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## Arizona Voters Want Conservation as Part of Balanced Approach to Water Management

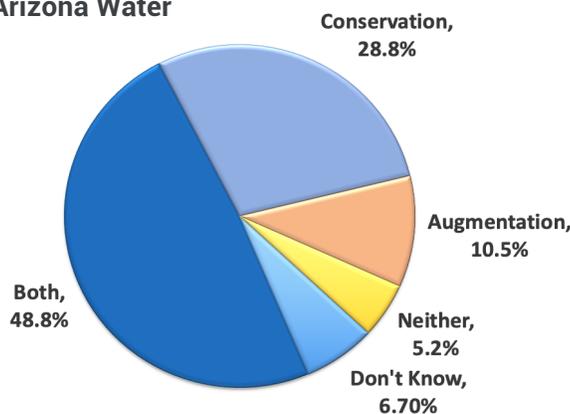
*Statewide survey demonstrates that nearly half of likely voters want “both” water augmentation and conservation*

(PHOENIX–April 14, 2022) As the state of Arizona considers establishing the Arizona Water Authority (AWA) and dedicating up to \$1 billion to finance major water projects, a statewide survey reveals that the most popular water management approach supported by voters features both conservation and augmentation tools. In addition, “long-term water supplies” was again found to be a top issue of concern among likely voters, trailing only education and immigration issues.

The big winner in the latest statewide survey conducted by HighGround Public Affairs was financing “both” conservation and augmentation, with nearly 50% selecting that option as the best water management approach for the state. Nearly 29% of voters preferred prioritizing conservation, while only 11% supported a sole focus on augmentation.

*Survey question: The state of Arizona is considering establishing the Arizona Water Authority and setting aside up to \$1 billion to finance major augmentation and conservation projects. Augmentation is focused on new water sources through ideas like desalination and pipelines from other water sources. Conservation is focused on ideas such as water storage, increased efficiency, groundwater recharge, and wastewater reuse. Which do you think should be the state’s top priority?*

**Water Priorities for Arizona  
Likely Voters: Arizona Water  
Authority**



<b>GOP:</b>	24.1% Conservation vs. 15.1% Augmentation 44.6% Both
<b>Dem:</b>	33.8% Conservation vs. 6.6% Augmentation 52.9% Both
<b>PND:</b> <small>Party Not Disclosed</small>	27.3% Conservation vs. 6.1% Augmentation 54.5% Both
<b>IND:</b> <small>Independent</small>	34.4% Conservation vs. 12.5% Augmentation 40.6% Both
<b>Maricopa:</b>	26.2% Conservation vs. 11.5% Augmentation 51.9% Both
<b>Pima:</b>	34.4% Conservation vs. 9.8% Augmentation 41% Both
<b>Rural:</b>	32.9% Conservation vs. 7.6% Augmentation Both 44.3%

Voters strongly agreed that the AWA should reflect a multifaceted approach that prioritizes both conservation and augmentation efforts, exploring a wide range of efforts to better address the needs of Arizonans. The option for “both” conservation and augmentation was the highest priority among all partisan and regional constituencies, and conservation outweighed augmentation among all segments for the second-highest option, including among Republicans and rural Arizona voters.

The Water for Arizona Coalition offered the following comments on the survey results:

“The Arizona Water Authority proposal has opened the door for the Legislature to seize a historic opportunity on the scale of the Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan and the 1980 Groundwater Act to craft high-impact water investments and conservation policy solutions that benefit the entire state,” said Haley Paul, policy director with the National Audubon Society and co-lead of the Water for Arizona Coalition.

“Arizona voters clearly want balanced, proactive and inclusive water management that prioritizes protecting and conserving the water we *do* have,” said Chris Kuzdas, senior water program manager for the Environmental Defense Fund and co-lead of the Water for Arizona Coalition.

As outlined in the coalition’s [Arizona Water Security Plan](#), the following needs should guide the development of the Arizona Water Authority:

1. Groundwater levels in many parts of Arizona and Colorado River Basin are in decline. We must act now.
2. Rural Arizona communities that rely on groundwater as their only or primary water supply need significant financial and technical resources and new, locally tailored management tools to ensure they have a secure water future.
3. Public investments in water should benefit all Arizonans. The purpose of water supply and management investments should be to enhance the security and reliability of water supplies for all of Arizona.
4. Public investments must support the sustainability and reliability of Arizona water supplies. To adapt to drought conditions and capitalize on public investment opportunities, we must develop an “all of the above” statewide supply and demand strategy that includes aggressive conservation, recycling and reuse, multi-benefit stormwater and groundwater recharge, and watershed restoration. The AWA should prioritize these types of investments.

[Previous polling](#) demonstrated that voters support efforts by the Arizona Legislature to protect rural groundwater supplies and help Arizona adapt to drought. Voters continue to express growing concern about water security and want their lawmakers to act.

[Water for Arizona Polling  
Data January 2022](#)

[Water for Arizona Coalition  
AWA Fact Sheet](#)

[Water for Arizona Coalition  
Water Security Plan](#)



### **About the Survey**

The N=400 survey was conducted among likely voters March 26 through March 27. The poll surveyed likely Arizona 2022 General Election voters who have a history of electoral participation and was balanced to model the likely turnout of voters across party, age, region, and gender. No weighting has been applied. The sample was provided from the internal voter database maintained by HighGround.

The live interview survey of voters was conducted in English by HighGround Public Affairs to both landline and cell phone users. The statewide survey was paid for by HighGround and conducted by HighGround Public Affairs on a variety of election and policy issues facing the state.

The question quoted in the release is provided verbatim. The survey questions not released are not reasonably expected to influence the response to the questions included in this release. Voters without a valid home phone or cell phone were not contacted.

The partisan advantage was set at +8% GOP based on previous midterm election trends, including the uptick in Democratic participation in past two election cycles combined with expected increase in enthusiasm among Republicans in the gubernatorial Election. The margin of error is  $\pm 4.9\%$ . For more information regarding the study, contact Paul Bentz of HighGround at 602-528-3684.

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*[The Water for Arizona Coalition](#) is a community of Arizonans who support innovative practices and smart policies to ensure a reliable water supply to meet the state's needs. The Coalition was recently recognized as an Arizona Capitol Times "2020 Leader of the Year" for their efforts in protecting Arizona's most valuable resource. Organizational support is provided by solution-oriented groups like American Rivers, Audubon Arizona, Business for Water Stewardship, Environmental Defense Action Fund, and Western Resource Advocates that collectively have over 60,000 Arizona members, as well as hundreds of hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreation enthusiasts across the state.*