



Clean Water Act

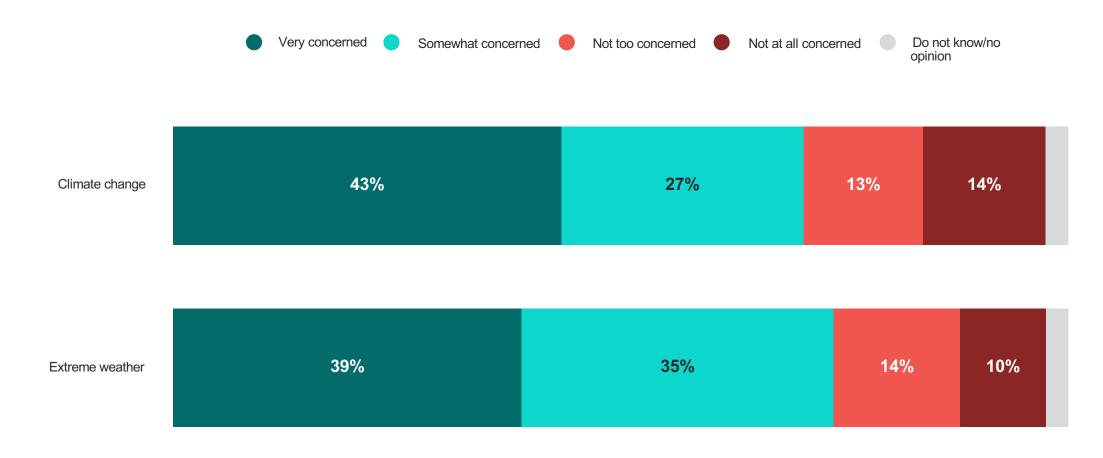
Walton Family Foundation

— NOVEMBER 2023



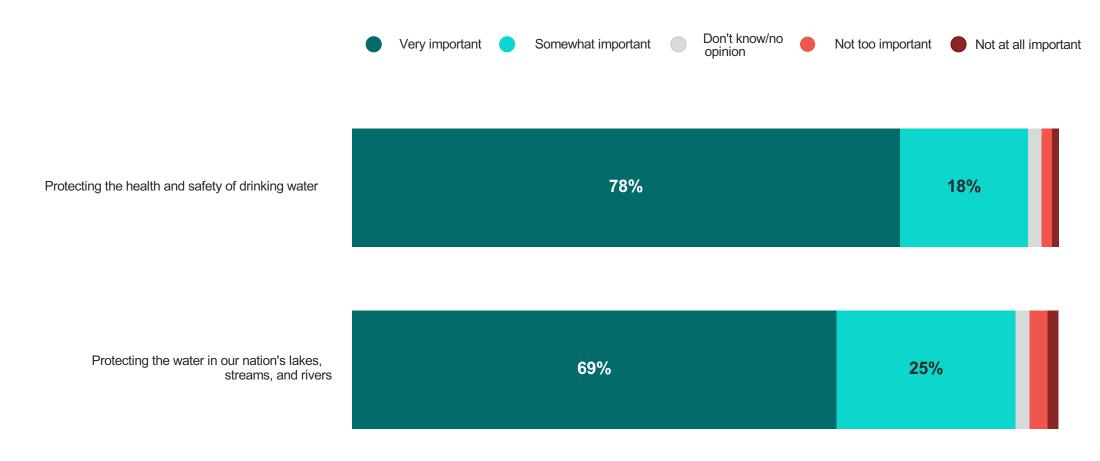
A majority of voters are concerned about climate change (70%) and extreme weather (74%).

Overall, how concerned are you about each of the following?



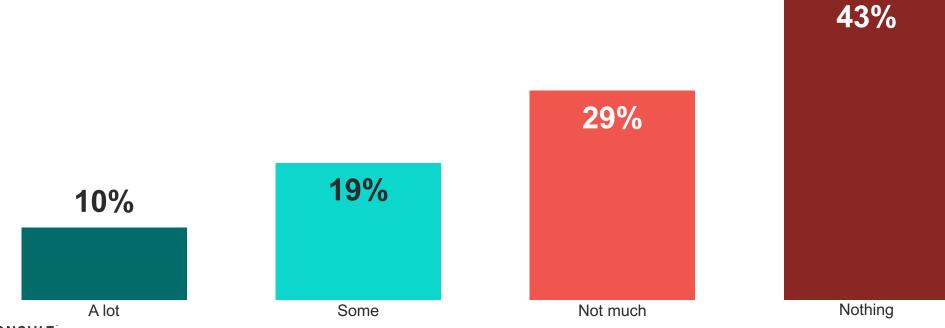
Nearly all voters say protecting the health and safety of drinking water (96%) and protecting the water in our nation's lakes, streams, and rivers (94%) is important.

