

Public Attitudes to Wildfires and the Logging Industry Full Report

Prepared for Nature Canada

August 24, 2023



Methodology

- » This study was conducted online using EKOS' probability-based research panel, *Probit*
- » The field dates for this survey are July 28 – August 9, 2023
- » In total, a random sample of 1,071 Canadian adults aged 18+ responded to the survey
- » The margin of error associated with the total sample is ± 3.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20
- » All the data have been statistically weighted by age, gender, and region
- » Note that due to rounding, figures may not add up to 100%

Support for further protections

- » By a margin of more than six to one, Canadians say the Government of Canada should be doing more to protect Canada's forests and biodiversity
 - Fully eight in ten (81%) agree the federal government should be taking further action to protect Canada's forests and wildlife, compared to just 13% who disagree
 - These findings are largely unchanged from March 2022
- » Clear majorities spanning the entire political spectrum say Canada's government should be doing more to safeguard Canada's forests and wildlife, though People's Party and Conservative voters are comparatively more likely to reject this notion
- » Those under 35 (89%) are somewhat more likely to say Canada's government should be doing more in this area

Support for further protections

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

The federal government should do more to protect Canada's forests and wildlife

August 2023



BASE: Canadians; July 28-August 9, 2023, n=1,071, MOE +/- 3.0%, 19 times out of 20

March 2022



BASE: Canadians; March 11-18, 2022, n=1,036, MOE +/- 3.0%, 19 times out of 20

DK/NR

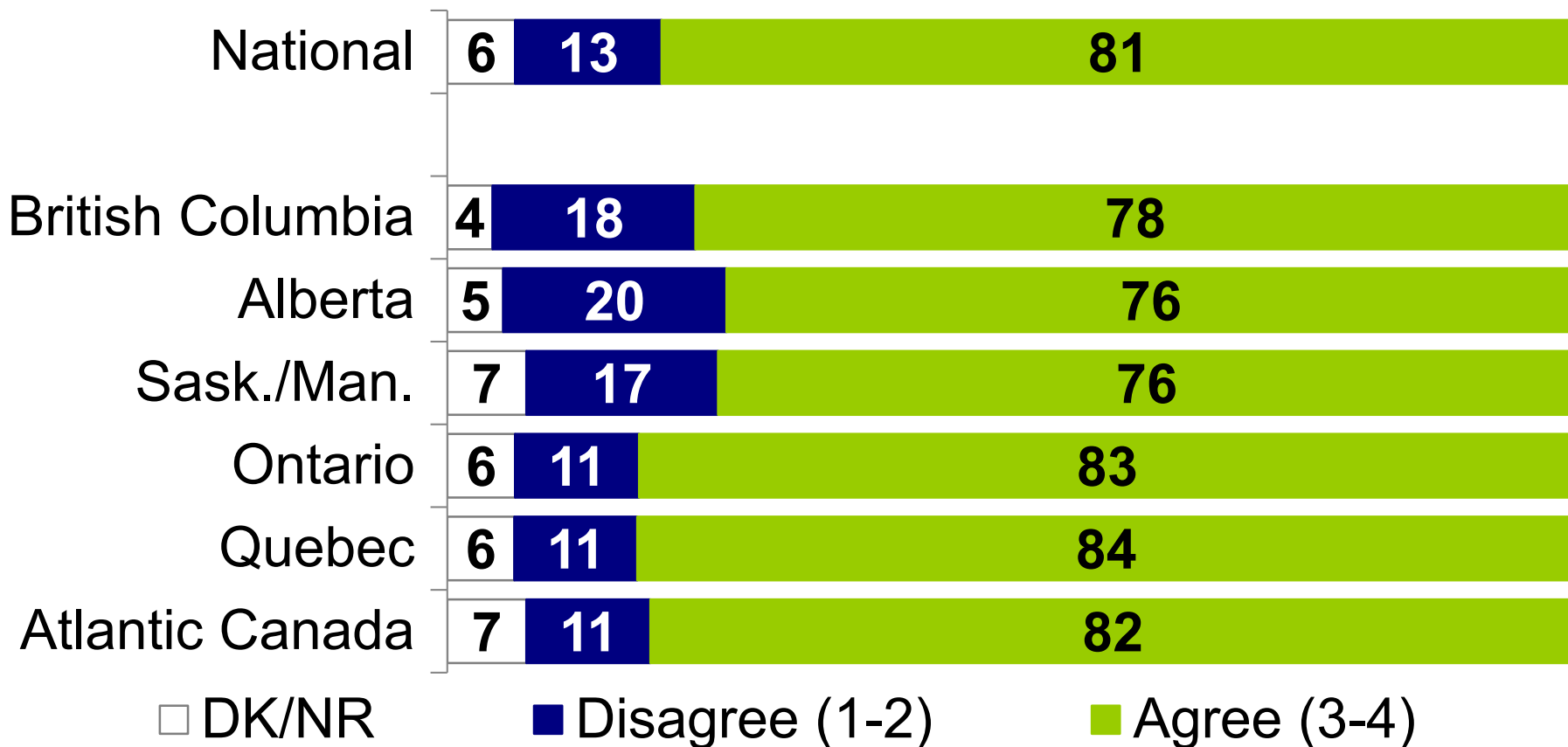
Disagree (1-2)

Agree (3-4)

Support by region

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

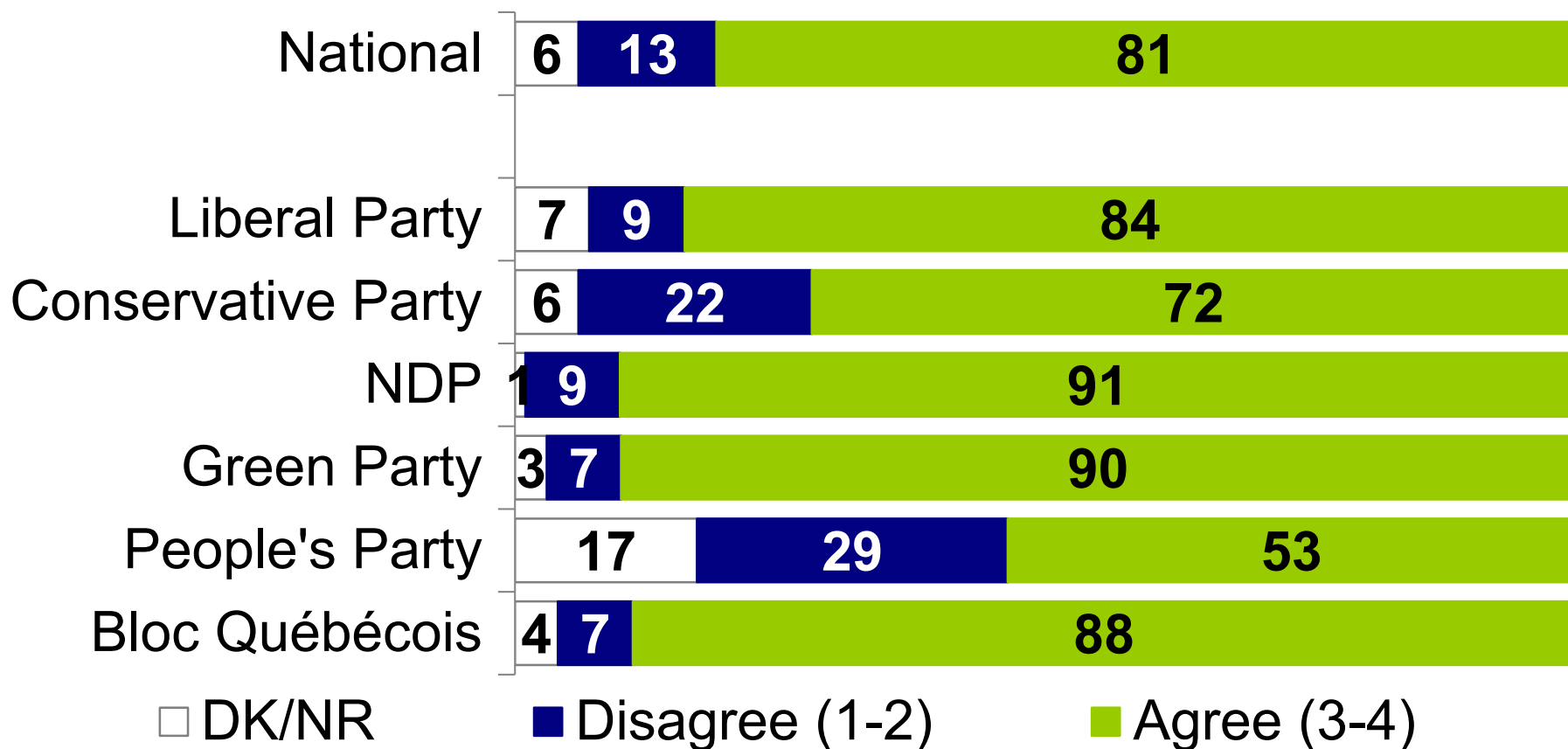
The federal government should do more to protect Canada's forests and wildlife



Support by vote intention

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

The federal government should do more to protect Canada's forests and wildlife



Preferred role for Canada

- » Eight in ten Canadians (79%) feel it is crucially important that Canada act as a world leader in the protection of the world's forests, a seven-point increase over March 2022
 - In contrast, just one in ten (9%) feel adopting a leadership stance in this area is a low priority
- » Overwhelming majorities within the Liberal, NDP, Green, and Bloc constituencies place a high degree of importance on Canada's role as a frontrunner on the global stage for forest preservation (89% to 95%)
 - Conservatives are more split, but a clear majority (58%) feel Canada should be stepping up
 - People's party voters, however, are highly divided on the matter; just 29% assign a great deal of importance to Canada's role in this area

Preferred role for Canada

Q. *Canada is home to the world's largest intact boreal forest. Canada's boreal region stores over 200 billion tonnes of carbon, equivalent to over 15 years of the world's carbon emissions. How important is it to you that Canada be a world leader on forest protection by protecting its remaining intact boreal forests?*

August 2023



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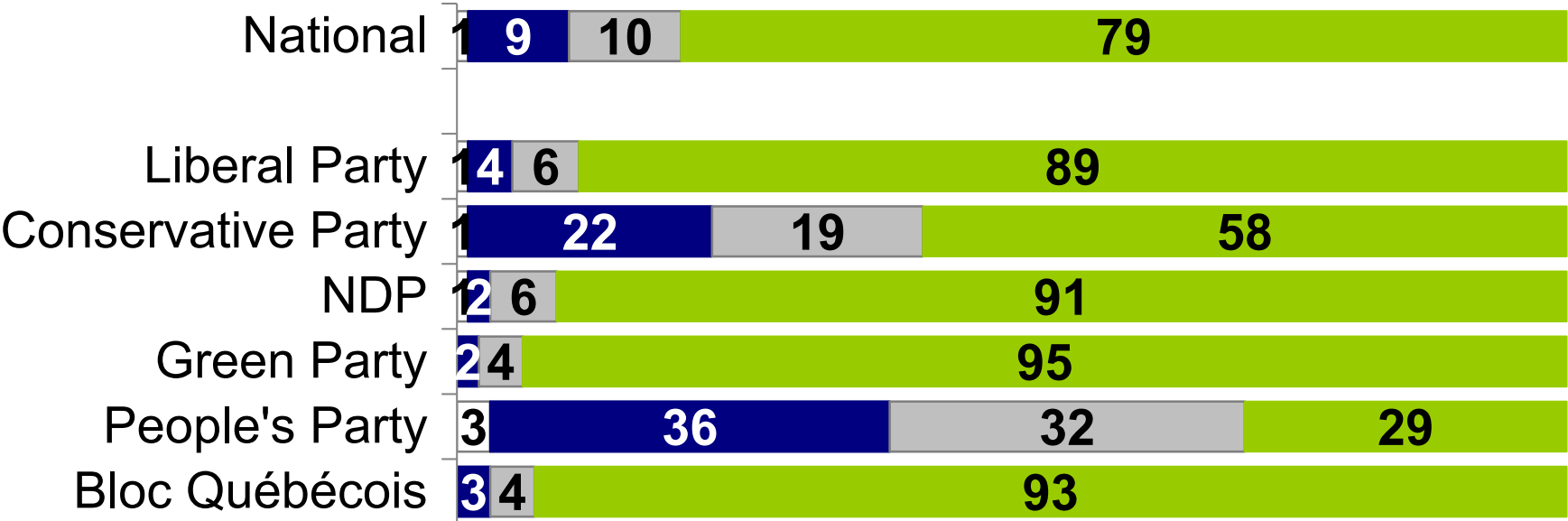


