

Sewer Area 7 Customers favor EOCWD over IRWD 15 to 1



VS.



In the late 90's, wealthy Newport Beach residents combined forces with well-heeled lobbyists and a complicit staff in an effort to build an international airport at El Toro. "LAX-South" was unsafe, unneeded and unwanted and the people who lived in the affected area recognized it and stood up in unity to oppose it. It took an organized effort and several countywide votes, but eventually the people won and the idea of building a 30 million annual passenger airport in central Orange County was defeated for good.

20 years later a similar – albeit smaller – battle is brewing in North Tustin. Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) has a board member and a former IRWD contractor on the LAFCO Commission as well as the support of the LAFCO staff and is attempting to take over the local sewers in North Tustin despite currently serving only 3% of the population. East Orange County Water District (EOCWD) serves 97% of the residents in Sewer Area 7 already and has had an application to obtain the sewers for more than two years. EOCWD does not have any direct representation on the LAFCO Commission like IRWD, but it does have the support of the local cities and community groups in Sewer Area 7 including the Cities of Tustin, Orange and the Foothill Communities Association.

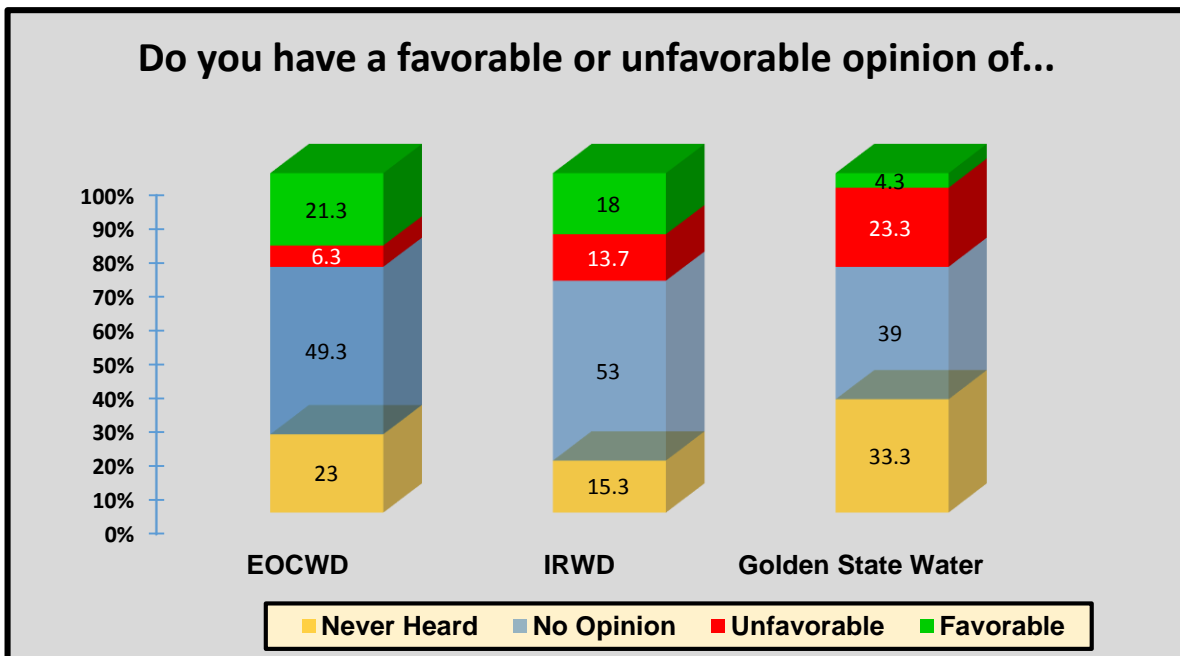
EOCWD was curious what the registered voters of Sewer Area 7 thought, so we conducted a scientific public opinion research survey of 300 randomly-selected registered voters, giving a confidence rating of 95%. North Tustin is known for being fiercely independent so we were not surprised by their support for their local water district, EOCWD. We were surprised however by the intensity of their passion.

The survey was conducted by professional public opinion research analyst John Lewis. 300 randomly-selected registered voters in Sewer Area 7 were interviewed over the phone. The survey was conducted from February 23 – 25, 2016. The confidence level of the survey is 95%.

2-4. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of IRWD / EOCWD / Golden State Water:

After an initial question about the drought, we asked if the respondents had a favorable opinion of IRWD and EOCWD as well as Golden State Water. Not surprisingly, about half had no opinion or never heard of either IRWD or EOCWD. While more knew of Golden State Water, almost one in four do not have a favorable impression of them.

IRWD has a net positive of 4 (18% favorable / 13.7% unfavorable) while **EOCWD has a net positive of 15** (21.3% favorable / 6.3% unfavorable).

