

ACSP Maintenance Period Considerations – SWCC Briefing



Background

- In May 2025, the 5-year maintenance period request was presented to the TRC for 6 BMPS:
 - Critical area planting
 - Cropland conversion
 - Diversion
 - Field border
 - Filter strip
 - Grassed waterway



TRC Meeting Outcome

- Assess statewide needs and impacts
- Consider financial impacts, conservation outcomes, and water quality benefits
- Survey districts to determine whether they face similar issues with the maintenance period on these BMPs or any others



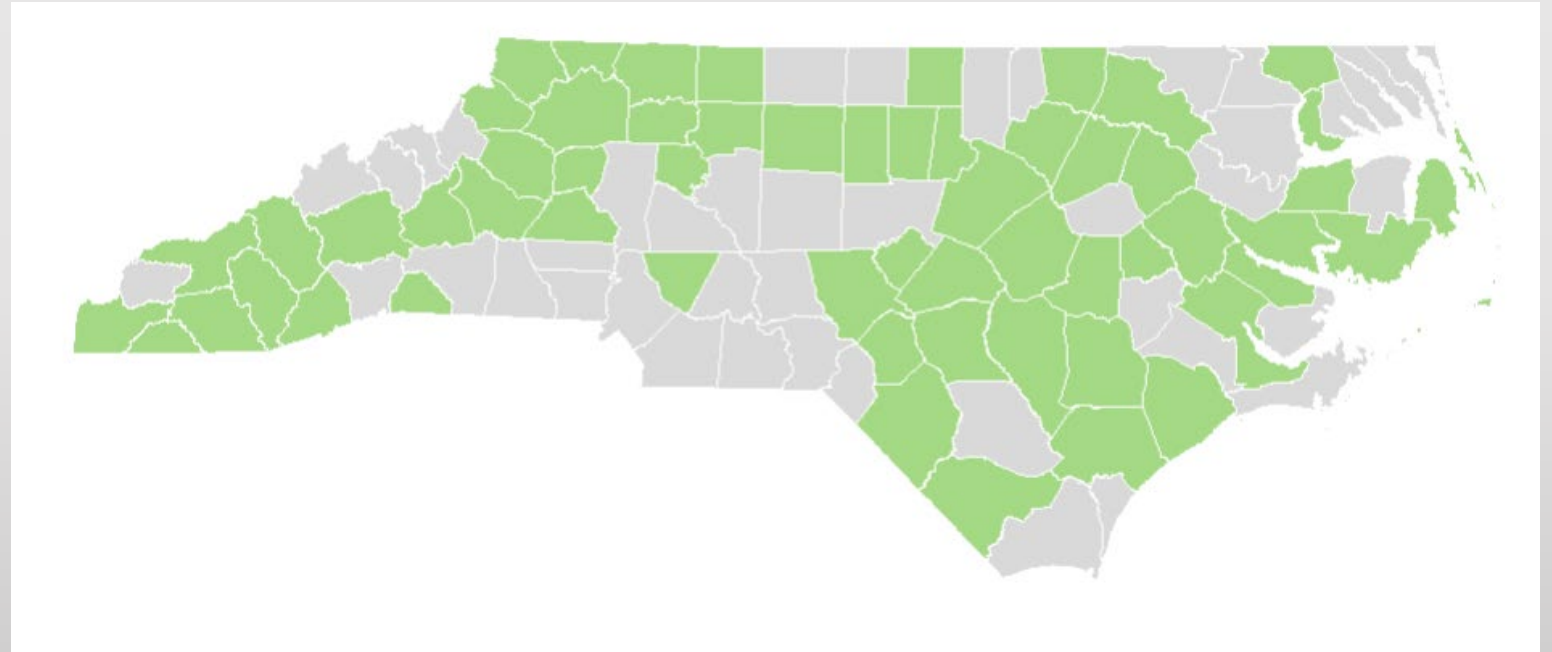
Agenda

- We will present survey data collected at five Division Update Meetings across the state that was used to gather opinions on maintenance periods
- The TRC considered the findings in April and scheduled a follow-up May meeting to discuss benefits and risks of various options
- This update is being presented for Commission consideration prior to being presented with the ACSP Detailed Implementation Plan in July



