

# **Northwest Indiana Residents' Knowledge of and Opinions on Air Quality**

**Presented at NIRPC's Environmental Management Policy Committee Meeting  
Tom Beppler, Responsive Management  
October 5, 2017**



# Overview of Presentation

- About Responsive Management
- Study Purpose and Methodology
- Concern About Air Quality as an Issue of Importance
- Opinions on the Current Air Quality in Northwest Indiana
- Knowledge of and Information on Air Quality
- Awareness of and Opinions on Air Quality Campaigns
- Taking Action
- Opinions on Air Quality Outreach Materials



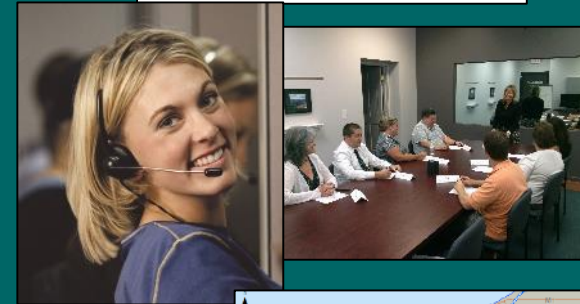
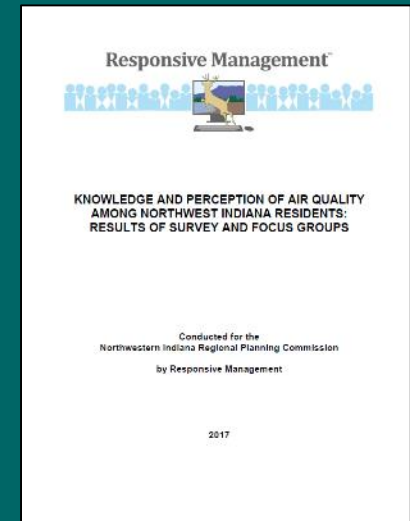
# About Responsive Management

- 27 years of continuous survey research
- More than 1,000 research studies
- 50 states and 15 countries
- Research for every state fish and wildlife agency, most departments of natural resources, and many state, regional, and municipal planning agencies
- Research for most federal resource agencies, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management
- Research for many NGOs, including the National Wildlife Federation, Izaak Walton League, Ducks Unlimited, Ocean Conservancy, BoatUS Foundation, and more
- Market research for industry leaders, such as Yamaha, Winchester, Vista Outdoor, Trijicon, and more
- **Data collection for the nation's top universities:** Auburn University, Colorado State University, Duke University, George Mason University, Michigan State University, North Carolina State University, Oregon State University, Penn State University, Rutgers University, Stanford University, University of California-Davis, University of Southern California, Virginia Tech, and West Virginia University



# Study Purpose and Methodology

- Research conducted to determine:
  - Knowledge of air quality issues
  - Relative importance placed on air quality
  - Awareness of specific air quality campaigns
- Scientific survey of Northwest Indiana residents:
  - Lake, Porter, and LaPorte residents (n=507)
  - Landline and cellular telephones in exact proportions
  - Over-sample of African-American and Hispanic residents; final data weighted to ensure actual proportions in overall area and within counties
  - Sampling error: +/- 4.35 percentage points
  - Selected trend comparisons with 2012 data
  - Geographic analyses
- Focus groups with Northwest Indiana residents:
  - Merrillville
  - Valparaiso
- All research conducted May-June 2017

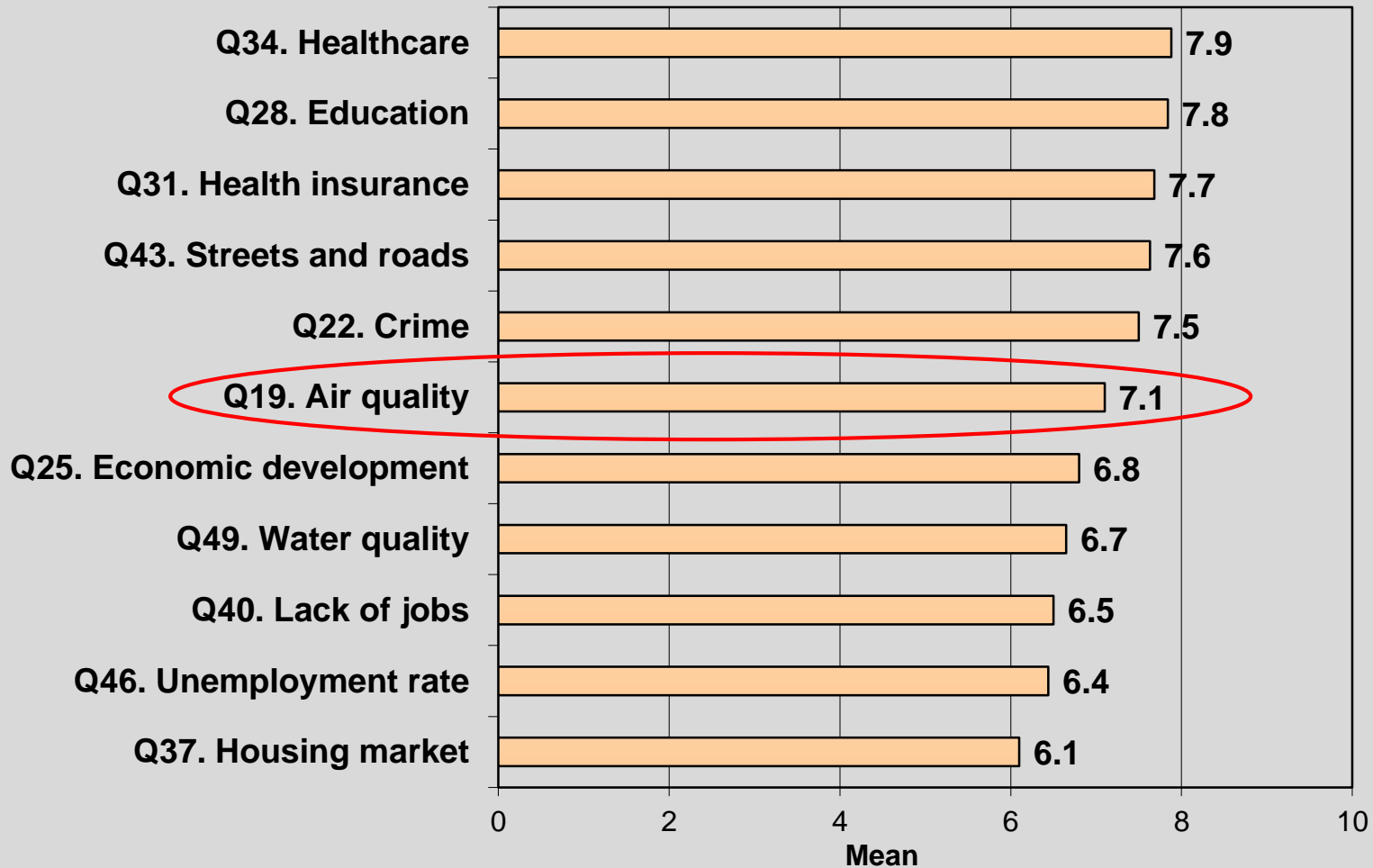


# Concern About Air Quality as an Issue of Importance

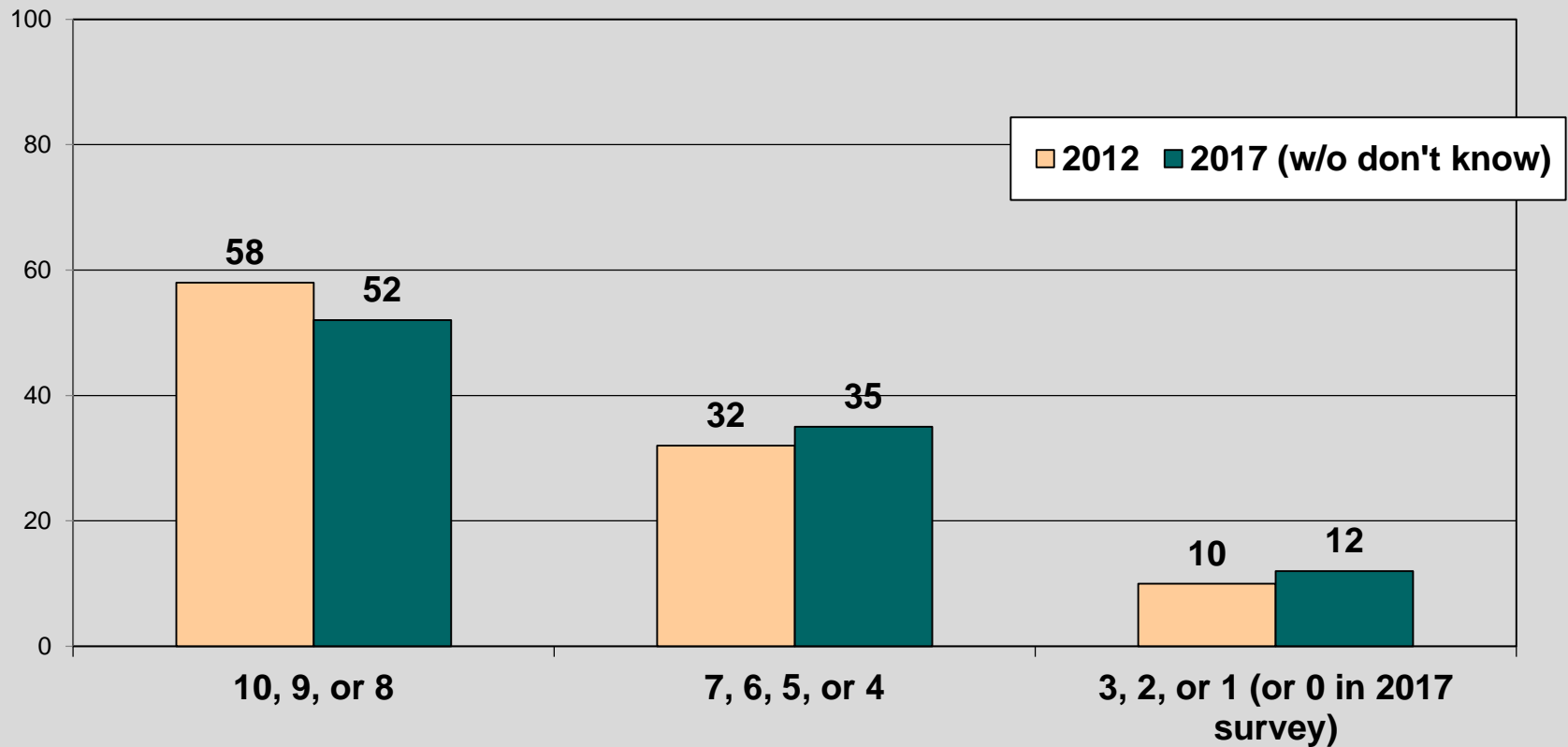




**Mean ratings of concern about the following issues in Northwest Indiana, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all concerned and 10 is extremely concerned:**



