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Oceans Protection Plan - Canadians' Confidence in Marine Safety 2026

Public Opinion Research Report

Prepared for Transport Canada

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TC.PublicOpinion-OpinionPublique.TC@tc.gc.ca

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Canada 

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This public opinion research report presents the results of an online survey with 3,144 Canadians conducted by Pollara Strategic Insights Inc. on behalf of Transport Canada. In-depth interviews with Indigenous partners and marine stakeholders were also conducted during the same time.

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Plan de protection des océans – la confiance des Canadiens à l'égard de la sécurité maritime 2026.

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The word "Canada" is written in a large, black, serif font. To the right of the letter "a", there is a small, stylized Canadian flag.

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Executive Summary

A. Research Background and Objectives

The Oceans Protection Plan is the largest investment ever made to protect Canada's coasts and waterways. It provides world-leading marine safety that creates economic opportunities for Canadians today, while protecting our coastlines for generations to come.

The Oceans Protection Plan (OPP) brings together Transport Canada, Indigenous partners, coastal communities, the marine industry and other stakeholders to develop and improve Canada's marine safety system as well as protecting and restoring the marine ecosystem. OPP is led by Transport Canada and brings together Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Natural Resources Canada and Health Canada.

Transport Canada regularly undertakes public opinion research (POR) to assess Canadians' confidence in the marine safety system and their awareness of the Oceans Protection Plan. This research also serves to gauge the strength of relationships with Indigenous partners and industry stakeholders. Since 2018, these studies have tracked changes in awareness, attitudes, and behaviours while evaluating progress against the Plan's objectives.

This latest round of research will inform communications planning, outreach, and engagement in marine safety, as well as serve to measure improvements in relationships with Indigenous Peoples, coastal communities, Indigenous partners, and marine stakeholders.

B. Brief Methodology

To meet the research objectives, Pollara designed a quantitative and qualitative component of research.

For the quantitative component, Pollara conducted an online survey with n=3,144 Canadians. Though a margin of error cannot be assigned to online surveys, a probability sample of this size would have a margin of error of $\pm 1.8\%$, 19 times out of 20. This sample includes n=600 surveys with Indigenous Peoples, n=1,540 surveys with residents living in coastal communities in Canada, and n=107 surveys across the territories. This survey was conducted between November 26 and December 22, 2025, in English and French.

Findings are reported separately for the general population, Indigenous Peoples, and Canadians residing in coastal communities. Where possible, the results have been tracked against a 2018 baseline survey of n=3,407 (n=2,168 public and n=1,239 Indigenous Peoples), a 2020 survey of n=2,702 (n=2,141 public and n=561 Indigenous Peoples), a 2022 survey of n=2,826 (n=2,224 public and n=602 Indigenous Peoples), and a 2024 survey of n=3,100 (n=2,476 public and n=624 Indigenous Peoples)

For the qualitative component, in-depth interviews were conducted by video conference with 26 Indigenous partners and 22 Marine stakeholders. These interviews were conducted between November 2025 and February 2026 in English and French.

The process for collection is described separately in Appendix A (Quantitative Methodology) and Appendix B (Qualitative Methodology). Appendix C presents the survey questionnaire and Appendix D presents the interview guide for Indigenous partners and Marine Stakeholders in-depth interviews.

C. Summary of Key Findings

Perceptions of Canada's Marine Safety System

Relatively few Canadians are truly familiar with and informed about marine safety issues. Across questions, we find some superficial awareness of these topics (37% to 44%), but only 10% to 14% say they are very aware of marine safety issues such as safe shipping practices, steps taken to protect the marine environment, responding to offshore spills, and maintaining the reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain. These awareness levels have been stable since 2022 after trending down for 4 years. Despite Canadians exhibiting low familiarity with marine safety issues, addressing these issues is still highly important to them (58% to 76%).

There is moderate awareness of programs and initiatives set up by the Government of Canada to respond to, prevent, and monitor oil spills and incidents; between 57% to 65% are aware of these activities. Three in four (73%) express at least moderate confidence in the system's ability to prepare for and respond in a timely manner to oil spills, while 66% express a similar degree of confidence in the system's ability to prevent oil spills and 60% for holding polluters accountable for covering the costs associated with spill clean ups. Confidence in Canada's marine oil spills and incident response system is unchanged from 2024.

About half (43% to 54%) report awareness of initiatives by the Government of Canada to protect and restore marine habitats and coastline and reduce the impact of shipping. Despite limited awareness, seven in ten have at least a moderate degree of confidence in Canada's marine safety system (70%) and that marine habitats and species are protected in Canada (72%). Canadians continue to express modest confidence in the marine safety system, with levels at par with 2024 and higher than 2022. These positive to modest perceptions are primarily due to the public's confidence in Canada's response capabilities and the regulatory framework.

Residents in coastal communities are slightly more aware of the broader aspects of Canada's marine safety system (43% to 49%) as well as the specific programs and initiatives set up by the Government of Canada. They also place slightly higher importance on responding to offshore spills, incidents and emergencies (79%), and on protecting the marine environment (77%). This cohort exhibits similar levels of confidence in the capabilities of Canada's marine oil spill response

system (60% to 76%) and Canada's marine safety system (73%) compared to the public, and slightly higher when it comes to protecting marine habitat and species (77%).

Indigenous Peoples report similar levels of awareness (37% to 43%) and give slightly higher importance (64% to 75%) to marine safety aspects than the general population. Confidence in Canada's marine safety system (72%) and marine oil spill response system (61% to 71%) among Indigenous Peoples is on par with the general population, while being slightly higher when it comes to marine habitat and species protection (76%). Indigenous Peoples residing in coastal regions are more likely to be aware of marine safety issues (60% to 63%) and the specific initiatives and programs set up by the government, and express slightly higher degrees of confidence in Canada's marine safety system (76%), marine oil spill response system (69% to 78%), and protection of the marine ecosystem in Canada (81%).

Perceptions of the Oceans Protection Plan

Given that Canadians are not very engaged on marine safety related issues, it is not surprising that few are familiar with the Oceans Protection Plan. While a slight majority (57%) report some degree of awareness of the Oceans Protection Plan, only 16% are very or somewhat familiar with the plan. This does however, represent a 4 point increase in familiarity and awareness levels since 2024, with the increase more pronounced among Indigenous Peoples.

Only 7% have seen, read, or heard about the Oceans Protection Plan in the past year. The most common things heard tend to be connected to the primary action points of the plan such as protecting marine ecosystems and habitats, protecting the oceans, waterways and coastline, and improving marine shipping safety. On a prompted basis, these aspects continue to be the pillars most associated with the Oceans Protection Plan.

Key sources of information on the Oceans Protection Plan are television, with some mentions of social media, newspapers, radio, and a few mentioning Transport Canada or other government websites.

Despite having low familiarity with the Oceans Protection Plan, a large majority of Canadians still believe its regulations, initiatives and actions are important. Canadians especially believe that timely response to and management of factors that impact marine pollution, including holding polluters accountable, as well as protection and restoration of the marine environment, are important (73% to 79%). Other aspects of the plan involving investments in scientific research, collaboration with multiple cohorts of Canadians on marine safety initiatives, and creating and maintaining economic opportunities are important for 61% to 73% of Canadians.

Between 38% to 51% of Canadians perceive a positive impact of the Oceans Protection Plan in improving marine safety and safeguarding the marine environment. However, many (36% to 42%) do not know enough to provide a rating. Not surprisingly, familiarity breeds positivity, as those who know more about the plan are more positive about its impact.

Coastal communities in Canada exhibit a similar level of familiarity with the Oceans Protection Plan as non-coastal communities (16% both). However, on a prompted basis, they are somewhat more likely to associate the specific initiatives with the Oceans Protection Plan and continue to give somewhat higher importance to all initiatives tested. Positive impacts of plan observed among coastal communities are at par with the general population.

Indigenous Peoples are slightly more likely to report familiarity with the Oceans Protection Plan compared to the public (27%), due to Indigenous coastal communities having a notably higher degree of familiarity of the Oceans Protection Plan (45%). Indigenous Peoples are also more likely to have seen, read, or heard about the plan in the past year, with television and social media their primary sources. Notably, they are much more likely to receive information via social media than the general public. Their views on the importance of most aspects of the Oceans Protection Plan resemble those of the public. However, they are notably more invested in enhancing marine safety in the Arctic and increasing meaningful participation from their community.

Roles in Protecting, Preserving and Restoring the Marine Environment

The majority of Canadians desire strong involvement from the Government of Canada and their provincial or territorial government in protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment. There is a significantly higher expectation – shared by 77% of Canadians – for the federal government to play a much larger and pivotal role in marine safety. However, the proportion of Canadians (41%) who believe the federal government has significantly contributed to addressing these aspects in recent years falls significantly short of these expectations.

Similarly, 66% prefer their provincial or territorial government to assume a larger role in marine environment protection and restoration, but only 30% believe they have played a substantial role. Half (49%) prefer Indigenous governments to play a significant role, with only 28% believing they have played a notable role. That said, Indigenous Peoples are more likely to expect Indigenous governments to play a stronger role (64%) – and are notably more likely than the public to give credit to Indigenous governments for fulfilling this role (44%). Expectations for municipal or local governments to play a substantial role are comparatively lower among the public – 42% expect them to play a strong role, with only 17% perceiving that they do.

Involvement in Canada's Marine Safety System

Only one in five (21%) Canadians are at least somewhat involved with marine safety and only 7% report having ever worked or volunteered on projects related to marine environment safety. Only 12% of Canadians search for information on marine safety. The level of involvement is the same as seen in 2024.

That said, despite limited engagement, Canadians are still advocates of marine safety and feel it is important to receive information and provide input on marine safety issues in Canada. Six in ten Canadians also express interest in knowing more about how to get involved in protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment (62%), about opportunities for training in marine

response for residents in coastal and Indigenous communities (59%) and careers in the marine sector (57%).

Coastal communities and Indigenous Peoples share the same sentiments as the general population. That said, Indigenous Peoples residing in coastal communities not only believe they should be playing a larger role in marine environment protection but are also more likely to say they are actively involved in the marine safety system (52%) and have worked or volunteered on projects related to marine safety (19%). They are notably more interested and display a higher likelihood to search for information on marine safety as well.

Government of Canada's (GoC) Programs and Initiatives and Participation in Engagement Sessions

Few Canadians actively search for information or are involved with marine safety. The primary source of information about programs and initiatives on marine safety is online – searching on the internet (75%) and Government of Canada websites (42%). A few mention other sources like non-government organizations, individuals working in the marine transportation or shipping industries and social media.

Only 3% of Canadians report participating in an engagement session on marine safety or the Oceans Protection Plan. Participation by coastal communities (4%) in these sessions is similar to that of the public. Rates are much higher among Indigenous Peoples (9%) and rise to 15% among Indigenous Peoples living in coastal areas. These engagement levels are similar to previous years.

Summary of In-Depth Interviews with Indigenous Partners and Marine Stakeholders (Qualitative Research Phase)

Indigenous Partners and Marine Stakeholders are directly and closely engaged in Canada's marine safety system and share a strong focus on marine safety outcomes and the governance of the Oceans Protection Plan. While perspectives differ based on roles and responsibilities – Indigenous partners emphasizing territorial stewardship and governance authority, with Marine Stakeholders prioritizing operational resilience and system integrity – both groups describe a system that is operationally effective but institutionally transitional. Attention is increasingly shifting from operational performance toward long-term governance and structural design.

Views on Canada's Marine Safety System and the Oceans Protection Plan

Canada's marine safety regime, including incident prevention and spill response capacity, is widely viewed as efficient and strong. Frontline institutions such as the Canadian Coast Guard and Transport Canada retain high levels of trust for their operational response and management.

The Oceans Protection Plan investments in enhanced marine monitoring, preparedness exercises, and emergency towing capacity are broadly recognized as strengthening marine safety and

operational readiness. Additionally, strengthened capacity, improved engagement, and a more visible federal presence reinforce confidence in operational delivery.

However, attention is now shifting from program delivery to institutional structure. While the Oceans Protection Plan is described as ambitious in scope, it is often perceived as a collection of initiatives layered onto existing systems rather than a clearly articulated, cohesive, long-term strategy. As expectations mature, the central question has shifted from what the Oceans Protection Plan funds to what enduring and integrated governance structure it ultimately establishes.

Fragmentation is identified as the primary risk: Indigenous partners point to siloed engagement and limited integration of authority, while marine stakeholders cite overlapping initiatives and unclear strategic alignment. Across both groups, the emphasis is not on system overhaul, but on greater integration, clearer governance pathways, and improved strategic coherence.

Indigenous Partners' Perspectives: Increased Governance and Authority

Indigenous partners view marine safety as intrinsically linked to territorial governance and intergenerational stewardship. They recognize operational improvements under the Oceans Protection Plan, including increased preparedness exercises, strengthened regulatory understanding, and expanded involvement through the Indigenous Coast Guard Auxiliary.

However, key structural gaps are highlighted. Indigenous governance is permanent, while program funding remains cyclical. Although Indigenous knowledge is increasingly incorporated and engagement has expanded, decision-making authority is limited, largely centralized and shared governance is not fully realized. As a result, Indigenous expectations have shifted from participation toward clearer authority alignment and measurable reconciliation outcomes.

Marine Stakeholders' Perspectives: System Integrity and Coherence

Marine Stakeholders evaluate the system primarily through the lens of operational risk, system integrity, and accountability. The regime is generally regarded as mature and effective, with the Oceans Protection Plan investments contributing to enhanced preparedness and response capacity.

Among this group, the key concern is system coherence. Stakeholders point to the proliferation of initiatives, overlapping mandates, and fragmented federal coordination as risks. During high-stress incidents, particular emphasis is placed on maintaining clear command structures and preserving and implementing the polluter-pay principle. Expectations increasingly focus on clearer integration between publicly funded enhancements and industry-funded response systems, without weakening accountability.

D. Note to Readers

Detailed findings are presented in the sections that follow. Overall results for the 2026 survey are presented in the main portion of the narrative and are typically supported by graphic or tabular presentation of results and labelled as “2026”. Results are compared, where applicable, with the 2024, 2022, 2020 and 2018 survey findings, and are presented in tables under the corresponding headings. Where there are significant differences between the public, Indigenous Peoples and coastal communities, these differences are described in the main paragraph.

Bulleted text is used to point out any statistically and substantively significant differences between sub-groups. If differences are not noted in the report, it can be assumed that they are either not statistically significant* in their variation from the overall or that the difference was deemed to be substantively too small to be noteworthy.

Results may not total to 100% due to rounding.

**Chi-square and standard t-tests were applied as applicable. Differences noted were significant at the 95 % level.*

E. Political Neutrality Certificate

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I hereby certify as a representative of Pollara Strategic Insights Inc. that the final deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.

Signed:

Date: March 31, 2026



Dan Arnold, Chief Strategy officer
Pollara Strategic Insights

Detailed Findings

A. Findings from The Quantitative Survey

The following section contains detailed analysis of the quantitative findings of this research project. It is divided into 6 sub-sections:

1. Perceptions of Canada's Marine Safety System
 - General Awareness of Marine Safety Issues
 - Importance of Marine Safety
 - Awareness of Government of Canada's Programs and Regulations
 - Confidence in Canada's Marine Safety System
 - Confidence in Canada's Marine Oil Spill Response System
 - Confidence in Canada's Marine Habitat and Species Protection
2. Perceptions of the Oceans Protection Plan
 - Awareness of the Oceans Protection Plan
 - Importance of the Oceans Protection Plan
 - Impact of the Oceans Protection Plan
3. Roles in Protecting, Preserving and Restoring the Marine Environment
 - Preferred Roles of Governments and Shipping Industry
 - Perceived Roles Played by Governments and Shipping Industry
4. Involvement in Canada's Marine Safety System
 - Perceived Personal Role in Protecting and Restoring the Marine Environment
 - Level of Active Involvement in Canada's Marine Safety System
 - Incidence of Searching for Information on Marine Safety
 - Importance of Receiving Information Related to Marine Safety
 - Importance of Providing Input into Decisions about Marine Safety
5. Sources of Information about Government of Canada's (GoC) Programs & Initiatives on Marine Safety
6. Participation in Engagement Sessions

1. Perceptions of Canada's Marine Safety System

General Awareness of Marine Safety Issues

Canadians demonstrate a limited degree of awareness of marine safety related issues. Around four in ten are at least moderately aware (rated 3, 4 or 5 out of 5) of the reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain (44%), the steps taken to protect the marine environment (42%), the marine response to offshore spills and incidents (39%), and of marine safety issues including safe shipping practices (37%).

Only about one in ten are highly aware (rated 4 or 5 out of 5) of these aspects related to marine safety. Levels of high awareness for marine safety, including shipping practices (10%) and steps taken to protect the marine environment (10%) are similar to 2024 and 2022 levels, and lower than those seen in 2018 and 2020. High awareness of response to offshore spills, incidents and emergencies (12%) and the reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain (14%) are slightly higher and show a slight increase since 2024.

- Awareness levels are higher in British Columbia and the territories than the Canada-wide average for all of these items. About half are at least moderately aware of the reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain (53% BC and 51% territories), marine response to offshore spills and incidents (51%; 47% respectively), and the steps taken to protect the marine environment (50%; 47% respectively). Awareness is lower for marine safety issues, including safe shipping practices (44%; 38% respectively), but still above the national average.
- Awareness in Atlantic Canada runs 1 to 4 points above the national average on these items.
- Minor variations in awareness levels are seen among age groups, with Canadians 65 and over being slightly more likely to claim awareness of these marine safety aspects than those younger than 65 years.

TABLE 1 – Q1. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all aware” and 5 is “very aware”, how would you characterize your level of awareness (e.g., the degree you feel informed) about each of the following in Canada? Base: General Population (N=3,144)

General Population	Aware (4-5)	Moderately Aware (3)	Not Aware (1-2)	Aware (4-5)			
	2026			2024	2022	2020	2018
Marine safety issues including safe shipping practices	10%	28%	59%	7%	9%	14%	17%
Steps taken to protect the marine environment	10%	31%	55%	9%	10%	16%	18%
Response to offshore spills, incidents, and emergencies	12%	27%	56%	9%	-	-	-
The reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain	14%	30%	50%	11%	-	-	-

Residents in coastal communities (43% to 49%) are somewhat more likely to say they are at least moderately aware of these marine issues compared to non-coastal communities (34% to 42%). While awareness levels are lower compared to 2018 to 2022, they are similar to 2024.

TABLE 2 – Q1. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all aware” and 5 is “very aware”, how would you characterize your level of awareness (e.g., the degree you feel informed) about each of the following in Canada? Base: Coastal Communities (N=1,540)

Coastal Communities	Aware (4-5)	Moderately Aware (3)	Not Aware (1-2)	Aware (4-5)			
	2026			2024	2022	2020	2018
Marine safety issues including safe shipping practices	11%	32%	54%	10%	20%	20%	29%
Steps taken to protect the marine environment	11%	36%	50%	12%	21%	20%	29%
Response to offshore spills, incidents, and emergencies	12%	33%	51%	11%	-	-	-
The reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain	14%	36%	47%	15%	-	-	-

Indigenous Peoples have similar levels of awareness as the general Canadian population. Among this cohort as well, awareness levels are similar to results seen in 2024, but down from 2018 to 2022 levels.

