

U.S. Public Opinion About Nuclear Energy 2021

With trends 1983-2021

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Top Takeaways

Public discourse on energy and climate has begun to include nuclear energy, but how has that affected U.S. public opinion? *The answer: A lot.*

- Support for nuclear energy has rebounded, and now Biden and Trump voters support nuclear energy about equally.
- Trump voters care more about affordable and reliable electricity. Biden voters care more about climate change.
- Support is driven by perception of need. Perception of need is boosted by climate change, recent energy shortages, and Democratic leadership endorsements (Obama bump in 2010, Biden bump in 2021).

Method

- 1,000 nationally representative U.S. adults surveyed May 1-6, 2021.
- Margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points.
- By Bisconti Research with Quest Global Research Mindshare Online Panel.
- Numbers shown are percentages, which may not add exactly due to rounding.

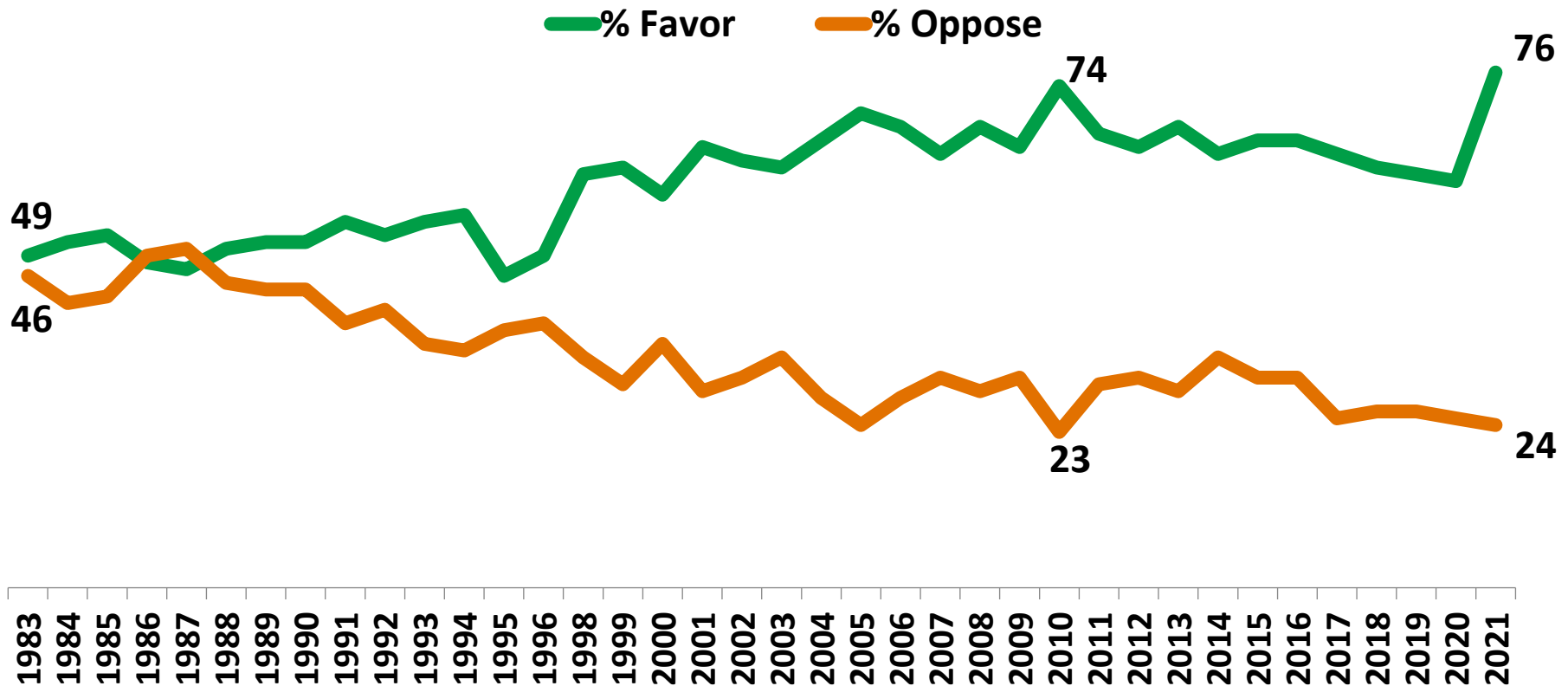
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- Attitudes
- Perception Challenges
- Communications
- Impact of Information
- Demographic Differences
 - Gender
 - Generations
 - Biden vs. Trump Voters

Attitudes

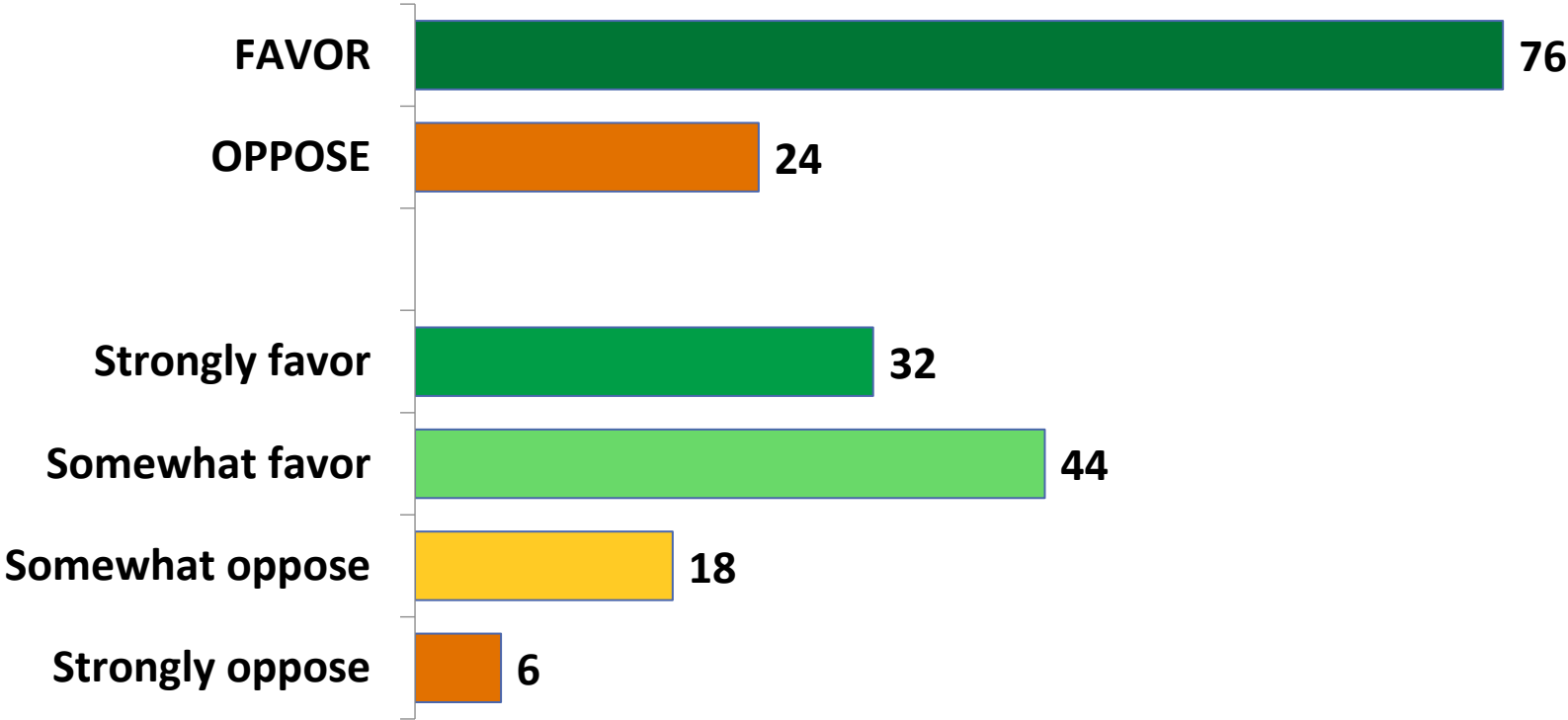
Favorability to Nuclear Energy 1983-2021

Overall, do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the use of nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity in the United States?