## Rating of concern about air quality. (Comparison of 2012 and 2017 surveys.)



# From the Focus Groups:

There's stuff that's more pressing. —Merrillville participant

You're not going to worry about dying from air quality 30 years from now if you're worried about getting shot tomorrow.  
—Merrillville participant

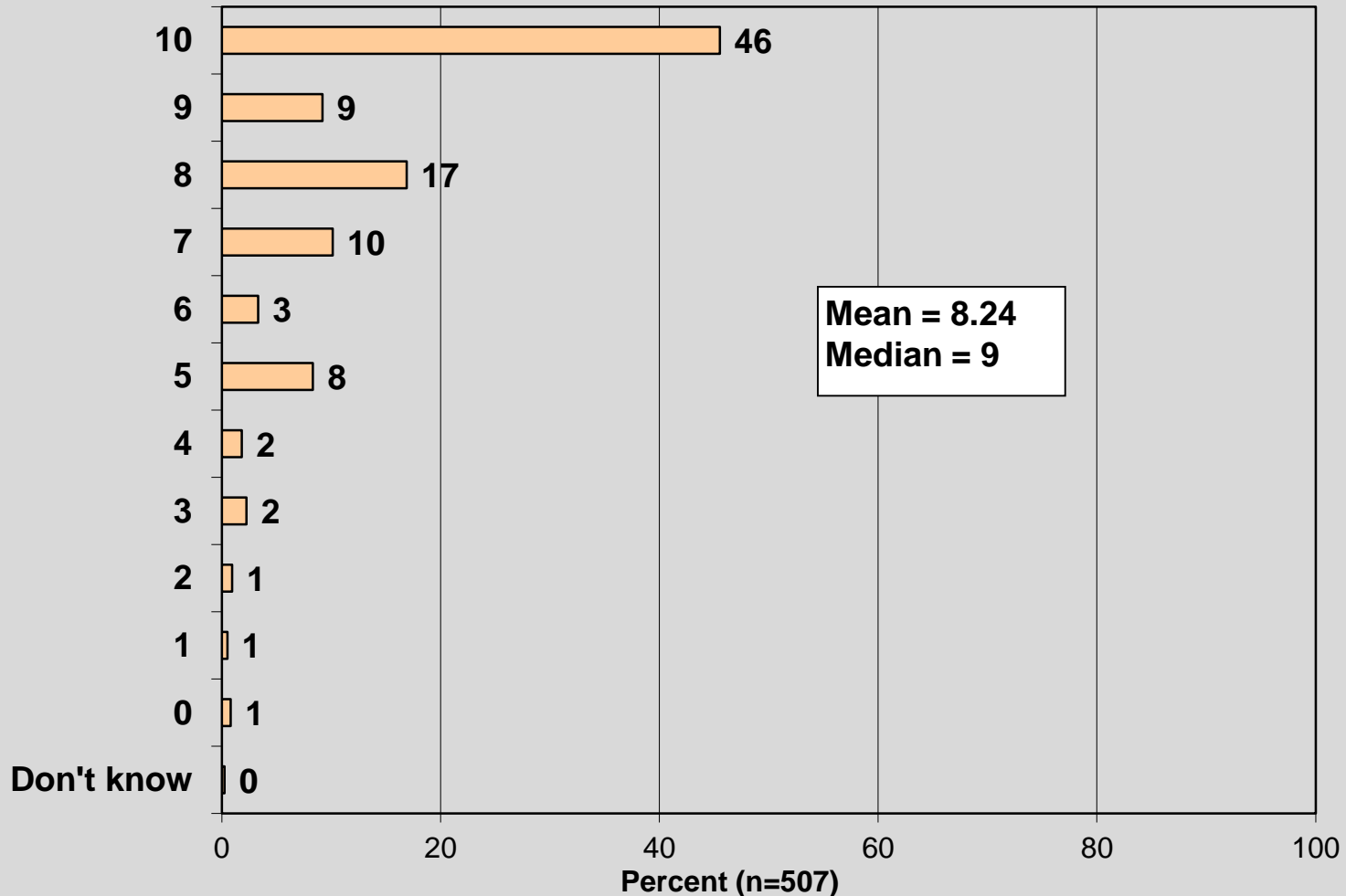
In the past five years, people have a lot more things to be concerned about. If you're breathing, you're good. —Valparaiso participant

I feel like it's not such a big issue because it's more long-term in the effect it has on us. It's not immediately affecting me, so that's why I don't pay attention to it. —Valparaiso participant

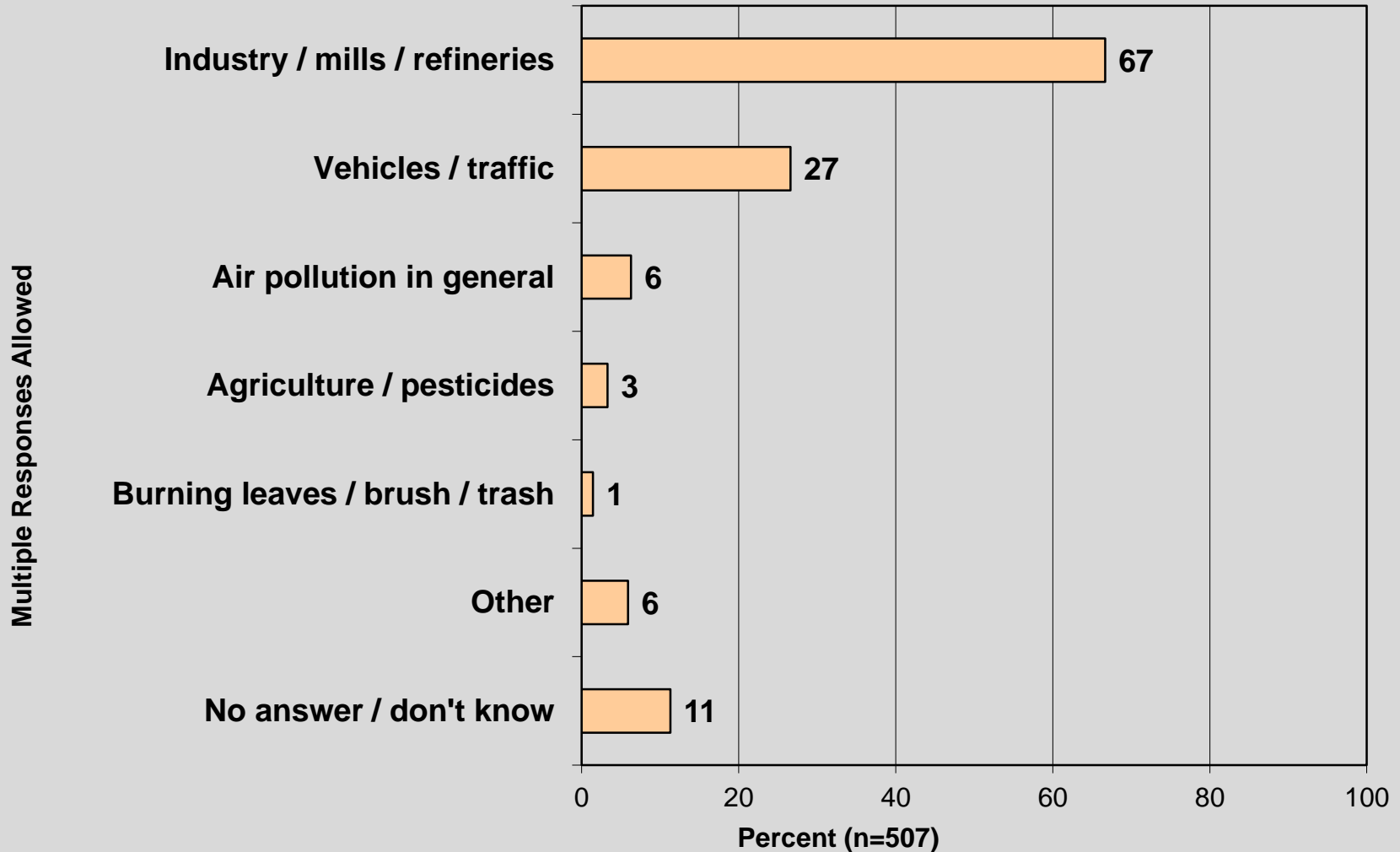




**Q65. How important to you, personally, is air quality in Northwest Indiana, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all important and 10 is extremely important?**



**Q69. In your opinion, what are the most important issues that negatively affect air quality in Northwest Indiana?**



# From the Focus Groups:

I've watched [the mills] break rules all the time... It's a huge problem up here. —Merrillville participant

There's no comparison [between pollution from cars and from the mills]. —Merrillville participant

Industry is the major issue. I don't think it's the vehicles. —Valparaiso participant

You want me to shut off my car at a drive-through while you [industry] are dumping crap in Lake Michigan? Let's take accountability for the biggest culprits, and leave the small guy alone. —Valparaiso participant

