



Metropolitan Water District Community Survey

Conducted May 7th – 11th, 2023

Executive Summary

- ▶ Survey of adult residents in the Metropolitan Water District Service Area.
- ▶ Conducted May 7 – May 11, 2022 via mixed-mode methodology incorporating live-telephone interviews and invitations to take the survey online. The survey was available in English and Spanish.
- ▶ 1,000 interviews service area-wide; overall margin of error ± 3.1 percentage points
- ▶ 200 additional interviews within San Diego County; margin of error for this region ± 6.9 percentage points. Responses are weighted to be representative of the service area overall.
- ▶ Where applicable, results compared with prior EMC research survey data on behalf of MWD. Prior to 2022, trend data was collected through phone-only methodology; sampling differences may have effects on trend data compared to current data.

Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

Survey Context

- ▶ This survey was conducted in May following a **historic 2023 rainy season** in California.
- ▶ A dozen atmospheric river events through the winter and spring brought heavy rains, flooding, and news coverage about improving drought conditions.



Key Findings

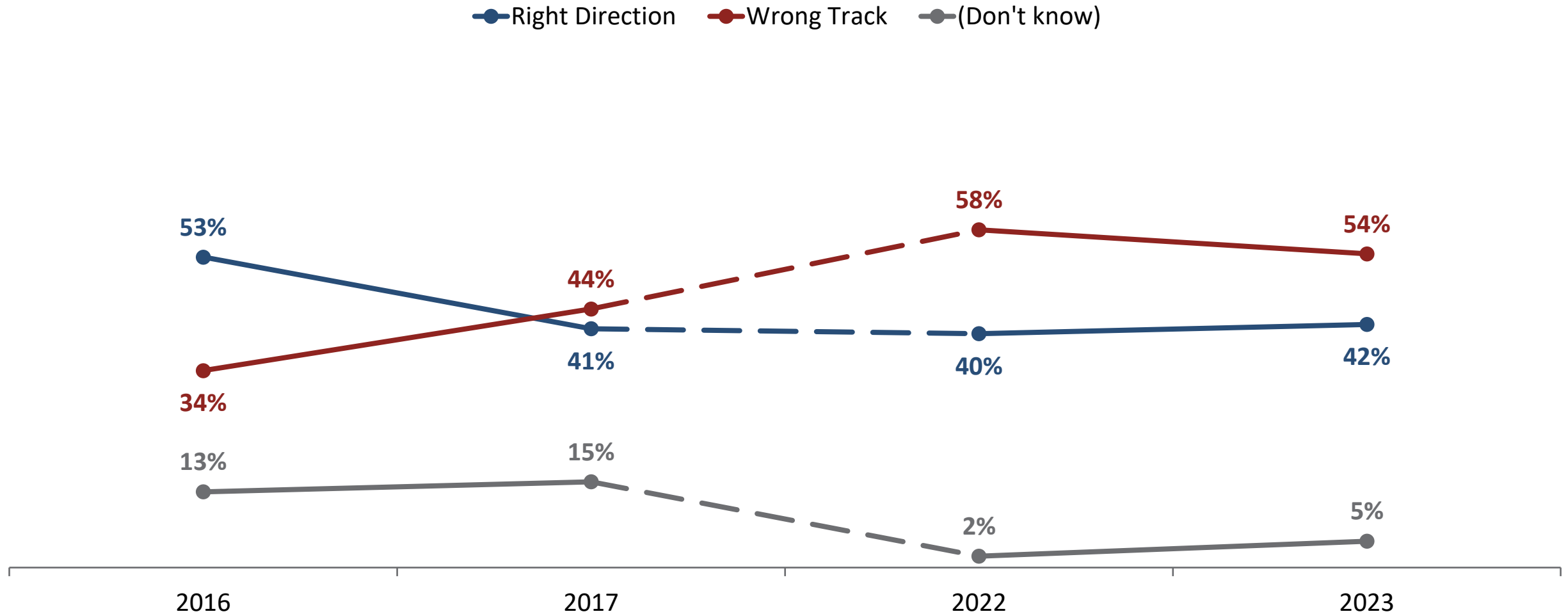
- ▶ Residents in Southern California are very concerned about water issues including supply, quality, water and the impact of climate change.
- ▶ While there are generally positive impressions of water agencies, they are rated critically on job performance.
- ▶ Despite a very rainy season, there is still significant awareness of the need to conserve and high support for investing in efforts to address long term water supply.
- ▶ Most think their tap water is safe to drink – however half of residents don't like the taste and over half prefer to pay for bottled water.
- ▶ Most are not happy with the amount they are paying for water and are reluctant to agree to higher rates to address water supply issues.



Issue Environment & Agency Ratings

Right Direction/Wrong Track Trend

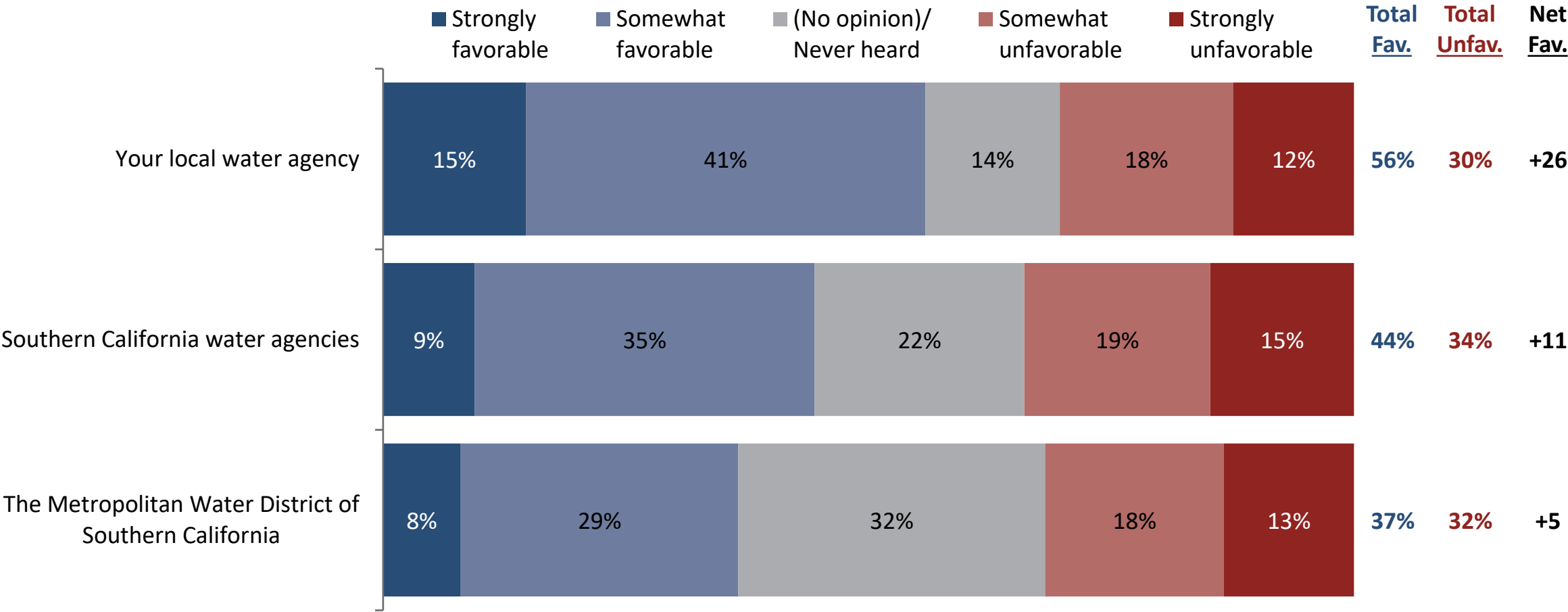
The region is less pessimistic today than in 2022, but a majority still feel that things are on the wrong track.



Q1. Do you feel that things in Southern California are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

Water Agency Favorable Ratings

Water agency ratings are positive, though most opinions are less intensely expressed. Fewer respondents can rate Metropolitan Water District specifically compared to a “local” water agency or SoCal water agencies broadly.

