

# Treasure Valley Stakeholders: Public Perceptions of Water Resources

Treasure Valley Project: Boise River Basin Water Management

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## What is the public's acceptance of potential public policies related to water resource management and urban growth?

### Abstract

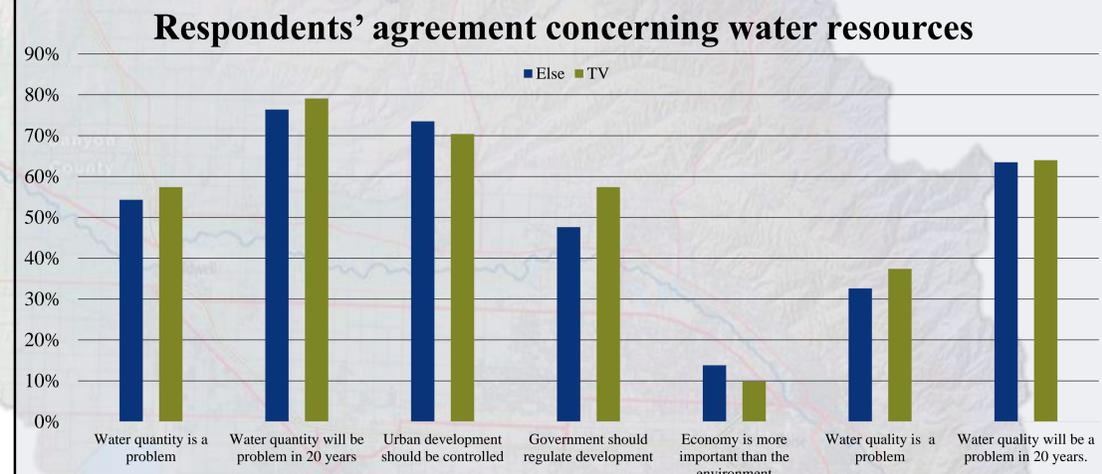
Citizens perceptions and opinions can highly impact the governance and management of water resources, yet they are often underrepresented in decision-making scenarios. An understanding of these perceptions allows consideration of citizen interests in stakeholder engagements and a more accurate anticipation of the future use and management of Idaho's water resources.

### Methods & Measures

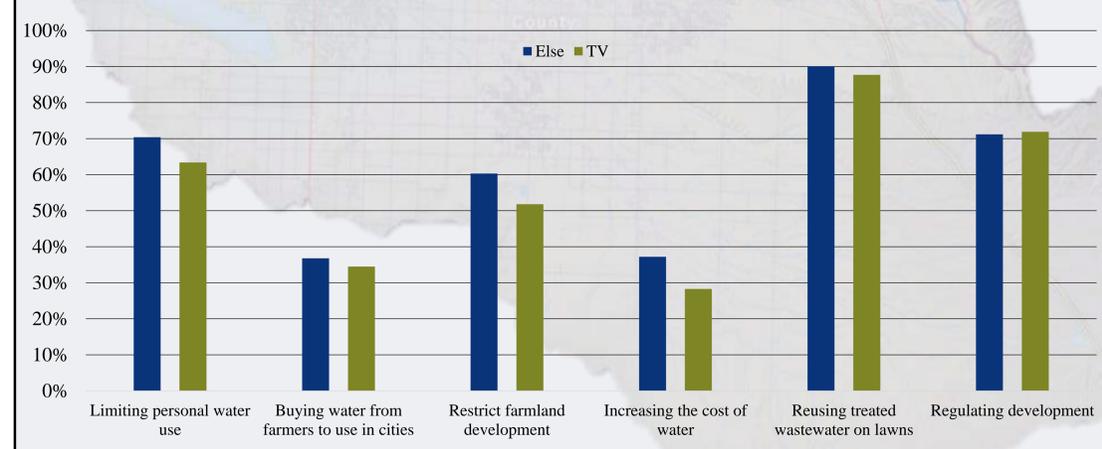
- Survey instrument developed by MPA graduate students using a framework derived from a values-beliefs-norms model with the focus on risk perception and acceptance of government management schemes
- Post-card request sent to a random sample of 5,000 Idaho households, stratified by sex – questionnaire to be filled out online
- 402 valid responses, producing a 95% confidence level and a  $\pm 5$  confidence interval
- Table below highlights the socio-economic status of the respondents for the Treasure Valley (TV) and other counties (Else)

Variable	Treasure Valley	Other Counties
Mean Age	64	65
Median Household Income	\$50,000 - \$69,999	\$50,000 - \$69,999
Sex	70% Male, 30% Female	56% Male, 44% Female
4-year college degree or Higher	53%	56%
Political Ideology	Moderate	Moderate
Belief in climate change	64%	60%
n	130	256

### Results – percent who “agree” or “strongly agree” with statements



### Support for government strategies to ensure Idaho has enough water



### Discussion

- There is minimal difference in the level of agreement between Treasure Valley responses and those of the rest of the state. This suggests that Treasure Valley perceptions are consistent with the rest of the state and that statewide interests could be considered in Treasure Valley stakeholder engagements.
- It is often assumed that citizens find economic concerns to be more important than environmental considerations. Notably, only 10% of Treasure Valley respondents and 13% of statewide respondents held this view. It is plausible that citizens place considerable value on the non-economic ecosystem services that water resources provide, providing evidence that management may need to focus on the less economically-tangible elements of river management.
- Although most citizens value the environment over economic concerns, government strategies that ostensibly bear a tangible cost were less preferred. In contrast – and contrary to popular belief – many Idaho citizens have high levels of agreement regarding general government regulation, specifically in regulating development and the use of water resources.

### Connections, Synergies, and Future Directions

- The **Five-Feature Framework** recommends the inclusion of marginalized stakeholders. This data provides a voice to those stakeholders that cannot be present in future stakeholder engagements.
- Citizen perceptions will be compared to management perceptions from the **Water Management Mapping** project and the **Community Engagement** project in order to better predict water management conflicts for use in the **Alternative Futures** models.