

A Brief Overview of Public Opinion on AB 32 and Bay Restoration

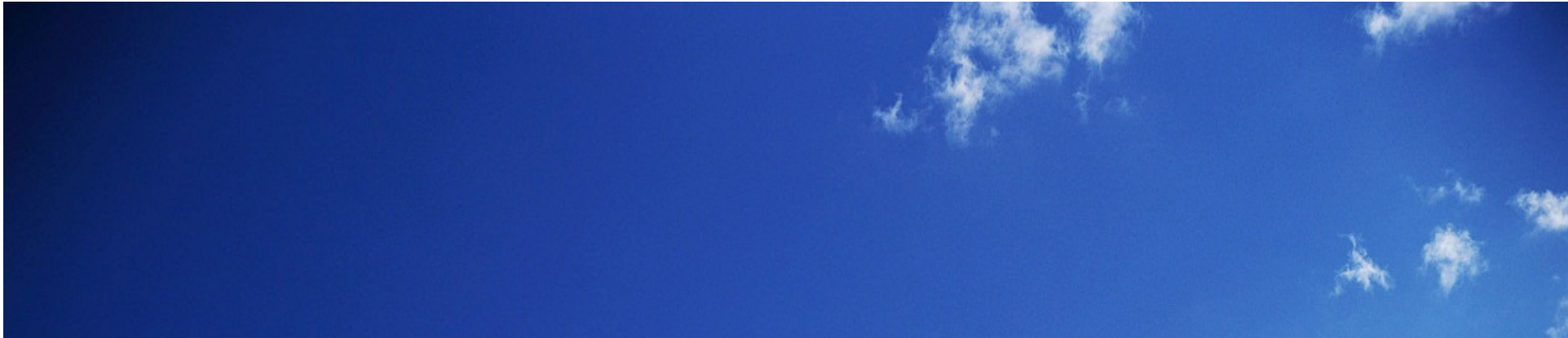
*Bay Area Climate Change
Communication Strategies Workshop
June 2013*

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates - FM3
Public Opinion Research & Strategy

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Presentation Overview

- 1. General approach to using opinion research to craft messaging guidance**
- 2. Six strategic messaging recommendations derived from AB 32 opinion research**
- 3. Select key findings from Bay restoration opinion research**



Approaching Opinion Research on Climate Change



Two Primary Research Tools

1. Quantitative Research

- a. Typically telephone surveys since they are the best way to reach representative samples
- b. Online samples are used more – and can be especially useful with visuals – but reaching representative samples can be tricky



2. Qualitative Research

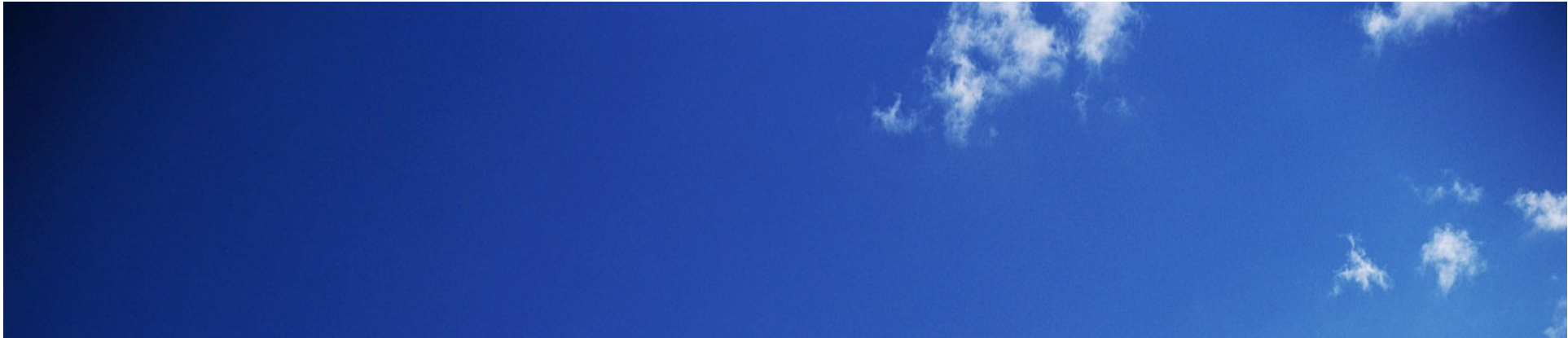
- a. Typically focus groups with 8-10 participants
- b. Useful for helping to design a complicated survey (or a survey on a complicated issue like climate change) or to dig deeper into specific message elements after a survey is completed.