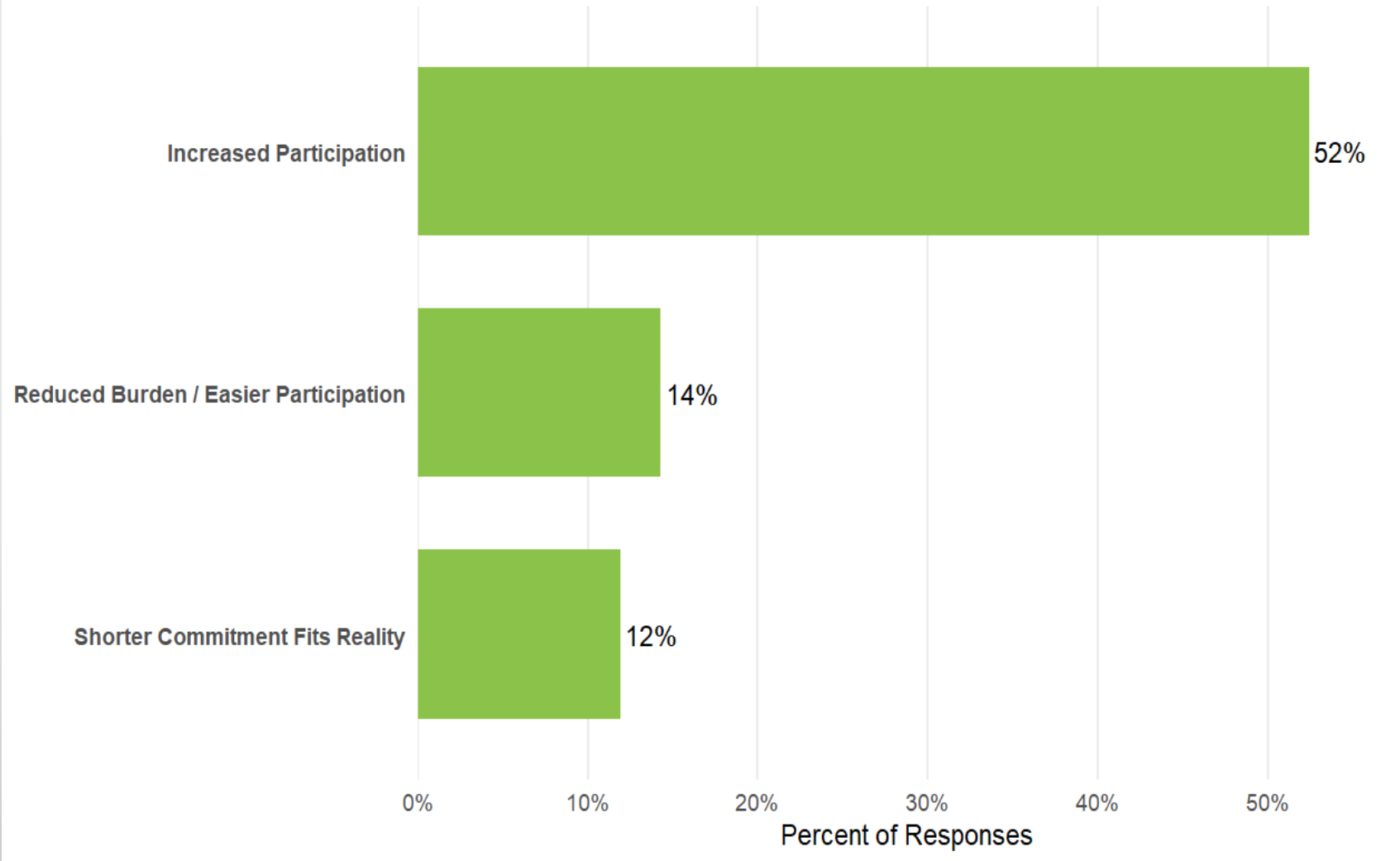
District Representation

- We had 96 responses across 57 counties
 - 65 district staff
 - 31 district directors



Top 3 Perceived Benefits of Reducing Maintenance Period

ATTACHMENT 13B



“It would make... landowners/farmers want to participate more”

“Potential of higher participation in cost share programs”

“Easier buy in from cooperators”

“Easier to use these with the landowner”