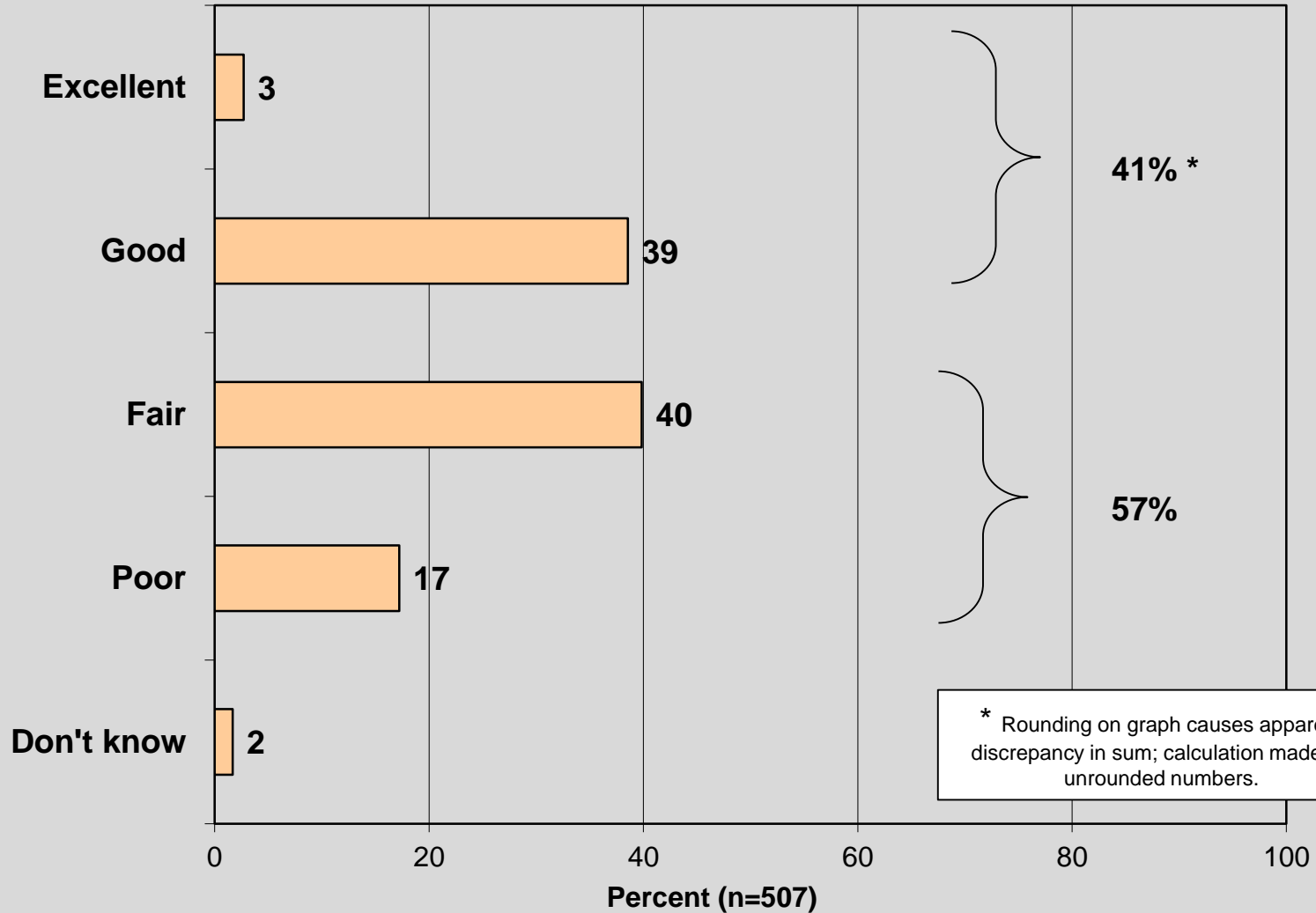
What is the percentage of our footprint versus the industry? —Valparaiso participant



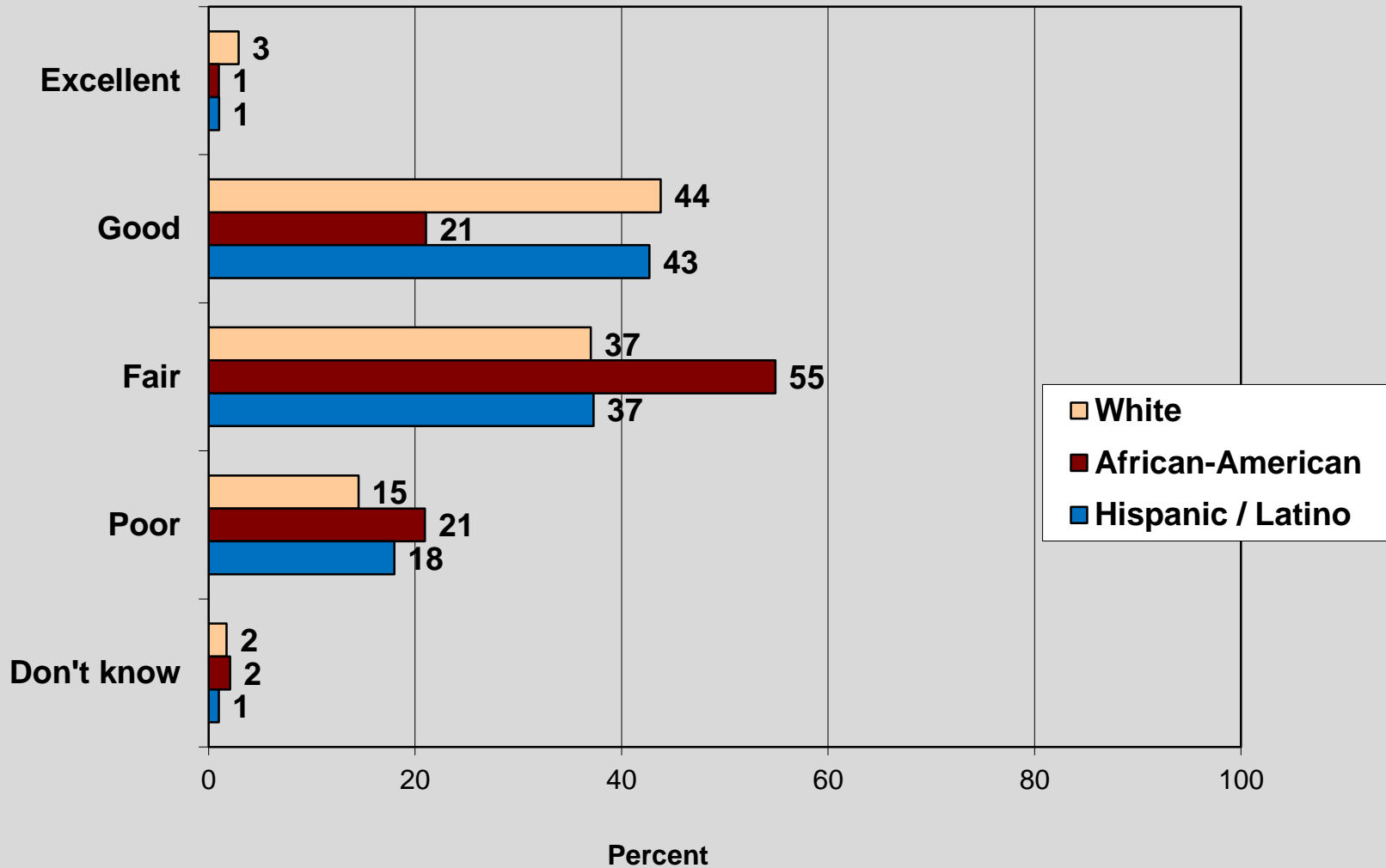
# Opinions on the Current Air Quality in Northwest Indiana



# Q57. How would you rate the current air quality in Northwest Indiana?



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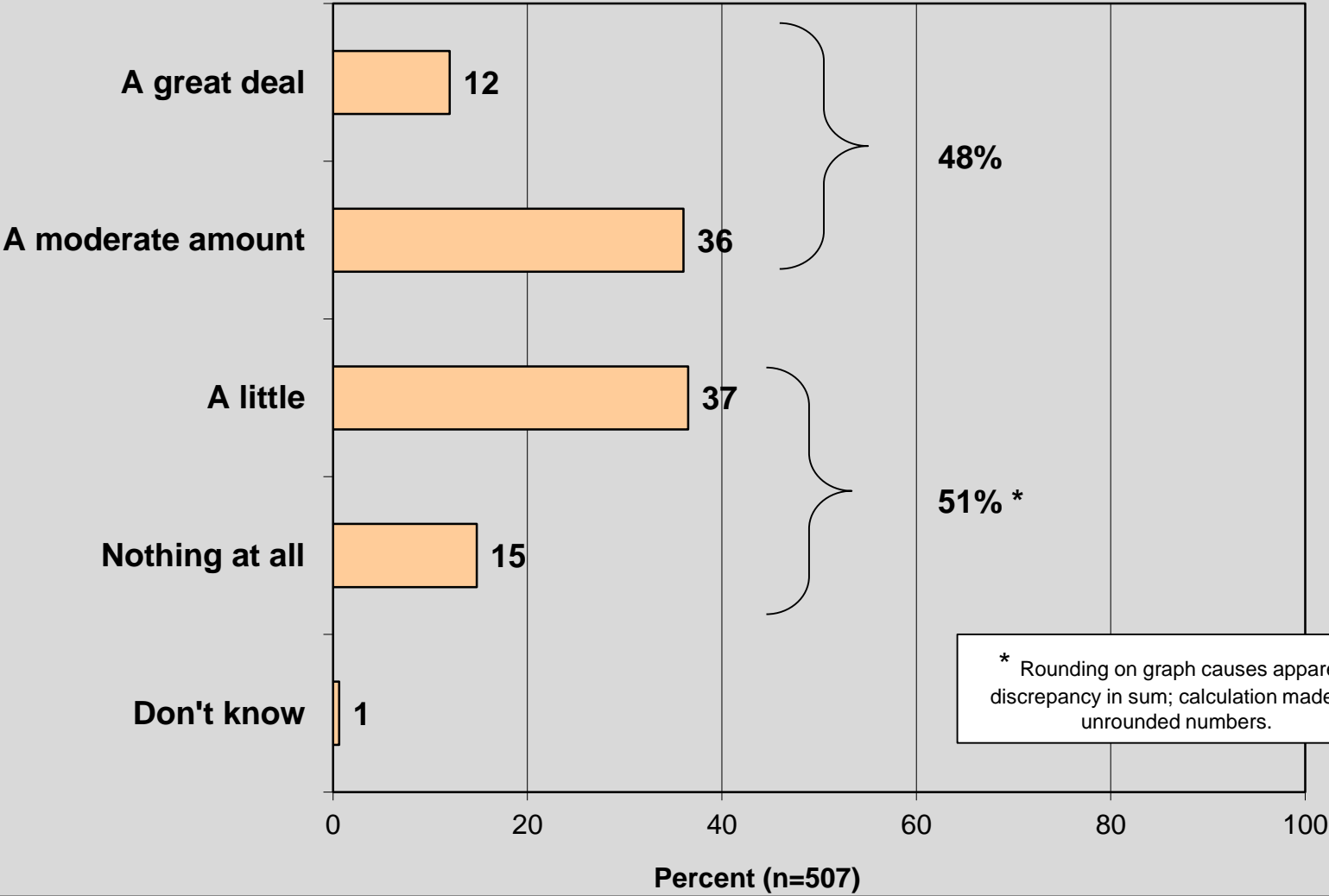




