

Public Opinion about Nuclear Energy: *Lessons from Research*

Ann Stouffer Bisconti, PhD
Bisconti Research, Inc.
www.bisconti.com

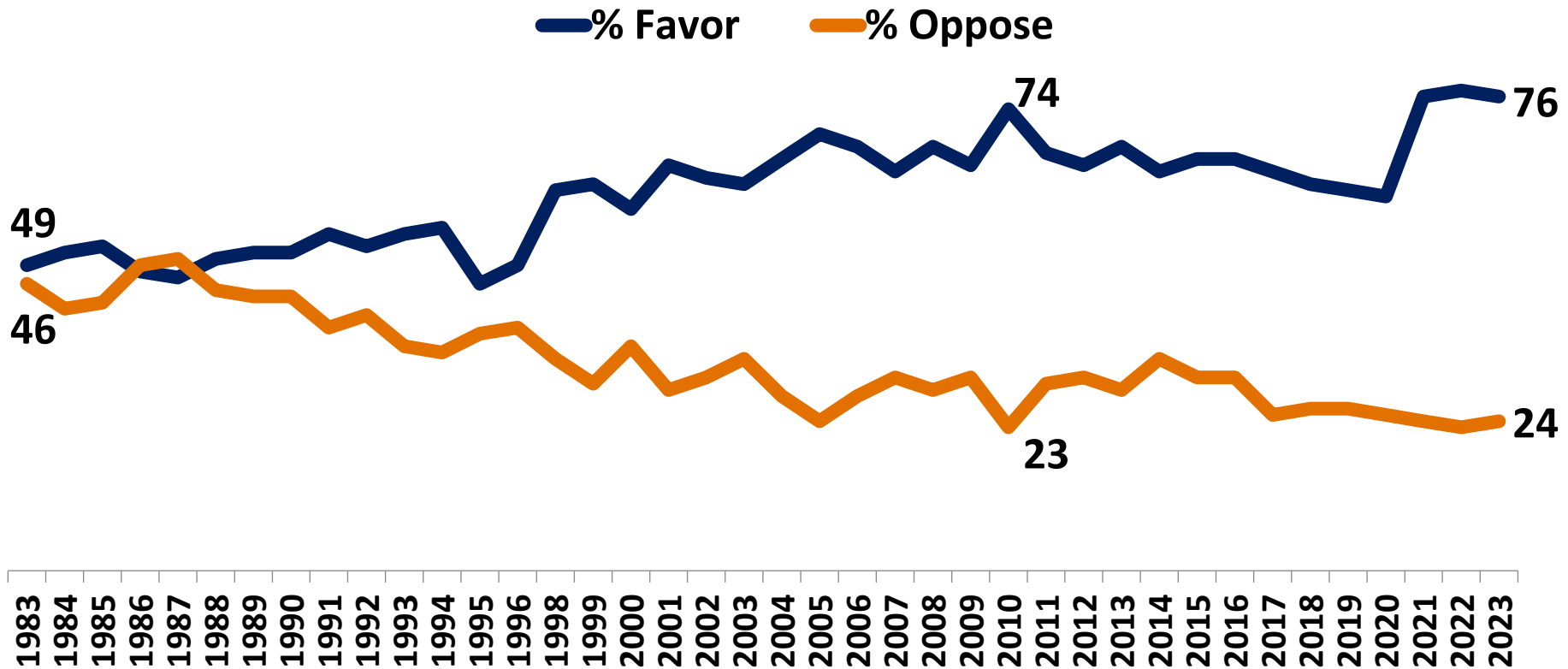
NCSL, December 2023

The National Nuclear Energy Public Opinion Surveys

- One or more surveys every year since 1983.
- Nationally representative U.S. sample of 1,000 or more.
- Margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points.
- By Bisconti Research, Inc. Since 2017 with Quest Mindshare Online Panel. Earlier surveys used telephone samples.
- Numbers shown are percentages, which may not add exactly due to rounding.

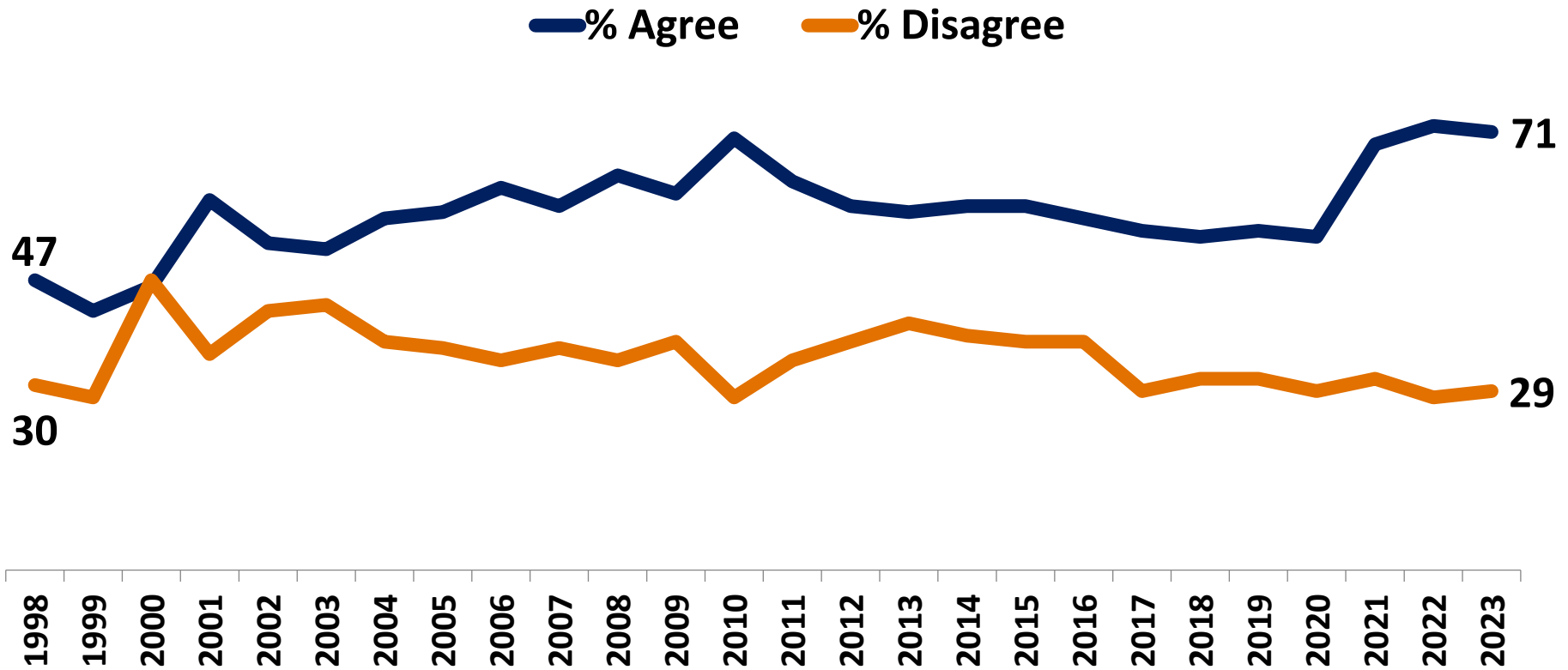
Record Favorability to Nuclear Energy Trend 1983-2023

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?



