



The Business Monitor

Summer 2026

Expansion of Data Centres in Canada

Contents

Introduction	2
Methodology	3
The Economic Impact of Expanding Data Centres	4
Messaging Around the Expansion of Data Centres	8
Discussion	15

Introduction

The findings presented are from the most recent Business Monitor. This edition of the Monitor features U.S. trade negotiations, tariffs and expanding data centres in Canada. The latter is the focus of this report.

The Business Monitor

The Business Monitor is the voice of Canadian business. The Monitor runs quarterly and is powered by the [Modus Business Panel](#) – Canada's only purpose-built and probability-based B2B research panel. There is no need to compromise data quality when using an omnibus. [Sample matters](#).

Benefits

- › Measurable accuracy of a probability sample.
- › Proprietary research findings at a fraction of the cost of a custom survey.
- › Expert design advice for your proprietary questions.
- › Extensive business demographic and profile data.
- › Ongoing tracking for a range of important metrics – economic and business confidence.

Specifications

- › Nationally representative sample of 500+ enterprises operating in Canada.
- › Survey is conducted online and via mobile devices in French and English.
- › 100% of the sample is based on random probability sampling, all respondents vetted by live in-house interviewers. No bots or survey fraudsters.



For scheduling and pricing, please reach out to:

- › Adriana Lisitza
- › alisitza@modusresearch.com
- › [Webpage](#)

Methodology

The [Business Monitor](#) is powered by the Modus Business Panel – Canada’s only purpose-built, *fully* probability-based business research panel.

The survey was conducted online using both email and SMS invitations/reminders, and completed via desktops, laptops, tablets and mobile devices.

A total of 520 responses were gathered from Canadian managers and executives. As Modus Business Panel is 100% recruited using RDD probability-based telephone sampling, it is statistically valid to calculate the margin of error – it is plus or minus 4.3% at a 95% confidence interval.

The survey was conducted from August 12 to 26, 2026. We run surveys at the optimal timeframe for online surveys (~ two weeks) to avoid the early response bias of quick turnaround surveys.

The data have been weighted by region and enterprise size using the latest population data from [Statistics Canada](#).



Notes on Reporting

Numbers in charts and tables may not always add up to 100 per cent due to rounding or the exclusion of non-response.

Scale aggregates are presented in parentheses on charts and tables, and are based on either a 5- or 7-point scale.

Regional breakouts are shown in some charts with small subsamples for the Prairies (n=35) and Maritimes (n=31). Any subsamples with fewer than 50 cases are marked with an asterisk.

Following News about Data Centres

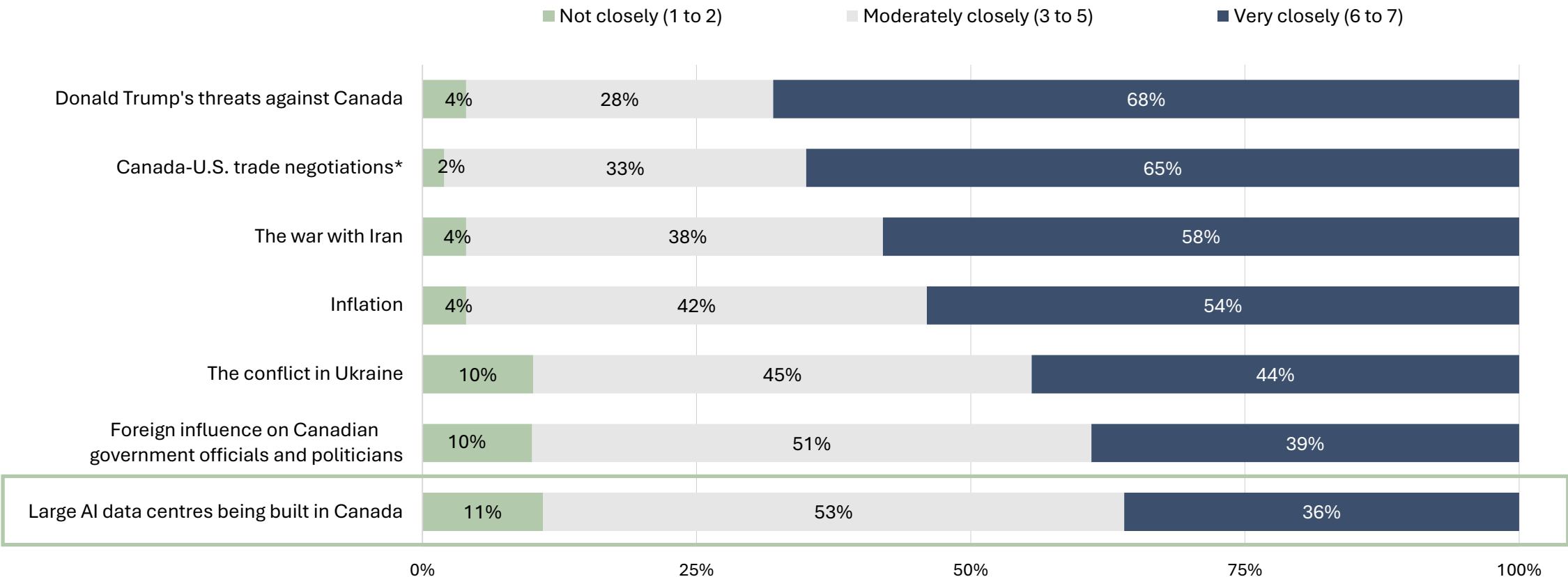
At this stage, the expansion of data centres in Canada is not a closely followed issue by most business leaders

Just over a third are following news on data centres – the lowest reading for all issues tested.

