

Climate of Change Survey 2022

Top-line summary webinar

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Université 
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 EcoAnalytics

A project of
 MakeWay

Climate of Change – why track opinion?

- National survey spanning 2011–2022 that tracks public opinion on climate change and related issues in Canada
- Partnership with international researchers (since 2011), and EcoAnalytics 2016–2018; 2020, 2022, 2023.
 - Tracking beliefs, attitudes, policy preferences and polarization around climate change
- High-level, contextual view of Canadian opinion that helps:
 - Pinpoint opportunities and threats, to craft effective messaging
 - Monitor effectiveness of campaigns
 - Test new frames and narratives

Reporting plan: today and January

- Today, mostly descriptive
 - High-level findings, a view from 20,000 feet
 - Update on tracking metrics (beliefs, risk perceptions, experience with weather)
 - New batteries on misinformation and eco-anxiety
- January, more analytical
 - Your survey experiments and questions: assigning responsibility to O&G sector, opportunities/barriers facing sue Big Oil campaign, clean energy transition
 - Pls advise me *asap* about questions you need answered in January

Methodology

- Quantitative survey (15 minutes)
- From Nov 25 to Dec 2, 2022
- Sample of 1,860 Canadians
- High-quality online sample, designed to be representative of Canadian population characteristics.
- Oversample in smaller provinces, weighted to match population stats
- Online, opt-in panel is non-probability but tracks closely to past telephone surveys (Lachapelle, 2021)

| Province (% of pop) | Target | Unweighted n |
|---------------------|--------|--------------|
| BC (14%) | 200 | 195 |
| AB (11%) | 200 | 203 |
| SK (3%) | 100 | 101 |
| MB (4%) | 100 | 104 |
| ON (38%) | 400 | 406 |
| QC (24%) | 300 | 302 |
| NB (2%) | 175 | 201 |
| NS (3%) | 175 | 201 |
| NL (1%) | 70 | 106 |
| PE (<1%) | 30 | 40 |
| | 1750 | 1860 |

Main findings and advice (1)

Link climate change to more salient issues: affordability, inflation, health, etc.

- Climate is competing for public & government attention
- Near-majority having difficulty making ends meet, financially; worries about healthcare
- Link climate "bads" (e.g., oil and gas) to cost of living & other problems (e.g. health)
- Stress how climate solutions (heat pumps & renewables) lower costs, stabilize energy prices, boost air quality, etc.

Engage Canadians on extreme weather

- Many exposed to extreme weather, most attribute some role to climate change
- But perceived harm remains low; ideology & worldviews obscure connection to climate change & mute calls to action
- Nevertheless, extreme weather still an opportunity to engage on mitigation and adaptation

Mind the gap

- Canadians still concerned about climate change, but few engaged in significant behavioural change,
- However, youth and BIPOC show signs of climate engagement & pro-environmental behaviours

Main findings and advice (2)

Target BIPOC, work with youth to emphasize justice of climate solutions

- Some social justice issues can be tied to addressing climate change
- Financially strained Canadians less likely to prioritize climate, less prepared for climate change impacts
- BIPOC segments more likely to engage in climate friendly behaviours but are disadvantaged by social structures
- How might EcoAnalytics research help the most vulnerable?

Moderate levels of eco-anxiety could benefit engagement

- Vast majority of Canadians show no sign of eco-anxiety
- Those who do are more likely to be engaged or engageable in climate friendly behaviours

Confusion reigns, somewhat

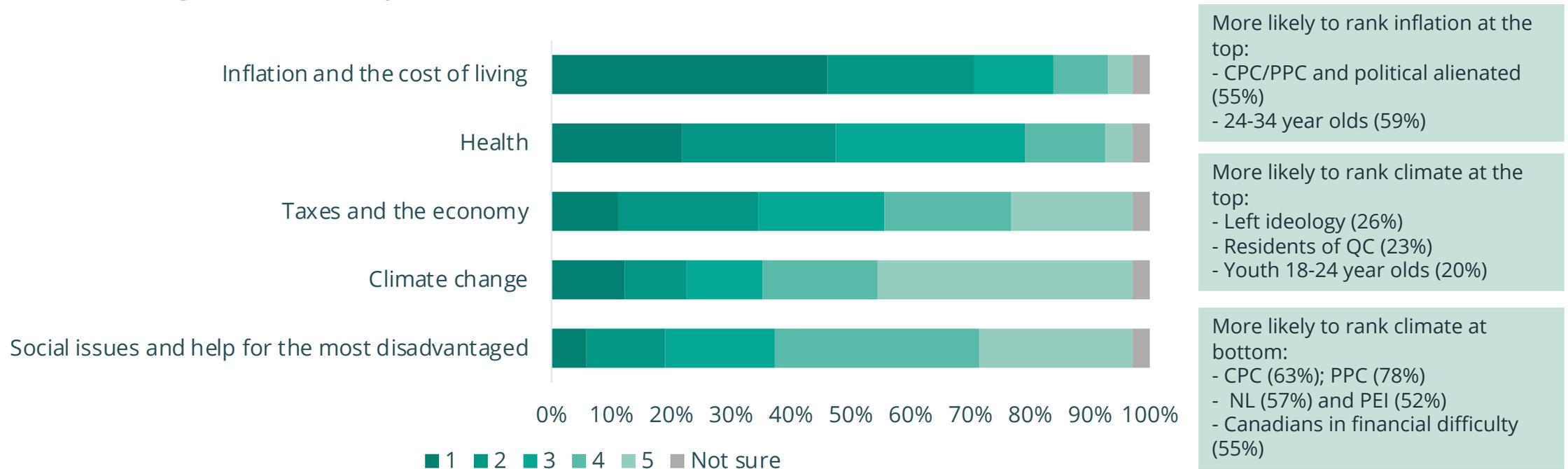
- Canadians generally good at identifying false information, though differences by segments can be large
- More strikingly, on many statements tested, Canadians just don't know what to believe.

Cooling climate of opinion

Tracking Canadian attitudes as the climate changes

Other issues eclipse climate change

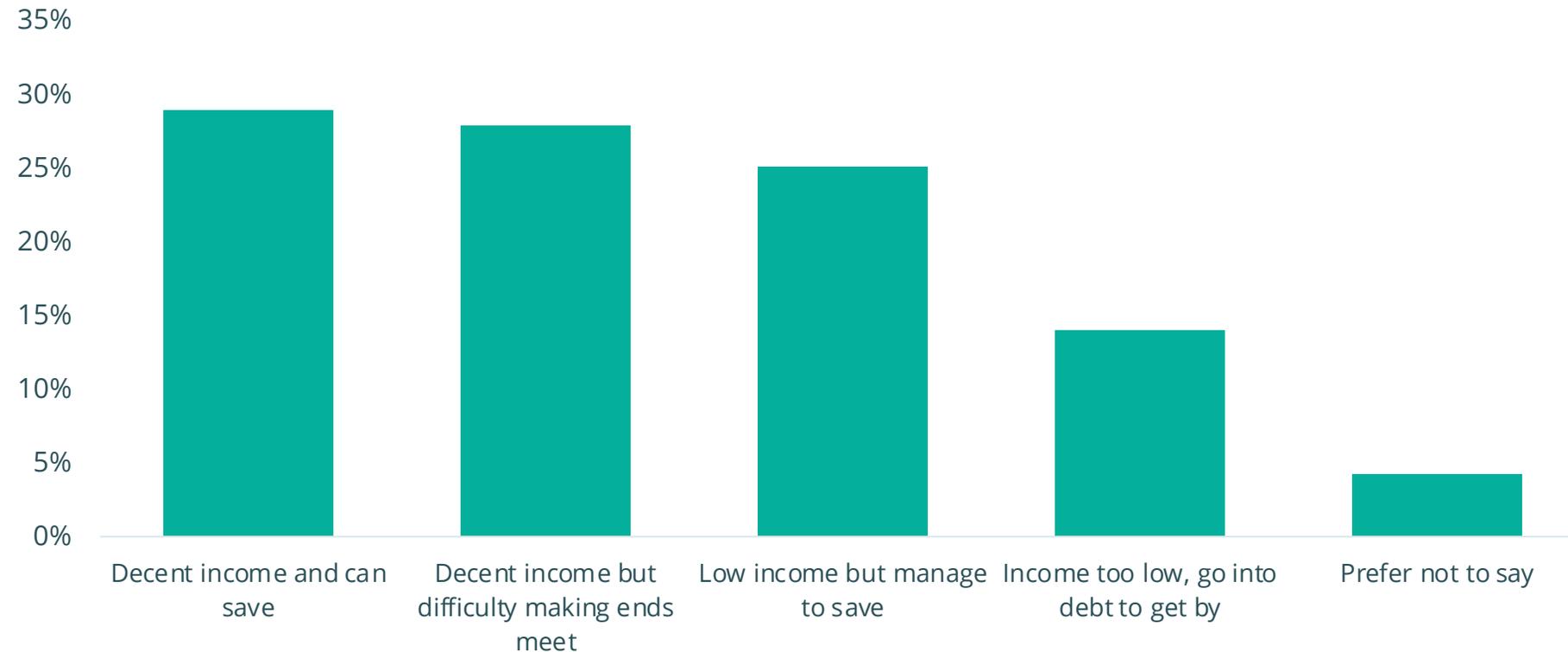
Q: Please rank the following issues in order of importance to you, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.



