



Clean Energy Communications

Renew Wisconsin Annual Summit

Madison, WI

January 18th, 2018



Introductions



Goals for this talk

Share what we know, based on evidence, about best practices for clean energy communications

- Familiarity with **communications tactics**
- Updates on **research, social science, and data** that can help identify and connect with different audiences.
- Recommendations on **effective clean energy messaging**.

Getting to know each other...

Go to **www.menti.com** and use the code **16 79 54**



1 Grab your phone

www.menti.com|

2 Go to **www.menti.com**

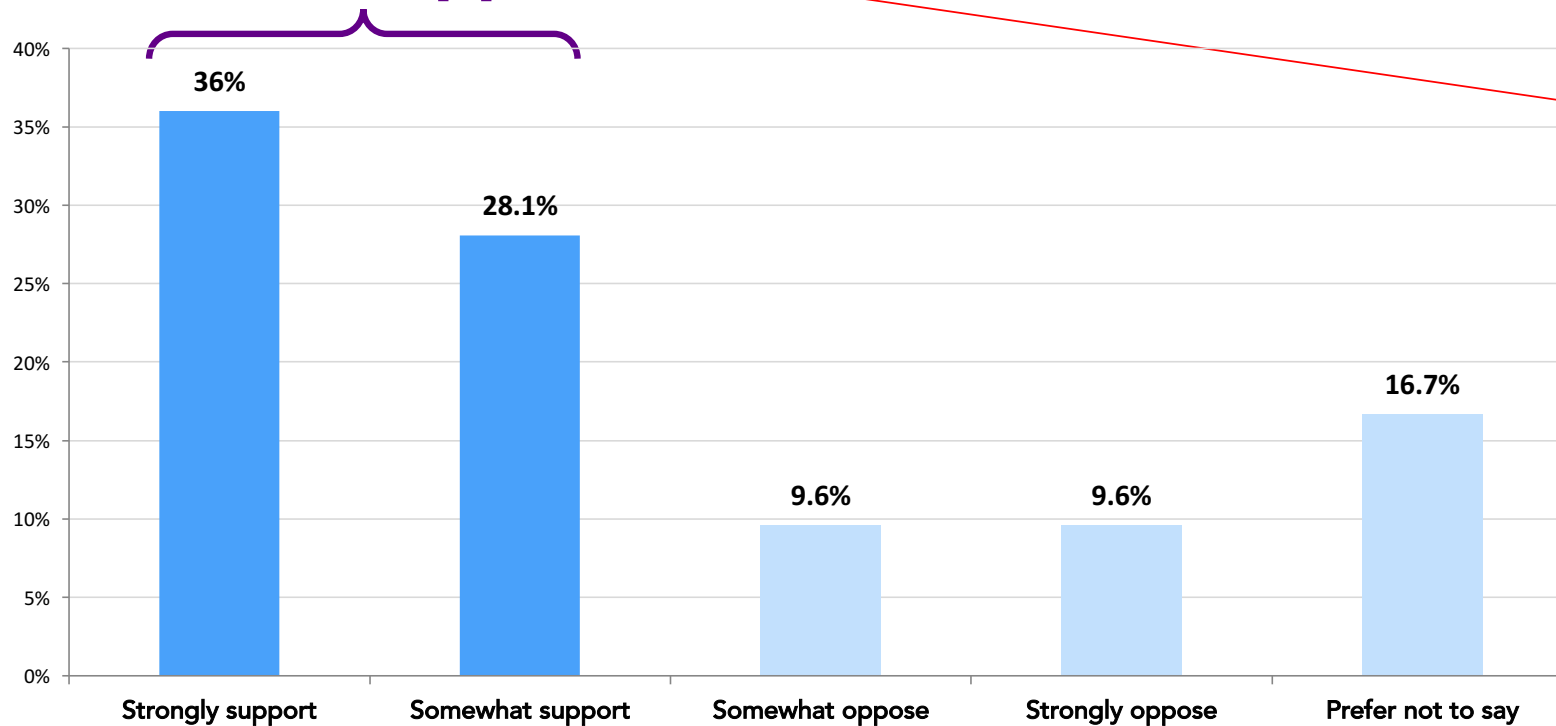


3 Enter the code
16 79 54 and vote!

1) CE comms 2) RPS

Strong support for 20% RPS, even with additional annual costs

64% support



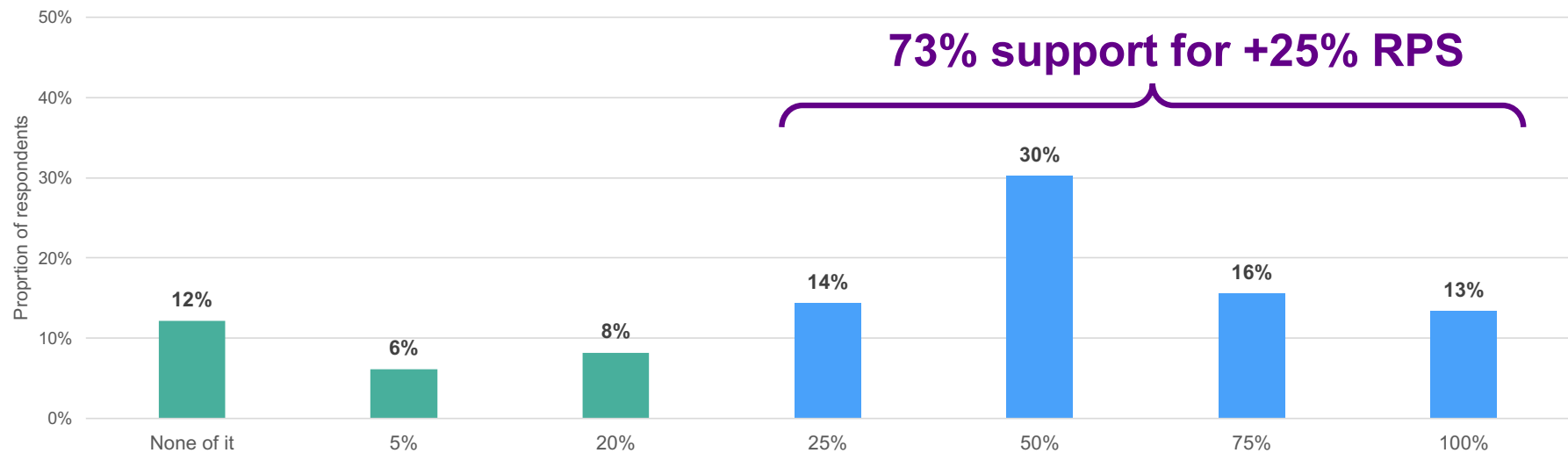
Wisconsin
Require utilities to produce 20%
electricity from renewable sources:
66%
(+ from national avg.)
(est. 2,529,884 of 3,968,995 adults)

"Do you support or oppose requiring utilities to produce 20% of their electricity from wind, solar or other renewable sources even if it cost the average household \$100 a year?"

Google Surveys fielded statewide January 12-14, 2018

It's not an anomaly. Hoosiers think so too.

What's your opinion? About how much of Indiana's electricity do you think electric utilities **should** be required to produce from renewable sources like wind and solar?



Google Surveys. Indiana. September 2017.

Communications Basics

Oftentimes, we think:

"communication" = "messaging"

Communications Matrix

Message

Messenger

Audience

Mode

Volume

Frequency

Research matters. A lot.



Research:

- ... adds clarity
- ... provides evidence
- ... adds value

Fishermen understand that fish feed in different spots at different times of the day, and are not hungry all the time. Good fishermen move to where the fish are, when they are biting, and what bait they like.

Always ask where people are, what's important to them, etc.

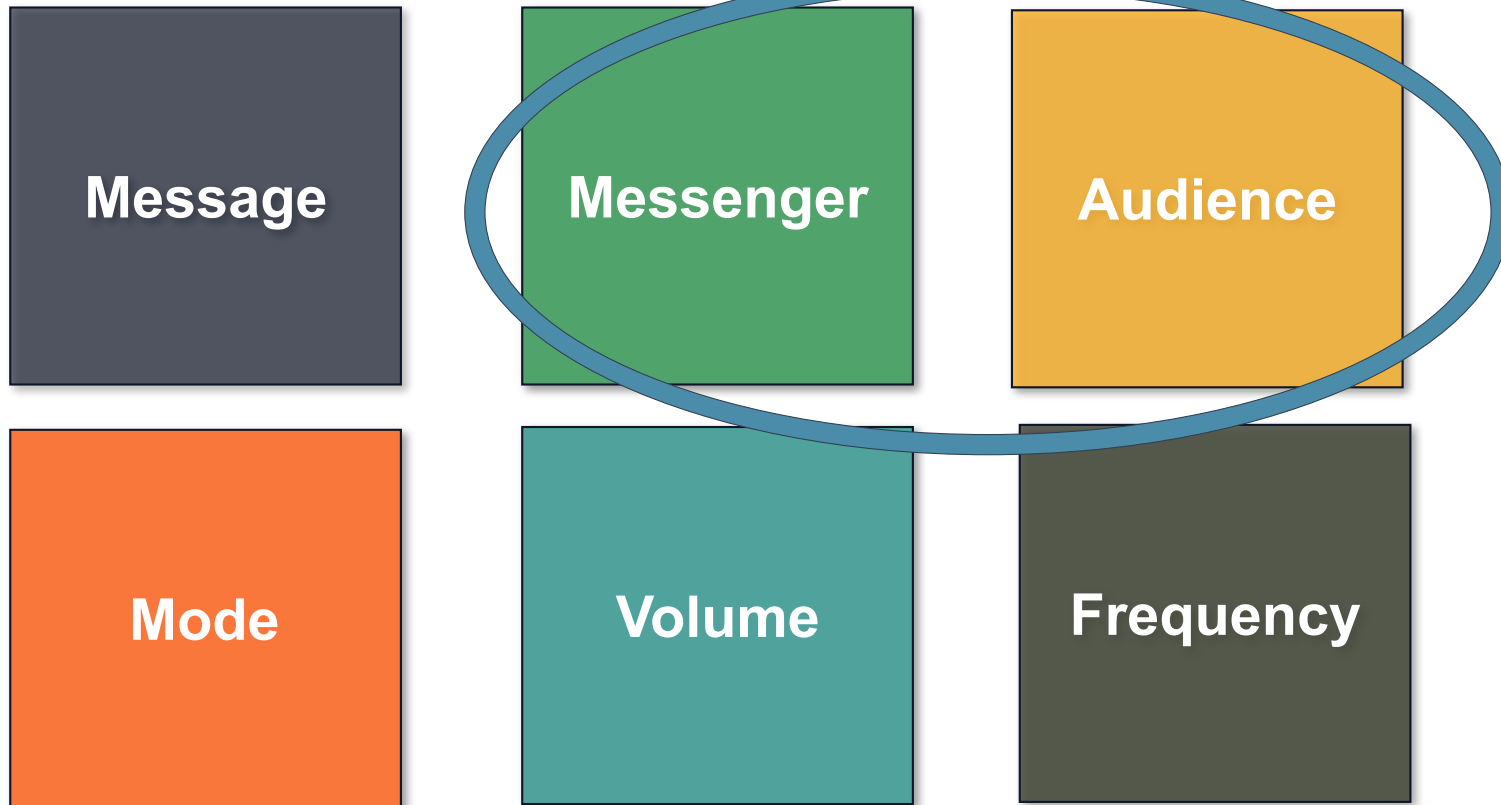


Know the "fish"!

Jeremy Porter Communications.

 Tusculum
Consulting

Clean energy communications matrix



Always consider your audience...

- Who are they?
- Where are they?
- What do they value?
- What are their opinions/actions on energy issues?
- What do you want them to do?





What do we know about what Wisconsinites think about energy?

