

WATER + US:

HOW WE THINK, FEEL, AND TAKE ACTION ON WATER

the
WATER
MAIN

APM
RESEARCH
LAB



In most U.S. towns, when it rains, where does most of the water that goes into storm drains end up?

(A) Rivers, lakes, and wetlands

(B) Water treatment plants

(C) Into the ground

(D) Don't know

Which one of the following statements is true about wetlands, such as swamps or marshes?

(A) They are a renewable source of electricity

(B) They help filter water and prevent flooding; or

(C) They pollute nearby lakes and rivers

Thinking about the thousands of chemicals that could contaminate drinking water, about how many are regulated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency?

(A) About 100

(B) About 3,000

(C) Just about all of them

(D) Don't know



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& Instagram

Lauren Humpert
Project Coordinator

lhumpert@americanpublicmedia.org



www.apmresearchlab.org

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Craig Helmstetter, PhD
Managing Partner

chelmstetter@apmresearchlab.org

WATER + US:

To better understand Americans' public will for water, the Water Main partnered with the APM Research Lab to conduct the first nationally representative survey designed to measure Americans' knowledge, connection, concern, and action related to water issues facing the country.

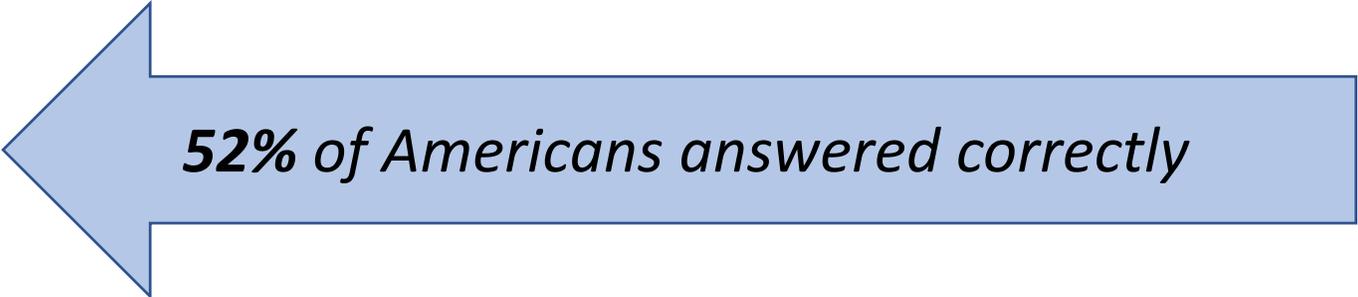




KNOW

In most U.S. towns, when it rains, where does most of the water that goes into storm drains end up?

