



Albertans' Opinions About Fracking

Alberta Public Opinion Study – Fall 2014

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Methodology

-  **Population** The province of Alberta has a total population of 4,121,700 residents (Statistics Canada, July 1, 2014) approximately 78% of which are 18 years of age or older, for an adult population of approximately 3,227,291.
-  **Sample** Data were collected by Lethbridge College students enrolled in a variety of Liberal Arts courses in the fall of 2014. Students interviewed 564 adult Alberta residents by telephone from October 4 to 9, 2014 under the supervision of Liberal Arts faculty member Dr. Faron Ellis. Telephone numbers were selected from a sample drawn from InfoGroup directories. We sincerely thank all participants who took time out of their day to respond to our inquiries. Further results from this study and results from past studies can be accessed by visiting the CSRL web pages at: www.lethbridgecollege.ca/go/csrl
-  **Representativeness** Analysis of the demographic data indicates that, within acceptable limits, the sample accurately represents the demographic distribution of the adult population within the province of Alberta. The sample has been statistically weighted where necessary to even better reflect the demographic distribution of the population (gender and age).
-  **Confidence** The weighted sample yields a margin of error of ± 4.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases to approximately ± 8.3 percentage points when analyzing each of the roughly equal regional subsamples (Calgary, Edmonton-metro, south excluding Calgary, and north excluding Edmonton-metro).
-  **IB Commons Call Centre** Students conducted interviews using the facilities of the Lethbridge College IB Commons Call Centre with applications assembled by members of Lethbridge College's IT team. We sincerely thank Lethbridge College IT and other supporting divisions for their service to our activities.
-  **Applied Research at Lethbridge College** This study is the results of the research efforts of over 60 Liberal Arts students enrolled in Social Science Research Methods, Introduction to Politics, Canadian Government, Environmental Issues, and Social Psychology under the supervision of Lethbridge College faculty members; Dr. Faron Ellis, Marda Schindeler, Dr. Jennifer Davis, and Kelly Oikawa.
-  **Sponsorship** These data are part of a larger study of the opinions and attitudes of Alberta residents conducted by the Citizen Society Research Lab at Lethbridge College. This particular set of questions resulted from the ongoing research interests of Lethbridge College faculty and students.

Awareness of Fracking

- When asked how much they have read or heard about the process of fracking (defined for all respondents as “directional drilling and hydraulic fracturing, also known as “fracking,” is a technique now being used to recover previously inaccessible oil and gas found deep underground”), a majority of Albertans report having read or heard a considerable amount about fracking.

More than one-third of Albertans (36.6%) report reading or hearing some, while a further 29.9% say they have read or heard a great deal. One in five Albertans (20.8%) report reading or hearing a little, while only 12.6% say they have read or heard nothing at all.

- Southern Albertans outside of Calgary report having read or heard the most (42.5% some, 32.2% a great deal), followed by Calgarians (33.6% some, and 34.3% a great deal), followed by Edmontonians and northern Albertans who report having read or heard a considerable amount but slightly less than their southern counterparts.

Awareness of Fracking

Read or heard about fracking
by region

	Calgary	Edmonton	North	South	All Albertans
Nothing at all	10.4	14.9	13.6	11.6	12.6
A little	21.6	25.4	23.6	13.7	20.8
Some	33.6	35.1	35.0	42.5	36.6
A great deal	34.3	24.6	27.9	32.2	29.9

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

- Men (37.8%) are more likely than women (22.0%) to have read or heard a great deal about fracking. University (38.4%) and college-technical-trade (30.9%) graduates are more likely than other education groups to have read or heard a great deal. And older Albertans are more likely to have read or heard a great deal than are younger Albertans.
- Politically, supporters of conservative parties are much more likely than supporters of other parties to state that they have read or heard a great deal about fracking. For example, over one-third of provincial Progressive Conservative supporters (36.5%) and even more Wildrose supporters (40.3%) claim to have read or heard a great deal. This compares to only one-fifth of provincial Liberal supporters (21.4%) and even fewer provincial NDP supporters (14.9%) reporting having read or heard a great deal about fracking. Similarly, federal Conservative supporters (39.9%) are much more likely than Liberal (21.1%), NDP (21.1%) and Green (16.0%) supporters to tell us they have read or heard a great deal about fracking.

Support for Fracking

- When asked whether or not they support the Alberta government continuing to allow fracking in the province, a substantial majority of Albertans state that they approve of continuing to allow fracking to take place in Alberta.

More than one of every five Albertans (21.9%) strongly support continuing to allow fracking, while more than one-third (37.1%) is somewhat supportive. Further, those who are not supportive are not necessarily opposed. Rather, the remainder of Albertans are split relative equally into three groups: those who are still undecided (16.8%), those who are strongly opposed (10.3%), and those who are somewhat opposed (14.0%).

Hence, a majority of Albertans overall are supportive of continuing to allow fracking in the province and, when the large number of undecided are factored out of the equation, majorities in all regions appear much more supportive than opposed.

