

Residents' Reactions to Gas Prices¹
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In an internet survey jointly sponsored by Kerr & Downs Research and the *Tallahassee Democrat*, 3 out of 4 residents believe that gasoline prices are too high. Greed on the part of major oil companies is cited as the number one reason for high gas prices, while 3 out of five residents blame OPEC countries.

President Bush and the Iraq war are each named by nearly half of residents as reasons for high gas prices. One in three residents blame infatuation of SUVs as the reason for high gas prices.

Three out of five residents maintain they have taken fewer automobile trips in the past 2 months because of high gas prices, while over one in three residents has driven to Georgia to buy cheaper gasoline. One in four residents do not fill their tanks completely in response to gas prices. One in six residents either cancelled their Memorial Day trip or did not drive as far as originally planned.

7% of residents claim they have begun looking for a more fuel-efficient vehicle, and 2% say they have already traded in for a more fuel-efficient vehicle. Mass transit is not a major part of residents reactions to high gas prices: 8% claim they have car-pooled, 7% say they walk more and 3% state they ride their bicycles more. No one in the survey claimed they ride TalTran more often as a result of high gas prices.

While noting that gas prices are high, many residents felt that we should consider our gas prices in the context of prices in other parts of the world:

As bad as prices are now, they are still amazingly low compared to many other countries. Currently, the UK is running about \$5.30 per gallon. Of course, if we want more reasonably priced gasoline, we need to allow for more drilling.

Compared to prices in other countries, we seem to have it better.

Compared to prices in Europe, we haven't even begun to pay the piper.

Environmentally oriented residents thought there was a lesson as well as a silver lining in current high gas prices.

People need to buy more fuel-efficient cars. I see a silver lining in these high prices. Most people do not think about the non-renewable resources we use carelessly every day.

^{1 1} The survey was part of *Voices*, an Internet survey panel sponsored by Kerr & Downs Research and *The Tallahassee Democrat*. The *Voices* panel is older, less racially diverse and has a higher income than Leon County as a whole. 470 residents responded to the survey conducted 5.28-5.31.04. To become part of *Voices*, go to www.voices2004.com.

I find it so frustrating that WE are in this situation again. A large majority of drivers today were driving during the oil crisis of the early 1970s. Talk at the time was that big cars were done. Now we have more than ever.

Some residents lambasted President Bush:

Is it a coincidence that gas prices are 50% higher now than they were four years ago, and the president is an oilman from Texas!

Remember President Bush has close ties to the oil industry.

Other residents saved their venom for oil companies:

There has to be collusion among major oil companies to manipulate the flow of gasoline and the price at the pump. The monopoly big oil enjoys at the pump is being manifested everyday in price increases.

Big oil has us glad to see prices drop below \$2 per gallon.