(A) Rivers, lakes, and wetlands



52% of Americans answered correctly

(B) Water treatment plants

(C) Into the ground

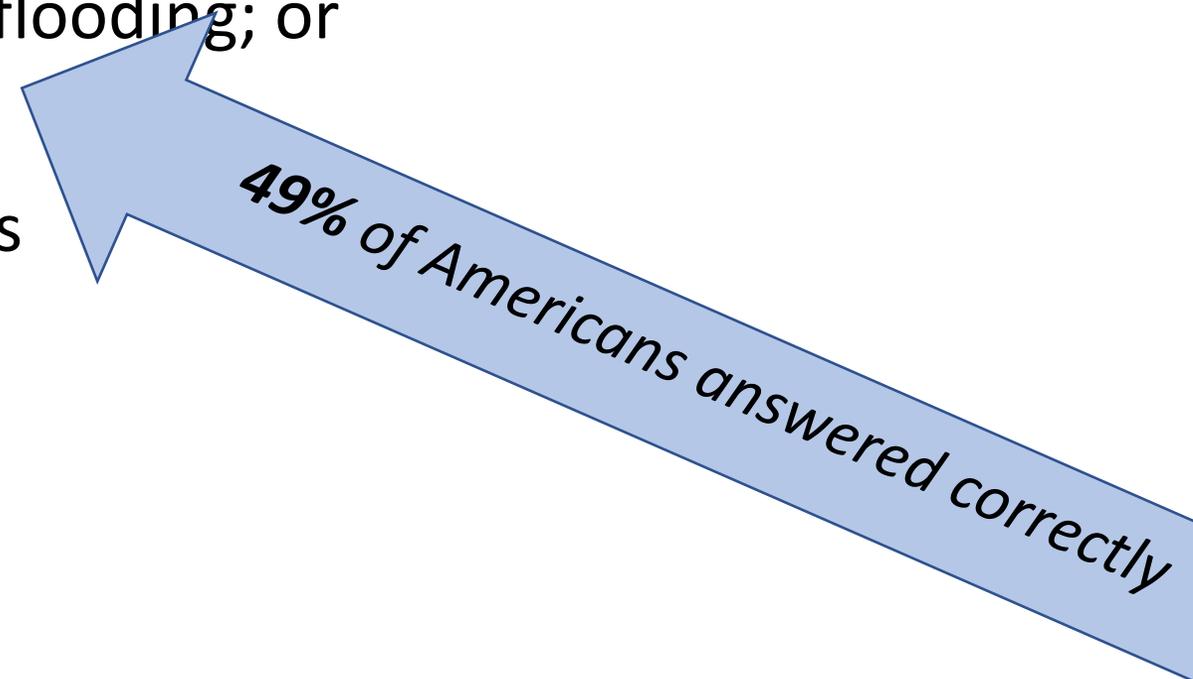
(D) Don't know

Which one of the following statements is true about wetlands, such as swamps or marshes?

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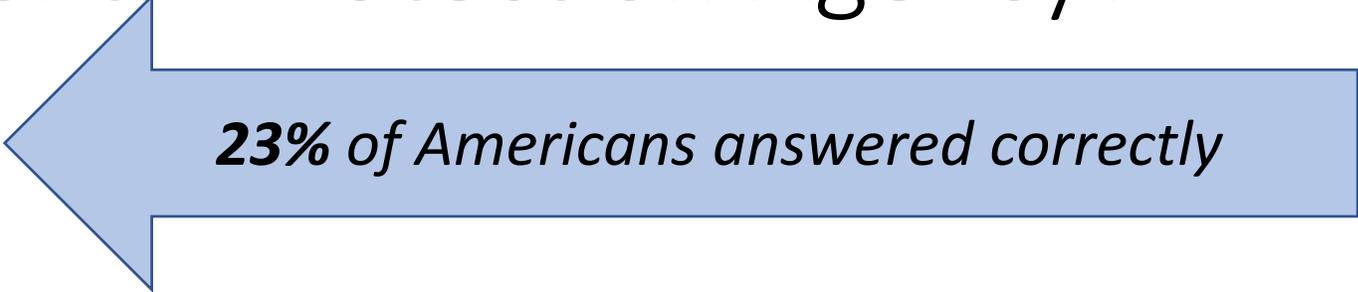
(C) They pollute nearby lakes and rivers



49% of Americans answered correctly

Thinking about the thousands of chemicals that could contaminate drinking water, about how many are regulated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency?

(A) About 100



23% of Americans answered correctly

(B) About 3,000

(C) Just about all of them

(D) Don't know

%

Percentage of people who correctly answered each water knowledge question.



Knowledge Scale: 48%

On average, people correctly answered 4.8 out of 10 questions about water.

Americans don't have deep knowledge of water issues.

