



Colorado River Basin Water Security Survey

Polling by **Morning Consult** on behalf of the **Walton Family Foundation**

— JULY 2026

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Key Takeaways

1

Drought impacts are top of mind – and concern about them is high.

Nearly 9-in-10 respondents across key states are very concerned about wildfire risks, threats to clean drinking water, and lowering water levels in the Colorado River Basin.

2

Addressing drought impacts is an important priority.

Four-in-five respondents across all seven states and in the Colorado River Basin counties say addressing the drought impacts from the Colorado River is an important priority to them personally and the majority say it is important for the federal government or their state government to make addressing water security a priority this year.

3

Respondents support a range of approaches to protect the Colorado River – and want these approaches prioritized.

Nine-in-ten respondents support restoring wetlands to help protect communities from fires, increasing agricultural efficiency to reduce water use, boosting municipal water conservation, and managing forests to limit wildfire damage. Support is broad across the political spectrum, ranging from more than eight-in-ten Republicans and Independents to more than nine-in-ten Democrats. Similar shares say each approach is an important priority, with more than half saying forest management and boosting municipal conservation should be a top priority.

4

Balanced approaches to Colorado River management are preferred to short-term options.

About half of respondents across the seven states prefer strategies to address water conservation that are both long-term and short-term, to help manage the drought into the future. Ensuring reliable water supply is a top priority for respondents.

METHODOLOGY

This poll was conducted between June 12-19, 2026, among a sample of 2,474 registered voters across 7 states. The interviews were conducted online, and the data were weighted to approximate a target sample of Adults based on age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, and party identification, within each state.

Results from the full survey have a margin of error of ± 2.0 percentage points for the full sample.

Survey results are provided for educational and informational purposes only. They are not intended to, and do not, support or oppose any candidate for political office, political party, election outcome, ballot measure, or specific legislation.



Audience	Sample Size	Margin of Error
Arizona	408	+/- 5 pts
California	606	+/- 4 pts
Colorado	404	+/- 5 pts
Nevada	406	+/- 5 pts
New Mexico	200	+/- 7 pts
Utah	350	+/- 5 pts
Wyoming	100	+/- 10 pts
CRB County	974	+/- 3 pts
CRB + Water Dependent County*	1843	+/- 2 pts
Democrats	829	+/- 3 pts
Republicans	858	+/- 3 pts

