



# **“Virginia Energy Sense Messaging Research”**

**Virginia Energy Efficiency Council**

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State Corporation Commission

# Today's Discussion

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- ❑ **About Us: Virginia Energy Sense**
- ❑ **What We Know: Research Findings Regarding Energy Attitudes & Behaviors**
- ❑ **Results: Measuring Our Impact**



# About Virginia Energy Sense



- ❑ Virginia Energy Sense is the Commonwealth's energy education program under the guidance of the State Corporation Commission.
- ❑ Virginia has set a goal to reduce electric energy consumption 10 percent below 2006 levels by 2020.
- ❑ Our mission is to work toward that goal by helping Virginians understand their energy use, and what they can do to save energy easily and cost effectively.

# About Virginia Energy Sense



## *Program Goals*

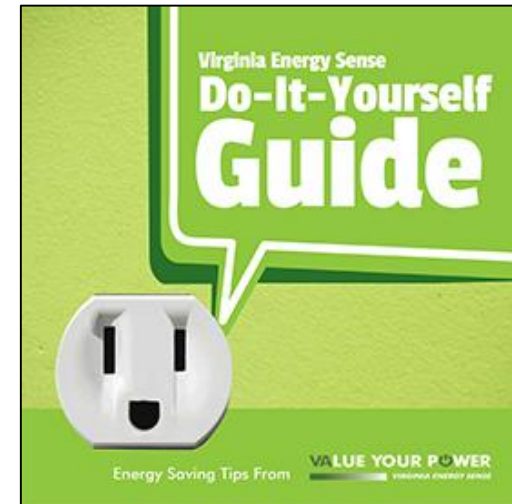
- ☐ Enable Consumers to Make Informed Choices
- ☐ Increase Awareness of Options for Conserving Electricity
- ☐ Enable Consumers to Reduce Electricity Consumption
- ☐ Foster Compliance with Consumer Protection Requirements

# About Virginia Energy Sense



## VES Resources

- ❑ Digital & Social Engagement
  - VirginiaEnergySense.org
  - Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr
- ❑ Community Outreach
- ❑ Earned Media
  - Op-eds
  - On air appearances
- ❑ Paid Media
  - Television ad/PSA
  - Jack online videos
- ❑ Educational Materials
  - Do-It-Yourself Guide
  - Tip sheets
  - Teaching kits



# What We Know: Research Findings



## Research Methodology

- ❑ Online quantitative survey in August 2016 of 1,250 Virginians
- ❑ Respondents were drawn from all geographic regions to ensure a representative distribution of respondents from across the Commonwealth

	Total	Central VA	Hampton Roads	Northern VA	Shenandoah Valley	Southwest VA	Southern VA
Sample Size	1,250	236	284	353	141	141	94
Margin of Error	+/- 2.77%	+/- 6.38%	+/- 5.82%	+/- 5.22%	+/- 8.25%	+/- 8.25%	+/- 10.11%

# What We Know: *Research Findings*



## *Energy Landscape*

- ❑ Virginians are increasingly interested in energy savings and awareness of VES and state energy-saving goals is up state-wide.
- ❑ Motivation is particularly high in northern and central Virginia.
- ❑ Messaging is effective at building motivation – the best messages do two things:
  - They provide actionable steps people can take to save energy
  - They explain how saving energy can save money
- ❑ One in four Virginians indicated they are likely to take steps to make their homes more energy efficient in the next few months.

Findings based on online survey of 1,250 general population across Virginia. Conducted August 2016.

# What We Know: *Research Findings*



## *Energy Landscape (cont.)*

- ❑ Saving money is the strongest motivator for people to take steps to reduce their energy usage.
- ❑ Most Virginians report already taking low-cost/no-cost steps to save energy, with a very small percentage investing in larger energy conservation steps, such as upgrading home insulation and conducting a home energy audit.
- ❑ Upon hearing VES messages, Virginians are 40% more likely to take steps to make their homes more energy efficient.

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# What We Know: *Research Findings*



## *Target Motivated Savers*

### **Receptive to VES Messages**

- Messages with an emphasis on savings featured near the end of the message are very compelling
- Less likely to think changes to energy use will affect home comfort (8%, -42 from 2015).

### **High Awareness of VES Campaign**

- More than twice as likely as GP to be aware of the Virginia Energy Sense campaign (39%, +8 from 2015) and the Commonwealth's 10% energy reduction goal (40%, +9 from 2015).

### **Motivated Attitudes Toward Energy-Conservation**

- Significantly more likely to be willing to invest more than \$100 in their home's energy efficiency (90%).
- Significantly more likely to be willing to pay for a \$400 home energy audit (84%).

Findings based on online survey of 1,250 general population across Virginia. Conducted August 2016.

