

CRITICAL INSIGHTS

RESEARCH FOR PRECISE PRAGMATIC DIRECTION

Maine Voter Preference Study

Summary Report of Findings

Prepared for:



**Natural Resources
Council of Maine**

March 2011

Focus Groups • Surveys • Public Opinion Polling

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Background & Survey Method

- In March 2011, the Natural Resources Council of Maine commissioned Critical Insights of Portland, a nonpartisan public policy polling firm, to conduct a statewide public opinion survey to gauge voter sentiment on specific issues that may impact the economy, and on a series of environmental initiatives that are facing the Maine Legislature.
- Critical Insights completed a total of 402 random telephone interviews across the state between March 21, 2011 and March 24, 2011.
 - All interviews were conducted with self-reported registered voters; final data was statistically weighted according to relevant demographics to reflect the voter base in Maine. A summary of the demographic profile of the sample appears at the end of this report.
 - With a sample of 402 interviews, results presented here have an associated margin of error of ± 4.1 percentage points at the 90% confidence level, or ± 4.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.
 - On average, the entire survey instrument – including general interest items and all subscriber questions – was 11 minutes in administrative length.
- Live interviews were conducted by telephone and coordinated from the Critical Insights Information Center in Portland, employing a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system.



*Perceived Negative Impact
of Various Factors
on Maine's Economy*



Perceived Negative Impact of Various Factors on Maine's Economy

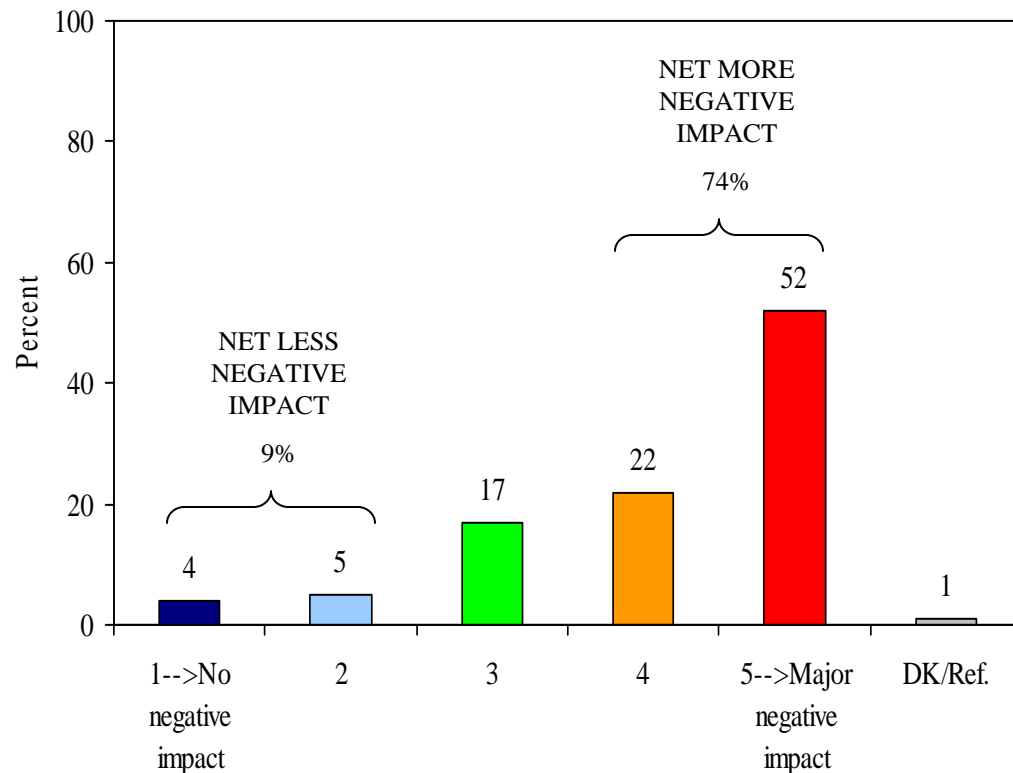
- Among registered voters surveyed, the greatest negative impact on Maine's economy is attributed to financial factors such as health insurance and energy costs, a weak national economy, and taxes.
- Compared to financial factors, a smaller proportion of respondents – although still a majority – feel that road conditions negatively effect the state's economy.
 - Northern Maine residents are significantly more likely than those living in other regions of the state to feel that road conditions are detrimental to the economy.
- Only about a quarter of respondents indicate that Maine's environmental laws, geographic location, or the availability of well trained workers in the state impact the economy negatively.
 - Large blocs of respondents assumed a “neutral” stance in each of the three areas mentioned above; therefore, it is important to note that only a minority expressed that these factors have little to no negative impact on Maine's economy.
 - More highly educated respondents, women and self-reported Democrats and Independents are significantly more likely than others to say that environmental laws have less negative impact on the economy.



Perceived Negative Impact of Various Factors on Maine's Economy

In your opinion, how much of a negative impact do you think each of the following factors has on Maine's economy? Please use a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 means "no negative impact" and a 5 means "major negative impact."

The cost of health insurance

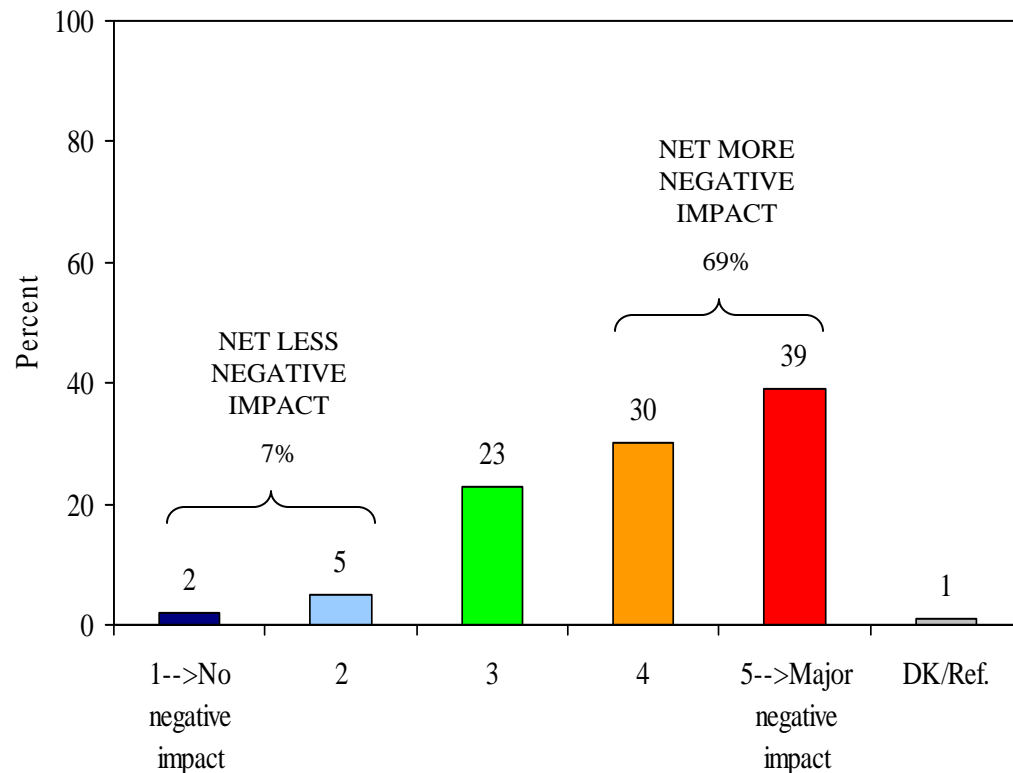




Perceived Negative Impact of Various Factors on Maine's Economy

In your opinion, how much of a negative impact do you think each of the following factors has on Maine's economy? Please use a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 means "no negative impact" and a 5 means "major negative impact."

The cost of energy

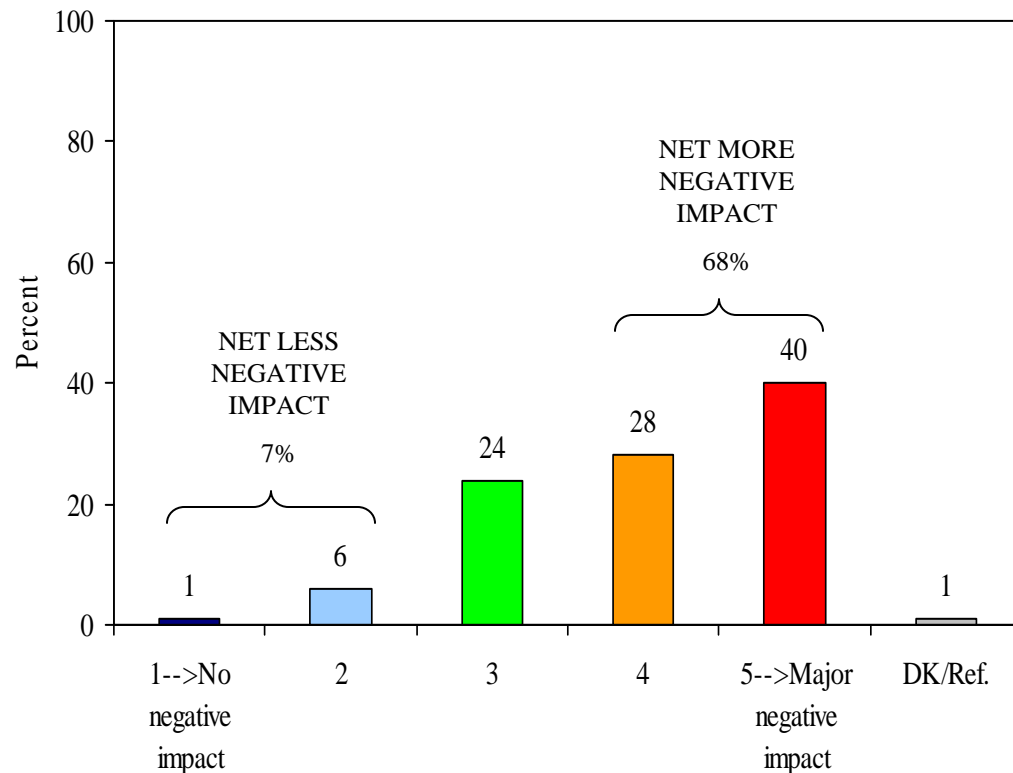




Perceived Negative Impact of Various Factors on Maine's Economy

In your opinion, how much of a negative impact do you think each of the following factors has on Maine's economy? Please use a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 means "no negative impact" and a 5 means "major negative impact."

The weak national economy

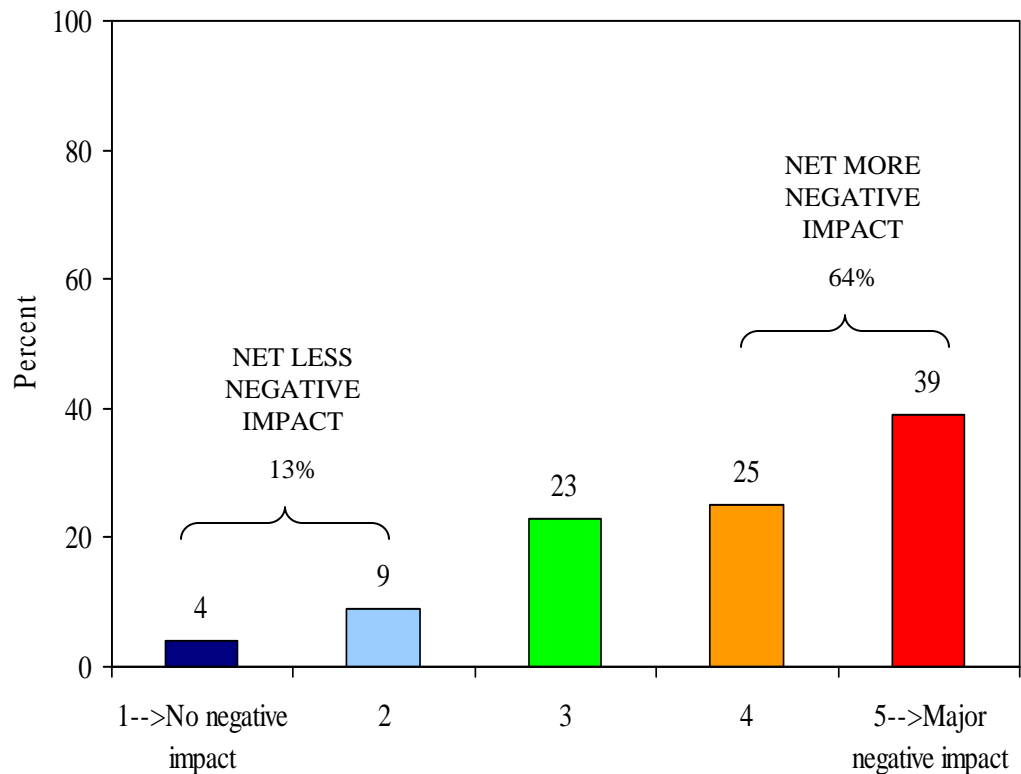




Perceived Negative Impact of Various Factors on Maine's Economy

In your opinion, how much of a negative impact do you think each of the following factors has on Maine's economy? Please use a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 means "no negative impact" and a 5 means "major negative impact."

