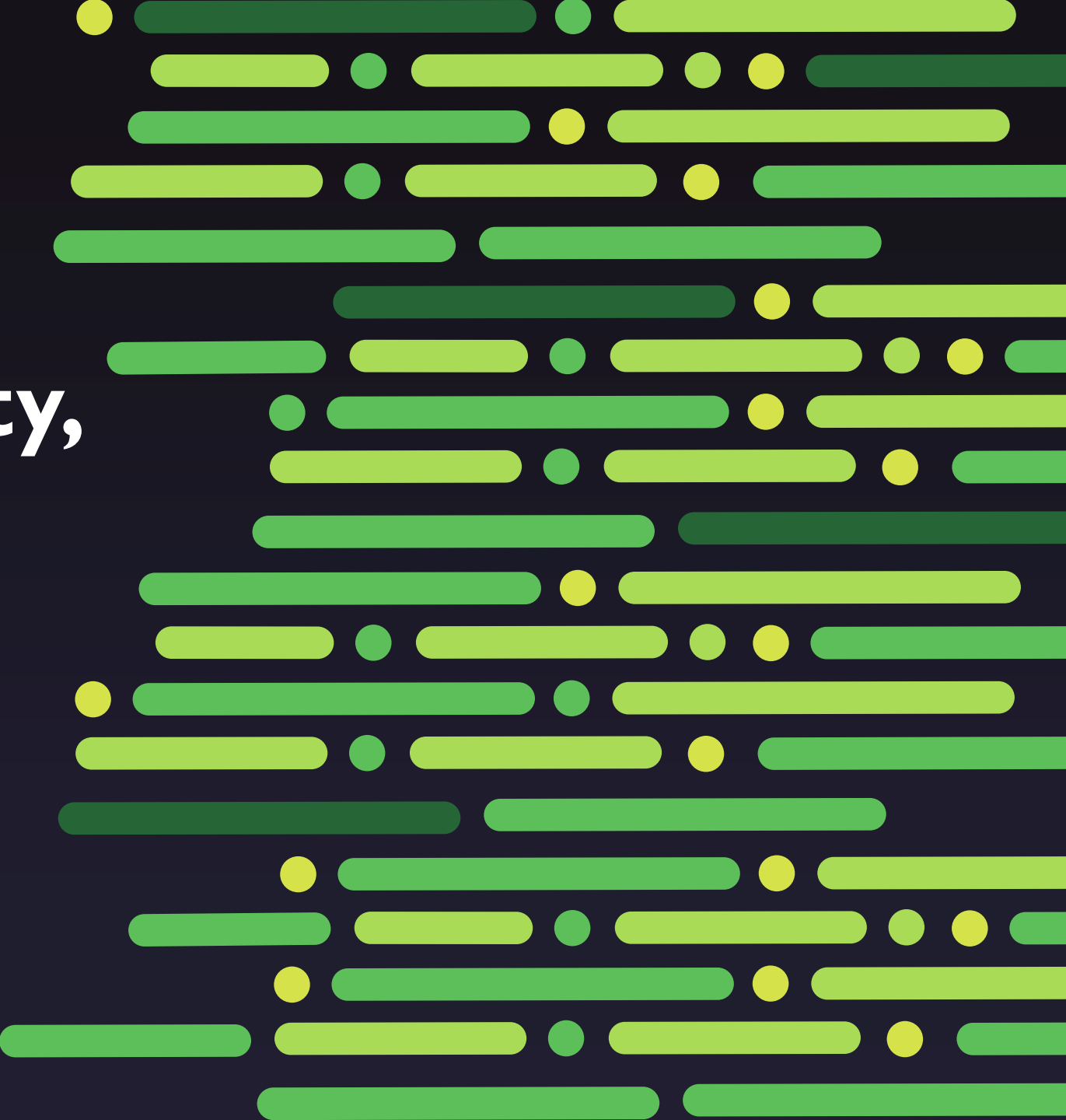


Energy, Affordability, and the Canadian Reality

May 2026



METHODOLOGY



THE SAMPLE

2,350 residents recruited
online.



THE TIMING

April 1 – 14, 2026



THE ACCURACY

Margin of error +/- 2.02%
19 times out of 20

The data was weighted by age, gender, education, and region.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What Canadians are telling governments about energy, housing, and affordability

Cost of living dominates decision-making; energy bills are now a core affordability issue

Canadians value energy efficiency but face structural barriers that limit access and adoption

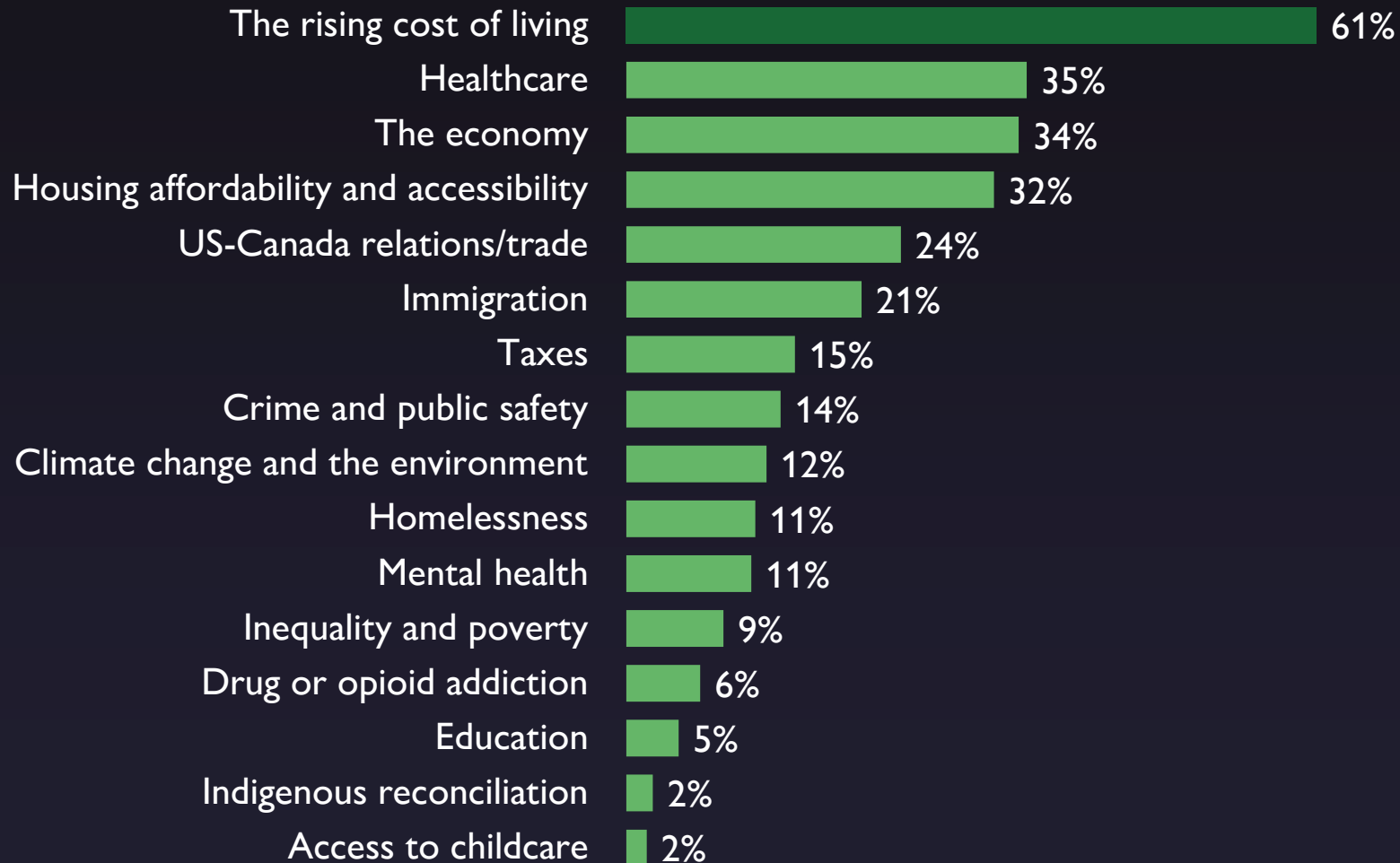
Even modest energy savings materially affect household stability