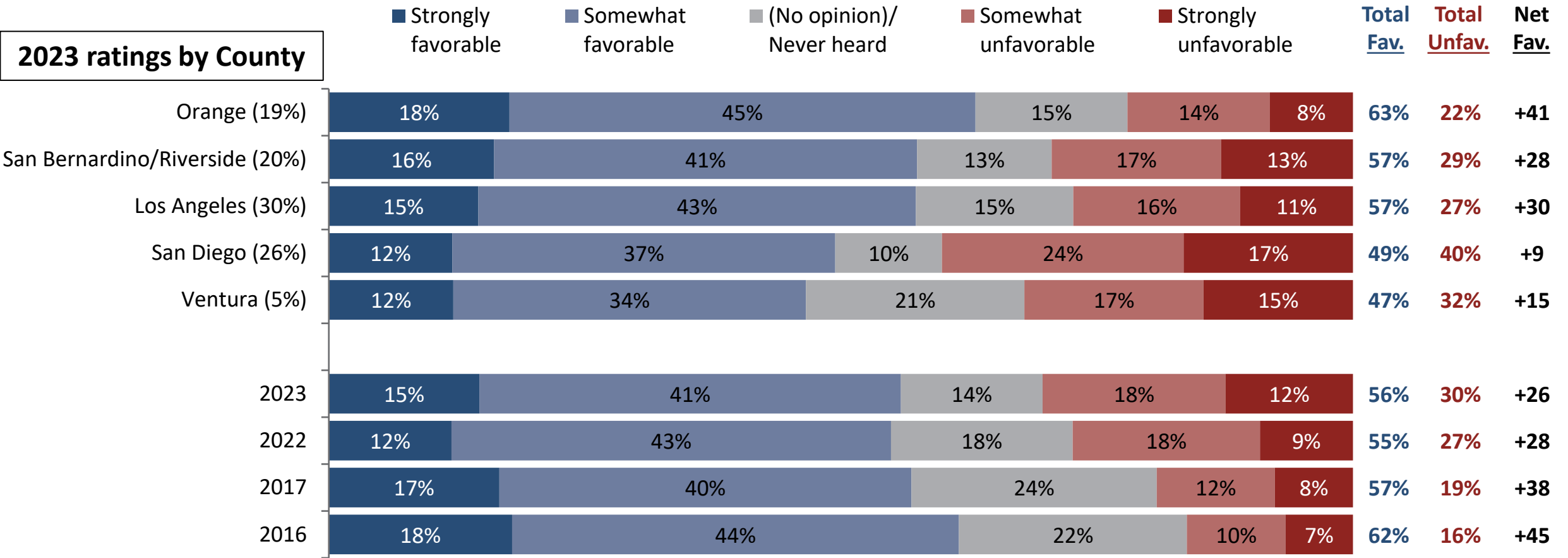


Local Water Agency Ratings



How would you rate your local water agency?

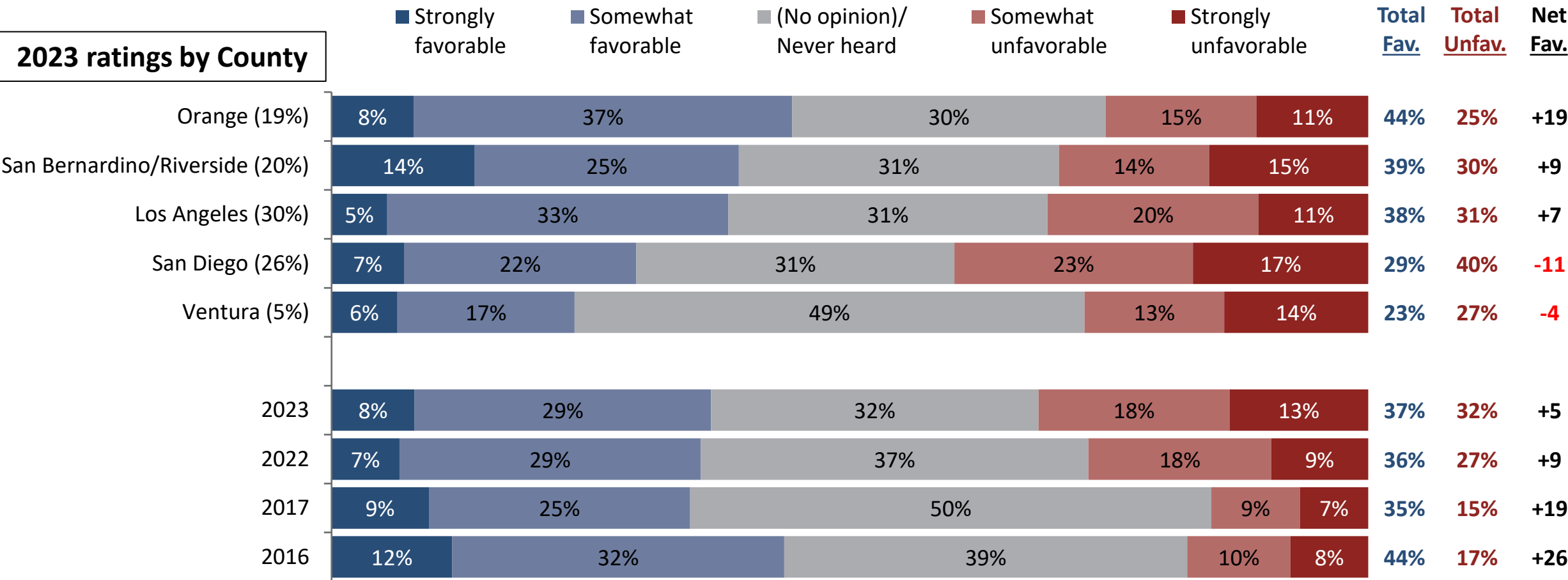
2023 ratings by County



MWD Ratings

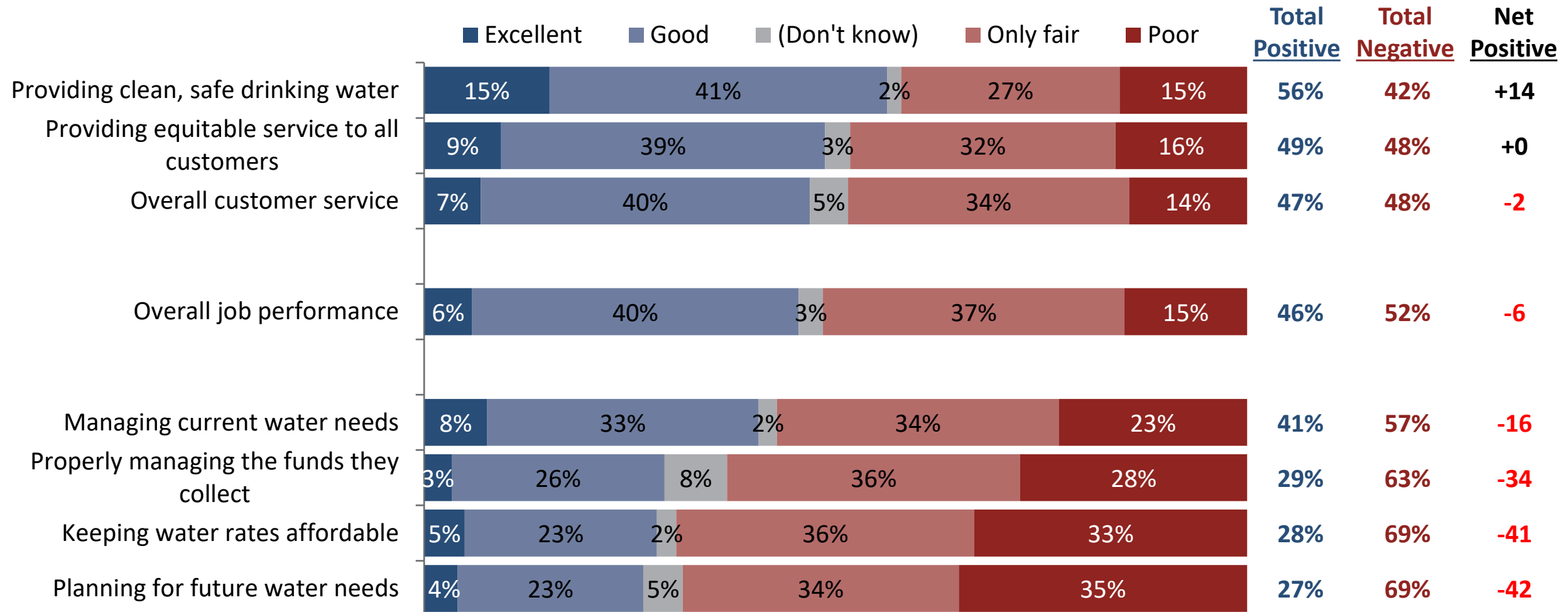
How would you rate the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California?

