

Opinions and Attitudes on Privatization of Public Services in Ontario

Online Polling Results

May 1st, 2015

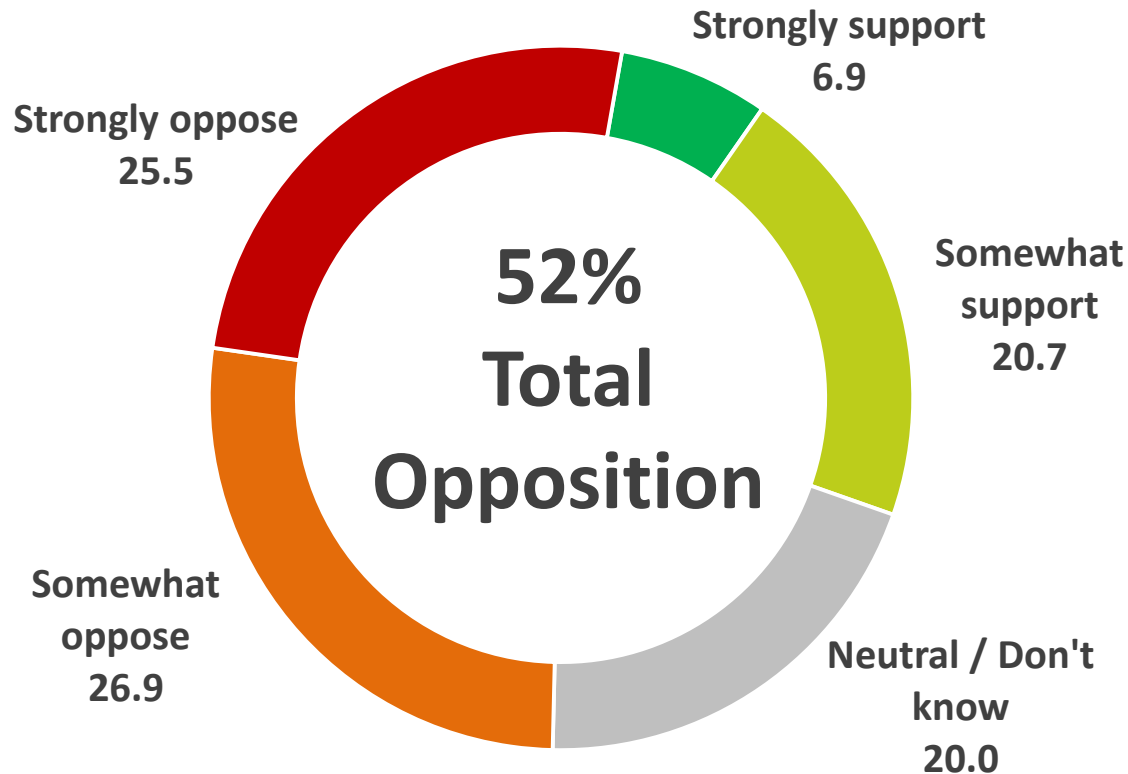
for
Ontario Public Service
Employees' Union

Poll Methods

- ▶ Fielded online from April 21 to 24, 2015
- ▶ Provincially representative sample of 1007 interviews
- ▶ Data statistically weighted to match gender and age composition of Ontario as per 2011 Census
- ▶ All figures are percent (%) unless otherwise noted
- ▶ If this were a probability sample, the margin of error for a sample of this size would = +/-3.1%, 19 times out of 20. Higher for sub groups.
- ▶ February data fielded February 6-8, 2015, 800n

Support and Awareness

Support/Opposition to Privatization in General



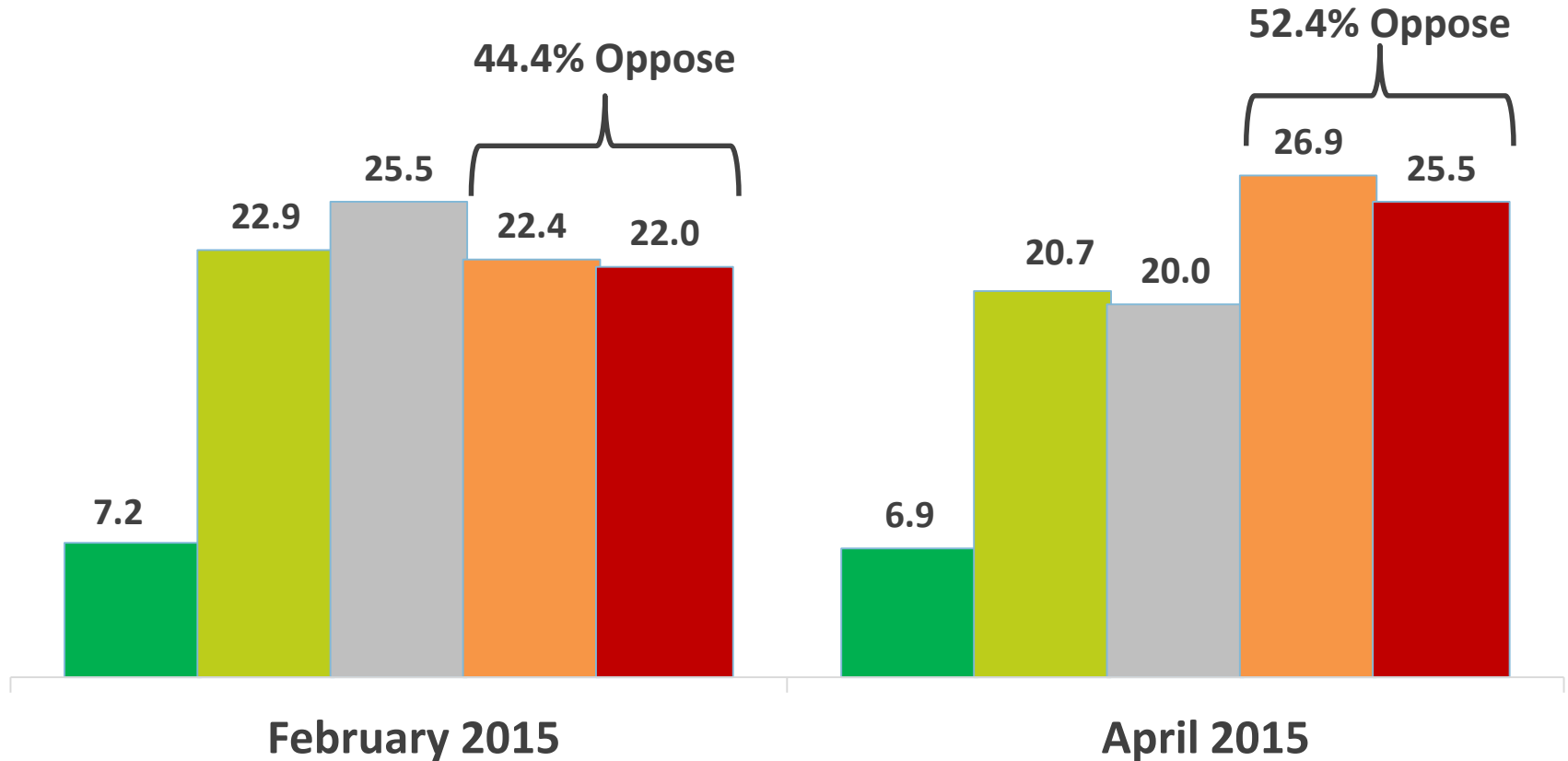
Opposition highest among provincial NDP voters (70%)

Total Opposition of those with an opinion = 66% (removing neutral & don't know)

Over the years, Ontario's provincial governments have sold or leased public assets to private investors, or have contracted out delivery of public services to private companies. This is called privatization. In general, would you say you support or oppose the privatization of government assets and services?

