

## Premiers' Performance: Ford, Eby rebound; the rest benefit little from intensifying US-Canada trade war

*Kinew tops rankings as the only premier with majority approval*

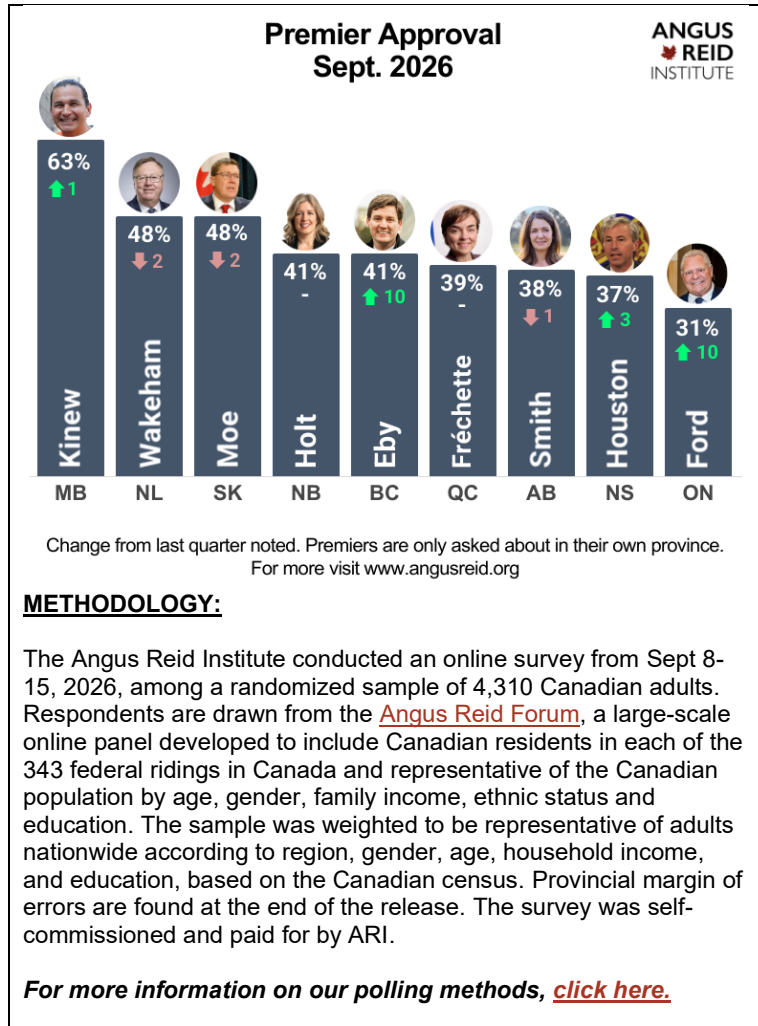
**September 16, 2026** – Some might say the U.S.-Canada trade war has become a renewed source of political leverage for this country's politicians. But unlike last year, when the non-profit Angus Reid Institute found rising personal popularity for a majority of provincial premiers, few of the provincial first ministers appear to be benefiting this fall, even as trade animosity between Canada and the U.S. intensifies.

New data from ARI shows big bumps in approval for B.C.'s David Eby (+10 to 41% approval) and Ontario's Doug Ford (+10 to 31%) but little movement elsewhere in the country. For both Eby and Ford, this represents a recovery in what had been flagging assessments from constituents. However, the latter is still facing deep disapproval across Ontario as plane and hotel spending scandals dog the governing Progressive Conservatives.

With key votes looming in October, eyes are turned to Quebec and Alberta where both Premiers Christine Fréchette (39%) and Danielle Smith (38%) are approved of by approximately two-in-five in their respective provinces. Both have seen no statistically significant change from the previous quarter. Smith's status quo comes as the governing UCP sorts through the aftermath of a surprise byelection defeat in a conservative stronghold and just weeks ahead of the Alberta referenda on separation and other issues. Fréchette has evidently built little momentum as the governing Coalition Avenir Québec to fend off the resurgent Parti Québécois in next month's election.

Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew's honeymoon period continues with approval of approaching two-thirds (63%) in the province. The second most approved-of premiers in the country are Newfoundland and Labrador's Tony Wakeham (48%) and Saskatchewan's Scott Moe (48%).

