



NARRATIVE
RESEARCH



Atlantic Quarterly

Commissioned Results
Winter (Q1) 2022

March 2022

Prepared for:

Atlantic First Nations Water Authority



- Random telephone survey with **1,450 adults in Atlantic Canada** aged 18+ years



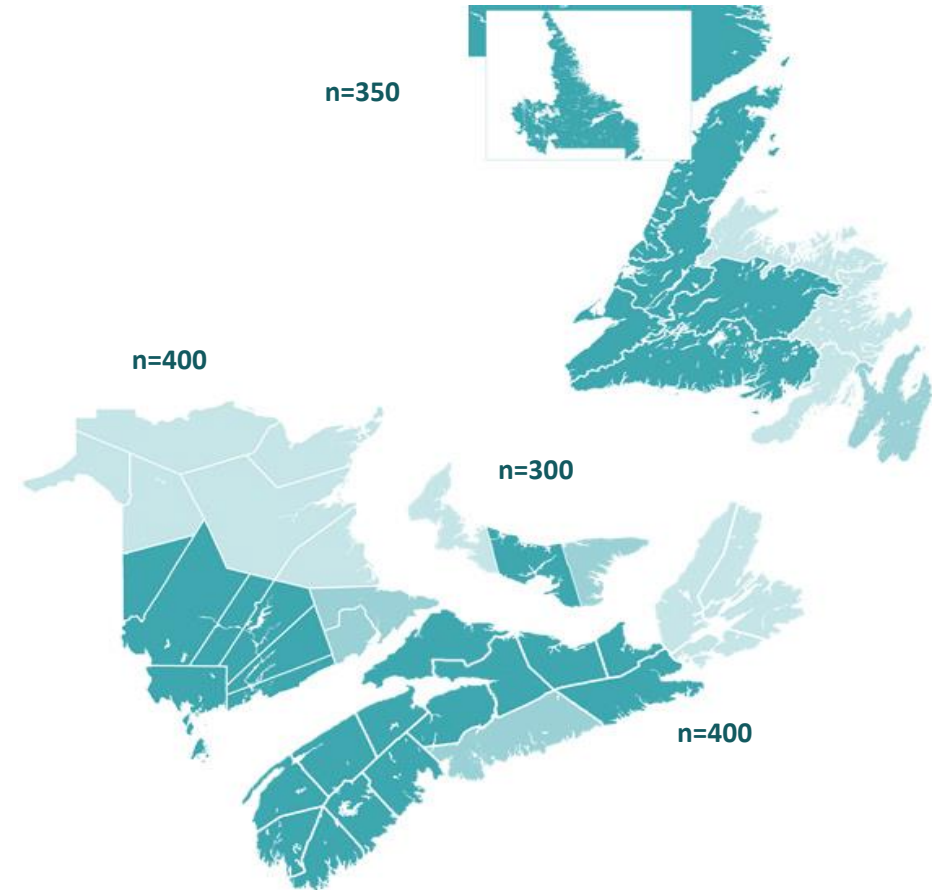
- Data collection dates: February 8-24, 2022



- Overall results accurate to within ± 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20



- Results may not equal 100 percent due to rounding
- Current results are compared with tracking data from previous Atlantic Quarterly surveys conducted in 2017 and 2018





The following are key highlights from this research:

- Atlantic Canadians lack confidence that all Canadians have access to clean and safe drinking water. Results have not changed compared with five years ago, when this perception was last assessed.
- While a number of reasons are cited for lack of confidence that all Canadians have access to clean and safe drinking water, issues in First Nations communities are most top-of-mind.
- That said, Atlantic Canadians do not recall specific news about drinking water quality in Atlantic Canadian communities.
- There is widespread support for First Nations having an independent water authority owned and operated by First Nations, with support elevated compared to earlier measurements prior to the formation of the water authority.
- There is also strong support for the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority receiving ongoing funding from the federal government towards its ongoing operation.





