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Technical Report

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CANADIANS (STILL) CARE ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

Closing the Perception Gap on Climate Concern and Action

TECHNICAL REPORT

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Preamble

About Re.Climate

Re.Climate is Canada's go-to centre for training, research, and strategy on climate change communications and public engagement. Based at Carleton University, we provide strategic services to help practitioners reach new audiences, overcome polarization, communicate urgency, and motivate change.

Project team

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Method

National survey of 4,232 Canadians in partnership with Abacus Data, fielded in English and French from September 12 to 19, 2025. All results are reported at the 95 per cent confidence level (p = <.05). Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.The data is weighted by age, gender, education and region. Three focus groups were held on November 18 to 19, 2025, with participants from Nova Scotia and Ontario.

Limitations

Panel-based surveys are not probabilistic samples. They rely on self-selected survey respondents. Large samples, however, when weighted, have been generally representative.

Citation

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Executive Summary

Climate change may not be top of mind, according to pollsters, due to cost-of-living and other concerns,[1] but that does not mean Canadians are not concerned or that they don't expect their political leaders to keep their promises to take further action. According to Re.Climate's latest national survey,[2] Canadians are:

- Proud of becoming a renewable energy superpower:
    - Seven in 10 feel pride in Canada becoming a renewable energy superpower.
        - These results include a majority of Albertans (56 per cent) and 79 per cent of people living in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Looking for leadership:
    - Sixty-five per cent want leaders to keep their promise to take more action on climate change.
    - Seven in 10 agree that Canada should regulate polluters causing climate change.
- Concerned about climate change and confident we can solve it if we work together:
    - Three-quarters are concerned about climate change and believe that future generations will be harmed.
    - Three-quarters are optimistic that it is still possible to reverse its consequences.
    - Nearly seven in 10 agree that if everyone does their bit, we can tackle its causes.

We also find that positive frames, such as "Time to Build," increase support for large-scale wind and transmission projects, while a "Pollution Blanket" frame, which explains the causes and consequences of climate change, increases support for wind power in Alberta and Manitoba. Canadians show a strong preference for future-oriented and positive framing of the energy transition, with a majority more likely to agree that growth in our economy and careers will be driven by the transition to electricity to power our lives. This phenomenon has been described by Ember as the "Electrotech Revolution.[3]

The challenging news is that while 42 per cent of Canadians think about addressing climate change at least weekly, they believe other Canadians do so only 33 per cent of the time and their neighbours only 26 per cent of the time. That is a 16 per cent perception gap between what Canadians think and what they believe their neighbours think. Combined with minimal media coverage,[4] and waning public discussion by political leaders about the need to address climate change, a climate silence has fallen over Canada.

Closing this perception gap is important because research shows that when people believe they are in the minority, they are more hesitant to talk about an issue. This hesitancy creates a "spiral of silence"[5] that can be broken by letting Canadians know they are concerned about climate change, highlighting personally relevant risks, profiling social norms, and increasing media coverage.

We also see the effects of misinformation and disinformation targeting climate change. Over one-third of Canadians somewhat or strongly agree that the effects of climate change are seriously exaggerated and one in five agree that climate change is a hoax.

We find predictable and surprising demographic differences in the results. Predictably, vote intention and provincial location influence results. Surprisingly, we see stage-of-life differences between younger and older Canadians. Canadians over 60 years of age, for example, are much more inclined to disagree that the effects of climate change are seriously exaggerated and to disagree that climate change is a hoax, compared with 18-to-29-year-olds. We also find that younger Canadians are far less inclined to agree that polluters causing climate change should be regulated, compared with older Canadians.

We report the detailed results of the Re.Climate research in the next section and then make ten recommendations for maximizing opportunities and addressing headwinds.

Results

Re.Climate, with Abacus Data, surveyed a national sample of 4,232 Canadians from September 12 to 19, 2025. The national sample is weighted by age, gender, education and region. Three focus groups were held on November 18 and 19, 2025 with participants from Nova Scotia and Ontario. See the appendix for tables.

Seventy per cent of Canadians feel pride in becoming a renewable energy superpower

Thirty per cent of Canadians feel more pride in Canada becoming an oil and gas superpower. Seventy per cent feel more pride in Canada becoming a renewable energy superpower than in becoming an oil and gas superpower (Figure 1).

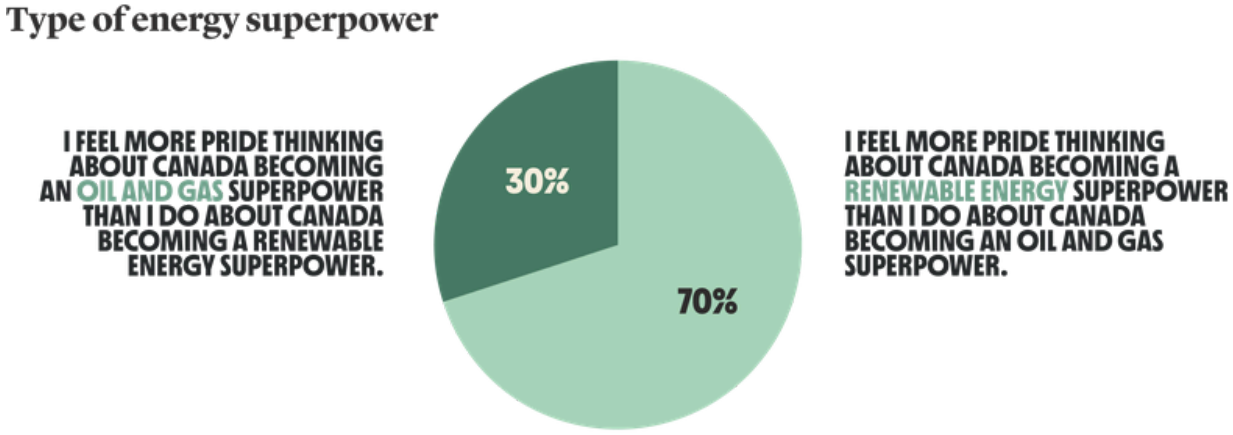

Figure 1. *Seven in 10 Canadians prefer Canada becoming a renewable energy superpower.*

Atlantic Canadians feel more pride about being a renewable energy superpower, with Newfoundlanders and Labradorians leading the way at 79 per cent, followed by residents of New Brunswick (77 per cent), Nova Scotia (75 per cent) and Prince Edward Island (74 per cent), Quebec (76 per cent), Manitoba (67 per cent) and Saskatchewan (60 per cent). Albertans are

more conflicted, with 56 per cent leaning toward renewable energy superpower and 44 per cent toward oil and gas superpower (Figure 2).

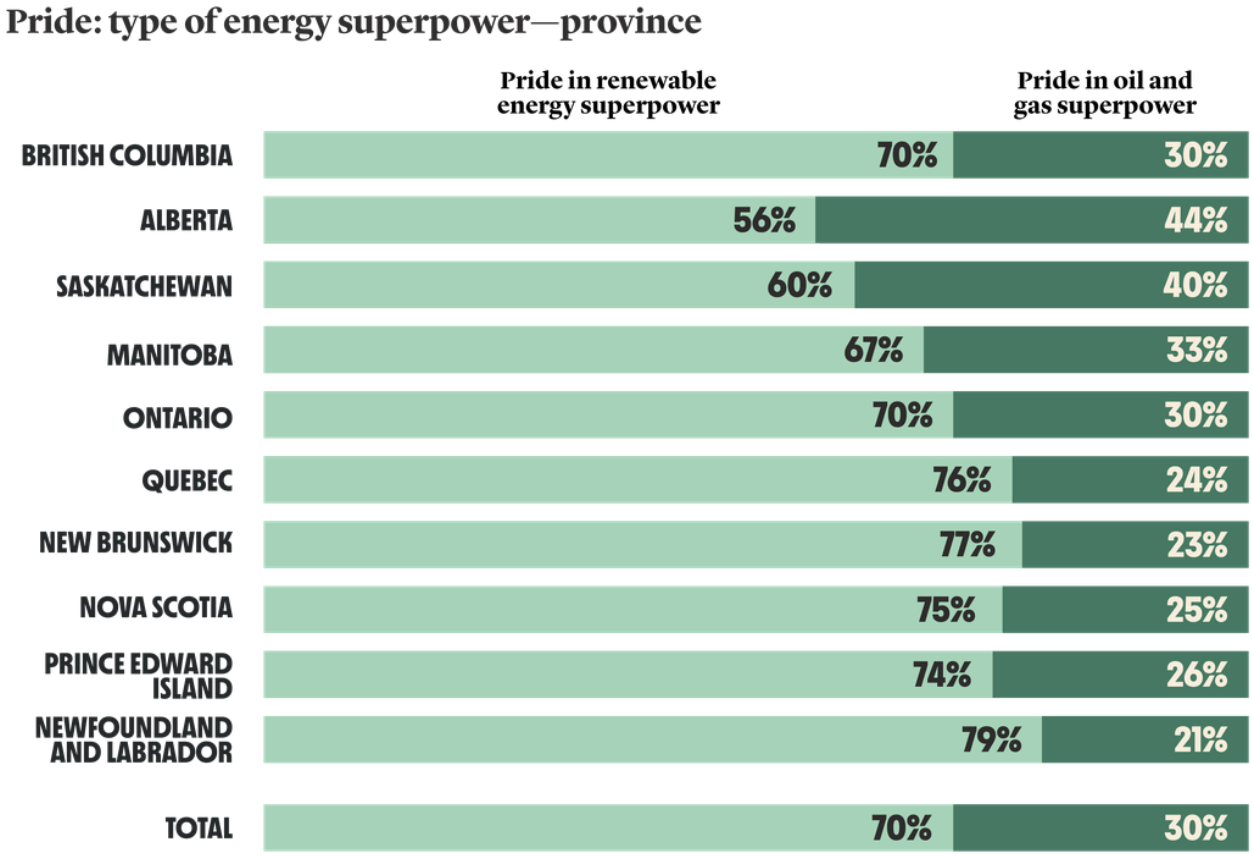

Figure 2. *Majorities in all provinces prefer Canada becoming a renewable energy superpower.*