Awareness is much higher among coastal Indigenous residents – six in ten are at least moderately aware of the reliability of the supply chain (63%), marine safety and shipping practices (61%), protective steps taken for marine environment (60%), and marine responses to offshore spills (60%) compared to one third to four in ten (34% to 40%) of those residing in non-coastal areas. Awareness levels among Indigenous coastal residents are notably up from 2024.

TABLE 3 – Q1. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all aware” and 5 is “very aware”, how would you characterize your level of awareness (e.g., the degree you feel informed) about each of the following in Canada? Base: Indigenous Peoples (N=600)

Indigenous Peoples	Aware (4-5)	Moderately Aware (3)	Not Aware (1-2)	Aware (4-5)			
	2026			2024	2022	2020	2018
Marine safety issues including safe shipping practices	11%	26%	56%	11%	17%	19%	23%
Steps taken to protect the marine environment	14%	28%	51%	11%	22%	26%	24%
Response to offshore spills, incidents, and emergencies	13%	29%	50%	12%	-	-	-
The reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain	21%	21%	51%	15%	-	-	-

Importance of Marine Safety

All aspects of marine safety tested are seen as highly important (rated 4 or 5 out of 5) by the majority of Canadians, with the most important being marine response to offshore spills, incidents, and emergencies (76%). Seven in ten feel that Canada's supply chain being reliable and strong (72%) and protecting the marine environment (71%) are very important. Six in ten (58%) perceive marine safety, including safe shipping and protecting the marine environment, as important.

- Marine response to offshore spills and incidents and protecting the marine environment is most important to residents of the territories (90%; 88% respectively), followed by those in Atlantic Canada (77%; 75% respectively) and British Columbia (77%; 73% respectively).
- The reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain is especially resonant across the Prairie provinces. Though people there are less directly connected to oceans and waterways, this could be a strong entry point to discuss the importance of the Oceans Protection Plan there.

Importance levels across all aspects are at par with results recorded in 2024. For marine safety issues and protecting the environment importance levels continue to be lower than in 2022 and prior years.

TABLE 4 – Q2. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all important” and 5 is “very important”, how important would you say that each of the following are to you? Base: General Population (N=3,144)

General Population	Important (4-5)	Somewhat Important (3)	Not Important (1-2)	Important (4-5)			
	2026			2024	2022	2020	2018
Marine safety issues including safe shipping practices	58%	25%	13%	59%	70%	76%	75%
Protecting the marine environment	71%	16%	8%	74%	83%	83%	83%
Response to offshore spills, incidents, and emergencies	76%	13%	7%	75%	-	-	-
The reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain	72%	16%	7%	71%	-	-	-

The importance of these issues is expressed more strongly in coastal communities. Importance for each aspect in 2026 is similar to 2024, however it is lower than results seen in 2022 and prior years.

TABLE 5 – Q2. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all important” and 5 is “very important”, how important would you say that each of the following are to you? Base: Coastal Communities (N=1,540)

Coastal Communities	Important (4-5)	Somewhat Important (3)	Not Important (1-2)	Important (4-5)			
	2026			2024	2022	2020	2018
Marine safety issues including safe shipping practices	63%	25%	9%	64%	81%	80%	82%

Protecting the marine environment	77%	15%	6%	79%	89%	87%	87%
Response to offshore spills, incidents, and emergencies	79%	13%	6%	80%	-	-	-
The reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain	73%	19%	5%	76%	-	-	-

Indigenous Peoples are slightly more likely to give high importance to marine safety (64%) and protecting the environment (73%) than the general population, while they give similar importance to responding to offshore spills (75%) and give lower importance to the supply chain (66%). That said, those living in the coastal regions give more importance to the supply chain than non-coastal Indigenous communities (72% vs. 65%).

The overall importance placed on supply chain reliability by Indigenous communities is however notably lower than in 2024. Importance placed on marine safety issues is on par with 2024 findings but continues to be 8 to 10 points lower than importance levels recorded in 2022 and prior.

TABLE 6 – Q2. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all important” and 5 is “very important”, how important would you say that each of the following are to you? Base: Indigenous Peoples (N=600)

Indigenous Peoples	Important (4-5)	Somewhat Important (3)	Not Important (1-2)	Important (4-5)			
	2026			2024	2022	2020	2018
Marine safety issues including safe shipping practices	64%	23%	6%	62%	74%	76%	74%
Protecting the marine environment	73%	16%	4%	77%	80%	84%	82%
Response to offshore spills, incidents, and emergencies	75%	15%	4%	77%	-	-	-
The reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain	66%	21%	5%	75%	-	-	-

Awareness of Government of Canada's Programs and Regulations

Canadians show higher awareness of specific programs, regulations and activities set up by the Government of Canada than they do about marine safety at the conceptual level. The majority say they are aware of the initiatives taken for responding to incidents of oil spills (65%), monitoring marine pollution (57%) and preventing incidents that contribute to marine pollution (57%). Awareness levels for these actions are similar to 2024 but continue to be somewhat lower when compared to 2022 and previous years.

- Majorities across all provinces are aware of the different regulations and activities in place to prevent marine pollution, however the level of awareness varies slightly. Of note – residents of the territories (73%) claim to be somewhat more aware of the steps taken to

respond to oil spill incidents, while British Columbia (62%) residents are more likely to say they are aware of the government monitoring marine pollution incidents.

- Awareness of these initiatives tends to increase with age, with those 65+ the most aware.

Compared to non-coastal communities, coastal communities are only somewhat more likely to say they are aware of steps taken to respond to (69% vs. 63%) and monitor (61% vs. 55%) incidents that contribute to marine pollution. Awareness is slightly lower for responding to and monitoring incidents compared to 2024.

Among Indigenous Peoples, awareness levels are similar to those seen among the public. Awareness is almost similar to 2024, except increasing slightly for monitoring incidents (59% vs. 54% in 2024). Coastal Indigenous communities are more likely to report being aware of monitoring incidents than non-coastal communities (70% vs. 57%), and slightly more aware of actions taken to prevent marine pollution (61% vs. 57%).

TABLE 7 – Q4. As far as you know, does the Government of Canada have programs, regulations, and/or activities in place to: *Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)*

% Saying YES	General Population					Coastal Communities					Indigenous People				
	2026	2024	2022	2020	2018	2026	2024	2022	2020	2018	2026	2024	2022	2020	2018
Respond to incidents, such as an oil spill, that contribute to marine pollution	65%	64%	74%	79%	74%	69%	73%	77%	79%	72%	62%	63%	72%	66%	64%
Monitor marine pollution incidents	57%	58%	60%	63%	62%	61%	65%	64%	67%	64%	59%	54%	63%	51%	51%
Prevent incidents, such as an oil spill, that contribute to marine pollution	57%	55%	62%	66%	63%	59%	59%	65%	68%	61%	57%	53%	55%	56%	50%

Over half (54%) of Canadians believe the government has programs and regulations in place to protect and restore aquatic habitats in coastal areas, while two fifths (43%) believe the government is working towards reducing the impact of marine shipping on the marine ecosystem.

Coastal communities and Indigenous Peoples exhibit similar levels of awareness of actions taken to protect marine habitat (56%; 53% respectively), while being somewhat more aware of the reducing impacts of shipping on the marine ecosystem (47%; 49% respectively).

While awareness levels remain unchanged from 2024 among the general population, it drops slightly among coastal communities and increases among Indigenous Peoples.

TABLE 8 – Q4. As far as you know, does the Government of Canada have programs, regulations, and/or activities in place to: *Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)*

% Saying YES	General Population		Coastal Communities		Indigenous Peoples	
	2026	2024	2026	2024	2026	2024
Protect and restore aquatic habitats in marine and coastal areas	54%	53%	56%	61%	53%	49%
Reduce the impact of marine shipping on Canada's marine ecosystem	43%	43%	47%	51%	49%	40%

Around half of Canadians say they are aware of steps taken to protect Canada's supply chain (53%) and create economic opportunities for coastal communities (45%). Residents in coastal communities (55%; 43% respectively) have similar awareness levels as the public, while Indigenous Peoples are slightly more aware (56%; 50% respectively). Awareness among the general population and Indigenous Peoples has increased somewhat compared to 2024.

TABLE 9 – Q4. As far as you know, does the Government of Canada have programs, regulations, and/or activities in place to: *Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)*

% Saying YES	General Population		Coastal Communities		Indigenous Peoples	
	2026	2024	2026	2024	2026	2024
Protect the reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain	53%	48%	55%	52%	56%	52%
Create economic opportunities for communities near Canada's coasts and waterways	45%	40%	43%	45%	50%	42%

Half of the public (51%) and Indigenous Peoples (50%) feel the government is working closely with Indigenous Peoples and coastal communities to protect Canada's coasts and improve marine safety, while coastal communities are somewhat more aware of this (56%). Awareness is up from 2024 among both Indigenous Peoples (up 5 points) and coastal communities (up 7 points).

TABLE 10 – Q4. As far as you know, does the Government of Canada have programs, regulations, and/or activities in place to: *Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)*

% Saying YES	General Population		Coastal Communities		Indigenous Peoples	
	2026	2024	2026	2024	2026	2024
Work closely with Indigenous Peoples and coastal communities to protect Canada's coasts, waterways and ecosystems and improve marine safety	51%	45%	56%	49%	50%	45%

Confidence in Canada's Marine Safety System

Seven in ten (70%) Canadians are at least moderately confident (rated 3, 4 or 5 out of 5) in Canada's marine safety system, with 32% highly confident and 38% saying they are moderately confident. Only 9% don't feel confident. One-fifth (20%) of the public don't have an opinion.

- Manitoba (75%), Quebec (74%), British Columbia (74%), and Alberta (74%) residents are more likely to express at least moderate confidence in Canada's marine safety system. Whereas residents of Atlantic Canada (69%), the territories (66%), and Ontario (66%) are somewhat less confident.

Confidence levels with Canada's marine safety system among Indigenous Peoples (72%) and those living in coastal communities (73%) is at par with the general population. Smaller coastal communities (78%) are more likely to be confident in Canada's marine safety system than mid-sized (73%) and larger (71%) coastal communities.

Confidence levels are maintained in 2026 compared to 2024. These levels are similar to levels seen in 2020 and 2018 after dropping in 2022.

TABLE 11 – Q3A. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all confident” and 5 is “very confident”, how confident are you in Canada's marine safety system? Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)

	Highly Confident (4-5)	Moderately Confident (3)	Not Confident (1-2)	Highly Confident (4-5)			
	2026			2024	2022	2020	2018
General Population	32%	38%	9%	30%	22%	29%	29%
Coastal Communities	35%	38%	8%	35%	25%	32%	29%
Indigenous Peoples	29%	43%	11%	28%	18%	22%	28%

The majority of those who are confident in Canada's marine safety system are unable to explain exactly why they feel that way. Those able to explain why, are equally likely to point to their confidence in Canada's response capabilities and the regulatory framework.

TABLE 12 – Q3B1. Why specifically do you feel this way? Open-ended Question. Base: General Population who rated 4 or 5 for Confidence in Canada's marine safety system (N=949).

Knowledgeable, has resources (staff, equipment)	18%
Canada has laws, policies, regulations in place, is proactive	17%
Generally heard positive comments in media or news, or have not heard of any incidents	11%
No reason in particular/ Don't know	54%

Responses with similar context or themes are grouped into a common theme. Responses less than 5% are not shown.

Similarly, the majority (53%) of those who are not confident cannot articulate why they feel that way. However, some feel that the marine safety system is not managed properly, stricter regulations and enforcements are needed, and that there are too many old boats, tankers and obstructions in the waterways. Very few point to specific incidents.

TABLE 13 – Q3B2. Why specifically do you feel this way? Open-ended Question. Base: General Population who rated 1 or 2 for Confidence in Canada's marine safety system (N=328).

Not managed properly, does not seem to be a priority, more enforcement & surveillance is needed, too many old boats, tankers, and obstruction in waterways	21%
Inadequate response, too slow to react, negative incidents have been happening (e.g., fires, accidents, spills, etc.)	6%
Need more resources (e.g., staff and equipment)	4%
Don't have enough information	14%
No reason in particular/ Don't know	53%

Responses with similar context or themes are grouped into a common theme. Responses less than 3% are not shown.

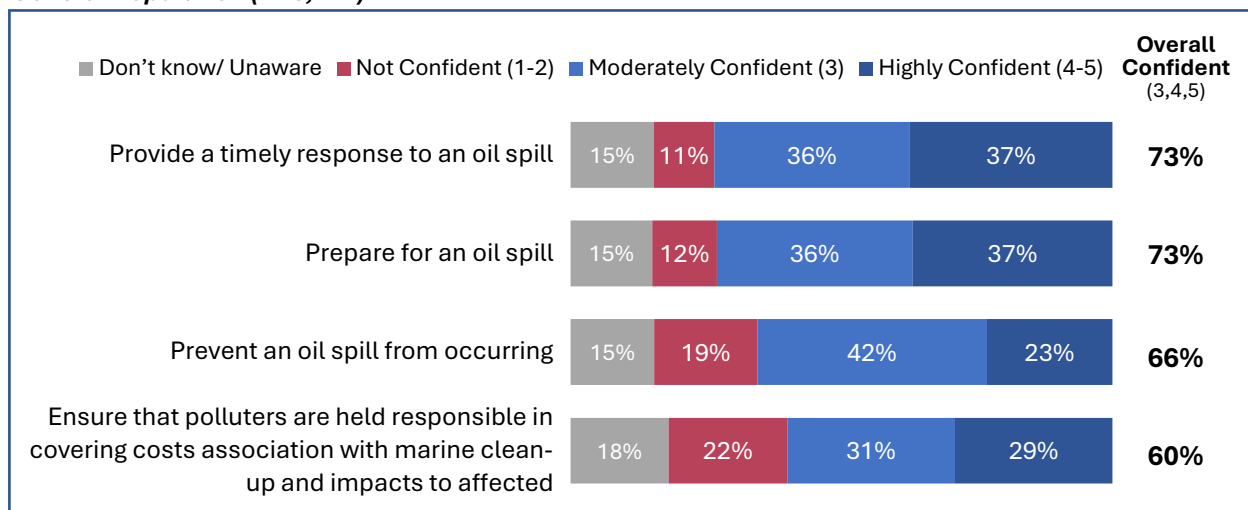
Confidence in Canada's Marine Oil Spill Response System

The majority of Canadians express at least moderate confidence (rated 3, 4, or 5 out of 5) in Canada's marine oil spill response system. Approximately seven in ten are moderately confident in the system's ability to prepare for (73%) and respond in a timely manner (73%) to an oil spill. Two thirds (66%) feel confident about the system's capacity to prevent oil spills, and six in ten (60%) are confident polluters will be held accountable for covering cleanup costs and other impacts. Over one in three are highly confident (rated 4 or 5) in the system's readiness to respond promptly (37%) and prepare for (37%) an oil spill, however high confidence is lower when it comes to ensuring polluters are held accountable (29%) and preventing an oil spill from occurring (23%).

- Across provinces, large majorities express overall confidence for all four elements of the response system. In the territories, while residents are confident about Canada preparing for an oil spill (76%), they are less confident when it comes to timely response to the spill (63%), preventing an oil spill (52%), and have very low confidence that polluters will be held responsible for their actions (36%). Likewise, British Columbians express lower confidence on oil spill prevention (58%) and ensuring polluters are held responsible (56%).

Confidence in preventing an oil spill is somewhat higher this year compared to 2024, whereas confidence levels across other parameters remain nearly unchanged. High confidence in the response system's ability to provide a timely response for an oil spill in 2026 (37%) is similar to levels observed in 2020 and 2018 (37% in both years), after dropping somewhat in 2022 and 2024 (30%; 32% respectively).

CHART 1 – Q11. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all confident” and 5 is “very confident”, how confident are you that Canada's Marine Oil Spill Response System can do each of the following? Base: General Population (N=3,144)



Similar to the public, coastal communities (60% to 76%) and Indigenous Peoples (61% to 71%) express at least a moderate level of confidence in the capabilities of the marine oil spill response system. Indigenous People residing in coastal communities (69% to 78%) are more confident with the system's ability overall compared to non-coastal communities (60% to 70%).

TABLE 14 – Q11. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all confident” and 5 is “very confident”, how confident are you that Canada's Marine Oil Spill Response System can do each of the following? Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)

Overall Confidence (3, 4, 5)	General Population		Coastal Communities		Indigenous Peoples	
	2026	2024	2026	2024	2026	2024
Provide a timely response to an oil spill	73%	72%	76%	75%	69%	70%
Prepare for an oil spill	73%	72%	76%	74%	71%	71%
Prevent an oil spill from occurring	66%	59%	64%	57%	63%	58%
Ensure that polluters are held responsible in covering costs associated with marine clean-up and impacts to affected	60%	59%	60%	58%	61%	60%

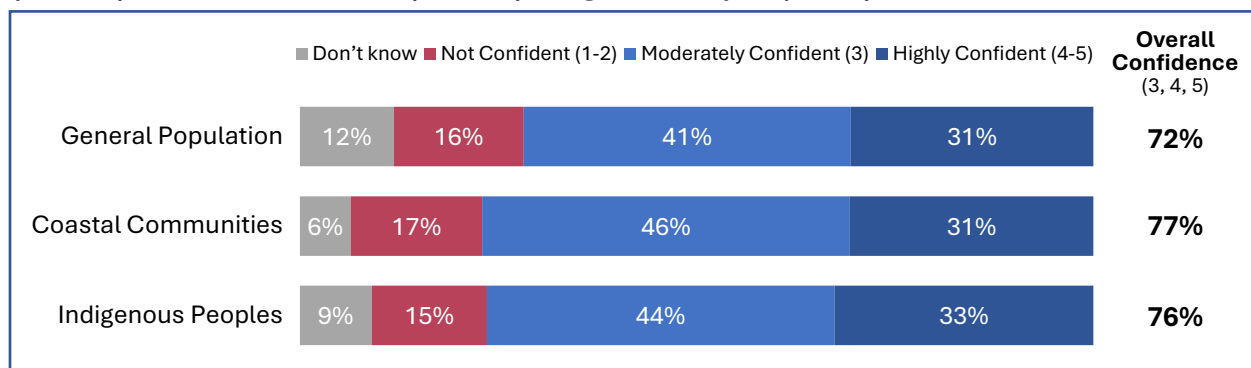
Confidence in Canada's Marine Habitat and Species Protection

Seven in ten (72%) Canadians are at least moderately confident (rated 3, 4 or 5 out of 5) about the protection of marine habitats and species in Canada. This includes one in three (31%) who express high confidence (rated 4 or 5) and 41% who express moderate confidence (rated 3).

