

# Salt Spring Island Climate Action Plan

## Online Engagement Summary

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# Introduction



Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, was the first community to take part in a pilot project intended to combine the Ethelo decision making platform with micro-targeted public engagement outreach strategies.

Following the United Nations recommendations, the CAP steering committee settled on a goal of reducing Salt Spring Island's greenhouse gas emissions by 50% from 2020 levels by 2030, estimated at approximately 35,000 tonnes. The target is focused on local emissions as opposed to "life cycle" emissions although information about interconnected issues and broader implications were also considered.

An additional goal of the engagement was to produce a plan that would be actionable and realistic, which meant that community members would have to prioritize which options they preferred and limit their options within a

maximum difficulty level. In addition to estimating how much a particular action might reduce greenhouse gas emissions, these options were also rated according to difficulty in terms of cost, convenience, and capacity.

Community members were asked to reflect first on their personal connection to each topic and then they were asked to give input into the communities plan. Community members had to select a bundle of options that would cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2030 (based on 2020 levels) and that would not be too difficult.

Educational information was presented along with each problem so that community members could make informed decisions.

What follows is a report of the five policy options with the biggest potential for greenhouse gas reduction, ranked in order of the level of support given by participants. Overall, this plan was supported by 82% of participants.

**This, along with the research of the committee and other targeted stakeholder engagement conversations, will form the basis of the Island's updated Climate Action Plan.**

# Community Consensus

Over the next pages you will find the most broadly supported greenhouse gas reduction strategy among the community members who participated. All of this feedback will be incorporated into the **SSI Climate Action Plan 2.0**.

## 856

community members voted in the public engagement process.



OPPOSE

SUPPORT



## Fairness

**What makes a fair plan?** Aside from hitting the target, it's important to have a plan with support. But there are different levels of support. Here is an example. The two pictures to the left represent levels of support and opposition for two potential plans.

The plan on the bottom is a better plan than the one on the top. Why? Because the people on the bottom are roughly equally happy. The plan on the top is divisive, with winners and losers.

## Level of Support

The level of support is the number of people that would support the details of this plan. The distribution of support shows how happy people are with the plan overall. People on the right-hand side are happy, people on the left are unhappy.

THIS PLAN HAS

## 82%

SUPPORT.



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## 40,688 tonnes

greenhouse gas reduction

## difficulty score of 4.71

out of 5.00

## GHG Emissions

Here you can see how much this set of options would reduce Salt Spring's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and how difficult that plan would be.



# Electrifying our vehicles.

*This was the most supported and least polarized option.*

## THE RESULTS:

On Salt Spring, our personal vehicles, work vehicles and off-island deliveries are responsible for close to 30,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases every year. That's more than 1/3 of all of our local emissions.

Right now there are approximately 9200 personal vehicles and 300-400 commercial vehicles on Salt Spring: only about 300 of the vehicles are electric. That's just under 3%.

Soon, the cost of an electric vehicle (EV) will be on par with a gas one, vehicle range and style choices are ever-expanding and savings in gas and service each year are generally around \$2000 - \$2500. With government incentives, EV vehicle sales are increasing and are much more affordable. Not only that, but we finally have enough used EV vehicle stock to make buying them realistic for more people.

We asked community members:

**How many gas vehicles do you think we can and should replace with electric vehicles in the next 10 years?**

# 50%

of vehicles to be replaced in the next 10 years.

# 12,900

tonnes of greenhouse gas reduced as a result.

# 75%

of participants supported this plan.



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# Healthy forests.

## THE RESULTS:

Between 2009 and 2017, about 86 hectares of forest were clear-cut on Salt Spring (an average of 11 hectares/year), equalling approximately 126,850 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e. It also means we have 86 hectares less of our forests working as a carbon sink to offset our daily emissions or as water sponges to support our natural aquifers and lakes.

Areas that are left unforested will never store nor sequester carbon at the same capacity again. However, even those that are reforested, will need more than 100 years before they can regain the carbon that was emitted by the initial loss, if ever.

We asked community members:

**What percent of trees should and can we stop from being cleared over the next ten years (if 110 hectares is 100%)?**

# 75%

reduction in forest clear-cutting over the next 10 years.

# 12,000

tonnes of greenhouse gas reduced as a result.

# 73%

of participants supported this plan.



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# Electrifying our ferries.

## THE RESULTS:

Our ferries add another 17,700 tonnes/year to our transportation-related emissions. Almost all island residents use the ferries at some point either personally, with the goods that they receive or through the businesses that they run and work at. We all contribute to these emissions.

By electrifying ferries on shorter routes, we would cut large amounts of emissions. BC Ferries has ordered new hybrid ferries that can operate on battery power alone for short routes, and say that they may transition to electric “when the technology matures”.

We asked community members:

**What percent of our ferries do you think we can and should replace with electric vessels in the next 10 years?**

# 50%

of our ferries replaced with electric ones over the next 10 years.

# 8,850

tonnes of greenhouse gas reduced as a result.

# 71%

of participants supported this plan.



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# Decreasing freight emissions.

## THE RESULTS:

Salt Spring relies heavily on imported goods which have a relatively large impact on our contribution to greenhouse gases, especially when it comes to our reliance on freight trucks to get what we need from off island.

Even when we are 'buying locally' rather than from Amazon or Wayfair, most of our goods are produced somewhere else. Cutting down in this sector includes buying less in general, trying to eat local food and buy used local items whenever possible, and watching for low-emission delivery opportunities now and in the future. As electric vehicle options for heavy-duty vehicles come on line in the next couple of years they will undoubtedly become popular due to the cost savings.

We asked community members:

**What percent of commercial transport emissions on Salt Spring do you feel could be decreased over the next ten years?**

# 50%

of freight/commercial transport emissions reduced within the next 10 years.

# 1,350

tonnes of greenhouse gas reduced as a result.

# 75%

of participants supported this plan.



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# Retrofitting our homes.

Pictured: Heat pump.

## THE RESULTS:

We have approximately 4900 private homes on the island, with 80% of those being single family detached homes. Electrically heated homes using heat pumps and other energy efficient equipment emit very few greenhouse gas emissions.

Compared to baseboard heaters, heat pumps can reduce your electricity use for heating by 50% or more. Using solar, solar hot water or geothermal in addition to a heat pump can reduce it down to next to nothing.

We asked community members:

**How many electrically heated homes can or should we retrofit in the next ten years?**

# 50%

of our homes to be retrofitted over the next 10 years.

# 1,500

tonnes of greenhouse gas reduced as a result.

# 75%

of participants supported this plan.



OPPOSE

SUPPORT

# At a Glance: All Policy Options

Community members voted on eight other options for reducing GHGs. These additional options cut fewer emissions than the top five options, but still had high levels of support.

POLICY OPTION	LEVEL OF SUPPORT	LEVEL OF REDUCTION SUPPORTED	GHGS REDUCED
Electrifying Personal Vehicles	75%	50%	12,900 tonnes
Halting Forest Clearing	73%	75%	12,000 tonnes
Electrifying Ferries	71%	50%	8,850 tonnes
Reducing Freight Emissions	75%	50%	1,350 tonnes
Retrofitting Electric-Heated Homes	75%	50%	1,500 tonnes
Reducing Tourism Vehicle Emissions	74%	50%	1,050 tonnes
Retrofitting Oil/Propane Homes	70%	75%	975 tonnes
Retrofitting Wood Stove Homes	74%	50%	761 tonnes
Increasing Composting	74%	75%	491 tonnes
Increasing Cycling Infrastructure	65%	75%	360 tonnes
Increasing Bus Routes	73%	50%	255 tonnes
Electrifying School Buses	66%	100%	90 tonnes
Electrifying Public Buses	68%	100%	70 tonnes
			<b>40,688 tonnes</b>

# Key Takeaways

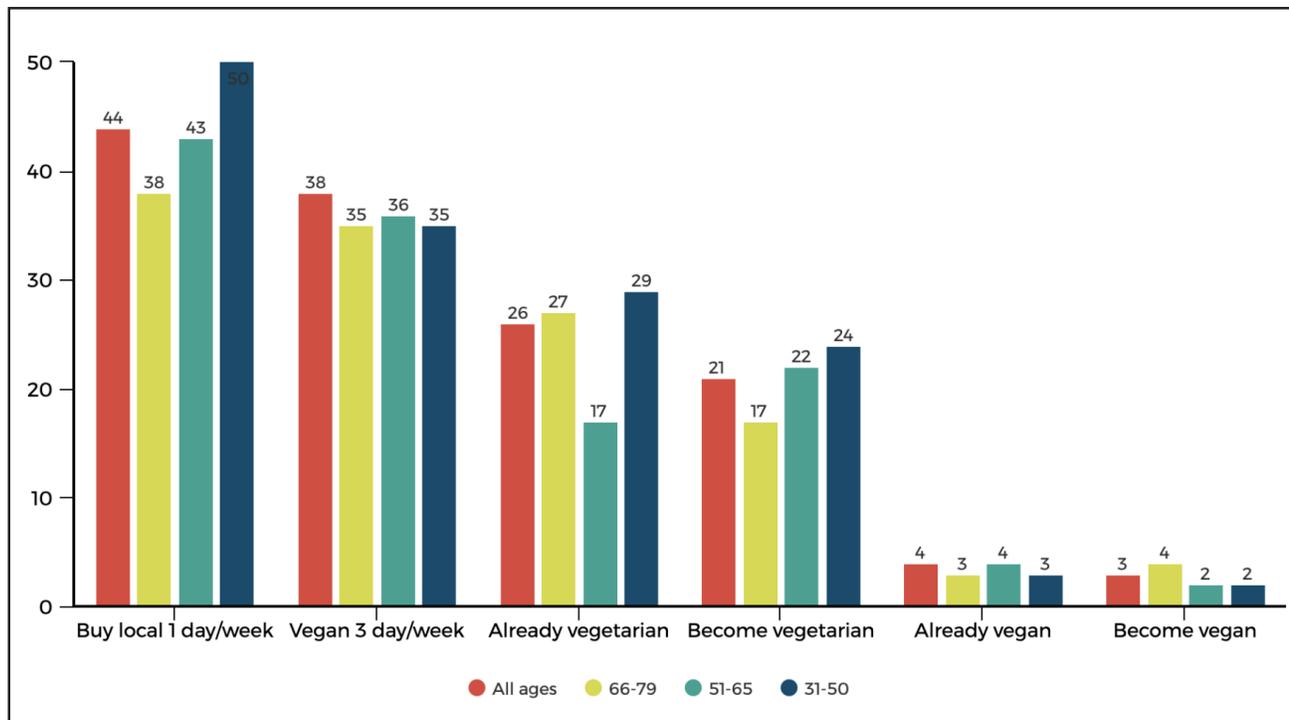
Our analysis of community members input highlighted some important points to consider in the context of the plan overall. Focusing additional attention on these and other areas was recommended:

- › One important group to take into consideration is those that are not concerned about climate change. ***Finding the climate solutions policies that they support regardless of their views on climate can be an effective way to move forward with policies everyone can be on board with.***
- › Interestingly, those that are not concerned or are minimally concerned with climate change still supported:
  - a \$20/yr. increase in taxes to pay for expanded public transit (see following page).
  - the electrification of transit and school buses as well as shuttle buses for tourists and locals to reduce automobile emissions - or perhaps not only to reduce emissions but to create more equitable public solutions.
- › Another interesting finding from this group was that **they showed an interest in more information about native plants and gardening that was helpful for addressing climate change.** One of the community members who provided a quote to use during the engagement is a botanist, researcher and master gardener. Coordinating with her to follow up with these community members appropriately is a good local fit.