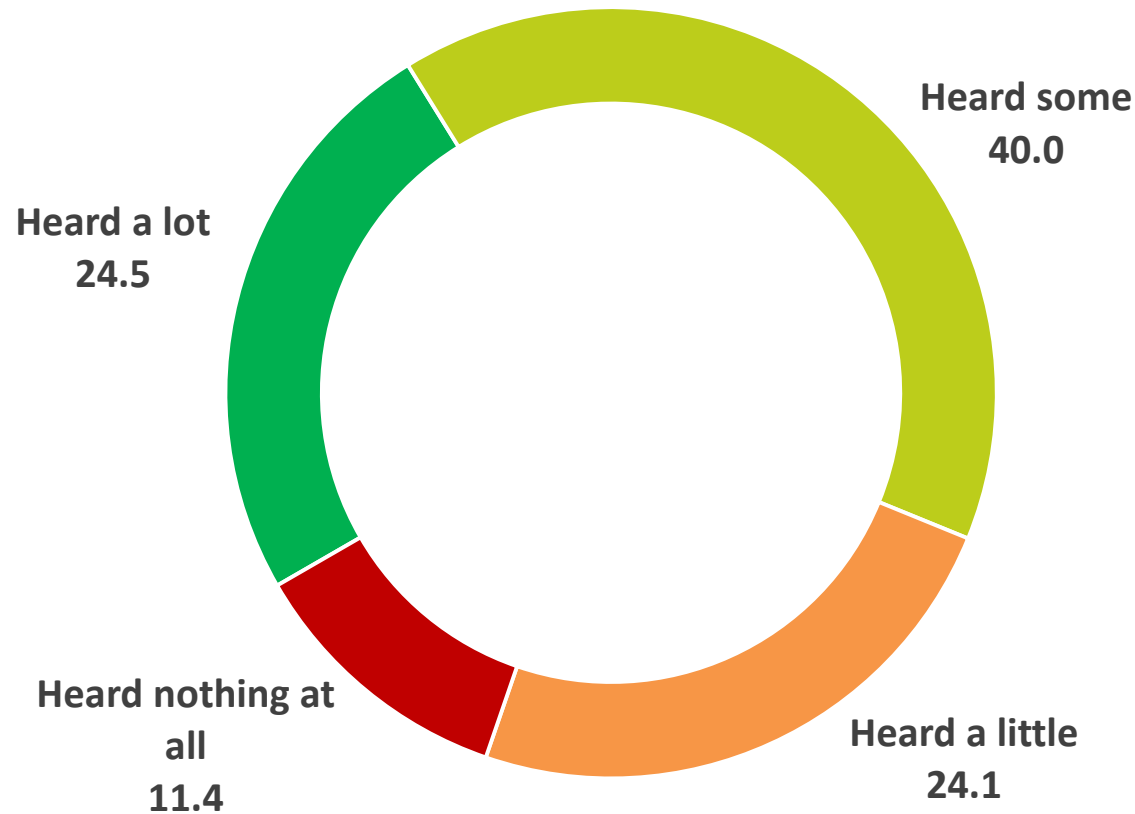
Opposition to Privatization 'in general' is Growing

■ Strongly support ■ Somewhat support ■ Neutral/Don't know ■ Somewhat oppose ■ Strongly oppose



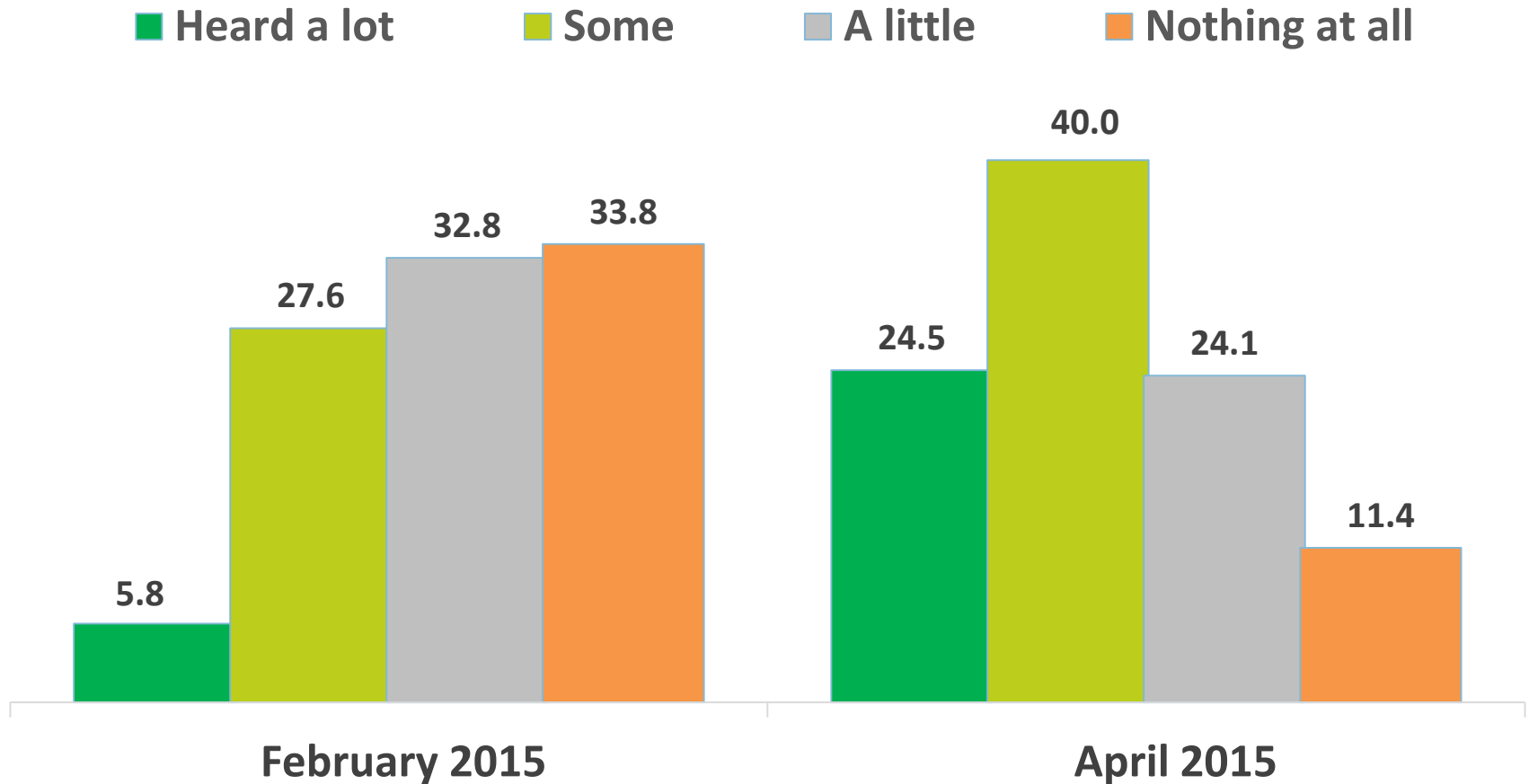
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Awareness of Hydro One Privatization



The Ontario government is considering selling public assets such as Hydro One in order to raise money for other infrastructure projects. How much have you heard about the Ontario government possibly selling Hydro One?

