

### Quick Hit – Foreign flows & Canadian bonds: 2018 a year to forget

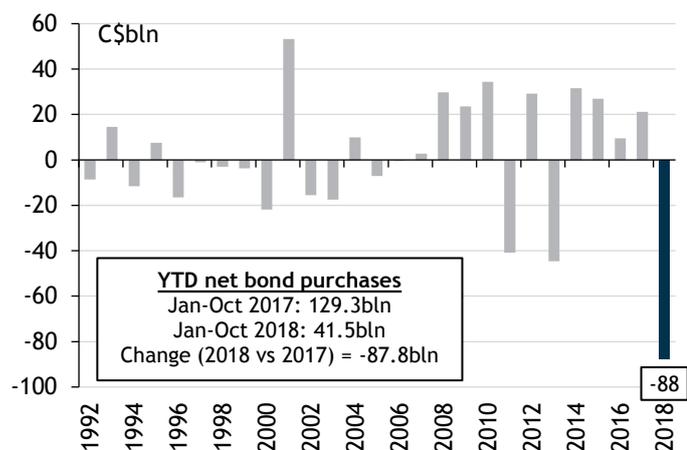
As reported this morning, non-residents acquired a net \$4.4 billion of Canadian bonds in October, bringing the year-to-date tally to \$41.5 billion. Without context, positive multi-billion-dollar inflows for the latest month and the current year-to-date sounds healthy enough. On balance, foreign investors are buying more Canadian bonds than they're selling (or seeing mature), right?

Despite positive bond inflows for the year, there's been a truly striking drop-off in the pace of net buying relative to prior years. For instance, this year has seen a roughly \$88 billion slowdown in net bond buying versus the prior year-to-date—an unprecedented deceleration (Chart 1). While it's true that 2017 was a massive year for net international investment, 2018's pace of net foreign bond buying is still the slowest in five years and second slowest in a decade... so there's more than a high base effect at play. Really, the slowdown in foreign purchases of Canadian bonds is looking more and more indiscriminate.

Whereas foreign investors acquired over \$20 billion of GoC bonds in 2017:YTD, they've moved to unload a net \$34 billion this year (Chart 2). Meanwhile, net foreign buying of federal government enterprise bonds is down 60% on a YTD basis, while combined flows in provincial/municipal securities have moderated >80%. Note that YTD bond flows would look a whole lot worse if it weren't for still-outsized foreign buying of Canadian corporate bonds (Chart 3). As far as corporates are concerned, beware of misinterpreting these data. As we regularly caution, a lot of these inflows are related to issues denominated in foreign currencies. Sure enough, if you isolate non-resident flows in C\$-denominated bonds only, 2018 has seen \$18.7 billion of net selling versus net buying of \$50 billion this time last year. All in all, 2018 has been a year to forget in terms of foreign flows into our bond market. Problem is, Canada will still have a non-trivial current account deficit to finance in 2019. Based on the current trend, not much external financing arrives via net FDI inflows... so it might just take a cheap currency and/or wider spreads to attract needed foreign buying in the year ahead.

**Chart 1: Foreign buying slows dramatically**

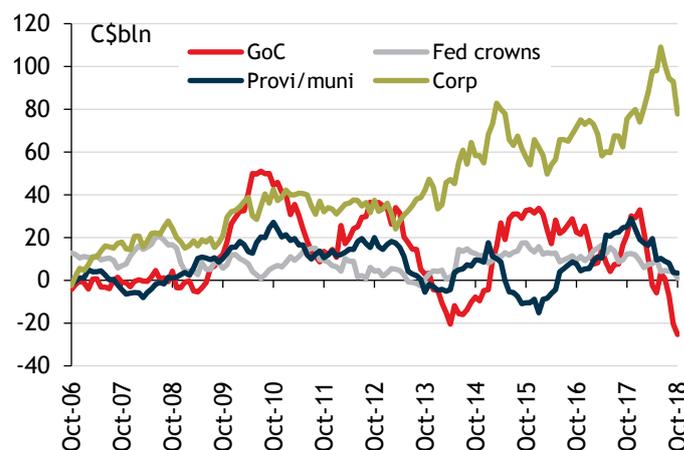
YTD change in net foreign purchases of Canadian bonds



