



Portland Water District

Results of a Residential Customer Survey

August 2023

Unique Perspectives in Marketing Research

Digital Research, Inc.

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Introduction



Background & Methodology

- This report presents the results of a residential customer survey conducted by Digital Research, Inc. on behalf of the Portland Water District.

The purpose of the survey was to gauge how well the organization is meeting the needs of its customers and to measure the level of satisfaction with PWD's services among its customers.

- This survey has been run periodically since 1998. Where applicable, the results of the current wave of the survey are compared to the results of previous waves to show changes over time.
- A total of 574 PWD customers completed this survey online in May and June of 2023.
 - Participants were drawn from a list of approximately 37,000 customers who provided PWD their email address (87% EBILL, 13% EMAIL).
 - Customers were invited to take the survey by email. Previous waves of the survey were conducted by mailed paper questionnaire or online (for the first time in 2017).
 - As in previous waves of the survey, customers were offered a chance to win one of several sweepstakes prizes for completing the survey. The prizes in 2023 were a \$300 Amazon gift card, an iPad mini, and a \$100 Amazon gift card.
 - The survey took most participants 10 to 15 minutes to complete.
 - With a total sample of 574 participants, the results presented here have a margin of sampling error of +/- 4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.



Key Findings and Implications



Key Findings

Overall satisfaction with PWD is very high and has increased since the organization's most recent customer survey in 2017.

- Almost all surveyed customers are satisfied with PWD overall (96%), representing a new high.
 - Satisfaction with PWD is higher than satisfaction with other tested utilities or service providers.
- In addition, customers are almost universally satisfied with the reliability (99%) and quality (96%) of their water from PWD, and nine out of ten are satisfied with PWD's wastewater service overall (90%).
- Huge majorities also believe the water they receive from PWD is safe (93%), colorless (97%), odor-free (93%), good tasting (92%), and delivered with adequate pressure (92%).
 - Two out of three agree that PWD responds quickly to emergencies (64%), and half agree that the organization provides advance alerts about planned shut-offs (52%). While customers are more likely to praise PWD's performance in other areas of service, given the perceived reliability of PWD and the fact that many do not have a firm opinion about PWD's performance in planned or emergency outages, these ratings likely reflect a lack of experience with these issues as a customer of PWD.
- Many customers are also satisfied with the price of their water (78%) or the overall value of PWD's services (70%). Eight out of ten believe PWD provides accurate bills (79%) – an increase over recent waves of the survey.
 - Fewer who use PWD for wastewater service are satisfied with the price of those services (62%).

Communication also appears to be a strength of the organization.

- Eight out of ten customers rate the amount of communication they receive from PWD as *about right* (82%), and almost none rate the amount of communication they receive as *too much* (<0.5%) or *too little* (4%).
- Another eight out of ten believe the organization keeps customers informed (79%), and seven out of ten believe the organization is easy to reach (72%).



Key Findings

PWD also enjoys a strongly positive image among its customers.

- Majorities believe PWD serves the public well (81%) or view the company as experienced (71%), well-run (65%), or trustworthy (60%).
- Many would also describe the organization as safe (69%) or reliable (67%).

PWD's online services are particularly popular; phone-based services are less popular.

- Seven out of ten surveyed customers currently use PWD's paperless billing (72%) or online bill payment systems (70%), and six out of ten use online auto payments (60%).
- In contrast, no more than one out of ten customers use account information by phone (8%), pay-by-phone (6%), or pay-by-text (6%) services. Importantly, this low usage is not necessarily a result of low awareness – usage of these services is low even among customers who are aware of them.
- Email is, by far, the preferred form of communication about account status, billing, water testing, construction, and information about PWD. Many would also like to receive emails about service interruptions, though text messages are also a popular way to receive information about water delivery issues.



Implications

PWD is in a very strong position in terms of customer satisfaction and its brand image.

- Perhaps because of its strongly positive image and the trust that customers have for the organization, large majorities believe the water provided by PWD is safe, even though many are unable to estimate how often PWD tests its water and do not know how the water compares to regulations.

PWD should prioritize email communications with customers when possible.

- A monthly cadence for communications would likely be most effective.
- PWD should also ensure it is able to provide targeted text message notifications for planned or emergency outages.

Likely due to PWD's reliability and the accuracy of its bills, customer service (especially in-person customer service) is not generally important to customers.

- Still, PWD should continue to offer robust customer service, as it is positively related to overall satisfaction among those who have used it (a relationship value of .662 on a scale of -1.0 to +1.0), and the organization would be well served to include online chats with customer service representatives going forward.

Perhaps predictably, fewer customers are satisfied with PWD's price and value than with other areas of service delivery; in addition, 'expensive' is the most common negative attribute ascribed to the organization.

- Perceived price and value are highly correlated with overall satisfaction with PWD (scores of .499 and .483, respectively, on a scale of -1 to +1), so the organization should clearly explain to customers what it is doing to control prices and minimize the extent of any necessary rate adjustments.



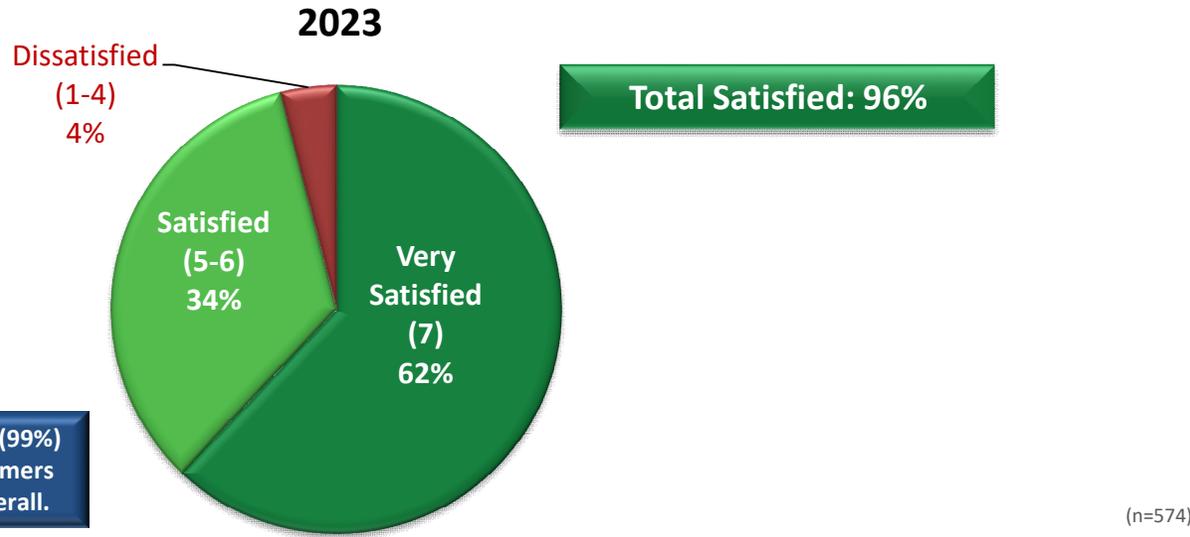
Satisfaction With PWD



Nearly all surveyed customers are satisfied with PWD overall, with six out of ten saying they are *very* satisfied.

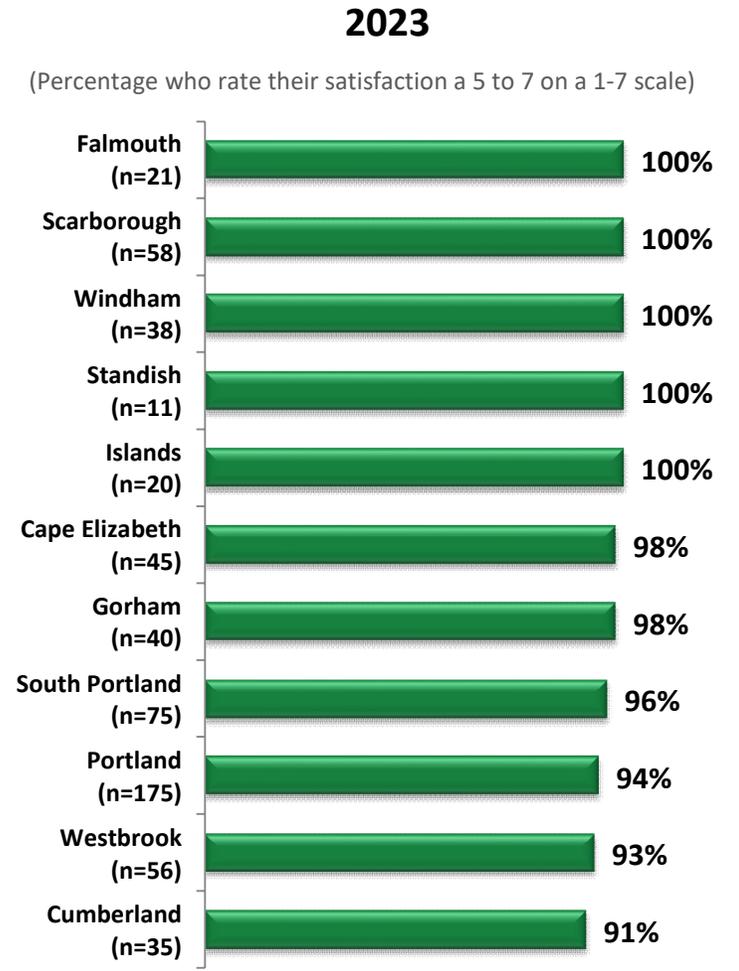
The share of customers who are satisfied with PWD has reached the highest point seen across seven previous waves of this customer research.

Overall Satisfaction With PWD

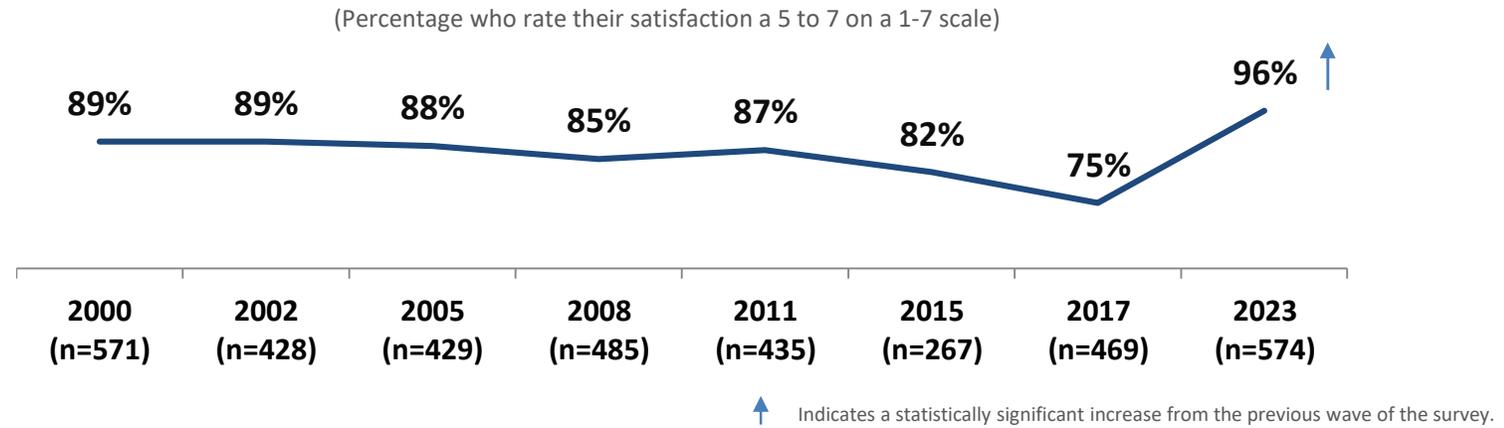


Customers who are age 70 or older (99%) are more likely than younger customers (95%) to be satisfied with PWD overall.

Locality



TREND



Perceptions of the quality of customer service, satisfaction with price, and perceptions of value are strongly related to overall satisfaction with PWD.

"I am very happy with the water we have here."

"You guys do a great job! Keep up the good work! We love our water!"

Factors Related to Overall Satisfaction	
Satisfaction with the quality of customer service*	0.662
Satisfaction with the price of water	0.499
Agreement that PWD provides good value	0.483

The values above were derived from correlations between ratings on the listed items and ratings of overall satisfaction with PWD. The values could range from -1.0 to +1.0. Higher values reflect a stronger relationship between the listed item and overall satisfaction with PWD.

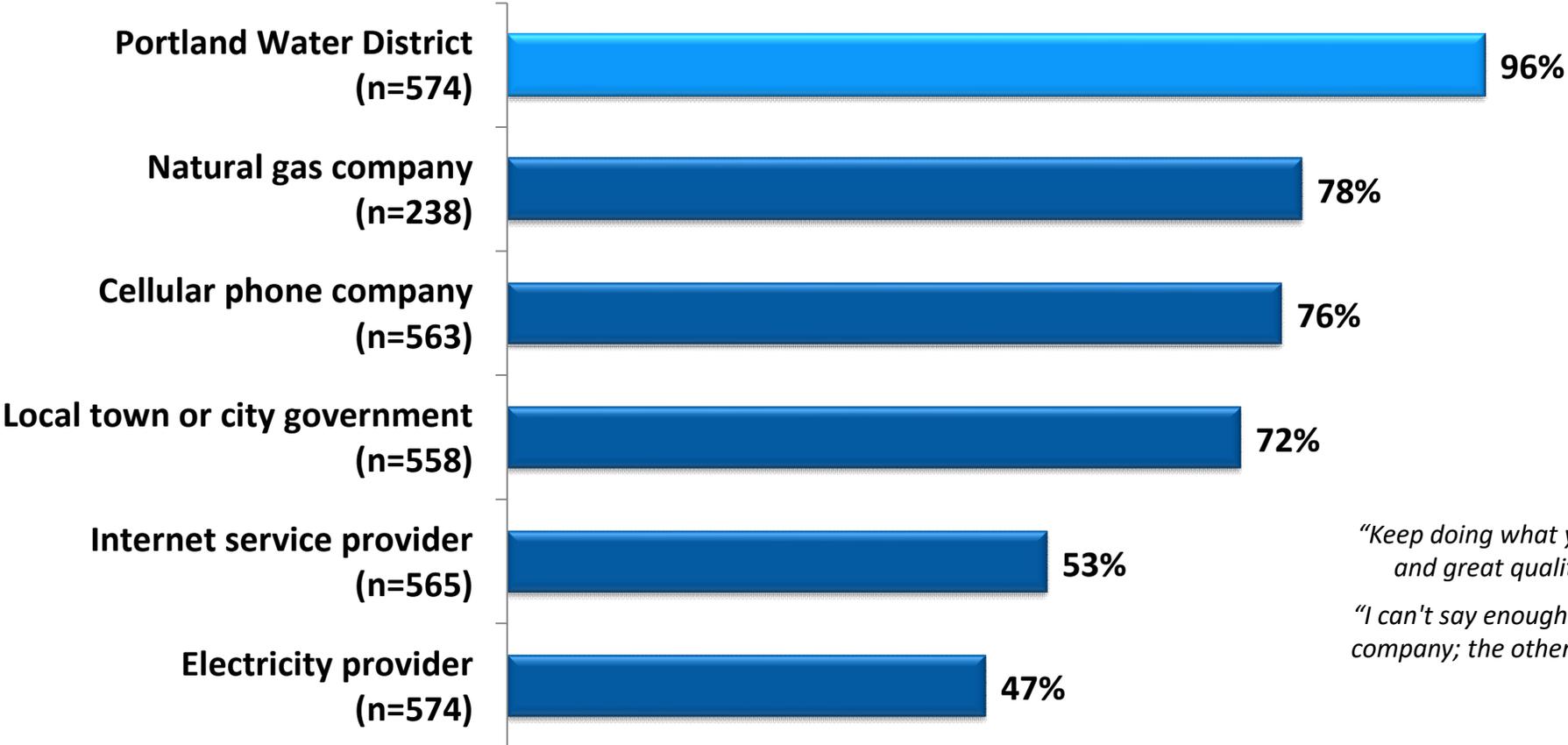
* Among those able to rate customer service



PWD’s customers are much more likely to be satisfied with PWD than with other service providers they use. While almost all are satisfied with PWD, eight out of ten are satisfied with their natural gas company or their cell phone provider, and seven out of ten are satisfied with their local government. Only about half are satisfied with their ISP or electricity provider.

Overall Satisfaction With Service Providers

(Percentage of customers who select a 5 to 7 on a 1-7 scale)



“Keep doing what you’re doing! Cheap, reliable and great quality. Best utility out there!”
“I can’t say enough good things about this utility company; the others should all take lessons from PWD.”

Among those who use service providers

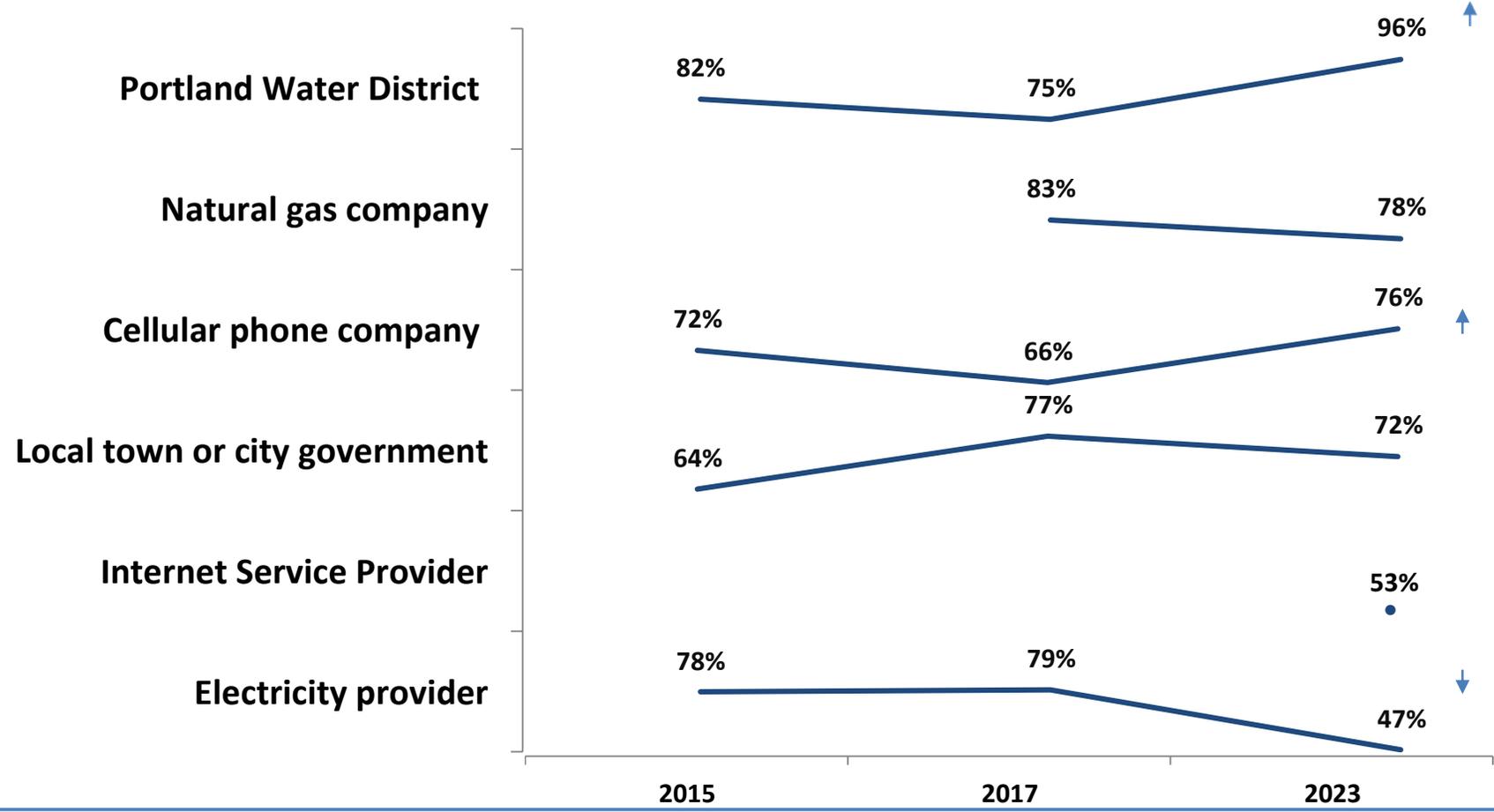
“Overall, how satisfied are you with each of the following service providers that you may work with?”
Scale: 1 – “Very dissatisfied” to 7 – “Very satisfied”



In contrast to the increased level of satisfaction with PWD, satisfaction with most other utilities and service providers has declined or held steady since 2017.