BASE: Canadians; March 11-18, 2022, n=1,036, MOE +/- 3.0%, 19 times out of 20

- DK/NR
- Not important (1-2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Important (4-5)

Preferred role by vote intention

Q. *Canada is home to the world's largest intact boreal forest. Canada's boreal region stores over 200 billion tonnes of carbon, equivalent to over 15 years of the world's carbon emissions. How important is it to you that Canada be a world leader on forest protection by protecting its remaining intact boreal forests?*



- DK/NR
- Not important (1-2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Important (4-5)

Importance of accurate GHG data (i)

- » Respondents were provided with a brief description of how Canada's greenhouse gas emissions are underreported and asked to rate the importance they place on accurately reporting this data
 - Fully seven in ten (71%) say it is highly important that Canada accurately report emissions from all economic sectors, a five-point increase over March 2022
- » Overwhelming majorities of Green, NDP, Liberal, and Bloc voters (85% to 97%) place a considerable degree of importance on the accuracy of greenhouse gas data
 - In stark contrast, just 40% of Conservatives and 20% of People's Party voters assign a similar level of importance

Importance of accurate GHG data (ii)

- » University graduates (79%), seniors (79%), youth (78%), and women (77%) are somewhat more likely to say it is highly important Canada provide an accurate accounting of its emissions
 - Residents of Alberta are comparatively see accurate reporting as a priority (59%)

Importance of accurate GHG data

Q. A recent study by national and international conservation groups found that Canada is underreporting greenhouse gas emissions from logging by more than 80 million tonnes per year – equal to more than 10% of Canada's overall emissions. How important is it to you that Canada fully and accurately reports greenhouse gas emissions from all economic sectors?

August 2023



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March 2022

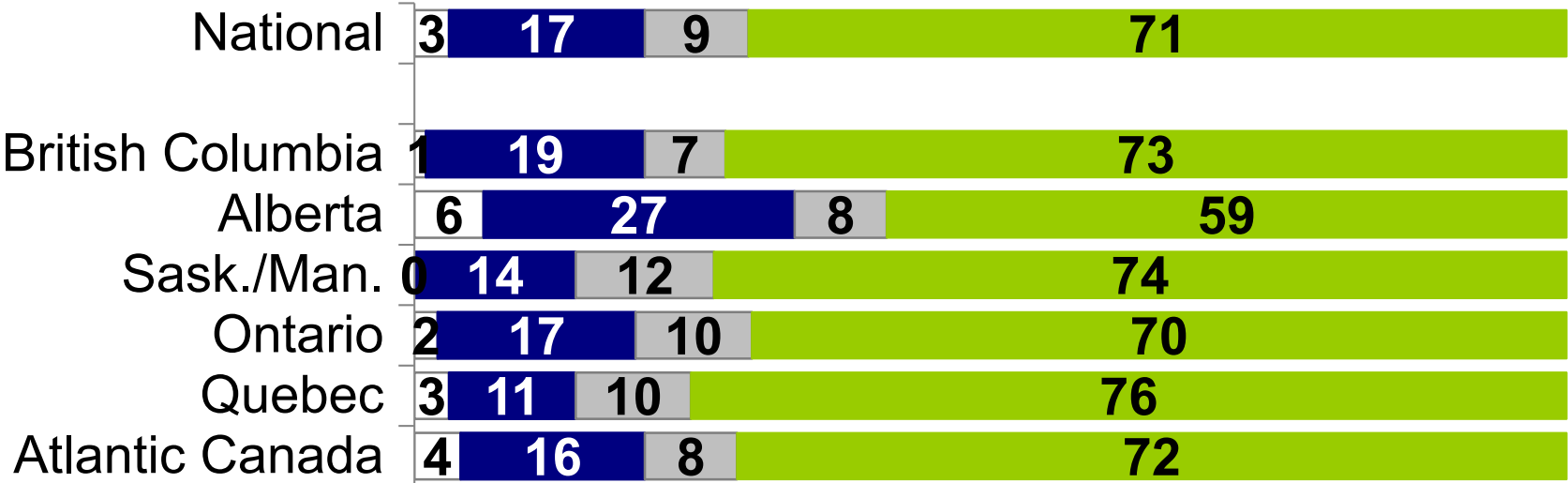


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- DK/NR
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Importance by region

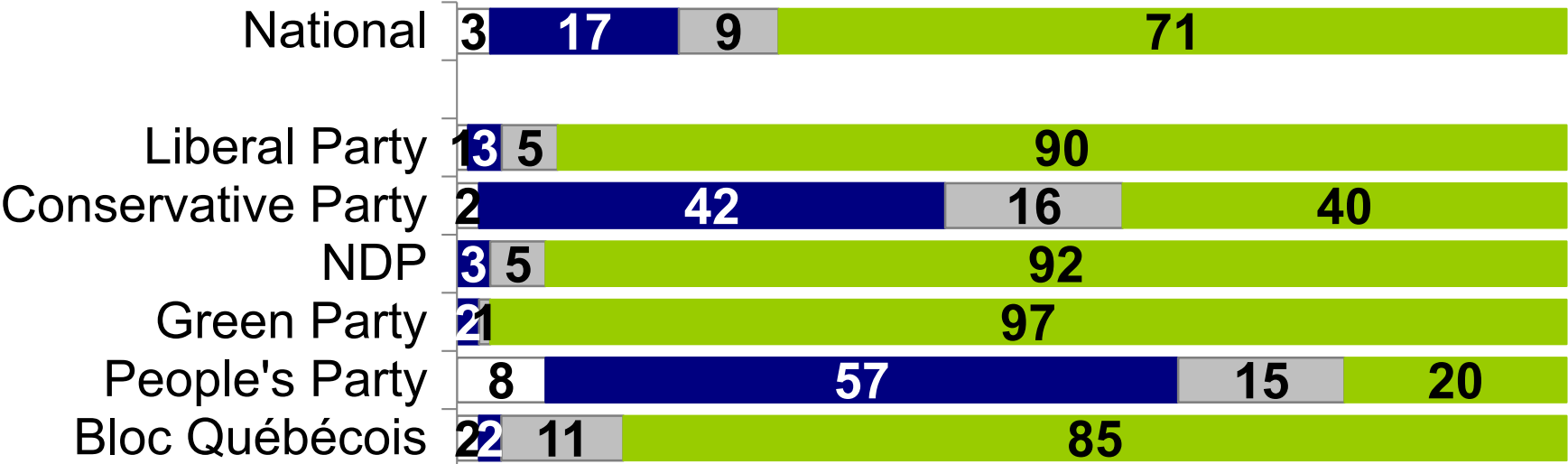
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- Not important (1-2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Important (4-5)

Importance by vote intention

Q. A recent study by national and international conservation groups found that Canada is underreporting greenhouse gas emissions from logging by more than 80 million tonnes per year - equal to more than 10% of Canada's overall emissions. How important is it to you that Canada fully and accurately reports greenhouse gas emissions from all economic sectors?



- DK/NR
- Not important (1-2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Important (4-5)

Support for carbon pricing on burning wood (i)

- » Respondents were informed that burning wood is exempt from carbon pricing – despite the fact that the production and use of firewood releases a significant amount of carbon into the atmosphere – and asked whether they agree or disagree that large companies should be pay a carbon tax on wood burning
- » Three-quarters of Canadians (76%) would support charging large companies for the carbon they emit through wood burning, compared to just 20% who disagree with this idea
 - These findings are consistent with those found in March 2023

Support for carbon pricing on burning wood (ii)

- » Nearly all Bloc, NDP, Liberal, and Green voters (90% to 95%) agree that large companies should be subject to carbon pricing when it comes to burning wood
 - Conservative supporters are more divided on the matter (54% agree), while People's Party voters are distinctly opposed (just 28% agree, compared to 69% who disagree)
- » University graduates (83%) and Quebecers (83%) are more apt to call for end to wood burning exemption
 - Residents of Alberta, meanwhile, are comparatively less likely to agree (65%)

Support for carbon pricing on burning wood

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Large companies should pay a carbon price on net greenhouse gas emissions from burning wood, as they do when they burn other fuels

August 2023



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DK/NR

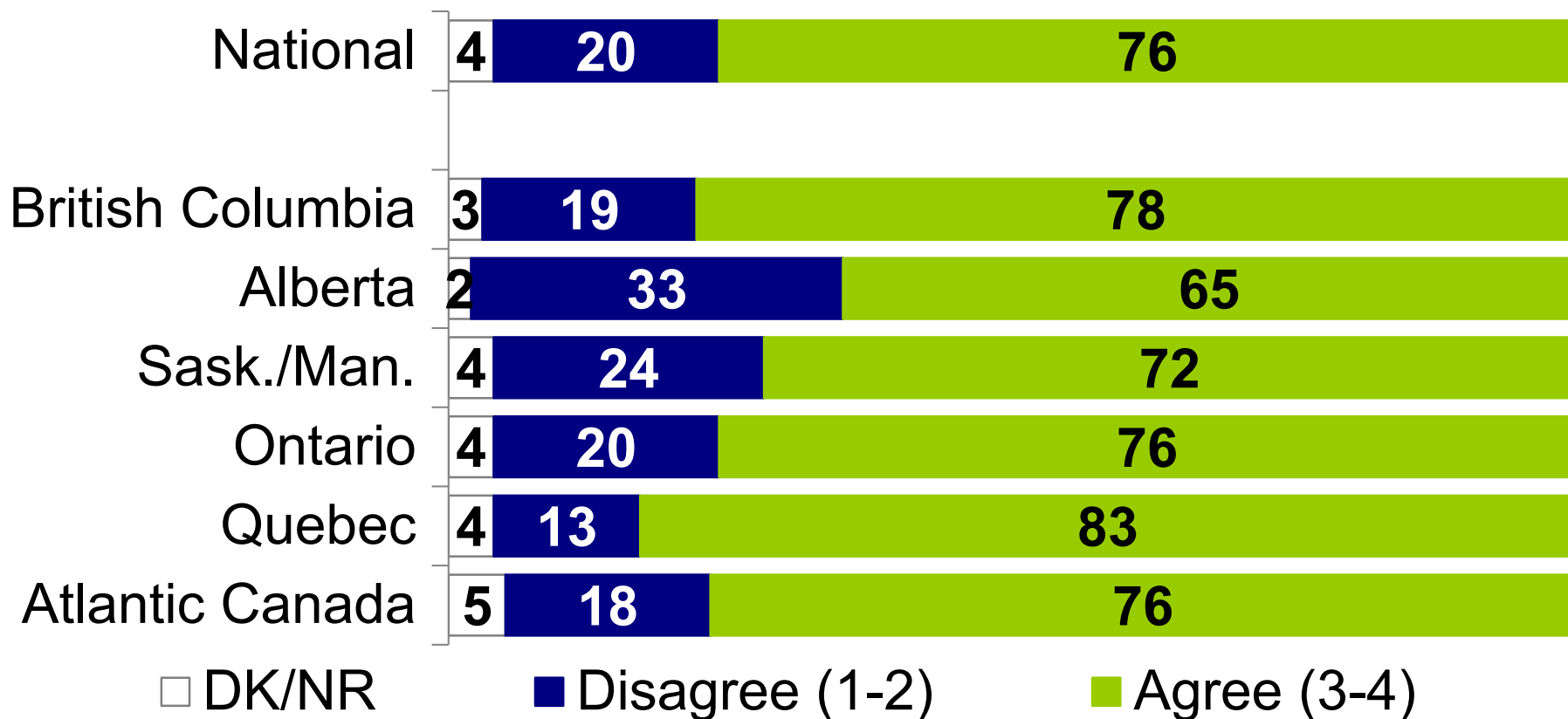
Disagree (1-2)

