

# EcoA Research Nutshell

## Regional Deep Dive: Quebec

### Key details

**Key terms:** Quebecers and climate change, misinformation, behaviours, demand for action, preferred solutions, communication guidelines

**Demographic profile:**

Residents of Quebec 18 years and older

**Sources:** EcoAnalytics:

Policy and Efficacy Framing Quantitative Research 2023, Climate of Change Survey 2021 and 2022, Policy and Efficacy Qualitative Research 2022, National Omnibus Survey 2022, Panoramic National Survey 2017.

Other sources:

Le Baromètre de l'Action Climatique 2022: Disposition des Québécois et des Québécoises face aux défis climatiques, CPAWS National Survey 2022, Greenpeace membership survey, Re.Climate 2023: What do Canadians really think of about climate change?, Statistics Canada, Canada Energy Regulator.

EcoAnalytics seeks to understand public opinion on climate and biodiversity issues across Canada. This reveals differences across regions, and this first in a series of “deep-dive” *Nutshells* on regional differences digs into the specific perspectives of Quebec opinion, compared with the rest of Canada (ROC). The series draws on research by EcoA since 2016, among other sources, bringing together significant data where differences exist on topics such as knowledge of and levels of concern about climate change and biodiversity loss, related behaviours, beliefs about the efficacy of solutions and people’s experience of extreme weather.

### Quebec: overview

Quebecers, followed closely by residents of BC, have a general reputation for being more supportive of climate policy, and more knowledgeable about climate issues and solutions. This reputation is supported by most of EcoA’s research. Quebecers are generally more concerned and more likely to take action than their counterparts in other parts of Canada. In all of EcoA’s surveys in 2022–2023, climate is more likely to rank as a top priority for Quebecers, while among Canadians in other provinces this topic tends to matter less than inflation, the economy and healthcare. This concern has translated to slightly higher levels of personal and collective action than elsewhere in Canada, however these levels remain quite low, nationally. Like many other Canadians, Quebecers still see climate change as a distant personal risk; but, more than residents of other provinces, they recognize the risk it is posing to vulnerable populations around the world and in Canada. Quebecers are also most likely to demand serious climate action by governments and, clearly understand the economic and security benefits to clean renewable energy. They also have the highest levels of demand for more ambitious biodiversity targets and government spending to achieve these targets. With this kind of support and demand, it is not surprisingly that Quebec has seen a significant increase in the clean technology and environmental sectors, and more employment opportunities in these sectors than anywhere else in Canada. In a nutshell, Quebec is a Canadian leader on climate action and its relatively high levels of concern, knowledge and demand should be leveraged both inside and outside of Quebec in climate communications.

### How do Quebecers differ?

- **Income:** Quebecers are significantly more likely to report having a decent income and ability to save (39%) than other provinces (ROC <25%) and the least likely to say that their income is too low (9% vs. ROC >15%) (Climate of Change 2022).
- **Extreme weather experience:** Interestingly, about half of Quebec respondents report experiencing significant changes in weather, but only 55% feel they were very negative changes, compared to other provinces where this number ranges between 62%–77% (Climate of Change 2022).

- **Levels of concern:** Less than a third of Quebecers say they are *very concerned* about climate change (five points lower than the ROC), however 50% are *some-what* concerned, which is six points higher than the ROC average. They also have the fewest unconcerned respondents (4%) ([Climate of Change 2022](#)). And almost 75% of Quebecers report experiencing eco-anxiety ([Le Baromètre de l'action climatique 2022: Disposition des Québécois et des Québécoises face aux défis climatiques](#)).
- **Perceived risk:** Only 10% of Quebecers feel that climate change will personally harm them a *great deal*, however, they are the most keenly aware of the harm climate

change is causing in developing countries. Two-thirds feel that climate change will cause a great deal of harm to people in developing countries, 10% above the average for the rest of Canada. They are also above the national average in recognizing the harm that will be caused to future human generations, plants and animals ([Climate of Change 2022](#)).

- **Quebec City:** Residents of Quebec City have lower levels of concern and lower likelihood of taking personal or collective action generally than residents of Montreal or the rest of Quebec ([Baromètre de l'action climatique 2022](#)).

## Knowledge and misinformation

To the best of your knowledge, how accurate are the claims in each of the following statements?

Oil companies have hidden evidence of human-caused climate change since the 1970s.



Rising oil & gas prices are a major reason for the surge in cost of living over the past year.



Renewable energy prices are more stable and predictable than are prices for oil & gas.



