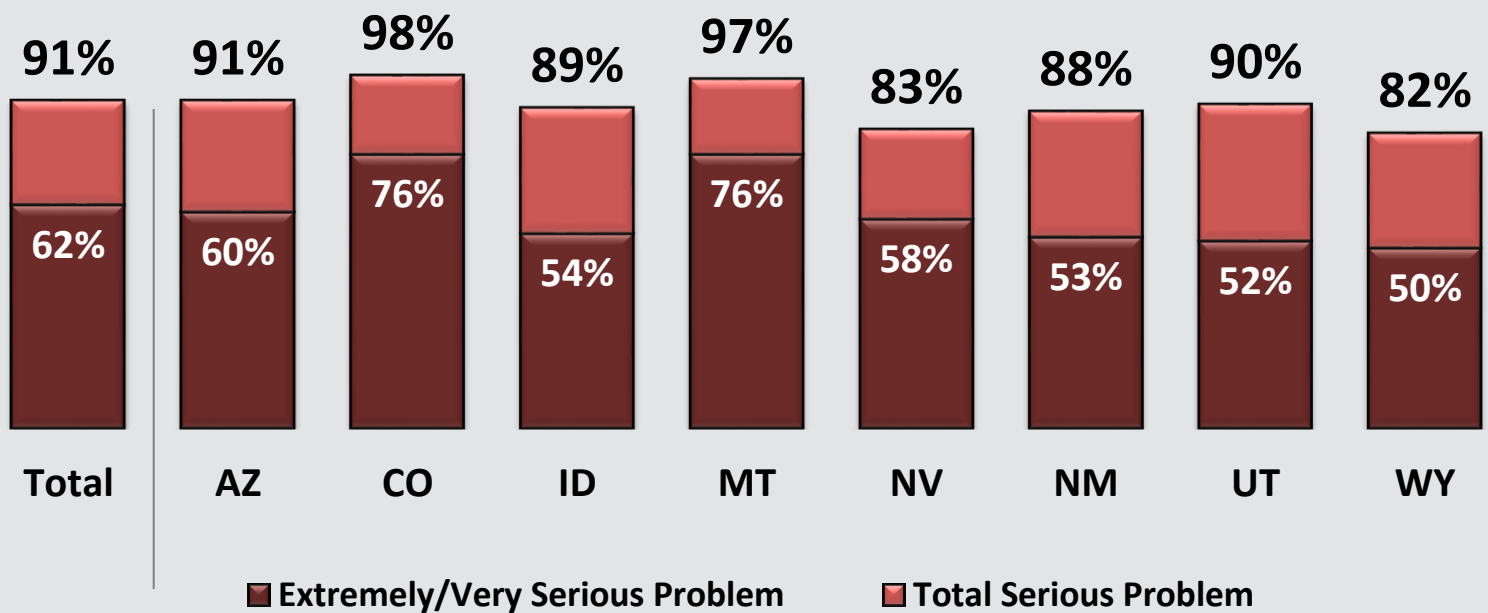# Wildfires in the West

Western voters view wildfires and the smoke from them as serious problems affecting their state. They are concerned about more frequent and severe wildfires and support a proposal that would help reduce the risk of wildfires.

Nine-in-ten Westerners view wildfires as a serious problem in their state, up significantly in the last six years. Today, 91 percent of Western voters characterize "uncontrollable wildfires that threaten homes and property" as a serious problem in their state, with more than six-in-ten (62 percent) describing this as an "extremely" or "very" serious problem. That is up significantly since 2016 when 77 percent viewed wildfires as a serious problem (up 14 points). And while this survey took place shortly after destructive fires in Colorado, it is worth noting that the proportion in Colorado who characterized wildfires as an extremely or very serious problem was unchanged from 2021 to 2022 – both at 76 percent. The vast majority in every single Western state now describe wildfires as a serious problem.

