

# BRUCE, HURON & GREY COUNTIES PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH TRACKING

Bruce Power

Summary Report

2021-02-03

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# Objectives & Methodology

## OBJECTIVES

Bruce Power commissioned research to understand and track attitudes and opinions from residents in Bruce, Grey, and Huron Counties towards a number of topics and issues, including:

- Energy/electricity issues in the community and support for nuclear energy and refurbishment of the Bruce facility
- Familiarity and impressions of Bruce Power
- Knowledge, understanding, and opinions towards Bruce Power's operations in the local community
- Communications with residents

## TRACKING

Statistically significant changes are noted with a ▲ or a ▼ arrow denoting a change up or down in the findings from the previous wave, within a 95% interval, 19 times out of 20. Any changes not noted with the arrows are not statistically significant and should be interpreted as no change in the measure.

## METHODOLOGY

Telephone interviews were conducted among a representative sample of n=600 local residents, including:

- n=215 in Grey County
- n=250 in Bruce County
- n=135 in Huron County

A total of n=300 interviews were conducted via landline telephone and n=300 were conducted via cell phone.

The entire data has been weighted by region, gender, and age to ensure the final sample reflects the population of all three counties.



**Fielding dates:** December 8-23, 2020.



**Margin of error:** +/-4.0%, nineteen times out of twenty on overall sample.

# Key Findings

## ATTITUDES AND IMPRESSIONS OF BRUCE POWER

Attitudes towards Bruce Power remain **strong and stable in relation to the previous wave**. Nearly all respondents polled (95%) have confidence that the nuclear facility **operates safely**, feel Bruce Power is a **community citizen** (93%), and are **confident in the security measures** at the facility (91%).

A majority of residents of Grey-Bruce-Huron Counties feel familiar with Bruce Power: **83% feel at least “somewhat familiar”** with the nuclear facility.

A quarter (24%) of respondents this year say they feel **“very familiar”** with Bruce Power, more than any previous year. This demonstrates that the increase in overall familiarity with Bruce Power is being driven by people feeling more familiar with the company than ever before.

Although a greater proportion of respondents feel familiar with Bruce Power, their overall impressions of the company have not shifted: **86% of those familiar have a favourable** (excellent/very good/ good) **impression** of the electricity generator, on par with previous years, with 81% of these respondents saying their impressions have not changed in the past 12 months.



# Key Findings

## MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE & SUPPORT FOR NUCLEAR POWER & REFURBISHMENT

In light of the challenging global pandemic, it is unsurprising that **COVID-19 and healthcare have become high priorities for residents** of Grey-Bruce-Huron. Importantly, the onset of the pandemic has not distracted from or drawn support away from the topic of refurbishing nuclear power plants: **eight in ten (82%) continue to support refurbishing nuclear reactors.** Those in support cite the necessity of refurbishment (12%) and the environmental benefits (10%), while those opposed (14% in total) most commonly cite safety concerns (7%).

Support for (or opposition to) refurbishment does not appear to be tied to knowledge of nuclear energy- despite fewer respondents indicating they are knowledgeable on nuclear energy and technology (62%, -7pts), support for refurbishment remains strong at 82%.

## COMMUNICATIONS

**Six in ten (60%) respondents indicate they have seen, read, or heard about Bruce Power** recently. More than ever before, residents of Grey-Bruce-Huron indicate they have received “a lot” of communication about Bruce Power.

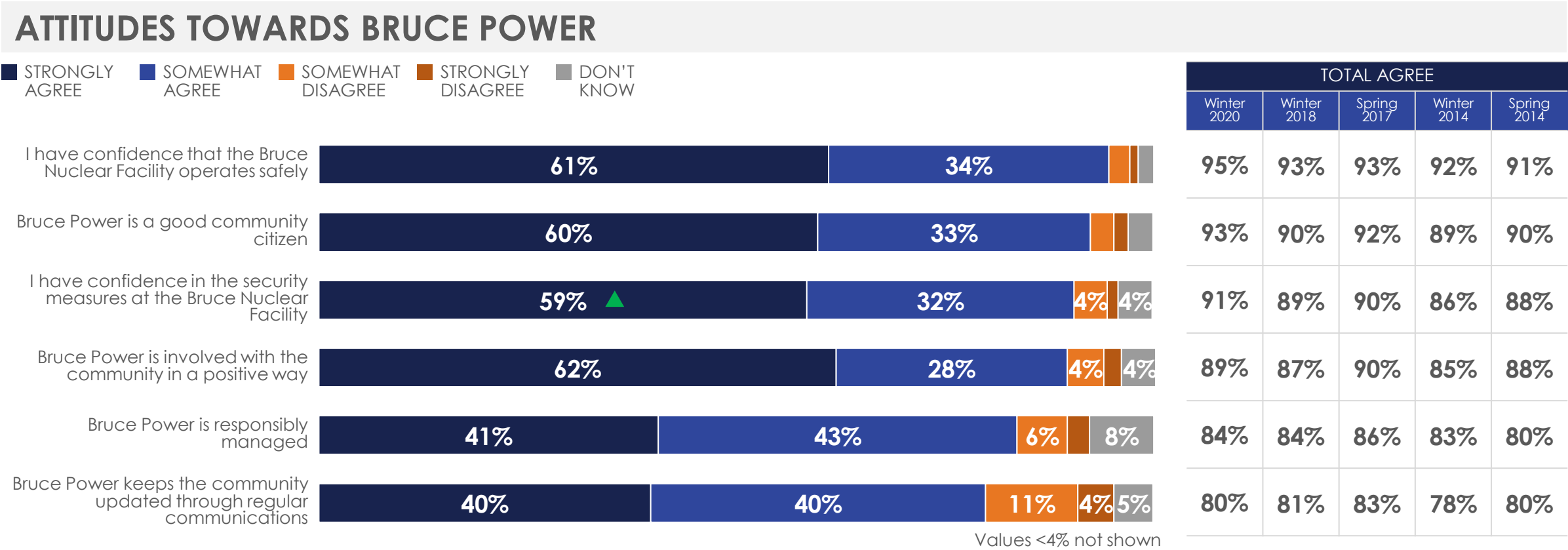
**Social media is the preferred method of communication** for a quarter of respondents (26%), followed by radio (17%, +5 pts), which has seen a significant increase in 2020.





