

Poll Briefing: The State of Public Opinion on Water

April 2025

Introduction

Environmental Polling Consortium Overview

The Environmental Polling Consortium (EPC) is the central hub for the environmental movement to coordinate, share, and execute public opinion research in order to shift attitudes and advance our shared advocacy goals.

By collecting, distributing, and interpreting public opinion research about environmental issues, we work to make this research more accessible and to democratize data across the environmental movement. Learn more at environmentalpollingconsortium.org.

What We Offer

- Weekly email roundups
- Resource + polling library
- Poll briefings + webinars
- Summary memos + decks
- Original research
- Consultations

Today's Agenda

Introduction & Overview of Water Attitudes

David Gold & Leah Zamesnik, Environmental Polling Consortium

Polling on Resilience, Infrastructure and Drinking Water

Sarah Bucci & Nicole Lampe, The Water Hub

Water Messages That Work

Sinjin Eberle, American Rivers Action Fund

Followed by Q&A

About this Briefing

- If you have any questions during the presentations, please put them in the Q&A. We'll have time at the end to discuss them.
- This webinar is being recorded. The recording and slide decks will be shared in a follow-up email.
- This briefing includes data from public polls as well as 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) polling. Attendees should only use the data that is shared here in ways that are consistent with your organization's guidelines.

Water Attitudes: Overview

Why the Polling on Water Matters & How to Use It

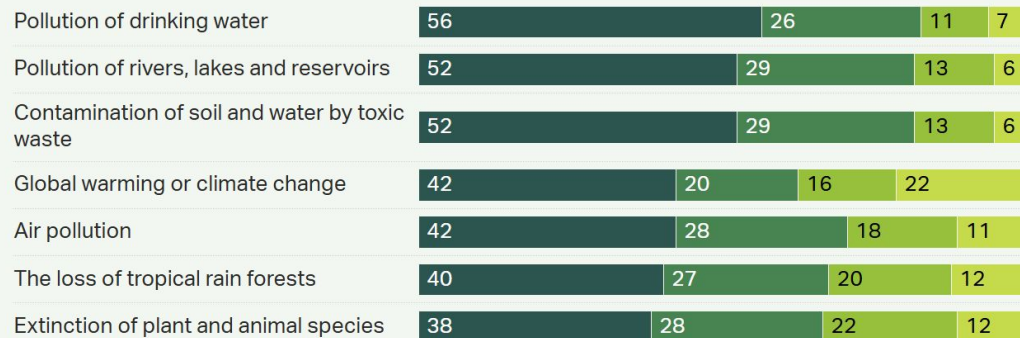
- **Clean water consistently ranks as Americans' number one environmental priority.** This means that we can raise the salience of many environmental threats by connecting them to water pollution.
- **Polling (and message testing) allow us to identify specific frames and language choices that make messages about water resonate even more.**
- **Additionally, public opinion research helps us identify key audiences that our messages about water are most likely to influence and mobilize.** This includes audiences that care about clean water but are not moved by messaging on other environmental topics (e.g., climate skeptics.)

Clean drinking water consistently ranks as Americans' top environmental priority

Drinking Water Safety Tops Environmental Worries in the U.S.

I'm going to read you a list of environmental problems. As I read each one, please tell me if you personally worry about this problem a great deal, a fair amount, only a little or not at all.