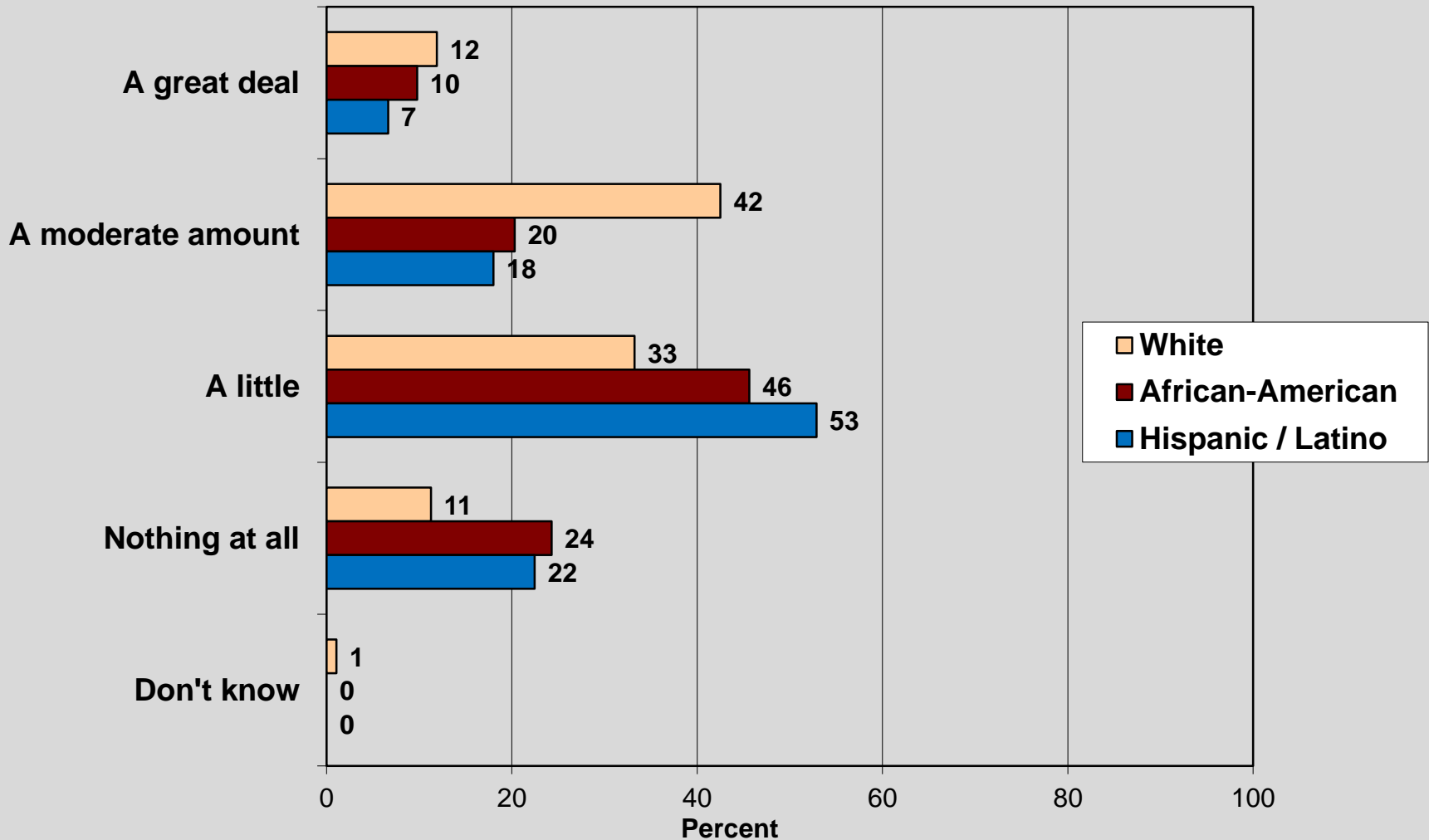
# Knowledge of and Information on Air Quality



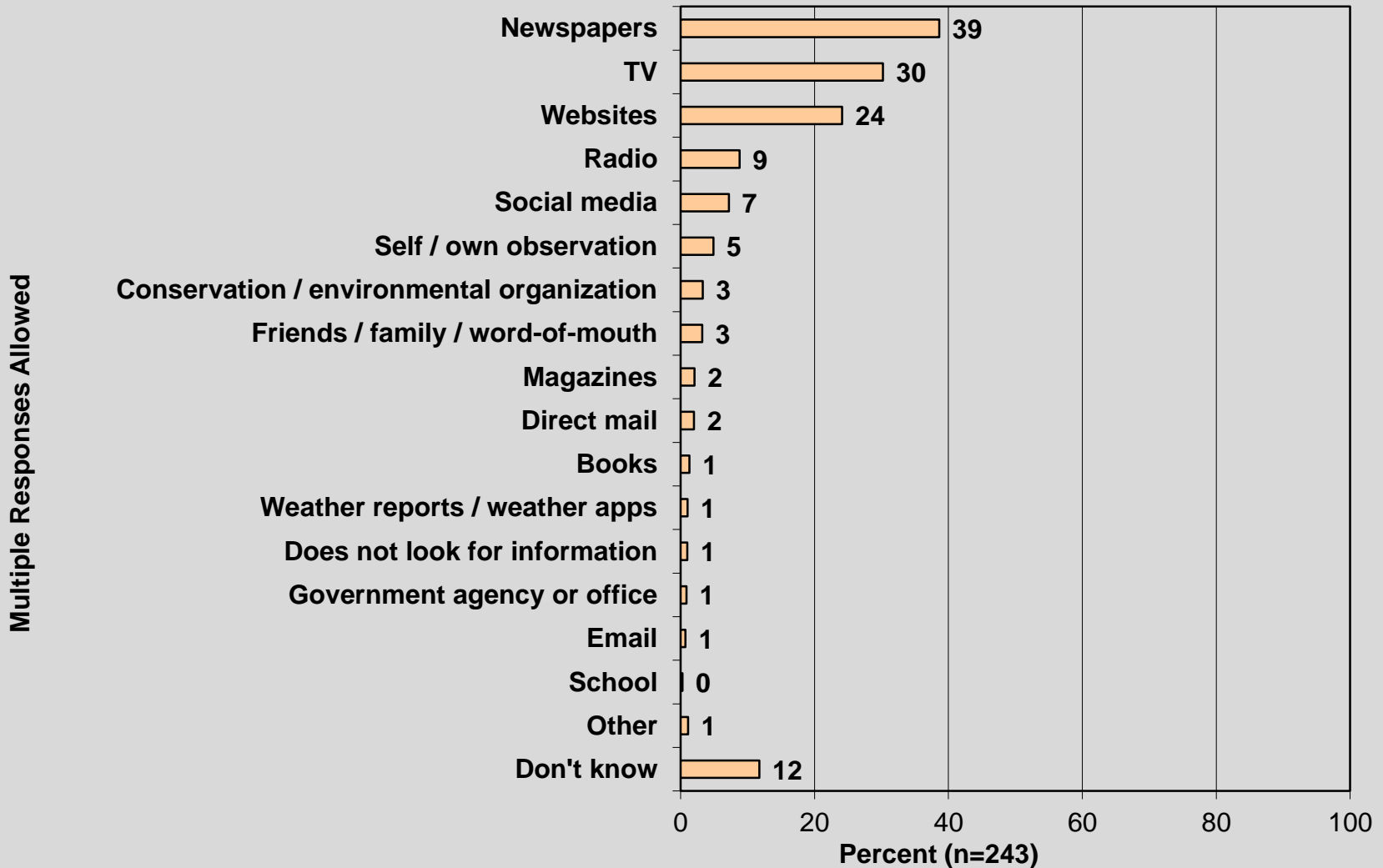
# Q55. How much would you say you know about air quality in Northwest Indiana?



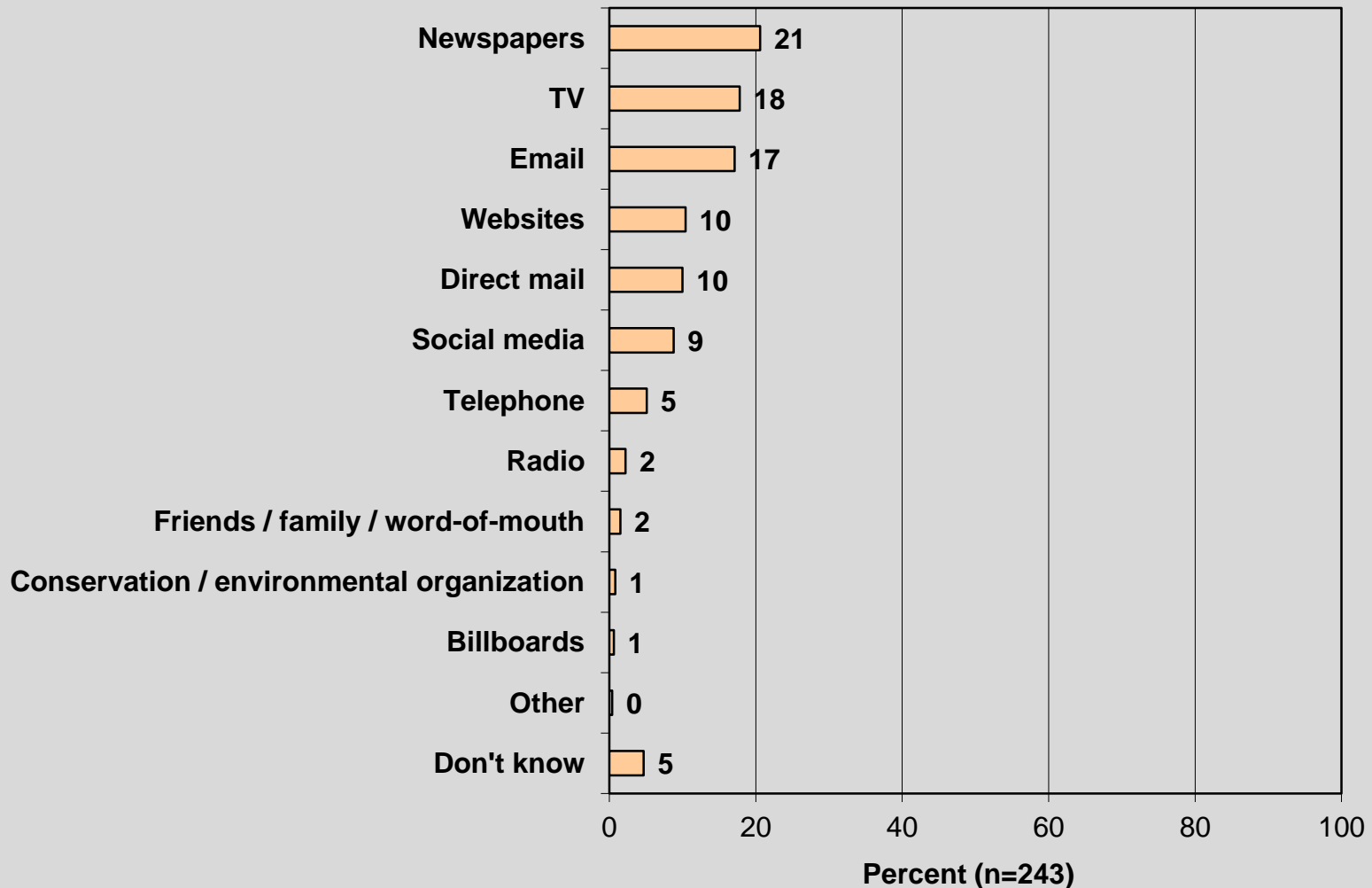
### Q55. How much would you say you know about air quality in Northwest Indiana?



