

Plurality of Canadians expect Trump tariff teeter-totter to last full term; majority ready to play hardball for long haul

Even in the case of a recession, few say Canada should concede to American demands

April 4, 2025 – It was the [prop chart](#) seen around the world. U.S. President Donald Trump stood in a windy Rose Garden on Wednesday holding up a list of reciprocal tariffs on dozens of nations. Not included on the list was Canada. For now, it appears that the tariff tit for tat between Canada and the U.S. is relegated to previously disclosed issues, from [steel and aluminum](#), to [dueling duties on auto parts](#). Some breathed a sigh of relief while others braced for the next round of turmoil.

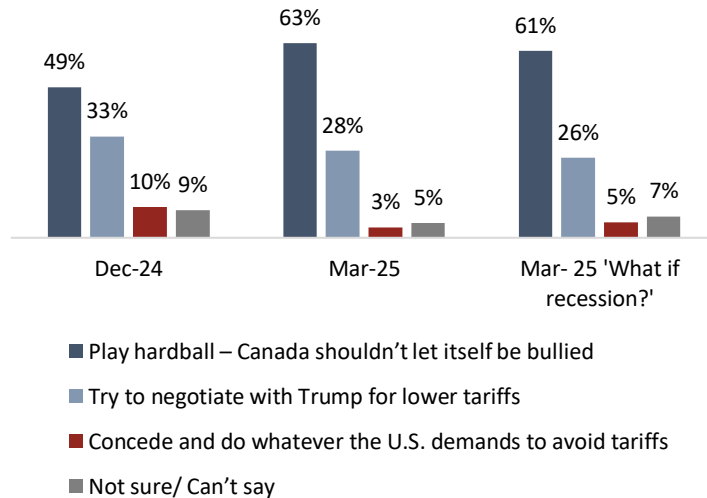
New data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds Canadians expecting more of the manufactured uncertainty in the coming years, and ready to hunker down and play hardball, even if the consequences are dire.

The largest group of Canadians (39%) say that they expect this trade war to persist until Trump is gone from office – if he does indeed [leave after a second term](#). Others are scattered in smaller groups expecting this to be resolved in less time or simply unsure how long it will last.

The outlook among Canadians is increasingly confrontational as the country embraces an [“elbows up”](#) approach. In December, 49 per cent said Canada should play hardball, a number that has risen to 63 per cent now. Three-in-10 (28%) are more inclined to negotiate, while three per cent say they would concede whatever the U.S. demands in order to avoid tariffs. That latter proportion has dropped from 10 per cent in December.

Notably, respondents were asked about what they would do if tariffs created a recession and significant job loss in Canada. In this case, the numbers barely budge. Three-in-five (61%) would continue to play hardball.

How to approach Trump tariffs?



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from March 28-31, 2025, among a randomized sample of 2,131 Canadian adults who are members of Angus Reid Forum. The sample was weighted to be representative of adults nationwide according to region, gender, age, household income, and education, based on the Canadian census. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 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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More Key Findings:

- Four-in-five (82%) say they are concerned about the negative consequences of Trump's tariffs.
- Six per cent of Canadians currently working say that they expect to lose a job if this trade war persists, while 51 per cent are concerned about that prospect. 44 per cent say their job is safe.
- Three-in-five Canadians say they are cancelling or delaying trips to the United States (61%), while 86 per cent say they're buying more Canadian products.

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

- **Four-in-five concerned about tariff turmoil**
- **Only two-in-five Canadians feel their job is safe**
- **Canadians say "play hardball" with Trump**
- **Recession risk shakes few**
- **What Canadians are doing on their own**
- **Canadians expect tariff saga to persist**

