

Marylanders' Attitudes and Policy Preferences on Climate Change

| Dec 10 2015 | The Nature Conservancy Maryland / District of Columbia Chapter |
| Board of Trustees Meeting | Chevy Chase, Maryland |

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GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
CENTER *for* CLIMATE CHANGE
COMMUNICATION



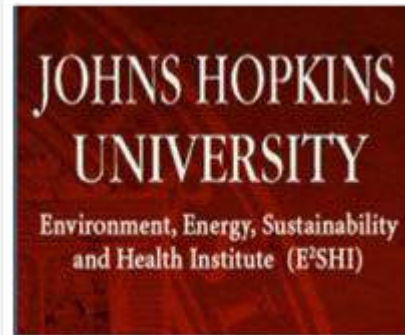
CLIMATE COMMUNICATION
CONSORTIUM *OF MARYLAND*



Baltimore Commission on Sustainability



CLIMATE COMMUNICATION
CONSORTIUM *OF MARYLAND*



Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health



Maryland League of Conservation Voters



Eastern Shore Land Conservancy



Maryland Environmental Health Network

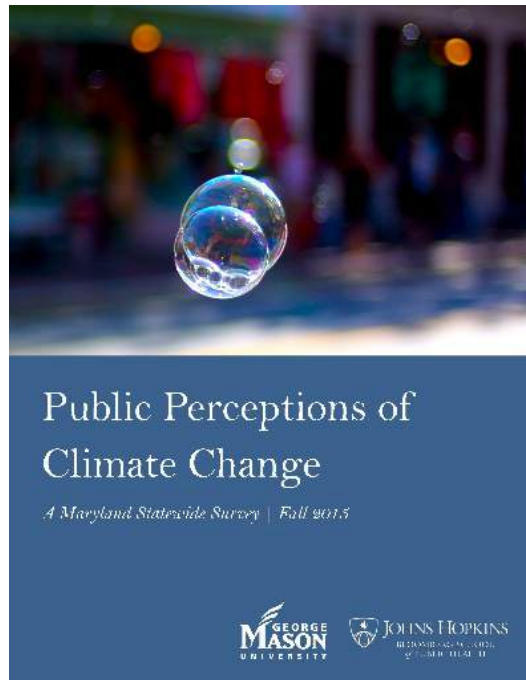


Maryland Department of the Environment

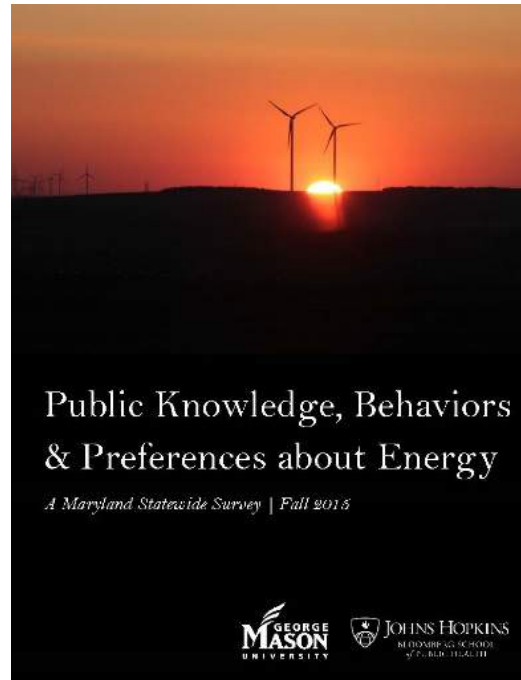


Maryland Department of Natural Resources

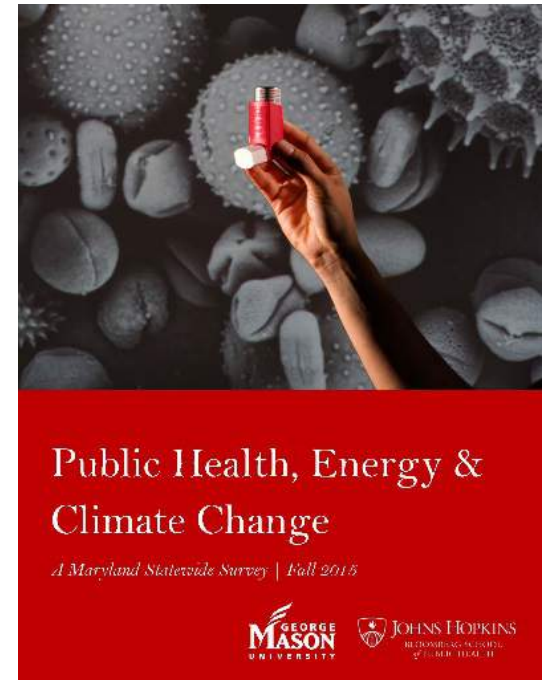
CLIMATE



ENERGY



HEALTH





Public Perceptions of Climate Change

A Maryland Statewide Survey | Fall 2015



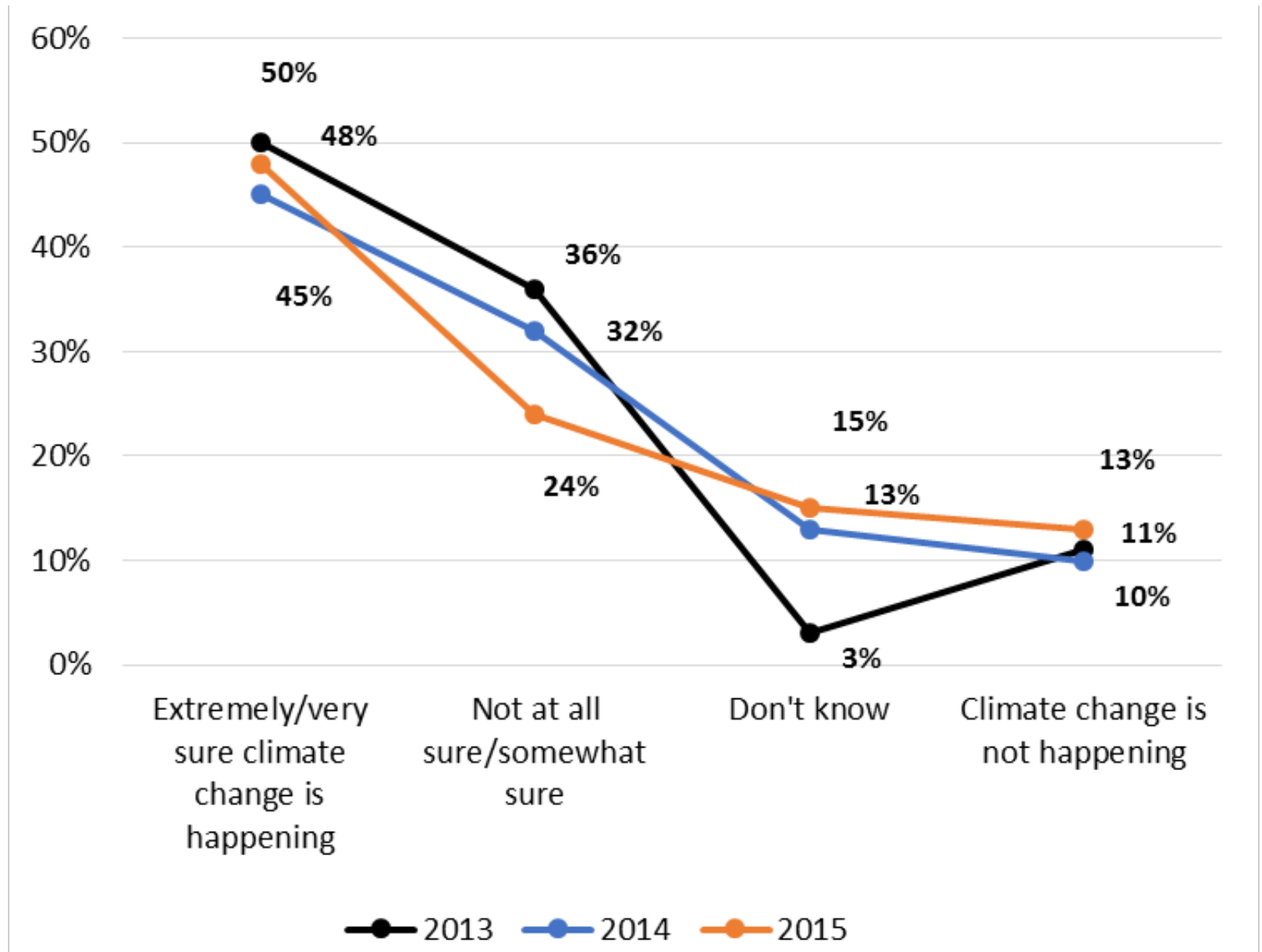


What do you think?

