Quarterly Approval Rating of Canada's Premiers:

Saskatchewan's Scott Moe (55% -1) Stays on Top with Highest Provincial Premier Approval

Newfoundland and Labrador's Ball (+10), Alberta's Notley (+6), Manitoba's Pallister (+5), New Brunswick Gallant (+4), Quebec's Couillard (+1) British Columbia's Horgan (-1), Ontario's Ford (-3), Nova Scotia's McNeil (-4)

September 26, 2018—Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe has emerged again in back to back quarterly tracking with the highest approval rating of any Provincial Premier in the country according to a *DART* **Insight** survey of constituent provincial voters across Canada.

Moe, who assumed the Premiership from former Saskatchewan Party Leader Brad Wall in January 2018, has a 55% approval rating (-1), effectively the same as the June sounding (56%).

Moe is followed by **British Columbia** Premier John Horgan at 49% (down 1 percentage point), **Newfoundland and Labrador** Premier Dwight Ball (42% +10), **Manitoba** Premier Brian Pallister (42% +5), **Alberta** Premier Rachael Notley (41% +6), **Ontario** Premier Doug Ford (37% -3), **New Brunswick** Premier Brian Gallant (37% +4), **Quebec Premier** Philippe Couillard (31% +1) and **Nova Scotia** Premier Stephen McNeil (26% -4).

Because of extremely small sample sizes, approval ratings cannot be provided for Prince Edward Island and the Canadian Territories.

Notes and Pointed Perspectives…

- **Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe** has the highest approval rating of all of the premiers in the country at 55% (-1), still up 3 points since winning the leadership race in January 2018 and succeeding former Saskatchewan Party Premier Brad Wall. A recent Trade Mission to China to discuss the benefits of potash, agriculture, resource and carbon capture and storage sectors; his high profile on NAFTA negotiations ("We cannot move forward with a bad deal and I'm not certain we can move forward with no deal either."); a call for the Trans Mountain pipeline move ahead and his opposition to the Trudeau government carbon tax, as well as opposition to a handgun ban, are all measures that have kept him popular with the political pulse of the province. While the next provincial election is not compulsory until 2020, some are suggesting it may come sooner.

- **Alberta Premier Rachel Notley** is up six points to 41% approval in leading her NDP majority government—and represents *five consecutive quarters* of approval improvement from 28% to 41% (+13 points). No doubt Notley's announcement to pull out of the national climate plan because of the recent Federal Court of Appeal ruling that stalls the Trans Mountain Pipeline from proceeding, and her vow to "hold Ottawa's feet to the fire" and "engage ferociously" if the federal government slips from its newly announced 22-week Trans Mountain review timeline, is earning her a solid uptick in her approval rating.

- **Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister** is up 5 points to 42% approval, just 11 points back of his highest rating in September 2016 (53%). A possible reason for the bounce? While other premiers have railed against the Trudeau government carbon tax, Premier Pallister saw where this was all heading, and, despite his

aversion to it, decided he'd rather have the revenues going to, and the cheques to voters coming from, his government.

- When **Ontario Premier Doug Ford** won his Conservative majority government on June 7, 2018 he did so with 40.50% of the votes cast and the first sounding of his approval rating for this quarterly report in the days that followed marked him at 40%. His first two months in office have been anything but calm, especially with the showdown with Toronto City Council to pare its size down from a proposed 47 seats for a soon to be civic election to 25 seats. After a provincial court judge ruled the legislative change to be unconstitutional on Charter grounds, Ford activated the rarely used Notwithstanding clause until an appeal court panel over-ruled the lower court judge and Stayed the court proceedings. As such, the Toronto Council is now moving ahead with an election of 25 Councillors. As tumultuous as it was, Premier ford dropped just three points in his approval rating (37%) which, if translated into voter support, would still yield him a majority government.

- With the next Quebec election underway for a vote on October 1, 2018 the approval rating for **Premier Philippe Couillard** is still mired at the low end of his *approval rating* (31% +1) despite his showing among *decided voters* which, in polling released during the same timeframe as this approval rating sounding, found 37 percent support for his Liberals with 30 percent preferring the Coalition Avenir Quebec. When first elected in 2014 the approval rating of the new Premier was at 59% and has witnessed a drop of 28 points since then.

