

Louisiana Coastal Issues Poll 2021

Research Findings Prepared by Global Strategy Group



Methodology

Phone Survey

Global Strategy Group conducted a telephone survey of 1,058 **registered voters in coastal Louisiana between** July 14 and July 20, 2021.

At least 150 interviews were conducted in each region of interest and each region was weighted to be proportional to its share of registered voters within the full region surveyed.

Region	N-size	Share	Parishes
Greater New Orleans	300	34%	Jefferson, Orleans
Greater Baton Rouge	157	30%	Ascension, East and West Baton Rouge, Livingston
Northshore	150	18%	St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Washington
Bayou Central	150	10%	Lafourche, St. Mary, Terrebone
River Parishes	151	5%	St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist
St. Bernard and Plaquemines	150	3%	St. Bernard, Plaquemines

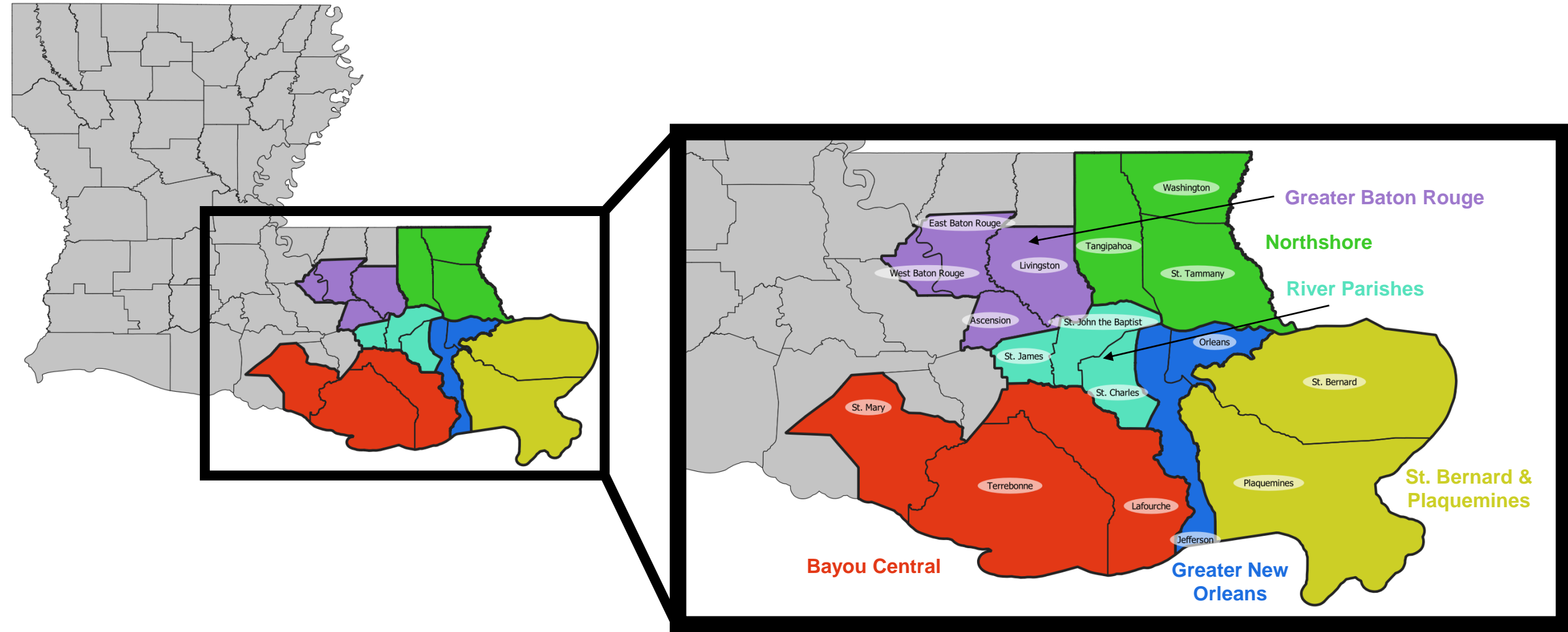
Margin of Error

The margin of error at the 95% confidence level for coastal voters is +/- 3.5%.

The margin of error for Greater New Orleans is +/- 5.7%.

The margin of error for other regions is +/- 8.0%.

Map of Regions Surveyed



Demographics of Survey Sample*

Gender

Men	45
Women	55

Age

18-29 year olds	17
30-44 year olds	27
45-54 year olds	15
55-64 year olds	17
Seniors 65+	23

Education

High school or less	25
Some college	39
4-year college graduates	26
Post-graduate	10
Refused to Answer	1

Race

White	64
African-American	30
Hispanic	3
Other	3

Party Registration (from voter file)

Democrats	42	} D+11
Independents/Other	28	
Republicans	31	

Party ID (self-reported)

Democrats/Dem Leaners	40	} R+6
Straight Independents/Other	14	
Republicans/Rep Leaners	46	

Ideology

Very liberal	12
Somewhat liberal	11
Moderate	27
Somewhat conservative	20
Very conservative	26
Refused to Answer	4

***The survey sample was weighted to match the demographic, political, and geographic profile of registered voters in the region surveyed.**

Key Findings

Coastal Louisianans are familiar with the problem of land loss and see it as an issue that needs addressing now.