# Attitudes Towards Bruce Power

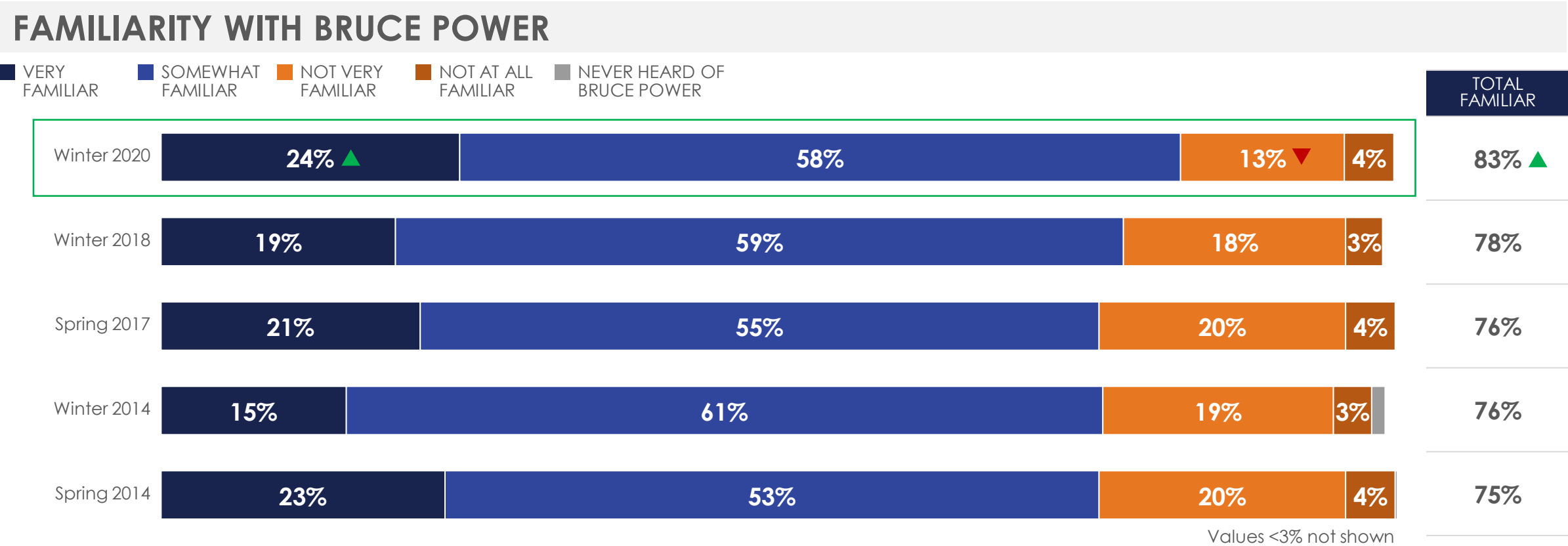
- Across all metrics, the majority of residents hold positive attitudes towards Bruce Power, consistent and stable with previous waves. Residents are most inclined to feel confident that the Bruce Nuclear Facility operates safely (95%), that Bruce Power is a good community citizen (93%), and that they have confidence in the security measures at Bruce Nuclear (91%).



Base: Respondents who indicated they are at least familiar with Bruce Power – Winter 2020 (n=575); Winter 2018 (n=816); Spring 2017 (n=477); Winter 2014 (n=477); Spring 2014 (n=477)  
Q15. I'm now going to read you a few statements about Bruce Power, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each one. Is that strongly or somewhat?

# Familiarity with Bruce Power

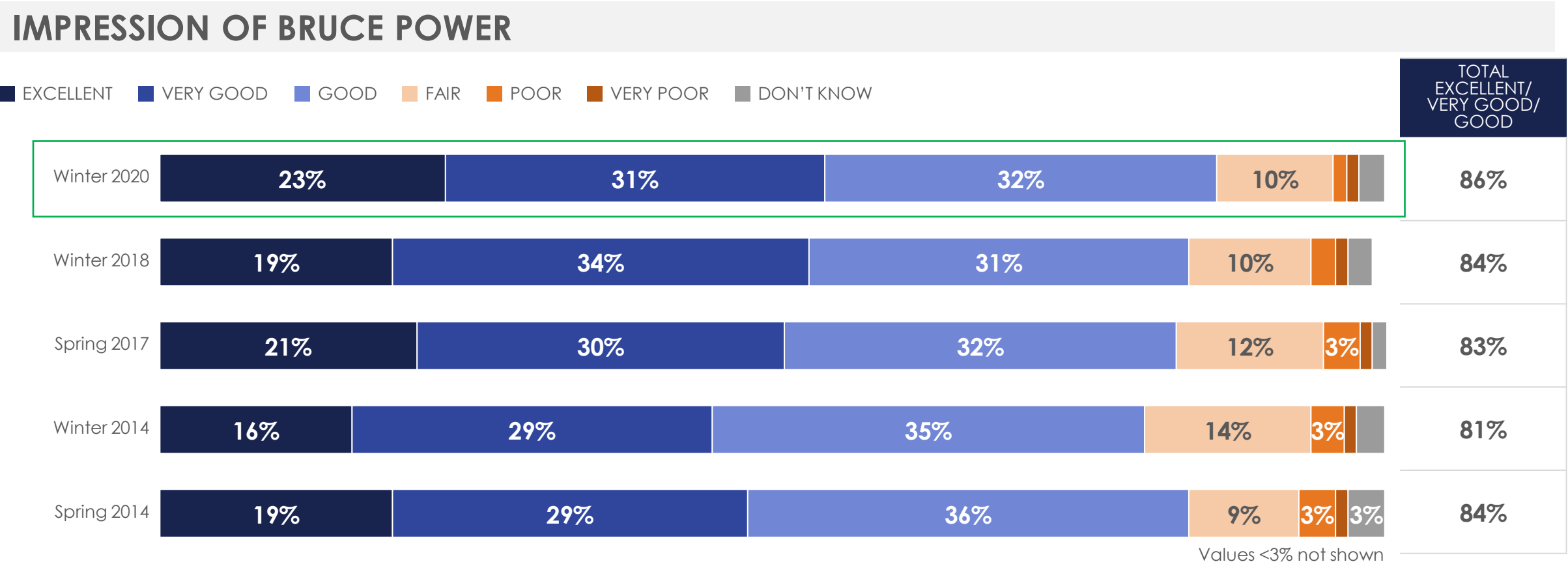
- More than eight in ten (83%) residents are familiar with Bruce Power, a significant increase from 2018, driven by the 24% of respondents who say they are “very familiar”.