Yale Opinion Maps: Wisconsin

Estimated % of adults who support requiring utilities to produce 20% electricity from renewable sources, 2016

Display model output: Require utilities to produce 20% electricity from renewable sources | Absolute Value | Permalink
Click on map to select geography, or: Wisconsin

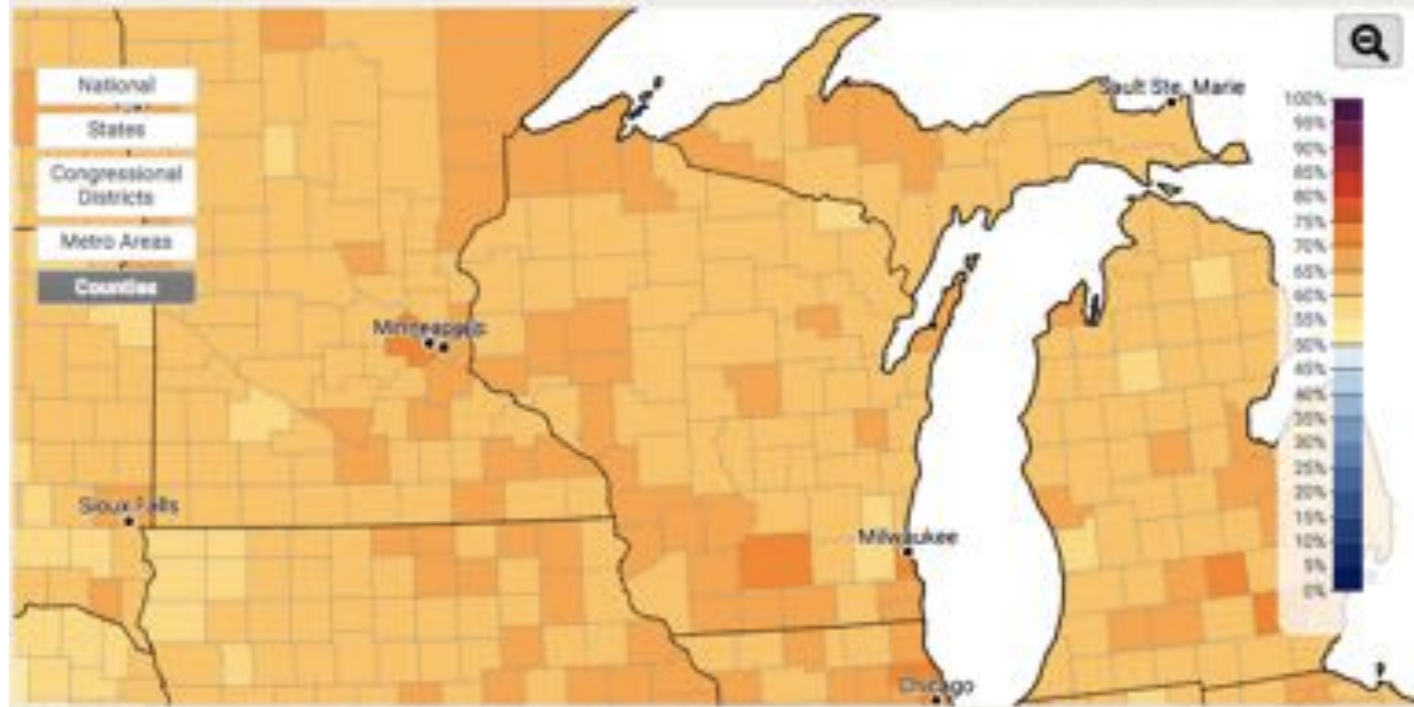


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Display model output: Absolute Value

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Yale Opinion Maps: Wisconsin

Estimated % of adults who support funding research into renewable energy sources, 2016

Display model output: Fund research into renewable energy sources | Absolute Value | Permalink

Click on map to select geography, or: Wisconsin | Un-Select

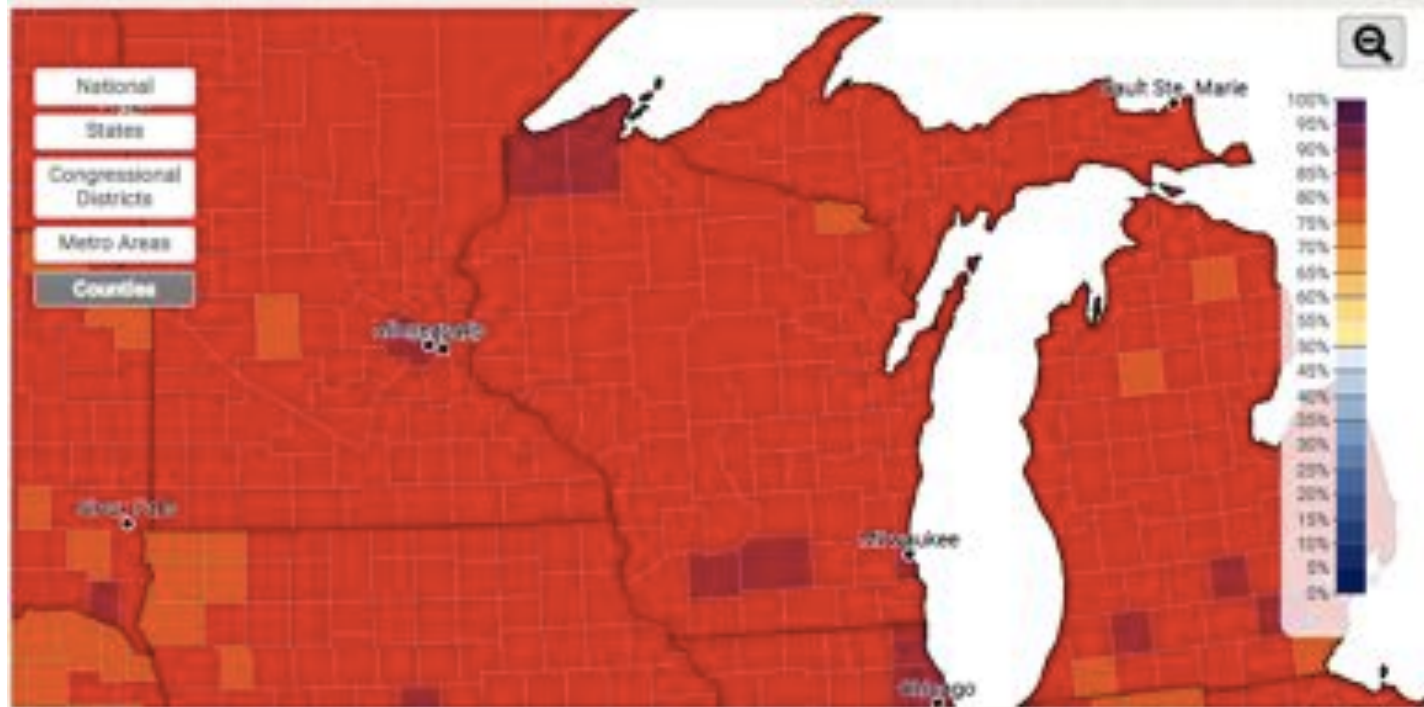


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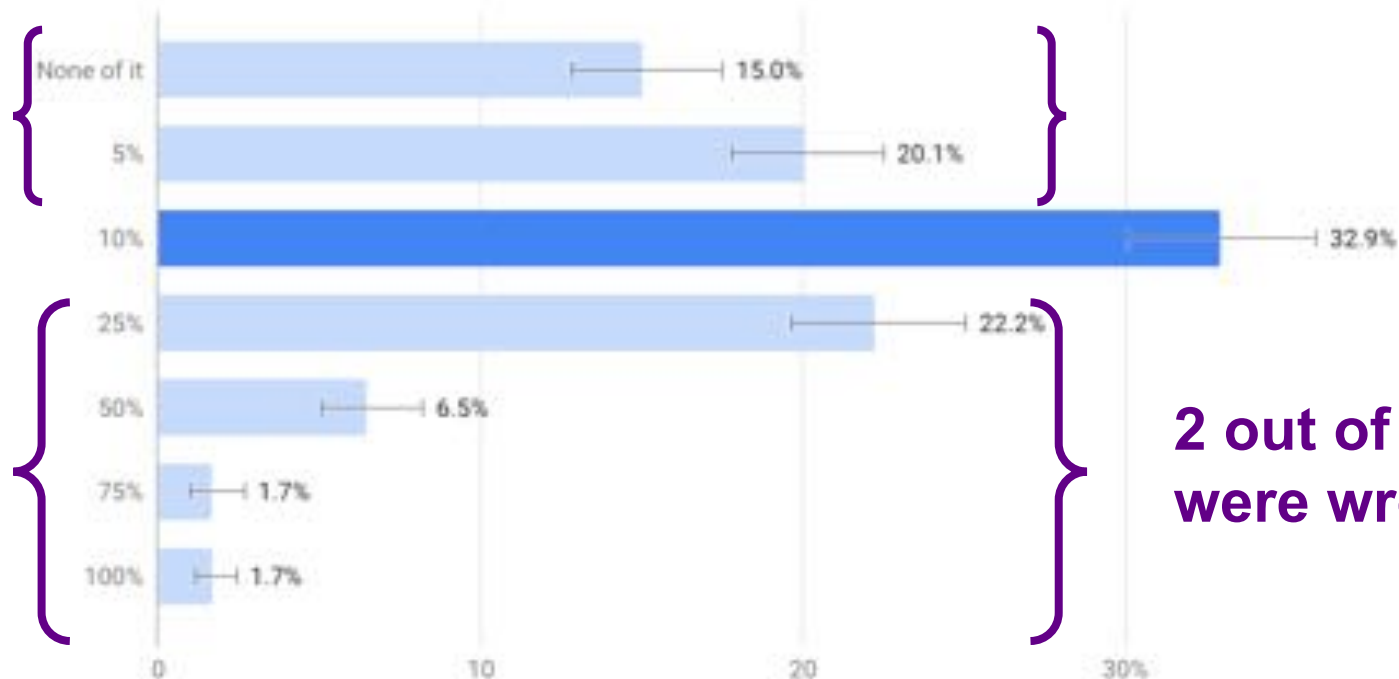
Click on map to select geography, or: Wisconsin Select a County Un-Select



What people in Wisconsin think about: current RE mix

About how much electricity in Wisconsin do you think currently comes from renewable sources like wind and solar power?

792 respondents ⓘ



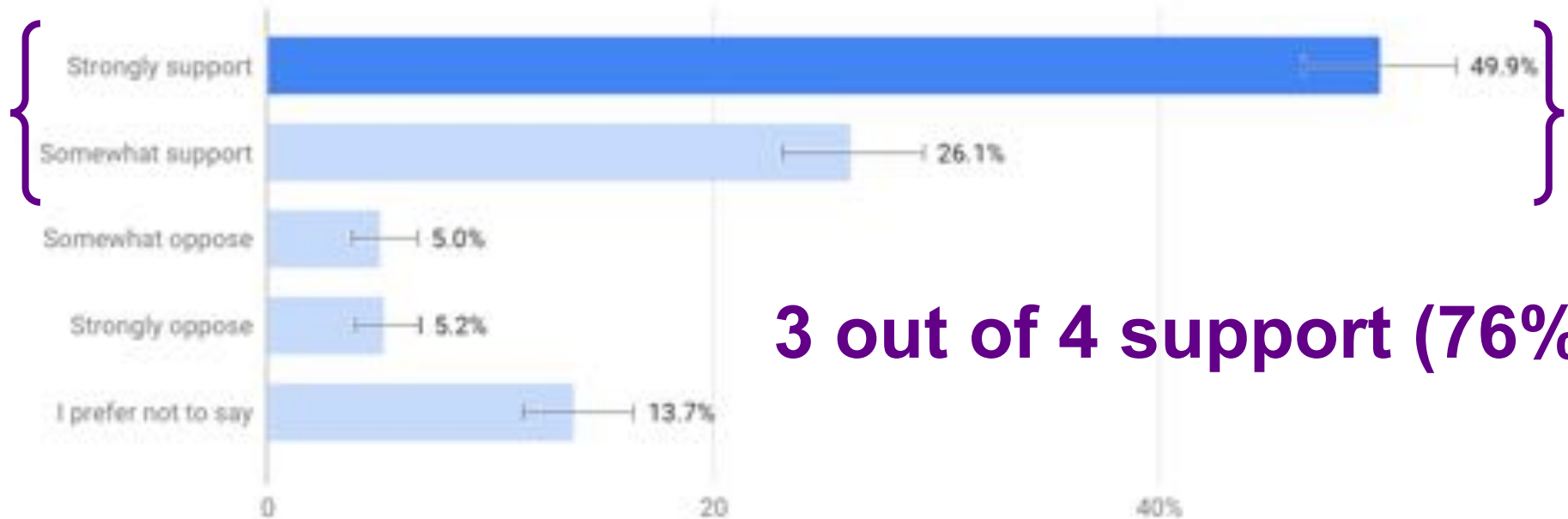
**2 out of 3 (67%)
were wrong**

Google Surveys fielded statewide January 12-14, 2018

What people in Wisconsin think about: net metering

Do you support or oppose allowing schools, churches, and homeowners that install solar panels on their property to sell the power they don't need back to the electric utility?

634 respondents ⓘ



Getting to know Wisconsin...