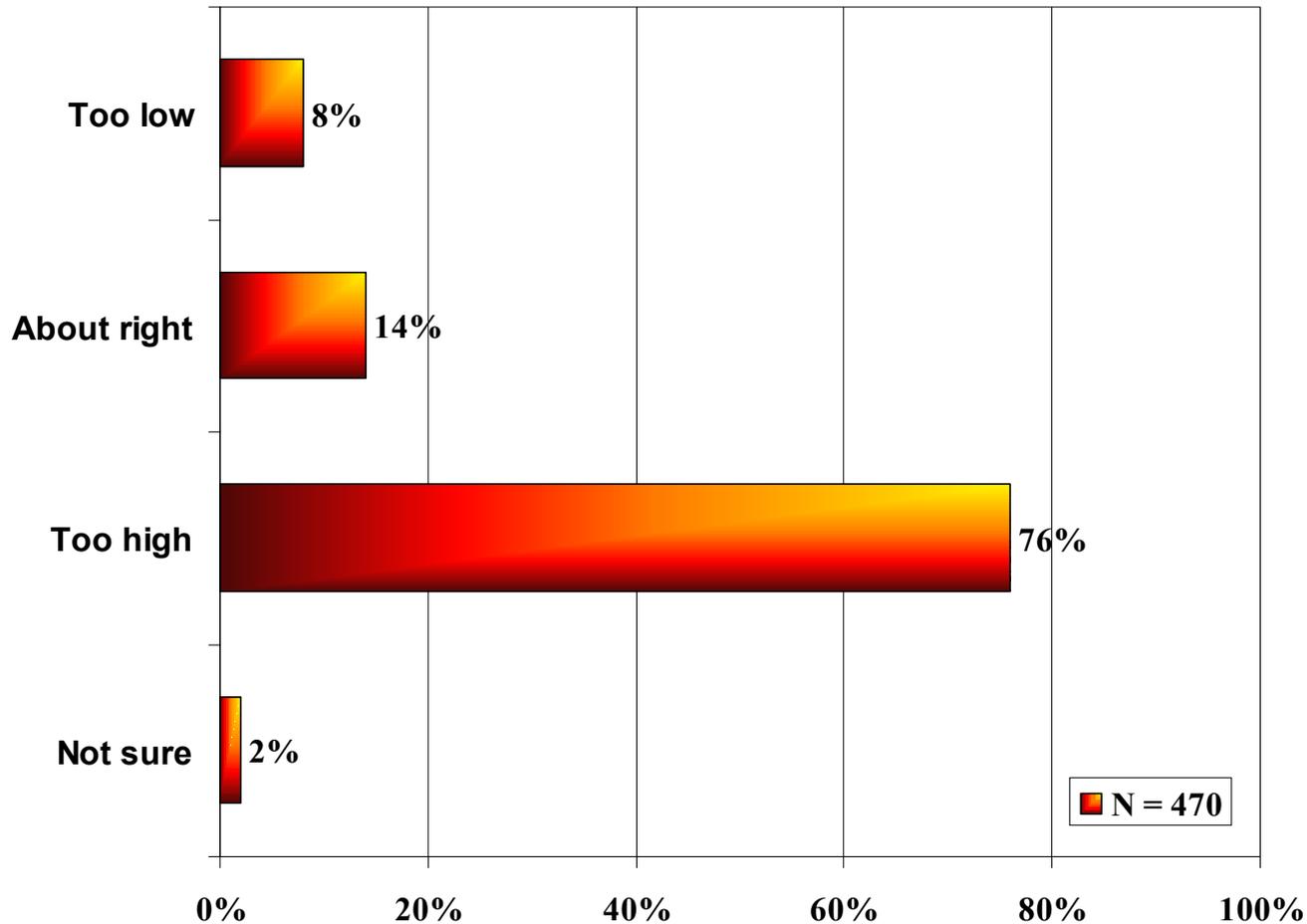
Oil companies will use any excuse to raise fuel prices, even when gas is readily available.

Many residents believe that prices follow market conditions up, but not down:

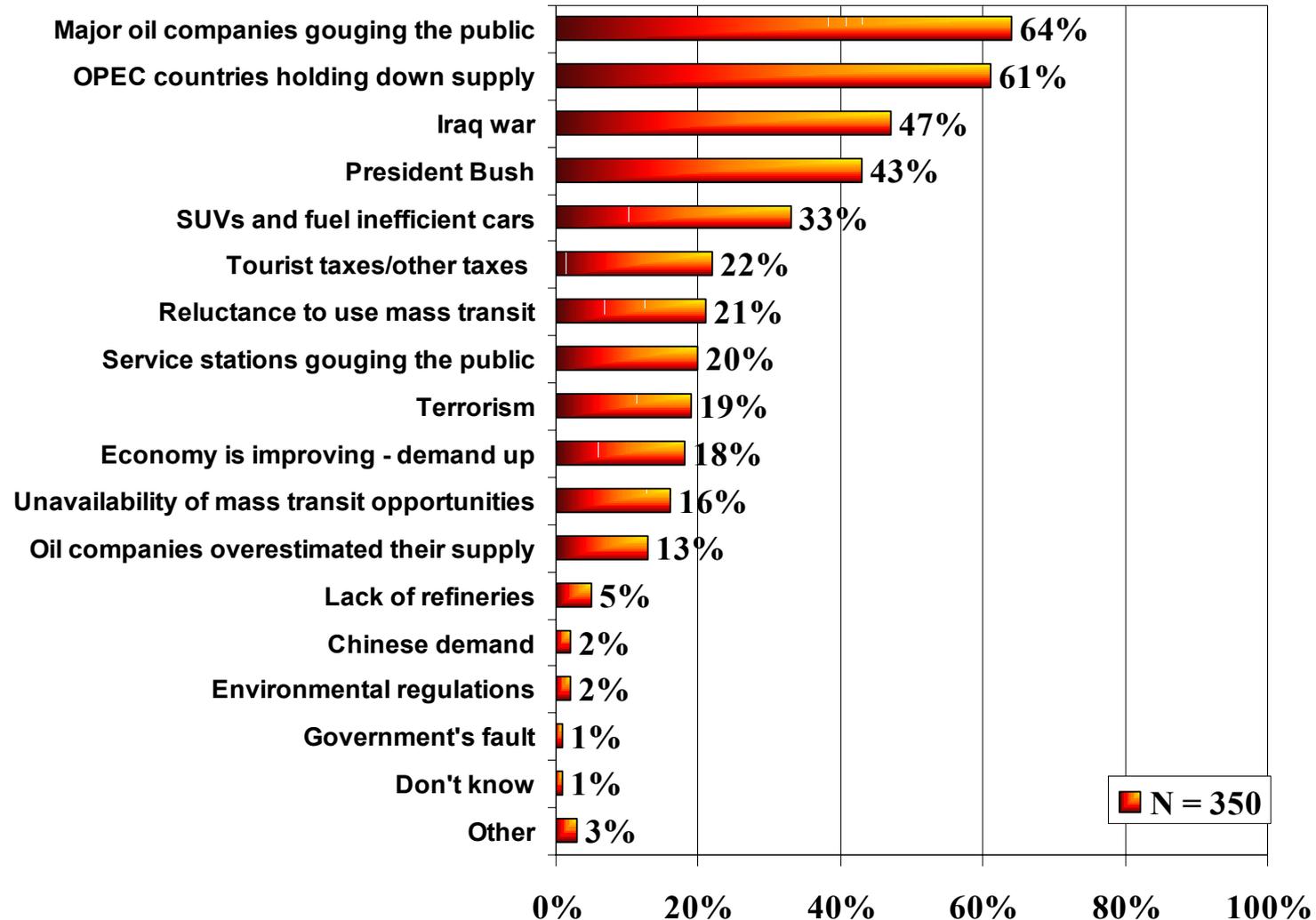
The price of crude has come down a bit in recent days, but I've not noticed any pump prices coming down.

Prices go up at the pump as soon as an increase per barrel is announced, but when crude prices drop there is no drop at the pumps immediately – maybe never.

In your opinion are gasoline prices too low, about right, or too high?