2023 ratings by County



Water Agency Job Performance

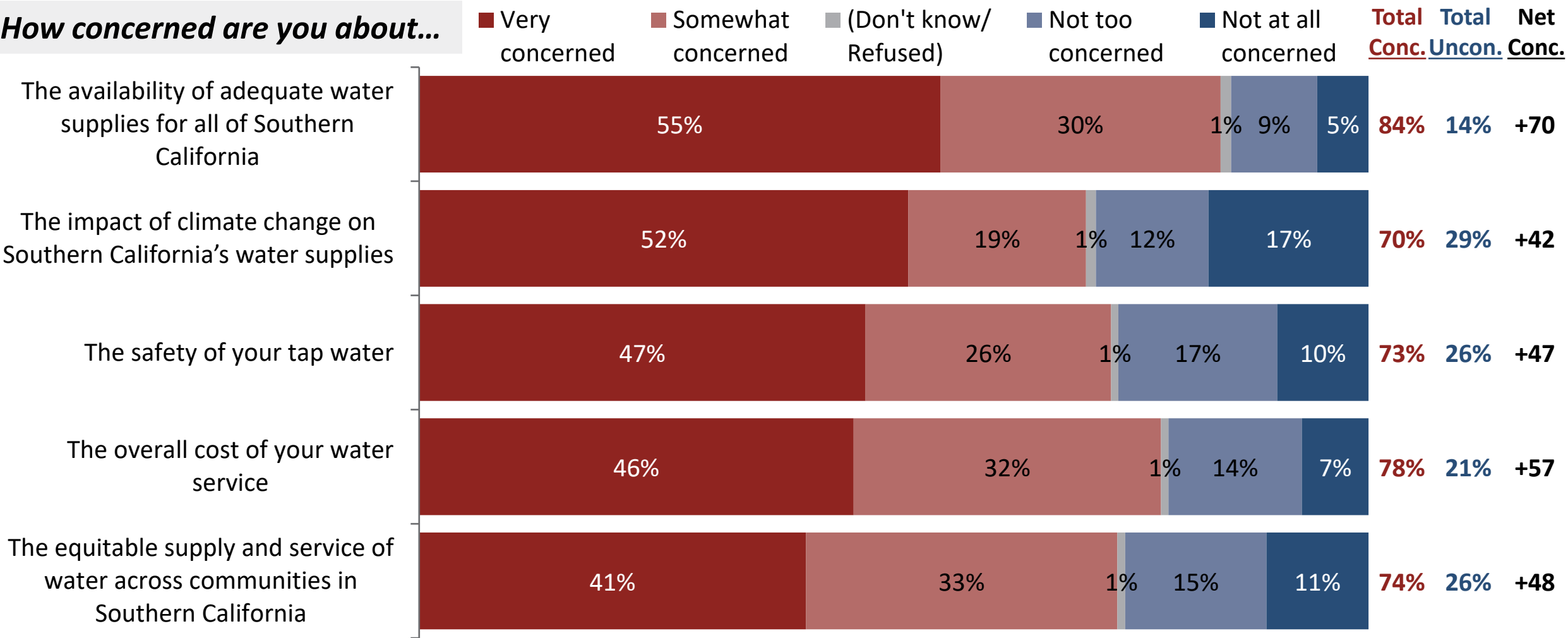
SoCal water agencies receive critical ratings on job performance in a number of areas.



Q10-17. Using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, please rate the job Southern California water agencies are doing on each of the following.

Water Issue Concern

Many water issues are concerning to residents.



Tap Water Quality: Taste

Respondents are split on the taste of their tap water, with one-in-four strongly disagreeing that it tastes good.

My tap water tastes good.

**Agree
48%**

Somewhat 33%

Strongly 15%

**Disagree
50%**

Somewhat 23%

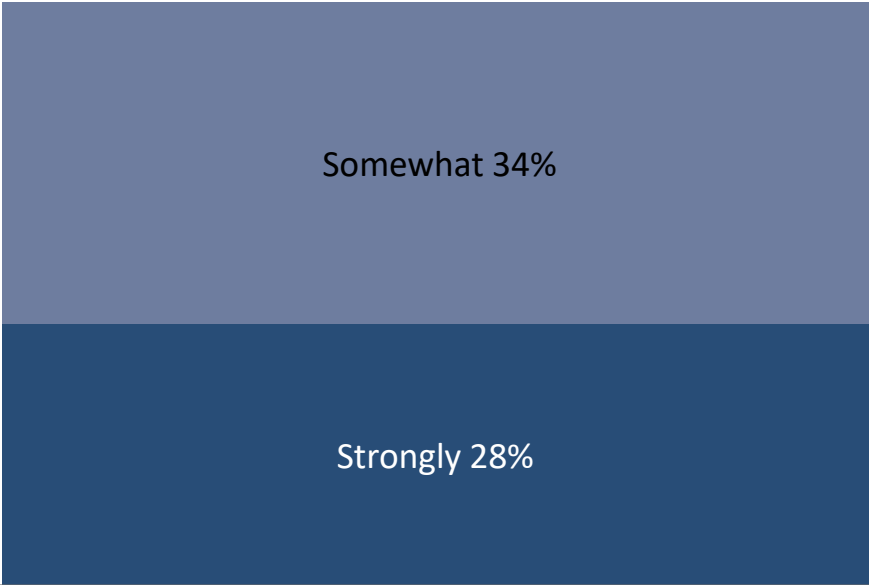
Strongly 26%

Tap Water Quality: Safe to Drink

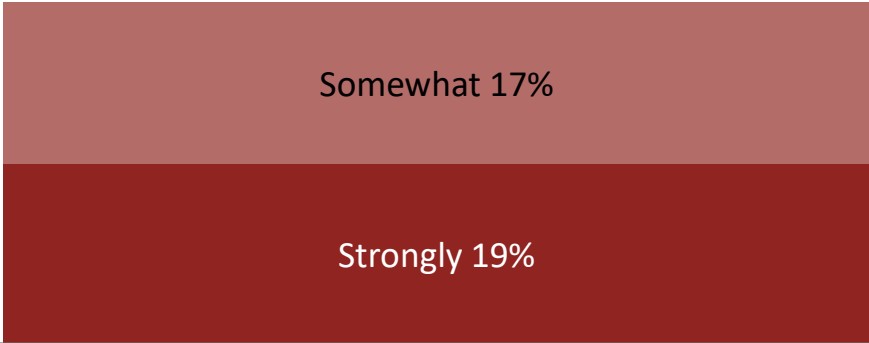
A majority believe that their tap water is safe to drink.

The water from my tap is safe to drink.

