Legislation and Communications Committee

Update on the Association of California Water Agencies "Vision for Our Water Future" Initiative

Item 6a

October 12, 2026

Presented by: Carolyn Schaffer

Item 6a Summary

Subject

Update on Association of California Water Agencies “Vision for Our Water Future” Initiative

Purpose

Provide an update on“Vision for Our Water Future” including June 2026 polling

ACWA's Statewide Initiative

Overview

VISION FOR OUR WATER FUTURE

In July 2026, Metropolitan adopted resolution supporting Vision Framework

- Making water a top priority for new governor, legislature, administration
- Framework for 4 priority actions
  1) Lead on Water
  2) Protect Affordability
  3) Deliver Critical Infrastructure
  4) Modernize Water Management
- Promote strengthening water science, data, and technology to support informed decision-making

California Voter Views of Key Water Issues

Key Findings of a Survey of California Voters Conducted June 6-11, 2026

FM3 RESEARCH | OPINION RESEARCH & STRATEGY

220-7994

Survey contracted by ACWA for “Vision for Our Water Future”

Survey Methodology

Dates	June 6-11, 2026
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voter Survey
Research Population	Likely November 2026 Voters in California
Total Interviews	623
Margin of Sampling Error	(Full Sample) ±4.0% at the 95% Confidence Level (Half Sample) ±5.7% at the 95% Confidence Level
Contact Methods	Telephone Calls Email Invitations Text Invitations
Data Collection Modes	Telephone Interviews Online Interviews
Survey Tracking	Selected Comparisons to Prior Research
Languages	English and Spanish

(Note: Not All Results Will Sum to 100% Due to Rounding)

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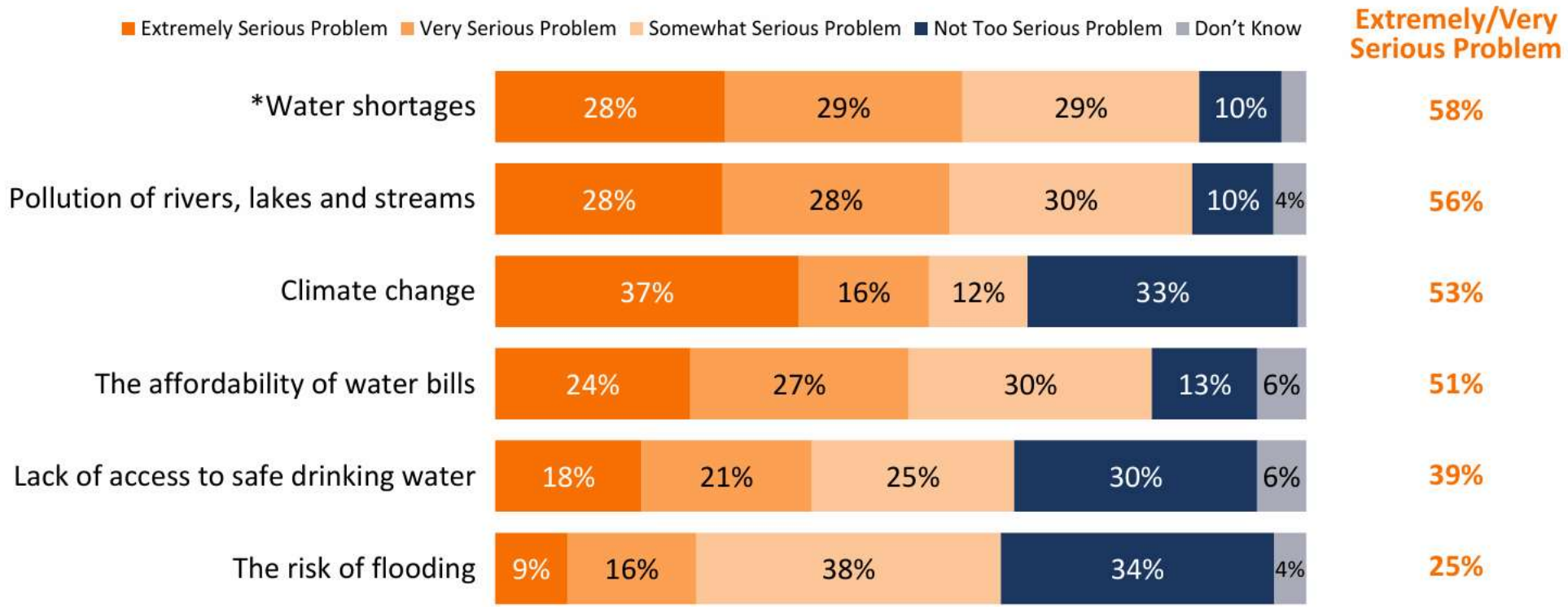
Relatively few are concerned about lack of access to safe drinking water or the risk of flooding.