Agree (3-4)

Support by region

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

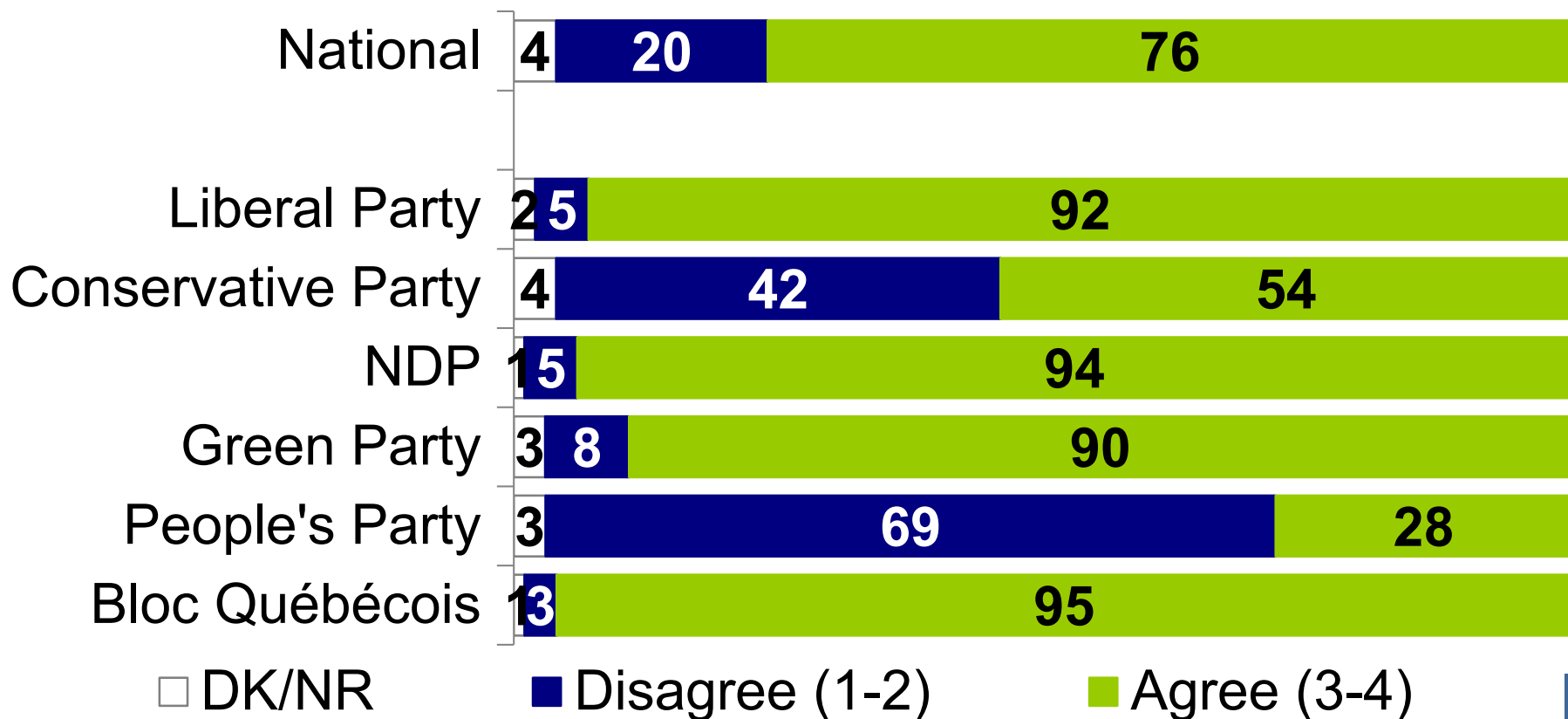
Large companies should pay a carbon price on net greenhouse gas emissions from burning wood, as they do when they burn other fuels



Support by vote intention

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Large companies should pay a carbon price on net greenhouse gas emissions from burning wood, as they do when they burn other fuels



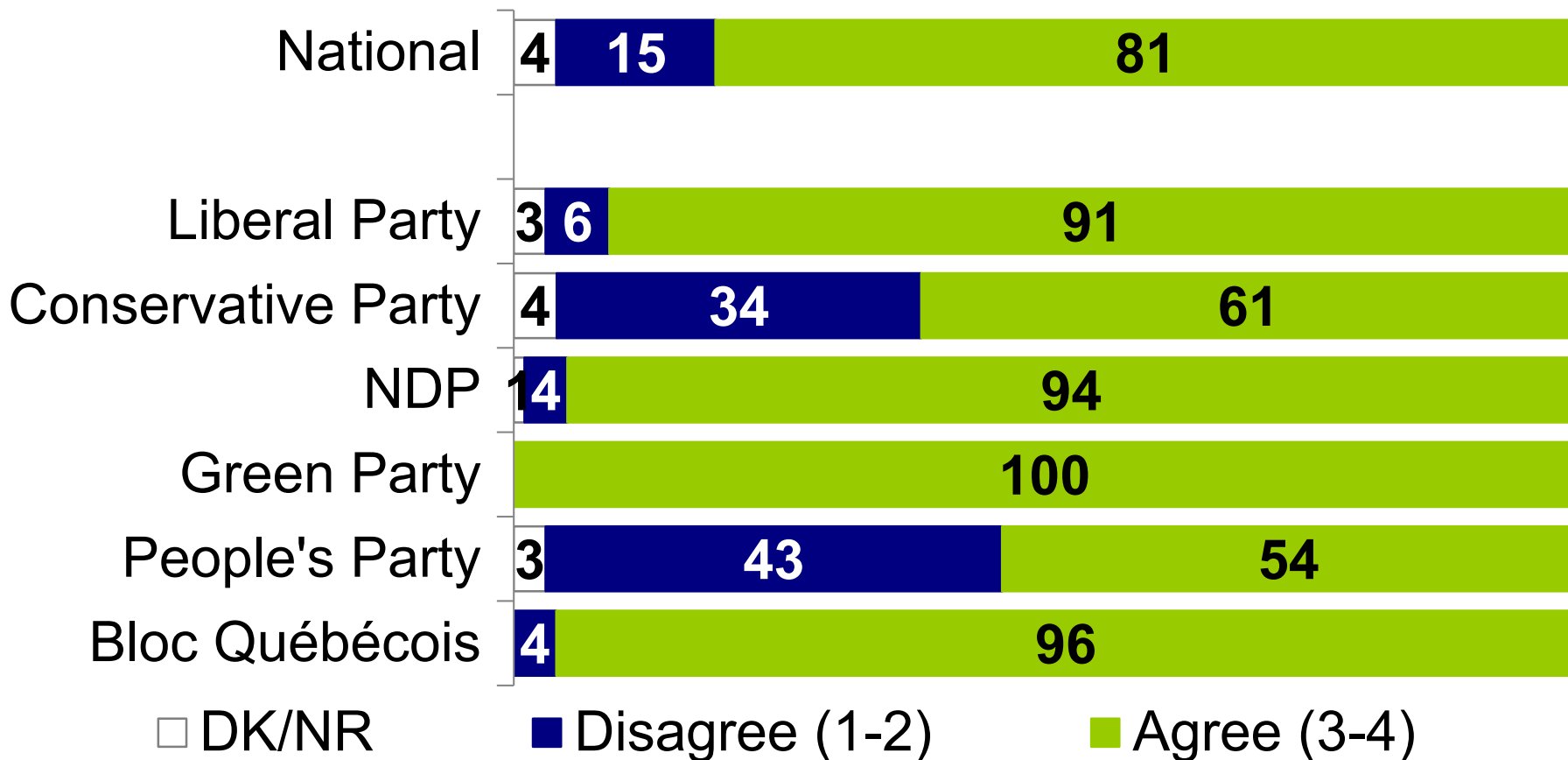
Support for phasing out clearcutting

- » Respondents were given a brief description of clearcut logging and asked to rate the extent to which they agree or disagree the practice should be phased out in favour of more sustainable approaches
 - By a margin of more than five to one, Canadians would support an end to clearcut logging (81% agree the practice should be ended, compared to just 15% who disagree)
- » Nearly all Green, Bloc, NDP, and Liberal supporters would support a gradual ban on clearcut logging (91% to 100%)
 - Conservative and People's Party constituents are more split on the matter though, in both cases, narrow majorities (61% and 54%, respectively) would support a transition to more sustainable alternatives

Support for phasing out clearcutting

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Federal and provincial governments should phase out clearcut logging in favour of more sustainable approaches



Importance of following E.U. Rules (i)

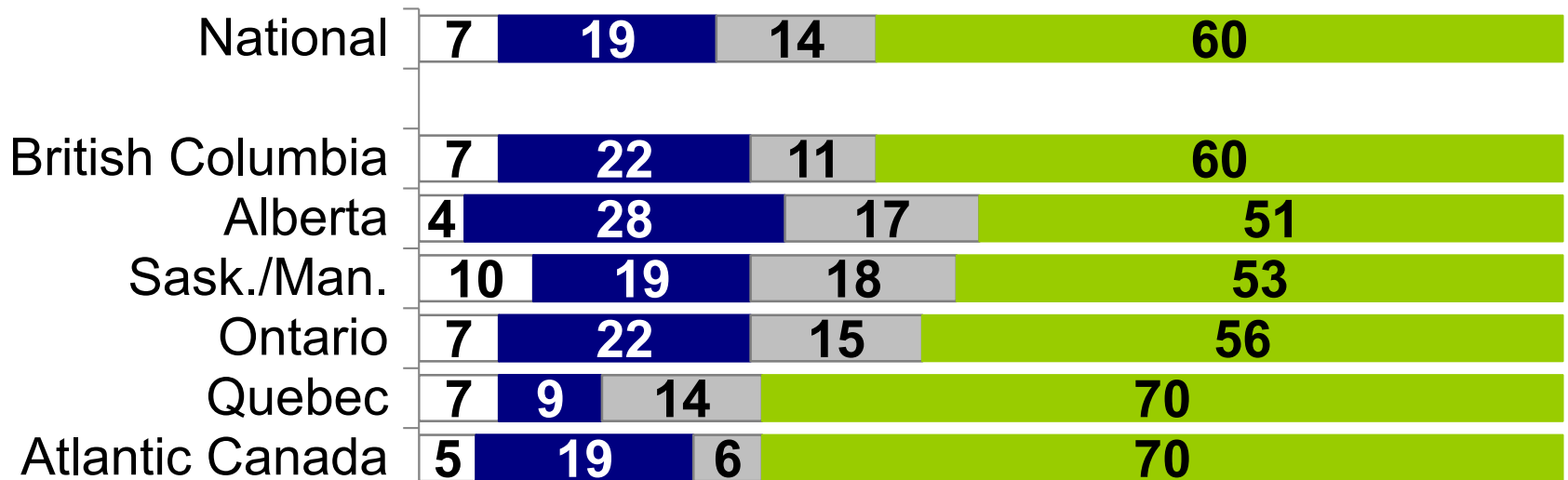
- » Respondents were given an overview of E.U. restrictions on importing products that cause forest degradation and asked to rate the degree of importance they place on ensuring Canada follows the E.U.'s regulations to ensure it can continue to sell its forest products abroad
 - A clear majority of Canadians (60%) say it is very important Canada align itself with the E.U.'s rules, though one in five (19%) place little to no importance on the matter
- » Green, Bloc, NDP, and Liberal voters all place a substantial degree of importance on ensuring Canada's forest products comply with E.U. regulations (74% to 88% attach a high level of importance)
 - Conservative and People's Party supporters place considerably less value on E.U. standards (just 32% and 22%, respectively, say compliance is important)

