San Francisco Bay

- ~ 500 square miles
- ~ 1,000 miles of shoreline
- Surrounded by ~ 7,000,000 people
- Home to globally important wetlands

© David Sanger

Recreation and Open Space

- Bay Trail
- Water Trail
- Birding
- Fishing and Hunting
- Environmental Education
- Views and Green Space

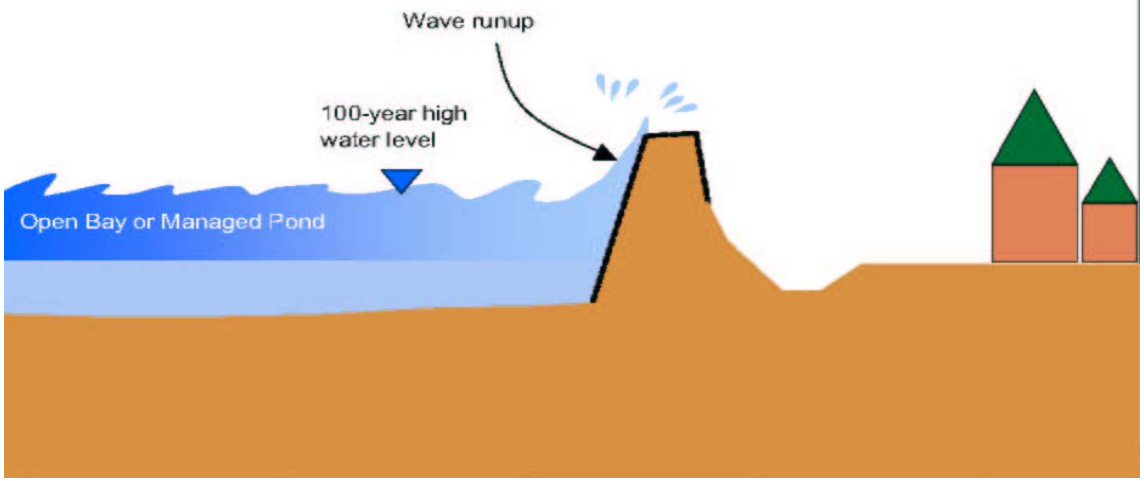
Habitats for Wildlife

- Endangered species
- Migratory birds
- Anadromous fish
- Other Wildlife

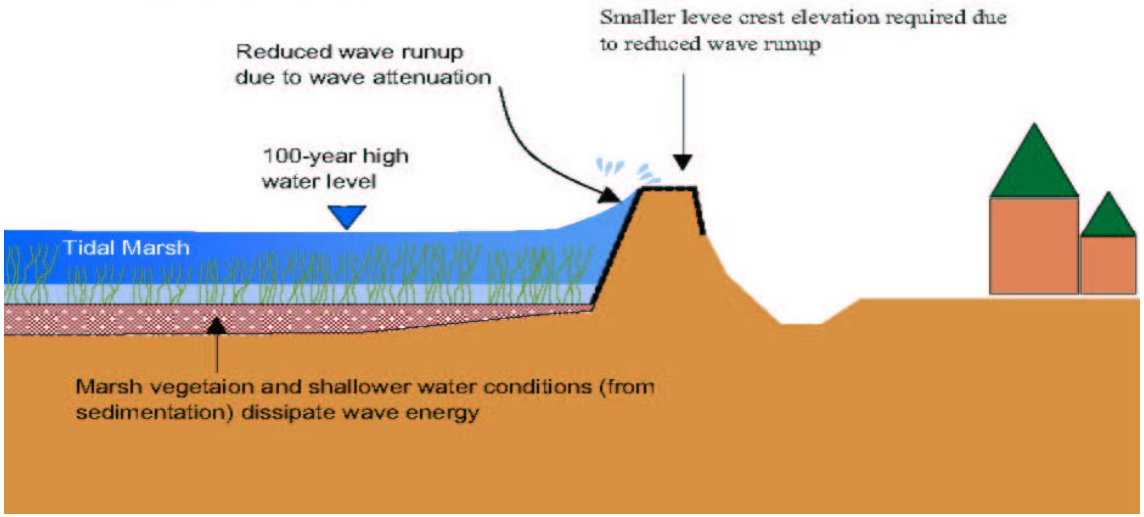
Other Benefits

- Flood Management
- Shoreline Buffer
- Clean Water
- Carbon Sequestration

Levee Adjacent to Open Water



Levee Adjacent to Tidal Marsh



"Gentlemen, it's time we gave some serious thought to the effects of global warming."

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

- The San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority is a regional government agency charged with raising and allocating funds for wetland restoration, flood control, and access along the San Francisco Bay shoreline.
- The Authority was created by the California legislature in 2008 with the enactment of AB 2954 (Lieber).

Board

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

- **Chair**
  Samuel Schuchat, Executive Officer, California State Coastal Conservancy
- **West Bay**
  Phil Ting, Assessor Recorder, City and County of San Francisco
- **East Bay**
  John Gioia, Supervisor, County of Contra Costa
- **North Bay**
  Keith Caldwell, Supervisor, County of Napa
- **South Bay**
  Rosanne Foust, Councilmember, City of Redwood City
- **Bayside City/County**
  Dave Cortese, Supervisor, County of Santa Clara
- **Bayside City/Park District**
  John Sutter, Director, East Bay Regional Park District

Advisory Committee

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

Steve Abbors, Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District
Josh Arce, Brightline Defense Project
Dion Aroner, Aroner, Jewel & Ellis
Cindy Chavez, South Bay Labor Council
Patrick Congdon, Santa Clara County Open Space Authority
Grant Davis, Sonoma County Water Agency
Beth Huning, San Francisco Bay Joint Venture
John Coleman, Bay Planning Coalition
Jerry Kent, East Bay Park and Recreation District
David Lewis, Save The Bay
Sally Lieber, Community Advocate
Cynthia Murray, North Bay Leadership Council
Steve Ngo, City College of San Francisco
Rahul Prakash, Earth Aid Enterprises
Bruce Raful, Raful & Associates
Curt Riffle, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation
John Rizzo, Sierra Club
Patrick Rutten, NOAA Restoration Center
Bob Spencer, Economist/Financial Consultant
Mendel Stewart, Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge
Laura Thompson, San Francisco Bay Trail Project
Will Travis, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
Kate White, Urban Land Institute

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

- Authority considering a regional ballot item to generate funds.
- Some of the Questions:
  - Is there support for this?
  - Type of tax?
  - Annual amount and timeframe?
  - Geographic area?
  - Which ballot?