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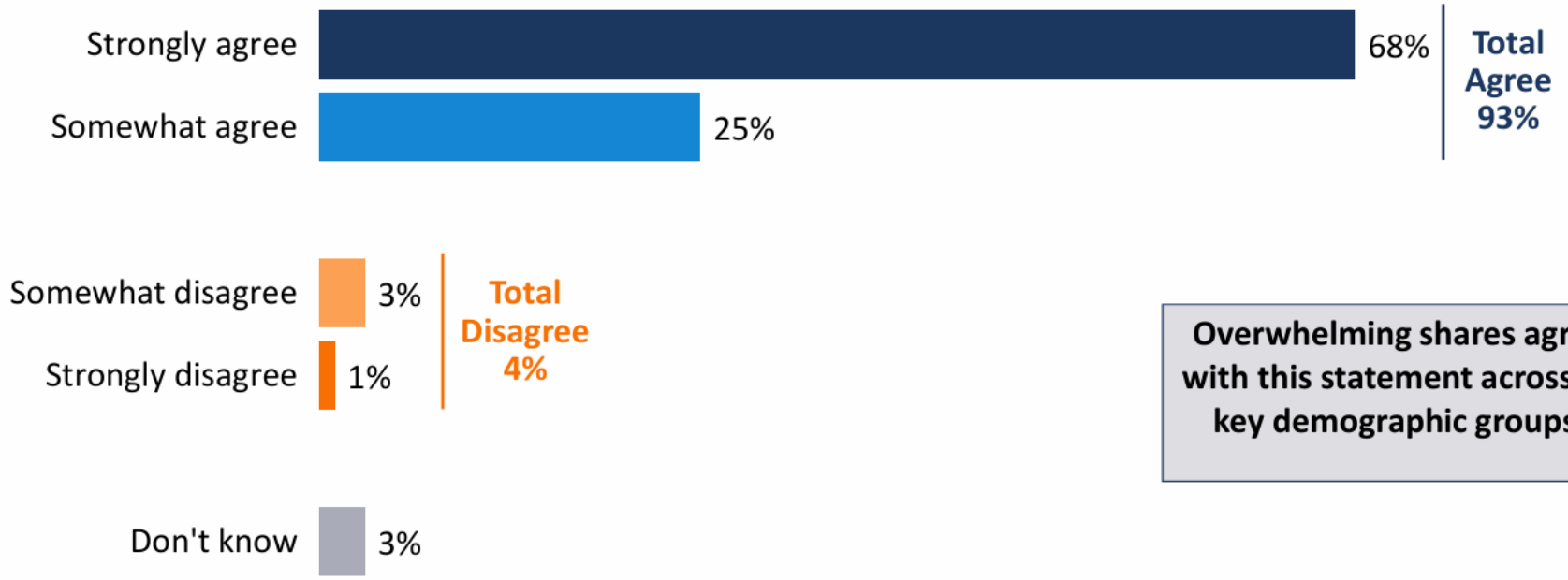
*Q3. Next, please consider the following issues that some people suggest are problems facing California. For each one, please indicate whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem. *Split Sample*

More than nine in ten voters agree that safe and reliable water supplies are critical to addressing California's goals.