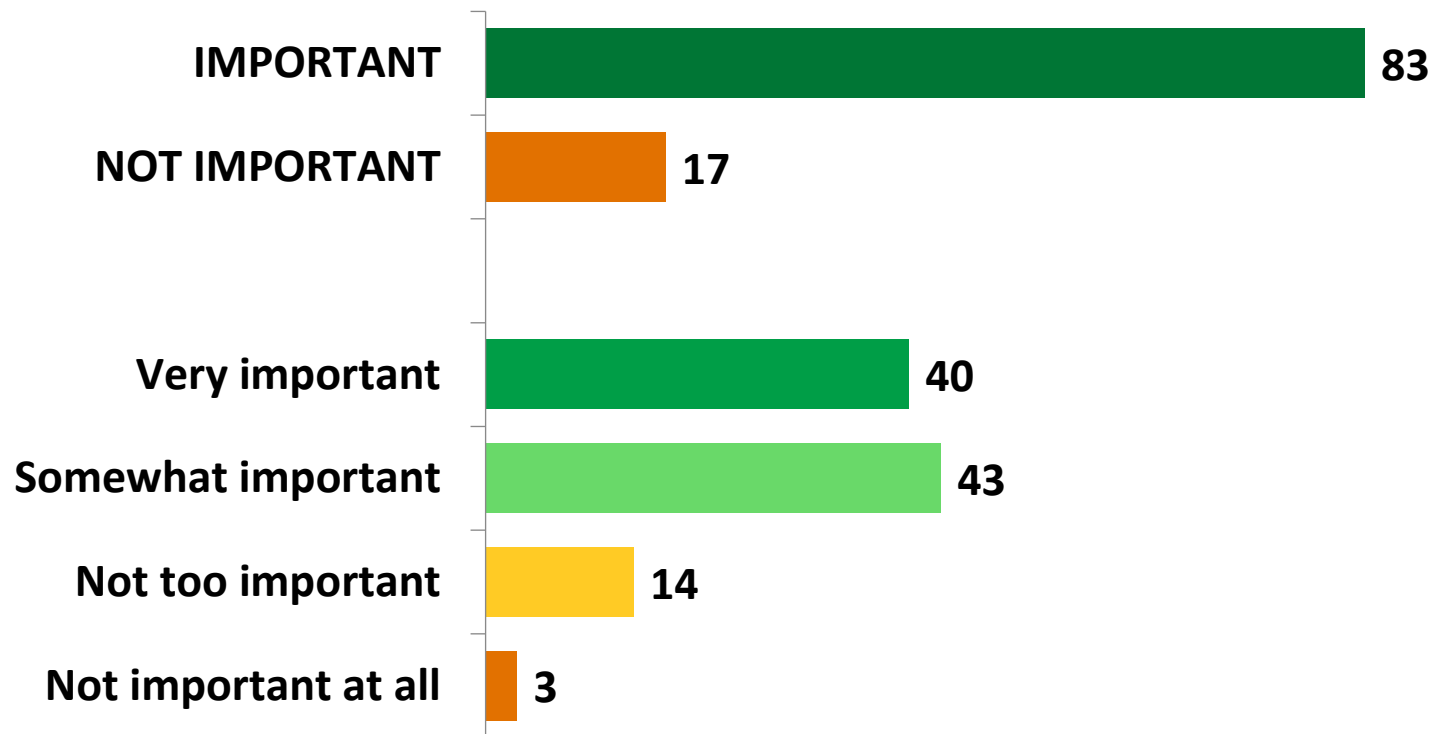
Favorability to Nuclear Energy 2021

Overall, do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the use of nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity in the United States? (%)



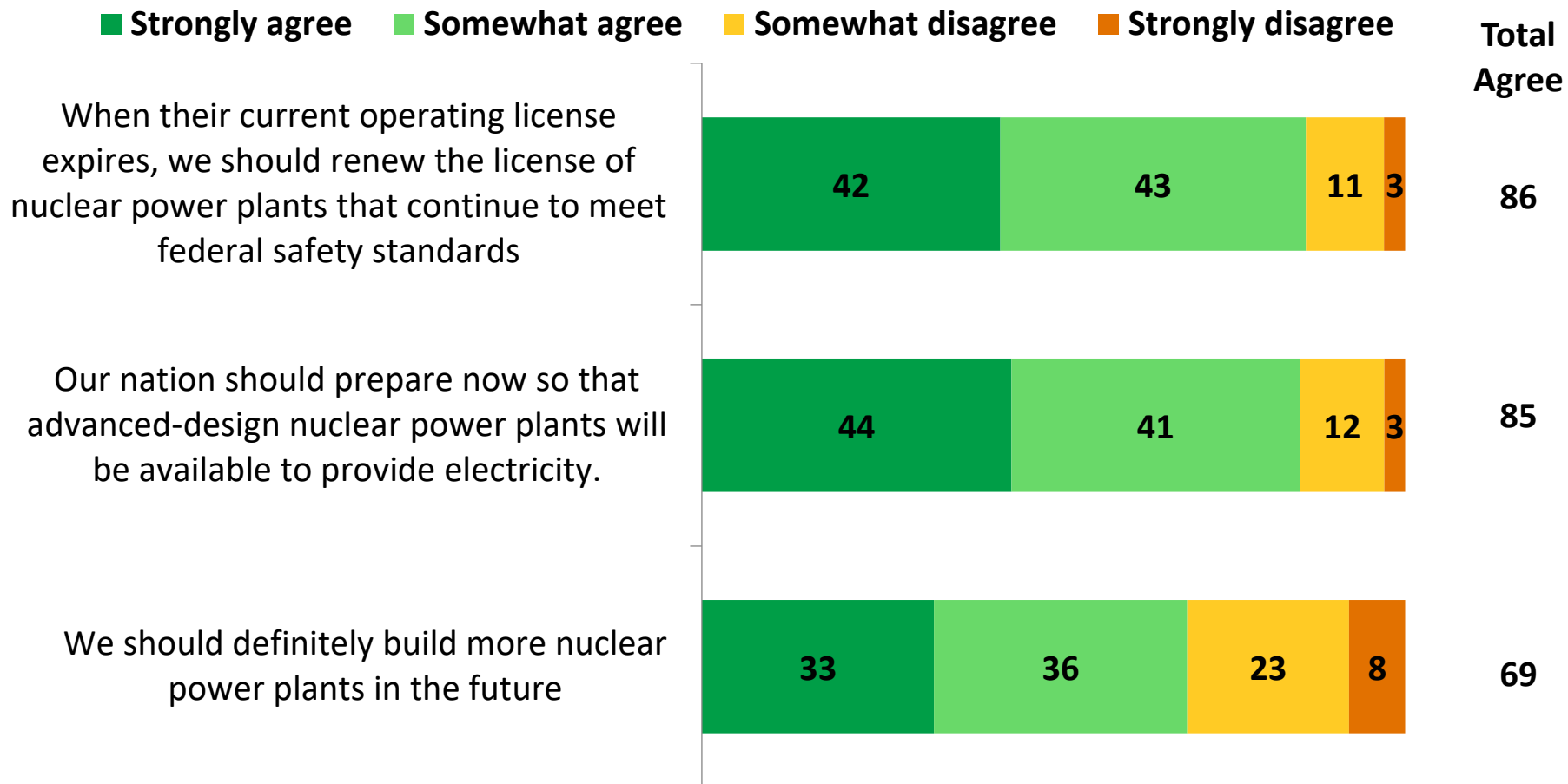
Perceived Importance of Nuclear Energy in Meeting US Electricity Needs in Years Ahead

How important do you think nuclear energy will be in meeting this nation's electricity needs in the years ahead? (%)