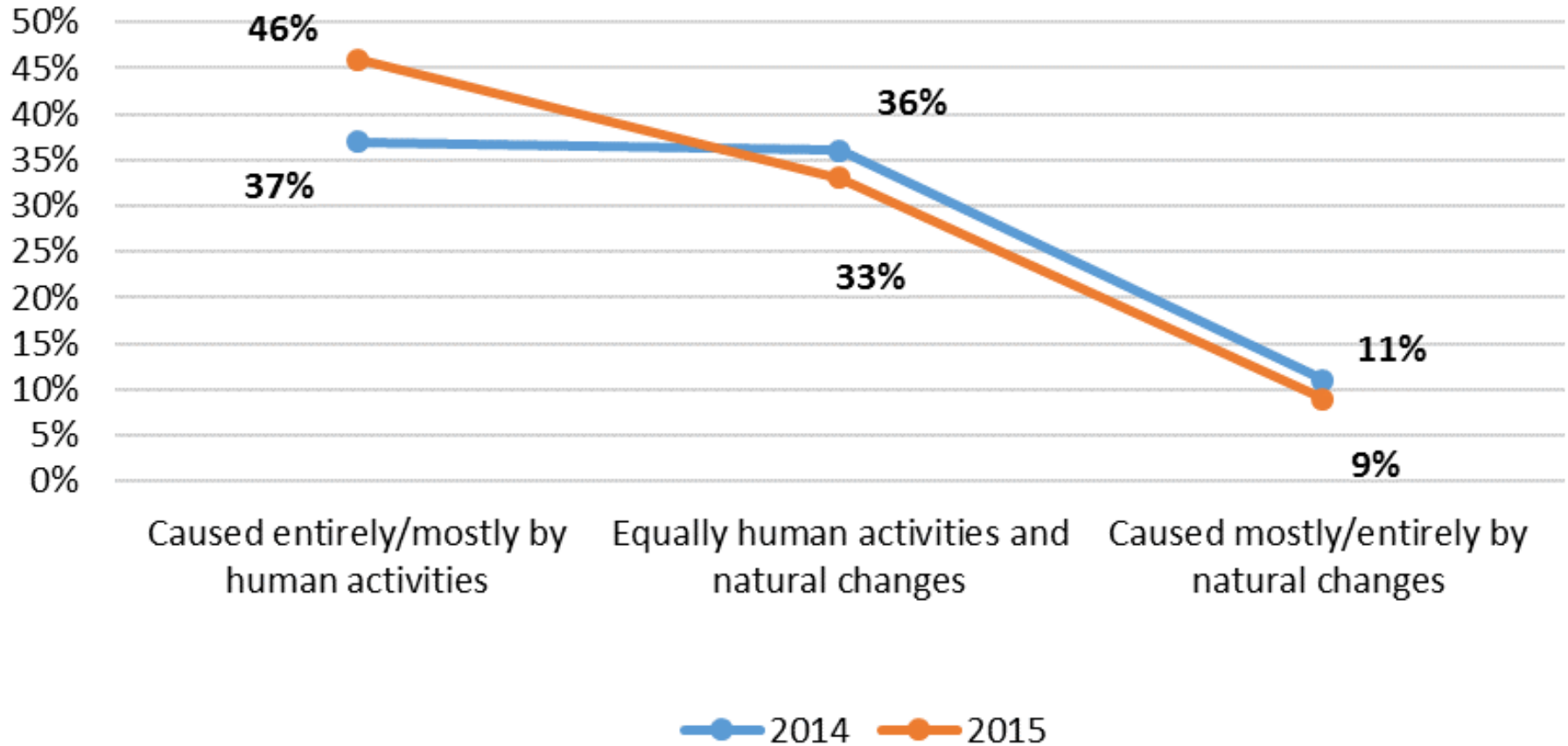
What percentage of
Marylanders say that climate
change is happening?

What percentage think it is
caused mostly by human
activities?