- Confidence about the protection of marine habitats and species is high and nearly equal across provinces. That said, high confidence is notably the lowest in the territories (16%).

Coastal community residents (77%) are more likely to feel modestly confident about Canada protecting marine habitat and species than non-coastal communities (69%). 76% of Indigenous Peoples express confidence in Canada's ability to protect its marine habitat and species, slightly higher than confidence levels expressed by the public. Overall confidence among Indigenous coastal communities is only slightly higher than non-coastal communities (81% vs. 76%).

CHART 2 – Q3C. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all confident” and 5 is “very confident”, how confident are you that marine habitats and species are protected in Canada? Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)



Compared to 2024, the overall confidence level among the general population is slightly higher this year, while confidence levels among Indigenous Peoples show an even larger increase.

TABLE 15 – Q3C. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all confident” and 5 is “very confident”, how confident are you that marine habitats and species are protected in Canada? Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)

	Overall Confidence (3, 4, 5)		Highly Confident (4-5)	
	2026	2024	2026	2024
General Population	72%	68%	31%	26%
Coastal Communities	77%	76%	31%	35%
Indigenous Peoples	76%	65%	33%	28%

2. Perceptions of the Oceans Protection Plan

Awareness of the Oceans Protection Plan

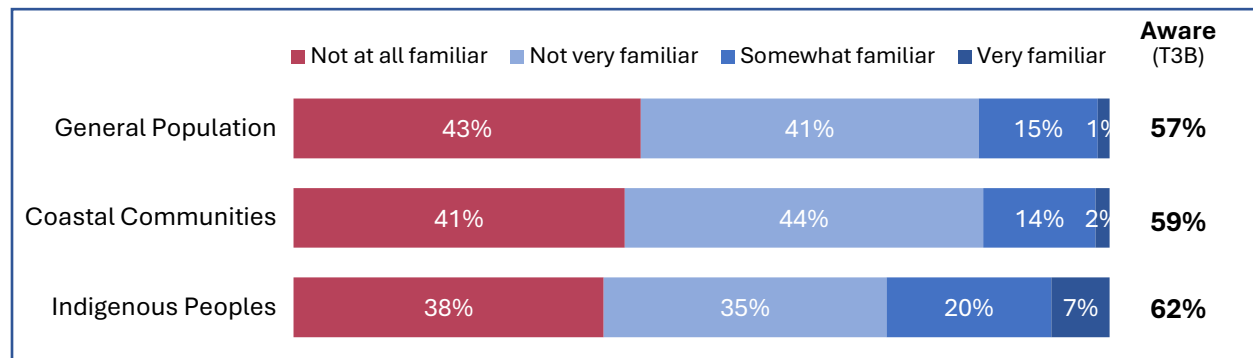
A small majority (57%) of Canadians report some degree of awareness with the Government of Canada's Oceans Protection Plan, though just 16% say they are very or somewhat familiar with the Oceans Protection Plan.

- Notably, residents of the territories are less likely to be aware of the Plan (41%).
- Canadians aged 18-34 report higher awareness of the Oceans Protection Plan (67%).

Coastal communities (59%) show a similar level of awareness and familiarity as the general population and non-coastal communities (57%). Although Indigenous Peoples report only slightly higher levels of awareness (62%) of the Oceans Protection Plan than the public, they are relatively much more familiar (27%) with the plan. Familiarity levels rise further to 45% among Indigenous Peoples living in coastal areas.

CHART 3 – Q5. How familiar are you with the Government of Canada's Oceans Protection Plan?

Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)



Awareness and familiarity with the Oceans Protection Plan are both up 4 points since 2024. Prior to 2024, respondents were asked if they had seen, read, or heard about the Oceans Protection Plan, thus we cannot do a direct comparison. Awareness of the plan amongst coastal communities is the same as seen in 2024, whereas awareness and familiarity amongst Indigenous Peoples increased 9 points.

Notably, those who are familiar with the Oceans Protection Plan are much more likely to express a higher degree of confidence in Canada's marine safety system (93% overall confident; 62% high confidence). Those who are not very familiar (79%; 34%) are still modestly confident, whereas those who are completely unfamiliar express much lower confidence (53%; 20%). Likewise, familiarity with the plan drives higher confidence in marine habitats and species being protected in Canada and for Canada's marine oil response system.

TABLE 16 – Q5. How familiar are you with the Government of Canada's Oceans Protection Plan?**Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)**

	Aware (Very/somewhat/not very)		Familiar (Very/somewhat)	
	2026	2024	2026	2024
General Population	57%	53%	16%	12%
Coastal Communities	59%	60%	16%	16%
Indigenous Peoples	62%	53%	27%	18%

Among those who are aware of the Oceans Protection Plan, one in ten (11%) have seen, read or heard something about the plan in the past year – this translates to only 7% of the general Canadian population that have heard something about the Oceans Protection Plan.

Although overall awareness of the plan is up from 2024, recall of hearing something about the plan in the past year is unchanged from 2024.

Indigenous Peoples (22%) are twice as likely to say they have read or seen something about the plan compared to the public. This figure rises to 37% among Indigenous Peoples who live in coastal regions.

- 15% in Ontario, 14% in Atlantic Canada, and 13% in British Columbia have heard about the plan in the past year.
- In line with awareness of the plan, 18-34 year olds (17%) are more likely to say they have read or heard something about the plan than those 35 and older (6% to 12%).

TABLE 17 – Q6: Have you seen, read or heard anything within the past year about the Government of Canada's Oceans Protection Plan? Base (Those who are very, somewhat or not very familiar with Oceans Protection Plan): General Population (N=1,779); Coastal Communities (N=934); Indigenous Peoples (N=357)

	2024	2026		
	Yes	Yes	No	Unsure
General Population	11%	11%	71%	17%
Coastal Communities	15%	13%	68%	19%
Indigenous Peoples	22%	22%	60%	17%

Those who report hearing, reading, or seeing something about the Oceans Protection Plan are most likely to have heard about protecting marine life and habitats (18%), increased protection of the waterways, oceans, and coastlines (11%) and improving marine shipping safety (11%). Notably, a large number (44%) cannot pinpoint specifics of what they heard regarding the plan.

TABLE 18 – Q7: What do you recall seeing, reading, or hearing about the Oceans Protection Plan? Open-ended Question. Base (Those who recall hearing, reading, or seeing anything about the Oceans Protection Plan in the past year): General Population (N=248); Coastal Communities (N=144); Indigenous Peoples (N=76)

	General Population	Coastal Communities	Indigenous Peoples
Protecting marine life and habitat (e.g., marine parks, setting aside areas for habitat protection, environmental protections)	18%	19%	10%
Increased protection of waterways, oceans, coastlines	11%	14%	12%
Improving marine shipping safety	11%	14%	3%
Increased investments in new projects and programs	7%	5%	23%
Improving oil spill prevention and response (e.g., new vessels/equipment to manage oil spills)	6%	10%	2%
New, stronger rules, regulations, laws	5%	5%	10%
Collaboration with Indigenous Peoples	5%	9%	1%
Debate on oil tankers on the west coast (regarding pipeline)	2%	3%	4%
Can't recall/ Don't know	44%	42%	32%

Responses with similar context or themes are grouped into a common theme.

Those who report recalling something about the Oceans Protection Plan learned about it primarily through television (41%), social media (35%), and newspapers (32%). While TV and newspapers have been the main sources of information about the Oceans Protection Plan in the previous years, social media has increased as a source compared to 2024 (27%).

- 18-34 year olds are more likely to have heard information about the Oceans Protection Plan via TV (43%), newspapers (34%), and social media (31%). 35-49 year olds are most likely to say social media was their main source of information (45%), followed by YouTube (37%). Those 50 and above are more likely to mention television as their main source (43% among 50-64 year olds and 58% among 65+).

TABLE 19 – Q8. Where do you recall seeing, reading, or hearing about Canada's Oceans Protection Plan? Select all that apply. Base (Those who recall hearing, reading, or seeing anything about Oceans Protection Plan in the past year): General Population (N=248); Coastal Communities (N=144); Indigenous Peoples (N=76)

	General Population	Coastal Communities	Indigenous Peoples
Television	41%	38%	57%
Social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.)	35%	35%	55%
Newspapers (print or online)	32%	48%	32%
Radio	25%	23%	27%

YouTube	20%	19%	17%
Transport Canada or other GoC website	10%	14%	11%
Neighbourhood or community newspapers	10%	16%	15%
Word of mouth (through a friend, family, acquaintance)	10%	13%	14%
Mail from the Government of Canada	10%	19%	5%
Magazines (print or online)	9%	7%	25%
Podcast	8%	11%	10%
Social media influencer	5%	7%	6%
Don't remember	1%	2%	0%

The Oceans Protection Plan is not associated with a single attribute. Among those who recall hearing about the Oceans Protection Plan in the past year, 23% associate it with all initiatives tested, meaning each individual initiative is associated with the plan by between 44% to 58% of respondents.

The measures most associated with the plan are protecting and restoring aquatic habitats in marine and coastal areas, ensuring that polluters are held responsible for marine clean ups, and reducing the impacts of marine shipping on Canada's marine ecosystem.

TABLE 20 – Q21. Which, if any, of the following initiatives do you associate with the Oceans Protection Plan? Select all that apply. Base (Those who recall hearing, reading, or seeing anything about Oceans Protection Plan in the past year): General Population (N=248); Coastal Communities (N=144); Indigenous Peoples (N=76)

	General Population	Coastal Communities	Indigenous Peoples
Protecting and restoring aquatic habitats in marine and coastal areas	35%	40%	22%
Ensuring polluters are held responsible for marine environment clean-up of hazardous and damaging spills	34%	37%	27%
Reducing impacts of marine shipping on Canada's marine ecosystems and species, including threatened or endangered whales	32%	44%	27%
Including more meaningful participation from Canadians, Indigenous Peoples, and coastal communities in initiatives to improve marine safety	29%	35%	16%
Improving marine safety in the Arctic	26%	37%	30%
Investing in and taking on scientific research to support evidence-based decisions for marine safety	26%	28%	29%
Creating economic opportunities for communities near Canada's coasts and waterways	24%	29%	20%
Improving response times and actions for spills and incidents	24%	34%	12%

Maintaining the reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain	22%	25%	27%
Addressing and removing wrecked and abandoned vessels	21%	32%	18%
All of the above	23%	19%	29%
None of the above/ Don't know	2%	1%	1%

Importance of the Oceans Protection Plan

Overall, the different aspects of the Oceans Protection Plan are considered as important (rated 4 or 5 out of 5) by the majority of Canadians. Response to and management of oil spill incidents such as ensuring polluters are held responsible to clean up hazardous spills (79%) and improving response times and actions for such incidents (78%) are considered most important. Given awareness of oil spill response is relatively low, this is an aspect of the plan that would benefit from added attention.

Two in three (68%) Canadians agree that improving marine safety in the Arctic is important, but this figure rises to 85% in the territories, making it the second most important aspect of the plan there (behind only ensuring polluters pay), and to 77% among Indigenous Peoples.

Six in ten (61%) agree including more meaningful participation from Canadians, Indigenous Peoples, and coastal communities is important. This figure is barely higher among coastal communities (64%) but rises to 77% among those who identify as Indigenous.

Compared to 2024, importance assigned to these aspects of the Oceans Protection Plan is nearly the same. There is a small increase in the share of Indigenous Peoples placing importance on Arctic marine safety (up 5 points) and including more voices in making decisions on marine safety (up 5 points).

TABLE 21 – Q9. The following are some aspects of the Government of Canada's Oceans Protection Plan. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is "not at all important" and 5 is "very important", how important are each of following aspects to you? Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)

Important (4-5)	General Population		Coastal Communities		Indigenous Peoples	
	2026	2024	2026	2024	2026	2024
Ensuring polluters are held responsible for marine environment clean-up of hazardous and damaging spills	79%	81%	85%	86%	83%	84%
Improving response times and actions for spills and incidents	78%	78%	81%	82%	82%	79%
Reducing impacts of marine shipping on Canada's marine ecosystems and species, including threatened or endangered whales	73%	73%	77%	75%	78%	76%

Protecting and restoring aquatic habitats in marine and coastal areas	73%	75%	77%	79%	78%	79%
Addressing and removing wrecked and abandoned vessels	51%	50%	54%	54%	54%	55%
Improving marine safety in the Arctic	68%	67%	70%	71%	77%	72%
Investing in and taking on scientific research to support evidence-based decisions for marine safety	68%	66%	74%	72%	71%	67%
Including more meaningful participation from Canadians, Indigenous Peoples, and coastal communities in initiatives to improve marine safety	61%	61%	64%	64%	77%	72%
Maintaining the reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain	73%	72%	75%	78%	71%	74%
Creating economic opportunities for communities near Canada's coasts and waterways	62%	61%	63%	63%	66%	65%

In 2024, the statement texts were modified, thus the data cannot be tracked exactly with 2020 and 2022.

Impact of the Oceans Protection Plan

Once informed about the Oceans Protection Plan's objectives, 38% to 51% of Canadians perceive very or somewhat positive impacts of the Oceans Protection Plan on various aspects of enhancing marine safety and safeguarding the marine ecosystem. It should be noted that many (36% to 42%) do not know enough to give a rating. Impact of the plan across all objectives is the same as observed in 2024.

The most positive impacts of the Oceans Protection Plan are seen on the protection and restoration of aquatic habitats (51% positive). Close to half also believe there have been positive impacts on improving response times for spills and incidents (49%), ensuring polluters are held accountable for marine environment clean up (48%), reducing impacts of marine shipping on Canada's marine ecosystems and species (47%), and investment in scientific research on marine safety (47%).

Those who are familiar with the Oceans Protection Plan perceive markedly higher positive impacts – between 62% to 73% – of the Oceans Protection Plan across these measures.

- Residents of the territories are less likely to feel the Oceans Protection Plan has had a positive impact on all the aspects tested. In particular, just about a quarter feel there has been a positive impact on addressing wreckages and abandoned vessels (24%), ensuring polluters are held responsible for clean ups (27%), and creating economic opportunities for coastal communities (27%). One in three feel there are positive impacts on maintaining the reliability and strength of the supply chain (30%), protecting and restoring the marine ecosystem (30%), and reducing the impacts on marine shipping (29%).

TABLE 22 – Q10. The Government of Canada launched the Oceans Protection Plan in 2016 and renewed it in 2022. Based on what you may know, what type of impact – if any – do you feel the Oceans Protection Plan has had on the following since its launch? Base: General Population (N=3,144)

General Population	Positive Impact (very/ somewhat)	No Impact	Negative Impact (very/ somewhat)	Don't know/ Unaware
Protecting and restoring aquatic habitats in marine and coastal areas	51%	10%	2%	37%
Reducing impacts of marine shipping on Canada's marine ecosystems and species, including threatened or endangered whales	47%	11%	4%	39%
Addressing and removing wrecked and abandoned vessels	38%	16%	4%	42%
Improving response times and actions for spills and incidents	49%	9%	3%	39%
Ensuring polluters are held responsible for marine environment clean-up of hazardous and damaging spills	48%	13%	3%	36%
Investing in and taking on scientific research to support evidence-based decisions for marine safety	47%	10%	4%	40%
Improving marine safety in the Arctic	46%	10%	3%	40%
Including more meaningful participation from Canadians, Indigenous Peoples, and coastal communities in initiatives to improve marine safety	45%	12%	6%	38%
Maintaining the reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain	45%	11%	4%	40%
Creating economic opportunities for communities near Canada's coasts and waterways	44%	11%	4%	40%

Between two fifths to half of respondents in coastal communities believe the Oceans Protection Plan has had positive impacts on various aspects of marine safety and environmental protection. These perceived positive impacts follow the same trend as seen among the general population.

Indigenous Peoples express views similar to the general population across most aspects. Notably, they are slightly more likely to perceive positive impacts of the plan on including more participation from Canadians, Indigenous Peoples and other coastal communities (52%).

TABLE 23 – Q10. The Government of Canada launched the Oceans Protection Plan in 2016 and renewed it in 2022. Based on what you may know, what type of impact – if any – do you feel the Oceans Protection Plan has had on the following since its launch? Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)

Positive Impact (very/ somewhat)	General Population		Coastal Communities		Indigenous Peoples	
	2026	2024	2026	2024	2026	2024
Protecting and restoring aquatic habitats in marine and coastal areas	51%	50%	52%	52%	51%	54%

Reducing impacts of marine shipping on Canada's marine ecosystems and species, including threatened or endangered whales	47%	47%	46%	52%	47%	52%
Addressing and removing wrecked and abandoned vessels	38%	35%	37%	37%	36%	41%
Improving response times and actions for spills and incidents	49%	46%	48%	48%	50%	48%
Ensuring polluters are held responsible for marine environment clean-up of hazardous and damaging spills	48%	43%	45%	43%	47%	49%
Investing in and taking on scientific research to support evidence-based decisions for marine safety	47%	44%	47%	44%	46%	50%
Improving marine safety in the Arctic	46%	43%	44%	42%	51%	49%
Including more meaningful participation from Canadians, Indigenous Peoples, and coastal communities in initiatives to improve marine safety	45%	43%	45%	46%	52%	52%
Maintaining the reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain	45%	42%	45%	46%	45%	45%
Creating economic opportunities for communities near Canada's coasts and waterways	44%	41%	42%	43%	50%	50%

3. Roles in Protecting, Preserving and Restoring the Marine Environment

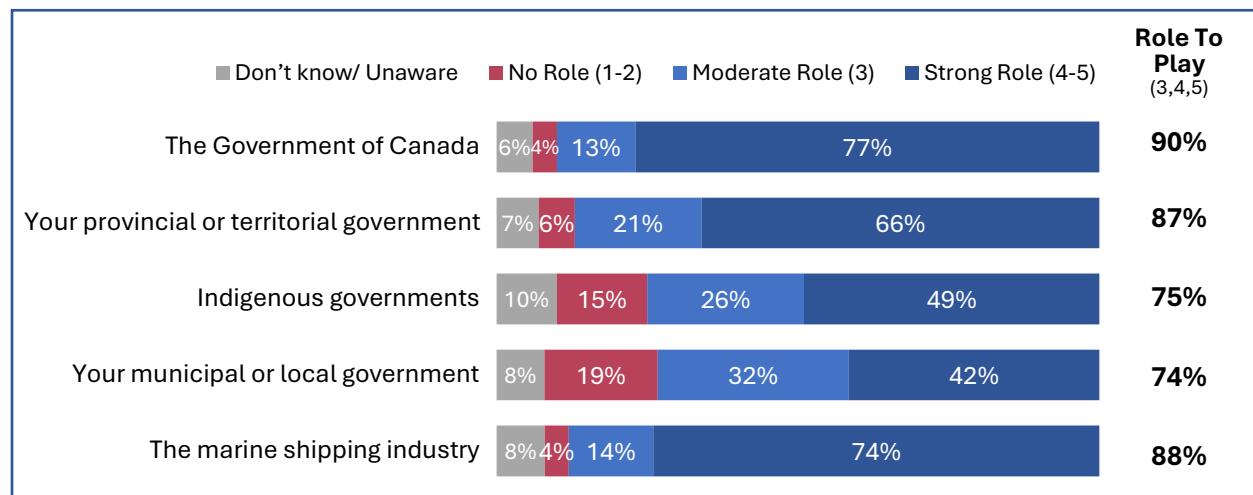
Preferred Roles of Governments and Shipping Industry

Three-quarters (77%) of Canadians believe the Government of Canada should play a significant role (rated 4 or 5 out of 5) in protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment, including six in ten (61%; rated 5 out of 5) who expect the federal government to play a larger and more pivotal role.

