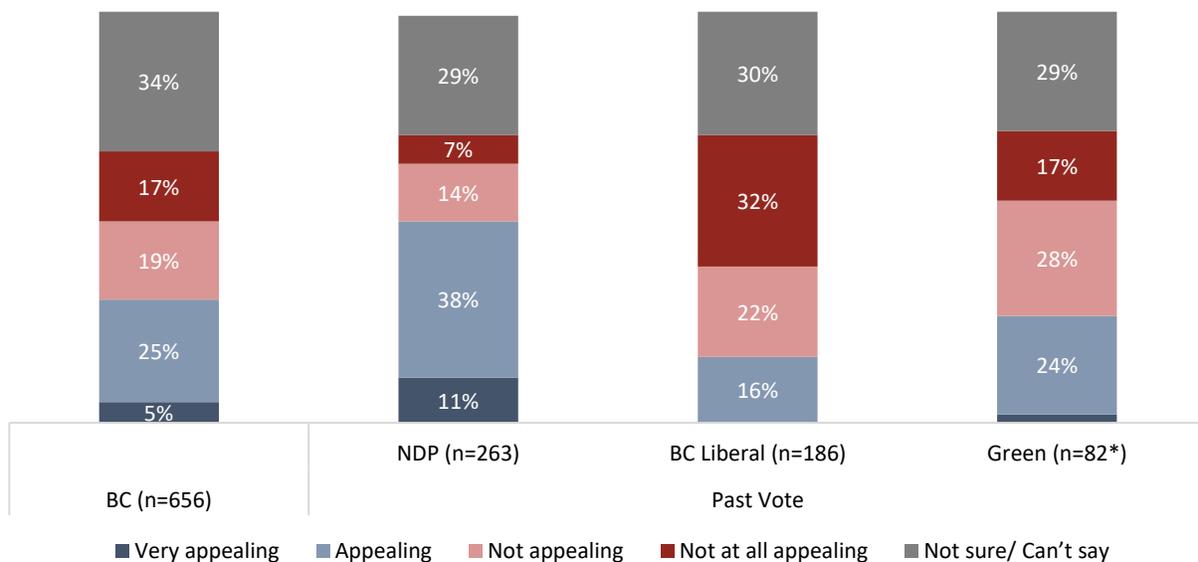
Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

**So far, based on what you've seen, read or heard, how appealing do you find Eby as a potential premier?
(B.C., n=656)**



Notably, Eby's unknown factor is distributed evenly across residents who voted for the NDP, Liberals, or Green Party in the last provincial election. But enthusiasm about what he brings to the table is a different story:

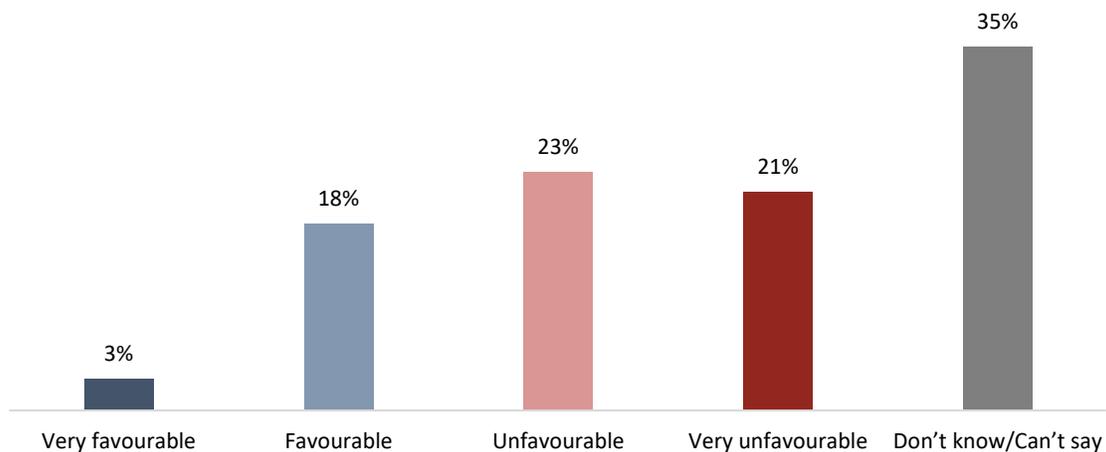
So far, based on what you've seen, read or heard, how appealing do you find Eby as a potential premier?



