AUGUST 5, 2026
MEDIA RELEASE

EYE ON ALBERTA

PUBLIC VIEWS ON COAL MINING IN THE EASTERN SLOPES

Copyright © 2026 ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc. All rights reserved. STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL
The contents of this document are the exclusive property of ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc. and may not be used in any manner whatsoever, without the prior written consent of ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc. No license under any copyright is hereby granted or implied.

Failed Coal Mining Question Likely Would Have Passed in October Referendum Vote

(CALGARY) An initiative proposing to outlaw coal mining in the Eastern Slopes of the Rocky Mountains likely would have passed in a province-wide referendum, but for an Elections Alberta ruling invalidating the petition.

According to a new ThinkHQ survey, a two-to-one majority of Albertans would vote in favour of a question banning new coal mining operations in the Eastern Slopes, put forward by the group “Water Not Coal”, while one-quarter would oppose it and one-quarter are unsure how they would vote.

Albertans’ Views on Eastern Slopes Coal Mining

Coal mining in Alberta’s Eastern Slopes has been a source of public debate in recent years, balancing economic development opportunities against concerns regarding water quality, environmental protection, recreation, ranching, tourism, and the long-term stewardship of the Rocky Mountain region. Recently, a citizens’ initiative sought to place a referendum question on Alberta’s October ballot that would have asked voters whether all new coal mining activities in the Eastern Slopes should be prohibited by law.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. Copyright © 2026 ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc. All rights reserved.

Failed Coal Mining Question Likely Would Have Passed in October Referendum Vote

The group submitted ~207,000 signatures, but on July 3rd, Elections Alberta ruled that only 172,088 were valid, falling short of the legal threshold by roughly 5,600. Representatives of the group Water Not Coal recently announced that they would seek a judicial review of Elections Alberta's methodology and ruling.

Survey Findings

When presented with the following question: “Should the Government of Alberta prohibit by law any and all new coal mining activities, including approvals and permits, within the Eastern Slopes of the Rocky Mountains?” a majority of Albertans (52%) indicate they would vote “Yes.” One-quarter (25%) would vote “No,” while 23% remain unsure about how they would vote.

Among decided voters, support rises to 68%, compared with 32% opposed.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. Copyright © 2026 ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc. All rights reserved.

Support for a Ban Extends Across Most Parts of Alberta

Support for prohibiting new coal mining activity is strongest in Alberta's major urban centres. Six-in-ten Calgarians (60%) and a majority of Edmonton residents (55%) indicate they would vote in favour of a ban. Support is somewhat lower in northern Alberta (46%) and southern Alberta (47%), while residents of central Alberta are the most divided, with 29% supporting a ban, 40% opposing it, and 31% unsure.

Women are considerably more supportive of a ban than men, with 58% of women indicating they would vote "Yes," compared with 44% of men.

Support is relatively consistent across age groups, ranging from 46% among Albertans aged 55 and older to 56% among those aged 35 to 54.

Educational attainment also appears to influence views on the issue. Albertans with a university degree are the most supportive of prohibiting new coal mining activity in the Eastern Slopes, with 61% indicating they would vote in favour of a ban. Support is lower among those with high school education (47%) or some post-secondary education (48%).

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. Copyright © 2026 ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc. All rights reserved.

Political Divides Remain Apparent

Views on Eastern Slopes coal mining vary significantly by partisan affiliation. Among Alberta NDP supporters, an overwhelming 85% would vote in favour of prohibiting new coal mining activity, while only 6% would oppose the measure. By contrast, UCP supporters are more divided: 24% would vote in favour of a ban, 41% would oppose it, and more than one-third (35%) remain unsure.

Despite these political differences, the survey suggests that support for a ban extends beyond any single demographic group, with majorities or pluralities in support of the proposal across many regions and socio-economic segments of the population.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. Copyright © 2026 ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc. All rights reserved.

Commentary

Commenting on the findings, ThinkHQ President Marc Henry notes: “Coal mining in Alberta’s Eastern Slopes continues to be one of the province’s most emotionally and politically charged natural resource issues. These results suggest that many Albertans remain concerned about future mining activity in the region and would welcome stronger legislative protections. While opinions vary across geography and political affiliation, the overall balance of public opinion currently favours halting new coal development in the Eastern Slopes. The findings also illustrate that the issue remains highly salient, with a significant proportion of Albertans continuing to engage with the debate.”