How important is each of the following?



A majority of voters are unfamiliar with the recent Supreme Court decision that significantly weakened the 1972 Clean Water Act. Democrats (38%) are more likely than independents (23%) or Republicans (22%) to have seen, read, or heard about the Supreme Court decision.

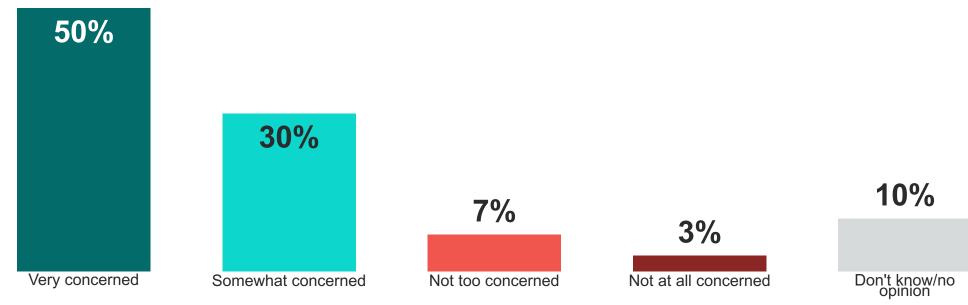
How much have you seen, read, or heard about the recent Supreme Court decision that significantly weakened the 1972 Clean Water Act?



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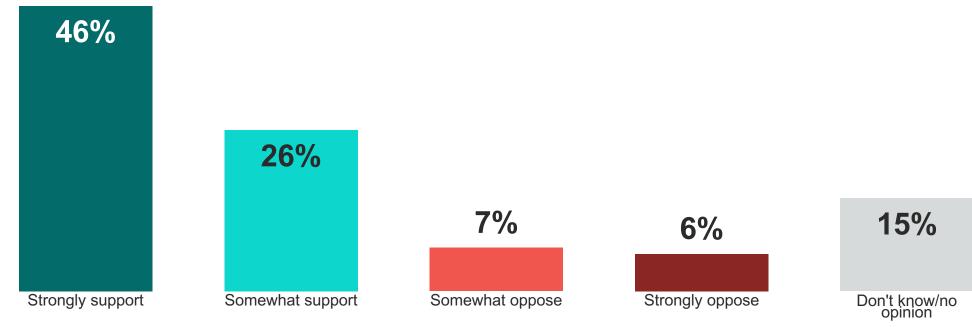
Four-in-five voters (80%) are concerned about the change of the Clean Water Act after learning that the narrowed scope means polluters might not need to meet water quality requirements. A bipartisan majority of voters are concerned about this change as well (Democrats 90%, independents 78%, Republicans 70%).

The Clean Water Act, which was passed 51 years ago, created federal water quality standards for operations like factories and sewage treatment plants that release pollution to protect clean water. Now that the Supreme Court has narrowed the scope of the Clean Water Act, polluters might not need to meet these water quality requirements before adding waste into many streams or wetlands. After learning more, how concerned are you about this change?



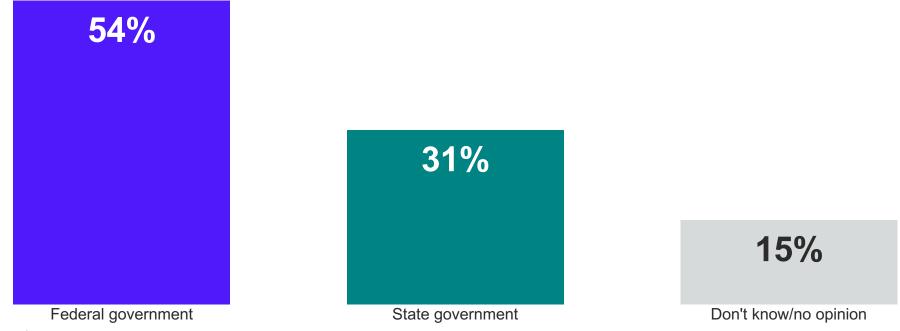
A majority of voters (72%) support a law to reverse the Supreme Court's decision and fully restore the previous level of protection of the nation's wetlands and waterways. A bipartisan majority of voters would support this law as well (Democrats 79%, independents 71%, Republicans 63%).