**Smaller sample size, interpret with caution*

Of note, Eby joins BC Liberal leader Kevin Falcon as an unknown quantity for many. Falcon, who won his own party's leadership election in February of this year, is unknown to 35 per cent, and viewed favourably by half as many as view him unfavourably:

**And what about the opposition, do you have a favourable or unfavourable view of BC Liberal leader Kevin Falcon?
(BC, n=656)**



Inflation, health care, housing affordability top priorities list

Should Eby become premier in December, he will have a pretty good idea of what issues are awaiting him, as persistent inflationary, health care, and housing challenges continue to occupy the minds of British Columbians.

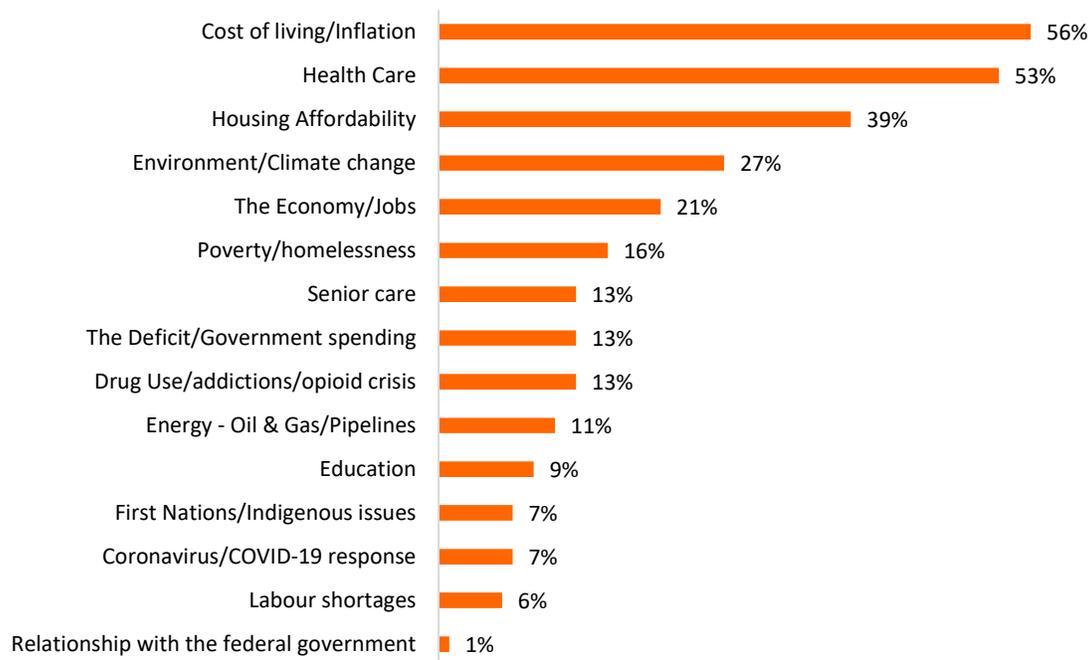
The Horgan government announced earlier in September a plan to provide \$600 million in tax relief and rebates to help B.C. residents cope with rising prices, and Eby, himself released a “[sweeping plan](#)” to address housing affordability if elected leader. Note, this study was fielded prior to the release of that plan. When it comes to health care, Horgan has [increased calls](#) for more federal funding as [delays](#), backlogs, and staffing shortages continue.

[Related: Canadians and healthcare access](#)

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

**Most important issues facing B.C.
(Select up to three; B.C, n=656)**



Asked how the provincial government is performing on those top issues, B.C. residents find some cause for optimism and some for criticism. Most offer kudos to the Horgan government for its COVID-19 response and for its handling of the relationship with the federal government. Other issues, like education, economic stewardship, and climate policy, have proponents and opponents on each side. The problem for the government is that it performs worst on some of the most important issues to residents. On health care, cost of living, and housing affordability – the three top issues – at least 73 per cent in each case say the government is doing a poor job.

