

# **FALL 2016 PENN STATE POLL**

**Report of Results**

**Submitted to:**

**Growing Greener**

**Prepared by:**

**Center for Survey Research**

**Penn State Harrisburg**

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**PennState**  
Harrisburg

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## INTRODUCTION

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The Penn State Poll (Poll) is an omnibus survey conducted by the Center for Survey Research (CSR) at Penn State Harrisburg. A total of 605 telephone interviews with adult Pennsylvanians were conducted between September 8 and October 29, 2016. The Penn State Poll used a dual-frame design consisting of both landline and cell phone samples. Project activity was directed by Stephanie L. Wehnau, Director of the Center for Survey Research at Penn State Harrisburg.

The purpose of the Penn State Poll is to provide timely and accurate data to agencies, organizations, and researchers with statewide interests and responsibilities. Sponsors of past Penn State Polls have used the results of the survey to track public policy issues; measure general attitudes, awareness, and knowledge of their organizations; and measure satisfaction with organizational services and performance.

### **Data Analysis Notes**

The following notes should be taken into account when reviewing the results:

1. Results include discussion for relationships that are statistically significant (chi-square or z-test statistics are significant at the .05 level).
2. When reviewing figures, it is important to review the preceding text to determine which relationships are statistically significant. Figures may include information about relationships that are not statistically significant.
3. Data are weighted as a function of each respondent's age and sex. All reported numbers and percentages reflect the weighted data.
4. Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding in the weighting process.
5. Cross-tabulations and frequencies may not add up to the sample size reported due to rounding in the weighting process and the exclusion of "Don't know" and "Declined to answer" responses.
6. See Appendices A and B of the Report of Methods for a map and list of the Penn State Poll Regions.
7. See Appendix C of the Report of Methods for the survey instrument that was used in data collection.

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## RESULTS

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### Importance of Conservation Efforts

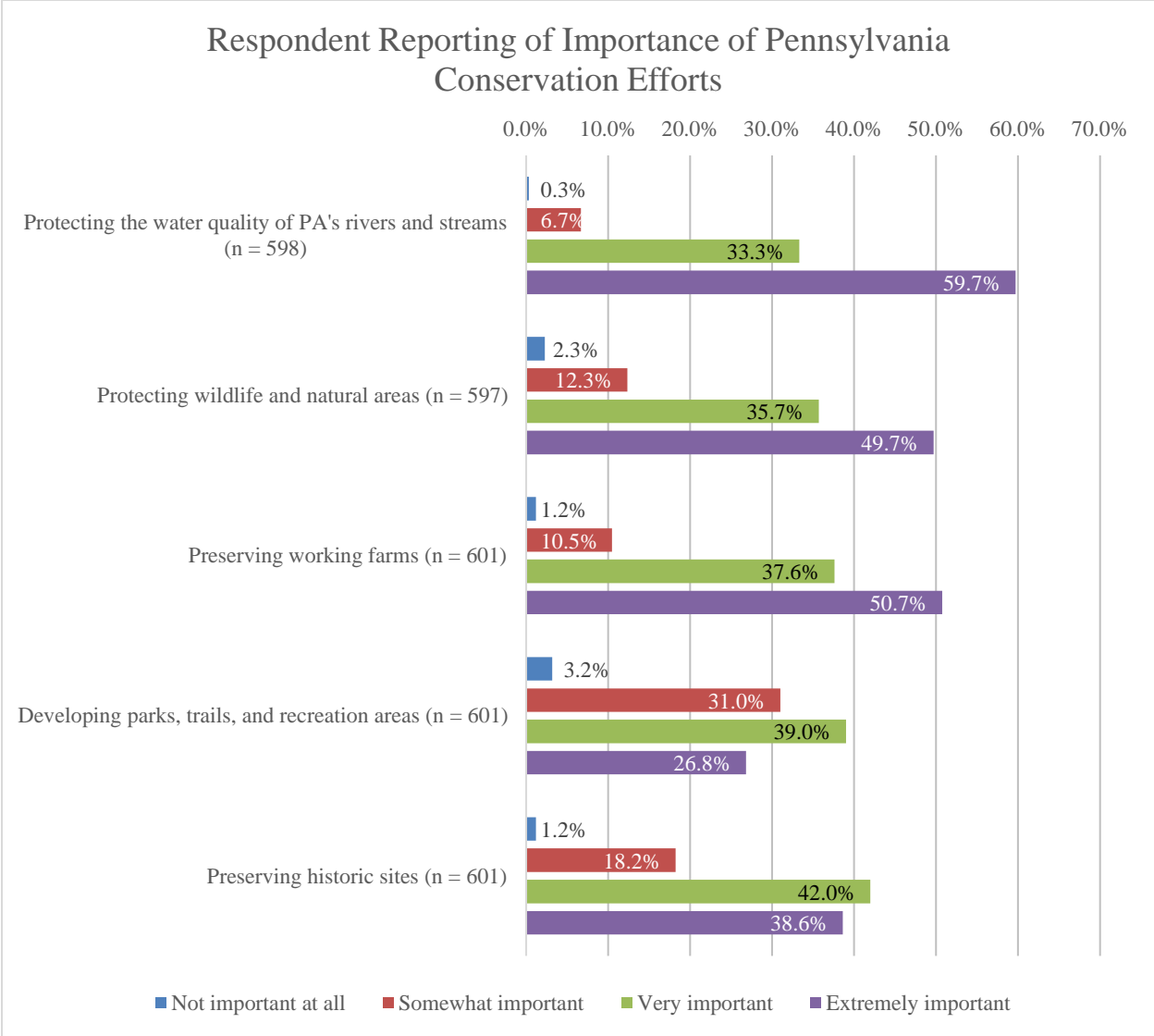
Respondents were asked a series of questions about how important they considered a variety of Pennsylvania conservation efforts to be. Efforts mentioned included protecting the water quality of Pennsylvania's rivers and streams; protecting wildlife and natural areas; preserving working farms; developing parks, trails, and recreation areas; and preserving historic sites. Only two-thirds of respondents (65.8%;  $n = 601$ ) said that they felt that developing parks, trails, and recreational areas was extremely or very important. This was significantly lower than any other result. More than four-fifths of respondents indicated that the remaining items were either extremely important or very important. Below are the proportions of respondents that indicated that each item was extremely or very important:

- Protecting the water quality of Pennsylvania's rivers and streams (93.0%;  $n = 598$ )
- Preserving working farms (88.3%;  $n = 601$ )
- Protecting wildlife and natural areas (85.4%;  $n = 597$ )
- Preserving historic sites (80.6%;  $n = 601$ )
- Developing parks, trails, and recreational areas (65.8%;  $n = 601$ )

There were no significant differences in the likelihood that someone would say that preserving working farms and protecting wildlife and natural areas is extremely or very important.

Likewise, there also were no significant differences in the proportions of respondents who said that protecting wildlife and natural areas and preserving historic sites is extremely or very important. For all other items, there were significant differences in the proportions of respondents who rated items to be extremely or very important. For example, respondents were more likely to say that preserving working farms was extremely or very important than they were to say that preserving historic sites is extremely or very important.

The figure on the following page shows how important respondents thought that each of these conservation efforts was.