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

- Polling
  - August, 2010 Poll by FM3
  - May, 2011 Focus Groups by EMC
  - July, 2011 Poll by EMC
- Analysis of previous measures
  - Prop 21
  - Measure WW

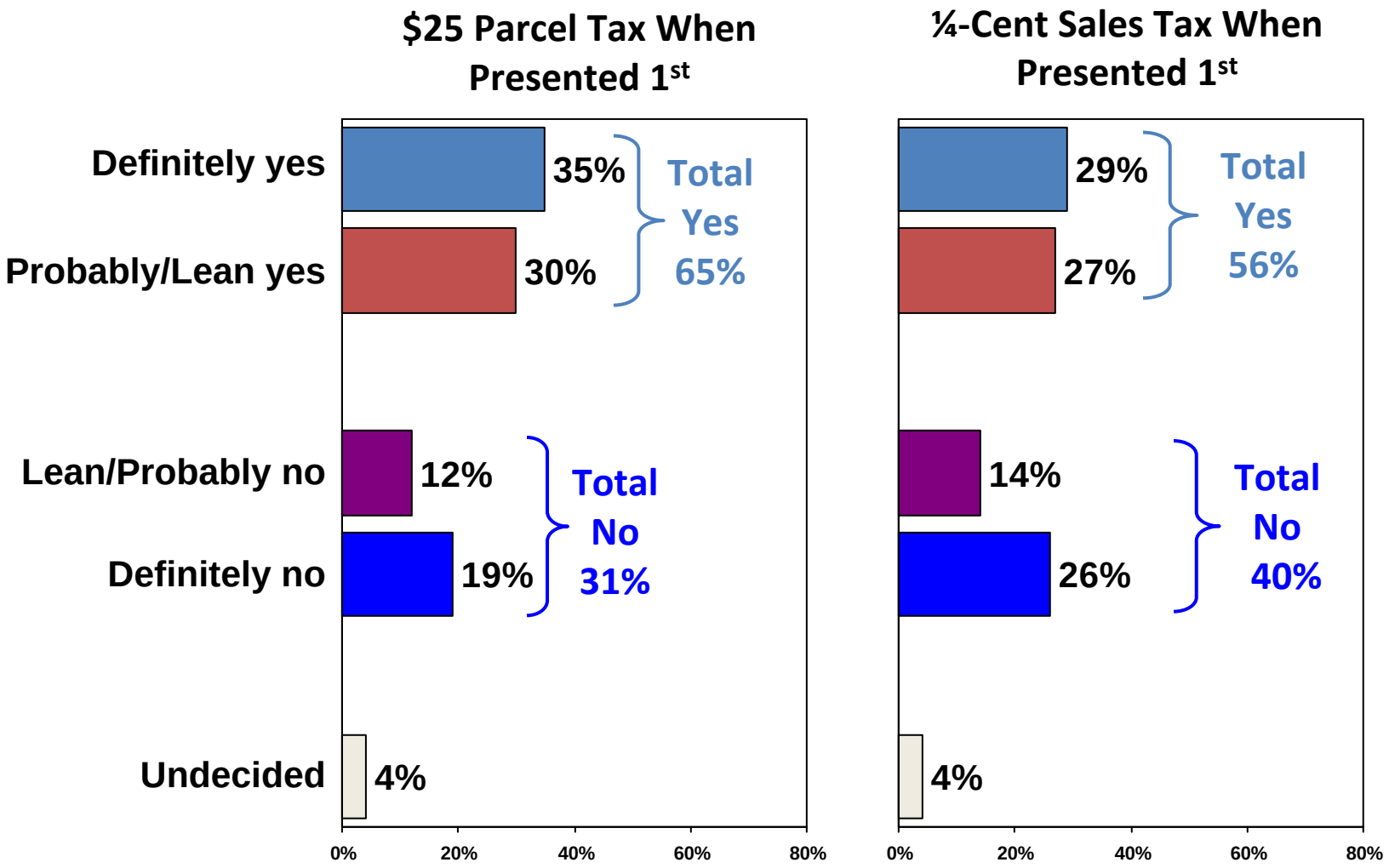
August, 2010 Poll by FM3

Highlights

Question Methodology

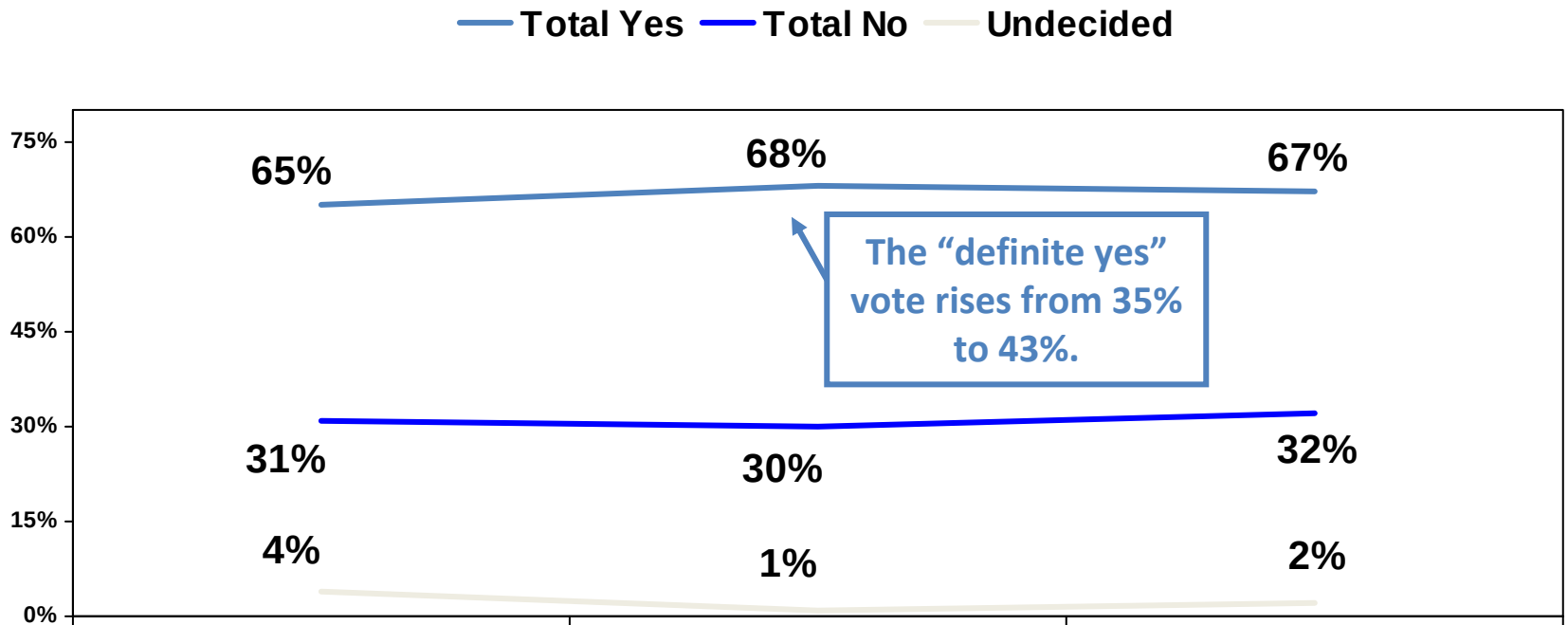
- **All voters were asked about two potential funding mechanisms:**
  - ***A $25 parcel tax measure***
  - ***A ¼ cent sales tax measure***
- **Half the sample was asked about the parcel tax first**
- **The other half was asked about the sales tax measure first**

Both measures initially obtain majority support, but only the parcel tax approaches two-thirds.