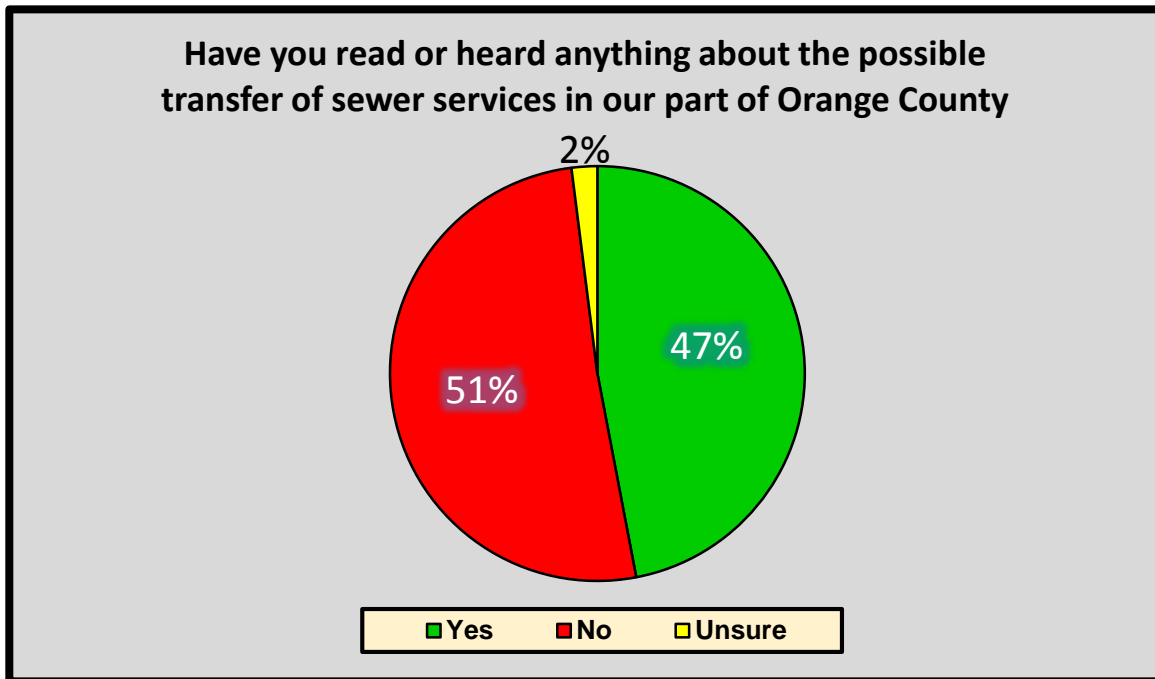


Key Takeaways

- ✓ **EOCWD's net positive** is nearly **four times greater** than IRWD's
- ✓ **No respondents** in the EOCWD service territory had an **unfavorable** opinion of EOCWD. (**80% held a favorable opinion**)
- ✓ **No respondents** in the **IRWD** service territory had an **unfavorable** opinion of EOCWD.

5. Have you read or heard anything about the possible transfer of sewer services in our part of Orange County?

Sewer infrastructure is not a particularly sexy topic or one that has been covered extensively in the media yet. However, nearly half of the respondents in Sewer Area 7 are aware of this issue.



Key Takeaways

- ✓ **The likelier the voter, the more aware of the issue they are:**
 - 61.5% of voters who voted in 4 out of 4 elections
 - 56.8% of voters who voted in 3 out of 4 elections
 - 43.3% of voters who voted in 2 out of 4 elections
 - 26.7% of voters who voted in 1 out of 4 elections
 - 25.9% of voters who voted in 0 out of 4 elections

- ✓ **EOCWD service area residents are highly engaged and aware:**
 - 76% of EOCWD voters are aware of the sewer issue

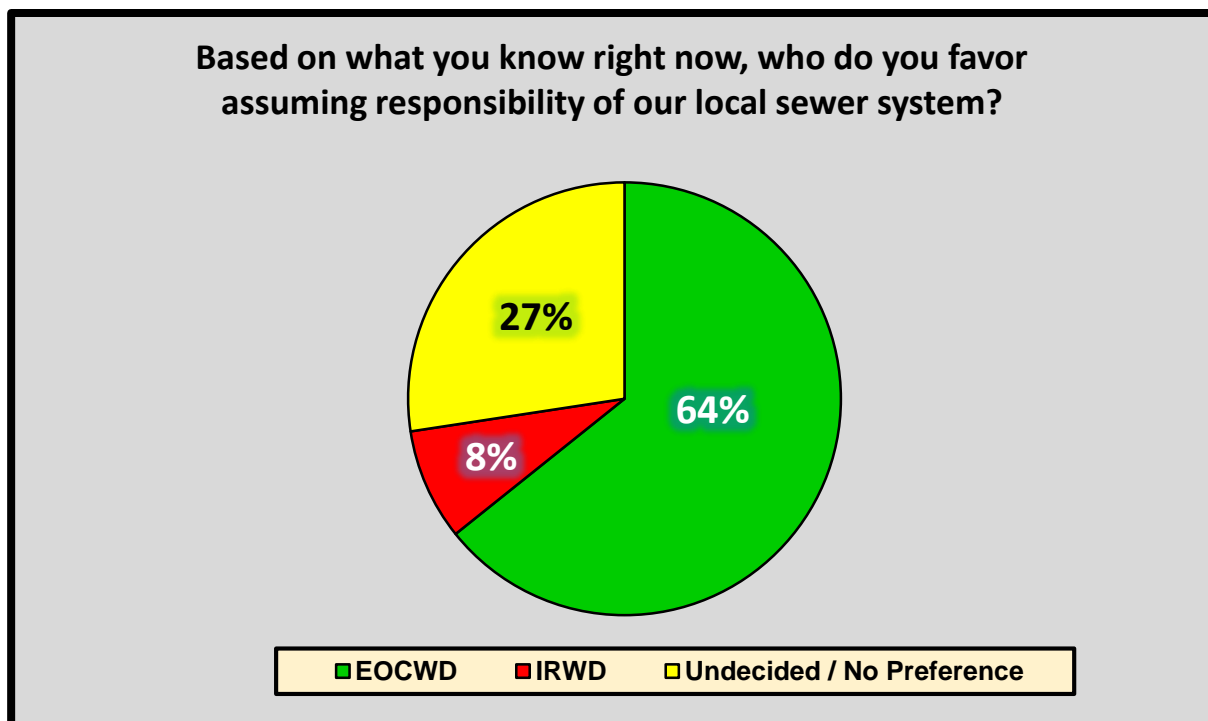
- ✓ **Older voters are disproportionally aware of the issue:**
 - Two-thirds of voters 65 – 74 years old are aware of the sewer issue

