

Report

Climate Change Politics (Provincial)

Ontario: February 2021



DATE 2021-03-19

Leger

We know Canadians

METHODOLOGY

Context and Objectives

Context

Clean Prosperity works at federal and provincial level to find climate change solutions that are innovative, support economic growth and generate new economic opportunity. Through this project, Clean Prosperity team wants to understand the opinion of Ontario residents on climate change issues, carbon tax and policies to address carbon pollution.

Objectives

Through this research, Clean prosperity team wants to understand:

- The importance of climate change for Ontario voters
- Impact of Carbon tax as an issue in deciding provincial election ballot
- Impressions of the provincial governments' position toward the federal carbon tax

Methodology

Study Population

- Ontario residents, aged 18 and older.

Data Collection

- A total of n=1505 online surveys were conducted via Leger's online panel, LEO.
- 1000 surveys were collected proportionately province-wide. In addition an oversample of 500 surveys were collected in the 905 GTA area of the province.
- The oversample of 1505 sureys was weighted to be proportional province-wide.
- Interviews were conducted from February 10 to February 23, 2021.

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 Ontario residents (n=1505) $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20.
- Quotas were set to ensure survey completions were properly distributed across the province.
- 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.

Summary of Findings

Findings (1/2)

Top of Mind Concerns:

Currently, Growing the Ontario economy, creating jobs and improving long term care system are top of mind concerns among Ontarians. Only about 12% residents mentioned climate change and its impacts as their priority concern. However, 72% Ontarians expressed concern about climate change and its impact on them and their family when asked.

- 57% of PC voter base is also concerned about the climate change impact on their families.
- 73% respondents support policies targeting reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and achieving net zero carbon emission goal by 2050.
- 56% Ontarians also agreed that they will only vote the provincial party if it has a credible climate change plan.

Overall, only 8% respondent rated Doug Ford's performance on environmental issues as good, 42% accessible voters rated the government's performance poor on environmental and climate change issues.

Carbon Pricing Policies:

Current Carbon Tax: Overall, 31% respondents believed that currently existing carbon tax policy allows the proceeds to be rebated back to households and business.

On explaining the policy, it finds support among 48% of the voters. 38% of PC voter support the currently implemented carbon tax policy in the province. Those opposing the policy are mainly concerned that it won't be affordable, while many view it as a tax grab.

Made-in-Ontario Carbon Pricing System: 48% residents support the made-in-Ontario Carbon pricing system for large industrial polluters being negotiated. The support is stronger among the PC voter base, 55% supporting the policy. On being given option between federal and provincial carbon tax, two-thirds voter base expressed support for provincial pricing system.

Findings (2/2)

Carbon Tax (Income Tax Exemption instead of direct rebate): The form of carbon pricing where the rebate is provided as increase in income tax exemption threshold finds support among 57% of the residents. The support is stronger among PC voter base, 64% of whom would support the policy and among those with higher household income.

Adoption of this policy will also increase the likelihood of almost a quarter of accessible PC voters (23%) voting for the Party.

Carbon Tax (All Tax money Rebated back to Families and Businesses): 67% of residents support the carbon pricing policy if they were assured that all money from the tax gets rebated back to families and businesses. This policy enjoys the strongest support among the options tested. This option also increases the likelihood to support PC among 29% of accessible PC voters. Adding that the tax would provide an additional rebate to rural residents and farmers find support among 32% voters who initially opposed the policy.

Carbon Tax (Tax money to offset the drivers' costs): 51% of Ontario residents and 66% of the PC voter base is in favour of the carbon pricing policy that allows the tax money to be used to offset the cost for drivers. This policy increases the likelihood to support PC party among 23% of accessible PC voters.

Other Climate Policies:

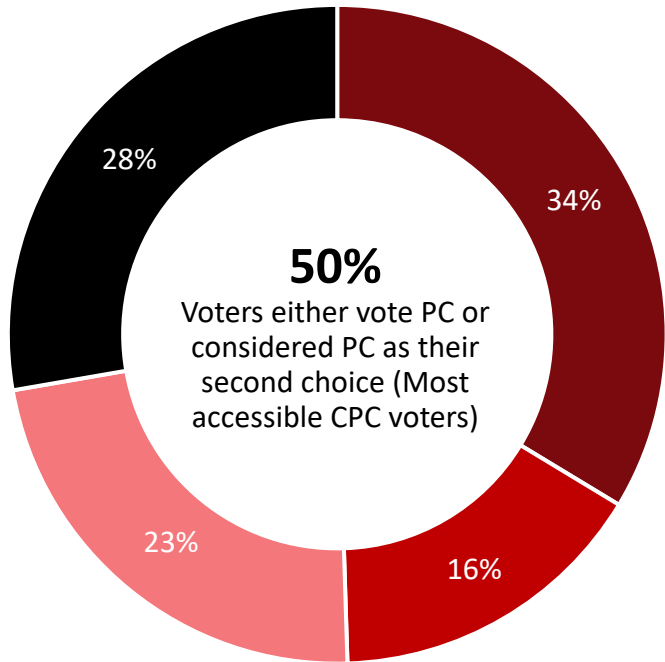
The majority of residents are in favour of levying a large fee on large polluters to incentivize them to reduce their carbon footprint. Only half of the residents favour the policy of blending gasoline with ethanol and increasing the cost of fuels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In general, GTA 905 area mirrors the opinion voiced by Ontario at large. Support for Made-in-Ontario provincial carbon pricing policy is seen stronger in this region compared to the rest of the province, while providing rebates to rural residents and farmers has a weaker impact in GTA 905 region as compared to Eastern or Northern regions of the province.

Detailed Results

Ontario - PC Voter Pool

Half of Ontarians consider the Progressive Conservative party among their top two choices in a provincial election



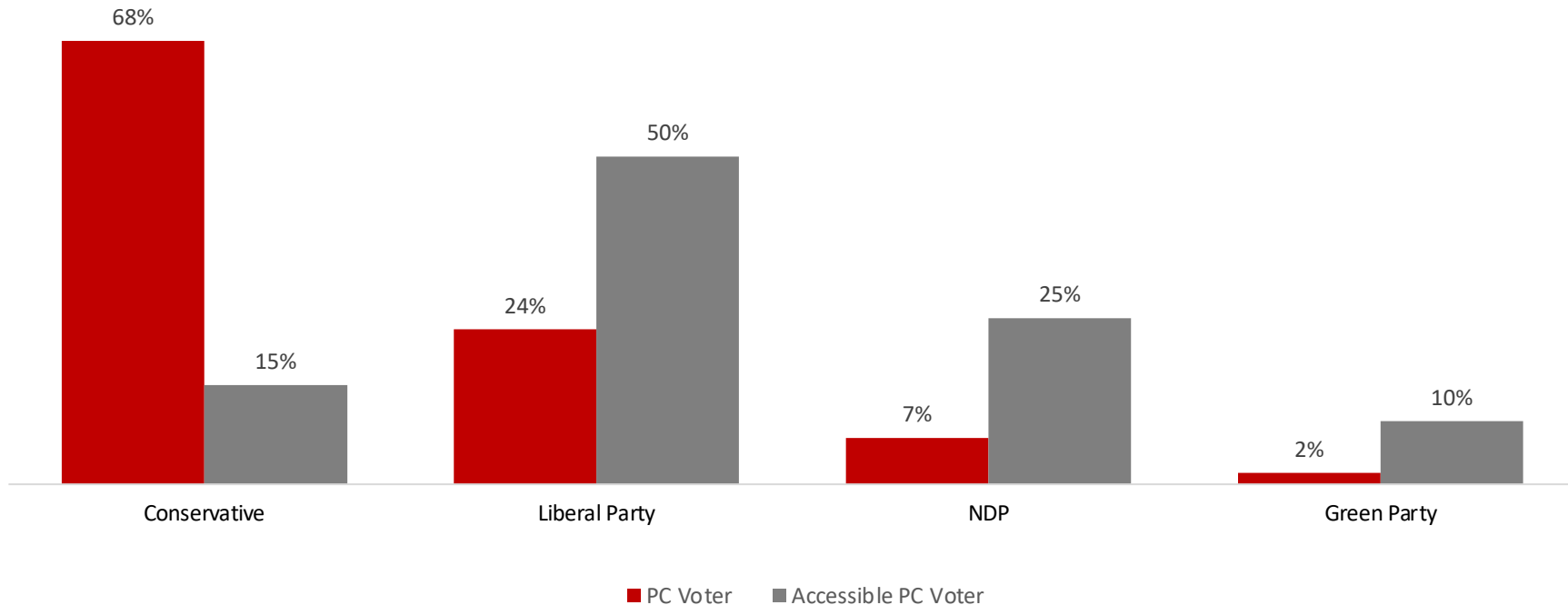
Term	Definition	Proportion
PC Voter base	Always vote PC in Provincial elections or will vote PC if elections happen tomorrow	34%
Most Accessible PC Voters	PC among top-two choices/PC-Liberal Switcher	16%
Other Accessible PC Voters	CPC not excluded as a possible ballot choice	23%
Non-PC Voters	Other than above (Never vote PC)	28%

Accessible Voters

- PC Voters
- Most Accessible PC voters
- Other PC voters
- Non-PC voters

Calculated based on provincial election voting questions
Base : Ontario Residents (n=1505)

In a federal election, 68% of provincial PC voters and 15% of accessible voters would choose CPC



Q6: And if a Federal election was tomorrow which of the party's candidates below would you be most likely to support?