Climate change continues to fall in importance relative to a high in 2019. A near majority (46%) ranks inflation and cost of living as most important. Health, in general, remains salient. Climate change ranks near the bottom (12%), with 43% ranking it lowest

Canadians in a financial squeeze

Q: Thinking now about your finances, which of the following statements best describes your personal situation?



Decline in public concern about climate

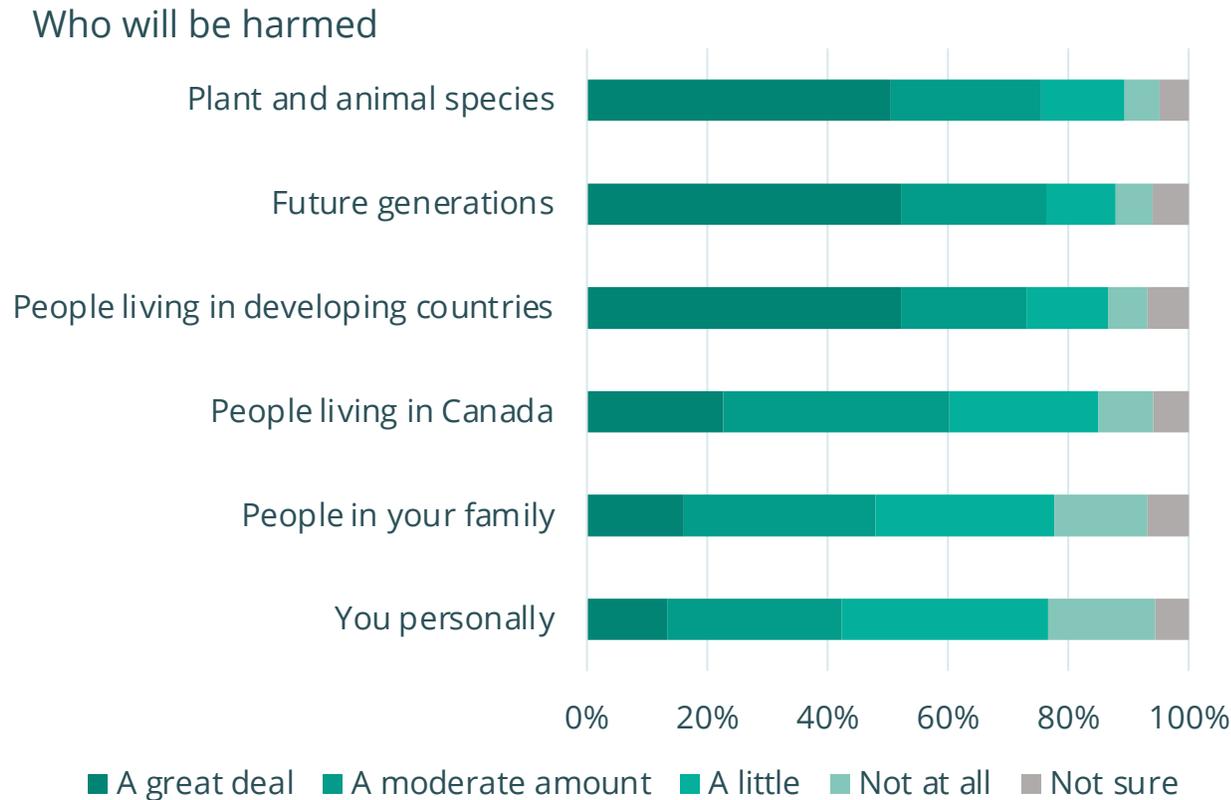
Q: How concerned are you, if at all, about climate change?



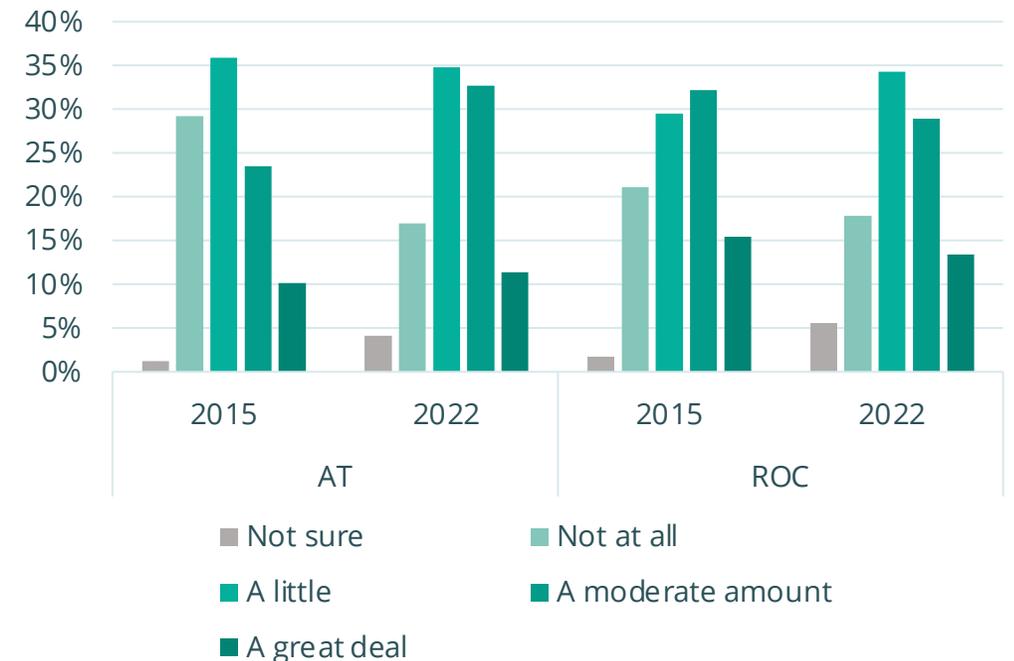
Reversing a trend of growing public concern about climate change since 2013, the proportion of “very” concerned dropped for the first time, even among more “concerned” segments such as those who vote NDP (69% very concerned in 2021) or Green (67%), and Canadians aged 18–29 (52%).

Climate remains a “distant” problem

Q: How much do you think climate change will harm...



Perceptions of personal risk, 2015–2022

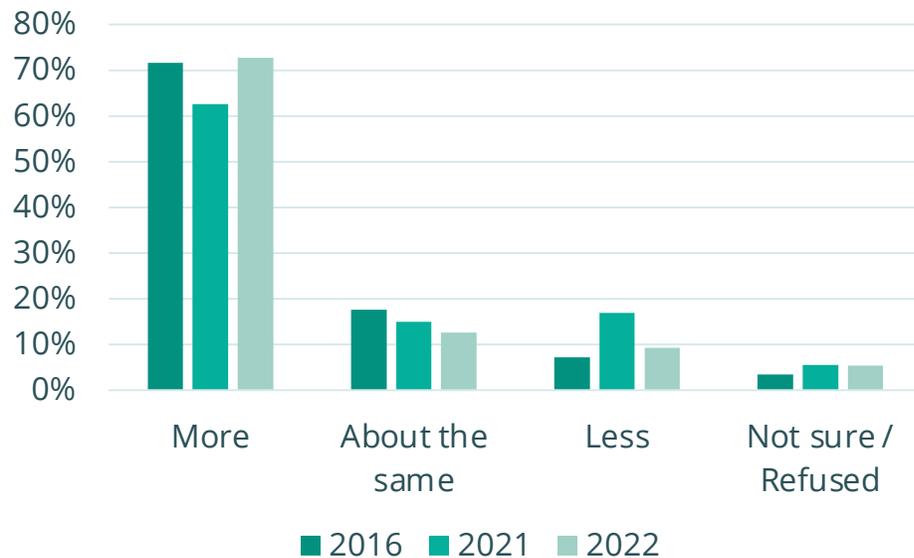


Climate change remains a psychologically distant problem, and perceptions of personal risk are still stubbornly low. Atlantic Canadians, post-Fiona, seemed largely impervious to evidence of greater personal risk, though perceptions of being at “moderate” risk rose significantly in the region.