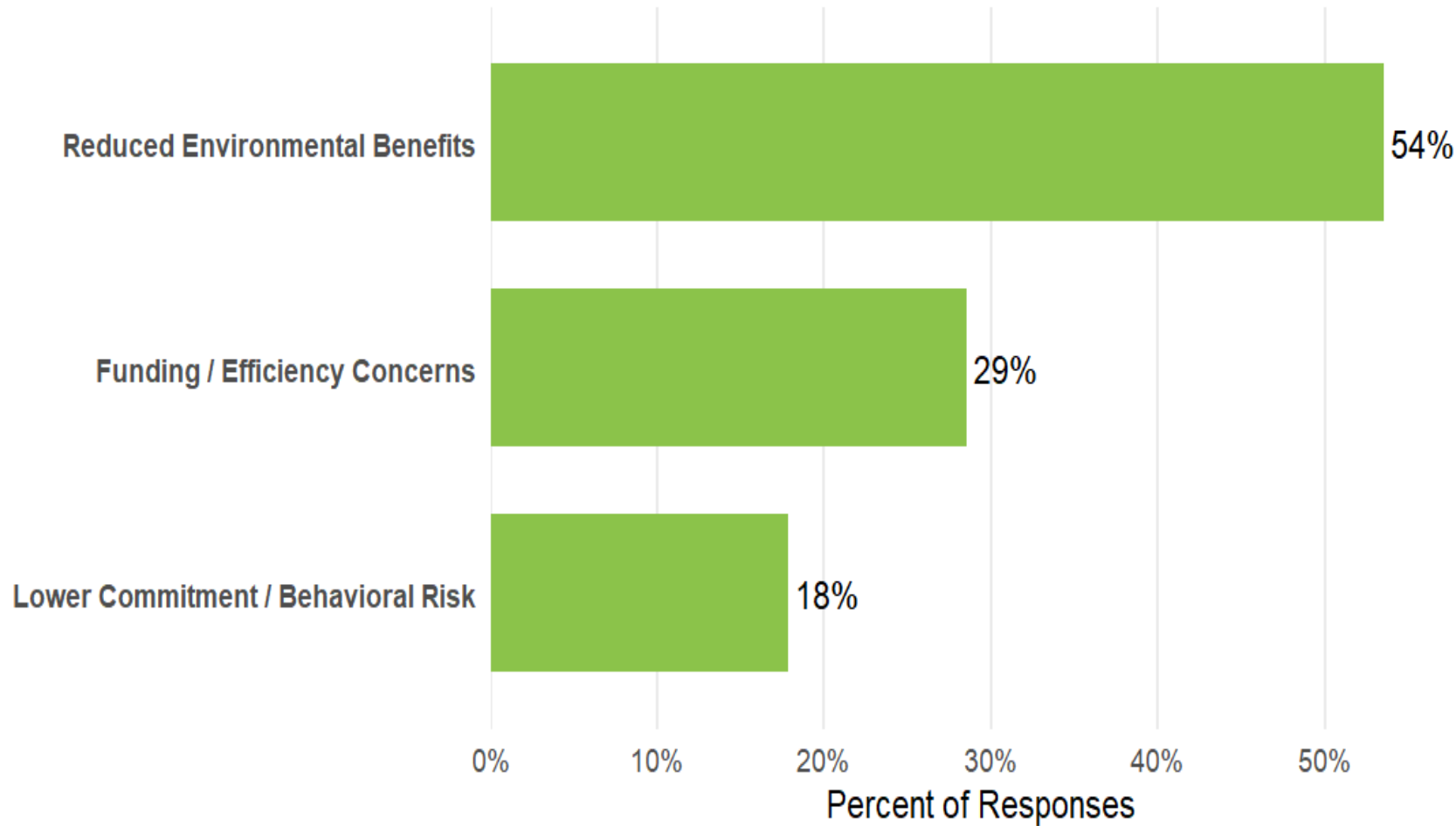
“Less administrative work”

“10 years is a long commitment...”

“Landowners might change/sale...”



Top Concerns About Reducing Maintenance Period



“Loss of long-term environmental benefits”

“Less protection for the same price”

“Invests taxpayer funds for a shorter period of time”

“Overuse of funds on same parcels”

“Less committed applicants to conservation”

“May attract the ones more interested in money than conservation...”