5/8 Heard First. If the vote on this measure were held today, would you vote yes in favor of this measure or no to oppose it? (Heard First)

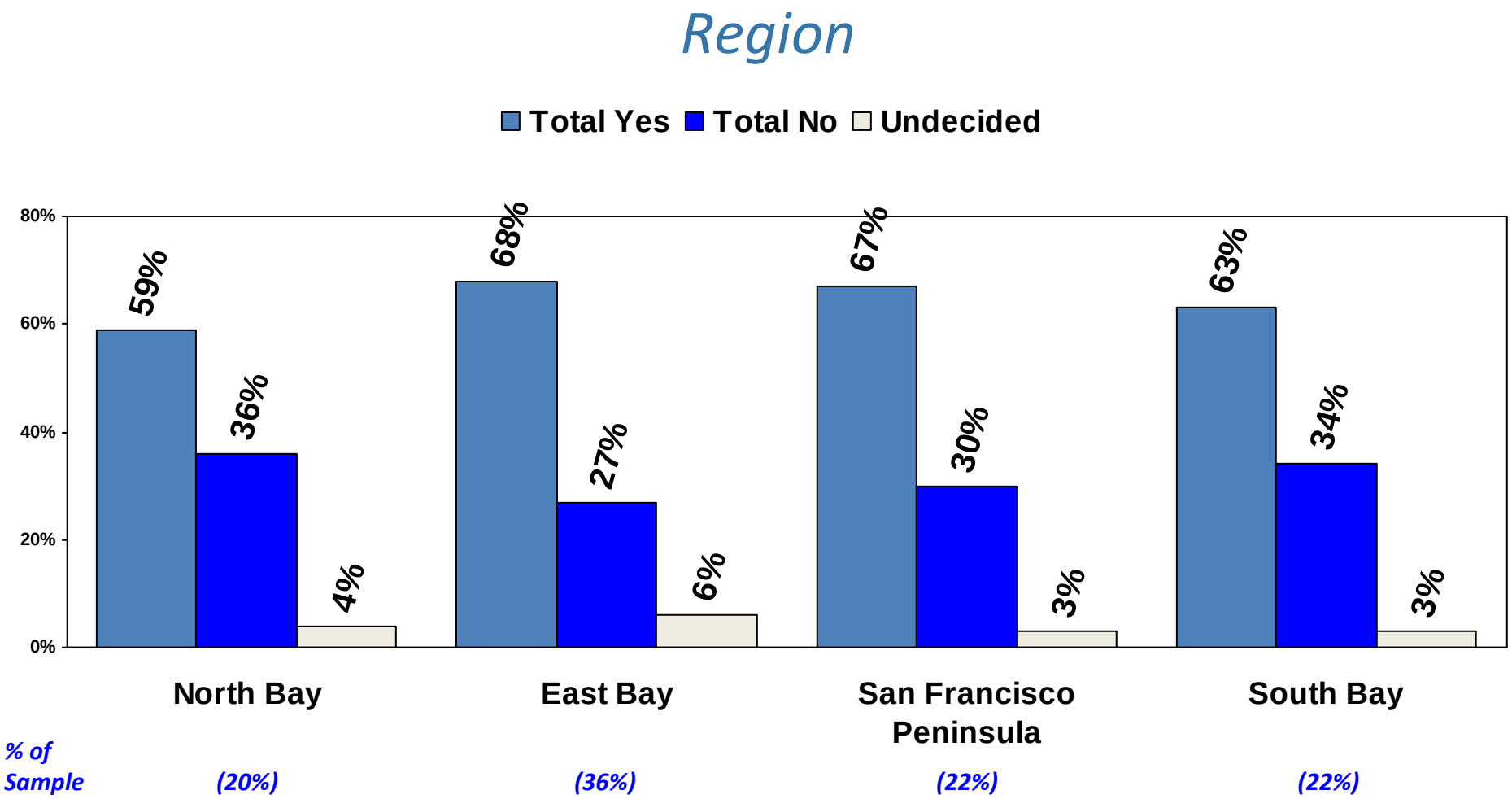
Support for the parcel tax measure reaches two-thirds after supportive messages.



	Initial Vote	After Supportive Statement	After Opposition Statement
Total Yes	65%	68%	67%
Total No	31%	30%	32%
Undecided	4%	1%	2%

5/16/18. Heard First--If the vote on this measure were held today, would you vote yes in favor of this measure or no to oppose it?

Support for the parcel tax is highest in the East Bay and San Francisco Peninsula.



5. Heard First. If the vote on this measure were held today, would you vote yes in favor of this measure or no to oppose it?

Conclusions

- **Voters continue to place enormous value on the Bay, but are highly concerned about the condition of the economy.**
- **While a regional sales tax does not appear likely to reach two-thirds supermajority support at this time, a parcel tax has the potential to do so under the following conditions:**
  - ✓ ***Keep the per-household cost under $25;***
  - ✓ ***Target a high turnout election like November 2012;***
  - ✓ ***Detail specific benefits for water quality and wildlife;***
  - ✓ ***Prepare for the ballot measure with a strong program of public education.***

May, 2011 Focus Groups by EMC

Highlights

Methodology

- 2 Focus Groups in Sunnyvale, California, May 10, 2011
- Participants were voters from Sunnyvale, Mountain View, Santa Clara, or Milpitas
- Voters who are strongly anti-tax and anti-environmental restoration, AND/OR voters who are strongly pro-tax and pro-environmental restoration were excluded.

- **Group 1:** Participants were initially told that a potential measure to provide funding for Bay restoration would cost $10 per parcel per year
- **Group 2:** Participants were initially told that a potential measure to provide funding for Bay restoration would cost $20 per parcel per year

“The Bay” is the San Francisco Bay Area

- Thinking about the Bay makes voters feel proud of their home. They think of the uniqueness, beauty, and greatness of the Bay Area.
- Voters associate the Bay with San Francisco:
  - Even though South Bay residents are close to the south end of the bay, when they think of “the Bay” they think of San Francisco.

“Pac Bell Park”

“Home”

“The Golden Gate Bridge”

Voters think the Bay is polluted

- When voters hear “San Francisco Bay,” they think about pollution (especially on the south end)
- Because the Bay is surrounded by cities, voters think pollution is inevitable.
- They are not sure the Bay is safe to fish or swim.

Voters value the Bay and feel responsible for restoration

- Even those who don't use it for recreation fully understand that the Bay is important to the Bay Area economy, climate, ecosystem, and identity.
- They acknowledge human responsibility for the pollution and want to clean, restore the Bay to health.

"[The Bay is an] integral part of the climate and economy. The Port of Oakland is a huge economic factor for the region…San Francisco is huge for tourism…the Bay is a huge part of our Mediterranean climate here. I love it."

Size Matters: 10 is better than 20

- Voters react very positively to $10/parcel/year for Bay wetlands restoration.
- For some $20 also seems reasonable, but it was clear that $10 was truly minimal while $20 was not.
- The lower the tax amount, the easier it is to vote for it without questioning it.
- For those who were opposed, the amount of the tax didn't matter.
- Likewise, a 10 year sunset is better than 20 years.

