



Minnesota  
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Partnership

# 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



# Bipartisan Research Team



**Dave Metz – FM3**

**Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates** (FM3) – a national Democratic opinion research firm with offices in Oakland, Los Angeles and Madison, Wisconsin – has specialized in public policy oriented opinion research since 1981. The firm has assisted hundreds of political campaigns at every level of the ballot – from President to City Council – with opinion research and strategic guidance. FM3 also provides research and strategic consulting to public agencies, businesses and public interest organizations nationwide.

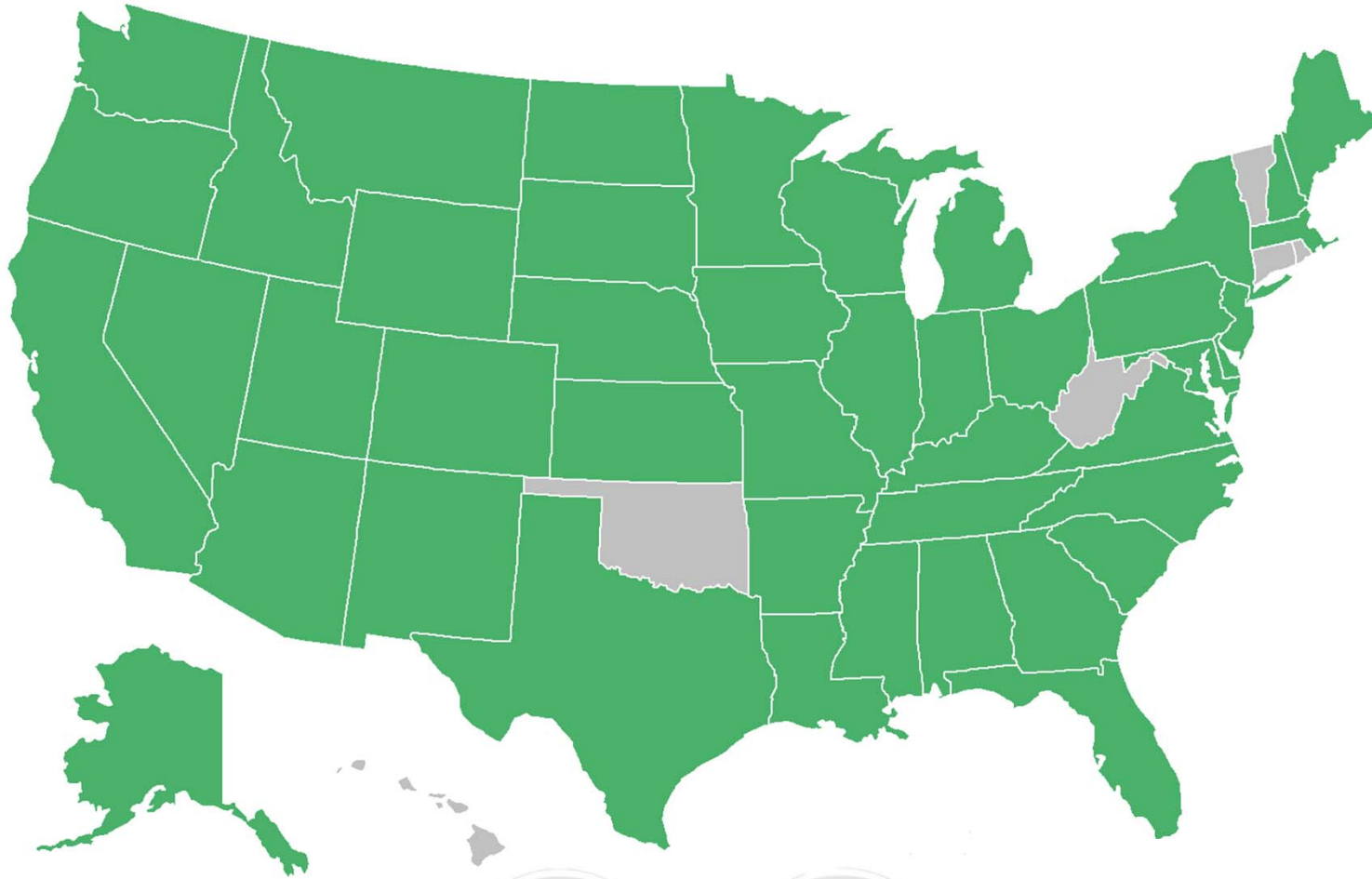


**Lori Weigel - POS**

**Public Opinion Strategies** (POS) is the largest Republican polling firm in the country. Since the firm's founding in 1991, they have completed more than 10,000 research projects, interviewing more than five million Americans across the United States. Media outlets such as *The Wall Street Journal*, NBC News, CNBC, and National Public Radio rely on Public Opinion Strategies to conduct their polling. The firm conducts polling on behalf of hundreds of political campaigns, as well as trade associations, not-for-profit organizations, government entities and industry coalitions throughout the nation.

As a bipartisan team, FM3 and Public Opinion Strategies have researched a wide range of issues for nearly a decade, in particular on conservation-related initiatives and policies. Together, the two firms have jointly conducted research on behalf of political campaigns, businesses, not-for-profit organizations and public agencies in 44 states and nationally.

**FM3 and POS have partnered to complete  
environmental research in 44 states.**



*Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates – FM3*

*PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH & STRATEGY*

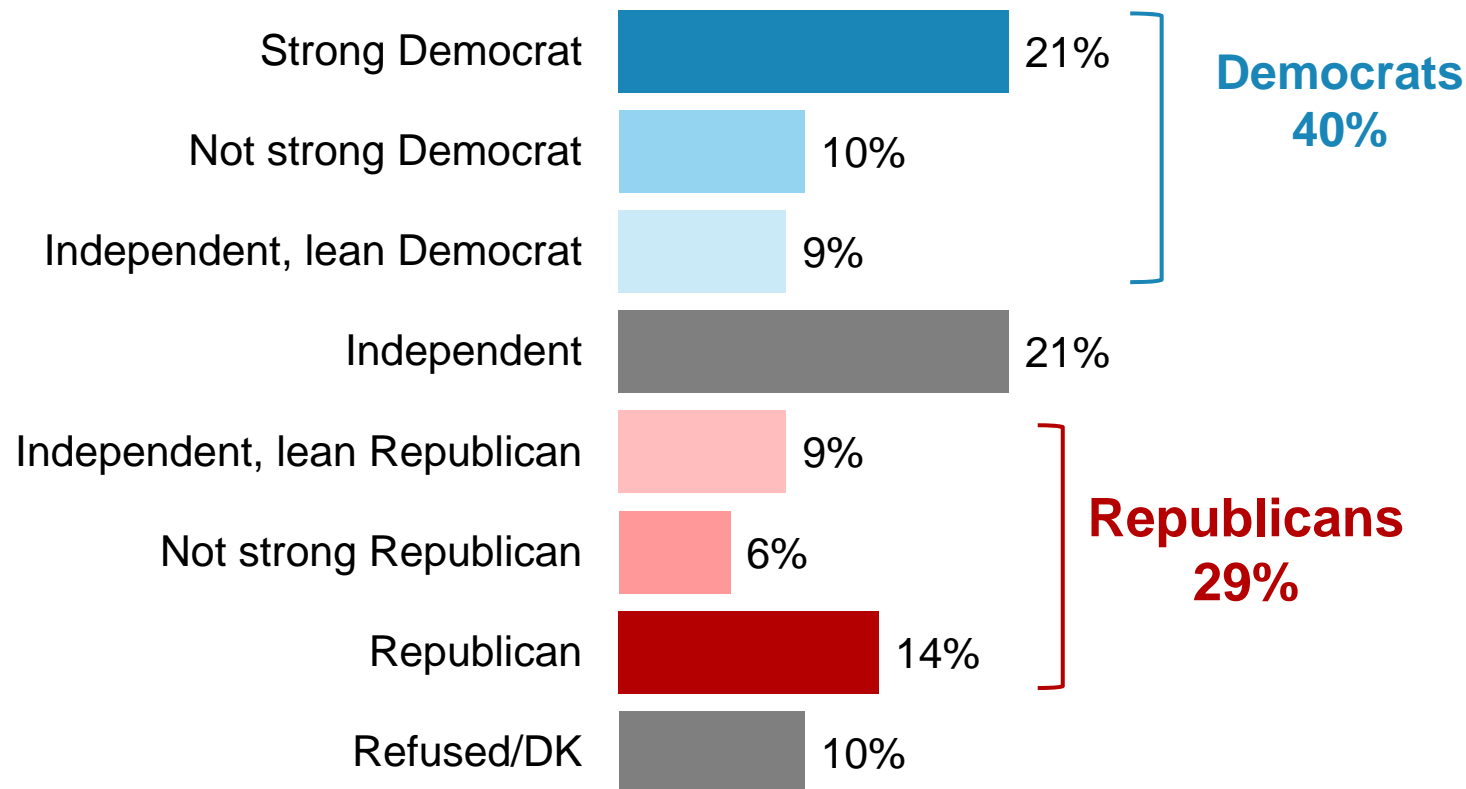


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# Political Context

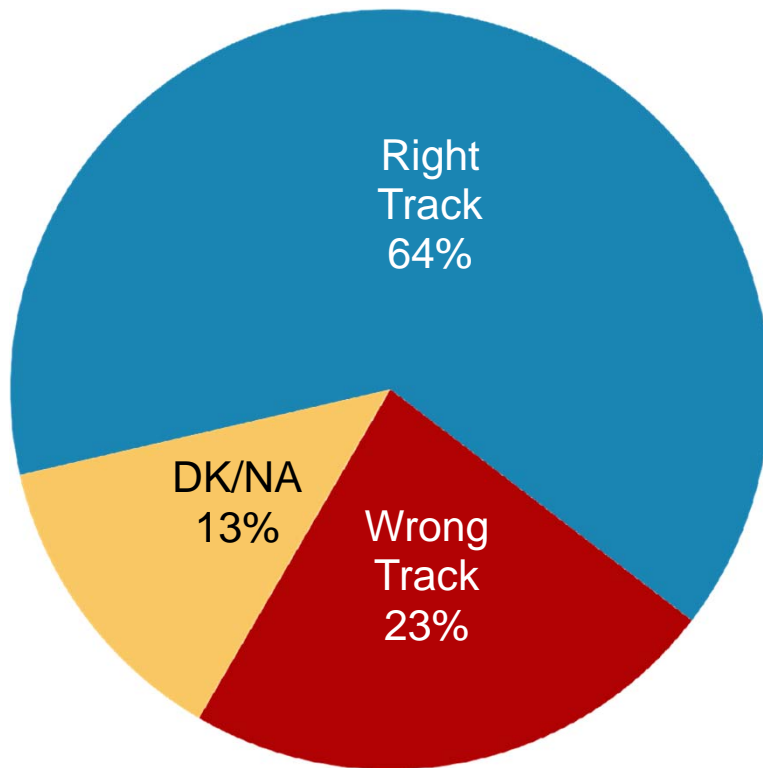
# The state's voters largely consider themselves Democratic or independent.

## *Party Self-Identification*



# Nearly two-thirds feel the state is headed in the right direction; Democrats are most optimistic.

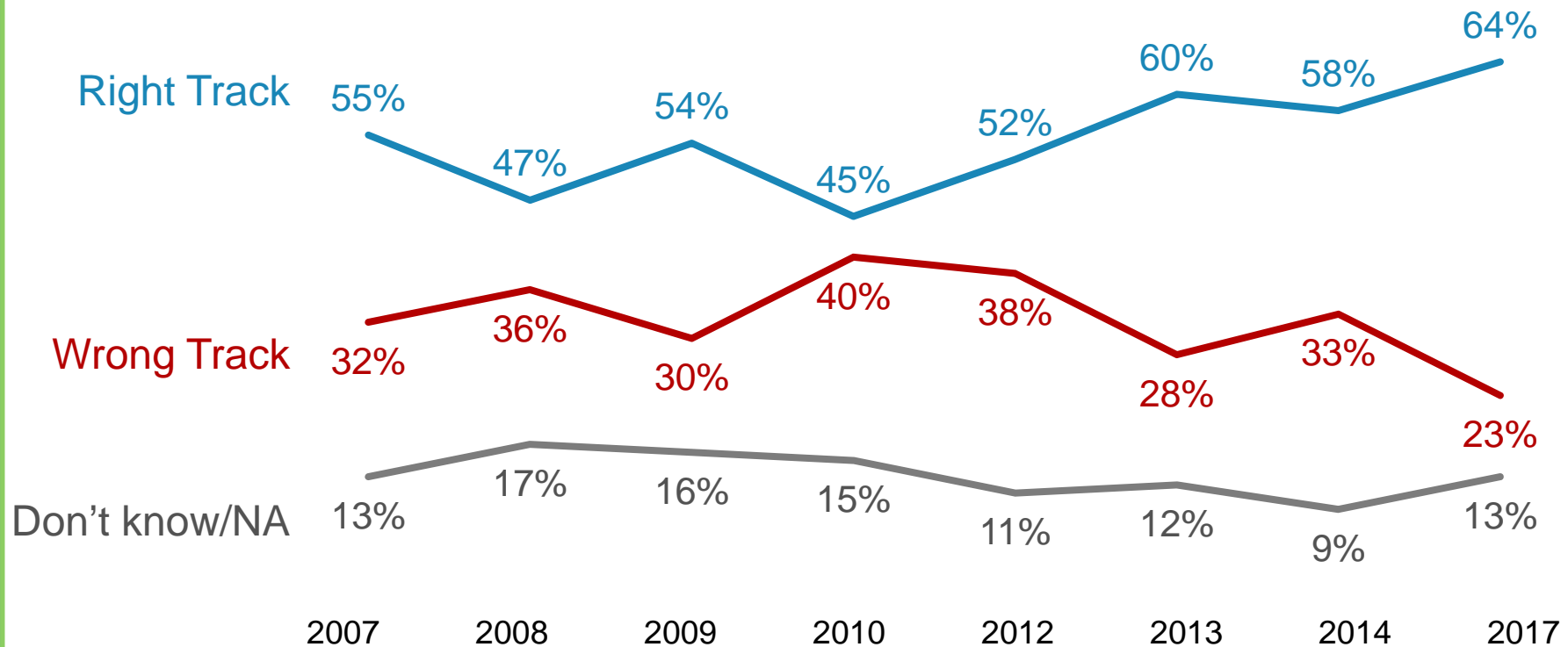
*Generally speaking, do you think that things in your part of Minnesota are on the right track or on the wrong track?*