Although the federal government is expected to hold the largest role, a majority of Canadians still desire strong involvement from their provincial or territorial government (66%) in protecting the marine ecosystem. Expectations of provincial government involvement is highest in Quebec (77%).

In contrast, only about four in ten (42%) have similar expectations from their municipal or local government. Additionally, a large majority believe that, alongside the federal government, the marine shipping industry should also bear significant responsibility for protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment (74%). Overall, all levels of government (74% to 90%) and the shipping industry (88%) are expected to play at least a moderate role (rated 3, 4 or 5) in marine environmental safety.

CHART 4 – Q12. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “no role at all” and 5 is “a very strong role”, how much of a role do you believe each of the following should have in protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment? Base: General Population (N=3,144)



Half (49%) of the public feel Indigenous governments should also play a role when it comes to protecting and restoring the marine environment. This is notably expressed more strongly by Indigenous Peoples (64%). That said, Indigenous Peoples, similar to the public, believe that the Government of Canada (74%) and marine shipping industry (72%) should be playing the larger roles in protecting, preserving and protecting the marine ecosystem. They also expect moderate roles to be played by their provincial or territorial government (57%), and municipal or local governments (39%), at the same level as the public.

While coastal communities believe the federal government (81%) and shipping industry (76%) should bear the most responsibility, and at marginally higher levels than the public, they are notably more likely to feel their provincial or territorial government (74%) have a larger role to play in protecting and restoring the marine environment.

In 2024, survey respondents were asked about the role to play in *developing marine safety*, whereas in the 2026 this is slightly modified to ask about *protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment*. While this is within the same context, results cannot be tracked exactly but are included in the table for directional comparison.

TABLE 24 – Q12. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “no role at all” and 5 is “a very strong role”, how much of a role do you believe each of the following should have in protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment? General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)

Strong Role to Play (4, 5)	General Population		Coastal Communities		Indigenous Peoples	
	2026	2024	2026	2024	2026	2024
The Government of Canada	77%	76%	81%	81%	74%	75%
Your provincial or territorial government	66%	59%	74%	66%	57%	59%
Indigenous governments	49%	45%	52%	46%	64%	61%
Your municipal or local government	42%	34%	46%	37%	39%	40%
The marine shipping industry	74%	70%	76%	72%	72%	70%

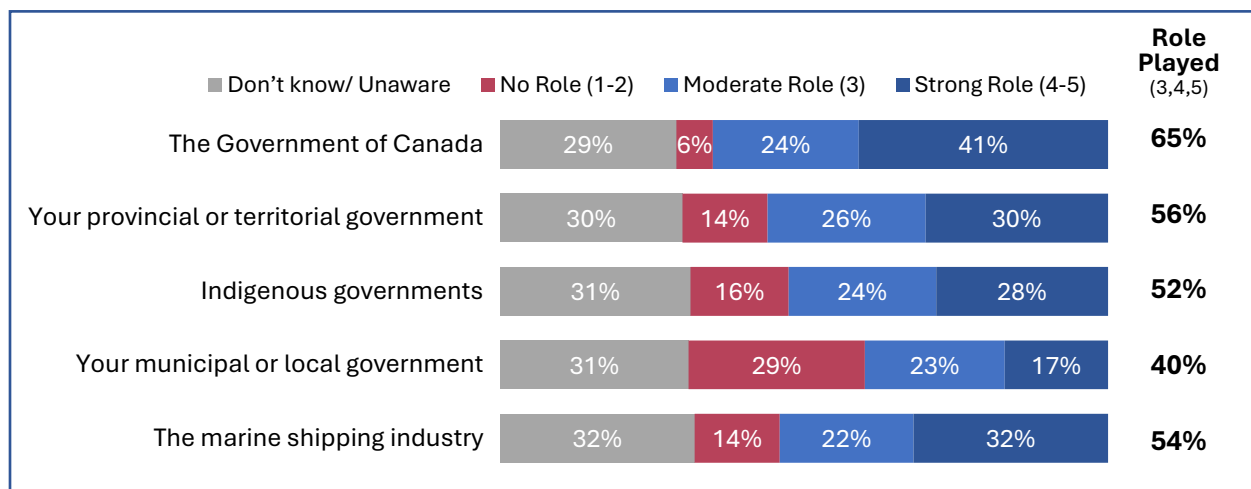
**In 2024, the question asked about role played in “developing marine safety including safe shipping”. In 2026, the question asks about role played in “protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment”. However, as the question is within the same context of marine safety, tracking is shown.*

Perceived Roles Played by Governments and Shipping Industry

Two-fifths (41%) of Canadians believe the Government of Canada has significantly contributed (rated 4 or 5 out of 5) to protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment in recent years. However, this proportion falls significantly short of the 77% who expect them to play a strong role. Similarly, three in ten (30%) Canadians perceive their provincial or territorial governments have played a modest role in protecting the marine environment, whereas twice as many (66%) expect these governments to assume a larger role. The same trend can be seen for municipal governments, Indigenous governments, and the marine shipping industry.

- British Columbians are the most likely to feel their provincial government has contributed significantly to protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment. This is the only region where the provincial government is seen to have done as much as the federal government (37% each).

CHART 5 – Q13. As far as you know, in the past few years, how much of a role have each of the following played in protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment? Please rate on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “no role at all” and 5 is “a very strong role”. General Population (N=3,144).



Coastal communities and Indigenous communities believe the federal, provincial and municipal governments have contributed to the same extent as the general public. That said, Indigenous Peoples feel that Indigenous governments have played a larger role (44%).

The question was slightly modified in 2026 compared to 2024. Thus results cannot be tracked exactly but are included in the table for directional comparison.

TABLE 25 – Q13. As far as you know, in the past few years, how much of a role have each of the following played in protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment? Please rate on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “no role at all” and 5 is “a very strong role”. General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)

Strong Role Played (4, 5)	General Population		Coastal Communities		Indigenous Peoples	
	2026	2024	2026	2024	2026	2024
The Government of Canada	41%	37%	41%	42%	41%	39%
Your provincial or territorial government	30%	23%	31%	26%	27%	25%
Indigenous governments	28%	19%	27%	19%	44%	32%
Your municipal or local government	17%	14%	18%	16%	18%	16%
The marine shipping industry	32%	33%	28%	35%	35%	38%

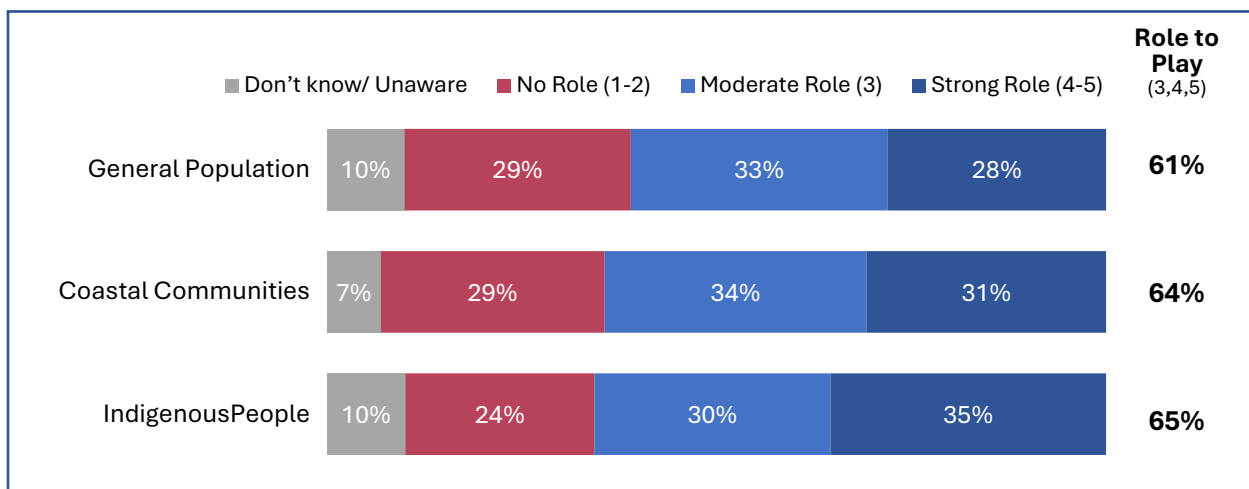
4. Involvement in Canada's Marine Safety System

Perceived Personal Role in Protecting and Restoring the Marine Environment

When it comes to their own personal role in protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment, just over a quarter (28%) of Canadians feel they have a strong role to play (rated 4 or 5 out of 5), with a third (33%) believing they have a moderate role to play (rated 3). That is, overall, at least six in ten (61%) say they have some part to play in marine environmental safety.

Coastal communities (31%) and Indigenous Peoples (35%) are slightly more likely believe they have a strong role to play. That said, Indigenous Peoples living in coastal communities are more likely to feel they have a strong role to play in marine safety (45%).

CHART 6 – Q22A. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “no role at all” and 5 is “a very strong role”, how much of a role do you believe you have to play in protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment? General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)



Those who feel they could play at least a moderate role in protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment believe they could start by being more responsible in following the regulations and restrictions, practice safe fishing and boating, and be more respectful of the environment (38%). In tandem, some would practice better waste management and ensure the environment is kept clean by participating in clean up drives (36%) and reduce and prevent water pollution, including overconsumption (34%). Relatively few believe they could help by choosing sustainable products (9%), supporting conservation organizations (8%), or reporting violations (4%).

Coastal community residents are more likely to practice behaviours that protect the environment, reduce pollution, and keep the environment clean. Indigenous Peoples are more likely to support environmental and conservation organizations.

TABLE 26 – Q22B. What role do you feel you could play in protecting, preserving, and restoring the marine environment? Open-ended Question. Base (Those who feel they play at least moderate role in): General Population (N=1137); Coastal Communities (N=616); Indigenous Peoples (N=244)

	General Population	Coastal Communities	Indigenous Peoples
Be more responsible and mindful of the environment, follow rules and restrictions, practice safe fishing and other marine activities, increase awareness, get educated, and share more information	38%	43%	38%
Practice better waste management (recycle, compost, not litter), participate in clean up drives, and ensure to keep the environment and surroundings trash-free	36%	43%	39%
Reduce water pollution and waste (plastic), reduce overconsumption	34%	32%	26%
Choose sustainable and environmentally friendly products including sustainable seafood, and support ethically sourced products and brands	9%	4%	9%
Support environmental, conservation, marine organizations by volunteering time, donations, signing petitions, and supporting regulations	8%	8%	17%
Report violations, pollution, hazards, illegal activities, oppose harmful industries or projects	4%	5%	2%

Responses with similar context or themes are grouped into a common theme.

Level of Active Involvement in Canada's Marine Safety System

A significant majority of Canadians (79%) say they are not actively involved (rated 1 or 2 out of 5) in Canada's marine safety system. That leaves 21% who are at least somewhat actively involved (rated 3,4 or 5 out of 5), including only 7% who say they are very actively involved (rated 4 or 5).

The lack of engagement by the public on marine safety issues explains the low overall awareness of the marine safety system in Canada, including the Oceans Protection Plan. In contrast, those who are familiar with the Oceans Protection Plan report a significantly greater degree of involvement in Canada's marine safety system (56% at least somewhat actively involved).

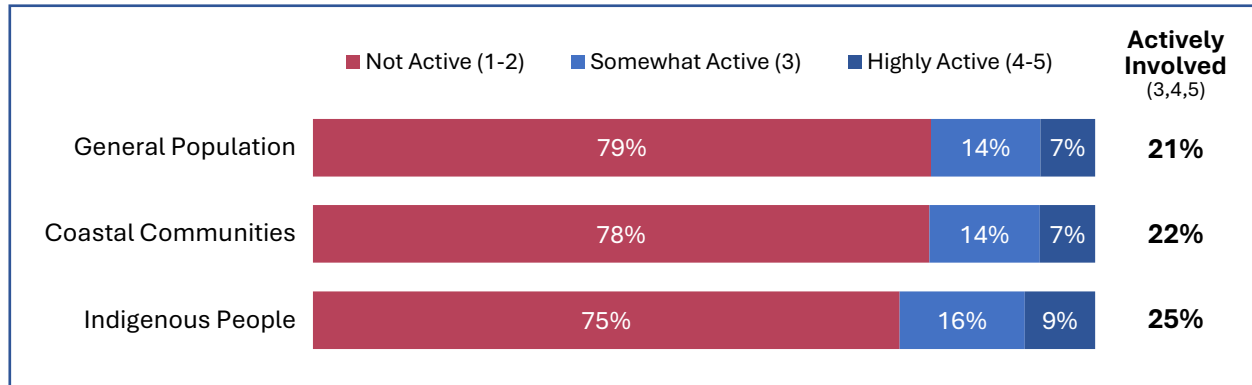
- Younger Canadians – 33% of 18-34 year olds and 24% of 35-49 year olds – are more likely to report being at least somewhat actively involved in Canada's marine safety system compared to 11% to 15% of those 50 and over.
- While at least one in five across provinces say they are somewhat actively involved, only 11% of those in the territories report any active participation.

The level of involvement in Canada's marine safety system is not significantly higher among the coastal communities (22%) and Indigenous Peoples (25%). That said, half (52%) of Indigenous

Peoples living in coastal communities are at least somewhat actively involved in Canada's marine safety system compared to just 20% of those residing in non-coastal Indigenous communities.

The extent of being actively involved is at similar levels as seen in 2024 (19%), though Indigenous involvement is up from 20% in 2024 to 25% now.

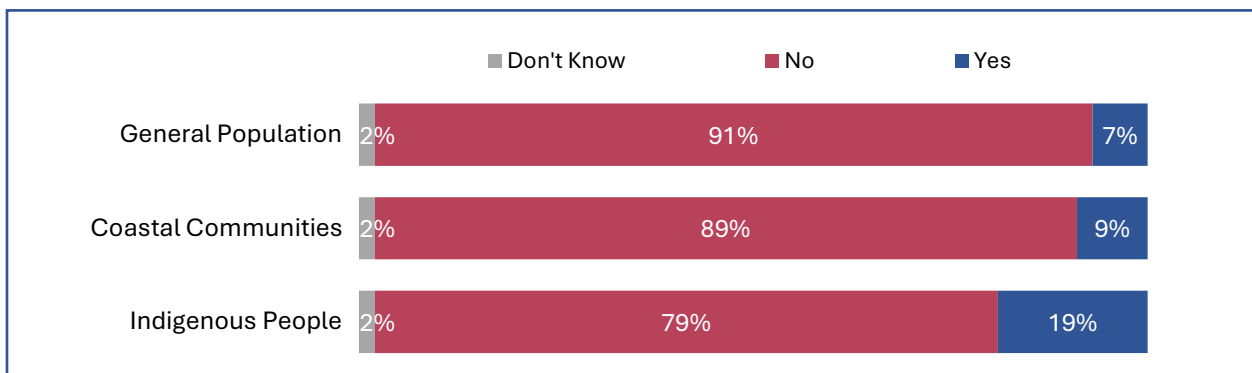
CHART 7 – Q20. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “not active at all” and 5 is “very active”, how would you characterize your level of involvement in Canada's marine safety system? Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)



By the same token, only 7% of Canadians say they have ever worked or volunteered on a project related to protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment. Incidence of working or volunteering is at 9% in coastal areas, 19% among Indigenous Peoples, and 33% among coastal Indigenous Peoples.

- Notably, though fewer residents in the territories say they are somewhat actively involved in Canada's marine safety system, they are much more likely than others to say they have worked or volunteered on projects related to protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment (18%).

CHART 8 – Q23A. Have you ever worked/volunteered on a project related to protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment? Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)



Those who have worked or volunteered on projects to protect, preserve and restore the marine environment mainly do so because of a sense of duty or responsibility (34%) or because they volunteered for organized cleanup efforts (32%). Relatively few do it because it is part of their job (10%), they participate in environmental research (8%), or out of concern for the health of local waterways (8%).

TABLE 27 – Q23B. Why did you work or volunteer on a project related to protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment? Base: General Population (N=246); Coastal Communities (N=163); Indigenous Peoples (N=62)

	General Population	Coastal Communities	Indigenous Peoples
Sense of duty or responsibility	34%	37%	28%
Volunteering for organized cleanup efforts to help clean up beaches, rivers, lakes, and protect marine life and habitat	32%	37%	19%
Part of the job (with government, marine organizations, involvement in oil spill clean ups)	10%	9%	8%
Participation in environmental research	8%	2%	25%
Out of concern for the health of local waterways	8%	6%	2%

Responses with similar context or themes are grouped into a common theme. Responses less than 8% are not shown.

Incidence of Searching for Information on Marine Safety

Over one in ten (12%) Canadians have ever looked for information about marine safety. This is similar to the level reported in 2024 (13%), but lower than the 19% who reported searching for information in 2022, and much lower than the 23% in 2020 and 24% in 2018.

Coastal communities (16%) are more likely than non-coastal communities (10%) to look for information. Interest is even higher among Indigenous Peoples: 23% overall, and 36% among coastal Indigenous. Among Indigenous Peoples, the likelihood to search for information has increased slightly compared to 2024 (18%) but is still behind the 25% to 39% recorded between 2018 and 2022.

TABLE 28 – Q15. Have you ever looked for information about marine safety in Canada? Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)

	2024	2026		
	Yes	Yes	No	Unsure
General Population	13%	12%	83%	4%
Coastal Communities	16%	16%	79%	5%
Indigenous Peoples	18%	23%	74%	3%

Importance of Receiving Information Related to Marine Safety

Though few Canadians have actively searched for information, most report interest in receiving information from the Government of Canada on this topic.

Three-quarters say it is highly important (rated 4 or 5 out of 5) for the government to provide information to the public on incidences of accidents or spills (76%) and on the records of cleaning up the spills (73%). Two-thirds feel it is very important to also let the public know about actions taken to protect and restore aquatic habitats in coastal areas (67%) and about new regulations implemented for the marine safe shipping sector (66%).

- Residents of Quebec and the territories are somewhat more likely to want information on incidents of spills (83% both), their clean up efforts (78%; 82% respectively), and on new regulations for safe shipping (71%; 72% respectively).

Those who are actively involved in Canada's marine safety system are much more likely to feel it is important to receive information about the records of spill clean ups (82%), records of protecting and restoring marine habitats (80%) and new regulations implemented for safe shipping in the marine sector (75%).