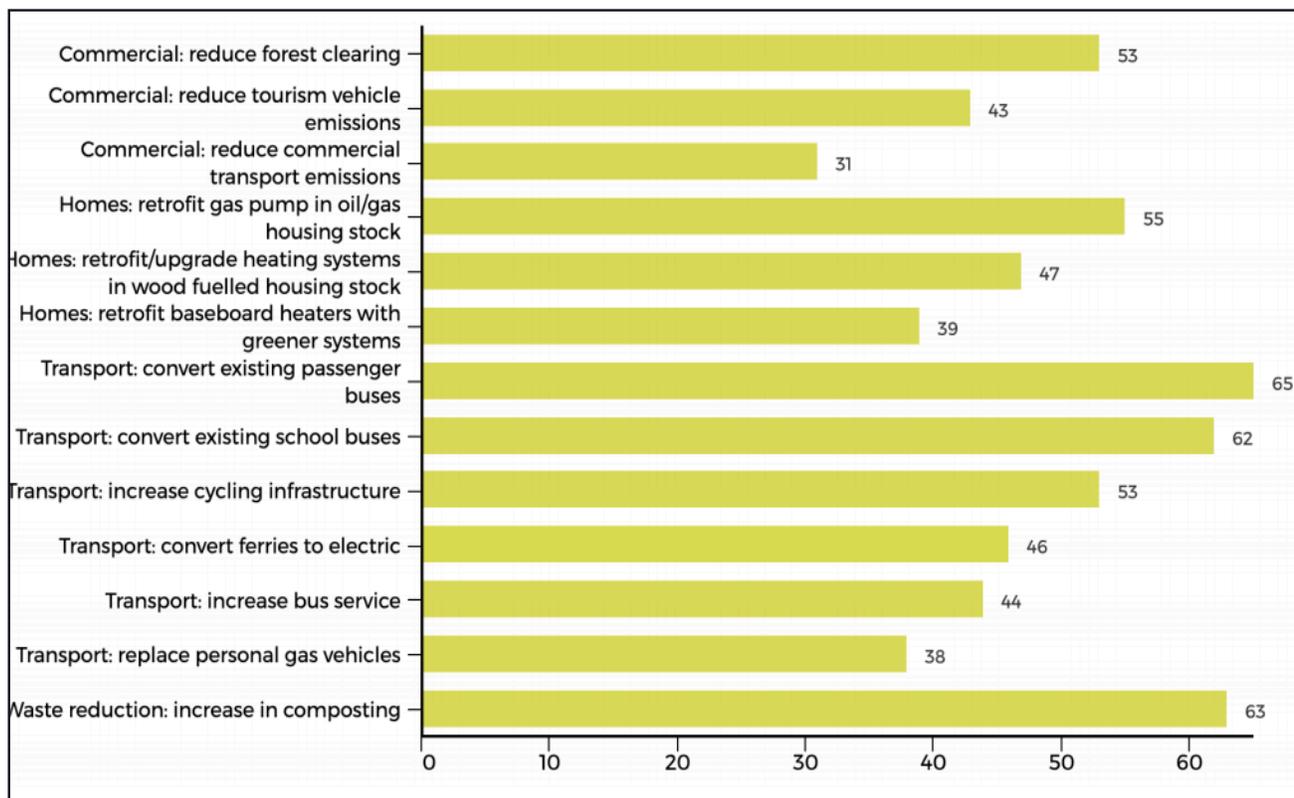
- › For those that are considering getting an EV there is a higher level of concern regarding costs. **We recommend that the EV club on the island be encouraged to follow up with this group** letting them know all the details of currently existing incentive programs and other opportunities to affordably switch to an electric car. In many cases community members can actually save money by switching vehicles but they are unaware of current prices and incentives. There seems to be a group of potential EV owners who need up to date information to inform their decision.
- › Other opportunities for strategic follow up communications include focusing on providing information for people who answered that they are open to the idea of reducing their meat consumption and eating a more plant based diet. This group showed the highest level of openness to making these kinds of changes to their diet. Helping to make that choice safe, affordable and accessible could help this group reduce their personal contribution to GHG emissions from factory farming.

**\*NOTE:** All follow ups are done on an opt in basis for any communications sent directly to participants who said they would like to know more about opportunities to get more involved or take further action. Other communications may take place with more generally micro targeted communications based on identifiable sub community groups.

### Changes planned to family diet:



### Policies supported by islanders not or partially concerned about climate change, by category and magnitude of increase:



See appendix at the end of this document for the full list of graphs.

# Participant Comments

There were over **5000 comments** recorded over the course of the engagement. Below are a snippet of some of the the suggestions that community members left for reducing GHGs on Salt Spring Island.

“

“I have been considering getting an e-bike for some time as it is more in my transportation budget than an e-car. I find the roads on SSI dangerous. and would love to see safe pedestrian and bike paths extend along all the main roads. This may enable more people to ride bikes into work from outside of Ganges.”

“**More seats for people waiting for the bus. Disability doesn't just affect walking; it also makes standing very difficult while waiting for a bus.**”

“I think delivery services should be considered essential to convert to electric. They are ever increasing and post-COVID maybe even more so.”

“I think CSA programs could become more commonplace among local residents. A tool that we need urgently is a publicly accessible website with an online, searchable database where local farms can post what they have and where you can buy it.”

“I feel strongly that we need to add new, affordable, multi family housing at higher density in our existing villages. This housing can demonstrate best practices in climate-friendly

construction, while making more housing options for all kinds of workers and families.”

“**As a renter, how can I encourage my landlord to install energy efficient equipment?**”

“Encouraging people to have composting toilets and grey water systems should be a focus - perhaps a workshop to let people know it is allowed in the code and to demonstrate simple DIY systems.”

Do everything we can to support our young farmers and their families - subsidize their efforts and prioritize food security.

“We have an aging demographic on this island and properties can sometime be neglected as their owners age and cannot physically or financially manage to maintain. Maybe a grant system/youth employment program could address those issues?”

“Perhaps we could have tax breaks similar to farmers for stewarding forests. There could be a system similar to the ‘environmental farm plan’ which would include a workbook with best practices that is used to create a forest plan. Then these properties would be eligible for forest tax break incentives.”

“Give retirees an incentive to take their money out of offshore funds. Community bonds could help build recreation facilities, composting facilities, bike lanes, housing and more, plus the community buy in goes through the roof when locals are actually co-investing in it with their local governments.”

“I support public transport and other means of fuel use reduction. However, these means do not apply directly to myself as I am a farmer, and the use of my vehicle for work (food production) cannot be replaced by public transport.”

There must be a balance in the local economy. It needs to be more diversified so we do not rely on tourism so much. Tourists are on holiday and tend to use more water, drive the roads, environmentally they create more demands on the environment.

“An expanded bike path network is needed. Making Ganges a pedestrian only zone would also be a good idea.”

“We should subsidize and incentivize fire-smarting, both by individual owners and in public areas. I am very concerned about losing my house to forest fire. We are too complacent

about the risk.”

“[There could be] a water consumption tax paid by every non-resident at point of entry. Tough to implement, but may make non-Islanders think about their water usage when here.”

“Subsidies for retrofitting older homes for more efficient homes is a great idea and should be explored.”

“An improved cycling network to connect the town to neighborhoods and the ferries is both beneficial in terms of emissions reduction and tourism.”

“If people of colour, people with lower incomes and people who know nothing about climate change because no one has ever reached out to them are never in the room where the decisions are being made we are going to continue to have two different worlds and two different realities. I think we need to give people the opportunity to participate in their future, give them ownership over it and give a real voice to the voiceless.”

# Salt Spring Climate Action Plan

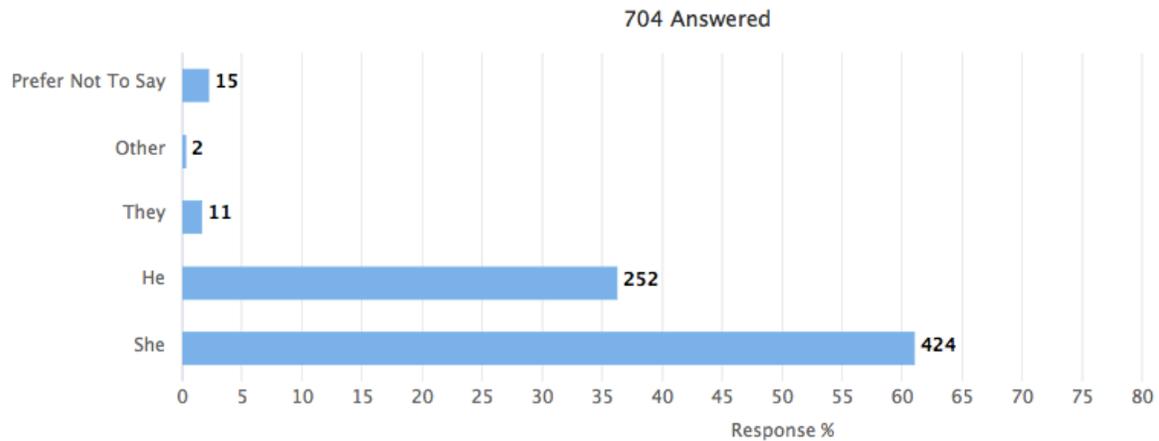
## Public Engagement

eDemocracy

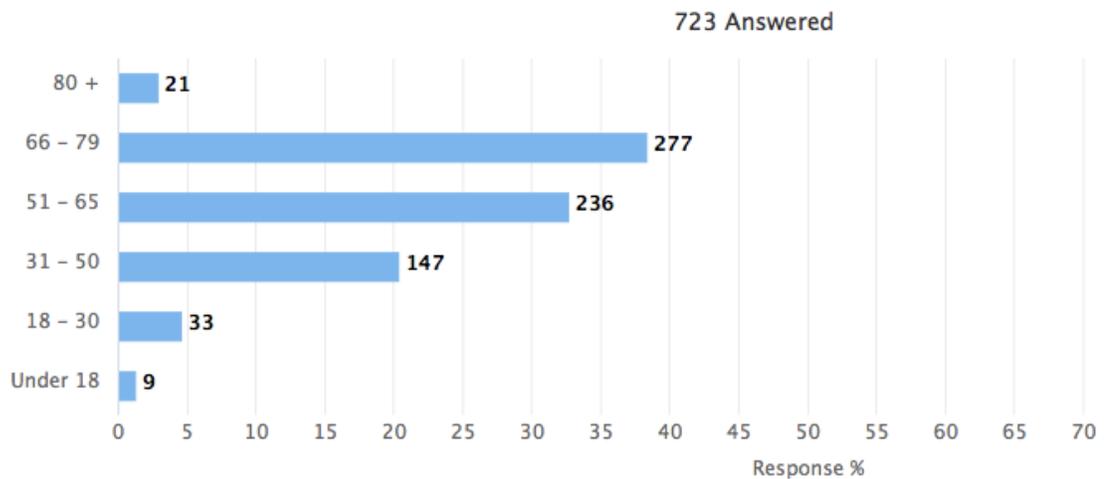
Survey Questions  
850 participants

### About You

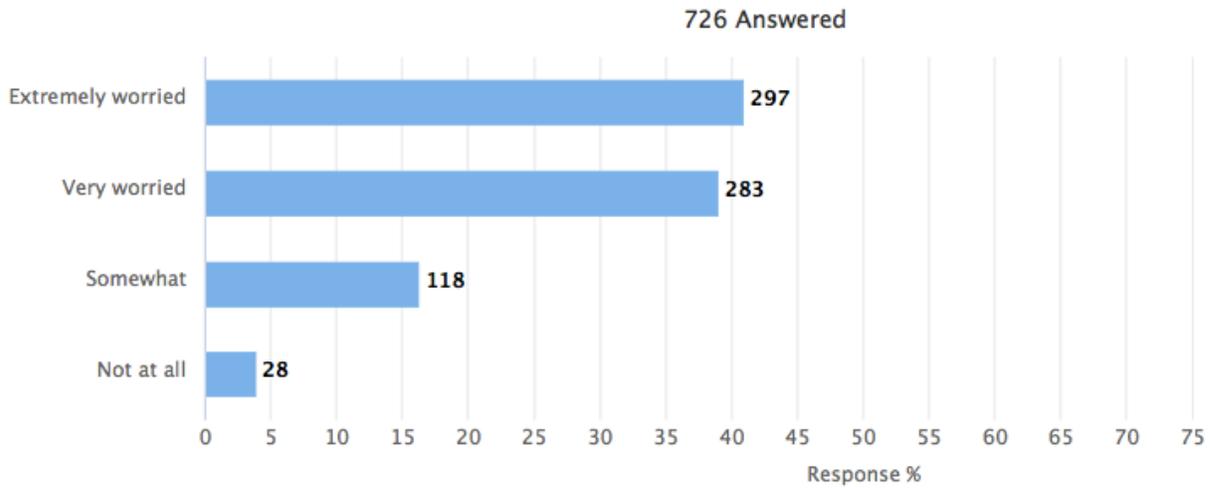
#### Gender Pronoun



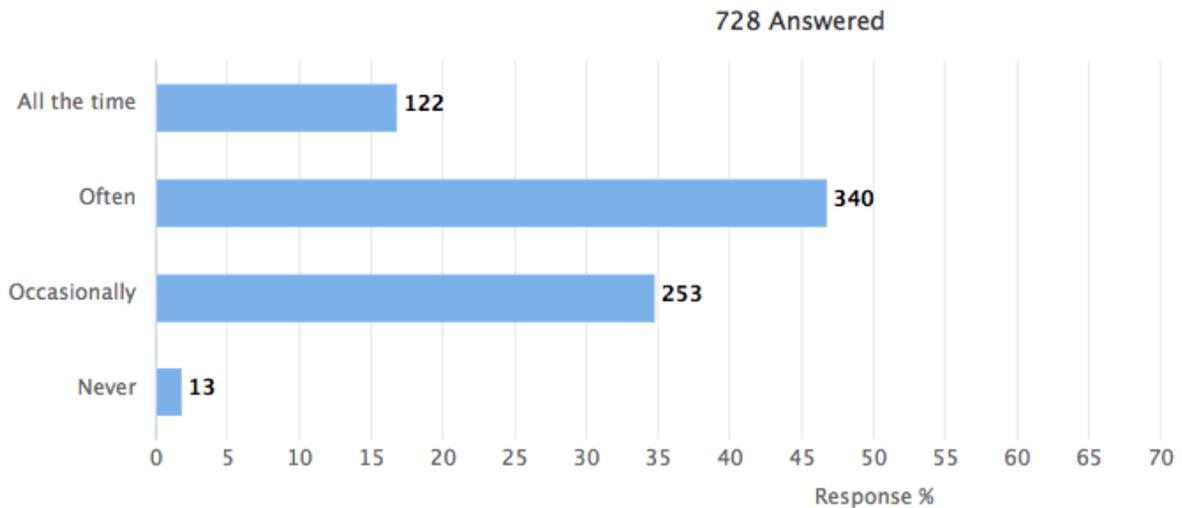
#### Your Age (if you don't mind us asking)