Base: All respondents – Winter 2020 (n=600); Winter 2018 (n=850); Spring 2017 (n=500); Winter 2014 (n=500); Spring 2014 (n=500)  
Q12. How familiar would you say that you are with Bruce Power? Are you ...?

# Impressions of Bruce Power

- Of those familiar with Bruce Power, impressions remain positive and stable with last year as the vast majority (86%) continue to hold positive views of the company.



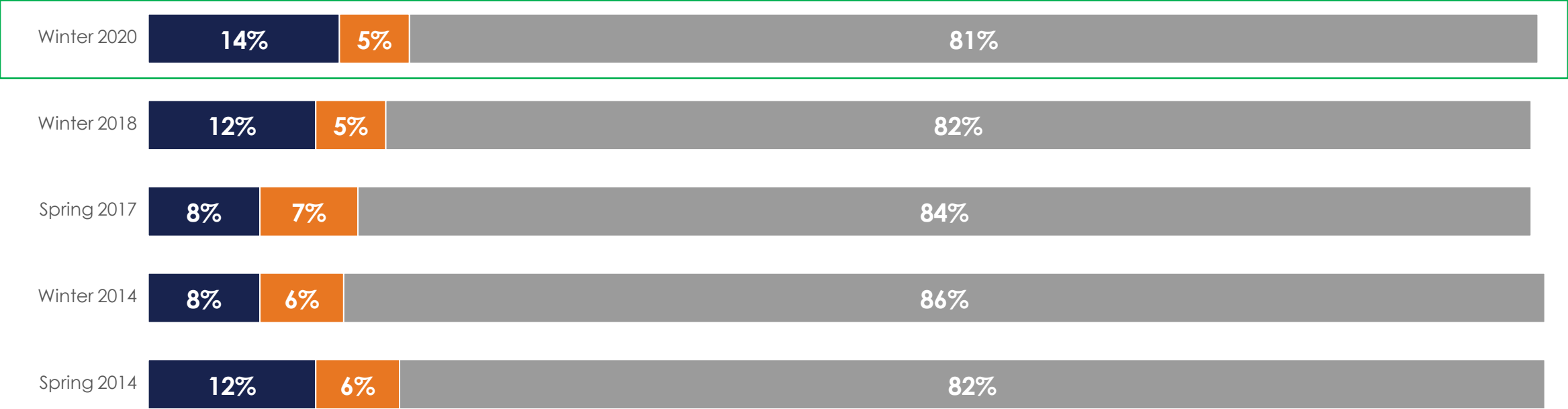
Base: Respondents who indicated they are at least familiar with Bruce Power – Winter 2020 (n=575); Winter 2018 (n=816); Spring 2017 (n=477); Winter 2014 (n=476); Spring 2014 (n=477)  
Q13. And, what is your overall impression of Bruce Power?

# Impressions Over Time

- The significant increase in positive opinion witnessed in 2018 has held firm through to 2020 and continued to inch up, as 14% of those who are familiar with Bruce Power say their opinion of the company has become more positive in the past 12 months. Although the vast majority (81%) of residents indicate their impression of the organization has not changed, only 5% of residents have a more negative impression, demonstrating overall growth year over year.

## CHANGES IN IMPRESSIONS OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS

■ MORE POSITIVE ■ MORE NEGATIVE ■ DON'T KNOW



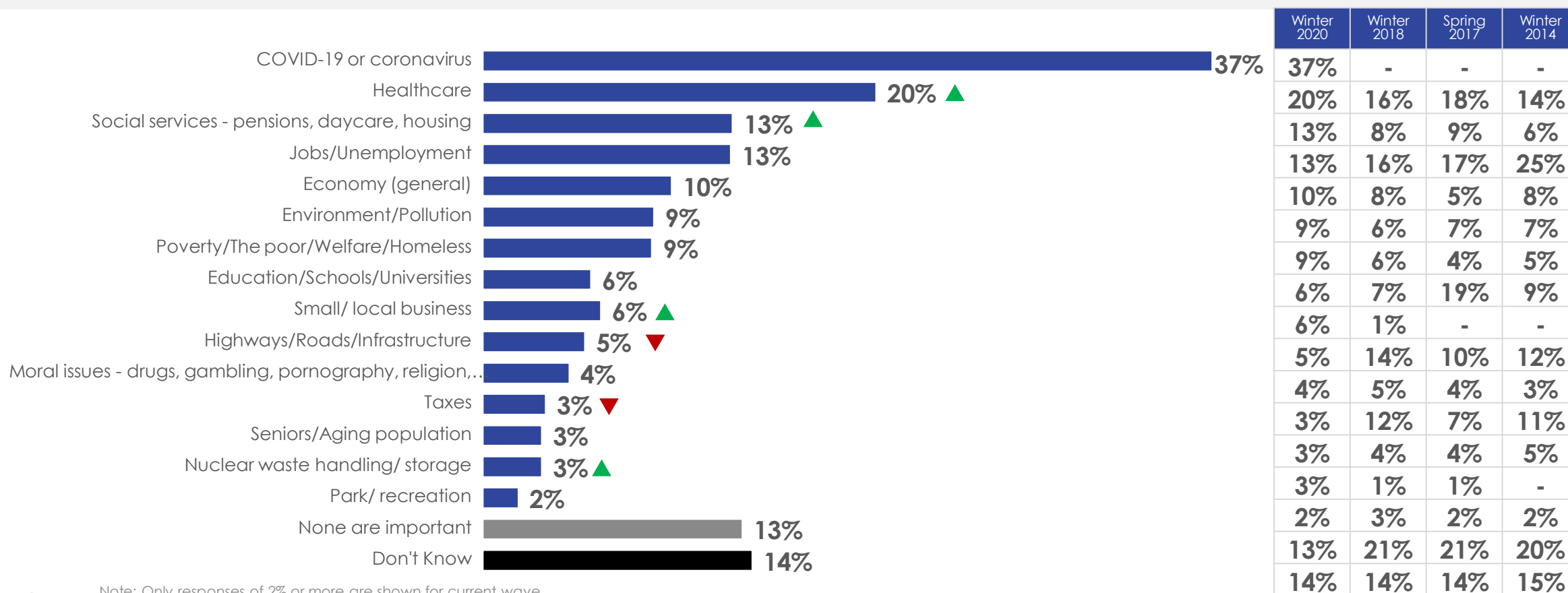
Base: Respondents who indicated they are at least familiar with Bruce Power – Winter 2020 (n=575); Winter 2018 (n=816); Spring 2017 (n=477); Winter 2014 (n=476); Spring 2014 (n=477)  
Q14a. In the past 12 months, has your overall impression of Bruce Power's Nuclear Generation station changed? Would you say your impression has become more positive, more negative or has stayed the same?