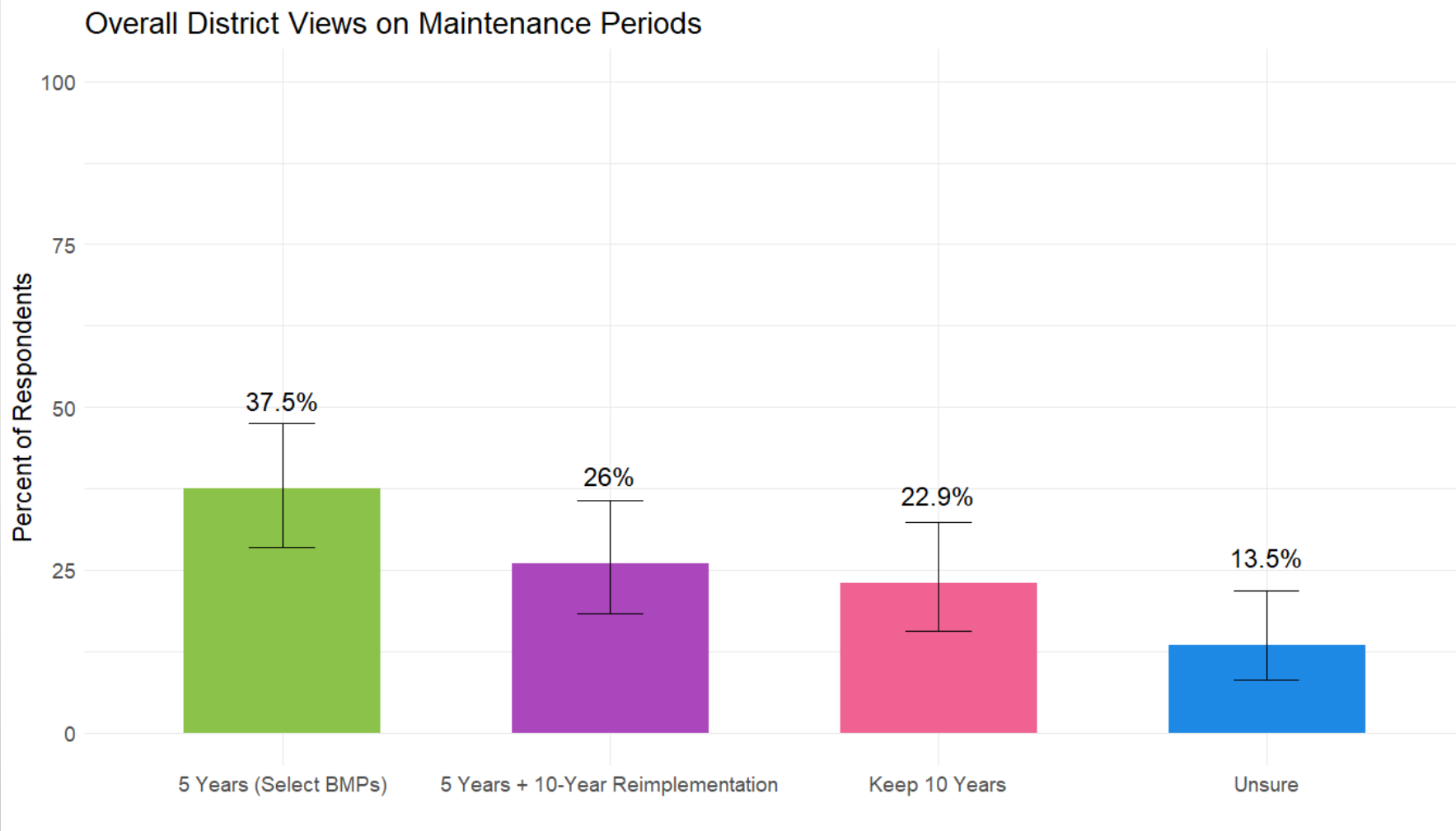


Group Survey Results Summary

- **Positive:** Shorter 5-year maintenance periods could significantly increase program participation and make enrollment more appealing to landowners.
- **Concerns:** Shorter contracts risk reducing long-term conservation benefits, particularly for erosion-control and engineered BMPs.
- **Alternatives:** Consider a tiered or incentive-based system where 5- and 10-year maintenance periods have different cost-share rates or bonus payments.
- **Overall Theme:** Trade-off between flexibility and conservation longevity; impacts vary by county and BMP type, suggesting a one-size-fits-all change may not work statewide.



