

IJC  
GREAT LAKES  
WATER QUALITY  
BOARD

2021

# GREAT LAKES REGIONAL POLL

**Webinar Presentation  
December 9, 2021**

**Thank you for attending**

**The webinar will  
begin shortly.**

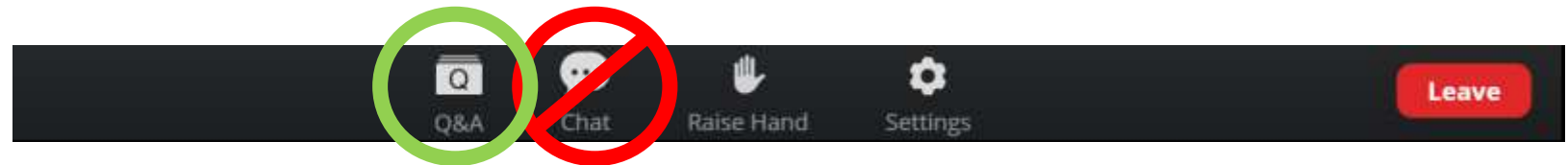
**Use this hashtag  
when you post on social  
media about these  
poll results:**



**#GreatLakesH2OpinionPoll**

# Webinar Agenda

- **Presentation (~45 minutes)**
  - Polling value and methods
  - Select poll results
- **Q&A (~45 minutes)**



[IJC.ORG/WQB/GREAT-LAKES-POLL](https://IJC.ORG/WQB/GREAT-LAKES-POLL)

About  
the  
IJC



# 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty

# About the Great Lakes Water Quality Board (WQB)



- Objectives to ensure Great Lakes are:
  - **Swim**mable
  - **Fish**able
  - **Drink**able
- WQB: Principal advisor to the IJC on Great Lakes water quality policy

# WQB Member Webinar Presenters



**Jon Allan**

WQB US co-chair  
University of Michigan Sr. Academic and  
Research Program Officer



**Mark Mattson**


WQB engagement work group co-chair  
Swim Drink Fish Canada President  
Lake Ontario Waterkeeper President



**Kelsey Leonard**

WQB engagement work group co-chair  
Poll project co-lead  
University of Waterloo Assistant Professor

# What is the value of public opinion polling?

A photograph of a person sitting on a concrete pier, looking out over a large body of water (the Great Lakes) under a clear sky. A thought bubble is superimposed on the image, containing the text 'The Great Lakes are...'.

The Great Lakes are...

Image credit: Alaeddin Hallak [@uplifter](#) via [Unsplash](#)



# Public Opinion Poll Results Help “Bridge”

**GREAT  
LAKES  
SCIENCE**

**DECISIONS,  
POLICIES and  
PROGRAMS**

Image credit: [Gray Matter @gray\\_matter](#) via Unsplash

## More than 55% of respondents are willing to pay \$5 (or more) on their monthly water bill



to fund efforts that help achieve  
swimmable, fishable, drinkable waters  
in the Great Lakes



Topic-based  
infographics  
for you to  
use and  
share

Available at:

[IJC.ORG/WQB/GREAT-LAKES-POLL](https://www.ijc.org/WQB/GREAT-LAKES-POLL)



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#GreatLakesH20pinionPoll

Image credit: [Birti Ishar @birtiishar](#) via Unsplash

Who—and  
how—are  
Great Lakes  
residents  
getting  
polled?

The  
Great Lakes  
are...

# Poll Methods

2015	2018	2021: phone	2021: online
Random phone poll with quota based on state/province population within Great Lakes basin	Replicate 2015 phone poll methods	Replicate 2018 phone poll methods	Not a random sample; self-selecting responses with poll on WQB website
Baseline dataset	Baseline plus + 300 First Nation, Métis or Tribal Nation member	Baseline plus + 500 First Nation, Métis or Tribal Nation members + 100 island residents	Attempt to poll new audiences
3,950 responses	4,250 responses	4,550 responses	4,674 responses
First-of-its-kind binational poll	Unique Indigenous sample	Observe long-run trends	Anecdotal results for comparison



Let's  
dive into  
the results

A photograph of a person diving from a rocky cliff into a large body of water. A thought bubble is superimposed on the right side of the image, containing the text 'The Great Lakes are...'. The background is a clear blue sky and water.

The  
Great Lakes  
are...

Image credit: [Chris Leslie @chrisl\\_D7000](#) via Flickr

Let's  
dive into  
the results\*


The  
Great Lakes  
are...  
~~because~~

**\*RESULTS ≠ ANALYSIS**

Image credit: [Chris Leslie @chrisl\\_D7000](#) via Flickr



# Great Lakes Residents Have Overwhelming Care, Concern and Curiosity for Great Lakes Water Quality



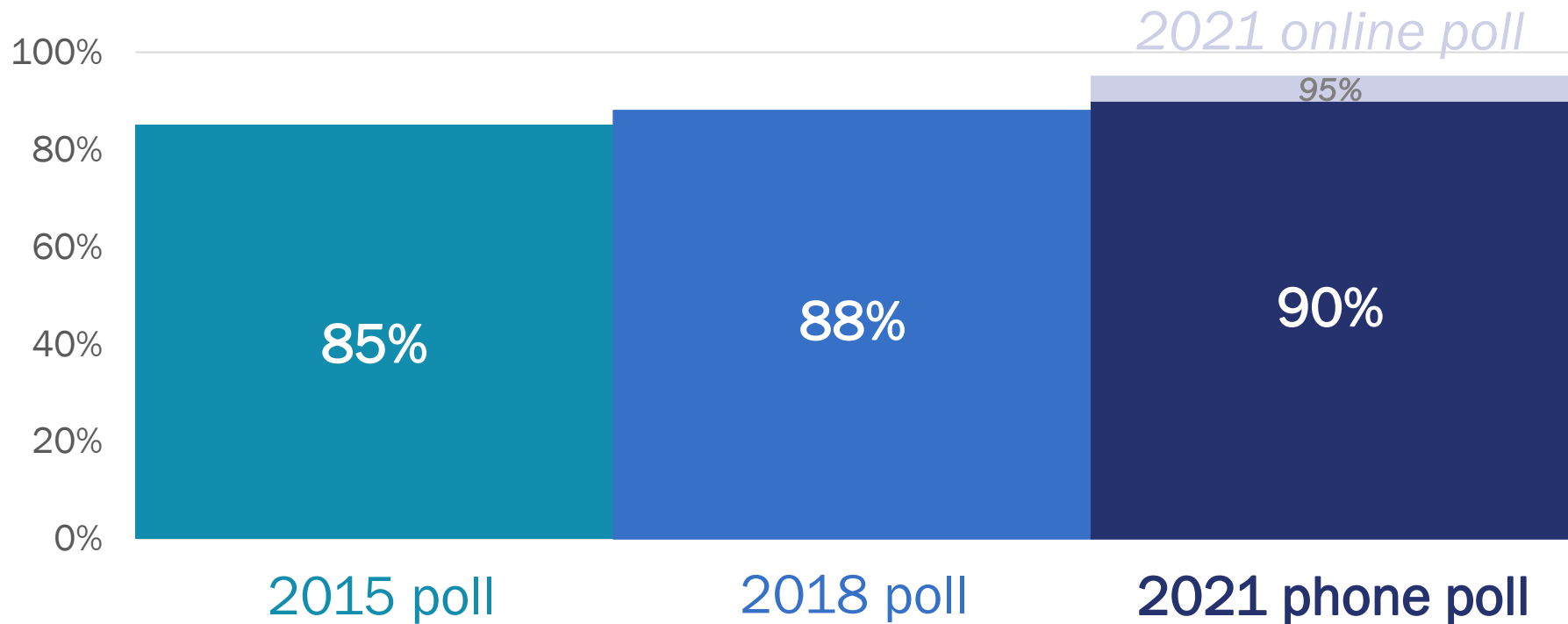
The  
Great Lakes  
are **important**

Image credit: [Nick Damico @nickjdamico via Flickr](#)

**Trend:**

**↑ +5%**  
**since 2015**

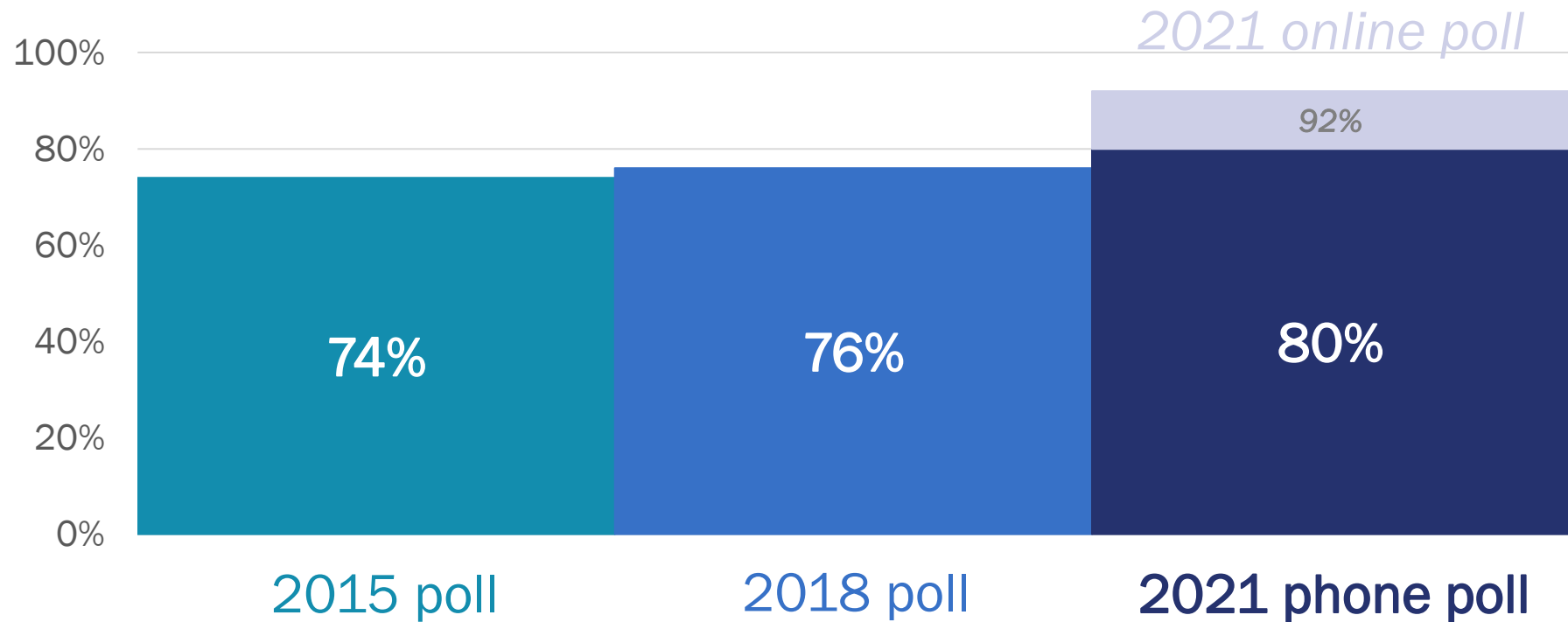
**90% of residents said it is  
important to protect Great Lakes  
health and water quality**



Trend:

↗ +6%  
since 2015

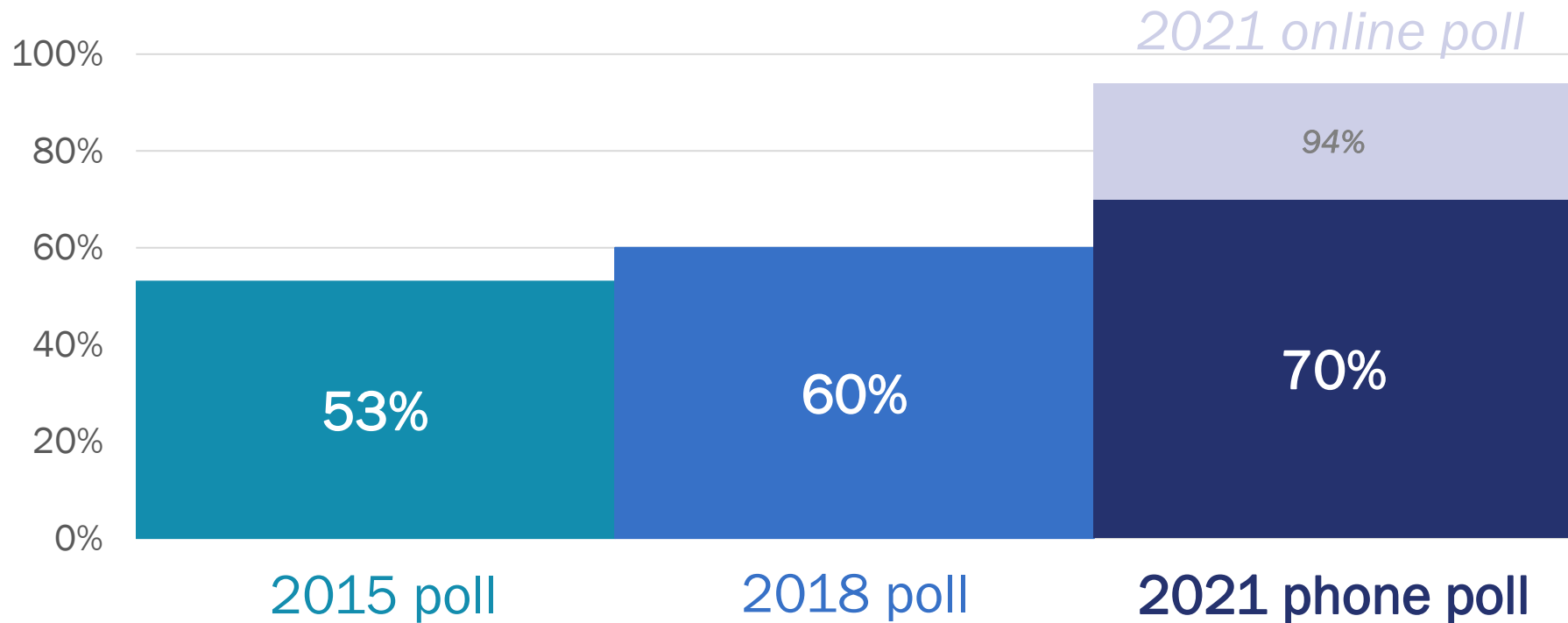
**80% of residents are concerned about  
the health and water quality  
of the lake that is closest to me.**



**Trend:**

↗ **+17%**  
since 2015

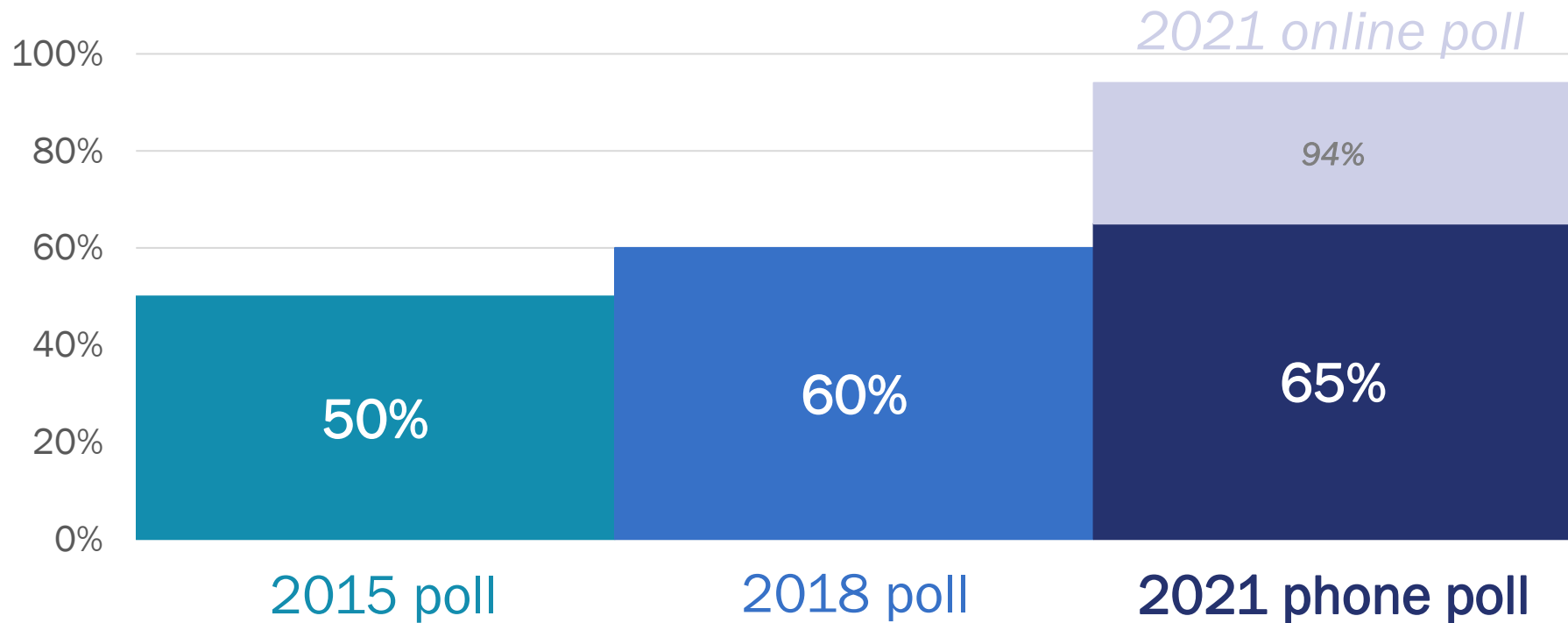
**70% of residents are concerned about the health and water quality of the Great Lakes as a whole.**



**Trend:**

**↗ +15%**  
**since 2015**

**65% of residents are interested in Great Lakes news and other information related to issues affecting the lakes.**





What is the **most significant problem or challenge** to the health and water quality of the lake you feel most connected with?

## #1: Pollution



Including:

11%	Pollution (in general)
11%	Industrial pollution
7%	Drainage, municipal runoff
4%	Agricultural pollution, waste or runoff
4%	Waste being dumped into the lakes
3%	Petroleum industry, spills or pipelines
1%	Plastics

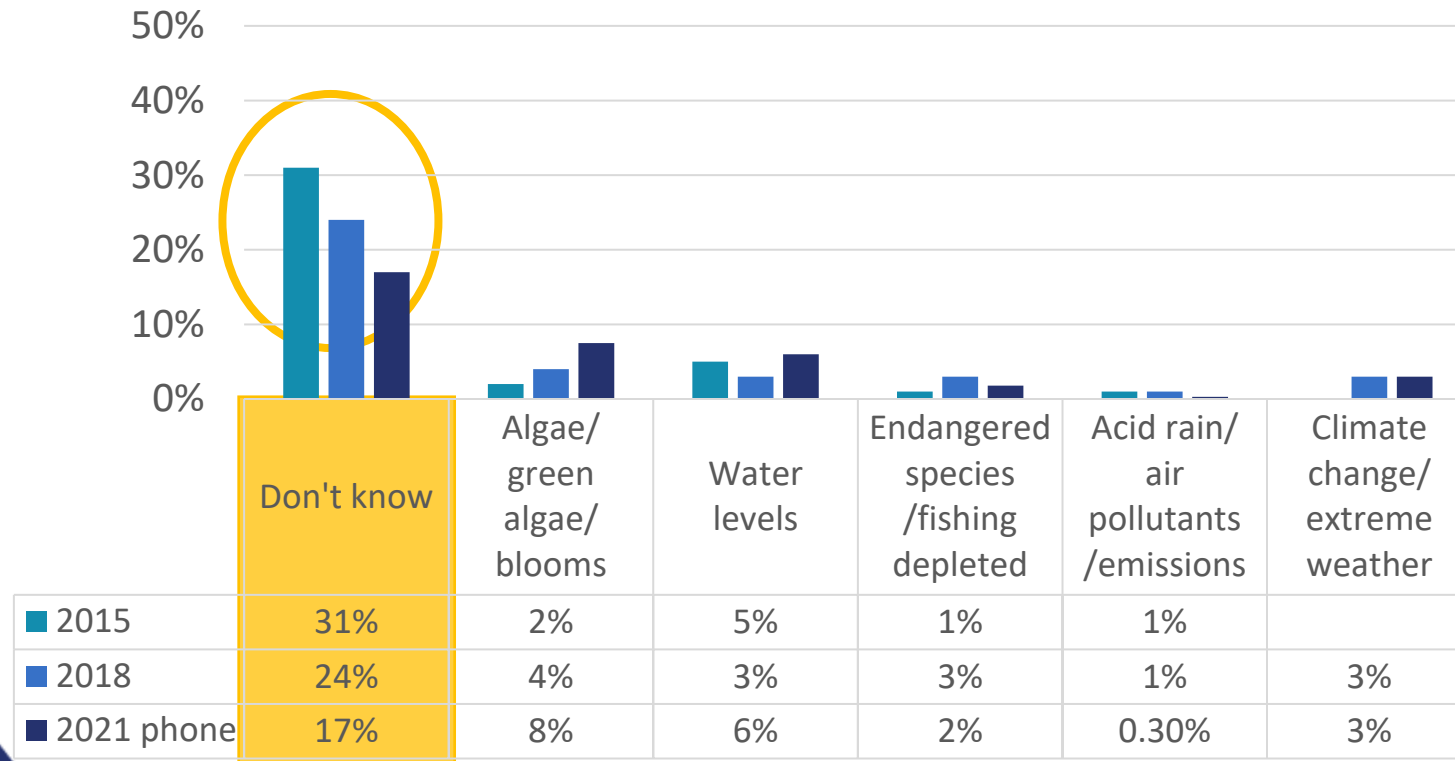
## #2: Invasive species



# Trend:

↘ 14%  
since 2015

## What is the **most significant problem or challenge** to the health and water quality of the lake you feel most connected with?



Other issues in 2021 phone poll

2%	Development, housing
1%	Lack of regulations
1%	Fracking
<1%	Shipping
<1%	Government policy
<1%	Mercury levels
<1%	Dams, hydroelectric plants

The  
Great Lakes  
are...

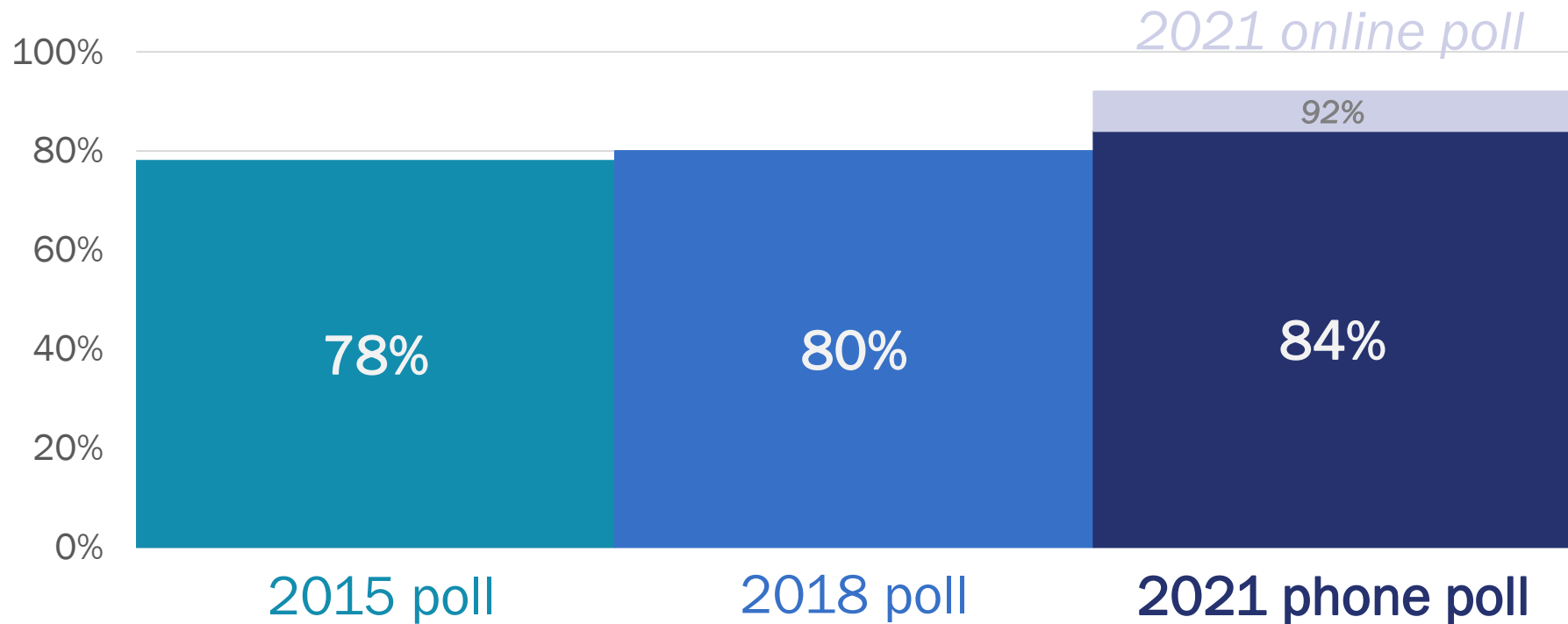
**Governments' and individuals'  
responsibility to  
protect the Great Lakes**

