REPORT

Economic Confidence

BRITISH COLUMBIA FOCUS

JANUARY 2026 #10651-10014591

Background

- Perceptions of the economic state in Canada is an important driver of how consumers will spend (or not spend) in the coming months.
- Leger, the largest Canadian-owned polling and marketing research firm, monitors views on the economy and Canadians' own finances to keep a pulse on the mood and sentiment of the public.
- *This report represents the results that focus on British Columbia in particular.*

Methodology

- Results are based on online research conducted among a sample of British Columbians 18 years of age and older.
- The most recent wave was conducted among a sample of 401 British Columbians, with fieldwork January 9-12, 2026.
- The data was statistically weighted according to Canadian Census figures.
- A margin of error cannot be associated with a non-probability sample in a panel survey, but for comparison purposes, a probability sample of 401 would have a margin of error of ±4.9%, 19 times out of 20.

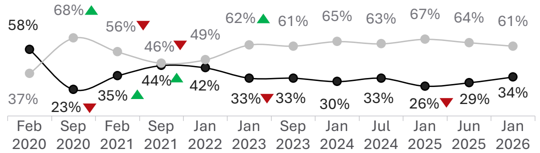
Additional methodology details can be found in the appendix.

KEY METRICS

NATIONAL ECONOMY

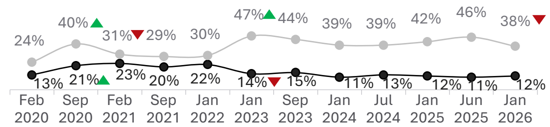
Current Confidence

Confidence in the national economy remains poor but is slightly less pessimistic.



Future Confidence

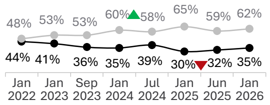
Future confidence is similarly not quite as negative.



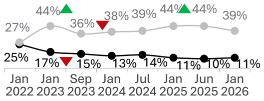
BC ECONOMY

Views of the current and future economy of BC are largely stable and remain in negative territory.

Current Confidence



Future Confidence

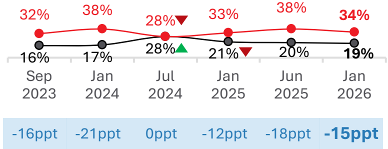


British Columbians' views of the economy and their personal finances are broadly in line with the national average. As such, results point to caution rather than optimism both currently and over the next six months. Concerns around housing affordability, inflation, and tariffs remain high, suggesting shoppers are unlikely to increase discretionary spending in the near term.

"Elbows up" sentiment remains prominent in response to US tariffs, with a majority of British Columbians regularly avoiding purchases from American suppliers. Forward-looking intentions indicate this behaviour is likely to persist.

Discretionary Spending

Predictions about discretionary spending are stable over the past year and half and continue to demonstrate caution.



Ongoing US Tariff Impact

Varying modestly by product category, a majority of British Columbians continue to routinely avoid buying US.

Future intentions indicate this will not only continue but that the trend may escalate.

AVOID BUYING US BY CATEGORY

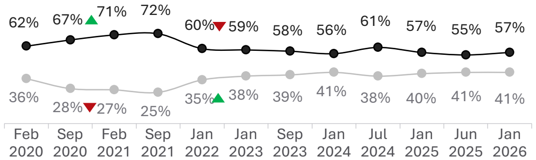
43% to 69%
always or sometimes avoid buying US

27% to 37%
less likely to buy US in next 6 months

HOUSEHOLD FINANCES

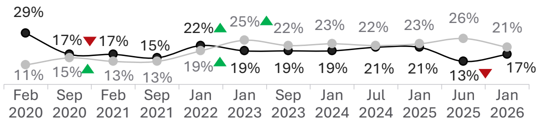
Current Confidence

Views of current household finances are stable again this January and are similar to the national average.



Future Confidence

Confidence in future personal finances has returned to more typical levels and is also on par with the Canadian average.