Individual Survey Results: Overall Opinion

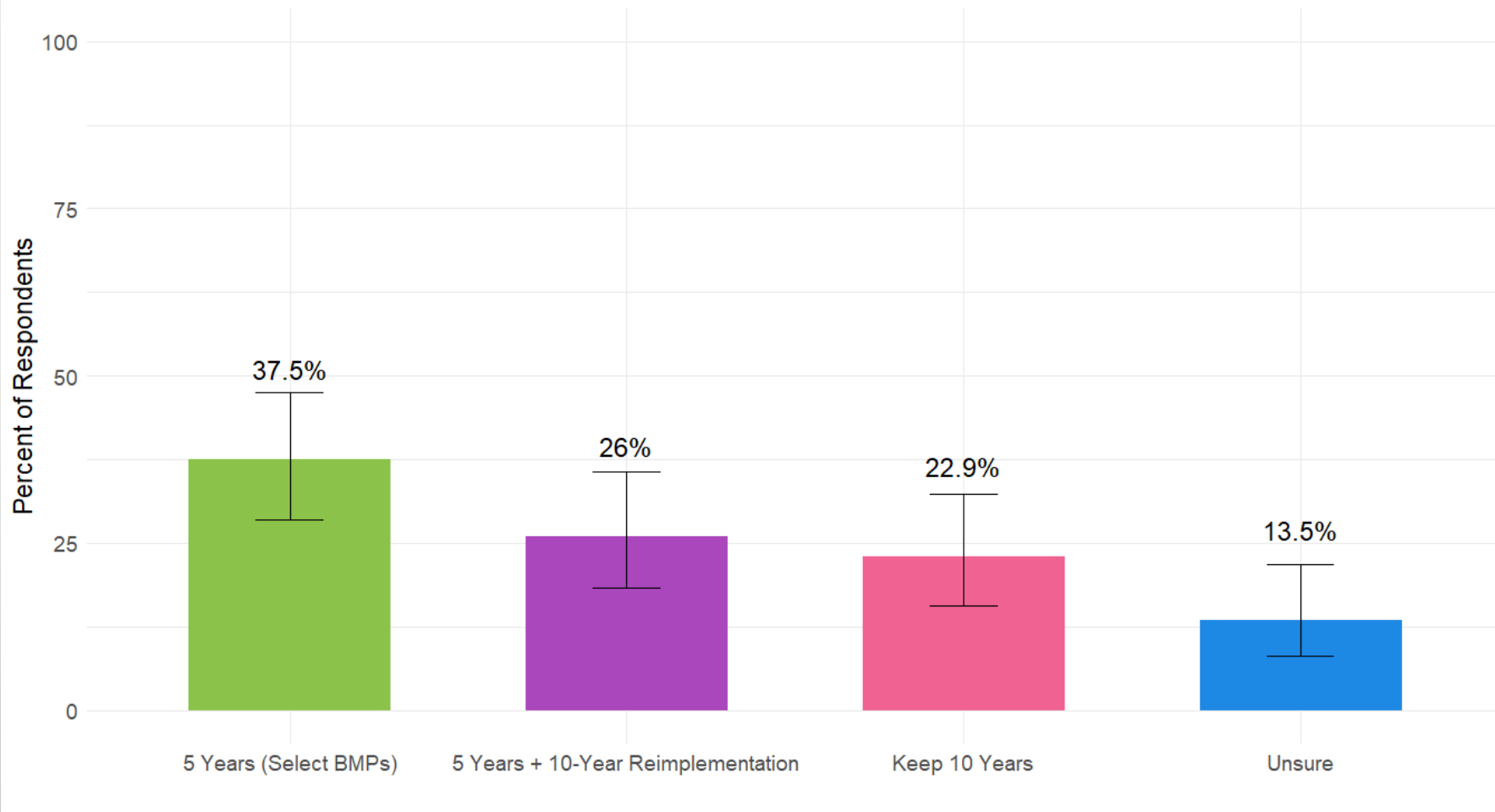


- Looking at the x-axis, we have 5 years on select BMPS and 5 years with a 10-year reimplementation limit which means the maintenance period is 5 years, but the BMP cannot be contracted again until 10 years have past
- Starting broad we see overall opinions on changing the maintenance period



Individual Survey Results: Overall Opinion

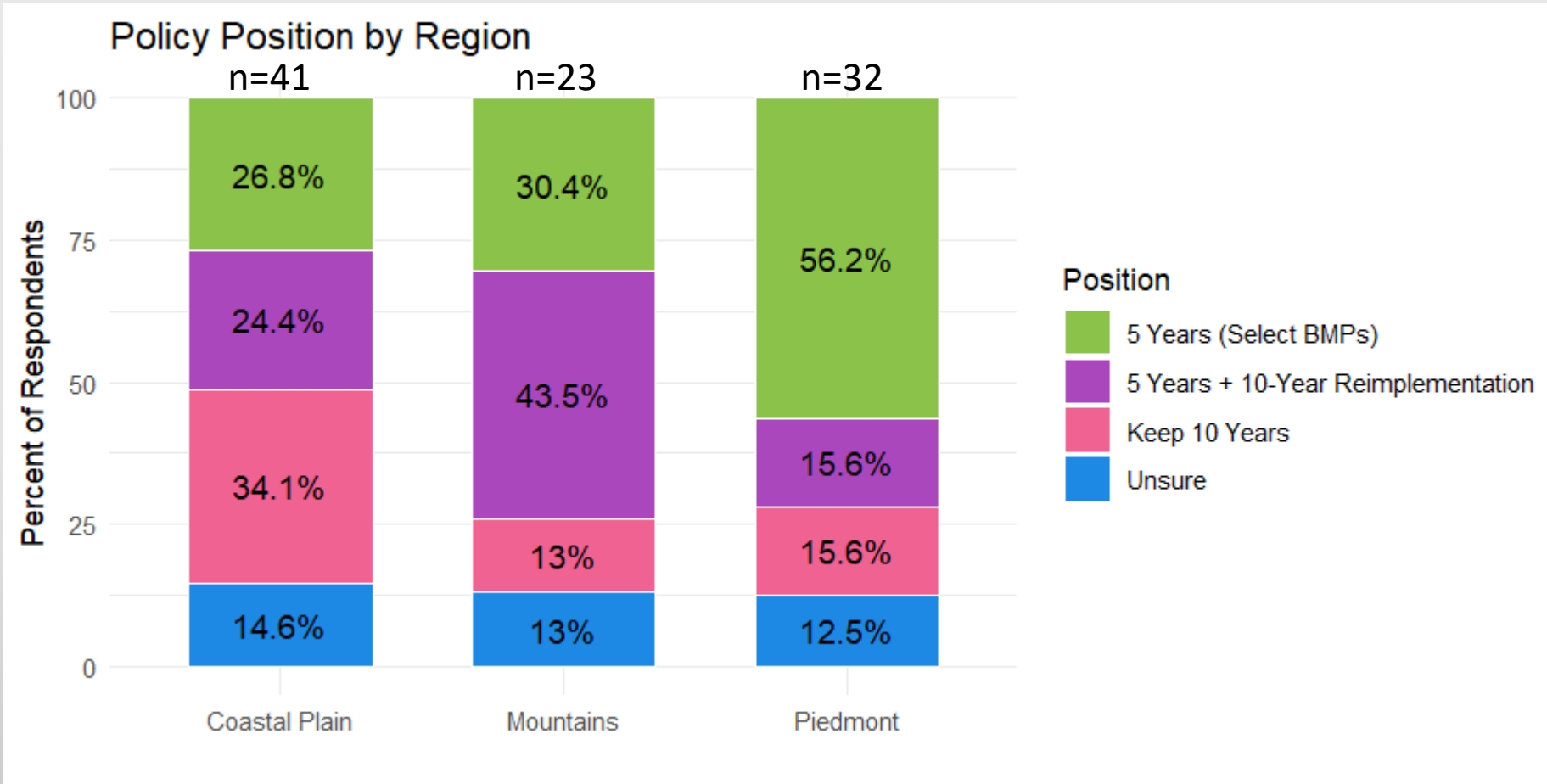
Overall District Views on Maintenance Periods