Taxes

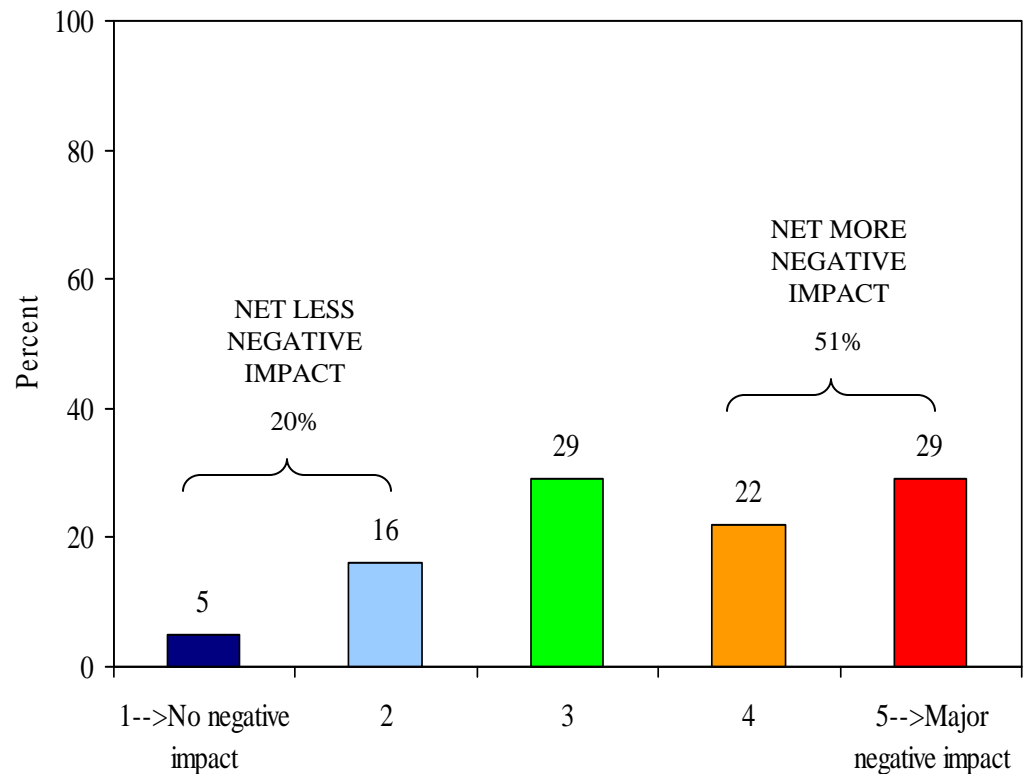




Perceived Negative Impact of Various Factors on Maine's Economy

In your opinion, how much of a negative impact do you think each of the following factors has on Maine's economy? Please use a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 means "no negative impact" and a 5 means "major negative impact."

The condition of Maine's roads and transportation systems

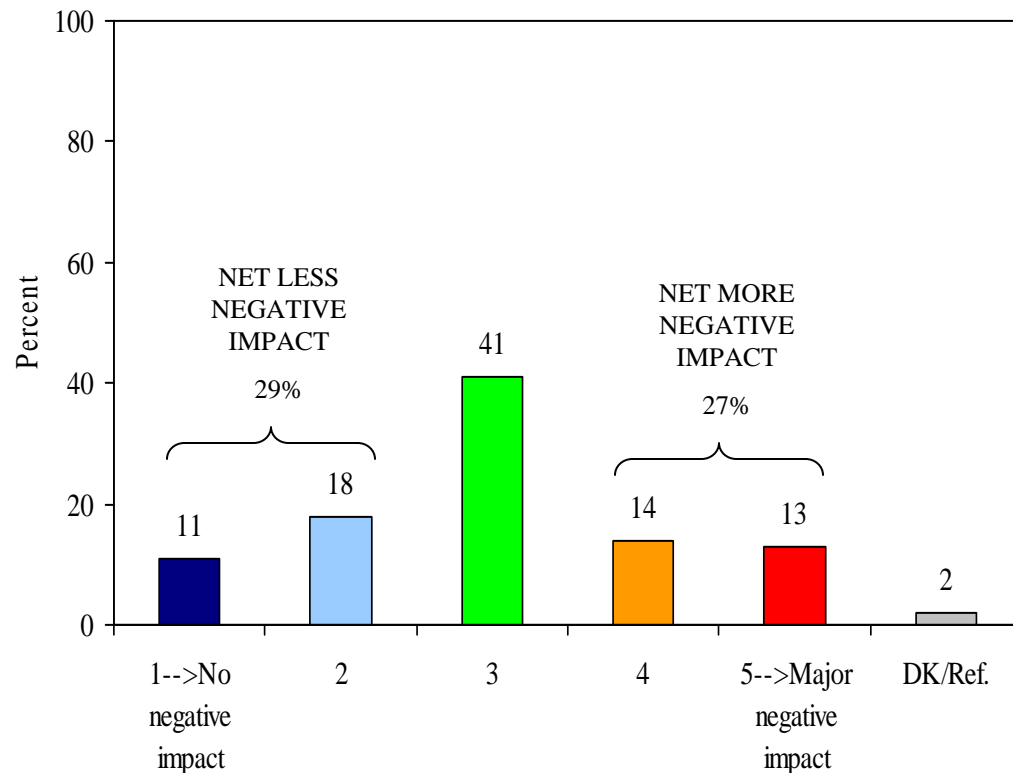




Perceived Negative Impact of Various Factors on Maine's Economy

In your opinion, how much of a negative impact do you think each of the following factors has on Maine's economy? Please use a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 means "no negative impact" and a 5 means "major negative impact."

The availability of well trained workers

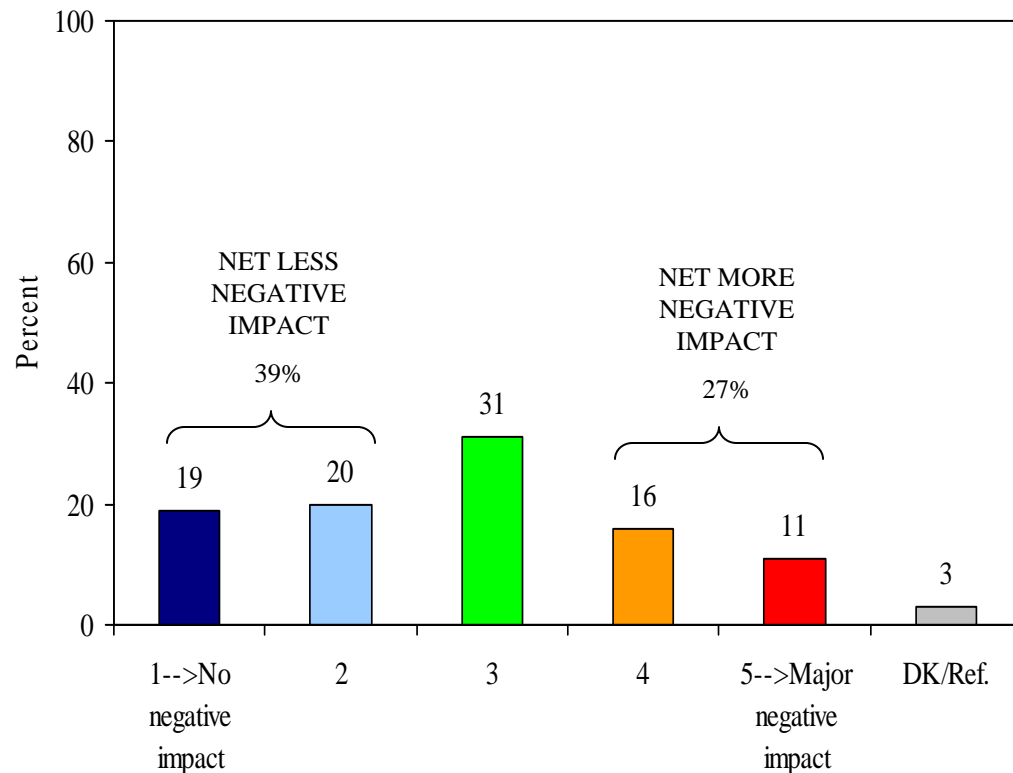




Perceived Negative Impact of Various Factors on Maine's Economy

In your opinion, how much of a negative impact do you think each of the following factors has on Maine's economy? Please use a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 means "no negative impact" and a 5 means "major negative impact."

Maine's geographic location

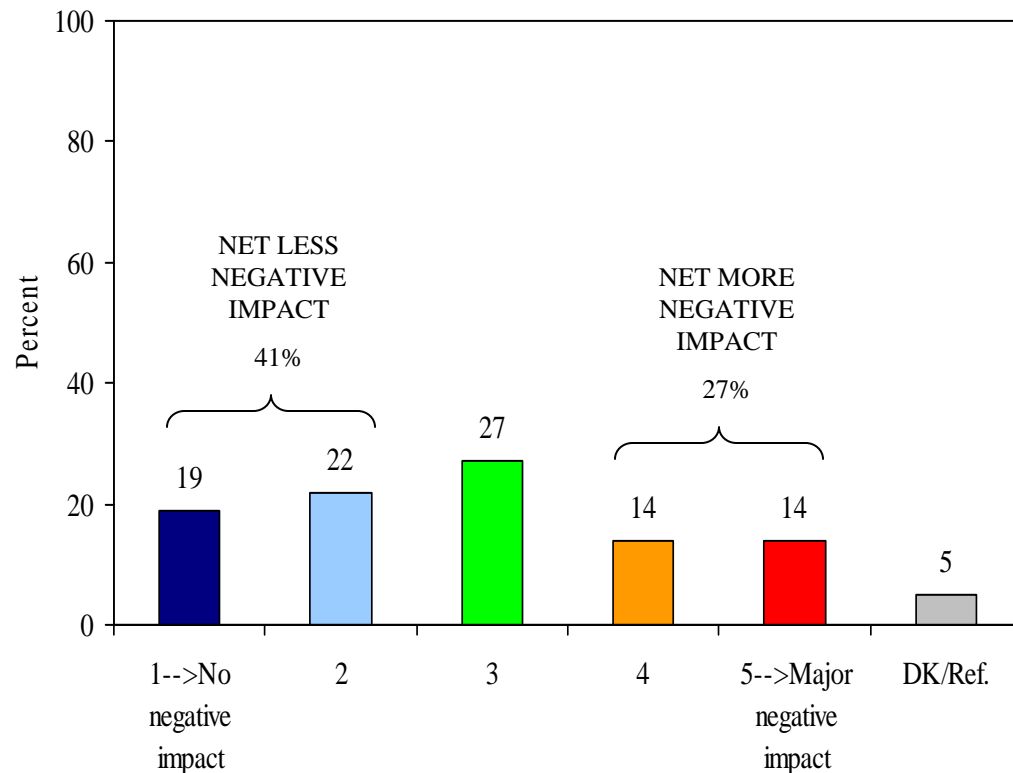




Perceived Negative Impact of Various Factors on Maine's Economy

In your opinion, how much of a negative impact do you think each of the following factors has on Maine's economy? Please use a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 means "no negative impact" and a 5 means "major negative impact."

