International Joint Commission
Great Lakes Water Quality Board

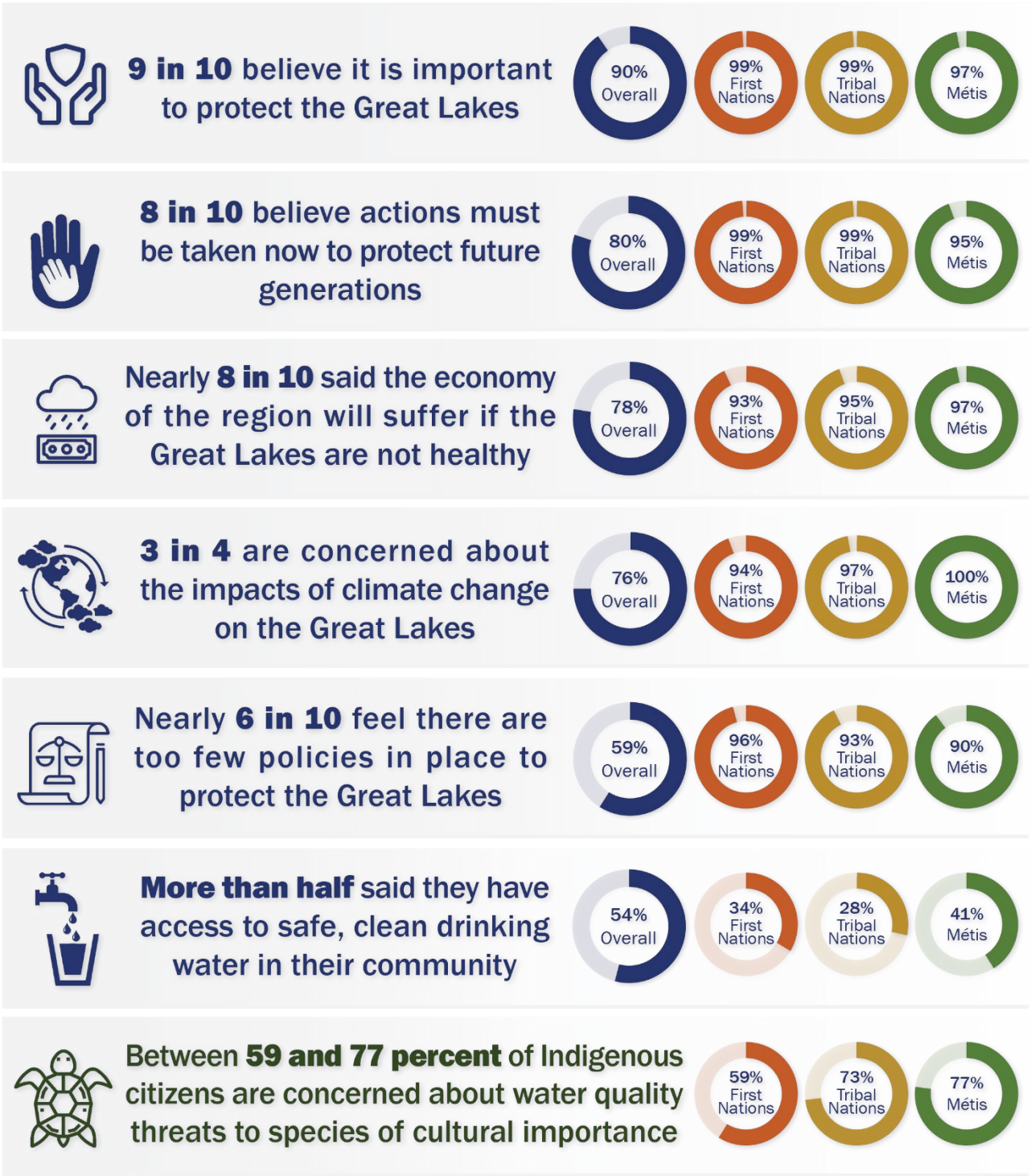
2021 Great Lakes Regional Poll
First Nations, Métis and Tribal Nations Results Comparison
Decision-Maker Briefing Booklet

- The International Joint Commission Great Lakes Water Quality Board's triennial Great Lakes Regional Poll reflects perceptions of Canadian and US residents within the Great Lakes basin region, including First Nations, Métis and Tribal Nations residents, on key Great Lakes topics.
- This briefing booklet highlights key results of select questions of interest or relevance to decision-makers. This does not include complete results of the 2021 polling efforts, which are available online.
- Graphs highlight similarities and differences among First Nation, Métis and Tribal Nation residents. A companion briefing booklet compares all results by country.
- Where applicable, 2021 telephone poll results are compared to results from the Great Lakes Water Quality Board's 2015 and 2018 Great Lakes Regional Polls.

IJC.ORG/WQB/GREAT-LAKES-POLL

KEY FINDINGS

Comparing poll responses **overall** with responses of **First Nations**, **Tribal Nations** and **Métis** citizens' responses



The 2021 phone poll included **4,550 respondents overall**. Of these, individuals that self-identified as Indigenous included: **195 First Nations respondents**, **266 Tribal Nations respondents** and **39 Métis respondents**.

