

# Great Lakes Water Quality Board Engagement Work Group



## **Binational Great Lakes Poll Report** July 2018



# Background

- In 2015, the International Joint Commission's Great Lakes Water Quality Board contracted with Oraclepoll to conduct a telephone survey of residents living in the Great Lakes basin catchment area to determine their awareness of and concern for issues impacting the lakes.
- This 2018 survey is a follow-up to the 2015 poll.
- The 2018 poll made a concerted effort to be inclusive of all sectors of the population. This included representative sampling of Indigenous persons (First Nations, Métis and Tribes) from each lake basin to obtain an appropriate representation of these communities and gain insights on their unique perspectives.



# Survey Methods

- A total of 4,250 interviews were completed between January 5 and 30, 2018.
- Interviews were conducted by telephone using live person-to-person interviewers and a randomized database for landlines and cell phone-only residences.
- One resident at each household who is 18 years or older was interviewed.
- Initial calls were made between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. Subsequent call-backs were made up to five times from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.



# Study Sample and Error Rates

Samples are representative of each state or province's population

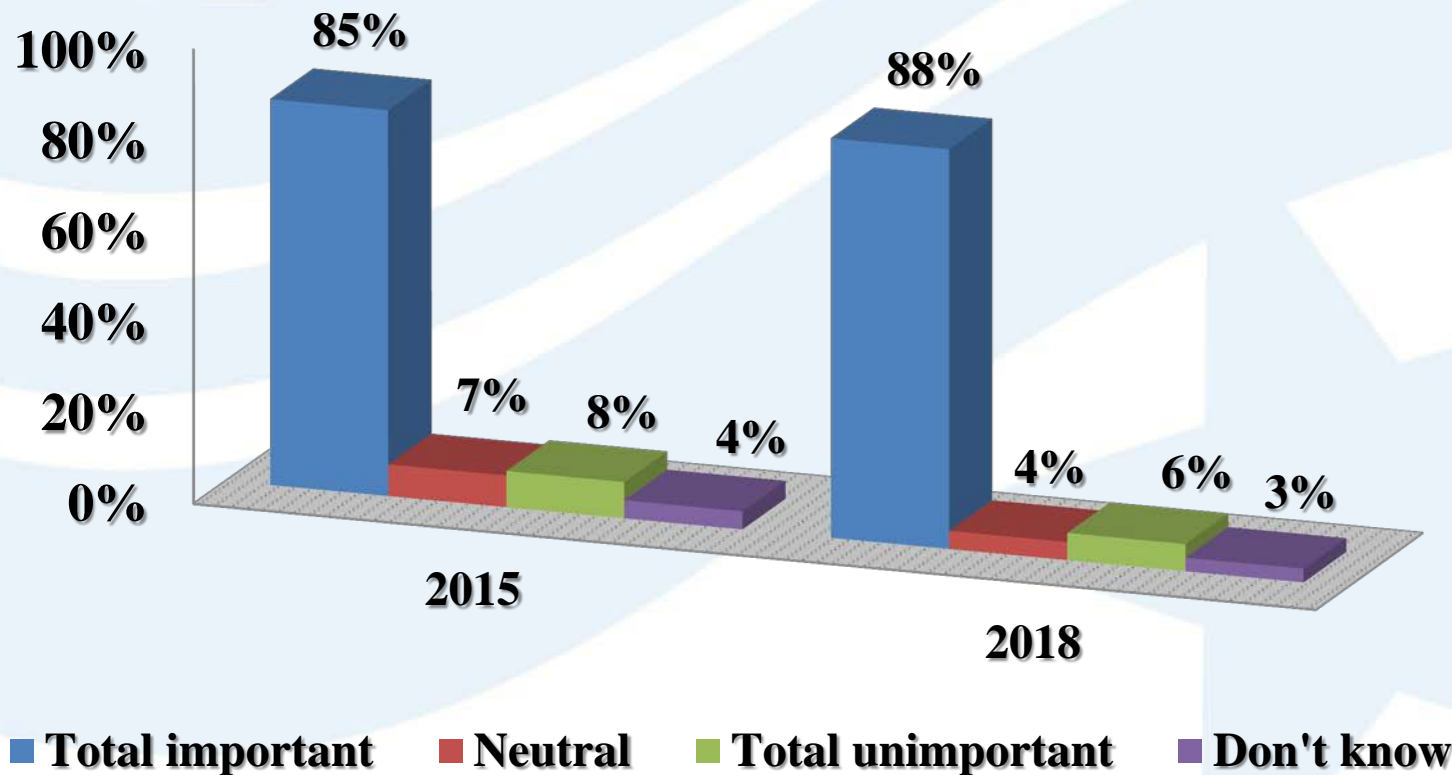
State/Province	Sample (N)	Percentage (%)	Error Rate (95% Confidence Level)
Ontario	1180	27.8	±2.9%
Michigan	1160	27.3	±2.9%
New York	475	11.2	±4.5%
Ohio	375	8.8	±5.1%
Illinois	375	8.8	±5.1%
Wisconsin	305	7.2	±5.6%
Indiana	140	3.3	±8.3%
Pennsylvania	120	2.8	±8.9%
Minnesota	120	2.8	±8.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3950</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>±1.5%</b>