Support for License Renewal and New Nuclear Power Plants

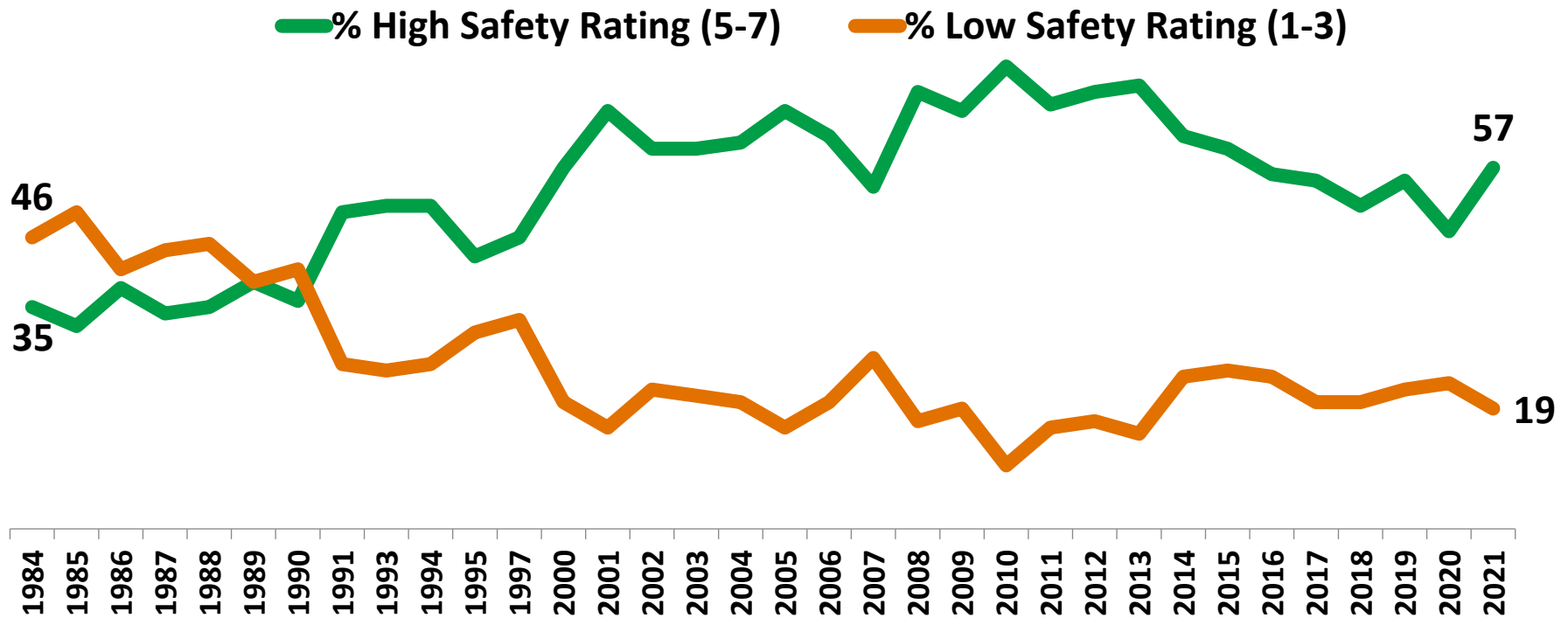
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (%)



Perception Challenges

Perception of Nuclear Plant Safety Turning Up Again? Perception of Safety Influenced by Perception of Need

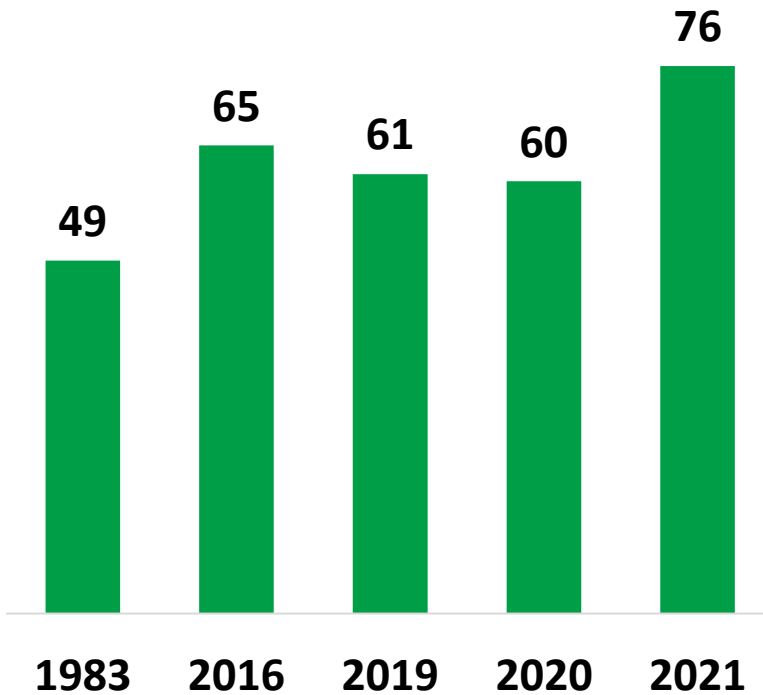
Thinking about the nuclear power plants that are operating now, how safe do you regard these plants? Please select one number on a scale of “1” to “7,” where “1” means very unsafe and “7” means very safe. The safer you think they are, the higher the number you would give.



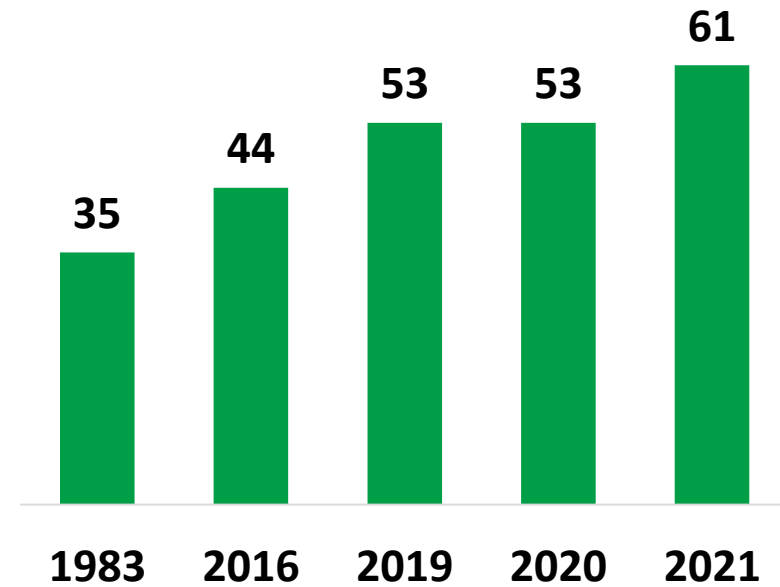
Vanishing Perception Gap?

Perception of Public Opinion More Favorable Now

Personally Favor Nuclear Energy



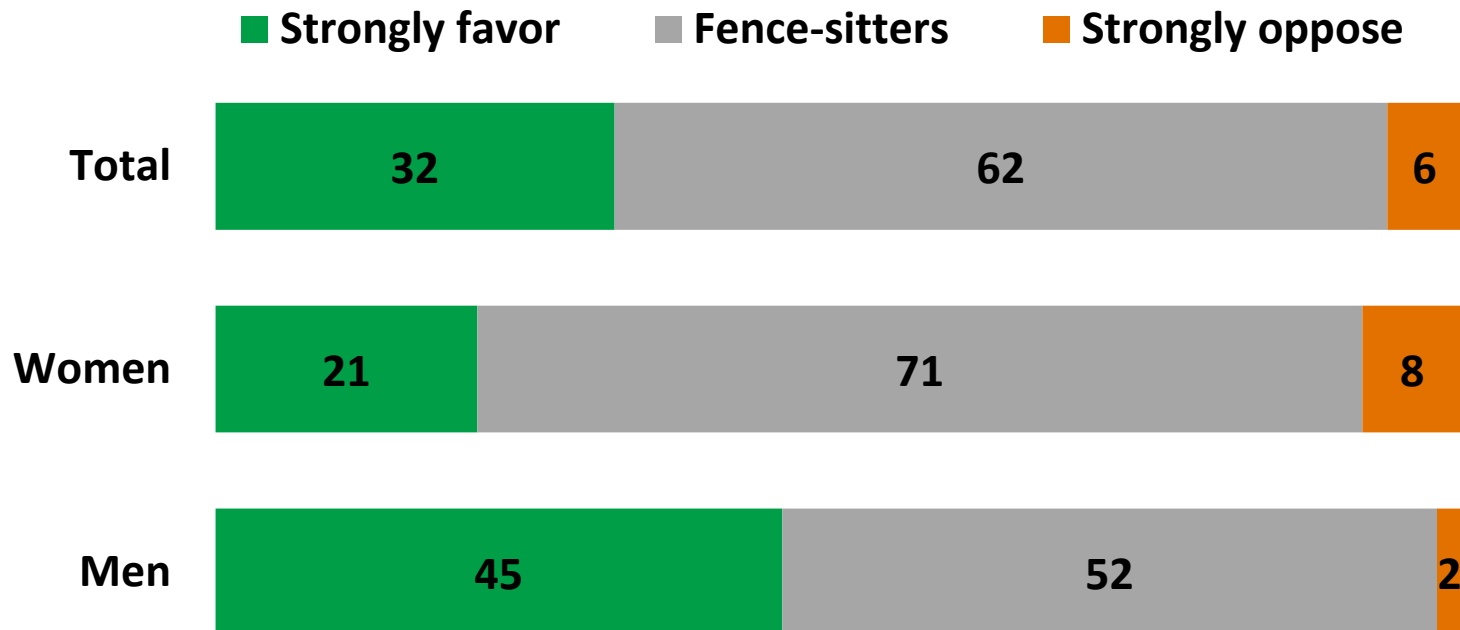
Think Majority of Public Favours Nuclear Energy