# What We Know: Research Findings



## Who Are Motivated Savers?

### Audience Definition

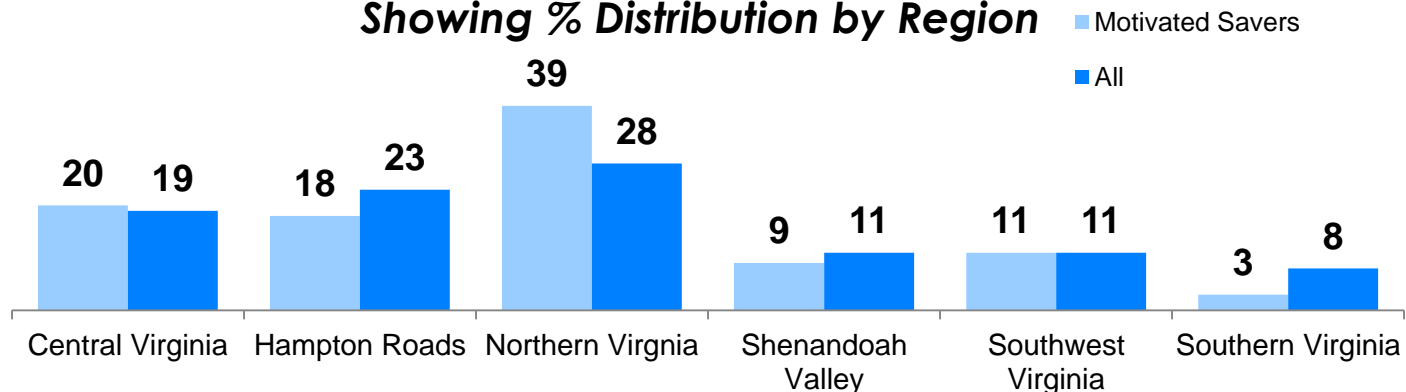
- Very likely to take steps in the next few months to make their home more energy efficient
- Likely to pay to get a professional home energy audit OR upgrade the insulation in their home in the next few months

### Demographics/Profile

More likely to:

- Live in Northern VA or Central VA
- 18-34 years old (37%)
- Have more than 2 people in the household (64%)
- Own home (85%, +11 from 2015)
- Newer homes (51%, -22 from 2015)
- Electric heat (47%, -21 from 2015)

### Showing % Distribution by Region



Findings based on online survey of 1,250 general population across Virginia. Conducted August 2016.

What steps are you most likely to take to make your home more energy efficient?

[illegible]**VIRGINIA ENERGY SENSE**

# What We Know: Research Findings



## You can save energy and money at same time

Given everything you read, what stands out the most?

*Showing all responses*



Findings based on online survey of 1,250 general population across Virginia. Conducted August 2016.

# What We Know: Research Findings

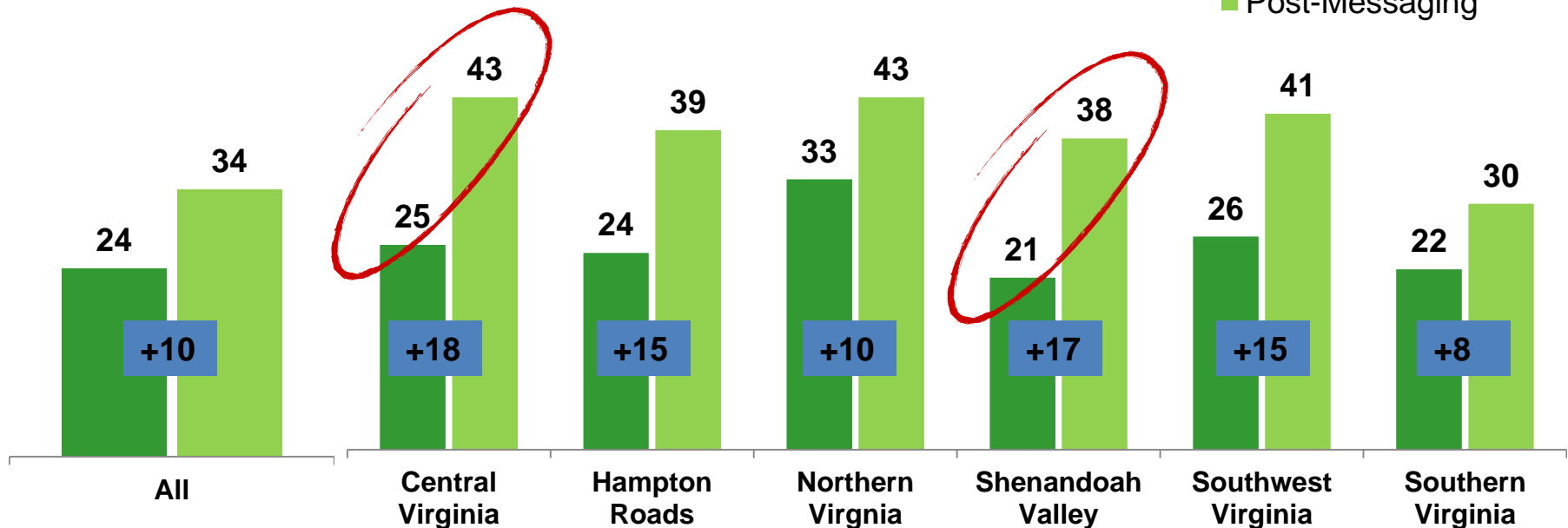


## Messaging is effective at persuading Virginians about the importance of energy efficiency

How likely are you to take steps to make your home more energy efficient within the next few months?