Six in ten Canadians say it is highly important for them to know more about how to get involved in protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment (62%), about opportunities for training in marine response for residents in coastal and Indigenous communities (59%) and careers in the marine sector (57%).

- Information about training opportunities in marine response is highly important to residents in the territories (72%), while career opportunities in the marine sector are more important to Atlantic Canada residents (63%).

While Canadians show the same level of interest in receiving this information as seen in 2024, interest still lags behind 2018 to 2022 levels.

TABLE 29 – Q17. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all important” and 5 is “very important”, how important is it for the Government of Canada to provide the public with the following information?

Base: General Population (N=3,144)

General Population	Highly Important (4-5)	Somewhat Important (3)	Not Important (1-2)	Highly Important (4-5)			
	2026			2024	2022	2020	2018
Incidence of accidents/spills	76%	14%	3%	75%	86%	89%	88%
The record of cleaning up spills	73%	17%	4%	74%	83%	88%	85%

The record of protecting and restoring aquatic habitats in marine and coastal areas	67%	21%	5%	69%	-	-	-
Implementation of new regulations to the marine safe shipping sector*	66%	20%	6%	66%	71%	79%	80%
How to get involved in protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment	62%	24%	6%	-	-	-	-
Opportunities for training in marine response for residents in Indigenous and coastal communities*	59%	24%	8%	60%	65%	67%	67%
Opportunities for careers in the marine sector	57%	26%	7%	-	-	-	-

*In 2024, the statement texts were slightly modified. The context remained the same, thus tracking is shown.

Those in coastal communities show a similar desire as the broader public's desire to stay informed on these topics. However, Indigenous Peoples are more likely to find government-provided information on all of these topics important. This is especially the case for opportunities for training in marine response for residents in Indigenous and coastal communities (69%).

TABLE 30 – Q17. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all important” and 5 is “very important”, how important is it for the Government of Canada to provide the public with the following information?

Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)

Highly Important (4-5)	General Population		Coastal Communities		Indigenous Peoples	
	2026	2024	2026	2024	2026	2024
Incidence of accidents/spills	76%	75%	78%	78%	77%	77%
The record of cleaning up spills	73%	74%	75%	75%	79%	78%
The record of protecting and restoring aquatic habitats in marine and coastal areas	67%	69%	67%	71%	74%	70%
Implementation of new regulations to the marine safe shipping sector	66%	66%	65%	67%	70%	69%
How to get involved in protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment	62%	-	61%	-	68%	-
Opportunities for training in marine response for residents in Indigenous and coastal communities	59%	60%	58%	61%	69%	73%
Opportunities for careers in the marine sector	57%	-	57%	-	65%	-

Importance of Providing Input into Decisions about Marine Safety

Though few Canadians currently engage on the topic of marine safety, seven in ten (70%) feel it is at least somewhat important (rated 3, 4 or 5 out of 5) for them to provide input and feedback on government decisions related to marine safety, emergency responses and environmental protection in their area. This includes a smaller 37% who feel it is essential (rated 4 or 5). The perceived importance of providing input is down across the board this wave.

Coastal community residents express similar levels of importance on being included in decisions as the public (73%), while Indigenous Peoples (79%) and especially coastal Indigenous Peoples (87%) place a higher importance on this. Over half (53%) of coastal Indigenous Peoples say this is essential, significantly higher than the general population (37%).

Canadians who report being more actively involved in Canada's marine safety system are more likely to feel that being included and providing input on these decisions is important to them (79%).

CHART 9 – Q14. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all important” and 5 is “very important”, how important is it to you to have input into or feedback on decisions the Government of Canada makes about marine safety including safe shipping practices and emergency response, and environmental protection in your area? Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous People (N=600)

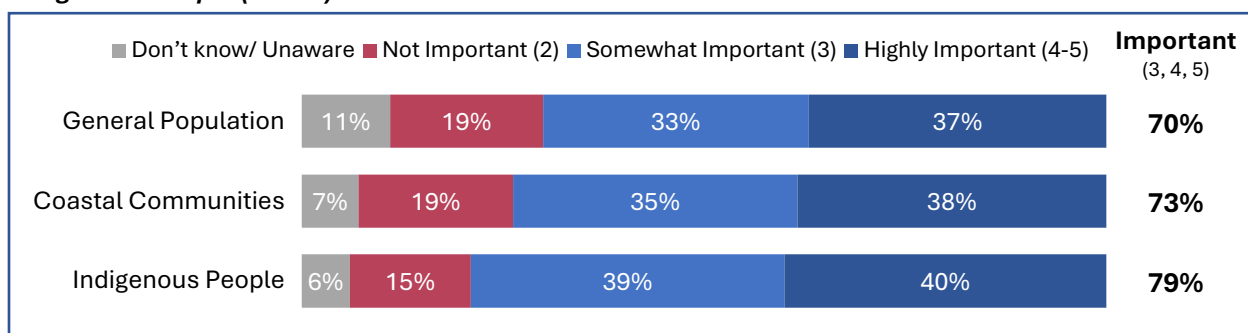


TABLE 31 – Q14. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all important” and 5 is “very important”, how important is it to you to have input into or feedback on decisions the Government of Canada makes about marine safety including safe shipping practices and emergency response, and environmental protection in your area? Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous People (N=600)

	Important (3, 4, 5)		Highly Important (4-5)	
	2026	2024	2026	2024
General Population	70%	73%	37%	41%
Coastal Communities	73%	76%	38%	44%
Indigenous Peoples	79%	81%	40%	54%

5. Sources of Information about Government of Canada's (GoC) Programs & Initiatives on Marine Safety

The public, coastal communities, and Indigenous Peoples identify several sources they would prefer to use when searching for information about the Government of Canada's programs.

- **Internet Search and Government Websites:** The majority of respondents across all groups (75% general population; 78% coastal communities; 76% Indigenous Peoples) prefer searching the internet, with a significant portion also relying on Government of Canada websites (42% general population; 50% coastal communities; 43% Indigenous Peoples). There continues to be a notable decline in the use of Government of Canada websites since 2020; dropping further in 2026 compared to 2024 (49% general population; 58% coastal communities; 46% Indigenous Peoples).
- **Non-Government Organizations:** Fewer respondents (15%) use relevant non-government organizations for information, though this is a more popular source among Indigenous Peoples (21%).
- **Social Media:** 15% mention social media as a source of information, with consistent usage levels since 2018. Indigenous communities (20%), and in particular the coastal Indigenous communities (27%) are more likely to use social media.
- **Industry Contacts:** There's a declining trend in seeking information from individuals working in the marine transportation and shipping sectors – about one in ten (14%; 11% respectively) say they will approach these individuals compared to two in ten as seen in previous years. Coastal Indigenous communities are slightly more likely to prefer interacting with individuals in the local marine transportation and safety sector (23%).
- A few say they will visit the **GoC office** (13%) or call **1-800 O Canada** (6%).
- Older Canadians are more likely to use government websites, while social media is more popular among younger demographics.
- Residents in the territories are much more likely to search the internet and the Government of Canada website, and access non-government organizations to learn about government programs and initiatives than other provinces. Atlantic Canadians and those in territories are more likely to ask someone working in the local marine transportation and safety sector.

These findings indicate the evolving preferences of Canadians in seeking information about government initiatives related to marine safety, with internet searches remaining dominant but with fluctuations in other sources such as government websites and non-profit organizations.

TABLE 32 – Q16. Where would you look for information if you wanted to learn more about Government of Canada programs and initiatives to protect Canada's coasts and waterways? Select all that apply.

Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)

	General Population	Coastal Communities	Indigenous Peoples
Internet search (e.g., Google)	75%	78%	76%
Transport Canada or other Government of Canada websites	42%	50%	43%
Relevant Non-Government Organization (e.g., environmental NGO)	15%	17%	21%
Social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Reddit)	15%	13%	20%
Someone working in local marine transportation and safety sector	14%	16%	17%
Visit Government of Canada office	13%	11%	13%
Someone working in the shipping industry	11%	12%	15%
My friends, family, or acquaintances	10%	10%	16%
Call 1-800 O Canada	6%	5%	8%
Don't know / Not interested in learning more about these programs	11%	9%	10%

6. Participation in Engagement Sessions

Few Canadians actively search for information or are involved with marine safety. Consistent with these findings, even fewer Canadians (3%) report participating in engagement sessions on marine safety or the Oceans Protection Plan. These results are consistent with previous years.

Indigenous Peoples (9%) are more likely to say they have participated in an engagement session, with those living in coastal areas more likely to have attended a session (15%).

TABLE 33 – Q18. Have you ever participated in an engagement session (e.g., a consultation or town hall) about marine safety, environmental protection or the Oceans Protection Plan? Base: General Population (N=3,144); Coastal Communities (N=1,540); Indigenous Peoples (N=600)

	2024	2026		
	Yes	Yes	No	Unsure
General Population	4%	3%	95%	2%
Coastal Communities	5%	4%	95%	1%
Indigenous Peoples	5%	9%	89%	2%

Most of those who participated in engagement sessions say they were organized by their provincial government (34%) and the Government of Canada (32%). Some mention other organizers like their local government (26%), environmental groups (24%) and the marine shipping industry (18%).

Indigenous Peoples are significantly more likely to report the sessions being organized by the Government of Canada (50%).

TABLE 34 – Q19: Who was this session organized by? Base: General Population (N=123); Coastal Communities (N=76); Indigenous Peoples (N=51)

	General Population	Coastal Communities	Indigenous Peoples
Provincial or Territorial Government	34%	32%	14%
The Government of Canada	32%	21%	50%
Municipal or local governments	26%	26%	36%
Environmental groups	24%	28%	18%
The marine shipping industry	18%	23%	14%
Indigenous governments	10%	8%	24%
Don't know	7%	5%	0%

B. Findings from the Qualitative Research

The following section contains detailed analysis of the qualitative findings of this research project. The findings are based on a total of 48 in-depth interviews: 26 with Indigenous Partners and 22 with Marine stakeholders.

It is divided into 3 sub-sections:

1. Findings from Indigenous Partner Interviews

This section presents Indigenous perspectives on marine safety and the Oceans Protection Plan, emphasizing marine spaces as governed territories with intergenerational responsibilities.

2. Findings from Marine Stakeholder Interviews

This section presents the Marine Stakeholders' perspectives, focusing on operational resilience, system integrity, and regulatory coherence.

3. Key Findings and Conclusion

This section brings together findings from the Indigenous Partner and Marine Stakeholder interviews to offer recommendations.

1. Findings from Indigenous Partners Interviews

The following section contains analysis of the qualitative findings from interviews with Indigenous partners for this research project. It is divided into 5 sub-sections:

- A. Introduction
- B. Views on Oceans and Marine Safety
- C. Awareness and Understanding of the Oceans Protection Plan
- D. Governance Architecture and Structural Evolution
- E. Comparison Analysis – Current Findings and 2024 Findings

A. Introduction

Indigenous participants consistently framed Canada's oceans and waterways not as policy domains, transportation corridors, or economic inputs, but as living systems that sustain culture, governance, identity, economy, and survival. Across all regions, water was described as "*foundational to continuity*". It is the connective tissue between past and future, between livelihood and identity, between land and law.

The Oceans Protection Plan touches each Indigenous community differently. In some regions, it has catalyzed operational change. In others, it has strengthened dialogue but left structural authority unchanged. Across all regions, it has exposed underlying tensions between federal program logic and Indigenous territorial permanence. This report expands each theme substantially, integrating regional case examples and operational realities to provide a fuller institutional picture.

B. Views on Oceans and Marine Safety

Across every interview, participants rejected the idea of oceans as empty corridors. Water is not a backdrop. It is infrastructure, livelihood, memory, law, and obligation. Indigenous Peoples recognize the importance of marine safety. One Ontario interviewee was emotional, discussing two community members who had died in preventable marine accidents.

West Coast: Marine Territory as Living Governance

On the West Coast, participants described territories where commercial shipping lanes intersect with salmon migration corridors, shellfish harvesting areas, and marine mammal habitats. One Indigenous partner described converting a former industrial site into a permanent marine stewardship and guardian base. Once an extractive infrastructure, it now houses environmental monitoring equipment, youth training programs, and coordination hubs for spill preparedness and wildlife observation. The site functions as a visible expression of territorial authority.

Here, marine governance is not theoretical, it is physically present. Teams patrol, monitor, record vessel traffic, and liaise with federal agencies. Indigenous partners emphasized that shipping expansion discussions cannot be divorced from historical experience. Past resource extraction conflicts shape present-day risk tolerance. Marine safety conversations are embedded within broader territorial governance histories.

Atlantic Canada: Fleet-Based Economies and Institutional Interdependence

In Atlantic regions, marine governance is deeply integrated into economic infrastructure. Community-owned fleets of seventy or more vessels operate within carefully structured seasonal cycles. These fleets support mechanical yards, electronic repair shops, dock infrastructure, fuel supply networks, and administrative systems. Marine safety regulations directly influence community revenue stability. Inspection timelines, safety certification requirements, and compliance costs are not abstract matters; they determine operational viability.

Indigenous participants emphasize that marine governance decisions ripple outward. When federal inspection regimes change, they affect employment. When safety standards tighten without consultation, they alter planning horizons. Here, marine safety is inseparable from economic autonomy.

St. Lawrence / Quebec: Maritime Risk and Emergency Systems

Along Quebec's St. Lawrence River, participants described an increasingly complex maritime environment involving commercial vessel traffic, recreational boating, flood risks, and shoreline erosion. For example, one community formally revised its emergency measures plan to incorporate maritime spill response and vessel incident protocols. Previously focused on land-based emergencies, the revised framework integrates marine risk explicitly. This integration was described as transformative rather than incremental.

Maritime coordination meetings now occur regularly, linking community officials with federal representatives. Simulation exercises include Indigenous mapping data and territorial knowledge. Marine safety has become embedded in governance infrastructure.

Great Lakes: Ecological Sensitivity and Regional Variation

In the Great Lakes region, partners emphasized recreational vessel density, invasive species risk, shoreline erosion, and cross-border shipping. While tanker traffic intensity differs from coastal zones, ecological vulnerability remains high. Participants stressed that marine safety frameworks must reflect regional ecological realities rather than apply uniform coastal assumptions. The Great Lakes case illustrates that marine governance is not monolithic. Regional adaptation is necessary.

Northern Territories: Emerging Arctic Pressures

Participants from the territories identified potential governance gaps in Arctic integration. Climate change is increasing shipping opportunities in northern waters, yet governance structures differ significantly in Inuit regions. Ensuring that the Oceans Protection Plan frameworks meaningfully

integrate northern Indigenous governance systems will be critical as Arctic shipping expands. Failure to adapt could replicate southern structural misalignments in new geographies.

Government Roles: Partner, Regulator, and Structural Constraint

Across interviews, assessments of federal engagement were nuanced, rather than polarized. Participants did not frame federal departments uniformly as adversarial or ineffective. In fact, Transport Canada, in particular, was frequently described as comparatively proactive, accessible, responsive and open to dialogue. In multiple regions, Indigenous partners positively cite structured roundtables, technical working groups, and periodic engagement sessions. In some communities, named liaison officers have also built ongoing working relationships, resulting in communication clarity and friction reduction.

For example:

- **In Quebec** along the St. Lawrence, bi-weekly coordination meetings between community maritime coordinators and federal representatives were described as strengthening operational readiness and clarifying regulatory requirements.
- **On the West Coast**, Transport Canada officials participated in simulation exercises incorporating Indigenous territorial mapping, signaling willingness to integrate Indigenous spatial knowledge into emergency response planning.
- **In Atlantic Canada**, regulatory briefings and inspection discussions were described as clearer and more predictable than in earlier periods.

These examples demonstrate incremental progress in relationship-building. However, participants consistently note that Transport Canada operates within institutional constraints. Even when Transport Canada officials are personally engaged, they are often limited in terms of their ability to implement changes sought by Indigenous partners.

Staff Turnover and Institutional Memory

One of the most frequently cited concerns across regions was staff turnover. Relationship continuity matters deeply in Indigenous governance contexts. Trust is relational and cumulative. When officials change frequently, institutional memory resets. Indigenous participants described the recurring burden of re-explaining territorial context, historical conflict, cumulative impacts, and local priorities to new representatives. This repetition imposes emotional and administrative costs.

Staff turnover weakens not only trust but also efficiency. Agreements negotiated over months may require re-briefing when personnel shift. Participants emphasize that continuity is as important as program design.

Interdepartmental Fragmentation

Indigenous participants describe improvements in cross-departmental forums but emphasize that coordination remains uneven and personality-dependent rather than structurally embedded.

In one West Coast case, it was noted that Transport Canada engagement was strong, but Fisheries and Oceans consultation processes operated on separate timelines. In Atlantic Canada, inspection regimes intersected with environmental licensing processes without consistent coordination. In Quebec, environmental monitoring discussions did not always align with marine transportation discussions.

This fragmentation places coordination burdens on Indigenous communities, who must navigate multiple federal channels simultaneously. Participants repeatedly stressed that marine safety cannot be compartmentalized.

The Federal Pace and Administrative Architecture

Even where intent is strong, participants described federal processes as slow-moving and procedurally complex. Funding approvals, contribution agreements, reporting requirements, and administrative compliance obligations can consume significant community administrative capacity. While smaller Nations with limited staff capacity face a disproportionate burden, reporting frameworks designed for larger institutions do not scale easily. Participants emphasize that administrative complexity could undermine otherwise positive programming.

C. Awareness and Understanding of the Oceans Protecting Plan

The Oceans Protection Plan has created meaningful openings. However, its operational impact also varies regionally.

West Coast: Guardians and Simulation Integration

On the West Coast, the Oceans Protection Plan funding supported guardian program expansion and monitoring equipment acquisition. Guardian teams now conduct vessel observation, environmental monitoring, and marine mammal tracking. Simulation exercises involving spill scenarios incorporated Indigenous maps and spatial data. This integration was described as a significant improvement over earlier exclusion from emergency planning. However, participants emphasize that simulation inclusion does not equate to shared authority in risk determination. Shipping growth remains a primary concern: while operational coordination has improved, increased traffic continues to generate anxiety.

Atlantic Canada: Regulatory Literacy and Fleet Safety

In Atlantic regions, the Oceans Protection Plan engagement strengthened regulatory awareness. Vessel inspection clarity improved. Training programs reinforced fatigue management and safety standards. Indigenous Coast Guard Auxiliary participation was described as particularly impactful. It enhanced emergency response coordination and increased Indigenous presence in on-water safety operations. However, participants emphasize funding uncertainty as contribution agreements are tied to limited program cycles and thus undermine long-term planning.

St. Lawrence / Quebec: Maritime Integration into Emergency Planning

In Quebec, the formal integration of maritime risk into emergency measures planning was described as transformative. Maritime coordination roles have emerged within community administration. Regular meetings with federal officials clarified spill response protocols and communication chains. However, Indigenous participants note that general community awareness of the Oceans Protection Plan remains limited. Engagement has often occurred at leadership and administrative levels rather than at broad community levels.