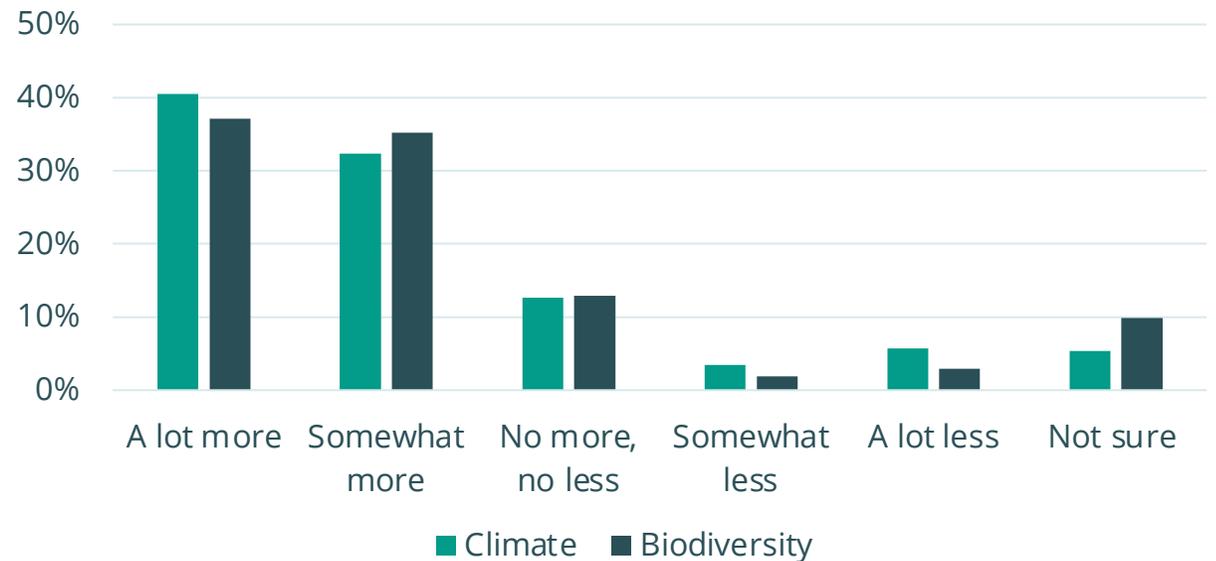
Yet, public demand for climate action rebounds

Q: Do you think governments should be doing more, less, or about the same as now to address climate change / the loss of biodiversity?

Demand for climate action, 2016; 2021 & 2022



Demand for more action on climate and biodiversity, 2022



Among most segments, demand for action on addressing the loss of biodiversity tracks support for climate action closely. Demand for more action on climate (85%) and protection of biodiversity (89%) is highest in Quebec. However, some segments (e.g. CPC) are significantly more opposed to action on climate (47%) than biodiversity (31%).

Misinformation

A climate of confusion?

Many Canadians know the truth, but...

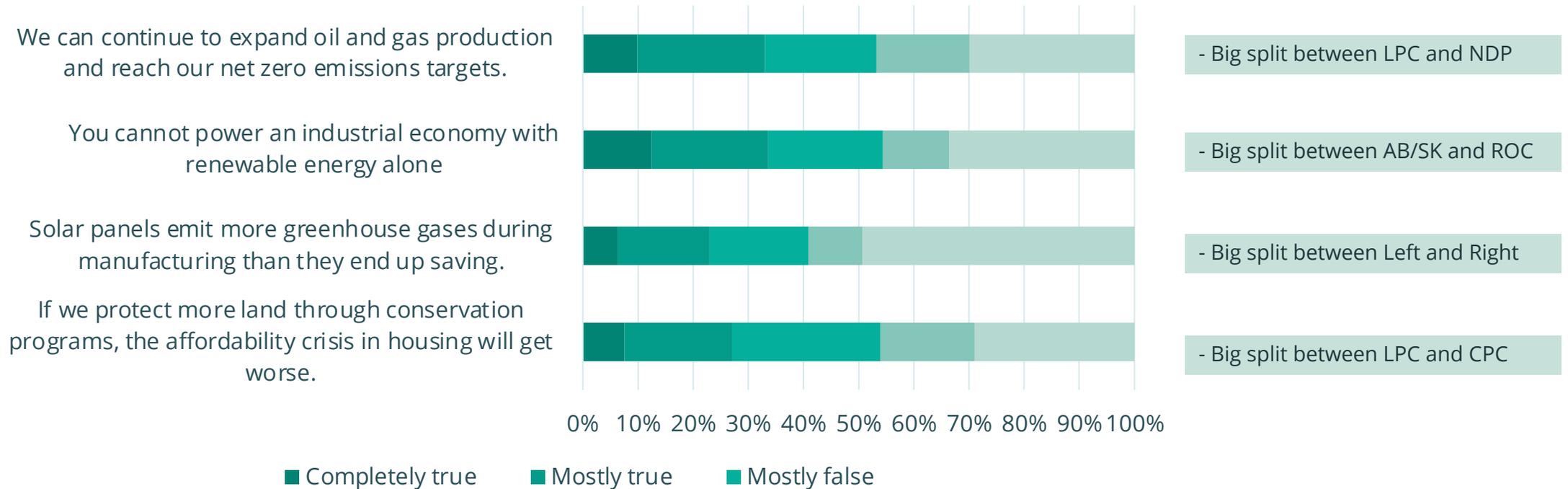
Q: To the best of your knowledge, how accurate are the claims in each of the following statements?



Canadians recognize that world energy prices are fuelling inflation, that oil companies have lied about climate change, and climate change is a bona fide health emergency, and that renewable energy prices are more stable than prices of fossil fuels, but...

Where are Canadians confused?

Q: To the best of your knowledge, how accurate are the claims in each of the following statements?



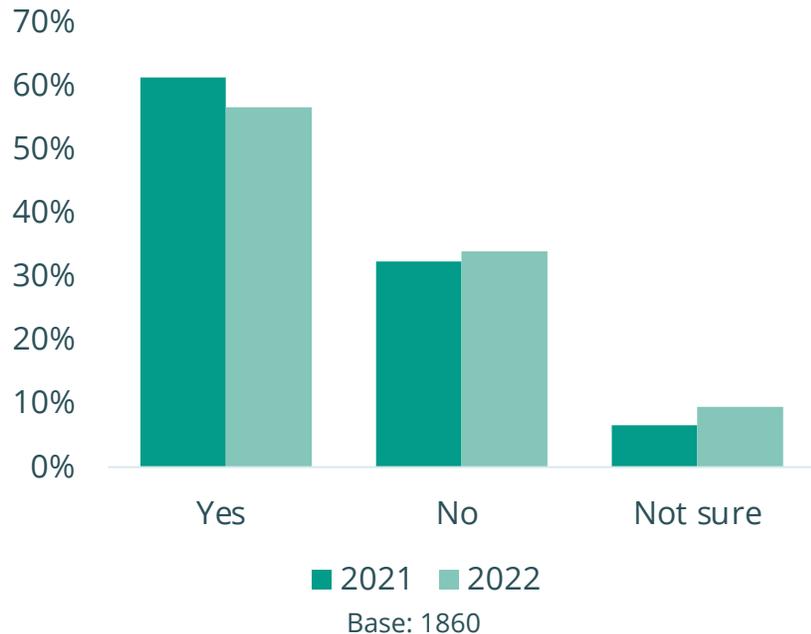
Percentage answering “not sure” reveal opportunities for opponents (and liars) to sow seeds of confusion among certain segments on certain topics (e.g. about life-cycle analysis of EVs).