# Q81. In general, where do you get your information on local air quality issues?



**Q83/Q84. What is the single best way to reach you with information about local air quality issues that you would be likely to read or look at?**



# From the Focus Groups:

I could trust an institution of higher education. —Merrillville participant

I would not trust the EPA, because the EPA has a vested interest in making sure they have money and control. —Merrillville participant

I trust [the NIRPC]. They bring in people from both sides of the spectrum – business people and people from universities, professors, things like that. —Merrillville participant

Independent sources. Like a nonprofit. —Valparaiso participant

I think the most objective [source] would be colleges. —Valparaiso participant

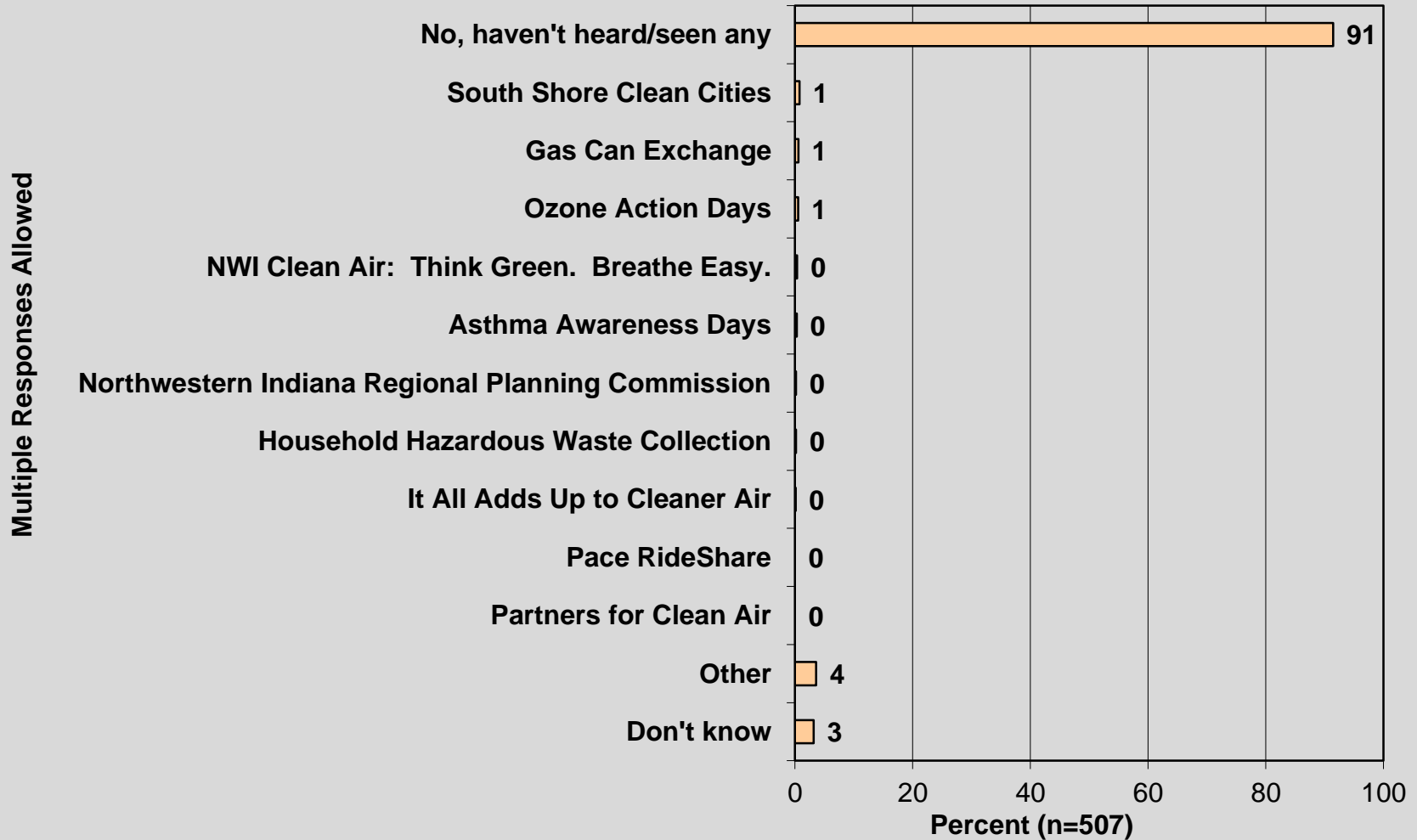




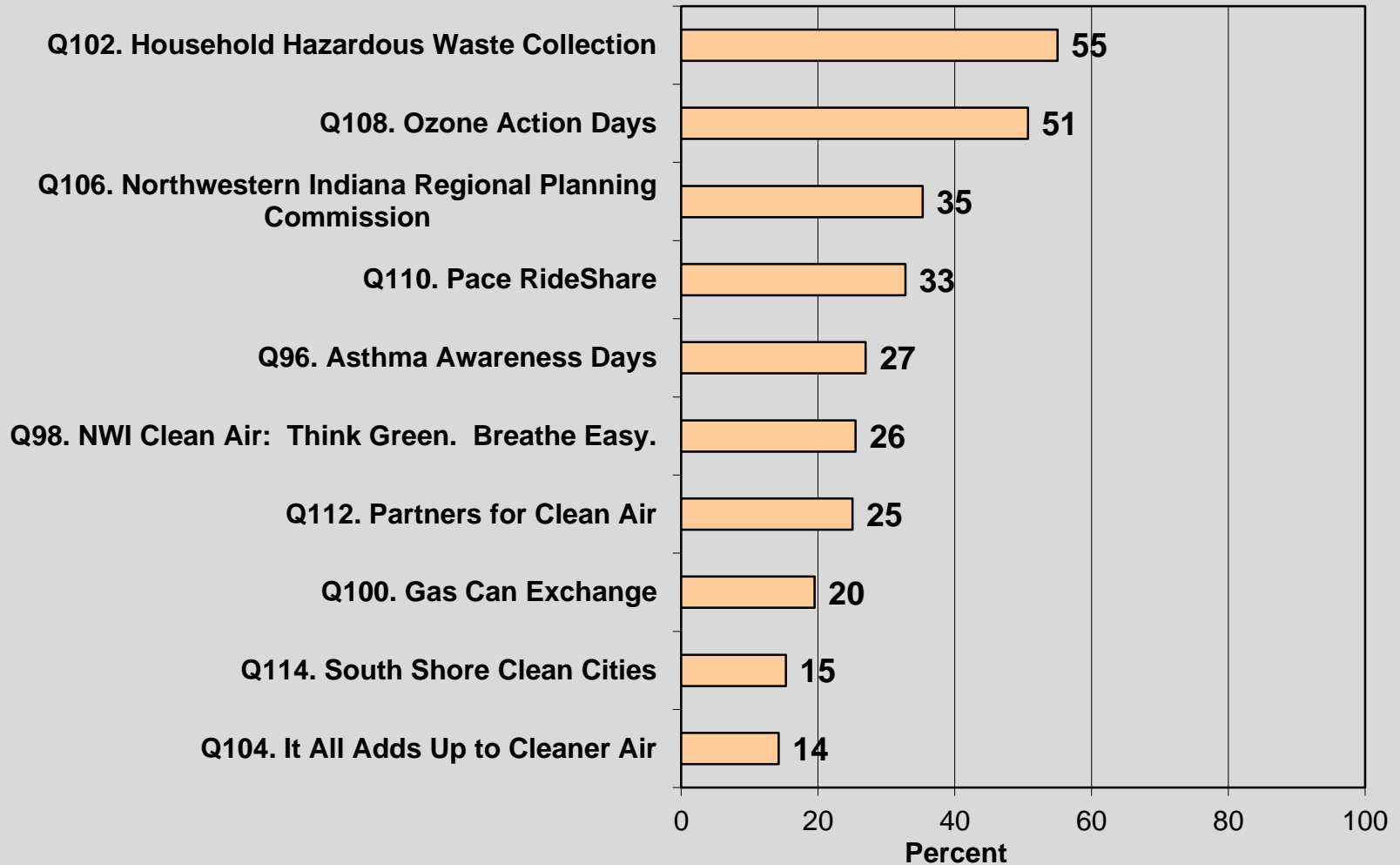
# Awareness of and Opinions on Air Quality Campaigns



