

WHAT AMERICANS THINK ABOUT WATER QUALITY & QUANTITY

Most Americans value water usage as an important issue the nation currently faces, among others like the economy, health care and public education. Researchers with the UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources asked 1,137 citizens about their perceptions concerning the quantity and quality of the United States' water supply in a nation-wide public opinion survey.

WATER A TOP ISSUE FOR MANY AMERICANS

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the typical American family of four uses 400 gallons of water per day, most of which are used for indoor activities like showering, flushing toilets, and washing clothes. It should come as no surprise then that the PIE Center's most recent national public opinion survey revealed water to be a top issue to United States citizens. Water was the third ranked highly or extremely important issue, only following the economy and the health care system.

While Americans identify water as a significant concern for them, 73 percent are willing to vote in support of water conservation programs and 67 percent are willing to vote for the candidates that support them.

Most respondents indicated having a plentiful water supply is essential for cities, agriculture, and commerce/ industry. Thirty-nine percent of those surveyed believed it is important for household landscapes to have plentiful water, signaling an opportunity to educate

HIGHLY OR EXTREMELY IMPORTANT ISSUES

1. THE ECONOMY	91%
2. HEALTH CARE	90%
3. WATER	84%
4. PUBLIC EDUCATION	78%
5. FOOD PRODUCTION	77%
6. TAXES	71%
7. IMMIGRATION	68%
8. CONSERVATION	67%
9. CLIMATE CHANGE	54%
10. HOUSING FORECLOSURE	52%

homeowners on how to conserve water outdoors and support water restrictions issued by local government so it can be delegated to more valued purposes.

Americans are cognizant of indoor water usage, with a large percent indicating that they only run their dishwashers and washing machines when they are full.

Eighty-nine percent of Americans stated they are likely to dispose of their hazardous material in the proper locations. However, only 55 percent were likely to use biodegradable cleaning products in order to prevent water pollution.

"I AM LIKELY TO..."

RESPONSIBLY DISPOSE
OF HAZARDOUS
MATERIAL TO PREVENT
WATER POLLUTION

89%

ONLY RUN THE
DISHWASHER WHEN
IT'S FULL

85%

ONLY RUN WASHING
MACHINE
WHEN FULL

83%

VOTE FOR WATER
CONSERVATION
PROGRAMS

73%

SUPPORT WATER
RESTRICTIONS ISSUED BY
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

68%

VOTE FOR CANDIDATES
WHO SUPPORT WATER
CONSERVATION

67%

USE BIODEGRADABLE
PRODUCTS WHEN
CLEANING

55%

NORTHEAST CONFIDENT IN WATER SECURITY

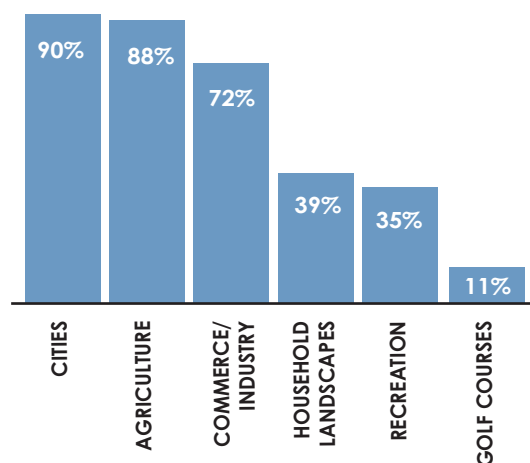
Throughout the United States, opinions of the quantity and quality of respondents' water varied regionally, with the Northeast indicating the highest levels of confidence in both water quantity and quality over the next 10 years.

The western US, including New Mexico, California and Washington, was the least unified in its confidence of water quantity. While 32 percent of westerners were highly or extremely confident, an equal 32 percent were not at all or only slightly confident that there would be enough water to sustain their community's needs. Interestingly, they were highly confident in their tap water quality, despite their quantity concerns.

Contrastingly, respondents from the Midwest were confident in water quantity; however, a quarter were not at all or only slightly confident in their tap water quality.

Respondents from the South are mostly confident of water quantity in their communities over the next decade. Yet, the South was the region that was the least confident in the quality of its tap water.

"I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE A PLENTIFUL SUPPLY OF WATER FOR..."



ABOUT OUR RESEARCH

The PIE Center is expanding its research portfolio by conducting four national surveys this year. The surveys explore what Americans think about water quality and quantity, food safety and security, animal welfare and community disaster preparedness.

