



**Nova Scotia  
April 2016 Report**

## Introduction

As the Liberal Government of Nova Scotia passes the midpoint of its current term, MQO Research releases its first Atlantic Matters poll. It's an opportunity to compare the Liberal party's current support to the outcome of the 2013 election, and from there, to take a look at how Nova Scotians are feeling about their government's performance at this midway point.

## Provincial Politics

According to MQO Research's recent Atlantic Matters poll of Nova Scotia households, Liberal party support is quite strong across the province.

- Decided and leaning voter support for the Liberal party currently stands at 59%, compared to their final vote share of 45.7% in the last provincial election (Fall 2013).
- In these newly released numbers, PC support sits at 17%. This is a significant drop from their popular vote result of 26.3% in the 2013 election. By comparison, NDP support has declined to 20% today versus a 2013 election share of 26.8%.

The Atlantic Matters poll was conducted by telephone from April 5 to April 9 2016 and included 600 randomly selected eligible voters from across the province. The margin of error for the survey is  $\pm 4.0\%$  19 times out of 20.

*Note: For the rating scale questions, results reflect only those who provided a rating between 1 and 10 (don't know and refused removed).*

## Government Performance

When asked to rate the provincial government's overall performance (on a scale of 1-10; higher number, more positive rating) since being elected in 2013, results were quite varied, with 51% providing a rating of 5 or less, while 49% provided a rating of 6 or higher (17% provided a rating of 8+).

The public's assessment of Premier Stephen McNeil's overall leadership received similar responses, with 52% offering a rating of 5 or less and 48% providing a rating of 6 or higher (18% provided a rating of 8+ for the current premier).

The specific areas where voters were most critical included government's performance in "creating jobs", where 68% provided a rating of 5 or less, and "managing the health care system", where 62% provided a similar 1 to 5 rating. Despite these somewhat critical perceptions from the public, half of the voting public (51%) gave the current government a rating of 6 or higher in terms of "demonstrating leadership".

## Provincial Outlook

In terms of looking forward, eligible voters were asked for their opinions on the general outlook for the province. Results indicate that 54% of households across the province feel that over the past three months the general outlook has remained "about the same", while a noteworthy 30% feel the outlook has gotten "worse" or "a lot worse". When asked how confident they are that the economy will improve this year, 39% gave a rating of 6 or higher on a scale of 1 to 10, suggesting that most feel the province's general outlook for this year will, at best, remain as it is today.

## Personal Wellbeing

Finally, respondents were asked how the current economy may affect them personally over the coming year. Using the same 1 to 10 scale, 71% indicated that the likelihood of them making a major purchase this year is quite low (5 or less on a scale of 1-10).

Conversely, when asked how concerned people are about the cost of living this year, 60% rated their level of concern as being quite high (8 or higher on a scale of 1-10).

After considering a series of related questions, respondents were asked: “With all of this in mind, how would you rate your general stress level this year”? In response to this question, 30% provided a rating of 8 or higher, while an additional 22% provided a rating of either 6 or 7.

## Federal Politics

Liberal support at the Federal level remains quite strong in Nova Scotia on the heels of last fall’s election. Today, 69% of decided and leaning voters indicate they would vote Liberal if an election were held today. This is a notable increase from Nova Scotia’s actual result in the fall 2015 Federal election, where a strong 61.9% of the popular vote was behind the Liberal party.

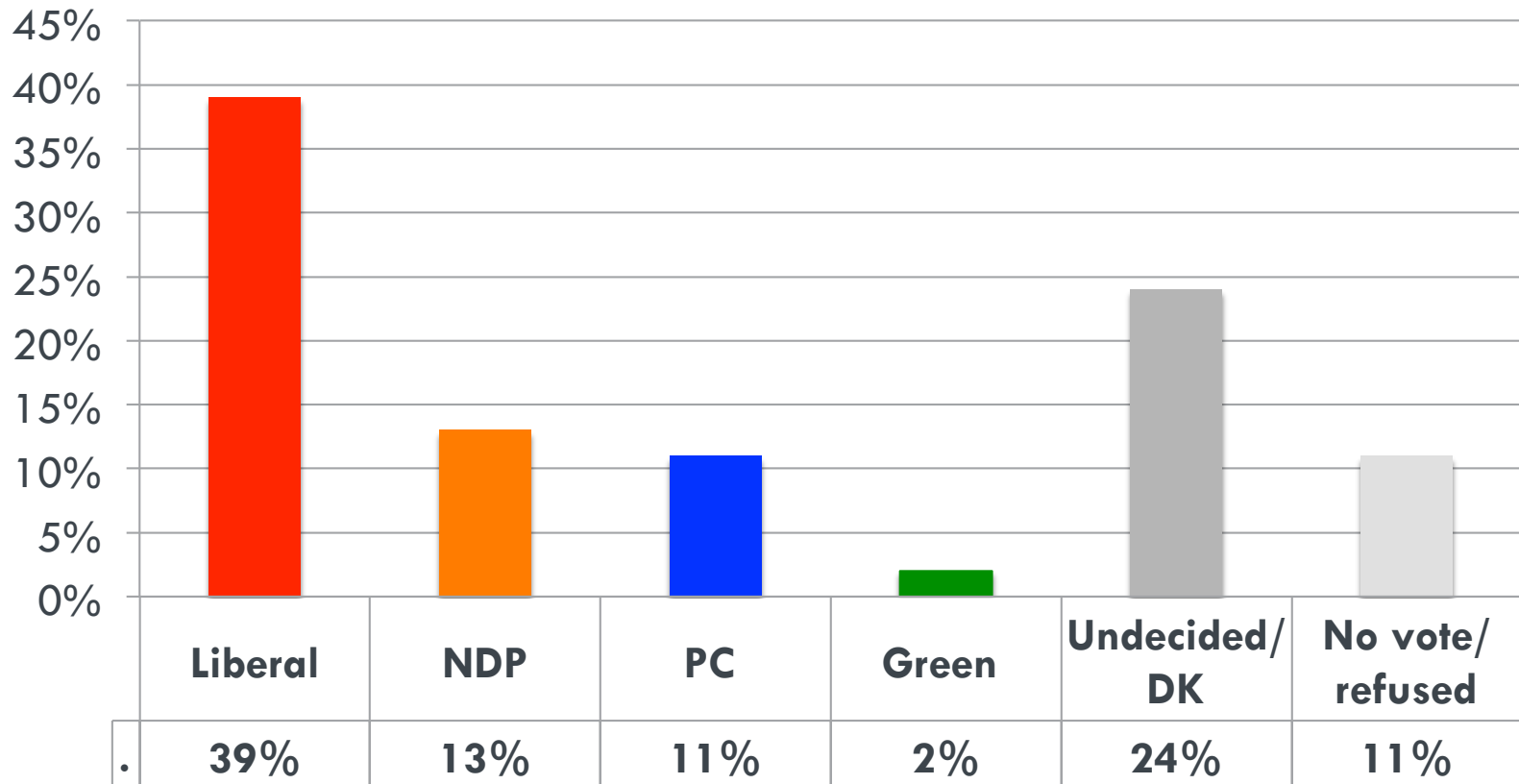
Since the Federal election, Federal Conservative and NDP support in the province has dipped slightly. Atlantic Matters poll results indicate that today, 15% of Nova Scotians would support the Federal Conservatives (versus 17.9% in the last election), while NDP support has slipped from 16.4% to 13%.