Overall Satisfaction With Service Providers

(Percentage of customers who select a 5 to 7 on a 1-7 scale)



Among those who use service providers

“Overall, how satisfied are you with each of the following service providers that you may work with?”
 Scale: 1 – “Very dissatisfied” to 7 – “Very satisfied”

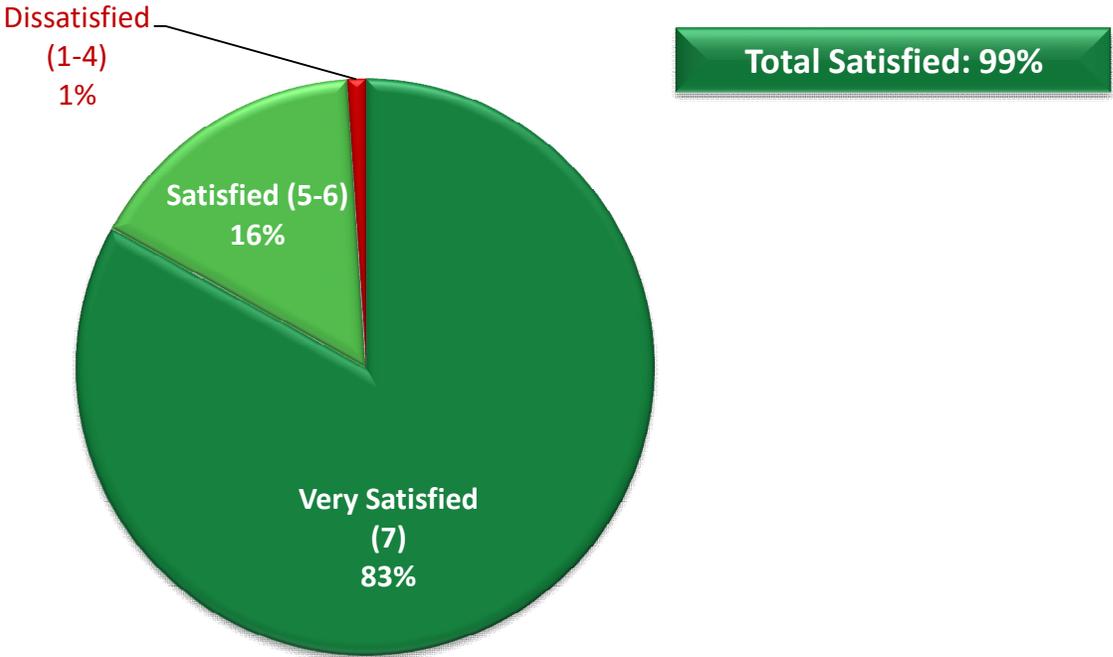
The arrows indicate a statistically significant change from the 2017 wave of the survey. The percentages for 2015 were adjusted to be comparable to the results from 2023 and may not match what’s shown in previous reports.



Almost all customers are satisfied with the overall reliability of their water service from PWD, including eight out of ten who are *very* satisfied.

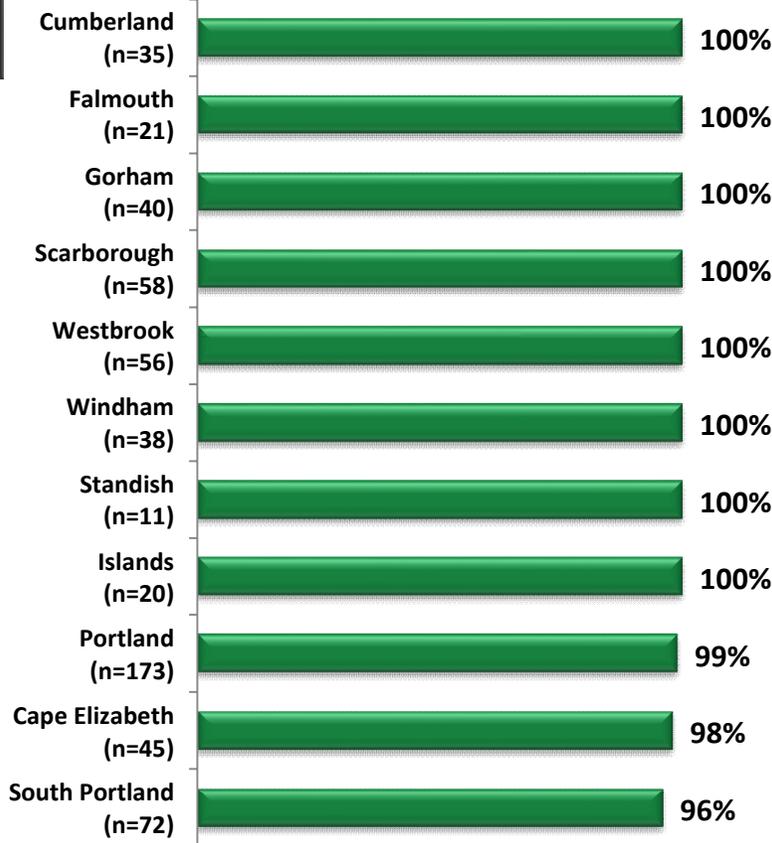
Satisfaction With the Overall Reliability of Water Service

2023



Locality

(Percentage who rate their satisfaction a 5 to 7 on a 1-7 scale)



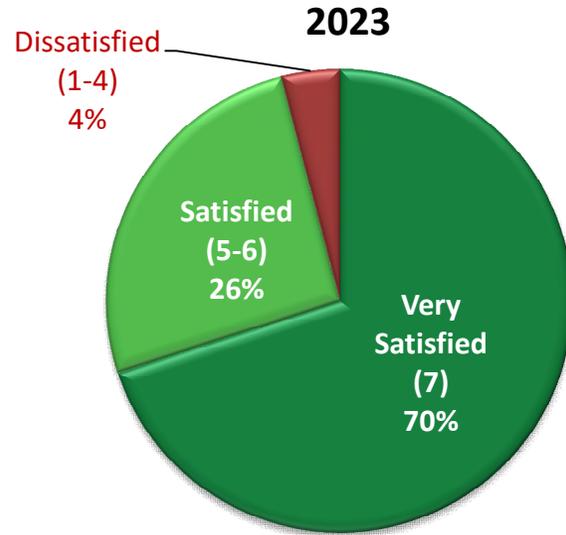
(n=574)



Almost all customers are also satisfied with the overall quality of their water, with seven out of ten saying they are *very* satisfied.

Customers are now more likely than in 2017 to be satisfied with the quality of their water.

Satisfaction With the Overall Quality of Water

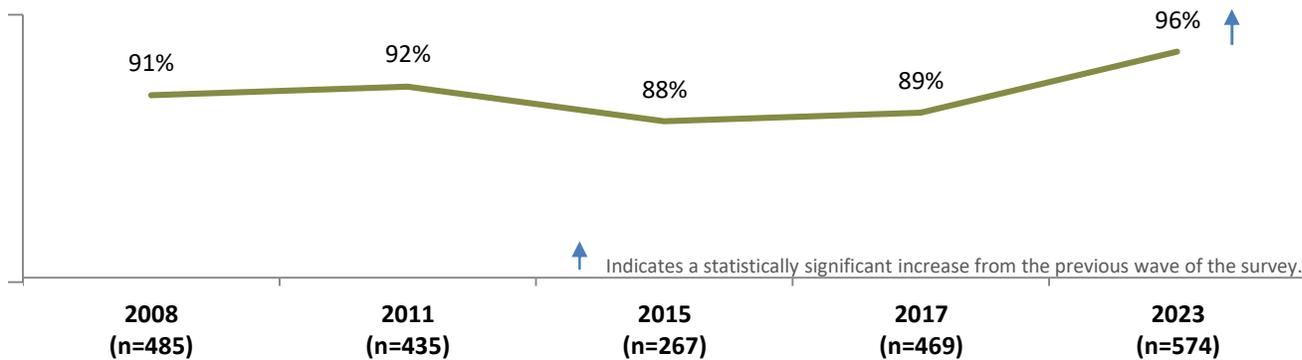


Total Satisfied: 96%

"I do read the water quality reports and hope you will continue to mail them."

(n=574)

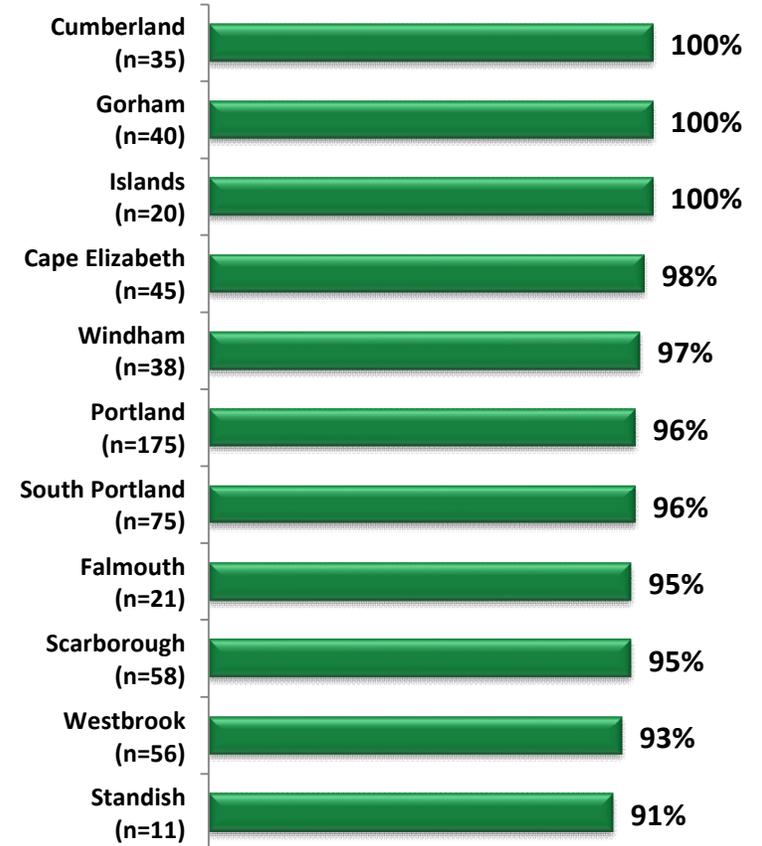
(Percentage who rate their satisfaction a 5 to 7 on a 1-7 scale)



Locality

2023

(Percentage who rate their satisfaction a 5 to 7 on a 1-7 scale)

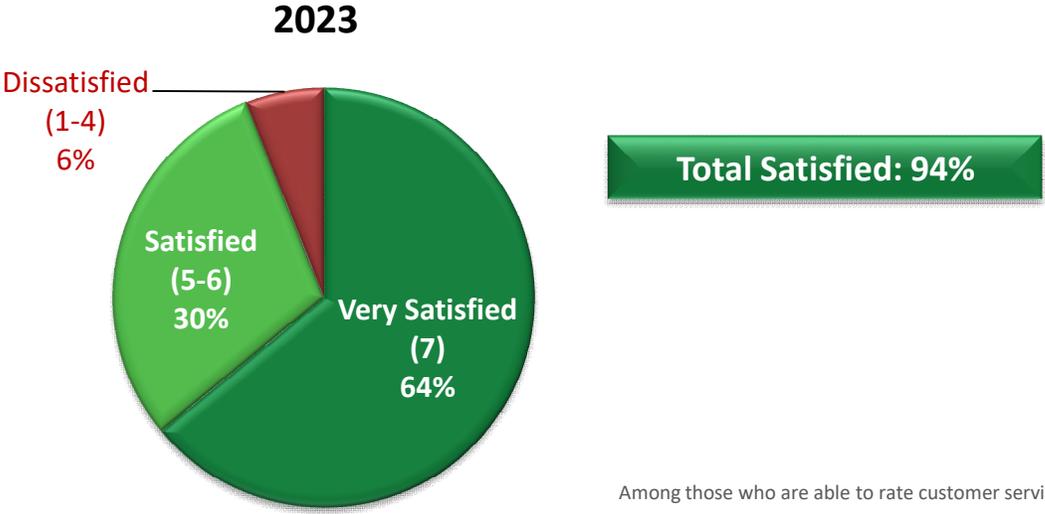


TREND



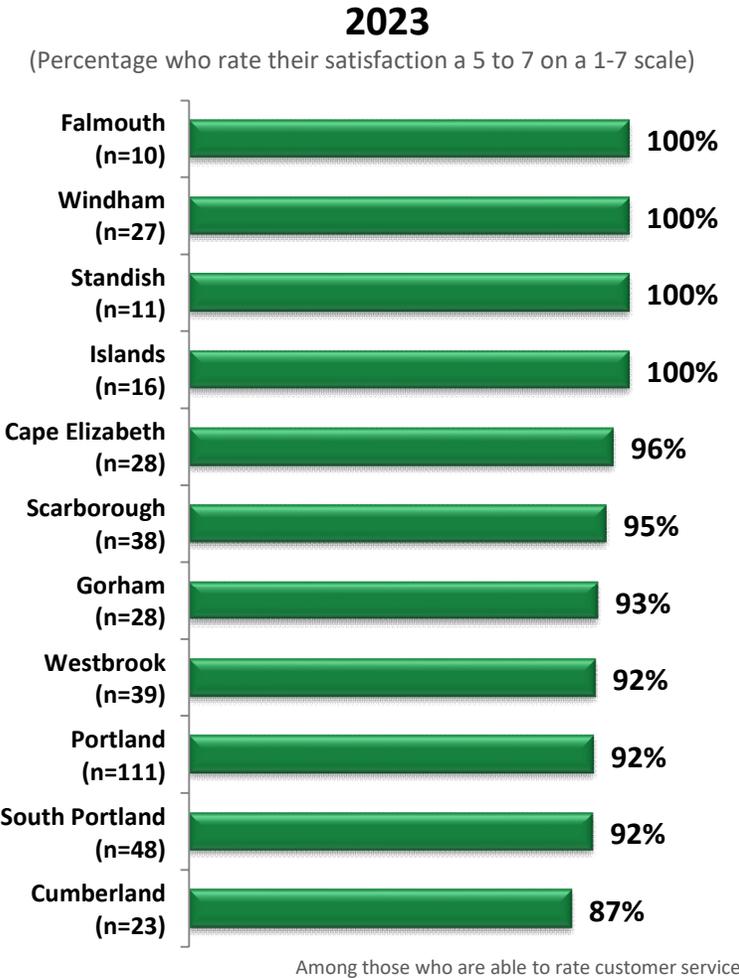
Nine out of ten customers who are able to provide a rating are satisfied with PWD’s customer service, including two out of three who are *very* satisfied with it. The share of customers who are satisfied with the organization’s customer service is higher in 2023 than in 2017.

Satisfaction With Customer Service

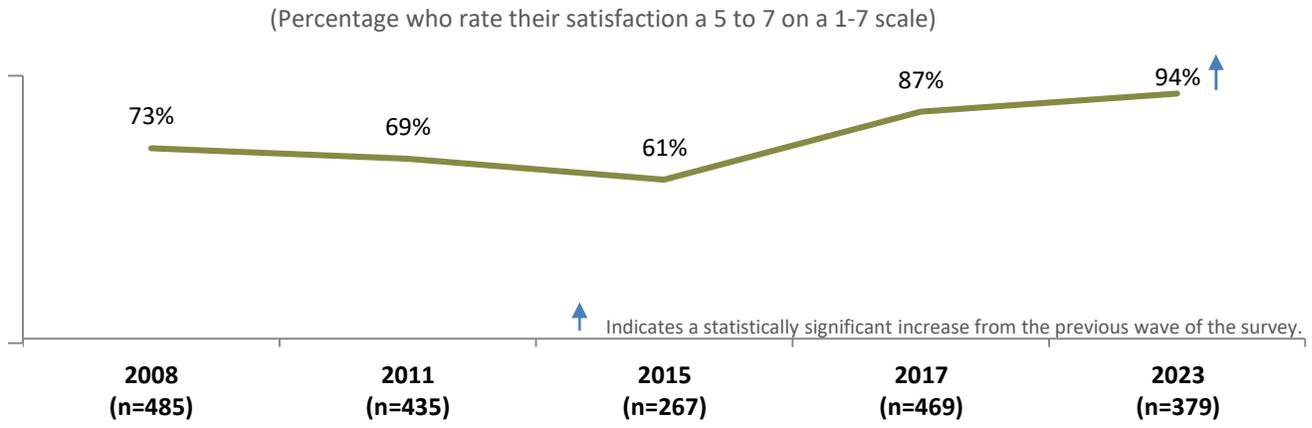


34% of customers are unable to rate PWD’s customer service (not shown)

Locality



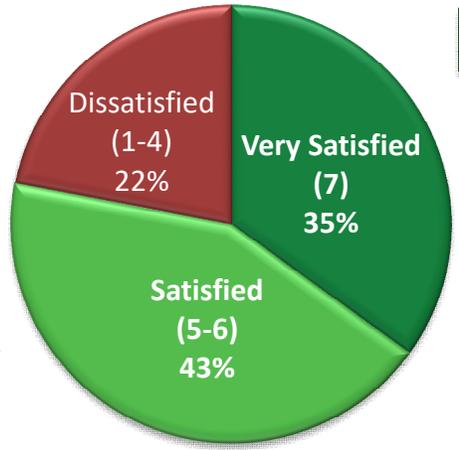
TREND



Eight out of ten surveyed customers are satisfied with the price they pay for water. The share of customers who are satisfied with the price they pay for water has held steady since 2017.

Satisfaction With the Price of Water

2023



Total Satisfied: 78%

Customers who recall communications from PWD over the past year are more likely to be highly satisfied with the price they pay for water (61% vs 54% rate their satisfaction a 6 or 7). Interestingly, income is not related to overall satisfaction with the price of water.

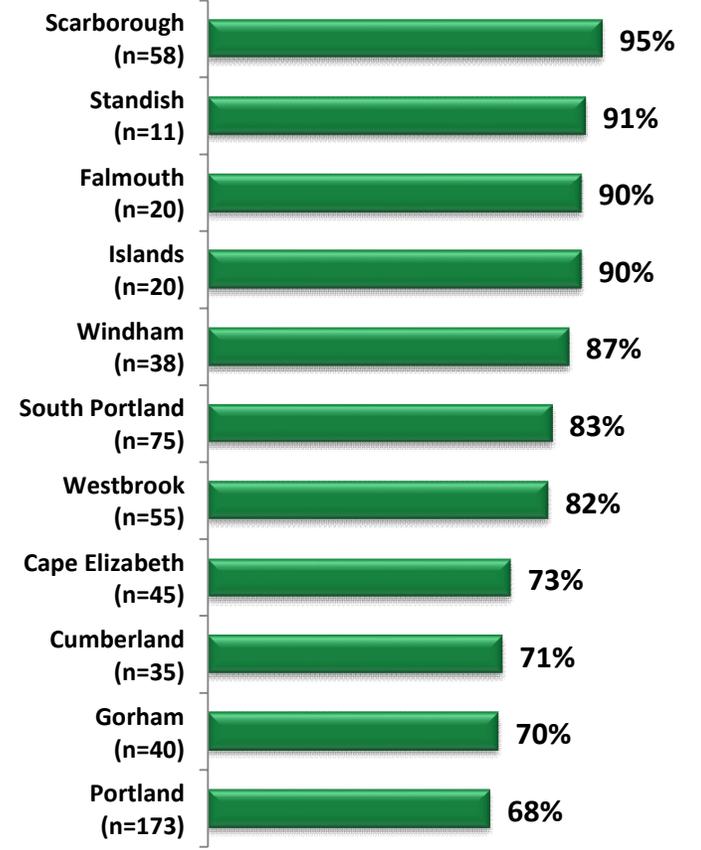
Among those who are able to rate the price of water (n=570)

"This is an expensive water program, and I would like to know what you are doing to keep costs down."
"The cost has increased so much recently!"