Image credit: [Adam Kring @adamkring via Unsplash](#)

**Trend:**

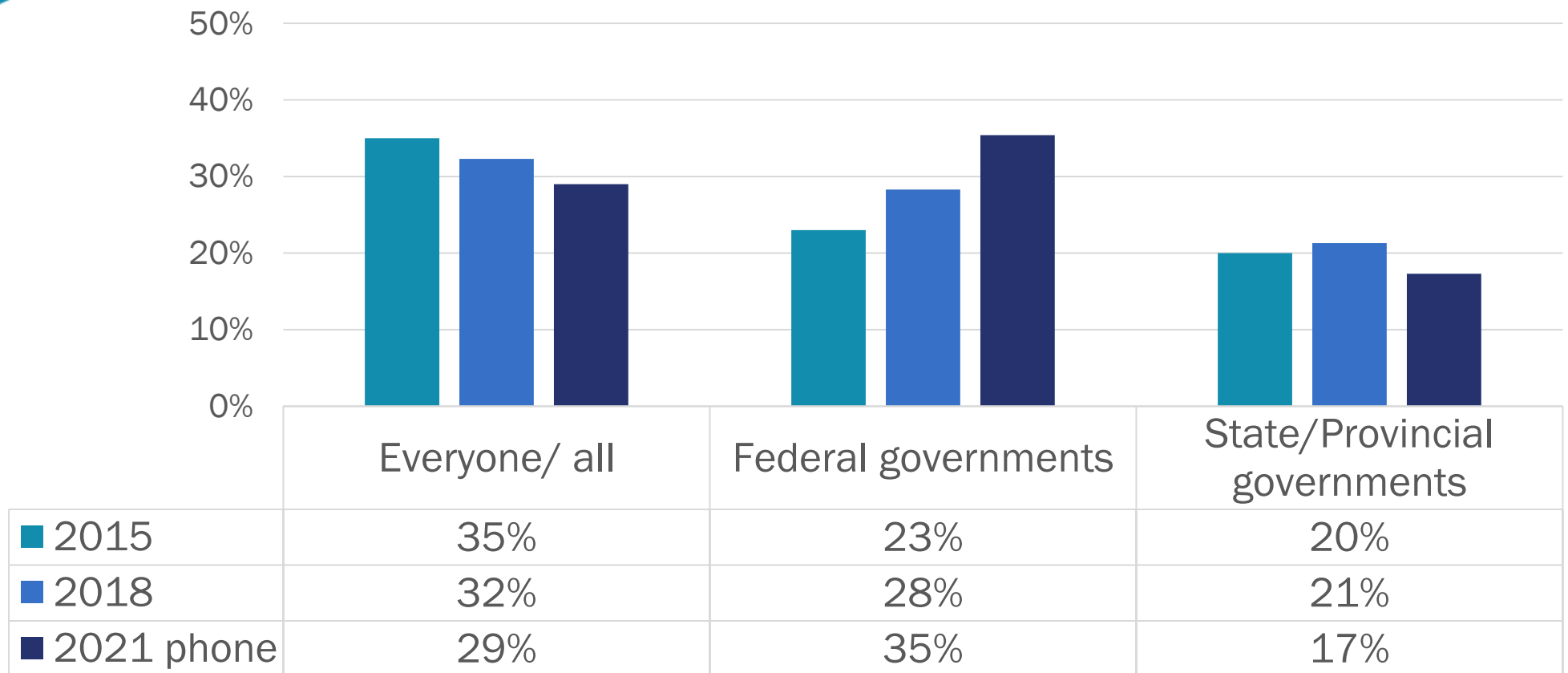
↗ +6%  
since 2015

**84% of residents believe the role of the individual is important for protecting the health and water quality of the Great Lakes.**



# Top Three Responses 2015 - 2021

## Who should be responsible for protecting the Great Lakes basin?

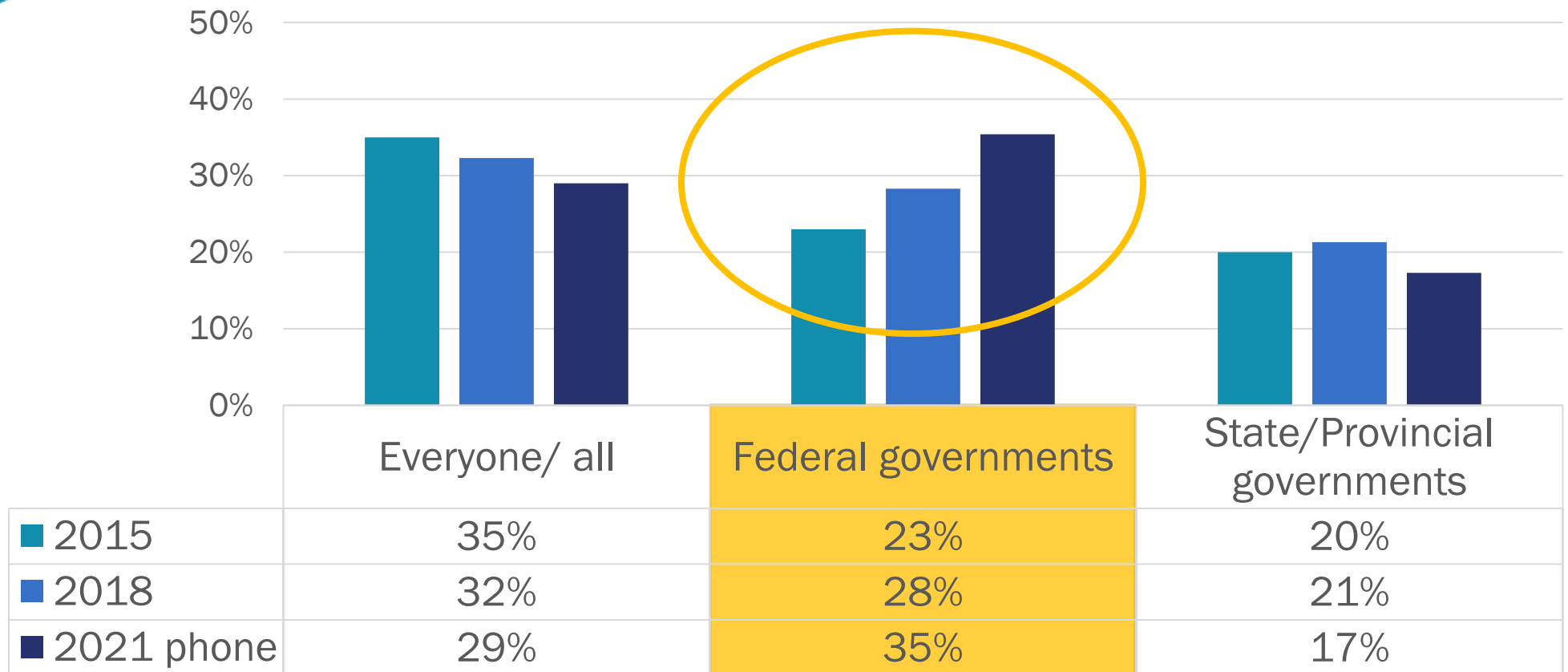




Trend:

↗ +12%  
since 2015

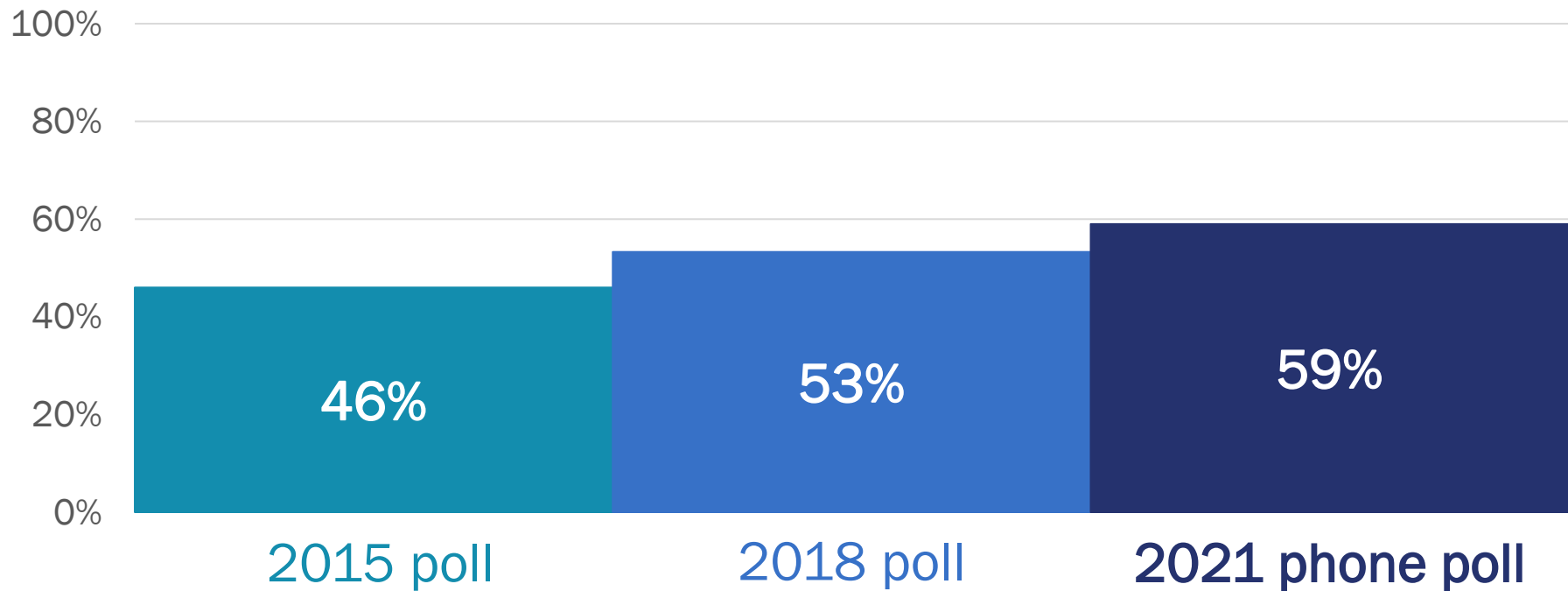
## Who should be responsible for protecting the Great Lakes basin?