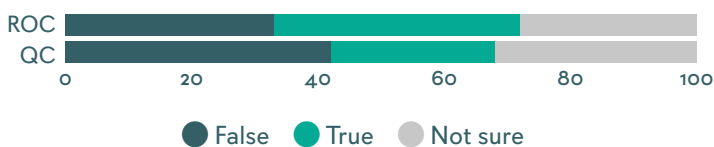
Solar panels emit more greenhouse gases during manufacturing than they end up saving.



If we protect more land through conservation programs, the affordability crisis in housing will get worse.



We can continue to expand oil and gas production and reach our net zero emissions targets.



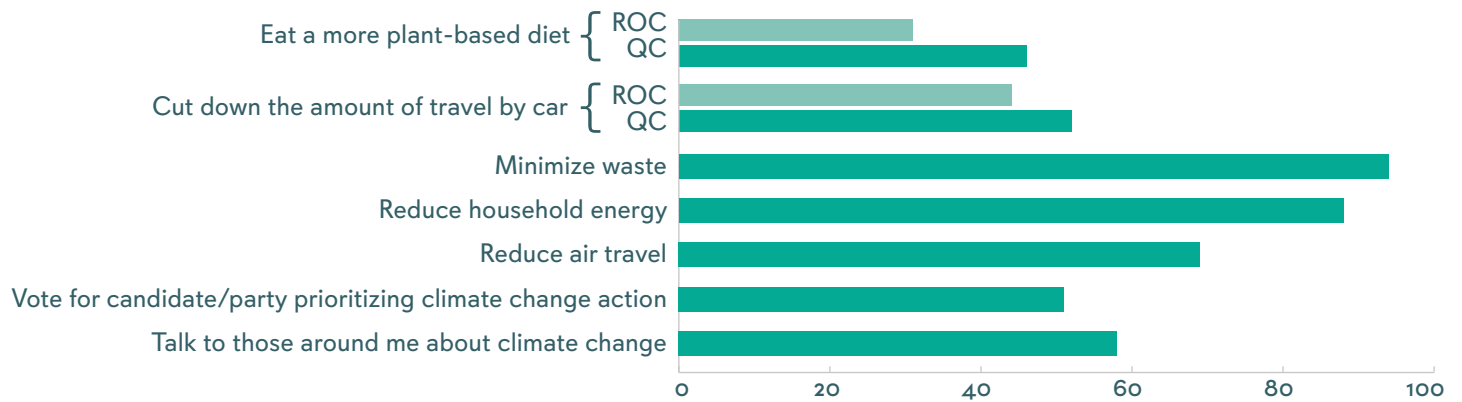
Quebecers are well ahead of many other Canadians when it comes to knowledge about climate change and climate solutions. They score higher than the national average on associating climate change to extreme weather and connecting the oil and gas industry to causing climate change. On misinformation, Quebecers were more likely than other Canadians (with the exception of those in BC) to know that the oil and gas industry has misled us about the connection between fossil fuels and climate change. Similarly, they are also more likely to recognize these three truths than residents of other provinces: that NATO considers climate change a security threat, that doctors are calling climate change a health emergency and that more land conservation will not worsen the housing crisis ([Climate of Change 2022](#)).

Like the rest of Canada, a large majority of Quebecers recognize that the rising cost of oil and gas has been a main driver of inflation recently and like many other Canadians they have significant knowledge gaps and uncertainty around the efficacy, and implementation of some climate solutions. However, in our [Policy and Efficacy Qualitative research in 2022](#), Quebecers showed more optimism than those in other provinces about the feasibility of a transition off fossil fuels and a national electricity grid. Their cynicism and doubt focused mainly on the ability of provinces to work together to make this happen, rather than the solution itself.

## Behaviours

Over the next twelve months, how likely or unlikely are you to do each of the following things:

Responses of “Likely, very likely or already doing”



Sources: *Climate of Change Survey 2022; Le Baromètre de l'action climatique 2022*

In terms of personal action, Quebecers' higher levels of moderate concern do seem to have translated into slightly higher levels of personal action than in the ROC. Compared with those in other provinces, they are eating (or more likely to say they would be willing to eat) less meat. They are also driving less, or more likely to say they would do this ([Climate of Change 2022](#)). No less than 65%, however, still report single-occupant driving as their primary mode of transportation ([Baromètre de l'action climatique 2022](#)). Quebecers are aware of the need to reduce consumption, however, and are already trying to minimize food waste, choose products that are reusable and reduce energy use.

