

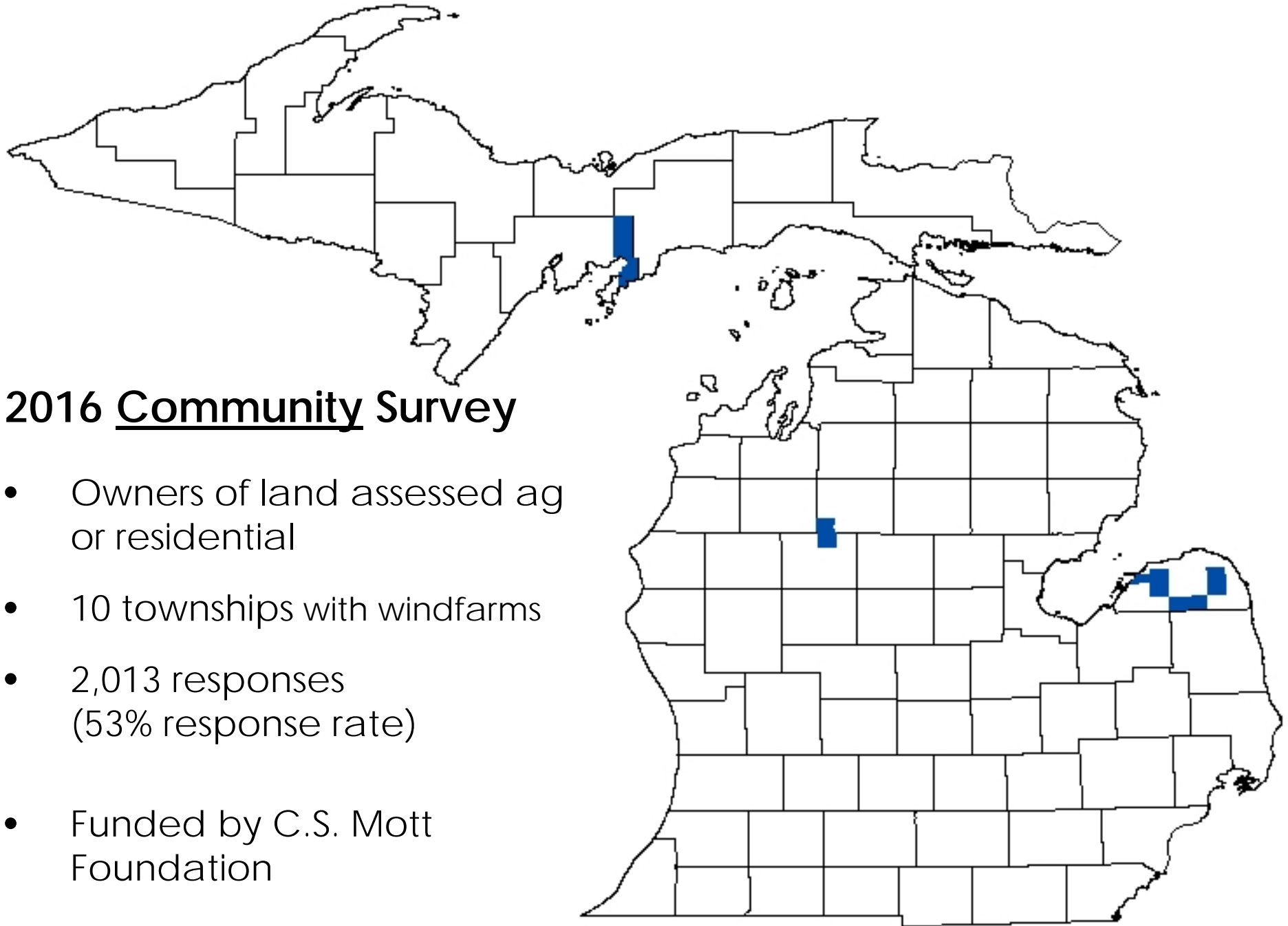
Pros and Cons of Windfarms

Midland County
November 21, 2017

Sarah Mills, PhD

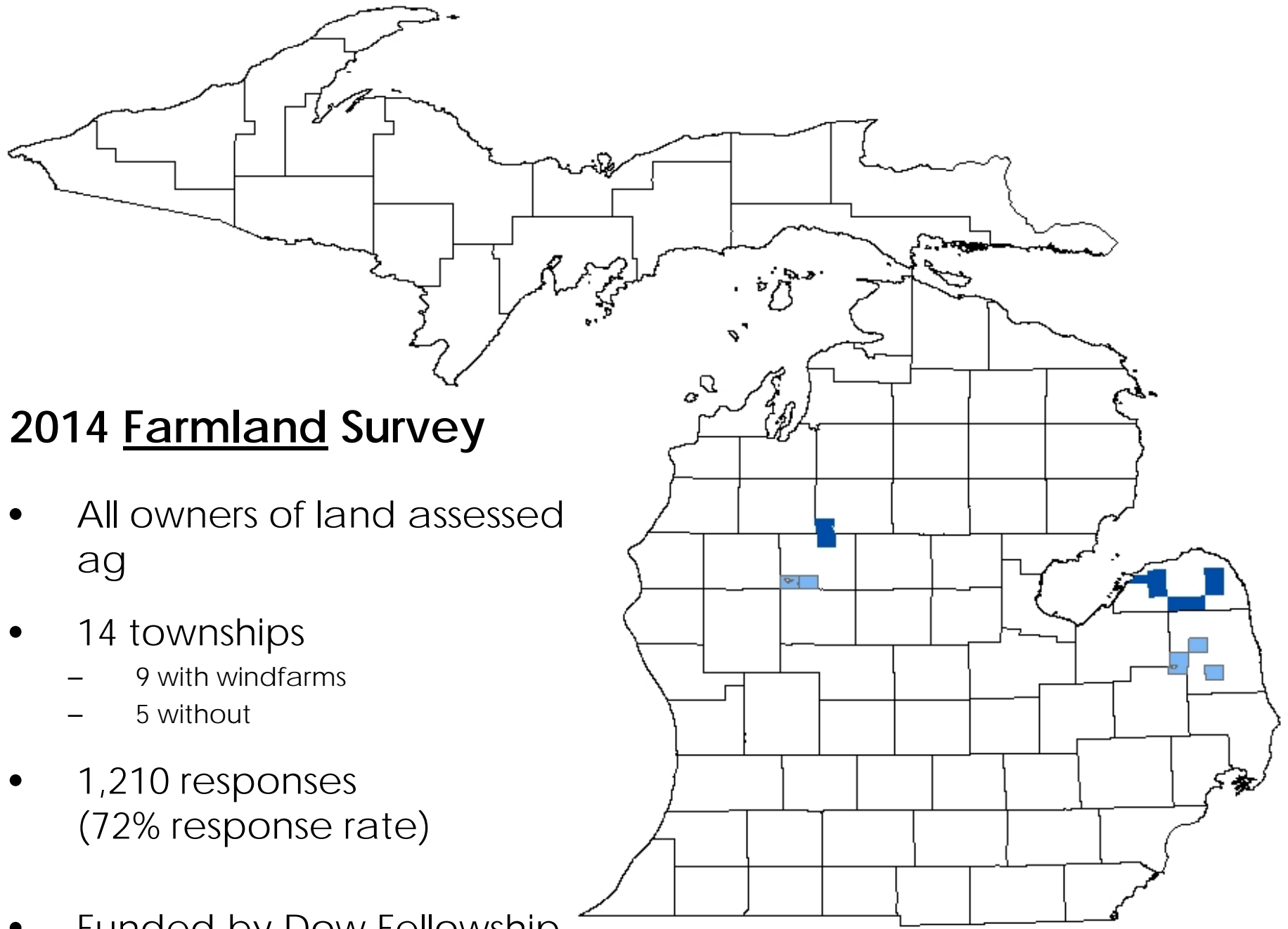
Who am I & Why am I here?