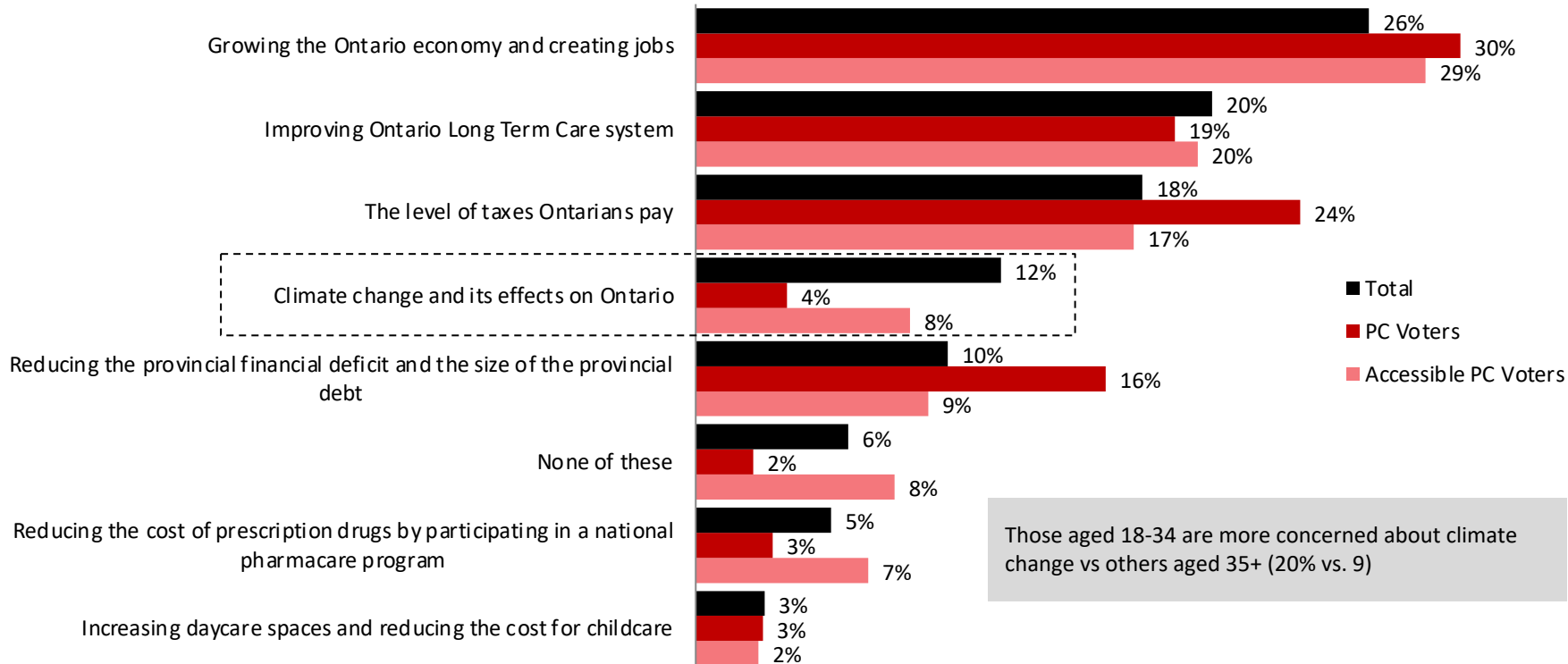
Q6A: Is there a Party you are leaning toward supporting, even just a little? (Committed Votes)

Base : Ontario (n=1246)

Detailed Results

Priority Issues

Improving economy and long term care systems are major concerns currently, about 12% voters have climate change as top priority



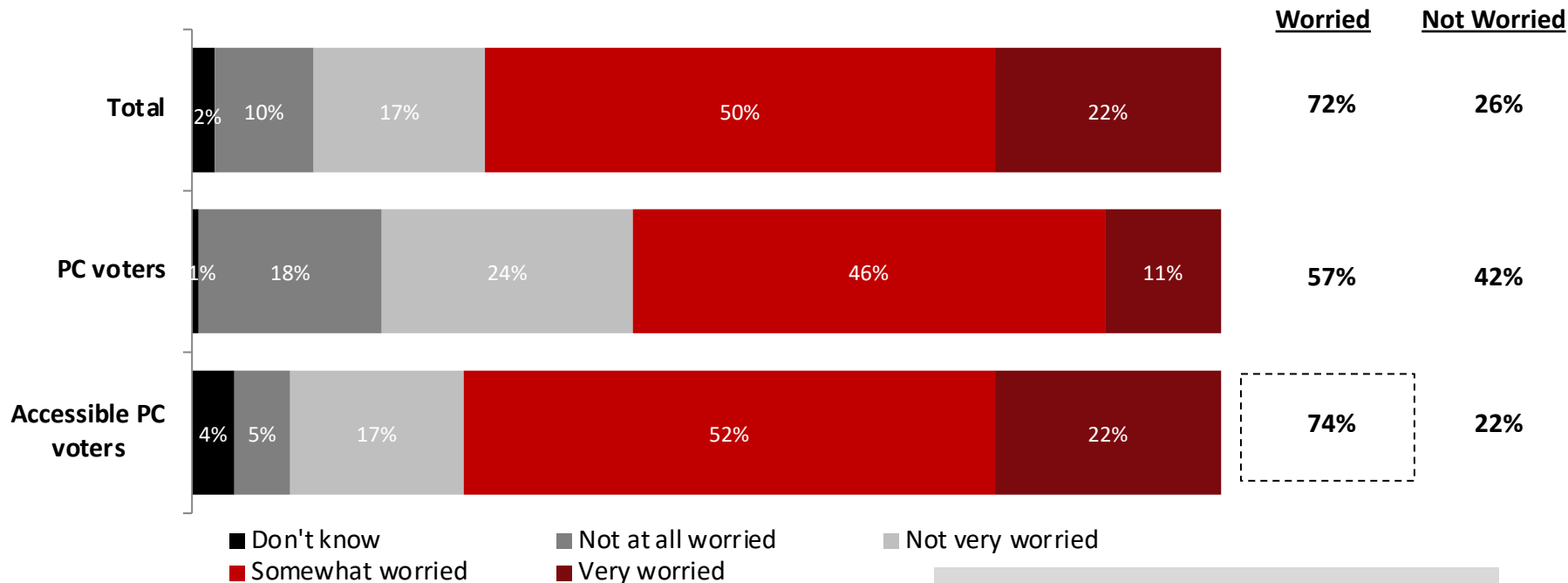
Those aged 18-34 are more concerned about climate change vs others aged 35+ (20% vs. 9%)

Q7: Once the COVID-19 situation is under control and vaccine is well distributed, what is the other issue that you think the Provincial government prioritize for Ontario?

Base : Ontario Residents (n=1505)

On asking specifically about climate change concerns, over half of voter base and 74% accessible PC voters mention it is worrisome

Climate change concerns

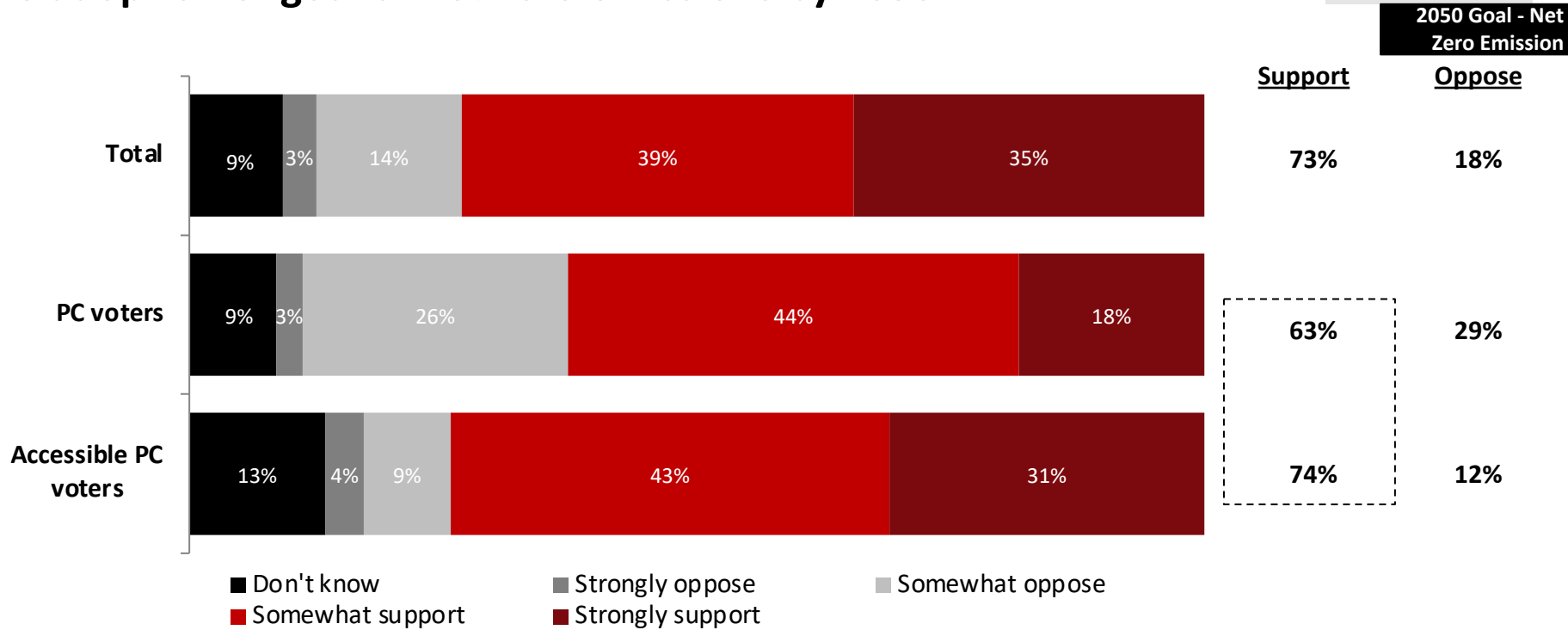


Those in northern region of province are least worried (41% not worried)

Q9: When you hear news and discussion about climate change how worried are you about how this will impact you and your family?

