



DE HAVILLAND AIRCRAFT
OF CANADA LIMITED

Canadian Perceptions: Wildfire Response

May 2026



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Methodology

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Field Window	May 20 to 29, 2026
Sampling	Online survey of randomly-selected sample of 1,555 Adult (18+) Canadian residents .
Reliability	As a guideline, a probability sample of this size carries a margin of error of ± 2.5% , 19 times out of 20. The margin of error is larger for sub-segments.
Weighting	Data has been weighted using the most current age, gender, and region Census data to ensure the sample reflects the actual population of adult Canadians.

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION COUNTS			
REGION	Weighted	Unweighted	Margin of Error
Atlantic Provinces	109	101	± 9.7%
Quebec	353	355	± 5.2%
Ontario	586	413	± 4.8%
Prairies (SK/MB)	109	151	± 8.0%
Alberta	183	207	± 6.8%
BC + Territories	215	328	± 5.4%
TOTAL CANADA	1,555	1,555	± 2.5%

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POLLARA STRATEGIC INSIGHTS IS A MEMBER OF THE **CANADIAN RESEARCH INSIGHTS COUNCIL (CRIC)**, AND THIS RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED IN COMPLIANCE WITH CRIC STANDARDS.

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Key Findings

- **Wildfires are seen as a serious and worsening problem.** 88% call wildfires a serious problem for Canada and 72% say they are worse than a decade ago.
- **New Canadian-made waterbombers are the study's most popular proposal.** 89% support federal investment in new Canadian-made waterbombers — the single highest level of support in the survey — and 73% want preference given to De Havilland Canada aircraft.
- **Appetite for a larger federal role and a national fleet.** 61% want Ottawa to play a larger role in wildfire response, and 52% favour a federally-owned national waterbomber fleet that provinces can draw on. 61% believe such a fleet would have reduced last year's wildfire damage in their province.
- **Defence and wildfire response are widely linked in the public mind.** 70% agree the two should be treated together as matters of national security, and 79% would support loaning Canadian waterbombers internationally during Canada's off-season.

A helicopter is shown in flight, dropping a large bucket of water. The background is a clear blue sky. The helicopter is positioned on the right side of the frame, and the bucket is hanging below it.

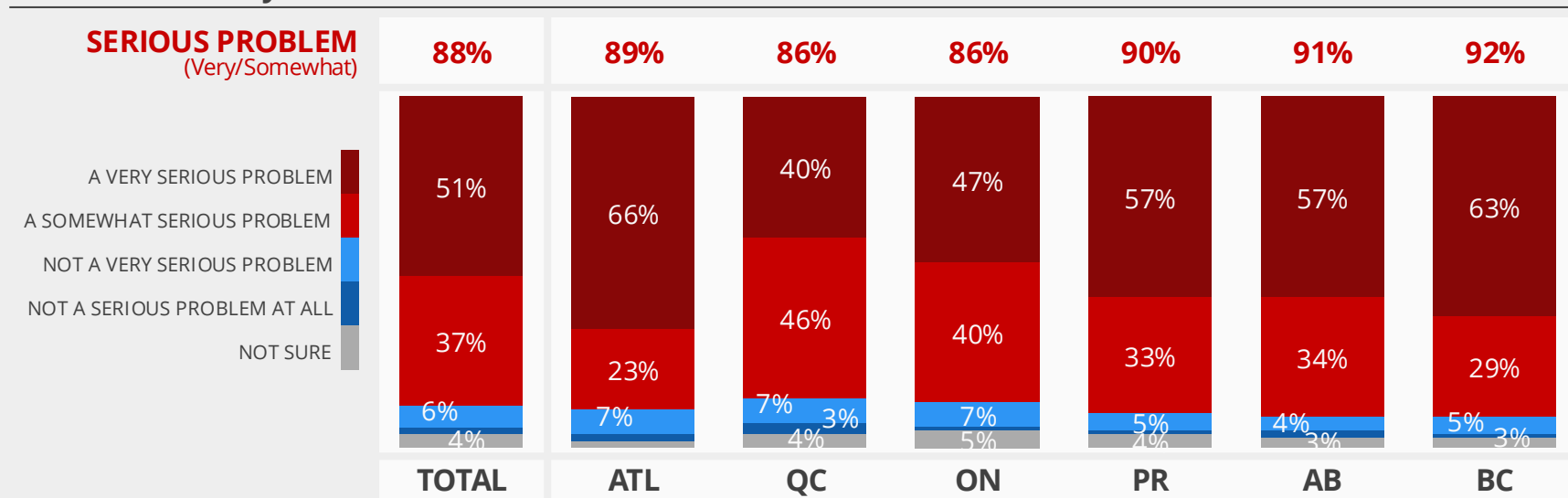
Wildfires Response

Nearly nine-in-ten see wildfires as a serious problem

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- 88% call wildfires a serious problem for Canada, including 51% who say it's a "very serious" problem.
- Concern is highest among those 55+ (94%), women (91%), Western Canadians (90% to 91%) and Atlantic Canadians (89%). NDP voters are the most likely to call wildfires very serious (67%).