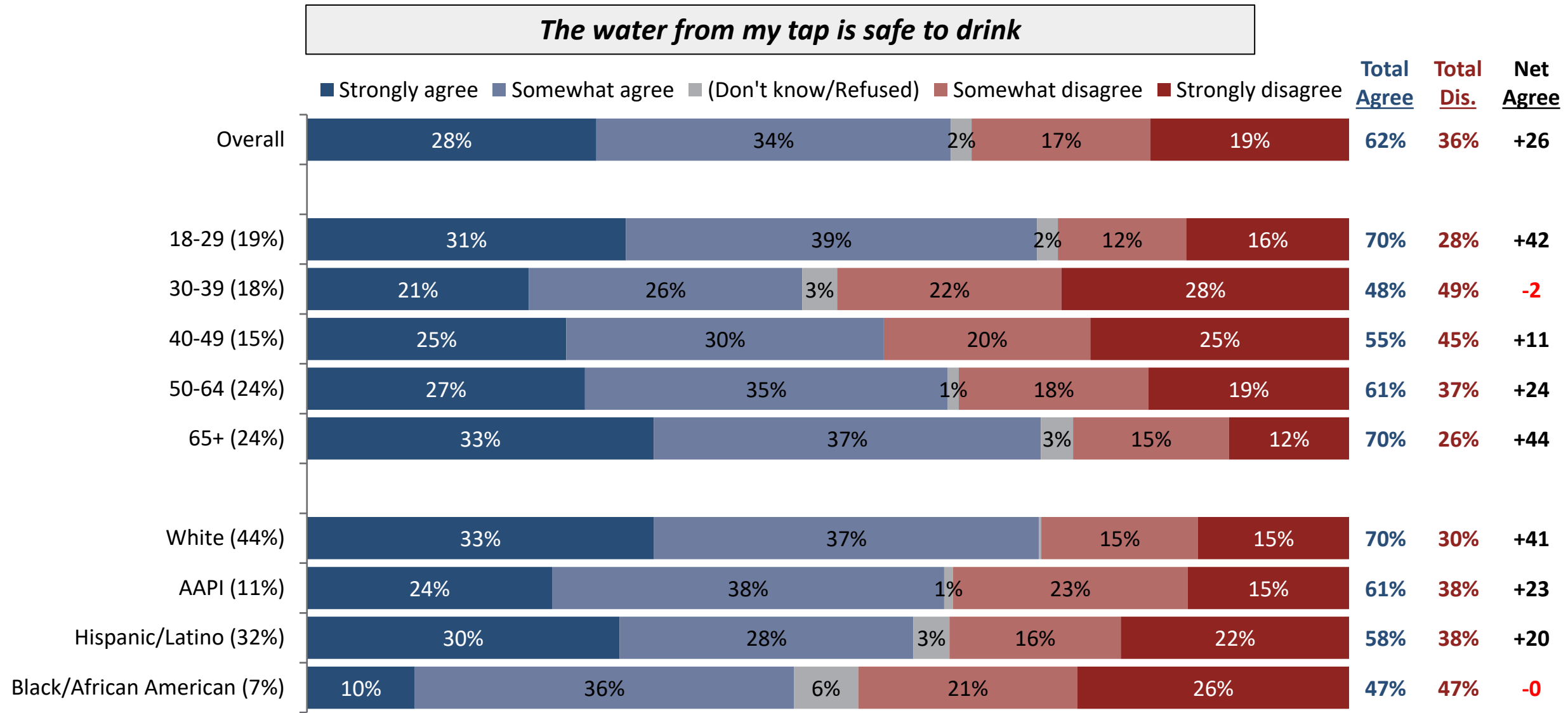
Agree
62%



Disagree
36%



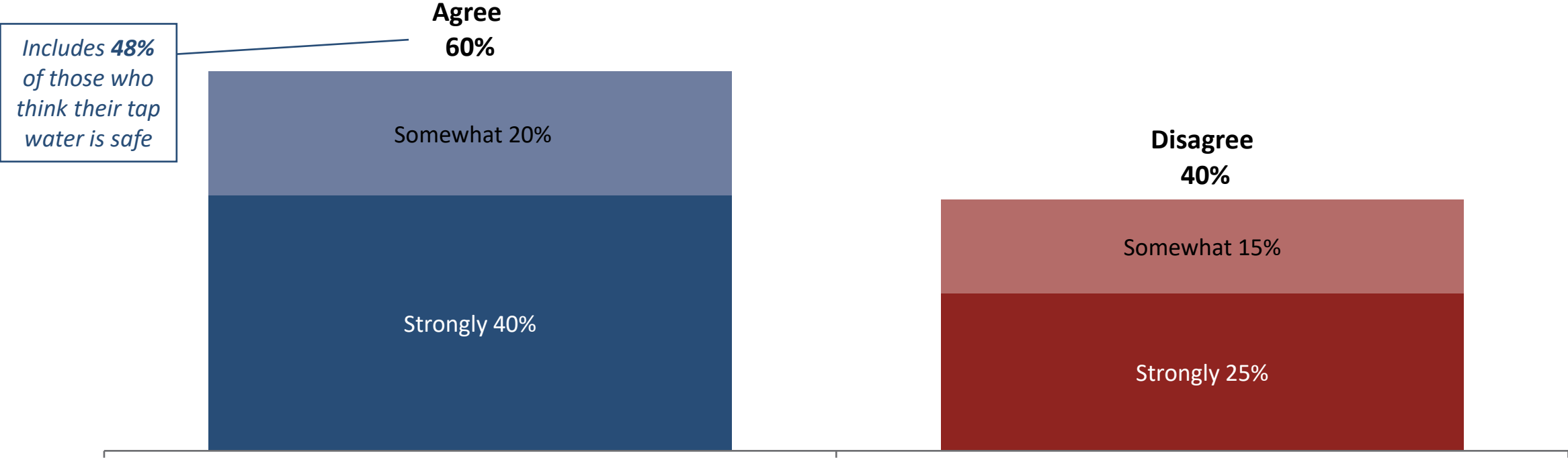
Tap Water Safety by Subgroups



Bottled Water Preference

Despite confidence in the safety of tap water, 60% of respondents agrees they still prefer bottled water.

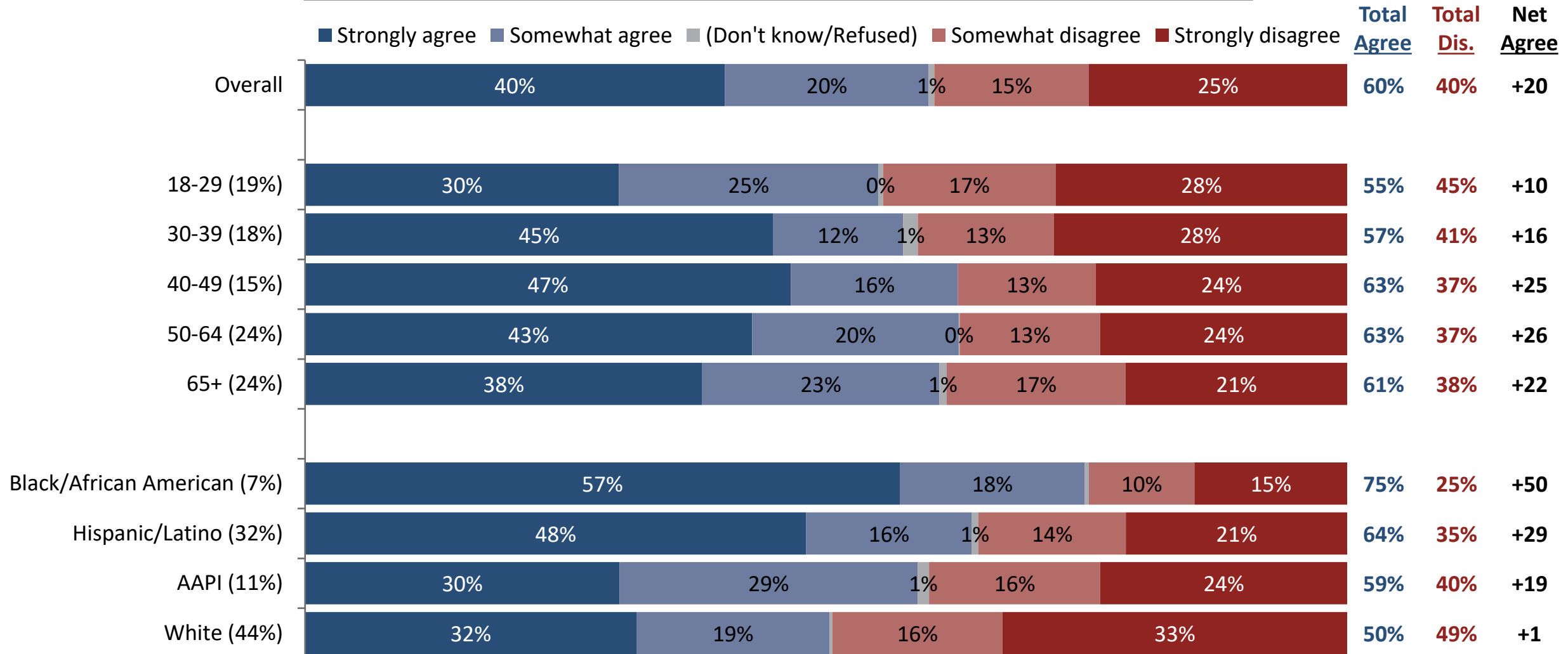
I prefer to pay for bottled water instead of drinking water from the tap.



Q27. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

Bottled Water Preference by Subgroups

I prefer to pay for bottled water instead of drinking water from the tap.



Q27. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.



Drought & Water Supply

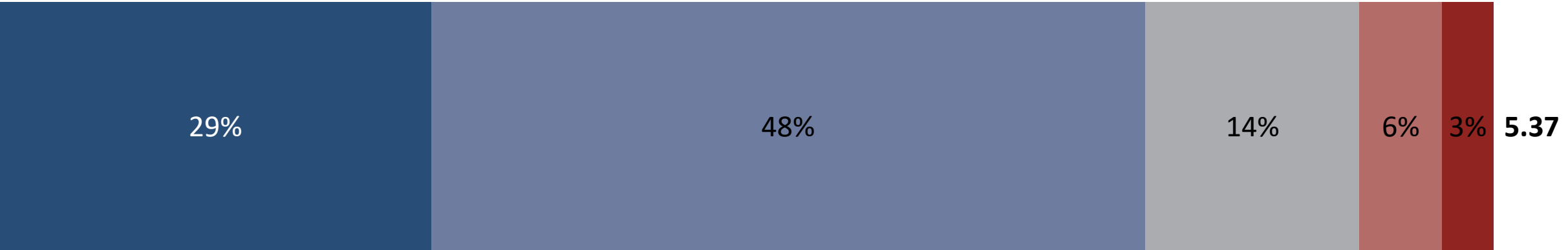
Commitment to Water Conservation



Recent rains may have affected perceived urgency around water conservation. While three-quarters say they are making an effort to conserve water, less than one-third indicate active commitment.