Though it is not a personally high level of priority for many British Columbians, the government’s handling of the opioid crisis, too, is panned. Four-in-five (81%) criticize those in power as B.C. continues to report record levels of opioid deaths:

Do you think the current government of B.C. is doing a good job or a poor job in each of the following areas? (B.C., n=656)		
<i>(Top Three Issues Highlighted)</i>		
	Good/ very good job	Poor/ very poor job
Coronavirus/COVID-19 response	66%	30%
Relationship with the federal government	51%	26%
First Nations/Indigenous issues	48%	36%
Education	44%	42%
The Economy/Jobs	42%	47%
Environment/Climate change	40%	49%
The Deficit/Government spending	37%	46%
Energy - Oil & Gas/Pipelines	26%	57%
Senior care	26%	59%
Health Care	25%	73%
Labour shortages	24%	58%
Cost of living/Inflation	18%	77%
Drug Use/addictions/opioid crisis	13%	81%
Poverty/homelessness	12%	84%
Housing Affordability	10%	85%

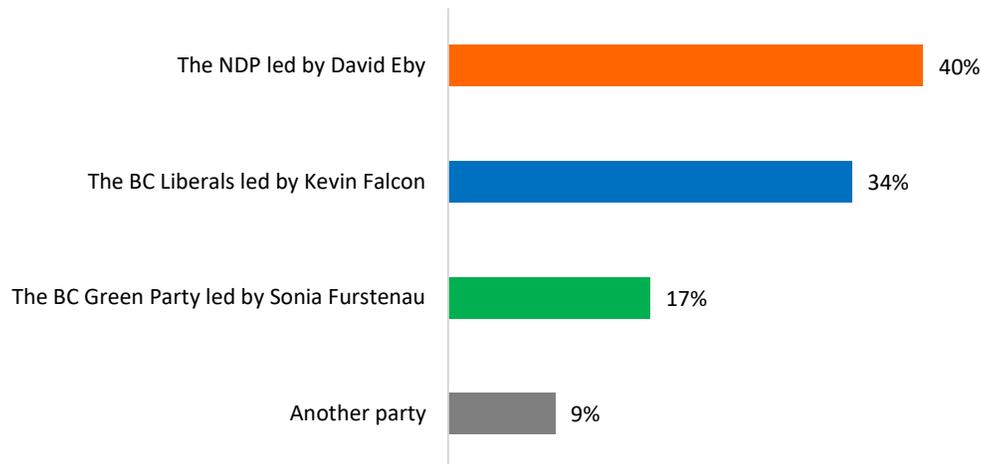
An NDP under Eby would still hold vote intention advantage

A provincial election is not expected until 2024, so the new BCNDP leader will have some time to get comfortable on the job. On the other hand, the time lag also allows opposition leader Falcon opportunity to grow his base. Respondents were asked to gauge how they would vote if an election were called with Eby as NDP leader and premier. Two-in-five (40%) would support the NDP, while one-in-three (34%) say they would vote for the opposition BC Liberals. A significant group of 17 per cent say they would support Sonia Furstenu's Green Party.

CONTACT:

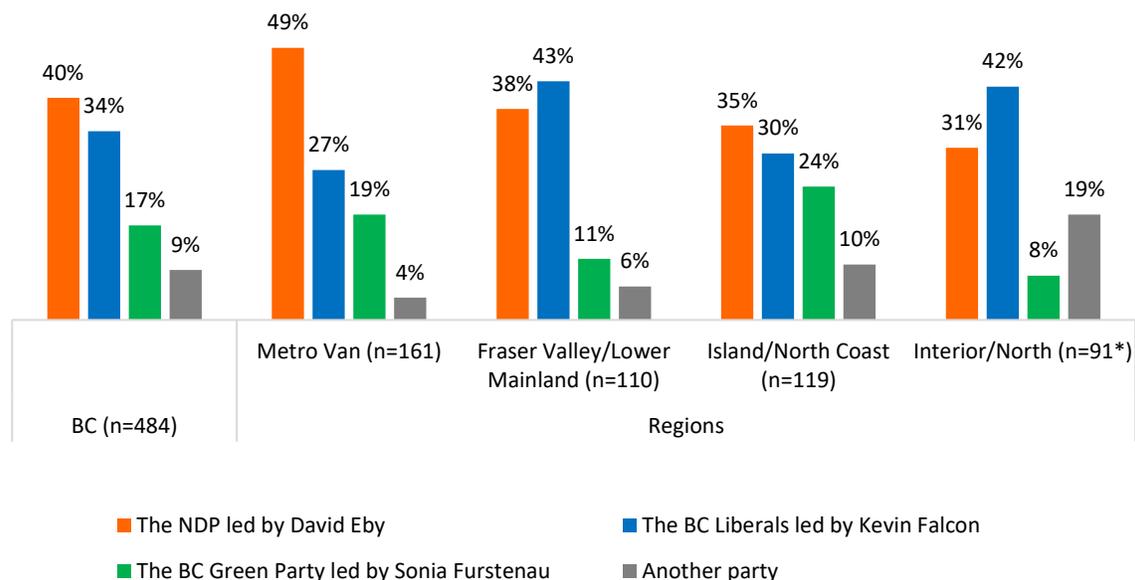
Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

**Vote intention - B.C.
(Decided and leaning voters only, n=484)**



Regionally, NDP support is centred around Metro Vancouver. Other portions of the Fraser Valley and Lower Mainland are competitive, as is Vancouver Island and the North Coast. The BC Liberals hold an important advantage in the Interior and north of the province:

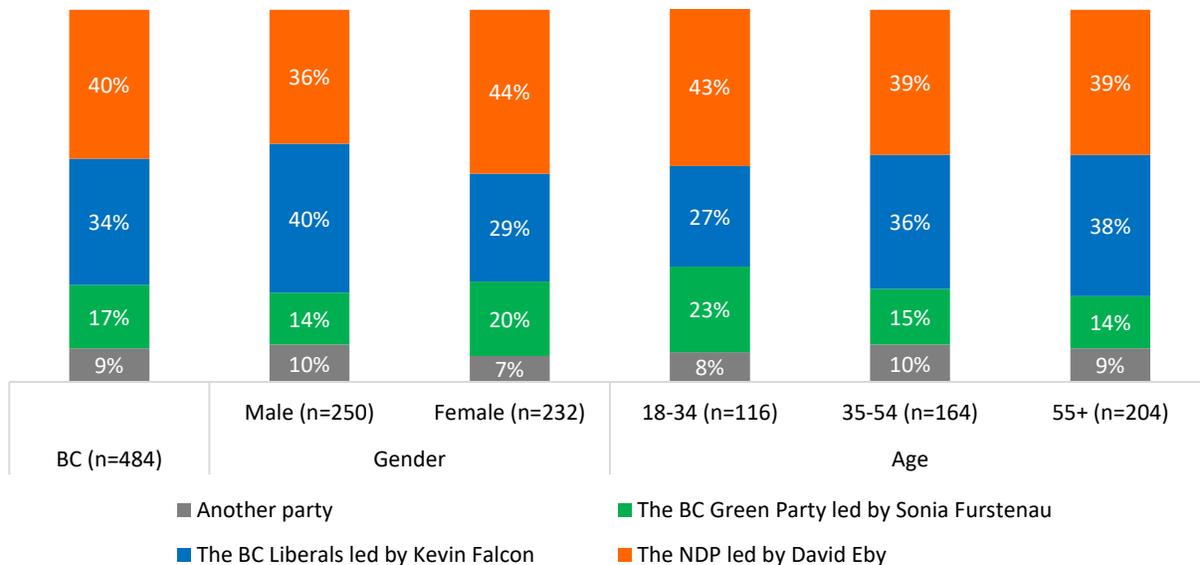
**Vote intention - B.C.
(Decided and leaning voters only, n=484)**



**Smaller sample size, interpret with caution*

Men in the province are divided close to evenly between the incumbents and opposition, while women show a clear preference for the New Democrats. Importantly, much of this advantage comes from younger people, with those over the age of 34 supporting each of the top two options close to evenly:

Vote intention - B.C.
(Decided and leaning voters only, n=484)



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

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org