* "Water Dependent County" refers to counties dependent on Colorado River water

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AGENDA

Drought Impacts

Government Role

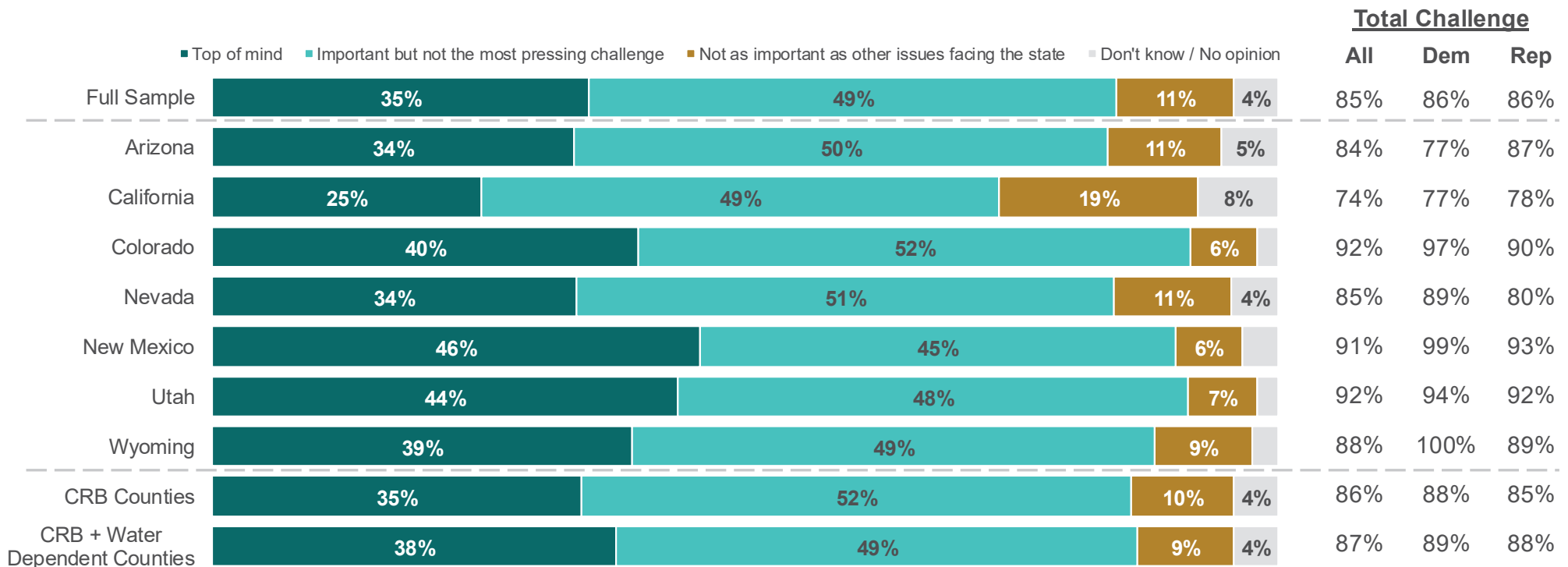
Colorado River Management



DROUGHT IMPACTS

Most respondents say addressing drought and diminishing Colorado River water supplies is a priority.

For you personally, how do the impacts of the droughts and diminishing water supplies from the Colorado River rank among other challenges facing your state?



Total challenge = % Top of mind + % Important but not the most pressing challenge.

Data label percentages less than 4% are removed from slide

DROUGHT IMPACTS

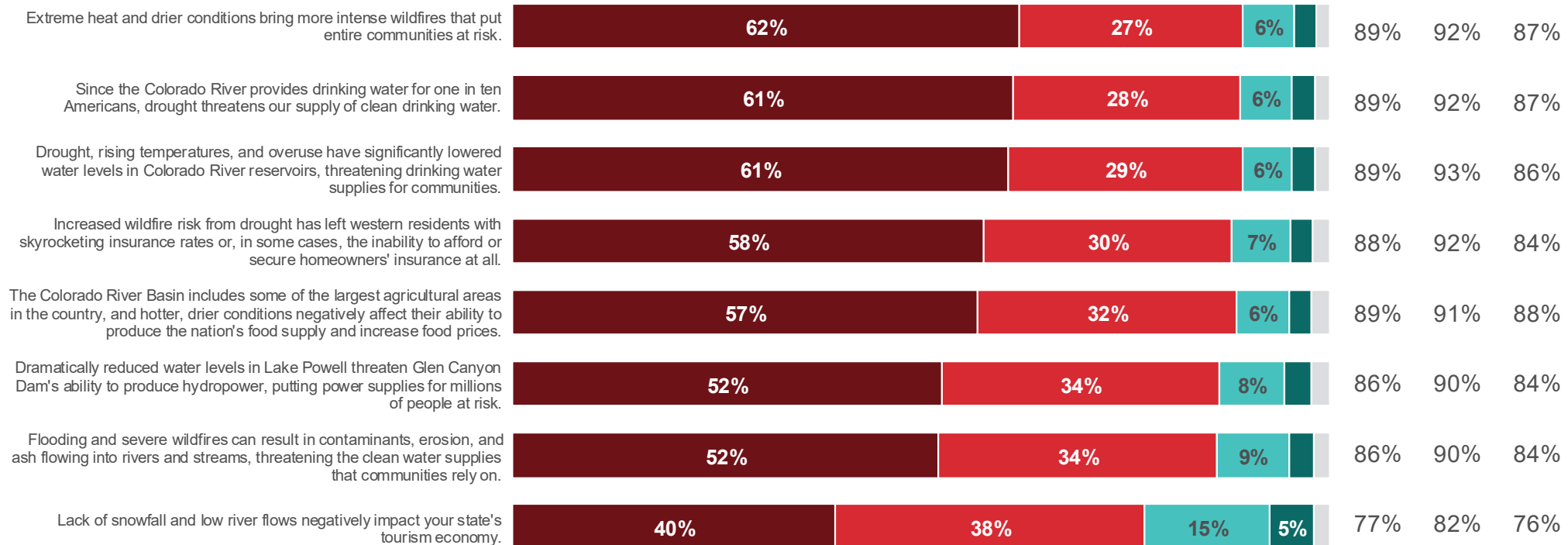
Americans are concerned about the drought's impacts on wildfires, clean drinking water, and lowering water levels in the Colorado River reservoirs.

How concerned are you about each of the following impacts of drought? *Among respondents in all seven states n=2,474*

■ Very concerned ■ Somewhat concerned ■ Not too concerned ■ Not at all concerned ■ Don't know / No opinion

Total Concerned

All Dem Rep



DROUGHT IMPACTS

Concern about drought impacts is high across all states, but *Colorado* respondents lead on wildfire and water concerns. *New Mexico* and *Wyoming* respondents express greater concern about its harm to the tourism economy compared to other states.

How concerned are you about each of the following impacts of drought?

