Report

Climate Change Politics
Greater Toronto Area: September 2020

CANADIANS FOR
**CLEAN
PROSPERITY**

Leger

We know Canadians

DATE 2020-09-14

METHODOLOGY

Context and Objectives

Context

Clean Prosperity works at the federal and provincial level to advocate for climate change policies that reduce emissions, while increasing economic growth and competitiveness. Through this project, the Clean Prosperity team is seeking to understand the opinion of Greater Toronto Area residents on climate change issues generally, and the carbon tax policy specifically.

Objectives

Through this research, the Clean Prosperity team wants to understand:
- The importance of climate change for GTA '905' area voters and what types of climate policies they support
- Views of a carbon tax in the minds of voters, including the impact on deciding which political parties to support

Methodology

Study Population
- Greater Toronto Area (Area '905') resident, aged 18 and older.

Data Collection
- A total of n=1001 online surveys were conducted via Leger's online panel, LEO.
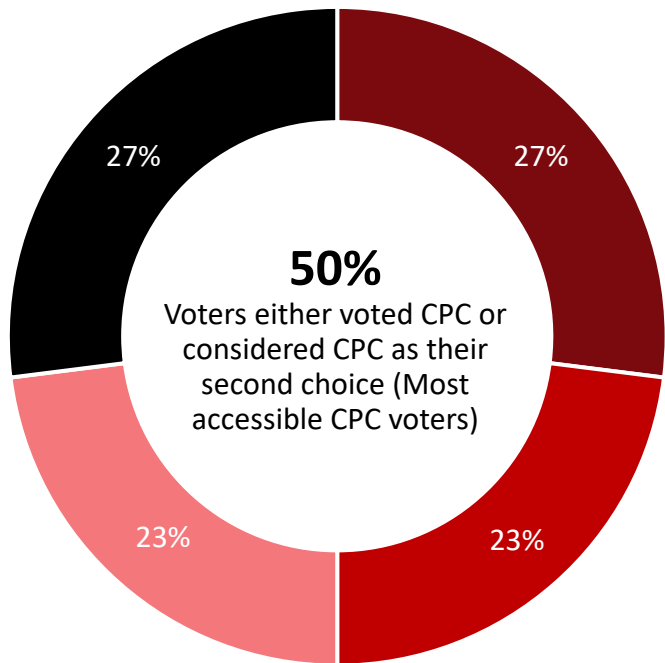- Interviews were conducted from August 21 to August 27, 2020.

Statistical Analysis
- As a non-probability internet survey, a margin of error is technically not to be reported.
- If the data were collected through a random sample, the margin of error would be Greater Toronto Area residents (n=1001) ±3.1%, 19 times out of 20.
- Quotas were set to ensure survey completions were properly distributed across the EDAs in the region.
- Using data from the 2016 Census, results were weighted according to age, gender and region in order to ensure a representative sample of the population.
- The numbers presented have been rounded to the nearest whole number. However, raw values were used to calculate the sums presented and therefore may not correspond to the manual addition of these numbers.

Detailed Results

CPC Voter Pool

Half of GTA residents consider the Conservative Party among their top two choices for Federal elections

Federal CPC Voters

50%
Voters either voted CPC or considered CPC as their second choice (Most accessible CPC voters)

27%
27%
23%
23%

- ■ CPC voters
- ■ Most Accessible CPC voters
- ■ Potential CPC voters
- ■ Non-CPC voters

Term	Definition	Proportion
CPC Voters	Voted CPC on 2019 General Election	27%
Most Accessible CPC Voters	CPC 2nd choice/CPC-Liberal Switcher	23%
Potential CPC Voters	CPC not excluded as a possible ballot choice	23%
Non-CPC Voters	Other than above (Never vote CPC)	27%

Accessible Voters

January 2020 the breakdown of voters was:
- CPC voter – 31%
- CPC Accessible – 39%
- Never vote CPC – 31%

Calculated based on Federal election voting questions
Base : Greater Toronto Area Residents (n=1001)

Most of CPC voters and 38% accessible CPC voters also voted for Doug Ford provincially

43% voted for Doug Ford's Conservative Party candidate

- 43% Conservative Party
- 30% Liberal Party
- 15% NDP
- 4% Green Party
- 7% Don't remember

2018 Provincial voting by Federal CPC pool

	CPC Voter	Accessible CPC Voter
Doug Ford's CPC Candidate	86%	38%
Kathleen Wynne's Liberal Party candidate	7%	30%
Andre Horwath's NDP candidate	3%	15%
Mike Schreiner's Green Party candidate	1%	5%
Don't remember	3%	12%
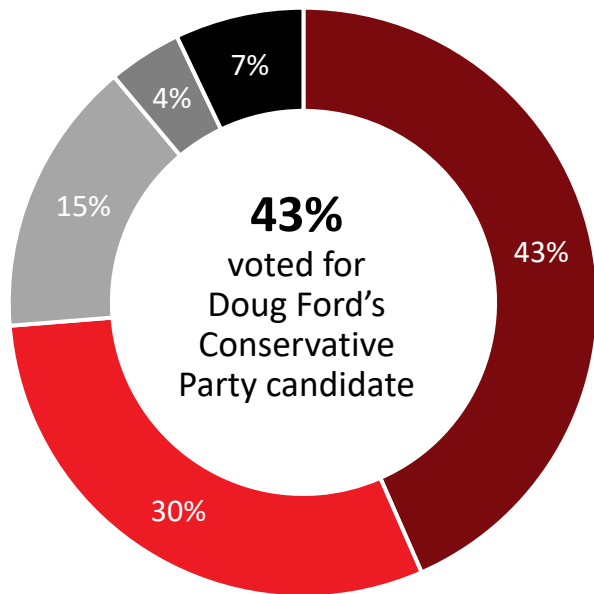
CPC Voters calculated based on Federal election voting questions

Q6: Thinking back to the last provincial election held in June 2018, which Provincial Party did you vote for then? (TOTAL WHO VOTE)

Base : Greater Toronto Area Residents (n=1001)
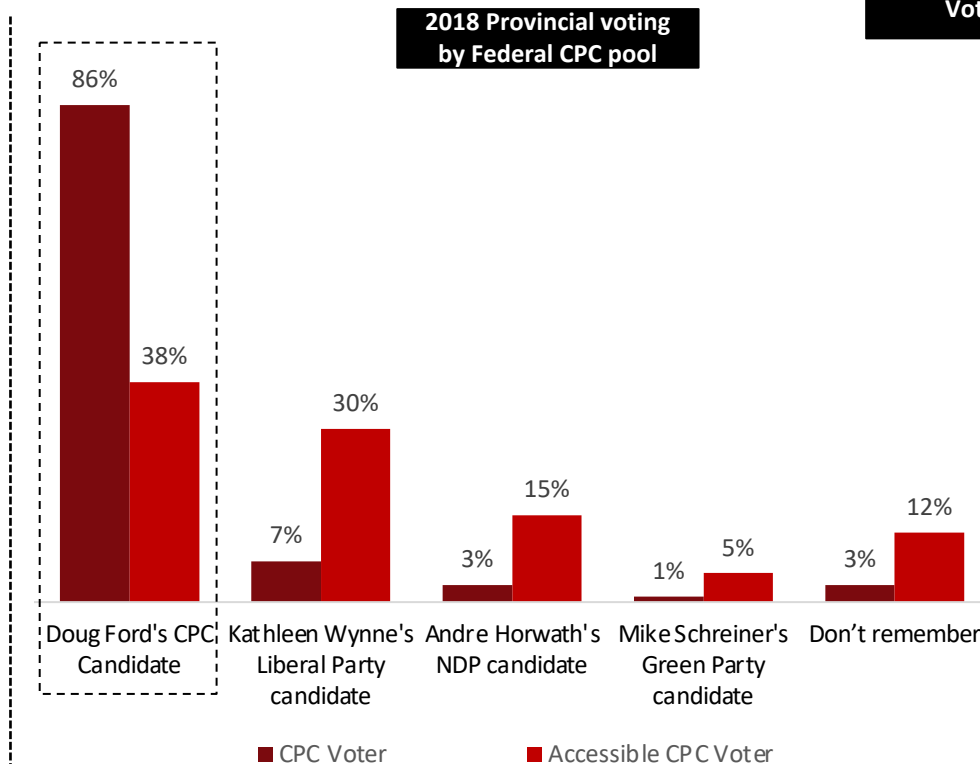
Detailed Results
COVID-19 Impact: Shift in priority issues (Un-aided)

Concerns about the economy and debt have risen after pandemic, climate change is top concern of 6% of GTA residents currently

Economy is top concern among Males (22% vs. 15% females) and those aged 35+ (20% vs 12% of 18-34 years)

