

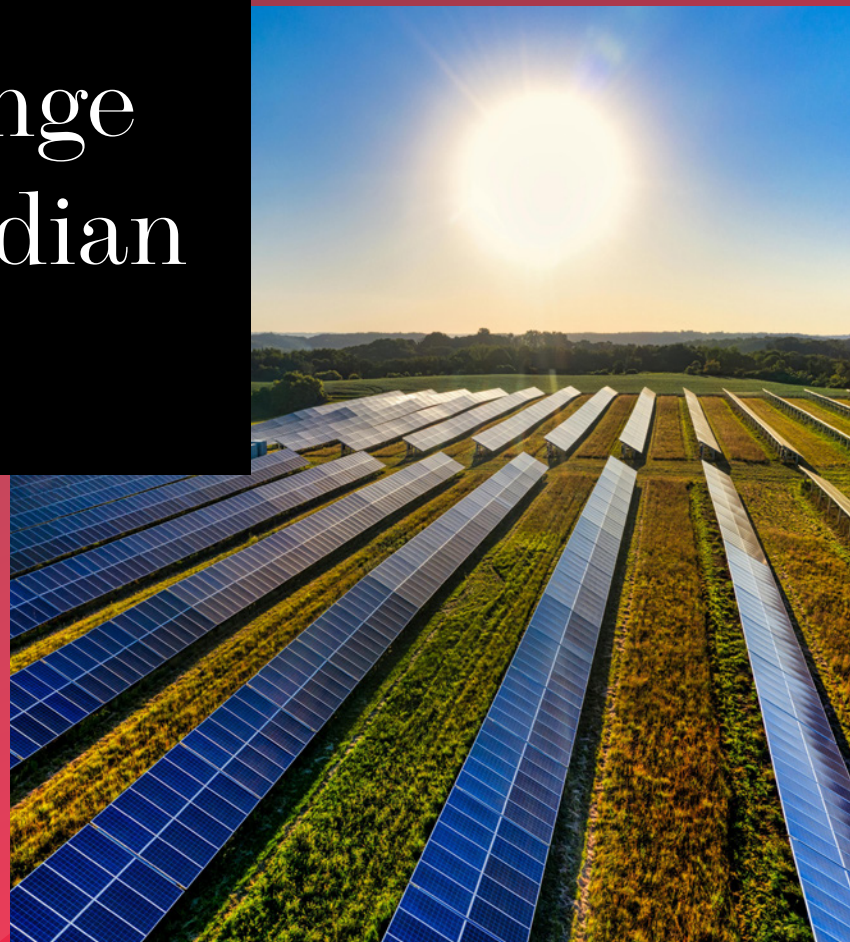


*Confederation
of Tomorrow*

Addressing climate change in the Canadian Federation

**Environics
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2024 SERIES



Environics Institute

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The Environics Institute for Survey Research was established by Michael Adams in 2006 with a mandate to conduct in-depth public opinion and social research on the issues shaping Canada's future. It is through such research that Canadians can better understand themselves and their changing society.

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Confederation of Tomorrow

The Confederation of Tomorrow surveys give voice to Canadians about the major issues shaping the future of the federation and their political communities. They are conducted annually by an association of the country's leading public policy and socio-economic research organizations.

The 2024 study consists of a survey of 6,036 adults, conducted between January 13 and April 13, 2024 (82% of the responses were collected between January 17 and February 1); 94% of the responses were collected online. The remaining responses were collected by telephone from respondents living in the North or on First Nations reserves.

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Executive Summary

With climate change and its disruptive impacts becoming increasingly apparent, governments in Canada have been introducing policy initiatives and programs to reduce the country's CO₂ emissions and begin the transition to a low-carbon economy. The current federal government has made climate change a signature priority, and introduced a carbon tax and rebate program that applies to provinces and territories that do not have their own comparable policy in place.

Provincial government positions on climate change vary widely, with some implementing their own ambitious carbon reduction initiatives and others reluctant to do so. The past two years have seen a growing polarization over the federal carbon tax, with the federal Conservative Party and many provincial premiers attacking it as an unreasonable burden on Canadians at a time of high inflation.

The latest Confederation of Tomorrow research conducted earlier this year reveals that Canadians are indeed much more focused on the cost of living than climate change, as was the case in 2023. A majority continue to support policies for phasing out the use of fossil fuels to reduce carbon emissions, but the preference is to proceed gradually to minimize job loss in the oil and gas industry. And since 2021, a modestly increasing minority - now one in four - are placing a greater priority on protecting these jobs than proceeding with any phase-out of fossil fuels.

Canadians are marginally more likely to believe climate change policies will have a positive rather than a negative impact on the economy of the country, of their province or territory, and of their local community over the next decade.

Canadians, however, are marginally more likely to believe climate change policies will have a positive rather than a negative impact on the economy of the country, of their province or territory, and of their local community over the next decade. Political attacks on the federal carbon tax have continued to eat away at the public's confidence in Ottawa's leadership on climate change, but Canadians remain more likely to trust the federal government than their provincial or territorial government on this issue. As in the past, perspectives on climate change and government policy are coloured by regional differences and federal political party affiliation.

Climate change as a public priority

Few Canadians - just one in twenty - identify climate change or the environment top-of-mind as the single most important problem facing the country today, with most focused on economic concerns associated with the rising cost of living and housing affordability.

Despite this low salience of climate change as an issue, many Canadians have taken note of the connection between the changing climate and significant changes in weather patterns (e.g., temperature extremes, precipitation levels or drought, major storms). More than one in two feel that climate change is definitely or likely having visible impacts on where they live (though fewer than three in ten say this is definitely the case).

Public perception of local climate change impacts has changed relatively little over time, though in recent years the proportion saying they are not noticing any changes due to climate change has dropped. Certainty about climate impacts on local conditions appears to be largely influenced by general views about climate change and one's federal party affiliation, reflecting the increasing politicization of the issue. The North stands out as the one region of the country where residents express the greatest certainty about climate change effects.

Climate change policy and the economy

In the context of general priorities, Canadians are evenly split on the relative importance of protecting the environment versus protecting jobs. This division has reflected public opinion more or less for decades, but with current concerns about the economy and cost of living, the balance has shifted a bit in the direction of job protection since 2023. Opinions are generally divided across the country, with the priority given to environmental protection somewhat more widespread in Eastern Canada and the North, and job protection more apt to be emphasized in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Priorities are also partly a function of political affiliation that align along with federal party positions on climate change. However, the shift away from placing environmental concerns ahead of job protection over the past year is evident across all parties and regions excepting the North.

Two-thirds of Canadians express support for phasing out fossil fuels to address climate change, but three-quarters of this group favour doing so at a gradual pace.