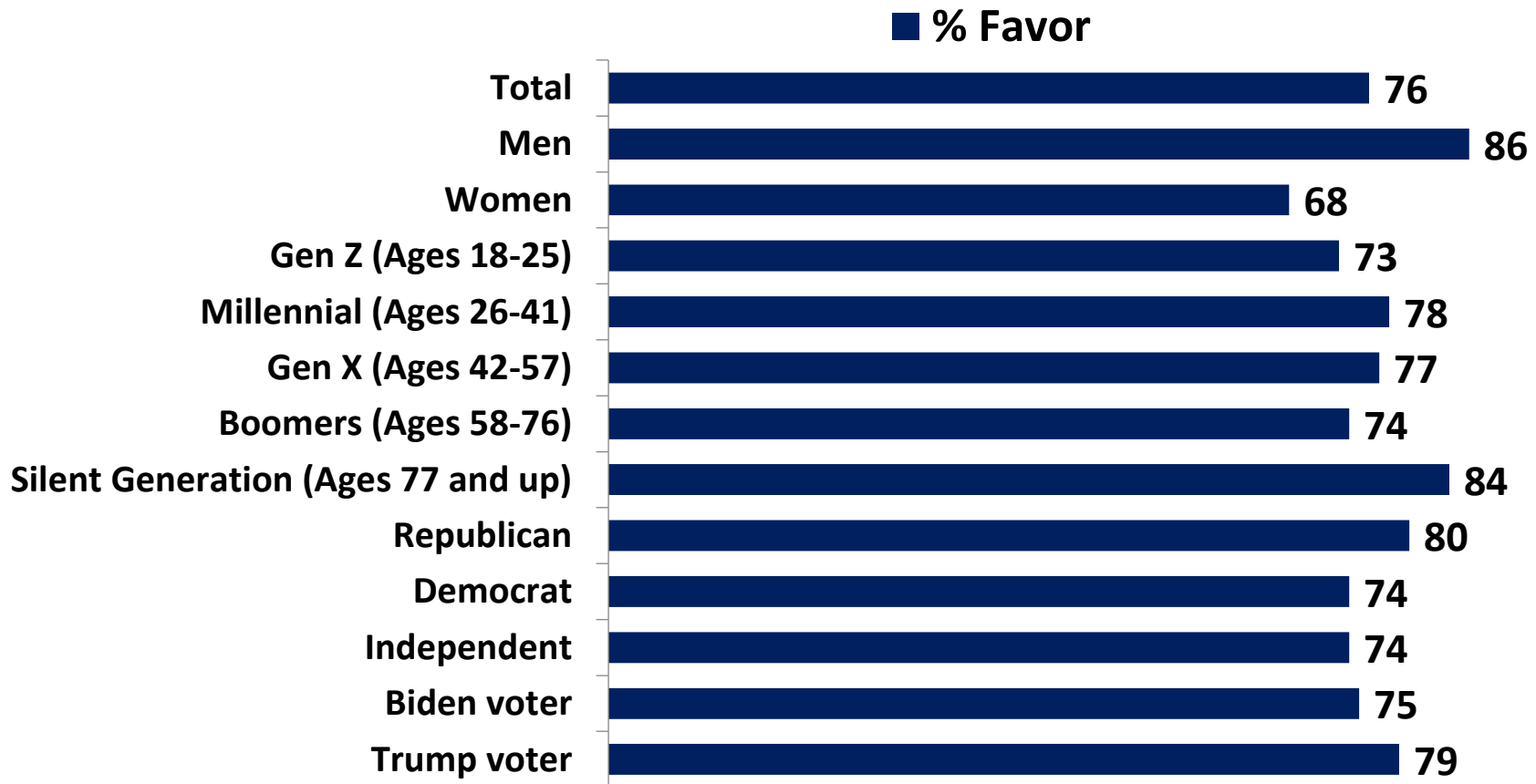
Record Support for Building More Nuclear Power Plants Trend 1998-2023

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements: We should definitely build more nuclear power plants in the future.(%)



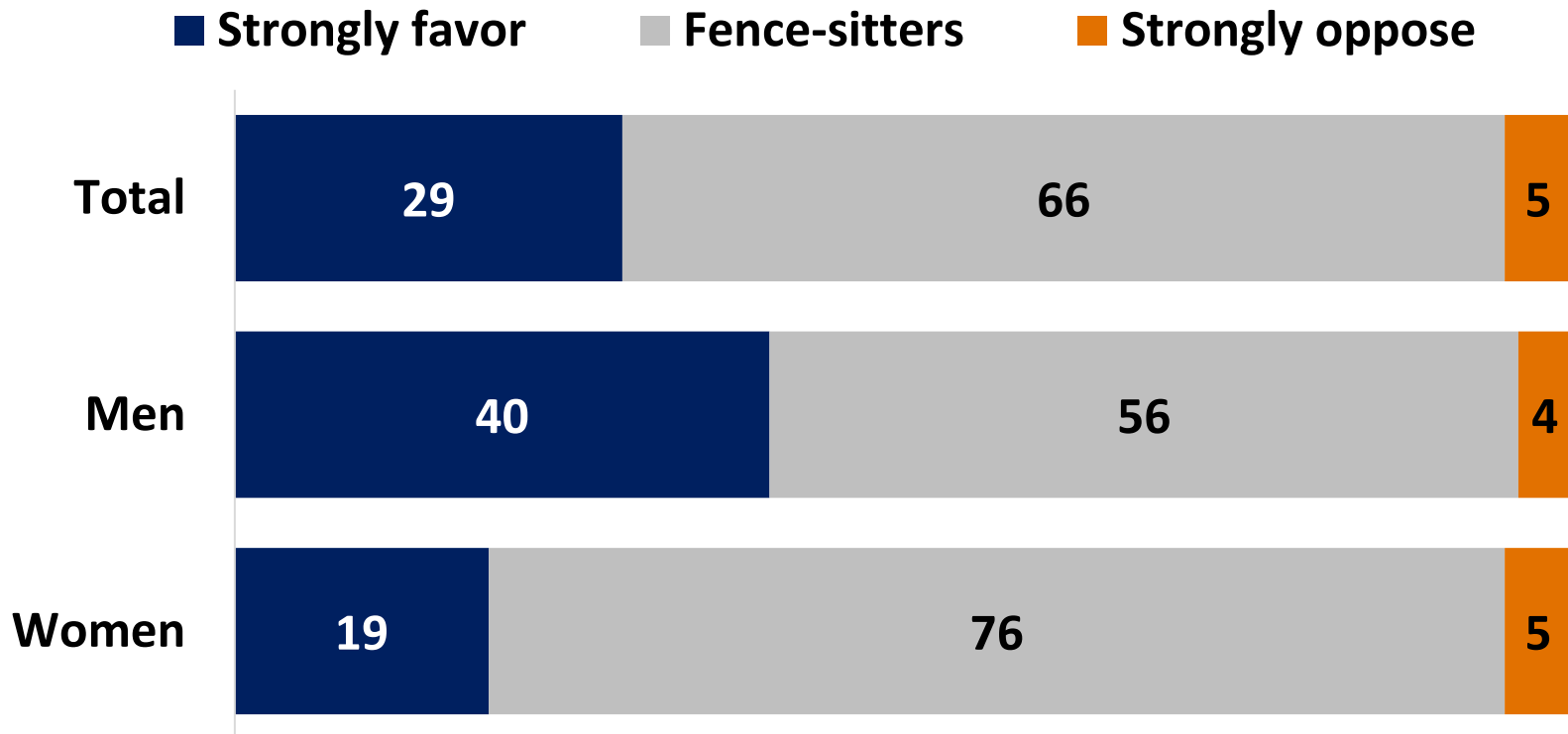
All Demographic Groups Favor Nuclear Energy