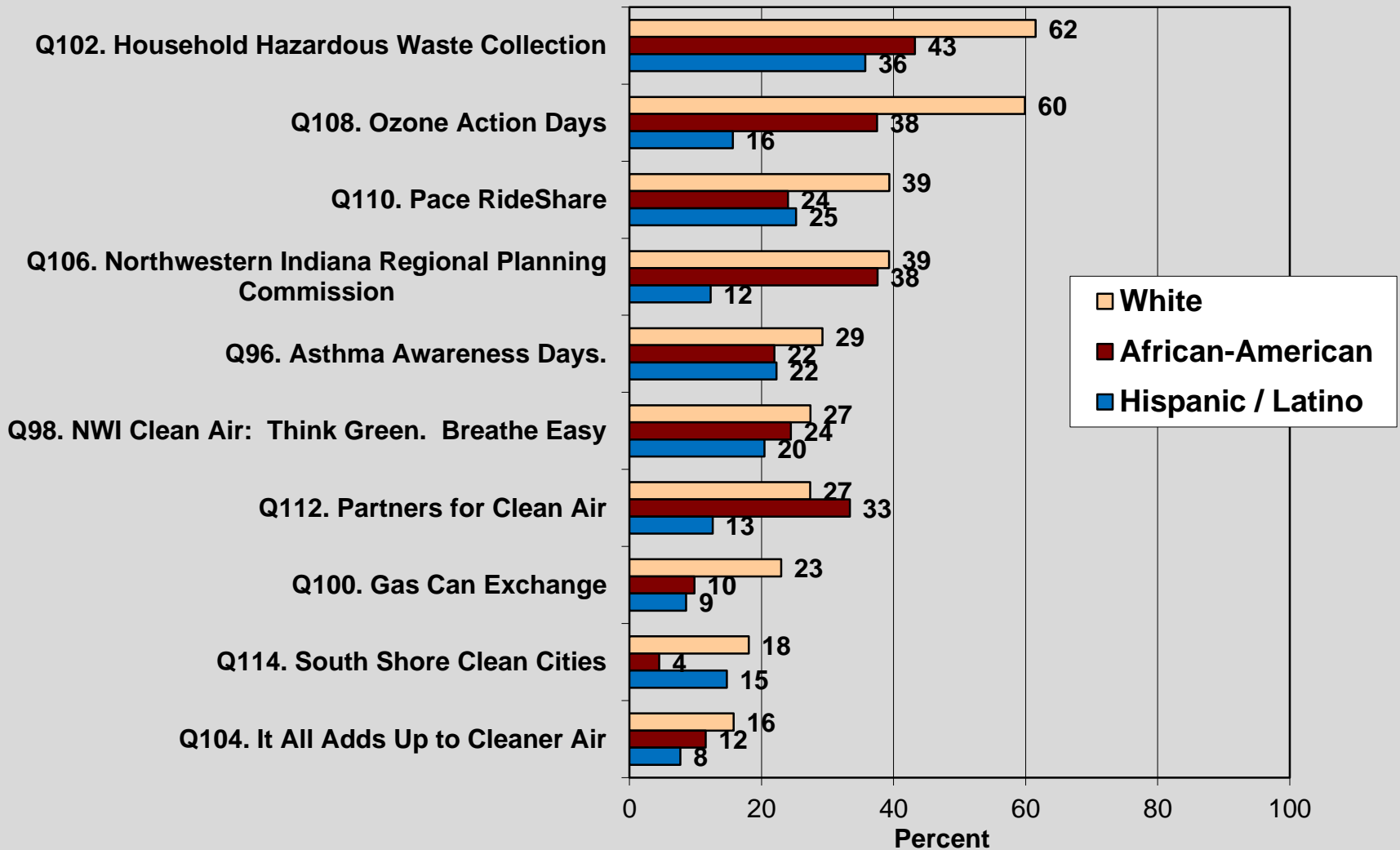
**Q92. Have you recently heard about or seen any campaigns or initiatives in Northwest Indiana that promote actions or programs to improve air quality? Can you specifically name any?**



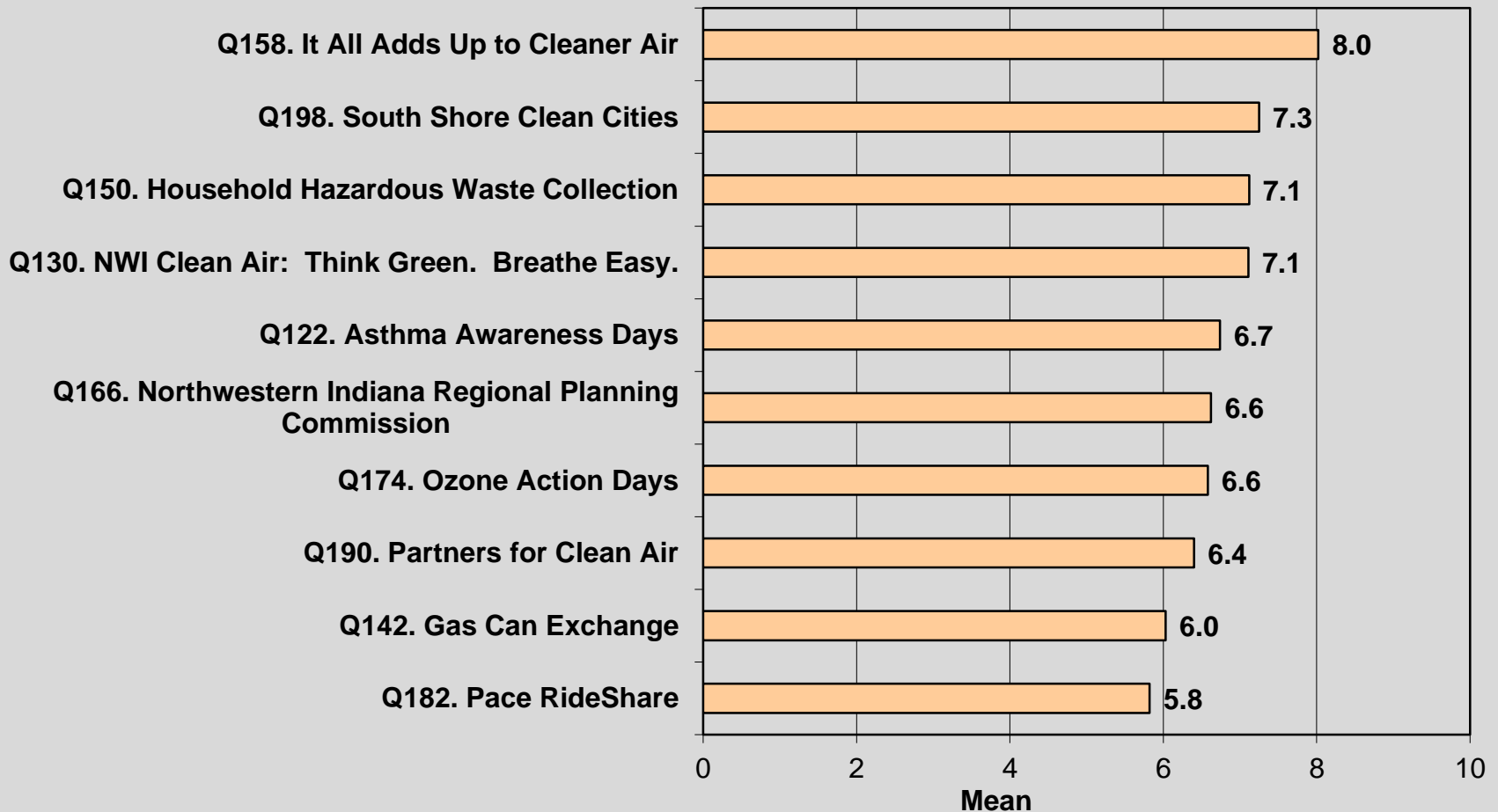
**Percent who were aware, prior to the survey, of the following campaigns after being prompted:**



**Percent who were aware, prior to the survey, of the following campaigns after being prompted.**



**Mean rating of the perceived effectiveness that the following could have on air quality education in Northwest Indiana, on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being not at all effective and 10 being extremely effective:  
(Asked of those aware of the program.)**

