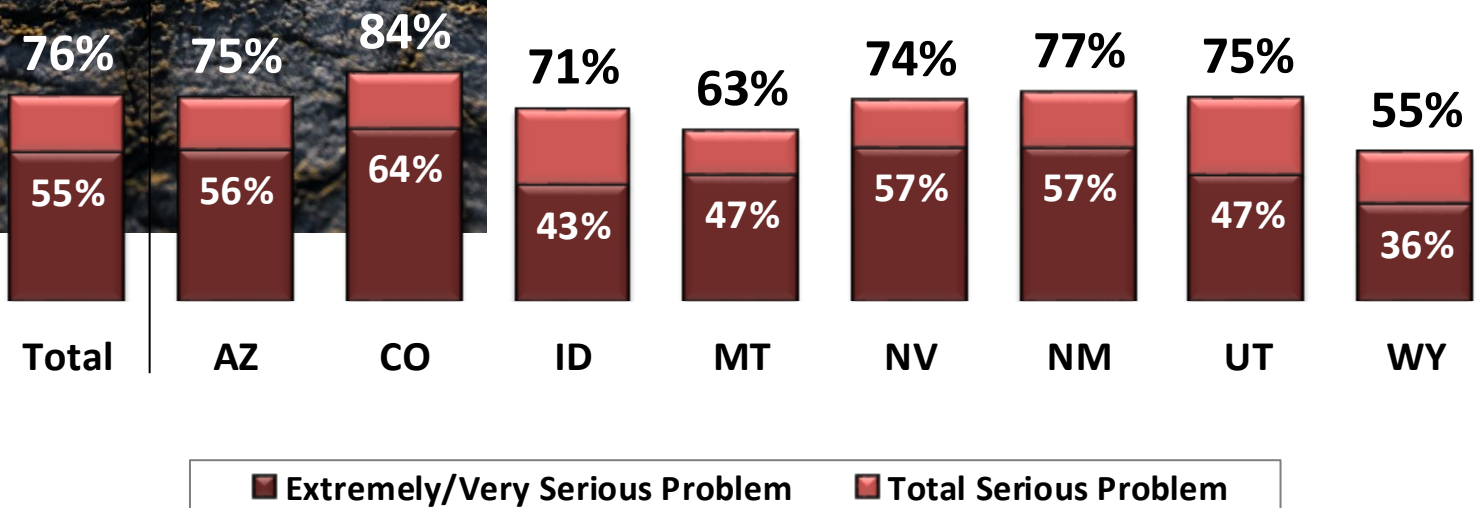


Climate Change in the West



The vast majority of Westerners consider climate change to be a serious problem, with climate concern highest among younger generations. Westerners also recognize the effects of climate change, such as air pollution and wildfires as serious problems. However, despite the fact that devastating fires were happening in California at the time of fielding, most believe their own communities are prepared for major events like fires or floods. Voters are supportive of specific policies, like controlled burns to reduce the risk of wildfires, as well as the U.S. government taking action to address the effects of climate change more broadly.