- Despite the relatively low attention, over 4 in 5 are at least keeping an eye on the issue.

Q How closely have you followed each of these topics/stories in the news over the past month?

Base: all enterprises, n=520



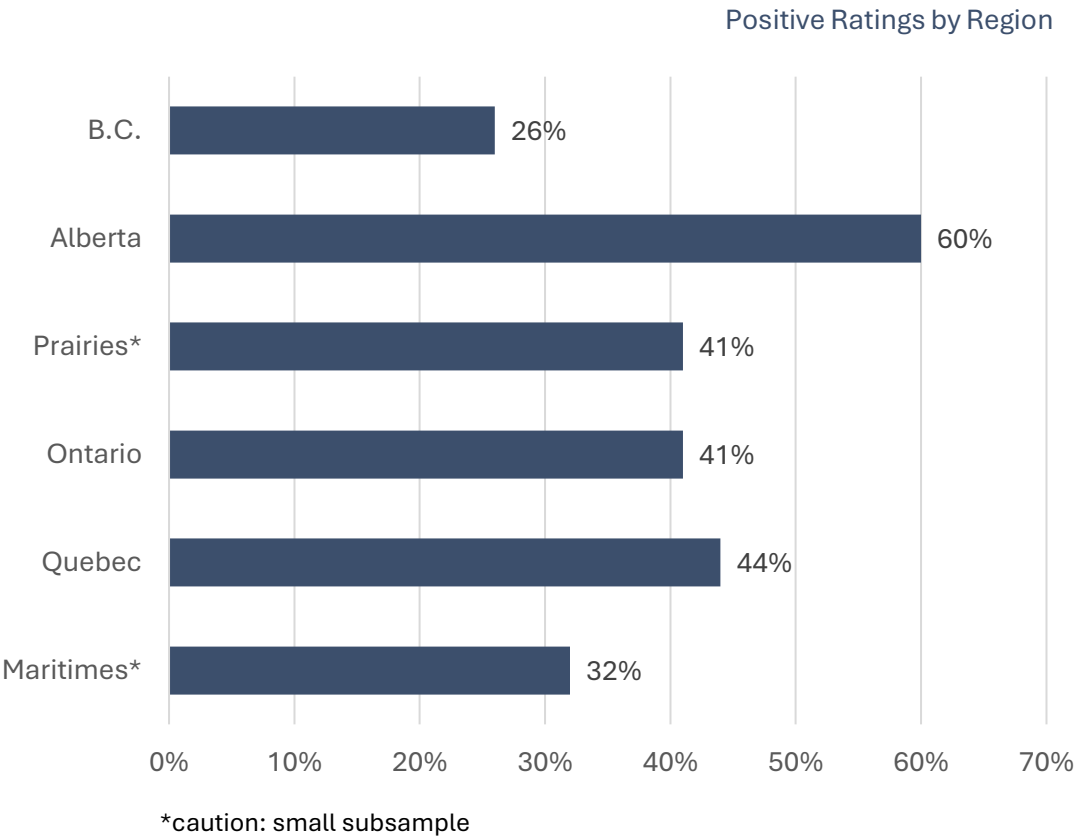
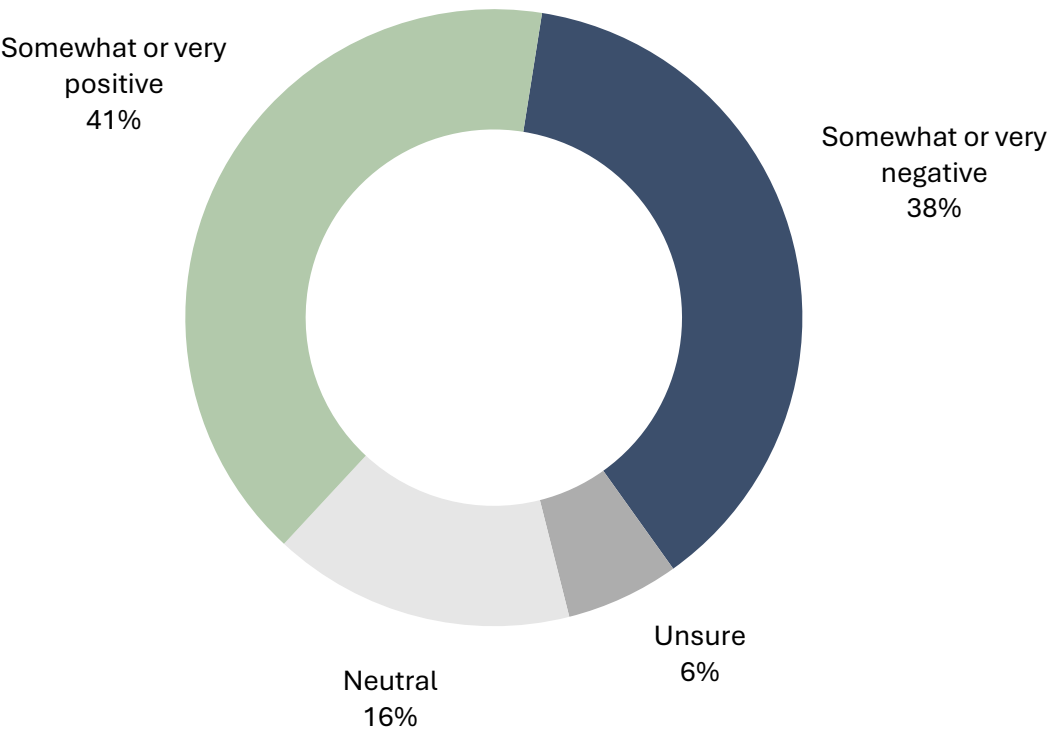
The Economic Impact of Expanding Data Centres