Governments have a clear mandate to act — with support across parties

A hand is shown from the top right, reaching down towards a row of house models. The models are arranged in a line, with the first two being pink and the rest being dark grey. The background is dark and textured.

**PRECARITY IS THE
CONTEXT**

COST OF LIVING IS THE DEFINING ISSUE



What are the THREE most important issues facing Canada today? Select up to 3.

THE INSIGHT

Canadians are making decisions through the lens of **financial pressure**. With cost-of-living dominating concerns and many households feeling strained, energy efficiency is a way to reduce monthly expenses. Climate benefits matter, but they are secondary to immediate cost relief.

Rising energy bills are a clear and tangible pressure point. Canadians already associate energy-efficient homes with lower costs, and many are actively changing behaviour to manage expenses.

In a period of economic uncertainty, Canadians are seeking greater control over their finances. Energy-efficient homes offer more predictable bills and reduced exposure to price volatility. Framed this way, energy efficiency becomes not just a financial benefit, but a source of stability in an otherwise uncertain environment.

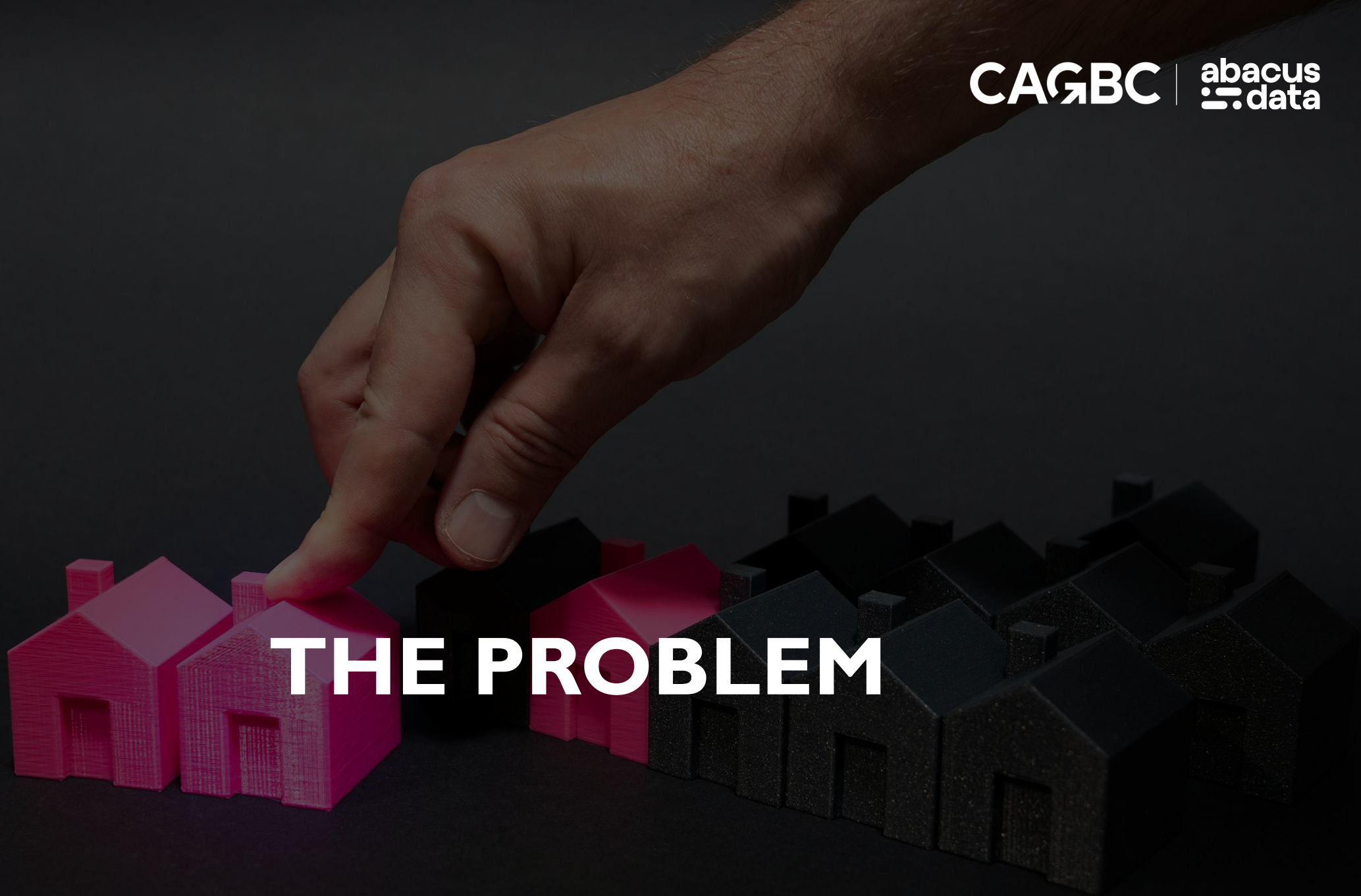
HOW CANADIANS ARE REALLY THINKING ABOUT ENERGY, HOUSING, AND AFFORDABILITY TODAY

Cost of living is shaping everything

Energy is now part of the affordability crisis

Canadians want efficiency but can't always access it

The system needs to close the gap



THE PROBLEM

NEARLY HALF OF CANADIANS ARE FINANCIALLY STRAINED

Comfort is no longer the norm

52% are comfortable

33% are “just getting by”