Perceptions of the federal government’s performance over the past three months were also strong, with 45% providing a rating of 8 or higher, and an additional 31% rating the federal government’s performance either a 6 or 7 on a scale of 1 to 10.

Interestingly, when asked how people rated the federal governments working relationship with Nova Scotia today, people were less enamored with the federal governments performance, 36% rated the relationship a 5 or less, and 37% rated it as either a 6 or 7.

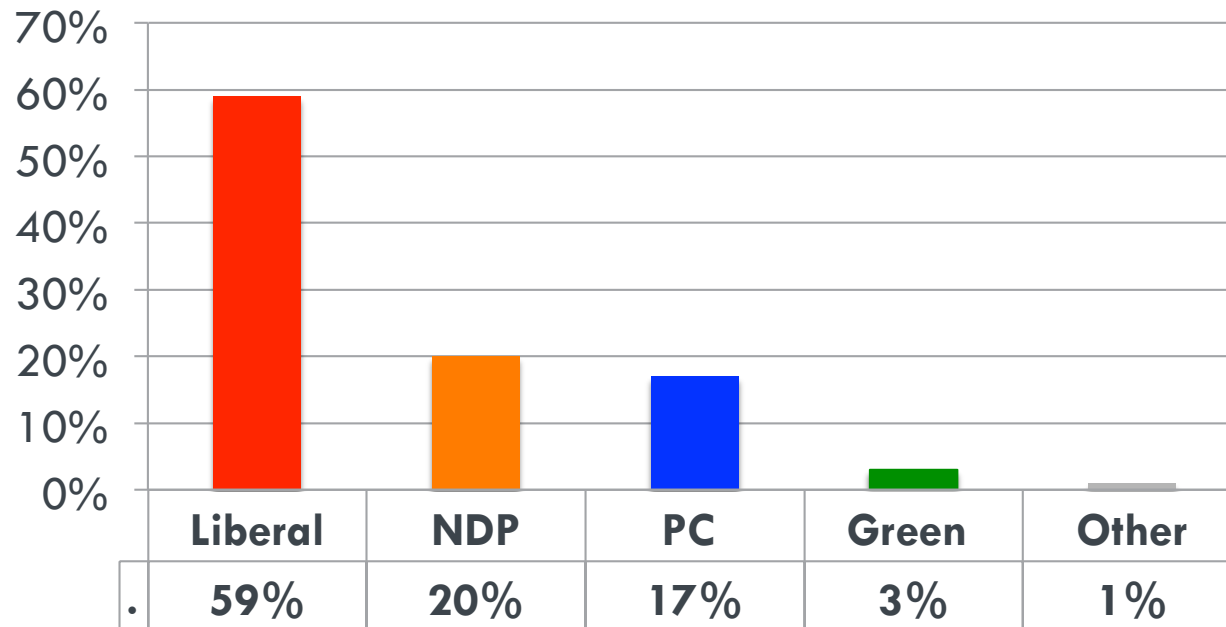
## *“If a provincial election were held today, which party would you most likely vote for?”*

*(Party numbers include decided and leaning)*



## “If a provincial election were held today, which party would you most likely vote for?”

*(Decided and leaning voters only; don't know/refused/would not vote have been removed)*



2013 Provincial election results

<b>45.7%</b>	<b>26.8%</b>	<b>26.3%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>
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N= 388