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



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## 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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### **B.C.: Eby's approval recovers**

The Trump tariffs may be the source of economic anxiety for Canadians, but they have also sown fertile ground for the nation's politicians. B.C. Premier David Eby's strong words in response to Trump's tariff and annexation threats last year helped boost his personal popularity in March 2025. For the only time in his tenure, a majority of British Columbians approved of his performance.

The escalation of the trade war is perhaps to Eby's political benefit, as his approval gains ten points from 31 per cent in June to 41 per cent now. Eby headlined at a recent "Rally for Canada", during which he revealed new signs to be erected at U.S. border crossings in the province that say "Strong, proud and will never be the 51<sup>st</sup> state. Sorry!"

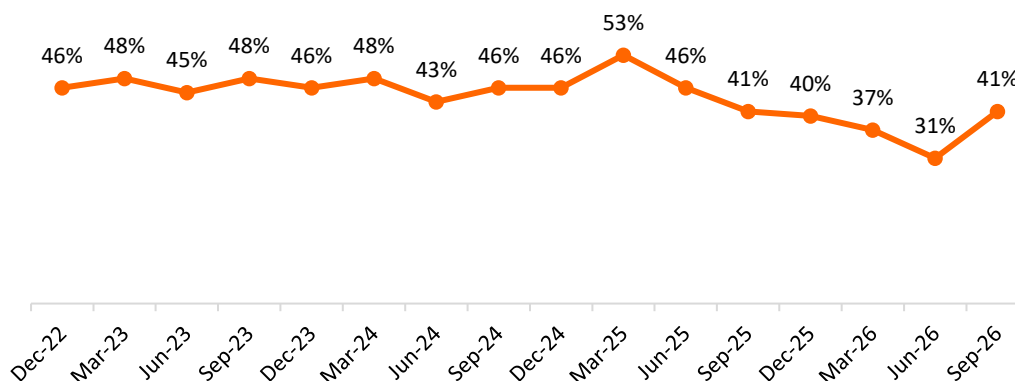
Eby may also benefit by being seen as better option than the alternative, B.C. Conservative leader Kerry-Lynne Findlay. Barely three months into the job, her caucus has splintered. Stay tuned for a coming release outlining the latest on the B.C. political scene.

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### Approval of B.C. Premier David Eby



### Alberta: Smith approved of by two-in-five

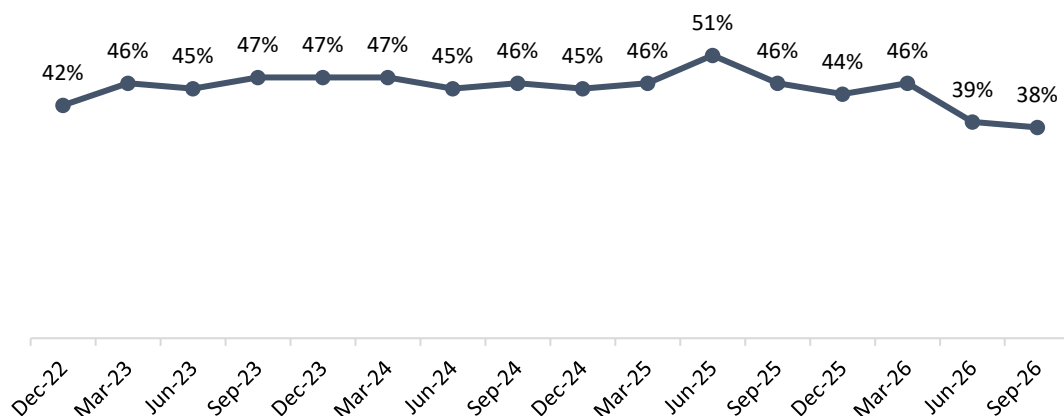
Alberta Premier Danielle Smith was dealt a surprise political blow during a crucial period for her in advance of the referendum when the NDP upset the UCP in the Calgary-Shaw byelection, claiming a historically conservative stronghold. It perhaps further highlights the challenges facing Smith in holding together the UCP coalition that is bifurcated by the separatist issue. The UCP candidate in Calgary-Shaw was endorsed by a separatist who ran as a pro-independence candidate for the position of UCP board president. The loss saw UCP yield half of its voters from the 2023 election, while the NDP managed to bring out 70 per cent of their support from the previous election.

Still, while there will be questions surrounding the surprise defeat in Calgary-Shaw, Smith's approval is unchanged compared to last quarter, with 38 per cent appraising her positively. A majority of Albertans (56%) say they disapprove of her performance, including 43 per cent who strongly do so, the highest such level of strong disapproval in the country.