Communications

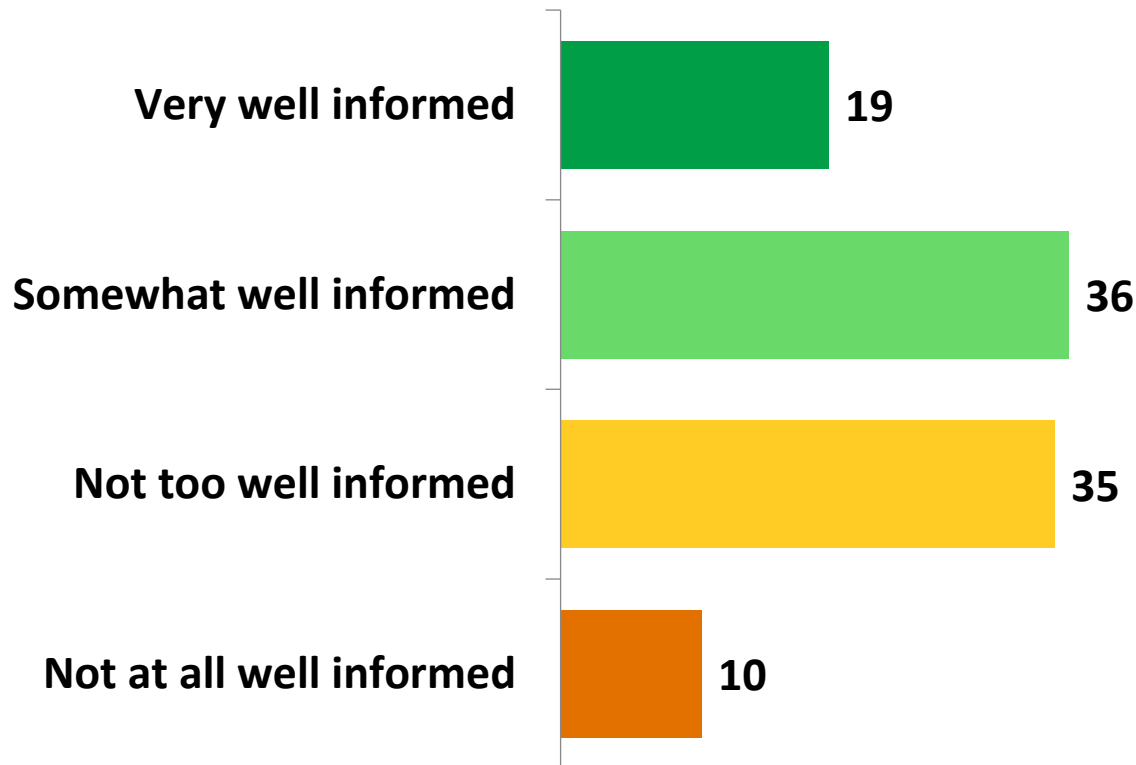
Opinions are Changeable: Most are Fence-Sitters (Not Strong Opinion)

Overall, do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the use of nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity in the United States? (%)



Few Feel Very Well Informed about Nuclear Energy

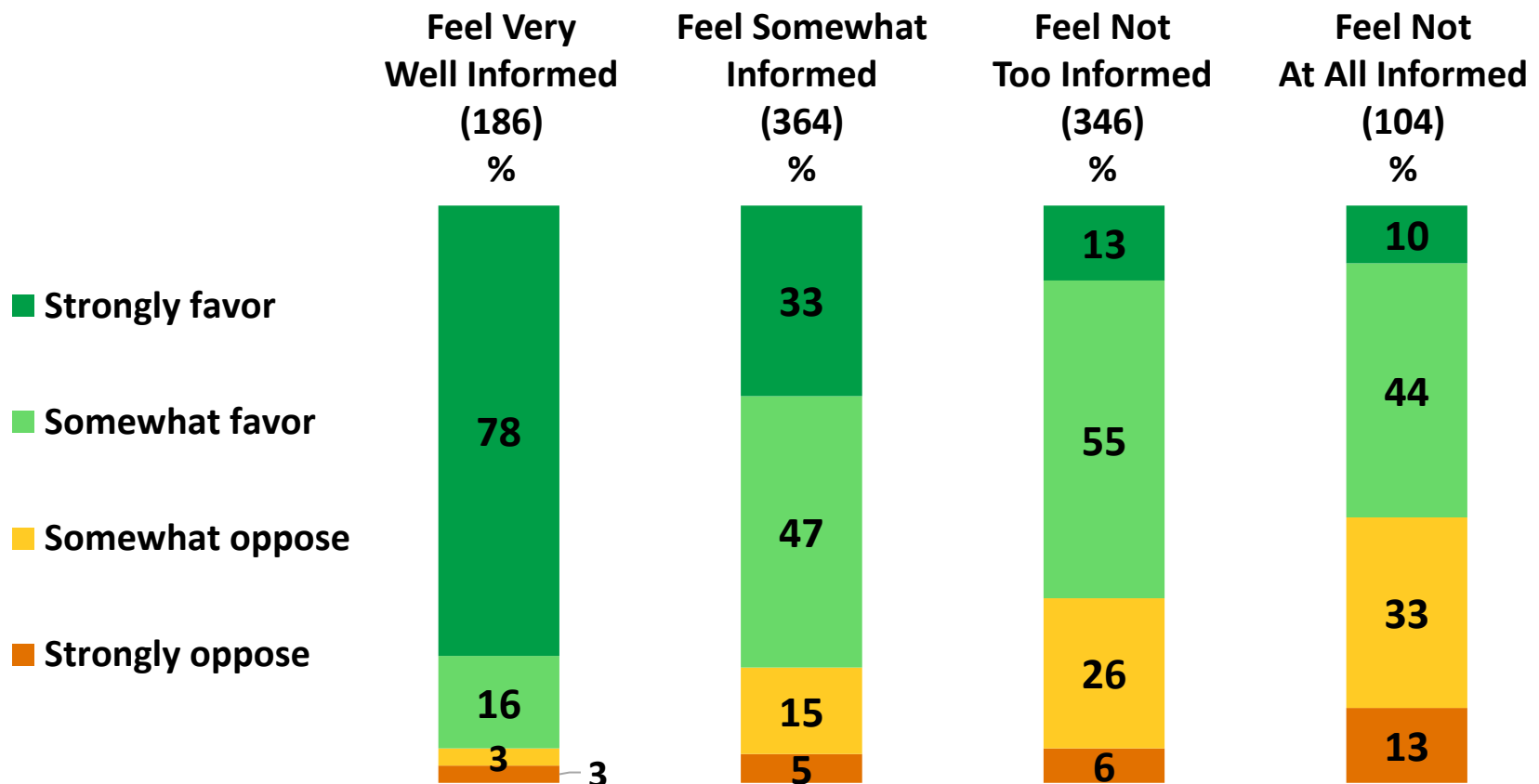
How well informed do you feel about nuclear energy used to produce electricity? (%)



The More Informed People Feel, the More Favorable

How well informed do you feel about **nuclear energy used to produce electricity**?