**Showing % Very Likely**

■ Pre-Messaging  
■ Post-Messaging



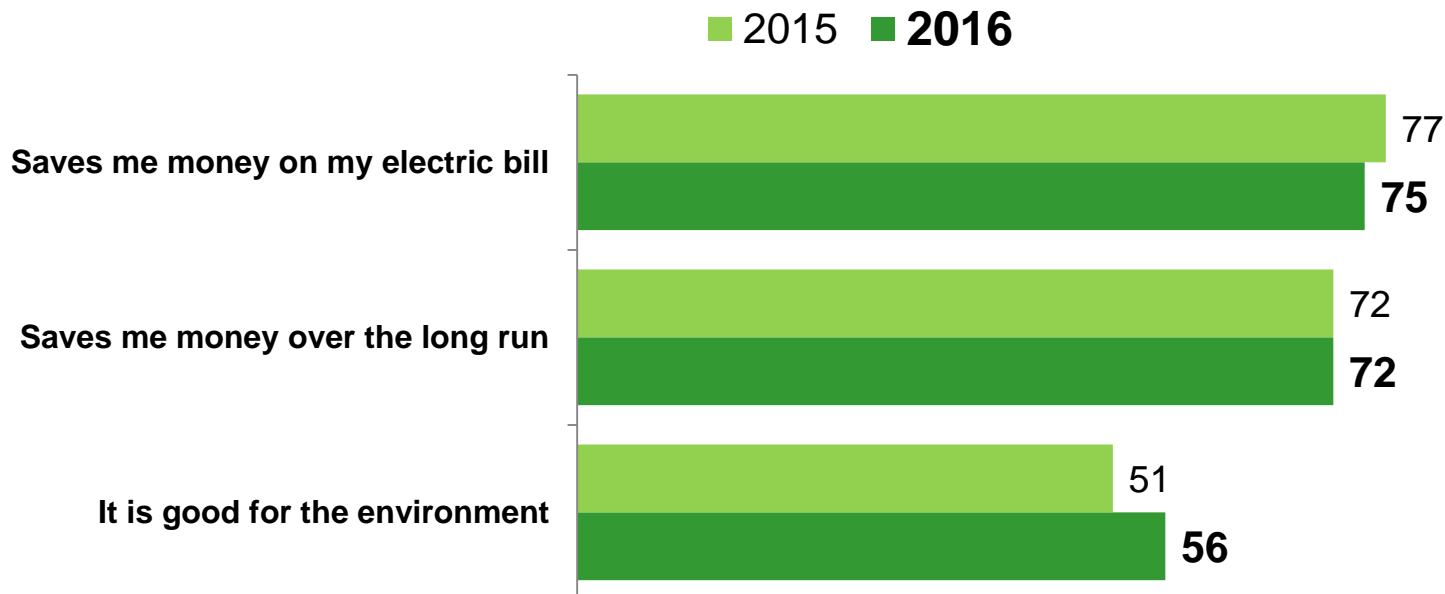
Findings based on online survey of 1,250 general population across Virginia. Conducted August 2016.

# What We Know: *Research Findings*



## *Saving money is a key motivator, environmental concerns increasingly important*

How important are the following reasons to save energy?  
***Showing % “Very Important” among All***



Findings based on online survey of 1,250 general population across Virginia. Conducted August 2016.

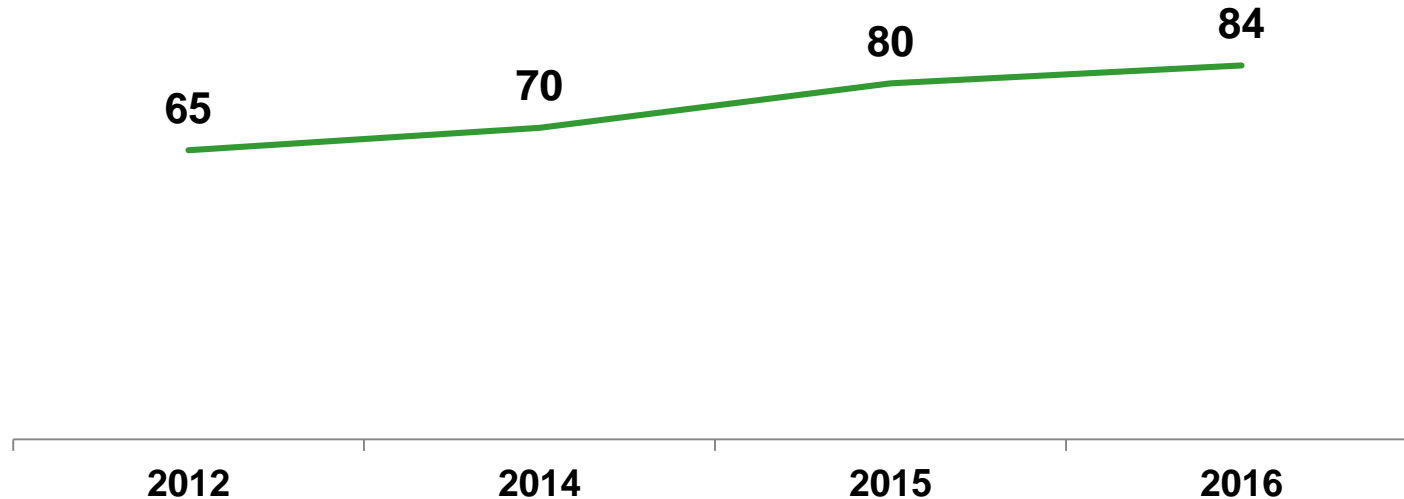
# What We Know: *Research Findings*



## *Interest in Reducing Energy Use Continues to Rise*

How interested would you be in learning more about the steps you could take to reduce electricity use?