Business leaders are polarized on the economic benefits of expanding large data centres

Positive and negative expectations of its economic impact are statistically equal.

- B.C. and Alberta stand out as remarkably different on the expected economic impact of expanding data centres.

Q There has been a lot of discussion in the news lately about the building of large data centres in various locations across Canada. In your view, do you think the overall economic impact of these data centres will be positive or negative? Base: all enterprises, n=520



Messaging Around the Expansion of Data Centres

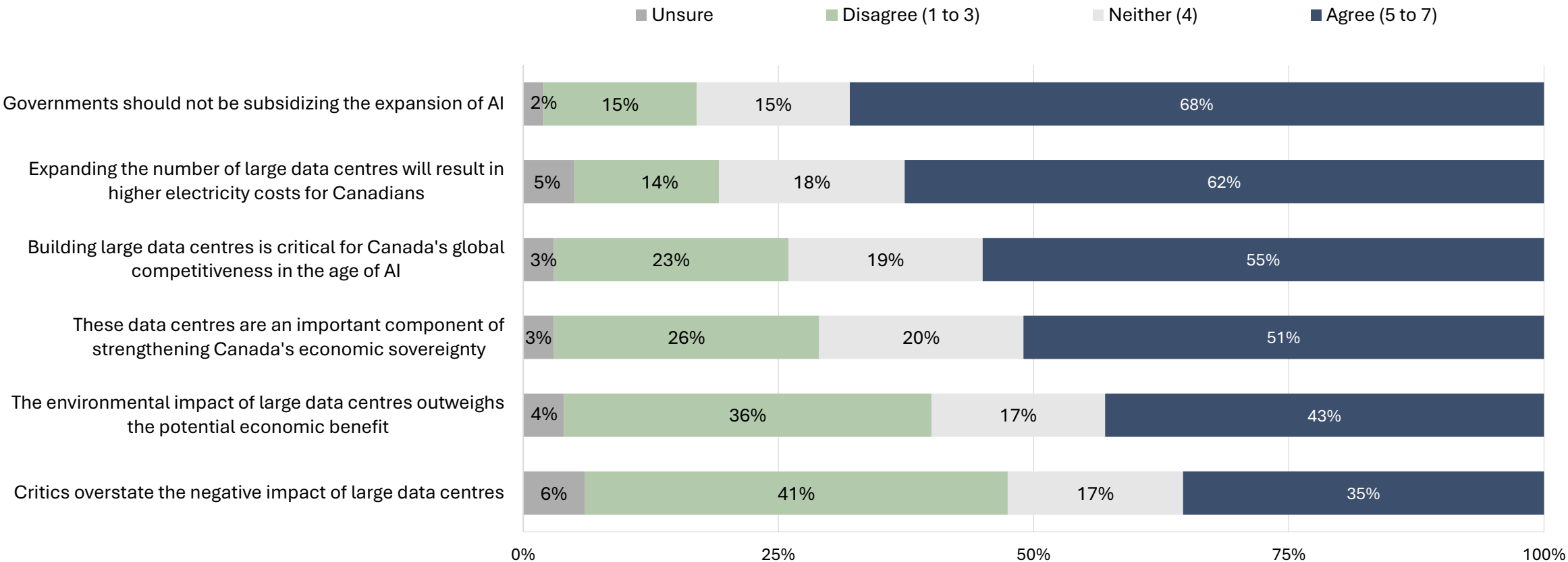
The most resonant positive messaging around data centres focuses on global competitiveness and sovereignty

On the negative side, there are strong concerns around government subsidies and the impact on electricity pricing.

- Across the various dimensions of expanding data centres, it is notable that two negative statements resonate more strongly than the most compelling messages for data centre expansion.

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements around data centres?