They are favorable to restoration efforts and lawmakers who support taking strong action to restore their state's coastal areas and wetlands. Further, nearly all agree that these efforts are important and that the state needs a plan, backed by science, to deal with the problem – because they themselves are feeling the effects caused by hurricanes, rainfall, and coastal flooding.

Voters across geographies and parties support sediment diversion projects. While there is an opportunity to increase the familiarity of sediment diversions, voters initially support these projects by a 59-point margin, which increases to 71 points after brief description. In this informed ask, support is at or above 74% in every region and among every demographic.

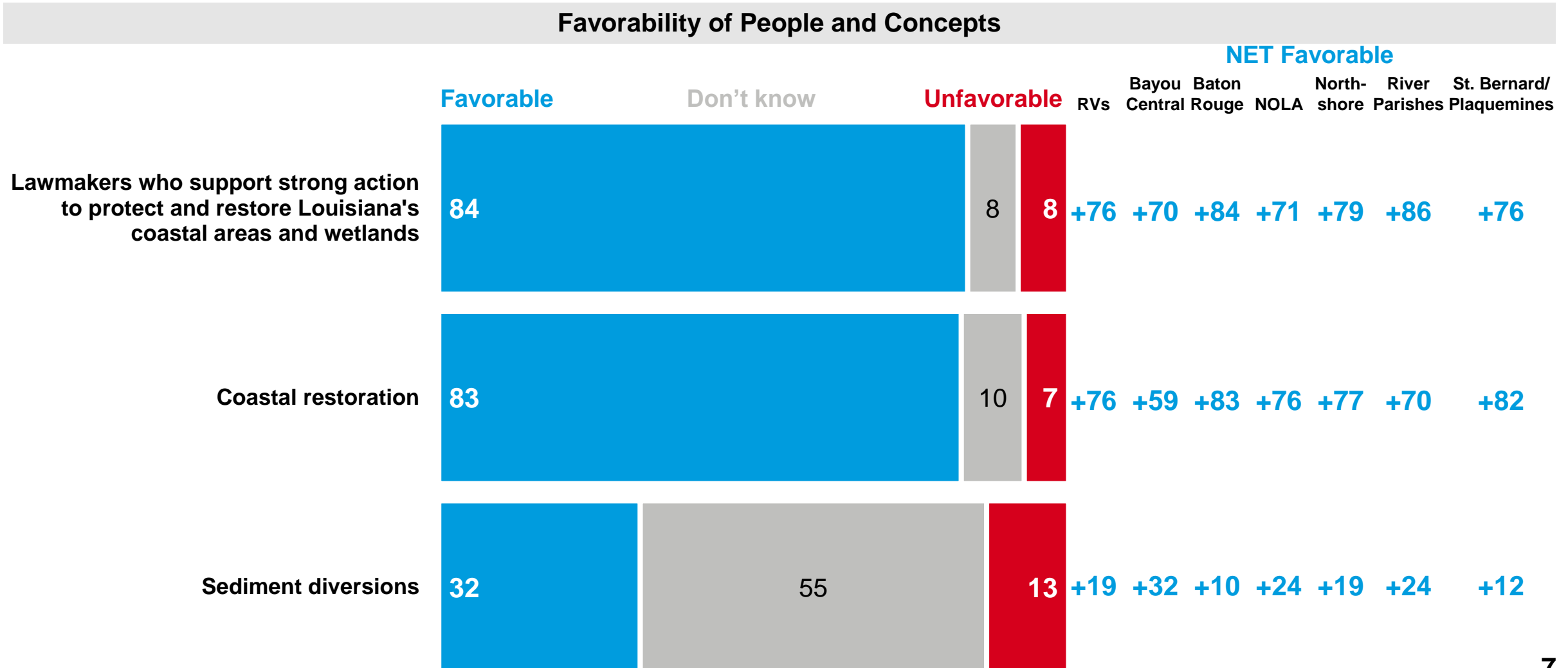
Voters believe sediment diversions will have positive impacts on everything from Louisiana's ability to withstand storm surges to commercial fisheries – and they would view elected officials who support diversions more favorably. Voters report that they would look more favorably on local and state elected officials who support these projects. Voters also see sediment diversion projects as having a positive impact on the region's ability to withstand hurricane storm surge and sea level rise, jobs and the economy on the coast, fish, and wildlife, the area's culture and way of life, and commercial fisheries in the long- and short-term.

Support for diversions is robust (even in St. Bernard and Plaquemines) and maintains a two-to-one margin even after voters hear a battery of negative messages without any positives. Even in the unlikely scenario where respondents heard a series of messages attacking diversion with no response from supporters, voters still support the projects by a two-to-one margin (59% to 30%). After balanced messaging, support finishes at 70% (with 20% opposition) and with every geography and demographic group supporting the projects by margins of at least 27 points.