6. ***Sewer service, which is currently provided by the Orange County Sanitation District, will be turned over to either the East Orange County Water District or the Irvine Ranch Water District.***

Both districts have pledged to cut sewer rates by 50%. But, because of lower costs, such as labor, East Orange County Water District will be able to inspect and clean the sewer lines twice as often as Irvine Ranch Water District, while charging the same amount as Irvine Ranch Water District.

Based on what you know now, who do you favor assuming responsibility for our local sewer system?

The results of this initial test question show that registered voters in Sewer Area 7 **overwhelmingly** support the EOCWD application **by an 8-to-1 margin.**



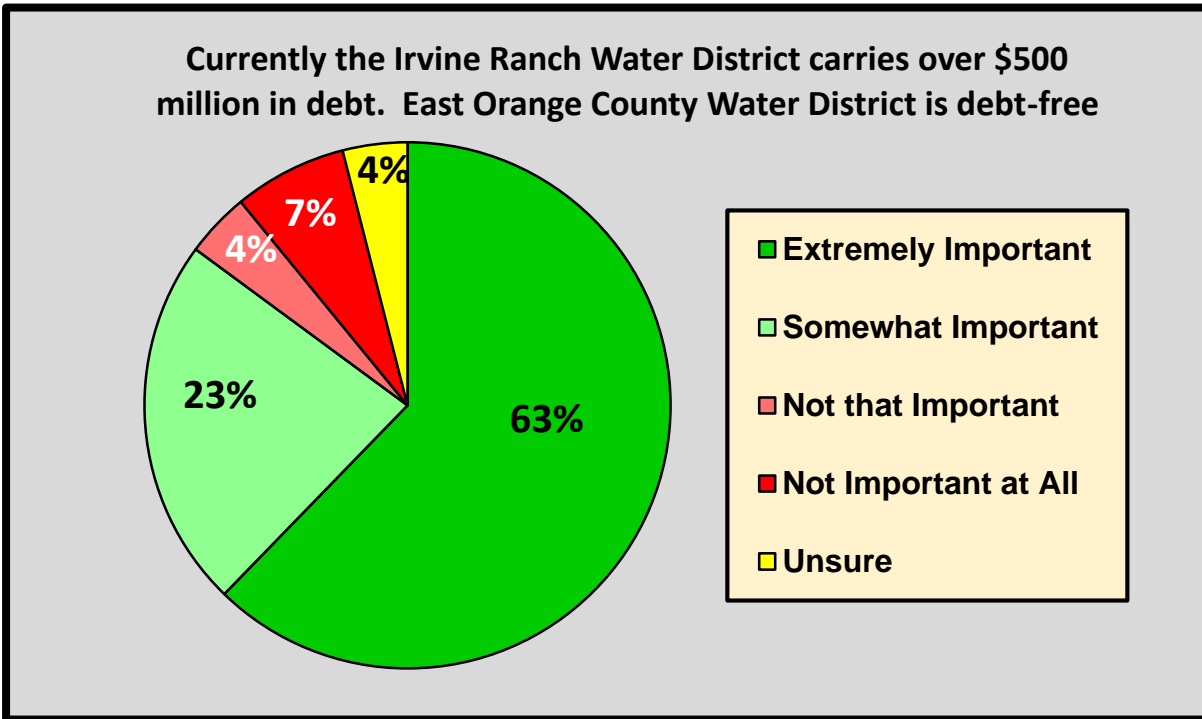
Key Takeaways

An astonishing **64% of registered voters support EOCWD compared to just 8% for IRWD**, yet when you peel the onion on some of the demographic information, the support for the local water district gets even more stark:

- ✓ **68% of high propensity voters (4 out of 4 elections) support EOCWD**
- ✓ **70% of voters who are 65 or older support EOCWD**
- ✓ **96% of voters in EOCWD Retail Zone support EOCWD**
- ✓ **0% of voters in IRWD service area support IRWD**
- ✓ **65% who live in the IRWD service area support EOCWD**

7. Here is some additional information. Please tell me how important each of the following is to you in deciding to which agency the sewer service should be turned over. Please rate each one as either *Extremely Important*, *Somewhat Important*, *Not That Important* or *Not Important at All*.