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### Approval of Alberta Premier Danielle Smith



### Saskatchewan: Moe approval hovers around half

Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe is equally approved of (48%) and disapproved of (48%) this quarter. He's been a relatively consistent presence in the top half of ARI's premier rankings, but this quarter's high ranking is [more about other premiers' decline](#) than an especially high approval for Moe himself.

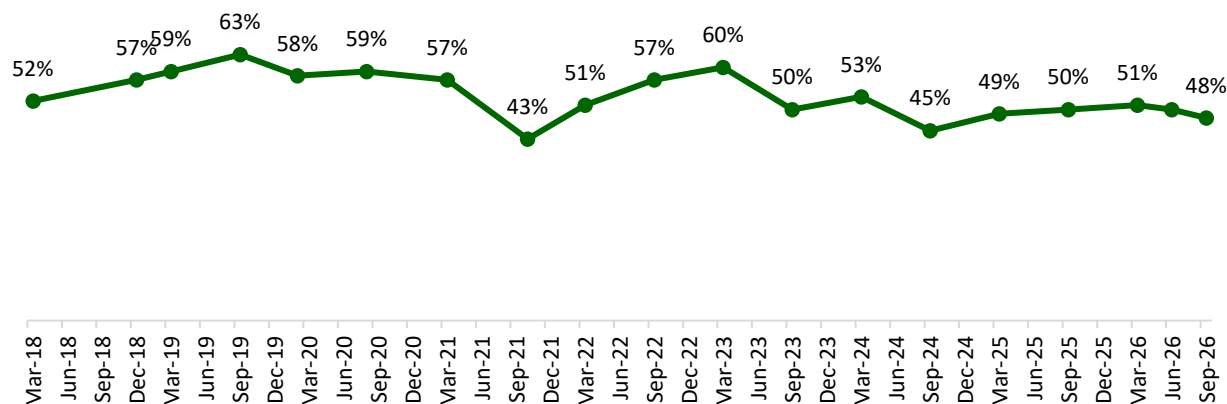
Still, as the longest tenured premier, Moe's relative popularity for a provincial leader is remarkable considering the fall other leaders elected in 2018 – Ontario's Doug Ford and Quebec's François Legault.

Moe has waded into the trade war by levelling a retaliatory tariff on U.S. alcohol coming into the province, a notable change since Saskatchewan, alongside Alberta, were among the first to reverse U.S. alcohol bans last year. But it would seem the U.S. tariff issue is not a major factor for approval of Moe, who was among the premiers [who did not receive a Trump bump in approval last March](#), at the previous peak of Trump's 51<sup>st</sup> state rhetoric.

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### Approval of Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe

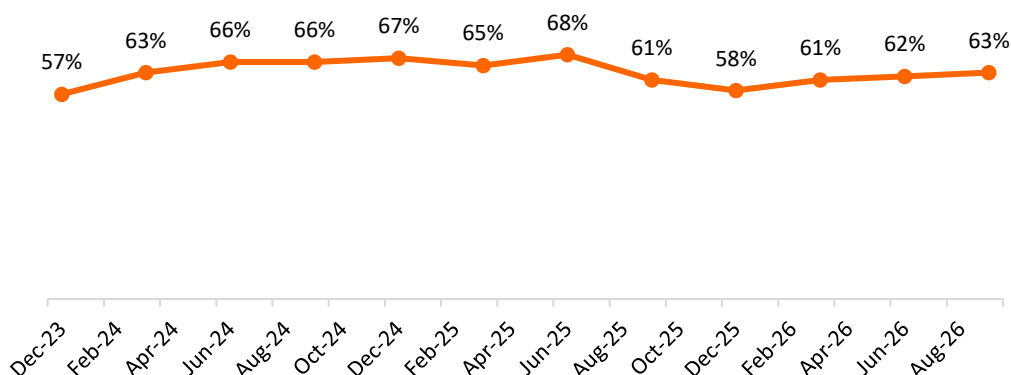


### Manitoba: Kinew endorsed by two-thirds

Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew's perch at the top of the premier rankings is uncontested once again. Kinew is the only premier with majority approval and is a full 14 points clear of second place. Kinew has made a strong push on economic development, [touting the potential benefits of year-round shipping at the Port of Churchill](#).