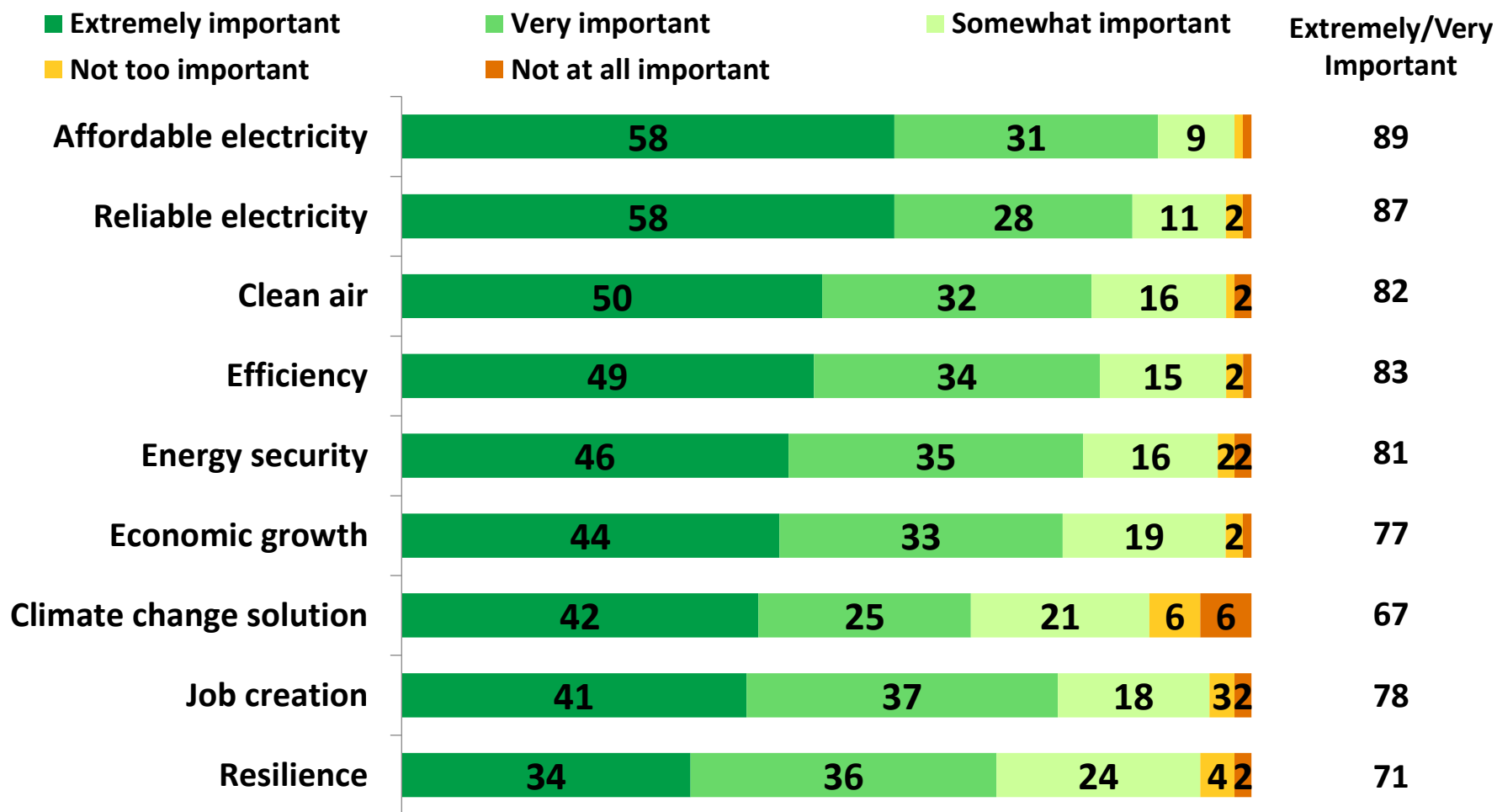
Overall, do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the use of nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity in the United States?



Considerations for Electricity Production

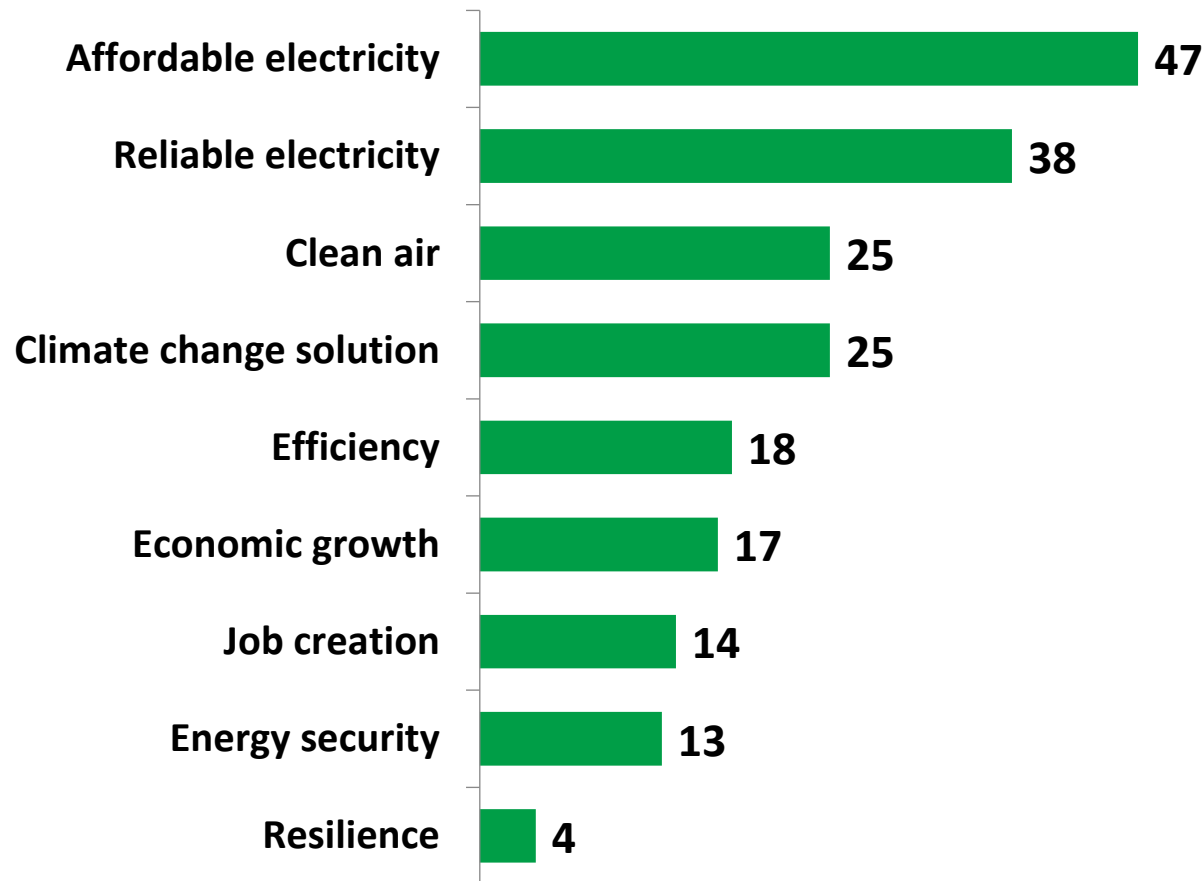
Focus Communications on What the Public Values

How important to you are the following considerations for the way electricity is produced? (%)



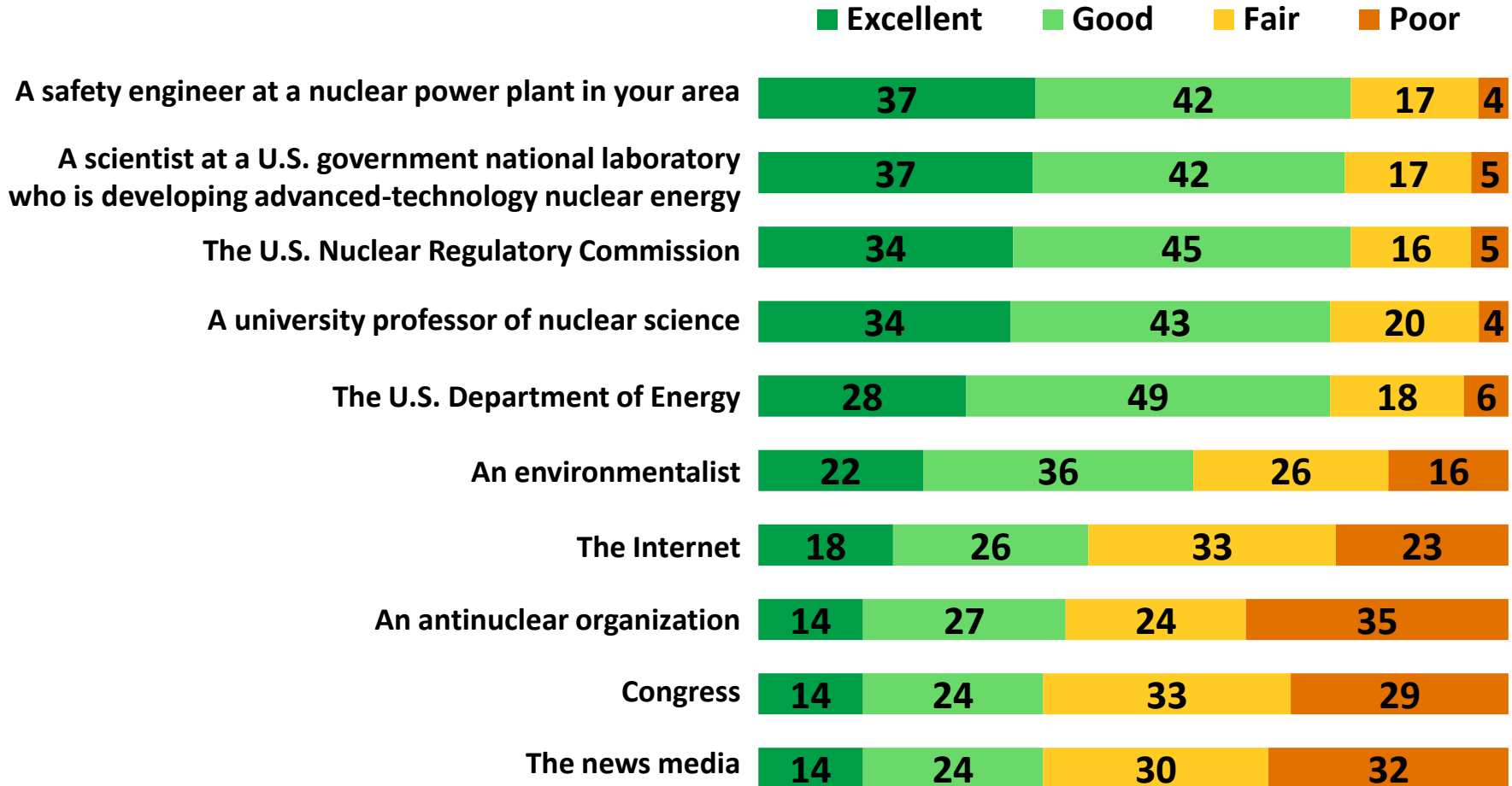
Most Important Considerations for Electricity Production

