

### Dominion Energy Ohio Energy Choice Tracking Surveys

Key findings from Residential and Non-Residential Dominion Energy Ohio Customers August-September 2017





### Methodology

- From August 24-September 14, 2017 Public Opinion Strategies surveyed a total
  of N=700 Dominion Energy Ohio (DEO) customers. We interviewed both
  residential (N=400) and non-residential customers (N=300), all customers
  participating in specific DEO programs.
- The margin of error for this study is +/- 3.7%, and smaller for the following sub-groups:

AUDIENCE	N-SIZE	MARGIN OF ERROR
Overall	700	+/- 3.7%
Energy Choice	433	+/- 4.71%
Standard Choice Offer (SCO)	140	+/- 8.28%
Monthly Variable Rate (MVR)	127	+/- 8.7%
Residential	400	+/- 4.9%
Non-residential	300	+/- 5.66%

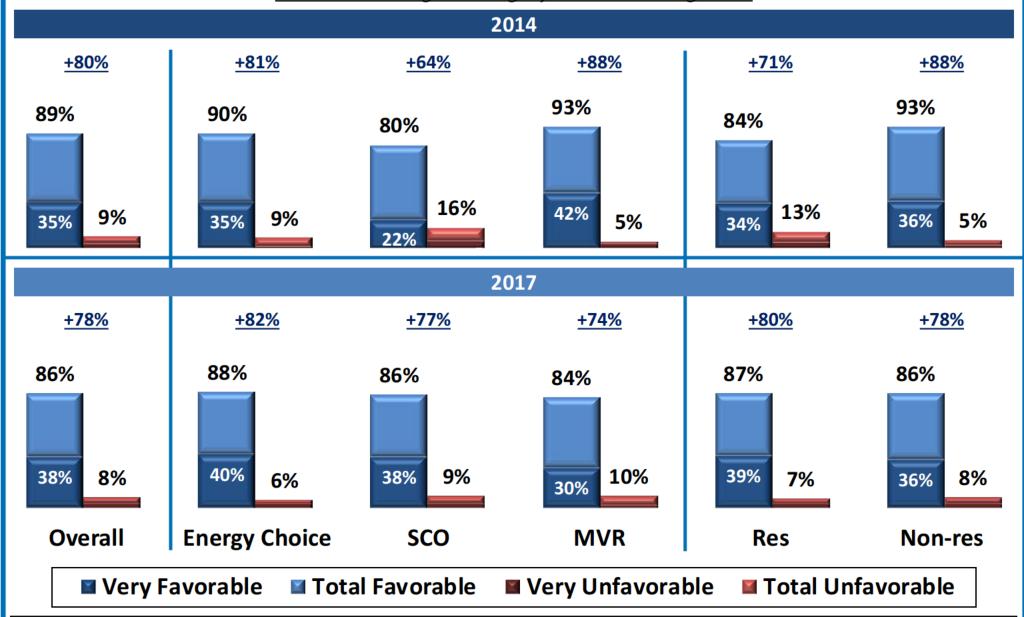




# Perceptions About Dominion Energy Ohio



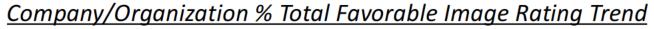
Dominion Energy Ohio is viewed very favorably among both residential and non RESARPD 1-1 customers. This data is consistent with 2014 within the margin of error. PUBLIC Dominion Image Rating by Customer Segment

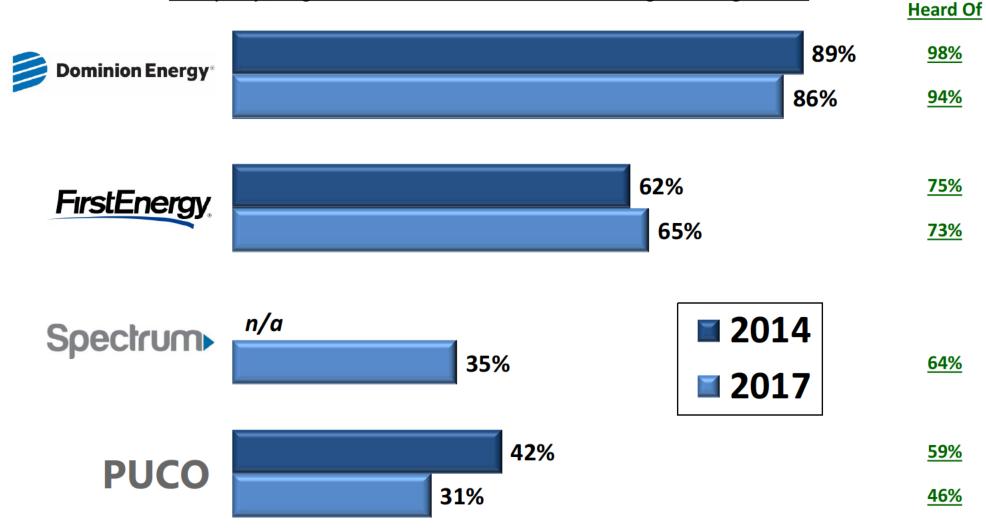


Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable view of each of these companies or organizations?



DEO is viewed the most favorably of the different companies and entities we asked bout in the survey. A majority of customers were not familiar enough with PUCO to have an opinion. There was a decline in the favorable rating for PUCO which is likely a result of respondents being less familiar with PUCO compared to 2014.





Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable view of each of these companies or organizations?



#### First word or phrase that comes to mind about DEO:

**Residential Customers** 

#### Gas Supplier/Gas Company Had Them For A Long Time Haven't Had A Problem With Them Natural Gas Good/Fair Prices Heating Reliable/Dependable/Consistent Good Service Expensive/Prices Too High Responsive To Problems Generally favorable

**Non-residential Customers** 

#### Expensive/Prices Too High BIIS Natural Gas Heating Haven't Had A Problem With Them Seil Gas Supplier/Gas Company Reliable/Dependable/Consistent

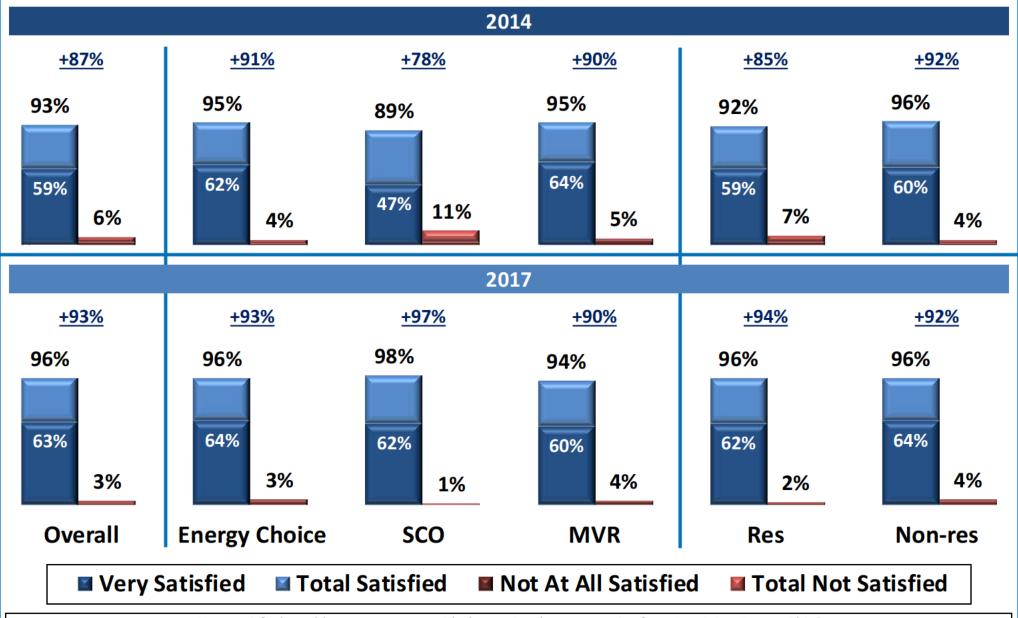
When you think of Dominion Energy Ohio, what is the first word or first words that come to mind?



#### Nearly all customers in the survey report being satisfied with the service received from DEO.

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Satisfaction with Dominion Energy Ohio Service by Customer Segment



How satisfied would you say you are with the service that you receive from Dominion Energy Ohio?



Significant majorities of DEO customers say Dominion Energy Ohio is "good" at all aspects of service we tested. This data is consistent with 2014 and in some places more positive.

Dominion Energy Ohio % Total Good at Providing Overall		Energy Choice		sco		MVR		Res		Non-res		
by Customer Segment Ranked by 2017 Overall	2014	2017	2014	2017	2014	2017	2014	2017	2014	2017	2014	2017
Reliable service	98%	98%	99%	97%	96%	100%	97%	99%	97%	99%	98%	97%
Safe natural gas	91%	92%	93%	93%	88%	93%	89%	87%	90%	91%	91%	92%
Useful communications	<b>75</b> %	82%	77%	82%	<b>72</b> %	87%	<b>74</b> %	<b>79</b> %	<b>75</b> %	87%	<b>75</b> %	77%
Reasonable prices	77%	80%	<b>77</b> %	80%	<b>72</b> %	81%	80%	<b>79</b> %	<b>74</b> %	<b>79</b> %	81%	81%
Customer service	78%	79%	<b>79</b> %	<b>79</b> %	68%	81%	82%	78%	74%	78%	81%	81%

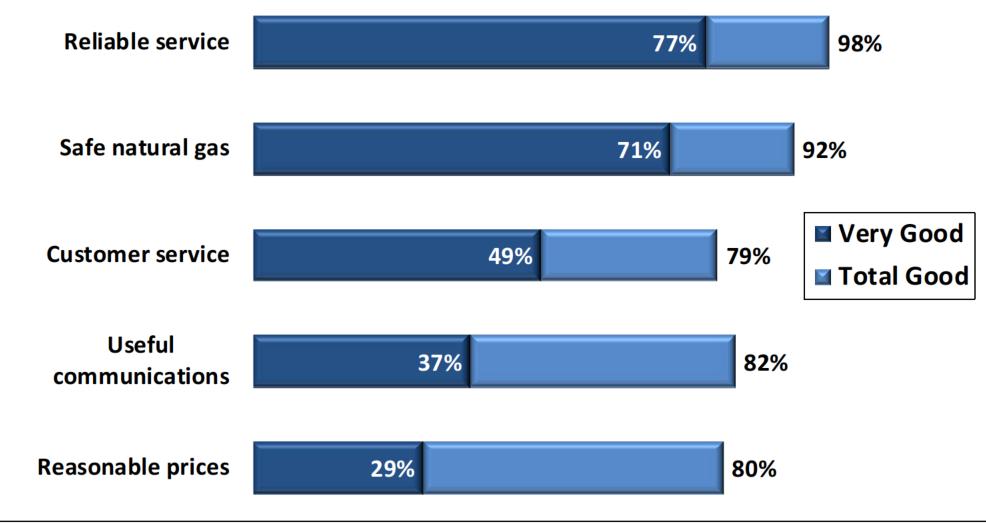
\*Note: yellow highlights represent shifts above the margin of error.