Awareness of Hydro One Privatization has Increased Substantially



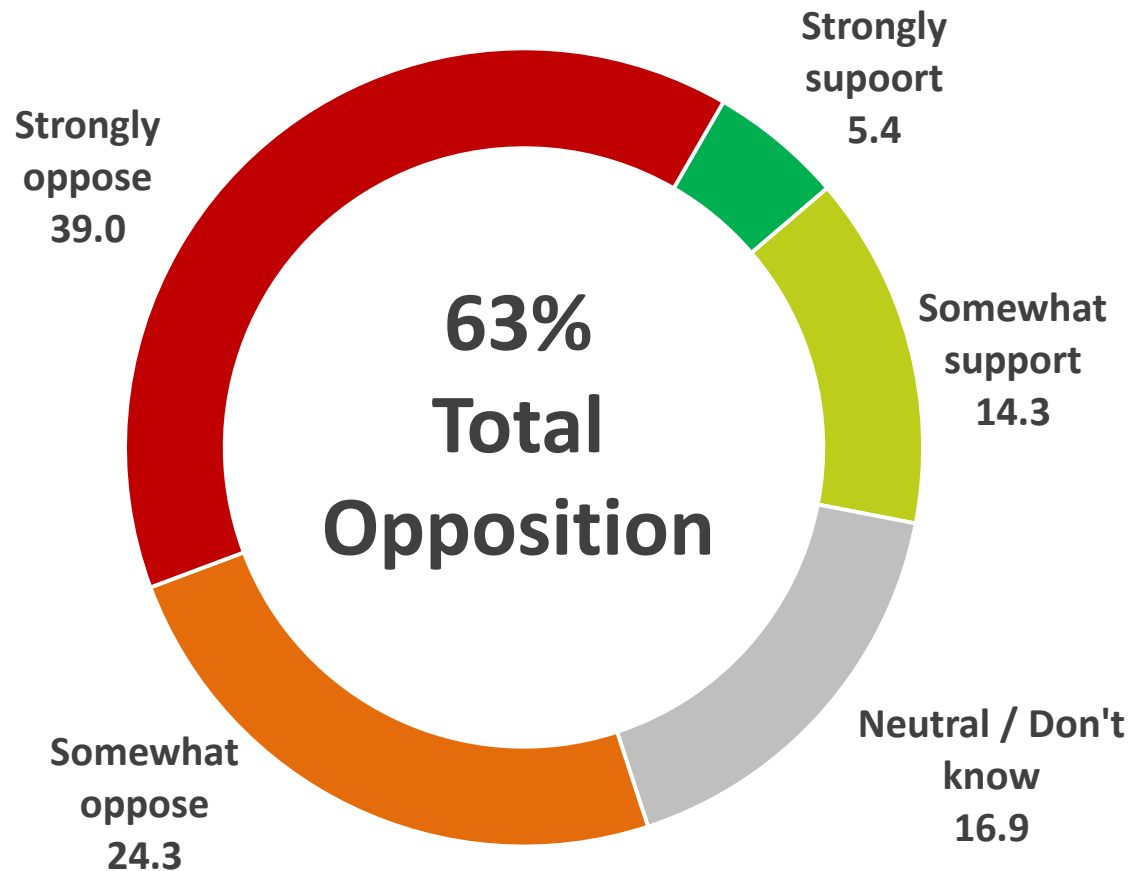
The Ontario government is considering selling public assets such as Hydro One in order to raise money for other infrastructure projects. How much have you heard about the Ontario government possibly selling Hydro One?

Support/Opposition to Hydro One Privatization

Total Opposition of those with an opinion = 76% (removing neutral & don't know)

Opposition to Hydro One privatization (63%) is higher than opposition to privatization in general (52%)

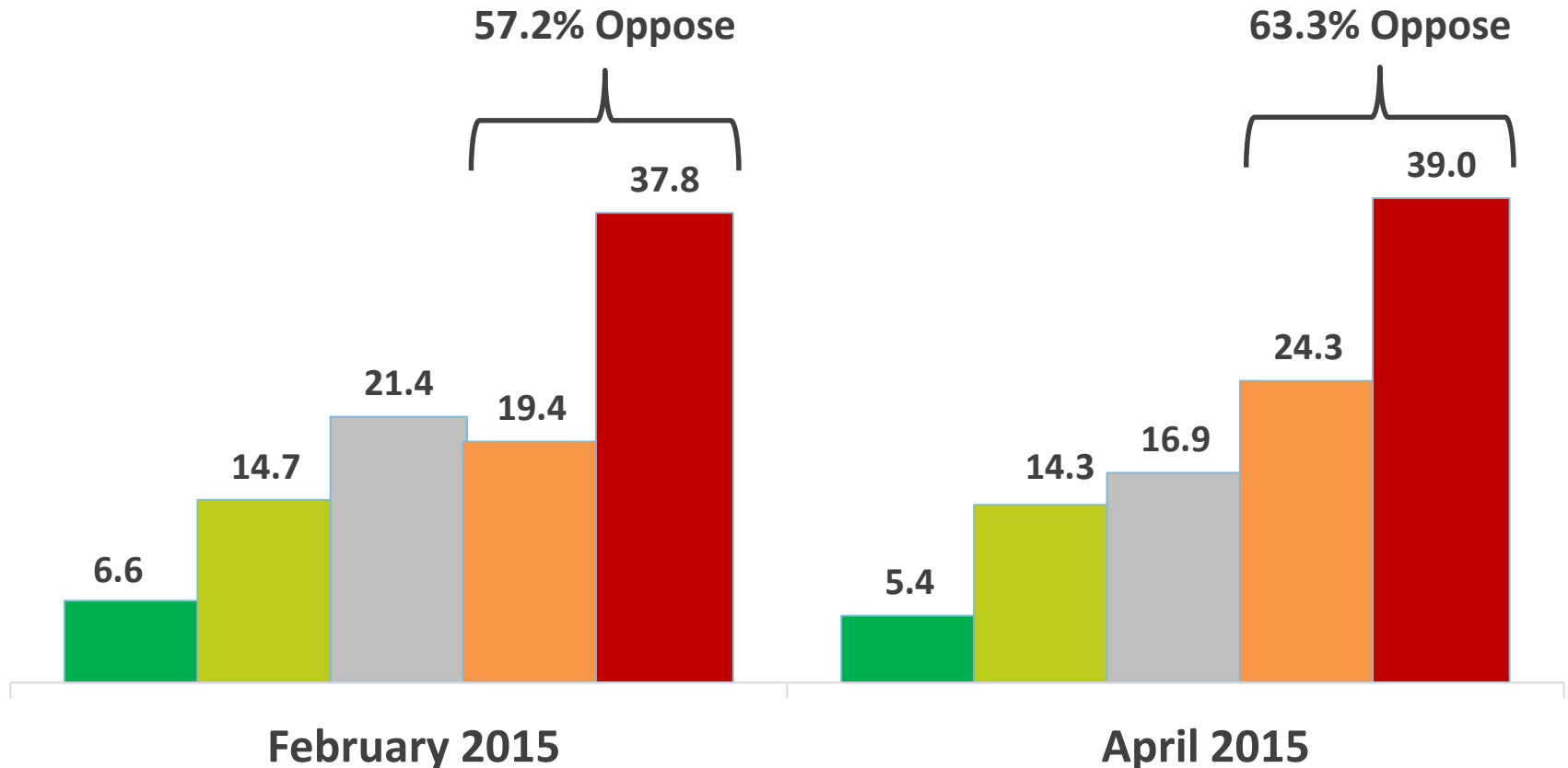
Strong opposition to Hydro One privatization highest among rural residents and those aged 50 +



Hydro One is Ontario's largest distribution utility, operating 97% of the high voltage electricity transmission grid throughout the province. Would you support or oppose the Ontario government privatizing public electricity assets such as Hydro One?