Select the two considerations for the way electricity is produced that are most important to you. (%)



Credibility of Sources: Experts Trusted Most

In your opinion, would each of the following be an excellent, good, fair, or poor source for accurate information on nuclear energy? (%)

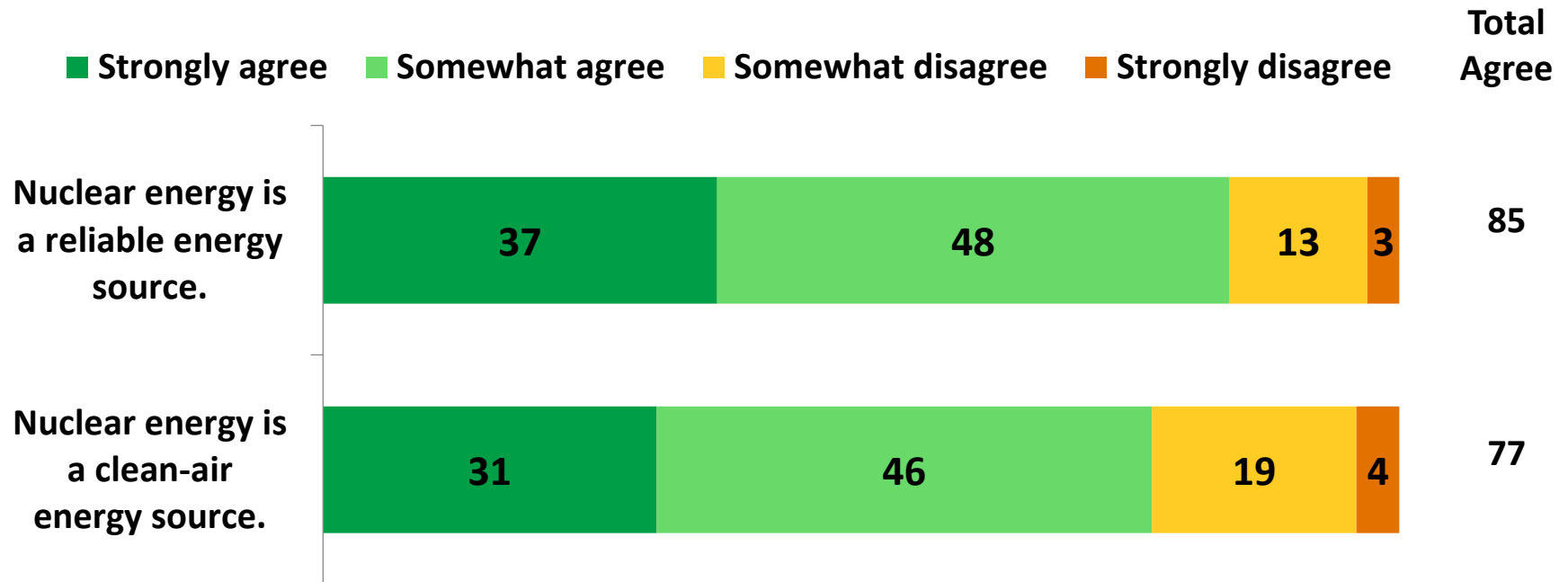


Impact of Information

(Asked after Questions about Attitudes)

Awareness of Nuclear Energy as Clean-Air and Reliable Energy Source

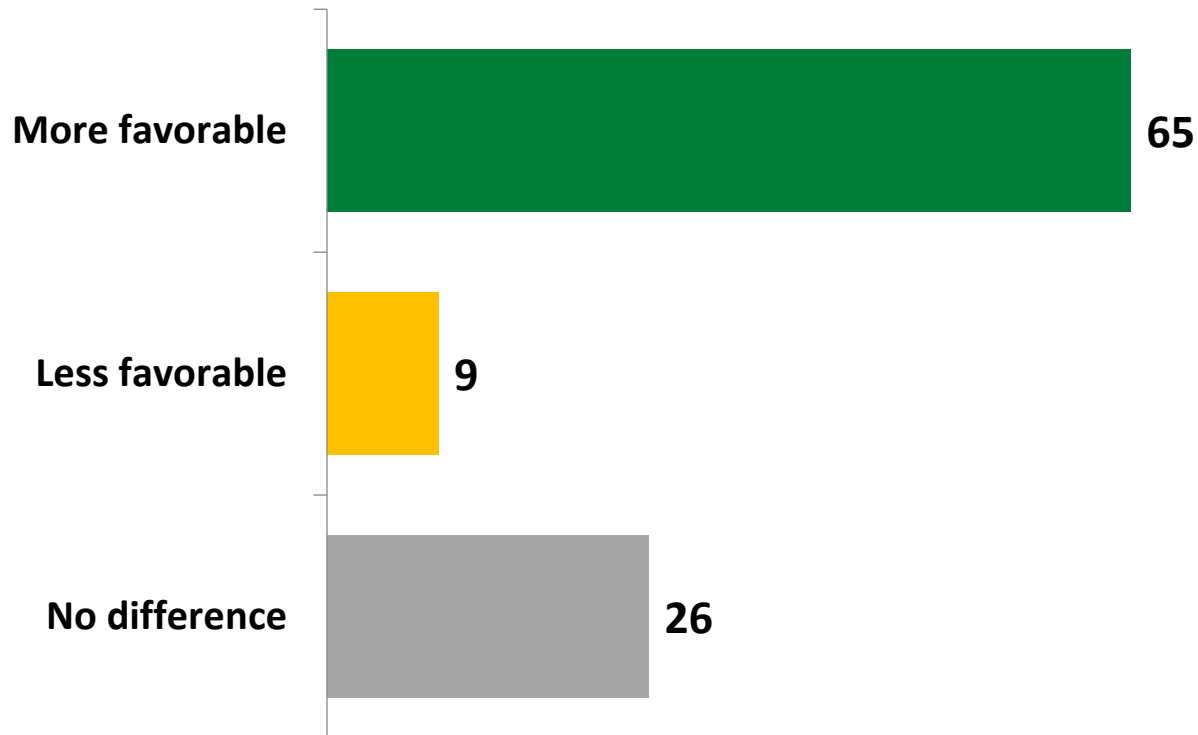
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (%)



Impact of Statement: “Nuclear Energy is America’s Largest and Most Reliable Clean Air Energy Source...”

Statement: In fact, nuclear energy is America’s largest and most reliable clean-air energy source. Nuclear energy already produces more than half the zero-emission electricity in the United States, and it produces electricity reliably 24 hours a day.