Base: all enterprises, n=520

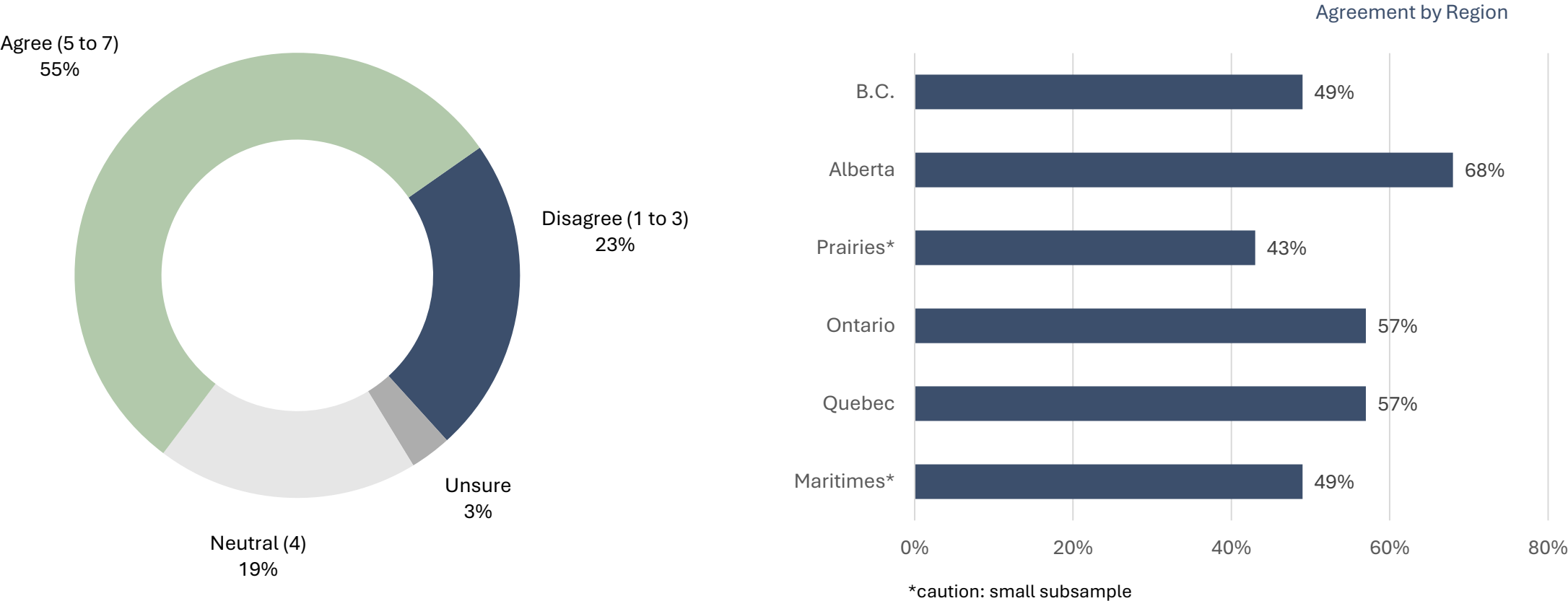


The most resonant message around data centres is its importance for Canada’s global competitiveness

As with the expected economic impact, Alberta’s business leaders are most positive about building large data centres.

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with ... building large data centres is critical for Canada’s global competitiveness in the age of A.I.?

