

Premiers' Performance: In election year, half approve of Moe and Eby, Higgs has steep hill to climb

Ford and Legault, leaders of two most populous provinces, hold approval of just one-in-three residents

March 11, 2024 – For three of Canada's provincial leaders, campaign season is not far off. Saskatchewan's Scott Moe and British Columbia's David Eby head into their expected October competitions in a relatively strong place when it comes to public opinion, garnering approval from approximately half of constituents respectively. For Premier Blaine Higgs in New Brunswick, the battle appears to have a steeper grade. Higgs is currently the least popular provincial leader in the country.

In the nearer term, budget season has provincial governments from coast to coast laying out promises and priorities for the year to come. They do so with varying levels of support from provincial residents, here are the Angus Reid Institute Premier Approval Ratings for March 2024.

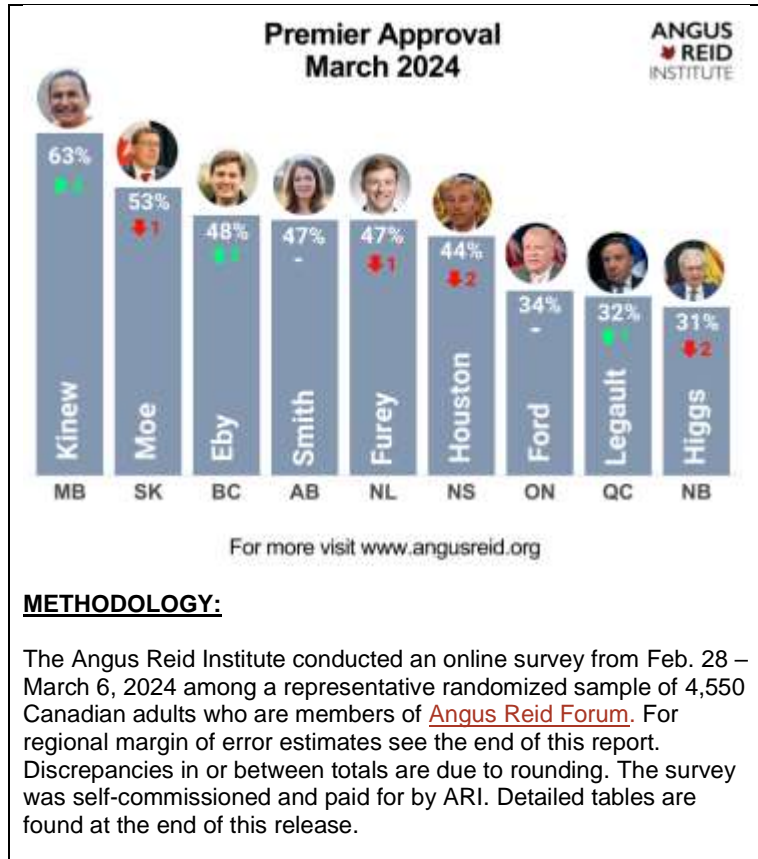
About ARI

*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.*

Note: Because its small population precludes drawing discrete samples over multiple waves, data on Prince Edward Island is not released.

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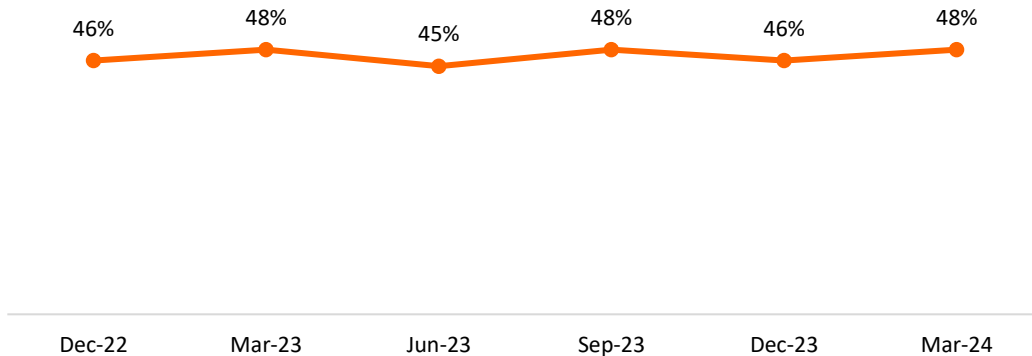
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Three facing October election