Experience of severe weather

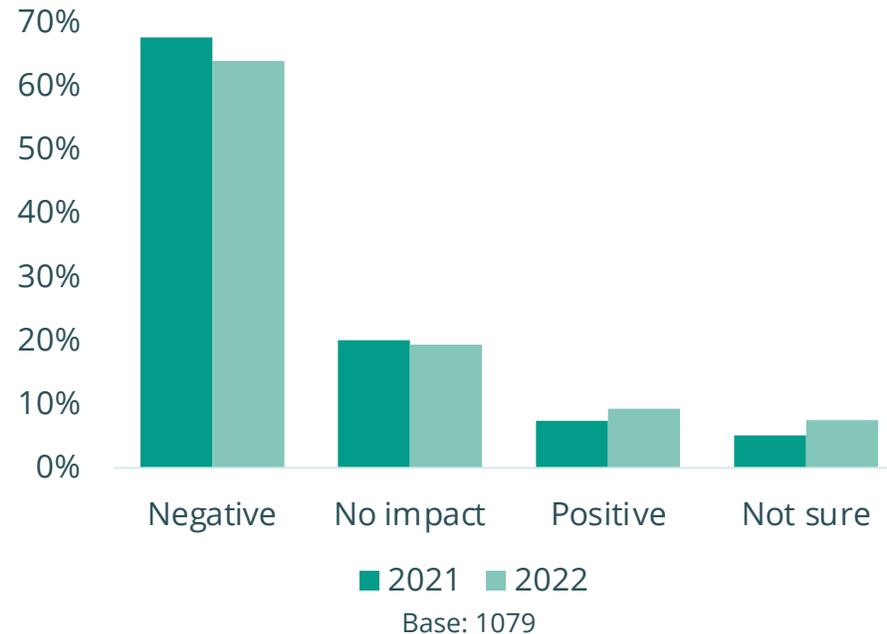
Most say weather changes are significant, but perceptions vary

Q: "...Have you personally seen any significant changes in weather patterns where you live over the past year?
[If yes] : Would you say that such changes ... have had a positive, negative, or no impact on people where you live?

Seen significant weather changes?



Weather changes positive or negative?



More likely to say "Yes"

- PEI (78%) BC (73%) NL (70%) NS (67%) NB (63%)
- 18-24 (63%) and 65+ (62%)
- Women (65%) vs Men (47%)
- Left (73%) vs Right (41%)
- LPC (68%) vs CPC (39%)

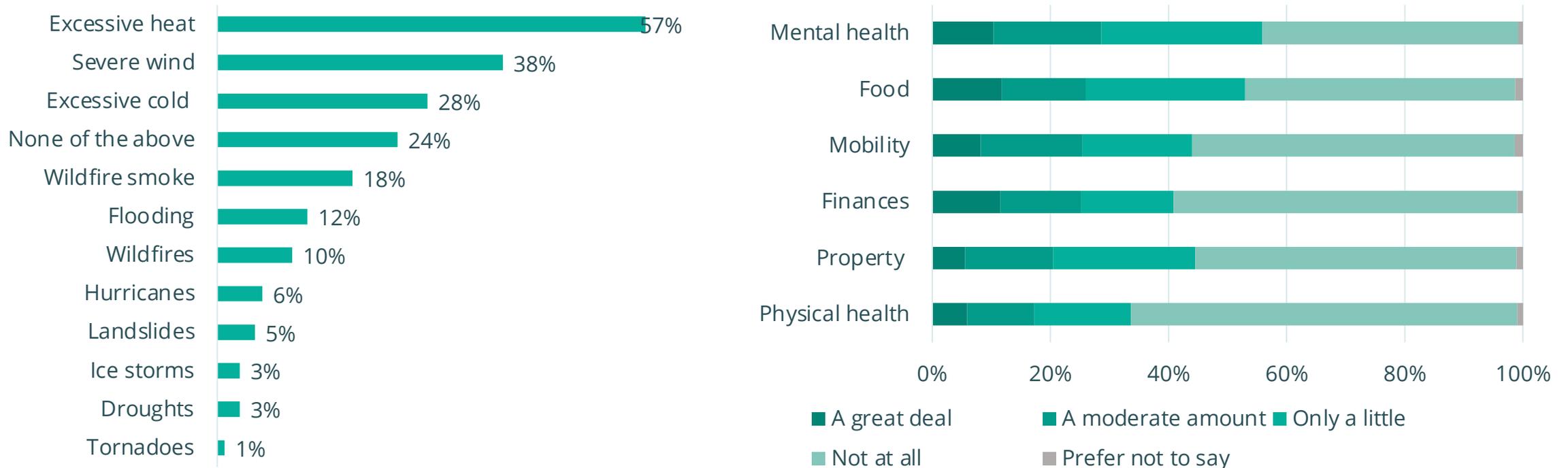
More likely to say "Negative"

- GP (81%)
- BC (77%) PEI (76%)
- Left (69%) vs Right (53%)
- Financially vulnerable (75%)

Of those reporting changes, 64% say impacts are negative. Differences across sub-groups, however, show that the same weather experienced by two people can be interpreted differently: i.e., whether it marked an important shift in patterns, and whether it was positive or negative.

Canadians experiencing extreme weather, nationwide

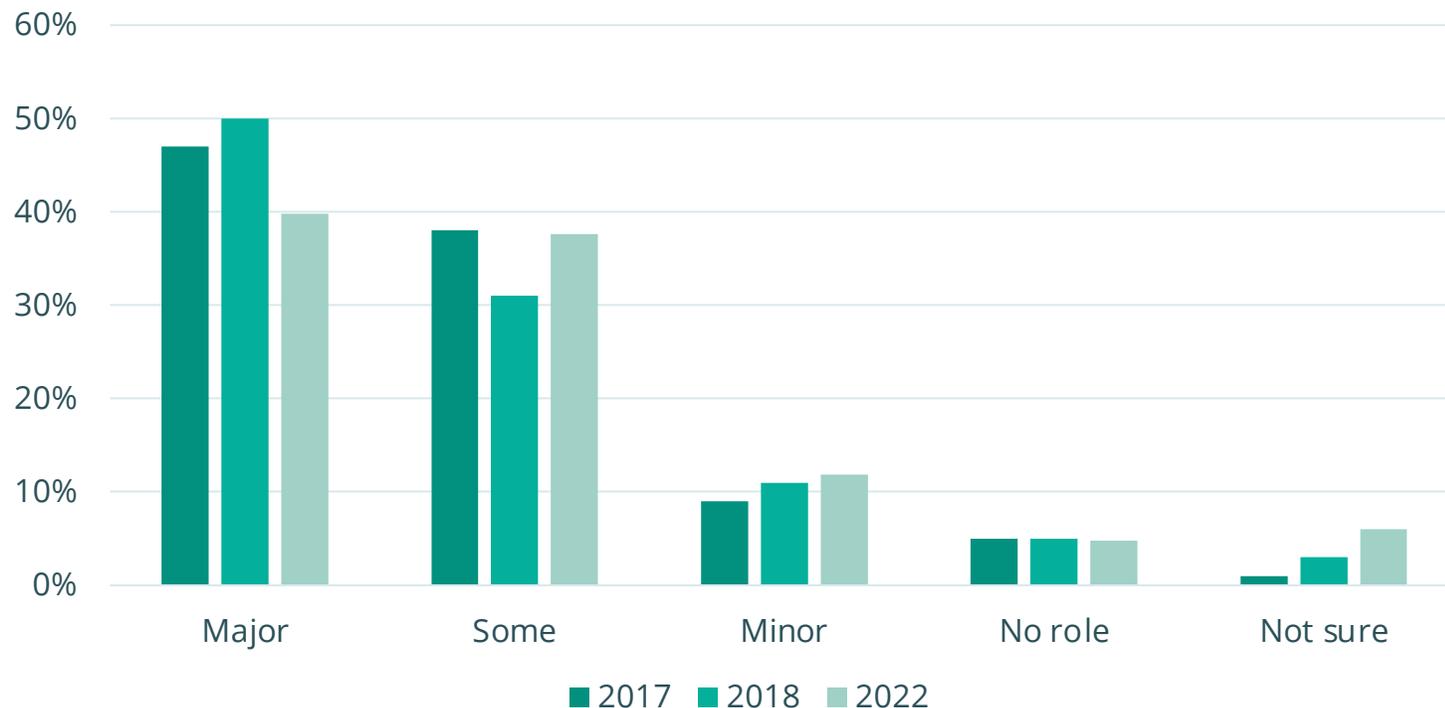
Q: In past year, which of the following extreme weather-related events, if any, have you personally experienced in your local area? How much were you harmed by this (these) extreme weather event(s)?



