

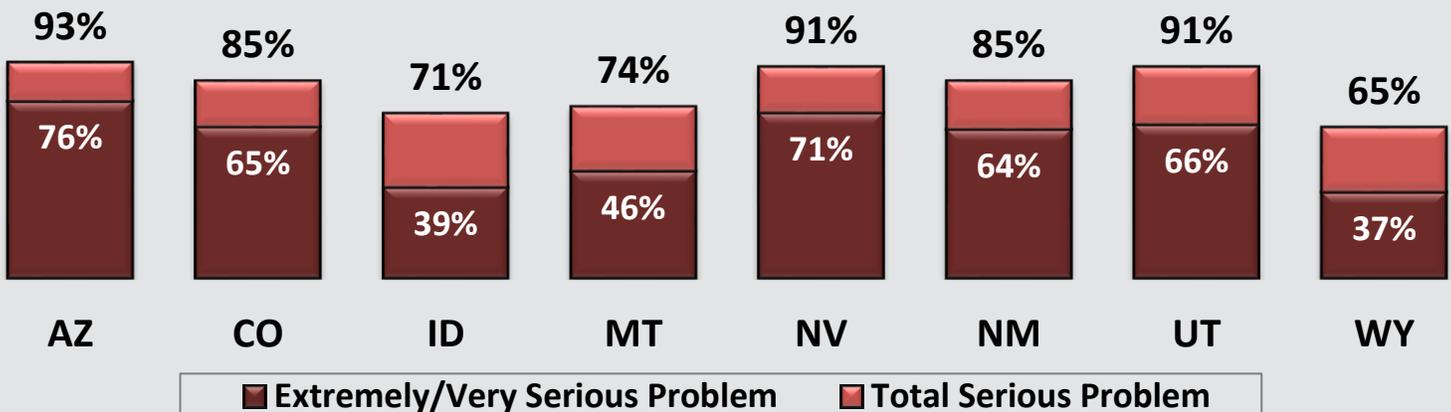
Water in the West

Water continues to be an issue of great concern to Westerners. Virtually all voters say water levels and supply are serious problems, with down-stream Colorado River Compact States expressing the most concern. Water quality and pollution are also considered serious problems, with concern about microplastics and pollution of rivers, lakes, and streams reaching all-time highs this year. Additionally, the problem of pollution from infrastructure and landfills is of particular concern among voters of color and in urban and suburban areas.



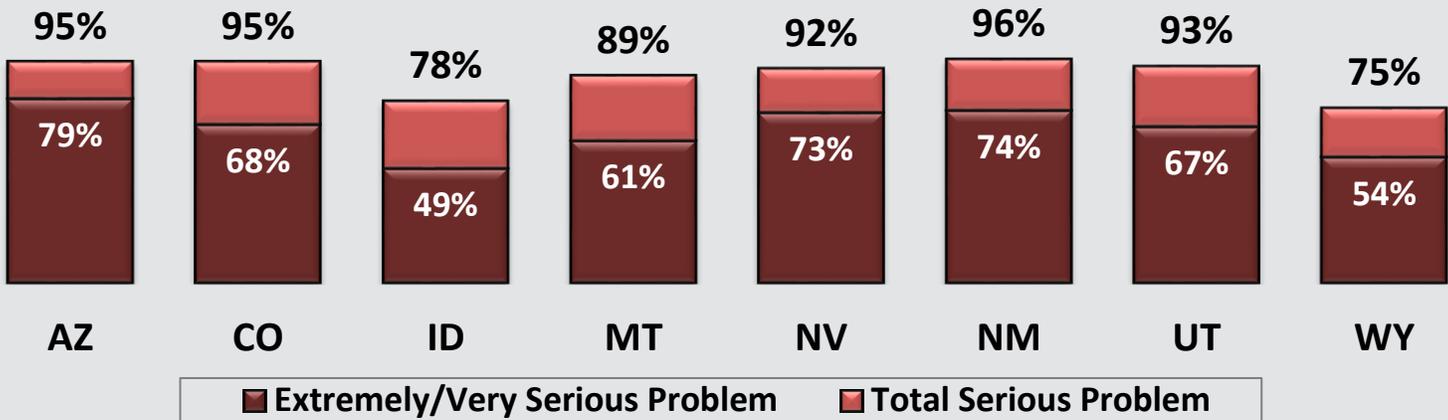
Westerners continue to be highly concerned about inadequate water supplies. Almost nine-in-ten voters (87 percent) say inadequate water supply is a serious problem in their state, with almost two-thirds (66 percent) saying it an “extremely” or “very” serious problem. Not surprisingly, inadequate water supply is of most concern in some of the down-stream Colorado River Compact states, such as Utah (91 percent), Nevada (91 percent), and Arizona (93 percent).