- **Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil** has slipped down to 26% (-5), back to his lowest ebb since December of 2013 at 25%. But as witnessed previously, Premier McNeil can't be underestimated—in March 2017 his approval rating was at the same level (27%) but in the general election of May 30, 2017 he won a re-elected

Majority government with 39.47% of the vote. While McNeil recently rebuffed a scathing report by the province's information and privacy ombudsman who said Nova Scotia's health department failed to probe whether a minister used a private email address for government business, there was some very good news on the economic front: Standard and Poor's upgraded the province's long-term credit rating to its highest ever from A+ to AA-, with a stable outlook. The province says the bond rating agency cited "strong fiscal management," and that Standard and Poor's credit report notes Nova Scotia is expected to outperform most Canadian provinces in the next two years

- While **New Brunswick Premier Brian Gallant** continued a rebound from his lowest approval rating delivered in December 2017 (24%, on par with the same rating of September 2016) to 37% (+4) in mid September—up a total of 13 points in nine months—and mirrored the *decided vote* (37.7%) for Gallant's Liberals on the September 24, 2018 election night—the elected seat count wasn't so kind with the outcome being 22 PCs, 21 Liberals, three for the Green Party and three for the People's Alliance. What's historic about this election is that New Brunswick has been a two-party province pretty much forever. In fact, only twice in the past 100 years has a third party held more than one seat in a legislature. Two parties other than the Liberals or Tories occupying seats in a legislature at the same time had also only happened twice before the September 24 election. As of this release time, Premier Gallant, who won the popular vote but needed 25 seats to retain a Majority government, has not yielded to **PC leader Blaine Higgs** and intends to recall the legislature in an attempt to form a Minority government.

- On the heels of his **Newfoundland and Labrador** Liberal party giving him a 79 per cent vote of confidence in June, **Premier Dwight Ball** is back up smartly (42% +10) from our last survey. However, despite the bounce, Progressive Conservative Leader Ches Crosby, the son of political Tory lion John Crosby,

won a very tight by-election race (+218) over Liberal Paul Antle in a riding previously occupied by a former provincial Liberal cabinet minister. Crosbie's victory gives the Tories an eighth seat in the House of Assembly, but more importantly, it puts Crosbie — a litigator known for class action lawsuits — a seat directly across from Liberal Premier Dwight Ball in the House of Assembly. The next provincial election set for Oct. 8, 2019.

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Methodology…

These are some of the topline findings of a **DART** **Insight** *poll conducted as part of a regular quarterly sounding of Canadians on various issues and matters that affect their lives as citizens, consumers, and voters. The research is created and analyzed under the direction of veteran pollster John Wright, CEO of* **DART** **Insight** *which is a division of* **DART** **Insight and Communications** *Inc. in partnership with Canada's national survey sample research provider* **Maru/Blue** *that curates a vast Online Panel and provides data collection services.*

The survey was conducted among 5,769 randomly selected Canadian adults who are members of **Maru/Blue**'s *Online panel between September 13-19, 2018. Respondents could opt in for either official language. The results have been weighted by education, age, gender, and region to match the population, according to Census data. This is to ensure the sample is representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The precision of this* **DART** **Insight** *Online poll is measured using a Bayesian Credibility Interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 1.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadian adults been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population and individual provinces. Minor discrepancies in the data may occur due to rounding.*

Visit http://www.dartincom.ca/polls/ for the written release and detailed tables. For further information or commentary please contact:

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About DART Insight and Maru/Blue…

DART Insight is the market and public affairs opinion research services division of Canadian based consultancy DART Insight and Communications Inc. The other half of the company is DART Communications and provides communications strategy and execution, media training, event deployment and corporate services. The company serves clients in private, public, association and not-for-profit organizations, is independent, and is not tied to any political organization. Founded by veteran pollster and commentator John Wright (CEO DART Insight) and communications specialist Victoria Ollers (CEO DART Communications), the company is comprised of highly experienced, recognized and awarded senior practitioners in many related disciplines who have gathered together under one banner to serve clients in North America and beyond.

Public releases of polling results, including detailed tables (weighted/unweighted), questions used and analysis, are provided freely at http://www.dartincom.ca/polls/

DART Insight and Communications is a member in good standing with the Marketing Intelligence and Research Association (MIRA) of Canada. Accuracy of any Online polling results are measured using a Bayesian Credibility Interval which is endorsed by MIRA and the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR).

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