Source: NBF, Statistics Canada

**Chart 2: Slowdown seen in most sectors**

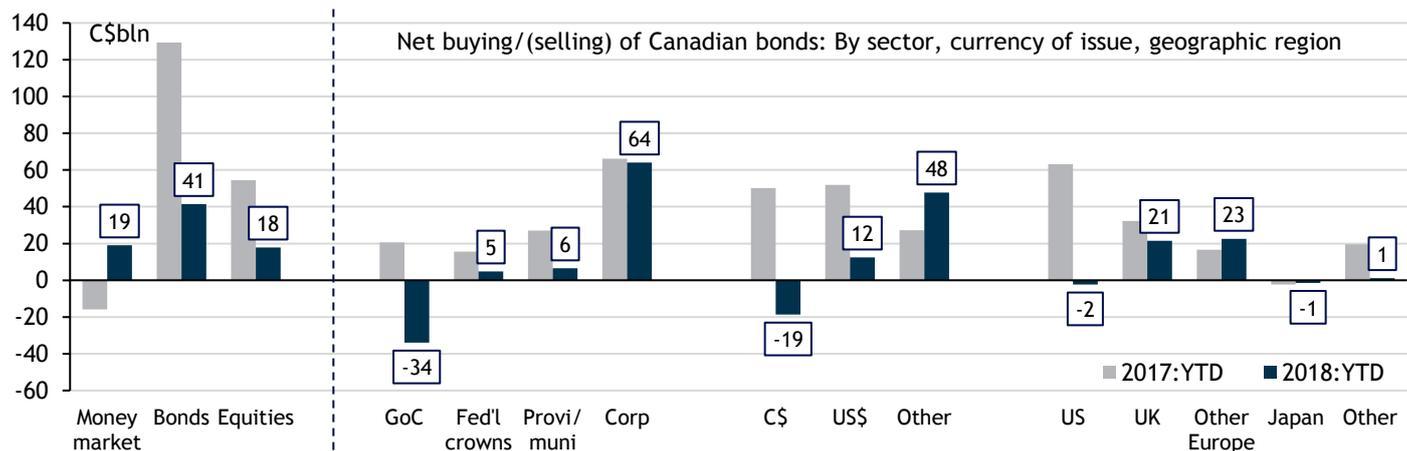
Net foreign purchases of Canadian bonds by sector: 12M rolling sum



Source: NBF, Statistics Canada

**Chart 3: A closer look at non-resident portfolio investment/(divestment) in Canada**

Net foreign investment in Canadian portfolio securities: 2018YTD vs 2017YTD



Source: NBF, Statistics Canada | Note: Year-to-date based on January to October data

PLEASE SEE END OF DOCUMENT FOR IMPORTANT DISCLOSURES

## Fixed Income Trading Desk Strategy

### Public Sector Strategy

Warren Lovely

+1 416-869-8598 | [Warren.Lovely@nbc.ca](mailto:Warren.Lovely@nbc.ca)

Catherine Maltais

+1 514-879-2270 | [Catherine.Maltais@nbc.ca](mailto:Catherine.Maltais@nbc.ca)

Taylor Schleich

+1 416-869-6480 | [Taylor.Schleich@nbc.ca](mailto:Taylor.Schleich@nbc.ca)

### Corporate Credit

Connor Sedgewick

+1 514-879-3182 | [Connor.Sedgewick@nbc.ca](mailto:Connor.Sedgewick@nbc.ca)

Pete Metzger

+1 416-869-8607 | [Pete.Metzger@nbc.ca](mailto:Pete.Metzger@nbc.ca)