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Safe and reliable water supplies are critical to addressing California's goals for our communities, the economy, the environment, and public health?"

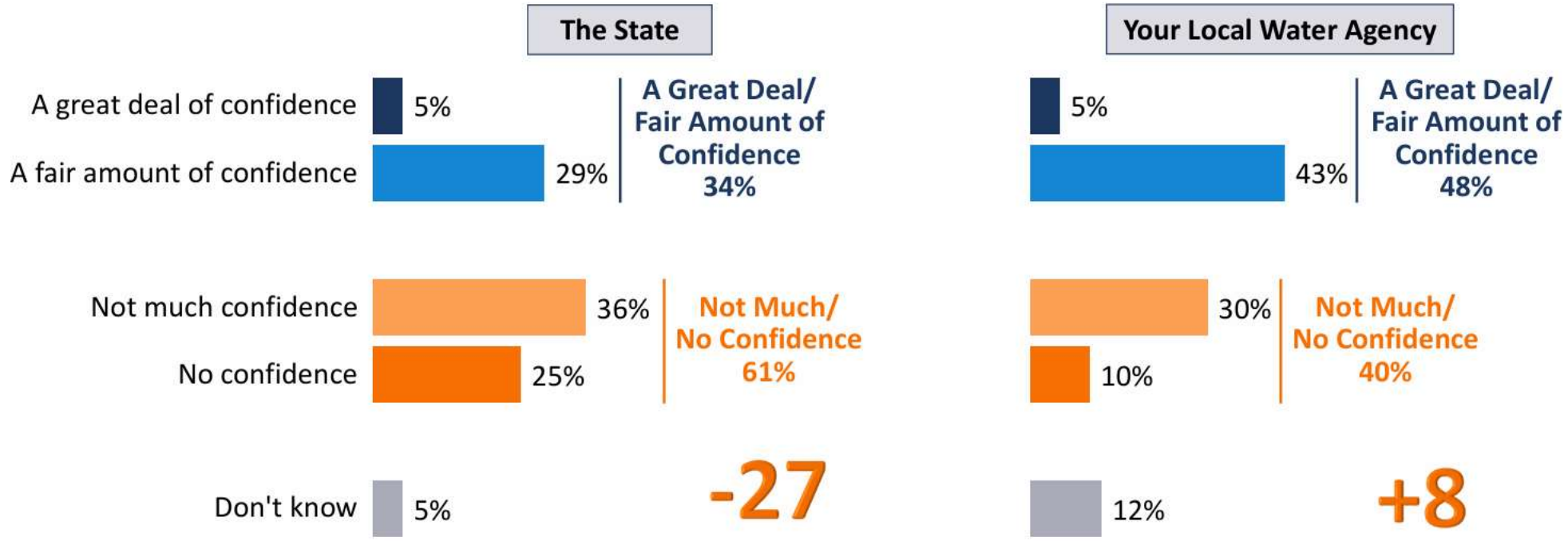


Overwhelming shares agree with this statement across all key demographic groups.

FM3 RESEARCH Q4.

Just under half have confidence in their local water agency to manage water supplies well, and one-third say the same for the state.