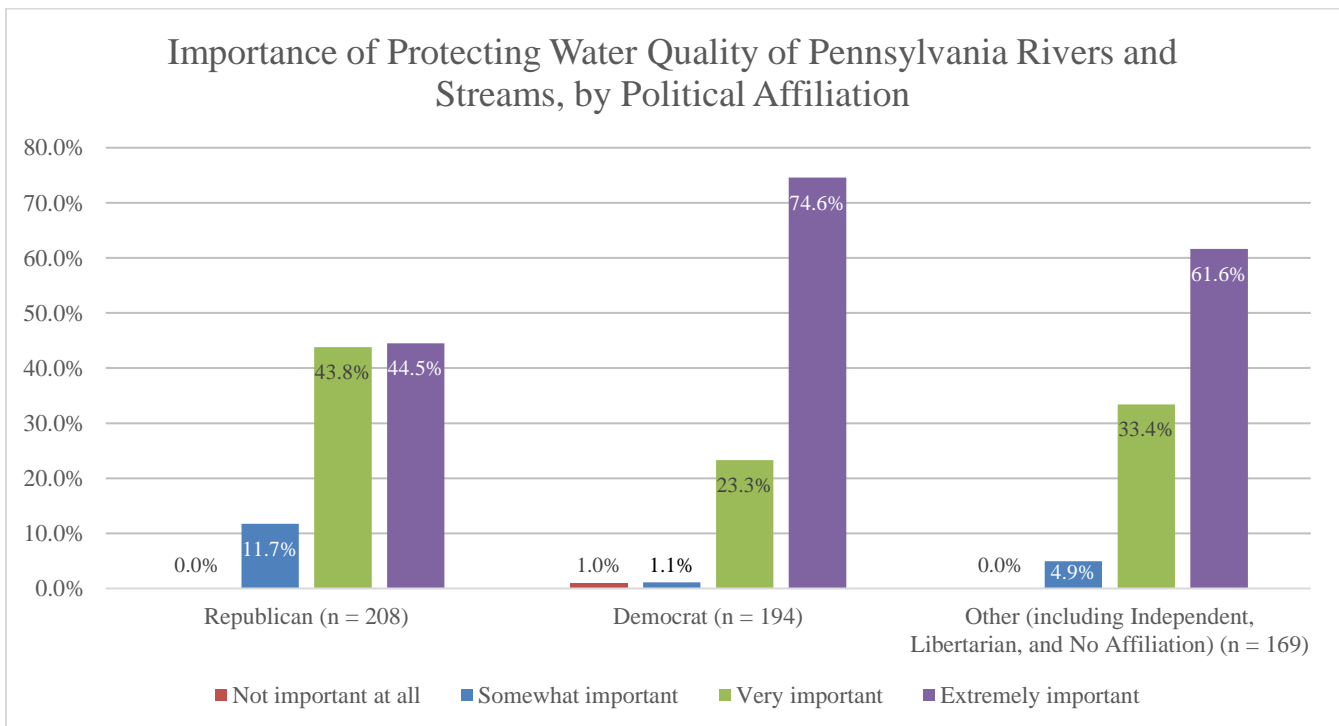
Respondents were more likely to say that protecting the water quality of Pennsylvania’s rivers and streams (59.7%;  $n = 598$ ) was extremely important than they were to say any other conservation effort was extremely important. Respondents were also less likely to say that developing parks, trails, and recreation areas (26.8%;  $n = 601$ ) and preserving historic sites (38.6%;  $n = 601$ ) was extremely important.

The next sections discuss the significance of these results by key demographic characteristics.

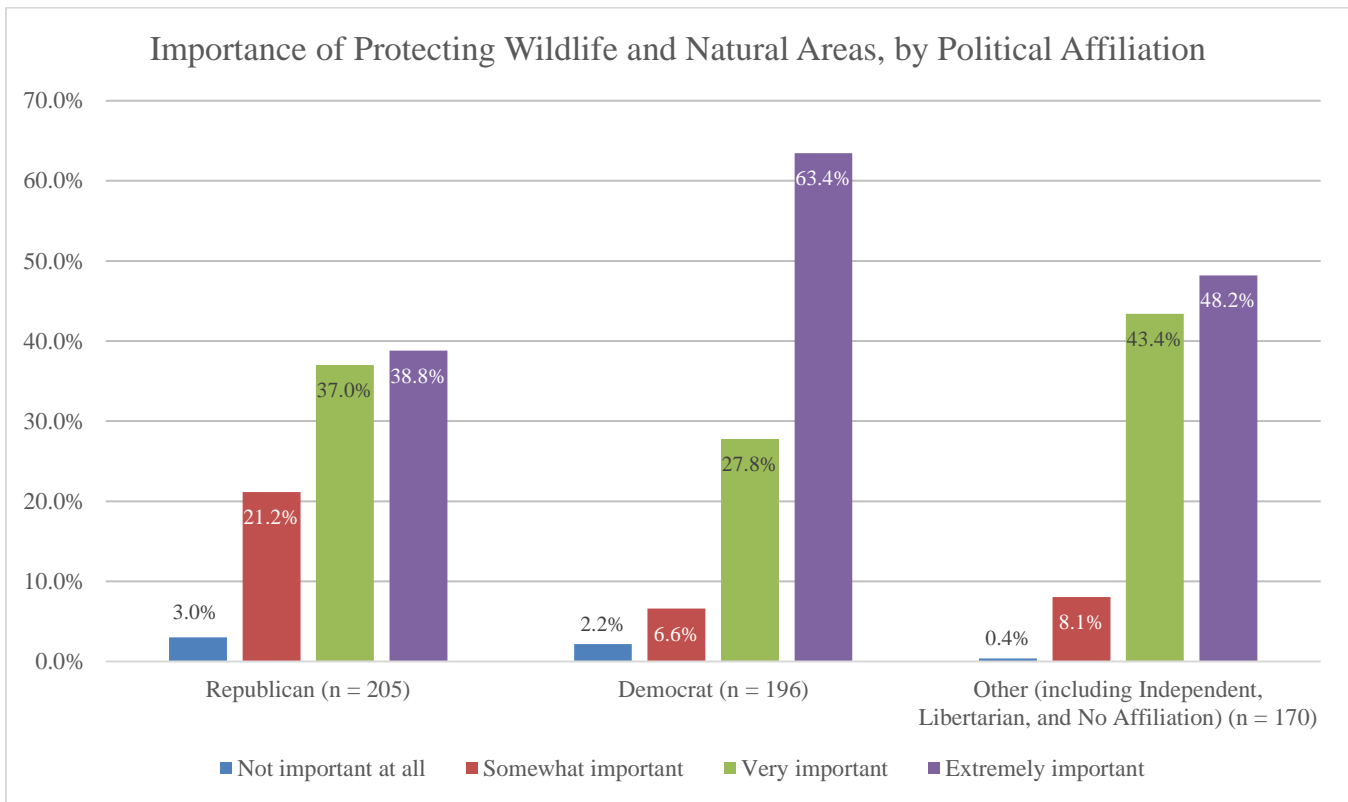
### Political Affiliation

There were many significant differences in respondents reporting significance of Pennsylvania conservation efforts by political affiliation. In fact, of the five conservation efforts that were mentioned to respondents, all had significant differences between political groups except for the importance of preserving working farms. Generally, Democrats thought that the conservation efforts were more important than both Republicans and those with some other political affiliation did. The following discusses key differences between political groups for the four conservation efforts that showed statistical significance.

