



SDIPR San Diego Survey, September 2007  
(n=1008 adult residents/505 City of San Diego, Track A; 503 outside, Track B)  
RDD  
Weighted on Voter Registration, Age, Gender  
Field dates: Sept. 4-9

Hi this is \_\_\_\_\_ with Competitive Edge Research, a national polling firm and we're calling the good folks of San Diego County to ask your opinion on local issues. We are not selling anything. Most people find it interesting and all your answers will be kept strictly confidential. Please let me begin by asking . . .

*(Topics were rotated)*

Now I would like to ask you for your opinions about water policy.

Q. How serious is the issue of water availability in San Diego County? Would you say it is an . . .

|                          | Sep<br>County % |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Extremely serious issue  | 27.7            |
| Very serious issue       | 38.5            |
| Somewhat serious issue   | 23.9            |
| Not serious issue        | 3.9             |
| Not an issue at all      | 4.4             |
| Unsure <i>(Not Read)</i> | 1.6             |

Q.. Some people have taken steps to conserve water this summer while many others have not. How about you? Have you taken . . .

|  | Sep<br>County % |
|--|-----------------|
| No steps to try to conserve water this summer            | 12.9            |
| A few steps or   | 46.4            |
| Have you made a big effort to conserve water this summer | 38.8            |
| Unsure/Can't recall ( <i>Not Read</i> )                  | 2.0             |

Q. What steps have you taken? (*Asked of those who report taking at least a few steps to conserve water in Q18, n=866*)

|   | Sep<br>County % |
|---|-----------------|
| Water the lawn and plants less/reduced irrigation       | 35.5            |
| Shorter showers/No baths                                | 15.2            |
| Conserve water (general)                                | 8.6             |
| Washing cars less                                       | 5.7             |
| Reduced dishwasher usage/Less water when washing dishes | 5.1             |
| Don't let faucets drip or run/Fixing leaks              | 4.8             |
| Drought tolerant plants/Re-landscaped outside/No lawn   | 4.2             |
| Use water at non-peak hours                             | 3.4             |
| Reduced laundry usage                                   | 3.1             |
| Turning off water while brushing teeth or shaving       | 3.0             |
| Low-flush toilets/Flush less                            | 2.5             |
| Recycle water/Store water                               | 1.5             |
| Low flow showers and faucets                            | 1.3             |
| Reduced outside water use                               | 1.3             |
| Other   | 3.7             |
| Unsure  | 1.2             |

Q. How much have you heard, if anything, about the San Diego County Water Authority's request for voluntary efforts to conserve at least 20 gallons of water per person per day? Have you . . .

|                                    | Sep<br>County % |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Heard a lot about it               | 14.2            |
| Heard a little about it            | 33.8            |
| Have heard almost nothing about it | 15.1            |
| Have heard nothing about it        | 36.6            |
| Unsure ( <i>Not Read</i> )         | 0.2             |

Let me give you some background. San Diego is located near a desert and imports 90% of its water. As a region, we are vulnerable to severe drought if the canals and pipelines that deliver water to the region have problems or if there is long drought in the places where San Diego's water comes from. Many experts say that water availability will become a severe problem as our sources of imported water are drying up and other cities are tapping into these sources before the water reaches San Diego.

I would like to tell you a little about three different proposals that have been made about ways the region could increase the supply of water in San Diego County and some of the arguments made in favor and against of each proposals.

*(Proposals were rotated)*

- Q. One proposal calls for desalination plants to be located on the coast which would take the salt out of sea water, purify that water, and then add it to the region's drinking supply. Would you support or oppose plans to open a desalination plant in San Diego County?

|                          | Sep<br>County % |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Support, strongly        | 49.6            |
| Support, somewhat        | 28.9            |
| Oppose, somewhat         | 5.0             |
| Oppose, strongly         | 7.8             |
| Unsure <i>(Not Read)</i> | 8.7             |

Q. Let me read you two opinions about the proposal. *(Opinions were rotated)*

Smith says that, since there is a near limitless supply of ocean water along our coast, this would be an easy and cost effective way of adding to the region's drinking supply. The technology is used around the world and it means that we would not have to build more dams or rely as much on water imported from other areas.

Jones says that that the pumps and intake systems kill a huge number of ocean animals and damage the coastal environment. Desalination plants use a large amount of electricity and will reduce the public's access to the coast. It is also one of the most expensive ways to increase our water supply.