Most Marylanders agree climate change is happening



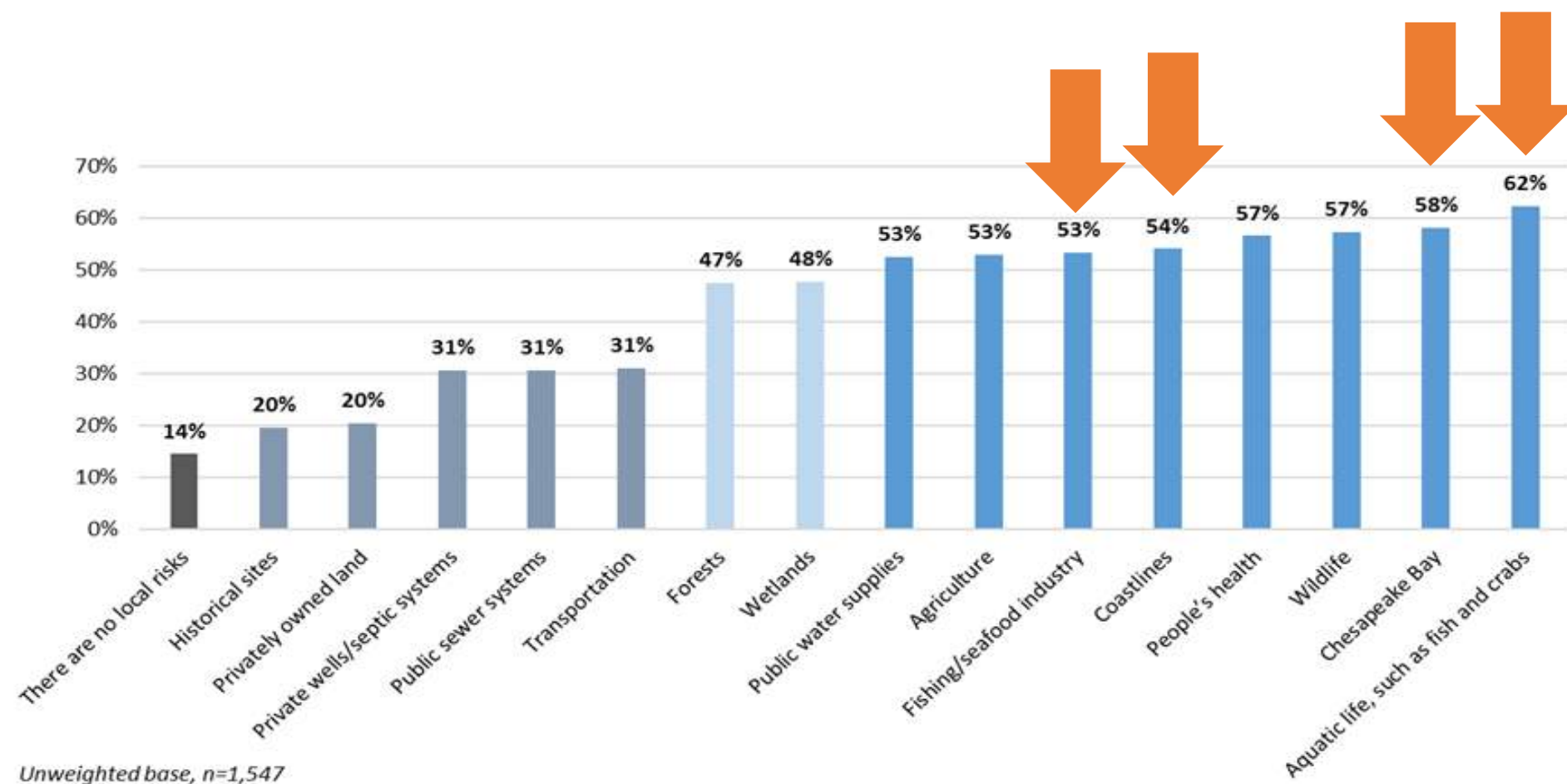
... and that humans are playing a role



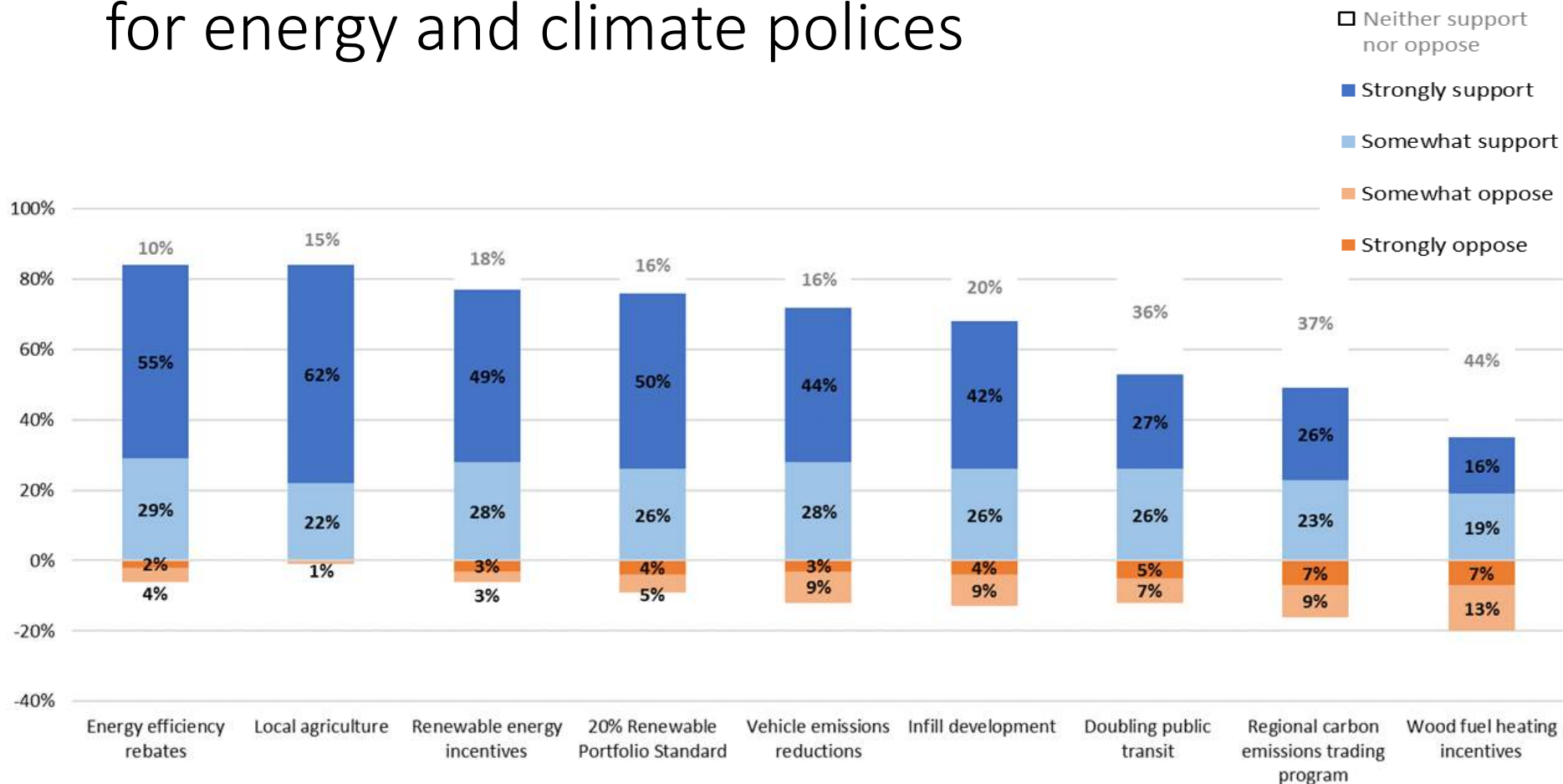
Main messages

- 1) Marylanders connect climate change and harm to Chesapeake Bay.
- 2) Climate remains lower on their priority list than many other issues.
- 3) There is majority support for renewing the state emissions reductions law.
- 4) Marylanders overestimate the amount of disagreement on climate change.

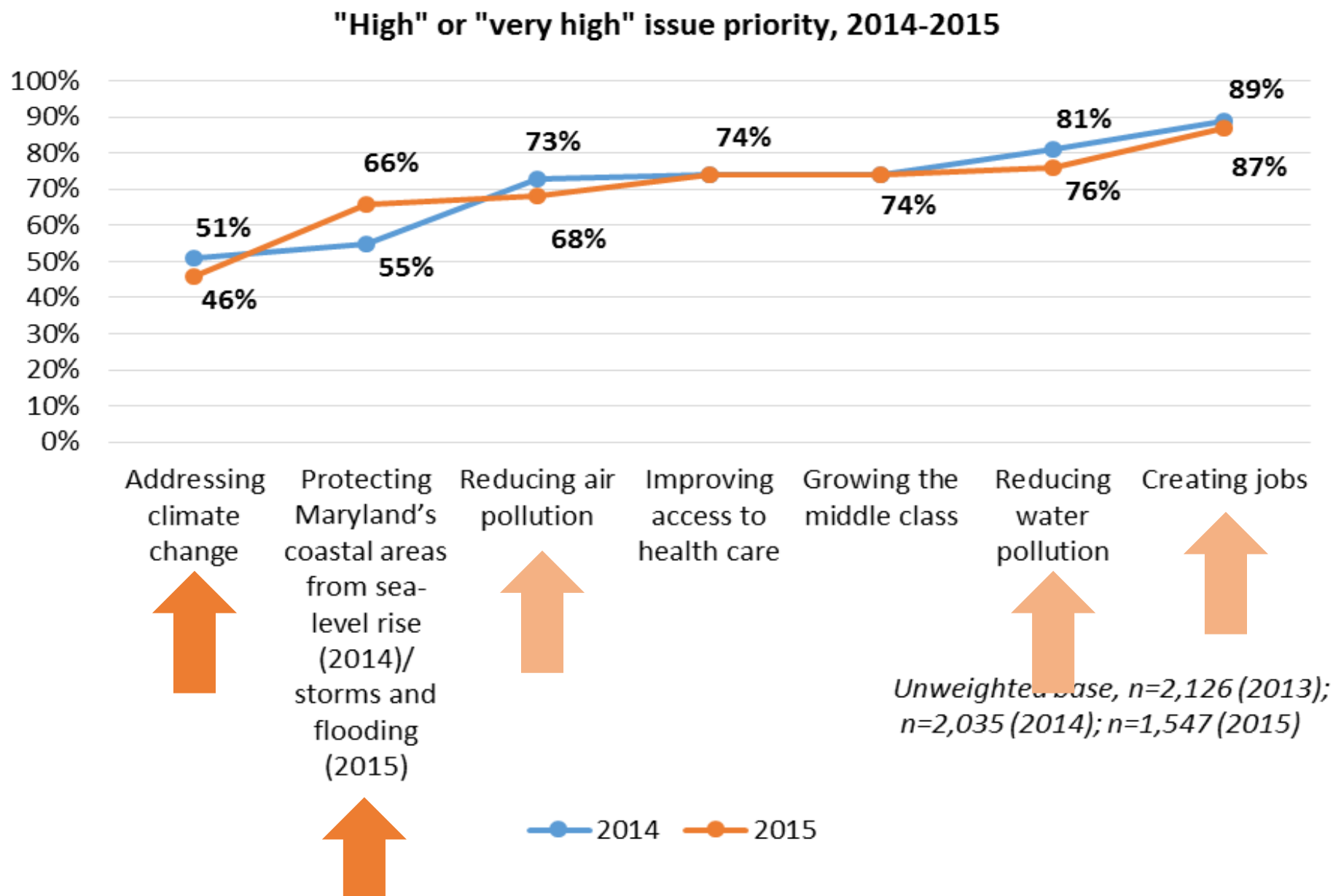
Marylanders identify Chesapeake Bay and its resources as at risk from climate change