- 5 years on select BMPS has highest support
- 95% Confidence interval shows the range where the true value likely falls, accounting for the fact that we only surveyed a sample - not everyone
- We need to determine what is driving responses



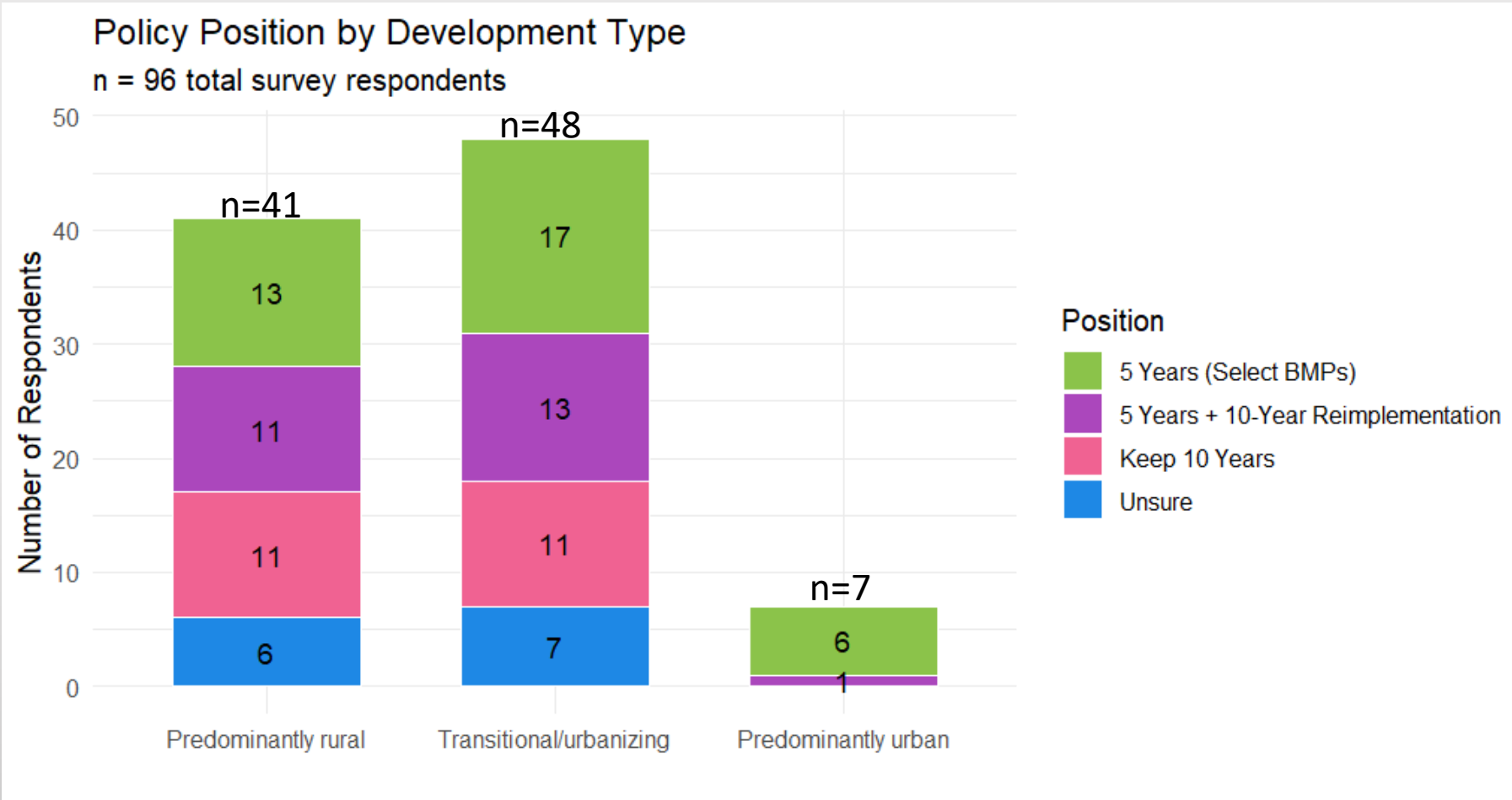
Individual Survey Results: By region



- Coastal plain prefers 10-year
- Mountains has strongest support for 10-year reimplementation limit
- Piedmont has strongest support for 5 Years on select BMPS
- This highlights differences in opinions across regions