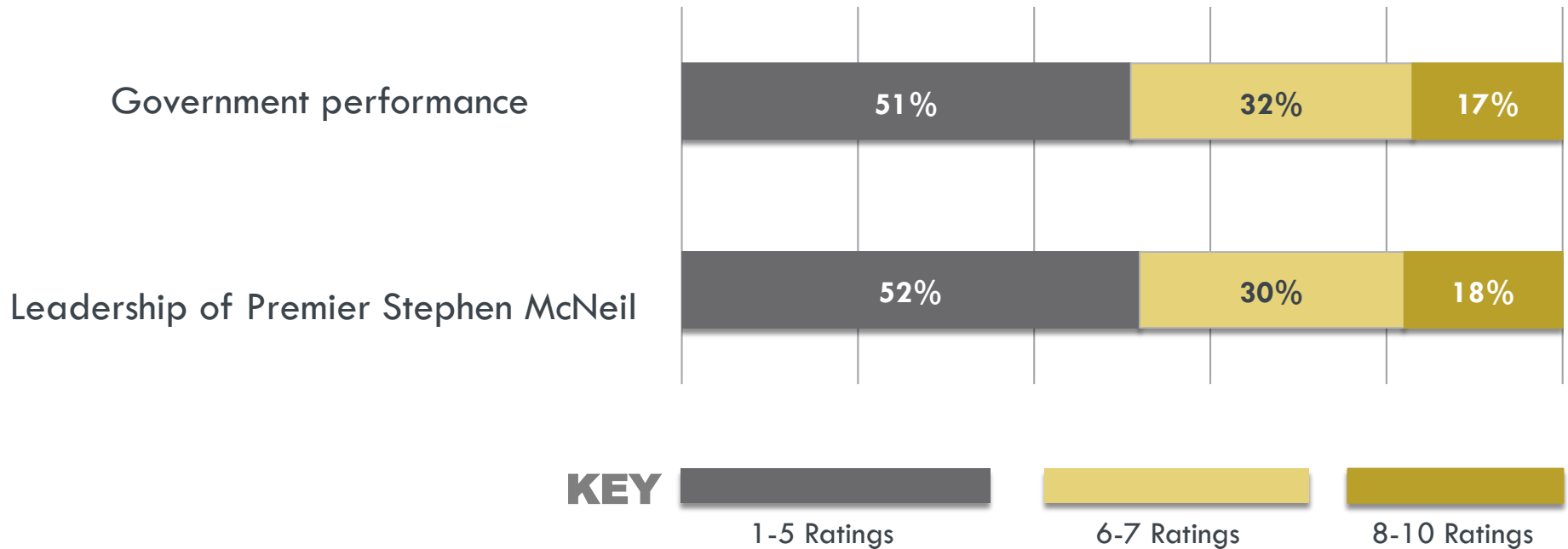
Margin of error for a sample size of 388 is  $\pm 4.97$  at 95% CI

**“How would you rate the overall performance of your provincial government since they have been elected?”**

*(Don't know and refused removed)*

**“How would you rate the overall leadership of Premier Stephen McNeil?”**

*(Don't know and refused removed)*



Note: Respondents provided a rating from 1 to 10, where 1= low/weak performance and 10=high/strong performance.

***“In the past three months, how would you rate your provincial government’s performance in each of the following areas?”***