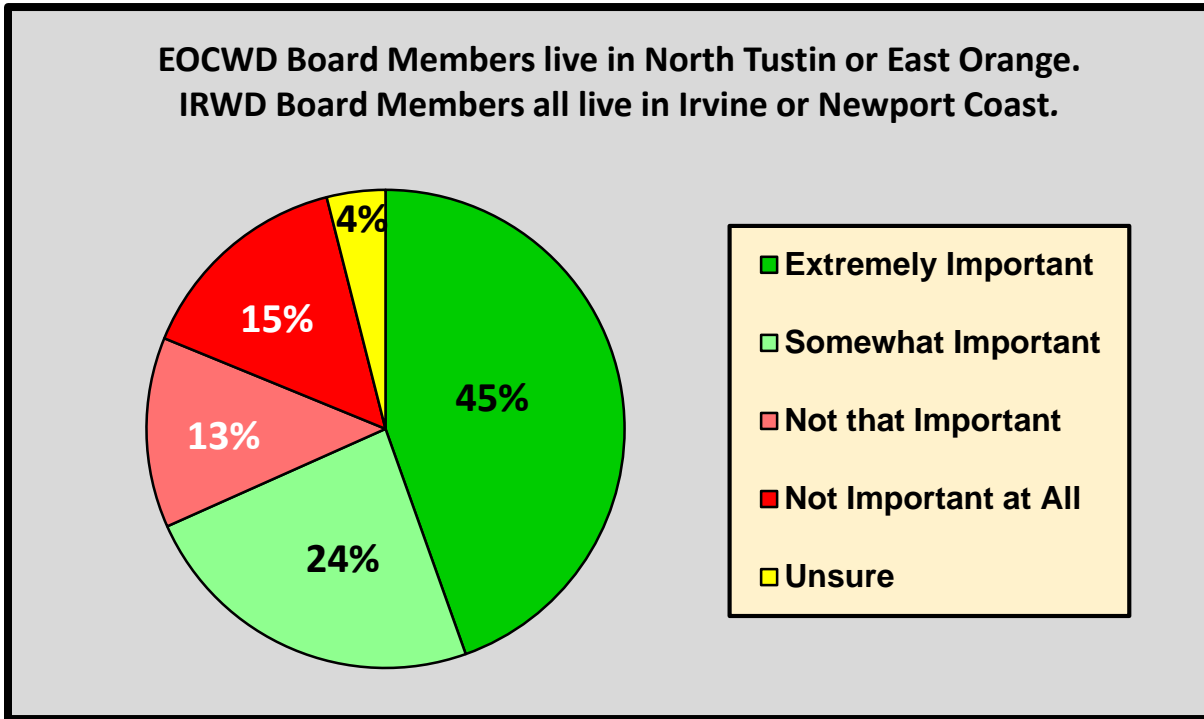
Currently the Irvine Ranch Water District carries over \$500 million in debt. East Orange County Water District is debt-free.



Key Takeaways

- ✓ 80% of EOCWD Customers found this **“Extremely Important”** and only 8% of EOCWD Customers found this **“Not That Important.”**
 - *None found it “Not Important at All”*
- ✓ The only demographic category where **fewer than 50%** found this “Extremely Important” was the group who has voted in **none of the last four elections (41%)**.
- ✓ **Nearly 9 out of 10 Republican voters** (89%) found this “Extremely” or “Somewhat” important.

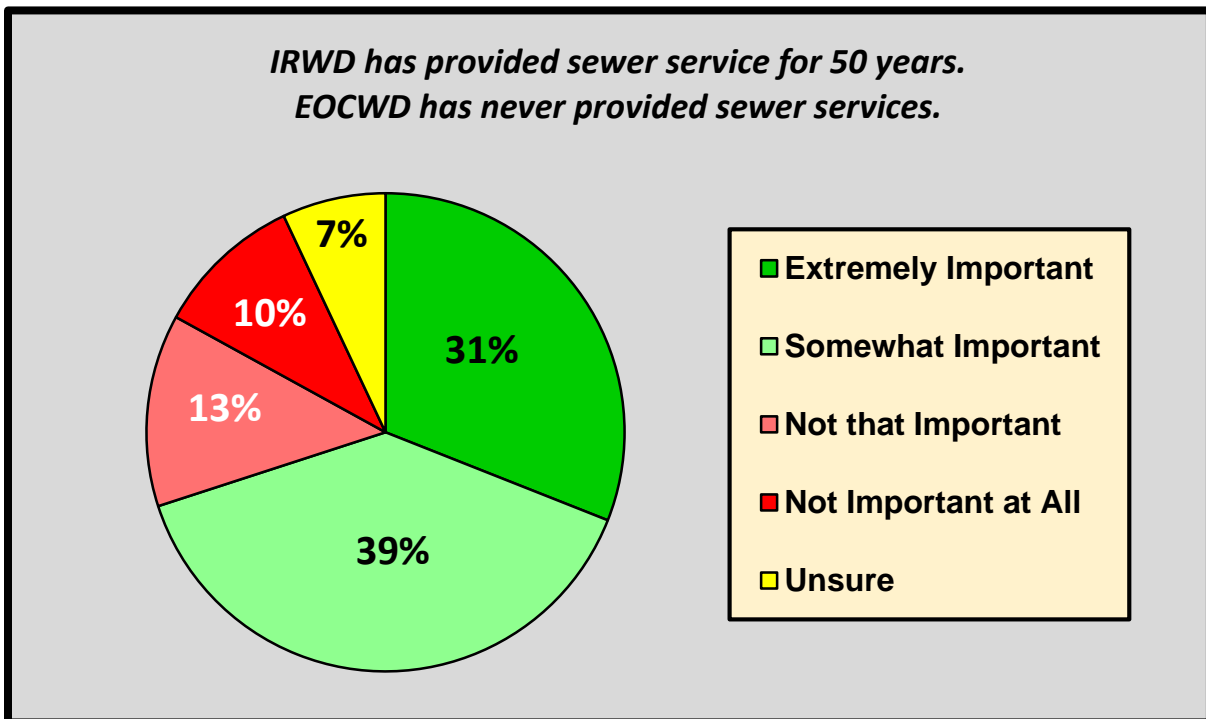
8. Elected East Orange County Water District Board Members live in North Tustin or East Orange. Irvine Ranch Water District Board Members all live in Irvine or Newport Coast.



Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Nearly 7 out of 10 voters** (69%) believe it is “Extremely” or “Somewhat” important that their elected leaders live in their community.
- ✓ **92% of EOCWD Customers** believe it is “Extremely” or “Somewhat” important that their elected leaders live in their community.
- ✓ **73% of High Propensity Voters** (4 out of 4 elections) believe it is “Extremely” or “Somewhat” important that their elected leaders live in their community.

9. ***Irvine Ranch Water District points out that they have provided sewer service for 50 years. They note that East Orange County Water District has never provided sewer services.***

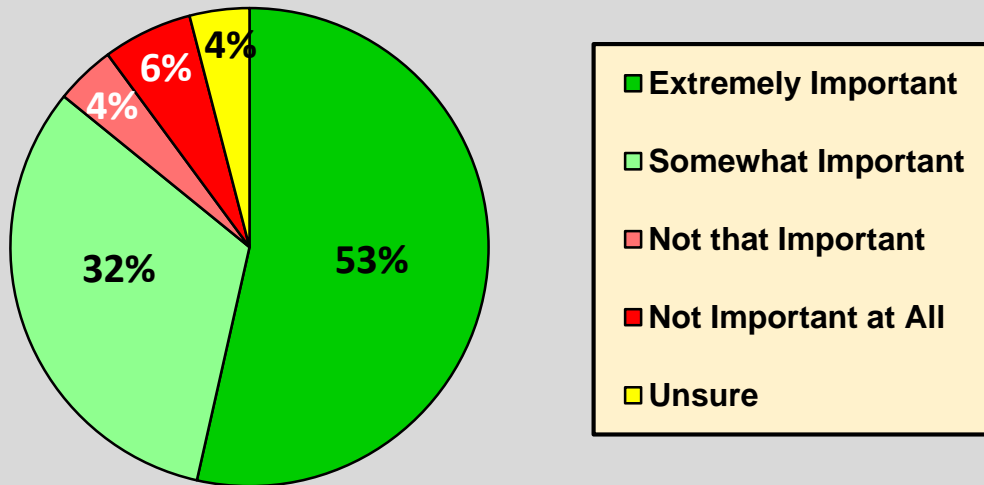


Key Takeaways

- ✓ IRWD's best argument for taking local control away from the community is that they have sewer service experience.
 - ***This is the least effective argument of any of the arguments tested.*** No other argument has an "Extremely Important" percentage under 40% - this one is closer to 30%.
- ✓ **Only 20% of EOCWD customers** find this issue "Extremely Important."
- ✓ **Only 28% of High Propensity Voters** (4 out of 4 elections) find this issue "Extremely Important."

10. The General Manager of the East Orange County Water District has over 30 years of experience working in several sewer agencies. East Orange County Water District will retain the same experienced sewer crews currently hired by the OC Sanitation District to inspect, clean and repair our local sewers.

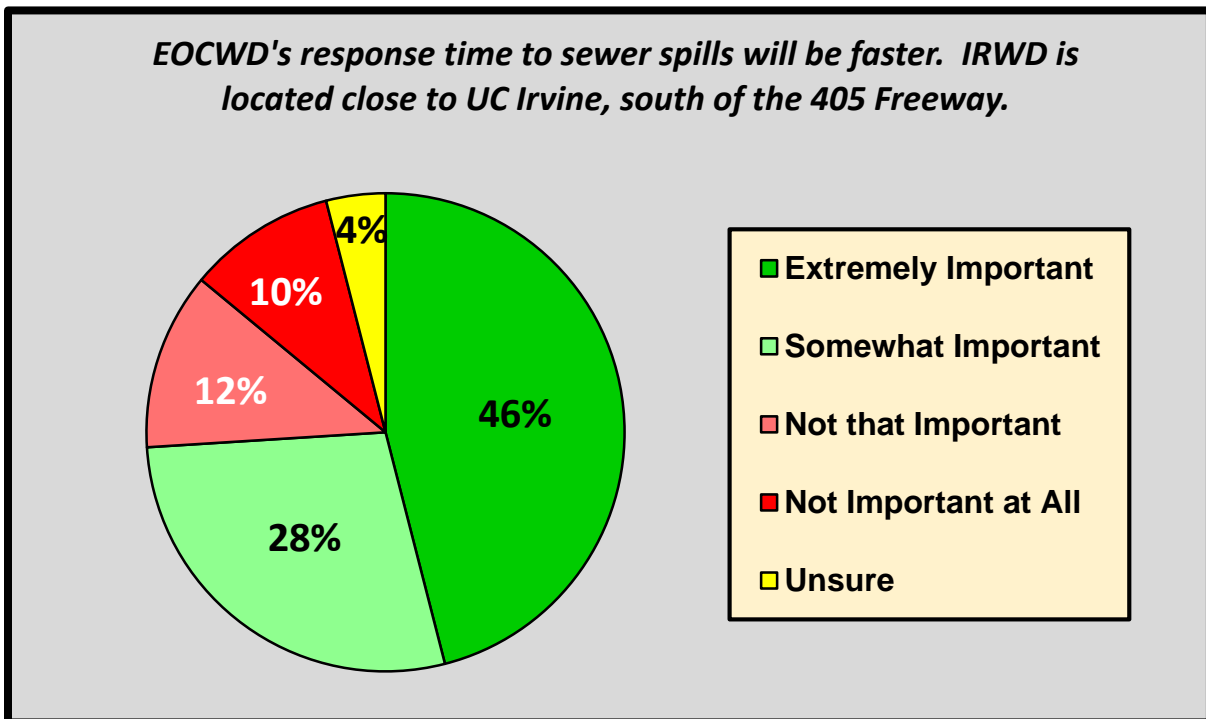
The EOCWD GM has more than 30 years experience working for sewer districts. EOCWD will contract with the same sewer crews that OCSD currently uses to clean and repair the sewers.