% Very + Somewhat concerned	Full Sample	Arizona	California	Colorado	Nevada	New Mexico	Utah	Wyoming	CRB Counties	CRB + Water Dependent Counties
Extreme heat and drier conditions bring more intense wildfires that put entire communities at risk.	89%	89%	87%	92%	87%	93%	91%	91%	87%	89%
Since the Colorado River provides drinking water for one in ten Americans, drought threatens our supply of clean drinking water.	89%	89%	85%	92%	86%	93%	93%	91%	87%	89%
Drought, rising temperatures, and overuse have significantly lowered water levels in Colorado River reservoirs, threatening drinking water supplies for communities.	89%	90%	86%	94%	87%	92%	92%	84%	88%	90%
Increased wildfire risk from drought has left western residents with skyrocketing insurance rates or, in some cases, the inability to afford or secure homeowners' insurance at all.	88%	86%	87%	92%	84%	91%	89%	97%	85%	88%
The Colorado River Basin includes some of the largest agricultural areas in the country, and hotter, drier conditions negatively affect their ability to produce the nation's food supply and increase food prices.	89%	87%	86%	95%	86%	94%	88%	89%	86%	89%
Dramatically reduced water levels in Lake Powell threaten Glen Canyon Dam's ability to produce hydropower, putting power supplies for millions of people at risk.	86%	88%	82%	90%	83%	89%	90%	92%	85%	87%
Flooding and severe wildfires can result in contaminants, erosion, and ash flowing into rivers and streams, threatening the clean water supplies that communities rely on.	86%	87%	81%	93%	82%	90%	88%	88%	84%	86%
Lack of snowfall and low river flows negatively impact your state's tourism economy.	77%	79%	76%	74%	77%	81%	77%	88%	77%	77%

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AGENDA

Drought Impacts

Government Role

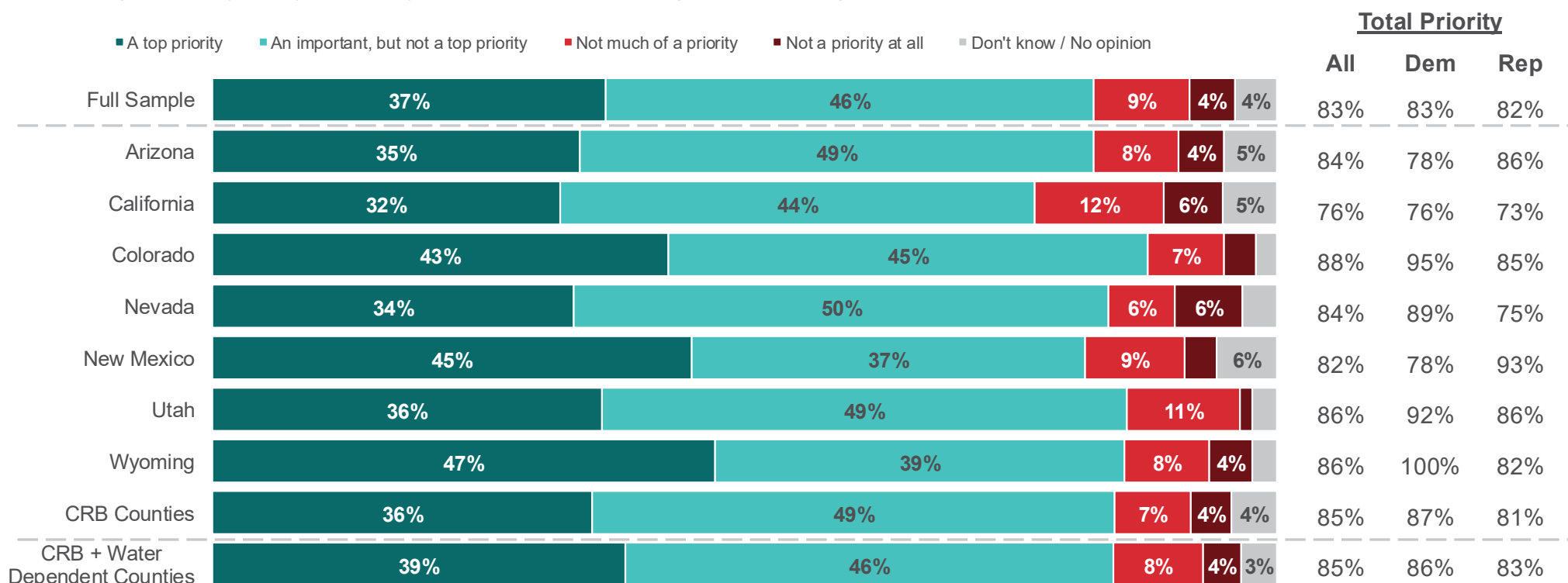
Colorado River Management



GOVERNMENT ROLE

Addressing the drought impacts from the Colorado River is an important priority to four-in-five respondents across the seven states and in key Colorado River Basin counties – nearly half of respondents in *Wyoming* and *New Mexico* say it is a *top priority*.

