

## Obstacles to solutions

**Canadians continue to believe the biggest obstacle to addressing climate change is more about politics and public resistance than about a lack of solutions to the problem.**

What do Canadians see as the biggest obstacle to solving the problem of climate change? As in 2011, a majority (56%) agree with the view that the solutions are now well known but that society is not ready to move ahead with them, compared with 38 percent who believe the solutions are not yet well enough understood to justify clear action. These proportions are essentially unchanged from June 2011.

The view that the primary obstacle is societal resistance is most evident in Quebec and Atlantic Canada (62% in each), among Canadians with a university degree (64%), those 18 to 29 (66%), and NDP supporters (74%). This perspective is least apt to be shared by Prairie province residents (46%), Canadians without a high school diploma (46%), those 60 years and older (46%), and Conservative supporters (42%).

Since 2011, belief in societal resistance as the primary obstacle has increased marginally in Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, while declining in Atlantic Canada and Alberta (where opinion is now evenly divided between the two points of view). This same time period has also seen a widening of the gap across education level and age cohort, as younger more educated Canadians have increasingly come to see the challenge as one of societal resistance, while older less educated individuals are now less apt to share this opinion.

## Shift to renewable energy

**A strong majority of Canadians believe it is possible for their province to shift its energy resources from fossil fuels to renewable power.**

Because fossil fuel combustion is a major source of greenhouse gases, renewable “green” sources of energy, such as wind, solar and biomass, are now being actively developed across the country. Despite the growth of such renewables, their potential to make a significant contribution to reducing reliance on fossil fuels has been a matter of ongoing debate among government, corporate and non-profit stakeholders. The Canadian public, however, is optimistic that renewable energy is a viable future.

Seven in ten (70%) Canadians say they believe it is possible for their province to shift most of its energy requirements from fossil fuels to clean renewable forms of energy, such as wind power, solar power and biofuels. One in four (23%) do not believe this can be done, while a handful are unable to say either way (6%). Opinions have essentially held steady since June 2011.

Optimism about the future of renewable energy is a majority view across the country, but as in 2011 there are notable differences in the strength of this opinion. Belief in the feasibility of shifting provincial energy sources to renewables continues to be strongest in Quebec (81%) and lowest in Alberta (52%). Over the past two years, this viewpoint has declined noticeably in Atlantic Canada (down 10), and to a lesser extent in the Prairie provinces (down 5 points). In Ontario – where there has been considerable controversy over the implementation the province’s Green Energy Act – opinions remain stable with 68 percent of residents saying their province can make the shift to renewable power.