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Overview

About the IJC Great Lakes Water Quality Board

The International Joint Commission's (IJC) Great Lakes Water Quality Board is the principal advisor to the IJC under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

About the board's Great Lakes Regional Polls

The IJC's Great Lakes Water Quality Board conducts this poll every three years to gauge residents' perceptions of water quality issues, the importance of, and perceived threats to, the Great Lakes, and their awareness of cross-border efforts to protect the Great Lakes. The board conducts its polls through telephone surveys of Canadian and US residents living in the Great Lakes basin. The 2015 poll established baseline data, and the 2018 and 2021 polls illuminate longitudinal findings and trends. In 2021 the poll was administered by telephone (4,550 respondents) and online (4,675 respondents).

The following results in this briefing booklet highlight key questions of relevance to decision-makers. Findings present the overall results of the 2015, 2018 and 2021 phone polls (as applicable), paired with the 2021 phone responses comparing responses of First Nations, Tribal Nations and Métis residents. A companion briefing booklet compares responses of American and Canadian citizens for a similar subset of 2021 phone poll questions.

About the value of public opinion polling to inform Great Lakes policy

Poll results represent residents' views and values on topics such as environmental health and water quality, the importance of protection and policy efficacy. Polls are a snapshot of public opinion at a given moment; however, as evident throughout this report, there are clear long-term trends in residents' perceptions of the quality of the Great Lakes region. The latest poll results, long-term trends, and similarities or differences between Canadian and US residents can all help inform decision makers about the views of their constituents on topics relevant to Great Lakes policy measures and can help inform future policy decisions.

What poll results cannot explain is the reasoning or motivation behind why residents hold these views and values. In 2022 and 2023 the board will be expanding its analysis of the 2021 poll results with methods like focus groups to better understand the "why" behind these public opinions. The board will conduct its next Great Lakes Regional Poll in 2024.

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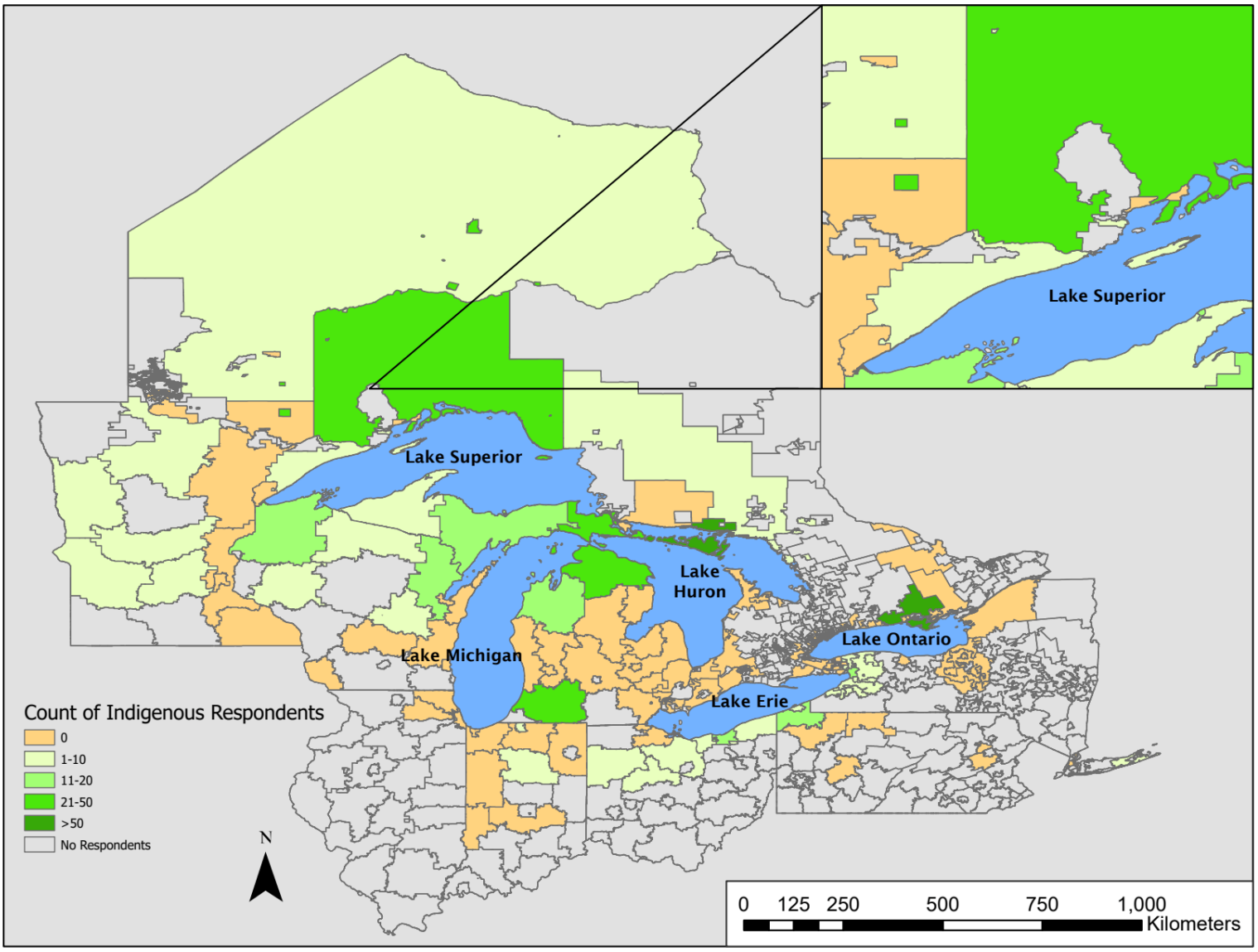
Geospatial distribution of respondents to the 2021 phone poll



Source: Emily Alvarez, Geospatial Analysis using 3-digit zip/postal code question in 2021 phone poll.