Individual Survey Results: By development

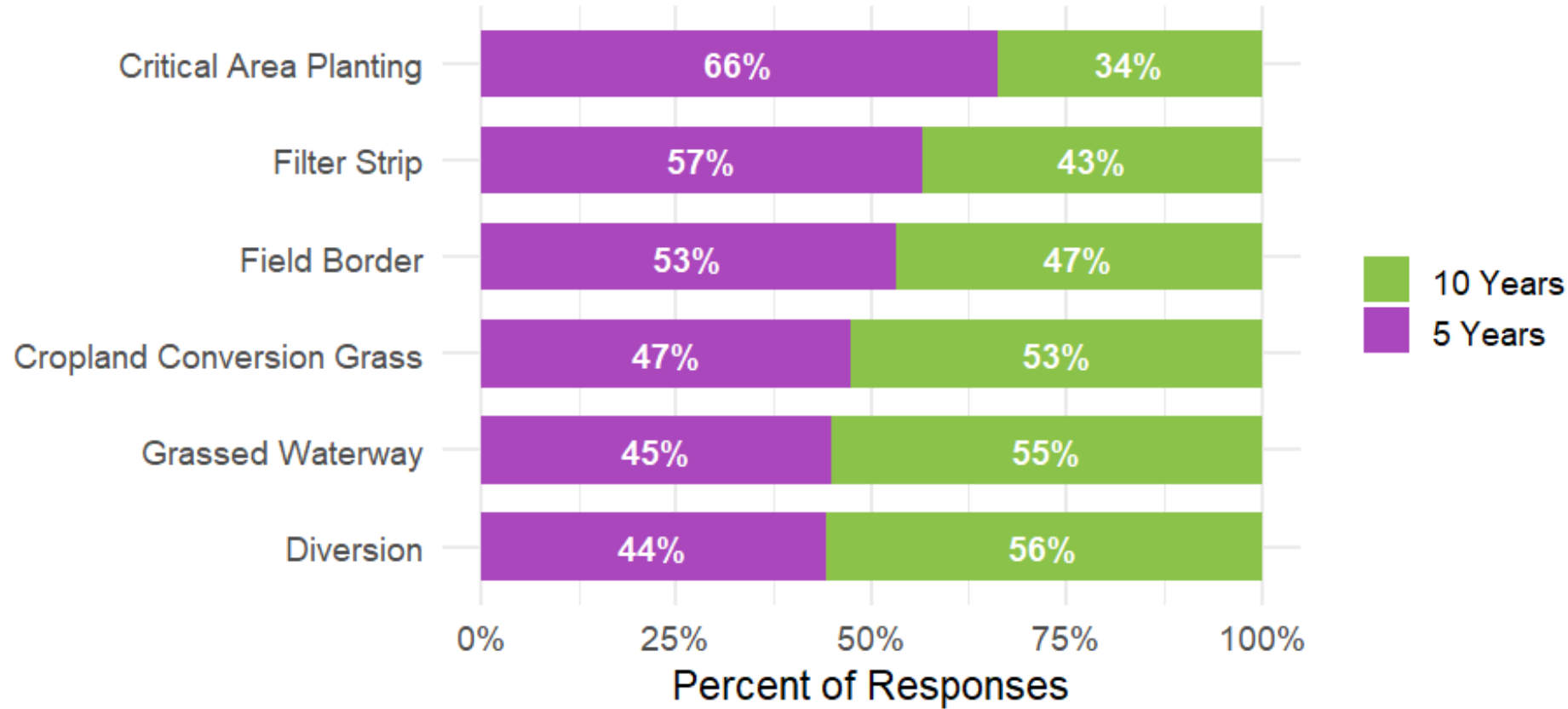


- Similar responses between rural and transitioning development
- Urban had strong support for 5-year maintenance periods.