15% are struggling



UTILITY COSTS ARE RISING

Energy is becoming less predictable

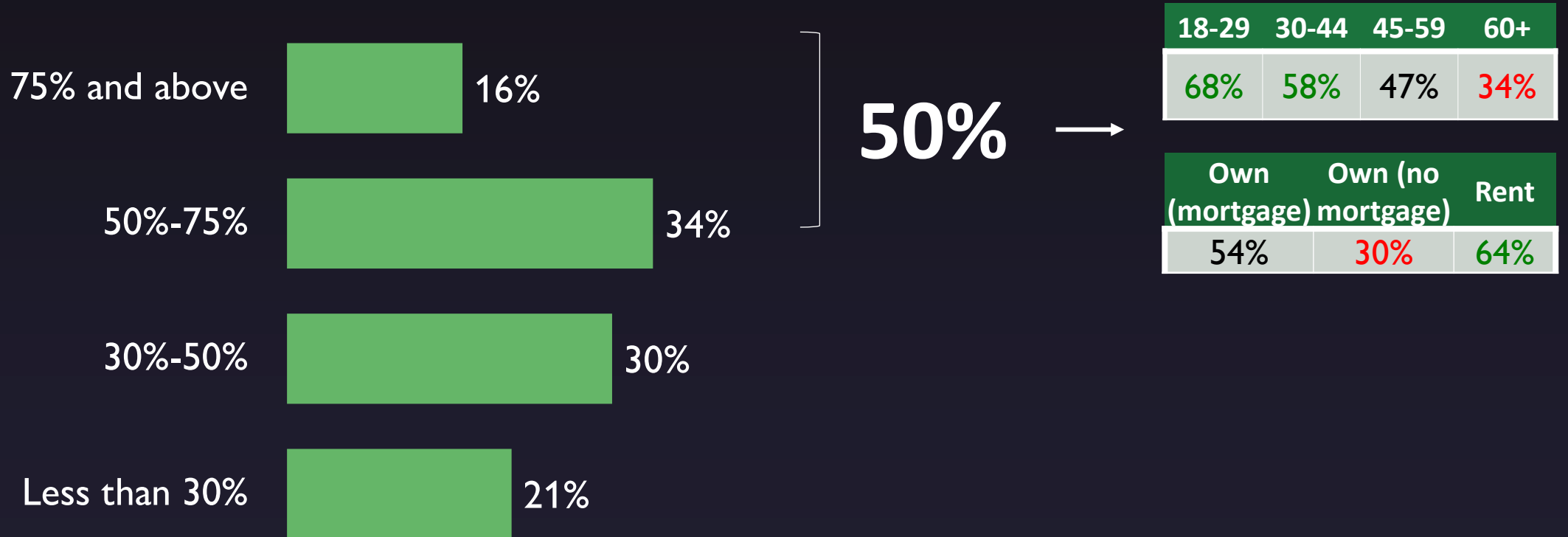
72%

**HOUSEHOLD UTILITY COSTS
HAVE INCREASED OVER THE
PAST 12 MONTHS**



HOUSING AND ENERGY ARE CONSUMING BUDGETS

Budgets are already stretched before energy is considered



ENERGY BILLS ARE NOW A CORE FINANCIAL PRESSURE

This is not a marginal expense

62%

SAY THEIR ENERGY BILLS AFFECT THEIR OVERALL MONTHLY BUDGET



18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
76%	73%	62%	45%

60%

FEEL THEIR ENERGY BILLS ARE A FINANCIAL BURDEN TODAY



18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
71%	72%	62%	44%



MANY ARE FORCED INTO IMPOSSIBLE CHOICES

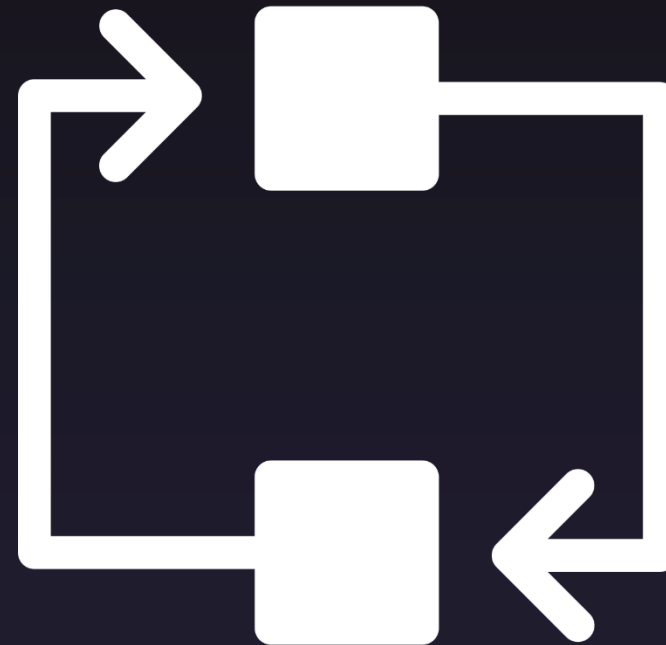
Energy competes with essentials

38%

have had to make trade-offs
between paying their energy bills
and other essential household
expenses



18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
58%	53%	36%	15%



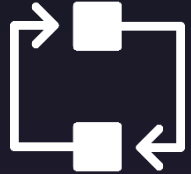
In the past 12 months, have you had to make trade-offs between paying energy bills and other essential household expenses such as food, transportation, or healthcare?

YOUNGER CANADIANS ARE LIVING THIS MOST ACUTELY

The most strained – and most adaptive



HIGHER COST BURDEN



MORE TRADE-OFFS



MORE OPENNESS TO CHANGE

PREDICTABILITY MATTERS

Stability is part of affordability

85%

**ARE CONCERNED ABOUT
THE VOLATILITY OF ENERGY
PRICES**



A hand is shown pointing at a row of house models. The models are arranged in a line, with the first two being pink and the rest being dark grey. The text 'WHAT DRIVES BEHAVIOUR' is overlaid in white, bold, uppercase letters across the middle of the image.

