

# **Saving the Planet: Perspectives from the Orthodox Jewish Community**

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## **Acknowledgements**

This project has been a more than research into the Orthodox community's involvement in environmental action. It has been a journey that began with my acceptance into the 2014-2015 GreenFaith Fellowship Program. I received generous financial support from GreenFaith and Wisconsin Interfaith Power & Light to participate in this program. Designed to train individuals to be environmental leaders within their specific religious communities, the 18-month program helped me focus on the intersection of Jewish values and practices with both the need and method of environmental protection from a Jewish perspective. Through my participation in this program, I have refined and strengthened my Jewish "green voice". A key part of the program was the Leadership Project in which each Fellow designed and conducted a project within and for their religious community. As a Board member of Canfei Nesharim: Sustainable Living Inspired through Torah, I have had the good fortune to be actively involved in developing materials about the environment for the Orthodox community. This Leadership Project is an outgrowth of that effort and will, hopefully, assist Canfei Nesharim as it transitions from teaching Orthodox Jewry about the environment and the challenges it faces to actively engaging Orthodox Jews in environmental action.

The survey was developed through and analyzed by Survey Monkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)). GreenFaith generously allowed the author to use their Survey Monkey account for this study. In this as well as all other forms of enthusiastic support, the author deeply thanks Rev. Fletcher Harper, Executive Director of GreenFaith. In addition, the author thanks all the rabbis and lay leaders who took time out of their already busy schedules to participate in the critical focus groups that helped develop the questions used for the survey. It was both heartening and enlightening to see all segments of the Orthodox spectrum share their thoughts and insights. The author also thanks Barbara Goldberg whose expert advice on how to develop questions for a focus group and the final survey were insightful and essential to the success of this project. And finally, a special thanks to all the anonymous survey participants who took the time to share their perspectives on the environment. Their honesty and forthrightness was critical to the success of this project.

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## **Executive Summary**

While there is some ambivalence toward the environment within the Orthodox community, there also is a broad-based reservoir of interest about environmental issues that reaches across all ages, religious practices and perspectives, and political philosophies. As an example of this connection, many Orthodox Jews express a certain degree of closeness to nature that is enhanced through informal experiences such as summer camps or hiking/camping. Furthermore, while many Orthodox Jews may not consider it a top priority, few of the respondents expressed strong negative feelings about the environment. The primary focus of this survey, possibly the first of its kind, was to identify strategies to transform the expressed interest in environmentally sustainable behaviors into concrete, positive action. To accomplish that aim, this survey was designed to understand current environmental attitudes within the Orthodox community, what barriers reduce active engagement in environmentally-friendly practices and what activities could motivate individuals and communities to action.

The initial step toward developing an active environmental perspective in the Orthodox community was to develop a series of small focus groups in which a series of open-ended questions were presented. Sessions (60-100 minutes) were recorded with permission of those in attendance. The 10 focus groups either involved synagogue or community-wide groups in the Greater Milwaukee (WI) area, New York City (NY), Silver Spring (MD) and Jerusalem (Israel).

Based on the answers given by focus group participants, an extensive 10-minute, 42-question survey was developed that covered 4 themes: 1) general demographics to be used for statistical comparisons, 2) general attitudes about the environment, 3) role of Judaism and the Jewish community in environmental action and 4) potential, broad-based strategies to enhance environmentally sustainable behavior.

Data were analyzed by comparing results for 4 demographic categories: age, geographic location, self-identified place within the spectrum of Orthodoxy and political philosophy. Ages were grouped 18-25, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65 and 66 and over. Geographic locations were grouped by Israel and broad-based zones in the US: Midwestern, Eastern, Southern and Western. Political philosophies were divided into Conservative, Moderate, Liberal and Other.

## **Observations**

There are 12 basic take-home lessons learned from this survey as to where the Orthodox community stands regarding the environment and its motivations to increase its level of environmentally sustainable behaviors.

- Regardless of which demographic grouping was analyzed, greater than 50% of survey participants state they are involved in doing environmentally-friendly actions. The only exception is from politically conservative individuals where that number drops to approximately

40%; still a significant number. Many of the actions conducted by Orthodox Jews are done as individuals and not as part of an organizational effort. This is likely due more to a lack of knowledge about than an avoidance of Orthodox environmental organizations

- There is a difference between what areas of environmental protection and action concern people and where they put most of their efforts. Across all demographic groupings the two most important areas of concern are air and water quality/pollution. Although the survey did not explore why these two topics were of such interest, it does fit a pattern that was seen among other survey question responses. Environmental harm, especially involving human health, that directly and clearly affects the individual, family or immediate community is consistently of high priority. Issues of endangered species, wilderness protection, etc. are low priority concerns. However, most of the effort in environmental actions centers on recycling. This specific action fits the general desire to do small, easily achievable actions that do not demand great amounts of time and/or effort that would conflict with an already busy personal schedule.
- The three most critical motivators for increased environmental action are, regardless of demographic grouping, increased availability of “green” products, existence of government incentives (even among politically conservative respondents), and influence of friends and/or social networking.
- Across all demographic groups, environmental education is considered important. Whether it is formal (day schools and yeshivas) or informal education (outdoor experiences), interaction with the environment enhances the Orthodox community’s appreciation and desire for protecting Creation.
- Across all ages, religious practices and political perspectives, everyone’s lives are simply too busy with jobs, family responsibilities and fulfilling the many religious obligations for Orthodox Jews to do much more than simple actions. Equally important is that people conduct their own personal cost/benefit analyses to evaluate the usefulness of specific actions to achieve specific environmental outcomes. Many are willing to act if that process yields greater benefits vs cost, although it is not clear how frequently that decision-making process is actually used. Regardless, the basic theme in the Orthodox community’s perspective on environmental action is one of balance between time available, benefits vs cost and local, direct impact issues vs global, indirect impact issues.
- Jewish values are seen as critical to encouraging better earth stewardship. Being a good steward of Creation is, however, not considered a central tenet of Judaism even by those who are more religiously and/or politically liberal. In other words, acting wisely in regards to the environment is an important value but it is only one of many important Jewish values, some of which are more central to defining and directing a religious life.
- Inclusion of environmental themes in, for example, a holiday program is viewed less favorably if it is the only focus. Acceptance of

environmental themes in a program dramatically increases among all demographic groups if such topics or action items are one of several themes. One example of how this could be accomplished is to use food waste as a subtheme for a holiday program. Each Jewish holiday has unique foods and learning about and developing action items for the environmental issues surrounding food waste could be included. Food waste was considered by many to be an important environmental concern. By incorporating Jewish values into specific environmental actions, there is a dramatic increase among all demographic groups in the interest to do those actions.

- The synagogue is an important location for environmental programming and action. Given this importance of the synagogue's role, it was surprising that most people did not see the rabbi as an important motivating force for environmental action.
- Less than one-half of respondents regardless of demographic category feel confident in their knowledge of Jewish views about the environment. When provided a list of areas that would be of interest to learn what the rabbis and commentators have said about the environment, the top two responses across all demographic categories were wise use of natural resources and sustainable practices.
- There is widespread agreement across all demographic groups that experiencing nature through hiking or camping enhances one's connection with HaShem and encourages a deeper appreciation of all Creation. According to survey participants such informal experiences strengthen and deepen Jewish spirituality.
- Due to its controversial nature, attitudes toward anthropogenic climate change were explored. In a comparison of age groups, climate change was among the top five concerns for those 46 and older. Regardless of geographic location, approximately 60% of respondents ranked climate change as a top five issue. While  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Modern Orthodox-Liberal Jews felt that climate change was a major issue, only slightly more than one-half of Modern Orthodox-Machmir did. Comparing by political philosophy  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Conservatives, two-thirds of Moderates and  $\frac{9}{10}$  of Liberals ranked climate change among the top five concerns.
- Increasing use of renewable energy sources was an important, top-five concern for all demographic groups. Although ranked 4<sup>th</sup>, slightly less than one-half of Conservatives felt increasing use of renewable energy sources was important.

### **Suggested Strategies**

A central goal of this study was to identify a small set of simple, achievable strategies that would increase environmental engagement in the Orthodox community. The following strategies are based upon motivators for action identified by the survey as well as survey participant suggestions. It is clear from the data that increasing environmental activism in the Orthodox community must be a bottom-up approach. In other words, incorporate the current concerns about both the environment and environmentalists with interests of the Orthodox community in



local environmental matters into a vision of individual and community engagement. It is not likely that a top-down approach, i.e., rabbinical leadership, will have a major influence on personal choices. Although not explored by the survey, rabbis may have some influence depending on relative importance of specific rabbis within a community and the level of commitment that rabbi demonstrates to environmental matters.

***Strategy 1: Increase the intensity of both formal and informal environmental education in schools, yeshivas camps, etc.*** Between 52 and 88% of respondents depending on the demographic felt that this was either the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> most important strategy. Formal education opportunities, however, are not the only method to which Orthodox Jews will respond. It is clear that informal, outdoor education and experiences will provide meaningful opportunities to enhance appreciation for and desire to protect nature.

***Strategy 2: Encourage simple, inexpensive activities that are not time consuming and can be easily integrated into people's already busy lives.*** These small-scale projects fit well with the view among most survey participants that local actions that produce quick, observable outcomes are preferred. While Orthodox Jews tend not to use non-Orthodox sources as guides, it is suggested that the book, Simple Actions for Jews to Help Green the Planet, (Rabbi Dov Peretz Elkins 2011) be used by individuals, synagogues, schools and organizations as a reference source to identify simple actions that can be accomplished with minimum effort, integrate into everyone's busy lives and increase the breadth of options from which Orthodox Jews can choose to be more environmentally active.

***Strategy 3: Develop a Jewish values-oriented approach for increasing environmentally sustainable behaviors.*** While learning more about the science of the environment is critical for developing effective methods to achieve a sustainable future, the real key to increasing environmental action in the Orthodox community is integrating Jewish values as they relate to the environment into people's everyday lives. As long as the program is people- and G-d-centric and not nature-centric, which can be viewed by some Orthodox Jews as approximating paganism, integrating environmental concepts and action projects along with other themes, e.g., holiday practices, can be a highly successful and accepted strategy. There exists a wealth of source material about Judaism, Jewish values and the environment that can assist educators within both formal and informal settings. Discussed in more detail below, Orthodox educators, including rabbis, should use the value-oriented materials developed by Canfei Nesharim: Sustainable Living Inspired through Torah within their established curricula. For example, while the science of water pollution needs to be understood, there are a host of Jewish values and halachot involving water quality, risk management and human health that will speak more to Orthodox Jews than a science-

only approach. This is of importance given the high ranking all respondents gave to issues of water pollution and values education.

**Strategy 4: Actively engage the private sector in environmental solutions such that both economic and environmental benefits are greater than costs.** Large proportions of the Orthodox community regardless of age, religious perspective or political philosophy want solutions to environmental problems to be a balance between the private and public sectors. While most agree that government incentives are an effective motivator for sustainable behavior within the Orthodox community, tying such inducements to the private sector will create a larger and more positive response. For example, a key motivator was increasing the availability of “green” products. Developing mechanisms to do this, e.g., advertisements on Orthodox Jewish websites, is an example of including the private sector in win-win efforts. While environmental organizations are seen as too liberal by many within the Orthodox community, an increased effort by these groups to use Orthodox media forums to highlight private sector successes in areas as renewable energy or sustainable agriculture which are of high importance to many in the Orthodox community, may be highly useful. Importantly, all these efforts are outside the political arena and, therefore, may reduce the antagonism many within the Orthodox community have toward politically-active environmental groups.

**Strategy 5: Increase the visibility and effectiveness of Canfei Nesharim within the Orthodox community.** Across all demographic categories there is a strong desire to increase the presence of an Orthodox voice within environmental organizations. Ironically, there exists an environmental organization which is based upon the values and practices of the Orthodox community but less than 10% of the respondents regardless of demographic group have ever heard of it. This presents a challenge and an opportunity for Canfei Nesharim. The strategies surrounding formal education suggested in this report have been a central focus of Canfei Nesharim’s efforts. Those individuals and groups who have availed themselves of Canfei Nesharim’s materials have given them high marks and will frequently seek the organization’s assistance. However, if Canfei Nesharim is to have a greater impact in the Orthodox community it must:

1. **Increase significantly its public relations efforts.** It is clear that Canfei Nesharim is not well-known in the Orthodox community. Therefore, Canfei Nesharim must give high priority to identifying funding sources that will leverage its ability to increase the number of connections with camps, day schools and yeshivas throughout the country. This will provide an excellent path to increasing visibility and provide a solid path for increasing sustainable behaviors at home. With the role of the synagogue ranked high as a key organizational structure to facilitate environmental action and programming, Canfei



Nesharim also needs to expand its current efforts to connect with synagogues nationwide to encourage formation of Green Committees which can then integrate Canfei Nesharim materials into synagogue programming and action items. By Canfei Nesharim fostering, encouraging and enhancing local Green Committees as a bottom-up approach, there will be a greater sense of ownership of environmental issues that are of importance to each Orthodox Jewish community.

2. ***Develop collaborative relationships with established Jewish outdoor education/experience organizations that have support within segments of the Orthodox community, e.g., Derech HaTeva and Hazon, to create authentic Orthodox outdoor experiences that allow people of all ages to connect with nature.*** Survey participants were clear that outdoor opportunities increase their desire to protect the environment. Allocating resources, therefore, is crucial to collaborate with organizations that provide existing outdoor education experiences while Canfei Nesharim provides the Orthodox Jewish content and, if needed, staff to create a coordinated, Jewish values-based outlook on nature, ecology and environmental concerns. This will speak to the needs and interests of many within the Orthodox community. This also connects to Strategy 1 above.
3. ***Be a leader to connect Orthodox Jews to environmental careers in areas such as engineering, public health, chemistry, etc.*** Development of internship programs, career information packets for high school and college students, etc. are paths to increase interest in the environment at a professional capacity. This fits well with the desire of survey participants to include the private sector in any strategy to enhance environmental engagement and is an activity that Canfei Nesharim is already in the position to provide through its Science and Technology Advisory Board. Increasing environmental professionals within the Orthodox community will develop a visible core of expert opinions that allow the community to be more accepting of environmental action. This also connects to Strategy 4 above.
4. ***Increase its social networking because it is a key feature of today's society and survey participants noted its critical role as a motivating force to increase sustainable behaviors.*** Already using social media to inform, Canfei Nesharim is in a unique position to expand these efforts to create a strong, cohesive and extensive network of Orthodox Jews needing and seeking support for environmental action at the individual and community levels. This also connects to increasing public relation efforts discussed above.
5. ***Provide a space for respectful, knowledgeable discussion of controversial topics while avoiding appearances of political bias.*** While it has been asked to participate in

specific initiatives that do have political overtones, Canfei Nesharim generally has to-date not signed on to those efforts. This stance mirrors the discussion within the Orthodox community regarding the use political activism on behalf of the environment. Yet, Canfei Nesharim has always recognized that being silent about topics such as science of climate change and environmental health as well as the moral implications of these challenges is a disservice to the Orthodox community. To balance these needs Canfei Nesharim should increase its efforts to create mechanisms by which a range of viewpoints can be safely and respectfully discussed while at the same time be a source for both scientific information and rabbinical perspectives. Clearly, this is not an easy tightrope to walk and will require much internal discussion as to how to develop such a process. However, by creatively developing a safe space for dialogue even politically conservative Orthodox Jews will feel comfortable using Canfei Nesharim resources and, in so doing, be more likely to become actively engaged in environmentally sustainable behaviors.

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It is recognized that these suggested strategies are not the only possible methods to increase environmental action among Orthodox Jews. They are, however, excellent starting ideas that can be easily accomplished in most communities and integrate the personal goals and needs of many individuals. Furthermore, the suggestions for Canfei Nesharim are ideas that use existing organizational structures and build upon existing programs thus making achieving successful outcomes more attainable. By instituting all these strategies, it will be possible to tap into the large reservoir of interest in and goodwill toward the environment among many Orthodox Jews and to do so in a way that is consonant with the values and practices of this growing community.

## Introduction

With its roots in an ancient agrarian society, Judaism as expressed in the Torah and Talmud is replete with examples of what Gerstenfeld and Wyler (1999) described as “environmental halachot”.<sup>1</sup> So detailed were these halachot that these authors declared that “...Jewish law represented by far the most advanced normative system in the Western world with respect to the environment.” Over the centuries as Jews became less attached to the land, the level of interest in developing halachic responsa that dealt specifically with environmental issues waned. Over the past decade, however, there has been an increase in the number of rabbinical commentaries about the environment with much of it being published by Canfei Nesharim: Sustainable Living Inspired through Torah, an Orthodox organization<sup>2</sup>. This religious response to environmental topics has paralleled the increase number of Orthodox Jewish professionals involved in environmental fields.

It is not surprising that the beginning of the Jewish environmental movement was anything but Orthodox. In fact, the beginning of the modern-day environmental movement as a whole was mainly not religious, as demonstrated by the largely secular nature of the early Earth Day activities. This reality has created tension between religious Jews, who today are largely urban, and the more secular (or at least less tied to formal religion) conservationists/preservationists who founded the environmental movement. During the 1970s when environmental action began to catch the public’s imagination, many of those who became involved were often, or appeared to be, counter-culture. Strongly religious societies tend to be more socially conservative and, thus, were less likely to sign on to what they perceived as focusing on nature rather than HaShem (G-d).

Fault lines between the priorities of religious Jews and environmental advocates exist because rather than seeing protecting the environment as a fundamental Jewish value, Orthodox Jews focus on halacha and mitzvot (religious obligations) as the path to achieve a life filled with holiness. Yet, there is a long history of religious teachings about the environment. For example, while not making it a central tenant of Judaism, many Chassidic teachings encourage respect for and closeness to the natural world. There are cases even among Ashkenazi Orthodox Jews of seeing the beauty and value of nature (Gerstenfeld and Wyler 1999). Today, a number of Orthodox websites include commentary about the environment, how specific holidays can and should include reverence for Creation, and what individual Jews could do to protect Creation<sup>3</sup>. While it is not known how many Orthodox congregations have followed its advice, the organization of Orthodox

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<sup>1</sup> “Halacha (plural = halachot) is Hebrew for Jewish Law and is based on the word to walk. Jewish law is seen as a path upon which a Jew walks, a path that leads to holiness and closeness to G-d.

<sup>2</sup> See: [www.canfeinesharim.org](http://www.canfeinesharim.org)

<sup>3</sup> Examples of this include: <http://www.aish.com/h/15sh/i/48965876.html>;  
[http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/255515/jewish/Ecology-and-Spirituality-in-Jewish-Tradition.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/255515/jewish/Ecology-and-Spirituality-in-Jewish-Tradition.htm))

rabbis, the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) issued a statement on the environment in 2007 <sup>4</sup> in which it “Calls upon its members to:

- Develop regular programs and shiurim for their congregations on Torah and the environment, and to teach the environmental connections to Jewish holidays; and,
- Develop curriculum on Torah and the environment and to organize at least two activities per year on our Torah responsibility to protect the environment; and,
- Take personal and communal action within synagogues, schools, and homes to protect the environment; and,
- Educate themselves and their constituents both scientifically and halakhically about the environmental challenges we face, and consider their implications for Jewish law.

11 It is not surprising, therefore, that shortly after the launching of Canfei Nesharim it became clear that many Orthodox Jews did care about the environment. However, their involvement in environmental action was limited because there was no formal organizational structure to identify or coordinate the actions of like-minded individuals. In its 2007 statement, the RCA saw in Canfei Nesharim the structure required to stimulate interest in the environment among Orthodox Jews as it called upon its membership to support the new Torah-based environmental movement and encouraged its members to partner with Canfei Nesharim to develop programs for their communities. By creating tools to support environmental education in the Orthodox community, Canfei Nesharim has inspired a broader base of environmentally-educated Orthodox Jews. In what was, perhaps, the first formal assessment of the Orthodox community’s attitudes about environmental issues, Canfei Nesharim conducted a survey of Orthodox day schools “...to explore the interest and possibilities for such programming...” with the outcomes used to identify best methods to address these needs (Epstein 2009). The study identified current environmental educational programming, potential challenges and barriers to teaching about the environment in the schools and resources needed to advance environmental education

While there does seem to be some level of ambivalence toward the environment, the Orthodox community has demonstrated an interest about environmental issues. Through informal experiences such as summer camps or hiking/camping, individuals and families have developed a certain degree of closeness to nature. The primary focus of this new survey, possibly the first of its kind, is to identify strategies to transform that interest into positive action. To accomplish that goal, this survey was designed to understand where the Orthodox community is currently, what barriers reduce active engagement in environmentally sustainable behaviors and what activities could motivate individuals and communities to action. It is realized that there are at least four demographic groupings that, collectively, can tell the story of the complex relationships between Orthodox Jews and environmental action: age, geographic location, religious

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<sup>4</sup><http://www.rabbis.org/news/article.cfm?id=100910>

perspective within the spectrum of Orthodoxy and political philosophy. As such, all the data were analyzed using these four categories.

## Methods

Community-based social marketing is a method by which individual and group behaviors can be changed to become more sustainable, i.e., a permanent part of the behavioral repertoire. In his book, Fostering Sustainable Behavior: An Introduction to Community-Based Social Marketing (2011), McKenzie-Mohr outlines the steps required to inculcate long-term behavioral changes that affect positive social change in a community. These steps include identification of an activity to be promoted, identification of barriers to that fulfilling that activity, design strategies to overcome those barriers and evaluate the effectiveness those strategies had in creating sustainable behavior.

The goal of this project was to enhance environmentally sustainable behaviors in Orthodox communities. The initial step was to develop a series of small focus groups in which a series of open-ended questions were presented. Sessions (60-100 minutes) occurred from October 2015 to January 2016 and were recorded on digital voice recorder with the knowledge and permission of all focus group participants. Focus groups either involved synagogue or community-wide groups. Locations for the 10 focus groups were in Milwaukee (WI), New York City (NY), Silver Spring (MD) and Jerusalem (Israel). Questions used for these focus sessions were professionally evaluated by Barbara Goldberg and Associates and are listed in Appendix A.

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Based on the answers to the focus group questions, an extensive 10-minute, 42-question survey was developed, which was also evaluated by Barbara Goldberg and Associates and covered 4 themes: 1) general demographics, 2) general attitudes about the environment, 3) role of Judaism and the Jewish community in environmental action and 4) possible strategies to enhance environmentally sustainable behavior. The survey, administered through Survey Monkey during June 2016, is in Appendix B. Individuals could access the survey via the Milwaukee-area Orthodox web site, Jewish in Milwaukee or by going directly to the Survey Monkey web link,

Data were analyzed using Survey Monkey by comparing results for 4 demographic areas: age, geographic location, self-identified place within the spectrum of Orthodoxy and political philosophy. Ages were grouped 18-25, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65 and 66 and over. Geographic locations were grouped by Israel and broad-based zones in the US: Midwest, east Coast, Southern and Western. Political philosophies were divided into conservative, moderate, liberal and other. The Orthodox spectrum was divided into the categories used by JWEd (<http://www.jwed.com/>; formerly Frumster), an online Orthodox dating service. The categories and definitions are:

- **Modern Orthodox-Liberal:** These tend to be individuals who are Shabbat and Kosher observant, but have a more "relaxed" or "open" approach to Halacha, sometimes accepting leniencies that are not accepted by those who espouse strict adherence to the dictates of the Halacha. Such individuals may, or may not be involved in regular and



consistent Torah learning or prayer, although the general tendency is to be more "relaxed" in these areas as well. A commonality amongst this group is that they are open to secular activities such as bars, clubs, and movies.

- **Modern Orthodox-Machmir:** These tend to be individuals who strive to maintain a lifestyle according to the rules and guidelines of Halacha (Jewish law); often this is reflected in greater involvement in daily Torah learning and prayer. However, they are modern in the sense that they are not "Yeshivish" (see the next category) and readily engage in the secular world while leading an Orthodox observant life.
- **Yeshivisch:** These tend to be individuals who identify more strongly with the Yeshivish-black-hat community, but feel that working in society is an essential part of their Judaism. Such individuals strive to embrace a structured Torah lifestyle with a professional secular career. Identification with a "Yeshivish" outlook can reflect itself in dress, which Rabbi one follows, and the Torah institutions that one attends or supports.
- **Chassidic:** Such individuals embrace a Hasidic philosophy, which includes a commitment to the emotional/spiritual element of Torah observance. This can be reflected in an orientation in which additional emphasis is placed on prayer and fulfillment of Mitzvos with religious fervor and passion. Usually, there is a distinctive mode of Chassidic dress, which can vary according to the particular affiliation (e.g. Breslov, Ger, Lubavitch [Chabad], Satmar etc). Often, an individual follows and professes allegiance to a particular spiritual guide (Rebbe).
- **Haredi:** With these individuals, Torah learning, prayer, and careful adherence to fulfillment of Mitzvos are core elements to a life of intensive religious commitment and spiritual growth. Strict and unbending loyalty to Halacha is seen as normative. Generally, an avoidance of the secular world is encouraged, and barriers are seen as critical to protecting against secular influences.
- **Other:** Often individuals may respond that they are "just Orthodox" or show a preference for combining aspects of several groups into their daily lives. This category, while representing 11.4% of total respondents, could not be statistically analyzed due to the high level of variability in responses.

There are several limitations to this study.

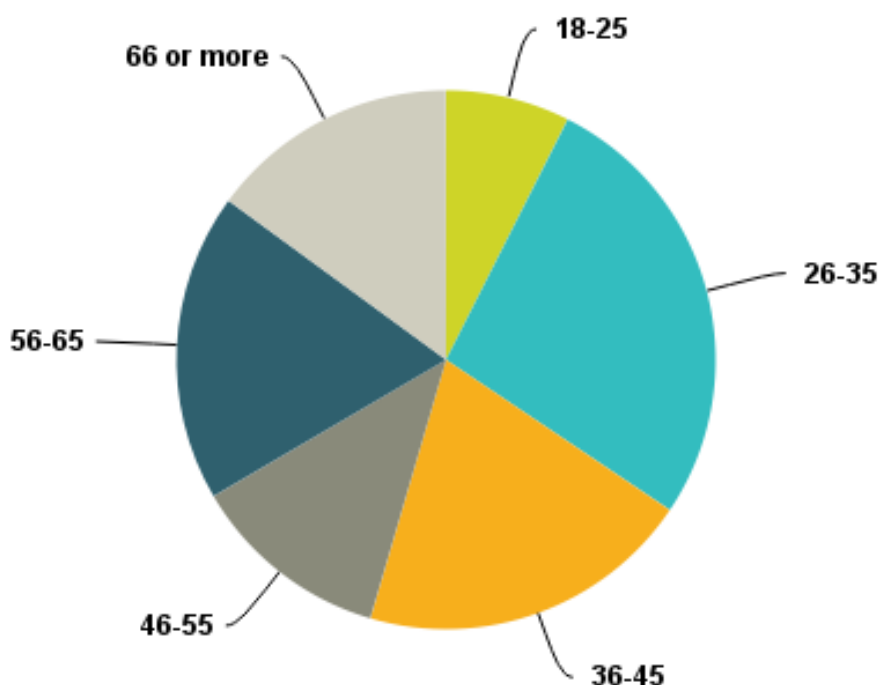
- The total sample size was small, 309 respondents. Of particular concern was the lack of sufficient numbers of Yeshivisch, Chassidic and Haredi respondents in this study (less than 20 for any of these groups). Furthermore, there were more respondents from the Midwestern states than Eastern states even though there are many more Orthodox Jews in the East (Pew Research Center 2015).

- While over one-half of American Orthodox Jews are more conservative politically (Pew Research Center 2013), the distribution of survey participants was approximately one-third conservative, one-third moderate and one-third liberal.
- While the age distribution in the Orthodox community tilts toward younger individuals, there was a significant level of participation among older adults in the survey.

## Results

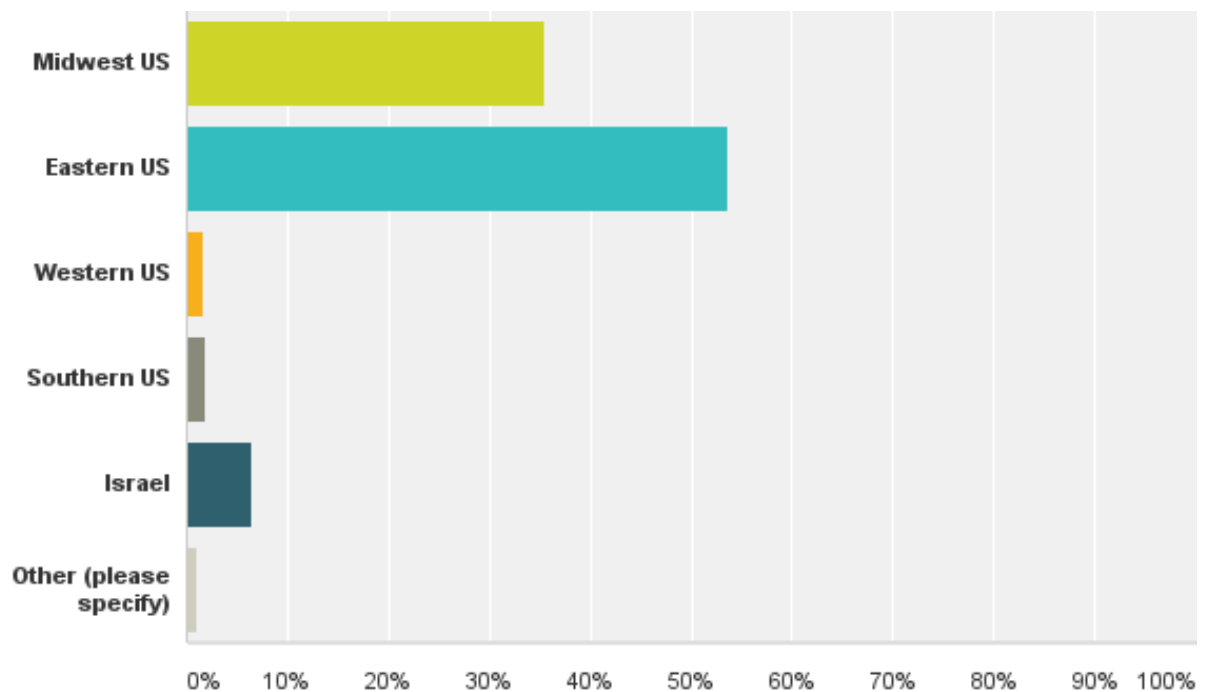
Data from the 309 respondents were separated into 4 demographic groupings: age, geographic location, self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy and political philosophy. All questions were compared by each of these groups. Because of the overall small population sample size, comparisons between the various demographic groups e.g., young, conservative, modern Orthodox Jews vs young, liberal, modern Orthodox Jews, were not analyzed.

**Age:** The 18-25 year-old age group is primarily college (undergraduate, graduate and professional school) age and young marrieds. It was not expected that there would be a large number of respondents (7.5%). Other than this and the 46-55 year-old (12.0%) groups, there was an even distribution among all other age groups ranging from 14.9-27.0% (Fig. 1).



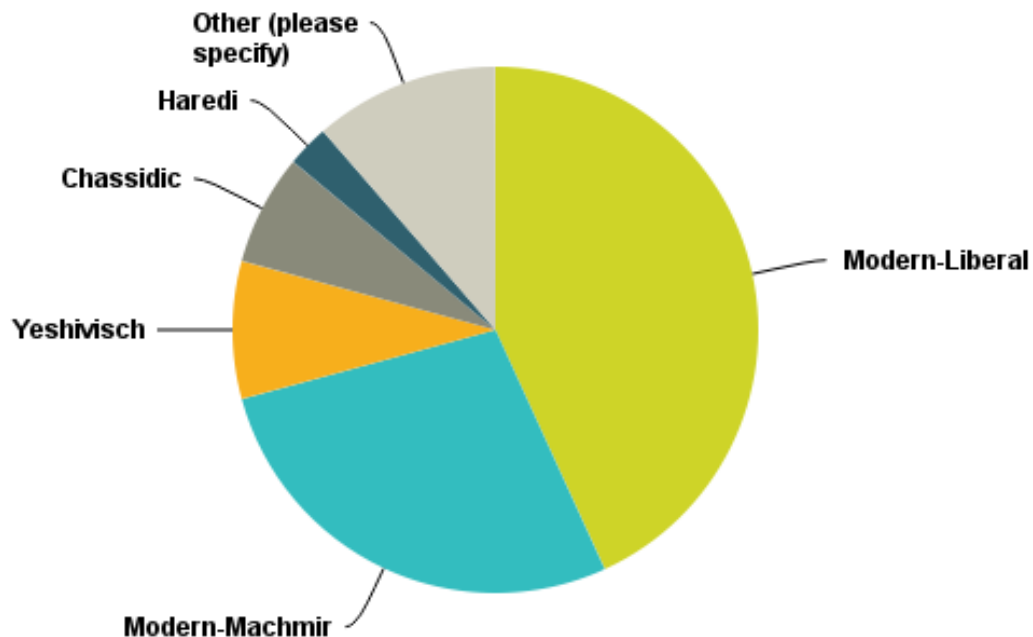
**Figure 1: Age distribution of survey respondents.**

**Geographic location:** The vast majority of respondents were from Midwestern and Eastern states, (35.4 and 53.6%, respectively; Fig. 2). Only 1.6% of survey respondents were from the West coast and only 2.0% from the Southern US. Those indicating "Other" (1.0%) often defined the four geographic categories differently than the intent of the survey, e.g., Texas was defined as Southwest rather than South or West. Due to the small number of respondents from Western, Southern US and Other, meaningful conclusions using those comparisons could not be developed. Because only approximately 20 individuals from Israel responded to the survey, conclusions from that small sample size could not be drawn. Thus, while all graphs include all data, location-based conclusions drawn from the survey are based only upon the data from Midwest and Eastern responses.



**Figure 2: Distribution of survey respondents based upon where one lives.**

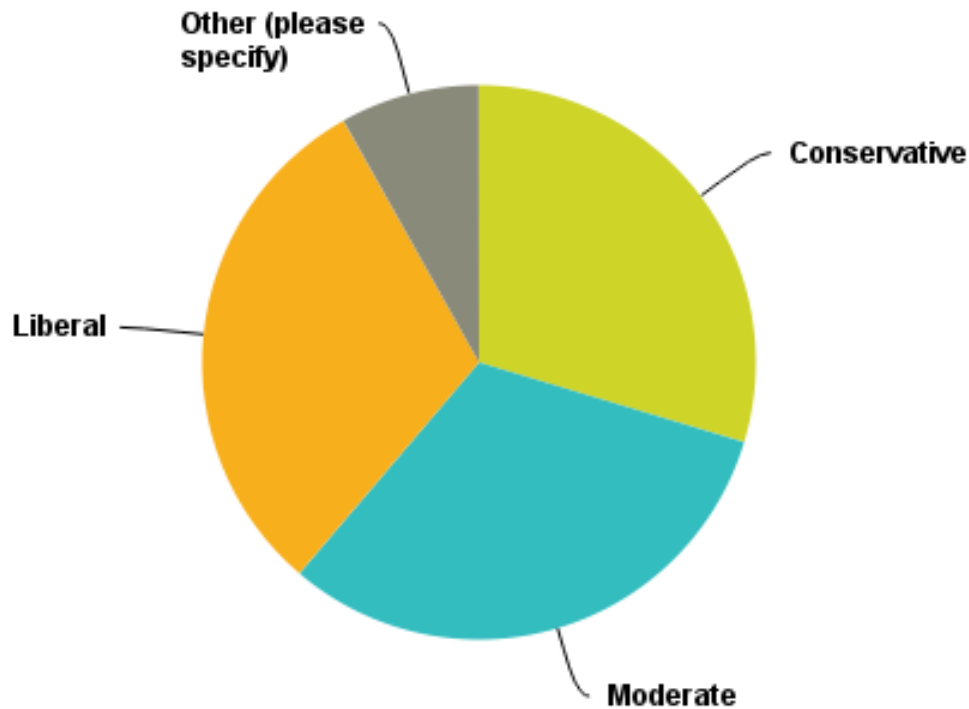
**Orthodox Spectrum:** The largest group of respondents identified themselves as Modern-Liberal (43.2%) followed by Modern-Machmir (27.6%). The remaining groups, Yeshivisch, Chassidic and Haredi were much smaller (8.4, 6.8 and 2.6%, respectively). As a result of the small sample sizes from these groups, meaningful comparisons were not possible. Those identifying as “Other” were a mixed group



**Figure 3: Distribution of survey respondents based upon self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodox practices and beliefs.**

(11.4%) made up of individuals who saw themselves as a combination of several classifications, e.g., Modern-Chassidic or used “Just Orthodox” as their identifier. As a result, these individuals could not be used in data analyses based upon religious classification.

**Political philosophy:** There was an even split among Liberals (30.6%), Moderates (31.6%) and Conservatives (29.6%) among survey respondents. Those indicating “Other” (8.1%) identified as independent or other label demonstrating a desire to not identify with any one political viewpoint. Because of the mixed nature of responses in Other, this category was not used for data analysis.



**Figure 4: Distribution of survey respondents based upon political philosophy.**

### **Current level of engagement.**

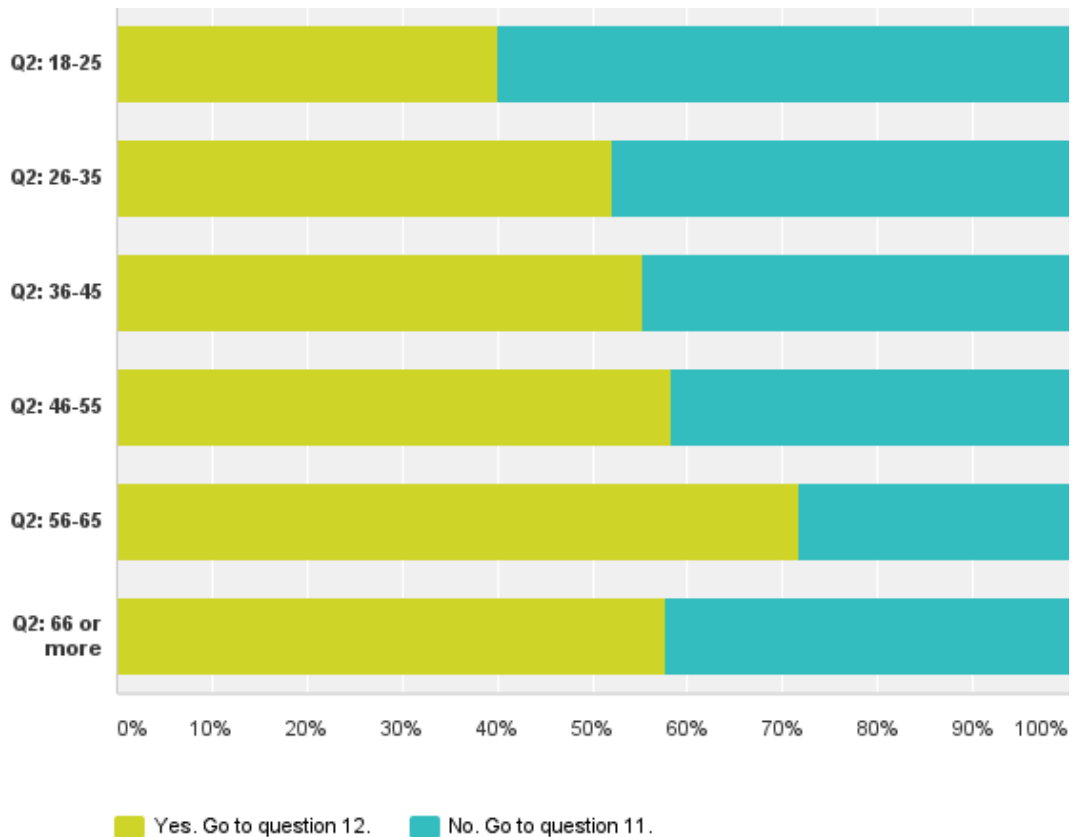
The figure legend indicates directions to respondents if they indicated they were or were not actively involved, i.e., if not involved they were directed to the question that queried reasons for that behavior. Therefore, only those who answered No to this question were included in the group that answered the next question as to why they were not actively engaged in environmentally sustainable behaviors.

### **Age**

- With the exception of the 18-25 year-old age group (40.0%), over 50% of respondents within each age group defined themselves as actively engaged in environmental activities (Fig. 5A).

- The 56-65 year-old group displayed the highest level of involvement (71.7%).

A.



19

### Geographic Location

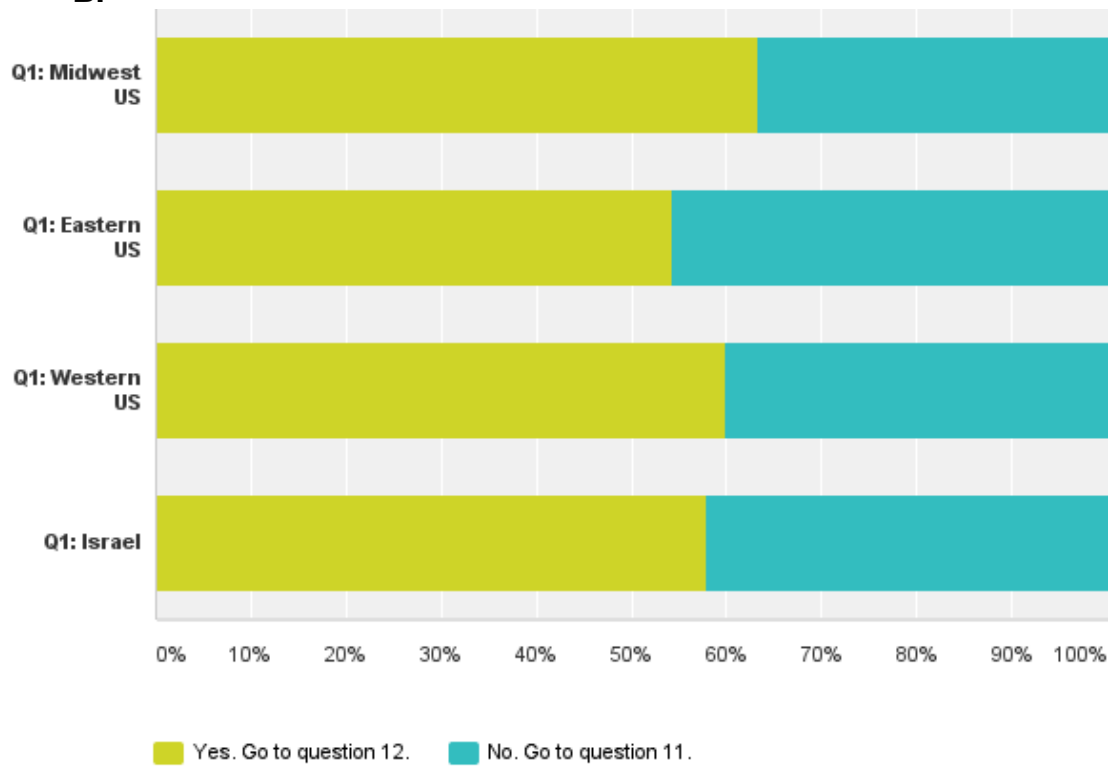
- A majority of respondents were actively engaged in environmental activities regardless of geographic location (Fig. 5B).
- Nearly two-thirds (63.3%) of those from the Midwest and a little more than one-half (54.3%) of those from the East were active.

### Orthodox Spectrum

- Just over one-half (50.6%) of the Modern-Machmir respondents indicated they were environmentally active, while 61.5% of the Modern-Liberal (Fig. 5C) so indicated.
- While no definitive statements can be made regarding the other groups due to the small sample size, it is of interest to note that the Yeshivish respondents were much less involved than the Chassidic or Haredi members (33.3 vs. 63.2 vs 62.5%, respectively).

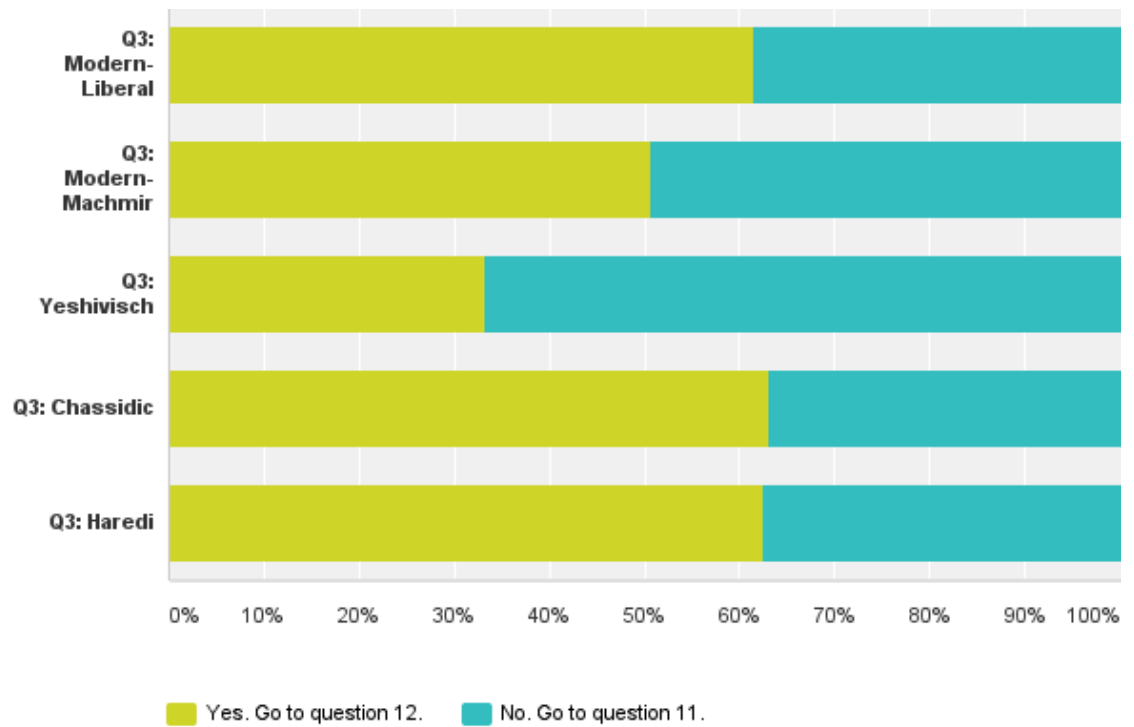


B.



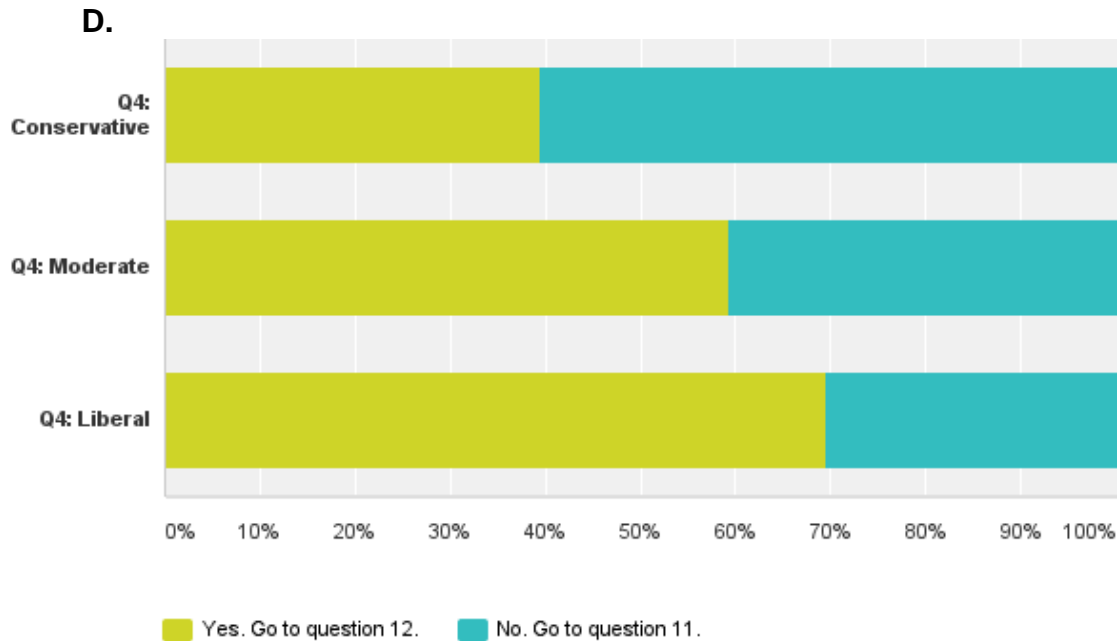
20

C.



## Political Philosophy

- Environmental engagement was directly correlated with political philosophy (Fig. 5D). Conservatives were the lowest (39.5%), Moderates intermediate (59.3%) and Liberals the highest (69.5%).



21

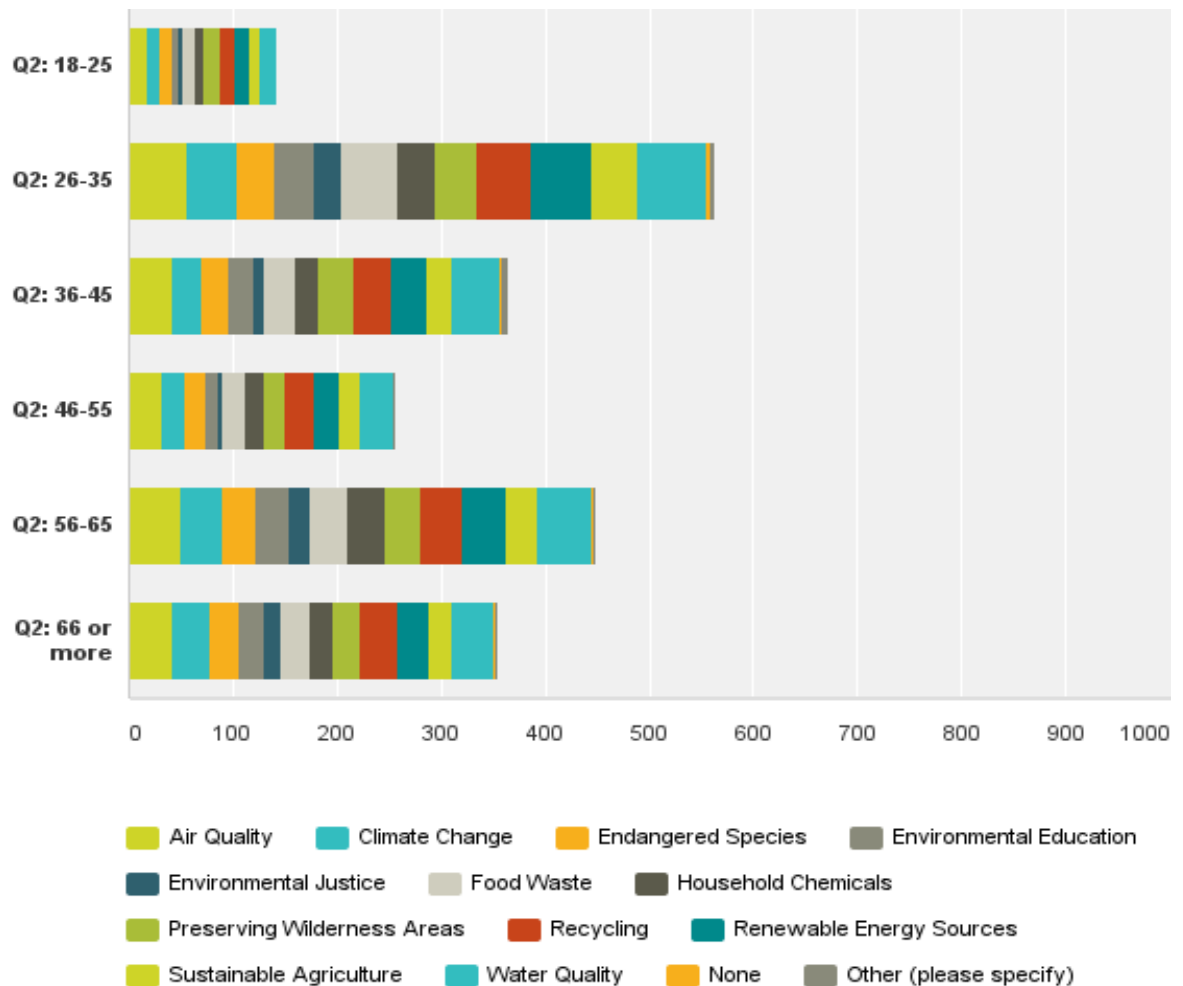
**Figure 5: Level of environmental engagement. A.** By age group. **B.** By geographic location. **C.** By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. **D.** By political philosophy.

## **What are people willing to do to protect the environment?**

The next set of data examines what motivates people to do environmentally-friendly activities. The questions cover topics of individual importance (Fig. 6), activities that are currently conducted (Fig. 7) and what would motivate someone to do more than what is done currently (Fig. 8). Collectively, these data provide a foundation for understanding what is important enough for the Orthodox community to drive movement toward environmental engagement. Data are plotted as number of responses for each category rather than percent of total because respondents were able to choose multiple options. However, Survey Monkey does transform the data of number of respondents who chose a particular option into percent of respondents identifying a particular option. Therefore, the data are discussed as a percent value.

## Topics of individual importance

A.