**Trend:**

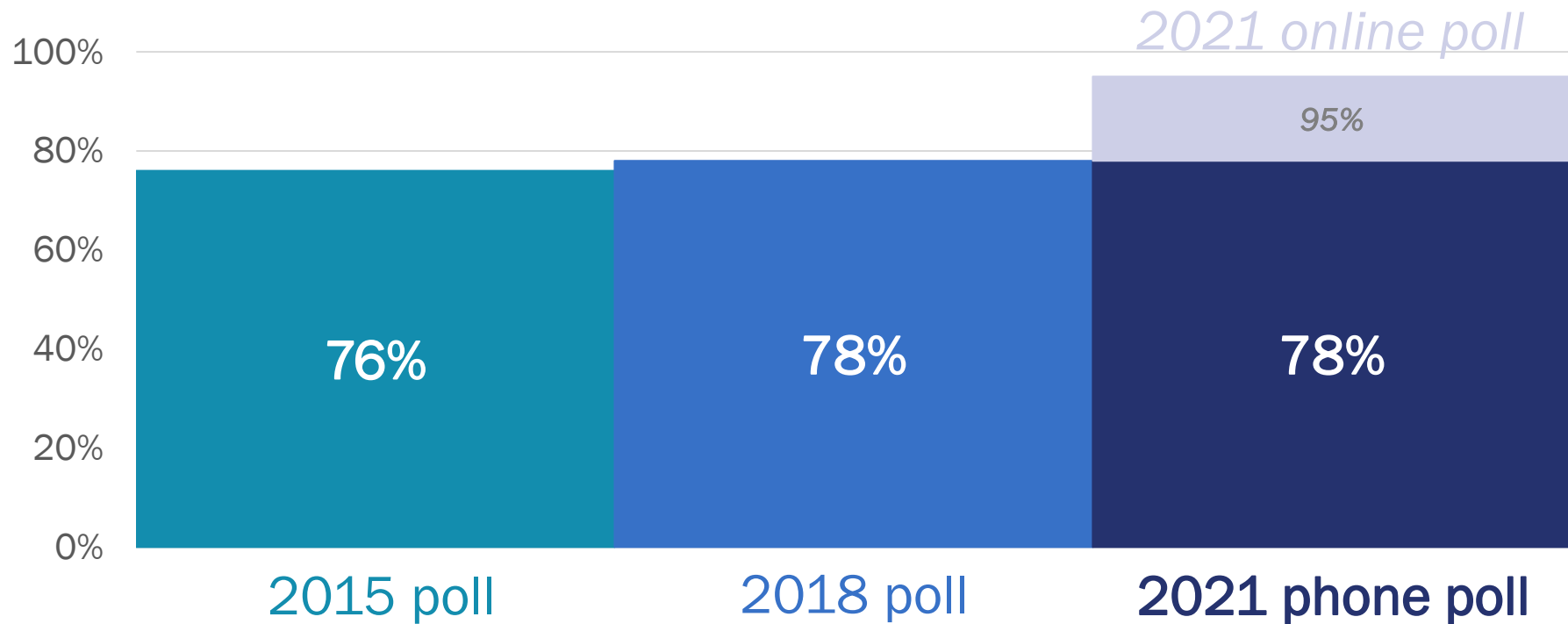
**↗ +13%**  
since 2015

**59% of residents feel there are too few policies and regulations in place to protect the Great Lakes.**



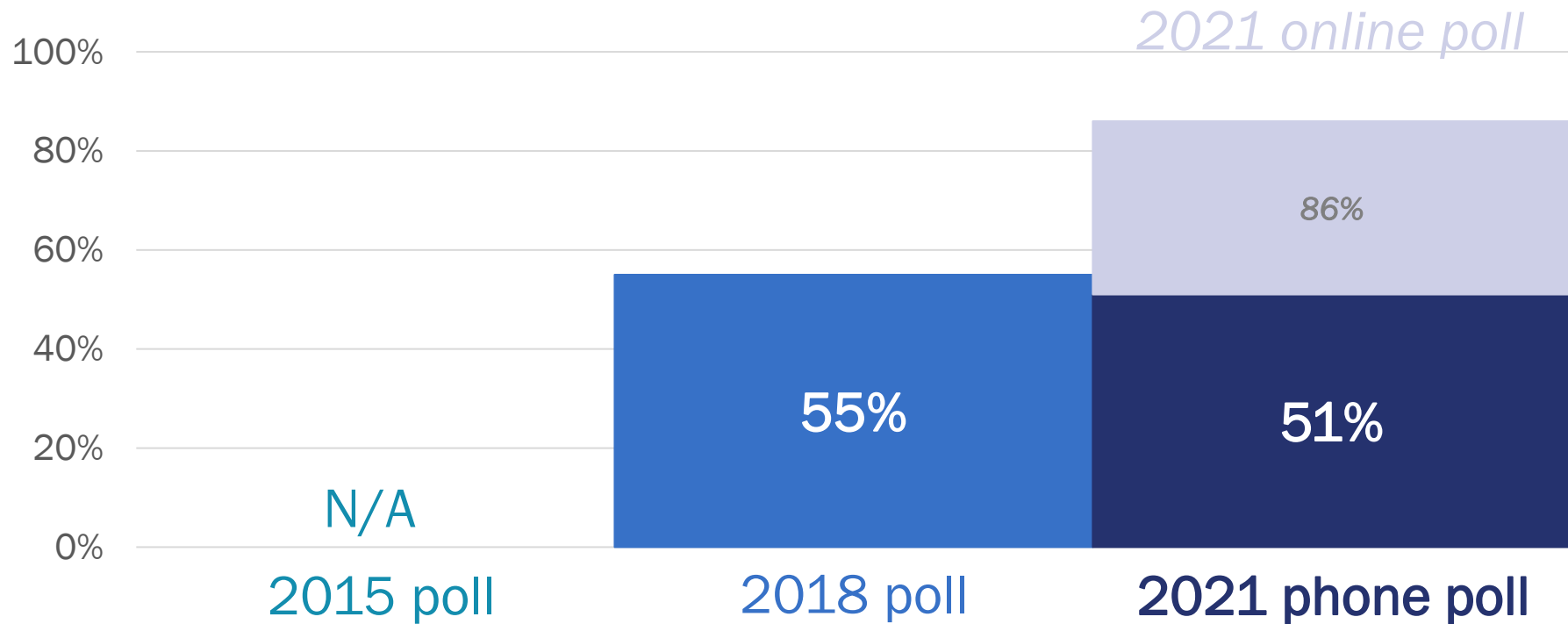
**Trend:**  
~ **SAME**  
since 2015

**78% of residents agree that  
the economy of the region will suffer  
if the Great Lakes are not healthy.**



**Trend:**  
~ **SAME**  
since 2018

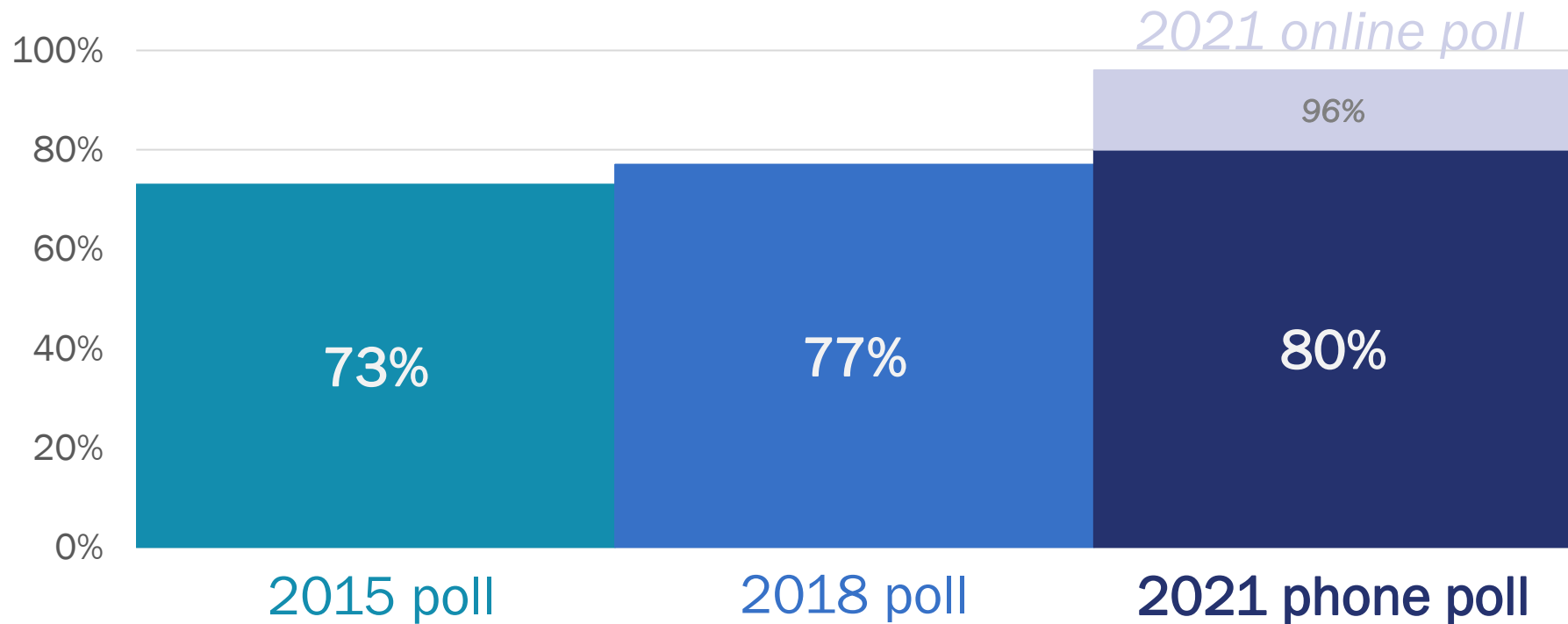
The majority of residents are willing to pay more for consumer products to enforce regulations that better protect the Great Lakes.



Trend:

↗ +7%  
since 2015

80% of residents agree that  
actions should be taken now to protect  
the Great Lakes for future generations.