Importance of following E.U. Rules (ii)

- » Quebecers and university graduates (70% and 69%, respectively) assign a comparatively higher level of importance to adhering to E.U. rules

Importance of following E.U. rules

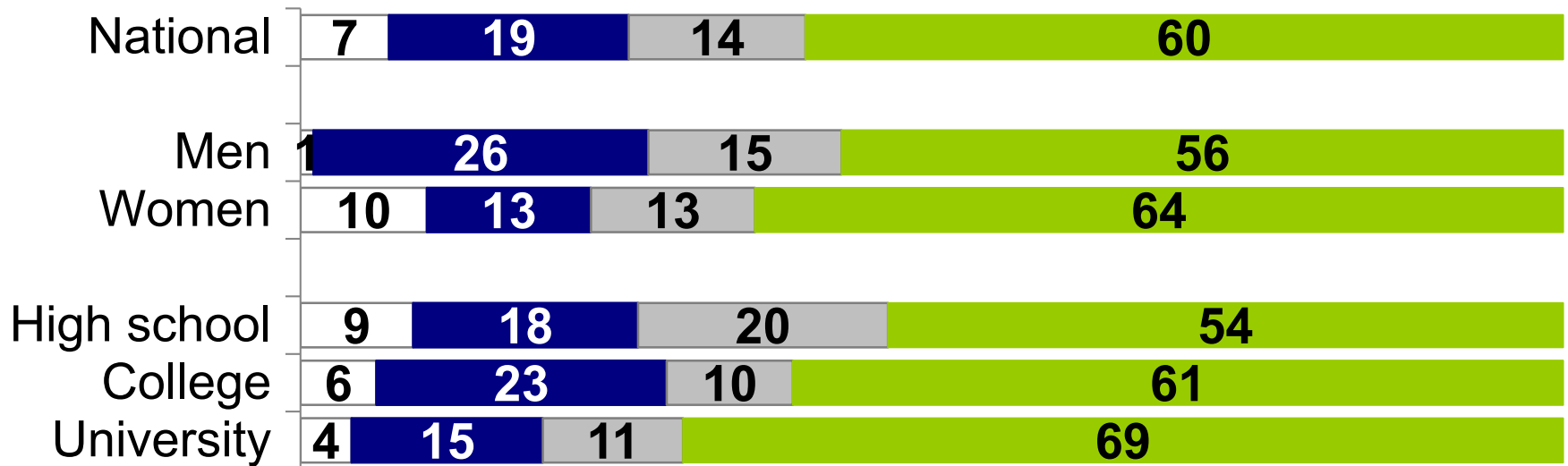
Q. *The European Union has introduced new regulations that restrict the import of wood products into European Union member states if they cause deforestation or forest degradation (e.g. cutting down never-before-logged forests). How important is it to you that Canada follows European Union rules to ensure we can sell our forest products to European countries?*



- DK/NR
- Not important (1-2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Important (4-5)

Importance by gender/education

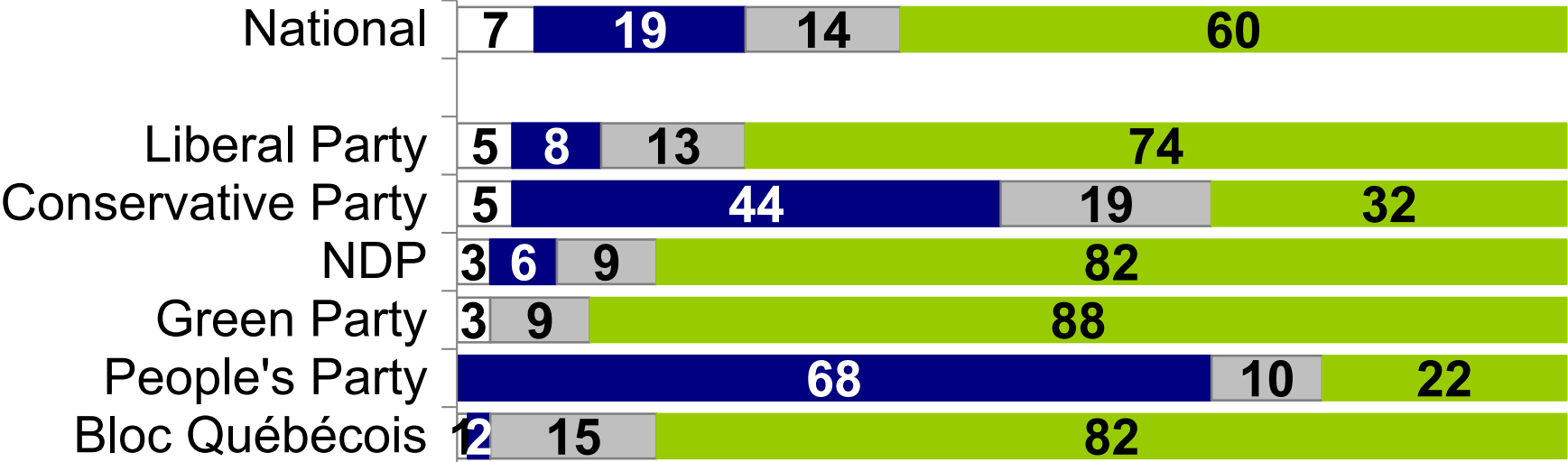
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- DK/NR
- Not important (1-2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Important (4-5)

Importance by vote intention

Q. *The European Union has introduced new regulations that restrict the import of wood products into European Union member states if they cause deforestation or forest degradation (e.g. cutting down never-before-logged forests). How important is it to you that Canada follows European Union rules to ensure we can sell our forest products to European countries?*



- DK/NR
- Not important (1-2)
- Moderately important (3)
- Important (4-5)

Attitudes to Indigenous rights (i)

- » Three-quarters of Canadians (75%) agree federal and provincial governments should be promoting – rather than opposing – sustainable wood harvesting practices that respect Indigenous rights abroad, compared to just 19% who disagree
- » Green, NDP, Liberal, and Bloc voters are all more likely to say Canada's governments should be supporting foreign laws to promote sustainable wood harvesting and Indigenous rights (89% to 97% agree)
 - Conservatives are evenly divided on the matter (48% agree, compared to 46% disagree), while a majority of People's Party supporters are opposed to the notion (60% disagree, compared to 40% who agree)

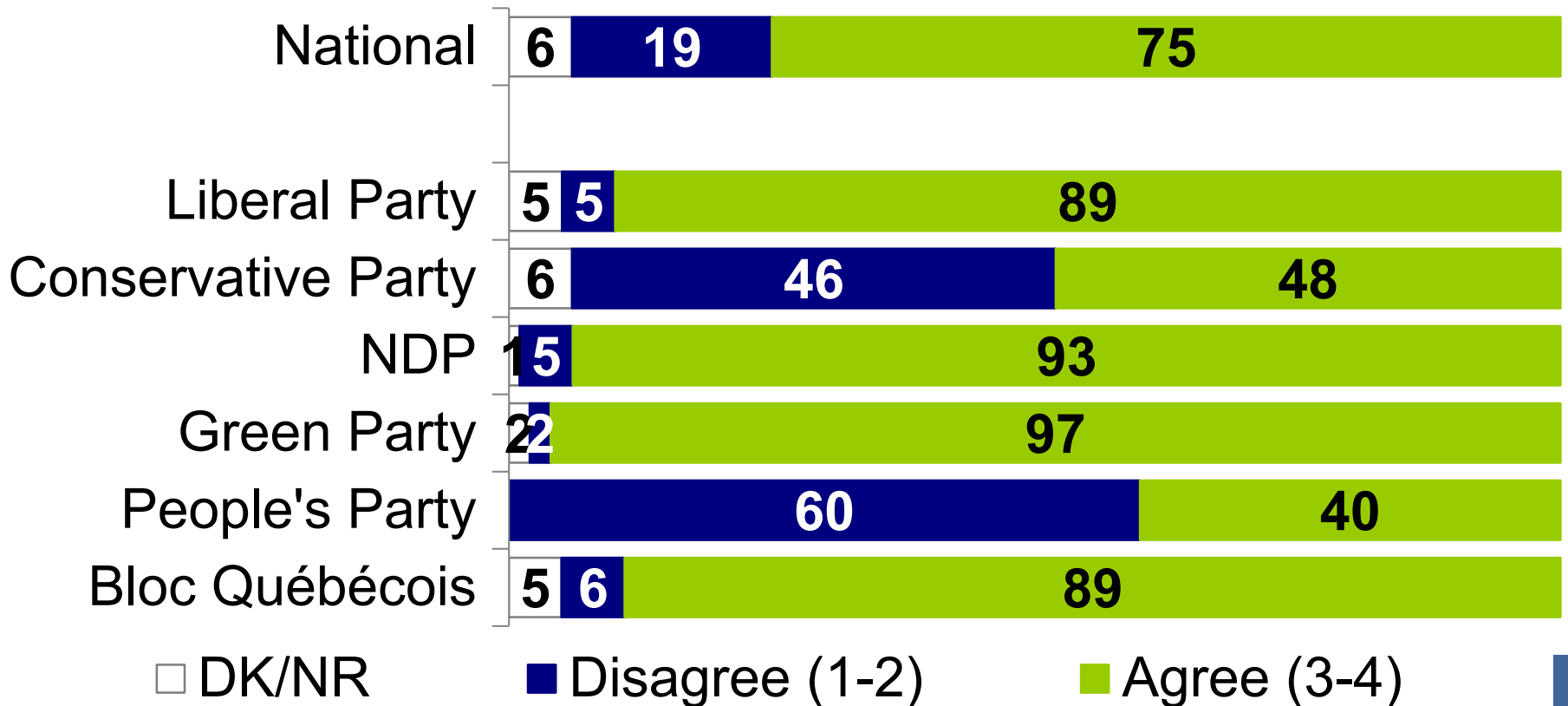
Attitudes to Indigenous rights (ii)

- » Those under 35, Quebecers, university graduates, and women are all more likely to say governments should be supporting other countries' efforts in this area (85%, 83%, 82%, and 80%, respectively)

Attitudes to Indigenous rights

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

Federal and provincial governments should support, not oppose, foreign laws to promote sustainable wood harvesting and Indigenous rights



Support for further protection for boreal forests (i)

- » Whatever their views on specific regulations, the vast majority of Canadians believe the Government of Canada should do more to protect and restore the boreal forest, even if it means imposing limits on the forestry industry
- » Fully eight in ten (80%) agree the federal government should expand its efforts to protect the boreal forest, even at the expense of restricting the forestry industry, compared to just 17% who disagree
- » Green, NDP, Bloc, and Liberal voters are far more favourably disposed towards bolstering safeguards for Canada's boreal forests (90% to 96% agree)
 - Conservative and People's Party supporters, however, are far less inclined to embrace further protections (57% and 45%, respectively, agree)