Demographic results indicate that:

- There is a 12 per cent gap between younger and older Canadians in feeling pride in Canada becoming a renewable energy superpower. Younger Canadians are prouder of Canada being a renewable energy superpower (18 to 29 year olds, 77 per cent) than older Canadians (over 60 years of age, 65 per cent; 45 to 59 year olds, 66 per cent; 30 to 44-year-olds, 70 per cent);
- Sixty-four per cent of rural Canadians are prouder of being a renewable energy power, compared with city and suburban residents (71 per cent);
- University-educated Canadians favour Canada being a renewable energy superpower (75 per cent) more than high school-educated (66 per cent) or college/apprenticeship-trained Canadians (67 per cent); and
- Green (85 per cent), New Democrat (83 per cent), Liberal and Bloc Québécois (80 per cent, respectively) voters feel prouder about Canada becoming a renewable energy superpower. Conservatives slightly favour Canada becoming an oil and gas superpower (52 per cent) over a renewable energy superpower (48 per cent).

Sixty-four per cent of Canadians want leaders to keep their climate change promises

Canadians strongly believe that a leader should keep their promises about climate change, even if a promise to take more action is more difficult to implement than expected. Sixty-four per cent of Canadians indicate leaders should keep their promise because no change is easy, compared with 36 per cent who believe a leader should break their promise in order to adapt (Figure 3).

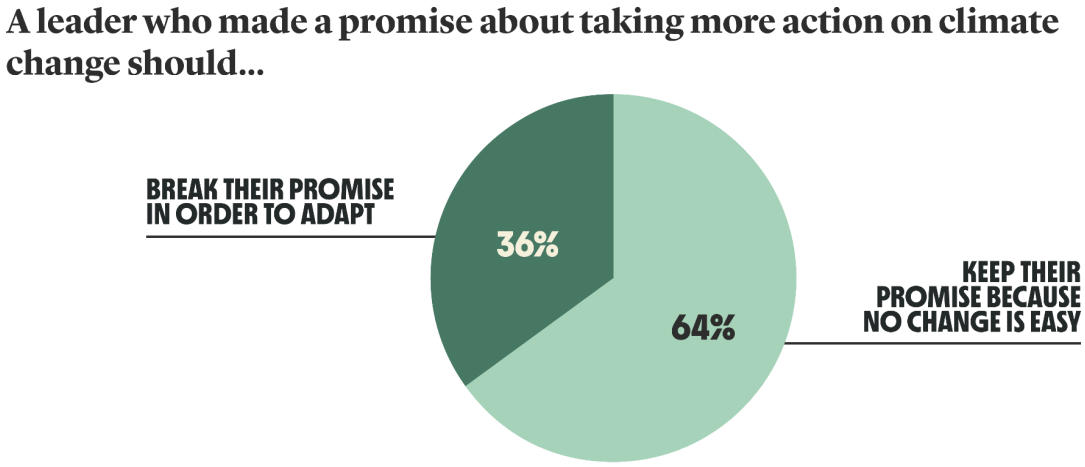

Figure 3. Nearly t*wo-thirds of Canadians want leaders to keep their promises to take more action on climate change.*

The only significant difference in expectation that leaders should keep their climate change promises across all demographics is vote intention, with a 17 per cent gap between perspectives of Bloc Québécois and Conservative voters. Seventy-four per cent of Bloc Québécois voters want leaders to keep their climate change promises, followed by New Democrats (69 per cent), Undecided voters (66 per cent), Liberals (65 per cent) and Conservatives (57 per cent). Forty-three per cent of Conservative voters support breaking promises to do more about climate change.

Canadians want polluters causing climate change to be regulated

There are also strong social expectations that political leaders should regulate polluters contributing to climate change. Seventy per cent of Canadians agree polluters need to be regulated (somewhat, strongly agree), while only eight per cent disagree (somewhat, strongly disagree); 16 per cent are neutral (Figure 4).

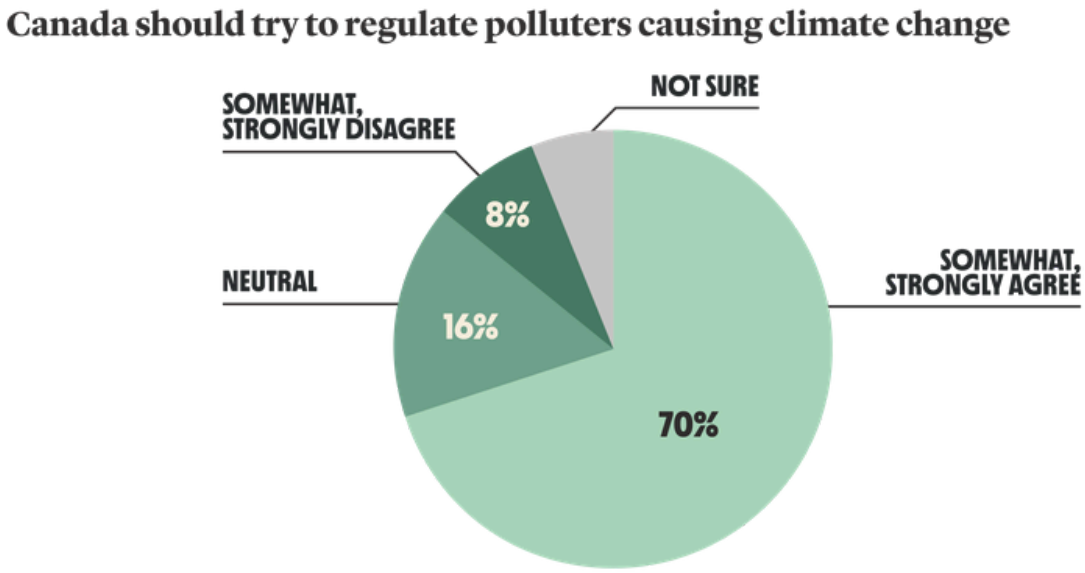

Figure 4. *Seven in 10 Canadians want polluters causing climate change to be regulated.*

There is a 18 per cent gap between younger and older Canadians regarding regulation of polluters causing climate change. Younger Canadians are less inclined to somewhat or strongly agree that Canada should regulate polluters causing climate change (63 per cent), compared with Canadians over 60 years of age (81 per cent). University-educated Canadians want polluters regulated (75 per cent) more than high-school-educated Canadians (64 per cent). Vote intention is also a significant factor, with Liberal, New Democrat, and Bloc Québécois voters more likely to somewhat or strongly agree (81 per cent, 81 per cent, and 70 per cent, respectively), compared with Conservatives (59 per cent). The good news is that a majority of Conservatives want polluters regulated.

Seventy-five per cent are concerned about climate change

Seventy-five per cent of Canadians are somewhat or very concerned about climate change (Figure 5). Twenty-one per cent are not too or not at all concerned. Atlantic Canadians are most concerned about climate change, compared with other provinces: Prince Edward Island (84 per cent), Newfoundland and Labrador (83 per cent) and Nova Scotia (80 per cent) lead the country. Residents of Alberta and Saskatchewan are somewhat less concerned, but with a significant majority (70 per cent in Saskatchewan; 68 per cent in Alberta).

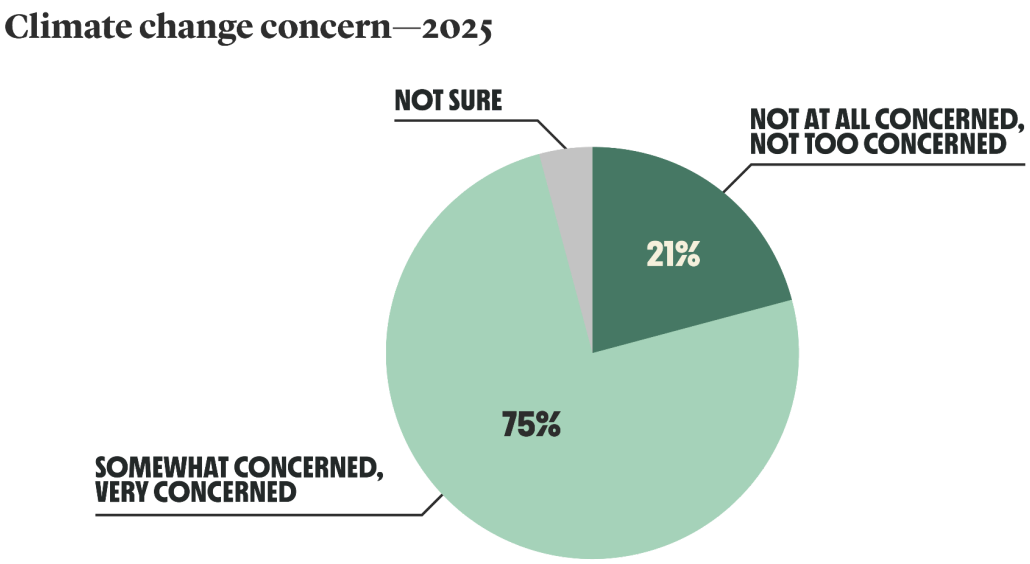

Figure 5. *Seventy-five per cent of Canadians are somewhat (38 per cent) or very concerned (37 per cent) about climate change.*

Indigenous survey respondents are very concerned about climate change (46 per cent relative to non-indigenous respondents (39 per cent), as are visible minority respondents (83 per cent, compared with 77 per cent). New Democrat voters indicate they are very concerned (66 per cent) about climate change, compared with 23 per cent of Conservatives and 50 per cent of Liberals and Bloc Québécois voters.