Party ID	Right Track	Wrong Track	DK/NA
Democrats	74%	15%	11%
Independents	60%	23%	17%
Republicans	56%	34%	9%

# This continues a general positive trend for the state since 2010.

*Generally speaking, do you think that things in your part of Minnesota are on the right track or on the wrong track?*



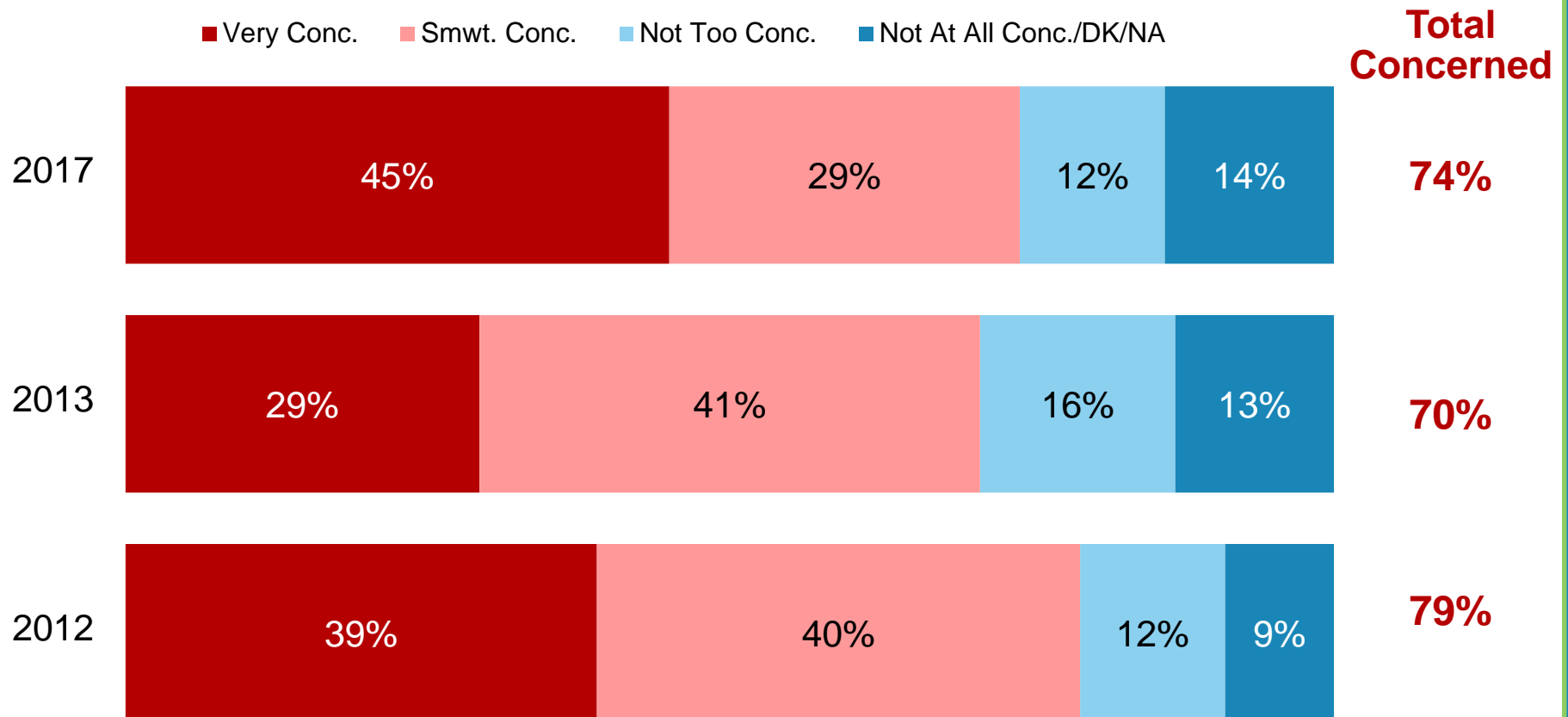




# Defending Minnesota's Environmental Policy Foundation

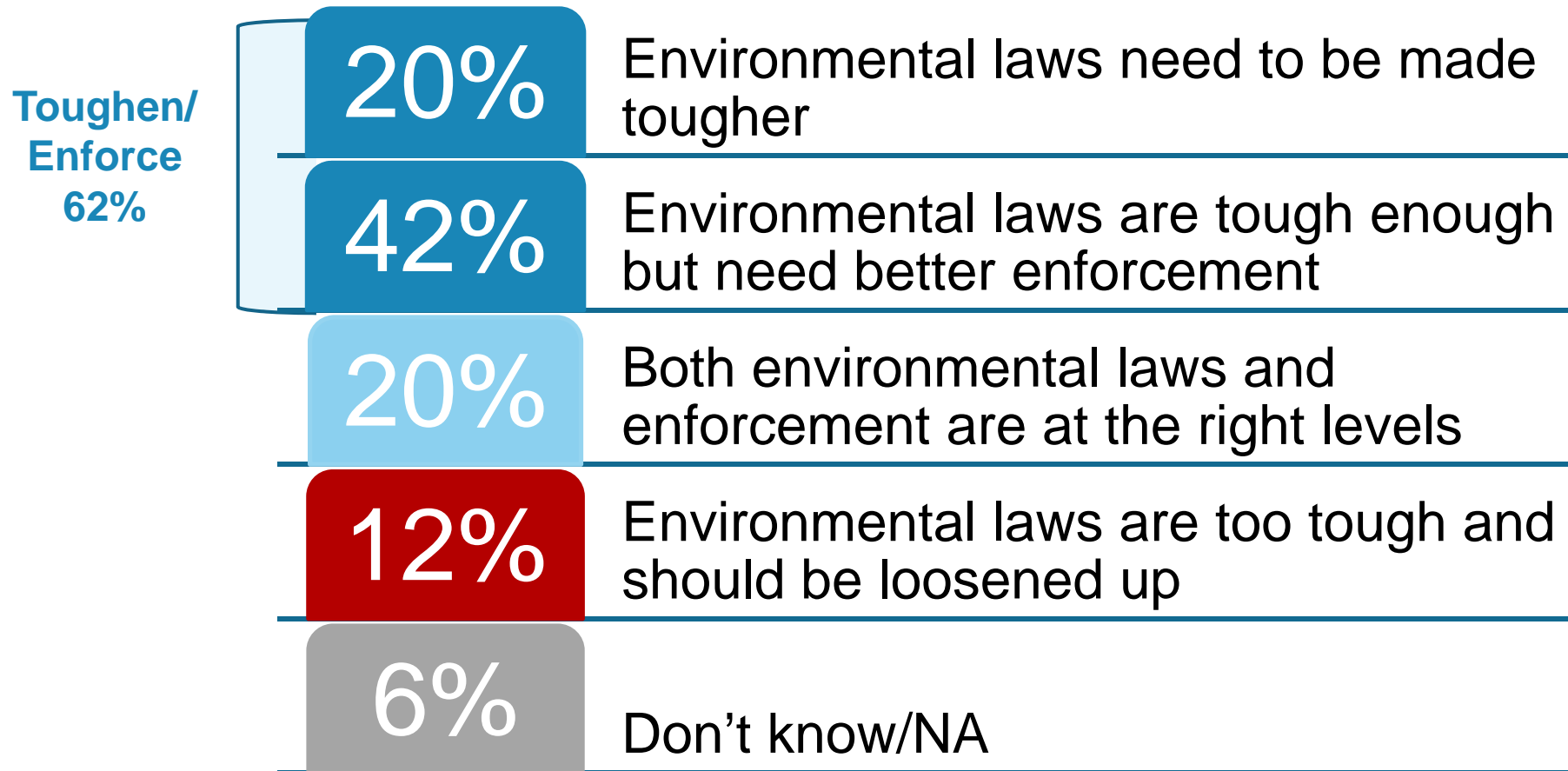
# Nearly half of Minnesota voters say they are “very concerned” about rollbacks of environmental laws.

*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?*

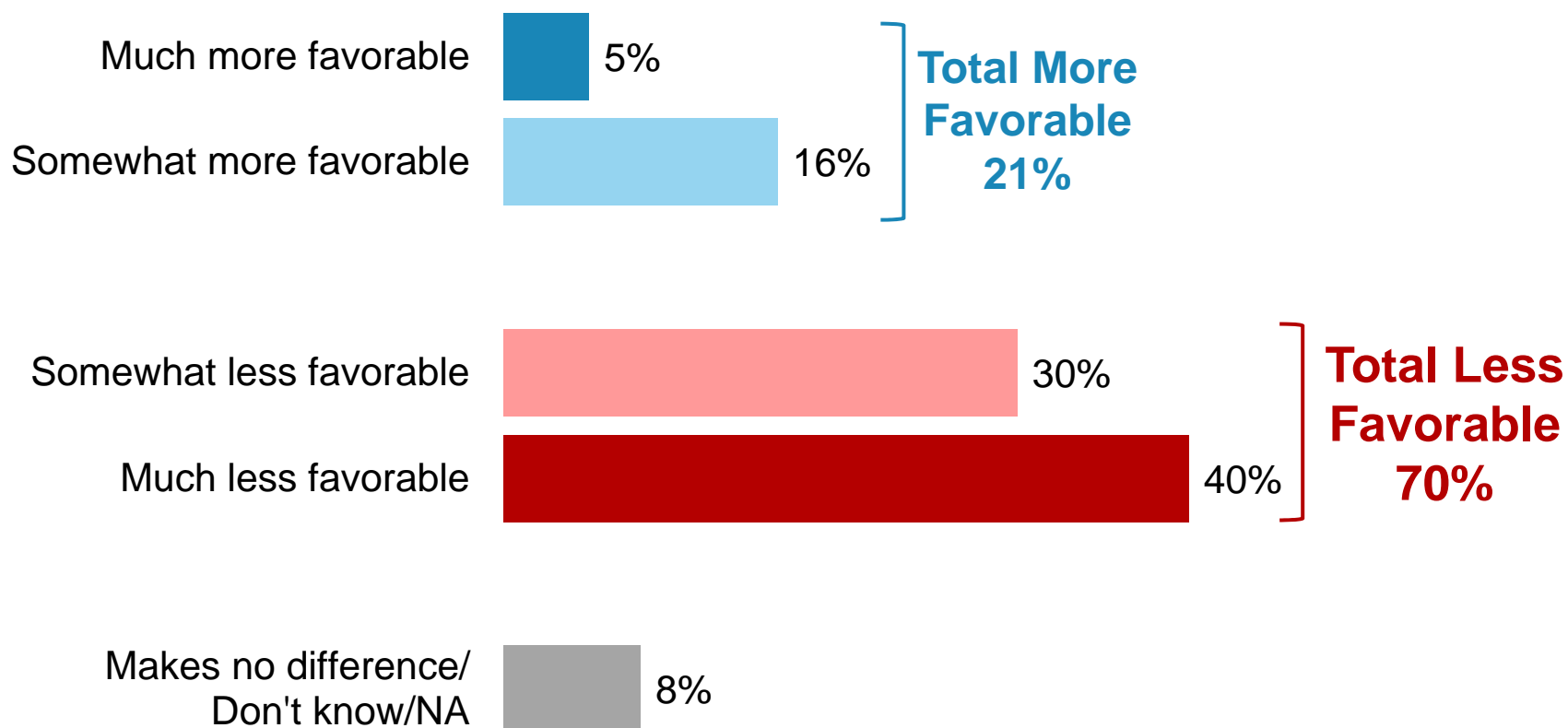


# Rural and urban voters' views are largely similar.

Statement	All Voters	Type of Area	
		Rural	Urban
Environmental laws need to be made tougher	20%	17%	22%
Environmental laws are tough enough but they need better enforcement	42%	43%	42%
Both environmental laws and enforcement are at the right levels	20%	22%	18%
Environmental laws are too tough and should be loosened up	12%	14%	11%
Don't know/NA	6%	5%	7%

# By a margin of more than three to one, voters say weakening environmental laws would give them a 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%
<b>Total More Favorable</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>22%</b>

Somewhat less favorable	30%	30%	31%	30%	40%	24%
Much less favorable	40%	62%	37%	12%	31%	46%
<b>Total Less Favorable</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>69%</b>