*(Don’t know and refused removed)*



**KEY**



1-5 Ratings



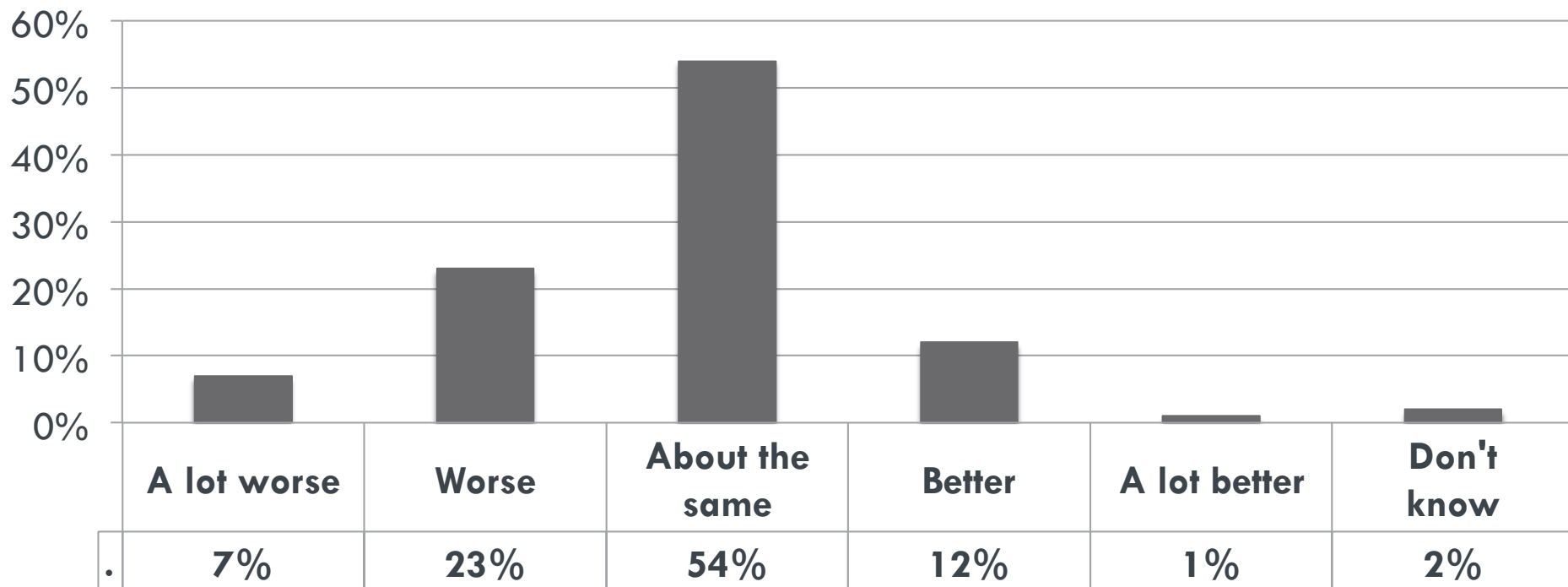
6-7 Ratings



8-10 Ratings

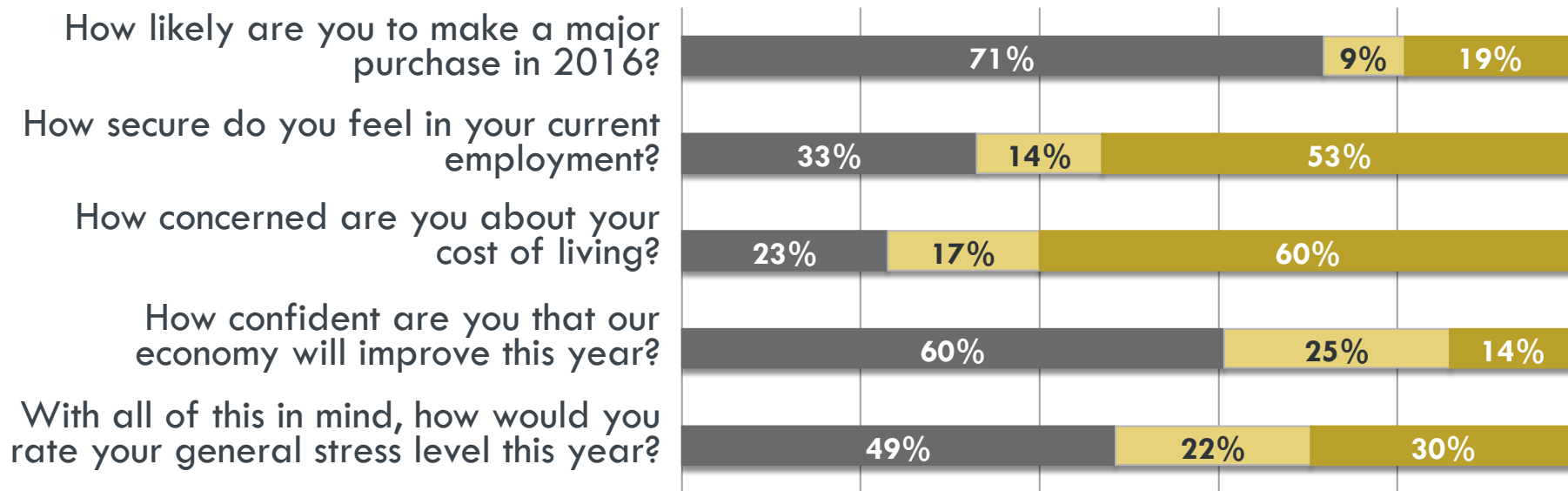
Note: Respondents provided a rating from 1 to 10, where 1= low/weak performance and 10=high/strong performance.

*“Based on your personal experiences over the past three months, would you say that the general outlook in NS has been getting...”*





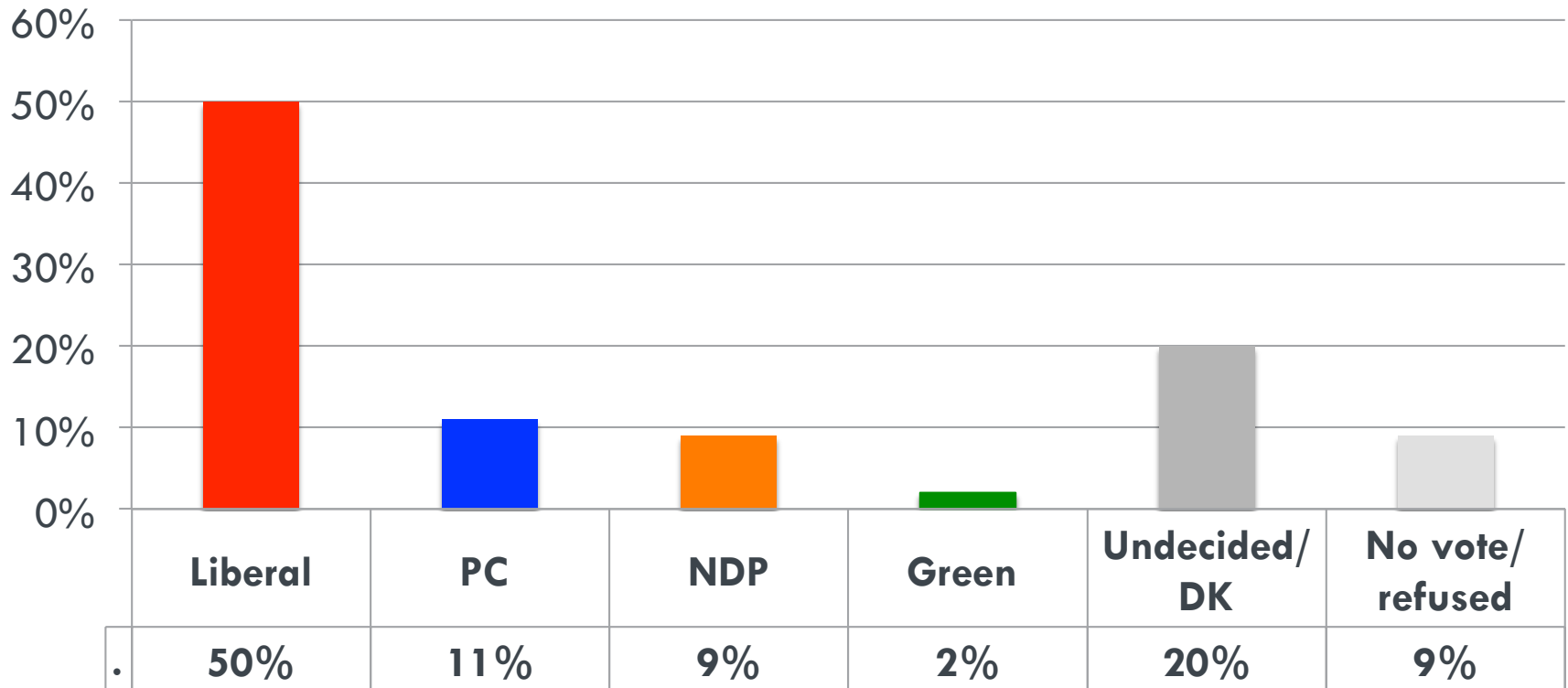
**“We’d like to know how the current economy may affect you this year....”**  
*(Don’t know and refused removed)*