Inadequate Water Supplies

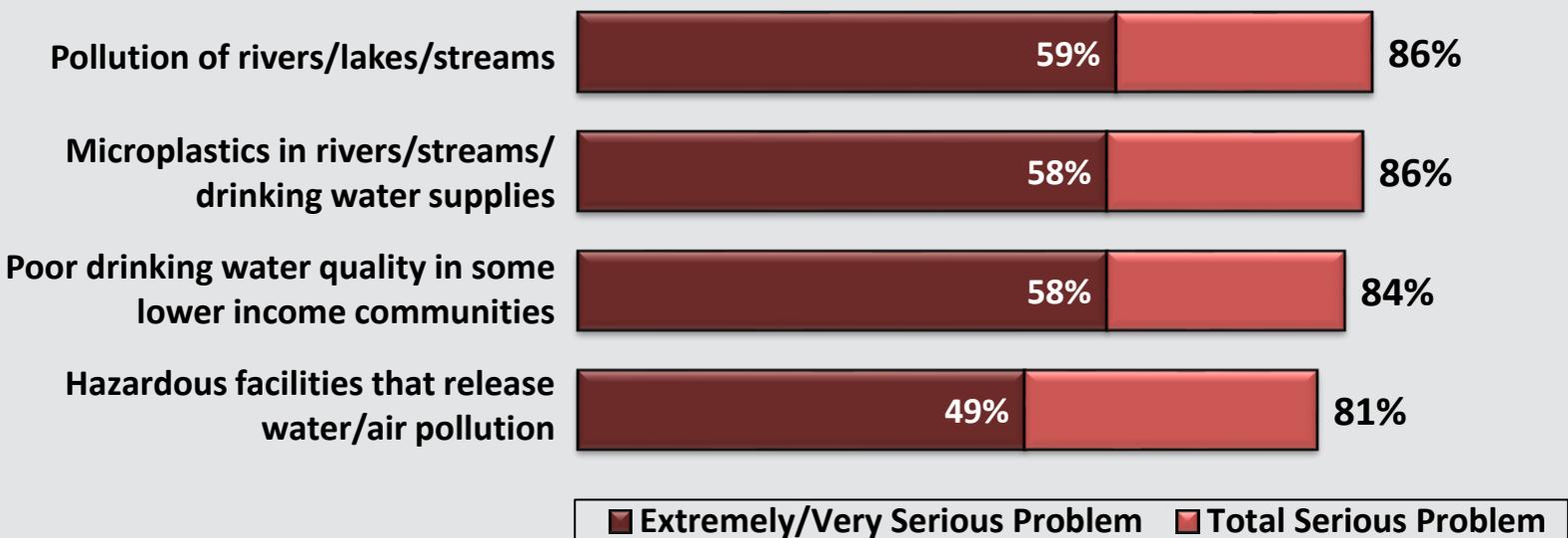


Similarly, the low level of water in rivers continues to be a grave concern. Virtually all Westerners (94 percent) say low river levels are a serious problem, consistent with prior years (93 percent in 2023 and 94 percent in 2022), and with 72 percent saying it is an “extremely” or “very” serious problem. Again, concern is more intense the farther South one moves in this region.

Low Level of Water in Rivers



Water supply is not the only concern. Quality of water and pollution are also big concerns.





The vast majority (86 percent) say **pollution of rivers, lakes, and streams** is a serious problem with almost six-in-ten voters (58 percent) characterizing it as an “extremely” or “very” serious problem – an all-time high measure since 2011.

Similarly, 86 percent are concerned about **microplastics**, that is tiny plastic particles in rivers, streams, and drinking water supplies. This is a seven-point increase in concern compared with 2020 (79 percent). Moreover, 58 percent say it is an “extremely” or “very” serious problem, up six points since 2020 (52 percent).

Moreover, 81 percent say “**hazardous facilities such as landfills, waste sites, or industries that release water or air pollution in my community**” is a serious problem.

There are also strong concerns about pollution coming from infrastructure and landfills. Eighty-four percent of Westerners say “**poor drinking water quality in some lower income communities due to lead pipes, aging infrastructure, or pollutants leaking into well water**” is a serious problem. Likewise, 81 percent say “**hazardous facilities such as landfills, waste sites, or industries that release water or air pollution in my community**” is a serious problem.

Concern about drinking water quality in lower income communities and pollution from landfills and waste sites is higher among voters of color than white voters, and among Westerners living in cities and suburban areas than those in more rural areas.