Health care and education issues are more important to females than males (education is most important issue for 8% females vs. 4% males) (healthcare 8% females vs. 3% males)
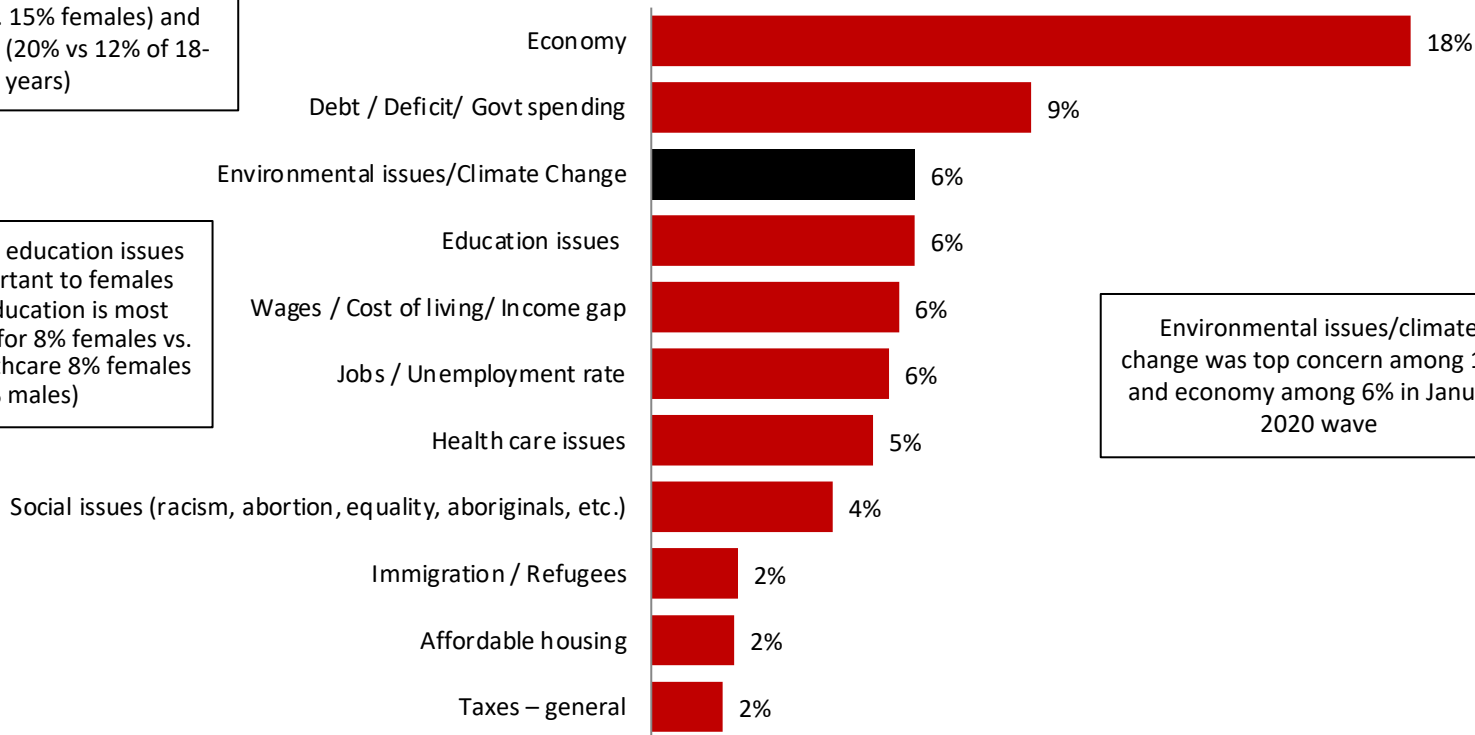
Environmental issues/climate change was top concern among 15% and economy among 6% in January 2020 wave

Concern	Percentage
Economy	18%
Debt / Deficit/ Govt spending	9%
Environmental issues/Climate Change	6%
Education issues	6%
Wages / Cost of living/ Income gap	6%
Jobs / Unemployment rate	6%
Health care issues	5%
Social issues (racism, abortion, equality, aboriginals, etc.)	4%
Immigration / Refugees	2%
Affordable housing	2%
Taxes – general	2%

Q1: Besides the pandemic, what in your opinion is the next most important issue you think the government in Ottawa should be dealing with these days? [TOP MENTION- UNAIDED] Base: Greater Toronto Area Residents (n=1001), (n=3028, January 2020 wave)

Economy and fiscal-related issues have gained importance among both CPC voters and accessible CPC voters

Economy: CPC Voter 26%, Accessible CPC Voter 15%
Debt / Deficit: CPC Voter 16%, Accessible CPC Voter 7%
Poor government/Ethical issues: CPC Voter 8%, Accessible CPC Voter 2%
Wages / Cost of living: CPC Voter 5%, Accessible CPC Voter 6%
Jobs / Unemployment rate: CPC Voter 5%, Accessible CPC Voter 8%
Health care issues: CPC Voter 3%, Accessible CPC Voter 5%
Education issues: CPC Voter 3%, Accessible CPC Voter 8%
Environmental issues: CPC Voter 2%, Accessible CPC Voter 5%
Social issues: CPC Voter 1%, Accessible CPC Voter 5%

■ CPC Voter (n=273)   ■ Accessible CPC Voter (n=455)

Q1: What in your opinion is the next most important issue you think the government in Ottawa should be dealing with these days? [TOP MENTION]
Base : Greater Toronto Area Residents (n=1001)

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Detailed Results
Other priority issues (Aided)

On being asked to choose priority issues from a list (aided), a CPC voters select economy, taxation and debt/deficit as their top choices

Top Two priority issues

Issues	Total Selections	CPC voter	Accessible CPC voter
Total 'N'	*1001*	*274*	*455*
	%	%	%
Growing the economy and creating jobs	**59**	61	63
The level of taxes Canadians pay	**37**	44	38
Reducing the Government deficits and the size of the Federal debt	**34**	50	33
Climate change and its effects in Canada	**24**	9	22
Reducing the cost of prescription drugs with a national pharmacare program Reforming Canada's immigration system	**15**	8	15
Reforming Canada's immigration system	**12**	20	9
Increasing spaces and reducing the cost for childcare	**9**	3	10
None of these	**4**	2	5

Q7: Once the COVID-19 situation is under control and we likely have a vaccine in place, what is the other issue that you think the government in Ottawa should prioritize?
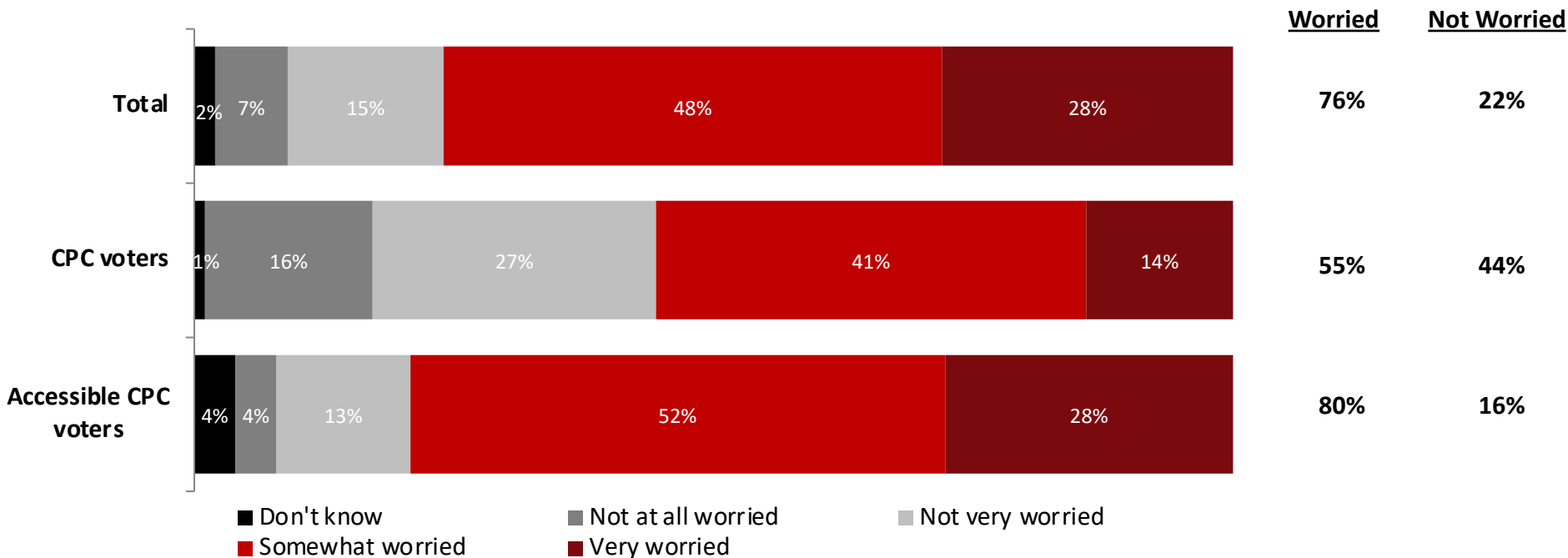Q8: Again, what is the other issue that you think the government in Ottawa should prioritize as well?
Base : Greater Toronto Area Residents (n=1001)

Detailed Results

Climate change issues

While not top of mind, climate change continues to worry 76% of GTA residents. 80% of accessible CPC voters worry about how climate change impacts on them.