On a scale from 1 to 7 where 1 is making no effort to use less water and 7 is an active commitment to water conservation, where would you place yourself on that scale?

■ 7 - Active commitment to water conservation ■ 5-6 ■ 4/(Don't Know) ■ 2-3 ■ 1 - No effort to use less water **Mean**

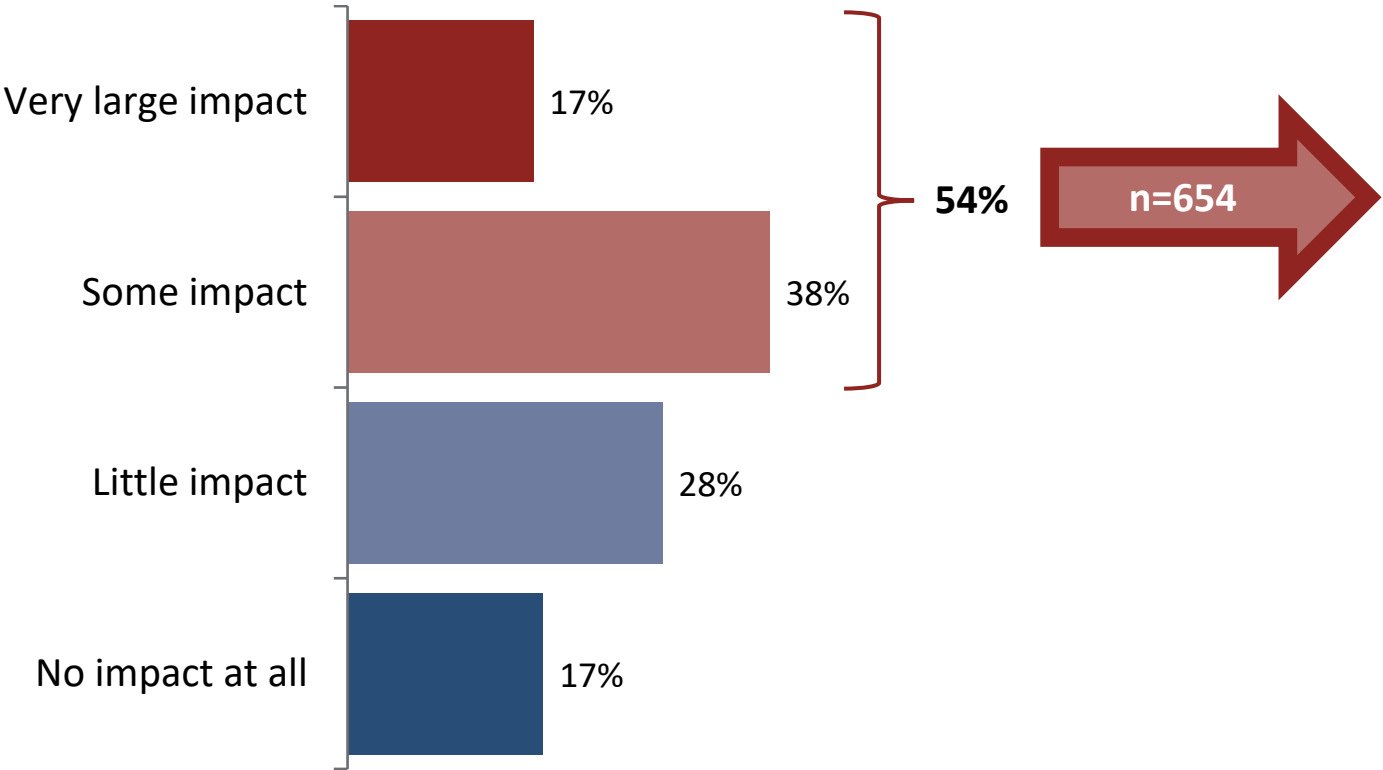


77% total committed to water conservation

Drought Impact

Half of residents say drought has at least some impact on them recently; yard and landscaping conservation stand out as specific behavior changes.

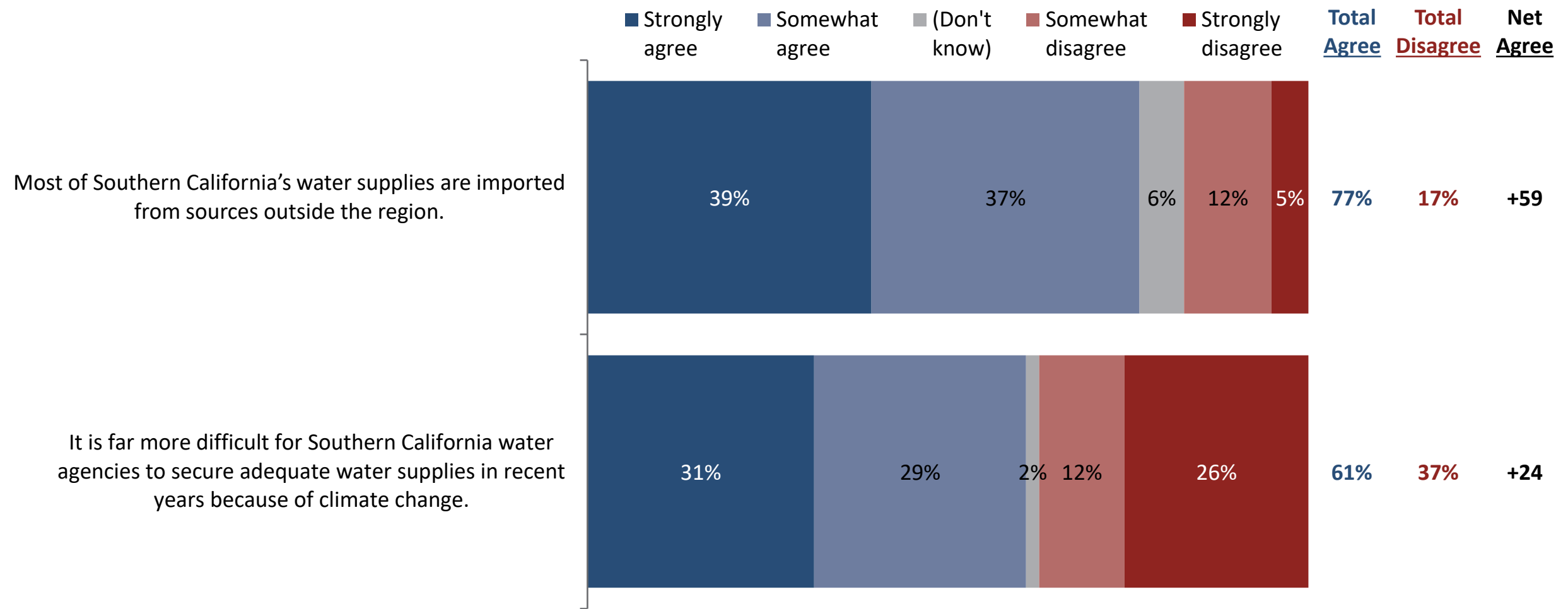
Thinking about the most recent drought, how much of an impact did the drought have on you personally – a very large impact, some impact, little impact, or no impact at all?