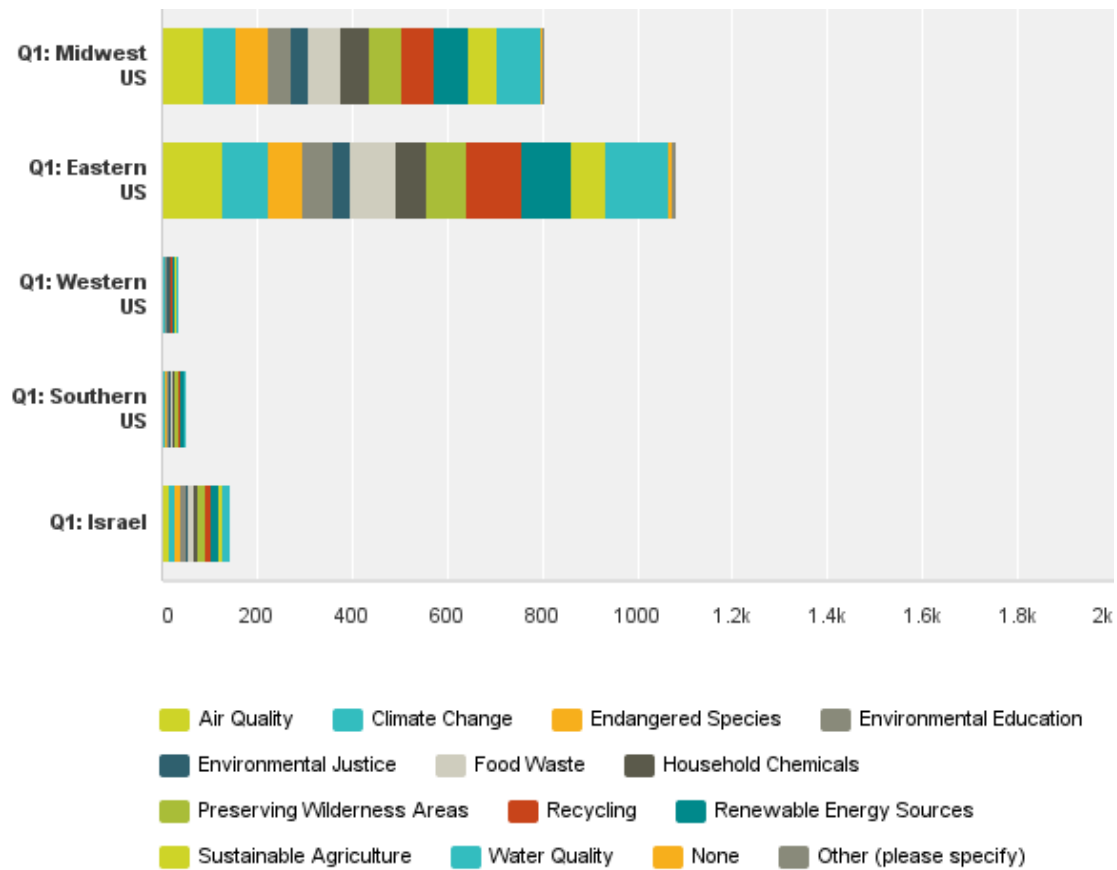


22

### Age

- Concerns over air and water pollution are, except for the 26-35 year-old age group, consistently 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> in a list of the top five topics of interest ranging from 72.4-93.3% (Fig. 6A).
- For the 26-35 year-old group, the 2<sup>nd</sup> choice was renewable energy sources (68.7%) with air pollution 3<sup>rd</sup> (67.5%).
- While the younger groups focused on wilderness protection, recycling and renewable energy as their 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> choice, older groups, focused on recycling, climate change and renewable energy sources to complete their top 5 choices.
- In all cases, the top 5 choices were chosen by at least 56% of the respondents regardless of age.

B.

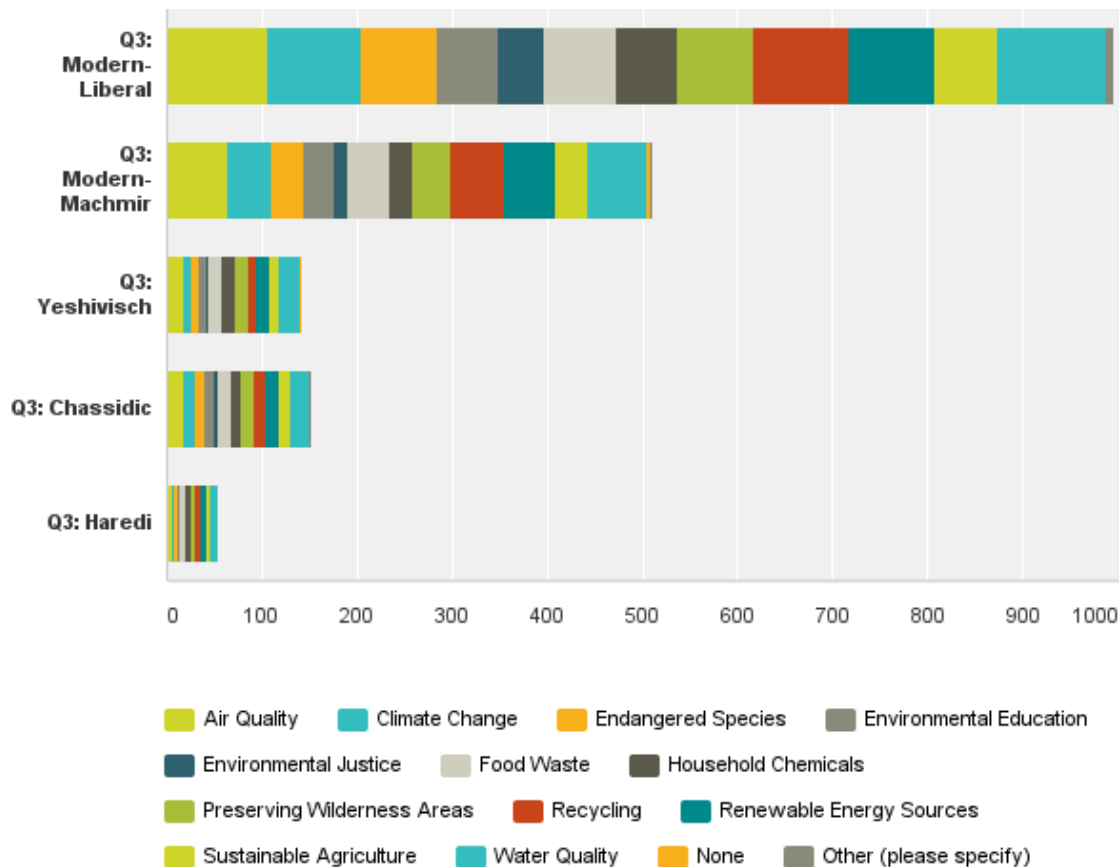


23

### Geographic Location

- Regardless of geographic location (Fig. 6B), water quality was the primary concern for both Midwestern and Eastern populations (86.0 and 81.5%, respectively).
- Air pollution was 2<sup>nd</sup> (81.3 and 79.6%, respectively). Midwestern participants listed renewable energy sources 3<sup>rd</sup> (67.3%), climate change 4<sup>th</sup> (68.4%) and tied for 5<sup>th</sup> were food waste and recycling (63.6%).
- Individuals from the Eastern states listed recycling 3<sup>rd</sup> (71.0%), renewable energy sources 4<sup>th</sup> (64.8%) and tied for 5<sup>th</sup> were climate change and food waste (59.3%).
- While the sample size was too small to be meaningful, it is of interest that the Israeli Orthodox Jews who participated in the survey listed wilderness protection 3<sup>rd</sup> (73.7%), recycling 4<sup>th</sup> (73.7%) and renewable energy sources 5<sup>th</sup> (73.7%).

C.



24

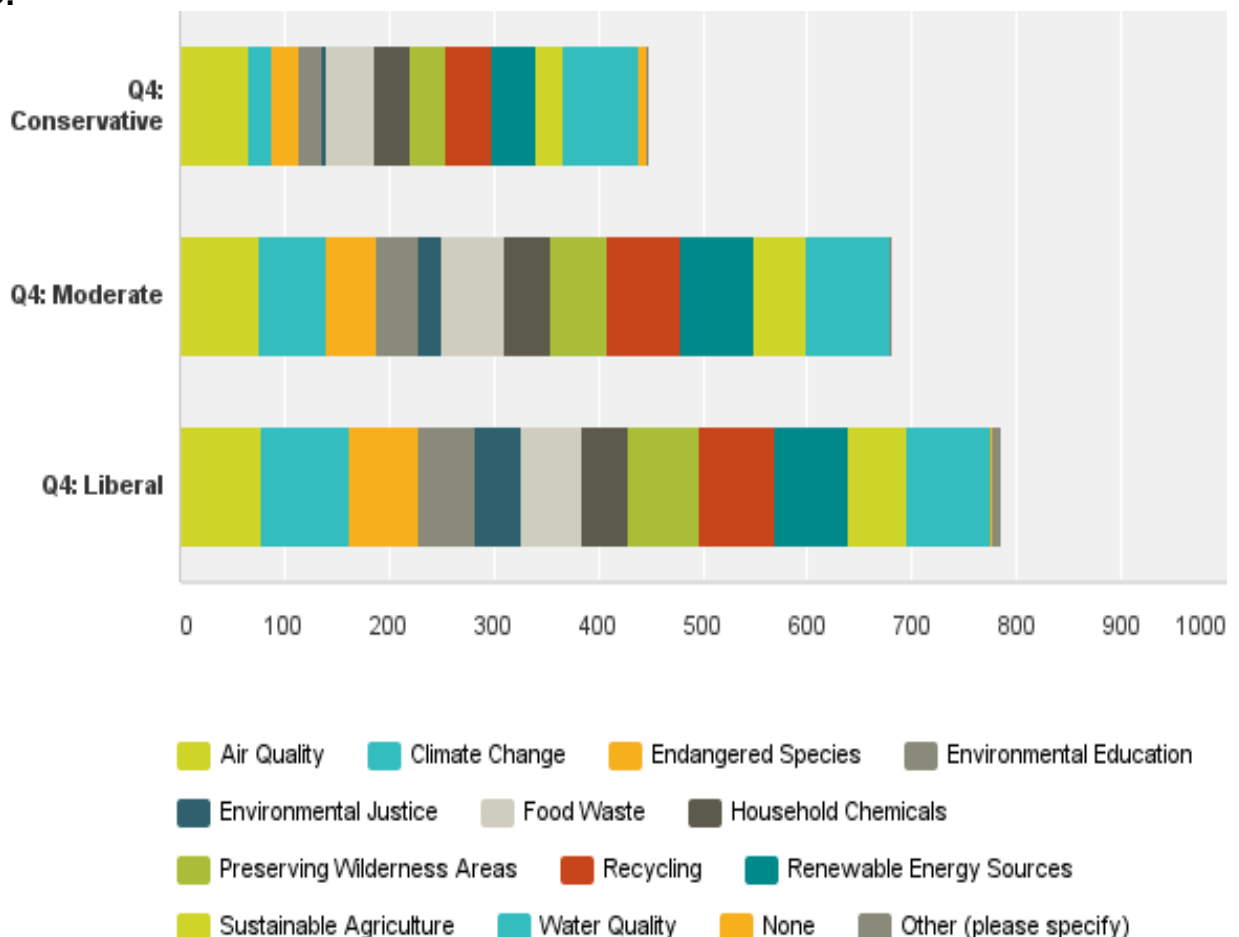
### Orthodox Spectrum

- In all groups based on religious practices (including Yeshivisch, Chassidic and Haredi; Fig. 6C), air and water pollution were of primary concern.
- With the exception of those who self-identify as Modern-Machmir, water quality was 1<sup>st</sup> (87.5-90.5%) and air pollution was 2<sup>nd</sup> (79.2-87.5%).
- For the Modern-Machmir group, air pollution was 1<sup>st</sup> (76.2%) and water pollution 2<sup>nd</sup> (75.0%).
- While the order was different, climate change, recycling and renewable energy sources ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> for both Modern Orthodox groups: (Liberal—3<sup>rd</sup> climate [76.7%], 4<sup>th</sup> recycling [76.7%], 5<sup>th</sup> renewable energy sources [70.5%]; Machmir—3<sup>rd</sup> recycling [66.7%], 4<sup>th</sup> renewable energy sources [64.3%], 5<sup>th</sup> climate change [56%]). While climate change is a controversial topic within the Orthodox community, it is of interest that it always ranked in the top 9 topics of concern regardless of how someone identified themselves within the Orthodox spectrum: Modern-Liberal—3<sup>rd</sup>, Modern-Machmir—5<sup>th</sup>, Yeshivisch—8<sup>th</sup>, Chassidic—6<sup>th</sup>, Haredi—9<sup>th</sup>.

## Political Philosophy

- For both conservatives and moderates, water (78.9 and 85.1%, respectively) and air pollution (74.4, 81.9%, respectively) were the top 2 environmental topics of concern (Fig. 6D).
- Liberals listed climate change as 1<sup>st</sup> (92.4%), water pollution 2<sup>nd</sup> (88.0%) and air pollution 3<sup>rd</sup> (84.8%).
- Recycling was 4<sup>th</sup> (74.5%) for moderates and liberals (79.4%).
- Food waste was 3<sup>rd</sup> (50%) and household chemicals 5<sup>th</sup> (38.9%) for conservatives.
- Moderates listed renewable energy sources as 3<sup>rd</sup> (75.5%) and recycling 4<sup>th</sup> (74.5%).
- Liberals listed recycling 4<sup>th</sup> (79.4) and wilderness protection as 5<sup>th</sup> (73.9%).
- Climate change was 5<sup>th</sup> (67%) for moderates and 10<sup>th</sup> (24.4%) for conservatives.

D.

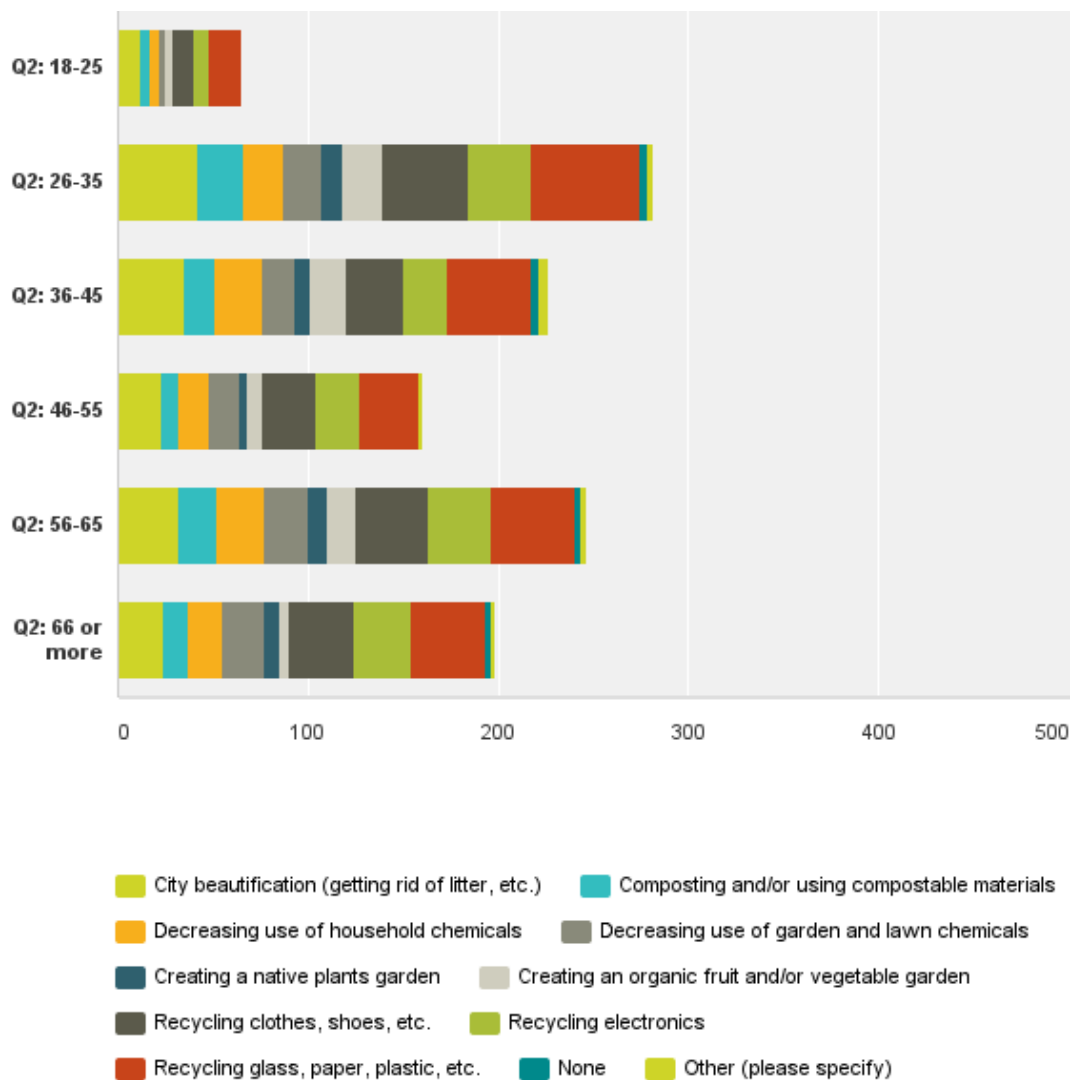


**Figure 6: Top five environmental topics that are of individual importance. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**



## Activities that are currently conducted

A.



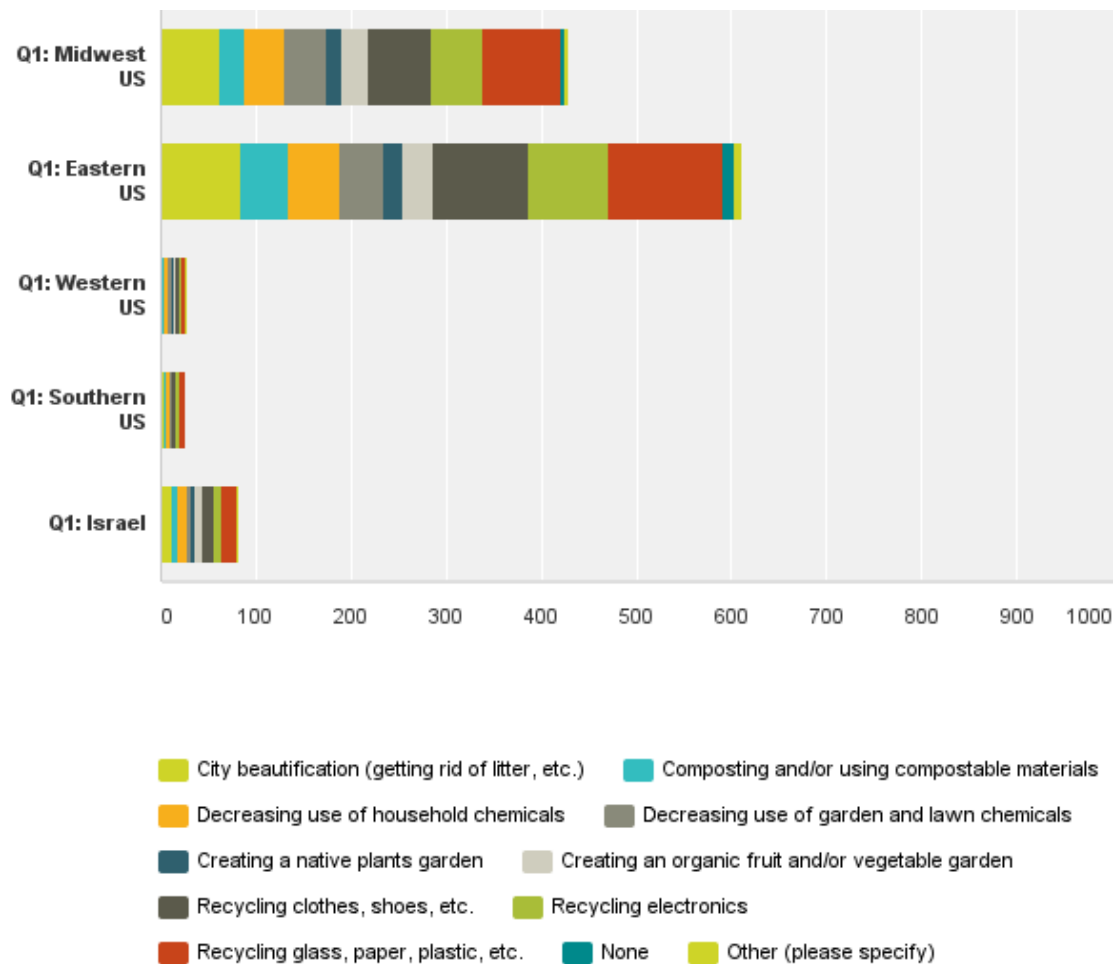
26

### Age

- Across all age groups (Fig. 7A), recycling was a primary activity, i.e., among the top 5 options, whether it was glass, metals and plastics (for this report called standard recycling), or clothes (i.e., donating for reuse) or electronics.
- The three older age groups (46-55, 56-65, 66 and older) were consistently standard recycling 1<sup>st</sup> (77.2-86.7%), clothes 2<sup>nd</sup> (61.4-77.8%) and electronics 3<sup>rd</sup> (62.3-66.7%); standard recycling was also 1<sup>st</sup> for 18-25 (85.0%) and 26-35-year-olds (80.6%).
- Electronics recycling was 4<sup>th</sup> for the two younger age groups (40 and 45.8%, respectively).

- City beautification (anti-littering, green space, etc.) was important to all age groups (18-25—60%; 26-35—58.3%; 36-45—63.9%; 46-55—60.4%; 66 and older—53.3%).
- Composting and monitoring the use of home and garden chemicals were also important activities for all age groups as 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> choices.

B.



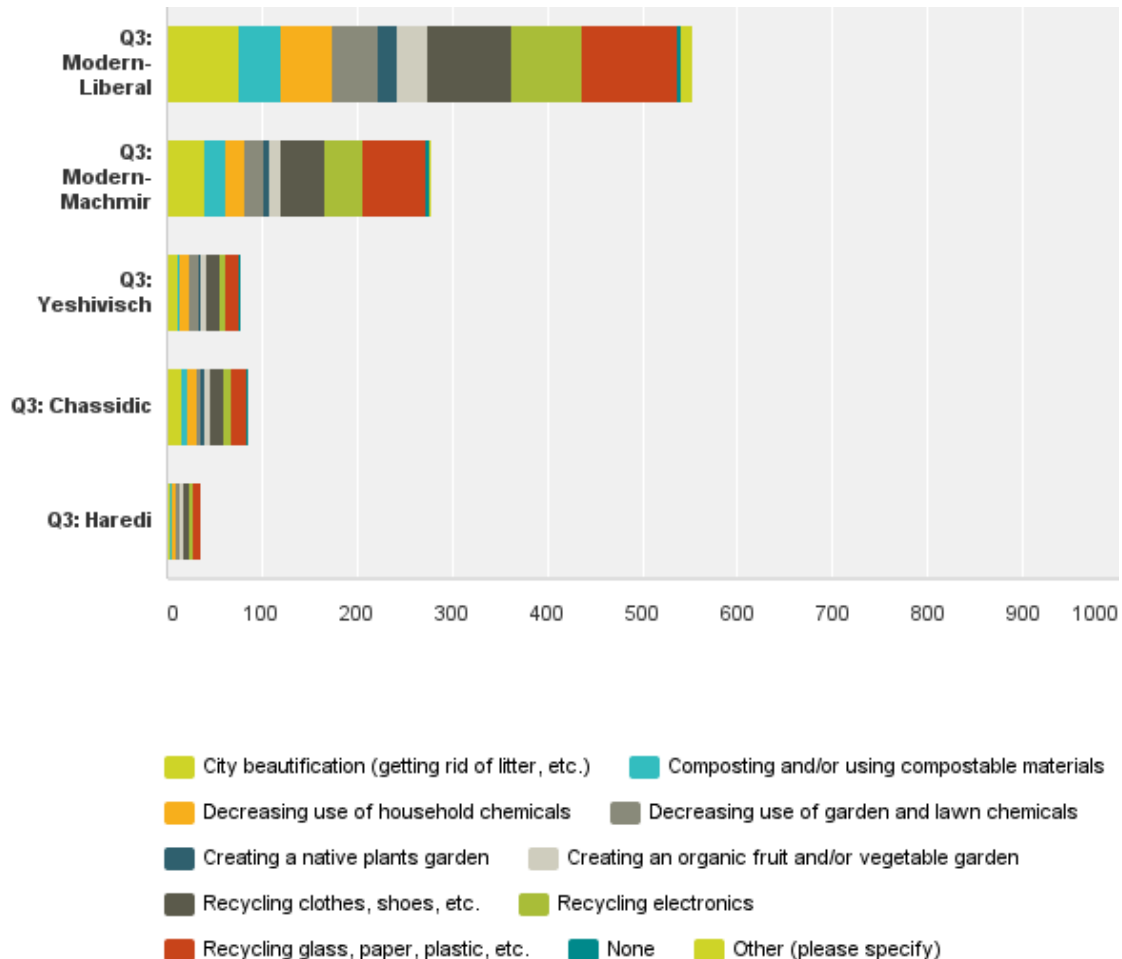
27

### Geographic Location

- There were no differences in ranking based on location between Midwestern and Eastern respondents (Fig. 7B).
- Standard recycling was 1<sup>st</sup> (84.5 and 79.2%, respectively), recycling clothes 2<sup>nd</sup> (68% and 65.6%, respectively) and city beautification 3<sup>rd</sup> (65% and 55.2%, respectively).
- Midwesterners listed monitoring use of garden chemicals (46.4%) and house chemicals as additional important activities.
- Eastern survey participants indicated that monitoring household chemicals (47.4%) and recycling electronics (42.1%) were their 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> choices.

- Israeli respondents ranked standard recycling 1<sup>st</sup> (89.5%) followed by city beautification (68.4%), recycling clothes (57.9%), monitoring household chemicals (47.4%) and recycling electronics (42.1%).

C.



28

### Orthodox Spectrum

- Standard recycling was the most important activity among all religious categories (71.4-100%; Fig. 7C).
- Among Modern-Liberal and –Machmir, recycling clothes was 2<sup>nd</sup> (70.2 and 57.5%, respectively).
- City beautification was the 2<sup>nd</sup> most important activity for both Yeshivisch (61.9%) and Chassidic (84.2%); it ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> for Modern-Liberal (61.3%) and Modern-Machmir (50%).
- Recycling electronics was listed as the 4<sup>th</sup> most important activity by Modern-Liberal (59.7%) and 3<sup>rd</sup> by Modern-Machmir (50%).
- Monitoring home chemicals was important for Modern-Liberal (43.6%), Yeshivisch (42.9%) and Haredi (50%). Monitoring garden

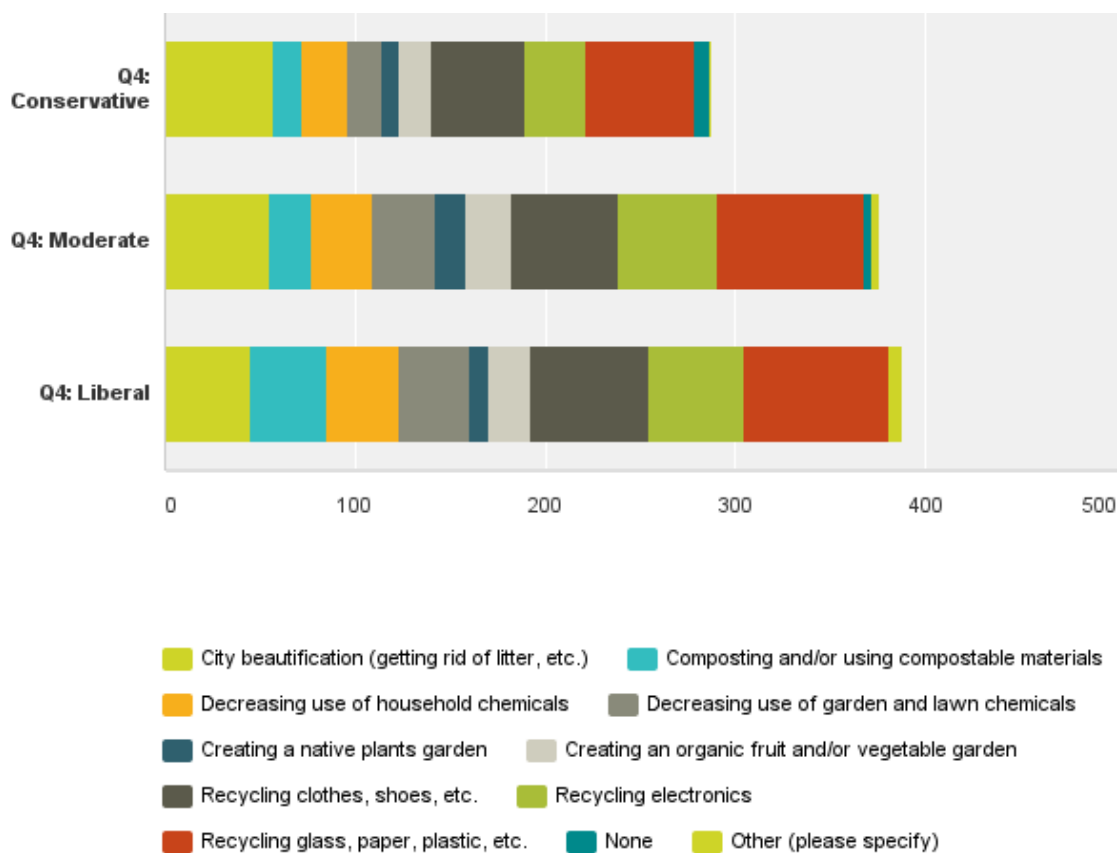
and lawn chemicals was also important to Yeshivisch respondents (47.6%).

### Political Philosophy

- Regardless of political philosophy (Fig. 7D), standard recycling was the most important activity (Conservative—69.1%, Moderate—84.6%, Liberal—90.5%).
- Both Moderates and Liberals ranked recycling clothes 2<sup>nd</sup> (61.5 and 75%, respectively), while it ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> among Conservatives (58.3%).
- City beautification was 2<sup>nd</sup> among Conservatives (67.9%), 3<sup>rd</sup> among Moderates (60.9%) and 4<sup>th</sup> among Liberals (55.6%).
- Recycling electronics is an activity that ranks 4<sup>th</sup> among Conservatives (38.1%) and Moderates (58.2%) and 3<sup>rd</sup> among Liberals (59.3%).
- Monitoring chemicals in the home are 5<sup>th</sup> among Conservatives (28.6%) and in the garden and lawn for Moderates (36.3%).
- Composting is the 5<sup>th</sup> most important activity in the homes of Liberals (47.6%).

D.

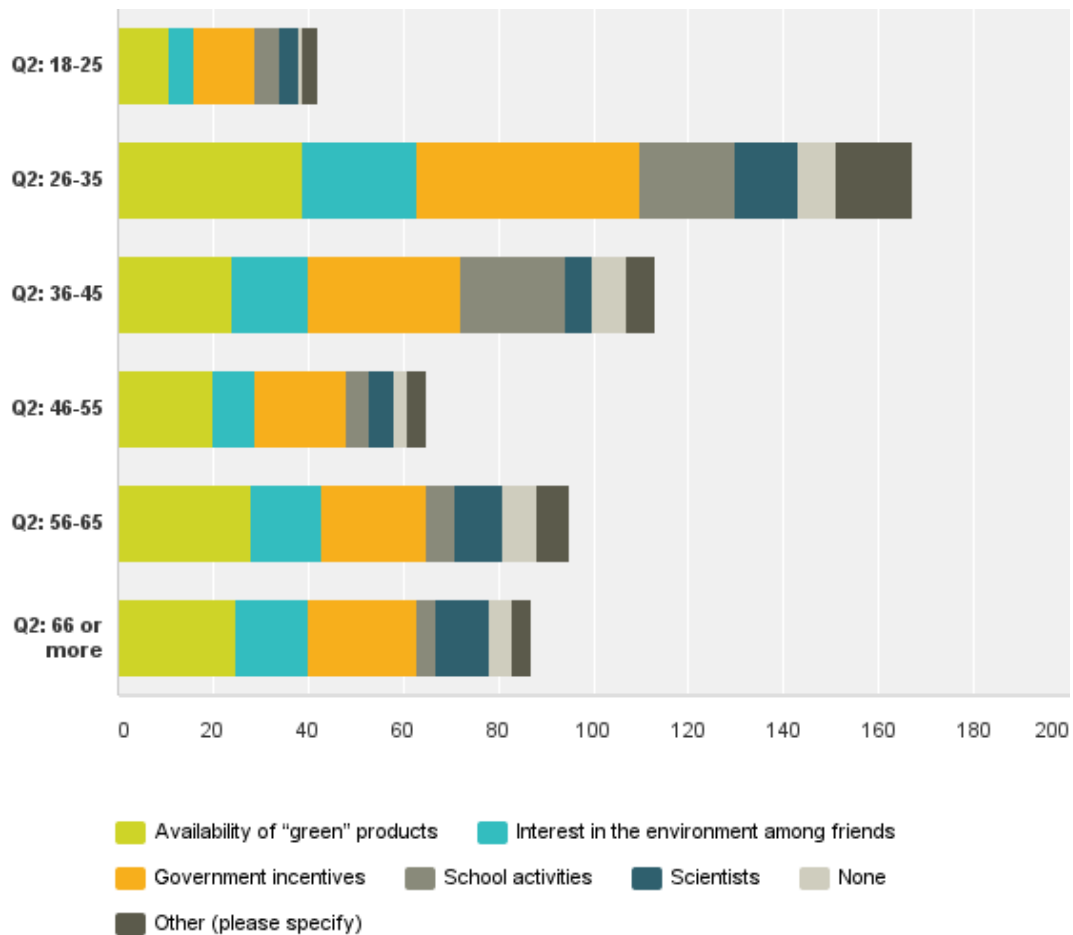
29



**Figure 7: Environmental activities that are important in survey respondents' lives. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

## What would motivate someone to do more than what is done currently?

A.

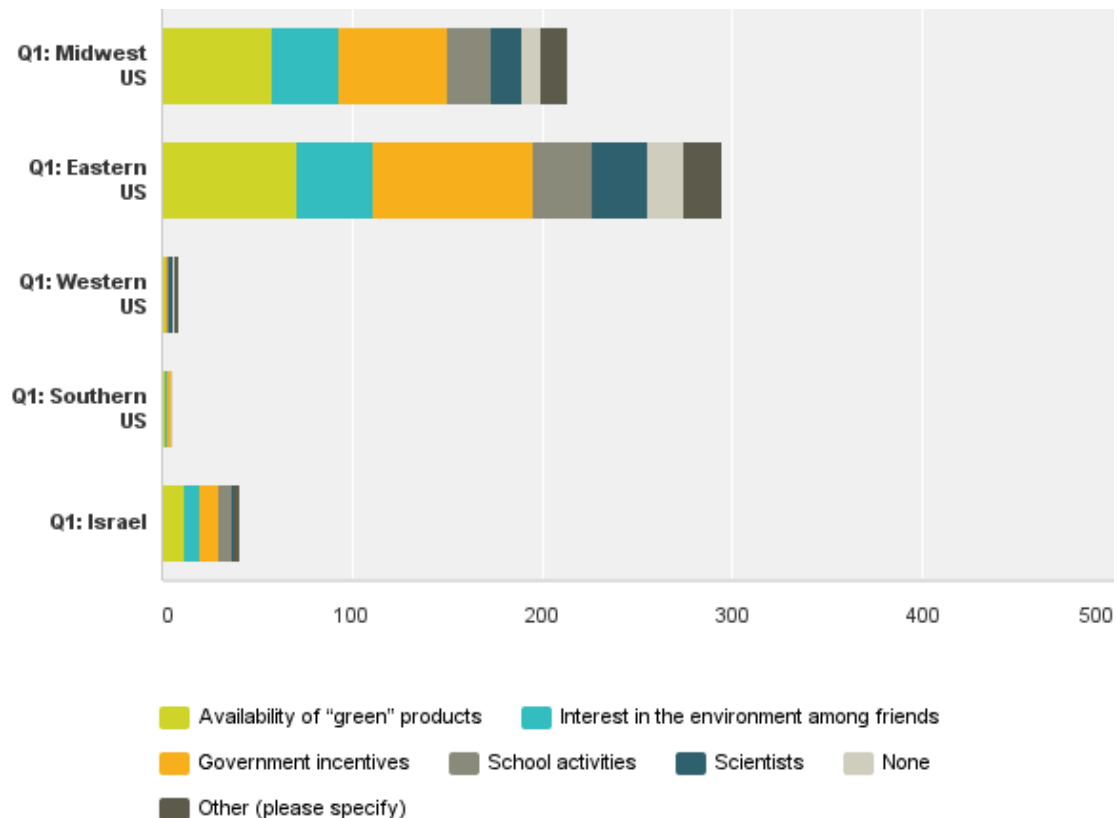


30

### Age

- Across all age groups, three motivating factors were significant: availability of "green" products, government incentives and connections with friends who are environmentally active (Fig. 8A).
- In the 36-45 year-old group, school programs (40%) were the 3<sup>rd</sup> most important factor and replaced friends.
- Younger age groups (18-25 and 26-35) chose government incentives as most important (65.0 and 66.2%, respectively) and availability of green products 2<sup>nd</sup> (55 and 54.9%, respectively).
- Among 18-25 year-olds, school programs and friends were 3<sup>rd</sup> (25%).
- All other age groups listed friends as 3<sup>rd</sup> (25.7-33.8%). While not among the top 2 factors, social networking, e.g., friends, does seem to play a role in influencing behavior as it relates to environmental action.

B.



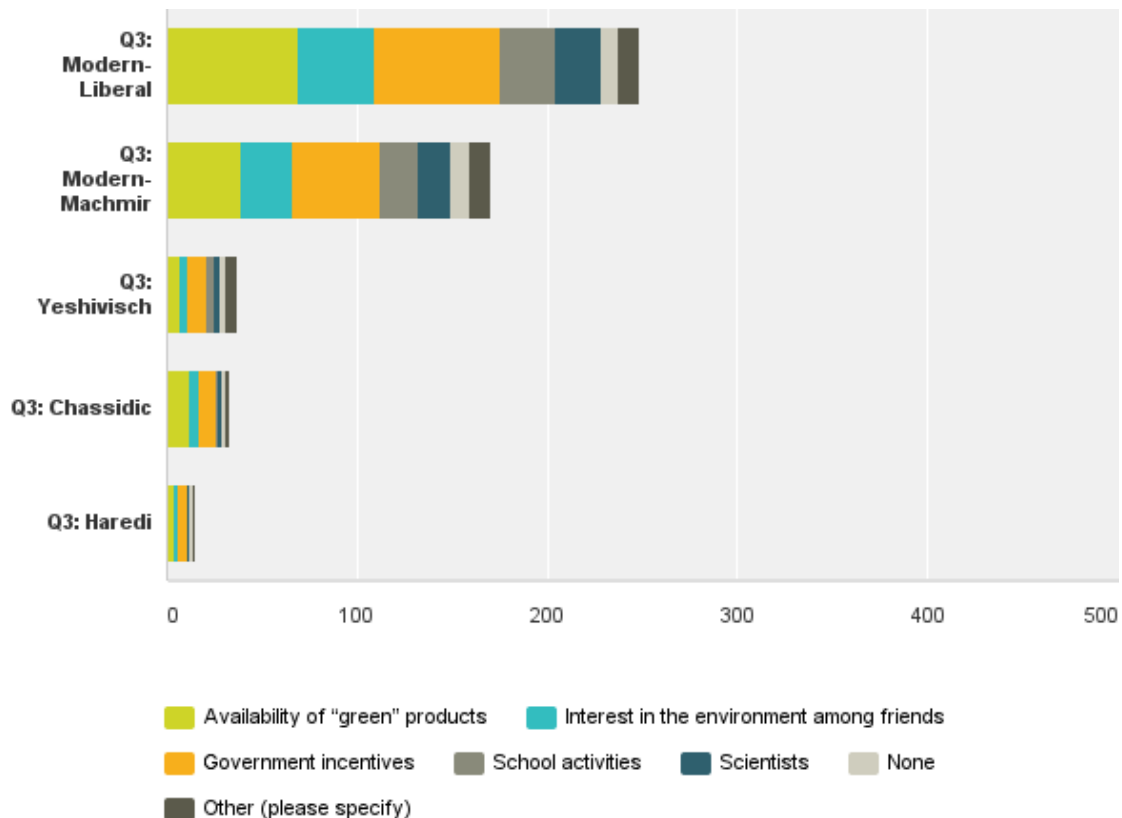
31

### Geographic Location

- As with age comparisons, availability of green products, government incentives and friends networking were the top three factors that motivated environmental engagement for Midwestern, Eastern and Israeli respondents (Fig. 8B).
- Availability of green products was 1<sup>st</sup> for both Midwestern and Israeli survey participants (59.2 and 63.2%, respectively), while Eastern respondents listed government incentives as 1<sup>st</sup> (56.4%).
- Government incentives were 2<sup>nd</sup> for Midwestern and Israeli respondents (58.2 and 52.6%, respectively), while Eastern survey participants listed availability of green products as 2<sup>nd</sup> (47.7%).
- All groups listed friends as 3<sup>rd</sup> (Midwest and Eastern: 35.7, Israeli: 42.1%). As with age group, social networking was not a major factor but does, nevertheless, play a role in decision making.



C.



32

### Orthodox Spectrum

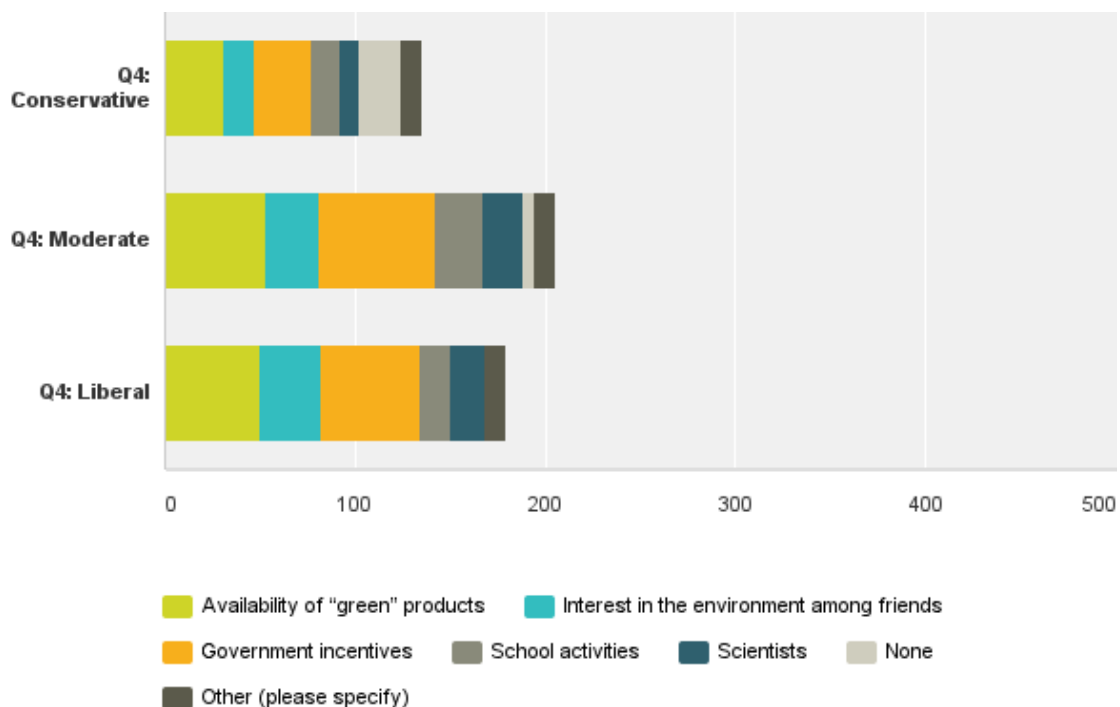
- Comparisons based on religious identification (Fig. 8C) again demonstrated that the top three factors that motivate individuals to do more environmentally-friendly actions are availability of green products, government incentives and friends.
- Consistently listed as 3<sup>rd</sup>, approx. one-third of the respondents indicated that social networking was important.
- Among Modern-Liberal participants, availability of green products was 1<sup>st</sup> (57.5%) and government incentives was 2<sup>nd</sup> (55.0%).
- It was the reverse order for Modern-Machmir individuals with government incentives 1<sup>st</sup> (57.5%) and availability of green products 2<sup>nd</sup> (48.8%).
- The other 3 groups of Orthodox Jews also listed the same three choices as factors that motivate them to do more environmental action.

### Political Philosophy

- Regardless of political philosophy, availability of green products and government incentives were the top two choices for what motivates one to be environmental active (Fig. 8D).

- For Conservatives availability of green products ranked 1<sup>st</sup> (36.5) and government incentives was 2<sup>nd</sup> (35.3). “None”, i.e., none of the choices were sufficient to motivate environmental action, was 3<sup>rd</sup> (25.9%).
- For both Moderates and Liberals, government incentives ranked 1<sup>st</sup> (68.5 and 64.2%, respectively) and availability of green products were 2<sup>nd</sup> (59.6 and 64.2%, respectively). Interest in the environment among friends was 3<sup>rd</sup> (31.5 and 39.5%, respectively).
- Those who responded with “Other” offered a range of factors that motivated them, some of which were examined in other survey questions. Level of convenience and amount of time were suggested factors, as were amount of energy savings and other cost/benefit considerations, degree of community or synagogue support and participation, and level of public and private sector cooperation.

D.



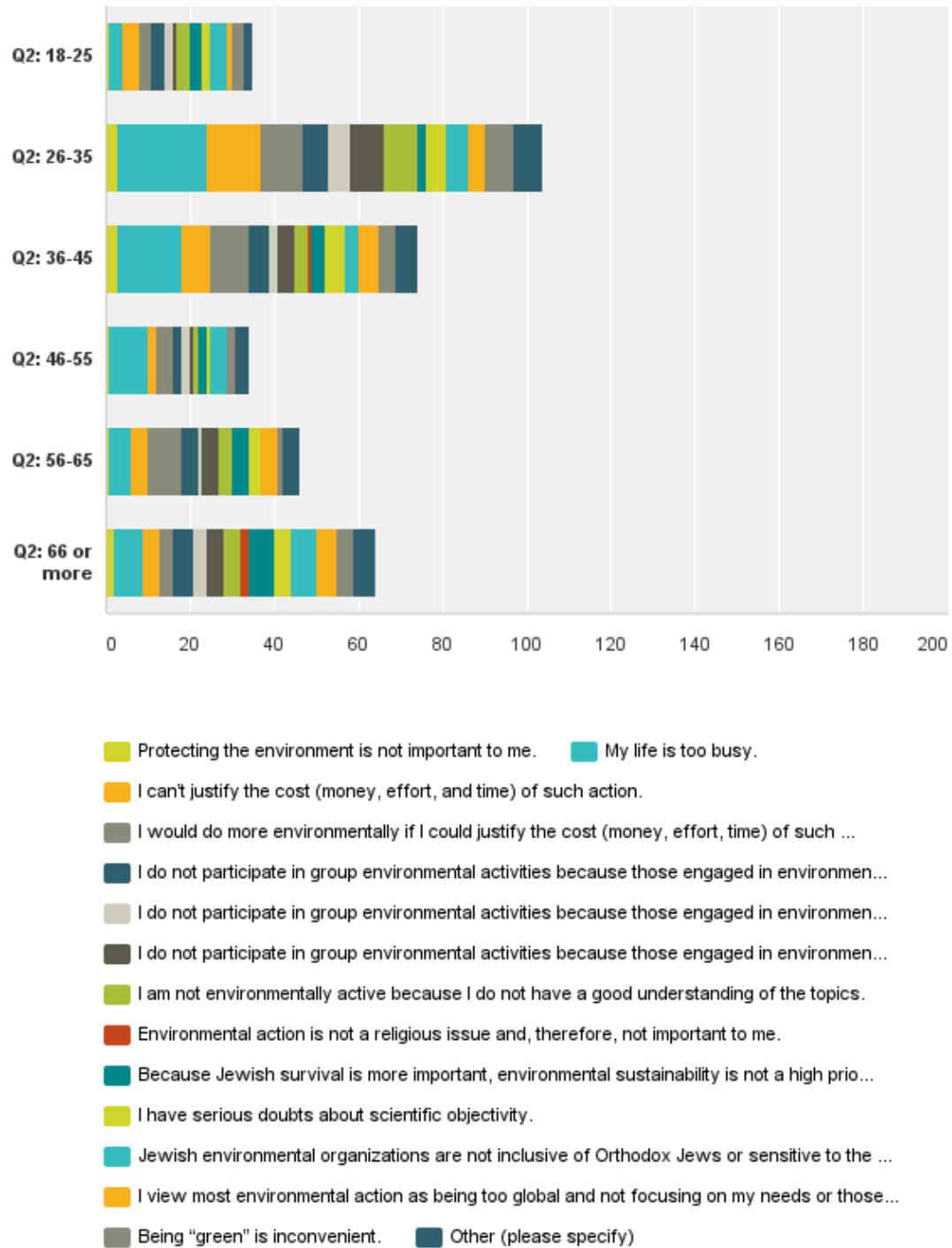
**Figure 8: Ranking of factors that motivate individual action** A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.

### Barriers to action.

Since there are key factors across all demographic categories that do motivate people to be engaged in environmental activities, what are the reasons that many individuals are not actively doing “green” actions? Of the many possible choices given in the survey, there are remarkably just a few reasons that seem to

predominate. Ordering of these reasons vary depending on the demographic category. What is important is that, regardless of demographic group, inaction was not due to believing that environmental protection was unimportant or because it was inconvenient, i.e., those choices were never among the top 5 reasons. In addition, most respondents did not explain their inaction because of a belief that environmental action is not a religious value and, therefore, is not important.

A.



## **Age**

- Of all the age groups (Fig. 9A), the 26-35, 36-45, 46-55 and 66 or more categories ranked being too busy as 1<sup>st</sup> (58.3, 57.7, 60.0, 35.0%, respectively).
- An inability to justify the costs of environmental action was 2<sup>nd</sup> for the 26-35 year-old group (36.1%), while the 36-45 and 46-55 groups noted that if they could justify the cost, they would do more (34.6 and 26.7%, respectively).
- The importance of Jewish survival over environmental sustainability was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> among the 66 and over group (30.0%).
- The 18-25 year-old demographic ranked being too busy 3<sup>rd</sup> (23.1%).
- While the 36-45 and 56-65 year-old groups listed as 3<sup>rd</sup> an inability to justify the cost as a reason for inaction (21.9 and 23.5%, respectively), the 26-35 year-olds noted that if they could justify the cost, they would do more (27.8%).
- The 46-55 and 66 and over groups listed as their 3<sup>rd</sup> choice a belief that environmental organizations were not inclusive of Orthodox Jews (26.7 and 30.0%, respectively).
- Tied for 3<sup>rd</sup> (23.1%) along with being too busy among 18-25 year-olds was that environmental organizations are too liberal, not knowing the science, Jewish survival more important and it is inconvenient to be active.
- Among the 56-65 year-olds, not being able to justify the cost was tied at 3<sup>rd</sup> with environmental organizations are too liberal and too nature-centered rather than people-centered, and too focused on global issues rather than local topics (23.5% each).

## **Geographic Location**

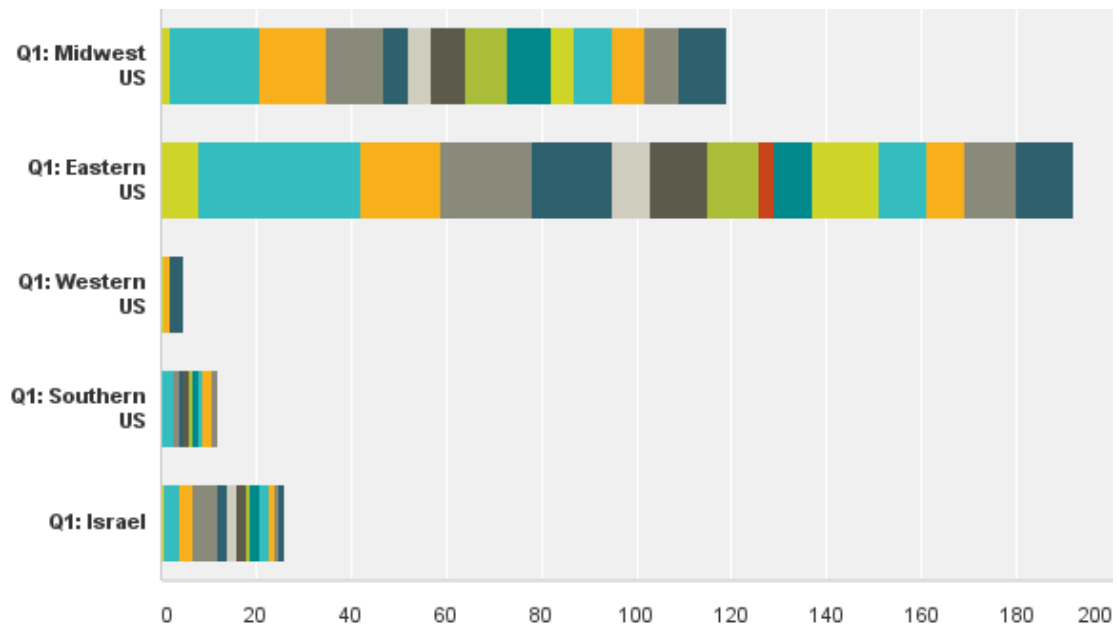
- Comparisons between respondents from the Midwest vs. Eastern US (Fig. 9B) result in similar outcomes. For both groups, being too busy was 1<sup>st</sup> (45.2 and 49.3%, respectively).
- While unable to justify the cost of environmental action was 2<sup>nd</sup> for those from the Midwest (33.3%), it was 3<sup>rd</sup> for those from the East (24.6%), as was a belief that environmental organizations are too liberal.
- Not knowing the science was 3<sup>rd</sup> (28.6%) for those from the Midwest, while being willing to do more if the cost could be justified (27.5%) was 2<sup>nd</sup> for those from the East (24.6%).

