



PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF TRANSPORTATION FEES & TAXES IN NORTH CAROLINA 2020



ITRE

Institute for Transportation
Research and Education

Emeline McCaleb
Weston Head, MS
Nick Norboge, PhD
Daniel Findley, PhD, PE

Michael Cobb, PhD
Eleni Bardaka, PhD
Larry Goode, PhD, PE

Study Overview

- Challenges to the long-term sustainability of revenue streams
- Survey has been updated to better understand how the public perceives transportation taxes and fees
- Public perceptions of transportation taxes and fees vary by demographics, but in most cases, not drastically
- Many states are exploring alternative funding mechanisms
- Support exists for increasing road funding, preference exists for the gas tax, but support exists to diversify funding sources

Findings from Similar Studies Across the Country

	Dependent Variable	Support for Tolls	Support for Increased Fuel Tax	Support for Increased Fuel Tax	Support for Variable VMT (By Vehicle Type)	Support for VMT	Willingness to pay for road improvements	Willingness to pay Toll to be free of delays	Support for Increased Fuel Tax
Independent Variable	Age (Older)	(-)	(+)	*	(-)	*	*	*	(+)
	Education (Higher Levels of Education = 1)	(+)	(+)	(+)	*	*	(+)		(+)
	Employment (Employed = 1)	*	*			*		*	
	Gender (Male = 1)	*	*	(+)	(-)	*	*	*	(+)
	Income (Higher Income)			(+)	*		(+)	(+)	(+)
	Miles Driven (More miles driven)			*	*	*	*		(+)
	Opinion of Government Investment in Transportation Funding (Favorable Opinion = 1)		*	(+)	(+)				(+)
	Party Affiliation (Democrat = 1)	(-)	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)		(+)
	General Level of Support	28%	29%	36%	19%	21%	38%	24%	40%
	Location of Study (Author, Year)	Virginia (Yusuf, 2018)		National (Nixon/ Agrawal, 2018)		National (Duncan, 2017)	California and Michigan (Fisher/ Wassmer, 2016)	Virginia (Yusuf, 2014)	California (Weinstein/ Dill, 2007)

* Indicates the variable was included in the model but was found to be insignificant

(+) Indicates the variable was **positively** correlated with the dependent variable

(-) Indicates the variable was **negatively** correlated with the dependent variable

2020 Public Perceptions Survey

Sample Size = 1,049

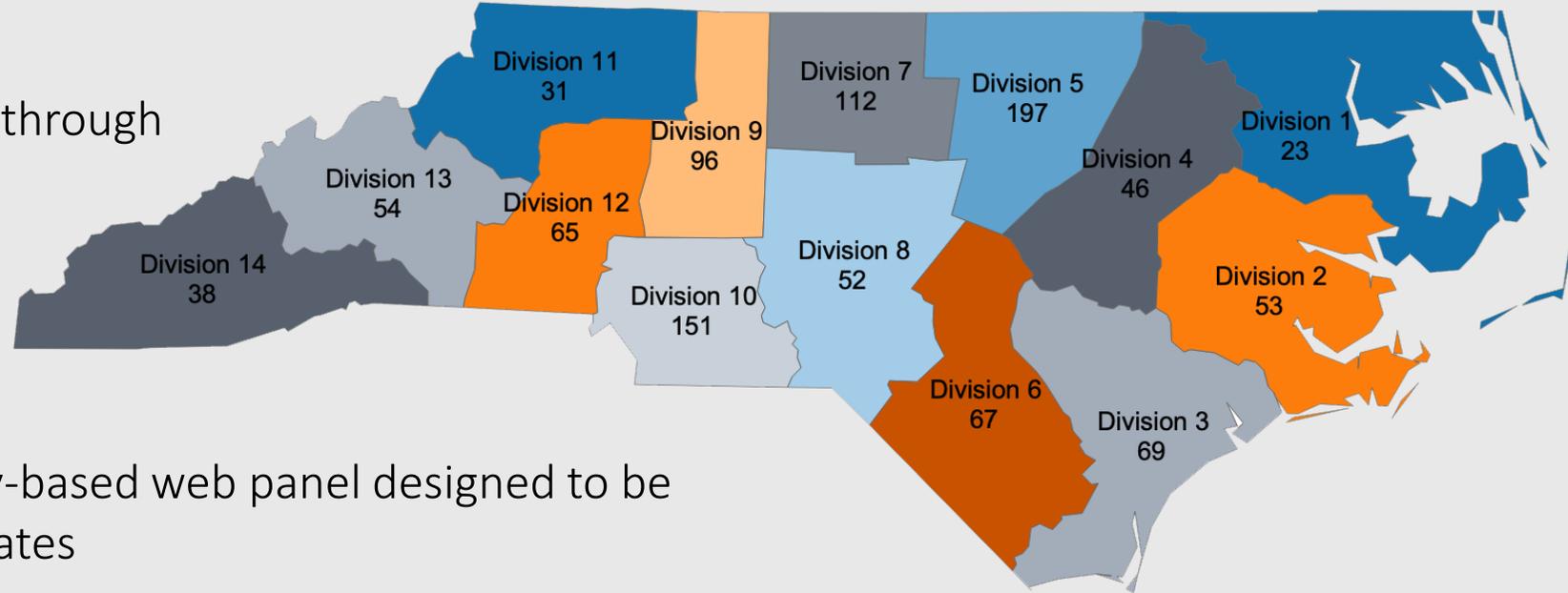
Deployed on July 23, 2020, ran through August 3, 2020

