

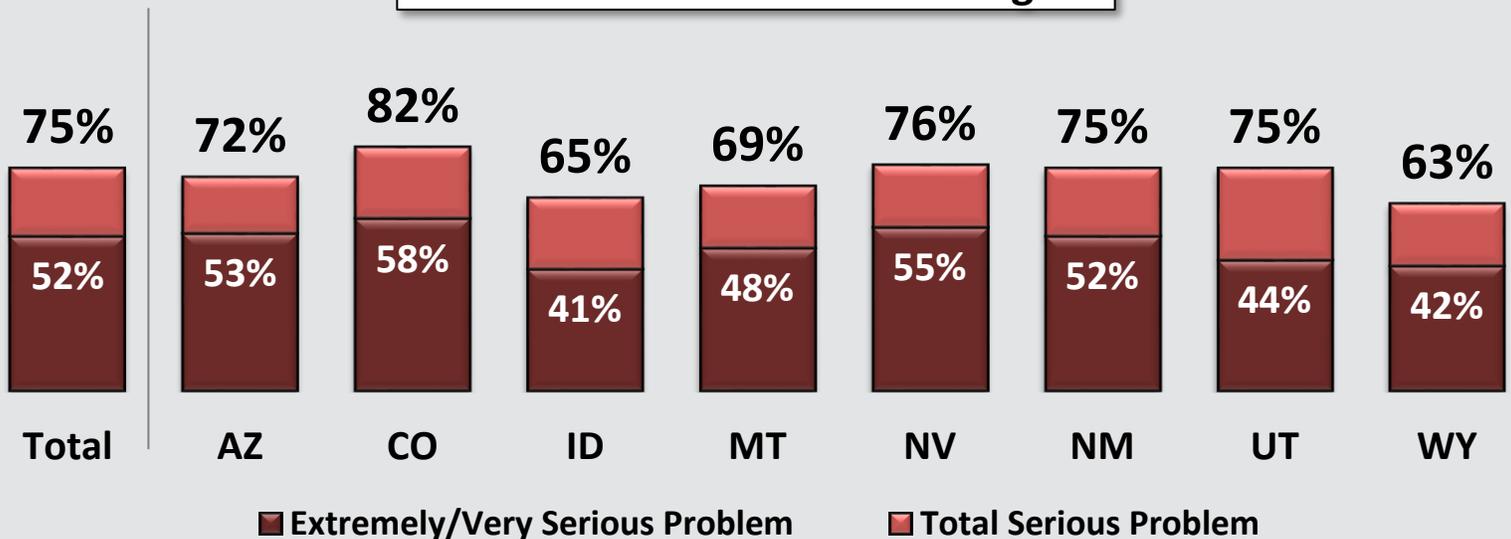
# Climate Change in the West

*Nearly three-quarters of Western voters say climate change is a serious problem, doubling in intense concern over the last decade; a majority say action is needed.*



Overall, 75 percent of Western voters say climate change is a serious problem, with more than half (52 percent) classifying it as an “extremely” or “very” serious problem. A majority in every single state says that climate change is at least a somewhat serious problem. Moreover, there are majorities across party lines - 52 percent of Republicans, 79 percent of Independents, and virtually all Democrats (97 percent) - saying climate change is a serious problem.

**Seriousness of Climate Change**



**The number of Westerners who see climate change as an extremely or very serious problem affecting their state has virtually doubled in the past decade.** A comparison of the five states that were interviewed in both 2011 and 2022 (CO, MT, NM, UT, & WY) reveals that almost twice as many voters see climate change as an extremely or very serious problem today (52 percent) than did in 2011 (27 percent). There has been a 22-point increase in those seeing it as at least a somewhat serious problem in that time (77 percent today, up from 55 percent in 2011 in these states).

**Most Western voters believe climate change requires action now.** Almost two-thirds of Westerners (65 percent) say that “climate change has been established as a serious problem, and immediate action is necessary” or “there is enough evidence that climate change is taking place that some action should be taken.” A decade ago, a minority of Western voters (48 percent) said the same.

	2011	2020	2022
Climate change has been established as a serious problem, and immediate action is necessary.	24%	40%	44%
There is enough evidence that climate change is taking place that some action should be taken.	24%	19%	21%
We don't know enough about climate change, and more research is necessary before we take action.	19%	15%	13%
Concern about climate change has been greatly exaggerated.	32%	25%	21%

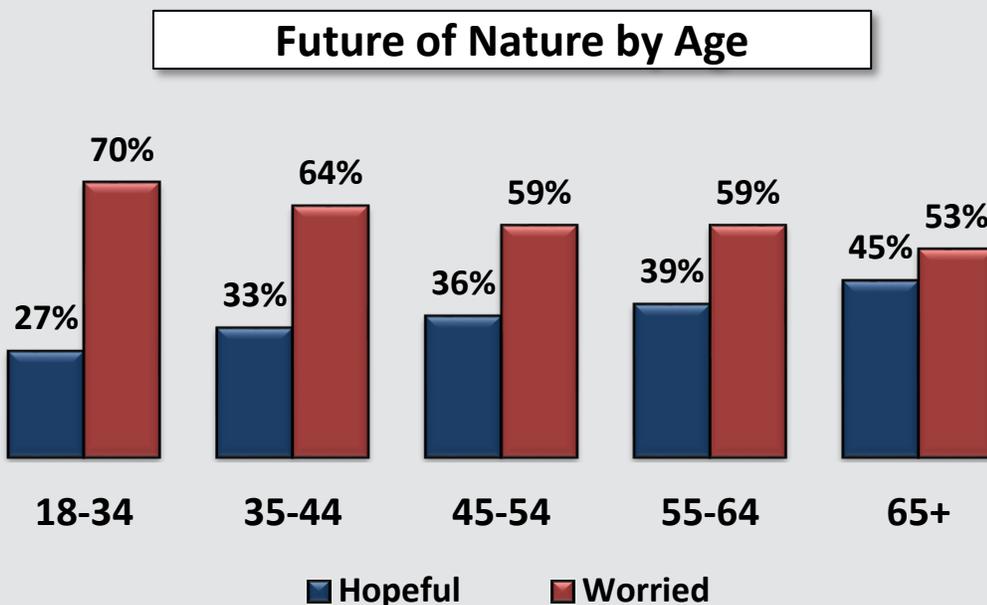
This majority desire to take action on climate change is expressed across all Western states. Strikingly, the youngest voters under age 35 are the most likely to say action needs to be taken (73 percent, compared to 65 percent overall).