Based on what you know, would you support or oppose a law to reverse the Supreme Court's decision and fully restore the previous level of protection of the nation's wetlands and waterways?



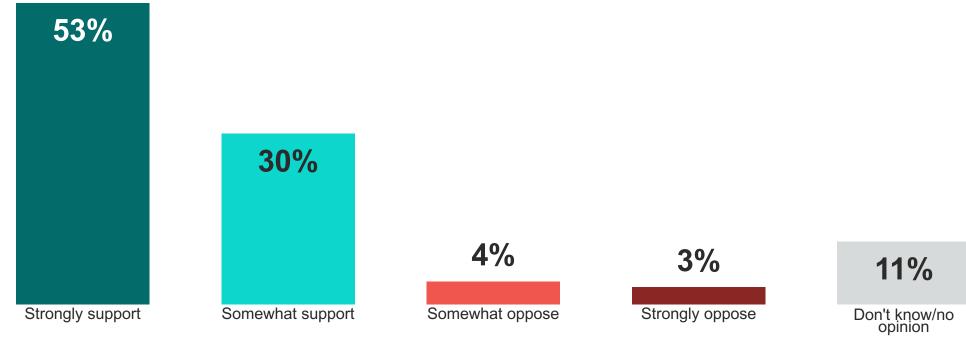
A majority of voters think the federal government, rather than the state government should establish standards to protect certain waters and wetlands from pollution and development.

Moving forward, who should establish standards to protect certain waters and wetlands from pollution and development?



A majority of voters (83%) would want their state legislature to support a law to restore protections to their state's wetlands and waterways. A bipartisan majority of voters would support this law as well (Democrats 87%, independents 81%, Republicans 77%).

If this issue was raised in your state legislature, would you support or oppose a law to restore protections to your state's wetlands and waterways?



Voters find the messaging focused on farmers needing clean water to grow food (84% - 55% very convincing) and needing to trust the water we drink (83% - 56% very convincing) most convincing of the tested messages about protecting American wetlands.

Next, you will read arguments that are in support of new actions to protect American wetlands. How convincing, if at all, are each of the

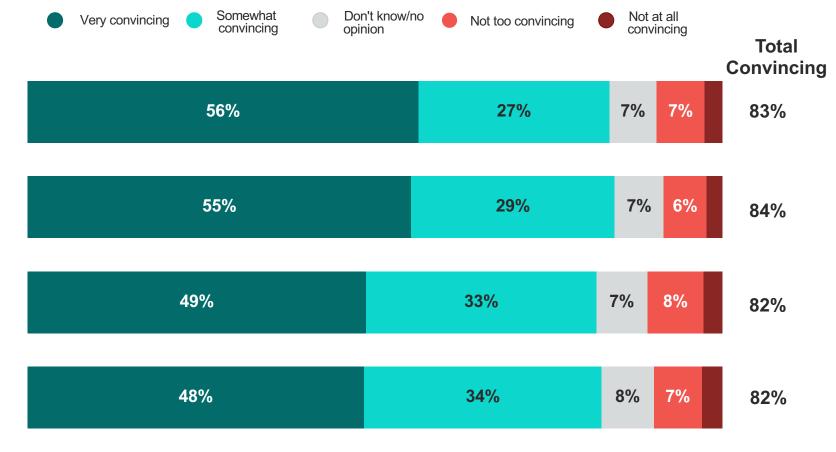


We must be able to trust that the water coming from our taps is clean and safe for our families to drink, cook, and to bathe. Wetlands serve to filter and clean water at the source. New and clear wetland protections are critical to safeguard our water supply and the health of our families and communities.

Farmers need clean water to grow safe and nutritious food to feed our families. Protecting American wetlands are crucial to maintaining our food supply now and for future generations.