## **Orthodox Spectrum**

- Among both Modern Orthodox groups (Liberal and Machmir; Fig. 9C), being too busy was the primary reason for not being environmentally active (46.2 and 42.5%), respectively) followed by not being able to justify the cost as the 2<sup>nd</sup> reason (21.5 and 30%, respectively).

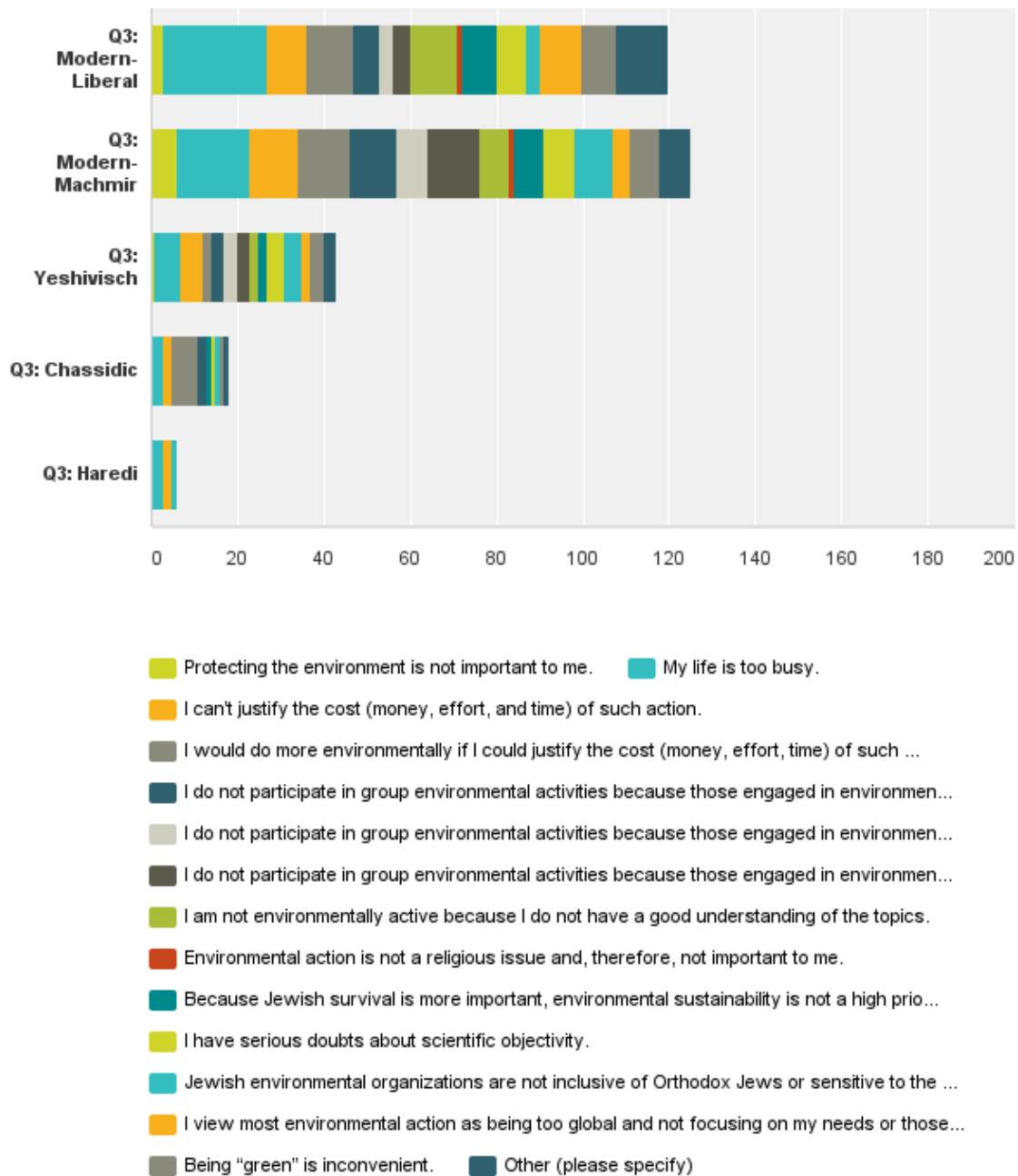
- For Modern-Liberal respondents, not having a solid understanding of the science was tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> (21.5%), while Modern-Machmir Orthodox Jews ranked environmental organizations were too nature-centered and not people-centered as 3<sup>rd</sup> (30%).
- While the sample sizes for the remaining religious groupings were too small to provide meaningful insights, it is noteworthy that the same issues that were important to Modern Orthodox Jews also were of concern to the Yeshivish, Chassidic and Haredi Jews who participated in the survey.

## B.



- Protecting the environment is not important to me.
- My life is too busy.
- I can't justify the cost (money, effort, and time) of such action.
- I would do more environmentally if I could justify the cost (money, effort, time) of such ...
- I do not participate in group environmental activities because those engaged in environmen...
- I do not participate in group environmental activities because those engaged in environmen...
- I do not participate in group environmental activities because those engaged in environmen...
- I am not environmentally active because I do not have a good understanding of the topics.
- Environmental action is not a religious issue and, therefore, not important to me.
- Because Jewish survival is more important, environmental sustainability is not a high prio...
- I have serious doubts about scientific objectivity.
- Jewish environmental organizations are not inclusive of Orthodox Jews or sensitive to the ...
- I view most environmental action as being too global and not focusing on my needs or those...
- Being "green" is inconvenient.
- Other (please specify)

C.



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### Political Philosophy

- Similar reasons are seen in comparisons between political philosophies (Fig. 9D). Both Moderates and Liberals rank too busy as 1<sup>st</sup> in their reasons for not being environmentally active (57.1 and 65.5%, respectively).
- Conservatives place unable to justify the cost and viewing environmental organizations as too liberal as 1<sup>st</sup> (32.1% each) followed by too busy and having serious doubts about the science as 3<sup>rd</sup> (30.4% each).

- While Liberals stated they would do more if they could justify the cost as 2<sup>nd</sup> (24.1%), Moderates ranked that as 3<sup>rd</sup> (31.4%).
- Not being able to justify the cost was 2<sup>nd</sup> for Moderates (40.0%) and not having a good understanding of the science was 3<sup>rd</sup> for Liberals (13.8%).

D.



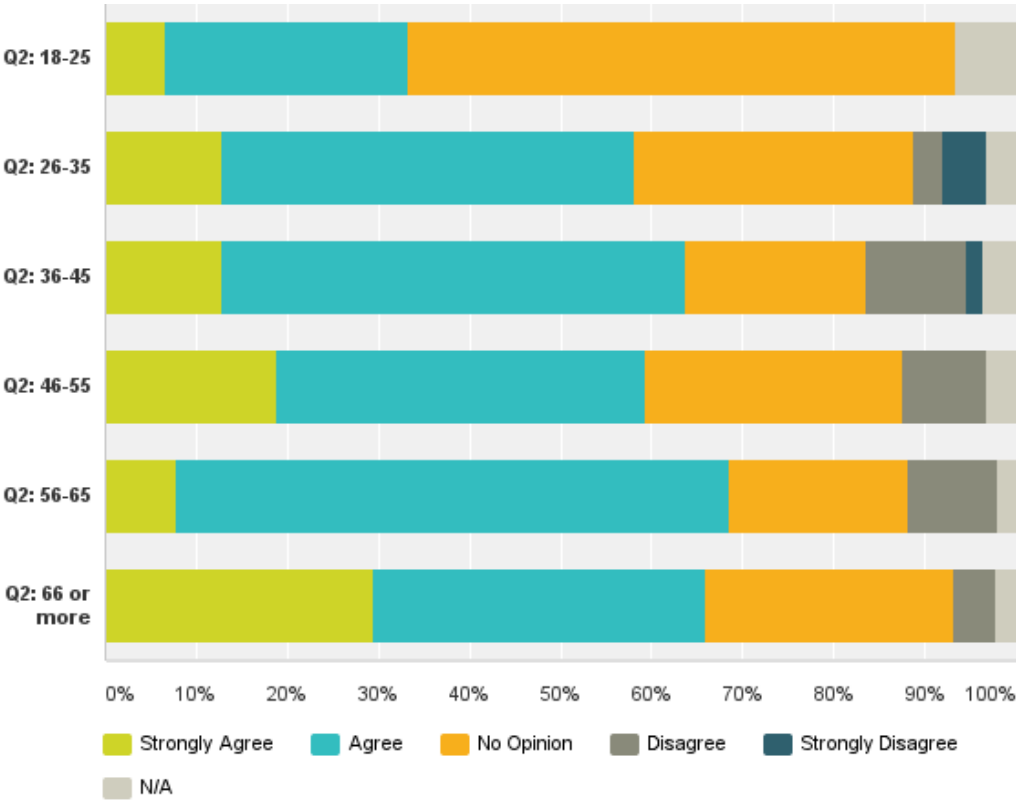
**Figure 9: Reasons survey participants are not environmentally active. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

**Actions that enhance a positive attitude toward the environment.**

The actions that people currently do and why they may not do more provide a foundation to examine specific enabling activities that encourage greater engagement in environmental action. In other words, what factors are involved in an individual’s decision-making process that would lead to choosing to do additional environmentally sustainable behavior? Question topics involved level of effort, balancing costs and benefits, experiential and academic activities, environmental health, and values. While responses are divided into strongly agree, agree no opinion, disagree and strongly disagree and are graphed accordingly, it is understood that there can be great subjectivity between strongly (dis)agree and (dis)agree. Therefore while the graphs show these divisions, data are combined as agree or disagree for comparisons. This presentation of the data will be used for all following graphs in this report involving a range of strongly agree-strongly disagree.

**Scope of project—small vs. large.**

A.



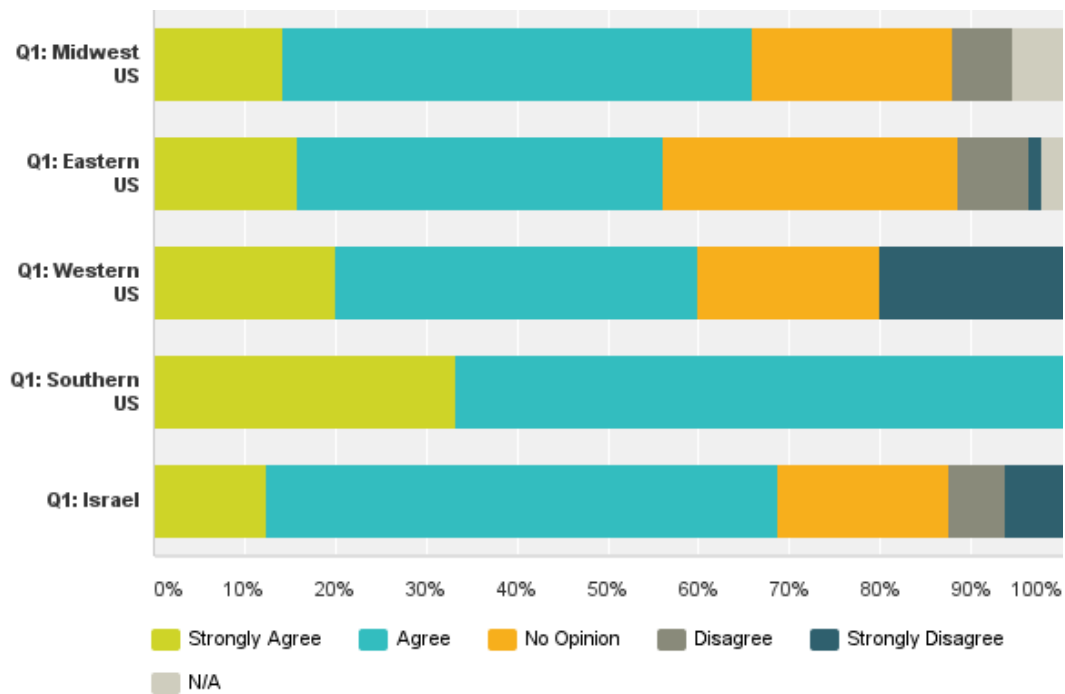
**Age**

- With the exception of the youngest age category (18-25), there is little age difference in opinion that small, focused projects are better suited to encouraging people to be involved in environmental actions (58.1-68.6%; Fig. 10A).
- It is not clear if the 18-25 year-olds are disinterested in small-scale projects, are willing and/or able to do more complex, time-consuming



projects or if they believe that doing small-scale projects even if immediate effects are experienced are not effective.

**B.**



40

### Geographic Location

- Small, focused projects work better across all geographic locations (Midwest: 66.0; Eastern: 56.1%; Israeli: 68.8%; Fig. 10B).

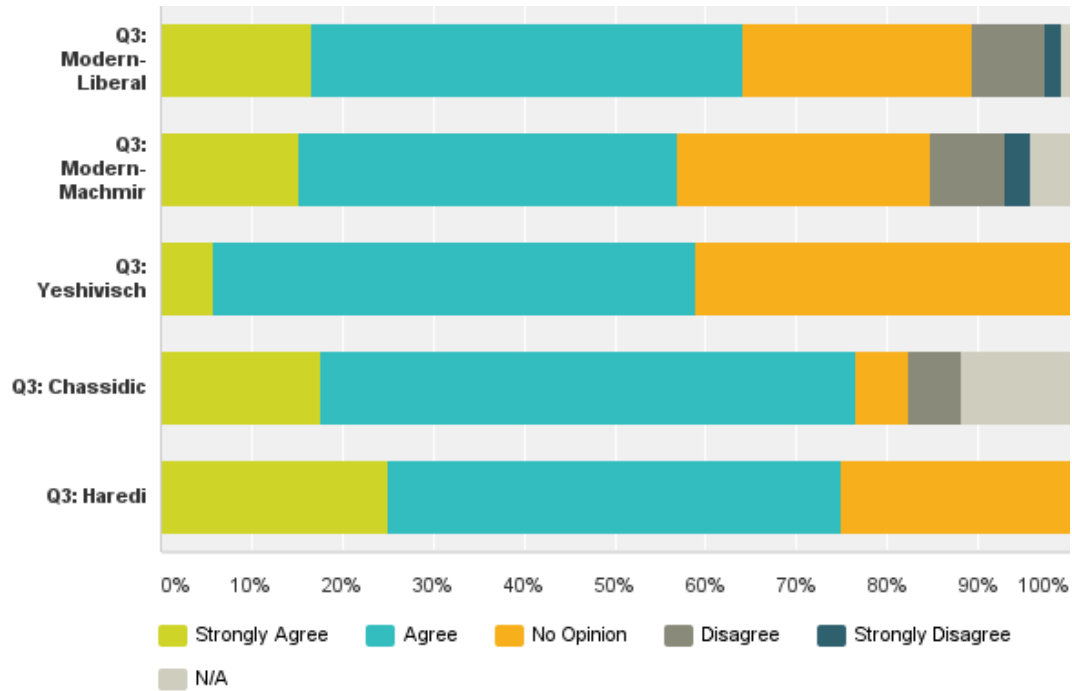
### Orthodox Spectrum

- Regardless of religious category (Fig. 10C), over one-half of all respondents agreed that small, more focused projects would encourage them to be more environmentally active.

### Political Philosophy

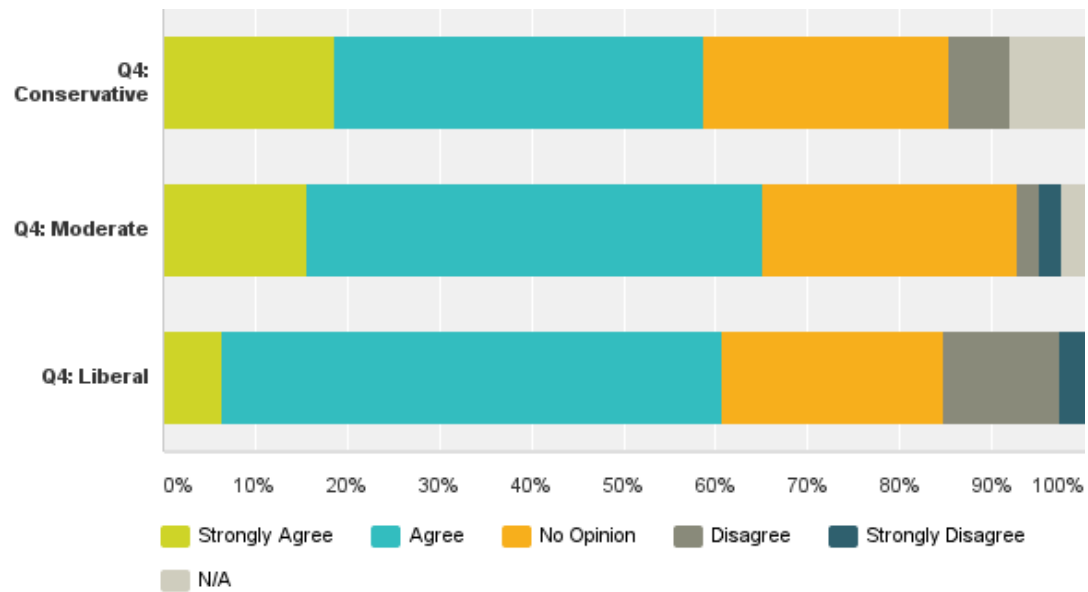
- Similarly for political philosophy (Fig. 10D) approx. 60% of all respondents in each category agreed that smaller, more focused projects would encourage them to do environmentally sustainable projects that have immediate benefit.

C.



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D.



**Figure 10: Preference for environmental action that focuses on smaller projects that have an immediate effect on the individual or community. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

•

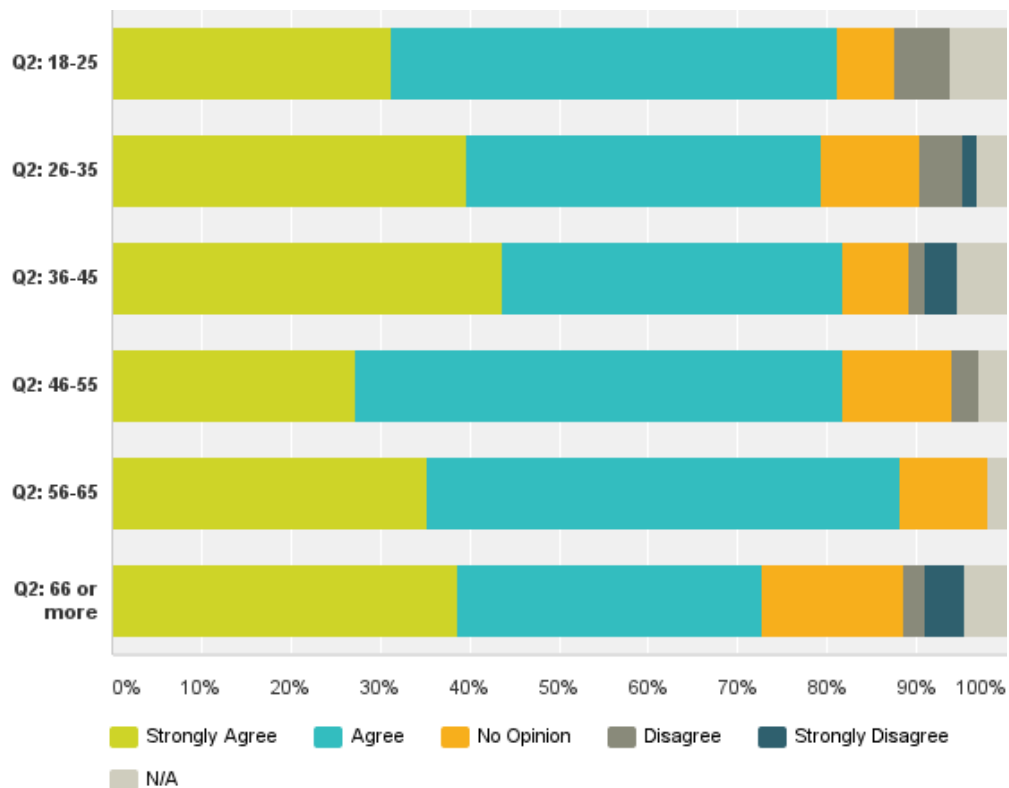
## General Observation

- Small projects, while preferred, may still require a great deal of effort to do well. Being able to see immediate benefits, an important aspect of the survey question, from even simple actions may be a critical factor in motivating individuals or communities to engage in environmentally sustainable behaviors. In other words, two-thirds to three-fourths of all respondents (data not shown) regardless of demographic category agreed that projects requiring less effort would be preferred. These data correlate well with one of the major barriers to being environmentally active, i.e., being too busy.

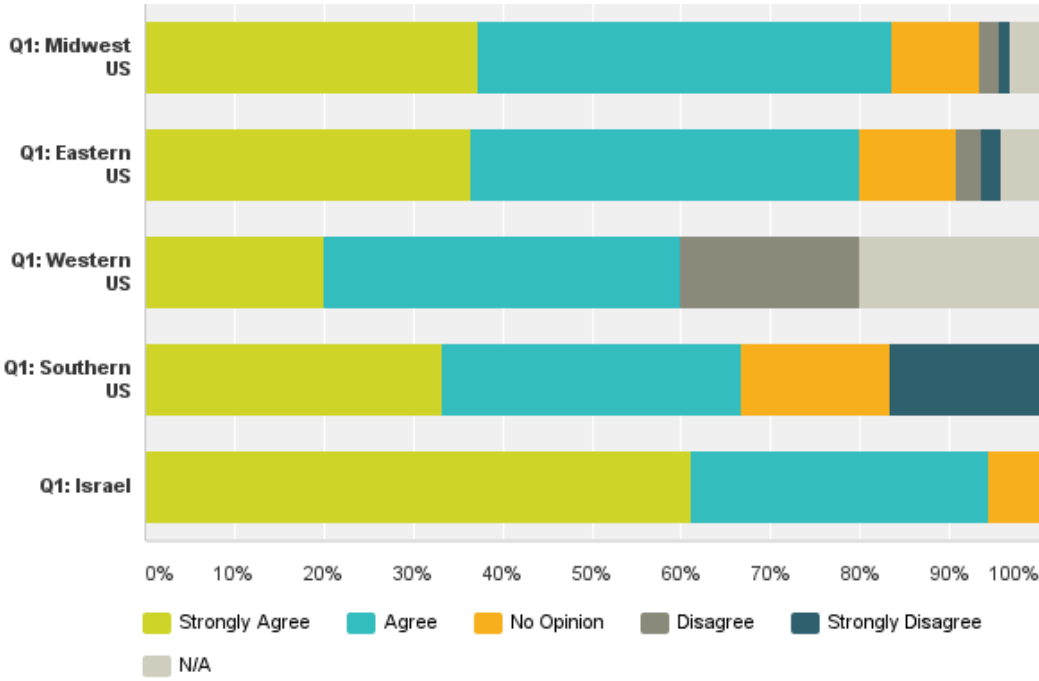
### *Effect of informal experiences on attitudes toward the environment.*

- Informal outdoor experiences create strong, positive attitudes toward the environment across all demographic categories and affect choices regarding activities to protect and/or enhance the environment (Fig. 11A-D).

A.

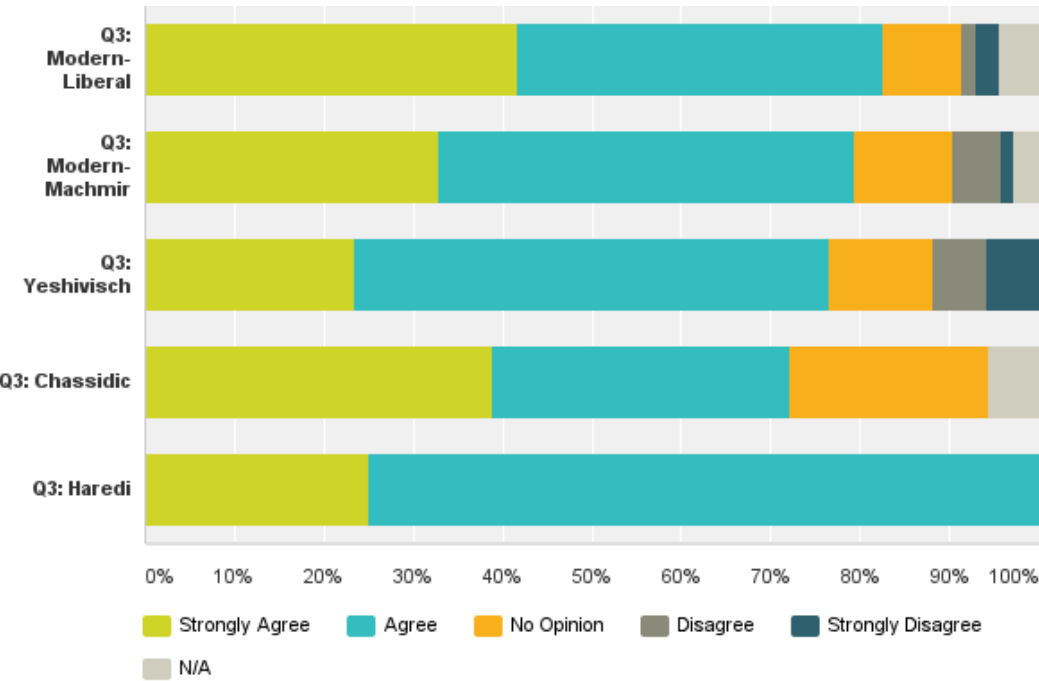


B.

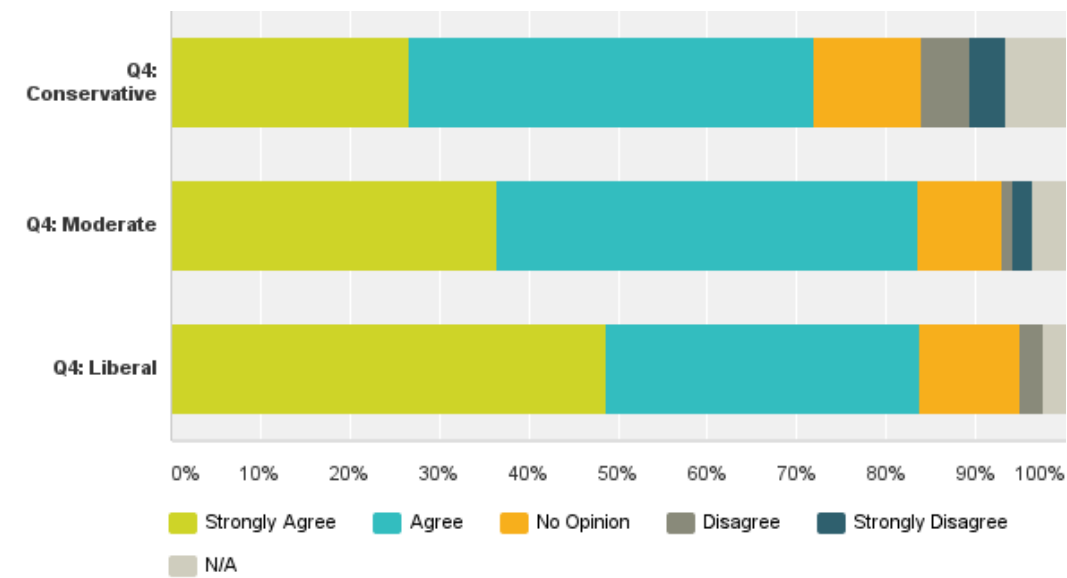


43

C.



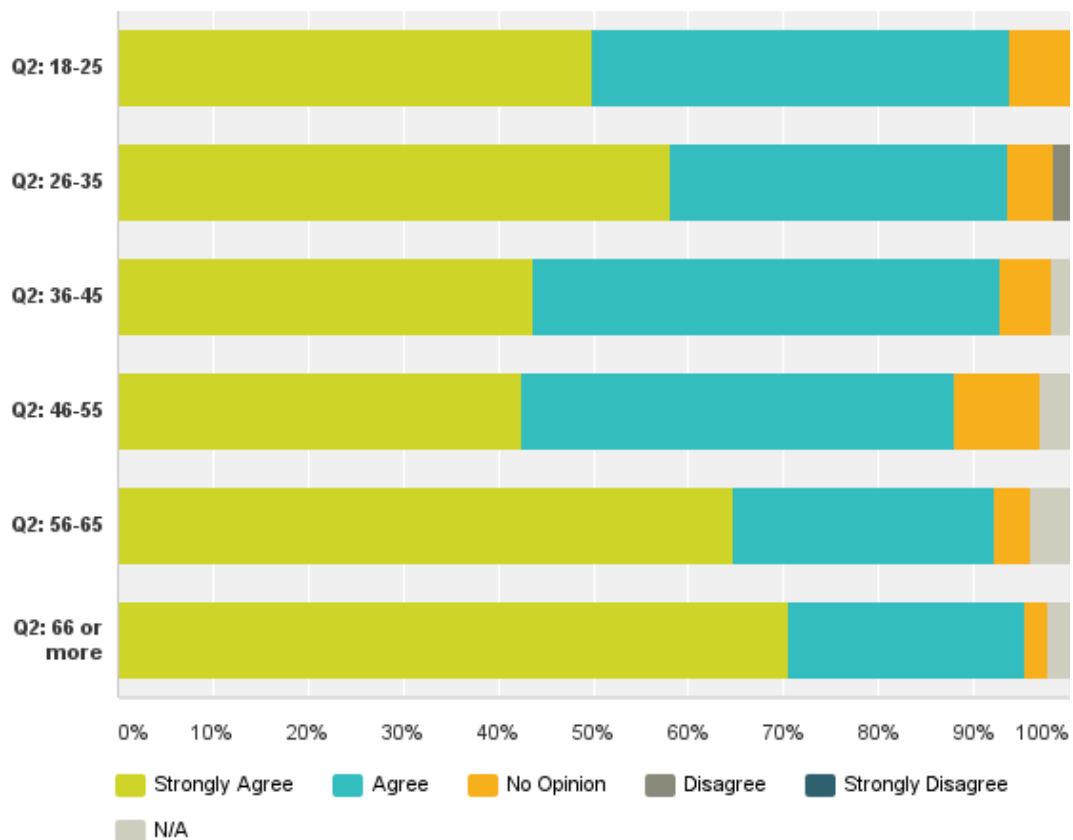
D.



**Figure 11: Role of experiencing nature through hiking or camping to evoke awe and a desire to protect nature. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

*Health of family as affected by the environment is important.*

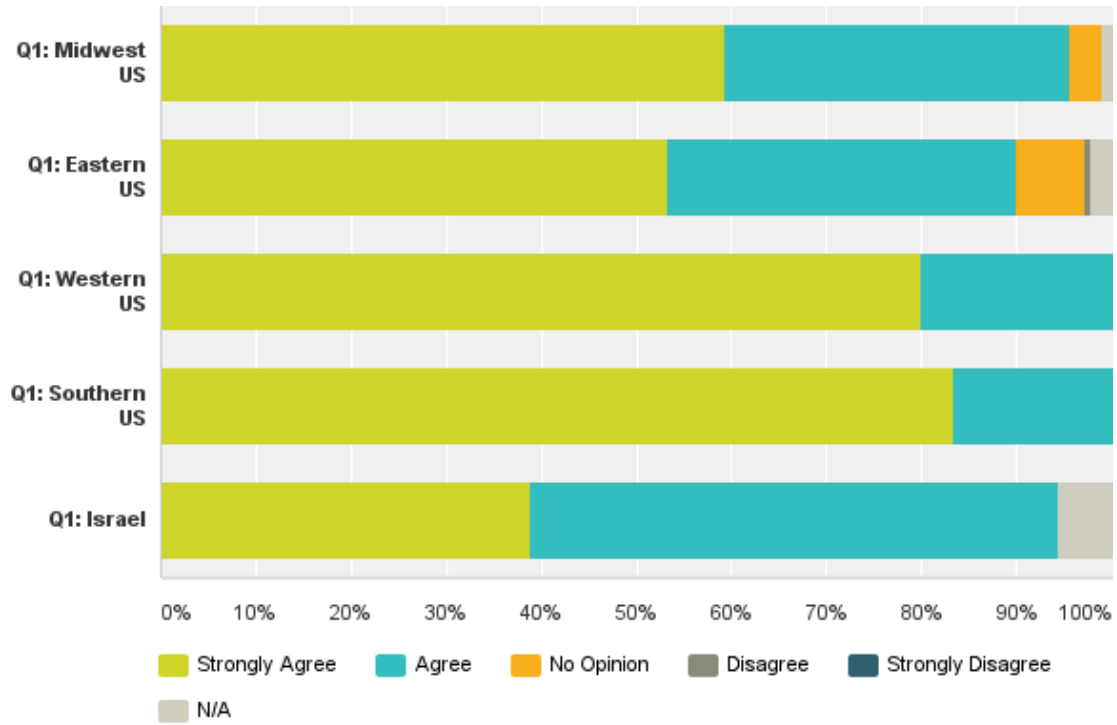
A.



45

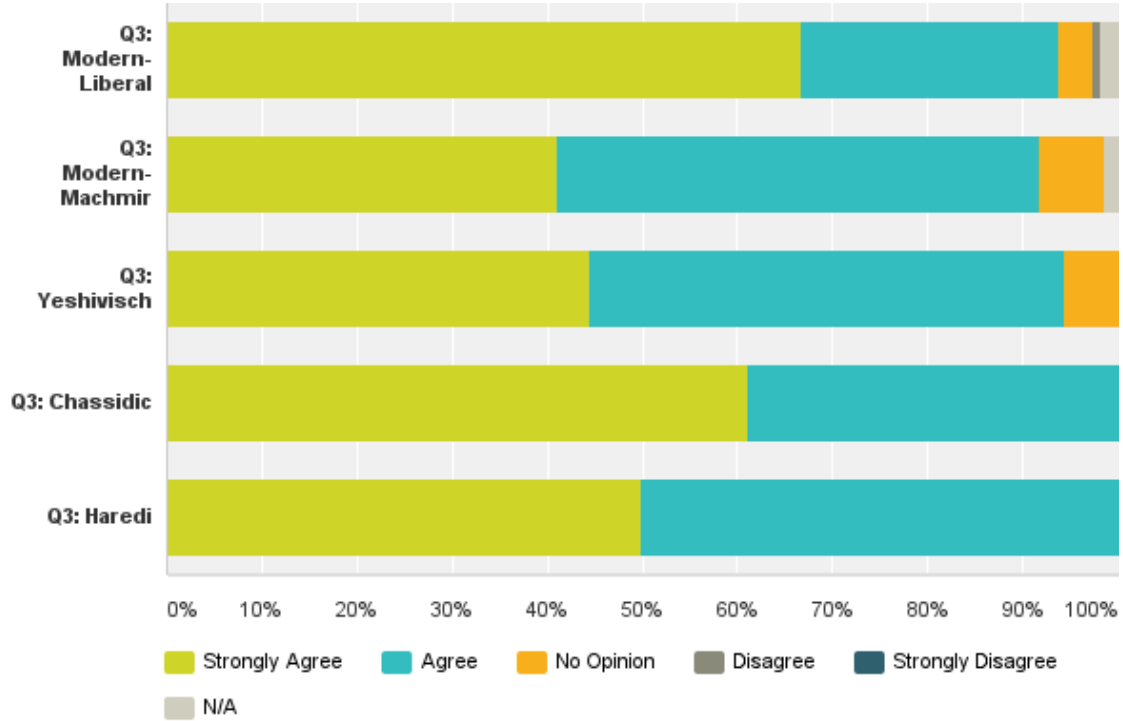
- Across all **age** groups (Fig. 12A), environmental health as it affects one's family is an important issue (approx. 90%). Few have no opinion and even fewer disagree (less than 2%).
- **Geographic location** (Fig. 12B) showed no difference in responses to this concern, i.e., approx. 90% agreed, few had no opinion and less than 1% disagreed.
- Self-identification within the **Orthodox spectrum** (Fig. 12C) resulted in similar data, i.e., approx. 90% agreed that family environmental health was an important concern. Few had no opinion and less than 1% disagreed.
- Across all **political philosophies** (Fig. 12D), there was very clear agreement that family health as it is affected by the environment was an important topic (91.6-98.8%). Only Moderates displayed any disagreement, although it was minor (1.2%).

B.

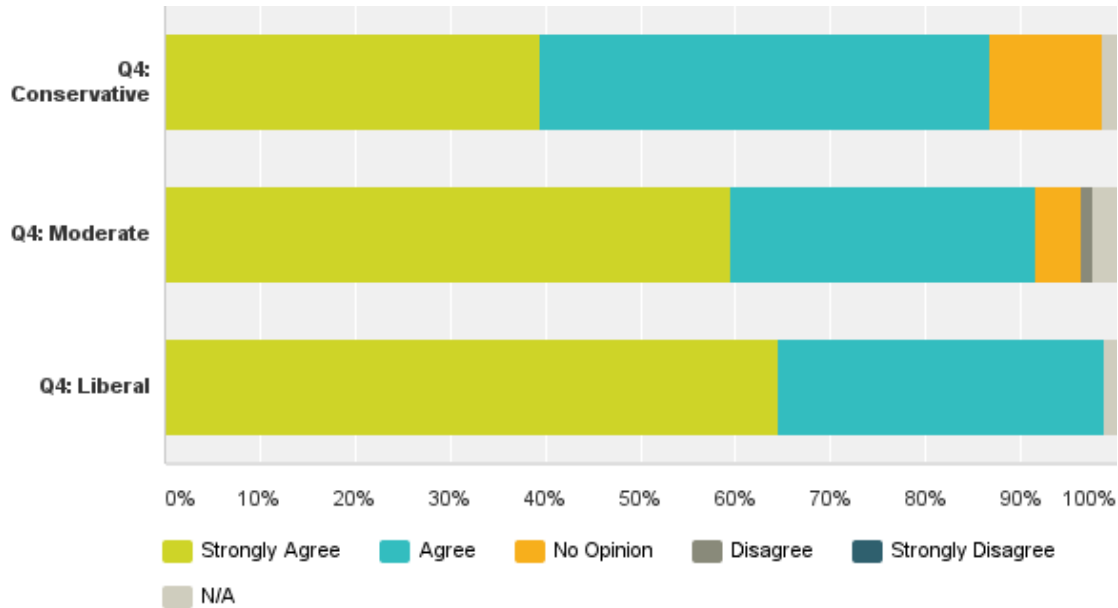


46

c.



D.



**Figure 12: The importance of influences of the environment on family health.** **A.** By age group. **B.** By geographic location. **C.** By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. **D.** By political philosophy.

47

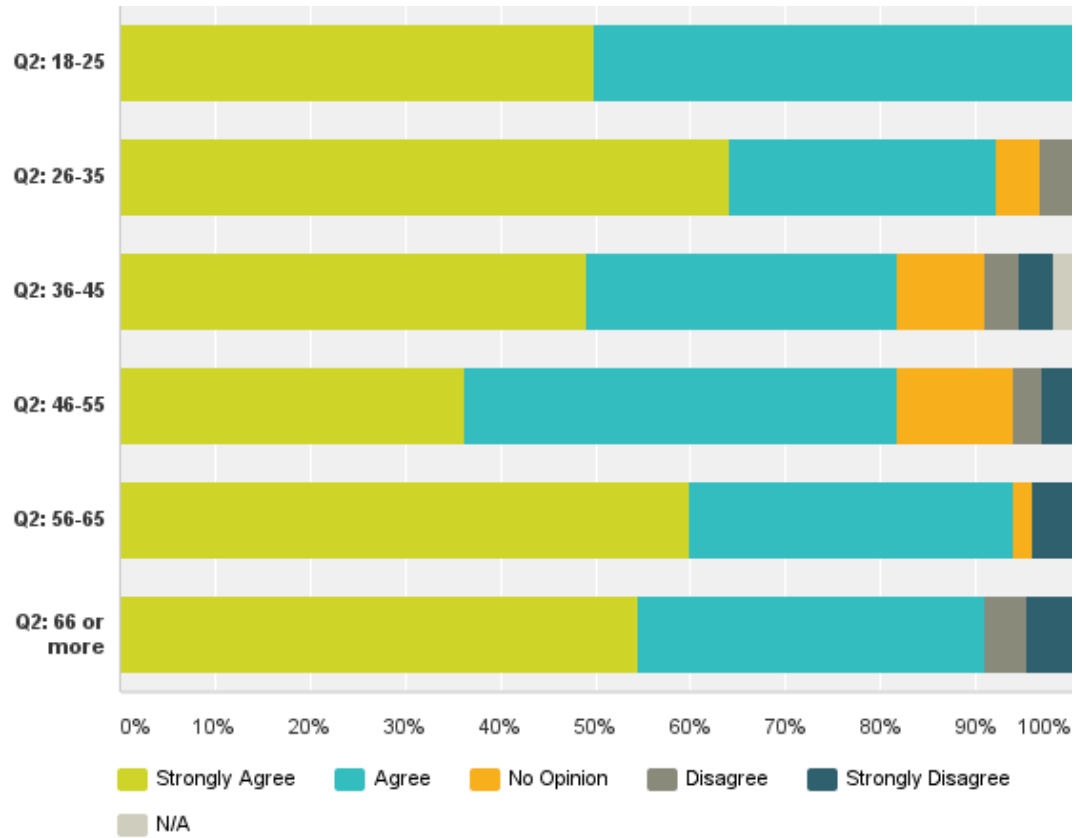
### The role of environmental education in the schools.

During focus group discussions, many participants indicated that they did not feel scientifically literate as it related to environmental topics. Thus, it was believed that education and its role in helping to inform people about the scientific foundations of environmental issues needed to be investigated. The structure of an environmental program of study was not examined; only whether including it in a school or yeshiva curriculum was important was asked. Adult education was not investigated directly in this survey. However, it was covered superficially in the question about respondent-suggested strategies (Fig. 32).

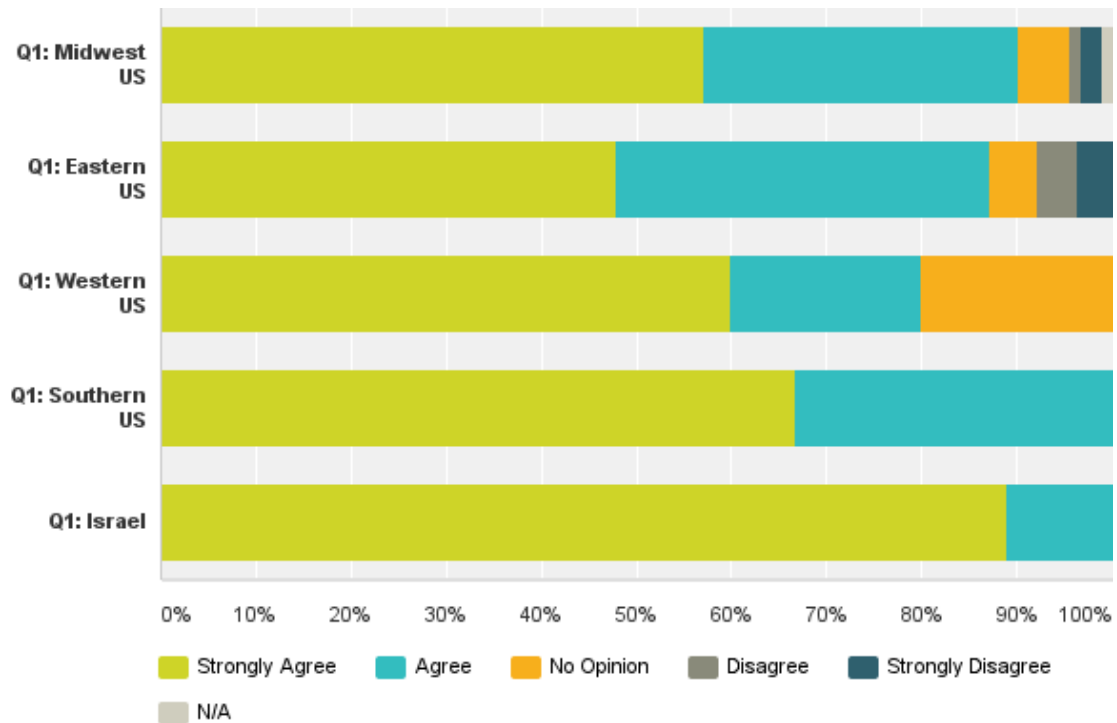
- Across all demographic categories (Fig. 12 A-D), teaching environmental education in the schools is very important.
- By **age**: 81.8-100% agreed; by **location**: 87.2-100% agreed
- By religious identification within the **Orthodox spectrum**: 82.2-94.8%.
- By **political philosophy**: 72.4-98.8%. Only politically Conservative respondents showed a positive opinion less than 80%, although there was still a clear majority of those who identified themselves in this category.



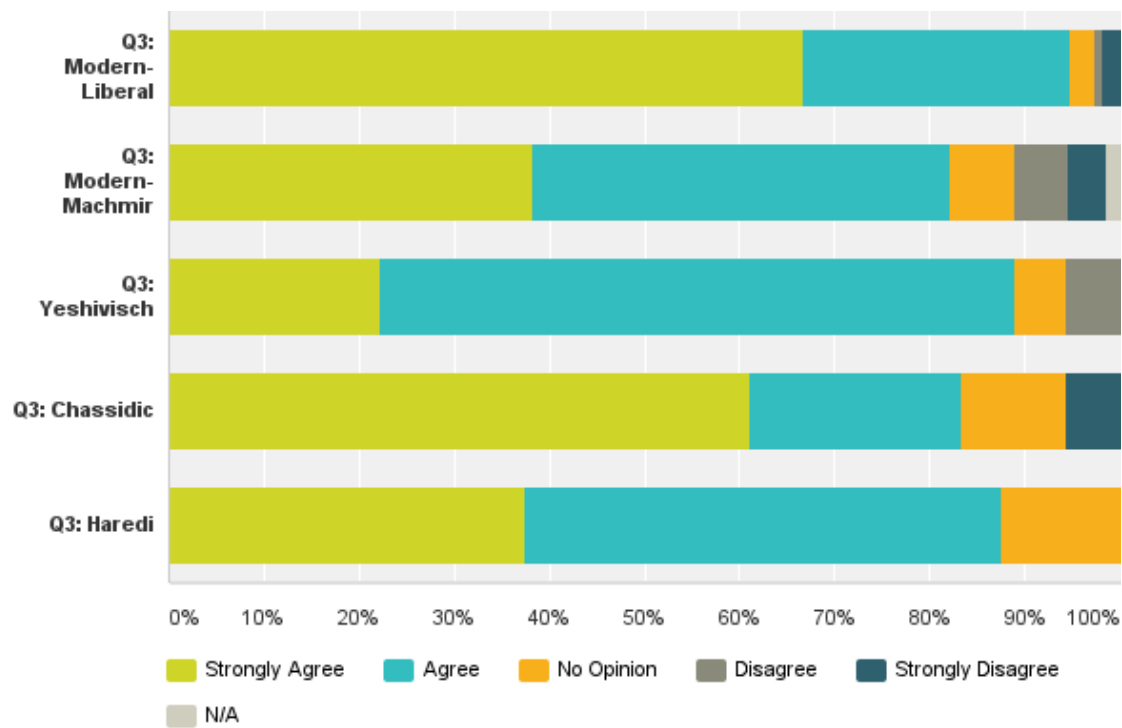
A.



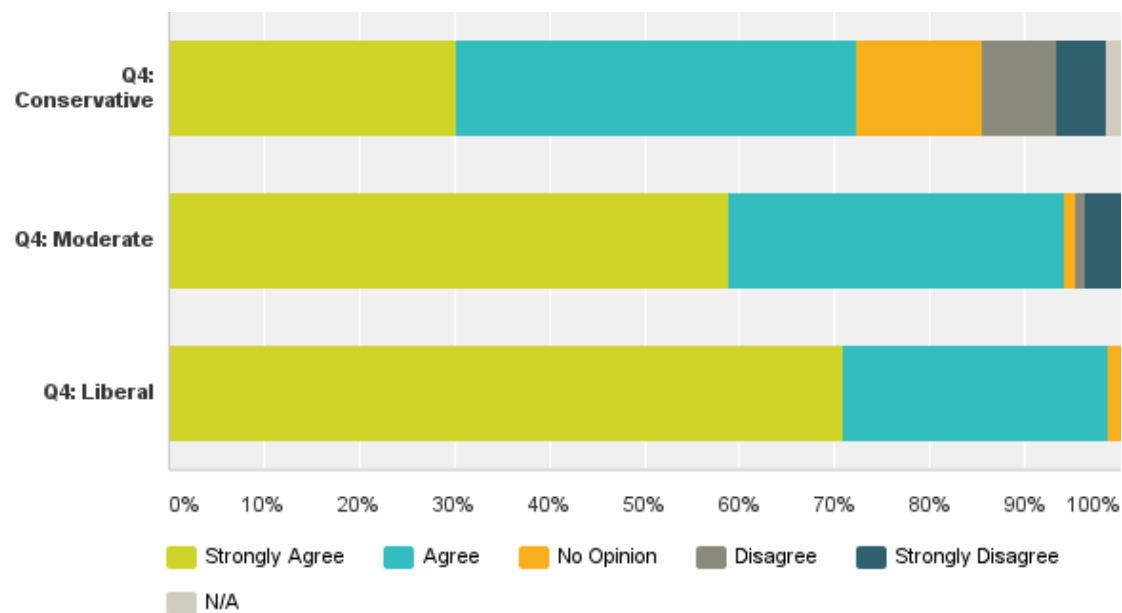
B.



C.



D.



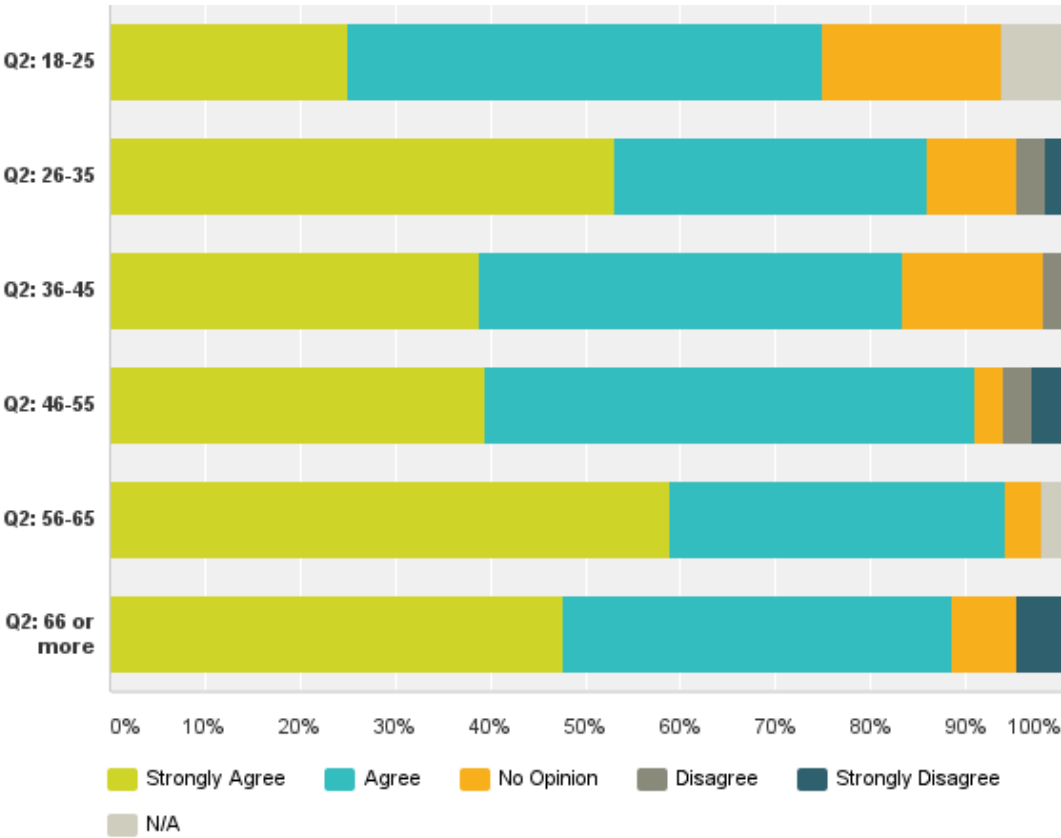
**Figure 13: Teaching about the environment in school is an important activity.**  
A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.

**Attitudes toward sustainability and sustainable practices.**

While sustainable practices were not listed as top-ranked personal activity (Fig. 6), individuals may not necessarily have a negative attitude toward that concept. Thus, it was important to investigate whether managing resources in a wise, sustainable manner was a value held by the Orthodox community. This was accomplished in two separate questions: 1) is good Earth stewardship a value and 2) the role of cost/benefit analysis in the decision-making process.