Seriousness of Uncontrollable Wildfires

	Total	AZ	CO	ID	MT	NV	NM	UT	WY
Total Serious Problem	91%	91%	98%	89%	97%	83%	88%	90%	82%
Extremely/Very Serious Problem	62%	60%	76%	54%	76%	58%	53%	52%	50%

■ Extremely/Very Serious Problem   ■ Total Serious Problem

More than two-thirds of Westerners believe wildfires are more of a problem than they were ten years ago. Consistent with last year, seven-in-ten voters (70 percent) characterize wildfires as "more of a problem than ten years ago," with one-in-four (26 percent) saying they are about the same, and a mere 2 percent viewing them as less of a problem today.
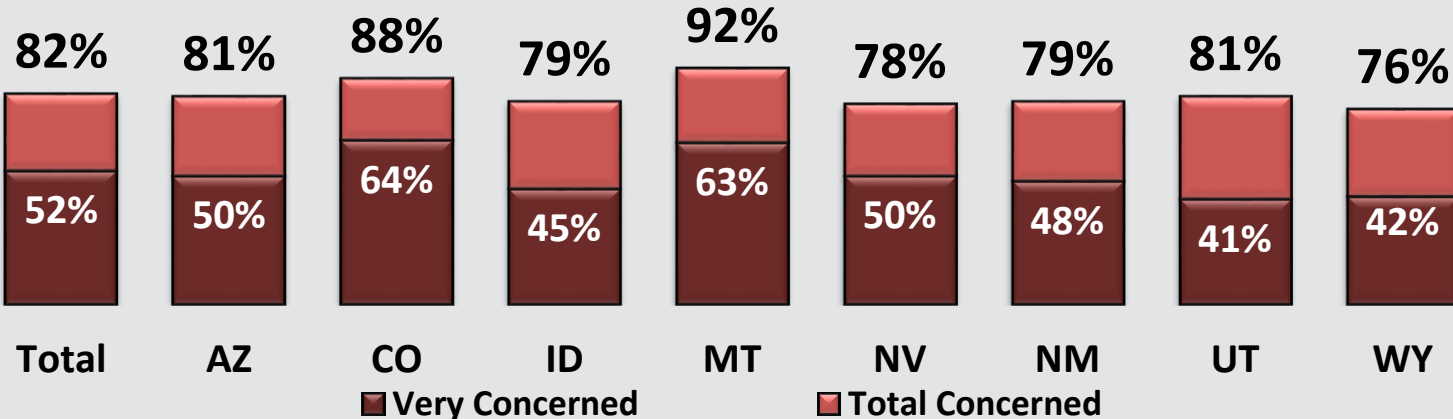
Wildfires in the West		

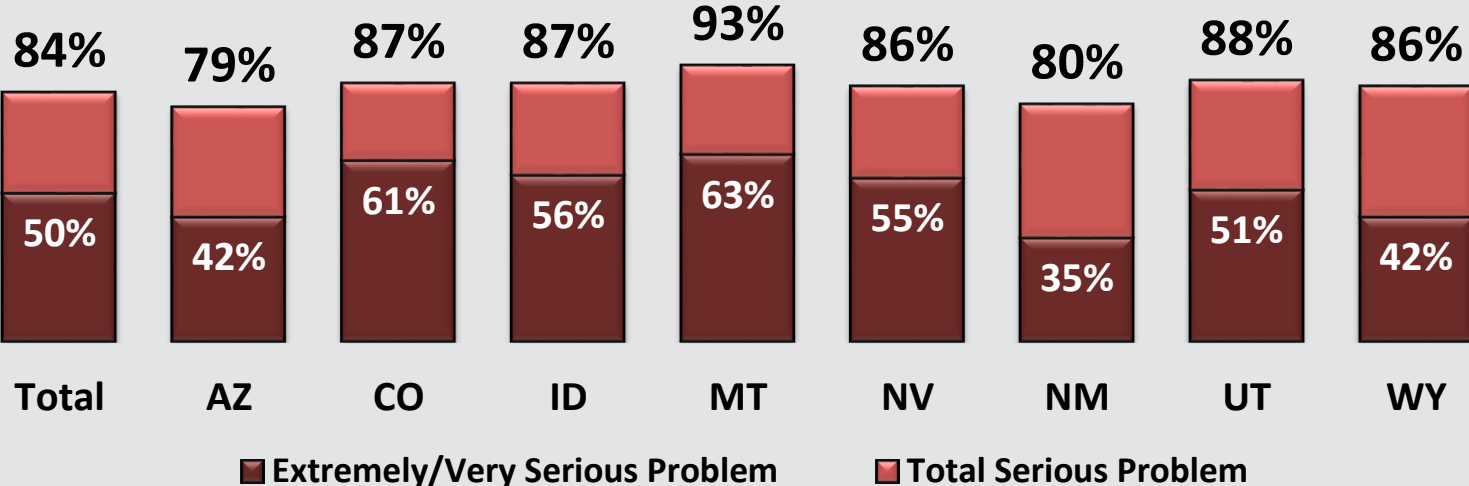|	More of a Problem **+**	About the Same **=**	Less of a Problem **—**
2022	**70%**	**26%**	**2%**
2019	**67%**	**27%**	**3%**