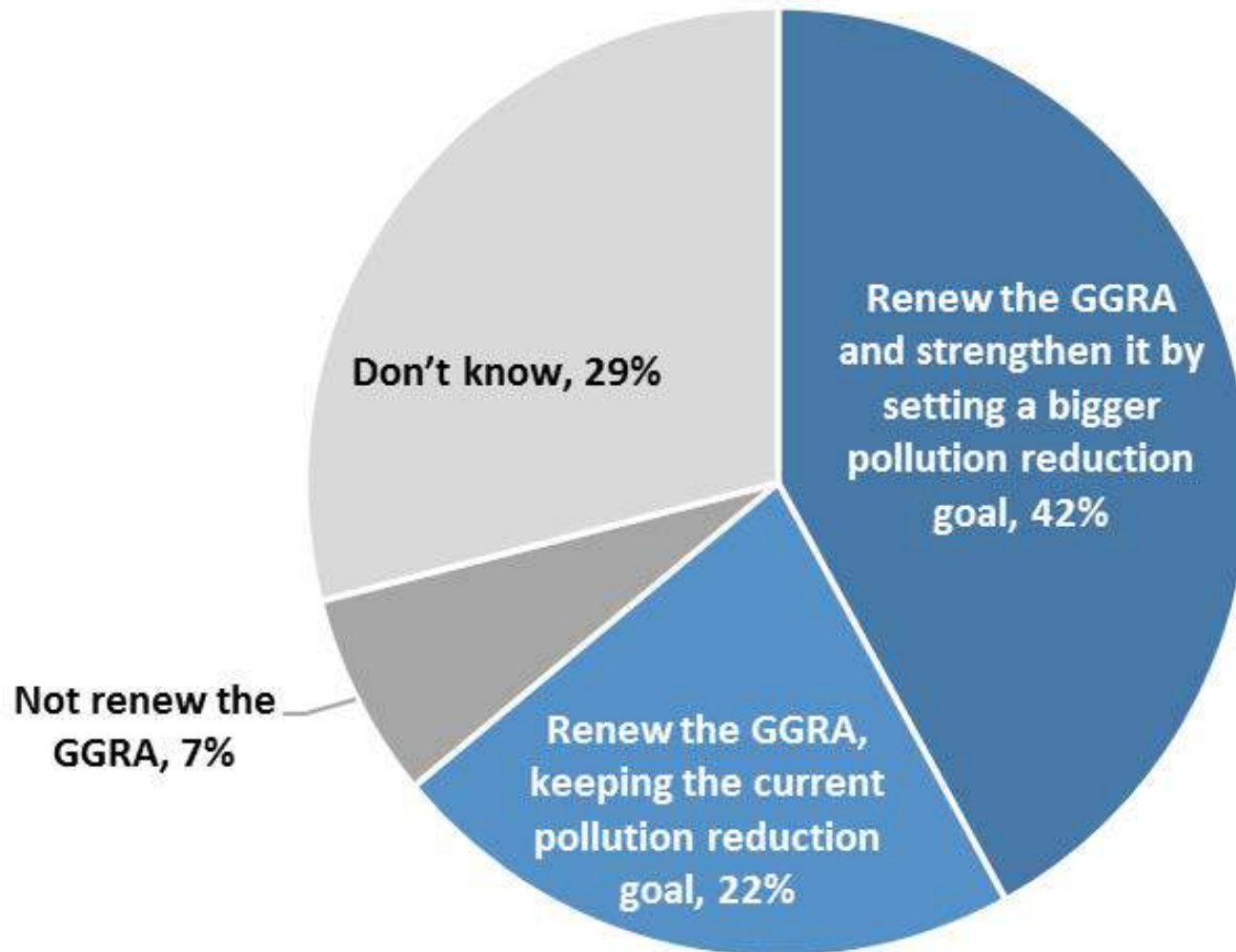
Marylanders demonstrate high support for energy and climate policies



... but climate remains lower on the priority list



A majority support renewing the state's law setting targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions



Recommendations



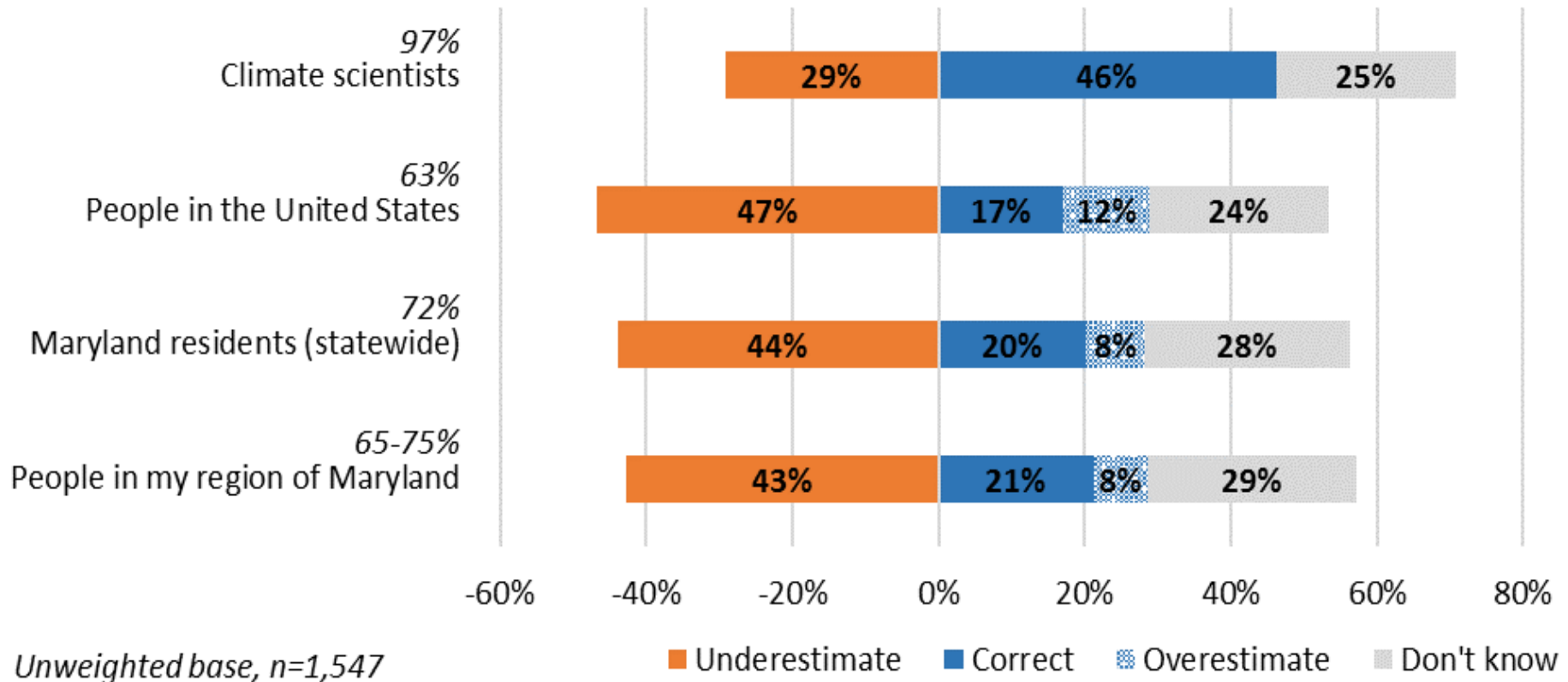
- 1) Use the label **“Maryland’s Greenhouse Gas Reduction law”**
- 2) In explaining the law, use **“promoting clean energy, a strong economy, and healthy people through 150 state programs”**
- 3) Use **“expire”** instead of “renew” to initially describe the status of the law