Locality

2023

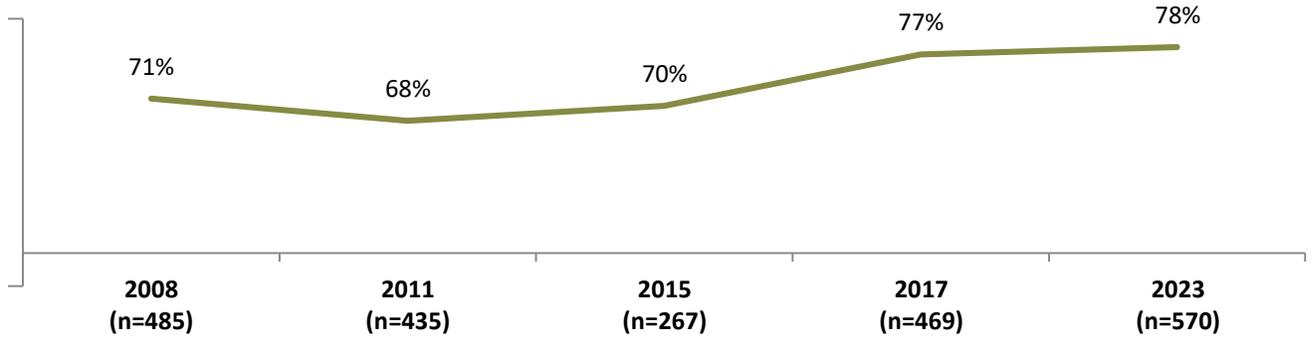
(Percentage who rate their satisfaction a 5 to 7 on a 1-7 scale)



Among those who are able to rate the price of water

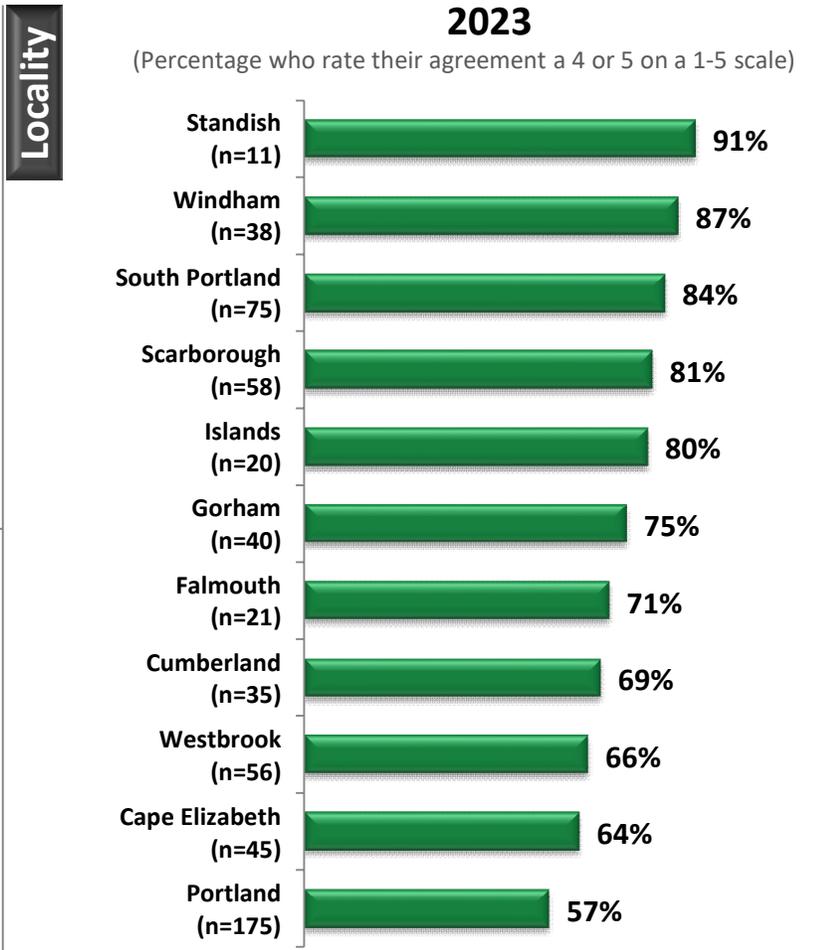
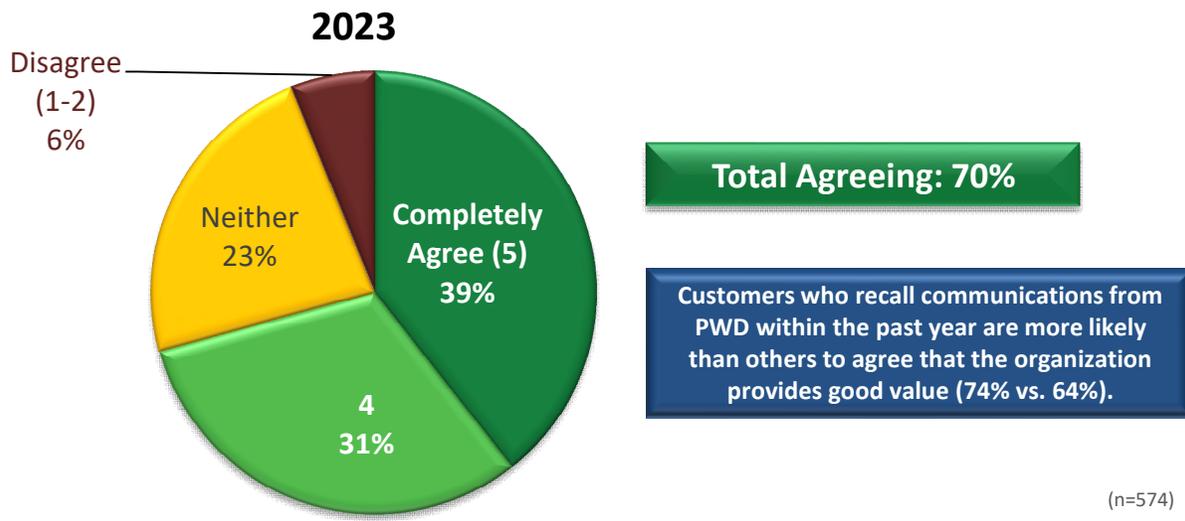
TREND

(Percentage who rate their satisfaction a 5 to 7 on a 1-7 scale)



Seven out of ten customers would agree that PWD provides good value for the money. The share of customers who agree that PWD offers good value has generally held steady over time.

Agreement That PWD Provides Good Value for the Money

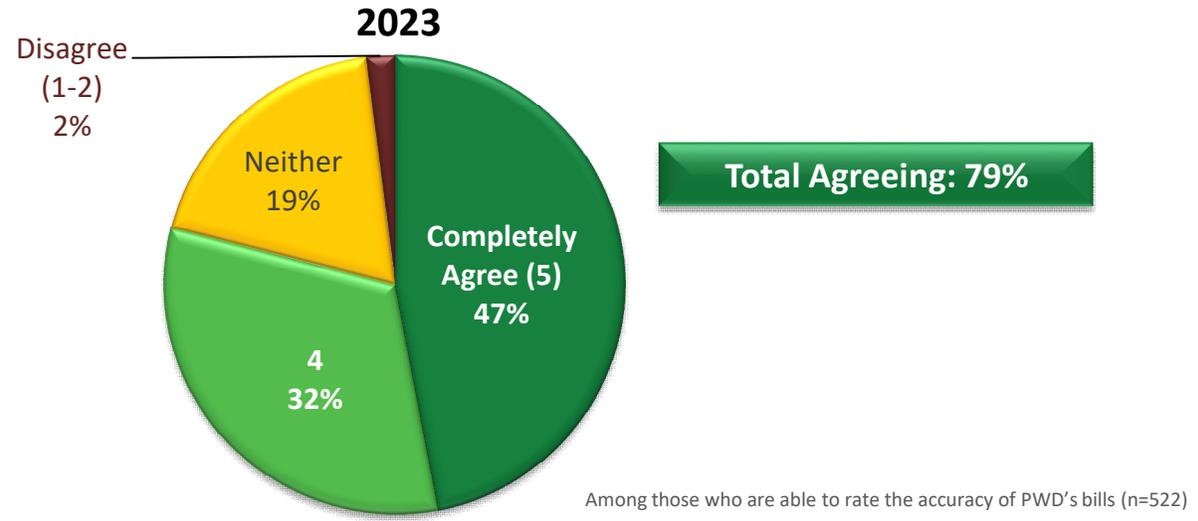


TREND

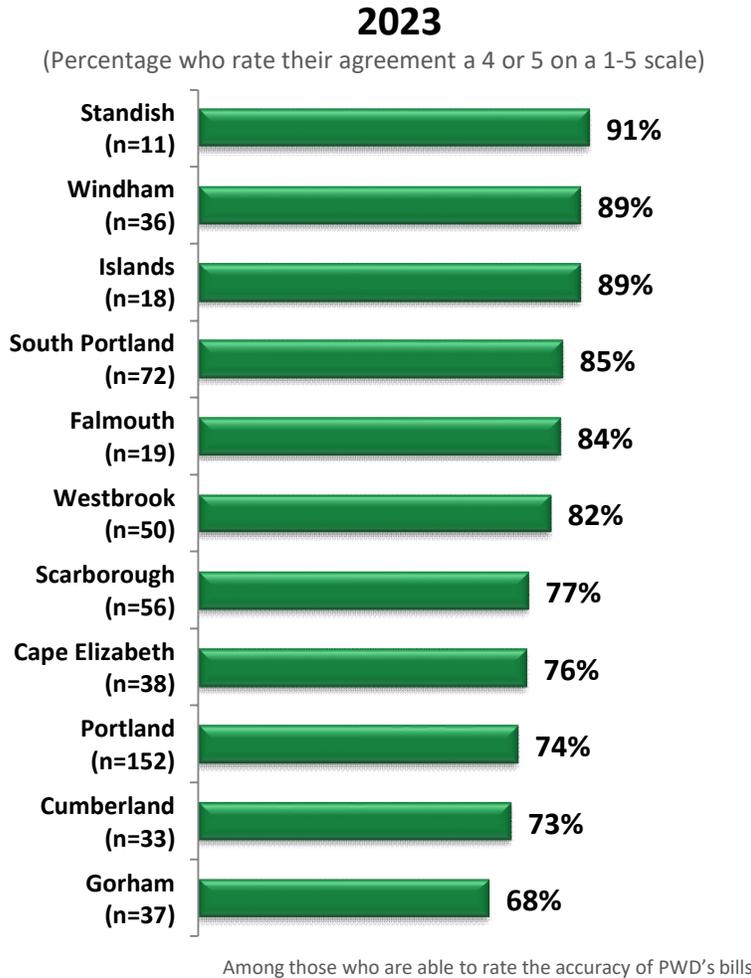


Eight out of ten customers would agree that PWD produces accurate bills.
 The share who agree that PWD produces accurate bills is now higher than in 2017.

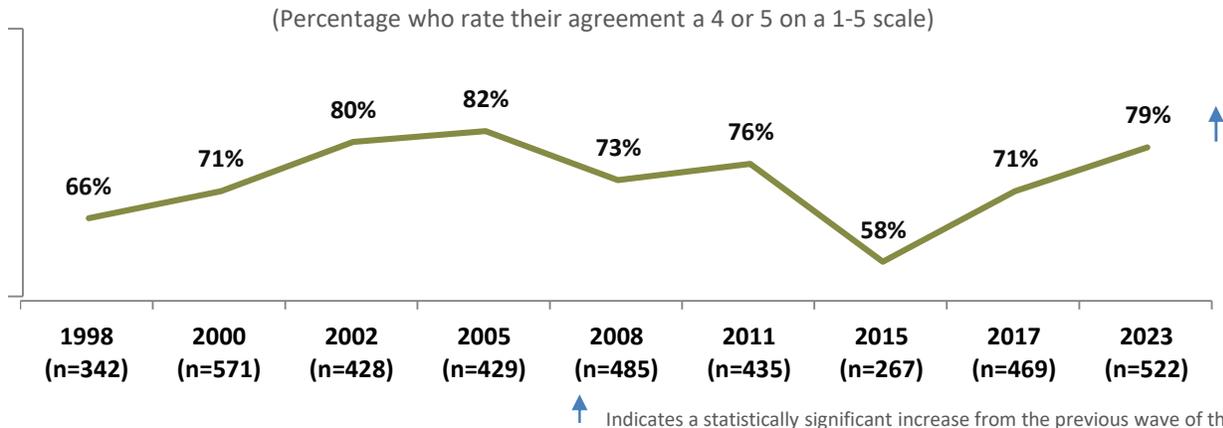
Agreement that PWD Produces Accurate Bills



Locality



TREND



Most of those who receive wastewater services from an external provider believe they receive those services from PWD, whether alone or in conjunction with a municipality.

Reported Provider of Wastewater Services



Receive Wastewater Services From PWD: 62%

Among those who know who provides their wastewater service (n=511)



Predictably, reported usage of wastewater services varies across localities.

Locality

Reported Provider of Wastewater Services

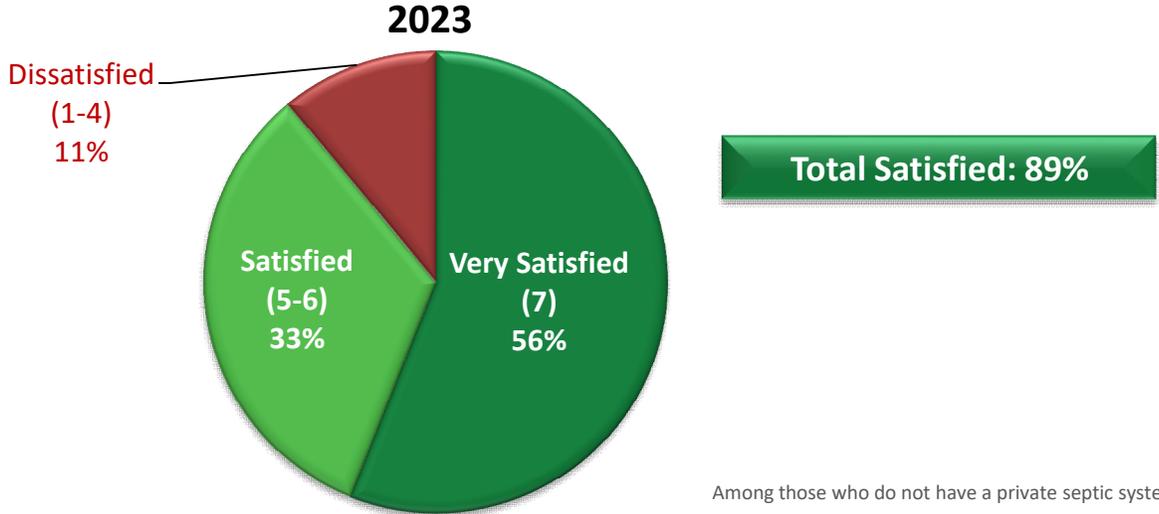
		Cape					South					
		Elizabeth	Cumberland	Falmouth	Gorham	Portland	Scarborough	Portland	Westbrook	Windham	Standish	Islands
Portland Water District	2023	40%	47%	44%	46%	81%	18%	45%	60%	19%	--	63%
	2017	42%	61%	42%	63%	76%	24%	53%	64%	50%	--	64%
	2015	37%	72%	50%	57%	81%	11%	44%	55%	100%	--	--
Local city/town	2023	14%	3%	6%	8%	4%	51%	34%	8%	--	--	--
	2017	36%	10%	42%	9%	8%	65%	22%	17%	--	--	--
	2015	17%	--	38%	14%	--	89%	32%	23%	--	--	--
Portland Water District and local city/town	2023	12%	9%	6%	16%	14%	5%	17%	6%	--	--	--
	2017	21%	30%	17%	28%	15%	11%	26%	20%	50%	--	36%
	2015	50%	28%	13%	29%	19%	--	24%	23%	--	--	--

Among those who know who provides their wastewater service
Please note several communities have very small sample sizes.
Results in those communities should be interpreted with caution.



Nine out of ten customers who do not have a private septic system are satisfied with their wastewater service overall, with nearly six out of ten *very* satisfied.

Overall Satisfaction With Wastewater Service

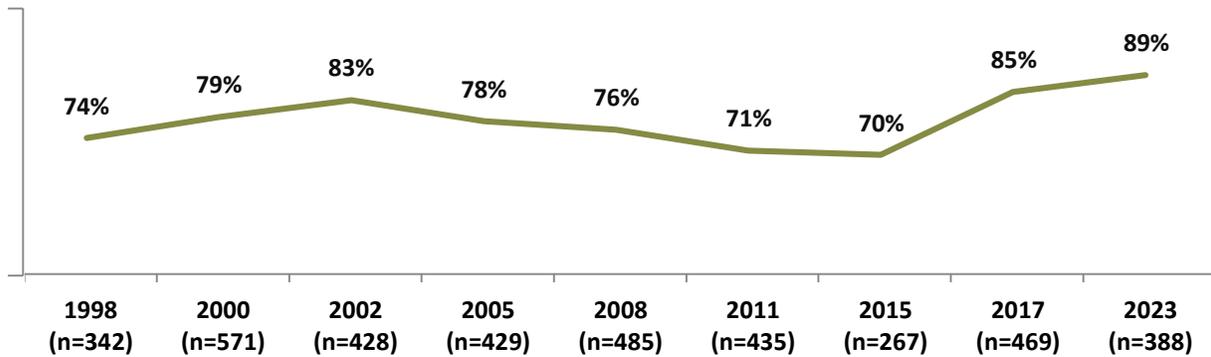


Locality

2023
(Percentage who rate their satisfaction a 5 to 7 on a 1-7 scale)



(Percentage who rate their satisfaction a 5 to 7 on a 1-7 scale)



TREND

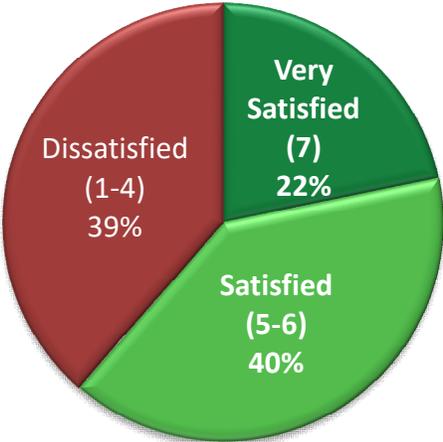
Among those who do not have a private septic system



Six out of ten are satisfied with the price they pay for wastewater service – holding steady from 2017.

Satisfaction With the Price of Wastewater Service

2023



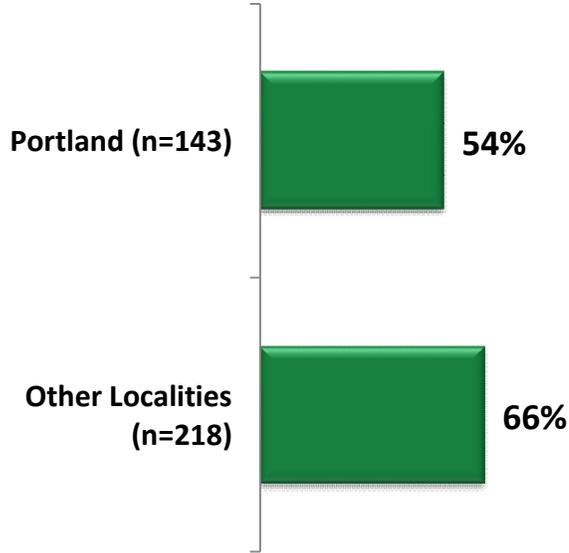
Total Satisfied: 61%

Among those who do not have a private septic system and are able to provide a rating (n=361)

Locality

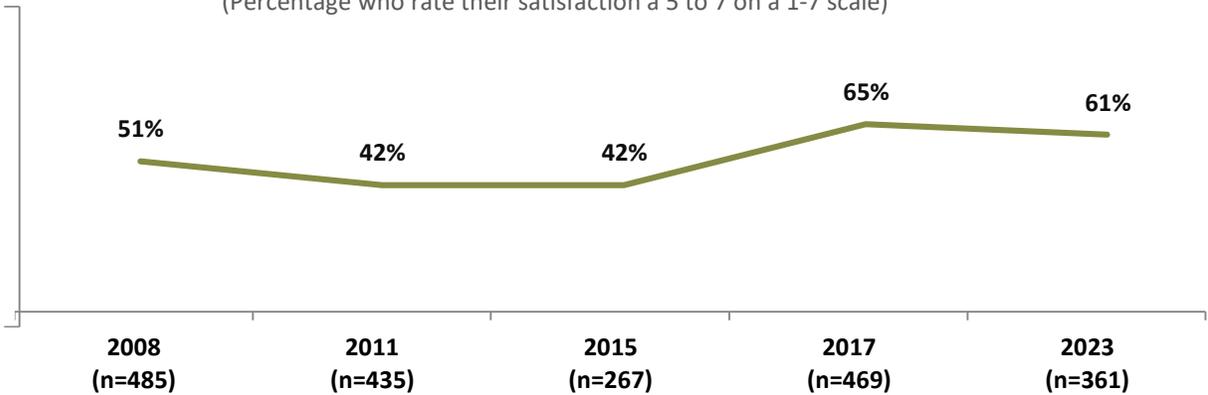
2023

(Percentage who rate their satisfaction a 5 to 7 on a 1-7 scale)



Among those who do not have a private septic system and are able to provide a rating

(Percentage who rate their satisfaction a 5 to 7 on a 1-7 scale)



TREND

“How satisfied are you with each of the following?”
Scale: 1 – “Very dissatisfied” to 7 – “Very satisfied”

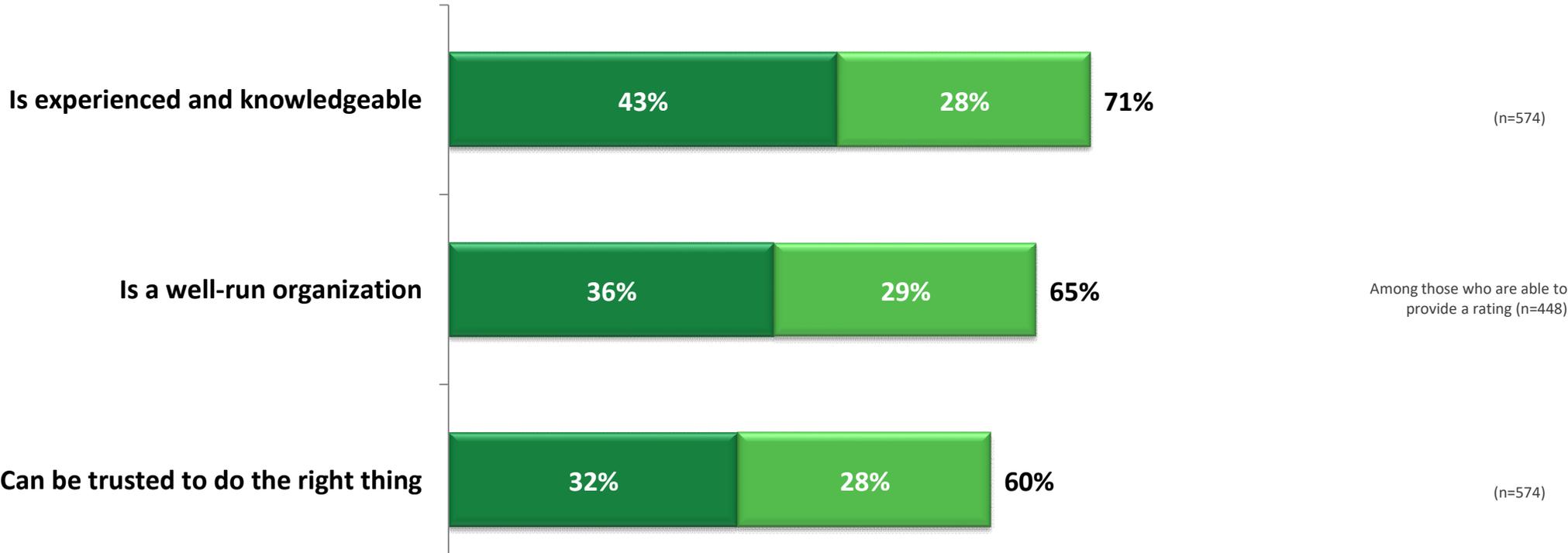


Views Towards PWD



Roughly seven out of ten customers overall believe PWD is experienced and knowledgeable or consider PWD to be a well-run organization. An additional six out of ten believe the company can be trusted to do the right thing.

