

B.C. Spotlight: Land rights saga boosts leaderless Conservatives as more now say DRIPA goes too far

BC NDP statistically tied with BC Conservatives in vote intention as party base assesses potential leaders

April 1, 2026 – At initial glance, the current political situation in B.C. might suggest a strong advantage for the BC NDP. They're the incumbent government facing off against a currently leaderless and relatively new-to-the-scene opposition that has lost six MLAs to defections and scandals and a former leader who resigned to prevent the party from fragmenting in the months since a narrow election loss in October 2024.

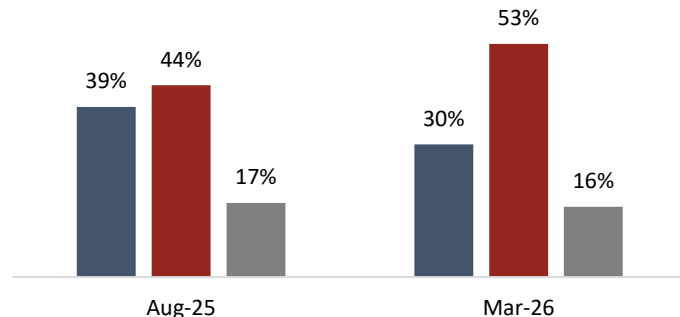
But new data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds Premier David Eby and the BC NDP statistically tied with the BC Conservatives in vote intention.

Recent court decisions on the rights of First Nations in mineral development and land usage factors heavily into the political picture in the province at the moment. Eby has been on the back foot for much of the past year reacting to court decisions that have changed the playing field between the provincial government and Indigenous peoples.

Former Premier John Horgan's government's decision to pass the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) to guide the province towards aligning its laws with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) continues to have ripple effects. Increasingly, British Columbians believe DRIPA "goes too far in limiting provincial authority". In August 2025, 44 per cent said that was the case; 53 per cent say so now.

The majority who believe B.C. has transferred too much power away from the provincial government to First Nations on key areas such as property and mineral rights are also far more likely to say they would support the opposition BC Conservatives (70%) than Eby's BC NDP (21%). Perhaps this political pressure is one of the reasons Eby's government is considering [weakening DRIPA's language](#).

Views of B.C. aligning its laws with UNDRIP



- It's a necessary step toward reconciliation and correcting historical injustices
- It goes too far in limiting provincial authority over land and resources
- Not sure / Can't say

METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from March 11-17, 2026, among a randomized sample of 499 Canadian adults who are residents of British Columbia. Respondents are drawn from the [Angus Reid Forum](#), a large-scale online panel developed to include Canadian residents in each of the 343 federal ridings in Canada and representative of the Canadian population by age, gender, family income, ethnic status and education. 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 +/- 4 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.

For more information on our polling methods, [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

Meanwhile, three-in-five (57%) say B.C. is on the wrong track, a 17-point increase from this time last year.

More Key Findings:

- Half (50%) say the province is giving “too much” attention to Indigenous issues, a 14-point increase from August 2025.
- Former Pattison Food Group President Darrell Jones is the most recognizable candidate for the BC Conservative leadership among both the general B.C. population (30% recognize the name) and 2024 BC Conservative voters (38%). Former BC United vice-president Caroline Elliott (61%), MLA Harman Bhangu (59%), and MLA Peter Milobar (58%) are the most liked among past BC Conservative voters.
- A majority (58%) say they have little or not trust of assurances from the federal government and Musqueam officials that the February agreement between the two will not affect private property rights.

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

Part One: BC NDP and BC Conservatives statistically tied

Part Two: What’s driving the situation?

- Top issues
- Three-in-five say province is on the wrong track
- The land rights saga
 - More saying DRIPA ‘goes too far’
 - Half say province paying ‘too much’ attention to Indigenous issues
 - More distrust than trust on federal gov’t agreements with Musqueam
 - Two-thirds say private property rights should be priority

Part Three: What (or who) is the alternative?

- Did Darrell make a bad Deal?
- Who do past BC Conservative voters like or dislike?

CONTACT:

