



Minnesota
Environmental
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Minnesota Voters' Environmental Priorities in 2017

*Results of a Statewide Voter Survey
Conducted February 1-5, 2017*

220-4733

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates – FM3

PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH & STRATEGY



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**



Survey Methodology

- 502 live telephone interviews with registered Minnesota voters, with an oversample of rural Minnesotans to yield 306 rural interviews and 196 urban interviews
 - *Interviews conducted from February 1-5, 2017 on both landlines and cell phones*
 - *Data statistically weighted to reflect true geographic distribution of voters throughout the state*
- Margin of sampling error of +/-5.3% for statewide sample; +/-6.9% for urban voters and +/-5.7% for rural voters
- Some percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding



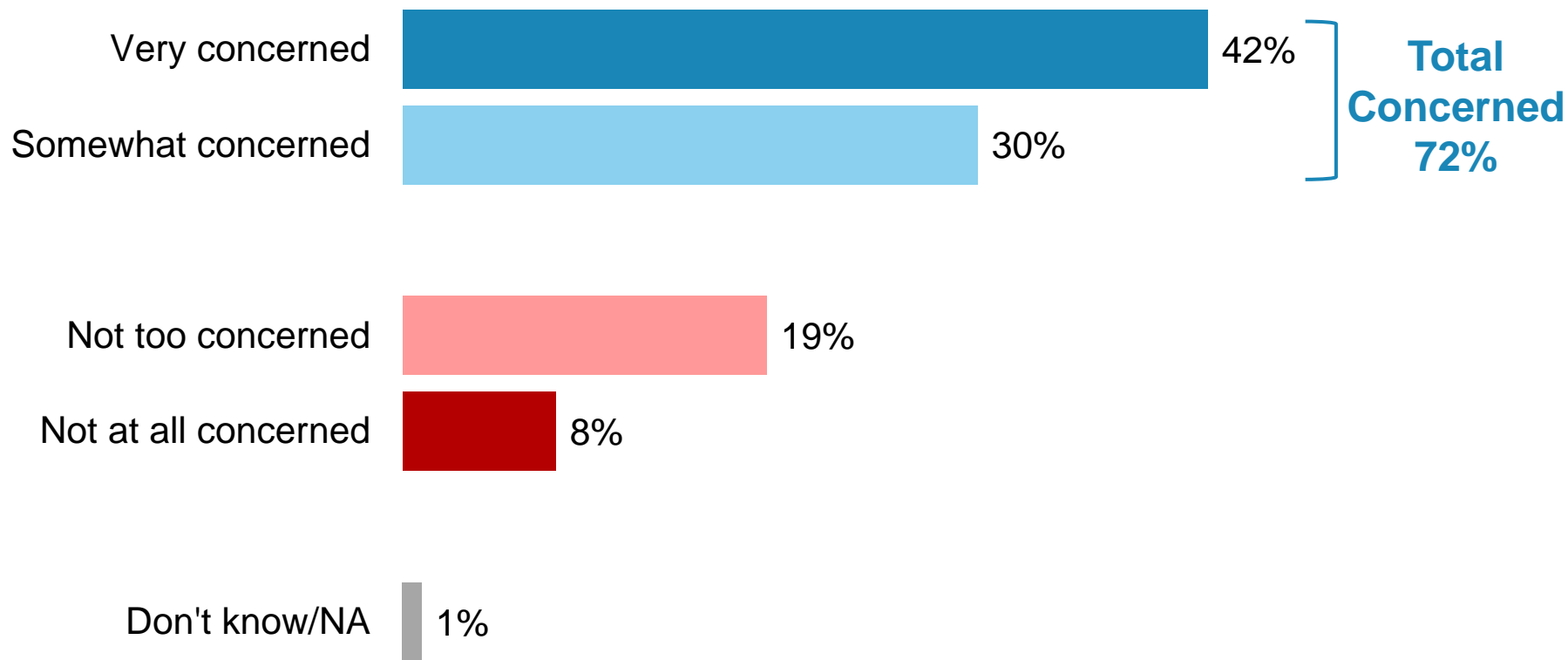


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Sulfide Mining

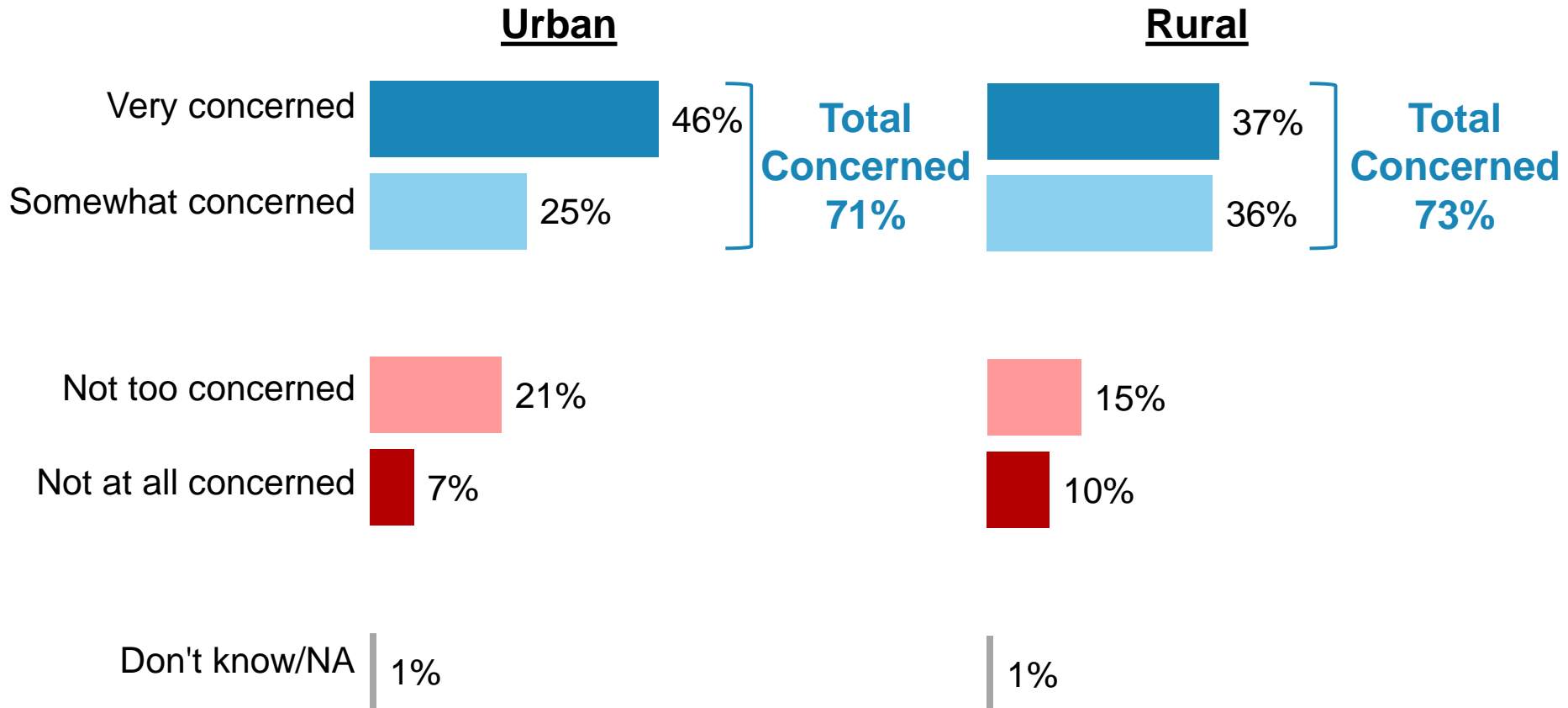
More than two in five are “very concerned” about mine runoff.