Focus on “the whole Bay”

- Given descriptions and pictures of potential projects, voters did not gravitate toward projects in the South Bay, specifically.
- Voters want the engineers and scientists to make the most prudent choices and spend funds on the most **necessary** projects.

“I wish there were some sort of priority list… If something needs to be done, I see why it’s important.”

“If this were something where it was more like parks in nature, I can see why you’d want it to be more local, but if you’re talking about quality of water and environment, it should be the whole bay”

Focus on the benefits

- Voters respond to the benefits, not the specifics of the restoration projects.
- Information about the number of acres and land use does little to sway them. Focus on benefits like:
  - ***Cleanup of trash and toxics and water quality:*** Voters like projects that will clean up the Bay and improve water quality.
  - ***Safety and flood control***: doing whatever is needed to keep voters safe is important.
  - ***Animal habitats***: voters care about wildlife and know they are an important indicator of the Bay ecosystem's health.
  - ***Environment***: limiting the effects of climate change and environmental benefits are important.

"Take care of our levees, whatever, if they're bad. I don't want to flood…When it comes to acres and stuff, that's too much."

The devil is in the details

- The more they focus on the details, the less interested they become.
- Voters are confused by terms like “tidal marshes” and “salt ponds” but these specifics are not necessary to build support for Bay restoration. Painting with a broad brush is better.
- Details will need to be available for those who want them, but they will not be a key part of the approach to communicating with voters.

Potential Vulnerabilities

- With an electorate wrought by tax fatigue, a crowded ballot will be a challenge. Although initially voters are supportive of funding for Bay restoration, once they ponder other measures that may be on the ballot or other causes worthy of funding, they become more hesitant and more skeptical.
- There is danger in the perception that restoration is frivolous or unnecessary in this economy. Emphasize projects that are essential.

"How many other things on ballot are $20?"

"We need to cleanup before we restore anything"

"On some ballots, there's just so much info…you might see [this] and just skip it."

July, 2011 Poll by EMC

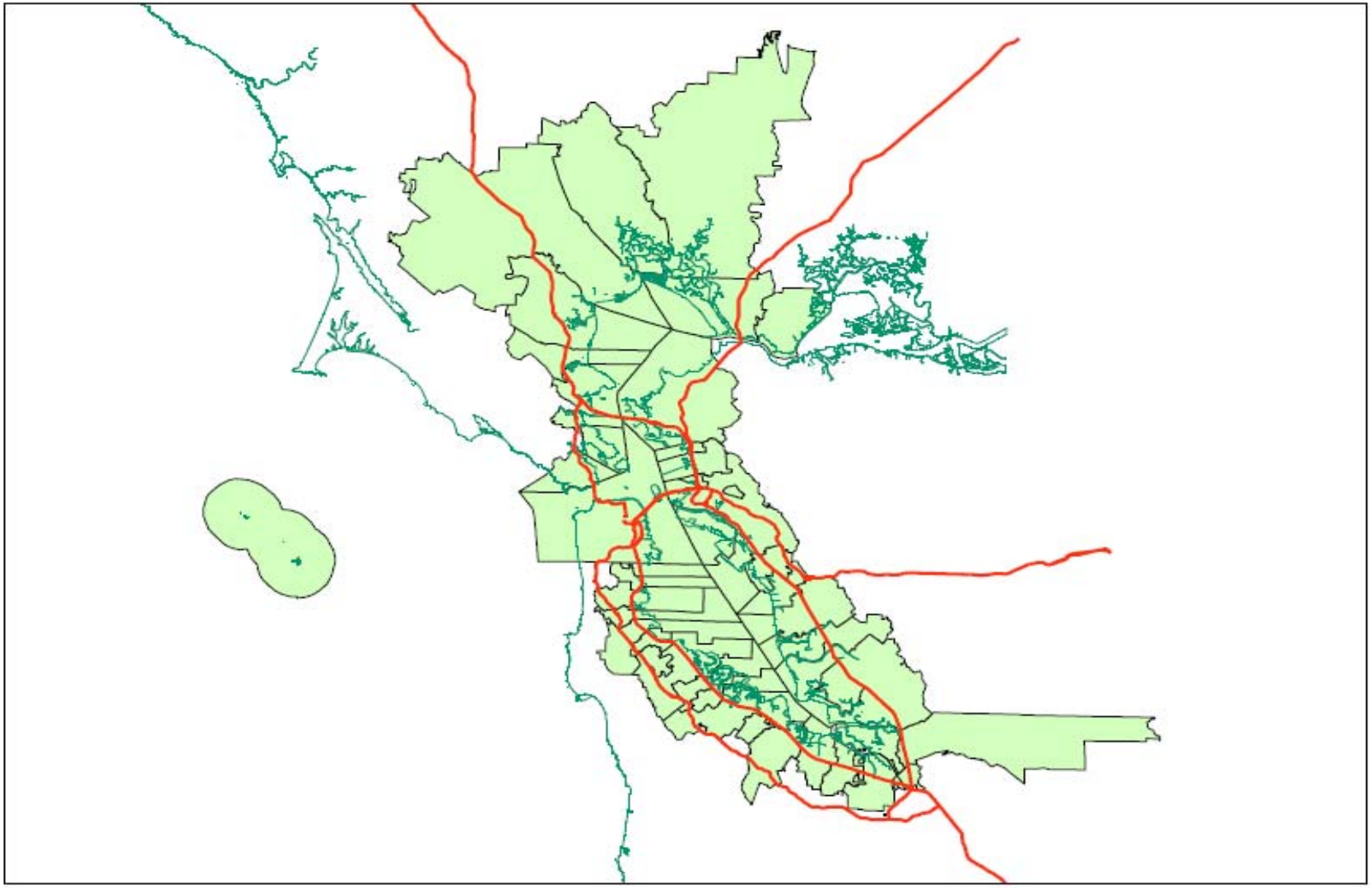
Highlights

Methodology

- Telephone survey of 9-County Bay Area likely November 2012 voters.
- 1,500 completed interviews.