Detailed Findings



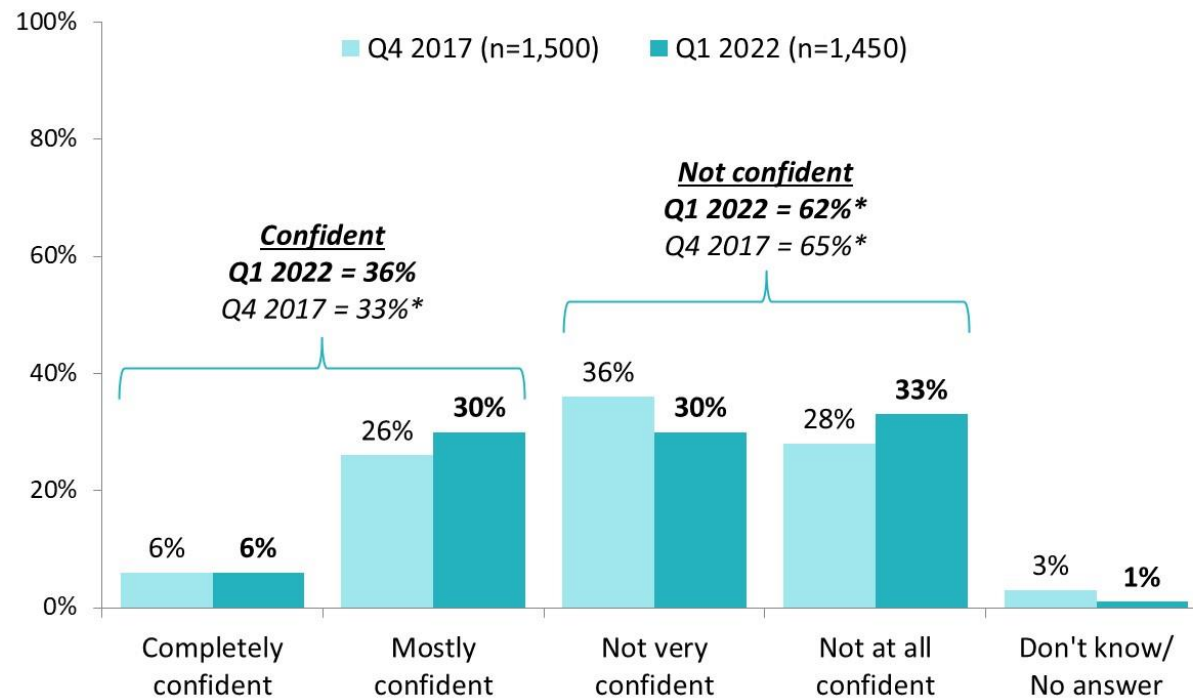
Access to Clean and Safe Drinking Water

Atlantic Canadians lack confidence that all Canadians have access to clean and safe drinking water.

Just slightly more than one-third (36%) of Atlantic Canadians are confident that all Canadians currently have access to clean and safe drinking water, while a majority (62%) are not very or not at all confident. Confidence has not changed appreciably compared with 2017. Across provinces, NB residents are slightly more confident, albeit across all provinces a majority are not confident in this regard.

	NB	NL	PE	NS
Confident	43%	35%	33%	32%
Not confident	55%	63%	64%	68%

Level of Confidence That All Canadians Currently Have Access to Clean and Safe Drinking Water



Q.WA1: Are you completely confident, mostly confident, not very confident, or not at all confident that all Canadians currently have access to clean and safe drinking water? **Due to rounding.*





Access to Clean and Safe Drinking Water

Among those who lack confidence that all Canadians have access to clean and safe drinking water, a number of reasons have been cited, with issues in First Nations communities the most commonly mentioned.

Atlantic Canadians who expressed a lack of confidence that all residents currently have access to clean and safe drinking water were then asked to provide reasons for such an opinion.