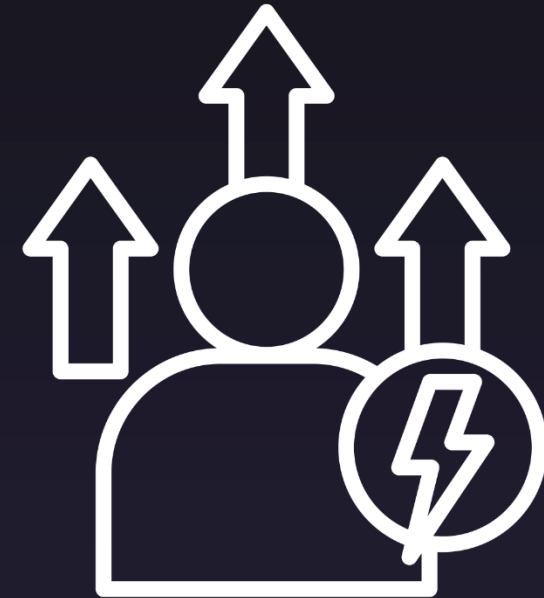
WHAT DRIVES BEHAVIOUR

MANY CANADIANS ARE ALREADY TAKING ACTION TO REDUCE ENERGY USE

This is not a passive or disengaged population

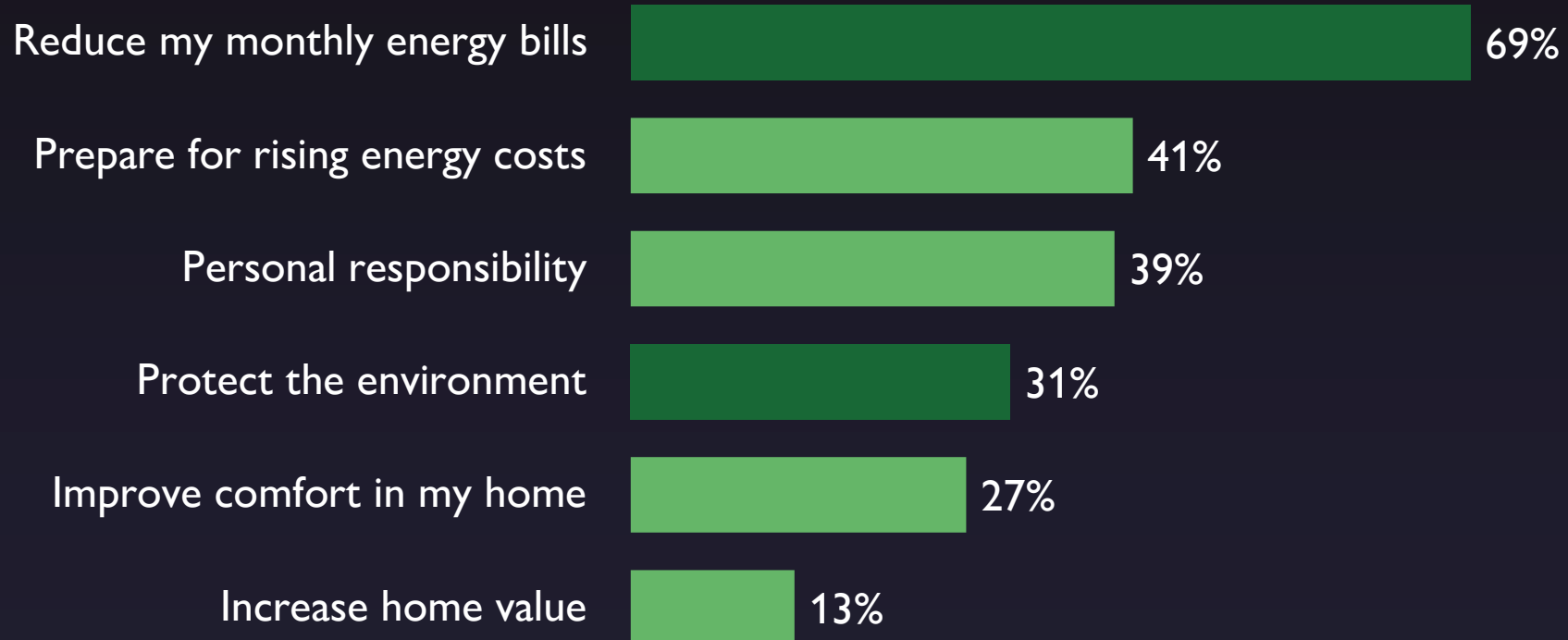
81%

ARE ACTIVELY TRYING TO REDUCE ENERGY USE IN THEIR HOME TODAY.



COST – NOT CLIMATE – DRIVES ACTION

The reality of motivation



HOWEVER, CONTROL OVER ENERGY COSTS IS LIMITED

Not everyone can act – even if they want to

36%

**say they have little or no control
over decisions that affect their
home's energy costs.**



Single detached house	Semi-detached house	Town/ Row house	Low-rise apt	Mid- / High-rise apt	Condo
28%	37%	36%	55%	61%	34%

Own (mortgage)	Own (no mortgage)	Rent
27%	24%	50%



ENERGY EFFICIENCY IS UNDERSTOOD THROUGH SAVINGS

A financial concept first



**LOWER
BILLS**



**LONG-TERM
SAVINGS**



HOUSING TRADE-OFFS

SPACE IS FLEXIBLE – COSTS ARE NOT

Canadians will give up size if it lowers monthly expenses

80%

would accept a slightly smaller home if it significantly reduced energy costs



CANADIANS WILL TRADE AMENITIES FOR LOWER COSTS

Energy savings outweigh the value of building features

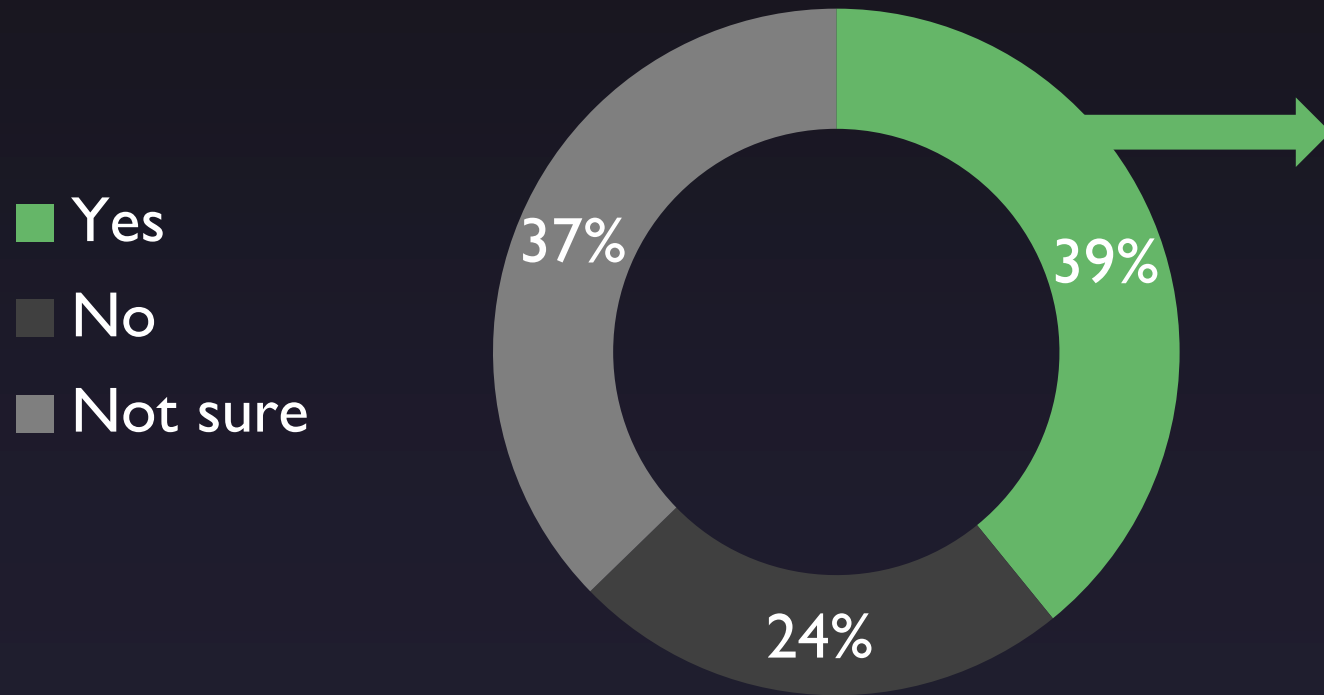
76%

would accept fewer building amenities if energy costs were significantly lower.