Landscape

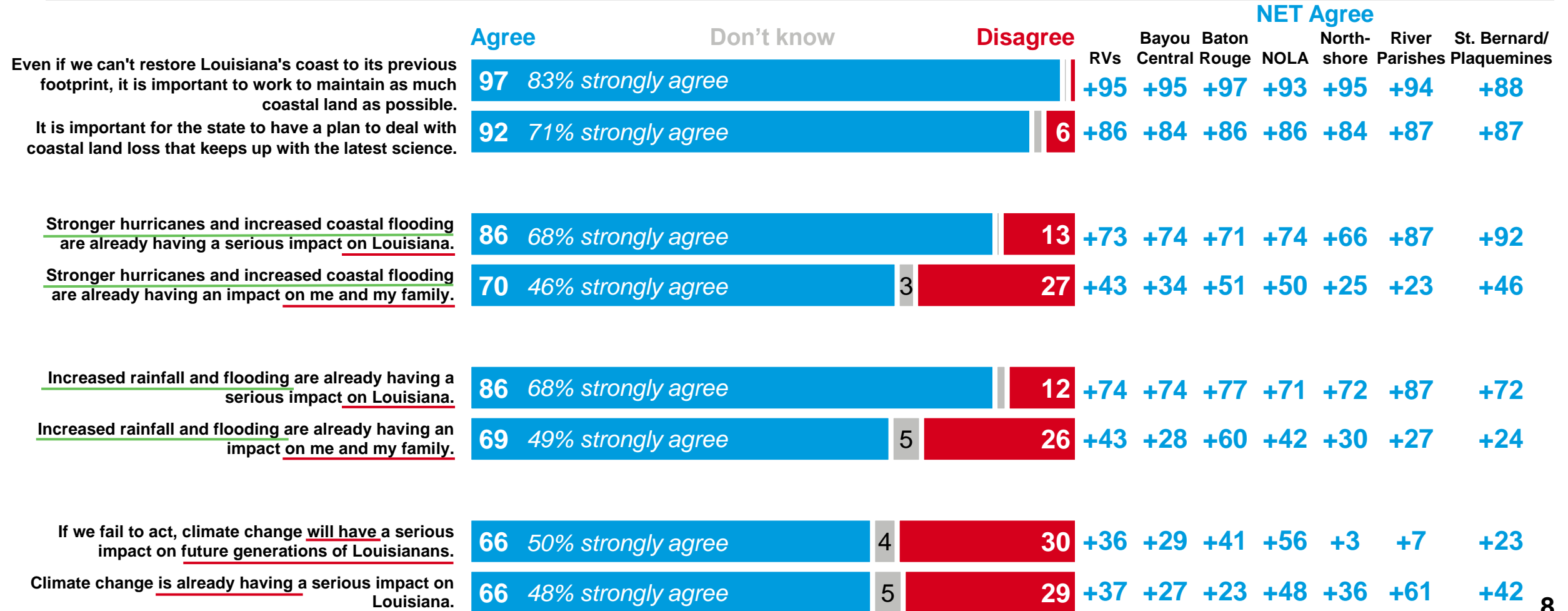
Coastal restoration and lawmakers who support it are popular.

“Sediment diversions” less known in comparison to “coastal restoration”



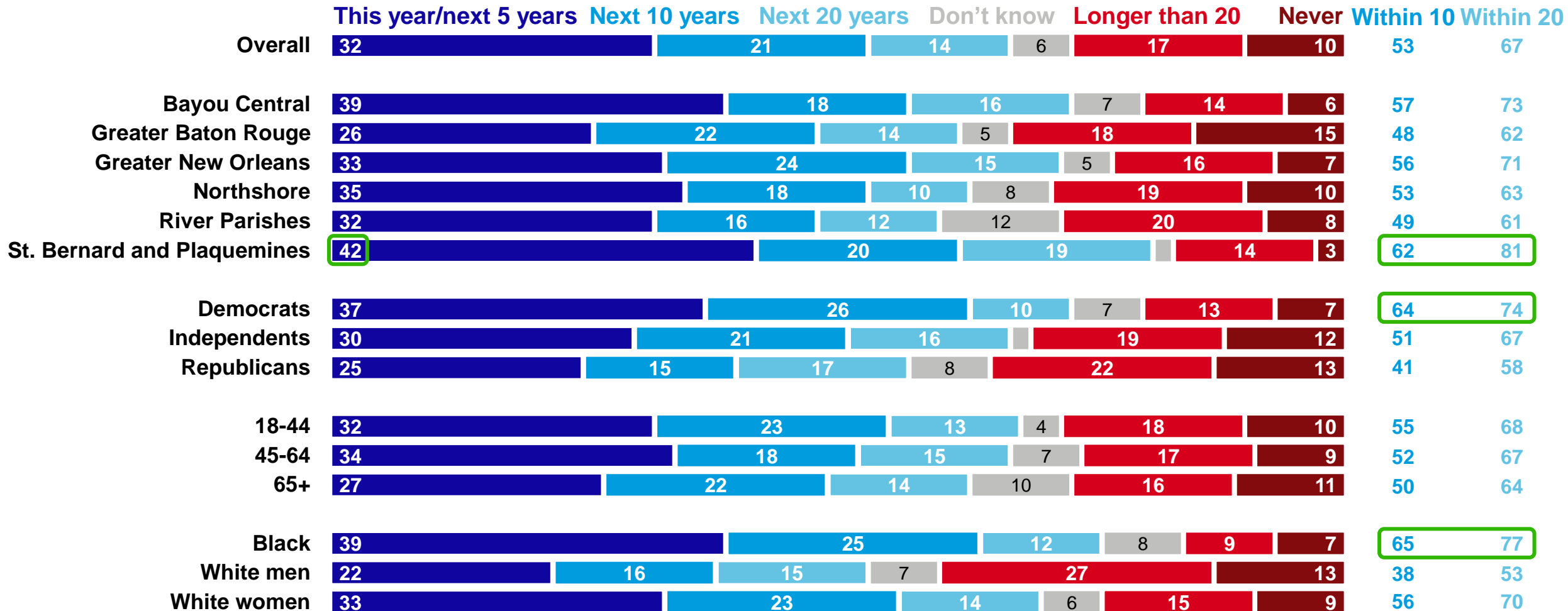
There is universal agreement with the need to maintain coastal land. Voters overwhelmingly recognize the effects hurricanes, rainfall, and flooding have on the state, and 2/3 see impacts on their own family

