

ecojustice

Canadians' views on emission reduction targets

June 20, 2019

Objectives and methodology

To assess Canadians' views about introducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets to address climate change, Environics asked a series of questions on a national telephone omnibus survey.

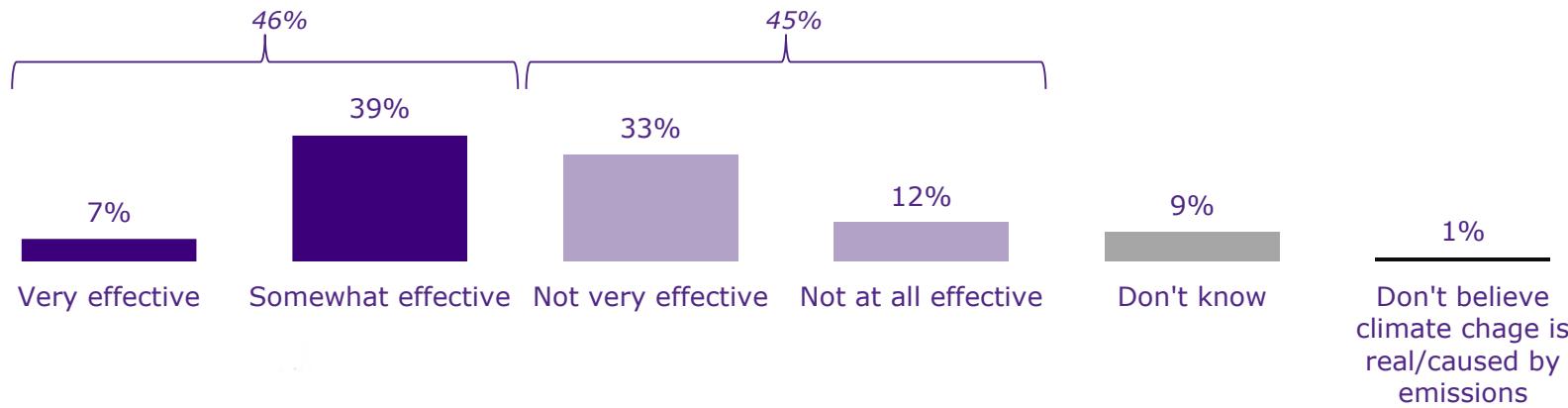
The results are based on telephone interviews conducted with a representative sample of 2,008 adult Canadians, from June 1 to 16, 2019. The margin of error for a random probability sample of this size is ± 2.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.



Summary

- Canadians have mixed views about the country's efforts to date at reducing the GHG emissions linked to climate change. Just under half (46%) say those efforts have been effective, while a similar proportion say they have not (45%).
- For governments to effectively reduce GHG emissions, a majority (61%) say strict targets will have to be put in place against which progress can be measured. Only three in ten (29%) say emissions can effectively be reduced without a strict target.
- Moreover, a majority (66%) believe those targets, if implemented, will have to be mandatory and legally-binding, rather than voluntary (26%).
- There is moderate support for a new federal law assigning a proportion of Canada's GHG emissions reduction target to each province and territory. Seven in ten support such a law overall, although only one-third express strong support.
- The creation of an independent watchdog organization would instill more confidence in governments' ability to meet emission reduction targets for half of Canadians (51%), while the other half say it would make no difference or give them less confidence.

How effective has Canada been to date at reducing GHG emissions?

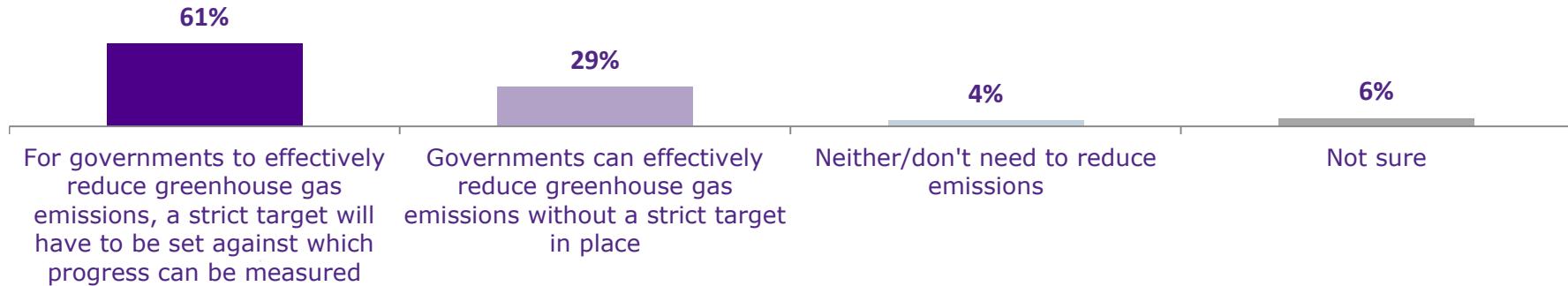


Canadians have mixed views about how effective Canada has been to date in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Just under half (46%) say it has been effective (46% very or somewhat), while a similar proportion (45%) say it has not. Most responses fall in the middle categories of 'somewhat effective' or 'not very effective', suggesting a lack of certainty overall.