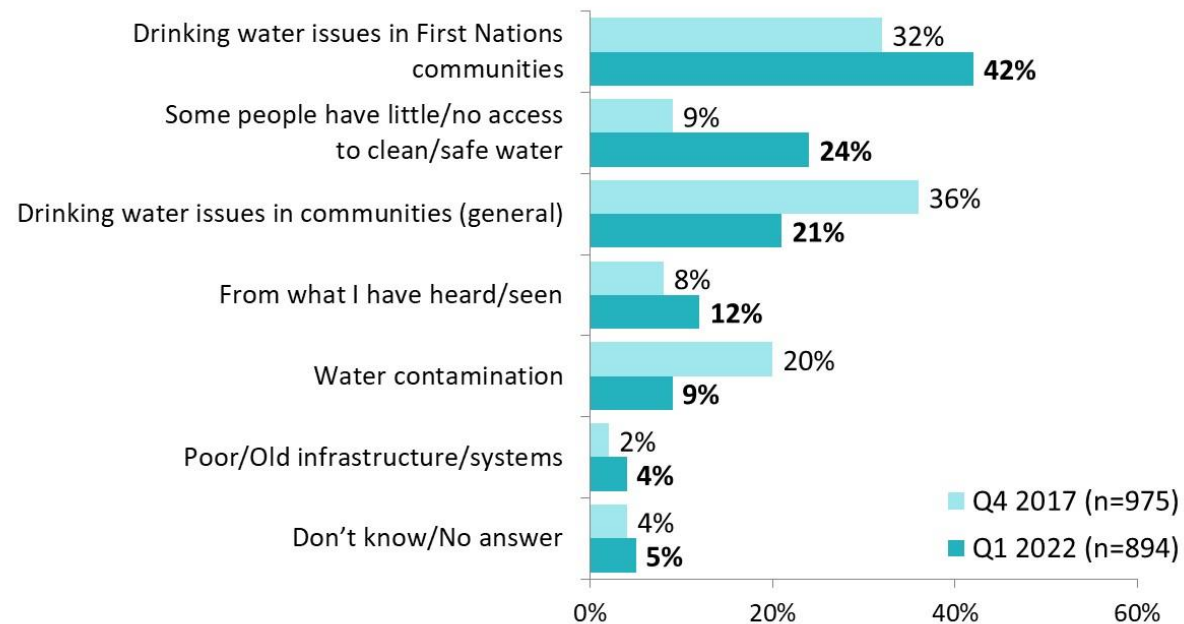
Most prevalent, just over four in ten residents mention **drinking water issues in First Nations communities**, while one-quarter cite some people *lack access to clean/safe drinking water*, and one-fifth mention **drinking water issues in communities** generally.

Of note, mentions of drinking water issues in First Nations communities is higher in PEI (53%) and NS (48%) than in NB (40%) and NL (30%).

Compared with 2017, mentions have shifted slightly, and reflect a slightly increased awareness of drinking water issues in First Nations communities.

Reasons Lack Confidence That All Canadians Have Access to Clean and Safe Drinking Water

Among Those Who Said They Were Not Confident in Q.WA1
Key Unaided Mentions From Total Mentions



Q.WA2: [ASK IF 'NOT VERY CONFIDENT' OR 'NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT' IN Q.WA1] Why do you say you are not very or not at all confident that that all Canadians currently have access to clean and safe drinking water? Probe: Any other reasons?





