

A **DART**/MARU Voice of Canada Poll

Quarterly Approval Rating of Canada's Premiers:

*Saskatchewan's Moe (60% **+1**), Quebec's Legault (59% **+3**) and Alberta's newly elected Kenny 55% rank atop the quarterly premier's ratings ladder while Ontario's Ford 29% (**-5**) and Nova Scotia's McNeil 14% (**-10**) Tumble into the Basement*

June 13, 2019 – Saskatchewan premier Scott Moe 60% (**+1**), Quebec premier François Legault 59% (**+3**) and newly elected Alberta premier Jason Kenny 55% rank atop the quarterly premier's ratings ladder while Ontario's Doug Ford 29% (**-5**) and Nova Scotia's Stephen McNeil 14% (**-10**) have tumbled into the bottom ranks and right into the basement according to a new **DART/MARU Voice of Canada** poll. The four remaining premiers surveyed land in the middle of the pack have all suffered losses in approval: New Brunswick's Blaine Higgs 45% (**-3**), British Columbia's John Horgan 44% (**-7**), Manitoba's Brian Pallister 37% (**-9**) and Newfoundland and Labrador's Dwight Ball at 31% (**-2**)

The **DART** *C-Suite Communicators* was poll conducted as part of a regular quarterly sounding of Canadians on various issues that affect their lives as citizens, consumers, and voters. The survey was conducted among 5,215 randomly selected Canadian adults who are members of **MARU/Blue's** Online panel between May 31-June 6, 2019 and is considered accurate to within +/- 1.5 percentage points. *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 March – is as follows:

1. Saskatchewan premier Scott Moe **60%** (**+1**)
2. Quebec premier François Legault **59%** (**+3**)

3. Alberta premier Jason Kenny **55%** (*first measurement*)
4. New Brunswick premier Blaine Higgs **45%** (-3)
5. British Columbia premier John Horgan **44%** (-7)
6. Manitoba premier Brian Pallister **37%** (-9)
7. Newfoundland and Labrador premier Dwight Ball **31%** (-2)
8. Ontario premier Doug Ford **29%** (-5)
9. Nova Scotia premier Stephen McNeil **14%** (-10)

Some words behind the numbers...

1. Saskatchewan premier Scott Moe 60% (+1)

- *Succeeded premier Brad Wall in January 2018 leadership win. Next official provincial election on Monday, November 2, 2020.*
- *On his watch, provincial economic downturn reversed with strong job numbers. For tenth consecutive month, province has more people working than it did a year ago – 14,300 more people working than in May of 2018 (unadjusted), for a total of 586,100 people employed in May 2019.*
- *Has restored money to previously cut education budget.*
- *Fighting against Trudeau government's carbon pricing program. In May, Saskatchewan's Court of Appeal ruled in favour of the federal government on the issue, stating that the tax is constitutional but along with other premiers is appealing decision.*
- *Has partnered with Ontario's Doug Ford, New Brunswick's Blaine Higgs, Manitoba's Brian Pallister, and Alberta's Jason Kenney to dramatically change or bury both Federal government Bill's C-69, which would change the way authorities assess major resource projects, and C-48, the Oil Tanker Moratorium Act.*

2. Quebec premier François Legault 59% (+3)

- *Still riding the approval honeymoon of his October 1, 2018 CAQ landslide victory.*
- *Has softened his position to create a mixed proportional electoral system.*
- *Opposition parties forcing his government to make difficult choices about reforming the province's immigration system (Bill 9) and civil service restriction of wearing religious garment/symbols while working (Bill 21.) Wants both bills passed by June 14, 2019 when legislature is scheduled to break for the summer.*
- *Bill 9 would break ground for a values test for permanent residency and align immigrant-selection process with needs of regional employers. Businesses worried measures will exacerbate growing labour shortage.*
- *Bill 21 would ban public servants from wearing religious garments like the hijab or kippa while at work. Minority groups, legal experts and United Nations monitors say the bill drastically*

overhauls the province's human rights charter and will institutionalize discrimination. Government could impose closure for passage.

3. Alberta premier Jason Kenny 55% (first measurement)

- *Led his United Conservative Party (UCP) in defeating Rachel Notley's one term NDP government taking 63 of the 87 seats on April 16, 2019.*
- *Key party catchphrase "renewing the Alberta advantage" hearkened to the 1990s prosperity under former premier Ralph Klein.*
- *First action: introduced, passed, and signed into law the Carbon Tax Repeal Act to remove consumer tax on gasoline and fossil fuel heated homes.*
- *Arm in arm with other premiers, legally and politically taking on federal government over Carbon Pricing mechanism.*
- *Pledging legislation in the fall to create \$1b indigenous opportunities corporation to help First Nations join in energy projects.*
- *Continues road trips to meet with counterparts in Quebec, New Brunswick and P.E.I. In Montreal, he'll make opening remarks at a Towards an Energy Future plenary session during the International Economic Forum of the Americas.*