Four-in-five concerned about tariff turmoil

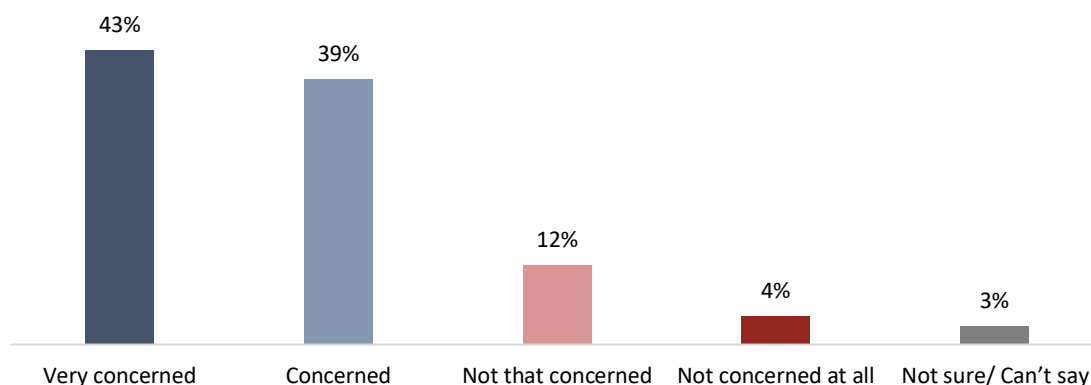
The world was united this week in confusion and frustration watching U.S. President Donald Trump announce tariffs on nearly every country in the world. That universal tax on imports to the U.S. will be set at 10 per cent, while some countries face a much higher rate. Canada has reportedly been left off of this latest list of tariffs, subject now to the mixed bag of tariffs already facing the country – including on steel and aluminum - and goods not exempted under the USMCA. Trump also took a shot at Canada's dairy industry, foreshadowing potential challenges in renegotiating a trade deal in the coming years.

With uncertainty the rule of the day, Canadians are concerned about the negative consequences of the tariffs. Two-in-five say they're very concerned, while 39 per cent are concerned:

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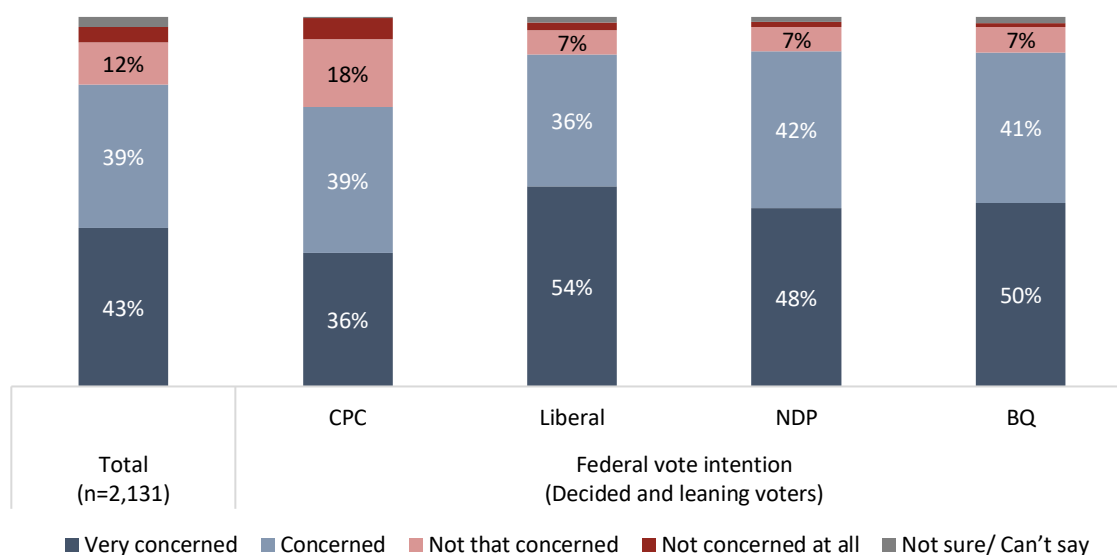
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How concerned are you about potential negative consequences for Canada's economy from Trump's tariffs?



Those who would currently support the Conservative Party are less concerned than others, with one-quarter voicing little to no worry:

How concerned are you about potential negative consequences for Canada's economy from Trump's tariffs?