So ???
What

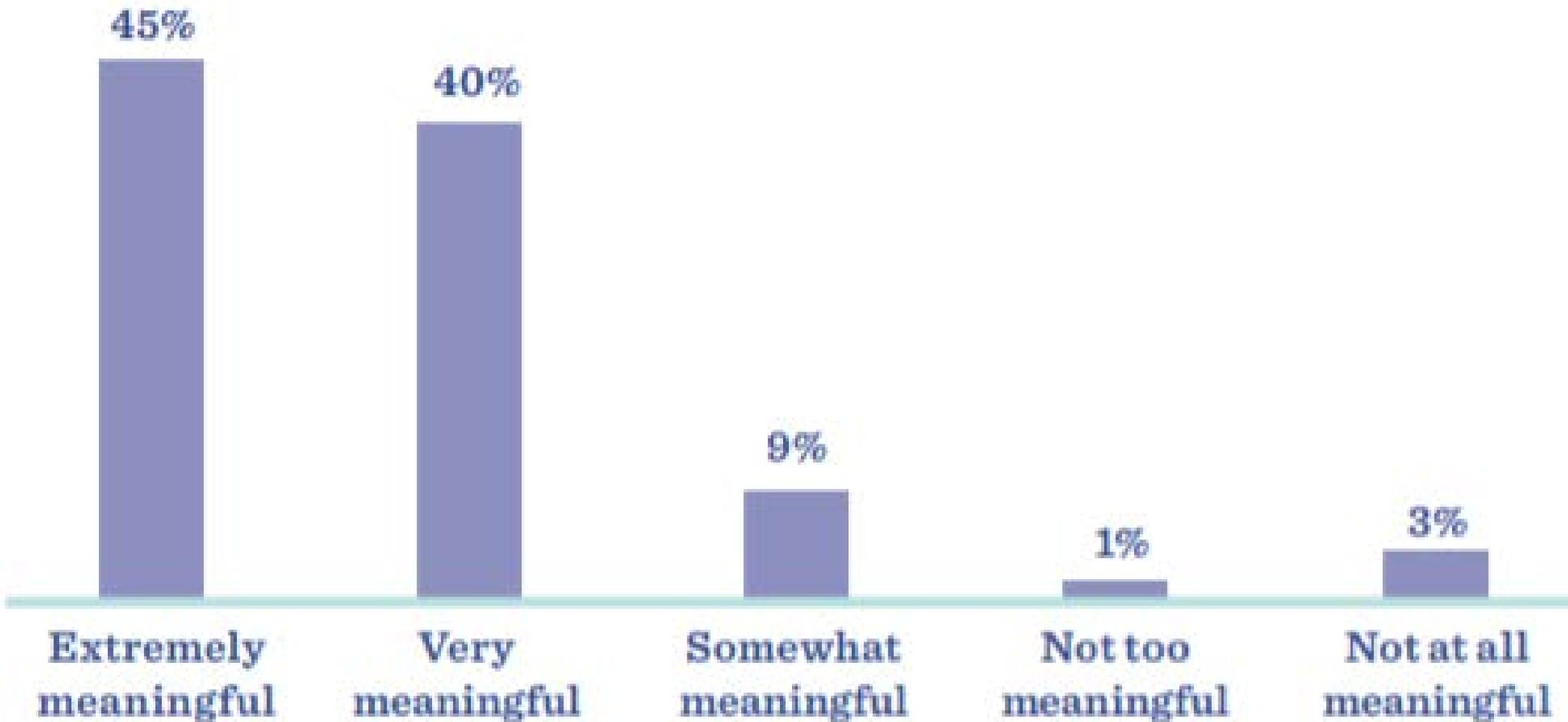
Traditionally, scientific and environmental organizations have focused on educating others about water. And yet, this study shows that people can and do care about water, and are concerned for its future, even without deep knowledge.

CONNECT



85%

of people indicate that water plays a meaningful role in their life.





Specific Body of Water

About half of Americans indicate that they feel a personal connection with a specific lake, river, or ocean.

Recreation

62% indicate that they spend free time in or around bodies of water at least once per month during the warmer months of the year.



A vast majority of people say that water plays a meaningful role in their life.

**So ???
What**

Americans feel connected to water, transcending traditional societal fault lines—proving that water is one of very few universal connectors and highlighting the vast opportunity for translating that connection into action.



