

Pipeline Politics: Majority back Westcoast LNG project; half say Ottawa should be pushing harder on the file

Opposition to pipeline projects in B.C. has dwindled over time

May 11, 2026 – The federal approval of Enbridge's Westcoast LNG pipeline expansion is being met with little public opinion opposition in what is further evidence of the changed landscape on pipelines in British Columbia.

New data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds majority support for the Westcoast LNG pipeline expansion across the country (55%) and in B.C. (61%), where support outnumbers opposition by three-to-one (17%).

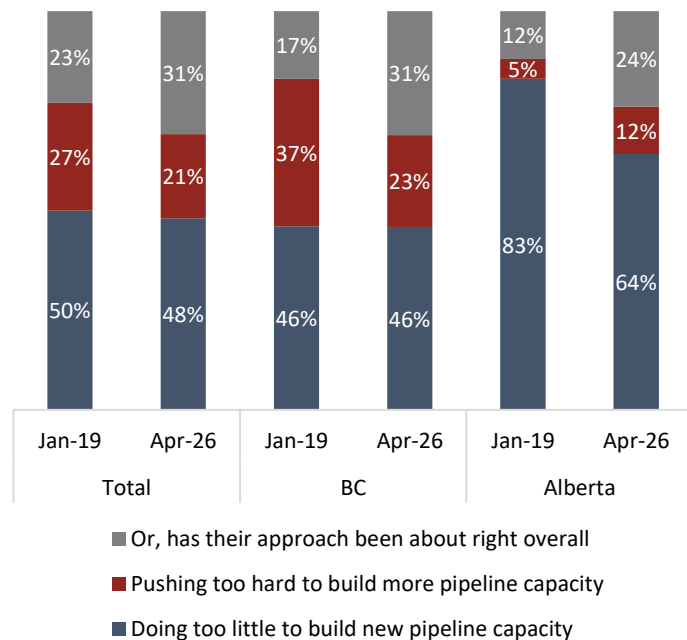
There is also a desire for more. Half (48%) in Canada, and more than two-in-five (46%) in B.C., believe the federal government is "doing too little to build new pipeline capacity". Nationally, three-in-ten (31%) say the federal government's approach is about right, while one-in-five (21%) say there is too much of a focus on building pipelines.

The latter group has shrunk by six points compared to 2019 (27%), when the Trans Mountain expansion was being debated.

Since 2019, there has been a major shift in priorities for Canadians when it comes to energy policy. At that time, more believed protecting the environment (55%) should be a bigger focus than economic growth (45%). Now, three-in-five (61%) say growing the economy should be the bigger focus for energy policy than stewarding the environment (39%).

In B.C., the proportion of residents standing in opposition to pipeline projects has shrunk over time. Earlier in the 2010s, majorities were opposed to Northern Gateway (2012, 57%) and the Trans Mountain expansion (2014, 54%). Eventually, there was more support for Trans Mountain once it was approved by the federal

Views on the federal government approach to pipelines over time



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from April 24-28, 2026, among a randomized sample of 2,360 Canadian adults. 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 +/- 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.

For more information on our polling methods, [click here.](#)

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government under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau but still sizable opposition (54% support, 38% oppose in 2019). In more recent data taken by ARI, opposition to various pipeline projects is under one-third, including Enbridge’s Westcoast LNG (17%).