BUT UPFRONT COST STOPS THEM

The critical barrier



18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
47%	44%	38%	32%

Own (mortgage)	Own (no mortgage)	Rent
39%	33%	51%





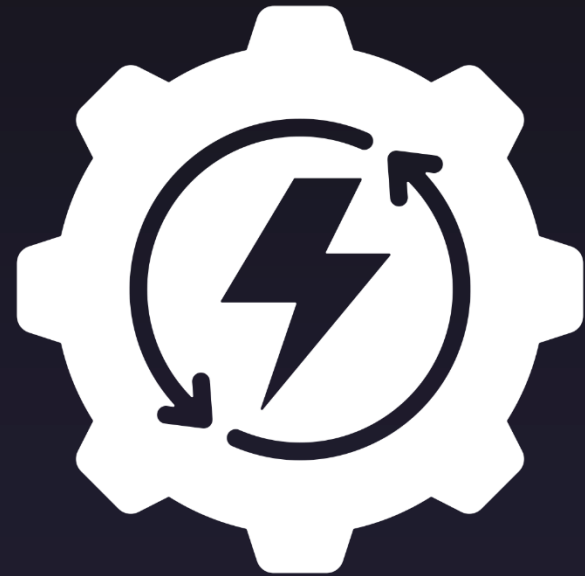
THE SOLUTIONS

CANADIANS WANT ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The interest is clearly there

73%

have a positive impression when they hear the term “energy-efficient building”



ENERGY EFFICIENCY MATTERS IN FUTURE DECISIONS

Most Canadians see it as an important factor when choosing a home

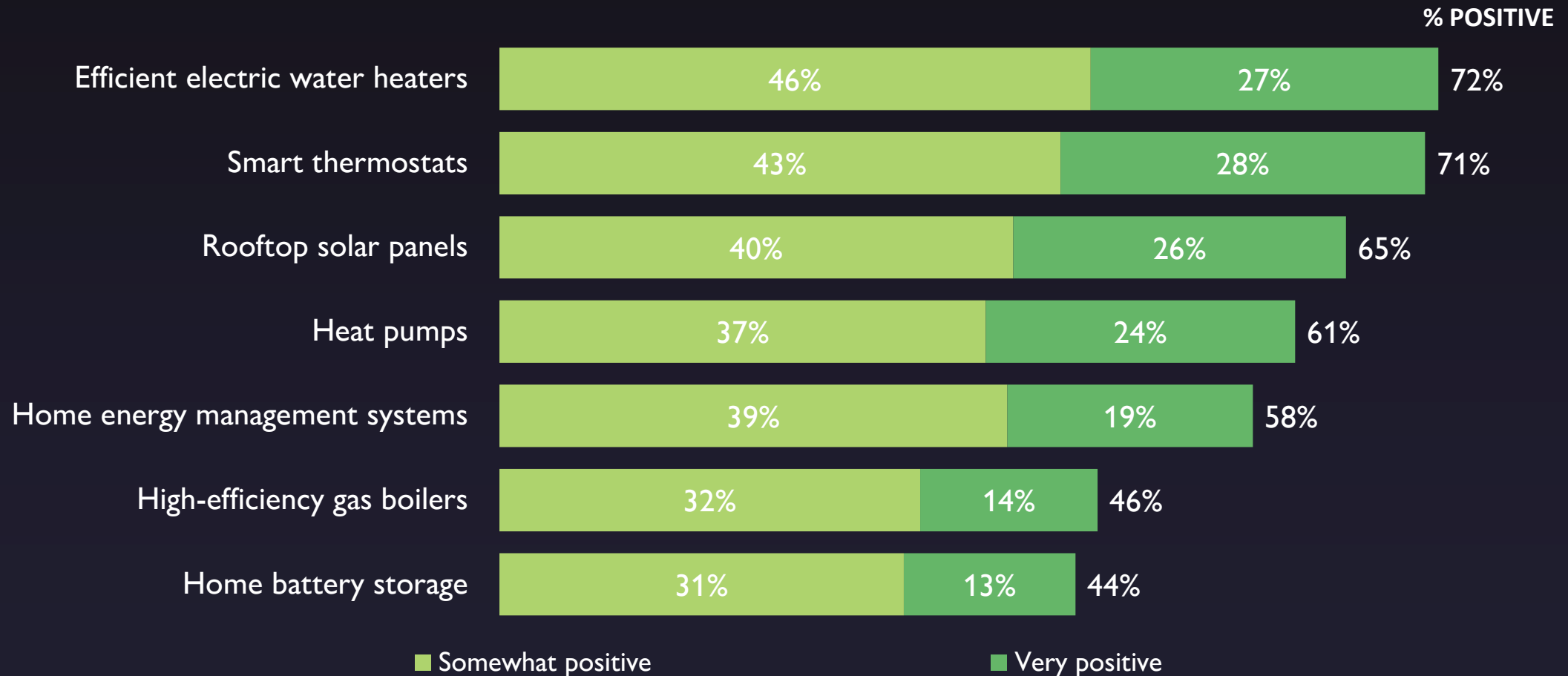
86%

find energy efficiency important in their housing decisions if they were moving within the next 5 years.



FAMILIAR TECHNOLOGIES BUILD CONFIDENCE

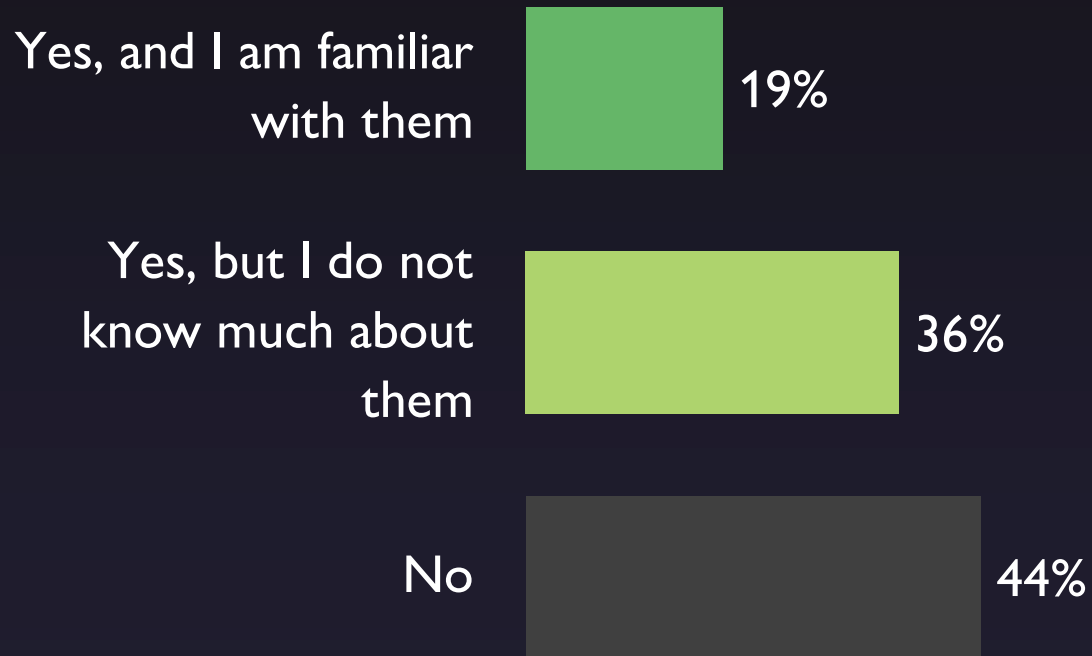
Adoption is highest where understanding already exists



For each of the following technologies, indicate your overall impression.

