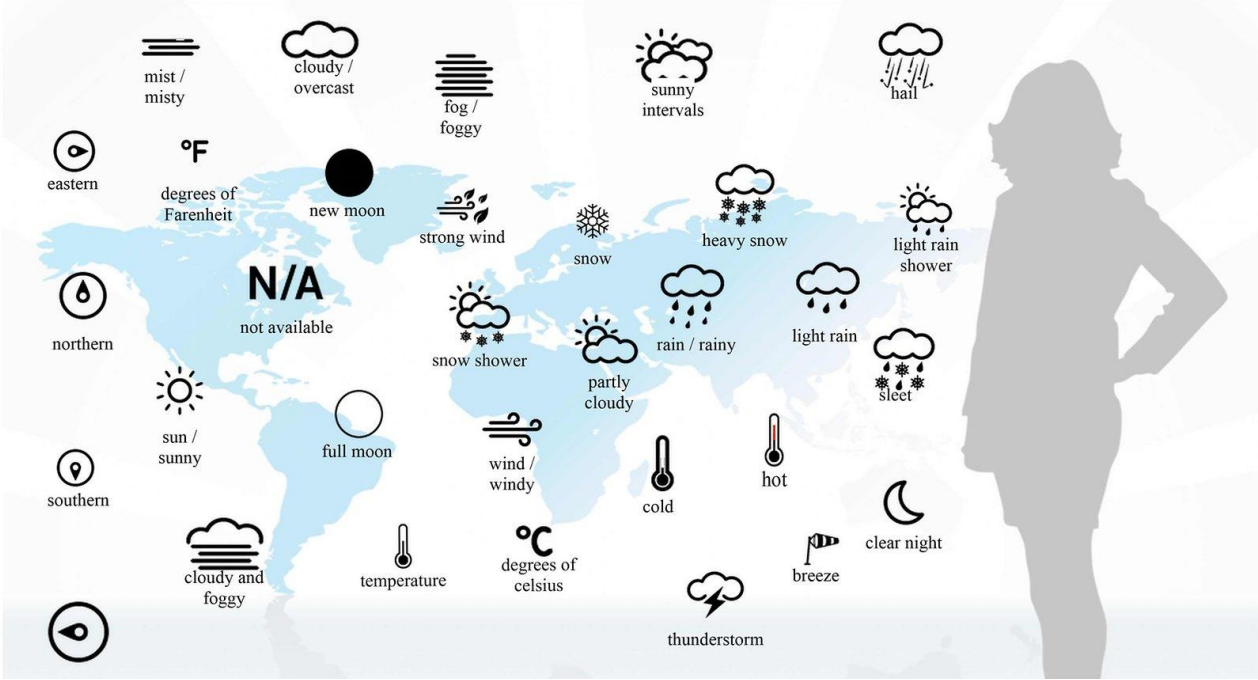# Voter views on water

The Water Hub
April 1, 2025

About the Water Hub

Communications support for the movement:

- Research, tools, and training
- Press and digital strategy
- Open-source creative content
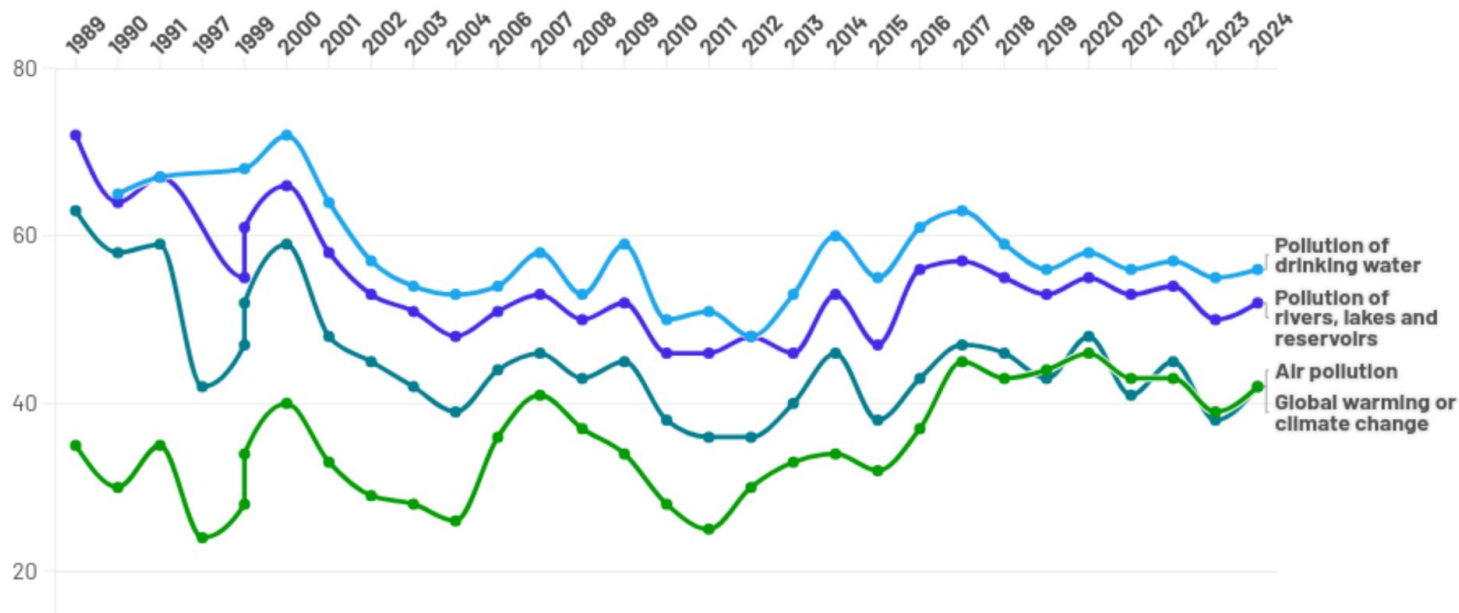- Hands-on help with writing, design, and pitching

Polling: roadmap or weather report

Water tops environmental concerns

Historical trend: % of voters worried a great deal about...

Source: Gallup, March 2024

Big picture water views

There's strong support that spans political parties for:

- Delivering safe drinking water and sanitation
- Keeping rivers and lakes clean and healthy
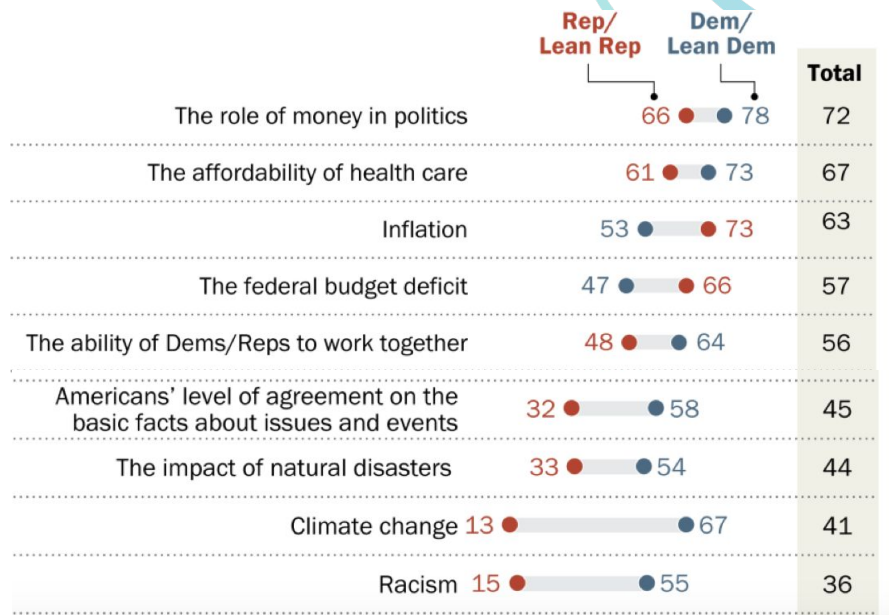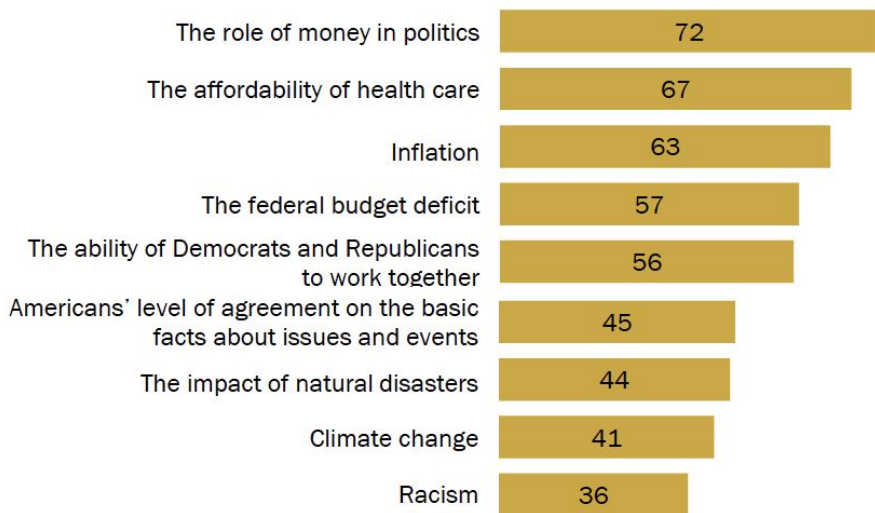- Helping communities prepare for disasters
- Working with nature