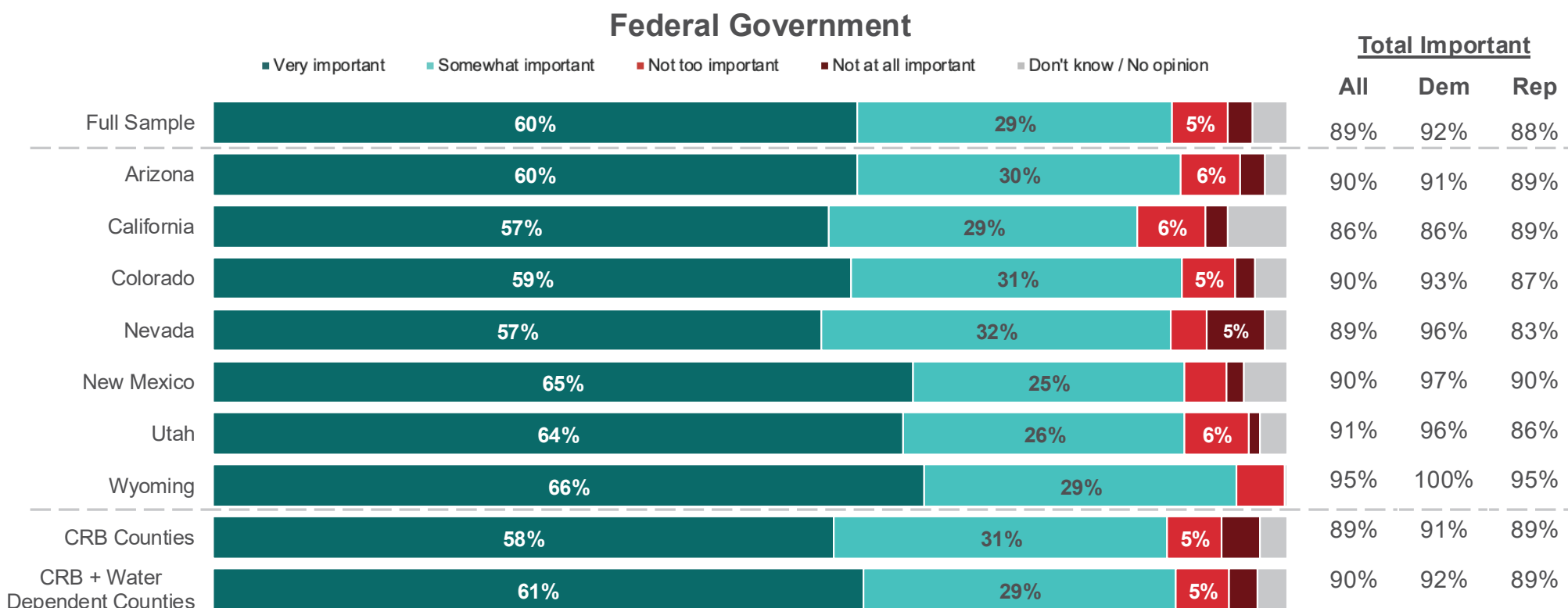
How high of a priority is it to you personally to address the impacts of droughts and diminishing water supplies from the Colorado River?



GOVERNMENT ROLE

Nine-in-ten respondents want to see federal government officials make addressing water security in the Colorado River Basin a priority.

