

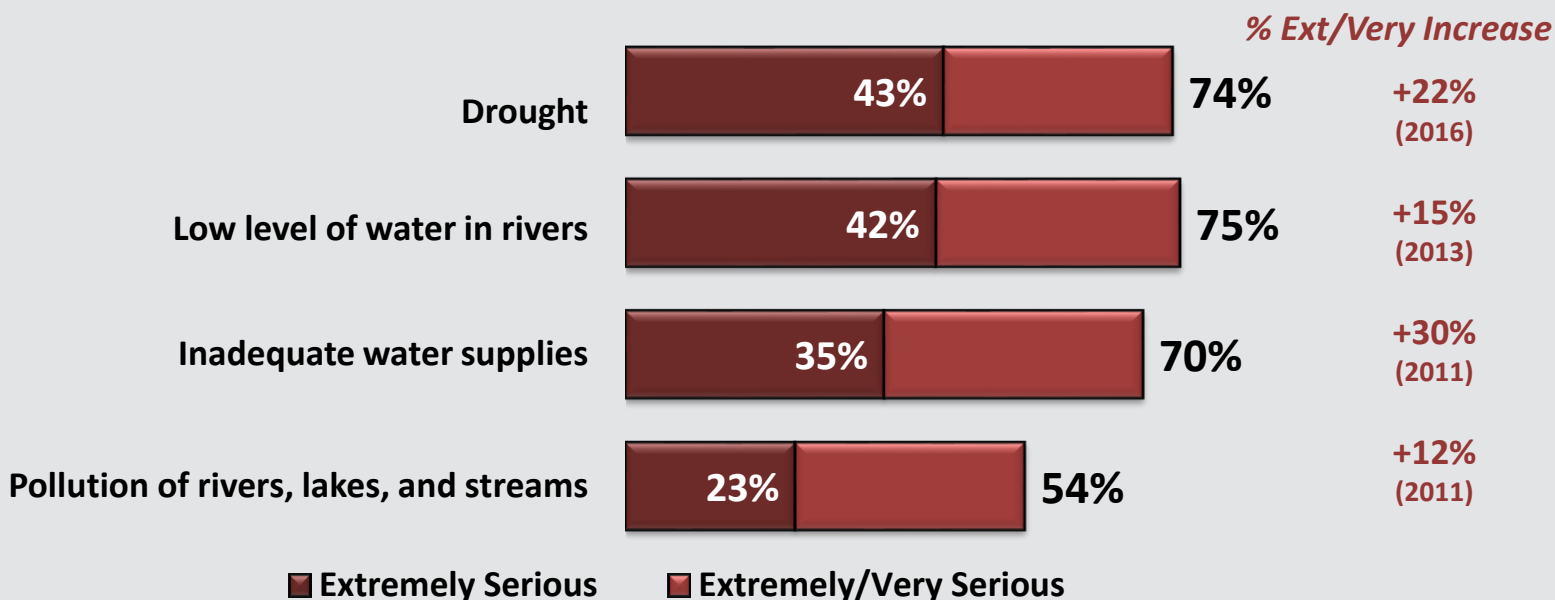
# Water in the West

*Anxiety about water is at a record high, and there is overwhelming support for a proposal to increase access to running water and sanitation in underserved communities.*



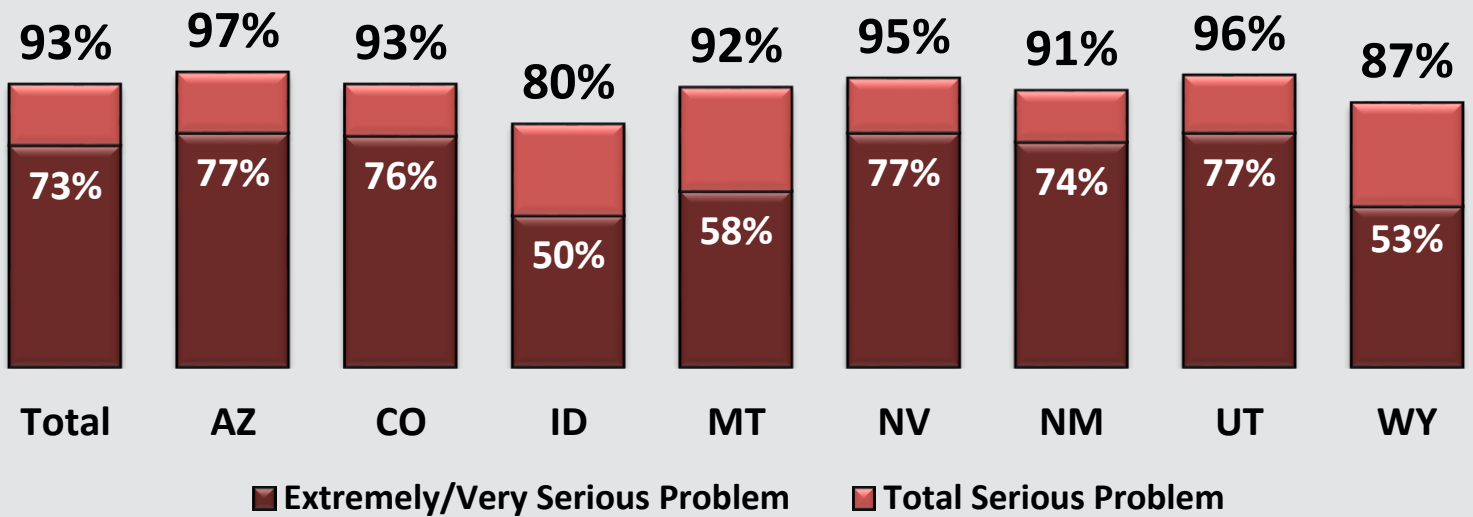
**Concerns about water supply and river levels are higher than ever among Western voters.** Nine-in-ten Westerners (89 percent) say inadequate water supply is at least a serious problem, up 14 points among the five states asked this question in both 2011 and 2022 (CO, MT, NM, UT, & WY). Moreover, the percentage of those saying it is an “extremely” or “very” serious problem has jumped a full 30 points. In fact, the perceived seriousness of water problems has risen by double digits over the last decade.