Key Takeaways

- ✓ **More than half** of all registered voters say it is “**Extremely Important**” that the EOCWD GM has 30 years of experience in sewers and that EOCWD will use the same crew that OCSD uses.
- ✓ **Even 94% of IRWD customers** say that it is “Extremely” or “Somewhat” important.

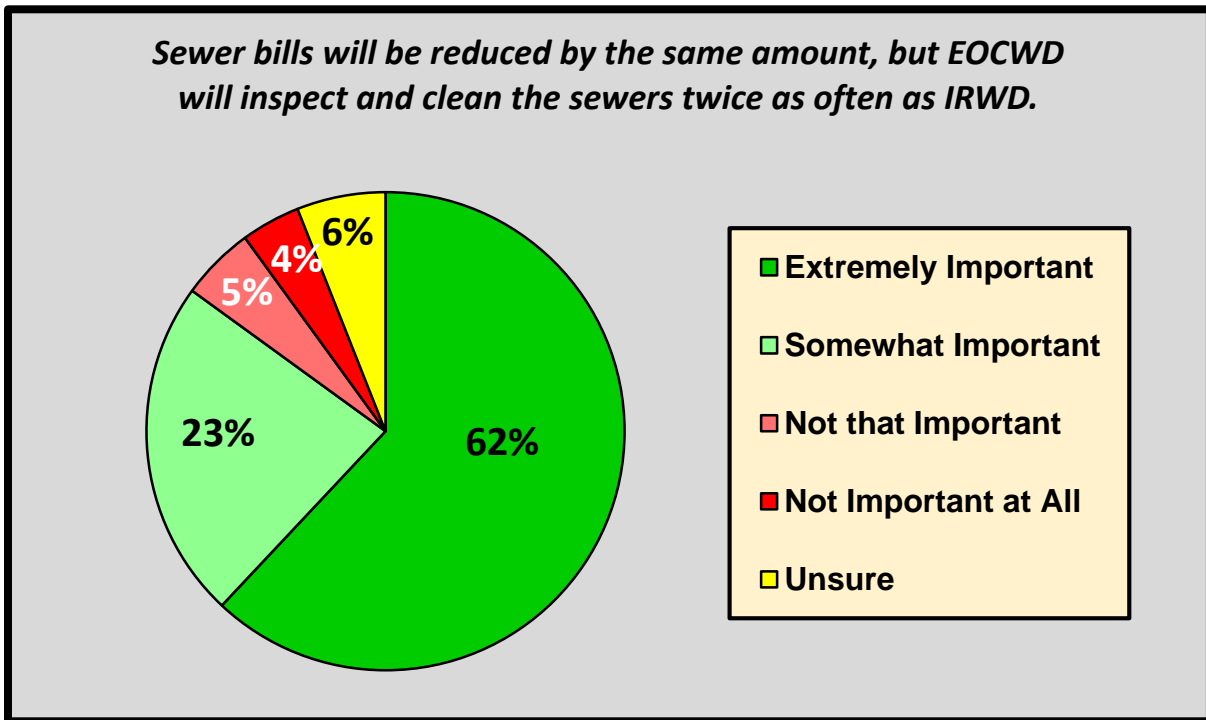
11. East Orange County Water District response time to sewer spills will be faster. Irvine Ranch Water District is located close to UC Irvine, south of the 405 Freeway.



Key Takeaways

- ✓ About **three out of four** voters say it is “Extremely” or “Somewhat” important that EOCWD would have a **faster response time** if there is a sewer spill.
- ✓ **8 out of 10** voters between 65 – 74 years old say it is “Extremely” or “Somewhat” important that EOCWD would have a **faster response time** if there is a sewer spill.
- ✓ There is a bit of a **gender split** on this question:
 - **52% of women** say faster response times are “Extremely Important.”
 - **40% of men** say faster response times are “Extremely Important.”