Completion rate: 60%

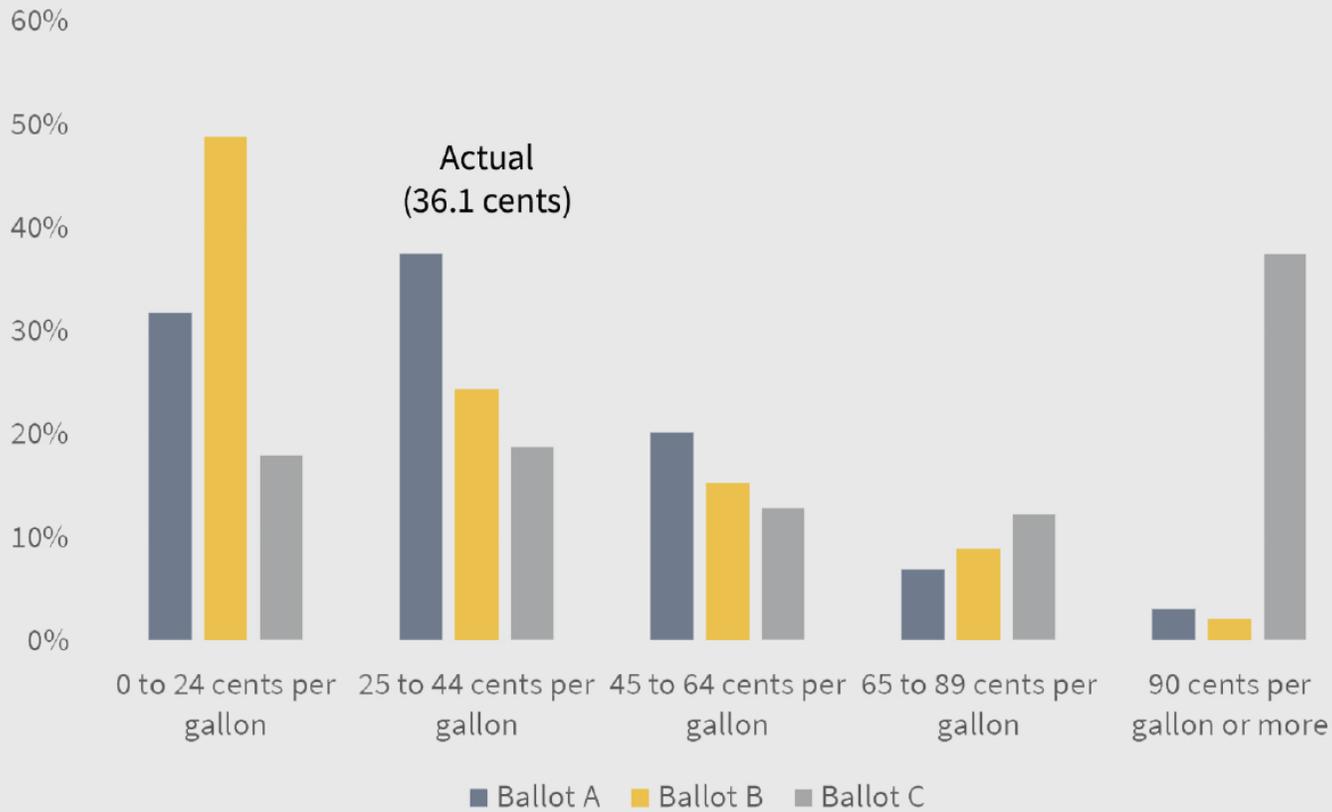
Conducted online by IPSOS KnowledgePanel®, a probability-based web panel designed to be representative of the United States

Weights were applied to collected data to ensure sample demographics accurately represent North Carolina's adult population