Promoting clean energy, a strong economy,
and healthy people through 150 state programs.

*Each of these message components
was tested with Marylanders.*

People underestimate the scientific—and social—consensus on climate change



Getting the message out is more important
than the frame (*science, health, local effects*)



Comments

- 1) The connection Marylanders are making between climate and the Bay may present a communication opportunity.
- 2) Strengthening perceptions of the social and scientific consensus may boost attitudinal certainty on climate.
- 3) It is more important to get people talking about climate generally than to focus on specific message frames.



How do you talk about climate change and energy in your personal and professional life?

The background of the slide is a photograph of two wind turbines silhouetted against a bright orange and red sunset sky. The sun is a glowing orb on the horizon, partially obscured by the turbines. The foreground is dark and indistinct.

Public Beliefs, Behaviors & Preferences about Energy

A Maryland Statewide Survey | Fall 2015



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of PUBLIC HEALTH



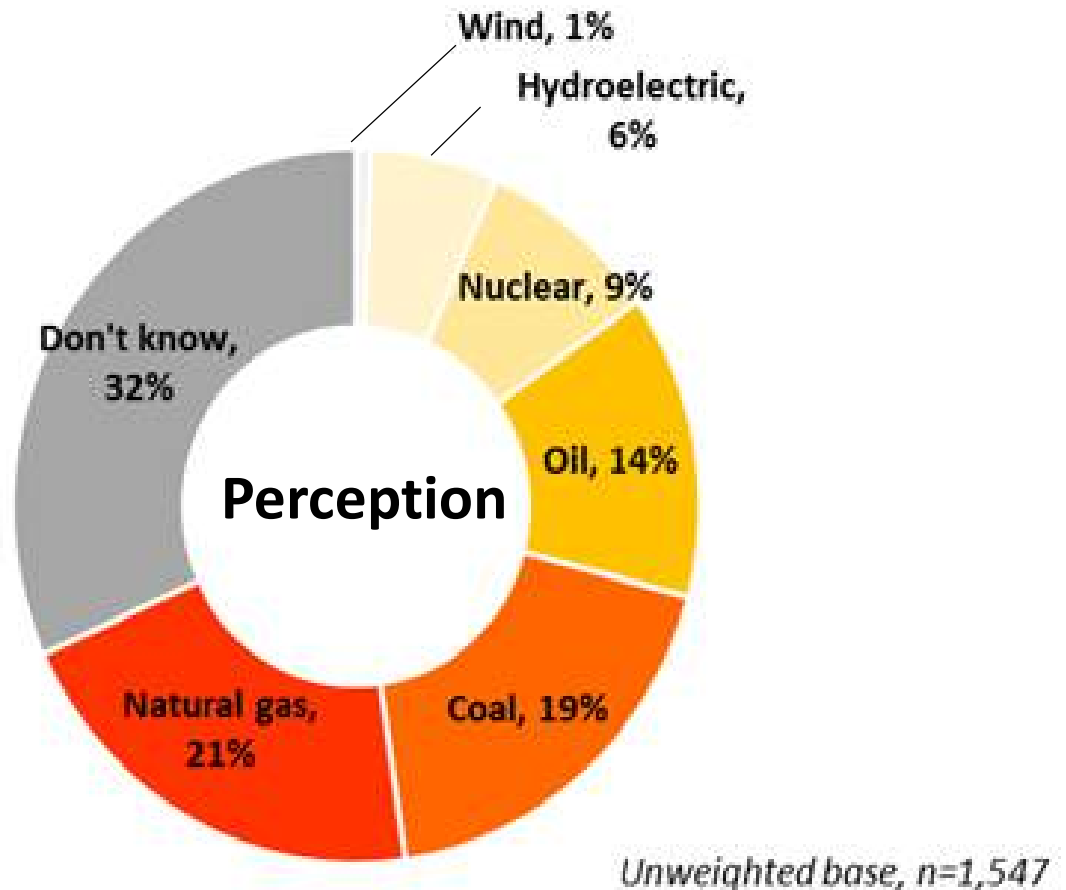
What do you think?

Do Marylanders know what
fuels their electricity?

Many don't know what fuels their electricity

Reality

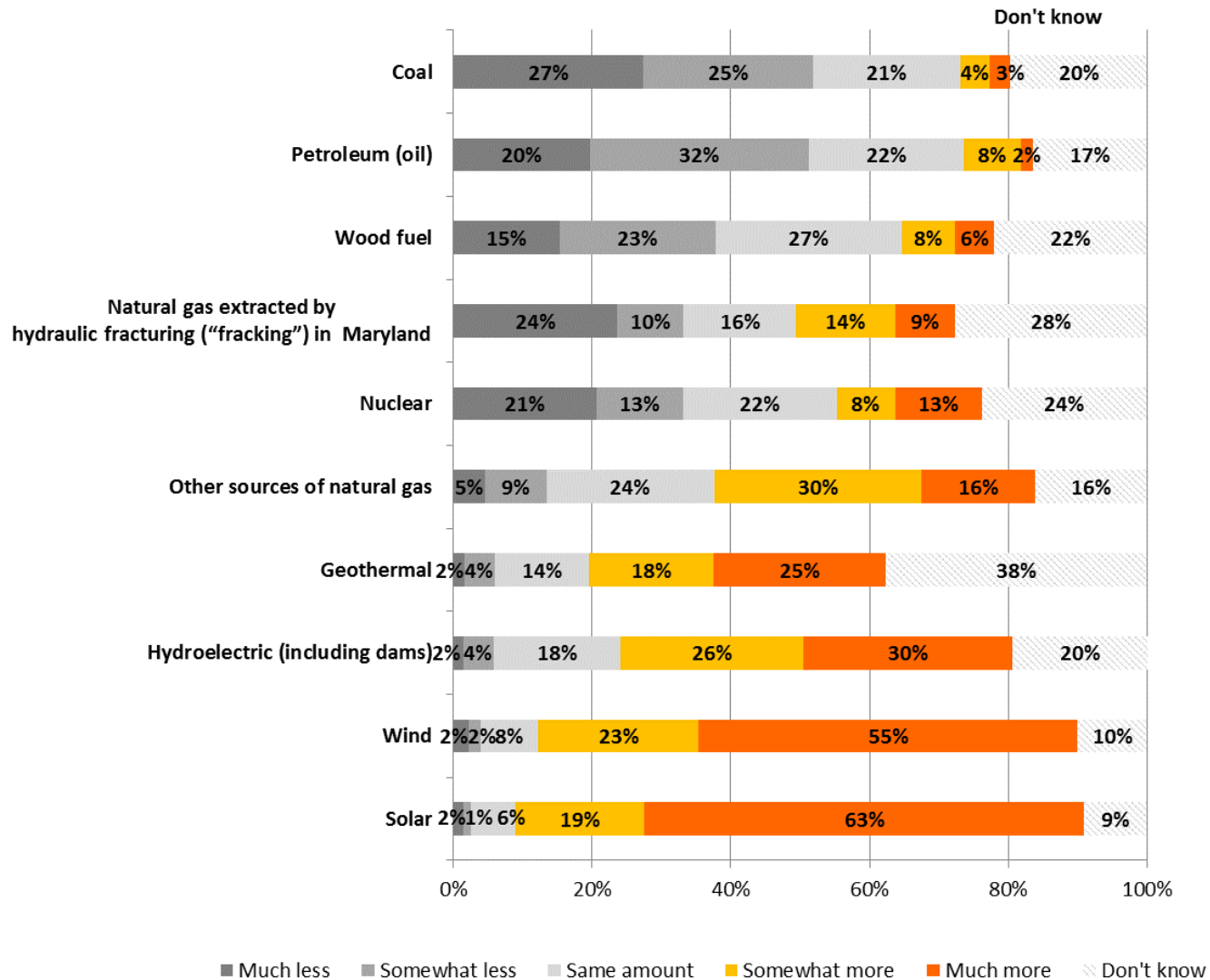
The two largest sources of Maryland's electricity generation are **coal-fired (40%)** and **nuclear (40%)** power plants with **natural gas (15%)** a distant third.