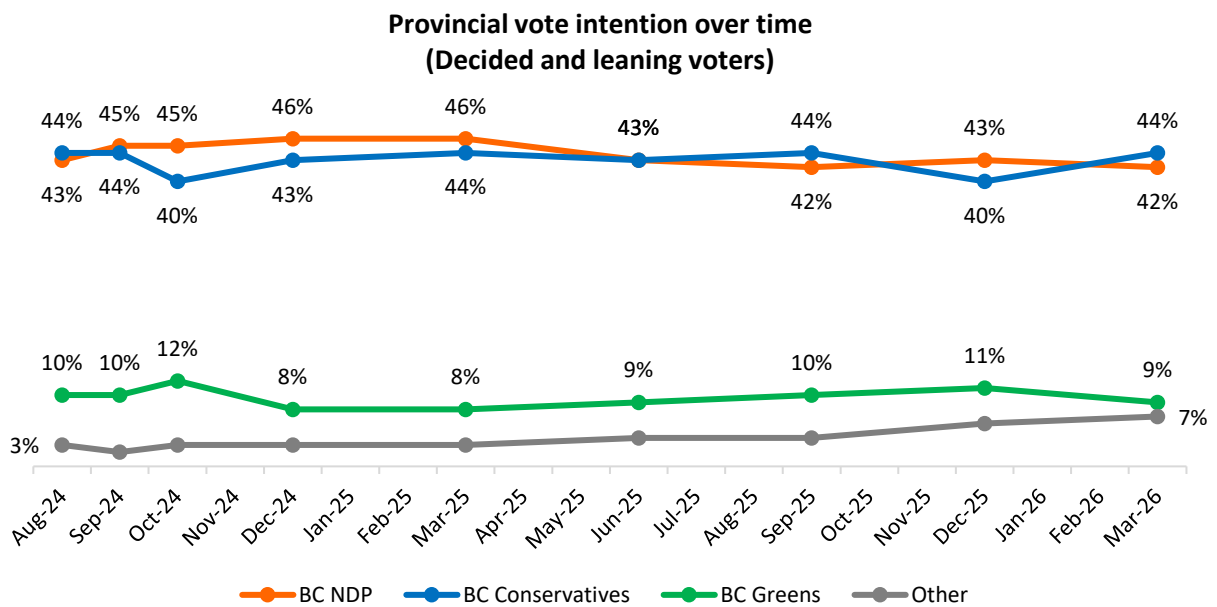
Shachi Kurl, President: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 dave.korzinski@angusreid.org

Part One: BC NDP and BC Conservatives statistically tied

The BC Conservatives surprise surge during the 2024 election campaign drove them from single-digit popular vote percentages to nearly forming government. But the months afterwards have revealed the growing pains the party has undergone as it morphs from also-ran to contender. Between the election and December 2025, when leader John Rustad was forced to resign to avoid a party “civil war” – his words – the BC Conservatives lost five MLAs. A sixth has since been kicked out of caucus after being charged with assault, assault by choking and uttering threats. Nine people have been confirmed as running to replace Rustad, leaving the disordered party currently without permanent leadership – more on that race in part three of this release.

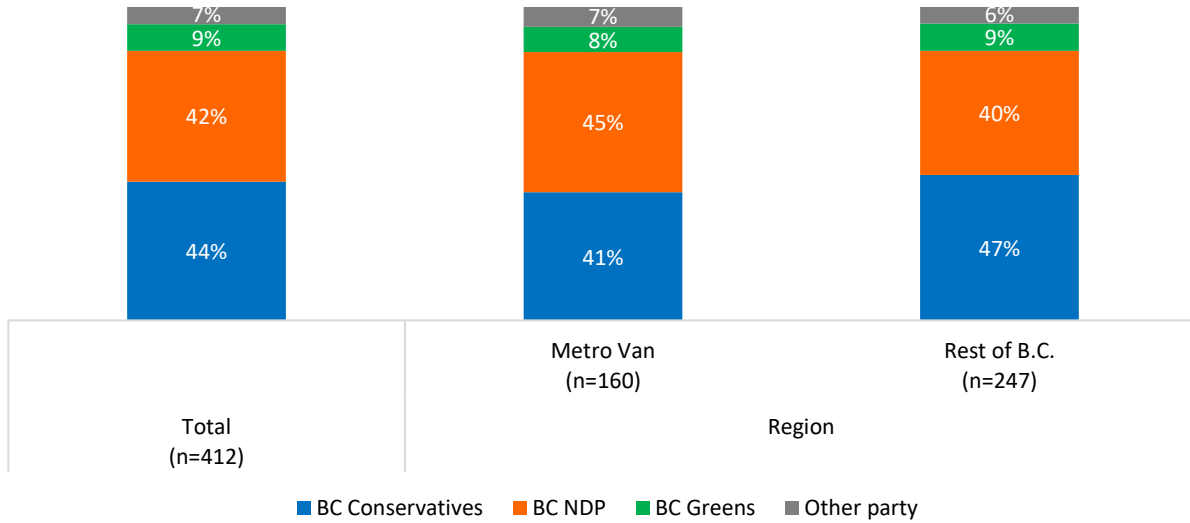
Related: Rustad’s rocky road: Half of the BC Conservative Party’s 2024 voters say they want him to go

And yet, despite the situation the Conservatives find themselves in, they also are statistically tied in vote intention with the governing BC NDP. Near-equal-sized groups of two-in-five say they would vote BC NDP (42%) and BC Conservative (44%) if the election were today.