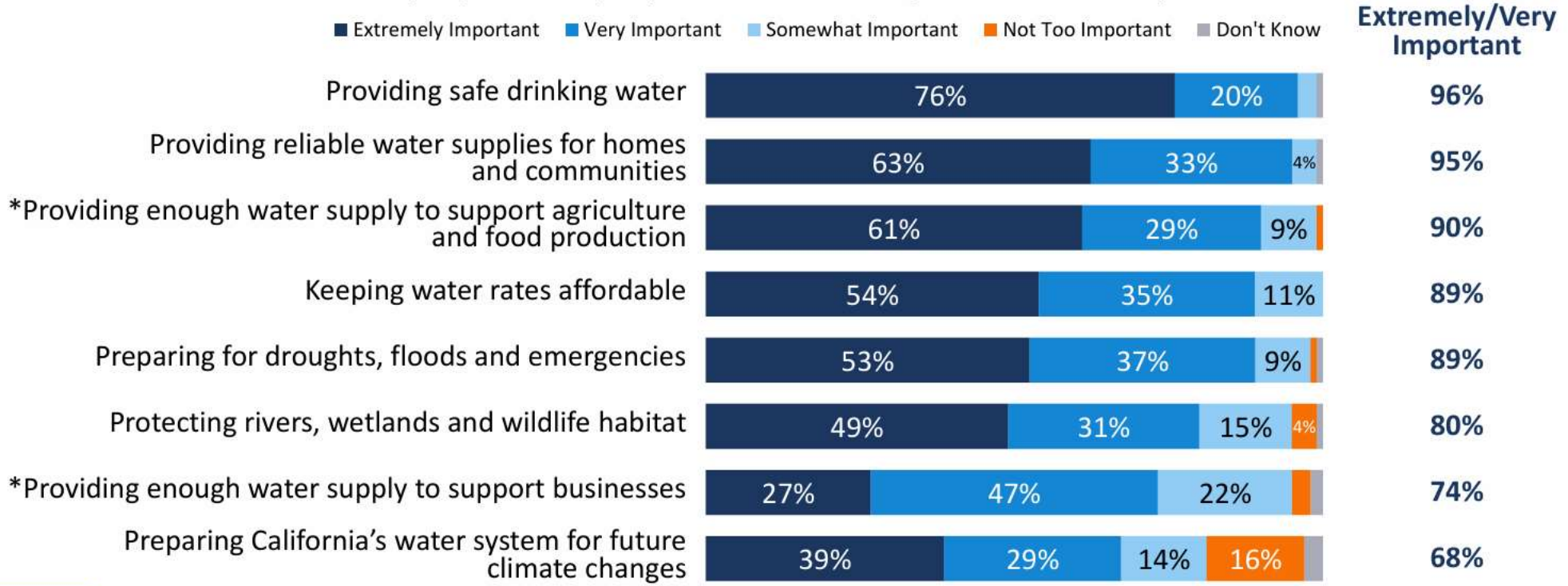
*Next, how much confidence do you have that **(HALF SAMPLE:** the state**)** **(HALF SAMPLE:** your local water agency**)** is managing California's water supplies well?*



FM3 RESEARCH Q6.

Voters' top priorities include providing safe drinking water and reliable water supplies.

Next, here are some goals for water in California. For each one, please indicate if you feel that goal is extremely important, very important, somewhat important or not too important.



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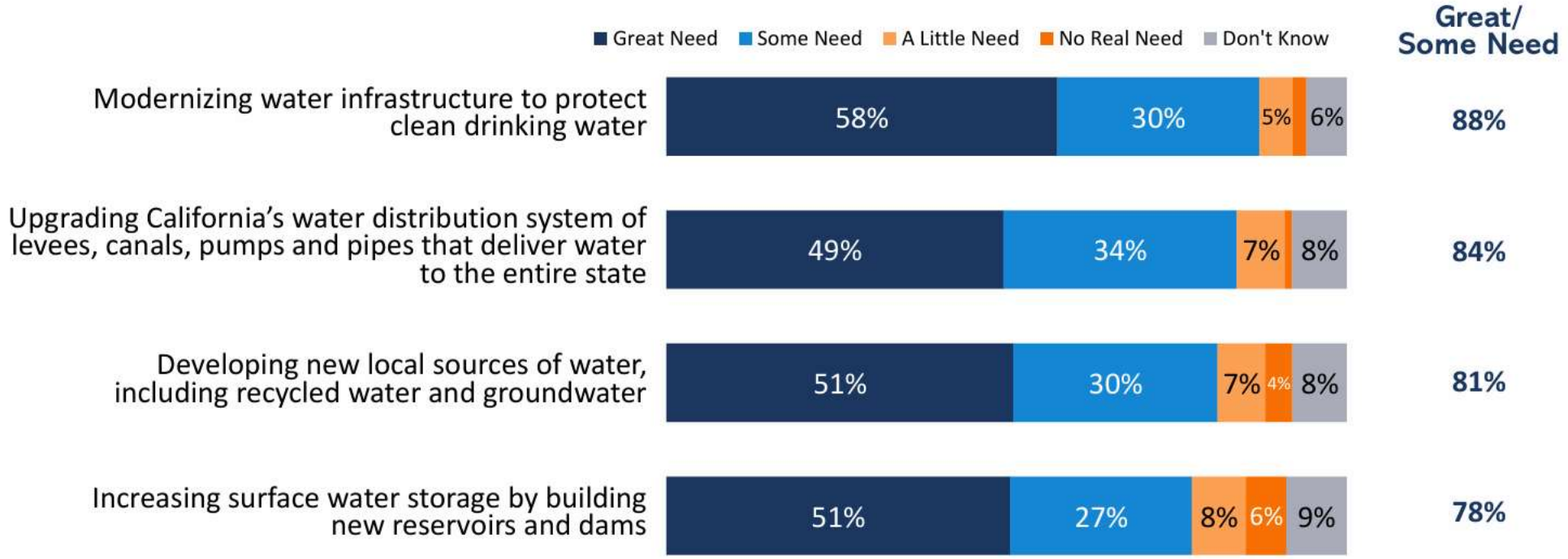
Q9. *Split Sample