Great Lakes: Limited but Growing Engagement

In the Great Lakes region, the Oceans Protection Plan engagement has been more modest but growing. Discussions focus on recreational vessel safety, invasive species management, and shoreline erosion mitigation. Indigenous participants highlight the importance of tailoring programming to regional ecological realities.

D. Governance Architecture and Structural Evolution

Indigenous partners are largely positive about the Oceans Protection Plan. They stress that Indigenous consultation and involvement is leaps and bounds superior under the Ocean Protections Plan than in the programs preceding it.

The guardian programs and Indigenous Coast Guard Auxiliary units are seen as success stories. There is a structural change where Indigenous Peoples are seen to be actively making a meaningful difference and where Indigenous knowledge is being utilized. There is an appetite to further expand these types of programs.

Increasingly, Indigenous partners frame the Oceans Protection Plan evaluation through a reconciliation lens. The question is no longer simply whether training occurred, it is whether authority shifted.

Structural Tensions: The Need for Funding Stability

Across interviews and regions, a consistent structural tension emerged that underlies many operational and relational concerns: the mismatch between federal program logic and Indigenous territorial permanence. Federal programs operate on defined fiscal cycles, contribution agreements, reporting milestones, and renewal timelines. They are designed around administrative efficiency, accountability frameworks, and budgetary planning horizons.

However, marine safety risks do not align with five-year funding cycles. Participants repeatedly emphasize that marine safety is permanent, but program funding is renewable. This mismatch produces several secondary tensions:

1. **Planning Uncertainty:** Communities cannot build long-term institutional capacity if funding certainty remains episodic.
2. **Staff Retention Challenges:** Maritime coordinators and guardian teams require stable employment frameworks; short-term funding complicates recruitment and retention.

3. **Institutional Development Constraints:** Building marine governance infrastructure requires multiyear commitments beyond project timelines.
4. **Authority Hesitation:** Federal agencies may hesitate to formalize shared governance roles when funding remains program-based rather than statutory.

Indigenous participants consistently call for longer-term, more stable funding frameworks tied to institutionalization rather than program experimentation.

Expertise Without Authority: The Governance Gap

A second structural tension lies in the separation between expertise contribution and authority. Final decision-making authority often remains centralized within federal institutions.

Indigenous participants describe a recurring experience: knowledge is welcomed; jurisdiction is not fully shared. This asymmetry creates governance friction. When Indigenous mapping data is used in simulation exercises, but routing decisions remain unchanged, questions arise about the depth of partnership. Indigenous participants emphasize that meaningful reconciliation requires structural integration of authority, not merely procedural inclusion of knowledge.

This does not imply immediate jurisdictional transfer in all domains. Rather, it signals the need for formalized shared governance mechanisms where Indigenous Nations exercise defined roles in risk determination, enforcement coordination, and regulatory design.

Reconciliation as Measurable Institutional Performance

An increasingly explicit theme across interviews is the expectation that reconciliation be measurable within the Oceans Protection Plan programming. Reconciliation, in this context, is not symbolic acknowledgment. It is institutional alignment. Indigenous participants articulate several dimensions through which reconciliation performance could be evaluated:

1. **Shared Decision-Making Structures:** Are Indigenous Nations formally integrated into risk-determination frameworks?
2. **Long-Term Agreements:** Do partnership arrangements extend beyond program cycles?
3. **Authority Recognition:** Are guardian programs recognized within enforcement architecture?
4. **Data Sovereignty:** Are Indigenous data systems respected and integrated appropriately?
5. **Funding Stability:** Does funding structure reflect permanent territorial responsibility?

Participants stress that without measurable indicators, reconciliation remains rhetorical. The next phase of the Oceans Protection Plan development may require moving from inclusion to co-design.

Enforcement Architecture and Indigenous Integration

Enforcement is one of the clearest structural gaps identified across regions. Voluntary measures and advisory zones lack credibility without visible enforcement capacity. Participants note that enforcement is not about punishment; it is about ecological protection and rule legitimacy.

Several potential pathways are discussed:

1. **Enhanced Guardian Mandates:** Formal recognition of guardian programs within enforcement-adjacent roles under structured agreements.
2. **Joint Patrol Models:** Coordinated patrols between Coast Guard and Indigenous marine teams.
3. **Data-Sharing Integration:** Real-time vessel tracking data shared with Indigenous monitoring teams.
4. **Graduated Enforcement Frameworks:** Incorporating Indigenous reporting into federal compliance systems.

These models would require careful legal design but reflect a desire for structural integration rather than symbolic partnership.

Youth Continuity and Institutional Future

Indigenous partners across regions emphasize youth engagement as critical for long-term marine governance. Marine stewardship must extend beyond present leadership.

Participants note that successful youth consultations must be planned far ahead of time and should include an honorarium and branded merchandise. They suggest handing out safety materials (e.g., life jackets) as part of these sessions.

Trust as Marine Safety Infrastructure

Trust emerges repeatedly as foundational infrastructure. It enables candid dialogue about risk.

Trust is built through:

- Continuity of personnel
- Funding reliability
- Transparent communication
- Early engagement in policy design
- Visible incorporation of Indigenous input

Trust is eroded through:

- Staff turnover
- Opaque decision-making
- Repeated consultation without visible influence
- Funding uncertainty

Indigenous participants consistently describe trust as cumulative and fragile. Marine safety systems rely on trust as much as on equipment or regulation.

E. Comparison Analysis – Current Findings and 2024 Findings

The 2024 research provides a baseline assessment of Indigenous partners and marine stakeholder perspectives on the Oceans Protection Plan, marine safety, and consultation processes. The current expanded findings build directly on that foundation. This section highlights areas of continuity and areas of change.

1. Views on Oceans and Marine Safety: Continuity with Governance Intensification

The 2024 findings documented a near-unanimous Indigenous perspective that oceans are culturally, spiritually, and intergenerationally central – frequently described through the language of sacred obligation and continuity. That framing remains fully intact.

What has evolved is not the worldview itself, but how it is expressed. In the 2024 findings, Indigenous perspectives were framed primarily in terms of values, whereas in the current findings, those same perspectives are expressed more explicitly in governance language. For example, oceans are described as governed territory, marine safety is framed as an expression of sovereignty, and shipping risk is evaluated in terms of authority and jurisdiction.

The discourse has matured from “*this is culturally important*” to “*this is a governance space*”. This shift is subtle but important. It reflects institutional confidence and rising expectations.

2. Understanding of the Oceans Protection Plan: Same Complexity, Elevated Expectations

The Oceans Protection Plan characterized as “not truly a plan” but rather “a collection of initiatives”, continues to be widespread, however, the framing of the critique has changed. In 2024, complexity was experienced as informational overload. In the current findings, the absence of a clear strategic architecture is increasingly interpreted as institutional weakness.

The question has shifted from “*What is the Oceans Protection Plan?*” to “*What is the Oceans Protection Plan structurally achieving?*” This is a significant escalation in expectations.

3. Consultation: Stable Format Preferences

Indigenous stakeholders in 2024 similarly emphasized reducing repetitive meetings and prioritizing meaningful dialogue over presentation-style sessions. This critique remains stable.

4. Reconciliation as a Measurable Indicator

The 2024 Findings framed Indigenous inclusion as a program strength. The current findings frame reconciliation as requiring measurable institutional change – shared decision-making, long-term agreements, formalized authority roles. This is a discursive evolution.

2. Findings from Marine Stakeholder Participant Interviews

The following section contains analysis of the qualitative findings from marine stakeholder interviewed in this research project. It is divided into 5 sub-sections:

- A. Introduction
- B. Views on Oceans and Marine Safety
- C. Awareness and Understanding of the Oceans Protection Plan
- D. Governance Architecture and Structural Evolution
- E. Comparison Analysis – Current Findings and 2024 Findings

A. Introduction

Marine stakeholders consistently approach Canada’s oceans and inland waterways not as symbolic environmental spaces, but as operational systems where judgment, redundancy, coordination, and preparation determine outcomes. Across interviews – spanning Arctic operators, spill response organizations, environmental certification leaders, port-side environmental coordinators, and regional navigation conveners – one common premise emerges: Marine safety is tested when conditions deteriorate.

The Arctic operator’s observation that *“when you’re up there, you’re alone”* captures the systemic truth: maritime governance must assume isolation, delay, and mechanical failure. Unlike terrestrial systems, marine systems offer no immediate redundancy, unless it is deliberately built in. This *“high-consequence, low-forgiveness”* reality shapes how marine stakeholders evaluate the Oceans Protection Plan and federal performance more broadly.

While stakeholders all approach the Oceans Protection Plan from different angles, most evaluate its success through one lens: Does it make the system more resilient under stress?

B. Views on Oceans and Marine Safety

Safety as Lived Risk: Survival and Professional Judgment

Operational stakeholders consistently define safety in elemental terms: *“coming home alive”*. For spill response leaders on the West Coast, marine safety is not abstract compliance.

The robustness of Canada’s regime is widely respected. Yet practitioners emphasize that *“regulation alone does not produce safety; judgment does.”*

West Coast response leadership describe Canada’s system as cooperative and robust, but they also warn against regulatory rigidity that overlooks operational realities. The pilot community reinforces that marine safety depends on discretion when *“the rulebook runs out”*. This tension between codified rules and adaptive expertise is central to marine stakeholder perspectives.

Safety as Environmental Prevention

Marine leadership highlight a regulatory gap rarely discussed in safety discourse in stormwater management. In their assessment, Canadian port stormwater standards lag significantly behind U.S. requirements, creating preventable contaminant pathways into waterways.

This illustrates a critical nuance. Marine safety is not only catastrophic spill prevention, but it also includes systemic environmental leakage.

Safety as Institutional Boundary Management

Several stakeholders frame safety as a governance clarity issue. When responsibility is diffuse, response also slows. The observation that *“the risk isn’t that nobody cares. It’s that everyone assumes someone else is in charge”* reflects a systemic coordination vulnerability.

Government Performance: Strong Outcomes, Structural Strain

Across interviews, there is broad agreement that Canada’s marine safety outcomes are strong by international comparison. Incident rates are low relative to traffic volume and coastline scale. However, stakeholders distinguish between outcome strength and architectural clarity. The perception that departments operate in silos emerges repeatedly.

C. Awareness and Understanding of the Oceans Protection Plan

Awareness and Conceptual Clarity

Across interviews, awareness of the Oceans Protection Plan was high, but understanding of the plan was uneven.

A consistent observation across participants is that the designation of the Oceans Protection Plan as a “plan” is widely perceived as misleading. Rather than functioning as a singular, integrated strategy, stakeholders describe it as operating more like a portfolio of initiatives layered onto existing governance structures.

As a result, stakeholders often struggle to articulate the initiative’s overarching objectives, long-term outcomes, and institutional end-state. This ambiguity does not diminish recognition of the initiative’s value, but it does complicate efforts to understand how individual projects connect within a coherent governance framework.

Interviewees explicitly describe confusion regarding the relationship between the Oceans Protection Plan and the Cumulative Effects of Marine Transportation Initiative, Impact Assessment Agency review processes, species protection frameworks, and emerging mandates associated with the Canada Water Agency.

What the Oceans Protection Plan Made Possible

Despite structural or operational ambiguity, several achievements are consistently acknowledged:

- Funding injection into under-resourced federal departments
- Expansion of Indigenous engagement
- Emergency towing vessel (ETV) deployment
- Improved data, mapping, and domain awareness
- Formalized dialogue forums
- Spurring on growth in associated industries
 - One BC marine stakeholder commented on how the Oceans Protection Plan has helped local companies who make sonar technology succeed.

For West Coast stakeholders, ETV deployment was the most tangible improvement. For Quebec stakeholders, structured dialogue forums created new interaction channels between industry, NGOs, and Transport Canada.

Communication and Engagement Patterns

Across interviews, email continues to function as the primary communication channel between federal programs and stakeholders. While this approach is efficient for information distribution, participants consistently indicated that it is less effective in fostering meaningful engagement or improving understanding of complex initiatives. In contrast, in-person regional meetings were widely viewed as significantly more impactful, strengthening dialogue, trust, and the perceived legitimacy of consultation processes.

Participants observe that when federal officials attend local dialogue forums in person, awareness, trust, and understanding of federal initiatives improve significantly. This finding suggests that the method and visibility of engagement may have a greater impact on stakeholder confidence than the overall volume of communication.

At the same time, many stakeholders describe experiencing consultation saturation. The volume of engagement requests across multiple initiatives has created participation fatigue, particularly where consultations appear overlapping or insufficiently differentiated.

D. Governance Architecture and Structural Evolution

Governance Architecture: A System Built Over Time

Marine stakeholders consistently emphasized that Canada's marine safety regime is not new. It is evolving. It is the product of decades of incremental development across:

- Industry-funded response organizations
- Coast guard operations
- Voluntary certification systems

- Port Authorities
- Federal regulation (Transport Canada)
- Navigation control systems
- Internal Maritime Conventions

The Oceans Protection Plan was therefore not introduced into a vacuum. It entered a mature system. Unlike some policy domains where federal funding builds capacity from scratch, the marine domain already possessed:

- Spill response organizations funded by industry
- Established pilotage systems
- Vessel traffic services
- Emergency towing capacity in certain regions
- Well-developed incident command frameworks

As a result, the Oceans Protection Plan investments were layered onto an existing architecture rather than constructing a new one. Marine stakeholders assess the Oceans Protection Plan not in isolation, but in relation to that legacy architecture.

Initiative Proliferation: Cumulative Effects and Governance Overlap

Multiple Marine Stakeholders report persistent difficulty distinguishing among several federal initiatives operating within the marine governance space. While individual initiatives are understood to address legitimate aspects of marine risk and environmental stewardship, their interaction is often experienced as conceptually overlapping and operationally difficult to navigate.

From the Quebec perspective, local sustainable navigation tables are described as proactive efforts to balance shipping growth, conservation priorities, and regional economic development. These forums are viewed positively as coordination mechanisms; however, participants expressed uncertainty about how the Oceans Protection Plan integrates within this broader ecosystem of regional and federal initiatives. The ambiguity does not stem from disagreement with the Oceans Protection Plan objectives, but from a lack of clarity regarding its distinct contribution relative to adjacent programs.

Marine leadership echo this observation more broadly, noting conceptual alignment between the Oceans Protection Plan goals and cumulative effects initiatives. The issue identified is not duplication of intent, but fragmentation in delivery across institutional silos. When multiple initiatives address marine risk through separate governance structures, stakeholders encounter practical challenges including engagement fatigue, duplicative reporting requirements, and uncertainty about overarching strategic alignment.

Indigenous Participation Within Marine Stakeholder Systems

Marine stakeholders consistently acknowledged that Indigenous participation has increased meaningfully since the launch of the Oceans Protection Plan. This shift is recognized as a structural evolution of the marine system itself.

Prior to the Oceans Protection Plan, Indigenous participation in marine governance often occurred through consultation processes tied to specific projects. Post the Oceans Protection Plan, Indigenous Nations increasingly participate in:

- Simulation exercises
- Monitoring programs
- Emergency preparedness planning
- Regional dialogue tables
- Spill response observation

Marine stakeholders generally view this expansion positively. However, concerns arise regarding structural integration. Some marine stakeholders worry that multiple authorities responding to the same incident could complicate command structures. They support inclusion but emphasize the importance of unified operational frameworks.

Jurisdictional Complexity: Inland and Great Lakes Perspectives

While coastal shipping often dominates national policy attention, inland marine systems present a distinct set of governance challenges shaped by jurisdictional complexity and uneven response capacity. Great Lakes stakeholders mention that marine safety incidents occurring outside port limits frequently involve fragmented firefighting authority, requiring coordination among multiple agencies that do not operate within a single command structure. Cross-border dynamics further complicate response planning. One of the stakeholders suggested: *“They should identify gaps on a map and ensure every mile has coverage”*.

Unlike coastal regions, inland systems lack a singular geographic and governance coherence. Stakeholders, therefore, stress that marine safety reforms must explicitly account for jurisdictional layering.

E. Comparison Analysis – Current Findings and 2024 Findings

Across both the 2024 findings and the current interviews, Marine stakeholders consistently affirm:

- Canada’s marine safety outcomes are strong relative to international comparators
- The polluter-pay spill response regime is effective and foundational
- The Coast Guard is operationally trusted
- Transport Canada possesses technical regulatory competence
- Oceans Protection Plan funding has improved departmental resourcing
- Engagement increased meaningfully post the Oceans Protection Plan

There is no evidence of regression in perceived operational quality. The core marine safety regime remains respected. The shift is in the tone and expectation, primarily in three areas:

1. From Administrative Frustration to Architectural Concern

In 2024, stakeholders described:

- Overlapping initiatives
- Consultation fatigue
- Lack of a cohesive “big picture”

These were experienced primarily as communication and coordination frustrations.

In the current findings, those same issues are framed more structurally:

- Overlapping federal mandates are seen as systemic inefficiency
- Initiative proliferation is seen as governance fragmentation
- Engagement fatigue is linked to siloed design
- Lack of a roadmap is interpreted as architectural weakness

The shift is subtle but meaningful, as the critique has moved from “*this is confusing*” to “*this is structurally incoherent*”.

2. Funding Stability Versus Program Temporality

In 2024, short funding cycles were criticized primarily for administrative inefficiency. Now, many question the long-term commitment to the plan and wonder whether the Oceans Protection Plan is a temporary injection or a structural shift. This distinction matters deeply to marine stakeholders.

3. Polluter-Pay Principle: Stable Core, Emerging Pressure

The polluter-pay framework remains central to marine stakeholder identity. Across interviews, industry-funded spill response was described as accountable, efficient, integrated, and proven.

However, the expansion of taxpayer-funded components under the Oceans Protection Plan, such as emergency towing vessels, introduces structural ambiguity. Stakeholders still support Emergency towing vessel deployment, but they question:

- Are we gradually shifting from industry accountability to shared financial responsibility without transparent debate?
- Should such capacity be integrated into industry funding?
- Does public funding dilute polluter-pay clarity?

This concern was present in 2024 but is more pronounced now. Marine stakeholders do not oppose federal involvement. Instead, they seek clarity on system design principles.

The System at a Key Moment

Taken together, the longitudinal comparison reveals:

- No erosion of confidence in marine safety performance
- No major decline in perception of federal competence
- Continued appreciation for the Oceans Protection Plan funding and engagement
- Escalation in expectations regarding system design clarity
- Increased attention to architectural coherence
- Greater concern about initiative fragmentation

In 2024, stakeholders sought:

- Clearer communication
- Better integration
- Fewer silos

In the current findings, the conversation has matured, and stakeholders seek:

- Structural coherence
- Defined governance principles
- Clear funding permanence
- Unified architecture
- Measurable objectives

3. Combined Key Findings and Conclusion

The in-depth interviews show broad agreement that Canada's marine safety regime performs well in operational terms - incident rates remain low relative to traffic volume and coastline scale; the spill response regime is regarded as robust; and the Coast Guard is widely trusted in incident leadership. The Oceans Protection Plan initiatives have led to more local response operations, leading to reduced reaction time when marine incidents occur. Overall, there is no perception of systemic operational failure. Thus, the debate is not about whether the system works, but rather about how it is structured and where it is heading.