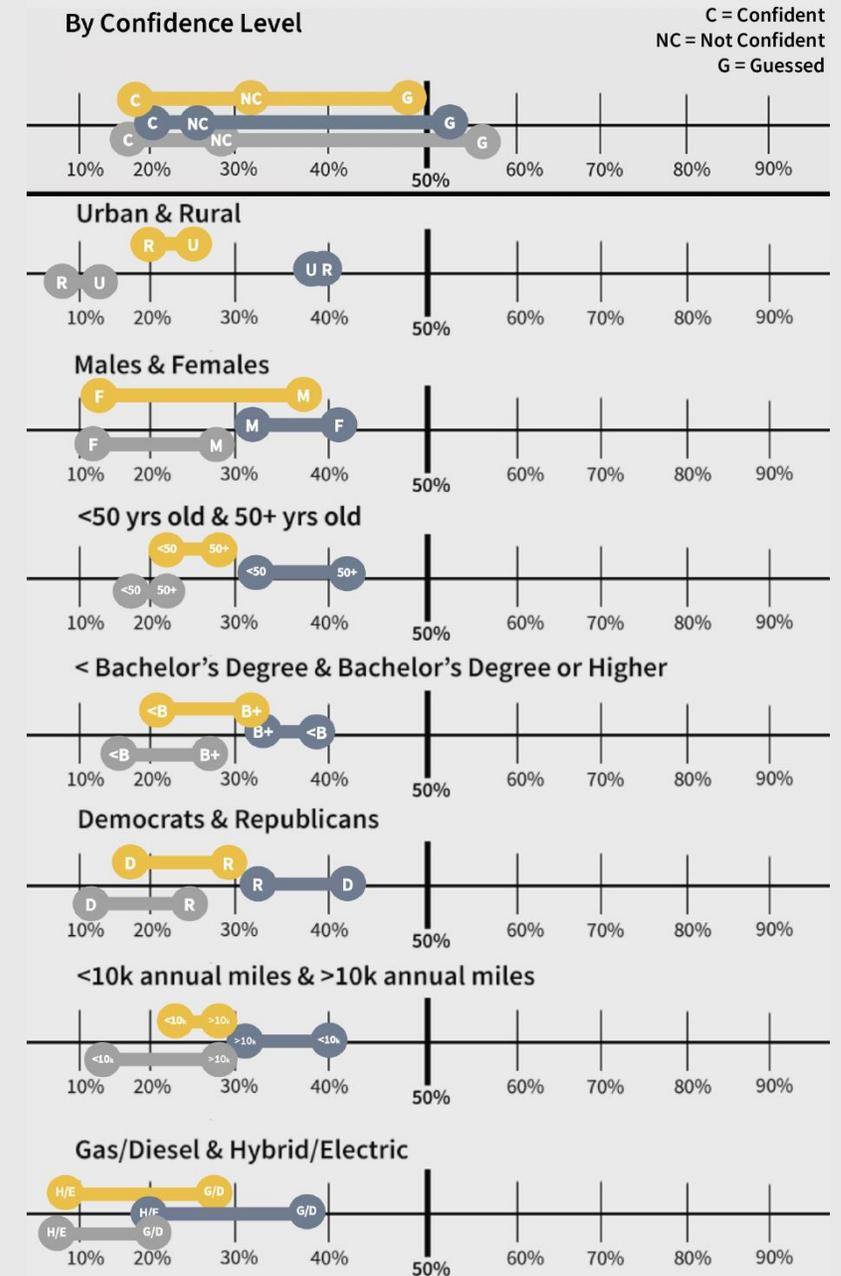
Responses by Division



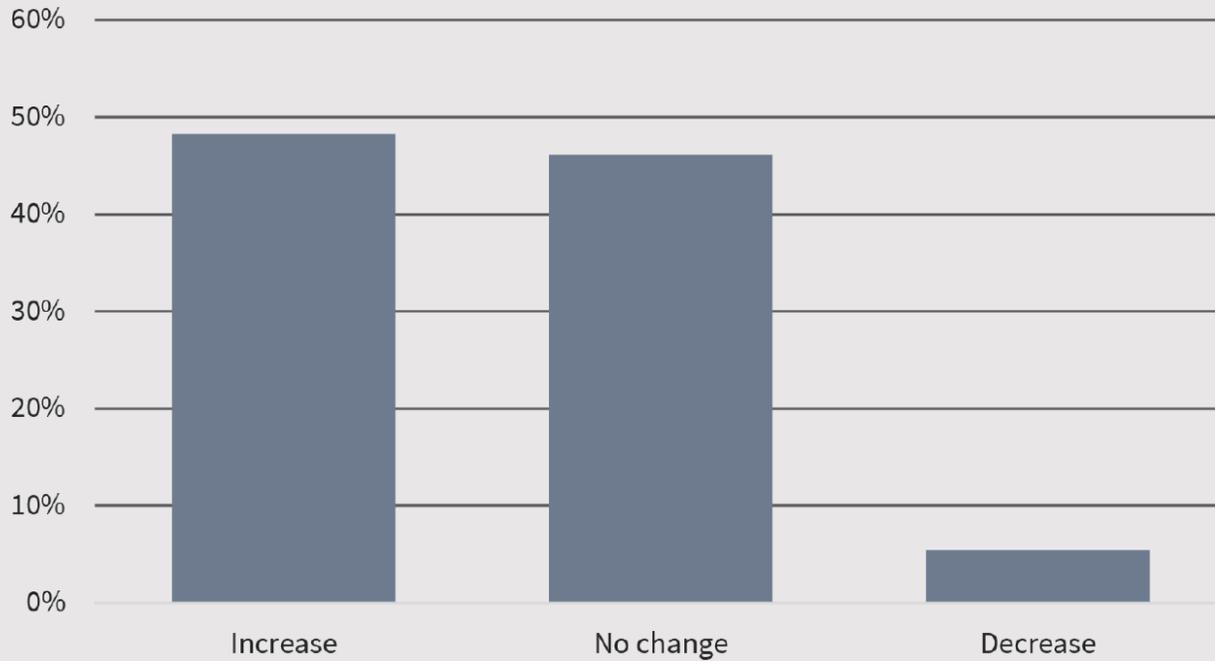
Estimates of the Current State Gas Tax Rate per Gallon of Gas



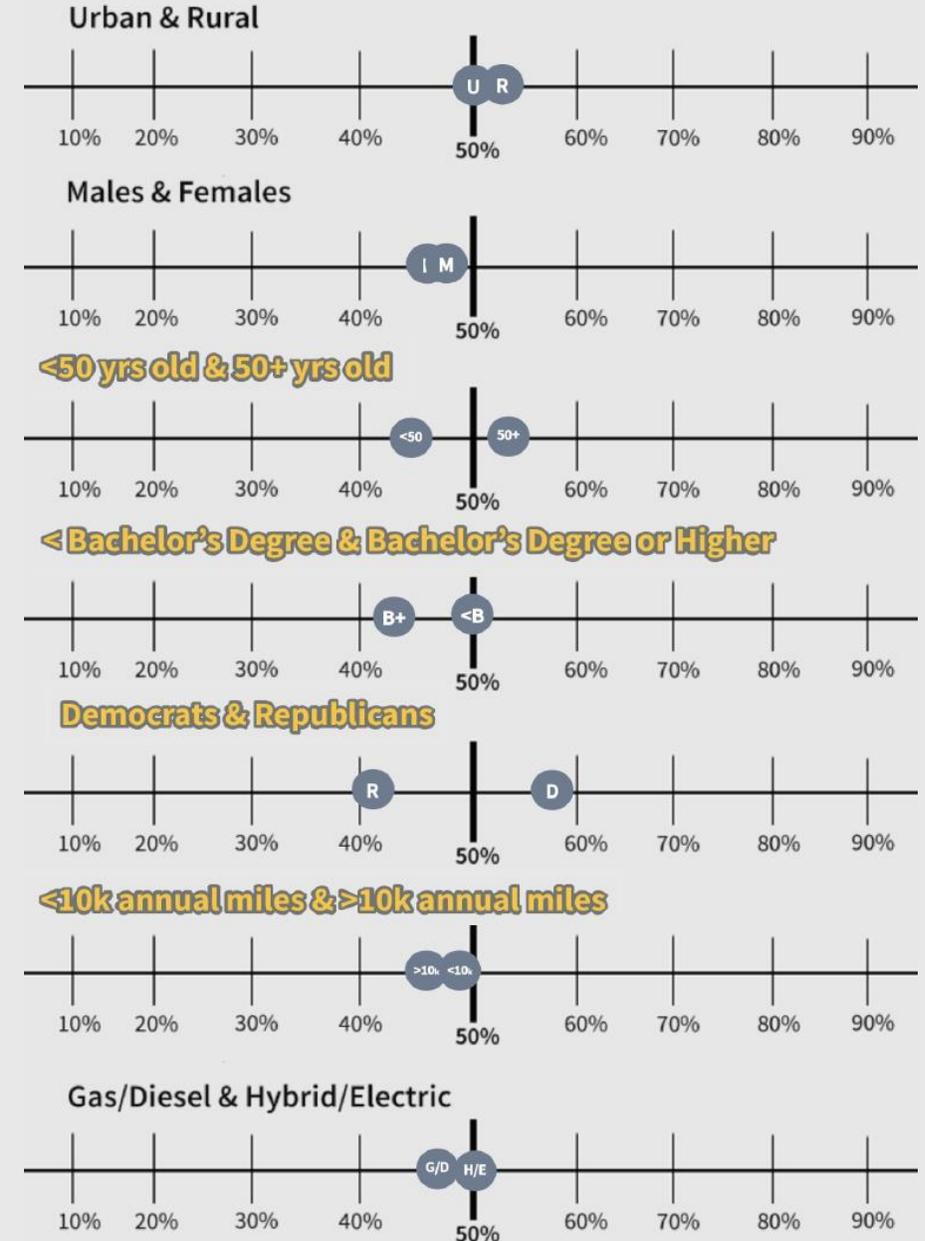
Percentage of Group Who Responded Accurately