Perceived Severity of Wildfires in Canada



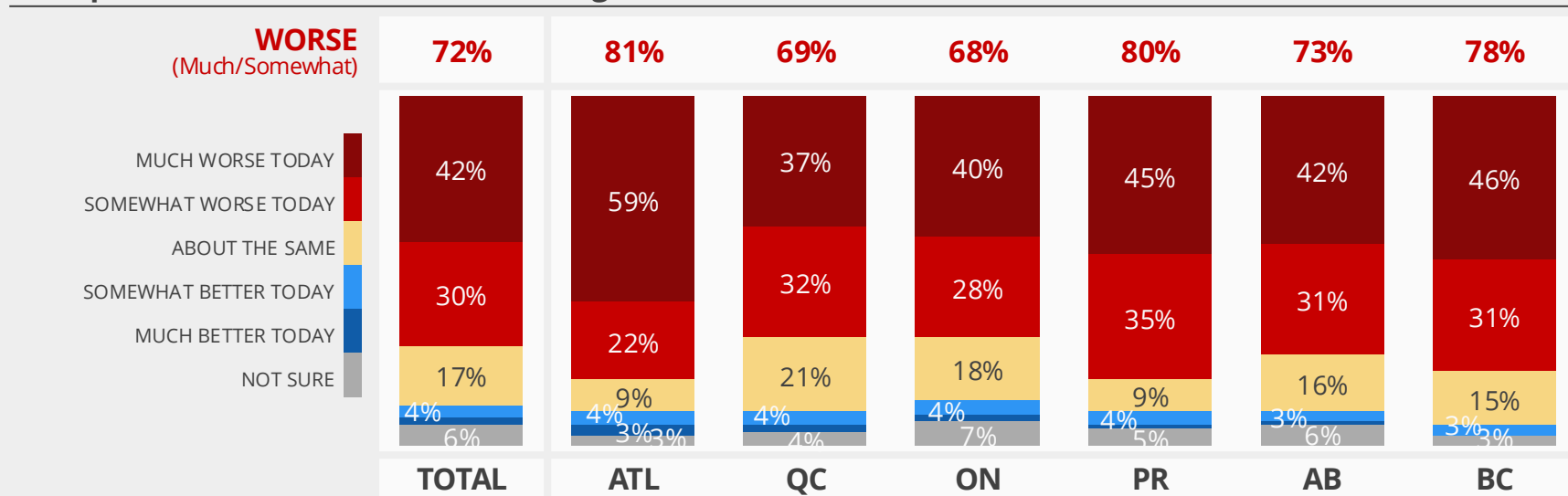
11. In your view, how serious a problem are wildfires for Canada today?
Base: Total (n=1,555). Note: Data <3% not labeled.

Most think wildfires have gotten worse over the past decade

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- 72% say wildfires are worse than ten years ago; only a small share feel they are about the same (17%).
- “Worse” peaks in Atlantic Canada (81%) with over half (59%) saying it’s much worse, the Prairies (80%), and among those 55+ (81%).
- NDP (54%) and Liberal (47%) voters are more likely than Conservative (38%) or Bloc (35%) voters to say “much worse.”

Perceptions of How Wildfires Have Changed Over the Past Decade



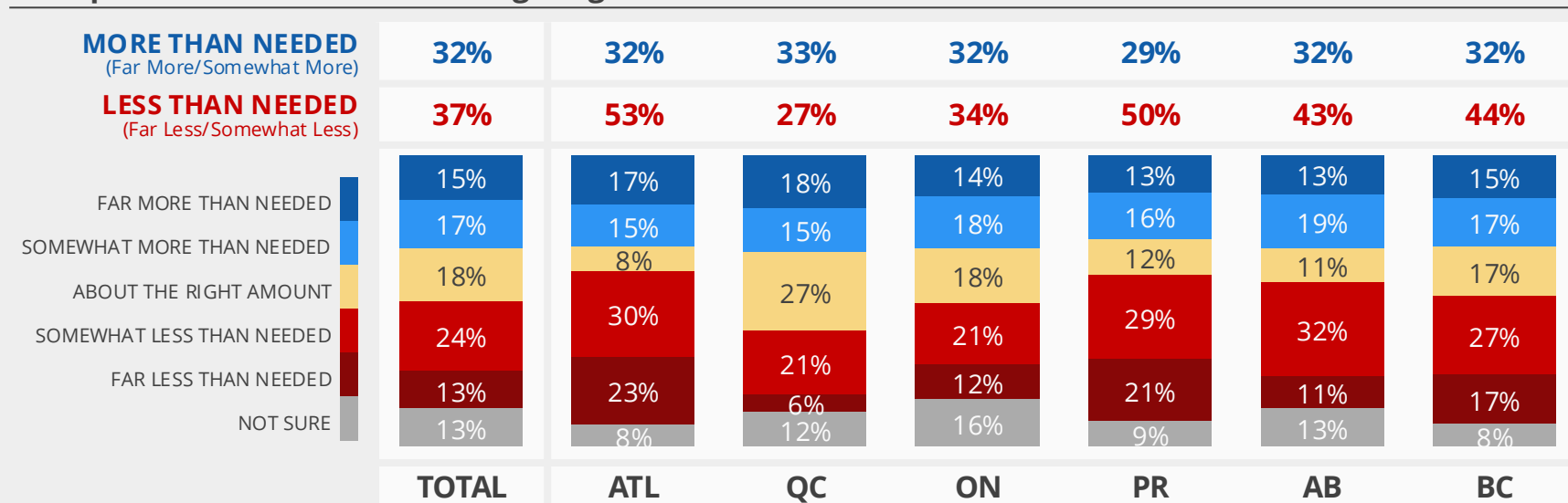
12. Compared with ten years ago, do you think wildfires in Canada are...
Base: Total (n=1,555). Note: Data <3% not labeled.