***Being a good steward of Earth’s resources is an important value.***

**A.**



**Age**

- A high level of agreement with the concept that environmental stewardship is a worthy value crossed all age groups (Fig. 14A).
- There was no evident trend in the responses with the order of agreeing being (low to high): 18-25 (75.0%), 36-45 (83.3%), 26-35 (85.9%), 66 and above (88.6%), 46-55 (90.9%), 56-65 (94.1%).
- Less than 5% of respondents in any age group disagreed.

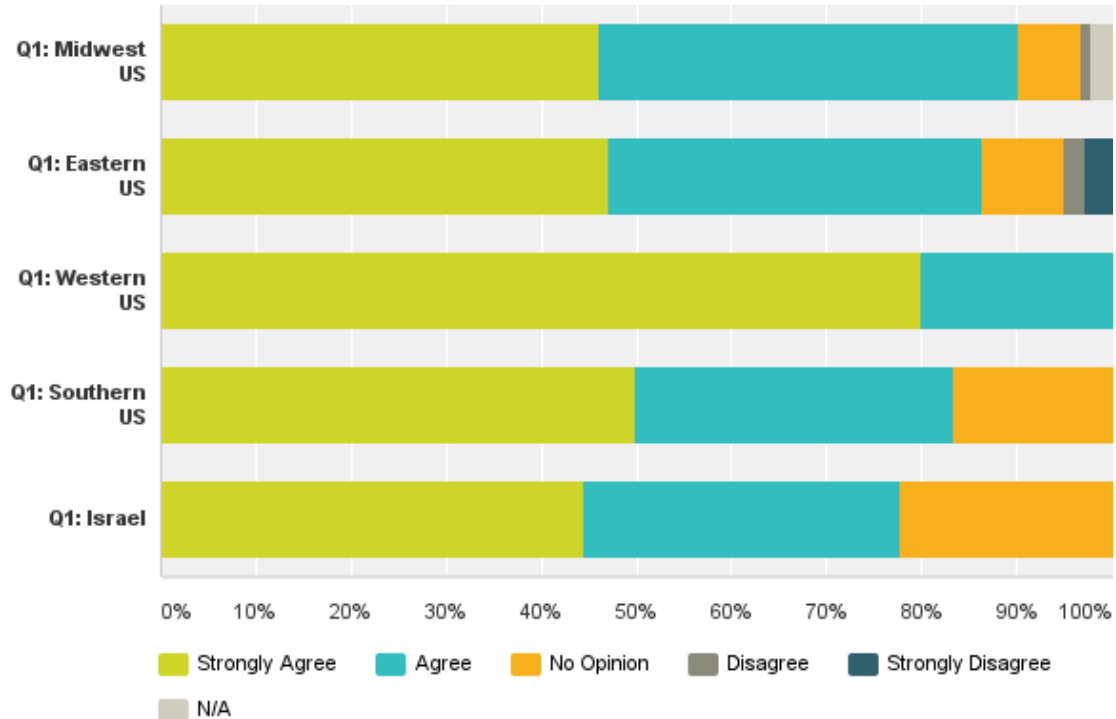
**Geographic Location**

- Of the two major geographic categories (Fig. 14B), Midwest and Eastern, there was a very high level of agreement that stewardship

was an important value (90.2 and 86.4%, respectively). Only 1.1% of those from the Midwest and 8.3% of those from the East disagreed.

- Of note, 77.7% of those Israelis who responded agreed with this statement.

## B.



51

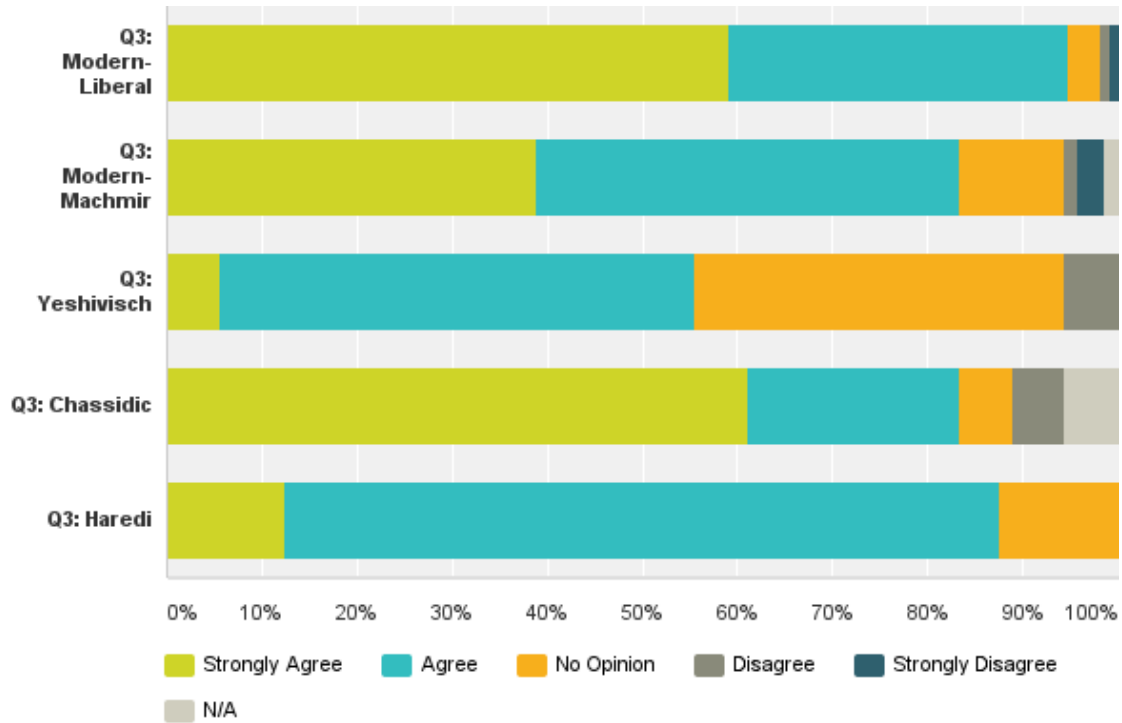
### Orthodox Spectrum

- Of the various categories within Orthodoxy (Fig. 14C), the Yeshivish respondents displayed the lowest level of agreement with the value of environmental stewardship (55.6%); 5.6% disagreed.
- While 5.6% of the Chassidic respondents also disagreed, 83.3% agreed. The difference between these two groups was the level of No Opinion (38.9 vs 5.6%, respectively). There was a moderate gap between Modern-Liberal (94.8%) and Modern-Machmir (83.3%).

### Political Philosophy

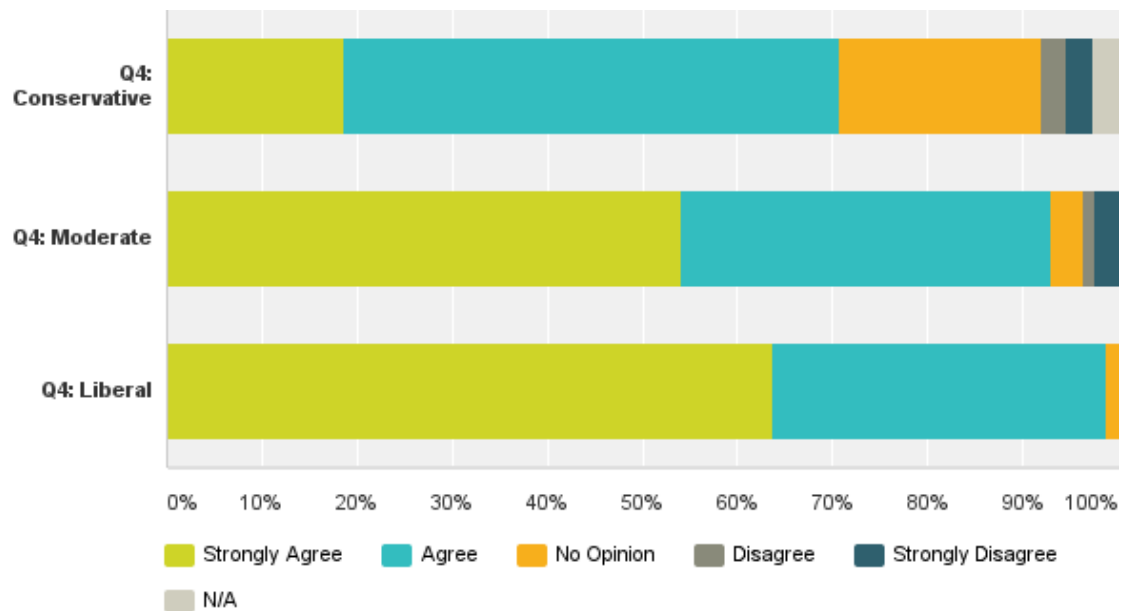
- Political philosophy effected levels of agreement and disagreement: Conservative (70.7), Moderate (92.3) and Liberal 98.8%; Fig. 14D).
- Level of disagreement, while small, followed a similar pattern: Conservative (5.4%), Moderate (3.6%) and Liberal (0%). A much larger number of Conservatives responded with No Opinion (21.3% vs less than 4% for Moderate and Liberal).

C.



52

D.

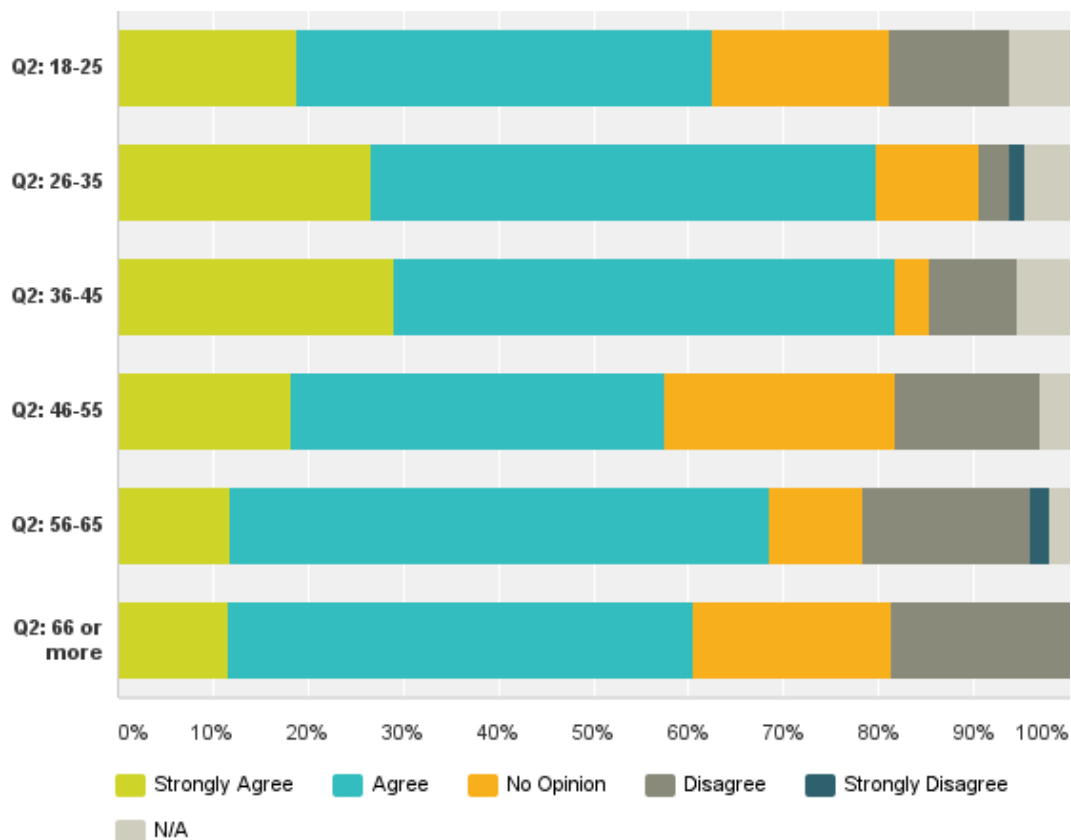


**Figure 14: Earth stewardship as a value as it relates to natural resources. A.** By age group. **B.** By geographic location. **C.** By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. **D.** By political philosophy.

### ***Balancing the cost vs the benefits of action.***

Cost/benefit analyses are not normally grouped with sustainability issues but it can be an important part of the decision-making process as to whether an action is, in the minds of individuals, sustainable. Thus, it was important to examine the role of this concept in the level of environmental engagement. As an extension of cost vs benefit decisions is a belief that protecting the environment is good for the economy. Making decisions about sustainability may require such a belief.

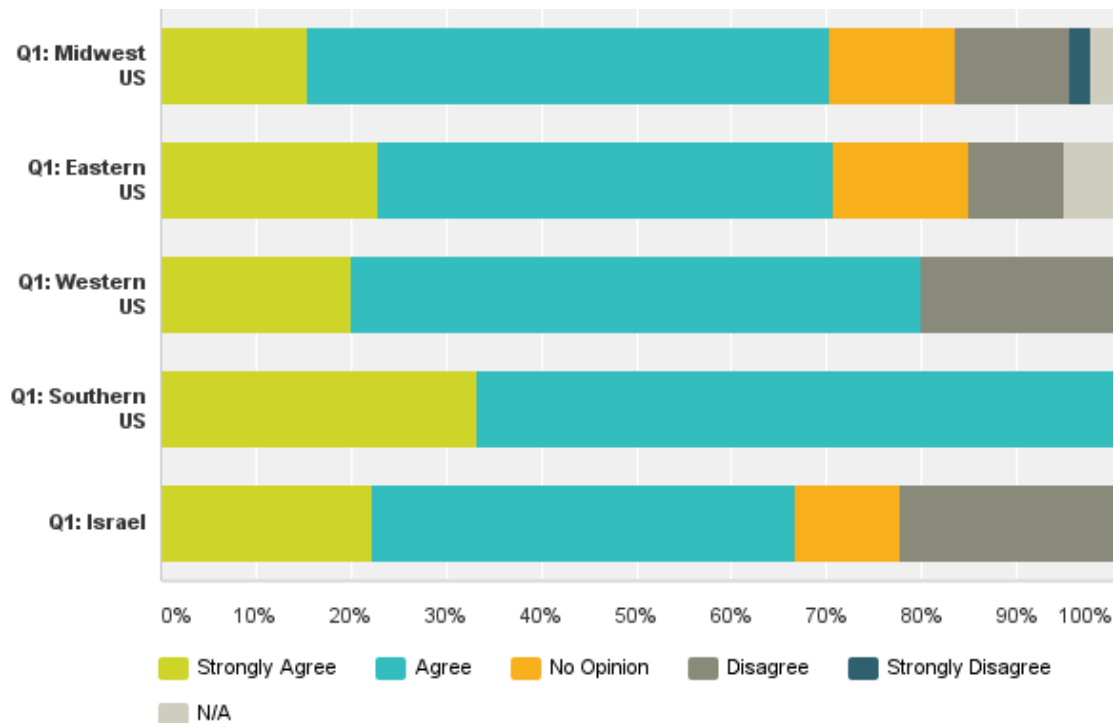
A.



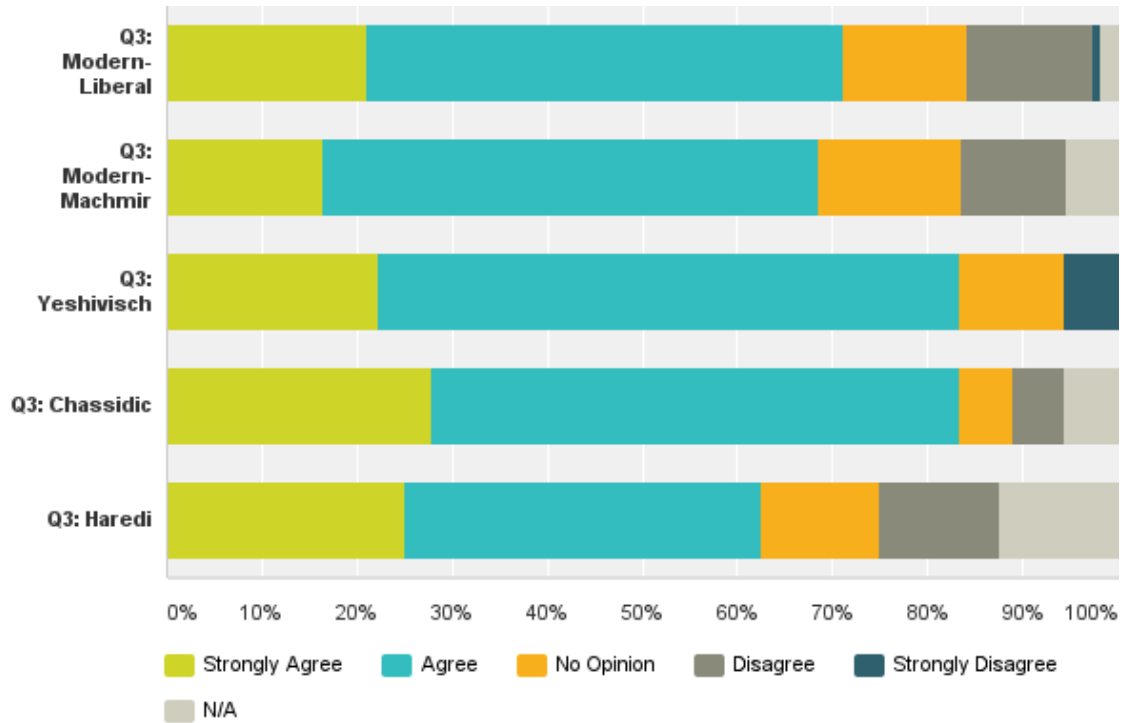
- Among the various **age** categories (Fig. 15A), the 46-55 year-old group was the lowest (51.1%) of those that agreed that taking into consideration the costs vs benefits was important. Highest was the 36-45 year-old group (81.8%).
- **Geographic location** (Midwest vs East only; Fig. 15B) displayed no difference (70.4 vs 70.8%, respectively), although Midwestern respondents did disagree with this statement more than those from the East (14.3 vs 10%, respectively).

- **Orthodox Spectrum:** Yeshivisch and Chassidic individuals were more likely to use cost vs benefit considerations in their decision-making process (both 83%; Fig. 15C) than Modern-Liberal or Modern-Machmir (both approx. 70%). Nearly two-thirds of Haredi respondents (62.5%) agreed.
- **Political Philosophy:** While approximately two-thirds of Conservatives (65.8%; Fig. 15D) used cost/benefit considerations in making environmental-based decisions, approximately three-fourths of Moderates and Liberals did (75 vs 73.8%, respectively).

B.

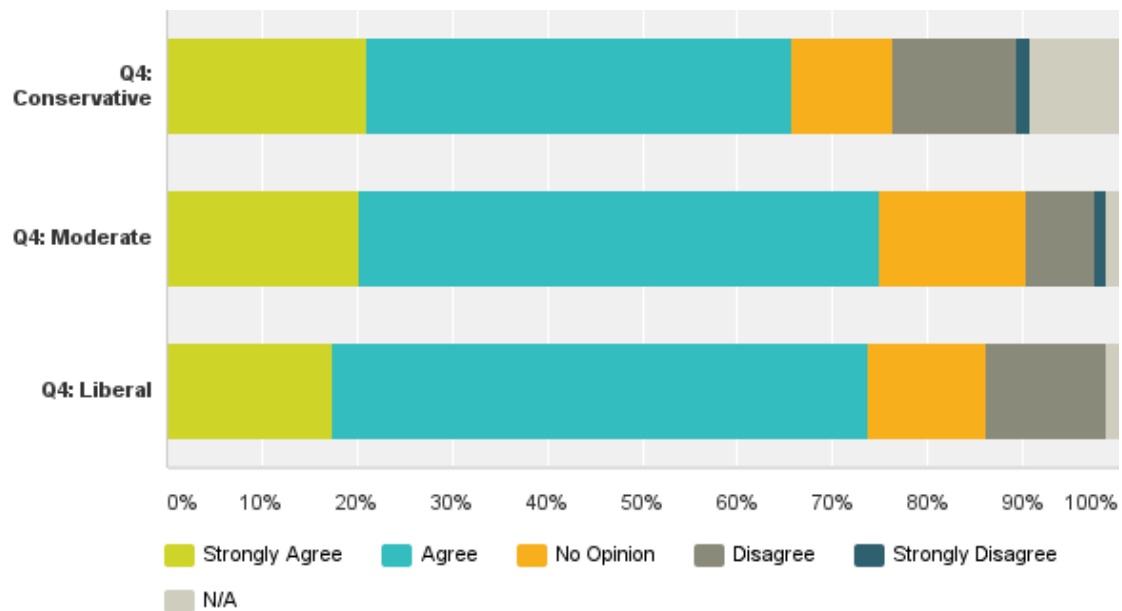


C.



55

D.



**Figure 15: Balancing the cost of action and the benefits that may accrue before deciding whether environmental action is worthwhile. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

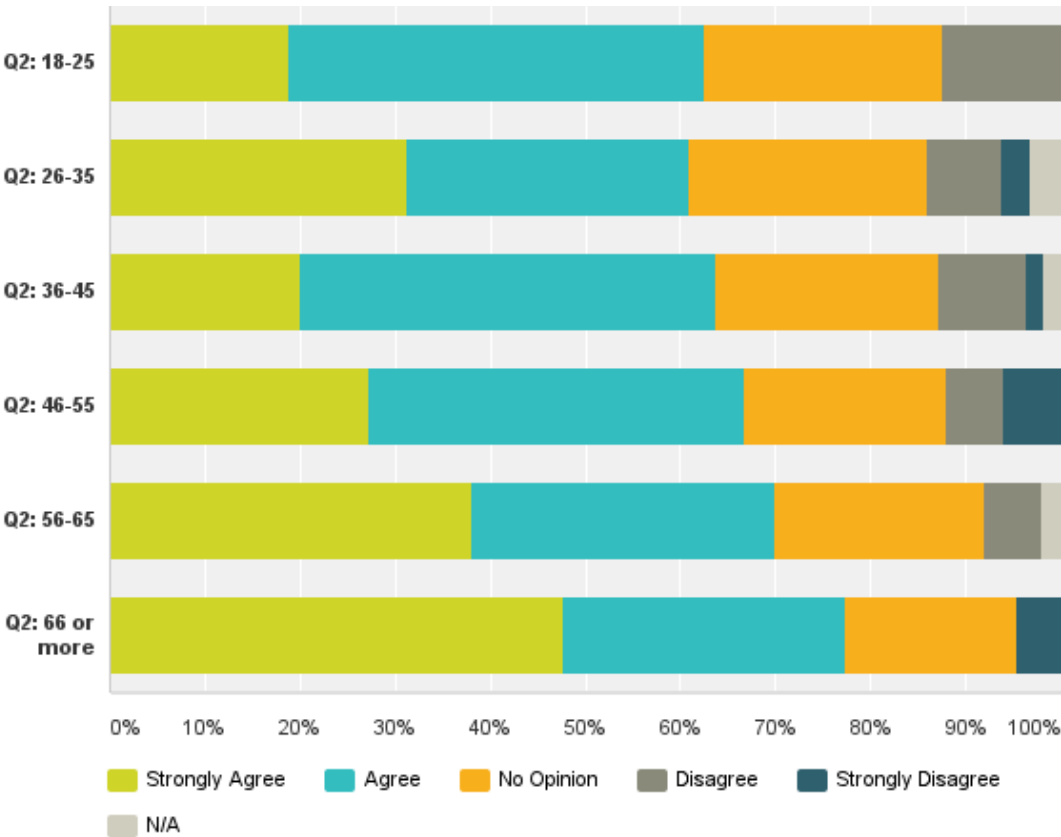


**Protecting the environment is good for the economy.**

While protecting the environment can be viewed as a value, there may be some utilitarian benefit to it. Seeing the health of the environment from this perspective may provide additional connecting points for individuals as they identify methods to relate to the environment. Reasons for individual perspectives on this question were not explored but could prove to be important for identifying strategies to increase the level and/or intensity of individual and/or community environmentally sustainable behaviors.

- **Age:** While those who strongly agree that protecting the environment is good for the economy is higher among the older age groups (56-65: 38%; 66 and older: 47.7%; Fig. 16A), greater than 60% of respondents in all groups were in agreement at some level.

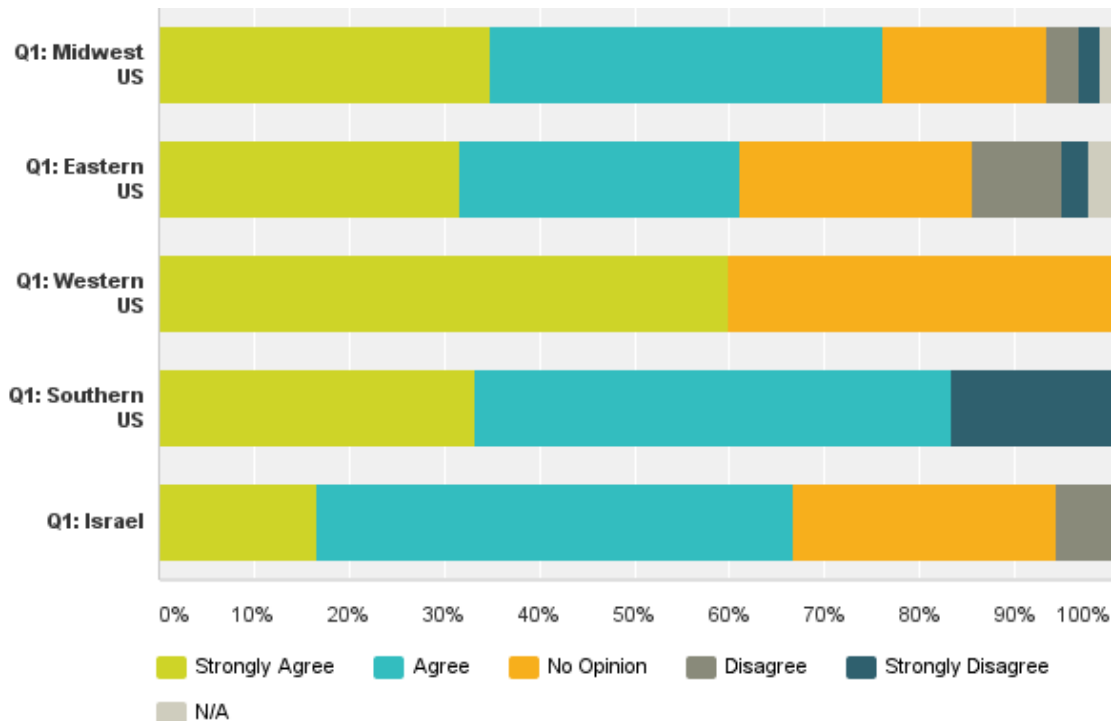
A.



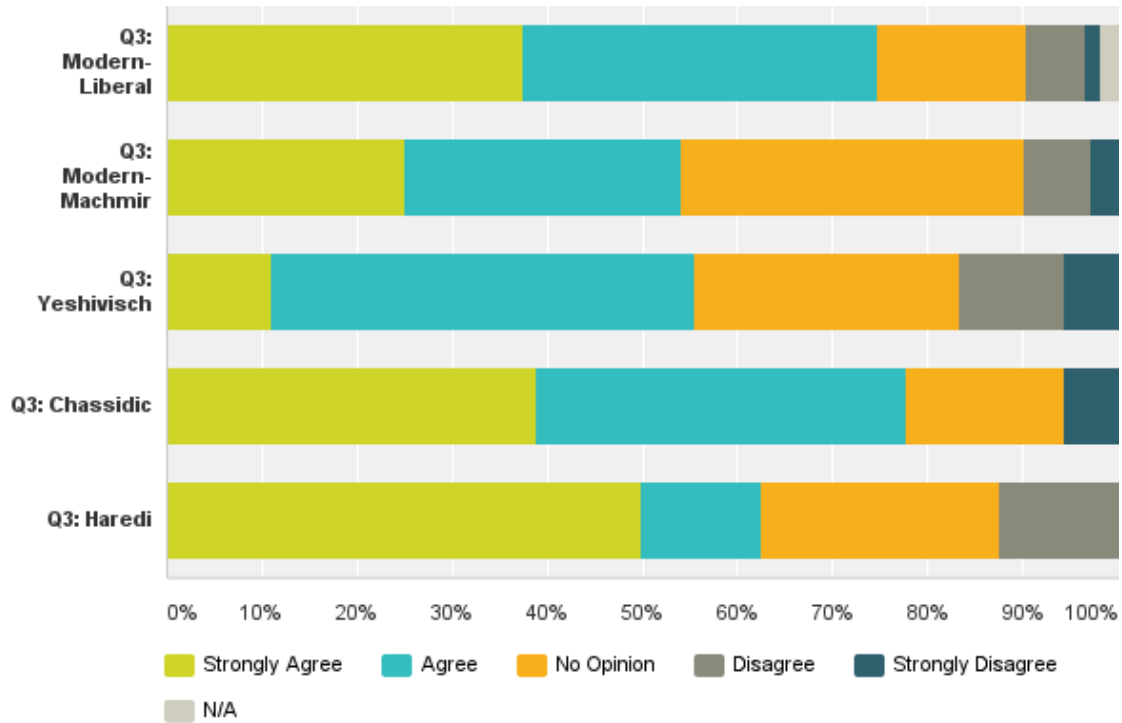
- **Geographic Location:** Fewer respondents from the East agreed that the environment’s health is good for the economy than those from the Midwest (56.1 vs 76.1%, respectively). Additionally, more survey participants from the East disagreed than those from the Midwest (12.3 vs 5.5%, respectively; Fig. 16B).

- **Orthodox Spectrum:** A clear difference in perspective was also evident between Modern Orthodox-Liberal and Modern-Orthodox Machmir (Fig. 16C). While nearly three-fourths (74.8%) of the Liberal Orthodox Jews agreed about the relationship between the environment and economy, only one-half (54.4%) of Machmir Orthodox Jews did. There were similar numbers of those who disagreed between these two groups of Modern Orthodox Jews (7.8 vs 9.7%, respectively).
- **Political Philosophy:** Marked trends occurred with political philosophies (Fig. 16D). Among Conservatives, 48.7% agreed that a healthy environment was good for the economy. Moderates showed greater acceptance of this idea (63.6%) and 84.8% of Liberals agreed. Those who disagreed responded similarly, i.e., Conservatives were highest (19.8%) followed by Moderates (8.3%) and Liberals (0%).

B.

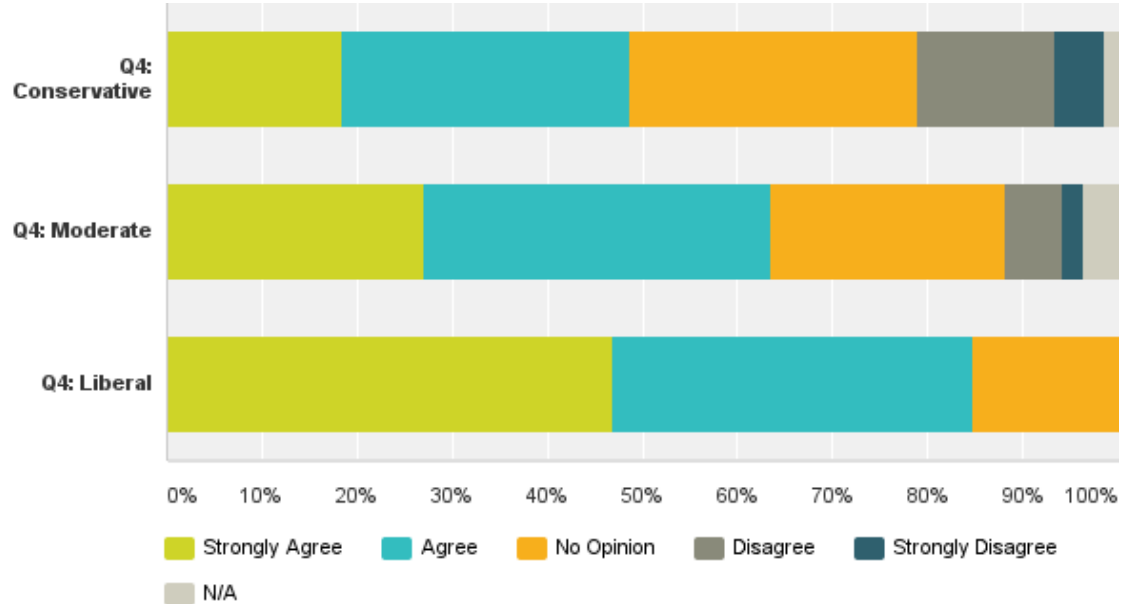


C.



58

D.



**Figure 16: Level of belief that actions to protect the environment are also good for the economy. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

## **Judaism, Jewish life and the environment.**

For the Orthodox Jew, Judaism permeates each and every aspect of one's private and public life. How this intersects with active engagement on environmental issues is the focus of the next set of questions. The topics considered in this part of the survey are level of involvement in religious- and/or secular-based environmental organizations, types of organizational structure (including role of the synagogue rabbi) and/or activities that motivate involvement and action, level of and interest in relationship between Jewish texts and environmental action, influence of Israel and its environmental actions as a role model for personal action, and suggested strategies that would enhance environmental engagement within the Orthodox community.

### ***Level of involvement in religious- and/or secular-based environmental organizations.***

There are two aspects to involvement in environmental organizations: current involvement and in what form or degree of religious-based organization would Orthodox Jews feel comfortable: Jewish, interfaith or secular. Level of interest in being a part of an environmental organization was also assessed by how individuals rate the importance of having an Orthodox voice within a particular organization.

#### ***Current involvement.***

59

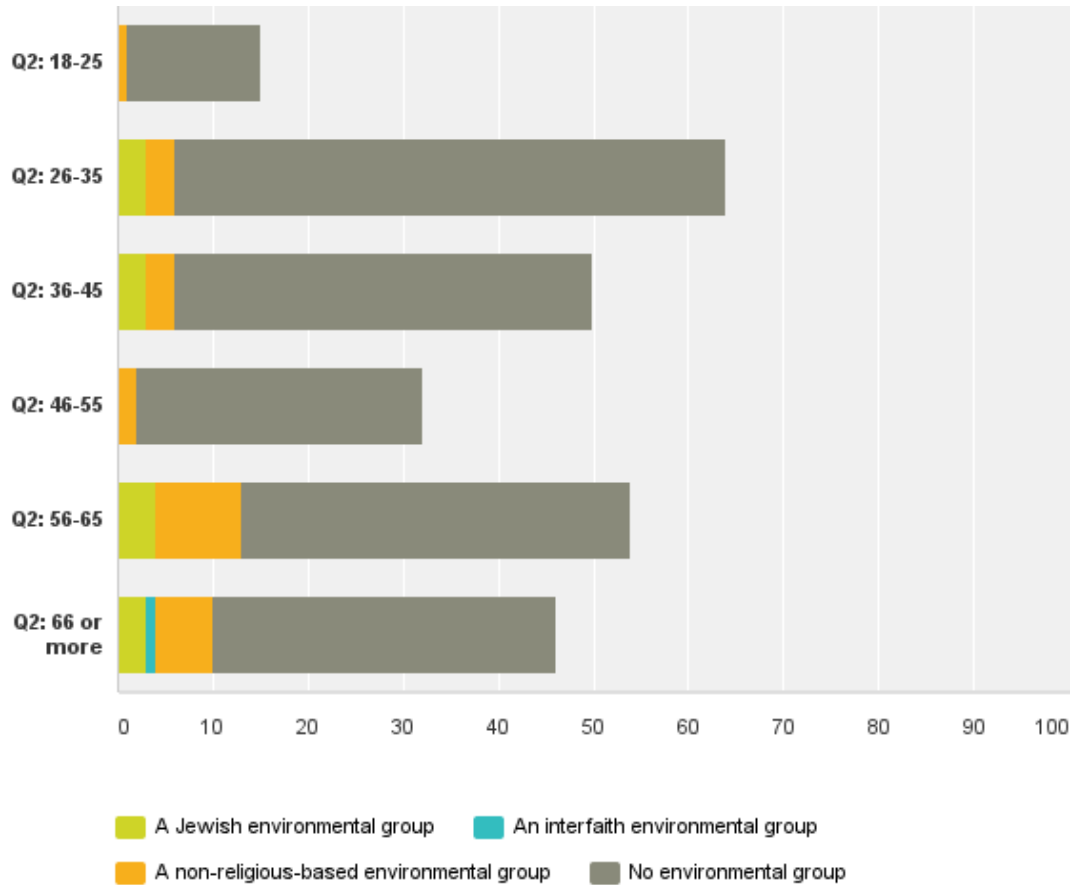
#### **Age**

- Regardless of age (Fig. 17A), the vast majority of respondents do not belong to any environmental group regardless of its religious focus.
- Only the group of 66 or older had even a small amount of participation in interfaith efforts (2.3%).
- Involvement in Jewish-based groups is under 10% regardless of age. While less than 10% of the age 18-55 years-old groups were involved in non-religious-based environmental organizations, 17.7% of the 56-65 and 14% of the 66 and older groups were participants in such groups.

#### **Geographic Location**

- Similar patterns were observed between geographic locations (Fig. 17B). While Western and Southern data sets were too small to assess, 83-91% of Midwestern and Eastern participants noted that they were not involved in any environmental group.
- No Midwestern respondents were involved in any Jewish group and only 6.7% of Eastern survey participants were part of a Jewish environmental organization.
- Less than 1% of Eastern respondents were involved in interfaith efforts.

A.

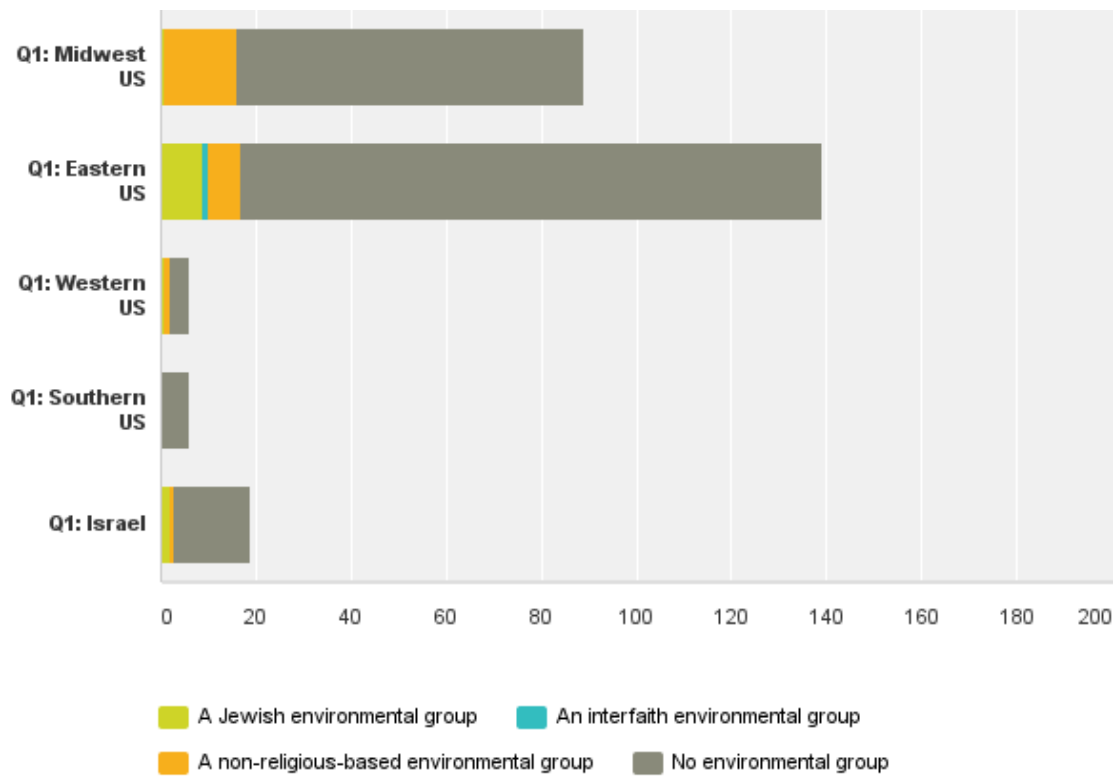


60

### Orthodox Spectrum

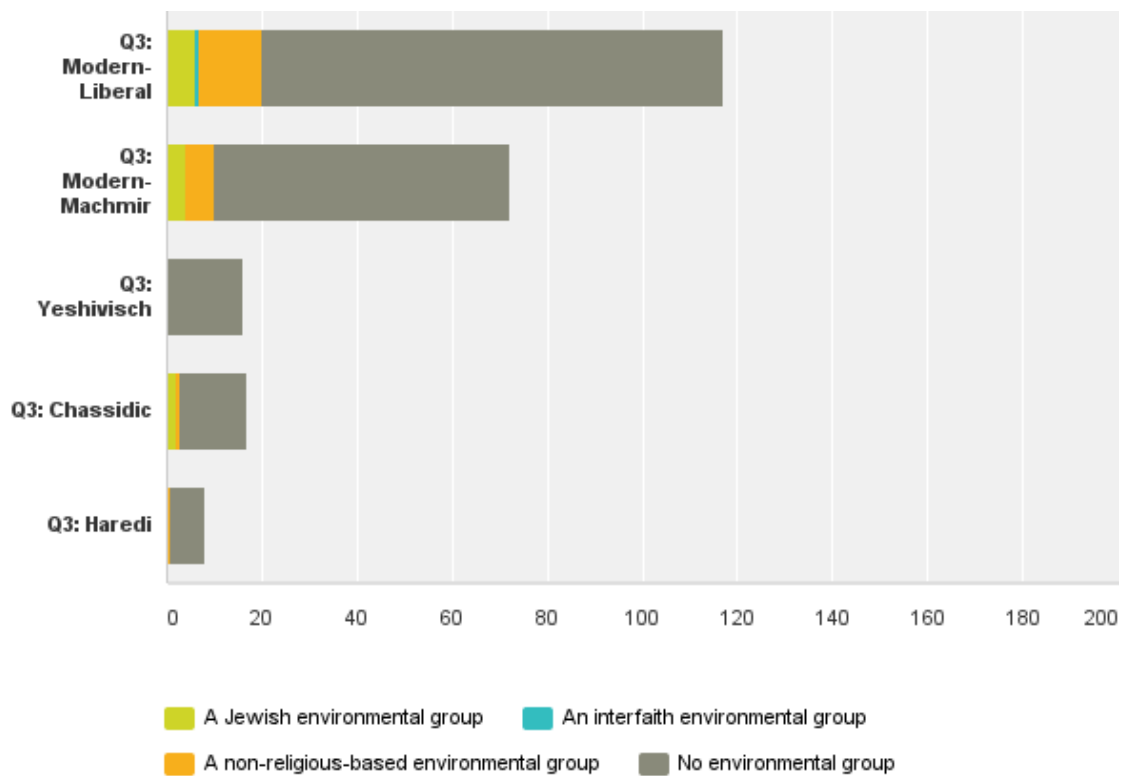
- Over 80% of all respondents regardless of where one placed themselves within the spectrum of Orthodoxy were not involved in any environmental organization (Fig. 17C).
- A small number of Modern-Liberal Orthodox Jews are involved in interfaith efforts (0.9%).
- Less than 6% of Modern Orthodox Jews (Liberal and Machmir) are involved in Jewish environmental groups.

B.



61

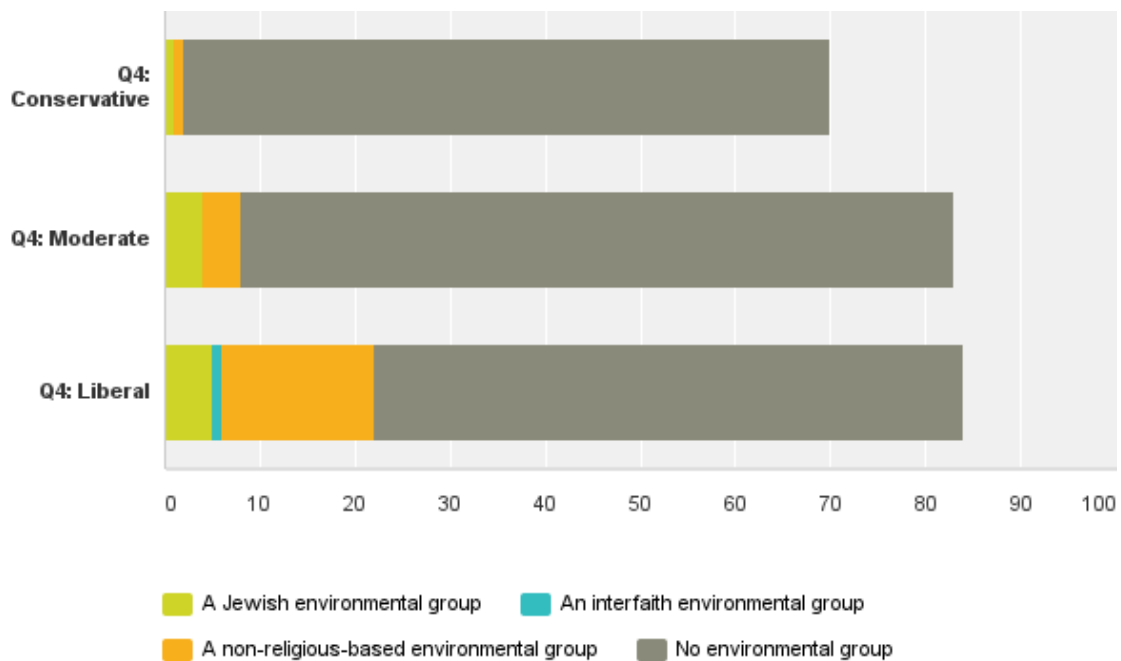
C.



## Political Philosophy

- A clear trend in organizational involvement is observed with political philosophy (Fig. 17D). 97.1% of Conservatives, 91.5 % of Moderates and 78.5% of Liberals are not involved in any environmental group.
- Among Conservatives who are involved, 1.4 % were in Jewish-based groups and 1.4% were in non-religious groups.
- 4.9% of Moderates are in Jewish-based groups and another 4.9% are in non-religious-based organizations.
- Liberals show the greatest level of participation in formal environmental groups: 8.3% in Jewish-based groups, 1.3% in interfaith efforts and 20.3% in non-religious-based organizations.

D.

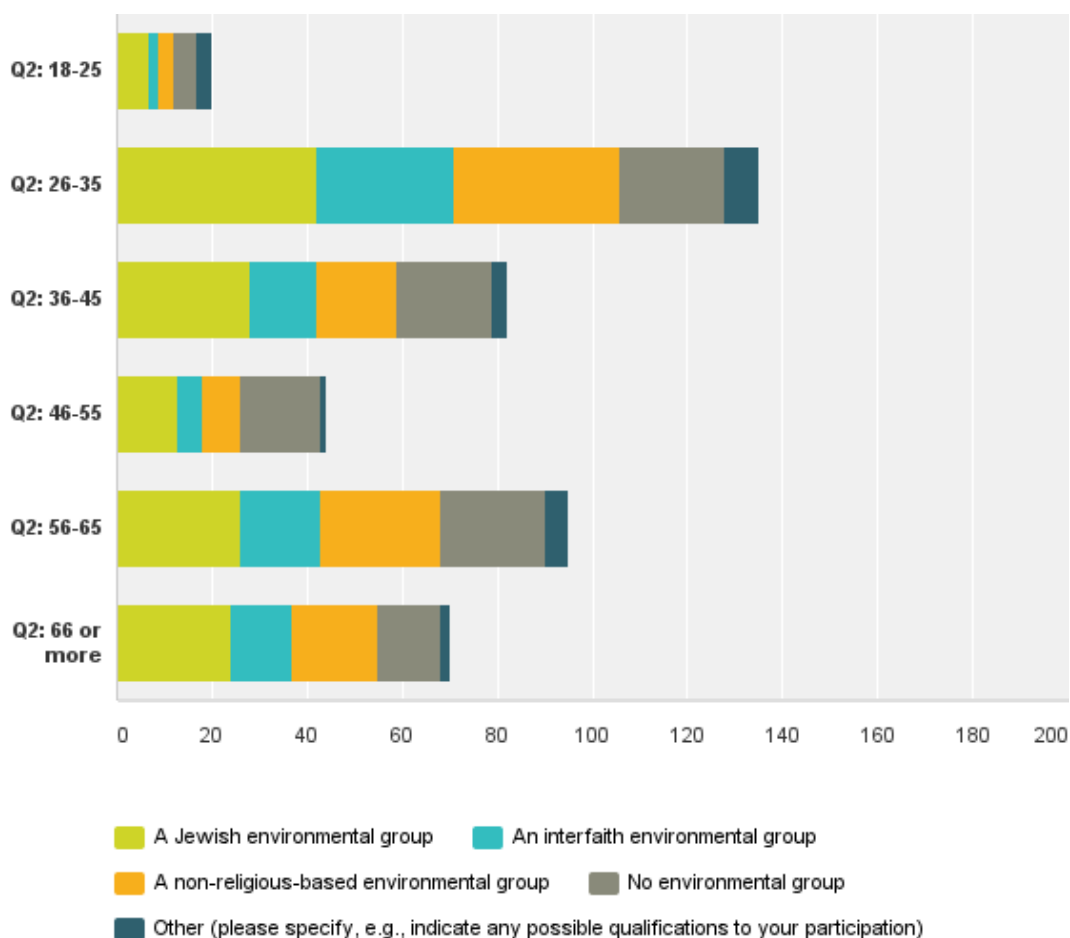


**Figure 17: Current involvement in environmental organizations. A.** By age group. **B.** By geographic location. **C.** By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. **D.** By political philosophy.

### ***Potential involvement.***

Often level of participation is a direct function of opportunities available. Therefore, the next question examined a “what-if” situation, i.e., if given the opportunity to become involved in an environmental organization, how comfortable would you feel in various religious- or secular-based organizations.

**A.**



63

### **Age**

- Across all age groups (Fig. 18A), there is a dramatic increase in willingness to become more involved in both religious- and non-religious-based environmental organizations and a decrease in choosing no involvement.
- Interest in Jewish-based groups ranged from 40.6% (ages 46-55) to 66.7% (ages 26-35).
- Willingness to participate in interfaith-based groups ranged from 14.3% (ages 18-25) to 34% (ages 56-65).
- Secular-based organizations also were of interest for 21.4% of ages 18-25 up to 55.6% among the 26-35 year-old group.

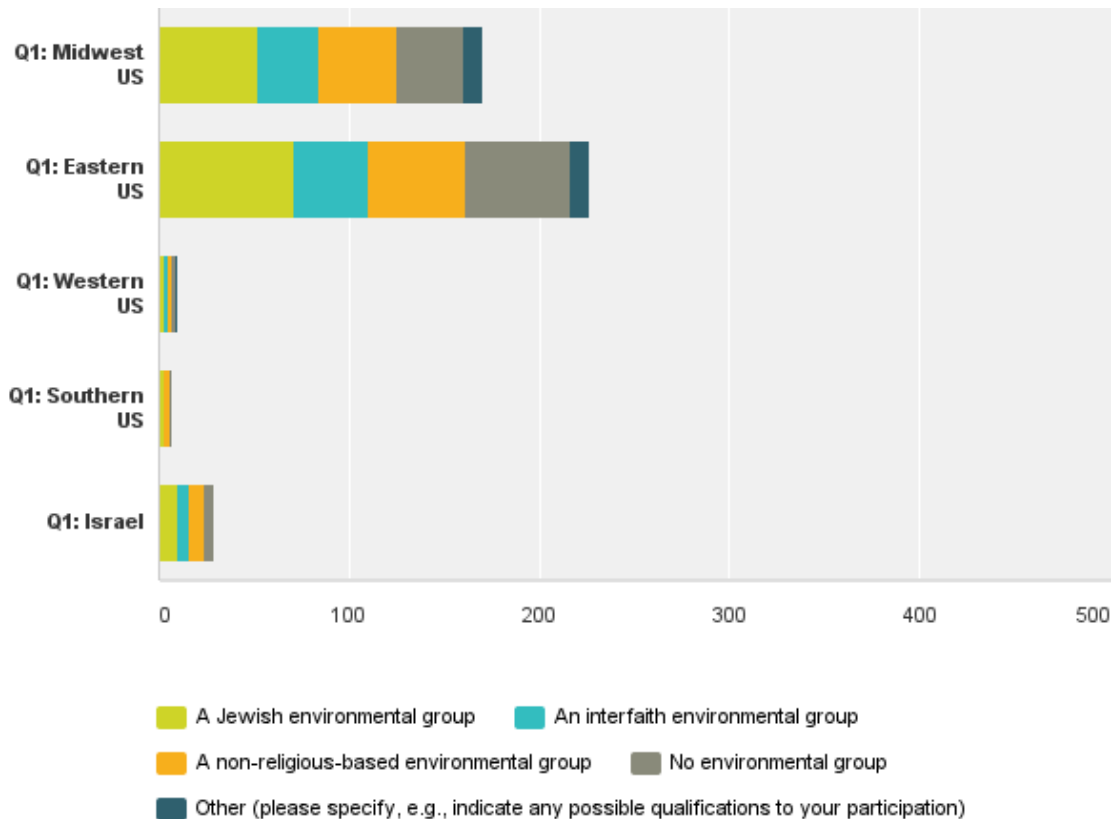


- Non-involvement as a choice decreased to 31.7% among the 66 and older group to 53.1% among 46-55 year-olds.