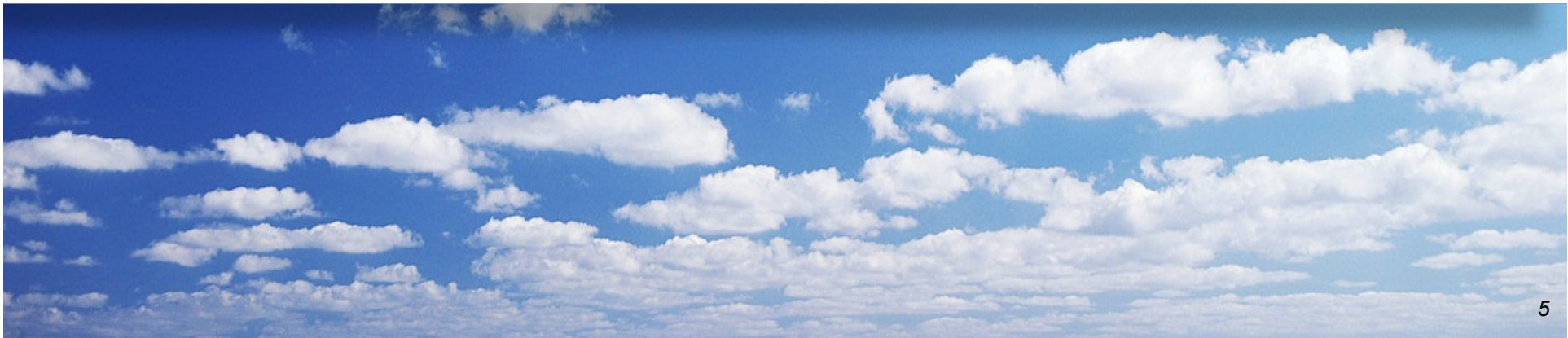
Key Research Elements

- ❖ Determining the issue context (e.g., where does something like climate change rank among other pressing issues or how do voters see the relationship between the environment and the economy).
- ❖ Constructing a baseline “vote” question, which is the key perception, action or attitude we want communications to influence (e.g., support for AB 32).
- ❖ Independently testing various messaging themes or elements to assess their individual impact and to determine reactions to the “vote” question can modified.
- ❖ Taking all of this information together to construct strategic message guidance.

Which leads us to...



Six AB 32 Strategic Communications Recommendations



Where do these come from?

- ❖ FM3 has been conducting quantitative and qualitative research on climate change and AB 32 for the past half dozen years.
- ❖ Last fall we conducted a comprehensive review of this research – as well as other publicly available research – to derive a series of strategic messaging recommendations.
- ❖ The following slides highlight the top six recommendations suggested by this research.

#1

AB 32 is functionally a blank slate.

AB 32???



- ❖ Fully seven years and one very expensive ballot measure campaign (Prop 23) since the laws passage, the vast majority of Californians still have not heard of it.
- ❖ In 2012 focus groups with swing voters, none of the participants recognized “AB 32” or the “Global Warming Solutions Act.”
- ❖ And only a handful had even a hazy idea that California had passed major legislation to address global warming.
- ❖ The upshot of this is that the opportunity to define and brand the law remains wide open, both to supporters and opponents.

#2

Advocate for both a stronger economy and a cleaner environment.

- ❖ California voters of all backgrounds believe strongly that good laws *can* and *should* promote economic growth and environmental health.
- ❖ The primary message priority for supporters of AB 32 is to frame it as an innovative way of meeting both goals for California.



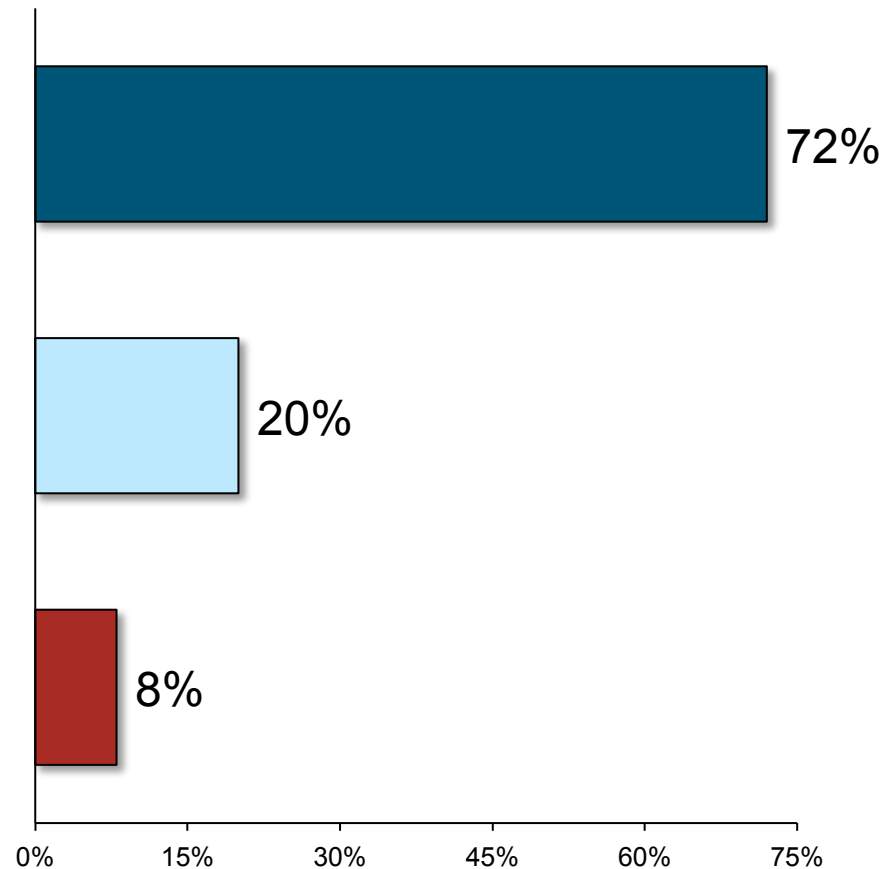
Voters overwhelmingly believe we can have a clean environment and strong economy at the same time.

We can have a clean environment and a strong economy at the same time without having to choose one over the other.

OR

Sometimes a clean environment and a strong economy are in conflict and we must choose one over the other.

Both/Neither/DK



FM3, CA Survey 2010

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4. I am going to read you a pair of statements. Please tell me which statement comes closest to your own view, even if neither of the statements matches your views exactly.

#3

Use the “Big Five” Themes to Promote AB 32

Over many different research projects, three arguments for AB 32 emerge as most effective...

1. Reducing air pollution and improving public health
2. Encouraging the growth of clean energy and energy efficiency jobs
3. Promoting more use of clean, renewable energy like wind and solar power.

...with two others not far behind.

4. Reducing our dependence on oil, especially foreign oil
5. Cutting costs to consumers over the long term.

#4

Do not emphasize any of the following as a central benefit of AB 32.