Climate change concerns

	Worried	Not Worried
Total — 2% / 7% / 15% / 48% / 28%	**76%**	**22%**
CPC voters — 1% / 16% / 27% / 41% / 14%	**55%**	**44%**
Accessible CPC voters — 4% / 4% / 13% / 52% / 28%	**80%**	**16%**

Legend:
- ■ Don't know
- ■ Not at all worried
- ■ Not very worried
- ■ Somewhat worried
- ■ Very worried

73% of GTA residents were worried about impact of climate change on them and their families in January 2020 (January 2020 wave)
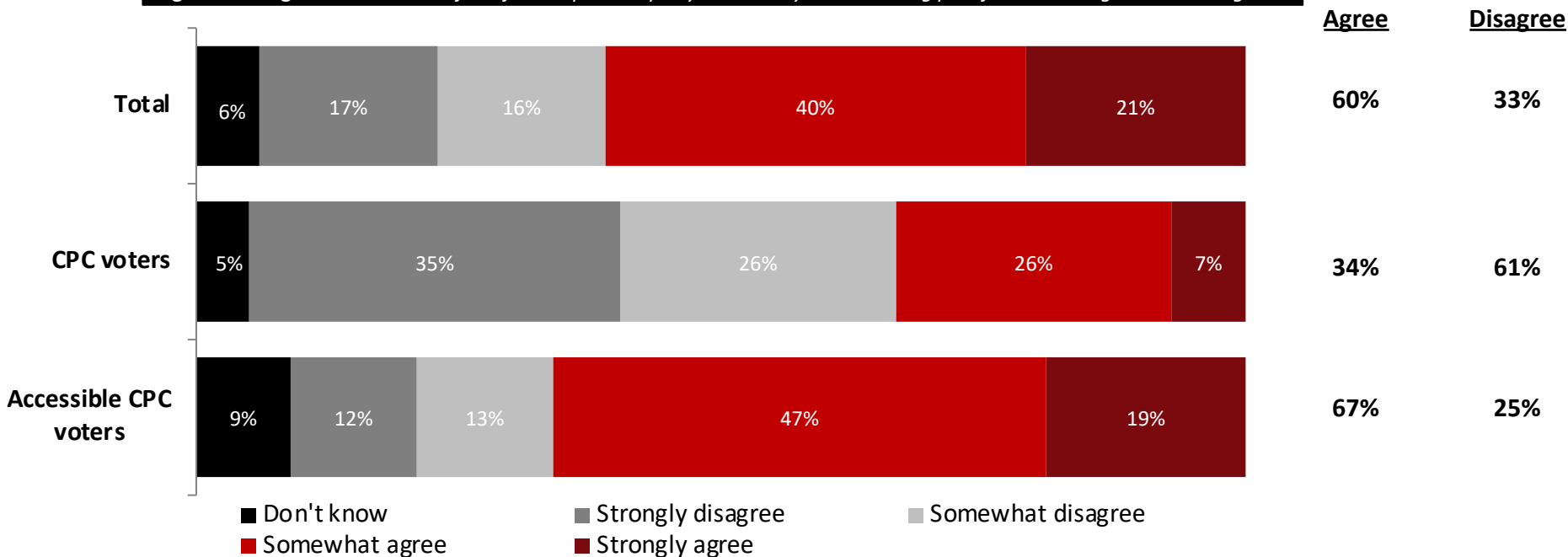
Q9: When you hear news and discussion about climate change how worried are you about how this will impact you and your family?
Base : Greater Toronto Area Residents (n=1001)

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60% would not support a federal Party if it did not present a strong plan to address climate change

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Agree or disagree: *I cannot vote for a federal political party unless they have a strong plan for addressing climate change.*

	Don't know	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree
Total	6%	17%	16%	40%	21%	**60%**	**33%**
CPC voters	5%	35%	26%	26%	7%	**34%**	**61%**
Accessible CPC voters	9%	12%	13%	47%	19%	**67%**	**25%**

■ Don't know   ■ Strongly disagree   ■ Somewhat disagree
■ Somewhat agree   ■ Strongly agree

61% of GTA residents agreed '*I cannot vote for a federal political party unless they have a strong plan for addressing climate change*' in January 2020
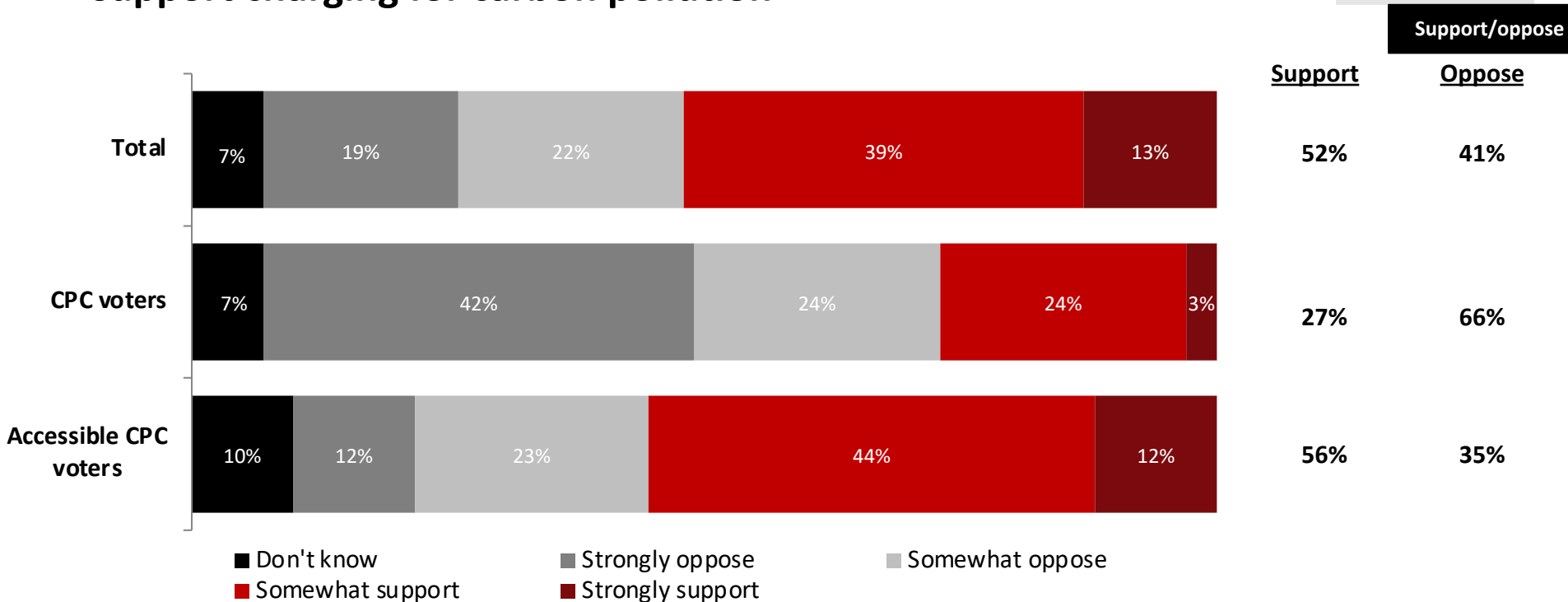
Q10: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: *I cannot vote for a federal political party unless they have a strong plan for addressing climate change.* Base: Greater Toronto Area Residents (n=1001)

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Half of the 905 region residents, including accessible CPC voters, support charging for carbon pollution

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	Support	Oppose

	Don't know	Strongly oppose	Somewhat oppose	Somewhat support	Strongly support	**Support**	**Oppose**
Total	7%	19%	22%	39%	13%	**52%**	**41%**
CPC voters	7%	42%	24%	24%	3%	**27%**	**66%**
Accessible CPC voters	10%	12%	23%	44%	12%	**56%**	**35%**

■ Don't know   ■ Strongly oppose   ■ Somewhat oppose
■ Somewhat support   ■ Strongly support

Information on screen: A common approach to address climate change is to charge for carbon pollution, which creates a financial incentive to generate less carbon pollution. Under this policy, people would pay more for activities that create pollution. For example, they would pay more per litre at the gas station, and pay more per unit of natural gas used for home heating. Companies that produce carbon pollution would also pay more.

Q13A: Do you support or oppose this type of policy as a way to address climate change?