Narrow plurality says Canada is under-resourced to fight wildfires

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- 37% say Canada has fewer wildfire-fighting resources than needed.
- The “less than needed” view is stronger in Atlantic Canada (53%), the Prairies (50%), BC (44%), and Alberta (43%) compared to Quebec (27%) or Ontario (34%).
- While 55+ (49%) are much more likely to feel Canada has less resources than needed for fighting wildfires, 18-34s (45%) are more likely to believe that Canada has more than enough resources.

Perceptions of Canada's Wildfire Fighting Resources



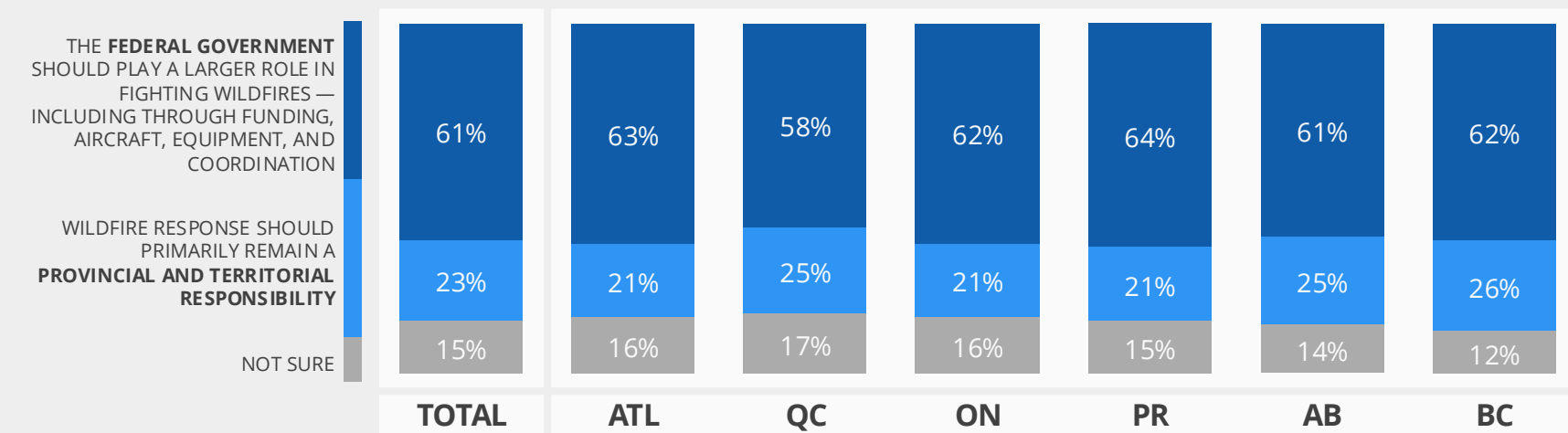
Q 13. How would you rate the current level of resources in Canada to fight wildfires — for example, ground crews, aircraft such as waterbombers, and other equipment? Base: Total (n=1,555).

Majority wants Ottawa to play a bigger role in fighting wildfires

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- 61% want the federal government to take a larger role — including funding, aircraft, equipment and coordination.
- Just 23% would keep wildfire response primarily a provincial and territorial responsibility.
- Opinions are similar across all regions and demographics.
- NDP (71%) and Liberal (67%) voters are more likely to want the federal government to play a larger role versus Conservative (61%) voters, and being much lower among Bloc voters (52%).

Preferred Government Role in Wildfire Response



14. Currently in Canada, fighting wildfires is mainly the responsibility of provincial and territorial governments. Which of the following comes closer to your view?
Base: Total (n=1,555).