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?



Strong Opinions Are 6 to 1 Favorable, But Most Are in the Middle

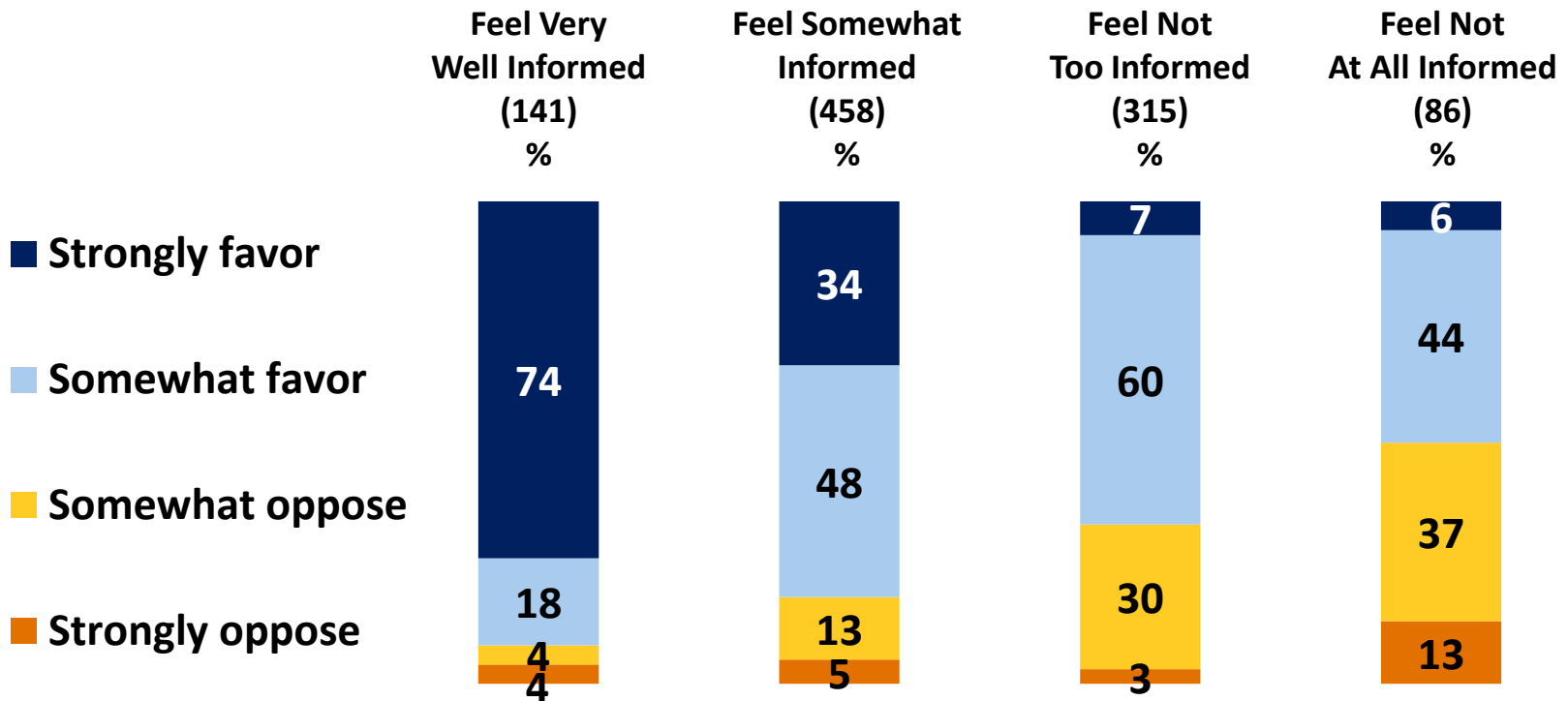
Overall, do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the use of nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity in the United States? (%)