High-school and college-or-apprentice-educated Canadians are less concerned than those who are university educated, as are those earning less than $59,000 a year, compared with those earning more than $160,000 a year. Rural Canadians are less concerned than city and suburban residents. Respondents aged 45 to 59 years old are somewhat less concerned than other age cohorts.

Almost half of Canadians believe climate change will harm future generations a lot

Seventy-six per cent of Canadians believe that climate change will harm future generations a lot or a moderate amount (Figure 6), with 18 per cent believing climate change will harm future generations not at all or a little.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are most inclined to indicate that climate change will harm future generations a lot (61 per cent), followed by Nova Scotians (60 per cent) and Quebecers (55 per cent). Albertans (39 per cent), residents of Saskatchewan (42 per cent), and Manitobans (46 per cent) are least inclined to indicate future generations will be harmed a lot by climate change.

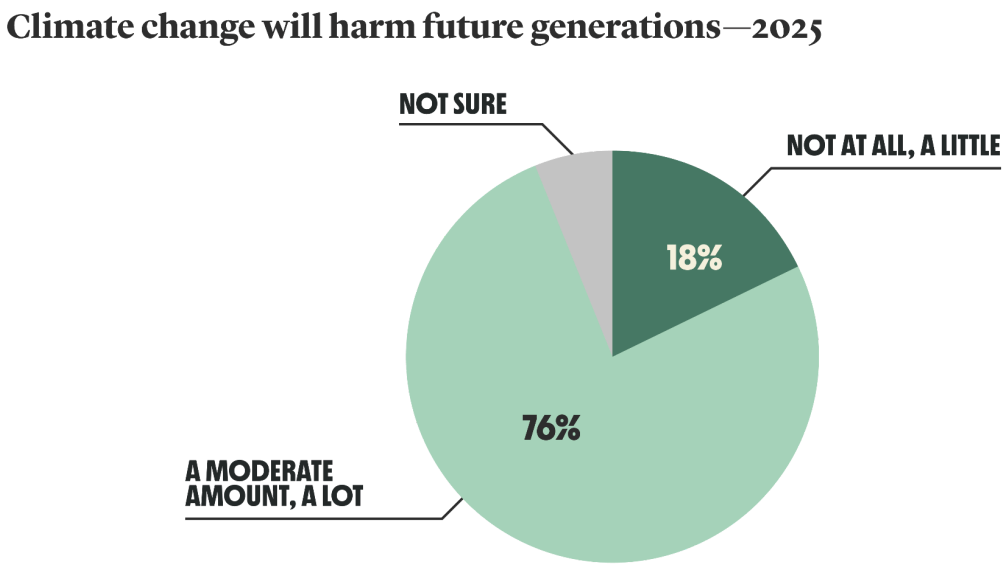

Figure 6.*Seventy-six per cent of Canadians believe climate change will harm future generations a lot (49 per cent) or a moderate amount (27 per cent).*

University-educated Canadians also agree that climate change will harm future generations a lot (53 per cent), compared with those high-school-educated (45 per cent). Conservatives are least likely to believe this (30 per cent), compared with Liberals (61 per cent), New Democrats (61 per cent) or Bloc Québécois voters (60 per cent).

Canadians are confident that if we work together, we can solve climate change

We explore collective, or social, agency with two questions: one focused on whether Canadians believe it is possible to reverse the consequences of climate change (Figure 7), and the other focused on whether Canadians believe that if everyone does their bit, we can solve climate change.

Seventy-four per cent of Canadians believe it is possible to reverse the consequences of climate change; 26 per cent indicate there is nothing we can do to stop climate change, so there's no point in trying.

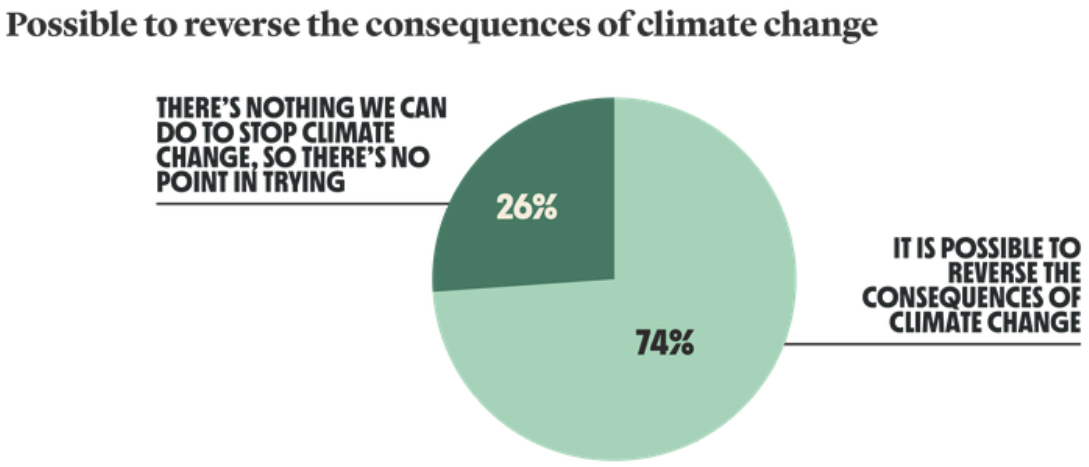

Figure 7. *A strong majority of Canadians believe the consequences of climate change can be reversed.*

University-educated Canadians are more inclined to indicate that the consequences of climate change can be reversed (79 per cent), compared with 67 per cent of high-school-educated Sixty-one per cent of Conservatives believe we can reverse the consequences of climate change, compared with Liberals (84 per cent), New Democrats (84 per cent), Bloc Québécois (78 per cent) and Undecided (75 per cent) voters. There are no significant differences across provinces.

Sixty-seven per cent of Canadians somewhat or strongly agree that if everyone does their bit, we can tackle climate change (Figure 8); 10 per cent somewhat or strongly disagree; 18 per cent neither agree nor disagree.

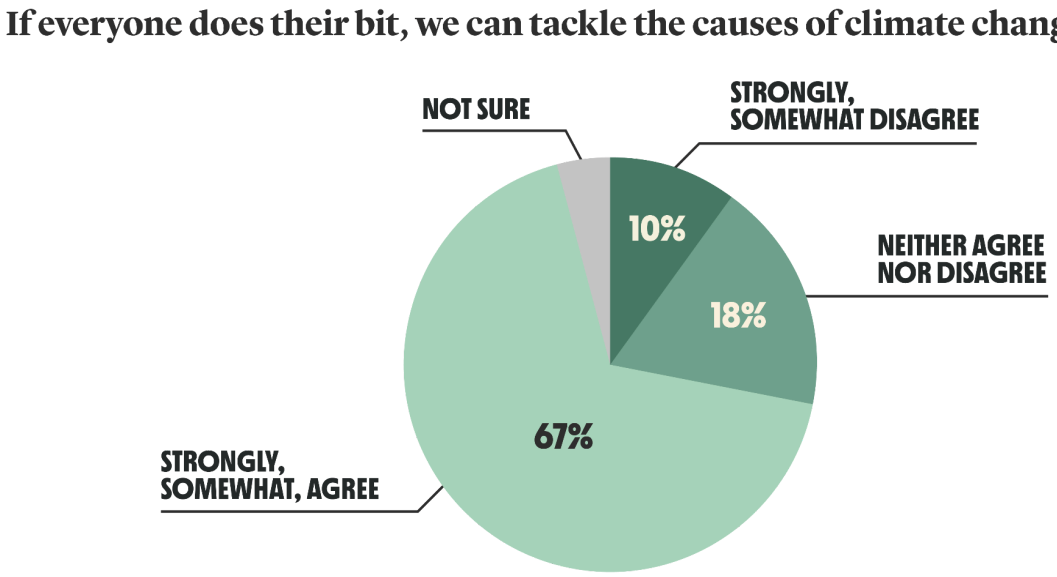

Figure 8. *Almost seven in 10 Canadians believe that we can solve climate change if we work together (38 per cent, somewhat agree; 29 per cent, strongly agree).*

There is an 11 per cent gap between older and younger Canadians in their belief about the power of working together. Older Canadians agree (72 per cent) more than 18-to-29-year-olds do (61 per cent) that we can solve climate change if everyone does their bit. City and suburban residents agree (68 per cent and 69 per cent, respectively, compared with rural residents (63 per cent). University-educated Canadians agree more (72 per cent) than high-school-educated Canadians (61 per cent), as do higher-income Canadians, compared with lower-income Canadians (71 per cent for those earning over $100,000, compared with 64 per cent for those earning less than $59,000). Conservatives are less inclined to believe that if everyone does their bit, we can tackle the causes of climate change (54 per cent), compared with progressive voters (81 per cent, Greens; 78 per cent, Liberals; and 74 per cent, New Democrats and Bloc Québécois).