75% report experiencing extreme weather-related events in the past year. While impacts are limited to date, nearly one third say experiencing these kinds of extreme weather events impacted their mental health a moderate amount or a great deal.

Beliefs about cause of extreme weather

Q: How much of a role, if any, do you believe climate change has played in causing more extreme weather in Canada?



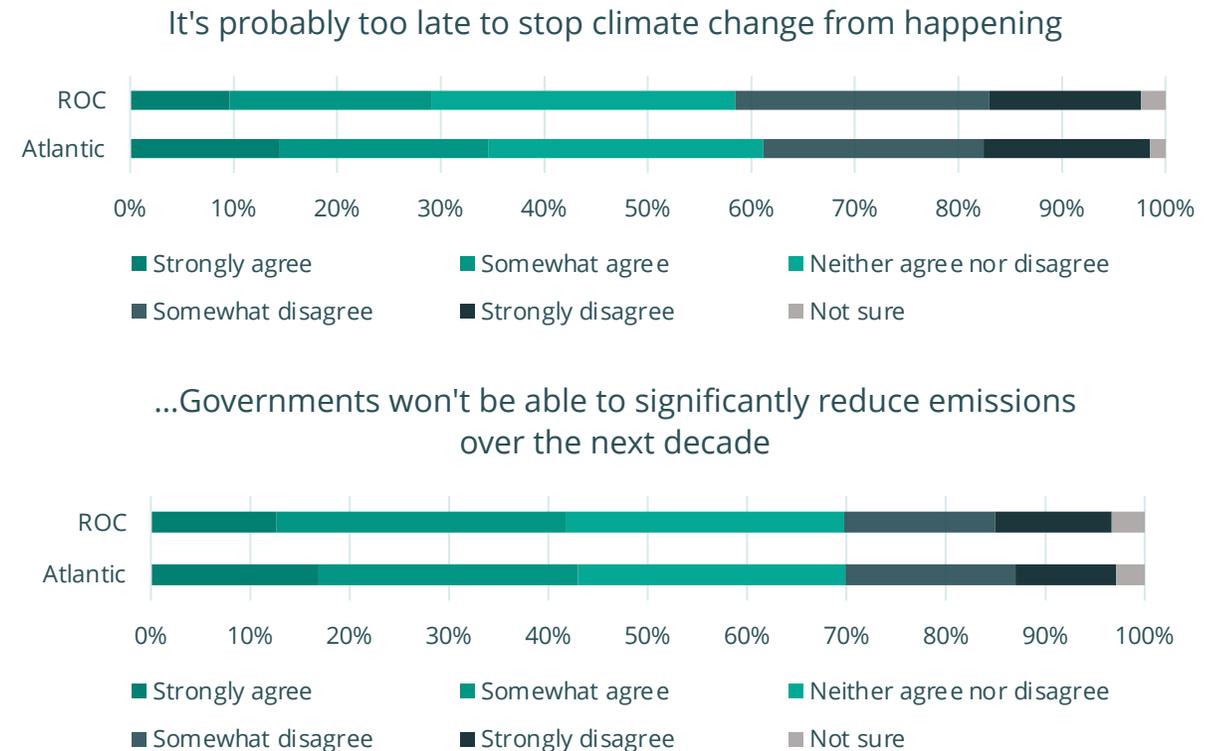
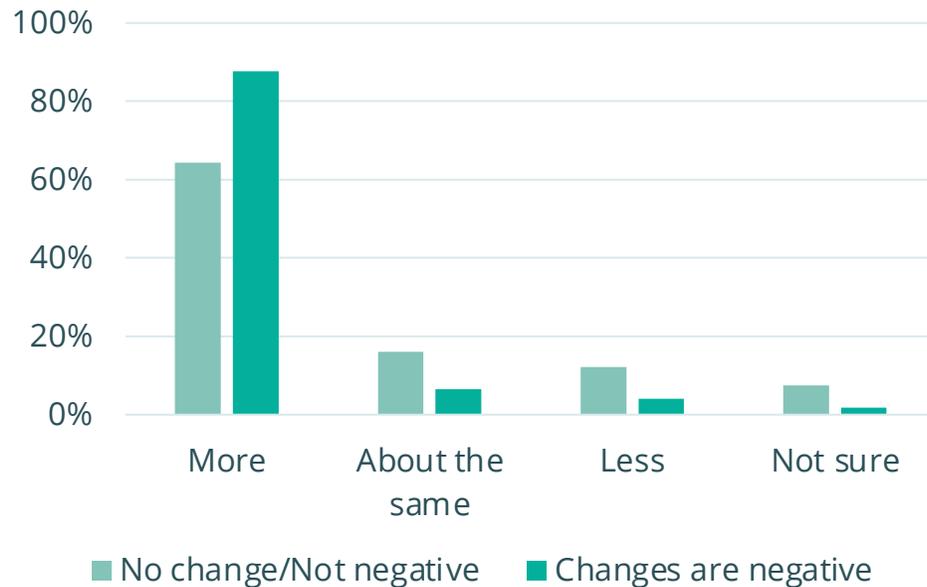
Largest differences in attributing a major role to climate change:

- GP (58%) vs CPC (23%) / PPC (8%)
- Left (65%) vs Right (25%)
- Women (45%) vs Men (34%)
- Residents of BC (47%) and Atlantic (43%) vs AB/SK (30%)

More and more Canadians believe the science that attributes extreme weather to climate change, but the proportion assigning a major role to climate change declined between 2018 (50%) and 2022 (40%). This decline is less pronounced in BC and Atlantic Canada, however: places that have experienced major weather events recently.

Is bad weather “good” for climate engagement?

Q: Thinking about the weather, have you personally seen any significant changes in patterns where you live over the past year? If yes, would you say such changes have had a positive /negative / no impact on people where you live?

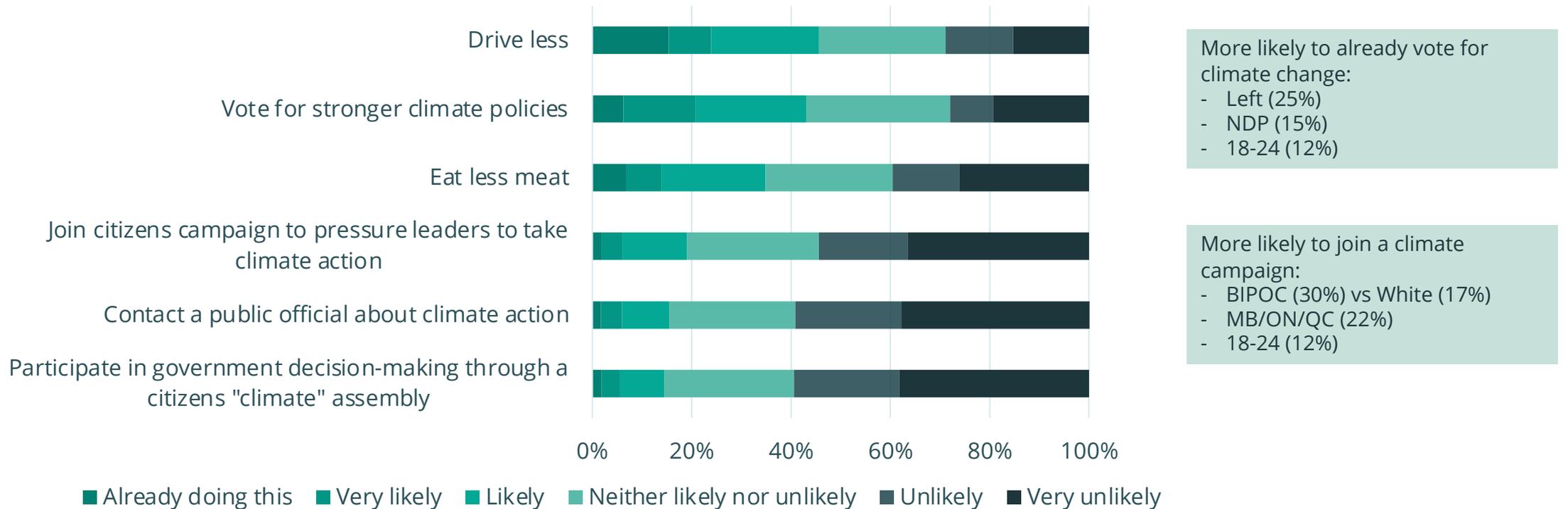


As in 2021, individuals who report seeing bad weather where they live (with no mention of climate) are more likely to want more action on climate change (left graph). In contrast to last year’s findings, however, we find no difference in levels of fatalism among residents of Atlantic Canada and ROC, even after experiencing *the costliest* hurricane on record.