Media Contact

Marc Henry, President,

ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc.

marc@thinkhq.com

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. Copyright © 2026 ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc. All rights reserved.

ALBERTA REFERENDUM
EASTERN SLOPES COAL MINING

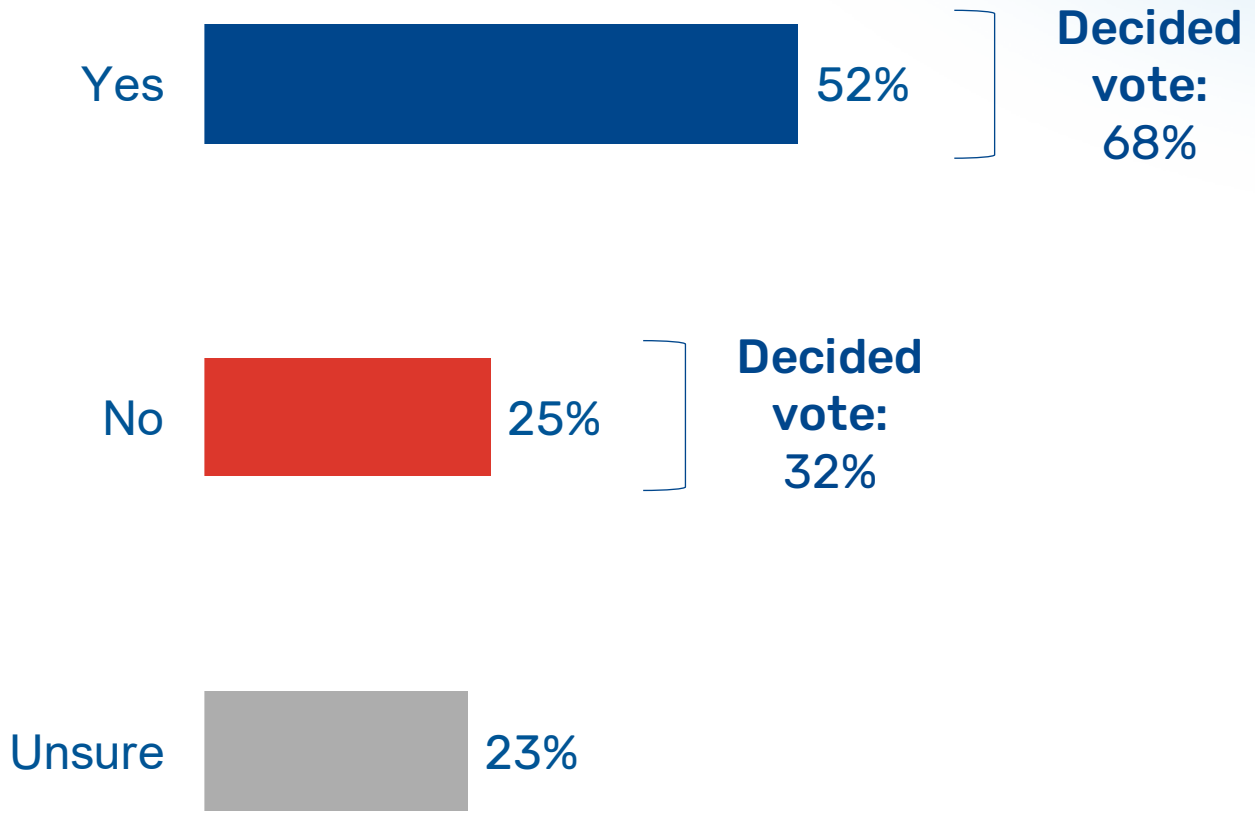
ThinkHQ™

Eastern Slopes Coal Mining

A group had been working to add a question to the October referendum related to coal mining in the Eastern Slopes of the Rocky Mountains, but they fell slightly short of securing the requisite number of signatures from Albertans. That said, we're curious about how you would have voted had their question been added to the ballot in October.

If the following question were asked in a referendum tomorrow, how would you vote?

Should the Government of Alberta prohibit by law any and all new coal mining activities, including approvals and permits, within the Eastern Slopes of the Rocky Mountains?