Runoff from mines threatening to pollute the Boundary Waters and Lake Superior



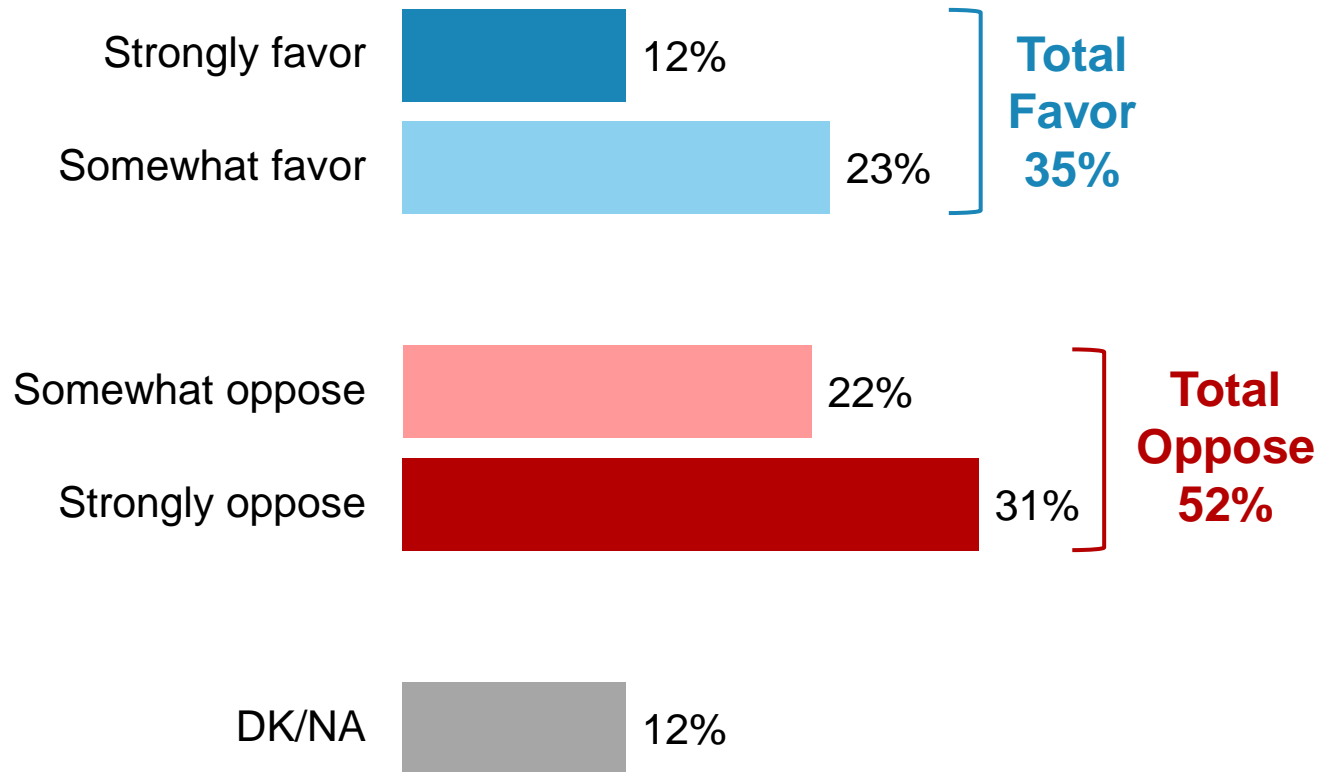
Urban and rural voters both express high levels of concern about this issue.

Runoff from mines threatening to pollute the Boundary Waters and Lake Superior



A majority opposes sulfide mining.

As you may know, new mines are being proposed near the Boundary Waters and Lake Superior. These are very different from the traditional Minnesota iron ore mines. These new sulfide mining operations would be used to extract copper, nickel, and other heavy metals from rock formations containing sulfur.



Urban voters are more strongly opposed to sulfide mining than rural ones.

Favor/Oppose	All Voters	Type of Area	
		Rural	Urban
Strongly favor	12%	13%	12%
Somewhat favor	23%	28%	20%
Total Favor	35%	41%	32%
Somewhat oppose	22%	21%	22%
Strongly oppose	31%	25%	34%
Total Oppose	52%	46%	57%
Don't know/NA	12%	13%	12%

Question language has been modified slightly from year-to-year.