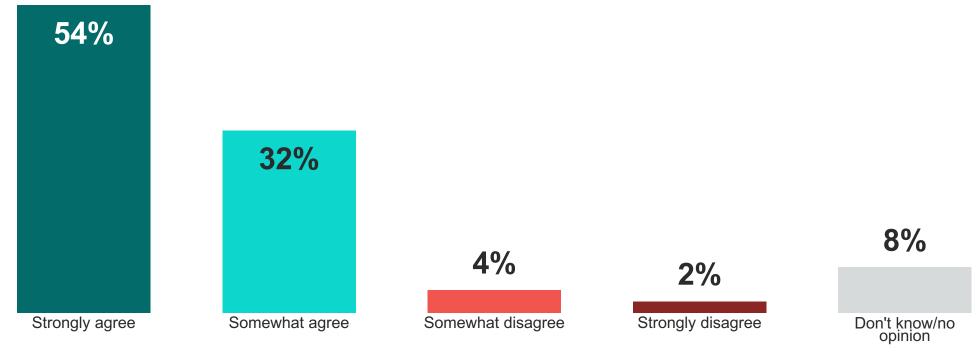
Wetland protections are vital to our economy since clean water affects every business. Companies and communities across the country need dependable, clean water to succeed.

Wetlands act like a sponge by absorbing, storing, and slowing the release of floodwaters, which help prevent flooding and reduce drought. We need to strengthen wetland protections to safeguard clean water and help protect communities from the impacts of intensifying weather events.



A majority of voters agree (86%) that farmers should be subject to clean water requirements to help protect downstream water quality for drinking and recreation.

Do you agree or disagree that farmers should be subject to clean water requirements to help protect downstream water quality for drinking and recreation?



When it comes to messaging about federal legislation to protect American wetlands, voters find the statements about how the legislation ensures that everyone has access to clean water (83%) and keeping families and communities safe (80%) most convincing.

Next you will read arguments that are in support of federal legislation to protect American wetlands. How convincing, if at all, are each of the following arguments?

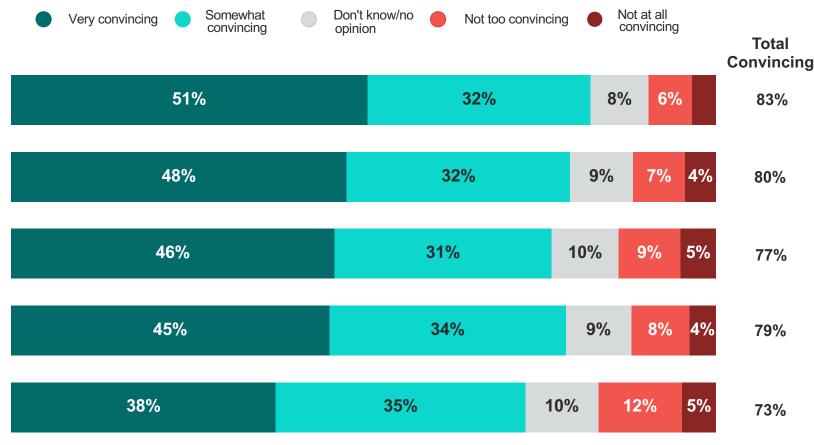
Strong federal water protections help to ensure that everyone - no matter which state they live in or their zip code - has access to clean water. Where you live should not determine whether you can access clean and safe water.

For over 50 years, the Clean Water Act successfully kept families and communities safer by reducing pollution in our waterways, including our rivers, lakes, and streams. The Supreme Court's weakening of those protections will lead to less clean and less safe water for our children and grandkids.

Due to the recent Supreme Court ruling, over 60 percent of the nation's wetlands are no longer protected by the Clean Water Act. Passing new legislation to safeguard our safe water needs to be a bipartisan priority for Congress.

Water and rivers do not stop flowing at state lines so leaving wetland regulations up to individual states does not make sense. Safeguarding water is best done on a national level and in a coordinated manner so that every American can access safe and clean water.

Forcing states and local communities, not the federal government, to each set of standards of wetland protection will result in a patchwork of laws and regulations that fail to adequately protect clean water across the country. Individual states will be saddled with the cost, resulting in less effective coordination.



After reading the tested messages, support for a law to reverse the Supreme Court's decision and fully restore federal protection of the nation's wetlands and waterways increased 8 points. Support for a law that reverses the Supreme Court decision also increased among Democrats (+9), independents (+5), and Republicans (+9).

Now that you have learned more, would you support or oppose a law to reverse the Supreme Court's decision and fully restore federal protection of the nation's wetlands and waterways?

