



MCALLISTER
opinion research

BC Perspectives on Fresh Water

*Results of a Telephone Poll of
835 British Columbia Residents
Commissioned by*



**vancouver
foundation**

November 22, 2010

Research Objective

To assess public support
for water act modernization
in British Columbia

Research Methodology

- Telephone interviews averaging 12.5 minutes were conducted October 25-31, 2010 inclusive
- Random sample of 835 British Columbians aged 18+
- Margin of error is $\pm 3.4\%$ 19 times out of 20
- Data is weighted by region, gender and age, according to the latest Statistics Canada census
- Sample drawn by generating random phone numbers from BC residential telephone exchanges
- *McAllister is an accredited member of ESOMAR, the international professional organization for market & opinion research*



Results

“You never miss the water till the well has run dry.”

Irish Proverb

98 percent of British Columbians recognize fresh water is critical to their well-being

In your opinion, how important is fresh water to prosperity and quality of life in BC? Would you say fresh water is...

Extremely important		86%
Fairly important		12%
Somewhat important		2%
Not too important		0.5%
Not important at all		0.5%
DK/NA		0.5%

- Water is most likely to be viewed as “extremely important” to prosperity and quality of life outside the Metro Vancouver region.

Water is important across all regions

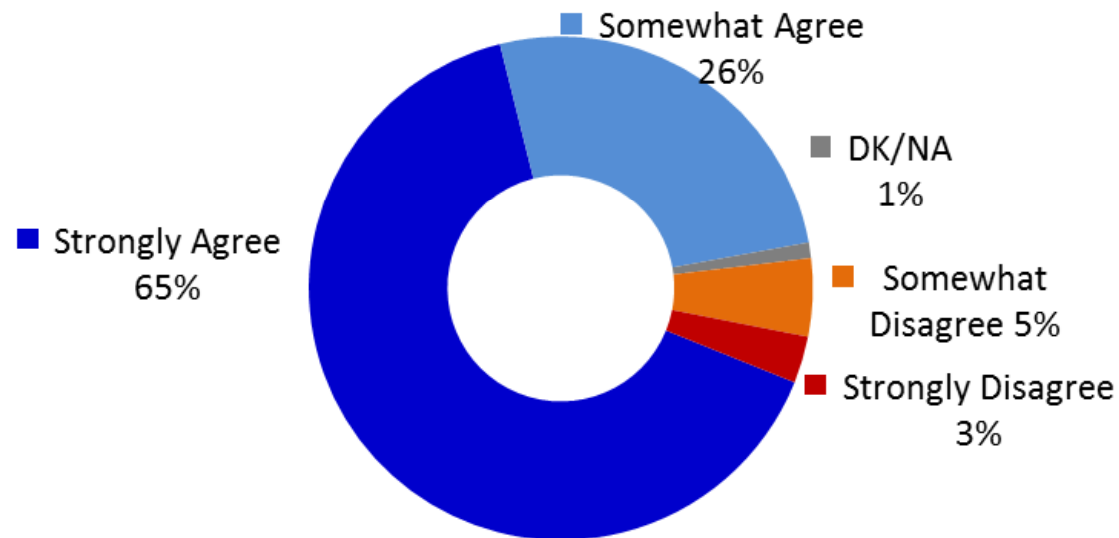
In your opinion, how important is fresh water to prosperity and quality of life in BC? Would you say fresh water is...

	Lower Mainland/ Southwest	Vancouver Island/Coast	Southern Interior	North/ Central BC
Extremely important	85%	89%	87%	90%
Fairly important	12%	11%	12%	7%
Somewhat Important	2%	1%	1%	3%
Not too important	0%	0%	0%	0%
Not important at all	1%	0%	0%	0%
DK/NA	0%	0%	0%	0%

91 percent consider fresh water to be BC's most precious resource

Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements...?

