



**Horizon Research**

# **Environmental Issues Survey**

**May 2024**

Prepared for

**Greenpeace**



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## Executive Summary

### Approach

These results are from a Horizon Research survey conducted between 20<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> May 2024. The total sample size was 1,060 adults, 18 years of age and over.

The maximum margin of error is  $\pm 3\%$  (at the 95% confidence level). The data was weighted on education, ethnicity, region, personal income and Party Vote 2023 to match the adult population.

### Summary

#### Protecting rivers, lakes and drinking water

**70%** (2,905,000 adults) are concerned about nitrate contamination of drinking water.

- **38%** (1,560,000 adults) are very concerned.

**87%** (3,586,000 adults) say that it is *important* to protect drinking water, rivers and lakes.

- **62%** (2,567,000 adults) say it is *very important*.

When told the Government wants to change regulations to protect fresh water, **55%** (2,270,000 adults) *disagree* with the change.

**22%** (883,000 adults) *agree* with it.

**19%** (772,000 adults) said they *neither agree nor disagree* with the change.

## Report

### 1. Nitrate contamination of drinking water

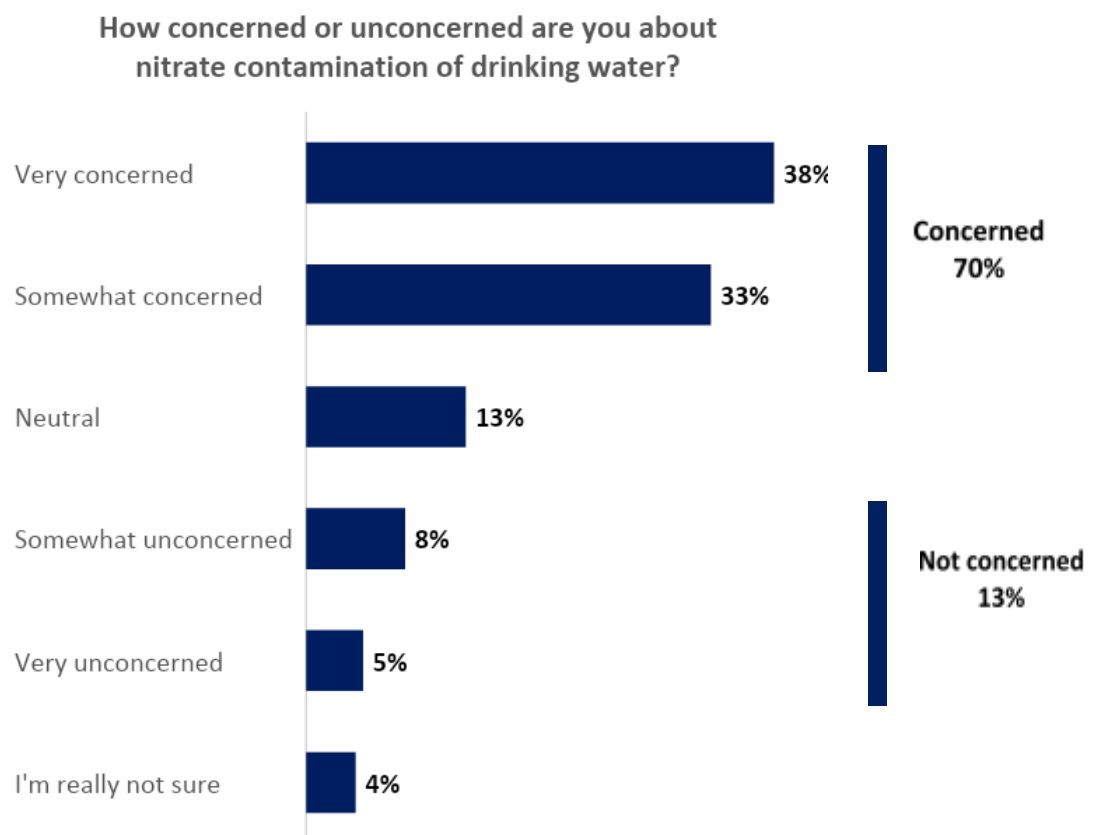
Respondents were told.

*Emerging scientific research shows that nitrate contamination of drinking water could be linked to increased risk of health impacts like bowel cancer and preterm birth.*

*Nitrate contamination of drinking water is increasing in New Zealand, particularly in rural areas, as a result of a growth in dairy herds and fertiliser use.*

**70%** (2,905,000 adults) are concerned about nitrate contamination of drinking water.

- **38%** (1,560,000 adults) are very concerned.