## Water Concerns



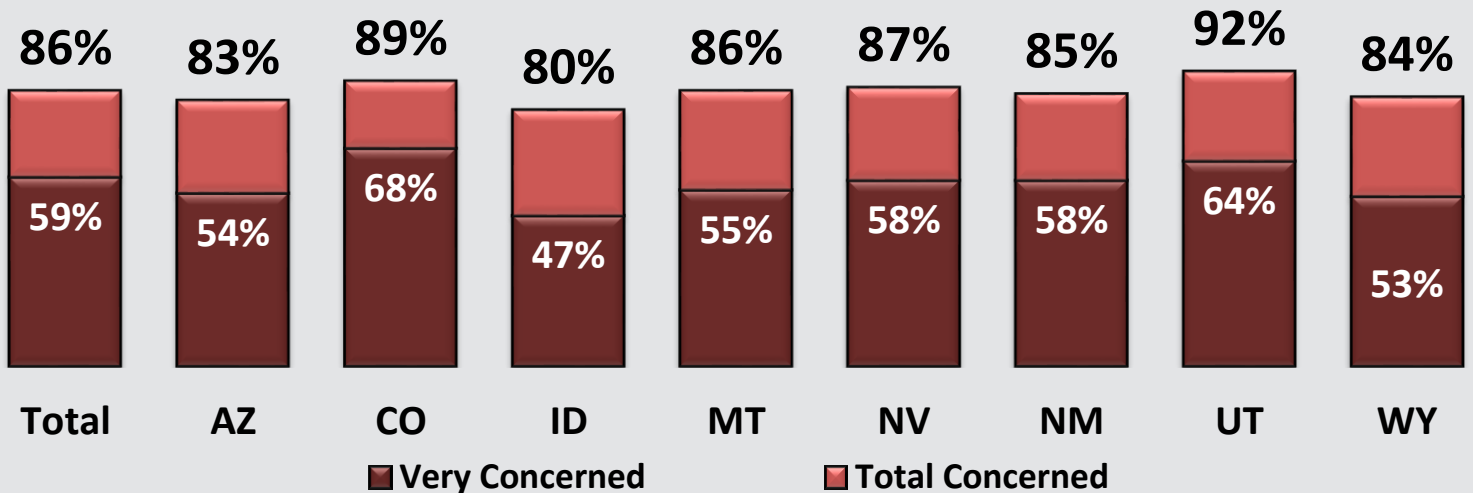
Concern about drought has also reached an all-time high and is matched by those who say the low level of water in rivers is an extremely or very serious problem. In past years, rivers have been more of a regional concern limited to the arid southwestern states, but the concern now extends across the entire interior West.

### Low Level of Water in Rivers

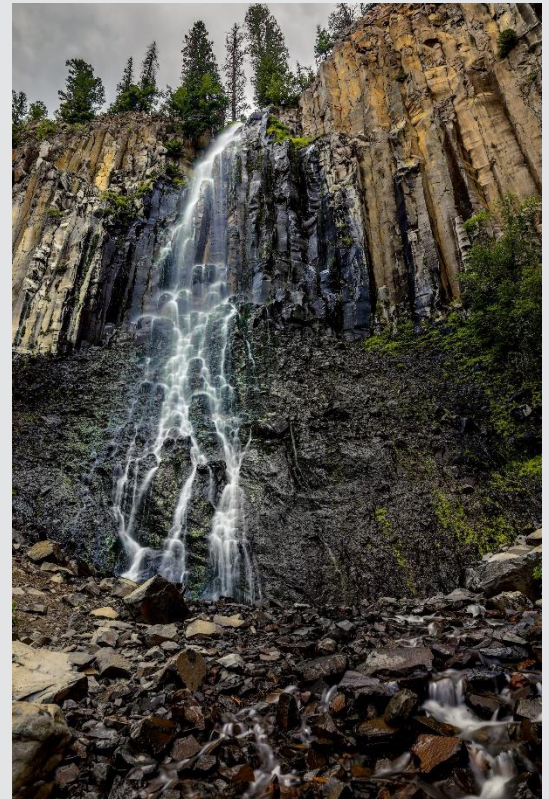


Four-in-five or more voters in every single state express concern about drought and reduced snowpack, with 86 percent overall saying they are concerned about this. Colorado and Utah stand out for being the most concerned.

### Droughts and Reduced Snowpack



**Overwhelmingly, voters in the Colorado River Compact states support conserving water over diversions to cities.** When voters in Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming are asked the best way to address the shortage of water, 81 percent choose “using our current water supply more wisely, by encouraging more water conservation, reducing use, and increasing recycling of water” compared to just 14 percent who opt for “diverting more water from rivers in less populated areas of the state to communities where more people live.” This question has been tracked in all these states except Arizona, and in each state, the percentage of voters opting for conserving and recycling water has increased over time.



**A proposal to increase federal funding for extending water and sanitation services to rural and tribal communities that lack this is strongly supported by Western voters.** Consistent with last year, there is near-universal support (87 percent) for “increasing federal funding to extend running water and sanitation services to rural areas and tribal communities that currently lack access.” Indeed, a majority (56 percent) “strongly” support the proposal. Moreover, there is solid support across all states, by party, and across race and ethnicity, as seen in the following chart.

### Federal Funding for Rural and Tribal Water and Sanitation