Base : Greater Toronto Area Residents (n=1001)

Adopting the policy won't significantly affect the likelihood to vote CPC. About a fifth of 'CPC accessible voters' would be more likely to vote for the Party

More likely
- Total: 18%
- CPC voters: 13%
- Accessible CPC voters: 21%

Not change likelihood
- Total: 44%
- CPC voters: 46%
- Accessible CPC voters: 43%

Less likely
- Total: 24%
- CPC voters: 31%
- Accessible CPC voters: 20%

Don't know
- Total: 14%
- CPC voters: 11%
- Accessible CPC voters: 16%

■ Total ■ CPC voters ■ Accessible CPC voters
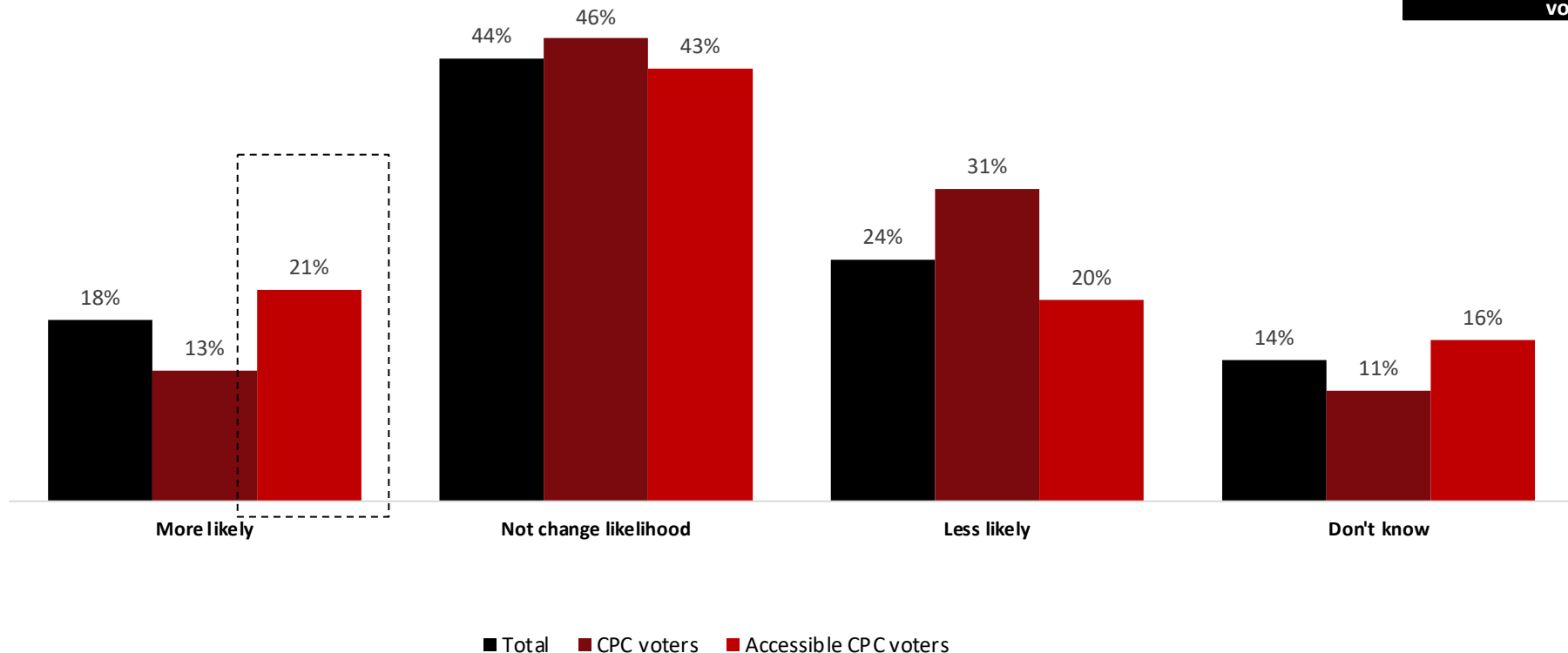
Q13B: If the Conservative Party of Canada were to adopt this policy of charging for carbon pollution, would it make you more likely to vote for them in an election, less likely or not change your likelihood of voting Conservative?
Base : Greater Toronto Area Residents , CPC and accessible CPC voters (n=729)

Over half of GTA residents and accessible CPC voters support the carbon tax policy in place in Ontario. About a third of CPC voters support the policy.

	Support	Oppose
Total	**53%**	**36%**
CPC voters	**34%**	**57%**
Accessible CPC voters	**57%**	**28%**

Support/oppose

Total: Don't know 11%, Strongly oppose 17%, Somewhat oppose 19%, Somewhat support 40%, Strongly support 13%

CPC voters: Don't know 10%, Strongly oppose 35%, Somewhat oppose 21%, Somewhat support 27%, Strongly support 7%

Accessible CPC voters: Don't know 15%, Strongly oppose 10%, Somewhat oppose 19%, Somewhat support 46%, Strongly support 11%

Legend:
- Don't know
- Strongly oppose
- Somewhat oppose
- Somewhat support
- Strongly support

Information on screen: The system of charging for carbon pollution that is currently active in Ontario is commonly referred to as a carbon tax. This year, it added 7 cents to the price of gasoline and increased costs for home heating by an average of $12 per month. The average Ontario household also received $448 back in rebates from this carbon tax. The carbon tax and the carbon rebate will both rise each year until 2022. In that year, the tax will add $12 cents / liter in gasoline and will return $700 in rebates to the average Ontario household.

Q13C: Do you support or oppose this policy?
Base : Greater Toronto Area Residents (n=1001)

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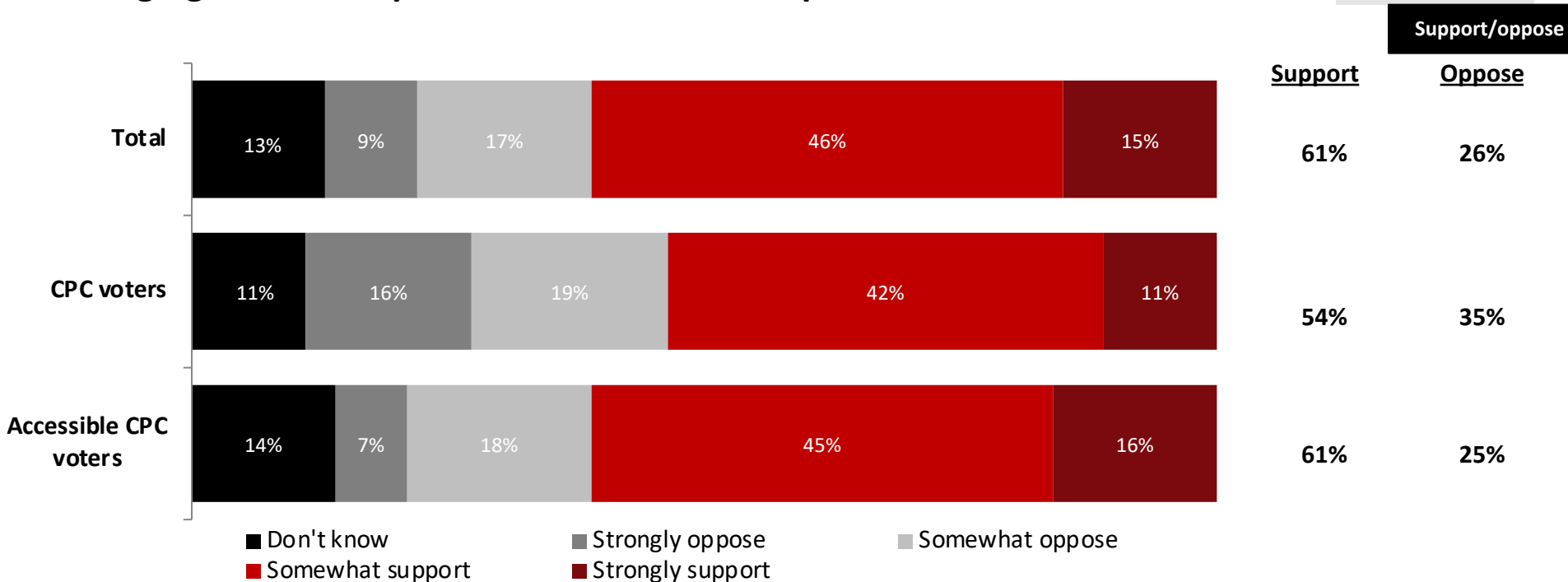# There is good support across the board for a policy where the proceeds from charging for carbon pollution are used to cut personal income tax rates

	Support	Oppose
Total — Don't know 13%, Strongly oppose 9%, Somewhat oppose 17%, Somewhat support 46%, Strongly support 15%	**61%**	**26%**
CPC voters — Don't know 11%, Strongly oppose 16%, Somewhat oppose 19%, Somewhat support 42%, Strongly support 11%	**54%**	**35%**
Accessible CPC voters — Don't know 14%, Strongly oppose 7%, Somewhat oppose 18%, Somewhat support 45%, Strongly support 16%	**61%**	**25%**