There were 4,550 total responses to the 2021 phone poll, including a base sample of 3,950 a cohort quota of 100 individuals that reported to live full-time or part-time on a Great Lakes Island, and 500 individuals self-identifying as First Nations, Métis or Tribal Nation citizens. Of these 500 individuals, 195 self-identified as First Nations, 39 self-identified as Métis, and 266 self-identified as Tribal Nations members. Details including affiliations are in Section 10 of the 2021 phone poll report.

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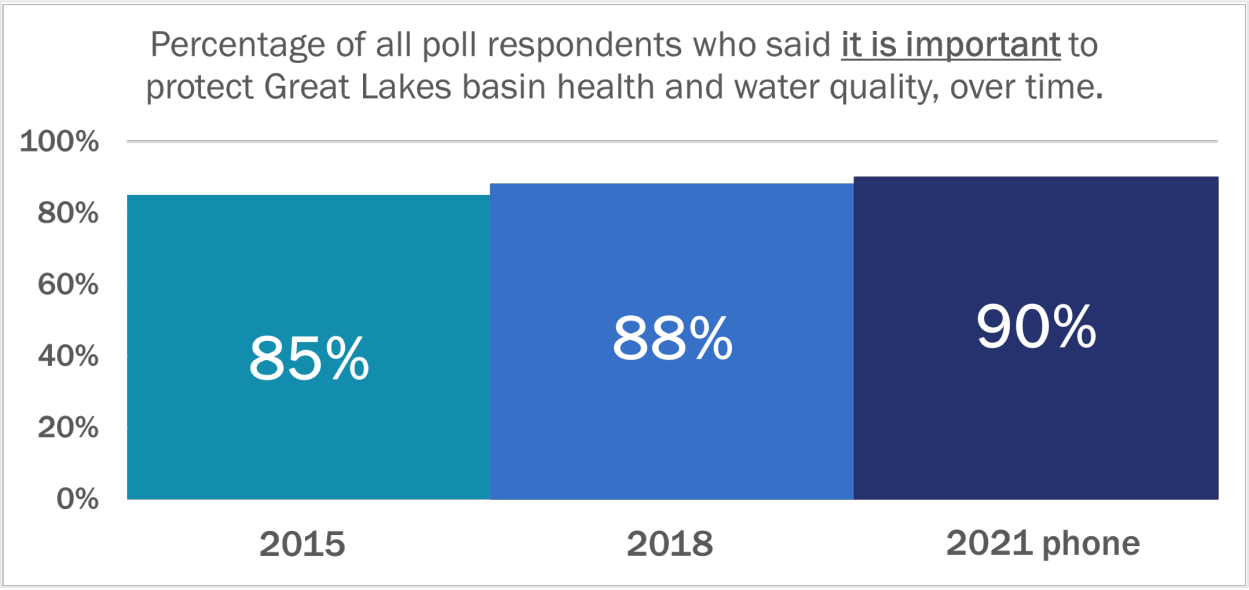
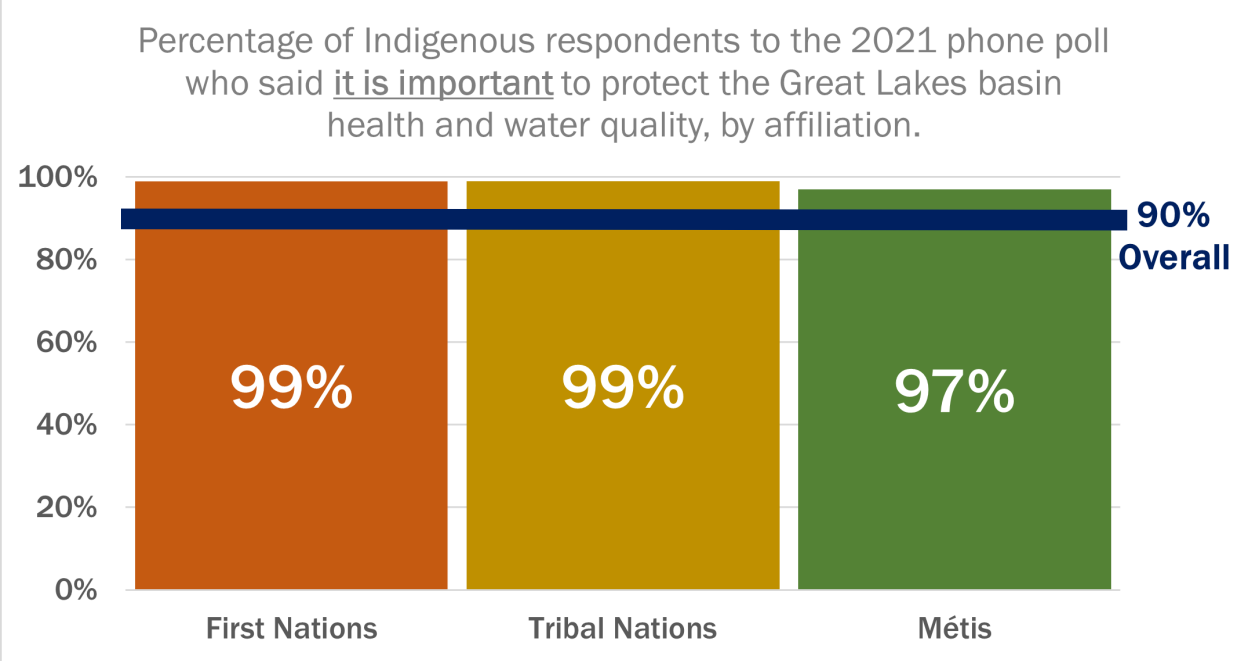
Importance of protecting Great Lakes water quality





2021 phone poll Question 10: On a scale of 1 to 5, "How important is it that the health and water quality of the Great Lakes basin be protected?" Responses: 1-not at all important (2%); 2-not important (2%); 3-neither important nor unimportant (3%); 4-important (10%); 5-very important (80%); don't know (2%).