Broad shares see a strong need to modernize water infrastructure.

Next, please consider this list of water infrastructure investments. For each one, please indicate if you think California has a great need, some need, a little need, or no real need to invest additional funding in that type of infrastructure.



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Q11.

Messaging in Favor of Safe and Reliable Water Supplies

Ranked by Very Convincing	
45%	**(HEALTH)** Reliable and resilient water infrastructure is essential to protecting public health. California must prepare its water systems to ensure that everyone has access to safe, clean water to drink, bathe, cook and more.
40%	**(AG)** Reliable water supplies are essential to protecting California's agriculture, which we all depend on for fresh food. Our next governor should make water supply and reliability a top priority.
39%	**(HOUSING)** California has a goal for 2.5 million more homes. As our state grows and changes, we need to ensure that we have sufficient and reliable water supplies to support housing and communities. Our next governor should make long-term water supply reliability for our population a priority.
39%	**(CLIMATE)** Climate change is already here, and already causing extreme conditions. California must modernize its water system to prepare for more extreme droughts, floods, and changing climate conditions.
35%	**(ENVIRONMENT)** Improving water reliability can help protect California's rivers, streams, and wetlands. Our next governor should work to protect water quality for our environment and future generations.
35%	**(DRINKING)** Nothing is more important than clean, safe water to drink — but too many Californians lack access to safe drinking water. Our next governor should ensure all Californians have safe drinking water.
33%	**(ECONOMY)** California's economy depends on reliable and affordable water systems — but inadequate water supplies put that at risk. California's next governor should make sure the state has the water infrastructure needed to support jobs and future economic growth.

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Q12. Next, please consider the following statements from people who believe that safe and reliable water supplies are critical to addressing California's goals for our communities, the economy, the environment, and public health. For each one, please indicate whether you find it very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not convincing as a reason to agree. If you do not believe the statement, you can indicate that instead.

Conclusions

- California voters strongly and broadly agree that “safe and reliable water supplies are critical to addressing California’s goals for our communities, the economy, the environment, and public health.”
  - They see safe and reliable water supplies as critical to agriculture, as well as for supporting manufacturing, increasing housing supply, and preparing for climate change.
- Broad shares support the state investing in improving water systems, preparing for drought and flooding, and helping keep water rates affordable.
  - This support cuts across all major demographic and geographic groups, including bipartisan backing.
  - Health benefits of clean water resonate especially strongly with Democrats, while the need for water to support agriculture connects with independents and Republicans.
- More than four in five see “great” or “some need” for funding to modernize water infrastructure.

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Next Steps

- ACWA Board to consider and adopt recommendations in early 2027
- ACWA will begin implementation, engage governor, administration, legislature
- Metropolitan to review Vision framework and recommendations for alignment with adopted 2027 Legislative Priorities and Principles

THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
1928