Eight-in-ten Westerners (82 percent) are concerned about "more frequent and severe wildfires." Across the states, at least three-quarters express concern about this phenomenon as the following graph illustrates. Moreover, concern about more frequent and severe wildfires is shared across age, gender, party, community type, and race and ethnicity.

More Frequent and Severe Wildfires

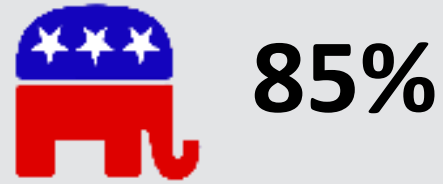|	Total	AZ	CO	ID	MT	NV	NM	UT	WY
Total Concerned	82%	81%	88%	79%	92%	78%	79%	81%	76%
Very Concerned	52%	50%	64%	45%	63%	50%	48%	41%	42%

■ Very Concerned   ■ Total Concerned

Voters are also concerned about the smoke from wildfires. Fully 84 percent of Westerners say the "smoke from wildfires during fire season" is a serious problem, with half (50 percent) saying it is an extremely or very serious problem. Voters in Montana are most likely to view the smoke as a serious problem. Still, voters across all community types express similar levels of concern. Eighty-four percent in urban areas say the smoke is a serious problem, 85 percent in the suburbs, 82 percent in small towns, and 86 percent in rural areas.

Seriousness of Smoke from Wildfires

	Total	AZ	CO	ID	MT	NV	NM	UT	WY
Total Serious Problem	84%	79%	87%	87%	93%	86%	80%	88%	86%
Extremely/Very Serious Problem	50%	42%	61%	56%	63%	55%	35%	51%	42%

■ Extremely/Very Serious Problem   ■ Total Serious Problem

NEW BRIDGE STRATEGY

THE COLORADO COLLEGE STATE OF THE ROCKIES PROJECT
Conservation in the West Poll

FM3 RESEARCH

A proposal that includes efforts to reduce wildfires receives broad and deep support. Nine-in-ten Western voters (91%) support a proposal "addressing the backlog of infrastructure repairs, reducing risk of wildfires, and natural resource protection on national public lands such as National Parks by providing jobs and training to unemployed people," with 60 percent "strongly" supporting it. Such near-unanimity is shared across states and all sub-groups, including party lines. Eighty-five percent of Republicans, 92 percent of Independents, and 97 percent of Democrats support the proposal.

Support for Proposal

85%

92%

97%

Job Corps Proposal for Public Lands

	Total	AZ	CO	ID	MT	NV	NM	UT	WY
Total Support	91%	93%	90%	83%	89%	91%	94%	92%	91%
Strong Support	60%	63%	61%	50%	54%	68%	58%	49%	59%

■ Strong Support   ■ Total Support