Fresh water is BC's most precious resource



- Older adults, especially women are most likely to say water is BC's most precious resource

Value of water

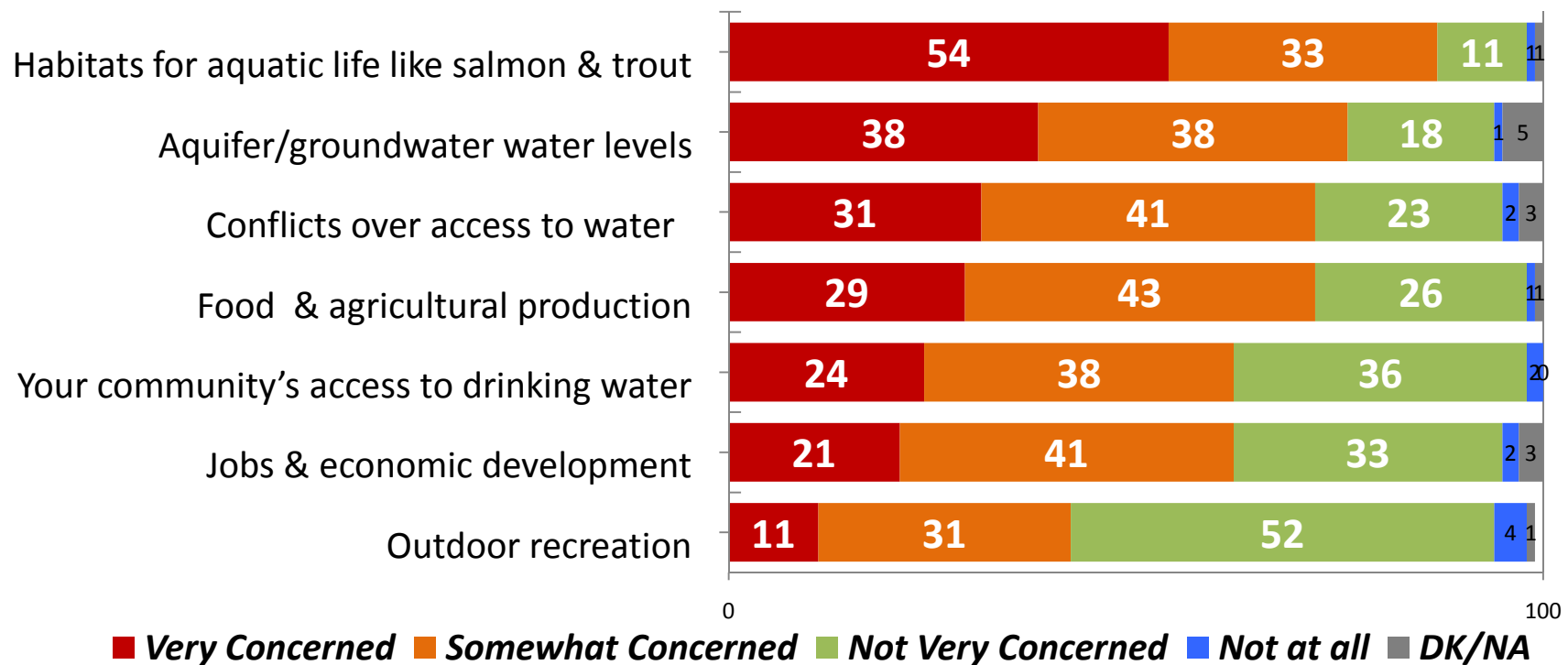
Why do you say fresh water is important to prosperity and quality of life in BC?

Text size reflects frequency of mention.



Nature is the top concern

How concerned are you about the IMPACT OF water SHORTAGES in the next 10 years on...