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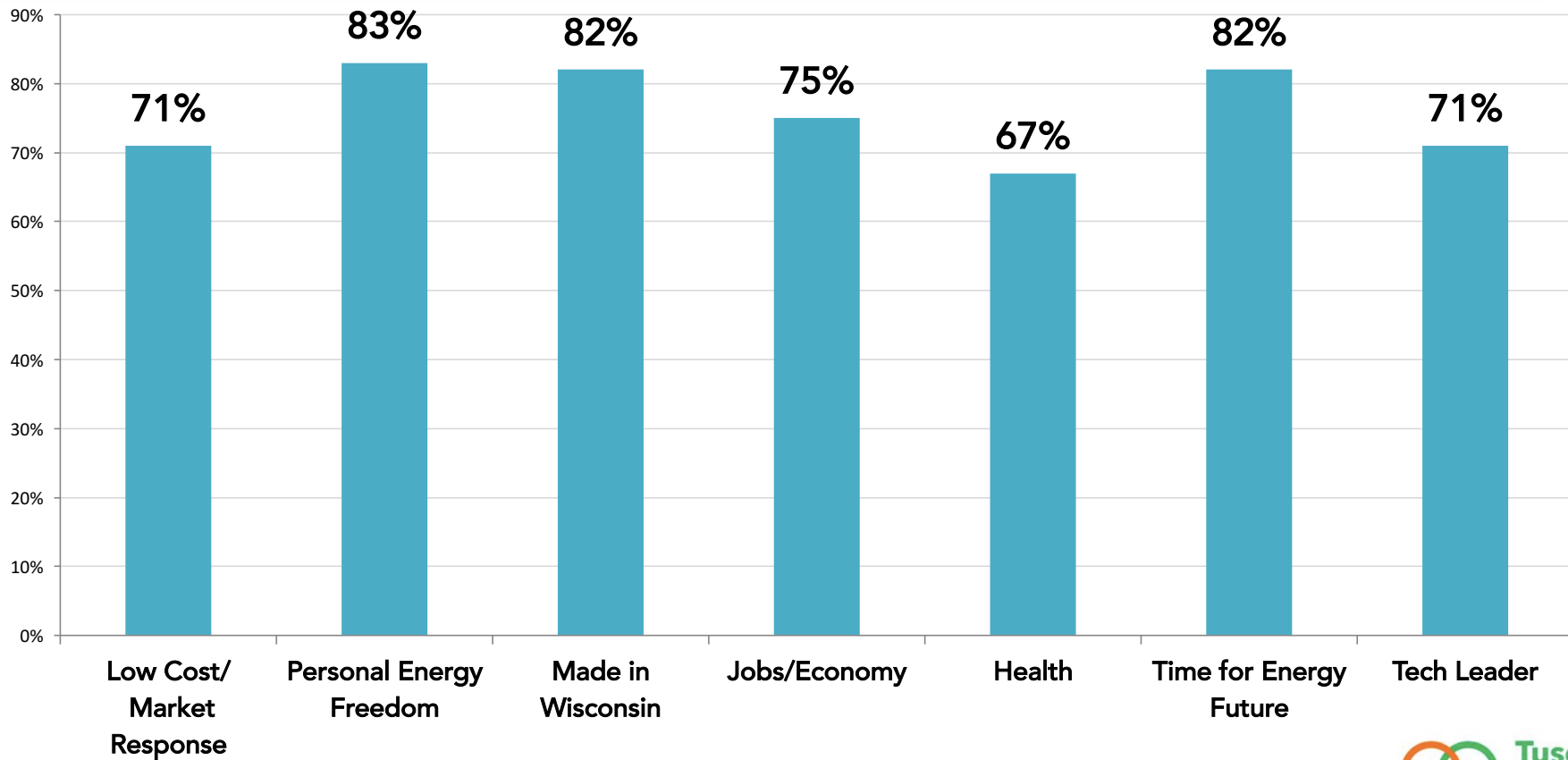
www.menti.com|

2 Go to **www.menti.com**



3 Enter the code
16 79 54 and vote!

Lots of strong support for various frames



Public Opinion Strategies/FM3. September 2017.

**It helps to know what we
know about people**

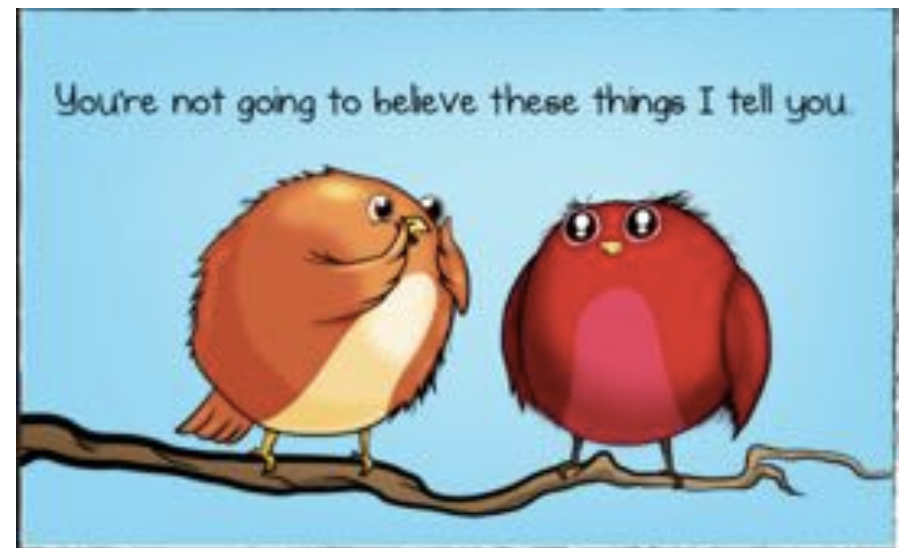
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- What do you want them to do?



How people think, in a nutshell

People tend to not make decisions rationally,
but rather based on how the options make them feel.



<http://theoatmeal.com/comics/believe>

Social Science 101



Social science to remember...

- **Motivated Reasoning:** People seek out and filter for information that reinforces existing beliefs and world views.
- **Solution Aversion:** Polarization results from an aversion to the solutions, rather than straight denial. It's about being able to do something about a problem, not the problem itself.
- **Peer Identity:** Who we trust, and their perceived "allied-ness" or "peer"-iness is much more closely linked to our political identities than data or science.

Social science to remember...

- *Efficacy really, really matters:* People need to know that their actions will have an impact.
- *Hope, not gloom and doom:* Most of our brains are wired to be inspired and motivated, not scared and helpless.
- *Lay out a plan:* Explaining how we get from low deployment to scale helps make a clean energy future tangible. Use real world examples and take the time to explain it.

But, we regularly miss the boat

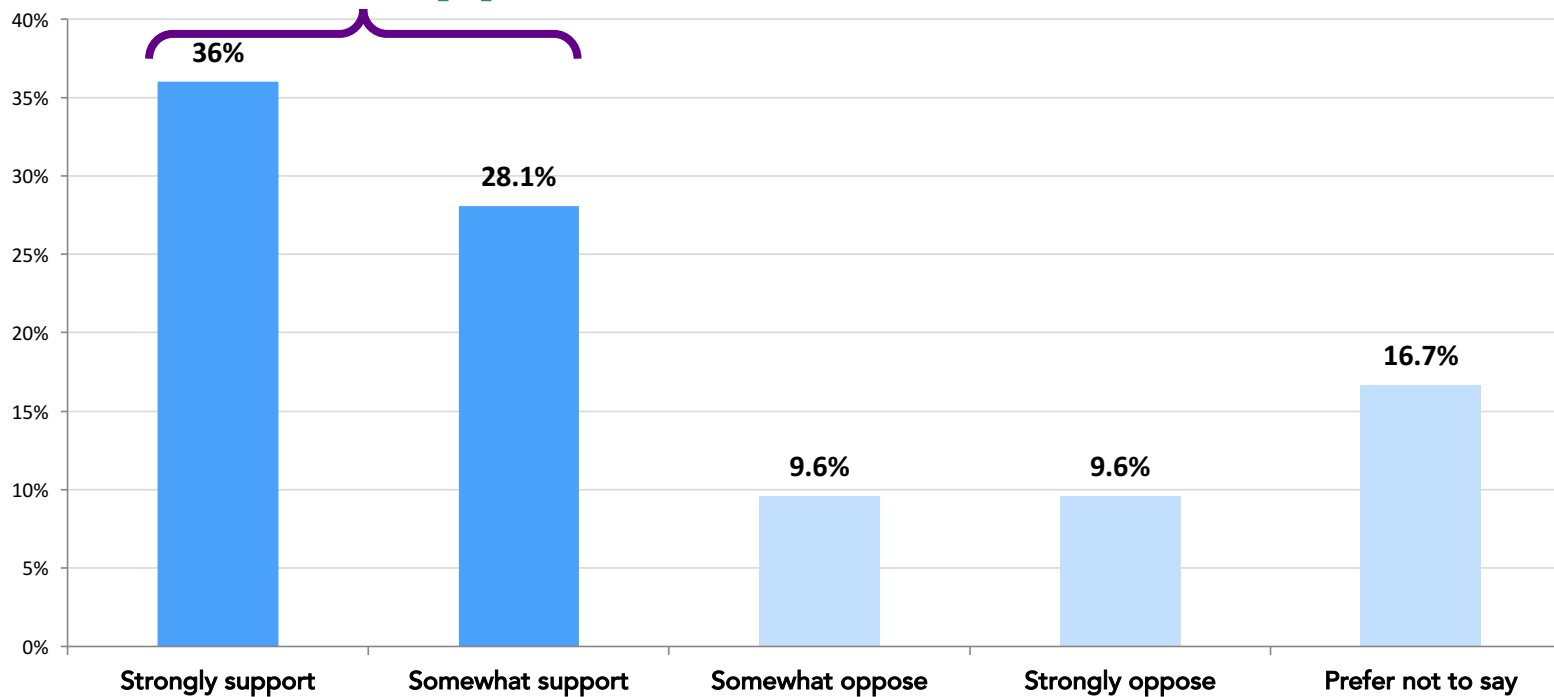
- **"Pluralistic ignorance"** Americans consistently *under-estimate* other Americans' opinions
- **"Spiral of silence"** When people think others don't share their support for action, they are less likely to voice their support



Mildenberger & Tingley, 2017, Geiger & Swim, 2016

Remember, 64% of Wisconsinites support a 20% RPS, even with additional annual costs

64% support



"Do you support or oppose requiring utilities to produce 20% of their electricity from wind, solar or other renewable sources, even if it cost the average household \$100 a year?"

Google Surveys fielded statewide January 12-14, 2018

But only 10% realize support is that high

How many Wisconsinites do you think support a requirement that utilities get 20% of their power from renewable sources even if it costs an average household \$100 a year?

664 respondents ⓘ



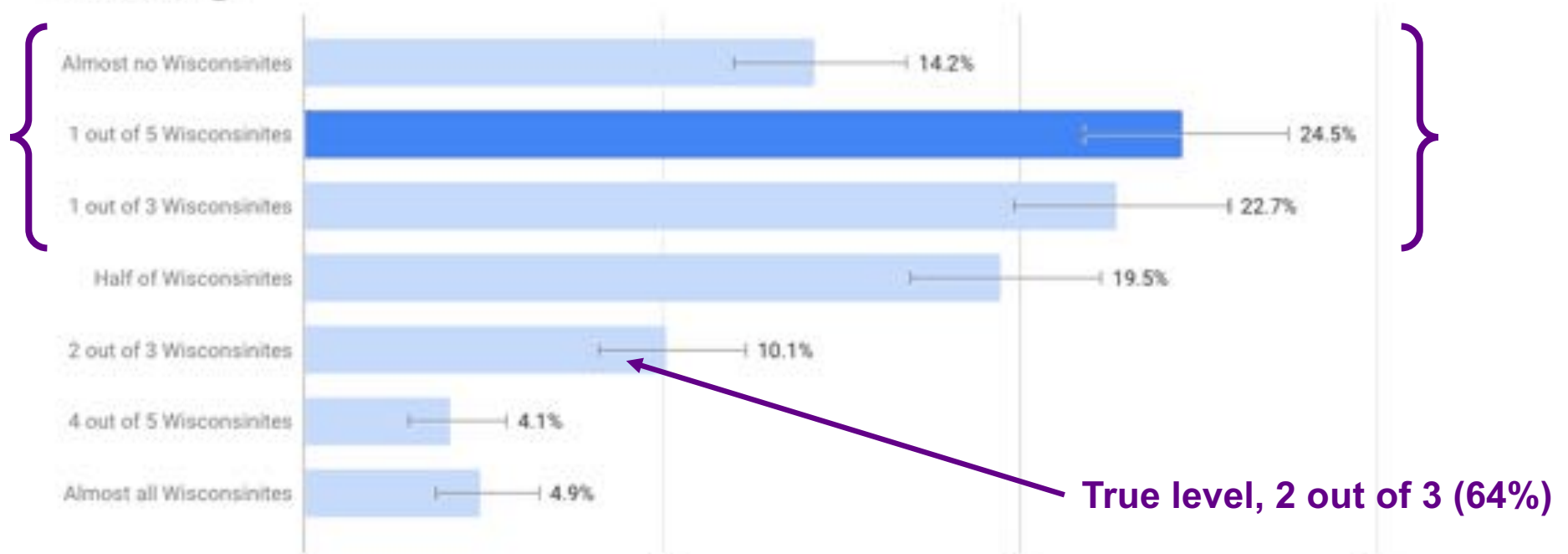
True level, 2 out of 3 (64%)

Google Surveys fielded statewide January 12-14, 2018

...so over 2/3 of Wisconsinites falsely think RPS supporters are in the minority

How many Wisconsinites do you think support a requirement that utilities get 20% of their power from renewable sources even if it costs an average household \$100 a year?