Statements about Climate Change and Effects



Voters see coastal land loss as an imminent threat: a third think they will directly feel the effects in the next five years, half in the next decade, and two-thirds in the next two decades. St. Bernard/Plaquemines are most worried

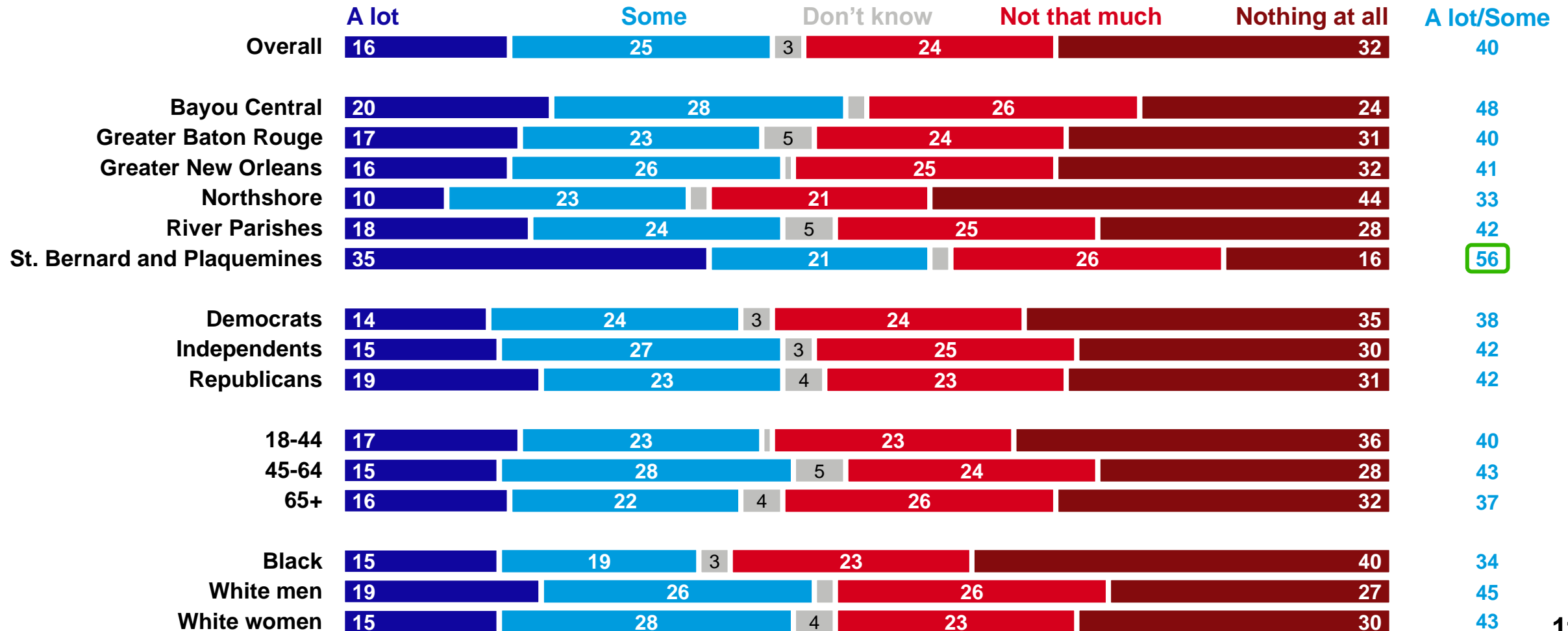
How soon do you think coastal land loss will directly impact you and your family?



Sediment Diversions

Awareness of sediment diversions is limited. St. Bernard and Plaquemines voters are most tuned in

How much have you seen, read, or heard about sediment diversions?