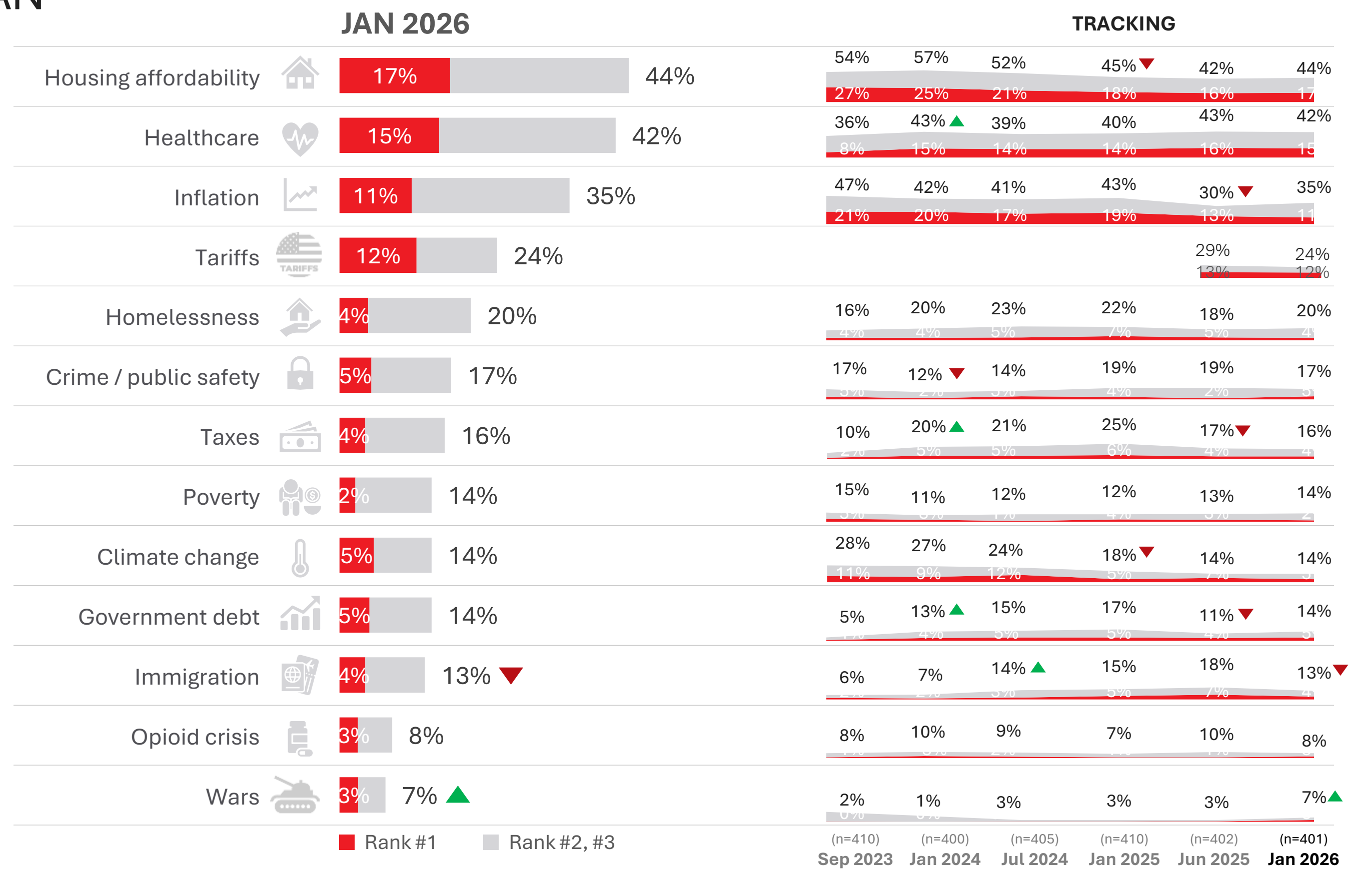
▲▼ Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous wave

IMPORTANT CANADIAN ISSUES AIDED

While concerns about tariffs from the US are still significant, they are directionally less prominent than in 2025.

In BC, housing affordability remains firmly in top spot. Inflation rounds out the top three, showing a slight increase from the previous wave, indicating this issue has not gone away. Taken together, these findings reinforce the extent to which economic concerns remain top of mind for British Columbians.