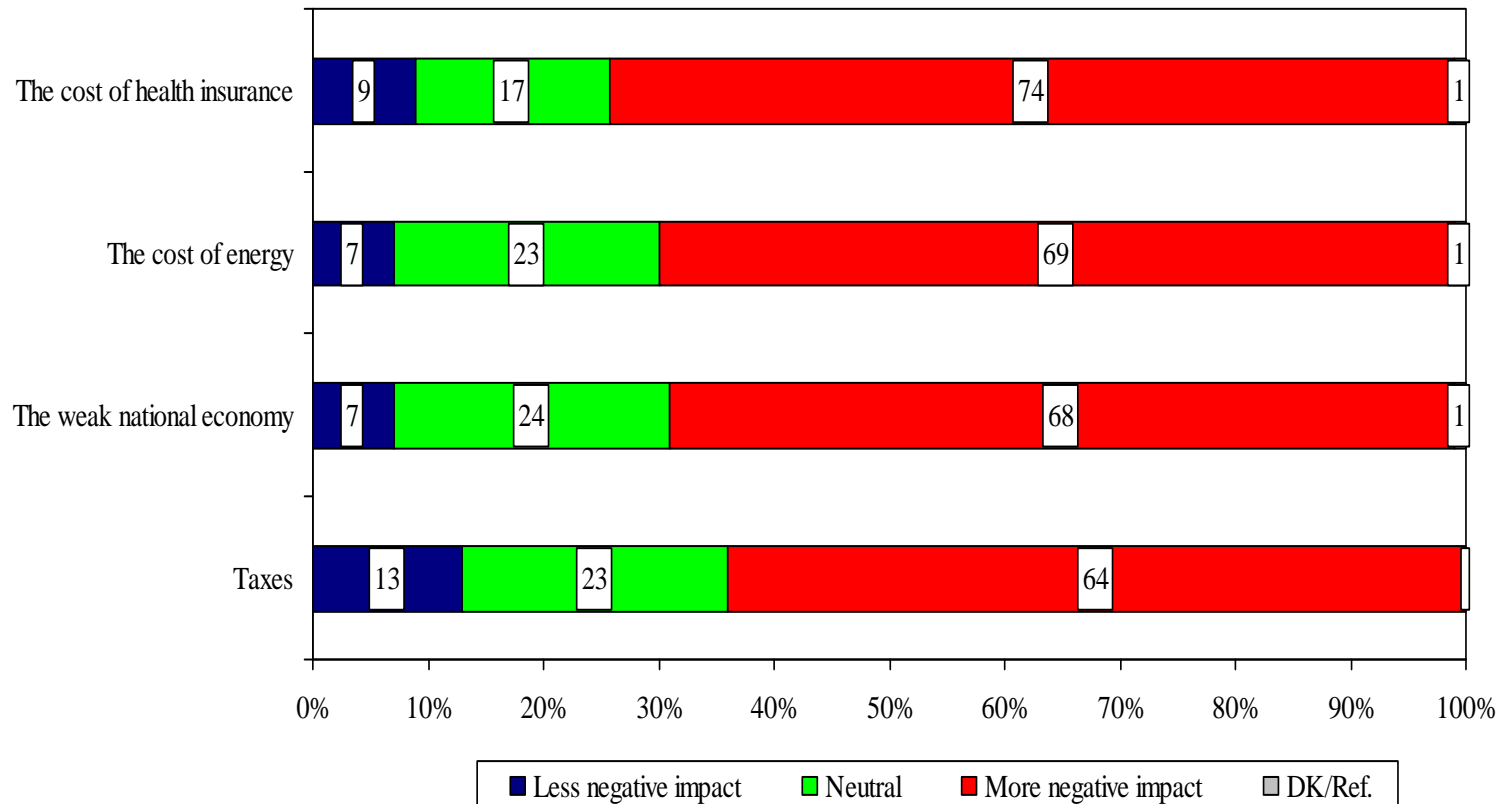
Maine's environmental laws





Summary of Perceived Negative Impact of Various Factors on Maine's Economy

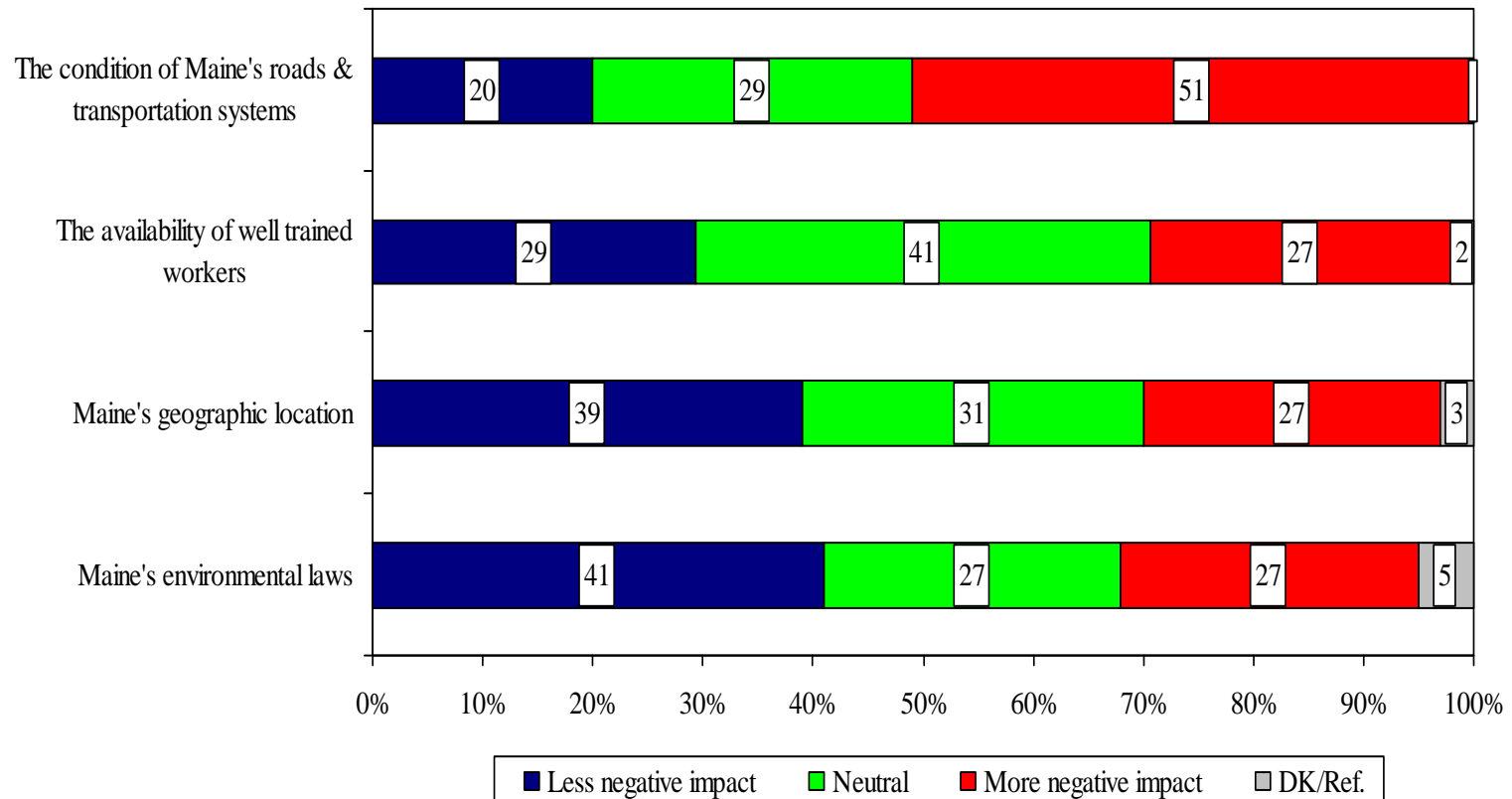
In your opinion, how much of a negative impact do you think each of the following factors has on Maine's economy? Please use a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 means "no negative impact" and a 5 means "major negative impact."





Summary of Perceived Negative Impact of Various Factors on Maine's Economy

In your opinion, how much of a negative impact do you think each of the following factors has on Maine's economy? Please use a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 means "no negative impact" and a 5 means "major negative impact."





*Views on Laws & Policies Pertaining to
Maine's Environment*



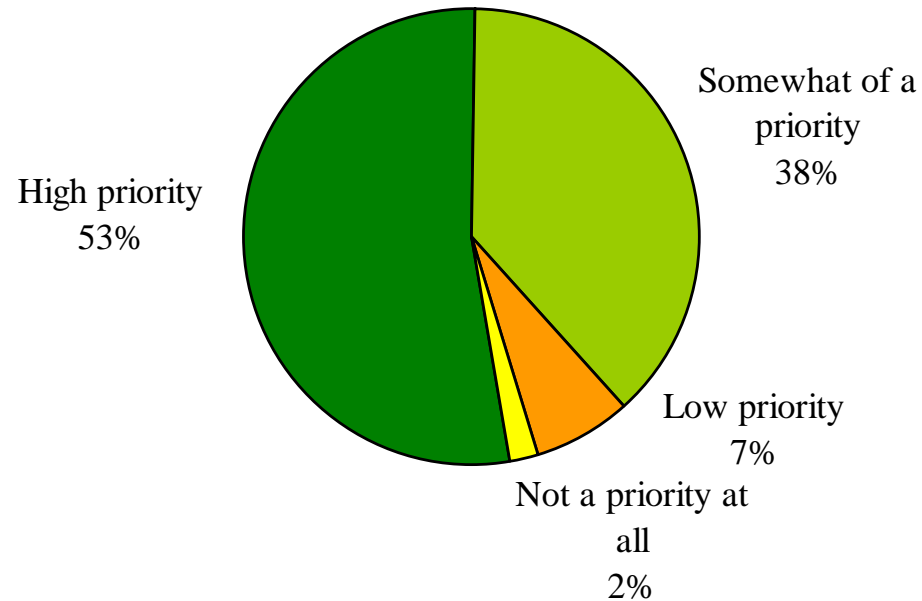
General Views on Environmental Laws

- An overwhelming majority of voters across the state (more than 9-in-10) believe that Maine’s lawmakers should prioritize preserving and protecting the environment.
 - Over half of these respondents (53%) indicated that this should be a “high priority” for Maine’s lawmakers;
 - An additional 4-in-10 (38%) indicated that this should be “somewhat of a priority”.
- When asked to choose which of two statements most closely represents their personal point of view, nearly two-thirds of respondents feel that environmental laws and regulations have worked, while about one-third feel that the laws have gone too far.
 - Categorically similar to respondents who view environmental laws as having a lesser negative impact on the economy, those who are more likely to feel that the environment should be a “high priority” for lawmakers or that environmental laws and regulations have worked tend to be more highly educated or describe their political affiliation as Democratic or Independent.



Views on Prioritizing Maine's Environment

In general, do you believe that preserving and protecting Maine's environment should be a high priority, somewhat of a priority, a low priority, or not a priority at all for our lawmakers?





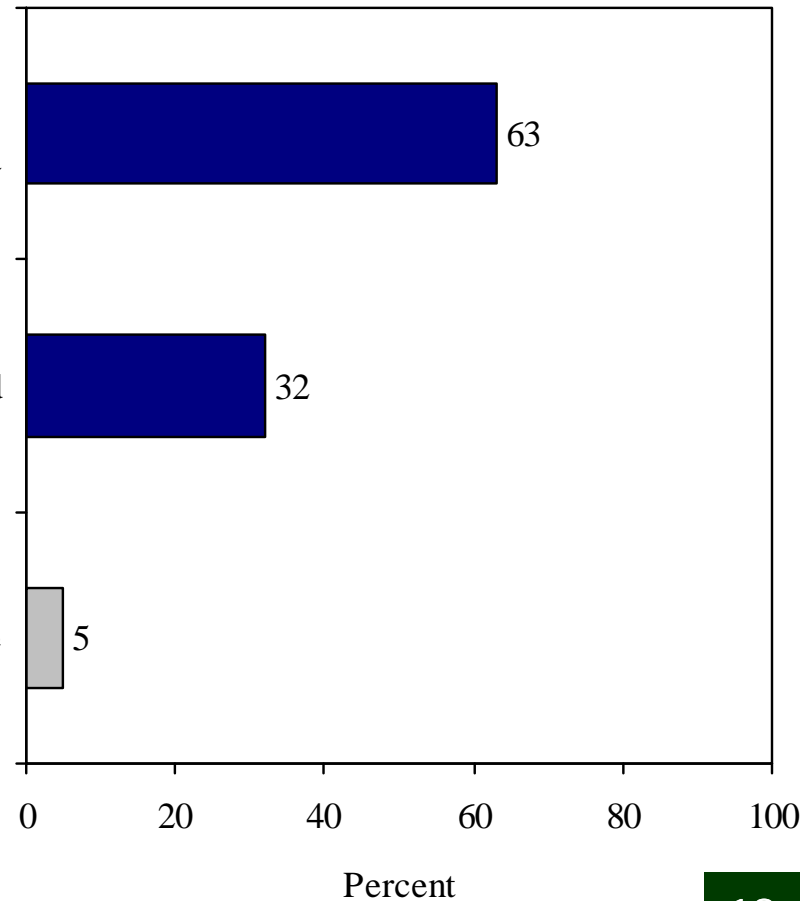
Trade-off on Environment and Economy

Next I am going to read you two statements. Please tell me which one comes closest to your own point of view.

Environmental laws and regulations have worked. They protect our environment and public health. We can have a clean environment while also achieving a stronger economy.

Environmental laws and regulations have gone too far. They are hurting Maine's economy so we should loosen up.

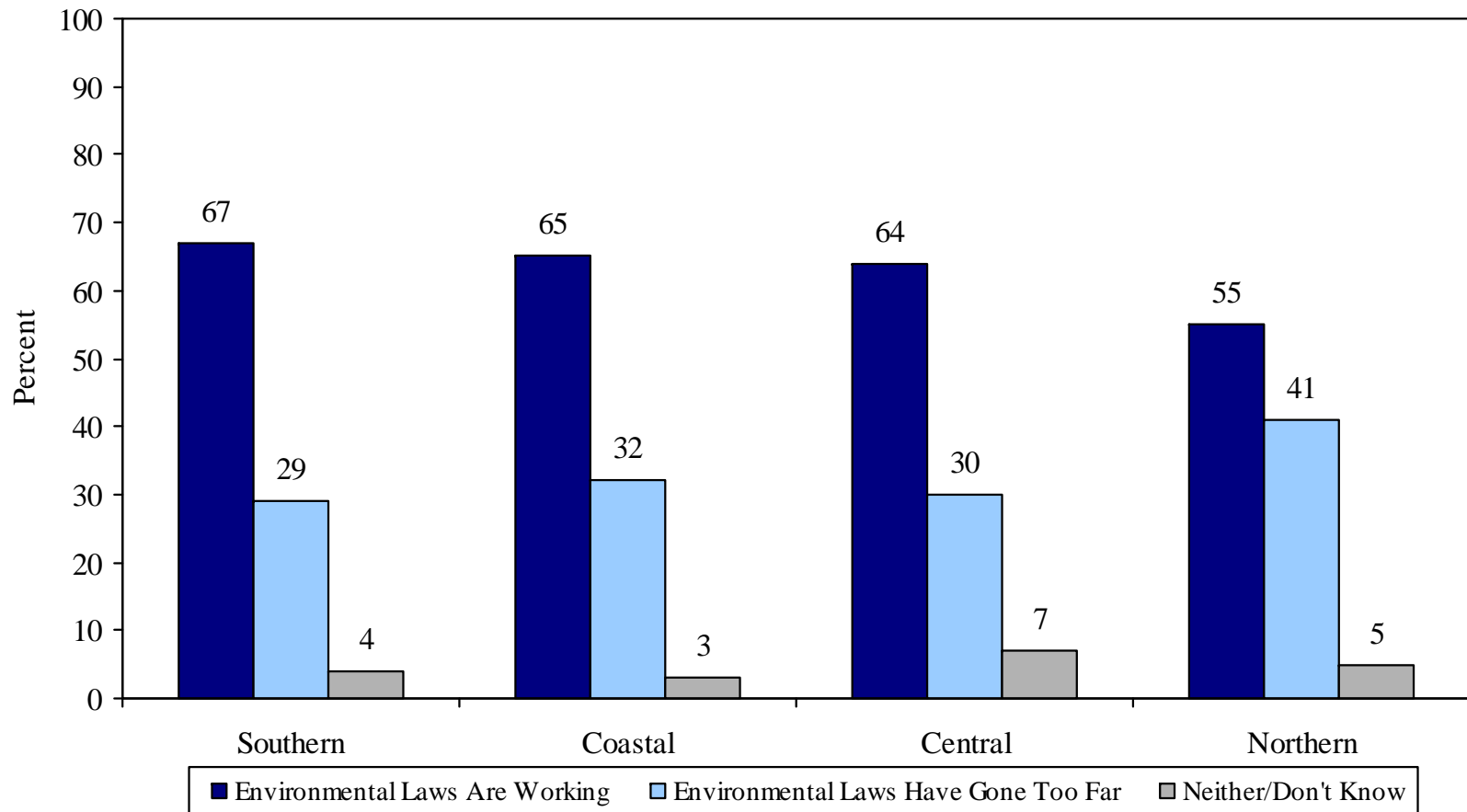
Neither / Can't decide





Environment and Economy Trade-Off

Regional Perspectives *



* SOUTHERN: Cumberland, York. COASTAL: Hancock, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Waldo, Washington.
CENTRAL: Androscoggin, Franklin, Kennebec, Oxford. NORTHERN: Aroostook, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset.