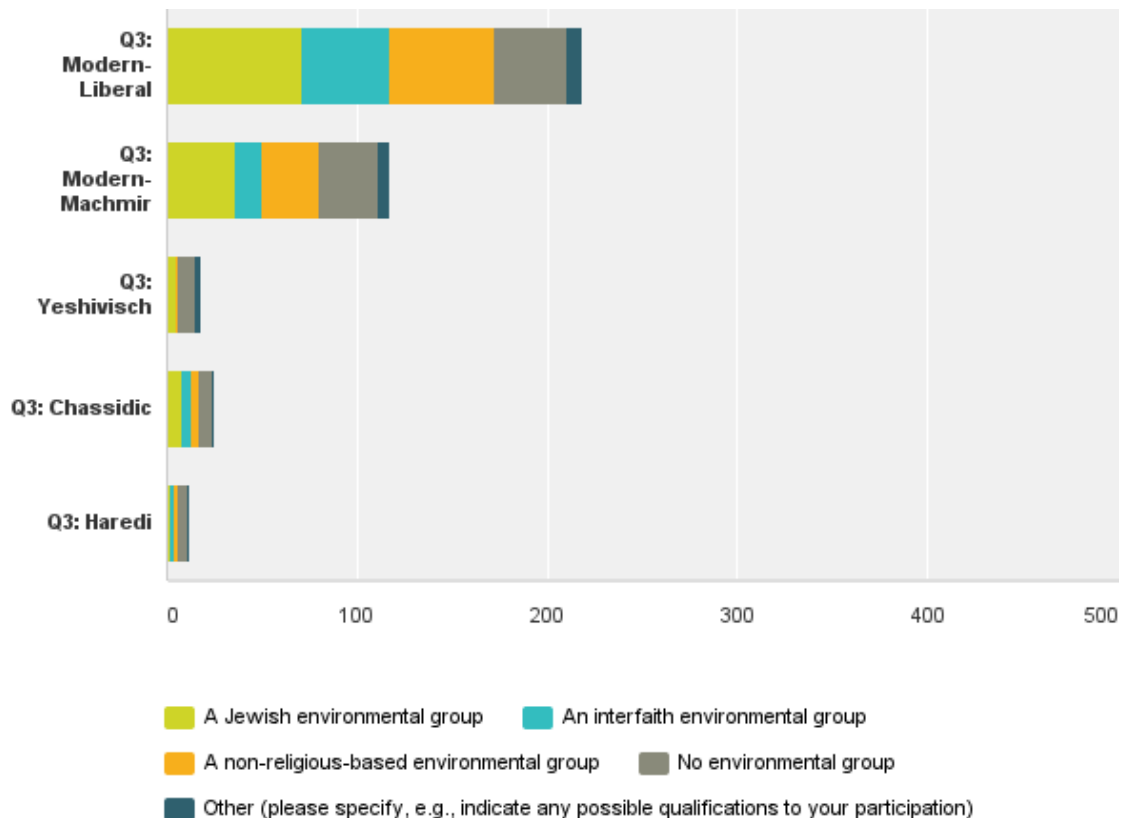
### **Geographic Location**

- Increase in willingness to become involved was also observed across geographic locations (Fig. 18B). More than one-half of the Midwestern and Eastern US respondents would participate in a Jewish-based group.
- 30-36% would also be willing to be involved in interfaith efforts.
- 38-47% would join a non-religious environmental organization.
- A greater than 50% reduction in non-involvement could occur if opportunities were made available.

**B.**



C.



65

### Orthodox Spectrum

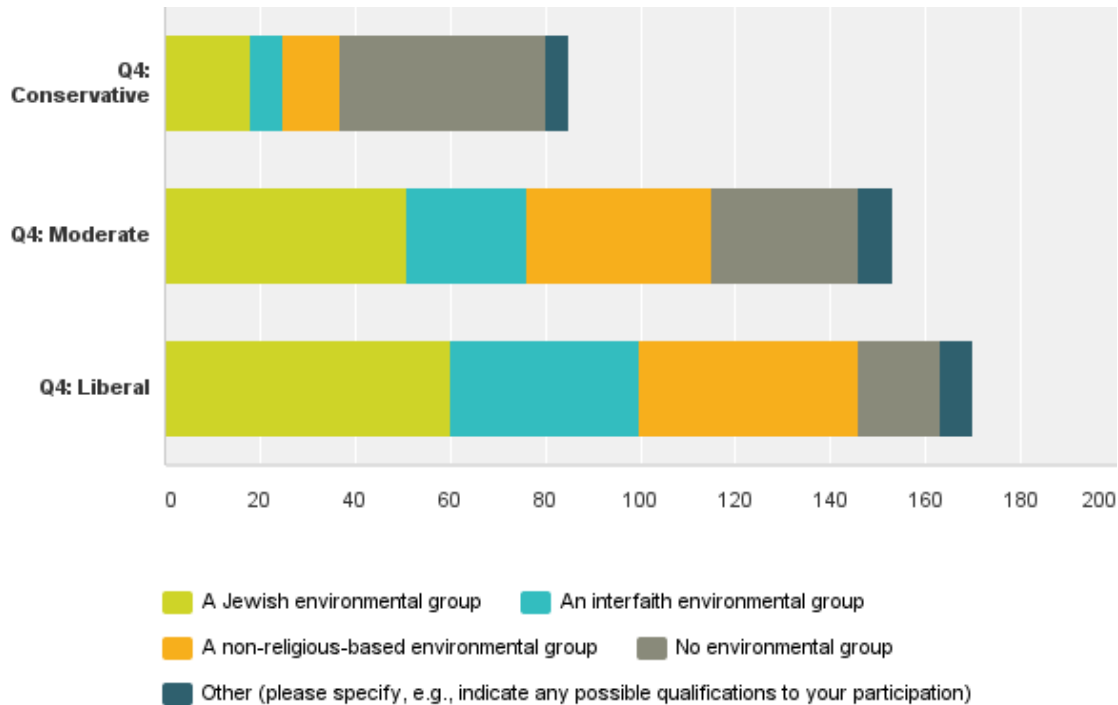
- Among Modern Orthodox Jews, 64.6% of Liberal and 51.4% of Machmir participants would join a Jewish-based environmental group (Fig. 18C).
- 41.8 and 20%, respectively, would join an interfaith effort.
- 50 and 41.9%, respectively, would get involved in a non-religious-based organization.
- A greater than 50% reduction in number of individuals not willing to be involved in any group occurred in both groups.

### Political philosophy

- Political philosophy affected interest level but all respondents regardless of political outlook displayed greater willingness to become involved (Fig. 18D).
- Conservatives were less inclined to join an environmental group regardless of religious perspective of that group (26.5 vs 10.3%, Jewish- vs interfaith-based, respectively) when compared to Moderates (61.5 vs 30.1%, respectively) or Liberals (77.9 vs 52%, respectively).
- More Conservatives (63.3%) were less interested in joining an environmental group than Moderates (37.4%) or Liberals (22.1%) and

less inclined to participate even in a non-religious based organization (17.7, 47 and 59.7% willing, respectively).

D.



66

**Figure 18: Potential involvement in environmental organizations.** A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.

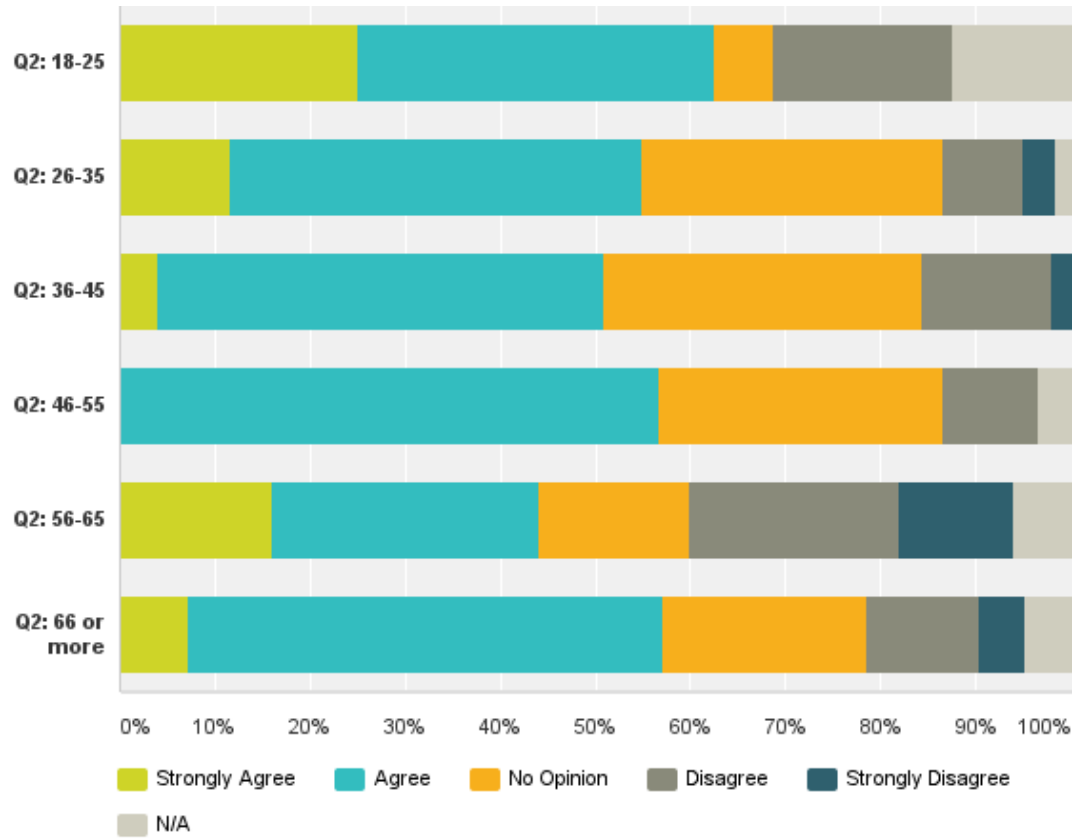
### ***Religious component to activity as a motivating force for environmental action.***

Another potential motivating factor is the degree to which an environmental action is imbued with religious significance. In Orthodox Judaism this may entail such areas as specific Jewish values (examined more specifically in later questions) or halacha.

#### **Age**

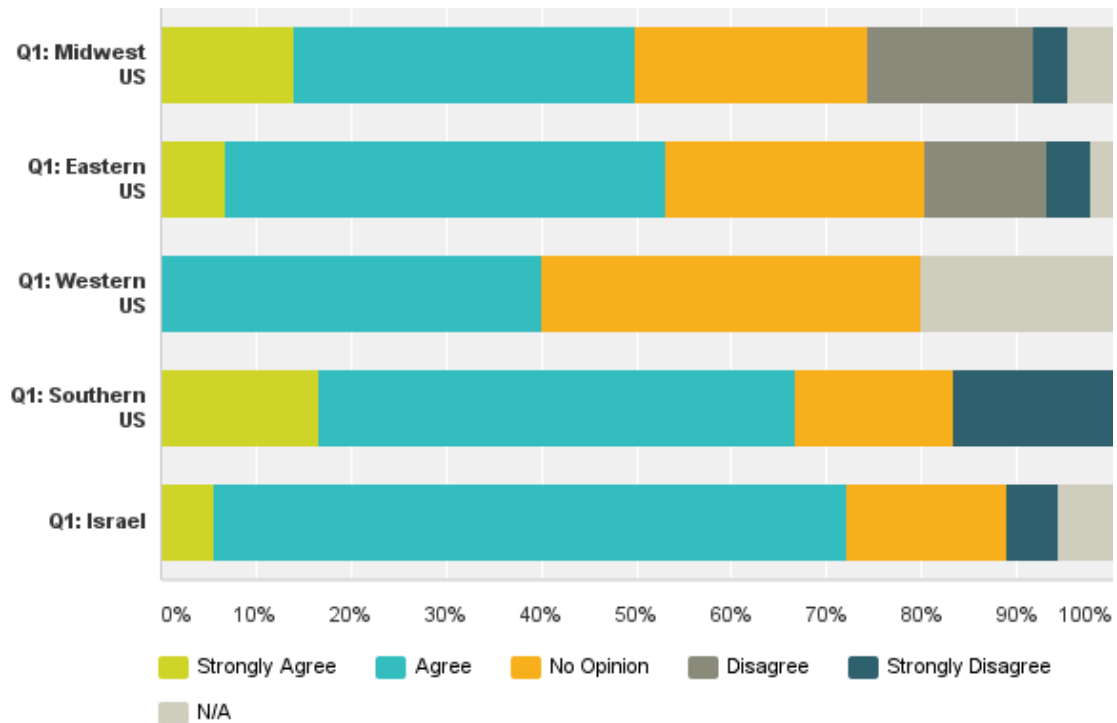
- With the exception of the 56-65 year-old group, over one-half of all respondents regardless of age agreed that adding a religious component to an environmental activity would increase personal involvement; the highest level of agreement was among the youngest age group with 62.5% (Fig. 19A).

A.



67

B.



## Geographic Location

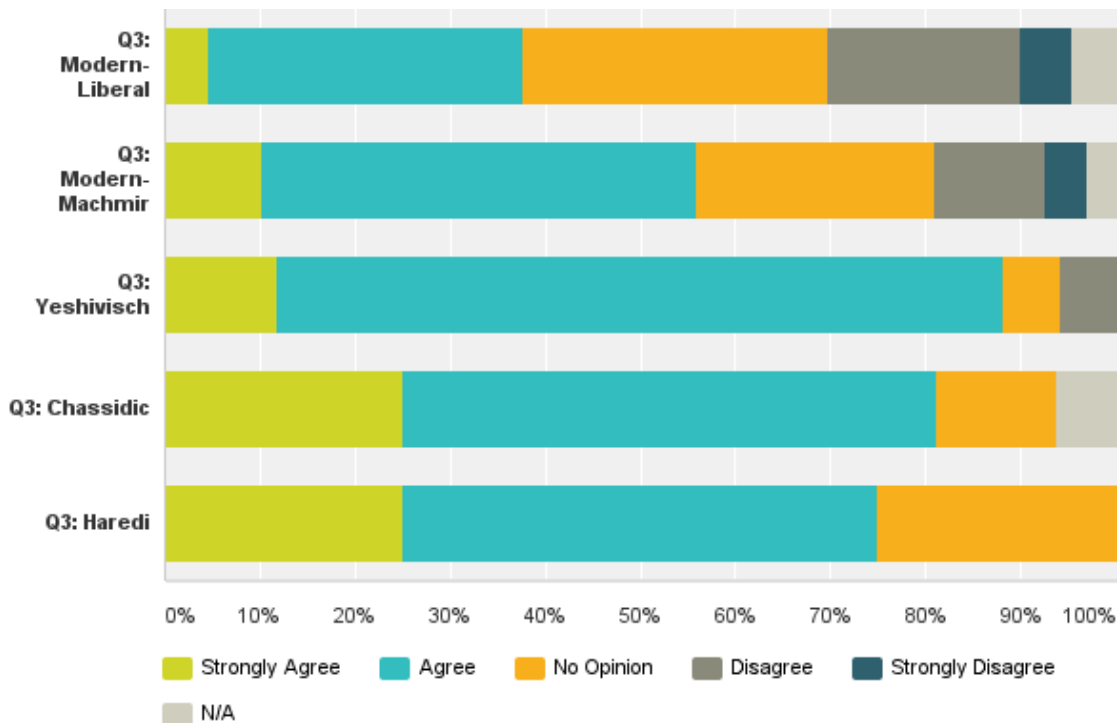
- Approximately one-half of all Midwestern (50.1%) and Eastern (53%) respondents indicated that a Jewish approach to environmental action would increase their involvement (Fig. 19B).

## Orthodox Spectrum

- While only 37.6% of Modern Orthodox-Liberal Jews felt that adding a religious component to an action would increase their involvement, 55.9% of Modern-Machmir Jews did (Fig. 19C).
- While only 2.5 % of Modern-Machmir Jews had no opinion, 32.1% of Modern-Liberal Jews had no opinion. 25.7% of Modern-Liberal Jews disagreed with the statement but only 16.6% of Modern-Machmir Jews disagreed.
- Over three-fourths of the Yeshivisch, Chassidic and Haredi Jews agreed that adding a Jewish aspect to an activity would increase their involvement.
- 

C.

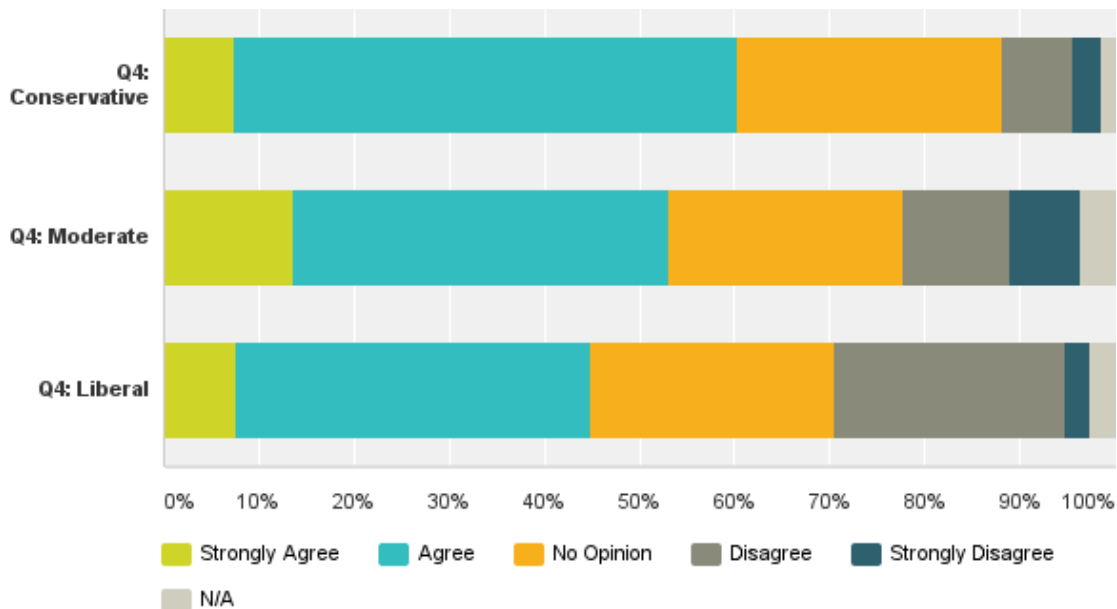
68



## Political Philosophy

- A clear trend using the political philosophy demographic was observed (Fig. 19D).
- 60.3% of Conservatives agreed that adding a religious component to an environmental activity would increase their interest level.
- Fewer Moderates (53.1%) were influenced by this.
- Only 44.9% of Liberals agreed.
- Among Conservatives, 10.3% disagreed, while 16.5 % of Moderates and only 2.7% of Liberals disagreed.

D.



**Figure 19: The effect on level of engagement when adding a religious component to an environmental action project or program. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

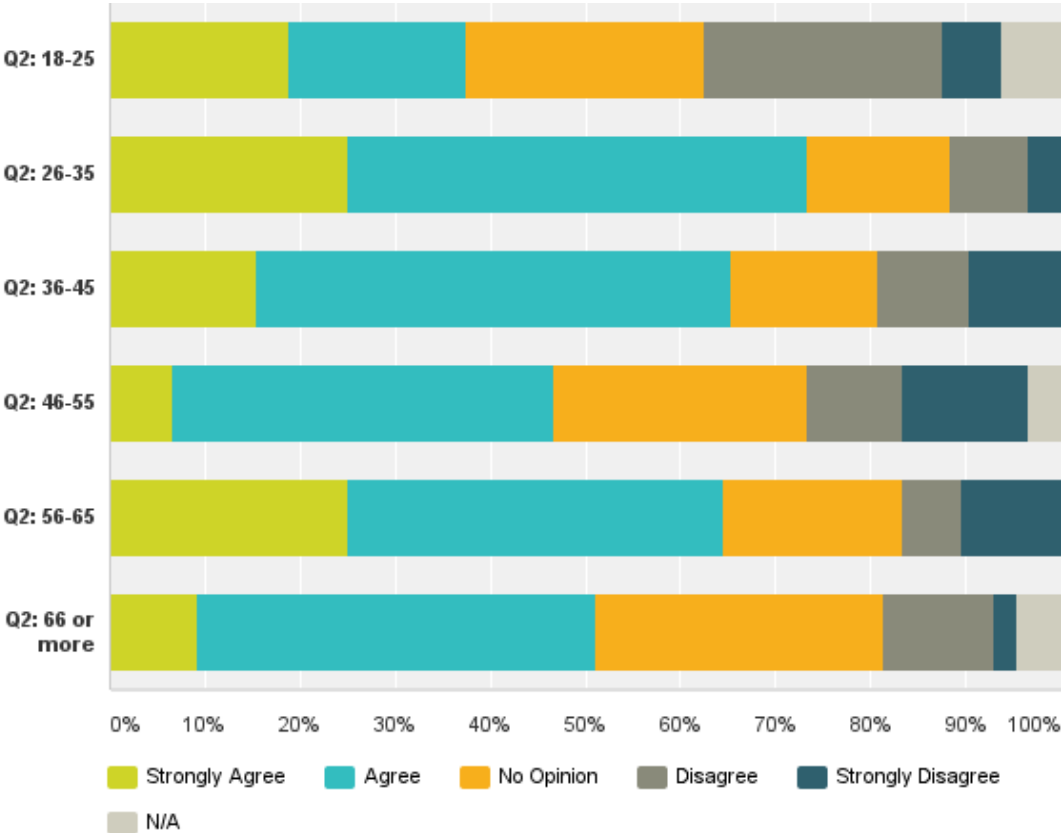
### ***Types of organizational structure and/or activities that motivate involvement and action.***

Beyond efforts fostered by non-profit organizations that focus on environmental issues, community programming or synagogue activities can influence level of involvement in environmental activities. The structure of the activity itself may have a role in increasing interest. Examples of this are whether the program primarily environmental vs environmental topics and/or action are only a part of the overall program or whether tying in a Jewish perspective to the action influences level of engagement. The nature of program leadership may matter, e.g., does rabbinical involvement influence decisions to become more active? Lastly, the

degree of inclusivity of Orthodox viewpoints as an influencing agent in the level of involvement in environmental action within an organization is evaluated.

***Jewish communal programming that is primarily environmental.***

**A.**



70

**Age**

- No consistent trends regarding participation in Jewish communal programming that was primarily environmental were observed by age group (Fig. 20A).
- Highest interest levels were seen among the following age groups: 26-35 (73.3%), 36-45 (65.4%) and 56-65 (64.6%). The lowest levels were observed among 18-25 (37.6%) and 46-55 (46.7%) year-olds.

**Geographic Location**

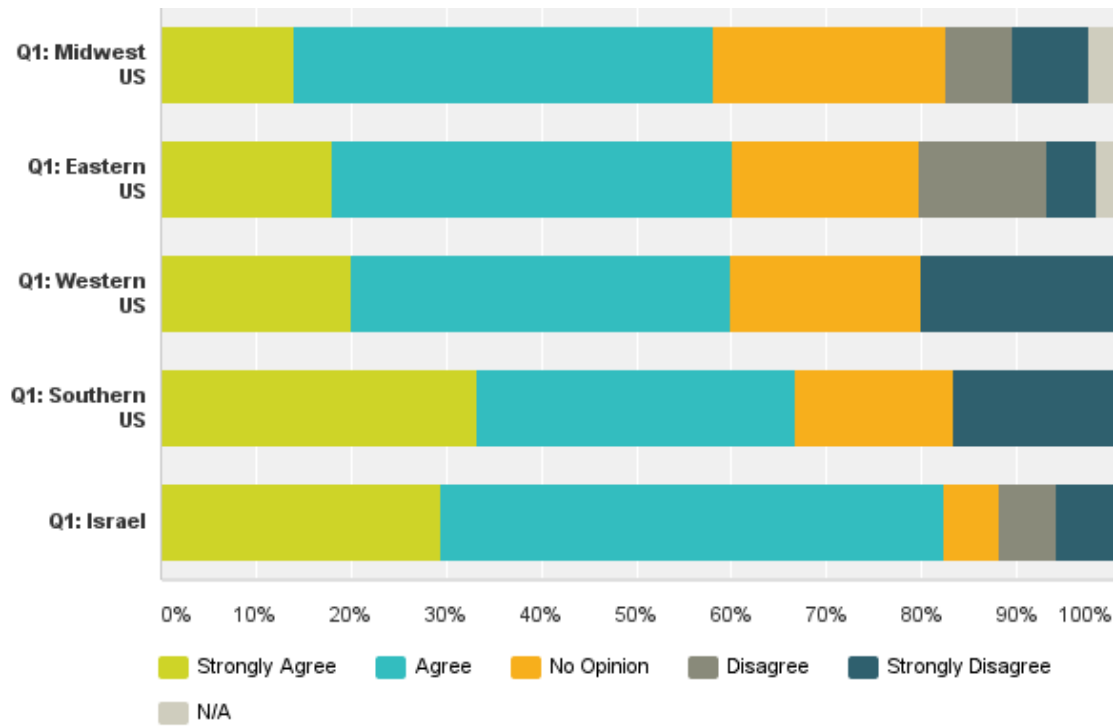
- There was no effect of geographic location (Midwest: 58.2% vs East Coast: 60.2% agreed; Fig. 20B).

**Orthodox Spectrum**

- Among Modern Orthodox Jews, willingness to participate in a program that was primarily environmental was higher among Liberal: 66.1 than

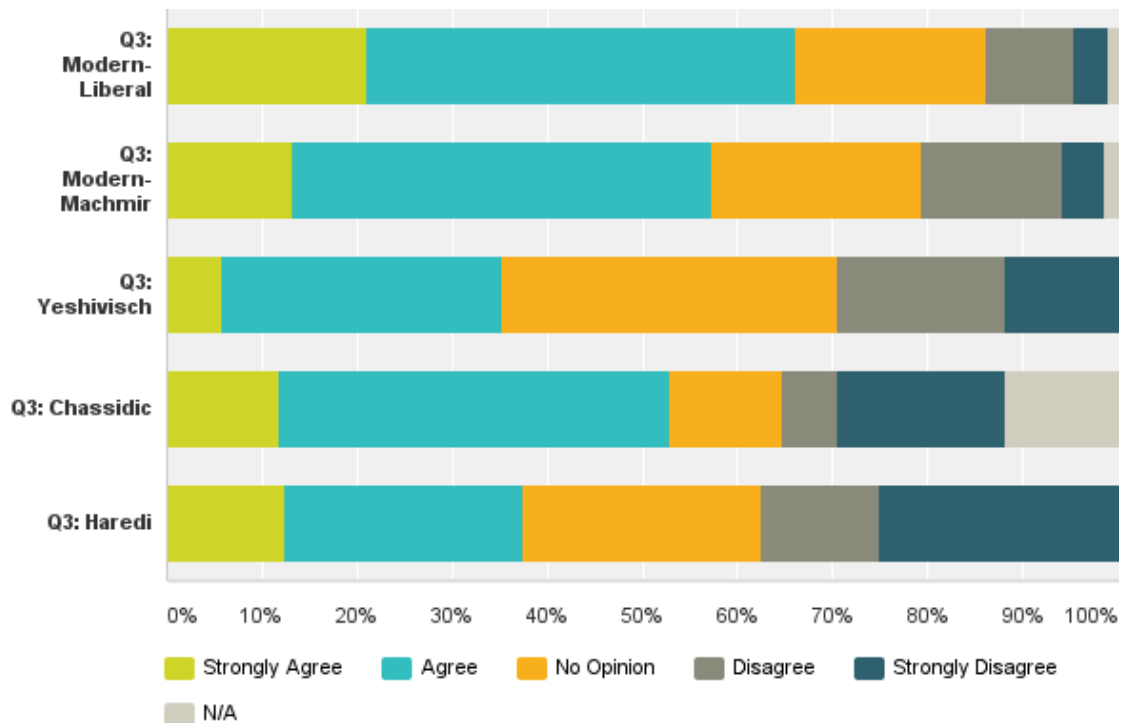
Machmir: 57.3% (Fig. 20C); less than 20% of respondents in either group disagreed.

**B.**



71

**C.**

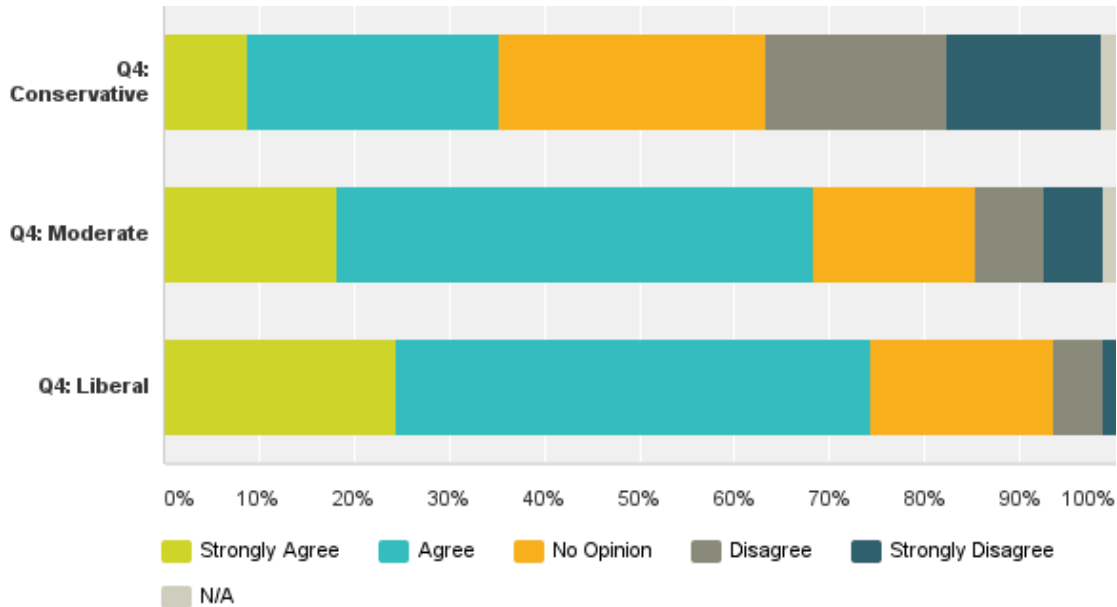




### Political Philosophy

- Political philosophy affected level of agreement with the statement that one would participate in a program that was primarily environmental (Fig. 20D).
- Fewer Conservative respondents agreed with the question (35.3%--an equal number disagreed with the statement), while both Moderates and Liberals were very supportive of such programming (68.3 vs 74.4%, respectively).

D.



**Figure 20: Level of interest in Jewish communal programming in which the primary focus is the environment. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

### ***Jewish communal programming that is NOT primarily environmental.***

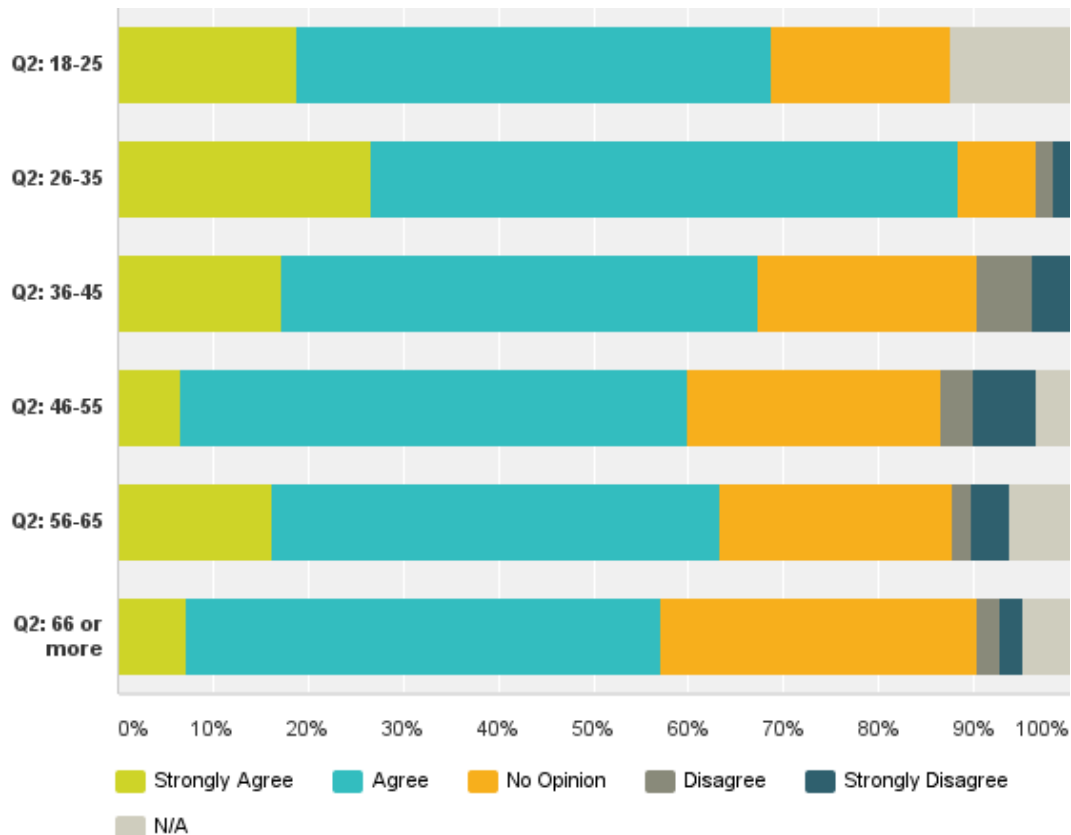
Because the above statement is not necessarily a critique of environmental programming but a statement of level of support about programming that is exclusively or primarily environmental, it was also important to examine whether participants in Jewish communal events would be comfortable with some aspects of that program focusing on the environment. This perspective can have important effects on how programs are designed to enhance environmental engagement.

### General Observations

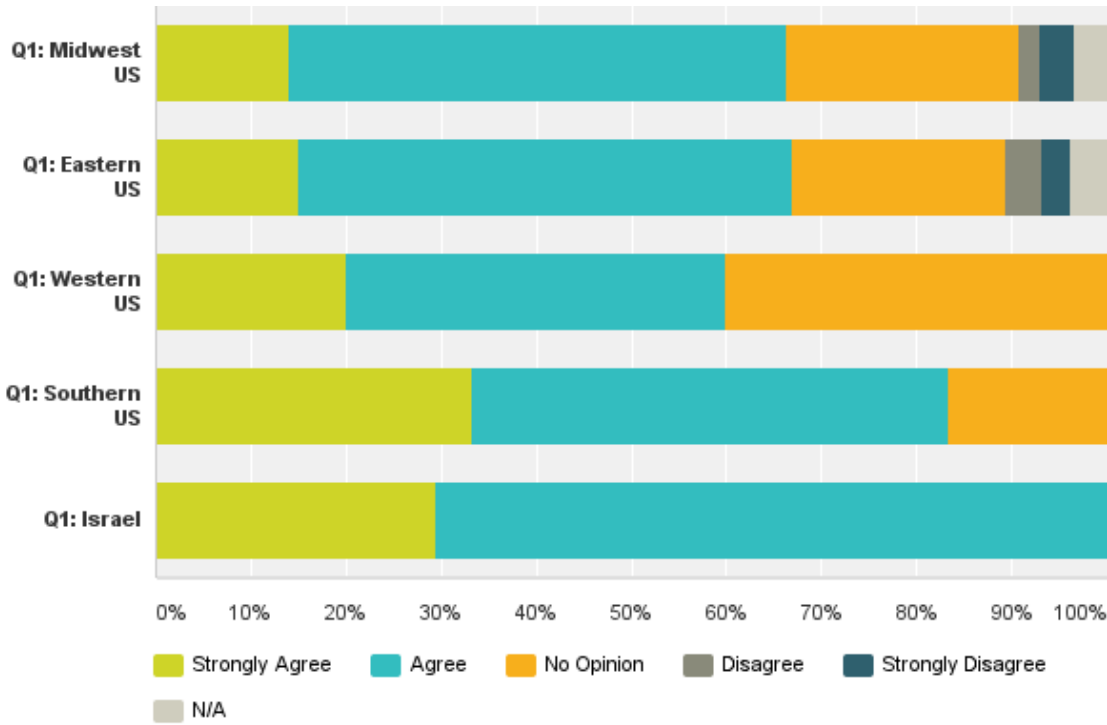
- Across all demographic groupings (Fig. 20), there is a shift toward higher levels of agreement that one would participate if a Jewish communal program did not have the environment as a primary theme.

- In all demographic groupings, there was a comparative decrease in those who disagreed.
- All **age** groups, except for the two older groups, showed significantly greater willingness to participate if the program did not have a primarily environmental focus (Fig. 21A).
- There was little change when data grouped by **location** (Fig. 21B).
- **Orthodox Spectrum:** While Modern Orthodox Jews showed little change in attitude, those from the Yeshivish, Chassidic and Haredi groups displayed twice as much interest (Fig. 21C).
- The largest gain when **political philosophy** is considered was among Conservatives (50.8% agreed; Fig. 21D). While a small increase occurred among Moderates, there was little change among Liberals.

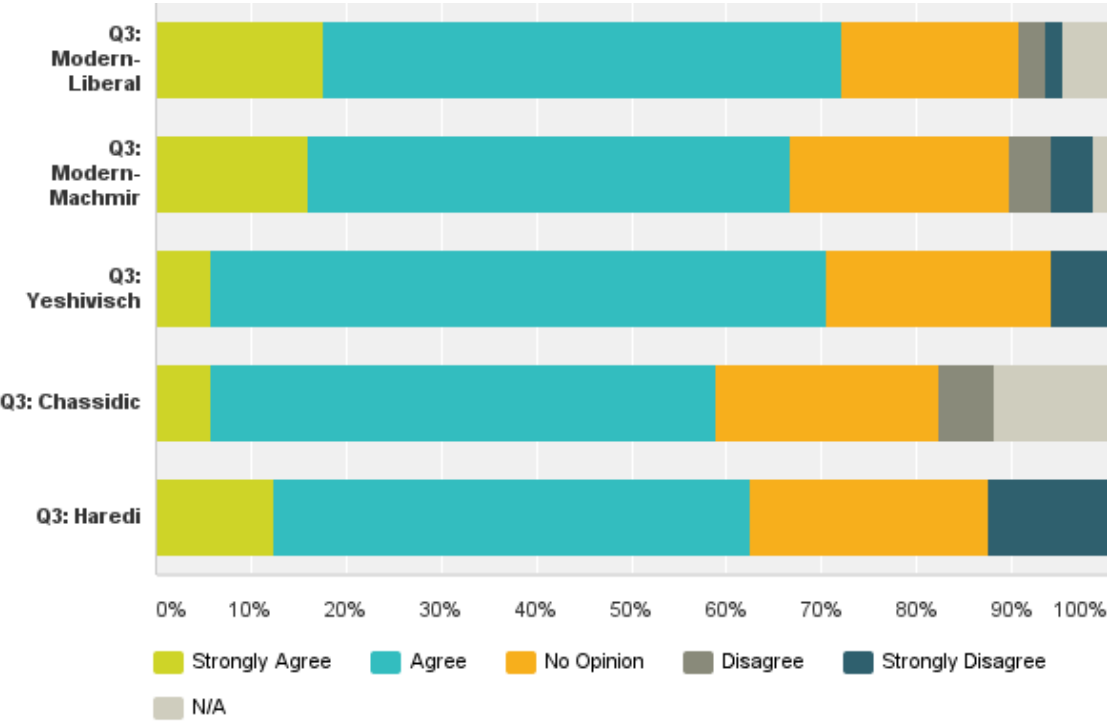
A.



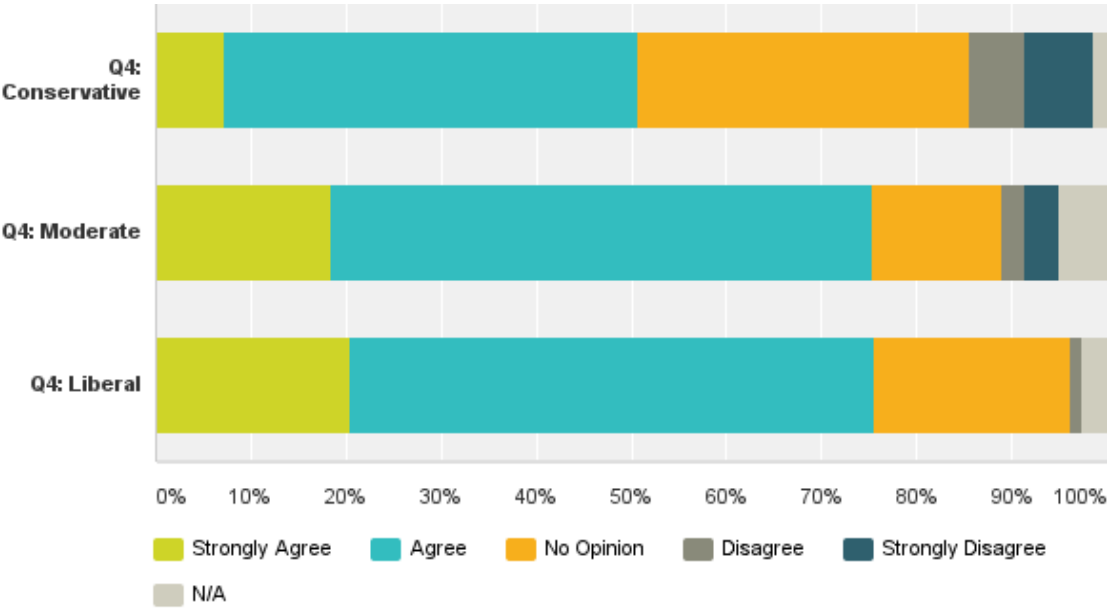
B.



c.



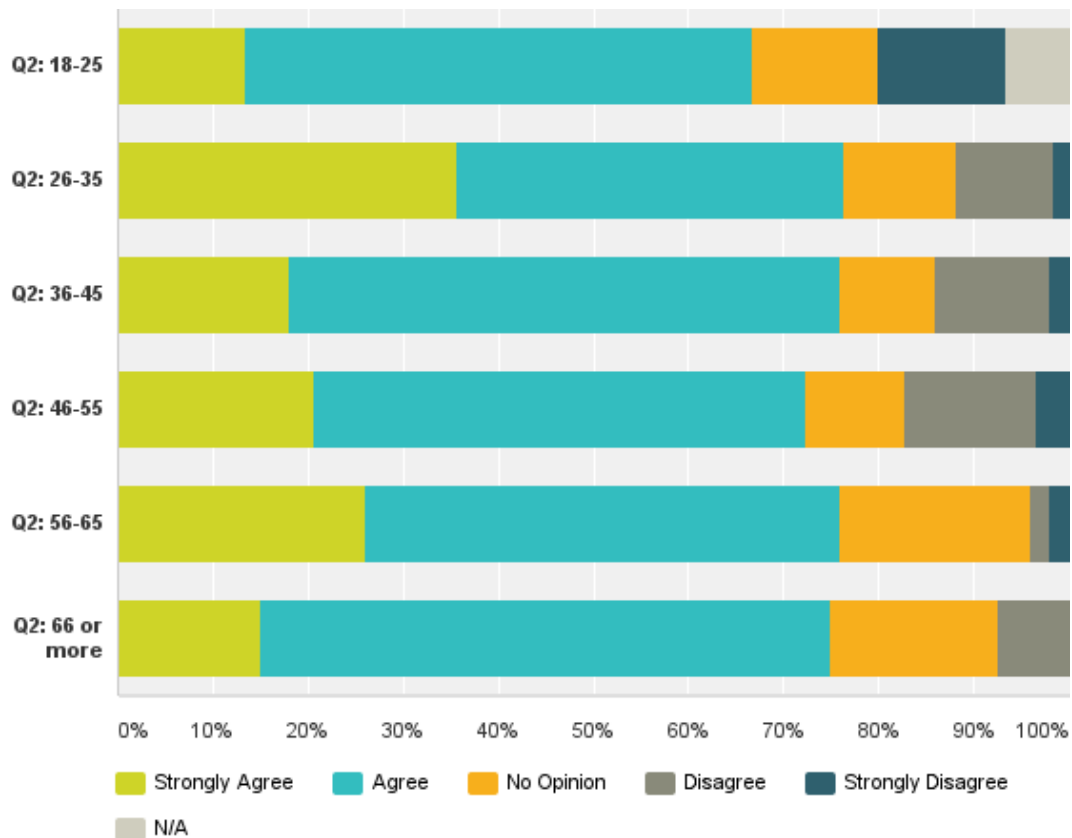
D.



**Figure 21: Level of interest in Jewish communal programming in which the environment is NOT the primary focus. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

*The synagogue as an important organizing unit for environmental action.*

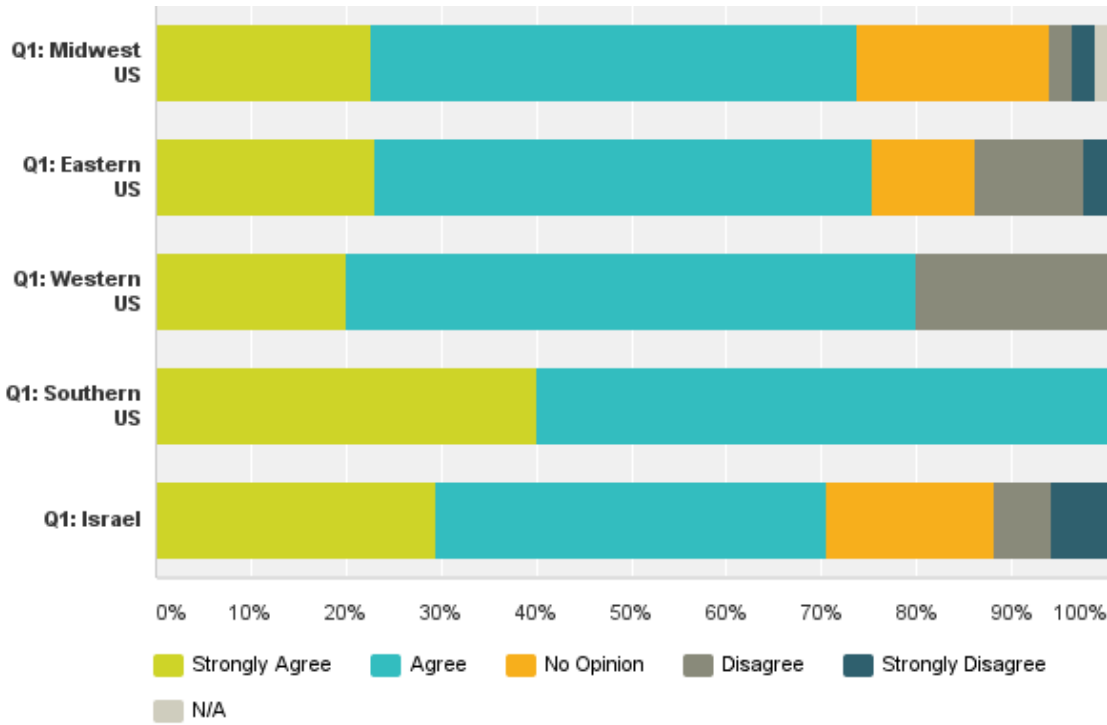
A.



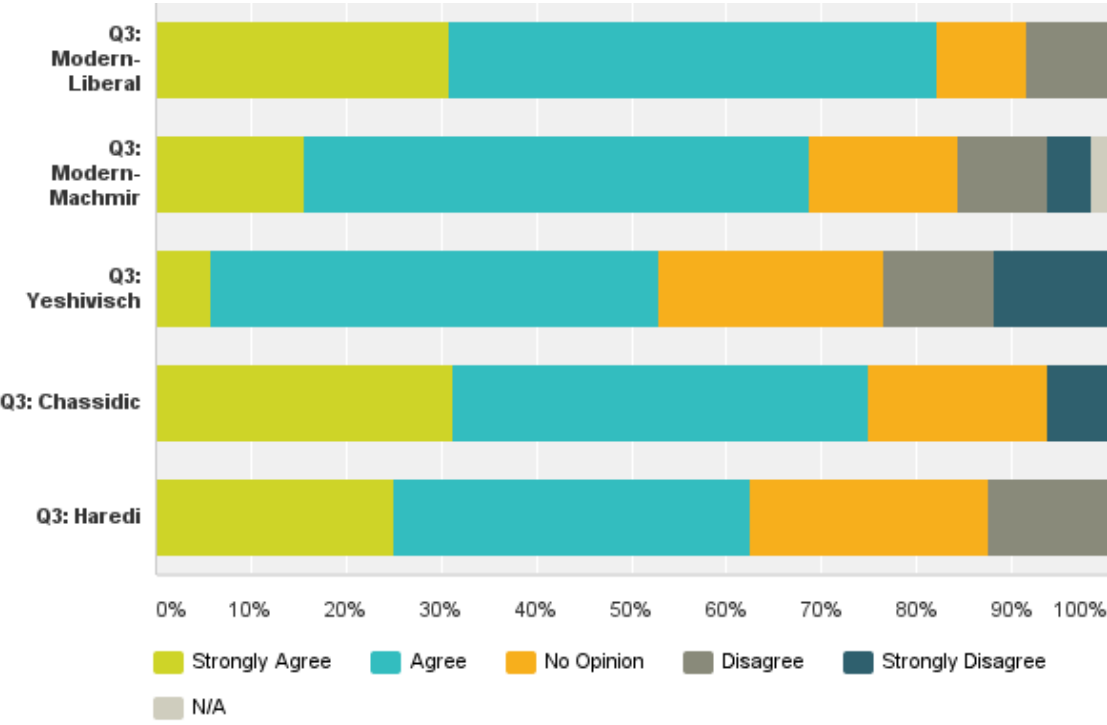
76

- Approximately three-fourths of all Orthodox Jews who responded to the survey ( $\pm 10\%$ ) regardless of age group agreed that the synagogue can be a central organizing unit for environmental activities and action (Fig. 22A).
- **Geographic Location:** Similar support was found among those living in the Midwestern or the Eastern US (Fig. 22B).
- **Orthodox Spectrum:** Strong support for this viewpoint was also found among Modern Orthodox-Liberal (82.2%) and Machmir (68.7%; Fig. 22C) Jews.
- **Political; Philosophy:** While over 80% of politically Moderate (81.8%) and Liberal (87.1%) Orthodox Jews agreed that the synagogue had an important role to play (Fig. 22D), a smaller number, albeit still over one-half, of Conservatives agreed with this statement (55.2%; 23.9% disagreed).

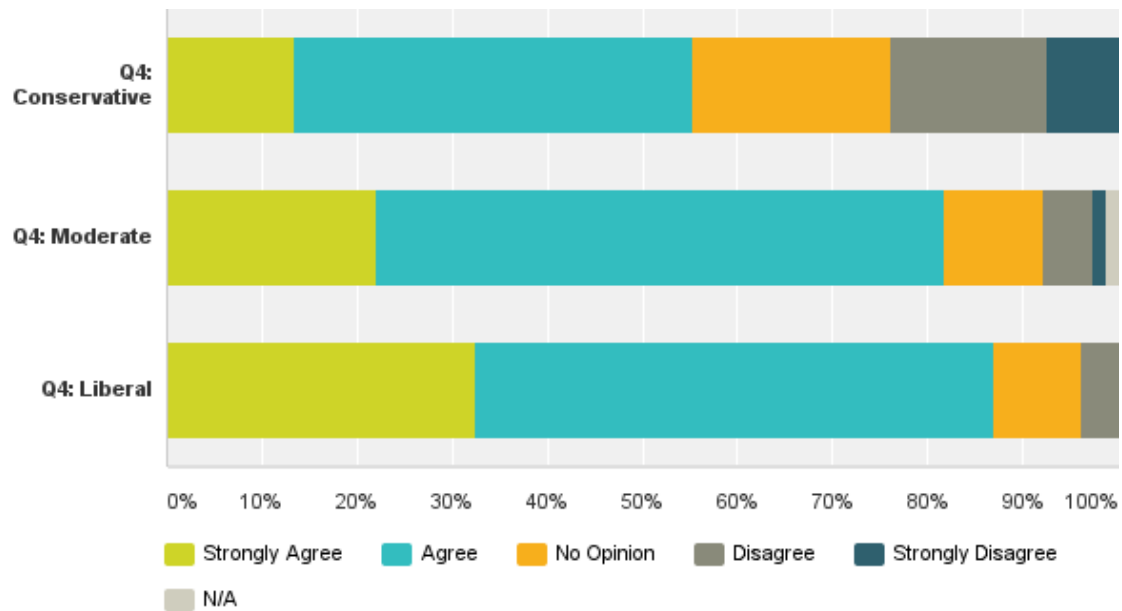
B.



C.



D.