Otherwise, immigration worries have eased slightly while on the global front, conflict is a growing concern.



Note: Responses >6% for Jan 2026 are shown.

What is the number one important issue facing Canada today?
What is the second most important issue? The third most important?

Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous wave

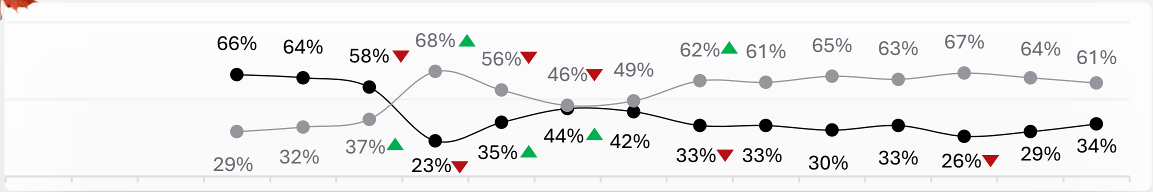
CURRENT ECONOMIC PERCEPTIONS

Views of the national economy among British Columbians have fluctuated over the past two years but continue to show no clear signs of recovery. Similar to the national picture, negative perceptions in BC still nearly double positive ones.

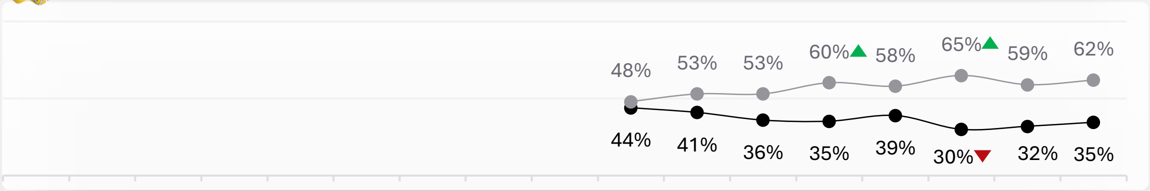
Sentiment toward the provincial economy remains pessimistic and largely unchanged over the same period.

Perceptions of household finances are stable and sit close to the national average.