*Note: Respondents provided a rating from 1 to 10, where higher numbers indicate greater likelihood of purchasing/higher levels of security/higher levels of concern/higher levels of confidence/greater stress level.*

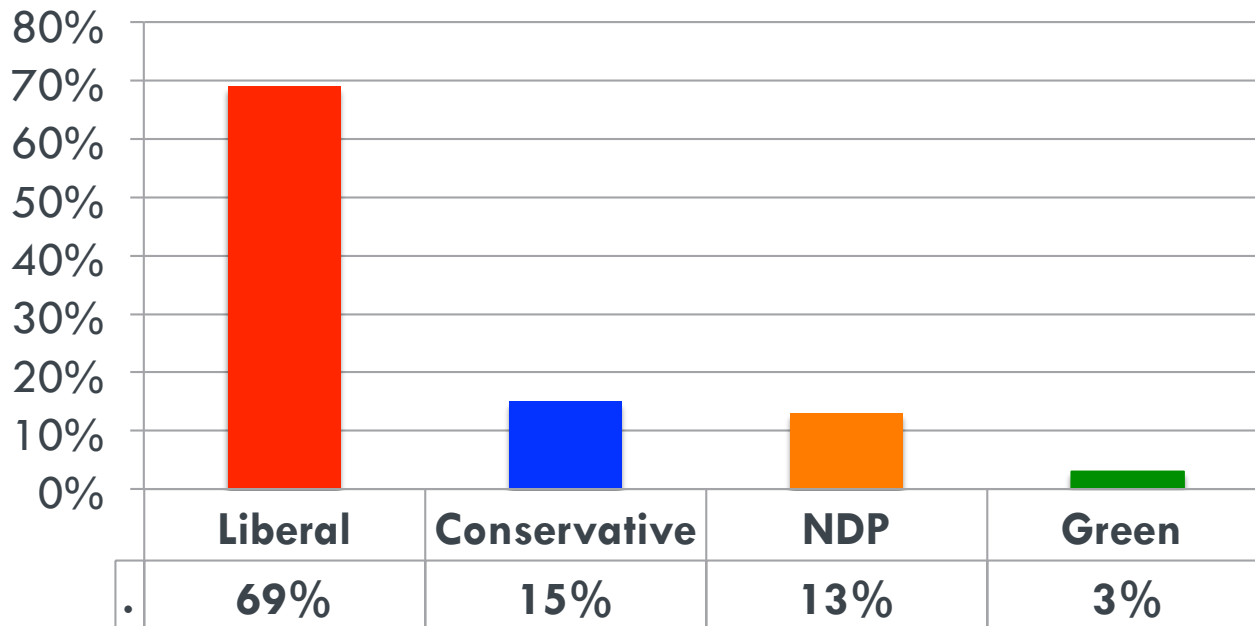
## *“If a federal election were held today, which party would you most likely vote for?”*

*(Party numbers include decided and leaning)*



## “If a federal election were held today, which party would you most likely vote for?”

(Decided and leaning voters only; don't know/refused/would not vote have been removed)



2015 Federal election results

<b>61.9%</b>	<b>17.9%</b>	<b>16.4%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>
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N= 433