Base : Ontario Residents (n=1505)

About three-quarters accessible and two-thirds PC voters also support the adoption of goal of net-zero emissions by 2050



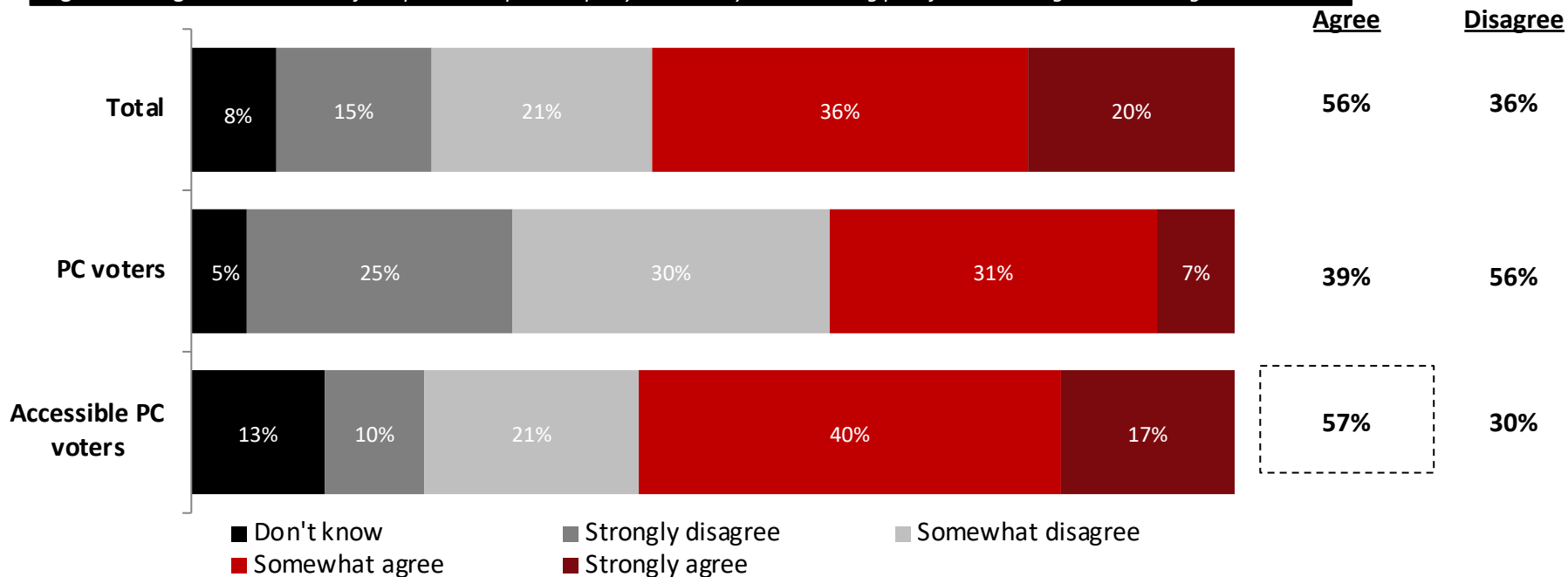
Additional Information: Some scientists have suggested that to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, countries around the world need to adopt a goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. Net-zero emissions means that Canada has to reduce its greenhouse gases substantially, and any remaining greenhouse gases that still go into the atmosphere would have to be offset by removing the same amount from the air. This will mean significant action for Canada.

Over half of Ontario residents and accessible PC voters agree they would vote for a provincial party only if it has strong climate change plans

70% of those worried about climate change agree with the statement vs. 22% of those not worried.

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

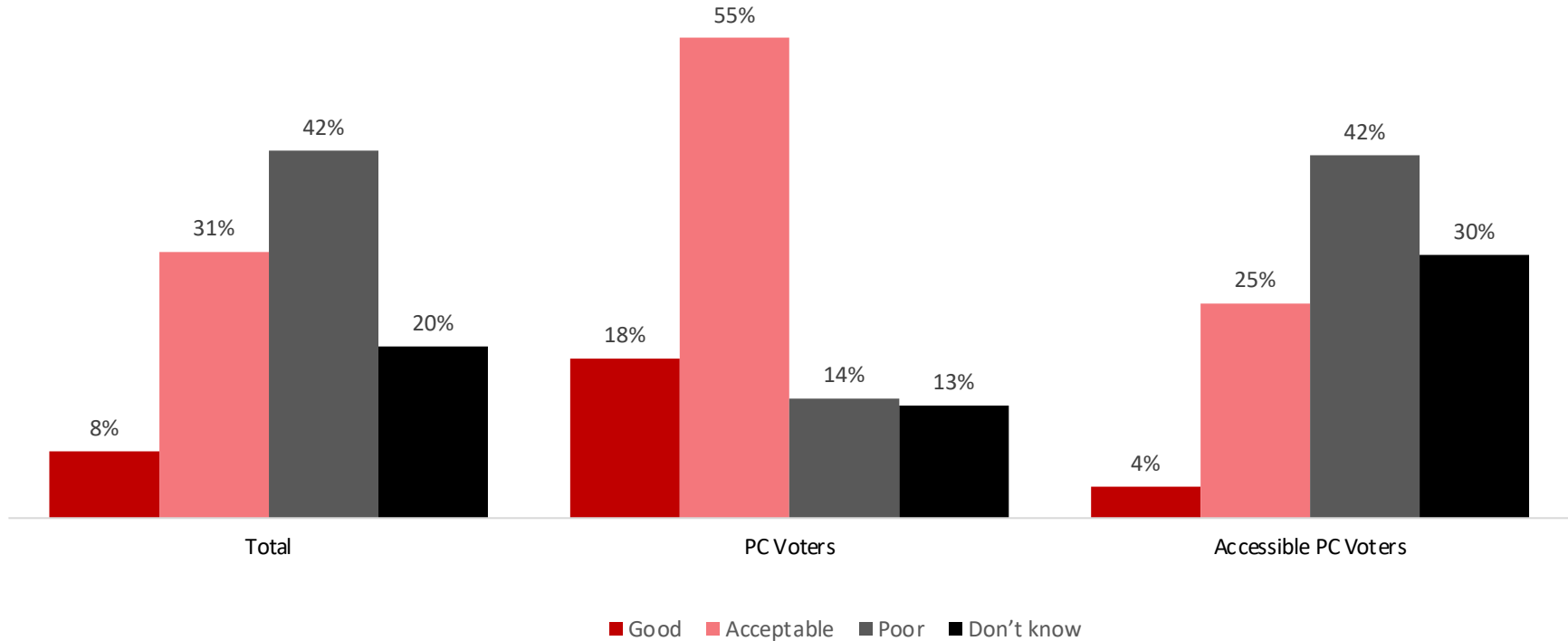
Agree/Disagree



Q10: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: *I cannot vote for a provincial political party unless they have a strong plan for addressing climate change.*
 Base : Ontario Residents (n=1505)

For 42% accessible PC voters, Doug Ford's government is performing poorly on environmental and climate change issues

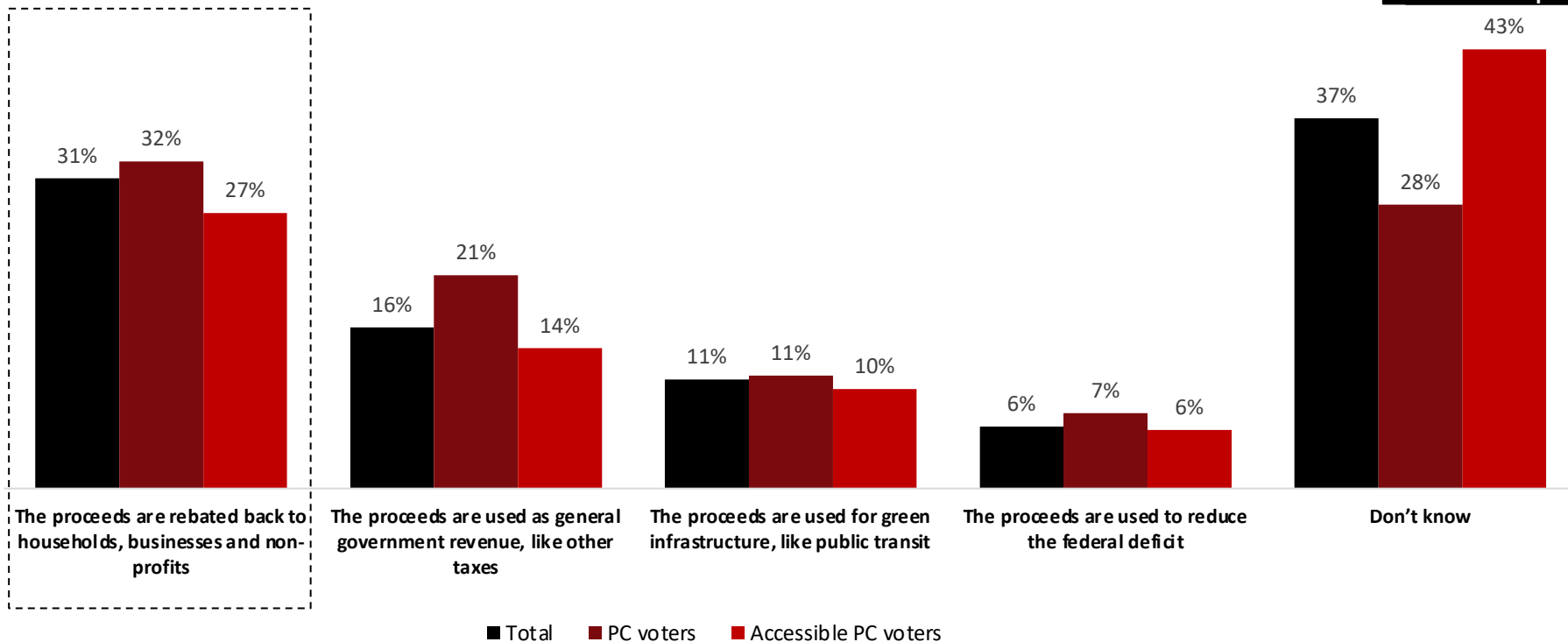
47% of those aged 18-34 years rate Doug Ford's performance as poor vs. 39% of middle aged (aged 35-54)