Would you say that Dominion Energy Ohio is good or bad at providing you with...



## And importantly, majorities of customers rate DEO as possible representations and good" on providing reliable service, safe natural gas, and customer service.

<u>Dominion Energy Ohio Good at Providing... - 2017 Overall</u>



Would you say that Dominion Energy Ohio is good or bad at providing you with...

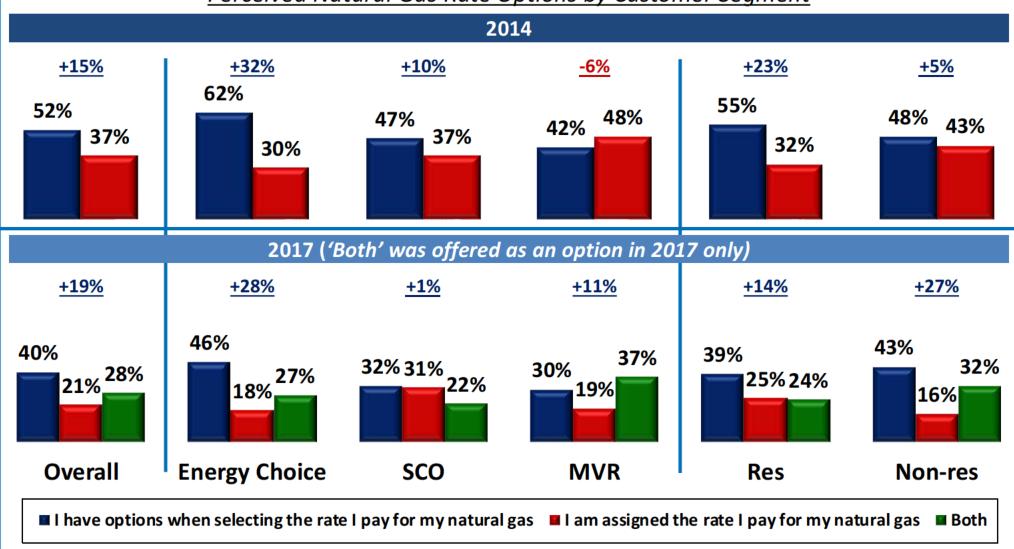


## Knowledge/ Perceptions About Their Rate Plan



## Customers are more aware than in 2014 that they have some options when selecting the rate they pay. But this shift could be due to the change in question language.

Perceived Natural Gas Rate Options by Customer Segment



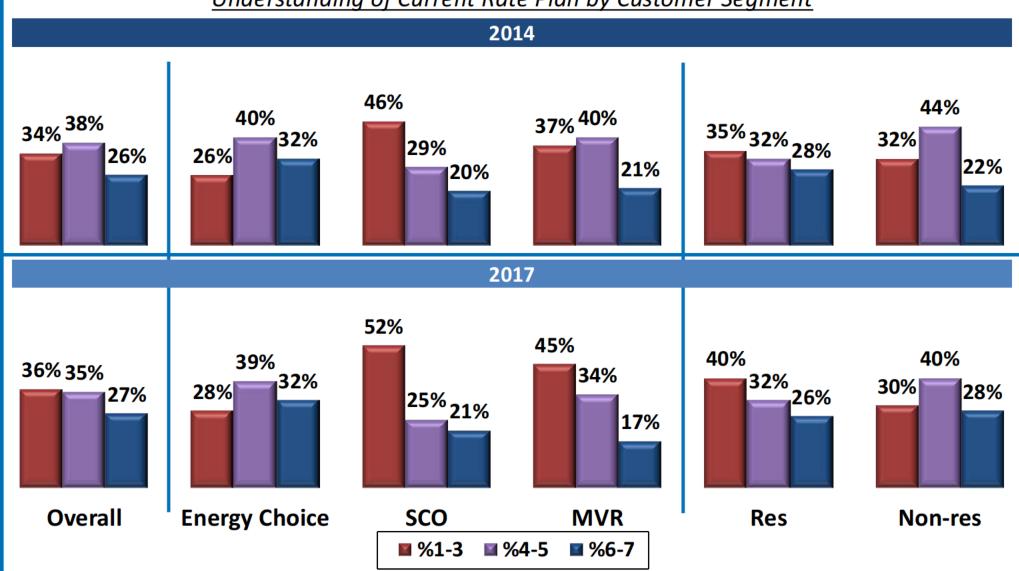
To the best of your knowledge do you have options when selecting the rate you pay for natural gas or are you assigned a rate?



Customers however report having varying levels of understanding of their rate plan.

Residential, SCO, and MVR customers have lower levels of understanding than Energy Choice and non-residential customers.

<u>Understanding of Current Rate Plan by Customer Segment</u>

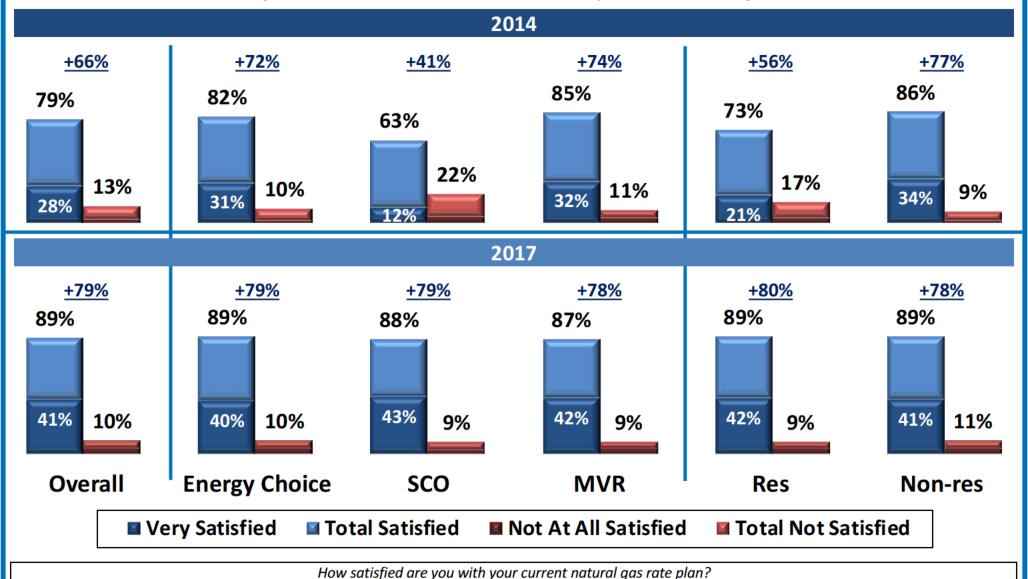


How well would you say that you understand your current rate plan? Please answer on a numeric scale of 1 to 7, with 1 meaning "Do not understand at all" and 7 meaning "Completely understand." You can use any number from 1 to 7 depending on how you feel.

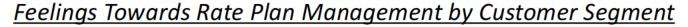


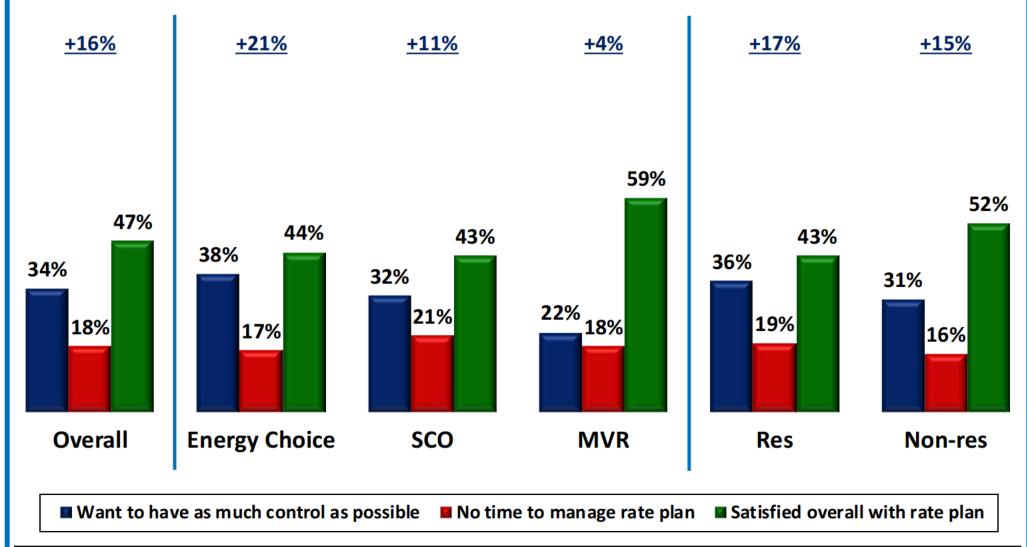
A significant majority of customers report being satisfied with their current majority of customers report being satisfied with their current majority of customers report being satisfied with their current majority of customers among residential customers.