Base: all enterprises, n=520

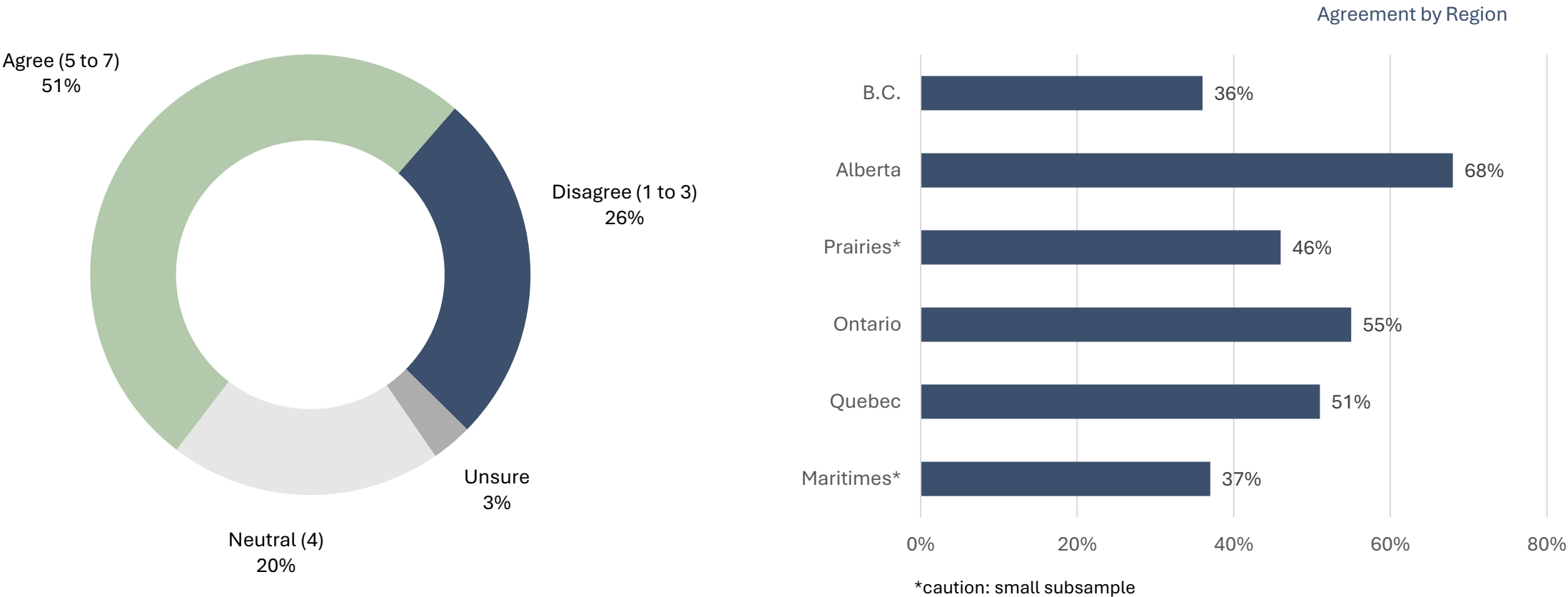


The importance of expanding data centres for economic sovereignty varies greatly by region

Again, strong variation between B.C. and Alberta.

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with ... these data centres are an important component of strengthening Canada's economic sovereignty?

Base: all enterprises, n=520



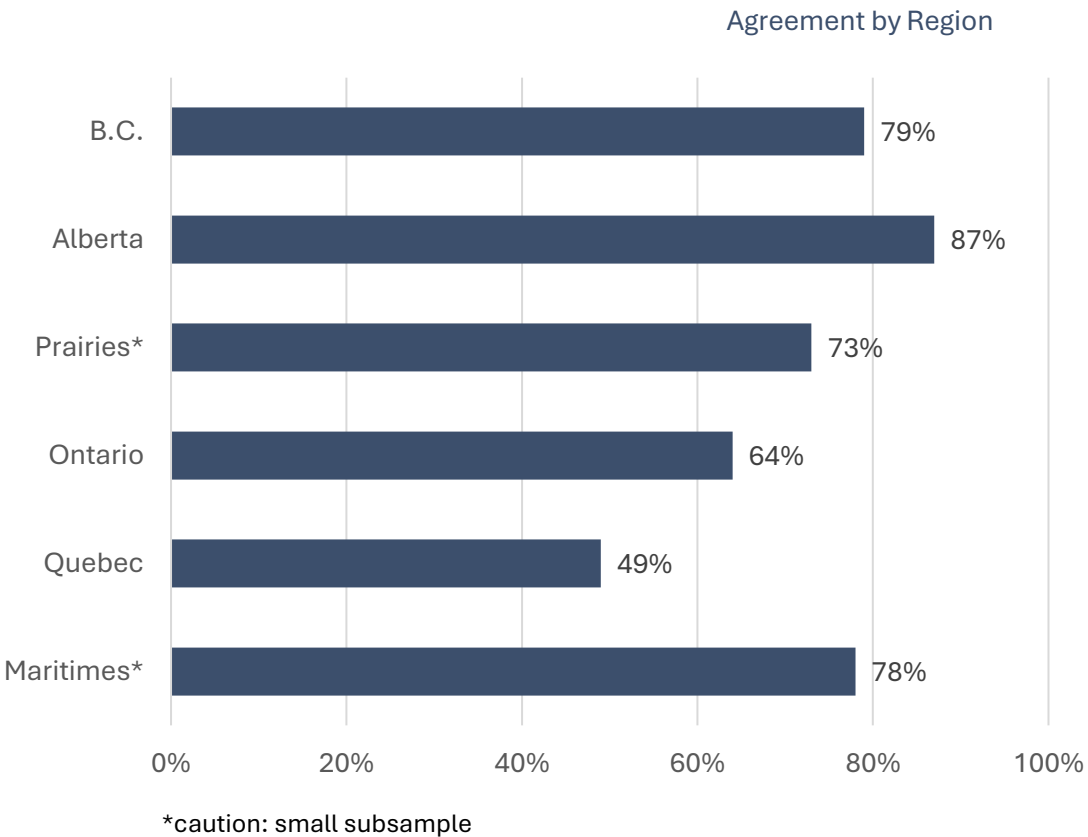
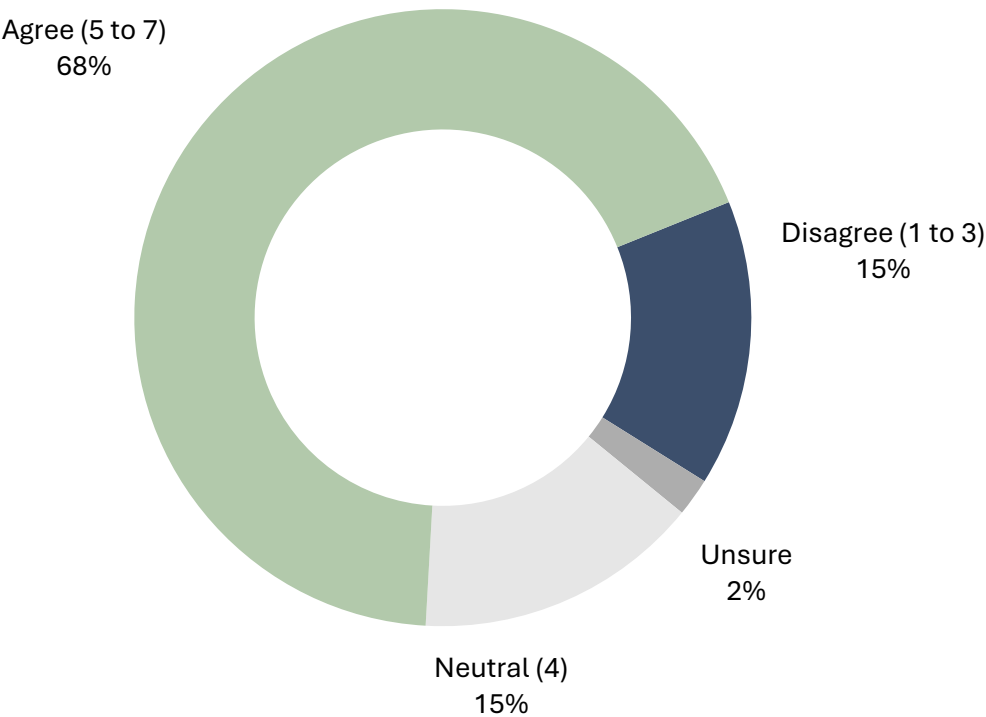
There is strong opposition to government subsidies for the expansion of A.I.