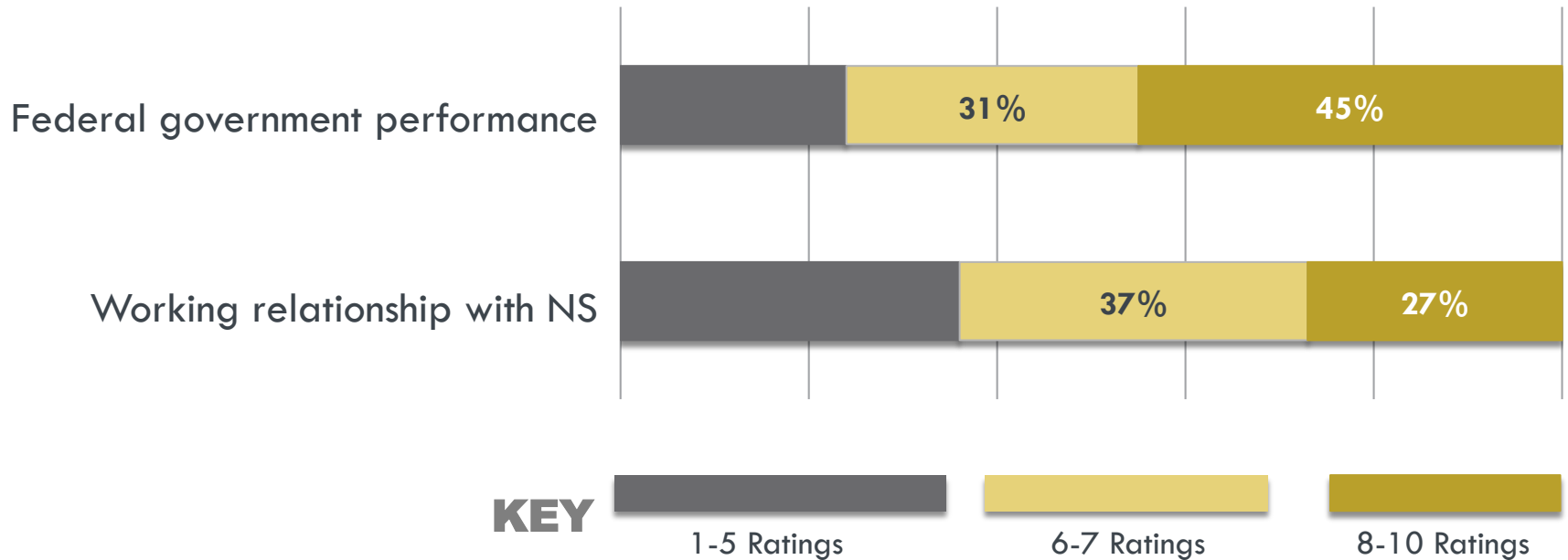
Margin of error for a sample size of 433 is  $\pm 4.70$  at 95% CI

**“Thinking about the past three months, how would you rate the performance of the Government of Canada, led by Justin Trudeau?”**

*(Don't know and refused removed)*

**“And thinking about the past three months, how would you rate the federal government’s working relationship with NS?”**

*(Don't know and refused removed)*



Note: Respondents provided a rating from 1 to 10, where 1=low/weak performance and 10=high/strong performance.

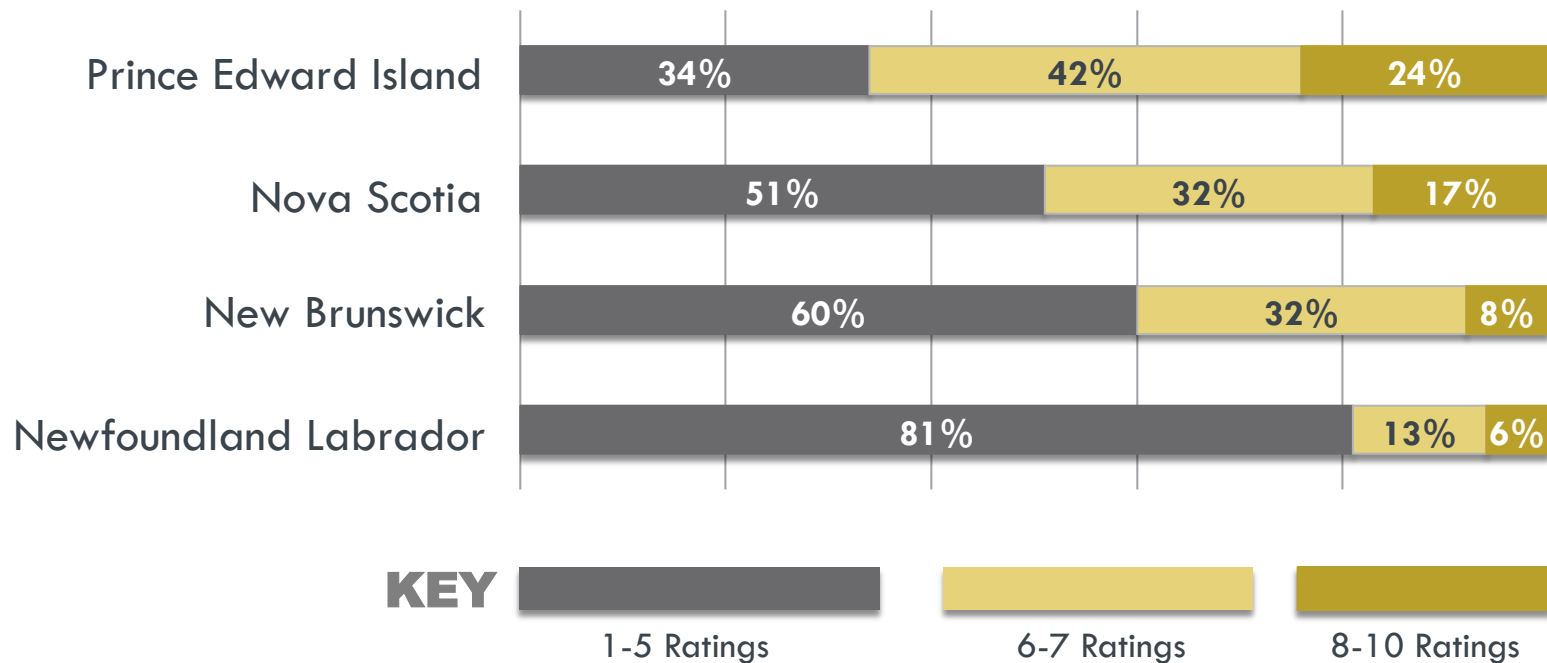


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A pan-Atlantic view of opinions from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland Labrador