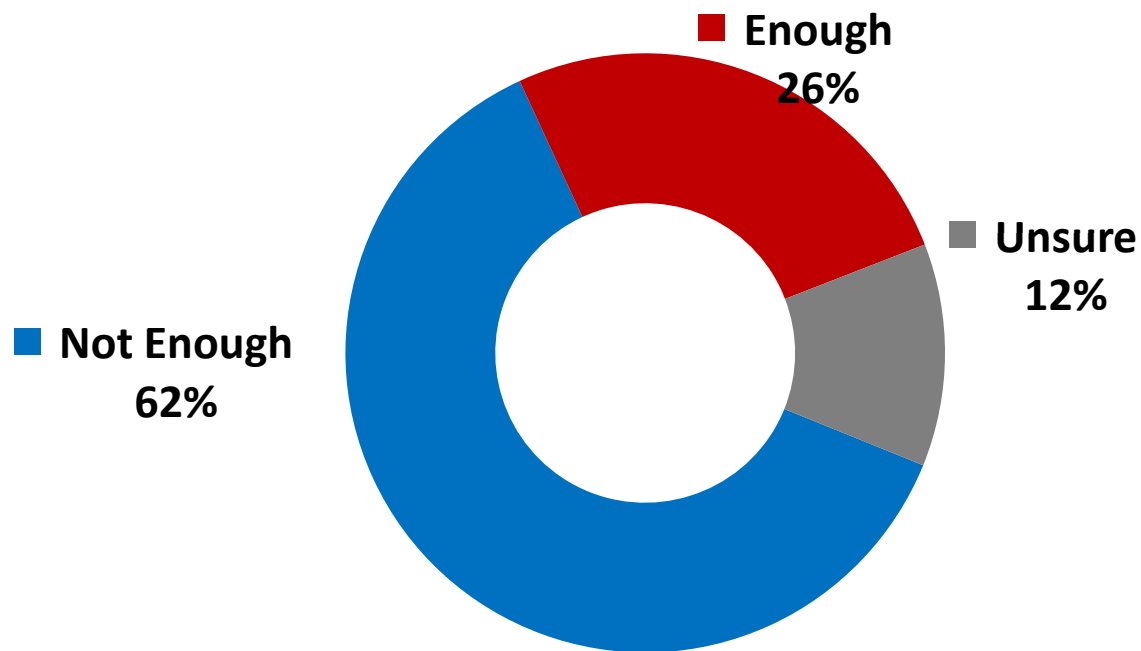
Lower Mainland residents tend to express fewer concerns about the impacts of water shortages

How concerned are you about the IMPACT OF water SHORTAGES in the next 10 years on...

<i>“Very Concerned”</i>	Mainland/ Southwest	Vancouver Island/ Coast	Southern Interior	North/ Central BC
Habitats for aquatic life like salmon & trout	52%	52%	64%	52%
Water levels in aquifers and groundwater	35%	42%	45%	39%
Conflicts over access to water	27%	42%	34%	30%
Food & agricultural production	24%	37%	31%	35%
Your community's access to drinking water	23%	28%	27%	19%
Jobs & economic development	19%	23%	20%	26%
Outdoor recreation	11%	9%	15%	11%

Perceptions of current rules governing water use

To the best of your knowledge, are current rules governing water use in BC ENOUGH or NOT ENOUGH to ensure the future sustainability of BC'S fresh water resources?



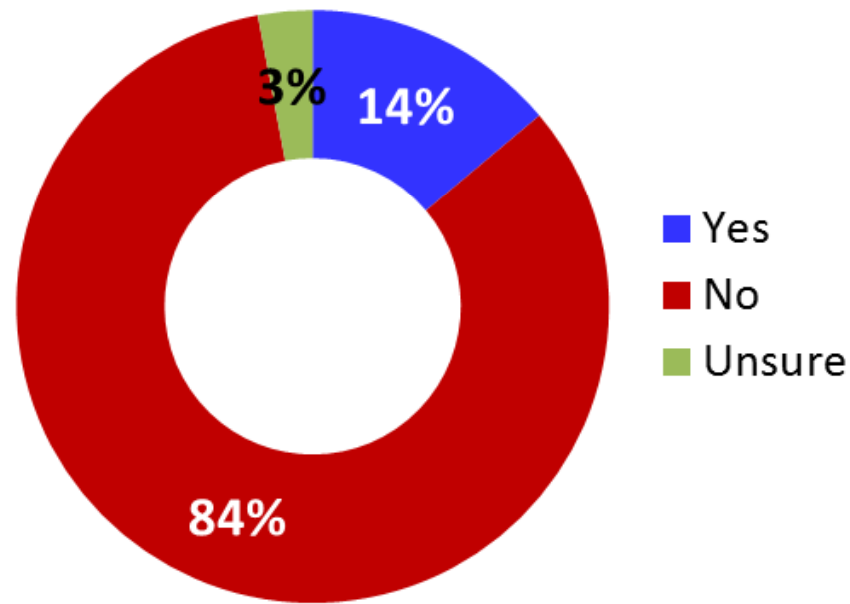
North Central BC residents are slightly more likely to say that current water rules are not enough