- PhD in land use planning
 - Farmland preservation
- Grant from C.S. Mott Foundation, taking lessons-learned from Michigan windfarms to ensure future wind development respects local community values
- To provide data-based account of opinions
 - Not relying on newspaper accounts
 - Give voice to the quiet folks



2016 Community Survey

- Owners of land assessed ag or residential
- 10 townships with windfarms
- 2,013 responses (53% response rate)
- Funded by C.S. Mott Foundation



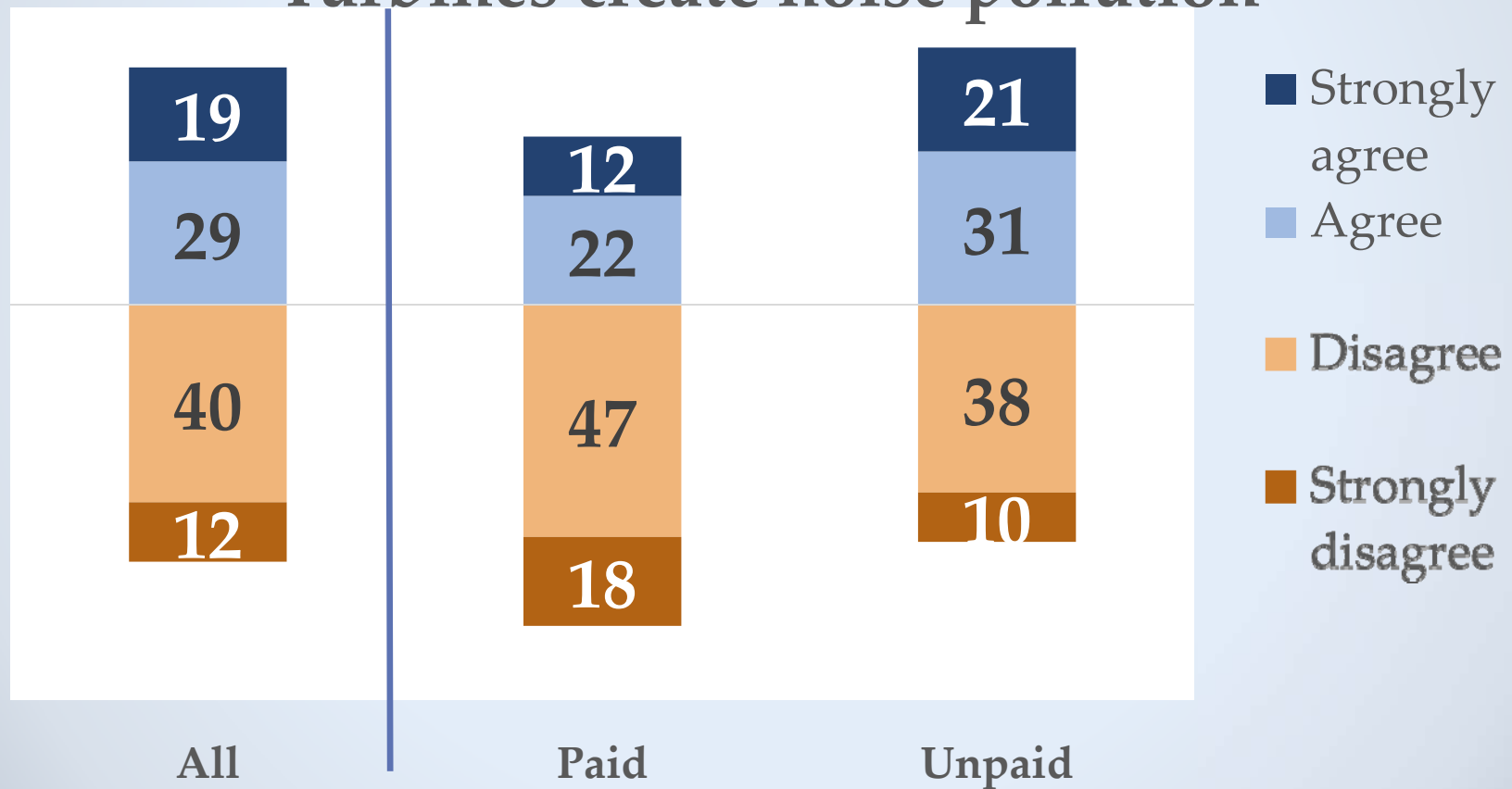
2014 Farmland Survey

- All owners of land assessed ag
- 14 townships
 - 9 with windfarms
 - 5 without
- 1,210 responses
(72% response rate)
- Funded by Dow Fellowship

Common arguments AGAINST wind turbines ...