Views Towards PWD



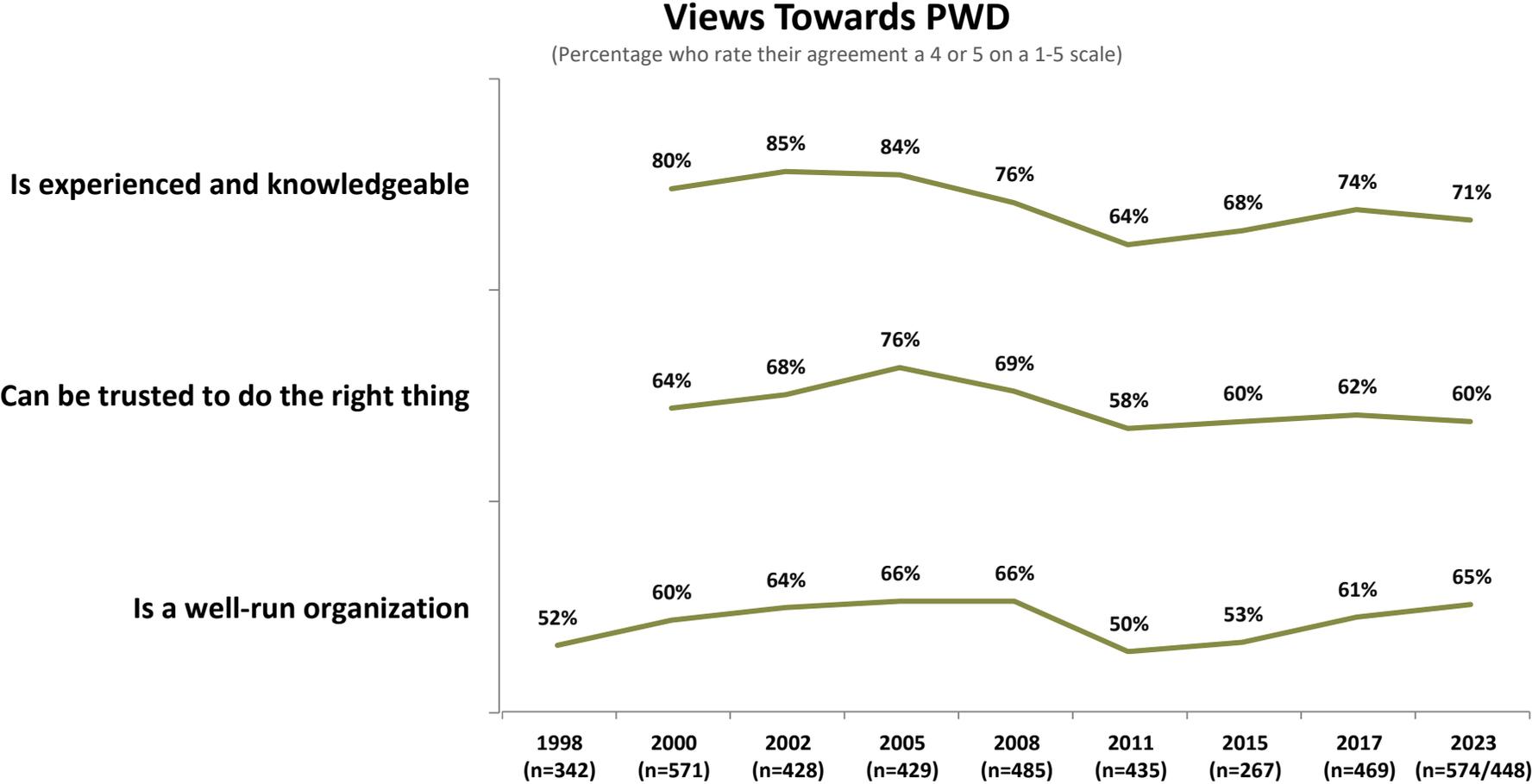
Customers who recall receiving communication from PWD within the past year are more likely than others to agree that the organization is experienced (77% vs. 59%), well-run (71% vs. 54%), and trustworthy (67% vs. 48%).

■ Completely Agree (5) ■ 4

"How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The Portland Water District..." Scale: 1 – "Completely disagree" to 5 – "Completely agree"

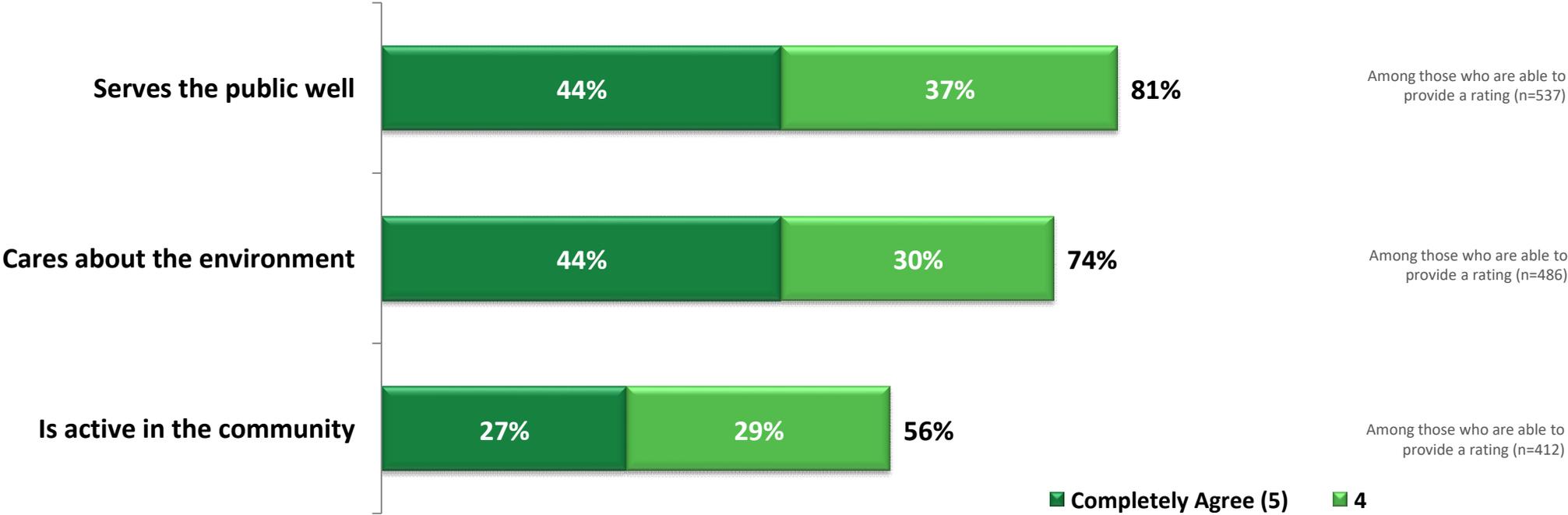


The shares of customers who feel PWD is experienced and knowledgeable, trustworthy, or well-run have held steady since 2017.



Among customers who are able to rate PWD’s community impact, eight out of ten believe the organization serves the public well, and about seven out of ten believe the organization cares about the environment. Roughly six out of ten would agree that PWD is active in the community.

Views Towards PWD’s Community Impact



Customers who recall receiving communication from PWD within the past year are more likely than others to agree that the organization serves the public well (86%, 73%), cares about the environment (80%, 63%), and is active in the community (62%, 44%).

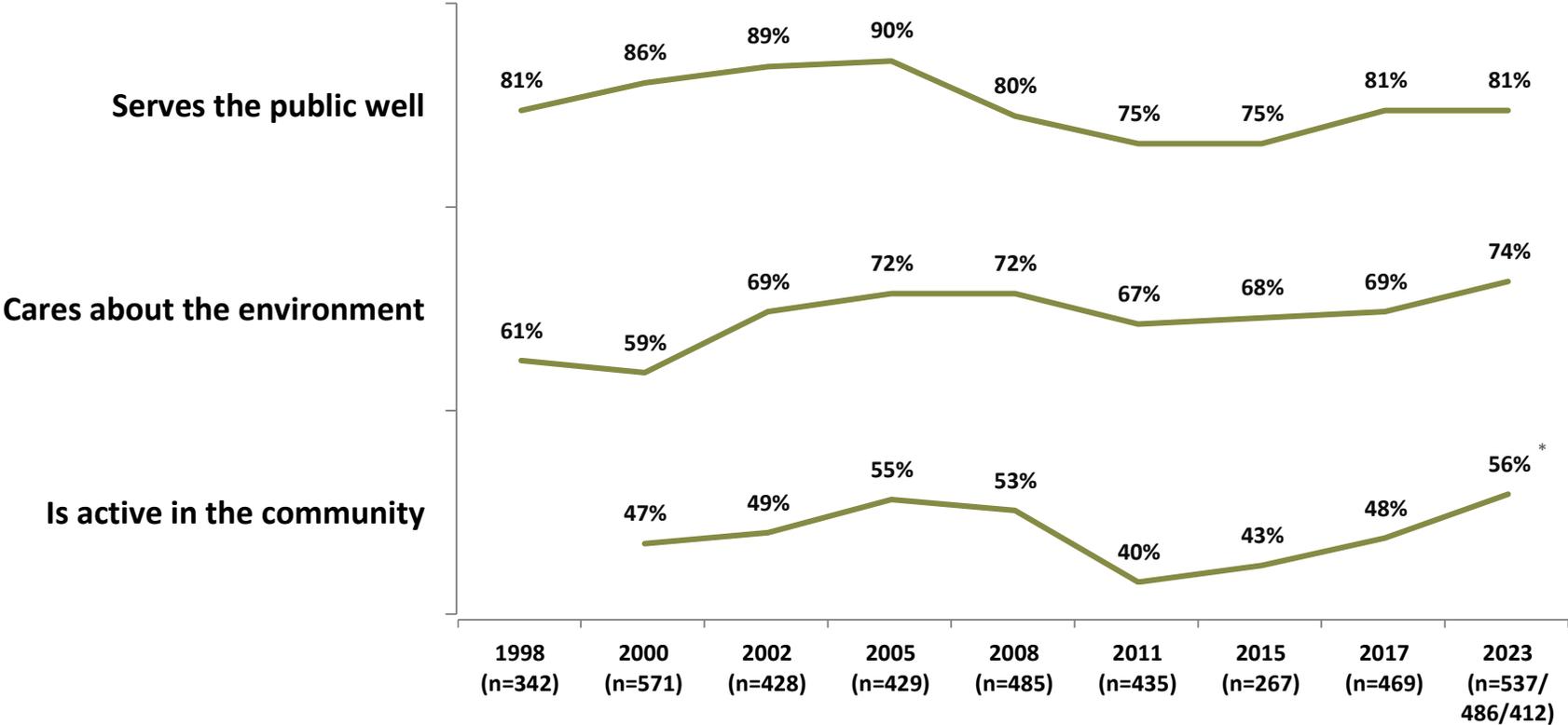
“How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The Portland Water District...” Scale: 1 – “Completely disagree” to 5 – “Completely agree”



Customers are just as likely to believe PWD serves the public well or cares about the environment in 2023 as in previous years. Compared to 2017, however, customers now appear more likely to believe PWD is active in the community.

Views Towards PWD’s Community Impact

(Percentage who rate their agreement a 4 or 5 on a 1-5 scale)



* In 2023 for the first time, this question offered a “Not sure” response option (28% selected “Not sure”). This may have shifted some responses and impacted the trends.

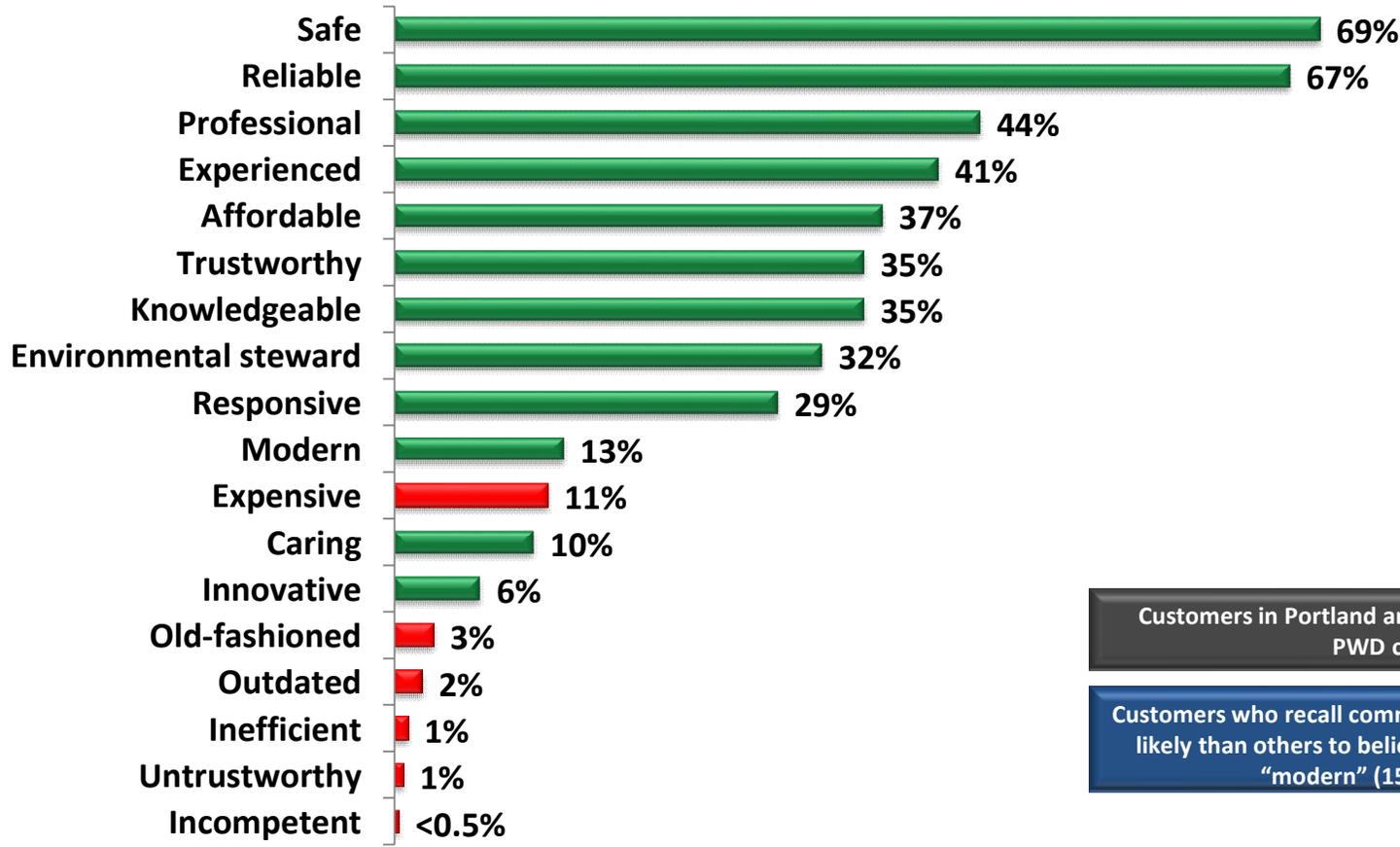
“How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The Portland Water District...” Scale: 1 – “Completely disagree” to 5 – “Completely agree”



Across 18 personality characteristics listed in the survey, customers are – by a wide margin – most likely to say that PWD is “safe” or “reliable,” with strong majorities saying those terms describe the organization. Many customers, but still less than half, believe PWD can be described as “professional,” “experienced,” “affordable,” “trustworthy,” “knowledgeable,” an “environmental steward,” or “responsive.” Smaller shares believe other positive terms that are not related to service delivery – such as “modern,” “caring,” or “innovative” – describe PWD. Only handfuls of customers believe PWD can be described by any of the negative terms listed in the survey including “expensive,” “old-fashioned,” “outdated,” “inefficient,” “untrustworthy,” or “incompetent.”

Views Towards PWD

(Percentage of customers who believe characteristic describes PWD)



Customers in Portland are much less likely than those in other areas to feel PWD can be described as “affordable.”

Customers who recall communications from PWD within the past year are more likely than others to believe the organization is “responsive” (32% vs. 22%), “modern” (15% vs. 9%), or “innovative” (9% vs. 2%).

(n=574)



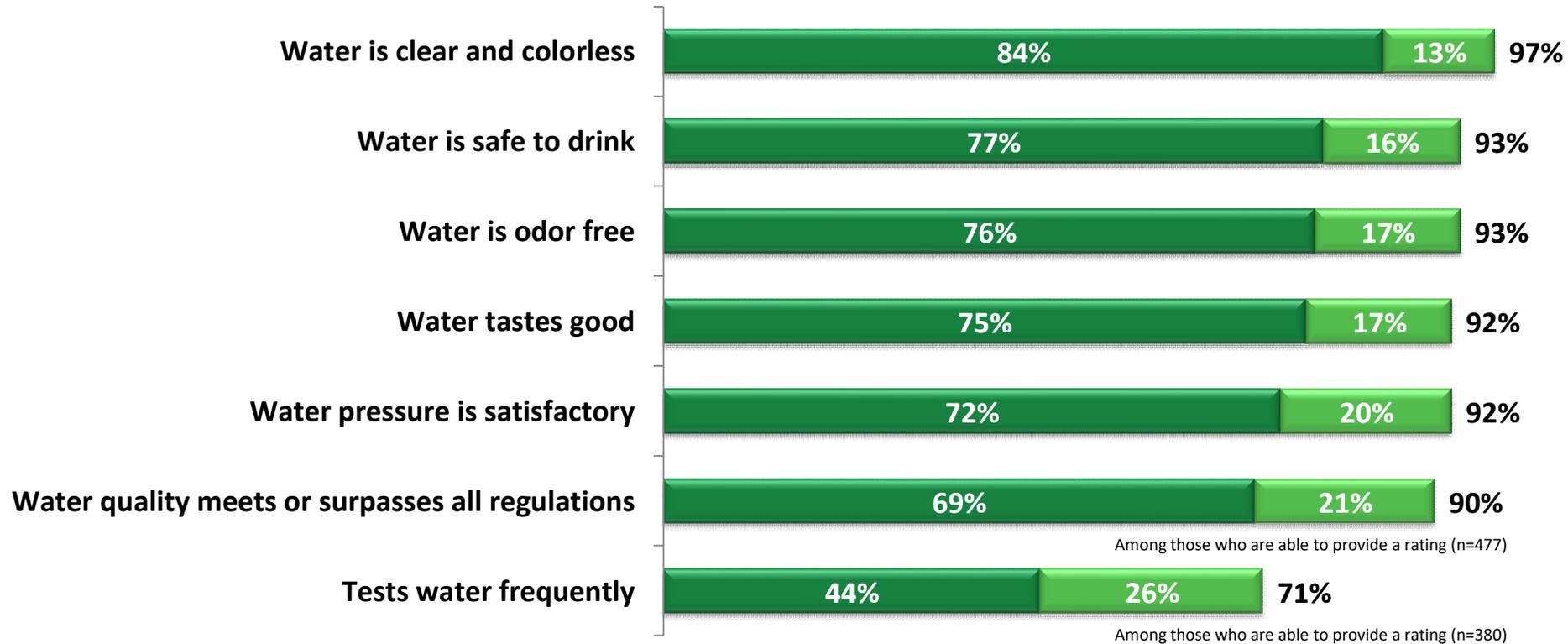
Assessment of Water Quality



Customers almost universally praise the quality of the water PWD provides.