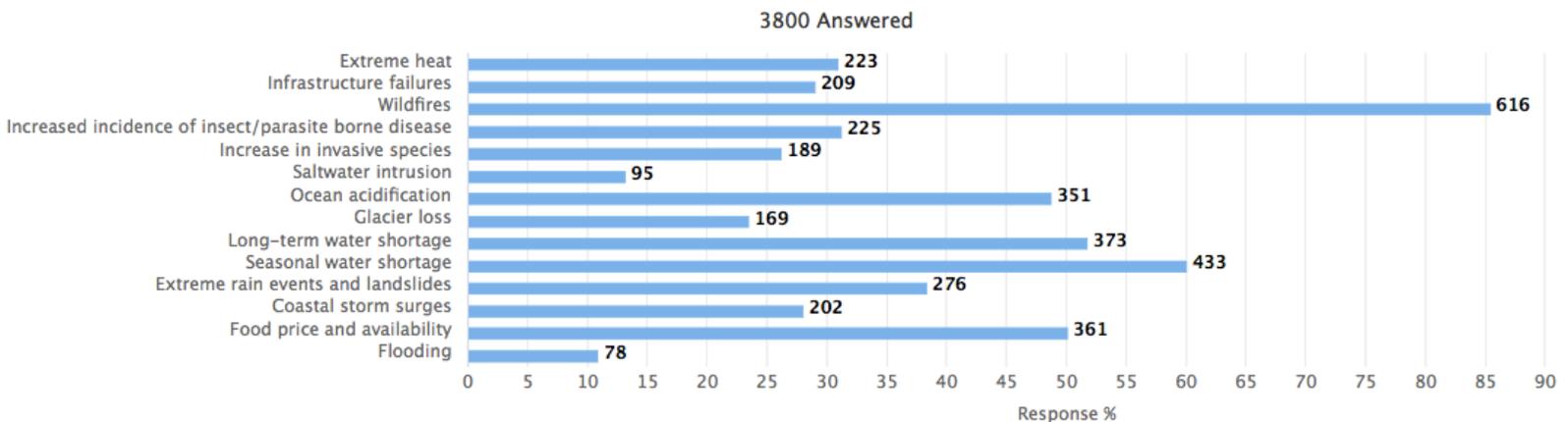
### How worried are you about climate change?



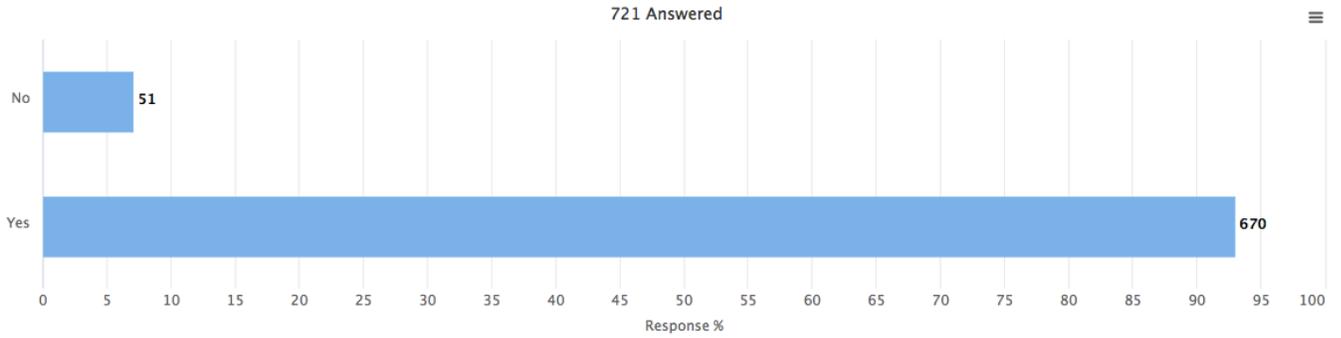
### How often do you talk to your family, friends or neighbours about it?



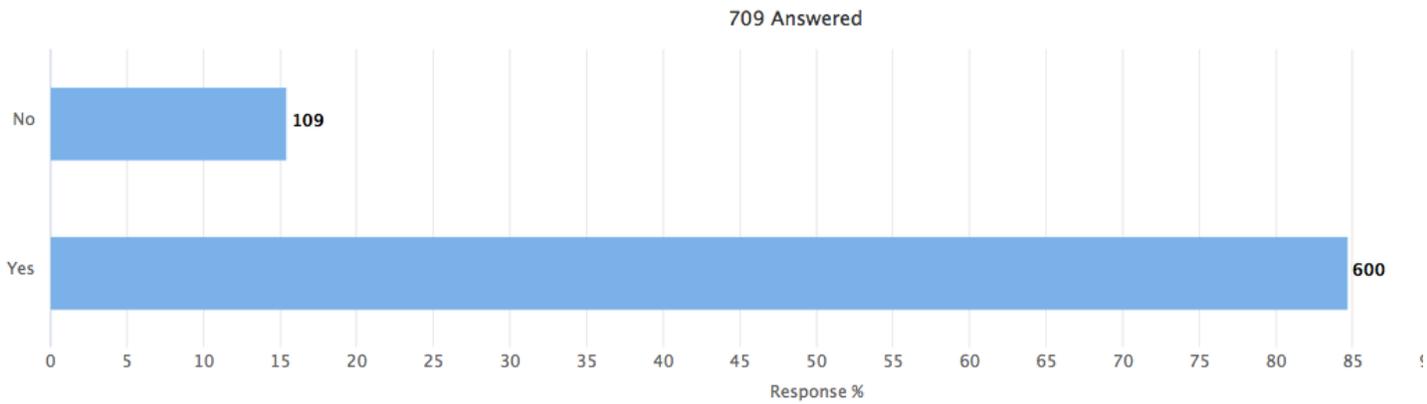
### Considering impact, likelihood and Salt Spring’s strengths and vulnerabilities, which climate event(s) are the ones that concern you most?



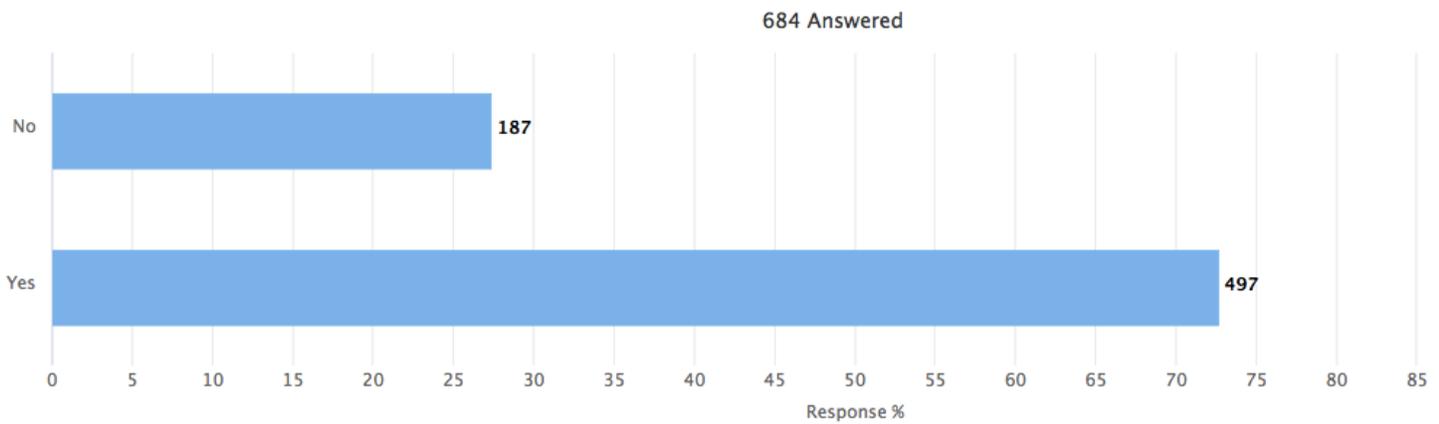
### Do you think that climate change will personally affect you?



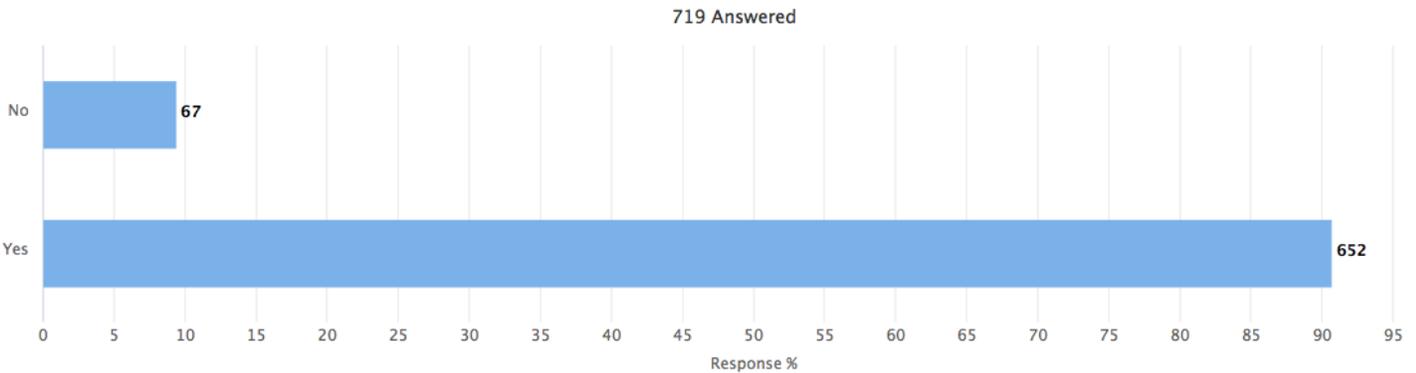
### Do you shop based on climate issues?



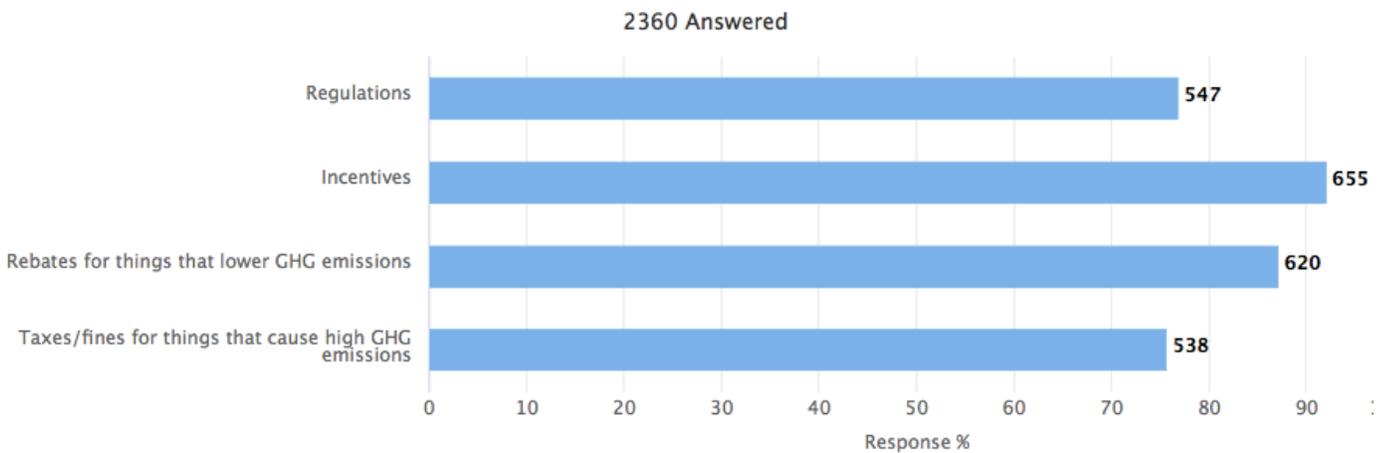
### Do you invest based on climate issues?