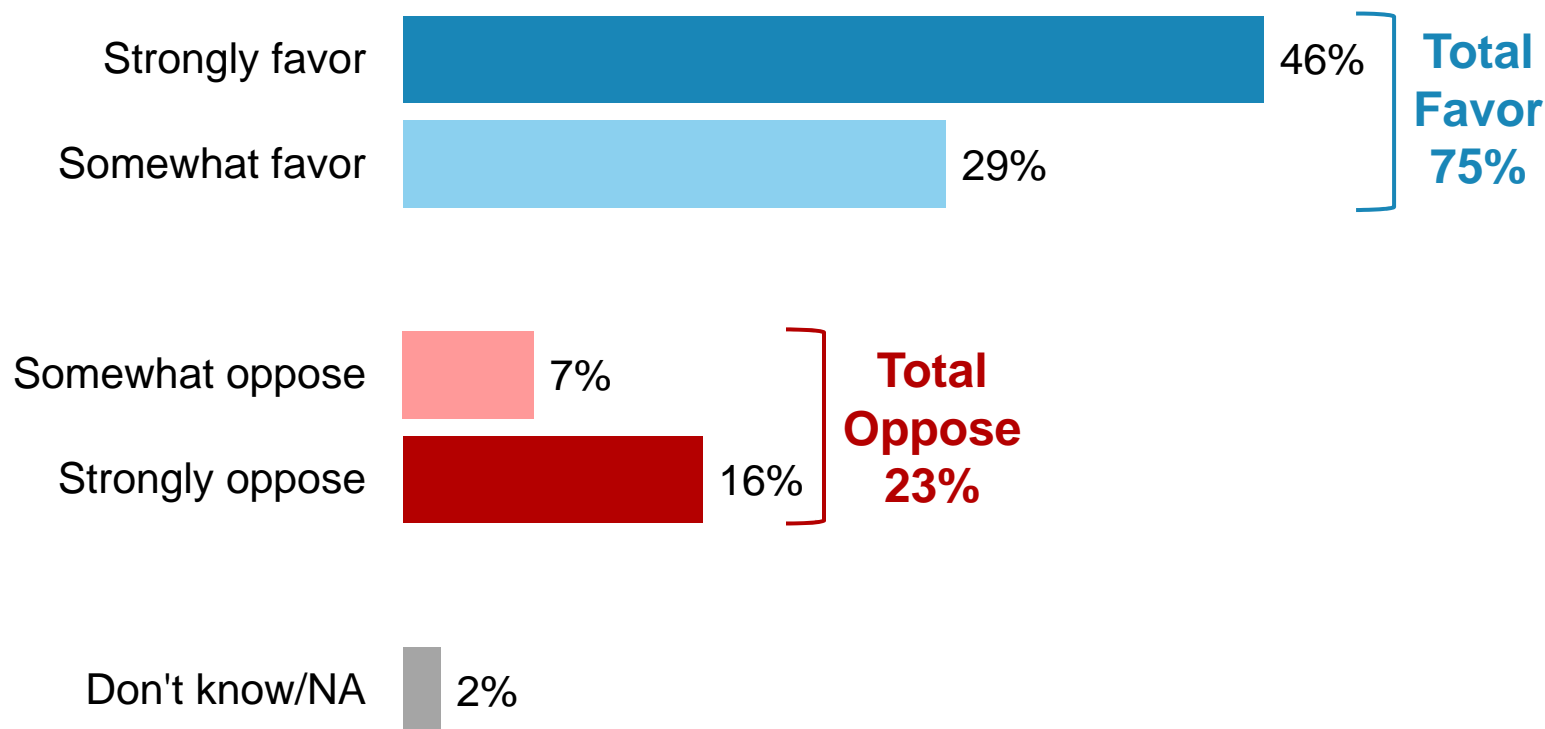
Makes no difference/ Don't know/NA	8%	1%	14%	14%	9%	8%
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# More than two in five older and female voters say they would have less favorable views of their legislator.

Favorability	All Voters	Age		Gender	
		18-49	50+	Men	Women
Much more favorable	5%	6%	4%	7%	3%
Somewhat more favorable	16%	20%	14%	21%	12%
<b>Total More Favorable</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>15%</b>
Somewhat less favorable	30%	30%	32%	30%	31%
Much less favorable	40%	36%	41%	34%	45%
<b>Total Less Favorable</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>76%</b>
Makes no difference/ Don't know/NA	8%	8%	10%	8%	9%

# Three-quarters of Minnesotans support the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment.

*I would like to ask you about a state constitutional amendment approved by Minnesota voters in 2008. It increased the state sales tax by three-eighths of 1% to provide dedicated funding for clean water, land protection, and wildlife habitat, arts education, and parks and trails. Whether or not you supported it originally, would you say you currently favor or oppose this constitutional amendment?*





## Intensity of support for the Amendment is the strongest it has been in polling.

Favor/Oppose	2014	2016	2017
Strongly favor	40%	30%	46%
Somewhat favor	31%	38%	29%
<b>Total Favor</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>75%</b>

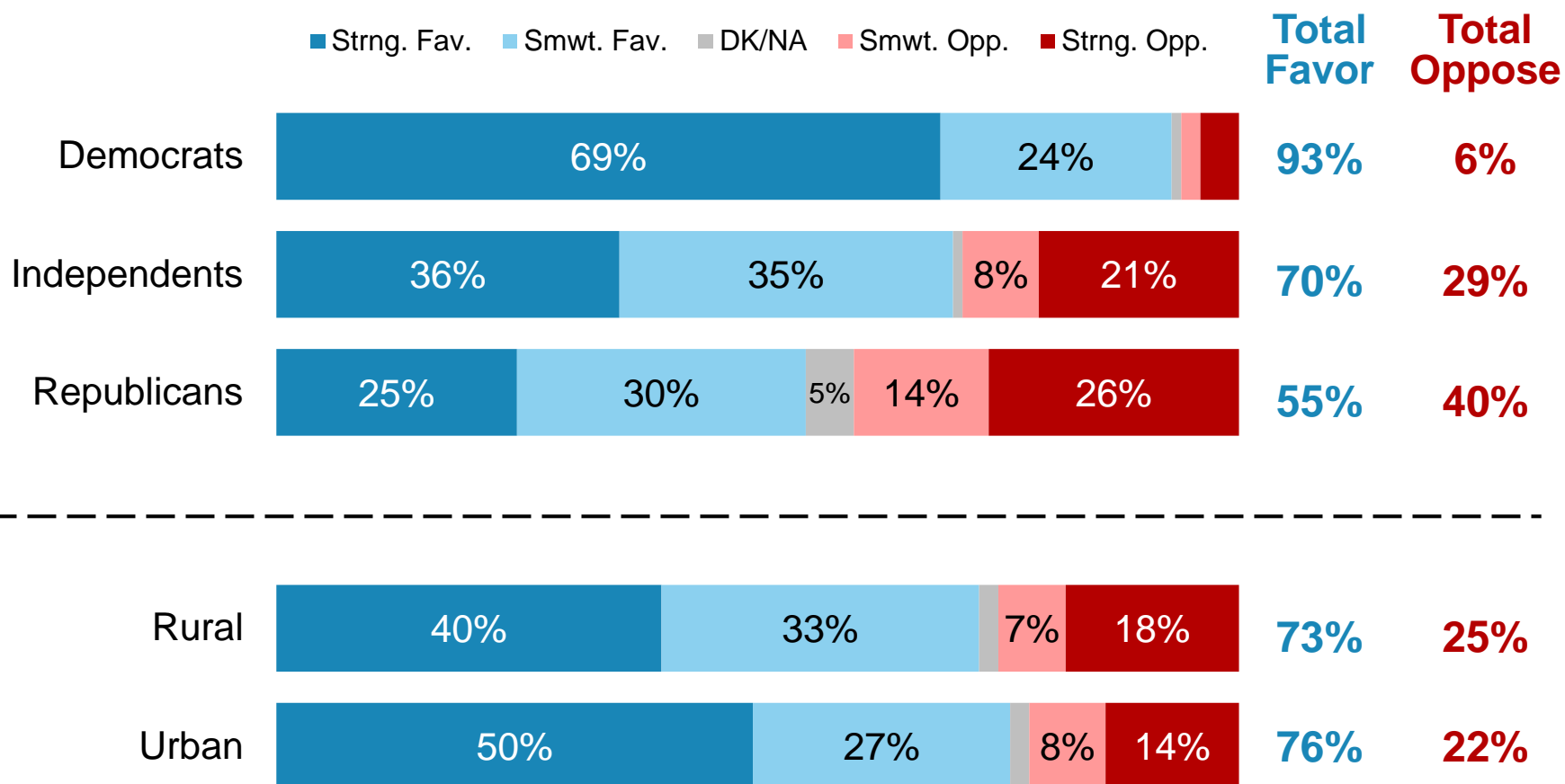
Somewhat oppose	11%	12%	7%
Strongly oppose	15%	12%	16%
<b>Total Oppose</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>23%</b>

<b>Don't know/NA</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>2%</b>
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Q6. I would like to ask you about a state constitutional amendment approved by Minnesota voters in 2008. It increased the state sales tax by three-eighths of 1% to provide dedicated funding for clean water, land protection, and wildlife habitat, arts education, and parks and trails. Whether or not you supported it originally, would you say you currently favor or oppose this constitutional amendment?

# While seven in ten independents favor the Amendment, about one-third “strongly favor” it.

*Support for Amendment by Party ID and Type of Area*



Q6. I would like to ask you about a state constitutional amendment approved by Minnesota voters in 2008. It increased the state sales tax by three-eighths of 1% to provide dedicated funding for clean water, land protection, and wildlife habitat, arts education, and parks and trails. Whether or not you supported it originally, would you say you currently favor or oppose this constitutional amendment?

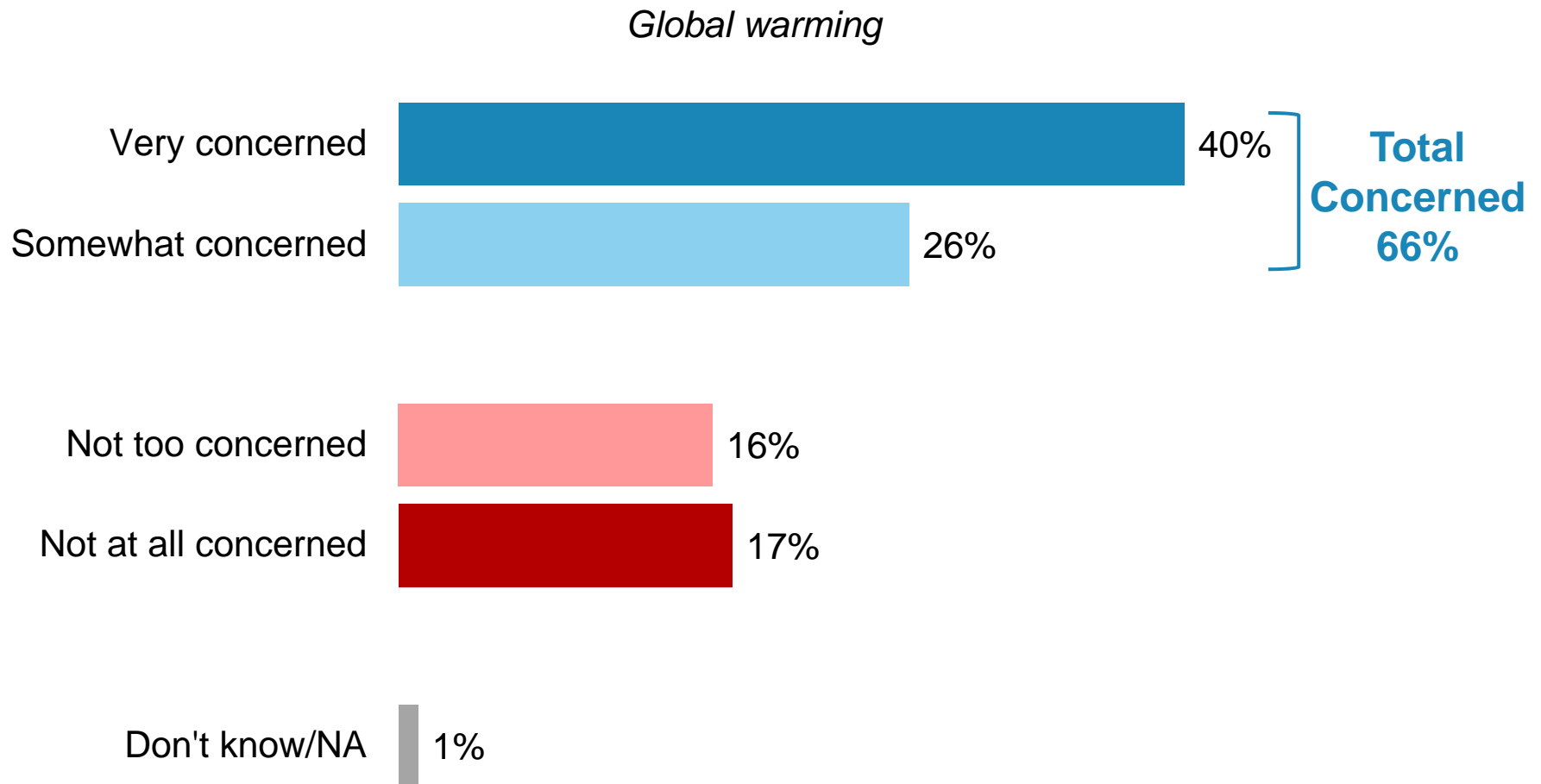


# Energy



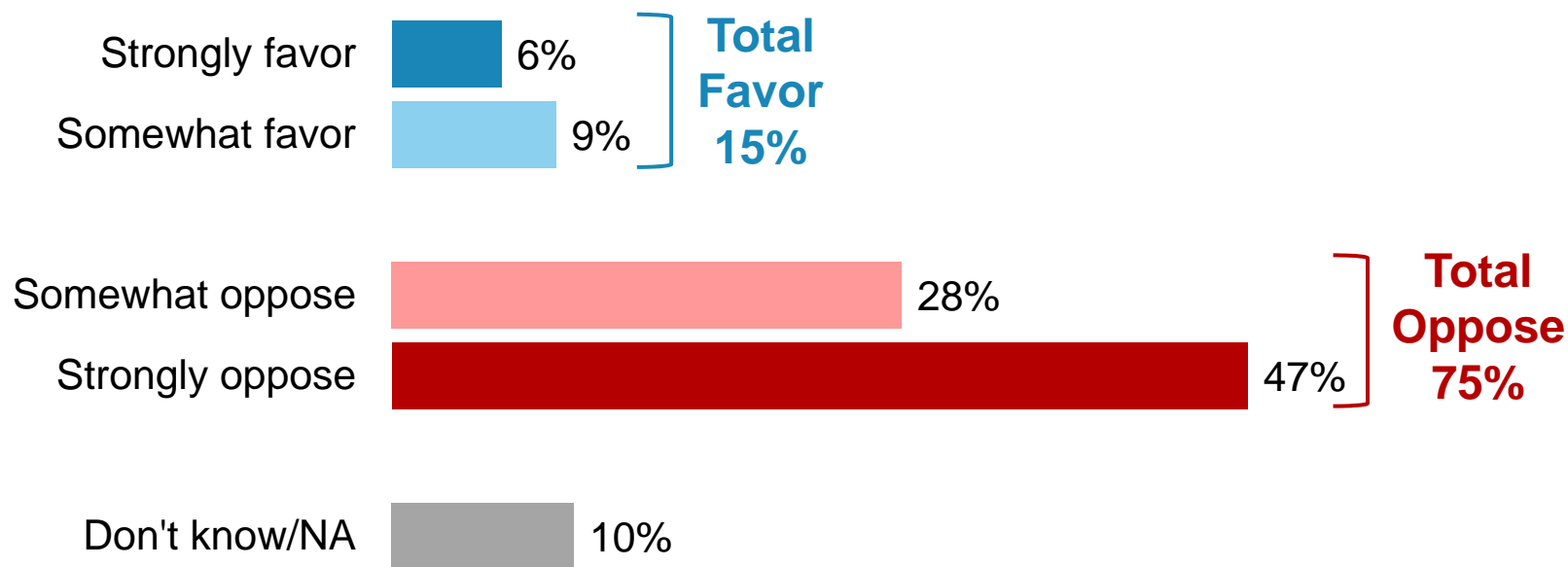
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# Two in five Minnesotans say they are “very concerned” about global warming.