You said that the drought has impacted you. What have you done differently because of the drought?	%
General conservation	31%
Reduced yard water usage	27%
Changed landscaping	10%
Reduced bathroom water usage	10%
Paid more for less water	4%
Followed mandates/regulations	3%
Reuse gray/rainwater	3%
Other	9%
None/Don't know/Refused	3%

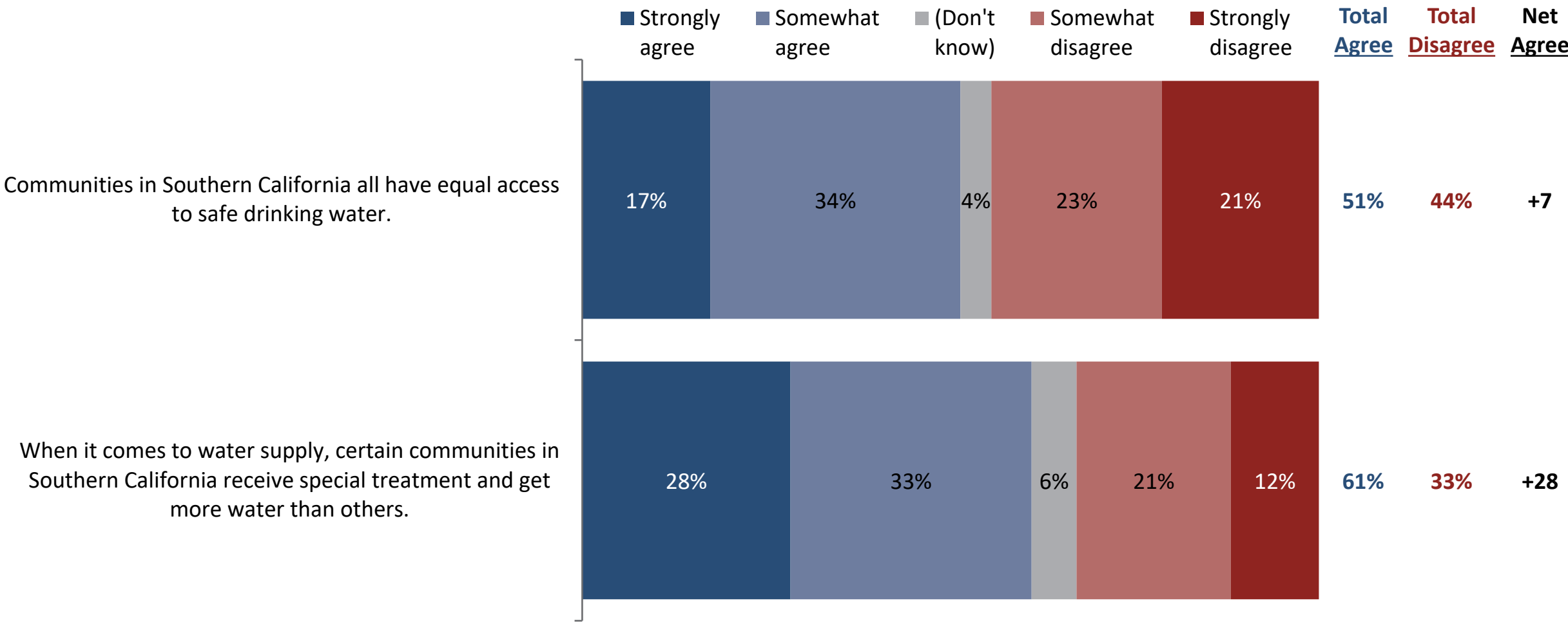
Adequate Water Supply

When prompted, most are generally aware that local water supply is imported and that climate change is making it harder to secure water.



Equitable Water Supply

There is some awareness of inequities in local water distribution.



Q20-29. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

Forced Choices

*Residents believe water supply is a real threat. When forced to choose, they prioritize having **enough** water supply over improving the quality and safety of their water.*

The lack of adequate water supplies for Southern California...

is a very real threat to our way of life. We may simply not have enough water for everyone in the future.

64%

is overblown. The state and water agencies will do what they need to do to make sure we will always have the water we need.

31%

Southern California water agencies' highest priority should be...

ensuring we have adequate water supplies to meet our region's needs.

57%

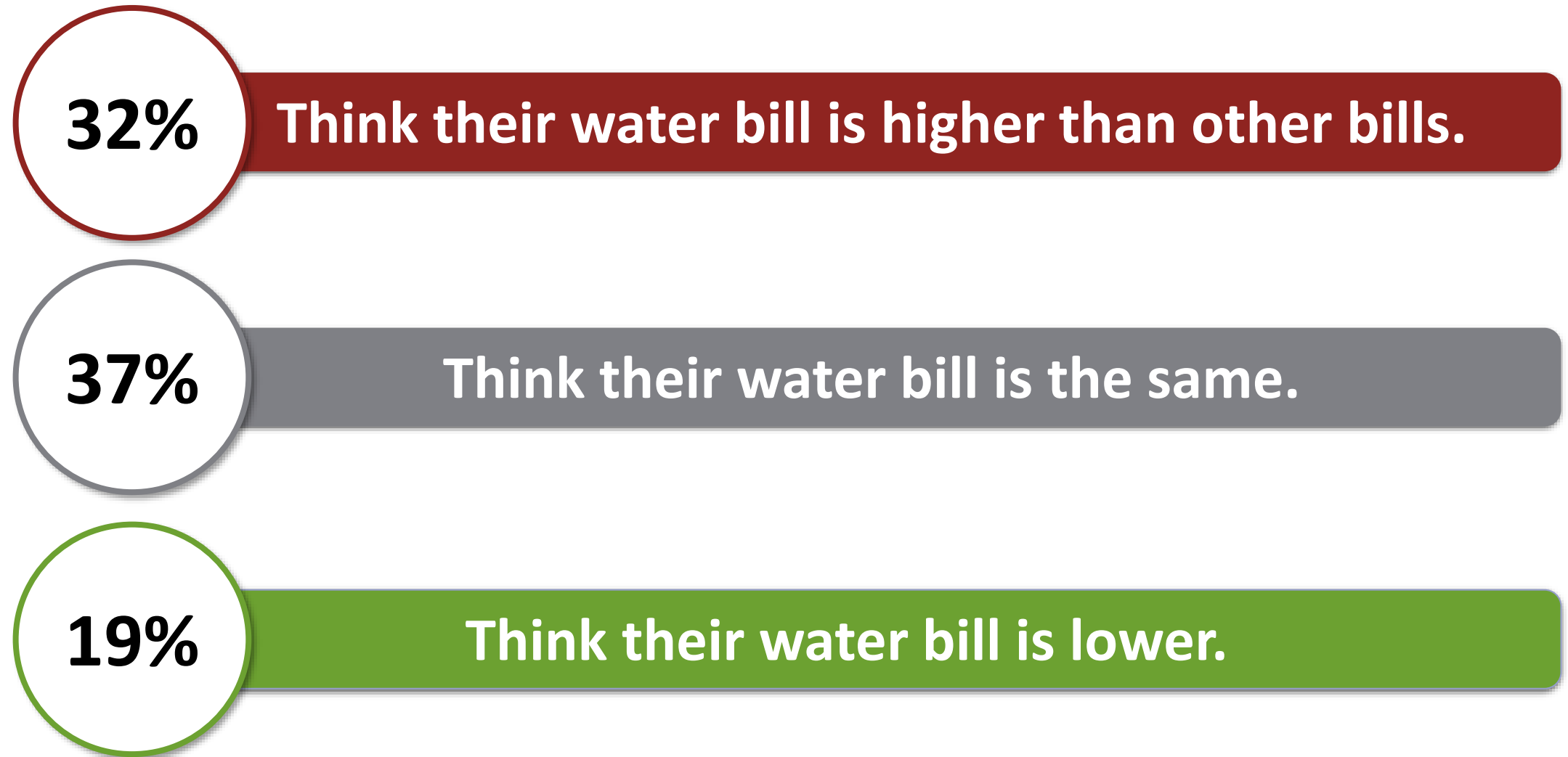
improving the safety and quality of our drinking water.