4. New Brunswick premier Blaine Higgs 45% (-3)

- *Following September 24, 2018 provincial election, became Progressive Conservative premier after defeating incumbent premier Brian Gallant's Liberal minority government via a non confidence vote with support of three elected members of the People's Alliance.*
- *Seven months into his term as premier, Higgs remains an unconventional politician doing much of his own PR and accepting unpredictable results.*
- *Has faced criticism (Mi'kmaq chiefs 'blindsided') for his surprise revelation that his government quietly lifted restrictions on natural gas fracking in the Sussex area during a cabinet meeting and plan to allow shale gas development.*
- *Labeled "propaganda" by critics, has sent 500 stickers about carbon tax pricing to gas pumps across the province titled "Federal Carbon Tax: At the Pumps" to explain how federal carbon tax will increase per litre of gasoline/diesel 2019 to 2022. (Similar to action taken by Ontario.)*
- *Open to a proposal for a permanent committee of the legislature on official languages.*
- *Met with protesting nurses who were marching in Fredericton to focus attention on their workplace and said he's hoping to better conditions attract more nurses to the province.*

5. British Columbia premier John Horgan 44% (-7)

- *Residents continue to pay some of the highest priced gasoline in North America. Anoints BC Utilities Commission (BCUC) to probe B.C.'s record high gasoline prices but accused by critics of "stacking the deck"/" casting blind eye" on role of provincial policies*

- *Unanimous decision in B.C. Court of Appeal says BC doesn't have the right to restrict flow of undiluted bitumen from Alberta.*
- *Unconventional: Alberta hoping to sway British Columbians with a \$1.1 million ad campaign supporting Trans Mountain pipeline expansion.*
- *Launching inquiry into provincial money laundering.*
- *Teachers and government back at bargaining table for new collective agreement and B.C. Teachers' Federation says province is trying to change contract language on class size and composition that they fought to restore during a 14-year court battle.*
- *Says B.C. government committed to learning, taking action and, enacting change from Truth and Reconciliation Commission*
- *His office was targeted for one of 17 rallies across B.C. calling for protection of old-growth forests.*

6. Manitoba premier Brian Pallister 37% (-9)

- *Has suggested that he may call an election soon, though not for at least several weeks. Has deemed the fixed election date of Oct. 6, 2020 as "horrible," due to potential to conflict with celebrations of Manitoba's 150th birthday. Observers suggest late summer campaign, likely August. Says his government will soon invoke election-style limits on partisan government announcements and advertising.*
- *Hints tax cuts will be one of his key election pledges: wants to see lower taxes in the province, using his favourite "kitchen table" metaphor to draw attention to Manitobans' relatively high tax burden.*
- *Passing legislation to drop the PST to 7% from 8% on July 1.*
- *Met with Prime Minister Trudeau to discuss approval of Manitoba Hydro's proposed Manitoba-Minnesota Transmission Project: federal government pushed back deadline to approve project over concerns that Indigenous consultations not adequately completed.*
- *Didn't attend a ceremony in France meant to honour Canadian soldiers who fought on D-Day during the Second World War.*

7. Newfoundland and Labrador premier Dwight Ball 31% (-2)

- *Re-elected May 16, 2019 – losing majority and squeaking by with tenuous minority with just 20 of possible 40 seats (one seat still in judicial recount.)*
- *Throne speech lightning quick, even shorter on details: "...my government received a mandate to rise above, to collaborate, and to do things differently."*
- *Tory Leader Ches Crosbie "willing to work together for the good of the province" but projected that his newly strengthened 15-member caucus is representative of people's desire for change. "The electorate of the province has just installed a new emergency brake in this House of*

Assembly. They're telling us to get the job done or they'll demand a do-over that will affect all of us."

- June 11, 2019 provincial budget essentially same as one tabled earlier in April but not passed before Ball dropped the election writ. Finance Minister Tom Osborne says "stability" is its hallmark for governing.