CONCERN

Drinking Water Safety

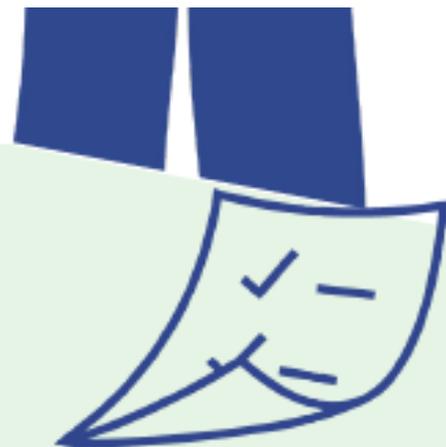
55% worry about the safety of the drinking water from their tap at home.

Black and Latino Americans (39% each) are more worried than Whites (28%) about the safety of the drinking water in their home.



Affordability

Half of Americans with annual incomes under \$25K worry that they may not be able to afford their water bill over the next two years, along with 32% of those with incomes \$25K-\$50K.



Water Regulation

About half of people feel there is too little government regulation protecting water, and another third think there is “about the right amount”.

- Black Americans (62%) are more likely to feel that the government is doing too little to protect water than Whites (48%) or Latinos (44%).
- 59% of Democrats indicate that the government is doing too little, compared with 41% of Republicans. However, when coupled together, over 80% of Republicans feel that the government is either doing too little (41%) or about the right amount of regulation (40%).