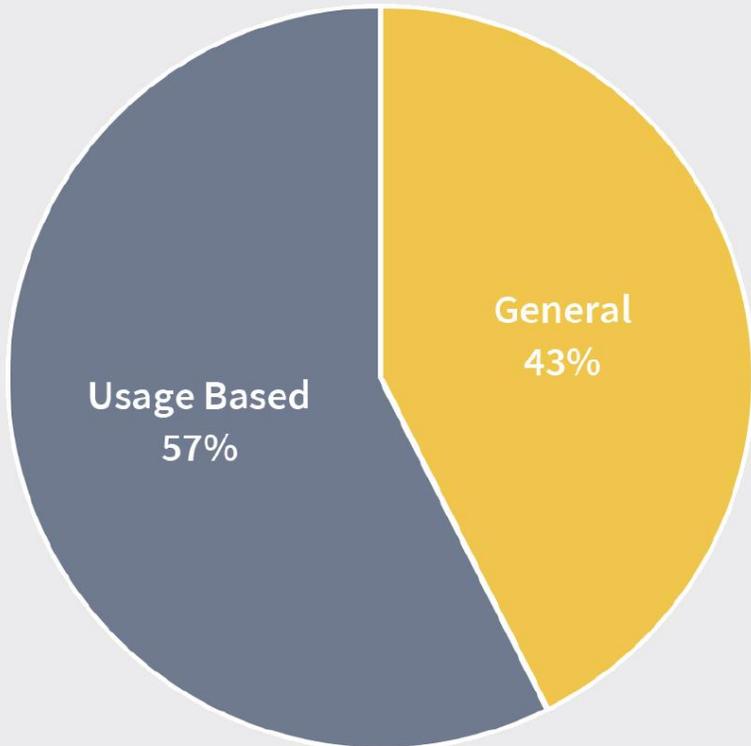
Support for Increasing Transportation Spending



Support Funding Increase, Difference by Group



Where Should Road Funding Come From?



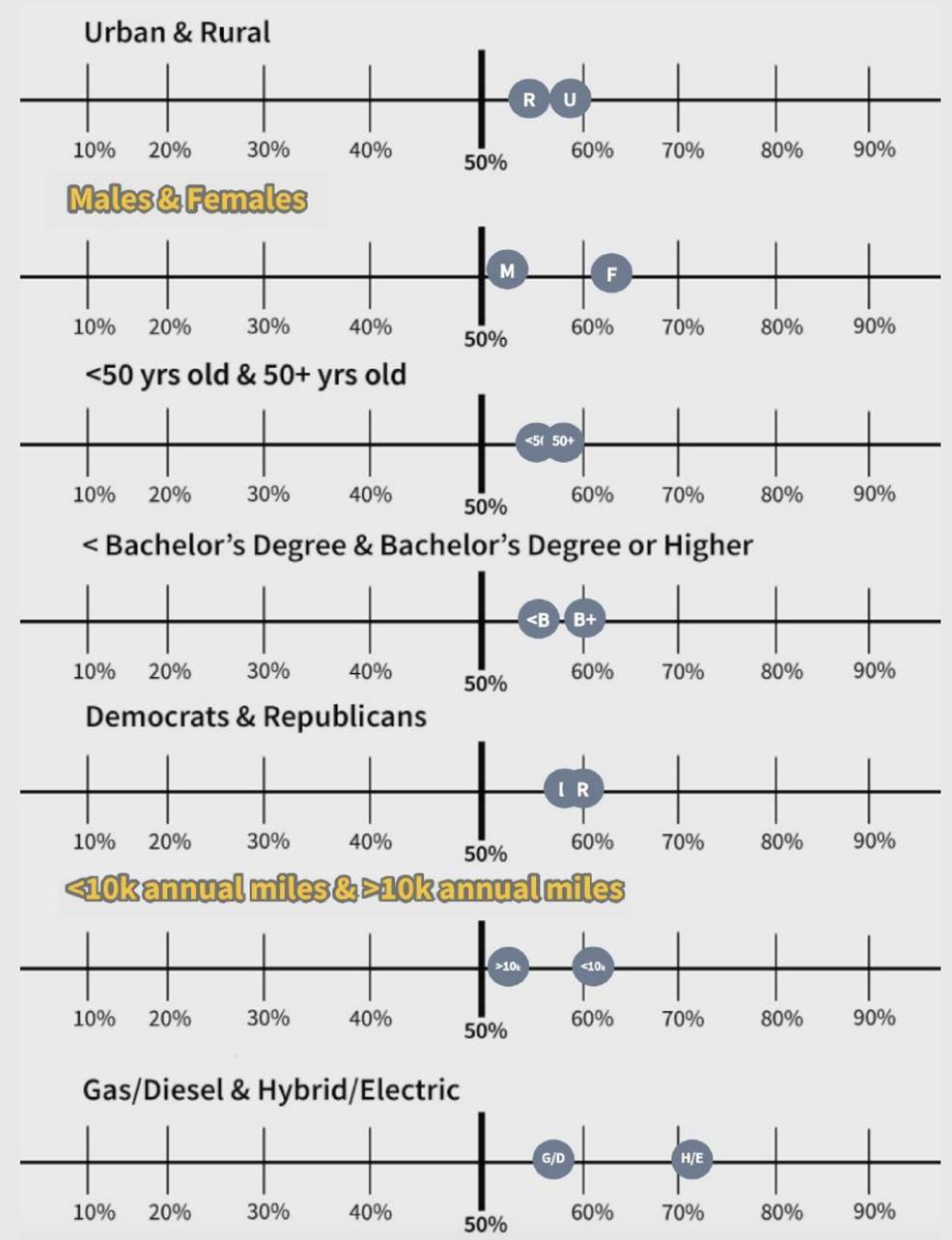
General Taxes:

General sales tax, property tax, vehicle property tax

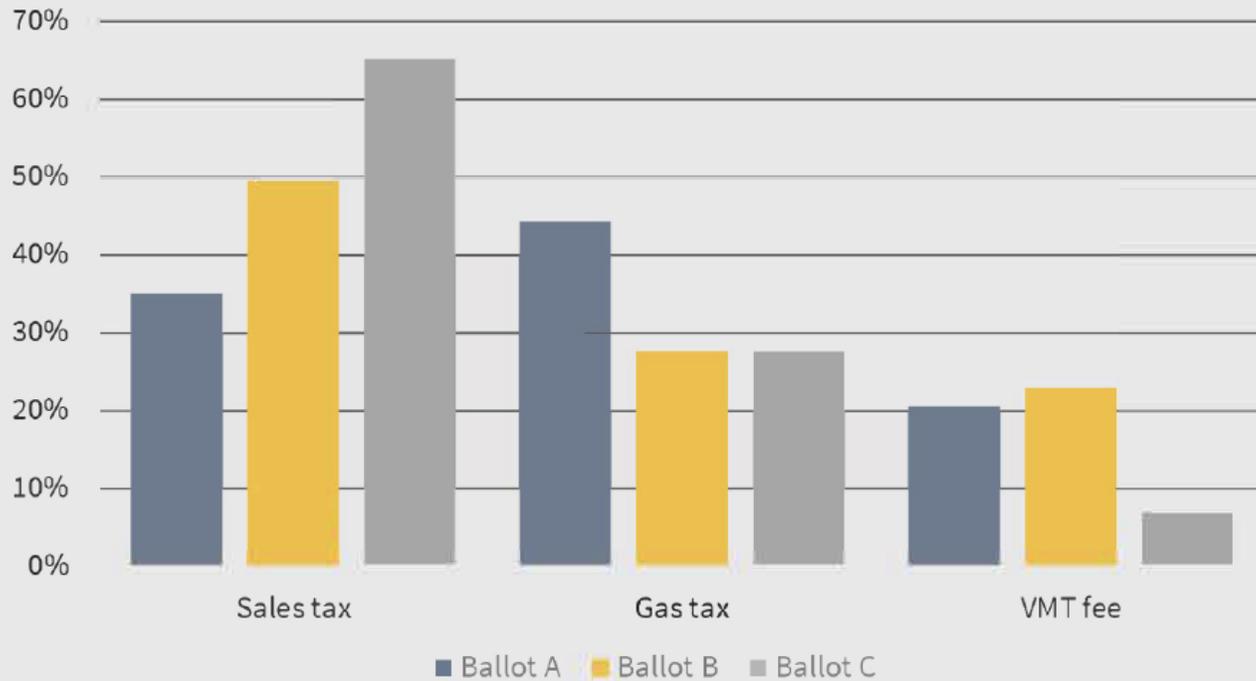
Usage Based Fees:

Fees from gasoline, tolls, or miles driven

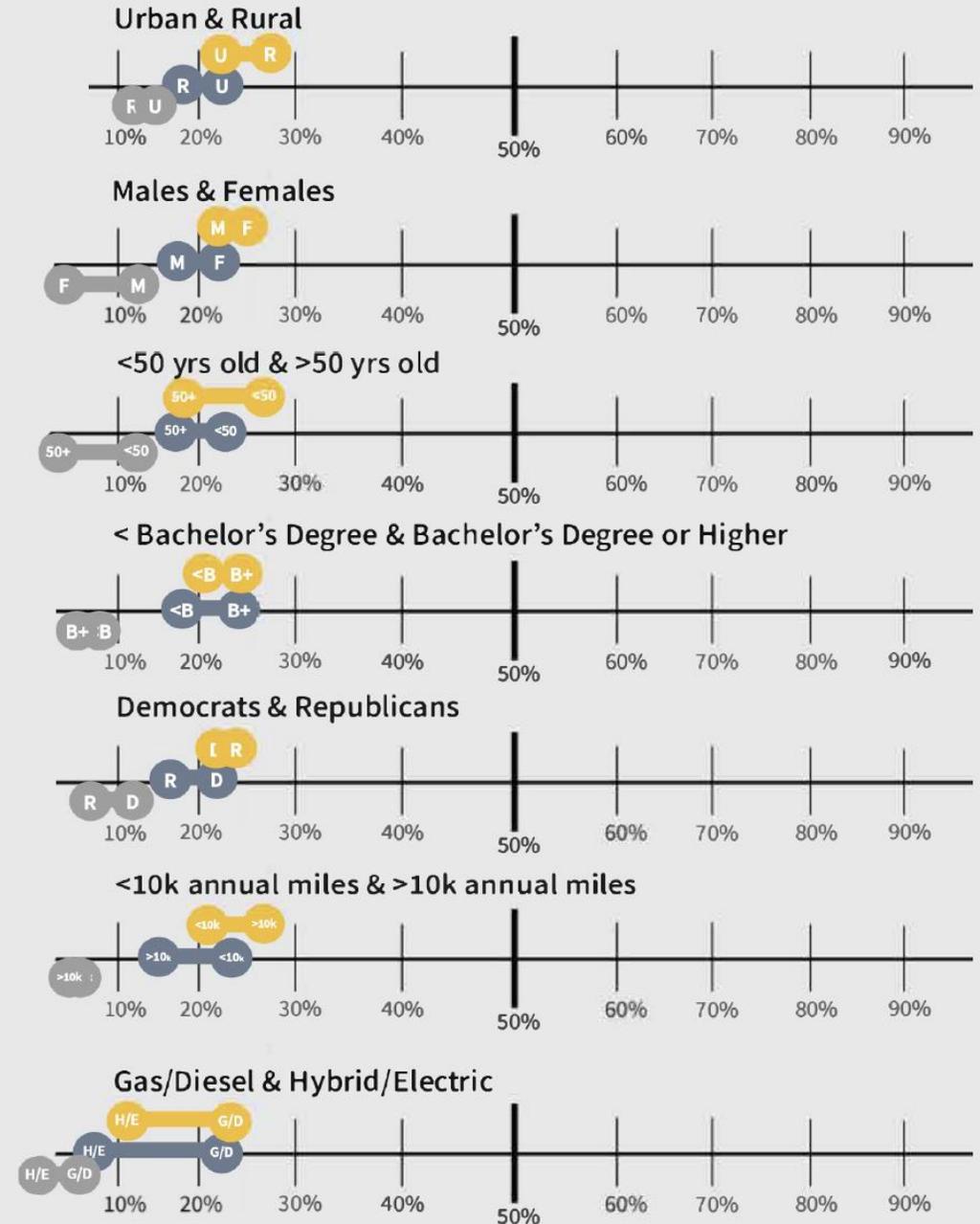
Preferred Usage Based, Difference by Group