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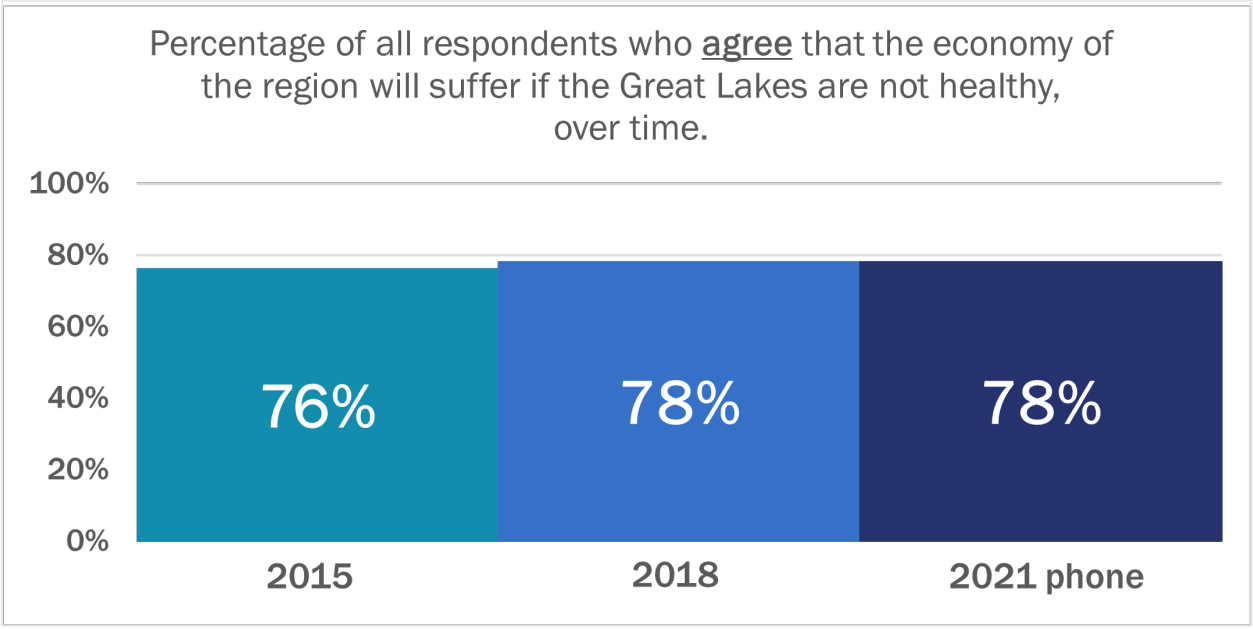
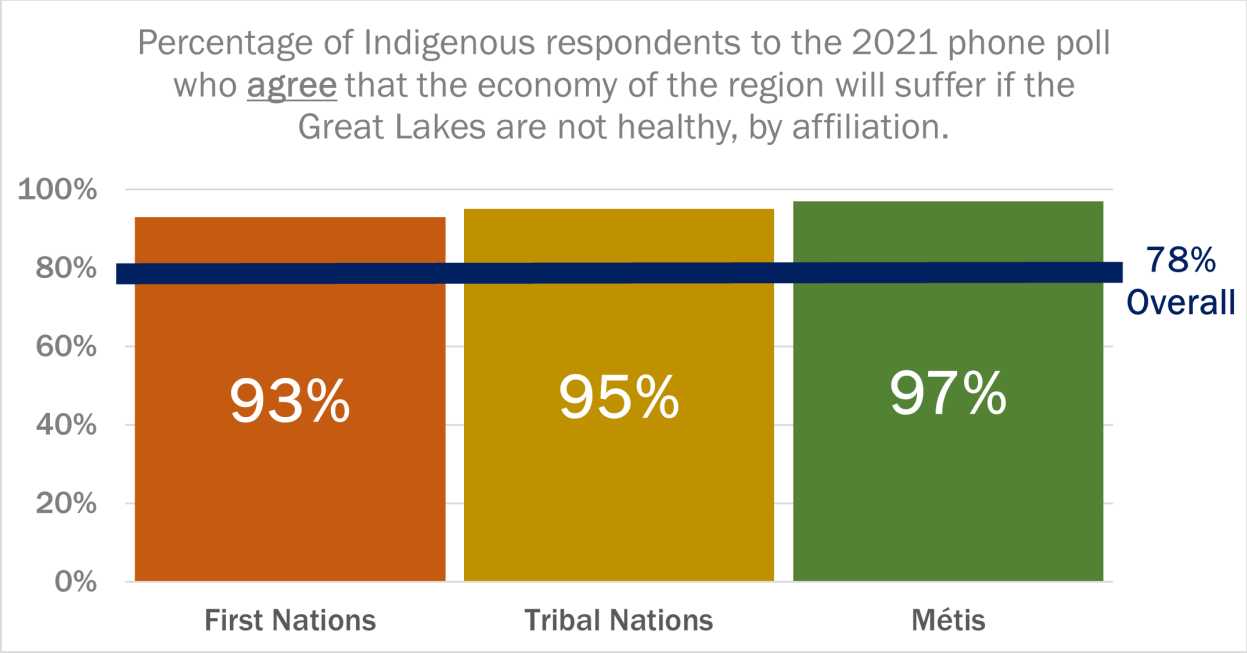
Impact on the economy of the region if the Great Lakes are not healthy