# Key Findings: Protection

## Importance of Protection: 88% feel it is very important to protect the Great Lakes

*“How important is it that the health and water quality of the Great Lakes basin be protected?” Please, respond using a scale from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important)*



# Responsibility for Lakes

In both surveys, respondents believe everyone is and should be responsible for protecting the health of the lakes, followed by the federal, provincial and state governments.

## Who is Currently Responsible for Protecting Health and Water Quality of Great Lakes Basin

Everyone / all	39%
Federal	23%
State / Provincial	18%
Don't know	10%
Residents / individuals	4%
All levels government	2%
EPA	2%
City / local	2%
Industry	1%

## Who Should be Responsible for Protecting Health and Water Quality of Great Lakes Basin

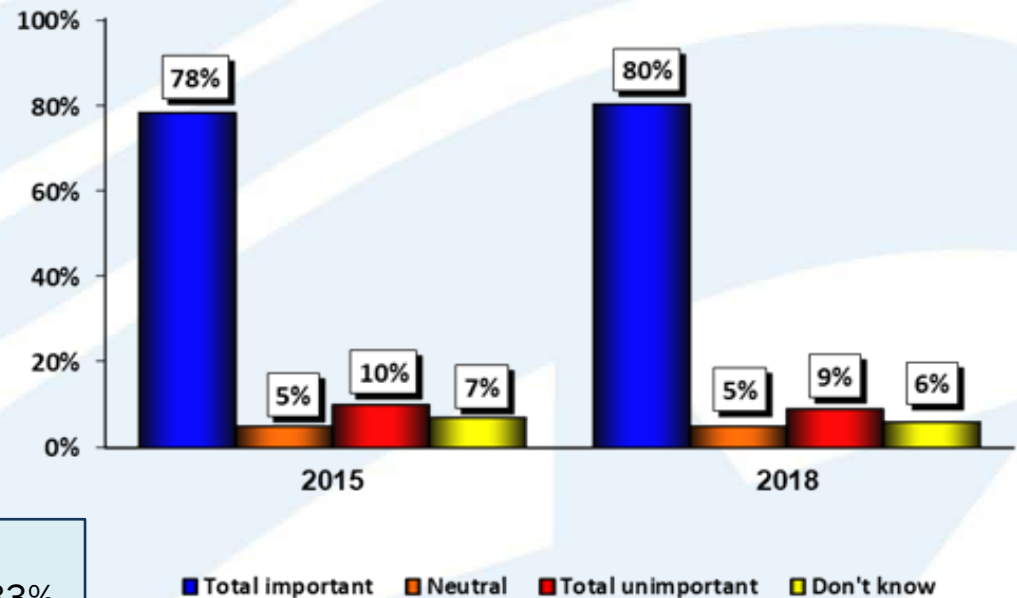
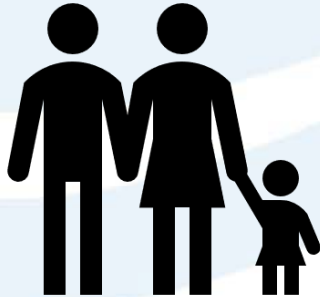
Everyone / all	42%
Federal	28%
State / Provincial	21%
Residents / individuals	5%
Don't know	5%
City / local	4%
All levels government	2%
EPA	1%
Industry	1%