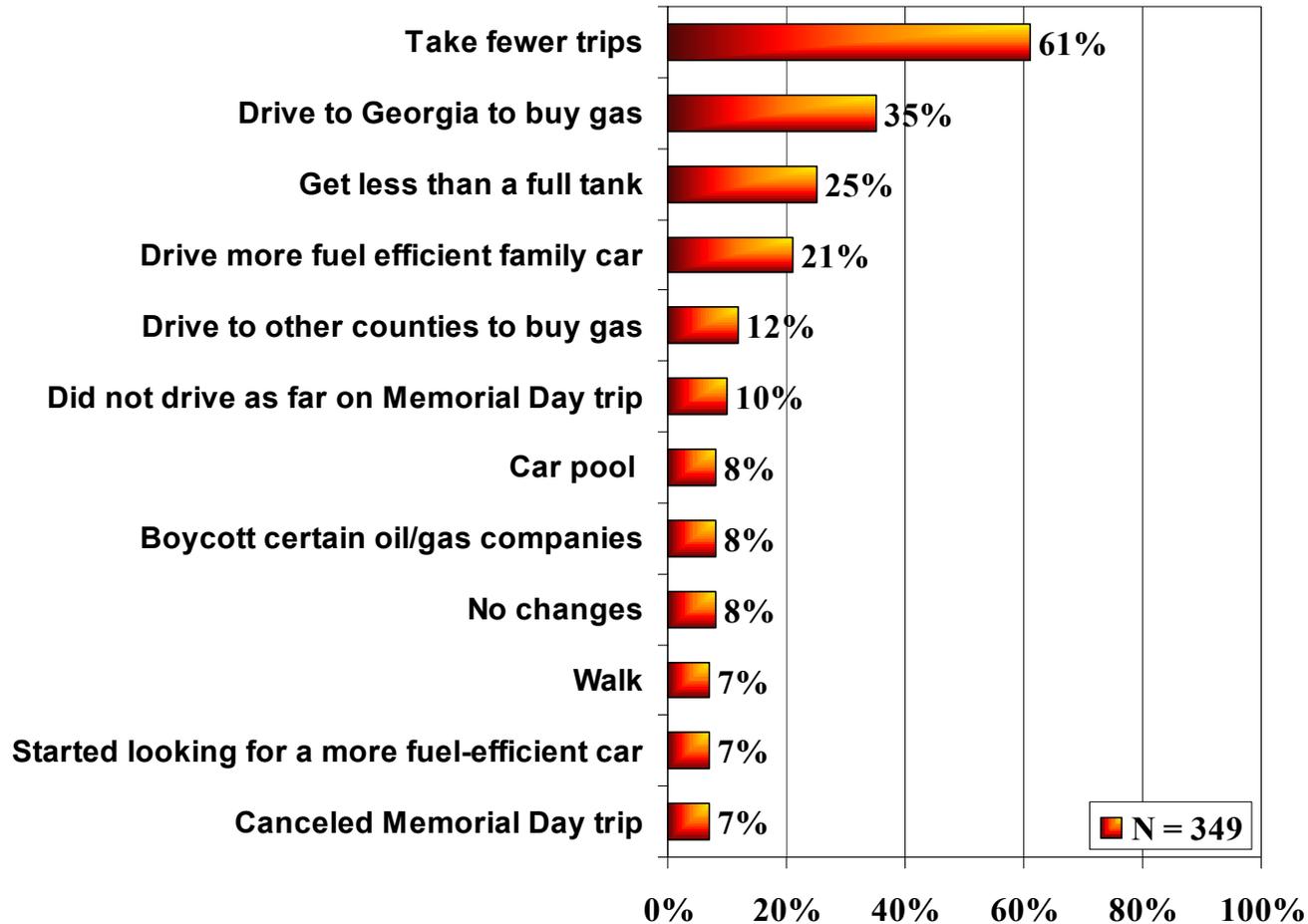


Why do you think gasoline prices are high?