Big picture water views

In general, voters:

- Are concerned about poorly planned development
- Want polluters to pay
- Think we can balance private property rights and the public good
- Don't buy that we have to choose between the economy and environment

BUT, it's not top of mind

Left bar chart:

Issue	Total
The role of money in politics	72
The affordability of health care	67
Inflation	63
The federal budget deficit	57
The ability of Democrats and Republicans to work together	56
Americans' level of agreement on the basic facts about issues and events	45
The impact of natural disasters	44
Climate change	41
Racism	36

Right chart:

	Rep/Lean Rep	Dem/Lean Dem	Total
The role of money in politics	66	78	72
The affordability of health care	61	73	67
Inflation	73	53	63
The federal budget deficit	66	47	57
The ability of Dems/Reps to work together	48	64	56
Americans' level of agreement on the basic facts about issues and events	32	58	45
The impact of natural disasters	33	54	44
Climate change	13	67	41
Racism	15	55	36

Source: Pew Research, February 2025

Unless we're talking about infrastructure...

Selected   Not selected

Drinking water and sewage
Renewable energy infrastructure
The electric grid
Oil and gas pipelines
New housing
Road networks
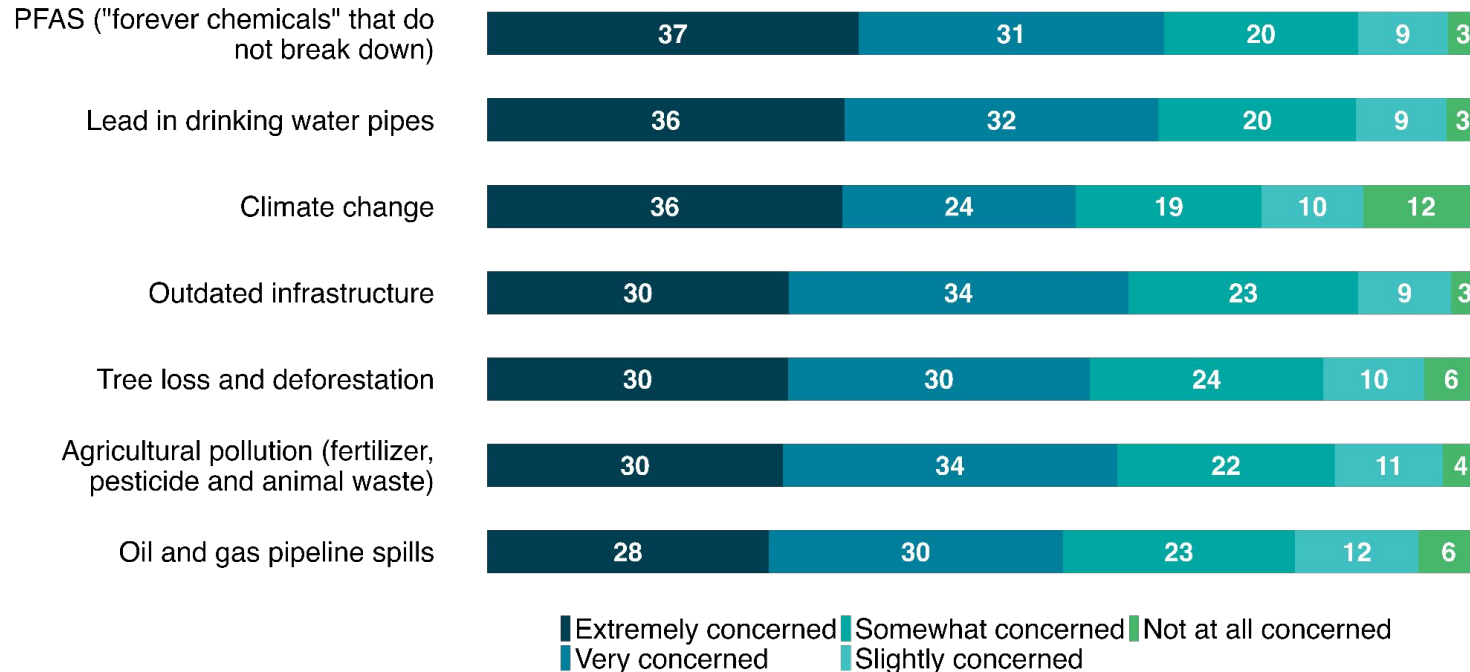Flood defenses
Railroads
High speed broadband
Airports
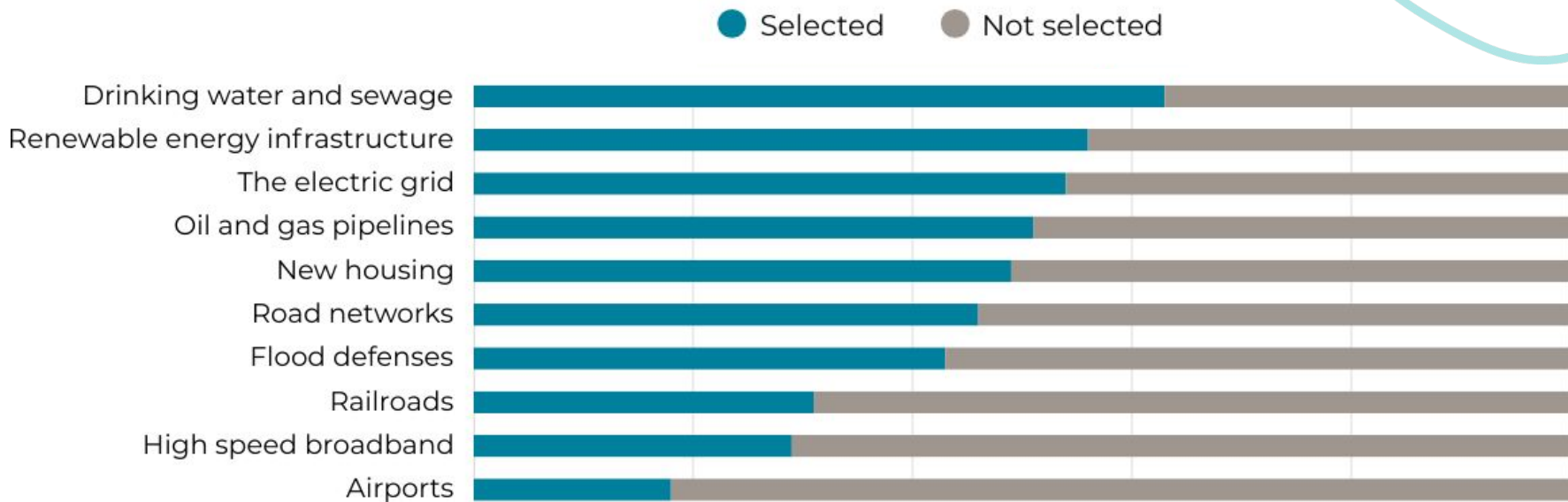
Source: Water Hub National Poll. Oct. 2024