# Personal Actions

## Strong majority feel individuals play an important role in protecting the lakes

*“How important is the role of the individual or individual household in protecting the health and water quality of the Great Lakes basin?”*



### Actions they are willing to take:

Care with what they dispose down the drain	83%
Conserve water	74%
Engage in online forums and interest groups	37%
Contact elected/government officials	32%
Attend meetings	29%
Don't know	25%



# Issues Facing Lakes

*Q1. "When thinking about the environmental health and water quality of the Great Lakes, what in your opinion are the most significant problems facing them?"*

	TOP OF MIND SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS	Percent
	Don't know	24%
	Pollution (in general)	19%
	Invasive species	17%
	Industrial pollution	11%
	Waste being dumped into the Lakes	6%
	Algae/green algae/blooms	4%
	Water levels / fluctuations	3%
	Oil spills / the oil pipeline	3%
	Endangered species / fishing depleted in the Lakes	3%
	Climate change/extreme weather	3%
	Drainage / run off	2%
	Agricultural pollution / waste / run off	1%
	Fracking	1%
	Acid rain	1%
	Lack of regulations	<1%
	Mercury levels	<.5
	Government policy	<.5





# Threats Facing Lakes

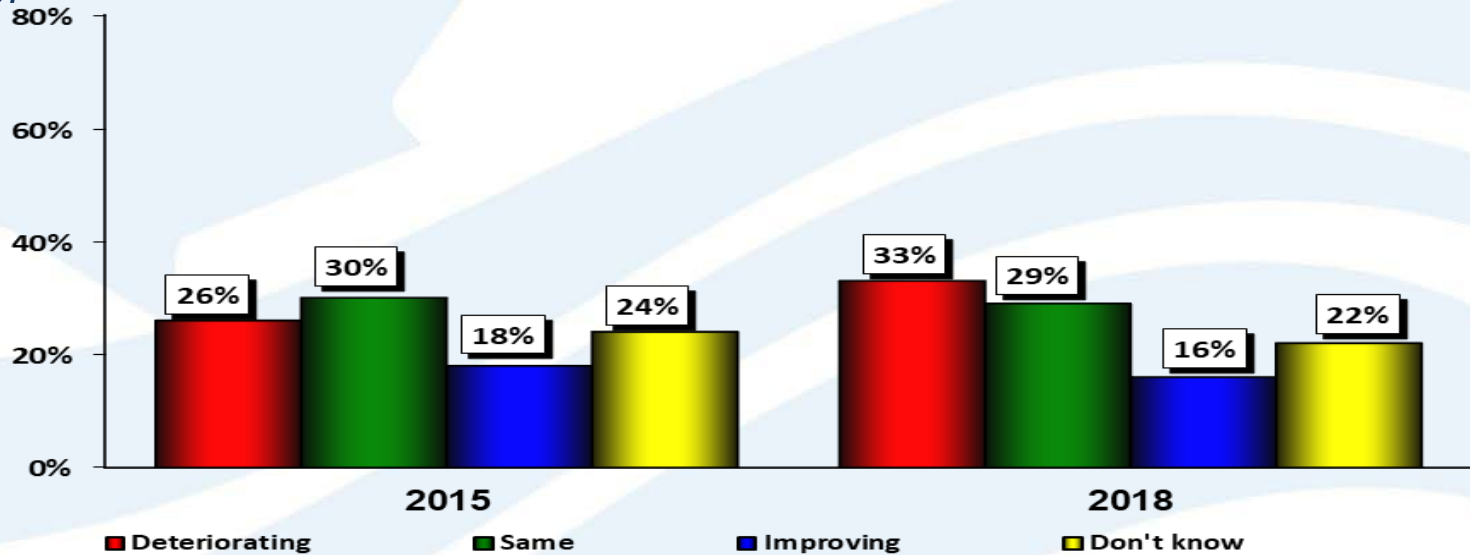
Q2. "Can you name anything that you feel may pose a threat to the lakes and rivers that surround and feed into the Great Lakes?" (MULTIPLE RESPONSES ACCEPTED)