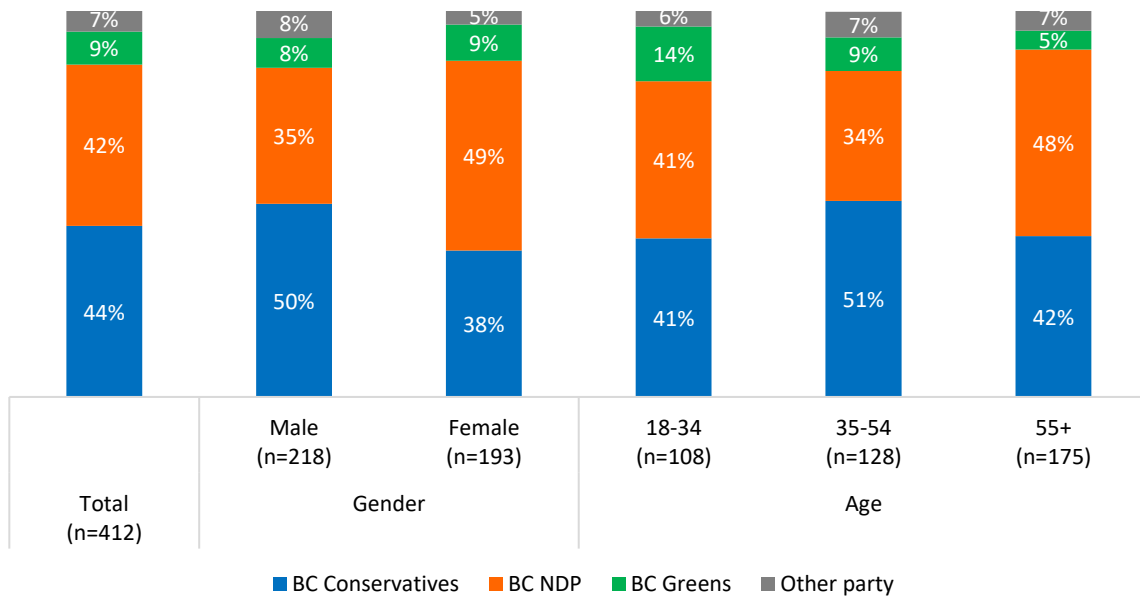
The BC NDP are favoured in Metro Vancouver (+4 over the Conservatives); the Conservatives lead elsewhere in the province (+7):

**Provincial vote intention
(Decided and leaning voters)**



The BC Conservatives perform best with men and those aged 35- to 54-years-old. More women would vote BC NDP if the election were today than BC Conservative:

**Provincial vote intention
(Decided and leaning voters)**



Part Two: What’s driving the situation?

Top issues

Examining the issues selected by British Columbians and how they’ve changed over the past two years suggests some successes for Premier David Eby and the governing BC NDP. There has been an 11-point decline in the proportion in the province selecting housing affordability as a top issue. And there have been some improvements on this front. Over the past two years, home prices and rental rates have [fallen in Vancouver](#), the western epicentre of Canada’s housing affordability crisis.

However, there are also persistent challenges. Health care remains a key concern, and critics highlight the many issues – [increasing wait times](#), [staffing shortages](#) – lingering in the system. And while housing affordability is perhaps trending in a positive direction, concerns over the high cost of living in general have abated little.

There are also rising concerns over government spending. One economist described the recent provincial budget as one “that managed to alienate everybody” as the government [slashed public sector employment but still projects three straight years of record deficits](#).

The criticism for Eby, [whose personal approval has fallen to a new low](#) (37%), certainly outweighs the praise as things stand.

Related: [Premiers’ Performance: Eby falls to a new low in B.C., while Kinew continues his comfort atop the list](#)

Top provincial issues in British Columbia over time (Up to three chosen)			
	Mar-24	Mar-25	Mar-26
Cost of living/Inflation	60%	52%	55%
Health Care	50%	49%	50%
Housing Affordability	40%	37%	29%
Street crime/Public safety	26%	26%	23%
The Economy/Jobs	16%	22%	22%
The Deficit/Government spending	14%	14%	20%
Poverty/homelessness	18%	13%	16%
Drug Use/addictions/opioid crisis	18%	16%	16%
Environment/Climate change	21%	12%	12%
The U.S. tariff issue/Donald Trump	N/A	30%	11%
Energy policy - Oil & Gas/Pipelines/Renewables etc.	7%	9%	11%
First Nations/Indigenous issues	6%	4%	8%
Education	10%	8%	8%

CONTACT:

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

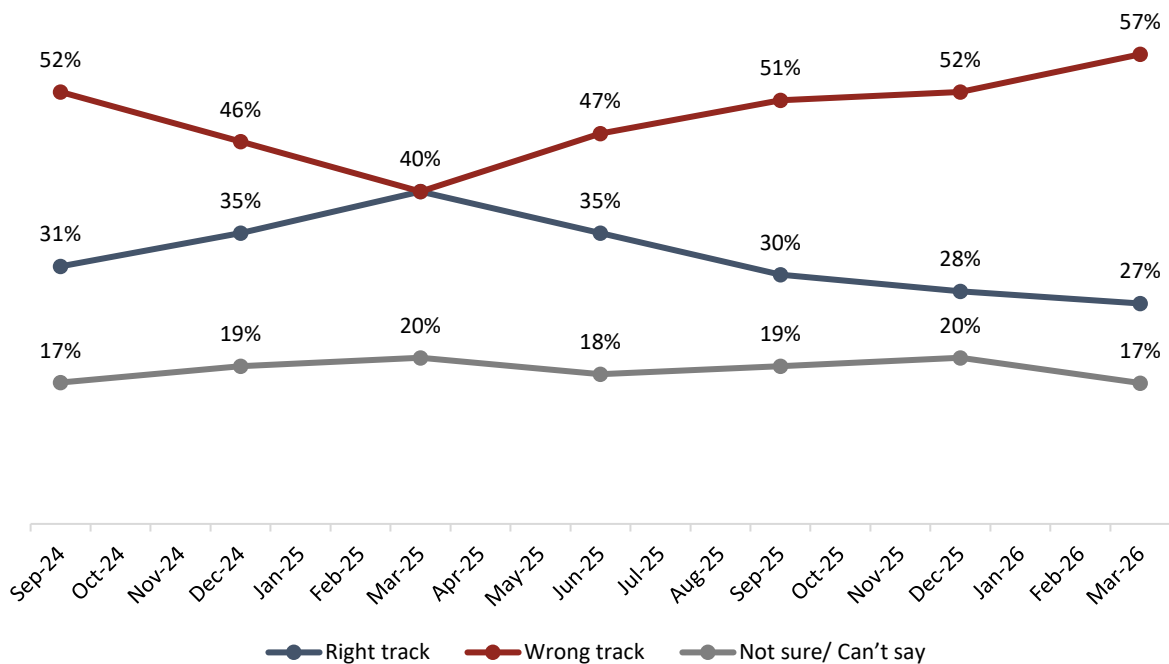
Three-in-five say province is on the wrong track