Initially, 2/3 support diversions. Support rises to 82% with limited information. Strong support across regions and demos, including St.B and Plaq. Strongest in Greater New Orleans and Bayou Central

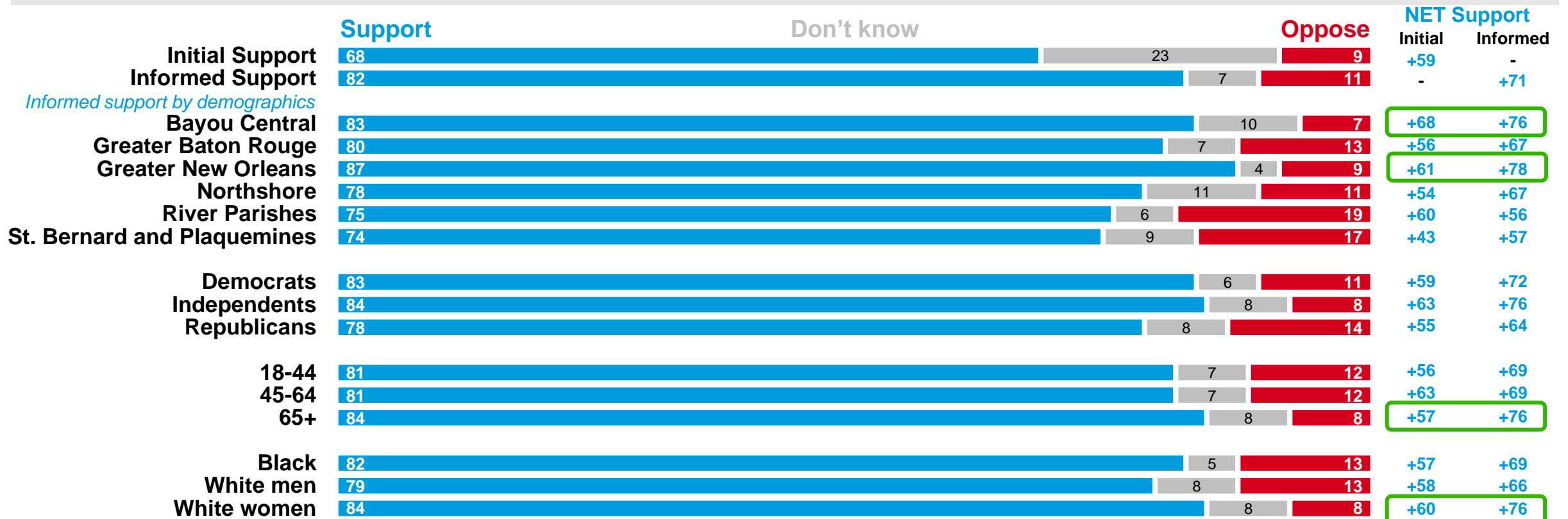
Support for Sediment Diversion Projects

Initial Support

Just based on what you know, do you support or oppose sediment diversion projects to build and maintain coastal wetlands over time?

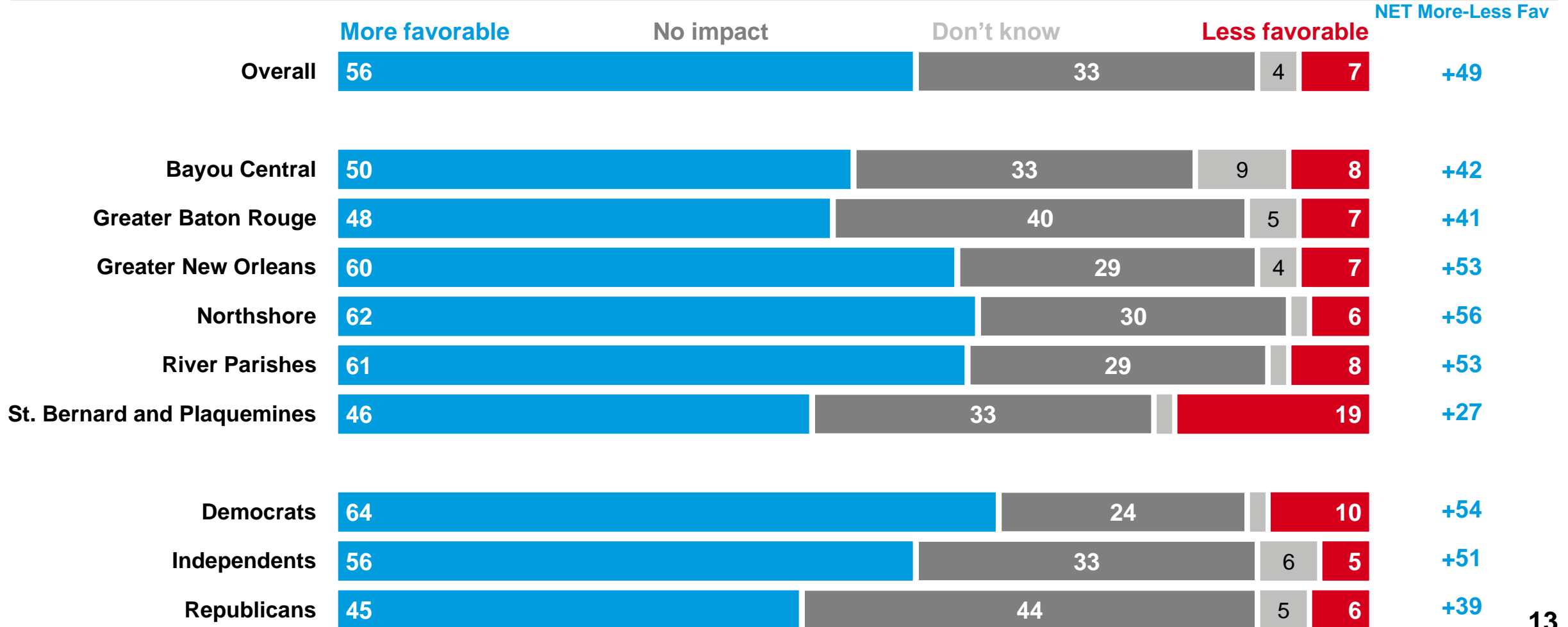
Informed Support

As you may know, sediment diversions are large-scale coastal restoration projects that build and maintain land over time by building control structures in the Mississippi River levee to divert freshwater, sediment, and nutrients from the river into nearby wetlands. Knowing this, do you support or oppose sediment diversion projects to build and maintain coastal wetlands over time?