We need to get Canadians talking about climate change to close the perception gap

Sparkman et al. (2022) found in a national survey of Americans of "false social reality",[6] a type of "pluralistic ignorance," defined as a "near universal perception of public opinion that is opposite of true public sentiment." In their study, the researchers found "supporters of climate policies outnumber opponents two to one, while Americans falsely perceive nearly the opposite to be true."

There is also a perception gap between what people believe they are willing to pay personally to address climate change (e.g., willingness to pay for climate action) and what they believe others are willing to pay. Global research by Andre et al., released in 2024,[7] explores the pluralistic ignorance phenomenon, which they define as "a situation where people systematically underestimate the willingness of their fellow citizens to act" (p. 253). The Andre et al. (2024) global study found 49 per cent of Canadians are willing "to contribute one per cent of their annual income" for climate action, but only 34 per cent believe that others are willing to do the same (e.g., a 15 per cent gap).

A 2025 United States study by the Environmental Voter Project[8] examined whether Americans believe other Americans think about climate change more or less often than they do (descriptive norm). We used the question formulation to ask Canadians how often they think about climate change, and then to assess how often they thought Canadians and their neighbours did. Figure 9 summarizes the results. We combine the results for every day, a few times a week and once a week into "at least once a week" to report results.

Forty-two per cent of Canadians think about addressing climate change at least once a week, 22 per cent less than weekly, and 31 per cent hardly ever or never (Figure 9). Five per cent are unsure. Canadians who think about climate change at least once a week believe only 33 per cent of Canadians and 26 per cent of their neighbours do the same (a nine per cent and 16 per

cent gap.

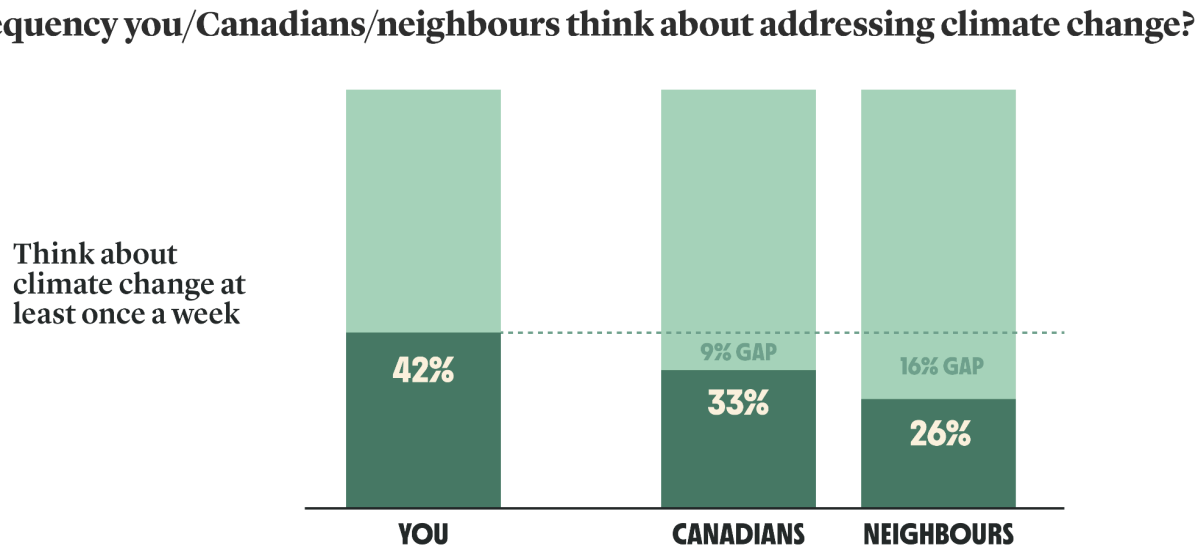

Figure 9. *There is a 16 per cent gap between Canadians who think about addressing climate change at least once a week (42 per cent) and how often they think their neighbours do (26 per cent).*

The gap varies for Canadians who think about addressing climate change less than weekly (22 per cent), perceiving that Canadians think about climate change more than they do (28 per cent), but that their neighbours think about climate change about the same amount as they do (21 per cent).

Canadians who hardly or never think about climate change (31 per cent) believe fewer Canadians than them think about climate change (26 per cent), but more closely match the national average for hardly ever or never for neighbours (34 per cent).

Vote intention drives even larger perception gaps, with 55 per cent of Liberal voters who indicate they think about addressing climate change at least once a week, perceiving 35 per cent of their neighbours do the same (a 20 per cent gap). There is a 25-per-cent gap between what New Democrats do (52 per cent think about climate change at least once a week), compared with their neighbours (27 per cent). Conservatives perceive Canadians and their neighbours think about climate change about as much as they do (28 per cent, compared with 29 per cent for Canadians and 21 per cent for their neighbours). Older Canadians perceive a much larger gap than average: 44 per cent of those over 60 say they think about addressing climate change at least once a week, while they believe only 19 per cent of their neighbours do the same (25 per cent gap).

Over a third of Canadians believe the effects of climate change are exaggerated

Thirty-two per cent of Canadians agree that the effects of climate change are seriously exaggerated, a concerning result that needs addressing with interventions aimed at countering

misinformation and disinformation. Forty-six per cent of Canadians somewhat or strongly disagree that the effects of climate change are seriously exaggerated (Figure 10).

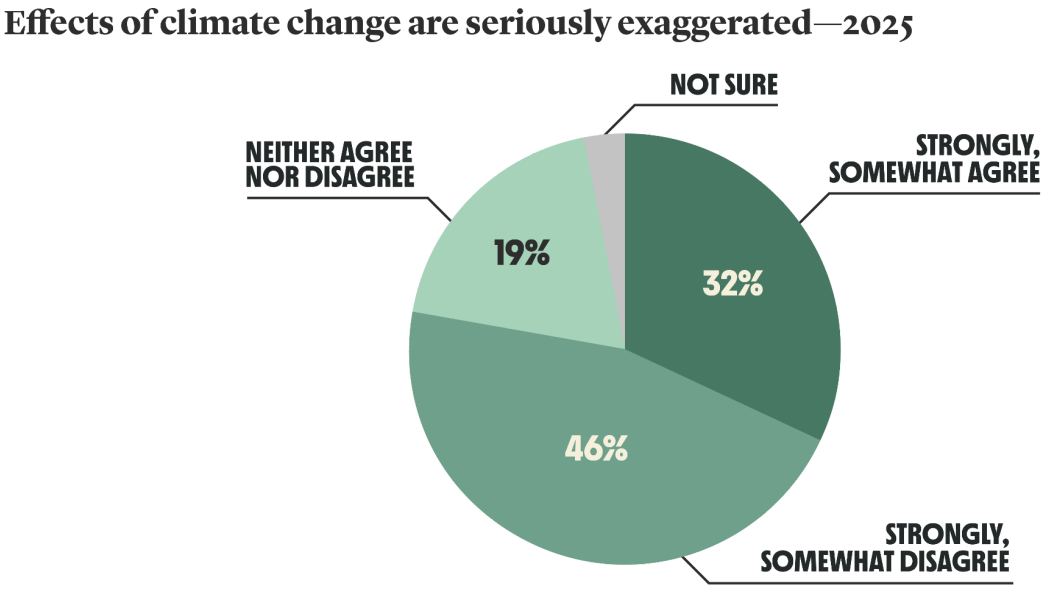

Figure 10. *Thirty-two per cent of Canadians somewhat (19 per cent) or strongly agree (13 per cent) that the effects of climate change are seriously exaggerated. Forty-six per cent disagree (26 per cent strongly, 20 per cent somewhat).*

Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador are most inclined to somewhat or strongly disagree that climate change is exaggerated (60 per cent), followed by residents of British Columbia (53 per cent) and Nova Scotia (52 per cent). Residents of Alberta (40 per cent) and Saskatchewan (39 per cent) are least inclined to disagree that the effects of climate change are seriously exaggerated.

Females disagree that the effects of climate change are seriously exaggerated (49 per cent) more than males do (43 per cent). Francophone Canadians are somewhat more inclined to somewhat or strongly disagree (48 per cent, compared to 45 per cent of non-Francophones), while Indigenous Canadians are more inclined to somewhat or strongly agree (37 per cent, compared to non-indigenous Canadians (32 per cent).

Twenty-seven per cent of Conservative voters disagree, compared to Liberals (59 per cent), New Democrats (59 per cent) and the Bloc Québécois (55 per cent). University-educated Canadians are also more inclined to disagree than other education-level Canadians. There is a 21 per cent gap between younger and older Canadians in disagreeing that the effects of climate change are seriously exaggerated. Older Canadians are most inclined to disagree that the effects of climate change are seriously exaggerated (60 per cent), compared to 18-to-29-year-olds (39 per cent).