Only two-in-five Canadians feel their job is safe

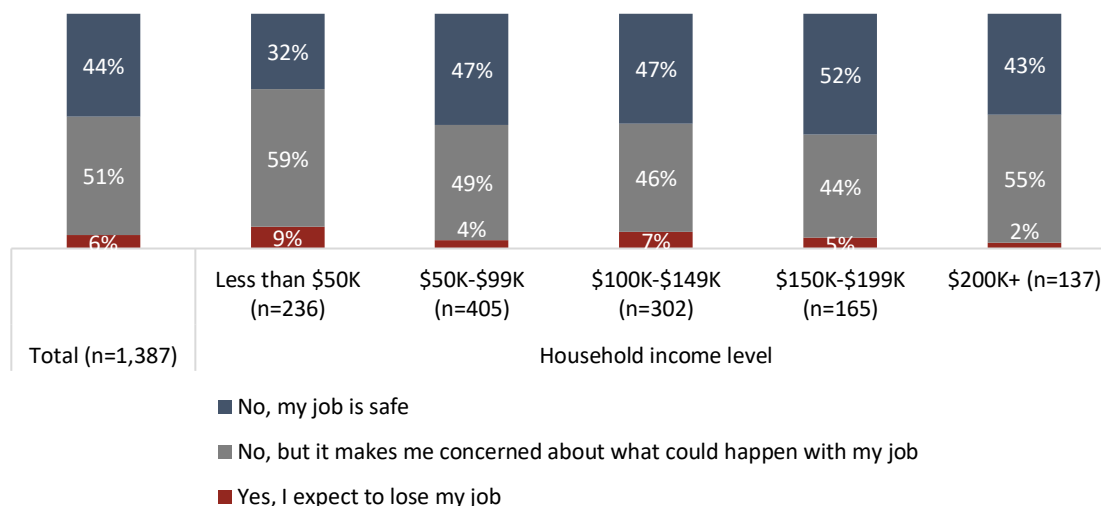
Canada appears to have dodged a bullet, for now, though the potential repercussions of tariffs are still unfolding and, in some ways, opaque. Global impacts will be uncertain for the coming months and supply chains are expected to shift. Working Canadians were asked if they think their job will be affected by this trade war, and just two-in-five (44%) say they foresee any risk of job loss. For half (51%) this is a concern, while for six per cent it is more of an expectation.

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Already Canadians in the country's auto-belt are feeling the pain after Stellantis announced that it would pause the assembly lines at its Windsor plant, affecting 3,600 hourly employees.

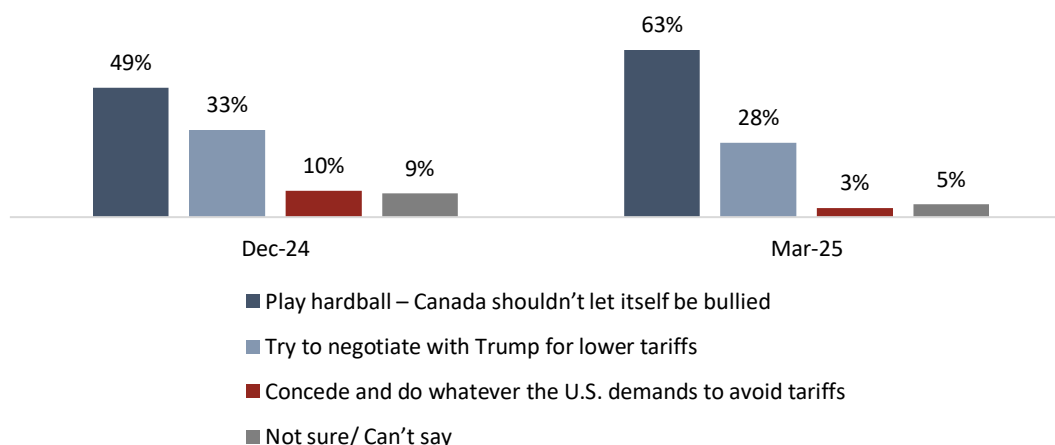
Do you think the tariffs will have an impact on your own job security?
(Among those currently working)



Canadians say “play hardball” with Trump

Much of the current situation is “wait and see” in nature. Canada is in the middle of a federal election campaign and the Trump administration has been anything but predictable to this point. Nonetheless, Canadians remain in an ornery mood when it comes to tariff threats. More than three-in-five (63%) say they believe Canada should approach Trump by playing hard ball, up from 49 per cent in December. The proportion that would have Canada accede to U.S. demands, meanwhile, has fallen from 10 per cent to three per cent:

How to approach Trump tariffs?