CERTIFICATION AWARENESS IS LOW BUT INFLUENCE IS REAL

Awareness is the missing link



62%

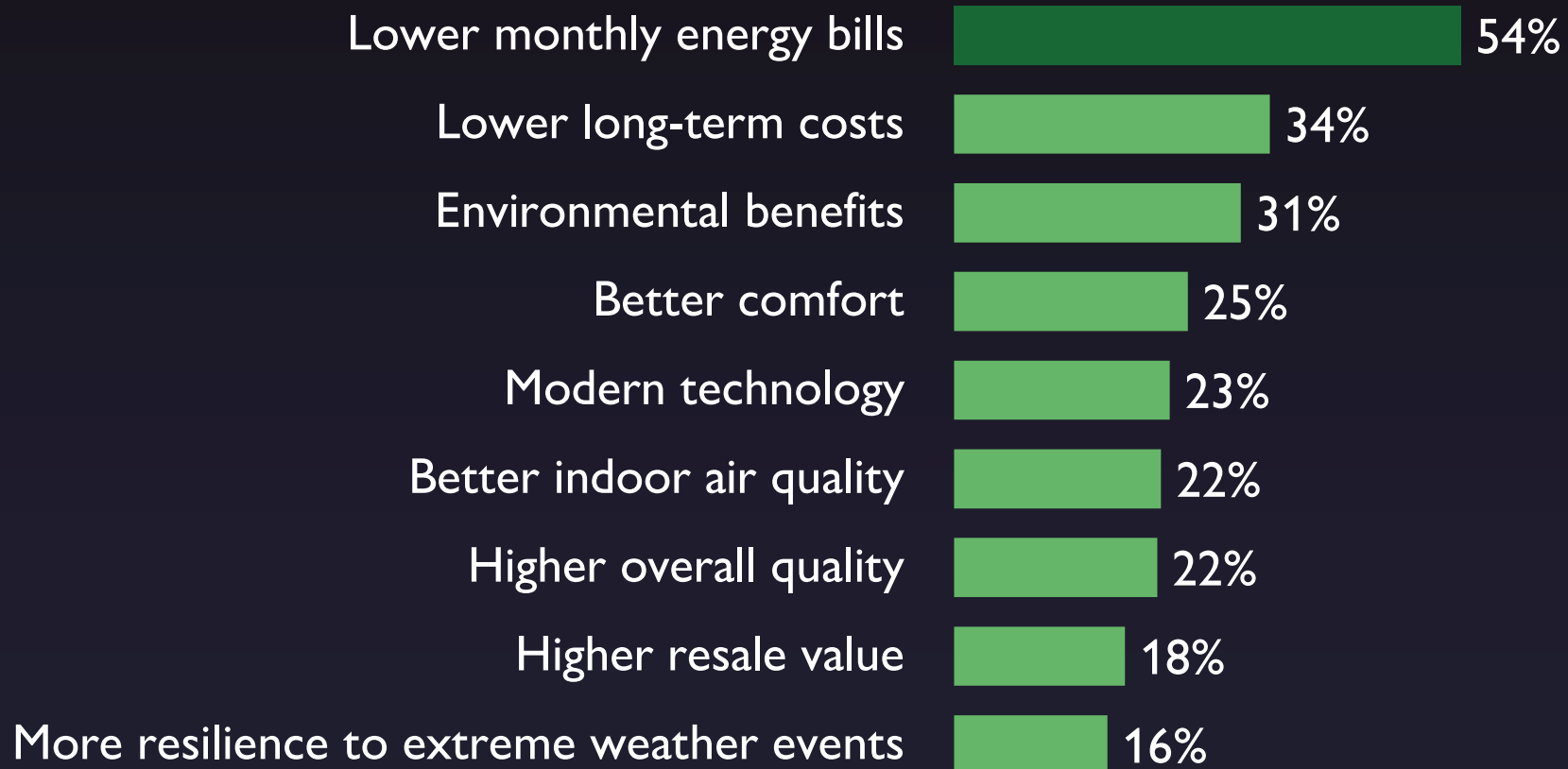
say a building certification would be a factor in their decision when purchasing or renting a home



Before today, had you heard of building certifications such as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) or Zero Carbon Building (ZCB), Passive House, EnergyStar, Enguide, Built Green, Novoclimat? Do you believe that living in a certified building would increase or decrease monthly housing costs?

ENERGY EFFICIENCY IS ASSOCIATED WITH COST SAVINGS

Financial benefit is the primary perception



EVEN MODEST SAVINGS HAVE REAL IMPACT

Small monthly reductions are meaningful for a large share of Canadians

49%

believe ~\$50 per month or
~\$600 per year savings would be
meaningful for their household



↓

18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
65%	53%	48%	37%

According to Natural Resources Canada, between 2000 and 2020, energy efficiency improvements were estimated to save on average 49\$ per month or about 600\$ annually. How meaningful would that be for your household?



IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT SAVING MONEY

Energy efficiency is linked to better day-to-day living

65%

agree that living in an energy-efficient building would improve their quality of life.



↓

18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
76%	65%	64%	58%



**THE VALUE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY
ISN'T THE ISSUE. CANADIANS
UNDERSTAND IT, BELIEVE IN IT, AND
RECOGNIZE THAT EVEN MODEST
SAVINGS MATTER.**

**THE REAL CHALLENGE IS NOT VALUE.
IT'S ACCESS.**



POLITICAL WILL

GOVERNMENT INCENTIVES ARE WIDELY SUPPORTED

Affordability support is seen as essential

77%

believe governments should provide incentives to make energy-efficient housing more affordable.



LPC	CPC	NDP	BQ
83%	71%	81%	89%



GOVERNMENT INCENTIVES ARE WIDELY SUPPORTED

Affordability support is seen as essential

86%

support stronger energy efficiency requirements in new housing construction.



LPC	CPC	NDP	BQ
90%	83%	91%	63%



CANADIANS EXPECT ENERGY EFFICIENCY TO BE BUILT IN

Near-universal support for making it a standard for BCH, not an option

91%

think Build Canada Homes should aim to build energy-efficient and resilient homes.