Democrats were more likely to say that that protecting the water quality of Pennsylvania’s rivers and streams is very or extremely important (97.9%;  $n = 194$ ) than Republicans (88.3%;  $n = 208$ ). Democrats were also more likely to say that protecting the water quality of Pennsylvania’s rivers and streams is extremely important (74.6%) than both Republicans (44.5%) and those with some other political affiliation (61.6%;  $n = 169$ ). Those with some other political affiliation were also more likely than Republicans to say that doing so is extremely important. Conversely, Republicans were more likely than Democrats to say that doing so is somewhat important (11.7% versus 1.1%, respectively) or very important (43.8% versus 23.3%, respectively), as shown in the next figure.

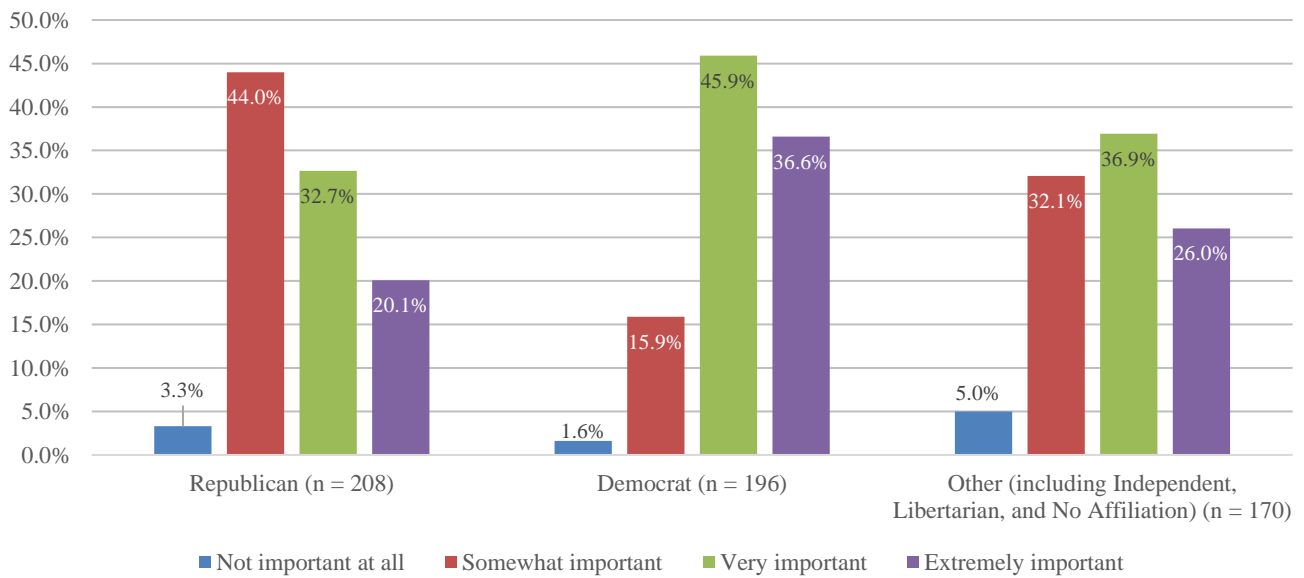


Republicans were less likely to say that protecting wildlife and natural areas is very or extremely important (75.8%;  $n = 205$ ) than both Democrats (91.2%;  $n = 196$ ) and those with some other political affiliation (91.6%;  $n = 170$ ). Democrats were more likely to say that protecting wildlife and natural areas is extremely important (63.4%) than both Republicans (38.8%) and those with another political affiliation (48.2%). Republicans were more likely to say that doing so is somewhat important (21.2%) than both Democrats (6.6%) and those with another affiliation (8.1%), as shown in the next figure.



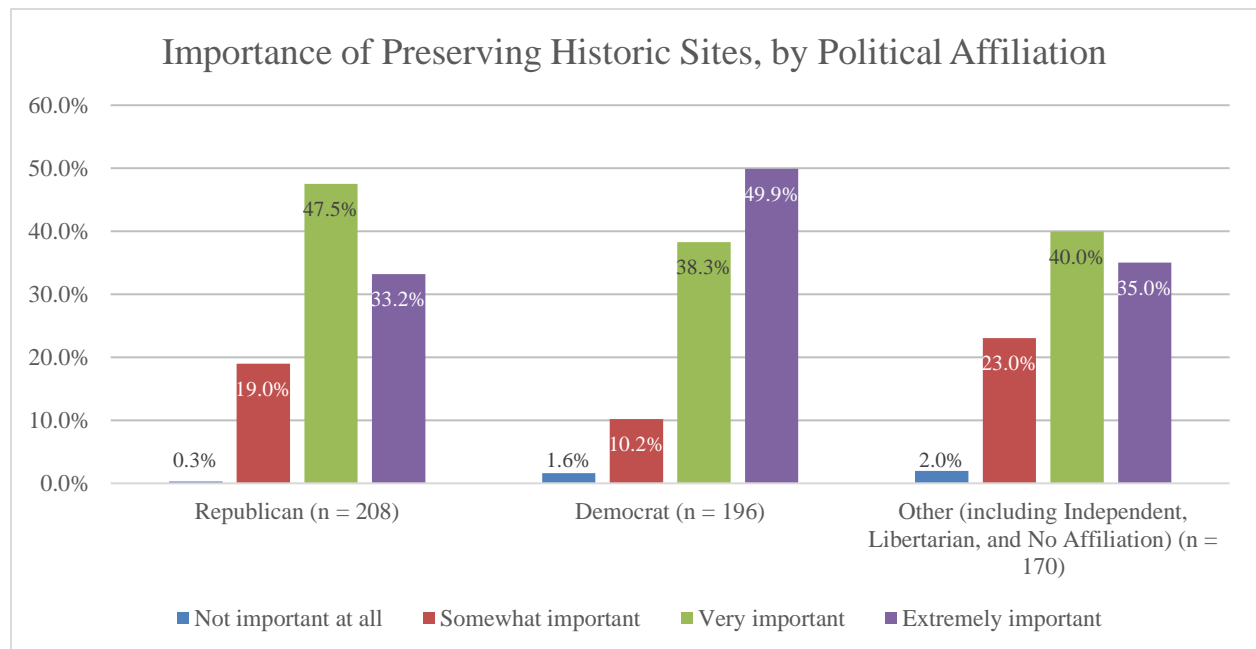
Democrats were more likely to say that developing parks, trails, and recreation areas is very or extremely important (82.5%;  $n = 196$ ) than both Republicans (52.7%;  $n = 208$ ) and those with another political affiliation (62.9%;  $n = 170$ ). Democrats were also more likely than Republicans to say that doing so is extremely important (36.6% versus 20.1%, respectively) or very important (45.9% versus 32.7%, respectively). Democrats were less likely to say that doing so is somewhat important (15.9%) than both Republicans (44.0%) and those with another political affiliation (32.1%), as seen in the next figure.