Contaminants are close to home

How concerned are you, if at all, that the following issues threaten the safety of drinking water in the United States?
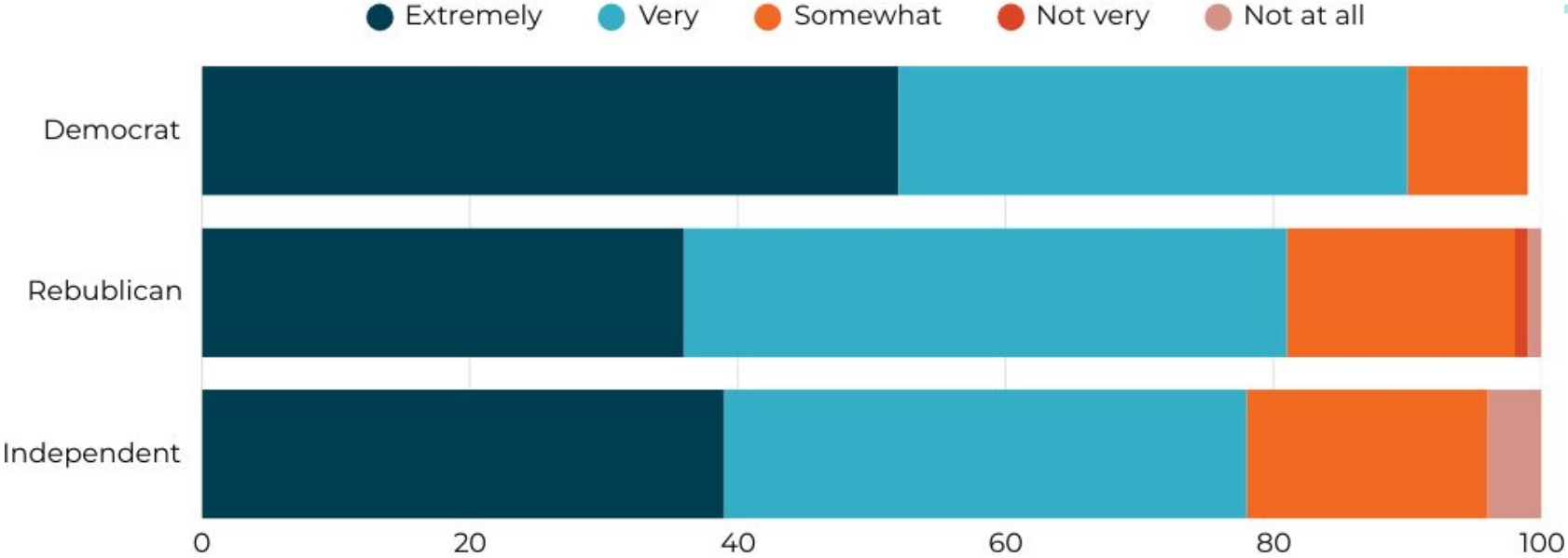
	Extremely concerned	Very concerned	Somewhat concerned	Slightly concerned	Not at all concerned
PFAS ("forever chemicals" that do not break down)	37	31	20	9	3
Lead in drinking water pipes	36	32	20	9	3
Climate change	36	24	19	10	12
Outdated infrastructure	30	34	23	9	3
Tree loss and deforestation	30	30	24	10	6
Agricultural pollution (fertilizer, pesticide and animal waste)	30	34	22	11	4
Oil and gas pipeline spills	28	30	23	12	6

Legend:
- Extremely concerned
- Very concerned
- Somewhat concerned
- Slightly concerned
- Not at all concerned

Water makes the case for conservation

Which are the most important reasons to protect U.S. lands and waters? Please rank your top 3.