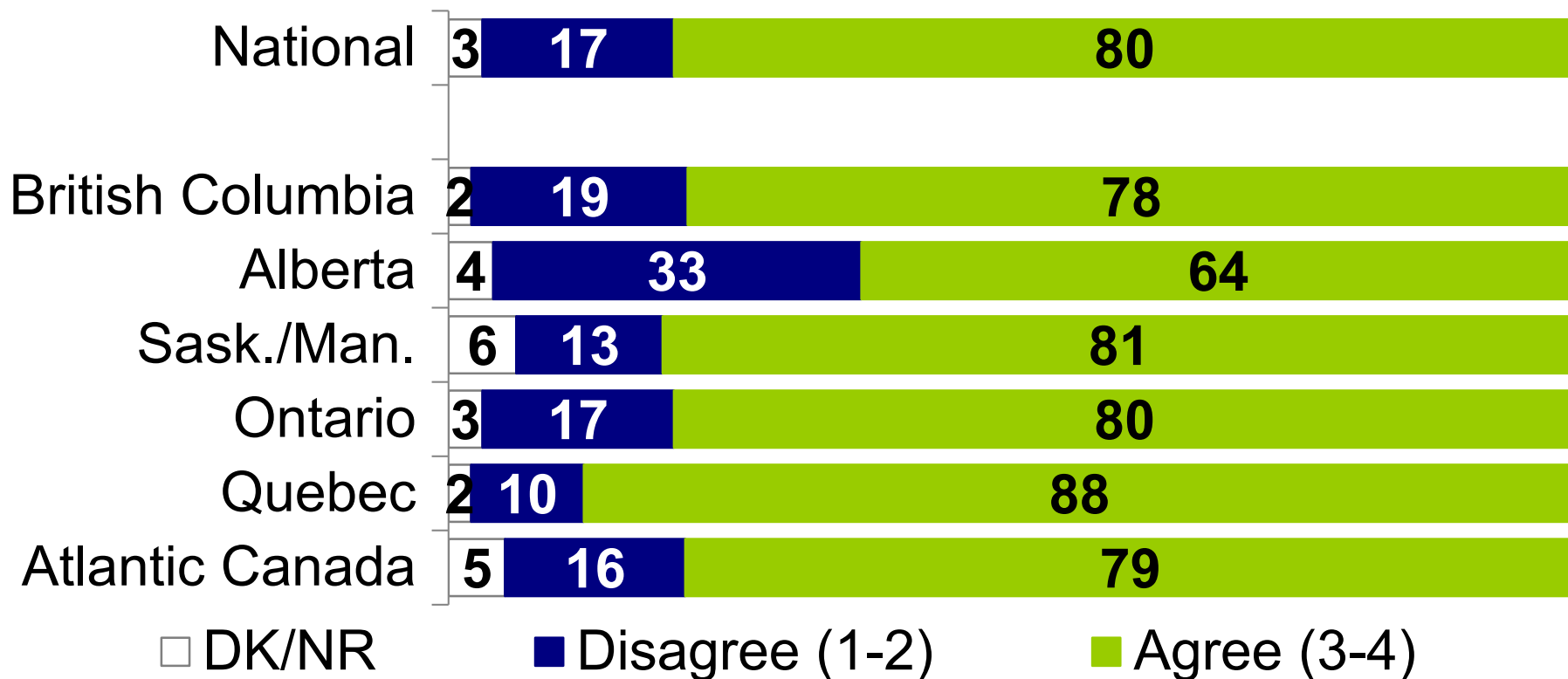
Support for further protection for boreal forests (ii)

- » Residents of Quebec, those under 35, and women are more likely to agree more action is needed (88%, 86%, and 86%, respectively)
 - Albertans are relatively less likely to endorse this stance (64%)

Support for further protection for boreal forests

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

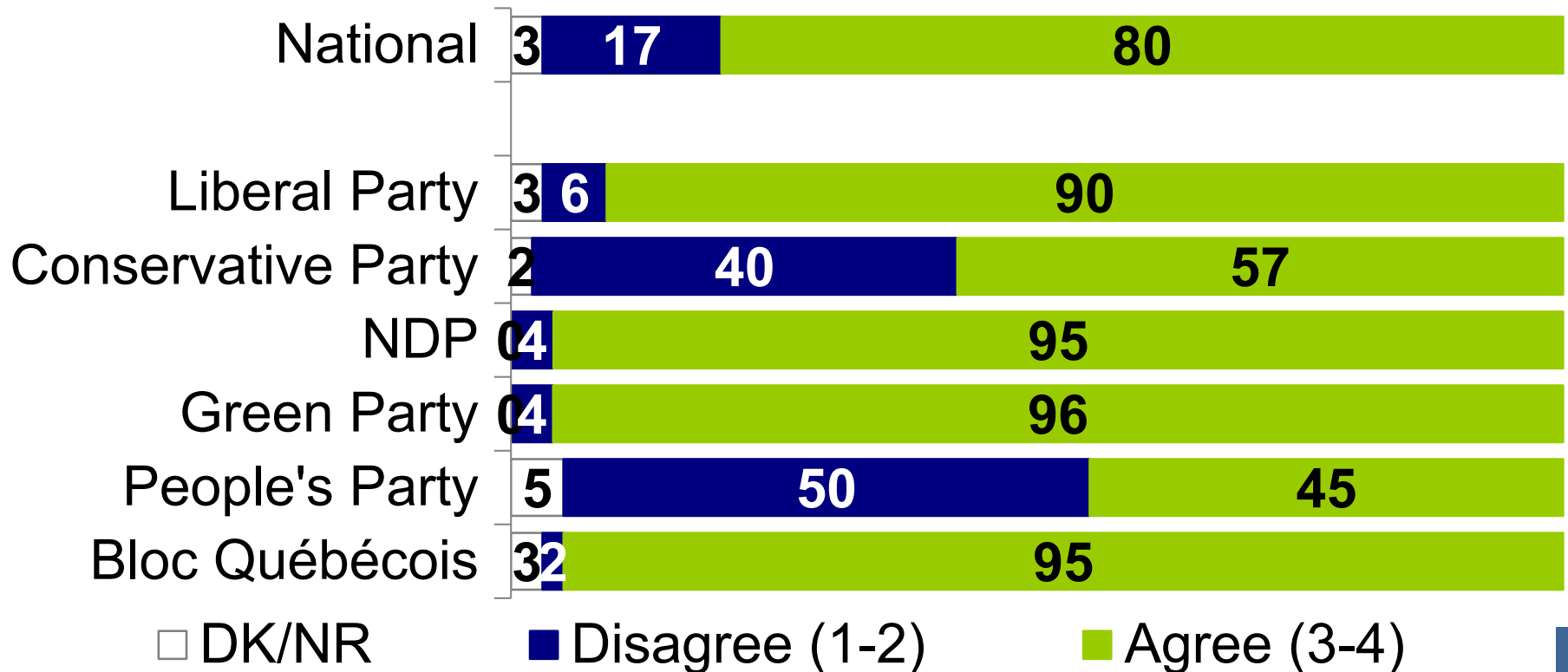
Governments in Canada should do more to protect and restore the boreal forest, even if it means imposing limits on the forestry industry



Support by vote intention

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Governments in Canada should do more to protect and restore the boreal forest, even if it means imposing limits on the forestry industry



Perceived responsibility for wildfires

- » By a wide margin, climate change stands out as the primary culprit behind the recent string of wildfires, with 64% saying climate change is to blame
 - University graduates (75%), Quebecers (74%), those under 35 (72%), and women (71%) are all more likely to identify climate change as a key catalyst of the upsurge in wildfires
 - The vast majority of NDP, Liberal, Green, and Bloc supporters (81% to 91%) see climate change as a primary contributor to the slew of wildfires, while Conservatives and People's Party supporters have virtually dismissed climate change as a possible factor (24% and 9%, respectively)

Perceived responsibility for wildfires

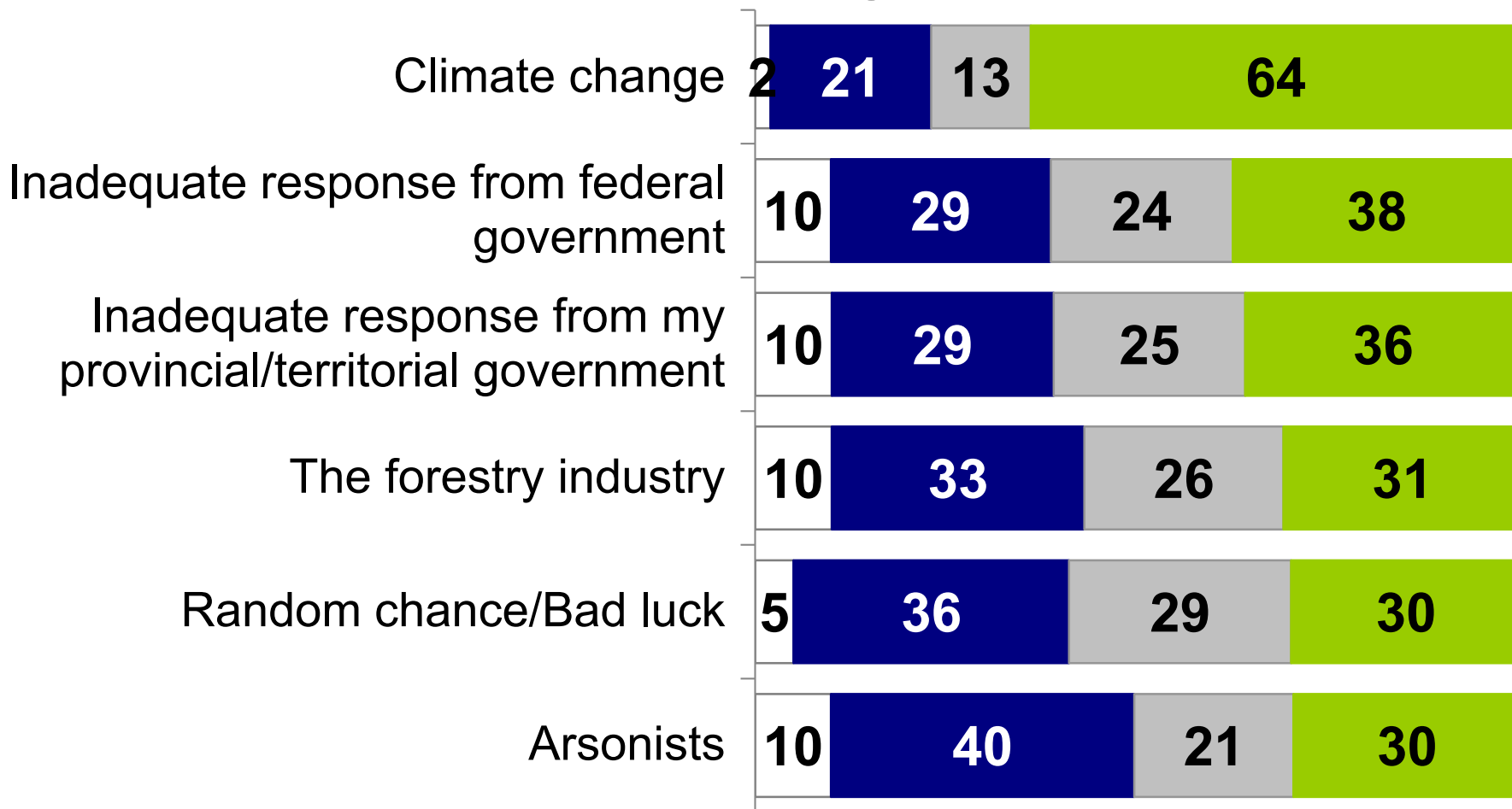
- » Just under four in ten (38%) attribute responsibility to a lackluster response from the federal government, while slightly fewer (36%) blame similar inaction from their respective provincial governments
 - Green and NDP voters are more apt to blame the federal government (52% and 46%, respectively)
 - NDP voters are more apt to blame provincial governments (48%), while Conservatives are less likely to do so (27%)