Taking all those issues together, approaching three-in-five (57%) believe B.C. is on the wrong track, double the number (27%) who say instead they believe the province is going in the right direction.

There was a period a year ago where two-in-five believed Eby and the BC NDP had righted the ship, but since then there is an increasing proportion that say the government has taken B.C. on the wrong path.

Those who voted BC NDP in the last election are the most likely to believe the province is going in the right direction (51%), but a sizable minority of three-in-ten (29%) of those 2024 voters are critical of the direction the province is going ([see detailed tables](#)).

Overall, do you feel British Columbia is on the right track or the wrong track?



The land rights saga

More saying DRIPA ‘goes too far’

Recent agreements and court settlements over Indigenous land title in B.C. has been central to much of the political discussion in recent months.

Related: [Cowichan Ruling: Most in B.C. believe court decision on Aboriginal title has potential to damage reconciliation](#)

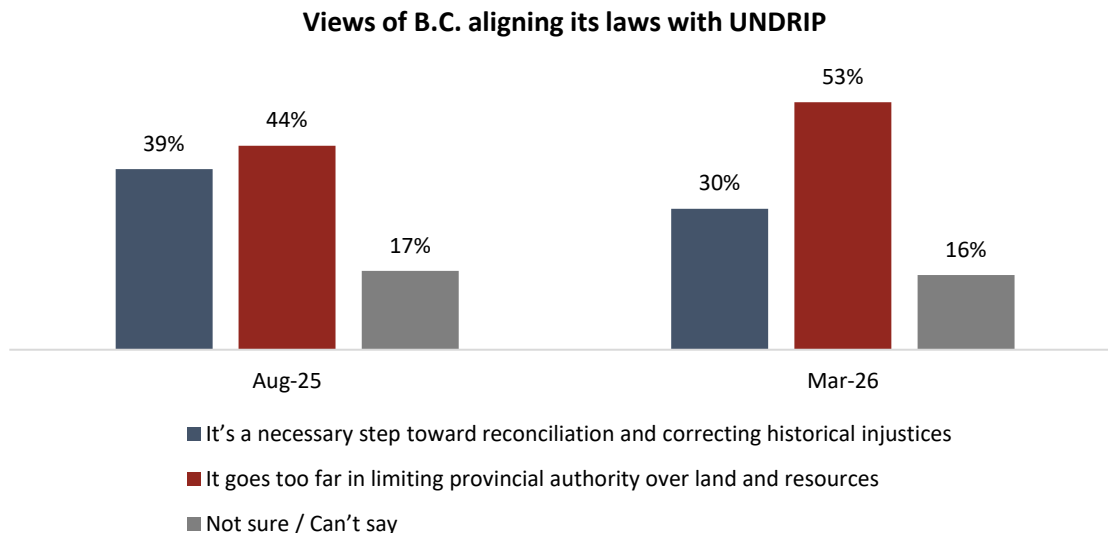
In 2019, B.C. passed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA), becoming the first jurisdiction to move to align its laws with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This has had [wide-ranging legal implications](#) for B.C. and its obligations to work with First Nations on resources and land rights. After recent court decisions on the province’s mineral rights

CONTACT:

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

regime and the Cowichan Aboriginal title claim, the [B.C. government is considering changes](#) to soften the language in DRIPA.