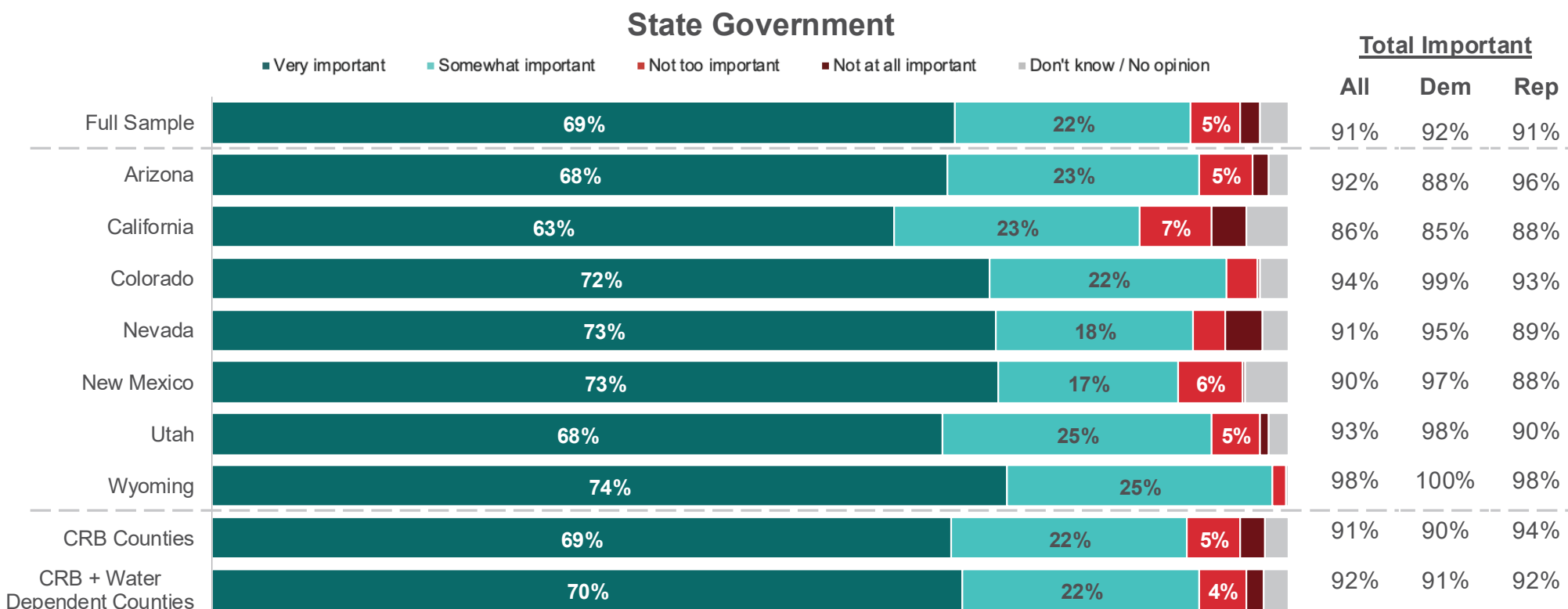
How important is it for each of the following to make addressing water security in Colorado River Basin states a priority this year?



GOVERNMENT ROLE

Most consider water security in the Colorado River Basin just as important a priority for state government officials as for federal ones.

How important is it for each of the following to make addressing water security in Colorado River Basin states a priority this year?



GOVERNMENT ROLE

The vast majority of respondents across the seven states support different approaches to protect the Colorado River.

How much do you support or oppose the following approaches to protect the Colorado River and water security in your state?

Among respondents in all seven states n=2,474



Total Support = % Strongly support + % Somewhat support

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GOVERNMENT ROLE

At least eight-in-ten respondents in each sub-geographic area support each solution to protect the Colorado River, with nearly nine-in-ten respondents across all states voicing support.

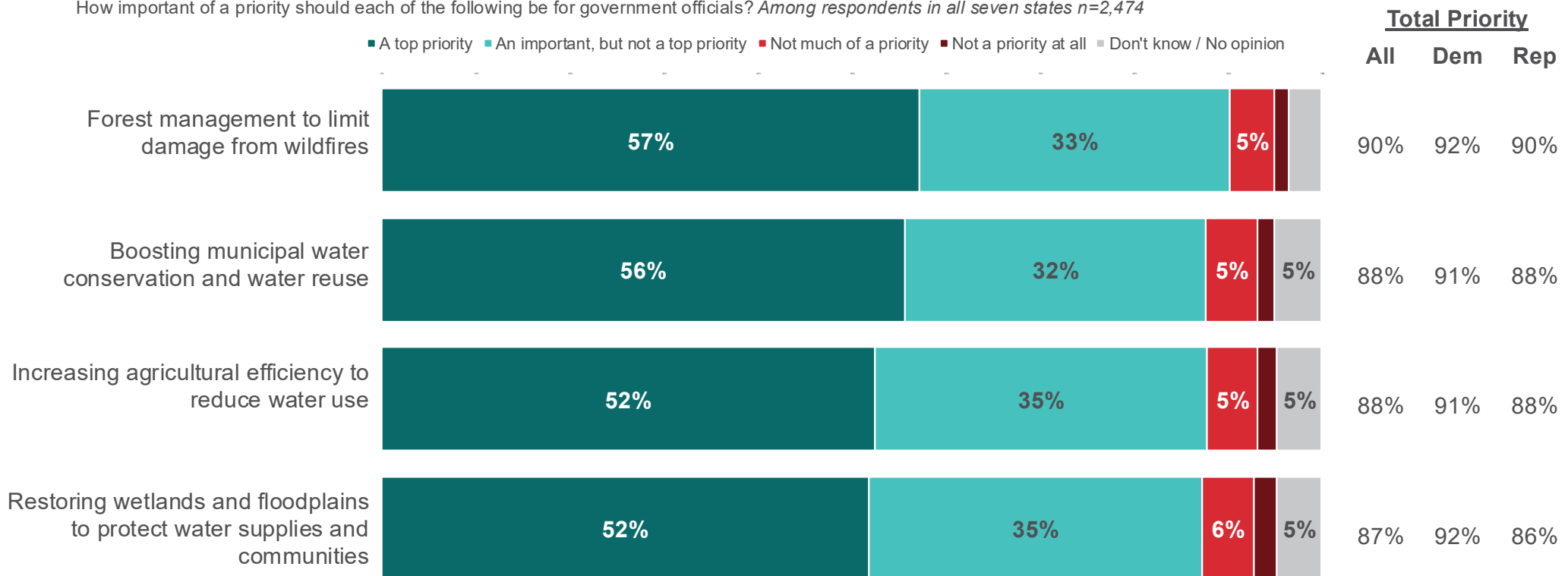
How much do you support or oppose the following approaches to protect the Colorado River and water security in your state?