	COMBINED TOTAL RESPONSES CATEGORIES	Percent
	Invasive species (zebra mussels, Asian carp)	26%
	Don't know	17%
	Pollution (in general)	12%
	Industrial pollution / waste	7%
	Garbage / waste	6%
	Algae / green algae	5%
	Population growth / urban sprawl	4%
	Chemical pollution	3%
	Pesticides	2%
	Oil industry/spills/pipelines	2%
	Agricultural pollution / waste / run off	2%
	Climate change/extreme weather	2%
	Water levels / Fluctuations	2%
	Not enough conservation of water	2%
	Runoffs (in general)	2%
	Fracking	1%
	Traffic on water	1%
	People / human populations	1%
	Illegal fishing	1%
	Mercury levels	1%
	Water being removed from watershed	1%
	Winter road salt	<1%
	Lack of regulations / laws	<1%
	Commercial vessels	<.5
	Acid rain	<.5
	Tourism	<.5

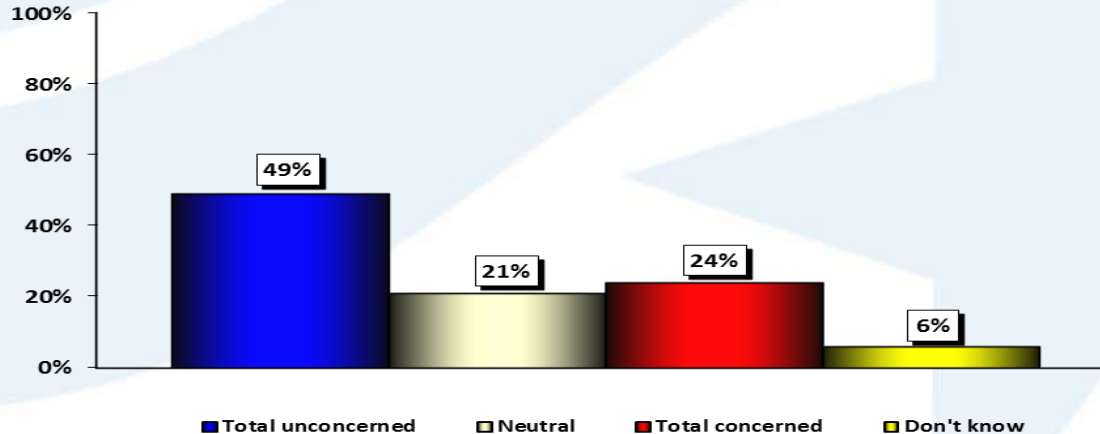


# Improving or Deteriorating?

*“In your opinion, is the environmental health and water quality of the Great Lakes improving, deteriorating or staying about the same?”*



*“How concerned are you with the environmental health or water quality of your local lakes or waterways in terms of them being safe for access and recreational purposes? Please use a scale from one, not at all concerned, to five, very concerned.”*



# Ranking of Factors Impacting Great Lakes Health

*“How much of an impact do you feel that each of the following have on the environmental health and water quality of the Great Lakes? Please use a scale from one, no negative impact at all, to five a very negative impact.”*