Support/oppose

Legend:
- Don't know
- Strongly oppose
- Somewhat oppose
- Somewhat support
- Strongly support

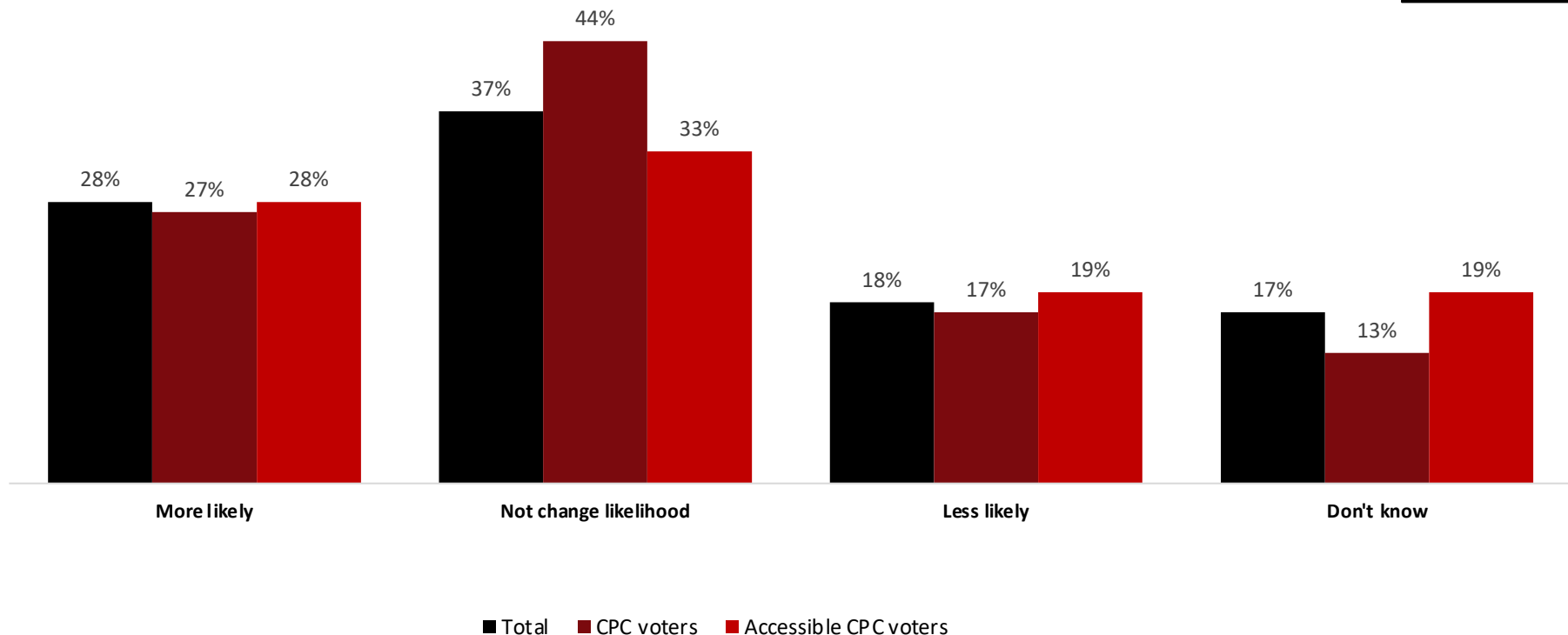Q14A: Do you support or oppose a policy where the proceeds from charging for carbon pollution are used to cut personal income tax rates?
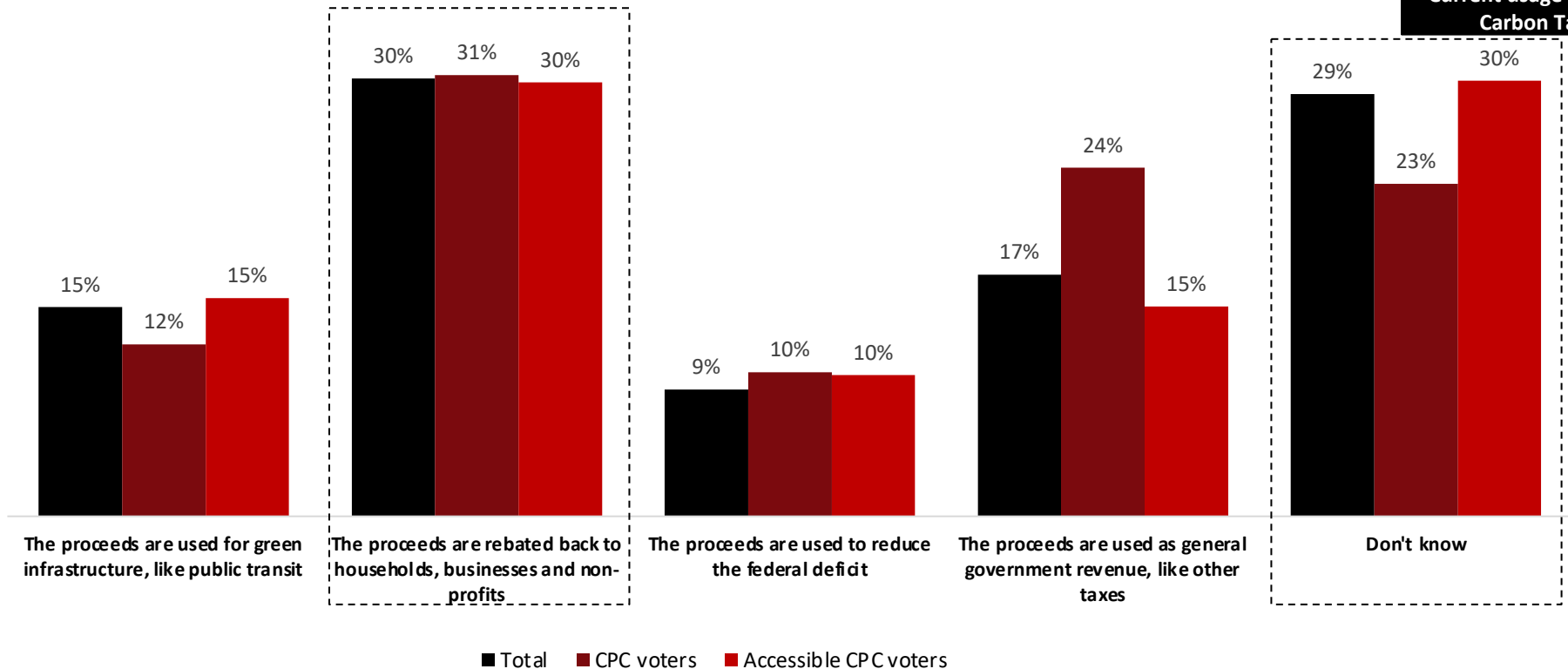Base : Greater Toronto Area Residents (n=1001)

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A carbon pricing policy that focuses on income tax reductions as opposed to rebates would be a NET vote earner for Conservatives in the 905 region

Likelihood to vote

More likely
- Total: 28%
- CPC voters: 27%
- Accessible CPC voters: 28%

Not change likelihood
- Total: 37%
- CPC voters: 44%
- Accessible CPC voters: 33%

Less likely
- Total: 18%
- CPC voters: 17%
- Accessible CPC voters: 19%

Don't know
- Total: 17%
- CPC voters: 13%
- Accessible CPC voters: 19%

■ Total ■ CPC voters ■ Accessible CPC voters

Q14B: If the Conservative Party of Canada were to adopt this policy, would it make you more likely to vote for them in an election, less likely or not change your likelihood of voting Conservative?