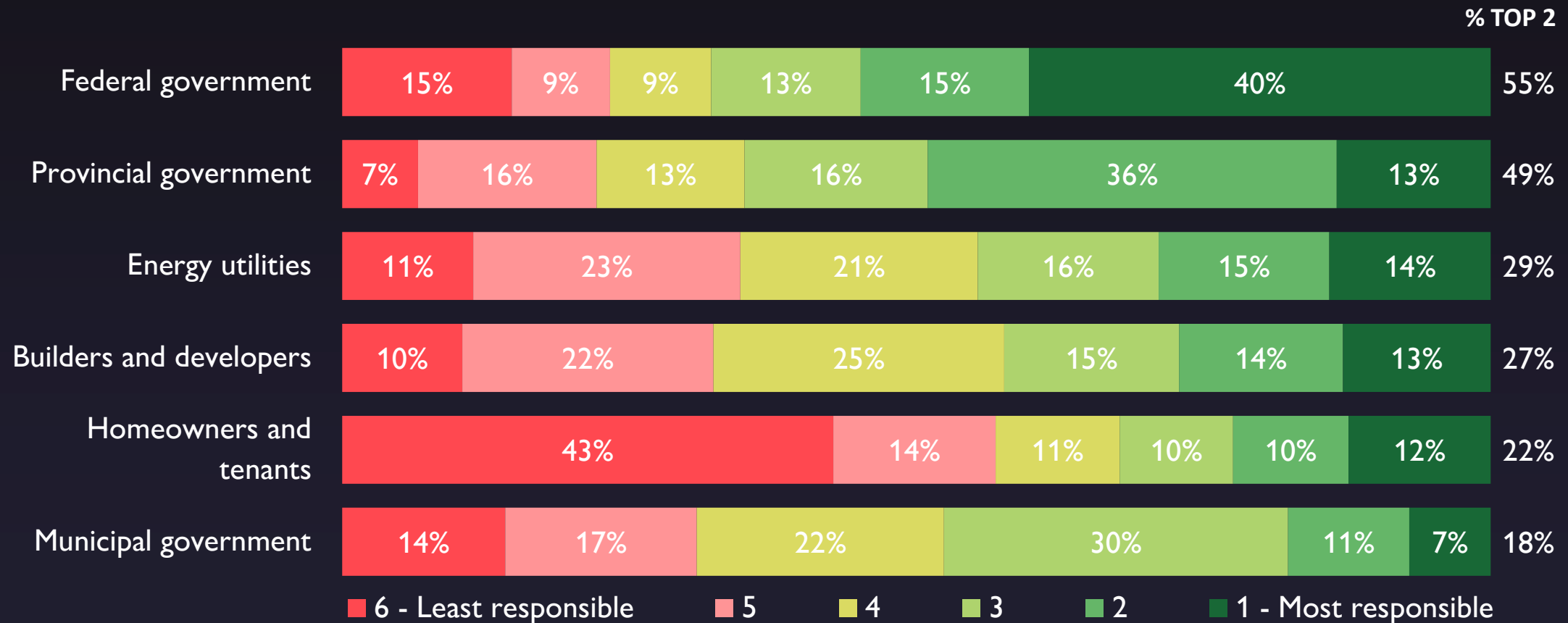
LPC	CPC	NDP	BQ
96%	87%	93%	93%



To what extent do you think Build Canada Homes, the new federal initiative to deliver affordable housing, should aim to build energy-efficient and resilient homes?

GOVERNMENT IS SEEN AS THE PRIMARY DRIVER

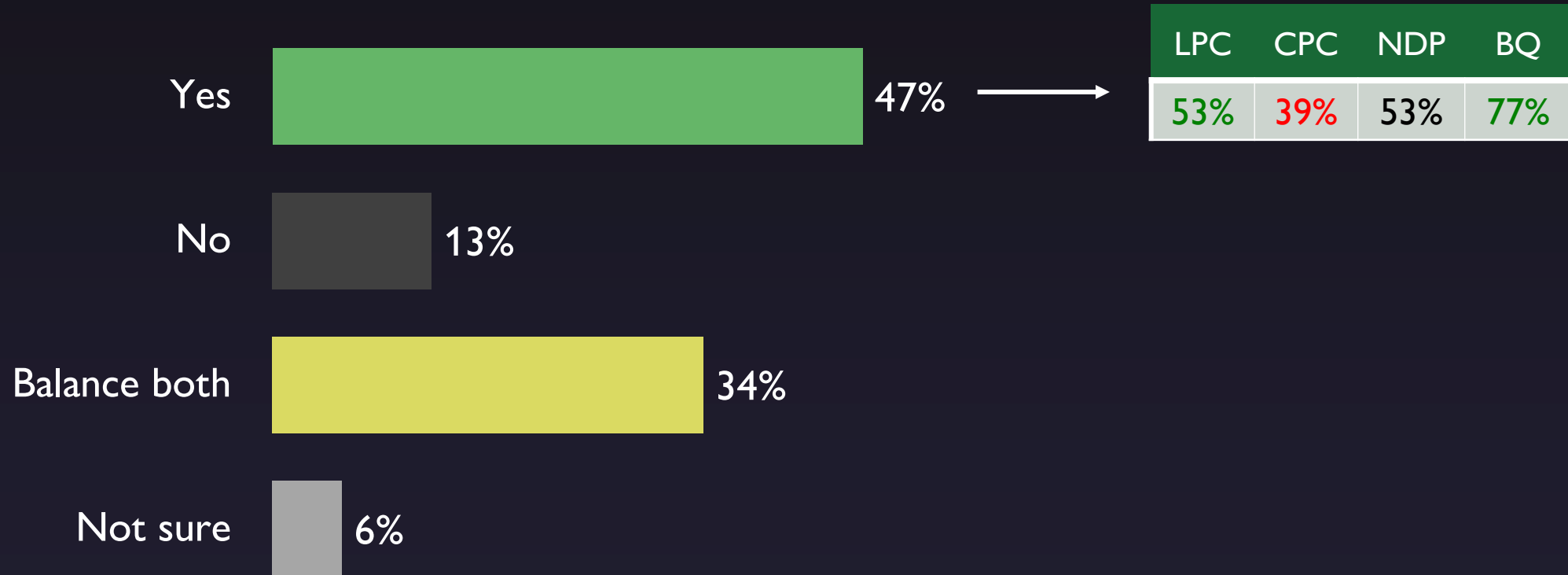
Responsibility sits at the system level, not with individuals



Who should be most responsible for helping Canadians adopt energy-efficient housing practices? Please rank in order from most to least responsible.