### Importance of Developing Parks, Trails, and Recreation Areas, by Political Affiliation



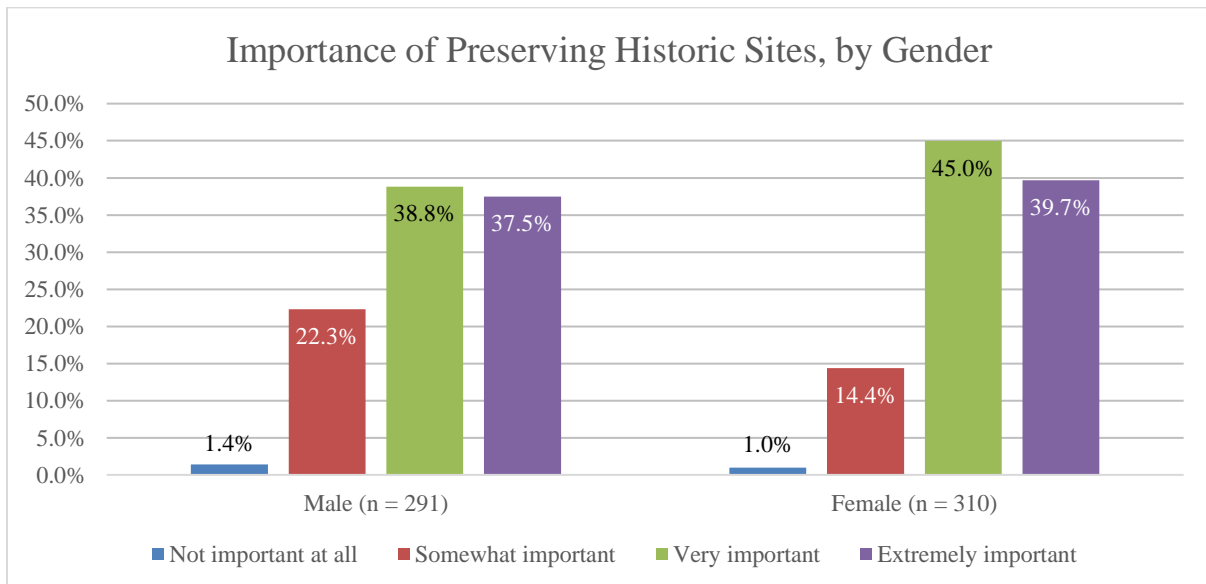
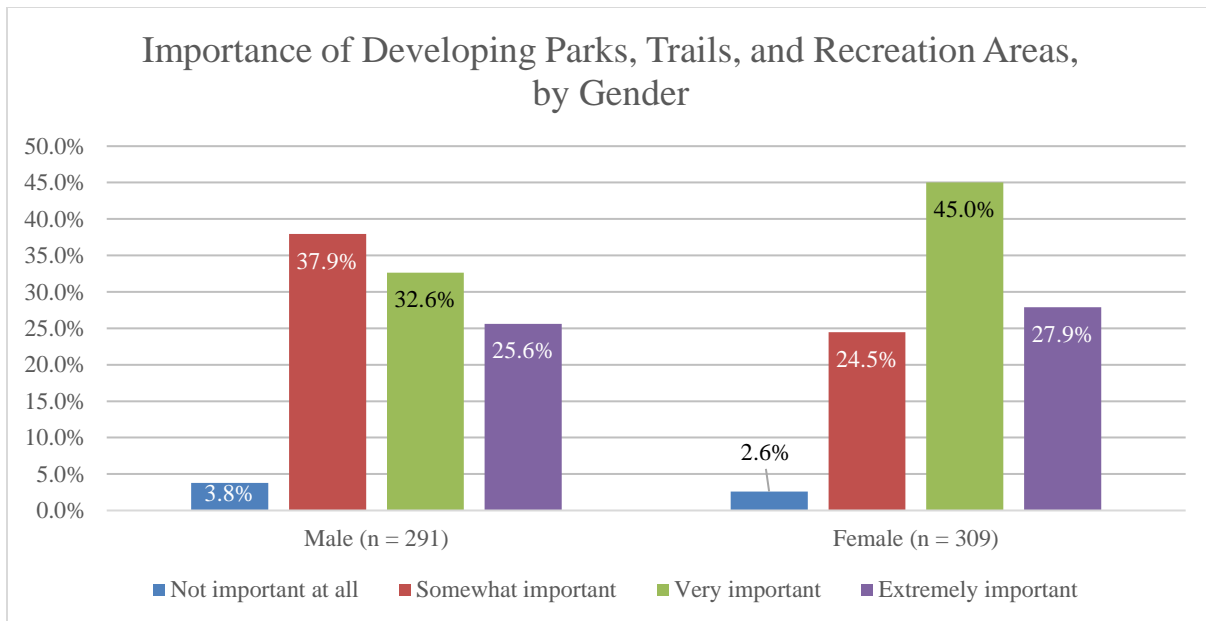
Finally, Democrats were more likely to say that preserving historic sites is extremely important (49.9%;  $n = 196$ ) than both Republicans (33.2%;  $n = 208$ ) and those with another political affiliation (35.0%;  $n = 170$ ). Conversely, they were less likely to say that doing so was somewhat important (10.2%) than Republicans (19.0%) and those with another affiliation (23.0%) as shown in the next figure.