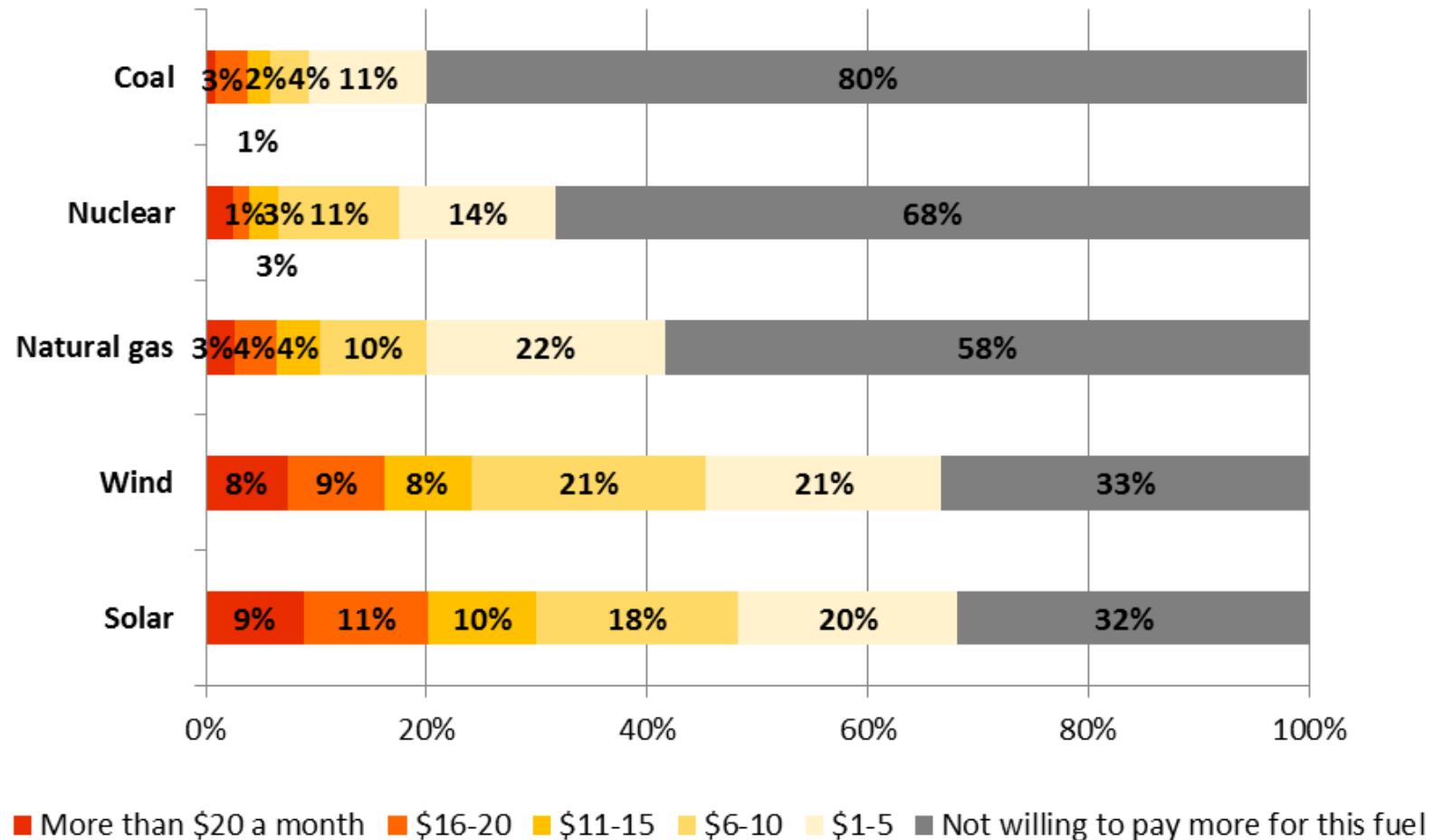
Main points

- 1) Marylanders support more renewable energy generation.
- 2) People say they are willing to pay more for renewables.
- 3) Expanding energy efficiency rebates remains one of the most favored climate and energy policies.

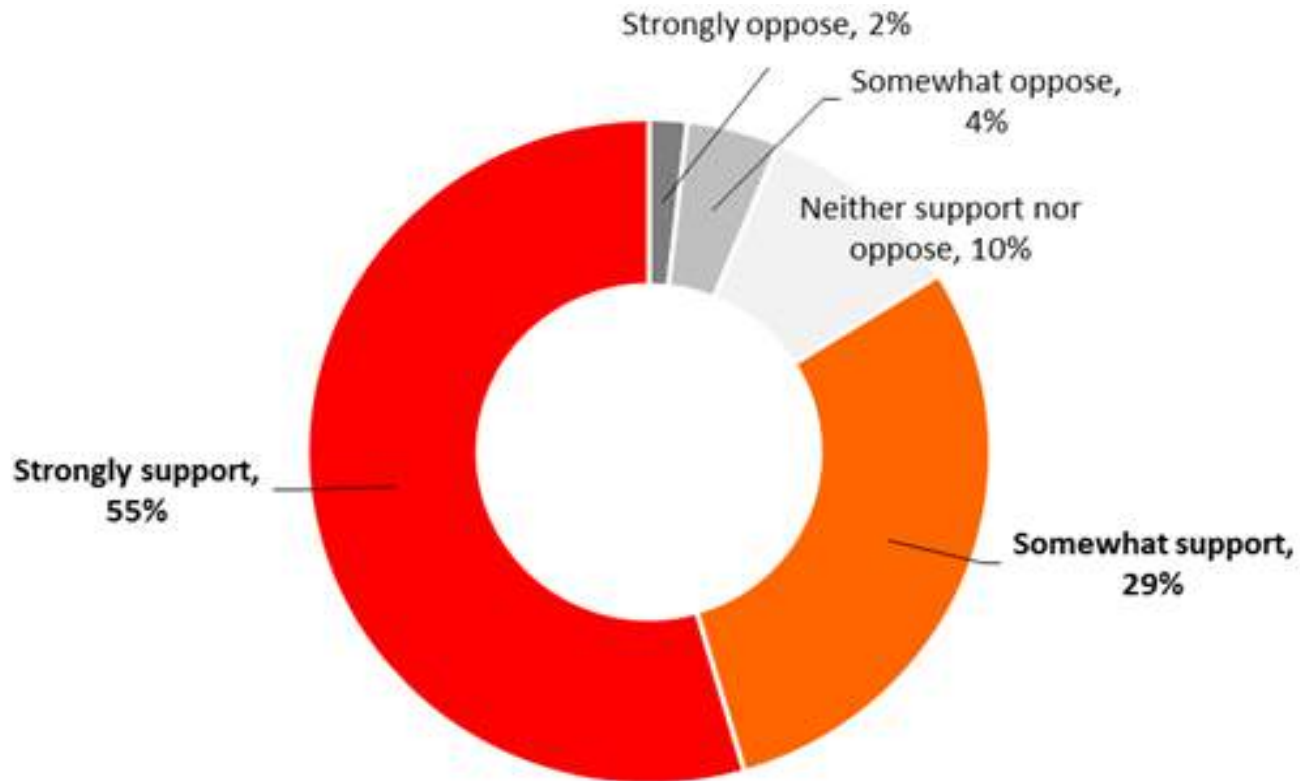
Marylanders want more electricity from renewable sources