There is now broad consensus that fossil fuel emissions are the main contributor to climate change, and their reduction is required in order to slow global warming and maintain a livable planet. But there is little agreement about how, and how quickly, such reductions can be achieved. Two-thirds of Canadians express support for phasing out fossil fuels to address climate change, but three-quarters of this group favour doing so at a gradual pace to ease the transition of workers in the oil and gas industry

who may lose their jobs as a result. One in four now believe the country should focus on protecting industry jobs rather than phasing out fossil fuels; this proportion has been inching upward each year since 2021.

The middle option of a gradual phase-out of fossil fuels is the preferred option for a plurality of Canadians across the population, with variations in support for the other two options across regions and federal political party supporters. Preference for a quick fossil fuel phase-out is most evident in Quebec, and among supporters of the federal Green Party and Bloc Québécois. Support for focusing on job protection instead is most prominent in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and among federal Conservative Party supporters.

How do Canadians imagine climate change policies (both current and future) will change the country and their communities over the coming decade? Opinions differ, and reflect broader perspectives about climate change that vary by region and politics. Overall, the public is somewhat more likely to believe the economic impact of climate policy over the coming decade will be positive rather than negative, while a third anticipate no net impact either way or do not offer a response to the question. Younger Canadians are more likely to expect positive impacts than their older counterparts, although the extent of this difference varies by region. Notably, for most Canadians, the anticipated economic impact of climate policies is the same whether considering the country, their province or territory, or their local community.

As might be expected, those who believe climate policies will have a positive impact are the ones most likely to advocate for a quick phase-out of fossil fuels.

Trust in governments to address climate change

Federal, provincial and territorial governments share jurisdiction over legislation and policies applicable to climate change, but in few cases work collaboratively on emissions reductions strategy. The federal government continues to be the more trusted level of government to address climate change, but this preference continues to erode along with the growing polarization over the federal carbon tax and rebate policy. Only one in four Canadians now trust the federal government more on this issue, reflecting a modest but steady decline since 2021. But just over half as many place greater confidence in their provincial government, and this proportion remains unchanged as an increasing number - now a plurality - trust neither jurisdiction on this issue, while an identical proportion say they trust both levels of government equally. Trust in the federal government on climate change is strongest in Ontario and the Maritime provinces, while provincial governments are most likely to be seen as more trustworthy in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Climate as a public priority

The past two decades have witnessed growing recognition of climate change as a global challenge that poses an existential threat to the future of human society on the planet. Governments, corporations and consumers broadly acknowledge the problem and their role in it, and are now wrestling with what constitutes an appropriate and necessary response that will slow the rise in greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, other issues with more immediate urgency are competing for attention.

Importance of climate change as a national problem

Few Canadians – just one in twenty – identify climate change or the environment top-of-mind as the single most important problem facing the country today. The predominant focus is on economic challenges, mostly associated with the rising cost of living and housing affordability.

Climate change has been of ongoing concern for Canadians over the past two decades, and at times emerged as among the most salient facing the country, based on a survey question recording the single most important problem facing Canadians today.¹ As recently as 2020, the public's focus on climate change and other environmental issues equalled that of the economy and inflation.² Very soon after, however, the COVID-19 pandemic quickly reoriented everyone's attention to this global public health care crisis and the resulting shutdown of life as usual. By 2023, with the pandemic receding, public attention shifted to economic concerns, which has carried over into the current year.

1 This survey question does not present a list of possible responses from which to select, but requires respondents to indicate unprompted and in their own words what they consider to be the most important problem. Only one response is accepted, so the results do not reflect what additional problems might also be seen as important. This question measures "top-of-mind" salience, rather than how Canadians feel about specific issues or problems.

2 The 2020 survey was conducted early in the year, prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March.

In 2024, Canadians are most likely to identify the country’s most important problem as the rising cost of living (33%), affordable housing (12%) and other economic issues (8%). Climate change and other environmental issues remain well down the list, mentioned by five percent of Canadians (essentially unchanged since 2021).

TABLE 1

Most important problem facing Canadians today?
Top mentions, 2019 - 2024

Issue	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Cost of living / inflation	8	8	1	8	33	33
Affordable housing	-	-	-	-	5	12
Economy / unemployment	17	12	13	9	9	8
Health care / mental health	7	9	5	6	10	8
Poor government leadership / Trudeau	9	7	9	6	7	6
Environment / climate change	8	12	3	5	4	5
Immigration	7	5	1	1	1	4
Poverty / inequality / homelessness	8	9	6	6	4	3
COVID-19	-	1	52	34	-	-

Q.2 In your opinion, what is the most important problem facing Canadians today?

Economic issues dominate the public’s attention across the country (especially in Ontario), with health care a significant secondary concern in Atlantic Canada and Manitoba. Climate change and the environment is top-of-mind as the country’s most important challenge by no more than six percent of Canadians in any province, but is somewhat higher in the North (10%). The comparatively low profile of climate change and the environment is also apparent regardless of Canadians’ age, education, income and gender. Even among those who would vote for the federal Green Party, only 13 percent mention climate change and the environment top-of-mind as the country’s most important problem, compared with 51 percent who focus on economic problems facing Canadians.

Noticing climate change where you live

More than one in two Canadians are convinced that changes in their part of the country are likely, if not definitely, due to climate change. One in five do not notice anything they would attribute to climate change. Public perception of local climate change impacts has changed relatively little over time.

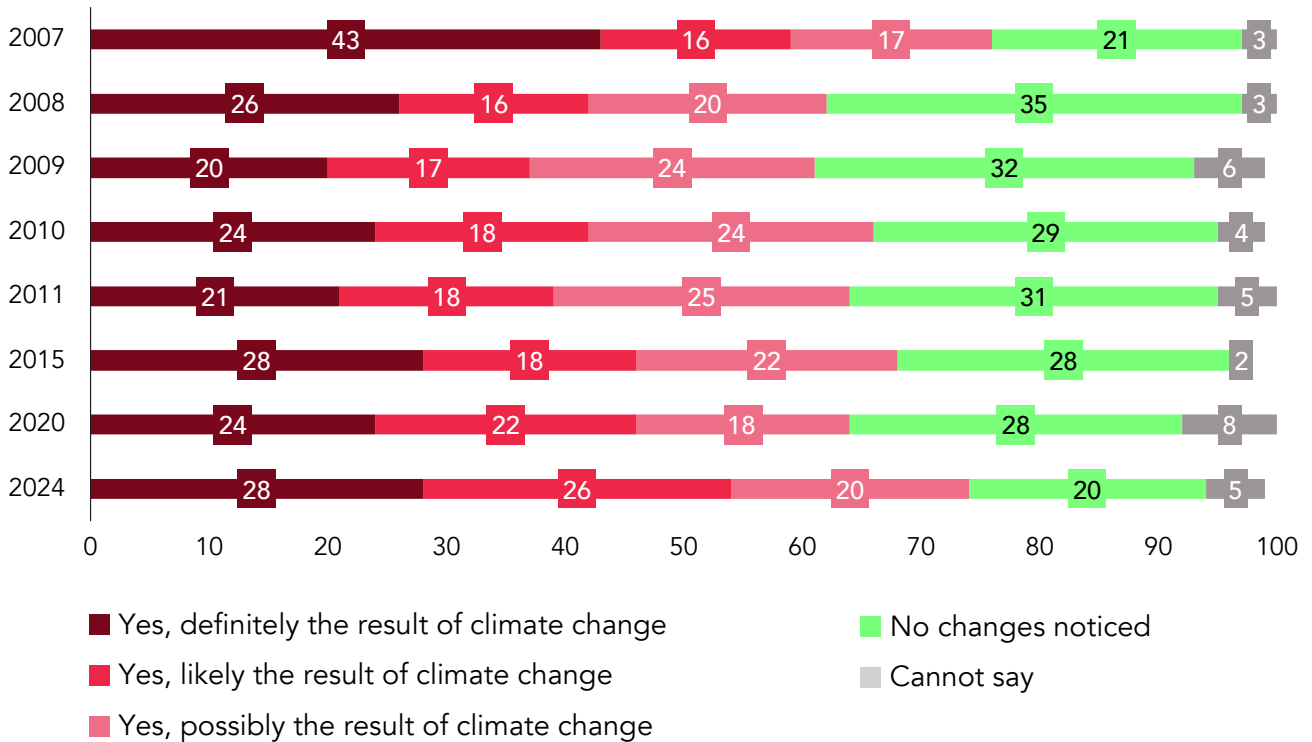
In Canada and elsewhere, weather patterns have been changing in uncharacteristic and at times extreme ways, in terms of wide fluctuations in temperature, precipitation levels and storm activity. Dry conditions across much of Canada in 2023 resulted in the worst wildfire season on record, while multiple “atmospheric rivers” inundated the west coast with record amounts of rain and snow. The winter of 2023-24 has now been confirmed as the warmest in recorded Canadian history.

