

# Californians ready to ramp up recycled water use\*

Statewide study reveals strong support for recycled water as a solution to water scarcity

## Introduction

The overwhelming majority of Californian adults support using recycled water in the home, even when the state is not experiencing drought conditions. Drought-weary Californians also believe another drought is in their near future, and they are concerned about future water supplies.

The majority of respondents - across a wide political spectrum - support public policies to promote and incentivize the use of recycled water.

The survey was commissioned by Xylem Inc.

## Key Findings

### High levels of concern about future droughts

- 🔹 Ninety percent of Californians report being concerned about future water shortages, with over half being very concerned.
- 🔹 Nearly 90 percent believe that the state will experience a major drought within the next five years.
- 🔹 Almost half (49 percent) believe the state is at risk of another drought within the next year.



## Continued strong support for recycled water

- 💧 The vast majority of Californians – 87 percent of survey respondents – reported that they are willing to use recycled water in their daily lives. This represents a two-percent decline from the support expressed during the fourth year of California’s extended drought, when Xylem conducted its first public opinion survey to gauge Californians’ perceptions of recycled water.
- 💧 Californians across the political spectrum support using recycled water as an additional local water supply, regardless of water shortages. More than 90 percent believe it is important to adopt solutions to safeguard the water supply, including expanding the availability of recycled water.
- 💧 Nearly 9 in 10 people support actions by local water agencies to provide financial incentives to households that use recycled water and adopt recycled water as a standard practice to prepare for future droughts.

**Californians support the use of recycled water but policies and education are needed to accelerate mainstream adoption**

## New policies and more education will help accelerate adoption

- 💧 Slightly more Californians believe that recycled water is available to them at home today than they did during the drought (47 percent vs. 41 percent). However, significantly fewer people reported being familiar with the technologies used to purify wastewater so it can be reused for personal needs than they did during the drought (46 percent vs. 52 percent).
- 💧 A majority of Californians (75 percent) report trusting the treatment process that is used to purify wastewater for personal uses. Upon learning more about the water treatment process, support for using recycled water for cooking, drinking and bathing increased substantially in 2017, a more notable increase than was seen in 2015.

### \*Methodology

In Fall 2015 Xylem commissioned an online public opinion survey to gauge Californians’ perceptions of recycled, purified, and reclaimed water. This survey was conducted in three waves, using three different terms: Recycled/Purified/Reclaimed among a total audience of 3,004 California residents. Respondents were representative of the general California population, based on age, ethnicity, gender, and region.

Building on the findings from the inaugural survey, the Fall 2017 study continued to track California residents’ perceptions of using “Recycled Water” and their understanding of the technology used to treat it. The 1,000 respondents to the 2017 survey were also representative of the general California population, based on age, gender, and region. Both surveys were conducted by [Edelman Intelligence](#).

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