654 respondents ⓘ



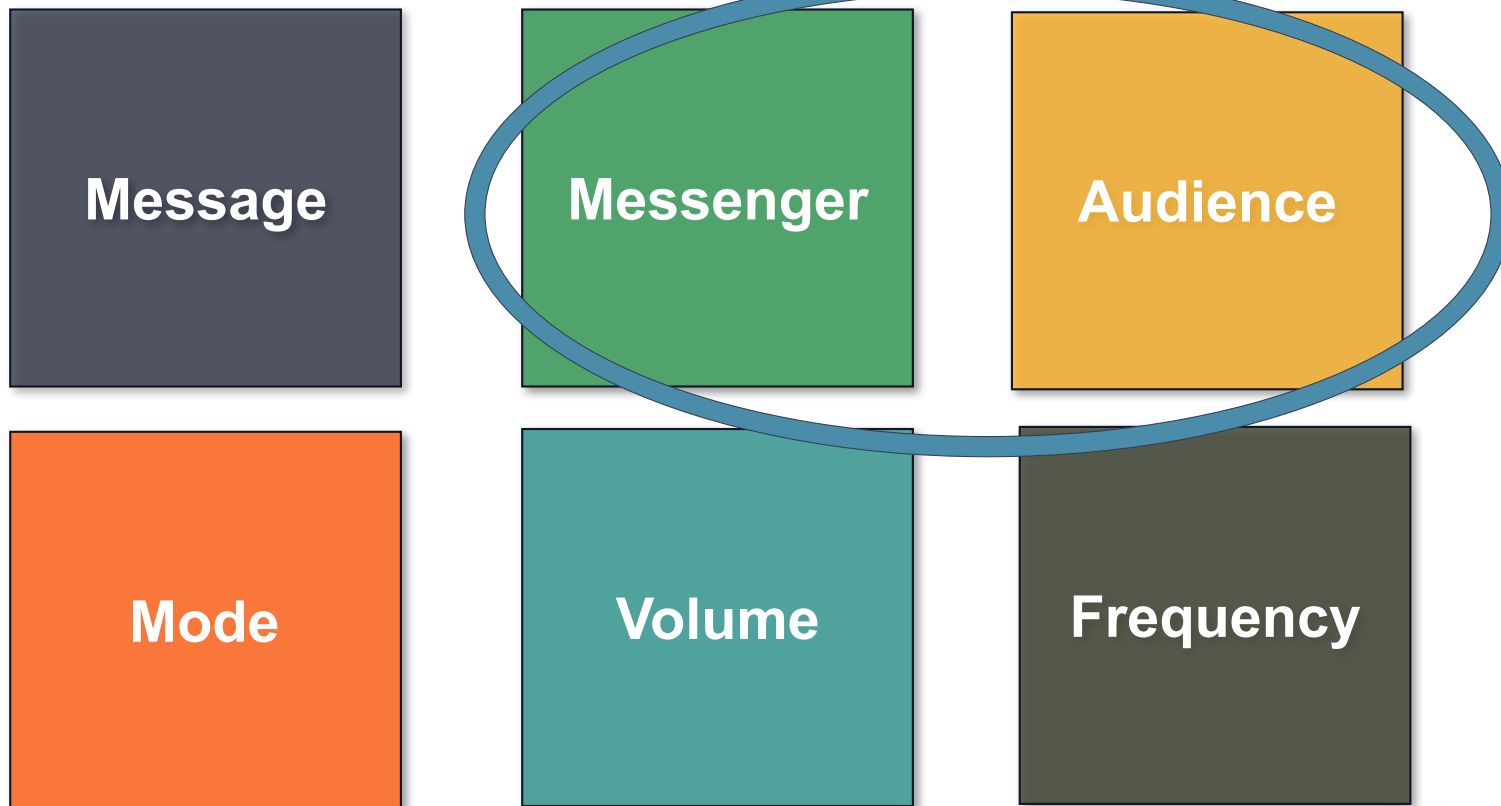
"Do you support or oppose requiring utilities to produce 20% of their electricity from wind, solar or other renewable sources even if it cost the average household \$100 a year?"

Google Surveys fielded statewide January 12-14, 2018

We all are wired to our brains...



Remember the communications matrix



Remember to consult or conduct research



Know the "fish"!

Jeremy Porter Communications.

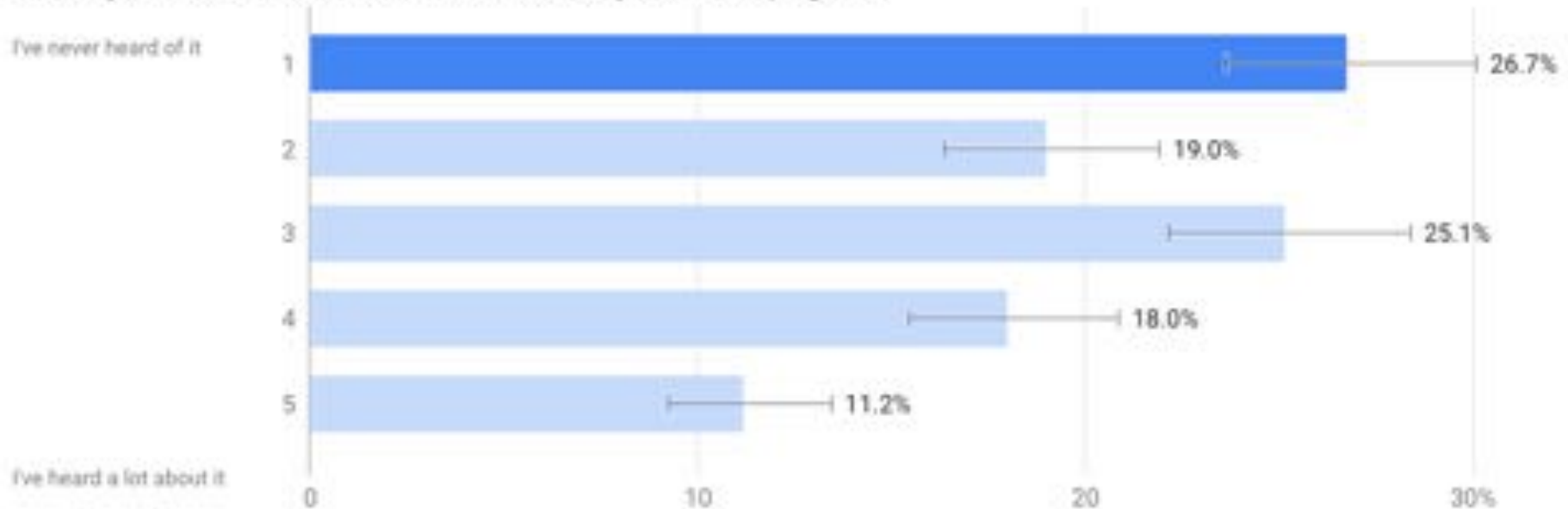


Don't presume people know about programs

Wisconsin's Focus on Energy program offers energy efficiency rebates and programs to help homeowners reduce their energy use and costs.

613 respondents ⓘ

Not everyone has heard about this. How familiar are you with this program?



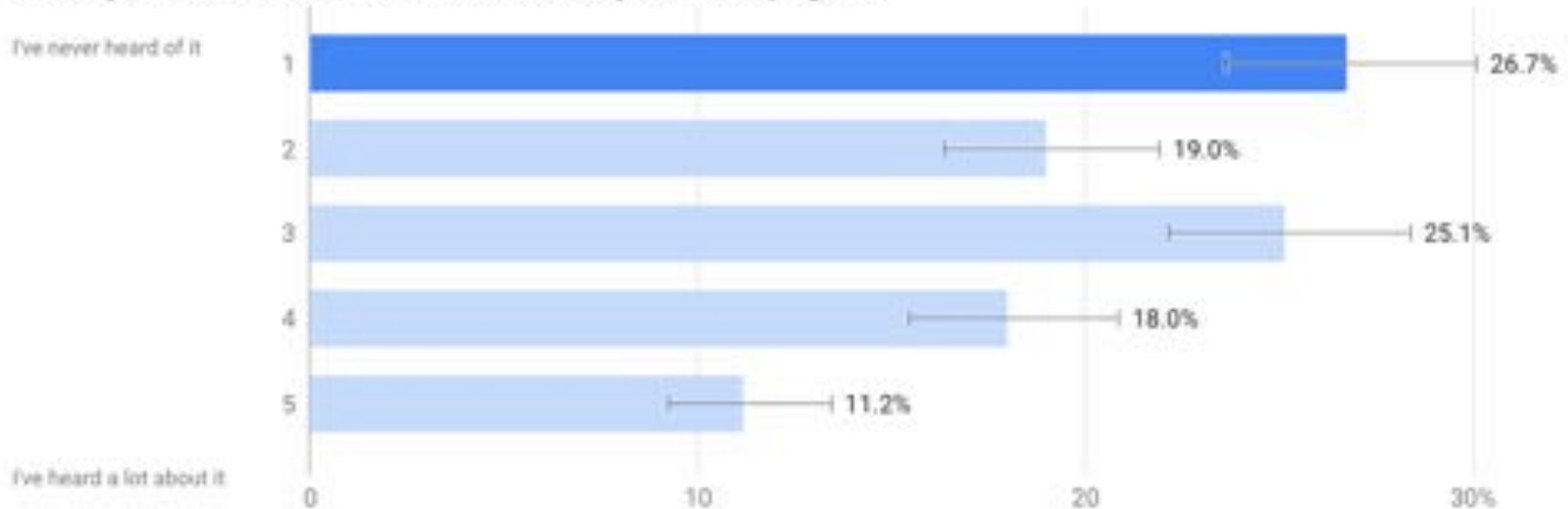
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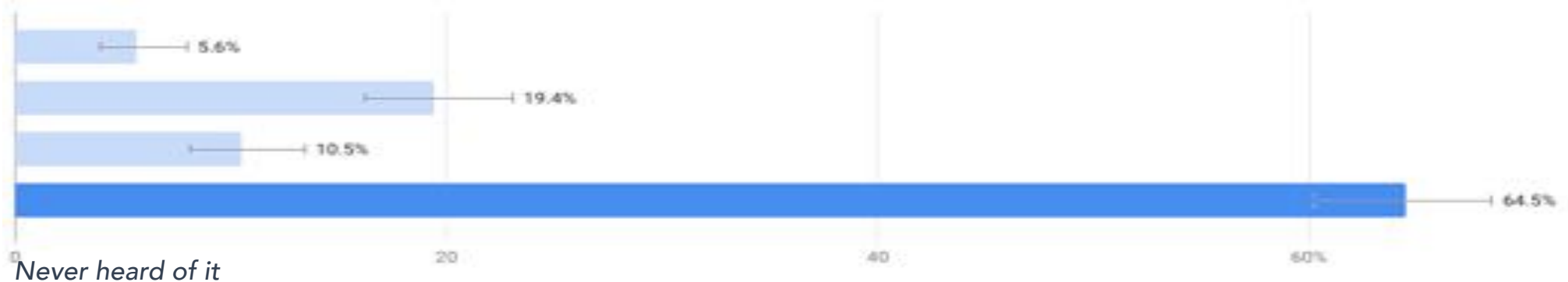


Google Surveys fielded statewide January 12-14, 2018

Really. Don't presume people know programs.

The Illinois state legislature recently passed the Future Energy Jobs bill which will greatly increase investment in renewable energy. How familiar are you with this plan?