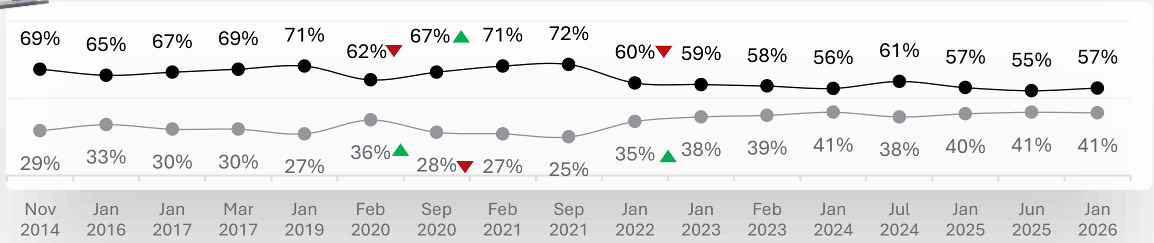
Canada Economy



BC Economy



Household Finances



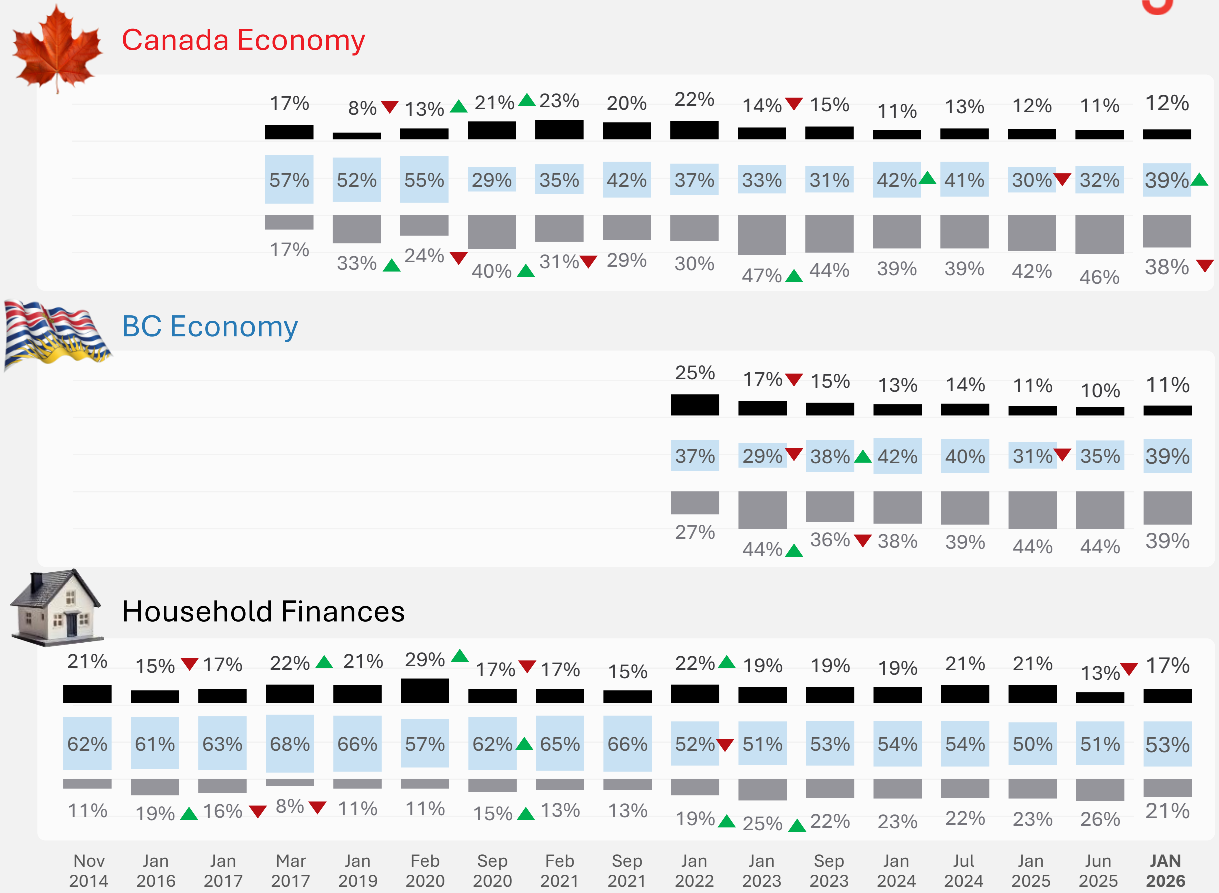
Good/very good
Poor/very poor

How would you describe the economic conditions in Canada today?
Thinking specifically about your home province/territory, how would you describe the economic conditions in ... today?
How would you describe your own household's finances today?

▲▼ Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous wave

FUTURE ECONOMIC CONFIDENCE

Expectations for the national economy, provincial economy, and household finances remain in negative territory. While there is no indication of a strong near-term recovery, fewer British Columbians now anticipate a decline in the Canadian economy compared with six months ago. At the same time, the share expecting conditions to remain stable is relatively high in January. Overall, these findings suggest British Columbians are anticipating more of the same in the months ahead.