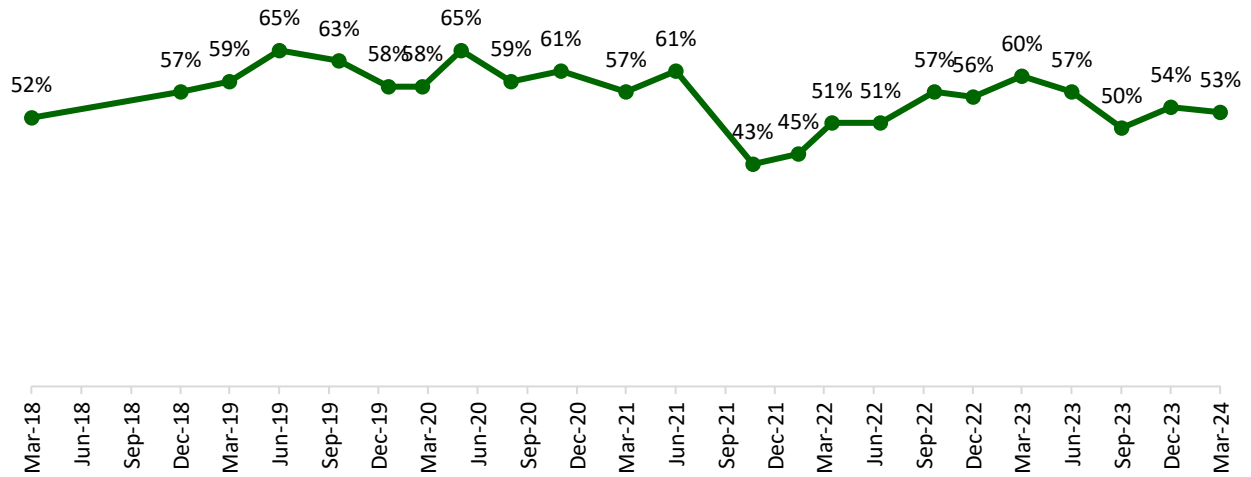
BCNDP leader David Eby is approved of by approximately half of residents (48%) ahead of an expected October election. This proportion has remained unchanged for well over a year now. Eby’s government announced significant new expenditures on housing and affordability relief in its 2024 budget which will portend more than a [\\$7-billion deficit](#) for 2024/25 (approximately double the projection outlined in the 2023 budget). Some critics have referred to as the party’s [election platform](#). Much of the intrigue in the electoral contest will depend on a divided opposition, which has given the NDP a [comfortable lead in vote intention thus far](#):