Nearly all agree that PWD’s water is clear, and at least nine out of ten agree it is safe, odor free, tastes good, delivered with good pressure, or meets regulations (among those who provide a rating). An additional seven out of ten who are able to provide an assessment expect that PWD tests its water frequently.

Views Towards the Quality of PWD’s Water



“[Our water] is delicious.”

Views towards each of these aspects of PWD’s water are generally consistent across the localities in PWD’s footprint.

(n=574, unless otherwise noted)

Customers who recall receiving communication from PWD within the past year are more likely than others to agree that the organization tests its water frequently (77% vs. 57%).

■ Completely Agree (5) ■ 4

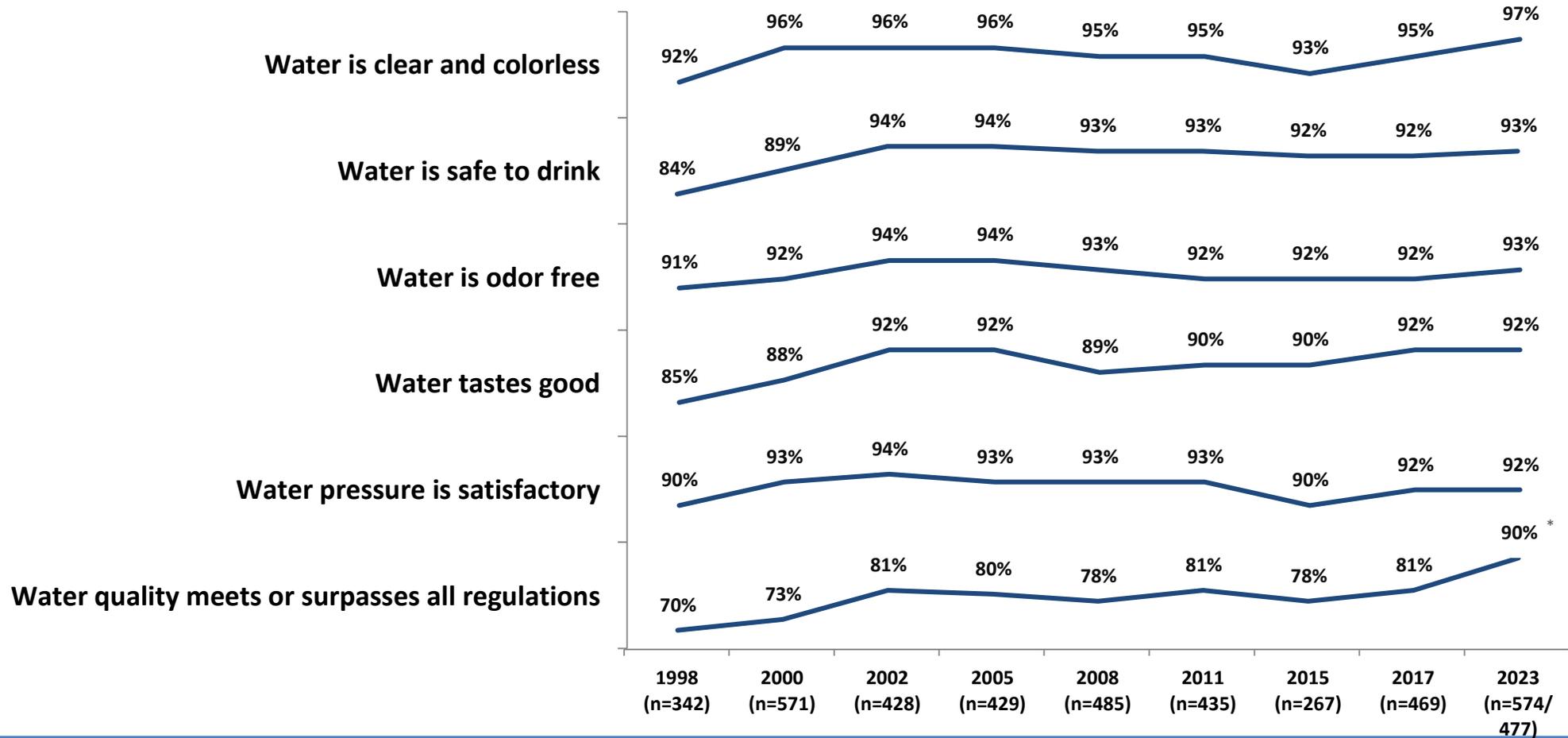


Views towards the tested parameters of PWD’s water quality have broadly held steady over time.

TREND

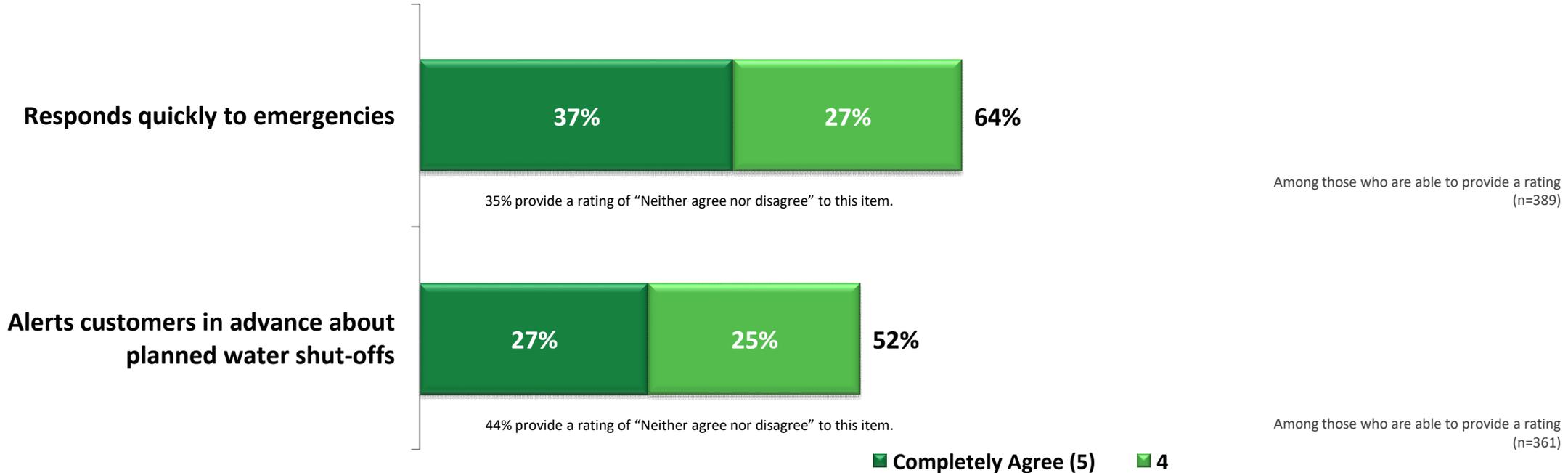
Views Towards the Quality of PWD’s Water

(Percentage who rate their agreement a 4 or 5 on a 1-5 scale)



Two out of three customers who provide a rating agree that PWD responds quickly to emergencies, and about half agree that PWD alerts customers in advance about planned water shut-offs. Almost all of the rest *neither agree nor disagree*, suggesting they do not have experience with PWD in these areas.

Views Towards PWD



“It would be great if PWD provided text notification of water main breaks. Right now, we find out only when the water stops working, which is not a pleasant experience. If we received notification ahead of a repair, we could prepare in advance.”

“I’m happy with the service – when the water was going to be shut off due to street work a few neighbors thought there could have been a bit more advance notice, but employees came to the door to alert people and/or left a note with a number you could call.”

“How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The Portland Water District...” Scale: 1 – “Completely disagree” to 5 – “Completely agree”

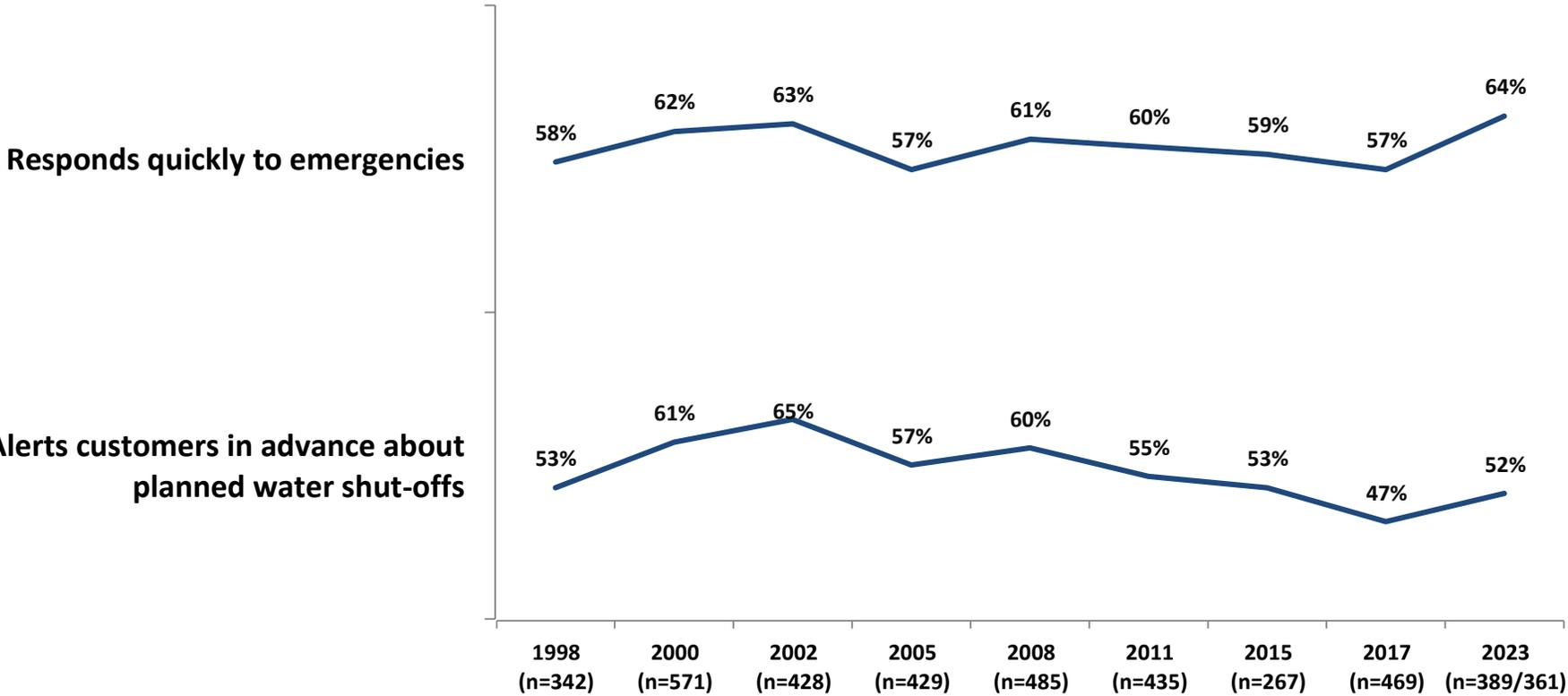


The shares who agree that PWD responds quickly to emergencies or alerts customers in advance about water shut-offs have broadly held steady over time.

TREND

Views Towards PWD

(Percentage who rate their agreement a 4 or 5 on a 1-5 scale)



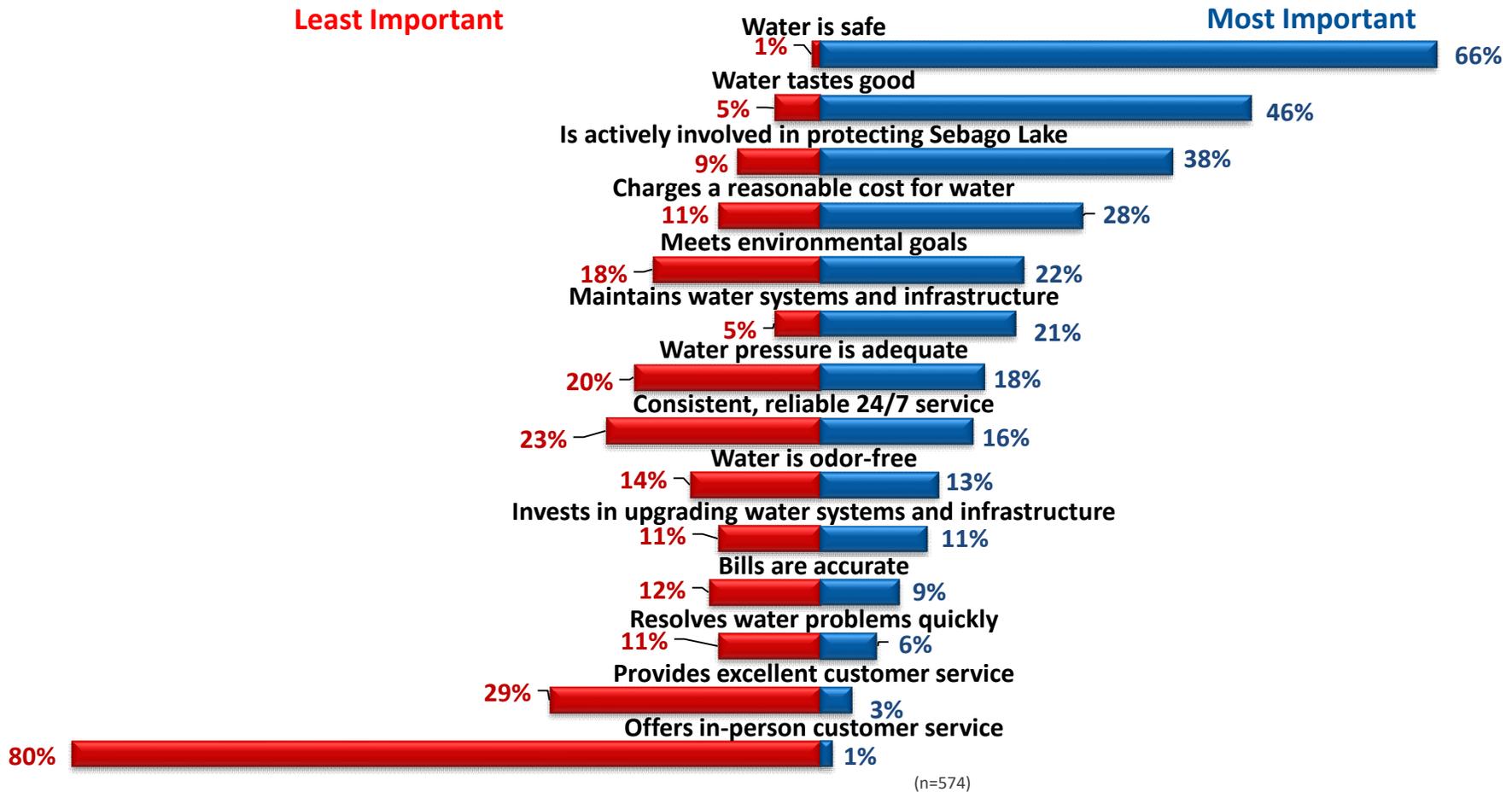
Views Towards and Usage of PWD's Services



Among 14 aspects of service listed in the survey, water safety is, predictably, the most likely to be seen as the *most important* component of PWD’s service, followed, distantly, by water that tastes good, protecting Sebago Lake, and reasonable cost. Customer service – most notably in-person customer service – appears to be the least important service component.

Most Important Aspects of PWD’s Services

(Percentage of customers who selected service as most or least important)



(n=574)

“Please select the three components of service provided by the Portland Water District that are MOST important to you.”
 “Please select the three components of service provided by the Portland Water District that are LEAST important to you.”

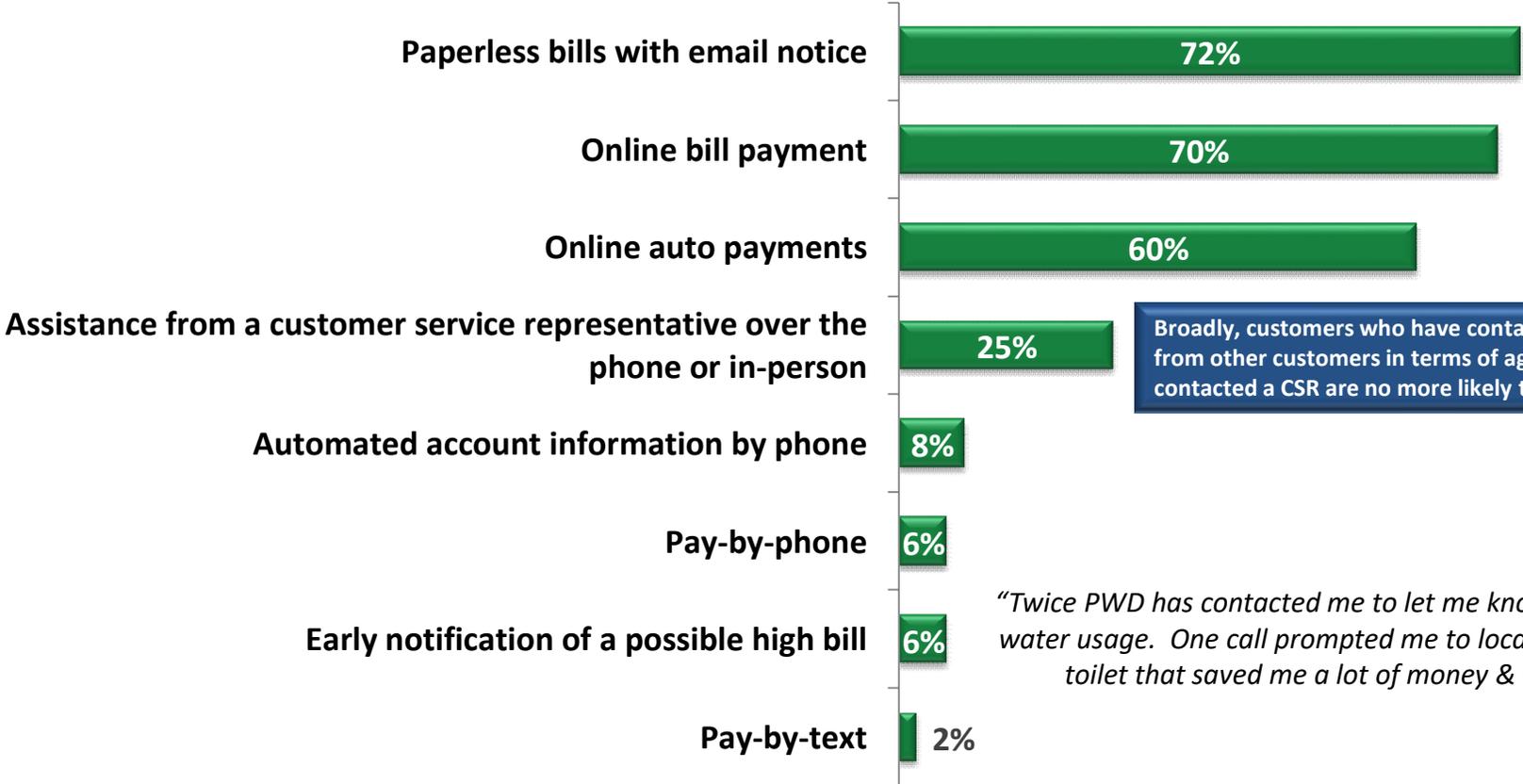


Seven out of ten surveyed customers currently use PWD’s paperless billing or online bill payment systems, and six out of ten use online auto payments. One-quarter have used in-person or phone-based customer service in the past twelve months. No more than one out of ten customers use account information by phone, pay-by-phone, early notifications of a high bill, or pay-by-text services.

Usage of PWD’s Services

(Percentage of customers who claim to use service)

	EBILL	EMAIL
Paperless bills with email notice	78% ↑	20%
Online bill payment	74% ↑	31%
Online auto payments	64% ↑	27%



Broadly, customers who have contacted a PWD customer service representative are no different from other customers in terms of age, gender, or home ownership. In addition, those who have contacted a CSR are no more likely to be satisfied with PWD overall than are those who have not.

“Twice PWD has contacted me to let me know of unusual water usage. One call prompted me to locate a leak in a toilet that saved me a lot of money & hassle.”

Customers in Portland are more likely than those in other areas to use paperless bills and online bill payment.

(n=574)

“Which of the following services from the Portland Water District have you used in the past 12 months?”