Approval / Disapproval of Proposed Changes to Maine's Laws & Policies

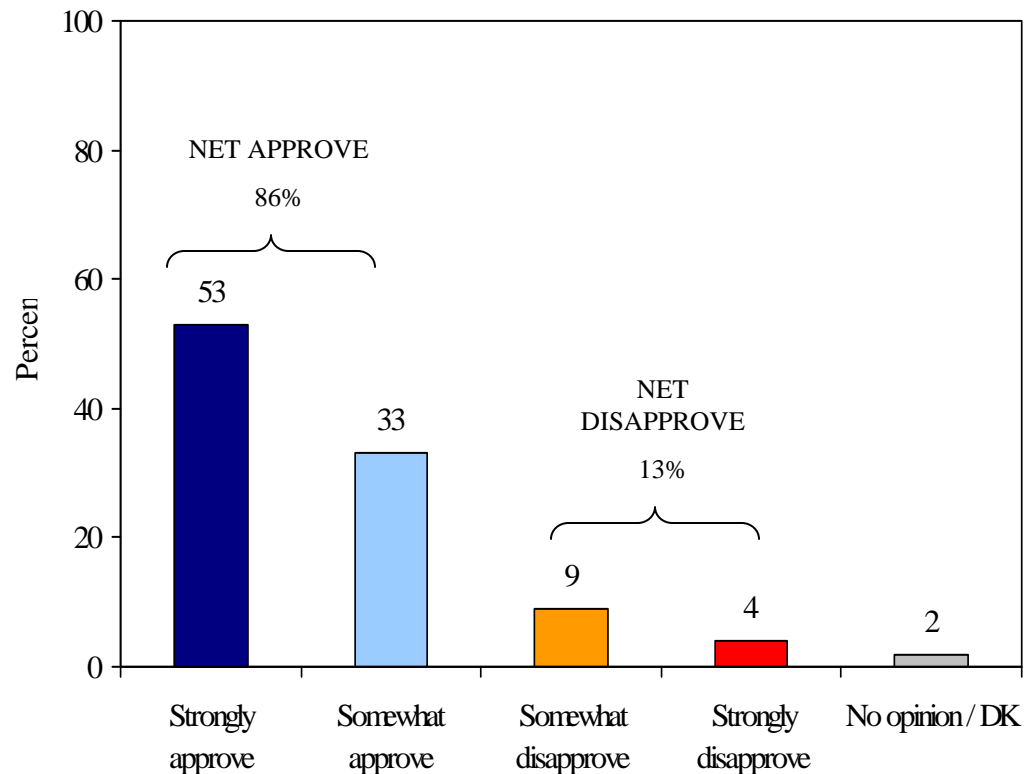
- Of the proposals surveyed, the Land for Maine's Future, reducing Maine's dependence on oil, investing in energy efficiency, and limiting the chemical BPA received the highest approval ratings among respondents.
 - Indeed, more than 8-in-10 respondents cited approval for each of these proposals.
 - Generally, respondents most likely to approve of these proposed changes tended to be women, well-educated, or self-described Democrats.
- By contrast, proposals of a less environmentally-friendly nature – specifically those related to repealing the state's bottle recycling program and weakening shoreland zoning – garnered disapproval by a majority of respondents.
- Given the robust opinions on energy cost and efficiency noted previously, it is not surprising that fully 8-in-10 respondents approve of Maine's uniform building and energy code. This support was consistent across demographic and geographic subgroups.



Approval / Disapproval of Proposed Changes to Maine's Laws & Policies

Now, I'm going to mention some proposed changes to Maine's laws and policies. For each one, please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of that particular proposal.

Providing funding for the Land for Maine's Future program, which conserves land for public access, traditional uses, and preserves farmland and working waterfronts

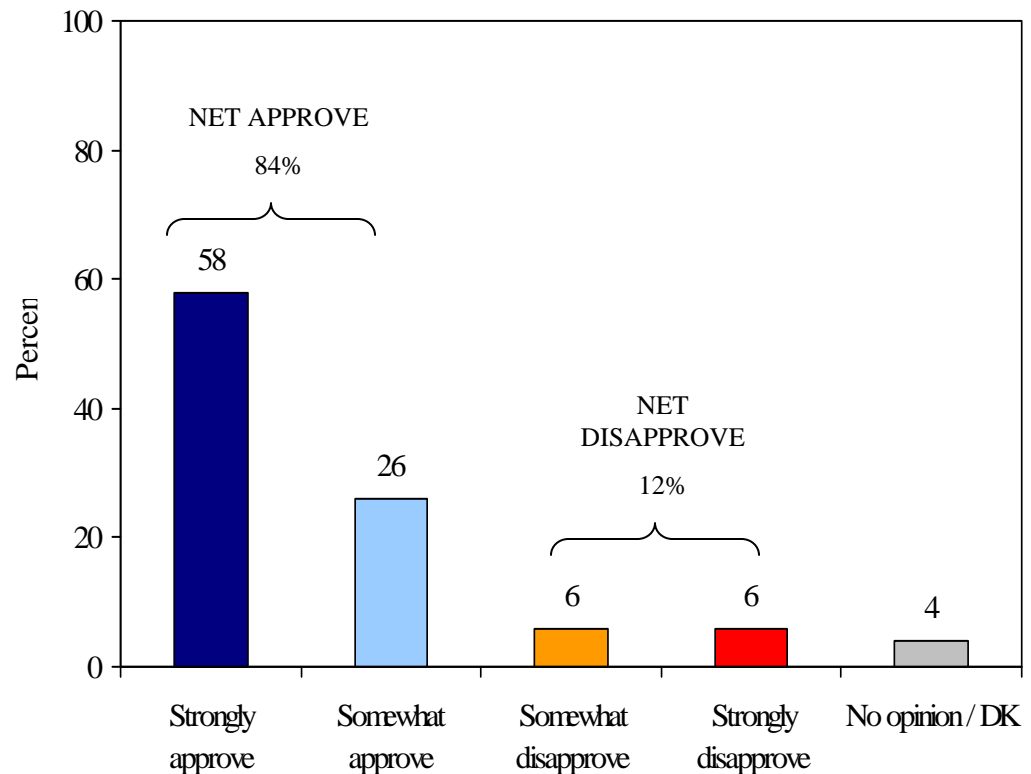


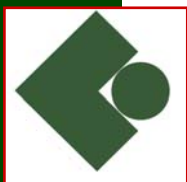


Approval / Disapproval of Proposed Changes to Maine's Laws & Policies

Now, I'm going to mention some proposed changes to Maine's laws and policies. For each one, please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of that particular proposal.

Adopting legislation that sets ambitious goals to reduce Maine's dependence on oil as a source of energy

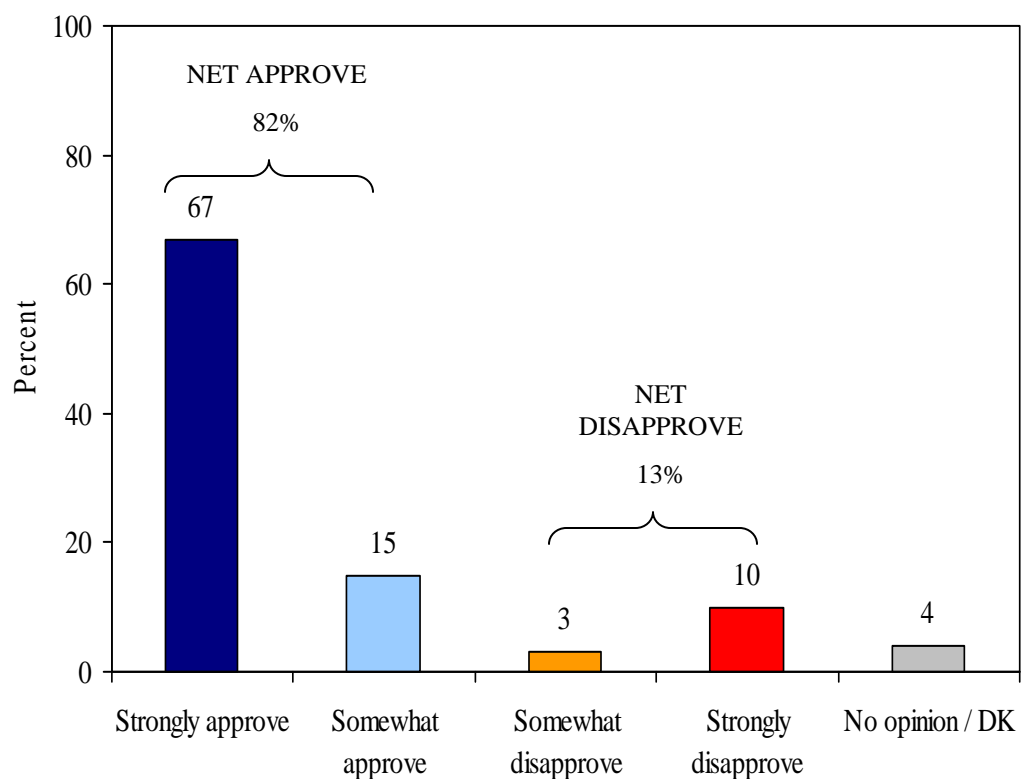


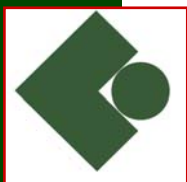


Approval / Disapproval of Proposed Changes to Maine's Laws & Policies

Now, I'm going to mention some proposed changes to Maine's laws and policies. For each one, please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of that particular proposal.

Requiring companies that make baby bottles and other plastic containers to stop using B-P-A, a chemical that has been linked to learning disabilities and other health problems

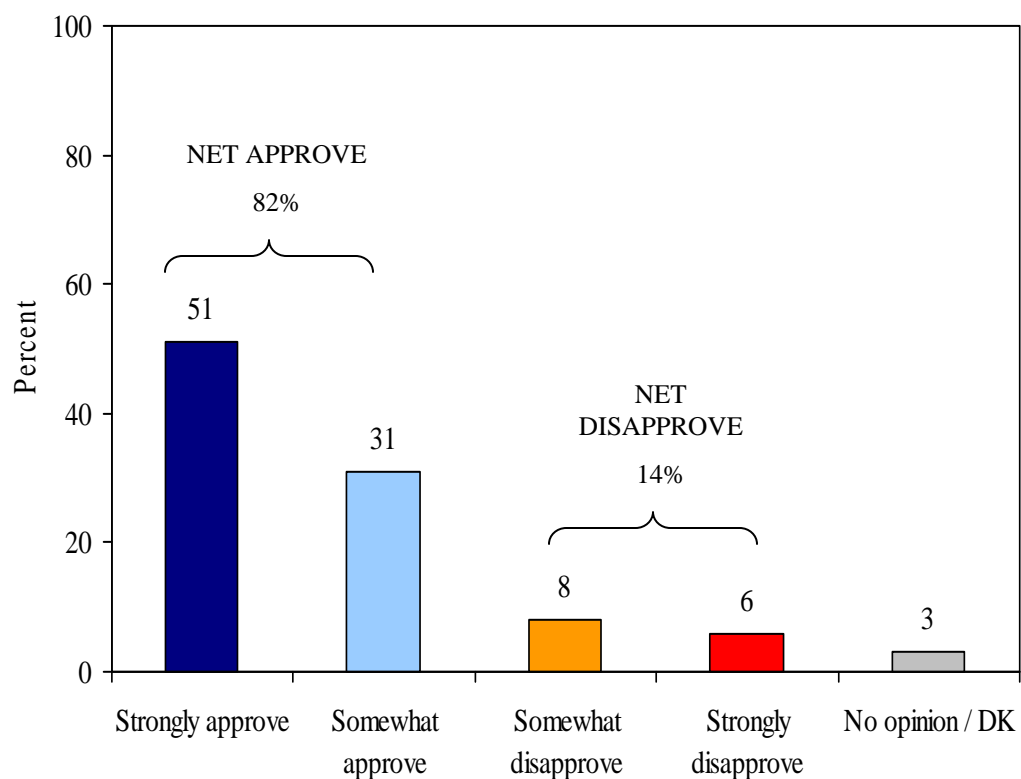




Approval / Disapproval of Proposed Changes to Maine's Laws & Policies

Now, I'm going to mention some proposed changes to Maine's laws and policies. For each one, please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of that particular proposal.

Increasing public investments in energy efficiency programs for Maine businesses, homeowners and industry

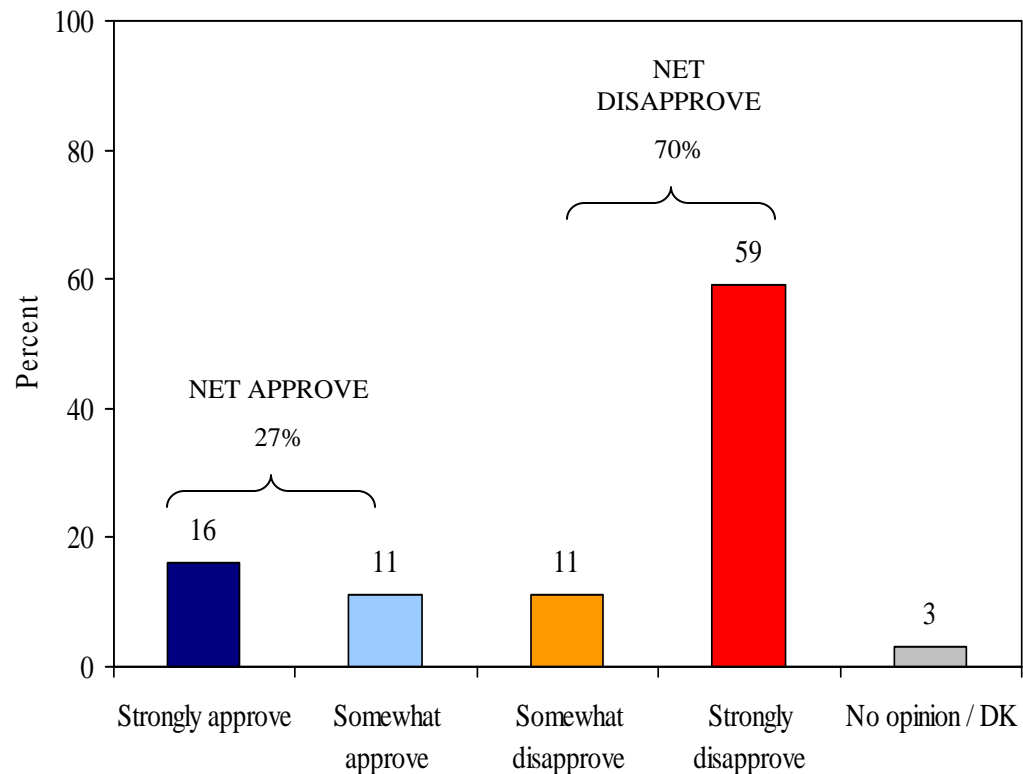




Approval / Disapproval of Proposed Changes to Maine's Laws & Policies

Now, I'm going to mention some proposed changes to Maine's laws and policies. For each one, please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of that particular proposal.

