



**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 24, 2015

Contact: Virginia Dawson

O: 415-946-8716

C: 914-924-0120

[vdawson@bayareacouncil.org](mailto:vdawson@bayareacouncil.org)

## 2015 Bay Area Council Poll: Residents Say They Are Already Conserving What They Can; Want More Recycling, Desal and Dams

*Residents harbor serious concerns about Bay Area's aging water infrastructure, and majority are OK with a modest fee to fix it and boost conservation*

**BAY AREA, CA** – Bay Area residents appear to be tapped out when it comes to restricting their water use, according to the results of the *2015 Bay Area Council Poll* released today, and heavily favor expanding the use of recycled water, turning sea water into drinking water and building new dams and reservoirs. Even the notion of adding recycled water to drinking water supplies got more support than raising rates, with 58 percent of residents in support.

The poll found 48 percent of residents rank the drought among the Bay Area's most dominant issues, with 89 percent saying that preparing for drought is an important priority for the region. And while 38 percent say they could do a bit more to conserve, another 38 percent say they're already doing everything they can to reduce water usage. Another 15 percent said they don't make a special effort to conserve and 3 percent pay little attention to their water use.

Residents are very interested in developing other sources of water, according to the poll, with 88 percent supporting the use of recycled water and 75 percent favoring tapping the ocean through desalinization. Tightening efficiency standards on farmers, who consume about 80 percent of the state's developed water, is favored by 84 percent of the Bay Area's urban and suburban residents. Building more dams and reservoirs also earned high support, with 63 percent favoring new storage, including 23 percent strongly in favor.

[View the 2015 Bay Area Council Poll results on drought, water issues>>](#)

"Conservation is an important tool in fighting California's historic drought, but it's not the only tool in the toolbox," said Jim Wunderman, President and CEO of the Bay Area Council. "Increasing our water supply by expanding recycling, desalinization and storage will bolster our resilience during times of severe shortage. We have an opportunity now to

leverage this strong public support to make greater use of these important tools and increase California's water security.”

Older residents and those making higher incomes appear willing to try a little harder than their younger, less compensated neighbors to conserve water. The poll found 42 percent of residents 65 years and older say they can conserve more compared with 35 percent of millennials. In households with annual income of at least \$125,000, 41 percent of residents say they can squeeze more water saving compared to 34 percent of residents making less than \$75,000 a year.

Among the Bay Area's nine counties, San Francisco residents think they are leading the way in conservation with 47 percent saying they're doing everything they can and 31 percent saying they could do a little more. Alameda County residents appear most willing to boost their conservation, with 33 percent saying they are doing everything possible to save water and 47 percent saying they could probably do more. Fewer residents in the counties of Contra Costa (36%), San Mateo (35%) and Santa Clara (32%) say they can probably do more to conserve.

Residents expressed strong concern about the condition of the Bay Area's aging water infrastructure, with 88 percent saying repairing and upgrading the region's water storage and delivery systems is an important priority for the region. And a majority of residents (52 percent) would support some form of “drought fee” as long as it's dedicated specifically to making repairs and upgrades.

Increasing water rates isn't popular, with just 31 percent saying that raising water prices should be among the strategies for combatting the dry spell. There is more acceptance for imposing fines and penalties for failing to meet mandatory water restrictions, with 68 percent in support.

The *2015 Bay Area Council Poll*, which was conducted by Oakland-based public opinion research firm EMC Research, surveyed more than 1,000 residents in an online poll about a range of issues related to economic growth, housing and transportation, drought, education and workforce.

###

### **About the Bay Area Council**

*The Bay Area Council is a business-sponsored, public-policy advocacy organization for the nine-county Bay Area. The Council proactively advocates for a strong economy, a vital business environment, and a better quality of life for everyone who lives here. Founded in 1945, the Bay Area Council is widely respected by elected officials, policy makers and other civic leaders as the voice of Bay Area business. Today, approximately 275 of the largest employers in the region support the Bay Area Council and offer their CEO or top executive as a member. Our members employ more than 4.43 million workers and have revenues of \$1.94 trillion, worldwide.*