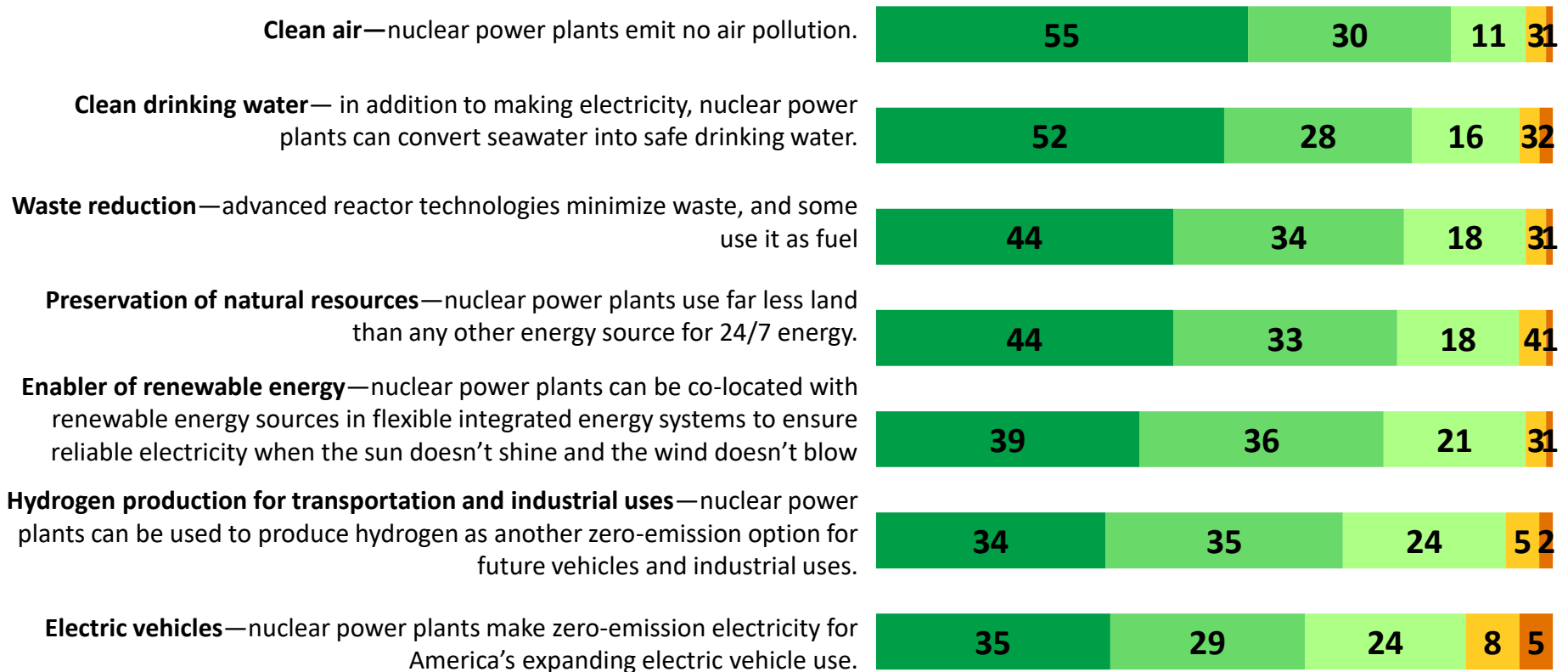
How does this fact affect your opinion of nuclear energy? (%)



Importance of “Environmental Advantages of Current or Future Nuclear Power Plants”

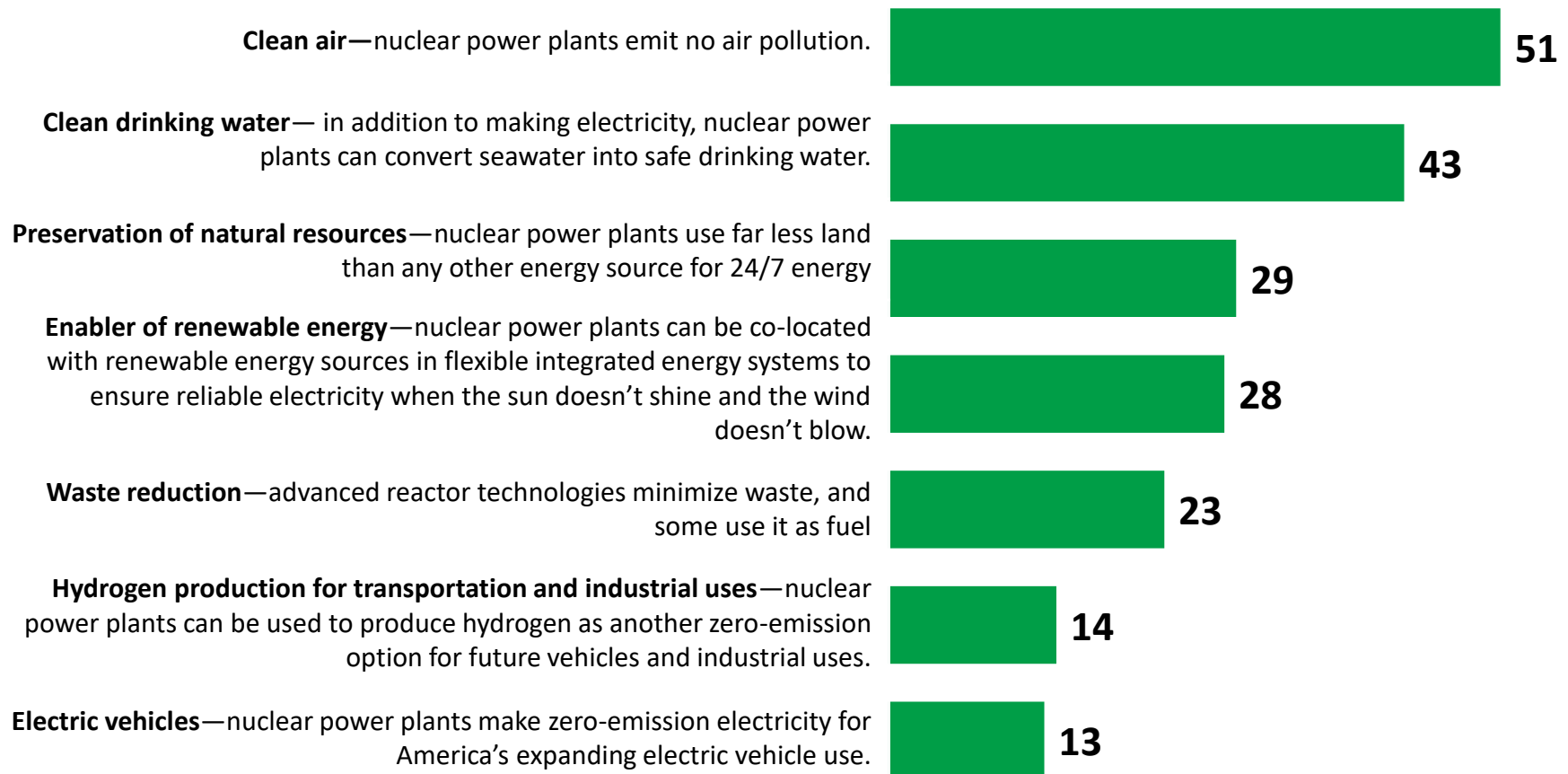
Following are some environmental advantages of current or future nuclear power plants. How important do you consider each one? (%)

■ Extremely important ■ Very important ■ Somewhat important ■ Not too important ■ Not at all important



Most Important “Environmental Advantages of Current or Future Nuclear Power Plants”

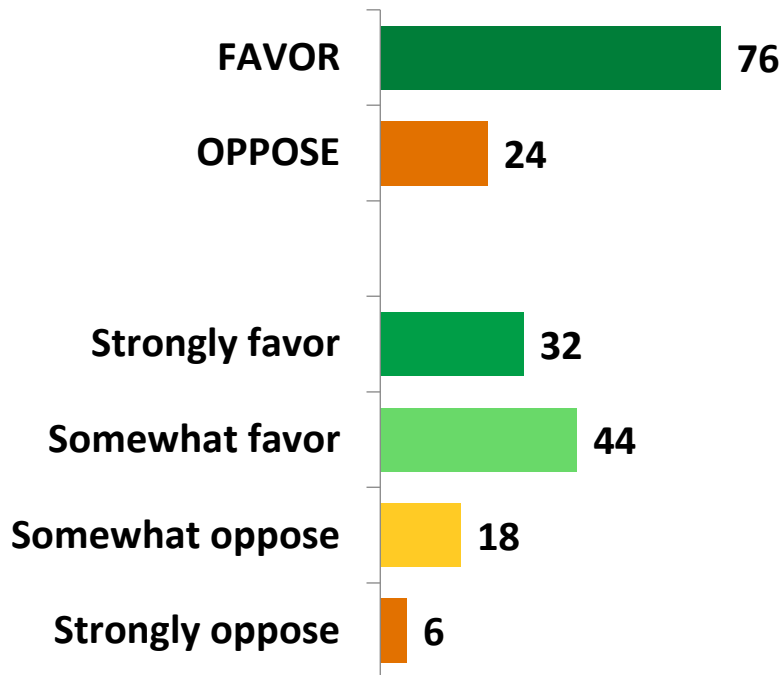
Select the two environmental advantages of current or future nuclear power plants that are most important, in your opinion. (%)