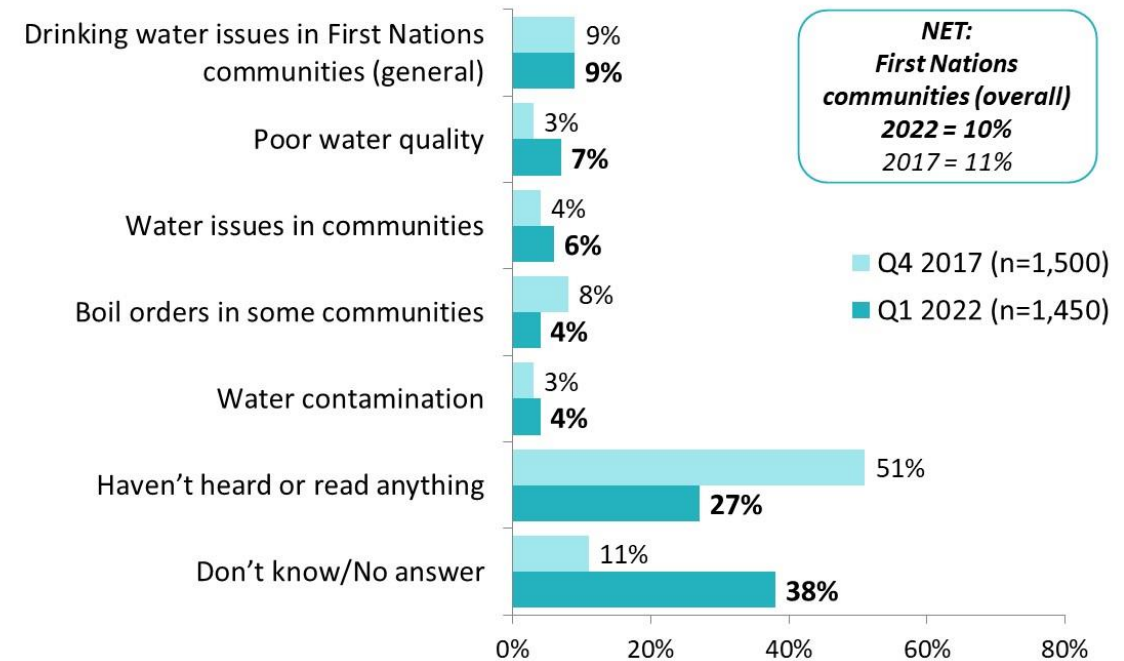
News About Drinking Water Quality

News about drinking water quality in Atlantic Canadian communities does not appear to be top-of-mind.

Overall, a large majority (65%) of Atlantic Canadians say they have not heard or read anything about drinking water quality in Atlantic Canadian communities (27%) or did not provide an answer (38%). That said, the most prevalent answer was **drinking water issues in First Nations communities**, mentioned by one in ten.

What Was Heard or Read about Drinking Water Quality in Atlantic Canadian Communities

Key Unaided Mentions From Total Mentions



Q.WA3: What, if anything, have you recently read or heard about drinking water quality in Atlantic Canadian communities?
Probe: Anything else?





First Nations Independent Water Authority

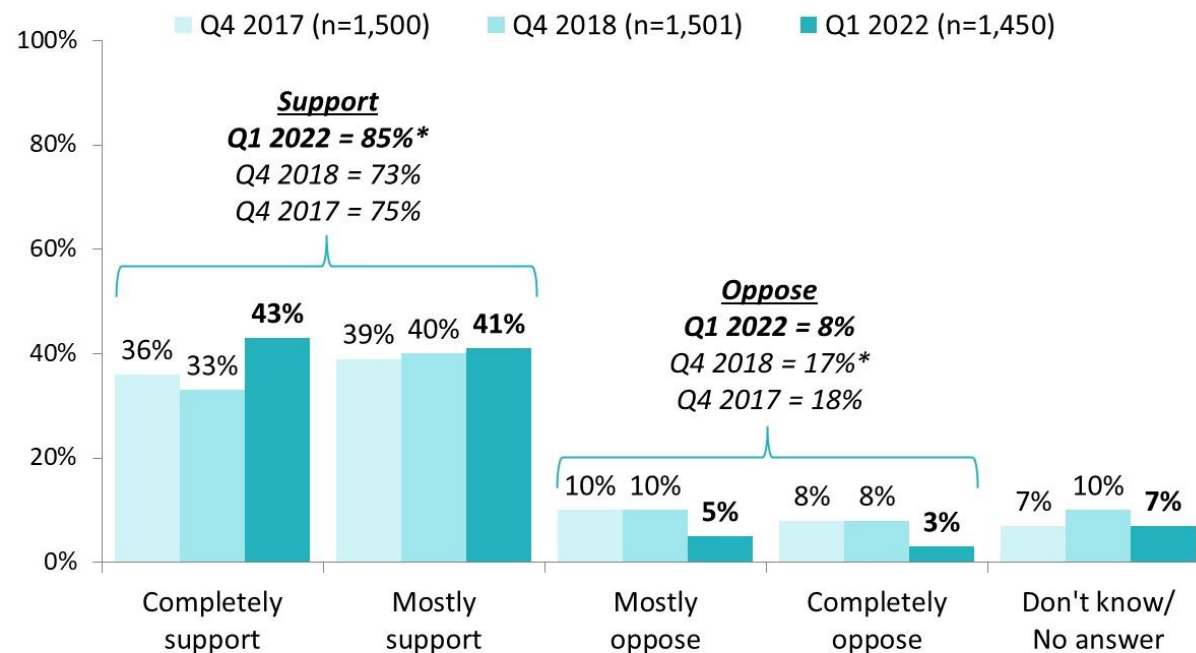
There is widespread support for First Nations having an independent water authority owned and operated by First Nations.