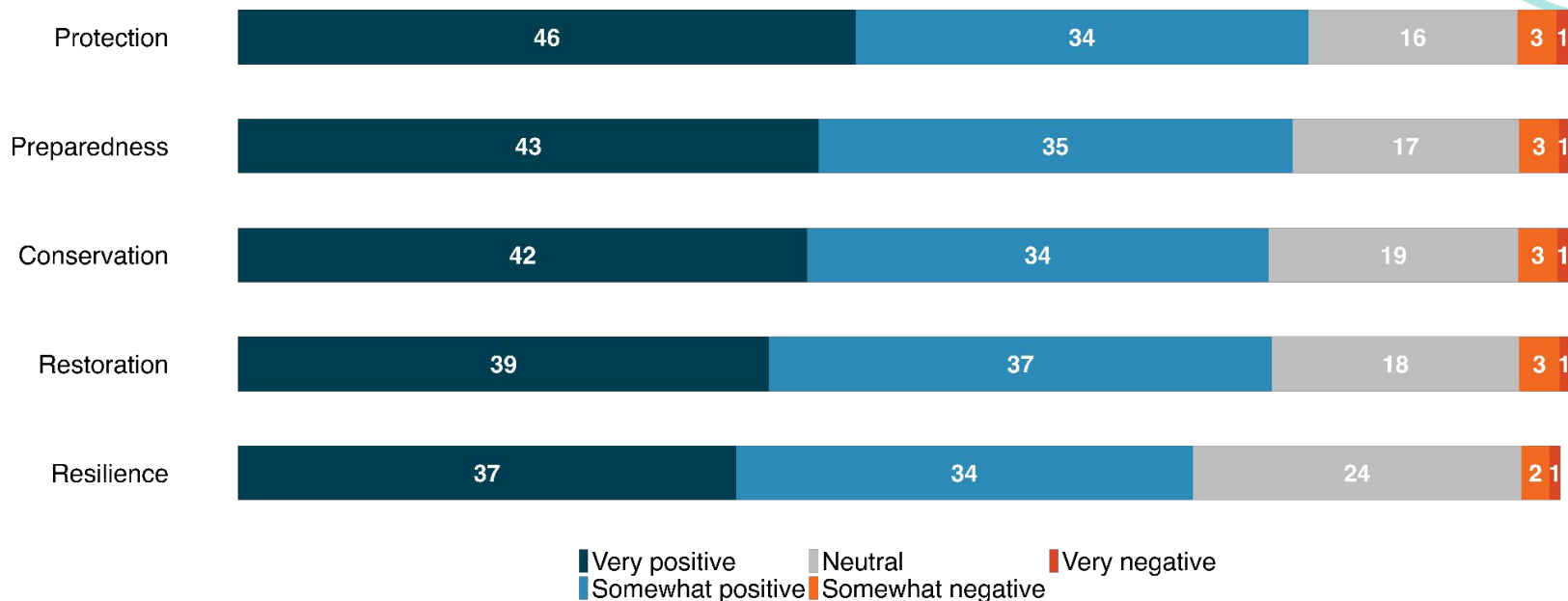| Answer	Total Score	Rank
Protecting the sources of drinking water	3088	1
Reducing carbon pollution to slow climate change	1438	2
Protecting communities from flooding, drought, and other disasters	1411	3
Providing habitat for fish and wildlife	1176	4
Protecting clean-flowing rivers	1140	5
Protecting threatened species of plants and animals	1051	6
Increasing access to nature for communities	561	7

Preparedness is popular!

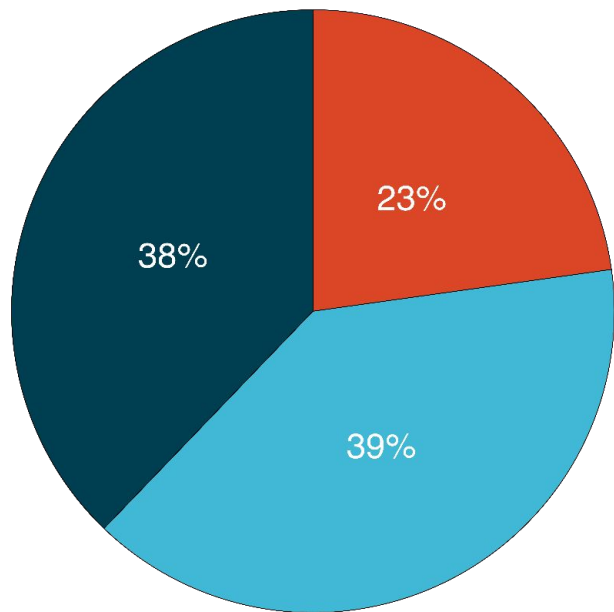How important is it for communities to invest in disaster resilience?