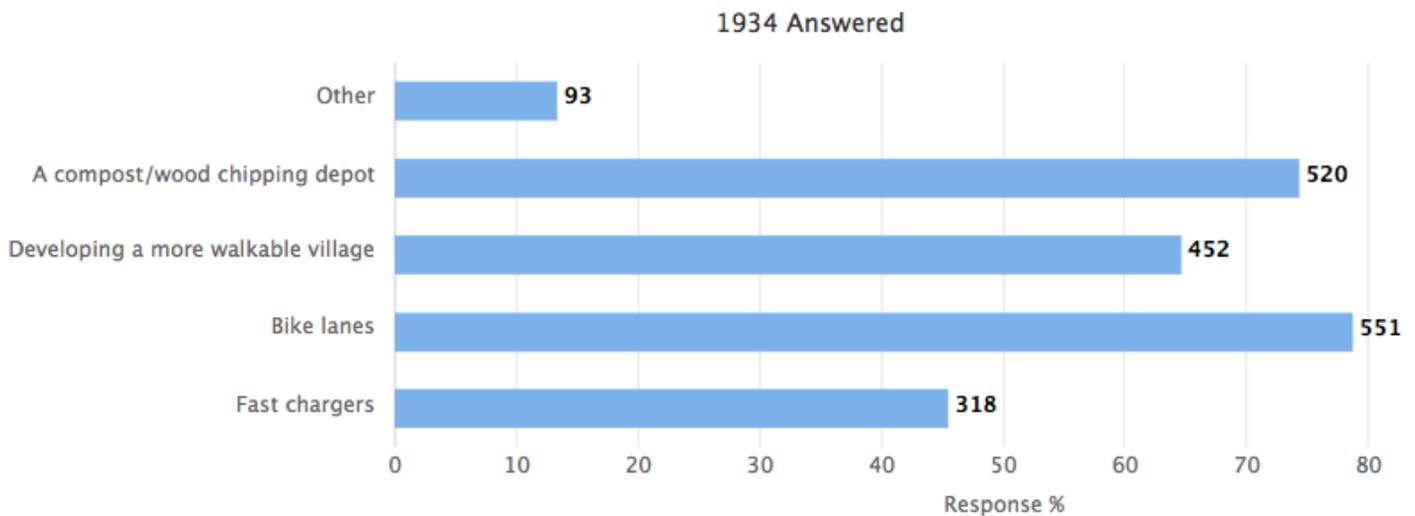
### Do you vote based on climate issues?



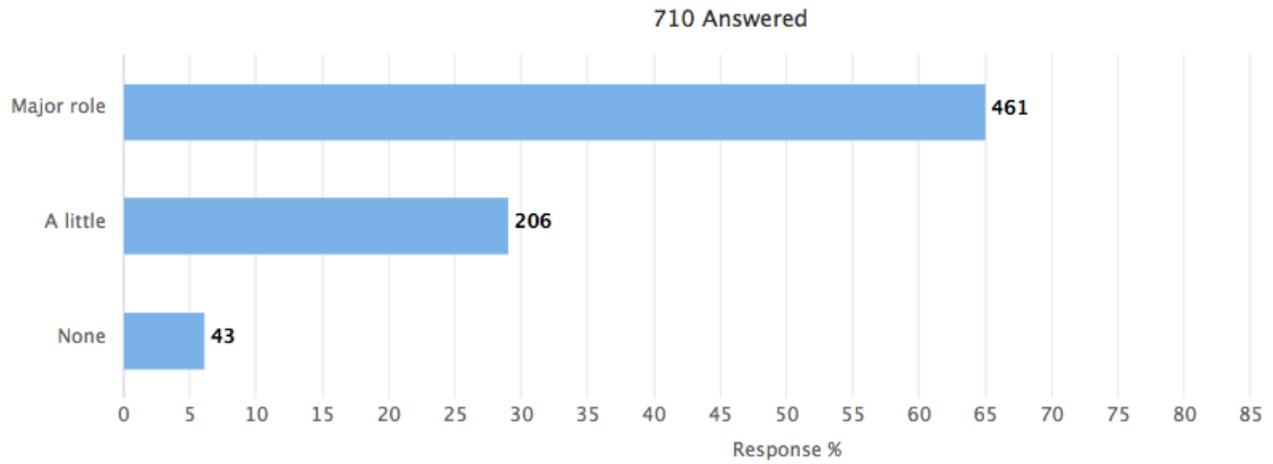
### What kind of a role should the government play?



### Should we use our tax/gas tax dollars or other senior government transfers or grants for:

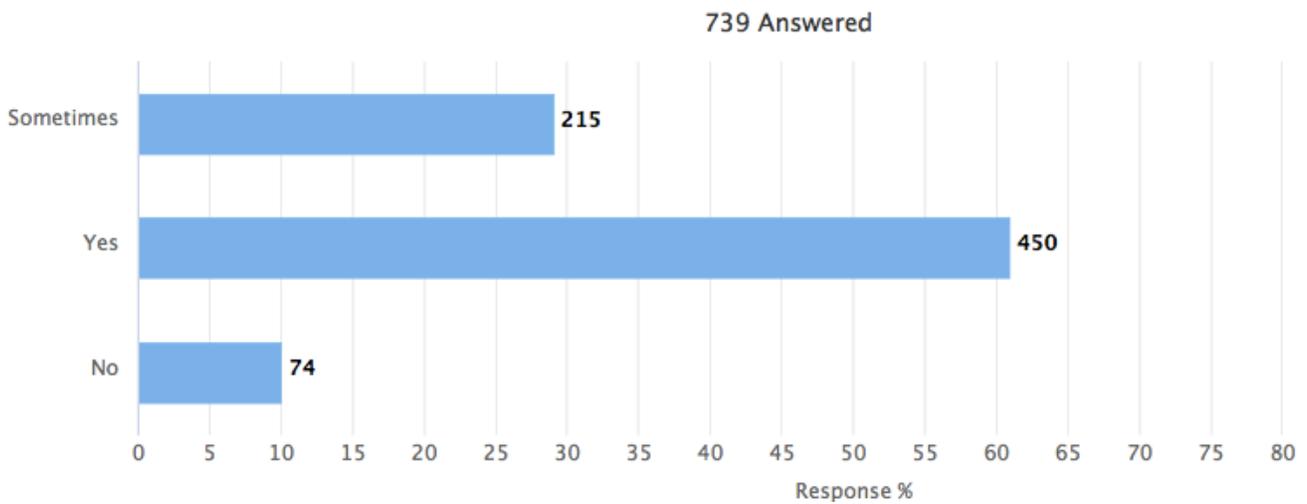


Knowing that we will not reach our goals if we only rely on the things that governments can do, how much of a role do you think the government should play in our individual choices?

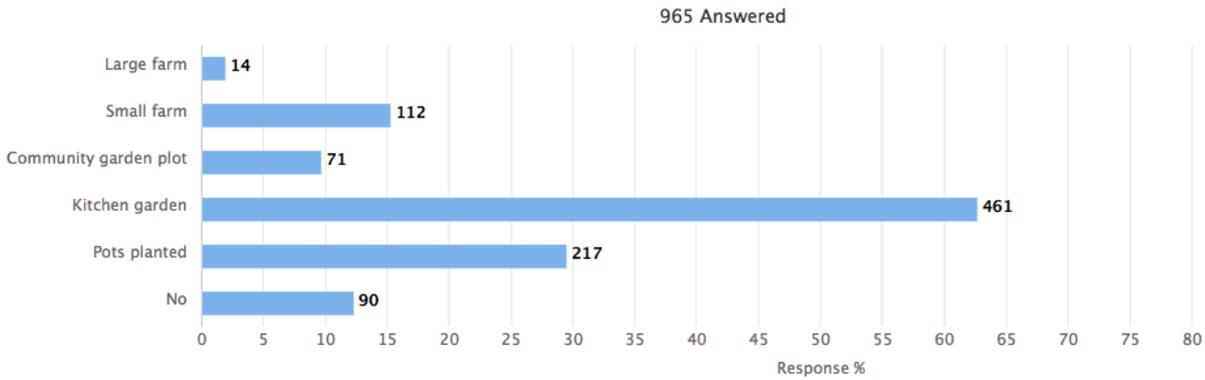


Food and Agriculture

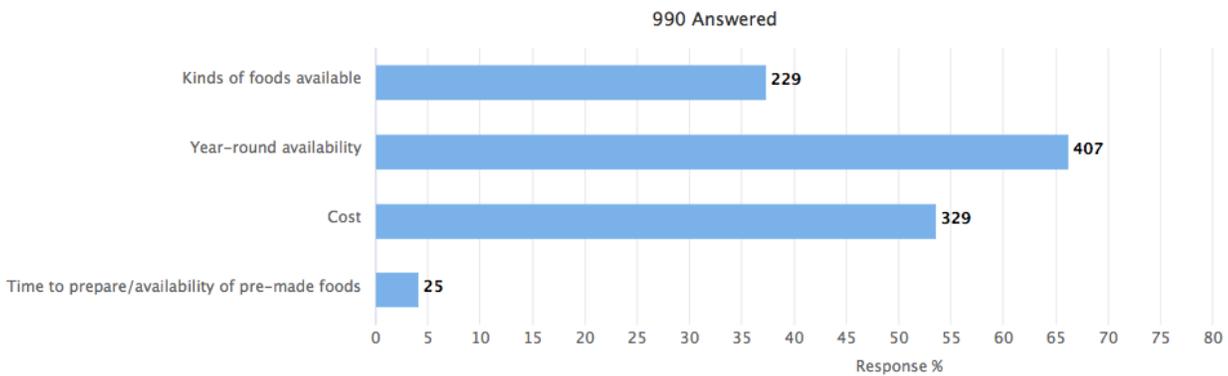
Do you consider your GHG footprint when shopping for food?



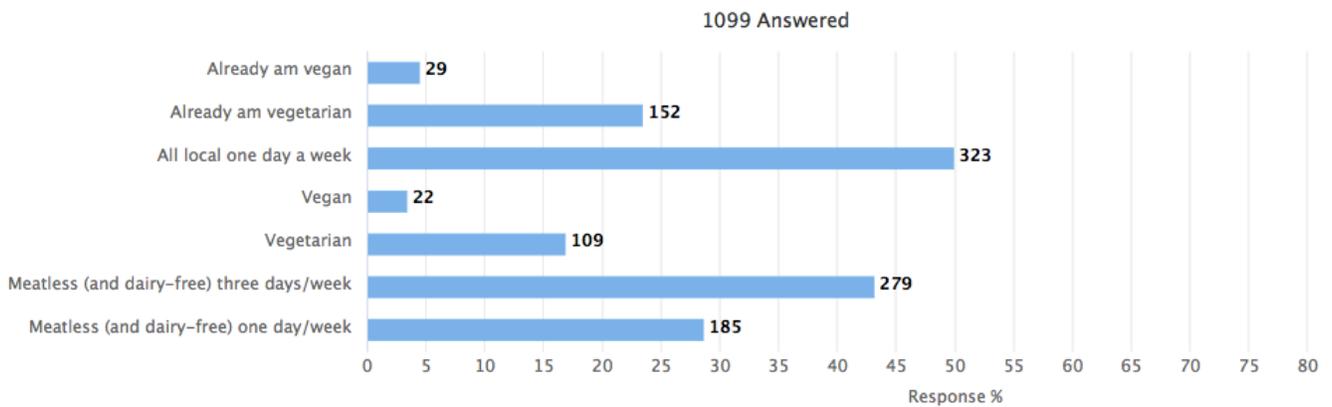
### Do you grow food?



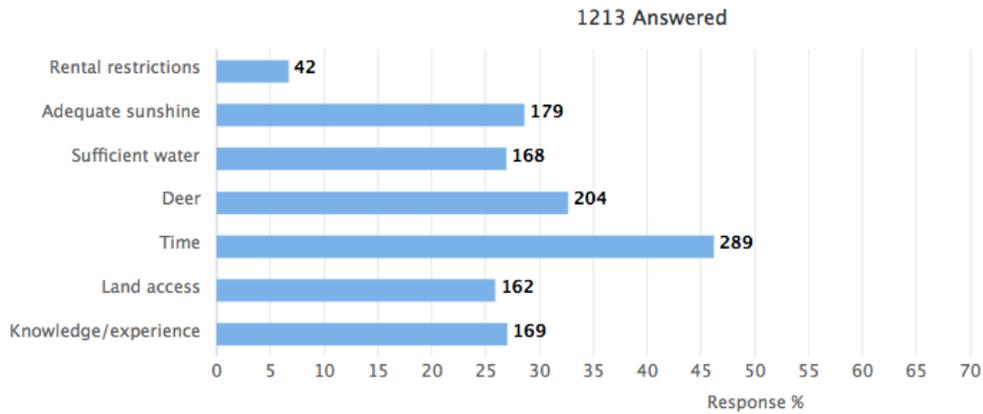
### What are the barriers for you for buying more of your food locally?