2021 phone poll Question 46: On a scale of 1 to 5 rank your agreement with the statement: "The economy of the region will suffer without healthy Great Lakes." Responses: 1-strongly disagree (1%); 2-disagree (2%); 3-neither agree nor disagree (8%); 4-agree (19%); 5-strongly agree (59%); don't know (12%).

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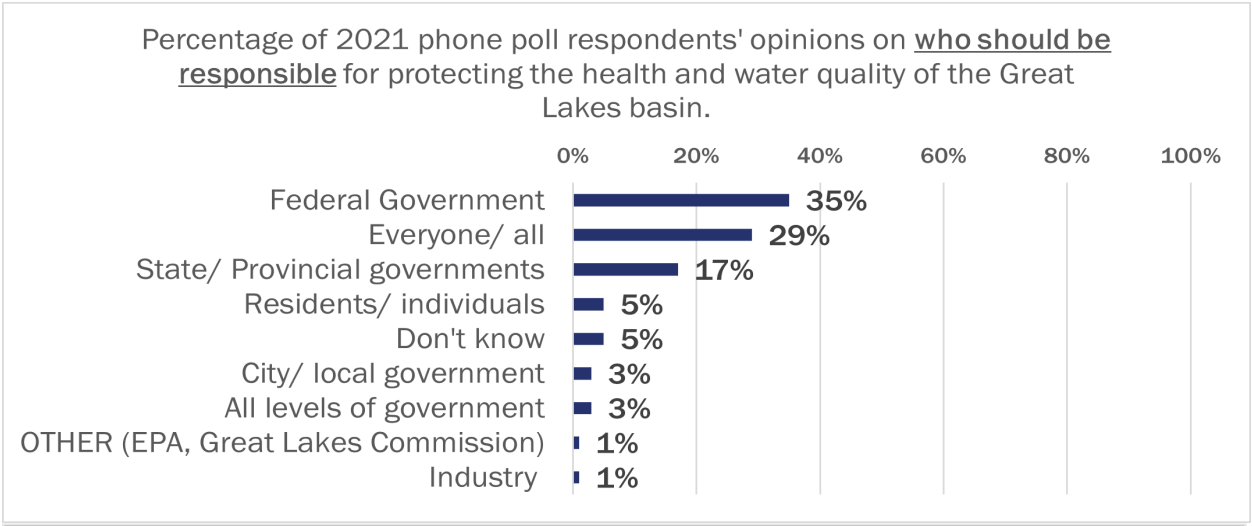
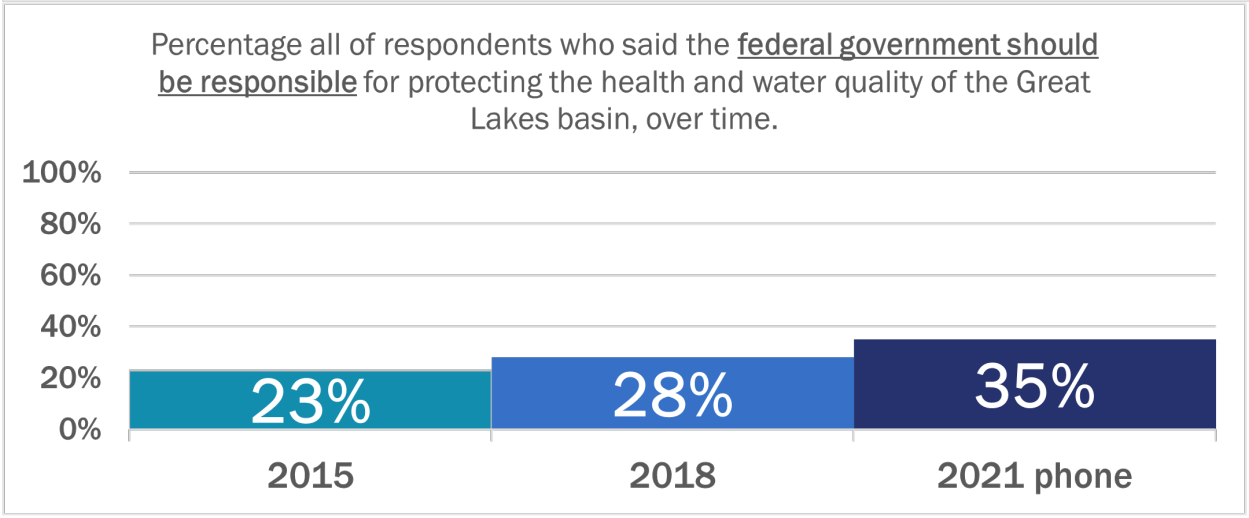
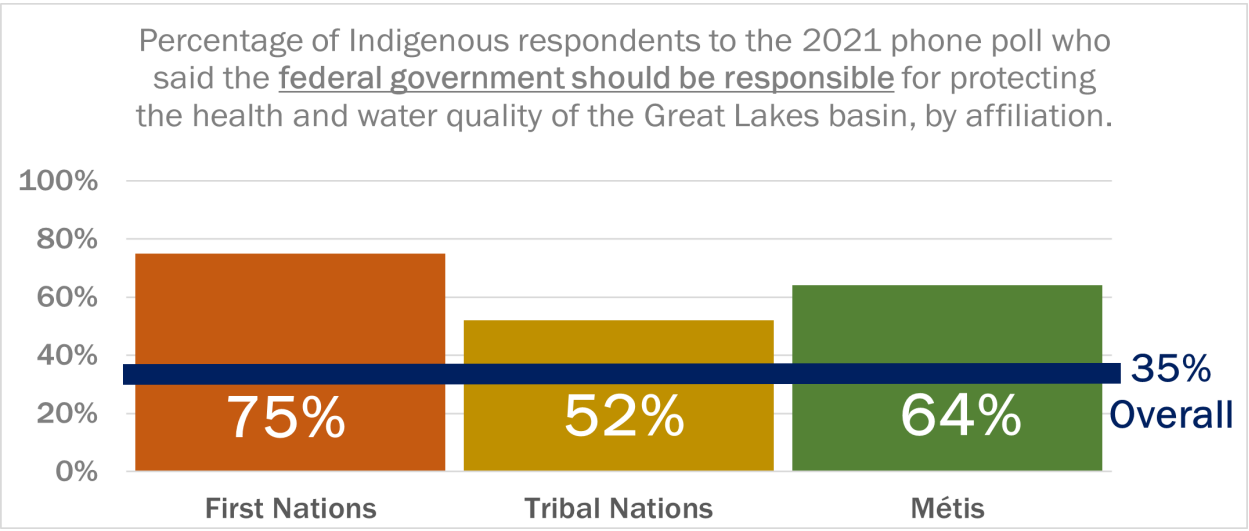
Who should be responsible for protecting Great Lakes water quality?







