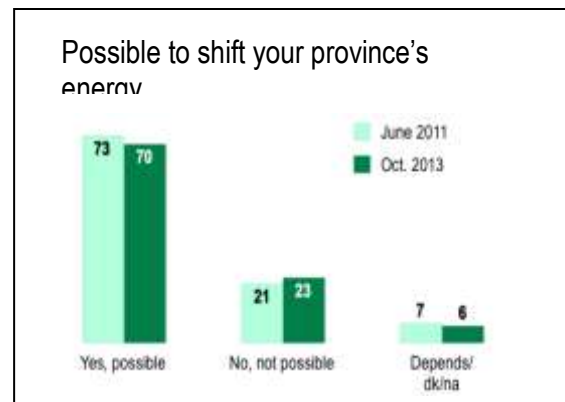


## Shift to renewable energy

**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.



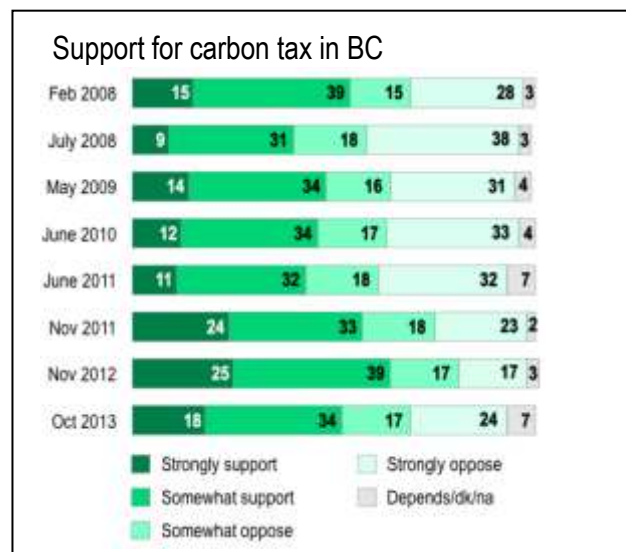
Seven in ten (70%) Canadians say they believe it is possible for their province to shift most of its energy requirements from fossil fuels to clean renewable forms of energy, such as wind power, solar power and biofuels. One in four (23%) do not believe this can be done, while a handful are unable to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

## Public support for carbon tax in B.C.

**British Columbians’ support for their provincial carbon tax has declined over the past year, but remains above 50 percent, and is stronger than during the first three years of its implementation.**

Public support for the carbon tax in B.C. has declined noticeably in the past year, although it is still backed by more than half of the province’s residents. A bare majority now say they strongly (18%) or somewhat (34%) support the current carbon tax that has been in place since 2008.<sup>1</sup> This proportion is down from 64 percent who expressed this view in November-December 2012, and reversing the upward trend dating back to 2011.



<sup>1</sup> This is how the carbon tax was described on the survey: “British Columbia now has a tax on all carbon based fuels used by consumers and businesses in the province, as a way to encourage reductions in greenhouse gas emissions generated in the province. This tax is now 7.2 cents per litre. This tax is revenue neutral which means the same amount raised through this tax each year is refunded – by law - to taxpayers in the form of lower personal income and corporate taxes.”

Four in ten somewhat (17%) or strongly (24%) oppose the provincial carbon tax, up from 34 percent who did so a year ago. The proportion who do not have a clear opinion on this question increased from three percent to seven percent.

The size of the BC subsample limits the scope of subgroup analysis, but it is evident that public support for the carbon tax has declined most noticeably among men and residents outside of the Vancouver metropolitan area.

British Columbians' view of their carbon tax is less positive than in 2011 and 2012, but remains more so than in previous years since it was implemented in July 2008. The current level of public support is very similar to that recorded in February 2008, just after it was first announced by then-Premier Gordon Campbell.

## Public support for a BC-style carbon tax in other provinces

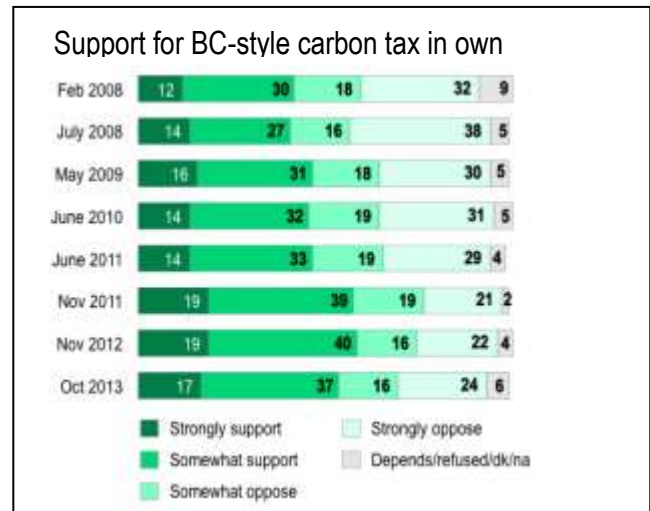
**A majority of Canadians outside of BC continue to support a BC-style carbon tax for their province, with this view strongest in eastern Canada and among youth.**

How do citizens elsewhere in Canada view the BC carbon tax as a climate change policy for their own province? As has been the case since 2011, a clear majority of Canadians outside of BC express support for such a tax in their province. The level of support has declined over the past year, but marginally and is now stronger than in British Columbia.

Across the country (outside of BC), more than half of citizens strongly (17%) or somewhat (37%) support a BC style carbon tax for their province, down five percentage points since 2012, but well above levels recorded prior to 2011.<sup>2</sup> Four in ten now somewhat (16%) or strongly (24%) oppose such a tax, up two points since 2012.

As in previous years, public views about a BC style carbon tax vary across the country. Support is strongest in eastern and central Canada, and lower in the Prairie provinces, but there have also been notable shifts over the past year. Opinions are now most favourable in Atlantic Canada (60% support, up 6 points since 2012), followed by Ontario (55%, down 3) and Quebec (55%, down 12). Public support for a carbon tax has declined most significantly in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (to 45%, down 14), while rising marginally in Alberta (47%, up 4).

Across the country, public support for a provincial carbon tax is strongest among Canadians 18 to 29 years of age, and this support has strengthened over the past year (to 72%, up 8 points), while declining among older cohorts. Support also increases with level of education, although it is only Canadians without a high school diploma who have become more positive about this policy since 2012. As before, carbon taxes are most widely supported by those who affiliate with the Federal opposition parties, especially the NDP (67%) and Liberal Party (64%), while this view is least apt to be shared by those who support the Federal Conservative Party (40%). Among those who do not identify with any party are largely split between supporters (48%) and opponents (42%). Since 2012, support for a provincial carbon tax has declined noticeably among those who affiliate with the Green Party (60%, down 12) and Bloc Québécois (55%, down 16).



<sup>2</sup> The survey question used the same description of the BC carbon tax, and then asked if respondents would support the introduction of this type of policy in their own province.