Repealing Maine's bottle bill, which establishes the state's deposit and recycling program for bottles, cans and other containers

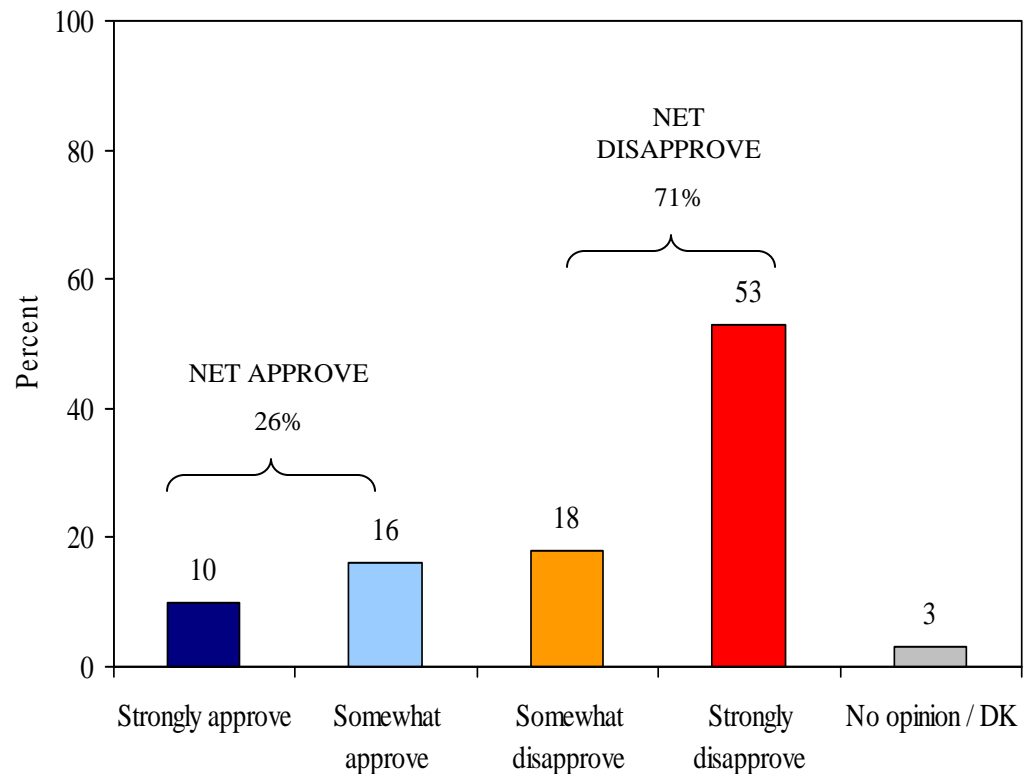




Approval / Disapproval of Proposed Changes to Maine's Laws & Policies

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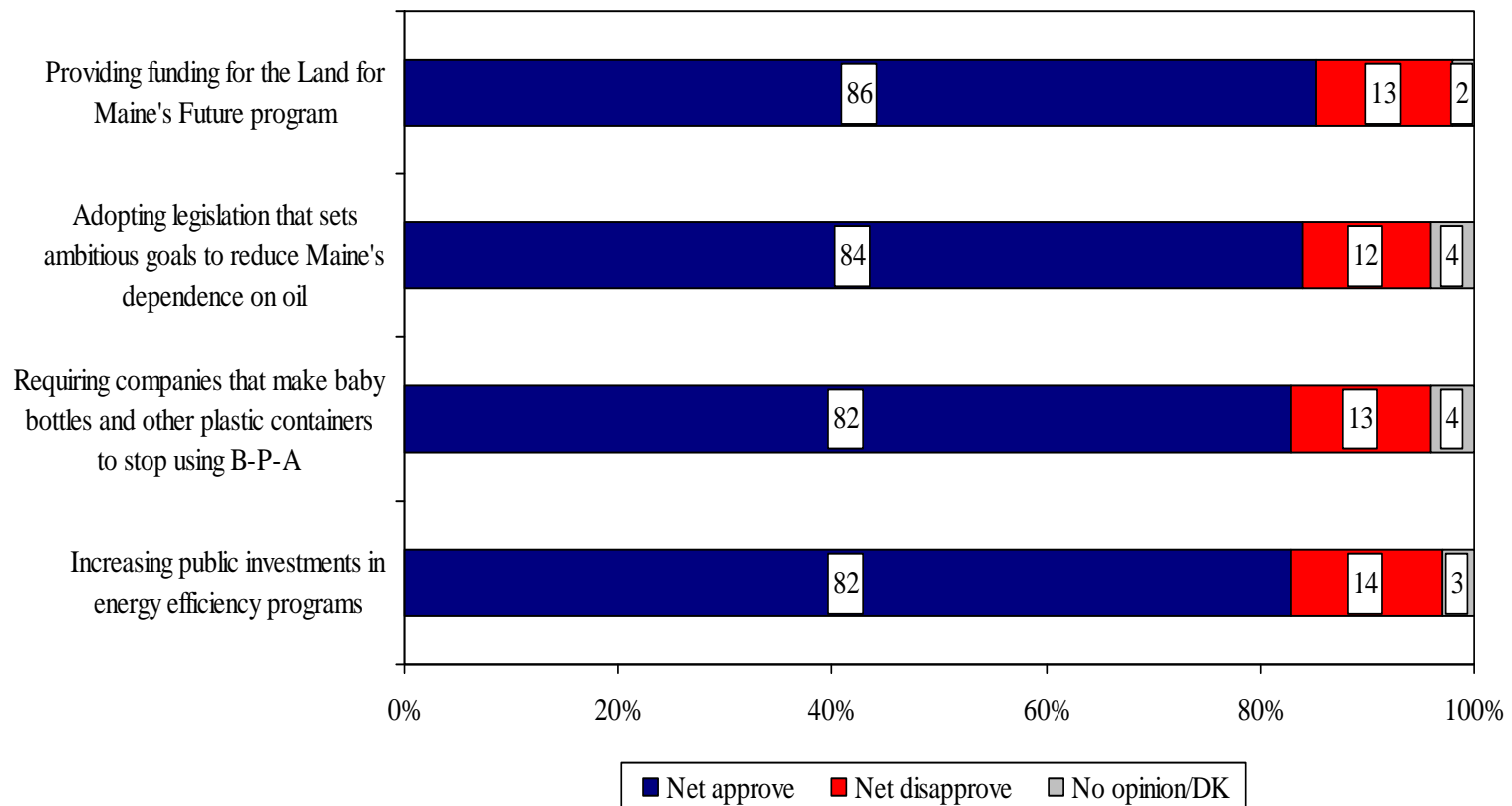
Changing shoreland zoning requirements so that people could build their homes closer to the shoreline of lakes, rivers, and the coast, but with the likely result that water pollution would increase





Summary Approval / Disapproval of Proposed Changes to Maine's Laws & Policies

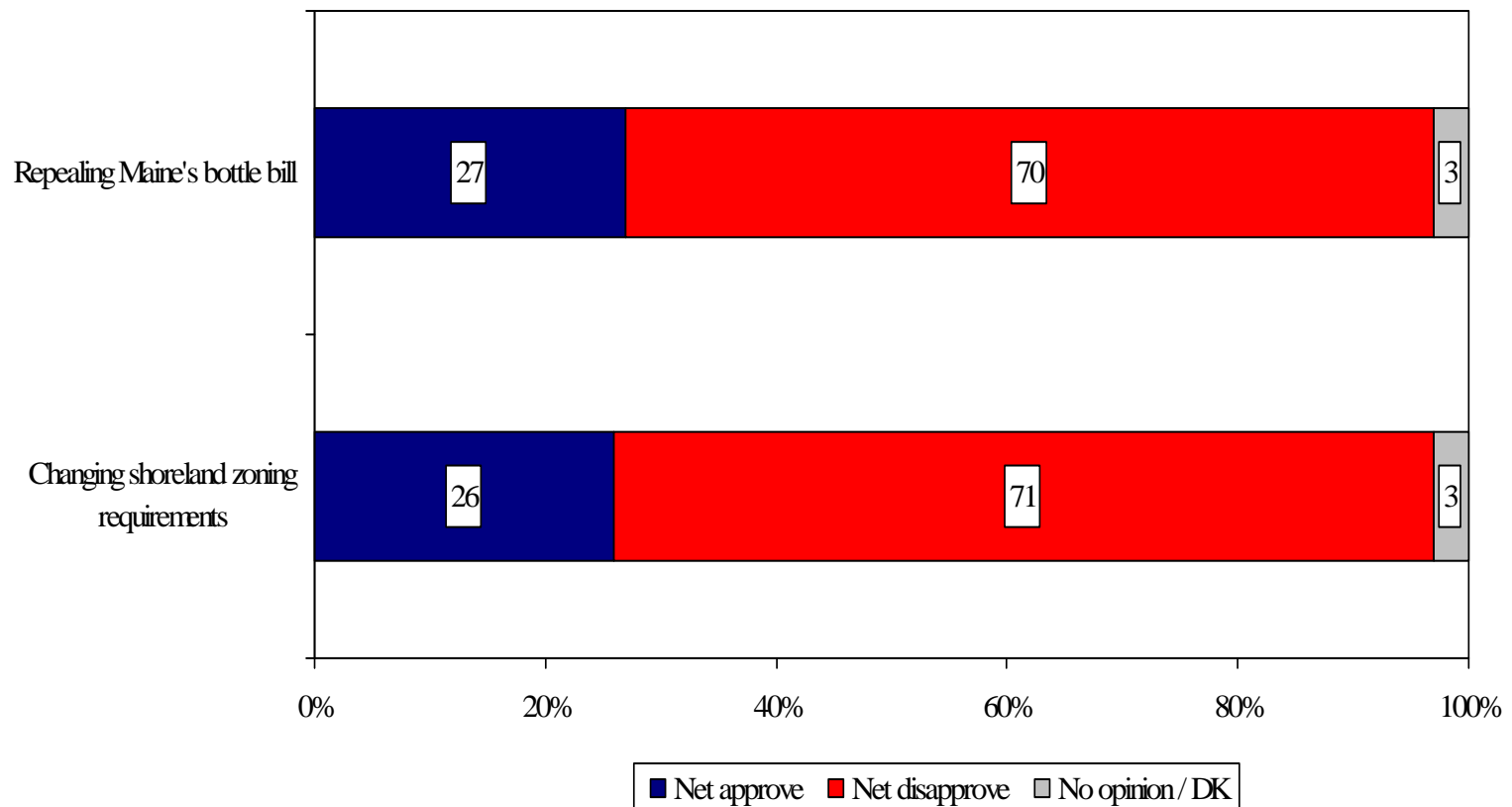
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Summary Approval / Disapproval of Proposed Changes to Maine's Laws & Policies

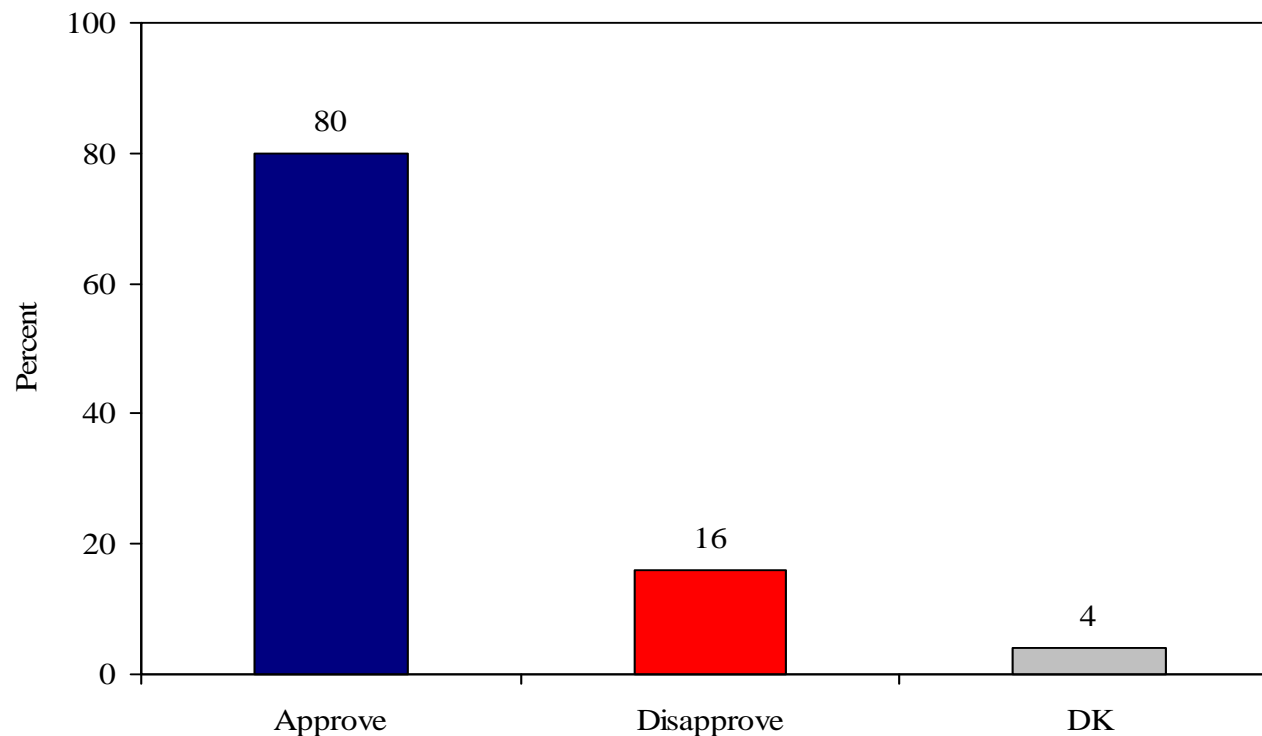
Now, I'm going to mention some proposed changes to Maine's laws and policies. For each one, please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of that particular proposal.