<u>Satisfaction with Current Rate Plan by Customer Segment</u>



Pluralities (47%) of customers say they do not to plan on doing any research of other rate plans or suppliers at this time because they are satisfied with their plan.



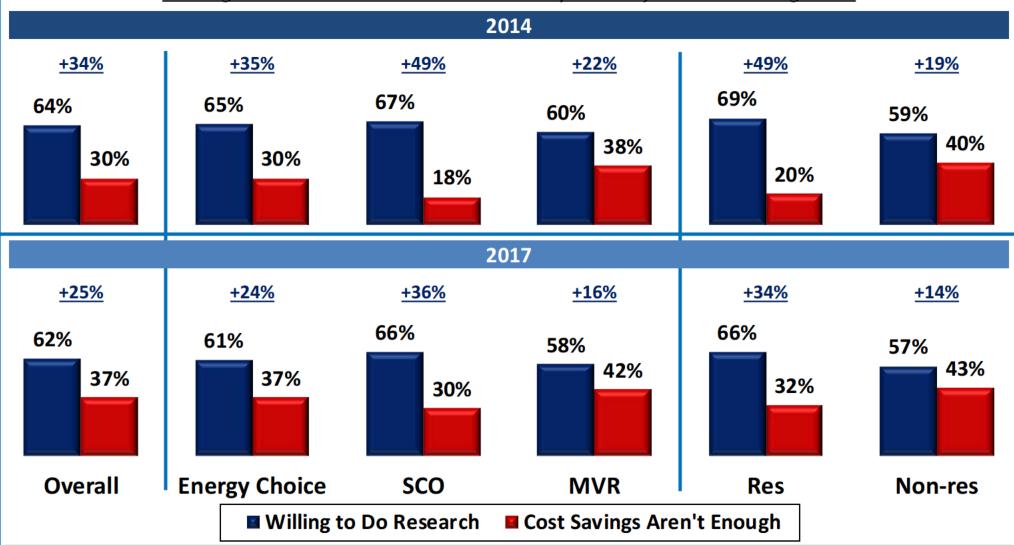


Which of the following is closer to your view?



However, when positioned around cost savings, over six in ten respondents say they are willing to do research into natural gas options. Since 2014, there has been a modest increase in the percentage of Energy Choice, SCO and residential customers saying cost savings are not enough.

Willingness to Research Natural Gas Options by Customer Segment



Of the following two options, which ONE is closer to your view? I am willing to do research about my natural gas options if it could help me save money ...or...

The cost of savings that research will get me aren't enough to justify the time commitment.



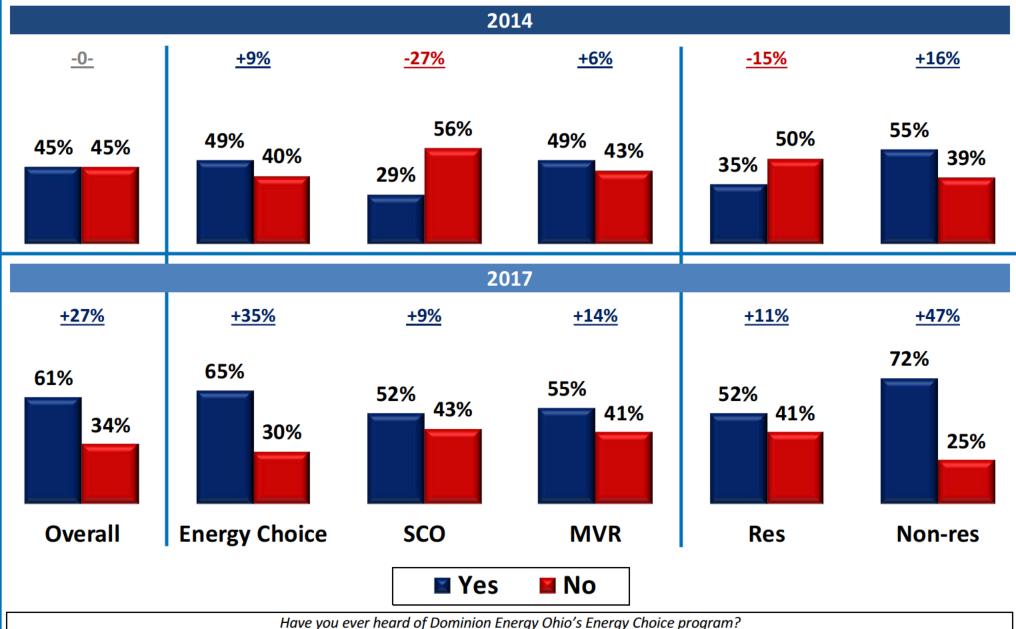


## Perceptions About: ENERGY CHOICE



Awareness of DEO's Energy Choice program has increased since 2014. Today, six in ten respondents report awareness. Non-residential are more aware than residential customers.

Heard of Energy Choice Program by Customer Segment

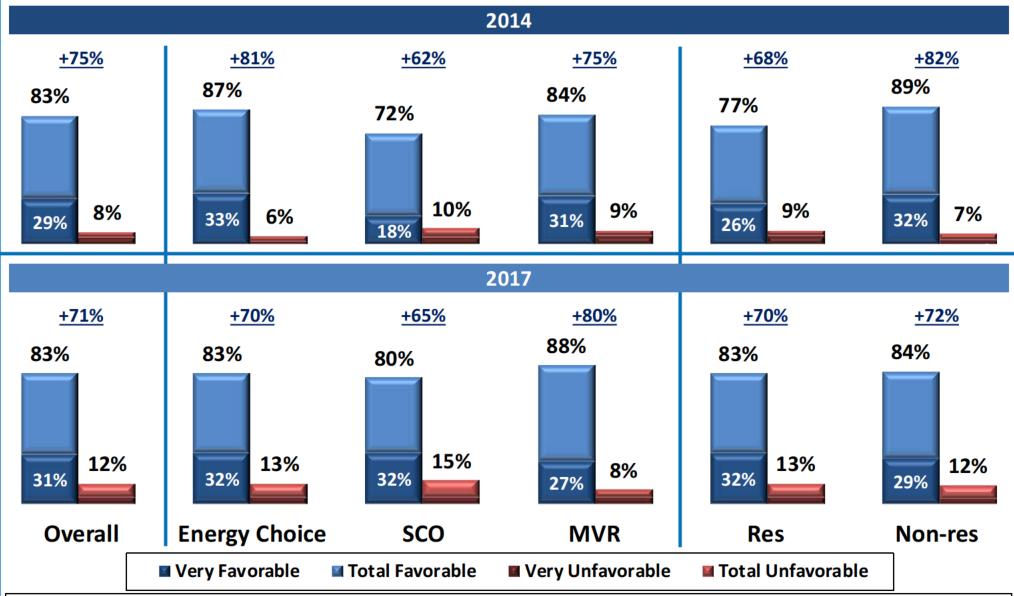


### Respondents were read the following information but DEO's Energy Choice program:

Dominion Energy Ohio offers its 'Energy Choice' program, which allows customers to select their own natural gas supplier and have Dominion Energy Ohio deliver the natural gas. Energy Choice customers select their own supplier and contract, which allows customers to choose based on rate cost, whether rates are fixed or variable, contract length, presence of termination fees and other factors. Energy Choice allows customers to select the supplier that meets their needs.



After providing all respondents with a description of the Energy Choice program, PCUSTO mers have an overwhelmingly favorable opinion of the program as described. PUBLIC Informed Energy Choice Program Image Rating by Customer Segment

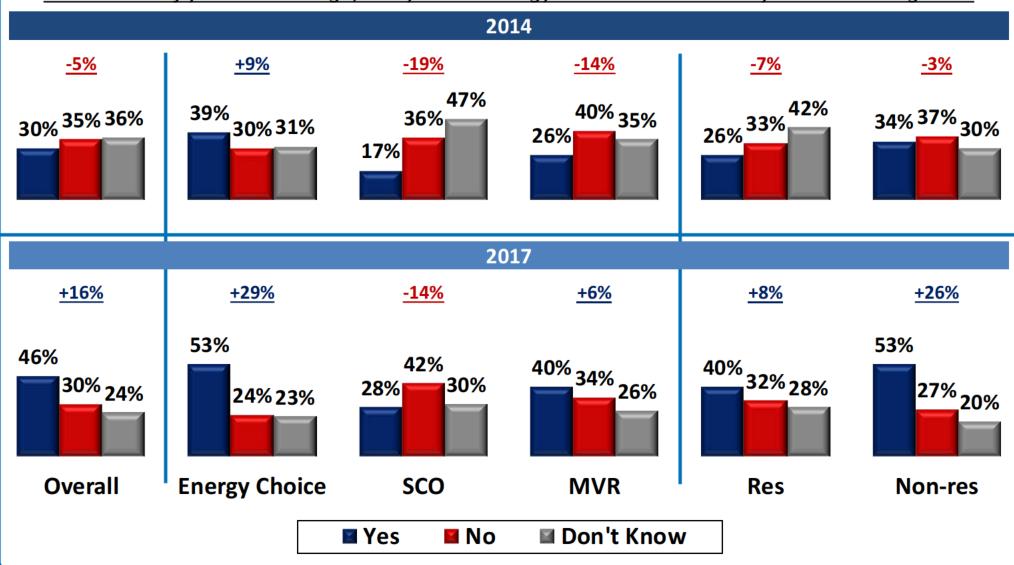


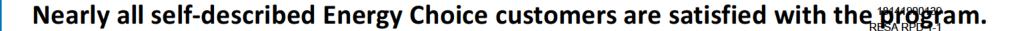
Given what you just heard, do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable view of Dominion Energy Ohio's Energy Choice program?