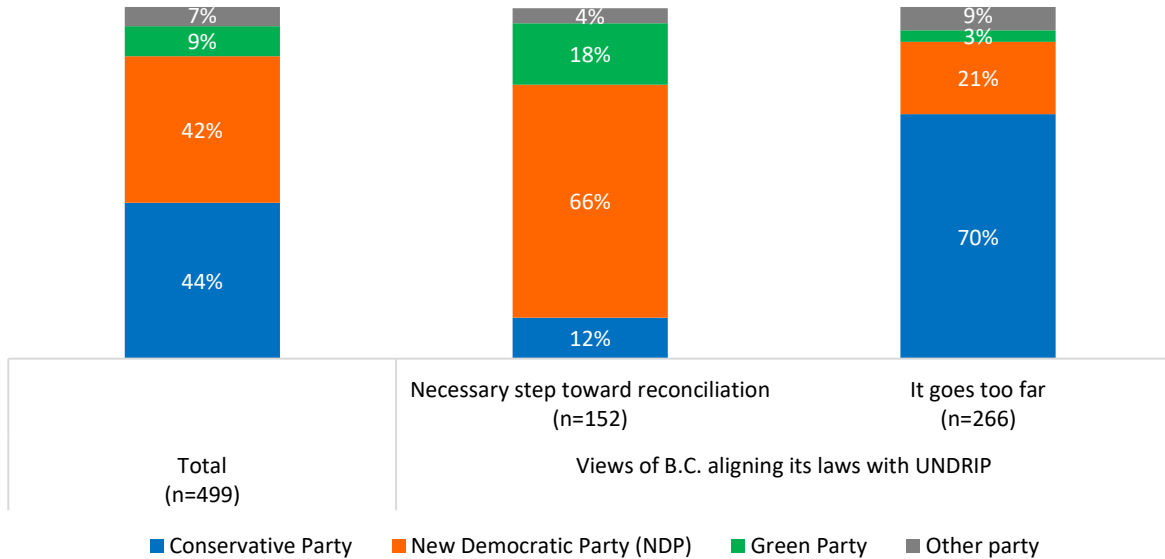
Public opinion has moved against DRIPA’s goal of aligning B.C.’s laws with UNDRIP. In August last year, British Columbians were split, but leaning towards believing DRIPA “goes too far in limiting provincial authority”. Now a majority (53%) believe that to be the case, with fewer saying that DRIPA is a “necessary step toward reconciliation” (39% to 30%):



Eby and the BC NDP’s efforts to amend DRIPA are perhaps out of line with his own base, a majority of whom believe it’s a necessary step towards correcting historical injustices ([see detailed tables](#)), but an acknowledgement of the political pressure his party is under when it comes to the issue of land rights in the province.

Indeed, by a more than three-to-one margin, those who believe DRIPA goes too far in limiting provincial authority would support the BC Conservatives if an election were today. It is worth noting too, that of those who believe DRIPA “goes too far”, one-in-five (21%) say they would vote BC NDP if the election were today:

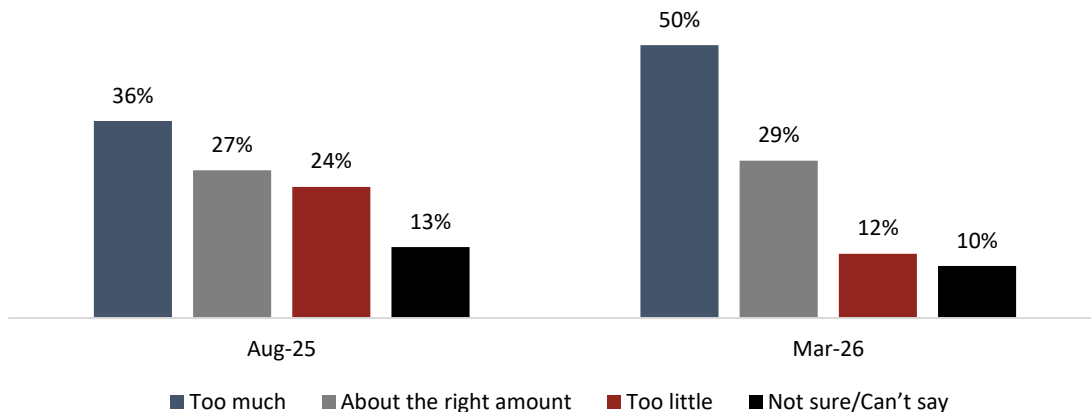
**Provincial vote intention
(Decided and leaning voters)**



Half say province paying ‘too much’ attention to Indigenous issues

Overall, First Nations/Indigenous Issues are selected by one-in-12 (8%) as a top issue facing the province. Court decisions have thrust these considerations into the forefront – perhaps more so than most British Columbians would prefer. Half (50%) in the province say the province gives “too much” attention to Indigenous issues, a 14-point increase from August of last year:

Overall, do you feel that your province gives too much, too little, or the right amount of attention to Indigenous issues?