This open-ended question corresponds to Question 13 in the 2021 phone poll.

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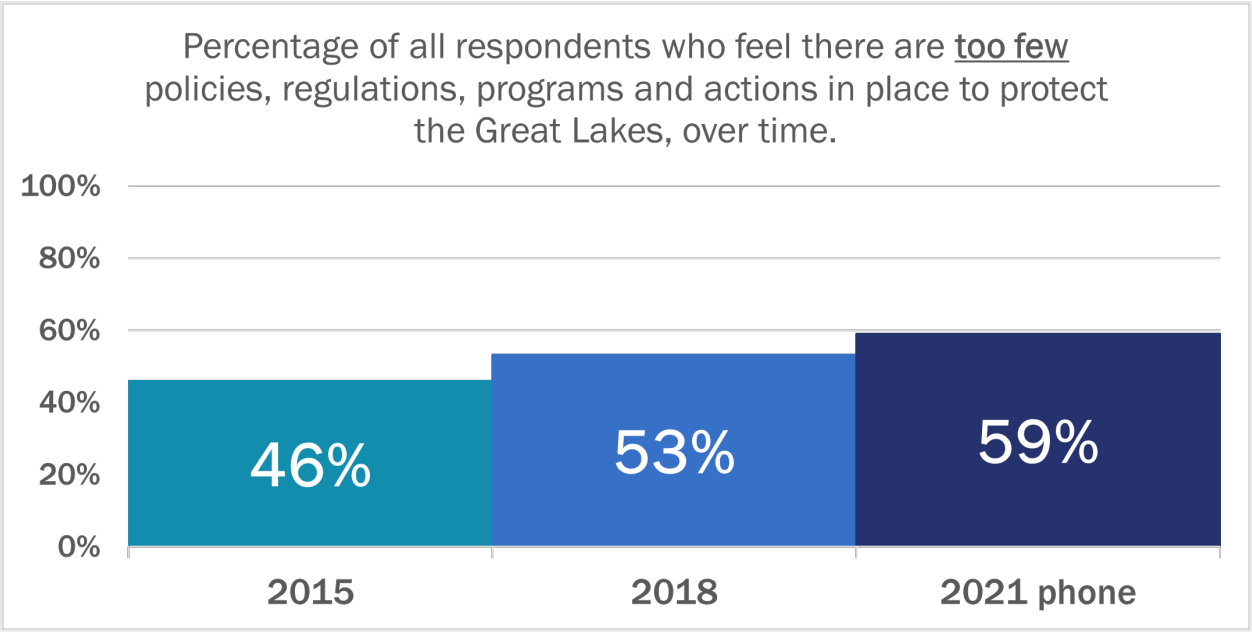
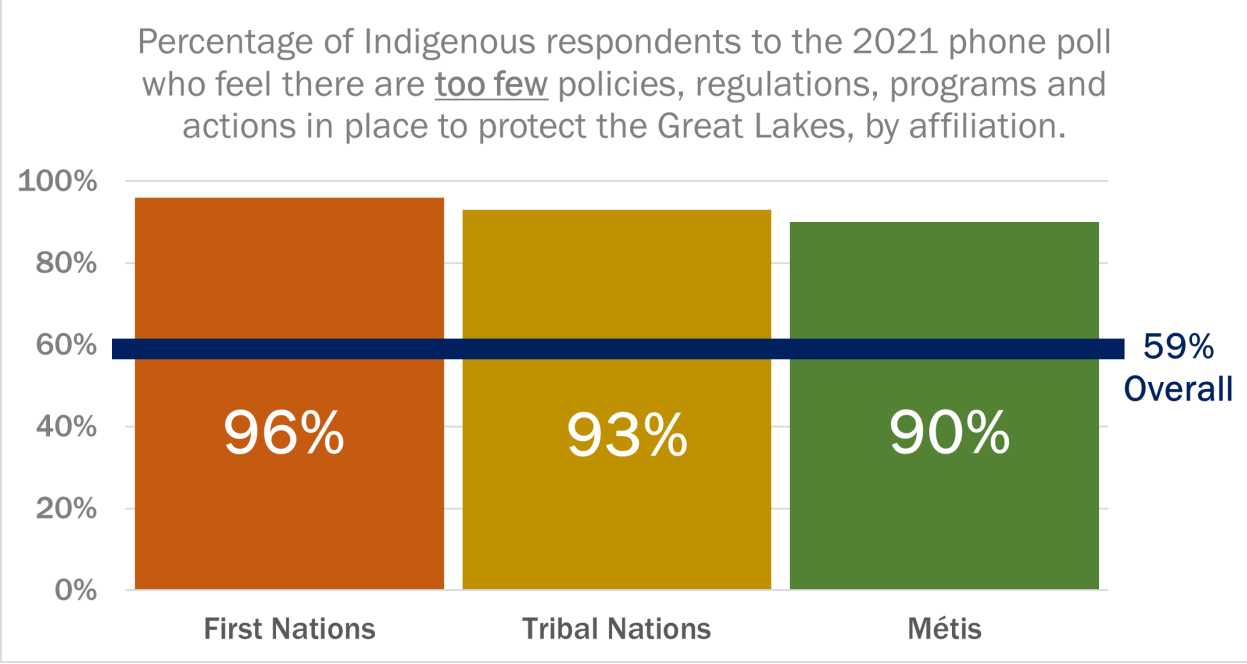
Opinions on policies, regulations, programs and actions in place to protect the Great Lakes