Base : Greater Toronto Area Residents , CPC and accessible CPC voters (n=729)

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About 30% resident believe the carbon tax is rebated back to households, an equal number aren't sure how the tax is used

Current usage of Carbon Tax

The proceeds are used for green infrastructure, like public transit
- Total: 15%
- CPC voters: 12%
- Accessible CPC voters: 15%

The proceeds are rebated back to households, businesses and non-profits
- Total: 30%
- CPC voters: 31%
- Accessible CPC voters: 30%

The proceeds are used to reduce the federal deficit
- Total: 9%
- CPC voters: 10%
- Accessible CPC voters: 10%

The proceeds are used as general government revenue, like other taxes
- Total: 17%
- CPC voters: 24%
- Accessible CPC voters: 15%

Don't know
- Total: 29%
- CPC voters: 23%
- Accessible CPC voters: 30%

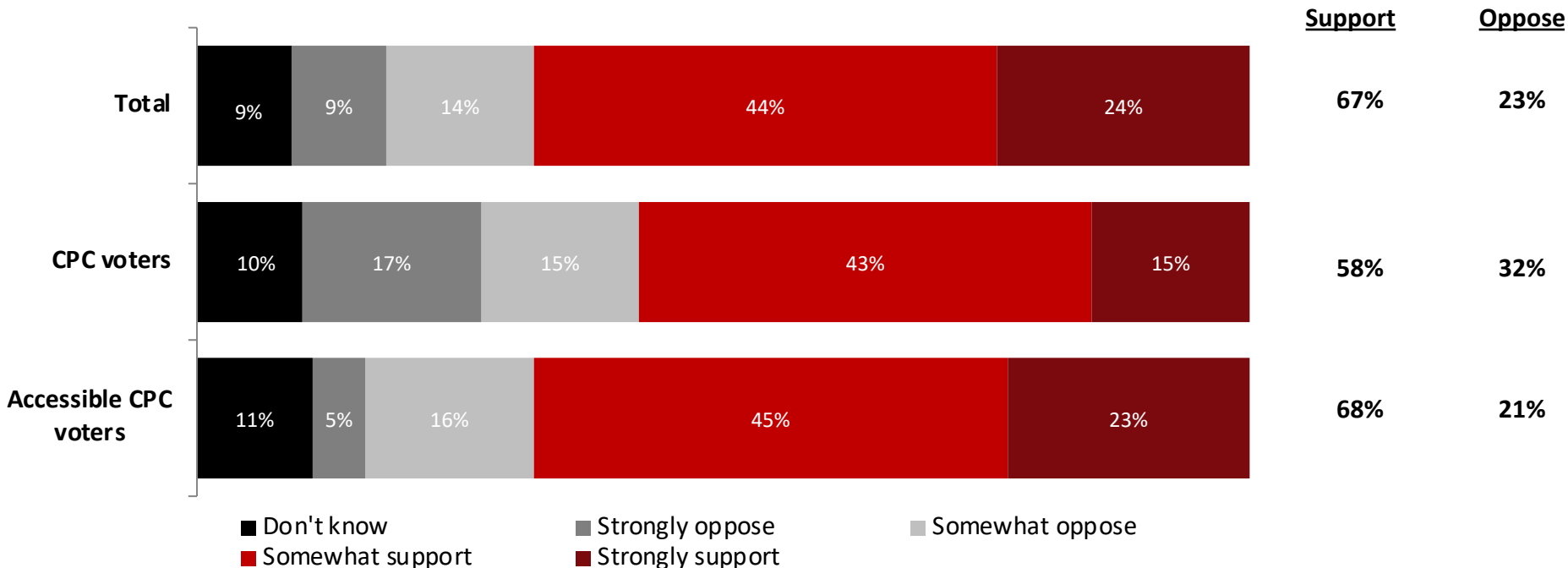■ Total ■ CPC voters ■ Accessible CPC voters

Q16: Which of the following options correctly states how the proceeds from the federal carbon tax are being used? Note this question is NOT about how you would like the proceeds to be used, but rather how the proceeds ARE being used currently.

Base : Greater Toronto Area Residents (n=1001)

Over two-thirds of accessible CPC voters would support a carbon tax if they knew the money was being rebated back

Support/Oppose

	Don't know	Strongly oppose	Somewhat oppose	Somewhat support	Strongly support	Support	Oppose
Total	9%	9%	14%	44%	24%	**67%**	**23%**
CPC voters	10%	17%	15%	43%	15%	**58%**	**32%**
Accessible CPC voters	11%	5%	16%	45%	23%	**68%**	**21%**

■ Don't know   ■ Strongly oppose   ■ Somewhat oppose
■ Somewhat support   ■ Strongly support

Q23: Would you support or oppose a carbon tax if you knew that all the money from the tax was being rebated back to families and businesses?
Base : Greater Toronto Area Residents (n=1001)

Detailed Results

Elements of Credible Climate Change Policy

Technology to reduce emissions and a fee on large polluters generate strong agreement as effective climate change policies.
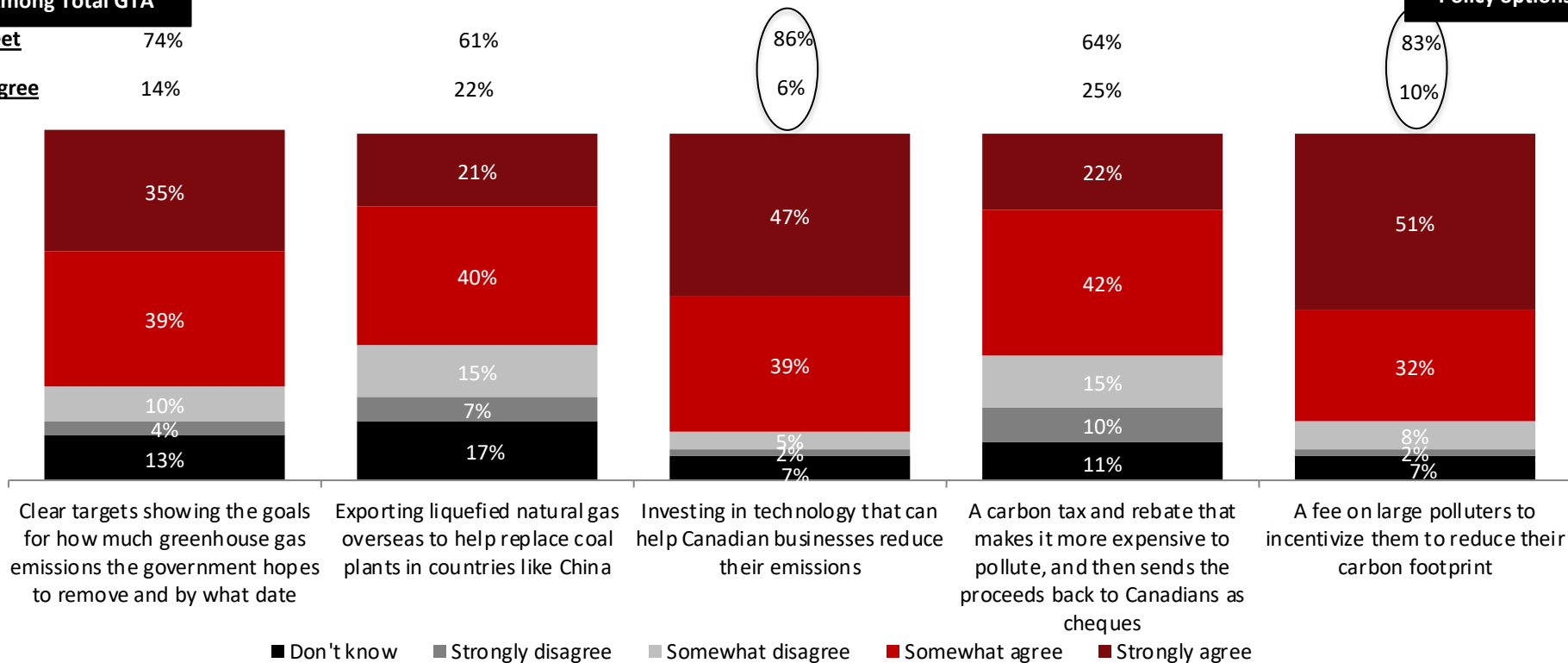
Among Total GTA

Policy options

	Clear targets showing the goals for how much greenhouse gas emissions the government hopes to remove and by what date	Exporting liquefied natural gas overseas to help replace coal plants in countries like China	Investing in technology that can help Canadian businesses reduce their emissions	A carbon tax and rebate that makes it more expensive to pollute, and then sends the proceeds back to Canadians as cheques	A fee on large polluters to incentivize them to reduce their carbon footprint
Agree↑	74%	61%	86%	64%	83%
Disagree↓	14%	22%	6%	25%	10%
Strongly agree	35%	21%	47%	22%	51%
Somewhat agree	39%	40%	39%	42%	32%
Somewhat disagree	10%	15%	5%	15%	8%
Strongly disagree	4%	7%	2%	10%	2%
Don't know	13%	17%	7%	11%	7%