Preference for Transportation Funding Source



Prefer VMT Fee, Difference by Group



Reason for Funding Preference

Quotes:

“There has to be a way to charge electric and high mileage vehicles.”

“People driving through our state or visiting are not paying their fair share.”

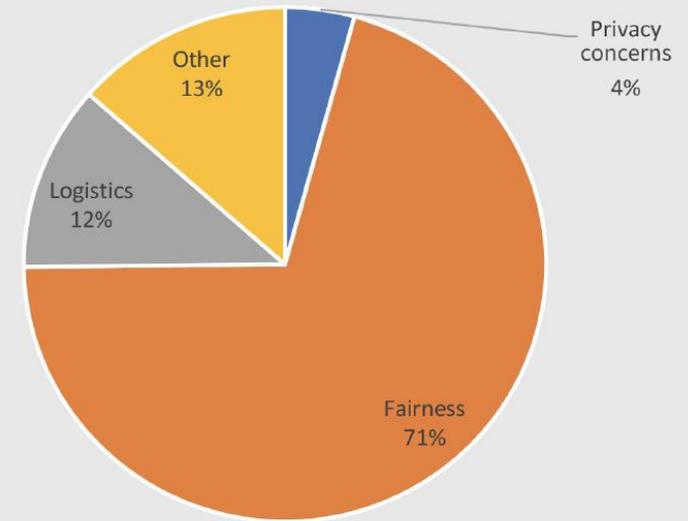
“People with lower income should not be taxed for driving.”

“Everyone uses the roads to a certain degree. Some businesses focus on driving (taxis, moving companies, companies that primary deliver their product to their clients than their clients coming to them, etc.) and would be impacted more than people who benefit from improved infrastructure but don’t drive as much.”

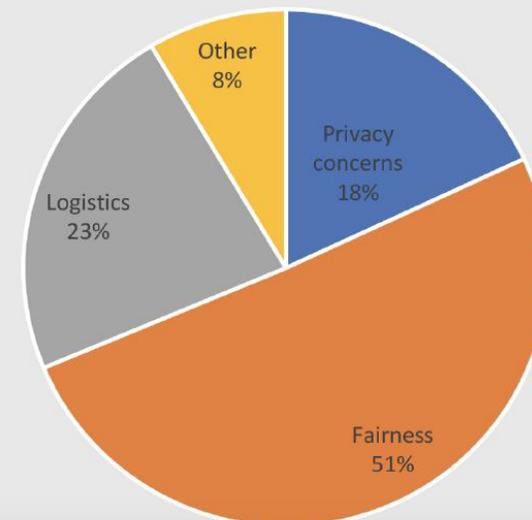
“I commute over 100 miles a day for work, and I don’t want to be taxed for living far from my job.”

“If a vehicle is fuel inefficient, [the gas tax] is more motivation to seek a more environmentally friendly vehicle.”