Opposition to Hydro One Privatization is Growing

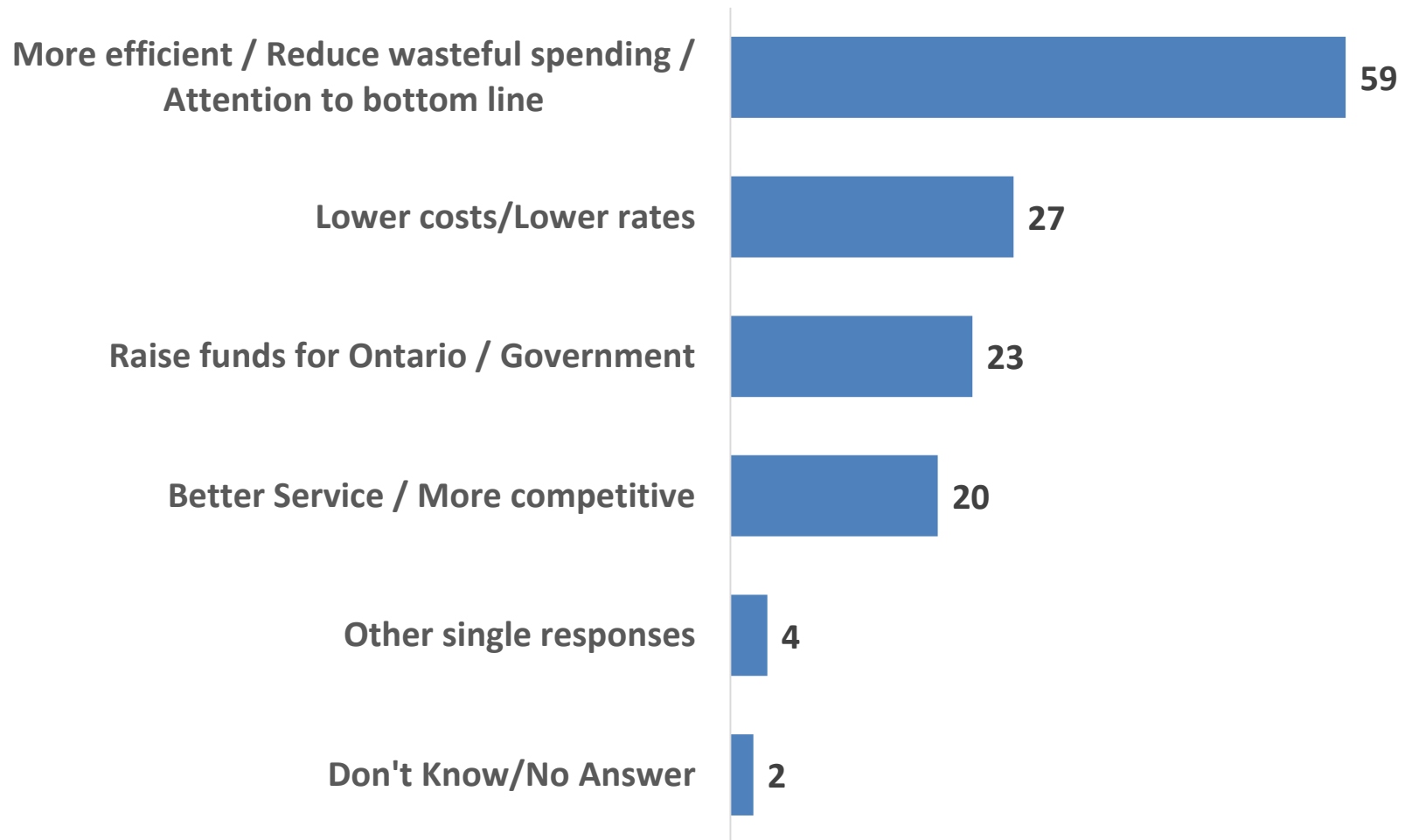
■ Strongly support ■ Somewhat support ■ Neutral/Don't know ■ Somewhat oppose ■ Strongly oppose



Hydro One is Ontario's largest distribution utility, operating 97% of the high voltage electricity transmission grid throughout the province. Would you support or oppose the Ontario government privatizing public electricity assets such as Hydro One?

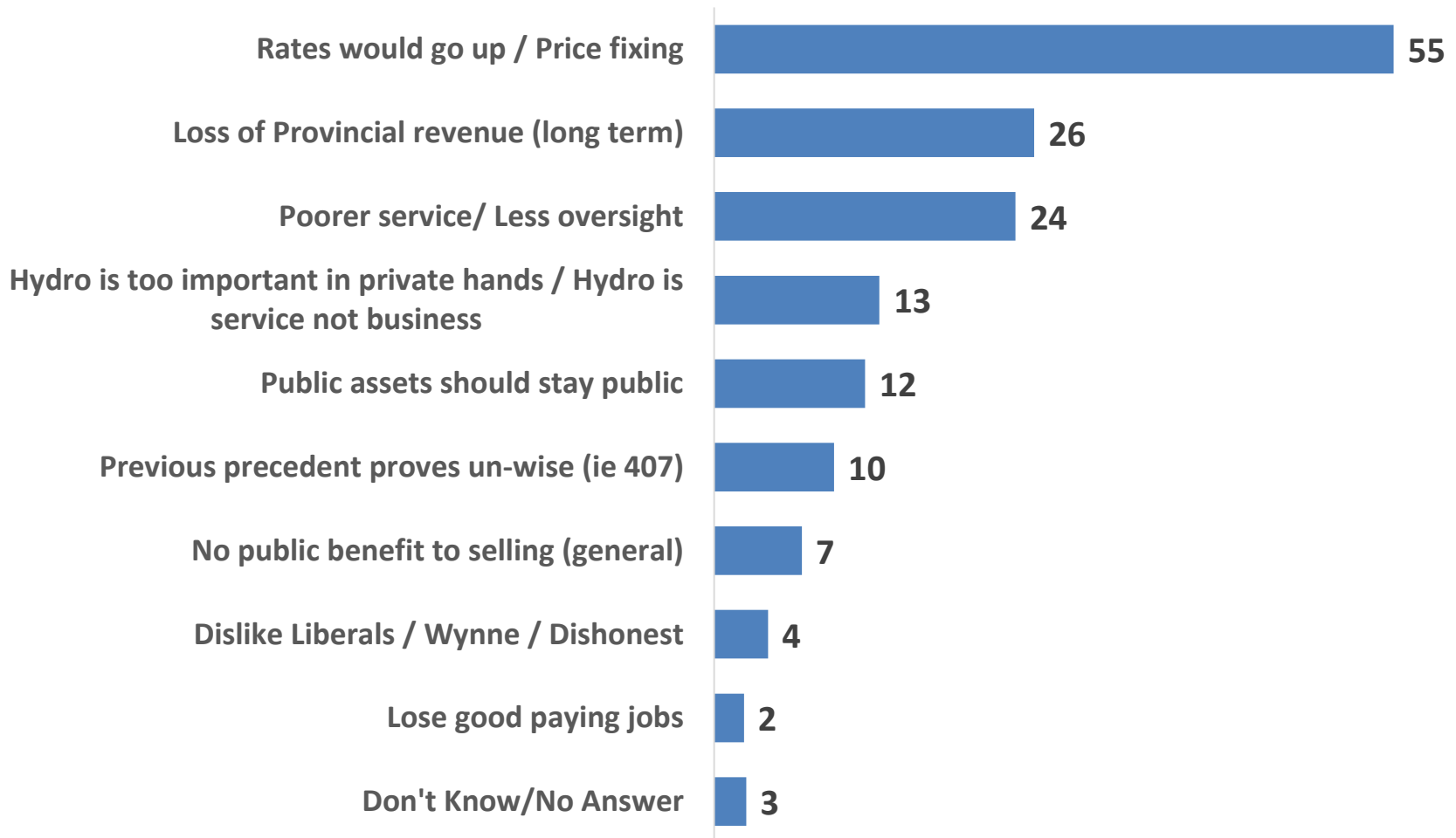
Reasons for Support / Opposition

Why Support Privatizing Hydro One?