***Showing % Total Interested among All***



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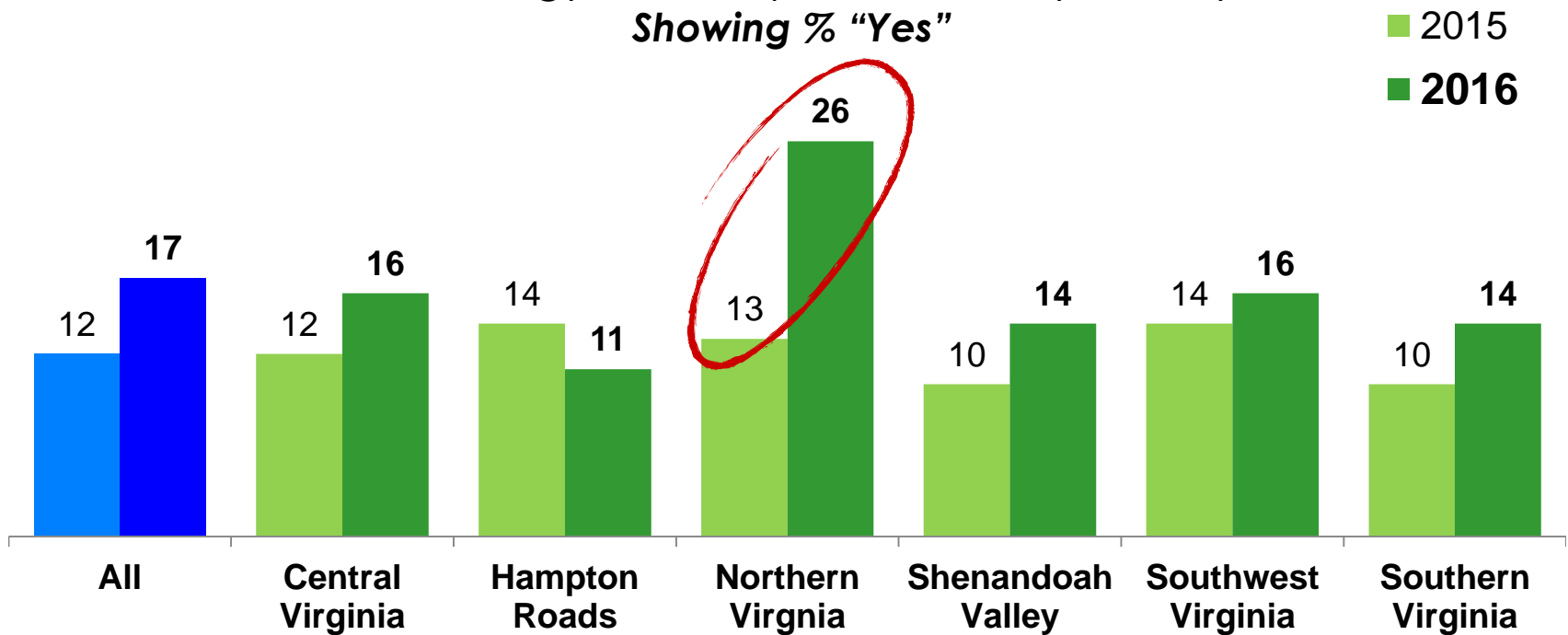
# What We Know: Research Findings



## State energy saving goals awareness increasing

Before today, were you aware that the Commonwealth of Virginia set the goal to reduce energy consumption levels by 10% by 2020?

Showing % "Yes"