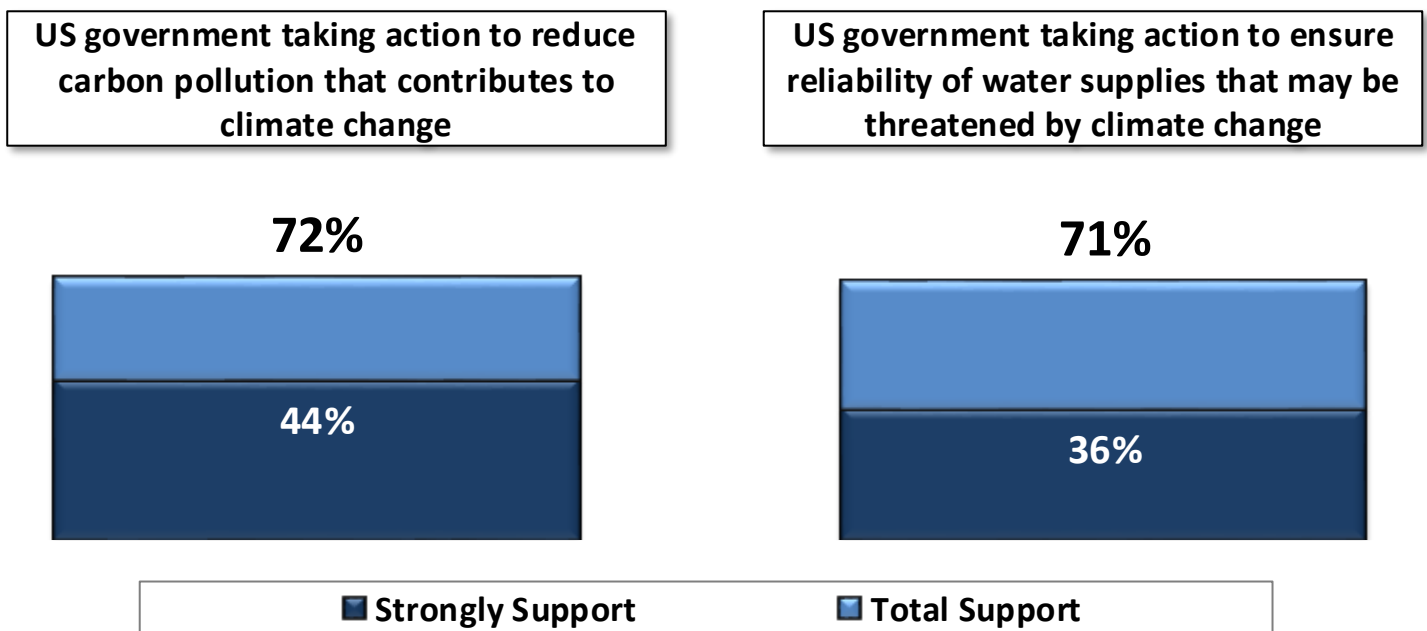
Climate change



Most Westerners say climate change is a serious problem. Roughly three-quarters (76 percent) of voters express concern about climate change, with more than half (55 percent) saying it is an “extremely” or “very” serious problem. In the five states in which the State of the Rockies research was first conducted, the view that this is an extremely or very serious problem has more than doubled (up from 27 percent in 2011).

A majority across all major sub-groups (i.e., gender, education, party, race, and ethnicity) perceive climate change to be a serious problem, but one of the most concerned is voters under 45 (84 percent say it is extremely or very serious) compared to voters age 45+ (70 percent).

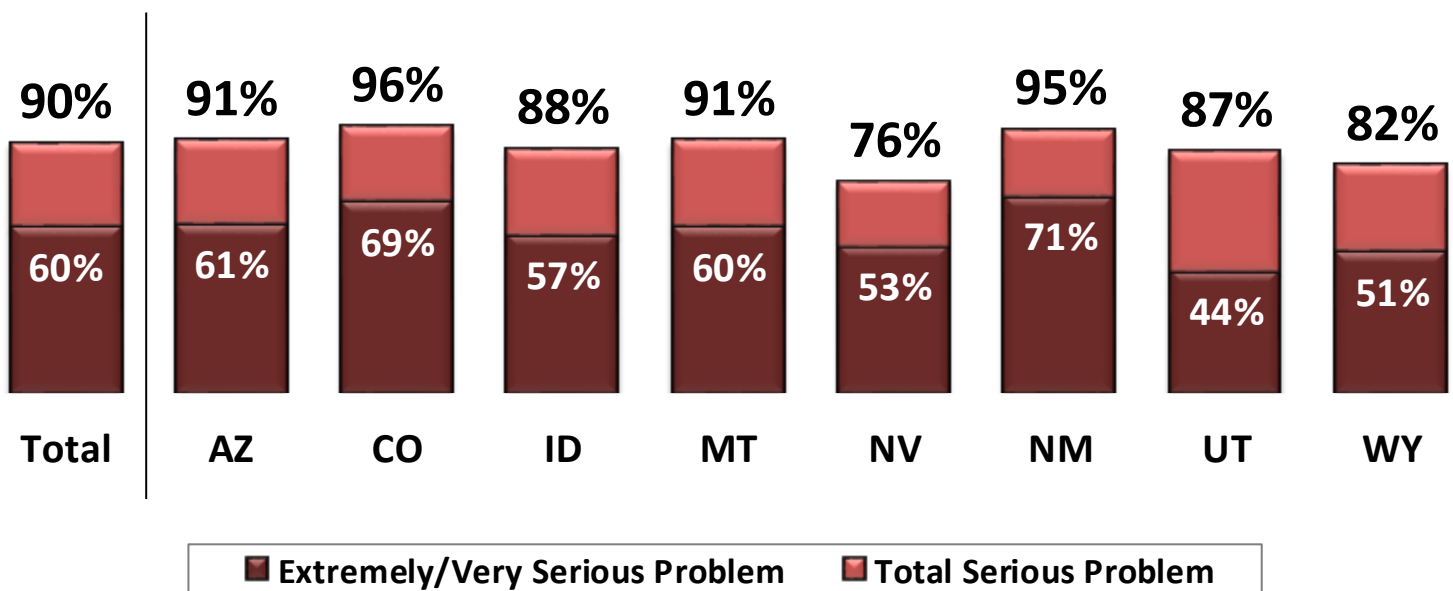
A strong majority are in favor of the US government taking action to mitigate climate effects. Nearly three-quarters of voters (72 percent) say they support “the United States government taking action to reduce the carbon pollution that contributes to climate change,” and nearly half (44 percent) are strongly supportive. A similar share of voters are supportive of “the United States government taking action to ensure the reliability of water supplies that may be threatened by climate change,” with 71 percent expressing support, including 36 percent who strongly support this.