■ % Great deal ■ % Fair amount ■ % Only a little ■ % Not at all

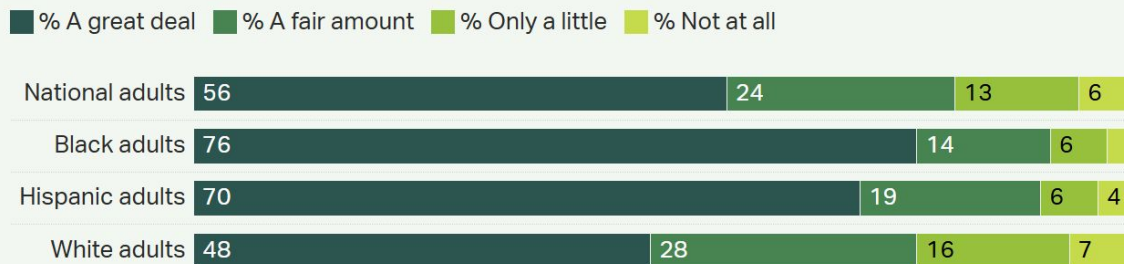


Source: [Gallup](#), March 2024

Water pollution is a particularly acute concern among Black and Hispanic Americans, majorities of whom worry “a great deal” about it

Level of Worry About Pollution of Drinking Water, by Racial Group

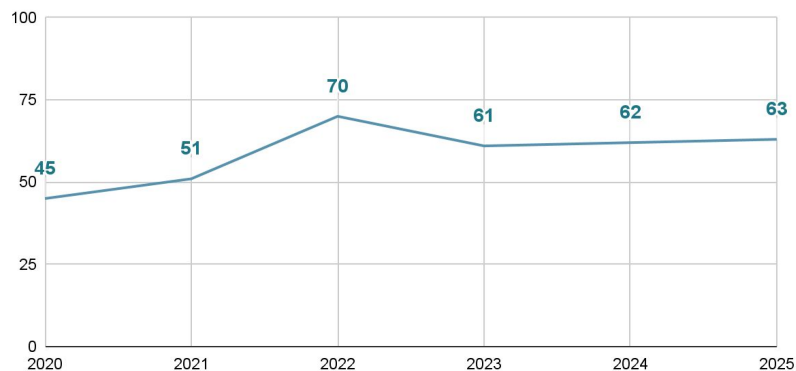
I'm going to read you a list of environmental problems. As I read each one, please tell me if you personally worry about this problem a great deal, a fair amount, only a little or not at all.
How much do you personally worry about pollution of drinking water?



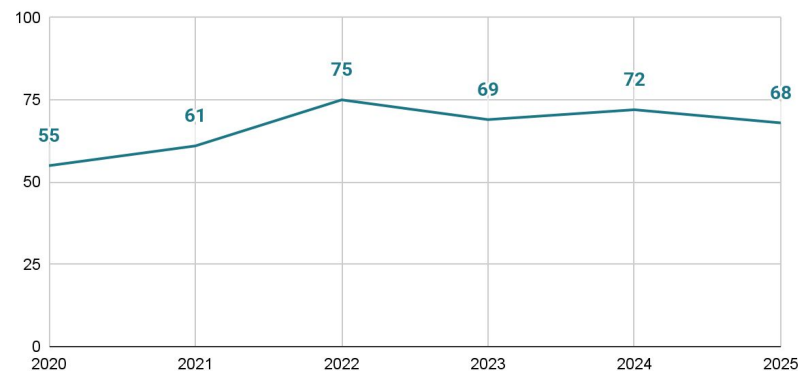
Source: [Gallup](#), May 2023

Water is also a highly salient issue in the West, where concerns about water availability have surged in recent years

% Saying that inadequate water supplies are an "extremely" or "very" serious problem in their state



% Saying that the low level of water in rivers is an "extremely" or "very" serious problem in their state



Source: [Colorado College Conservation in the West Poll](#), 2020-2025
(AZ, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, UT, & WY)

In the 2024 election, the Biden-Harris administration’s actions to clean up drinking water ranked as VP Harris’s most popular environmental accomplishment

Below is a list of actions Vice President Kamala Harris has taken. For each, please say whether you support or oppose that action:

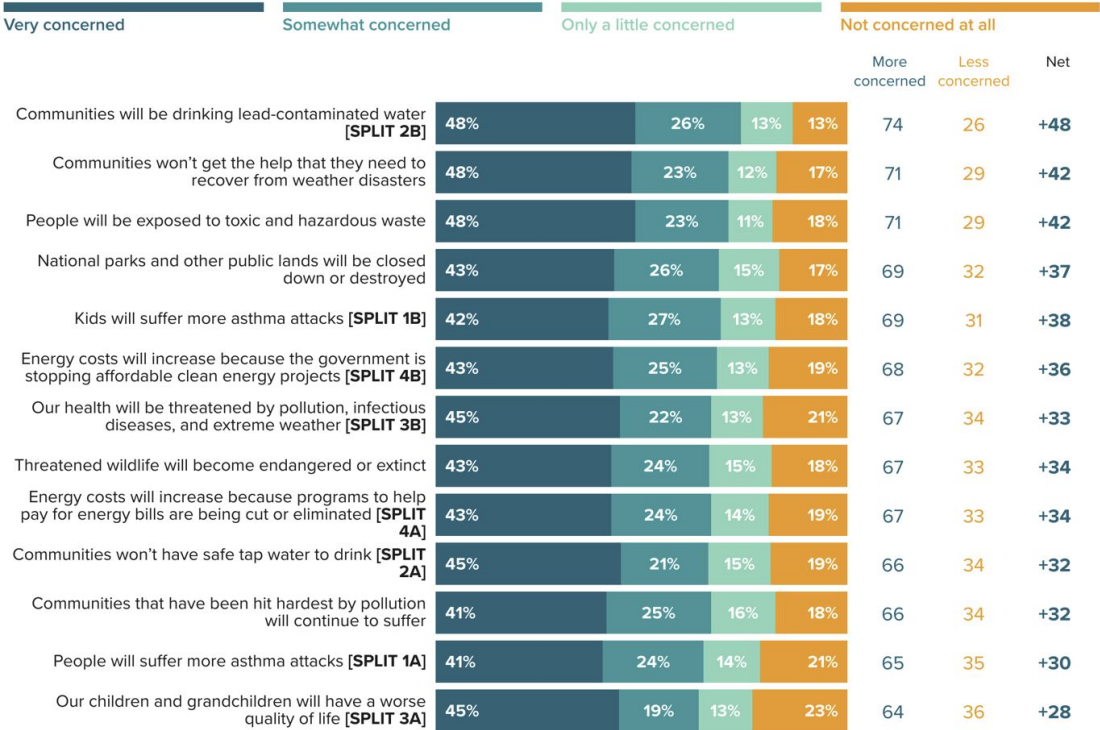
All likely voters				
	All likely voters	Democrat	Independent / Third party	Republican
Supported strengthening the Clean Air and Water Acts, passed a law to replace 100% of lead pipes, and announced the first-ever limits on cancer-causing "forever chemicals" to protect drinking water	72%	91%	71%	54%
Took an oil company to court for potential criminal violations after an oil pipeline spill poisoned coastal waters	69%	90%	67%	47%
Passed a clean energy plan that has created over 300,000 new good-paying jobs across the U.S., the majority of which don't require a college degree	68%	90%	66%	44%
Supported legislation that would limit air pollution from vehicles and power plants and ensure communities have clean air to breathe	66%	89%	63%	42%
Implemented a national plan to support marginalized communities that have been polluted by the oil and gas industry, including a \$600 million grant to fund environmental justice projects across the country	65%	87%	59%	42%
Passed the most ambitious climate and clean energy plan in U.S. history to triple the production of clean energy, cut carbon pollution by up to 41% by 2030, and save Americans up to \$38 billion in electricity costs	64%	91%	62%	37%
Led an investigation into Exxon for its actions to mislead the American public about its awareness of and role in worsening climate change	61%	84%	57%	37%
Opposed plans by MAGA Republicans to gut protections for clean air and water and repeal clean energy investments	58%	83%	57%	29%

Source: [Climate Power + Data for Progress](#), July 2024

We recently found that contaminated drinking water also ranked among voters' greatest environmental concerns about federal funding cuts

Below are some potential impacts of federal government funding cuts or freezes to some programs and services.

Please indicate how concerned you are, if at all, about each of these impacts.



Source: EPC + Combined Defense 3.0, Mar. 2025

Thank You