One in five Canadians believes that climate change is a hoax

Twenty per cent agree that climate change is a hoax (Figure 11). Fifty-six per cent of Canadians somewhat or strongly disagree that climate change is a hoax. Males (24 per cent) compared to females (18 per cent), 30 to 44 year olds (30 per cent) compared to 14 per cent of those over 60 years of age, and residents of Alberta (29 per cent), Saskatchewan (25 per cent) and Prince Edward Island (36 per cent) are most likely to agree that climate change is a hoax. Misinformation and disinformation about climate change must be confronted with fact-based corrections if we are to reduce the number of Canadians who hold this view.

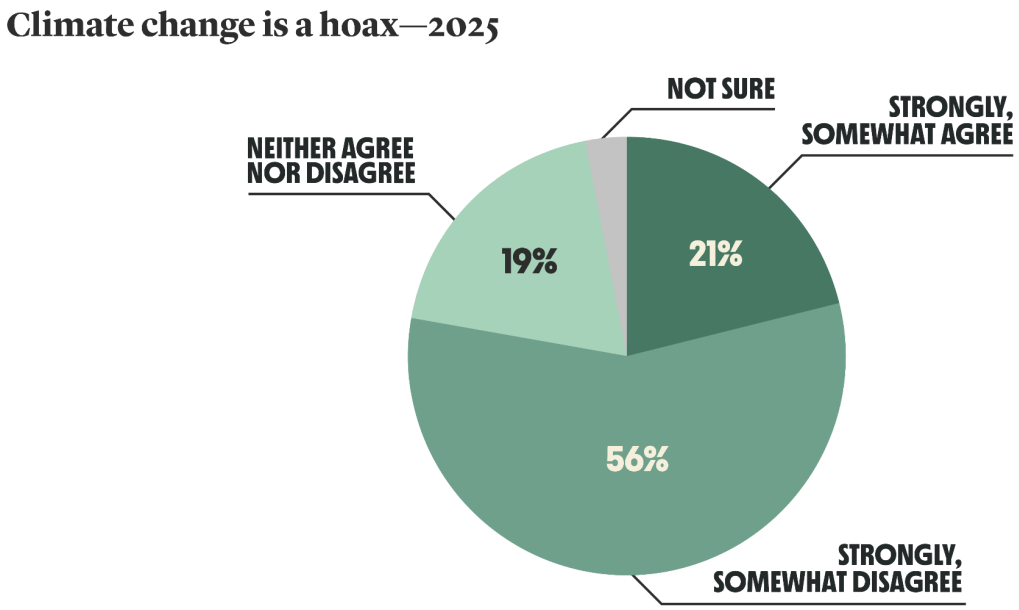

Figure 11. *Forty-one per cent of Canadians strongly disagree that climate change is a hoax; eight per cent strongly agree. Almost half of Canadians only somewhat disagree (16 per cent) are neutral (19 per cent) or somewhat agree (12 per cent).*

Indigenous Canadians are more inclined to somewhat or strongly agree that climate change is a hoax (31 per cent), compared to 20 per cent of non-indigenous Canadians. Francophones are more inclined to disagree (60 per cent), compared to non-Francophone Canadians (56 per cent). Progressive voters disagree more strongly (66 per cent to 70 per cent) than do Conservatives (40 per cent). Canadians over 60 years of age are much more inclined to disagree that climate change is a hoax (73 per cent), compared to 18 to 29 year olds (47 per cent), a 27 per cent gap.

Frame experiments

We tested five frames in the Re.Climate survey. Four frames were tested using an experimental design (a control group or no-exposure group and two test groups). We also tested an electrotech frame in four parts using a disagree-agree response rating.

The frames for the first experiment were: Pollution Blanket and Time to Build:

Pollution Blanket

Burning fossil fuels is hurting everything we love. Every vehicle, furnace, industrial and power plant burning oil, gas or coal adds heat-trapping gases to the air. It's like putting a pollution blanket around the earth. The pollution blanket is making it hotter. The blanket traps heat that used to go back to space. It's like when you go to sleep with an extra blanket and you wake up sweating. That is what we are doing to our planet. And all that trapped heat energy has to go somewhere - so it melts the glaciers, warms up the oceans, and makes heatwaves, fires, and storms stronger. We need to phase out pollution from burning coal, oil and gas so the blanket will thin, and we can get back to a comfortable temperature.

Time to Build

It's a time to build in Canada; a time to say yes to building clean, reliable, and affordable energy for all of us. Getting there requires that we say "yes" to new ways of making and using energy to power our homes, factories and vehicles. When we say yes, we build the careers of the future. Canada can be proud of what it has accomplished in its oil and gas sector, but the momentum and growth for the future is in solar, wind, hydro and technologies that store power. It's a story of abundance: We won't run out of sunlight or wind or the human ingenuity needed to build Canada. Like our grandparents before us who gave us healthcare, our legacy to future generations would be reliable, affordable, and abundant energy.

The survey sample was randomly assigned to three groups, with all respondents, regardless of group assignment, answering the following questions:

> "If a large-scale onshore or offshore wind project is proposed near to where you live, would you (strongly oppose, somewhat oppose, neither support nor oppose, somewhat support, strongly support)."
>
> "If a large-scale transmission project is proposed near to where you live, would you (strongly oppose, somewhat oppose, neither support nor oppose, somewhat support, strongly support)."

The frames for the second experiment were Net Zero and Unfair:

Net Zero

Every vehicle, furnace, industrial and power plant burning oil, gas or coal adds heat-trapping gases to the air. To stop these gases from going into the air, we must decarbonize our energy systems so we reach net zero, a state where the world balances the amount of human-caused greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions with the amount removed from the atmosphere either naturally or using technology. When we do this, no additional GHGs are released into the air. We decarbonize our energy systems by installing more renewable energy technologies like household and community solar, as well as large-scale onshore and offshore wind, and building transmission lines to connect electricity systems across provinces.

Unfair

Everything needs to change. Billionaires and corporate profits are out of control. There's no justice for workers. The poorest always get the short end of the stick. If we're going to cut the pollution pouring heat-trapping gases into the air, unbalancing our climate, then we need more

energy democracy. We need a fair transition as we diversify our energy systems. Citizens need to have a say in deciding where projects go, a share in the benefits, and be compensated where there are costs. Local and indigenous communities must have the opportunity to own or co-own projects and to be trained and employed to work on renewable energy and transmission projects.

All respondents in the second experiment answered the following questions:

> "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The federal government should speed up implementation of energy transition policies and infrastructure investments to control the pollution causing climate change."
>
> "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I am too worried about the economy, Canadian jobs and tariff threats from the United States to think about investing in a new energy system. We need to stick with what we have now."

Frame experiment results

The no-exposure group (the control) serves as the baseline for assessing the impact of the frames (Figure 12). We see an increase in support for a large-scale onshore or offshore wind project near where you live of 12 per cent, and an eight per cent lift in support for a large-scale transmission near where you live. The Pollution-Blanket frame increases support for wind and transmission, but not as dramatically (eight per cent for wind; seven per cent for transmission).

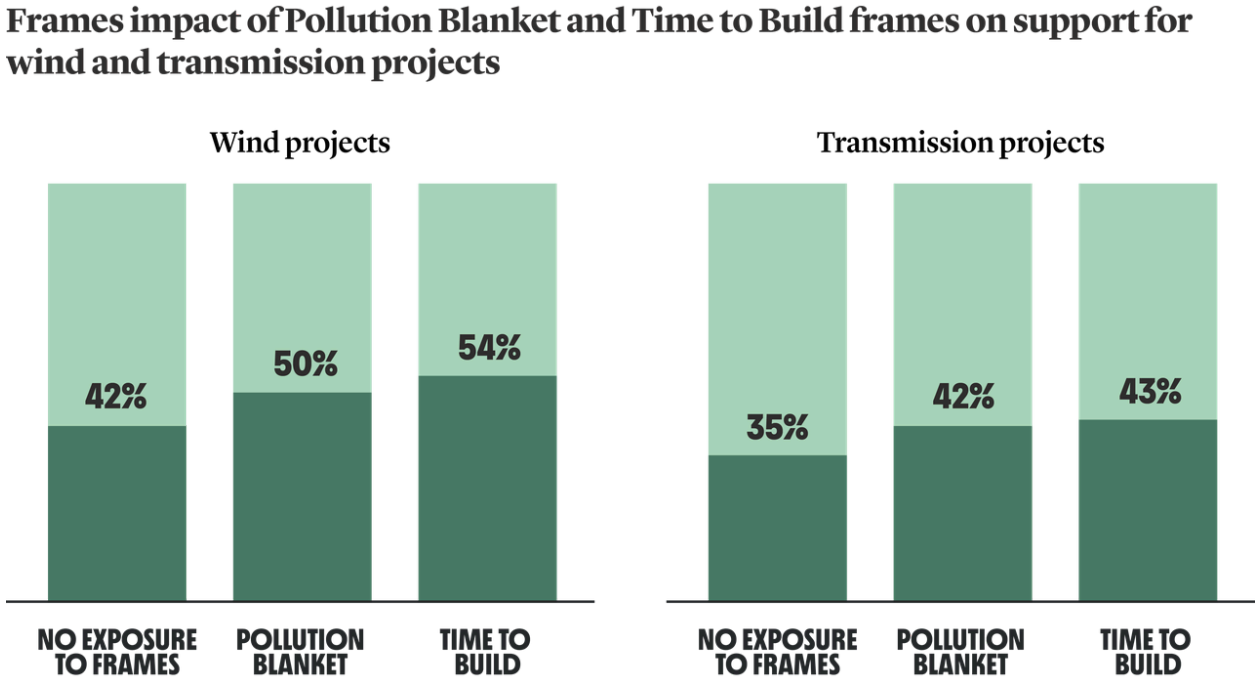

Figure 12. *The Time-to-Build frame increases support for large-scale wind projects near where you live by 12 per cent and for transmission projects eight per cent.*

Provincial results show that Alberta and Manitoba react most positively to the Pollution-Blanket frame over the Time-to-Build frame for wind (Alberta: 53 per cent, compared with 45 per cent in their no-exposure group; Manitoba: 60 per cent, compared with 39 per cent in their no-exposure

group), and transmission (Alberta 52 per cent, compared with 33 per cent in their no-exposure group; Manitoba 55 per cent, compared with 29 per cent in their no-exposure group, Figure 13).