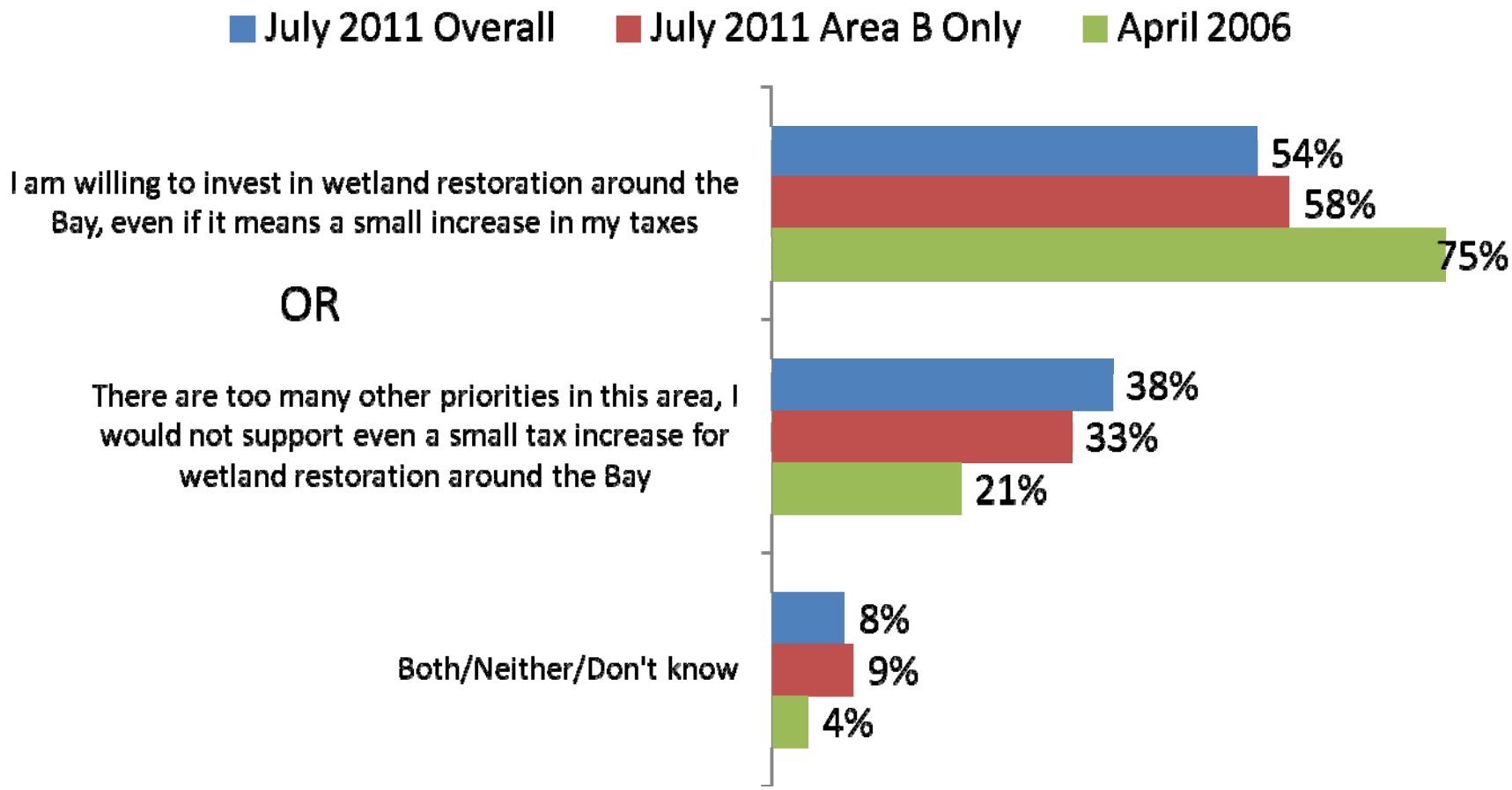
- “Area B”: a subset of the 9-County Bay Area that includes areas close to the Bay.
- 810 Interviews (54%) completed in Area B

Area B



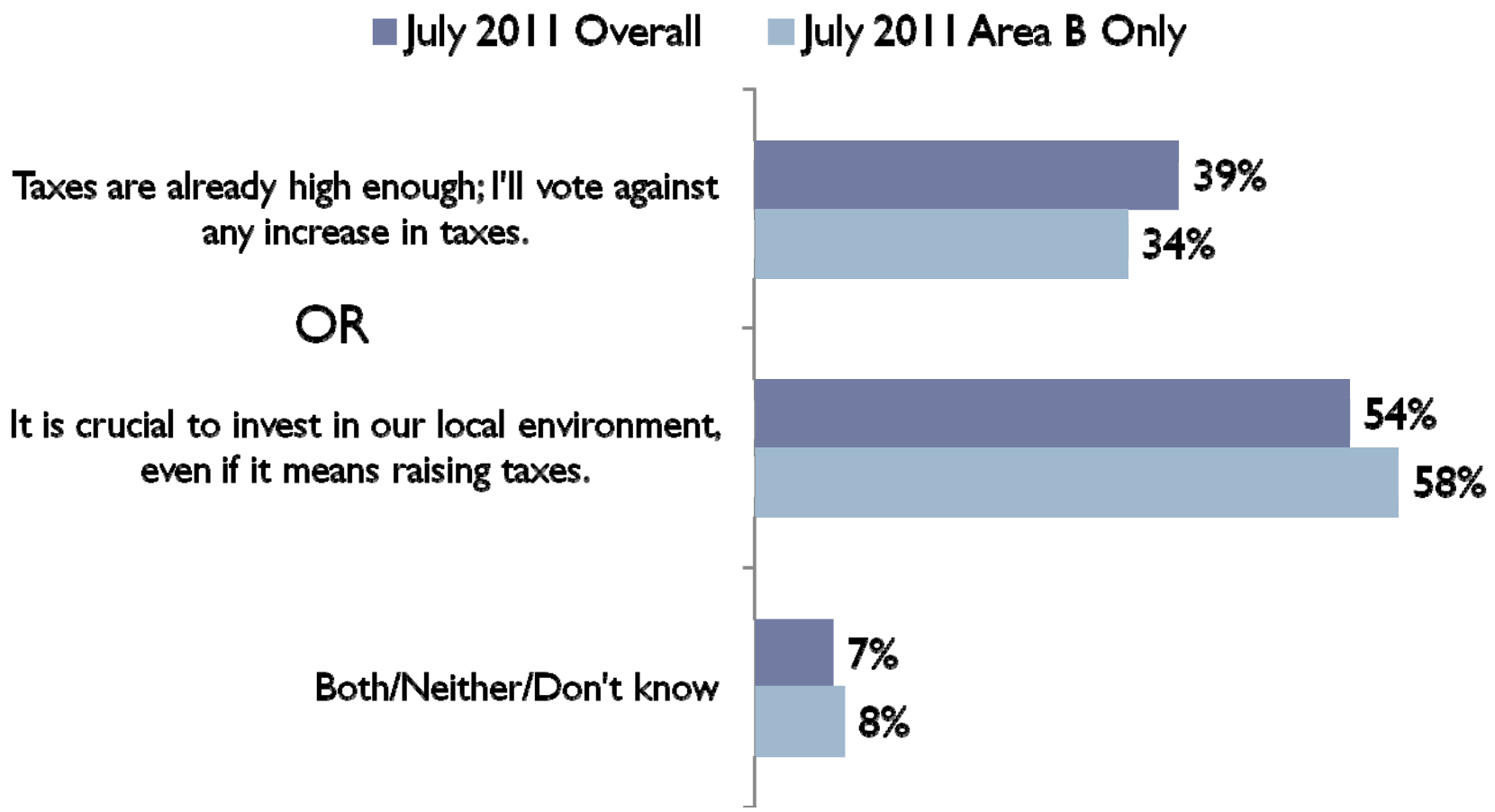
Fewer (less than 2/3) are willing to invest in wetland restoration while other priorities are gaining ground.

Which of the following is closer to your opinion (Q14)



There is a high level of tax fatigue. Even in Area B, one third of voters would vote against any tax increase.