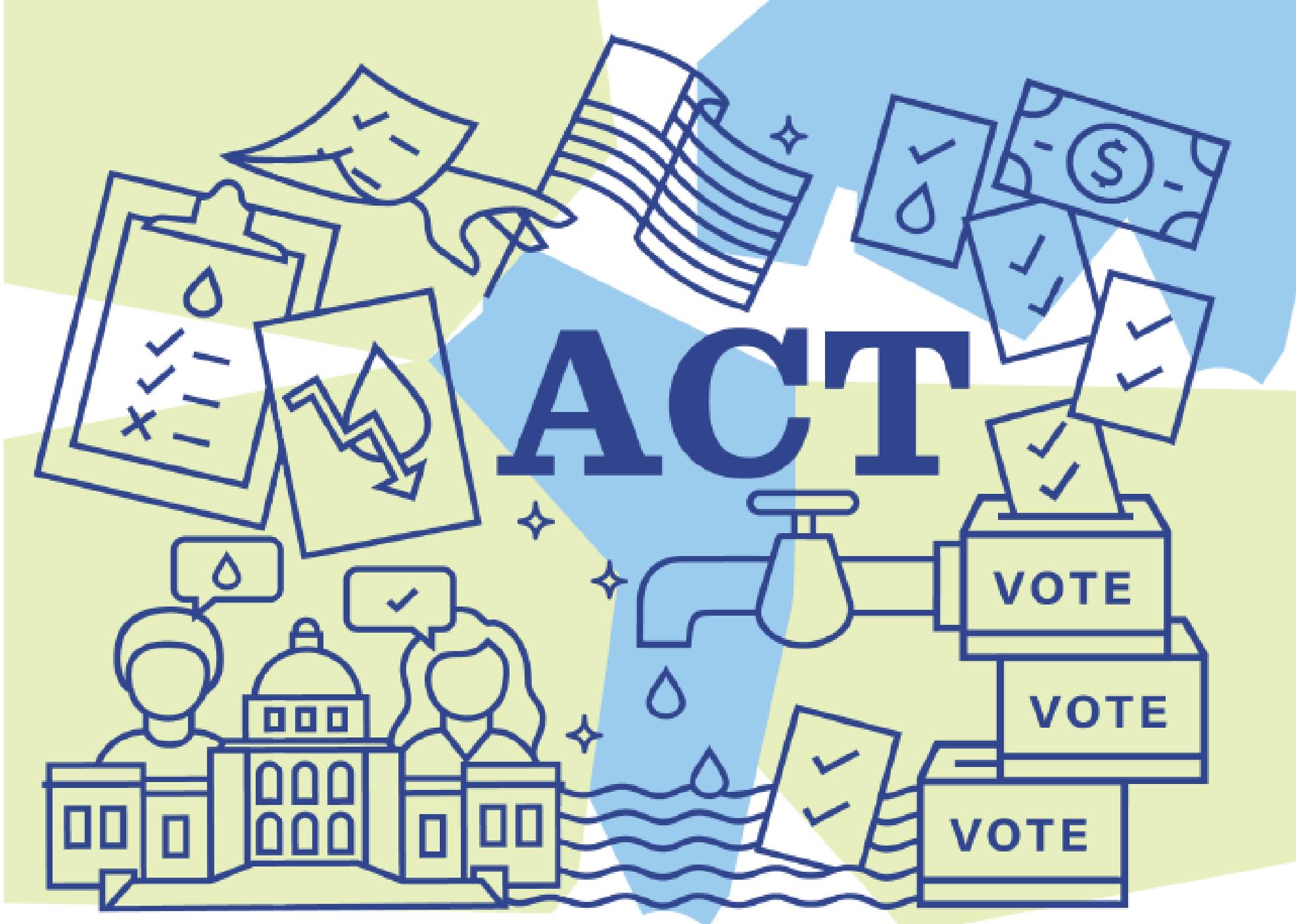


People share high levels of concern for water.

So ???
What

Despite not having high levels of knowledge about water, people living in the U.S. are very concerned about the future of our water resources. While this concern cuts across demographic categories, marginalized communities are acutely aware of issues facing our water resources.

ACT



We asked

“When deciding who to vote for, how important is it to you that a candidate says that taking care of water resources is a priority for them?”

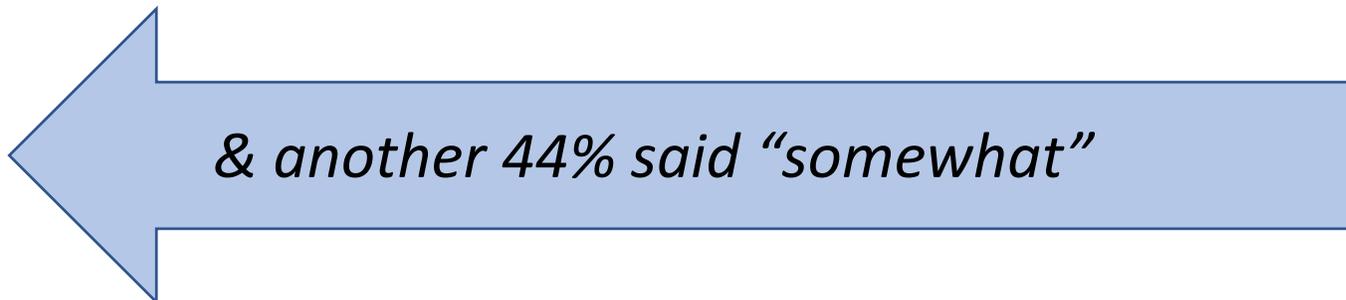
What proportion of *Republicans* answered “Very Important”