2021 phone poll question 16a: "Thinking about the policies, regulations, programs and actions in place to protect the Great Lakes, do you feel there are too many, too few or just the right amount?" Responses: too few (59%); just right (14%); too many (4%); don't know (23%).

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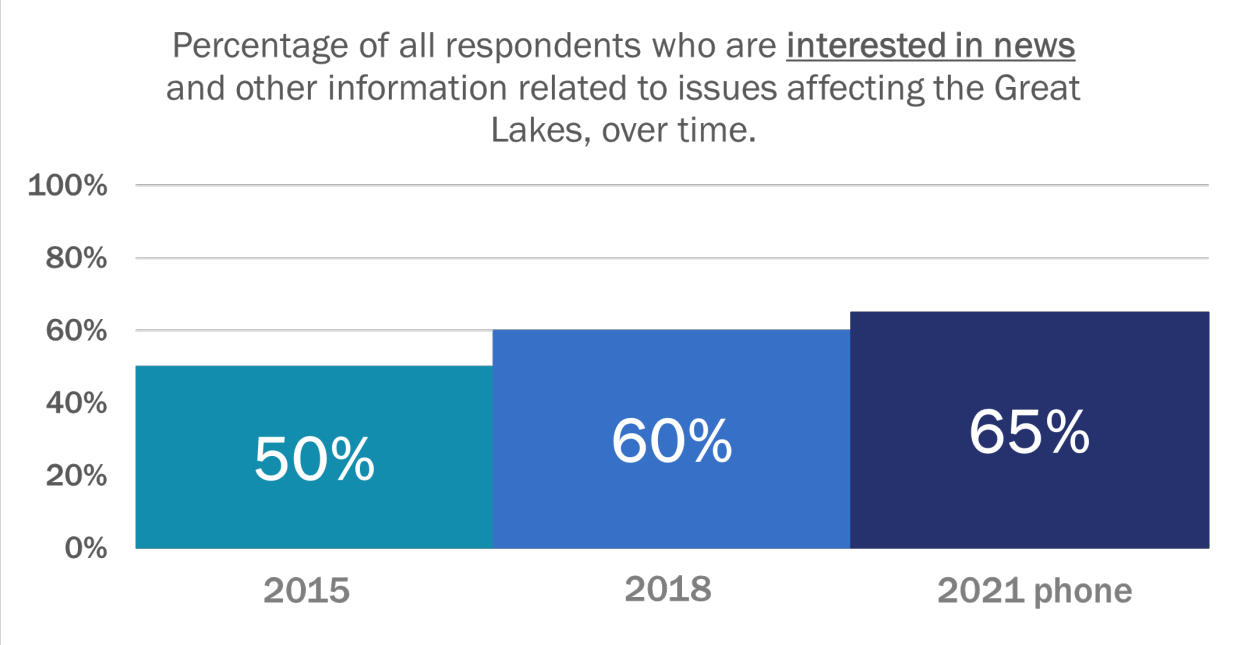
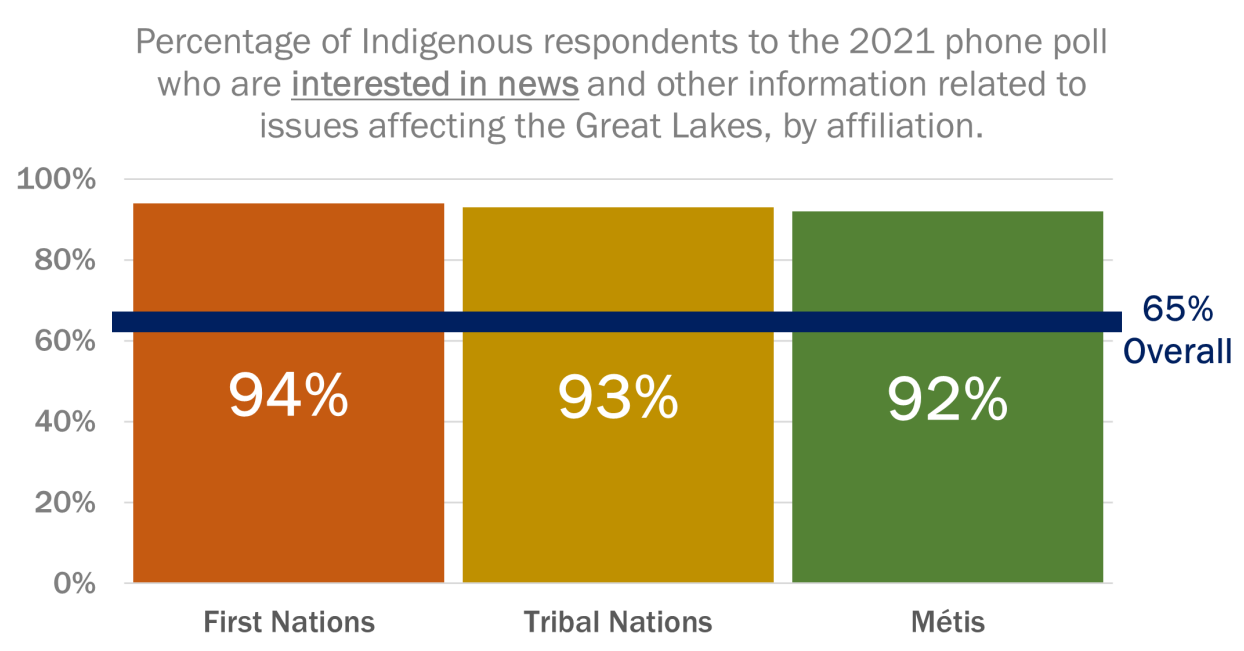
Interest in news and other information related to issues affecting the Great Lakes