# Top Issues for Grey-Bruce-Huron Counties

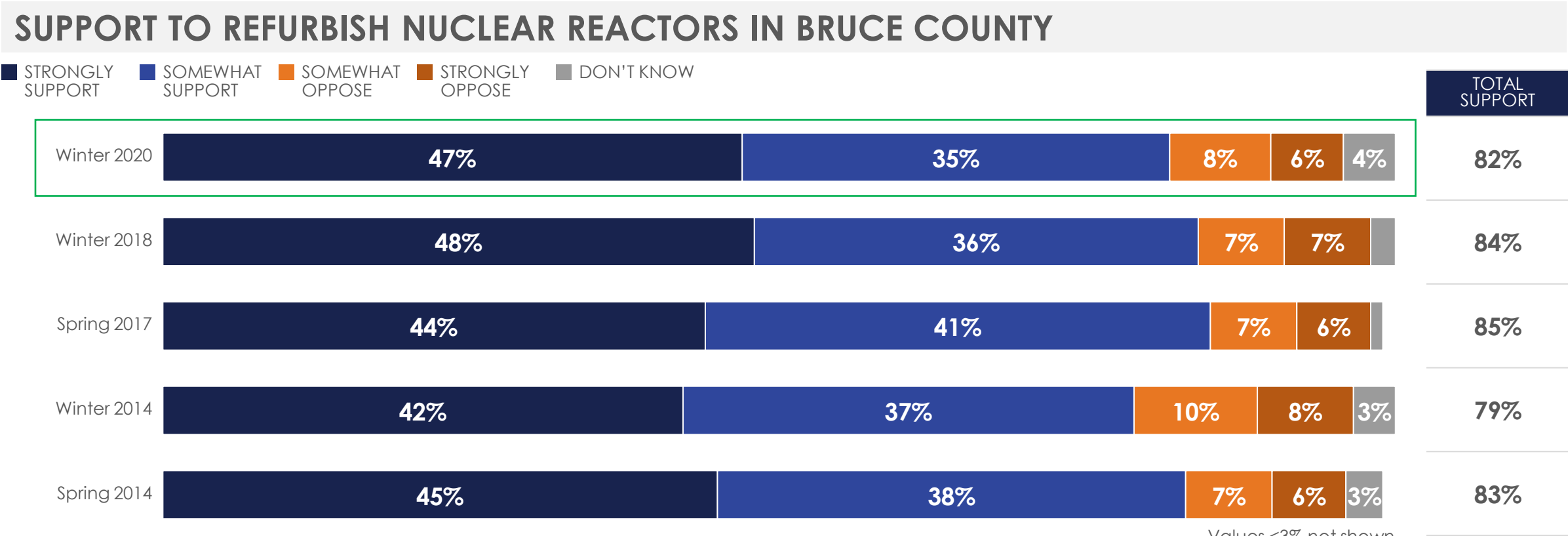
- Amidst a global pandemic, respondents place COVID-19 (37%) and healthcare (20%, +4 pts) as issues they feel should receive the greatest attention from community leaders. Issues that are intersectional with coronavirus, including social services (13%, +5 pts) and small and local businesses (6%, +5 pts) have seen a significant increase in 2020, as these topics have come to forefront of public discourse. Conversely, issues more distant from the pandemic including highways/infrastructure (5%, -9 pts) and taxes (3%, -9 pts) have seen a significant decline in importance compared to 2018.

## TOP-OF-MIND ISSUES IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY



# Support for Refurbishment

- Support for refurbishment remains strong, as the majority of residents (82%) continue to support renovating the Bruce Power nuclear facility. This is bolstered by the half of residents (47%) who continue to indicate they 'strongly support' refurbishment.

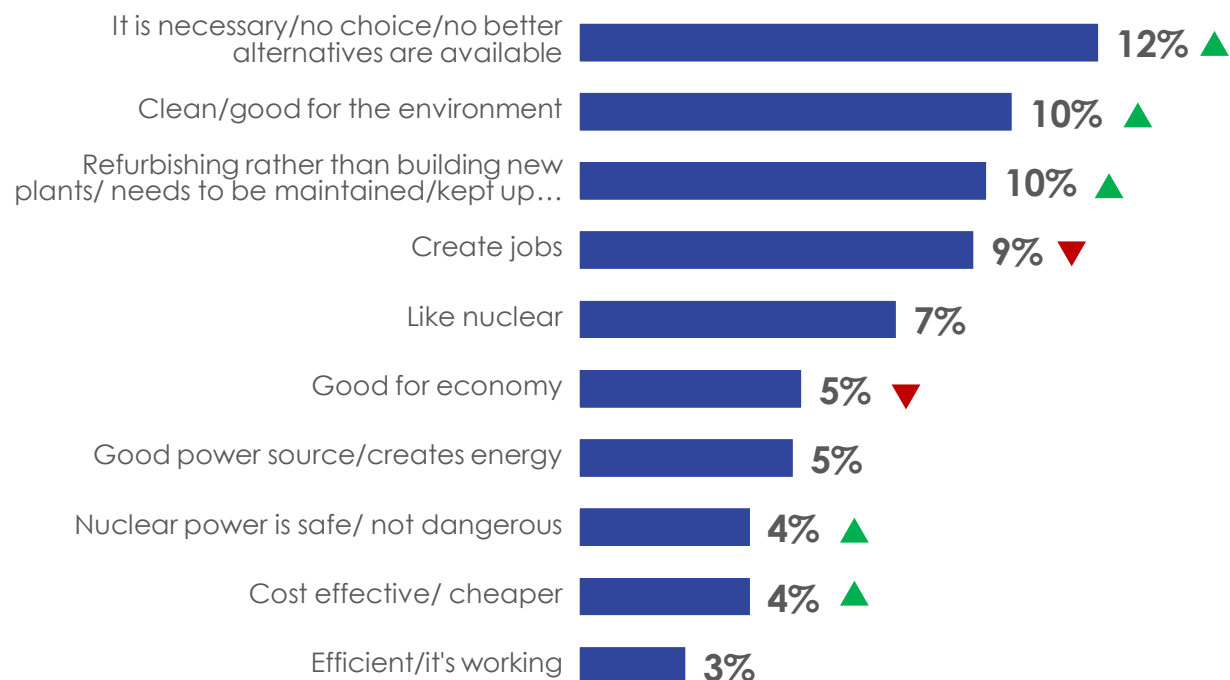


Base: All respondents – Winter 2020 (n=600); Winter 2018 (n=850); Spring 2017 (n=500); Winter 2014 (n=500); Spring 2014 (n=500)  
Q6A. Many large power generating plants in Ontario with various fuel sources will have to be replaced over the next 10 years or so because they are aging. In Ontario 80% of the plants will have to be replaced. In order to help meet Ontario's future electricity demand, would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose upgrading and refurbishing existing nuclear power plants?