More than eight in ten (85%) Atlantic Canadians support First Nations having an independent water authority owned and operated by First Nations. Support is strong and similar across the four provinces, as well as across various demographic segments.

Support is more robust than it was in 2017 and 2018, when Atlantic Canadians were asked about their support prior to the formation of the Water Authority.

As you may be aware, in 2020 the federal government and Atlantic First Nations Chiefs signed an agreement laying the foundation for First Nations to own and operate their own water authority. The Atlantic First Nations Water Authority was established, and will be responsible for the operation, maintenance, and capital upgrades of all water and wastewater assets in participating First Nations. The water quality and environmental regulations will be the same for this water authority as they are for all other municipal water utilities.

Viewpoint That First Nations Should Have an Independently Owned and Operated Water Authority



Q.WA4: All things considered, do you completely support, mostly support, mostly oppose, or completely oppose First Nations having an independent water authority owned and operated by First Nations? *Due to rounding.
 Note: Slight change of question wording in Q1 2022.





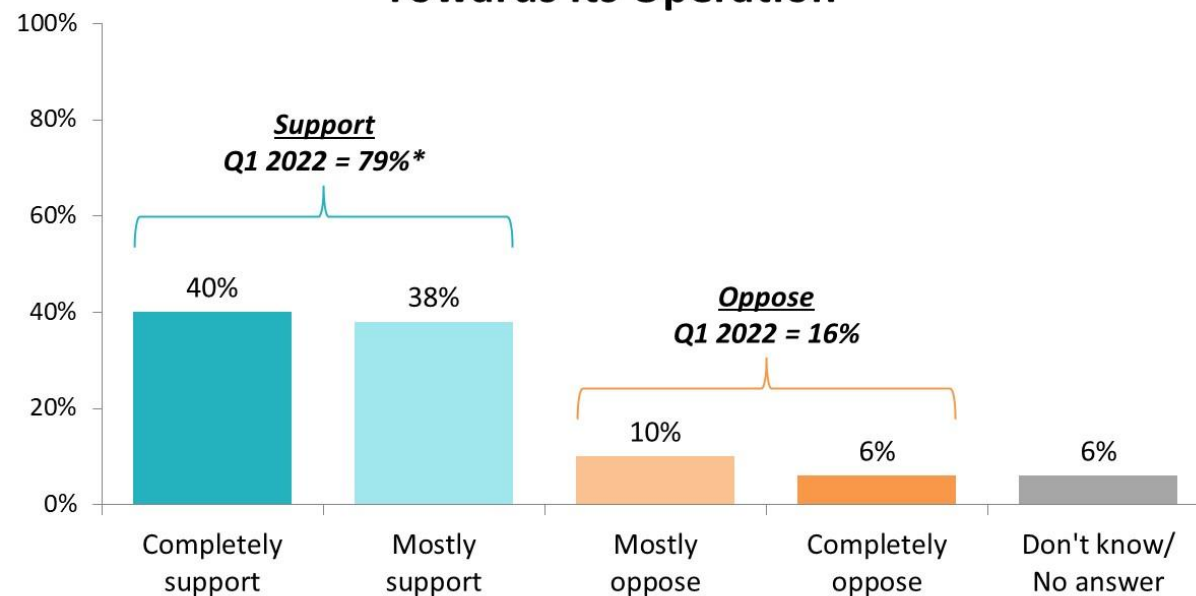
First Nations Independent Water Authority

There is strong support for the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority receiving ongoing funding from the federal government towards its ongoing operation.