Frames: Pollution Blanket and Time to Build—support wind and transmission

	Support a large-scale onshore or offshore wind project proposed near to where you live			Support a large-scale transmission project proposed near to where you live		
	NO EXPOSURE	POLLUTION BLANKET	TIME TO BUILD	NO EXPOSURE	POLLUTION BLANKET	TIME TO BUILD
STRONGLY OPPOSE	8%	8%	6%	6%	6%	5%
SOMEWHAT OPPOSE	11%	11%	10%	13%	13%	10%
NEITHER SUPPORT NOR OPPOSE	27%	24%	25%	30%	29%	33%
SOMEWHAT SUPPORT	29%	32%	32%	25%	31%	29%
STRONGLY SUPPORT	13%	19%	22%	10%	11%	14%
NOT SURE	12%	7%	5%	16%	11%	8%

Figure 13. *Residents of Alberta and Manitoba increase support for wind and transmission projects after exposure to the Pollution-Blanket frame. Residents of Nova Scotia are not influenced by either frame.*

Support for wind projects is high for residents in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. It may be the case that frames had little influence due to this higher base rate of support. The Pollution-Blanket framing slightly dampened support for wind in Nova Scotia.

Males favour Time to Build. Younger survey respondents slightly favour the Pollution-Blanket frame over Time to Build, compared with those over 60 years of age who slightly favour the Time-to-Build frame. Generally, community type has not been significant in this study, but that is not the case as it relates to the framing experiments.

Rural residents increase support for wind most after exposure to the Pollution-Blanket frame (66 per cent support) over the Time-to-Build frame (49 per cent). City dwellers somewhat prefer the Time-to-Build frame and people living in suburbs somewhat prefer the Pollution-Blanket frame.

Conservatives react negatively to both frames with lower levels of support for wind after exposure, compared with Liberals, who had similar responses to both frames (e.g., support for wind was similar for both), while New Democrats much prefer the Pollution-Blanket frame (48 per cent) over the Time-to-Build frame (34 per cent).

The second experiment's results are not significant at a national scale (Figure 14). The Net-Zero frame increases support for the federal government to speed up implementation of energy-transition policies and infrastructure investments by only four per cent, compared with the group unexposed to any frame (62 per cent, compared with 58 per cent in the control group) and two per cent after exposure to the Unfair frame (60 per cent compared with 58 per cent in the control group).

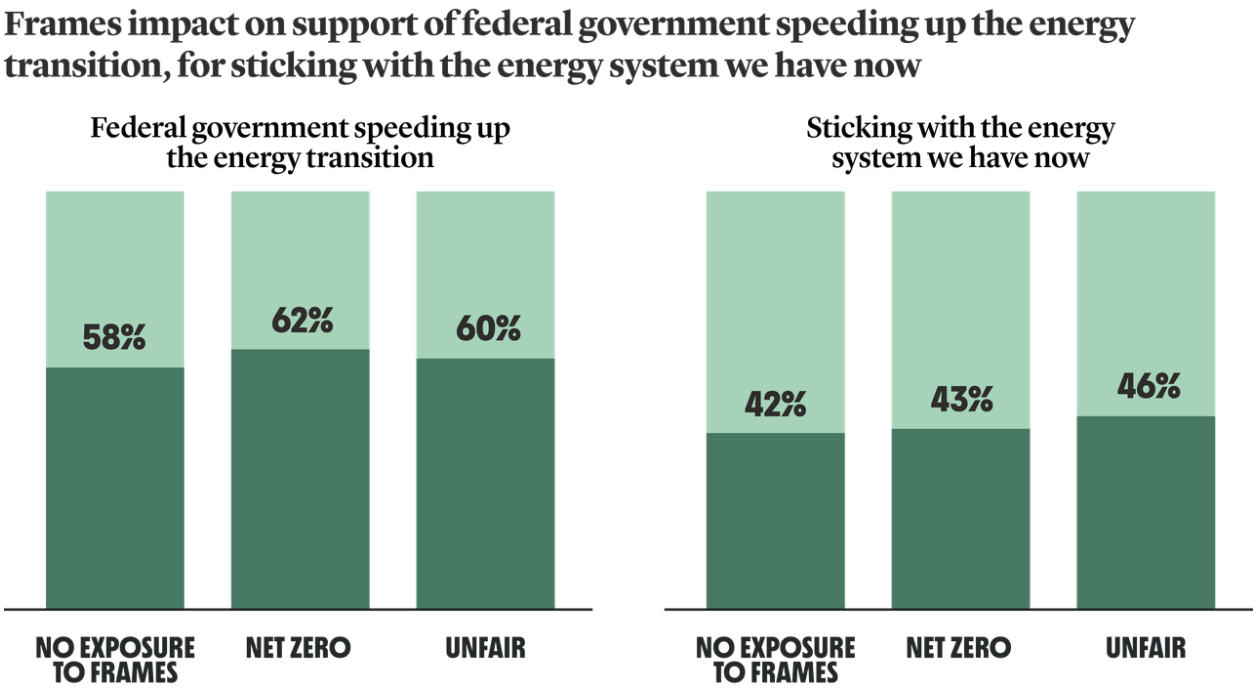

Figure 14. *Net-Zero and Unfair frames have no significant influence on national support for federal action on the energy transition or support for the energy system status quo.*

Results are significant when compared among provinces. Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Newfoundland and Labrador respond most favourably to the Net-Zero frame (Figure 15), with exposure to this frame increasing support for federal action on the energy transition. Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador respond most favourably, increasing support for federal action on the energy transition by 35 per cent, compared with their no-exposure group. Residents of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec increase support by 11 per cent after exposure to the Net-Zero frame. Alberta increases support for federal action on the energy transition by five per cent.

Residents of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island react most positively to the Unfair frame, increasing support for energy transition investments by 16 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively. Nova Scotia did not react well to either frame, dropping support for federal action after exposure to both frames, compared with its no-exposure group. The Unfair frame increases support for federal action for Conservatives and New Democrats.

Frames: Net Zero and Unfair—speed up energy transition; stick with status quo—province

	The federal government should speed up implementation of energy transition policies and infrastructure investments to control the pollution causing climate change.			I am too worried about the economy, Canadian jobs and tariff threats from the United States to think about investing in a new energy system. We need to stick with what we have now.		
	Somewhat, strongly agree					
	NO EXPOSURE	NET ZERO	UNFAIR	NO EXPOSURE	NET ZERO	UNFAIR
BRITISH COLUMBIA	59%	60%	59%	38%	32%	46%
ALBERTA	58%	63%	56%	43%	47%	50%
SASKATCHEWAN	52%	63%	54%	40%	53%	50%
MANITOBA	56%	67%	65%	51%	42%	43%
ONTARIO	60%	61%	60%	46%	46%	44%
QUEBEC	57%	68%	61%	38%	42%	33%
NEW BRUNSWICK	53%	58%	69%	38%	39%	49%
NOVA SCOTIA	78%	64%	69%	38%	42%	49%
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	60%	77%	85%	35%	58%	55%
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR	37%	72%	62%	18%	42%	51%

Figure 15. *There are significant differences in how residents of different provinces respond to the Net-Zero and Unfair frames. Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Newfoundland and Labrador respond most favourably to the Net-Zero frame. p = <.05.*

We also tested the influence of the Net-Zero and Unfair frames on Canadians' economic worries, with regional differences reinforcing the importance of place-based, context-informed communications. The Unfair frame results suggest a backfire risk, increasing agreement by four per cent that "I am too worried about the economy, Canadian jobs and tariff threats from the United States to think about investing in a new energy system. We need to stick with what we have now." The Unfair frame shows a backfire effect in some provinces. This frame increases support for the energy status quo in British Columbia, Alberta, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, but decreases it in Manitoba, Quebec and slightly in Ontario. Both frames increase support for the energy status quo in Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Unfair frame also increases support for the energy status quo among 18 to 29 year olds (six per cent), 30 to 40 year olds (nine per cent), and lowers it for those over 60 years of age (five per cent). This result suggests that a more populist, negative framing may activate top-of-mind concerns, undermining support for acting on climate change. We observe this possibility in the regional and demographic results.