Detailed Results

Current Carbon Tax Policy

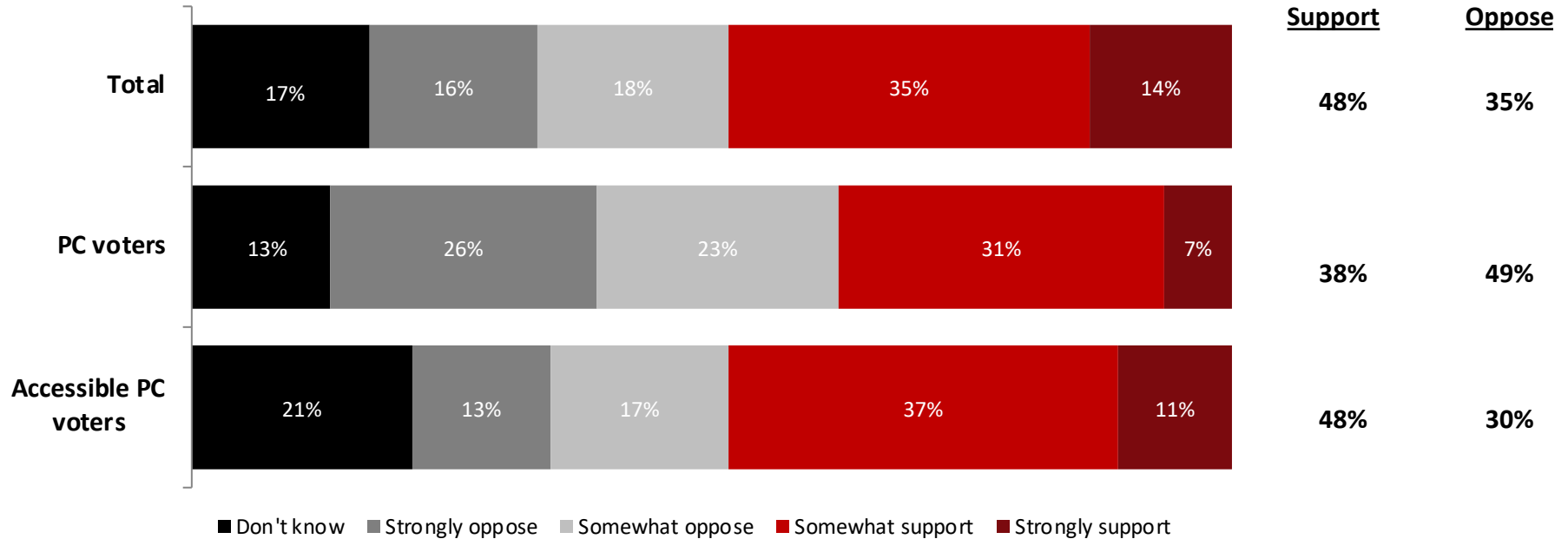
37% of residents are unsure how carbon tax money is being used currently, three in ten believe that the proceeds are rebated back



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.

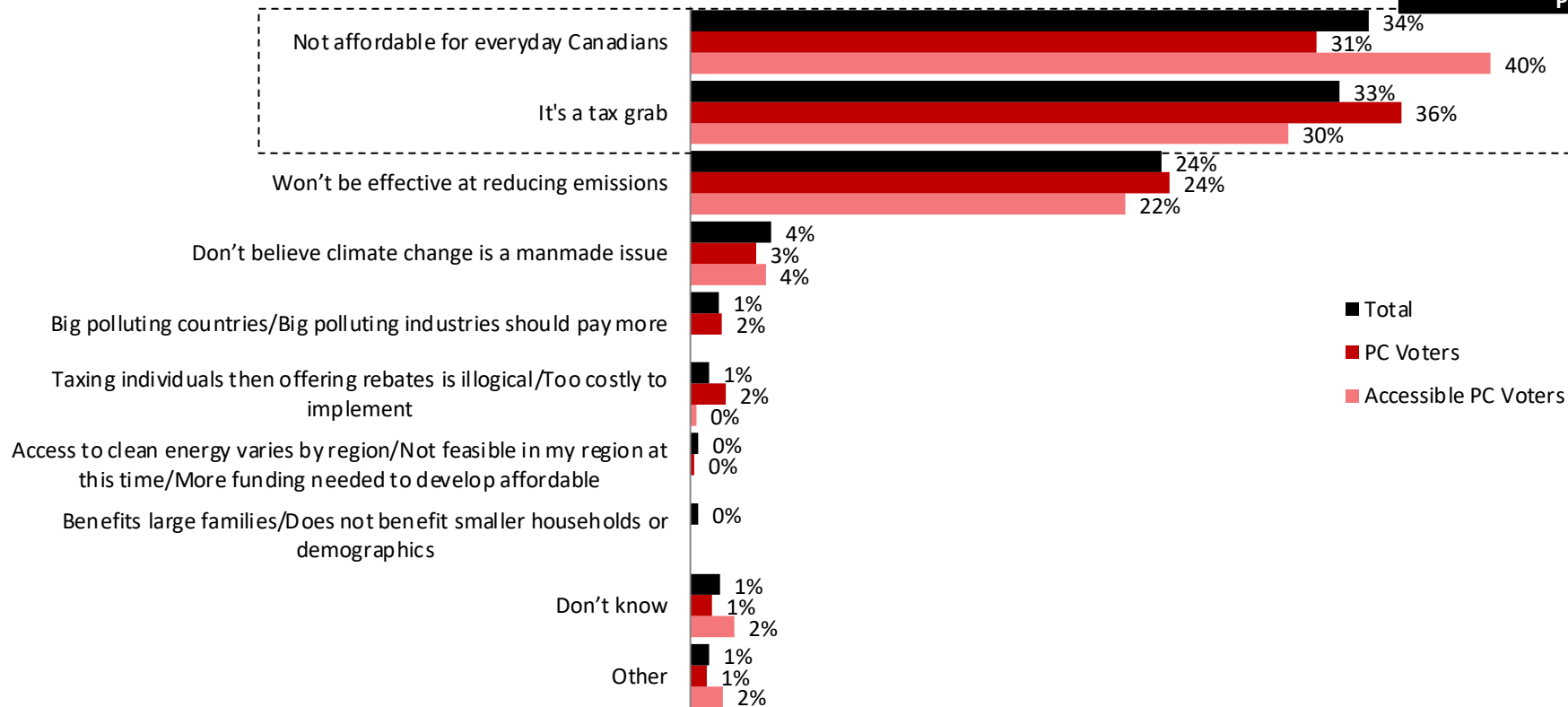
Base : Ontario Residents (n=1505)

About half of Ontarians (48%) and only 38% of the PC voter base favour the current system of charging for carbon pollution



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 a liter of gasoline and 6 cents to the cost of a cubic metre of natural gas for home heating. The average Ontario household of four also received \$600 back in rebates in 2020 from this carbon tax (as an income tax refund). The carbon tax and the carbon rebate will both rise each year until 2030. In that year, the tax will add \$38 cents / liter in gasoline and will return \$2000 in rebates to the average household of four.

Many of those opposing the policy are concerned it won't be affordable for Canadians, others see it as a tax grab



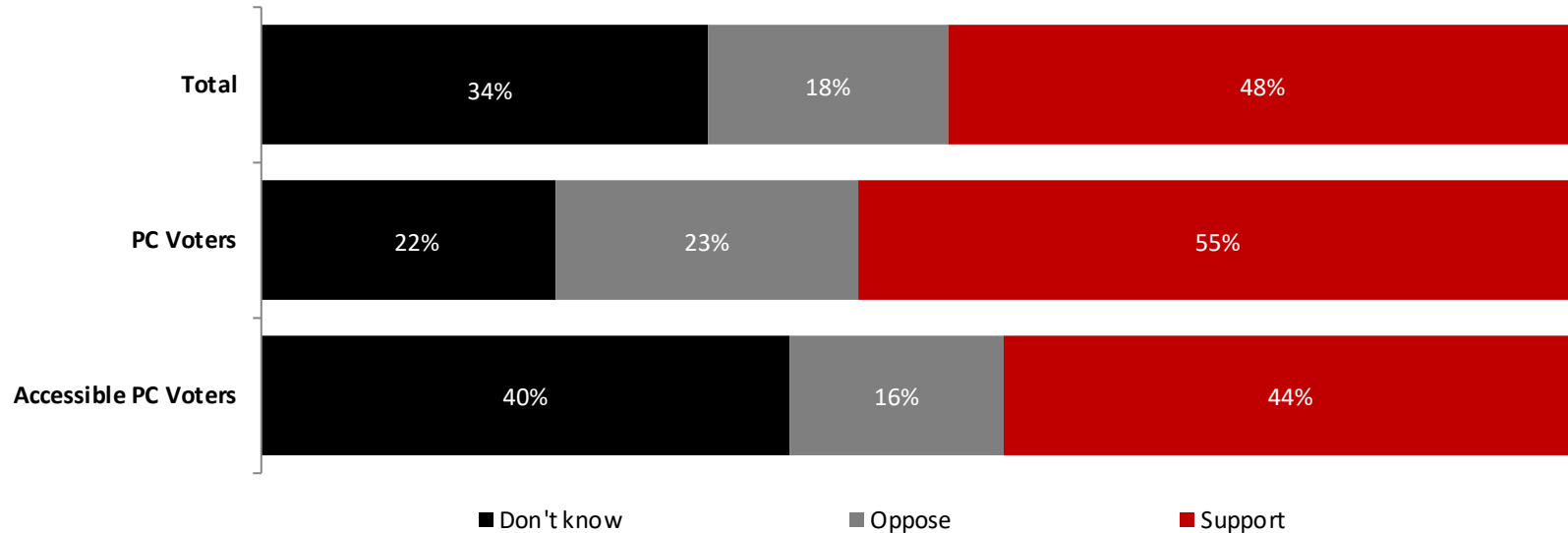
Q13_1:What is the main reason that you oppose this policy? Please choose the answer that most accurately reflects how you feel even if none of the answers are exactly right or use the Other selection. Base : Ontario Residents opposing the policy (n=519)