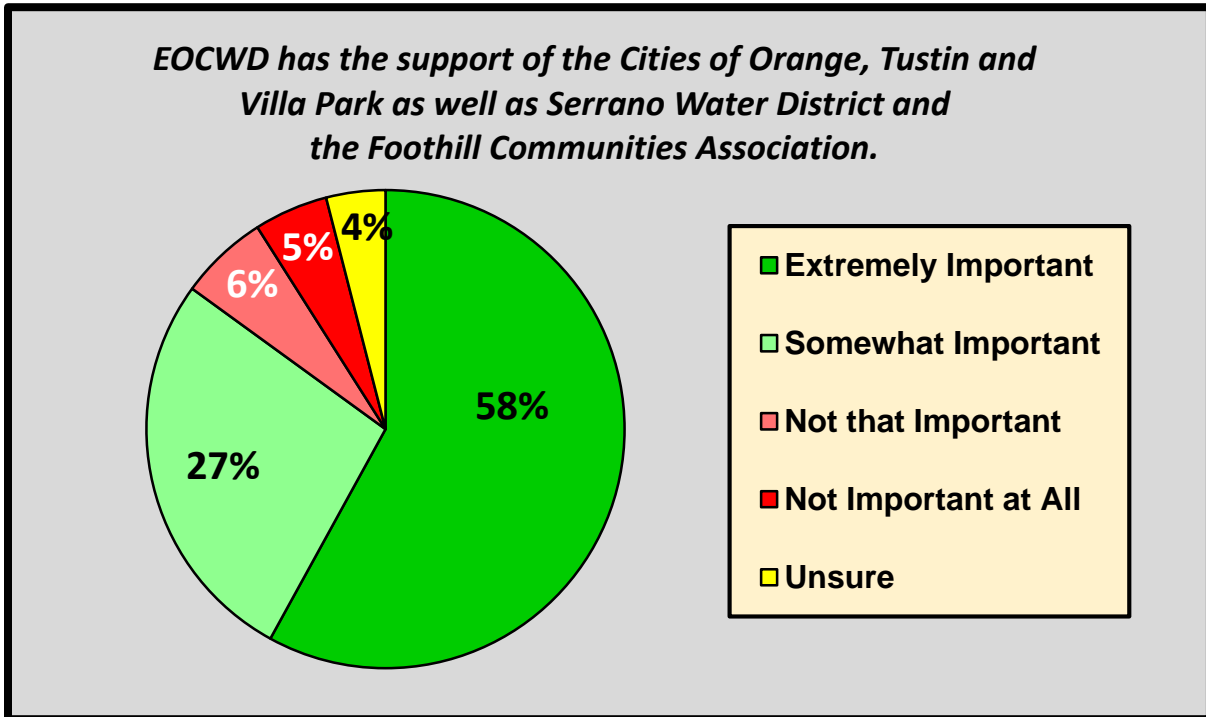
12. Sewer bills to consumers would be reduced by the same amount under either transition plan. However, due to lower costs, such as labor, East Orange County Water District will inspect and clean the sewer pipes twice as often as Irvine Ranch Water District.



Key Takeaways

- ✓ More than **two out of three** women voters say that it is “Extremely Important” that EOCWD will clean the sewers twice as often as IRWD for the same price.
- ✓ **86% of high-propensity voters** (4 out of 4 elections) say it is “Extremely” or “Somewhat” important that EOCWD will clean the sewers twice as often as IRWD for the same price.
- ✓ **92% of voters between 30 – 44 years old** say it is “Extremely” or “Somewhat” important that EOCWD will clean the sewers twice as often as IRWD for the same price.

13. When considering which agency should be chosen to provide our local sewer service, the Foothill Communities Association, Serrano Water District and the Cities of Orange, Tustin and Villa Park have all taken action to support the application of the East Orange County Water District to provide sewer service.