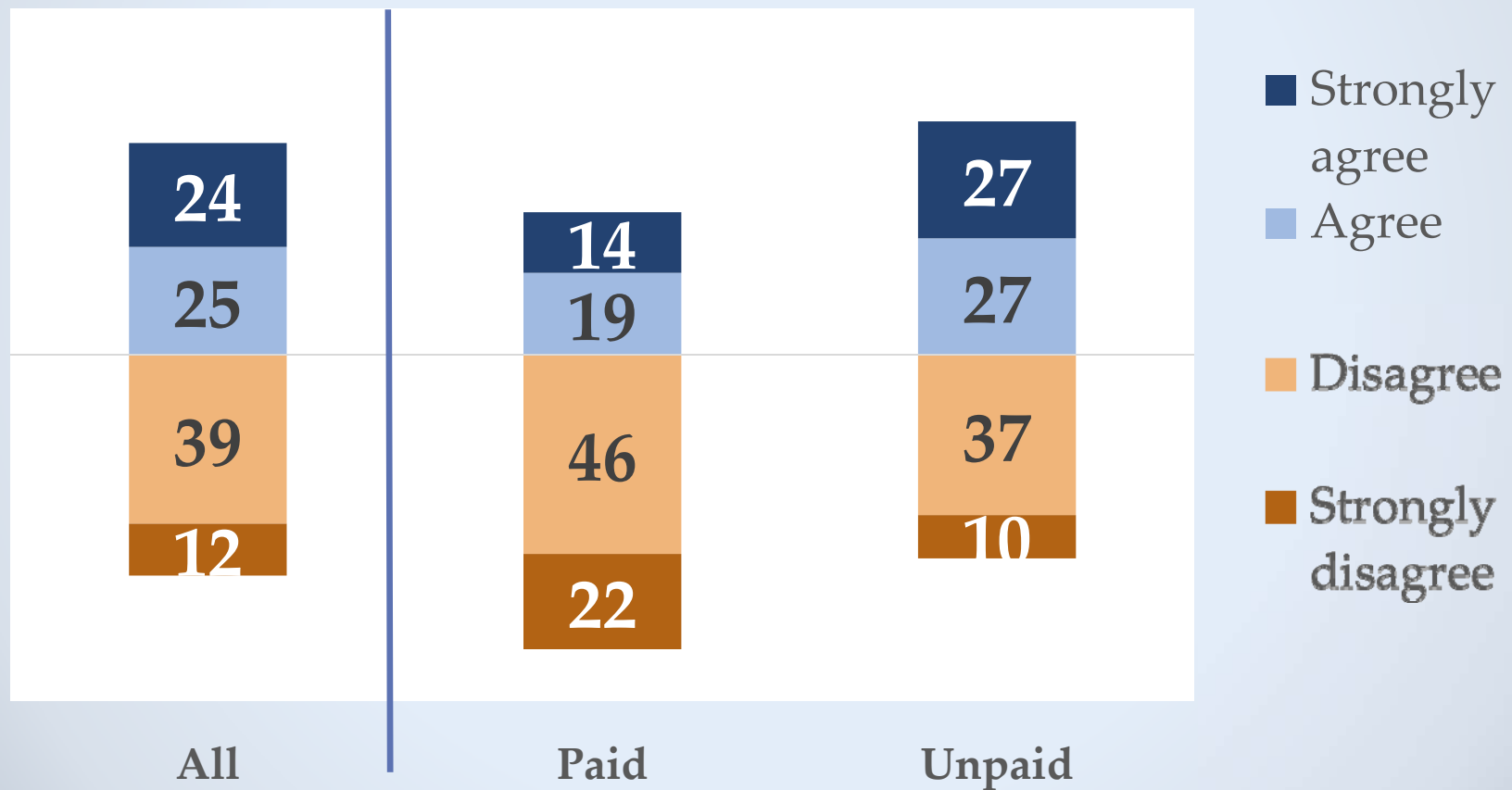
Noise

Turbines create noise pollution



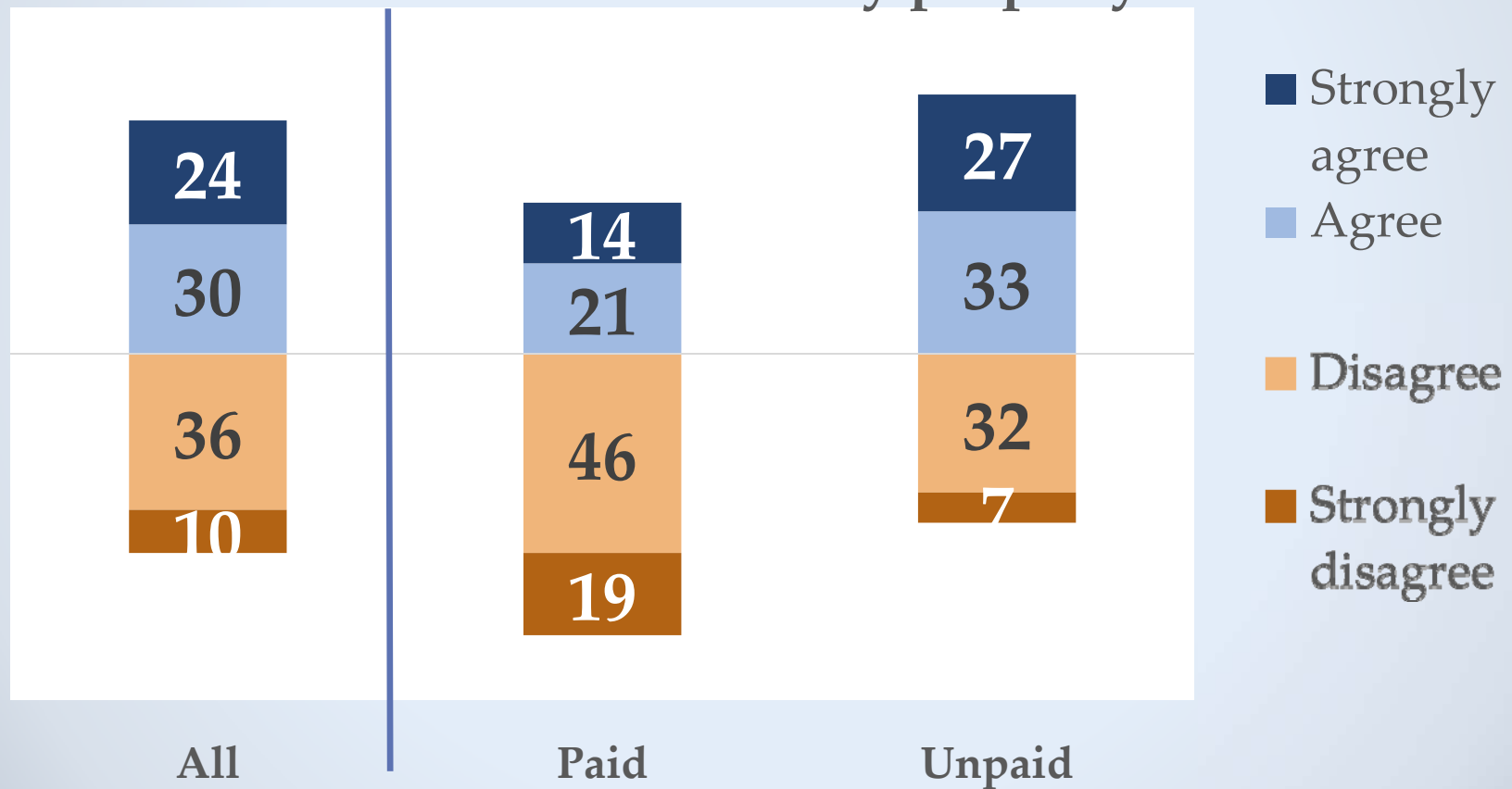
Visual/Aesthetic

Turbines create visual/aesthetic problems



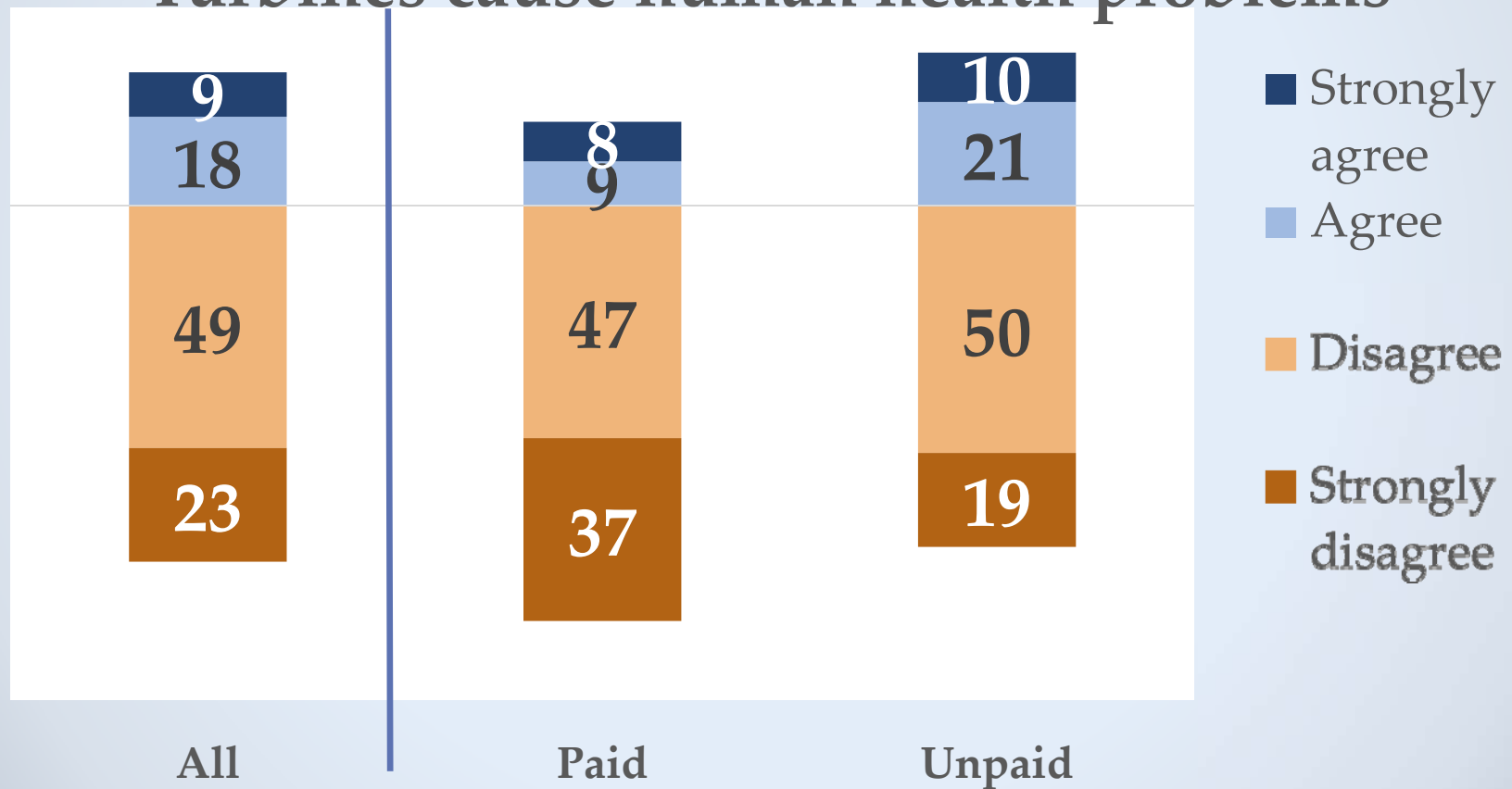
Property values

Turbines decrease nearby property values