Scientists and meteorologists find clear evidence that such rapid fluctuations in weather are due in part to climate change, and this view is mirrored by the experiences of a slim majority of the public. More than one in two (55%) Canadians say they have noticed changes in their part of the country that they believe are *definitely* or *likely* the result of climate change (though fewer than three in ten (28%) say this is definitely the case. Another one in five report they have seen changes *possibly* (20%) due to climate change, with an additional one in five (20%) having noticed nothing that would fit this category.

As unusual weather fluctuations have become more frequent in recent years, an increasing number of Canadians may be gradually coming to see their connection to climate change. Compared with 2020, a higher proportion now believe the changes they have noticed are definitely (up 4 percentage points) or likely (up 4 points) due to climate change, while fewer now see no such connection (down 8 points).

FIGURE 1

Noticed any changes in your part of the country that are the result of climate change? 2007 - 2024



Q.78 Have you noticed any changes in your part of the country which you think are definitely, likely, or possibly the result of climate change?

Source for 2007 – 2011: Canadian Environmental Barometer (EnviroNics); for 2015: Focus Canada (EnviroNics Institute); for 2020: Survey on Employment and Skills (EnviroNics Institute)

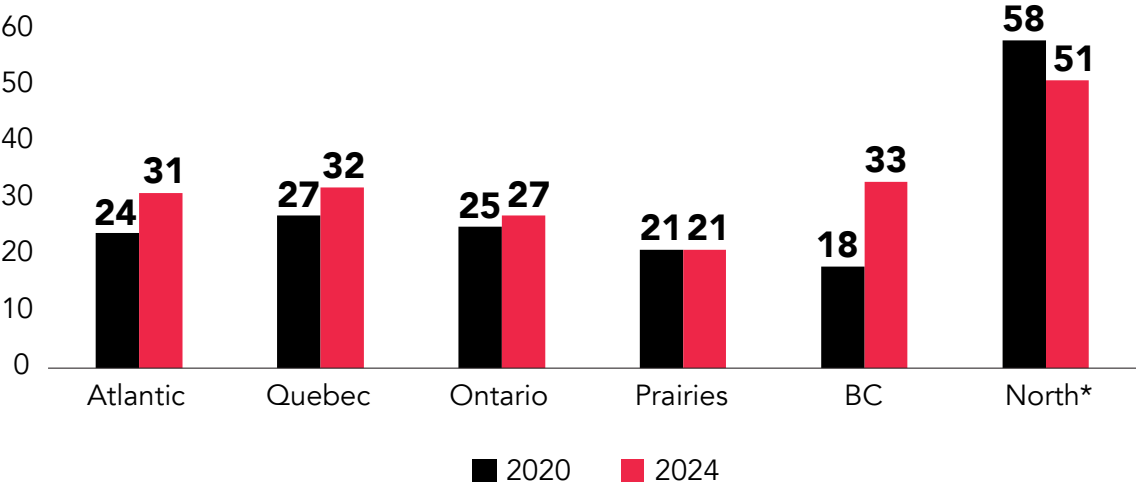
However, this latest shift in public perceptions does not reflect a longer-term upward trend over time. Previous EnviroNics surveys dating back to 2007 reveal that Canadians' views about local impacts connected to climate change have fluctuated over the past 17 years, and may be influenced as much by media coverage as local weather conditions. The year 2007 was marked as one in which climate change gained prominence as a major global issue, and when the B.C. government introduced the country's first carbon tax; in that year more than four in ten (43%) Canadians reported having noticed local impacts they felt were definitely the result of climate change.

As before, Canadians’ opinions about local climate change impacts vary across the country in a predictable pattern that largely mirrors regional sentiments about climate and climate policy. Among provinces and regions, the belief that local changes are definitely linked to climate change is most evident in Atlantic Canada, Quebec and British Columbia, and this view has strengthened in all three cases, especially in B.C. since 2020 (33%, up 15) and Prince Edward Island (29%, up 17). This perspective is shared by only one in five (21%) Prairie region residents, and has weakened since 2020 in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (down 5 points each). People living in this region are more likely to say that any local changes have no connection to climate change (28%), although this view is now less prominent than before in Manitoba and Alberta.

In contrast with the provinces, residents of the North are much more likely to report having noticed changes definitely resulting from climate change (51%).

FIGURE 2

Definitely noticed changes that are the result of climate change, 2020 - 2024



Q.78 Have you noticed any changes in your part of the country which you think are definitely, likely, or possibly the result of climate change? *Results for the North in 2020 are unweighted. Source for 2020: Survey on Employment and Skills (Environics Institute)



Even more than region, Canadians' perceptions of local climate change impacts are coloured by their federal political party affiliation.

Even more than region, Canadians' perceptions of local climate change impacts are coloured by their federal political party affiliation, as might be expected given the politicized nature of climate change and the federal carbon tax. A definite climate change connection is reported by roughly four in ten who would vote for the federal Liberal Party (41%), NDP (39%), Green Party (45%) or Bloc Québécois (39%), compared with about one in ten among each of these groups who see no connection. The reverse pattern is evident among those who would support the federal Conservative Party, with fewer than one in six (14%) reporting a definite connection, compared with 32 percent who see no connection at all.