<i>% Strongly + Somewhat support</i>	Full Sample	Arizona	California	Colorado	Nevada	New Mexico	Utah	Wyoming	CRB Counties	CRB + Water Dependent Counties
Restoring wetlands and reconnecting rivers to their floodplains to help protect communities from fires and floods and filter pollutants from drinking water.	87%	88%	83%	91%	84%	92%	89%	84%	87%	87%
Increasing agricultural efficiency by helping farmers to implement water-saving strategies like planting lower water-use crops and investing in water-saving infrastructure.	87%	87%	83%	90%	86%	88%	88%	87%	87%	87%
Boosting municipal water conservation and water reuse with methods like water-efficient plumbing and appliances, leak-detection systems, recycling and reuse of purified wastewater, replacement of lawns with drought-tolerant landscaping, and incorporating water planning into development and growth decisions.	87%	91%	82%	89%	86%	88%	87%	84%	89%	88%
Proactively managing and restoring forests using strategies such as thinning overgrown areas and conducting prescribed burns to protect communities and water infrastructure from catastrophic wildfires.	87%	86%	85%	86%	87%	90%	88%	92%	87%	87%

GOVERNMENT ROLE

Nearly three-in-five respondents across the seven states think forest management to limit wildfire damage and boosting water conservation and water reuse should be a top priority for government officials in their state.

How important of a priority should each of the following be for government officials? Among respondents in all seven states n=2,474



Total Priority = % Top priority + % An important, but not top priority
Data label percentages less than 4% are removed from slide

GOVERNMENT ROLE

Forest management leads as a top priority, with boosting municipal water conservation, increasing agricultural efficiency, and restoring wetlands and floodplains each rated as similarly important.

How important of a priority should each of the following be for government officials?

<i>% Top + Important priority</i>	Full Sample	Arizona	California	Colorado	Nevada	New Mexico	Utah	Wyoming	CRB Counties	CRB + Water Dependent Counties
Forest management to limit damage from wildfires	90%	85%	90%	92%	91%	91%	92%	97%	88%	90%
Boosting municipal water conservation and water reuse	88%	82%	85%	91%	90%	90%	90%	93%	87%	88%
Increasing agricultural efficiency to reduce water use	88%	84%	84%	90%	89%	91%	91%	96%	87%	88%
Restoring wetlands and floodplains to protect water supplies and communities	87%	85%	84%	91%	87%	91%	89%	89%	87%	88%