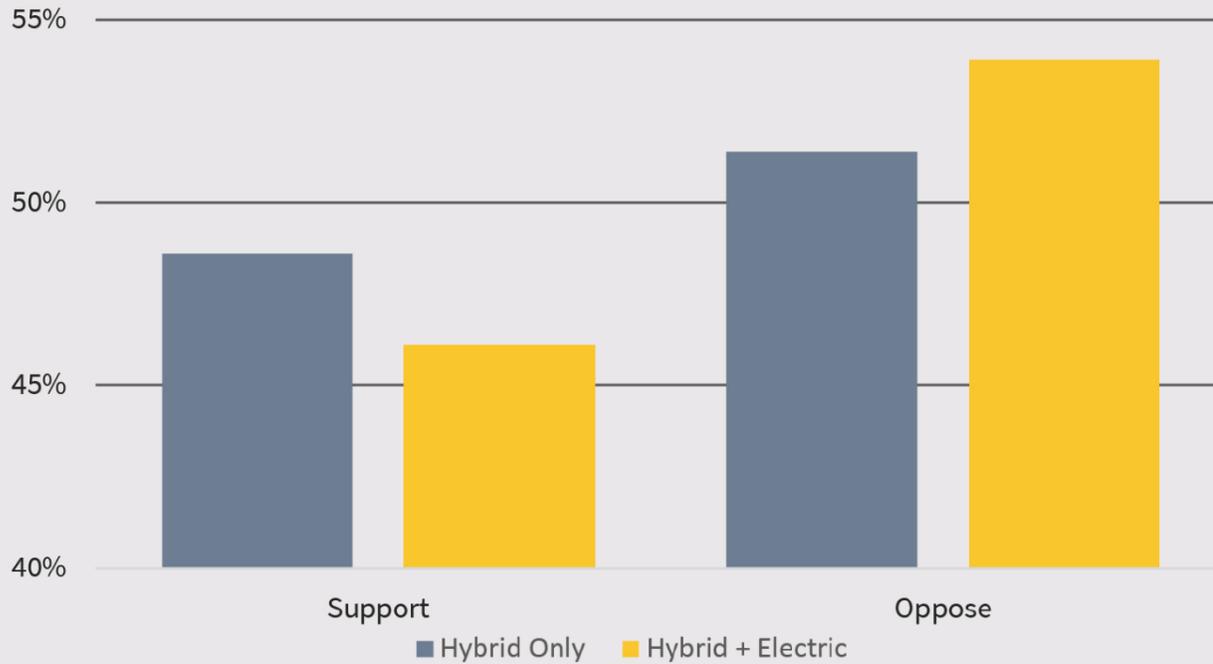
Chose VMT



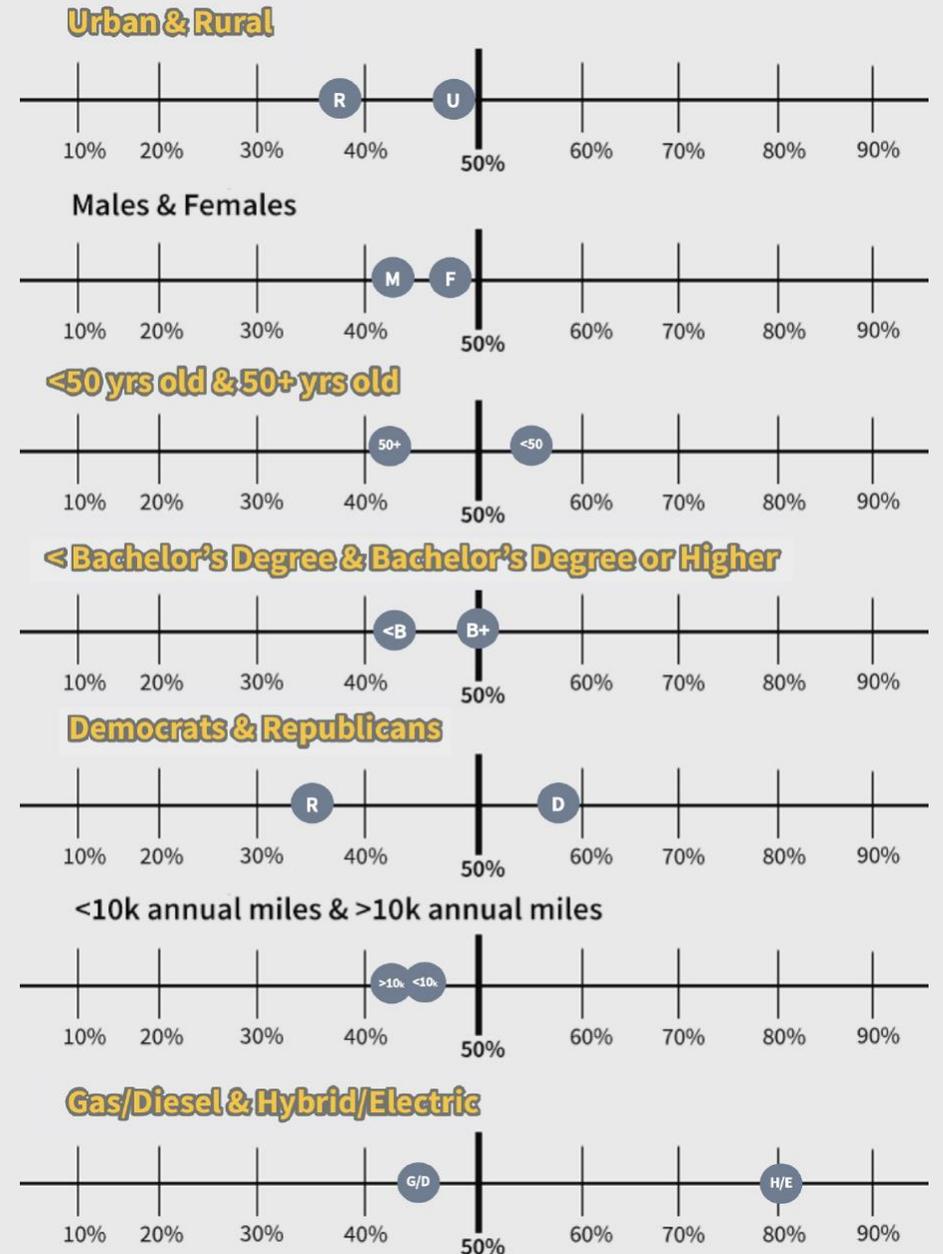
Chose gas or sales tax



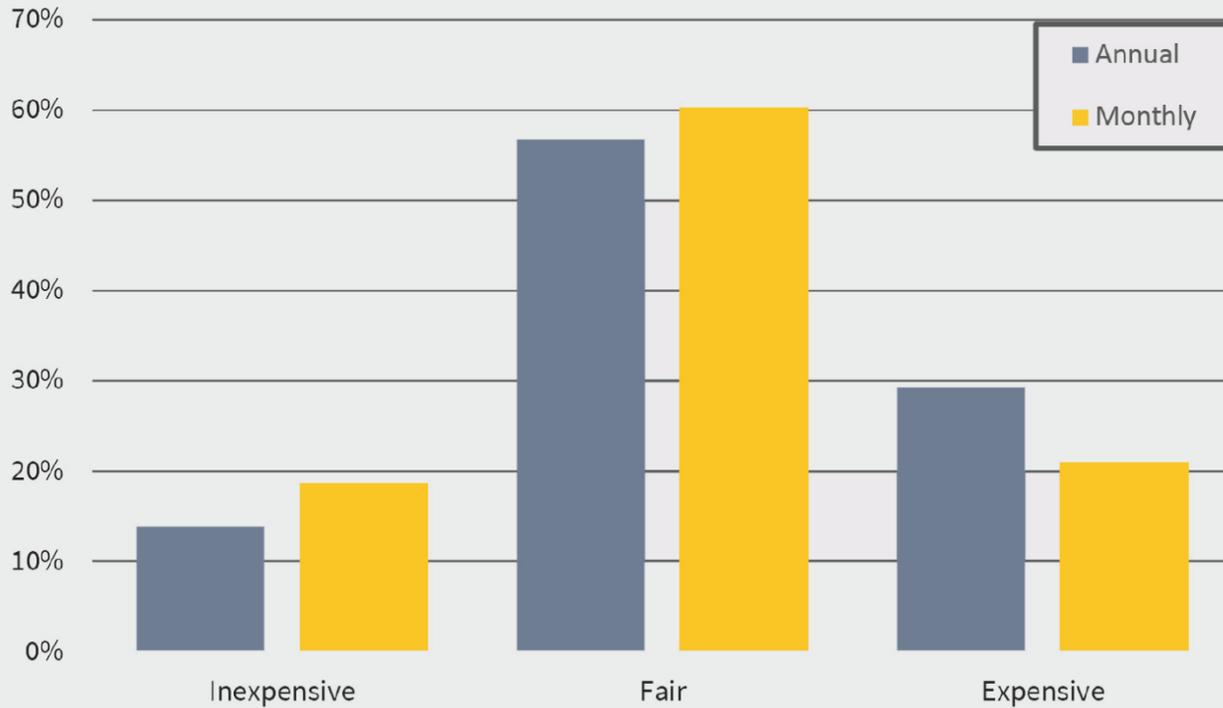
Support for Hybrid & Electric Vehicles Paying Less to Use Roads



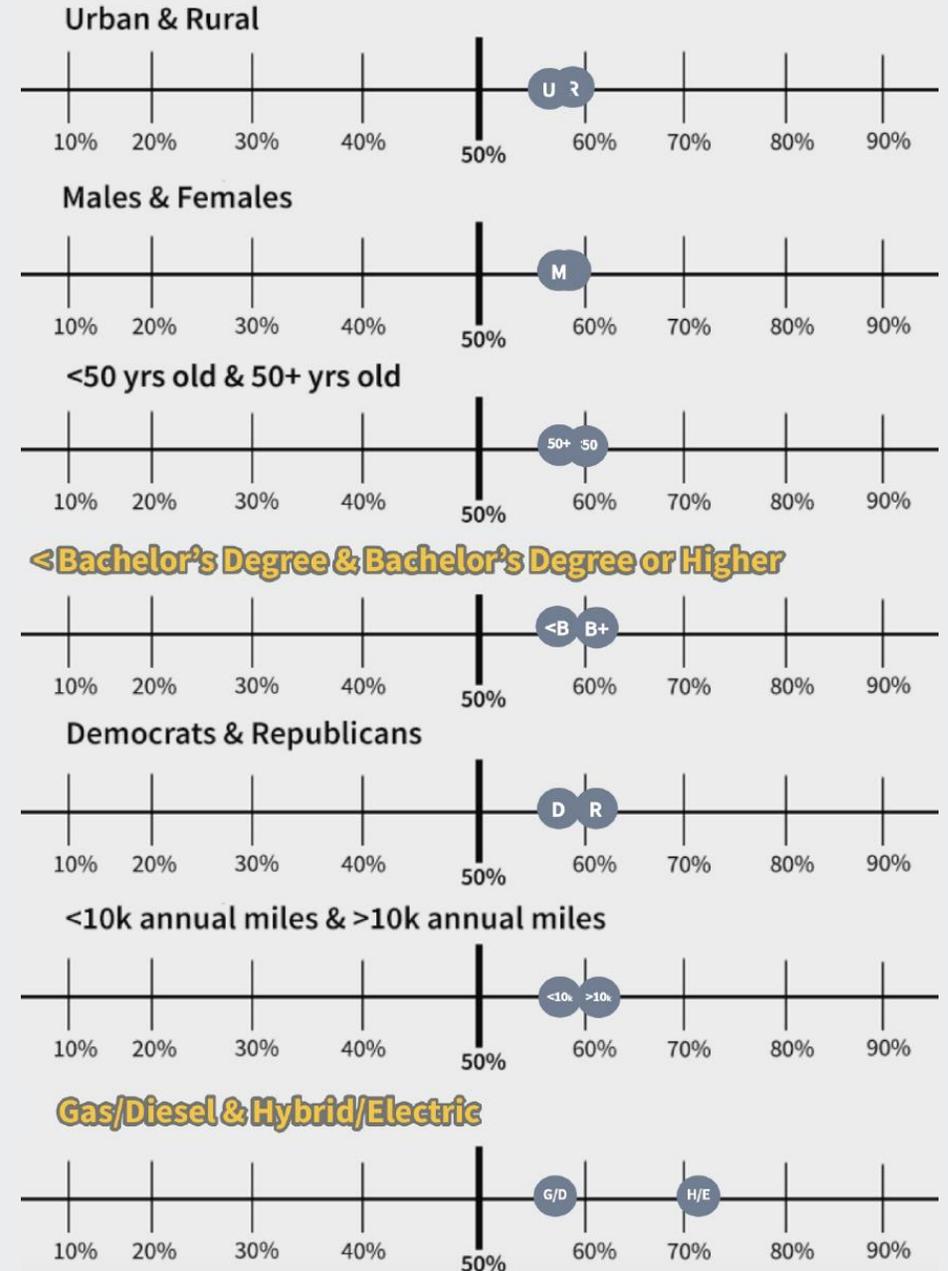
Support Statement, Difference by Group



Perceived Fairness of Gas Tax



Perceived as Fair, Difference by Group



Summary

Respondents, in general:

- VMT fee is less popular than the sales tax and gas tax
- Do not know the current gas tax rate, even those who claim to be confident in their response
- Believe that \$200 a year in state gas tax is a fair amount of money
- Prefer usage-based taxes in theory – when asked specifically though, sales tax preference is prevalent
 - The Numbers Matter!
- Few differences in opinions about transportation issues across sub-groups
- Plurality support an increase in funding
- Satisfied with NCDOT services