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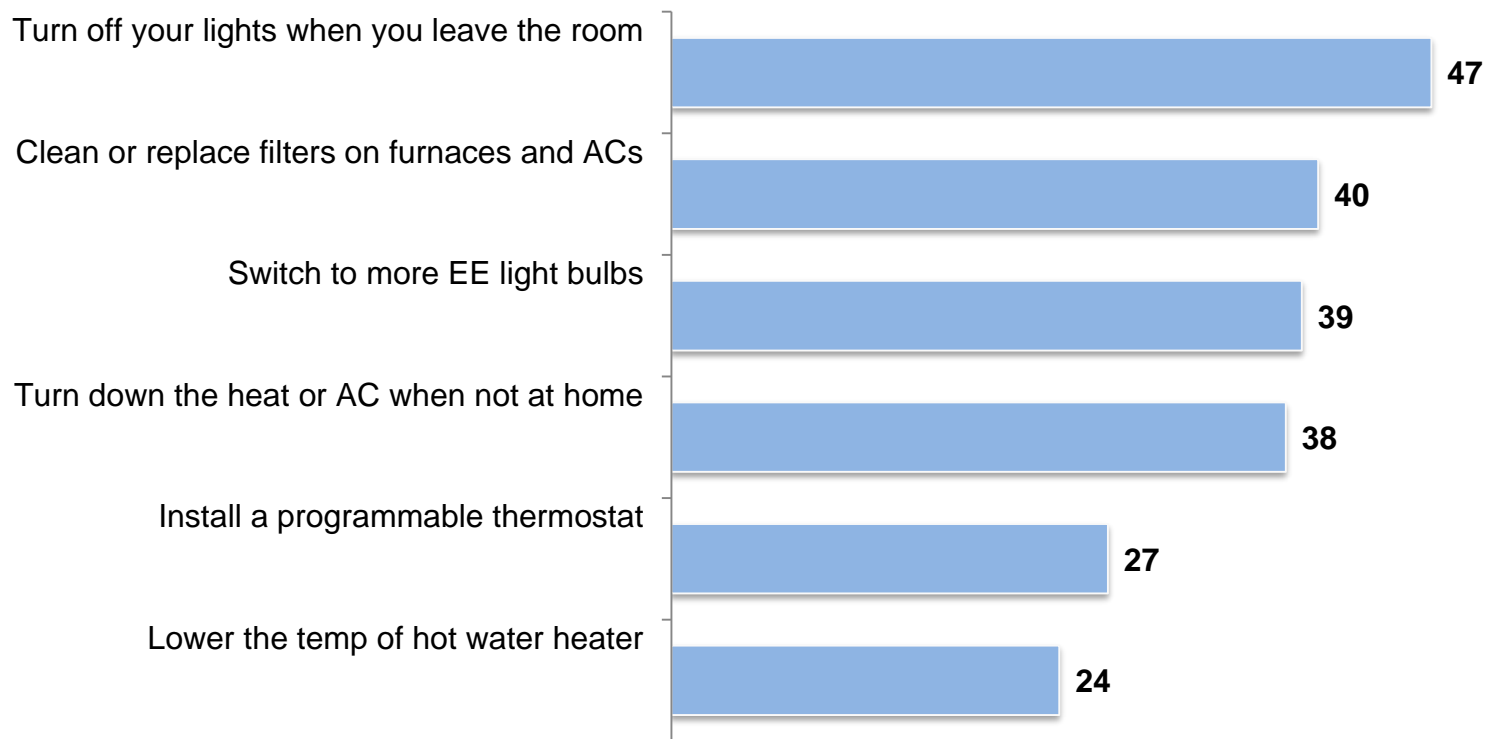


# What We Know: Research Findings



## 1 in 3 currently take energy saving steps

Energy-Saving Actions Engaged In  
**Showing % “Already Doing This” among All**



Findings based on online survey of 1,250 general population across Virginia. Conducted August 2016.