### Relative Value Models

Drew Lloyd

+44 (0)20-7488-9379 | [Drew.Lloyd@nbc.ca](mailto:Drew.Lloyd@nbc.ca)

#### Important Disclosures

##### General

This Report was prepared by National Bank Financial, Inc. (NBF), (a Canadian investment dealer, member of IIROC), an indirect wholly owned subsidiary of National Bank of Canada. National Bank of Canada is a public company listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

The particulars contained herein were obtained from sources which we believe to be reliable but are not guaranteed by us and may be incomplete and may be subject to change without notice. The information is current as of the date of this document. Neither the author nor NBF assumes any obligation to update the information or advise on further developments relating to the topics or securities discussed. The opinions expressed are based upon the author(s) analysis and interpretation of these particulars and are not to be construed as a solicitation or offer to buy or sell the securities mentioned herein, and nothing in this Report constitutes a representation that any investment strategy or recommendation contained herein is suitable or appropriate to a recipient's individual circumstances. In all cases, investors should conduct their own investigation and analysis of such information before taking or omitting to take any action in relation to securities or markets that are analyzed in this Report. The Report alone is not intended to form the basis for an investment decision, or to replace any due diligence or analytical work required by you in making an investment decision.

Any opinions expressed herein reflect a trading perspective. NBF, or its affiliates may publish fundamental research on the subject issuer(s), which may reflect a different opinion. This Report is not produced by the NBF Research Department and has not been reviewed by the NBF Research Department.

This Report is for distribution only under such circumstances as may be permitted by applicable law. This Report is not directed at you if NBF or any affiliate distributing this Report is prohibited or restricted by any legislation or regulation in any jurisdiction from making it available to you. You should satisfy yourself before reading it that NBF is permitted to provide this Report to you under relevant legislation and regulations.

*National Bank of Canada Financial Markets is a trade name used by National Bank Financial and National Bank of Canada Financial Inc.*

*National Bank Financial Inc. or an affiliate thereof, owns or controls an equity interest in TMX Group Limited ("TMX Group") and has a nominee director serving on the TMX Group's board of directors. As such, each such investment dealer may be considered to have an economic interest in the listing of securities on any exchange owned or operated by TMX Group, including the Toronto Stock Exchange, the TSX Venture Exchange and the Alpha Exchange. No person or company is required to obtain products or services from TMX Group or its affiliates as a condition of any such dealer supplying or continuing to supply a product or service.*

##### Canadian Residents

NBF or its affiliates may engage in any trading strategies described herein for their own account or on a discretionary basis on behalf of certain clients and as market conditions change, may amend or change investment strategy including full and complete divestment. The trading interests of NBF and its affiliates may also be contrary to any opinions expressed in this Report.

NBF or its affiliates often act as financial advisor, agent or underwriter for certain issuers mentioned herein and may receive remuneration for its services. As well NBF and its affiliates and/or their officers, directors, representatives, associates, may have a position in the securities mentioned herein and may make purchases and/or sales of these securities from time to time in the open market or otherwise. NBF and its affiliates may make a market in securities mentioned in this Report. This Report may not be independent of the proprietary interests of NBF and its affiliates.

This Report is not considered a research product under Canadian law and regulation, and consequently is not governed by Canadian rules applicable to the publication and distribution of research Reports, including relevant restrictions or disclosures required to be included in research Reports.