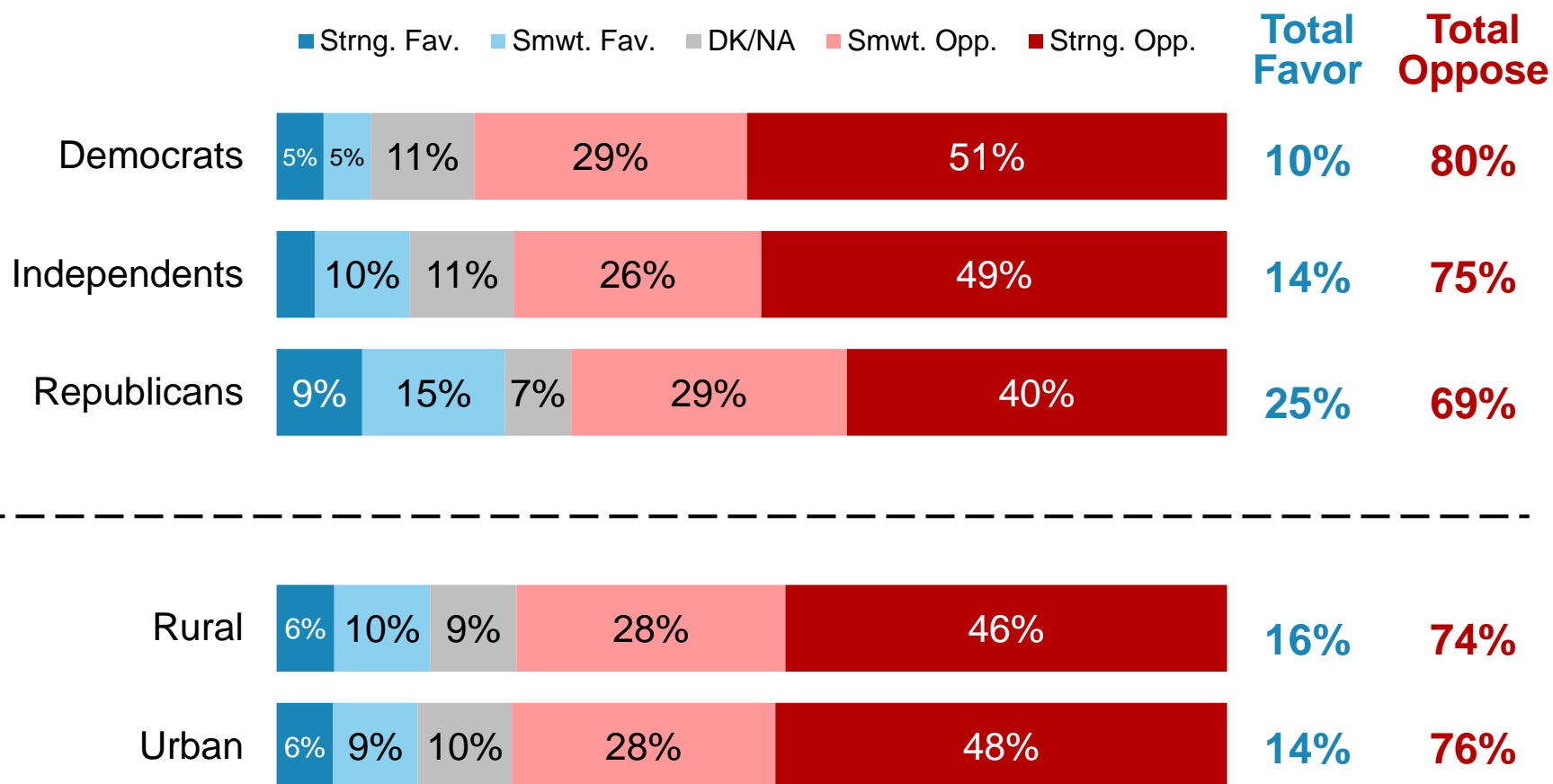
## Given a brief explanation, three-quarters oppose lifting oversight of utility and co-op charges.

*I would like to ask you a few questions about energy. When utility customers want to generate electricity on their own property through solar panels or farmers with wind turbines, they still need to be connected to the electric grid. Currently, the State of Minnesota regulates disputes over how much utilities and co-ops can charge homeowners, businesses, and farmers to connect their own solar panels or wind turbines to the grid. Some rural power companies have proposed passing a law that would remove this oversight, and allow utilities and co-ops to charge however much they want to homeowners, businesses, and farmers who connect their solar or wind power to the grid. Would you favor or oppose this proposed law?*



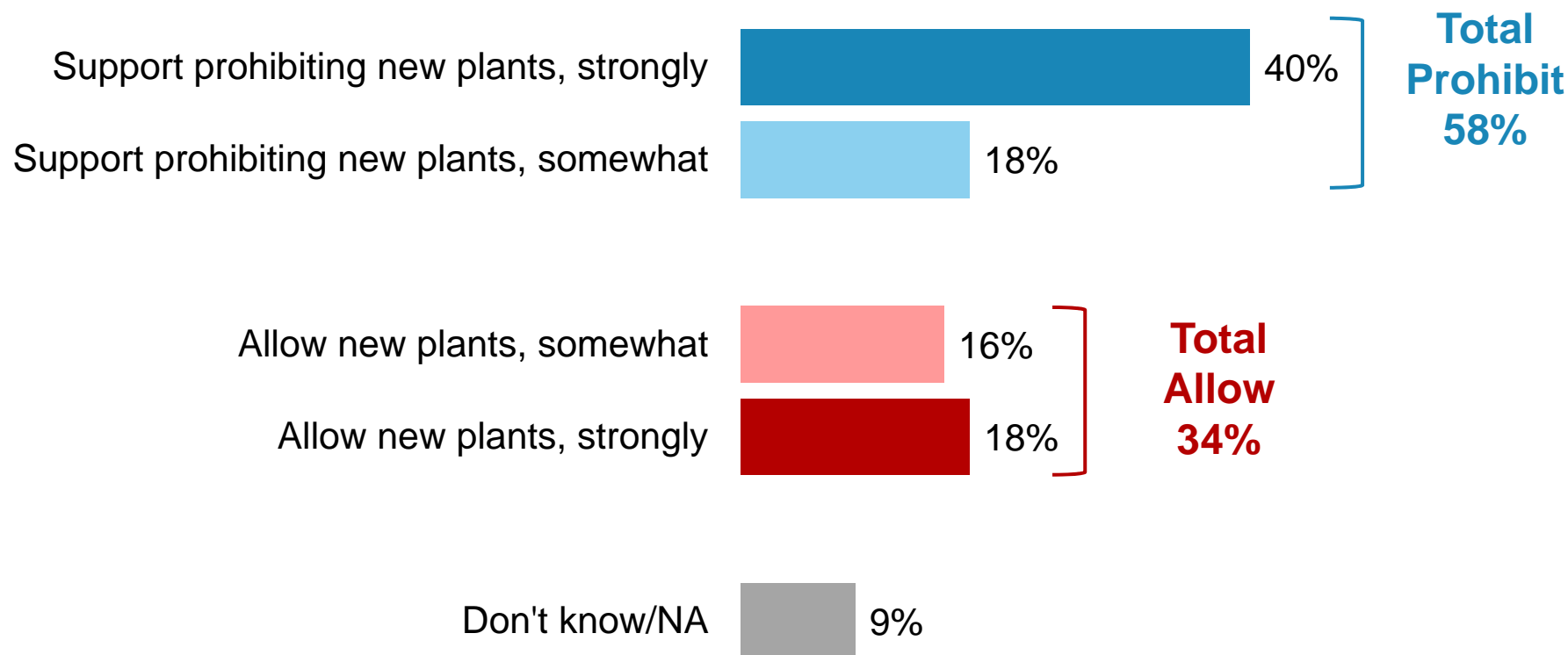
# Nearly seven in ten Republicans oppose this proposal, two in five strongly.

*Support for Deregulation by Party ID and Type of Area*



# A strong majority supports the moratorium on new nuclear power plants in the state.

*Minnesota currently has a state law that prohibits the construction of new nuclear power plants. Do you support the existing law prohibiting new nuclear power plants, or do you want to allow new nuclear power plants to be built in Minnesota?*



# Strong support for new nuclear plants in Minnesota is falling.

	2009	2010	2012	2017
Support prohibiting new plants, strongly	41%	45%	45%	40%
Support prohibiting new plants, somewhat	11%	12%	12%	18%
<b>Total Prohibit</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>58%</b>

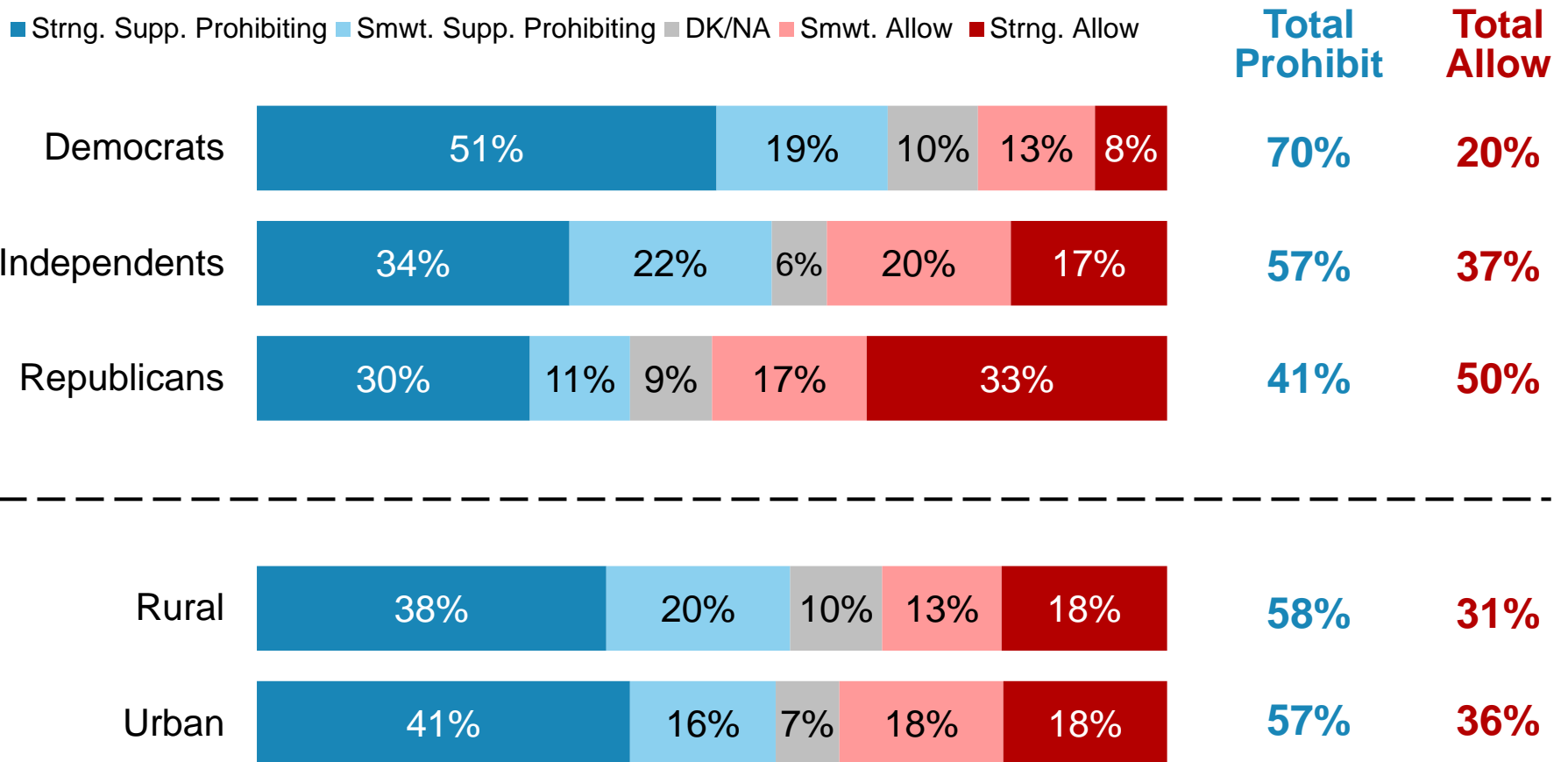
Allow new plants, somewhat	15%	16%	16%	16%
Allow new plants, strongly	24%	21%	21%	18%
<b>Total Allow</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>34%</b>