# What We Know: Research Findings

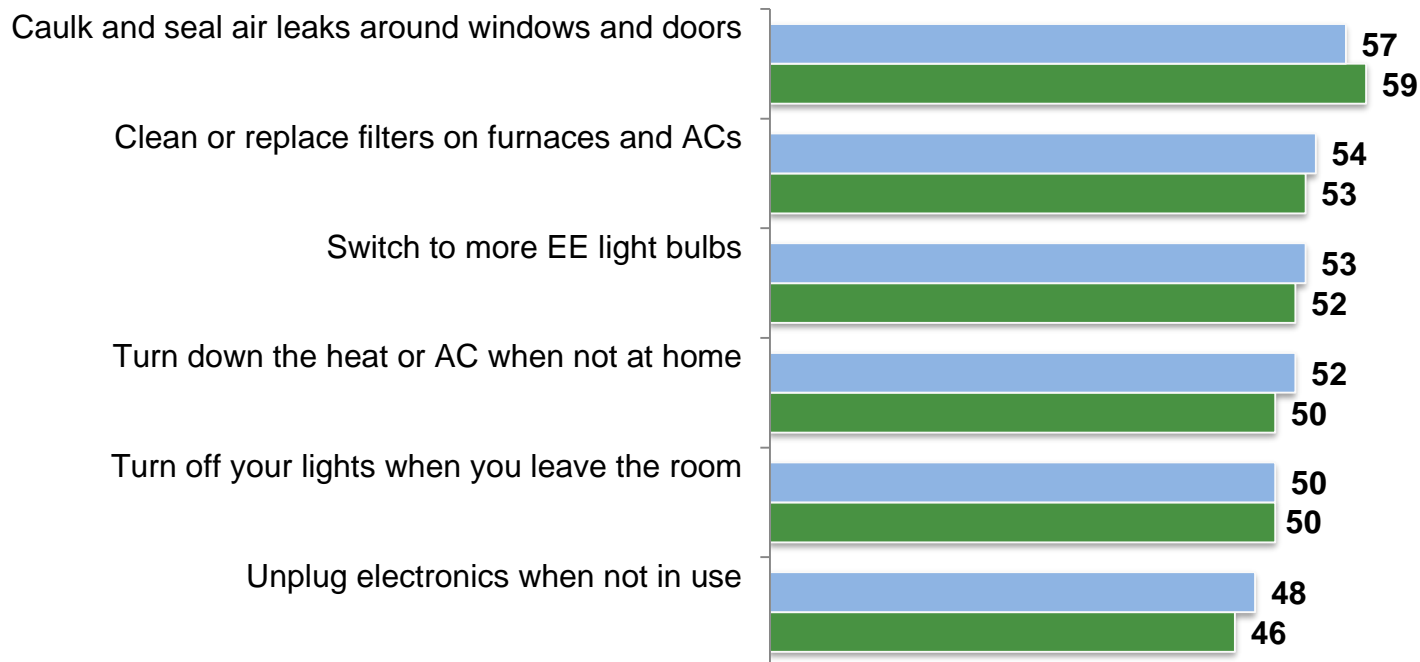


## Majority to take actions not involving renovations

Likelihood to Engage in Energy-Saving Actions

**Showing % “Very” and “Somewhat Likely” among All**

■ 2016 ■ 2015



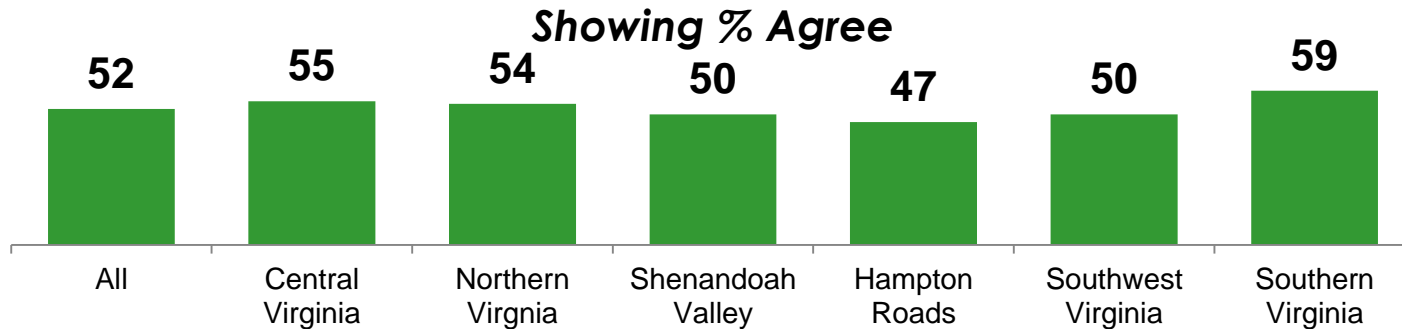
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# What We Know: Research Findings

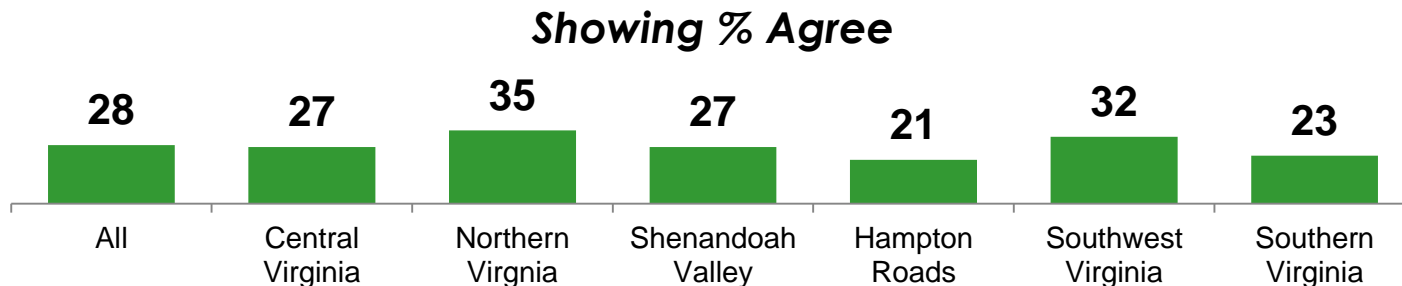


## *Emphasize energy efficiency investments pay off*

Initial costs to make my home more energy efficient are too expensive.



The financial investment to make my home more energy efficient will not pay for itself in the long term.



Findings based on online survey of 1,250 general population across Virginia. Conducted August 2016.