(A) 2%

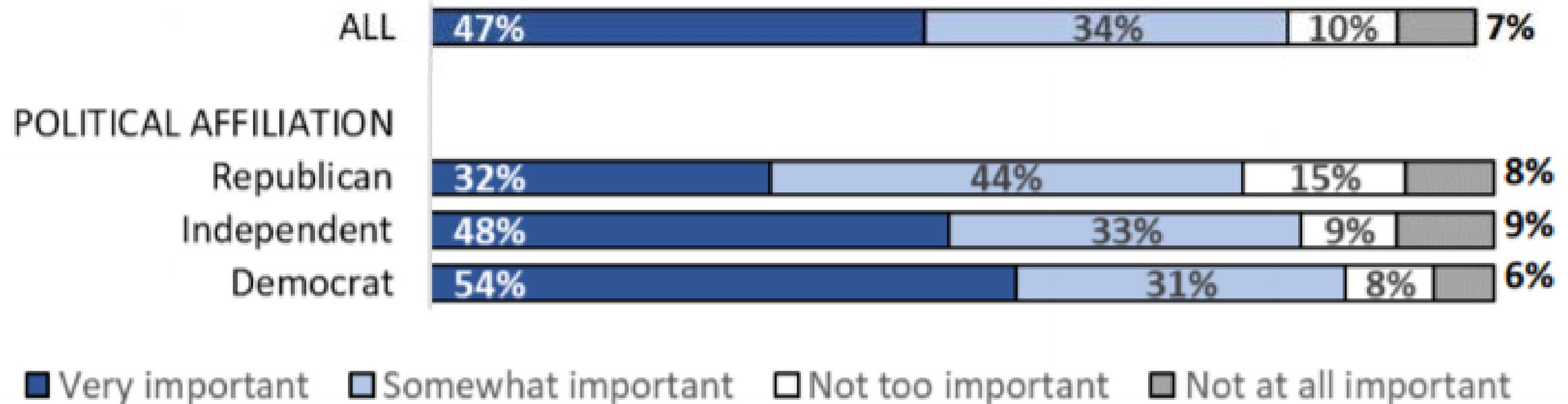
(B) 12%

(C) 32%

(D) 72%



Taking care of water resources is an important voting issue for most American adults; especially so for low-income Americans, Latinos, women, and Democrats



72% report doing things in their daily lives to conserve water or protect water from pollution



...but when asked about the most meaningful actions they take most were actions that that would have only marginal impacts:

“I bathe as fast as I can.” – 65-year-old woman from Massachusetts

“I am very conservative about brushing my teeth, I don’t really use water just the toothpaste.”
– 21-year-old man from Rhode Island

“I use a full load instead of small loads in washing clothes.” – 73-year-old woman from Missouri

“I had my yard covered with rocks and I don't water my yard.” – 94-year-old man from New Mexico

“I recycle plastic and don’t flush the toilet too much.” – 24-year-old man from Florida

“I don't dump garbage on the ocean or streets since sooner or later it will end up on the ocean anyways.” – 51-year-old man from California

“I do not buy water bottles if I can bring my own bottle from home.”
– 23-year-old woman from Arizona

How often do you share information with others about water and water-related issues?

Proportion among the American public

(A) Nearly every day

7%

(B) At least once a week

15%

(C) At least once a month

16%

(D) A few times per year

26%

(A) Never

34%

Time & Money

- Only about 1 in 5 say they have contributed money or volunteered for an organization that works on water issues.
- That is true for both Republicans, Democrats, and Independents alike.

A majority of Americans report that they are taking some action to protect water in their daily lives.

Still, our actions do not match the scale of the problems. Most people report actions that focus on their immediate, individual impact on water.

So ???
What

We need to focus all that energy toward action that matters.

What else would you like us to address?

- The survey results and the survey process itself.
- What are the findings?
- What was the surprising result that you did not expect?
- How did you hope the results would be used?
- What can we (Met Council, Water Suppliers, LGUs) do with this new information to do our jobs?
- How did you design this study?
- How much time went into the different phases of the project?
 - Question creation?
 - Surveying?
 - Data Analysis?
 - Graphic Design?
 - Social Media?
 - Radio Stories?
- The survey story/science communication.
- How did the survey become a story to share with the public?
- How did you decide on a target audience?
- Did you have graphic designers in-house? How did you know who to work with?
- How did you design the associated art and infographics?
- What advice can you give to water professionals/technicians/scientists that want to shape their own story to share?
- If you could run a science communication basic training, what would you say are essential to the process?



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@thewatermain on Twitter, Facebook,
& Instagram

Lauren Humpert
Project Coordinator

lhumpert@americanpublicmedia.org



www.apmresearchlab.org

@apmresearch on Twitter, Facebook,
Instagram, & LinkedIn

Craig Helmstetter, PhD
Managing Partner

chelmstetter@apmresearchlab.org

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