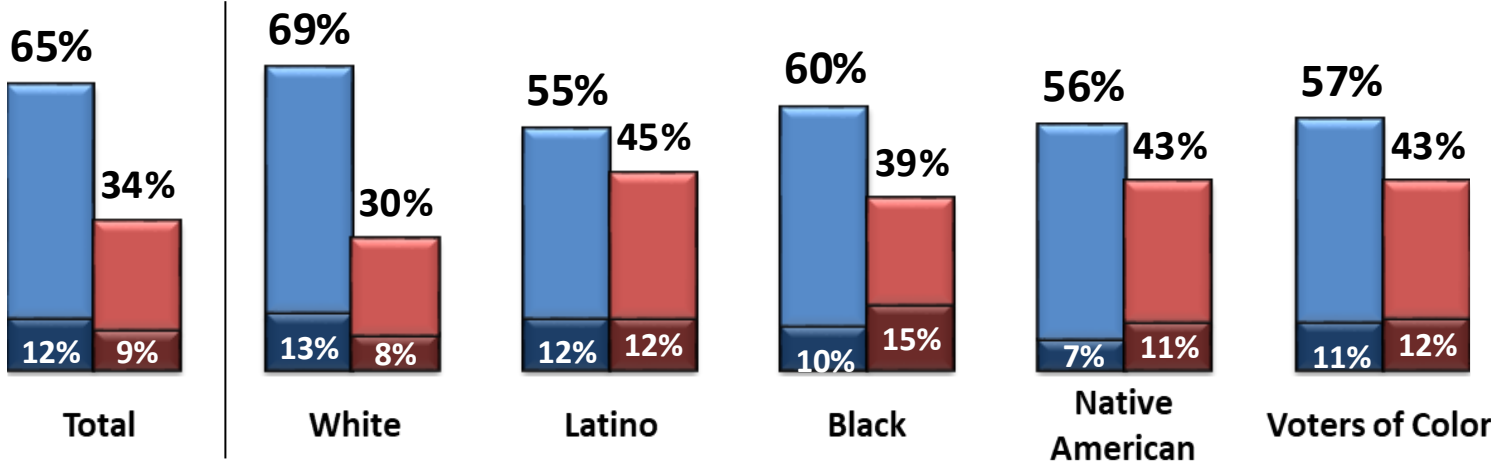


One of the more widely recognized effects of climate change in the West – wildfire – remains a concern for the vast majority of Western voters. With wildfires in Los Angeles raging at the time of this research, this issue was certainly on voters’ minds. Nine-in-ten Westerners (90 percent) say “uncontrollable wildfires that threaten homes and property” are a serious problem in their own state. There is broad consensus about the problem of uncontrollable wildfires, with solid majorities of all key subgroups (i.e., gender, age, education, party, race, and ethnicity) expressing concern.

Uncontrollable wildfires that threaten homes and property



Despite widespread concerns over the threat of wildfire, a majority of Westerners believe their community is prepared for the risk of significant weather events. Nearly two-in-three voters (65 percent) say their community is prepared for the risk of a significant weather event, such as wildfire, flood or severe drought. Despite voters' overall optimism, however, only 12 percent characterize their community as "very prepared." There is significant variation in how prepared voters feel their communities are based on the state they live in, geography, and voters' racial or ethnic background – the latter shown below.



■ Very Prepared ■ Total Prepared ■ Not at All Prepared ■ Total Not Prepared



Westerners are supportive of using controlled burns to reduce the risk of wildfires. Nearly all Westerners (94 percent) are supportive of "allowing trained fire teams to use controlled burns to remove growth in forests that could fuel wildfires, when and where it is safe to do." More than two-thirds of voters (69 percent) are strongly supportive. Support is consistent across all types of communities, with highest intensity among voters in small towns (72 percent strongly support) and rural areas (73 percent strongly support).

Air pollution is also a concern, particularly in Utah. More than four-in-five Western voters (82 percent) say air pollution and smog is a serious problem in their state, with more than half (53 percent) calling it an “extremely” or “very” serious problem. There is significant variation by state, with nearly all Utah voters (95 percent) saying it is a serious problem and more than three-quarters (76 percent) saying it is an “extremely” or “very” serious problem.

Air pollution and smog