Detailed Results

Other Carbon Tax Policy Options

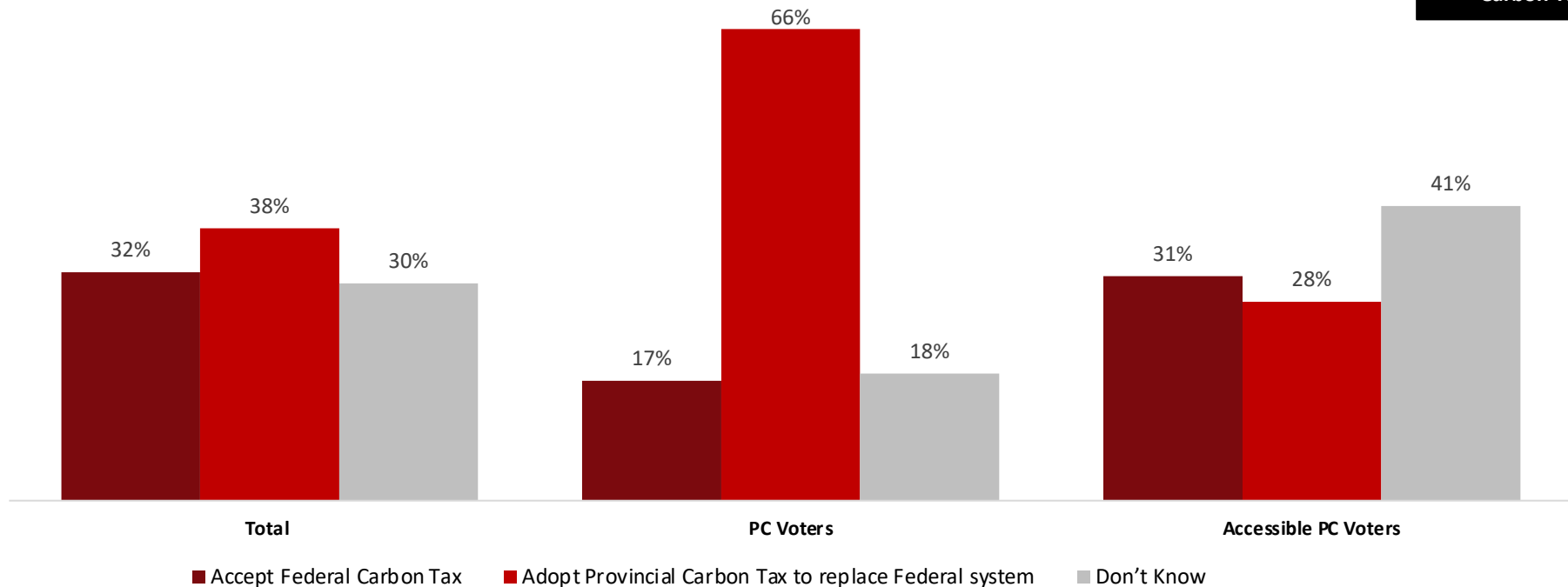
About half of Ontarians support a Made-in-Ontario carbon pricing policy; somewhat more support from the PC voter base

Support is strongest in GTA 905 (51%), East (52%), compared to Central where only 37% support Made-in-Ontario policy



Scenario: Premier Ford has negotiated an agreement with the federal government to use a Made-in-Ontario carbon pricing system for large industrial polluters in Ontario. If Premier Ford were to decide that the best way to fight climate change was to also adopt a carbon price on gasoline and home heating, and he sent all the money back to Ontarians, would you support or oppose this policy?

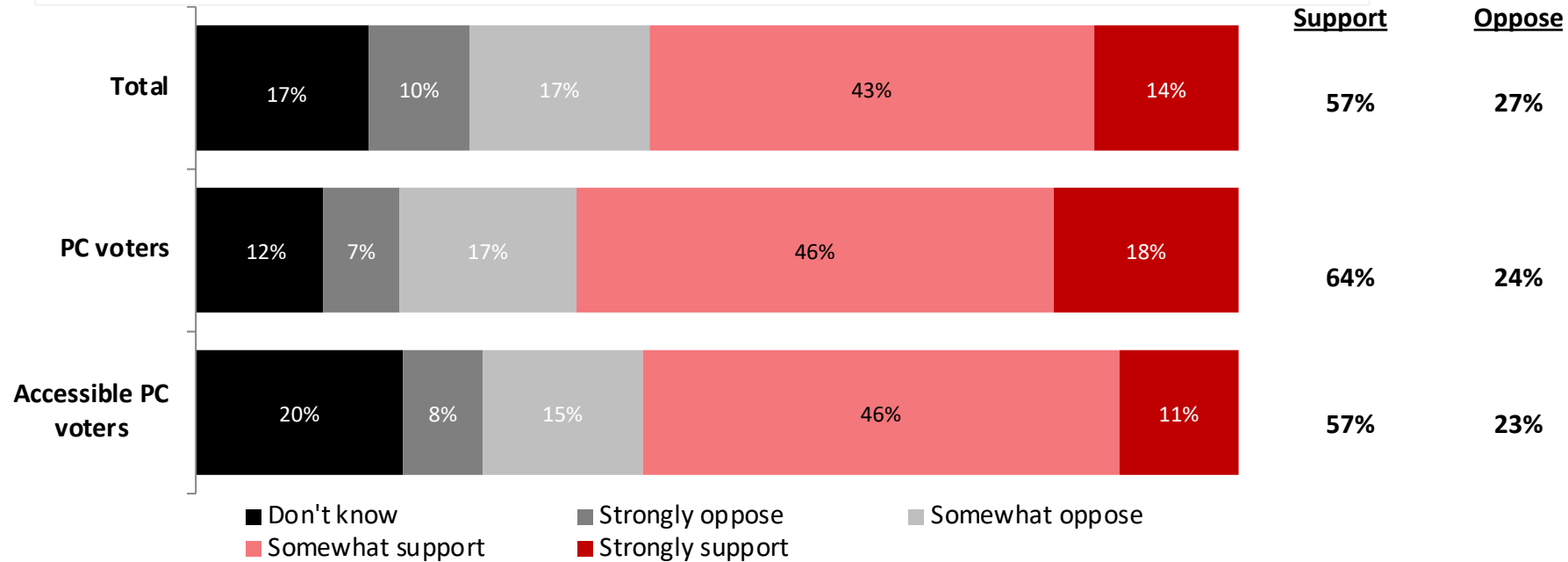
Two-thirds of the PC voter base favour adopting a provincial carbon tax over the federal one. Overall however, Ontarians are divided on the choice.



Scenario: Premier Ford is currently challenging the consumer portion of the federal carbon tax at the Supreme Court. If the Court rules against Premier Ford, he will have to choose between accepting the federal carbon tax or implementing his own Made-in-Ontario carbon tax policy.

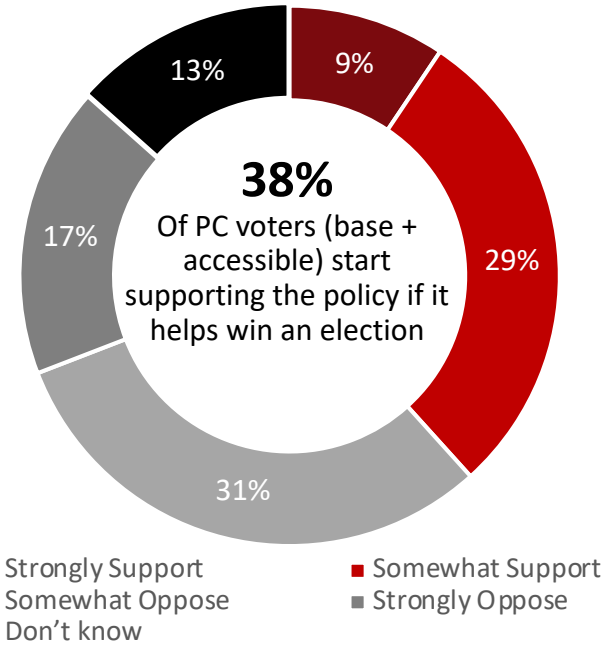
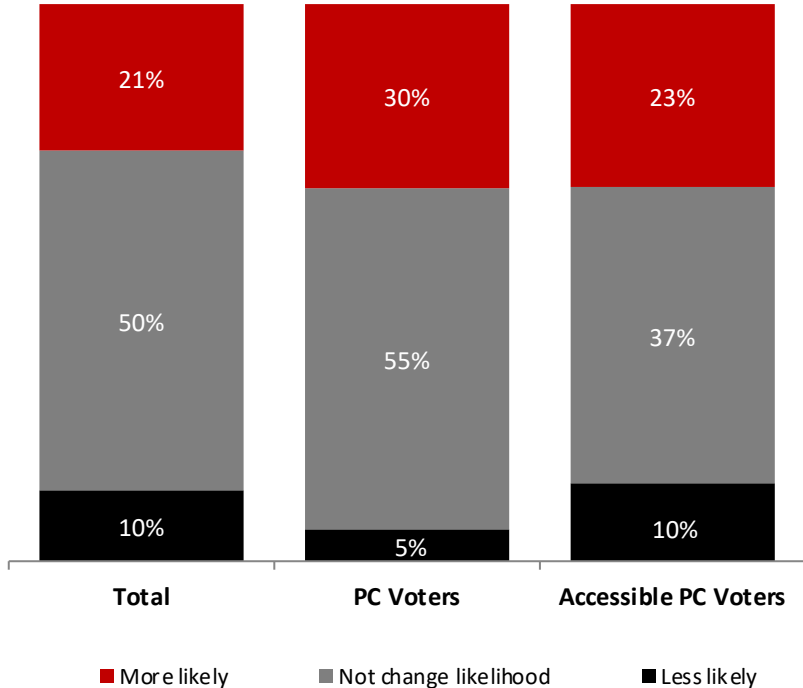
57% of Ontarians support a carbon tax policy if its proceeds are used to reduce personal income tax rates