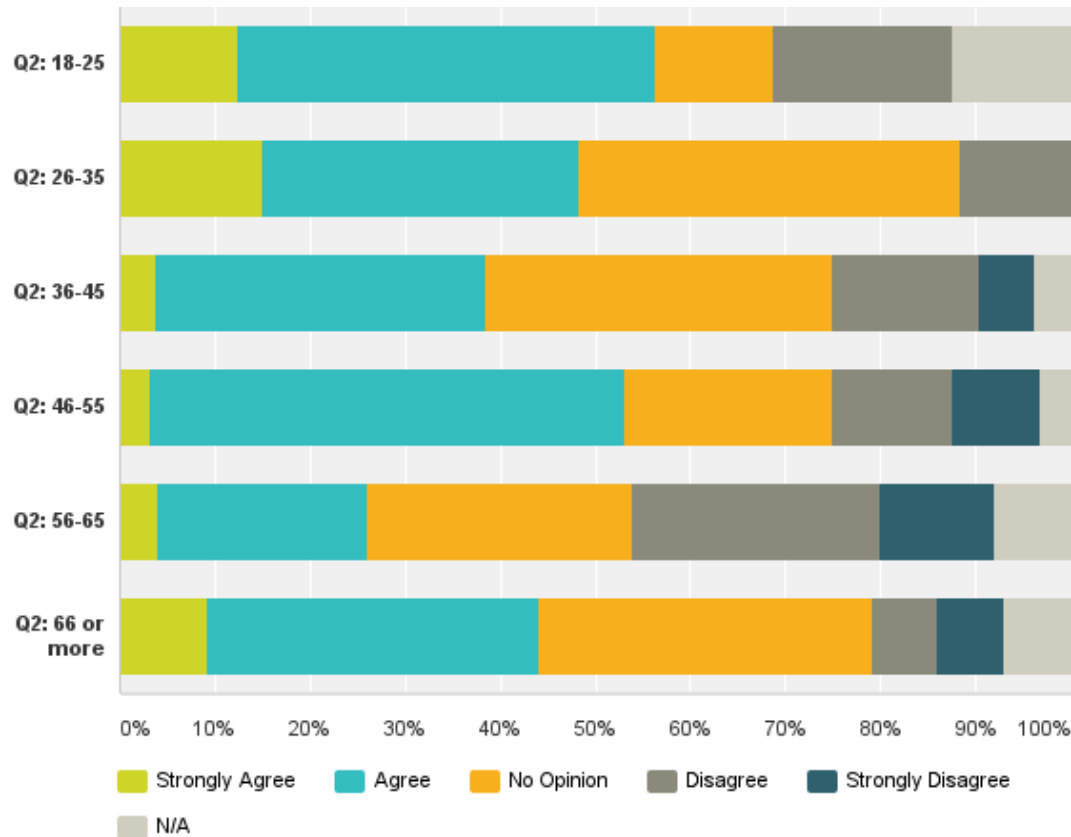


**Figure 22: Level of agreement that the synagogue is an important organizing unit for environmental action. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

**Role of the rabbi.**

Organizationally, the spiritual leader of a synagogue is the rabbi. The role of the rabbi in influencing and directing action can, therefore, be central to the life of an Orthodox Jew. So it is reasonable to inquire whether rabbinical advocacy for environmental action could be a strong motivating factor. Unfortunately, this question did not differentiate between a synagogue rabbi vs a well-respected posek or Rebbe. Thus, the specific level of rabbinical authority being considered by the reader of this question could have a profound impact on individual responses.

A.



79

**Age**

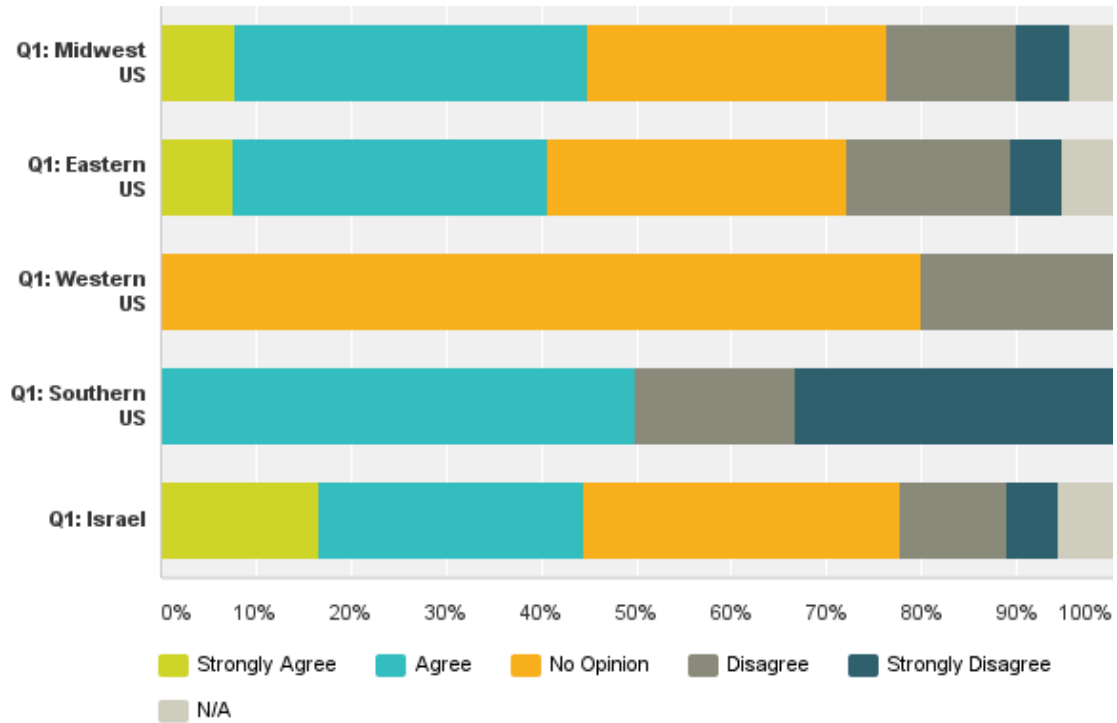
- With the exception of two age groups (18-25: 56.3% and 46-55: 53.1%), less than one-half of all respondents regardless of age believed rabbinical advocacy was important (Fig. 23A).

**Geographic Location**

- Less than one-half of both Midwestern and Eastern survey participants agreed that rabbinical input was influential (45 and 40.6%, respectively; Fig. 23B).

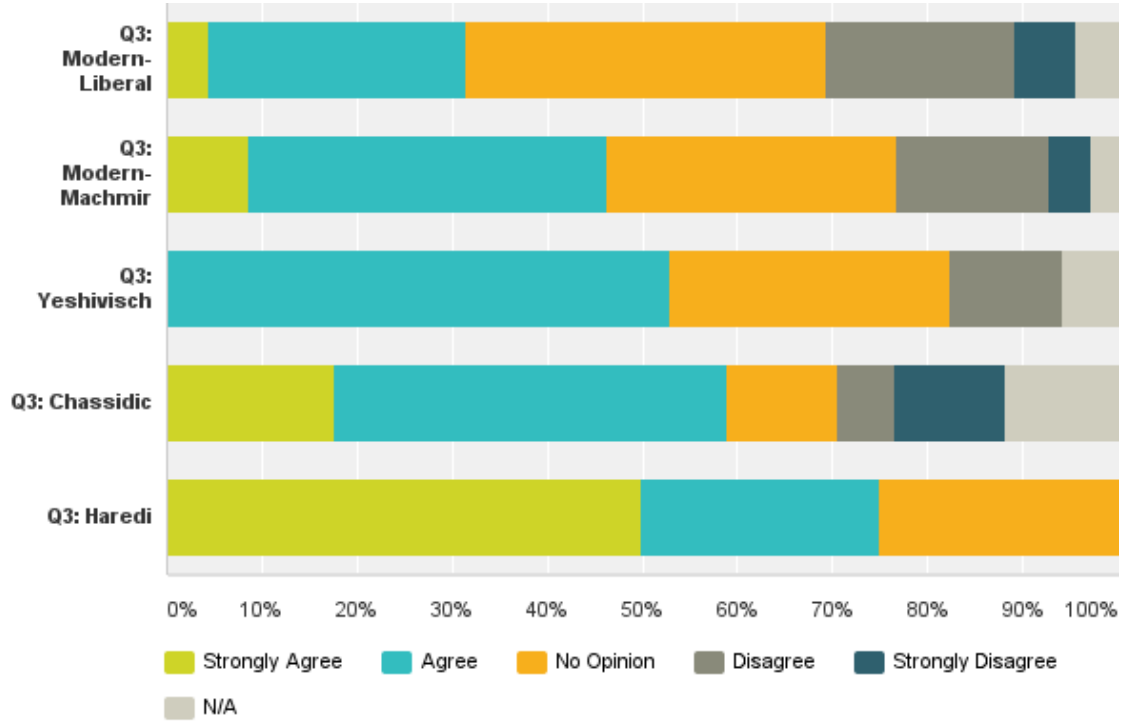


B.



80

c.



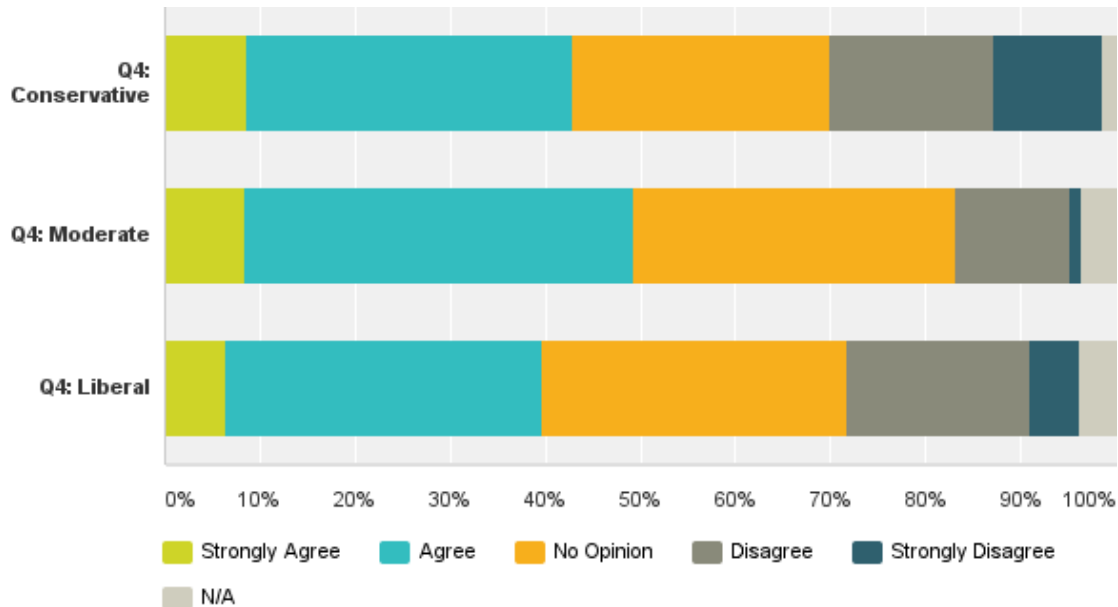
### Orthodox Spectrum

- While most Yeshivisch, Chassidic and Haredi respondents agreed that rabbinical advocacy was important the sample size is too small to make definitive statements.
- Modern Orthodox Jews displayed ambivalence about the question (Liberal: 31.5% agree, 37.8% no opinion and 26.1% disagree; Machmir: 46.4% agree, 30.4% no opinion and 20.3% disagree; Fig. 23C).

### Political Philosophy

- There was little difference between political philosophies with all approximately 40% in agreement (Fig. 23D).

D.



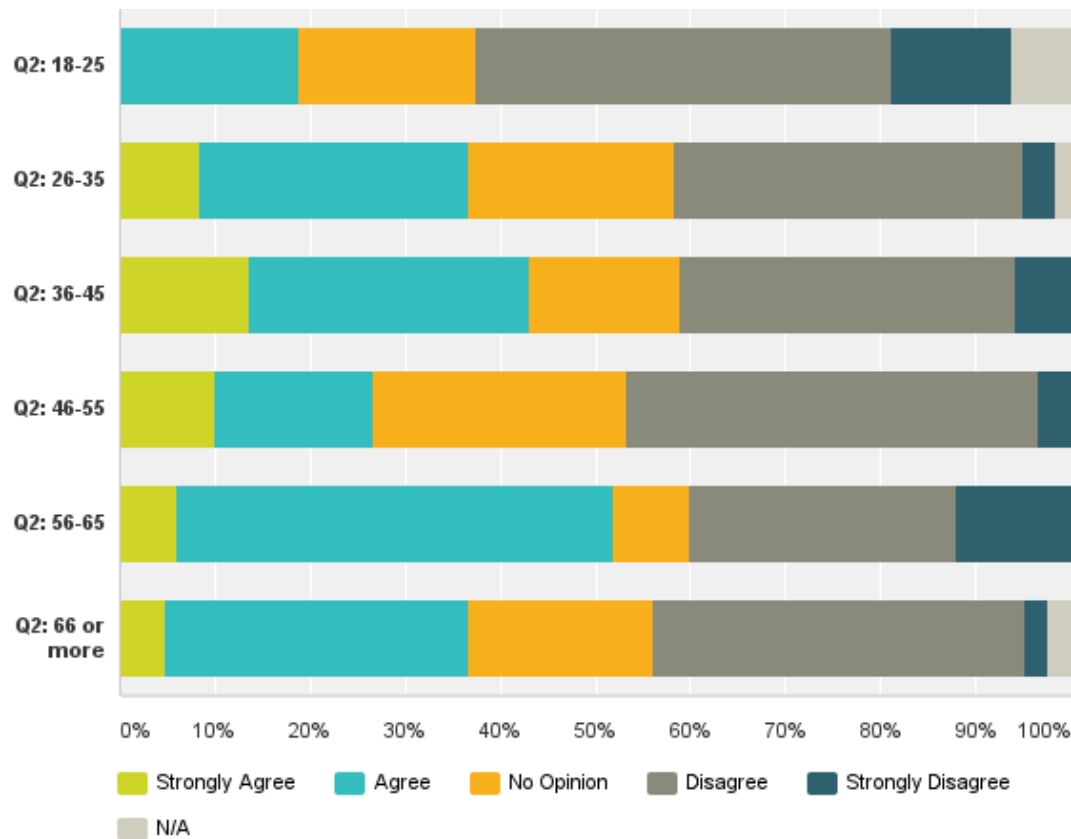
**Figure 23: The influence of rabbinical advocacy for environmental action on individual choices for environmentally sustainable behavior. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

**The role of Jewish texts in influencing environmental behaviors.**

Central to the Orthodox Jewish experience is the study of texts. This survey examined two aspects of this relationship: level of knowledge of texts that have bearing on today’s environmental issues and topics individuals would like to learn what the textual basis for environmental action might be.

***Level of knowledge with Jewish sources that bear upon the environment.***

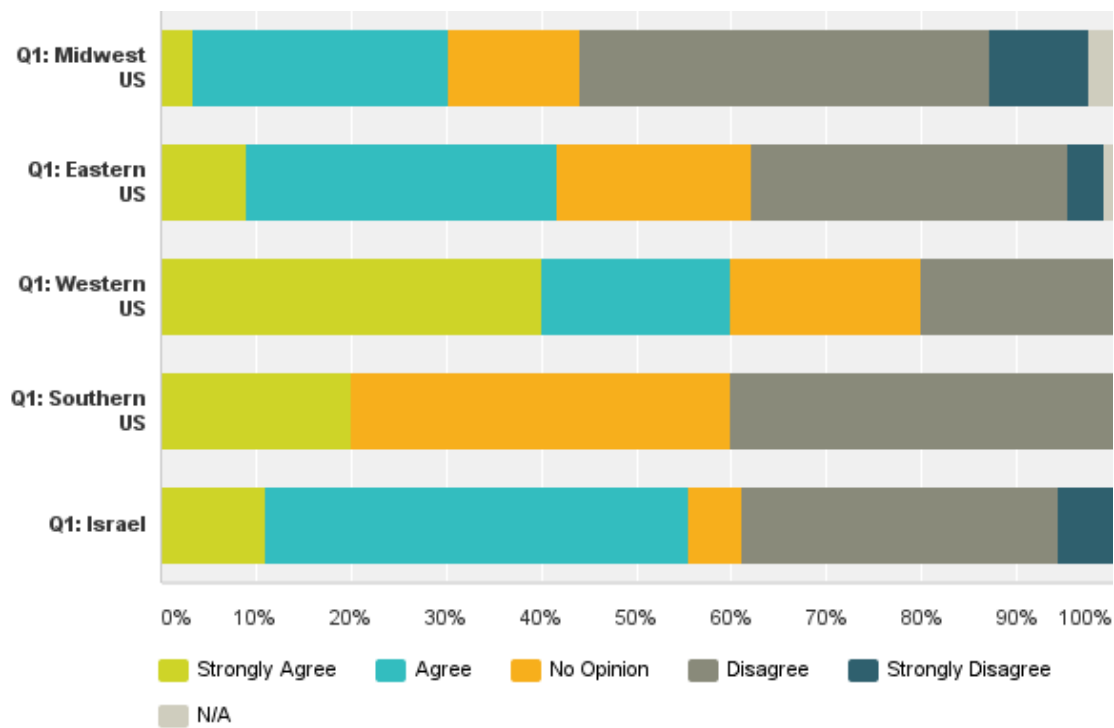
**A.**



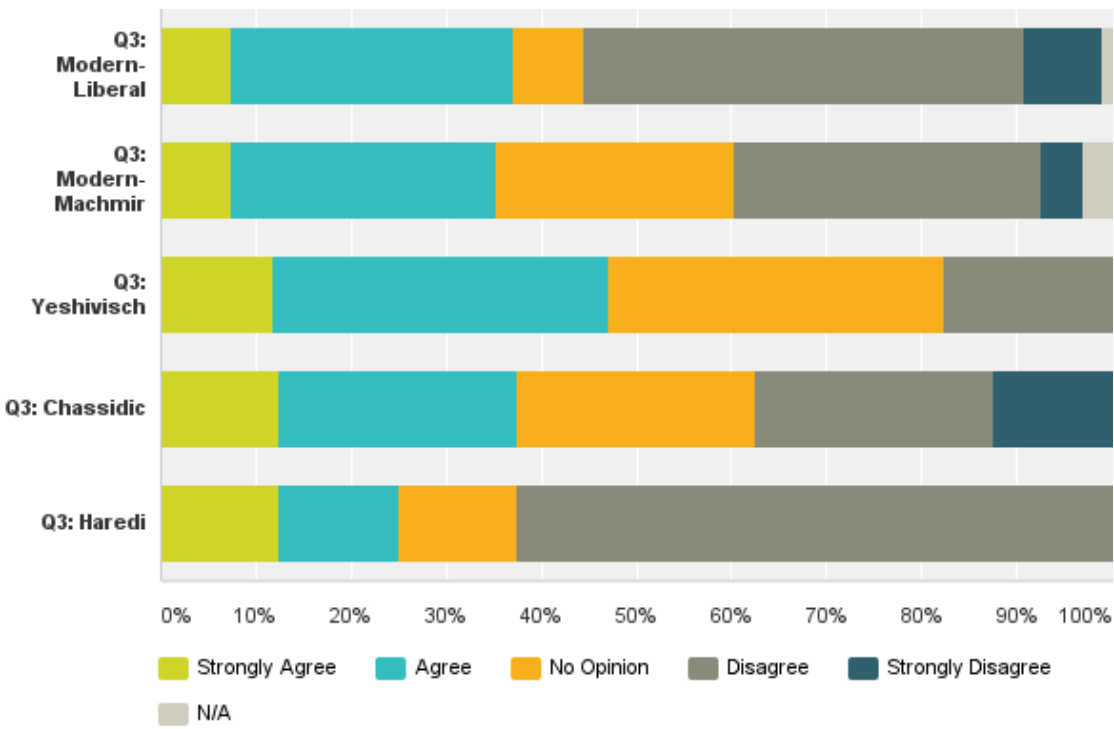
**General Observations**

- Within all demographic groupings whose level of agreement was less than 50%, the low was 18.8% (18-25 year-olds) and the highest was 43.1% (46-45 year-olds).
- With only two exceptions (56-65 year-old age group: 52%) and those living in Israel: 55.5%), less than one-half of all respondents believed that they were well-versed in Jewish sources about the environment.
- Even when compared by religious identification, only approximately one-third of all respondents felt they knew the source material that impacted on environmental action.
- Similarly, when compared by political philosophy, less than 45% of respondents felt comfortable with their knowledge level.

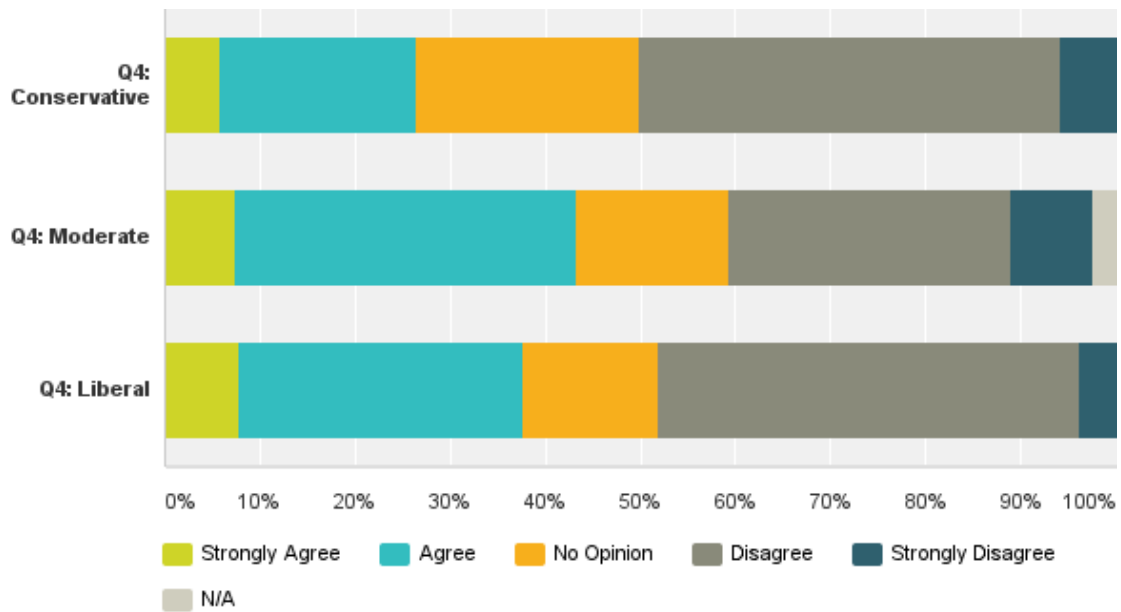
B.



83 c.



D.

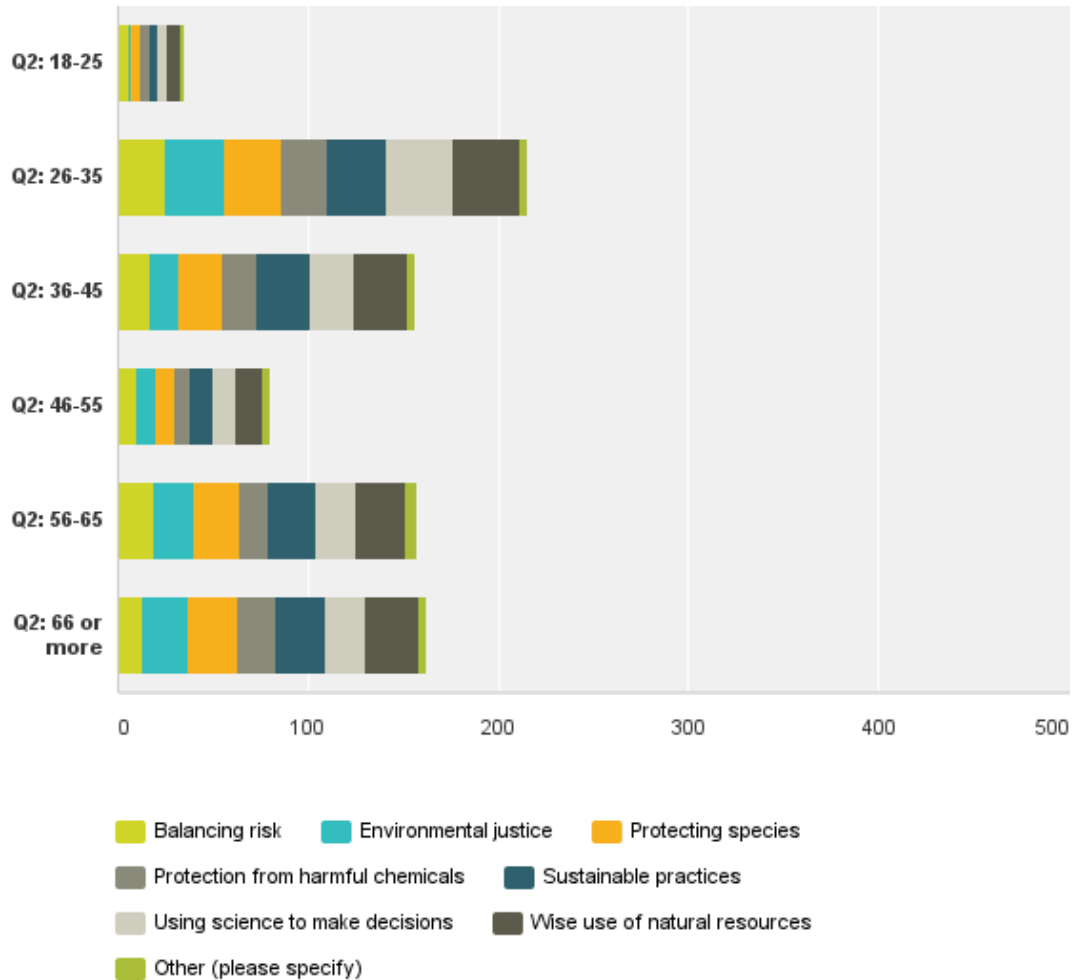


**Figure 24: Level of agreement that respondent is well-versed in Jewish sources about the environment. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

### *Topics respondents want to learn what Judaism says.*

Given the general lack of knowledge about what our Jewish texts say about the environment, the next important question is to identify topics of Jewish study that would generate environmental interest and/or action.

A.

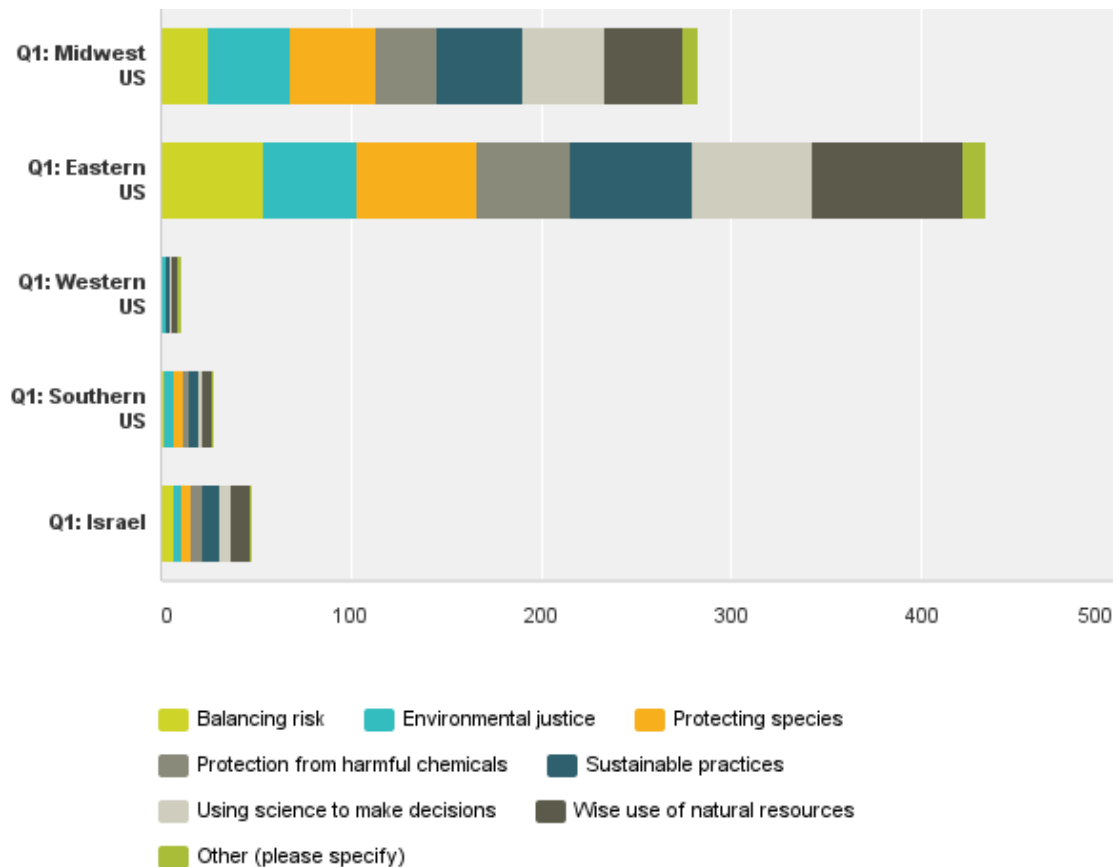


### Age

- Among all age groups, what Judaism says about the wise use of natural resources (hereafter called resource use) was a major topic of interest (58.3-73.7%; Fig. 25A).
- The category of sustainable practices was in the top 3 topics for all groups except 18-25 year-olds (26-35: 59.6%; 36-45: 62.2%; 46-55: 50%; 56-65: 58.1%; 66 and more: 68.4%).
- Jewish attitudes toward protecting species was important for the 18-25 year-old group (45.5%), 36-45 group (51.1%), 56-65 group (55.8%) and 66 and older group (68.4%).

- What Judaism says about using science to make decisions was important to 18-25 year-olds (45.5%), 26-35 year-olds (67.3%) and 36-45 year-olds (50%).
- Studying Jewish texts on chemical use was important to 18-25 year-olds (45.5%) and environmental justice was important to 26-35 year-olds (59.6%).

## B.



## Geographic Location

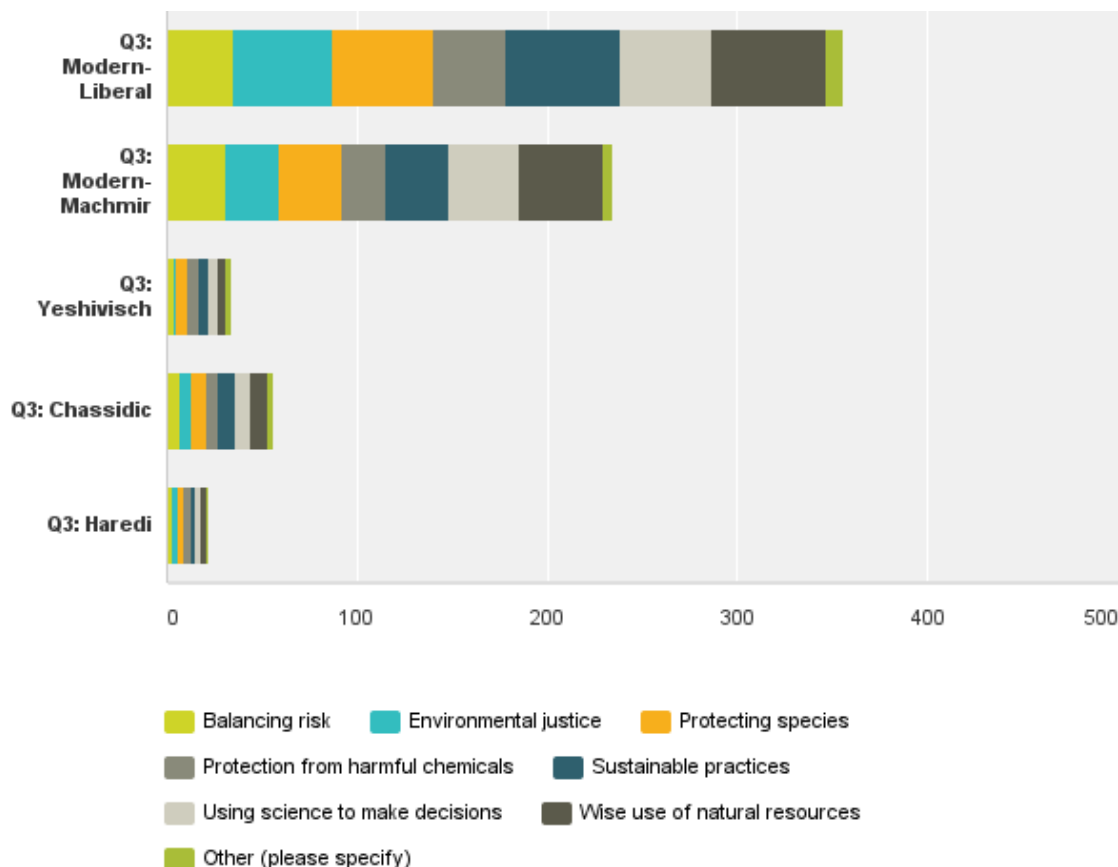
- Geographic location (Midwest vs East only; Fig. 25B) made little difference for which environmental topics what people would like to learn what Judaism teaches. The top three in both locations was sustainable practices, resource use and using science to make decisions.
- For comparison between Midwest and East: sustainability (60 and 57%, respectively); resource use (56 and 69.3%, respectively) and using science (57.3 and 55.3%, respectively).
- 57.3% of Midwestern respondents also wanted to know what Judaism has to say about environmental justice.
- 55.3% of respondents from the East wanted to know Jewish attitudes about protecting species.

- Sustainability and resource use also ranked high in Israel (76.9 and 69.2%, respectively) with using Halacha to learn how to balance risk third at 53.9%.

### Orthodox Spectrum

- Among Modern Orthodox Jews, sustainability, resource use and species protection are the top three topics people would like to learn how Judaism provides guidelines for action (Fig. 25C).
- The order is almost identical, as well. For Modern-Liberal, resource use and sustainability are 1<sup>st</sup> (61.9%) and species protection is 3<sup>rd</sup> (54.6%). For Modern-Machmir, resource use is 1<sup>st</sup> (73.3%), using science to make decisions is 2<sup>nd</sup> (61.7%), and sustainability and species protection 3<sup>rd</sup> (55%).
- Although the sample size is too small to make definitive comparisons, sustainability is also important to Yeshivisch (64.3%), Chassidic (64.3%) and Haredi (40%) Jews. What Judaism says about chemical use in the home and/or garden was important among respondents in the Yeshivisch (50%) and Haredi (80%) communities.

C.

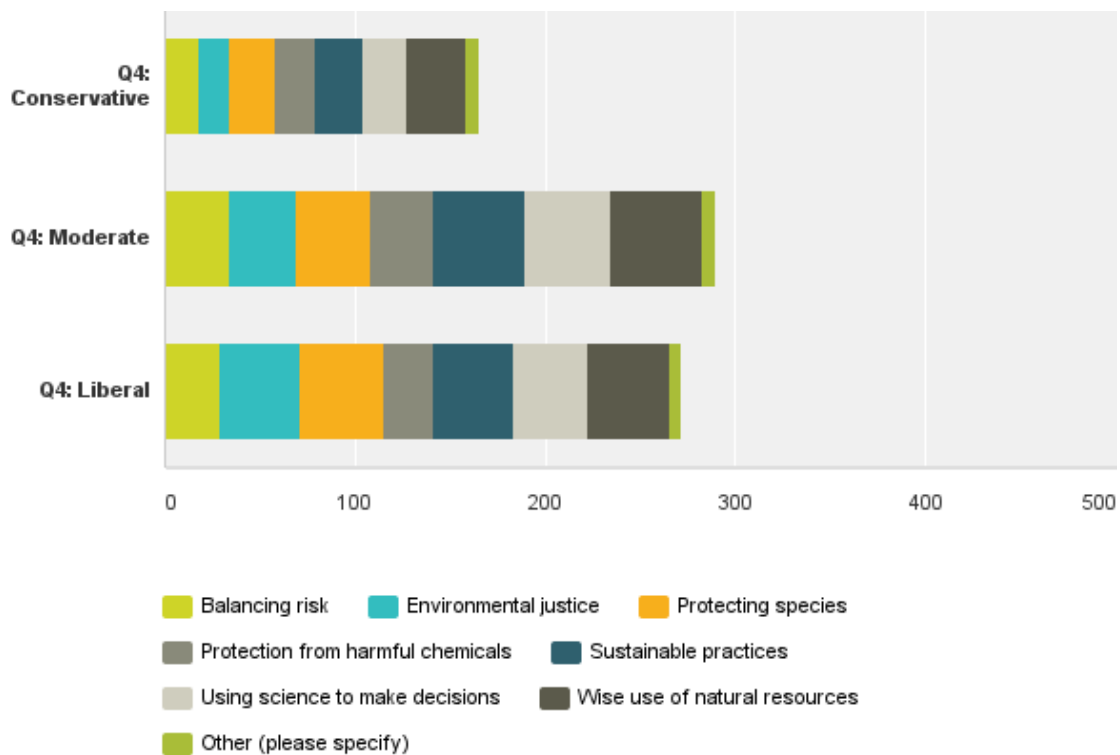




## Political Philosophy

- Learning what Judaism says about resource use and sustainability was the top two choices regardless of political philosophy (Fig. 25D).
- Resource use was 1<sup>st</sup> among all groups (Conservative: 57.8%; Moderate: 68.1%; Liberal: 64.7%).
- Sustainability was 2<sup>nd</sup> (Conservative: 46.3%; Moderate: 66.7%; Liberal: 61.8%).
- Jewish attitudes about using science to make decisions was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> for Conservatives and Moderates (42.6 and 62.5%, respectively).
- The Jewish perspective about environmental justice was tied for 2<sup>nd</sup> most important for Liberals (61.8%).

D.



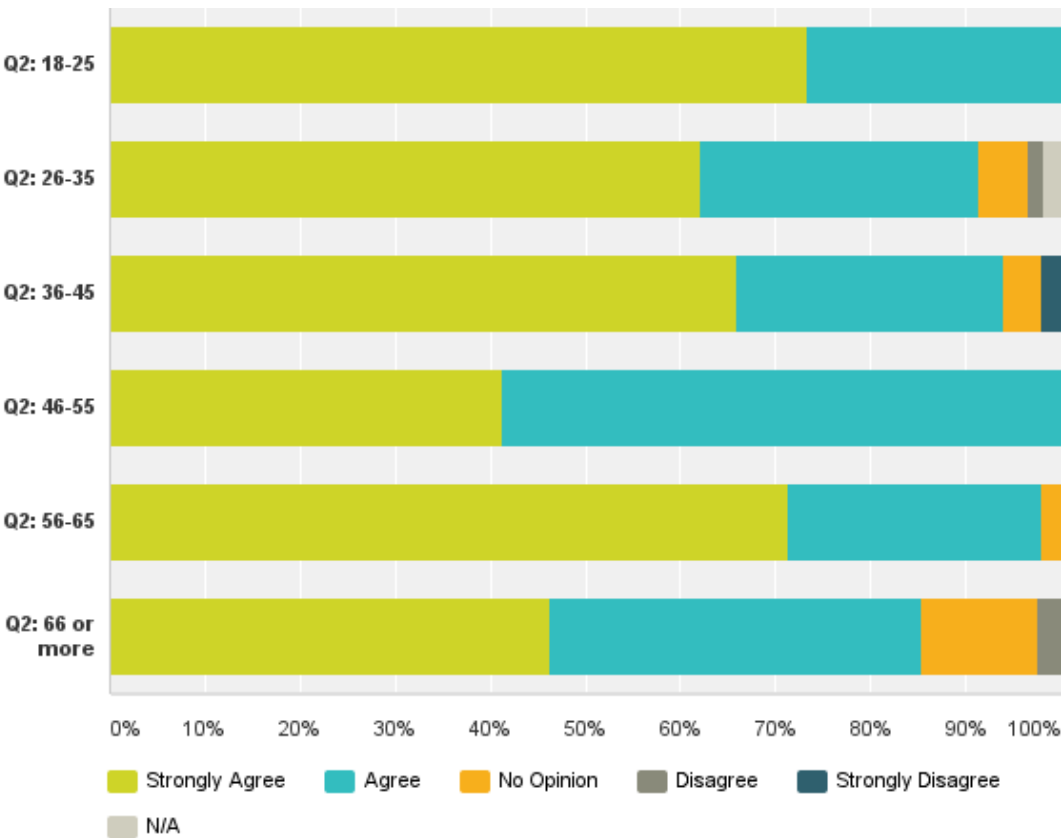
**Figure 25: Learning about what Judaism says about the environment. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

**The role of Jewish values in influencing environmental behaviors.**

Jewish values are the individual and community moral standards that develop from an understanding of fundamental principles of halacha. As such, they can be the basis for individual and group behaviors that relate to environmental action. Environmental action itself can be seen as a value which may or may not be viewed as central to Judaism. Because environmental topics may affect an entire community, it was important to examine if communal responsibility plays a role in decisions affecting the environment, i.e., responsibility to others as a basis for ensuring a safe environment that protects human well-being. Just as previous questions examined whether outdoor experiences enhanced a sense of connection to the environment, survey participants were asked if such activities also enhanced their relationship with HaShem. Lastly, as connectivity to Israel is an important Jewish value, the experiences of Israel may have an influence on environmental attitudes.

***Discovery of HaShem through nature.***

A.

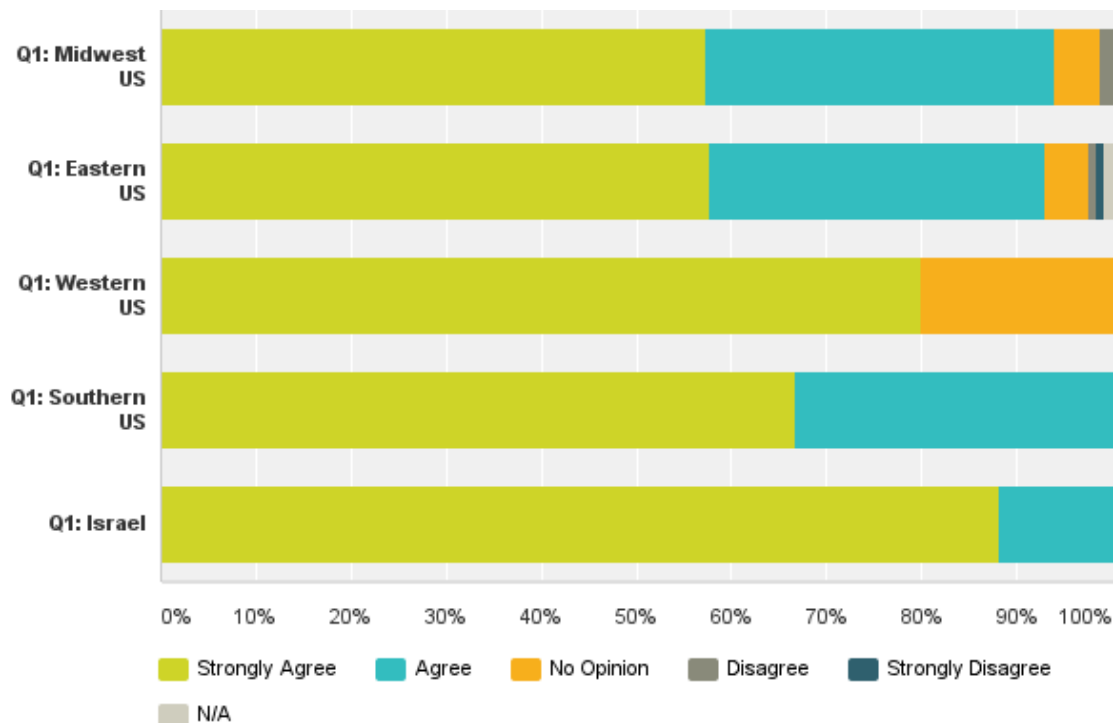


**General Observations**

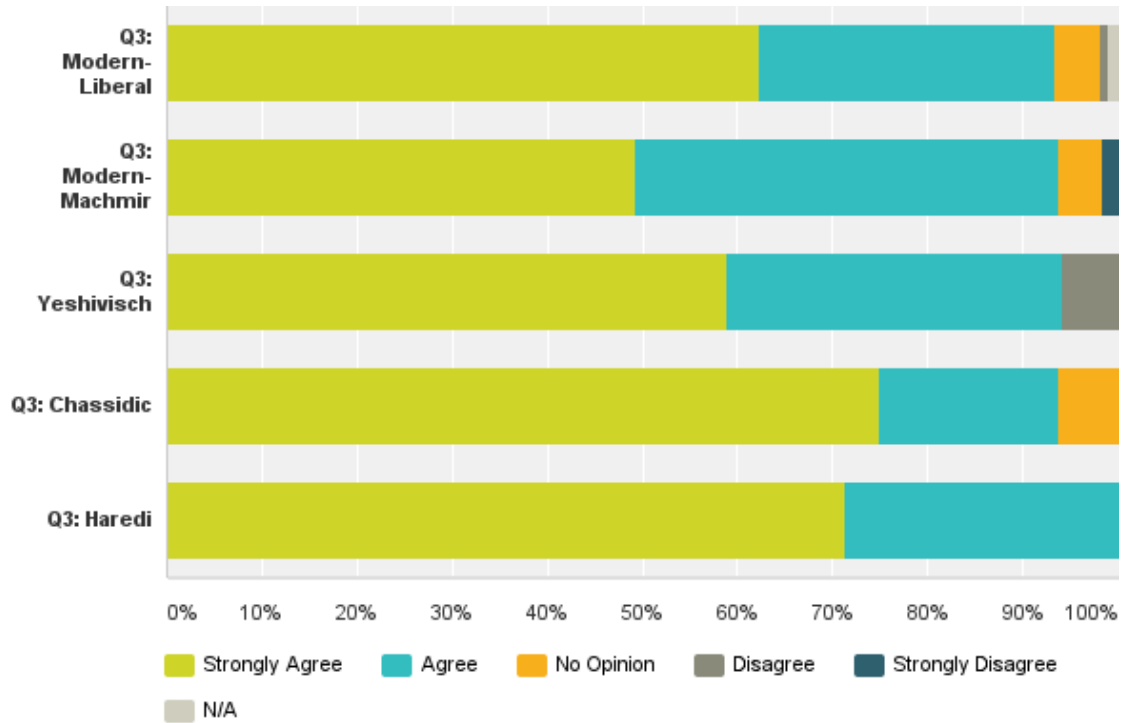
- Across all demographic groupings, there is very high agreement that outdoor experiences are an effective method to discover one's connections to HaShem (Fig. 26).

- With the exception of the 66 and older age group (85.3%), in all age groups 91-100% of all respondents agreed with this concept (Fig. 26A).
- Similar levels of agreement were observed regardless of geographic location (93.1-93.9%; Fig. 26B), self-identification within the Orthodox spectrum (93.4-93.8%; Fig. 26C) and political philosophy (92.3-95.4%; Fig. 26D).
- Given the small sample sizes of the south, west and Israel geographic locations and the Yeshivisch, Chassidic and Haredi respondents, these data were not included in the numbers given above. However, those responses were also above 90% in agreement.

**B.**

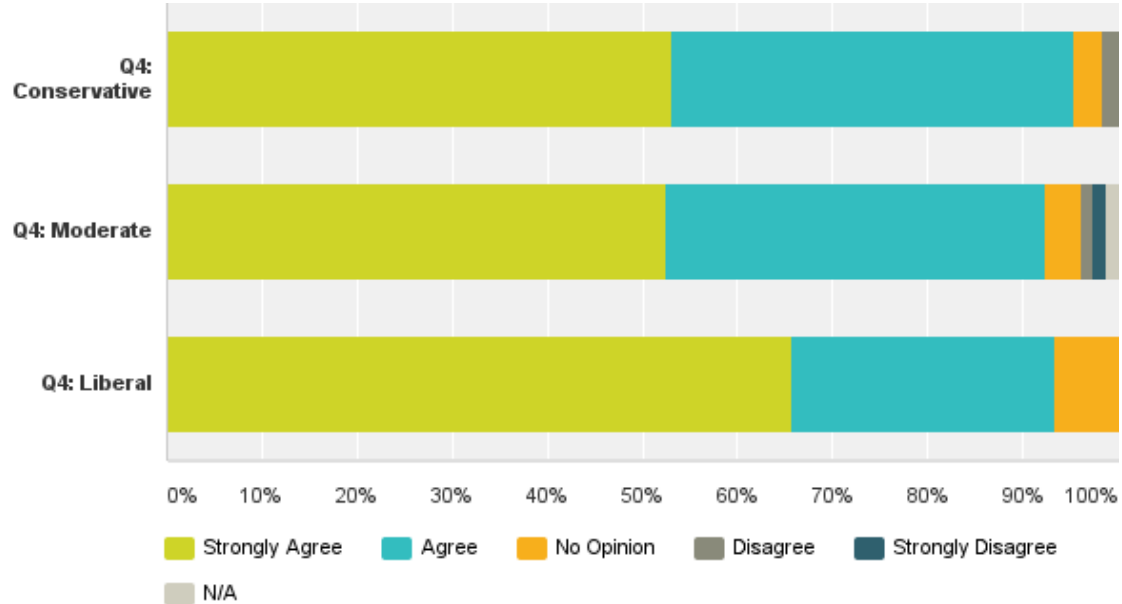


C.



91

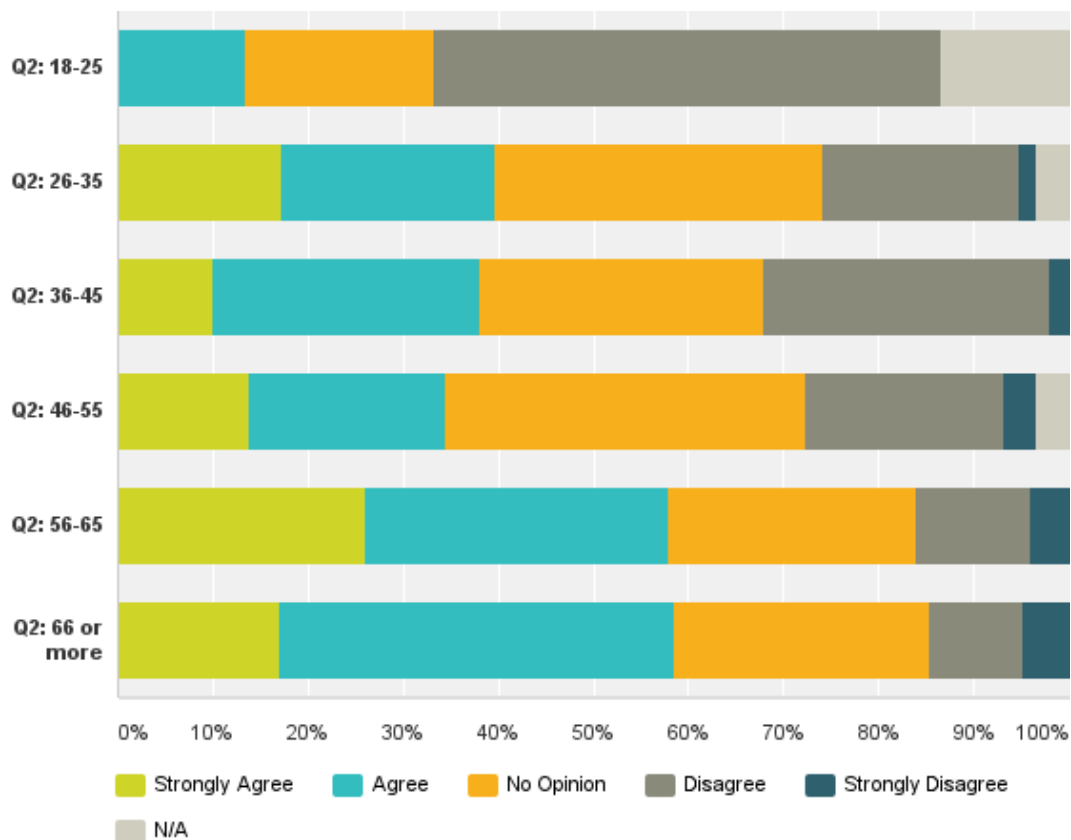
D.



**Figure 26: Outdoor experiences as a means to enhance discovery of HaShem.**  
**A.** By age group. **B.** By geographic location. **C.** By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. **D.** By political philosophy.