As popular as AB 32 is, and as many compelling arguments as there are for its implementation, there are also less effective themes that should generally be avoided:

1. Reducing Global Warming
2. Extreme Weather
3. National Security
4. Short-Term Cost Savings
5. California Leadership

Yes, even though it is called the “Global Warming Solutions Act”

Voters are much more skeptical of these arguments and many see them as polarizing.

#5

But, remember that AB 32 also has five major vulnerabilities.

AB 32 also has five major vulnerabilities, which have shown up repeatedly in the research:

1. Increased Consumer Costs
2. Job Loss
3. Hidden Taxes
4. Bureaucracy
5. Going It Alone

The more complex our explanations, the more this vulnerability can be exploited.

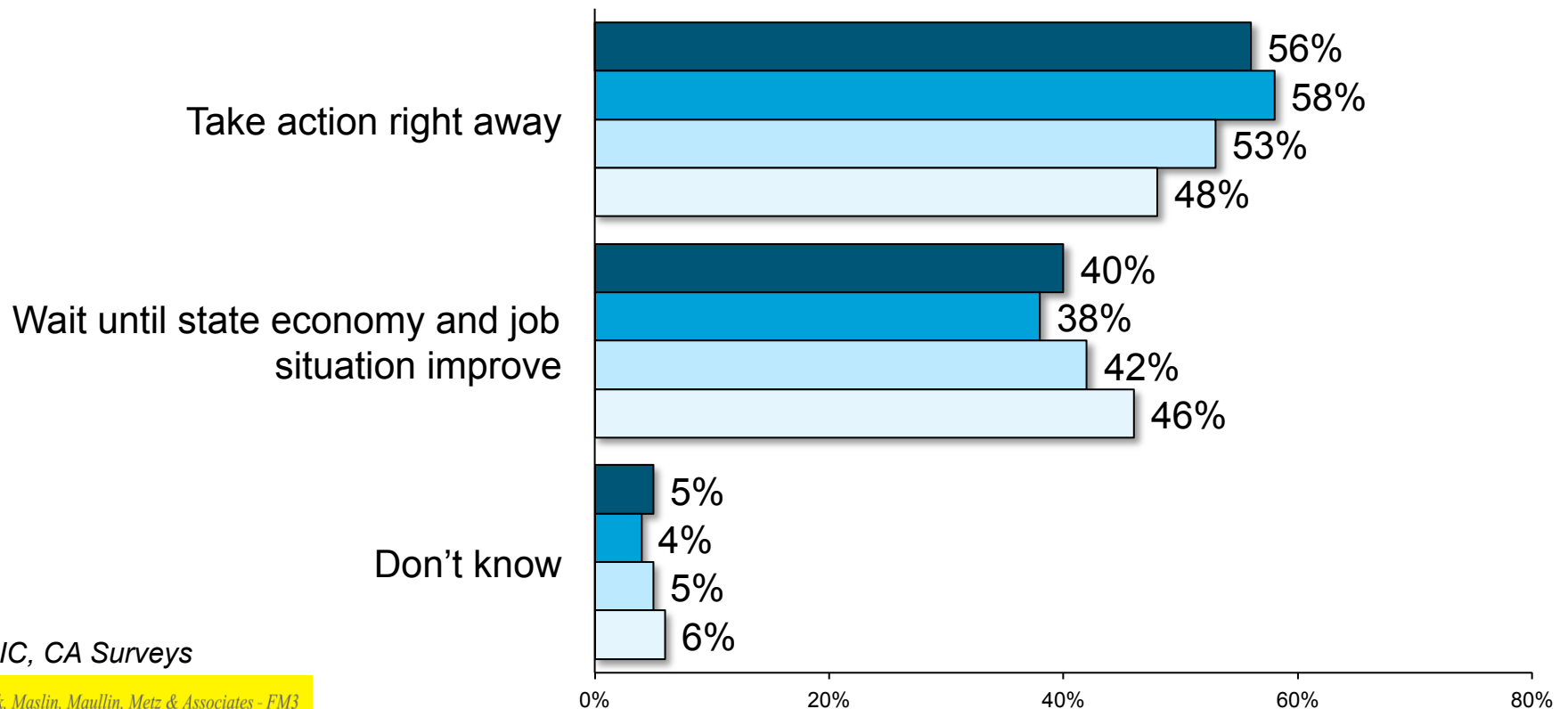
The main danger of these arguments is that voters see the negative outcomes of AB 32 as much more likely and credible than positive outcomes.

For many of these reasons, lots of Californians are sympathetic with arguments for delay.

When it comes to the state government's plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, should it (1) take action right away [or should it] (2) wait until the state economy and job situation improve to take action?

(July Surveys)