Finally, Indigenous Peoples are more likely than other Canadians to be making a clear connection between climate change and what they see where they live. While 55 percent of Canadians overall say they have noticed changes in their part of the country which they think are definitely or likely the result of climate change, this figure rises to 69 percent among Indigenous Peoples, and to 73 percent among those who identify as First Nations.

Climate change policy and the economy

Reducing carbon emissions at the scale demanded by current scientific models presents a daunting challenge because the economy and standard of living are powered primarily by fossil fuels, especially in Canada with its vast distances and northern climate. How do governments come up with policies that effectively address climate change without significantly disrupting the country's economy, employment and social well-being?

Environment versus economic priorities

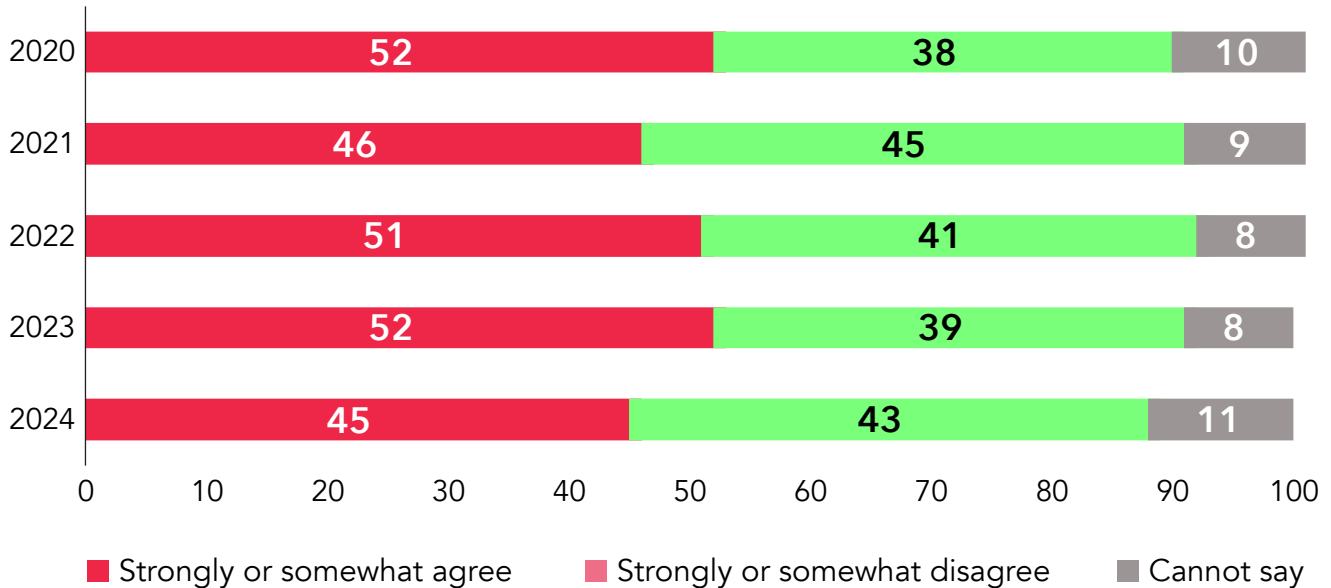
Canadians are evenly divided on the relative priority that should be given to protecting the environment versus protecting jobs, with some variation across regions and federal party support. The emphasis placed on environmental protection has declined since 2023 across the population.

At the broadest level, Canadians place importance on both a healthy environment and a strong economy - and, in principle, these priorities should not be incompatible. But when asked to choose which should take precedence, the public is evenly split between those who strongly (16%) or somewhat (29%) agree that *protecting the environment is more important than protecting jobs*, and those who somewhat (29%) or strongly (14%) disagree with this statement.

This division in priorities reflects opinions expressed among Canadians dating back over the past few years. But the past 12 months marks a downward shift in emphasis on environmental over job protection, with fewer now agreeing with the statement prioritizing the former (down 7 percentage points). The relative balance between these two perspectives has fluctuated back and forth since 2020.

FIGURE 3

Agree or disagree? Protecting the environment is more important than protecting jobs, 2020 – 2024



Q.5D [Agree/Disagree]: Protecting the environment is more important than protecting jobs.

The broad division in priorities on this question is largely reflected across the country. Agreement about emphasizing environmental protection over jobs is most likely to be expressed in PEI (50% strongly or somewhat agree), New Brunswick (47%), Quebec (47%), Ontario (47%) and especially in the North (66%), with this view least apt to be shared among residents of Saskatchewan (32%) and Alberta (35%). But the decline in agreement with the statement since 2023 has occurred across all provinces (though is most stable among residents of the North (up 2 percentage points)).

Opinions also vary by age cohort, with priority given to environmental protection most pronounced among Canadians age 18 to 34 (52%), and least so among those age 55 plus (40%). Views are consistent across levels of household income, but differ when it comes to adequacy of income, with emphasis on protecting the environment strongest among those who have enough and can save from it (52%), in comparison with those who do not have enough to cover current needs (41%).

As with other questions about the environment, the relative balance given to environmental and economic priorities is based in large measure on federal political party affiliation. Supporters of the federal Liberal Party are among the strongest proponents of environmental protection (58% agree with the statement, 18% strongly). This perspective is also shared by majorities of those who would vote for the federal NDP (55%, 24% strongly) and Green Party (67%, 32% strongly), but by only one in three supporters of the federal Conservative Party (32%). Notably, however, agreement with this statement about environmental protection being more important than protecting jobs has declined among supporters of all federal parties over the past year.