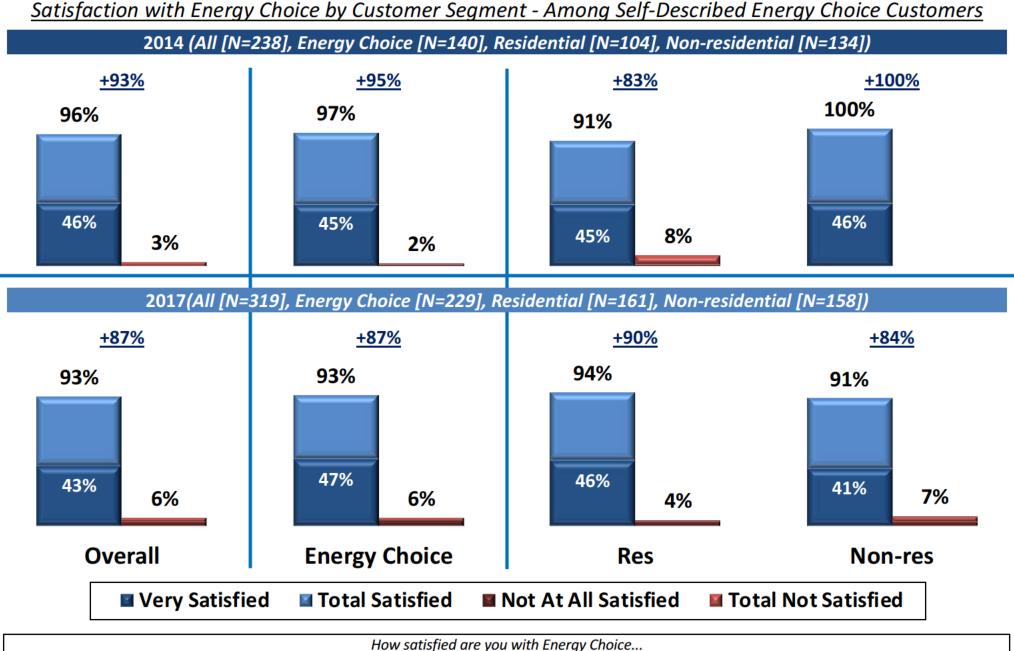


Energy Choice customers are more confident in affirming their correct rate plan as to message to 2014. However, there still remains confusion across these different segments as to which they are an Energy Choice customer. Non-residential are more likely than residential to say they are an Energy Choice customer.

To the best of your knowledge, are you an Energy Choice customer? by Customer Segment







Among those who say they are not Energy Choice customers, there are a variety of reasons they have not signed up, though time and not being aware Energy Choice was an option when the most mentioned.

Reasons Not Enrolled in Energy Choice by Customer Segment Ranked by 2017 Overall	Overall	Energy Choice	sco	MVR	Res	Non- res
Busy/Have not had time to research	23%	18%	23%	35%	21%	27%
I was not aware that Energy Choice was an option	19%	15%	28%	15%	23%	12%
Need more information/better explanation	13%	14%	8%	18%	12%	15%
I am satisfied with my current plan	12%	15%	12%	4%	13%	10%
I do not think it is a good plan for me	6%	6%	10%		5%	6%
Rates fluctuate	2%	1%	1%	4%	3%	
Someone else makes the decision	2%	2%	2%		1%	2%
Rate is too high	1%		1%	2%	1%	
Energy Choice is not available in my area	1%		1%	2%	1%	
Think it will cost more money	-		1%			
Other	13%	16%	6%	11%	7%	22%
Don't Know	15%	18%	7%	20%	17%	13%

<sup>\*</sup>Open-ended question without pre-determined responses was asked among those who say they are not Energy Choice customers or aren't sure (54%)

What are some of the reasons why you haven't enrolled in Energy Choice?

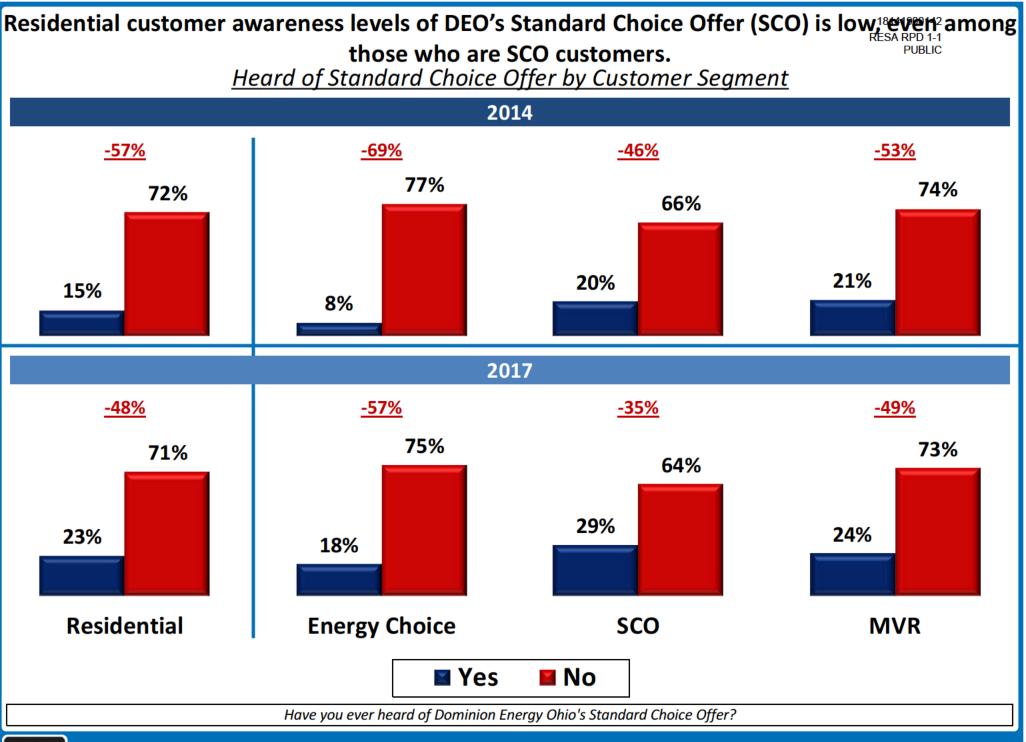




## Perceptions About: STANDARD CHOICE OFFER (SCO)\*

\*NOTE: This section on SCO was only asked of residential customers





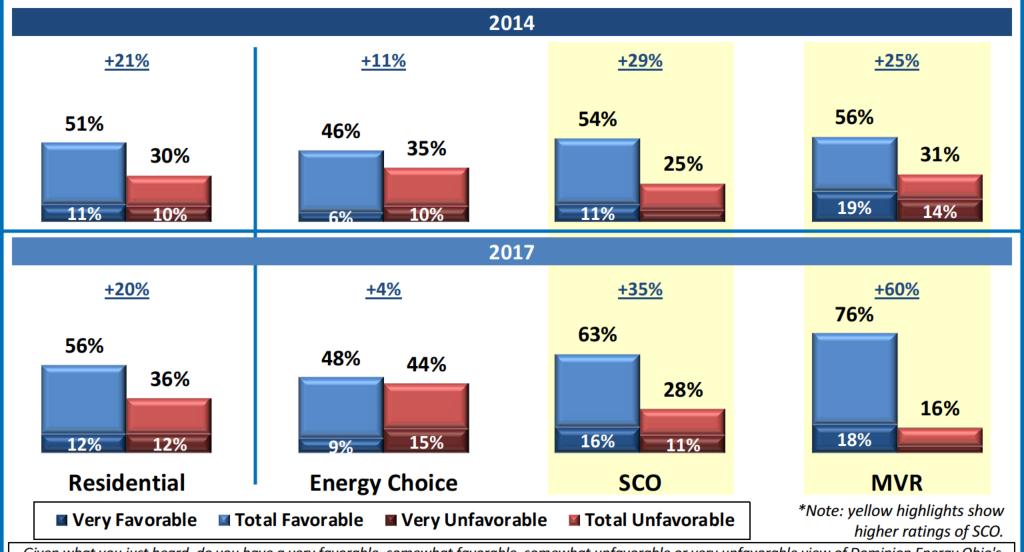
#### Respondents were read the following information at the following informati

Dominion Energy Ohio offers a 'Standard Choice Offer' which enables customers to let Dominion Energy Ohio assign them to a supplier at a specified market based rate, which may fluctuate monthly as natural gas market prices change.



After providing respondents with a description of SCO, just over half say they have a favorable opinion of it. SCO and MVR customers are much more favorable than Energy Choice customers of SCO.