Simple terms trump jargon

Please rate how you feel about each of the following terms:

Term	Very positive	Somewhat positive	Neutral	Somewhat negative	Very negative
Protection	46	34	16	3	1
Preparedness	43	35	17	3	1
Conservation	42	34	19	3	1
Restoration	39	37	18	3	1
Resilience	37	34	24	2	1

Legend: Very positive · Somewhat positive · Neutral · Somewhat negative · Very negative
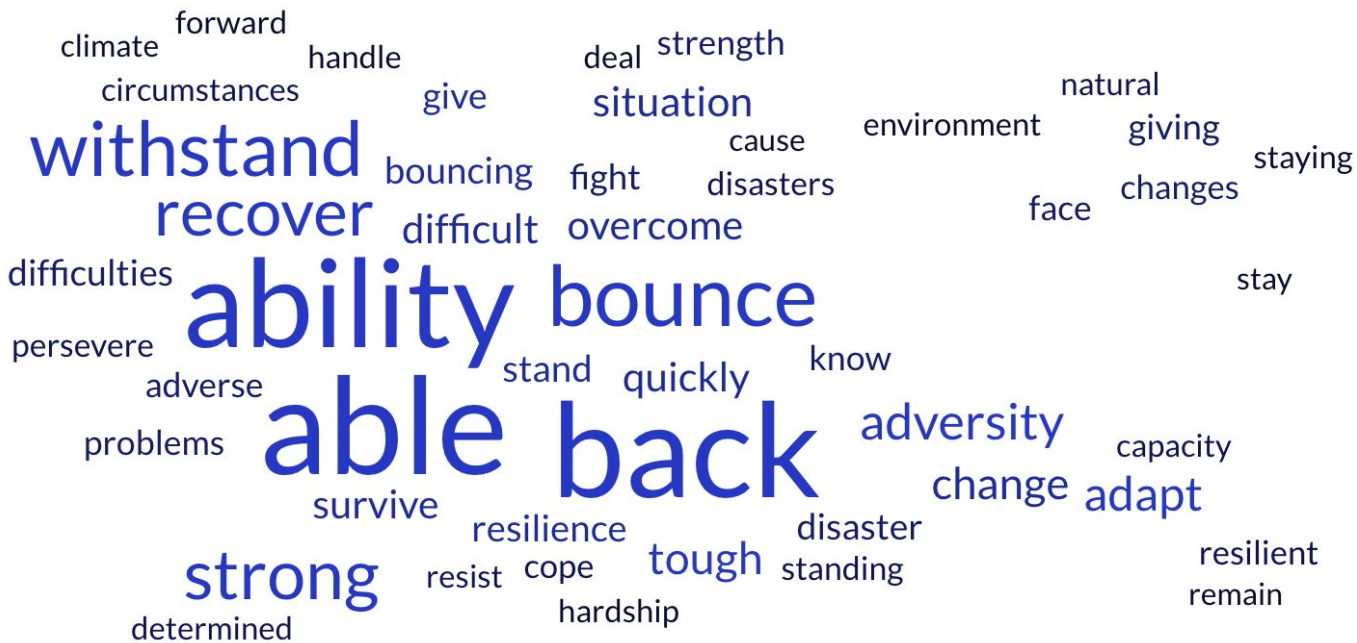
Speaking of resilience