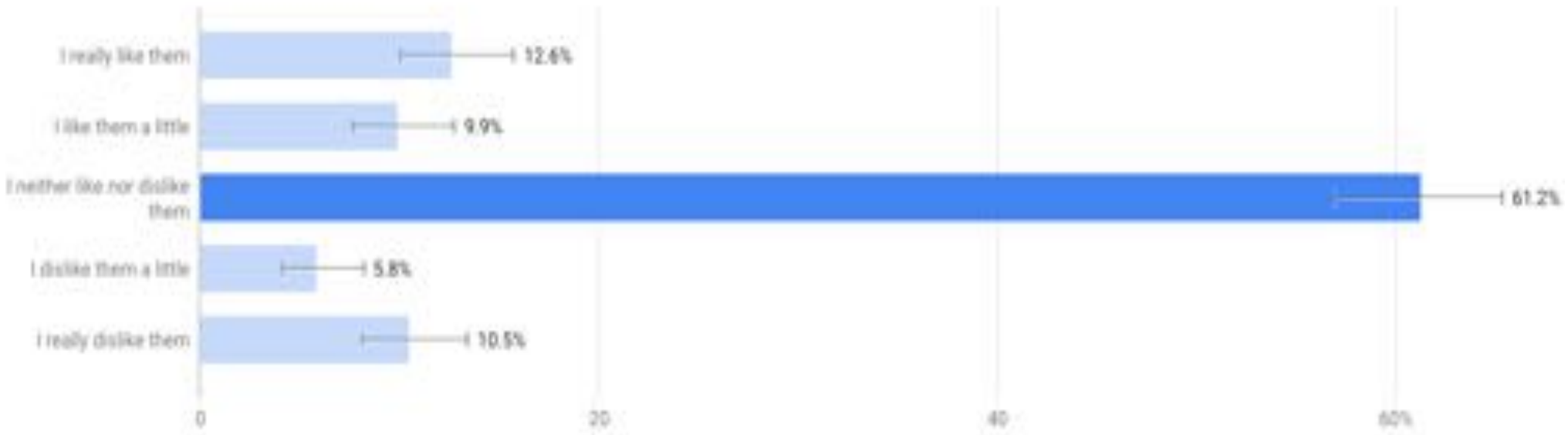
Heard a lot about it



Google Surveys. Fielded statewide in Illinois. December 2016.

Most have a neutral opinion of their utility

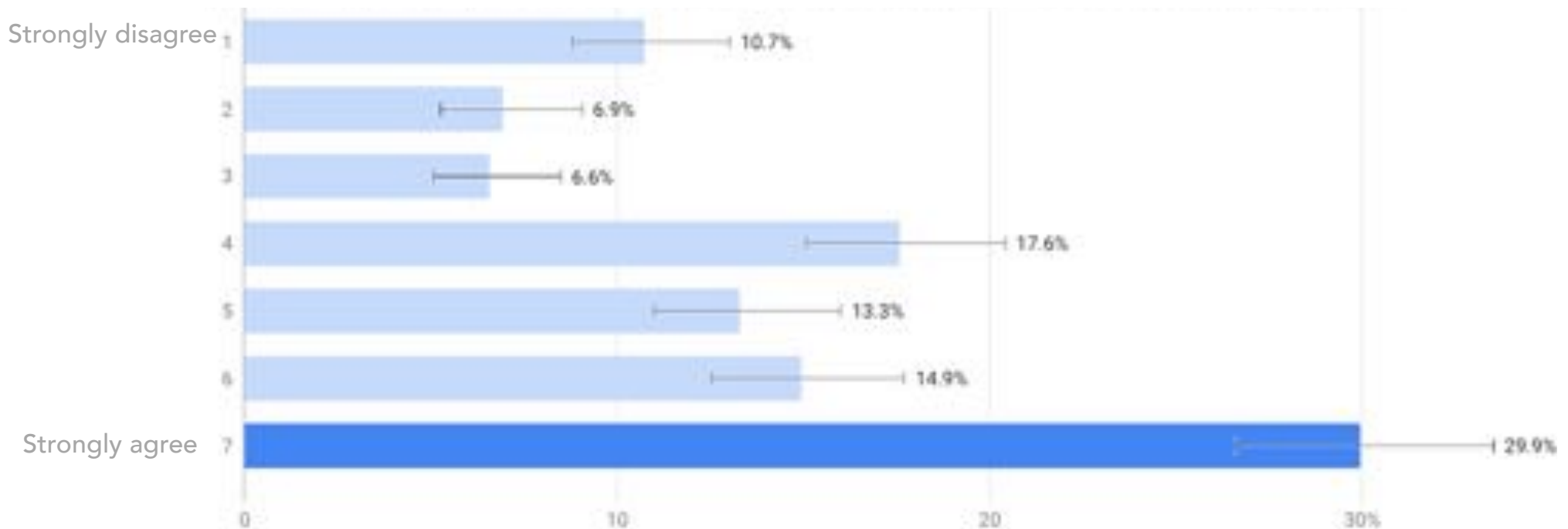
Overall, do you like or dislike your utility company? (First Energy, Toledo Edison, Duke, etc.)



Google Surveys. Fielded statewide in Ohio. 2016.

Local energy production is a winner

It's important to increase Wisconsin solar and wind power because we shouldn't have to rely on out-of state utilities and foreign oil to keep our lights on.



Google Surveys. Fielded statewide in Ohio. 2016.

Clean energy comms recommendations (based on social science and data)

Focus on where we're heading, rather than where we've been (fossil fuels)

Position clean energy in the here and now

Put people in the picture

It's okay to have bold goals

Be specific about how we get to scale

The policy handle may make a difference

Don't assume people are not willing to pay

Leverage energy efficiency's broad appeal

Tap core values like: self-reliance, American innovation/ leadership, and legacy

Pick good messengers (neighbors, business owners, local elected officials, etc)

Amplify diverse voices to make the vision more inclusive

Always consider your audience...

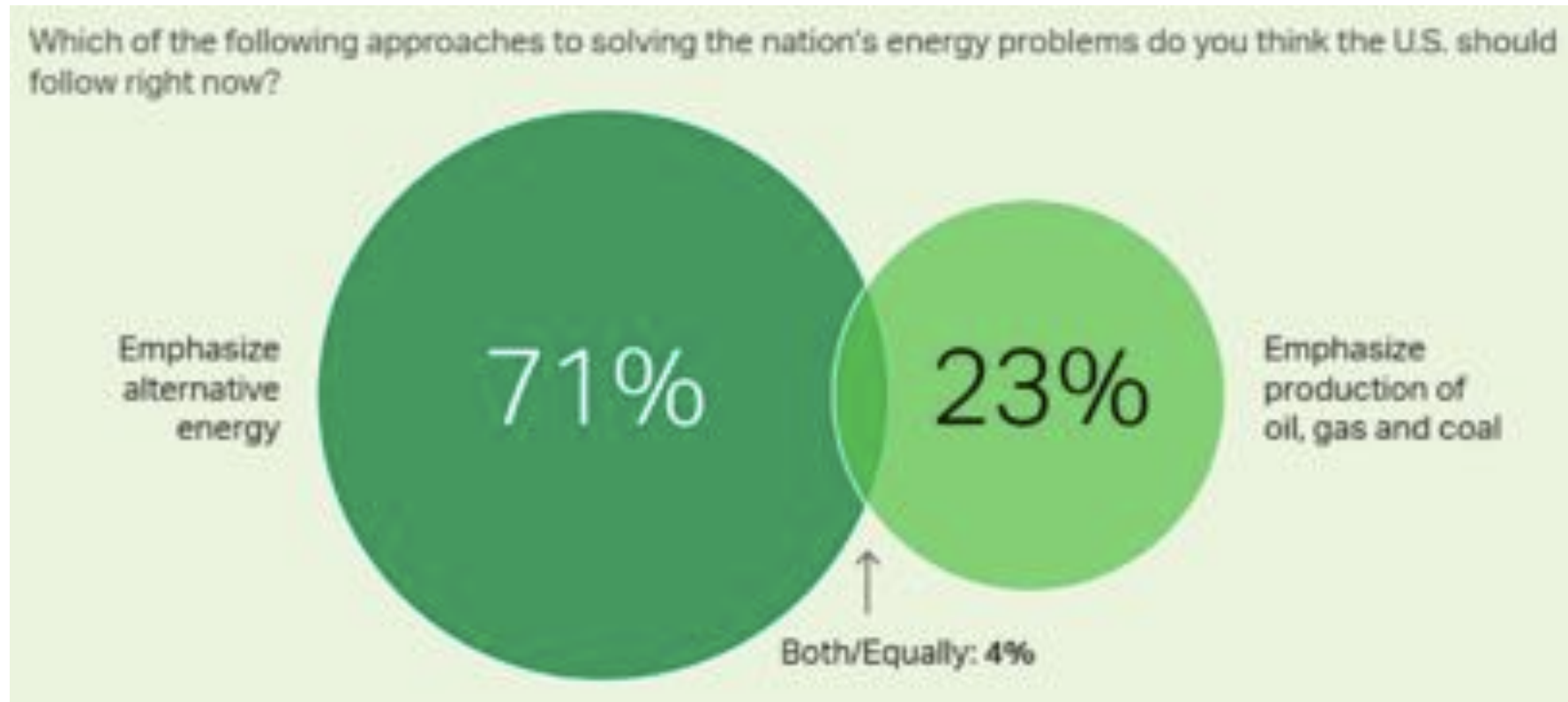
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Clean Energy Opinions: What We Know



Americans prefer alternative energy development

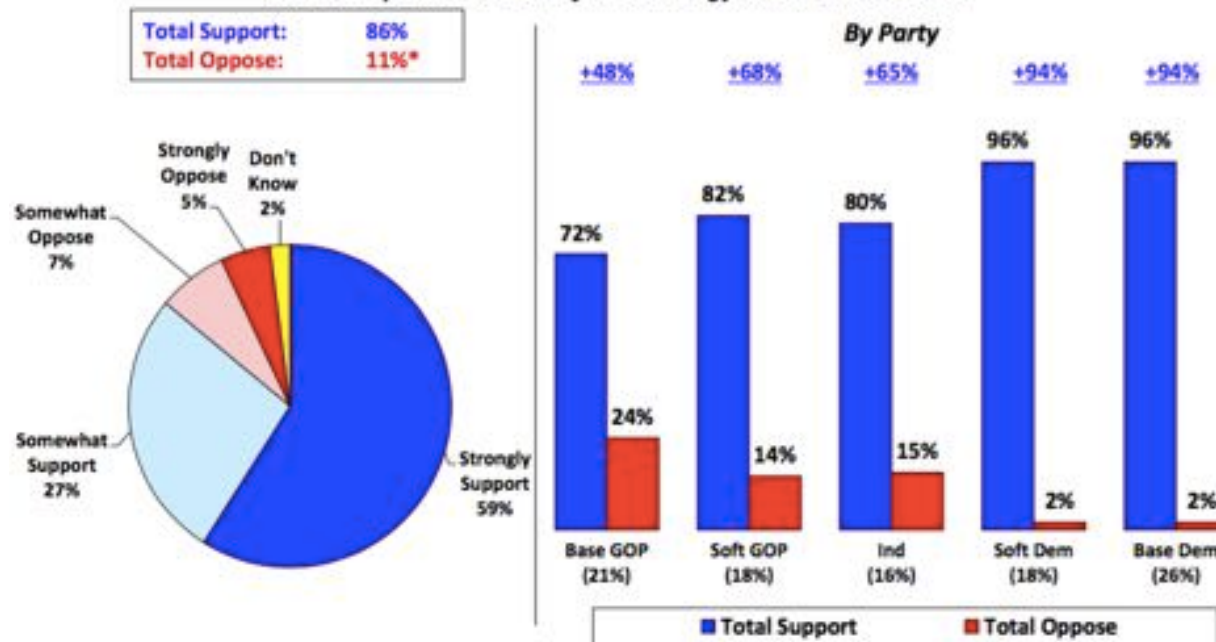


Gallup. March, 2017.