Do you agree more with Smith or Jones?

|                                     | Sep<br>County % |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Smith (Pro-Desalination), strongly  | 28.0            |
| Smith, somewhat                     | 24.1            |
| Jones, somewhat                     | 18.6            |
| Jones (Anti-Desalination), strongly | 18.9            |
| Unsure <i>(Not Read)</i>            | 10.4            |

Q. One proposal calls for treating wastewater to drinking water standards, pumping it into the region's reservoirs, and then treating that re-purified water again at the region's existing water treatment plants. Would you support or oppose plans to treat wastewater in San Diego County so that it would be drinkable?

|                          | Sep<br>County % |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Support, strongly        | 22.8            |
| Support, somewhat        | 21.5            |
| Oppose, somewhat         | 13.6            |
| Oppose, strongly         | 35.8            |
| Unsure <i>(Not Read)</i> | 6.4             |

Q. Let me read you two opinions about the proposal. *(Opinions were rotated)*

Williams says that we already treat some of our wastewater to nearly these standards but we waste most of it by dumping it into the ocean. Orange County has been using a very similar process without any problems. Also, the water we import from Northern California has been used before and this plan is really no different than what we do now. Finally, reusing water is the most environmentally-friendly way of increasing our region's water supply.

Harris says that it may make sense to recycle water for landscaping and outdoor use but it is not safe to use in our homes. Something could go wrong with the treatment plants. Even if this is the most environmentally-friendly way to increase the water supply, wastewater should not be used in this way. He calls this plan “toilet-to-tap.”

Do you agree more with Williams or Harris?

|   | Sep<br>County % |
|---|-----------------|
| Williams (Pro-Wastewater reuse), strongly | 18.9            |
| Williams, somewhat                        | 23.1            |
| Harris, somewhat                          | 16.5            |
| Harris (Anti-Wastewater reuse), strongly  | 35.4            |
| Unsure ( <i>Not Read</i> )                | 6.1             |

Q. San Diego County gets more of its water from the Colorado River than anywhere else. That water gets 400 million gallons of treated wastewater discharged into it each day. So Williams argues that we’re already drinking treated wastewater so why not solve our water supply problems by treating our local water? Knowing this, are you more inclined or less inclined to support plans to treat wastewater in San Diego County so that it would be drinkable? (*Asked of those who are not strongly supporting or strongly opposing in Q24, n=462*)

|                                   | Sep<br>County % |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Much more inclined to support     | 21.6            |
| Somewhat more inclined to support | 40.7            |
| Somewhat less inclined to support | 17.8            |
| Much less inclined to support     | 9.8             |
| Unsure ( <i>Not Read</i> )        | 10.1            |

Q. One proposal is to conserve more water. This means adopting laws(?) to cut back on the amount of lawn, flowers and other water-hungry landscape in the County. It also could mean significantly increasing the price of water for people and businesses that use lots of it. Water rationing would become more common. Would you support or oppose plans to mandate more water conservation in San Diego County?

|                            | Sep<br>County % |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Support, strongly          | 37.7            |
| Support, somewhat          | 28.8            |
| Oppose, somewhat           | 11.8            |
| Oppose, strongly           | 17.4            |
| Unsure ( <i>Not Read</i> ) | 4.4             |

Q. Now that you have heard about these three alternative plans, which, if any, would you most favor? *(Choices 1 through 3 were randomized)*

|   | Sep<br>County % |
|---|-----------------|
| Seawater desalination                       | 38.3            |
| Treating wastewater so that it is drinkable | 21.3            |
| Mandated conservation                       | 31.0            |
| None of these plans                         | 7.3             |
| Other <i>(Not Read)</i>                     | 0.5             |
| Unsure <i>(Not Read)</i>                    | 1.5             |

Q. Which, if any, would be your second choice? *(Asked of those who favor a plan in previous question, n=912)*

|   | Sep<br>County % |
|---|-----------------|
| Mandated conservation                       | 28.4            |
| Treating wastewater so that it is drinkable | 26.3            |
| Seawater desalination                       | 26.2            |
| None of these plans                         | 17.8            |
| Other <i>(Not Read)</i>                     | 0.3             |
| Unsure <i>(Not Read)</i>                    | 1.1             |

**Mean Score**

|   | Sep<br>County |
|---|---------------|
| Seawater desalination                       | 1.00          |
| Mandated conservation                       | 0.87          |
| Treating wastewater so that it is drinkable | 0.66          |