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AGENDA

Drought Impacts

Government Role

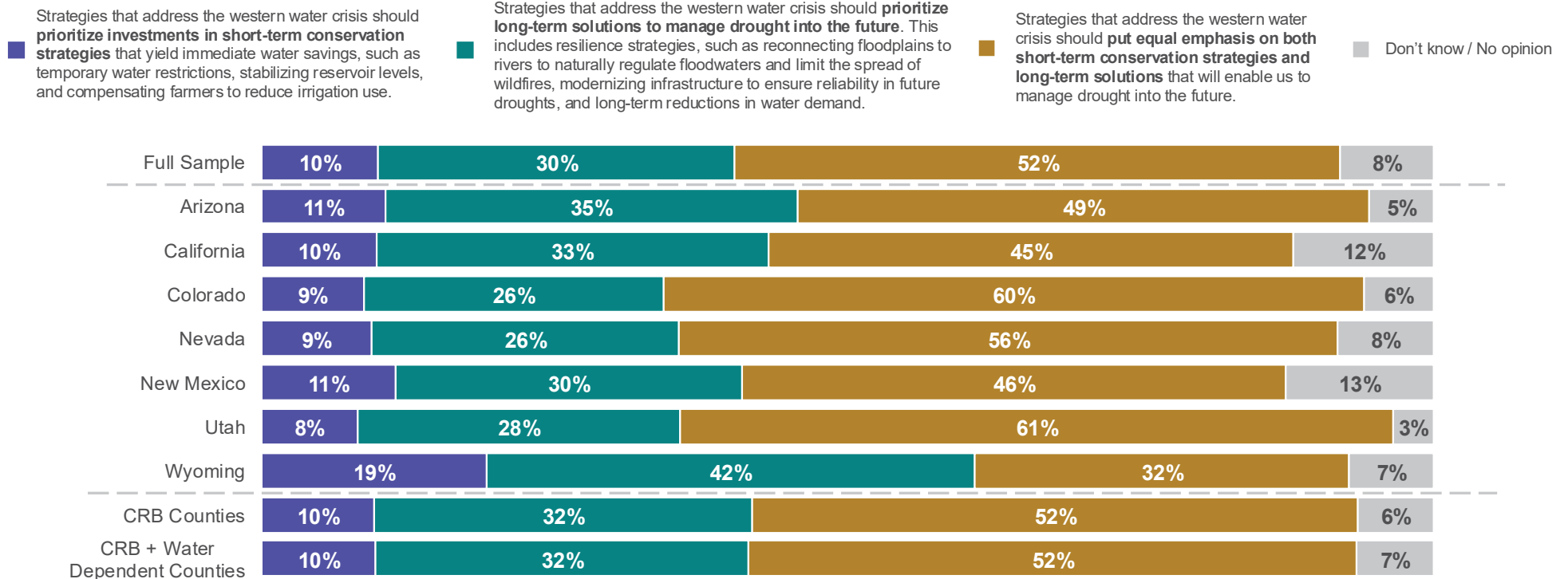
Colorado River Management



COLORADO RIVER MANAGEMENT

Most prefer both long-term solutions to manage drought and short-term conservation strategies.

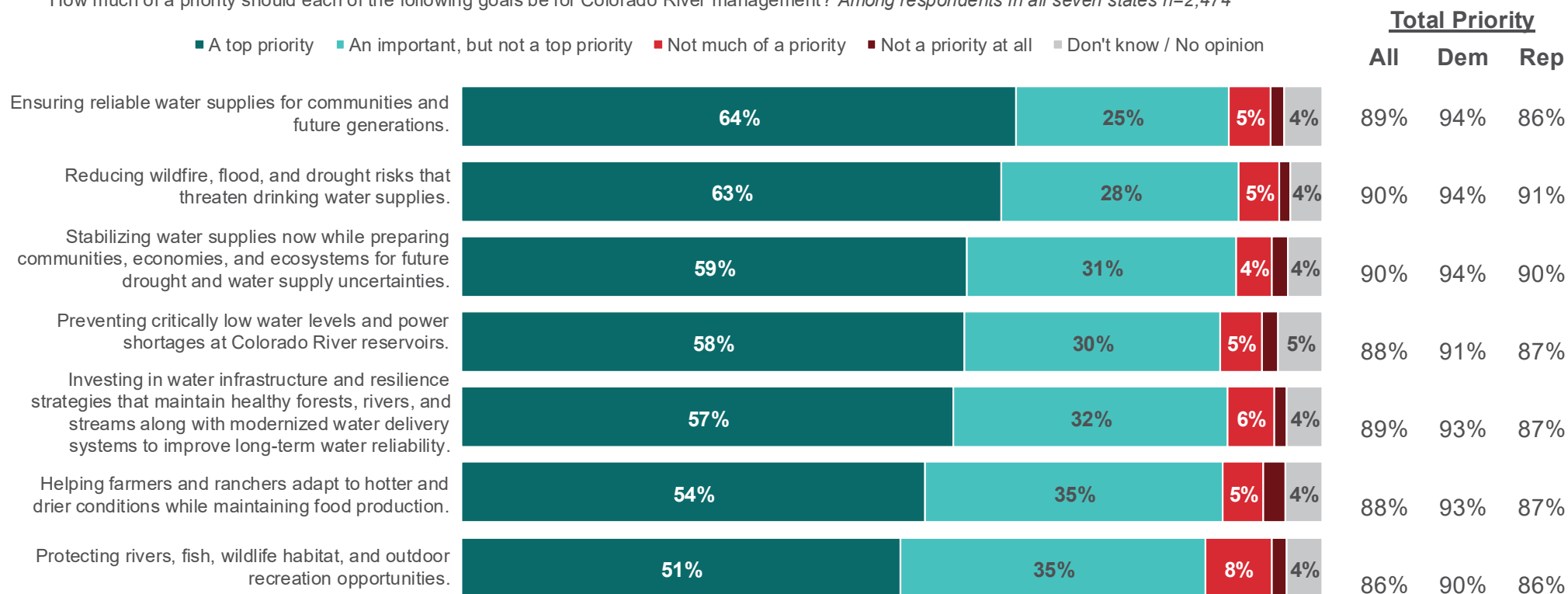
When it comes to improving the health of the Colorado River, which of the following is closest to your point of view?



COLORADO RIVER MANAGEMENT

Across parties, respondents see ensuring reliable water supplies for communities and reducing natural disaster as top priorities for Colorado River management.

How much of a priority should each of the following goals be for Colorado River management? Among respondents in all seven states n=2,474



COLORADO RIVER MANAGEMENT

Ensuring reliable water supplies, stabilizing water supplies, and reducing threats from natural disasters are respondents' top management goals.