Perceived responsibility for wildfires

- » Three in ten assign culpability to the forestry industry (31%), bad luck (30%), and arson (30%)
 - Green Party supporters (55%), Bloc voters (51%), NDP supporters (39%), and Quebecers (38%) are more apt to blame the forestry industry
 - Conservative voters are more likely to see the wildfires as an artefact of random chance (42%)
 - The notion that arsonists are responsible is limited primarily to Conservative and People's Party voters (49% and 65%, respectively)

Perceived responsibility for wildfires

Q. To what extent do you believe each of the following holds responsibility for the surge in wildfires this year?



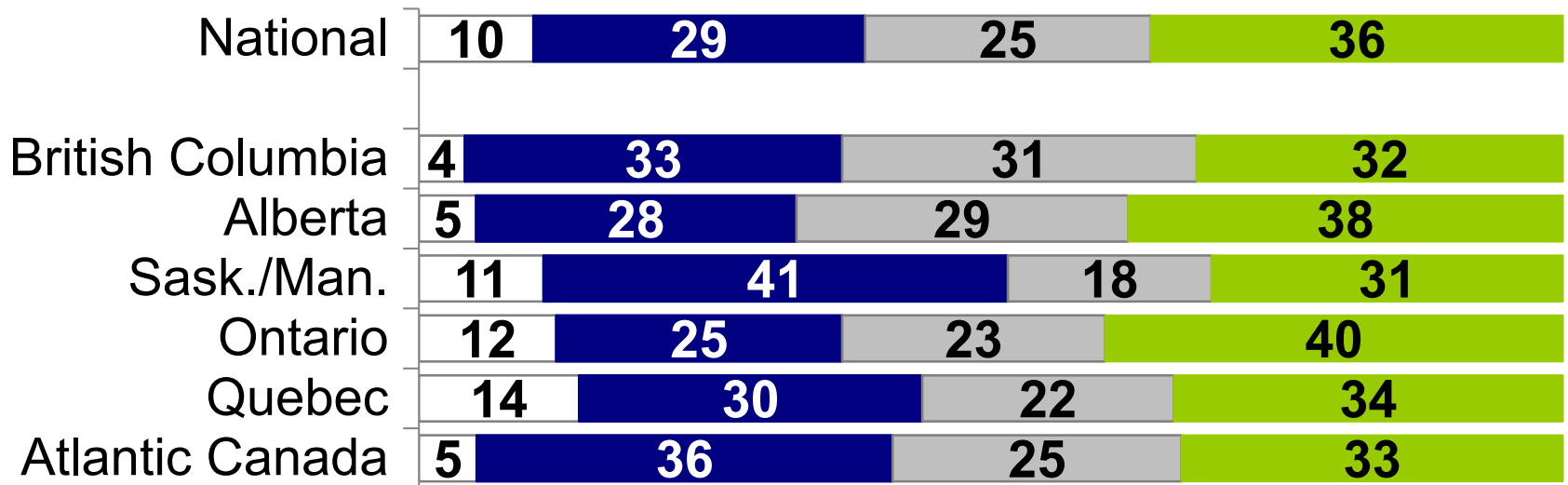
□ DK/NR ■ Low extent (1-2) ■ Moderate extent (3) ■ High extent (4-5)

37

Perceived responsibility by region: Provincial governments

Q. *To what extent do you believe each of the following holds responsibility for the surge in wildfires this year?*

Inadequate response from my provincial/territorial government

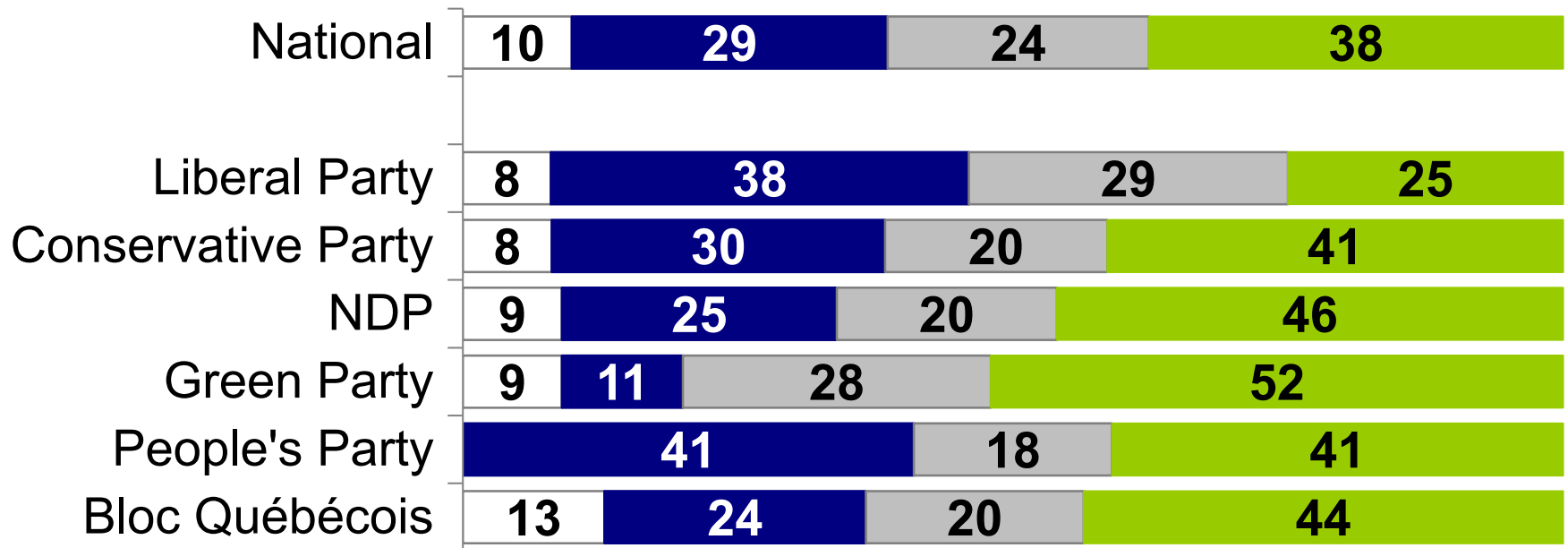


- DK/NR
- Low extent (1-2)
- Moderately extent (3)
- High extent (4-5)

Perceived responsibility by vote intention: Federal government

Q. *To what extent do you believe each of the following holds responsibility for the surge in wildfires this year?*

Inadequate response from the federal government

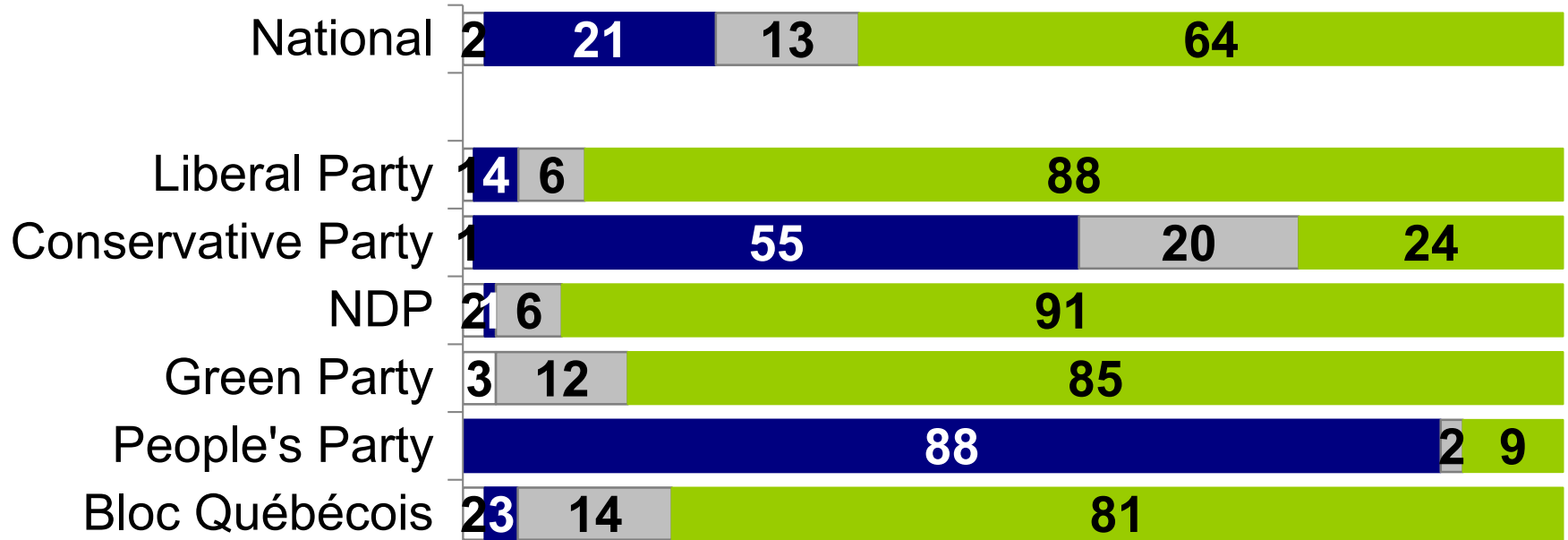


- DK/NR
- Low extent (1-2)
- Moderately extent (3)
- High extent (4-5)

Perceived responsibility by vote intention: Climate change

Q. To what extent do you believe each of the following holds responsibility for the surge in wildfires this year?

Climate change

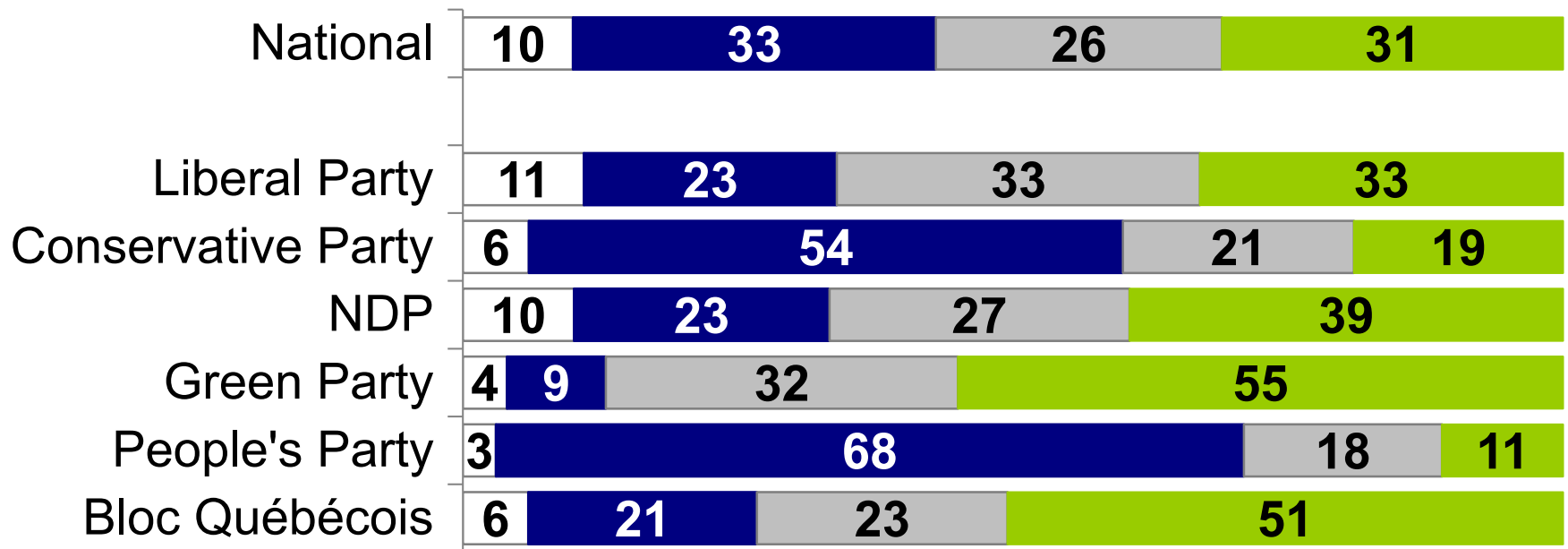


- DK/NR
- Low extent (1-2)
- Moderately extent (3)
- High extent (4-5)