An electricity-powered energy system

We tested a frame based on the idea that the energy transition is about moving away from oil and gas to an electricity-dominant energy system. The frame was divided into four parts and respondents were asked to indicate whether they strongly disagreed to strongly agreed:

1. It is inevitable that electricity will take over from oil and gas. Investments in renewables are exploding; we have reached peak oil.
2. Future growth in our economy and careers will be driven by electrotech (technologies like solar, wind, storage, and electric heating, cooling and vehicles).
3. Canadian leaders must choose national projects and policies that drive Canadian investments toward electricity, not tie our economy to outdated oil and gas.
4. Shifting to electrotech is a generational opportunity to leave our children cheap, abundant and secure energy, create jobs and careers that will last a lifetime, and create opportunities for business growth and new industries.

Results indicate a preference for future-oriented and positive framing, with the portion of the text focused on “future growth” favoured (61 per cent somewhat or strongly agree), compared with the energy transition is “inevitable” frame, which garnered 43 per cent support (Figure 16). Canadian leaders must choose national projects and policies that garnered support of 55 per cent of Canadians; shifting to electrotech is a generational opportunity, 56 per cent.

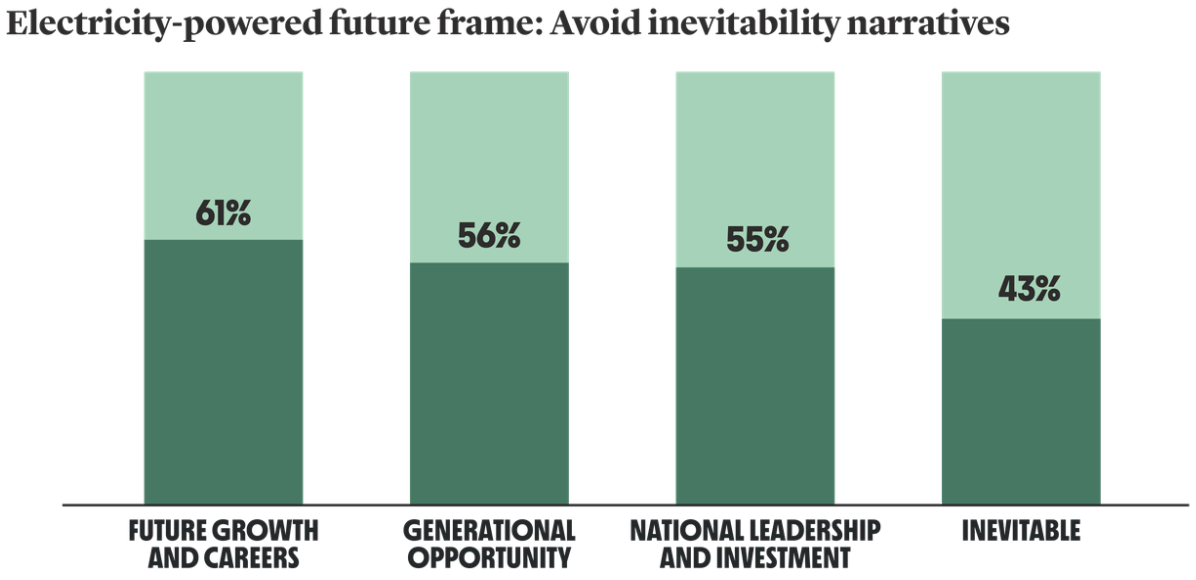

Figure 16. *Canadians prefer positive, future oriented framing over inevitability framing.*

Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador react most negatively to the idea that it is inevitable that electricity will take over from oil and gas (29 per cent somewhat or strongly agree,

compared with Nova Scotia residents where 51 per cent somewhat or strongly agree, Figure 17). Newfoundland and Labrador residents respond most positively to the future growth in our economy and careers orientation (71 per cent) as do Prince Edward Islanders (73 per cent) and Nova Scotians (72 per cent).

Electrotech frame—province

	Future growth in our economy and careers will be driven by electrotech	Shifting to electrotech is a generational opportunity*	Canadian leaders must choose national projects and policies that drive Canadian investments toward electricity	It is inevitable that electricity will take over from oil and gas.
	Somewhat, strongly agree			
BRITISH COLUMBIA	62%	57%	55%	44%
ALBERTA	56%	52%	46%	38%
SASKATCHEWAN	57%	47%	45%	38%
MANITOBA	60%	54%	52%	43%
ONTARIO	60%	55%	54%	44%
QUEBEC	61%	59%	61%	44%
NEW BRUNSWICK	61%	57%	53%	42%
NOVA SCOTIA	72%	58%	64%	51%
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	73%	61%	67%	47%
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR	71%	53%	56%	29%

Figure 17. *Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador react most negatively to the idea that it is inevitable that electricity will take over from oil and gas, compared with other provinces (29 per cent somewhat or strongly agree.*

Focus groups

Re.Climate also conducted three focus groups[8] in November 2025 to gather feedback on the frames and perspectives on the energy transition. Across the frames tested (Time to Build, Net Zero and Electrotech), participants liked:

- Optimistic, non-technical and future-oriented: People want good news, not warnings.
- Career creation, opportunity and economic growth: Repeatedly cited as motivating, especially for their children's future.

- Respect for Canada's current energy workers: Anything framed as 'abandoning oil and gas' created pushback from some.
- Abundance (energy that won't run out): This framing was mentioned repeatedly and enthusiastically.
- Stability and stronger grid capacity: The connection between electrification and grid growth resonated: Electric vehicles, along with increased electric heating, mean we need more grid capacity.

Across all three frames, participants resisted:

- Technical language or climate jargon: Words like "decarbonize," "net zero," "balancing emissions" and "techno-economic transition" were immediate turn-offs.
- Overly negative tone: Participants do not want messaging that focuses on threats, burdens or climate doom.
- Anything that sounds unrealistic or too futuristic: "Far-fetched," "not happening," or "doesn't feel real" came up repeatedly.
- Framing that pits oil and gas versus renewables: Participants prefer "add to our portfolio" rather than "replace the industry."

Advice on improvements:

- Make it feel real and local: They want concrete examples of jobs, wages, where projects will be built, who benefits, and what it looks like in their communities.
- Avoid jargon and simplify language: This was consistent across sessions.
- Show balance: Growth, not replacement: Frames should acknowledge oil and gas workers respectfully to avoid defensiveness.
- Keep the tone hopeful and empowering: The emotional impact mattered more than the technical content.

Participants also noted that having the conversation in the focus group increased their support for wind and transmission because it helped them to better understand how they work.

One-time exposure to frames is only suggestive of potential impact. Of course, frames alone cannot do all the work needed to engage Canadians in supporting climate change policies and the build-out of a less-polluting energy system driven primarily by electricity.

A 2026 meta-analysis published in *Nature Climate Change*,[9] investigating the persuasiveness of climate change messages, notes that "Our main conclusion from this research is that several well-cited messaging strategies reliably influence pro-environmental attitudes and behavioural intentions in the United States. However, the effect sizes are small, suggesting that lasting impact may require messaging campaigns that involve repeated or stronger doses of messaging."

Recommendations

1. **Make closing the perception gap a priority**
   Make climate concern visible locally, provincially and nationally to strengthen descriptive norms (the belief that others behave in this way). Strengthening descriptive norms can help reduce Canadians' hesitation to speak out and to speak with one another. Highlight that 75 per cent of Canadians are concerned about climate change. That figure represents 31 million Canadians. Let Canadians know that over 17 million of them think

about climate change at least weekly. Doing this helps close the perception gap and reduces the spiral of silence that suppresses public discussion.

2. **Normalize talking about climate change and demonstrate collection action**
   Invest in campaigns that encourage conversations among neighbours, families, and co-workers. Profile people talking to each other about climate change. Reducing the perception gap is a priority if we are to remove the climate silence settling over Canada.

3. **Profile strong public expectations that leaders keep their climate promises**
   Strengthen expectations to behave in a certain way by profiling that most Canadians want leaders to keep their promises, even when climate policies are difficult to implement. Communicate to political leaders that Canadians expect them to follow through on their climate commitments.

4. **Emphasize that regulation of polluters is a social expectation**
   With seven in ten Canadians supporting regulation of polluters, confidently frame regulation as aligned with mainstream public values, fairness, and accountability. Seventy per cent of Canadians represent 29 million people. Use this information to counter efforts to frame government regulation as overreach, particularly as federal and provincial governments negotiate a new industrial carbon pricing regime.

5. **Position renewable energy as a source of national pride and identity**
   Promote the finding that 70 per cent of Canadians feel prouder about Canada becoming a renewable energy superpower than an oil and gas superpower. Pride-based framing resonates and can help build social acceptance for energy transition projects.

6. **Frame messaging and stories around positive, future-oriented Time to Build**
   Frame the energy transition as an opportunity to build economic security, careers, and improve affordability. The Time-to-Build frame significantly increases support for wind and transmission projects across most regions and population segments. Focus group participants responded favourably to it, but do not overstate or overhype the potential. Be open, honest about the work ahead and defend the right of community residents to be involved in decision-making relating to energy transition projects and to receive community benefits.