Timetable for phasing out fossil fuels

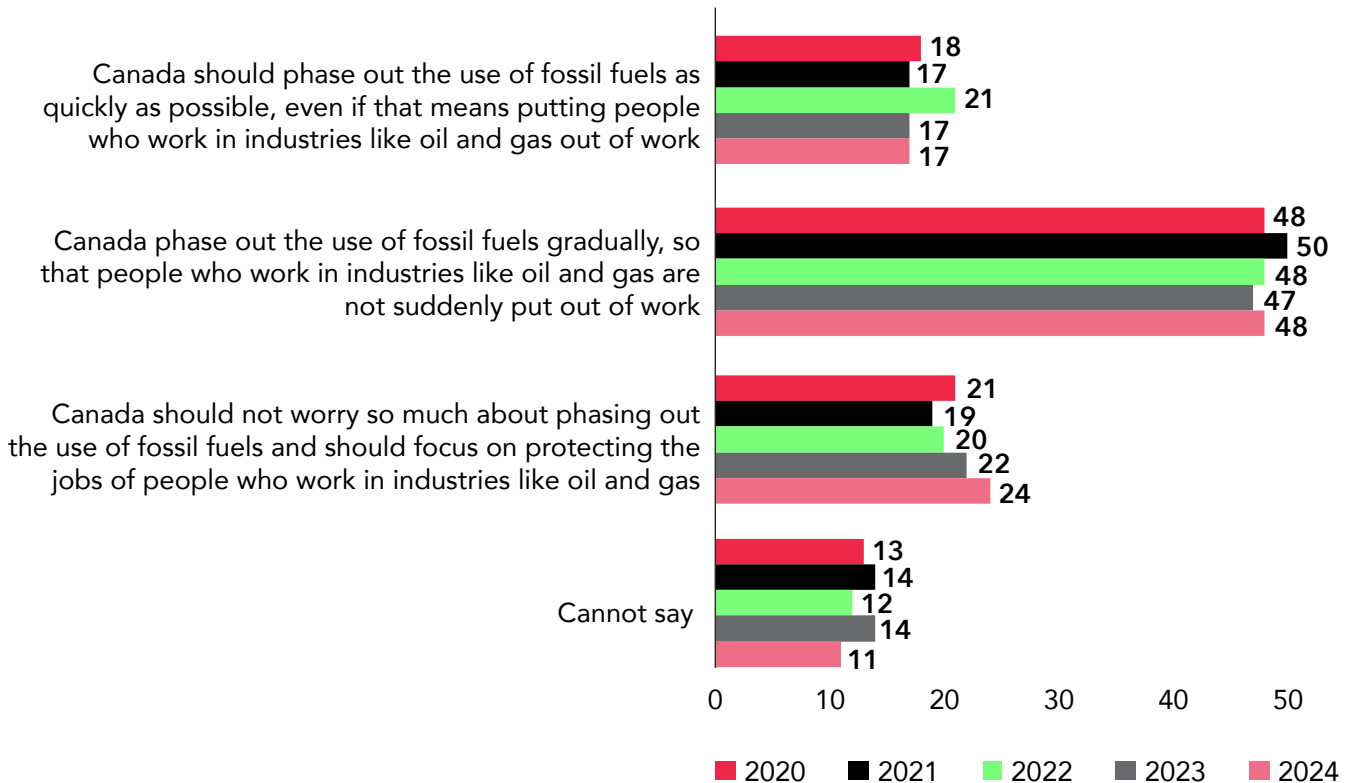
A plurality of Canadians continues to favour a gradual phase-out of fossil fuels to address climate change, with smaller proportions advocating either a fast phase-out or a timetable that prioritizes jobs in the oil and gas sector. Perspectives differ noticeably by region and political affiliation.

It is now well-established that climate change is primarily the result of carbon emissions from fossil fuel combustion in the engines that currently power modern society. While there is now a general consensus on the need to reduce such emissions to slow the pace of global warming and minimize its disruptive consequences, what has yet to be determined is how - and how quickly - reliance on fossil fuels can be reduced over time.

The survey addressed this issue by asking Canadians which of three options they prefer for phasing out fossil fuels like oil and gas, and replacing them with more renewable sources of energy. Current results reveal a general pattern evident each year since this question was first posed in 2020. Of the three options presented, a clear plurality of Canadians prefers the middle option, which entails a gradual phase-out of fossil fuels so that people in affected industries are not suddenly put out of work (48%). Most of the remainder are largely split between those who support a phase-out “as quickly as possible” even if it means putting people out of work (17%) and those who advocate for “not worrying so much about phasing out” fossil fuels and instead focus on job protection for those in the oil and gas industry (24%).

FIGURE 4

How quickly should Canada phase out fossil fuels? 2020 - 2024



Q.28 Some people say that in order to fight climate change, countries like Canada should phase out the use of fossil fuels like oil and gas, and should replace them with more renewable sources of energy. Thinking about this, which of the following three options do you prefer?

Apart from a steady preference for the middle option, the past year has seen a slight uptick in support for the focus on jobs (up 2 percentage points from 2023), continuing a modest but steady trend dating back to 2021.

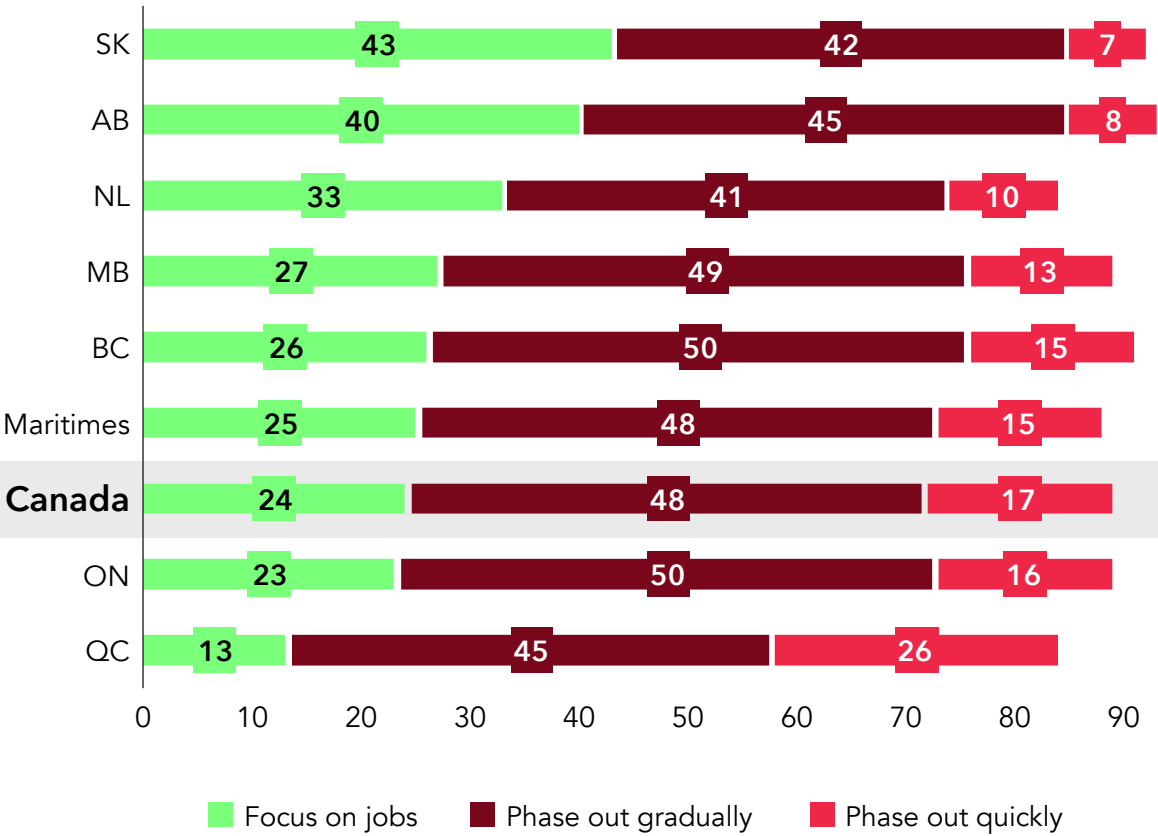
The middle option of a gradual phase-out of fossil fuels is the plurality view across most of the country, with some variation in levels of support for the other two options. Public preference for a quick phase-out is most evident in Quebec (26%), while support for focusing on jobs is most widely expressed in the Prairies, notably in Saskatchewan (43%, virtually tied with the middle option at 42%) and Alberta (40%). Opinions have changed little at the provincial or territorial level since 2023, with a preference for focusing on job protection up slightly in all jurisdictions except New Brunswick and Quebec.³

³ This question was not included for all respondents in the 2024 survey conducted with residents in the North.