# What We Know: Research Findings

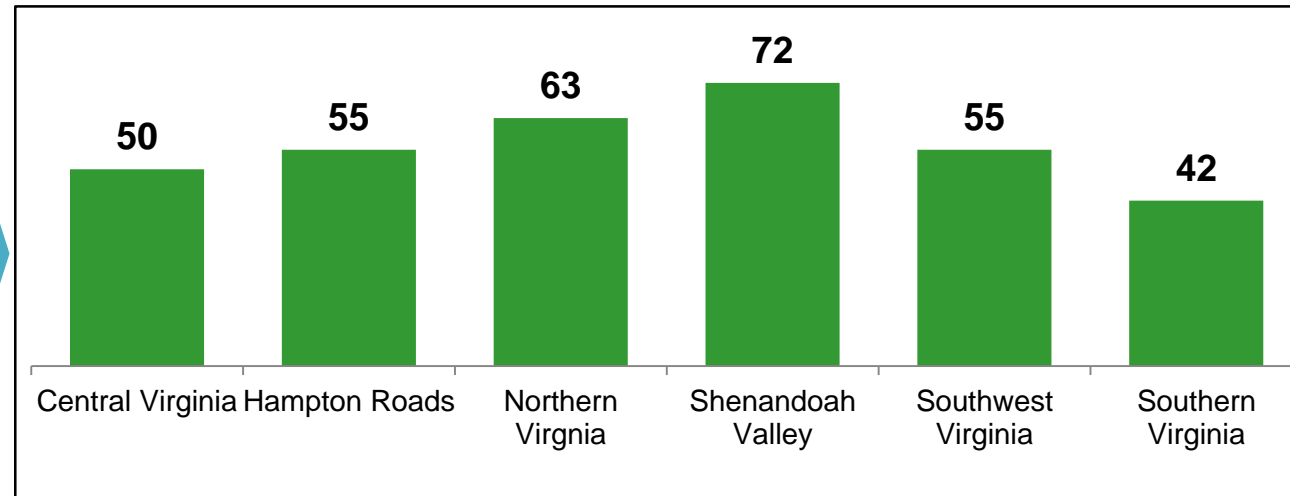
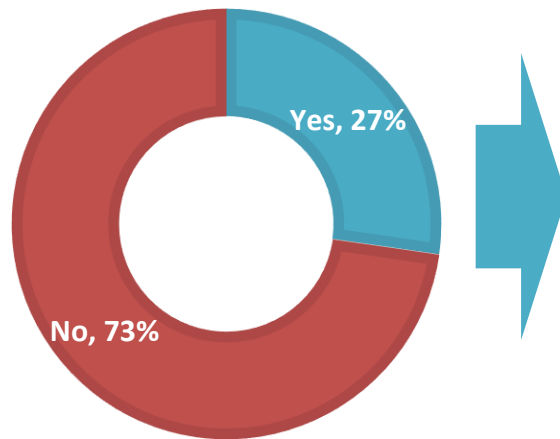


## Nearly 75 percent of Virginians don't have a programmable thermostat

How often do you program your thermostat to save energy?

**Showing % 7 days a week**

Programmable  
Thermostat Ownership



Findings based on online survey of 1,250 general population across Virginia. Conducted August 2016.

**VIRGINIA ENERGY SENSE**

# What We Know: *Research Findings*



*One third of Virginians are unlikely to install programmable thermostats*

**1 in 3**

unlikely to install a programmable thermostat

Top Reasons Not to Install:

- 22% say it's too expensive
- 19% not convinced it will save energy
- 15% unsure how to install one

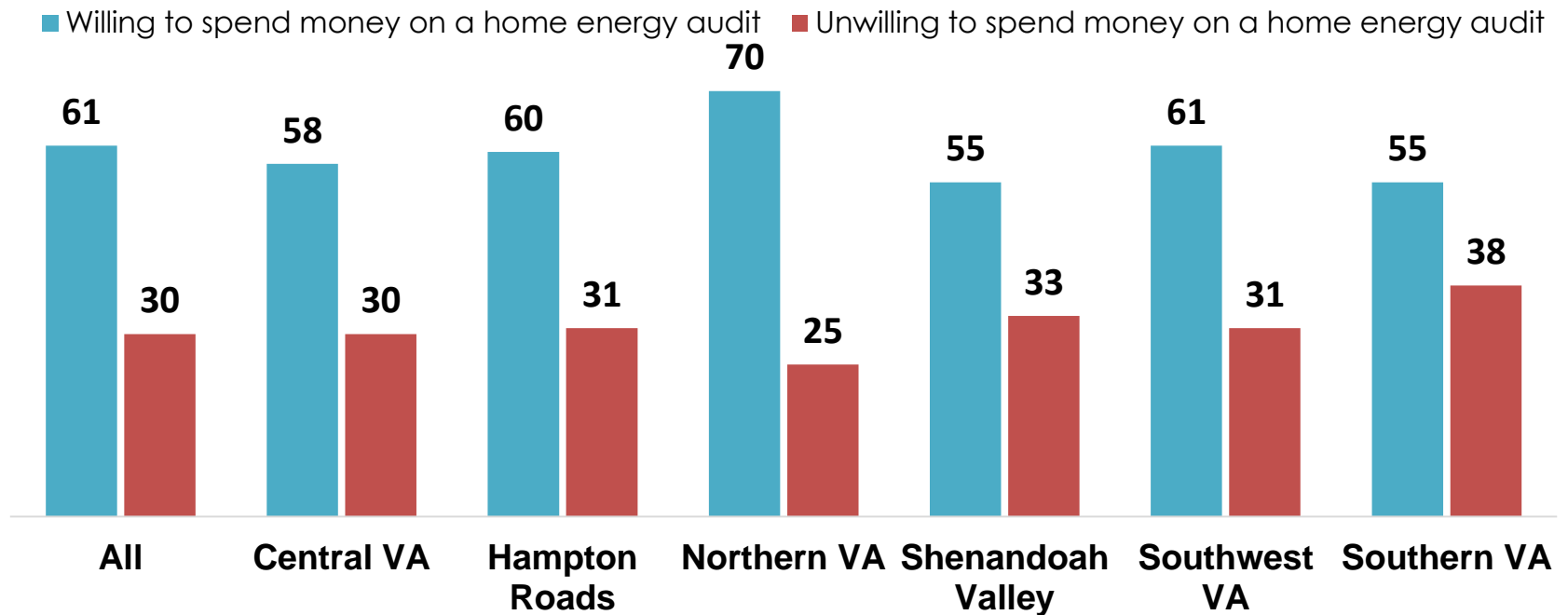
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**VIRGINIA ENERGY SENSE**