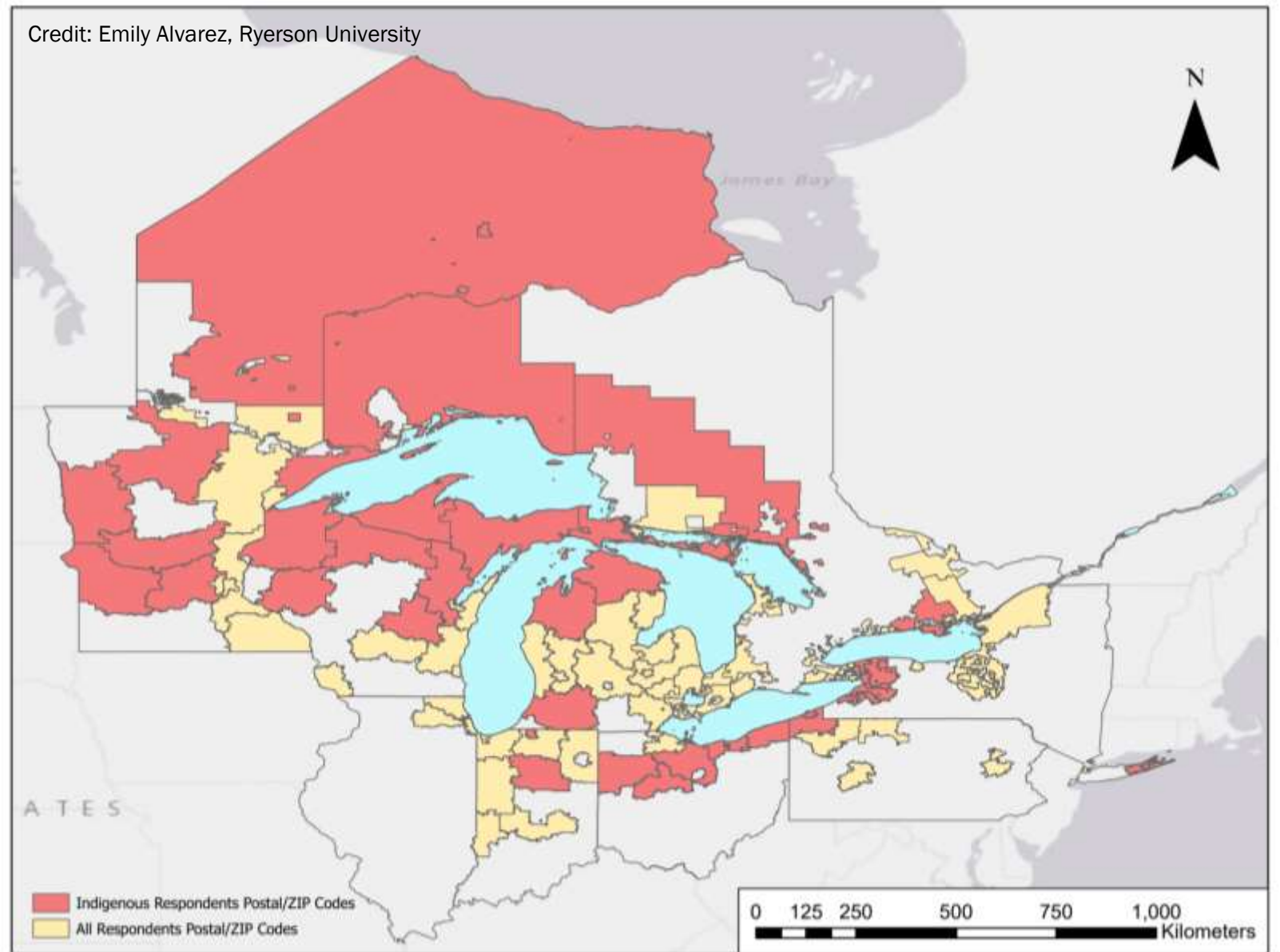




# Opinions of First Nations, Métis, and Tribal Nation members

Image credit: [Laurie Shaul](#) @number7cloud via Flickr

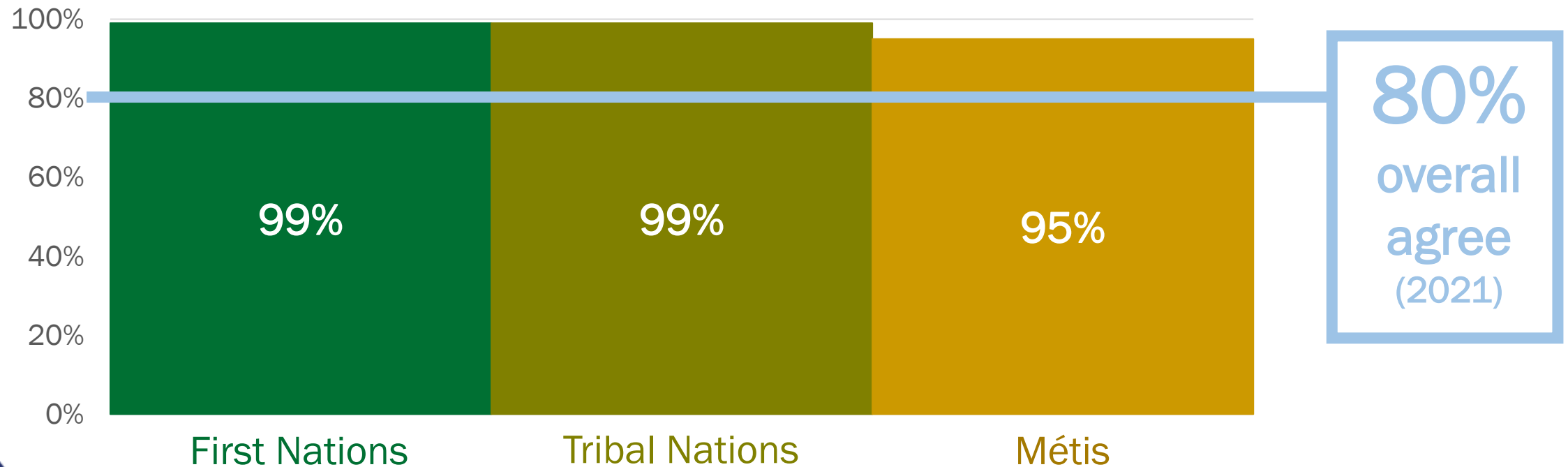
Do you  
identify as a  
First Nations,  
Métis, or  
Tribal Nation  
member?



**Trend:**

↑ **15%+**  
vs. overall

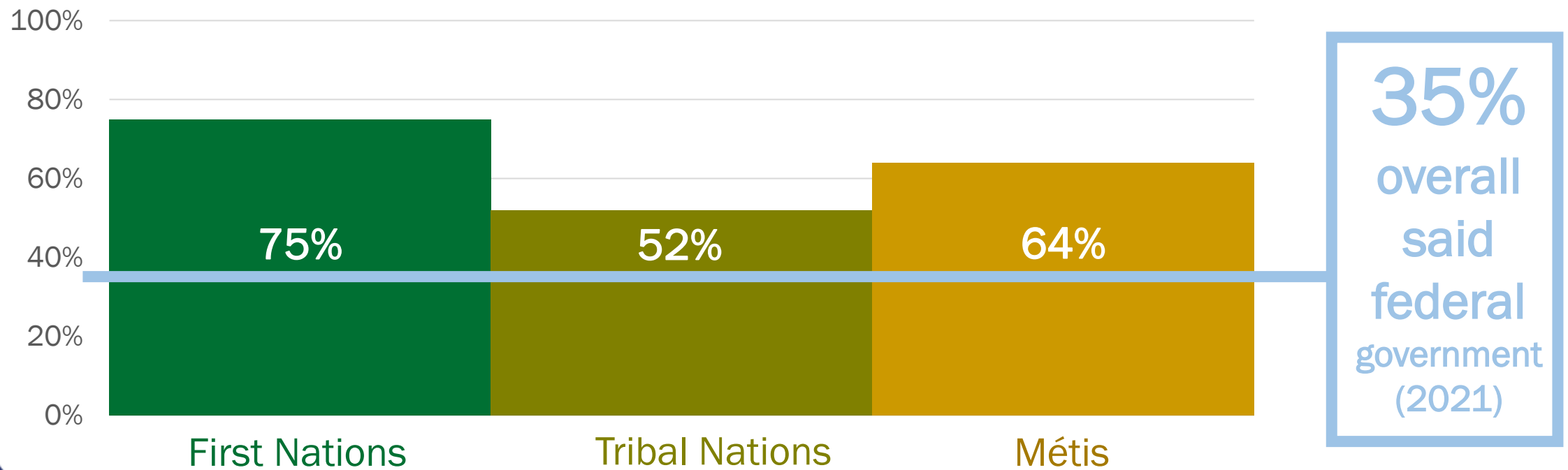
**95% or more of Indigenous individuals agree that actions should be taken now to protect the Great Lakes for future generations.**



Trend:

↑ 17%+  
vs. overall

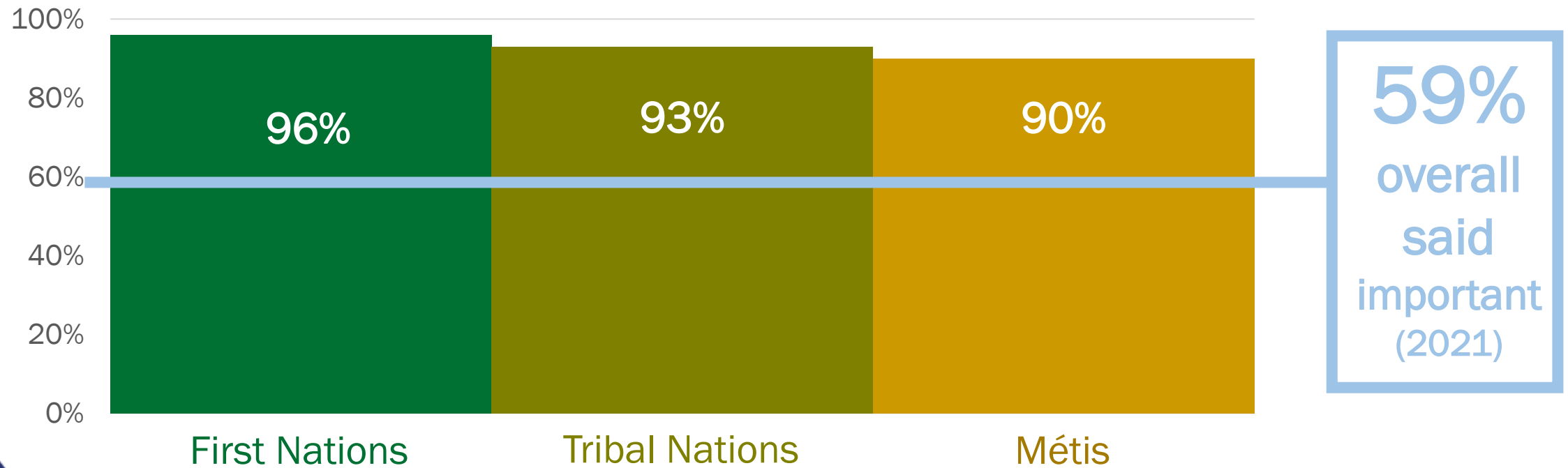
A majority or more of Indigenous individuals  
believe the federal government should be  
responsible for protecting the Great Lakes basin.



**Trend:**

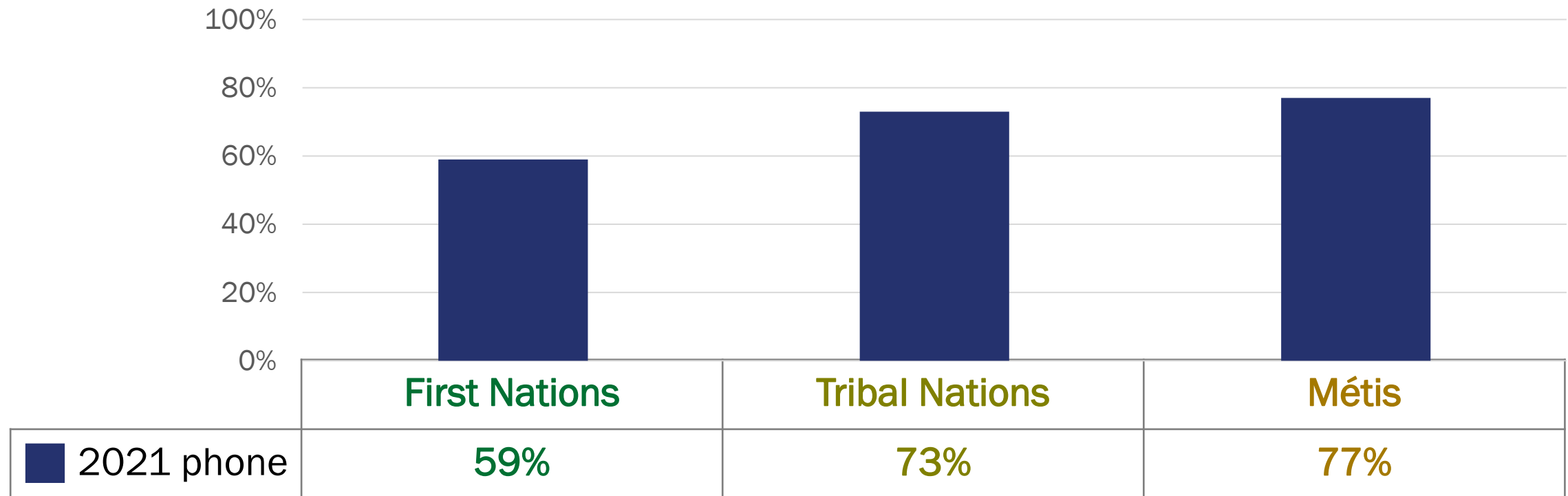
↗ **31%+**  
vs. overall

**90% or more of Indigenous individuals  
believe the role of the individual is important  
for protecting the Great Lakes.**





A majority or more of Indigenous individuals said there are fish, plant or wildlife of cultural importance they are concerned about due to threats to Great Lakes water quality.