Approval of B.C. Premier David Eby



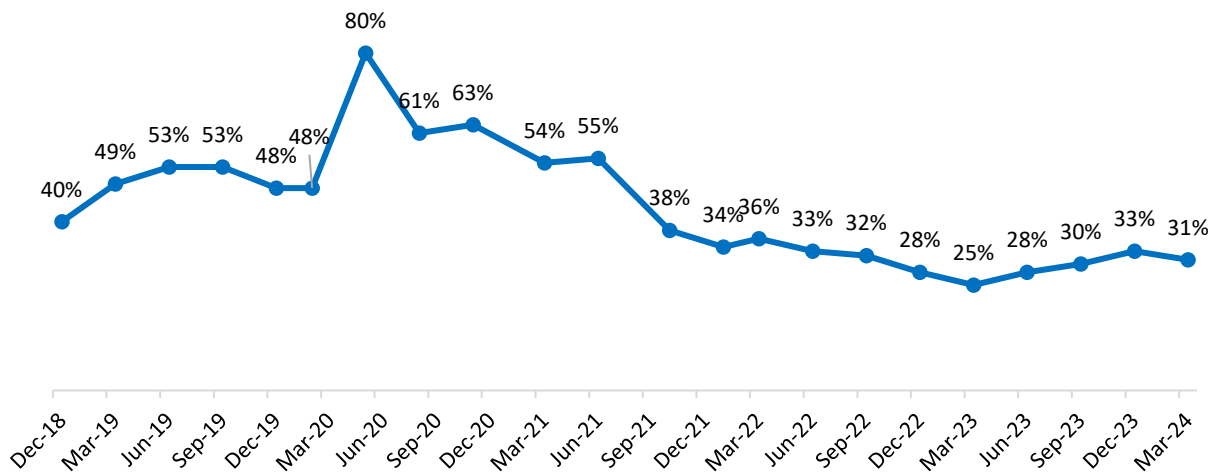
Premier Scott Moe of Saskatchewan remains among the most approved of leaders in the country, one of just two leaders who break the majority mark this quarter (53%). Moe and his Saskatchewan Party have been going head-to-head with the federal government on the federal carbon tax. Moe’s government was called “[immoral](#)” by Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault for deciding not to collect the tax and distribute rebates to residents. Moe responded by stating the government would replace rebates with “[less tax](#)”. Saskatchewanians will likely head to the polls this October to weigh in themselves on the direction of the province. More on that election will be released in the coming weeks:

Approval of Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe



In New Brunswick, Blaine Higgs is heading into election as the least popular premier in the country. The Progressive Conservative leader is approved of by 31 per cent of residents, and has spent considerable time in recent months defending his controversial – but supported – position on parental rights and LGBTQ2+ policies in schools. Higgs’ government recently conveyed \$75 million in affordability payments, though he noted significant negative coverage of the payments had frustrated him, after critics suggested certain groups, like retirees, should have been eligible for benefits but weren’t.

Approval of New Brunswick Premier Blaine Higgs



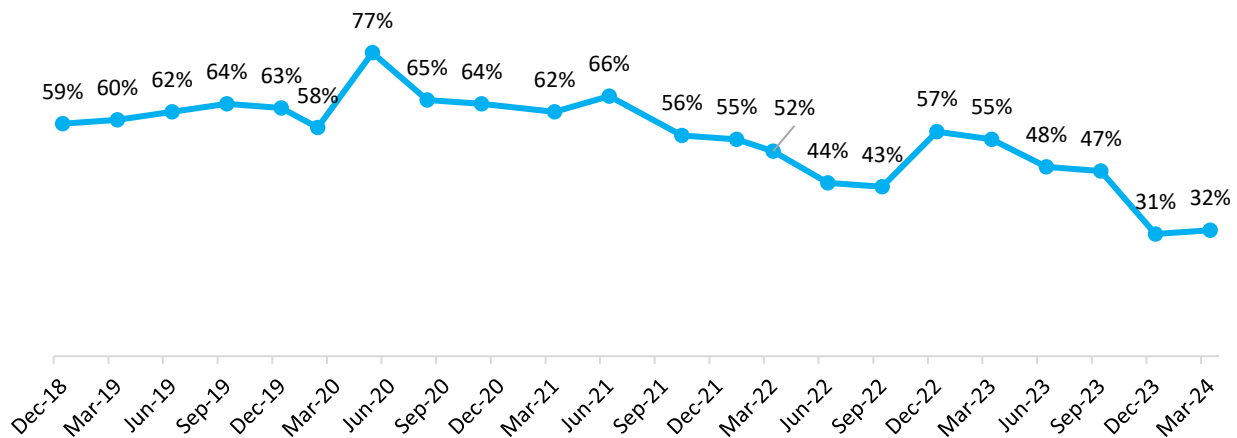
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Legault and Ford approved by one-in-three

After a precipitous 16-point decline in quarter-over-quarter approval to end last year, Quebec Premier François Legault sees his personal assessment stabilize at 32 per cent. The Coalition Avenir Québec's forthcoming 2024 budget will reportedly run a larger deficit due to the unforeseen funding needed to reach a deal with the province's teacher's union, which was on strike for 22 days in December and January. Quebec's highest court recently upheld (most of) one of Legault's signature legislative pieces – Bill 21 – which the leader cheered as a “great victory for the nation of Quebec”:

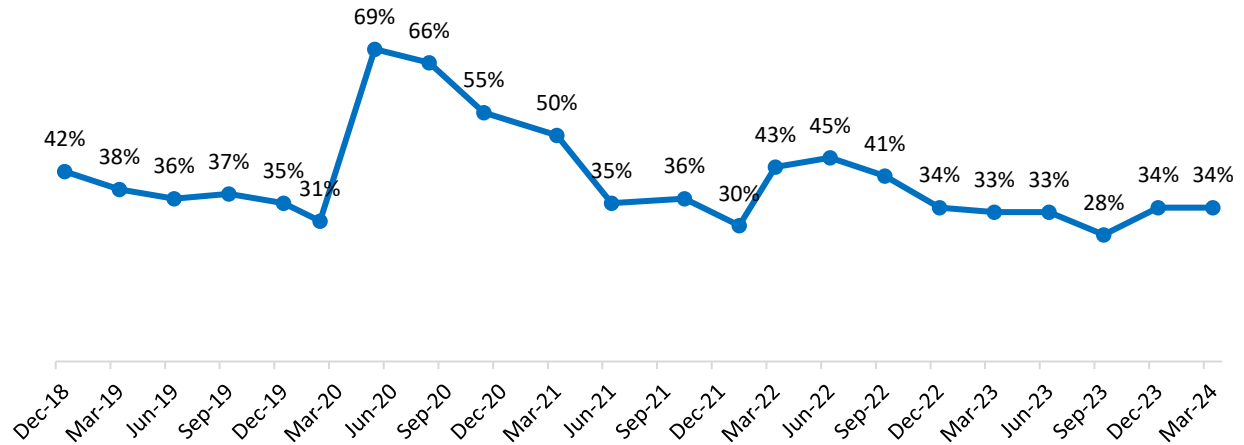
Approval of Quebec Premier François Legault



Ontario's Doug Ford announced his intention to “Get It Done” last month, introducing new legislation to streamline infrastructure projects by shortening environmental assessments and speeding up approval processes. Cooperation with the federal Conservatives may be less than a given, however, if that party does indeed form the next government in Ottawa. Tensions between the two conservative camps flared after newly elected federal MP Jamil Jivani criticized Ford's government in a victory speech. Ford suggested Jivani, a former advisor to his own party, should “focus on the carbon tax”.

Ford and his Progressive Conservatives will hope that getting it done will help to boost his stagnant personal approval rate, which hasn't exceeded its current 34 per cent mark since September 2022:

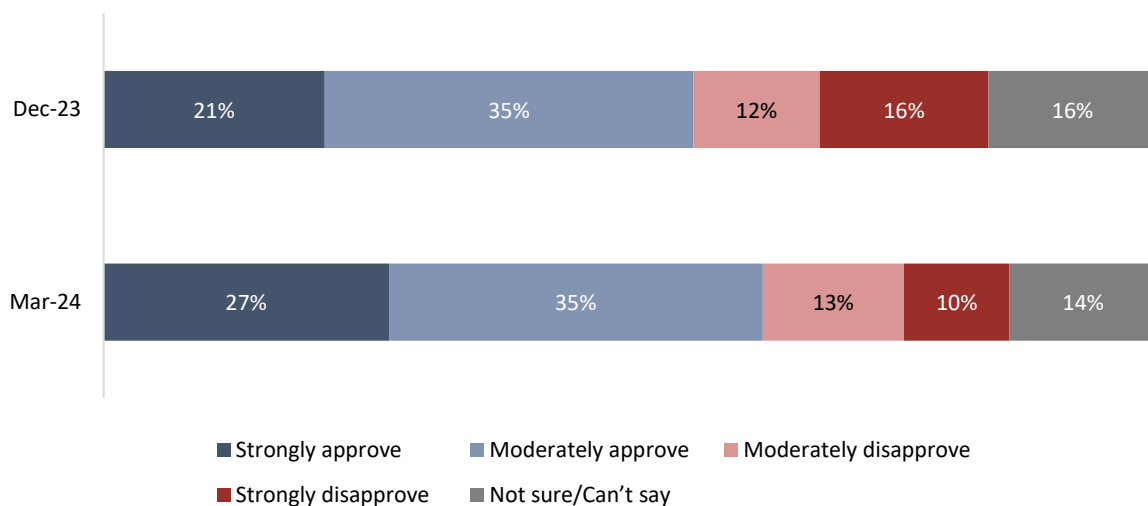
Approval of Ontario Premier Doug Ford



Kinew enjoying honeymoon highs

Canada's most popular premier continues to reside in Manitoba, where Manitoba NDP leader Wab Kinew enjoys a seven-point increase in approval to 63 per cent. Kinew and his government will release its first budget on April 2, which will reportedly focus on health care and low-carbon energy investments. Kinew will hope to extend his honeymoon period as he approaches the one-year mark as premier late in 2024:

Approval of Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew



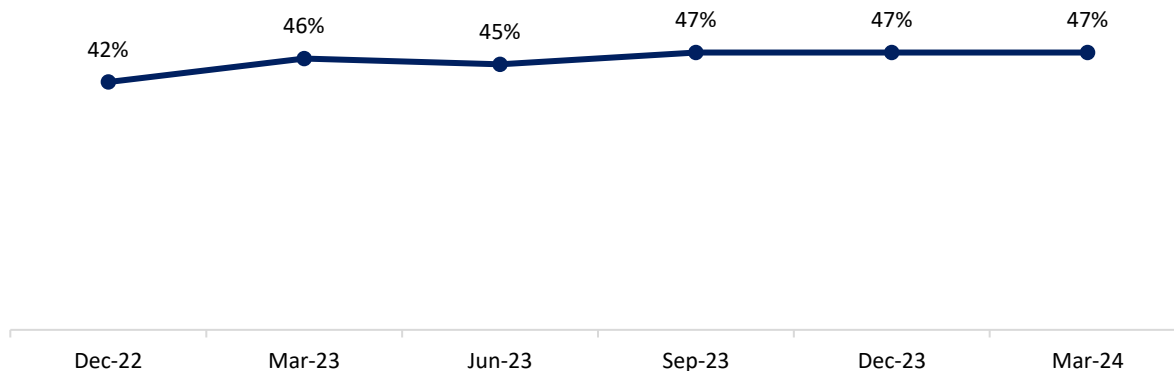
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Smith locked in at 47 per cent

Alberta’s Danielle Smith is arguably the [most talked about premier in the country](#). Smith has garnered headlines with her decision to join New Brunswick and Saskatchewan in changing school policies surrounding [name and gender identification](#) and continues to trade barbs with federal officials over the federal government’s climate and energy policy. Smith recently [threatened to invoke](#) the “Sovereignty Within a United Canada Act” to overcome disagreements over emission abatement for natural gas projects. Her approval rating of 47 per cent is identical to those registered in September and December of last year:

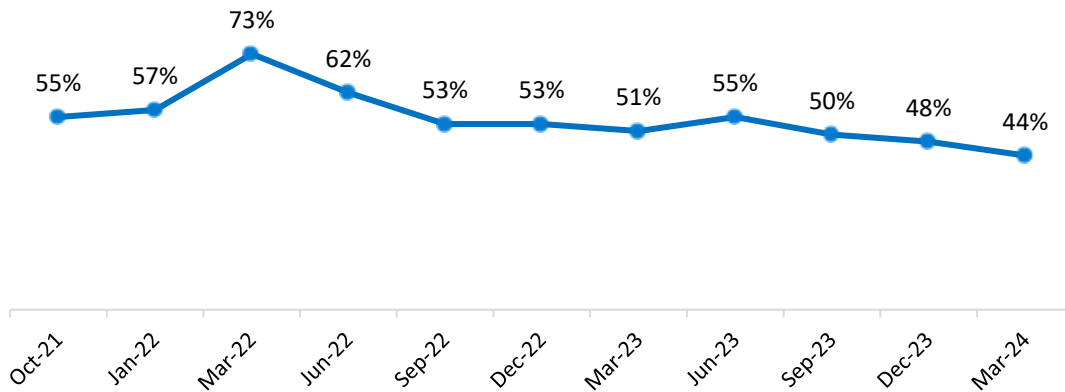
Approval of Alberta Premier Danielle Smith