Informed Standard Choice Offer Image Rating by Customer Segment

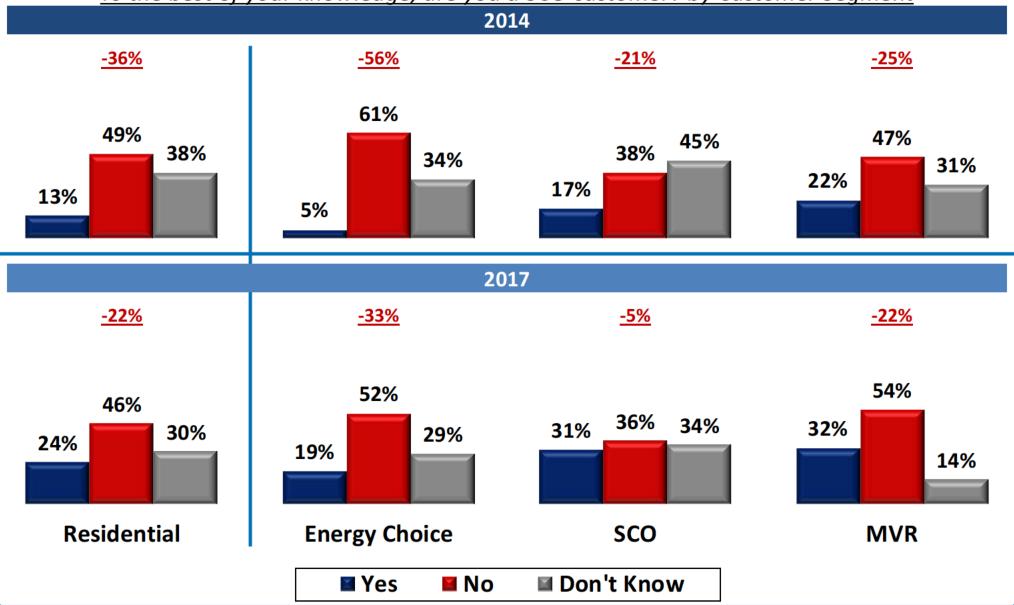


Given what you just heard, do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable view of Dominion Energy Ohio's Standard Choice Offer?



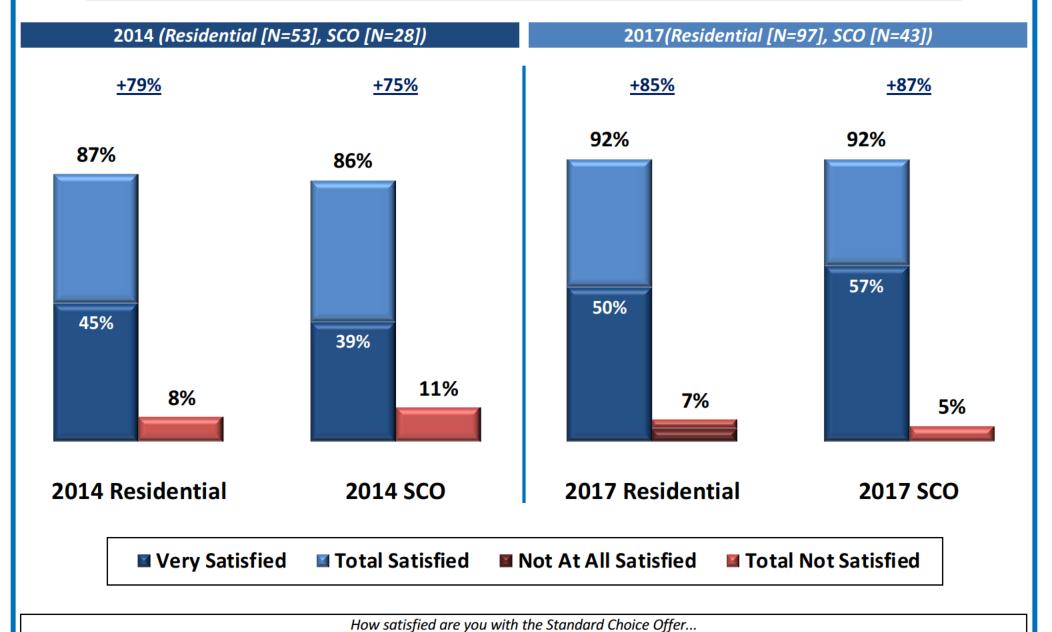
Nearly one quarter of residential customers believe they are an SCO customer. Parkigher percentage of SCO customers than in 2014 identify themselves as an SCO customer, but still the majority of SCO customers do not believe they are SCO.

To the best of your knowledge, are you a SCO customer? by Customer Segment



#### Among the 24% of customers who believe they are SCO, satisfaction levels with S€Opare high.

Satisfaction with Standard Choice Offer by Customer Segment - Among Self-Described SCO Customers

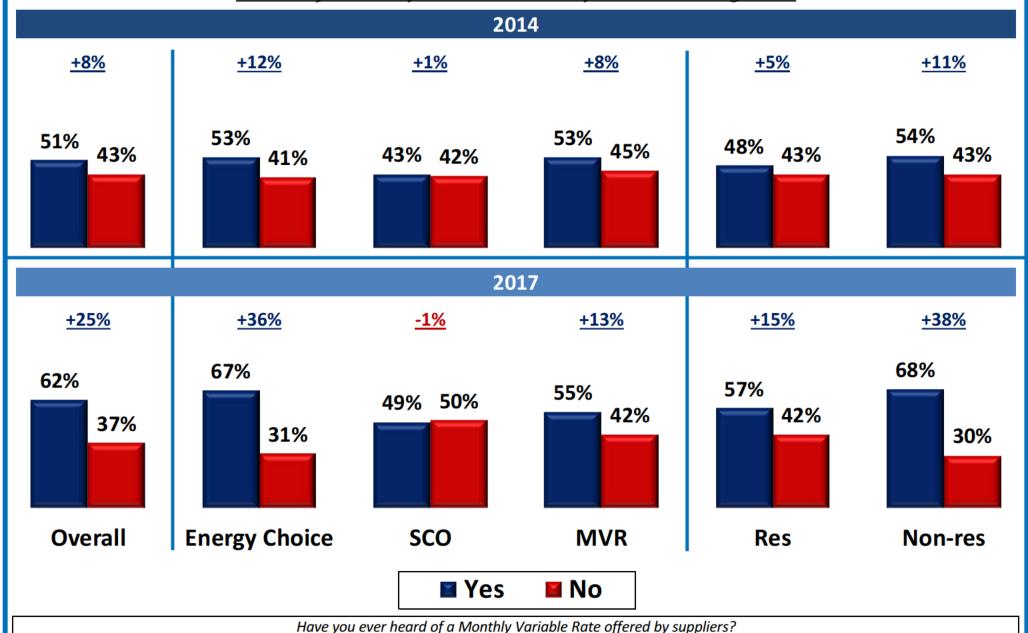




## Perceptions About: MONTHLY VARIABLE RATE (MVR)



Awareness of MVR is higher than in 2014. More than six in ten customers say they have heard of MVR. The rise in awareness is being driven by Energy Choice customers. Public Heard of Monthly Variable Rate by Customer Segment



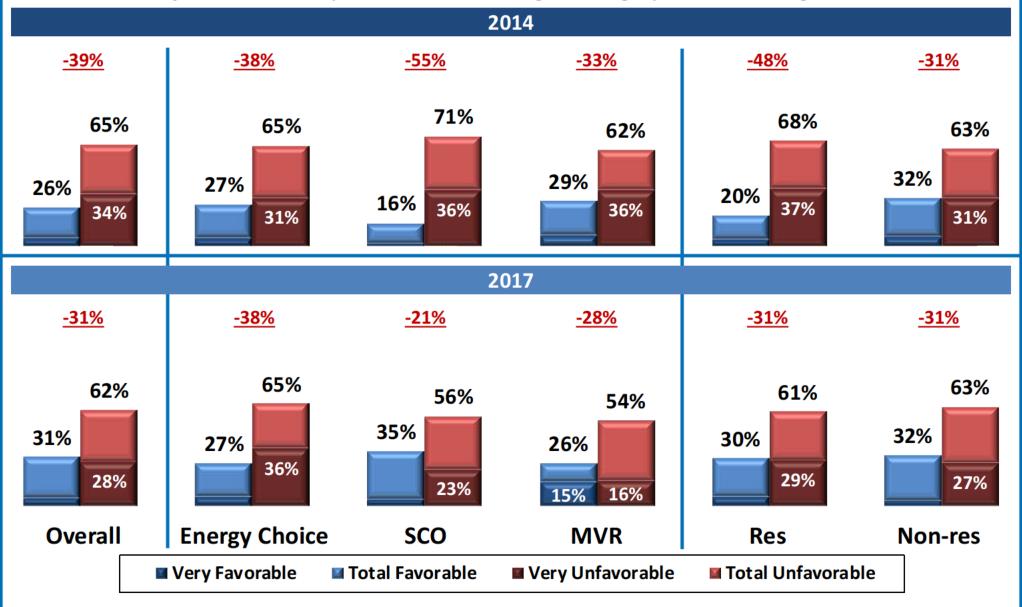
### Respondents were read the following information at the following informati

Residential customers whose contracts have expired are placed on a Monthly Variable Rate, also referred to as MVR. Customers on the MVR are randomly assigned a natural gas supplier and charged at that supplier's chosen monthly variable rate.

#### Customers' views are unfavorable of MVR.

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#### <u>Informed Monthly Variable Rate Image Rating by Customer Segment</u>

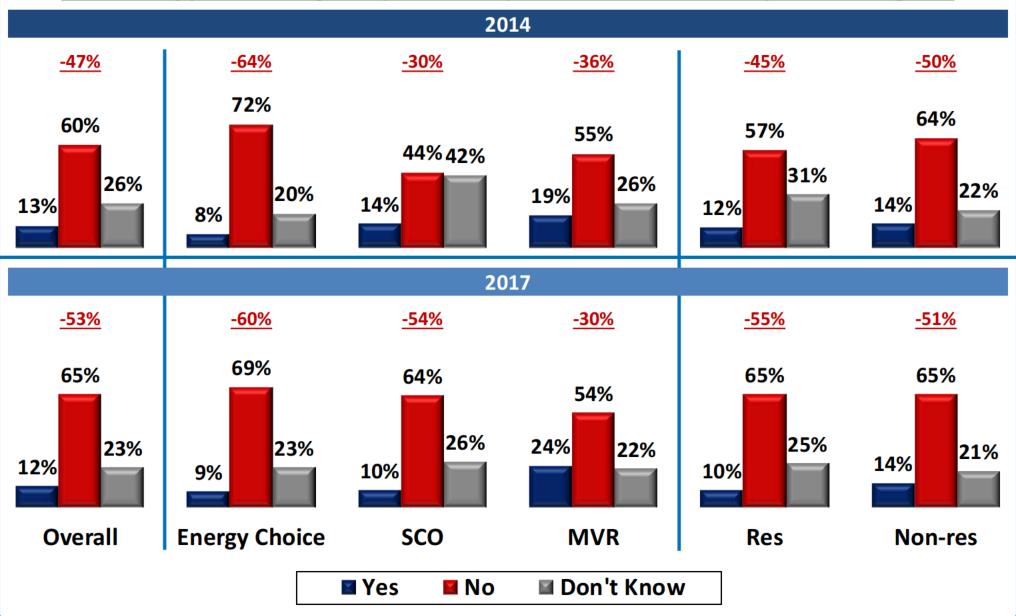


Given what you just heard, do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable view of the MVR?



