



## Water concerns linger despite rains

By Mike Lee

Tuesday, December 13, 2011



A new poll by Field Research shows California residents remain worried about longterm water supplies even though reservoirs are at or near record levels.

The survey was conducted in late November for the Association of California Water Agencies, an alliance of departments that deliver water to most of the state's residents. It's part of a long walk-up toward a November 2012 vote on a bond that would pay for upgrades and expansion to the state's aging water supply system.

Three-fourths of respondents cited concern about water, with 28 percent "extremely" concerned and 47 percent "somewhat" concerned. In addition, 84 percent said the state has major water problems and must invest in its water infrastructure to ensure future reliability.

Mark DiCamillo, senior vice president with Field Research, said the findings show water remains a significant issue even though the economy is dominant.

"You still have a significant majority saying they are concerned about water," said a statement by DiCamillo, who has surveyed Californians regarding water and other issues for more than 20 years. "There is also a core base of support for investing public dollars in upgrading and expanding the state's water system through a water bond. That base is about 40 percent, with another 22 percent that is sympathetic and inclined to feel that way."

Field Research polled 1,000 registered voters in English and Spanish between Nov. 15 and 27.

Water association officials seized on the results.

"At a time when the public is hypersensitive about how dollars are spent, investing in water infrastructure may be in a class by itself because water is seen as such an essential service and a critical part of our economy and jobs," Executive Director Timothy Quinn said in a press release.

The California Building Industry Association, the California Farm Bureau Federation and other groups also said the poll underscored the importance of the state's water supply system -- but it's too soon to say whether residents will be willing to pay for major new costs when many are struggling to pay other bills.

[Region's water outlook bright for 2012]

[Rare bird sends buzz through enthusiasts]

[Abalones cling to life as recovery plan forms]

Mike Lee: [mike.lee@uniontrib.com](mailto:mike.lee@uniontrib.com); (619)293-2034; Follow on Twitter @sdutlee

© Copyright 2011 The San Diego Union-Tribune, LLC. An MLIM LLC Company. All rights reserved.