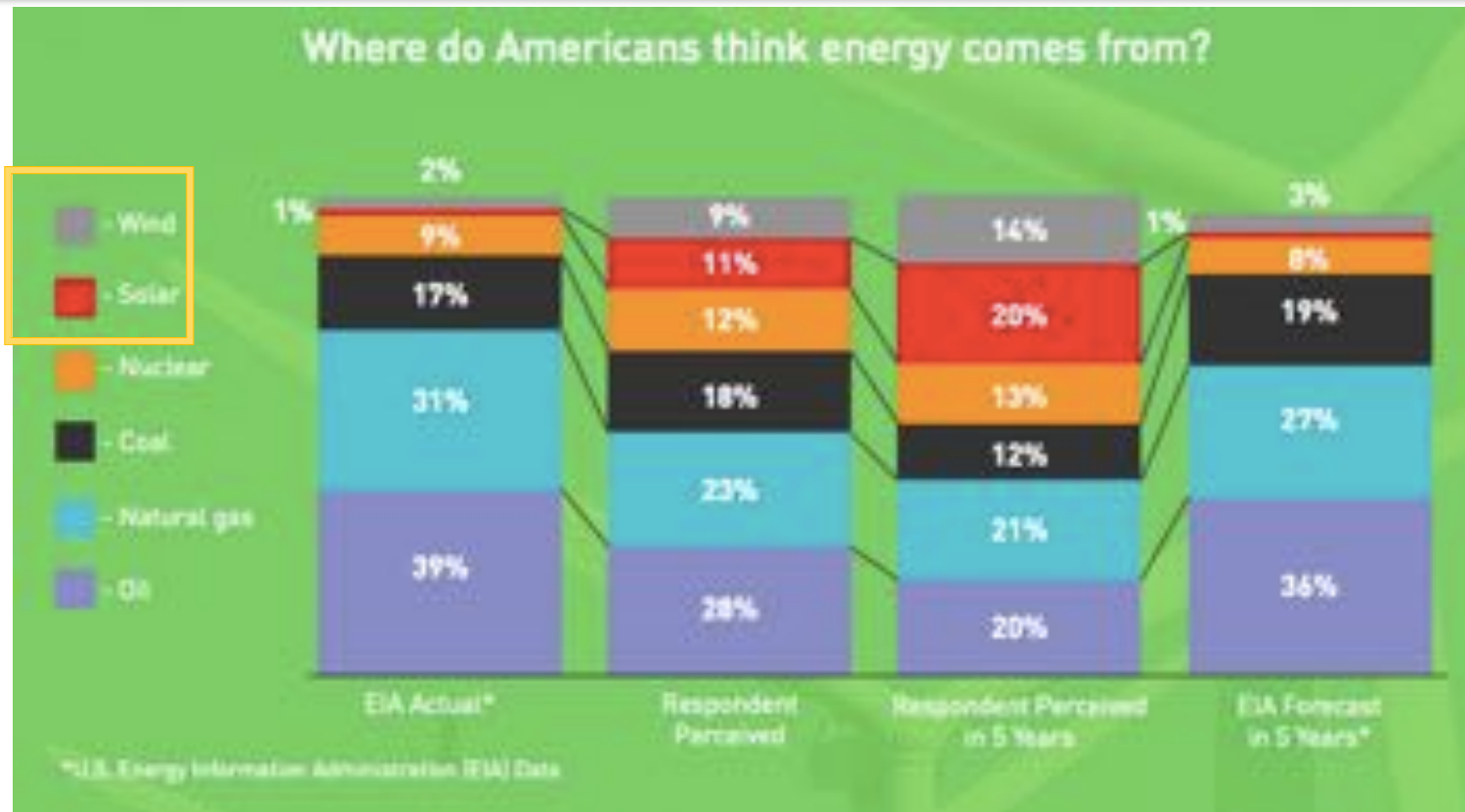
Clean energy is hugely popular

Almost 60% of voters strongly support taking action to accelerate the development and use of clean energy.

"And, would you say you support or oppose taking action to accelerate the development and use of clean energy in the United States?"

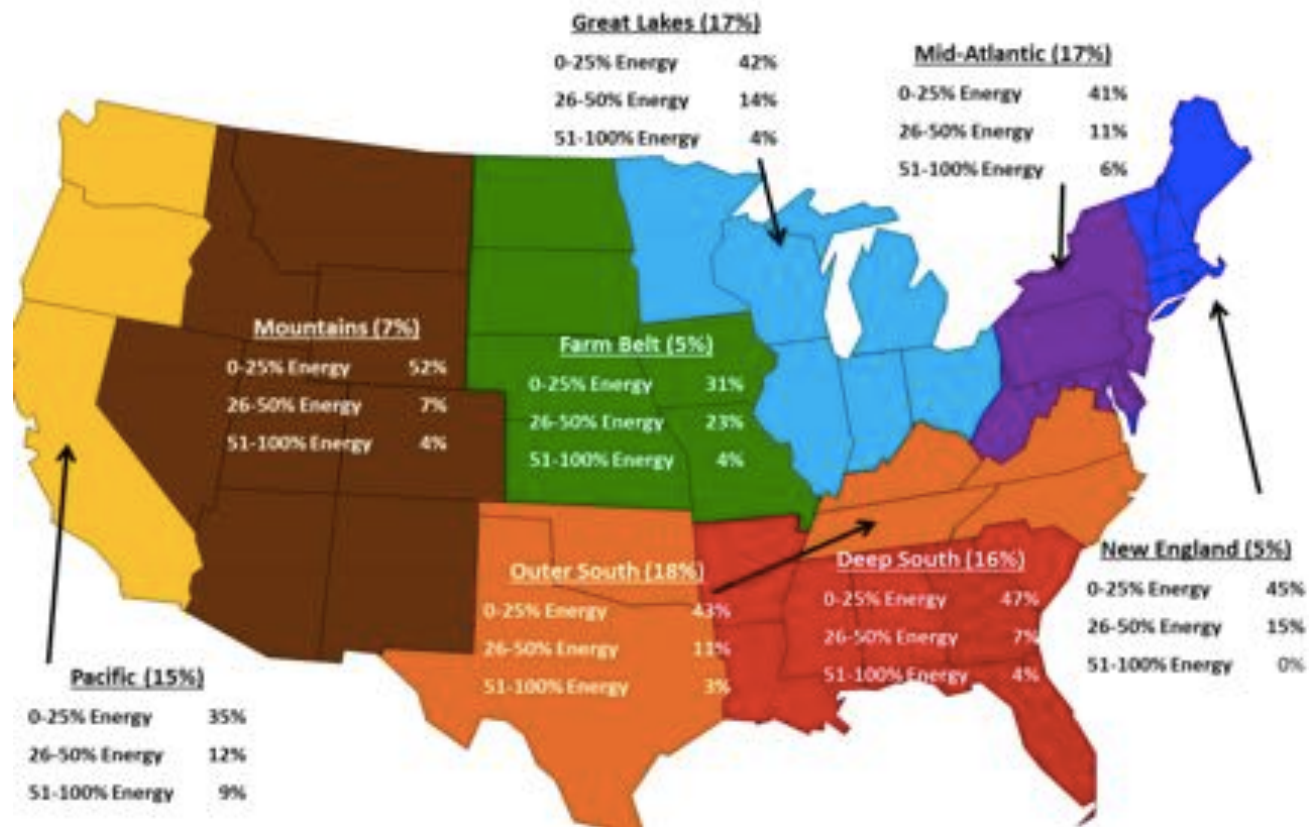


But clean energy production is overestimated, wildly



Those overestimates are widespread

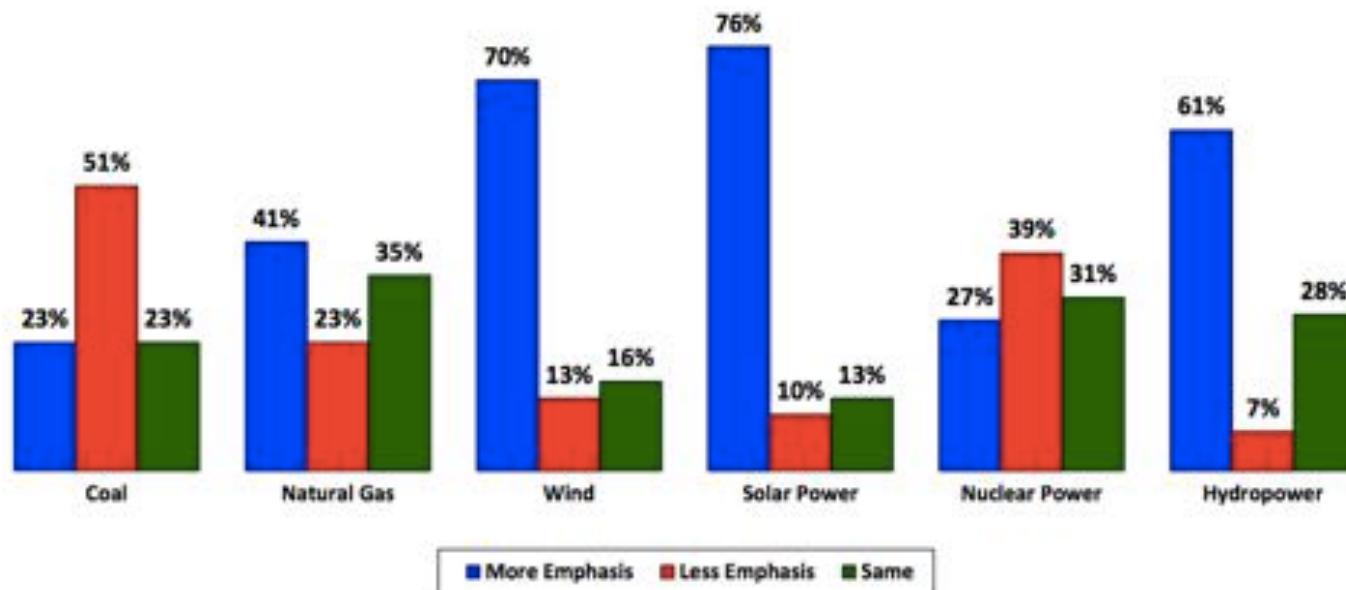
Percent of state's electricity voters say comes from renewable sources



Public Opinion Strategies. November 2016.

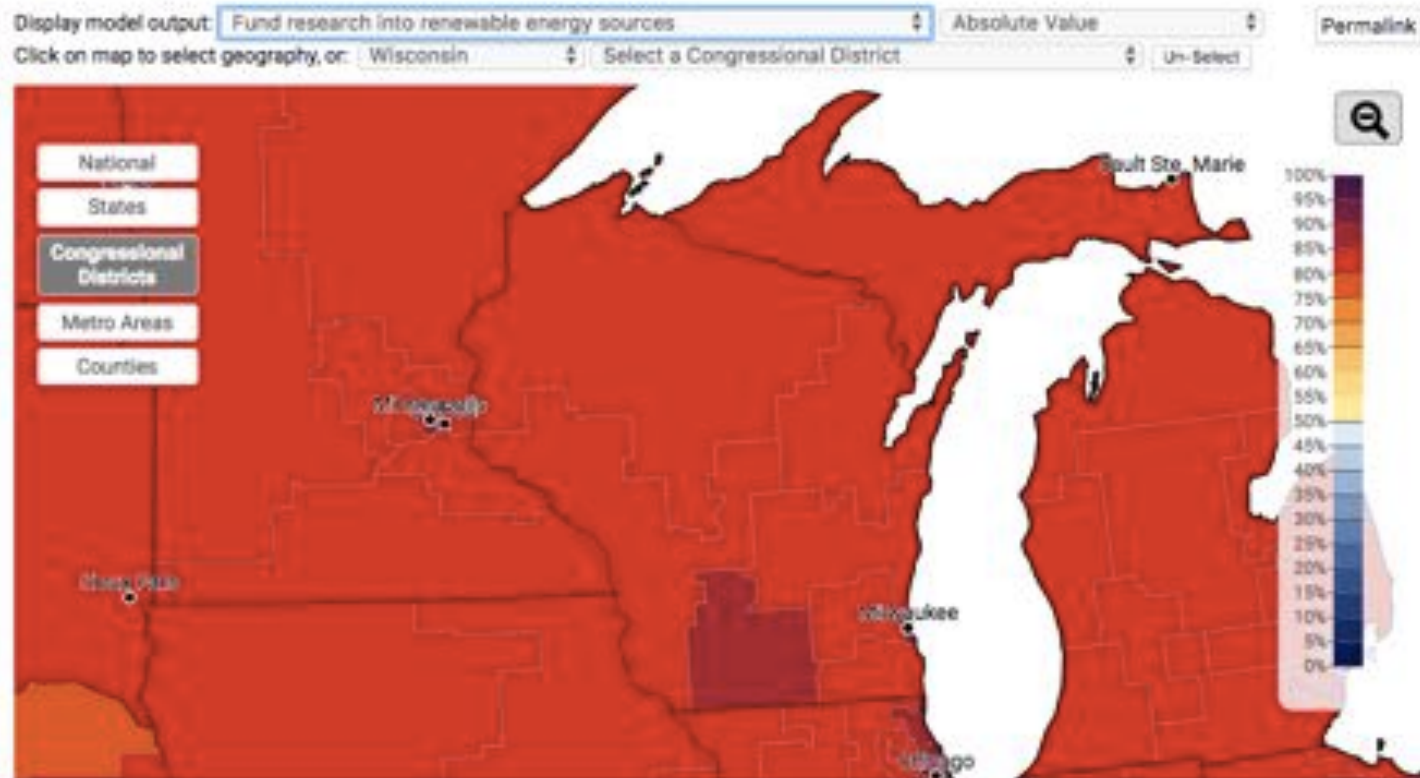
And yet people still think the U.S. should be producing even more renewable energy

"Do you think that, as a country, the United States should put more emphasis, less emphasis, or about the same emphasis as it does now on producing domestic energy from each of the following sources..."