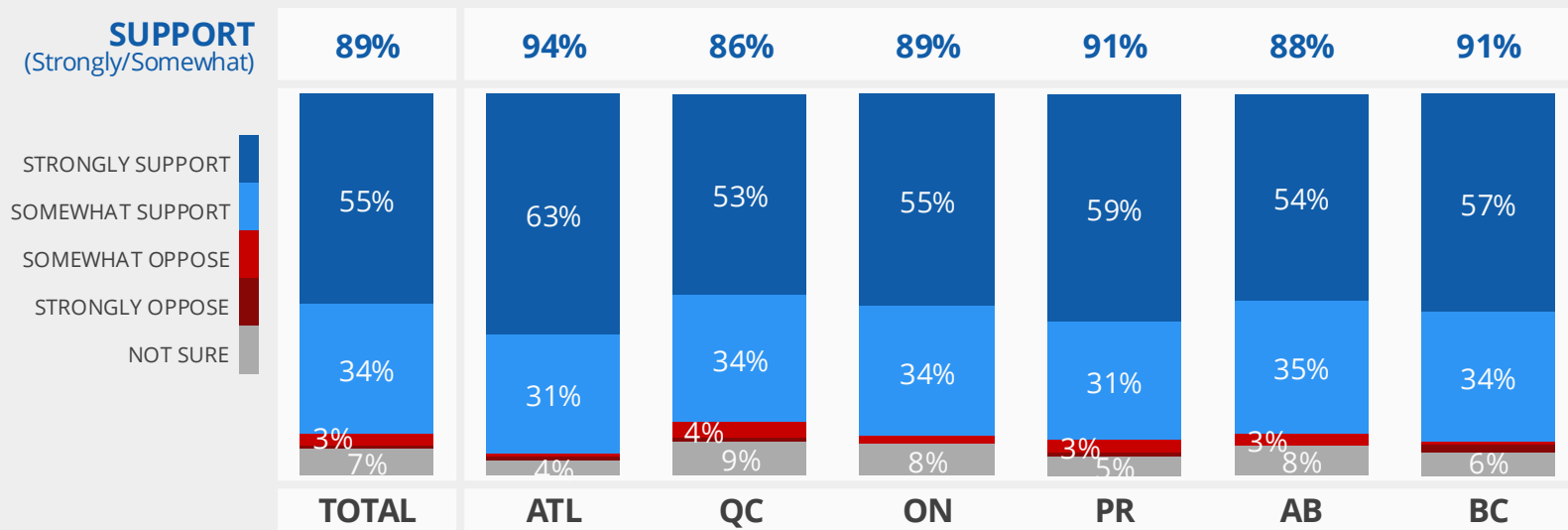
Waterbombers and Aircraft Investment

Canadians overwhelmingly back federal investment in new Canadian-made waterbombers

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- 89% support federal investment in new Canadian-made waterbombers, with over half (55%) strongly supportive.
- Support is near-universal across regions (86–94%) and demographics. By vote, NDP (96%) and Liberal voters (95%) are the most supportive but followed closely by Conservative (91%) and Bloc (89%) voters.

Support for Investing in New Canadian-Made Waterbombers



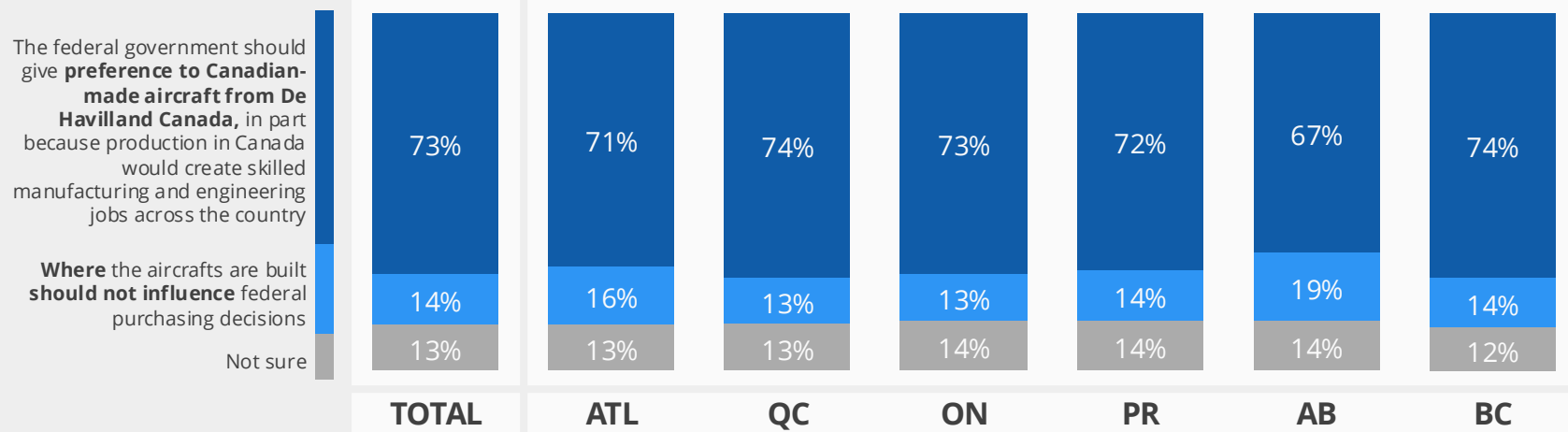
15. The fleet of aircraft used to fight wildfires in Canada — particularly waterbombers — is aging and will need to be replaced over the coming decade. Building new Canadian-made waterbombers would create skilled manufacturing and engineering jobs in Canada. How much do you support or oppose the federal government investing in new Canadian-made waterbombers? Base: Total (n=1,555). Note: Data <3% not labeled.