Importantly, opposition to public assistance for A.I. expansion is strongest where support for its expansion is also strongest – Alberta.

- Quebec is the only region that lacks a clear majority opposing subsidies from government.

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with ... governments should not be subsidizing the expansion of A.I.?

Base: all enterprises, n=520

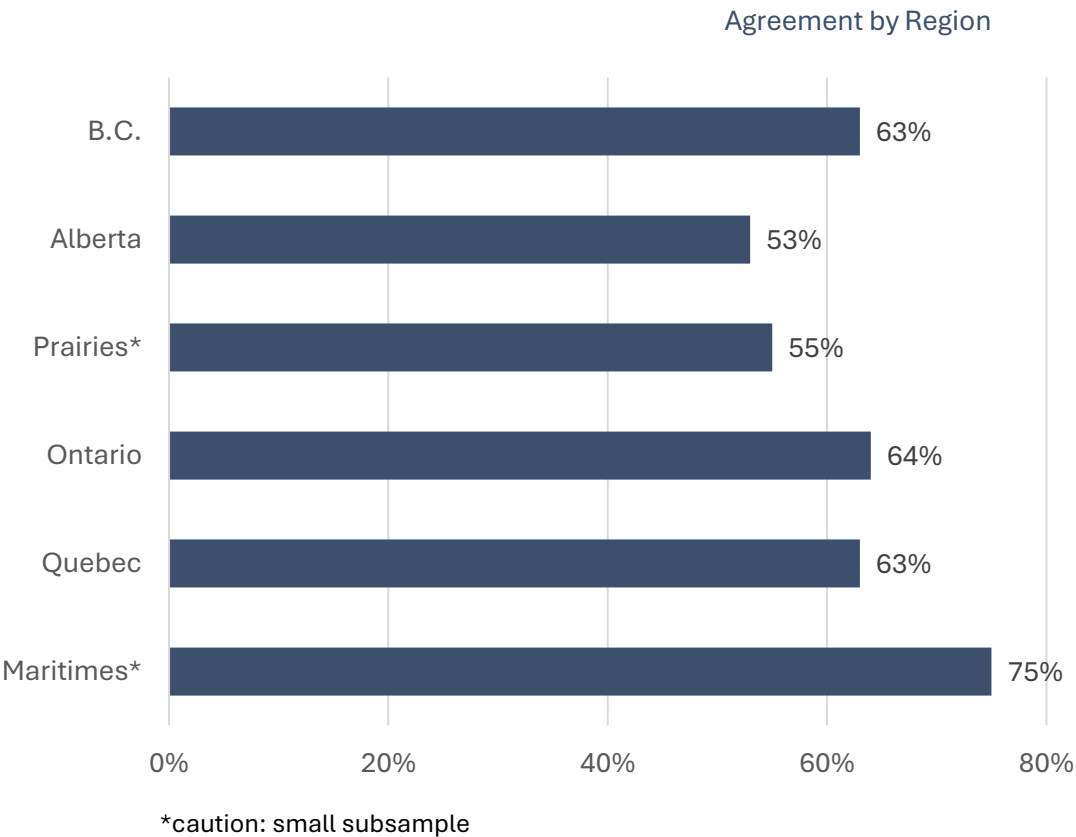
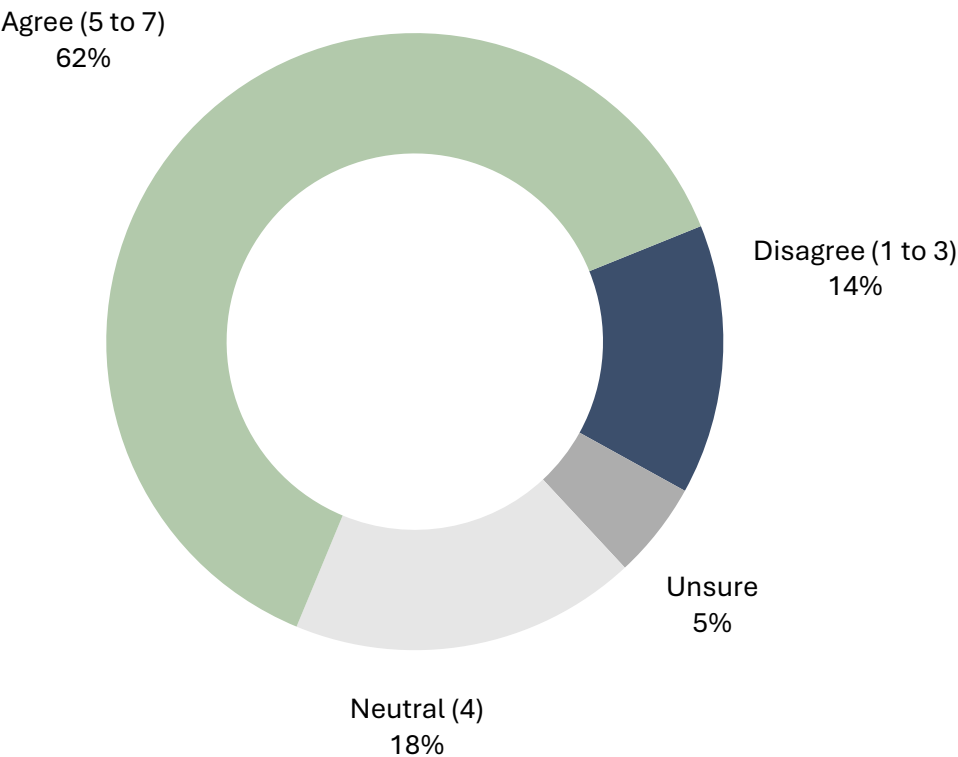