# Reasons for Supporting Refurbishment

- In 2020, reasons for supporting refurbishment have shifted. Whereas in 2018, job creation topped the list, this year residents are more likely to feel it is necessary or that there is no choice (12%, +3 pts). Environmental reasons (10%, +6 pts) and preference for refurbishment rather than building new (10%, +6 pts) have seen an increase in 2020, while the former top reason of job creation has fallen 9 points to 9%.

## REASONS FOR SUPPORTING REFURBISHMENT



Winter 2020	Winter 2018	Spring 2017
12%	9%	10%
10%	4%	7%
10%	4%	8%
9%	21%	20%
7%	6%	8%
5%	9%	8%
5%	5%	5%
4%	2%	5%
4%	2%	3%
3%	3%	3%

Note: Only responses of 3% or more are shown for current wave.

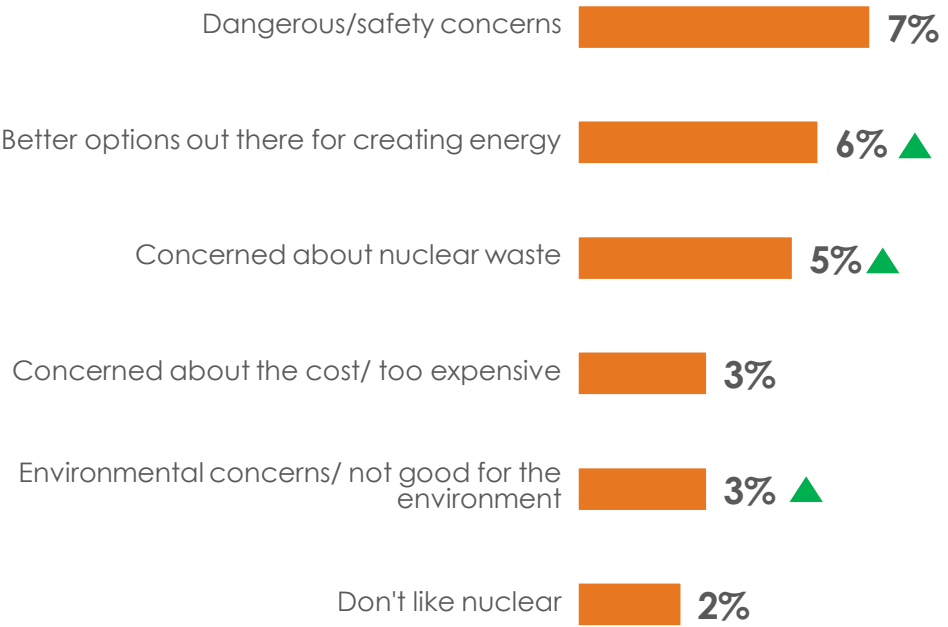
Base: Support/oppose plans to refurbish nuclear reactors in Bruce – Winter 2020 (n=600); Winter 2018 (n=850); Spring 2017 (n=500); Winter 2014 (n=500)

Q6B Why do you say that?

# Reasons for Opposing Refurbishment

- Among the 14% of respondents who oppose refurbishment, reasons for opposing remain largely in line with the previous wave. Danger and safety concerns continue to top the list at 7%, closely followed by there being better options for creating energy (6%, +3 pts) and concerns of nuclear waste (5%, +2 pts). A very small proportion continues to state that they don't like nuclear energy (2%).

## REASONS FOR OPPOSING REFURBISHMENT



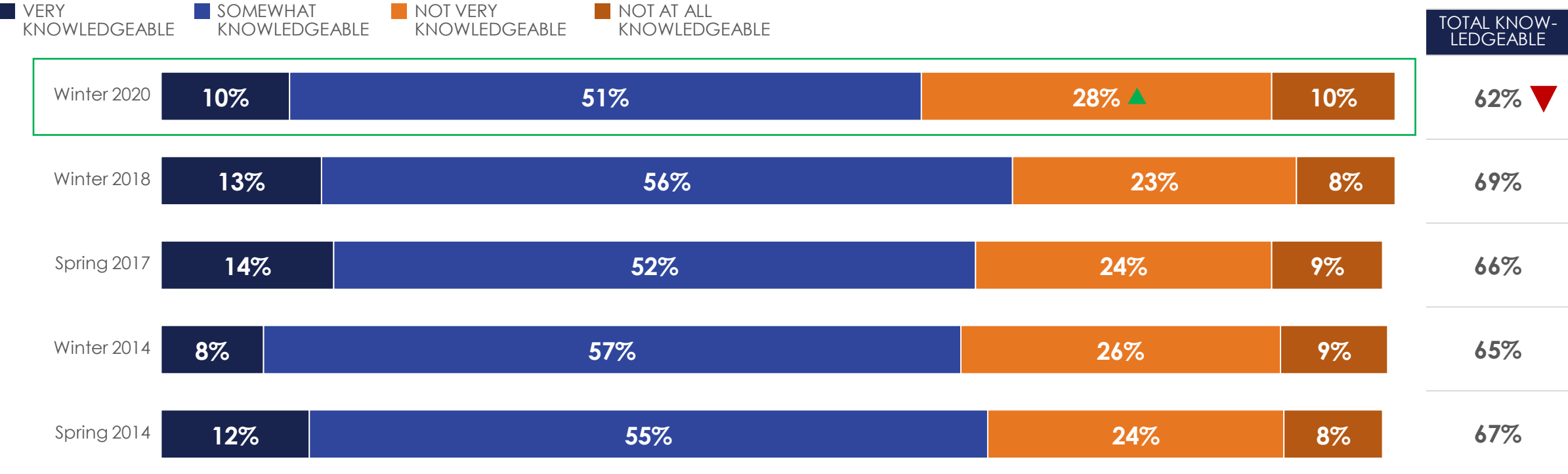
Winter 2020	Winter 2018	Spring 2017
7%	8%	8%
6%	3%	5%
5%	3%	5%
3%	2%	5%
3%	-	4%
2%	3%	3%

Note: Only responses of 2% or more are shown for current wave.  
Base: Support/oppose plans to refurbish nuclear reactors in Bruce – Winter 2020 (n=600); Winter 2018 (n=850); Spring 2017 (n=500); Winter 2014 (n=500)  
Q6B Why do you say that?