(2017 Language)

*As you may know, new mines are being proposed near the Boundary Waters and Lake Superior. These are **very** different from the traditional Minnesota iron ore mines. These new sulfide mining operations would be used to extract copper, nickel, and other **heavy** metals from **rock formations containing sulfur**.*

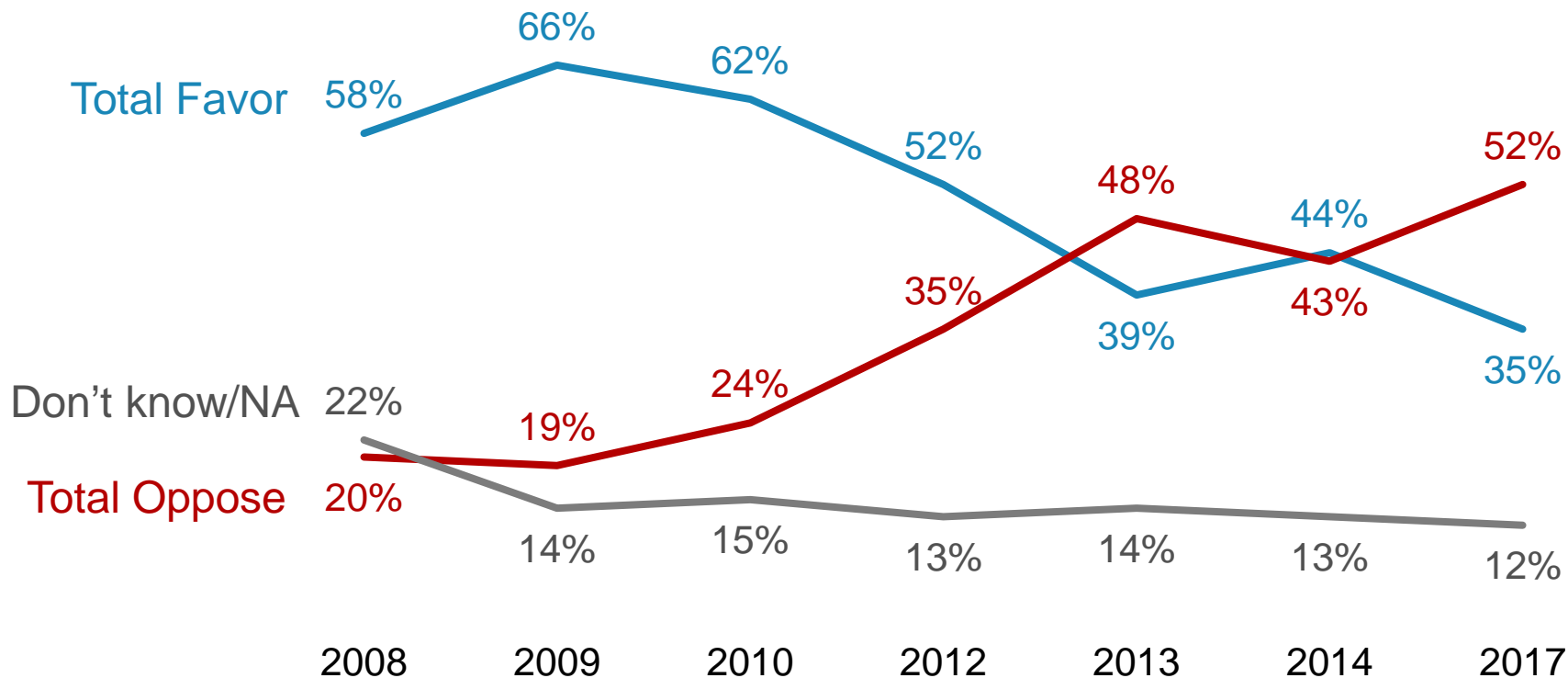
(2012 Language)

As you may know, new mines are being proposed near the Boundary Waters and Lake Superior. These are different than the traditional Minnesota iron ore mines. These new sulfide mining operations would be used to extract copper, nickel, and other precious metals from underground sulfur deposits.