Reaction to High Gas Prices*

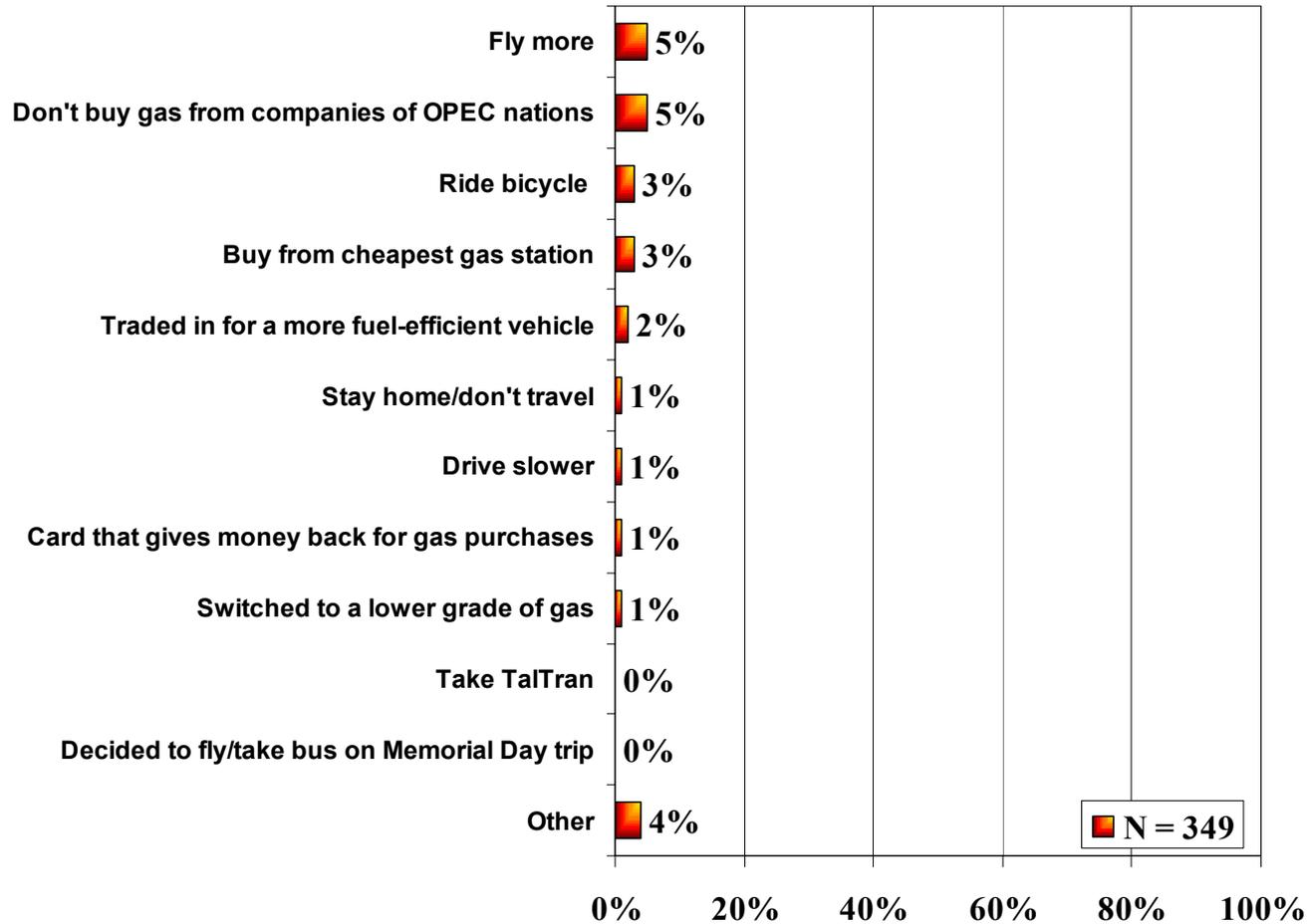
Top Responses



*Have you done any of the following in the past 2 months because of the high price of gasoline?