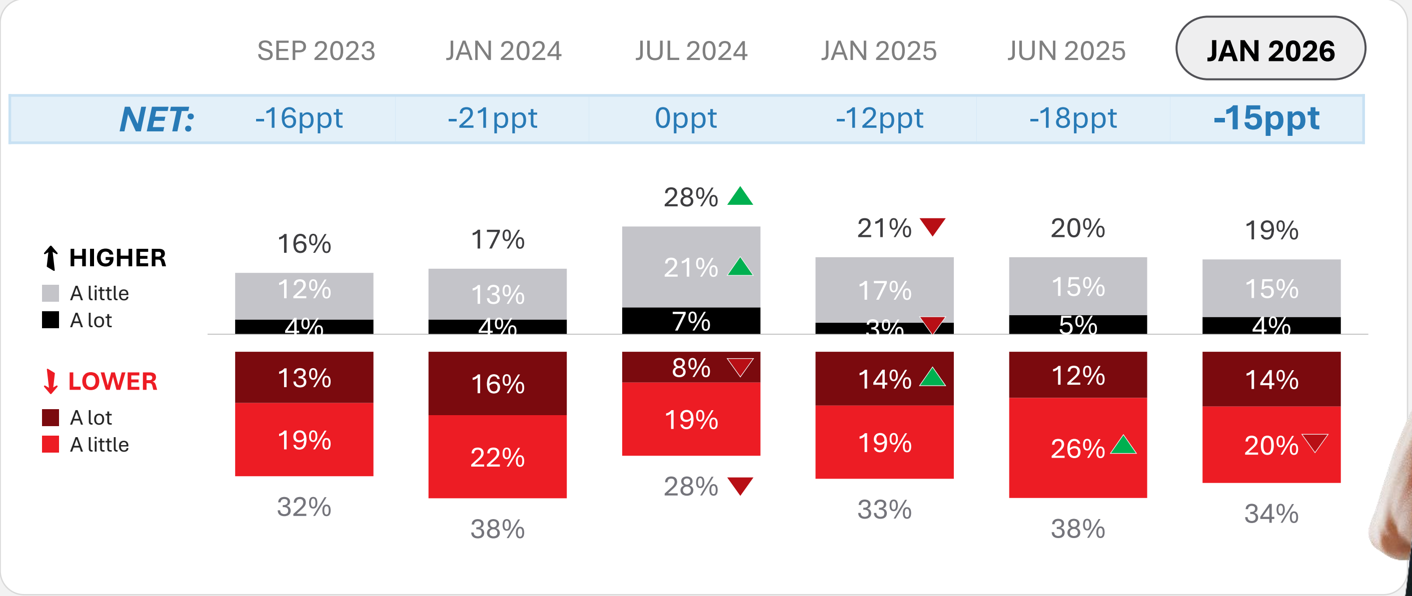
- Improve
- Stay the same
- Decline

Over the next six months, do you expect the Canadian economy to improve, remain the same, or decline?
Thinking specifically about your home province/territory, over the next six months, do you expect the economy to improve, remain the same, or decline?
Over the next six months, do you expect your own household's finances to improve, remain the same, or decline?

▲▼ Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous wave

OVERALL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING EXPECTATIONS

The outlook for discretionary spending in BC is slightly less negative than six months ago, with fewer residents planning to reduce their spending. However, it continues to reflect a high degree of caution among consumers, as those intending to spend less remain outweighed by those planning to increase their spending.



The next questions are about your **discretionary spending** – by this, we mean your spending on **non-essential items** (items that you can choose to spend your money on or not). Do you expect your discretionary spending in the **next 6 months** to be higher, about the same or lower compared to the past 6 months?

▲▼ Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous wave

WINTER HOLIDAY SPENDING VS. BUDGET

Despite generally gloomy expectations for the economy and discretionary spending, British Columbians were – as is typically the case –more likely to exceed rather than come in under their budgets when shopping during the winter holiday season. Results are largely consistent with that of the past two years.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

	JAN 2024	JAN 2025	**JAN 2026**
NET CHANGE:	+15	+15	**+13**
MORE	**31%**	**31%**	**32%**
A little more	22%	25%	20%
A lot more	8%	7%	13% ▲
On budget	44%	44%	**42%**
A lot less	9%	7%	7%
A little less	7%	9%	12%
LESS	**16%**	**16%**	**19%**
Did not spend:	9%	8%	**7%**

Thinking about spending related to the recent **winter holiday season** (including gifts, entertaining, and spending for yourself), how did it compare to your intentions/budget?