Mixed views are evident across the country, with the exception of Quebec, where a majority (56%) are pessimistic about Canada's GHG efforts. Liberal supporters (58%) are most optimistic about GHG reduction efforts to date.

Q1. From what you know or have heard, how effective do you think Canada has been to date at reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change?

View on need for emission reduction targets

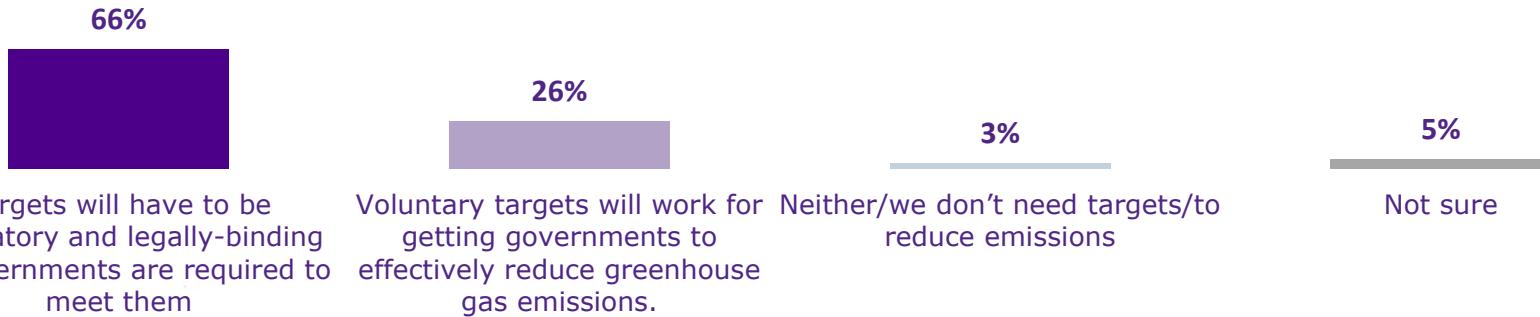


A majority of six in ten Canadians (61%) believe governments will have to set strict targets in order to effectively reduce GHG emissions, twice as many as who say governments can effectively reduce emissions without a strict target in place (29%).

Majorities in all regions and voter groups say a strict target is necessary, especially among Ontario (66%) and Quebec (64%) residents, as well as Liberal and Green Party supporters (73% and 71%, respectively). Belief that a strict target is unnecessary is higher, but still the minority view, among Conservative Party supporters (41%) and those living in Alberta (40%).

Q2. Which is closest to your view?

View on whether emissions targets need to be mandatory



Targets will have to be mandatory and legally-binding so governments are required to meet them

Voluntary targets will work for getting governments to effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

3%

5%

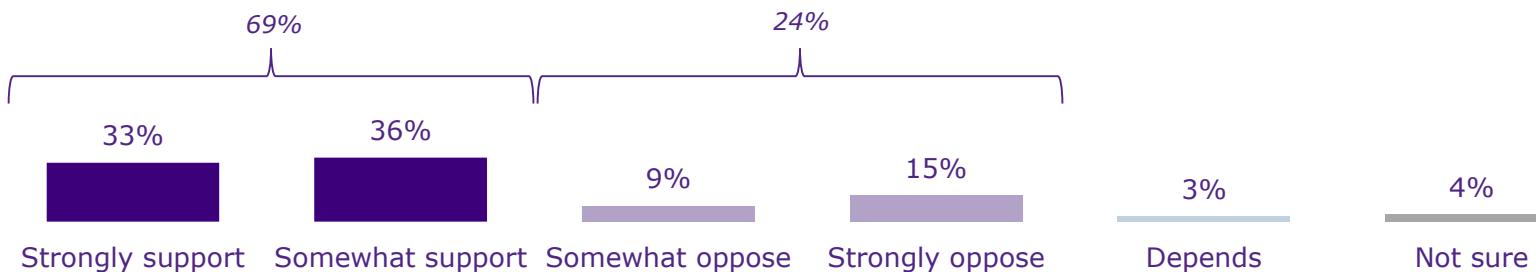
Two-thirds of Canadians (66%) say targets, if implemented, should be mandatory and legally binding so governments are required to meet them, compared to one-quarter (26%) who believe voluntary targets will be sufficient.