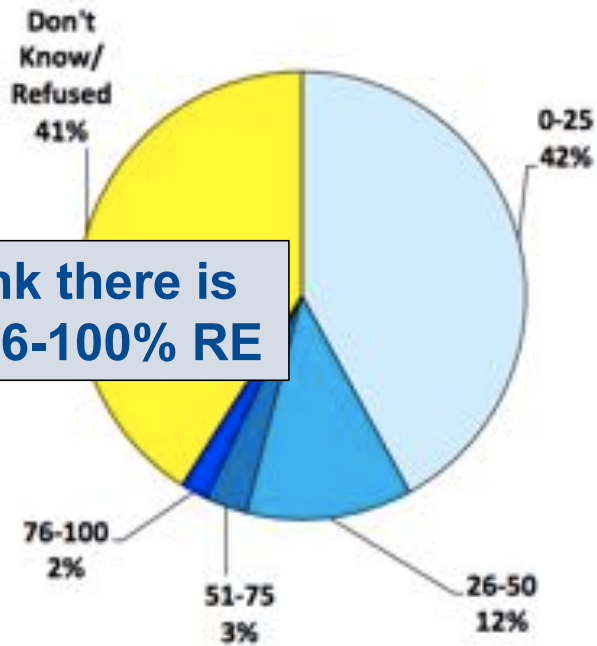
Remember this? Yale Opinion Maps

Estimated % of adults who support funding research into renewable energy sources, 2016



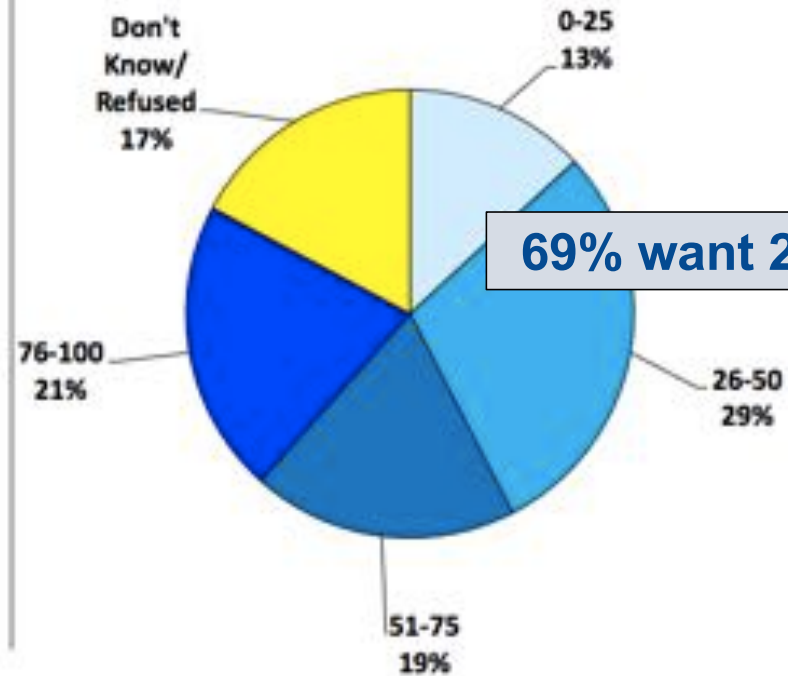
Still true. Everyone wants more renewables

"What percent of your state's electricity currently comes from renewable sources like wind, solar, hydro, and biomass?"



17% think there is already 26-100% RE

"And, what do you think is the right amount of energy for your state to generate from renewable sources like wind, solar, hydro, and biomass?"



69% want 26-100% RE

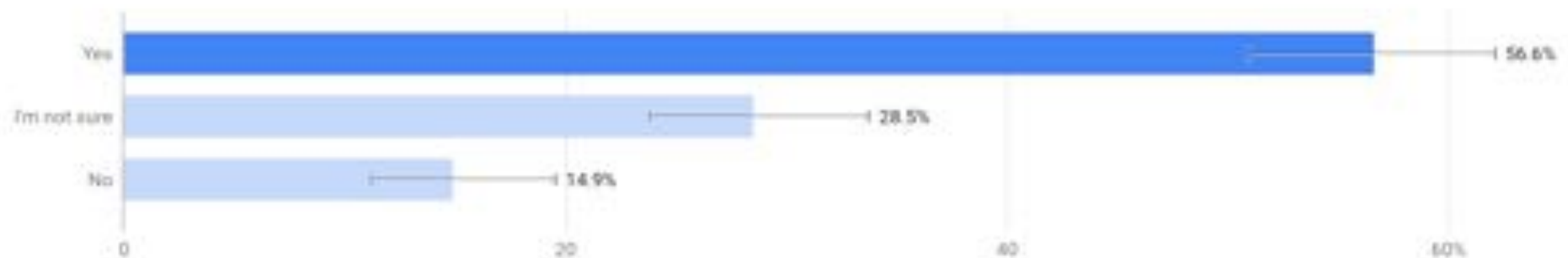
Net metering garners strong support elsewhere too

Policies and Proposals Ranked by Total Support – by Party

	Total	GOP	IND	DEM
Some utility customers generate their own power through wind, solar and other renewable sources. At times, they generate more than they can use and they receive a credit on their bill for the surplus power that is fed back into the electric system. Do you support or oppose continuing to credit these customers at fair market rates for the power they feed into the electricity system?	93%	93%	94%	93%
Requiring Ohio's electric utilities to provide cost-effective programs through which customers can improve energy efficiency upgrades to their homes and businesses.	89%	84%	88%	96%
Creating more reasonable set-back limits for wind turbines that both acknowledge the property rights of land owners like farmers to locate wind turbines on their land and allow more wind energy to be produced in rural areas of the state, while ensuring neighbors are not disturbed.	86%	80%	83%	93%
Providing rebates and grants to assist lower income Ohio residents with weather proofing their homes to make them more energy efficient.	84%	76%	80%	96%
Requiring major electric utilities to gradually increase their use of renewable energy like wind and solar to twelve and a half percent over the next eight years.	79%	68%	79%	89%

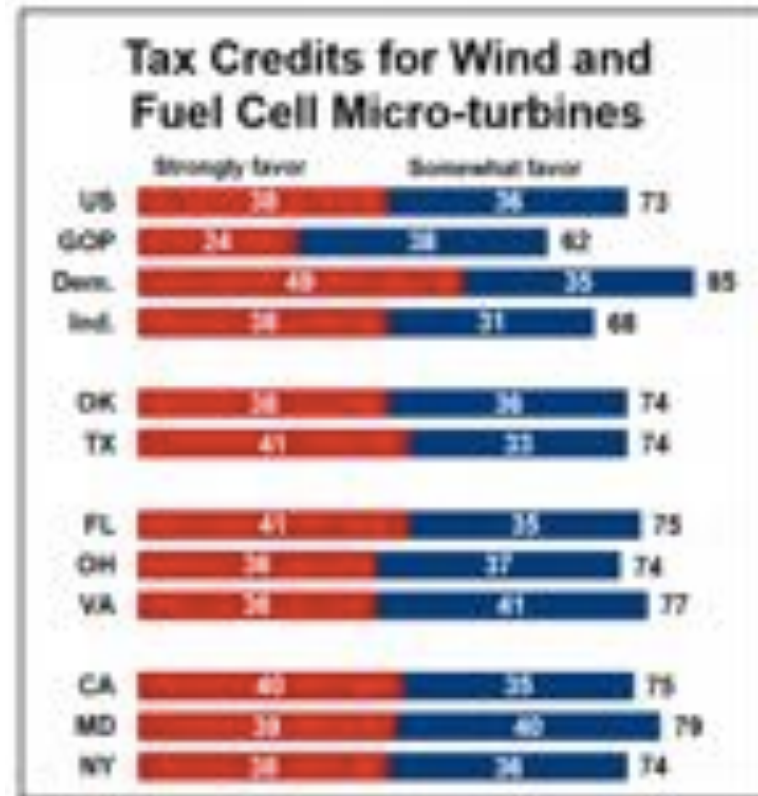
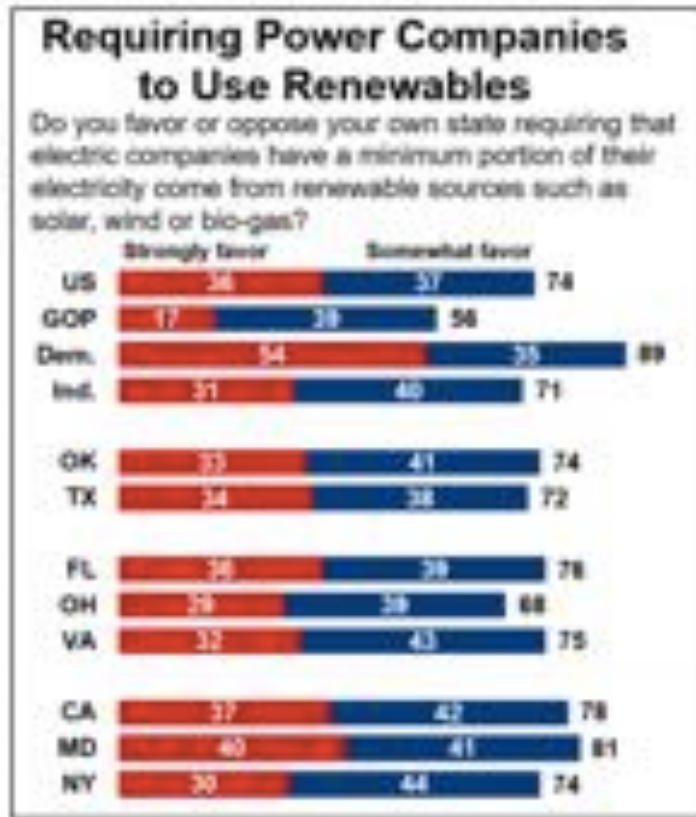
People support the economics of renewables

Do you believe that renewable energy will create good paying jobs in your state?



Google Surveys. April 2017.

People support renewables and tax credits: OK, TX, FL, VA, OH, CA, MD, NY



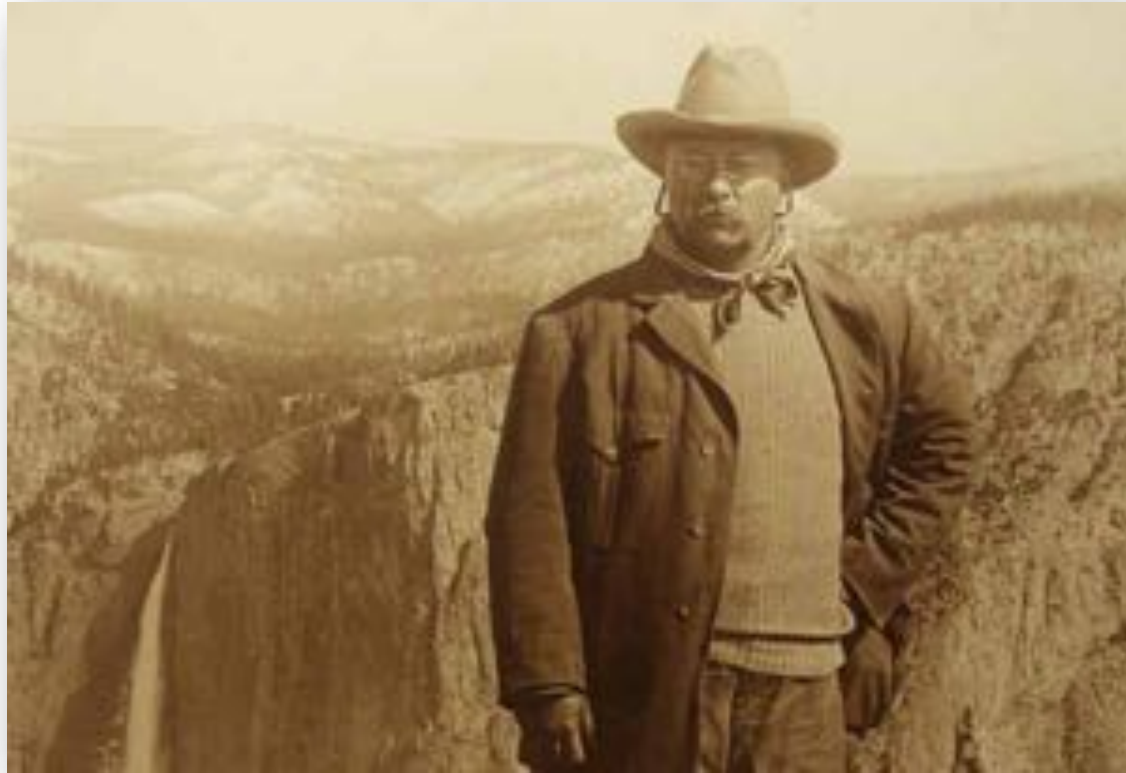
Americans on Clean Power. September 2016.

Always consider your audience...