- Support is strong in all regions of the province, peaking in Calgary (77.1%), but still strong in Edmonton (65.7%), the north outside of Edmonton (72.6%), and the south outside of Calgary (67.7%).

Support for Fracking

Support & opposition by region	Calgary	Edmonton	North	South	All Albertans
Strongly support	27.4	15.0	23.2	22.0	21.9
Somewhat support	40.0	39.17	35.5	34.0	37.1
Somewhat oppose	11.9	13.5	14.5	16.0	14.0
Strongly oppose	7.4	14.3	8.0	11.3	10.3
Undecided	13.3	18.0	18.8	16.7	16.8

Support & opposition by region (decided only)	Calgary	Edmonton	North	South	All Albertans
Support	77.1	65.7	72.6	67.7	70.9
Oppose	22.9	34.3	27.4	32.3	29.1

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

- Support is strongest amongst men (76.9%), upper income earners (81.4%), and university graduates (73.2%).
- Politically, support strongest among provincial PC (82.1%), Wildrose (75.4%) and federal Conservative (85.8%) voters, but it is important to note that majorities of provincial (65.3%) and federal (55.1%) Liberal supporters, provincial (54.8%) and federal (60.8%) NDP supporters, and even federal Green (57.1%) voters, support continued fracking in Alberta.

Awareness of Fracking (%)

Gender*	Male	Female	All Albertans
Nothing at all	10.1	15.2	12.6
A little	15.1	26.7	20.8
Some	37.1	36.1	36.6
A great deal	37.8	22.0	29.9

Household Income	Under \$60,000	\$60-120,000	Over \$120,000
Nothing at all	17.4	8.7	15.8
A little	16.7	22.5	21.8
Some	37.5	38.7	31.5
A great deal	28.5	30.1	30.9

Education*	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Nothing at all	21.4	14.4	8.1	6.8
A little	21.4	21.6	22.1	19.2
Some	31.7	42.3	39.0	35.6
A great deal	25.4	21.6	30.9	38.4

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Nothing at all	27.0	10.4	4.9	11.8
A little	23.0	27.2	17.0	17.3
Some	33.6	32.8	43.4	33.9
A great deal	16.4	29.6	34.6	37.0

Provincial Vote*	PC	Wildrose	Liberal	NDP	Undecided
Nothing at all	16.1	8.2	8.9	17.6	15.4
A little	15.3	17.2	32.1	18.9	23.1
Some	32.1	34.3	37.5	48.6	36.5
A great deal	36.5	40.3	21.4	14.9	25.0

Federal Vote	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	Green	Undecided
Nothing at all	10.6	11.1	7.0	24.0	17.8
A little	15.6	17.8	21.1	34.0	22.8
Some	33.9	50.0	50.9	26.0	30.7
A great deal	39.9	21.1	21.1	16.0	28.7

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; * sig < 0.05

Support for and Opposition to Fracking (%)

Support-Opposition by Region	Calgary	Edmonton	North	South	All Albertans
Support	77.1	65.7	72.6	67.7	70.9
Oppose	22.9	34.3	27.4	32.3	29.1

Gender*	Male	Female	All Albertans
Support	76.9	63.6	70.9
Oppose	23.1	36.4	29.1

Household Income*	Under \$60,000	\$60-120,000	Over \$120,000
Support	63.2	68.6	81.4
Oppose	36.8	31.4	18.6

Education	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Support	71.7	67.4	70.7	73.2
Oppose	28.3	32.6	29.3	26.8

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Support	70.9	76.5	68.6	69.2
Oppose	29.1	23.5	31.4	30.8

Provincial Vote*	PC	Wildrose	Liberal	NDP	Undecided
Support	82.1	75.4	65.3	54.8	70.0
Oppose	17.9	24.6	34.7	45.2	30.0

Federal Vote	Conservative	Liberal	NDP	Green	Undecided
Support	85.8	55.1	60.8	57.1	61.4
Oppose	14.2	44.9	39.2	42.9	38.6

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; * sig < 0.05

Demographics

Area of Province (%)		Gender (%)		Income (%)		Education (%)		Age (%)	
Calgary	24.5	Male	49.9	Under \$60,000	30.3	H-School/less	22.9	18-29	22.8
Edmonton	23.9	Female	50.1	\$60-120,000	35.7	Some P-Sec.	20.4	30-44	22.1
North	25.0			Over \$120,000	34.0	Col-Tech-Grad	25.0	45-64	32.5
South	26.5					University Grad	31.7	65 or older	22.6
									Mean age = 48 years old

Religious Participation (%)	
2-3/month-more	24.7
Several/year	23.3
Rarely-never	52.0

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

Questions

Directional drilling and hydraulic fracturing, also known as “fracking,” is a technique now being used to recover previously inaccessible oil and gas found deep underground. Please tell me how much you have read or heard about fracking. Would you say you have read or heard...

- Nothing at all
- a little
- some
- a great deal
- don't know
- refused

From what you know about “fracking” please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the province of Alberta continuing to allow fracking in this province. Would you say you...

- strongly agree
- somewhat agree
- somewhat disagree
- strongly disagree
- don't know
- refused