Only 51% of those with HH income <\$60K support this form of policy vs. 63% of those with income \$100K+



Information on screen: Instead of a system where the rebate is directly provided to Ontarian households, the proceeds are used to reduce personal income taxes, including an increase in the personal tax exemption threshold.

Adoption of this form of carbon tax makes 23% accessible voters more likely to vote PC, 38% of PC voters initially opposed to the policy support if it improves election prospects of the party

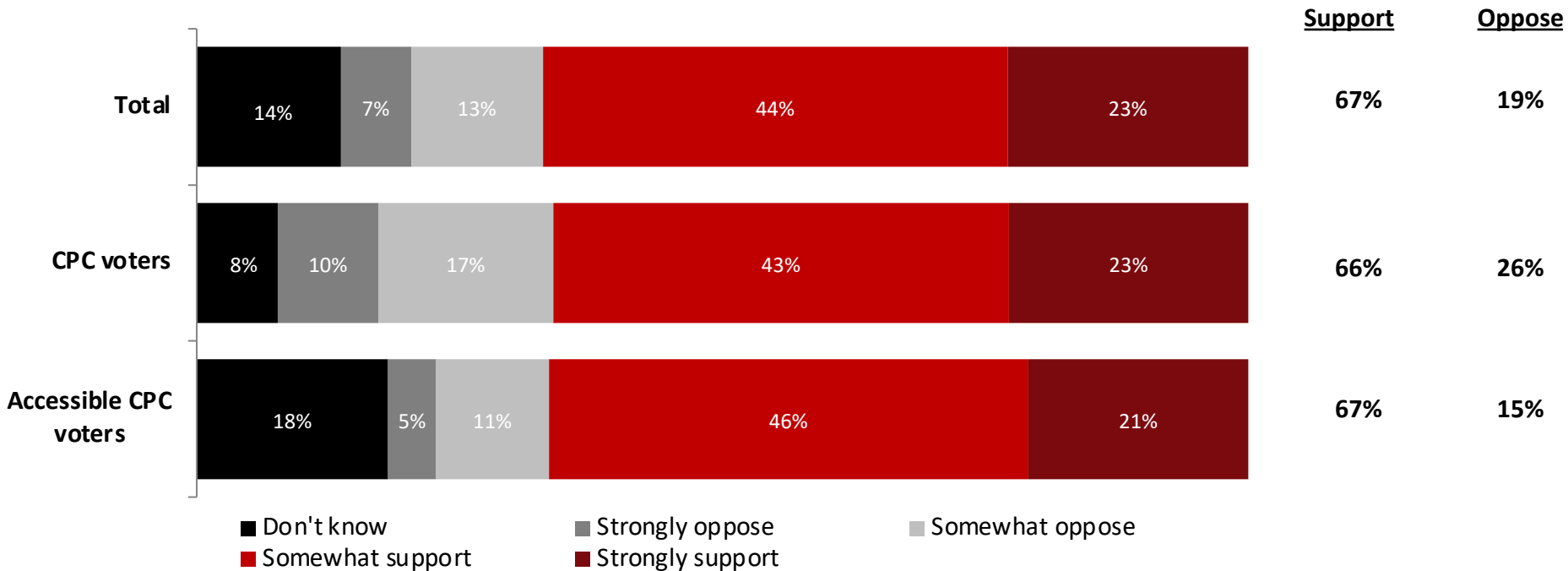


Q14B: If Premier Ford and the Progressive Conservative government were to adopt this policy, would it make you more likely to vote for him in an election, less likely or not change your likelihood of voting for the PCs?
Base : Ontario Residents (n=1505)

Q14C: If you knew that adopting this carbon pricing policy would help the Progressive Conservatives win the next provincial election, would you support or oppose the policy?
Base : Ontario Residents, PC Voter opposing adoption of policy (Q14A) (n=168)

67% residents support carbon tax policy if known that the tax money is being rebated back to families and businesses

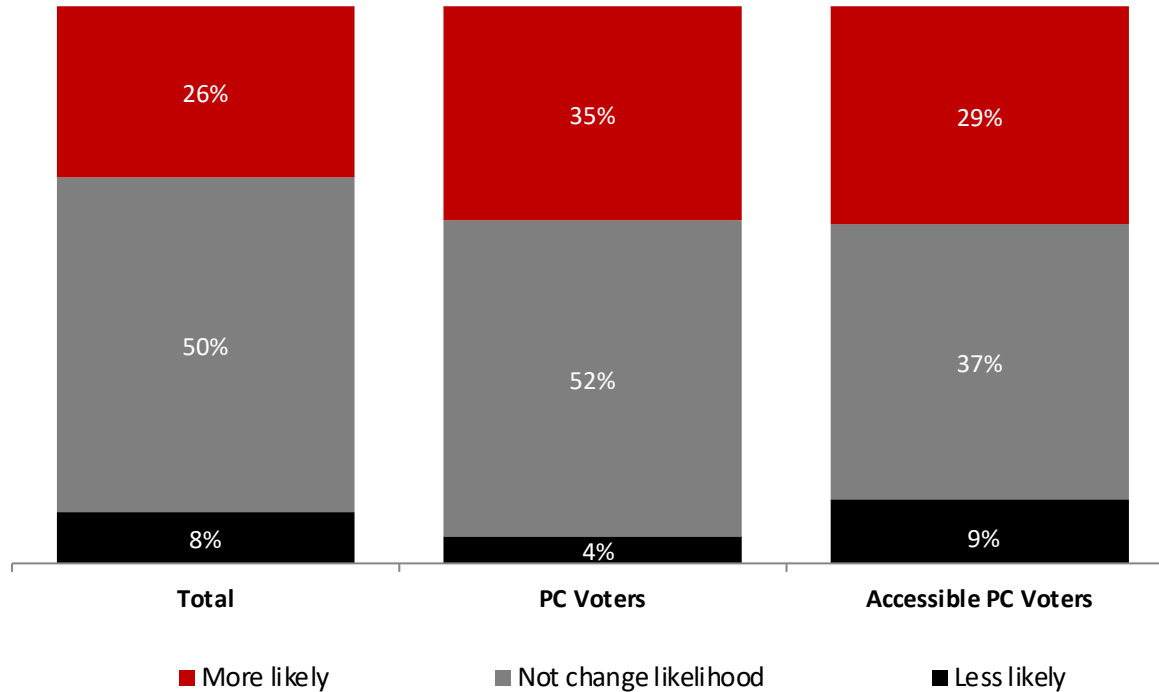
71% of aged 18-34 support this form of policy vs. 63% of aged 35-54



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 : Ontario Residents (n=1505)

Adoption of this policy makes 29% accessible voters more likely to vote PC

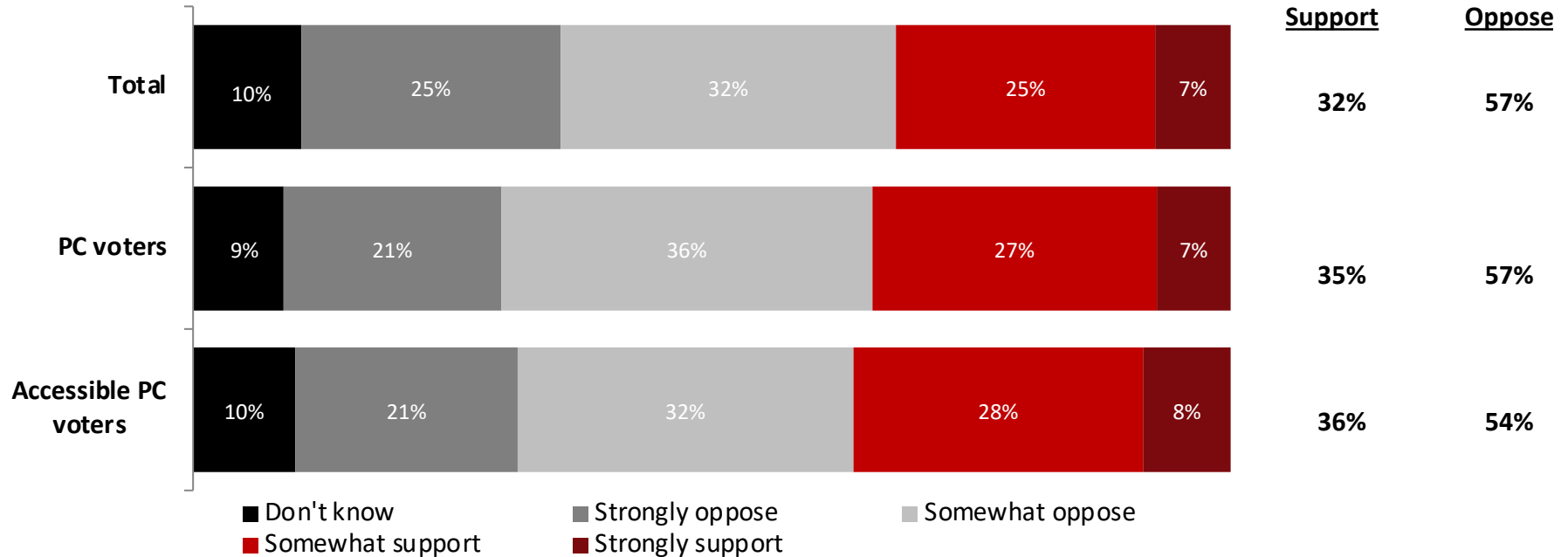


Q23B: If Doug Ford and the Progressive Conservatives were to adopt this policy, would it make you more likely to vote for them in the next provincial election, less likely or not change your likelihood of voting PC?