Quebecers are also showing stronger demand for clean technology and renewables. Forty-three percent of new zero-emission vehicles registered in Canada in 2021 were in Quebec, compared to only 28% in BC, and 23% in Ontario ([Canada Energy Regulator](#)). Perhaps as a result, Quebec has been adding clean-tech jobs much faster than the ROC, growing from 9,811 in 2017 to 22,697 in 2021. Over the same period, Ontario added only 2,000 and BC, only 3,000 ([Statistics Canada](#)).

When it comes to supporting environmental NGOs, it's noteworthy that Quebecers' values are most likely to be in close alignment with those of many advocacy groups but Quebec also has the lowest level of support for ENGOs ([Panoramic 2017](#)). Greenpeace may be the exception here, as it draws a majority of its supporters from Quebec, according to a [Greenpeace membership survey](#).

On questions about knowledge and support for Indigenous-led conservation initiatives such as IPCAs, Quebec respondents show similarly low levels of knowledge to other Canadians and similar levels of moderate agreement and support for Indigenous leadership and decision-making in protecting nature ([Policy and Efficacy Framing 2023](#)).

## Demand for action

Quebecers consistently demonstrate some of the highest levels of demand for government climate action and biodiversity protection ([Climate of Change Survey 2021 and 2022](#)). More than the residents of any other province, they see the economic and security benefits of transitioning to renewables ([National Omnibus Survey, 2022](#)). And on protecting biodiversity, they show the highest levels of support (92%) for targets and increased government spending to meet them (86%) ([CPAWS, 2022](#)).

However, when it comes to trust in the government to do the right thing on climate action, Quebecers are no more trusting than most other Canadians. Their lowest levels of trust relate to the government distorting facts and being too influenced by industry ([National Omnibus Survey 2022](#)).

Like other places in Canada strong concern about climate change has dropped in recent years in Quebec. Some drivers of this decline are heightened feelings of powerlessness, blame-shifting, denial of human responsibility and techno-optimism — all of which hamper climate action.

## What solutions do Quebecers support?



Source: *Le Baromètre de l'action climatique 2022*.

Quebecers are strongly in favour of several climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. These include urban greening (94%), improving the supply of healthy food at affordable cost in disadvantaged communities (90%), the strengthening of health and public safety networks to better prepare them for climate disasters (90%), and other measures that protect vulnerable populations ([Baromètre de l'action climatique 2022](#)).

Quebecers are also close to unanimous in holding large oil companies mostly responsible for climate change. Canadians in other parts of the country more frequently apportion the blame to Big Oil and the government. Quebecers also show the highest levels of support for suing major oil producers ([Climate of Change 2022](#)).

Some solutions garner less support in Quebec than elsewhere. For example, Quebecers are much less likely to buy the argument that nuclear power is an affordable, safe alternative to fossil fuels ([Policy and Efficacy Framing, 2023](#)). Nor do Quebecers demonstrate as strong support as those in western provinces for investments and measures to help workers in the oil and gas sector retrain and move to greener jobs, the so-called just transition ([National Omnibus Survey, 2022](#)).

## Takeaways and opportunities

Quebec is a leader in Canada and globally on many climate and biodiversity fronts. This should be leveraged by communicators focused on audiences in Quebec and in the rest of Canada, in a sensitive manner that does not divide Canadians.

Quebec is also a pivotal election ground and politicians, of all stripes, should be mindful that climate is among Quebecers' top priorities.

Communications guidelines:

- Leverage Quebecers' demand for government climate action when communicating with policy-makers.
- Leverage, too, the importance of the Quebec climate vote in the next election. Hold Quebec up as a leader: speak to the many areas in which it is scaling up investment and infrastructure in renewable energy and green technology. Highlight the new jobs, significant uptake in ZEVs and that Quebec's approach is proof that you can have a strong economy and protect climate and the environment.
- In Quebec:
  - > Highlight the successes of Quebec to build confidence in local, provincial, federal, public and private initiatives;
  - > Build momentum;
  - > Continue to fill knowledge-gaps and counter misinformation;
  - > Continue to demand further action from government;
  - > Use frames around economy and holding government and industry accountable; and
  - > Continue using affordability, security and fair-share messaging.
- Speaking to Canadians outside Quebec:
  - > Where appropriate, highlight success stories and examples from Quebec: companies like the electric truck and bus manufacturer, Lion Electric, and the economic advantage of access to clean, relatively cheap hydroelectric power.
  - > Emphasize that if it is working in Quebec it can be done in other jurisdictions.