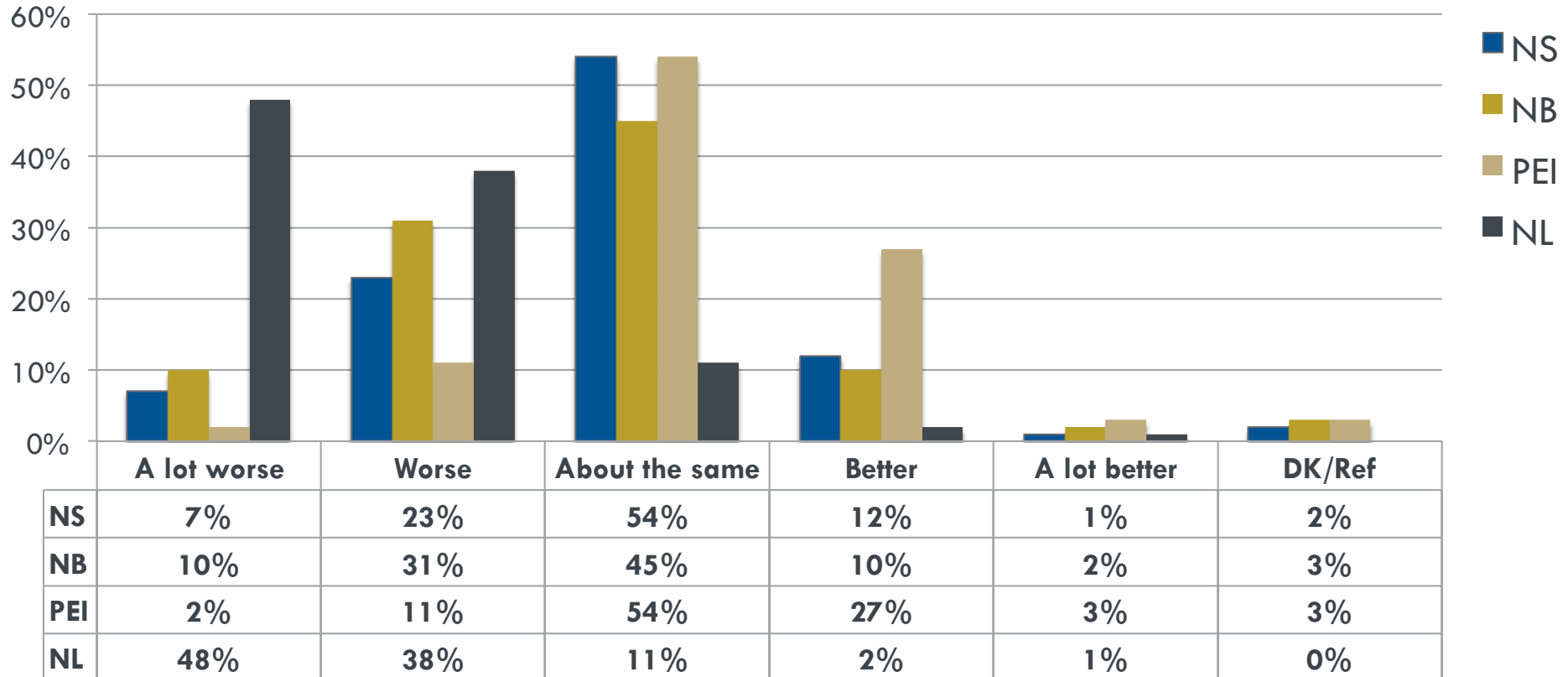
**“How would you rate the overall performance of your provincial government since they have been elected?”**

*(Don't know and refused removed)*



Note: Respondents provided a rating from 1 to 10, where 1= low/weak performance and 10=high/strong performance.