The More Informed People Feel, The More Favorable

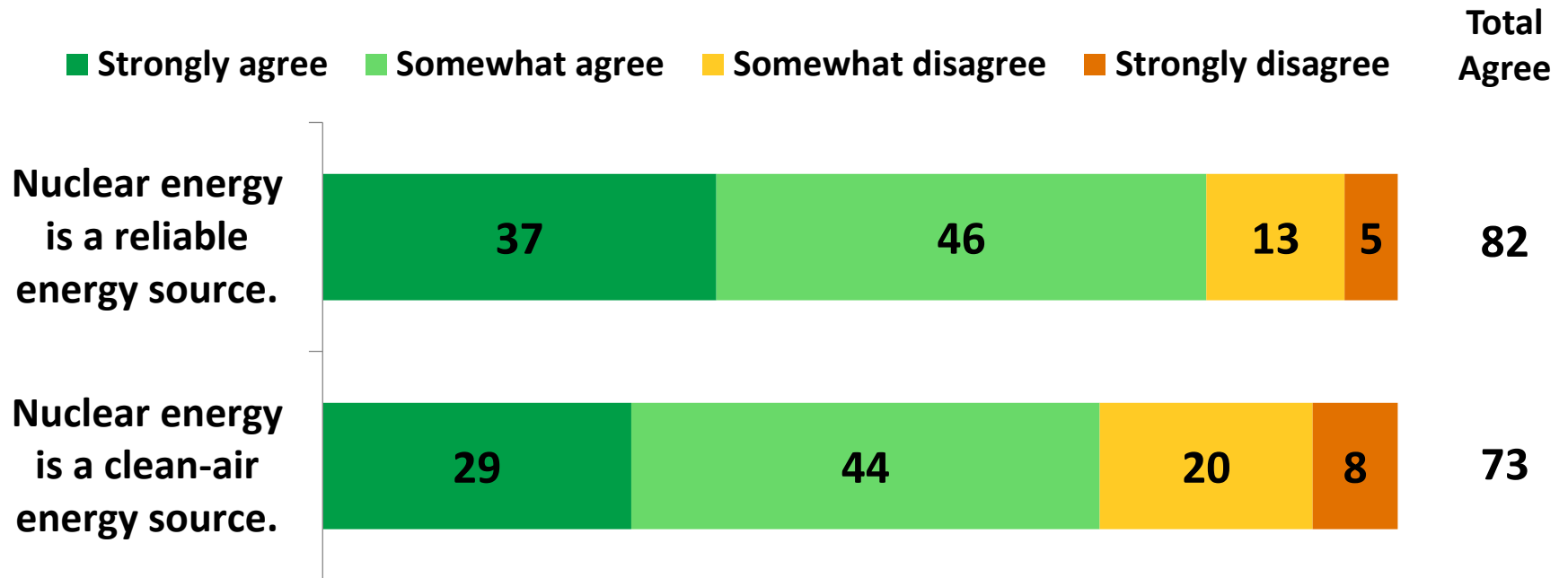
How well informed do you feel about **nuclear energy used to produce electricity**?

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?



The Idea that Nuclear Energy is a Clean-Air and Reliable Energy Source is Plausible

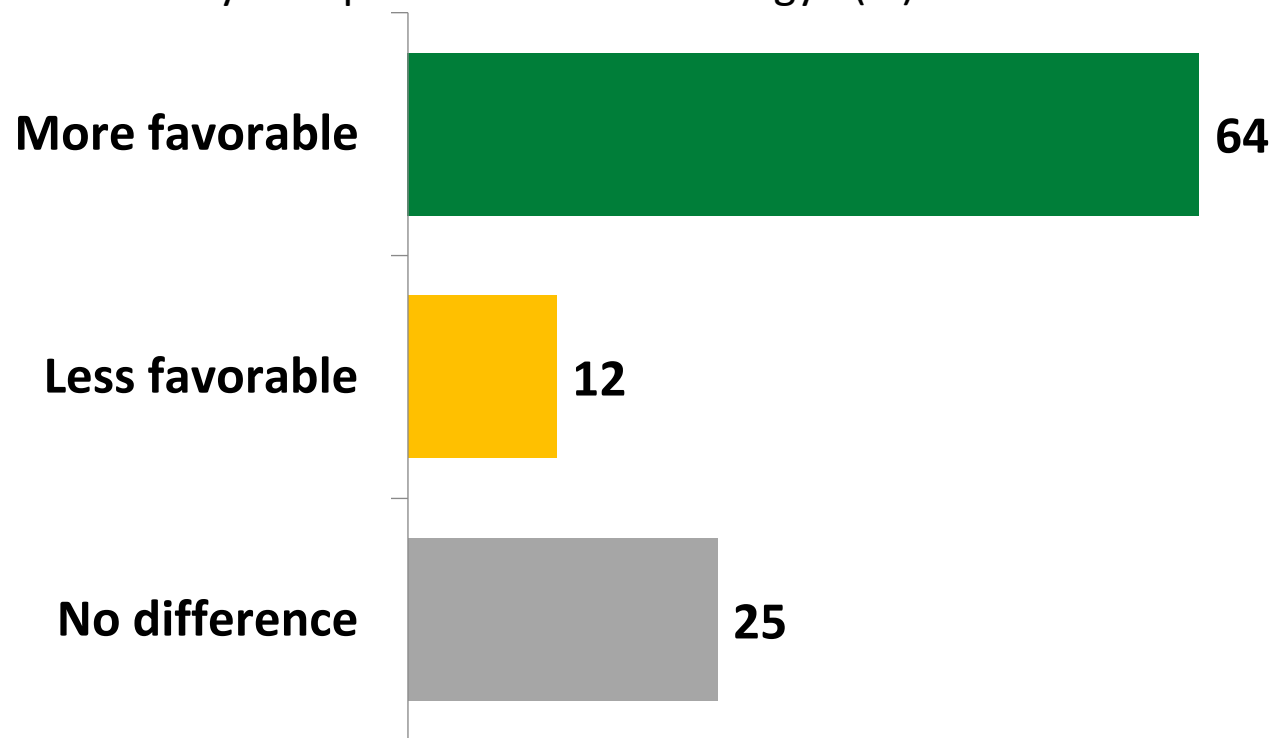
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (%)



Linking the Clean-Air and Reliability Benefits Is Powerful

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? (%)



The Clean Air and Reliability Linkage Changes Opinions Across Politics

**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

What About Nuclear Power Plant Neighbors?