### Importance of Preserving Historic Sites, by Political Affiliation



## Gender

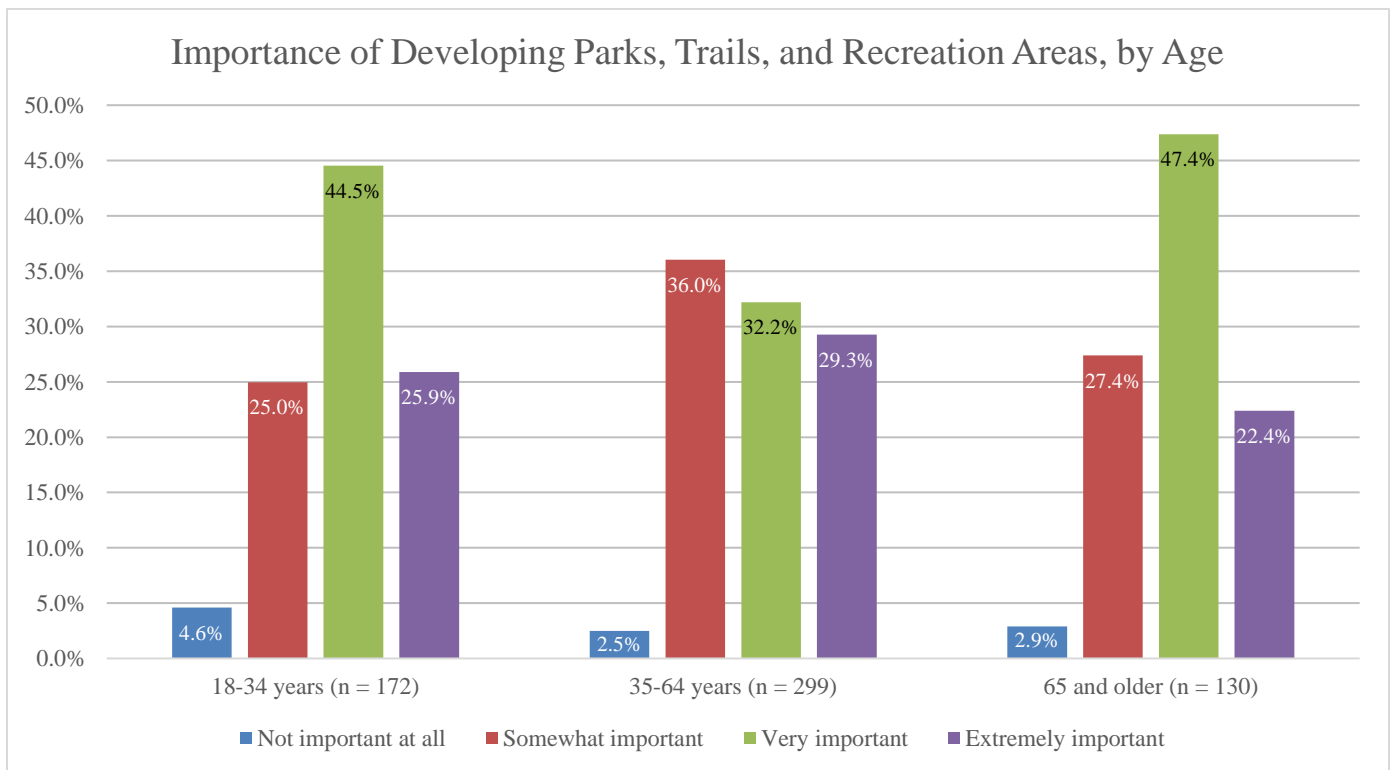
Women were more likely than men to say that developing parks, trails, and recreation areas was extremely or very important (72.9%;  $n = 309$  versus 58.3%;  $n = 291$ , respectively). They were also more likely than men to say that preserving historic sites was extremely or very important (84.6%;  $n = 310$  versus 76.3%;  $n = 291$ , respectively). The next figures show the responses to these items. There were no other statistically significant differences in respondent reporting of importance of Pennsylvania conservation efforts by gender.





### Age

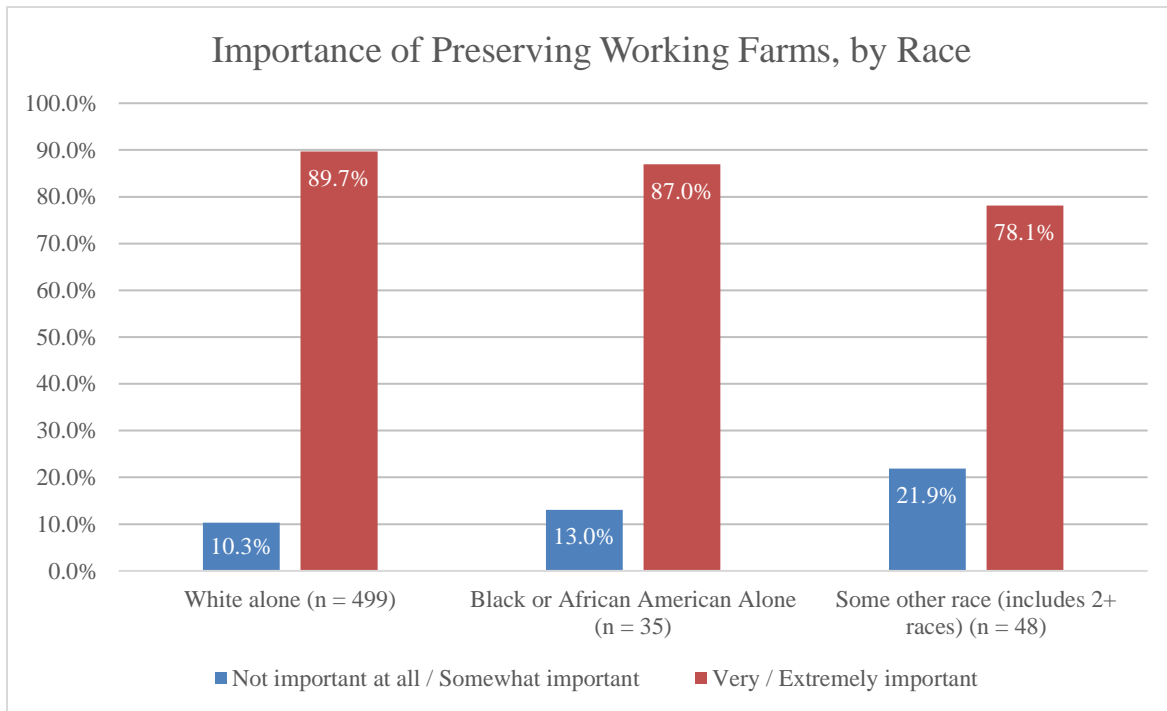
Respondents between the ages of 18 and 34 were more likely to say that protecting wildlife and natural areas is extremely important (57.5%;  $n = 168$ ) than respondents who were 65 years of age and older (42.9%;  $n = 130$ ). In addition, respondents between the ages of 35 and 64 were more likely to say that developing parks, trails, and recreation areas is somewhat important (36.0%;  $n = 299$ ) than those between the ages of 18 and 34 (25.0%;  $n = 172$ ). Respondents between the ages of 35 and 64 were less likely to say that developing parks, trails, and recreation areas is very important (32.2%) than those between the ages of 18 and 34 (44.5%) and those 65 years of age and older (47.4%;  $n = 130$ ), as shown in the next figure. There were no other statistically significant differences in respondent reporting of importance of Pennsylvania conservation efforts by age.



### Race

White respondents were more likely to say that preserving working farms is very or extremely important (89.7%;  $n = 499$ ) than respondents who reported a race other than white alone or black/African American alone (78.1%;  $n = 48$ ), as shown in the next figure. White respondents

were also more likely to say that developing parks, trails, and recreation areas is somewhat important (32.3%;  $n = 498$ ) than those who reported a race other than white alone or black/African American alone (15.1%;  $n = 48$ ). There were no other statistically significant differences in respondent reporting of importance of Pennsylvania conservation efforts by race.