Majorities in all regions and voter groups say the targets should be mandatory. This view is most widespread in the Atlantic provinces (73%) and Ontario (71%).

The view that voluntary targets are sufficient is higher among Conservative supporters (39%).

Q3. If targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions are implemented, which of the following is closest to your view?

Support for new federal law assigning GHG emissions reduction targets to each province/territory

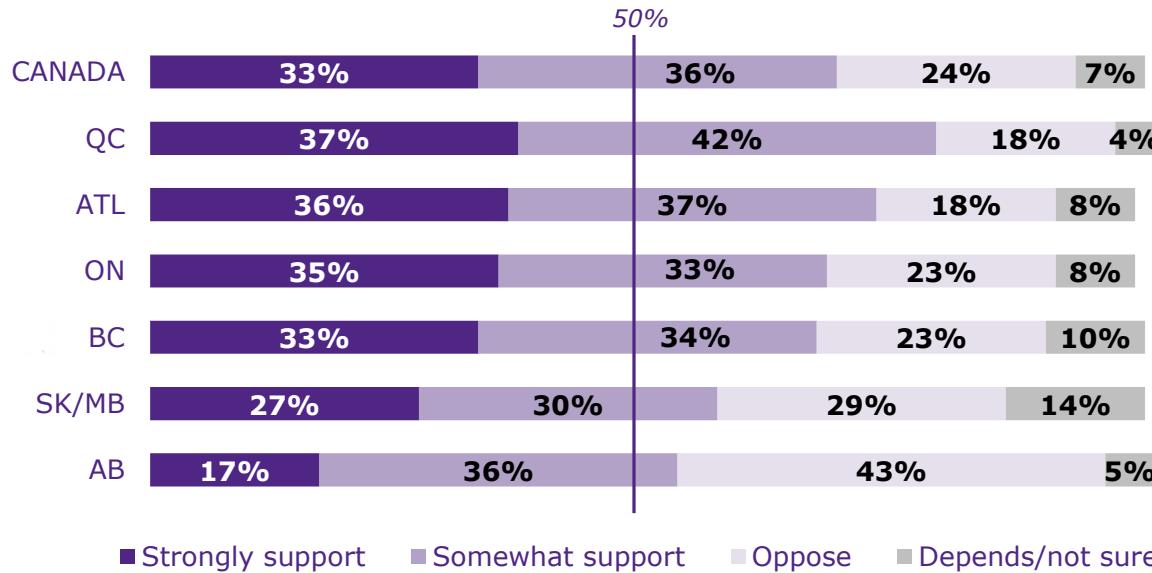


There is moderate support for a new federal law that assigns a proportion of Canada's total greenhouse gas emissions reduction target to each province and territory. Seven in ten (69%) support such a law overall, but only one-third (33%) express strong support (another 36 percent somewhat support it).

There is majority support for a new federal law among most voter groups except Conservative Party supporters, who are almost equally divided between support (47%) and opposition (46%).

Q4. Would you support or oppose a new federal law that assigns a proportion of Canada's total greenhouse gas emissions reduction target to each province and territory? (AS NEEDED: Is that strongly or somewhat support/oppose?)

Support for new federal law assigning GHG emissions reduction targets to each province/territory – by region



Majorities in all regions express overall support for a new federal law assigning GHG reduction targets. Strong support is lower in Alberta (17%) and Manitoba/Saskatchewan (27%) than in other provinces.

Q4. Would you support or oppose a new federal law that assigns a proportion of Canada's total greenhouse gas emissions reduction target to each province and territory? (AS NEEDED: Is that strongly or somewhat support/oppose?)

Confidence in independent watchdog organization to oversee government emissions reduction commitments



Half of Canadians (51%) would be more confident in the ability to meet emission reduction targets with an independent watchdog organization in place, while just under half say that it would make no difference (38%) or would reduce their confidence (8%).

Belief that a watchdog organization would make them more confident in meeting emissions targets is higher in the Atlantic provinces (60%) and Quebec (55%) and among Green Party supporters (68%). Meanwhile, Conservative Party supporters and Alberta residents are more likely than others to say it made no difference to their confidence in emissions targets (45% and 46%, respectively).

Q5. One option is to have a non-partisan, unbiased and independent organization oversee government commitments on cutting emissions. Would this make you more confident that emission reduction targets would be met, less confident, or would it make no difference?