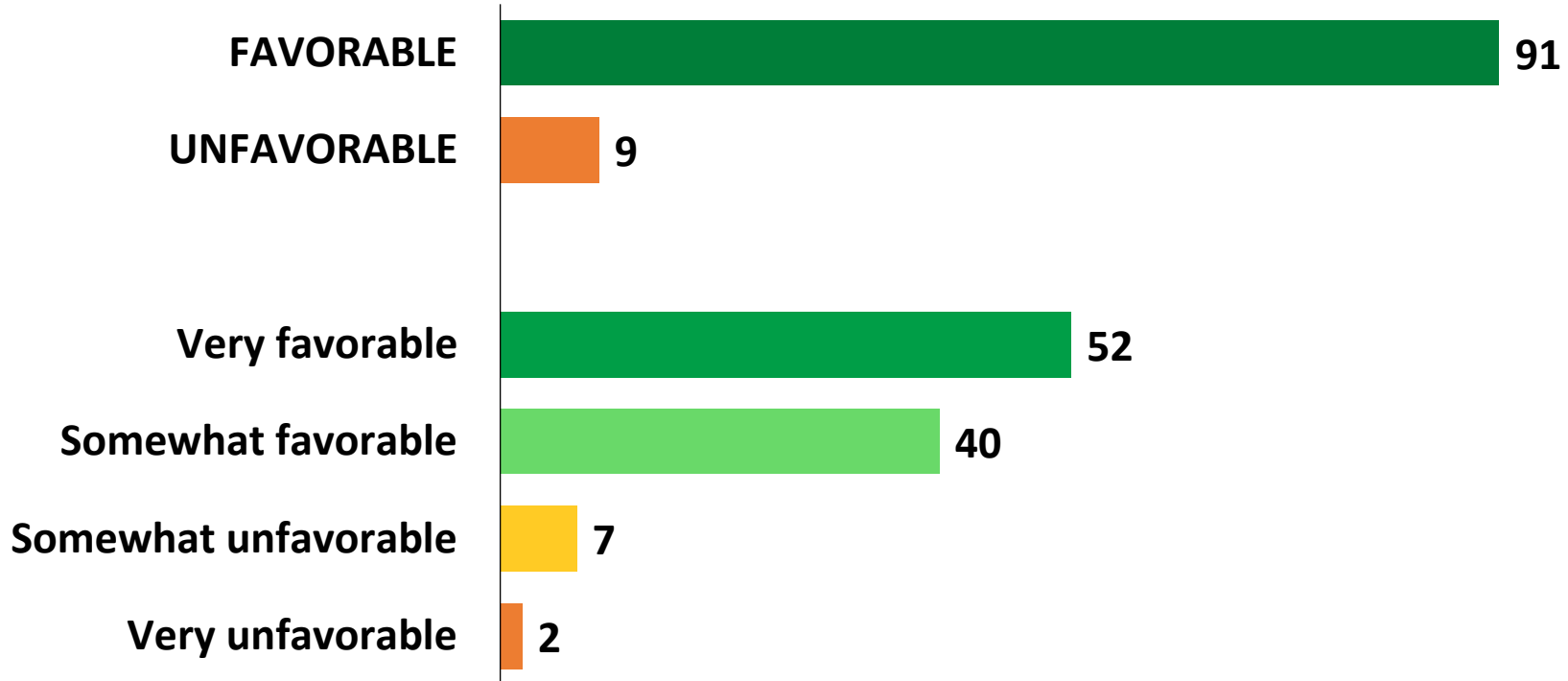
**Reverse NIMBY:
Nuclear Power Plant Neighbors Say “Yes”**

The National Nuclear Power Plant Neighbors Public Opinion Survey

- 9 national plant neighbor surveys 2005-2022.
- 910 full-time residents within a 10-mile radius of U.S. nuclear power plants in 2022.
- The plant neighbors include a maximum of 18 around 52 of the 54 operating sites.
- Households with people who work at a nuclear power plant were excluded due to vested interest.
- Margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points.
- By Bisconti Research with Quest Mindshare Online Panel. Funded by the Nuclear Energy Institute.
- Numbers shown are percentages, which may not add exactly due to rounding.

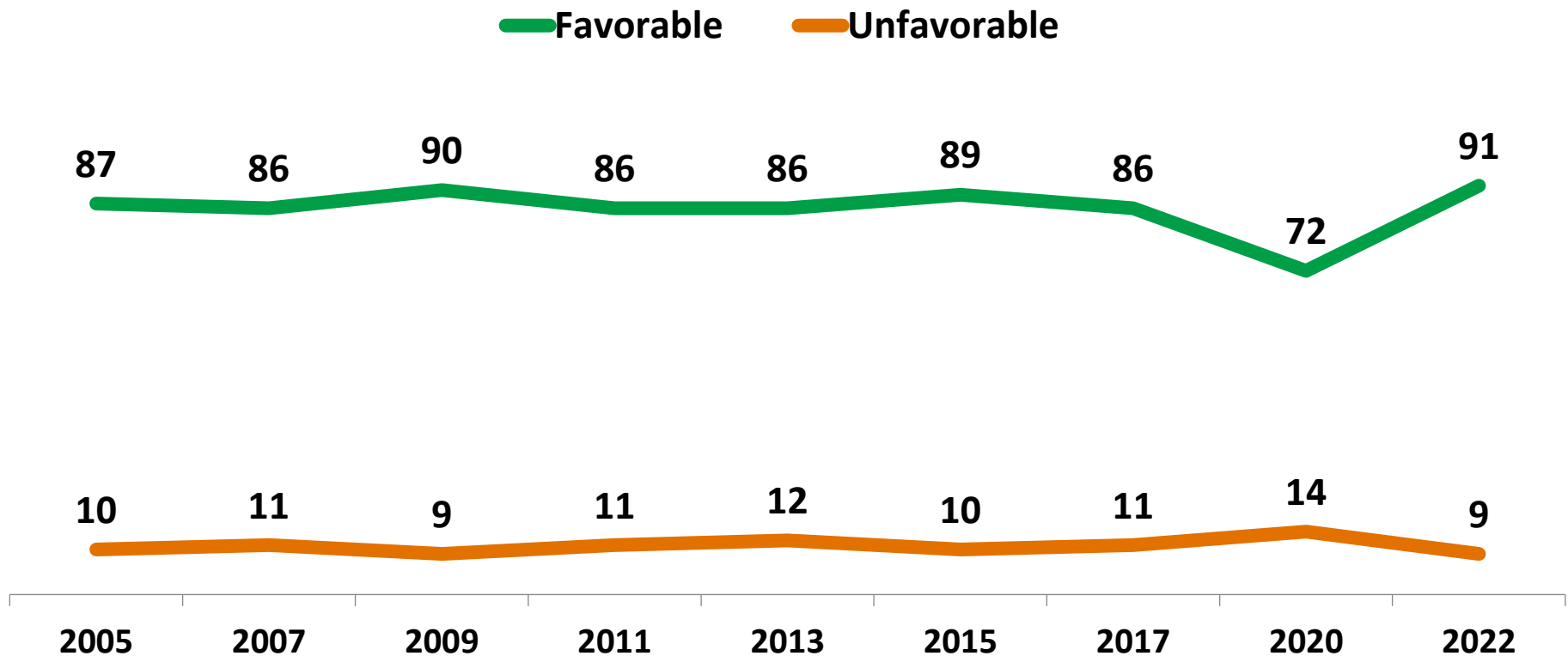
Favorable Impression of Nearby Nuclear Power Plant

Thinking of the nuclear power plant closest to where you live, would you describe your general impression of this plant and the way it has operated recently as very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable? (%)