#### Only a small percentage of customers identify themselves as MVR, the percentage is also relatively low among MVR customers.

To the best of your knowledge, are you a Monthly Variable Rate customer? by Customer Segment





## Comparing The Three Plans



After hearing about all three types of rate plans, customers today are more likely to identify which plan they have than they were in 2014. However, there is still confusion among majorities of customers.

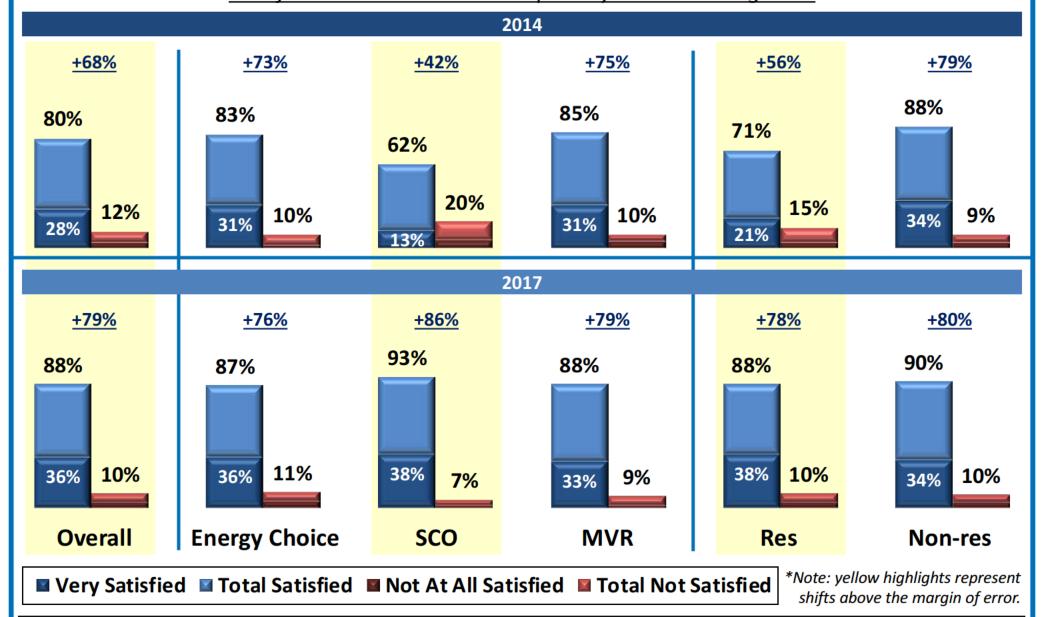
Which Rate Plan Are You Enrolled In?	Overall		Energy Choice		sco		MVR		Res		Non-res	
by Customer Segment Ranked by 2017 Overall	2014	2017	2014	2017	2014	2017	2014	2017	2014	2017	2014	2017
Energy Choice	28%	32%	37%	41%	17%	13%	22%	24%	23%	22%	33%	46%
Standard Choice Offer	5%	14%	2%	<b>7</b> %	18%	40%	3%	12%	11%	25%	Not A	Asked
Monthly Variable Rate	9%	6%	<b>7</b> %	4%	4%	3%	15%	14%	6%	4%	12%	9%
I am not enrolled in any of these plans	23%	19%	21%	20%	15%	15%	29%	20%	16%	16%	29%	23%
Don't know	35%	29%	33%	28%	47%	29%	30%	29%	43%	34%	27%	22%

\*Note: yellow highlights represent shifts above the margin of error.

Given what you heard, which of the following rate plans are you enrolled in...



Satisfaction with customers' current rate plan is high at the end of the survey RESA REPORT AND THE RESA REPORT AND THE SURVE IS ARE AND THE SURVE IS A RESA REPORT AND THE SURVE IS A RESARRANT AND THE SURVE IS A SURVE IS A RESARRANT AND THE SURVE IS A S



Given what you heard in this survey, how satisfied are you with your current rate plan...



Customers have varying preferences of the rate plan they would choose the purple of the rate plan they would choose the purple of the rate plan they would choose the purple of the rate plan they would choose the purple of the purple of the rate plan they would choose the purple of the purple of

Preferred Rate Plan by Customer Segment	Overall		Energy Choice		sco		MVR		Res		Non-res	
Ranked by 2017 Overall	2014	2017	2014	2017	2014	2017	2014	2017	2014	2017	2014	2017
Energy Choice	36%	48%	45%	55%	26%	31%	30%	44%	33%	36%	39%	65%
Standard Choice Offer	5%	15%	2%	10%	17%	36%	1%	10%	10%	26%	Not A	Asked
Monthly Variable Rate	5%	6%	4%	6%	3%	4%	8%	11%	4%	5%	<b>7</b> %	7%
I need additional information to make a choice	44%	16%	38%	15%	34%	10%	<b>57</b> %	22%	37%	14%	51%	18%
Don't know	10%	15%	10%	14%	21%	19%	4%	14%	17%	19%	4%	9%

\*Note: yellow highlights represent shifts above the margin of error.

And, given what you heard, if you had to choose a rate plan would you choose...



#### Open-End Responses: Additional Information Needed to Choose a Rate Plan?

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Among Those Saying They Need More Information to Make a Choice

#### **Residential Customers**

- Which option is the cheapest
- A brochure or page on a website displaying all options together where one can easily compare them to each other in a simple, straightforward way
- How the service differs for each option (responsiveness to problems, etc.)
- How much the price fluctuates in a given year/variable vs fixed rate
- Given last 12 months of bills, how much would I save
- Fine print/terms and conditions for each option (how to terminate service, hidden fees)
- How long are you locked into your option/rate
- Where does the energy come from
- How reliable are the different options
- What do other people say is the best option

#### **Non-Residential Customers**

- Which option is the cheapest
- A brochure or page on a website displaying all options together where one can easily compare them to each other in a simple, straightforward way
- How long are you locked into your option/rate
- Fine print/terms and conditions for each option (how to terminate service, hidden fees)
- How much the price fluctuates in a given year/variable vs fixed rate
- Transportation/delivery costs
- Given last 12 months of bills, how much would I save

What type of additional information would you need to make a choice?



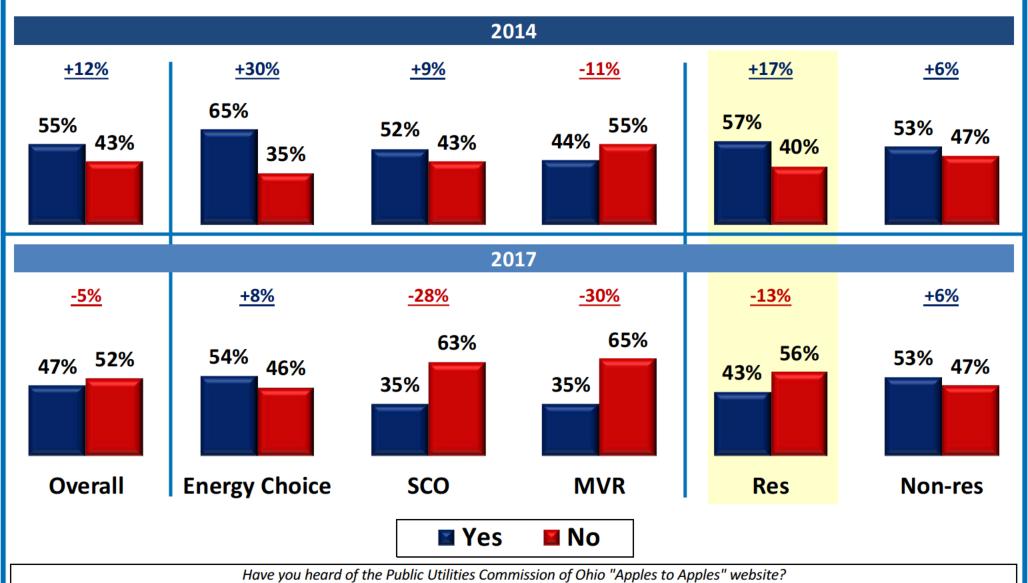


## Websites



Fewer customers are aware of PUCO's Apples to Apples website than they were in 2014. This is being driven by lower levels of awareness among residential customers (as highlighted in yellow in the chart below).