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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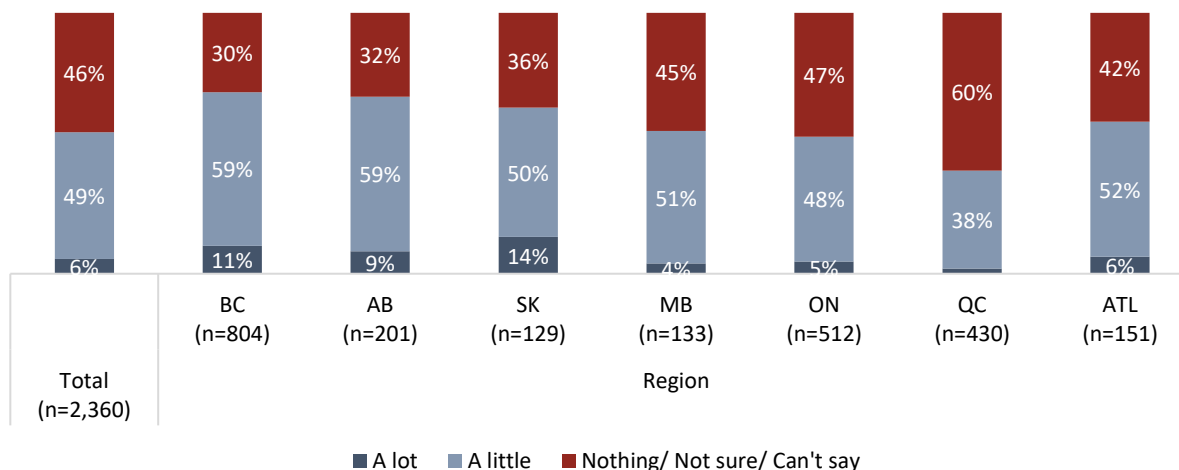
- Little knowledge, but plenty of support for Enbridge LNG pipeline expansion
- The history of support for pipeline projects in B.C.
- Shifting views on energy policy – economy prioritized over environment
- Half want more push on pipelines from federal government

Little knowledge, but plenty of support for Enbridge LNG pipeline expansion

The federal government approved in April a \$4-billion expansion of the southern portion of Enbridge’s Westcoast natural gas pipeline system. The pipeline brings natural gas from northeastern B.C. to consumers and businesses in the Lower Mainland. The boost in capacity will also supply the Woodfibre LNG project near Squamish, B.C. which is expected to start exporting liquefied natural gas to Asia in 2027.

Although Westcoast is a key backbone of B.C.’s natural gas system, most in the province (59%) say they know just a little about it:

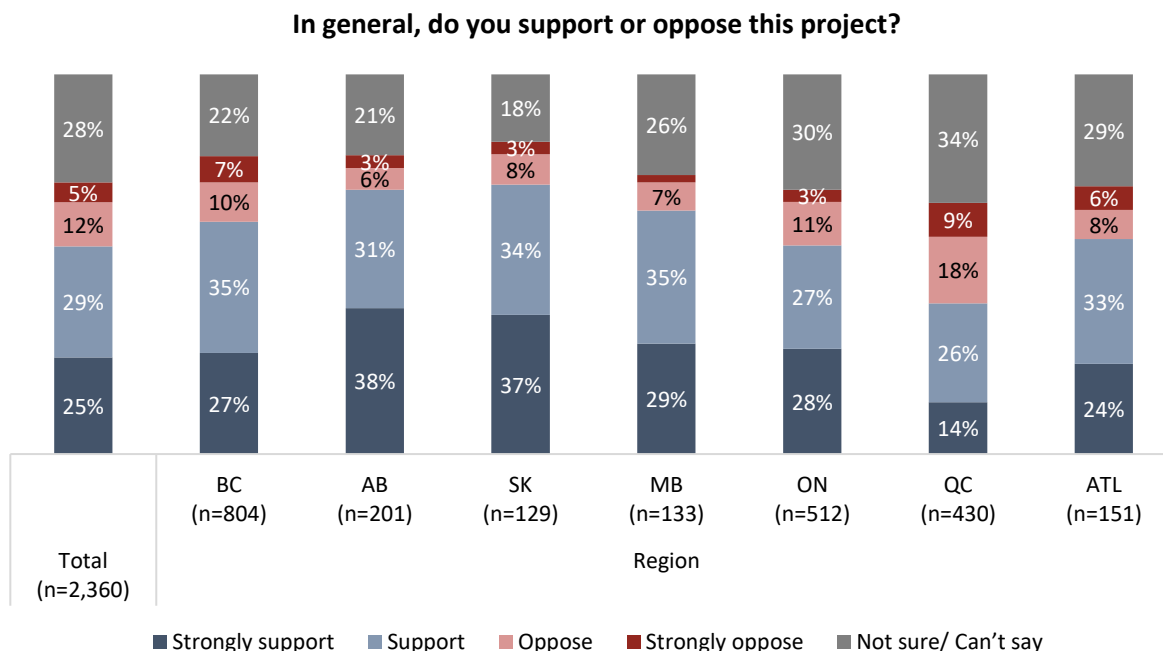
How much would you say you know about this pipeline?