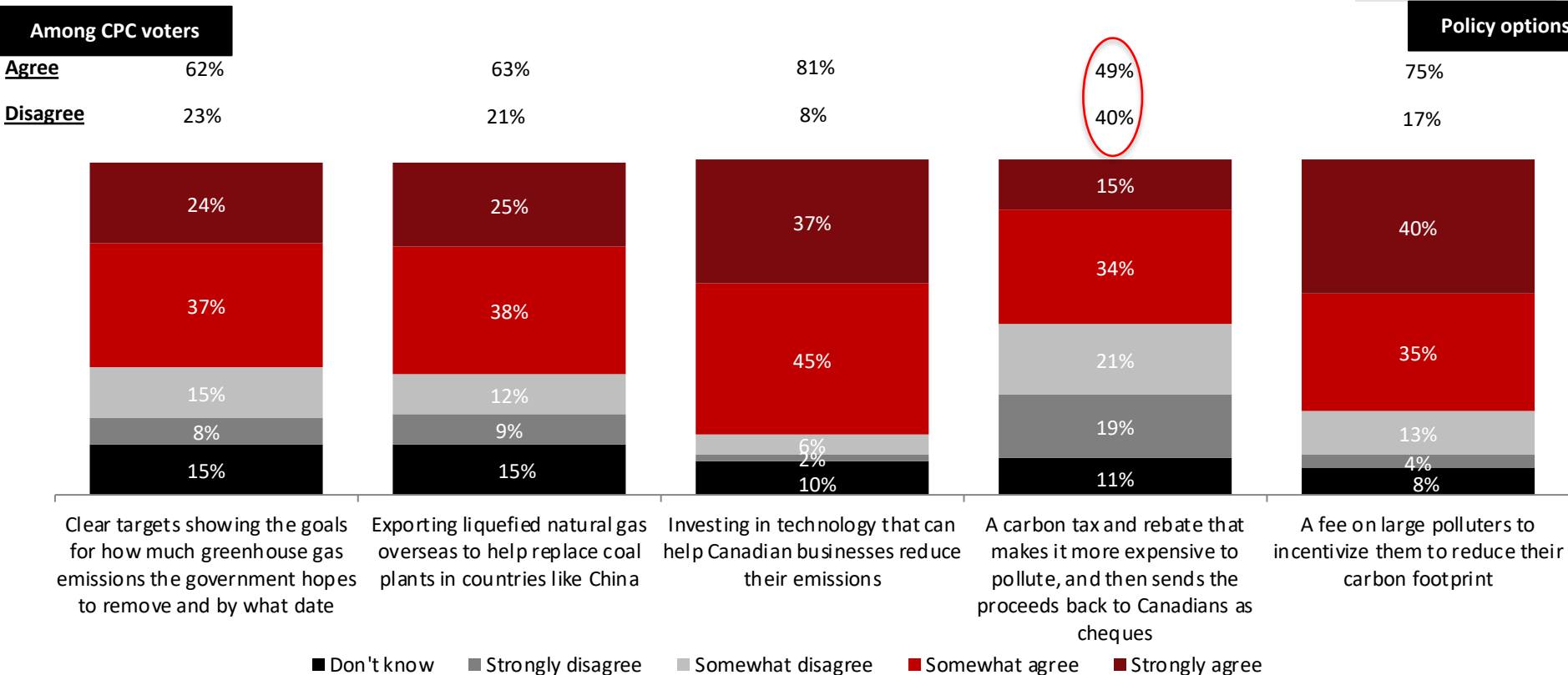■ Don't know ■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree

Q22: Below are several actions which Governments-Federal or Provincial- could implement as part of an effective and credible climate change plan. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree these actions should be priorities to include in a climate change plan. Base: Greater Toronto Area Residents (n=1001)
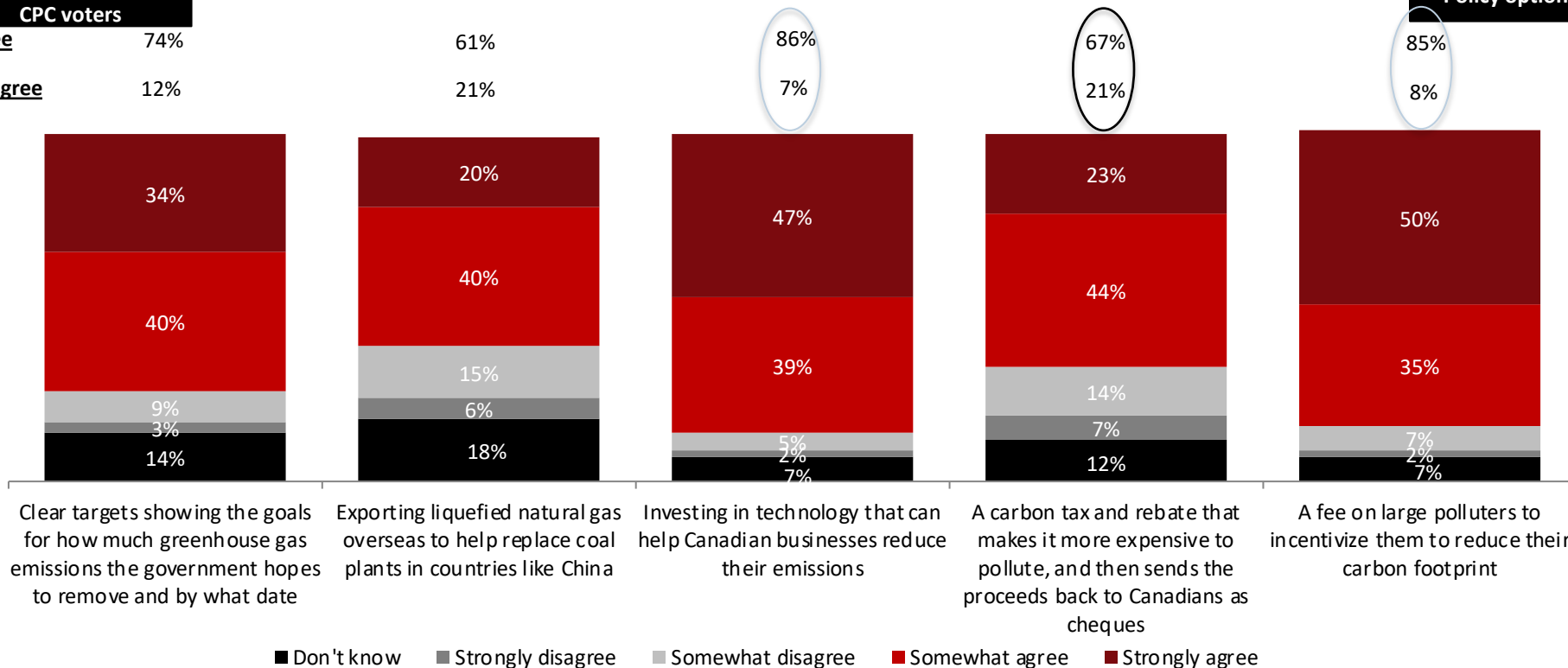
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CPC voters share the overall voter sentiments, except with the policy of a carbon tax, which drops to being supported by about half of CPC supporters.

Among CPC voters

Policy options

	Clear targets	Exporting LNG	Investing in tech	Carbon tax and rebate	Fee on large polluters
Agree	62%	63%	81%	49%	75%
Disagree	23%	21%	8%	40%	17%

Clear targets showing the goals for how much greenhouse gas emissions the government hopes to remove and by what date
- Strongly agree: 24%
- Somewhat agree: 37%
- Somewhat disagree: 15%
- Strongly disagree: 8%
- Don't know: 15%

Exporting liquefied natural gas overseas to help replace coal plants in countries like China
- Strongly agree: 25%
- Somewhat agree: 38%
- Somewhat disagree: 12%
- Strongly disagree: 9%
- Don't know: 15%

Investing in technology that can help Canadian businesses reduce their emissions
- Strongly agree: 37%
- Somewhat agree: 45%
- Somewhat disagree: 6%
- Strongly disagree: 2%
- Don't know: 10%

A carbon tax and rebate that makes it more expensive to pollute, and then sends the proceeds back to Canadians as cheques
- Strongly agree: 15%
- Somewhat agree: 34%
- Somewhat disagree: 21%
- Strongly disagree: 19%
- Don't know: 11%

A fee on large polluters to incentivize them to reduce their carbon footprint
- Strongly agree: 40%
- Somewhat agree: 35%
- Somewhat disagree: 13%
- Strongly disagree: 4%
- Don't know: 8%

Legend: ■ Don't know ■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree
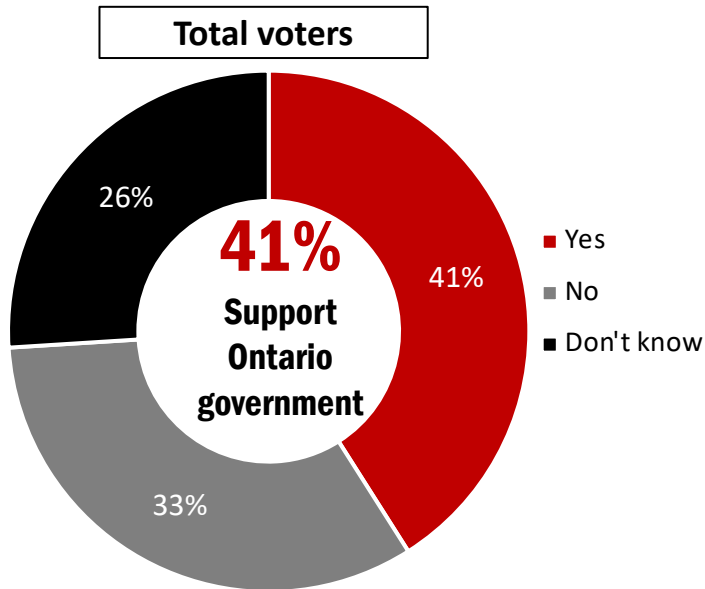
Q22: Below are several actions which Governments-Federal or Provincial- could implement as part of an effective and credible climate change plan. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree these actions should be priorities to include in a climate change plan. Base : Greater Toronto Area Residents (n=1001)