### Would you consider changing your family's diet by doing any of the following?

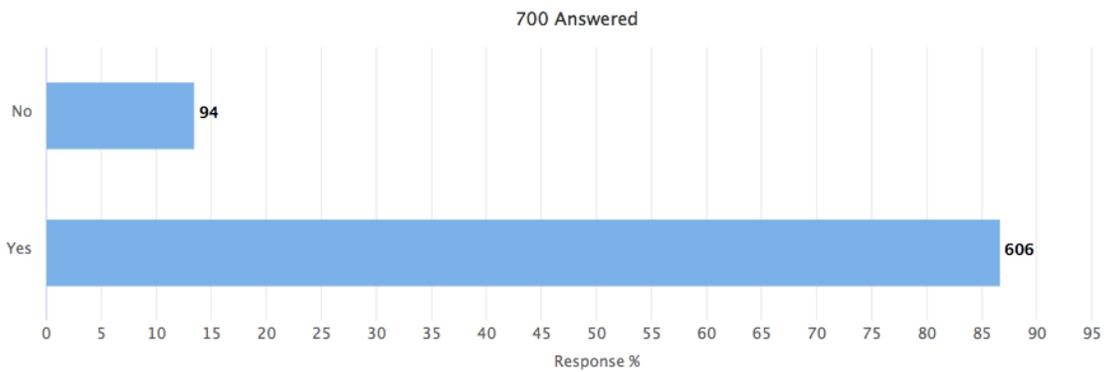


**What are the barriers for you to grow more of your own food and increase local food production?**

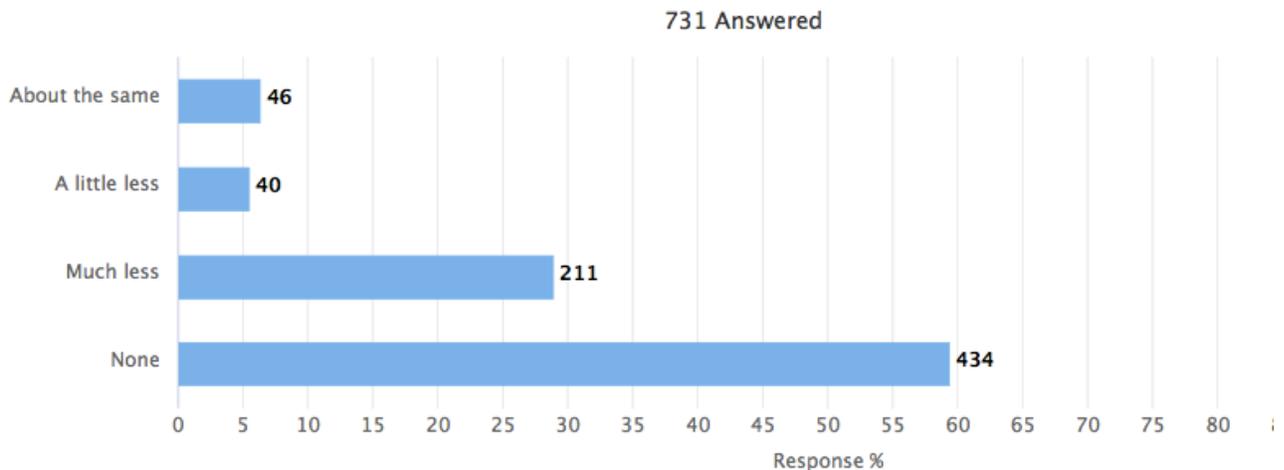


**Forests**

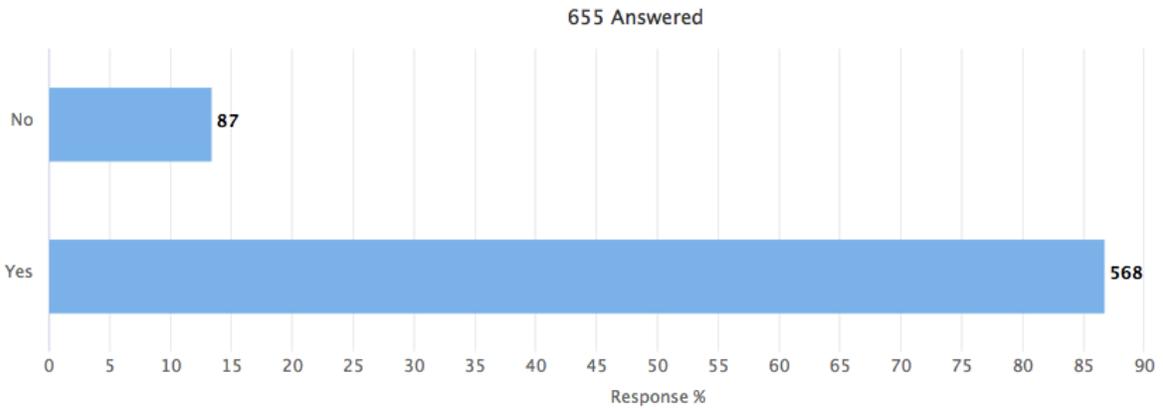
**Do you think Salt Spring should stop slash burning?**



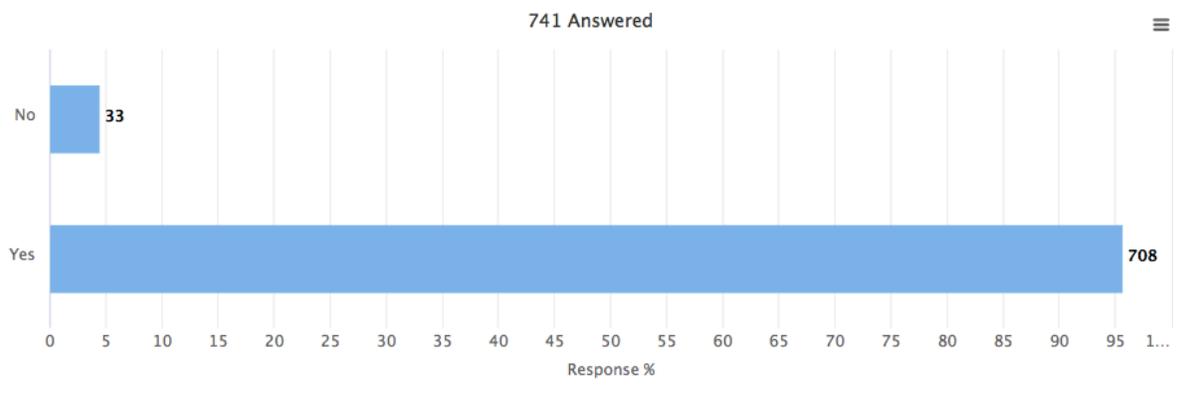
**Given the role of forests in storing carbon and protecting water, how much clear cut logging do you think should occur on SSI?**



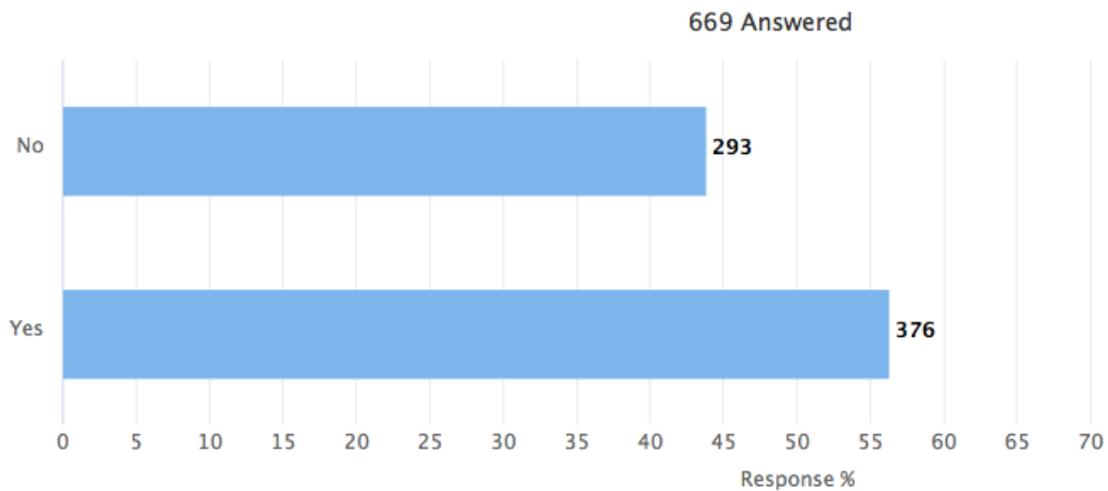
**If you would like to restore a forest on your property, would you be interested in knowing more about what native plants/trees are fire resistant as well as which are best suited to the changing climate?**



**Would you support a community wood chipper program?**

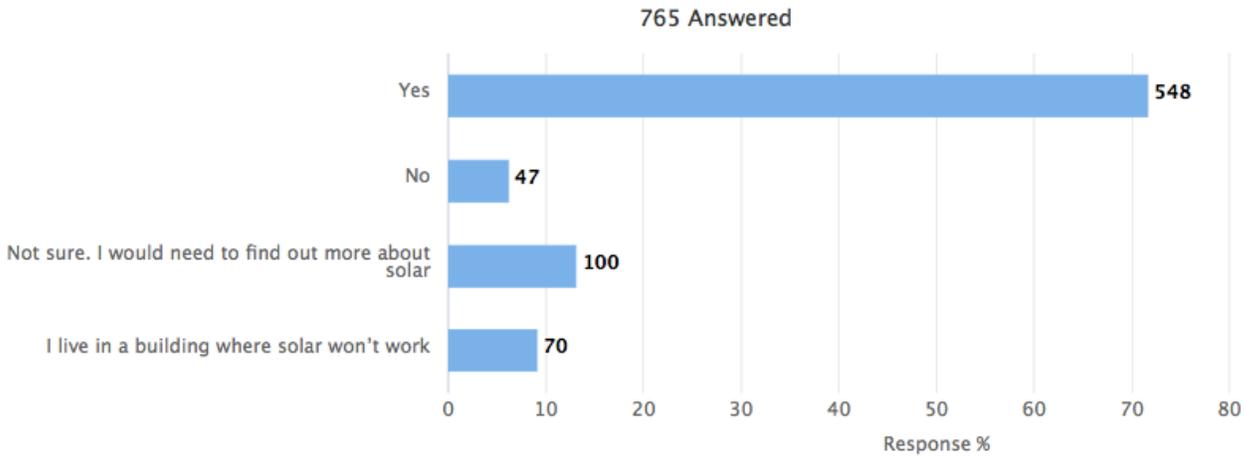


**Would you be interested in incentives to restore a forest on your property?**

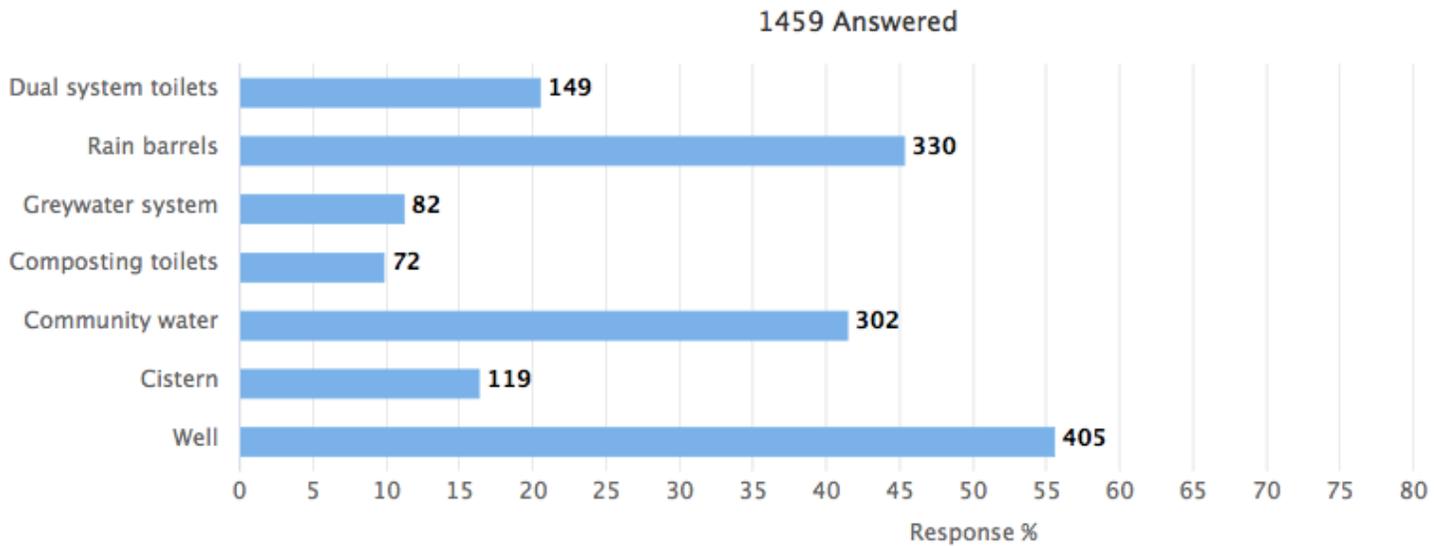


Homes and Buildings

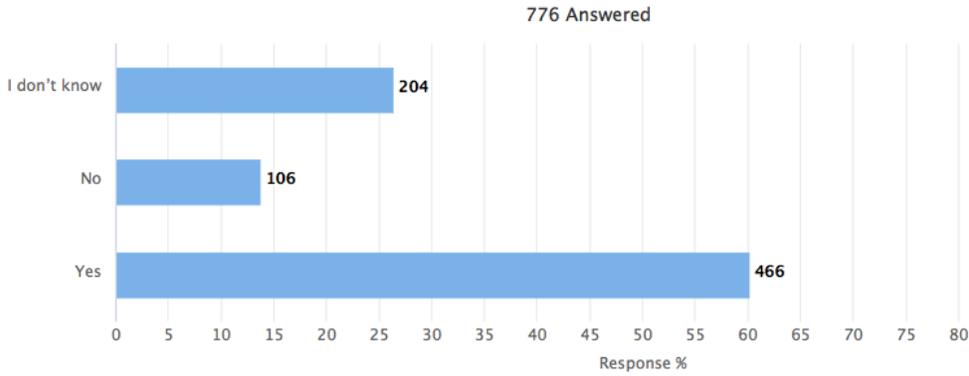
If there were an incentive offered for solar would you consider putting solar or solar hot water on your roof?