Nearly one-in-four Westerners (24 percent) have changed where they recreate outdoors due to “changes in the climate, such as fires or less snow or water.” A significant number of voters in these states say the impacts of climate change are affecting their outdoor pursuits. This number is even higher among young voters (37 percent), which is one of the most likely groups to engage in outdoor recreation. Montanans and Coloradans are also more likely to say they have changed their outdoor recreation habits due to the impacts of climate change (33 percent and 31 percent, respectively).

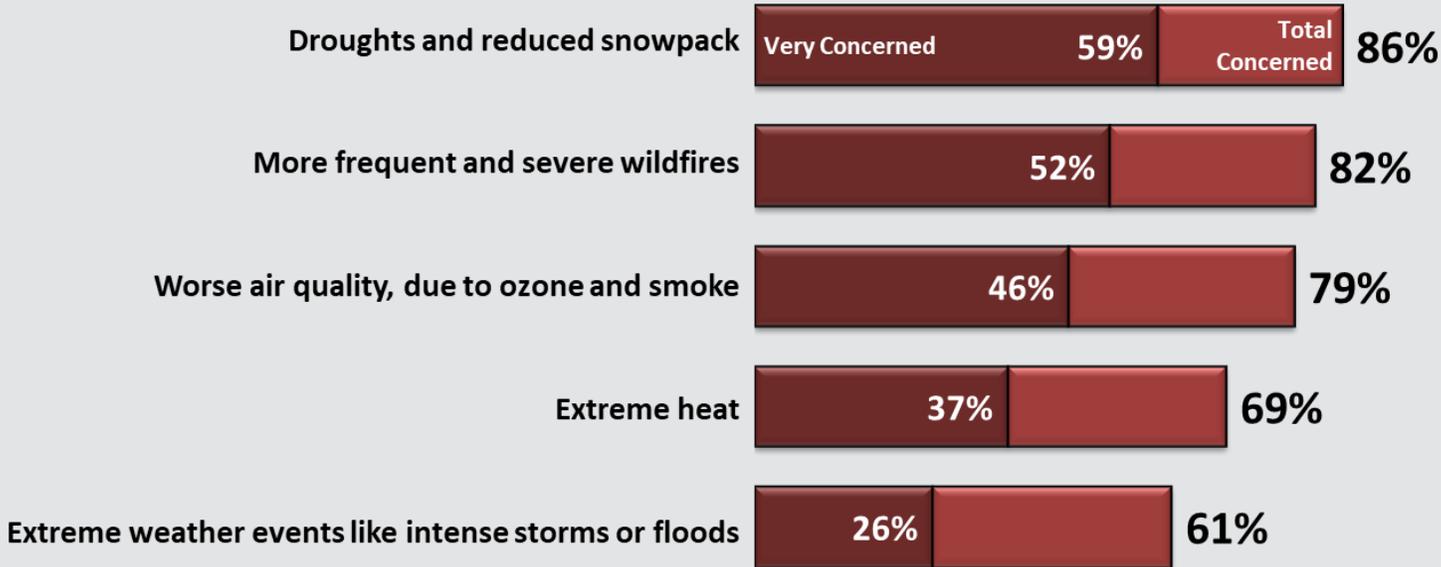
Concern about climate change also bears a strong relationship to general concerns about the future of nature. Westerners are more than twice as likely to say they are “worried” (69 percent) about “the future of nature, meaning our land, water, air and wildlife” than say they are hopeful (28 percent). Moreover, concern about the future of nature has increased eight points since 2021 (61 percent worried), and a majority in every state interviewed expresses this worry. Those who say climate change is an extremely or very serious problem are far more pessimistic about the future of nature (11 percent hopeful; 88 percent worried) than the approximately one-in-four Westerners who do not believe climate change is a problem (56 percent hopeful; 40 percent worried).

Younger Westerners – who tend to be the subgroup most apt to say climate change is a serious problem facing their state (83 percent) – also tend to be more pessimistic about the future of nature, although a majority of all ages express concern.



**Majorities across all Western states are concerned about the impacts of climate change in their state.** Topping the list of concerns is “droughts and reduced snowpack” (86 percent concerned), followed by “more frequent and severe wildfires” (82 percent). Eight-in-ten Westerners (79 percent) are concerned by “worse air quality, due to ozone and smoke,” while more than six-in-ten are concerned about “extreme heat” (69% percent) and “extreme weather events like intense storms or floods” (61 percent).

### Climate Change Concerns



**Four-in-five say that lack of planning to cope with these kinds of natural disasters is a serious problem.** When asked to assess the “lack of planning for potential natural disasters, like floods or wildfires,” nearly half of Western voters (47 percent) say it is an extremely or very serious problem, while 82 percent say it is at least a somewhat serious problem.