Individual Survey Results: By BMP

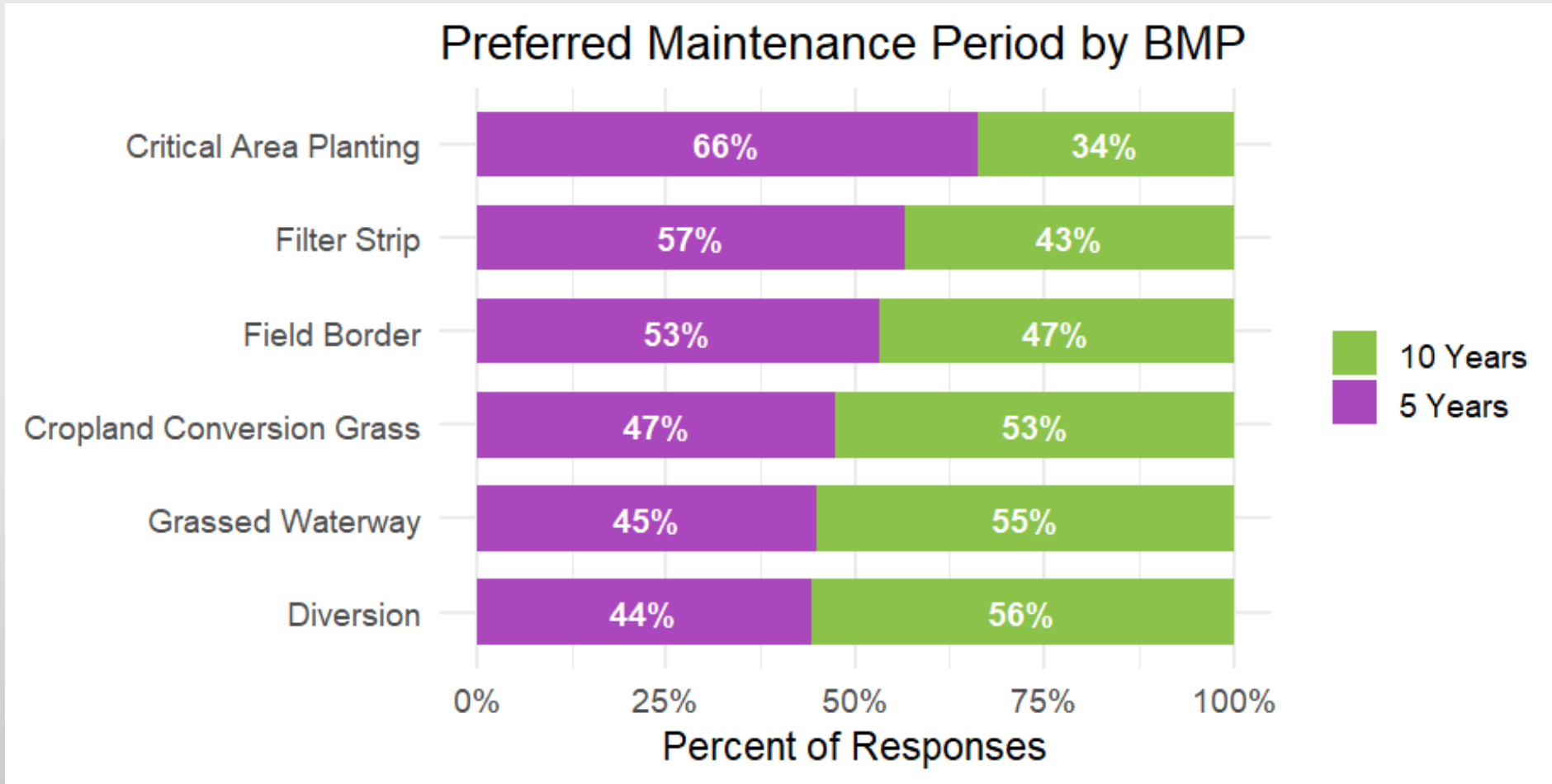
Preferred Maintenance Period by BMP



- For 6 BMPS we asked what maintenance period is preferred
- CAP, filter strip, and field borders have majority support for 5 years
- Cropland conversion, grassed water way, and diversion have majority support for 10 years



Individual Survey Results: By BMP



- This really highlights that while people may support some form of 5-year maintenance period in principle (64%) when asked about specific practices hesitance increases/support drops



Some paths under consideration

- **Maintain 10-Year Period for All BMPs (Status Quo):**
 - Keeps the program consistent and avoids new administrative complexity.
 - Supported most strongly in specific areas (e.g., Coastal Plain), though not the majority view statewide.
 - Low risk but does not address concerns about landowner enrollment barriers.
 - **5-Year Maintenance + 10-Year Re-Implementation Cap:**
 - A compromise approach with broad support across regions.
 - Landowners only commit for 5 years at a time. Program limits total re-applications to once every 10 years. Reduces district burden while preventing excessive turnover.
- **Adopt a tiered-cost approach:**
 - Move to 5 years: 50-65% cost share rate
 - Keep 10 years: 75% cost share rate
 - **Adopt a mixed approach for BMPS:**
 - Select certain BMPs for reduction to 5 years
 - Keep other at 10 years

} → ...or offer both



Next steps

- Additional TRC meeting scheduled for May 26th
 - Discussion on the benefits and risks to maintenance period reductions for identified BMPs
 - Review options for maintenance adjustment
- Results may inform changes to the maintenance period of BMPs in the Detailed Implementation Plan presented at the July Commission meeting