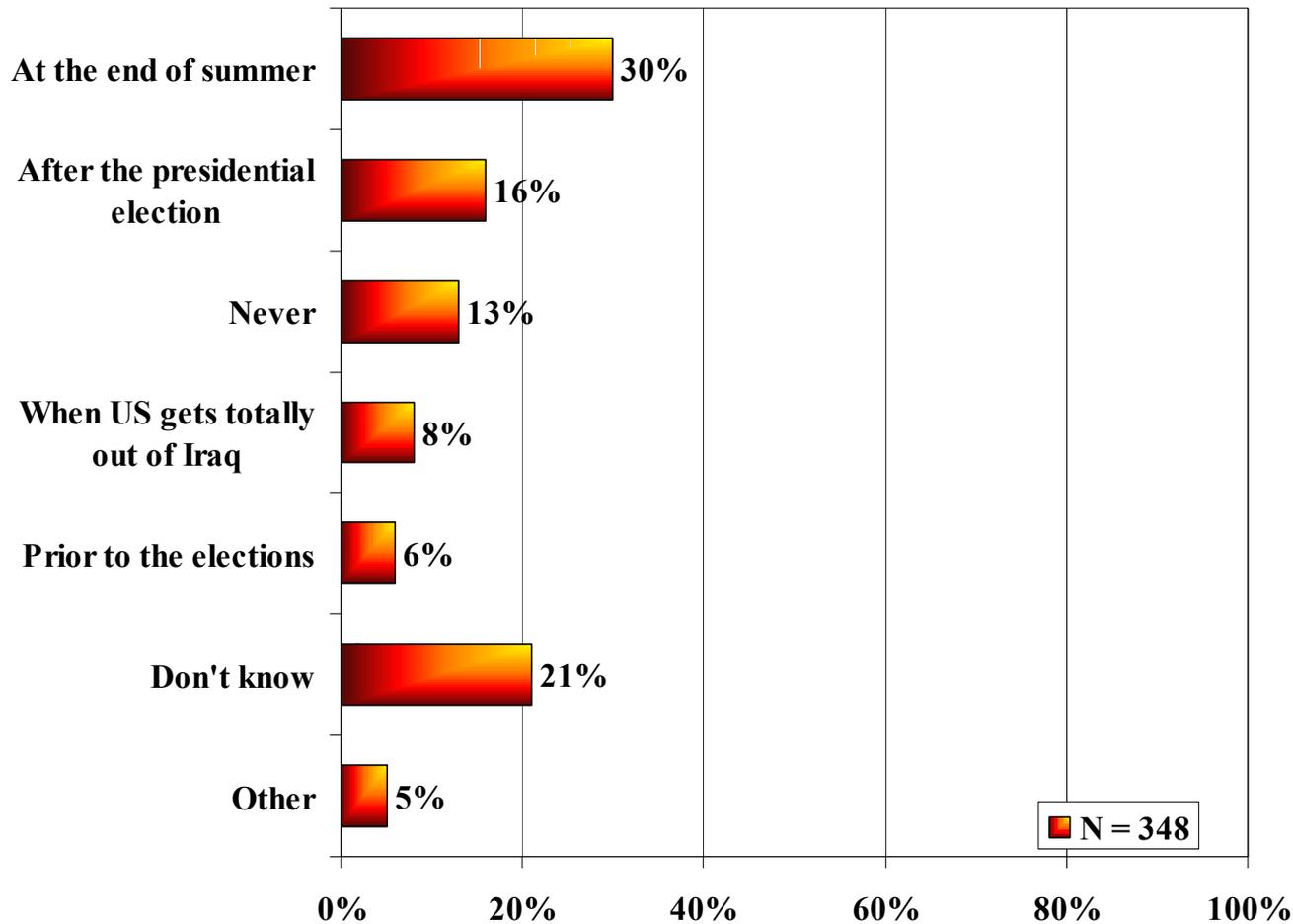
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Other Responses