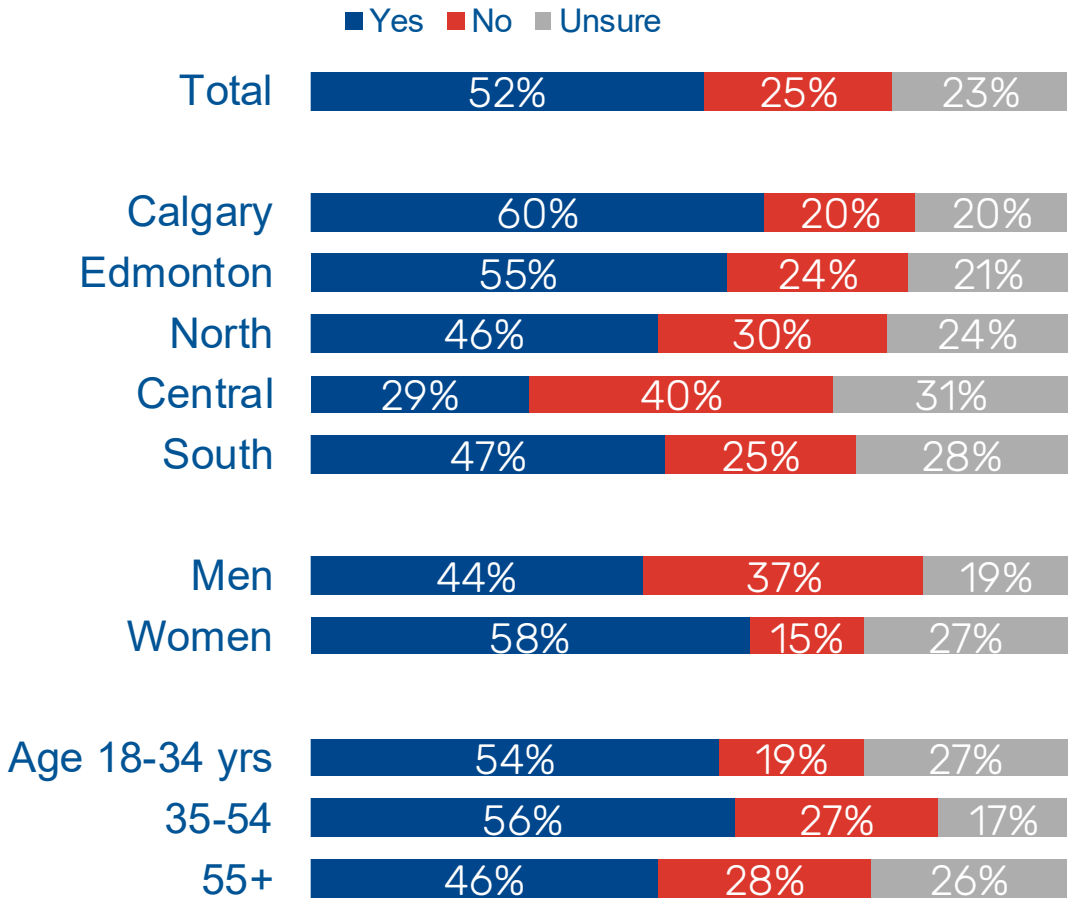


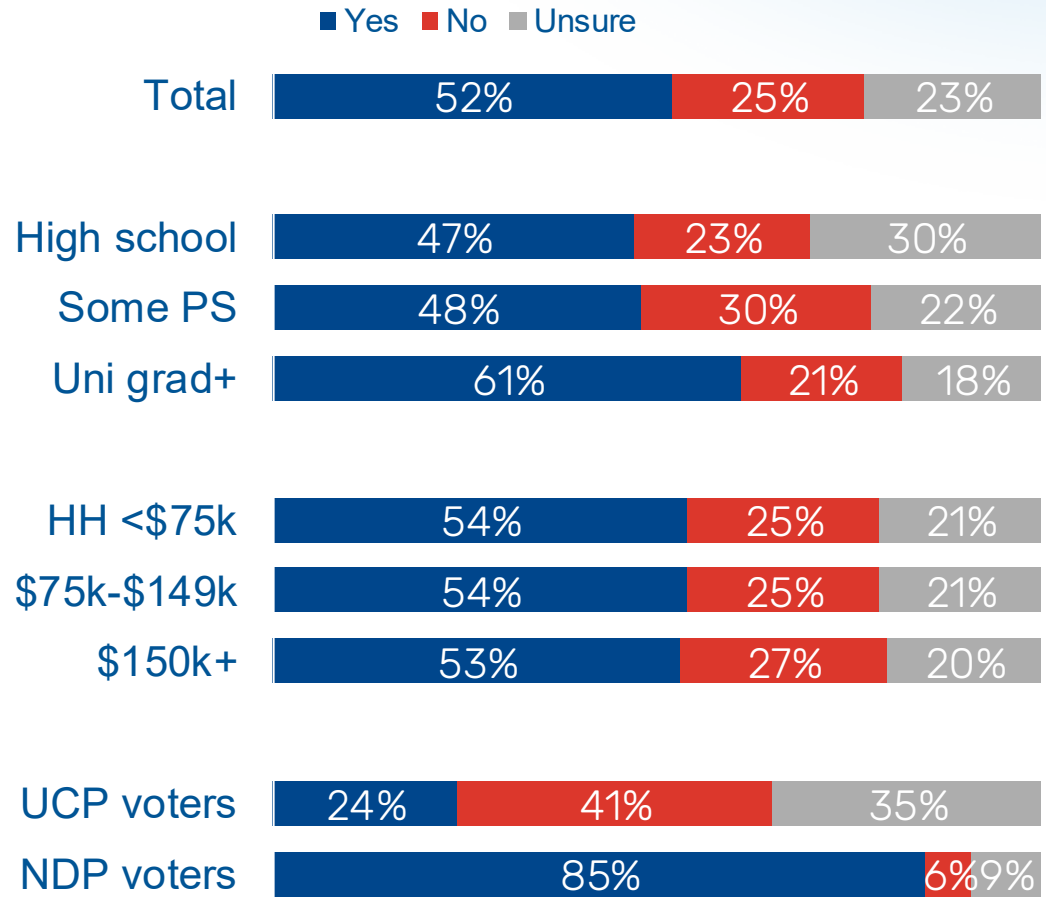
Base: All respondents (n=1,100)

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. Copyright © 2026 ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc. All rights reserved.

Eastern Slopes Coal Mining
By Key Demographics

Should the Government of Alberta prohibit by law any and all new coal mining activities, including approvals and permits, within the Eastern Slopes of the Rocky Mountains?





Base: All respondents (n=1,100)

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. Copyright © 2026 ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc. All rights reserved.

Research Methodology

- **Approach**: Online survey of Adult Albertans
- **Region**: Alberta
- **Field dates**: July 16 – 21, 2026
- **Sample size**: n=1,100
- **Sampling**: A random stratified sample of panelists was invited to complete the survey from panel partners
- **Weighting**: Weighted to reflect gender, age, education, and region of the Alberta population according to Stats Canada
- **Margin of error**: The margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of this size is **+/- 2.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20**

Sample sizes:	Unweighted	Weighted	MOE*