Coping with climate change

Significant behaviour change not yet evident

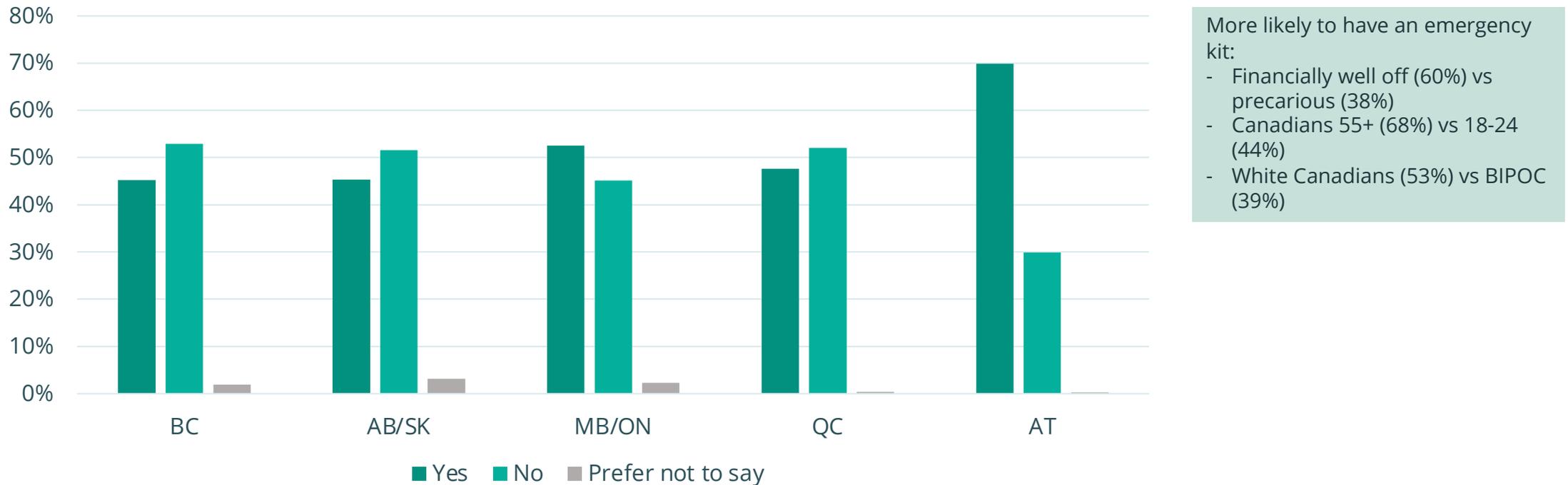
Q: Over the next twelve months, how likely or unlikely are you to do each of the following things:



Despite relatively high levels of concern and demands for more government action, few Canadians have adopted personal behaviours that protect against climate change significantly, and fewer are engaged in collective political action in support of positive change.

We are adapting, in Atlantic Canada above all

Q: Do you have an emergency supply kit in your home, i.e. enough supplies in the home to survive 72 hours without power?



The data do not allow us to draw a causal connection between this behaviour and experience of Hurricane Fiona, but it's noteworthy that residents of Atlantic Canada were most likely to say they had an emergency supply kit in their home.

Few Canadians suffer greatly from eco-anxiety

Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change? (1-4 scale - Not at all; Several of the days; Over half the days; Nearly everyday)

Affective

- Not being able to stop or control worrying
- Feeling afraid

Rumination

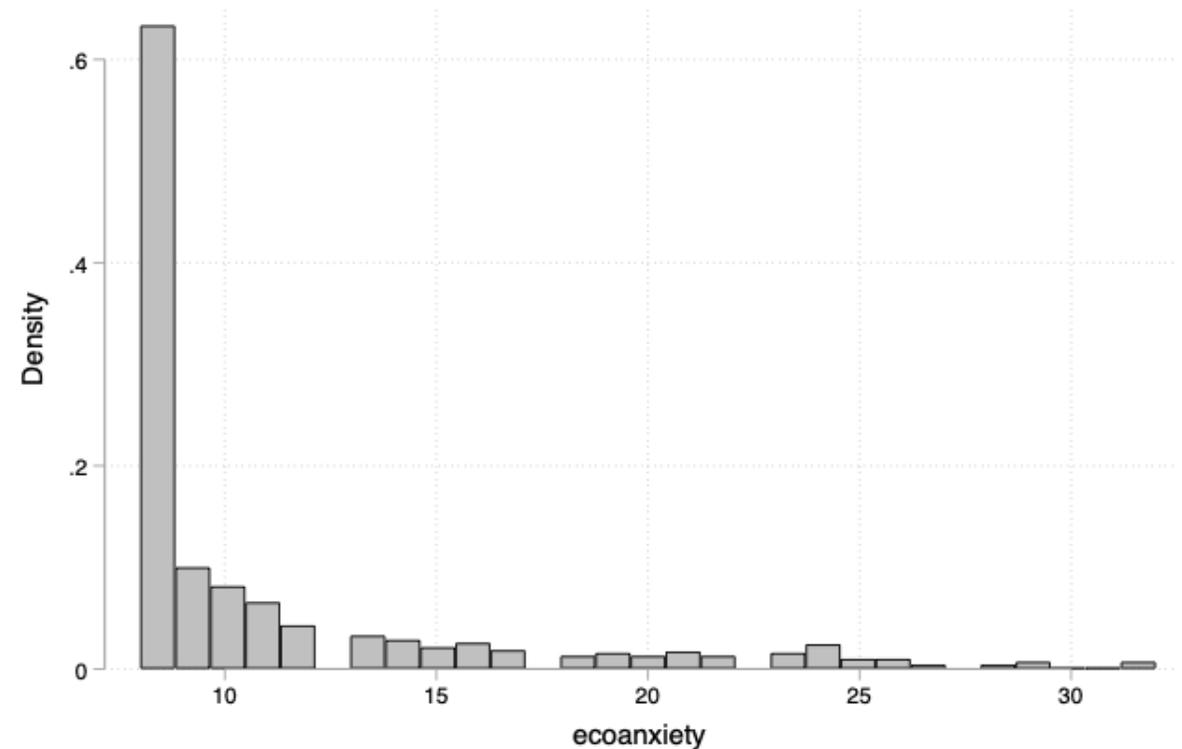
- Unable to stop thinking about future climate change
- Unable to stop thinking about past events related to climate change