# Knowledge of Nuclear

- Knowledge of nuclear energy has fallen from the past wave, sitting at 62% (-7 pts). This is driven by the increasing proportion of respondents who indicate they are *not very knowledgeable*.

## KNOWLEDGE ABOUT NUCLEAR ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY



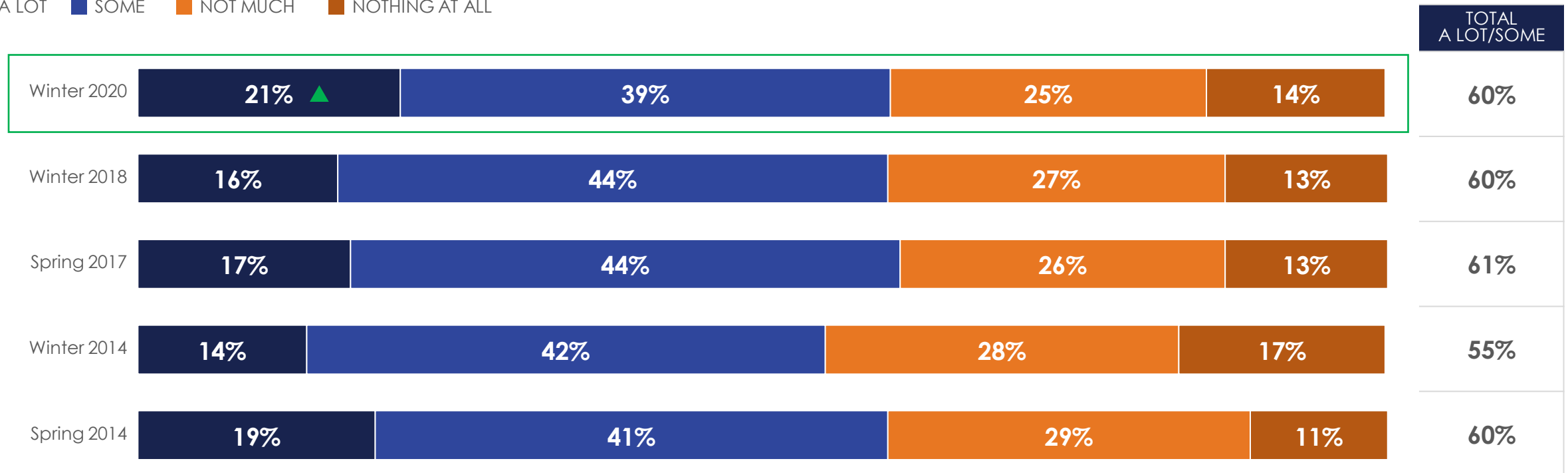
Base: All respondents – Winter 2020 (n=600); Winter 2018 (n=850); Spring 2017 (n=500); Winter 2014 (n=500); Spring 2014 (n=500)  
Q3. Overall, would you say you are very knowledgeable, somewhat knowledgeable, not very knowledgeable, or not at all knowledgeable about nuclear energy and nuclear technology issues?

# Recall of Bruce Power

- Six in ten (60%) residents have read, seen, or heard at least something about Bruce Power recently, consistent with what has been observed over the past three waves. In 2020, there is an increase in the proportion who have read, seen, or heard *a lot* about Bruce Power.

## RECALL OF BRUCE POWER

■ A LOT ■ SOME ■ NOT MUCH ■ NOTHING AT ALL



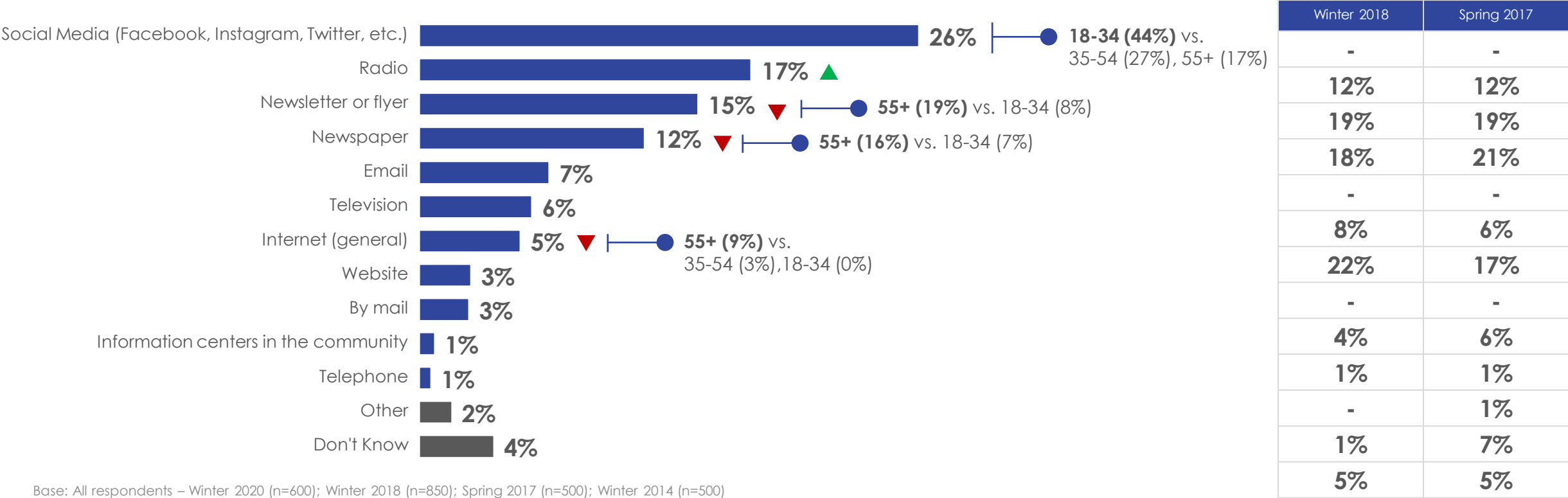
Base: All respondents – Winter 2020 (n=600); Winter 2018 (n=850); Spring 2017 (n=500); Winter 2014 (n=500); Spring 2014 (n=500)  
Q14. How much have you read, seen, or heard about Bruce Power recently?