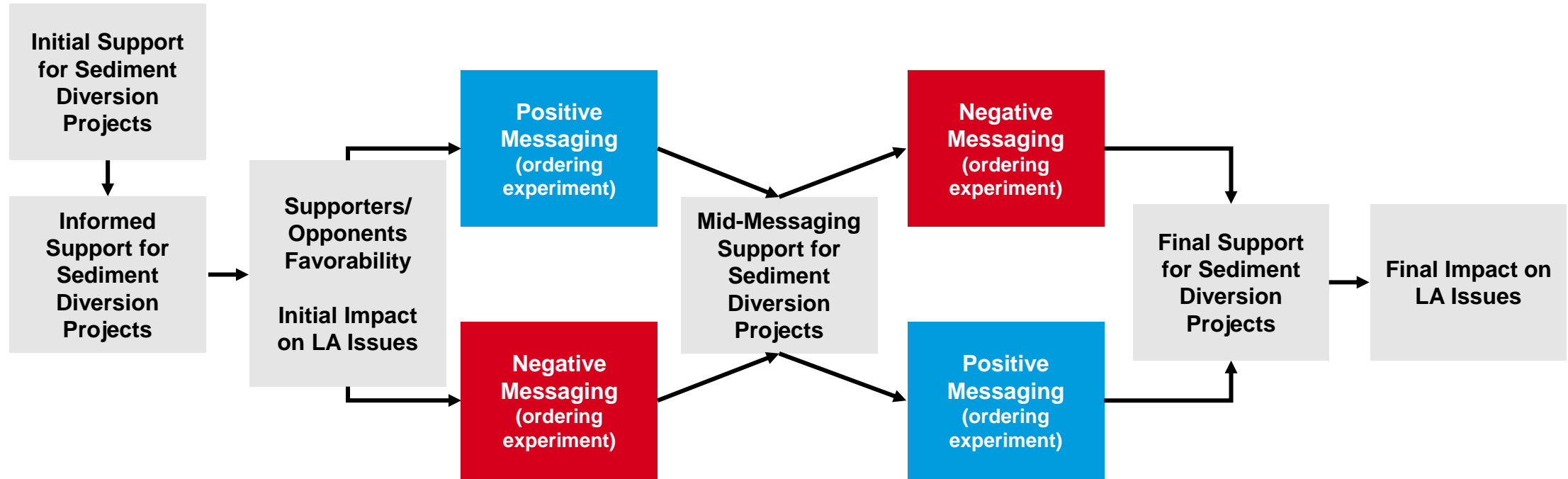
Elected officials benefit from supporting sediment diversion projects across geography and party

Would you feel more or less favorably about your local/state elected officials if they supported sediment diversion projects?



Respondents heard arguments from both sides of the issue – half hearing positives first and half hearing negatives first

Survey Structure



Each respondent was read five messages in favor of sediment diversion projects

Positive Messaging

[SPLIT] [ECONOMY] Economists say that the construction of sediment diversion projects can bring desperately needed economic growth to Louisiana's coastal region by spurring \$1.4 billion in regional investment. These projects could support over 12,000 additional local jobs and increase household earnings in our region by as much as \$648 million a year.

[SPLIT] [MISSISSIPPI] The Mississippi River is our greatest natural resource – it built the very land on which we live here in south Louisiana. The Mississippi and its annual supply of sediment are the strongest tools we have to build and maintain coastal wetlands and protect communities from hurricane storm surge and sea level rise.

[SPLIT] [FISHERIES] Sediment diversions are operated to maximize coastal land building while minimizing impacts to fisheries. And without these diversions, the future of our fisheries and fishing economy – and the wildlife habitats they depend on – are at risk of complete collapse.

[SPLIT] [FISHERIES – LONG-TERM] Sediment diversions are operated to maximize coastal land building while minimizing impacts to fisheries. And while there will be some short-term impact, without these diversions, the future of our fisheries and fishing economy – and the wildlife habitats they depend on – are at risk of complete collapse.

[LAND LOSS] In just a few generations, Louisiana has lost a land mass equivalent to Delaware; and if we fail to act, Louisiana's coast could lose thousands more square miles over the coming decades. Not only will sediment diversion projects reduce coastal land loss, but they will also help increase the lifespan and effectiveness of other coastal restoration and protection projects.

[SPLIT] [SCIENCE] Nearly all scientists and engineers agree that sediment diversions are the most effective way to build and maintain coastal wetlands over time. Sediment diversions are backed by decades of research, and scientists, engineers, and economists agree that these projects are vital to maintaining a future for Louisiana's coast.