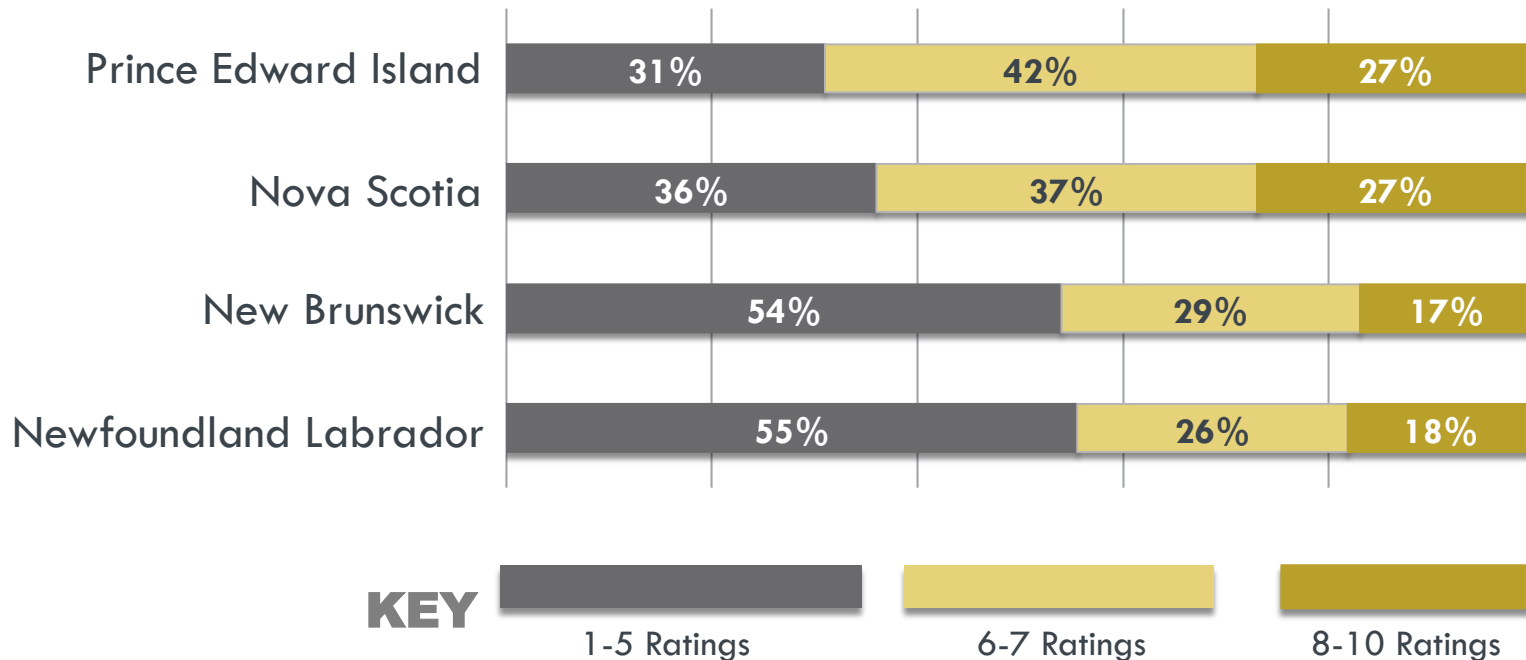
*“Based on your personal experiences over the past three months, would you say that the general outlook in NS/NB/PEI/NL has been getting...”*





**“And thinking about the past three months, how would you rate the federal government’s working relationship with [Province]?”**

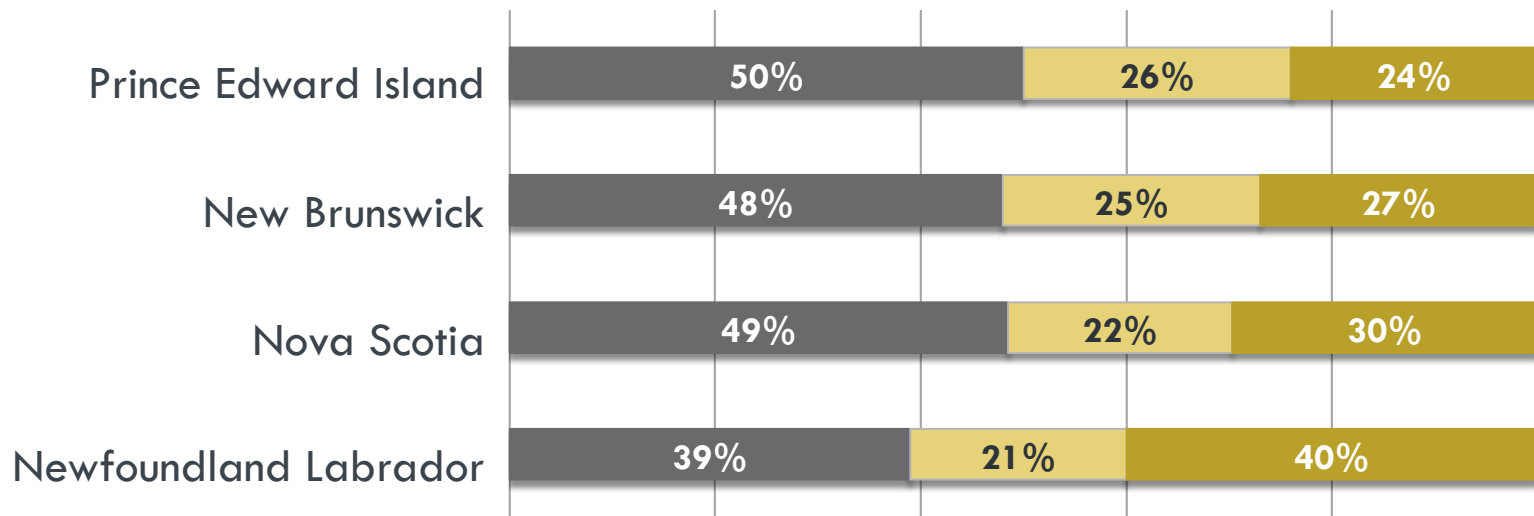
*(Don’t know and refused removed)*



Note: Respondents provided a rating from 1 to 10, where 1= low/weak performance and 10=high/strong performance.

## “With all of this in mind\*, how would you rate your general stress level this year?”

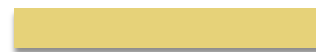
\*Major purchases, job security, cost of living, confidence in the economy  
(Don't know and refused removed)



**KEY**



1-5 Ratings



6-7 Ratings



8-10 Ratings

Note: Respondents provided a rating from 1 to 10, where higher numbers indicate stress level.



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