Meanwhile, Kinew's government enacted a policy it says will help address the key issue of affordability: cutting the provincial sales tax on store-bought food [on July 1](#). Manitobans get tax relief on rotisserie chickens, chips, and baked goods, which were previously subject to a seven-per-cent tax.

### Approval of Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew



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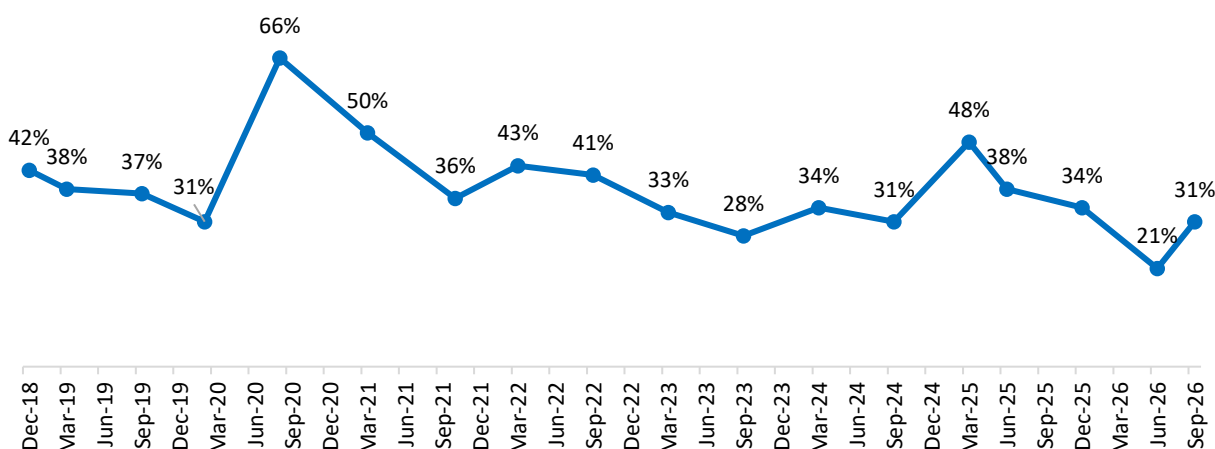
## **Ontario: Ford rebounds, but still lowest in country**

The trade war between Canada and the United States has become a key platform for Ontario Premier Doug Ford, who has perhaps been the premier most in the spotlight with his U.S. TV appearances and controversial ad. Ford, who has been nicknamed “[Captain Canada](#)”, was one of the biggest beneficiaries last March when many provincial leaders saw nationalism-fueled boost to their popularity.

The intensified hostilities between Canada and the U.S. on the trade front has coincided with another improvement for assessments of Ford, but not to the same extent as last year. Three-in-10 (31%) of Ontarians approve of Ford’s performance, as he’s used [colourful language](#) in a literal war of words with U.S. President Donald Trump, who is [deeply unpopular among Canadians](#).

But two-thirds (64%) of Ontarians say they disapprove of their premier’s performance. At issue is perhaps the lingering effects of spending scandals by Ford government MPPs. Twenty PC caucus members came under fire for expensing hotels during government sittings [despite living nearby](#). The hotel scandal comes on the heels of a private plane kerfuffle [earlier this year](#).

**Approval of Ontario Premier Doug Ford**



## **Quebec: Fréchette unchanged at 39 per cent as campaign underway**

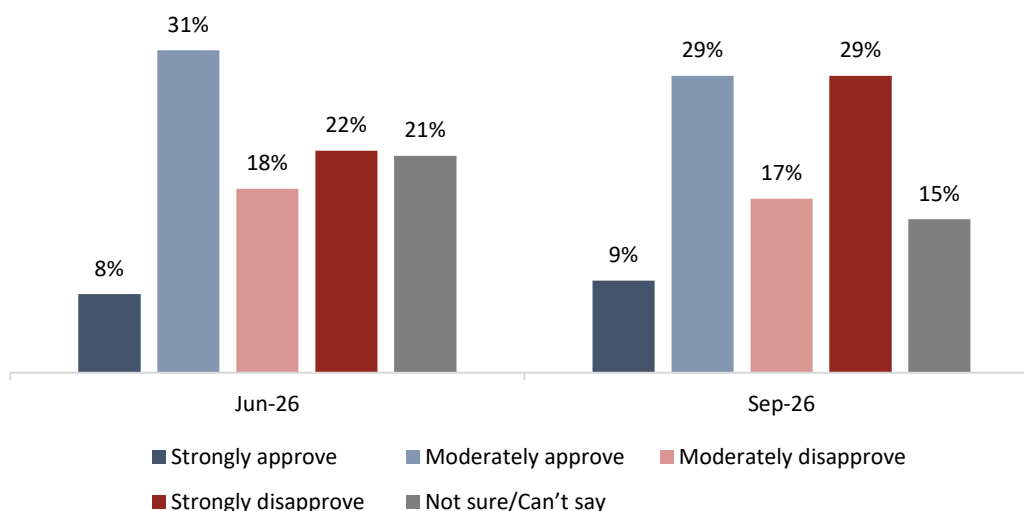
Quebec Premier Christine Fréchette has breathed new life into the flagging Coalition Avenir Québec, who were staring down certain electoral collapse before former Premier François Legault stepped down earlier this year. Quebecers are split on Fréchette’s performance as premier – 39 per cent approve, 47 per cent disapprove. But that’s a better base to work with than the one left in Legault’s wake.