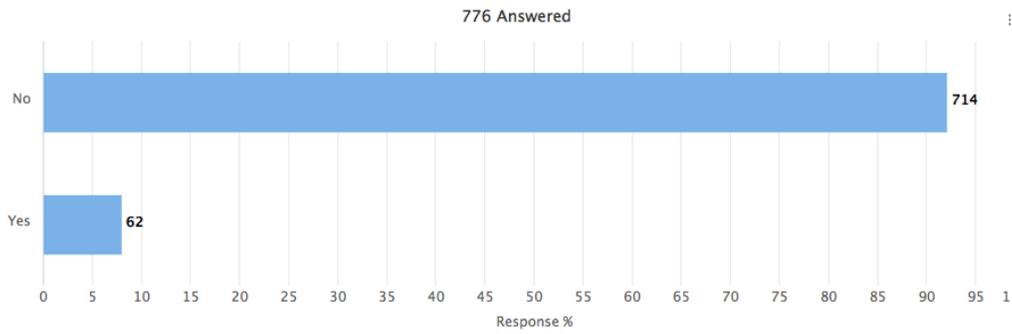
Do you have any of the following?



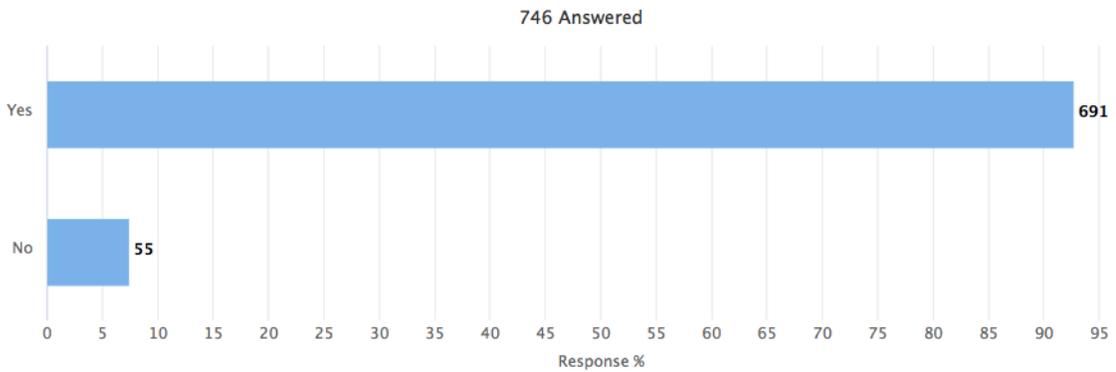
**Are you in a neighbourhood with an active POD emergency system?**



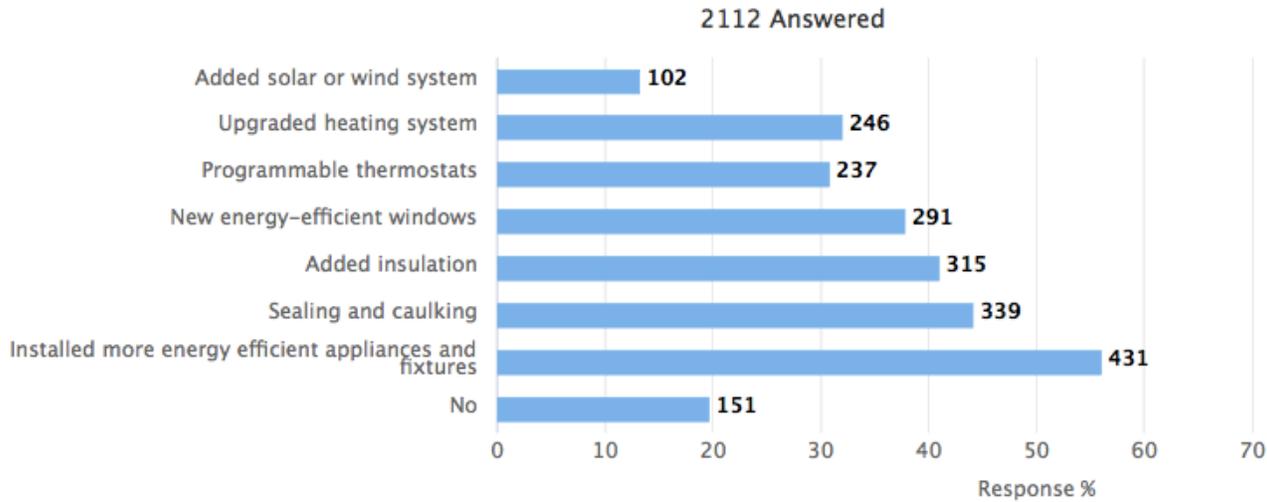
**Do you ever find that you run out of water?**



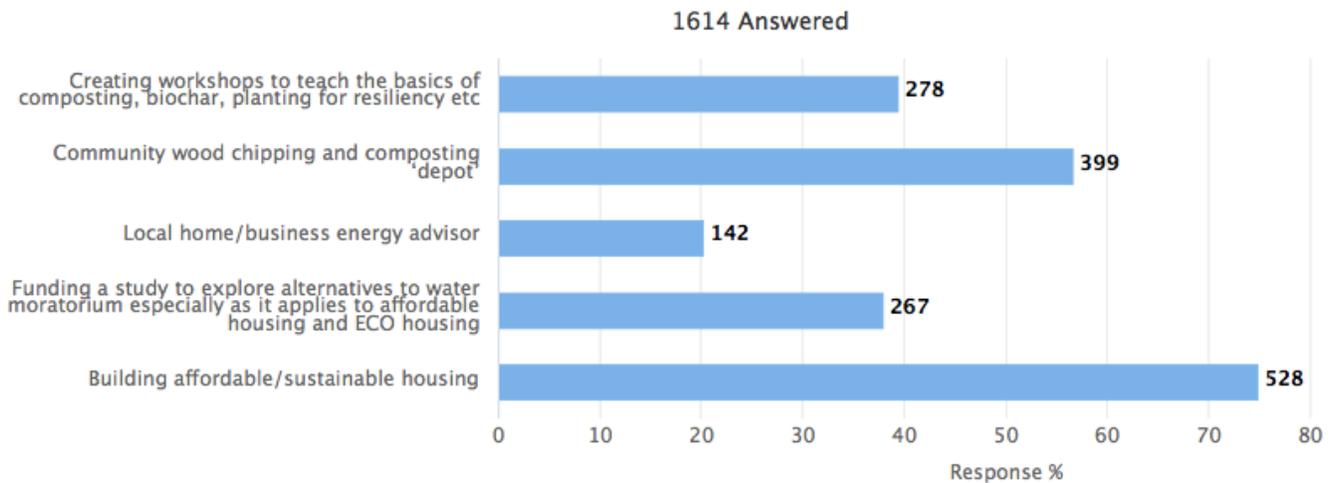
**The BC government has a program in place to replace old energy inefficient wood stoves with new efficient ones. Would you support the CRD or community groups applying to have that program brought to Salt Spring?**



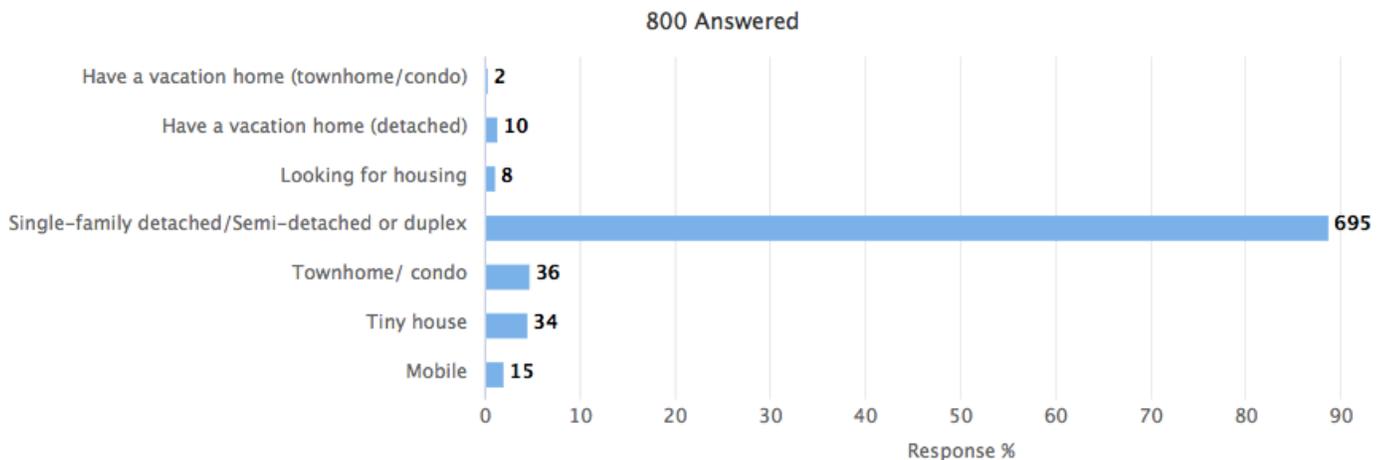
### Have you done anything to make your home more energy efficient?



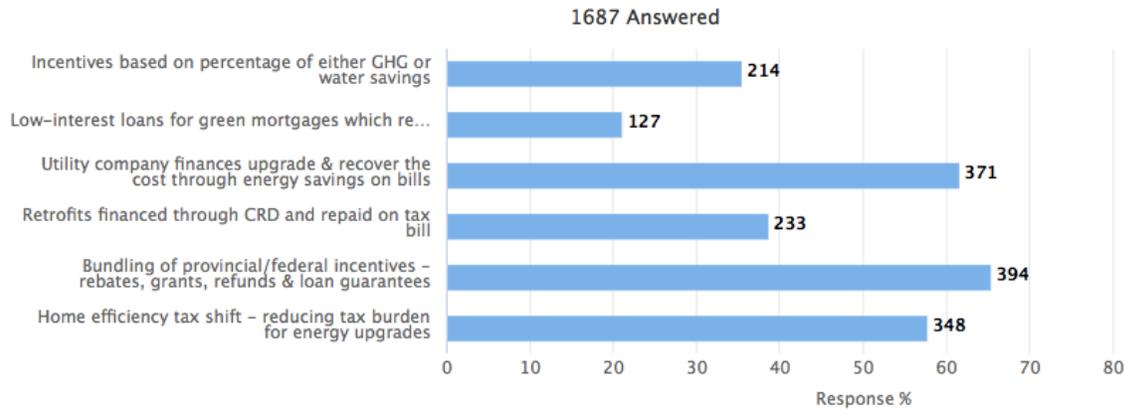
### If we were able to utilize a speculation/empty home tax or other available tax monies, would you like to see the money used for any of the following:



### What kind of home do you live in?

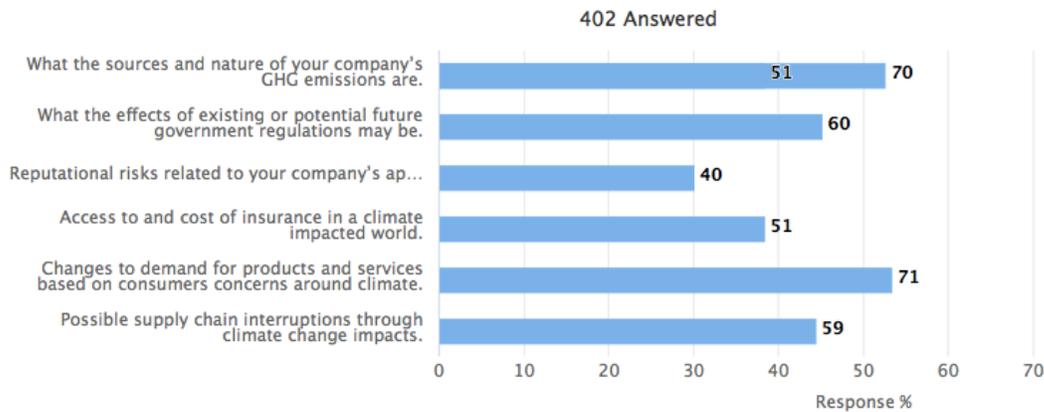


**Would any of the following financing options help you decide to make your home more energy-efficient or add water saving features to your home?**