(Earlier Language)

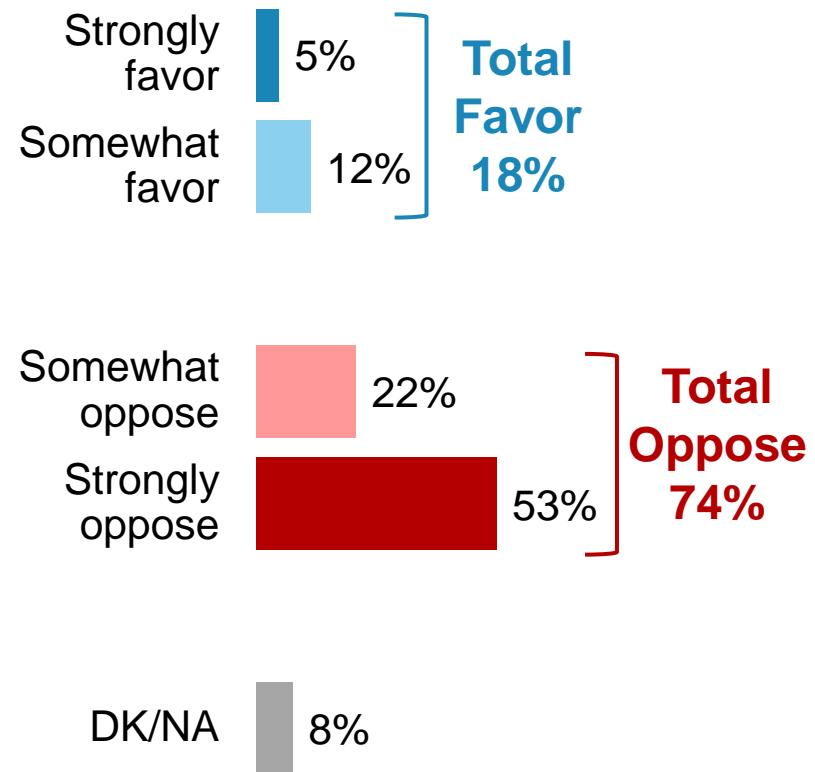
Next, about 20 new mines are being proposed in Northern Minnesota. These are different than the traditional Minnesota iron ore mines. These new sulfide mining operations would be used to extract copper, nickel, and other precious metals from underground sulfur deposits.

Opposition to sulfide mining is at its highest point, though question wording changes limit direct comparison.



A specific description of PolyMet generates even broader and stronger opposition.

Minnesota's first proposed sulfide mine, PolyMet, would operate for 20 years, but threatens to pollute the headwaters of Lake Superior with toxic sulfide mining waste for hundreds of years after it is closed, requiring near perpetual water treatment and maintenance of the mine and processing site.



Urban voters are more strongly opposed to this specific sulfide mining proposal.