7. **Tailor frames to regions**
   Use the “Pollution Blanket” frame in places like Alberta, Manitoba and rural areas, where it produces larger increases in support for wind and transmission infrastructure. Note that in some provinces like Nova Scotia, where support for wind is already high, that any narrative had a dampening effect on support. More testing is required in Nova Scotia. We can also expect that as provinces and communities move from discussions to specific proposals that support may fall, but can rise again once projects are operational if trust is built through effective engagement of residents and there are community benefits that are perceived as fair.

8. **Test populist or grievance-based framing, as it may heighten economic anxiety**
   The Unfair frame backfired increasing support for sticking with the existing energy system for some demographics and provinces. This research indicates that populist framing may undermine support for the energy transmission, rather than build it. Test, test, test before using and consider the longer-term impacts beyond immediate campaign interests.

9. **Counter misinformation and disinformation**
   The growing share of Canadians who believe that the effects of climate change are exaggerated and that climate change is a hoax demands repeated correction.

10. **Build personal and collective efficacy**
    Messaging should reinforce that climate change is solvable and that collective action matters. Tell Canadians that 31 million of them (74 per cent) believe the consequences of climate change can still be reversed and 28 million of them (67 per cent) believe we can solve climate change if everyone does their bit.

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Appendix: Tables

Table 1. *Climate change concern.*

Not at all concerned	8%
Not too concerned	13%
Somewhat concerned	38%
Very concerned	37%
Not sure	4%

Weighted. *N* = 4,232. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 2. *Climate change will harm future generations.*

Not at all	5%
A little	13%
A moderate amount	27%
A lot	49%
Not sure	6%

Weighted. *N* = 4,232. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table *3.* *How often do You/Canadians/Neighbours think about addressing climate change?*

	You	Canadians	Neighbours	Gap (You)	
				Canadians	Neighbours
At least once a week	42%	33%	26%	-9%	-16%
Less than weekly	22%	28%	21%	+6%	-1%
Hardly ever, never	31%	26%	34%	-5%	+3%
Not sure	5%	12%	18%		

Weighted. *N* = 4,232. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 4. *If everyone does their bit we can tackle climate change.*

Strongly disagree	4%
Somewhat disagree	6%
Neither agree nor disagree	18%
Somewhat agree	38%
Strongly agree	29%
Not sure	4%

Weighted. *N* = 4,232. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 5. *Climate change is a hoax.*

Strongly disagree	41%
Somewhat disagree	16%
Neither agree nor disagree	19%
Somewhat agree	12%
Strongly agree	8%
Not sure	3%

Weighted. *N* = 4,232. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 6. *Effects of climate change are seriously exaggerated*

Strongly disagree	26%
Somewhat disagree	20%
Neither agree nor disagree	19%
Somewhat agree	19%
Strongly agree	13%
Not sure	3%

Weighted. *N* = 4,232. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 7. *Frames: Pollution Blanket and Time to Build - support wind and transmission.*

	Support a large-scale onshore or offshore wind project proposed near to where you live			Support a large-scale transmission project proposed near to where you live		
	No exposure	Pollution Blanket	Time to Build	No exposure	Pollution Blanket	Time to Build
Strongly oppose	8%	8%	6%	6%	6%	5%
Somewhat oppose	11%	11%	10%	13%	13%	10%
Neither support nor oppose	27%	24%	25%	30%	29%	33%
Somewhat support	29%	32%	32%	25%	31%	29%
Strongly support	13%	19%	22%	10%	11%	14%
Top two	42%	50%	54%	35%	42%	43%
Not sure	12%	7%	5%	16%	11%	8%

Weighted. n = 2,247 to 3,676. p = <.05. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 8. *Frames: Net Zero and Unfair - Speed up energy transition; Stick with the energy status quo.*

	The federal Government should speed up implementation of energy transition policies and infrastructure investments to control the pollution causing climate change.			I am too worried about the economy, Canadian jobs and tariff threats from the United States to think about investing in a new energy system. We need to stick with what we have now.		
	No exposure	Net zero	Unfair	No exposurel	Net zero	Unfair
Strongly disagree	5%	5%	6%	8%	9%	9%
Somewhat disagree	8%	8%	7%	19%	18%	17%
Neither disagree nor agree	22%	21%	24%	24%	24%	24%
Somewhat agree	33%	36%	33%	27%	29%	30%
Strongly agree	26%	26%	27%	16%	14%	16%
Top two	**58%**	**62%**	**60%**	**42%**	**43%**	**46%**
Not sure	7%	5%	3%	7%	5%	3%

Weighted. *n* = 2,247 to 3,670. *p* = > .050. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 9. *Frames: Net Zero and Unfair - Speed up energy transition; Stick with energy status quo.*

	The federal Government should speed up implementation of energy transition policies and infrastructure investments to control the pollution causing climate change.			I am too worried about the economy, Canadian jobs and tariff threats from the United States to think about investing in a new energy system. We need to stick with what we have now.		
	No exposure	Net zero	Unfair	No exposure	Net zero	Unfair
Strongly disagree	5%	5%	6%	8%	9%	9%
Somewhat disagree	8%	8%	7%	19%	18%	17%
Neither disagree nor agree	22%	21%	24%	24%	24%	24%
Somewhat agree	33%	36%	33%	27%	29%	30%
Strongly agree	26%	26%	27%	16%	14%	16%
Top two	**58%**	**62%**	**60%**	**42%**	**43%**	**46%**
Not sure	7%	5%	3%	7%	5%	3%

Weighted. *n* = 2,247 to 3,670. *p* = > .050. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 10. *Effects of climate change are seriously exaggerated*

Strongly disagree	26%
Somewhat disagree	20%
Neither agree nor disagree	19%
Somewhat agree	19%
Strongly agree	13%
Not sure	3%

Weighted. *N* = 4,232. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 11. *Climate change is a hoax - 2025.*

Strongly disagree	41%
Somewhat disagree	16%
Neither agree nor disagree	19%
Somewhat agree	12%
Strongly agree	8%
Not sure	3%

Weighted. *N* = 4,232. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

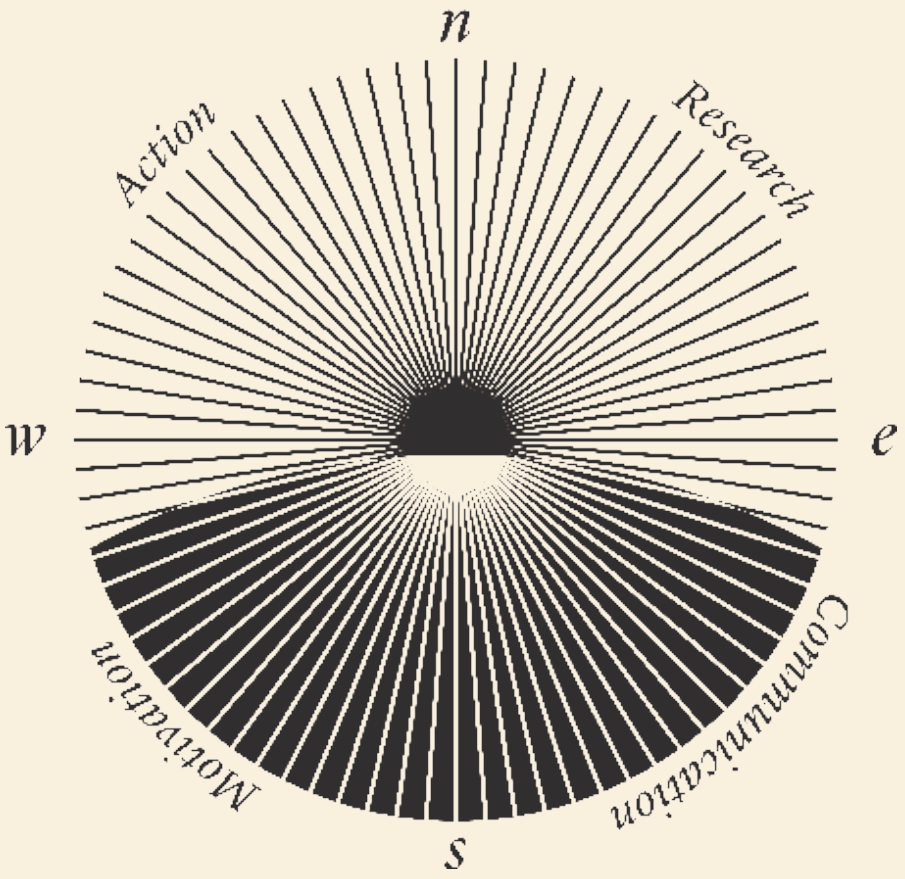
Table 11. *Frame: Electricity-dependent energy system (Electrotech)*

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Not sure
Future growth in our economy and careers will be driven by electrotech	3%	6%	23%	38%	23%	7%
Shifting to electrotech is a generational opportunity	3%	7%	27%	36%	20%	7%
Canadian leaders must choose national projects and policies that drive Canadian investments toward electricity	6%	8%	24%	31%	23%	7%
It is inevitable that electricity will take over from oil and gas.	7%	13%	28%	29%	14%	10%

Weighted. *N* = 4,232. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 12. Stage-of-life effects are significant.

	60+	18-to-29-year-olds
Effects of climate change exaggerated (disagree)	60%	39%
Climate change is a hoax (disagree)	73%	60%
Regulate polluters (agree)	81%	63%
Pride renewable energy (agree)	65%	77%



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