Alberta total	**n=1,100**	**n=1,100**	**+/- 2.9**
Calgary	n=396	n=398	+/- 5.6
Edmonton	n=349	n=352	+/- 5.8
Northern Alberta	n=120	n=121	+/- 9.8
Central Alberta	n=117	n=120	+/- 9.8
Southern Alberta	n=118	n=108	+/- 9.6

**Margin of error: Percentage points 19 times out of 20.*

The margin of error is associated with a probability sample of this size.

Accuracy of sub-samples of the data decline based on sample sizes

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. Copyright © 2026 ThinkHQ Public Affairs Inc. All rights reserved.

Contact:

MARC HENRY
President
marc@thinkhq.com

THINKHQ
Public Affairs Inc.
523 21 Ave SW
Calgary, AB. T2S 0G9

ThinkHQ is a proud member of Integrated Strategic Partners.
https://ispartnersinc.com

Integrated. Strategic. Partners. (ISP) is a leading consultancy firm specializing in providing comprehensive strategies for organizational success. With expertise in marketing and communications, government relations, and research and polling, ISP offers tailored solutions designed to empower clients to thrive in today's dynamic landscape. By uniting specialists from diverse disciplines, ISP delivers holistic strategies that drive tangible results and maximize impact.

For more information, visit https://ispartnersinc.com