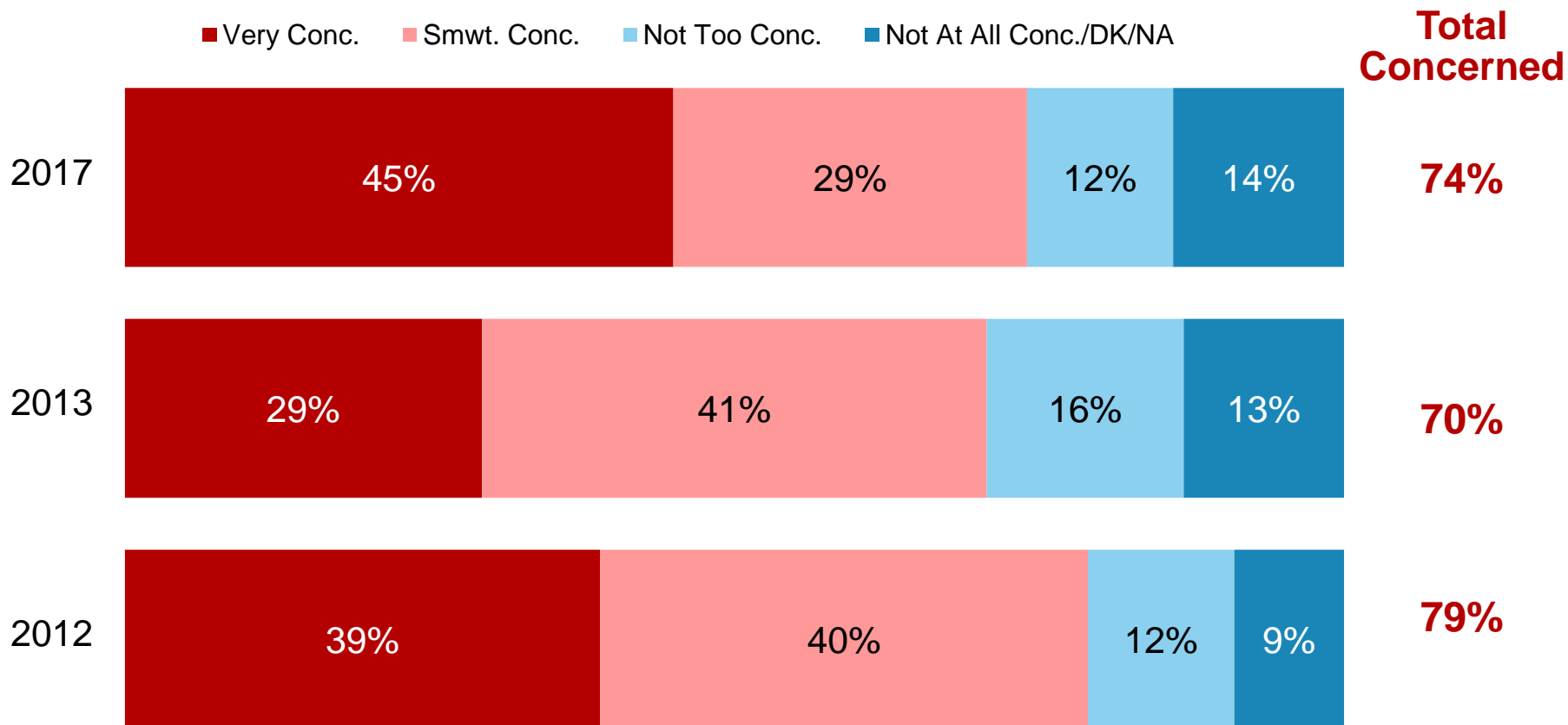
Favor/Oppose	All Voters	Type of Area	
		Rural	Urban
Strongly favor	5%	6%	5%
Somewhat favor	12%	11%	13%
Total Favor	18%	17%	18%
Somewhat oppose	22%	27%	18%
Strongly oppose	53%	50%	55%
Total Oppose	74%	76%	73%
Don't know/NA	8%	7%	9%

The gender gap on this issue is significant, with women much more likely to oppose PolyMet.

Favor/Oppose	All Voters	Household Income		Men by Age		Women by Age	
		<\$75,000	\$75,000+	18-49	50+	18-49	50+
Strongly favor	5%	7%	3%	5%	9%	3%	2%
Somewhat favor	12%	12%	12%	26%	15%	6%	7%
Total Favor	18%	19%	15%	31%	25%	9%	10%
Somewhat oppose	22%	20%	25%	26%	20%	26%	18%
Strongly oppose	53%	54%	54%	37%	46%	58%	64%
Total Oppose	74%	74%	80%	63%	66%	84%	82%
Don't know/NA	8%	6%	6%	6%	9%	7%	8%