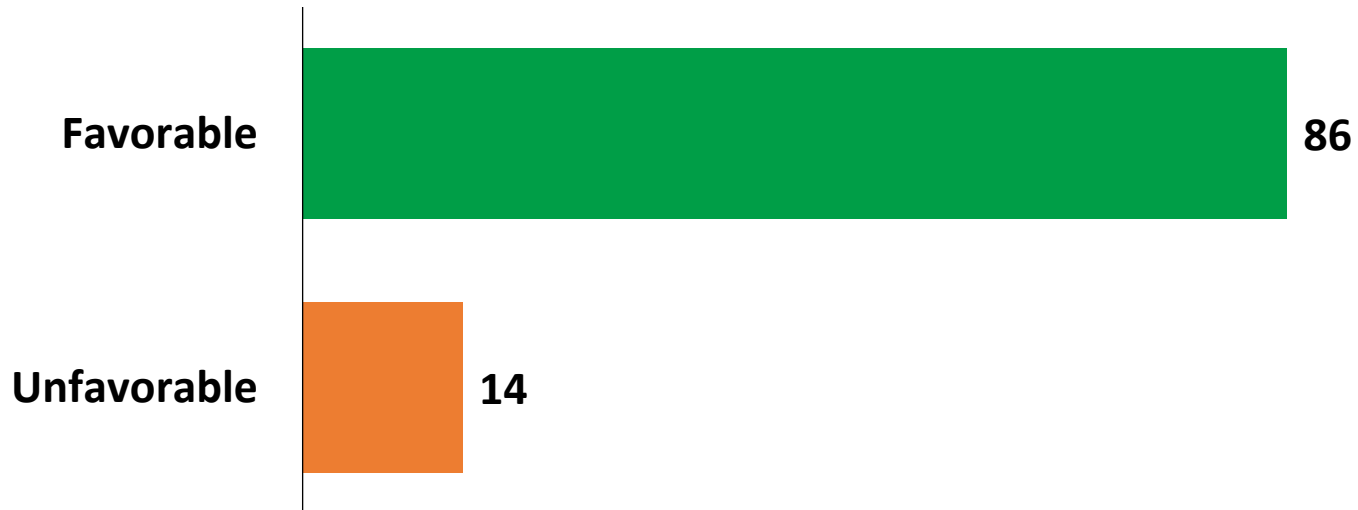
Impression of Nearby Nuclear Plant (Trend 2005-2022)

Thinking of the nuclear power plant closest to where you live, would you describe your general impression of this plant and the way it has operated recently as very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable? (%)



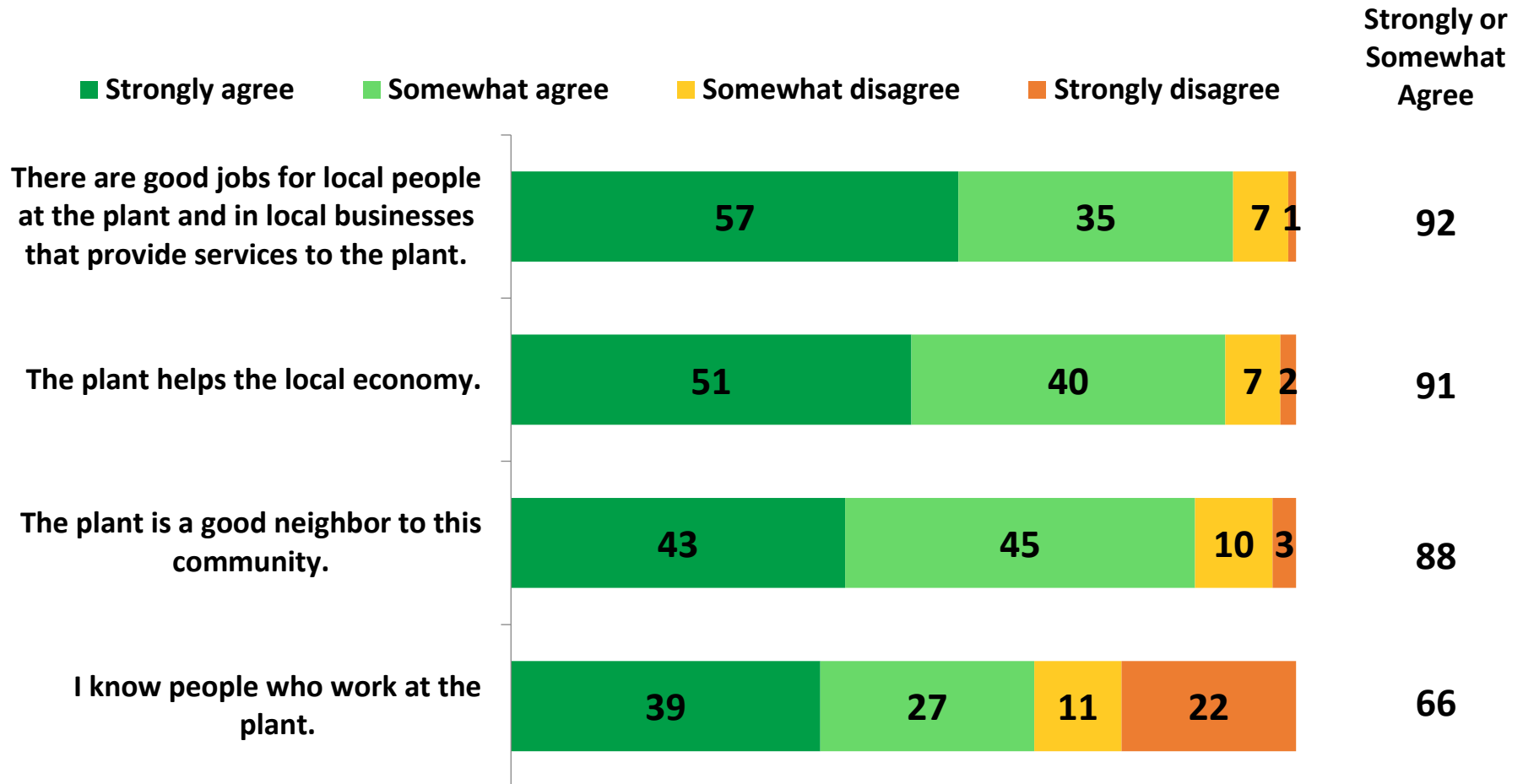
Neighbors Know that Community Supports the Plant

Do you think that the majority of people in your community have a favorable or unfavorable impression of this plant? (%)