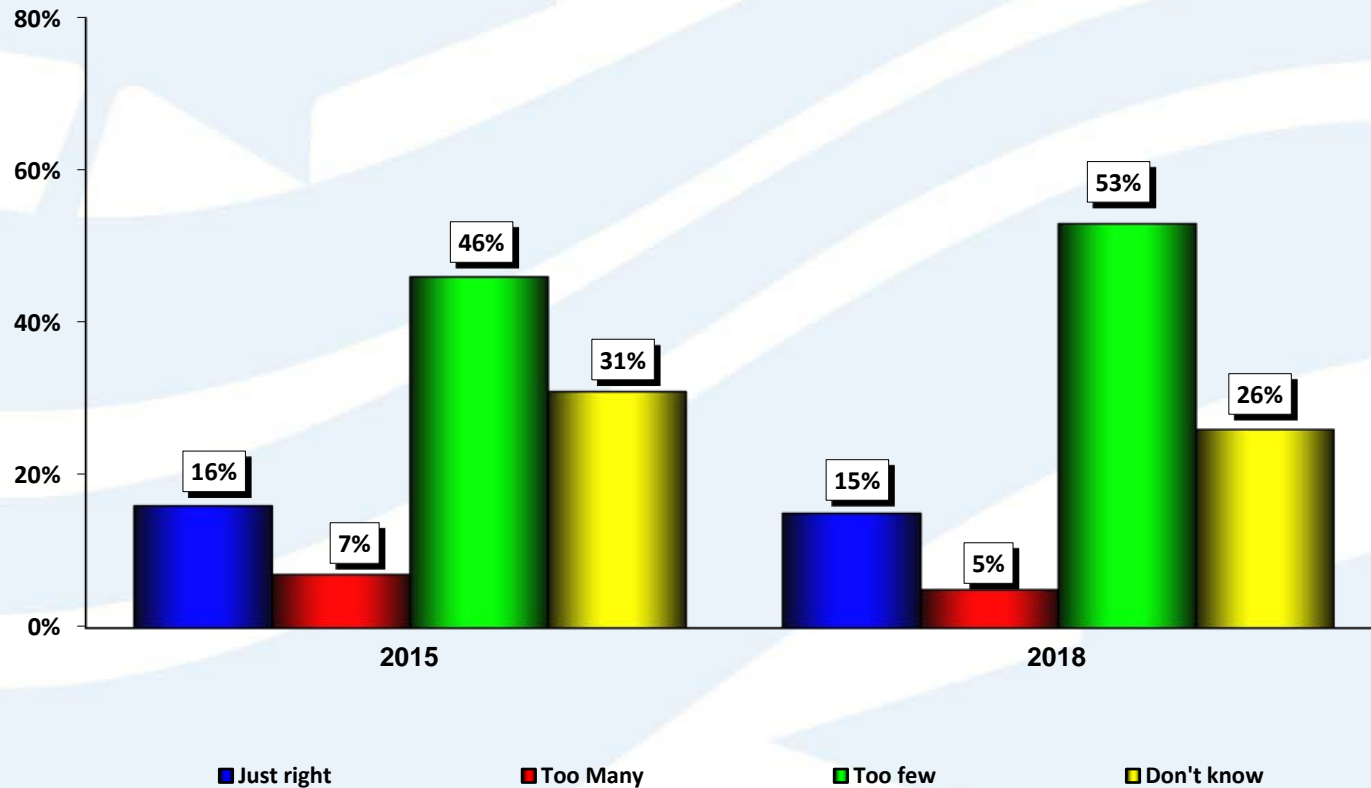
**TOTAL  
RESPONSES OF  
HIGH AND  
EXTREME  
NEGATIVE  
IMPACT**

<b>Invasive species such as Zebra &amp; Quagga mussels, Asian Carp</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Algae blooms</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>Municipal waste water runoff</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>The petroleum industry, such as pipelines, drilling, fracking</b>	<b>73%</b>
<b>Climate change / Global warming</b>	<b>73%</b>
<b>The impact of heavy rainstorms</b>	<b>72%</b>
<b>Flooding</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>Nuclear waste</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>Loss of wetlands</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>Manure or animal waste runoff</b>	<b>66%</b>