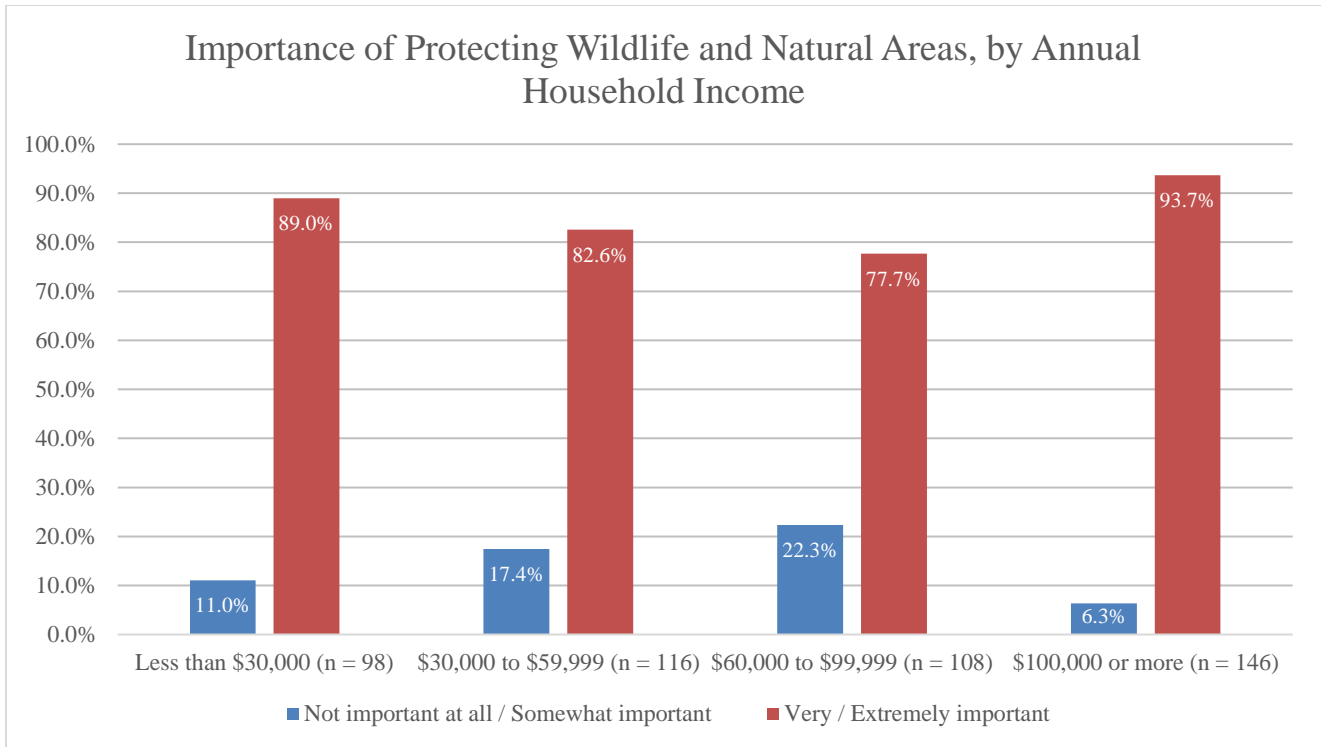


### *Educational Attainment*

Respondents with some college (including two-year degrees, technical degrees, and Associate’s degrees) were more likely to say that preserving working farms is extremely important (58.0%;  $n = 214$ ) than those who had completed graduate work (42.9%;  $n = 119$ ). There were no other statistically significant differences in respondent reporting of importance of Pennsylvania conservation efforts by educational attainment.

### *Household Income*

Respondents who reported living in households with annual incomes of \$100,000 or more were more likely to say that protecting wildlife and natural areas is very or extremely important (93.7%;  $n = 146$ ) than those in households with annual incomes of \$30,000 to \$59,999 (82.6%;  $n = 116$ ) and \$60,000 to \$99,999 (77.7%;  $n = 108$ ), as shown in the next figure.

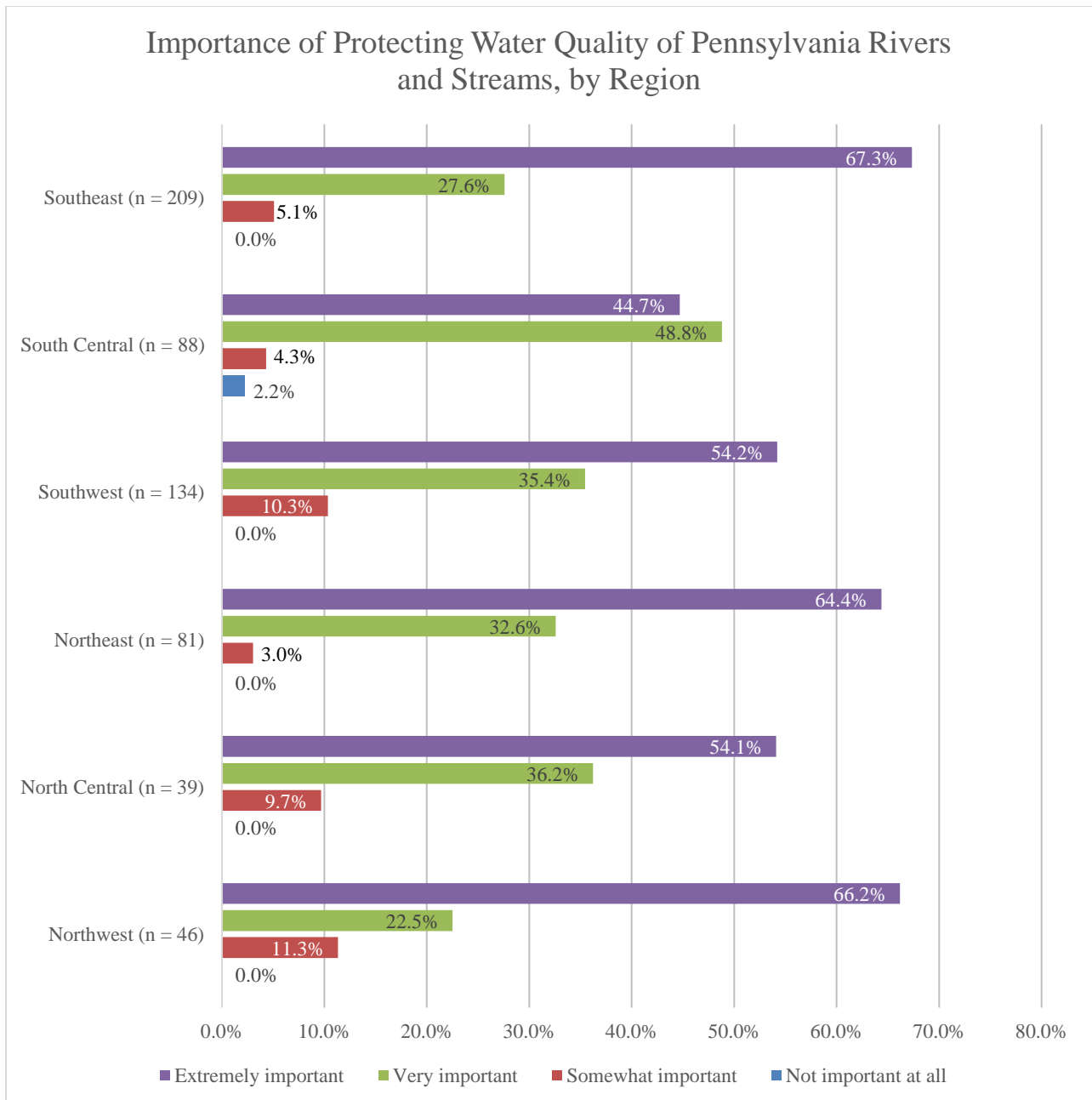


In addition, respondents who reported living in households with annual incomes of \$30,000 to \$59,999 were more likely to say that preserving historic sites is extremely important (57.5%;  $n = 117$ ) than those living in households with annual incomes of less than \$30,000 (39.0%;  $n = 98$ ), \$60,000 to \$99,999 (36.0%;  $n = 111$ ), and \$100,000 or more (34.9%;  $n = 146$ ). There were no other statistically significant differences in respondent reporting of importance of Pennsylvania conservation efforts by annual household income.