Total sample n=1,060

Across demographic groups the people more likely to be *concerned* about nitrate contamination in drinking water are:

- 25-34 year olds **77%**
- Females **75%**
- Household income less than \$20k **81%**
- Household income \$50k-\$70k **80%**
- Māori **88%**
- Living in Manawatu/Whanganui **81%**

And those more likely to *not be concerned* about nitrate contamination in drinking water are:

- 45-54 year olds **22%**

- 65-74 year olds **21%**
- Personal income \$70k-\$100k **23%**.

Green, Labour and Te Pāti Māori voters are more likely to be concerned about nitrate contamination in drinking water, though a majority of voters National (**54%**) and New Zealand First (**64%**) are concerned

<i>How concerned or unconcerned are you about nitrate contamination of drinking water?</i>	ALL	PARTY VOTE 2023					
		ACT New Zealand	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First	Te Pāti Māori
Very concerned	38%	<b>19%</b>	46%	<b>49%</b>	<b>17%</b>	28%	<b>59%</b>
Somewhat concerned	33%	28%	<b>44%</b>	34%	37%	36%	27%
Neutral	13%	<b>22%</b>	<b>6%</b>	10%	<b>22%</b>	19%	<b>5%</b>
Somewhat unconcerned	8%	<b>17%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>17%</b>	6%	<b>1%</b>
Very unconcerned	5%	7%	<b>1%</b>	<b>2%</b>	5%	12%	3%
I'm really not sure	4%	7%	2%	3%	2%	0%	6%
<b>TOTAL CONCERNED</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>86%</b>
<b>TOTAL NOT CONCERNED</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>4%</b>

N (unweighted)	1,060	100	167	284	256	59	49
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BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED =significantly lower than total sample

## 2. How important is it to protect drinking water, rivers and lakes?

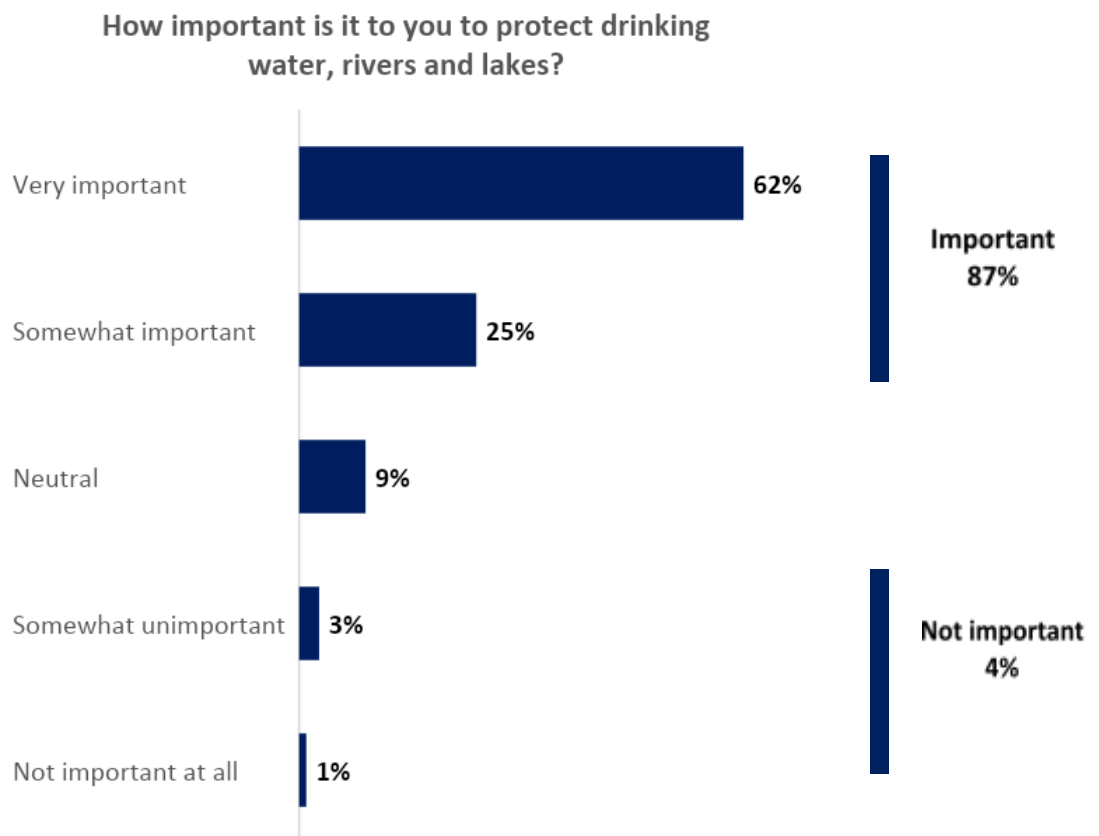
Respondents were told.