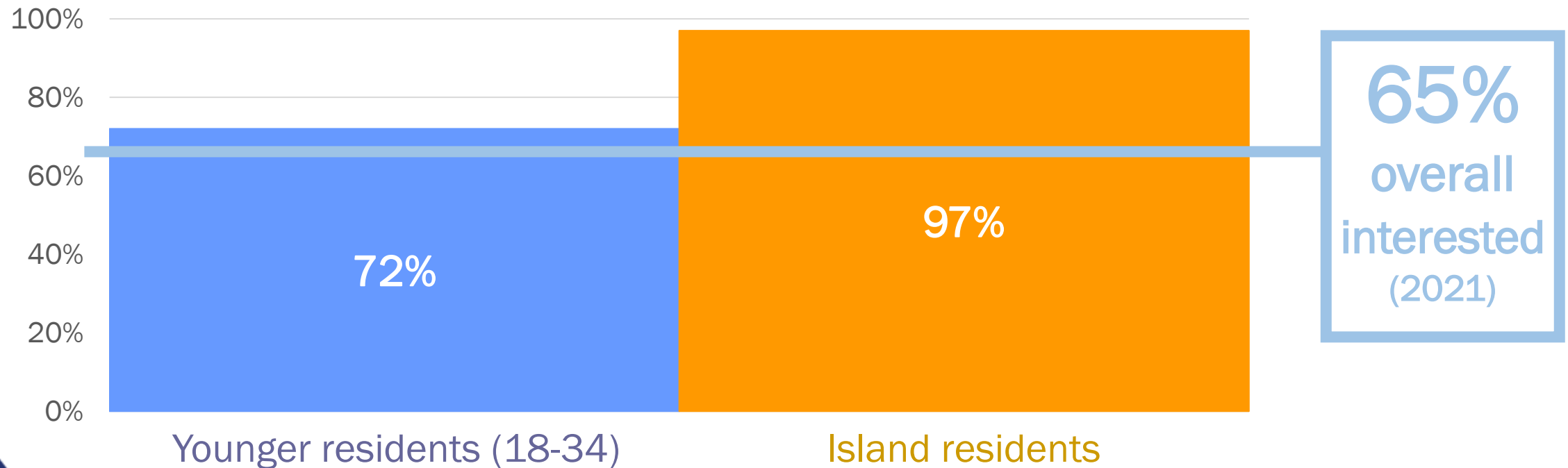
# Younger residents and island residents' opinions

The Great Lakes are...



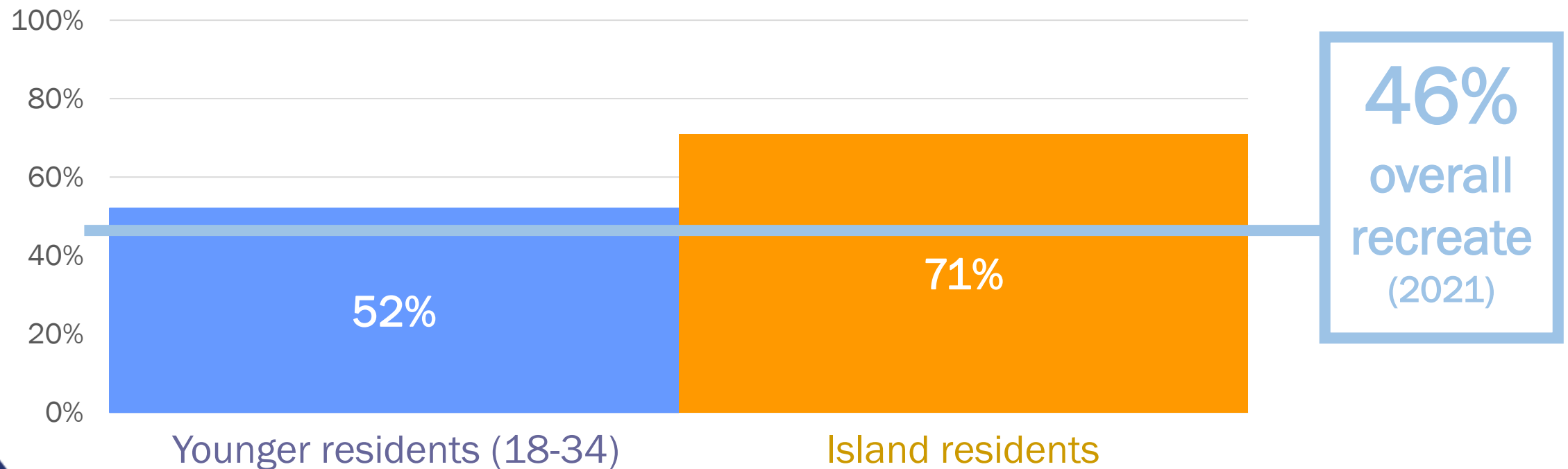
**Trend:**  
↑ 7%+  
vs. overall

**72% of younger residents and  
97% of island residents  
are interested in Great Lakes news.**




**Trend:**  
↑ 6%+  
vs. overall

A majority of younger residents and  
**71% of island residents**  
use the Great Lakes for recreation or leisure.



# Opinions on Great Lakes water quality issues

A photograph of a person swimming in the Great Lakes under a blue sky with scattered clouds. A large white thought bubble with a blue outline is positioned above the swimmer, containing the text 'Is it safe to swim in this Great Lake?'. Three smaller white circles with blue outlines lead from the main bubble to the swimmer.

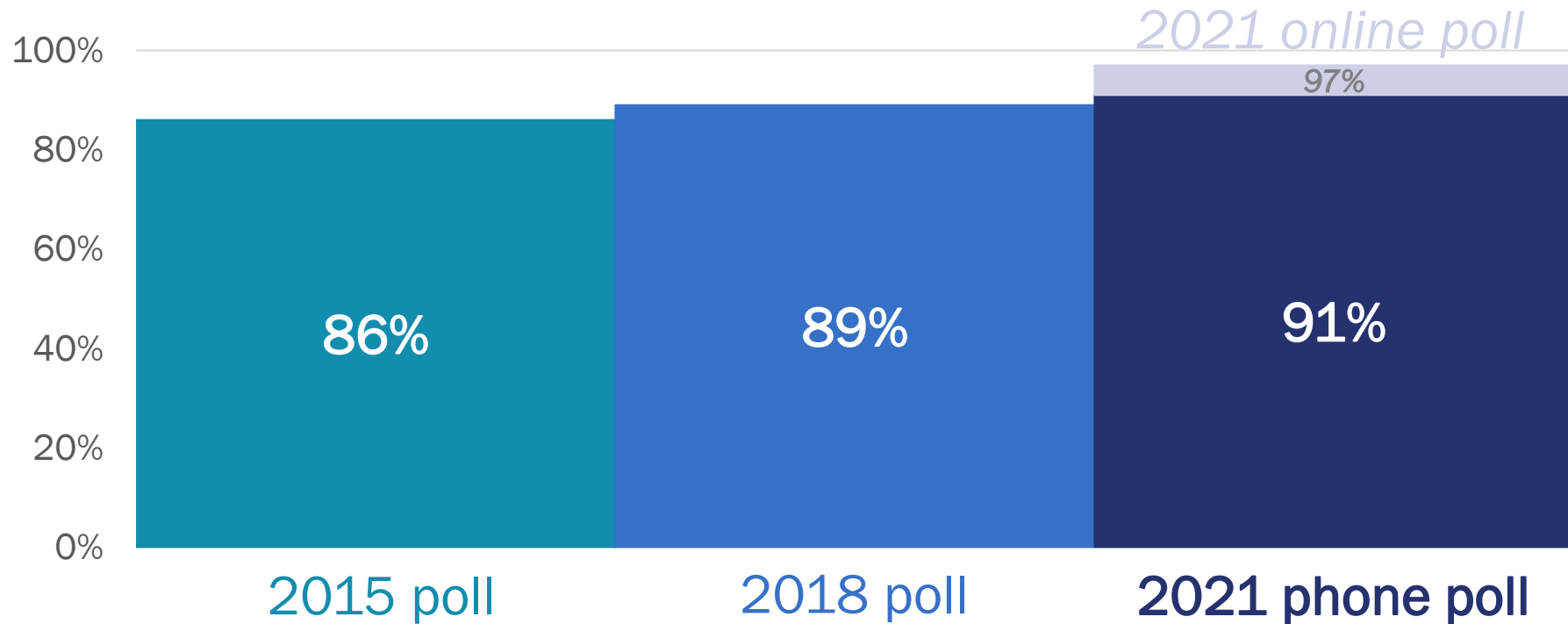
Is it safe  
to swim in this  
Great Lake?

Image credit: [Ussama Azam @ussamaazam via Unsplash](#)

**Trend:**

↗ +5%  
since 2015

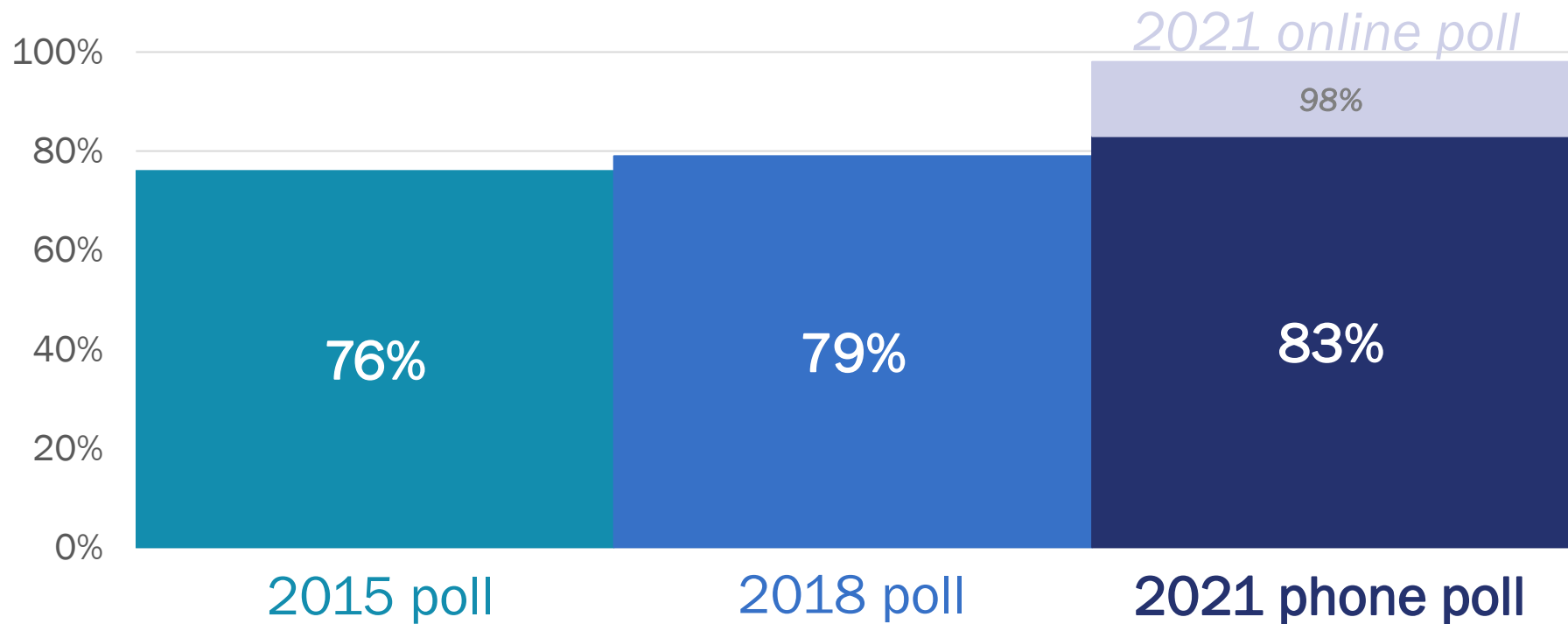
**91% of residents believe that it is important that the Great Lakes are available for leisure or recreational uses.**