To the best of your knowledge, are current rules governing water use in BC ENOUGH or NOT ENOUGH to ensure the future sustainability of BC'S fresh water resources?

	Lower Mainland/ Southwest	Vancouver Island/ Coast	Southern Interior	North/ Central BC
Enough	29%	18%	24%	26%
Not Enough	60%	62%	64%	67%
Unsure	5%	10%	6%	6%
DK/NA	6%	10%	6%	2%

Little awareness of BC water modernization initiative

Have you seen or heard anything about the BC provincial government's initiative to modernize and improve rules for protecting and managing our water?



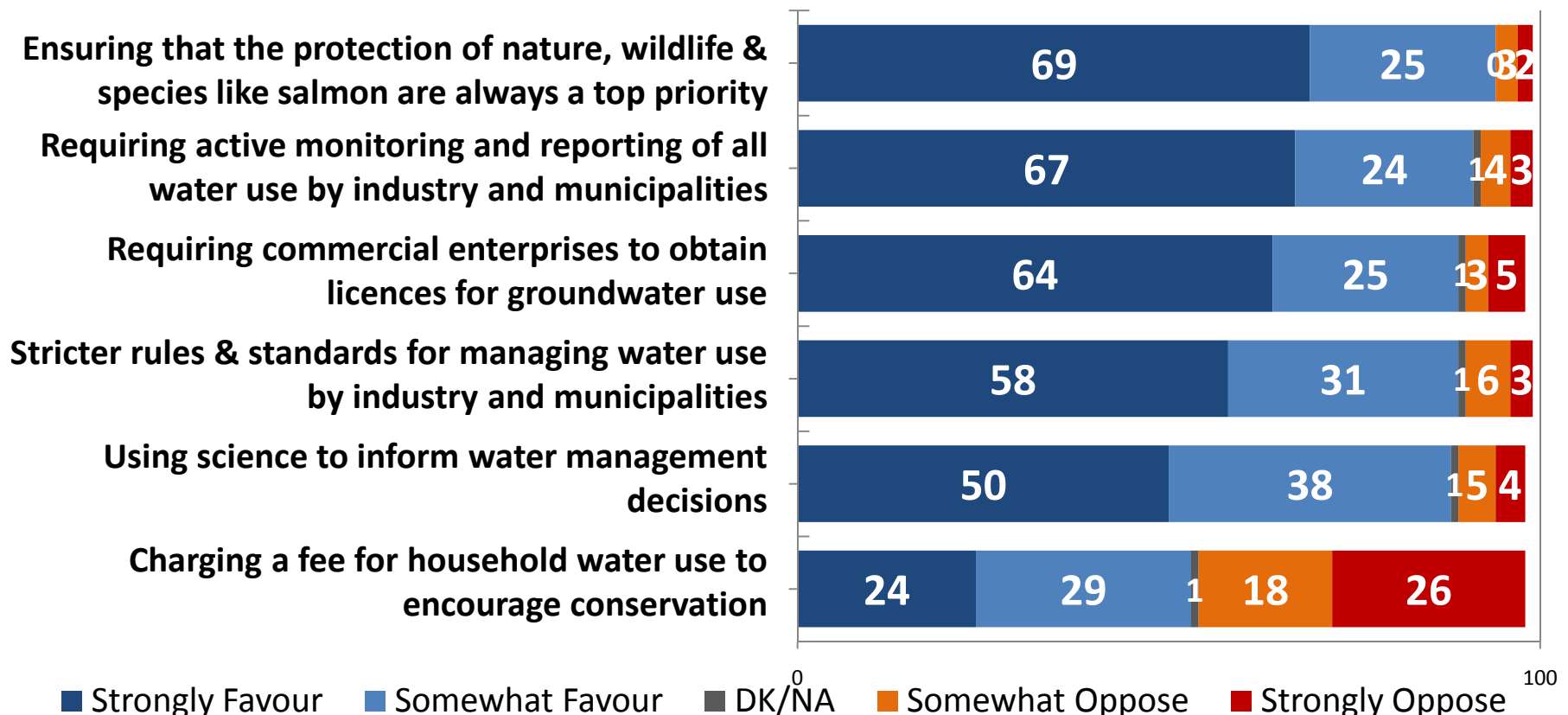
North Central residents are more likely to have heard of the BC government water initiative