The biggest desire among both Marine stakeholders and Indigenous partners is for a durable architecture that requires:

1. **A more permanent funding framework:** Stakeholders want to be able to plan long-term and are sometimes unable to do so due to government funding cycles.
2. **Integrate initiatives into a clear strategic roadmap:** For some, the Oceans Protection Plan still feels like a collection of programs rather than a single plan. Participants want:
 - A clear articulation of the Oceans Protection Plan objectives
 - A roadmap of initiatives
 - Defined and measurable metrics
 - Regular consolidated updates
3. **Minimize staff turnover:** This can be disruptive, especially in roles where there are direct dealings with Indigenous communities, given the need to build trust.
4. **Meaningfully formalized Indigenous authority:** Indigenous knowledge is increasingly included, but Indigenous Peoples are not always included in the decision-making authority.
5. **Address jurisdictional gaps:** Some stakeholders identified gaps in jurisdiction when it comes to on-water firefighting. Others identified lack of clarity around stormwater regulations. Ensure it is always clear as to who is responsible.

Marine stakeholders and Indigenous partners were generally positive about consultations, and offered the following advice:

1. **Hold as many in-person consultations as possible:** The information is absorbed better in-person than via Zoom. This is especially important for more remote communities. As one BC interviewee commented: *"Part of the challenge is our coast is so far away from Ottawa. We need direct communication."*

Several marine stakeholders talk about how in-person events are also good networking opportunities, where they can compare notes with others from nearby regions.

2. **Listen, don't just talk:** Consultations should be about feedback, not just government officials outputting information. As one Indigenous partner commented: *"You have 2 ears and 2 eyes but only 1 mouth. It's better to look and listen twice as much as you talk."*
3. **Put up booths at existing events:** For Indigenous Peoples, try to find existing community events which can be piggy backed. One Indigenous partner from Ontario talked about how an Oceans Protection Plan booth was set up at a Pow Wow that attracted over 1,000 people.

Advertise about Indigenous consultations so that they don't only bring in the same people.

For Indigenous consultations, offer transportation and provide food for those who attend. One Indigenous participant from Ontario talked about how bringing food is a part of their culture.

4. **Reach out to young people:** Indigenous partners praised current outreach efforts towards youth. They see the importance of young people learning marine safety, and felt the kids who complete the program can then spread knowledge through the community. As one Indigenous partner in Ontario commented: *"They won't listen to their parents about marine safety, but they will listen to other kids who do the program."*

Moreover, they believe this type of outreach will lead to young Indigenous Peoples taking marine safety leadership roles in the future.

Other recommendations from the research include:

1. **Reduce the administrative burden:** Smaller organizations and Indigenous communities often feel overwhelmed by the application process and reporting process. Some feel these systems are designed for groups with more resources.
2. **Advertise:** Some suggested more general population advertising about the Oceans Protection Plan and marine safety is needed, to build public understanding.
3. **Don't use the "OPP" acronym in Ontario:** Some Indigenous People still hold distrust of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP).
4. **Work with academics:** Many universities have their own funding envelopes and researchers are looking to partner with government programs to gather data.

Appendix

Appendix A: Quantitative Research Methodology Report

Pollara completed online surveys with n=3,144 individuals across Canada. A detailed discussion of the approach used to complete this research is presented below.

Sample design

The sampling plan for the study was designed by Pollara in collaboration with Transport Canada. The research requirement entailed collecting samples from the following:

- General population sample of n=1,600 Canadians 18 years of age and older
 - Regional quotas of n=325 in Atlantic Canada, n=300 in Quebec, n=300 in Ontario, n=25 in Manitoba, n=25 in Saskatchewan, n=25 in Alberta, n=500 in British Columbia, n=100 in the territories.
- Oversample of n=500 among residents living in small coastal communities – defined as communities of <30,000 people within 20 km of St. Lawrence seaway, ocean, or Great Lakes
- Oversample of n=450 among residents living in mid-sized coastal communities – defined as communities of 30,000 or more people, but excluding Quebec City, Greater Montreal Area, Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, and Greater Vancouver Area
- Oversample of n=500 self-identified Indigenous Peoples

Coastal communities were defined using Forward Sortation Areas (FSAs). Only in cases where the FSA provided by the respondent was not available in the pre-defined list, or covered both coastal and non-coastal communities, was the respondent categorized into a coastal community based on their self-selected answers in the survey.

Data collection

The surveys were conducted in English and in French, based on the respondent's preference, from November 27, 2025, to December 22, 2025.

The landing page for the online survey stressed that participation in the survey was voluntary, and that information provided would remain private and confidential, in compliance with the Privacy Act and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA). Participants were provided assurance that none of their identifiable information would be shared with Transport Canada.

Pollara collected n=3,144 interviews, more than the n=3,100 specified in the quotas. While online surveys cannot be assigned a margin of error, a probability sample of this size would be accurate to $\pm 1.8\%$, 19 times out of 20.

The total of n=3,144 interviews included:

- n=664 in Atlantic Canada, n=412 in Quebec, n=934 in Ontario, n=108 in Manitoba, n=49 in Saskatchewan, n=100 in Alberta, n=770 in British Columbia, n=107 in the territories
- n=1,540 in coastal communities, including n=648 in small coastal, n=528 in mid-coastal, and n=364 in large coastal communities
- n=600 among Indigenous Peoples
- n=2,780 in English and 364 in French

The total number of surveys n=3,144 were conducted online through a randomly selected online panel across Canada. Participants took a median time of 13 minutes to complete the survey.

Among respondents who started the survey, 12% failed to complete it. These incomplete responses were not included in the final data set.

Demographic information of respondents was collected, and the final data was weighted to census proportions of Canadians by age and gender within each province and territory. After weighting the general population sample, a layer of weighting was applied to the coastal communities' sample to ensure the proportion of this sample was accurately represented in the total dataset. Likewise, the Indigenous Peoples sample was weighted as per the actual incidence of Indigenous Peoples in Canada to ensure their proportion was accurately represented in the total dataset.

Quality controls

Prior to launching the survey, Pollara tested the links to ensure programming matched the questionnaire in both languages and included the correct use of skips and randomizations. A "soft launch" of the survey data was conducted first to ensure respondents were able to access the survey and did not have any issues with the question wording. Pollara reviewed soft launch data before proceeding to full launch.

Respondent Totals

Region	Unweighted total
Atlantic Canada	664
Quebec	412
Ontario	934
Manitoba	108

Saskatchewan	49
Alberta	100
British Columbia	770
Territories	107
Language	Unweighted total
English	2780
French	364
Coastal Communities	Unweighted total
Small	648
Medium	528
Large	364
Indigenous Peoples	Unweighted total
Residing in Coastal Communities	204
Not Residing in Coastal Communities	396
Age	Unweighted total
18-34	547
35-49	842
50-64	886
65+	869
Respondent	Unweighted total
Men	1419
Women	1702
Other	17
Prefer not to say	6

Appendix B: Qualitative Research Methodology Report

Methodology

For the qualitative component, in-depth interviews were conducted with 26 Indigenous partners and 22 Marine stakeholders between November 2025 and February 2026. This includes twelve interviews conducted in Atlantic Canada, eight in Ontario, fourteen in British Columbia, twelve in Quebec, and 2 in the Prairie and Northern Region. The table below shows the number of interviews per group and the location of the respondents:

Regions	Indigenous Partners	Marine Stakeholders
Atlantic Canada	9	3
Ontario	4	4
British Columbia	6	8
Quebec	6	6
Prairie and Northern	1	1
Language		
English	20	16
French	6	6

Respondents were recruited using a list of partners and stakeholders provided by Transport Canada.

Respondents were given the option of completing the in-depth interviews by phone or by Zoom, and all chose to complete the interviews by Zoom. Interviews were scheduled (and re-scheduled when needed) to accommodate the schedules of those being interviewed.

Indigenous Partners interviewed were given an honorarium to thank them for their participation.

A note about interpreting qualitative research results

It is important to note that qualitative research is a form of scientific, social, policy, and public opinion research. In-depth interviews are not designed to help reach a consensus or to make decisions, but rather to elicit the full range of ideas, attitudes, experiences, and opinions of a selected sample of participants on a defined topic. Because of the small numbers involved the participants cannot be expected to be thoroughly representative in a statistical sense of the larger population from which they are drawn, and findings cannot reliably be generalized beyond their number.

Glossary of terms

The following is a glossary of terms which explains the generalizations and interpretations of qualitative terms used throughout the report. These phrases are used when groups of participants

share a specific point of view, and emerging themes can be reported. Unless otherwise stated, it should not be taken to mean that the rest of participants disagreed with the point; rather others either did not comment or did not have a strong opinion on the question.

Generalization	Generalization Interpretation
Few	Few is used when less than 10% of participants have responded
Several	Several is used when fewer than 20% of the participants responded
Some	Some is used when more than 20% but significantly fewer than 50% of participants responded with similar answers.
Many	Many is used when nearly 50% of participants responded with
Majority	Majority or plurality are used when more than 50% but fewer than 75% of the participants responded with similar answers.
Most	Most is used when more than 75% of the participants responded with similar answers.
Vast majority	Vast majority is used when nearly all participants responded with similar answers, but several had differing views.
Unanimous/Almost all	Unanimous or almost all are used when all participants gave similar answers or when the vast majority of participants gave similar answers and the remaining few declined to comment on the issue in question.

Appendix C: Online Survey Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey dealing with current issues.

Si vous préférez répondre au sondage en français, veuillez cliquer sur « Français » dans le coin supérieur droit.

Your participation is voluntary, and your responses will be kept entirely confidential. The survey takes approximately 15 minutes to complete and is registered with the Canadian Research Insights Council's (CRIC) Research Verification Service under project code 20251124-LE521. This survey is being conducted by Pollara Strategic Insights on behalf of Transport Canada.

All survey responses collected are anonymous. Any personal information you provide is collected in accordance with the *Privacy Act* and in accordance with the Treasury Board Directive on Privacy Practices. In addition to protecting your personal information, the *Privacy Act* gives you the right to request access to and correction of your personal information.

For more information about these rights, or about our privacy practices, please contact Transport Canada's Privacy Coordinator at 613-993-6161. You also have the right to file a complaint with the Privacy Commissioner of Canada at www.priv.gc.ca if you think your personal information has been handled improperly.

If you have special accessibility needs to complete this survey, please contact Pollara at information@pollara.com or 416-921-0090.

SCREENERS

SCR1. In which province or territory do you live?

Newfoundland and Labrador
Prince Edward Island
Nova Scotia
New Brunswick
Quebec
Ontario
Manitoba
Saskatchewan
Alberta
British Columbia
Yukon

Northwest Territories

Nunavut

I live outside Canada **[THANK AND TERMINATE]**

SCR2. What are the first three digits of your postal code? (Example: A1A)

[HAVE ANSWER BOX TO TYPE FSA]

[Only accept valid Canadian FSA.]

Z1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

Other

Prefer not to say

SCR3A. In what year were you born?

[Have answer box to type year of birth. Provide “prefer not to say” option]

[IF YEAR IS 2008 OR LATER, THANK AND TERMINATE]

[IF “PREFER NOT TO SAY” IN SCR3A, SHOW SCR3B]

SCR3B. In which of the following age categories do you belong?

18 to 24

25 to 34

35 to 49

50 to 64

65 or older

Prefer not to say **[THANK AND TERMINATE]**

SCR4. Are you a Canadian Citizen?

Yes

No **[THANK AND TERMINATE]**

Prefer not to say **[THANK AND TERMINATE]**

SCR5. Do you live in a **coastal community**? That is, a community within 20 kilometres of an ocean, the St. Lawrence River, the Bay of Fundy, or one of the Great Lakes.

Yes
No
Don't know

SCR6. About how large is the population of the city, town, or community where you live?

A rural area, or a community of less than 5,000 people
5,000 to less than 30,000 people
30,000 to less than 100,000 people
100,000 to less than 500,000 people
500,000 people or more
Don't know

SCR7A. Do you identify as an Indigenous Person (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit)?

Yes
No
Don't know
Prefer not to say

[IF "YES", AT SCR7A, ASK SCR7B]

SCR7B. And, which of the following best describes you? Are you a First Nations Person, Métis, or Inuit?

First Nations persons in Canada
Métis persons in Canada
Inuit persons in Canada
Other (*please specify*)
Prefer not to say

[IF "FIRST NATION" (CODE 1) AT SCR7B, ASK SCR7C]

SCR7C. Do you live on a First Nations reserve for at least six months of the year?

Yes
No
Don't know
Prefer not to say

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all aware” and 5 is “very aware”, how would you characterize your level of awareness (e.g., the degree you feel informed) about each of the following in Canada? **[CAROUSEL. DO NOT RANDOMIZE]**

1. Marine safety issues including safe shipping practices
2. Steps taken to protect the marine environment
3. Marine response to offshore spills, incidents, and emergencies
4. The reliability and strength of Canada’s supply chain

[RESPONSE]

- 1 - Not at all aware
- 2
- 3 - Moderately aware
- 4
- 5 - Very aware
- Don't know

Q2. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all important” and 5 is “very important”, how important would you say that each of the following are to you? **[CAROUSEL. DO NOT RANDOMIZE]**

1. Marine safety issues including safe shipping practices
2. Protecting the marine environment
3. Marine response to offshore spills, incidents, and emergencies
4. The reliability and strength of Canada’s supply chain

[RESPONSE]

- 1 - Not at all important
- 2
- 3 – Somewhat important
- 4
- 5 - Very important
- Don't know

Q3A. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all confident” and 5 is “very confident”, how confident are you in Canada's marine safety system?

- 1 - Not at all confident
- 2
- 3 – Moderately confident
- 4

5 - Very confident
Don't know

[SKIP 3B, IF DK AT 3A]

Q3B. Why specifically do you feel this way?

[OPEN END]

No reason in particular/ Don't know *[EXCLUSIVE]*

Q3C. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all confident” and 5 is “very confident”, how confident are you that marine habitats and species are protected in Canada?

1 - Not at all confident
2
3 – Moderately confident
4
5 - Very confident
Don't know

Q4. As far as you know, does the Government of Canada have programs, regulations, and/or activities in place to: **[CAROUSEL. RANDOMIZE]**

1. Prevent incidents, such as an oil spill, that contribute to marine pollution
2. Monitor marine pollution incidents
3. Respond to incidents, such as an oil spill, that contribute to marine pollution
4. Work closely with Indigenous Peoples and coastal communities to protect Canada's coasts, waterways and ecosystems and improve marine safety
5. Protect the reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain
6. Protect and restore aquatic habitats in marine and coastal areas
7. Reduce the impact of marine shipping on Canada's marine ecosystem
8. Create economic opportunities for communities near Canada's coasts and waterways

[RESPONSE]

Yes
No
Unsure

Q5. How familiar are you with the Government of Canada's Oceans Protection Plan?

Very familiar

Somewhat familiar
 Not very familiar
 Not at all familiar

[SKIP Q6 IF “NOT AT ALL FAMILIAR” IN Q5]

Q6. Have you seen, read or heard anything **within the past year** about the Government of Canada's Oceans Protection Plan?

Yes
 No
 Unsure

[IF YES AT Q6, ASK Q7]

Q7. What do you recall seeing, reading or hearing about the Oceans Protection Plan?

[OPEN END]

Can't recall/ Don't know **[EXCLUSIVE]**

[IF YES AT Q6, ASK Q8]

Q8. Where do you recall seeing, reading or hearing about Canada's Oceans Protection Plan? Select all that apply.

Television
 Radio
 Newspapers (print or online)
 Neighbourhood or community newspapers (print or online)
 Magazines (print or online)
 Social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn)
 YouTube
 Podcast
 Social media influencer
 Transport Canada or other Government of Canada website
 Mail from the Government of Canada
 Word of mouth (through a friend, family or acquaintance)
 Other (*please be as specific as you can*)
 Don't remember **[EXCLUSIVE]**

[IF YES AT Q6, ASK Q21]

Q21. Which, if any, of the following initiatives do you associate with the Oceans Protection Plan? Select all that apply. **[RANDOMIZE. ANCHOR ALL, NONE, DK]**

- Including more meaningful participation from Canadians, Indigenous Peoples, and coastal communities in initiatives to improve marine safety
- Improving response times and actions for spills and incidents
- Reducing impacts of marine shipping on Canada's marine ecosystems and species, including threatened or endangered whales
- Protecting and restoring aquatic habitats in marine and coastal areas
- Addressing and removing wrecked and abandoned vessels
- Investing in and taking on scientific research to support evidence-based decisions for marine safety
- Improving marine safety in the Arctic
- Ensuring polluters are held responsible for marine environment clean-up of hazardous and damaging spills
- Creating economic opportunities for communities near Canada's coasts and waterways
- Maintaining the reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain
- All of the above **[ANCHOR. EXCLUSIVE]**
- None of the above **[ANCHOR. EXCLUSIVE]**
- Don't know **[ANCHOR. EXCLUSIVE]**

Q9. Since it was launched in 2016, and renewed in 2022, the Oceans Protection Plan has strengthened protections for our coasts and wildlife, improved marine traffic and incident management, and advanced partnerships with Indigenous communities.

The following are some aspects of the Government of Canada's Oceans Protection Plan. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is "not at all important" and 5 is "very important", how important are each of following aspects to you? **[CAROUSEL. RANDOMIZE]**

1. Including more meaningful participation from Canadians, Indigenous Peoples, and coastal communities in initiatives to improve marine safety
2. Improving response times and actions for spills and incidents
3. Reducing impacts of marine shipping on Canada's marine ecosystems and species, including threatened or endangered whales
4. Protecting and restoring aquatic habitats in marine and coastal areas
5. Addressing and removing wrecked and abandoned vessels
6. Investing in and taking on scientific research to support evidence-based decisions for marine safety
7. Improving marine safety in the Arctic
8. Ensuring polluters are held responsible for marine environment clean-up of hazardous and damaging spills
9. Creating economic opportunities for communities near Canada's coasts and waterways
10. Maintaining the reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain

[RESPONSE]

- 1 - Not at all important
- 2
- 3 – Somewhat important
- 4
- 5 - Very important
- Don't know

Q10. The Government of Canada launched the Oceans Protection Plan in 2016 and renewed in 2022. Based on what you may know, what type of impact – if any – do you feel the Oceans Protection Plan has had on the following since its launch? **[CAROUSEL. RANDOMIZE 1 TO 10]**

1. Including more meaningful participation from Canadians, Indigenous Peoples, and coastal communities in initiatives to improve marine safety
2. Improving response times and actions for spills and incidents
3. Reducing impacts of marine shipping on Canada's marine ecosystems and species, including threatened or endangered whales
4. Protecting and restoring aquatic habitats in marine and coastal areas
5. Addressing and removing wrecked and abandoned vessels
6. Investing in and taking on scientific research to support evidence-based decisions for marine safety
7. Improving marine safety in the Arctic
8. Ensuring polluters are held responsible for marine environment clean-up of hazardous and damaging spills
9. Creating economic opportunities for communities near Canada's coasts and waterways
10. Maintaining the reliability and strength of Canada's supply chain

[RESPONSE]

- Very positive impact
- Somewhat positive impact
- No impact
- Somewhat negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Don't know /Unaware

Q11. Canada's Marine Oil Spill Preparedness and Response Regime was established in 1995 as a partnership between government and industry. As the federal department responsible for the regime, Transport Canada sets and enforces its guidelines and regulations.