... and they say they are willing to pay more for them



Energy efficiency rebates are the most favored energy and climate policy



Comments

- 1) Willingness to pay for renewables is likely over-represented by survey data.
- 2) Interest in energy efficiency presents an opportunity to message about less-practiced behaviors with larger energy-saving benefits such as water heating.

A hand holding a red inhaler against a background of microscopic organisms.

Public Health, Energy & Climate Change

A Maryland Statewide Survey | Fall 2015

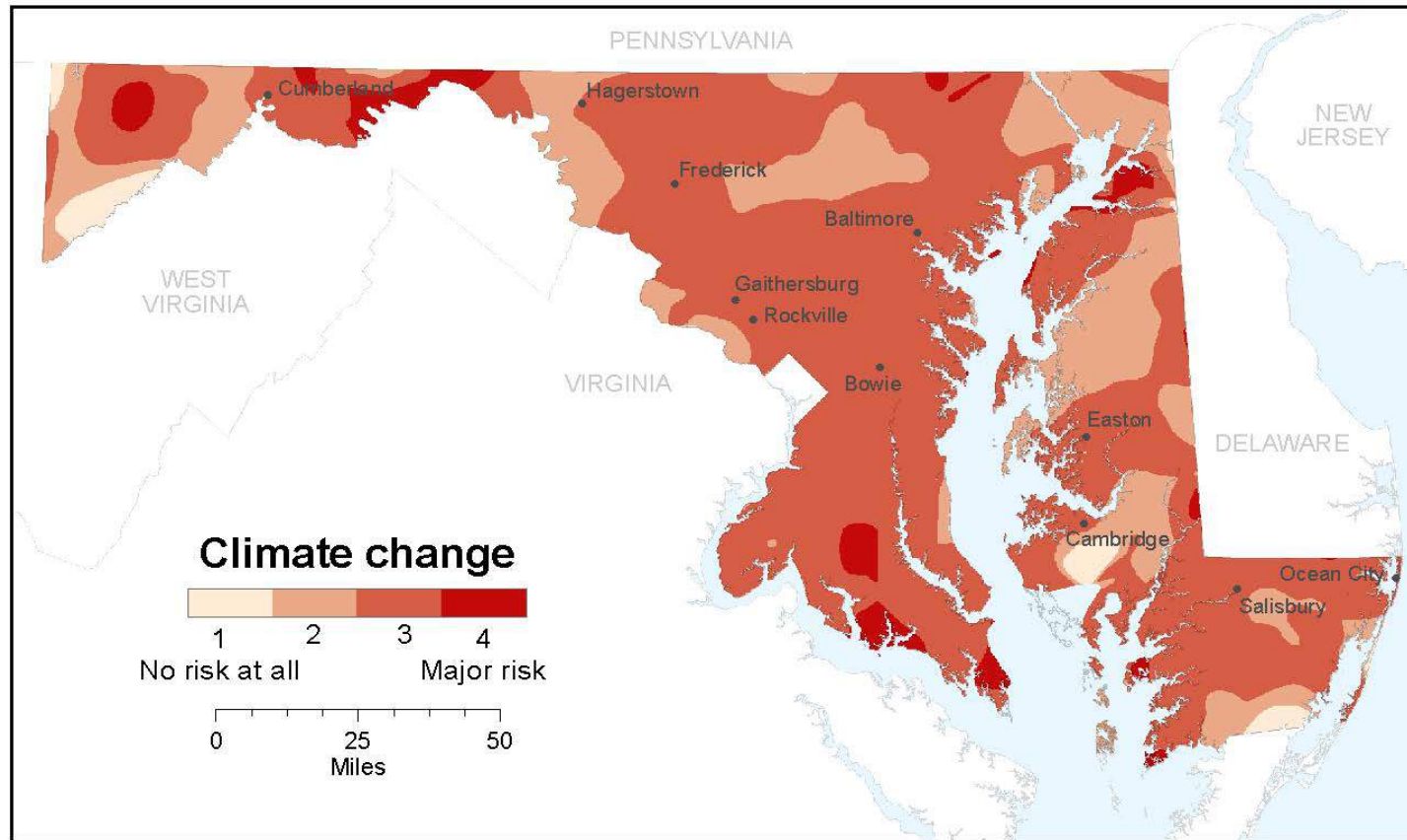


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Main points

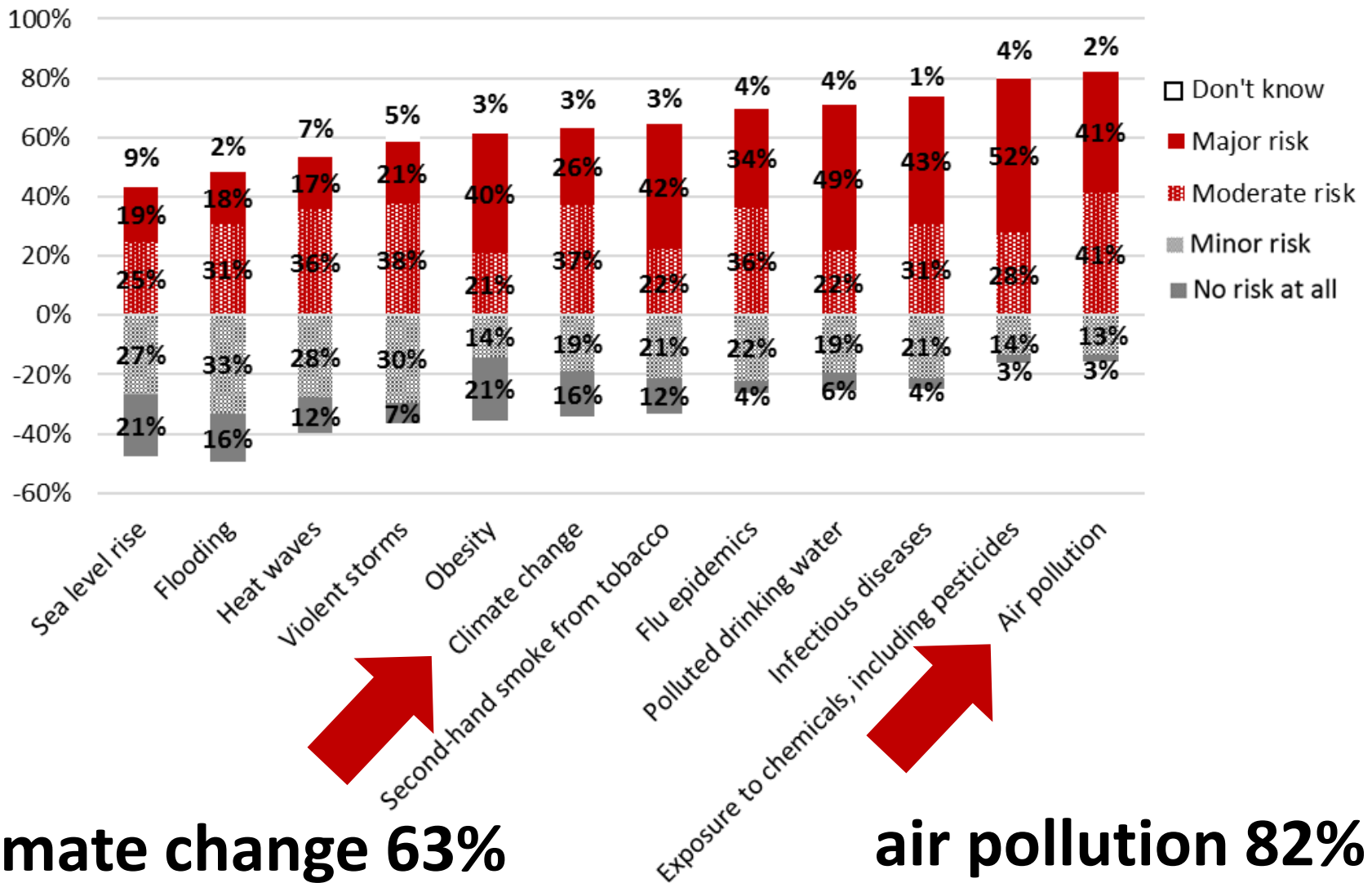
- 1) Marylanders are generally concerned about the effects of climate change on health.
- 2) More are concerned about the effects of air pollution, yet few rate their air quality as poor.
- 3) Many don't know which energy sources are harmful.

63% of Marylanders perceive climate change as a personal health risk

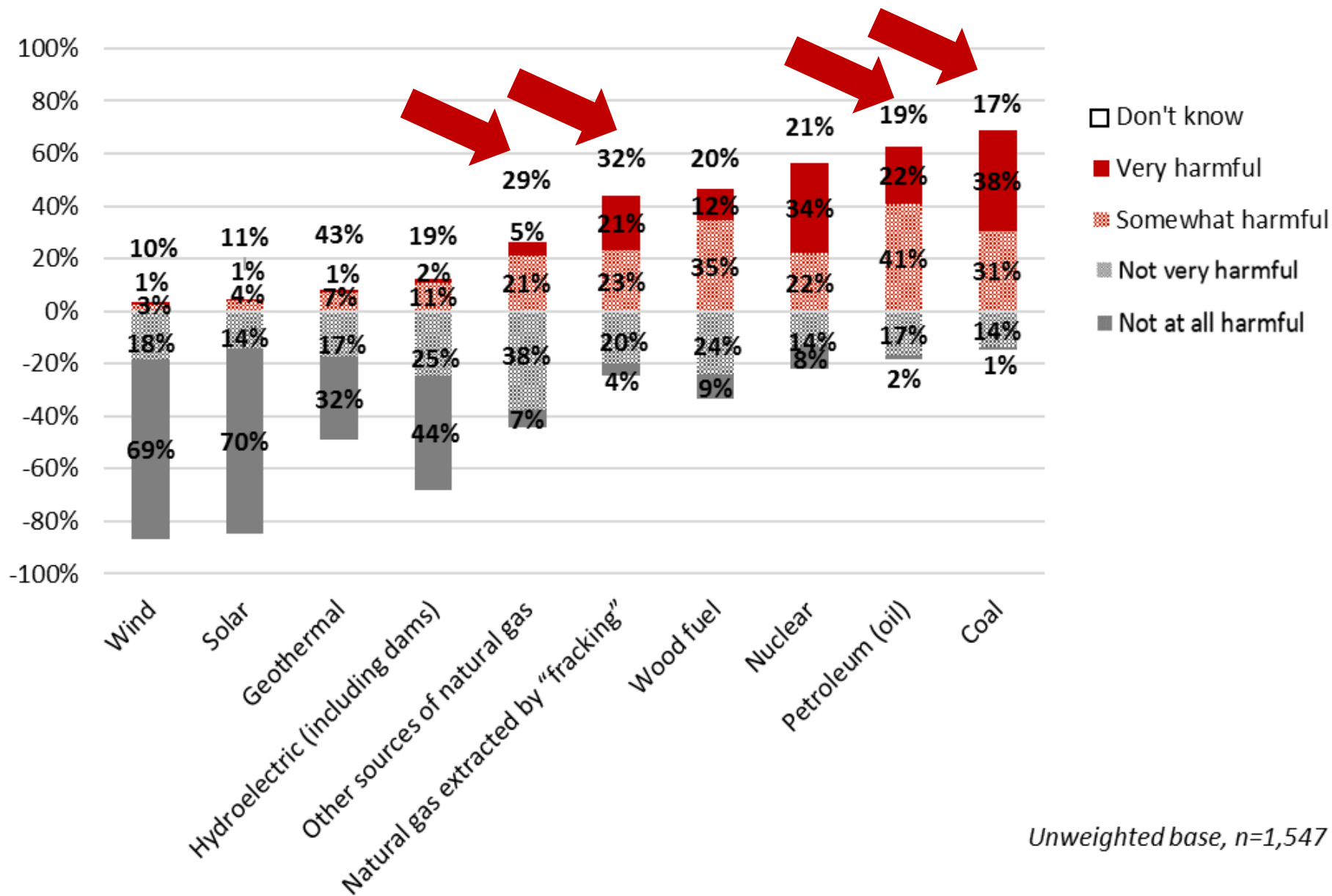


How much of a risk do you feel each of the following poses to your health?

Marylanders are more concerned about air pollution than climate change



Many don't know which energy sources are harmful



Comments

- 1) Strengthen co-identification of climate with respiratory health.