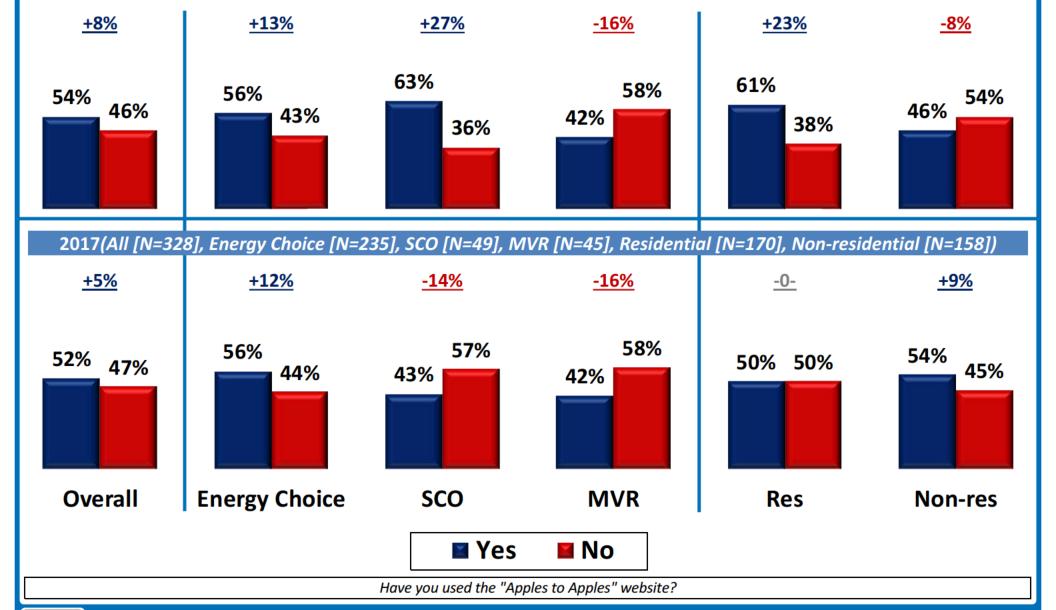
Heard of "Apples to Apples" website by Customer Segment



Consistent with 2014, just over half of those who have heard of the Apples to Apples website say they have used it. There has been drop-off in usage among residential customers.

Have you used the "Apples to Apples" website? by Customer Segment – Among Heard of Website

2014 (All [N=441], Energy Choice [N=234], SCO [N=84], MVR [N=123], Residential [N=231], Non-residential [N=210])

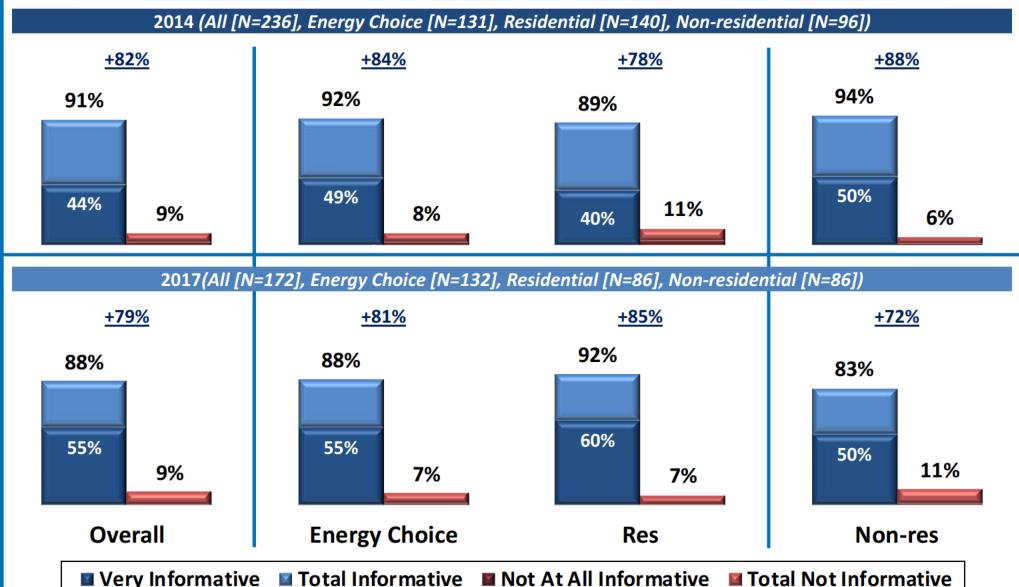






**PUBLIC** 

Website Informative by Customer Segment – Among 'Apples to Apples' Website Users



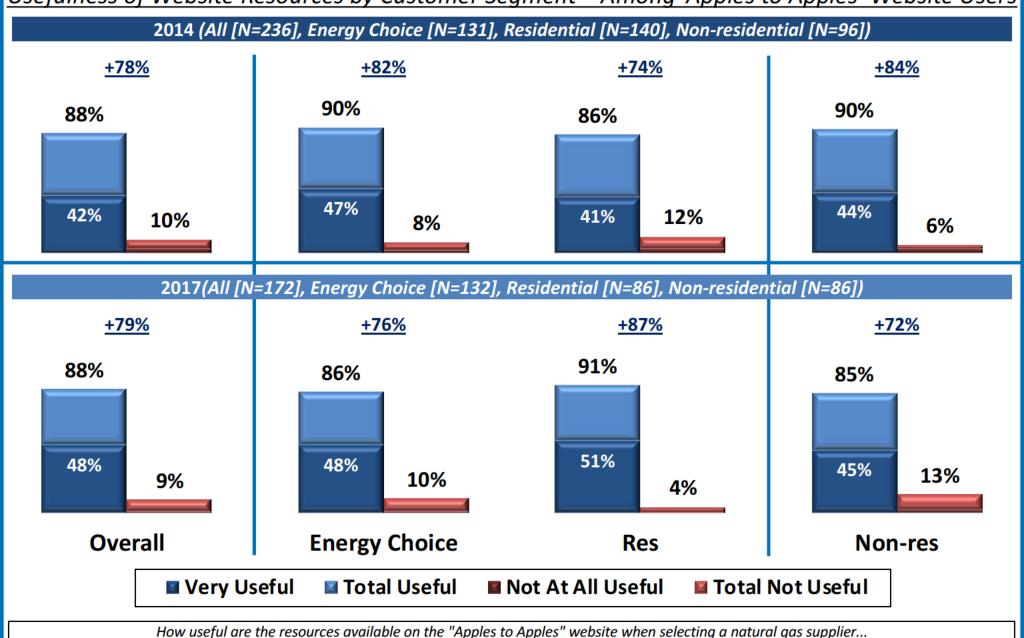
How informative would you say the "Apples to Apples" website is...



#### And users also find the website useful.

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<u>Usefulness of Website Resources by Customer Segment – Among 'Apples to Apples' Website Users</u>



#### Open-End Responses: Recommendations for improving Apples to Apples website:

Among Users of 'Apples to Apples' Website

#### **Residential Customers**

- No recommendations/site is good and easy to use
- Make it less confusing (clarify terms, less information on the page at once)
- More information about rates
- Include contact information for the different suppliers
- More information about customer service/reliability
- More specifics about terms of each offer
- Too many suppliers shown/want website to just show best 3-5 rates
- Information was not available for some suppliers (rates for certain months)
- More options for sorting
- Publicize the site's existence more extensively
- Alternative ways to learn about these options (phone calls, local meetings)

#### **Non-residential Customers**

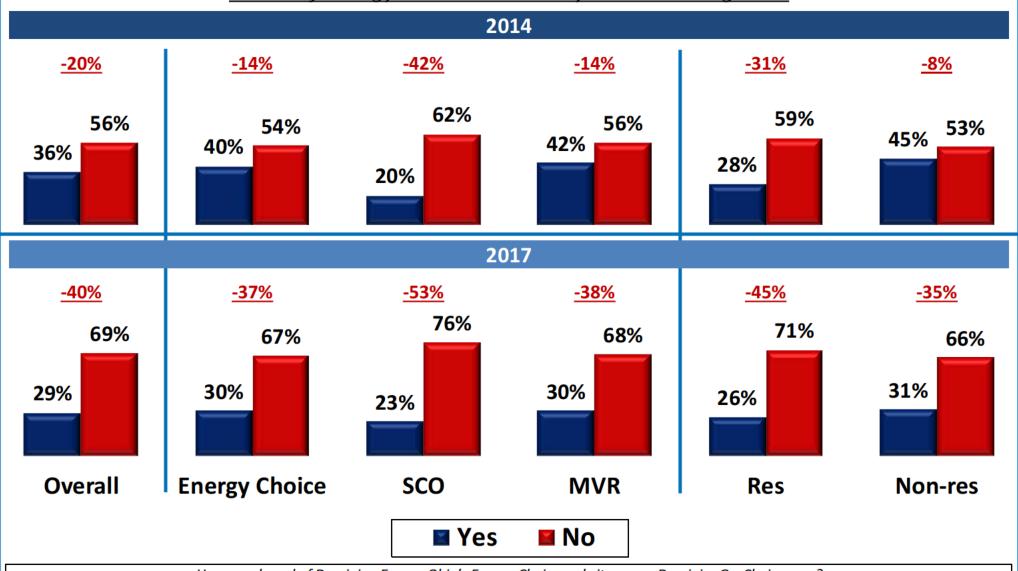
- Make it less confusing (clarify terms, less information on the page at once)
- No recommendations/site is good and easy to use
- Make the site easier to navigate
- More information about rates
- Corporate/business rates were unavailable
- It should only show suppliers that are available in your area
- More information the terms of each offer (length of offer, how to terminate service, hidden fees)
- Too many suppliers shown/want website to just show best 3-5 rates
- Make sure rates are current

What recommendations, if any, do you have for making the "Apples to Apples" website more useful to you and other consumers?



Fewer customers have heard of DEO's Energy Choice website compared to Apples website. Awareness of DEO's website has decreased since 2014.





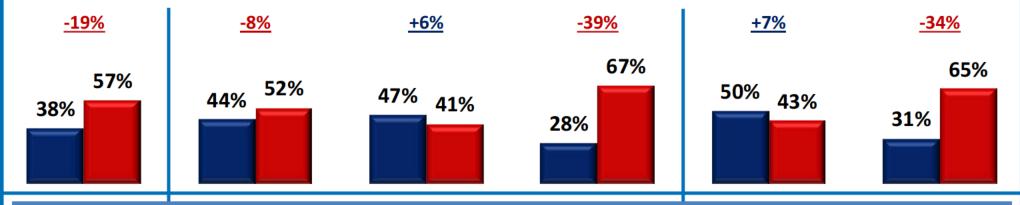
Have you heard of Dominion Energy Ohio's Energy Choice website, www.DominionGasChoice.com?