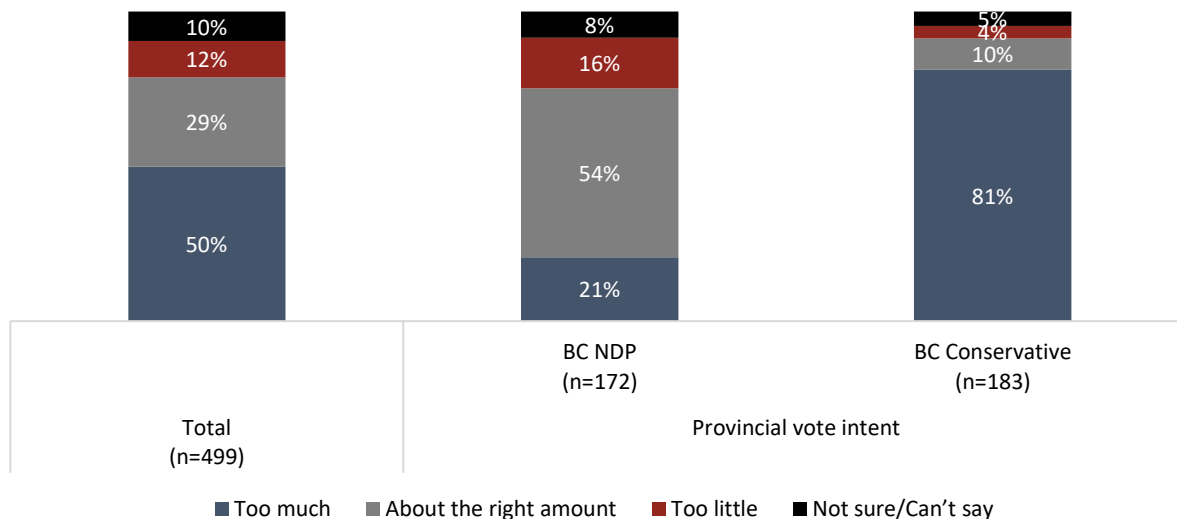


CONTACT:

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

Four-in-five (81%) of those who would support the BC Conservatives in an election believe the government is giving “too much” attention to Indigenous issues. One-in-five (21%) BC NDP supporters agree, although a majority (54%) say the Eby government is giving that file the “right amount” of attention:

Overall, do you feel that your province gives too much, too little, or the right amount of attention to Indigenous issues?



More distrust than trust on federal gov’t agreements with Musqueam

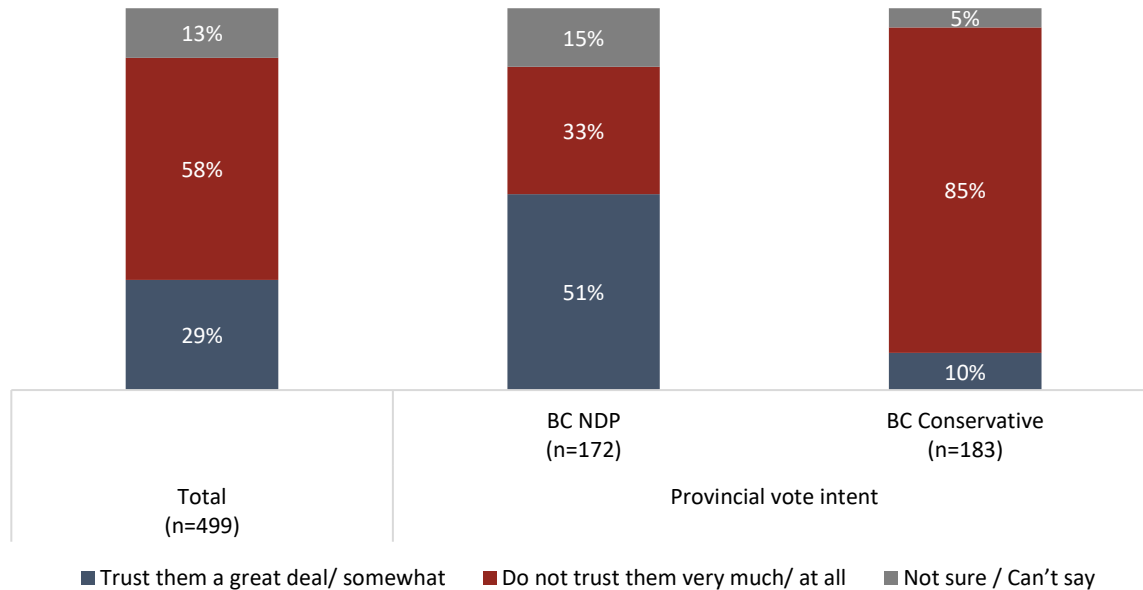
The Cowichan decision was not the only major development on the Indigenous land rights front in B.C. in recent months. In February, the federal government reached a landmark agreement with the Musqueam Indian Band, formally recognizing its rights and title across their traditional territory. Eby and the federal Crown-Indigenous relations minister have [offered conflicting views](#) on how much the province knew about this agreement before it was announced as [it further stoked fears about the implications of Indigenous title rights for private property](#). Federal officials and Musqueam leaders [have stated](#) that the new agreement does not affect private property rights.

However, there is much distrust from British Columbians. A majority (58%) say have little or no trust that these agreements will not affect private property rights; half as many (29%) say they trust the assurances a great deal or somewhat. There is a political split: those who would vote BC NDP are much more trusting of the federal government and Musqueam officials’ statements that the agreements won’t affect private property rights (51%) than those who would vote BC Conservative (10%)

CONTACT:

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

How much do you trust the assurances from the federal government and the Musqueam that these agreements will not affect private property rights?