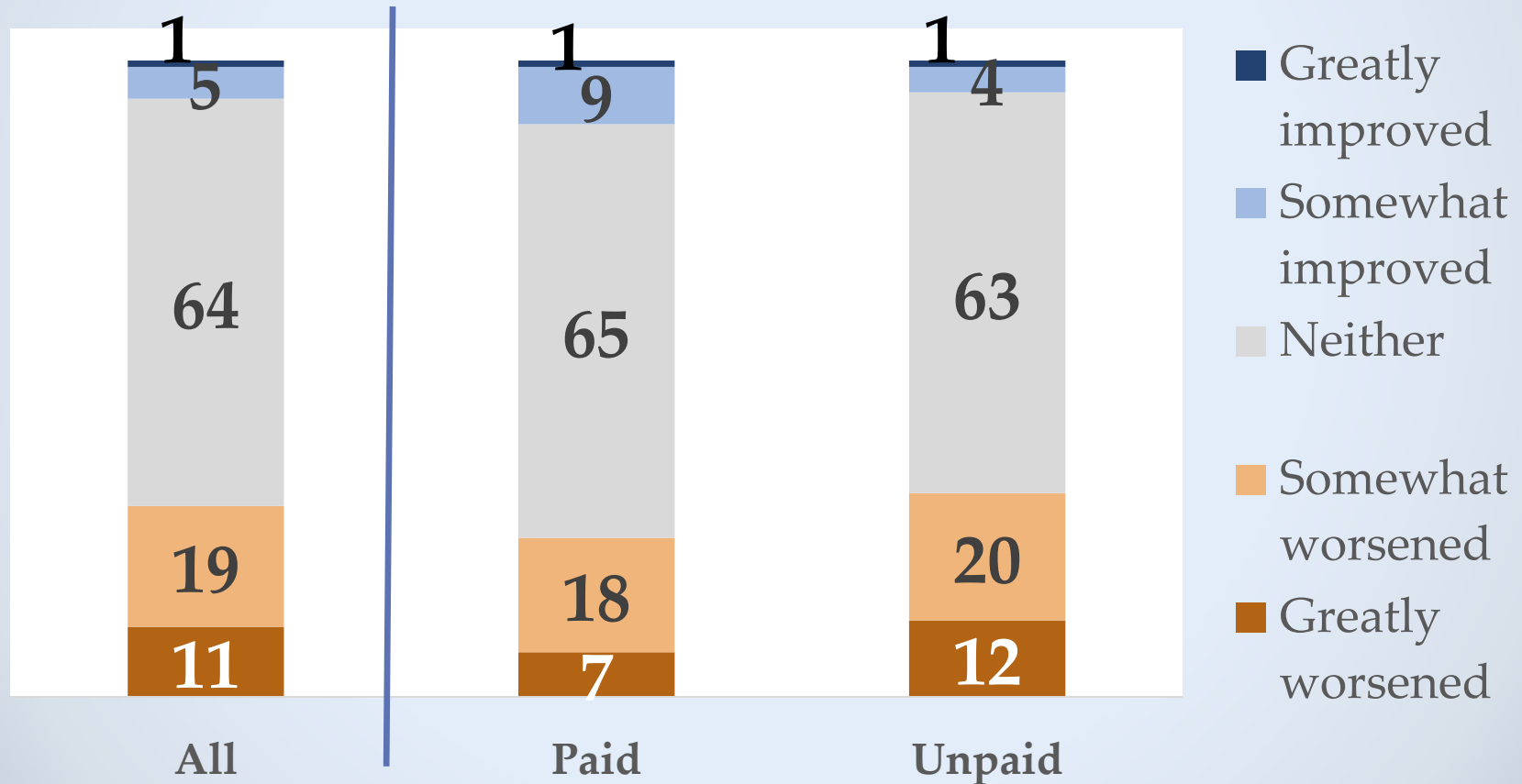
Health Problems

Turbines cause human health problems



Relationships with Neighbors

Turbines' effect on relationships with neighbors



Data about the negative impacts

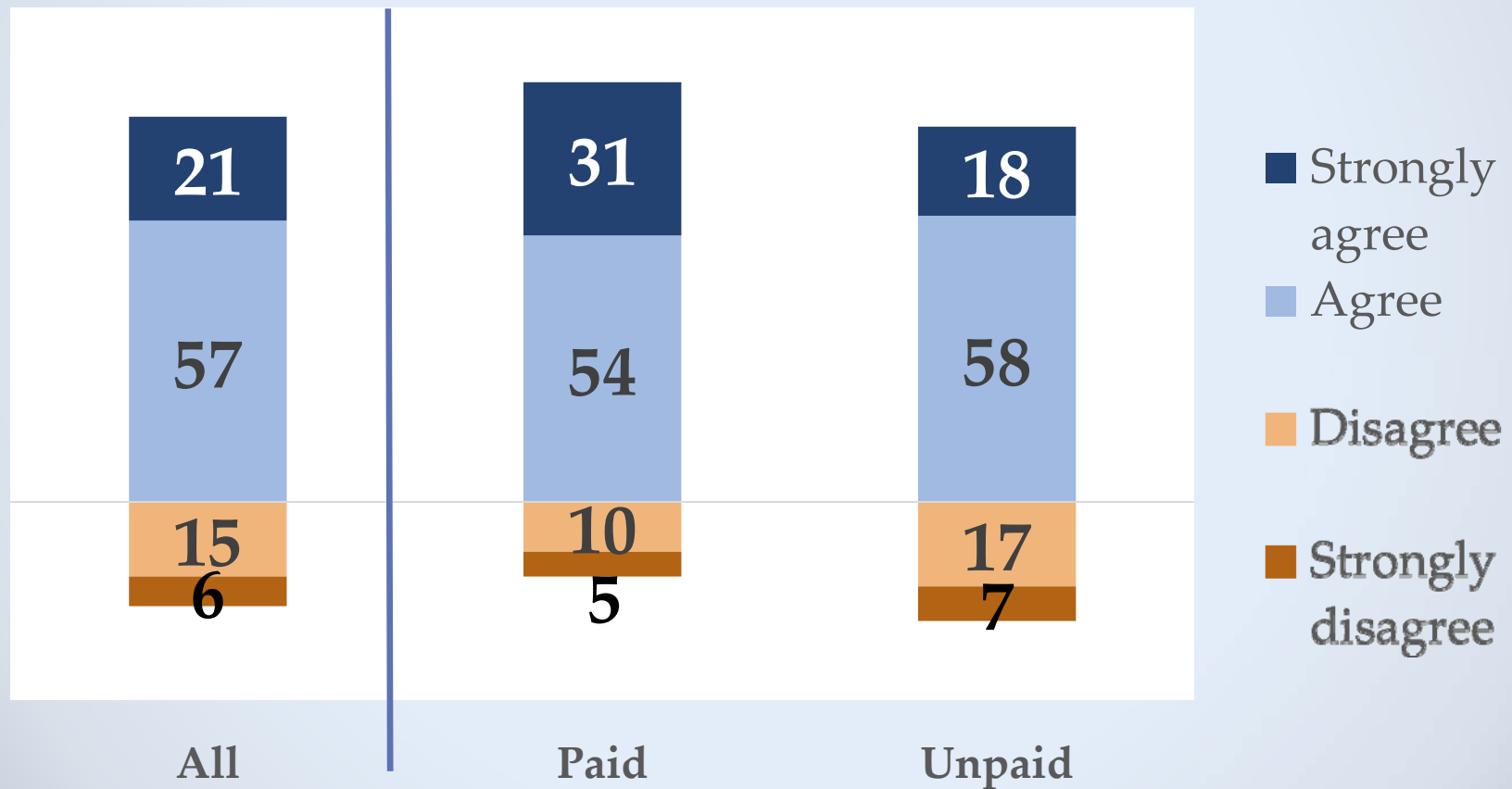
- Views on noise, visual impact, property values roughly 50/50
 - Financial stake = rosier view
 - OR
 - no financial stake = more soured view

BUT STILL SPLIT OPINIONS
- Most don't see health impacts, but some do
- Majority don't think it's divided the community
 - Even in some pretty contentious projects

Common arguments FOR wind turbines ...