Canadians' support for a gradual phase-out of fossil fuels extends across at least two in five supporters of each of the main federal political parties, with predictable variation in the relative popularity of the two other options. Preference for a quick phase-out is most likely to be expressed by those who would vote for the federal Green Party (32%) or Bloc Québécois (35%), followed by the NDP (24%) and Liberal Party (21%). In none of these parties does more than one in five endorse a primary focus on jobs (with this option least popular among BQ supporters, at 7%).

FIGURE 5

How quickly should Canada phase out fossil fuels?
By province or region, 2024



Q.28 Some people say that in order to fight climate change, countries like Canada should phase out the use of fossil fuels like oil and gas, and should replace them with more renewable sources of energy. Thinking about this, which of the following three options do you prefer?



In contrast, only one in ten (9%) federal Conservative Party supporters prefer a quick phase-out, compared with 43 percent who place a greater priority on protecting oil and gas industry jobs, and a comparable proportion (42%) who prefer a gradual phase-out of fossil fuels. Views on this question among supporters within each political party have changed little over the past year.

Opinions on this question also vary somewhat by age, with younger Canadians age 18 to 24 (27%) being twice as likely as their older counterparts age 55 and older (14%) to prefer that the use of fossil fuels be phased out as quickly as possible, regardless of the impact on employment.

Younger Canadians are twice as likely as their older counterparts to prefer that the use of fossil fuels be phased out as quickly as possible, regardless of the impact on employment.

Impact of climate change policies

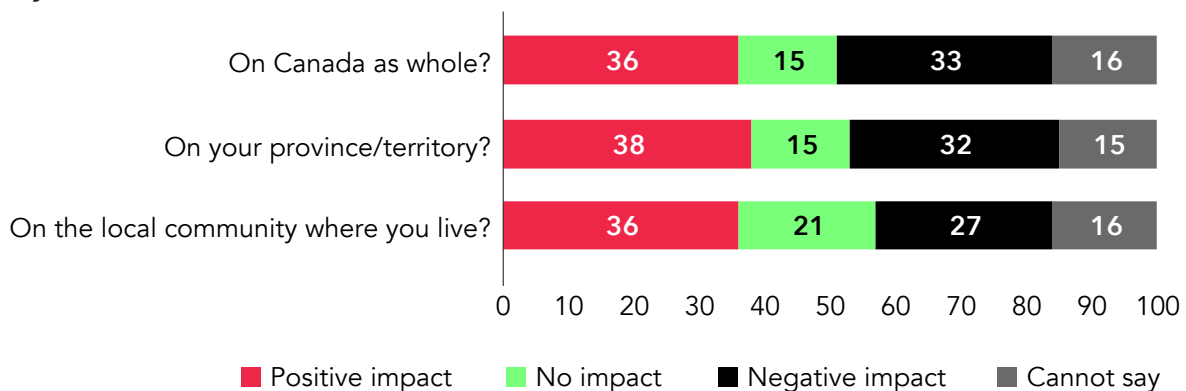
Canadians are marginally more likely to believe that climate change policies will have a positive rather than a negative impact on the economy of the country, of their province or territory, and of their local community over the next decade. Opinions partly reflect how people feel about climate change and phasing out fossil fuels.

The survey asked about the likely impacts of policies aimed at fighting climate change over the next 10 years, in terms of being positive or negative on the economy of the country, of their province or territory, and of their local community. This question is intended to reveal how Canadians feel today about what climate change initiatives will likely mean in the future, including the economy and quality of life.

The results reflect an absence of consensus and a similar division of opinions about climate change evident in other questions. Small pluralities of Canadians believe that climate change policies will have a positive impact over time, compared with slightly smaller proportions who anticipate a negative result. Others anticipate no net impacts or cannot offer a response to the question.

FIGURE 6

Likely economic impact of climate change policies over the next 10 years, 2024



Q.82 Over the next 10 years, do you think policies aimed at fighting climate change in Canada will generally have a positive or negative impact on the economy of each of the following?

This pattern is similar whether the focus is climate change impacts on the country, province/territory or one's local community, although the positive over negative difference increases modestly as the focus shifts from national to regional to local impacts. Overall, few Canadians appear to be making distinctions about the effect of climate change policies by locality: roughly 80 percent give the same response to all three levels.

Views about future climate change policy impacts on the economy vary somewhat across the country, reflecting differing perspectives on climate change evident in other questions.

Views about future climate change policy impacts on the economy vary somewhat across the country, reflecting differing perspectives on climate change evident in other questions. Those most likely to anticipate positive rather than negative impacts on their province or territory live in PEI, Ontario, British Columbia and the North.⁴ This perspective is least apt to be shared in Saskatchewan and Alberta, where residents anticipate negative over positive impacts by a two-to-one margin.

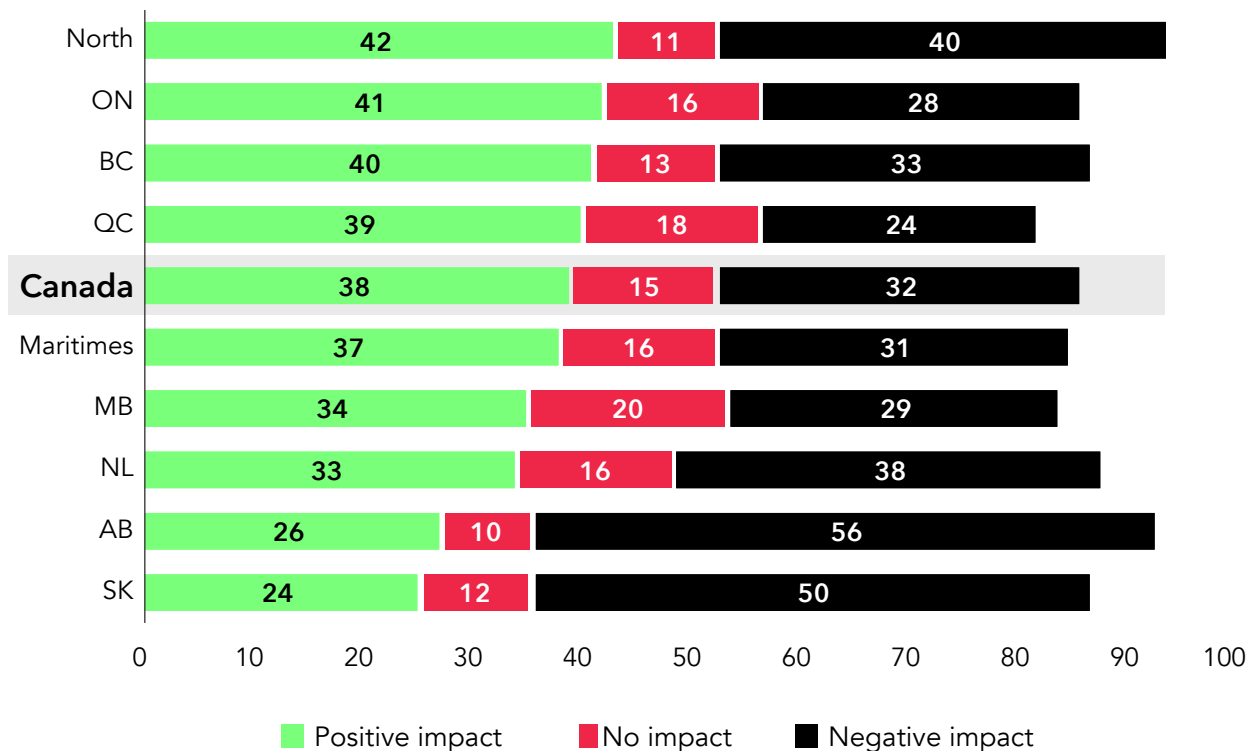
4 Results presented for group differences are based on anticipated impacts on one's province or territory. Findings are very similar for questions focusing on national and local impacts. Note that residents of the North are also more likely to anticipate a negative impact, because they are much less likely than average to say these policies will have no impact, or to offer no opinion.