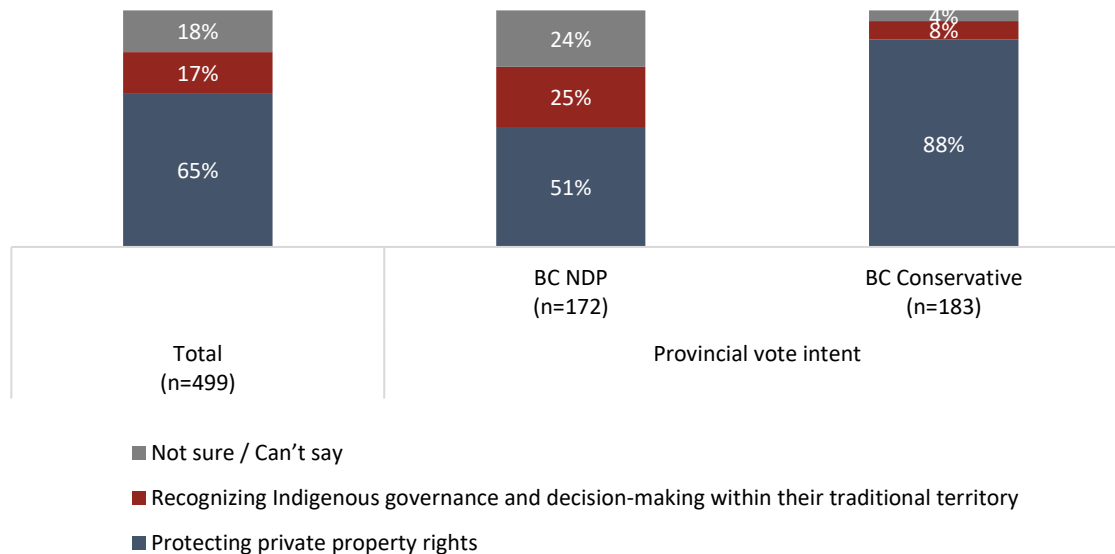
Two-thirds say private property rights should be priority

There is more agreement across political lines as to what the priority should be if there is a conflict between private property rights and the recognition of Indigenous governance within traditional territory. Half (51%) of BC NDP supporters and nine-in-ten (88%) BC Conservative supporters say private property rights should take precedence over Indigenous decision making. Together, that represents two-thirds (65%) of British Columbians:

CONTACT:

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

If there were ever a conflict between protecting private property rights and recognizing Indigenous governance and decision-making within their traditional territory, which do you think should take priority?



Part Three: What (or who) is the alternative?

Did Darrell make a bad deal?

The chaos of the post election period for the BC Conservatives has done little to dampen support for the party. There is an eight-person field of both party insiders and outsiders competing for an office that has plenty of fertile ground to grow an election push to contest the incumbent BC NDP.

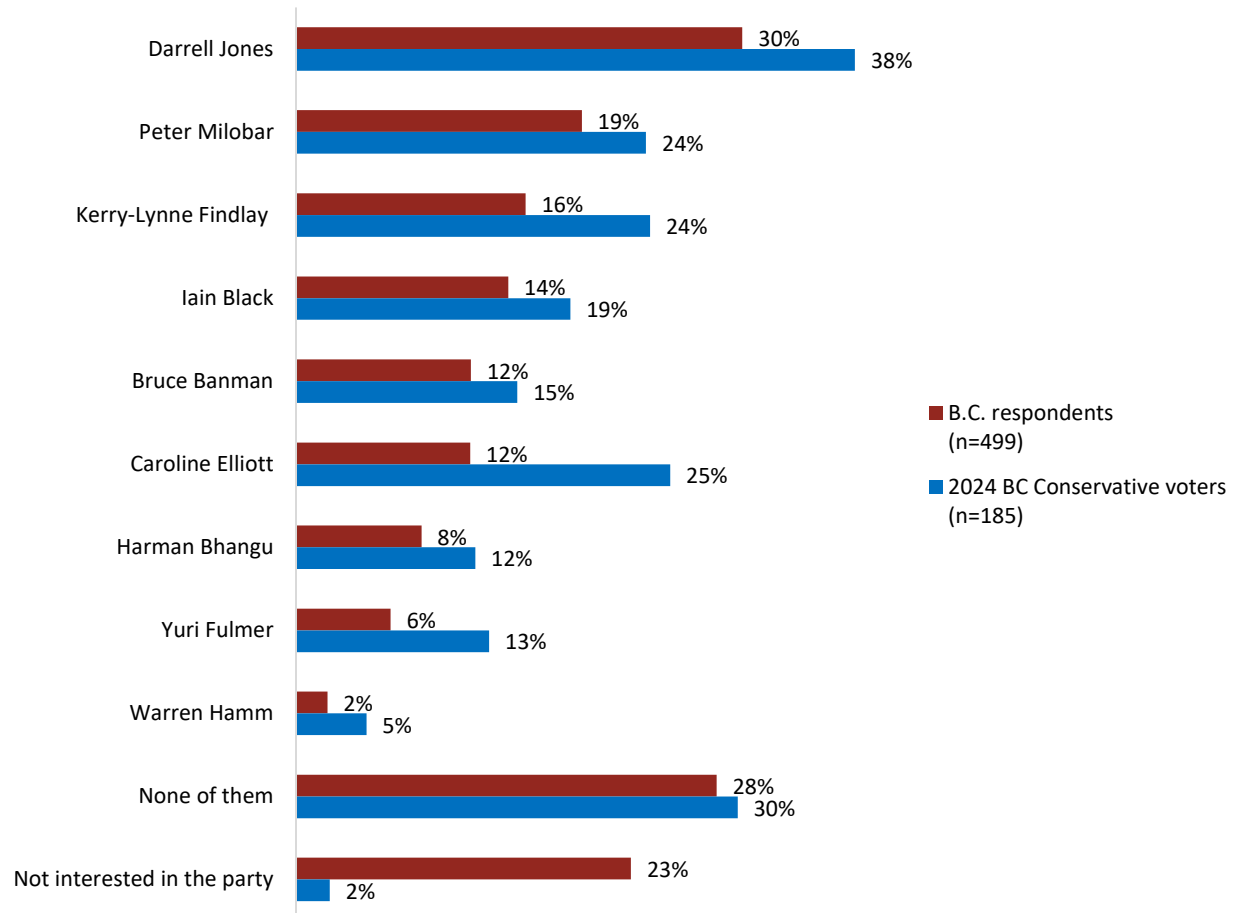
The field has already narrowed from the nine who were confirmed by the party for the contest; the first to drop out of the race was the candidate with the highest name recognition. Former Pattison Food Group President Darrell Jones, who exited the race on March 29 and endorsed former BC United vice-president Caroline Elliott on the way out, is familiar to 30 per cent of British Columbian residents and 38 per cent of those who voted for the BC Conservatives in 2024, perhaps buoyed by his appearance in [Darrell's Deals TV ads](#).