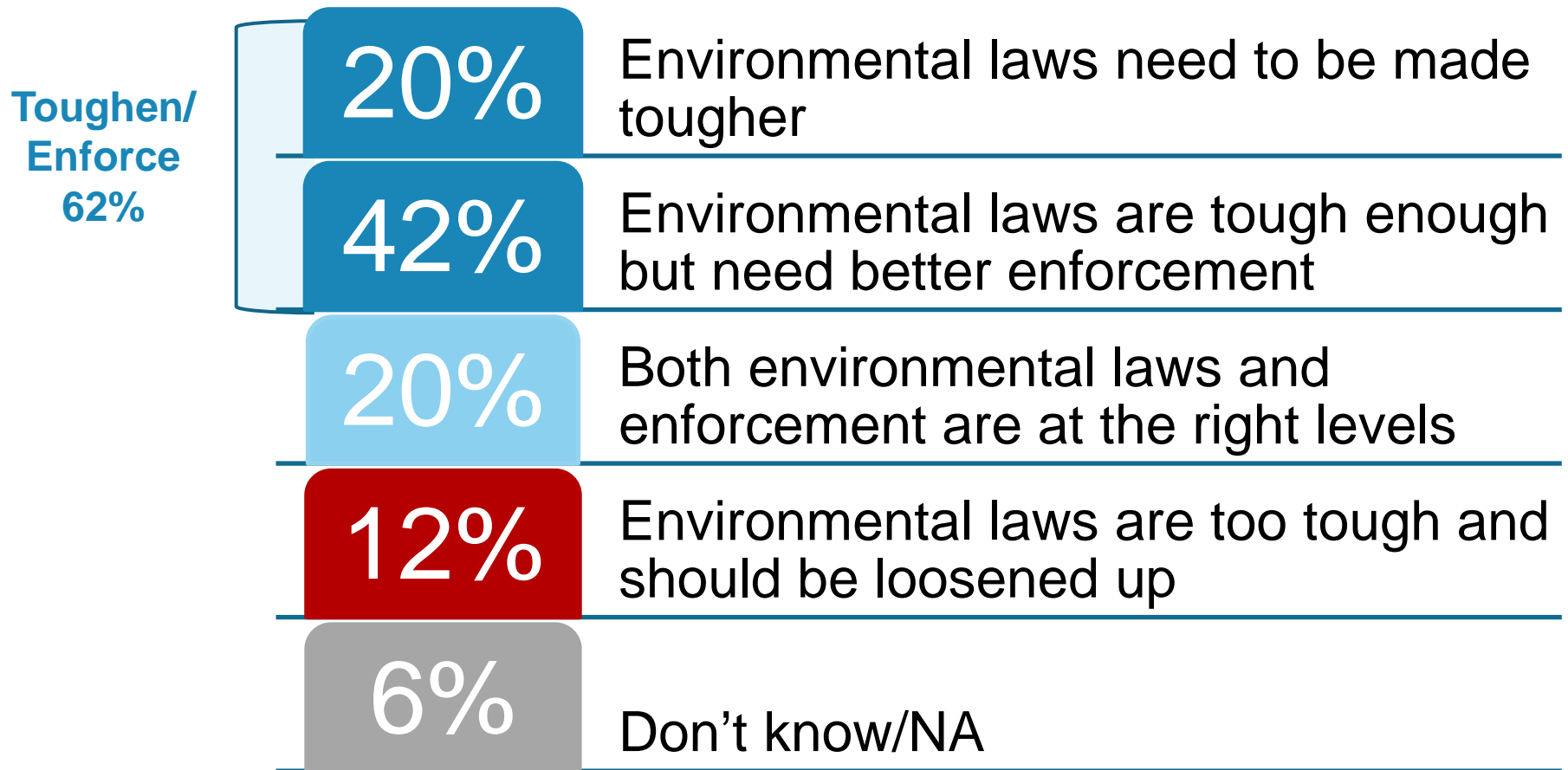
Nearly half of Minnesota voters say they are “very concerned” about rollbacks of environmental laws.

Rollbacks of laws that protect our land, air and water



More than three in five voters want tougher laws or better enforcement of existing laws.

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view of government regulations of the environment in Minnesota?

