



Southwest States & Pacific Islands

Regional Water Program

A Partnership of USDA CSREES & Land Grant Colleges and Universities

Government Activity in Water & Environmental Issues

In a recently conducted survey of residents in the Southwest States and Pacific Islands, over 40% of respondents from Arizona, California, Hawaii, and Nevada felt that State government should bear the most responsibility for the protection of water quality in communities (Figure 1). Respondents from the Pacific Islands were more likely to put the responsibility on the individual citizen. Responses from the four states were

similar in their distribution with state government as the top choice, followed by local government (county, city, or town). Survey recipients were given a choice of federal government; state/territorial government; county, city, or town; individual citizens; don't know; or other with which to answer the question ***“In your opinion, who should be most responsible for protecting water quality in your community?”*** No more than 14% of respondents from any state thought the federal government should be the responsible party. In the Pacific Islands, however, opinions vary widely by Island. While individual citizens ranked high on each island as the preferred level of responsibility, the responses range from 19% in the Northern Marianas to 53% in the Marshall Islands (the range in the states was 6% in Arizona to 13% in Hawaii).

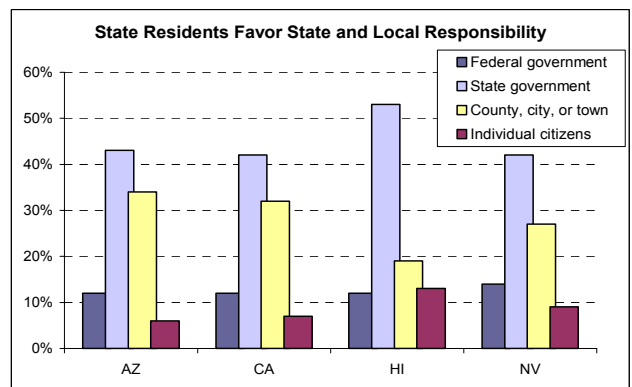


Figure 1. Survey respondents in the states are fairly consistent in who they believe should be responsible for water quality.

The Southwest States & Pacific Islands Water Survey

A 37-question survey was conducted by the Southwest States and Pacific Islands water quality team with the support of the Pacific Northwest water quality program. The survey was used to document public awareness, aptitudes, attitudes, and actions toward water quality in Arizona, California, Nevada, Hawaii, and the Pacific Islands of American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. The survey was completed by 1766 residents in the four states and 303 residents in the Pacific Islands from August of 2003 to July 2004. The collected data were analyzed using the SAS procedure at the University of Idaho, and have a sampling error of +/- 5 percent.

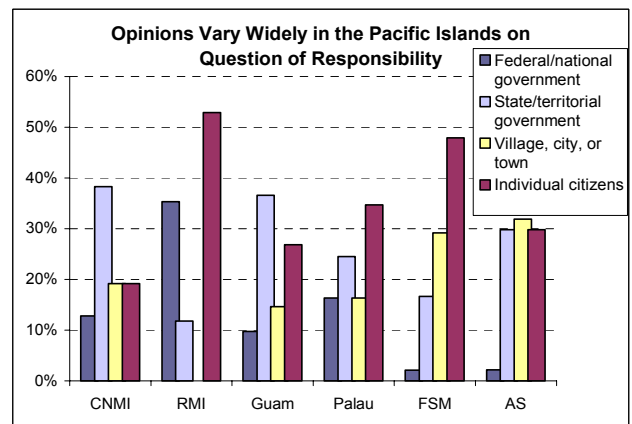


Figure 2. Survey respondents in the islands vary greatly in who they believe should be responsible for water quality.

University of Guam • American Samoa Community College • College of the Marshall Islands



College of Micronesia • Northern Marianas College • Palau Community College

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Not Enough Attention on the Environment

In another question, residents were asked; ***“In your opinion, does the environment receive the right amount of emphasis from local government and elected officials in your state?”*** (“Jurisdiction” replaced “state” in the Pacific Island surveys.)

Response choices were: “No, there is too much emphasis.”; “No, there is not enough emphasis.”; “Yes, about the right amount of emphasis.” or “No opinion/don’t know.”

Respondents from the mainland states were consistent with 40% of the respondents indicating that environmental issues do not receive enough emphasis from local and state government while 30% responded that emphasis on environmental issues was about right (Figure 3a).

Most Residents of Hawaii and the Pacific Islands indicated that they feel environmental issues do not receive enough emphasis from local and state government.

Over two-thirds (67%) of the responses from the Marshall Islands and Guam said there was not enough emphasis from local officials on environmental issues. About 56% from Palau, FSM, and American Samoa agreed, as did 45% from the Northern Marianas (Figure 3b).

Among the Pacific Islanders, residents of Palau were more than twice as likely to think environmental issues are well served with 30% saying the emphasis is about right.

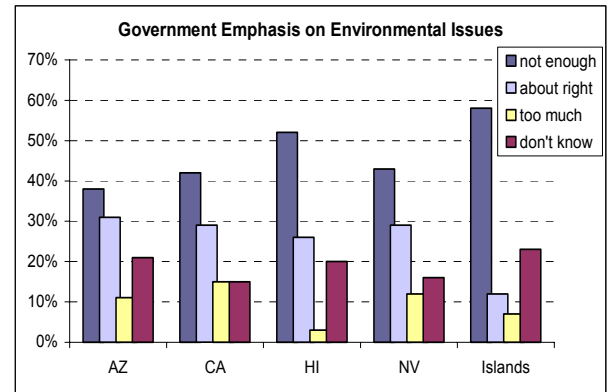


Figure 3a. Responses are very consistent across the Southwestern States.

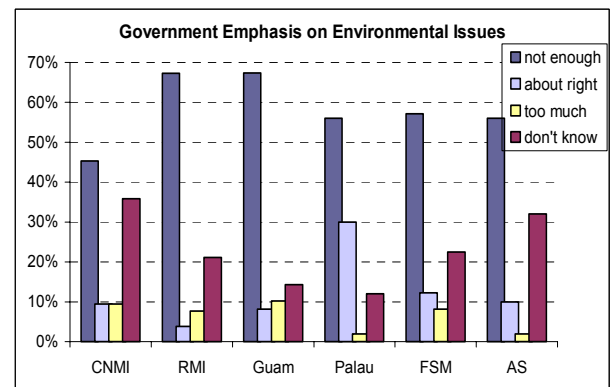


Figure 3b. The majority of respondents from the Pacific Islands do not feel there is enough emphasis placed upon environmental issues by State and Local governments.

About Our Program - The Southwest States & Pacific Islands Water Program, a component of the National Water Program (a partnership of USDA - CSREES and Land Grant Universities and Colleges) seeks to ensure the integration of water quality research, education, and extension efforts within the jurisdiction of each of the ten regions established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Program is designed to make resources of the university system more accessible to Federal, State, and local water quality improvement efforts, thus enhancing opportunities for agricultural producers, and rural communities to adopt voluntary approaches for the improvement of water quality.

Southwest States & Pacific Islands (Region 9)

<http://ag.arizona.edu/region9wq/>

National program website

<http://www.usawaterquality.org/>