**Trend:**

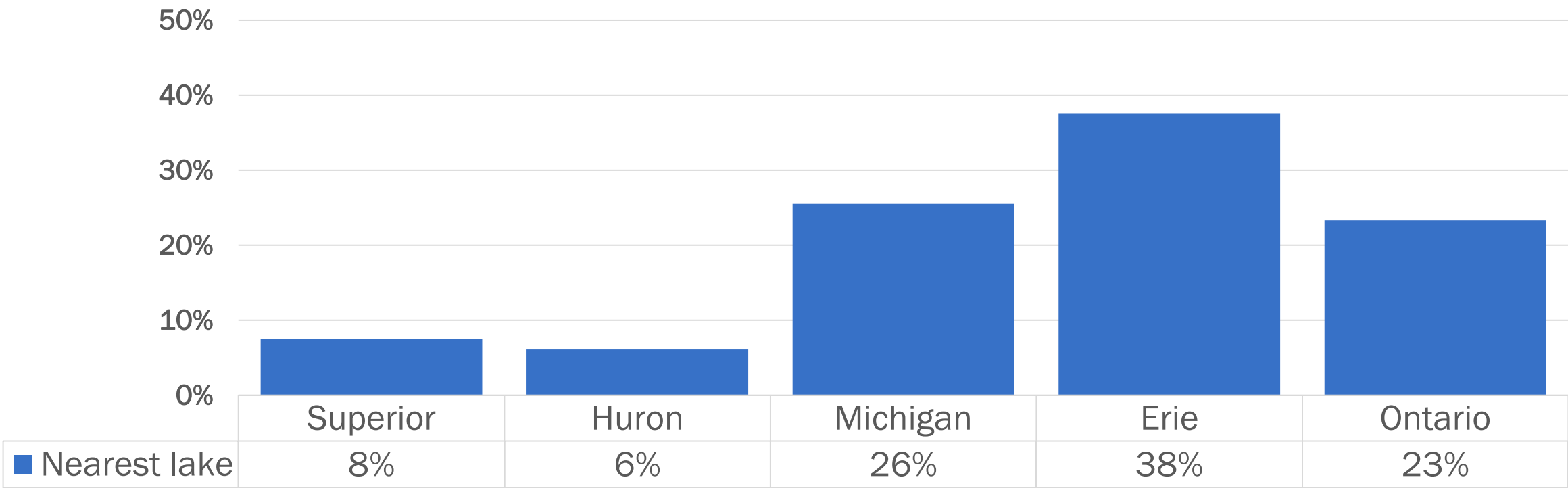
↗ +7%  
since 2015

**83% of residents agree that it is important to protect the Great Lakes for the benefit of fish and wildlife.**

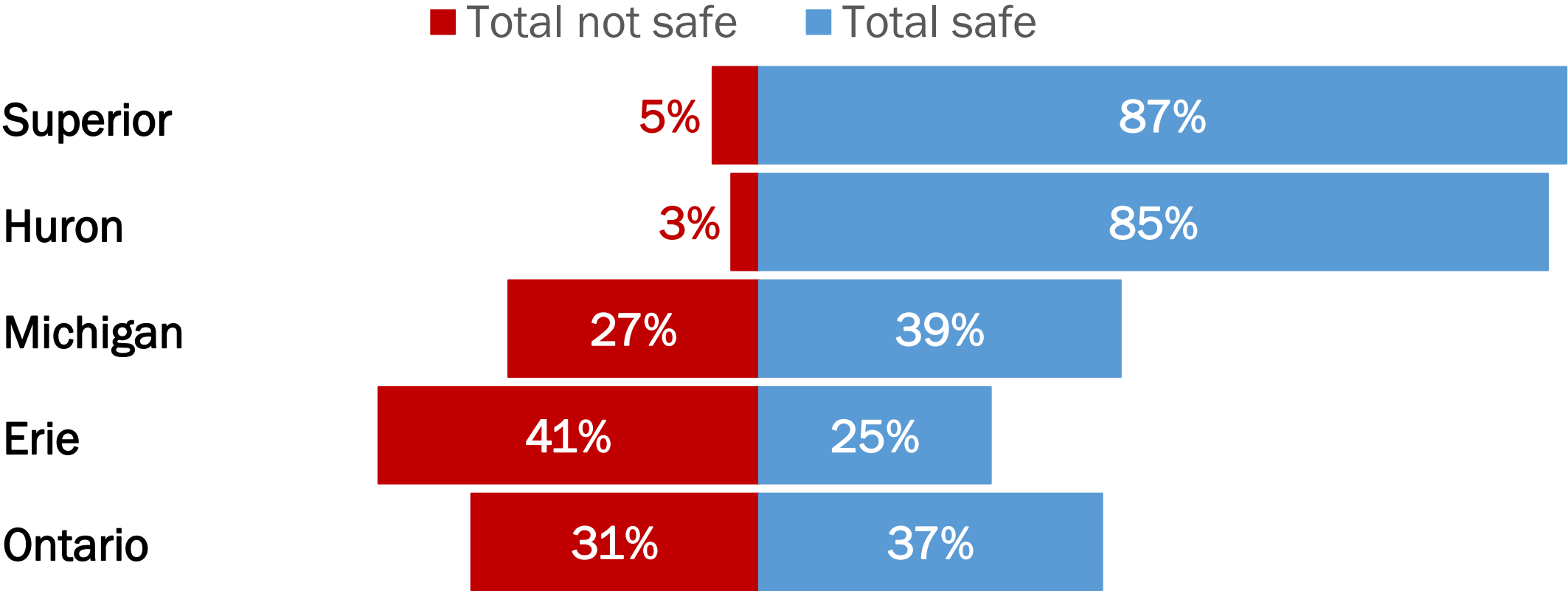




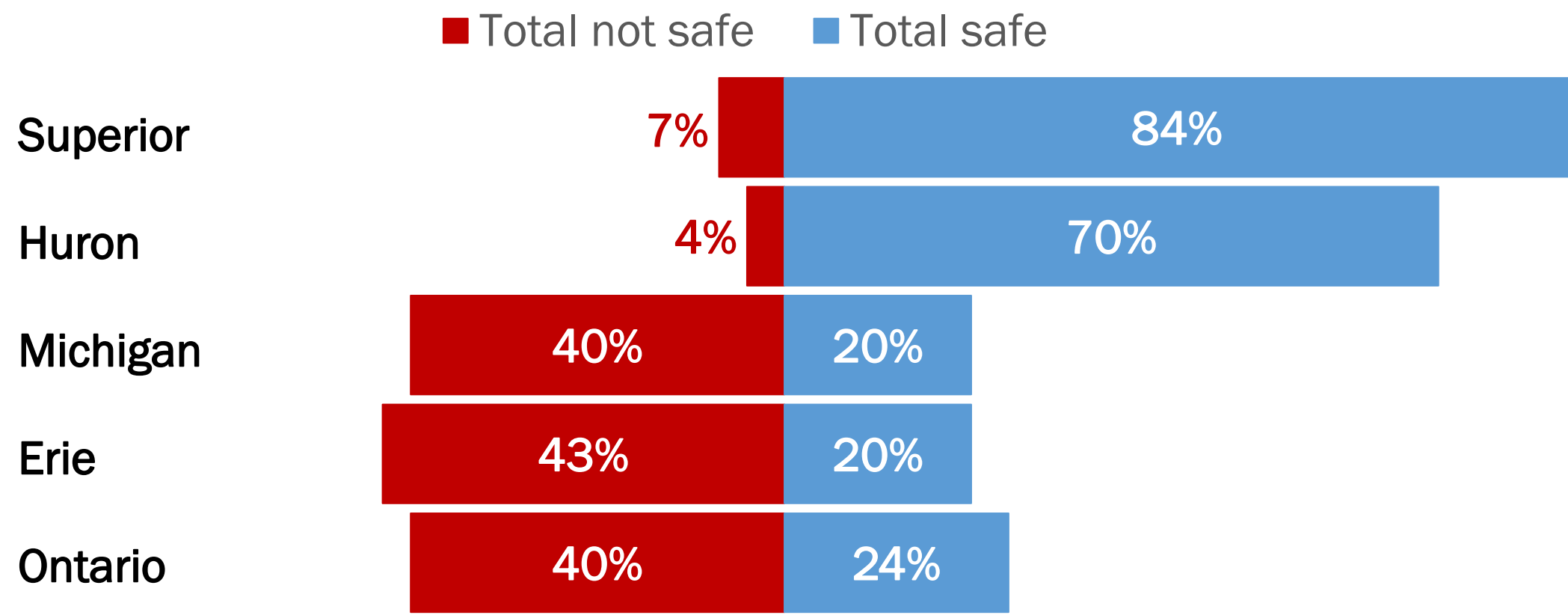
# Distribution of respondents by their nearest lake



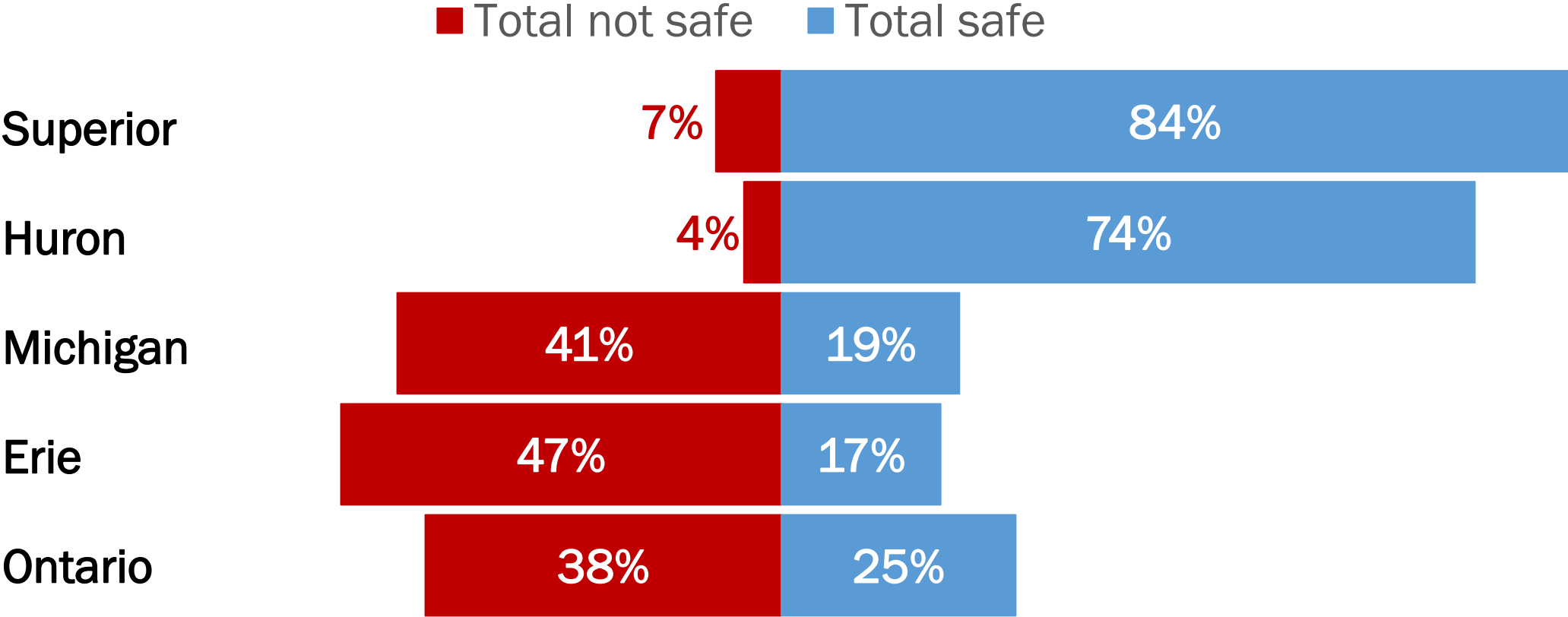
Please rate **how safe you think it is to swim in**  
the Great Lake that is closest to you.