# Preferred Communication

- Social media now tops the list of preferred communication sources for respondents, with a quarter (26%) indicating this is the best way for Bruce Power to communicate with them. Residents increasingly mention radio (17%, +5 pts) as a preferred source for communications, while newsletters (15%, -4 pts) and newspaper (12%, -6 pts) have fallen. It should be noted that mentions of Social Media (26%) are comparable to previous mentioned of Internet (in general) (22%) but are higher.
- Younger respondents prefer communicating through social media, while respondents 55+ favour traditional sources including newsletters or newspapers.

## COMMUNICATING WITH RESIDENTS

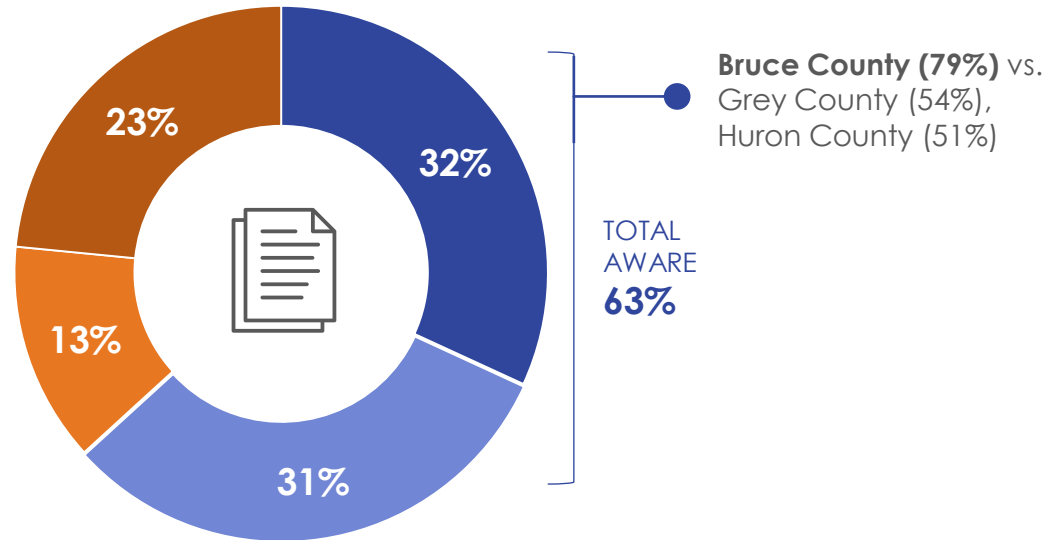


# Awareness and Support For Proposed South Bruce NWMO DGR Site- 2020

- Two-thirds (62%) of respondents are aware of the consultation process underway to select a site for nuclear fuel, higher among residents of Bruce County- the location of the proposed fuel site.
- While a majority of respondents (69%) support the consultation and study process, those who were aware of the proposal prior to polling are significantly more likely to say they *strongly support* the process (43% aware vs. 27% unaware), pointing to a connection between awareness of the proposal and support for the process.

## AWARENESS OF PROPOSAL

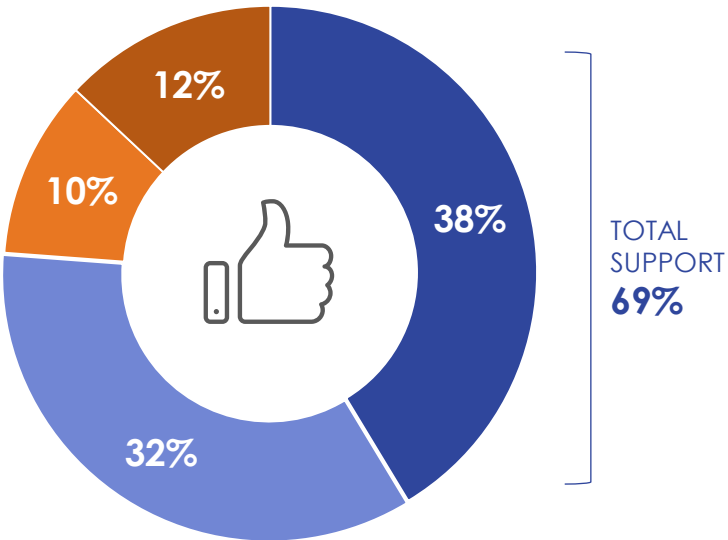
■ VERY AWARE   ■ SOMEWHAT AWARE   ■ ONLY A LITTLE AWARE   ■ NOT AT ALL AWARE



Base: All respondents – Winter 2020 (n=600)  
QNEW7. How aware are you of a consultation and study process underway by the Nuclear Waste Management Organization to engage with the community in South Bruce and the broader region to select a site for a long-term Deep Geological Repository for Spent Nuclear Fuel? Would you say that you are very aware, somewhat aware, only a little aware or not at all aware of this proposal?