8. Ontario premier Doug Ford 29% (-5)

- After one year in office, Ontario, Premier Doug Ford's personal approval rating has tumbled from 40% (his PC's grabbed 40.5% of the vote for a Majority) to 29%-- a swift 11% decline.
- It's been a tumultuous time as government has declared war on previous Liberal deficit and debt: a rip of the band-aid, marked by few phased-in plans or retreats. Well communicated/received "pragmatic" budget up-front harboured hidden cuts in fine print. Little consultation has led to backlash.
- Criticism from almost all quarters over cuts to health care, education, social services; agglomeration of francophone and environmental commissioners, child/youth advocate.
- Parents of autistic children apoplectic over changes (relented until at least next year) and furious mayors due to retroactive cuts in funding (also stayed), has weakened species-at-risk provisions, scaled back planned increase to welfare and disability support, and cut the size of Toronto city council – his former political home – roughly in half. Even uploading the Toronto Transit from the city is viewed as settling scores to get the subway system in place that his brother, the late and former Toronto Mayor Rob Ford, had wanted but never achieved.
- Buck-a-beer, legal tailgate parties, and declaration to scrap beer monopoly store agreement (without regard to cost) has led to beer obsession label.
- Opposition to the federal carbon "tax" relentless – from legislating penalties for gas station owners who don't display provincial government "information" stickers on pump (\$10,000 a day) to enjoining like minded premiers to challenge federal government in court on its jurisdictional ability to impose the tax (round one went to the federal government with the appeal now underway.)
- Fallout is now a contagion: ads painting Andrew Scheer as 'yes man' to Doug Ford already raining down as Trudeau Liberals try to hold the crucial 905 area code ridings that ring Toronto proper in October election. House has risen until almost Halloween – frees up provincial PC ground troops and resources to help in crucial ridings that Scheer needs to win and takes Ford government out of the spotlight (unless he shows up on the campaign trail with Scheer.)

9. Nova Scotia premier Stephen McNeil 14% (-10)

- McNeil's Liberals won a second consecutive majority government in May 2017, but his popularity has been anemic, and recent public opinion polling suggests he and his party are trailing t provincial Progressive Conservatives for first time in years (by eight percentage points.)

- *Two years would be more than enough time for most parties and governments to recover public support and win next election, but drumbeat could be starting for him to step aside in time for new leader to emerge and rejuvenate provincial Liberal fortunes. Outcome of the federal election might provide a moment of clarity for all concerned.*
- *In the meantime, has tapped Dr. Tom Marrie – who served as dean of medical schools at Dalhousie University and University of Alberta – to take over as Healthcare deputy minister for assessment to reset the relationship between the Health authority and Health Department. Tasks will also include finding way for people on front lines to have control over what they do while working within a centralized system and identifying gaps in system and within department.*
- *Several months after first taking office in the 2013 election premier had particularly strong approval rating – almost two-thirds applauded. With approval rating now in basement and election to be held in 2021, he will need to monitor the palace guard.*

– 30 –

C-Suite Communicators **Methodology**

These are some of the topline findings of a **DART C-Suite Communicators MARU/Blue** 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, who is a Partner of **DART C-Suite Communicators**. Data was collected by Canada’s national survey sample research provider **MARU/Blue** using their **MARU Voice of Canada** Omni Online curated panel.

The survey was conducted among 5,215 randomly selected Canadian adults who are members of **MARU/Blue’s** Online panel between May 31-June 6, 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 C-Suite Communicators MARU/Blue Voice of Canada** 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:

John Wright

Partner

DART C-Suite Communicators
 (416) 919-2101 jwright@dartincom.ca

About **DART C-Suite Communicators** and **MARU/Blue**

DART C-Suite Communicators is a team of high-level insight specialists and seasoned communicators who partner with the C-Suite, Executive leadership, or the Board to advance and protect crucial interests, brands, assets, and reputations requiring vital intelligence and pivotal communication strategies. Differentiated by our C-Suite peer-level bench strength, **DART C-Suite Communicators** consultants are smart, strategic thinkers who bring experienced fresh-eyes to tough communications assignments knowing the right questions to ask, the internal and external audiences to heed, and the tools and tempo to deliver actionable solutions and accountability. Together, the **DART C-Suite Communicators** team discreetly and seamlessly fills the gaps in existing resources by either doing the work needed or by providing advice and counsel. We are C-Suite confidants who bring integrity, honesty, ideation, and trustworthy sound-boarding to every assignment.

DART C-Suite Communicators is independent and not tied to any political organization. It is a partnership founded by veteran pollster John Wright and communications specialist Victoria Ollers.

DART C-Suite Communicators public releases of polling results, including detailed tables (weighted/unweighted), questions used and analysis, are provided freely at <http://www.dartincom.ca/polls/> **DART C-Suite Communicators** abides by the MRIA polling disclosure requirements.

MARU/Blue is a premium quality data services firm that provides reliable global data connections for brands, agencies, and market research. We create value for our clients by connecting them with expertly profiled known respondents. The result? Reliable, reproducible insights. We deliver instant access to the general population, specific markets, and your or your competitor's customers. **MARU/Blue** began disrupting the market community industry in 2000. Our market communities' broke new ground, adding depth and richness to clients' understanding of what motivates their customers and shapes their markets. Now, as part of the **MARU Group**, we continue to provide reliable global data connections for agencies, brands, and market research firms. **Springboard America**, and **MARU Voice Canada**, established more than a decade ago, are a testament to our commitment and depth of engagement. More recently we developed the **MARU Voice Business Canada** and Springboard America Business Forum, both an excellent source for business to business research.

Discover us at:

www.dartincom.ca www.marublue.net

DART

C-Suite Communicators