■ 2012 ■ 2011 ■ 2010 ■ 2009



PPIC, CA Surveys

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#6

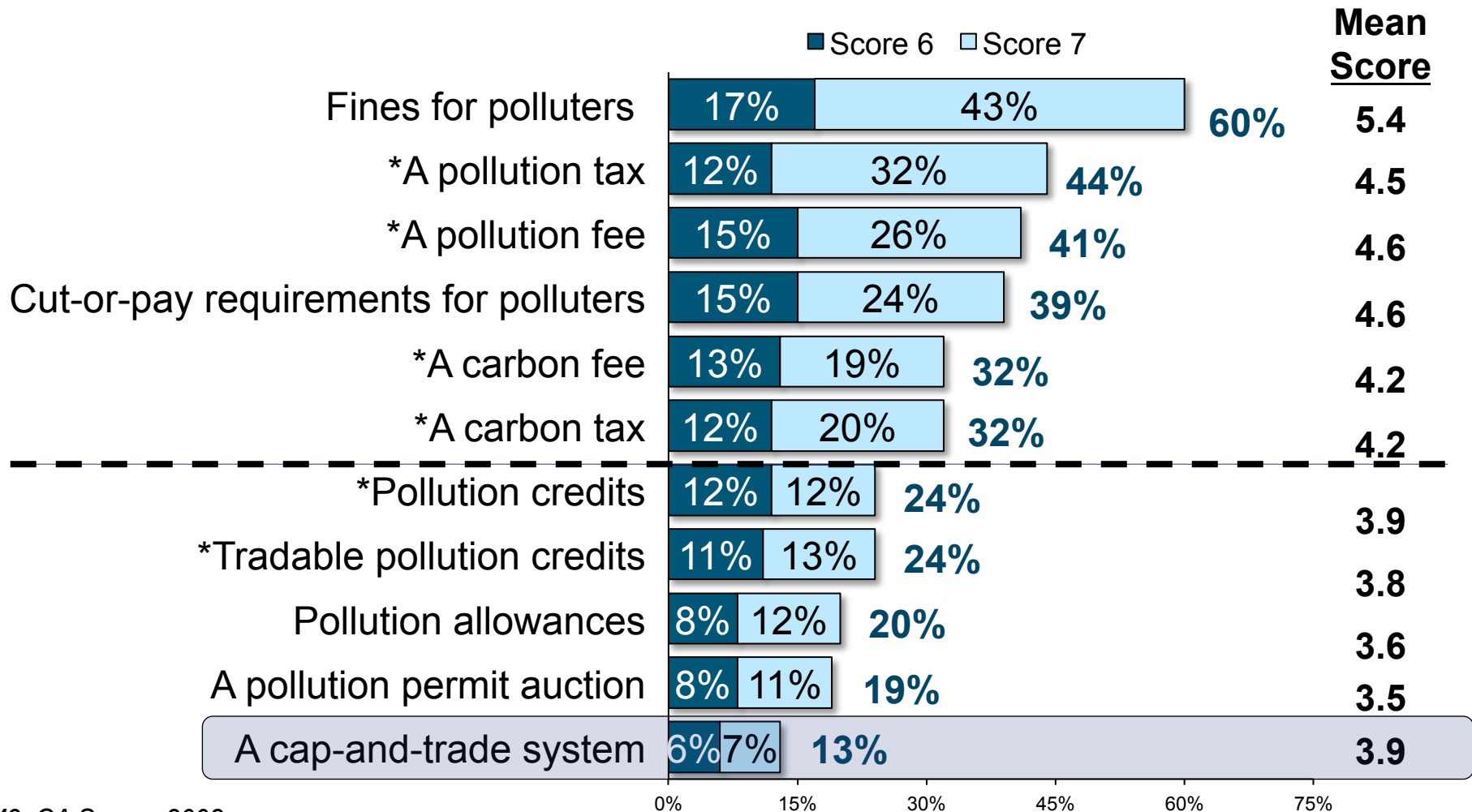
Whatever you do, please stay on the front of the brownie box.

- ❖ The brownie box is a good metaphor for environmental policy: people buy brownies for the delectable brownie they see on the front of the box (the end product) not the recipe hidden on the back (the process that produces it).
- ❖ We need to focus on what AB 32 produces – cleaner air, more jobs, and greater use of clean energy – all things that Californians want more of.
- ❖ We must not get bogged down in explaining the processes that produce them (auctions, allowances, and cap-and-trade), which are at best conducting and at worst alienating.



The very name “cap-and-trade” sparks a negative intuitive reaction from voters.

(Ranked on a 7-Point Scale Where 1 = “Very Negative” and 7 = “Very Positive”)



FM3, CA Survey 2008

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7. I am going to read you some of the terms people might hear when solutions for global warming are discussed. Please tell me whether each term sounds positive or negative to you. I am not asking you to define or explain the term, just tell me whether the term has a positive or negative ring or feeling to it when you hear it. We will use a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means VERY NEGATIVE and 7 means VERY POSITIVE. Four on this scale means neither positive nor negative.