Three-in-four Canadians want preference given to De Havilland Canada's aircrafts

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- 73% say Ottawa should give preference to Canadian-made aircraft from De Havilland Canada, citing the skilled jobs that domestic production would create.
- Only 14% say where aircraft are built should not influence federal purchasing decisions.
- Higher preference for De Havilland aircrafts among Bloc (88%) and Liberal (81%) voters, and dropping somewhat among Conservative (72%) and NDP (68%) voters.

Preferred Approach to Federal Aircraft Procurement



Q 16. Thinking about new federal defence and firefighting aircraft purchases, which of the following comes closer to your view?
Base: Total (n=1,555).

A federal national wildfire-fighting fleet is the most-preferred ownership model

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- 31% favour a federally-owned national firefighting fleet that all provinces and territories can draw on — the top option — followed by a provincial/federal combination (20%) and provincially-owned fleets (20%).
- Models that include a federal fleet collectively outweigh purely provincial or private-leasing approaches.
- Across most provinces federal-owned model is preferred; however, ATL is more inclined towards the province having its own fleet. In BC, preferences are nearly split between federal-owned (26%) and provincially-owned (23%).

Preferred Model for Ownership of Wildfire-Fighting Aircraft

	TOTAL	ATL	QC	ON	PR	AB	BC
The federal government should own a national firefighting aircraft fleet that all provinces and territories can draw on	 31%	23%	34%	32%	31%	26%	26%
A combination of provincial fleets and a federal fleet	 20%	25%	17%	20%	27%	21%	19%
Each province should own its own firefighting aircraft fleet	 20%	32%	23%	15%	17%	19%	23%
A combination of provincial fleets, a federal fleet, and leasing from private companies	 11%	7%	6%	11%	11%	15%	14%
Provinces should rely on leasing firefighting aircraft from private companies	 8%	5%	9%	8%	5%	8%	7%
Not sure	 11%	8%	10%	13%	9%	11%	11%

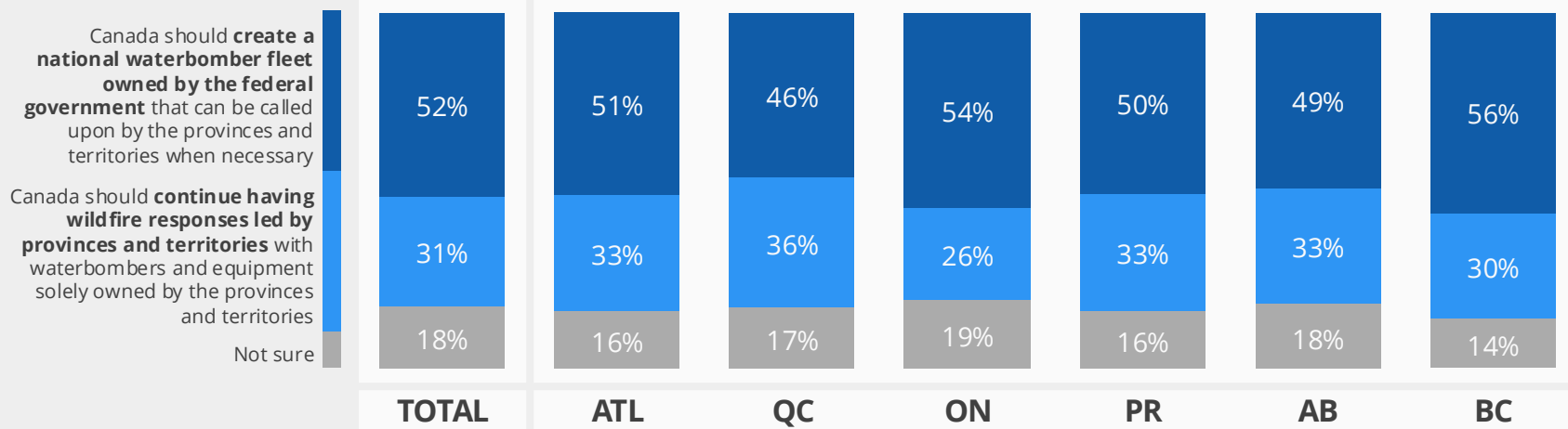


Q17. There has been discussion about who should own the aircraft used to fight wildfires in Canada. In your view, which approach makes the most sense?
Base: Total (n=1,555).