Aside from subsidies, the impact on electricity costs is the largest concern

Only a small minority disagree that data centres expansion will negatively affect electricity pricing for households.

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with ... expanding the number of large data centres will result in higher electricity costs for Canadians?

Base: all enterprises, n=520

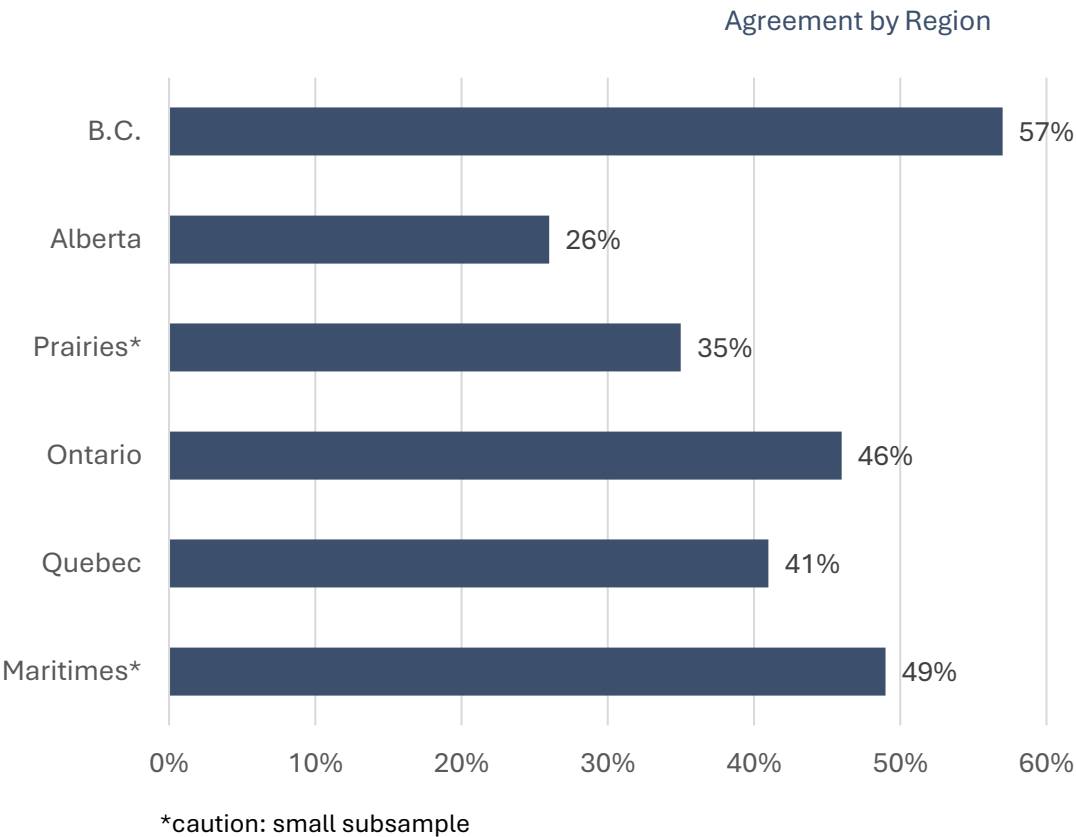
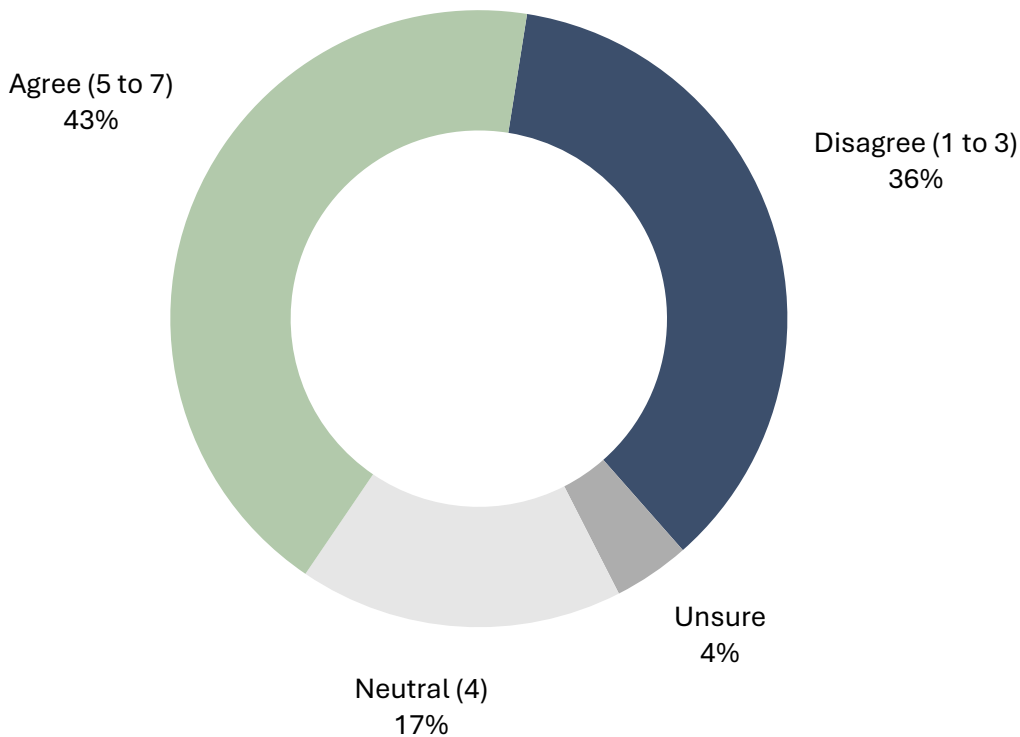