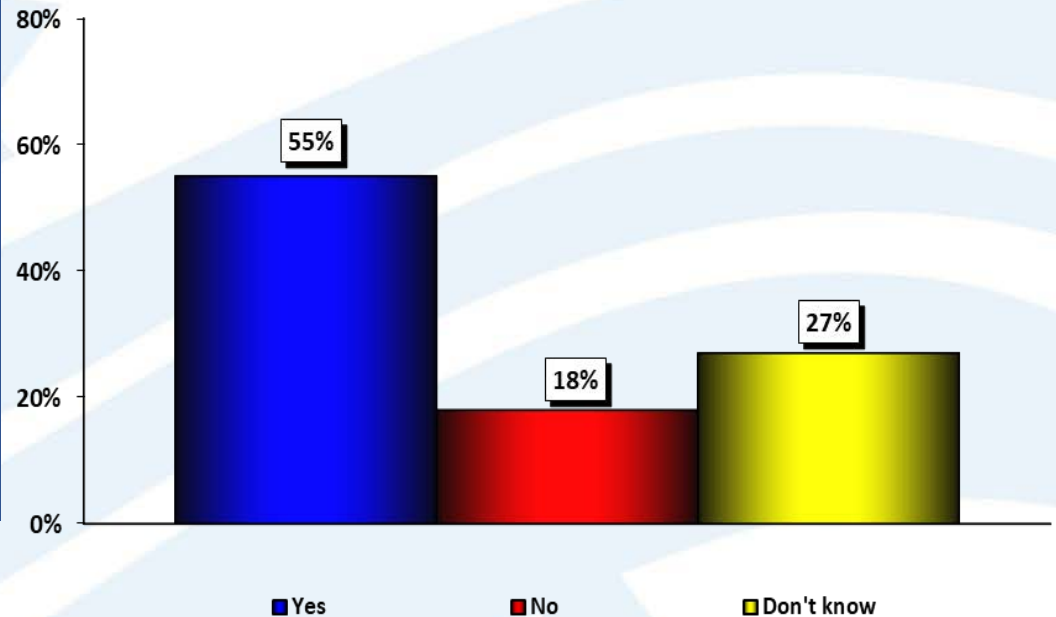
# Regulations to Protect the Lakes

*“Thinking about the policies and regulations in place to protect the water quality of the Great Lakes, do you feel there are too many, too few or just the right amount?”*



# Willingness to Pay for Protections

“Would you be willing to have greater protection of the Great Lakes through regulations and their enforcement even if it means that it may increase the cost of certain consumer products?”

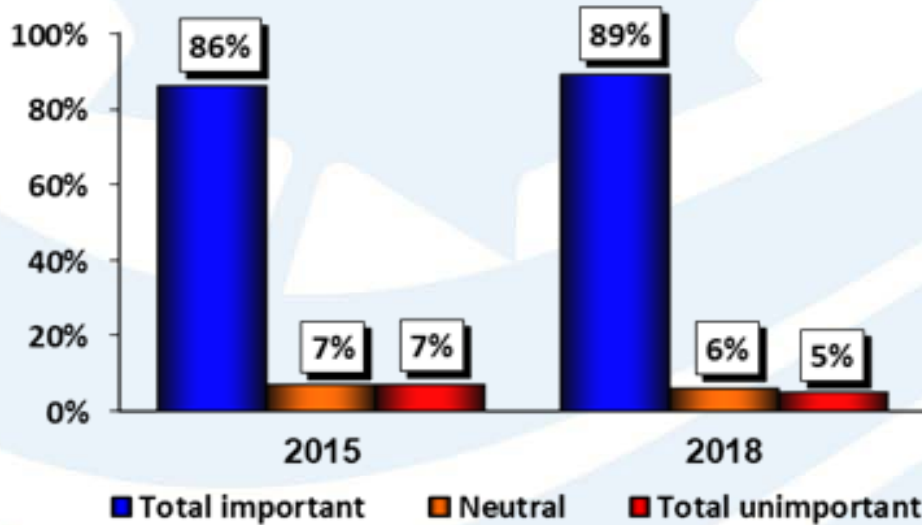


- 55% said that they would be willing to have greater protection of the Great Lakes through regulations and their enforcement even if it meant an *increase in the cost of some consumer products*, while 18% would not but a significant 27% were unsure.
- 30% felt greater protection would have *no impact on jobs and the economy*, 27% felt there would be negative implications and 23% said the effect would be positive, while 20% were undecided.