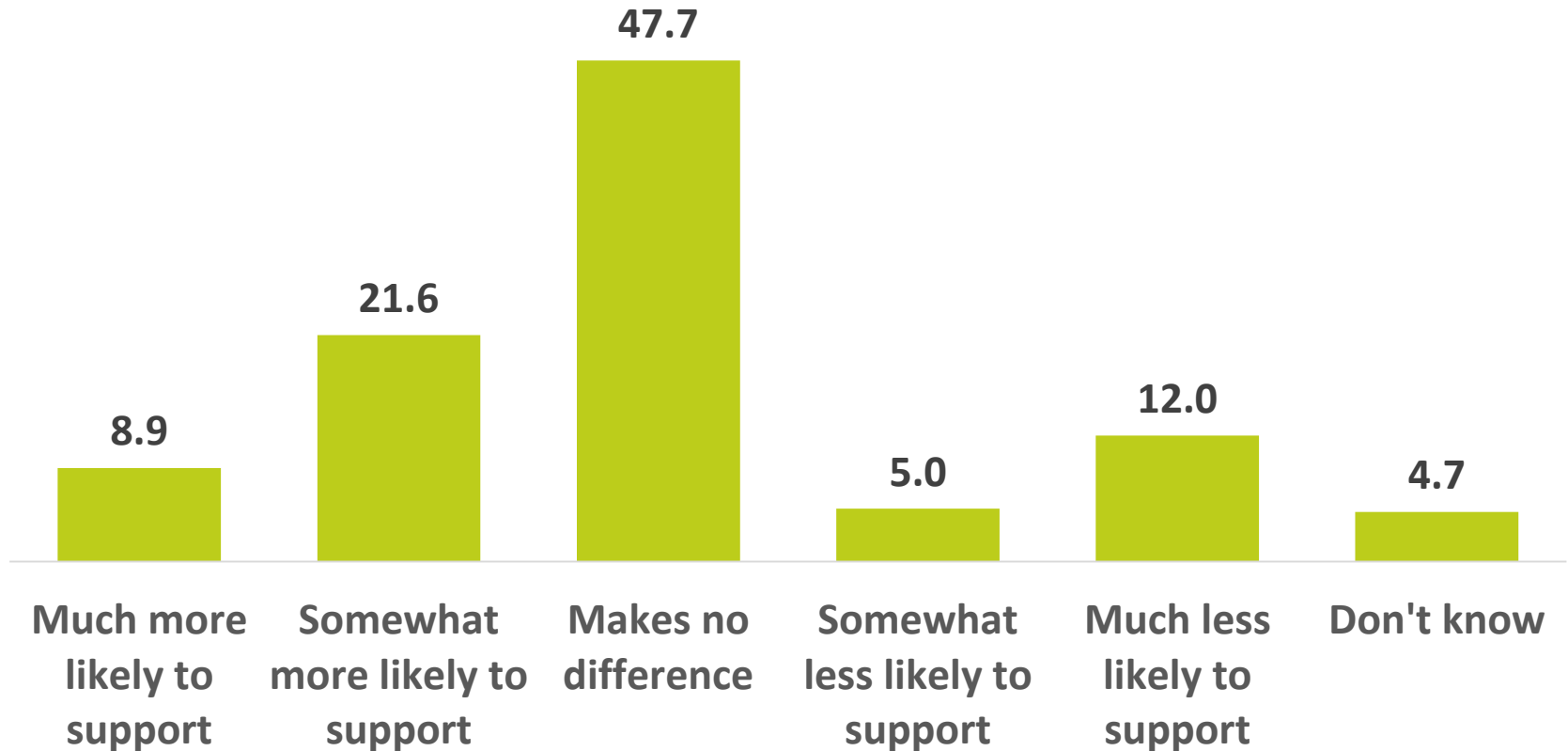
Why do you support the Ontario government privatizing public electricity assets such as Hydro One? [Coded open end responses]

Why Oppose Privatizing Hydro One?



Why do you oppose the Ontario government privatizing public electricity assets such as Hydro One? [Coded open end responses]

More Likely to Support Privatization if Proceeds Go To Transit?



Would you be more or less likely to support privatizing public electricity assets if you knew the proceeds would go to building transit infrastructure such as trains, buses and road improvements?

Issues and Arguments

The Ontario government intends to privatize assets like Hydro One in order to pay for new transit and other infrastructure.

[ROTATE SOME/OTHER STATEMENTS]

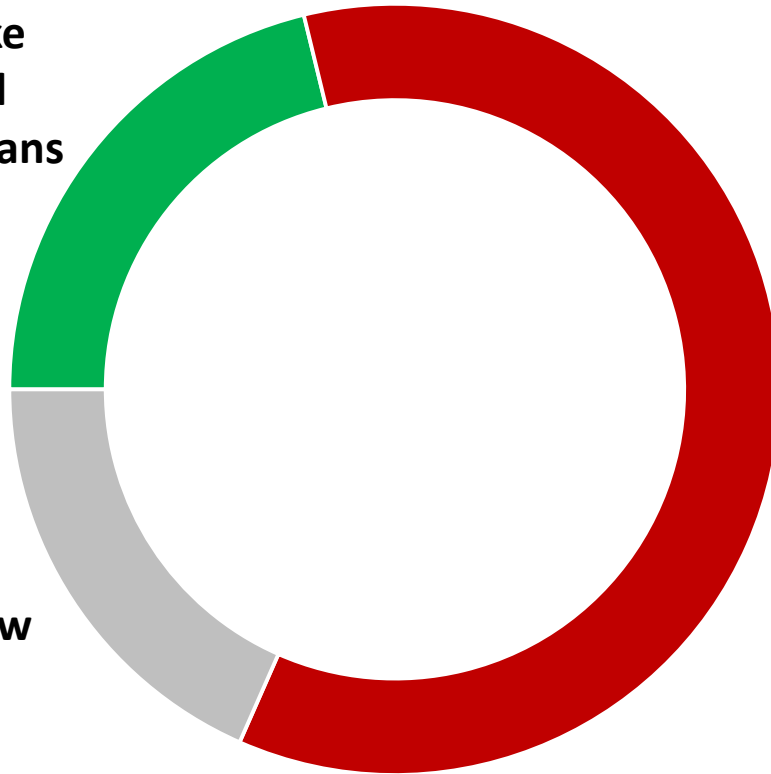
Some/Other people say that privatizing assets like Hydro One is a good thing because it means that the government does not need to introduce new taxes or fees to pay for things like transit and infrastructure.

Other/Some people say that privatizing assets like Hydro One is a bad thing because it is a short term gain that will result in the loss of significant steady revenue for the government in the future.

Which is Closer to Your View?

Privatizing assets like
Hydro One is a good
thing because it means
no new taxes
21.2