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Support for the project outweighs opposition by three-to-one (61% to 17%) in B.C. There is also more who support the pipeline expansion than oppose it in every province in the country:



The history of support for pipeline projects in B.C.

The relative enthusiasm of British Columbians to embrace a pipeline in B.C. is notable given the history of response to other pipeline projects, both in the province and in Canada more broadly.

In 2012, approaching three-in-five (57%) opposed the Northern Gateway project, prior to that pipeline's initial approval by the federal government under Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2014 and eventual rejection by the federal government under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in 2016. In 2017, a majority (55%) in the province said they supported Trudeau's rejection of the pipeline.

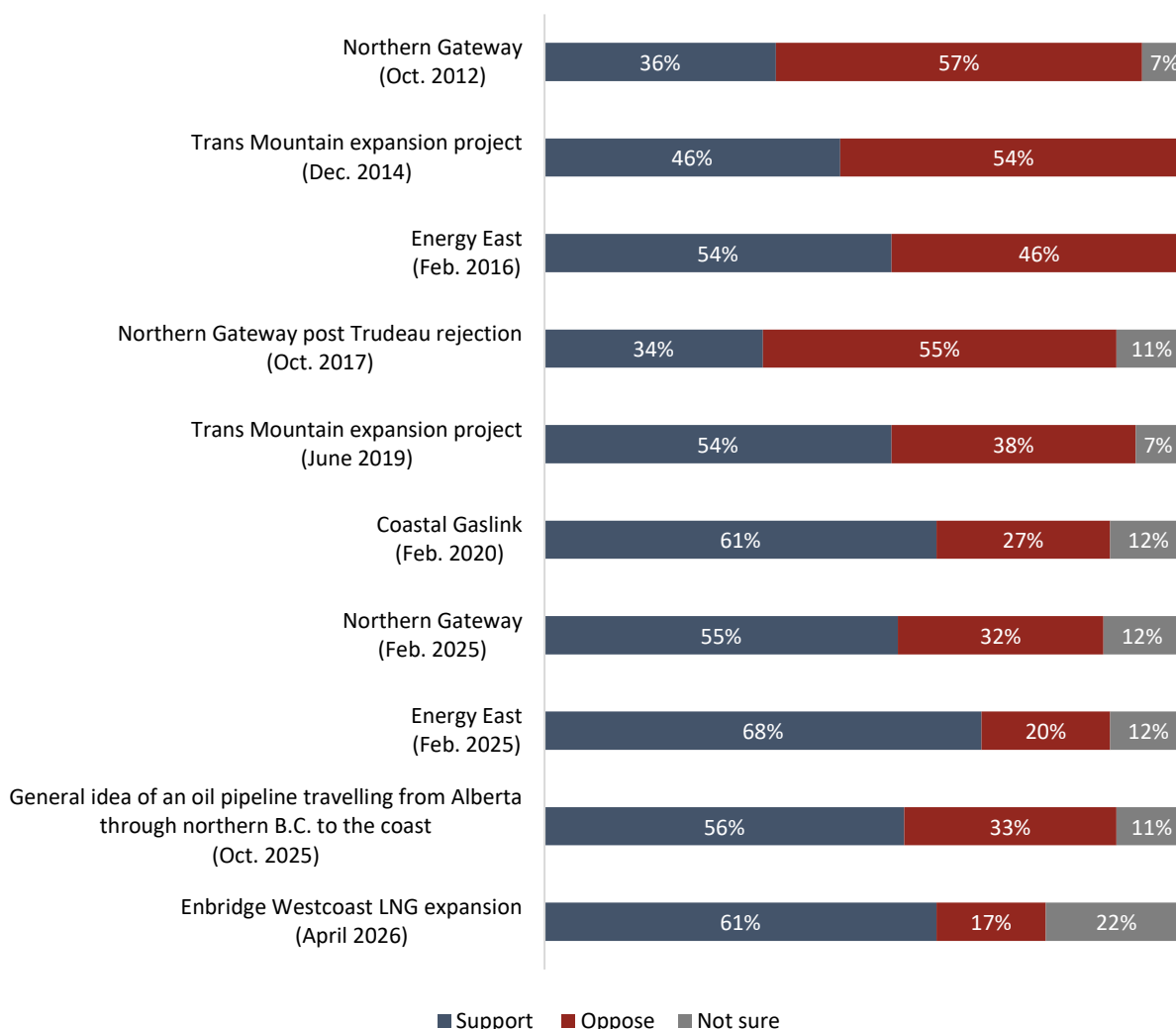
B.C. opposition to Trans Mountain shrank as time went on, starting at 54 per cent in December 2014. But it was still relatively high – 38 per cent – after the expansion was approved by the Trudeau Liberals.