## SUPPORT/OPPOSE PROCESS

■ STRONGLY SUPPORT   ■ SOMEWHAT SUPPORT   ■ SOMEWHAT OPPOSE   ■ STRONGLY OPPOSE

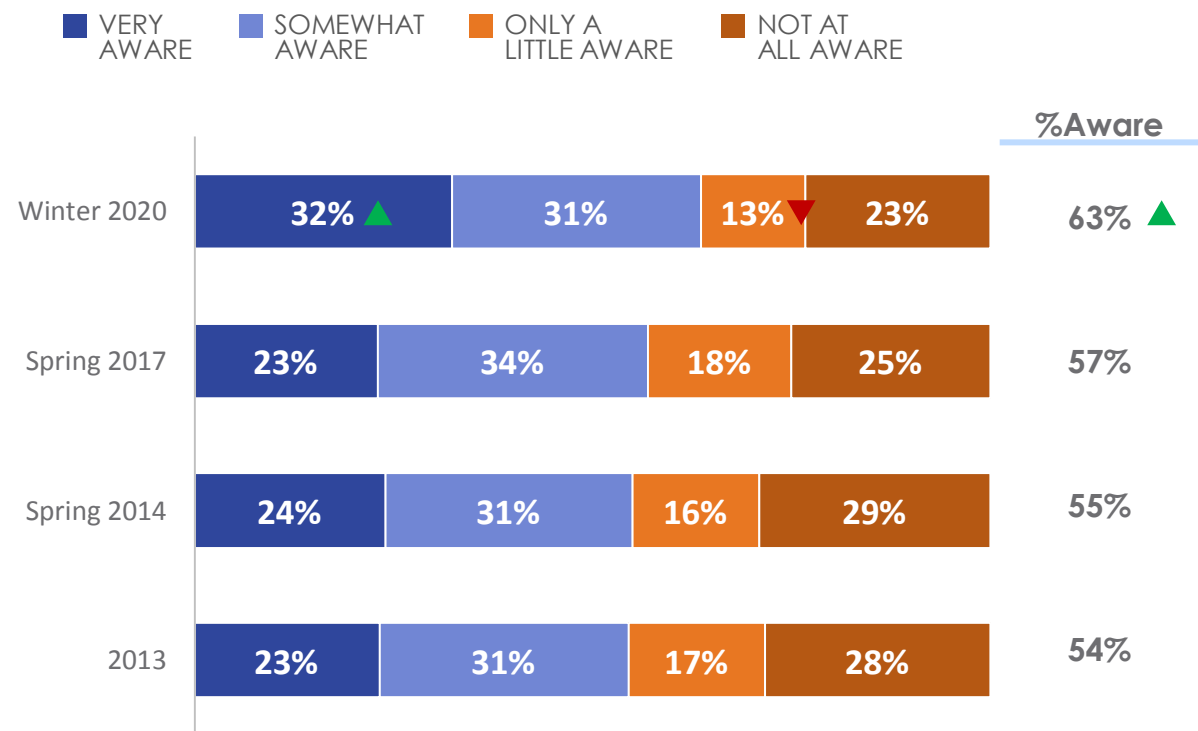


Base: All respondents – Winter 2020 (n=600)  
QNEW8. Would you say that you support or oppose this consultation and study process?

# Awareness and Support For Proposed South Bruce NWMO DGR Site- Tracking

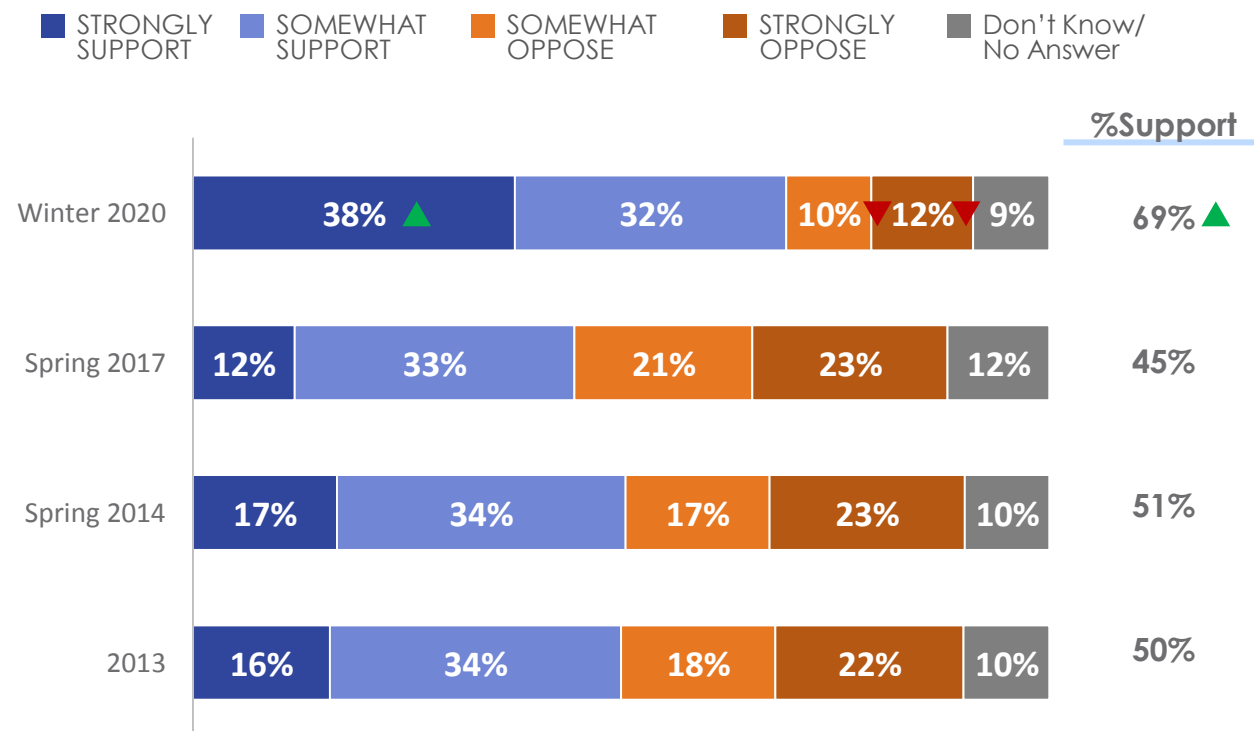
• Awareness of and support for the consultation and study progress to select a nuclear waste site has significantly increased since 2017. In both cases (awareness and support) the increase in overall sentiment is driven by those who feel most strongly (i.e. those who feel very aware (32%, +9 pts) or strongly support (38%, +26 pts).

## AWARENESS OF PROPOSAL



Base: All respondents – Winter 2020 (n=600); Spring 2017 (n=500); Spring 2014 (n=500); 2013 (n=500)  
QNEW7. How aware are you of a consultation and study process underway by the Nuclear Waste Management Organization to engage with the community in South Bruce and the broader region to select a site for a long-term Deep Geological Repository for Spent Nuclear Fuel? Would you say that you are very aware, somewhat aware, only a little aware or not at all aware of this proposal?

## SUPPORT/OPOSE PROCESS



Base: All respondents – Winter 2020 (n=600); Spring 2017 (n=500); Spring 2014 (n=500); 2013 (n=500)  
QNEW8. Would you say that you support or oppose this consultation and study process? Note: Prior to 2020 this question wording was as follows: Would you say that you support or oppose this proposal?  
Methodological note: "Don't Know" was not an option provided- represented instead is the proportion who provided no response/ refused to answer in the telephone polling

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