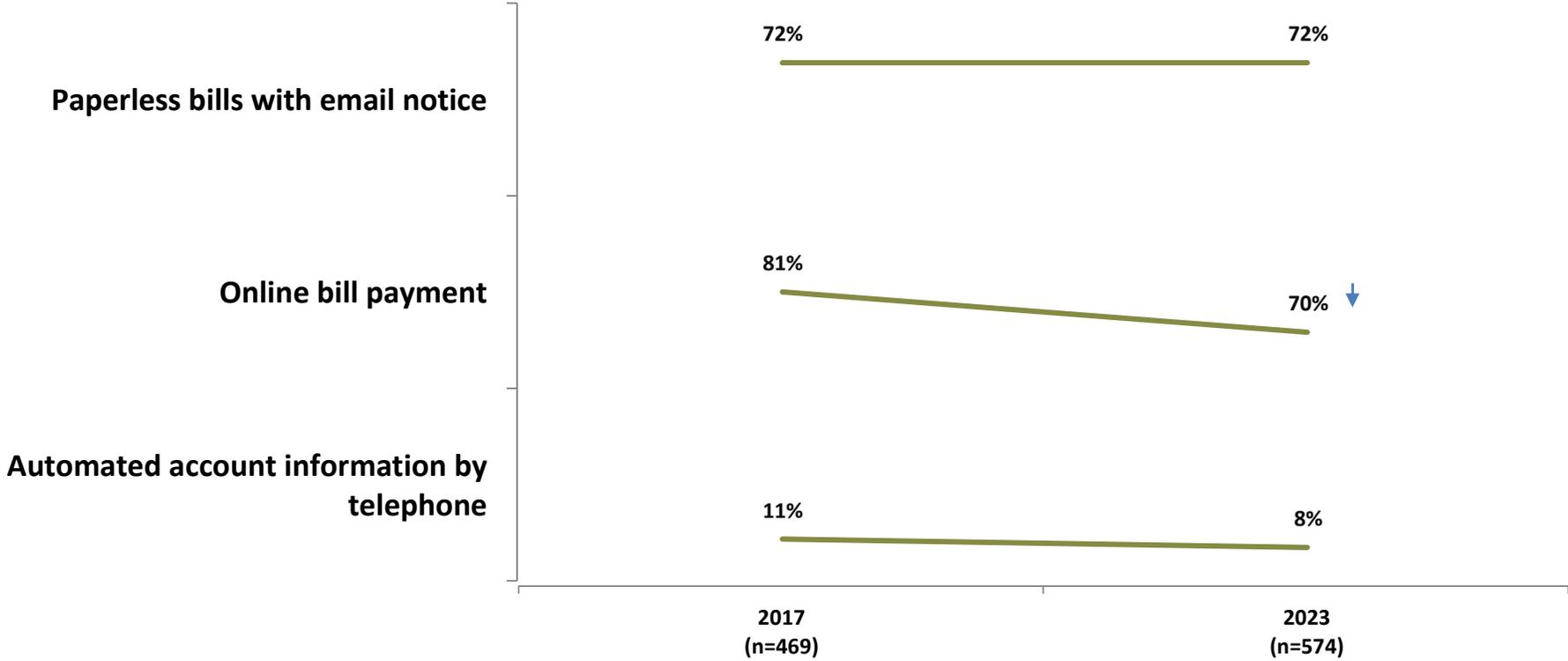
↑ Indicates a statistically significant difference between customer groups.



Reported usage of online bill payment has declined since 2017.

Usage of PWD's Account Services

(Percentage of customers who claim to use service)



↓ Indicates a statistically significant decline from the 2017 wave of the survey.

“Which of the following services from the Portland Water District have you used in the past 12 months?”



The adoption rate of many of PWD’s customer service options – that is, usage specifically among customers who are aware of them – is generally lowest for phone-based services (automated account information, pay-by-phone, and pay-by-text).

Those who have signed up for ebill services are more likely than their counterparts to be aware of online bill payments (97% vs. 84%) and paperless bills with email notices (85% vs. 68%).

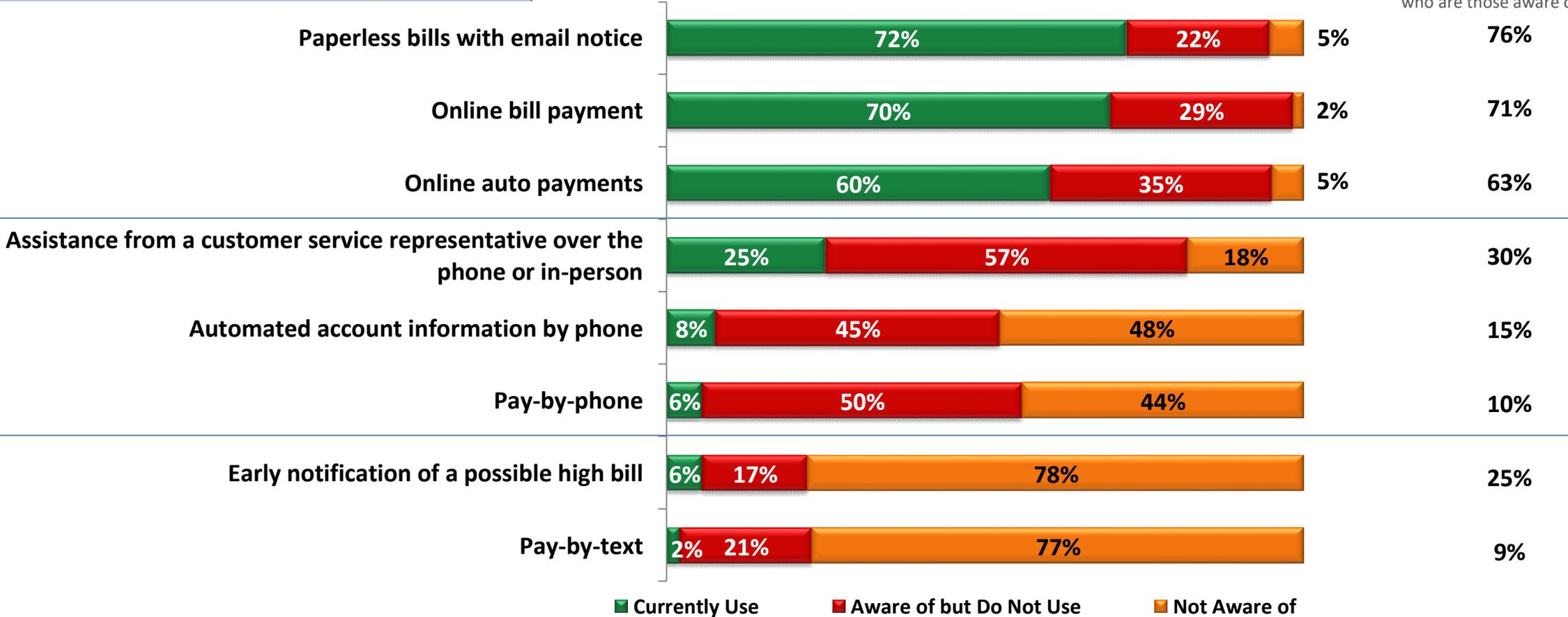
Usage of PWD’s Services

Adoption Rate
(Percentage using service among who are those aware of it)

High usage, moderate awareness among non-users

Low usage, high awareness among non-users

Low usage, low awareness among non-users

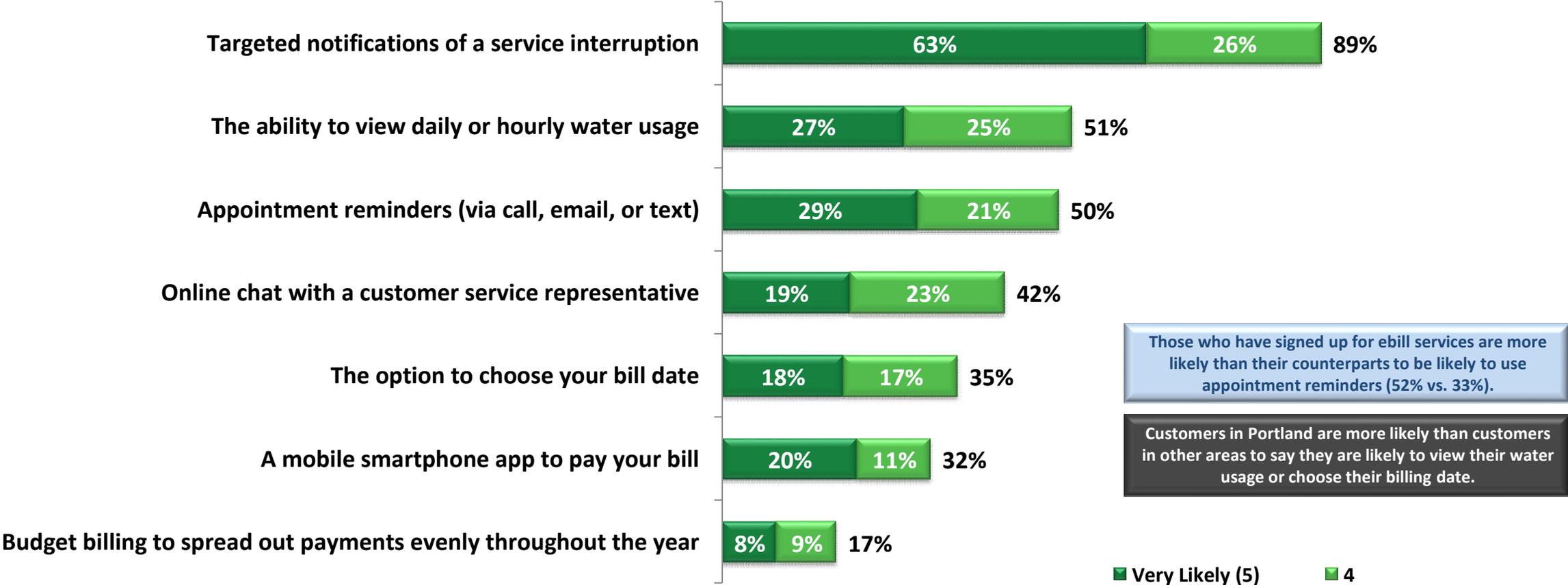


(n=574)



Nine out of ten customers say they would be likely to use targeted notifications of service interruptions if they were made available, including two out of three who would be *very* likely to do so, making that – by far – the most popular of seven potential services listed in the survey. Half would be likely to monitor their water usage or take advantage of appointment reminders, and four out of ten would be likely to use an online chat if it were offered. About three out of ten would be likely to choose their bill date or use a mobile smartphone app to pay their bill, and two out of ten would take advantage of budget billing if it were available.

Likelihood of Using Services From PWD



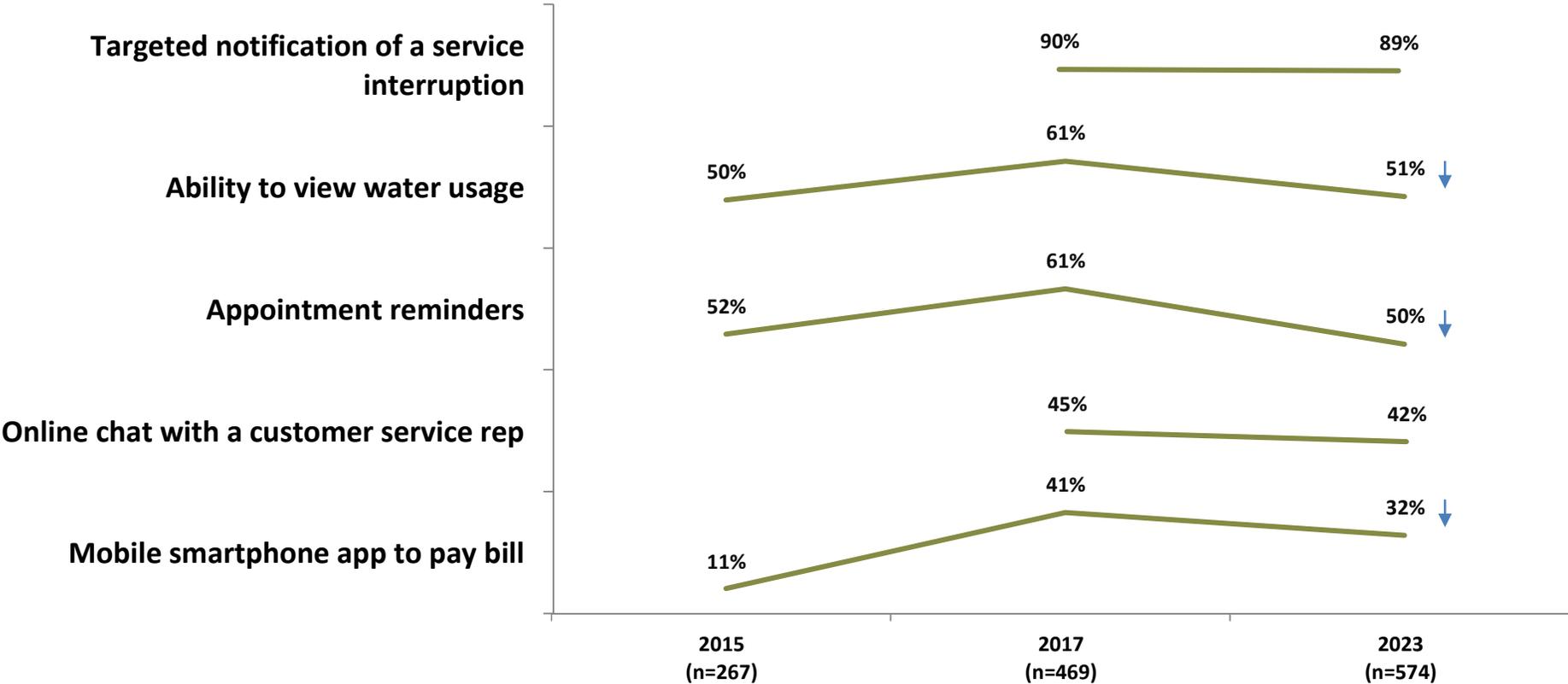
(n=574)



Anticipated likelihood of using several services has declined since 2017, often returning to the levels seen in the 2015 survey.

Likelihood of Using Services

(Percentage who rate their likelihood of using the service a 4 or 5 on a 1-5 scale)



↓ Indicates a statistically significant decline from the 2017 wave of the survey.

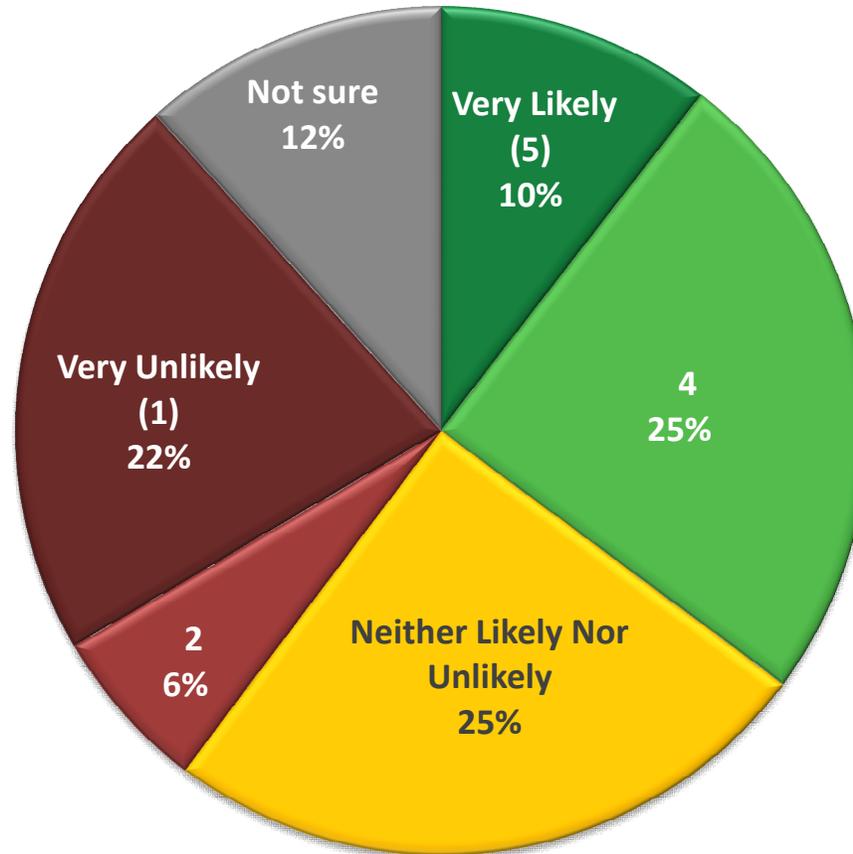
“How likely would you be to use each of the following customer service options, if the Portland Water District made them available?”
Scale: 1 – “Very unlikely” to 5 – “Very likely”

“Choosing a billing date” and “Budget billing” were not included in the 2017 survey.
“Early notification of a possible high bill” was not included in the 2023 survey.



One out of three customers say they are likely to consider contributing to watershed protection through voluntary contributions. Most of the rest cannot commit.

Likelihood of Considering Contributing to Watershed Protection



**Total Likely to Consider:
35%**

Likelihood to contribute to watershed protection is particularly high in Falmouth.

"I appreciate the efforts to keep Sebago Lake clean and healthy for us."

"Let's say the Portland Water District offered customers the chance to contribute to watershed protection through small, voluntary contributions on their PWD bill. If you had to guess at this point, how likely would you be to consider making that contribution?"

(n=574)



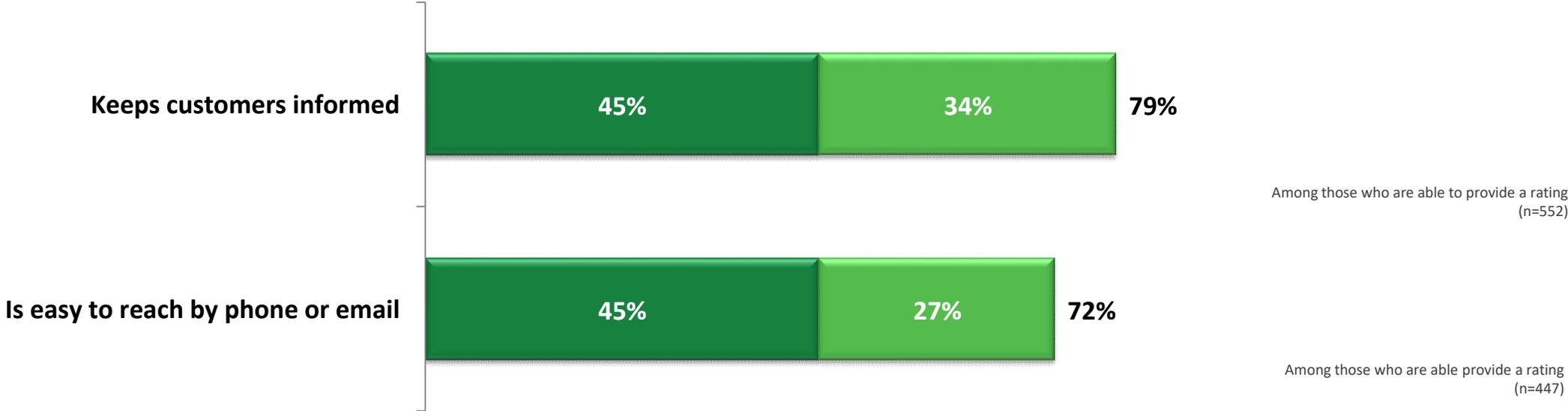
Views Towards PWD's Communications



Eight out of ten customers agree that PWD generally keeps them informed, and seven out of ten agree that PWD is easy to reach by phone or email.

"I am pleased with your communications and with your service."

Views Towards PWD's Communications



Customers who recall communications from PWD within the past year are more likely than others to agree that the organization keeps customers informed (87% vs. 62%) or is easy to reach (76% vs. 65%).

Customers in Portland are less likely than those in other areas to feel PWD keeps customers informed.

■ Completely Agree (5) ■ 4

"How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The Portland Water District..." Scale: 1 – "Completely disagree" to 5 – "Completely agree"

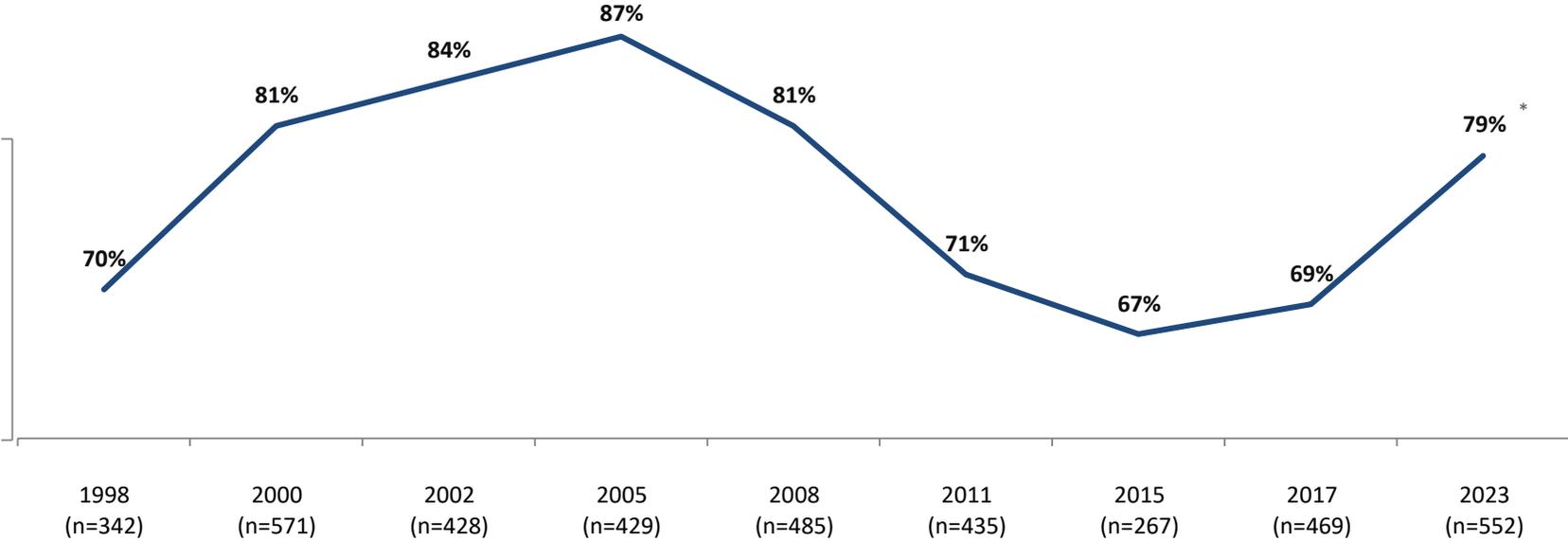


Noteworthy majorities of customers continue to feel PWD keeps customers or the public informed.