<b>Don't know/NA</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>9%</b>
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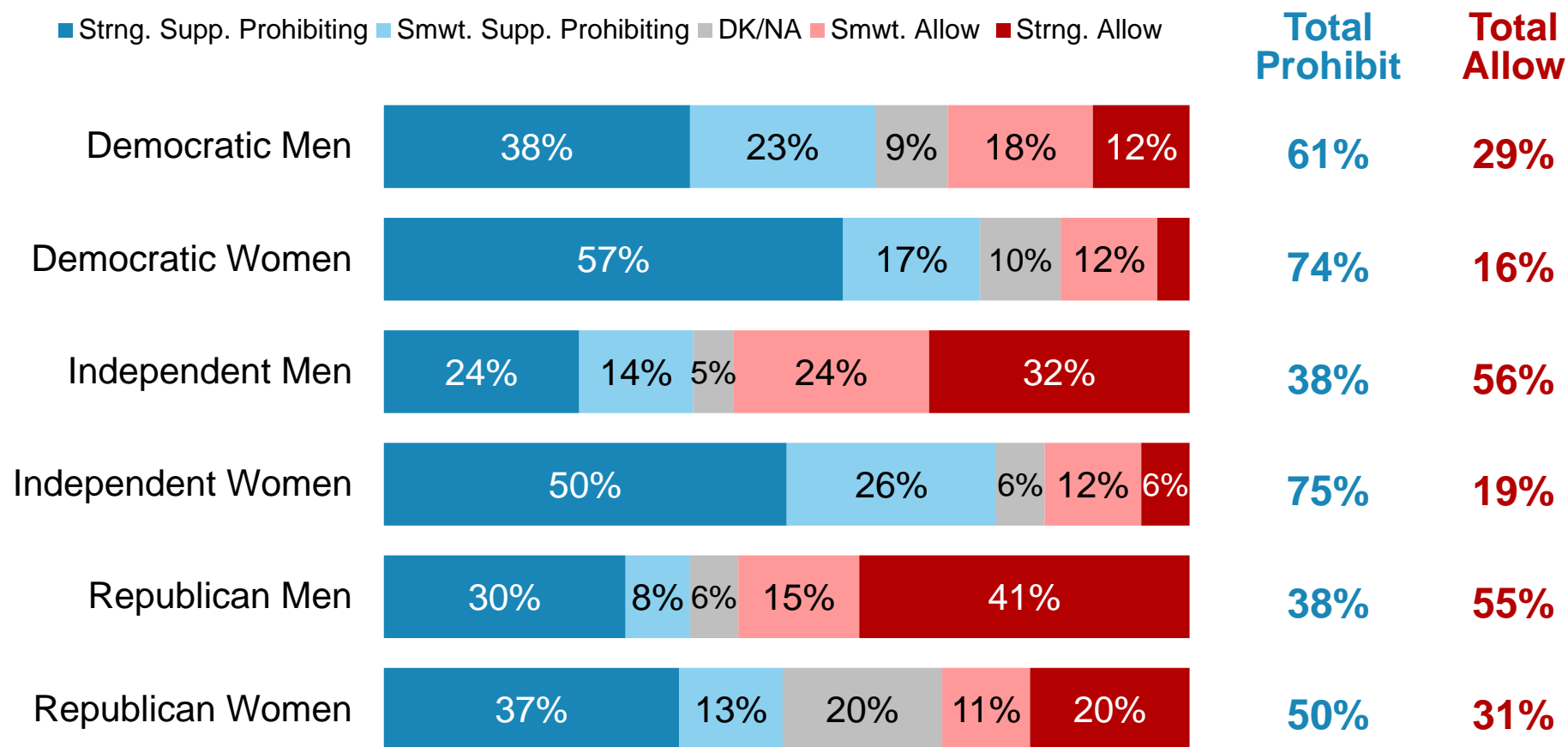
# Majorities of Democrats, independents and both urban and rural voters support the moratorium.

## Support for Nuclear Prohibition by Party ID and Type of Area



# Republican and independent men drive the modest support for new plants; independent and Democratic women back the moratorium.

## *Support for Nuclear Moratorium by Party by Gender*



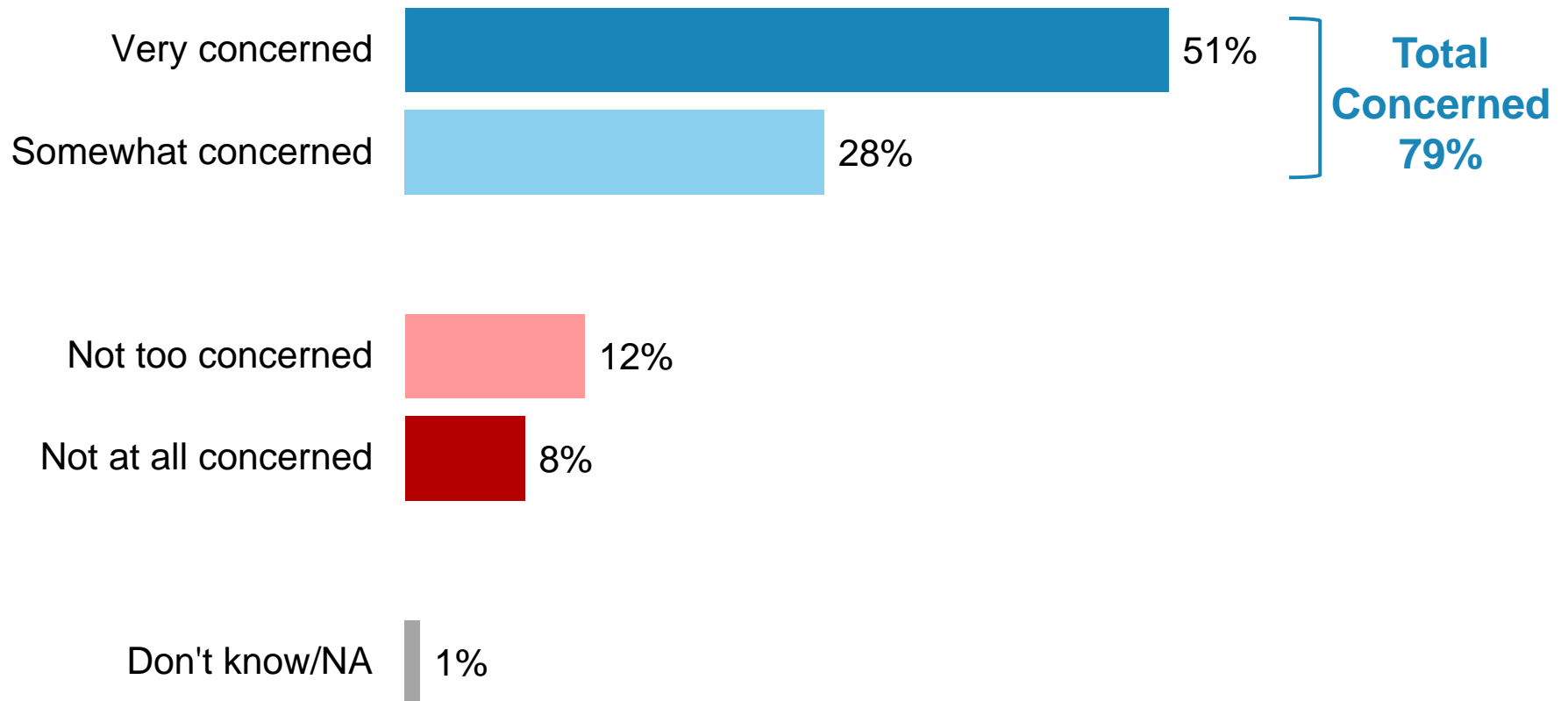


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# Agricultural Pollution & Safe Drinking Water

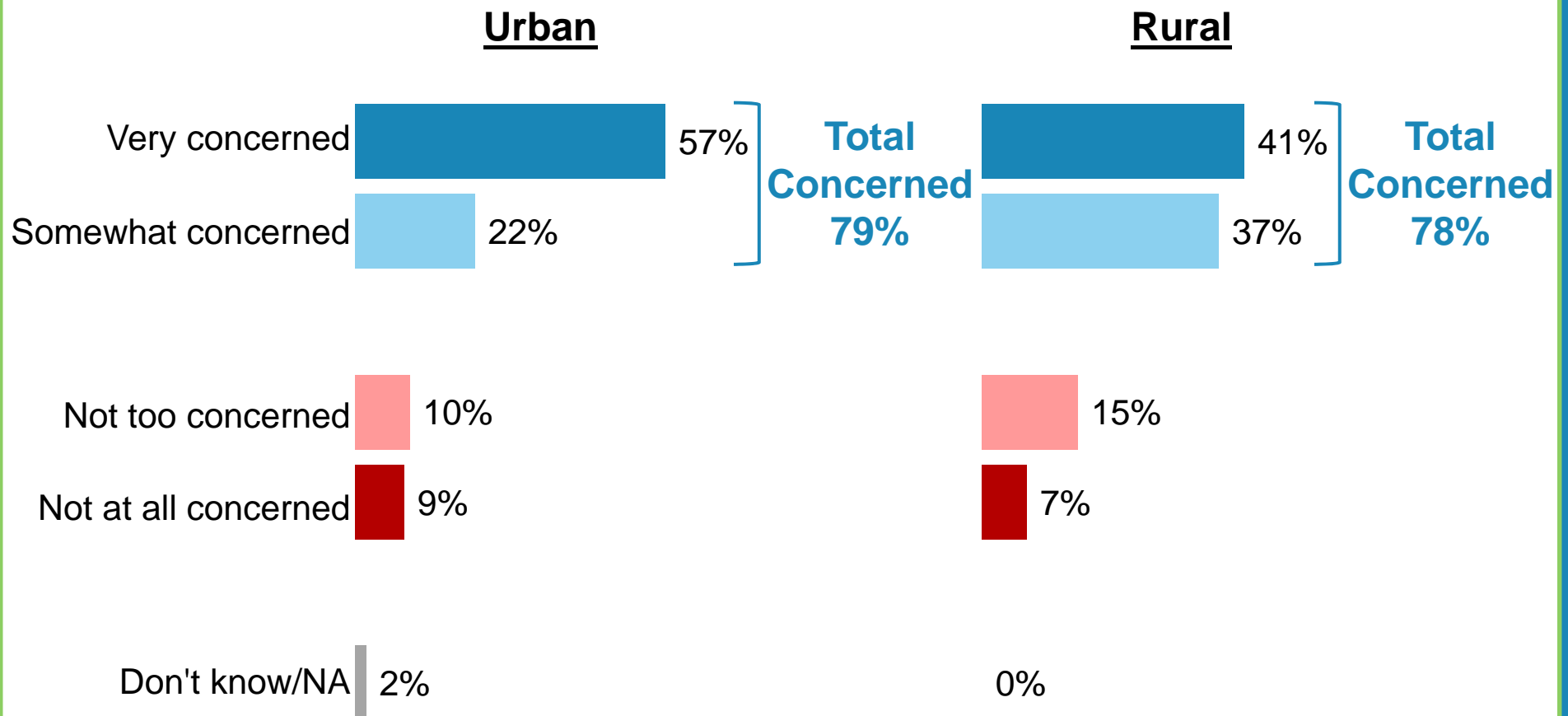
# Half of Minnesotans are “very concerned” about pollution of drinking water.

*Pollution of drinking water*



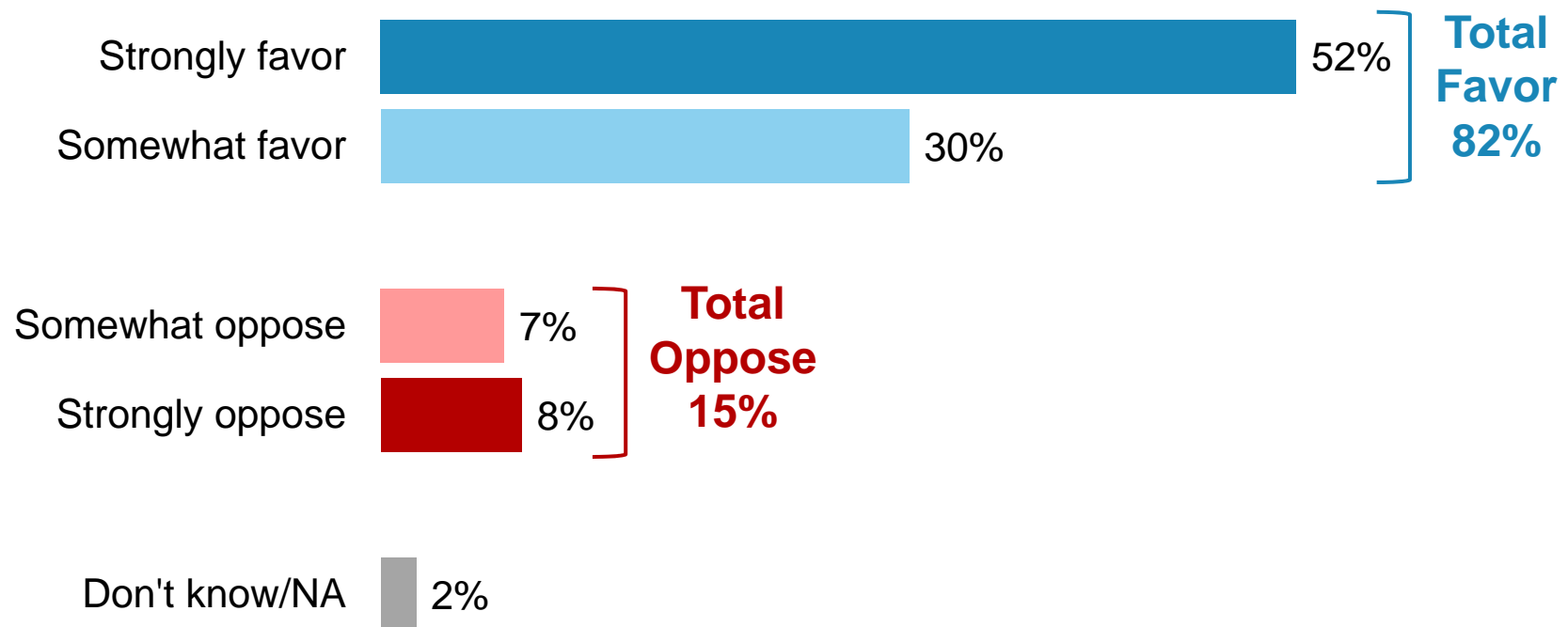
# More than two in five rural voters are “very concerned,” as are nearly three in five urban voters.