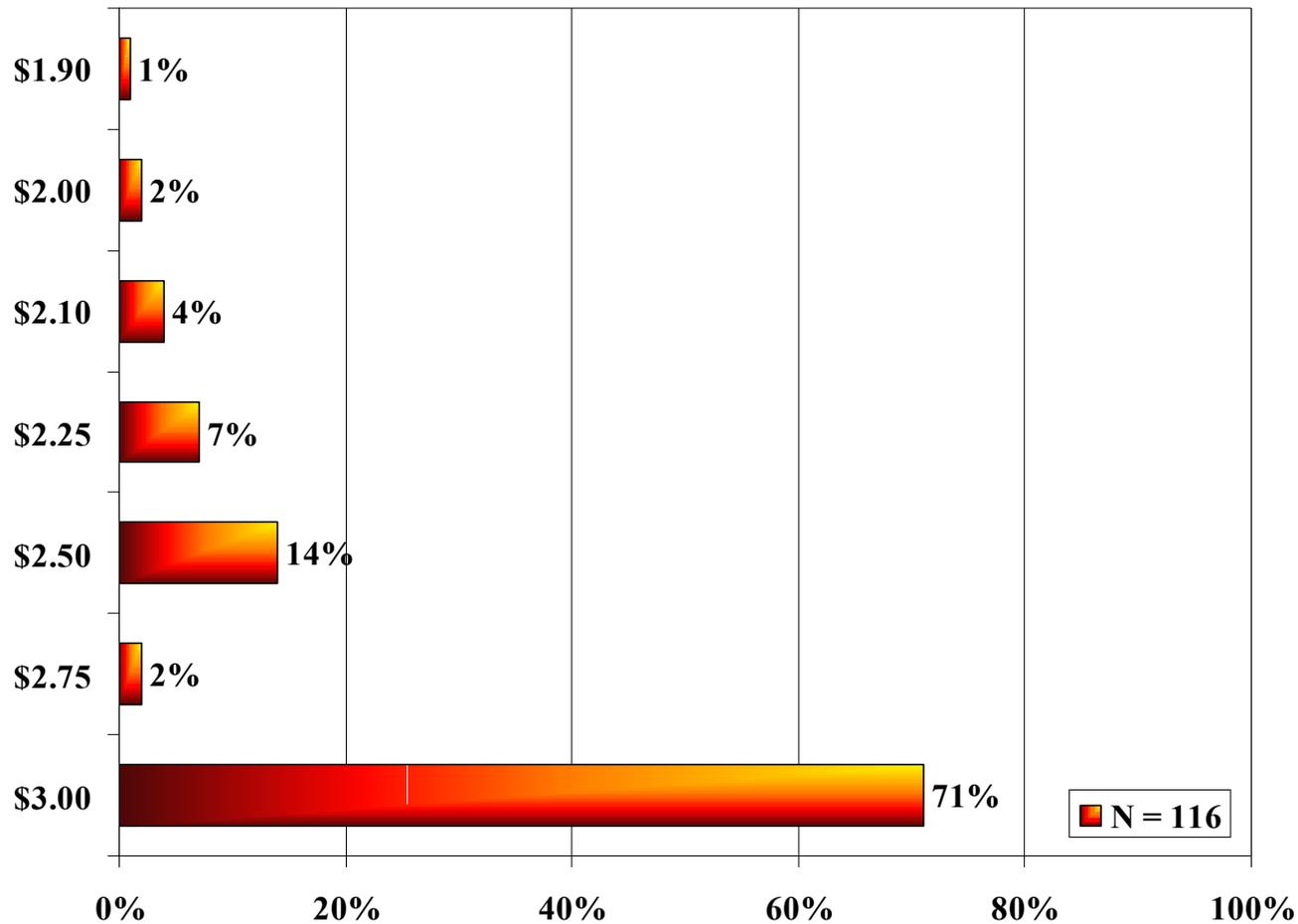
*Have you done any of the following in the past 2 months because of the high price of gasoline?

Expect Gas Prices Will Drop*



*When do you expect gasoline prices to come down significantly. Say by 15 to 20 cents per gallon?

At what price per gallon do you feel that gas is “too expensive”?*



*Asked only of residents who felt that gas prices were NOT too high. Top choice was on the survey was \$3.00. It appears that most residents feel that the price must go higher than \$3.00 to be considered “too expensive.”