Dysfunctional

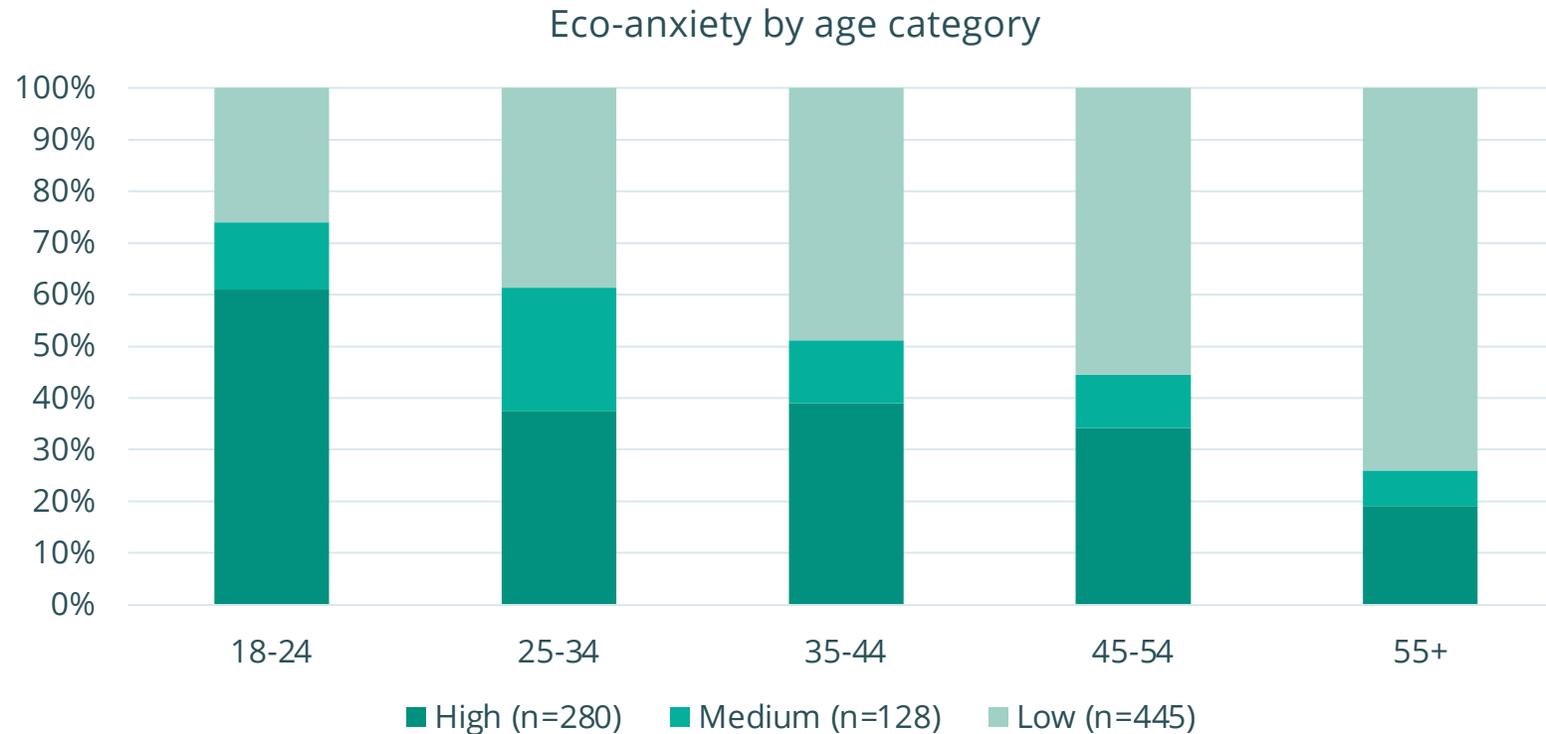
- Difficulty enjoying social situations with family and friends
- Difficulty worrying and/or studying

Anxiety about one's impact

- Feeling anxious about the impact of your personal behaviours on climate change
- Feeling anxious about your personal responsibility to help address climate change



Who is most likely to be anxious about climate change



Environmental correlates

- Experience with one of the types of self-reported extreme weather (35%) vs none (21%)
- Self-reported “strongly agree” personal experience with climate change (46%) vs other (30%)

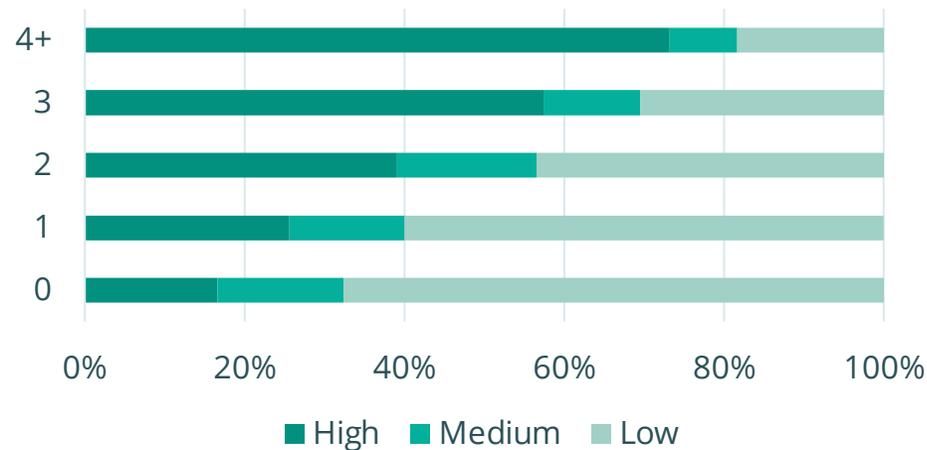
More likely to have high levels of eco-anxiety:

- Youth 18-24 (61%)
- Discuss climate change often (60%)
- BIPOC (57%) vs White (27%)
- GP (52%)
- High self reported knowledge about climate change (46%)
- Low income (44%)

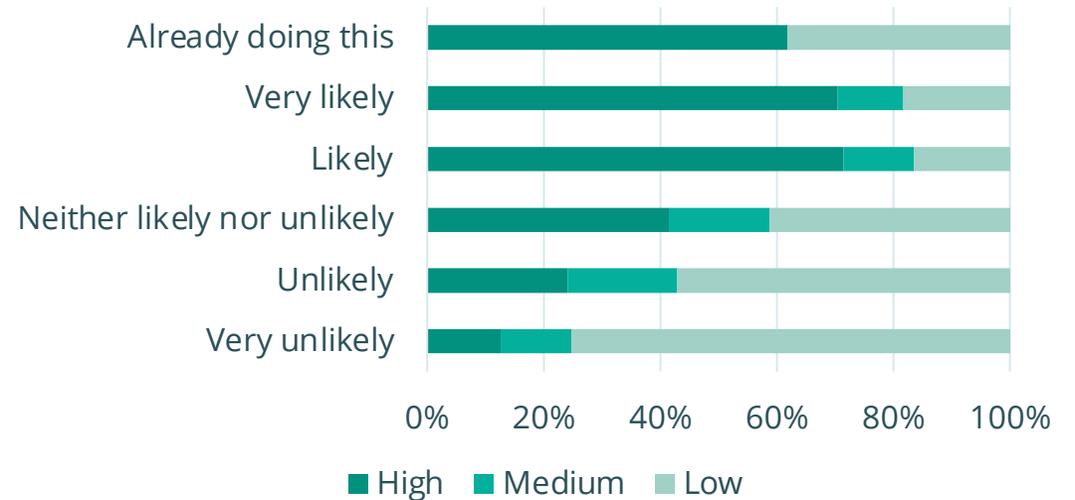
Certain groups are more likely to report moderate levels of Eco-anxiety in Canada. These high, medium and low categories were created by dividing the sample into terciles, following the range of the distribution. Since the distribution is skewed, “high” levels of eco-anxiety here generally refer to moderate levels in absolute terms.

Eco-anxiety has an upside

Number of pro-environmental behaviours by level of eco-anxiety



Join a climate campaign by level of eco-anxiety



People with a “high” score on the eco-anxiety scale (i.e., a moderate level of eco-anxiety in absolute terms) are more likely to exhibit *some or all* the pro-environmental behaviours examined in this survey. These were (in abbreviated form) as follows: driving less, voting for stronger climate policies, eating less meat, joining a citizens' campaign to pressure leaders to take climate action, contacting a public official about climate action and participating in government decision-making through a citizens "climate" assembly.