## *Pollution of drinking water*



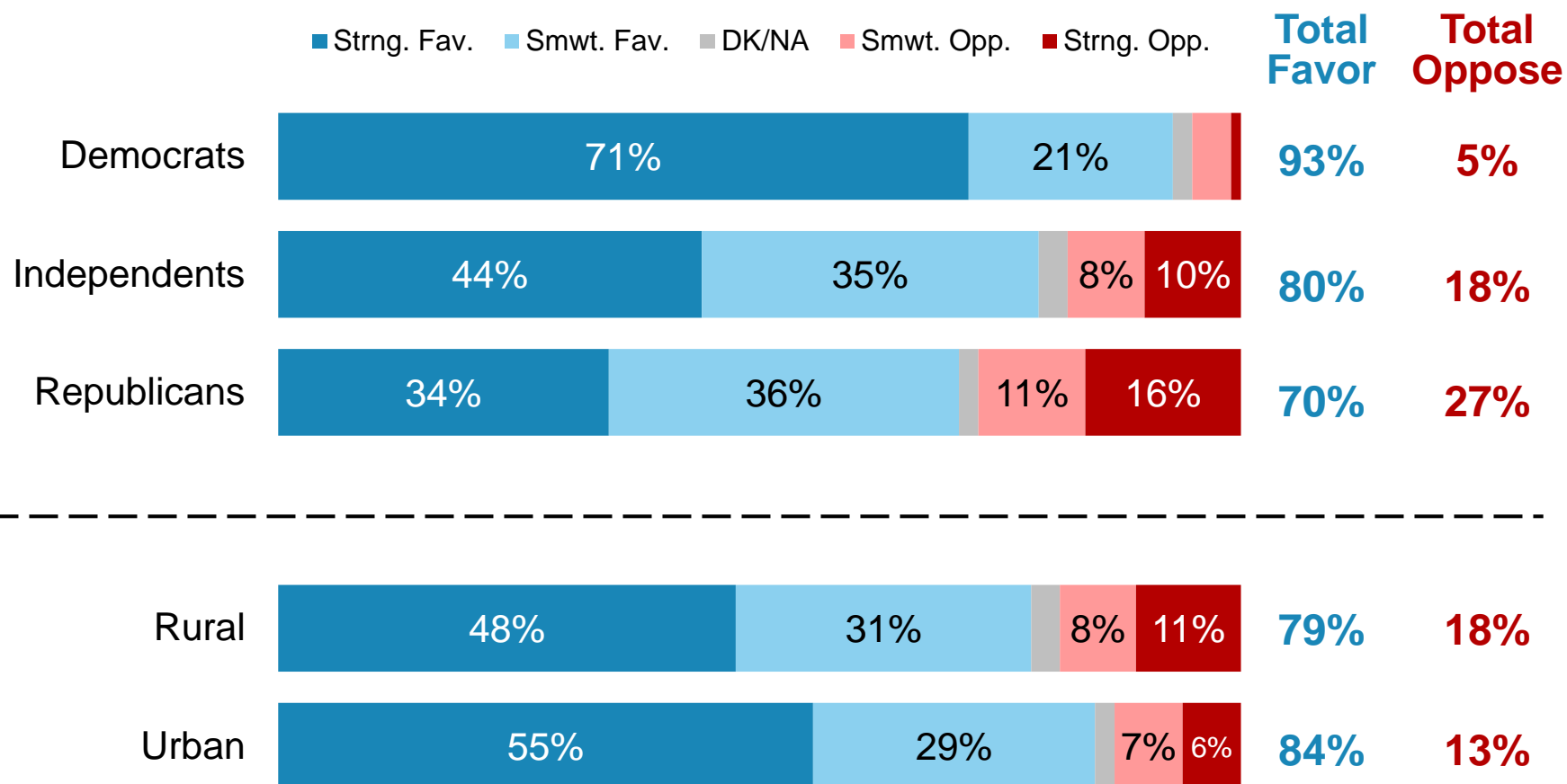
# A majority of Minnesota voters “strongly favor” the buffer initiative law.

*In 2015, a “buffer initiative” law was approved in Minnesota. It designated more than 100,000 acres statewide to be set aside in up to 50-foot strips of natural vegetation along rivers, streams, and ditches. These buffers help filter out agricultural pollution from Minnesota’s waters. Would you say you currently favor or oppose this buffer initiative?*



# Urban voters are only slightly more supportive than their rural counterparts.

*Support for Buffer Initiative by Party ID and Type of Area*



Q7. In 2015, a "buffer initiative" law was approved in Minnesota. It designated more than 100,000 acres statewide to be set aside in up to 50-foot strips of natural vegetation along rivers, streams, and ditches. These buffers help filter out agricultural pollution from Minnesota's waters. Would you say you currently favor or oppose this buffer initiative?



# Pollinators

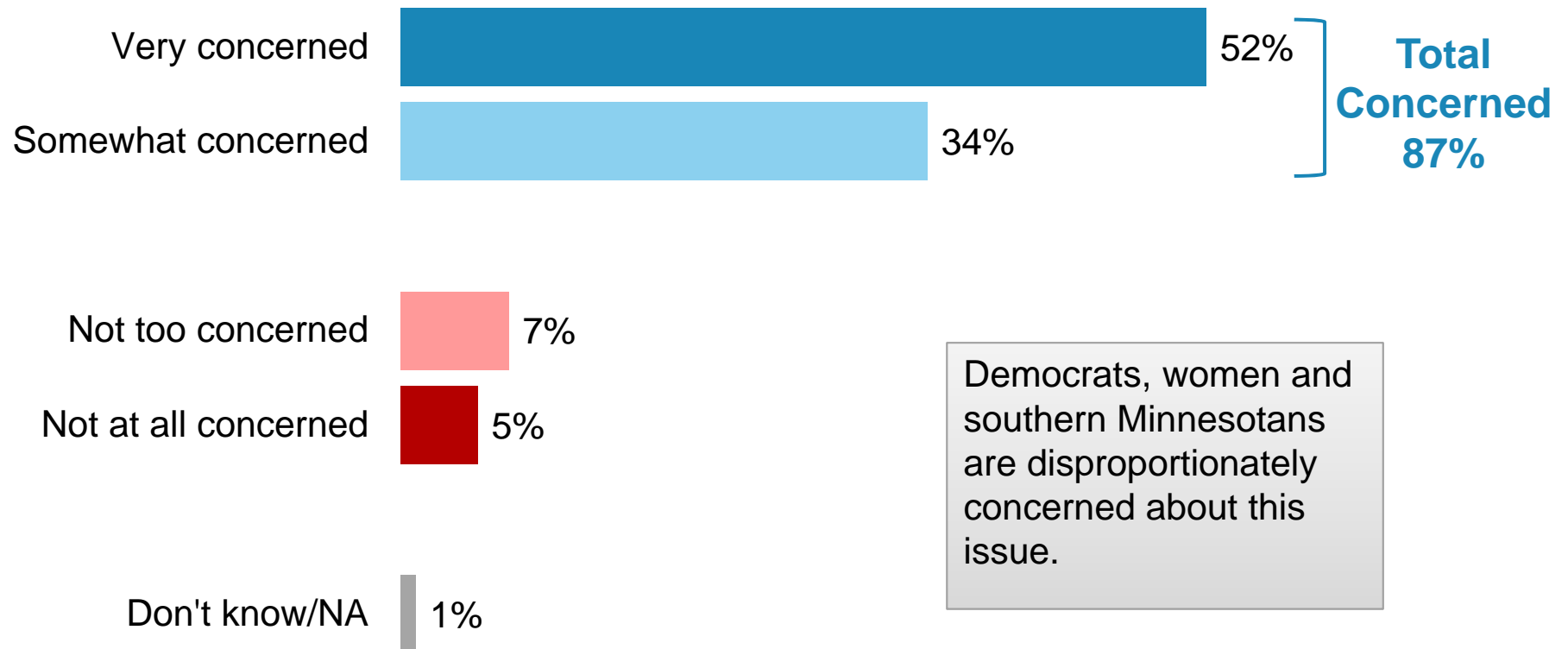


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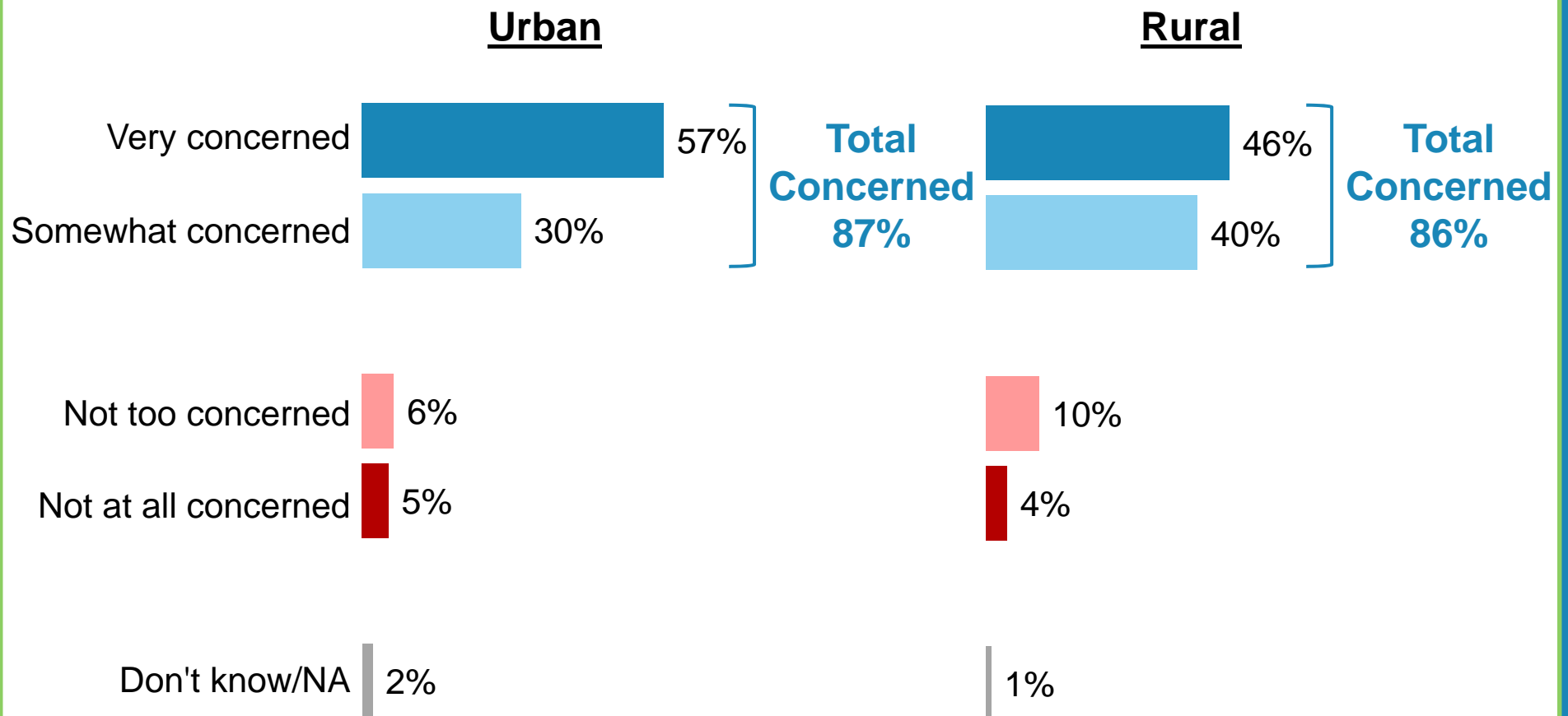
# Concern about disappearing pollinators is quite strong in Minnesota.

*Disappearance of species essential for pollinating crops, like honeybees and monarch butterflies*



# Intensity of concern about disappearing pollinators is especially high among urban voters.

*Disappearance of species essential for pollinating crops, like honeybees and monarch butterflies*



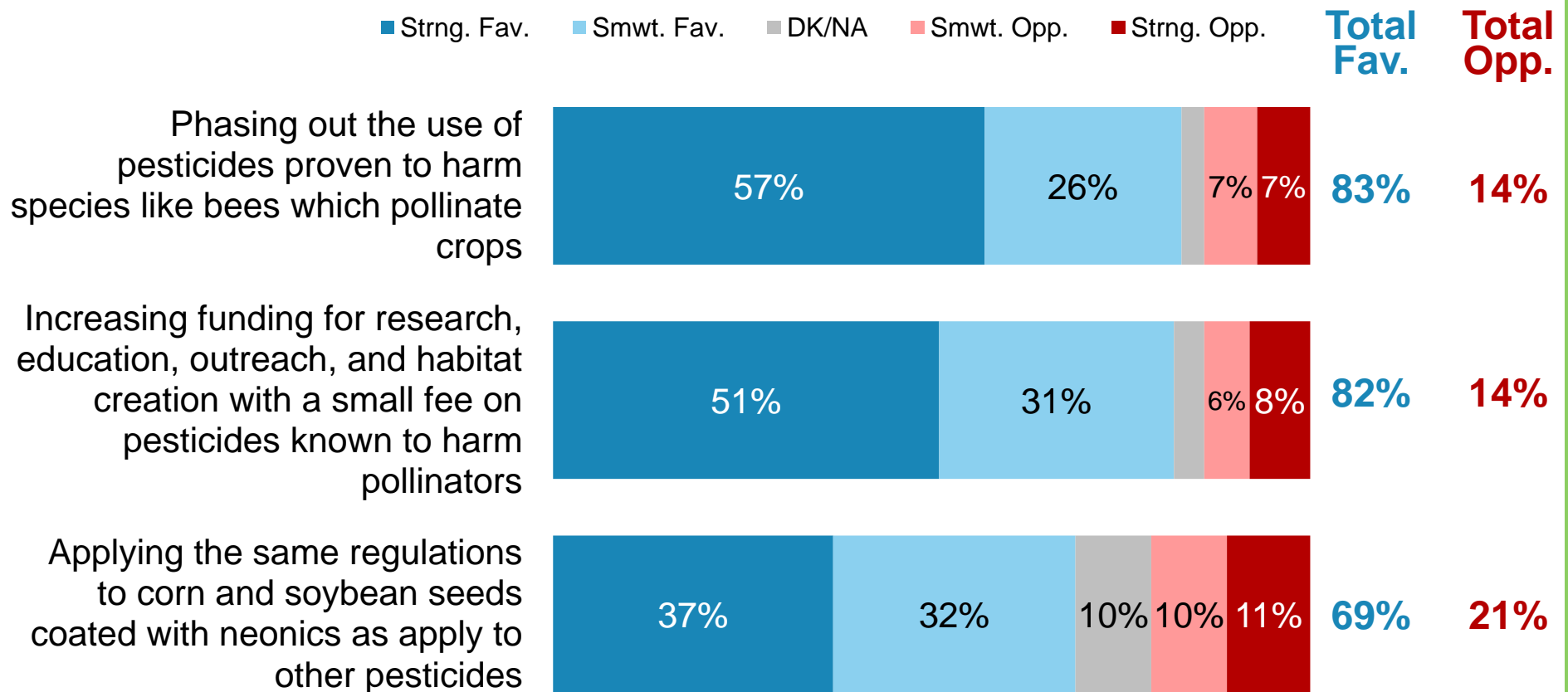
# Background on Neonics and Pollinators

My next questions have to do with another subject. For more than a decade, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, has allowed the use of a new class of pesticides known as neonics. Unlike traditional pesticides that are sprayed and applied to the surface of plants, neonics are taken or absorbed into the plant and then found in every plant part, including the flower pollen and nectar. After years of study, many scientists believe this new class of pesticides is a main contributing factor in the declining population of honeybees and other species which pollinate crops.