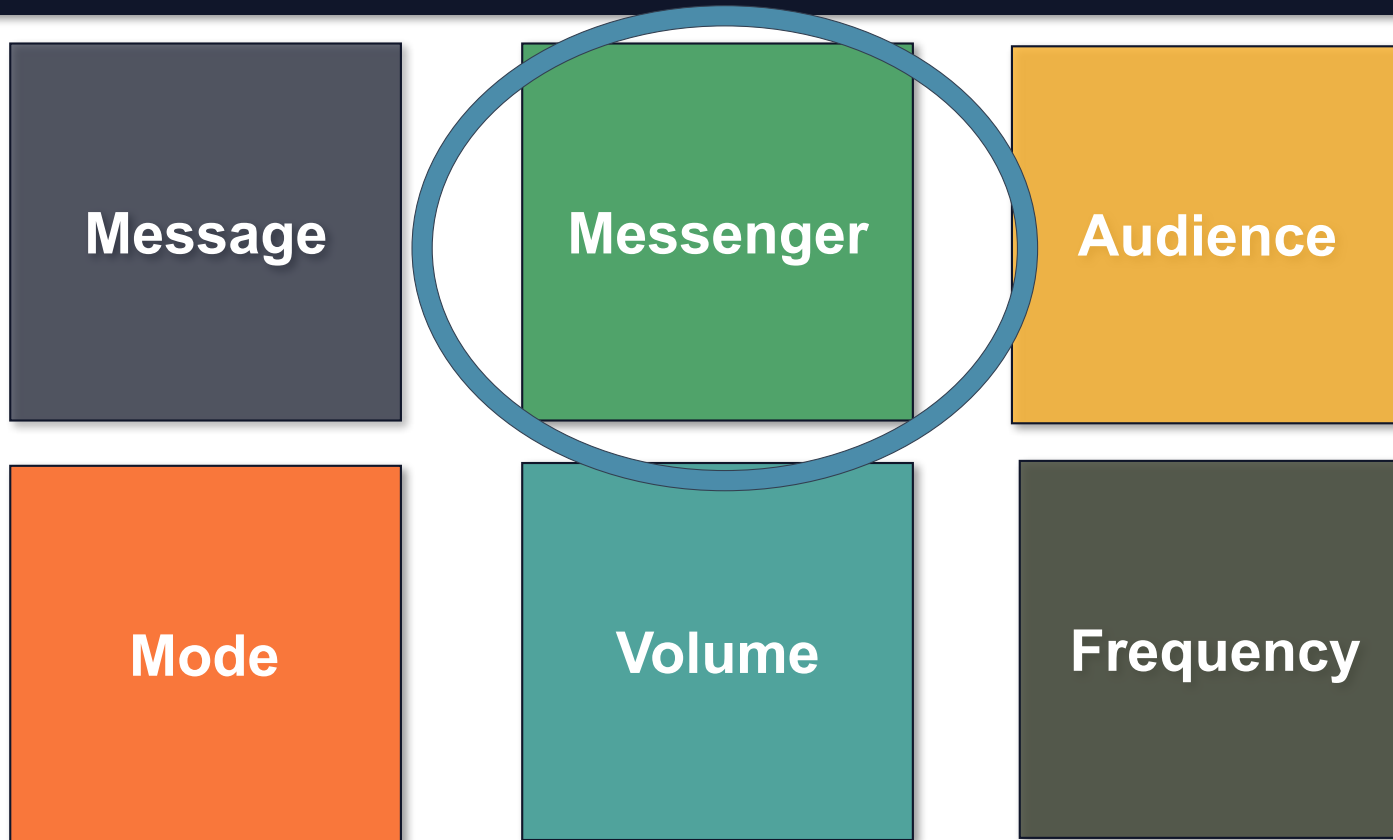
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Engaging conservative publics on energy



Communications Matrix



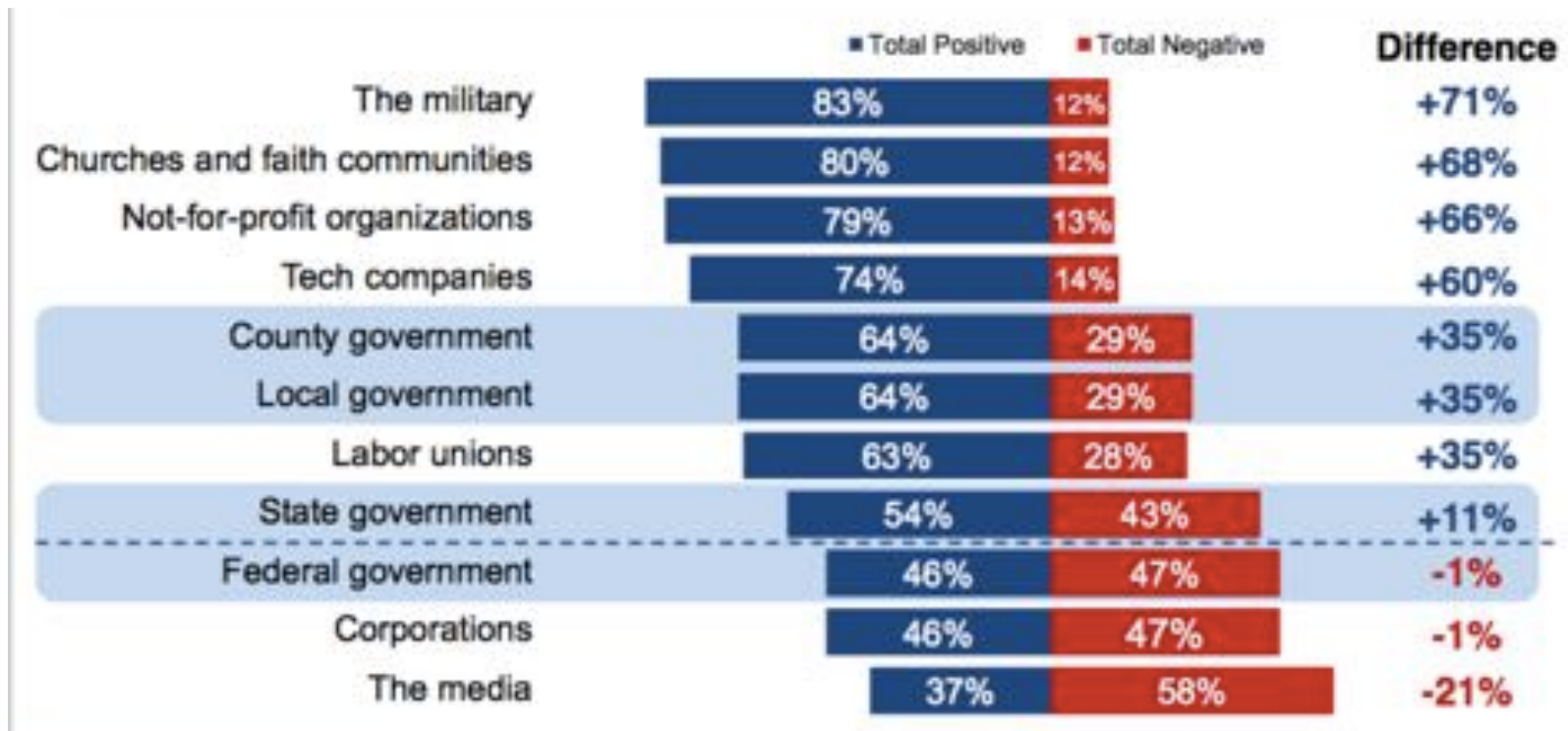
Conservative publics are responsive to the cues of conservative elites.



What makes a good messenger?

- Figures of authority
- People I trust
- People like me
- People I like

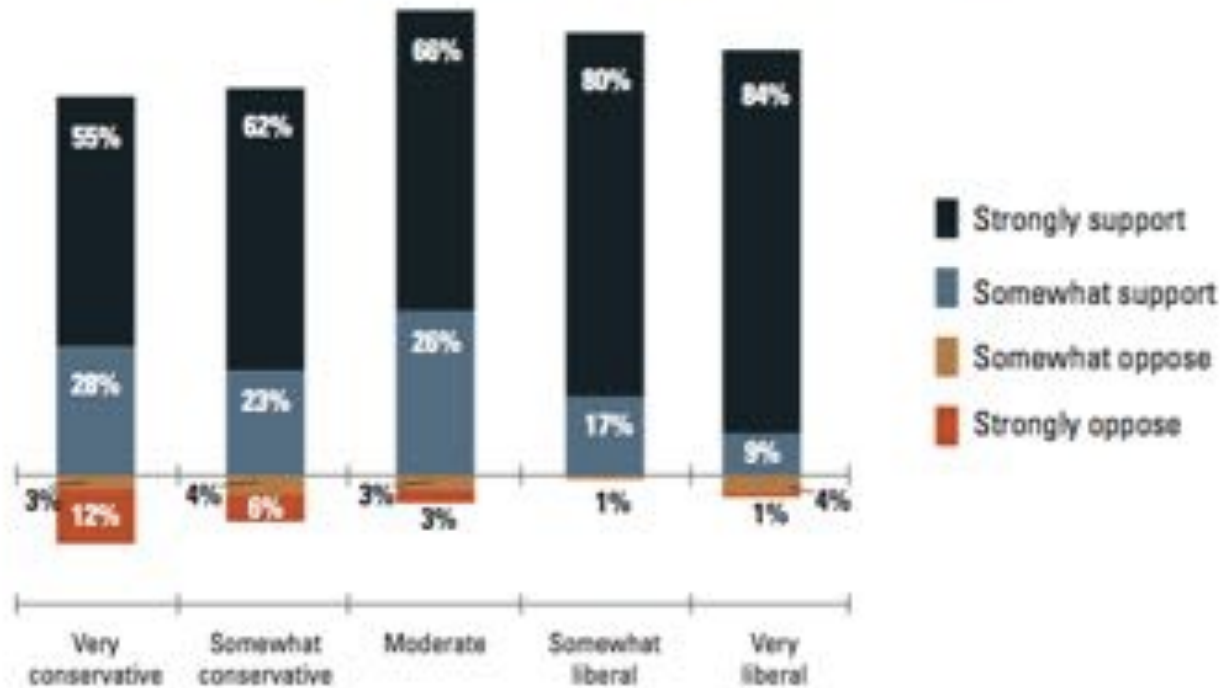
Conservative voters have more confidence in state/local than federal government



FM3. April 2017.

State level policy has strong support from conservative publics

Figure 3: Support for increased use of solar energy in one's own state, by political ideology



83% of self-identified very conservatives, and **85%** somewhat conservatives support increasing solar in their state

University of Michigan. Muhlenburg College. September 2017.

Conservative publics are most responsive to values

Individual choice

Patriotism/Pride

Liberty

Security

Market-driven

Business

Economic opportunity



"love of country"
"joining the fight"
"taking pride"
"performing one's civic duty"
"honoring all of Creation"



Conservative publics are not monolithic

- **Energized:** Majorities of conservatives/GOP support clean energy policies. It's about plugging them into authentic pathways of efficacy. Not persuasion.
- **Generational divides:** Moderate and younger Republicans are more engaged and concerned on energy than Tea Party and older Republicans.

Conservative public communications

- **Messengers Matter. A LOT.** Respected figures, innovators, respected voices convey relevance and authority.
- **Emphasize values.** Frame arguments around conservative values, especially patriotism, independence, business and economic opportunity.
- **Don't try to persuade.** There is already strong latent support among many for more clean energy. Open doors, but you don't need to shove people through them.
- **Maintain neutrality.** Present information in a way that's not threatening or political.



Working with rural communities

Rural/Urban values

There are notable urban / rural differences on certain key values.

(% Rating Each a "7," Extremely Important)








Values	All Voters	City	Suburb	Small Town	Rural Area
Common Sense	69%	61%	67%	72%	76%
Personal Responsibility	68%	65%	64%	66%	75%
Kindness	68%	65%	61%	66%	77%
Compassion	57%	53%	62%	65%	44%
Tolerance	57%	60%	61%	56%	49%
Open-mindedness	56%	55%	45%	57%	62%
Resilience	42%	36%	32%	44%	53%

FM3. April 2017.

Clean energy is a priority

Voters in both urban and rural areas make clean energy a top priority.

Which one of the following sources of energy would you want to encourage the use of here in (STATE)? And which would you NEXT most want to encourage the use of?

Sources of Energy		All Voters	City	Suburbs	Town	Rural
Solar power		71%	80%	76%	66%	58%
Wind power		48%	49%	50%	48%	44%
Natural gas		22%	19%	21%	26%	24%
Energy efficiency efforts		19%	20%	20%	17%	20%
Nuclear		13%	15%	13%	13%	11%
Coal		8%	4%	5%	13%	13%
Oil		8%	3%	6%	11%	17%

Public Opinion Strategies/FM3. State of the Rockies Poll. January 2017

“Rural consciousness” in Wisconsin



Rural Folks Like Me =
Hard-Working People =
Non-Public Employees =
Deserving



Urbanites =
People Who Don't Work Hard =
Public Employees =
Undeserving

Skepticism driven by ideology, not vulnerability

- Rural politics are uniquely personal
- Rural communities are already part of the solution
- Authentic, local voices matter most
- People don't like being talked at, especially by strangers

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Takeaways?

Jane Bloch

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