##### UK Residents

This Report is a marketing document. This Report has not been prepared in accordance with EU legal requirements designed to promote the independence of investment research and it is not subject to any prohibition on dealing ahead of the dissemination of investment research. In respect of the distribution of this Report to UK residents, NBF has approved the contents (including, where necessary, for the purposes of Section 21(1) of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000). This Report is for information purposes only and does not constitute a personal recommendation, or investment, legal or tax advice. NBF and/or its parent and/or any companies within or affiliates of the National Bank of Canada group and/or any of their directors, officers and employees may have or may have had interests or long or short positions in, and may at any time make purchases and/or sales as principal or agent, or may act or may have acted as market maker in the relevant investments or related investments discussed in this Report, or may act or have acted as investment and/or commercial banker with respect hereto. The value of investments, and the income derived from them, can go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount invested. Past performance is not a guide to future performance. If an investment is denominated in a foreign currency, rates of exchange may have an adverse effect on the value of the investment. Investments which are illiquid may be difficult to sell or realise; it may also be difficult to obtain reliable information about their value or the extent of the risks to which they are exposed. Certain transactions, including those involving futures, swaps, and other derivatives, give rise to substantial risk and are not suitable for all investors. The investments contained in this Report are not available to retail customers and this Report is not for distribution to retail clients (within the meaning of the rules of the Financial Conduct Authority). Persons who are retail clients should not act or rely upon the information in this Report. This Report does not constitute or form part of any offer for sale or subscription of or solicitation of any offer to buy or subscribe for the securities described herein nor shall it or any part of it form the basis of or be relied on in connection with any contract or commitment whatsoever.

This information is only for distribution to Eligible Counterparties and Professional Clients in the United Kingdom within the meaning of the rules of the Financial Conduct Authority. NBF is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and has its registered office at 71 Fenchurch Street, London, EC3M 4HD.

NBF is not authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and the Financial Conduct Authority to accept deposits in the United Kingdom.

## U.S. Residents

With respect to the distribution of this report in the United States of America, National Bank of Canada Financial Inc. ("NBCFI") which is regulated by the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) and a member of the Securities Investor Protection Corporation (SIPC), an affiliate of NBF, accepts responsibility for its contents, subject to any terms set out above. To make further inquiry related to this report, or to effect any transaction, United States residents should contact their NBCFI registered representative.

This report is not a research report and is intended for Major U.S. Institutional Investors only. This report is not subject to U.S. independence and disclosure standards applicable to research reports.

## HK Residents

With respect to the distribution of this email in Hong Kong by NBC Financial Markets Asia Limited ("NBCFMA") which is licensed by the Securities and Futures Commission ("SFC") to conduct Type 1 (dealing in securities) and Type 3 (leveraged foreign exchange trading) regulated activities, the contents of this email are solely for informational purposes. It has not been approved by, reviewed by, verified by or filed with any regulator in Hong Kong. Nothing herein is a recommendation, advice, offer or solicitation to buy or sell a product or service, nor an official confirmation of any transaction. None of the products issuers, NBCFMA or its affiliates or other persons or entities named herein are obliged to notify you of changes to any information and none of the foregoing assume any loss suffered by you in reliance of such information.

The content of this email may contain information about investment products which are not authorized by SFC for offering to the public in Hong Kong and such information will only be available to, those persons who are Professional Investors (as defined in the Securities and Futures Ordinance of Hong Kong ("SFO")). If you are in any doubt as to your status you should consult a financial adviser or contact us. This material is not meant to be marketing materials and is not intended for public distribution. Please note that neither this material nor the product referred to is authorized for sale by SFC. Please refer to product prospectus for full details.

There may be conflicts of interest relating to NBCFMA or its affiliates' businesses. These activities and interests include potential multiple advisory, transactional and financial and other interests in securities and instruments that may be purchased or sold by NBCFMA or its affiliates, or in other investment vehicles which are managed by NBCFMA or its affiliates that may purchase or sell such securities and instruments. No other entity within the National Bank of Canada group, including National Bank of Canada and National Bank Financial Inc, is licensed or registered with the SFC. Accordingly, such entities and their employees are not permitted and do not intend to: (i) carry on a business in any regulated activity in Hong Kong; (ii) hold themselves out as carrying on a business in any regulated activity in Hong Kong; or (iii) actively market their services to the Hong Kong public

## Copyright

This Report may not be reproduced in whole or in part, or further distributed or published or referred to in any manner whatsoever, nor may the information, opinions or conclusions contained in it be referred to without in each case the prior express written consent of NBF.