# Please rate **how safe you think it is to eat fish from the Great Lake that is closest to you.**

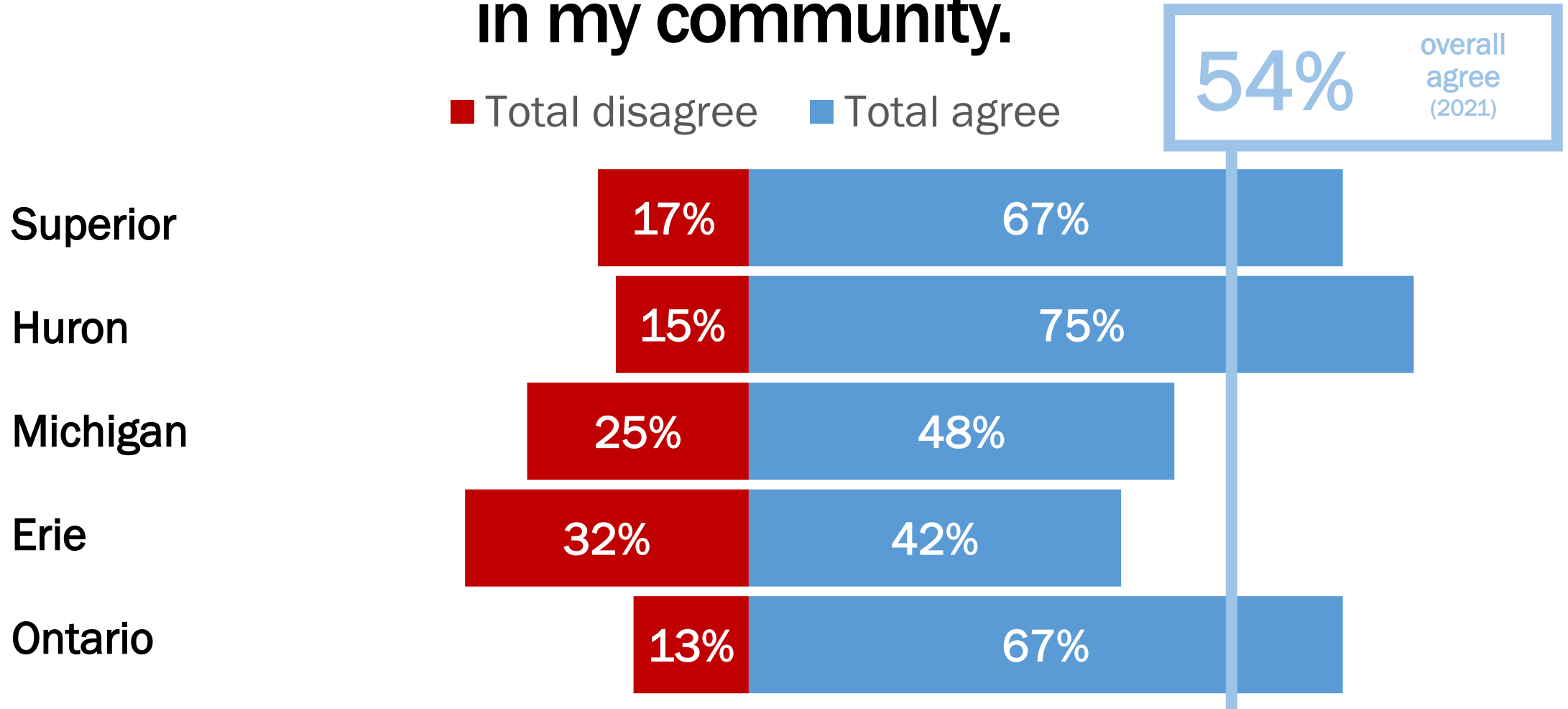


Please rate **how safe you think it is to drink water from the Great Lake that is closest to you.**

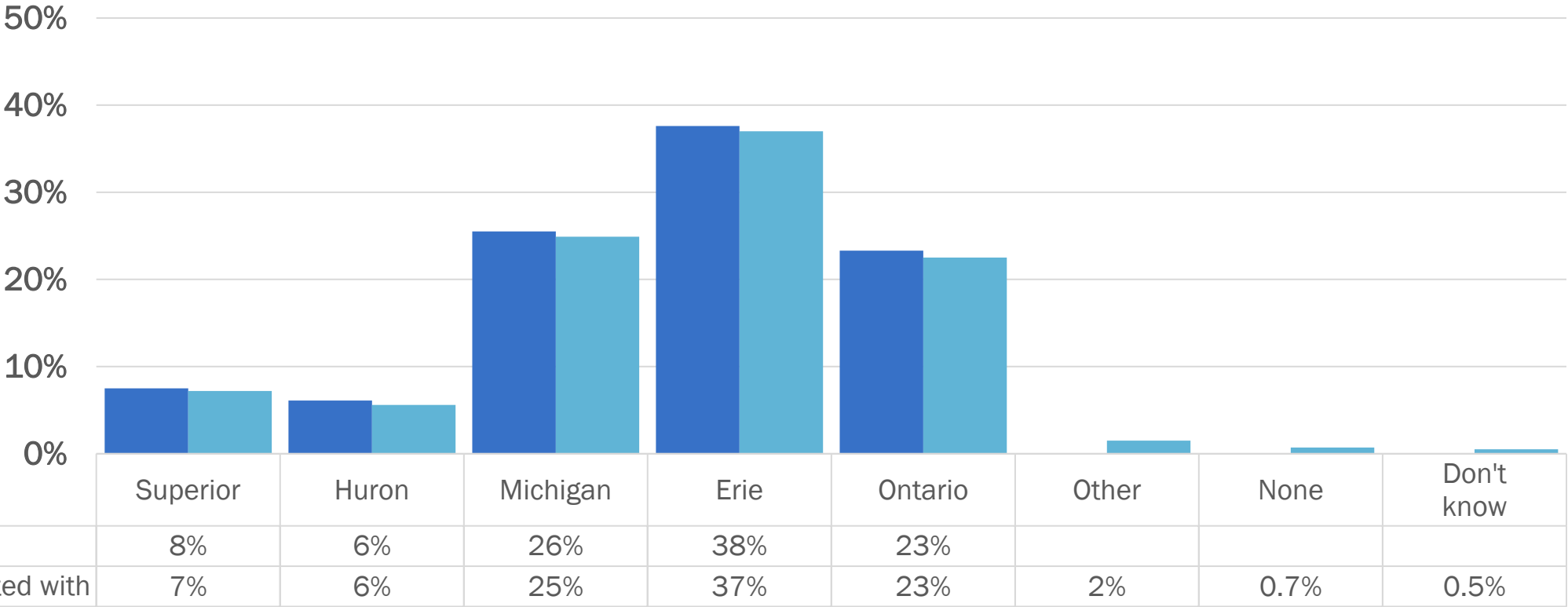


# I have **access to clean, safe drinking water** in my community.

■ Total disagree ■ Total agree



# With which water body do you have the greatest connection?






Please rate **the status and trend** of the health and water quality of the Great Lake you have the greatest connection with.

	Superior	Huron	Michigan	Erie	Ontario
Status	Good (66%)	Good (63%)	Poor (38%)	Poor (37%)	Poor (36%)
Trend	Unchanging (51%)	Unchanging (52%)	Unchanging (30%) / Deteriorating (30%)	Unchanging (30%) / Deteriorating (34%)	Unchanging (31%) / Deteriorating (32%)

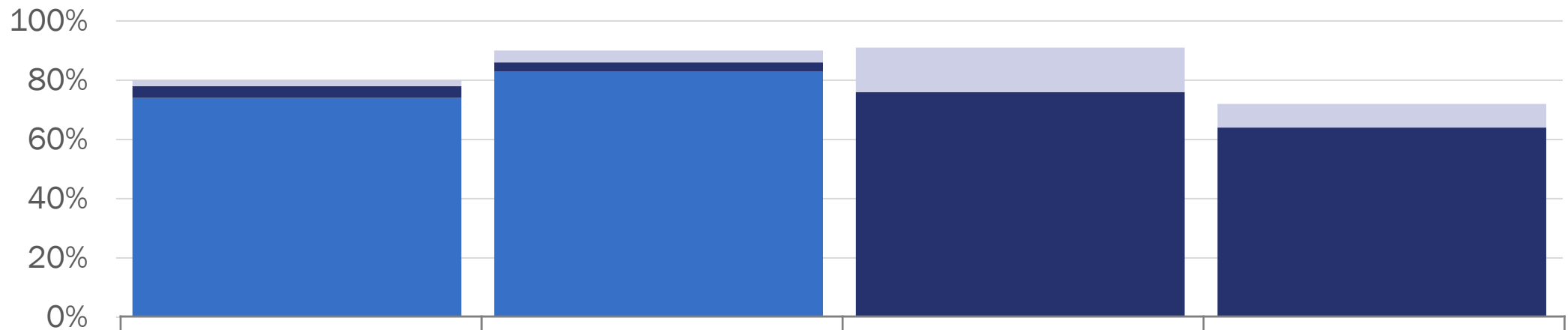
# Individual actions to protect the Great Lakes



What will I do to protect the Great Lakes?

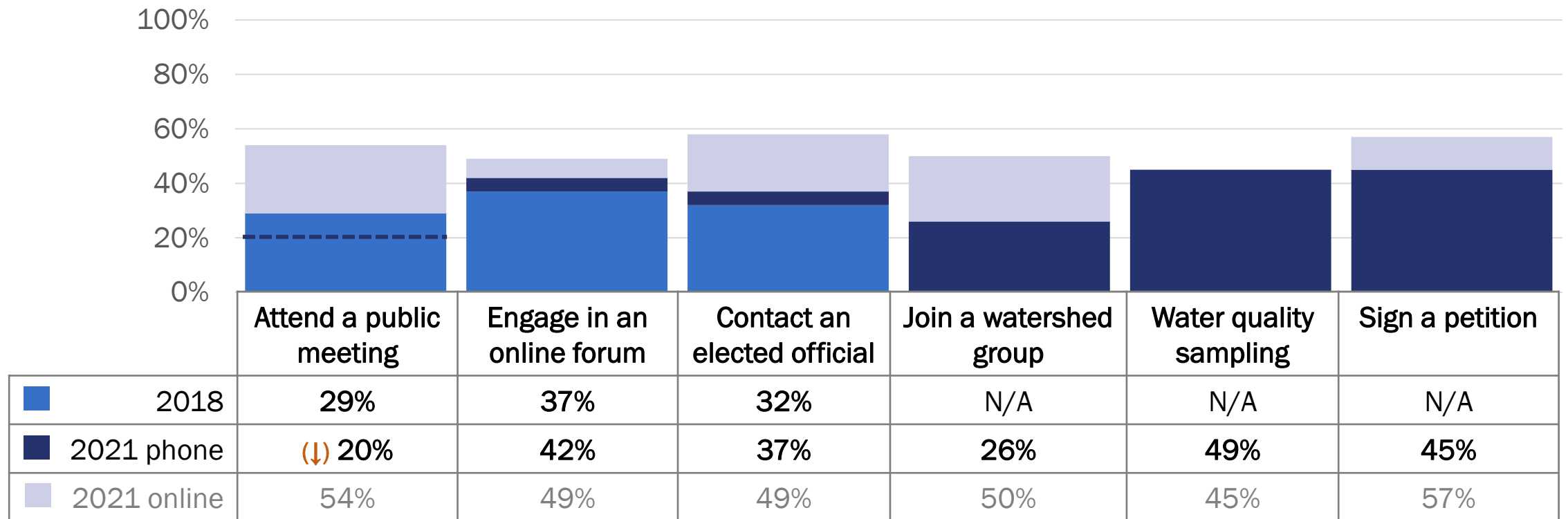
Image credit: [Vincent Ledvina @vincentledvina via Unsplash](#)

# The majority of residents said they would take part in the following actions to help protect the Great Lakes.



	Conserve water at home by using less	Be aware of disposal down drains	Reduce use and disposal of plastic waste	Purchase home water conservation products
2018	74%	83%	N/A	N/A
2021 phone	78%	86%	76%	64%
2021 online	80%	90%	91%	72%

# Fewer residents said they would take part in the following actions to help protect the Great Lakes.



## Next steps:

- **Water Quality Board**
  - **Additional analysis of results**
  - **Next poll: 2024**

*We encourage additional analysis  
by other organizations.*

*Contact: [rajesh.bejankiwar@ijc.org](mailto:rajesh.bejankiwar@ijc.org)*

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# AUDIENCE Q&A

Image credit: [Taz @sporkist via Flickr](#)



# Thank you!

Contact: [rajesh.bejankiwar@ijc.org](mailto:rajesh.bejankiwar@ijc.org)

[surveymonkey.com/r/WQBPOLL2021](https://surveymonkey.com/r/WQBPOLL2021)

[IJC.ORG/WQB/GREAT-LAKES-POLL](https://IJC.ORG/WQB/GREAT-LAKES-POLL)

Image credit: [Taz @sporkist via Flickr](#)