As with economic impact, business leaders are polarized on the trade off between environmental impact and economic benefit

B.C. shows the strongest concerns about the environmental impact and Alberta the weakest.

Q How strongly do you agree or disagree with ... the environmental impact of large data centres outweighs the potential economic benefit?

Base: all enterprises, n=520



Discussion

Discussion

While the expansion of data centres is not currently a particularly hot topic, it continues to simmer and is on the radar of Canada's business leaders. It is a remarkably polarizing topic. The business class is as likely to see positive as negative economic impacts. There are strong concerns around electricity pricing and government support.

The two most compelling arguments in favour of data centre expansion – [strengthening sovereignty and Canada's global competitiveness](#) – have traction with only small majorities of business leaders. The idea that it will have a positive economic impact fails to convince even a strong plurality.

For the federal government, the expansion of data centres is part of its [AI strategy](#). Touting its cool climate and a deregulated electricity market, the Government of Alberta says it is part of its [growth strategy](#) and is pushing for investments. Alberta is the lone province with a strongly receptive business audience. For the rest of the country, it will be an uphill battle to convince business leaders of the benefits.



The Modus Advantage

Modus Panels versus the Opt-ins

All the major providers of panel research in Canada rely on opt-in/non-probability recruiting. It is important to know the difference.

- Modus panels rely exclusively on telephone-based random probability recruiting that covers the entire Canadian population (aside from those without a telephone).
- There is no need to qualify your results with awkward disclaimers like: “For comparison purposes, a probability sample would have a margin of error ...”
- On the basis of probability sampling, we can legitimately cite the margin of error and project the results confidently.
- People cannot join a Modus panel unless we randomly select them and verify them with a live in-house interview. Our panels contain real respondents with none of the AI bots, professional respondents or survey fraudsters that plague opt-in panels.

As the AAPOR [Task Force on Non-probability Sampling](#) has pointed out:

- *“The use of opt-in panels [is] premised on a willingness to accept overwhelming coverage and selection error.”*
- *“AAPOR has long maintained reporting margin of sampling error with opt-in or self-identified samples is misleading.”*

FEATURES	MODUS PANELS	OPT-IN PANELS
Random, probability-based recruiting	YES	No
Coverage of the entire known population	YES	No
Measurable accuracy (margin of error)	YES	No
High response rates	YES	No
Projectable results	YES	No
Financial incentives	No	YES
Exotic sampling, weighting and data cleaning	No	YES
Survey pros and fraudsters	No	YES
A.I. bots	No	YES

Standards and Ethics



- › Modus staff are members of AAPOR
- › We adhere to AAPOR's stringent [Code of Professional Ethics and Practices](#)
- › Globally, AAPOR is one of the only survey research organizations that maintains strict standards on probability sampling, including explicit restrictions for reporting non-probability samples.

Modus

R E S E A R C H



Sample Matters

modusresearch.com