

Quarterly Approval Rating of Canada's Premiers:

Alberta Gives Premier Rachel Notley a 38% (+4) Approval Rating as Election called for April 16, 2019

Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe Regains First Place Standing with Personal Best (59%) as Still Honeymooned Quebec Premier François Legault Slips to Second Place (56%)

March 25, 2019— In the wake of an Alberta election called for April 16, 2019, a new poll shows that premier Rachel Notley's approval rating stands at 38%—up four points since December of 2018 (34%). Ranked sixth of the nine premiers measured across the country each quarter, the incumbent premier (and the province) are arguably in for one of the most significant election campaigns in decades.

Just one province over to the east, premier Scott Moe has regained his place as the premier with the highest approval rating across the country. With a personal high mark of 59%, premier Moe displaces still honeymooned Quebec premier François Legault who claimed the title last quarter with a 61% approval rating coming off his election victory and now resting in second place with 56% (-5)

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 survey was conducted among 5,450 randomly selected Canadian adults who are members of **Maru/Blue's** Online panel

between March 8-14, 2019. *Because of extremely small sample sizes, approval ratings cannot be provided for Prince Edward Island, Nunavut and both the Yukon and Northwest Territories.*

The ranking of the premiers by their individual provincial approval ratings for this quarterly assessment – and any degree of fluctuation from last quarters results released in December 2018 – is as follows:

1. Saskatchewan premier Scott Moe 59% (+3)
2. Quebec premier François Legault 56% (-5)
3. British Columbia premier John Horgan 51% (+5)
4. New Brunswick premier Blaine Higgs 48% (+5)
5. Manitoba premier Brian Pallister 46% (+4)
6. Alberta premier Rachel Notley 38% (+4)
7. Ontario premier Doug Ford 34% (-1)
8. Newfoundland and Labrador premier Dwight Ball 33% (*No change since December 2018*)
9. Nova Scotia premier Stephen McNeil 24% (-6)

Some Notes on the Findings...

- British Columbia premier John Horgan is up in his approval rating – from 46% last quarter to 51% (+5) in this first quarter of 2019. This comes as the British Columbia’s Court of Appeal begins to consider the key question: does the province have the jurisdiction to regulate the transport of oil through its territory and restrict bitumen shipments from Alberta? And while some critics opine that the premier has gone missing in the US softwood lumber dispute, he’s been pretty much everywhere else on policies affecting the province – from affordable housing to rebuilding the BC salmon stock to new funding for foster parents and caregivers to being on hand to celebrate the Catalyst Paper purchase. In other

words, doing “premier” things. His latest approval rating is par with his highest score of 52% exactly one year ago.

- On the other side of the mountain, many are now fixed on **Alberta premier Rachel Notley’s approval rating** as she takes the province to the polls on April 16, 2019. The premiers’ approval rating is **up from her last result at 34% December 2018 to 38% (+4) now**. The election field looks tilted towards the United Conservative Party under leader Jason Kenney, but campaigns have a way of generating their own personality so...buckle up. We’ll assess whomever is in the premier’s chair next quarter.
- **Saskatchewan premier Scott Moe has regained first spot in approval ratings among his peers rising to 59% (+3)** since December 2018 and is his highest personal rating since taking over from former leader Brad Wall in February 2018. Mr. Moe has had consistently high approval ratings since his first finding of 52% exactly one year ago. The premier has been steadfast in opposition to the Federal Carbon tax, travelled to Washington for trade talks, announced a number of funding initiatives (such as the Farm Water management plan) and has waded into federal politics calling out the prime ministers SNC “job focus” and coyly into Alberta politics next door in the run-up to an imminent election.
- **Manitoba premier Brian Pallister is up smartly to 46% from a 42% approval rating** he has held consistently since September 2018. This new sounding is just five points back of his highest rating in September 2016 (53%). The polling for this finding was during the timeframe just following the 2019 budget which dropped the provincial sales tax by one point, lowered the deficit and pledged to balance to books by 2024. The budget was framed by a new Throne speech in November 2018 that had no immediate impact on his ratings in December 2018.

- **Ontario Premier Doug Ford has an approval rating of 34%, down one point from December 2018 (35%)** and a high-water mark of 40% (now -6) right after his June 2018 election (with 40% of the vote). The Ford government has been controversial to say the least with announcements on everything from re-vamping the provincial healthcare system to re-basing the formula of money provided for autism treatment to the stillborn appointment of a new provincial police commissioner to the ousting of a second and third member of the PC caucus and the winding up and folding in of various provincial agencies – all with the underlying drive to reign in spending to drive the deficit down. Next up: the education system (*hello* teachers unions) and a first major Budget.
- Quebec premier **François Legault arrives with his second quarterly approval level of 56%**--just off 5 points from his first post election approval rating of 61%. And while he has dropped from his first place standing in the approval hall pedestal among his provincial peers to second spot, it's clear that the Leader of the Coalition Avenir Québec ("CAQ") is experiencing a broadly-based honeymoon after capturing just 37.42% of the popular vote on October 1, 2018. The approval rating measurement was taken just shy of Quebec Finance Minister Eric Girard's first budget for spending on a plethora of campaign promises (and might even consider the buying of embattled SNC-Lavalin stock if necessary.)
- **Nova Scotia premier Stephen McNeil has an approval rating of 24%**--down six points since December 2018. This is the lowest personal standing the premier has had (his previous record was 25%) since we first measured his approval performance in December 2013. And while not lower than the last rating for Ontario premier Kathleen Wynne at 19% it is at the absolute bottom of the current crop of premiers. And while a probe by the RCMP has found no evidence former Liberal prime minister Jean Chrétien lobbied Nova Scotia Premier

Stephen McNeil or Business Minister Geoff MacLellan during a closed-door meeting last year, the government remains under attack for various policy and political decisions – or lack thereof. In short, the horizon doesn't look like it's going to get much easier than it is now.

- **New Brunswick Progressive Conservative premier Blaine Higgs builds on his first approval rating last quarter at 43% to land with a second quarter finding of 48% (+5)** – the electorate clearly warming to the minority government he leads. As chair of the Council of the Federation, he garnered local and national profile by leading a joint mission to the National Governors Association meeting in February. His Finance minister has just delivered his first budget so clearly, as any budget is not just a policy instrument but a political platform, the next approval rating will be the one to watch in charting a course for this government.
- **Newfoundland and Labrador Liberal premier Dwight Ball holds steady this quarter with a 33% approval rating** – no doubt a number he'd like to see increase with an election designated just over six months from now on October 8, 2019. The real question is whether the premier, in citing a potential conflict with the Federal vote just 13 days later, would pull the plug and go to the polls (as he can) if the winds look favourable to do so. And while the premier has been clearly campaigning throughout the province to garner support, this approval rating headed toward the ultimate prize doesn't auger well.

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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 5,450 randomly selected Canadian adults who are members of **Maru/Blue**'s Online panel between March 10-17, 2019. 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. Reporting of results from Prince Edward Island, Nunavut and both the Yukon and Northwest Territories is excluded because of extremely small sample sizes. 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.

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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