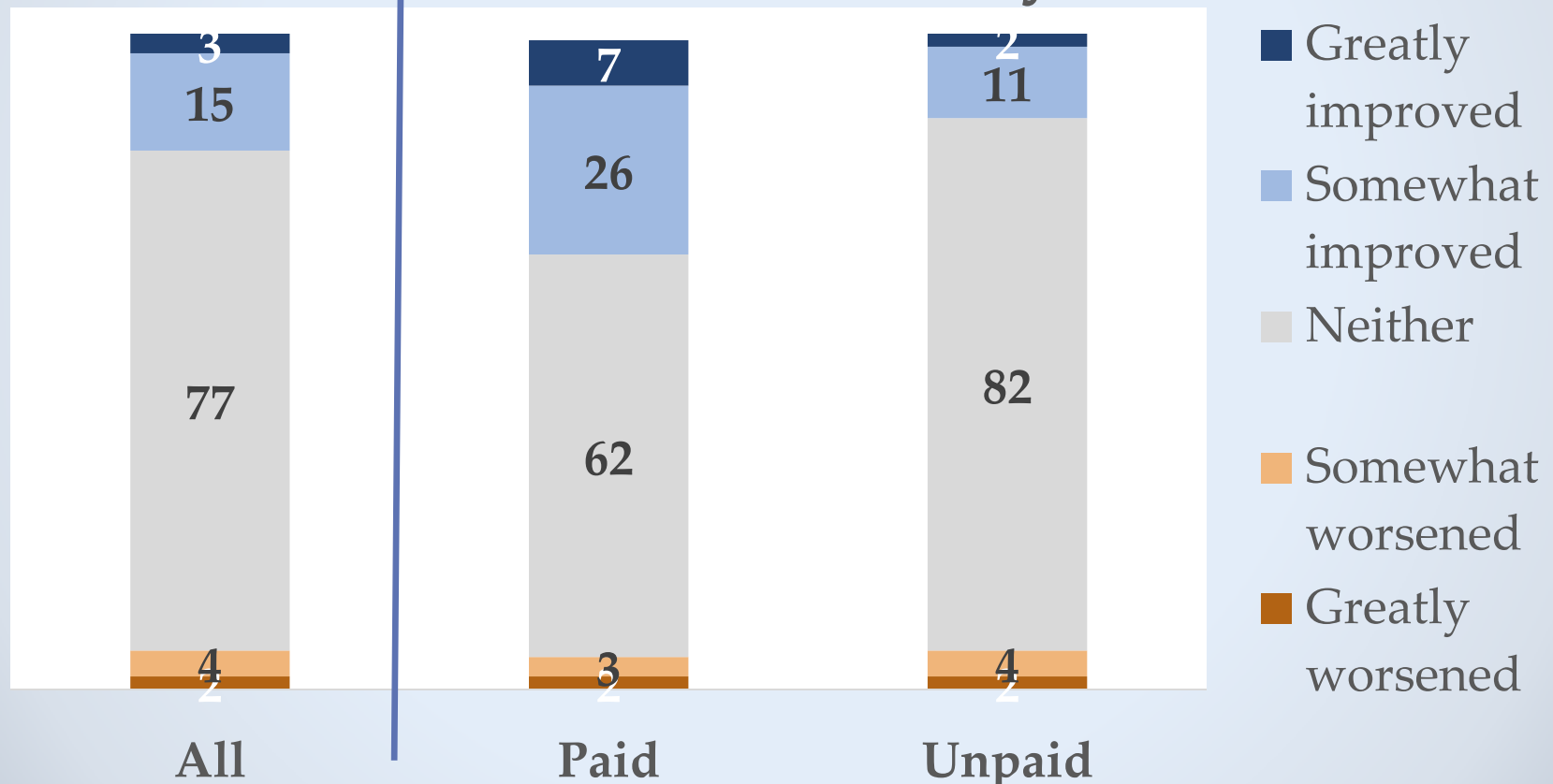
Job Creation

Turbines create jobs



Tax Benefits

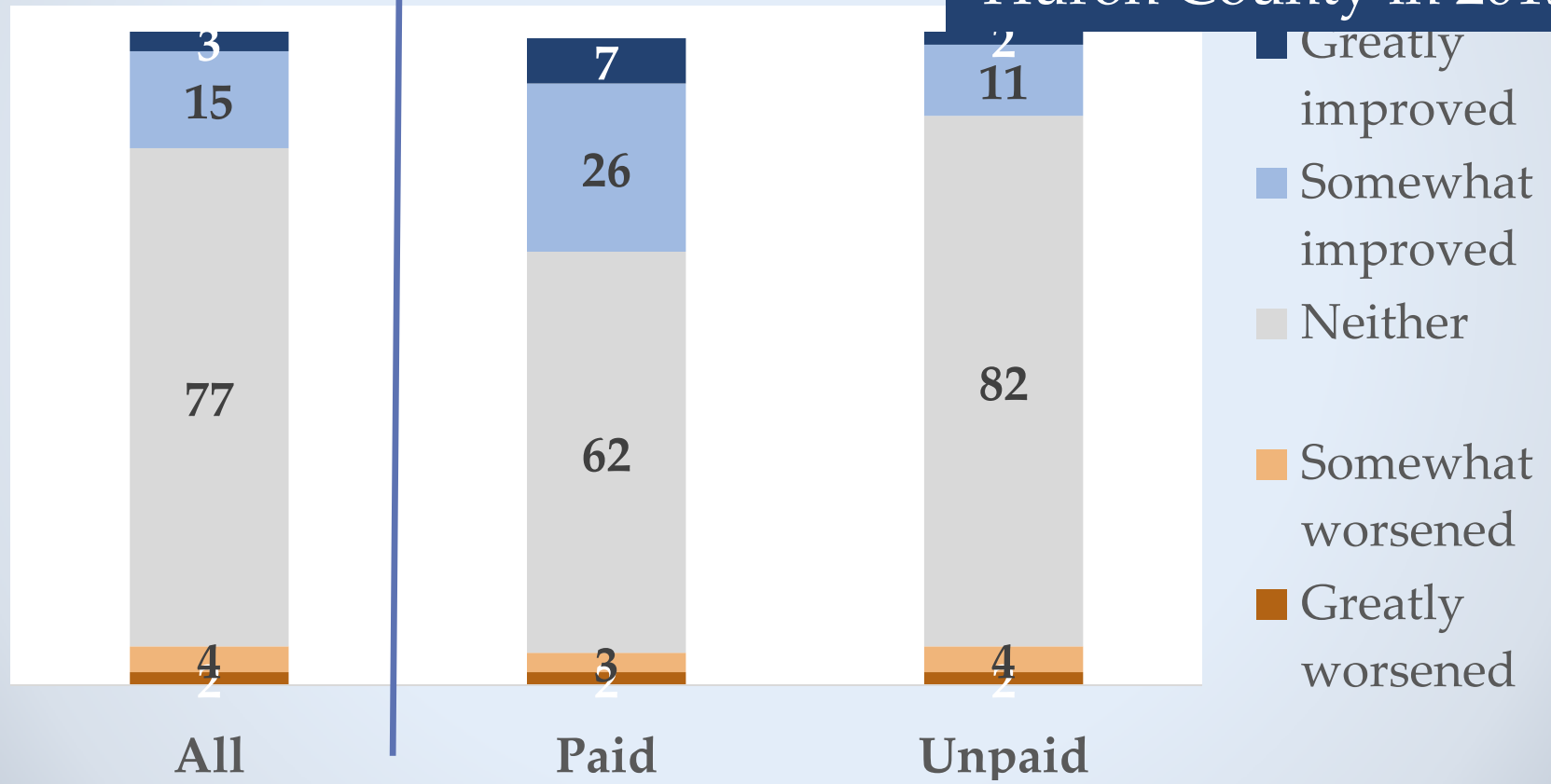
Turbines' effect on county services



Tax Benefits

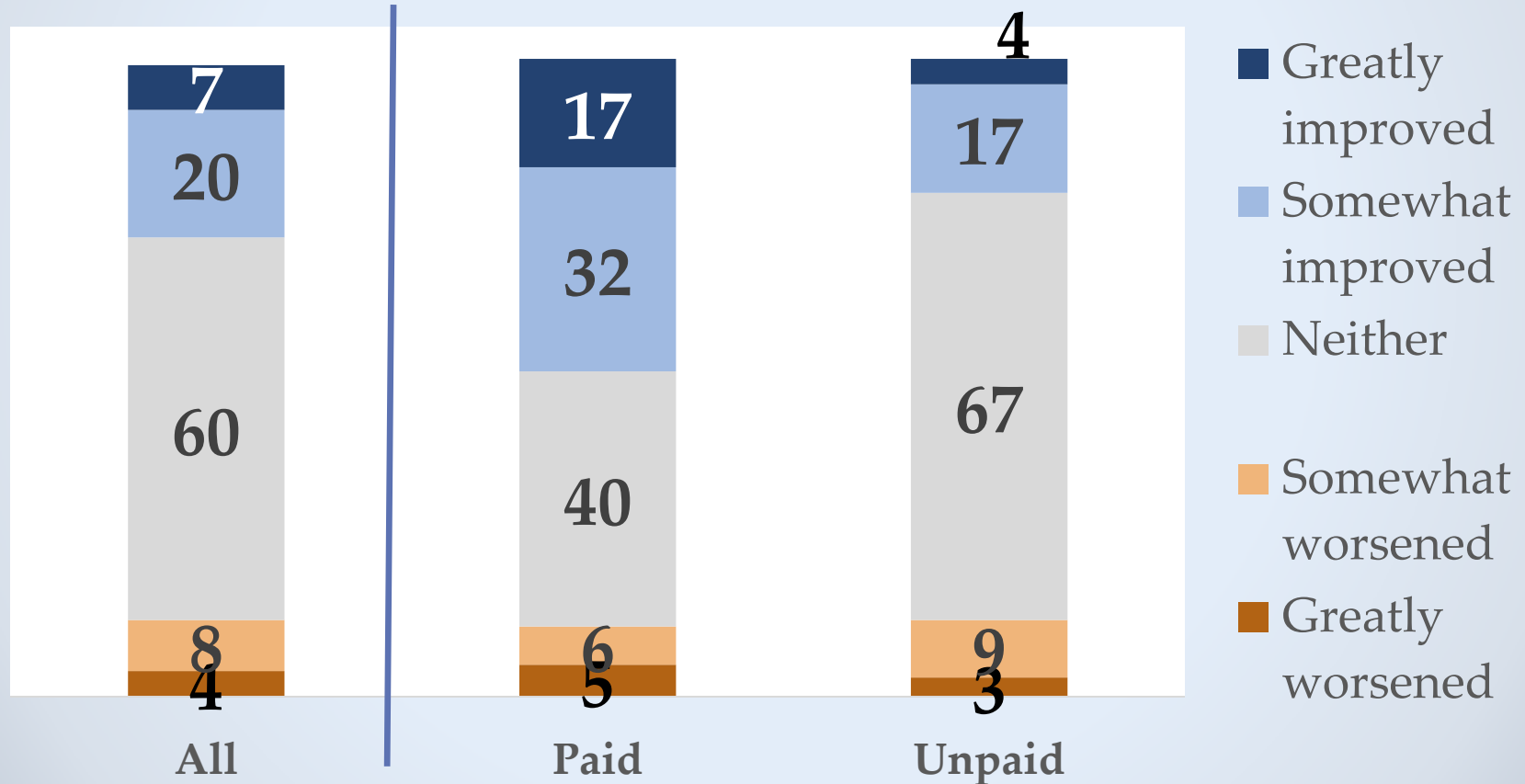
Turbines' effect on county

\$2.749 Million to county gov't in Huron County in 2015



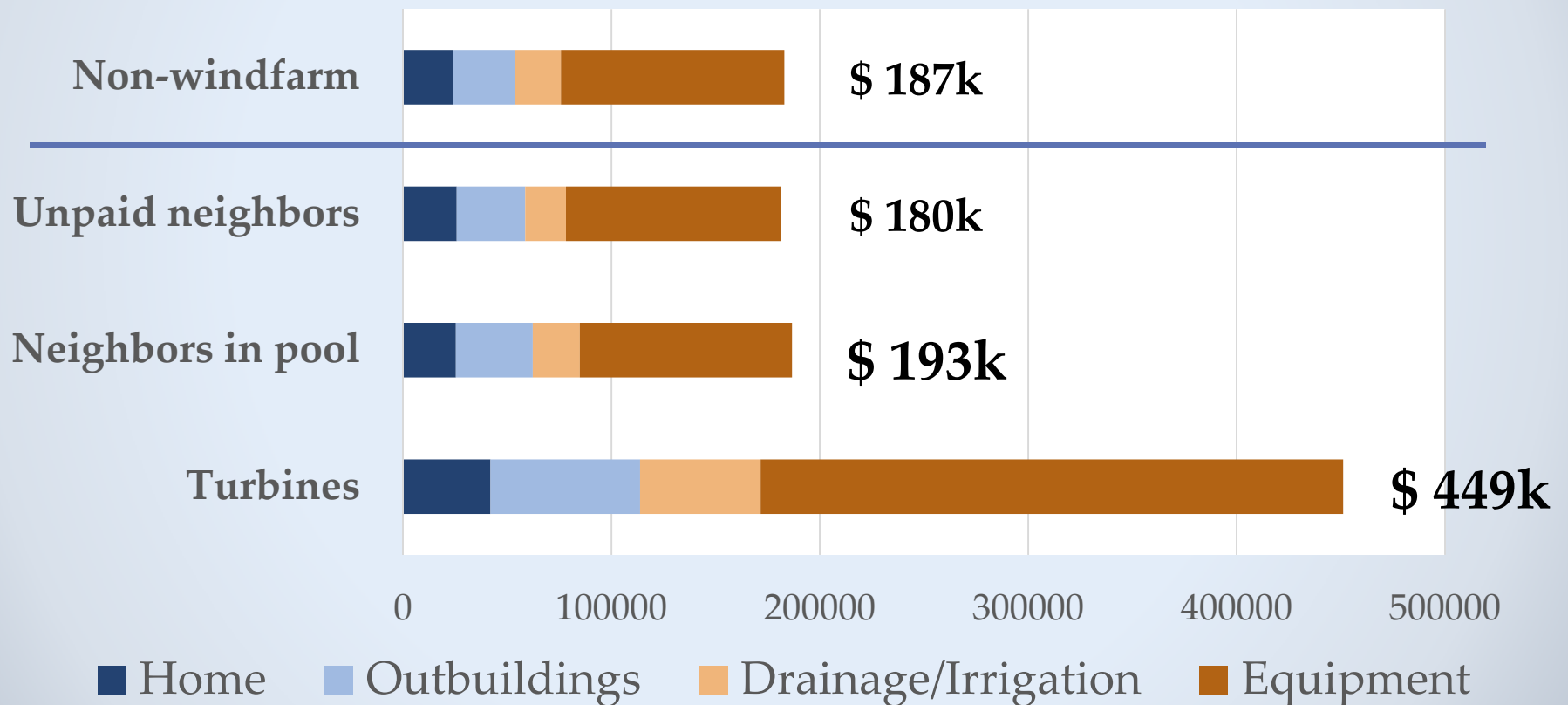
Roads

Turbines' effect on local roads



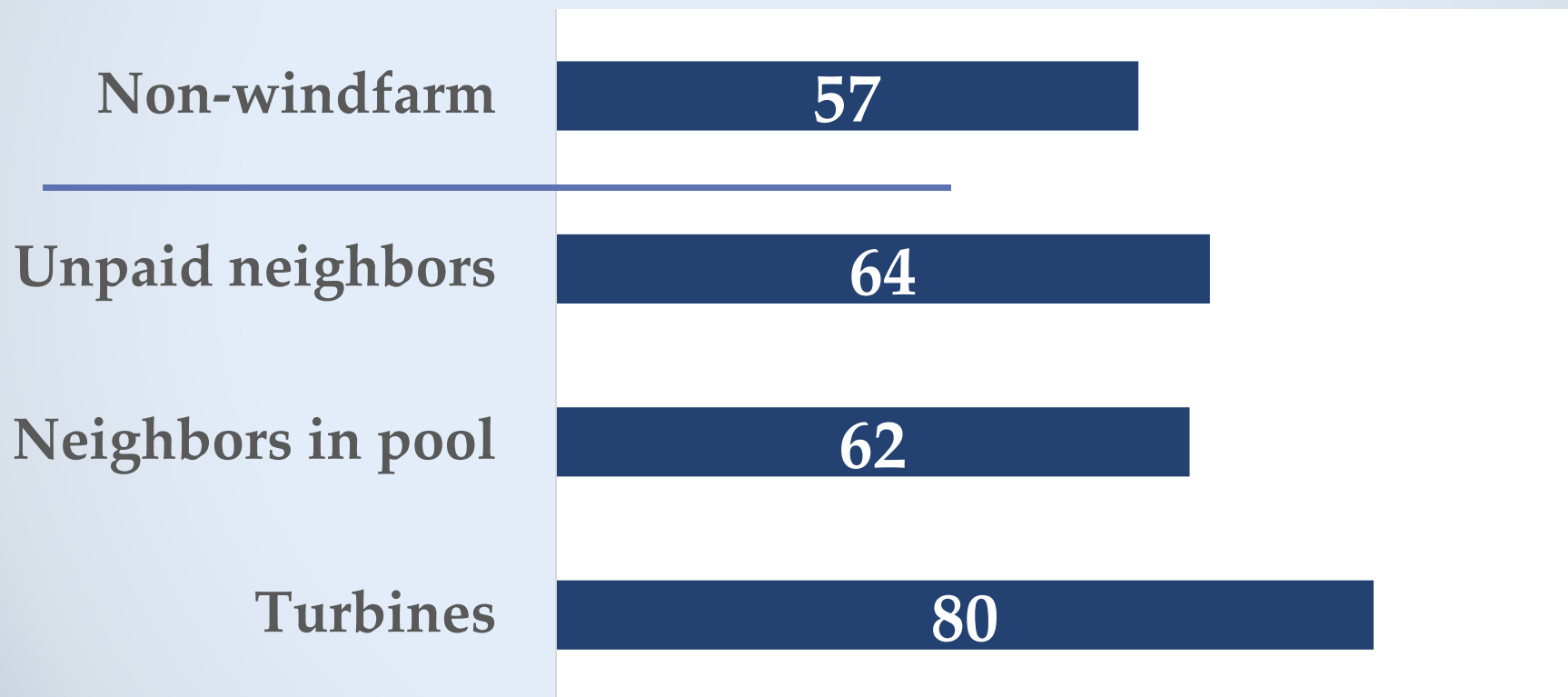
Farm Income

Investments over 5 years: 2009-2013



Farm Succession

% that have farm succession plan



Data about the positive impacts

- Most see job creation with caveat about types of jobs
- Majority (60%+) haven't seen changes to roads, townships services, county services, or local schools
 - Despite pretty substantial payments
 - Likely because of how money being used: plug holes, do more of same
- Landowner payments linked to substantial increase in on-farm investment and increase in succession planning

Overall drivers of attitudes

- Direct compensation
- Type of land owned
 - secondary vs. primary residence
 - farmland / rental property *only*
- Being within earshot of turbines
- Attitudes about process, wind developer

What lessons do I draw?

- Wind energy is an economic development proposition for Michigan townships and counties
- Communities need to decide if this type of economic development fits with your goals

What lessons do I draw?

- If goal is for substantial residential development or growth of tourism, wind may not be right
 - These landowners less likely to directly benefit
 - Some may be deterred from building
- If goal is to sustain agriculture, wind can fit
 - Farm diversification & succession planning
 - Keeping young people on the farm/in town
 - Adds to the property tax base
 - Siting on property lines takes little land out of production
 - Compatible with PA 116



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