Communications With Customers/the Public

(Percentage who rate their agreement a 4 or 5 on a 1-5 scale)

Keeps Customers/the Public Informed



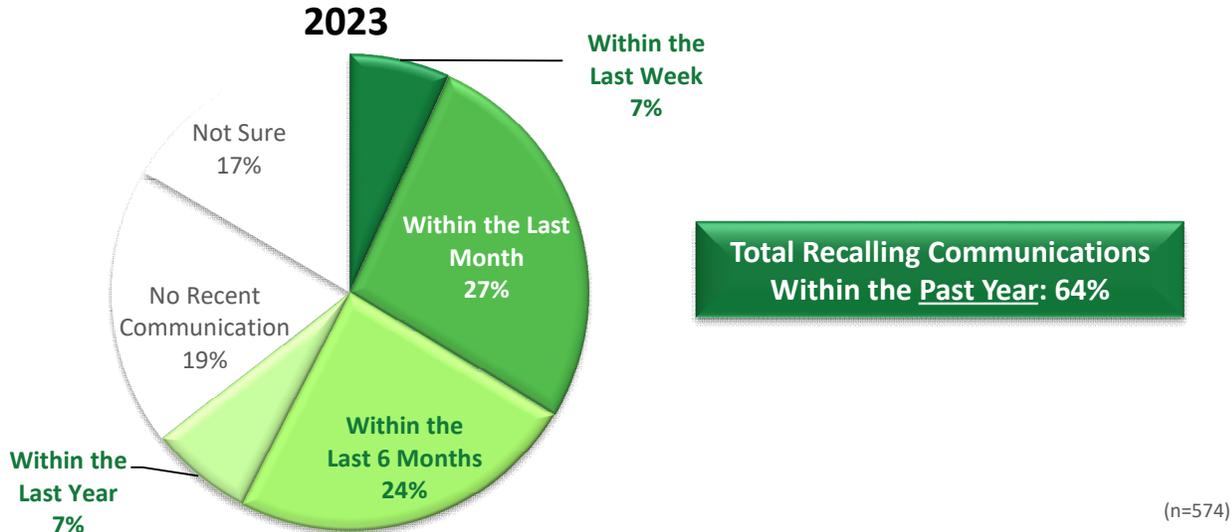
* Prior to 2023, this question was "Keeps the public informed." This change may have impacted the ability to compare results.

"How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The Portland Water District..." Scale: 1 – "Completely disagree" to 5 – "Completely agree"



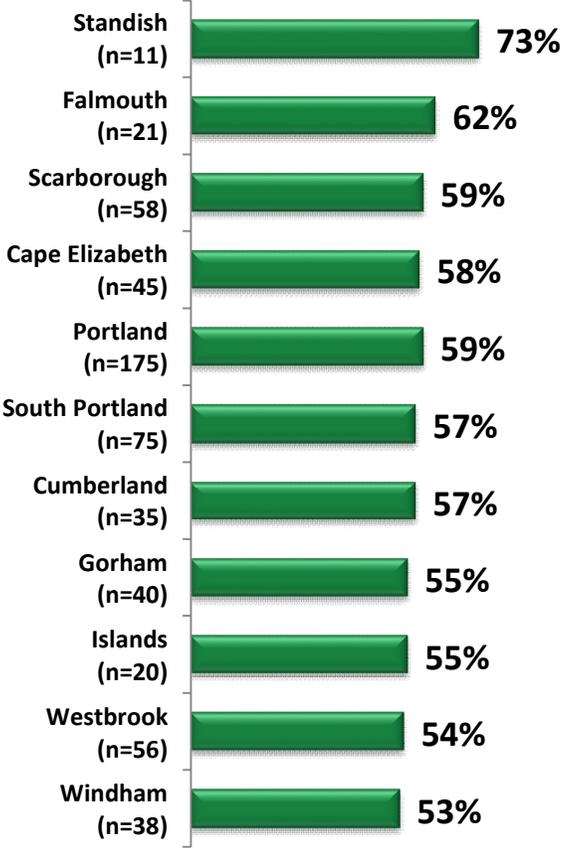
Roughly six out of ten customers recall receiving non-bill communications from PWD within the past six months, including one out of three who recall receiving communications within the *past week* or within the *past month*.

Recall of Communications From PWD



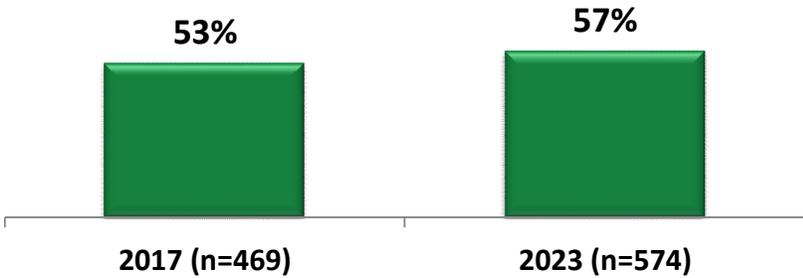
Locality

2023
(Percentage who recall communication from PWD within the past six months)



Recall of Communications From PWD Within Past Six Months

(Percentage who recall communication from PWD within the past six months)



TREND

“Besides a bill, do you remember receiving any communication from the Portland Water District?”

Please note the small sample sizes for several communities. Results in those communities should be interpreted with caution.



Account information is the most common type of communication from PWD (49%), followed by information about water quality (38%), rate adjustments (30%), environmental messages (30%), or PWD’s community involvement (30%). Fewer, but still noteworthy shares, recall receiving information about their water supply (22%) or upgrades (21%).

Six out of ten who recall communication from PWD say the organization has sent them emails (64%); no more than half as many recall receiving billing inserts (27%) or PWD’s newsletter (22%) or have been to the website (17%).

Recall of Communication From PWD

Topics of Communication	
Account or billing information	49%
Your water quality	38%
Water rate adjustments	30%
Environmental messages/promotions	30%
PWD’s activities in the community	30%
Your water supply	22%
Construction projects/upgrades	21%
Wastewater services	9%
Other information	7%

Methods of Communication	
Email	64%
Billing insert	27%
E-newsletter	22%
PWD’s website	17%
Radio, television, or print	11%
Social media	4%
Text message	2%
Phone call	2%
An in-person meeting or visit	1%
Billboards or other public signage	<0.5%
Some other place	4%

Among those who recall communications in the past year (n=370), not in the past six months, as is shown on the previous page

“In the past year, have you received information from the Portland Water District about...?”

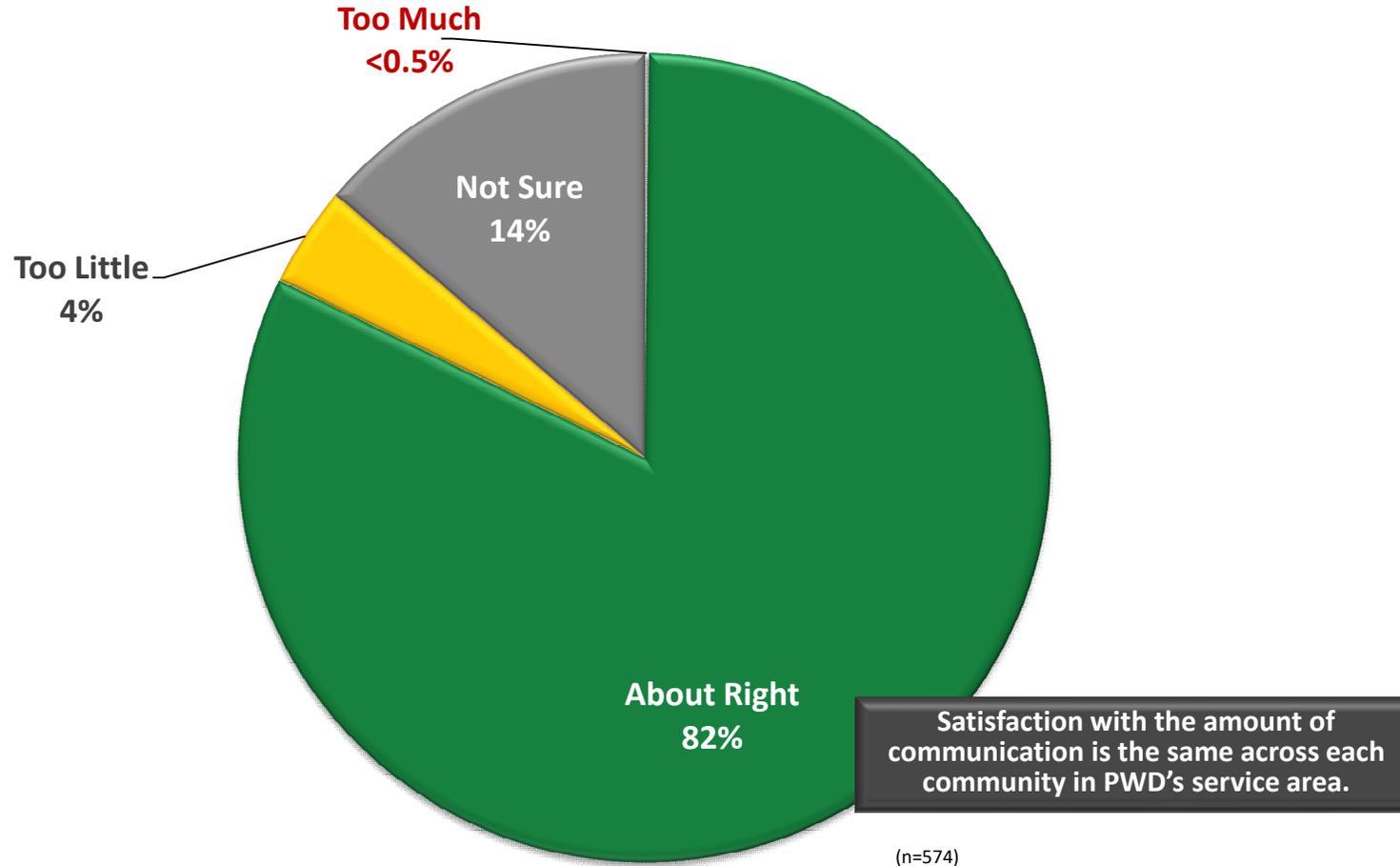
“In the past year, have you seen or heard information from the Portland Water District via...”



The large majority of customers – eight out of ten – feel the amount of communication they receive from PWD is *about right*.

The preferred frequency of communication appears to be monthly to every six months.

Views Towards the Amount of Communication From PWD



Satisfaction with the amount of communication is the same across each community in PWD's service area.

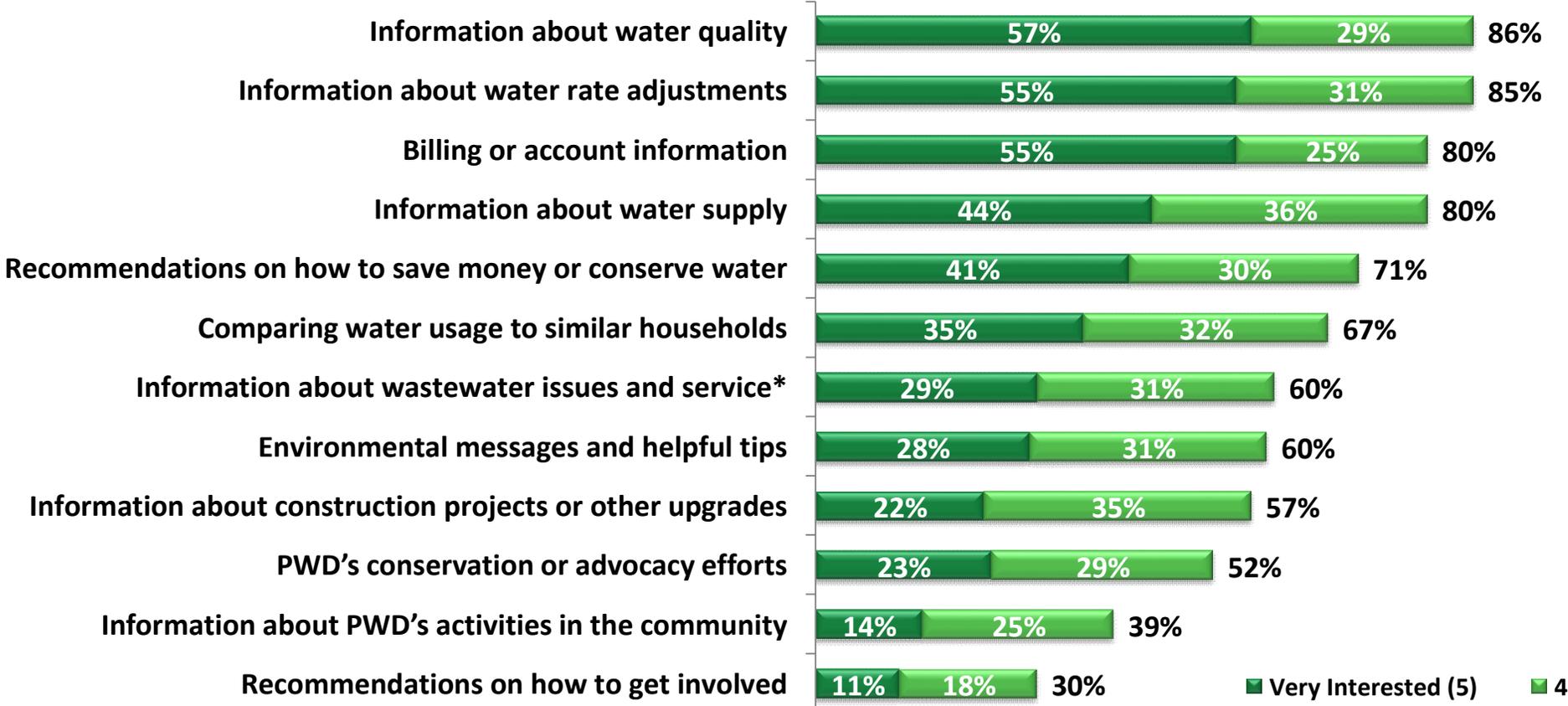
Those who feel the amount of communication from PWD is "About right" are particularly likely to recall communications within the past month (31%) or past six months (27%).

Communication		
Timing of Most Recent Communication	Among those who rate communication:	
	About Right (n=471)	Too Little (n=23)
Last week	8%	4%
Last month	31%	17%
Last 6 months	27%	17%
Last year	7%	4%
None	14%	35%



At least eight out of ten customers are interested in receiving information from PWD about water quality, rate adjustments, billing, or their water supply, with as many as half saying they are *very* interested in receiving those types of information. Seven out of ten are interested in receiving recommendations on how to conserve water or comparing their usage to other households, and six out of ten are interested in information about wastewater service, environmental issues, or construction. Fewer, but still about half, are interested in PWD’s conservation efforts. An additional four out of ten are interested in information about PWD’s activities in the community, and three out of ten are interested in recommendations on how to get involved with the organization.

Interest in Information From PWD



(n=574)

* Among those who do not have private septic (n=388)

“How interested are you in receiving the following from the Portland Water District?” Scale: 1 – “Not at all interested” to 5 – “Very interested”

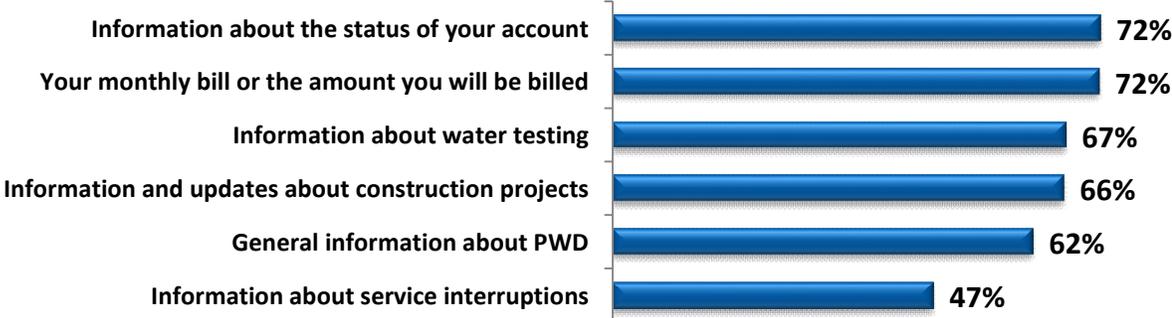


Email is clearly the preferred method of communication for customers, whether for information about account status, bills, water testing, construction projects, or general information about PWD. Although many would like to receive information about service interruptions by email, many would also like to receive information about service interruptions by text message.

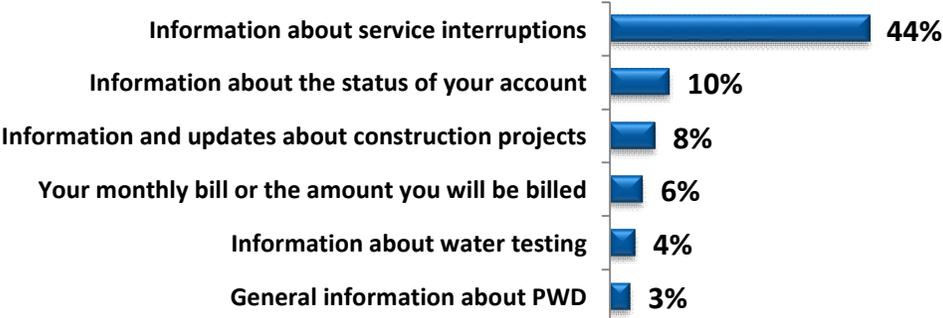
Communication Preferences

(Percentage of customers who would like to receive specific types of information through listed channels)

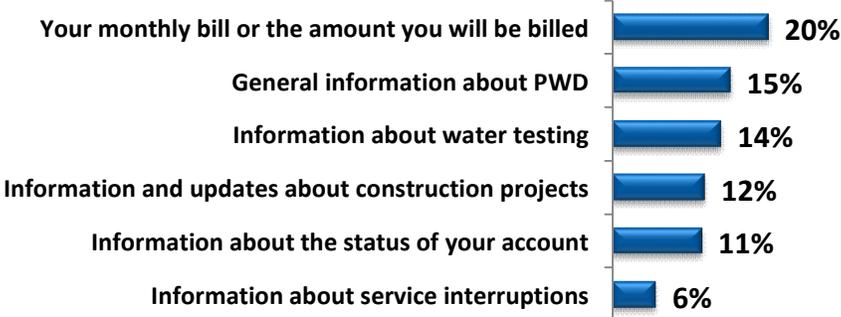
Email



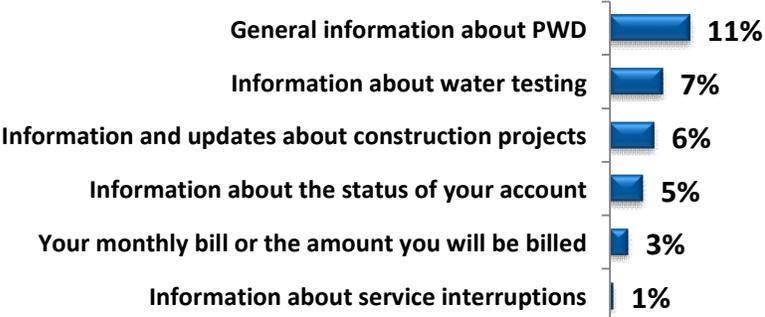
Text Message



Mail



PWD Website



(n=574)

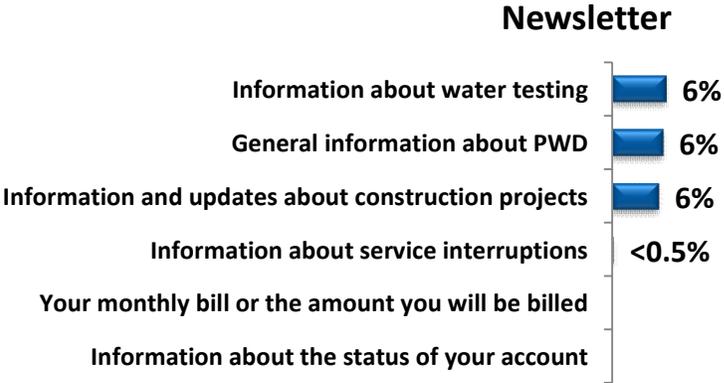
“How would you MOST prefer to receive the following from PWD?”