On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all confident” and 5 is “very confident”, how confident are you that Canada's Marine Oil Spill Response System can do each of the following? **[CAROUSEL. DO NOT RANDOMIZE]**

1. Prevent an oil spill from occurring
2. Prepare for an oil spill
3. Provide a timely response to an oil spill
4. Ensure that polluters are held responsible in covering costs associated with marine clean-up and impacts to affected communities

[RESPONSE]

- 1 - Not at all confident
- 2
- 3 - Moderately confident
- 4
- 5 - Very confident
- Don't know / Unaware

Q12. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “no role at all” and 5 is “a very strong role”, how much of a role do you believe each of the following should have in protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment? **[CAROUSEL. DO NOT RANDOMIZE]**

1. The Government of Canada
2. Your provincial or territorial government
3. Your municipal or local government
4. Indigenous governments
5. The marine shipping industry

[RESPONSE]

- 1 - No role at all
- 2
- 3 - A moderate role
- 4
- 5 - A very strong role
- Don't know / Unaware

Q13. As far as you know, in the past few years, how much of a role have each of the following played in protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment? Please rate on a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “no role at all” and 5 is “a very strong role”. **[CAROUSEL. DO NOT RANDOMIZE]**

1. The Government of Canada
2. Your provincial or territorial government
3. Your municipal or local government
4. Indigenous governments
5. The marine shipping industry

[RESPONSE]

- 1 – No role at all
- 2
- 3 – A moderate role
- 4
- 5 – A very strong role
- Don't know / Unaware

Q22A. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “no role at all” and 5 is “a very strong role”, how much of a role do you believe you have to play in protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment?

- 1 – No role at all
- 2
- 3 – A moderate role
- 4
- 5 – A very strong role
- Don't know / Unaware

[IF SELECTS 3, 4 OR 5 AT Q22A, ASK Q22B]

Q22B. What role do you feel you could play in protecting, preserving, and restoring the marine environment? Please explain what specifically you could do.

[OPEN END]

Nothing in particular/ Don't know **[EXCLUSIVE]**

Q23A. Have you ever worked/volunteered on a project related to protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment?

- Yes
- No
- Can't recall

[IF SELECTS “YES” AT Q23A, ASK Q23B]

Q23B. Why did you work or volunteer on a project related to protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment? Please explain.

[OPEN END]

No reason in particular/ Don't know **[EXCLUSIVE]**

Q14. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all important” and 5 is “very important”, how important is it to **you** to have input into or feedback on decisions the Government of Canada makes about marine safety including safe shipping practices and emergency response, and environmental protection in your area?

- 1 - Not at all important
- 2
- 3 – Somewhat important
- 4
- 5 - Very important
- Don't know

Q15. Have you ever looked for information about marine safety in Canada?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Q16. Where would you look for information if you wanted to learn more about Government of Canada programs and initiatives to protect Canada's coasts and waterways? Select all that apply.

[MULTIPLE MENTION. LAST 2 ARE EXCLUSIVE]

- Internet search (e.g., Google)
- Social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, YouTube, Reddit)
- Transport Canada or other Government of Canada websites
- Call 1-800 O Canada
- Visit Government of Canada office
- My friends, family, or acquaintances
- Someone working in the shipping industry
- Someone working in local marine transportation and safety sector
- Relevant Non-Government Organization (e.g., environmental NGO)
- Other (*please be as specific as you can*):
- Not interested in learning more about these programs **[EXCLUSIVE]**
- Don't know **[EXCLUSIVE]**

Q17. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is “not at all important” and 5 is “very important”, how important is it for the Government of Canada to provide the public with the following information? **[CAROUSEL. RANDOMIZE]**

1. Incidence of accidents/spills
2. The record of cleaning up spills

3. Opportunities for training in marine response for residents in Indigenous and coastal communities
4. Implementation of new regulations to the marine safe shipping sector
5. The record of protecting and restoring aquatic habitats in marine and coastal areas
6. Opportunities for careers in the marine sector
7. How to get involved in protecting, preserving and restoring the marine environment

[RESPONSE]

1 - Not at all important

2

3 – Somewhat important

4

5 - Very important

Don't know

Q18. Have you ever participated in an engagement session (e.g., a consultation or town hall) about marine safety, environmental protection or the Oceans Protection Plan?

Yes

No

Don't know

[IF YES IN Q18, ASK Q19]

Q19. Who was this session organized by?

The Government of Canada

Provincial or Territorial Government

Municipal or local governments

Indigenous governments

The marine shipping industry

Environmental groups

Other (*please be as specific as you can*)Don't know **[EXCLUSIVE]**

Q20. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “not active at all” and 5 is “very active”, how would you characterize your level of involvement in Canada’s marine safety system?

1 – Not active at all

2

3 – Somewhat active

4

5 – Very active

DEMOGRAPHICS

We're almost done, just a few final questions for demographic purposes, so that we can classify your responses. All your answers will remain anonymous and confidential.

Z2. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

- Some high school or less
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Registered Apprenticeship or other trades certificate or diploma
- College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma
- University certificate or diploma below bachelor's level
- Bachelor's degree
- Post graduate degree above bachelor's level
- Prefer not to say

Z3. Which of the following categories best describes your total annual household income, including income from all household members, before taxes are deducted?

- Under \$20,000
- Between \$20,000 and \$39,999
- Between \$40,000 and \$59,999
- Between \$60,000 and \$79,999
- Between \$80,000 and \$99,999
- Between \$100,000 and \$149,999
- \$150,000 or above
- Prefer not to say

Z4. Where were you born?

- Born in Canada
- Born outside Canada
- Prefer not to say

Z5. Do you own a boat?

- Yes
- No

Prefer not to say

Z6. Do you work in the marine industry (e.g., fishing, marine tourism/transportation, port worker)?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

THANK YOU!

Your feedback is important, thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Appendix D: In-Depth Interview Discussion Guide

Indigenous Peoples Interview Guide

Introduction (5 minutes)

- My name is _____ and I work for Pollara Strategic Insights. Thank you for taking the time to complete this interview.
- *Ask participant to introduce themselves. (confirm their organization and location)*
- This in-depth interview is being conducted by Pollara Strategic Insights, on behalf of Transport Canada. Our discussion will be on the Oceans Protection Plan and associated issues. You were invited to participate as you are a key partner on these issues. Even if you're not familiar with the Oceans Protection Plan, that's fine – you can still answer the questions.
- Our discussion will be about 45 minutes in length. However, please feel free to excuse yourself any time during our session if you need to do so. We can always schedule a time to finish this interview at a later date.
- Pollara will e-transfer you the \$150 honorarium within 10 business days, as a thank you for your participation. Can I confirm the e-mail address it should be sent to?
- As per the Government of Canada standards for conducting public opinion research, I would like to bring to your attention – and confirm your consent to – the fact that this session will be audio/video recorded for the purposes of our analysis, in case I need to double-check the record against my notes. These recordings will be used by Pollara only to write the report and will be destroyed after the completion of the final report.
- The entire discussion will remain completely confidential, and no comments or responses will be associated with you or anyone else who is participating. We're conducting 50 in-depth interviews on this topic, and the final report will not name anyone who participated. Rather, it will make comments like "most people felt this way" or "a few people felt this way". We will not identify to Transport Canada who participated or did not participate in the interviews.
- For our time today, I will ask you some questions. Please feel free to express your thoughts and opinions and remember that there are no right or wrong answers. We respect and value everyone's opinion, so please give your honest opinion.
- I am not employed by Transport Canada and am not a subject matter expert, so I might not be able to answer all your questions. However, if you do have questions, I will make a note of them, and will try to get you an answer as quickly as possible. I encourage you to ask questions, because it's useful for me to know if there are terms or concepts you're not familiar with, or if there are topics you'd be interested in learning more about.

Context (10 minutes)

1. What do Canada's oceans and/or waterways mean to your community?
 - a. (PROBE IF NEEDED) Why are oceans and/or waterways important to your community?
2. Is marine shipping important to your community? How so?
 - a. How is marine shipping affecting your community (in the past and in the present)?
3. When you hear the term "marine safety", what's the first thing that comes to your mind?
4. If we think of marine safety in terms of the protection of life and the environment through the safe movement of all forms of water transportation, what type of role do you believe the Government of Canada has around marine safety?
 - a. (PROBE IF NEEDED) How do you see the role of the Government of Canada when it comes to safe shipping?
 - b. (PROBE IF NEEDED) How do you see the role of the Government of Canada when it comes to marine pollution incidents, like spills?
 - c. Overall, how is the Government of Canada doing when it comes to marine safety?
 - d. Are they doing enough?

Oceans Protection Plan (20 minutes)

5. Have you heard about the Oceans Protection Plan? Do you feel you have a good understanding of what the Oceans Protection Plan is?
 - a. (IF THEY ARE FAMILIAR) Assume I'm not familiar with the Oceans Protection Plan. How would you describe it to me in 30 seconds?
 - b. (IF THEY ARE FAMILIAR) *When* did you learn about the Oceans Protection Plan? Have you heard more about it over the last year or two?
6. Are you familiar with the role Indigenous communities play in developing and delivering the Oceans Protection Plan? Is your community familiar?
 - a. Do you have any involvement with Indigenous partnerships connected to the Oceans Protection Plan? Does your community?
 - i. (IF YES – PROBE) Tell me a bit about those partnerships.
 - ii. (IF YES – PROBE) Have you seen new/stronger partnerships over the last year or two?
 - b. Are you and your community currently involved or planning to be involved in delivering the Oceans Protection Plan?
 - i. (IF YES – PROBE) In what ways?
 - c. As part of the Oceans Protection Plan, the Government of Canada provides Indigenous communities with training equipment to help protect Canada's coasts and waterways, including preventing and responding to accidents, as well as generating science related to marine safety. How do you feel about this?

7. What is working well with regards to the Oceans Protection Plan?
8. What could be improved with regards to the Oceans Protection Plan?
9. Where are you currently getting information about the Oceans Protection Plan?
 - a) Have you had any challenges getting information about the Oceans Protection Plan?
10. What are some ways the Government of Canada could raise awareness and understanding of OPP within your community? (RECORD RESPONSES, THEN PROBE ON HOW THEY'D FEEL ABOUT THE OPTIONS BELOW AND IF PEOPLE IN THEIR COMMUNITY WOULD PARTICIPATE)
 - a. In-person meetings?
 - b. Virtual meetings be useful?
 - c. Social media?
 - d. Information on a website?
 - e. Direct mail?
 - f. Dialogue forums/workshops?
 - g. Newsletter you could subscribe to?
 - h. Podcasts?
 - i. Anything else?

Indigenous Engagement (10 minutes)

11. Have you worked with other government departments on OPP? (for instance Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Canadian Coast Guard)
 - a. If yes, what worked well? Any examples of best practice that you would like to see repeated?
 - b. How can relationships with Other Government Departments be improved?
12. Do you feel that your community should have a larger role in protecting Canada's coast?
 - a. What role should your community have?
13. Do you feel that the Oceans Protection Plan can help Indigenous communities play a stronger role in decisions about marine safety? Why/Why not?
 - a. (IF NOT, PROBE) How could this be improved?
14. Has your community received funding to support your involvement in OPP?
 - a. How did this funding affect your ability to be involved?
15. Has the Government of Canada collected input and feedback about marine safety from your community?
 - a. Does your organization receive follow-up after this on how the feedback was used?

- b. What are some of the ways the Government of Canada could collect input and feedback?
 - c. Are you satisfied with how the Government of Canada is supporting your community to have a better understand of – and greater involvement in - the Oceans Protection Plan?
16. What type of relationship would you like to see between your community and the Government of Canada?
- a. What would make for a meaningful relationship between your community and the Government?
17. How can relationships between the Government of Canada and Indigenous communities be created or sustained?
- a. PROBE: What are the best ways to make sure these are effective partnerships?
 - b. What are the obstacles, if any, that you see to building relationships between the Government of Canada and Indigenous communities?
 - c. Is the Oceans Protection Plan an effective program to help create, maintain meaningful partnerships?
18. If you could make one recommendation to make the Oceans Protection Plan more effective, what would it be?

Thank you for your time! I'll follow up with an e-mail that has the password for the e-transfer once it has been sent to you. If you have any issues or don't see the e-transfer within 10 business days, you can always e-mail information@pollara.com.

Marine Stakeholders Interview Guide

Introduction (5 minutes)

- My name is _____ and I work for Pollara Strategic Insights. Thank you for taking the time to complete this interview.
- *Ask participant to introduce themselves. (confirm their organization and location)*
- This in-depth interview is being conducted by Pollara Strategic Insights, on behalf of Transport Canada. Our discussion will be on the Oceans Protection Plan and associated issues. You were invited to participate as your organization is a key stakeholder on these issues. Even if you're not familiar with the Oceans Protection Plan, that's fine – you can still answer the questions.
- Our discussion will be about 45 minutes in length. However, please feel free to excuse yourself any time during our session if you need to do so. We can always schedule a time to finish this interview at a later date.
- As per the Government of Canada standards for conducting public opinion research, I would like to bring to your attention – and confirm your consent to – the fact that this session will be audio/video recorded for the purposes of our analysis, in case I need to double-check the record against my notes. These recordings will be used by Pollara only to write the report, and will be destroyed after the completion of the final report.
- The entire discussion will remain completely confidential and no comments or responses will be associated with you or anyone else who is participating. We're conducting 50 in-depth interviews on this topic, and the final report will not name anyone who participated. Rather, it will make comments like “most people felt this way” or “a few people felt this way”. We will not identify to Transport Canada who participated or did not participate in the interviews.
- For our time today, I will ask you some questions. Please feel free to express your thoughts and opinions and remember that there are no right or wrong answers. We respect and value everyone's opinion, so please give your honest opinion.
- I am not employed by Transport Canada and am not a subject matter expert, so I might not be able to answer all your questions. However, if you do have questions, I will make a note of them and will try to get you an answer as quickly as possible. I encourage you to ask questions, because it's useful for me to know if there are terms or concepts you're not familiar with, or if there are topics you'd be interested in learning more about.

Context (10 minutes)

1. So that I have a sense of where you're coming from, can you tell me a bit about what your role is with your organization, and how long you've been working there?
2. What do Canada's oceans and/or waterways mean to your organization?
 - a. (PROBE IF NEEDED) Why are oceans and/or waterways important to your organization?
3. Is marine shipping¹ important to your organization? How so?
 - a. How is marine shipping affecting your community (in the past and in the present)?
4. When you hear the term "marine safety", what's the first thing that comes to your mind?
5. If we think of marine safety in terms of the protection of life and the environment through the safe movement of all forms of water transportation, what type of role do you believe the Government of Canada has around marine safety?
 - a. (PROBE IF NEEDED) How do you see the role of the Government of Canada when it comes to safe shipping?
 - b. (PROBE IF NEEDED) How do you see the role of the Government of Canada when it comes to marine pollution incidents, like spills?
 - c. Overall, how is the Government of Canada doing when it comes to marine safety?
 - d. Are they doing enough?

Oceans Protection Plan (20 minutes)

6. Have you heard about the Oceans Protection Plan? Do you feel you have a good understanding of what the Oceans Protection Plan is?
 - a. (IF THEY ARE FAMILIAR) Assume I'm not familiar with the Oceans Protection Plan. How would you describe it to me in 30 seconds?
7. Is your organization involved in any aspects of the Oceans Protection Plan?
 - a. (IF YES, PROBE) In what ways are they involved?
 - b. (PROBE) Has your organization been engaged on any Oceans Protection Plan initiatives? If yes, which ones?
8. Are you familiar with the role Indigenous communities play in developing and delivering the Oceans Protection Plan?
 - a. Have there been opportunities for your organization to work with Indigenous partners on Oceans Protection Plan initiatives?

¹ The shipment of goods (cargo) by ocean or waterway.

9. What is working well with regards to the Oceans Protection Plan?
10. What could be improved with regard to the Oceans Protection Plan?
11. Where are you currently getting information about the Oceans Protection Plan?
 - a. Have you had any challenges getting information about the Oceans Protection Plan?
12. What are some ways the Government of Canada could support a better understanding of the Oceans Protection Plan with marine stakeholders? (RECORD RESPONSES, THEN PROBE ON HOW THEY'D FEEL ABOUT THE OPTIONS BELOW AND IF PEOPLE IN THEIR ORGANIZATION WOULD PARTICIPATE)
 - a. In-person meetings?
 - b. Virtual meetings be useful?
 - c. Social media?
 - d. Information on a website?
 - e. Direct mail?
 - f. Dialogue forums/workshops?
 - g. Newsletter you could subscribe to?
 - h. Podcasts?
 - i. Anything else?

Stakeholder Engagement (10 minutes)

13. Have you worked with other government departments on OPP? (for instance, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Canadian Coast Guard)
 - a. If yes, was there something that worked well? Any examples of best practice that you would like to see repeated?
 - b. How can relationships with other Government Departments be improved?
 - c. Do you find coordination between departments (e.g. DFO, Transport Canada, Coast Guard) clear or confusing?
14. Do you feel that marine stakeholders should have a larger role in protecting Canada's coast?
 - a. Who else should play a larger role in protecting Canada's coast? (for example, local government, civil society, businesses, universities, etc.)
15. Do you feel that the Oceans Protection Plan can help the marine sector play a stronger role in decisions about marine safety? Why/Why not?
 - a. (IF NOT, PROBE) How could this be improved?
16. Does the Government of Canada currently collect input and feedback about marine safety from your organization?

- a. Does your organization receive follow-up after this on how the feedback was used?
 - b. What are some of the ways the Government of Canada could collect input and feedback?
 - c. Are you satisfied with how the Government of Canada is involving the marine sector when it comes to the Oceans Protection Plan?
17. What type of relationship would you like to see between your organization and the Government of Canada?
- a. What makes for a meaningful relationship between government and stakeholder groups like yours?
18. How can relationships between the Government of Canada and organizations in the marine sector be created or strengthened?
- a. PROBE: What are the best ways to make sure these are effective partnerships?
 - b. Is the Oceans Protection Plan an effective program to help create, maintain and strengthen stakeholder relationships?
19. If you could make one recommendation to make the Oceans Protection Plan more effective, what would it be?

Thank you for your time!