Which of the following is closer to your opinion (Q15)

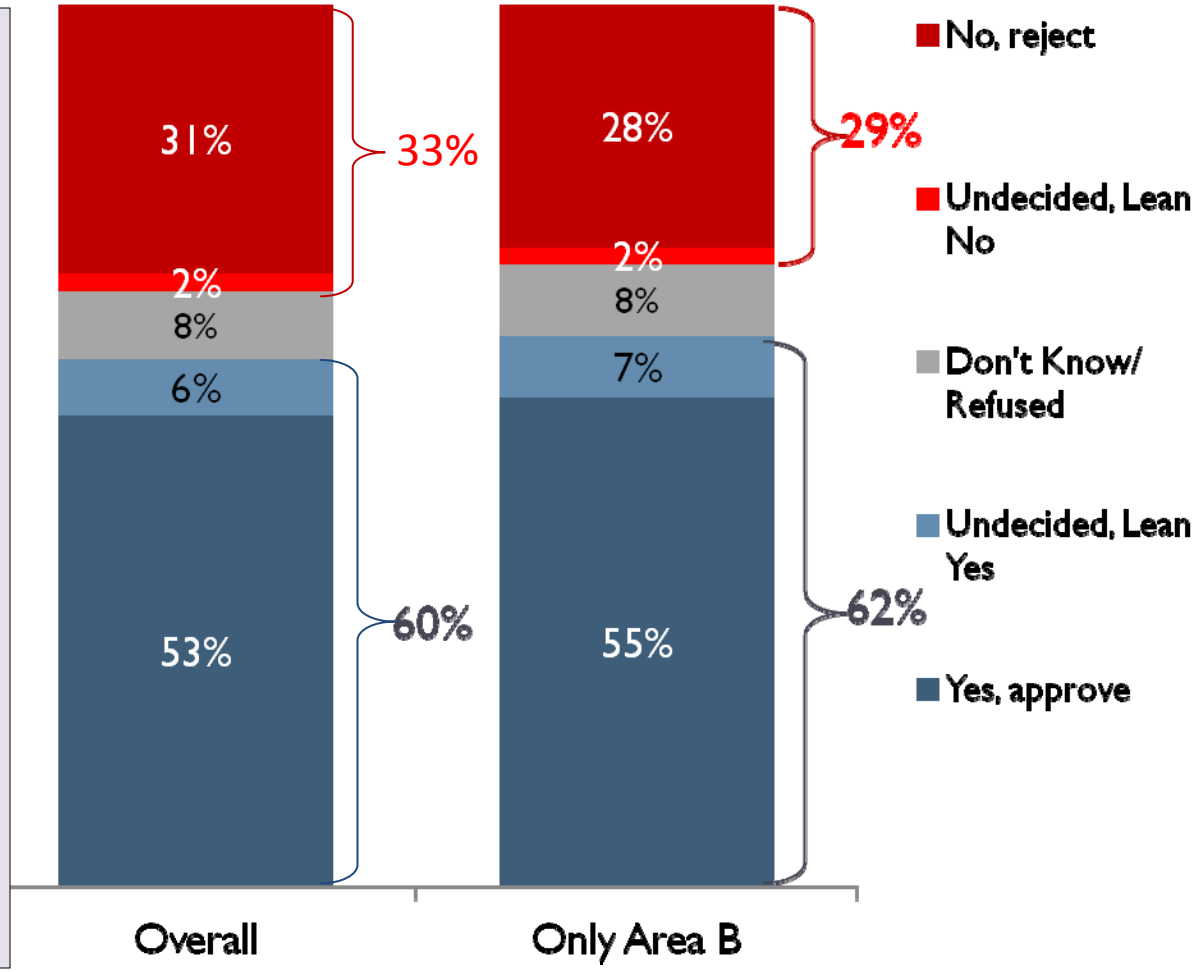


On the initial ask, fewer than two-thirds would vote for a Bay Restoration measure

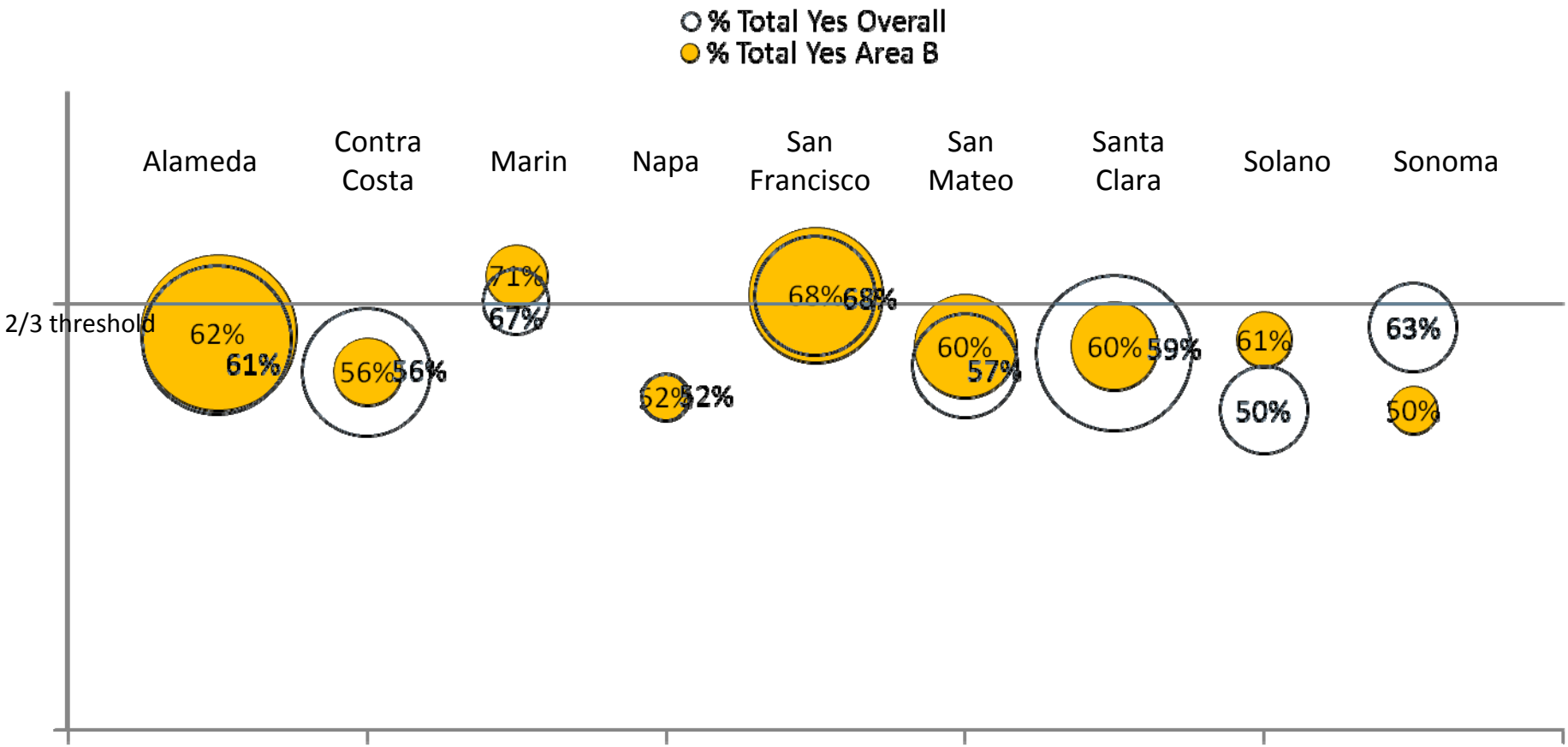
Now, I'm going to read you a measure that may appear on the ballot next year:

To restore and protect the quality of the San Francisco Bay including: cleaning up trash and pollution; protecting habitat for fish and wildlife; improving water quality; restoring more than forty-thousand acres of wetlands; and, providing flood protection; shall the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority authorize an annual special tax of ten dollars per parcel for ten years with citizen oversight, audits, and all funds staying in the Bay Area.