Approval / Disapproval of Maine's Uniform Building & Energy Code

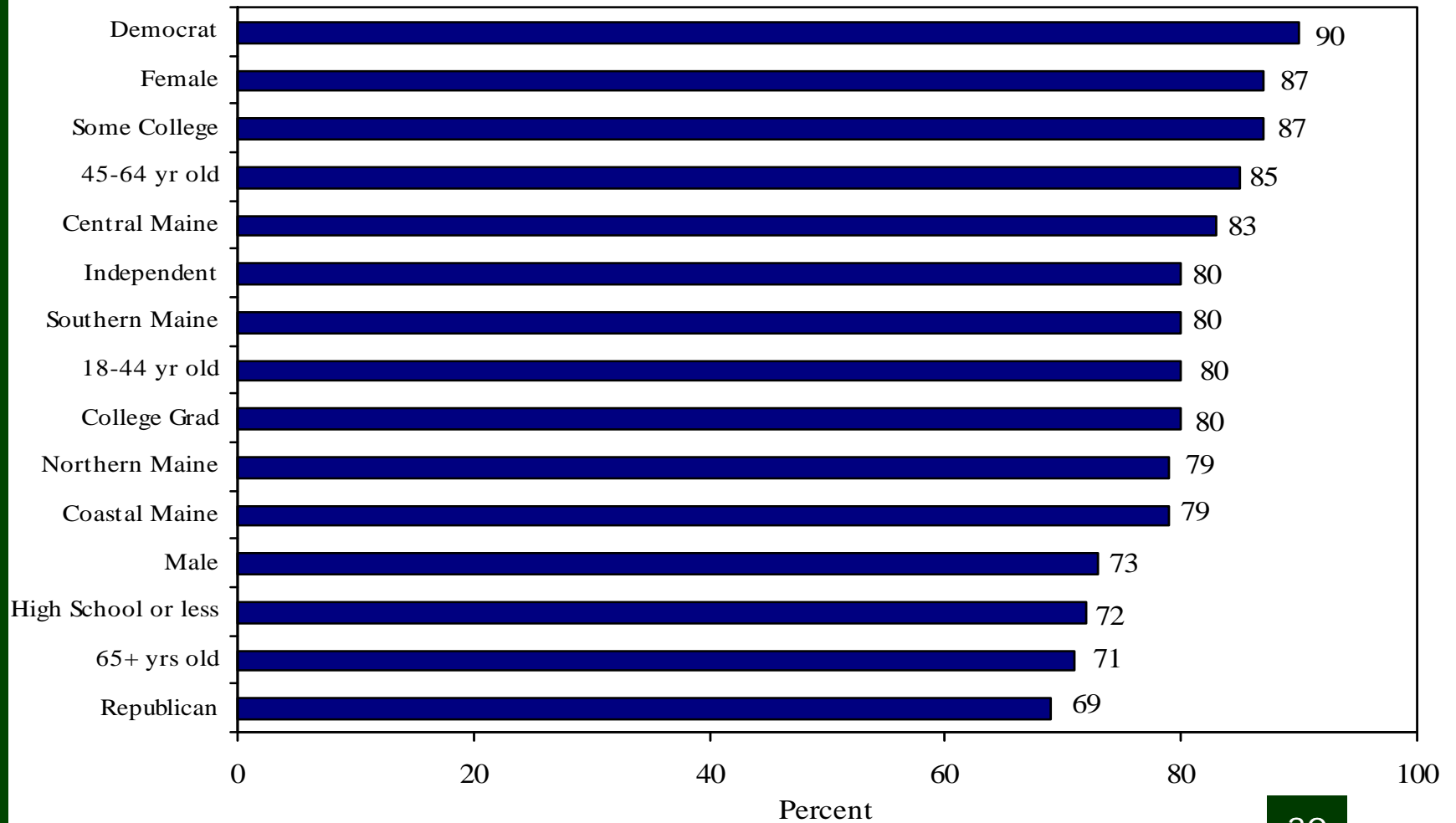
Maine is one of more than 40 states that has adopted a uniform building and energy code that requires new homes to be built using energy efficiency features designed to help homeowners reduce energy costs. Do you approve or disapprove of Maine's uniform building and energy code?





Approval of Uniform Building & Energy Code

Maine is one of more than 40 states that has adopted a uniform building and energy code that requires new homes to be built using energy efficiency features designed to help homeowners reduce energy costs. Do you approve or disapprove of Maine's uniform building and energy code?





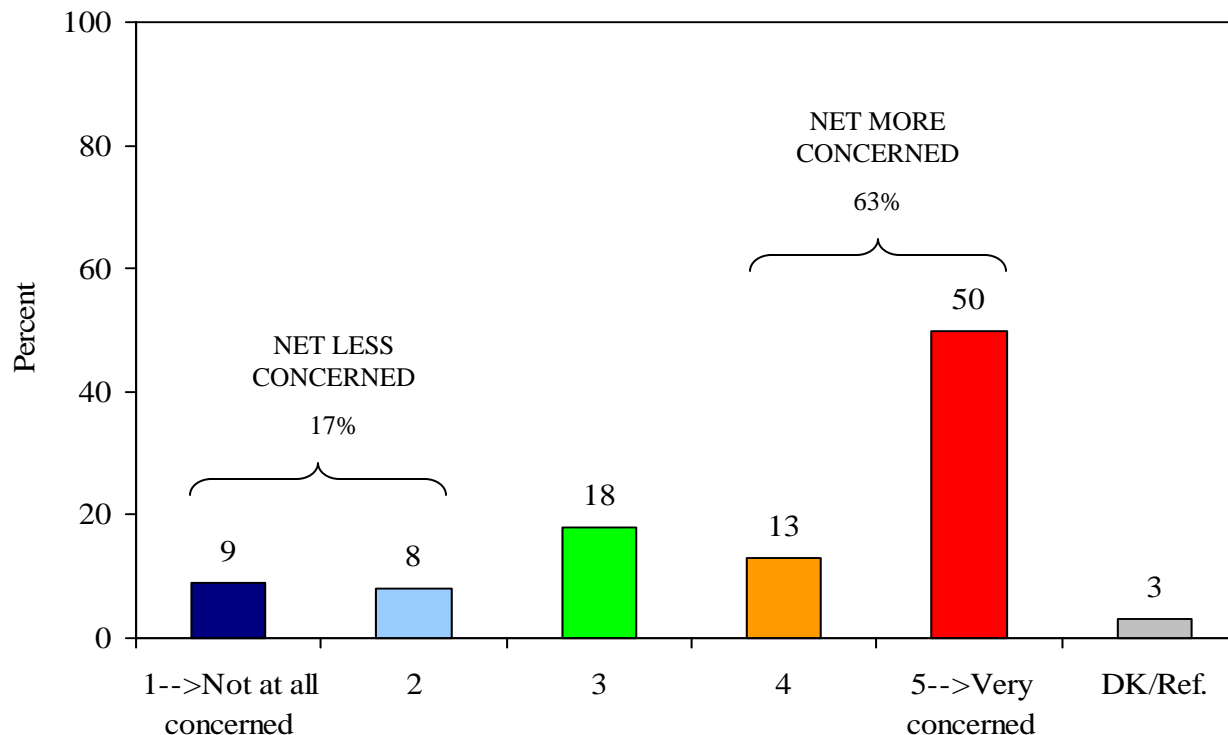
Views on Weakening Environmental Laws & Standards

- Given the level of support for the environment noted throughout this report, it is not surprising that more than 6-in-10 voters polled say they would be concerned if they learned that their elected representative in the Maine State Legislature had voted to weaken laws that protecting Maine's overall environment.
 - Women, older voters, respondents with higher educational attainment, voters in Central Maine, and self-reported Democrats and Independents are more likely than others to be concerned about the possibility of environmental laws being weakened by their elected representative.
- More than 6-in-10 respondents polled also say they would be concerned if environmental standards for reviewing development proposals in Maine's North Woods were weakened. Concern about a possible weakening of such standards was at 60% or higher in all four demographic regions sampled by the poll (Northern, Central, Coastal, and Southern)



Concern about Legislators Weakening Laws that Protect Maine's Environment

How concerned would you be if you learned that your elected representatives in the Maine State Legislature had voted to weaken the laws that protect Maine's clean air, clean water, and the environment? Please use a scale of 1 to 5 where a 1 means "not at all concerned" and a 5 means "very concerned."

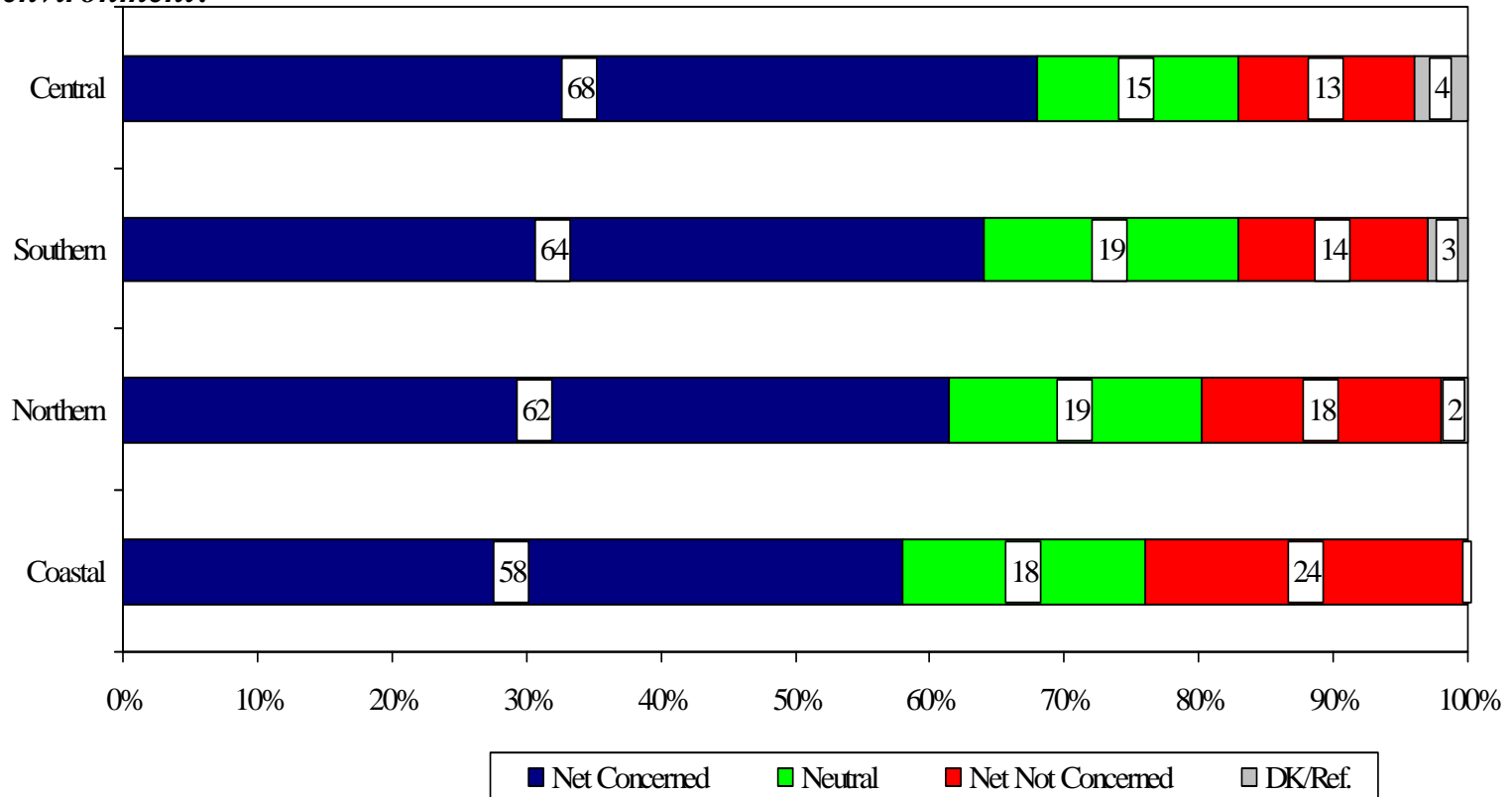




Concern about Legislators Weakening Laws that Protect Maine's Environment

Regional Perspectives *

How concerned would you be if you learned that your elected representatives in the Maine State Legislature had voted to weaken the laws that protect Maine's clean air, clean water, and the environment?