- 2) Marylanders are worried about air pollution, but they don't necessarily identify it in their own lives.
- 3) Making the connections between energy>air pollution>climate>health is difficult, but likely helpful.



How can TNC simplify the message for Marylanders to help people make connections between climate, energy, and health?

Clean Energy,
Strong Economy,
Healthy People

[Take Action](#)

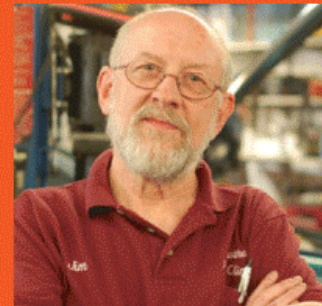
We're working hard to make a difference, and could use your help.

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Email address

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Stories from Marylanders



The background of the slide features a photograph of a solar farm with rows of photovoltaic panels in the foreground and several wind turbines in the distance under a bright, slightly cloudy sky.

What can you do?

- Use resources available at www.renewmd.org
- Follow us on twitter & retweet @renewmaryland
- Like us on Facebook/marylandrenew
- Sign up for biweekly newsletter

Renew  Maryland

PARTNERSHIPS



Thank you to Town Creek Foundation of Easton, Maryland for its support, Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene for its partnership on the 2013 and 2014 surveys, and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health on the 2015 and 2016 surveys.



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