Furey, Houston see similar approval in Atlantic Canada

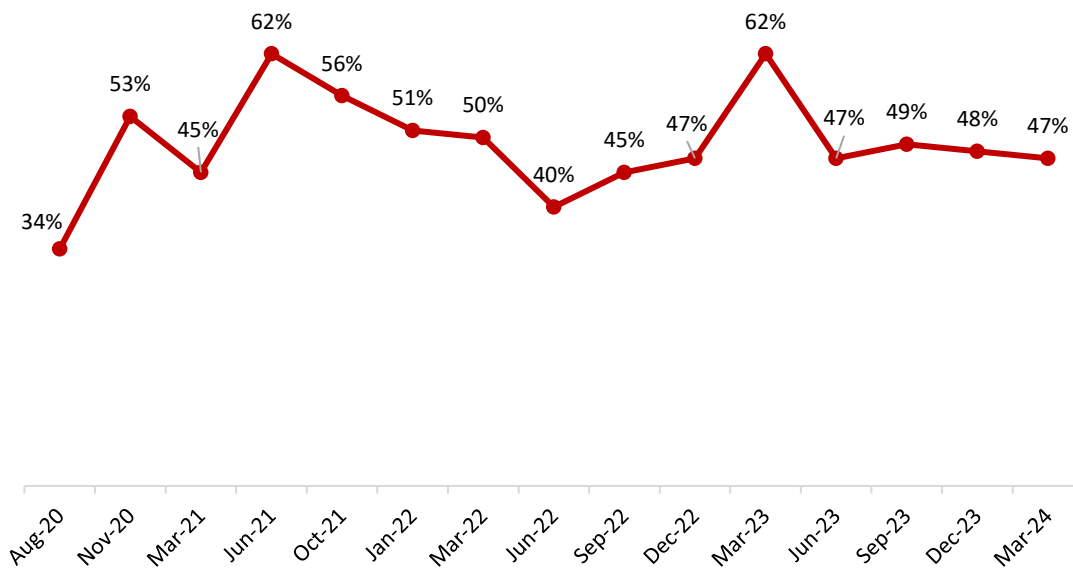
On the east coast, Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston endures a four-point drop in approval. Houston will be hoping to earn some good will with what he and his finance minister have called the [largest tax break](#) in the province’s history, as a part of the 2024 budget. Some critics have stated that this claim is [“misleading”](#):

Approval of Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston



Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Andrew Furey has had a stable approval rating of between 47 and 49 per cent over the past year. Furey has faced criticism from the opposition and the N.L. nurses' union after his government reportedly spent [more than \\$35 million](#) on travel nurses in 2023, which he claims was needed to keep the provincial health system operating. Health care continues to be among the [top two concerns](#) for residents in the province:

Approval of Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Andrew Furey



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Provincial margins of error								
BC (813)	AB (409)	SK (389)	MB (354)	ON (908)	QC (655)	NB (387)	NS (350)	NL (218)
+/- 3%	+/- 5%	+/- 5%	+/- 5%	+/- 3%	+/- 4%	+/- 5%	+/- 5%	+/- 7%

Summary tables to follow

Approve/disapprove by province									
(Unweighted sample sizes)	Province								
	BC (813)	AB (409)	SK (389)	MB (354)	ON (908)	QC (655)	NB (387)	NS (350)	NL (218)
Strongly Approve	14%	27%	25%	27%	8%	9%	7%	12%	14%
Moderately approve	33%	21%	28%	35%	26%	23%	24%	32%	33%
Moderately disapprove	18%	11%	12%	13%	20%	23%	15%	27%	23%
Strongly disapprove	23%	38%	33%	10%	43%	39%	49%	22%	22%
Not sure	12%	4%	3%	14%	4%	6%	5%	7%	9%

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