Have you seen or heard anything about the BC provincial government's initiative to modernize and improve rules for protecting and managing our water?

	Lower Mainland/ Southwest	Vancouver Island/Coast	Southern Interior	North/ Central BC
Yes	12%	14%	16%	21%
No	85%	84%	84%	78%
Unsure	3%	2%	1%	1%

Strong support for new rules

There are various ways in which BC could update its rules for protecting and managing fresh water. Please say if you would FAVOUR or OPPOSE each of the following IDEAS ...?










Support for new rules is strongest...

There are various ways in which BC could update its rules for protecting and managing fresh water. Please say if you would FAVOUR or OPPOSE each of the following IDEAS ...?

<i>"Strongly Favour"</i>	Lower Mainland/ Southwest	Vancouver Island/Coast	Southern Interior	North/ Central BC
Ensuring that protection of nature, wildlife & species like salmon always a top priority	69%	74%	66%	65%
Requiring active monitoring & reporting of all water use by industry and municipalities	67%	68%	70%	56%
Requiring commercial enterprises to obtain licences for groundwater use	62%	70%	65%	64%
Putting in place stricter rules & standards for managing water use by industry & municipalities	58%	56%	57%	58%
Using science to inform water management decisions	51%	49%	46%	45%
Charging a fee for household water use to encourage conservation	22%	29%	30%	16%

Nature a top priority during times of water scarcity

AFTER DRINKING WATER, what should be the TOP PRIORITY USE for fresh water during times of water scarcity? In your opinion, should the priority be...

Survival of natural species & aquatic life like salmon		45%
Agricultural production		38%
Hydro-electric power generation		9%
Industrial production		2%
Tourism & recreation		1%
OTHER		3%
VOLUNTEERED: DK/NA		3%

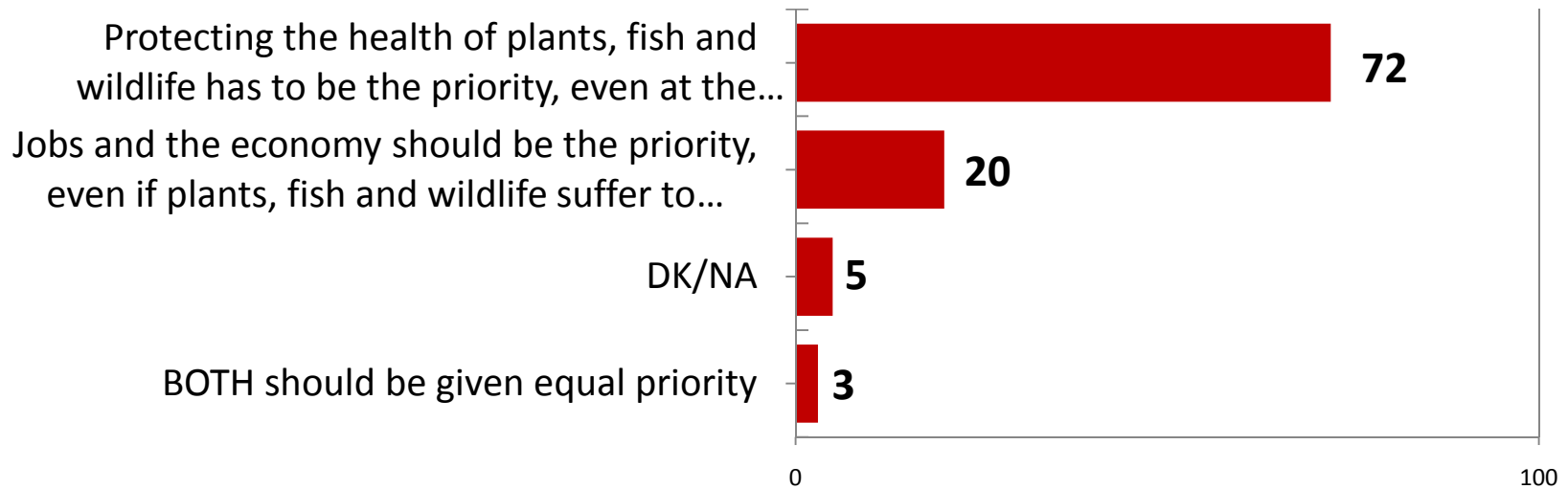
Island coastal residents are most likely to place a priority on securing Nature's needs for water