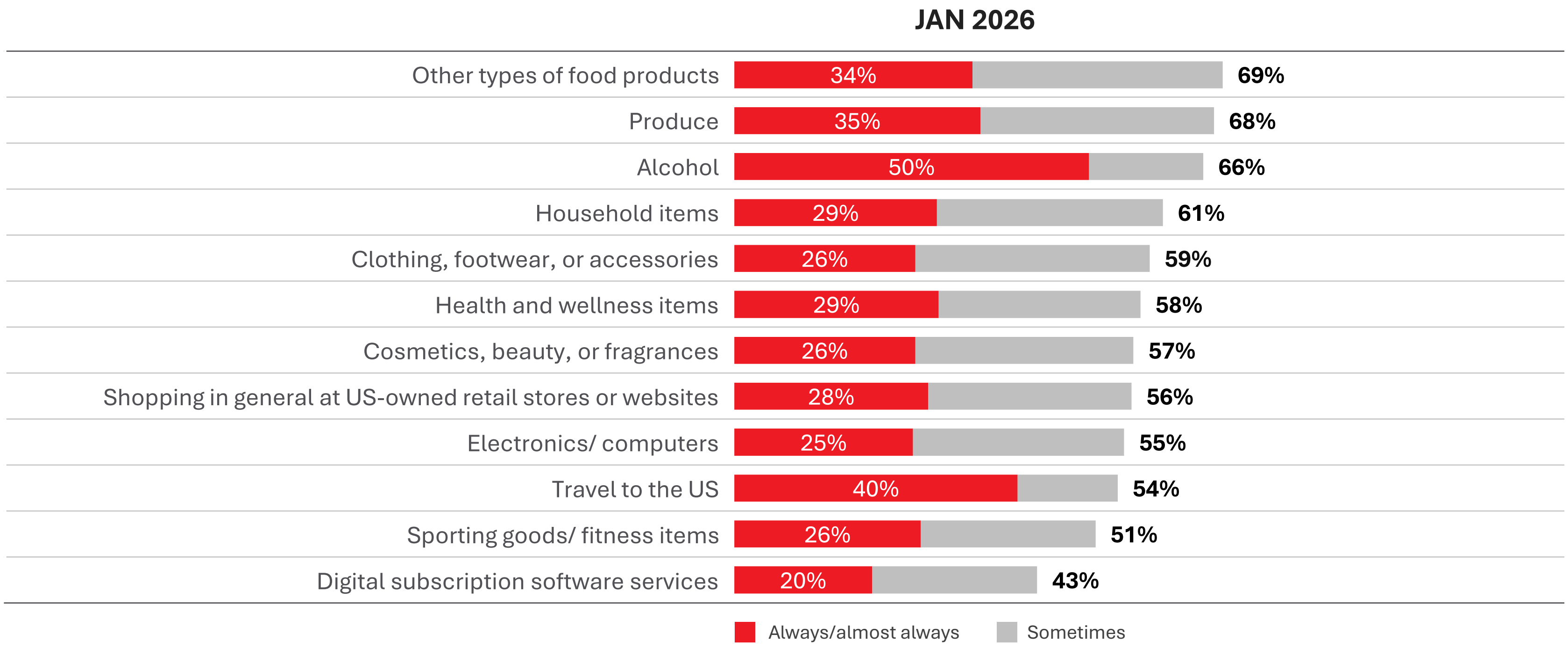
▲▼ Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous wave

CURRENT AVOIDING BUYING ALWAYS/SOMETIMES FROM THE US

(Among Buyers of Each)

Between four and seven in ten British Columbians report that they always or sometimes avoid purchasing products and services from US suppliers.

Food (both produce and other grocery items) and beverages (particularly alcohol) are where the largest majorities are taking a stand. Notably, British Columbians are most “absolute” in their avoidance when it comes to alcohol purchases and travel to the US, with the highest proportions saying they always or almost always avoid these categories. By contrast, avoidance is most challenging in the area of digital subscription services, which are heavily dominated by US-based providers such as Netflix.



Changing the topic slightly, how often do you consciously **avoid buying items from the USA** when it comes to each of the following?