Opinions on this question are also shaped by federal political party allegiance. Positive impacts of climate change policy on the country's economy are most widely anticipated by supporters of the federal Liberal Party (57% positive versus 20% negative), followed by the NDP (48% versus 24%), BQ (38% versus 23%) and Green Party (37% versus 33%). Federal Conservative Party supporters express the opposite view (22% positive versus 51% negative).

Finally, how Canadians think about future climate policy impacts tends to be consistent with their preference for the speed at which such policies are implemented. Positive provincial or territorial impacts are most widely anticipated by those who favour a fast timetable for reducing fossil fuel use (56%), compared with those who prefer a gradual phase-out (45%) and those who advocate for focusing instead on protecting industry jobs (19%).

FIGURE 7

Likely economic impact of climate change policies on your province or territory over the next 10 years, by province or region, 2024



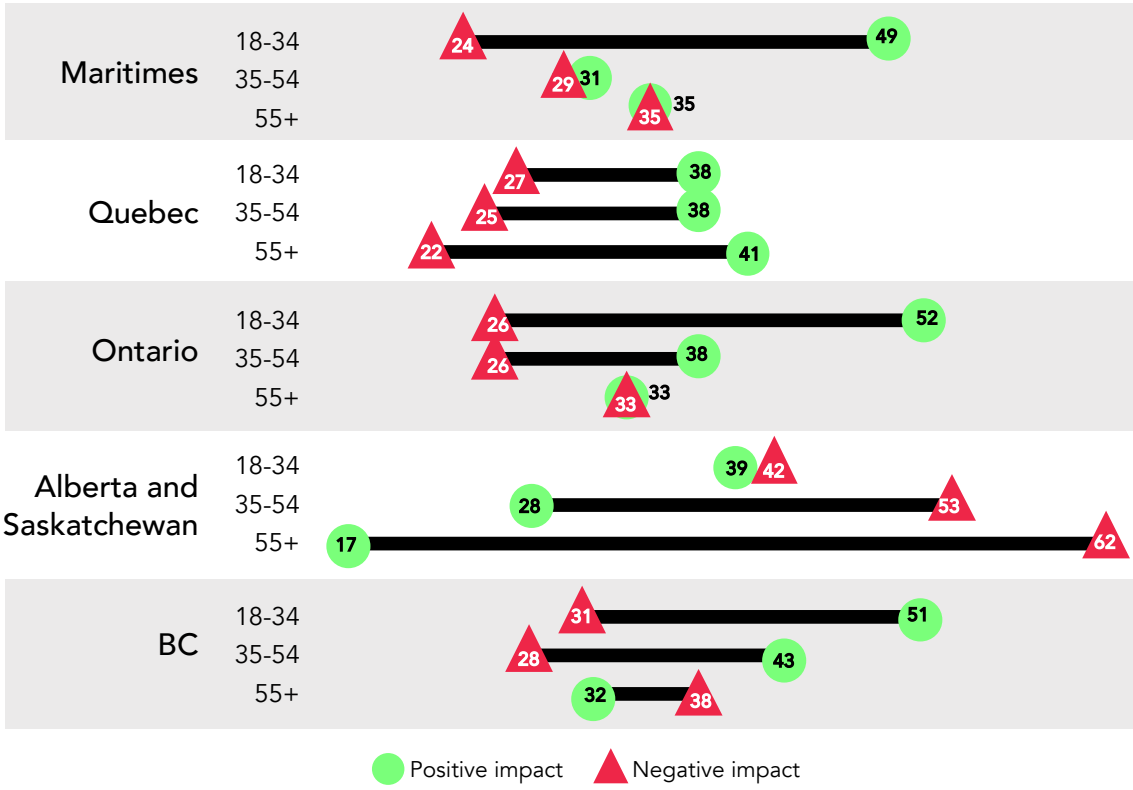
Q.82 Over the next 10 years, do you think policies aimed at fighting climate change in Canada will generally have a positive or negative impact on the economy of each of the following: Of your province/territory?

Overall, there are significant differences among age groups. The proportion anticipating that climate change policies will have a positive impact on provincial or territorial economies declines as age increases (from 47% among those age 18 to 24, to 33% among those age 55 and older); conversely, the proportion anticipating a negative impact increases (from 27% to 36%). But this pattern differs significantly across regions. There is relatively little difference in opinion among age groups within Quebec, for example, but significant differences in other regions of the country.

Moreover, there are major regional differences in the views of those in the oldest age group, particularly. The proportion of those age 55 and older who expect climate change policies to negatively impact their province ranges from only 22 percent in Quebec, to the mid-30 percent range in Ontario (33%), the Maritimes (35%) and B.C. (38%), to 62 percent in Saskatchewan and Alberta (combined).

FIGURE 8

Likely economic impact of climate change policies on your province or territory over the next 10 years. By region and age group, 2024



Q.82 Over the next 10 years, do you think policies aimed at fighting climate change in Canada will generally have a positive or negative impact on the economy of each of the following: Of your province/territory?