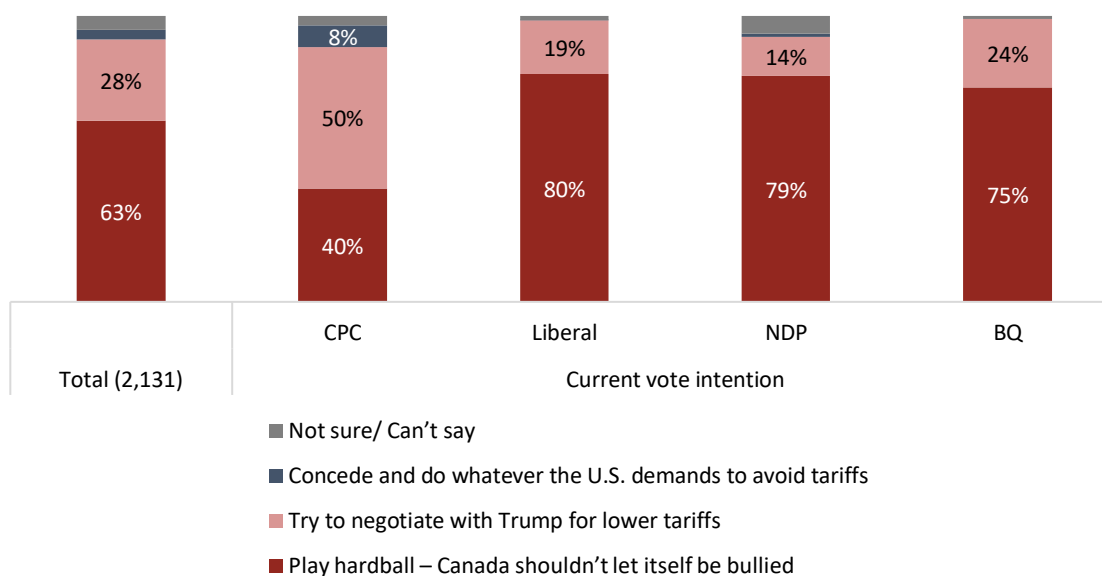


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Conservative Party voters are half as likely as other partisans to say Canada should play hardball, and much more likely to say that trying to negotiate without pushing back too hard is the better play:

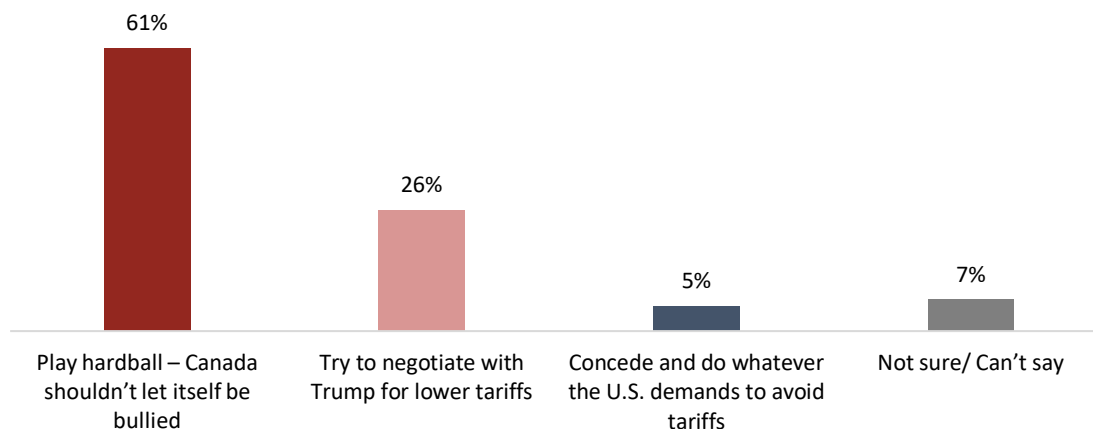
How should Canada respond to tariff threats?



Recession risk shakes few

The risk in all of this is that Canadians will lose wealth and jobs. Some economists already suggest [Canada is in a recession](#), with others worrying that the risk of this is being accelerated by Trump's policies. Supposing that this worst-case scenario does emerge, Canadians' resolve is – at least for now – steady. The same number say Canada should continue to play hardball, rather than capitulate:

Suppose six months from now the tariffs are still in place, resulting in hundreds of thousands of lost jobs & a recession in Canada. In that case, how do you believe the Canadian govt should approach Trump's tariffs?