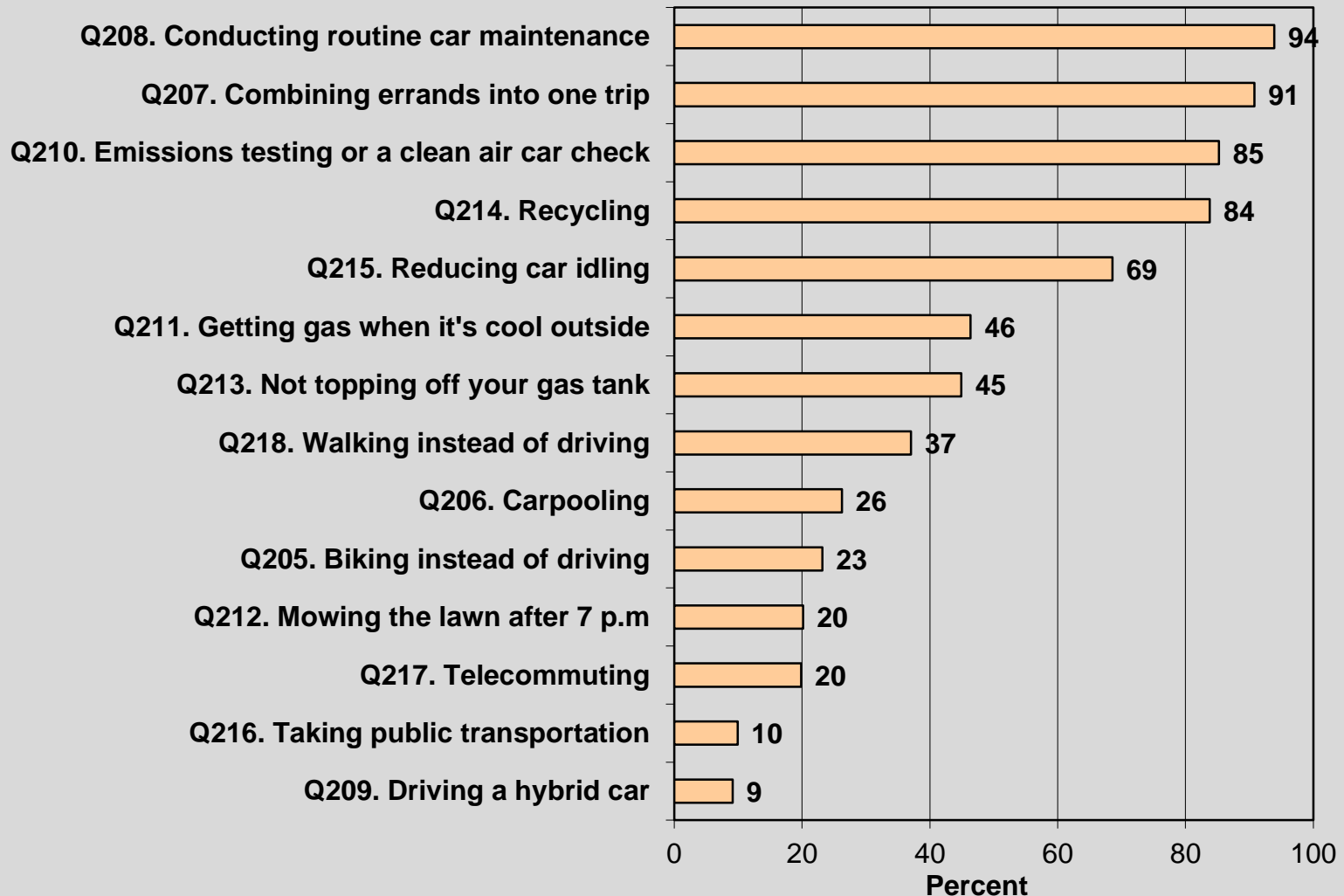


# Taking Action

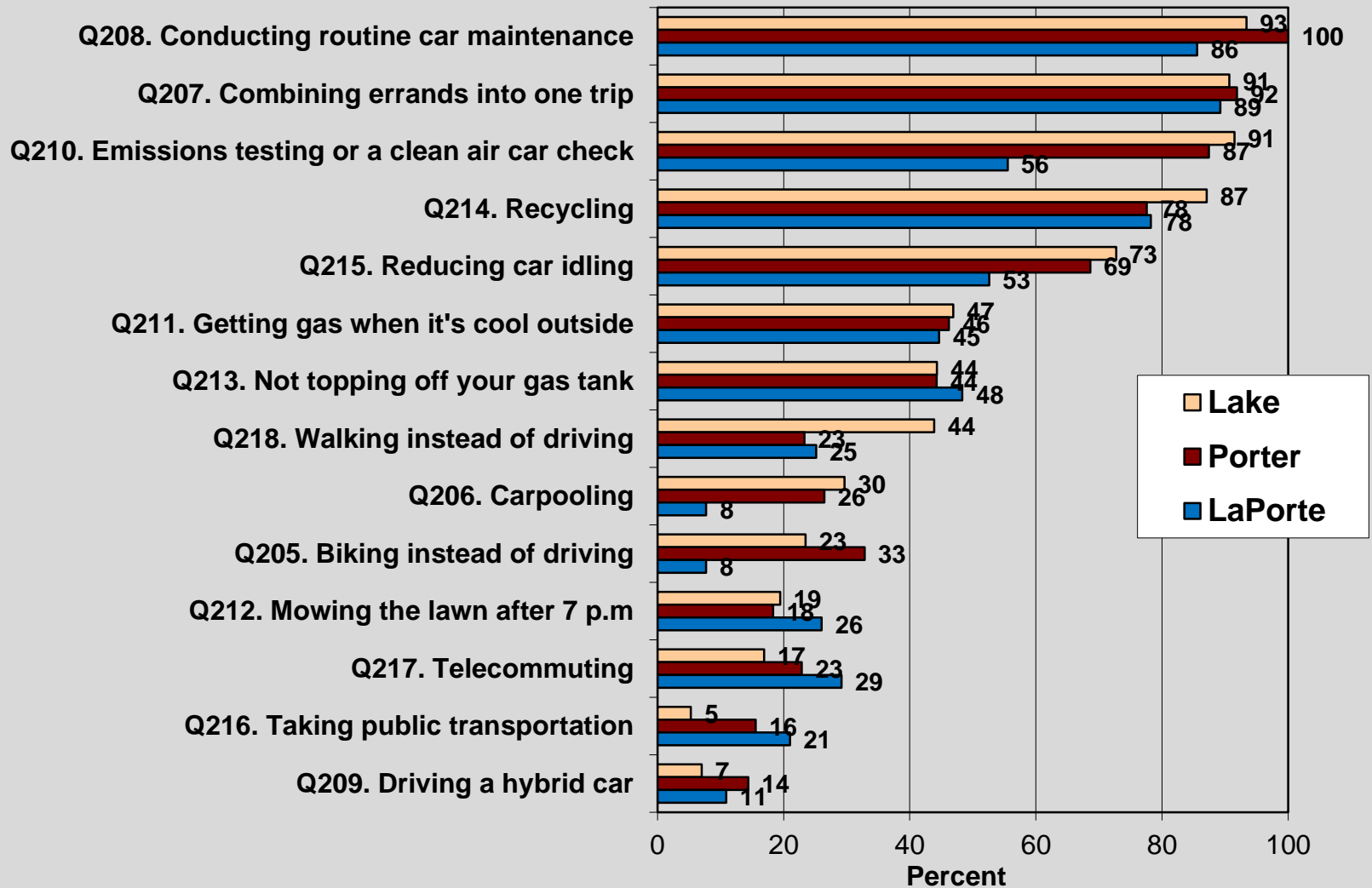




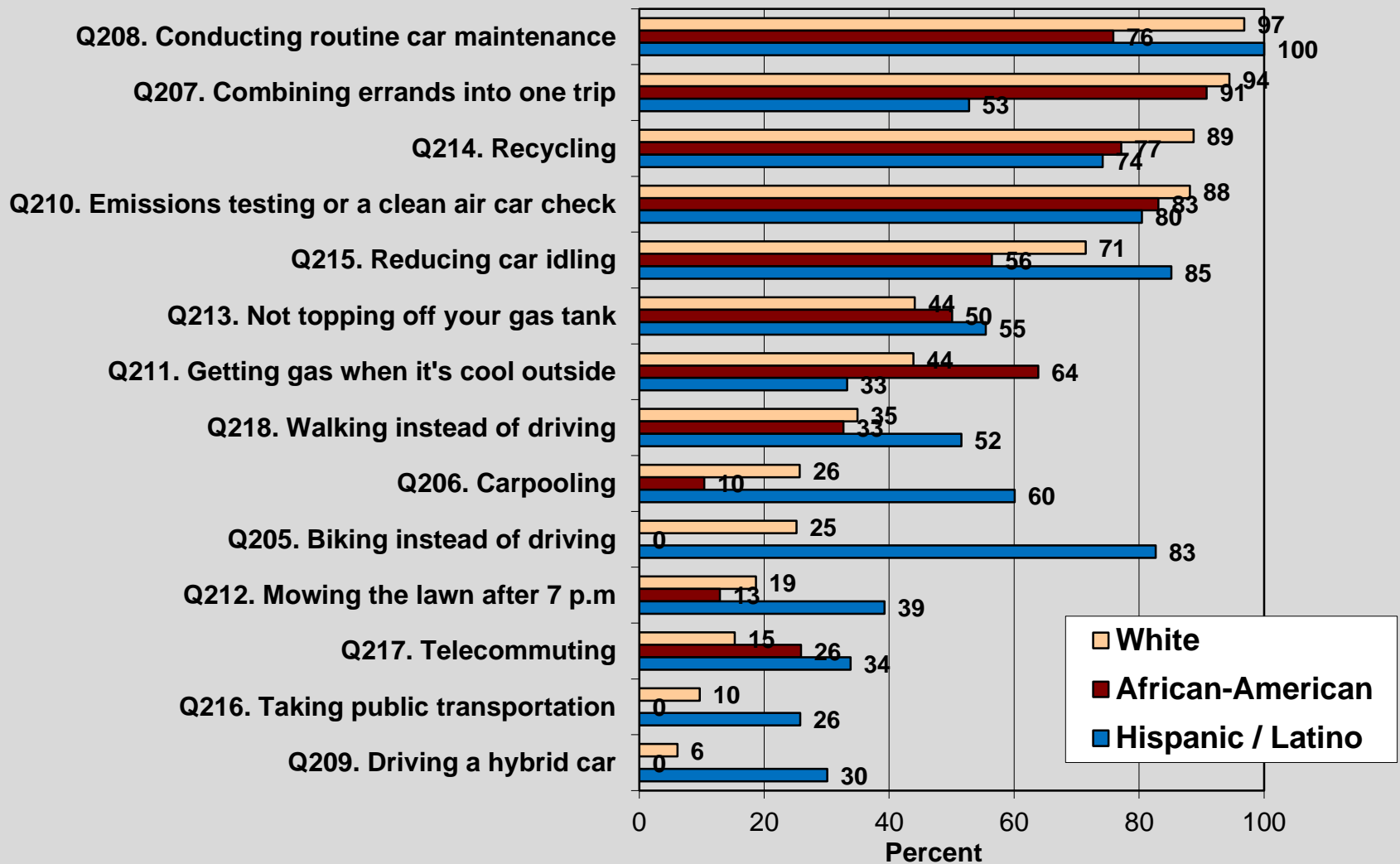
## Percent who are currently taking the following actions to improve air quality in their area:



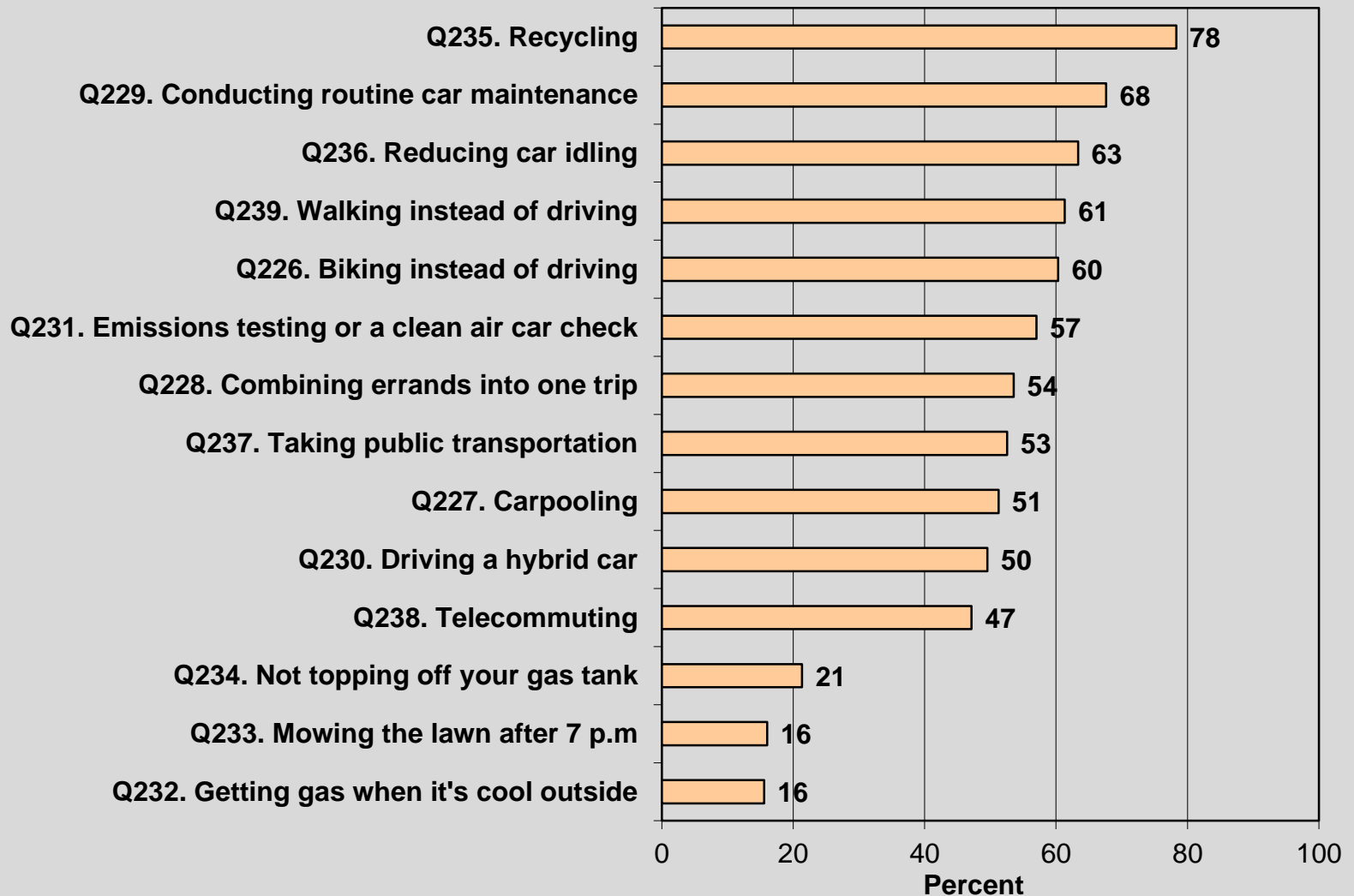
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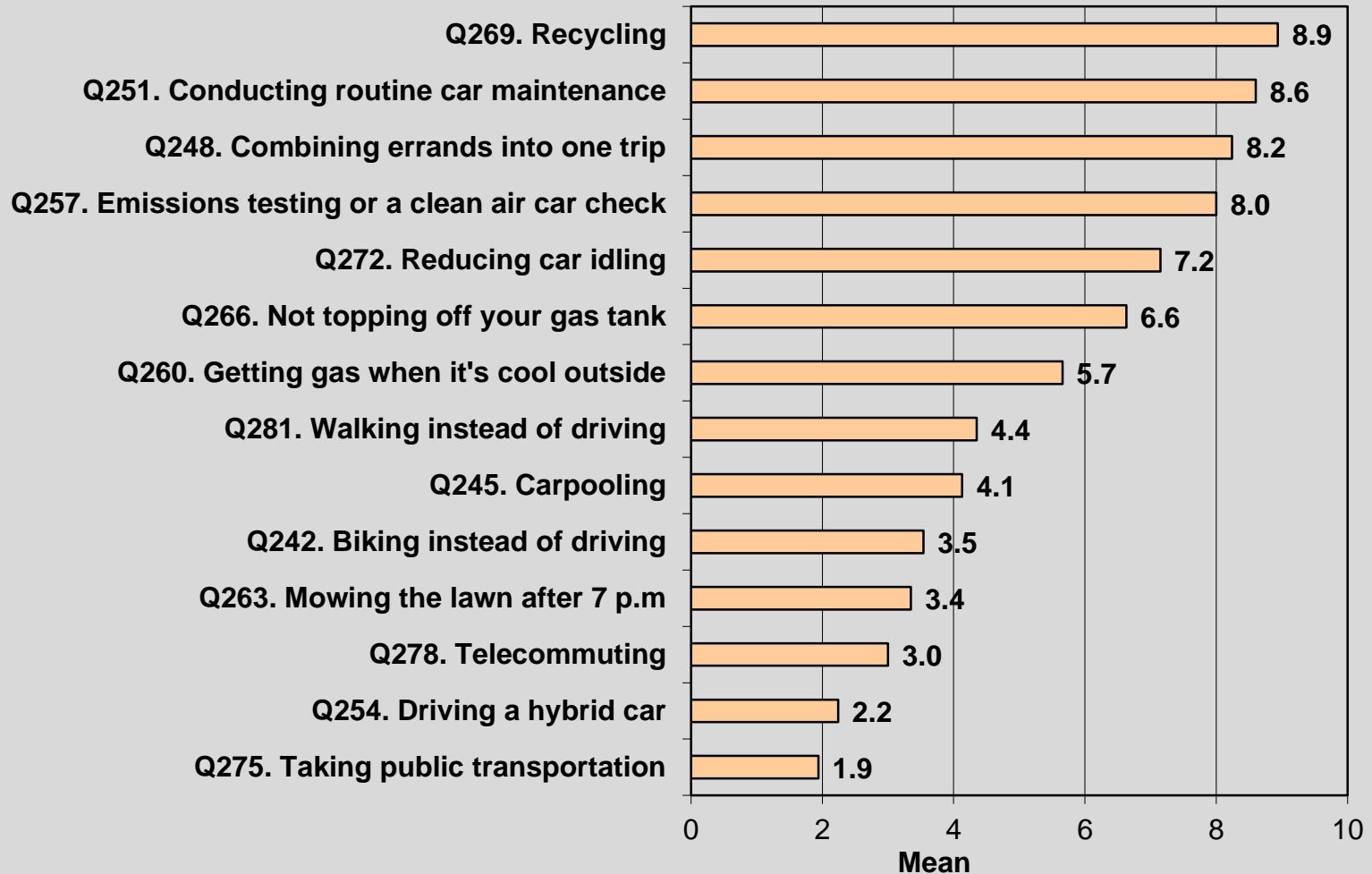
## Percent who are currently taking the following actions to improve air quality in their area.



## Percent who say that the following do a lot to improve air quality in their area:



**Mean rating of likelihood to adopt the following actions to improve air quality problems in their area, on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all likely and 10 is extremely likely:**



# From the Focus Groups:

Most people combine errands for convenience; it's not air quality.  
—Merrillville participant

Public transportation around this area is very minimal. —Valparaiso participant

I'm for the idea [of carpooling], but I don't have a lot of trust in people. —Valparaiso participant

I would love to [drive a hybrid car], but the cost of all that...  
—Valparaiso participant

If it [telecommuting] was an option I would take it. —Valparaiso participant



# Opinions on Air Quality Outreach Materials



# From the Focus Groups:



This is hokey [the ad featuring the hands forming a heart]. I'm not watching *Ellen*.  
—Merrillville participant

Cigarette commercials are gross but eye-catching. —Merrillville participant

The woman in the coat looks like she's enjoying herself. She doesn't look like she has cardio-vascular disease.  
—Valparaiso participant



The ad is sugarcoating: "I'm giving you this horrible information, but look how pretty it is." —Valparaiso participant

Something that catches my attention is not going to be children smiling. It's going to be something morbid and scary. [Morbid] messages create a sense of urgency. Nothing here creates urgency. —Valparaiso participant





# From the Focus Groups:

We are so ecologically friendly now. Each new rule is basically saying, “Let’s find a new way to extract money from the people.”

—Merrillville participant

[Do something like] what they do on the buses—it will say, “This bus saves X [number] of cars.” CSX will do something about how much freight they move compared to how many semis. —Merrillville participant

It’s just not practical to tell us to ride a bike or walk. There are no sidewalks; you just can’t do it. —Valparaiso participant

I would direct it [air quality messages] at industry. It’s a much bigger impact.

—Valparaiso participant



Trees clean the air, they absorb odors and pollutant gases nitrogen oxides, ammonia, sulfur dioxide and ozone and filter particulates out of the air by trapping them on their leaves and bark.



Avoid refueling on Air Quality Action Days. If you have to, refuel when it’s cool.



Share a ride, walk or bike instead of Driving



A lawn mower that mulches will cut and recut grass trimmings into small pieces. Since grass trimmings are 85% water, they quickly decompose, releasing nitrogen and additional nutrients that nourish the lawn.



# From the Focus Groups:

**Your Family Comes First**

**The Top Ten Tips for Improving Air Quality**

It's the small things that can make a big difference in the quality of the air we breathe.

1. Limit engine idling time. If you're stopped for more than 30 seconds...turn it off.
2. Combine errands or "trip chaining" – plan your route so that all your errands can be done in one trip with the least amount of stops and miles.
3. Fill your gas tank during the cool evening hours to reduce evaporation and don't top off the tank.
4. Park and go inside at restaurants; avoid drive-thru windows and congested areas to save fuel and time.
5. Get regular engine tune-ups and keep the right amount of air in the tires. Well-maintained vehicles create less pollution.
6. Mow your lawn after 7 p.m.
7. Conserve energy in your home; turn off appliances and lights when not in use.
8. Change the way you get to work – join or, better yet, start a carpool.
9. Walk or bike to work, to church, to local meetings.
10. Join Northwest Indiana Clean Air to get more information about ways you can think green so we all breathe easy.

There's nothing more important than spending time outdoors with your family. That's why it's so important to do whatever you can to keep our air clean. It's good for the environment and good for the health of your friends and family.

Take a closer look at how poor air quality is affecting our community:

- Across the three counties of Northwest Indiana, recent studies from the American Lung Association show that:
  - 9% of adults suffer from asthma
  - 4% live with chronic bronchitis
  - 38% have a form of cardio-vascular disease
  - 10% of the children in Lake and LaPorte counties struggle with pediatric asthma
- The number of adults with asthma is nearly that of adults with diabetes. Consider how diabetics make adjustments to their diet in order to be as healthy as possible.
- Everyone can make adjustments to improve air quality and the quality of life for those who live with asthma and other lung diseases.

It's Easy to Make a Difference.  
FIND OUT HOW AT  
NWICleanAir.com

NORTHWEST INDIANA  
**CLEAN AIR**  
Think Green. Breathe Easy.

Northwest Indiana – where it all adds up to cleaner air.  
Brought to you by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission, a Clean Air leader.

This one [the Top Ten Tips] is probably the best. —Merrillville participant

When you're advertising, you want to spark up a conversation. [The statements] on the brochure do that more than the ones on the flyer. —Merrillville participant

If you were sitting at a bus station you would read it. —Merrillville participant

This stuff should be put up at the tire place or the oil change place. We're stuck there so we'll look at it. —Valparaiso participant

I would feel positive about it if I knew the other side of the coin [industry] was being addressed. —Valparaiso participant



# Messaging Recommendations:

- ✓ Communicate that clean air actions by individual citizens are just part of the overall effort—people must be convinced that industry is also contributing to solutions
- ✓ Provide the reasons why specific actions are recommended
- ✓ Specific contextual information is appreciated: consider communicating historical trends in air quality, current status, comparisons to other parts of the state or country, etc.
- ✓ Make sure recommended actions apply to certain areas—for example, avoid encouraging walking or bike riding in areas without sidewalks or bike lanes
- ✓ Use eye-catching and memorable images on billboards and in print ads; save text ads for captive audiences (waiting rooms, bus stops, etc.)



**Questions?**