37%



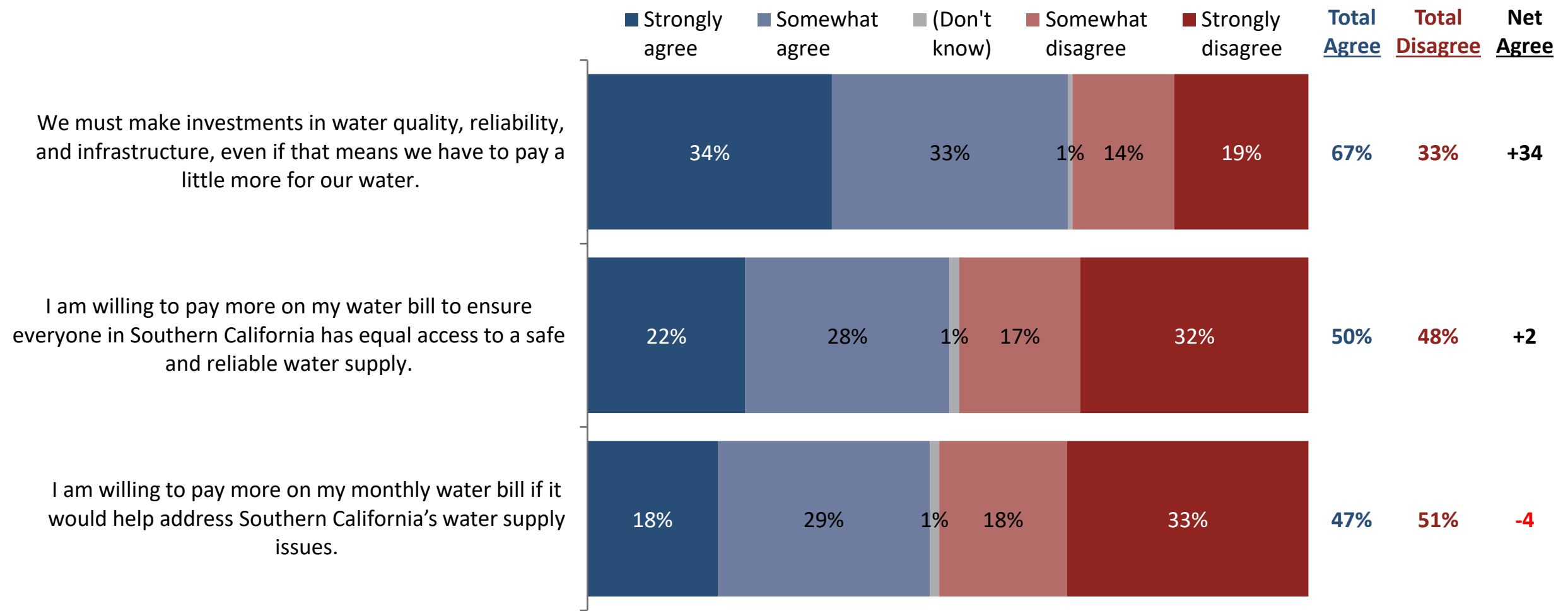
Water Bill Rates

Household Water Bill



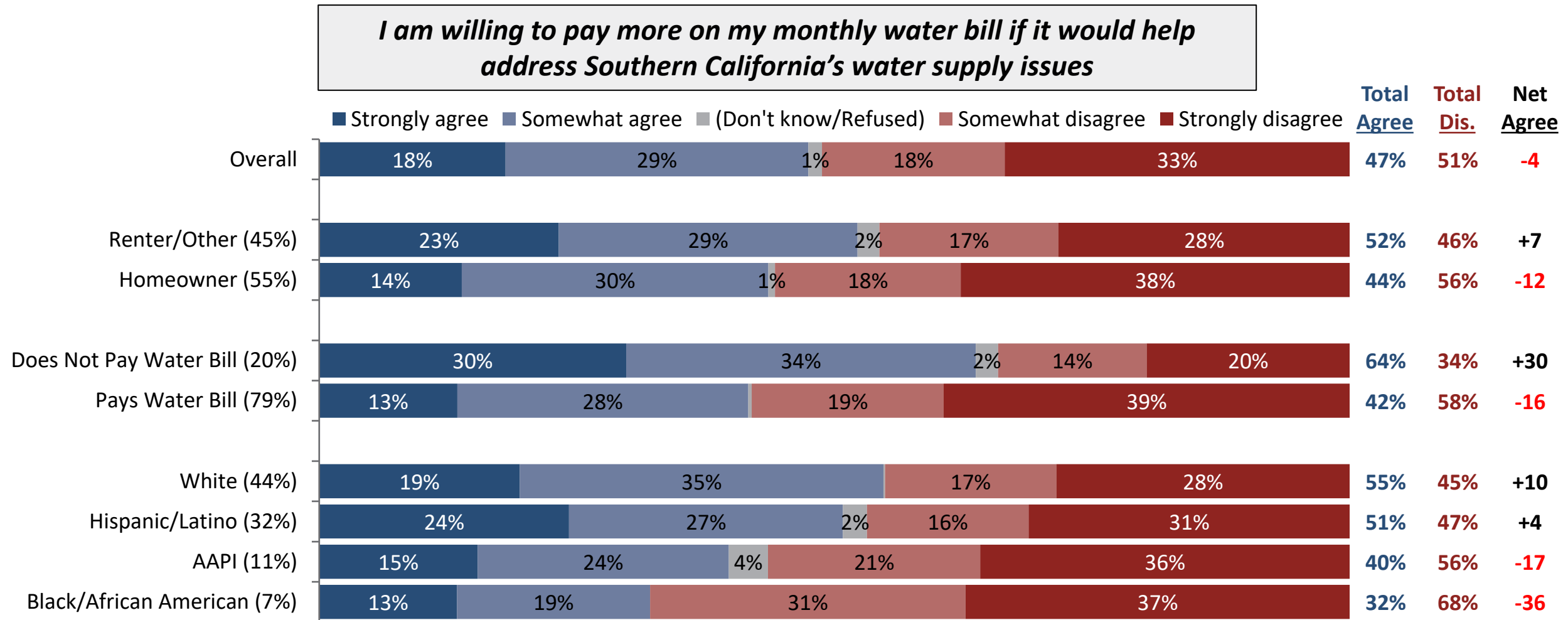
Attitudes Toward Rate Increases

Two-thirds of residents agree that water supply investments are necessary – but just half are willing to personally pay for such improvements.