*New Zealand currently has regulations to protect rivers, lakes and drinking water from pollution.*

*The Government is proposing to weaken or remove these protections. Proponents argue this will reduce compliance costs for farmers. Opponents argue this will lead to more polluted rivers, lakes and drinking water.*

**87%** (3,586,000 adults) say that it is *important* to protect drinking water, rivers and lakes.

- **62%** (2,567,000 adults) say it is *very important*.



Total sample n=1,052

Across demographic groups the people more likely to say it is *important* to protect drinking water, rivers and lakes are:

- 35-44 year olds **95%**
- Household income \$30k-\$50k **93%**
- Māori **94%**.

There are no demographic groups who are significantly more likely to say it is *not important* to protect drinking water, rivers and lakes.

There are differences among 2023 voters but overall, the majority say it is important to protect drinking water, rivers and lakes, including **81%** of National and **73%** each of ACT and New Zealand First voters.

<i>How important is it to you to protect drinking water, rivers and lakes?</i>	ALL	PARTY VOTE 2023					
		ACT New Zealand	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First	Te Pāti Māori
Very important	62%	45%	85%	80%	40%	54%	88%
Somewhat important	25%	28%	13%	14%	42%	19%	8%
Neutral	9%	14%	1%	3%	13%	20%	1%
Somewhat unimportant	3%	10%	0%	1%	4%	7%	3%
Not important at all	1%	3%	1%	1%	2%	0%	0%
TOTAL IMPORTANT	87%	73%	99%	95%	81%	73%	96%
TOTAL NOT IMPORTANT	4%	13%	1%	2%	6%	7%	3%

N (unweighted)	1,059	98	167	283	253	59	49
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BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED =significantly lower than total sample

### 3. Fresh water regulation changes

Respondents were told.

*Fresh water regulations in New Zealand currently require water to be managed through the following hierarchy, known as Te Mana o te Wai.*

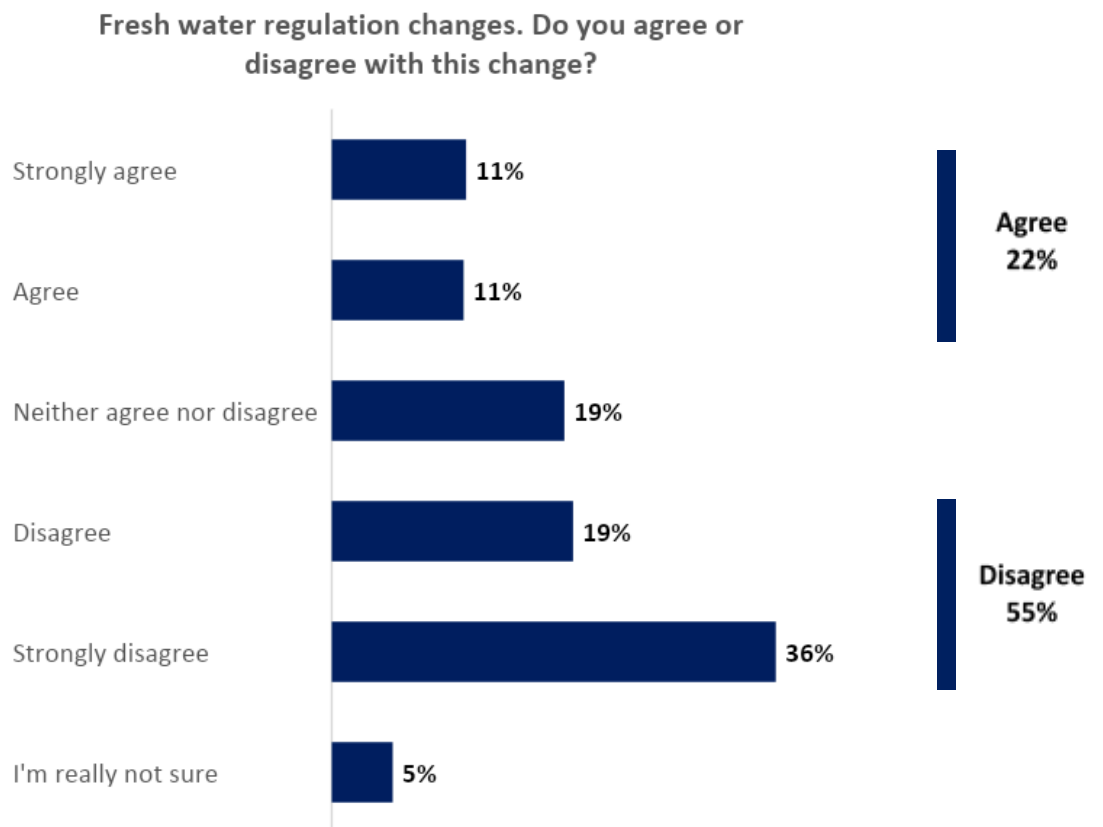
*The first priority is the health of water bodies themselves. Next in importance is the health of communities and their access to safe drinking water, and this is followed lastly by use for commercial purposes.*