# A majority favors phasing out certain pesticides and increasing funding for research.

*Here are a series of ideas that have been proposed to help prevent the decline of pollinator species. Please tell me whether each sounds like something you would favor or oppose.*



# A majority of the state's urban voters strongly support funding research with a small pesticide fee.

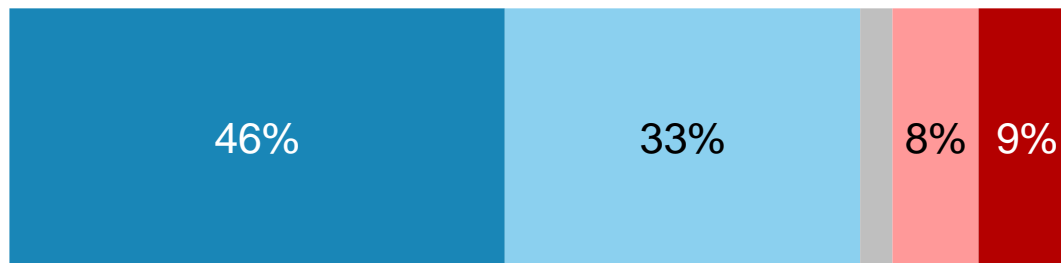
*Increasing funding for research, education, outreach, and habitat creation with a small fee on pesticides known to harm pollinators.*

*By Type of Area*

**Total  
Favor** **Total  
Oppose**

■ Strng. Fav. ■ Smwt. Fav. ■ DK/NA ■ Smwt. Opp. ■ Strng. Opp.

Rural



**80%**

**17%**

Urban



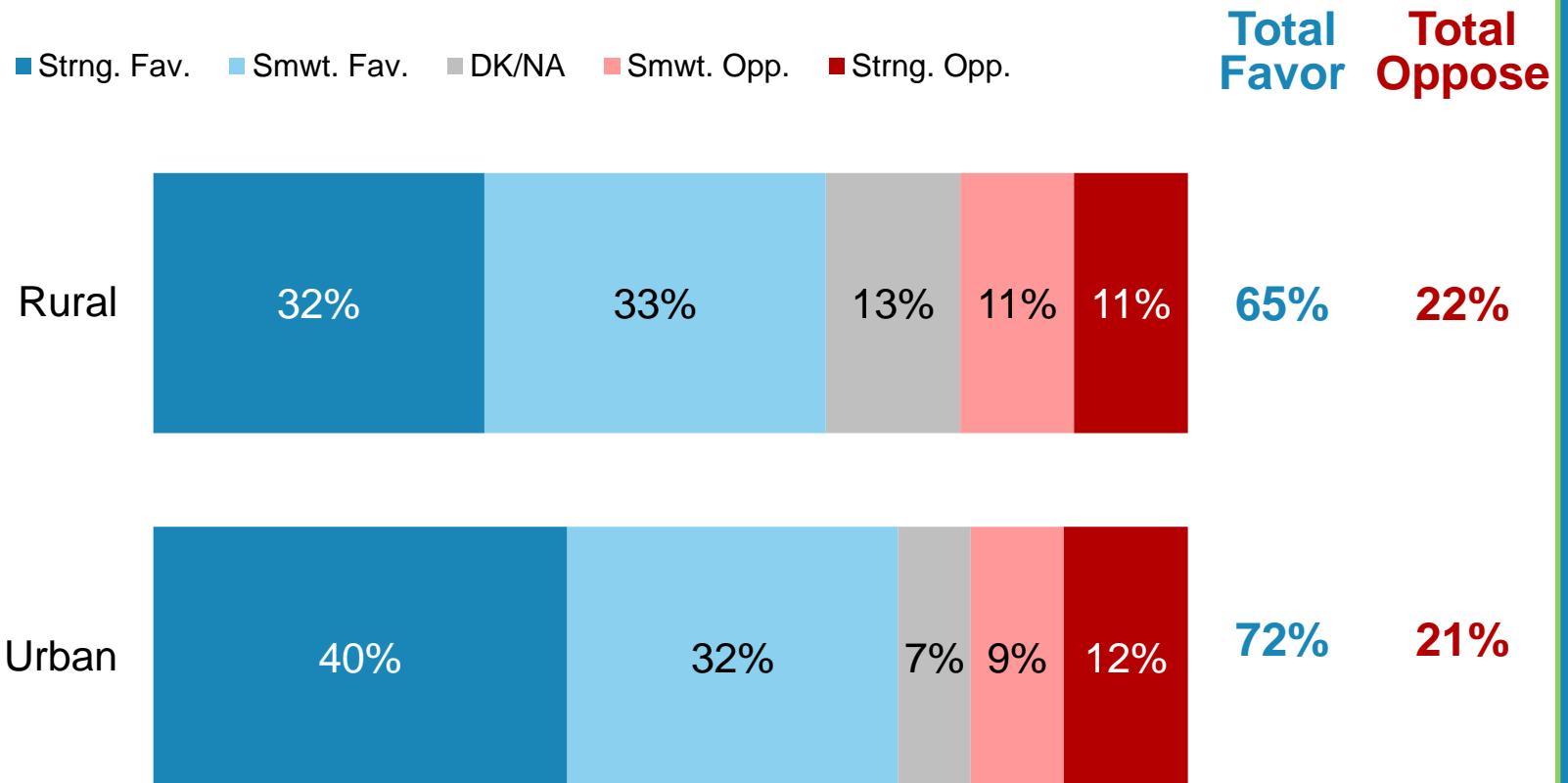
**84%**

**12%**

# Two in five urban voters strongly favor regulations on neonics.

*Applying the same regulations to corn and soybean seeds coated with neonics as apply to other pesticides.*

*By Type of Area*



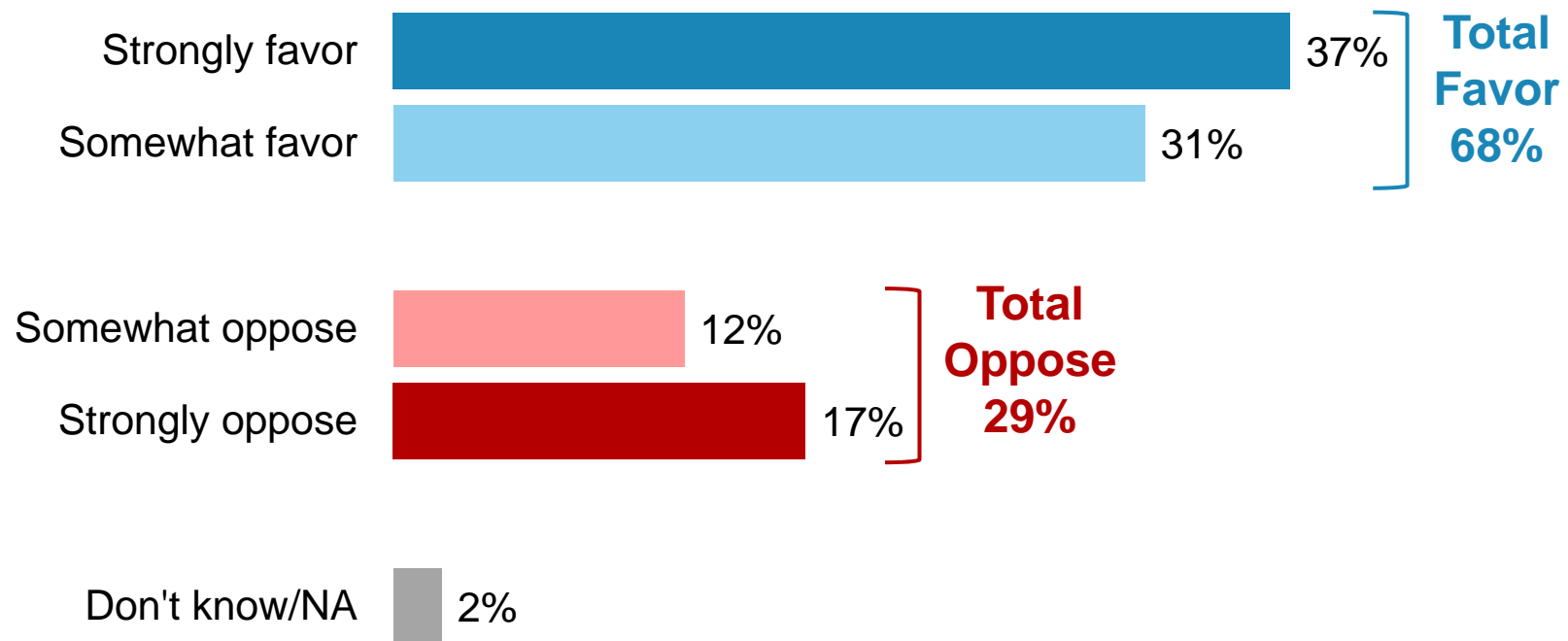


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# Transportation

# Minnesotans favor increased investment in funding for bike and pedestrian routes.

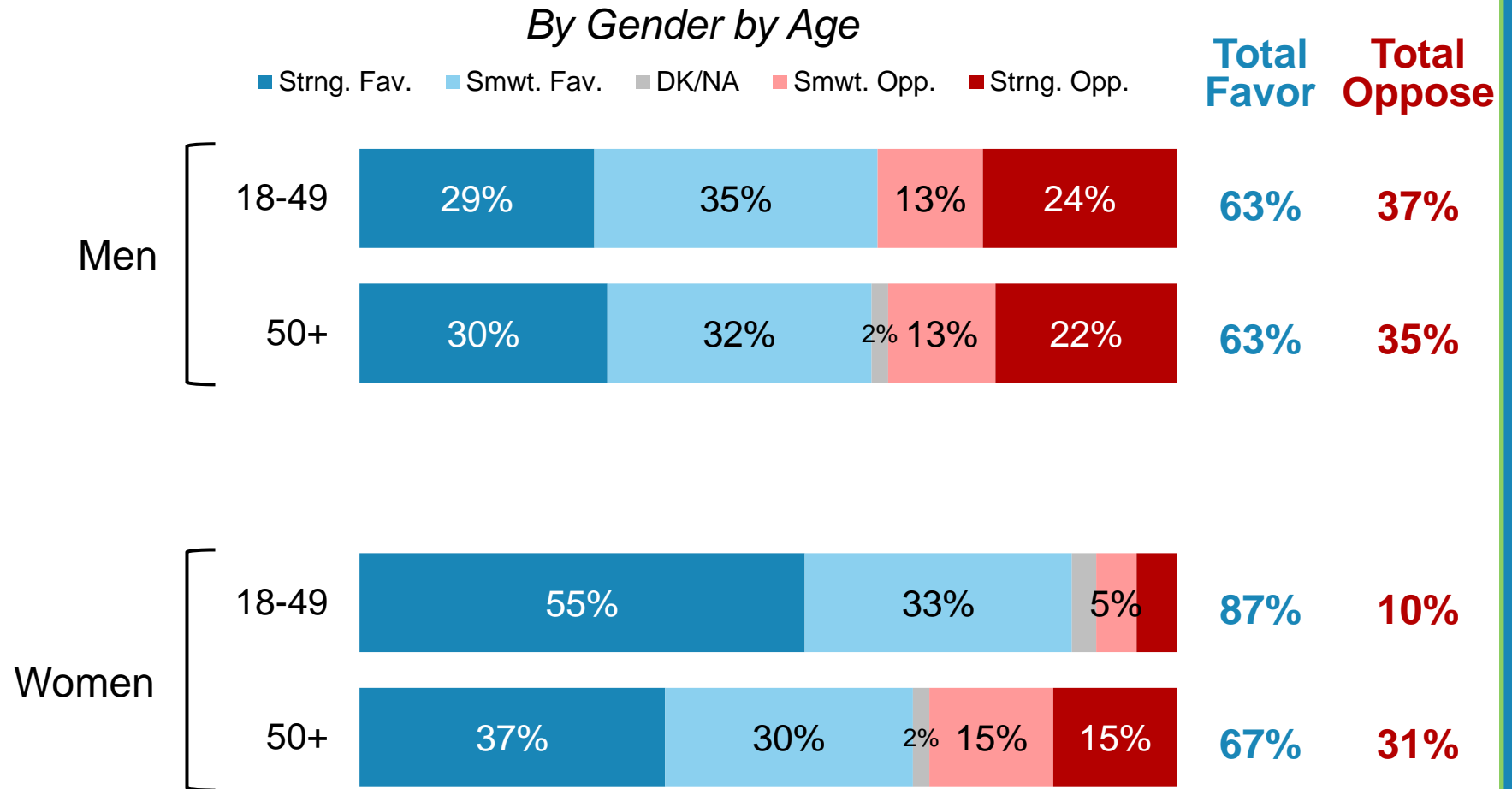
*Minnesota legislators and Governor Dayton may consider options for increasing funding for roads and transit during the upcoming legislative session. Would you favor or oppose including, in these proposals, additional funding for safe bicycle and pedestrian routes?*