Relatively few – no more than one out of ten customers overall – would prefer to receive any specific type of information by newsletter.

Communication Preferences

(Percentage of customers who would like to receive specific types of information through listed channels)



No more than 2% of customers selected “call and speak to a person,” “online chats,” “social media,” or “in-person” as a preferred way to receive any of the listed types of information (so they are not shown).

(n=574)



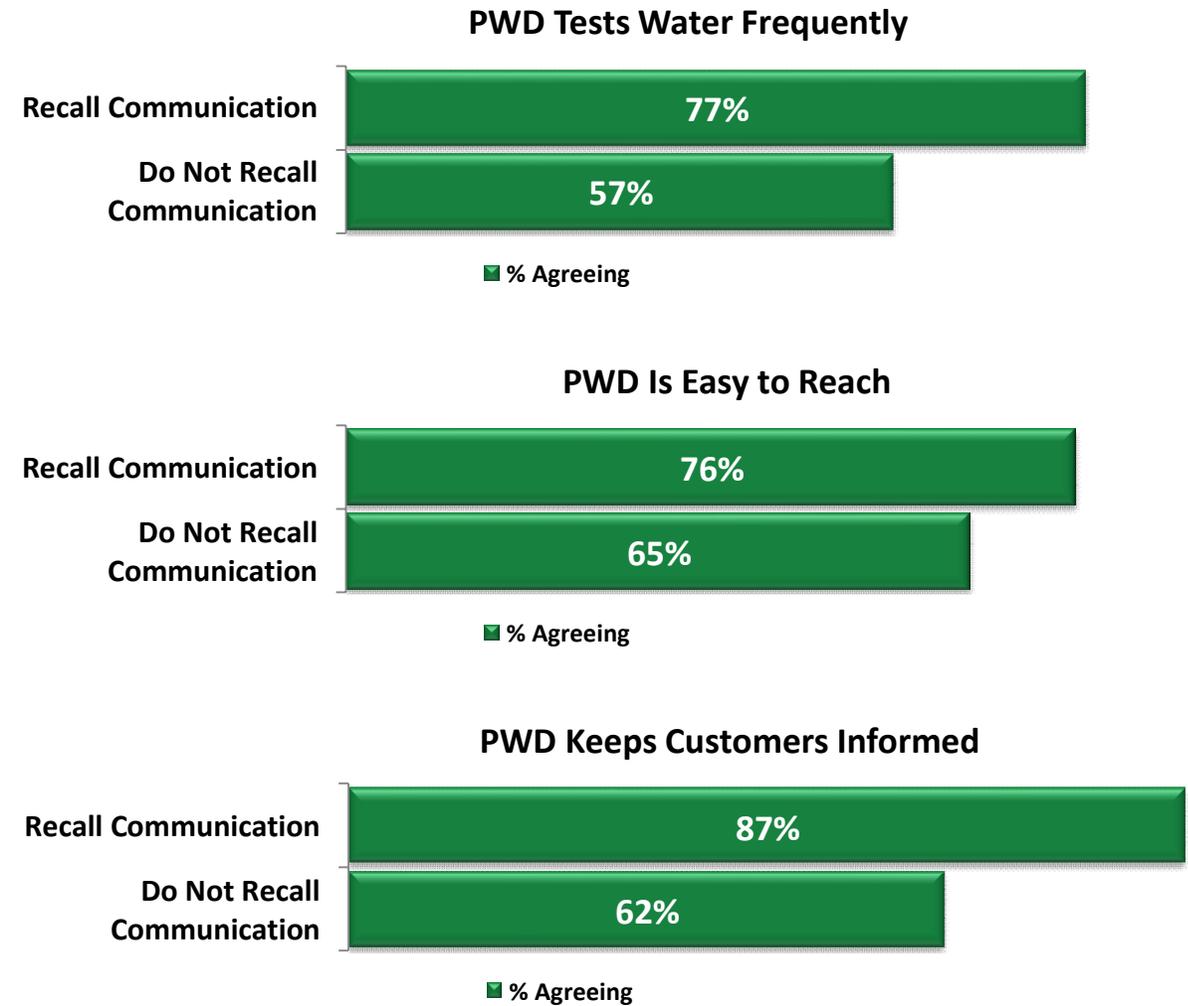
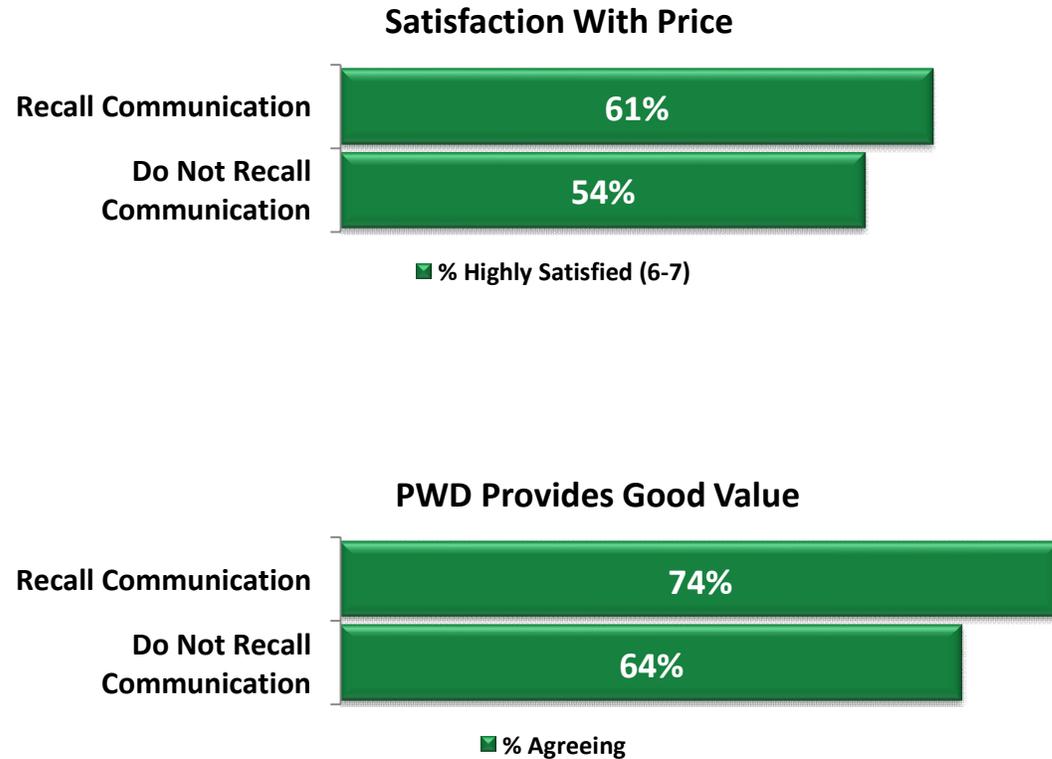
Profile of Responding Customers



Impact of Communications

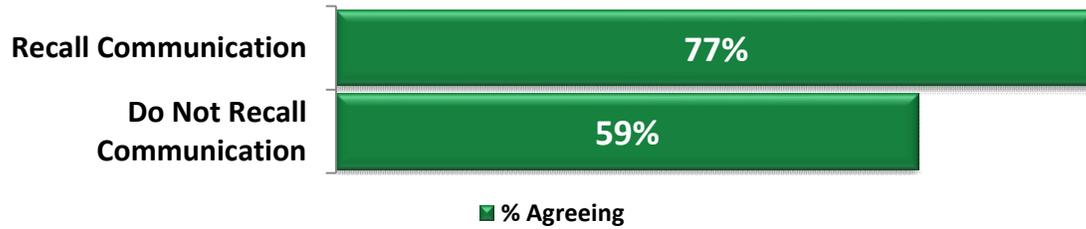


Impact of PWD Communications

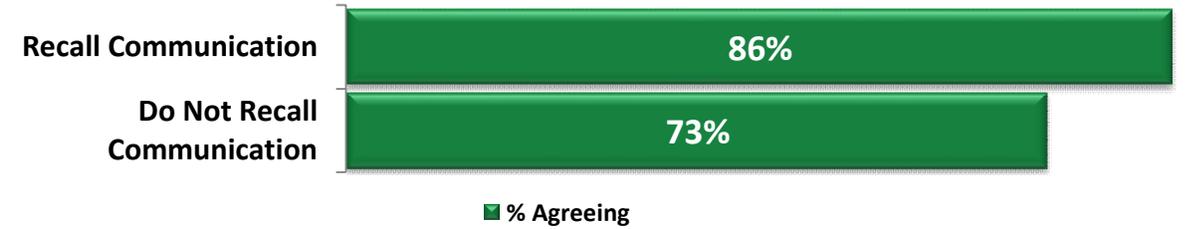


Impact of PWD Communications

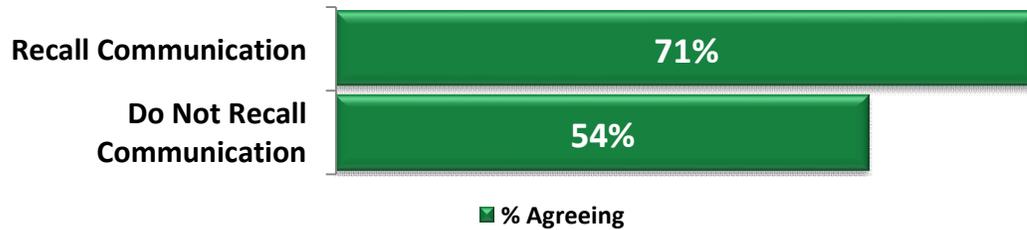
PWD Is Experienced and Knowledgeable



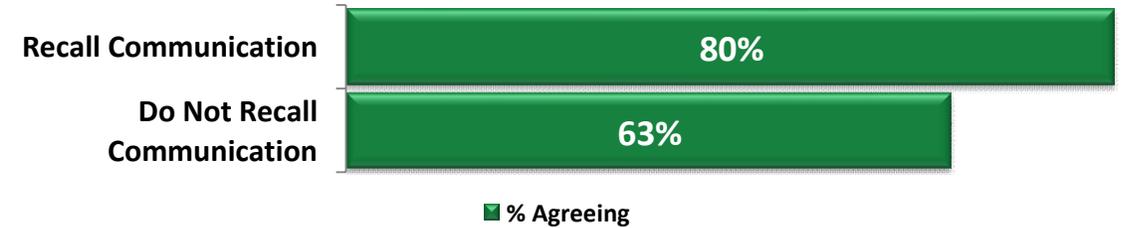
PWD Serves the Public Well



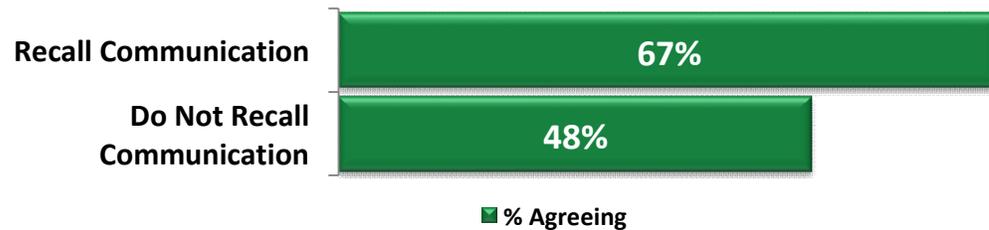
PWD Is Well-run



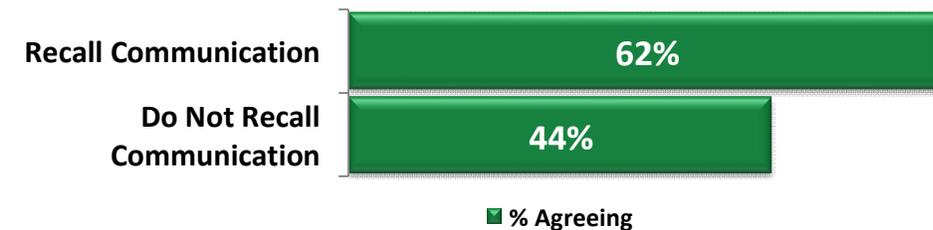
PWD Cares About the Environment



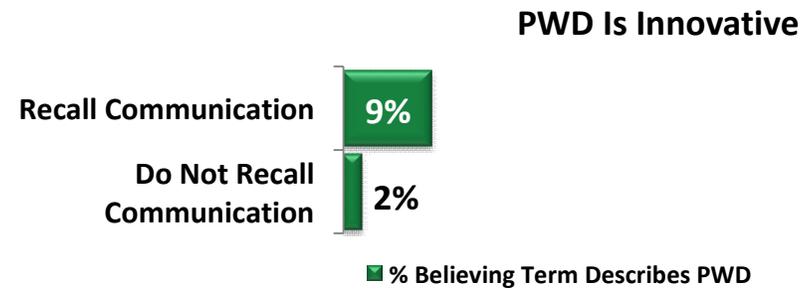
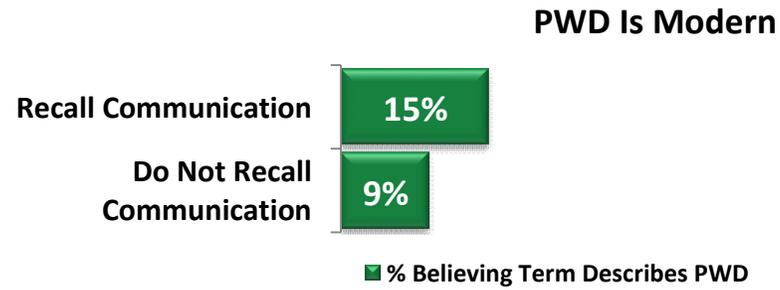
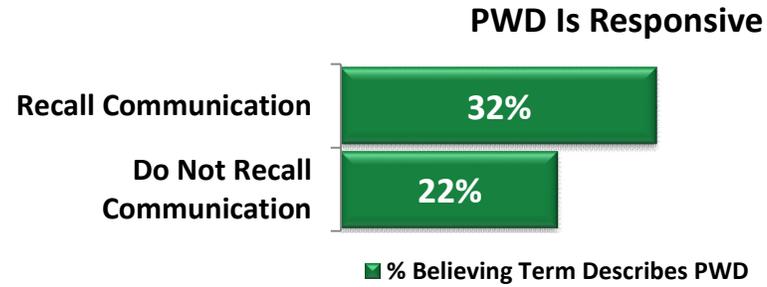
PWD Can Be Trusted To Do the Right Thing



PWD Is Active in the Community



Impact of PWD Communications



Profile of Responding Customers

Gender	
Male	41%
Female	53%
Non-binary / Something else	<0.5%
Prefer not to answer	6%

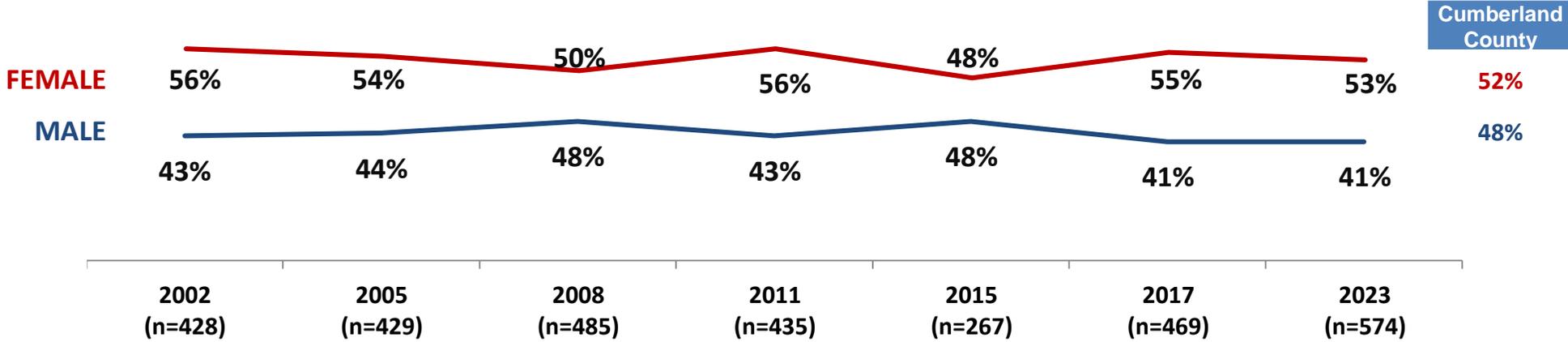
Age	
18-24	<0.5%
25-34	7%
35-54	32%
55-69	33%
70+	23%
Prefer not to answer	4%

(n=574)



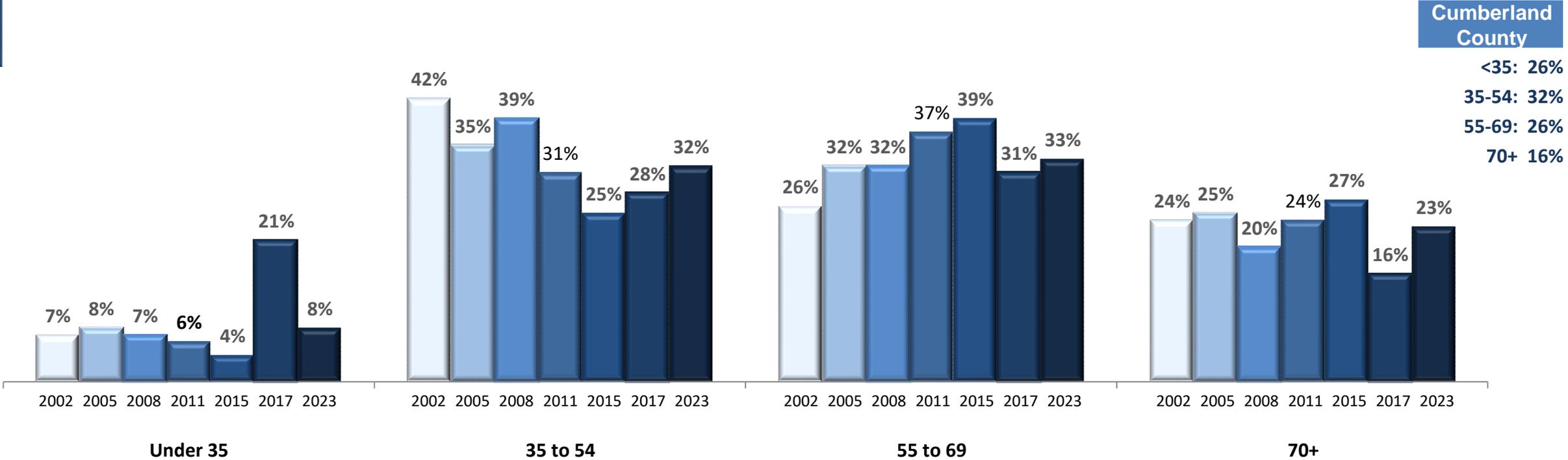
Gender of Responding Customers and Cumberland County

TREND



Age of Responding Customers and Cumberland County

TREND



Profile of Responding Customers

Ethnicity	
	2023
White or Caucasian	86%
Hispanic or Latino	1%
Asian or Pacific Islander	1%
Native American	1%
African American	1%
Some other race/ethnicity	1%
Prefer not to say	11%

Tenure as PWD Customer		
	2017	2023
5 years or less	43%	24%
6 to 10 years	10%	15%
11 to 15 years	7%	8%
16 to 20 years	7%	7%
More than 20 years	32%	44%
Not sure	<0.5%	1%

(n=574)



Profile of Responding Customer Households

	Locality	
	2017	2023
Portland	33%	30%
South Portland	15%	13%
Scarborough	11%	10%
Westbrook	8%	10%
Cape Elizabeth	6%	8%
Gorham	7%	7%
Windham	5%	7%
Cumberland	6%	6%
Falmouth	4%	4%
Peaks Island	2%	3%
Standish	2%	2%

	Number of People in Household	
	2017	2023
1	17%	20%
2	42%	43%
3+	41%	37%

	Type of Household	
	2017	2023
Single-family home	88%	89%
Duplex or two-family home	12%	7%
Multi-unit dwelling (3 or more units)		3%
Some other type of dwelling		1%

	Household Income	
	2017	2023
Less than \$35,000	8%	5%
\$35,000 to \$74,999	24%	19%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	17%	15%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	20%	19%
\$150,000 or more	9%	18%
Prefer not to answer	22%	24%

	Ownership of Housing	
	2015	2023
Own	94%	97%
Rent	2%	3%
Neither/No answer	4%	1%

2017: (n=469)
2023: (n=574)