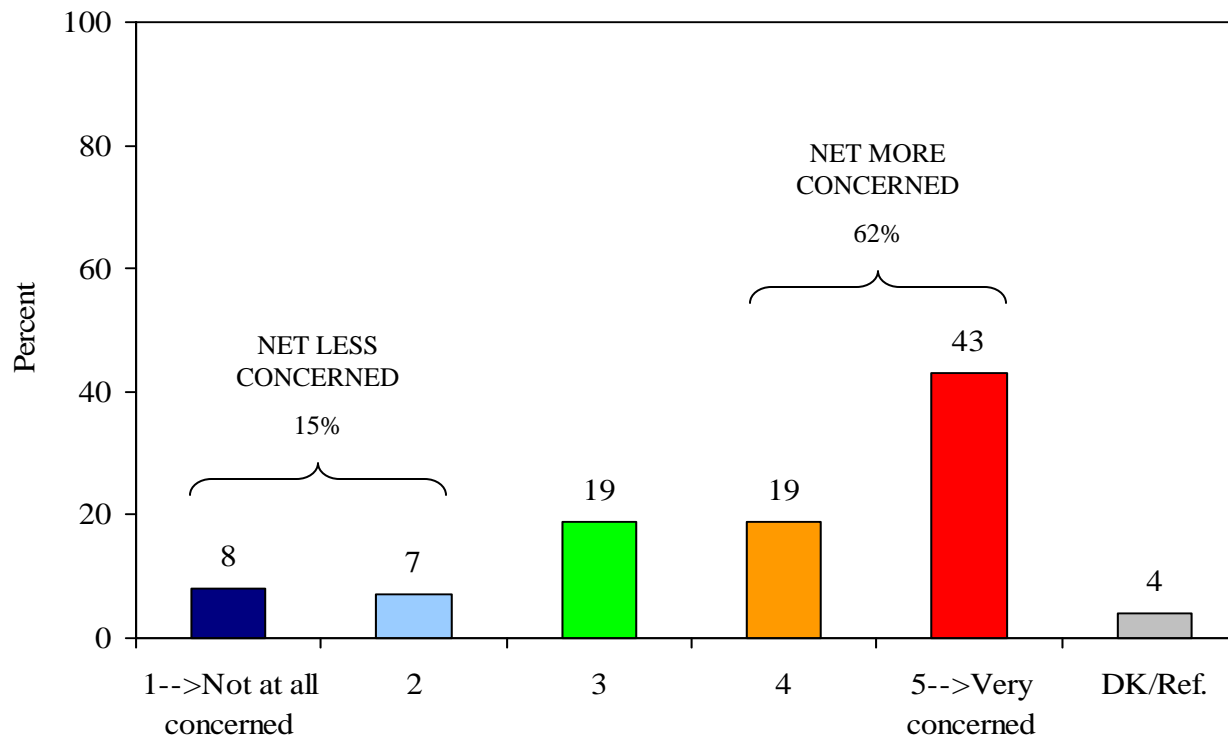


* CENTRAL: Androscoggin, Franklin, Kennebec, Oxford. SOUTHERN: Cumberland, York. NORTHERN: Aroostook, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset. COASTAL: Hancock, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Waldo, Washington.



Concern with Weakening Environmental Standards for Maine's North Woods

Thinking about Maine's North Woods, how concerned would you be if the environmental standards for reviewing major industrial, commercial and large scale residential development in the North Woods were weakened? Please use a scale of 1 to 5 where a 1 means "not at all concerned" and a 5 means "very concerned."





*Perceived Importance of
Protecting Maine's Environment*



Perceived Importance of Protecting Maine's Environment

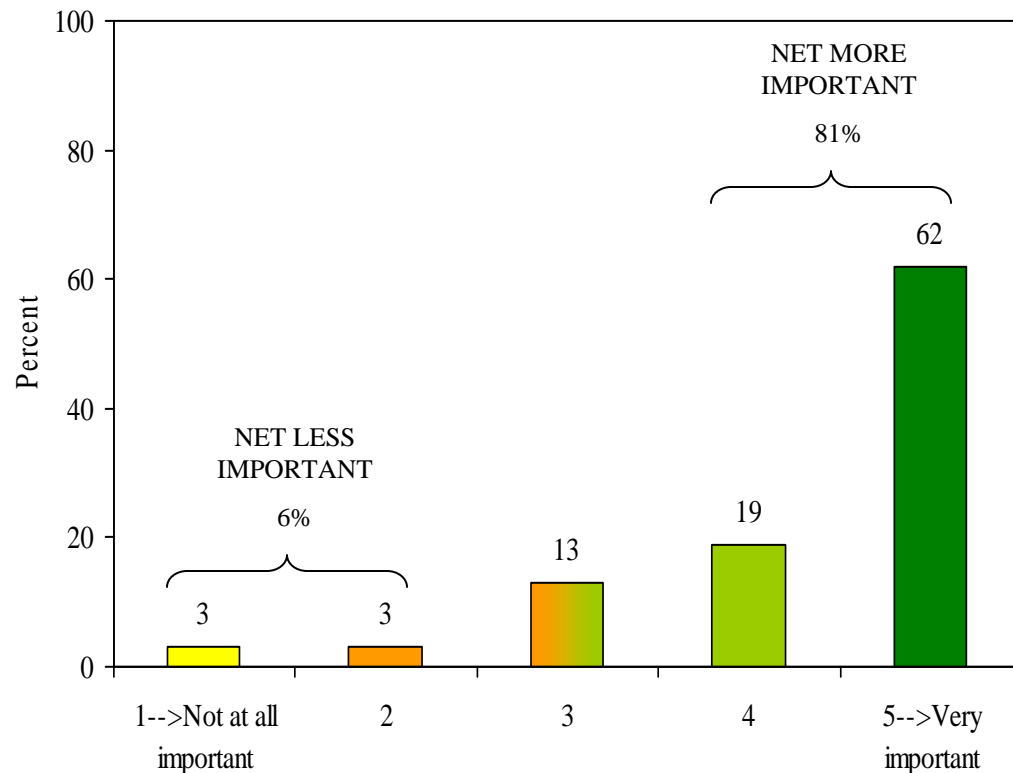
- When asked to rate the importance of protecting a clean and healthy environment for specific reasons, the prevailing reason chosen by these representative voters was, “For our children’s future and natural heritage.”
 - Indeed, more than 8-in-10 respondents feel that it is important to protect the environment for our children.
- The other reasons tested also garnered high levels of importance, specifically the future of the economy (75%) and attracting new business to the state (70%).
- Consistent with findings noted previously, the value placed on each of the assessed reasons to protect the environment is significantly greater among women, as well as among self-described Democrats and Independents.
- Virtually all voters surveyed agree that it is important for Maine to identify and require replacement of dangerous chemicals used in consumer products, provided the safer replacement chemicals are effective and affordable.



Perceived Importance of a Clean & Healthy Environment

Using a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 means “not at all important” and a 5 means “very important,” how important is protecting a clean and healthy environment for each of the following reasons?

For our children’s future
and natural heritage

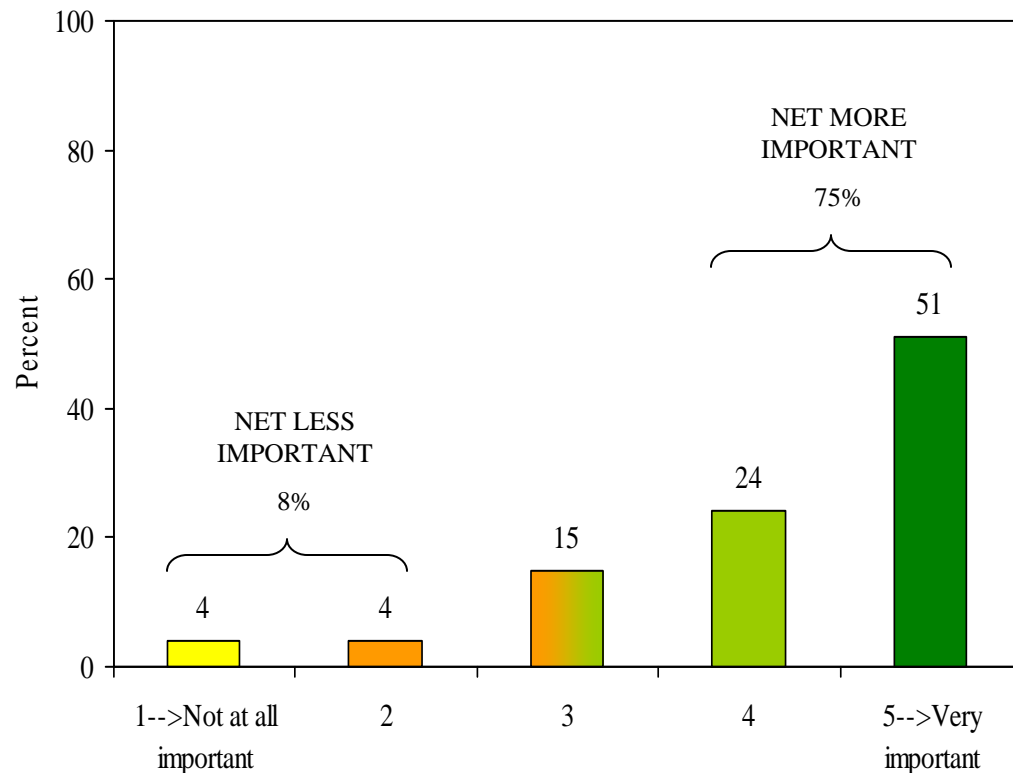




Perceived Importance of a Clean & Healthy Environment

Using a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 means “not at all important” and a 5 means “very important,” how important is protecting a clean and healthy environment for each of the following reasons?

For the future of Maine’s economy

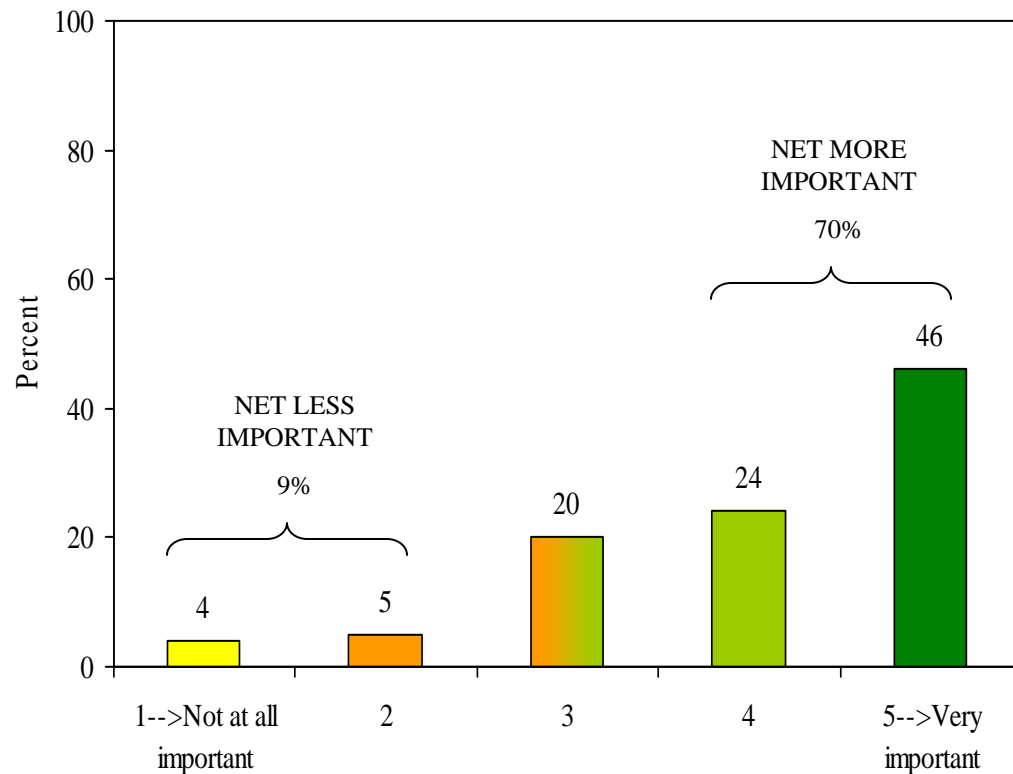




Perceived Importance of a Clean & Healthy Environment

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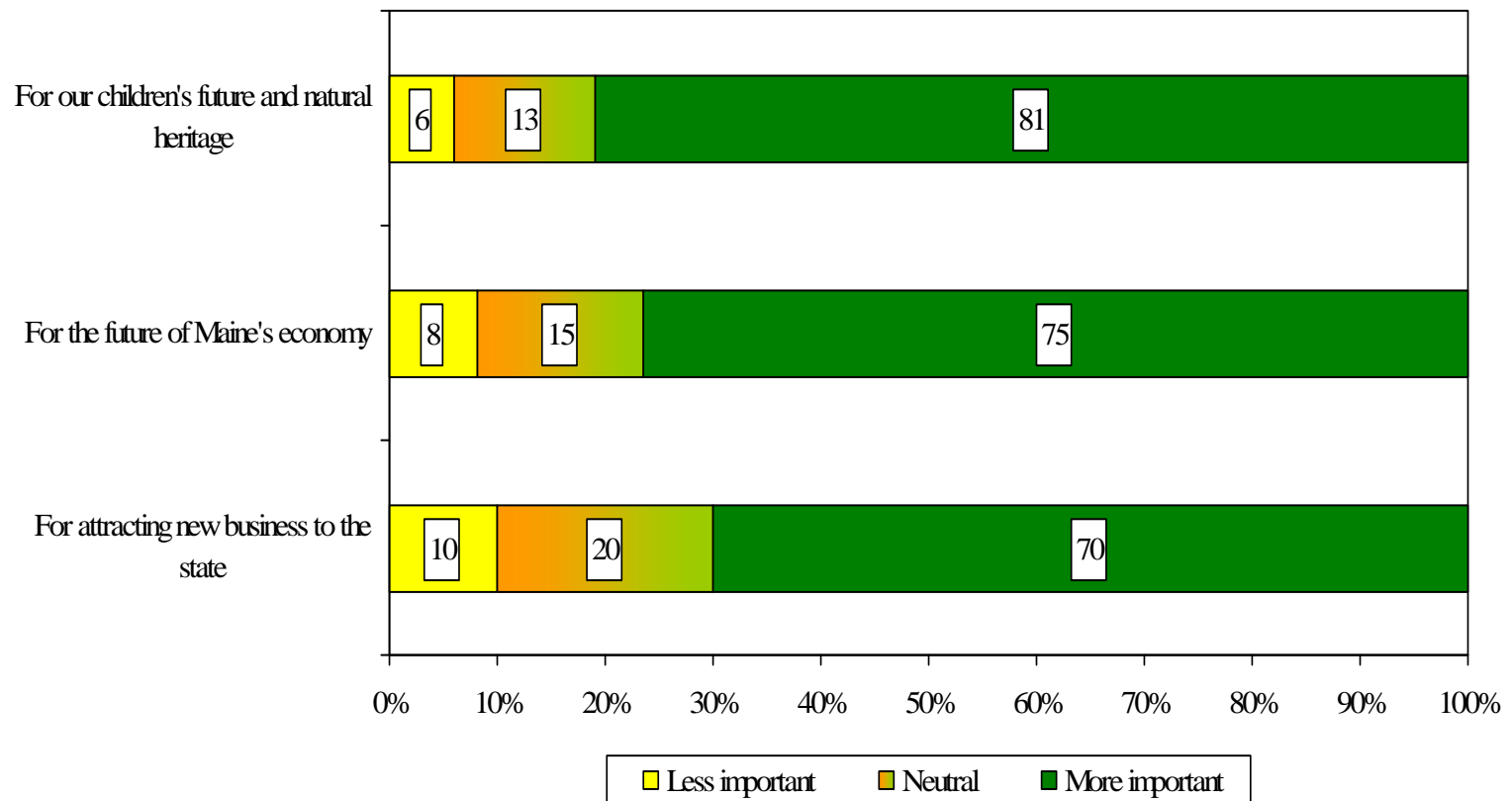
For attracting new business
to the state