#### *Penn State Poll Region*

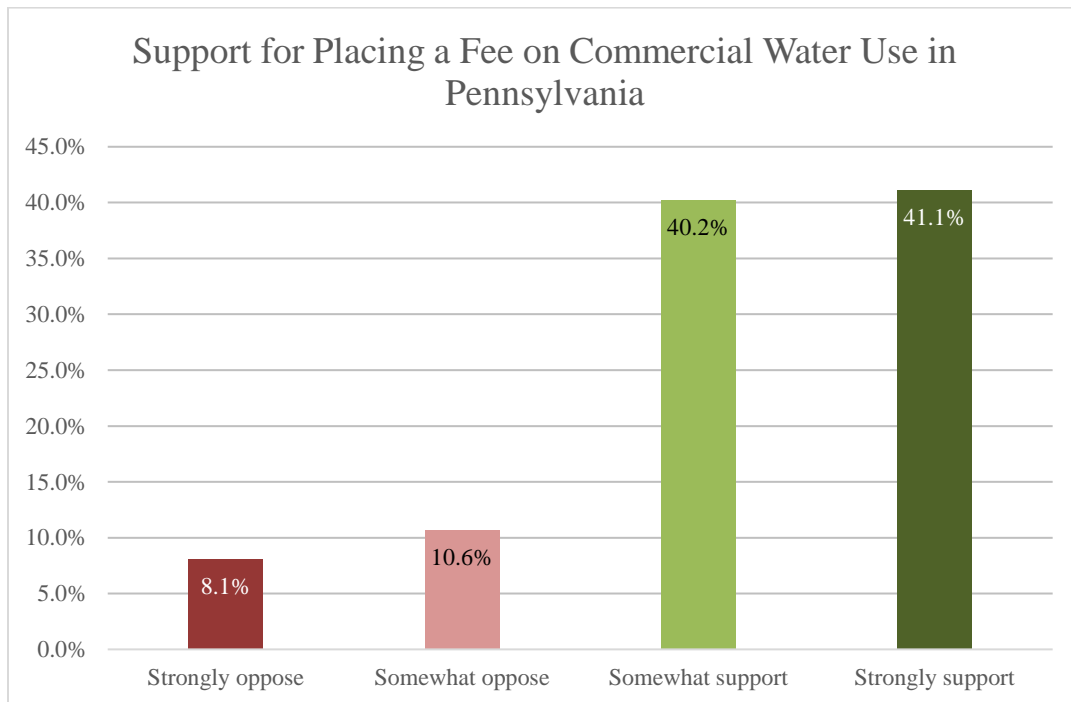
Respondents who live in Southeast Pennsylvania were more likely to say that protecting the water quality of Pennsylvania’s rivers and streams is extremely important (67.3%;  $n = 209$ ) than those who live in the South Central region (44.7%;  $n = 88$ ). Respondents from the South Central region were more likely to say that it is very important (48.8%) than those in the Southeast (27.6%) and Northwest (22.5%;  $n = 46$ ) regions, as shown in the next figure.

Respondents from the Southeast region were more likely to say that protecting wildlife and natural areas is extremely important (57.3%;  $n = 210$ ) than those in the Northwest region (33.2%;  $n = 47$ ). Finally, Southeast region respondents were also more likely to say that developing parks, trails, and recreation areas is extremely important (32.8%;  $n = 210$ ) than those in South Central Pennsylvania (14.6%;  $n = 90$ ). There were no other statistically significant differences in respondent reporting of importance of Pennsylvania conservation efforts by Penn State Poll region.

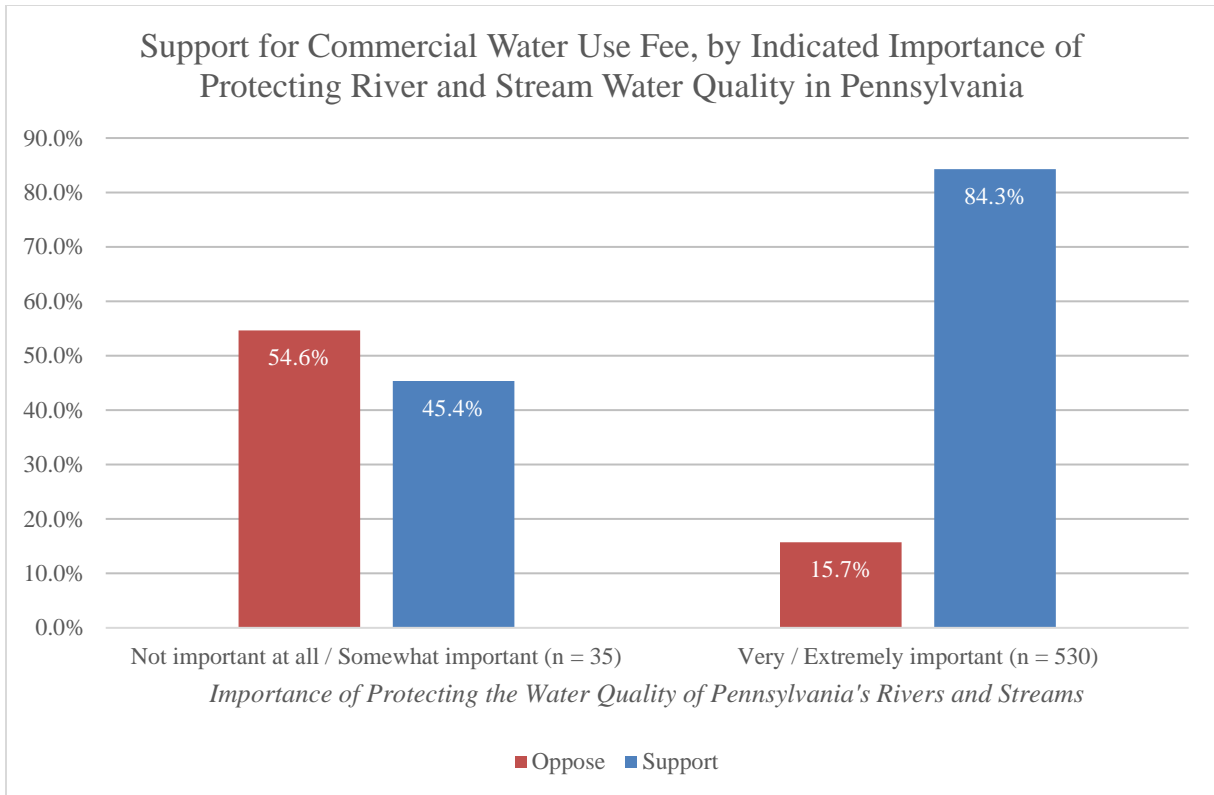


### Commercial Water Use Fee

Four-fifths of respondents (81.3%;  $n = 570$ ) indicated that they support placing a fee on commercial water use in Pennsylvania to fund protecting and restoring Pennsylvania’s rivers and streams and for conservation, recreation, and preservation projects. Respondents who were in support of such a fee were evenly divided between those who said they somewhat support it (40.2% of all respondents) and those who said that they strongly support the fee (41.1%), as shown in the next figure.