Don't know
18.4

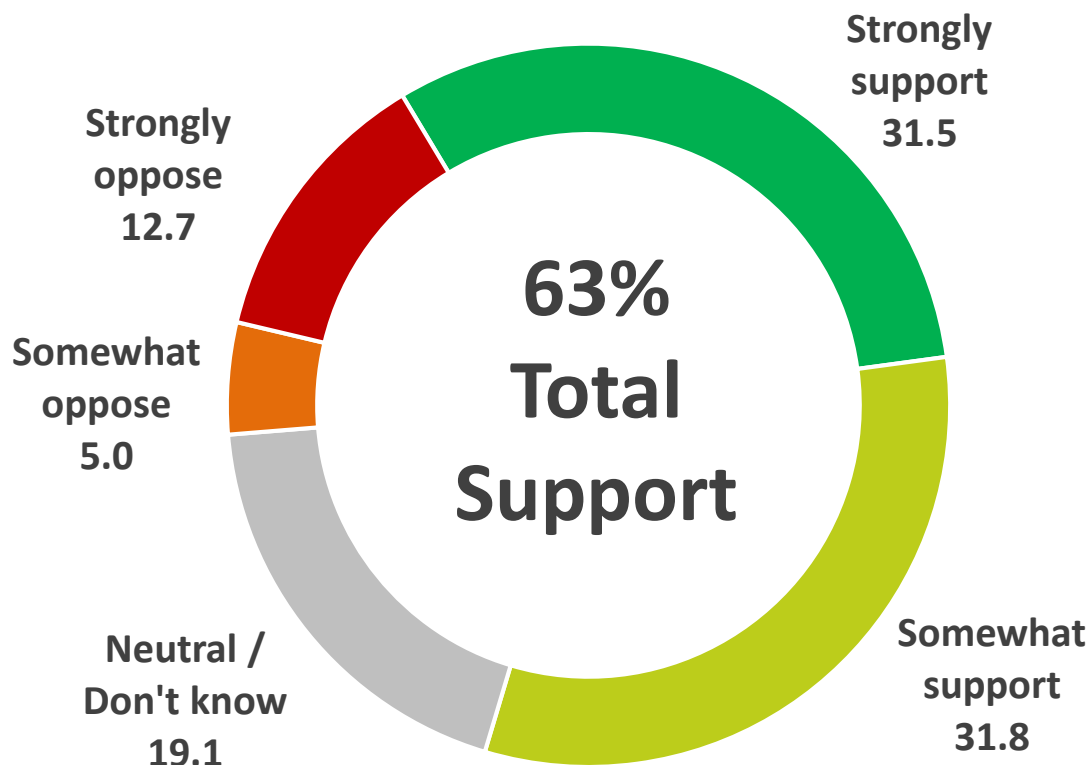


Privatizing assets like
Hydro One is a bad thing
because it means lost
future revenue
60.4

The Ontario government recently announced a new cap-and-trade system intended to reduce greenhouse gas by making industrial polluters pay for the carbon emissions they cause.

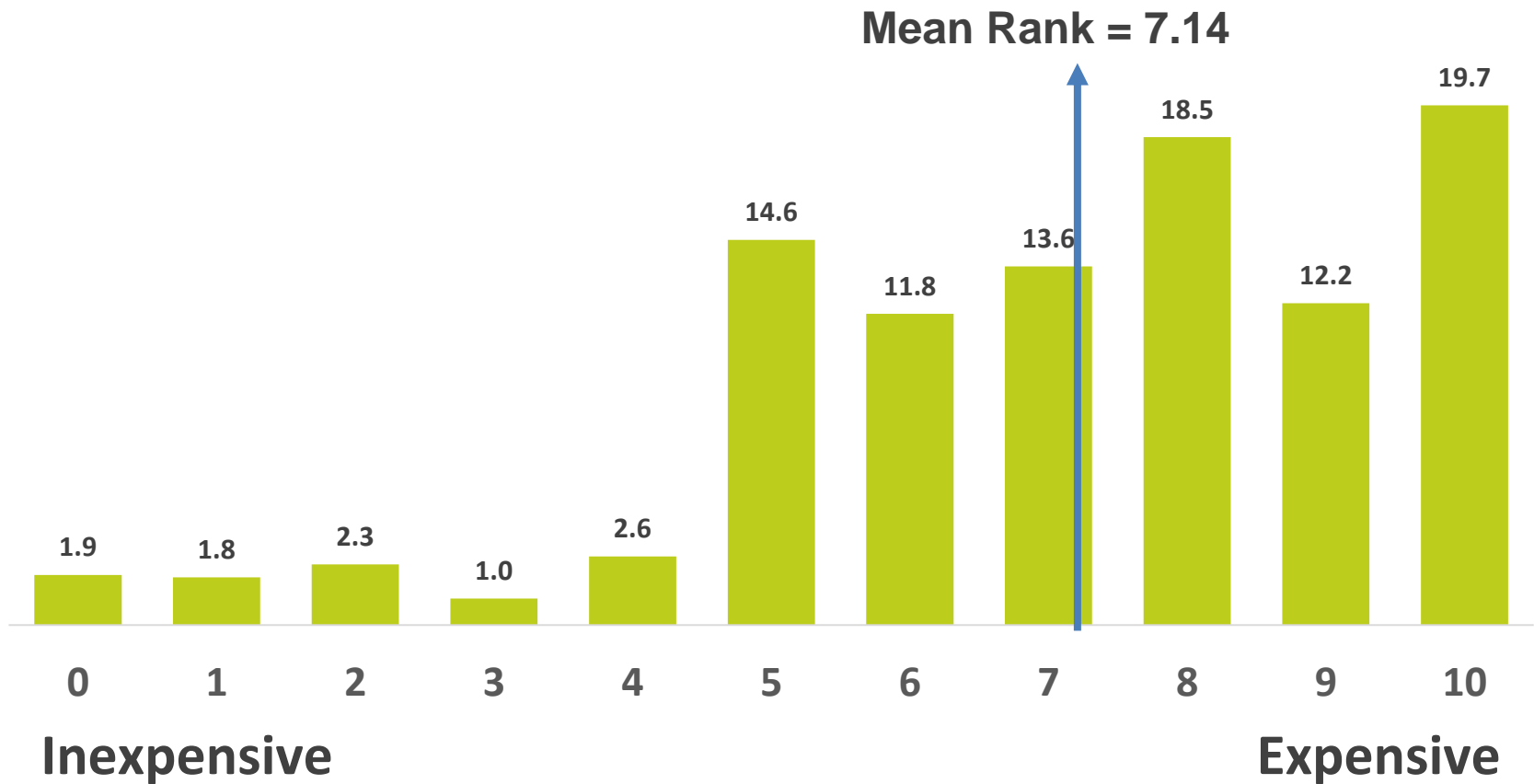
Would you support or oppose using the revenues from the new cap-and-trade system to pay for transit and infrastructure improvements instead of privatizing Hydro One?

Support/Opposition for Using Cap-and-Trade Revenues for Infrastructure Spending Instead of Privatizing Hydro One