Perceived responsibility by vote intention: The forestry industry

Q. *To what extent do you believe each of the following holds responsibility for the surge in wildfires this year?*

The forestry industry

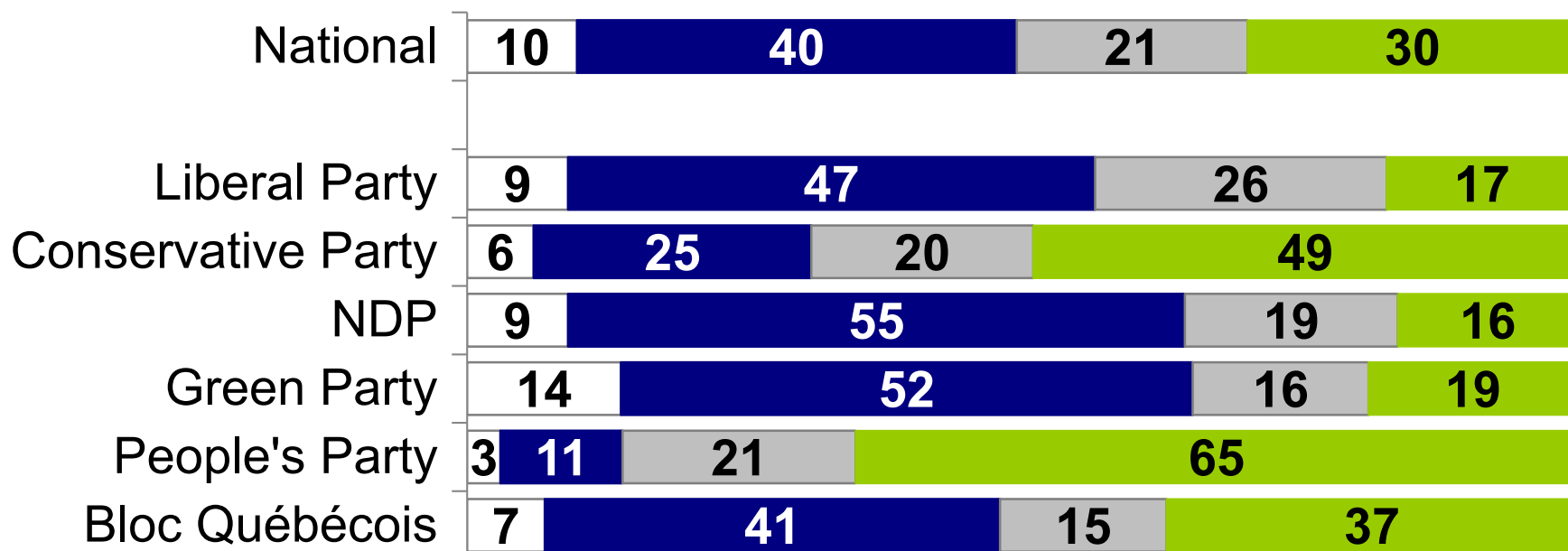


- DK/NR
- Low extent (1-2)
- Moderately extent (3)
- High extent (4-5)

Perceived responsibility by vote intention: Arsonists

Q. *To what extent do you believe each of the following holds responsibility for the surge in wildfires this year?*

Arsonists

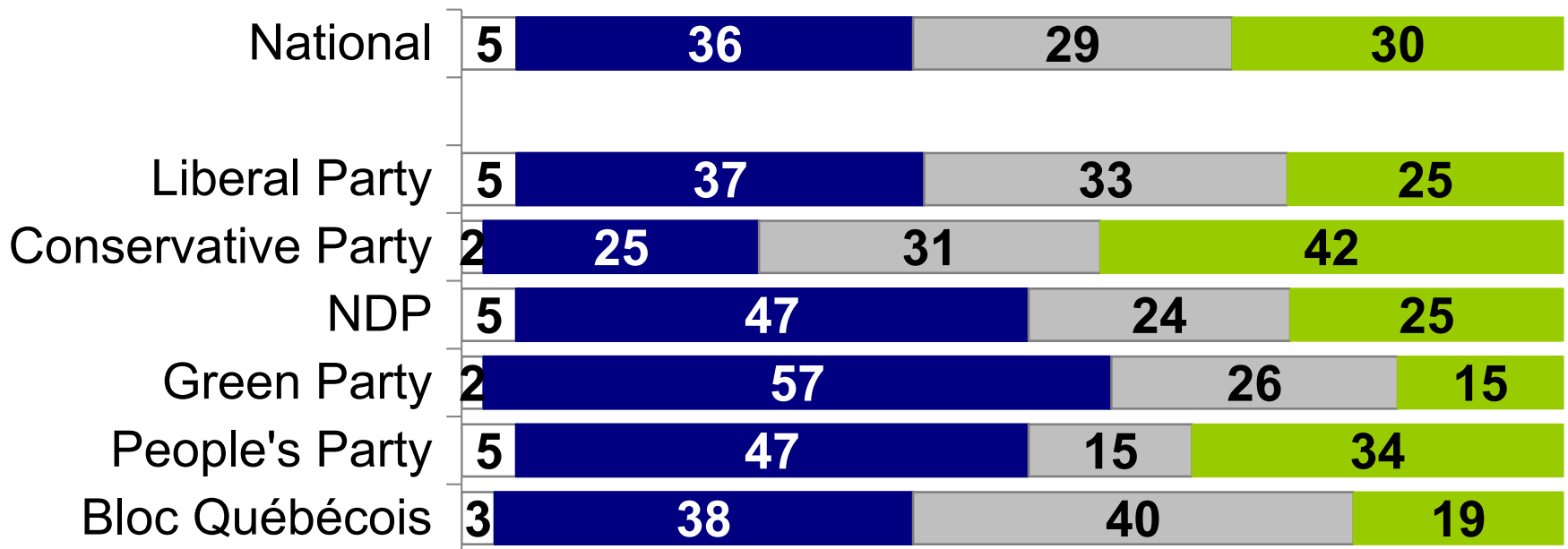


- DK/NR
- Low extent (1-2)
- Moderately extent (3)
- High extent (4-5)

Perceived responsibility by vote intention: Random chance

Q. *To what extent do you believe each of the following holds responsibility for the surge in wildfires this year?*

Random chance/Bad luck



- DK/NR
- Low extent (1-2)
- Moderately extent (3)
- High extent (4-5)

Responsibility for wildfire prevention (i)

- » Going forwards, Canadians see the federal government, provincial governments, and forestry industry as holding an equal share of the responsibility for preventing future wildfires in the country
- » Seven in ten Canadians (69%) contend their respective provincial governments should be responsible for preventing future wildfires
 - NDP, Green, and Liberal voters are more apt to support the notion that provincial governments should be tasked with preventing wildfires
 - Those under 35 (79%) and university graduates (77%) are also more likely to share this view

Responsibility for wildfire prevention (ii)

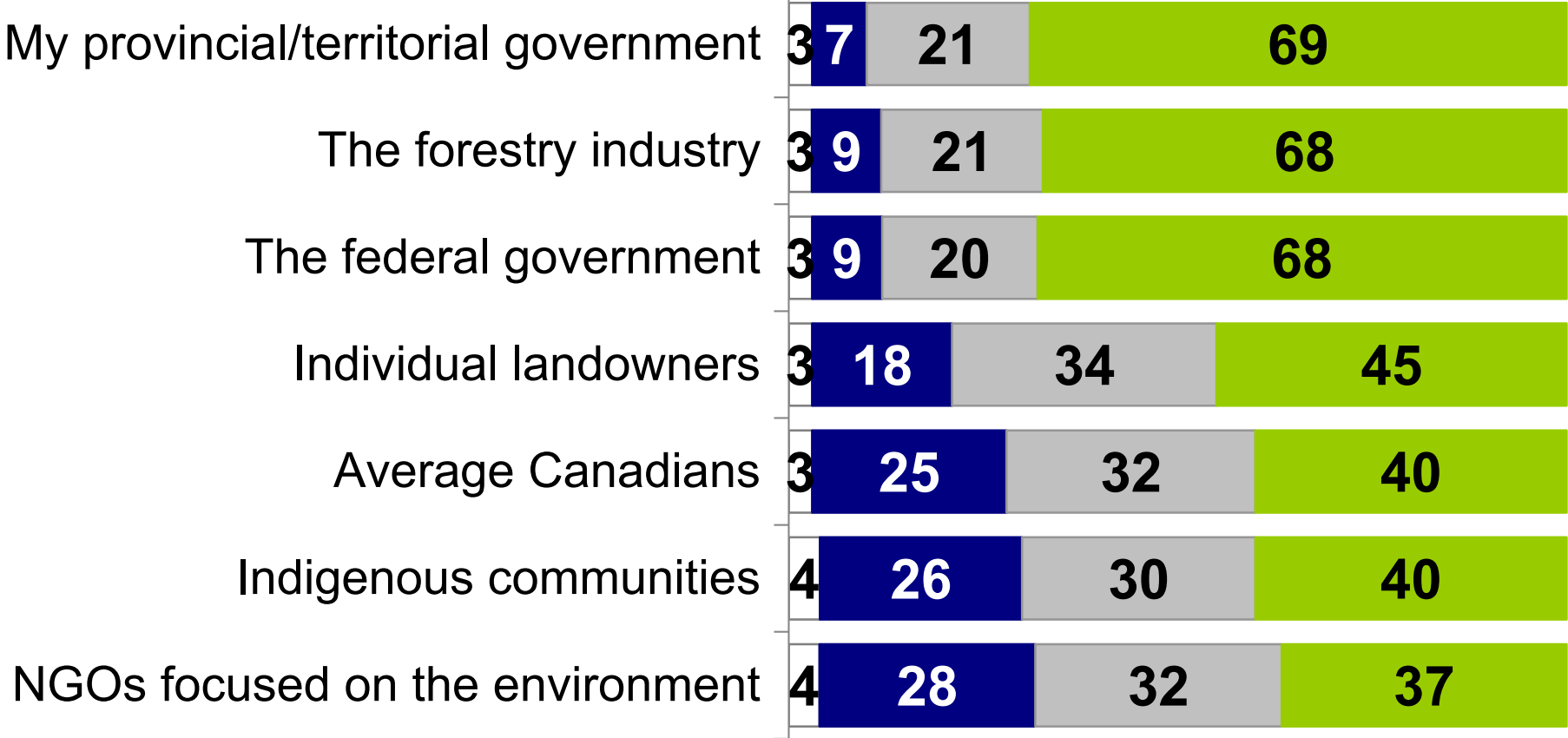
- » Slightly fewer (68%) say the federal government should be primarily responsible for preventing future wildfires
 - Green and NDP voters (84% and 82%, respectively) are more inclined to say the federal government should bear responsibility
 - Those under 35 (81%), university graduates (75%), and women (73%) are more likely to say the federal government has a major role to play
- » A further 68% believe the forestry industry itself should play a central part in wildfire prevention
 - Green (91%), Bloc (87%), and NDP (81%) supporters are all more likely to say responsibility lies with the industry
 - Seniors (76%), women (74%), and university graduates (73%) are all more likely to hold this belief

Responsibility for wildfire prevention (iii)

- » Just under half (45%) feel that individual landowners should take responsibility for wildfire prevention
 - Conservative voters are less likely to believe individual landowners should shoulder the responsibility of preventing wildfires (35%)
- » Roughly four in ten say average Canadians (40%), Indigenous communities (40%), and NGOs (37%) have a significant role to play
 - Those 55 and over (49% to 55%) and women (47%) are more apt to say average Canadians should take the lead in wildfire prevention
 - Those over 55 (50% to 56%) and women are more likely to favour an Indigenous-led approach

Responsibility for wildfire prevention

Q. To what extent do you believe each of the following entities and organizations should be responsible for preventing future wildfires in Canada?