*Split Sample

AB 32 Language to Use and Avoid

Bad / Confusing Words to Avoid

Global warming

Auctions

Cap and Trade

Extreme Weather

Allowances

Regulation

State Government / State Law

Low Carbon Fuel Standard

Markets

Green Energy / Green Jobs

Revenue

Gas Prices

Good Words to Use

Accountability

Clean Air

Oil Companies

Clean Energy

Energy Efficiency

Leadership

Action

Polluters

Safeguards

Choices

Innovation

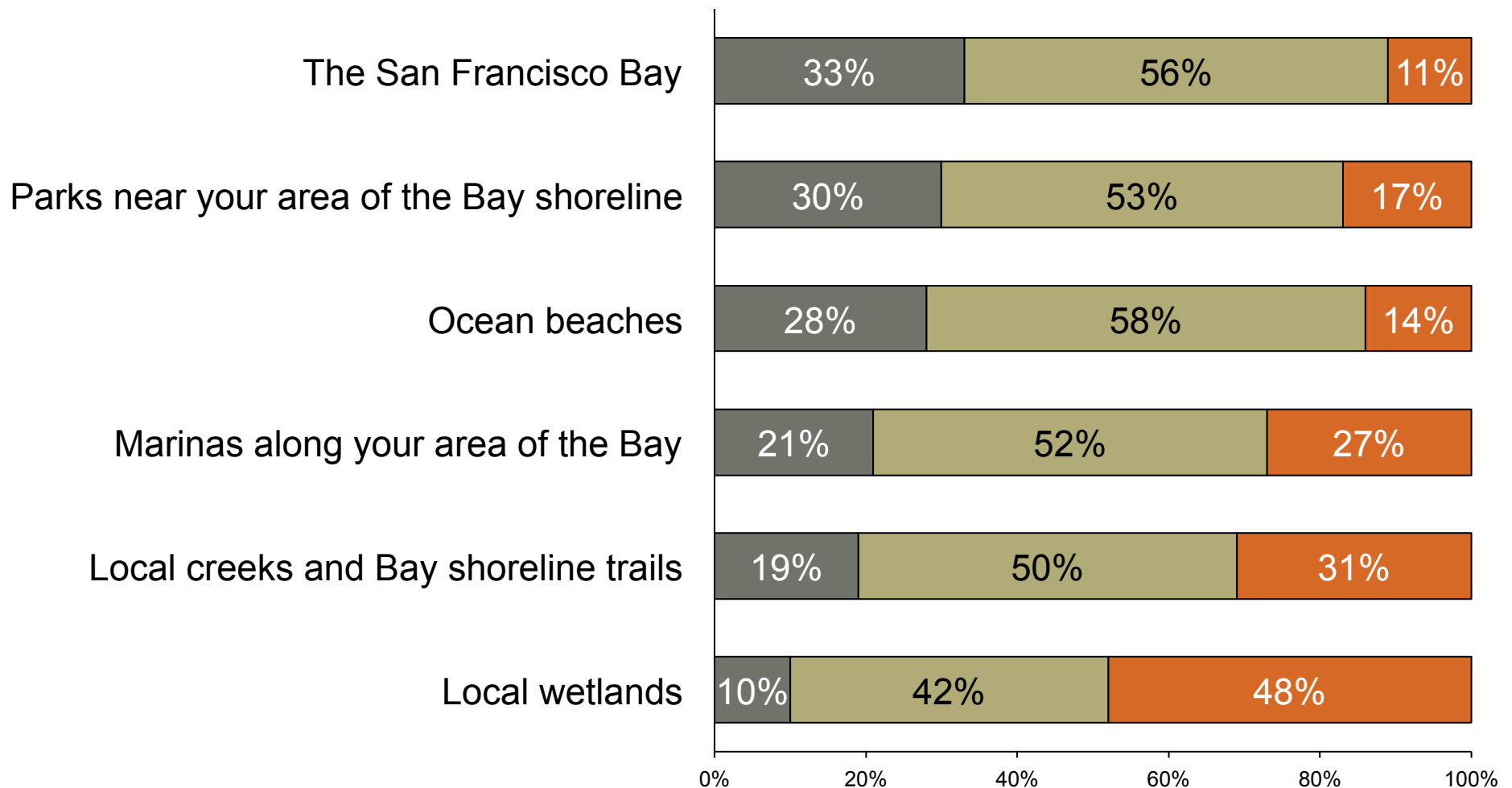
Technology



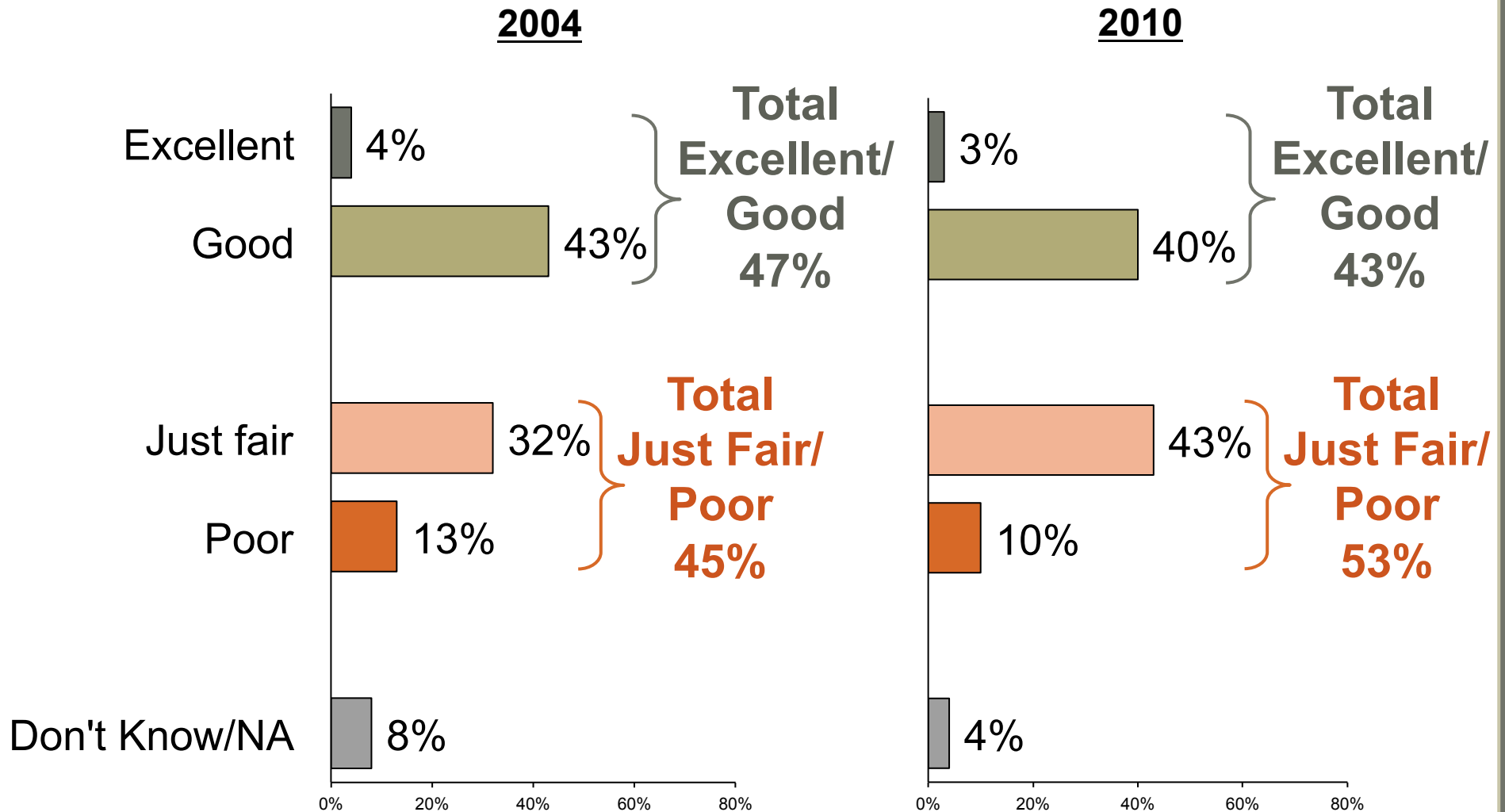
Select Bay Restoration Research Findings