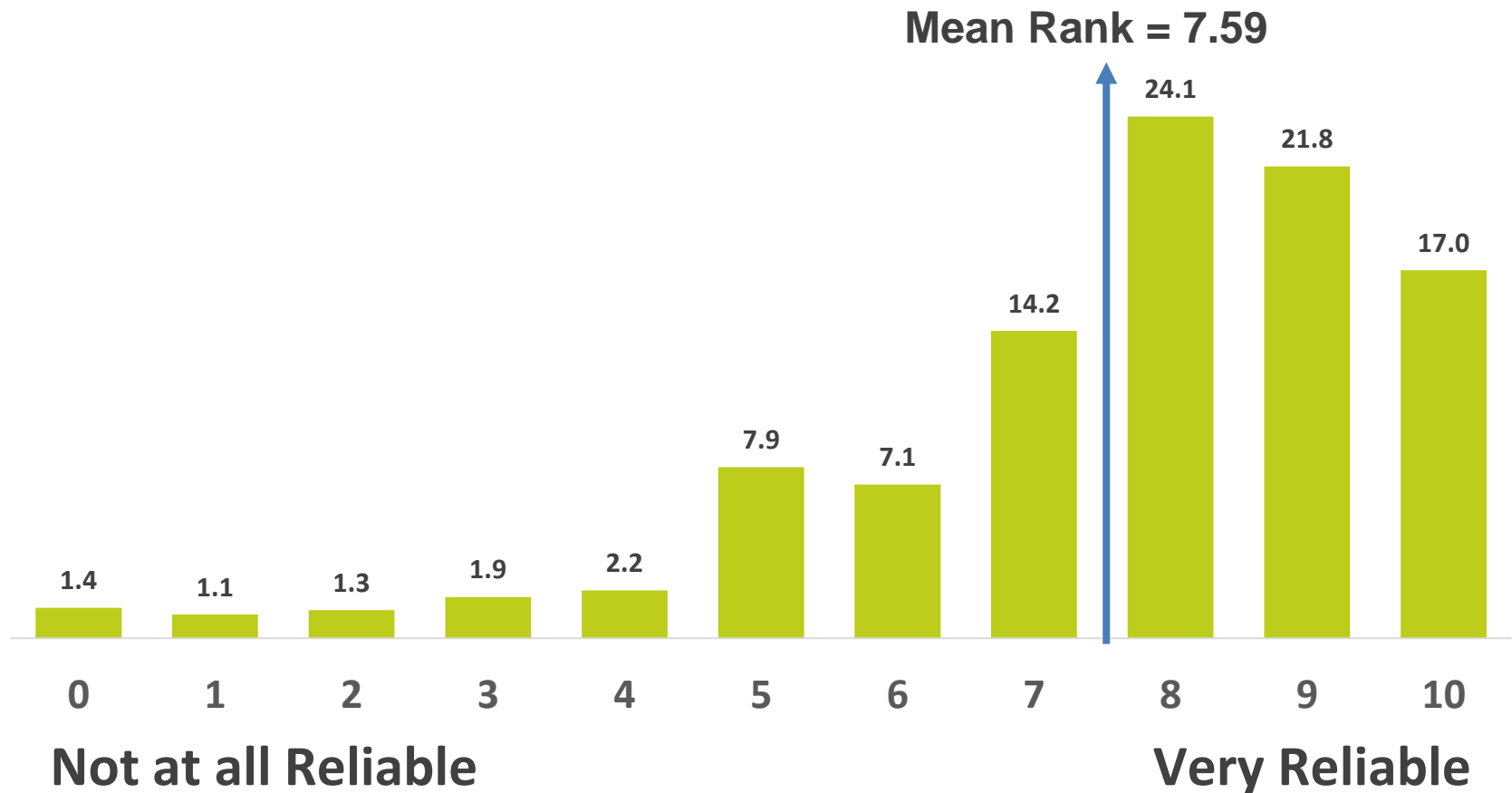
Cost and Quality of Service

Rating the Cost of Your Local Electricity Utility



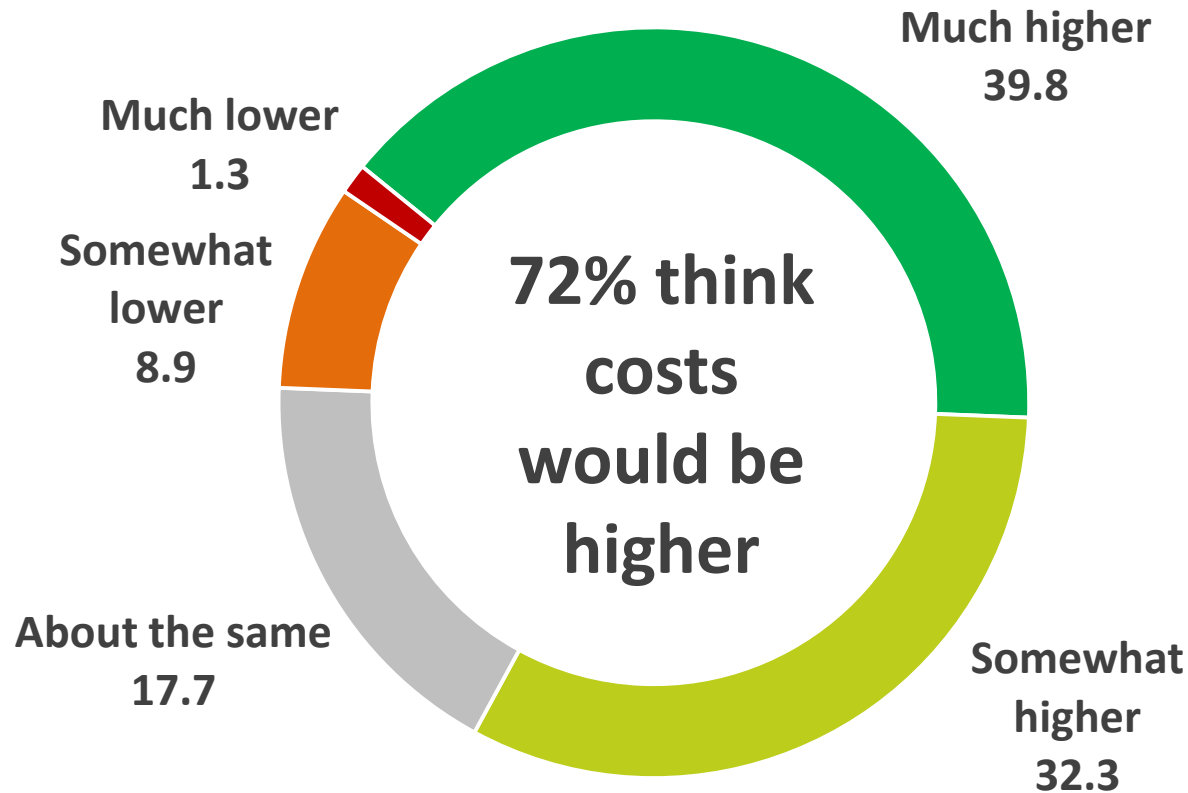
Thinking about your local electricity utility, how would you rate the cost of the service you receive?

Rating the Reliability of Service from Your Local Electricity Utility



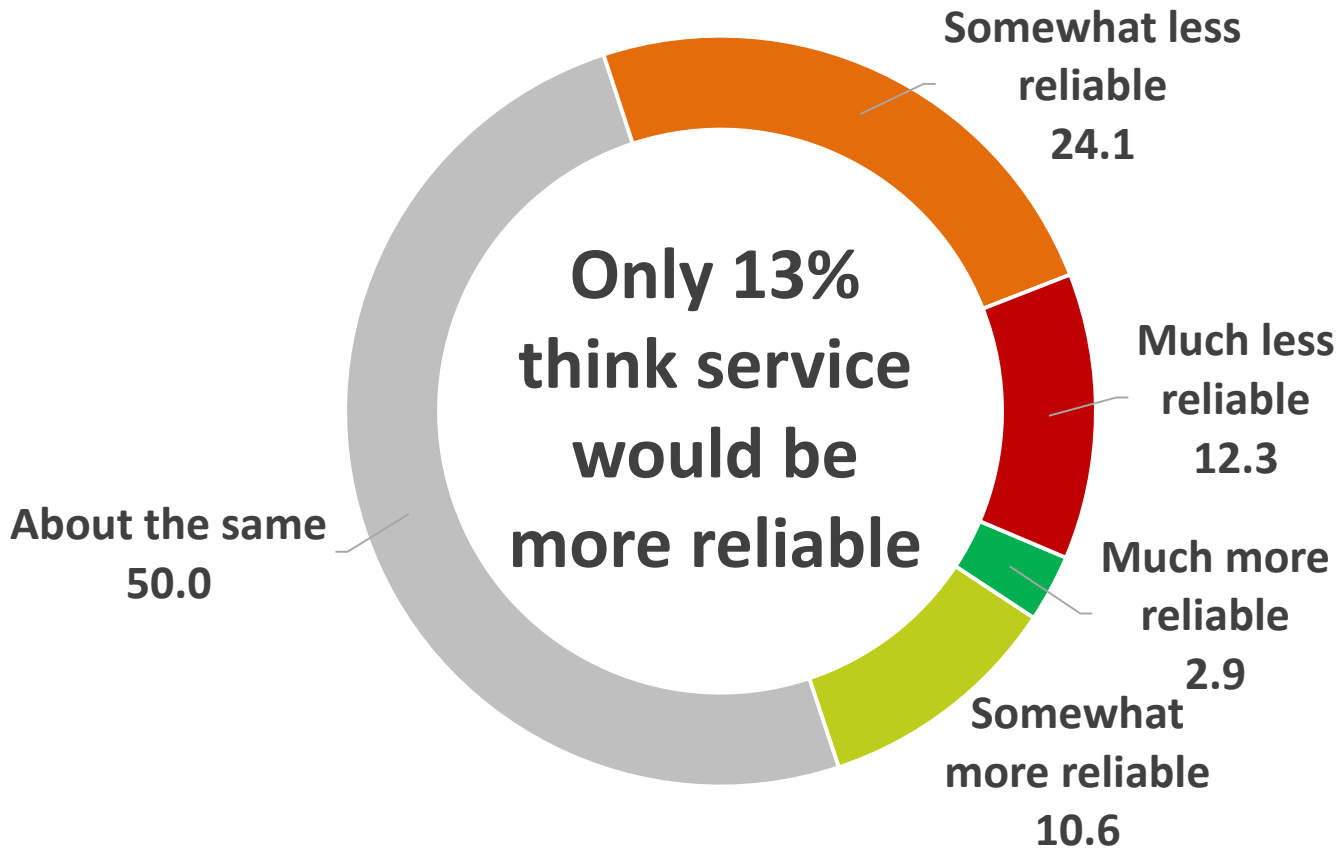
How would you rate the reliability of the service from your local electricity utility?

