



**Delta  
Stewardship  
Council**

A CALIFORNIA STATE AGENCY

# Delta Residents Survey

## Results regarding climate change and other environmental impacts in the Delta

### Overview

In 2023, researchers surveyed over 2,000 people in California's Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta region to better understand their sense of place, quality of life, priorities and concerns for the region, as well as their experiences and attitudes related to environmental and climate change impacts (Rudnick et al., 2023). The findings show survey respondents are both aware of and concerned about climate change, support environmental protection measures, and share a desire for more robust climate action from both government and fellow residents. These survey results will inform the work of the Delta Stewardship Council and other organizations to plan and implement regional climate adaptation strategies.

### Environmental impacts experienced

Nearly half (**48.6%**) of respondents reported experiencing extreme heat, while about one-third (**35.7%**) noticed worsening air quality in their area. More than a quarter (**28.5%**) of respondents indicated they hadn't yet experienced any direct impacts from climate change in their region.

### Concerns and beliefs about climate change & environmental hazards

The vast majority of respondents acknowledged that climate change is happening; greater than **80%** believed climate change is either entirely or partially caused by human activities. Only a small fraction of respondents believed climate change isn't occurring (**4%**) or that



Photo of flooding caused by the 2004 Jones Tract levee breach. Photo credit: California Department of Water Resources.

climate change is mostly due to natural changes in the environment (**11%**).

Respondents expressed strong concern about drought, water quality, wildfires, and air quality. About half (**49%**) of respondents said they were very concerned about heat waves, while others expressed serious concerns about floods (**33%**) and rising sea levels (**26%**).

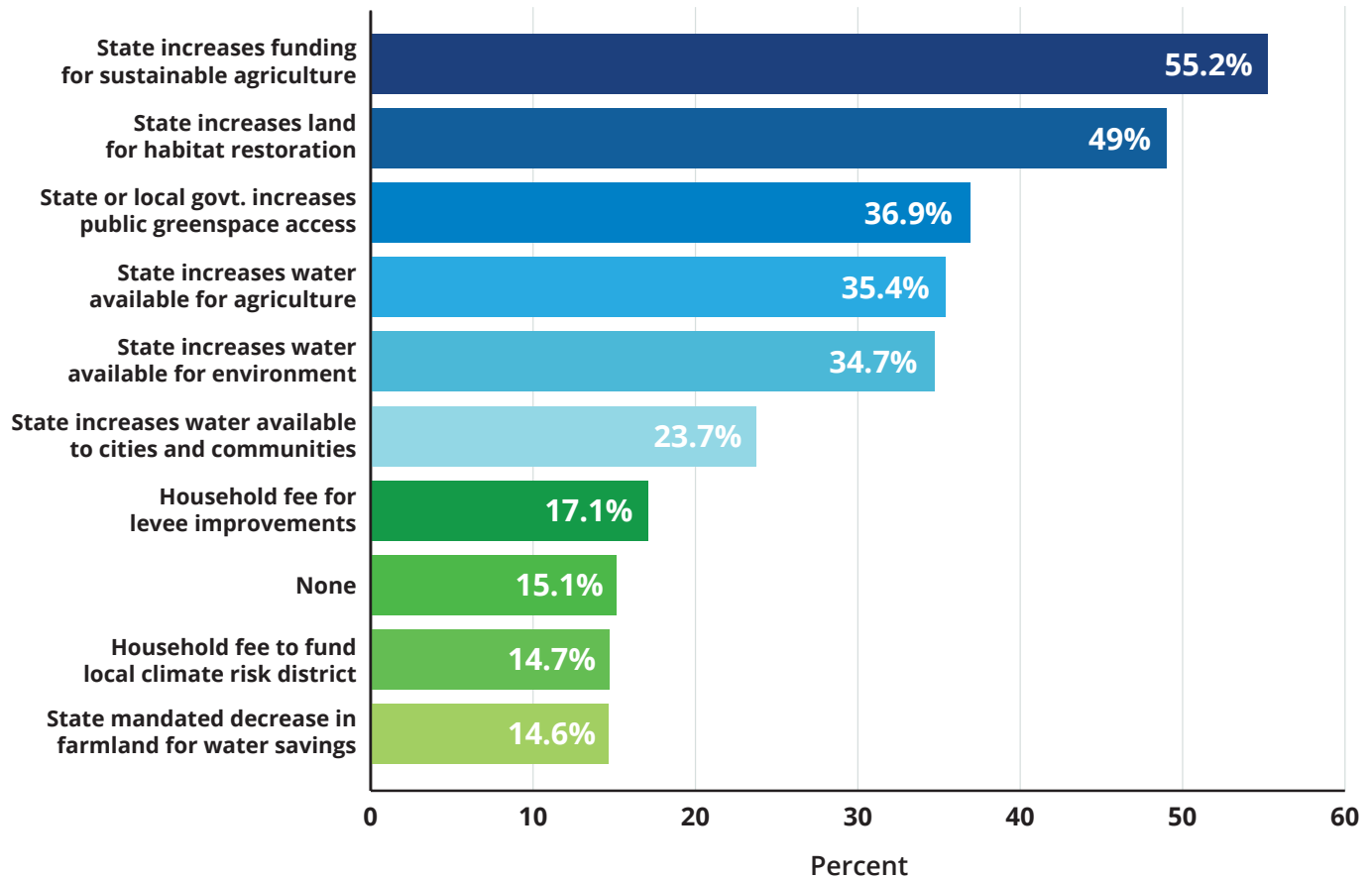
### Overview of adaptation policy preferences

Many respondents support increased government action. More than half (**55.2%**) favored additional state funding for sustainable farming practices, and almost half (**49%**) supported expanding land restoration efforts for wildlife habitat.

**Citation:** Rudnick, Jessica; Tomari, Kenji; Dobbin, Kristin; Lubell, Mark; and Biedenweg, Kelly. 2023 California Delta Residents Survey. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2024-07-01. <https://doi.org/10.3886/E195447V2>



**Figure 1: Percentages of respondents who support each of the listed climate adaptation policies**



2,196 respondents.

Respondents were asked to select all adaptation policy actions they would support.

### Drought attitudes & experiences

**68%** of respondents strongly agreed that California should prepare more for severe droughts. The survey revealed widespread sentiment that neither government bodies nor fellow Californians are doing enough to address drought concerns.

### Adaptive capacity

To gauge likely capacity to respond and adapt to extreme events or other climate change impacts, respondents were asked if they have access to 15 different types of adaptive resources (such as a car, air conditioning, and insurance). Over **50%** of

respondents had most of the resources asked about; however, access varied by geography and demographics. **Less than 20%** of respondents reported having flood insurance.

### Learn more about the Delta Residents Survey

To learn more about the 2023 Delta Residents Survey, visit [deltacouncil.ca.gov/social-science](https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/social-science).

**Survey Data Citation:** Rudnick et al., 2023. *[see full citation on the reverse]*.

**Addressing climate change in the Delta:** In late 2024, the Delta Stewardship Council released its Draft *Delta Adapts* climate Adaptation Plan for public comment and tribal consultation, which concluded in February 2025. Staff are finalizing the Adaptation Plan, which recommends strategies to improve the Delta’s resilience in the face of climate change. For more information about *Delta Adapts*, visit [deltacouncil.ca.gov/delta-plan/climate-change](https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/delta-plan/climate-change). Subscribe to receive email updates from the Council at [rb.gy/kzlh4](https://rb.gy/kzlh4).