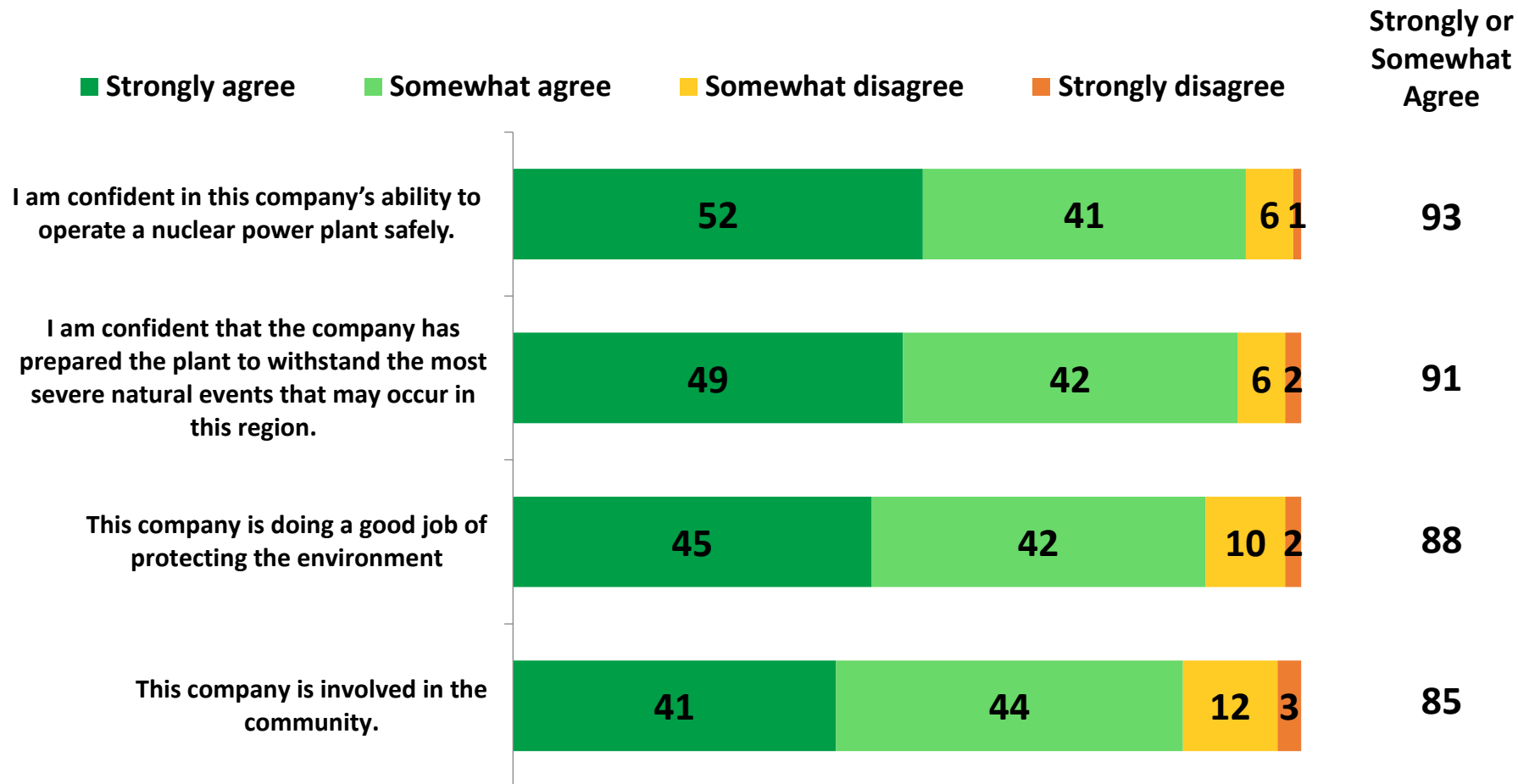
The Plant as Good Neighbor

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements about the company that operates the nearest nuclear power plant? (%)



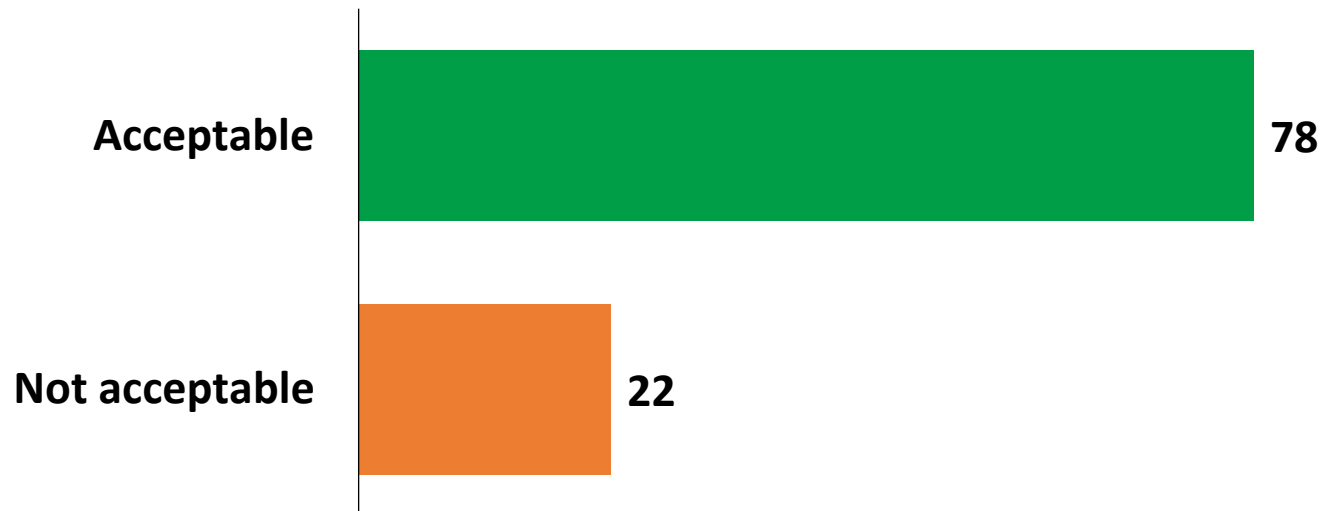
Confidence in the Company Boosts Favorable Attitudes

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements about the company that operates the nearest nuclear power plant? (%)