DK/NR
 Low extent (1-2)
 Moderate extent (3)
 High extent (4-5)

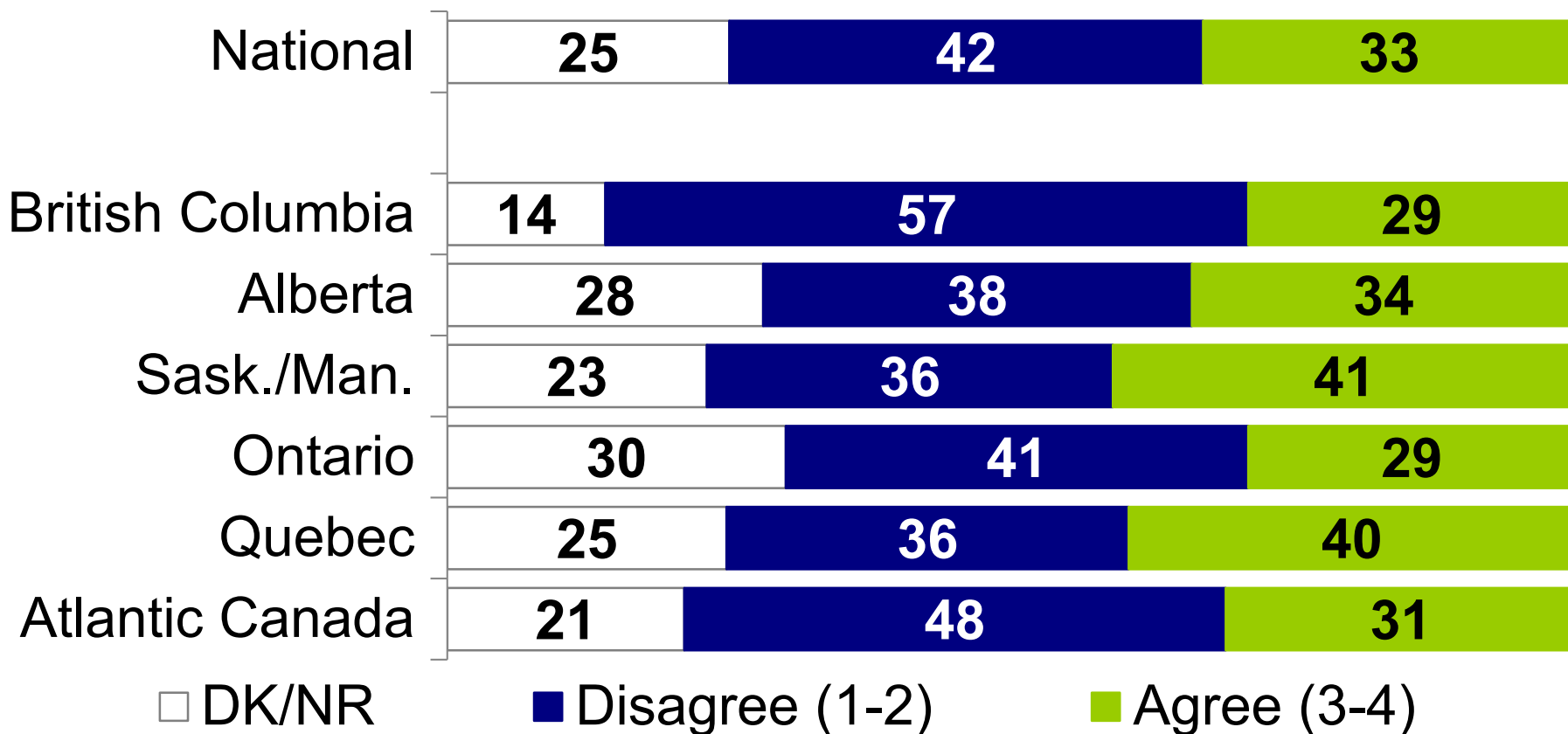
Views on GoC pledge to protect forests

- » Canadians express serious doubts as to whether the Government of Canada is fulfilling its commitment to protect old-growth forests
 - Just one-third (33%) agree the federal government is honouring its pledge, compared to 42% who disagree
 - One-quarter (25%) did not respond to the question, suggesting a fair amount of uncertainty on the matter
- » Liberal voters are more likely to assert the federal government is keeping its promise (48%), while Green and NDP voters are more apt to say the government has not stayed true to its word (59% and 55%, respectively, disagree the government has kept its promise)
- » Residents of British Columbia and those under 35 are more apt to say the federal government is failing to live up to its promise (57% and 49%, respectively)

Views on GoC pledge to protect forests

Q. *The Government of Canada has promised to "help protect old-growth forests."*

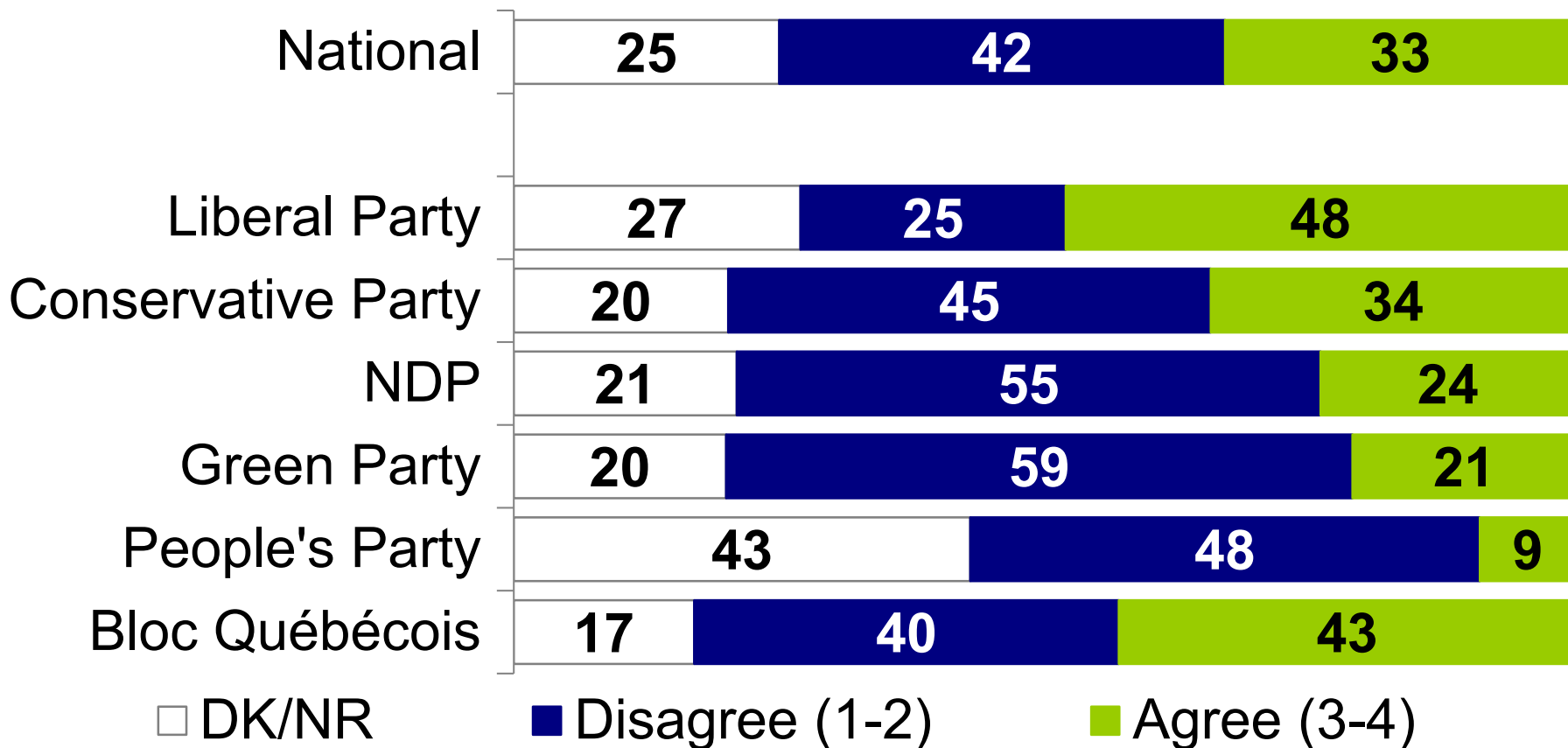
To what extent do you agree or disagree that it is keeping its promise?



Views on GoC pledge to protect forests

Q. *The Government of Canada has promised to "help protect old-growth forests."*

To what extent do you agree or disagree that it is keeping its promise?



Conclusions (i)

- » Forest conservation and restoration is a major priority among Canadians and results reveal a clear mandate for acting as a world leader in this area
 - At the same time, however, Canadians have serious doubts as to whether the Government of Canada is fulfilling its commitment to protect old-growth forests
- » Results also reveal broad support for all of the protection measures tested (phasing out clearcut logging, imposing carbon pricing on burning wood, etc.)
 - Notably, a majority of Canadians favour adhering to European regulations

Conclusions (ii)

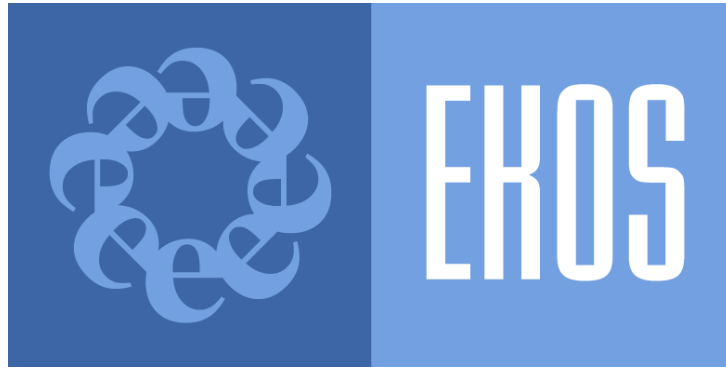
- » Results further reveal some interesting demographic divides
 - Women and those in both the oldest and youngest age cohorts are more likely to support further measures to protect Canada's forests
 - Interestingly, residents of British Columbia – who have always led as supporters of environmental protections – appear to have surrendered their title to Quebec

Conclusions (iii)

- » Results also reveal large partisan gaps
 - Support for various measures to protect Canada's forests is consistently lower among Conservative and People's Party voters (though narrow majorities still assign a high degree of importance in this area)
 - In particular, Conservative and People's Party supporters are far more strongly opposed to cross-border co-operation, such as adhering to E.U. regulations or promoting Indigenous rights abroad
- » Many of these divisions are linked to the polarization and disinformation we see in many areas today
 - For example, nearly all left and centre-left voters see climate change as the primary cause of the recent surge in wildfires
 - Among Conservatives, however, arson and random chances are seen as the top causes

Conclusions (iv)

- » Results reveal deep concerns over the recent surge in wildfires
- » Climate change is seen as the primary cause
- » However, the federal government, provincial governments, and the forestry industry itself are also seen as complicit
 - Nevertheless, these three culprits are seen as the three main sources of response
 - Indeed, there is a near-consensus that the federal government, provincial governments, and forestry industry all have a major role to play in preventing future wildfires



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