AFTER DRINKING WATER, what should be the TOP PRIORITY USE for fresh water during times of water scarcity? In your opinion, should the priority be...

	Lower Mainland/ Southwest	Vancouver Island/ Coast	Southern Interior	North/ Central BC
Protecting plants, fish and wildlife has to be the priority, even at the risk of slowing down economic growth	69%	81%	75%	70%
Jobs and the economy should be the priority, even if plants, fish and wildlife suffer to some extent	23%	12%	17%	17%
(VOLUNTEERED) BOTH should be given equal priority	3%	1%	4%	9%
DK/NA	5%	5%	4%	3%

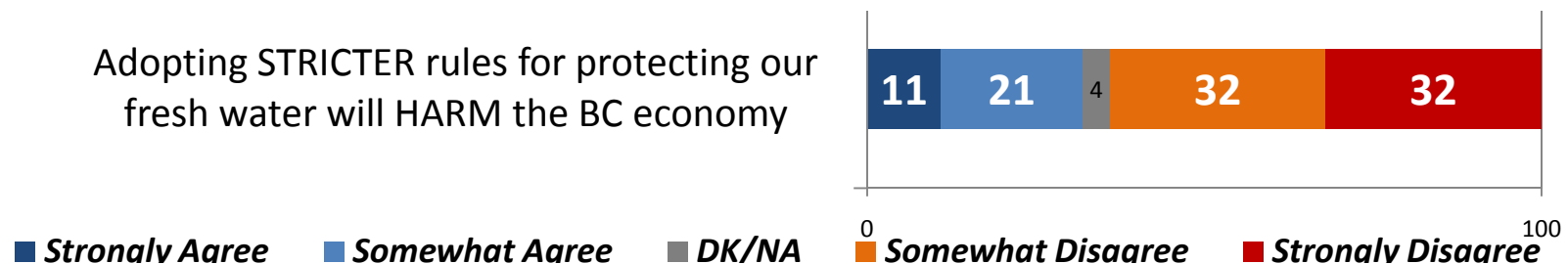
Nature a priority for managing water use during times of water scarcity *even if it slows economic growth*

Which of these statements about managing the USE OF WATER during times of water scarcity do you most AGREE with MOST?