Summary of Perceived Importance of a Clean & Healthy Environment

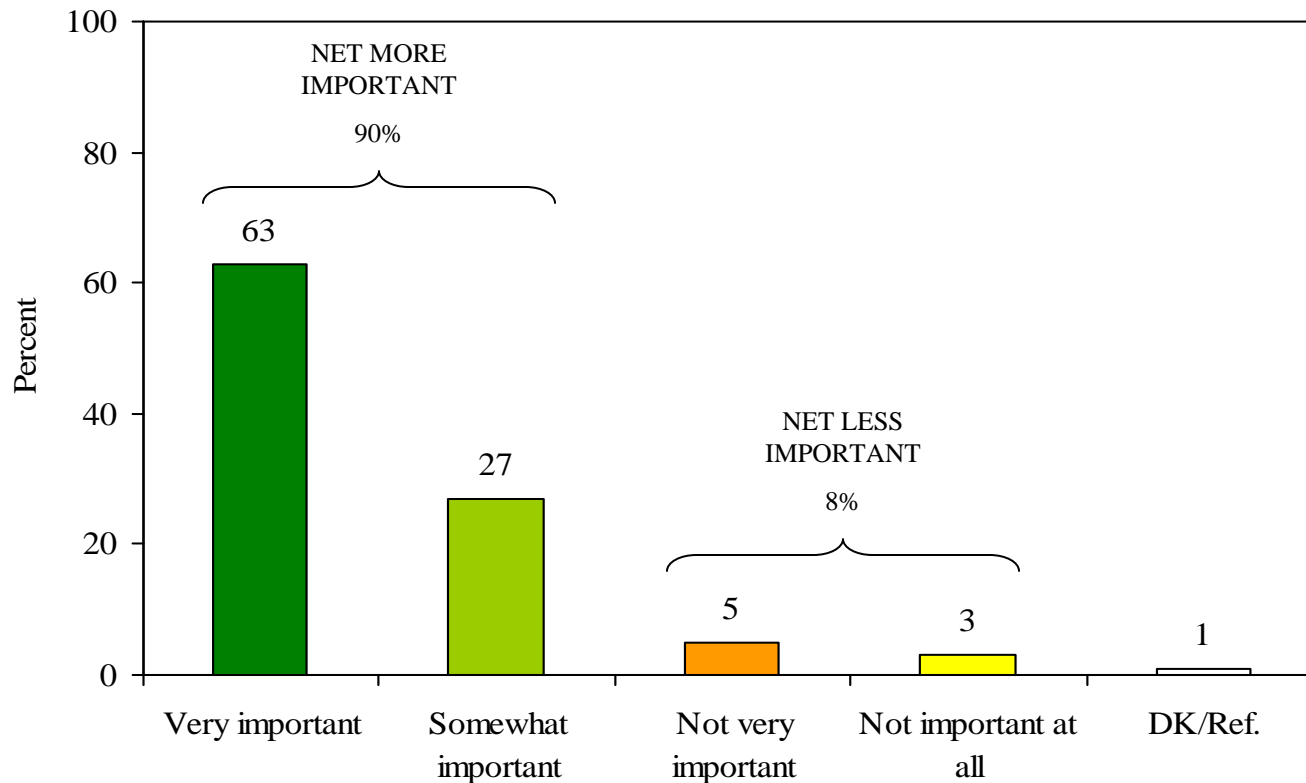
Using a scale of 1 to 5, where a 1 means “not at all important” and a 5 means “very important,” how important is protecting a clean and healthy environment for each of the following reasons?





Perceived Importance of Using Safer Chemicals in Consumer Products

How important do you believe it is for Maine to identify the most dangerous chemicals used in making consumer products, and to require manufacturers to replace them with safer ones as long as they are effective and affordable?





*Views on Wind Power
as a Source of Maine's Electricity*



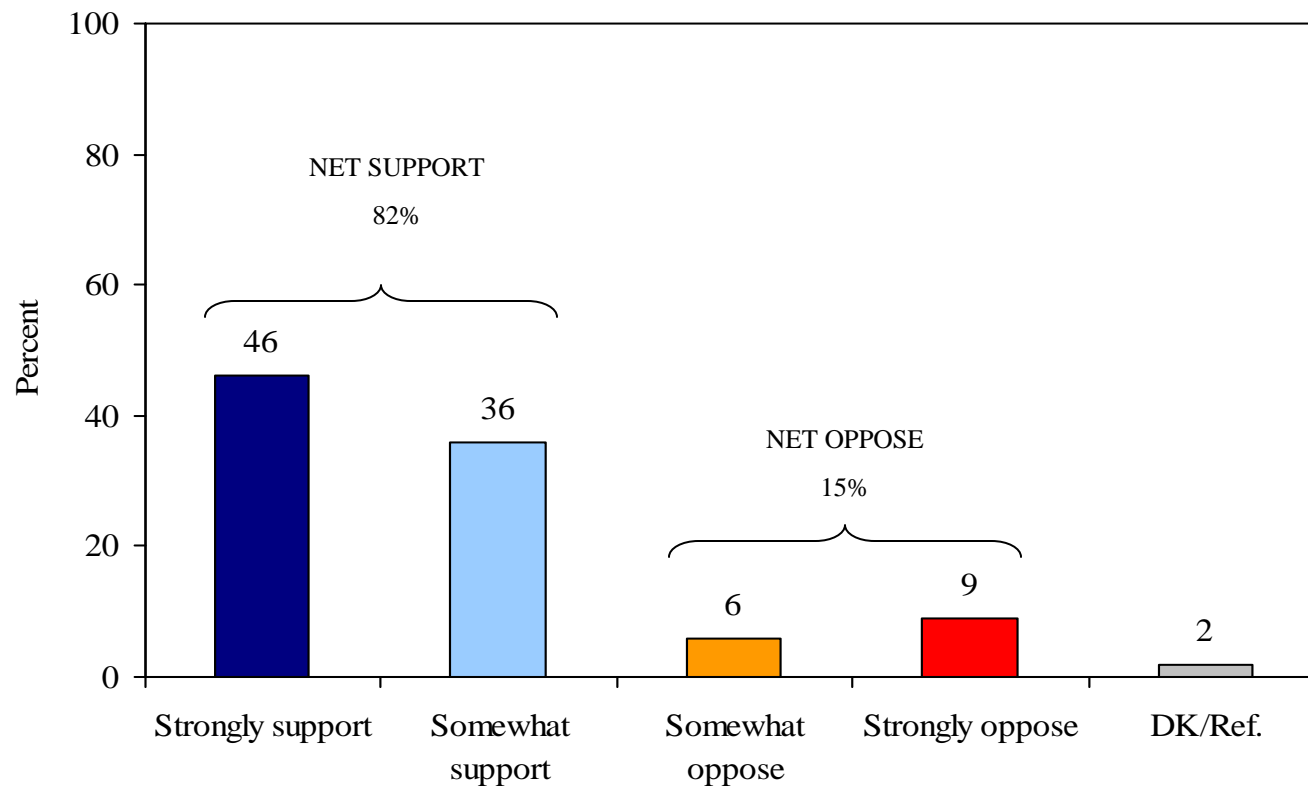
Support / Opposition for Wind Power

- More than 8-in-10 survey respondents support the development of wind power in Maine as an alternative source of electricity.
 - Indeed, only 15% of all survey respondents indicate any level of opposition.
- Women and respondents citing Democratic party affiliation are significantly more likely to “strongly support” wind power as a form of alternative energy.
- Net support for wind power (combining those who “strongly support” and those who “somewhat support”) exceeds 70% for all demographic subgroups: Democrats, Republicans, and Independents; all age and income categories; male and female; and all regions of Maine.



Support / Opposition for Wind Power as a Source of Electricity

Thinking now about wind power, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the development of wind power in Maine as a source of electricity?



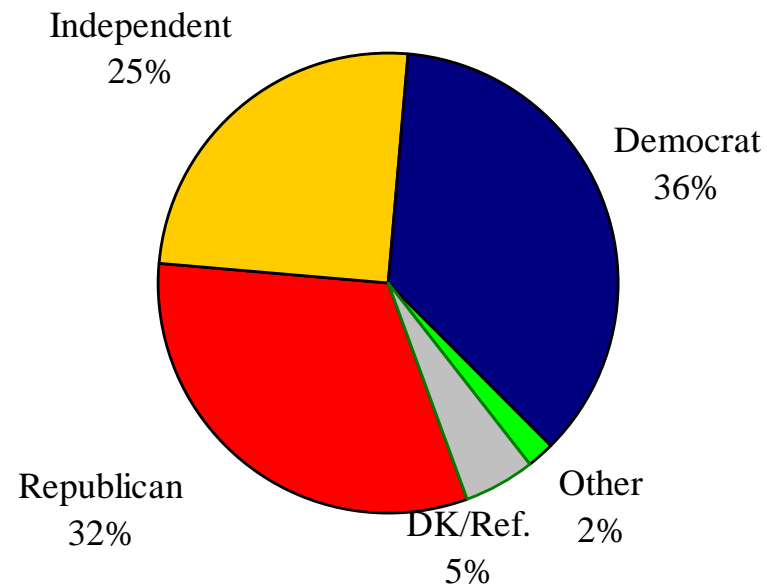


Sample Profile



Voter Party Affiliation

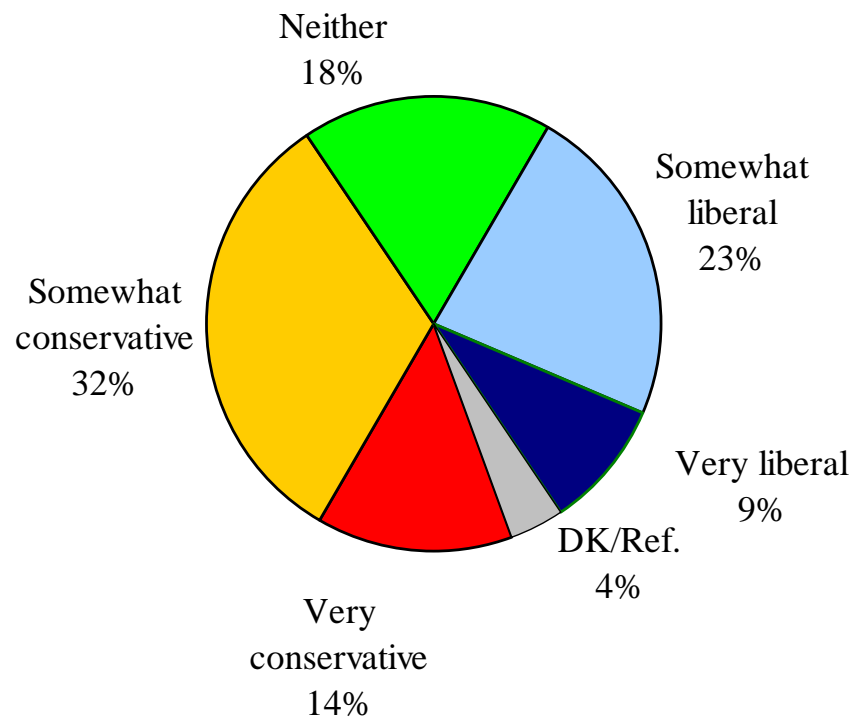
In what political party are you registered to vote?





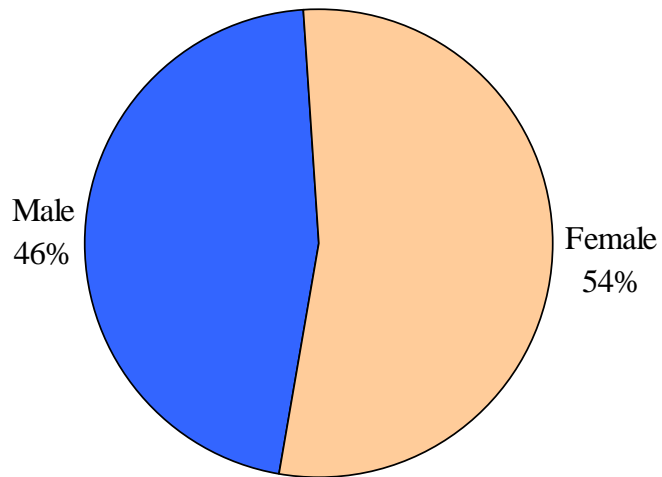
Political Philosophy

Which of these statements best describes your political leanings?

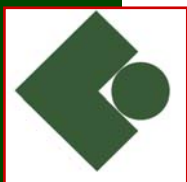




Respondent Gender and Age



<i>Into which of the following categories does your age fall?</i>	Percent
18 to 34	26%
35 to 44	18
45 to 54	22
55 to 64	18
65 or older	17



Education

<i>What is the highest level of education you have completed?</i>	Percent
High school or less	5%
Graduated high school	19
Technical/Vocational/Community College	3
Some college	23
Graduated college	35
Graduate school	13



Household Income

<i>Which of the following broad groups includes your household's approximate total yearly income before taxes?</i>	Percent
Less than \$25,000	10%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	26
\$50,000 to \$74,999	19
\$75,000 to \$99,999	13
\$100,000 or more	13
Don't know or refused to specify	18



Household Composition

Do you have any children, age 18 or younger, living with you at home?