[SPLIT] [SPORTSMEN] Our wetlands and fish and wildlife habitats make coastal Louisiana a sportsman's paradise, which brings in millions of dollars of economic activity every year and supports tens of thousands of local jobs. If we fail to act, the loss of our wetlands will threaten Sportsman's Paradise as we know it and put all of those economic benefits at risk.

[STORM SURGE] Coastal wetlands are our communities' best defense against hurricane storm surge and sea level rise, but the combination of land loss and more frequent and severe storms are leaving us increasingly vulnerable. Sediment diversion projects are the best and most cost-effective way to protect our communities from coastal flooding.

Each respondent was read five messages in opposition to sediment diversion projects

Negative Messaging

[COST] These sediment diversions will cost a staggering \$2 billion to divert river water that contains very limited amounts of sediment, yielding minimal land restoration despite the incredible cost.

[DOLPHINS] Research shows that diverting polluted freshwater from the Mississippi will kill up to 70% of our bottlenose dolphin population. And as Louisiana dolphins become virtually extinct as a result of this diversion, so too will other sea life, because when the dolphins perish, everything else in the food chain below them dies, too.

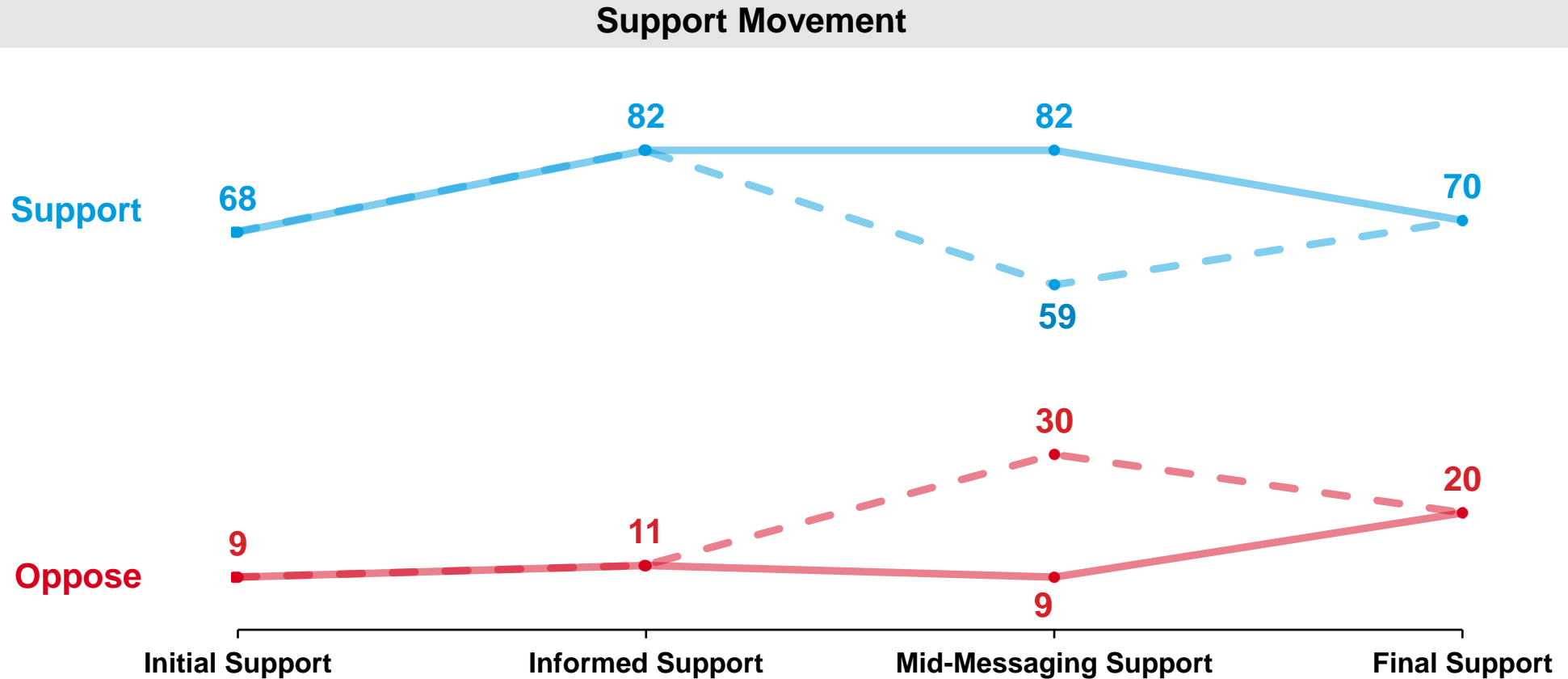
[SPLIT] [DREDGING] Sediment diversions will take 50 years to be remotely effective. Meanwhile, there are more viable and less intrusive options that will take less time. For instance, dredging and pumping sediment has already been proven to reduce land loss, rebuild habitat, enhance flood protection, and lower storm surge by five feet.

[SPLIT] [EXPERIMENTS] Sediment diversions are nothing more than multi-billion-dollar experiments that will harm local communities and the productivity of our fisheries and take decades to build minimal amounts of land.