***Environmental values are central to Judaism.***

**A.**



92

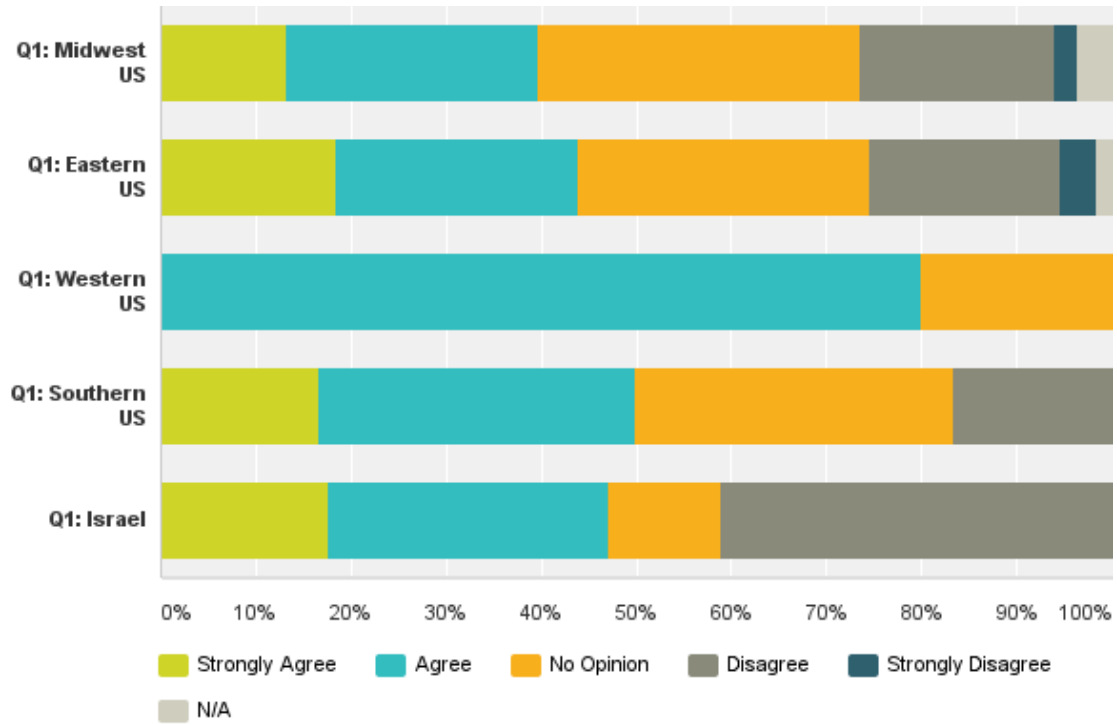
**Age**

- In general, most age groups did not agree that environmental values are a central (vs important but not fundamental) value in Judaism (Fig. 27A).
- However, only the 18-25 year-old group showed clear disagreement with that statement (13.3% agree vs 53.3% disagree).
- Ages 26-55 all showed an even distribution between agree no opinion and disagree.
- Ages 56-65, and 66 and older responded more favorably (58% agree vs 16% disagree and 58.6% agree vs 14.7% disagree, respectively).

**Geographic Location**

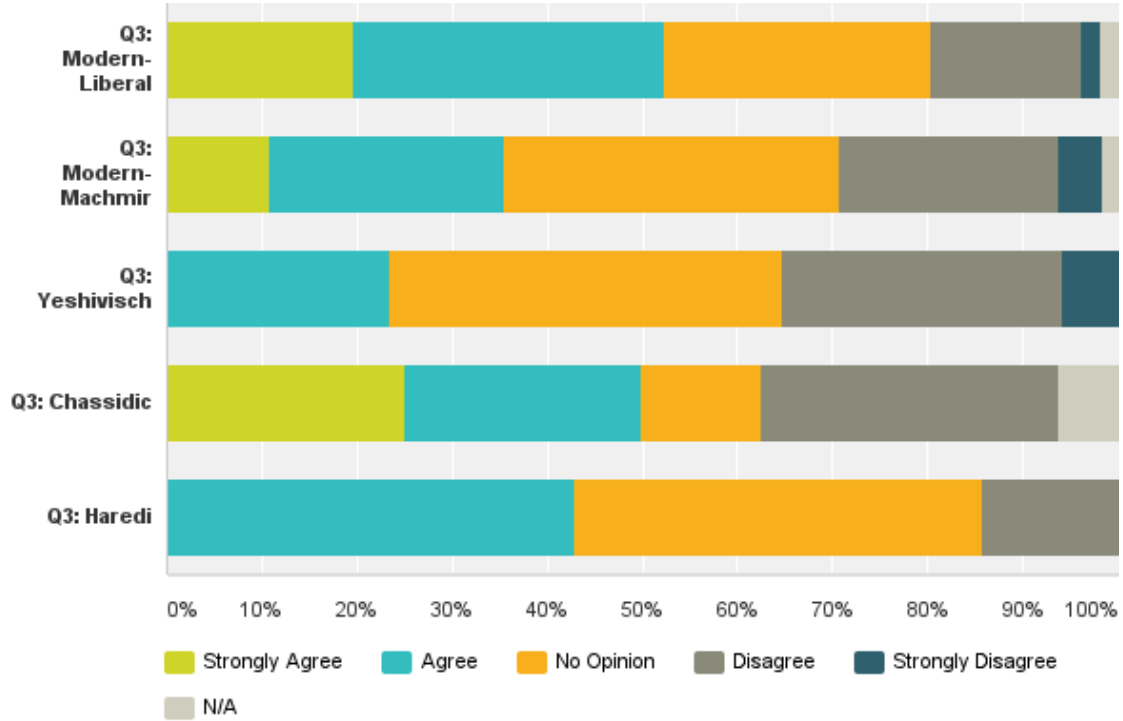
- Both Midwestern and Eastern respondents answered the survey question similarly (39.8% agree vs 22.9% disagree and 43.9% agree vs 23.9% disagree, respectively; Fig. 27B).

B.



93

c.



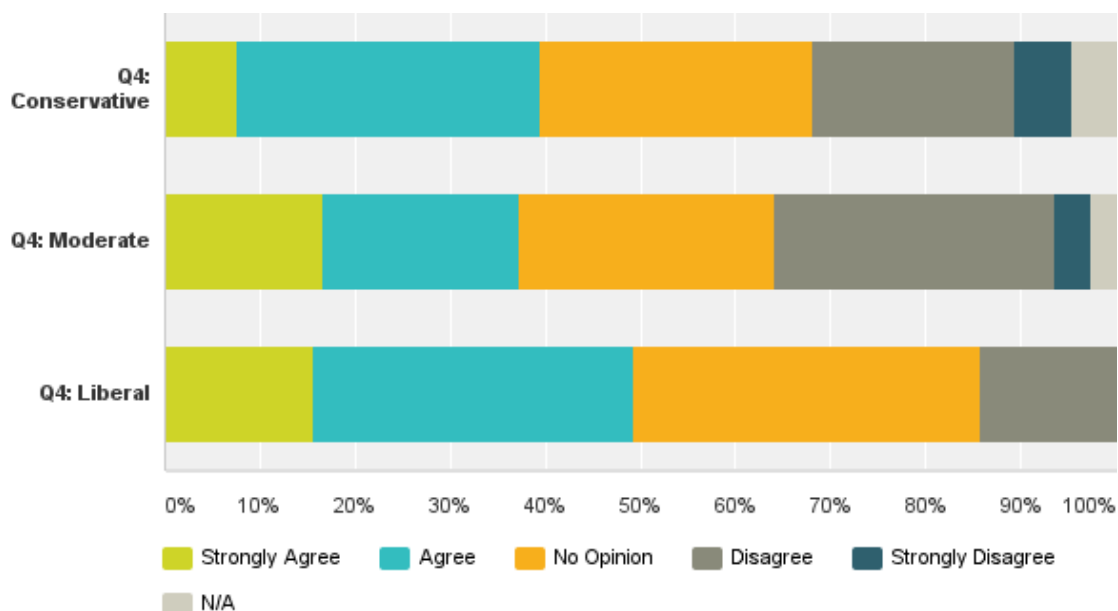
### Orthodox Spectrum

- Slightly more than one-half of Modern Orthodox-Liberal survey participants agreed with environmental values as central to Judaism (52.3%; Fig. 27C).
- Other than the few Chassidic respondents, no other group was in agreement with this statement (e.g., Modern Orthodox-Machmir: 35.4% agree vs 27.7 disagree).

### Political Philosophy

- From a political perspective, no group responded with greater than 50% agreement (Conservative 39.4%; Moderate: 37.2%; Liberal 49.4%; Fig. 27D).

D.



**Figure 27: Level of agreement that environmental values are a central tenant of Jewish belief. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

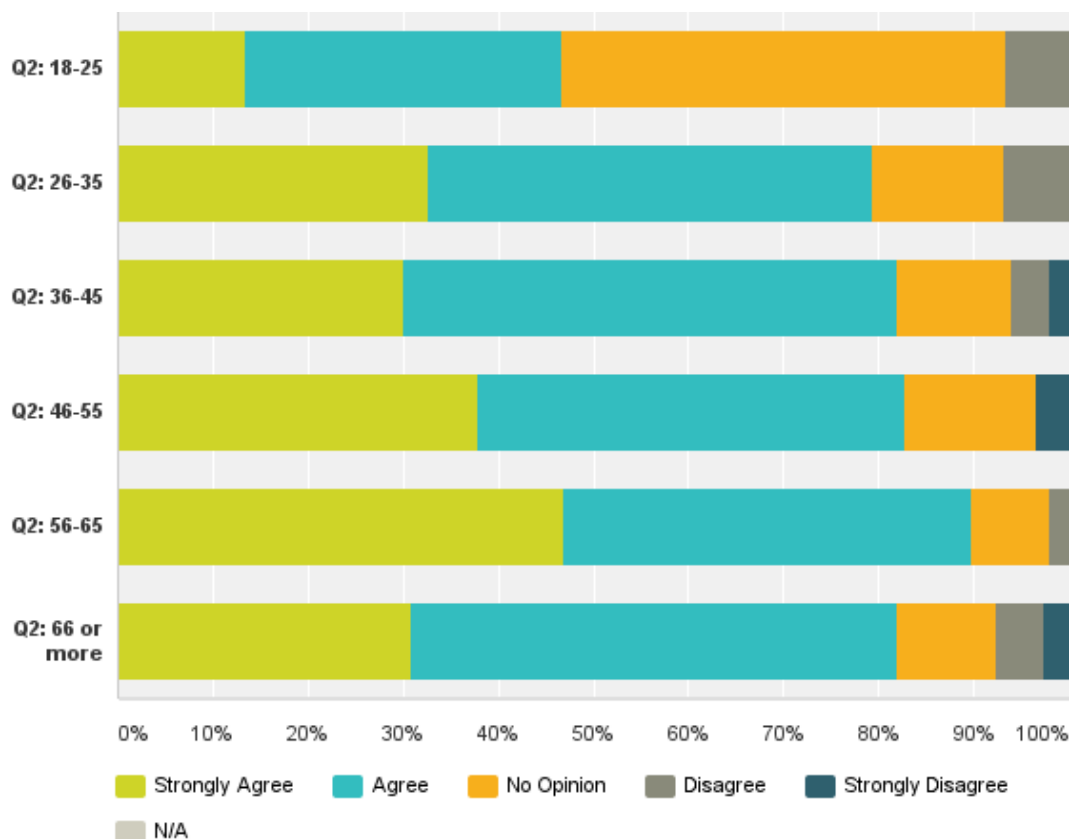
### ***Being a good steward of the environment is a Jewish value.***

While it is clear that most Orthodox Jews do not view environmental action as a central value in Judaism, a rephrasing of the question allowed for an analysis as to whether it is considered a Jewish value at all.

- With the exception of the 18-25 year-olds, all **age** groups responded with greater than 50% agreement that being a good steward of the environment is a Jewish value; less than 8% disagreed in any age group (26-35: 79.4%; 36-45: 82%; 46-55: 82.7%; 56-65: 90.8%; 66 and older 82.1%; Fig. 28A).
- **Geographic Location:** Survey participants from the Midwest and East were largely in agreement with the statement; under 7% disagreed (86.3 and 76%, respectively; Fig. 28B).
- **Orthodox Spectrum:** Agreement also was high among the two Modern Orthodox groups (Liberal: 86.7%; Machmir: 70.3%; Fig. 28C). Only 4.8% of Modern-Liberal and 6.2% of Modern-Machmir disagreed.
- An upward trend agreement was observed when data are grouped by **political philosophy** (Conservative: 70.7%; Moderate: 81.6%; Liberal 87.1%; Fig. 28D). A downward trend was observed in disagreement but all were under 10%.

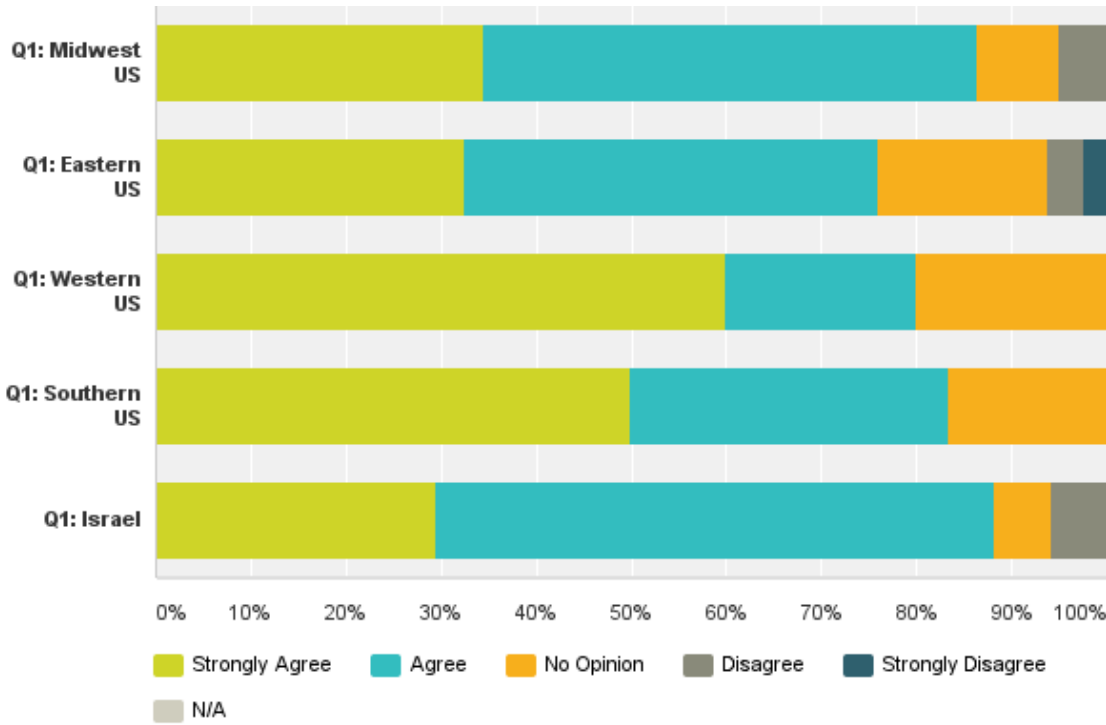
A.

95



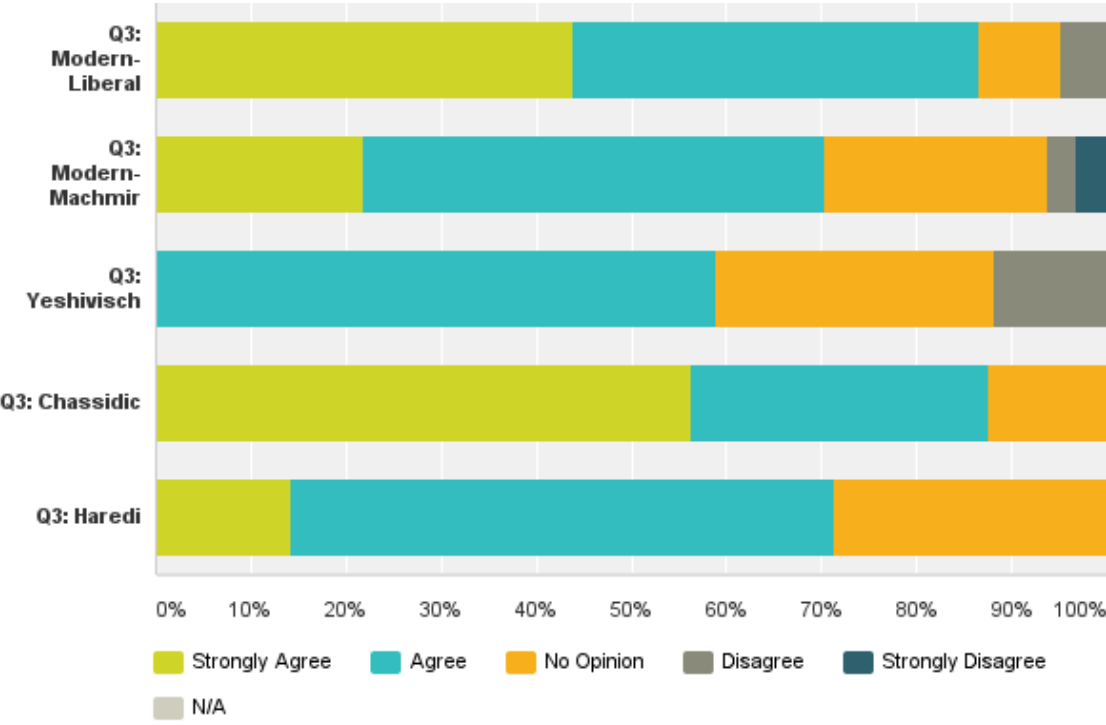


B.

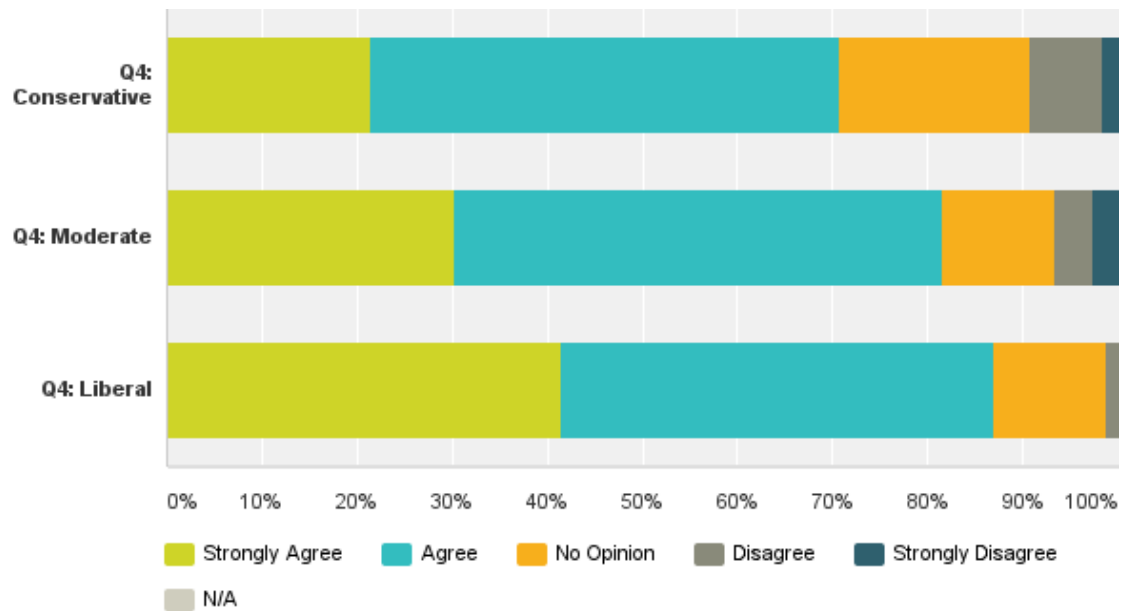


96

c.



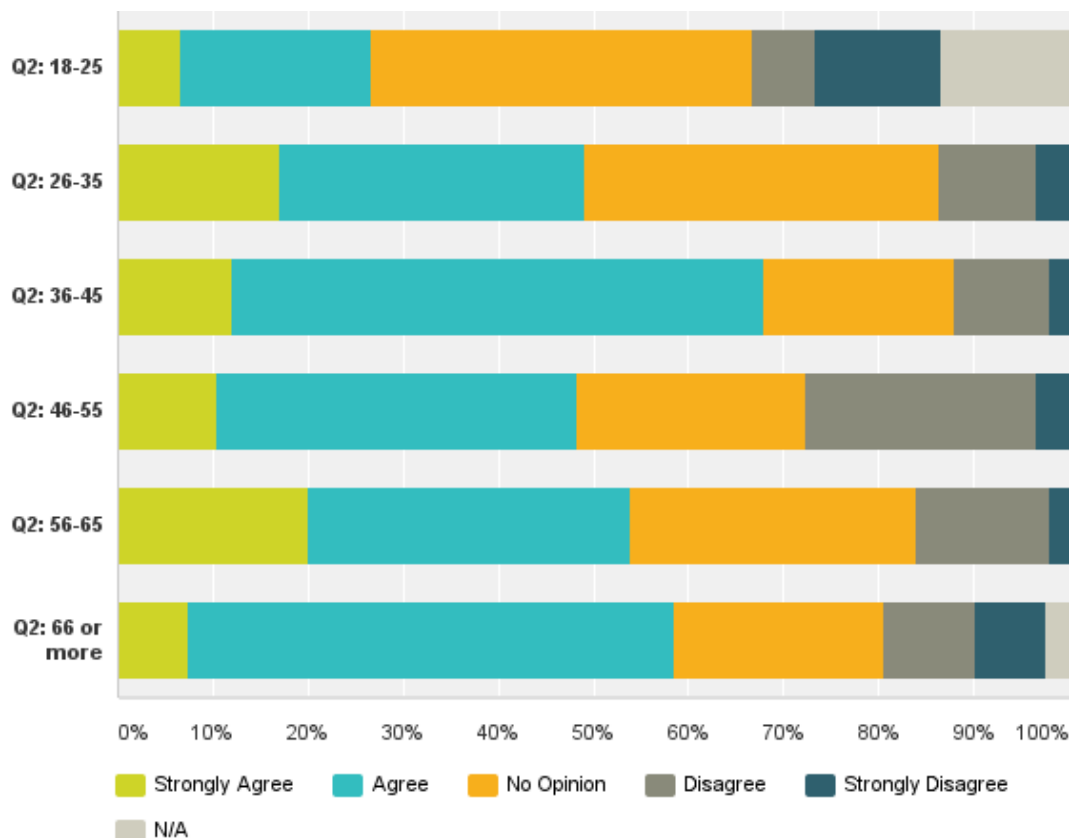
D.



**Figure 28: Being a good steward of Earth's natural resources is an important, even if not central, Jewish value. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

***Jewish communal responsibility can drive environmental action.***

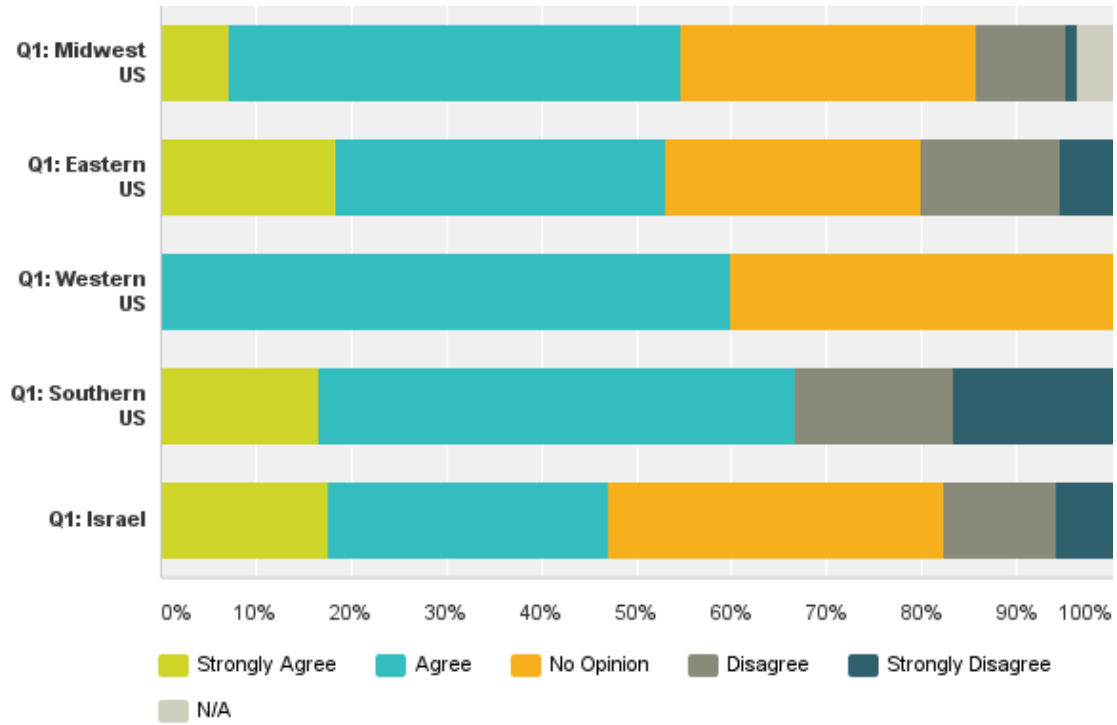
**A.**



98

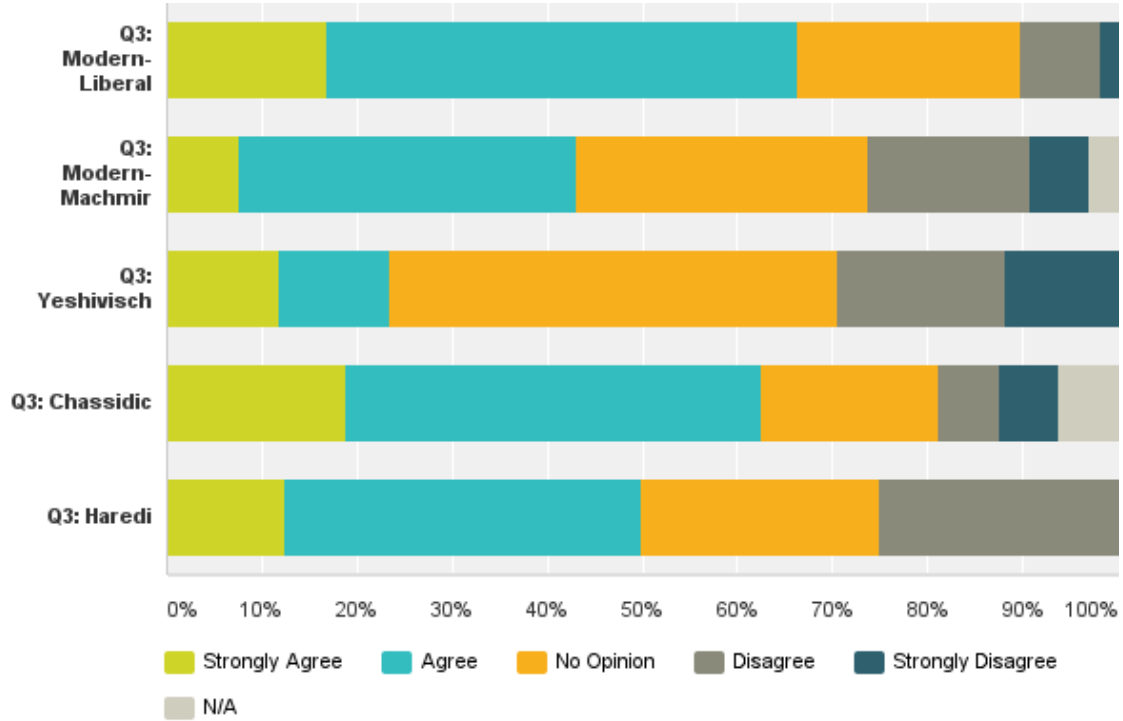
- In most **age** groups, there was not a strong agreement that the value of Jewish communal responsibility was an important driver for environmental action (Fig. 29A). While the 18-25, 26-35 and 46-55 groups were less than 50% (26.7, 49.2, and 48.2%, respectively), one-half to two-thirds of the other age groups were in agreement.
- **Geographic Location:** Approximately one-half of respondents from the Midwest (54.7%) and East (53%) agreed that a sense that environmental action results from the Jewish value of communal responsibility (Fig.29B). However, nearly twice as many respondents from the East disagreed vs those from the Midwest (20 vs 10.7%, respectively).
- **Orthodox Spectrum:** There was a distinct difference in level of agreement with the role of communal responsibility in encouraging environmental action between Modern-Machmir (43.1%; Fig. 29C) and Modern-Liberal (66.3%). There were greater levels of No Opinion (30.8 vs 23.6%, respectively) and disagreement (23.1 vs 10.3%, respectively) between Modern Machmir and Liberal.
- **Political Philosophy:** While there was little difference between politically Moderate and Liberal Orthodox Jews (53.8 vs 50.2%, respectively; Fig 29D), only 38.8% of Conservatives agreed. A nearly equal number (32.9%) disagreed.

B.

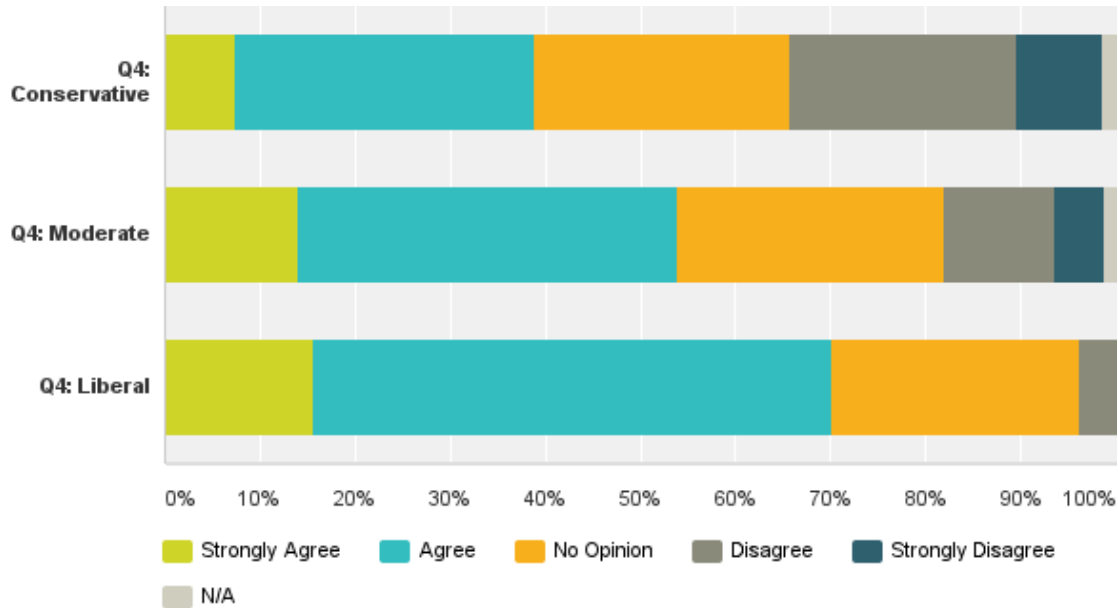


99

c.



D.



**Figure 29: The value of Jewish communal responsibility as a driving force for environmental action. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

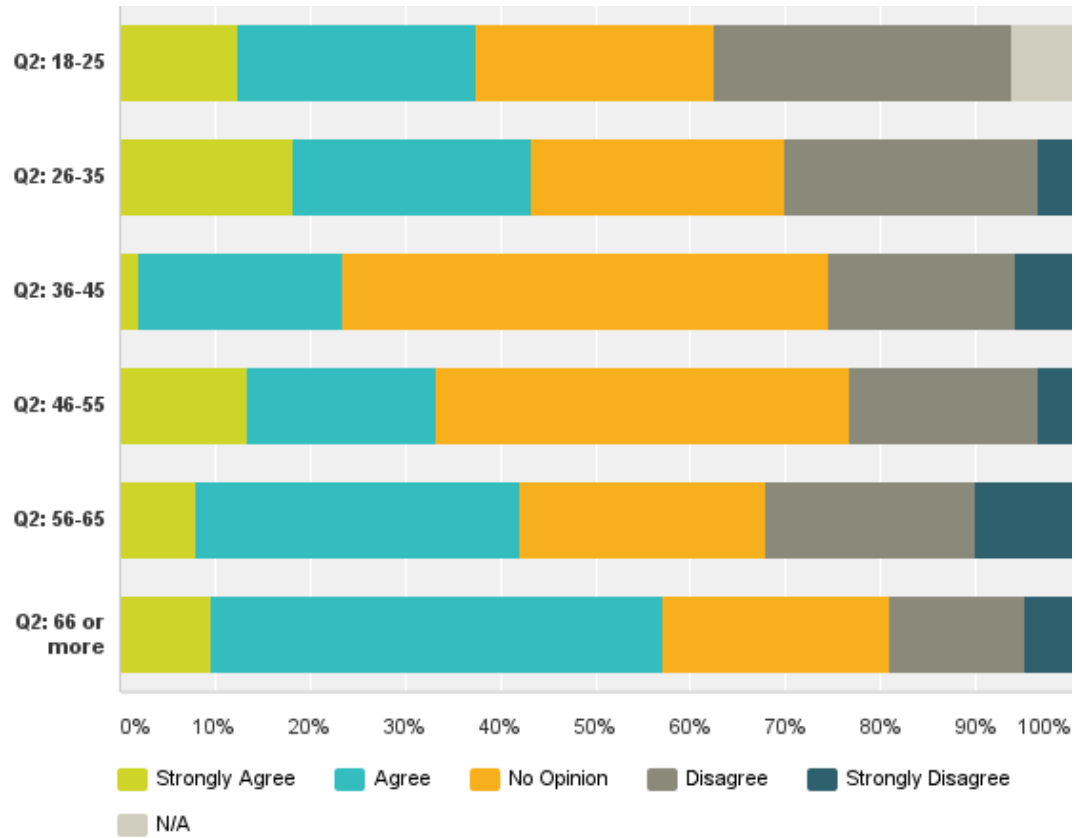
100

### *Israel as a source of environmental ethics and practice.*

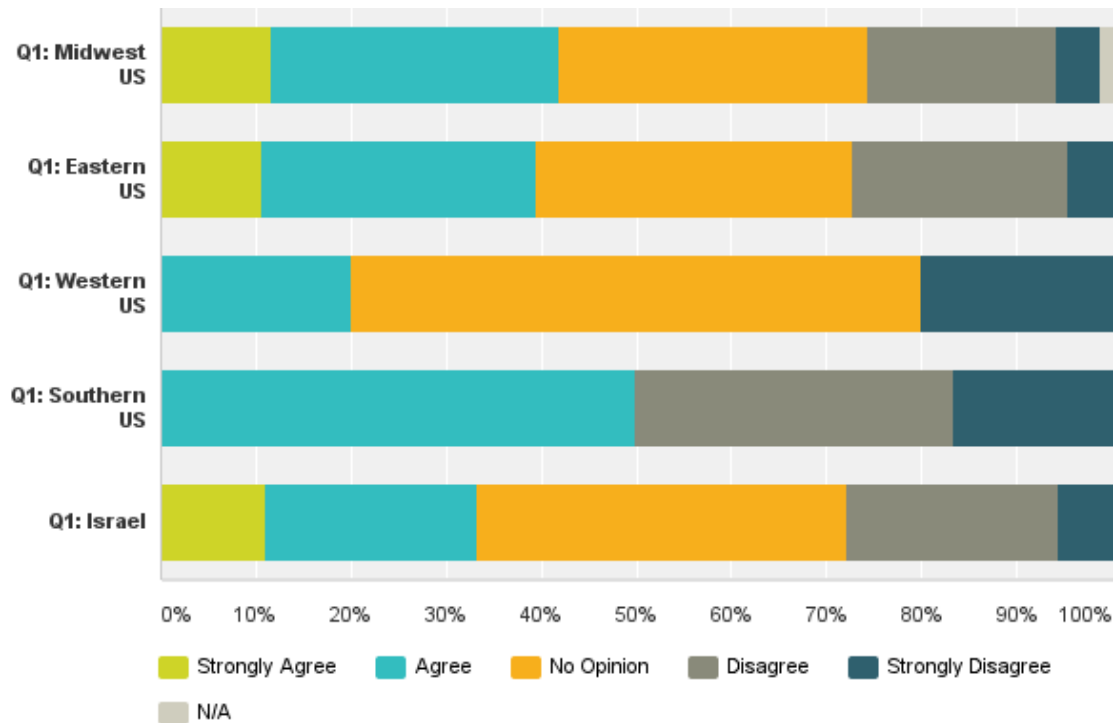
Not only does Israel have political, historical and cultural significance for Orthodox Jews, it has deep religious significance. The survey examined what role, if any, Israel has as a role model for environmental ethics and practices.

- The only **age** group that responded with greater than 50% agreement was the 66 and older group (57.1%; Fig. 30A). All other groups ranged from 23.6% (36-45 year-olds) to 43.3% (26-35 year-olds).
- **Geographic Location:** Whether the respondents were from the Midwest or East, approx. 40% agreed with the statement (41.8 and 39.4%, respectively; Fig. 30B). Approx. ¼ of the survey participants disagreed (24.5 and 27.3%, respectively).
- **Orthodox Spectrum:** While 45.9% of Modern Orthodox-Liberal Jews agreed that Israel had a positive influence on environmental attitudes, 31.2% disagreed (Fig. 30C). Among Modern Orthodox-Machmir respondents, 31.2% agreed and 19.2% disagreed.
- **Political Philosophy:** Fewer Conservatives (33.9%) than Moderates (38.3%) or Liberals (47.4%) agreed that Israel's environmental practices influenced them (Fig. 30D). Approximately equal numbers disagreed (30.8, 29.6 and 25.6%, respectively).

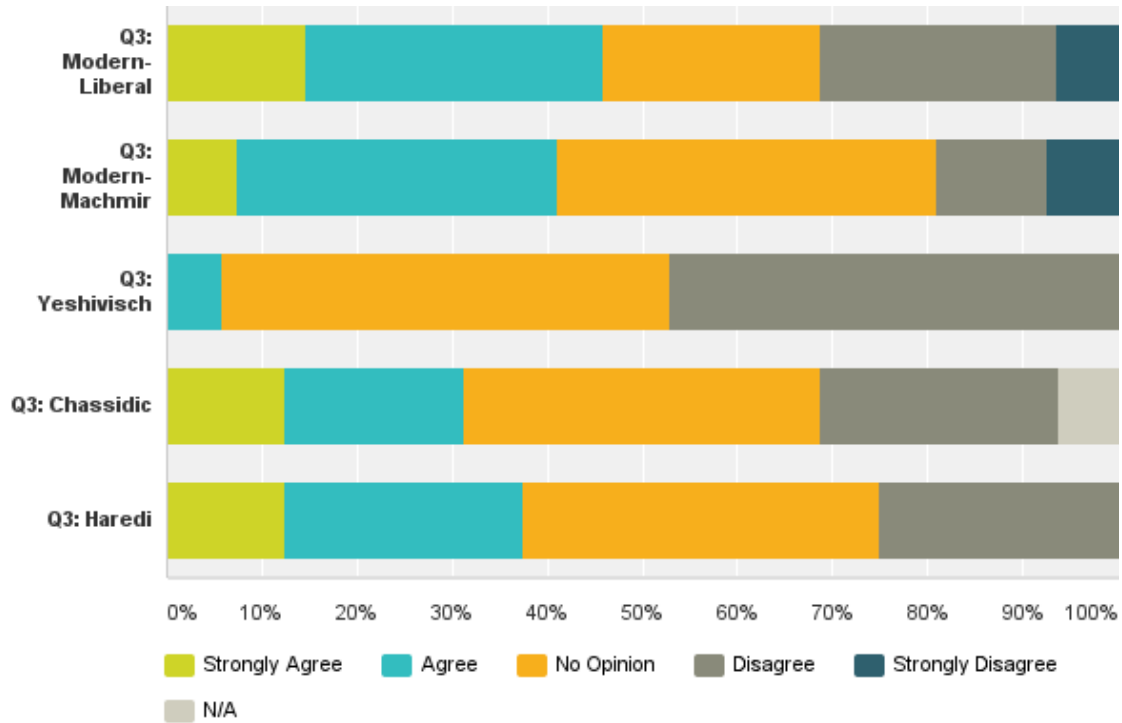
A.



B.

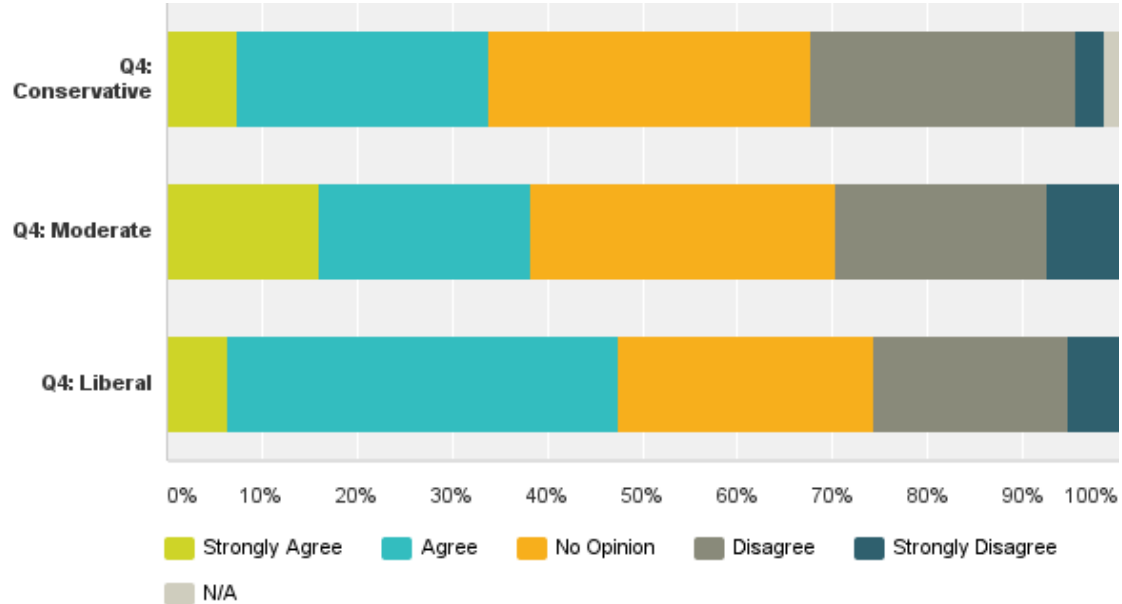


C.



102

D.



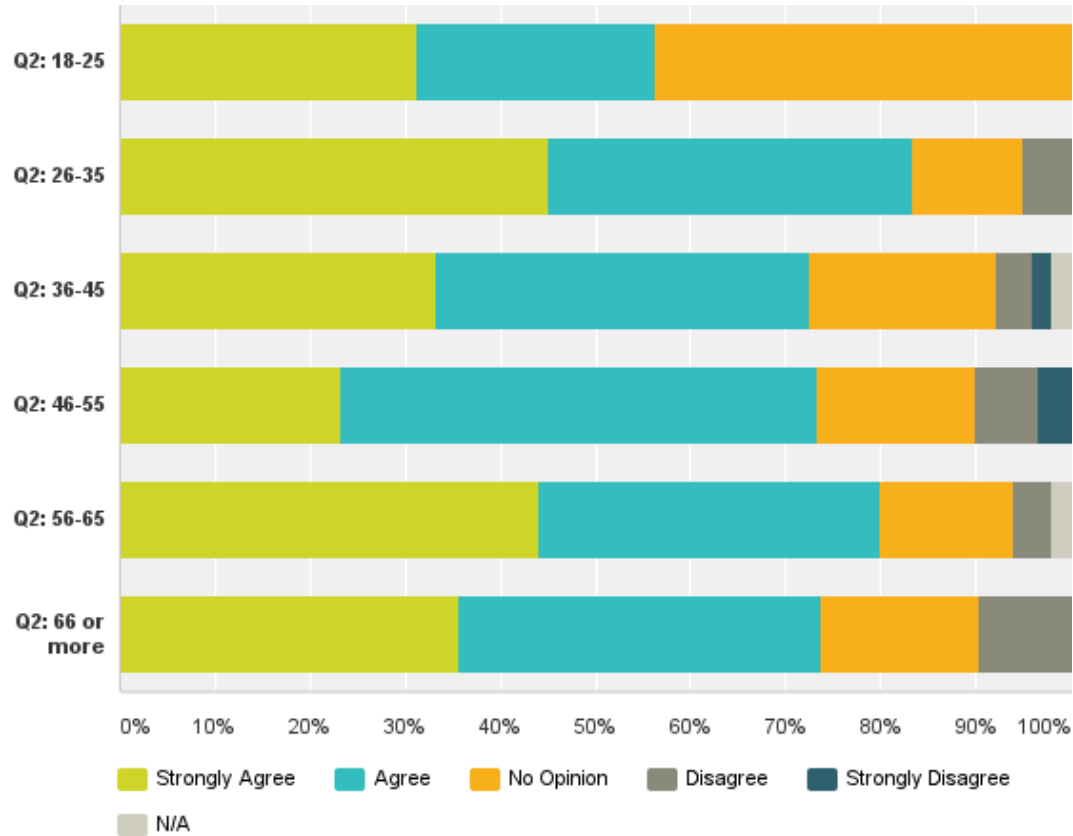
**Figure 30: The value of Israel's environmental practices as a role model for individual and/or community action. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

**Possible strategies to actively engage the Orthodox community in environmental action.**

Two questions directly and explicitly addressed the ultimate focus of the survey: should Orthodox Jews have a role within environmental organizations and what do the respondents suggest that would encourage their community to become more involved in environmentally sustainable behaviors.

***Importance of having an Orthodox voice in environmental groups.***

**A.**



103

**Age**

- Beyond the slightly more than one-half of 18-25 year-old respondents (51.3%) agreeing, three-fourths of all participants from all age groups agreed with necessity of having an Orthodox voice in environmental groups (Fig. 31A).

**Geographic Location**

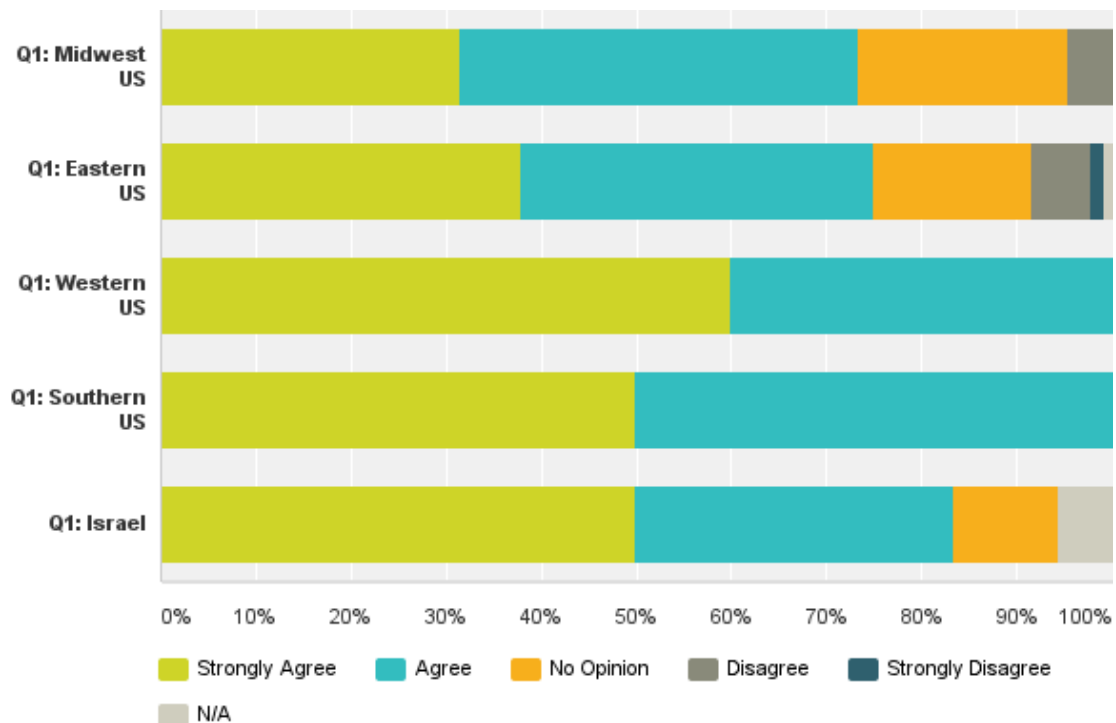
- Geographic location had no effect on the level of agreement with this question (Midwest: 73.3% vs East: 75%; Fig. 31B).



### Orthodox Spectrum

- There were no differences between Modern Orthodox Liberal (79%) and Machmir (75%) groups.
- While too small to adequately analyze, Yeshivisch (58.8%) and Chassidic (87.5%) agreed with the concept; only 37.5% of the Haredi respondents agreed (Fig. 31D).

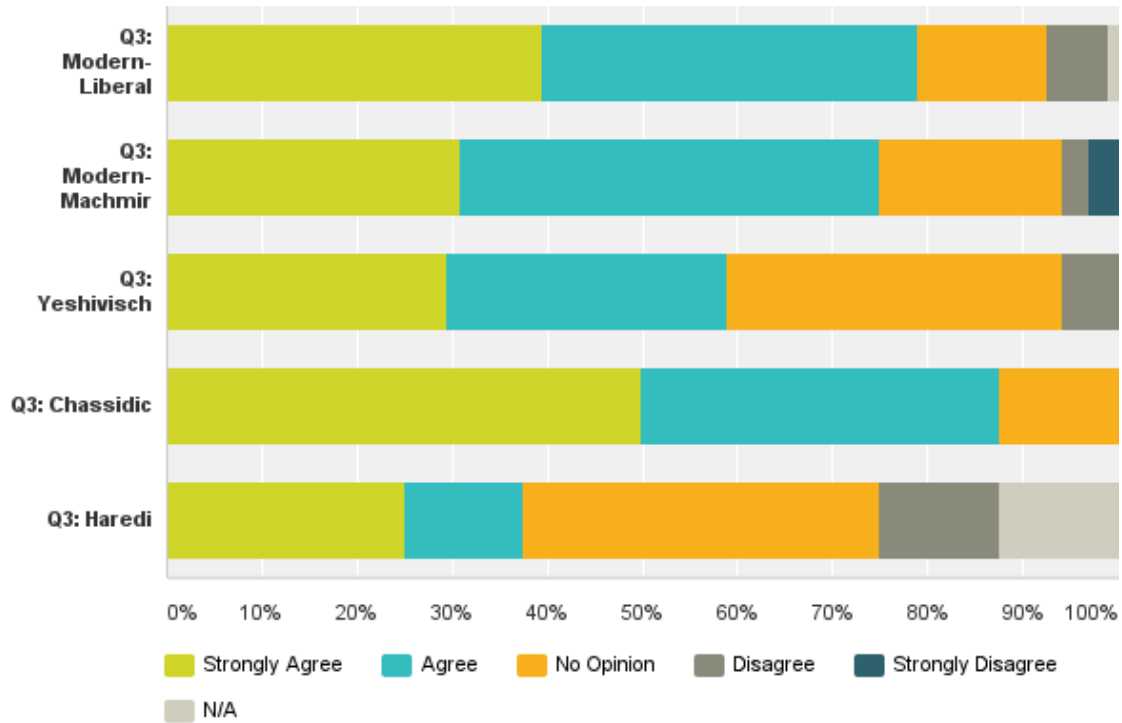
**B.**



### Political Philosophy

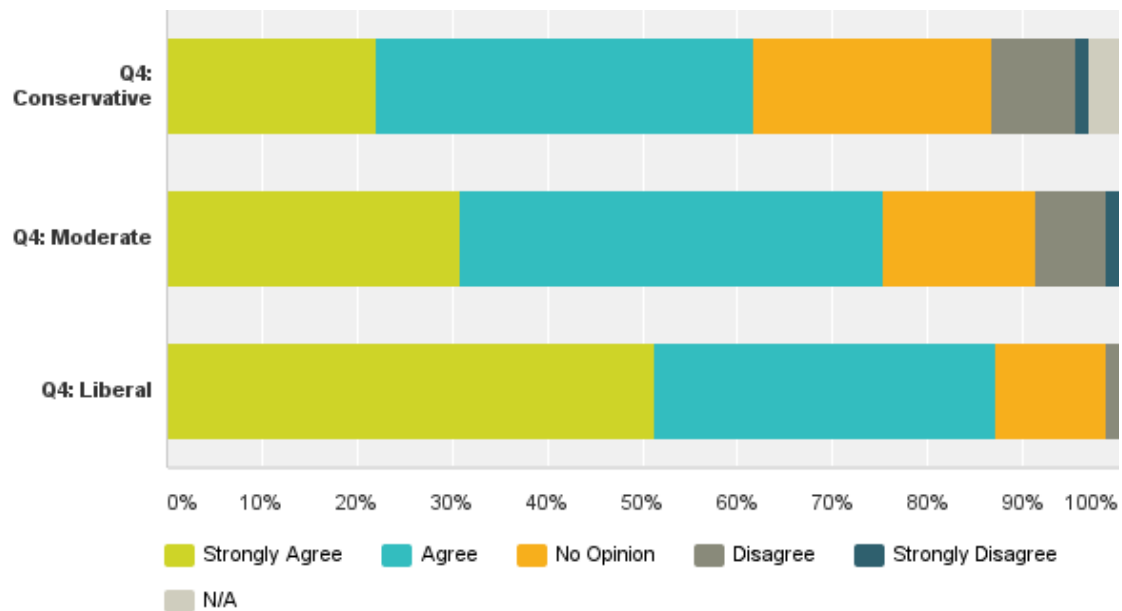
- Comparisons of agreement to disagreement showed clear trends when compared to political philosophy.
- Conservatives agreed less and disagreed more than the other two groups (61.8 and 10.3%; Fig. 31D), although, a majority still agreed.
- 75.3% of Moderates agreed and 8.6% disagreed.
- Liberals agreed more and disagreed less with the statement than the other two groups (87.2 vs 1.3%, respectively).

C.



105

D.



**Figure 31: Is it important to have Orthodox participation in environmental organizations?** A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.