A slim majority backs creating a national waterbomber fleet while one-third also lean towards keeping waterbombers and equipment solely owned by the provinces and territories

- Just over half (52%) want Canada to create a federally-owned national waterbomber fleet that provinces and territories can call on when needed.
- BC (56%), and NDP voters (60%), Liberal voters (55%) are more likely to back a national waterbomber fleet.

Support for Creating a National Waterbomber Fleet



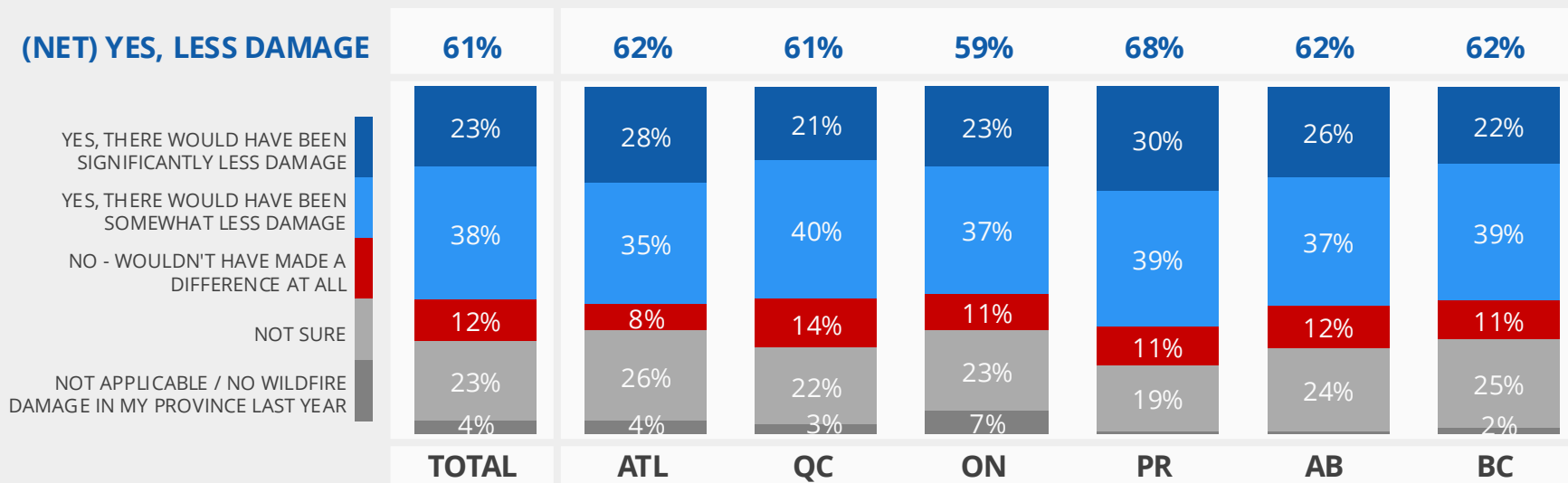
18. Some have proposed creating a national waterbomber fleet that could be used by provinces and territories when needed during Canadian wildfire seasons. Which of the following comes closer to your view? Base: Total (n=1,555).

Most believe a national fleet would have reduced last year's wildfire damage

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- 61% think wildfire damage in their province would have been less last year if Canada had a national waterbomber fleet.
- This belief is significantly higher among under-35s (66%) and Prairie residents (68%).