Which description best matches what "resilience" means to you?
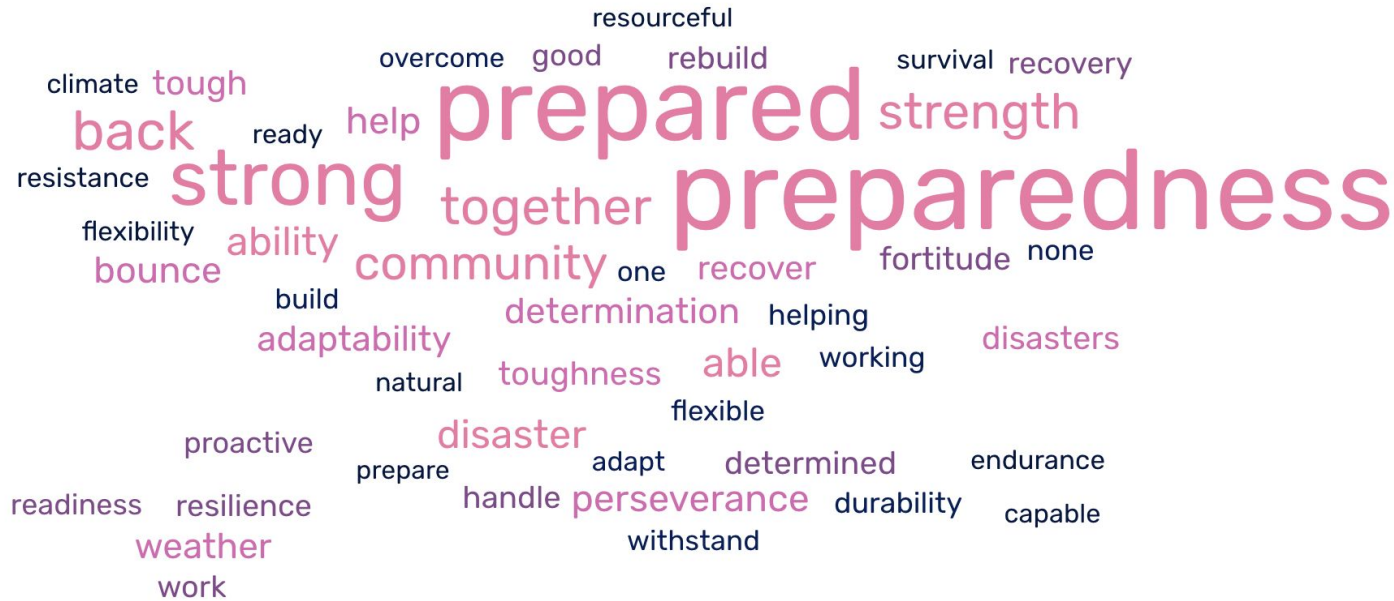

23%

38%

39%

- ■ Recovering stronger after a crisis or disaster
- ■ Bouncing back to how things were before a crisis or disaster
- ■ Strong or healthy enough to avoid a crisis or disaster

What does resilience mean to you?

forward
climate
handle
circumstances
give
deal
situation
strength
natural
environment
giving
staying
withstand
bouncing
fight
disasters
cause
changes
face
recover
difficult
overcome
stay
difficulties
ability
bounce
persevere
stand
quickly
know
adverse
problems
able
back
adversity
capacity
change
adapt
survive
disaster
resilience
tough
strong
resist
cope
standing
resilient
remain
determined
hardship

How else would you use to describe a community's ability to handle disasters?

resourceful
overcome   good   rebuild   survival   recovery
climate   tough
back   ready   help   prepared   strength
resistance   strong   together   preparedness
flexibility   ability
bounce   community   one   recover   fortitude   none
build   determination   helping
adaptability   able   working   disasters
natural   toughness   flexible
proactive   disaster   endurance
prepare   adapt   determined
readiness   resilience   handle   perseverance   durability   capable
weather   withstand
work

Voters ❤️ natural climate solutions

- 86% of Democrats + 79% of Republicans support "**planting trees in cities** to provide shade, reduce heat + lower energy

- 89% of Democrats + 78% of Republicans support "**protecting grasslands** that support wildlife and improve water quality"
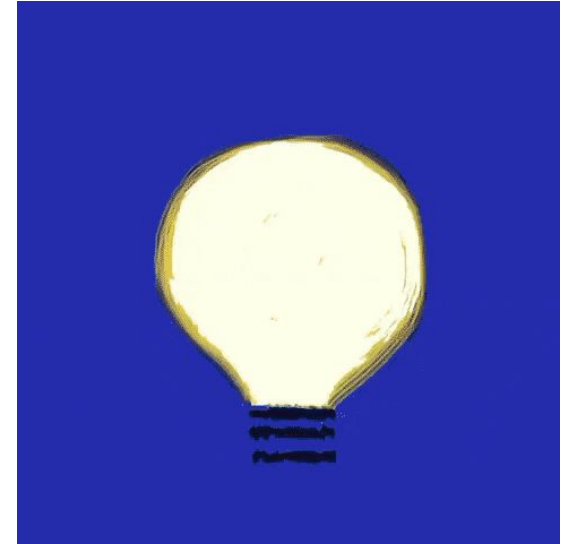
Source: US Nature for Climate Survey, May 2023

Polling ➡ Messaging

- Start with home, heart, health
    - Safe drinking water and sanitation
    - Disaster preparedness and prevention
- Describe specific projects and their benefit
    - Lead pipe replacement to keep kids healthy
    - Green streets that soak up rain
    - Coastal marshes that buffer cities against storms
- Localize and tailor to your audience