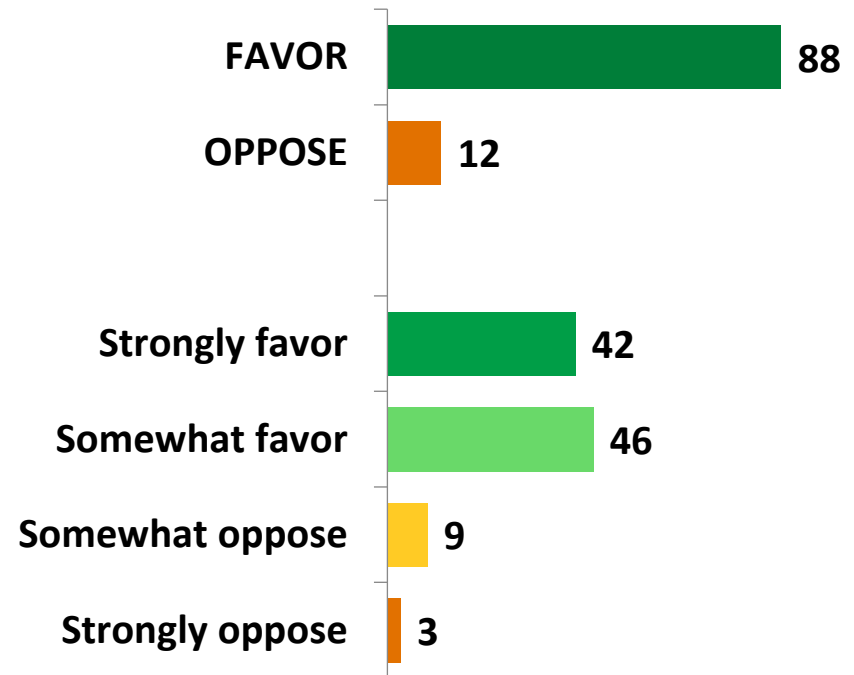
Favorability to Nuclear Energy Before and After Information

Overall, do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the use of nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity in the United States? (%)

Before—Start of Survey



After—End of Survey



Of those who initially opposed nuclear energy, 57% changed to favor.

Gender

Attitudes Toward Nuclear Energy

Overall, do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the use of nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity in the United States? (%)

Please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements. (%)

	Men (n=442)	Women (n=553)
% favor nuclear energy	83	70
% agree with license renewal	90	82
% agree with preparation to make advanced-design nuclear plants available	90	81
% agree with building more nuclear power plants	77	63

Most Important Considerations for Electricity Production

Select the two considerations for the way electricity is produced that are most important to you. (%)

	Men	Women
Affordable electricity	44	50
Reliable electricity	38	38
Clean air	19	29
Climate change solution	26	23
Efficiency	17	18
Economic growth	20	14
Job creation	15	12
Energy security	15	12
Resilience	5	3

Most Important “Environmental Advantages of Current or Future Nuclear Power Plants”

Select the two environmental advantages of current or future nuclear power plants that are most important, in your opinion. (%)

	Men	Women
Clean air —nuclear power plants emit no air pollution	47	54
Clean drinking water — in addition to making electricity, nuclear power plants can convert seawater into safe drinking water	33	51
Preservation of natural resources —nuclear power plants use far less land than any other energy source for 24/7 energy	29	29
Enabler of renewable energy —nuclear power plants can be co-located with renewable energy sources in flexible integrated energy systems to ensure reliable electricity when the sun doesn’t shine and the wind doesn’t blow	32	25
Waste reduction —advanced reactor technologies minimize waste, and some use it as fuel	24	21
Hydrogen production for transportation and industrial uses —nuclear power plants can be used to produce hydrogen as another zero-emission option for future vehicles and industrial uses.	19	9
Electric vehicles —nuclear power plants make zero-emission electricity for America’s expanding electric vehicle use.	15	11

Impact of Statement

Men

Women

Statement: In fact, nuclear energy is America's largest and most reliable clean-air energy source: Nuclear energy already produces more than half the zero-emission electricity in the United States, and it produces electricity reliably 24 hours a day.
How does this fact affect your opinion of nuclear energy?

Impact of statement:

More favorable	71	62
Less favorable	6	11
No difference	23	27

Generations

Attitudes Toward Nuclear Energy

Overall, do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the use of nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity in the United States? (%)

Please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements. (%)

	Gen Z* (n=67)	Millennial (n=349)	Gen X (n=241)	Boomer (n=302)	Silent/ Greatest (n=41)
% favor nuclear energy	69	80	73	73	88
% agree with license renewal	79	88	86	84	88
% agree with preparation to make advanced-design nuclear plants available	78	87	85	84	90
% agree building more nuclear power plants	67	76	66	63	78

*Generations are defined as follows: Gen Z (Under 25); Millennial (25-40); Gen X (41-56); Boomer (57-75); Silent and Greatest (Over 75)

Most Important Considerations for Electricity Production

Select the two considerations for the way electricity is produced that are most important to you. (%)

	Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer	Silent/ Greatest
Affordable electricity	30	36	52	58	61
Reliable electricity	16	28	41	51	54
Clean air	34	27	25	22	12
Climate change solution	31	23	21	26	32
Efficiency	30	21	16	12	20
Economic growth	22	23	16	11	5
Job creation	18	19	13	8	5
Energy security	15	16	12	12	12
Resilience	3	8	4	1	0

Most Important “Environmental Advantages of Current or Future Nuclear Power Plants”

Select the two environmental advantages of current or future nuclear power plants that are most important, in your opinion. (%)

	Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer	Silent/ Greatest
Clean air —nuclear power plants emit no air pollution	48	44	53	55	66
Clean drinking water — in addition to making electricity, nuclear power plants can convert seawater into safe drinking water	37	42	49	44	32
Preservation of natural resources —nuclear power plants use far less land than any other energy source for 24/7 energy	25	26	29	33	32
Enabler of renewable energy —nuclear power plants can be co-located with renewable energy sources in flexible integrated energy systems to ensure reliable electricity when the sun doesn’t shine and the wind doesn’t blow	22	30	27	27	39
Waste reduction —advanced reactor technologies minimize waste, and some use it as fuel	28	26	22	20	10
Hydrogen production for transportation and industrial uses —nuclear power plants can be used to produce hydrogen as another zero-emission option for future vehicles and industrial uses.	18	15	13	11	15
Electric vehicles —nuclear power plants make zero-emission electricity for America’s expanding electric vehicle use.	21	17	7	10	7

Impact of Statement

	Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer	Silent/ Greatest
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Statement: In fact, nuclear energy is America’s largest and most reliable clean-air energy source: Nuclear energy already produces more than half the zero-emission electricity in the United States, and it produces electricity reliably 24 hours a day.
How does this fact affect your opinion of nuclear energy?

Impact of statement:

More favorable	57	69	61	67	68
Less favorable	24	13	9	3	0
No difference	19	19	30	31	32

Biden vs. Trump Voters

Attitudes Toward Nuclear Energy

Overall, do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the use of nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity in the United States? (%)

Please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements. (%)

	Biden Voters (n=470)	Trump Voters (n=363)
% favor nuclear energy	76	82
% agree with license renewal	84	89
% agree with preparation to make advanced-design nuclear plants available	85	88
% agree building more nuclear power plants	66	77

Most Important Considerations for Electricity Production

Select the two considerations for the way electricity is produced that are most important to you. (%)

	Biden Voters	Trump Voters
Affordable electricity	38	56
Reliable electricity	31	46
Clean air	29	18
Climate change solution	38	10
Efficiency	17	17
Economic growth	18	17
Job creation	13	16
Energy security	11	16
Resilience	4	5

Most Important “Environmental Advantages of Current or Future Nuclear Power Plants”

Select the two environmental advantages of current or future nuclear power plants that are most important, in your opinion. (%)

	Biden Voters	Trump Voters
Clean air —nuclear power plants emit no air pollution	52	48
Clean drinking water — in addition to making electricity, nuclear power plants can convert seawater into safe drinking water	38	46
Preservation of natural resources —nuclear power plants use far less land than any other energy source for 24/7 energy	29	28
Enabler of renewable energy —nuclear power plants can be co-located with renewable energy sources in flexible integrated energy systems to ensure reliable electricity when the sun doesn’t shine and the wind doesn’t blow	30	30
Waste reduction —advanced reactor technologies minimize waste, and some use it as fuel	21	22
Hydrogen production for transportation and industrial uses —nuclear power plants can be used to produce hydrogen as another zero-emission option for future vehicles and industrial uses.	15	15
Electric vehicles —nuclear power plants make zero-emission electricity for America’s expanding electric vehicle use.	16	11

Impact of Statement

**Biden
Voters**

**Trump
Voters**

Statement: In fact, nuclear energy is America's largest and most reliable clean-air energy source: Nuclear energy already produces more than half the zero-emission electricity in the United States, and it produces electricity reliably 24 hours a day.
How does this fact affect your opinion of nuclear energy?

Impact of statement:

More favorable

71

64

Less favorable

8

8

No difference

21

29

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