# Younger women stand out as enthusiastic supporters of bike and pedestrian investments.

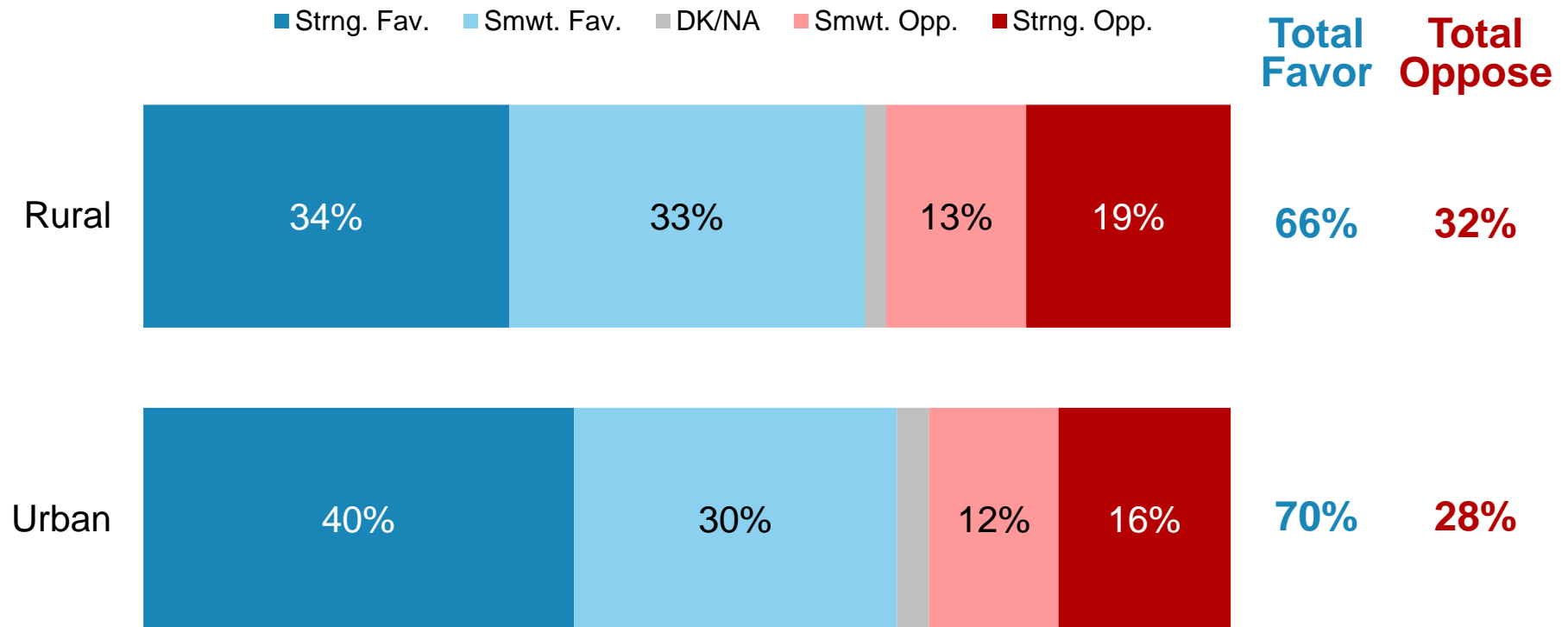
*Minnesota legislators and Governor Dayton may consider options for increasing funding for roads and transit during the upcoming legislative session. Would you favor or oppose including, in these proposals, additional funding for safe bicycle and pedestrian routes?*



# Both urban and rural voters are supportive, though urban voters with slightly more intensity.

*Minnesota legislators and Governor Dayton may consider options for increasing funding for roads and transit during the upcoming legislative session. Would you favor or oppose including, in these proposals, additional funding for safe bicycle and pedestrian routes?*

## By Type of Area



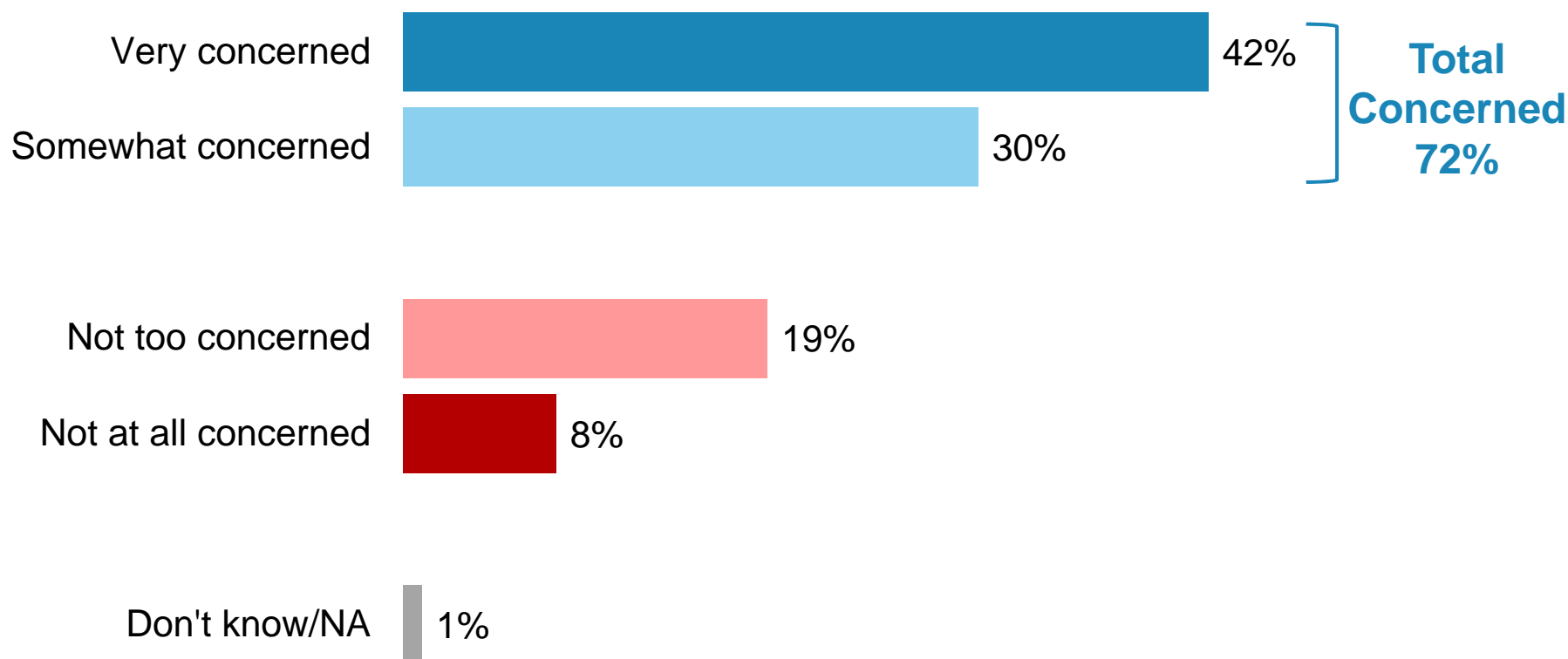


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# Sulfide Mining

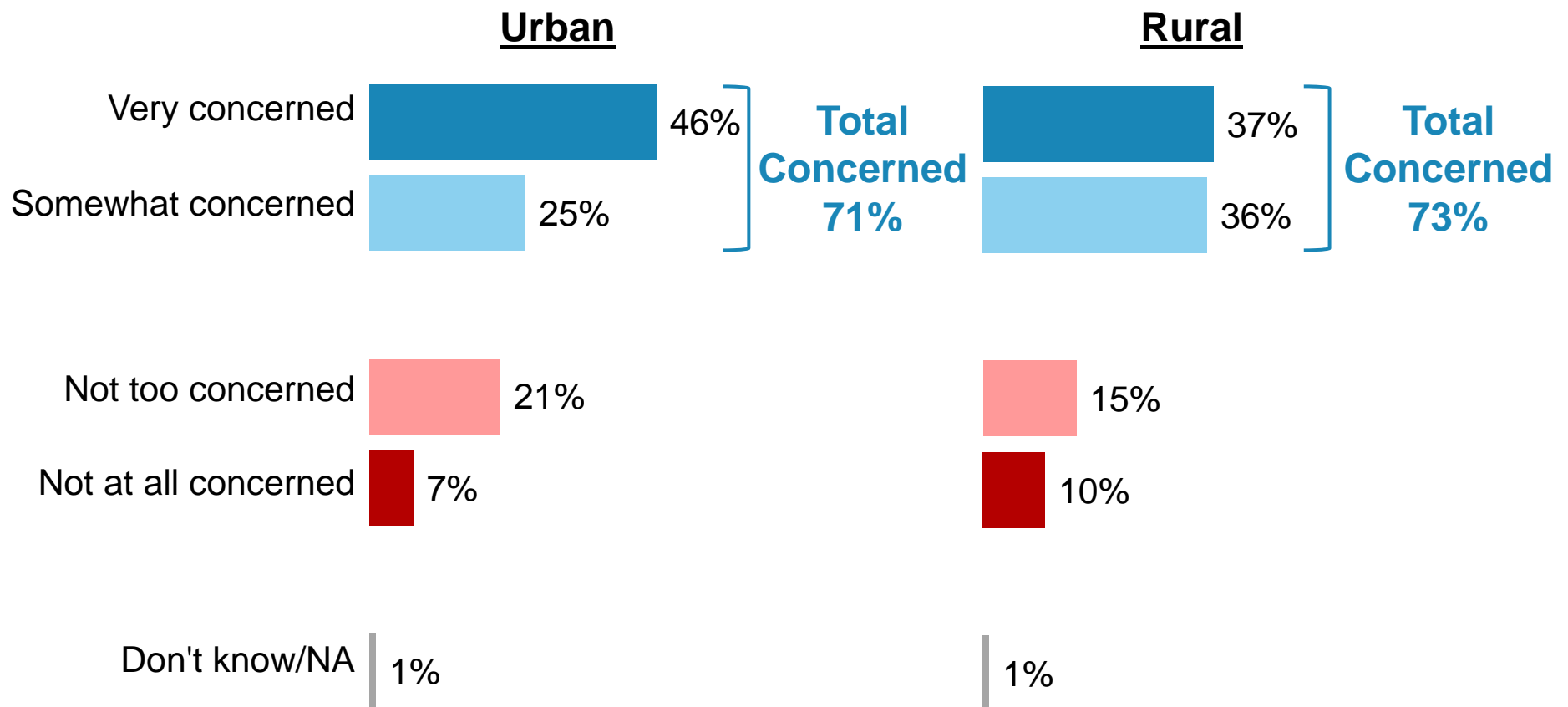
# More than two in five are “very concerned” about mine runoff.

*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*



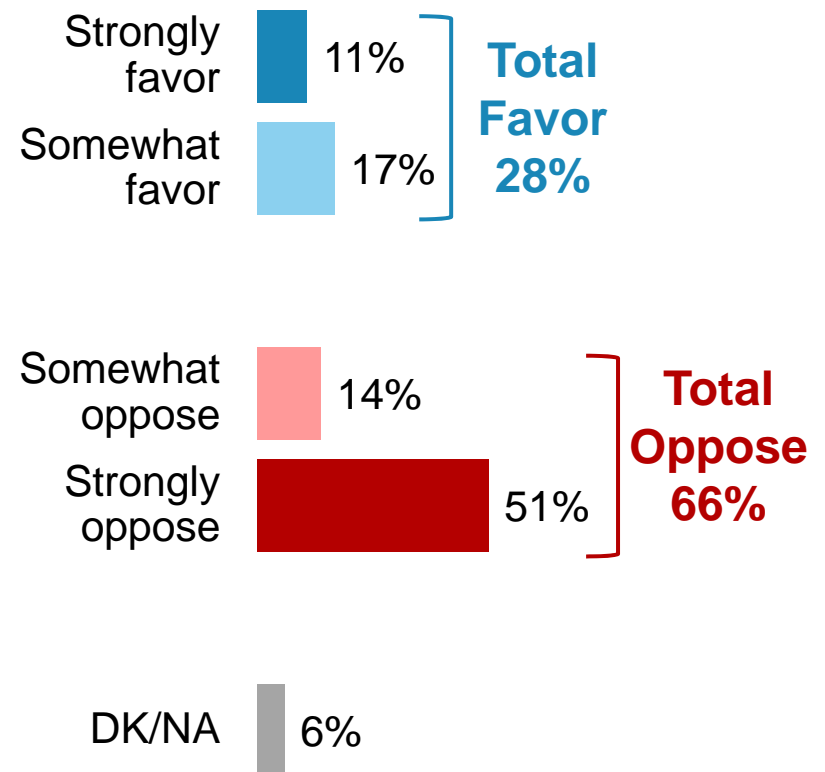


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# Pipelines and Tar Sands Oil

# Minnesotans oppose increasing the flow of Tar Sands Oil more than two-to-one.

Now let me give you some more information. Tar Sands Oil is an unconventional form of oil that is found mixed with sand and stone in Canadian oil fields. When Tar Sands Oil spills, it is very difficult to clean up because it sinks to the bottom of rivers and lakes, creating long-term contamination. For example, six years after a pipeline broke and spilled into the Michigan River, tens of thousands of gallons of Tar Sands Oil are still on the bottom of the river, even though the company has spent over \$1 billion to clean it up. Would you favor or oppose increasing the flow of Tar Sands Oil through Minnesota?



# More than two in five rural voters oppose increasing the flow of Tar Sands Oil in Minnesota.

Favor/Oppose	All Voters	Type of Area	
		Rural	Urban
Strongly favor	11%	13%	10%
Somewhat favor	17%	19%	16%
<b>Total Favor</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>26%</b>

Somewhat oppose	14%	17%	12%
Strongly oppose	51%	44%	57%
<b>Total Oppose</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>69%</b>

<b>Don't know/NA</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>5%</b>
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# Again, men are much more likely than women to support increasing Tar Sands Oil flow.

Favor/Oppose	All Voters	Household Income		Men by Age		Women by Age	
		<\$75,000	\$75,000+	18-49	50+	18-49	50+
Strongly favor	11%	12%	10%	19%	16%	6%	6%
Somewhat favor	17%	18%	17%	31%	23%	11%	8%
<b>Total Favor</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>13%</b>

Somewhat oppose	14%	16%	14%	10%	13%	12%	16%
Strongly oppose	51%	49%	54%	34%	39%	67%	64%
<b>Total Oppose</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>80%</b>

<b>Don't know/NA</b>	6%	4%	5%	6%	9%	3%	6%
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