More recent data shows how more accepting British Columbians are of pipelines in general. A majority (55%) said in February 2025 they would support a revival of Northern Gateway. A similar pipeline project – a greenfield pipeline proposed by Alberta Premier Danielle Smith starting in Alberta travelling through northern B.C. – was supported by 56 per cent and opposed by one-third (33%):

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Support vs. opposition in British Columbia for pipeline projects over time



Shifting views on energy policy – economy prioritized over environment

The Westcoast LNG pipeline expansion arrives in a much different public opinion environment than in 2019, when the federal government under Trudeau approved the much larger Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project. At that time, although a majority in B.C. supported the Trans Mountain expansion, there was more public pressure to ensure that the environment was protected as Canada set energy policy. A majority (55%) of Canadians, including approaching three-in-five (57%) in B.C., said protecting the environment should be a bigger priority for energy policy than promoting economic growth.

Priorities have shifted significantly since then, especially in the wake of the economic threats from U.S. President Donald Trump.

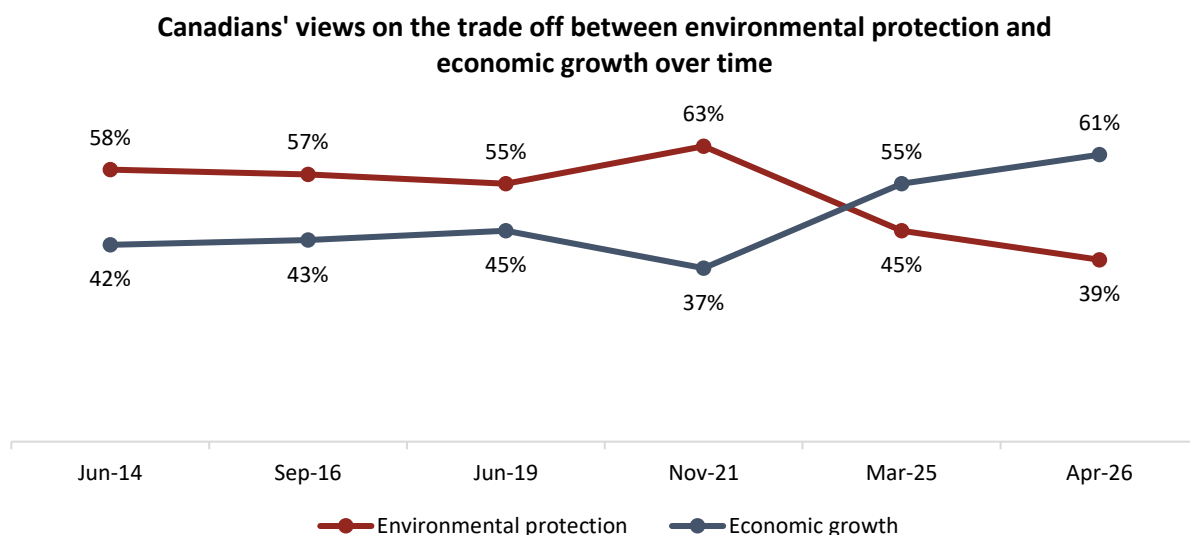
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Related:

- [Shovels in the ground: More than half of Canadians say Liberals made right decision in approving TransMountain expansion](#)
- [Pipeline Push: Majority of Canadians, including B.C. residents support the idea of a pipeline to the north coast](#)

Now, three-in-five (61%) believe economic growth should be the biggest priority rather than environmental protection. Two-in-five (39%) believe it should be the other way around:



This dramatic turnaround since 2019 is illustrated by the regional numbers. In B.C., there has been a 16-point swing to the side of prioritizing economic growth in energy policy. The largest shifts are in Manitoba (24-points) and Quebec (24-points):

In shaping Canada's energy policy, what do you see as the biggest priority? (Change from June 2019 noted)								
	Total	Region						
		BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	ATL
Environmental protection	39% (-16)	41% (-16)	26% (-4)	31% (-7)	34% (-24)	37% (-14)	48% (-24)	41% (-16)
Economic growth	61% (+16)	59% (+16)	74% (+4)	69% (+7)	66% (+24)	63% (+14)	52% (+24)	59% (+16)

Half want more push on pipelines from federal government

What hasn't changed is the view on whether the federal government is doing enough on pipelines. In January 2019, half (50%) said the federal government under Trudeau was doing too little; a similar number (48%) say the same of the Liberals under Prime Minister Mark Carney now. There has, however,

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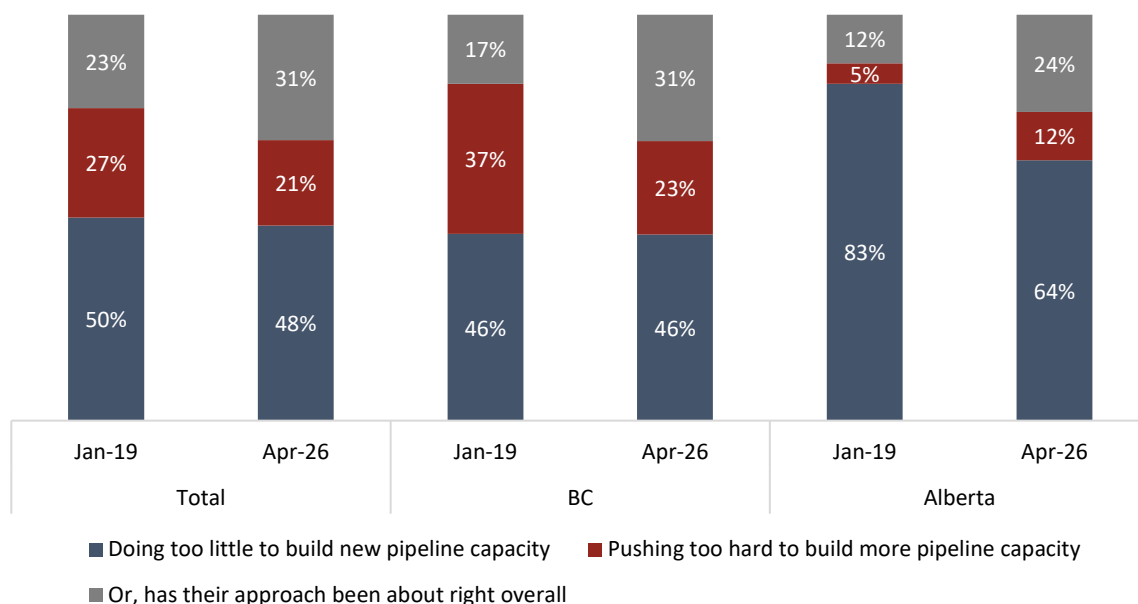
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been a six-point decline in the proportion of Canadians who believe the federal government is pushing new pipelines too hard (27% in 2019; 21% now).

The decline in those who say the federal government is focusing too much on building new pipelines is evident among British Columbians. In 2019, approaching two-in-five (37%) in B.C. believed the federal government was doing too much on the pipeline file, one-quarter (23%) say the same now.

Across the border in Alberta, where pipelines to service the province’s oil and gas industry are always a major issue, the majority who believe the federal government is not doing enough on pipelines has shrunk since 2019, from four-in-five (83%) to two-thirds (64%).

Views on the federal government approach to pipelines over time



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

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