Base : Ontario Residents (n=1505)

About a third of Ontarians initially opposing the policy start to support it if an additional rebate is sent to rural residents and farmers

Support increases to 45% in Eastern and 47% in Northern region with the additional rebate to rural residents/farmers.

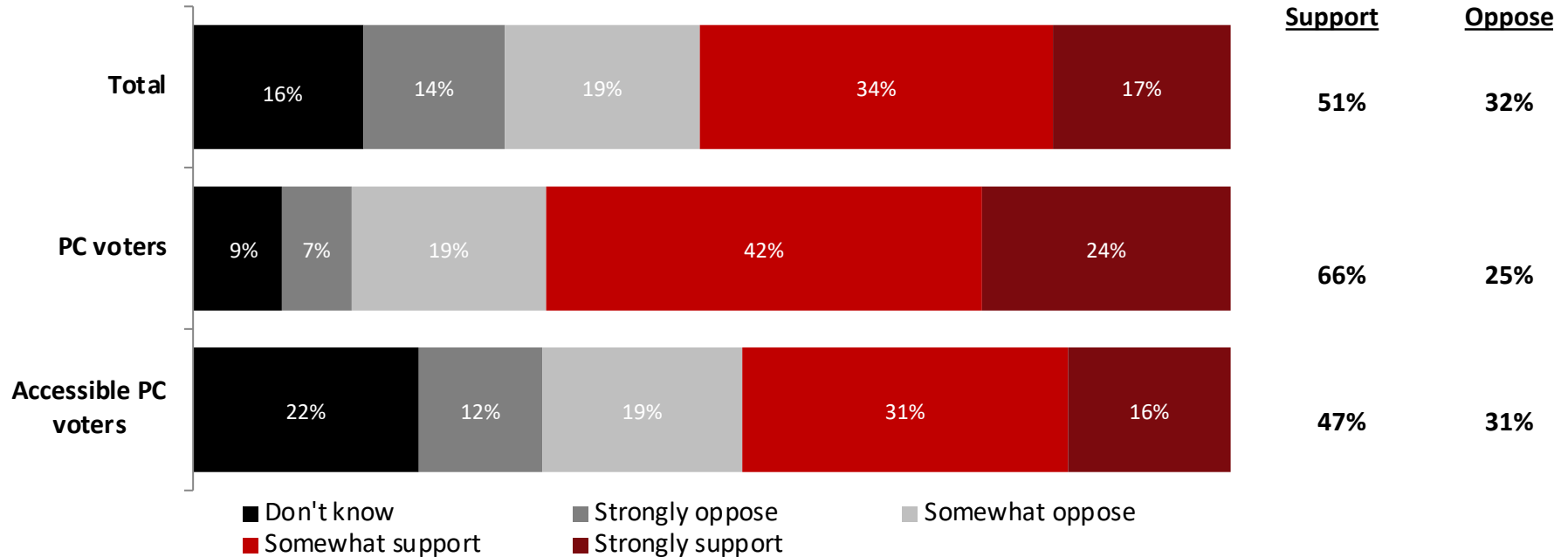


Q23D: Let's assume that the carbon tax also sent an additional rebate payment to rural Ontario residents and farmers to address the extra costs faced by these populations. Would you support or oppose this policy?

Base : Ontario Residents opposing policy of rebating tax back (Q23) (n=289)

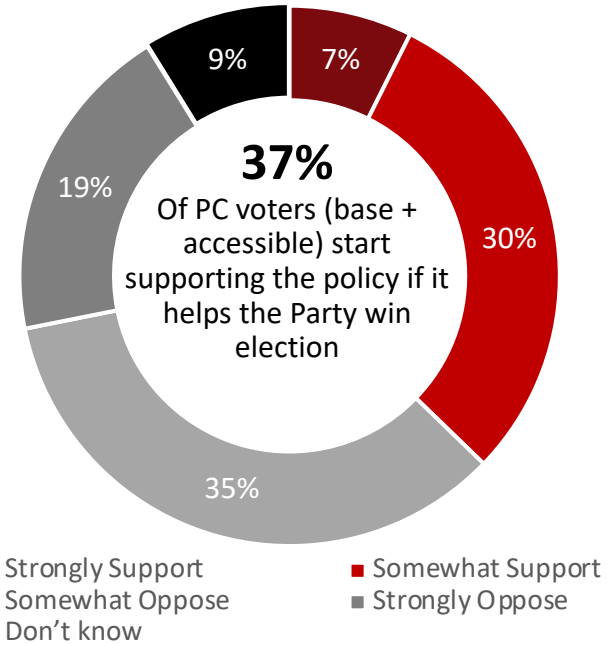
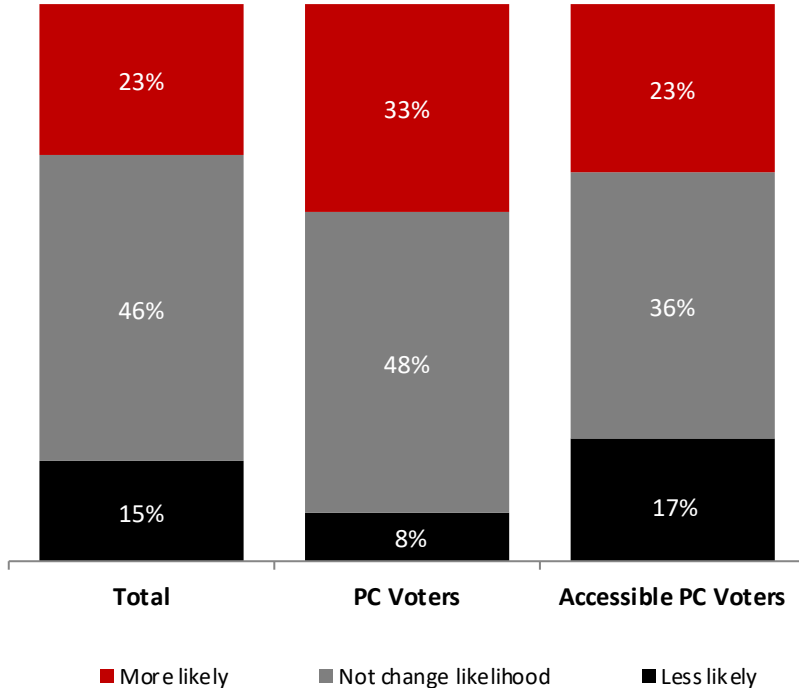
About half of residents support a carbon tax policy which uses the revenue to offset costs for drivers. PC voters are more likely to support this

Carbon tax – offset drivers' cost



Information on screen: Let's consider a scenario where Premier Ford announced he was implementing a carbon tax but was going to use all the revenue to offset costs for drivers through a combination of lowering other taxes on gas, reducing auto insurance and cutting costs for driver license and vehicle plate fees.

Adoption of this form of carbon tax makes 23% accessible voters more likely to vote PC; 37% of PC voters initially opposed would support the policy if it helps the Party win the election



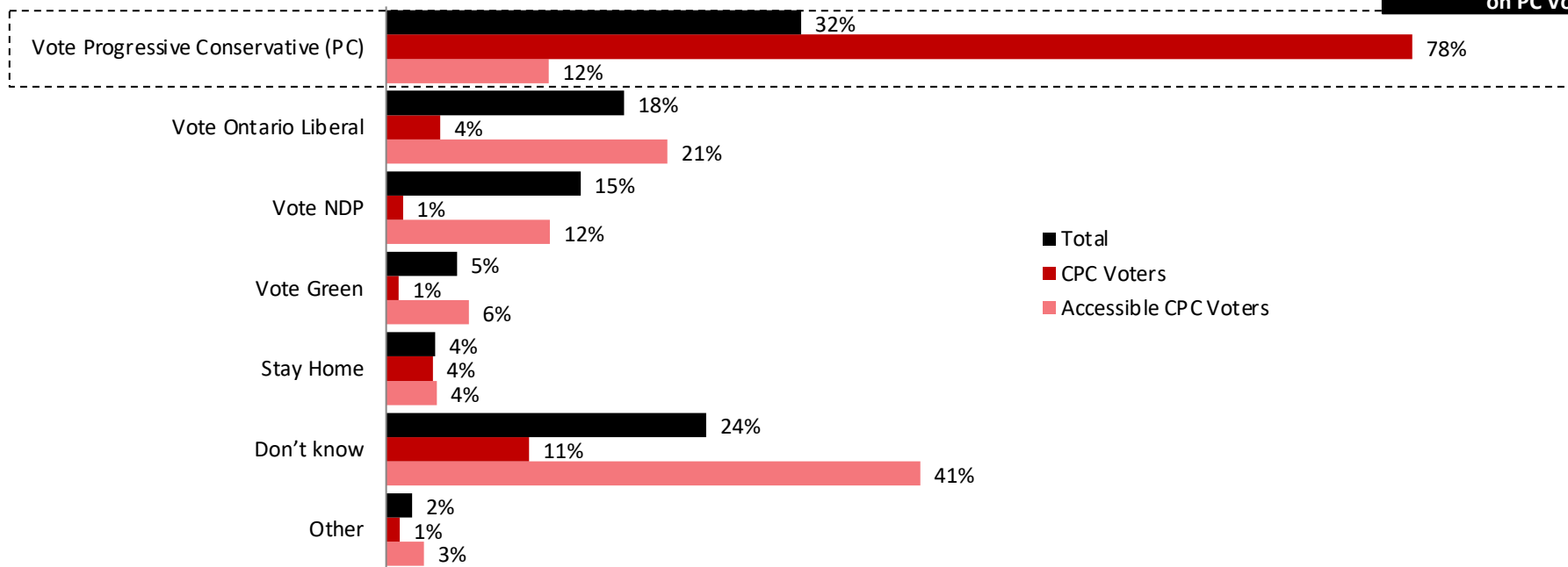
NEWQ23F: If the Progressive Conservatives were to adopt this policy, would it make you more likely to vote for them in an election, less likely or not change your likelihood of voting Conservative?