Would Cost be Higher or Lower if Privatized?



If your local electricity service were privatized, do you think the cost of your electricity would be higher or lower than if it remained a publicly-owned utility?

Would Service be More or Less Reliable if Privatized?



Do you think a privatized electricity service would provide a more or less reliable service than if it remained a publicly owned utility?

Arguments in Favour of Privatization

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know
If you privatize local utilities, private owners may find ways to reduce costs more than publicly-owned utilities would, and that's a good reason to privatize local utilities.	8.4	21.5	21.0	18.0	24.7	6.4
By selling off all or part of local electricity companies, the government could provide municipalities with funding for transit and transportation infrastructure without raising taxes, and that's a good thing.	5.7	21.8	23.4	18.3	24.2	6.5
Privatizing Ontario hydro will make it more efficient and cost effective. That's a good reason to privatize hydro.	6.3	18.0	17.8	17.3	34.8	5.9

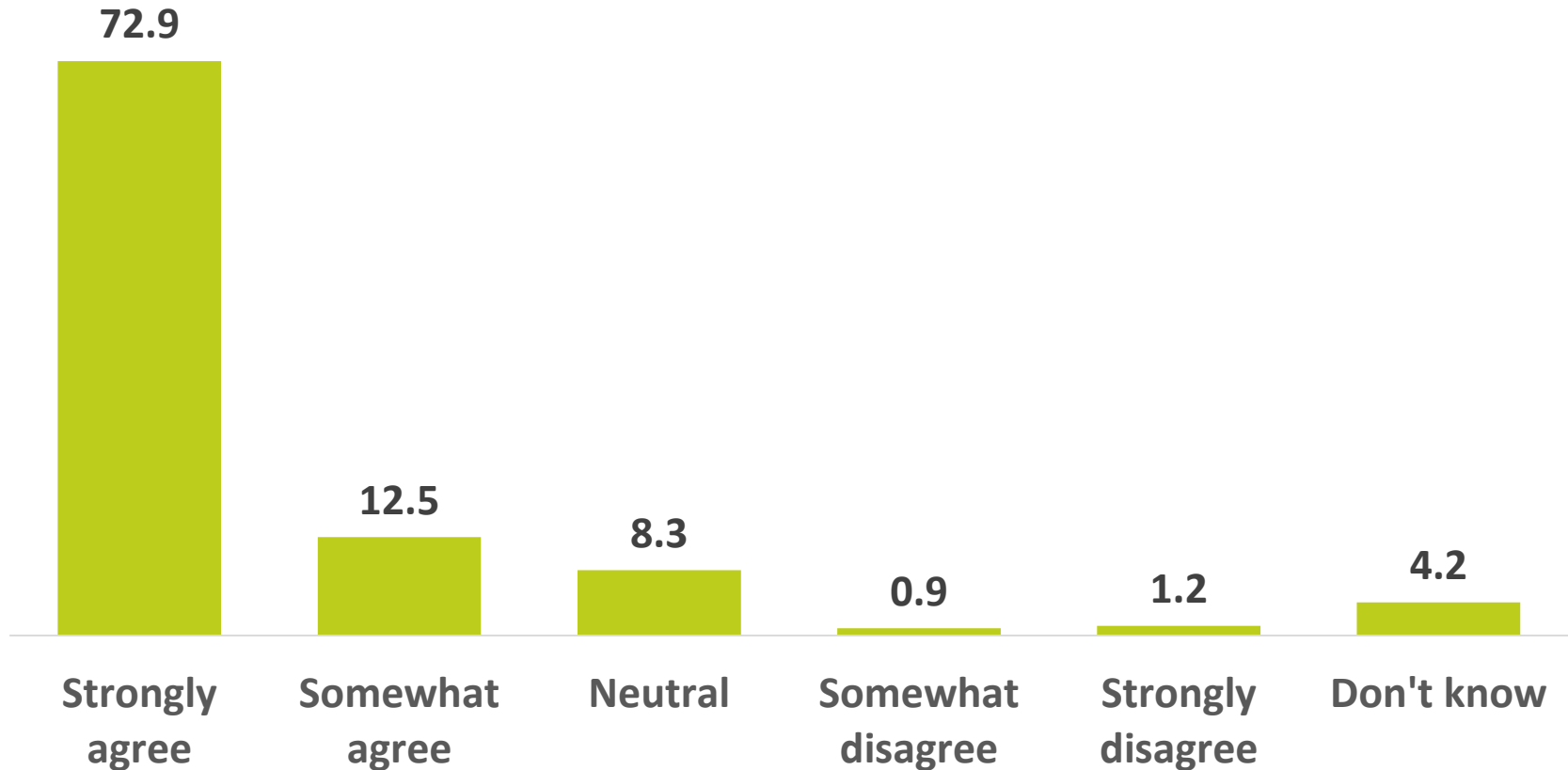
Arguments Against Privatization

TOP 3	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know
If we privatize the electricity system, we give up control over accountability, reliability and affordability. And unlike services like cell phones, we can't just switch to another provider if we aren't satisfied with the service. That's a good reason to keep hydro public.	49.4	21.4	11.6	9.2	4.7	3.7
Selling off hydro to private interests will make my rates go up because private companies will raise rates to increase their profits. That's a good reason to oppose any sale of hydro.	42.6	27.3	12.8	8.6	4.6	4.1
Ontario should keep hydro public because it's the only way to ensure the service will be there for everyone, when they need it, no matter where they live.	40.0	27.0	14.1	8.5	6.2	4.1

CONT'D	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know
Ontario's hydro system has been built by the people of Ontario through our taxes. It's wrong to sell off those assets to private interests like banks and big corporations.	44.6	22.3	14.9	7.2	6.2	4.8
The province of Ontario should not be allowed to force municipalities to sell off electricity distribution - that's a decision that should be made locally by communities and their elected representatives.	37.7	28.8	18.1	6.1	3.2	6.0
Less public control over electricity distribution means risking higher costs and lower quality service. That's a good reason to keep hydro public.	42.1	23.4	14.2	9.3	6.1	4.9

CONT'D	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know
Privately operated utilities would be accountable to their shareholders but not to Ontario residents. That's a good reason to keep utilities like Hydro One in public control.	42.4	22.2	14.7	8.9	7.1	4.7
Private utility owners will lower the wages and benefits of their front-line employees and that's not good for workers, their families or the communities involved.	26.3	26.3	23.2	11.5	7.1	5.6
Operators of local utilities should be allowed to find ways to lower their costs, including changes to the wages and working conditions of the people delivering the service if it means keeping energy costs down.	19.8	28.5	20.6	14.5	11.0	5.6

Transparency is Expected



Any steps the government takes to privatize electricity assets should be completely transparent so the people of Ontario know what the government has planned and what we can expect.

Conclusions

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- Opposition to privatization increasing
- Opposition to privatization of Hydro One higher than privatization of public services in general
- Increased awareness = Increased opposition
- Opposition higher among northern & rural residents
- Opposition increases with age
- Argument of less taxes not strong enough to counter opposition to privatization
- Residents find current electricity service reliable and somewhat expensive, but think service would be more expensive and no more reliable if privatized
- Number one concerns are cost, reliability, accountability, access, and loss of government revenue
- Transparency is important

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for
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