# What We Know: Research Findings



***60 percent of Virginians are willing to invest in a professional home energy audit***



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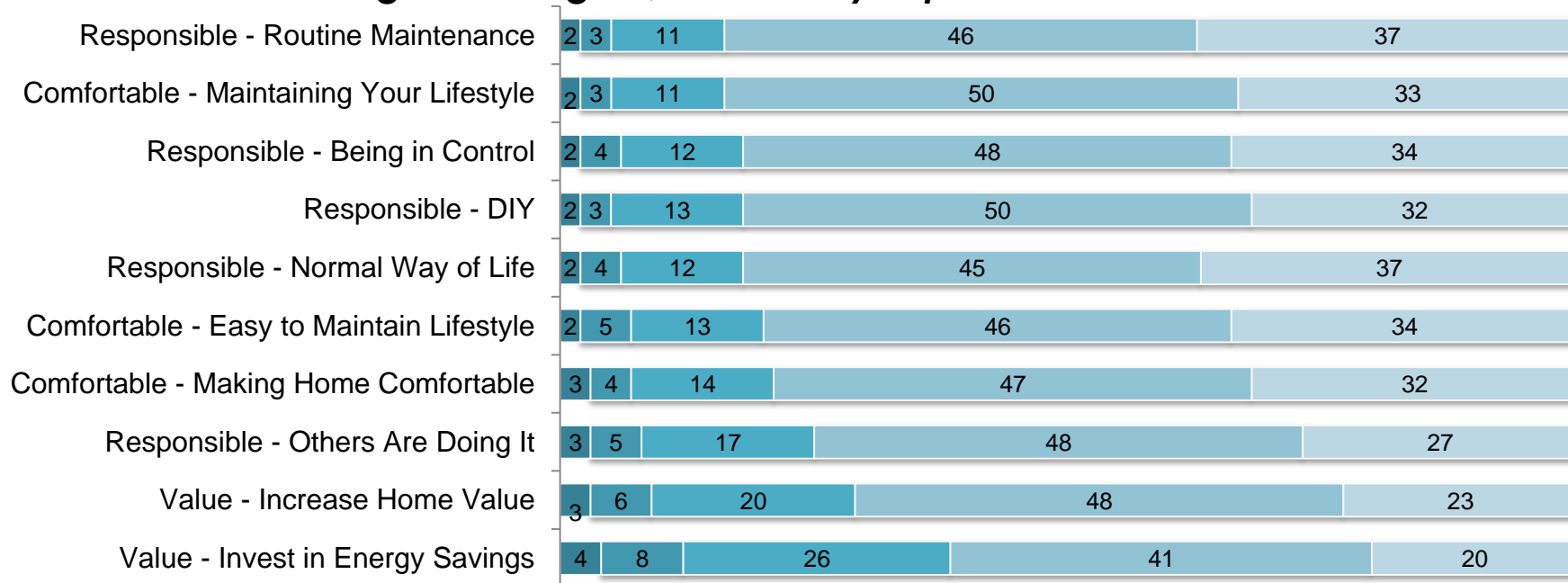
# What We Know: Research Findings



## *Tangible monetary benefits motivate Virginians*

How motivated does this statement make you to take the next step to conserve energy in your home?

**Showing % among All, Ranked by Top-Two Box Motivated**



■ Don't know ■ Not at all motivated ■ Not motivated ■ Somewhat motivated ■ Very motivated

Findings based on online survey of 1,250 general population across Virginia. Conducted August 2016.

# Results:

## *Measuring Our Impact*



### *Key Metrics from April 2015 to today*

- ❑ 500,000 targeted media impressions through op-ed placements, on air television radio interviews
- ❑ Twitter followers from 1,241 to more than 4,500 (360 percent increase).
- ❑ Increased VES Facebook fans by 515 fans to 2,143 (416 percent).
- ❑ Increased Energy Challenge participants (email list) from 1,000 to more than 14,400.
- ❑ Reached approximately 800,000 Virginians through partnerships with education, business and government organizations.
- ❑ Reached 225,000 Virginians through participation in community events and distributed hundreds of collateral items to citizens.



# Results:

## *Measuring Our Impact*



### *Key Metrics from April 2015 to today (cont.)*

- ❑ The 30-second “Spend Your Energy Elsewhere” commercial garnered nearly four million impressions, with an expected reach of 94 percent the Harrisonburg, Roanoke, Hampton Roads regions, as well as a 63 percent reach in Richmond.
- ❑ Increased average website traffic from 817 sessions in April 2015 to more than 9,500 in September 2016.
- ❑ Drove more than 356,000 views on YouTube through “Jack” web video series, each of which were approximately 60 seconds in duration. Viewers stayed engaged with the videos for about 47 seconds.

Findings based on online survey of 1,250 general population across Virginia. Conducted August 2016.

# Jack is Back for Halloween



Findings based on online survey of 1,250 general population across Virginia. Conducted August 2016.