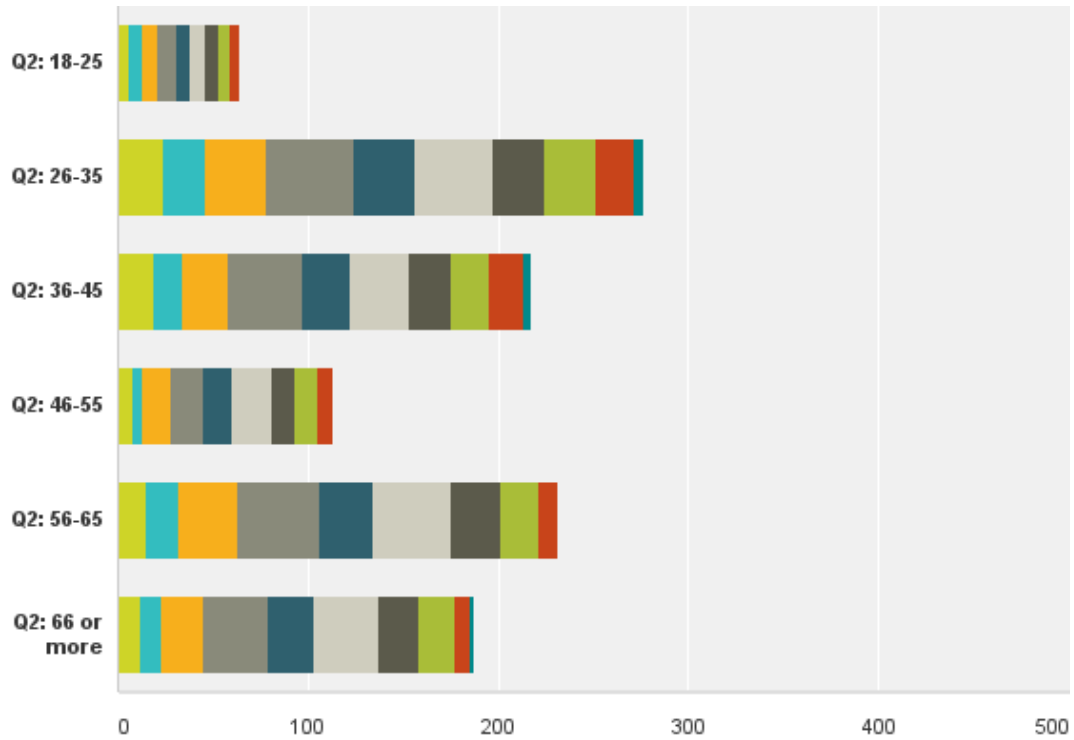
***What ideas do Orthodox Jews have to encourage their communities to become more actively engaged with environmental action?***

The overall survey was both an inquiry into attitudes and an interactive tool to encourage a thought process that would generate ideas and perspectives. The next section will determine how these ideas and perspectives can act as a foundation for further discussion on next steps. Analyses are done on the top three choices. Obviously, some of these choices could be combined, e.g., learning about science or Jewish values may be integral to a school curriculum or can be part of some informal education program sponsored by a synagogue or community. To keep the question simple, the survey did not attempt to categorize these possibilities.

**Age**

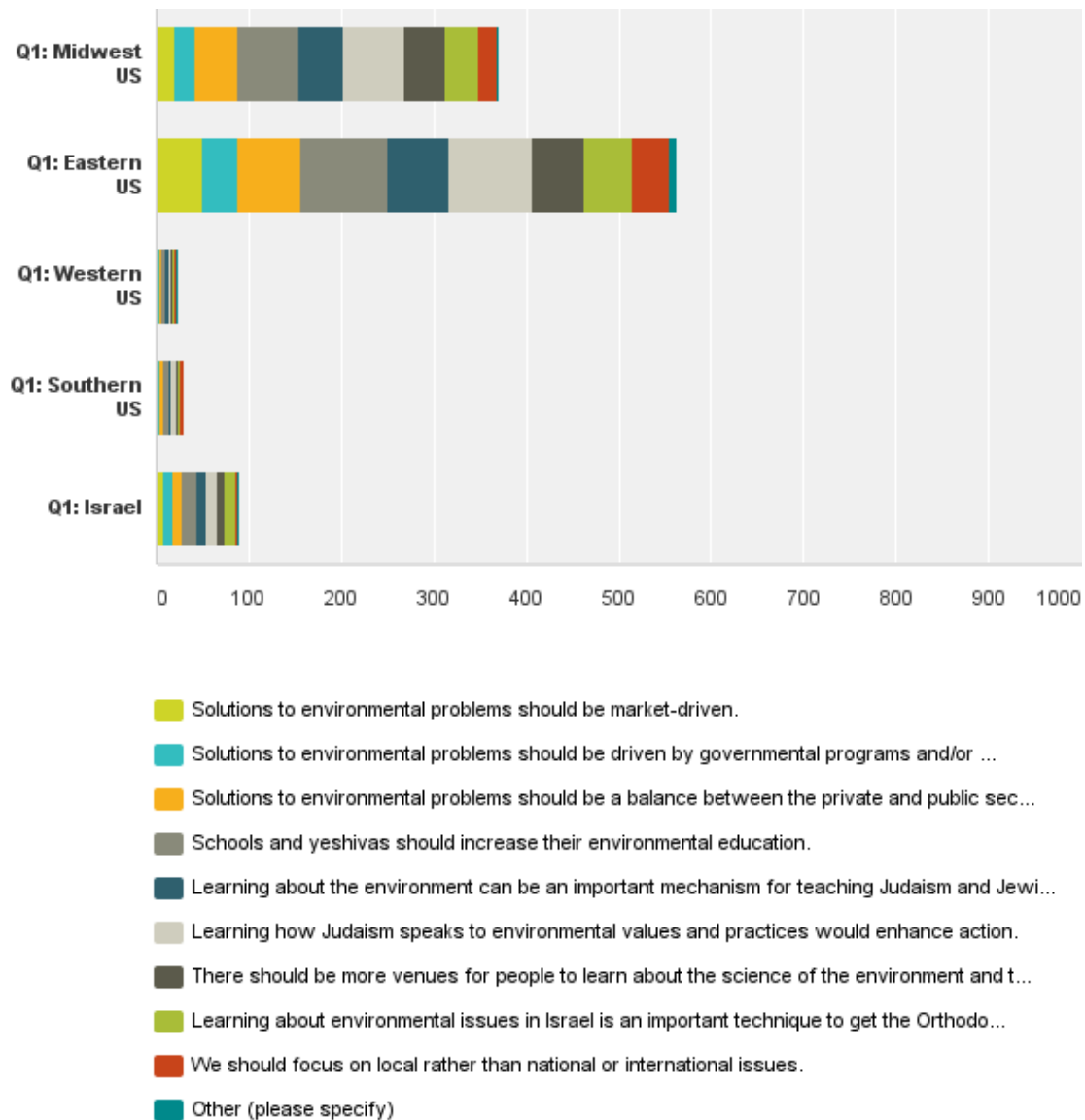
- Including environmental education in the curriculum of schools is a top priority for all age groups (Fig. 32A).
- With the exception of the 46-55 year-old group, it is the most important strategy ranging from 71.4% for 18-25 year-olds to 87.6% for 56-65 year-olds.
- Learning how Judaism speaks to environmental values and practices (hereafter labeled “values”) was also important for all groups except the 18-25 year-old category (26-35: 73.2%; 36-45: 63.3%; 46-55: 72.4%; 56-65: 85.4%; 66 and more: 82.9%).
- Teaching and using solutions to environmental problems that integrate the private and public sectors of the economy (hereafter labeled “private/public”) were also seen as important strategies (18-25: 57.3%; 26-35: 57.1%; 36-45: 49%; 46-55: 51.7%; 56-65: 64.6%; 66 and more: 53.7%).
- Increasing venues to learn about science was important for 18-25 year-olds (50%; 26-35 year-olds: 57.1%; and 66 and older: 51.2%).
- 51.7% of 18-25, 26-35 and 46-55 year-olds felt learning how Judaism speaks to environmental values and practices was important.

A.



- Solutions to environmental problems should be market-driven.
- Solutions to environmental problems should be driven by governmental programs and/or ...
- Solutions to environmental problems should be a balance between the private and public sec...
- Schools and yeshivas should increase their environmental education.
- Learning about the environment can be an important mechanism for teaching Judaism and Jewi...
- Learning how Judaism speaks to environmental values and practices would enhance action.
- There should be more venues for people to learn about the science of the environment and t...
- Learning about environmental issues in Israel is an important technique to get the Orthodo...
- We should focus on local rather than national or international issues.
- Other (please specify)

B.

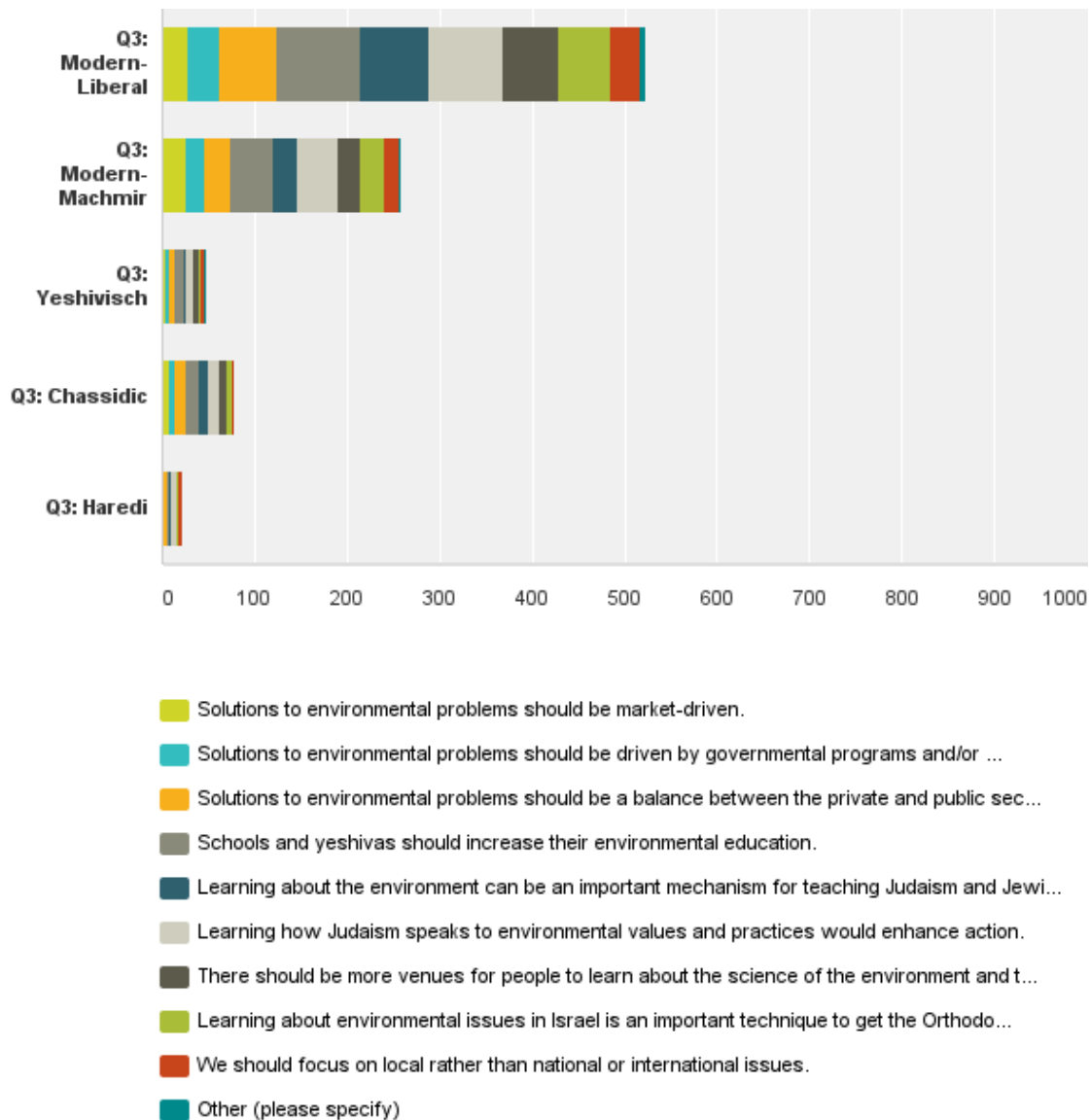


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### Geographic Location

- Regardless of geographic location (Fig. 32B), the role of schools and yeshivas was most important in enhancing environmental information action (Midwest: 83.5%; East 73.6%).
- The second most important strategy was teaching about values (Midwest: 82.3%; East: 69.8%).
- While those from the Midwest suggested using the environment as a mechanism or tool to teach Jewish values (62%) as their 3<sup>rd</sup> choice, those from the East ranked private/public interactions as 3<sup>rd</sup> (51.9%).

C.



109

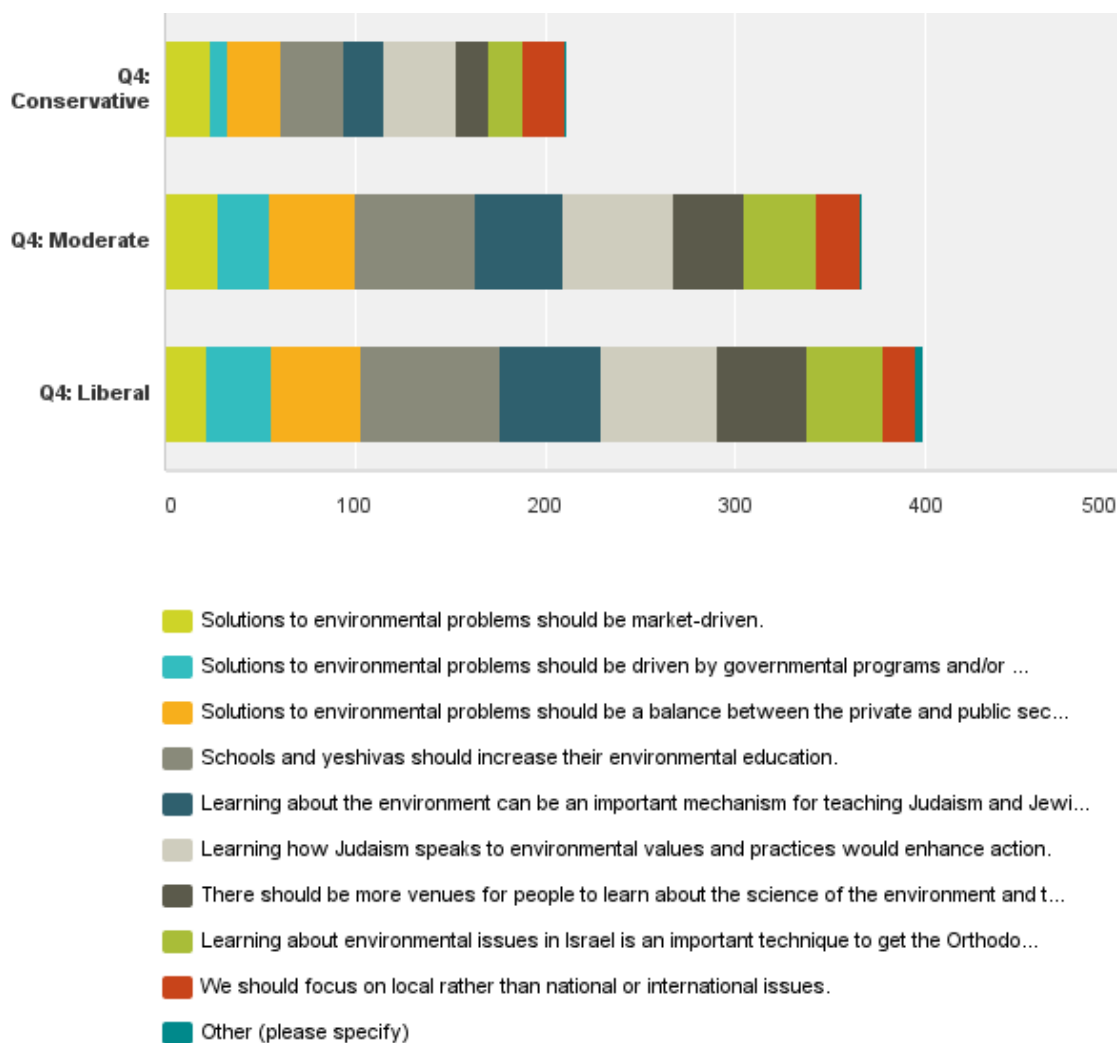
### Orthodox Spectrum

- Among Modern Orthodox Jews, regardless of identifying as Liberal or Machmir, environmental education in the schools and yeshivas was ranked most important as a strategy to enhance environmental action (86.5 and 70.3%, respectively; Fig. 32C). The role of the school and yeshiva was also most important for Yeshivisch and Chassidic respondents and ranked second among Haredi survey participants.
- Judaism and environmental values was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> by Modern-Machmir (70.3%) and 3<sup>rd</sup> by Modern-Liberal (70.2%).
- Using Judaism as a mechanism to teach environmental values ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> among Modern-Liberal Jews (72.2%).
- Identifying private/public integration was 3<sup>rd</sup> among Modern-Machmir (43.8%).

## Political Philosophy

- As with the other demographic breakdowns, schools and yeshivas, and values are among the top three suggested strategies regardless of political philosophy (Fig. 32D). For schools the rankings were: Conservative (2<sup>nd</sup>)--52.4%, Moderate (1<sup>st</sup>)--82.9%; Liberal (1<sup>st</sup>)--96.1%). For values the rankings were: Conservative (1<sup>st</sup>)—60.3%; Moderate (2<sup>nd</sup>)—81.6%; Liberal (3<sup>rd</sup>)—67.7%).
- For Conservatives, developing private/public sector integration was 3<sup>rd</sup> (44.4%).
- Both Moderates and Liberals ranked using Judaism to teach about the environment 2<sup>nd</sup> (69.7 vs 81.6%, respectively).

D.



**Figure 32: Potential strategies to actively engage the Orthodox community in environmental action. A. By age group. B. By geographic location. C. By self-identification within the spectrum of Orthodoxy. D. By political philosophy.**

## Conclusions

The Orthodox community is far from being a monolithic bloc. Rather, there is great diversity in approaches to a halachic lifestyle. That range of thought and behavior is mirrored in the varied relationships with the environment and views as to how one should act on its behalf. It is how one acts, what motivates those actions and what would encourage additional engagement with environmental protection that are the primary focuses of this study. In such an approach, this study has a fundamental premise that by internally building upon the cultural norms, practices and perspectives of a community, that the goal of actively engaging that community in environmentally sustainable behaviors will be more successful than if outside groups attempt to instill their values and perspectives as a means to achieve those same ends. In other words, process matters.

This study, perhaps the first of its kind, identified many ideas and opinions about methods to develop environmentally sustainable behaviors in the Orthodox community. Yet, there are several clear limitations of this project and it is critical to identify them in hopes that future studies will fill in the gaps. While only 309 people responded to the survey, they represented a broad and fairly equitable distribution of ages and political philosophies. The tilt toward more politically liberal respondents is not necessarily representative of the political tendencies among American Orthodox Jews of whom 57% identify with or lean toward the Republican Party (Cooperman and Smith 2013). Similarly, the high preponderance of Modern Orthodox survey participants does not reflect the distribution of religious lifestyles in the American Orthodox community. Nearly 71% of the respondents called themselves Modern Orthodox (Liberal and Machmir combined) but in the US they only account for 31% of all Orthodox Jews (Pew Research Center 2015). The lack of sufficient numbers of Yeshivisch, Chassidic and Haredi respondents in this study does limit the power of any proposed strategies. These groups represent 62% of US Orthodox Jews (Pew Research Center 2015). Lastly, while responses based on geographic location did not vary greatly for most survey questions, there were more respondents from the Midwestern states than Eastern states even though there are many more Orthodox Jews in the East (Pew Research Center 2015). Therefore, because of all these important limitations, the proposed strategies unfortunately focus primarily, although not exclusively, on Modern Orthodox Jews.

**I. Environmental action.** With one exception all demographic groups showed greater than 50% of survey participants are involved in doing environmentally-friendly actions. The only exception was from politically conservative individuals where that number dropped to approximately 40%; still a significant number. Most of those actions were done as individuals and not as part of an organizational effort. While there is an Orthodox environmental organization, Canfei Nesharim, less than 10% of respondents regardless of how the data were grouped, had heard of it (data not shown). Yet, there was interest in being involved in such an organization, although what that meant was not explored by the survey. In fact, it has been the experience of Canfei Nesharim that if provided a structure within which Orthodox Jews can find a pathway to environmental engagement, many individuals do become involved (Evonne Marzouk, former Executive Director Canfei Nesharim, personal communication).



There was a split between what areas of environmental protection and action that concerned people and where they put most of their efforts. Across all demographic groupings the two most important areas of concern were air and water quality/pollution. Although the survey did not explore why these two topics were of such interest, it did fit a pattern that was seen among many responses. Environmental harm that directly and clearly affects the individual, family or immediate community was consistently a high priority. Issues of endangered species, wilderness protection, etc. were low priority concerns. Yet in spite of this concern, most environmental actions were centered on recycling. This specific action fit the general desire to do small, easily achievable actions that do not demand great amounts of time and/or effort.

**II. Action motivators.** The three most critical motivators for increased environmental action were, regardless of demographic grouping, increased availability of “green” products, existence of government incentives even among politically conservative respondents) and influence of friends and social networking. The survey did not define “green” products so it is not clear what people had in mind. Depending on interest such products could be anything from non-genetically modified food ingredients to environmentally-safe chemicals to solar panels. This is played out through the high interest in sustainable agriculture and renewable energy sources among all demographic groups. This last observation was true only if the question focused on a specific issue, e.g., sustainability/stewardship. If being ranked among a list of other potential action items, it was not a top priority. Importantly, this was true among all demographic groups. There was an inherent difficulty in ranking personal action items. While those that had direct and/or immediate affect tend to be given higher priority, it seemed apparent that this did not imply that the other items in the list, e.g., sustainability/stewardship, were unimportant.

It was unfortunate that so few Chassidic Jews responded because in one of the two focus groups that included this segment of the Orthodox Jewish population, one of the primary concerns that were actually acted upon was household and garden chemicals, which included food additives and establishing organic gardens. The concern over harmful chemicals was also important to Modern Orthodox-Machmir and politically conservative Jews. That observation was interesting because among Republicans only 43% agreed that chemical pollution is a problem; 67% of Democrats and 57% of Independents agree (SRI Consultants 2006). It would worthwhile to follow up on these viewpoints to determine how widespread this practice is within these segments of the Orthodox community and what can be done to spread these practices to other Orthodox Jews.

**III. Environment and the economy.** A common theme among environmentalists is that a healthy environment is critical for a healthy economy. 83% of Americans concur (SRI Consultants 2006). However, among Orthodox Jews, this viewpoint was not so widely held, particularly among the more religiously and/or politically conservative members. In fact, the only group that matches the value seen among Americans in general was the politically liberal.

**IV. Environmental education and experiences.** Across all demographic groups, environmental education was considered important. Whether it is formal

(day schools and yeshivas) or informal education (outdoor experiences), interaction with the environment enhances one's appreciation for and desire to protect Creation.

There is widespread agreement across all demographic groups that experiencing nature through hiking or camping enhances one's connection with HaShem and encourages a deeper appreciation of all Creation. Such informal experiences clearly strengthen and deepen Jewish spirituality. Of interest is the higher ranking 26-45 year-old respondents gave this question. This age group may be more active outdoors and, therefore, more readily identifies with the relationship between being outdoors and connecting spiritually to nature. In this, Orthodox Jews are in agreement with Americans in general as 87% of the general population agrees that the beauty of nature is a gift from HaShem, 80% would love a 2-week trip in the mountains and 81% agree that taking care of nature is part of one's duty to G-d (SRI Consultants 2006).

**V. Potential barriers.** With all this good feeling toward the environment, what barriers reduce people's being more active? Across all ages, religious practices and political perspectives, everyone's lives are simply too busy with jobs, family responsibilities and fulfilling religious obligations to do much more than simple actions. Equally important was that people conduct their own cost/benefit analyses to evaluate the usefulness of specific actions to achieve specific environmental outcomes. Many were willing to act if that process yielded greater benefits vs cost, although it was not clear how frequently that decision-making process was actually used. The survey did not explore directly what constitutes a benefit or cost but issues of health were a priority. However, benefit:cost analyses for environmental health among Orthodox Jewish families paralleled those of the general American public in which 83% were wary about the effects of environmental pollution on family health (SRI Consultants 2006). Other barriers included a lack of scientific knowledge, environmentalists seen as too liberal/self-righteous (a view shared by 55% of Republicans but only 38% of Democrats and 44% of Independents; SRI Consultants 2006), environmentalists considered as too nature-oriented and not enough people-focused, and Jewish survival was more important of a value.

**VI. Environmental science and Jewish values.** Rather than scientific evidence being a major influence on environmental action decisions, Jewish values were seen as critical to encouraging better earth stewardship. Being a good steward of Creation was, however, not considered a central tenet of Judaism even by those who are more religiously and/or politically liberal. In other words, acting wisely in regards to the environment is an important value but it is only one of many important Jewish values. This perspective, generally agreed upon by all demographic categories, was a driving force that influenced many of the survey responses. This concept is based upon a foundational perspective of Orthodox Judaism in which observance of halacha as a way to achieve holiness and closeness to HaShem is central. Environmental attitudes may be an outgrowth of that world view but are not a direct expression of it. This also was made clear in several of the focus group discussions.

An example of the division between environmental action as a value and such action as a central tenet of Judaism was observed in responses to the

centrality of an environmental theme for Jewish communal programming. Inclusion of environmental themes in, for example, a holiday program was viewed less favorably if it was the only focus. When environmental topics or action items were one of several themes, acceptance of such a program outline increased dramatically in all demographic groups. It is likely that another reason for such a response is that each person has their own range of touchstones with Judaism. Having a program that has a greater chance of connecting to those individual needs has a greater chance of success while at the same time introducing environmental perspectives that could influence future actions, especially if such programming includes a list of activities that could be conducted as a group, family or an individual.

**VII. Organizational influences.** As noted in the Introduction, a lack of organizational structures within the Orthodox community that can provide support for environmental action was and still is a key barrier to sustainable behaviors. In this light, it was not surprising that a large percentage of the respondents, regardless of demographic category, agreed that the synagogue is an important location for environmental programming and action. Given this importance of the synagogue's role, it was surprising that most people did not see the rabbi as an important motivating force. While not explored, there may be several reasons for this. If the respondent was considering their own rabbi, it is possible that they did not view that individual as the key person that would influence their environmental decisions. Alternatively, since the question was not clear as to whether spiritual leader was the synagogue rabbi or an important community posek, the level of gravity afforded a rabbinical decision could vary greatly. A follow-up on this issue is warranted as it may have a profound effect on how to develop appropriate strategies for the Orthodox community.

**VIII. Knowledge of Jewish sources about the environment.** Given the importance Jewish values plays in defining how people put into practice sustainable behaviors and the importance of learning not only as a value in and of itself but as a mechanism of discovering what are acceptable actions, it is important to note that fewer than 50% of respondents regardless of demographic category felt confident in their knowledge of Jewish views about the environment. When provided a list of areas that would be of interest to learn what the rabbis and commentators have said about the environment, the top two responses were wise use of natural resources and sustainable practices. Although these two options are related they are not necessarily identical. Wise use of resources is much more subjective, i.e., what is wise use to one may be wasteful to another. However, there is less subjectivity in for sustainable practices because they imply the ability to renew the resource, e.g., forestry, use it in a fashion that allows future generations to benefit from it, e.g., sustainable agriculture, and/or use of the resource does not diminish its availability, e.g., renewable energy. Nevertheless, each option does suggest a strong desire to be good stewards of Creation, a value that was supported by a majority of respondents regardless of age, religious perspective or political philosophy. Interestingly, areas of environmental action that do not involve using Earth's bounty or have less direct impact on individual lives were not considered priority concern items, e.g., protecting endangered species or wilderness protection.

**IX. Climate change.** Due to its controversial nature, attitudes toward anthropogenic climate change were explored. In a comparison of age groups, climate change was among the top five concerns for those 46 and older; among those groups the older individuals ranked it higher. Regardless of geographic location, approximately 60% of respondents ranked climate change as a top five issue. While three-fourths of Modern Orthodox-Liberal Jews felt that climate change was a major issue, a little over one-half of Modern Orthodox-Machmir did. Only when comparing by political philosophy did major differences appear:  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Conservatives, two-thirds of Moderates and nine-tenths of Liberals ranked climate change among the top five concerns. On the positive side this implies that anthropogenic climate change not only is an accepted fact among many Orthodox Jews but its importance has even reached into a portion of those who are religiously and/or politically conservative. Furthermore, this was a ranking of importance not a statement of agreement. Of the 15 choices given, climate change was never ranked less than 10<sup>th</sup> by any demographic group. Individual responses, however, do paint a picture of intense opposition to the concept by a number of respondents. It is possible that given the relative importance of teaching Jewish values over science, that a different approach is required to reach those who question the scientific validity of climate change. For example, many who doubt the human role in climate change still agree that the climate is changing. There is a moral issue of how this affects the most vulnerable in society and how we as fellow travelers on this planet should respond. In other words, if climate change mitigation is not a topic of concern, climate change adaption could be a more acceptable approach to many in the Orthodox community. This idea is supported by the fact that renewable energy is a top five topic of concern regardless of demographic category, including conservatives, and that environmental factors that affect family health are very important.

### **Summary**

There are 12 basic take-home lessons learned from this survey as to where the Orthodox community stands regarding the environment and its motivations for increased action.

- Regardless of which demographic grouping was analyzed, greater than 50% of survey participants state they are involved in doing environmentally-friendly actions. The only exception is from politically conservative individuals where that number drops to approximately 40%; still a significant number. Many of the actions conducted by Orthodox Jews are done as individuals and not as part of an organizational effort. This is likely due more to a lack of knowledge about than an avoidance of Orthodox environmental organizations
- There is a difference between what areas of environmental protection and action concern people and where they put most of their efforts. Across all demographic groupings the two most important areas of concern are air and water quality/pollution. Although the survey did not explore why these two topics were of such interest, it does fit a pattern that was seen among other survey question responses. Environmental harm, especially involving human health, that directly and clearly

affects the individual, family or immediate community is consistently of high priority. Issues of endangered species, wilderness protection, etc. are low priority concerns. However, most of the effort in environmental actions centers on recycling. This specific action fits the general desire to do small, easily achievable actions that do not demand great amounts of time and/or effort that would conflict with an already busy personal schedule.

- The three most critical motivators for increased environmental action are, regardless of demographic grouping, increased availability of “green” products, existence of government incentives (even among politically conservative respondents), and influence of friends and/or social networking.
- Across all demographic groups, environmental education is considered important. Whether it is formal (day schools and yeshivas) or informal education (outdoor experiences), interaction with the environment enhances the Orthodox community’s appreciation and desire for protecting Creation.
- Across all ages, religious practices and political perspectives, everyone’s lives are simply too busy with jobs, family responsibilities and fulfilling the many religious obligations for Orthodox Jews to do much more than simple actions. Equally important is that people conduct their own personal cost/benefit analyses to evaluate the usefulness of specific actions to achieve specific environmental outcomes. Many are willing to act if that process yields greater benefits vs cost, although it is not clear how frequently that decision-making process is actually used. Regardless, the basic theme in the Orthodox community’s perspective on environmental action is one of balance between time available, benefits vs cost and local, direct impact issues vs global, indirect impact issues.
- Jewish values are seen as critical to encouraging better earth stewardship. Being a good steward of Creation is, however, not considered a central tenet of Judaism even by those who are more religiously and/or politically liberal. In other words, acting wisely in regards to the environment is an important value but it is only one of many important Jewish values, some of which are more central to defining and directing a religious life.
- Inclusion of environmental themes in, for example, a holiday program is viewed less favorably if it is the only focus. Acceptance of environmental themes in a program dramatically increases among all demographic groups if such topics or action items are one of several themes. One example of how this could be accomplished is to use food waste as a subtheme for a holiday program. Each Jewish holiday has unique foods and learning about and developing action items for the environmental issues surrounding food waste could be included. Food waste was considered by many to be an important environmental concern. By incorporating Jewish values into specific environmental actions, there is a dramatic increase among all demographic groups in the interest to do those actions.

- The synagogue is an important location for environmental programming and action. Given this importance of the synagogue's role, it was surprising that most people did not see the rabbi as an important motivating force for environmental action.
- Less than one-half of respondents regardless of demographic category feel confident in their knowledge of Jewish views about the environment. When provided a list of areas that would be of interest to learn what the rabbis and commentators have said about the environment, the top two responses across all demographic categories were wise use of natural resources and sustainable practices.
- There is widespread agreement across all demographic groups that experiencing nature through hiking or camping enhances one's connection with HaShem and encourages a deeper appreciation of all Creation. According to survey participants such informal experiences strengthen and deepen Jewish spirituality.
- Due to its controversial nature, attitudes toward anthropogenic climate change were explored. In a comparison of age groups, climate change was among the top five concerns for those 46 and older. Regardless of geographic location, approximately 60% of respondents ranked climate change as a top five issue. While three-fourths of Modern Orthodox-Liberal Jews felt that climate change was a major issue, only slightly more than one-half of Modern Orthodox-Machmir did. Comparing by political philosophy one-fourth of Conservatives, two-thirds of Moderates and 9/10 of Liberals ranked climate change among the top five concerns.
- Increasing use of renewable energy sources was an important, top-five concern for all demographic groups. Although ranked 4<sup>th</sup>, slightly less than one-half of Conservatives felt increasing use of renewable energy sources was important.

### **Suggested Strategies**

A central goal of this study was to identify a small set of simple, achievable strategies that would increase environmental engagement in the Orthodox community. The following strategies are based upon motivators for action identified by the survey as well as survey participant suggestions. It is clear from the data that increasing environmental activism in the Orthodox community must be a bottom-up approach. In other words, incorporate the current concerns about both the environment and environmentalists with interests of the Orthodox community in local environmental matters into a vision of individual and community engagement. It is not likely that a top-down approach, i.e., rabbinical leadership, will have a major influence on personal choices. Although not explored by the survey, rabbis may have some influence depending on relative importance of specific rabbis within a community and the level of commitment that rabbi demonstrates to environmental matters.

***Strategy 1: Increase the intensity of both formal and informal environmental education in schools, yeshivas camps, etc.*** Between



52 and 88% of respondents depending on the demographic felt that this was either the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> most important strategy. Formal education opportunities, however, are not the only method to which Orthodox Jews will respond. It is clear that informal, outdoor education and experiences will provide meaningful opportunities to enhance appreciation for and desire to protect nature.

**Strategy 2: Encourage simple, inexpensive activities that are not time consuming and can be easily integrated into people's already busy lives.** These small-scale projects fit well with the view among most survey participants that local actions that produce quick, observable outcomes are preferred. While Orthodox Jews tend not to use non-Orthodox sources as guides, it is suggested that the book, Simple Actions for Jews to Help Green the Planet, (Rabbi Dov Peretz Elkins 2011) be used by individuals, synagogues, schools and organizations as a reference source to identify simple actions that can be accomplished with minimum effort, integrate into everyone's busy lives and increase the breadth of options from which Orthodox Jews can choose to be more environmentally active.

**Strategy 3: Develop a Jewish values-oriented approach for increasing environmentally sustainable behaviors.** While learning more about the science of the environment is critical for developing effective methods to achieve a sustainable future, the real key to increasing environmental action in the Orthodox community is integrating Jewish values as they relate to the environment into people's everyday lives. As long as the program is people- and G-d-centric and not nature-centric, which can be viewed by some Orthodox Jews as approximating paganism, integrating environmental concepts and action projects along with other themes, e.g., holiday practices, can be a highly successful and accepted strategy. There exists a wealth of source material about Judaism, Jewish values and the environment that can assist educators within both formal and informal settings. Discussed in more detail below, Orthodox educators, including rabbis, should use the value-oriented materials developed by Canfei Nesharim: Sustainable Living Inspired through Torah within their established curricula. For example, while the science of water pollution needs to be understood, there are a host of Jewish values and halachot involving water quality, risk management and human health that will speak more to Orthodox Jews than a science-only approach. This is of importance given the high ranking all respondents gave to issues of water pollution and values education.

**Strategy 4: Actively engage the private sector in environmental solutions such that both economic and environmental benefits are greater than costs.** Large proportions of the Orthodox community regardless of age, religious perspective or political philosophy want solutions to environmental problems to be a balance between the private and public sectors. While most agree that government incentives are an effective motivator for sustainable behavior within the Orthodox

community, tying such inducements to the private sector will create a larger and more positive response. For example, a key motivator was increasing the availability of “green” products. Developing mechanisms to do this, e.g., advertisements on Orthodox Jewish websites, is an example of including the private sector in win-win efforts. While environmental organizations are seen as too liberal by many within the Orthodox community, an increased effort by these groups to use Orthodox media forums to highlight private sector successes in areas as renewable energy or sustainable agriculture which are of high importance to many in the Orthodox community, may be highly useful. Importantly, all these efforts are outside the political arena and, therefore, may reduce the antagonism many within the Orthodox community have toward politically-active environmental groups.

***Strategy 5: Increase the visibility and effectiveness of Canfei Nesharim within the Orthodox community.*** Across all demographic categories there is a strong desire to increase the presence of an Orthodox voice within environmental organizations. Ironically, there exists an environmental organization which is based upon the values and practices of the Orthodox community but less than 10% of the respondents regardless of demographic group have ever heard of it. This presents a challenge and an opportunity for Canfei Nesharim. The strategies surrounding formal education suggested in this report have been a central focus of Canfei Nesharim’s efforts. Those individuals and groups who have availed themselves of Canfei Nesharim’s materials have given them high marks and will frequently seek the organization’s assistance. However, if Canfei Nesharim is to have a greater impact in the Orthodox community it must:

1. ***Increase significantly its public relations efforts.*** It is clear that Canfei Nesharim is not well-known in the Orthodox community. Therefore, Canfei Nesharim must give high priority to identifying funding sources that will leverage its ability to increase the number of connections with camps, day schools and yeshivas throughout the country. This will provide an excellent path to increasing visibility and provide a solid path for increasing sustainable behaviors at home. With the role of the synagogue ranked high as a key organizational structure to facilitate environmental action and programming, Canfei Nesharim also needs to expand its current efforts to connect with synagogues nationwide to encourage formation of Green Committees which can then integrate Canfei Nesharim materials into synagogue programming and action items. By Canfei Nesharim fostering, encouraging and enhancing local Green Committees as a bottom-up approach, there will be a greater sense of ownership of environmental issues that are of importance to each Orthodox Jewish community.
2. ***Develop collaborative relationships with established Jewish outdoor education/experience organizations that***



*have support within segments of the Orthodox community, e.g., Derech HaTeva and Hazon, to create authentic Orthodox outdoor experiences that allow people of all ages to connect with nature.* Survey participants were clear that outdoor opportunities increase their desire to protect the environment. Allocating resources, therefore, is crucial to collaborate with organizations that provide existing outdoor education experiences while Canfei Nesharim provides the Orthodox Jewish content and, if needed, staff to create a coordinated, Jewish values-based outlook on nature, ecology and environmental concerns. This will speak to the needs and interests of many within the Orthodox community. This also connects to Strategy 1 above.

3. *Be a leader to connect Orthodox Jews to environmental careers in areas such as engineering, public health, chemistry, etc.* Development of internship programs, career information packets for high school and college students, etc. are paths to increase interest in the environment at a professional capacity. This fits well with the desire of survey participants to include the private sector in any strategy to enhance environmental engagement and is an activity that Canfei Nesharim is already in the position to provide through its Science and Technology Advisory Board. Increasing environmental professionals within the Orthodox community will develop a visible core of expert opinions that allow the community to be more accepting of environmental action. This also connects to Strategy 4 above.
4. *Increase its social networking because it is a key feature of today's society and survey participants noted its critical role as a motivating force to increase sustainable behaviors.* Already using social media to inform, Canfei Nesharim is in a unique position to expand these efforts to create a strong, cohesive and extensive network of Orthodox Jews needing and seeking support for environmental action at the individual and community levels. This also connects to increasing public relation efforts discussed above.
5. *Provide a space for respectful, knowledgeable discussion of controversial topics while avoiding appearances of political bias.* While it has been asked to participate in specific initiatives that do have political overtones, Canfei Nesharim generally has to-date not signed on to those efforts. This stance mirrors the discussion within the Orthodox community regarding the use political activism on behalf of the environment. Yet, Canfei Nesharim has always recognized that being silent about topics such as science of climate change and environmental health as well as the moral implications of these challenges is a disservice to the Orthodox community. To balance these needs Canfei Nesharim should increase its efforts to create mechanisms by which a range of

viewpoints can be safely and respectfully discussed while at the same time be a source for both scientific information and rabbinical perspectives. Clearly, this is not an easy tightrope to walk and will require much internal discussion as to how to develop such a process. However, by creatively developing a safe space for dialogue even politically conservative Orthodox Jews will feel comfortable using Canfei Nesharim resources and, in so doing, be more likely to become actively engaged in environmentally sustainable behaviors.

It is recognized that these suggested strategies are not the only possible methods to increase environmental action among Orthodox Jews. They are, however, excellent starting ideas that can be easily accomplished in most communities and integrate the personal goals and needs of many individuals. Furthermore, the suggestions for Canfei Nesharim are ideas that use existing organizational structures and build upon existing programs thus making achieving successful outcomes more attainable. By instituting all these strategies, it will be possible to tap into the large reservoir of interest in and goodwill toward the environment among many Orthodox Jews and to do so in a way that is consonant with the values and practices of this growing community.

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## Appendix A: Focus Group Questions

Below are the questions used in the focus groups. These were intended to be open-ended questions to stimulate discussion and to identify topics critical to a successful survey. Focus group sessions lasted approximately 60-90 minutes.

### General Questions

1. How do you feel about efforts to improve the environment?
2. What do you think is required of you with regard to improving the environment?
3. In your own home, what activities do you participate in that could be considered environmentally-friendly? Why are these particular activities important to you? What barriers do you face that might prevent you from doing more?
4. Considering these activities, what roles do you believe each of the following should have in fostering them?
  - a. Yourself
  - b. Synagogue/community
  - c. Private sector
  - d. Public sector
  - d. Science
5. Do you do any outdoor activities such as hiking, camping, canoeing, etc.? Do these activities influence your attitudes toward the environment?
6. What environmental issues beyond those you have already mentioned are important to you? Why?

### Jewish Community Focus Questions

1. Think about a particular environmental issue that is important to you. What Jewish sources come to mind that might guide your actions?
2. We all have a tendency to “cherry-pick”, i.e., identify with or feel connected to those parts of a story or a body of knowledge with which we feel comfortable and tend to minimize or even ignore those parts with which we feel less connected or even view as inconvenient. This is also true for environmentally-friendly behaviors as it relates to citing our sages to support a particular idea, concept or action.
  - a. Do you have concerns that those in the non-Orthodox communities take quotes out of context to support their viewpoint?

b. If so, can you share some specific examples where you have observed this, especially as it relates to environmental issues?

c. How have you responded?

d. Does it affect your general opinion of environmentalism or non-Orthodox Jews?

3. How do you feel regarding cooperating with the non-Orthodox segments of the Jewish community on community-wide environmental programs or projects?

a. Are there areas of cooperation which might be more problematic for you? Why?

b. How would you respond to those situations?

4. Can environmental issues be a way for the entire Jewish community to work together? If yes, are there any limits to that cooperation? If not, what barriers do you envision that block such participation?

5. Can environmental issues be a way the Orthodox and non-Jewish communities to work together? If yes, are there any limits to that cooperation? If not, what barriers do you envision that block such participation?

6. How do the answers to the previous questions regarding interaction with either the non-Orthodox Jewish or non-Jewish communities affect your:

a. Relationships to those involved with environmental advocacy and action

b. level of engagement in environmental advocacy

7. How do you view environmental activists in terms of:

a. Nature of narrative used to frame issue/core beliefs

b. Political affiliations

c. Relationship with the religious world

d. Similarity of social and cultural values

8. Some environmental issues have generated controversy. One topic in particular is climate change.

a. Regardless of your opinion on this issue, what do you know about it?

b. From what sources have you received your information? Which of these is the most important source?

c. How important of an issue do you believe it is? Explain.

d. Does knowledge of this topic affect your behavior? Explain.

Wrap-up Question

What strategies do you envision to increase your community's level of engagement in environmental activities? Consider the viewpoints generated in this discussion as a basis for your answer.

## Appendix B: Survey questions.

Below is the survey that appeared online at Jewish in Milwaukee, a website used to advertise activities and services for the Milwaukee Orthodox community. The link was provided to communities in other cities to increase the geographic distribution of survey participants. Alternatively, the Survey Monkey web link was provided, if requested.

**We live in challenging times. Among the many issues each of us faces, environmental protection may be an important part of our lives as Orthodox Jews. Through the answers you give in this survey, Jewish Wisconsin Initiative for a Sustainable Environment (J-WISE) and Canfei Nesharim: Sustainable Living Inspired through Torah (CN; an Orthodox environmental education and outreach organization) hope to identify strategies to engage the Orthodox community in ways that are sensitive to its religious needs and views. The survey questions are drawn from responses to focus groups nationwide and in Israel.**

**Please note that:**

**Because your honesty is essential to the success of this survey, your anonymity will be assured. The only ones that will see your responses are the researchers.**

**Your responses will be combined with others, so that neither you nor your Synagogue will be identified.**

**The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete.**

**Once completed, the report based on the answers will be made available for public reading on the CN website (<http://www.canfeinesharim.org>).**

**On behalf of both J-WISE and CN, thank you for taking the time to take this important survey.**

*Answers in a survey do not exist in a vacuum. To help correlate those responses to other data that can influence our decisions, please answer the following demographic questions:*

### **1. Where do you live?**



Midwest US



Eastern US

- ☐ Western US
- ☐ Southern US
- ☐ Israel
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**2. What is your age group?**

- ☐ 18-25
- ☐ 26-35
- ☐ 36-45
- ☐ 46-55
- ☐ 56-65
- ☐ 66 or more

**3. Where do you place yourself within the spectrum of the Orthodox community?**

- ☐ Modern-Liberal
- ☐ Modern-Machmir
- ☐ Yeshivisch
- ☐ Chassidic
- ☐ Haredi
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**4. Where do you place yourself politically?**

- ☐ Conservative



- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Liberal
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**5. What is your primary source of scientific information?**

- ☐ News media
- ☐ Internet
- ☐ Scientific presentations (publications, conferences, etc.)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

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II. Topics that involve environmental action cross religious, political and cultural identities. The following questions address these issues.

**6. The following environmental topics are important to me. Please mark all that apply.**

- ☐ Air Quality
- ☐ Climate Change
- ☐ Endangered Species
- ☐ Environmental Education
- ☐ Environmental Justice
- ☐ Food Waste
- ☐ Household Chemicals
- ☐ Preserving Wilderness Areas
- ☐ Recycling

- ☐ Renewable Energy Sources
- ☐ Sustainable Agriculture
- ☐ Water Quality
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**7. Which of the following activities are important in your life? Please mark all that apply.**

- ☐ City beautification (getting rid of litter, etc.)
- ☐ Composting and/or using compostable materials
- ☐ Decreasing use of household chemicals
- ☐ Decreasing use of garden and lawn chemicals
- ☐ Creating a native plants garden
- ☐ Creating an organic fruit and/or vegetable garden
- ☐ Recycling clothes, shoes, etc.
- ☐ Recycling electronics
- ☐ Recycling glass, paper, plastic, etc.
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**8. I am also interested in doing the following. Please mark all that apply.**

- ☐ City beautification (getting rid of litter, etc.)
- ☐ Composting and/or using compostable materials

- ☐ Decreasing use of household chemicals
- ☐ Decreasing use of garden and lawn chemicals
- ☐ Creating a native plants garden
- ☐ Creating an organic fruit and/or vegetable garden
- ☐ Recycling clothes, shoes, etc.
- ☐ Recycling electronics
- ☐ Recycling glass, paper, plastic, etc.
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*9. Which of the following would encourage you to be more environmentally active? Please mark all that apply.*

- ☐ Availability of “green” products
- ☐ Interest in the environment among friends
- ☐ Government incentives
- ☐ School activities
- ☐ Scientists
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*10. Would you say that you are ACTIVELY engaged in environmentally-friendly activities?*



Yes. Go to question 12.

☐ No. Go to question 11.

**11. I am not environmentally active because \_\_\_\_ . Please mark all the reasons that apply.**

**NOTE: If you answered "Yes" to question 10, skip this question and go to question 12.**

- ☐ Protecting the environment is not important to me.
- ☐ My life is too busy.
- ☐ I can't justify the cost (money, effort, and time) of such action.
- ☐ I would do more environmentally if I could justify the cost (money, effort, time) of such action.
- ☐ I do not participate in group environmental activities because those engaged in environmental protection are mostly politically liberal.
- ☐ I do not participate in group environmental activities because those engaged in environmental protection are mostly non-religious or secular.
- ☐ I do not participate in group environmental activities because those engaged in environmental protection are mostly more nature-centered than people-centered.
- ☐ I am not environmentally active because I do not have a good understanding of the topics.
- ☐ Environmental action is not a religious issue and, therefore, not important to me.
- ☐ Because Jewish survival is more important, environmental sustainability is not a high priority.
- ☐ I have serious doubts about scientific objectivity.
- ☐ Jewish environmental organizations are not inclusive of Orthodox Jews or sensitive to the needs and customs of the Orthodox community.
- ☐ I view most environmental action as being too global and not focusing on my needs or those of my family or community.
- ☐ Being "green" is inconvenient.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*12. I prefer environmental action that focuses on smaller projects that have an immediate effect on my life or community.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*13. I prefer doing environmental actions that require less effort to accomplish.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*14. I balance the cost (money, time and/or effort) of an environmental action and its benefit before deciding if I will do that activity.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*15. Experiencing nature through hiking evokes awe and a desire to protect it.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*16. Teaching about the environment in school is important.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*17. Being a good steward of Earth's resources is an important value for me.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*18. The health of my family as it is affected by the environment is important to me.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

***19. Protecting the environment is good for the economy.***

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

***20. Protecting the environment is good for national security.***

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*III. Now, we will address topics that center on Judaism and the environment. These questions cover a range of ideas expressed in the focus groups.*

*21. I am interested in discovering what, if anything, Judaism says about \_\_\_\_\_. Please mark all that apply.*

- ☐ Balancing risk
- ☐ Environmental justice
- ☐ Protecting species
- ☐ Protection from harmful chemicals
- ☐ Sustainable practices
- ☐ Using science to make decisions
- ☐ Wise use of natural resources
- ☐ Other (please specify)

*22. I currently am involved in \_\_\_\_\_. Please mark all that apply.*

- ☐ A Jewish environmental group
- ☐ An interfaith environmental group
- ☐ A non-religious-based environmental group
- ☐ No environmental group

*23. I would feel comfortable participating in \_\_\_\_\_. Please mark all that apply.*

- ☐ A Jewish environmental group
- ☐ An interfaith environmental group
- ☐ A non-religious-based environmental group
- ☐ No environmental group
- ☐ Other (please specify, e.g., indicate any possible qualifications to your participation)



*24. Consumerism as a value is antithetical to Judaism.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*25. If my rabbi actively advocates it, I would be more amenable to adopt an environmentally-friendly life style.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*26. I would attend a Jewish community-based program that was primarily devoted to an environmental theme.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*27. I would attend a Jewish community-based program that was not primarily devoted to an environmental theme, but did include such themes.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*28. I believe that I am well-versed in Jewish sources about the environment.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*29. If there is a religious component (e.g., halachic or theological) to environmental action, I would be more inclined to be more involved.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*30. It is important to have an Orthodox voice in Jewish environmental groups.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*31. I look to Israel as a source of environmental ethics and practice.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*32. I am aware of the programs and educational material of the Orthodox Jewish environmental organization Canfei Nesharim: Sustainable Living Inspired through Torah.*

- ☐ Definitely
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Not at all

*33. I believe that environmental engagement can be a unifying force in the Jewish community.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion

- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*34. Jewish communal responsibility is an important driving force for environmental engagement.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

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*35. The synagogue can be an important organizing unit for environmental action.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*36. Simplicity rather than being elaborate in doing a hiddur mitzvah (beautifying a ritual observance) is an important way to be environmentally sensitive.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion

- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*37. One can discover HaShem through nature.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

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*38. Environmental values are a central theme in Judaism.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ N/A

*39. Being a good steward of Earth's resources is a Jewish value.*

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ No Opinion
- ☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ N/A

*40. It would be important to have an expert scientist come to my community to speak about specific environmental topics.*

☐ Strongly Agree

☐ Agree

☐ No Opinion

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly Disagree

☐ N/A

*IV. The central goal of this survey is to identify potential environmental actions that would be appropriate for the Orthodox community. In that spirit, these are the last two questions.*

*41. I believe the following strategies to enhance environmental action are appropriate for the Orthodox community. Please mark all that apply.*

☐ Solutions to environmental problems should be market-driven.

☐ Solutions to environmental problems should be driven by governmental programs and/or policies.

☐ Solutions to environmental problems should be a balance between the private and public sectors.

☐ Schools and yeshivas should increase their environmental education.

☐ Learning about the environment can be an important mechanism for teaching Judaism and Jewish values.

☐ Learning how Judaism speaks to environmental values and practices would enhance action.

☐ There should be more venues for people to learn about the science of the environment and the challenges it faces.

☐ Learning about environmental issues in Israel is an important technique to get the Orthodox community more active.

☐ We should focus on local rather than national or international issues.

☐ Other (please specify)

*42. Please add any comments or final thoughts here.*