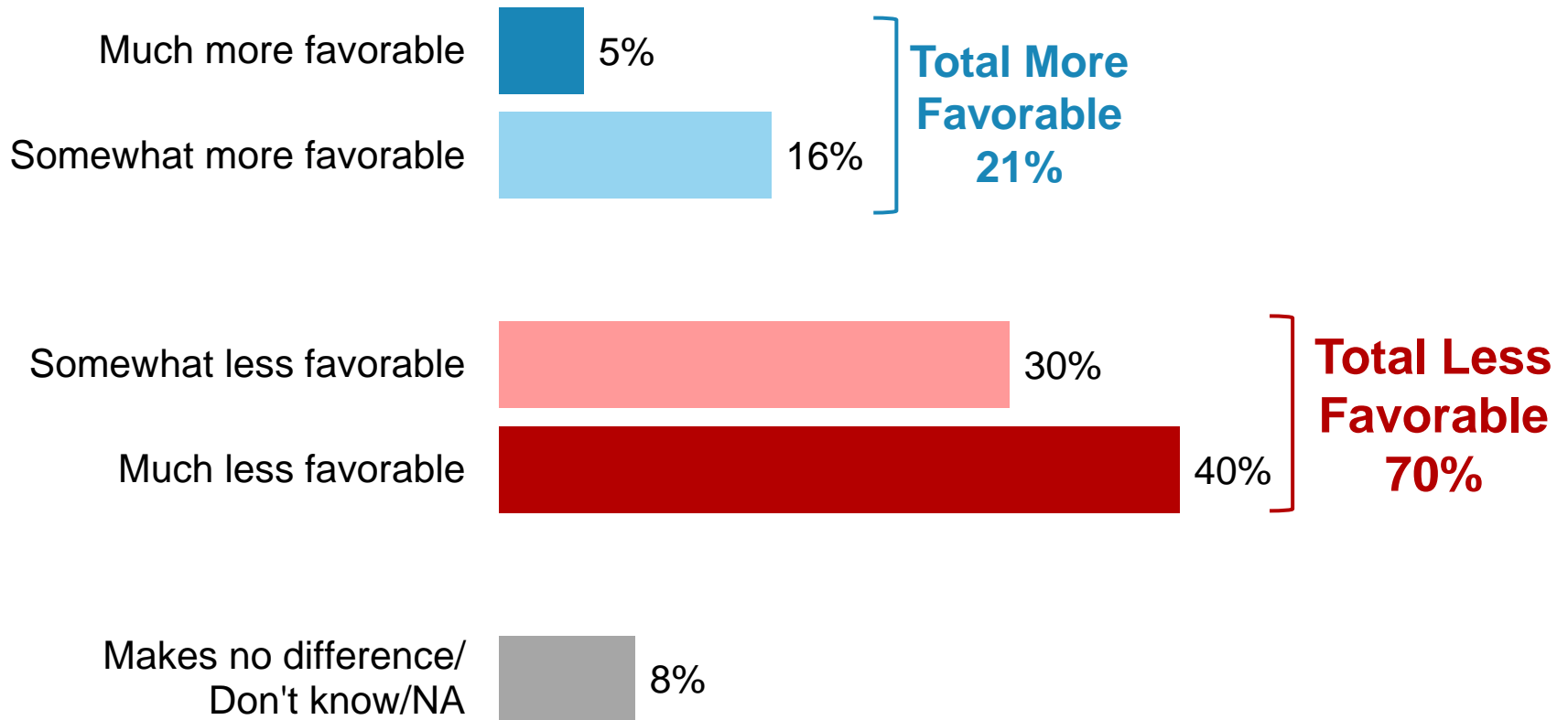


Nearly one-third of Democrats believe environmental laws should be made tougher.

Statement	All Voters	Party ID			Type of Area	
		Dems.	Inds.	Reps.	Rural	Urban
Environmental laws need to be made tougher	20%	32%	12%	10%	17%	22%
Environmental laws are tough enough but they need better enforcement	42%	47%	42%	37%	43%	42%
Both environmental laws and enforcement are at the right levels	20%	16%	21%	24%	22%	18%
Environmental laws are too tough and should be loosened up	12%	1%	14%	25%	14%	11%
Don't know/NA	6%	3%	11%	5%	5%	7%

By a margin of more than three to one, voters say less favorable view of their legislator.

Suppose that your state legislator voted to weaken environmental protection laws. Would you have a more favorable or less favorable view of them?



This impression varies along party lines, though with little difference between urban and rural.

Favorability	All Voters	Party ID			Type of Area	
		Dems.	Inds.	Reps.	Rural	Urban
Much more favorable	5%	1%	5%	10%	5%	5%
Somewhat more favorable	16%	6%	13%	33%	15%	17%
Total More Favorable	21%	7%	18%	43%	20%	22%
Somewhat less favorable	30%	30%	31%	30%	40%	24%
Much less favorable	40%	62%	37%	12%	31%	46%
Total Less Favorable	70%	92%	68%	42%	71%	69%
Makes no difference/ Don't know/NA	8%	1%	14%	14%	9%	8%

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