Most voters have at least some occasional contact with the Bay.

■ Freq. Visit ■ Occas. Visit ■ Never Visit/DK/NA

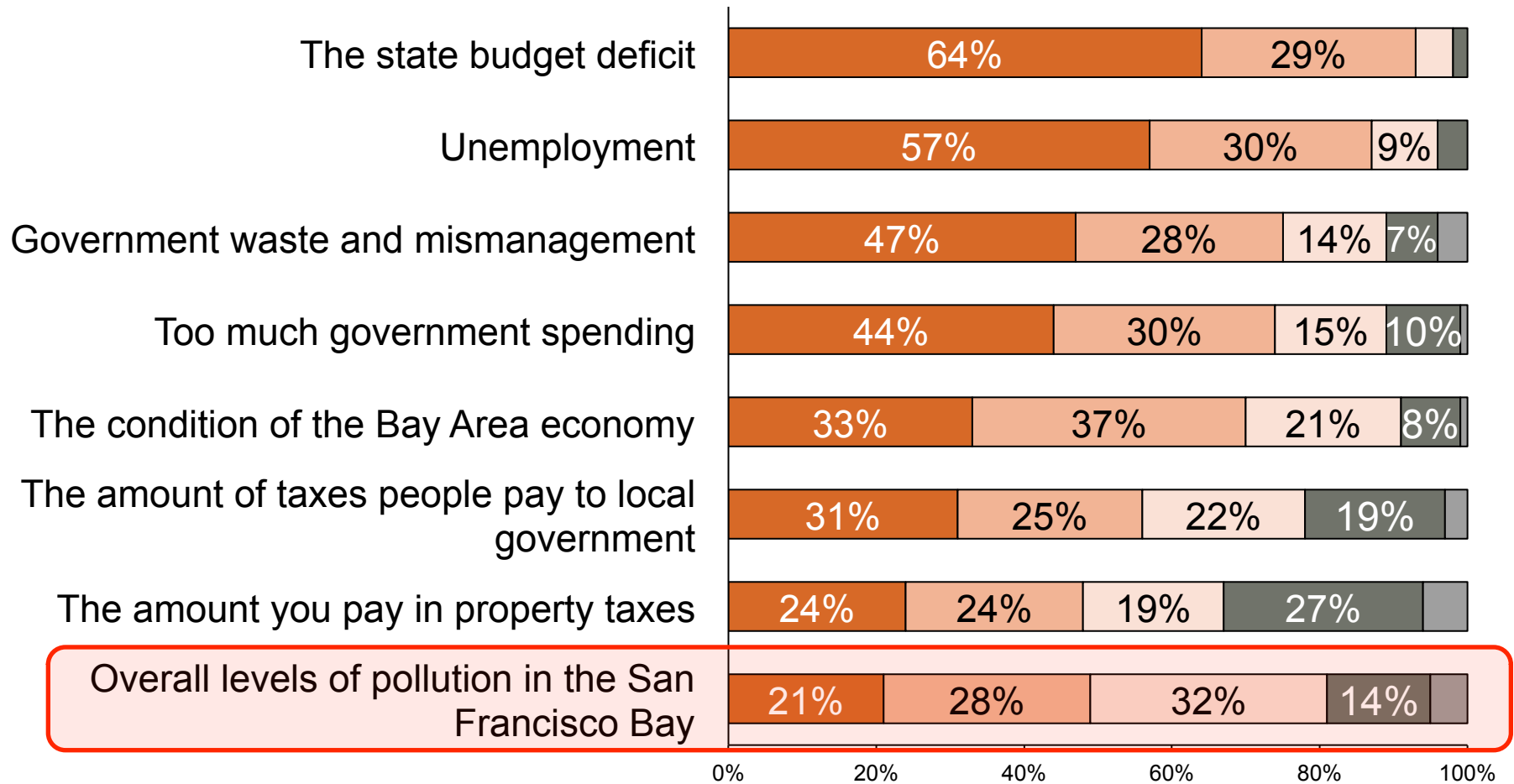


Assessments of the Bay's condition have worsened somewhat since 2004.