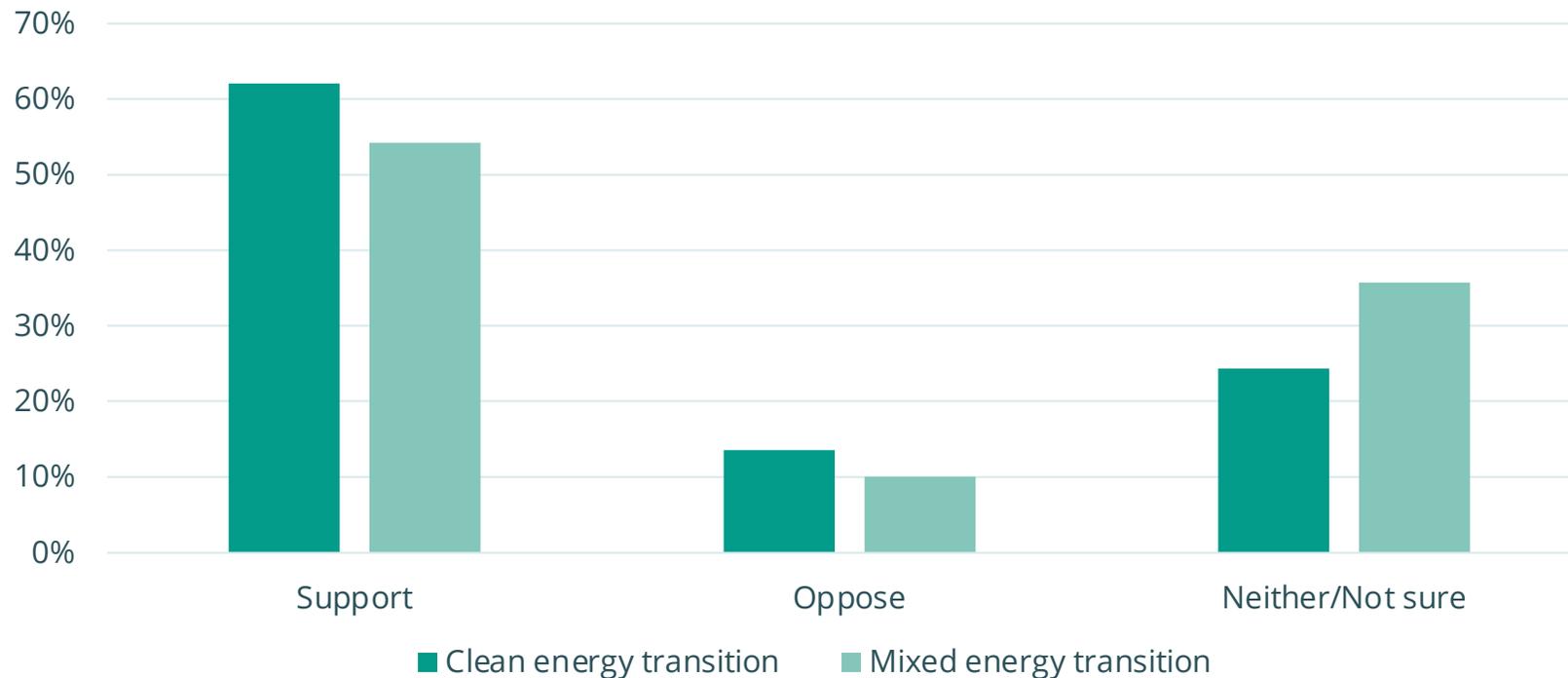
Sneak peek: January webinar

Two visions of the energy transition: An experiment (with more to come!)

Q: How strongly do you support or oppose investing heavily in electricity technologies like ...

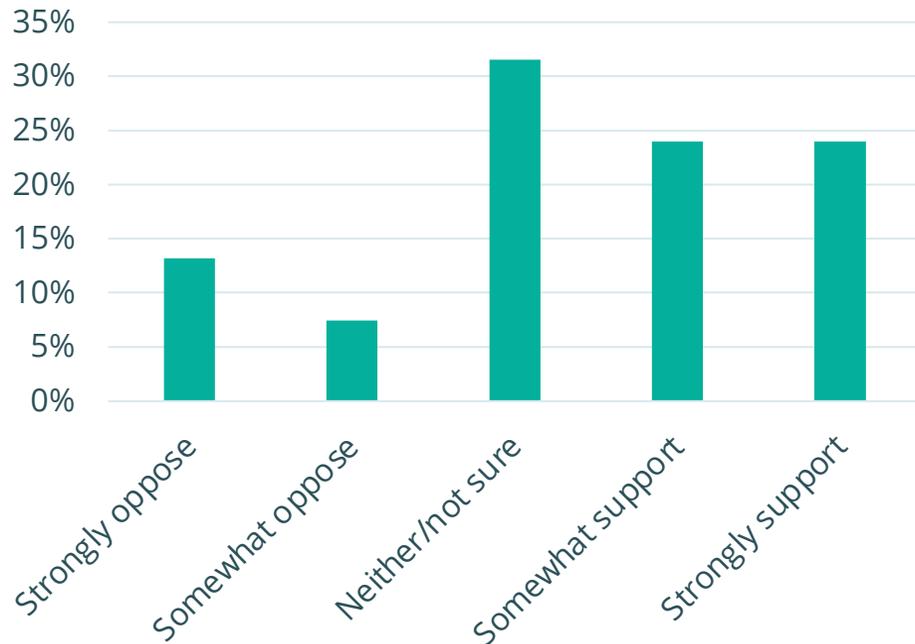
A (Clean) : ..wind, solar and hydro with storage options ensuring a reliable transition to a 100% renewable electricity system by 2035?

B (Mix) : ...small nuclear reactors and fossil fuels like natural gas, along with some renewable energy to ensure a reliable transition to an electricity system with fewer emissions by 2035?

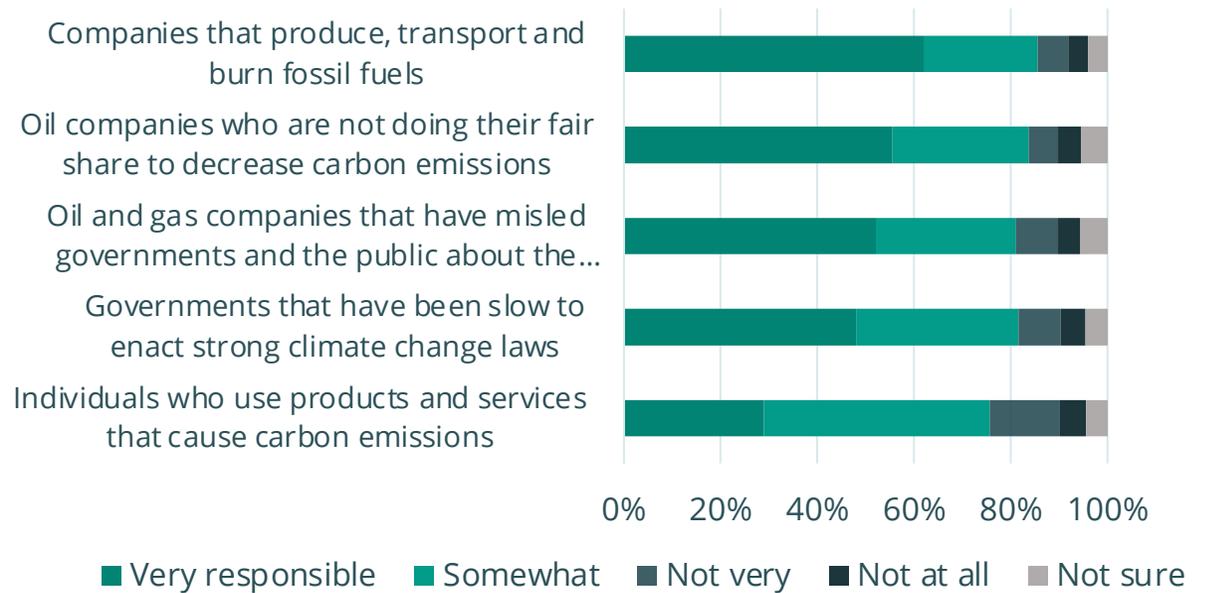


Opportunities and challenges for the sue big oil campaign

Q: To what extent do you support or oppose local governments suing oil & gas companies to make them pay a share of the costs of local climate change impacts?



Q: Thinking about the human causes of climate change, who or which group would you say is primarily responsible for causing climate change? Please rank the groups from most (1) to least (3) responsible.



Recommendations

- Link climate change to more salient issues: affordability, inflation, health, etc.
- Engage Canadians on extreme weather
- Mind the gap
- Target BIPOC, work with youth to emphasize justice of climate solutions
- Moderate levels of eco-anxiety could benefit engagement
- Confusion reigns, somewhat

Questions for Members and Associates

- What stood out for you?
- What would you like to find out more about?: e.g areas where you want more specific regional or demographic info?
- What has the most potential for use in your communications? And policy discussions?
- Anything here you want to follow up on with Environics frame and message testing next month: e.g. misinformation; knowledge; government action; adaptation?



Other questions?