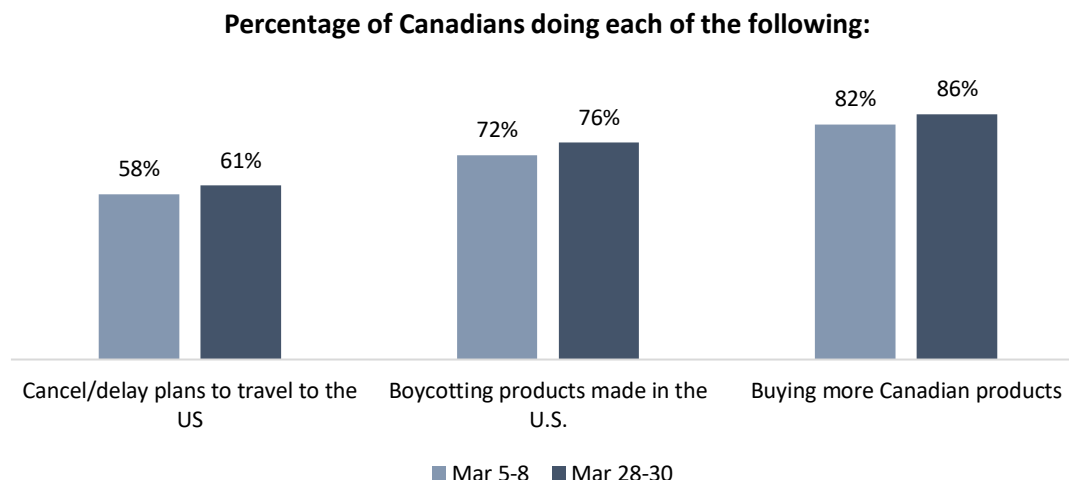


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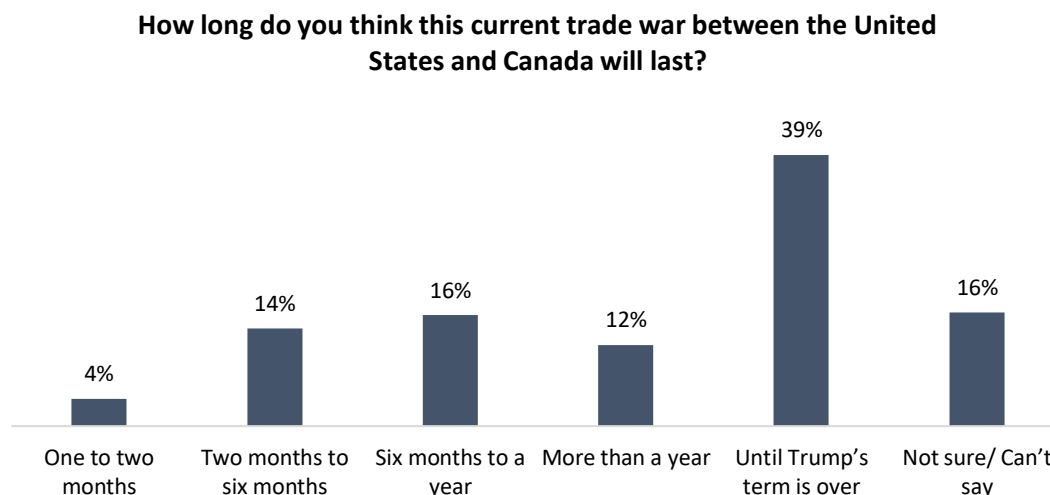
What Canadians are doing on their own

The cross-border data already proves it, Canadians are cutting back their travel to the U.S. to levels last seen during COVID-19. These numbers may drop further, considering that three-in-five Canadians say they are cancelling or delaying plans to travel across the border. In addition to this, the proportion of Canadians saying they're boycotting American products or buying more Canadian products is already high and appears to be growing:



Canadians expect tariff saga to persist

The endgame to the trade war is unknown and many Canadians don't expect it to wrap up any time soon. The largest group of Canadians – two-in-five (39%) - say they expect this to continue until Trump's term is over. Another one-in-seven (12%) say it will last more than a year. Others are divided or unsure:



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

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