The issues motivating the vote will be key as Fréchette is left to defend an eight-year CAQ track record. Stay tuned for a more fulsome report on the leaders, issues and motivations of the Quebec election from ARI.

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### Approval of Quebec Premier Christine Fréchette

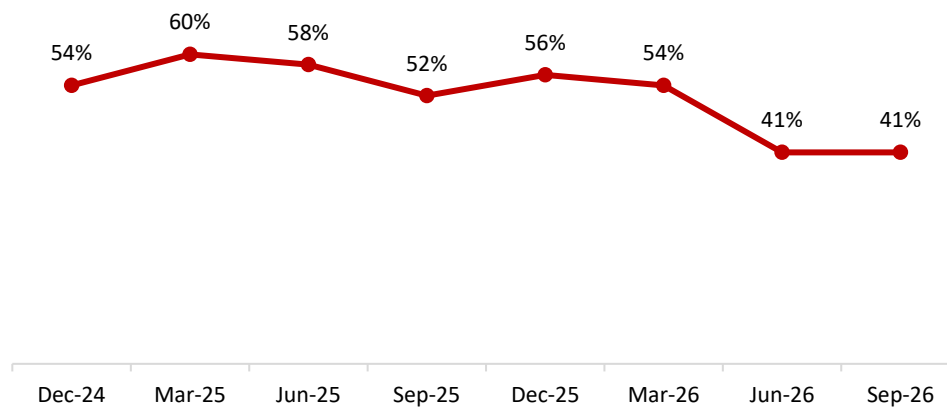


### New Brunswick: Holt holds at 41 per cent

The honeymoon period for New Brunswick Premier Susan Holt is officially over as she holds two-in-five (41%) approval for the second consecutive quarter. Holt has followed her federal counterparts along the path of economic pragmatism over environmental protectionism. The New Brunswick Liberal government last month announced it would [review the province's moratorium on hydraulic fracturing](#) as it considers all economic options amid a U.S.-Canada trade war with no end in sight. The ban had been in place since 2014, when it was put in place by former Liberal Premier Brian Gallant after protests against gas development in the province.

[Earlier in the summer](#), Holt announced the province would follow weaker carbon prices the federal government allowed for Alberta rather than a stricter system as promised during Holt's election campaign.

### Approval of New Brunswick Premier Susan Holt



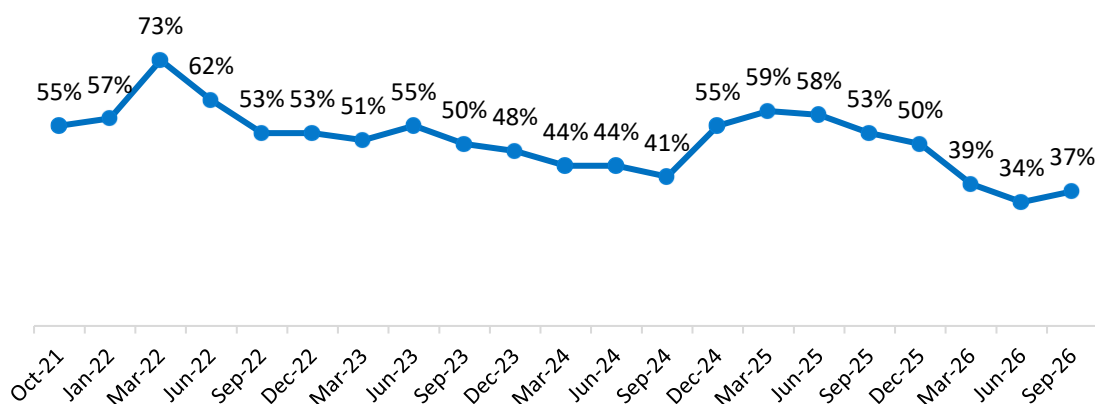
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## Nova Scotia: Houston bucks negative trend

Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston made some slight positive headway this quarter. More than one-third (37%) in the province approve of his performance as premier, though a majority (55%) still disapprove. Houston's personal popularity has not recovered from the spring's [unpopular provincial budget](#). Houston's summer speaking tour of chambers of commerce around the province was met with protesters for various issues, including some that surrounded [Houston's car and smashed the windshield](#). Nova Scotia's plan to explore hydraulic fracturing has been a flashpoint since the province lifted the fracking moratorium [last year](#).

### Approval of Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston



## Newfoundland and Labrador: Wakeham approved of by half

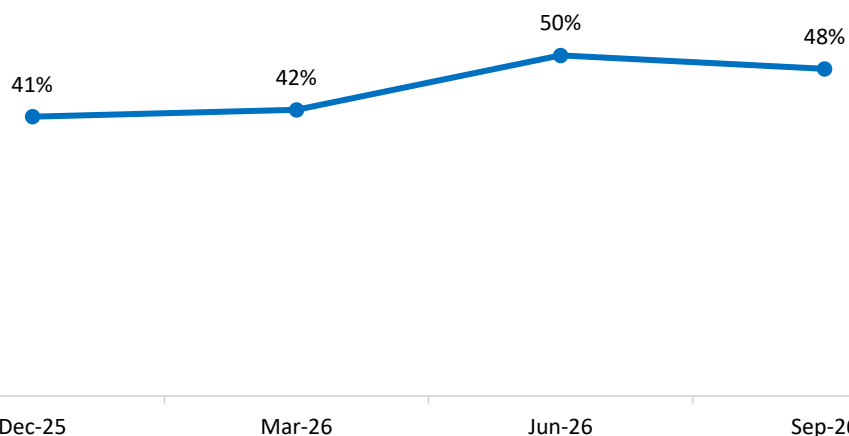
The new Churchill Falls deal between Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec has not been without controversy. It's resulted in the departure of [one Member of the House of Assembly from the governing PC party of Premier Tony Wakeham](#). The latest deal is a replacement for the one negotiated by the previous government under the Liberals. Wakeham had said he would put the final agreement to a referendum, but that promise was rescinded. The deal is an attempt to correct the below market rates Quebec was paying for energy from the Labrador-based power plant, but, according to critics, [does not bring enough benefits back to the province](#).

Newfoundland and Labrador residents are split on Wakeham's performance, with equal numbers approving and disapproving.

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### Approval of Premier and Progressive Conservative leader Tony Wakeham



| Provincial margins of error |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| BC<br>(749)                 | AB<br>(403) | SK<br>(325) | MB<br>(342) | ON<br>(779) | QC<br>(795) | NB<br>(261) | NS<br>(386) | NL<br>(209) |
| +/- 4%                      | +/- 5%      | +/- 5%      | +/- 5%      | +/- 4%      | +/- 3%      | +/- 6%      | +/- 5%      | +/- 7%      |

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

#### Summary table

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| Premiers -<br>Approve/disapprove by province |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| (Unweighted<br>sample sizes)                 | Province    |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |
|                                              | BC<br>(749) | AB<br>(403) | SK<br>(325) | MB<br>(342) | ON<br>(779) | QC<br>(795) | NB<br>(261) | NS<br>(386) | NL<br>(209) |
| Strongly<br>Approve                          | 10%         | 23%         | 17%         | 23%         | 8%          | 9%          | 6%          | 11%         | 7%          |
| Moderately<br>approve                        | 31%         | 15%         | 31%         | 40%         | 23%         | 29%         | 35%         | 26%         | 41%         |
| Moderately<br>disapprove                     | 16%         | 13%         | 18%         | 16%         | 28%         | 17%         | 21%         | 28%         | 25%         |
| Strongly<br>disapprove                       | 31%         | 44%         | 31%         | 17%         | 36%         | 29%         | 30%         | 31%         | 18%         |
| Not sure                                     | 13%         | 5%          | 4%          | 5%          | 5%          | 15%         | 9%          | 5%          | 9%          |

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