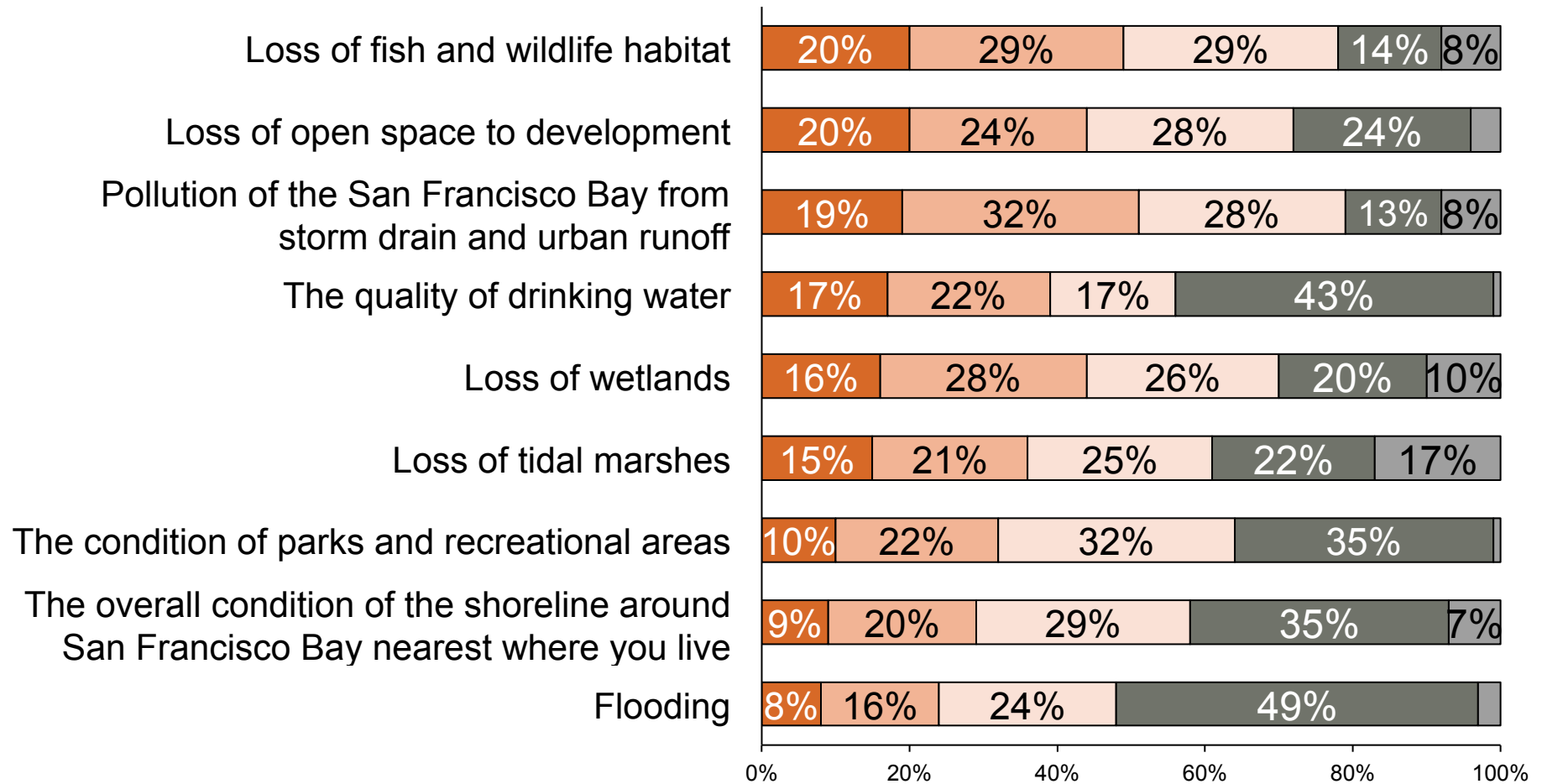
The state budget deficit, unemployment and government waste are top voter concerns...

Ext.Ser. Very Ser. Smwt. Ser. Not Too/Not At All Ser. DK/NA



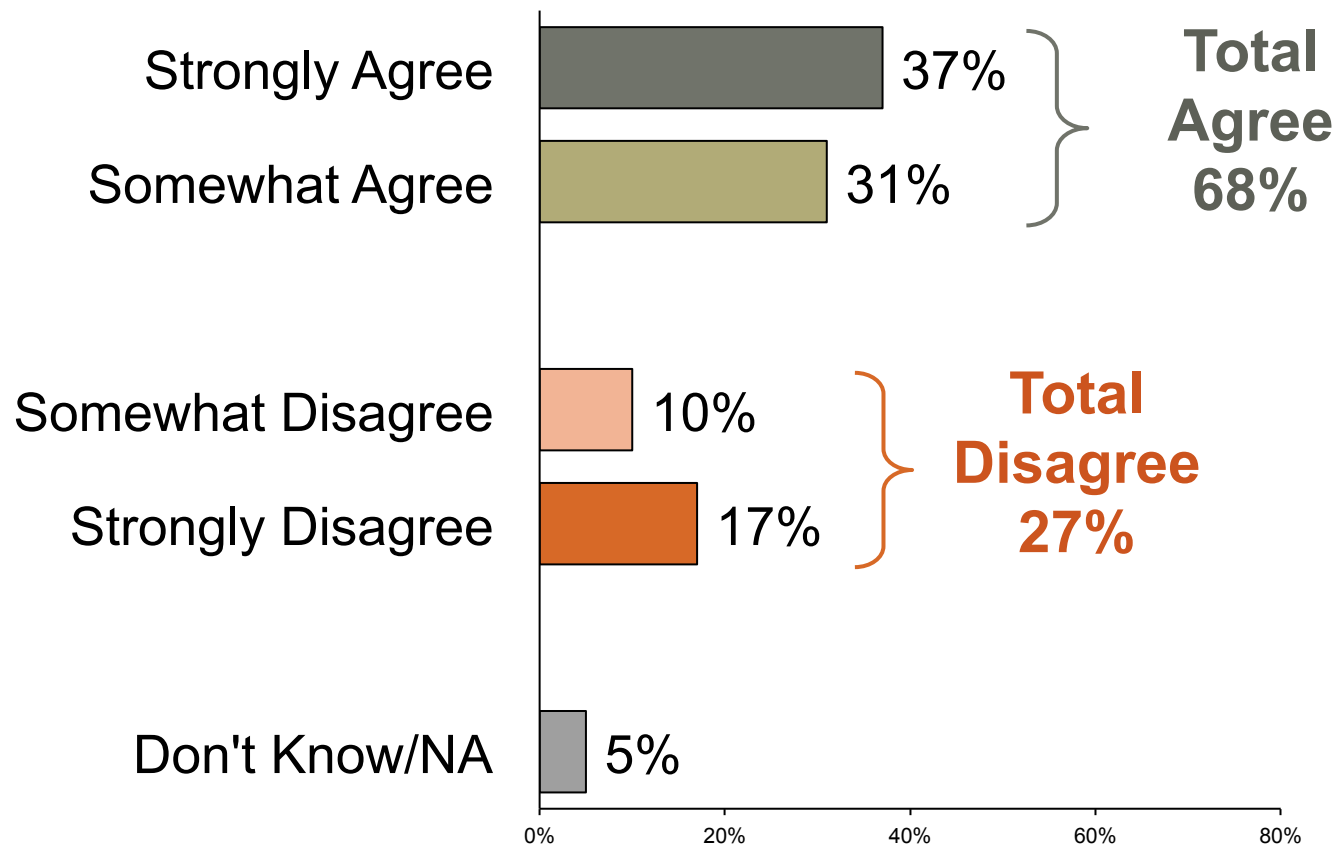
...while environmental issues related to the Bay are much lower priorities.