*The Government wants to remove this requirement, which would mean that commercial water uses could be prioritised above healthy drinking water and healthy lakes and rivers.*

When asked if they agree or disagree with the change, **22%** (883,000 adults) said they agree with it.

**55%** (2,270,000 adults) said they disagree.

**19%** (772,000 adults) said they neither agree nor disagree with the change.



Total sample n=1,054

The demographic groups significantly more likely to agree with the removal of fresh water regulations are:

- Males **26%**
- Personal income \$50k-\$150k **26%**
- Household income less than \$20k **36%**
- Living in Northland **42%**.



The groups significantly more likely to *disagree* with the removal of regulations are:

- 55+ year olds 64%
- Females 63%
- Personal income \$30k-\$50k **65%**
- Living in Wellington **69%**
- Living in Nelson/Tasman/Marlborough **79%**

ACT voters are more likely to agree with the fresh water regulating changes.

<i>Fresh water regulation changes. Do you agree or disagree with this change?</i>	ALL	PARTY VOTE 2023					
		ACT New Zealand	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First	Te Pāti Māori
Strongly agree	11%	9%	7%	9%	10%	12%	9%
Agree	11%	23%	2%	12%	16%	9%	1%
Neither agree nor disagree	19%	30%	5%	6%	25%	34%	5%
Disagree	19%	18%	15%	11%	28%	20%	13%
Strongly disagree	36%	14%	69%	57%	18%	24%	67%
I'm really not sure	5%	6%	3%	5%	4%	1%	6%
<b>TOTAL AGREE</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>TOTAL DISAGREE</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>80%</b>

N (unweighted)	1,054	98	167	284	252	59	49
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BLUE = significantly higher than total sample RED = significantly lower than total sample

## Appendix 1 – Sample

Results are from a Horizon Research survey conducted between 20<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> May 2024. The total sample size was 1,060 adults, 18 years of age and over.

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Sub-sample respondent counts and margins of error are shown below.

	All respondents	
	Count	Sub-sample margin of error
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1060</b>	<b><math>\pm 3\%</math></b>
<b><u>GENDER</u></b>		
Male	516	$\pm 4.3\%$
Female	538	$\pm 4.3\%$
Another gender	6	
<b><u>AGE GROUP</u></b>		
18-24 years	113	$\pm 9.2\%$
25-34 years	209	$\pm 6.8\%$
35-44 years	176	$\pm 7.4\%$
45-54 years	174	$\pm 7.4\%$
55-64 years	152	$\pm 7.9\%$
65-74 years	131	$\pm 8.6\%$
75 years or over	105	$\pm 9.6\%$
<b><u>ETHNIC GROUP</u></b>		
Asian	82	$\pm 10.8\%$
Indian	36	$\pm 16.3\%$
Māori	206	$\pm 6.8\%$
NZ European/ Pākehā	732	$\pm 3.6\%$
Other European	66	$\pm 12.1\%$
Pasifika	76	$\pm 11.2\%$
Other	34	$\pm 16.8\%$
<b><u>PARTY VOTE 2023</u></b>		
ACT New Zealand	100	$\pm 9.8\%$
Green Party	167	$\pm 7.6\%$
Labour Party	284	$\pm 5.8\%$
National Party	256	$\pm 6.1\%$
New Zealand First	59	$\pm 12.8\%$
Te Pāti Māori	49	$\pm 14\%$

Demographic tables results accompany this report.

### Contact

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