Base : Ontario Residents (n=1505)

NEWQ23G: If you knew that adopting this carbon pricing policy would help the Progressive Conservatives win the next election, would you support or oppose the policy?

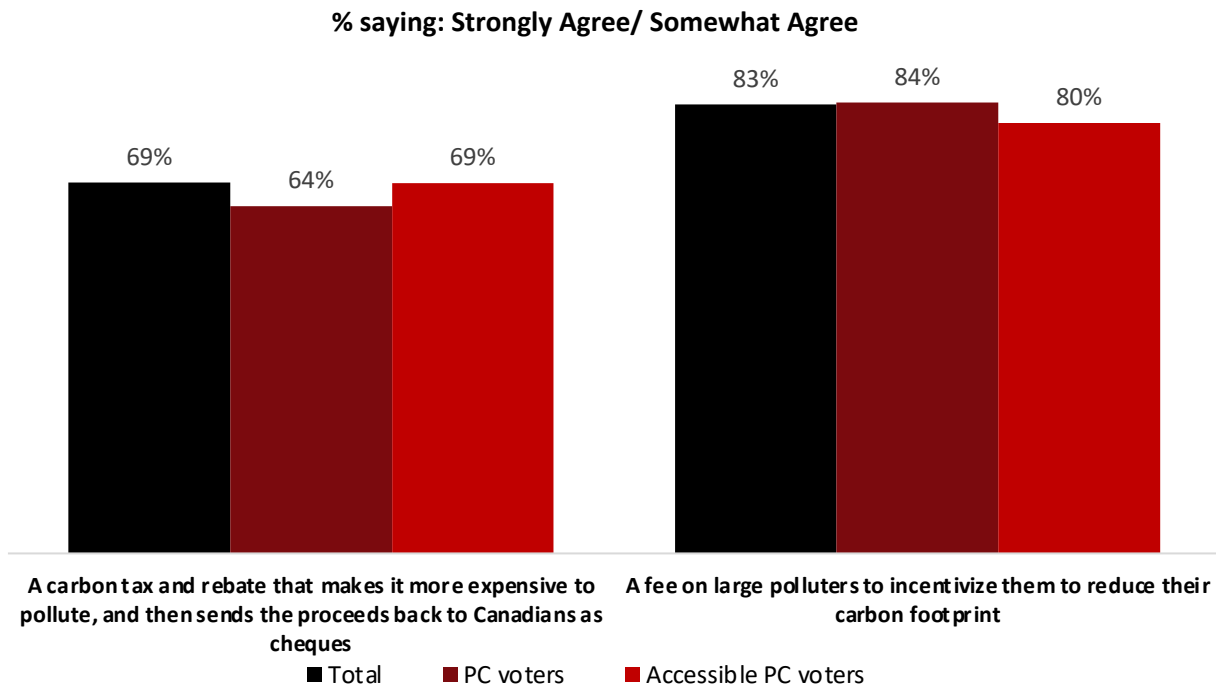
Base : Ontario Residents, PC Voter opposing adoption of policy (n=180)

78% of the PC voter base and 12% of accessible voters will vote for the Party if it introduces a carbon policy that increases costs, but returns money back



Scenario: Please consider a scenario where the Progress Conservative government under Doug Ford maintained its focus on fiscal discipline, economic growth and standing up for average Ontarians. Let's also assume that Premier Ford replaces the federal carbon tax with his own made-in-Ontario carbon pricing policy that increases the costs of gasoline and home heating but returns all the money back to Ontarians as either rebates or personal income tax cuts. The other parties he is running against – the Liberals, Greens, and NDP – also support a carbon price.

Majority of residents are in favour of levying a fee on large polluters to incentivize them to reduce their carbon footprint



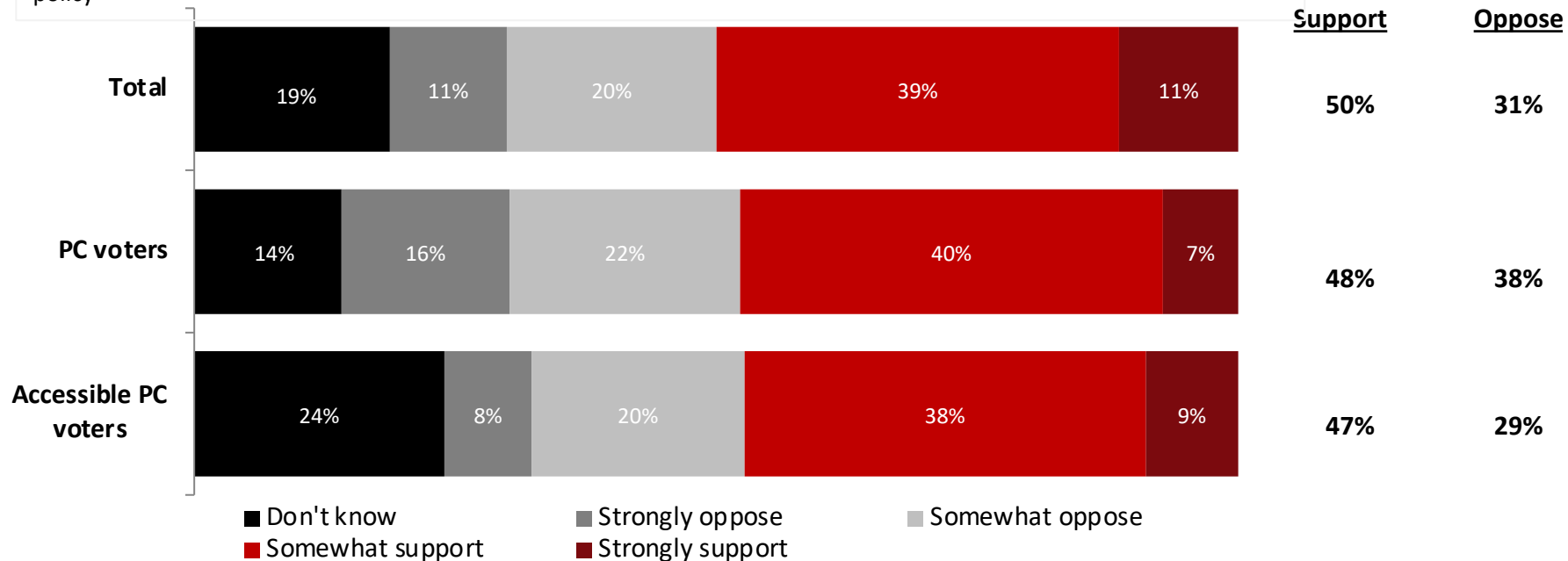
Q22: Please tell me whether you agree or disagree these actions should be priorities to include in a climate change plan

Base : Ontario Residents (n=1505)

Slightly less than half of PC voters support a policy where fuel producers blend fuel with ethanol to lower emissions, but raises the cost of fuel

Carbon tax – raise cost of fuel

Support is strongest in GTA 905 (56%), GTA 905 (51%), and East (50%), compared to North, where only 36% support the policy



Information on screen: Let's consider a climate policy where the government required producers of fuel to reduce the greenhouse gas content in their fuel through actions like blending more ethanol into gasoline. This policy would reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions but raise the cost of fuels like gasoline.

RESPONDENTS PROFILE

RESPONDENT PROFILE – Ontario(1/2)

	Weighted
n=	1505
Gender	(%)
Male	48
Female	52
Age	
18 to 34	28
35 to 54	38
55 years of age or older	35
Employment	
Retired	23
Working Full-time/part-time	54
Student	8
Homemaker	4
Unemployed	7
Disability	1

	Weighted
n=	2004
Household Income	(%)
Less than \$60K	30
\$40K to less than \$100K	28
\$100K and over	30
Education	
High school	13
Some college or university	18
A college or university degree	53
A graduate degree	15
Number of Vehicles	
0-1	76
2	15
3 or more	7

RESPONDENT PROFILE – *GTA 905(2/2)*

	Weighted
n=	759
Gender	(%)
Male	48
Female	52
Age	
18 to 34	28
35 to 54	46
55 years of age or older	26
Employment	
Retired	18
Working Full-time/part-time	60
Student	9
Homemaker	4
Unemployed	7
Disability	1

	Weighted
n=	2004
Household Income	(%)
Less than \$60K	25
\$40K to less than \$100K	28
\$100K and over	34
Education	
High school	10
Some college or university	18
A college or university degree	53
A graduate degree	18
Number of Vehicles	
0-1	67
2	20
3 or more	9

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