Ext.Ser. Very Ser. Smwt. Ser. Not Too/Not At All Ser. DK/NA



However, many would still be willing to pay more in taxes for restoration, if they knew more about its benefits.

I would be willing to pay more in taxes for wetlands restoration if I knew more about the benefits of restoring the wetlands around San Francisco Bay



Voters want to see money spent on...

- Reducing levels of pollution in the Bay
- Improving water quality in the Bay
- Protecting endangered fish and wildlife
- Protecting migrating birds like shorebirds and ducks
- Protecting habitat for endangered fish and wildlife

Primarily things related to water quality, fish and wildlife.

...and see these as lower priorities...

- Restoring tidal marshes
- Restoring the Bay for recreational fishing
- Opening new areas around the Bay shoreline for swimming, boating, hiking, biking, wildlife viewing and other recreational activities
- Opening new areas as parks and open space for public use around the Bay shoreline

Primarily things related to recreational opportunities.

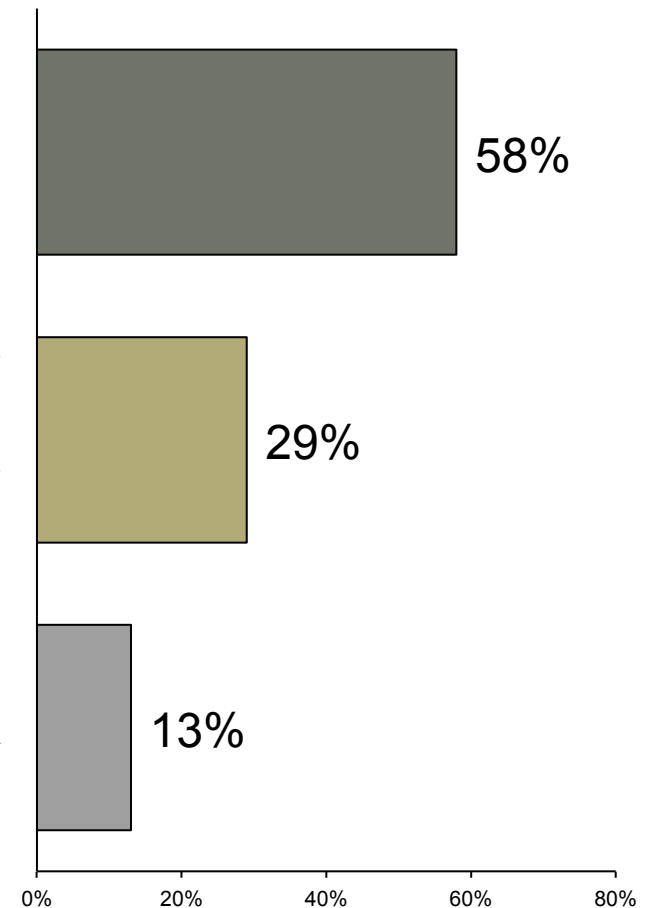
Voters place a higher priority on funding the most effective projects to improve the Bay than on funding projects in their specific county.

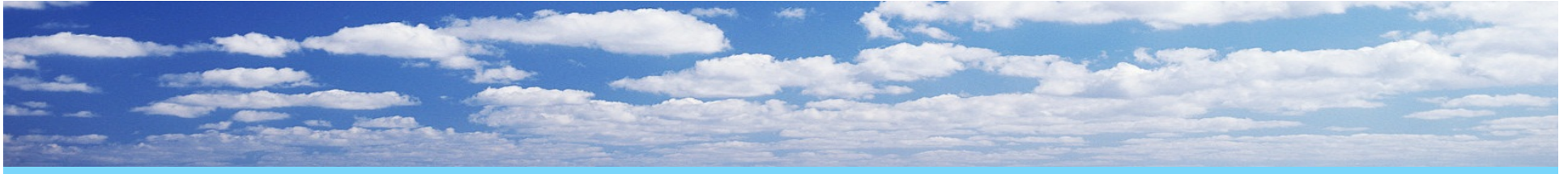
It does not matter to me if revenues generated by this measure are spent in my county, as long as funding goes to the most effective projects to improve the Bay.

OR

I only want revenues raised in my county to be spent on Bay restoration projects specifically in my county; I do not think they should be spent in a different part of the Bay Area.

Both/Neither/DK/NA





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