# Mirroring general residents, over two-thirds of accessible CPC voters agree carbon tax a credible policy

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Among Accessible CPC voters

Agree	74%	61%	86%	67%	85%
Disagree	12%	21%	7%	21%	8%

Stacked bar chart values:

	Clear targets showing the goals for how much greenhouse gas emissions the government hopes to remove and by what date	Exporting liquefied natural gas overseas to help replace coal plants in countries like China	Investing in technology that can help Canadian businesses reduce their emissions	A carbon tax and rebate that makes it more expensive to pollute, and then sends the proceeds back to Canadians as cheques	A fee on large polluters to incentivize them to reduce their carbon footprint
Strongly agree	34%	20%	47%	23%	50%
Somewhat agree	40%	40%	39%	44%	35%
Somewhat disagree	9%	15%	5%	14%	7%
Strongly disagree	3%	6%	2%	7%	2%
Don't know	14%	18%	7%	12%	7%

■ Don't know ■ Strongly disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Strongly agree

Q22: Below are several actions which Governments-Federal or Provincial- could implement as part of an effective and credible climate change plan. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree these actions should be priorities to include in a climate change plan. Base : Greater Toronto Area Residents (n=1001)

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Detailed Results
Ontario Government on Climate Change

4 in 10 GTA residents support the Ontario government's legal challenging of the federal carbon tax and rebate policy, accessible CPC voters are divided in opinion
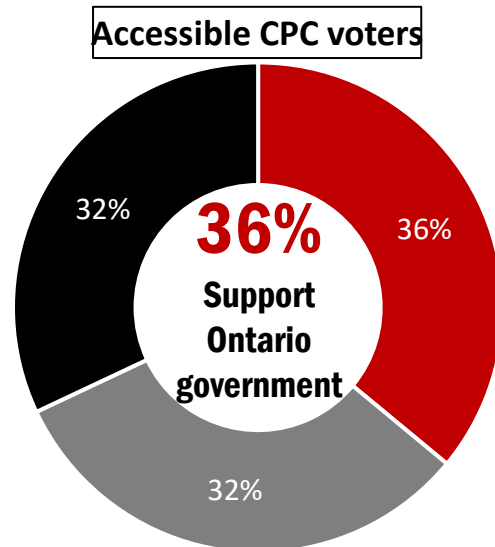
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Support/Oppose the position of Ontario Government: The Ontario government is challenging the federal carbon tax and rebate policy at the Supreme Court.

Total voters

- 26%
- 41%
- 33%

41% Support Ontario government

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

CPC Voters

- 21%
- 66%
- 13%

66% Support Ontario government

Accessible CPC voters

- 32%
- 36%
- 32%

36% Support Ontario government

41% of residents favour Ontario govt's stance on tax and rebate
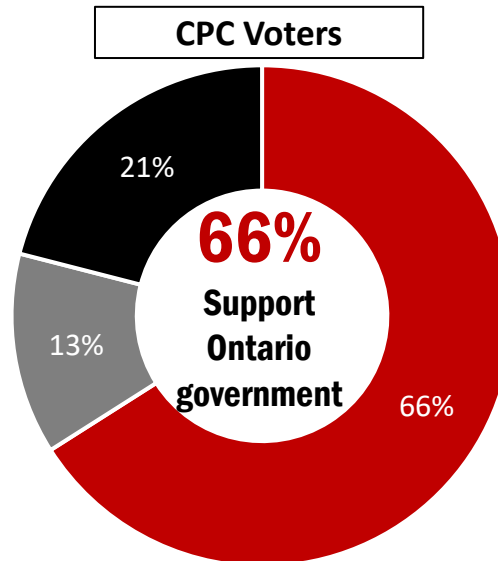
66% of CPC voters favour Ontario govt's stance on tax and rebate

36% of accessible voters favour Ontario govt's stance on tax and rebate

Q20: The Ontario government is challenging the federal carbon tax and rebate policy at the Supreme Court. Do you support the Ontario government fighting the carbon tax and rebate policy in court? Base: Greater Toronto Area Residents (n=1001)

While over half of CPC voters support Doug Ford's anti-carbon tax campaign, 65% of accessible voters are against government spending on campaign

Support/oppose

	Support	Oppose
Total	**29%**	**61%**
CPC voters	**55%**	**33%**
Accessible CPC voters	**23%**	**65%**

Total: Don't know 11% | Strongly oppose 35% | Somewhat oppose 25% | Somewhat support 17% | Strongly support 11%

CPC voters: Don't know 13% | Strongly oppose 11% | Somewhat oppose 22% | Somewhat support 27% | Strongly support 28%

Accessible CPC voters: Don't know 12% | Strongly oppose 36% | Somewhat oppose 29% | Somewhat support 16% | Strongly support 6%

Legend:
- ■ Don't know
- ■ Strongly oppose
- ■ Somewhat oppose
- ■ Somewhat support
- ■ Strongly support

Preamble: Doug Ford has launched a campaign to oppose the carbon tax and rebate policy, and his government has approved spending $30 million on this campaign.

Q21: Do you support or oppose Premier Ford using taxpayer money to wage this campaign against the carbon tax and rebate?

Base : Greater Toronto Area Residents (n=1001)

FINAL THOUGHTS

Final Thoughts

This study is a follow-up to one conducted at the beginning of 2020—pre-pandemic. A primary objective was to determine whether the findings of the earlier study still held among voters in the seat-rich 905 region of Ontario. Specifically, have attitudes toward climate change and pricing carbon pollution changed with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a top-of-mind issue and priority for government action, climate change has decreased in frequency of mention from the pre-pandemic period. It has gone from a top #1 or #2 item to 4th on the list of issues. Besides the COVID-19 situation, *the economy, the level of taxation* and *debt and deficits* now lead the issue matrix.

Climate change may have diminished as an immediate priority, but it is still an important issue for 905 voters—three-quarters of these voters are worried about the impact of climate change (80% of accessible CPC voters). Also noteworthy is climate change is still an important enough issue that Parties that ignore the issue in their policy platforms risk alienating large numbers of voters in this region. Six in ten voters agreed they would not vote for a federal Party that did not have a strong plan to address climate change.

The Conservative Party has opposed the current federal government's carbon tax policy; however this study provides data that suggests if CPC voters are aware that all the money raised from the tax is rebated back to consumers, their opposition to the policy decreases. In addition, this study shows that a carbon pricing strategy that focuses on returning the proceeds of a carbon tax to Canadians in the form of *personal income tax cuts* would be a net vote winner for the Party in the 905 region. This research finding is contrary to the anecdotal views sometimes expressed suggesting the adoption of any carbon pricing policy would cost the Party support.

Finally, from the 905 voter perspective, a credible climate change policy should contain actions such as:
- Investing in technological innovation
- Charging fees to large carbon emitters
- Clear targets for greenhouse gas reductions
- A carbon tax that returns the proceeds to Canadians

RESPONDENTS PROFILE

RESPONDENT PROFILE – *GTA Region*

	Weighted
n=	1001
Gender	(%)
Male	48
Female	52
Age	
18 to 34	28
35 to 54	38
55 years of age or older	34
Origin of Birth	
Born in Canada	63
Born outside of Canada	36

	Weighted
n=	1001
Household Income	(%)
Less than $60K	23
$40K to less than $100K	29
$100K and over	37
Education	
High school	11
Some college or university	15
A college or university degree	52
A graduate degree	22
Region	
East GTA	45
West GTA	55

OUR SERVICES

- **Leger**
  Marketing research and polling

- **Leger Metrics**
  Real-time VOC satisfaction measurement

- **Leger Analytics**
  Data modeling and analysis

- **Legerweb**
  Panel management

- **Leger Communities**
  Online community management

- **Leger Digital**
  Digital strategy and user experience

- **International Research**
  Worldwide Independent Network (WIN)

600
EMPLOYEES

185
CONSULTANTS

8
OFFICES

CALGARY | EDMONTON | MONTREAL | PHILADELPHIA
QUEBEC CITY | TORONTO | VANCOUVER | WINNIPEG

34

OUR CREDENTIALS

Leger is a member of the Canadian Research Insights Council (CRIC), the industry association for the market/survey/insights research industry.

Leger is a member of ESOMAR (European Society for Opinion and Market Research), the global association of opinion polls and marketing research professionals. As such, Leger is committed to applying the international ICC/ESOMAR code of Market, Opinion and Social Research and Data Analytics.

Leger is also a member of the Insights Association, the American Association of Marketing Research Analytics.

Leger

We know Canadians

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