# Recreational Value of the Lakes

“How important is it to you that the Great Lakes are available for leisure or recreational purposes? Please respond using a scale from one, not at all important, to five, very important.”



“Name the types of activities that you enjoy on the lakes.”



35%  
Swimming/  
beach visits



27%  
Boating, fishing,  
canoeing, kayaking,  
paddle boarding, wind surfing,  
sailing



5%  
Skating, cross country skiing,  
skiing, snowshoeing



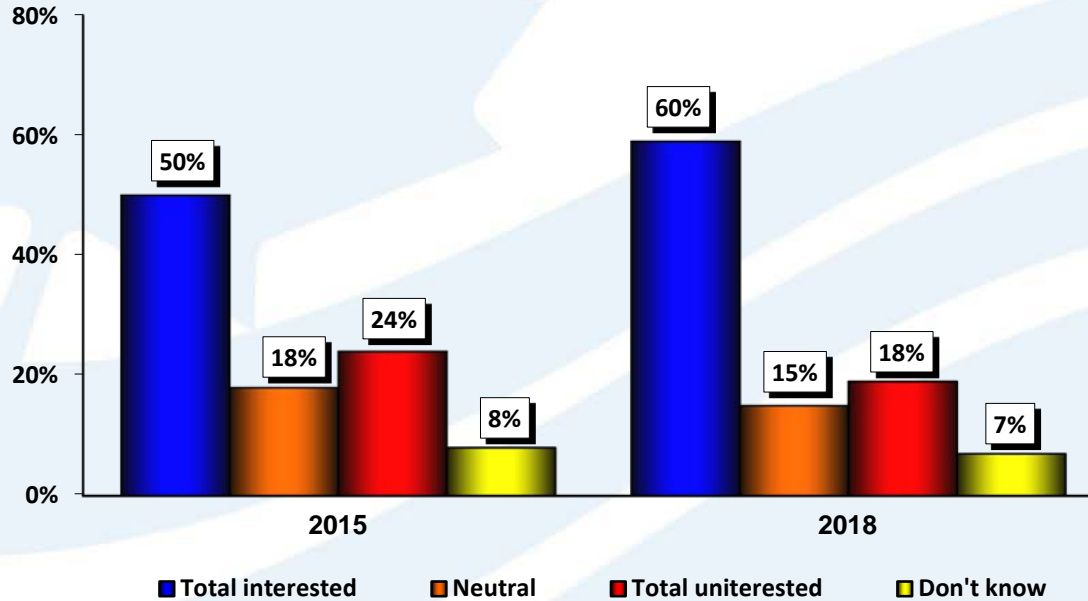
# Value Statements

AGREEMENT VALUE STATEMENTS	Totally Disagree 1 & 2		Neutral 3		Totally Agree 4 & 5		Don't know	
	2015	2018	2015	2018	2015	2018	2015	2018
<b>Q1.</b> <i>Actions should be taken now to ensure the health and water quality of the Great Lakes for future generations</i>	3%	2%	11%	9%	73%	77%	14%	12%
<b>Q2.</b> <i>It is important to protect the Great Lakes for the personal benefits that I receive</i>	6%	6%	18%	15%	60%	65%	16%	14%
<b>Q3.</b> <i>Great Lakes water quality should be protected for the benefit of people living in the Great Lakes Basin</i>	8%	6%	12%	11%	68%	72%	12%	11%
<b>Q4.</b> <i>Great Lakes water quality should be protected for the benefit of fish and wildlife who depend on the Lakes</i>	5%	4%	4%	3%	76%	79%	15%	13%
<b>Q5.</b> <i>The economy of the region will suffer if the Great Lakes are not healthy</i>	2%	2%	7%	6%	76%	78%	15%	14%
<b>Q6.</b> <i>The health of residents in the region will suffer without healthy Great Lakes</i>	3%	2%	12%	11%	72%	74%	13%	14%
<b>Q7.</b> <i>I am concerned about the health and water quality of the Great Lakes as a whole</i>	9%	7%	25%	21%	53%	60%	13%	12%
<b>Q8.</b> <i>I am most concerned about the health and water quality of the Lake that is closest to me</i>	3%	3%	13%	12%	74%	76%	10%	9%