If the election were held today, would you vote Yes to approve or No to reject this measure? (Q7)



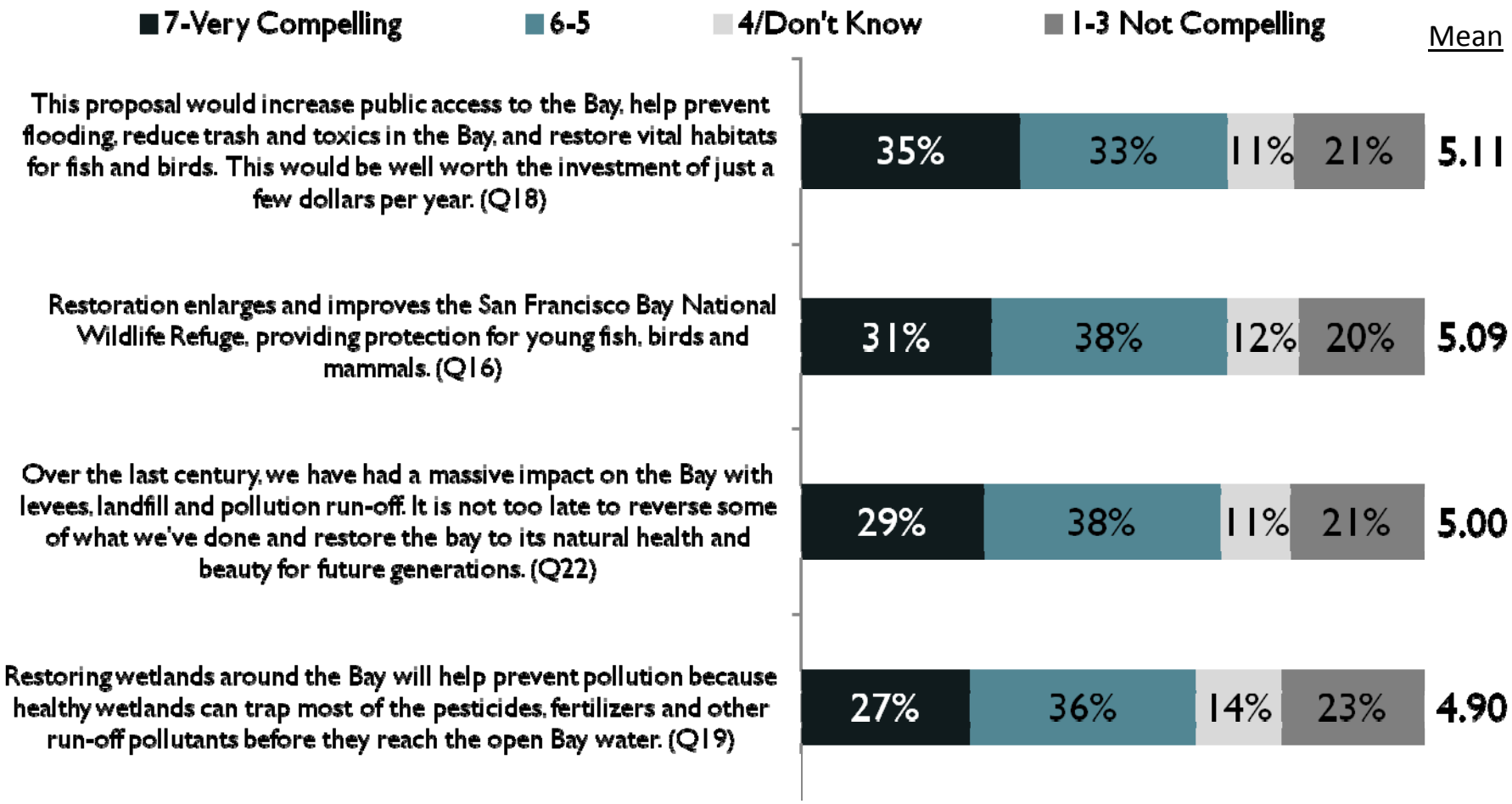
Support by county overall compared to Area B: not a big difference



Bubble size represents size of demographic subgroup

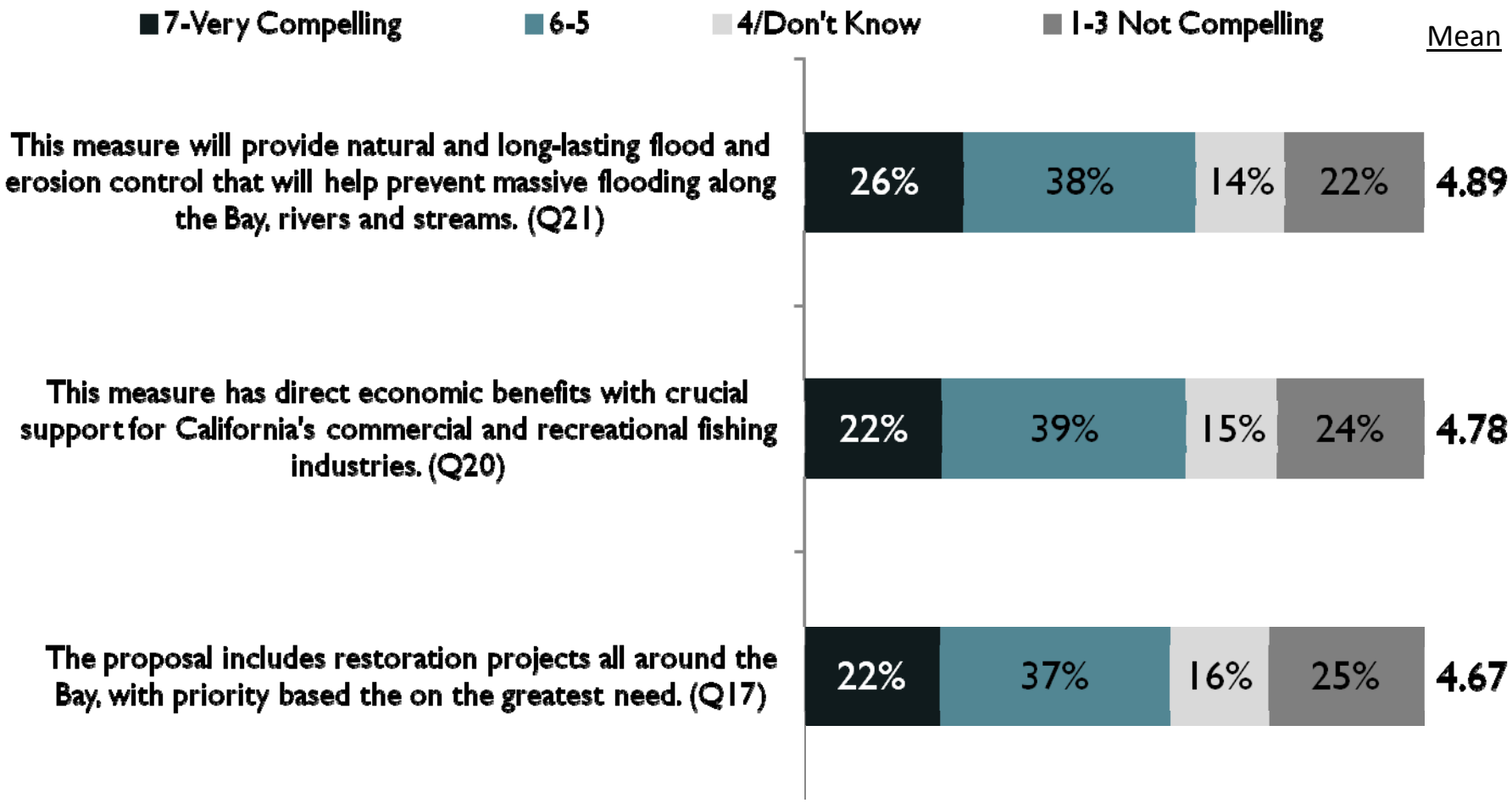
Reducing trash and toxics for a few dollars a year is the most compelling message in favor of the measure