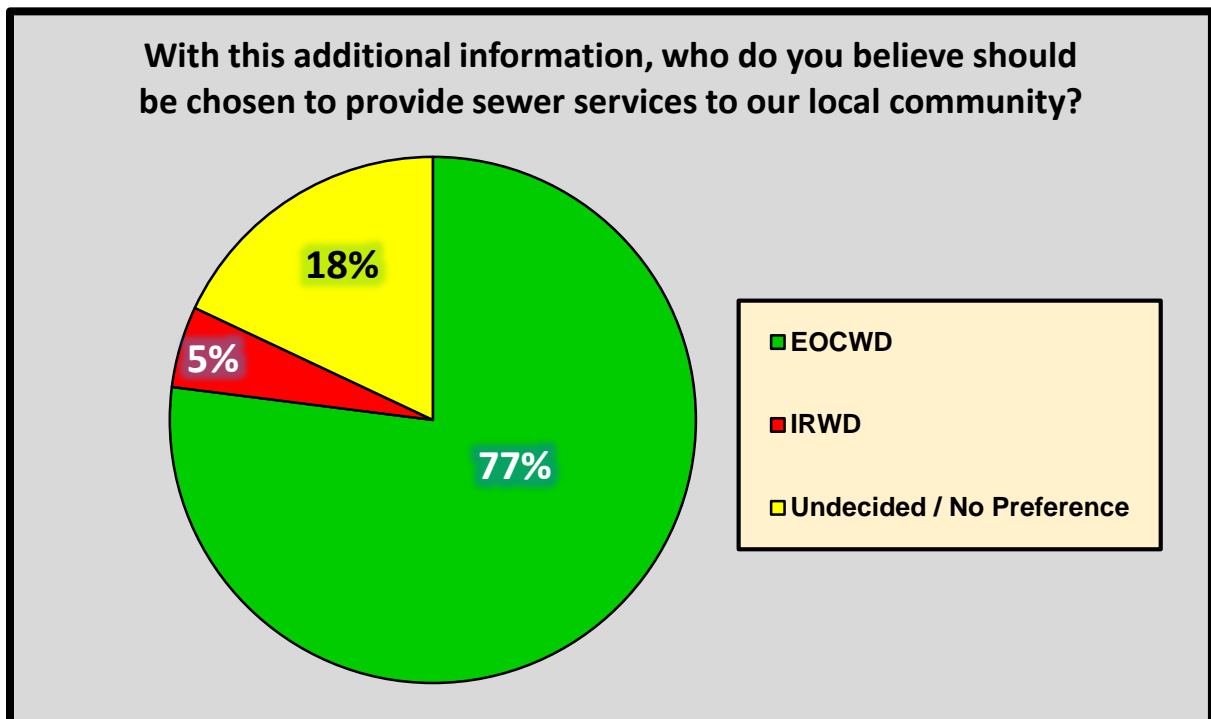


Key Takeaways

- ✓ **92% of EOCWD customers and 94% of Golden State Water Customers** say EOCWD's local support is "Extremely" or "Somewhat" important. Only 82% of IRWD customers agree.
- ✓ **Two out of three women voters** say EOCWD's local support is "Extremely" or "Somewhat" important.
- ✓ **Only about one out of ten voters** who voted in the last 3 or 4 of the last four elections say that it is "Not that important" or "Not important at all" that EOCWD has local support from the local community groups and cities.

14. With all of this additional information, who do you believe should be chosen to provide sewer services to our local community?

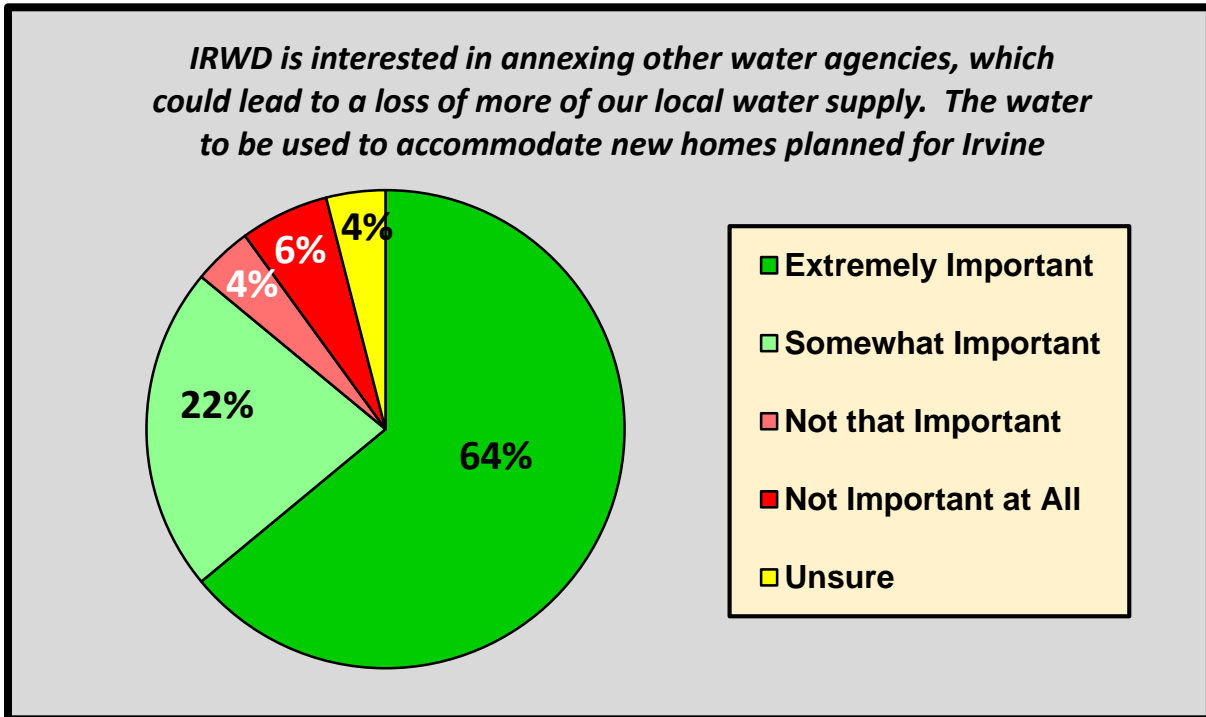
The results of this informed test question show that the support of EOCWD over IRWD nearly doubled from **8-to-1** in the initial test question to **15-to-1** once they learned about the two applications.



Key Takeaways

- ✓ **More than three out of four voters support EOCWD**
- ✓ **Only one out of 20 support IRWD**
- ✓ **Fewer than 3% of voters in unincorporated North Tustin support IRWD**
- ✓ **96% of the voters in the EOCWD service area support EOCWD.**

15. The Irvine Ranch Water District is interested in annexing other Water Agencies. If they do so, they will have access to a greater share of our local supply of water. They will need to send more water to Irvine to accommodate the thousands of new homes developers plan to build there. Is this information...



Key Takeaways

- ✓ **84% of EOCWD customers** say the potential loss of local groundwater to accommodate growth in Irvine is “Extremely Important.”
- ✓ **Only about half (52%) of IRWD customers** say the potential loss of local groundwater to accommodate growth in Irvine is “Extremely Important.”
- ✓ **More than two-thirds of high-propensity voters** (4 out of 4 elections) say the potential loss of local groundwater to accommodate growth in Irvine is “Extremely Important.”