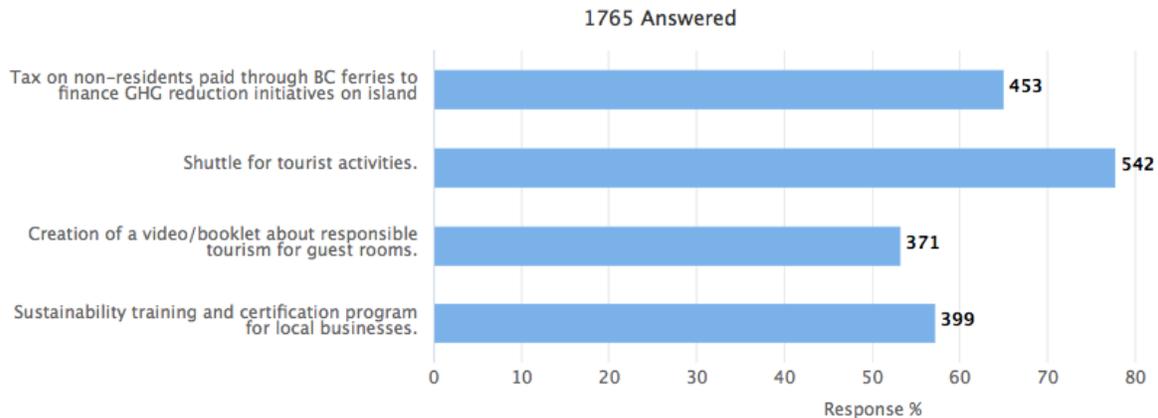


**Tourism and Commercial**

**If you own a business do you consider any of the following in your decisions?**

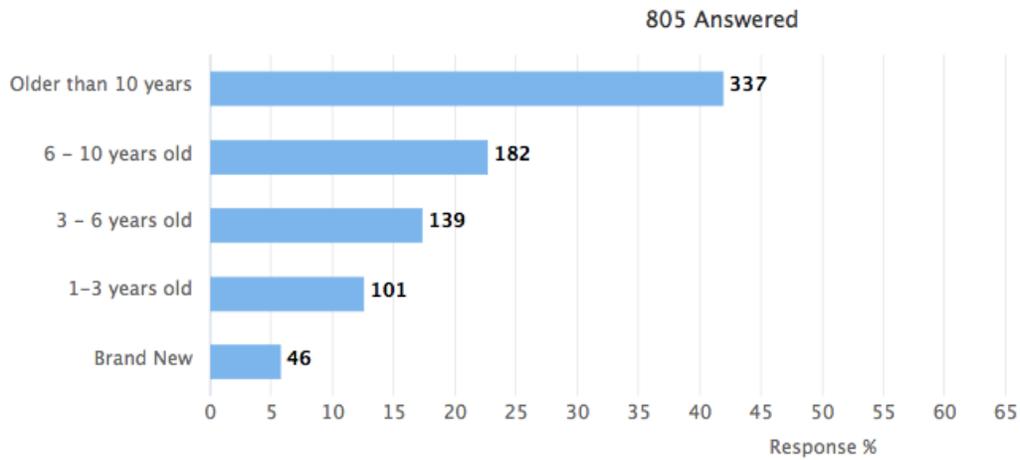


**Which of the following options would you support?**

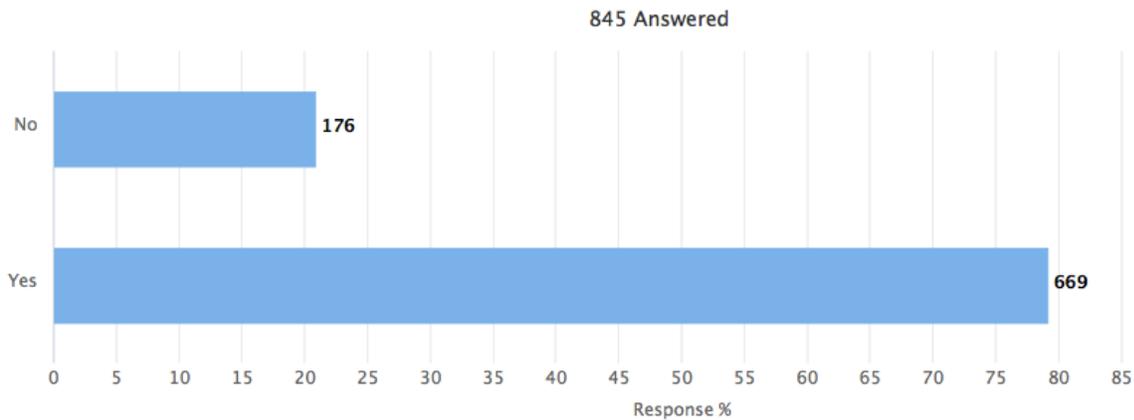


Transportation

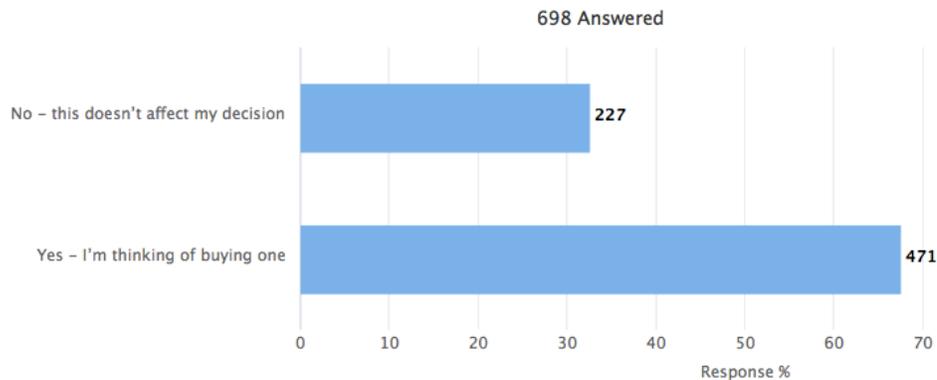
If you own a car - How old is your car?



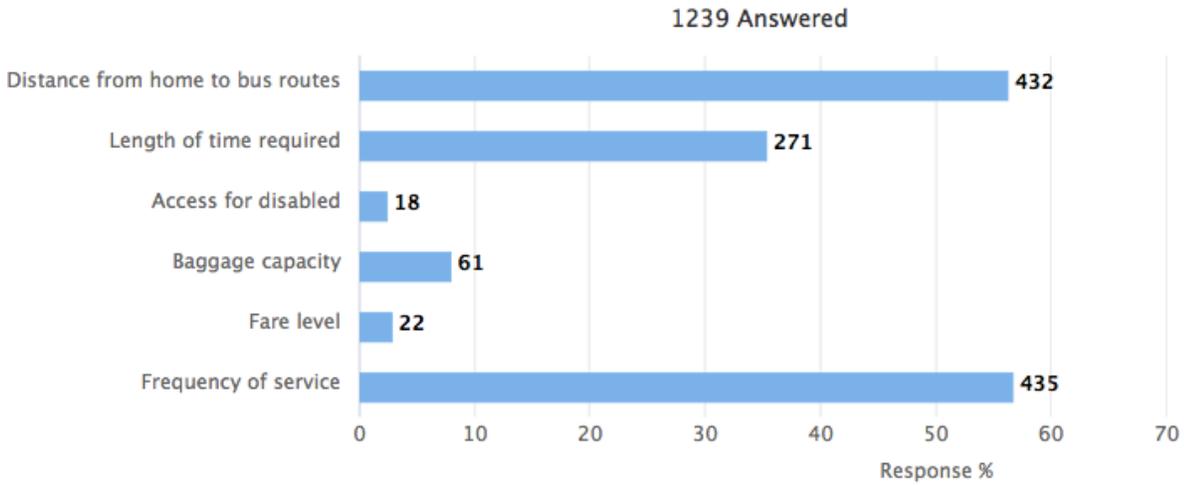
Most of us don't realize that driving slower actually cuts emissions and reduces pollution. Would you support reduced speed limits to cut GHG emissions?



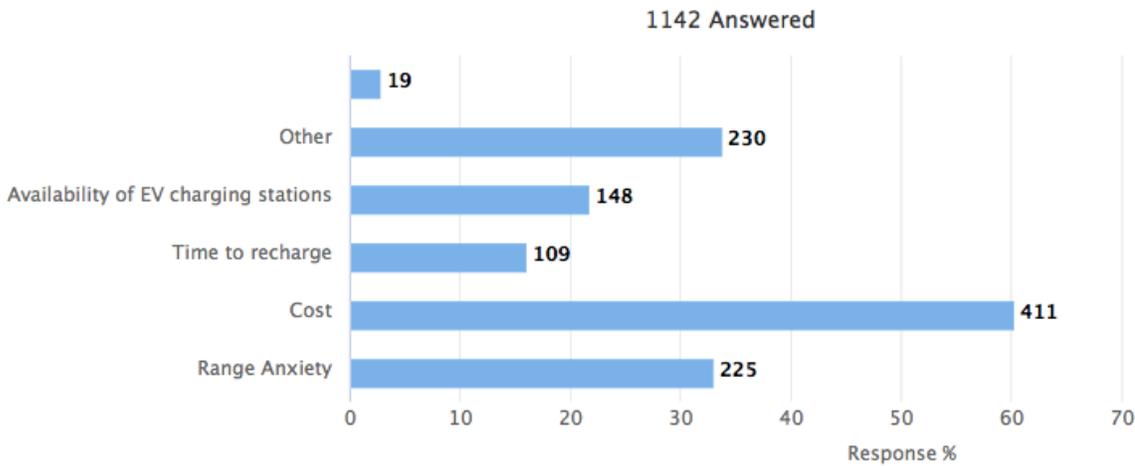
Right now, there are approximately \$8,000 in government subsidies for EV's which brings the price of many EV's in line with the price of gas cars. Does this incentive help you consider an EV?



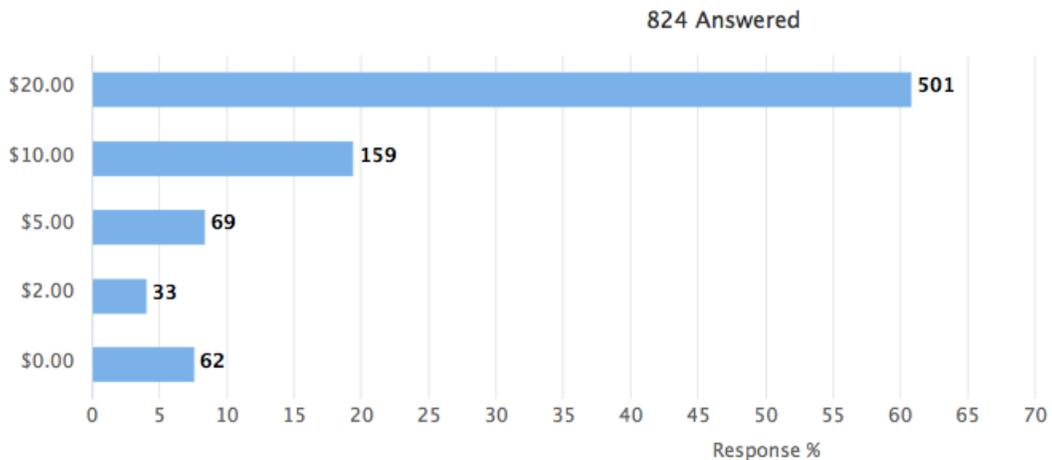
**What are the major barriers for you around public transportation?**