[ECONOMY] Several Parish Councils in coastal Louisiana oppose these projects because they know they will harm local economies. Filling our estuaries with freshwater will destroy saltwater ecosystems, destroying commercial fisheries, killing thousands of jobs, and forever impacting our state's multi-billion-dollar seafood industry.

[FRESHWATER] These projects are nothing more than a diversion of polluted freshwater from the Mississippi River into our saltwater estuaries which will decimate saltwater-based wildlife. It will take decades for our oyster, crab, shrimp, and shellfish populations to recover from the negative impacts of this kind of freshwater intrusion.

Support holds at 2-to-1 after voters ONLY hear attacks. After balanced messaging, final support ends at a robust 70%



Key
—— Positive messaging first
----- Negative messaging first

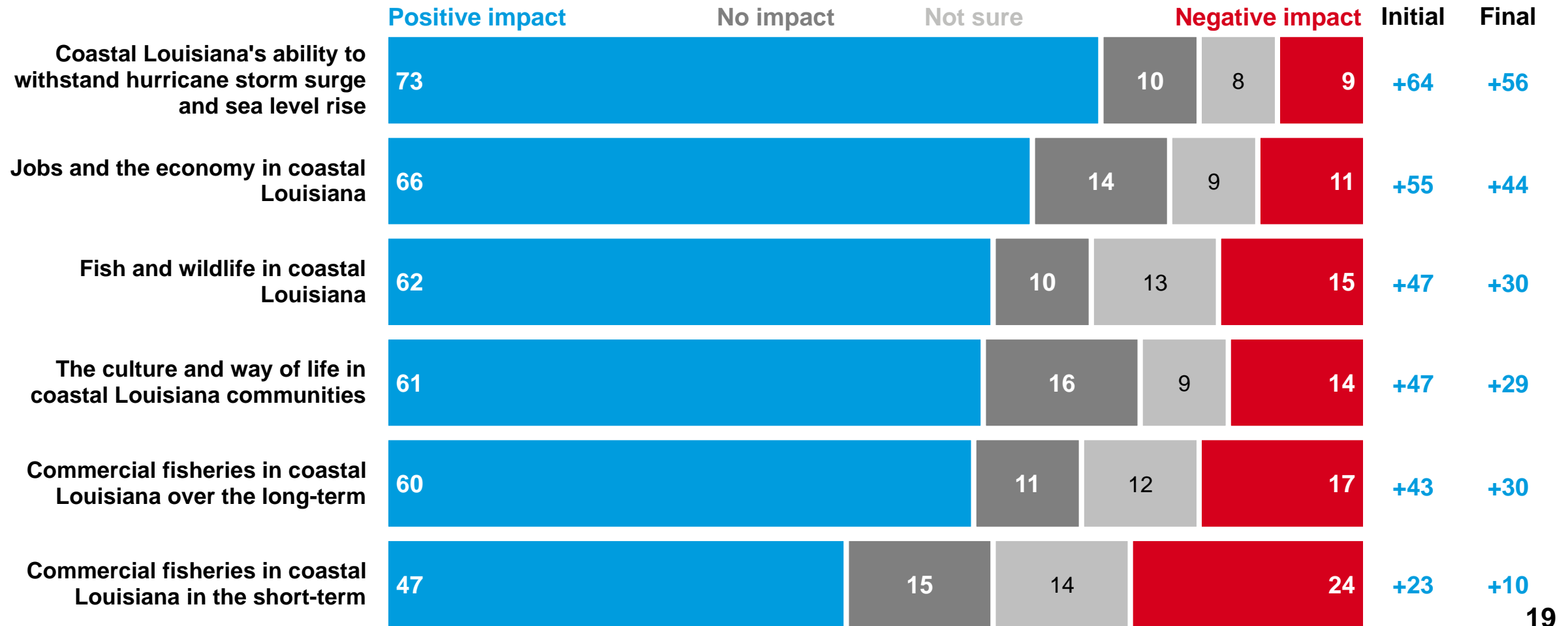
After balanced debate, every demographic and region in the survey supports sediment diversion projects by a margin of at least 27 points

Support Movement

	Initial Support	Informed Support	Final Support
Overall % Support	68	82	70
Overall % Oppose	9	11	20
Overall NET support	+59	+71	+50
<i>NET Support by demographics</i>			
Bayou Central	+68	+76	+64
Greater Baton Rouge	+56	+67	+48
Greater New Orleans	+61	+78	+54
Northshore	+54	+67	+45
River Parishes	+60	+56	+40
St. Bernard and Plaquemines	+43	+57	+29
Democrats	+59	+72	+58
Independents	+63	+76	+47
Not very conservative Republicans	+61	+63	+57
Very conservative Republicans	+47	+65	+27
18-44	+56	+69	+49
45-64	+63	+69	+46
65+	+57	+76	+56
Black	+57	+69	+58
White men	+58	+66	+38
White women	+60	+76	+49

Coastal Louisiana voters see diversion projects overwhelmingly benefiting a range of issues, even after a barrage of attacks

What kind of impact do you think sediment diversion projects would have on each of the following?



Thank You

New York

Washington, DC

Hartford

Chicago

Denver

Seattle