Eight in ten (79%) Atlantic Canadians support the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority receiving ongoing funding from the federal government towards its ongoing operation. Support levels are strong across the provinces and demographic segments, although it is relatively higher among younger than older residents.

As well, those identifying as First Nations are slightly more likely to support the water authority receiving federal government funding for its ongoing operation (91% versus 78% of non-First Nations).

Viewpoint That Atlantic First Nations Water Authority Should Receive Ongoing Federal Government Funding Towards Its Operation



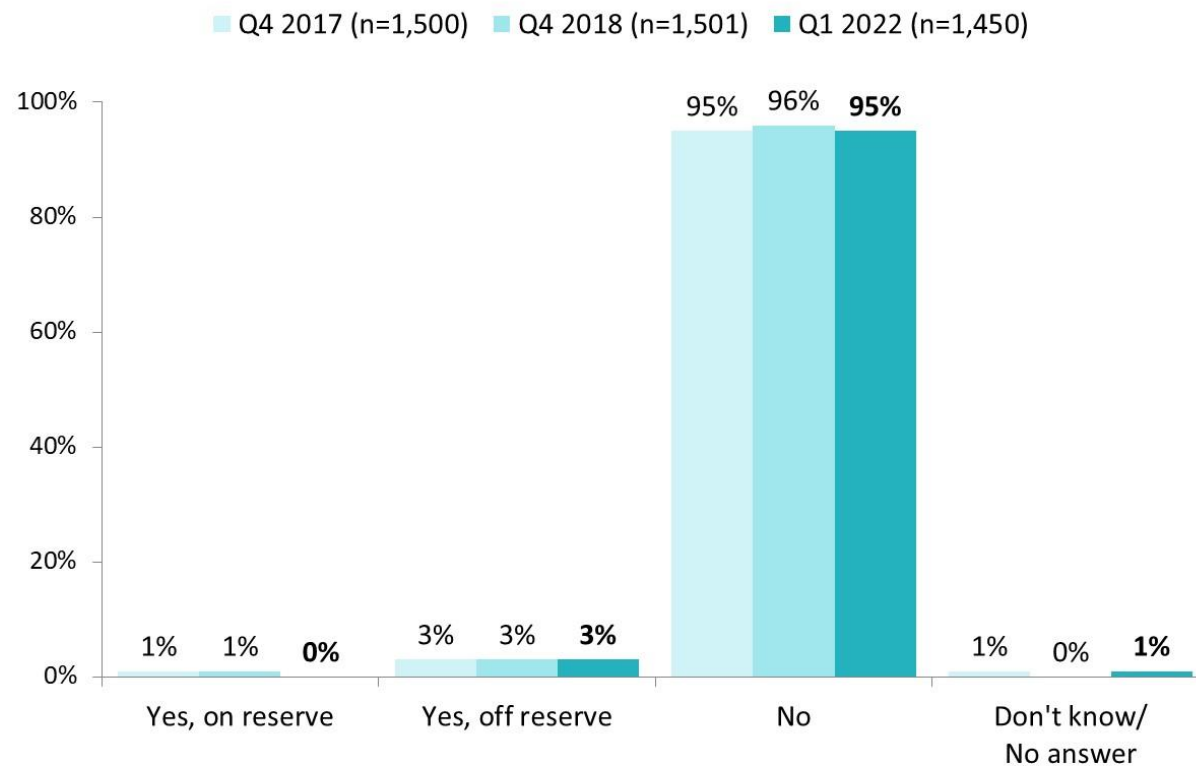
Q.WA5: In the agreement, the Federal Government provided an initial \$2.5 million investment in the initial costs to set up the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority. All things considered, do you completely support, mostly support, mostly oppose, or completely oppose the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority receiving ongoing funding from the federal government towards its ongoing operation? (n=1,450) *Due to rounding. New question in Q1 2022.





A small percentage of the sample included First Nations persons living on or off reserve.

First Nations Person Living On or Off Reserve



Q.WA6: Are you a First Nations person living on or off reserve? *Note: Slight change of question wording from Q4 2018.*



every insight tells a story.