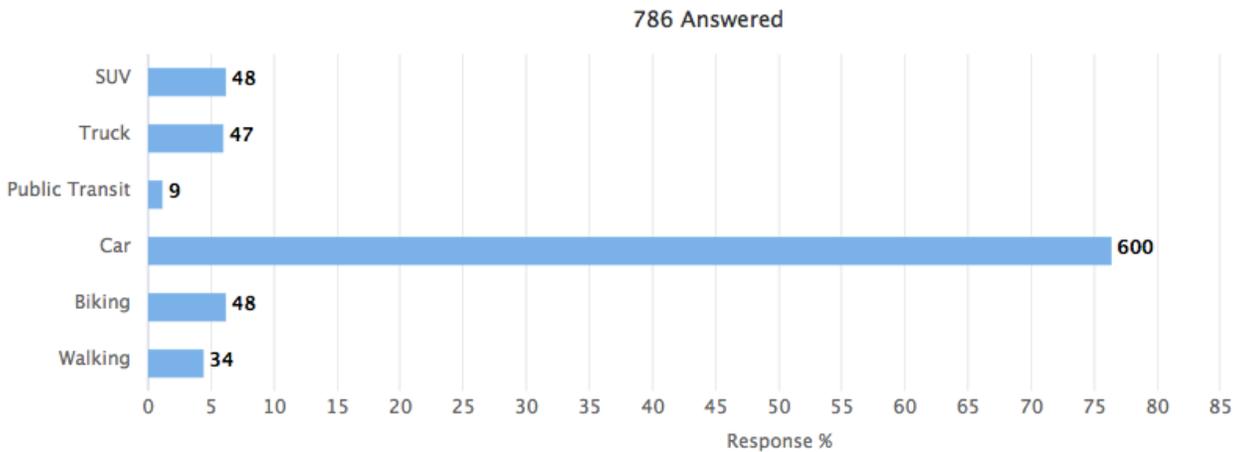
**What are your barriers to buying an EV? (You can skip this if you own an EV)**



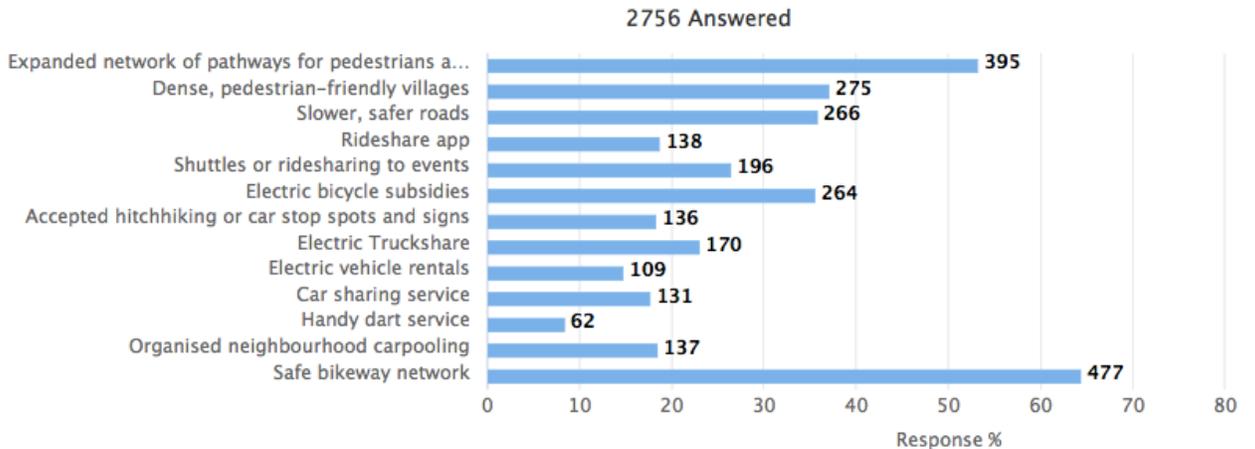
**What is the maximum tax increase per year you would support to improve bus frequency and expanded routes?**



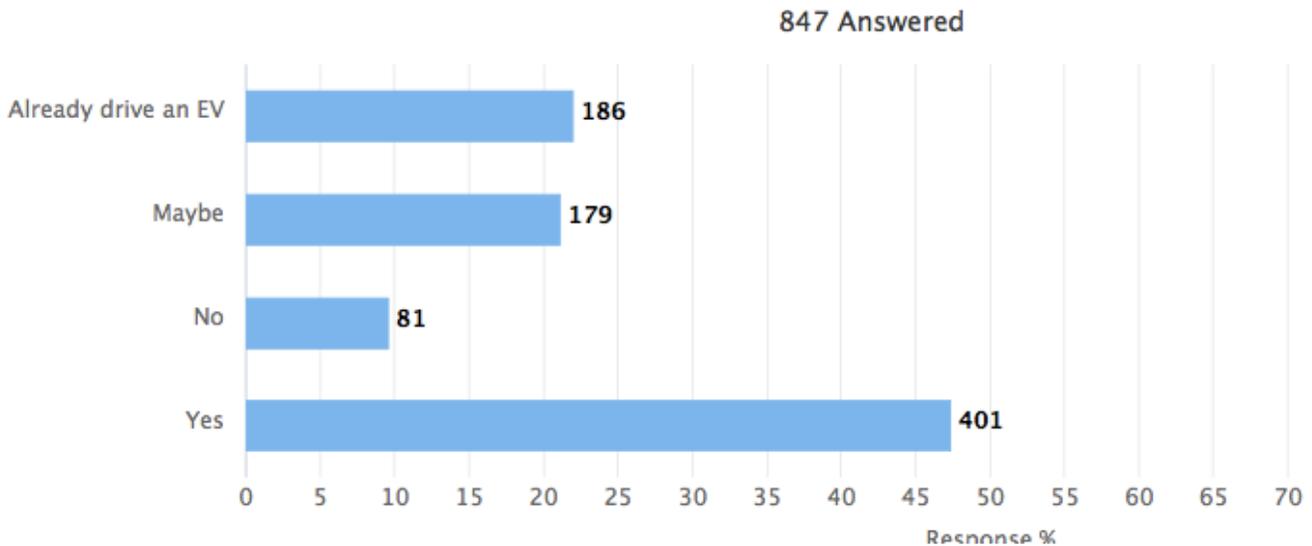
### What is your main mode of transportation currently?



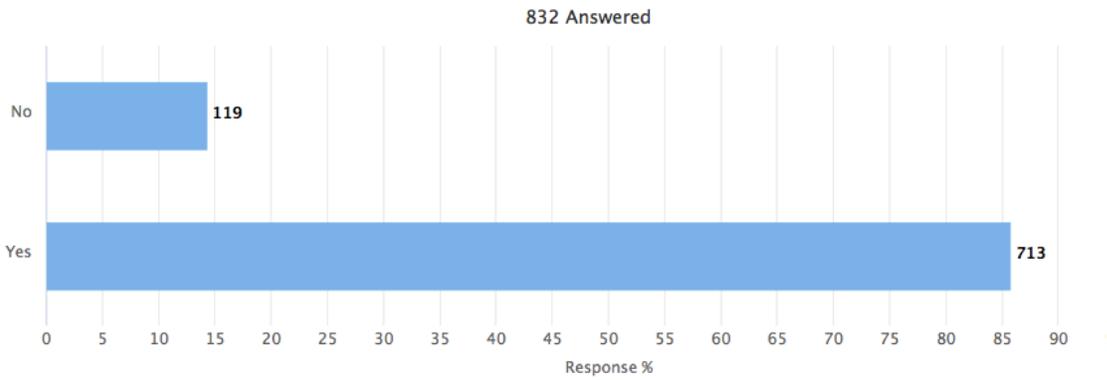
### What would help you drive less, or for your family to own one less car or truck?



### Would you consider buying an electric vehicle as your next vehicle?

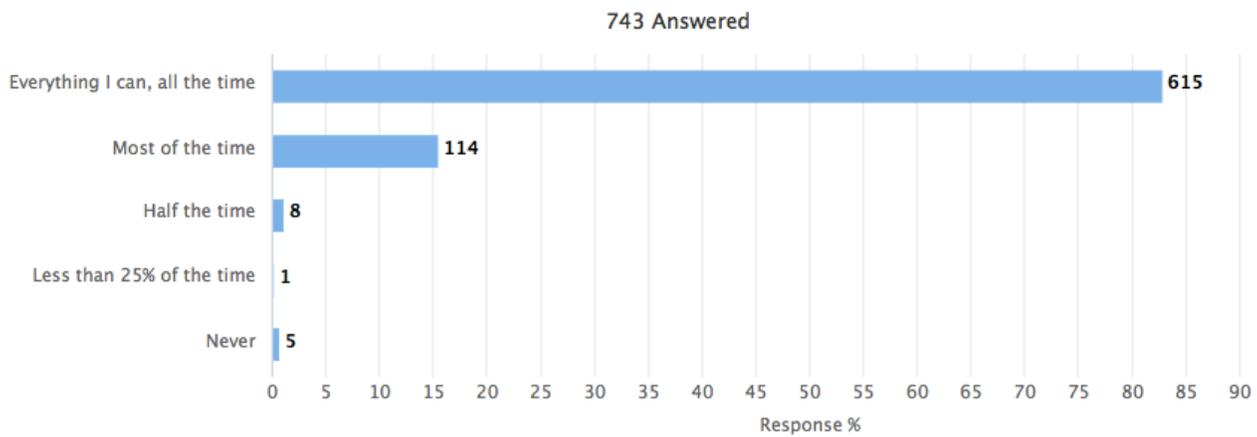


**Would you support a residence card that allows SSI residents to ride the bus for a lower fare than non-residents?**

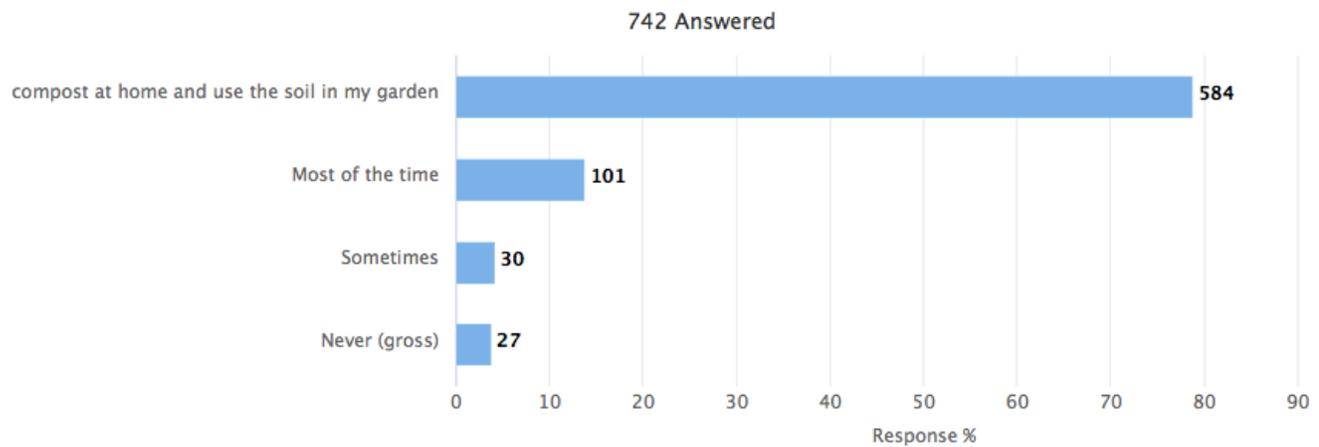


**Waste**

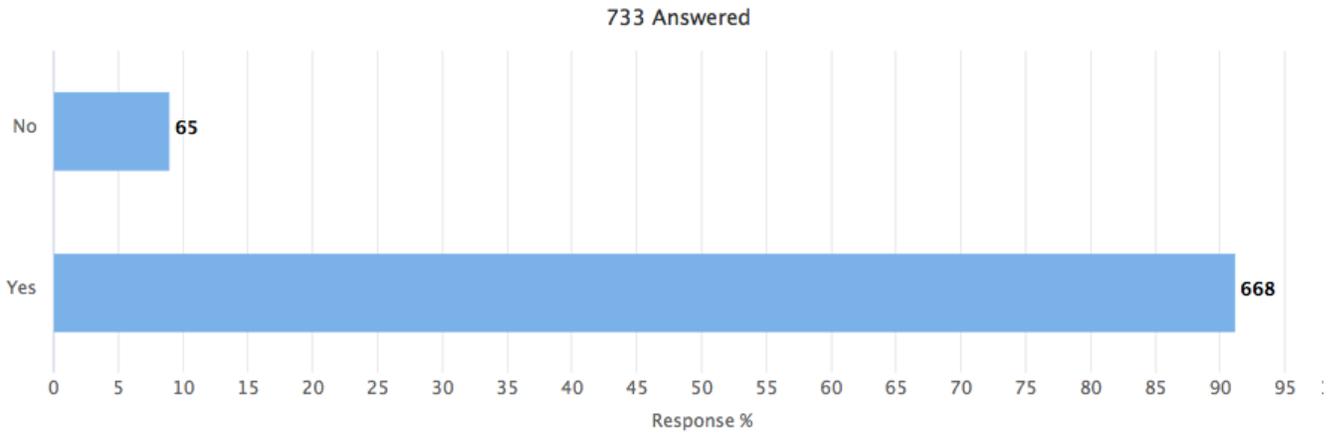
**How often do you recycle?**



**How much do you compost?**



**Would you support a community compost and wood chipping facility where you could drop off wood waste for chipping, drop off food waste for composting and collect compost?**



**If you answered yes, how do you think we should pay for it?**