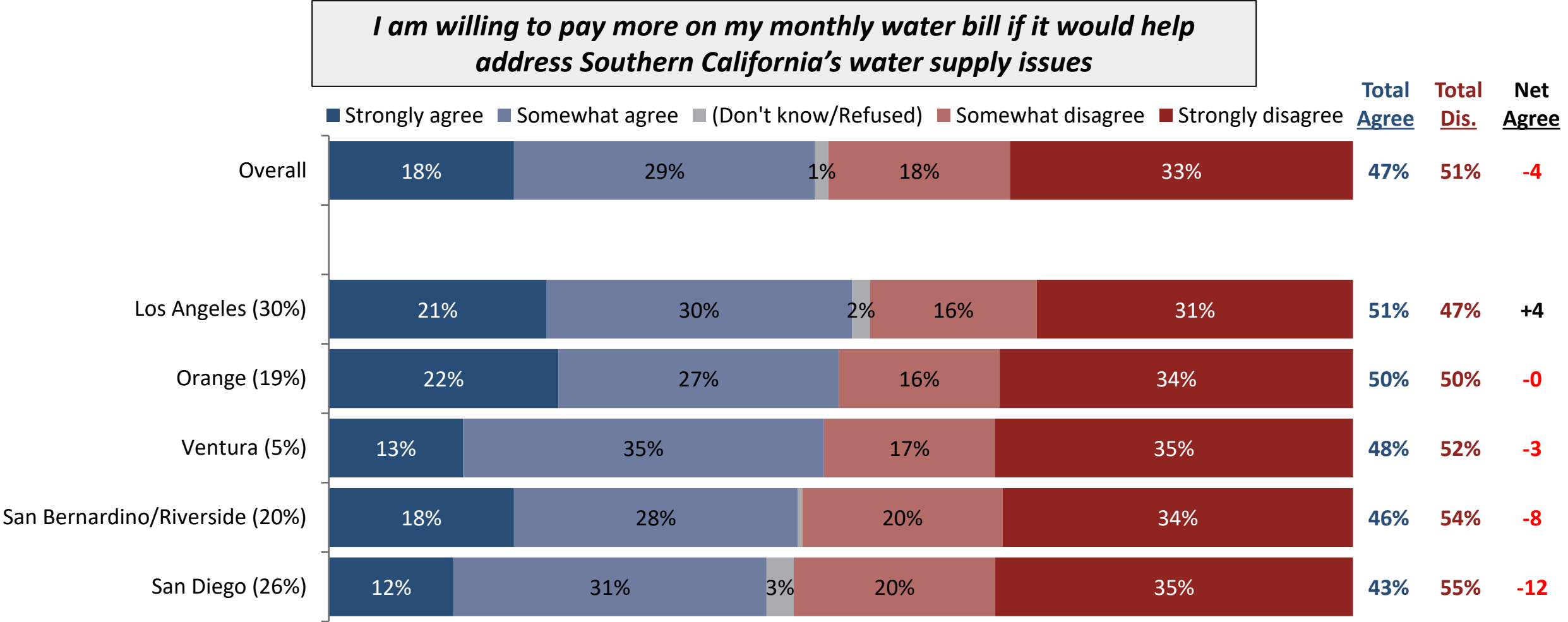


Q20-22. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

Rate Increase Attitudes by Subgroups



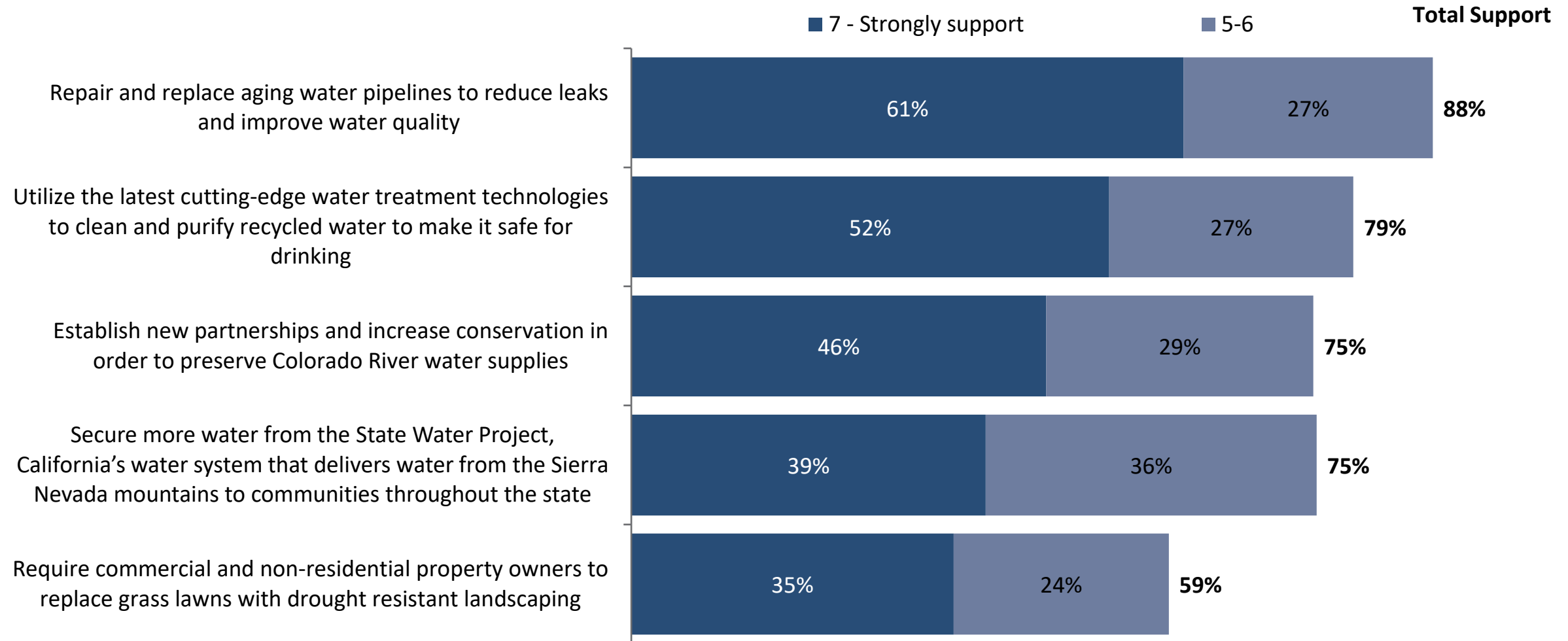
Rate Increase Attitudes by County



Q22. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

Potential Reliability Improvements

There is significant support for efforts to address water supply and water quality locally.



Q33 – 37. Now I'm going to read you some projects or actions that could be pursued to help improve the reliability of Southern California's water supply. Please use a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 means you strongly oppose that item and 7 means you strongly support that item.

Reasons to Modestly Increase Rates

Residents respond positively to information about the need to invest in water supply, especially when it doesn't mention a rate increase.

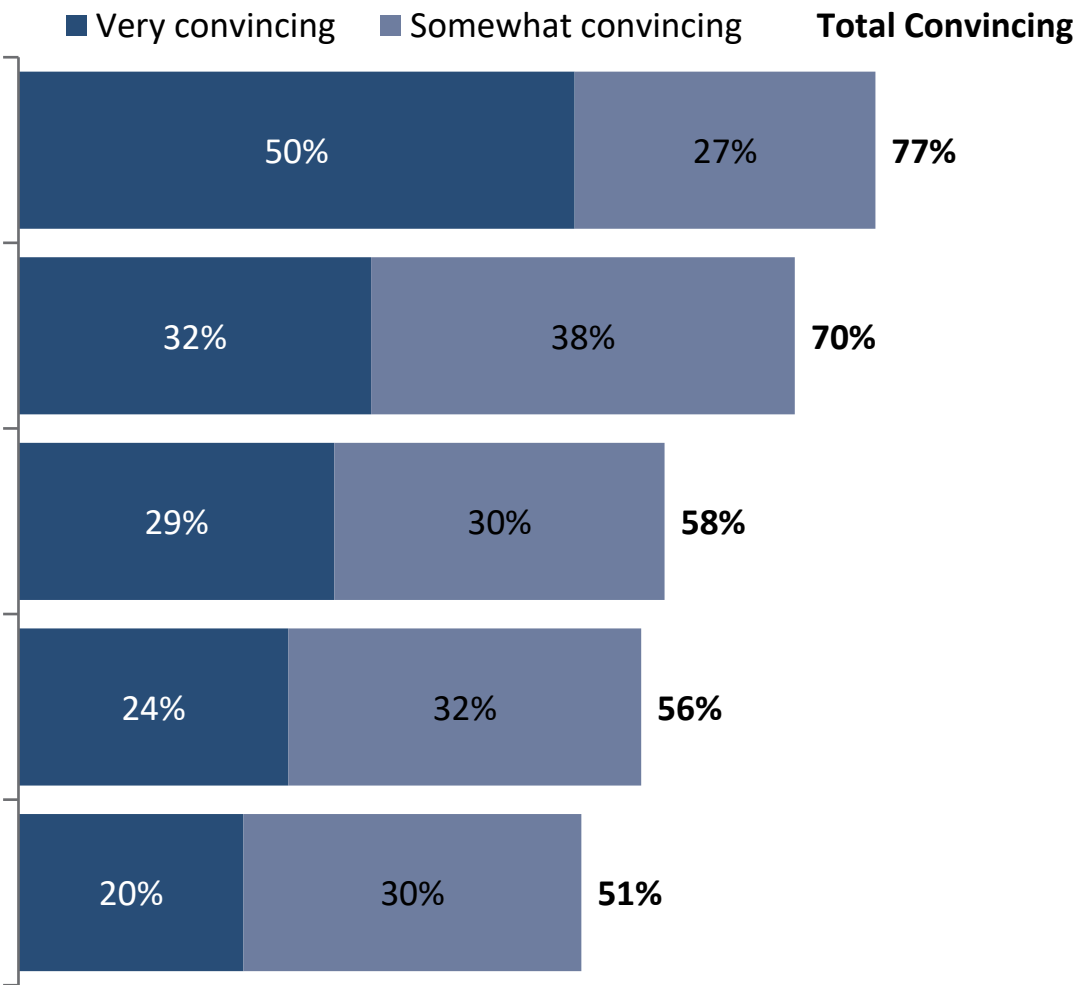
California must adapt to a changed climate that quickly swings back and forth from extremely dry years to extremely wet years. This climate whiplash will continue and we need to invest in better ways to store water in the wet times so we can use it in the dry times.

The quality of life in Southern California depends on our water security. We need to invest in conservation, local supplies and imported supplies from the Colorado River and Northern California to keep our communities and economy strong.

Access to safe, reliable, clean drinking water is a basic human right. Modest rate increases will help to ensure that everyone in our region has access to the water they need and deserve.

We all need to continue to do our part to reduce water use. Conserving water today means we will have more water tomorrow, particularly in the dry years. Modest rate increases will help California water agencies continue to invest and promote conservation efforts across the region.

If we each do our part, including possibly paying slightly more for water, we can help to ensure that all our neighbors in communities across Southern California will continue to have the water they need today and the water they need in the future.



Rate Increases: After Information

After hearing additional information, a slight majority of respondents say they are willing to pay more to address water supply issues. Strong opposition remains.

I am willing to pay more on my monthly water bill if it would help address Southern California's water supply issues.

Initial Ask

After Info

Net Agree: +7
Net Shift: +10

Agree
47%

Disagree
51%

Agree
52%

Disagree
46%

Somewhat 29%

Somewhat 18%

Somewhat 34%

Somewhat 15%

Strongly 18%

Strongly 33%

Strongly 19%

Strongly 30%

Q22/Q43. Now that you've heard more, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with this statement: *I am willing to pay more on my monthly water bill if it would help address Southern California's water supply issues.*

- ▶ There is high concern about water issues and awareness that long-term supply is a significant issue.
- ▶ Water quality is also a significant issue for many, with higher concern and less trust in the tap water among BIPOC residents.
- ▶ Residents agree that water infrastructure improvements are important, and that Southern California needs to better prepare for climate change.
- ▶ However, many also feel they are already paying a lot for the water they have and disagree with the notion of paying higher water bills to address water supply issues.



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