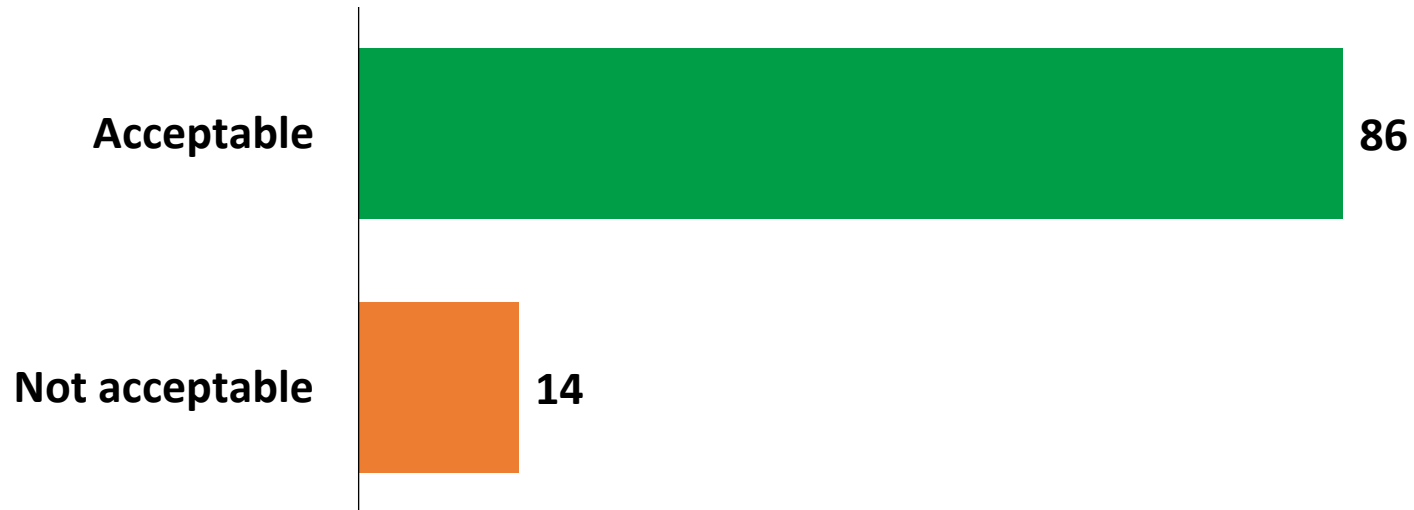
New Nuclear Reactor Acceptable at Nearby Plant

If a new power plant were needed to supply electricity, would it be acceptable to you or not acceptable to you to add a new nuclear reactor at the site of the nearest nuclear power plant? (%)



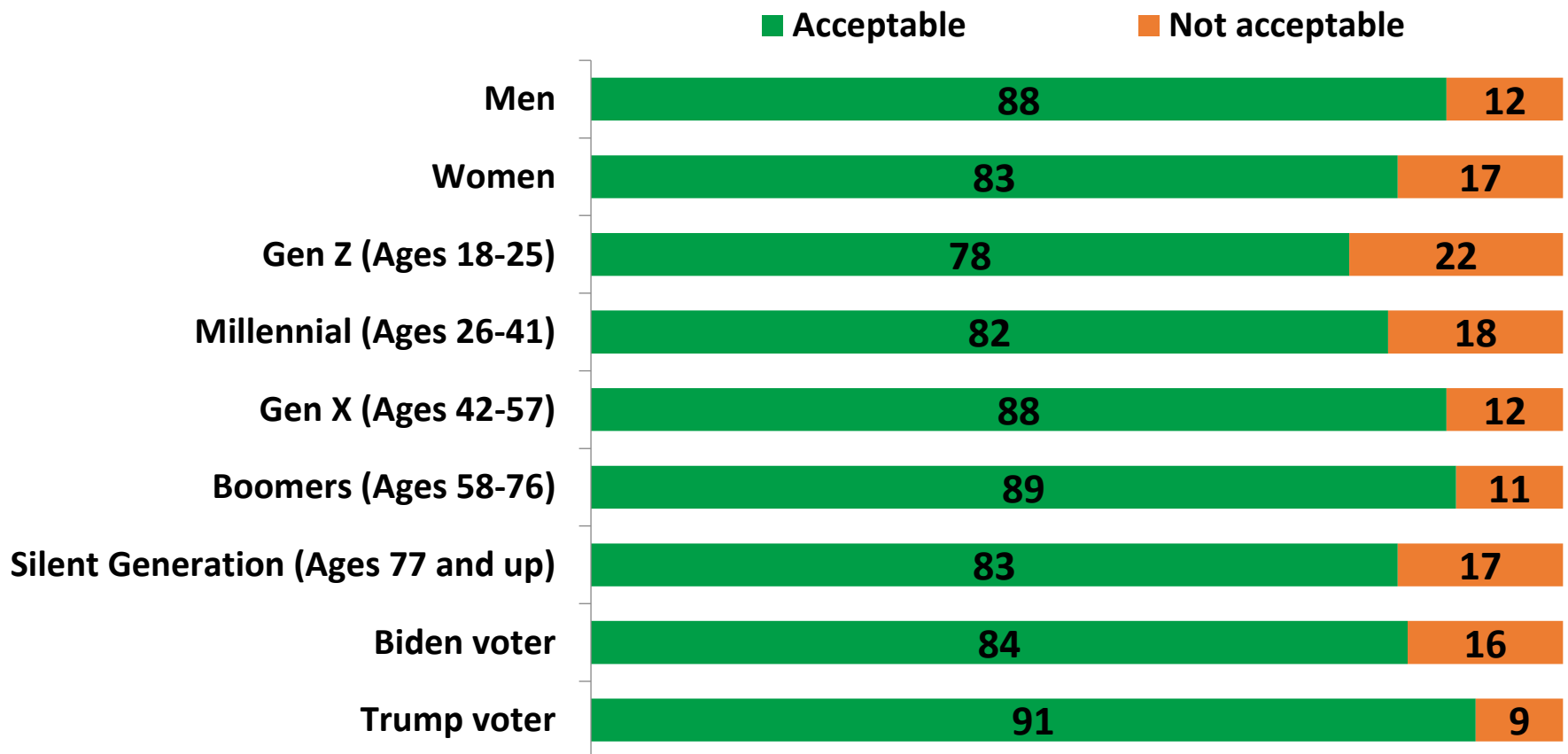
SMR Acceptable at Nearby Plant

Innovative Small Modular Reactors, known as SMRs, are a new advanced alternative for supplying electricity. Would it be acceptable to you or not acceptable to you to add a Small Modular Reactor (SMR) at the site of the nearest nuclear power plant? (%)



SMR Acceptable Across Demographics At Nearby Plant

Innovative Small Modular Reactors, known as SMRs, are a new advanced alternative for supplying electricity. Would it be acceptable to you or not acceptable to you to add a Small Modular Reactor (SMR) at the site of the nearest nuclear power plant? (%)



Key Lessons

- Public opinion is becoming more favorable.
- More of the public strongly favor nuclear energy than strongly oppose, but majority fence sit.
- Those who feel more informed are more favorable.
- Link clean air and reliability benefits.
- Plant neighbor support is broad and deep.
- Safe plant performance and community outreach boost plant neighbor support.
- For new plants, consider existing plant sites.

More Key Lessons

www.bisconti.com/blog