Among the remaining eight candidates, Elliott leads the way in recognition with one-quarter (25%) of past BC Conservative voters saying they are familiar with her. MLA Peter Milobar (24%) and former MP and federal cabinet minister Kerry-Lynne Findlay (24%) are close behind in familiarity among the party's recent voters.

CONTACT:

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

Have you heard of or are you familiar with any of the following candidates?



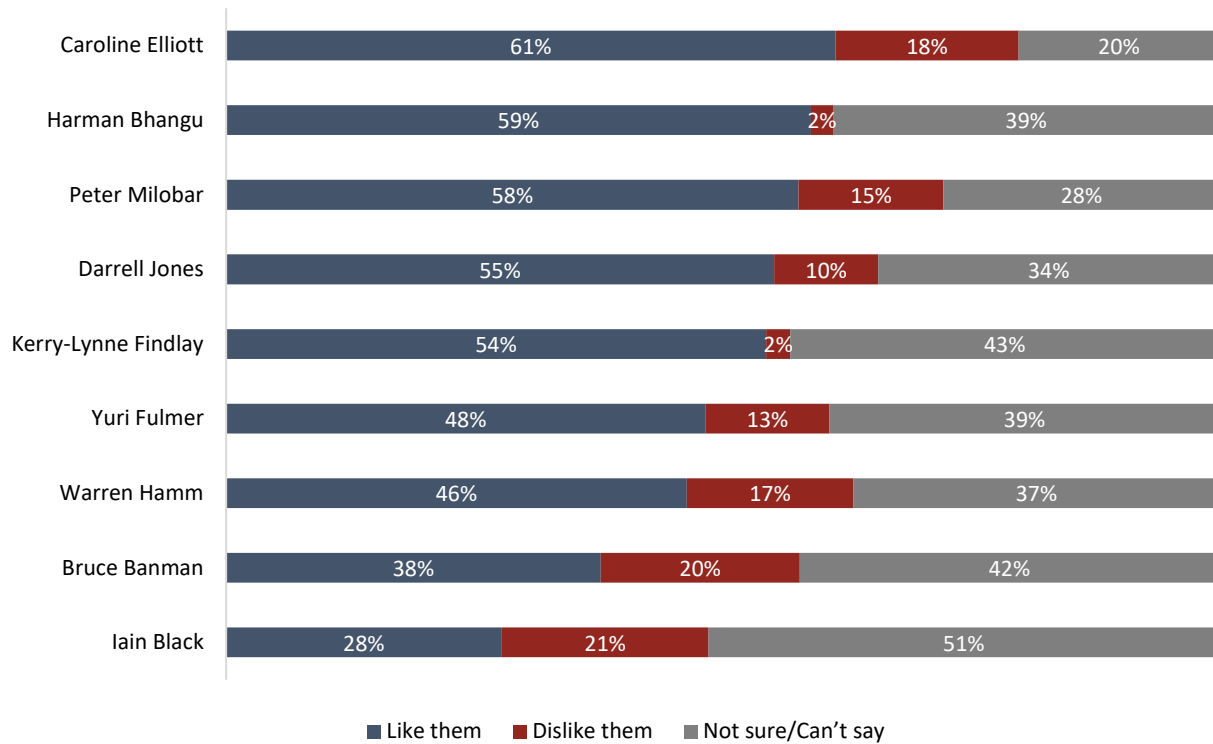
Who do past BC Conservative voters like or dislike?

There is more likability of the candidates among past BC Conservative voters than recognition – note that a short description of the candidate was included ([see detailed tables](#)). Three-in-five say they like the candidacies of Elliott (59%), MLAs Harman Bhangu (59%), and Milobar (58%). Findlay (54%) is close behind:

CONTACT:

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

**Do you like this person as a candidate for the BC Conservatives or dislike them?
(Among 2024 BC Conservative voters, n=185)**



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