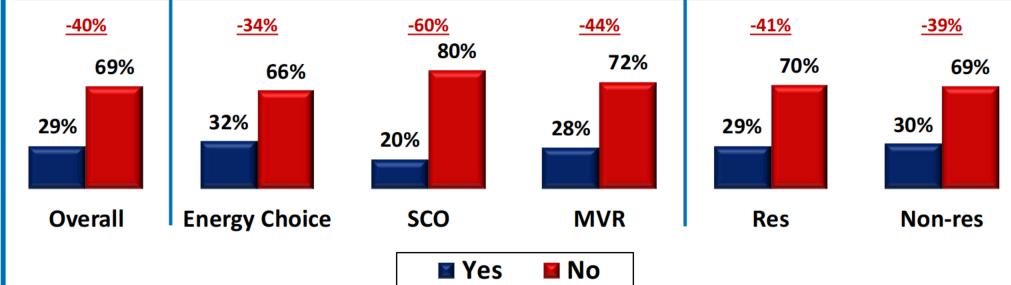
# And among those aware of the DEO website, reported usage levels have decreased since 2014, particularly among residential and Energy Choice customers.

<u>Have you used the Energy Choice website? by Customer Segment – Among Heard of Website</u>

2014 (All [N=292], Energy Choice [N=144], SCO [N=32], MVR [N=116], Residential [N=111], Non-residential [N=181])





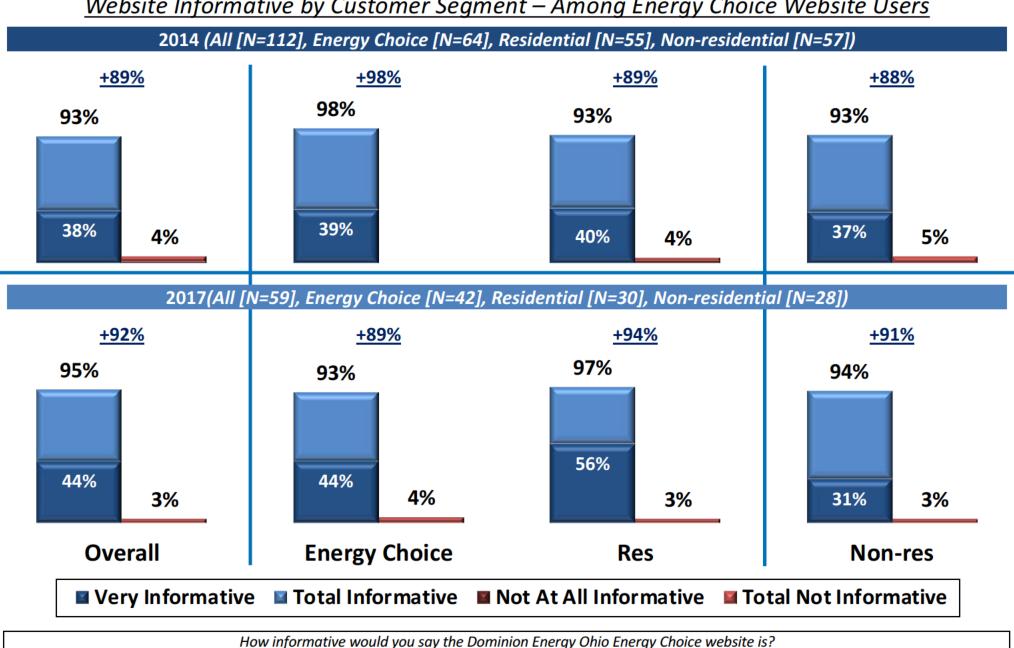


Have you used the Dominion Energy Ohio Energy Choice website?



#### However, those who use DEO's website say it is informative.

Website Informative by Customer Segment – Among Energy Choice Website Users

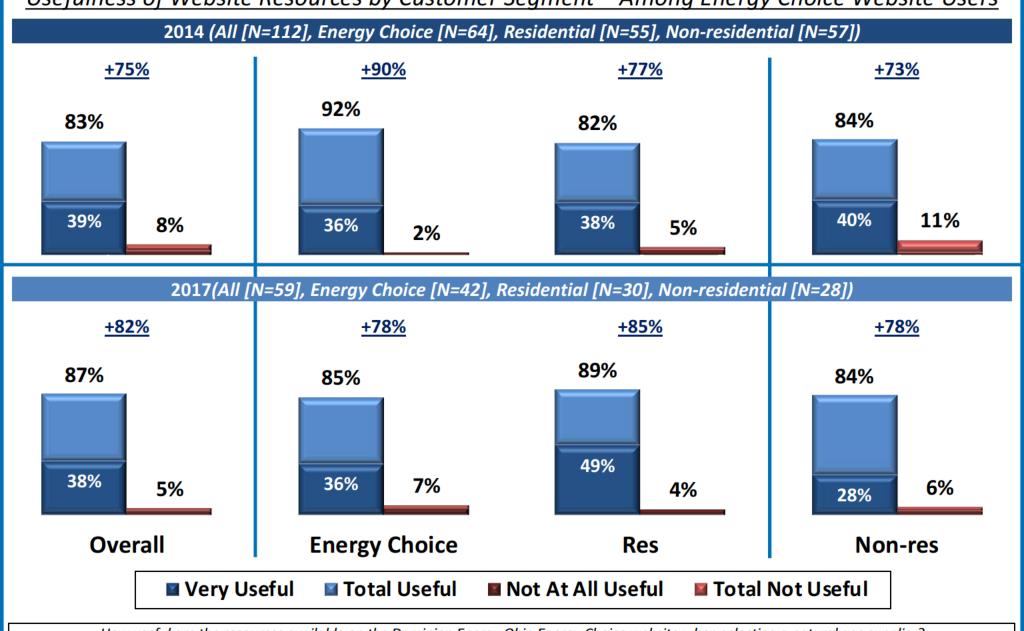




#### And also say the website is useful.

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<u>Usefulness of Website Resources by Customer Segment – Among Energy Choice Website Users</u>



How useful are the resources available on the Dominion Energy Ohio Energy Choice website when selecting a natural gas supplier?



#### Open-ended responses: Recommendations for improving Energy Choice Website

#### Among Users of Energy Choice Website

#### **Residential Customers**

- No recommendations/site is good and easy to use
- Bigger font/font size options
- Make it easier/simpler to compare supplier offers
- Publicize the site's existence more extensively

#### **Non-residential Customers**

- No recommendations/site is good and easy to use
- Make the site easier to navigate
- Make the site generally more user friendly
- Make it easier/simpler to compare supplier offers

What recommendations, if any, do you have for making the Dominion Energy Ohio Energy Choice website more useful to you and other consumers?





# Recall Of DEO Energy Choice Advertising



# Nearly three in ten customers say they recall advertising about the Energy Choice program. Upscale customers are more likely to say they have seen, read, or heard this advertising.

<u>Top Sub-groups: Seen/Read/Heard Advertising</u> by Residential/Non-residential Customers

% YES Seen/Read/Heard Energy Choice Ads by Customer Segment					
Overall	29%				
Energy Choice	31%				
Standard Choice Offer	26%				
Monthly Variable Rate	24%				
Residential	24%				
Non-residential	35%				

Top Sub-groups: Residential (24%)					
Women Income Over \$75K	35%				
Income \$75K-\$100K	33%				
Ages 50-64	32%				
Men Ages 50+	30%				
Income \$100K+	30%				
Men Income Over \$75K	30%				
Republican Men	29%				

Top Sub-groups: Non-residential (35%)					
Republican Women	45%				
Some College	42%				
Republicans	41%				
Rural Residents	41%				
College Graduates	41%				

Have you seen, read, or heard any ADVERTISING from Dominion Energy Ohio in the past year talking about their Energy Choice program?



### Open-End Responses: What advertising respondents recall sering, reading, or hearing about Energy Choice Program?

#### **Residential Customers**

- Receiving information in the mail either included with their bill or separately
- That the program allowed you to compare and choose your gas supplier
- Saw it on DEO's website
- Seeing in the brochures/bill inserts a toll free phone number to call in case they had questions about the program
- Learning about fixed billing versus monthly variable rate billing
- Receiving information via email
- Seeing advertisements on TV, but do not recall specifics other than it was about Energy Choice
- Seeing that DEO changed its name/logo

#### **Non-residential Customers**

- Receiving information in the mail either included with their bill or separately
- That the program allowed you to compare and choose your gas supplier
- Seeing advertisements on TV, but do not recall specifics other than it was about Energy Choice
- Learning about fixed billing versus monthly variable rate billing
- Learning about the program on DEO's website/being referred to the website from a mailer
- Receiving solicitation phone calls from gas suppliers
- Hearing an ad about it on the radio

Please tell me about the ADVERTISING that you saw, read, or heard about Dominion Energy Ohio in the past year about their Energy Choice program. What specifically do you remember about the advertising?



## A slight majority say they received mail from DEO in the past year about their gas supply or rate plan options.

Mail Received from						
Dominion Energy Ohio	Energy					
by Customer Segment Ranked by Overall	Overall	Choice	SCO	MVR	Res	Non-res
Yes, a letter	19%	19%	19%	18%	19%	19%
Yes, bill insert - something with my bill	17%	18%	14%	16%	18%	16%
Yes, cannot recall what I received	9%	10%	8%	8%	9%	9%
Yes, a brochure	8%	<b>7</b> %	7%	13%	8%	8%
Yes, other	3%	3%	2%	5%	3%	3%
TOTAL YES	51%	<b>52</b> %	47%	48%	50%	51%
No	38%	<b>37</b> %	36%	46%	37%	40%
Don't Know	11%	11%	17%	6%	13%	9%

Have you received anything in the mail from Dominion Energy Ohio in the past year talking about your gas supply or rate plan options?





// 703.836.7655