Perceived Impact of a National Waterbomber Fleet on Wildfire Damage



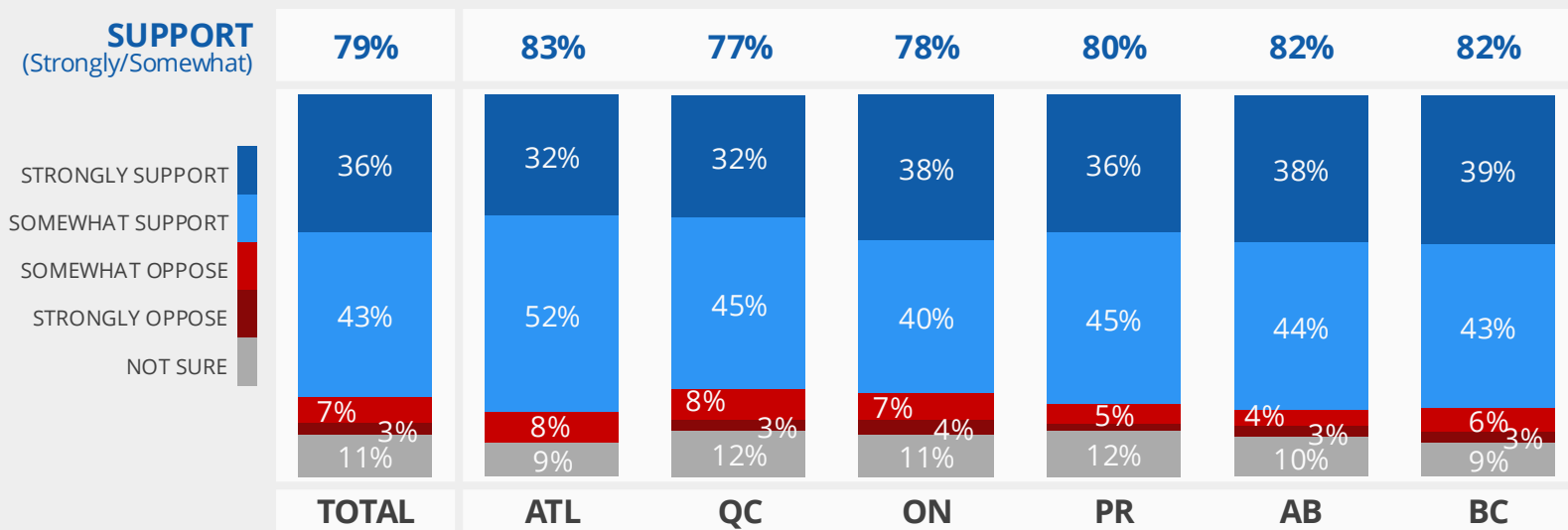
19. If Canada had a national waterbomber fleet that could have supported provinces and territories in fighting wildfires last year, do you believe that the wildfire damage in your province would have been less? Base: Total (n=1,555). Note: Data <2% not labeled.

Strong support for loaning Canadian waterbombers abroad in off-season

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- 79% would support loaning or leasing a national waterbomber fleet internationally during Canada's off-season.
- Support rises with age (83% of those 55+) and is higher among men (83%). Liberal voters lead (88%).

Support for International Use of Canadian Waterbombers During the Off-Season



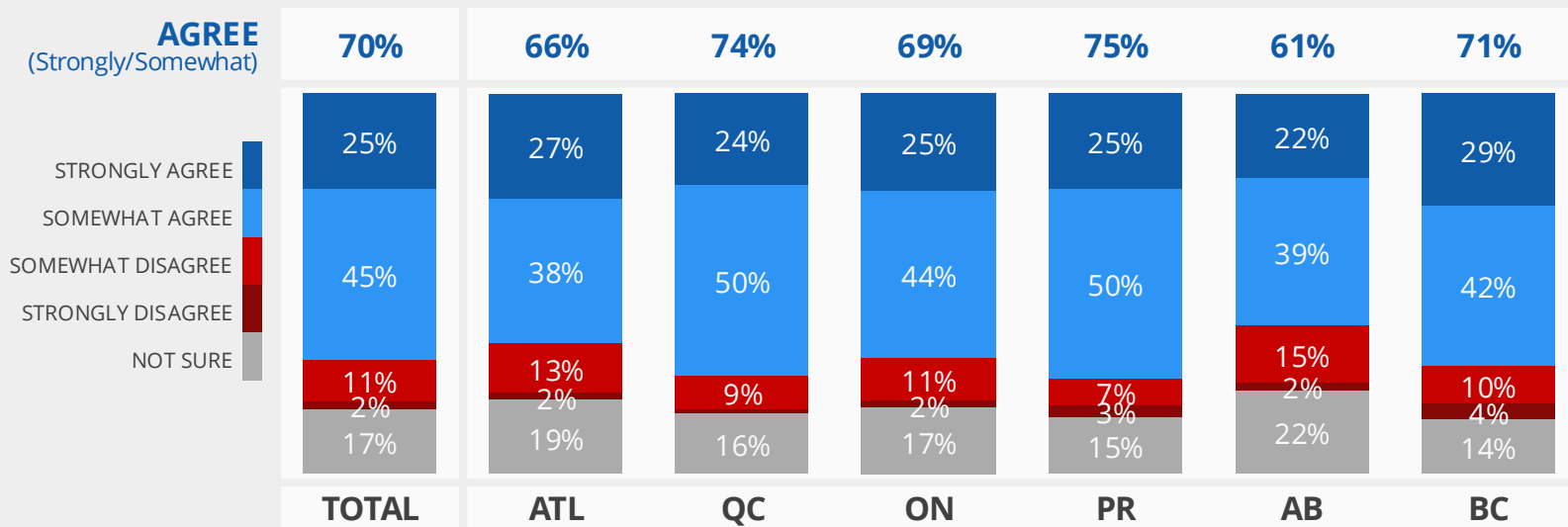
20. When Canada's wildfire season ends, Canadian-owned waterbombers are sometimes loaned or leased to other countries — such as in Europe, Australia, or South America — where their fire seasons are starting. If Canada owned a national waterbomber fleet, would you support or oppose these waterbombers being loaned or leased internationally during Canada's off-season? Base: Total (n=1,555). Note: Data <3% not labeled.