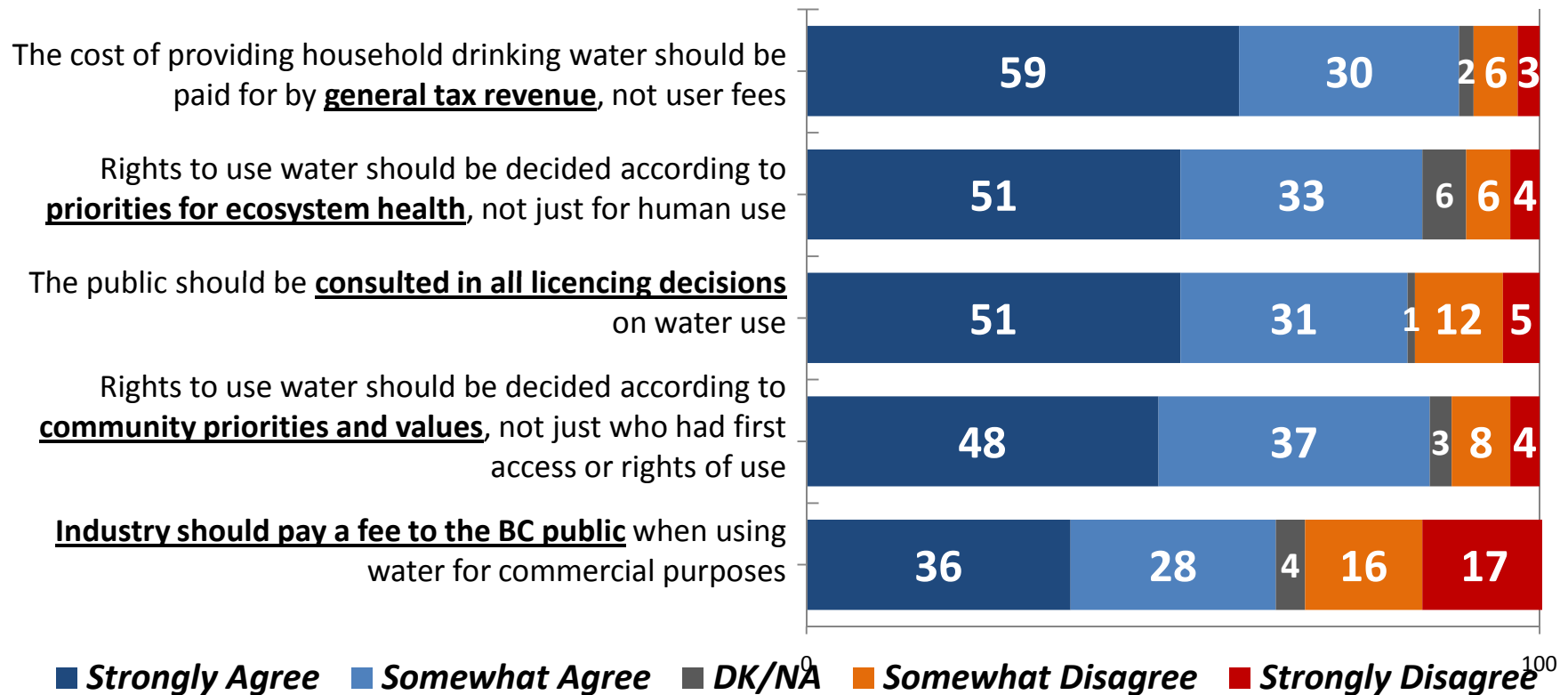
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement...

Adopting STRICTER rules for protecting our fresh water will HARM the BC economy



Strong support for water as a publicly-owned resource

Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements...



Environmental groups have the most relative credibility on water issues

AND FINALLY, when it comes to protecting fresh water in BC, please say whether you have a great deal, some, a little or no CONFIDENCE in the following groups?

%	TOTAL CONFIDENCE	A Great Deal of Confidence	Some	A Little	No Confidence
Environmental groups	77	31	46	14	9
Local government	64	10	54	19	16
BC Hydro	59	12	47	22	16
First Nations	55	17	38	24	18
BC provincial government	48	6	42	25	26
Federal government	45	5	40	29	25
Industry	27	3	24	33	38

Conclusions

“The water that you touch is the last of what has passed and the first of that which comes; so with present time.”

Leonardo da Vinci

Conclusions

1. Broad consensus that fresh water is critical to British Columbia's prosperity and well-being .
2. Two out of three British Columbians believe the rules currently governing water use are not enough to protect against future threats to availability.
3. Little awareness of Government of British Columbia initiatives on water policy reform(i.e. Water Act Modernization; Living Water Smart Plan).
4. Strong support for securing water for ecosystems and species as top priority for water law and management.
5. ENGOs have credibility among the public on water issues.

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