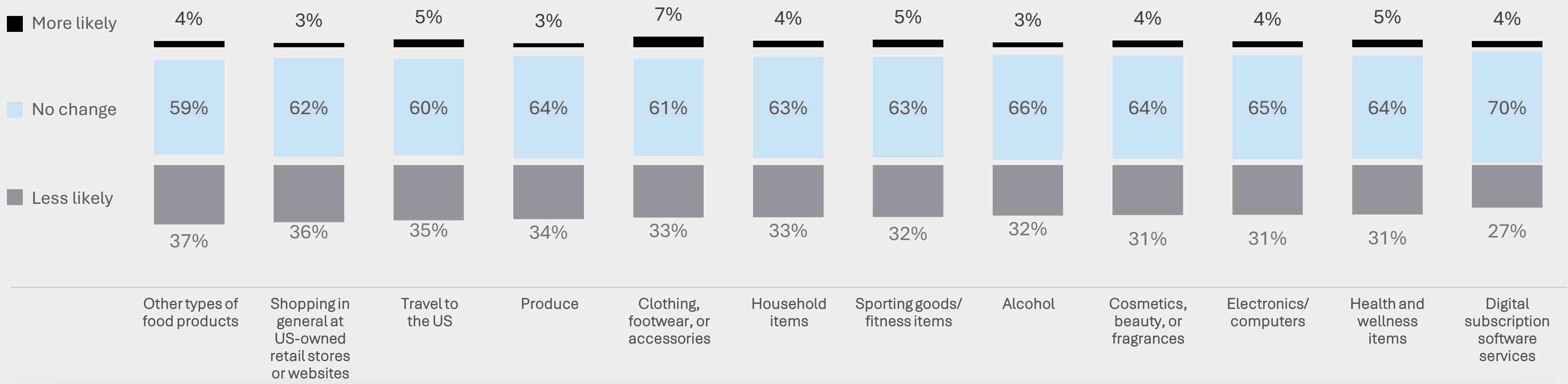
FUTURE LIKELIHOOD TO CONSIDER BUYING FROM THE US

(Among Buyers of Each)

Reflecting their “elbows up” attitudes, a strong majority of British Columbians – like Canadians from all provinces – report currently avoiding purchases from the US across all categories tested. Moreover, a notable minority (one in three or more) plan to intensify these efforts and be even less likely to buy from the US over the next six months. Only a very small share anticipate backtracking and becoming more likely to purchase from US suppliers in the near term.

Taken together, these findings clearly indicate that avoidance of US products and services is not a short-term reaction, but a trend with staying power.

JAN 2026



NET CHANGE	-33	-33	-30	-31	-26	-29	-28	-29	-27	-27	-26	-23

Compared to how you have felt about buying products from the USA in the past 6 months or so, do you think you will be **more or less likely to consider** buying these items from the USA **in the NEXT six months**, or will how you feel about buying them not be likely change?

Appendix

METHODOLOGY

- The LEO (Leger Opinion) panel is the largest Canadian panel with over 400,000 representative panelists from all regions of Canada. LEO was created by Leger based on a representative Canadian sample of Canadian citizens with Internet access.
    - Many of LEO's panelists were randomly selected through Leger's telephone call centre (RDD), panelists from more hard-to-reach target groups were also added to the panel through targeted recruitment campaigns. The double opt-in selection process, a model to detect fraud and the renewal of 25% of the panel each year ensures complete respondent quality. To ensure a higher response rate and reach people on their mobile devices, Leger has developed a high-performance Apple and Android application.
- The results presented in this study comply with the public opinion research standards and disclosure requirements of CRIC (the Canadian Research and Insights Council) and the global ESOMAR network. Leger is a founding member of CRIC and is actively involved in raising quality standards in the survey industry. President Jean-Marc Léger is a member of the CRIC's Board of Directors and the Canadian representative of ESOMAR.

WEIGHTED AND UNWEIGHTED SAMPLE

The tables below present the distribution of respondents for the most recent wave on key variables before and after weighting for the current wave.

Gender ID	Unweighted	Weighted
Men	195	178
Women	206	188

Age group	Unweighted	Weighted
18-34	101	97
35-54	117	116
55+	183	153

NOTES ON READING THIS REPORT

- The numbers presented have been rounded. However, the numbers before rounding were used to calculate the sums presented and might therefore not correspond to the manual addition of these numbers.

- In this report, statistically significant differences in trending over time are shown as follows:

  ▲▼ Statistically significantly higher/lower than previous wave

- In this report, statistically significant differences between subgroups are shown as follows:

  ⬆⬇ Statistically significantly higher/ lower than comparison group(s)

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