# Information Interest and Sources

“How interested are you in news and other information related to issues affecting the Great Lakes? Please use a scale from one being not at all interested to five, very interested.”



Where  
Currently get  
Information  
about Great  
Lakes

Online/hard copy newspapers and internet 24%  
Television 16%  
Social media 14%  
Radio 9%  
Word of mouth 5%  
Magazines, environmental organizations 1%

Preferred  
Sources to  
get  
Information

Internet 29%  
Newspapers 19%  
Television 16%  
Radio 7%  
Email 2%  
Word of mouth, environmental organizations, magazines 1%







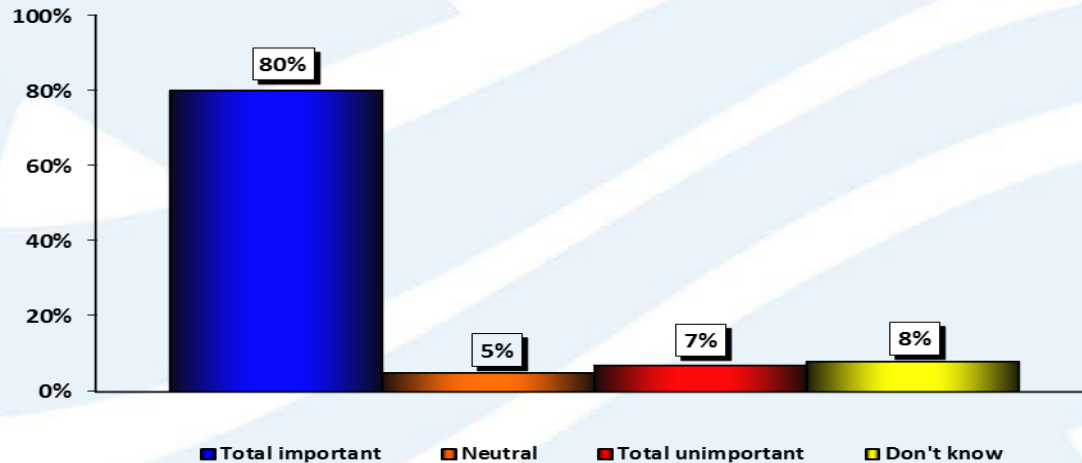
# Indigenous Poll Participation

- This 2018 poll includes interviews with 300 Indigenous peoples, including First Nation, Tribal and Métis respondents.
- Their results show consistent and strong support for Great Lakes protection (99%) as well as high levels of awareness of the lakes and issues affecting them.
- When residents were asked to name a threat to the lakes, Algae concerns were most cited by Indigenous or Metis respondents (15%).



# Binational Cooperation to Protect the Great Lakes

“How important is it that the US and Canada work together on dealing with Great Lakes issues? Please respond using a scale from one not at all important to five very important.”



*In your opinion, how important is it to have an organization like the IJC?*

**Totally Important 78%**

Don't Know 12%

Totally Unimportant 6%

Neutral 4%

*How important is it that the IJC be adequately funded in order to fulfill its objective?*

**Totally Important 70%**

Don't Know 17%

Neutral 9%

Totally Unimportant 5%



Thank you for listening. We welcome your questions and comments.



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