Most agree defence and wildfire response should be treated together

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- 70% agree Canada should consider defence spending and wildfire response together as matters of national security.
- Agreement is significantly higher among rural residents (77%), men (74%), Liberal voters (78%), and Bloc voters (78%).
- Support highest in PR (75%) and QC (74%) while being lowest in AB (61%).

Support for Integrating Defence and Wildfire Response Capabilities



21. Some have argued that Canada's defence spending and its wildfire response should be considered together — for example, by using military aircraft and personnel for both Arctic patrol and emergency wildfire response, and by treating both as matters of national security. How much do you agree or disagree with this approach? Base: Total (n=1,555). Note: Data <2% not labeled.

Half of **British Columbians** say the province lacked firefighting resources

- Among BC residents, 51% say the province has lacked sufficient firefighting resources, including aircraft, to respond as effectively as it should have. 39% say that, given the size and severity of recent fires, BC did about as well as it could have.
- Directionally, BC Conservative voters are somewhat more likely to say BC lacked resources (58% vs. 48% of BC NDP voters), but small sub-sample means the difference can't be stated firmly.

Assessment of British Columbia's Response to Recent Wildfires—BC Only

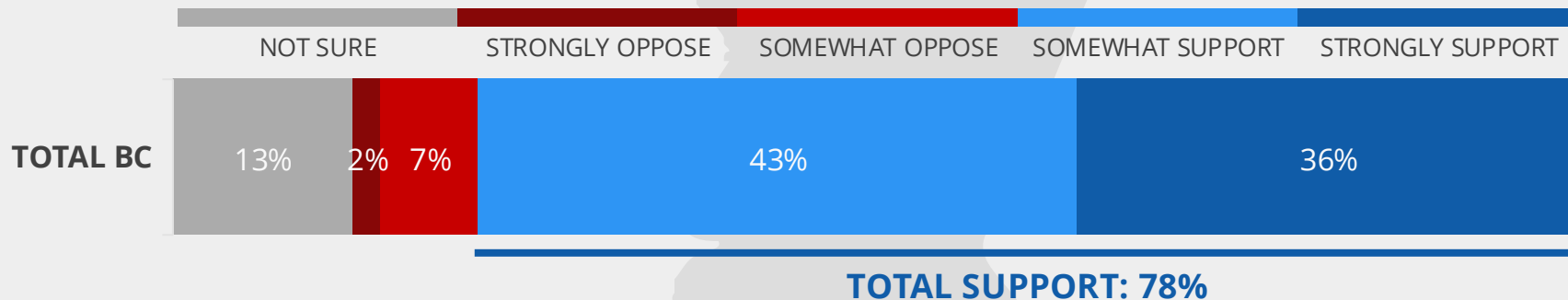


British Columbians strongly back a dedicated provincial firefighting fleet

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- 78% of BC residents support BC owning its own dedicated fleet of waterbombers and other firefighting aircraft.
- Just 9% oppose the idea.

Support for British Columbia Owning a Dedicated Firefighting Aircraft Fleet—BC Only



23. Some argue that British Columbia should own its own dedicated fleet of waterbombers and other firefighting aircraft, rather than relying on contracted aircraft or aircraft from other provinces. How much do you support or oppose British Columbia owning its own dedicated fleet? Base: BC Residents Only (n=300).

DEMOGRAPHICS

AGE (NETS)	
18-34	27%
35-54	33%
55+	40%
MEAN AGE	48.7

GENDER	
Female	51%
Male	49%

REGION (NETS)	
Atlantic	7%
Quebec	23%
Ontario	38%
Manitoba/ Saskatchewan	7%
Alberta	12%
BC + North	14%

INCOME	
Under \$50,000	30%
\$50,000 to less than \$100,000	35%
\$100,000 or over	28%
Prefer not to say	7%

EDUCATION	
High school or less	24%
College, Trade school or apprenticeship	35%
University degree	40%
Prefer not to say	1%

ETHNICITY	
(Net) White	70%
(Net) Racialized	31%
Black	8%
South Asian	6%
Chinese Heritage	5%
Indigenous Heritage	4%





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The logo for Pollara strategic insights, with the word 'pollara' in a bold, lowercase sans-serif font, and the words 'strategic insights' in a smaller, lowercase sans-serif font below it. The background of the slide features a large, faint target graphic and a photograph of a De Havilland DHC-6 Twin Otter aircraft in flight, dropping a large volume of water or fire retardant.

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