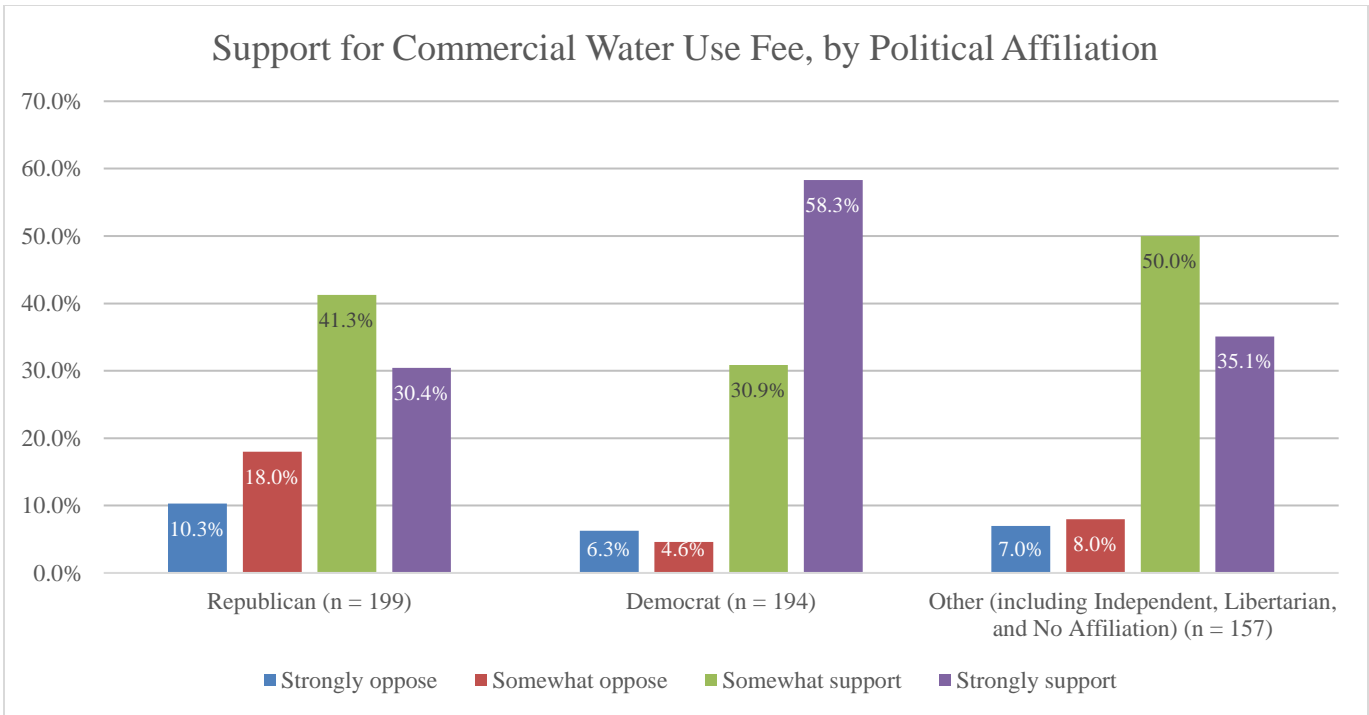


Unsurprisingly, higher levels of support for placing a fee on commercial water use were positively correlated with higher indicated levels of importance for protecting the water quality of Pennsylvania’s rivers and streams (Pearson Correlation = 0.679;  $p < 0.01$ ;  $n = 598$ ). Over four out of five respondents who said that protecting the water quality of Pennsylvania’s rivers and streams is very or extremely important (84.3%;  $n = 530$ ) said that they would support placing a fee on commercial water use. Perhaps more surprising is that nearly half of respondents who said that protecting river and stream water quality in Pennsylvania is somewhat important or not important at all (45.4%;  $n = 35$ ) indicated that they would support this fee, as shown in the next figure.

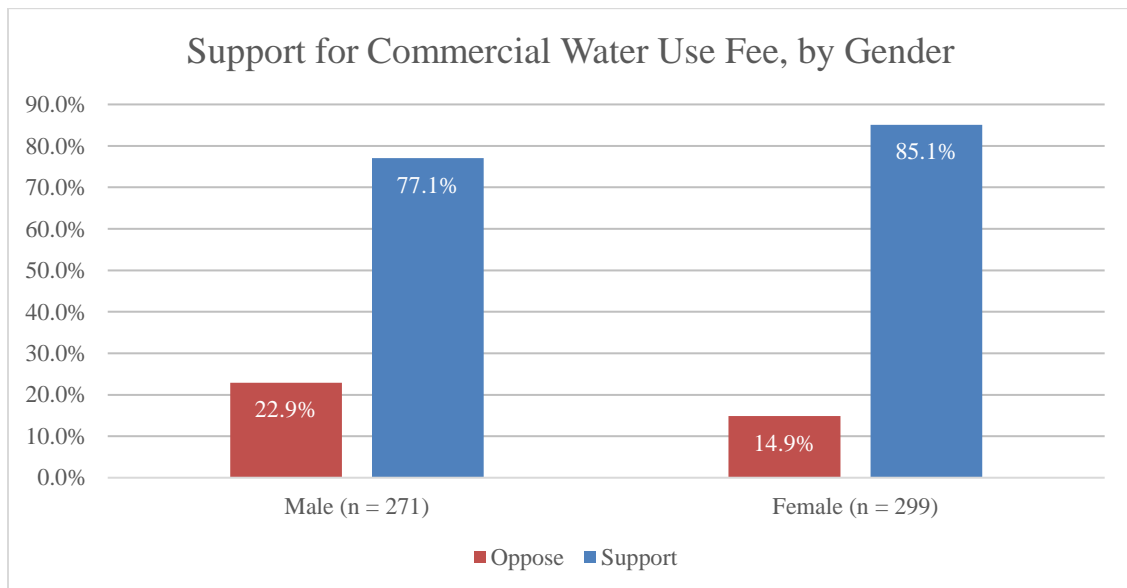


### *Demographic Sub-Groups*

Republicans were more likely to say that they oppose placing a fee on commercial water use in Pennsylvania to fund protecting and restoring Pennsylvania's rivers and streams (28.3%;  $n = 199$ ) than both Democrats (10.8%;  $n = 194$ ) and those with some other political affiliation (14.9%;  $n = 157$ ). More than half of Democrats said that they strongly supported such a fee (58.3%), and they were more likely to have strongly supported the fee than both Republicans (30.4%) and those with other affiliations (35.1%), as shown in the next figure.



Women were more likely to indicate that they supported placing a fee on commercial water use in Pennsylvania to fund protecting and restoring Pennsylvania’s rivers and streams (85.1%;  $n = 299$ ) than men were (77.1%;  $n = 271$ ), as shown in the next figure.



There were no significant differences in support of a commercial water use fee by age, ethnicity race, education, household income, or region.