Trust in governments to address climate change

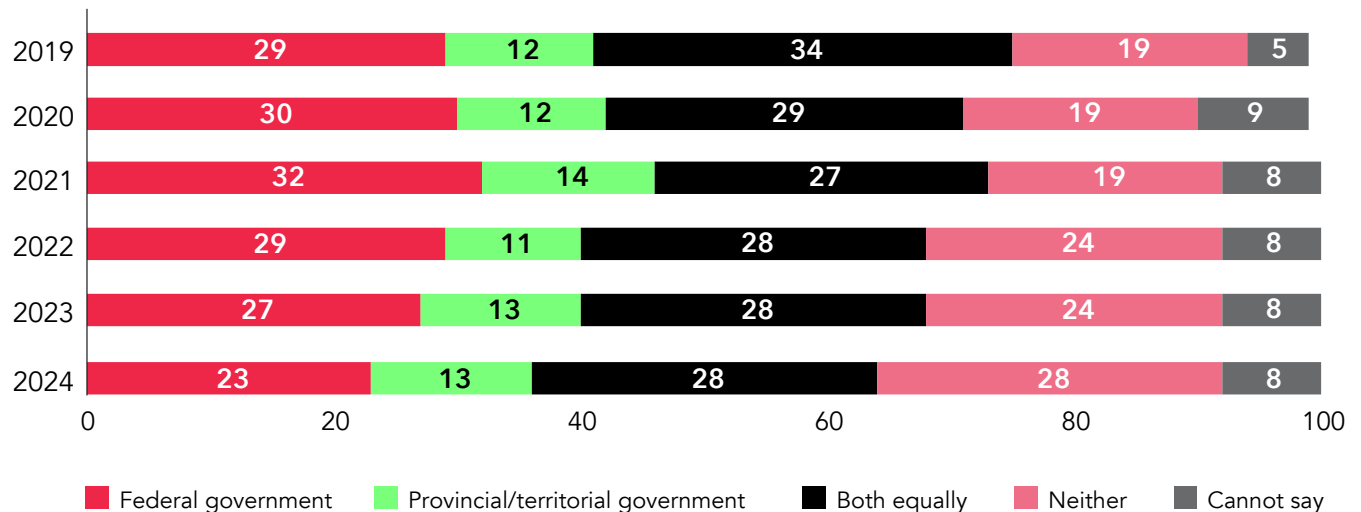
Canadians continue to be more likely to trust the federal government than their provincial or territorial government to address climate change, but this preference has declined over the past year as an increasing proportion say they trust neither jurisdiction on this issue.

Climate change is a collective challenge, and calls for attention from all sectors, organizations and individuals. But the lead on policy in Canada rests with the federal and provincial governments, which share jurisdiction over the legislative, regulatory and public financing of measures aimed at reducing the country's carbon emissions. Which level of government do Canadians trust more to take the necessary steps?

The current federal government's climate change policy of pricing carbon emissions has, from the start, been met with strong opposition by several provincial governments, notably those in the Prairies. The policy survived a constitutional challenge in the Supreme Court in 2021, but continues to be a political lightning rod that has now become the target of federal Opposition leader Pierre Poilievre. This appears to be eroding the public's confidence in Ottawa's climate change agenda.

FIGURE 9

Which government do you trust more to address climate change?
By province or region, 2019 - 2024



Q.25c Which government do you trust more to make the right decisions in the following areas:
Addressing climate change?

Since 2019, the Confederation of Tomorrow survey has been asking Canadians which senior level of government they trust more to make the right decisions in addressing climate change. In 2021, the public chose the federal over their provincial or territorial governments by more than a two-to-one margin, but this gap has since diminished. In 2024, just one in four (23%) Canadians trust the federal government more to address climate change, down four points since 2023 and well below the 32 percent recorded in 2021.

By comparison, a smaller but stable proportion (13%) say they are more likely to trust their provincial or territorial government, with twice as many (28%) expressing equal trust in both levels of government (both are unchanged from 2023). An increasing proportion (28%) now trust neither level of government (up 4 points since 2023, but up 9 points since 2021), while another eight percent do not offer an opinion.

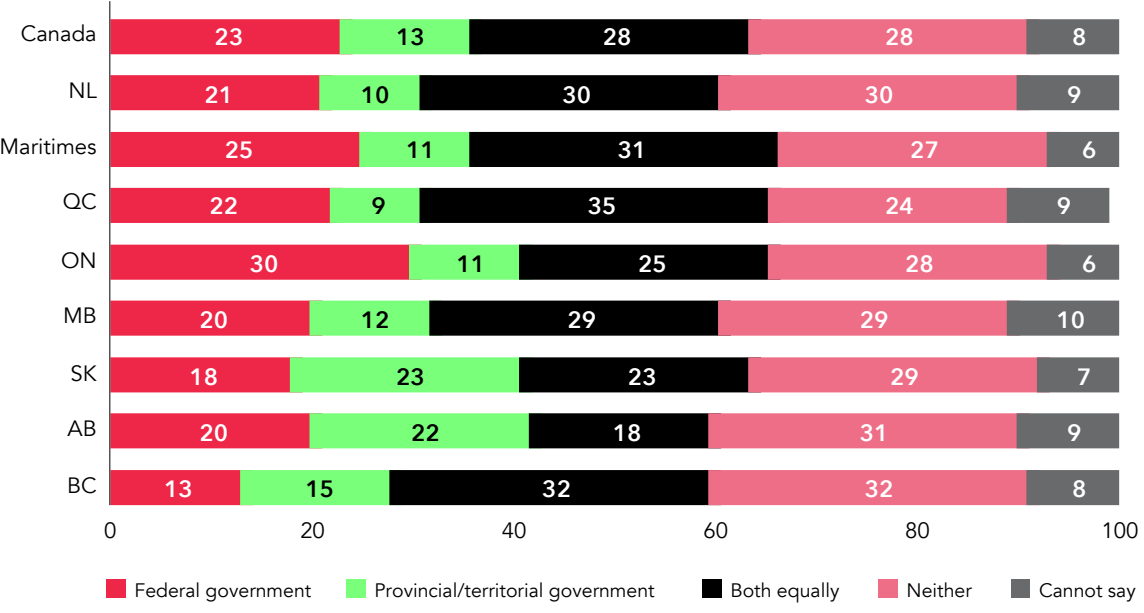
The federal government continues to be the more trusted level of government everywhere but in Saskatchewan and Alberta, where provincial opposition to the federal carbon policy is most intense. Trust in the federal government on climate change has declined since 2023 across the West, while remaining stable in Eastern and Central Canada.

This erosion of public trust in the federal government has not resulted in growing confidence in provincial or territorial governments in addressing climate change, as there has been little change over the past year, except in Alberta (22%, up 6 points, and now for the first time surpassing trust in the federal government by 2 points) and Quebec (where it has declined to among the lowest in the country, at 9%).

By comparison, the view that *both* senior level of governments can be equally trusted to address climate change continues to be more prevalent than trust in either level separately, except in Alberta and Saskatchewan (in Saskatchewan, this opinion has actually jumped by 10 points since 2023). A comparable proportion express the opposite view - that neither level of government can be trusted on this issue - and this sentiment has increased over the past year in Quebec, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia.

FIGURE 10

Which government do you trust more to address climate change?
By province or region, 2024



Q.25c Which government do you trust more to make the right decisions in the following areas:
Addressing climate change?



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