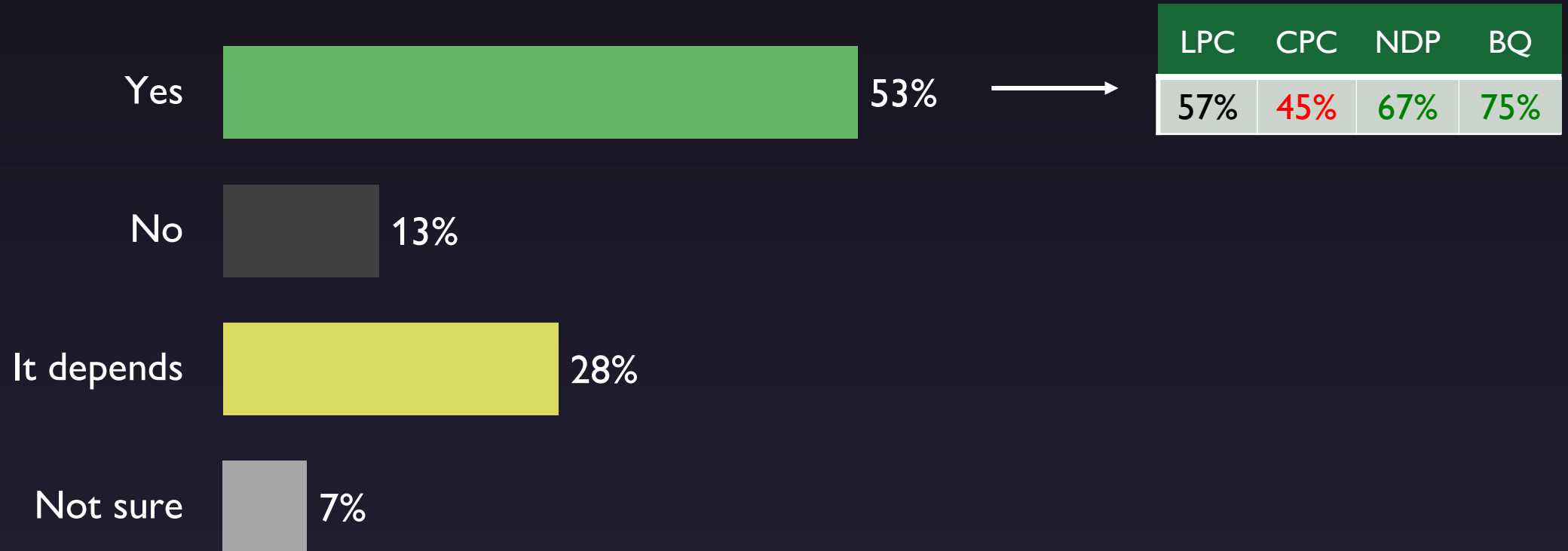
CANADIANS ACCEPT TRADE-OFFS FOR BETTER OUTCOMES

Long-term affordability outweighs short-term cost



MAJORITY SUPPORT MORE FUNDING FOR ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOUSING

Few oppose funding energy-efficient affordable housing



NEAR-UNIVERSAL SUPPORT FOR ENERGY TRANSPARENCY

Canadians want efficiency clearly reflected in housing listings

89%

support energy efficiency ratings being required on housing listings.

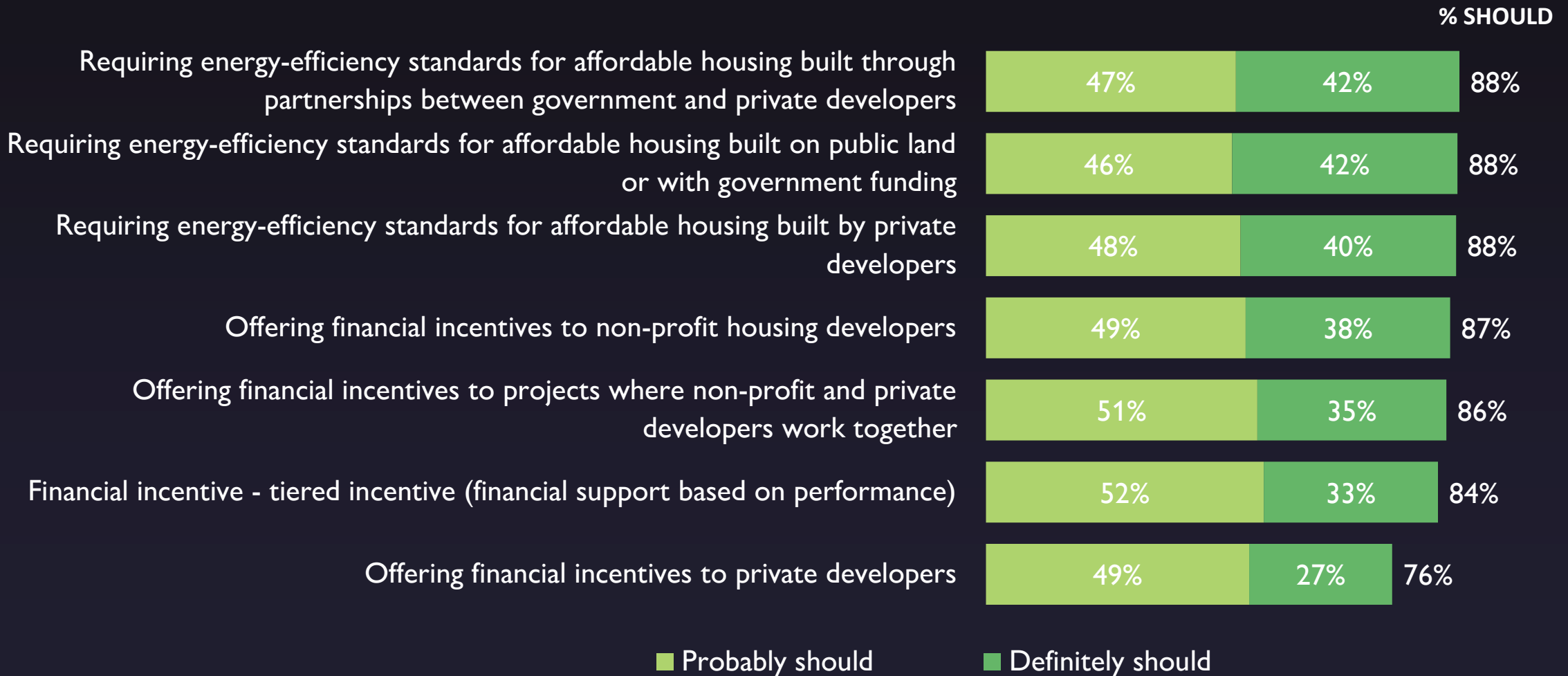


LPC	CPC	NDP	BQ
93%	82%	91%	91%



GOVERNMENT IS SEEN AS THE PRIMARY DRIVER

Responsibility sits at the system level, not with individuals





FINAL THOUGHTS

**WHEN YOU STEP BACK, THE PATTERN IS
CLEAR: CANADIANS ARE ENGAGED AND
UNDERSTAND THE VALUE BUT COST
AND ACCESS ARE HOLDING THEM BACK.**

**THAT'S WHERE REAL PROGRESS CAN
HAPPEN.**

The Upshot

What this means for energy efficiency and housing

Energy efficiency is widely valued, with strong and growing importance in housing decisions

The desire to reduce energy costs is clear, but the ability to act is constrained

The system is limiting adoption, particularly through upfront costs and access barriers

These pressures are affecting affordability, financial stability, and quality of life

There is clear public support for government action and system-level solutions

Cost is the primary decision filter.

Access determines whether action happens.

**System-level solutions are required
to scale adoption.**

Thank You

CAGBC

cagbc.org

**abacus
data**

abacusdata.ca