For each statement please tell me how compelling this is as a reason to support the measure. Please use the scale from 1 to 7 where one is not at all compelling and seven is a very compelling reason to support a Bay restoration measure.

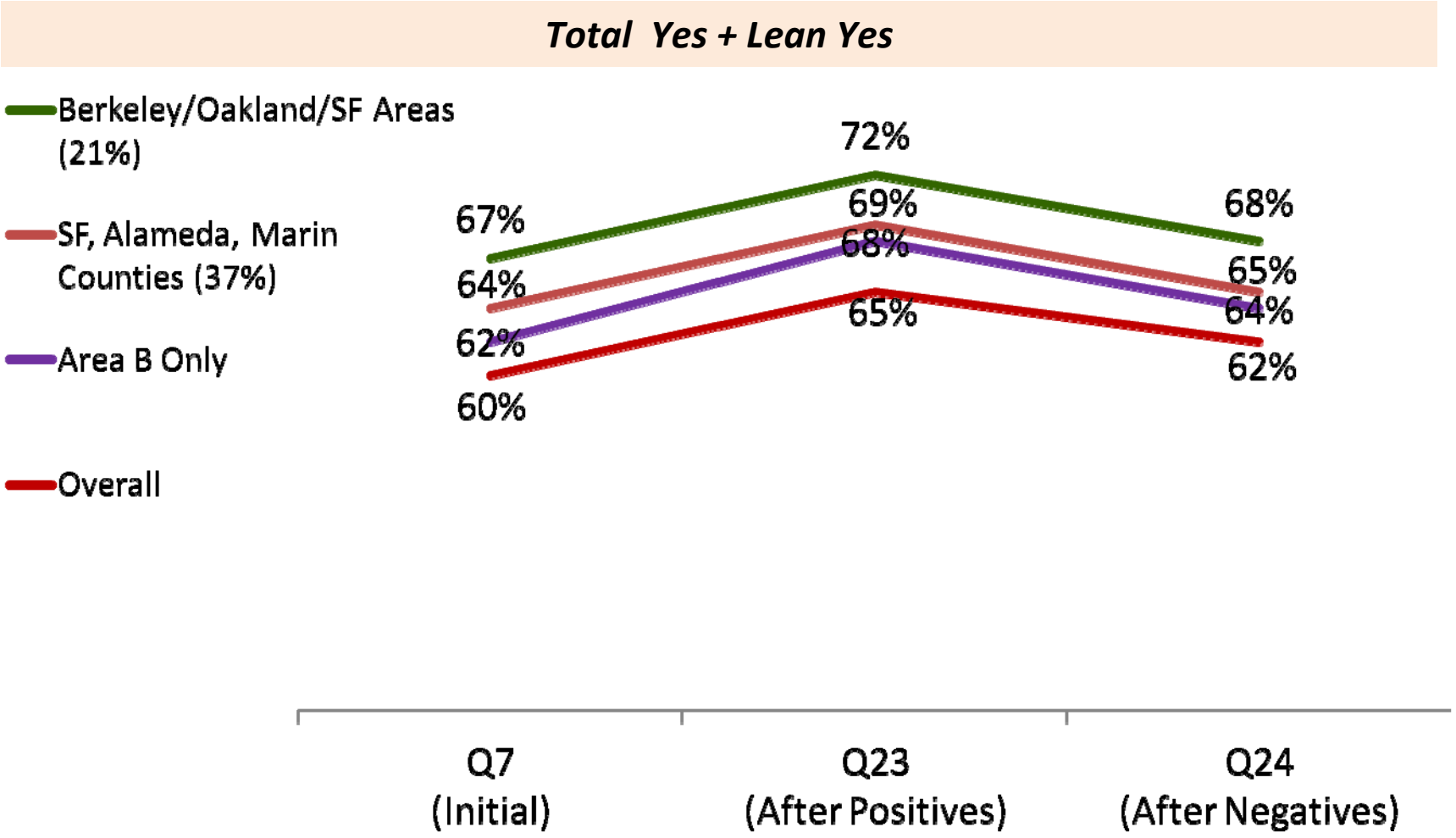


Surprisingly, economic benefits are less compelling

I'd like to read you a list of some of the components of the California Jobs & Investment Act. Rate each component on a 1 to 7 scale, where 1 means you think that component is of Little or No Importance and 7 means you think that component is Extremely Important.



Limiting the geographic scope has only a small impact on the likely vote



Key Findings

- Concerns about the economy, unemployment, and the State budget deficit have increased dramatically while other priorities, including environmental restoration, are shrinking.
- A $10 Bay Restoration measure falls short of 2/3 support among voters in the 9-County Bay Area. Support in "Area B" is slightly higher, but still below a supermajority.
- Messages in favor of a measure do resonate, particularly the prospect of cleaning up trash and toxics for a few dollars a year.
- While support for a measure does not quite reach two-thirds today, the hesitancy is likely due to economic conditions not lack of willingness to support the projects.

Next Steps

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

- Decision Process by Board
  - November, 2012 or wait until 2014 or 2016?
  - Geographic Area?
  - Amount and years?
  - Area B at $10/parcel would generate <$10m/year.