How much of a priority should each of the following goals be for Colorado River management?

<i>% Top + Important priority</i>	Full Sample	Arizona	California	Colorado	Nevada	New Mexico	Utah	Wyoming	CRB Counties	CRB + Water Dependent Counties
Ensuring reliable water supplies for communities and future generations.	89%	87%	87%	91%	90%	90%	90%	91%	88%	89%
Reducing wildfire, flood, and drought risks that threaten drinking water supplies.	90%	86%	89%	91%	91%	91%	93%	93%	89%	91%
Stabilizing water supplies now while preparing communities, economies, and ecosystems for future drought and water supply uncertainties.	90%	91%	87%	92%	90%	89%	92%	92%	90%	90%
Preventing critically low water levels and power shortages at Colorado River reservoirs.	88%	87%	86%	88%	90%	89%	90%	90%	87%	88%
Investing in water infrastructure and resilience strategies that maintain healthy forests, rivers, and streams along with modernized water delivery systems to improve long-term water reliability.	89%	86%	88%	90%	89%	90%	93%	87%	88%	89%
Helping farmers and ranchers adapt to hotter and drier conditions while maintaining food production.	88%	88%	87%	89%	88%	90%	89%	96%	87%	89%
Protecting rivers, fish, wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation opportunities.	86%	85%	85%	88%	85%	92%	87%	90%	84%	87%

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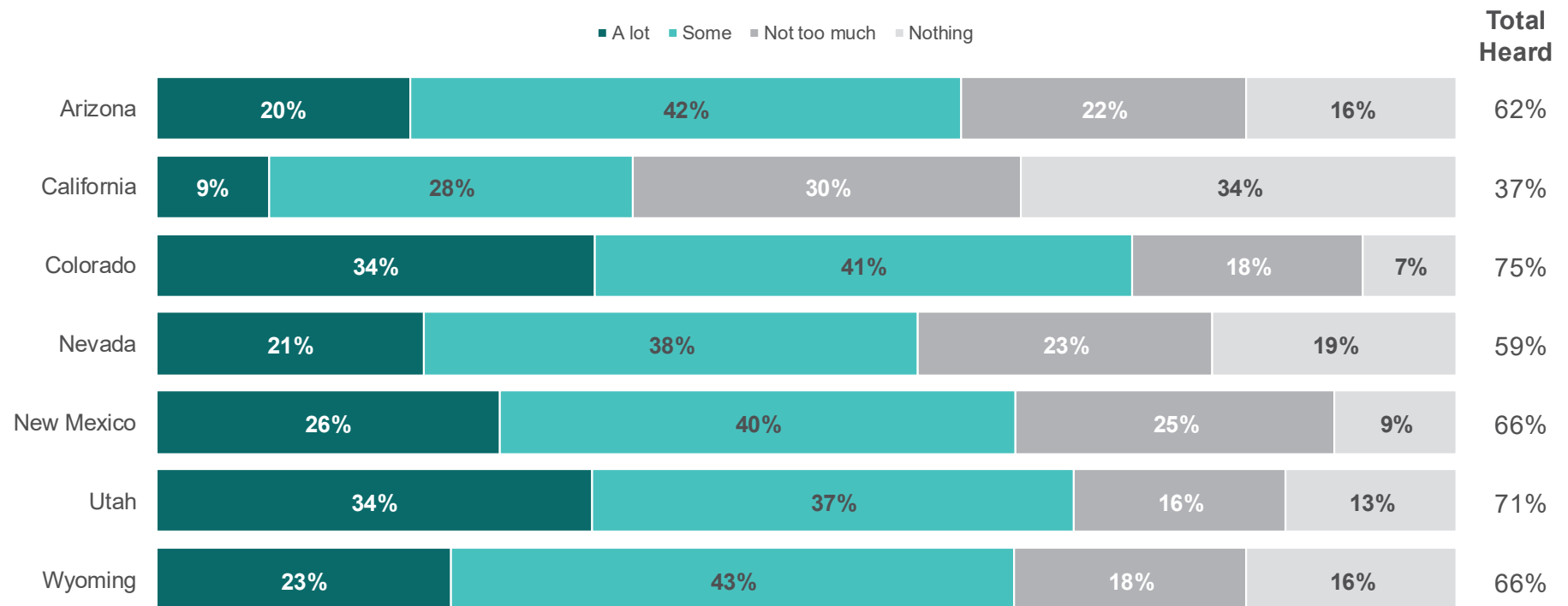
Appendix



AWARENESS

Respondents in Colorado, Utah, and New Mexico have heard the most about the drought in the Colorado River Basin. California respondents are the least likely to report hearing about it this year.

How much have you heard, seen, or read this year about drought in the Colorado River Basin and _____?



Total heard = % A lot + % Some



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