2021 phone poll question 33: On a scale of 1 to 5: "How interested are you in news and other information related to issues affecting the Great Lakes?" Responses: 1-not at all interested (10%); 2-not interested (6%); 3-neither interested nor uninterested (13%); 4-interested (27%); 5-very interested (38%); don't know (6%).

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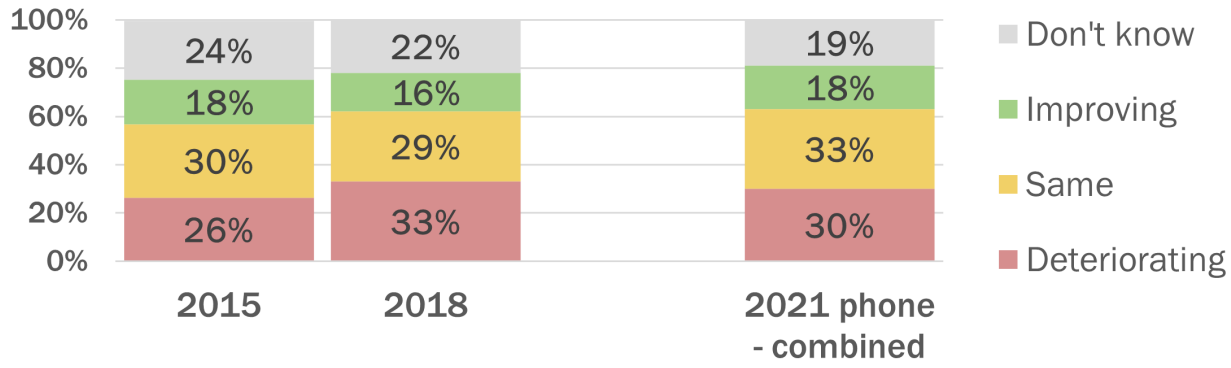
Views on the current status* and trend** of the health of the lake the respondents have the greatest connection with

2021 phone poll respondents' opinions on the current status* and trend** of the environmental health and water quality of the lake the respondents reported having the greatest connection with.

	Superior	Huron	Michigan	Erie	Ontario
Status	Good (66%)	Good (63%)	Poor (38%)	Poor (37%)	Poor (36%)
Trend	Unchanging (51%)	Unchanging (52%)	Unchanging (30%) / Deteriorating (30%)	Unchanging (30%) / Deteriorating (34%)	Unchanging (31%) / Deteriorating (32%)

Views on the current trend of the health of the lake the respondents have the greatest connection with

Respondents' opinions on the trend of the environmental health and water quality of the Great Lakes overall (2015 and 2018 polls) and the lake respondents have the greatest connection with, combined (2021 phone poll).



*2021 phone poll question 3: How would you rate the current status of the environmental health and water quality of the lake you have the greatest connection with using a scale from one very poor to five very good?

**2021 phone poll question 4: In your opinion, is the environmental health and water quality of this lake improving, deteriorating or staying about the same?

Details comparing overall responses and Canadian/US responses by lake are in the companion briefing booklet that compares Canadian and US results.

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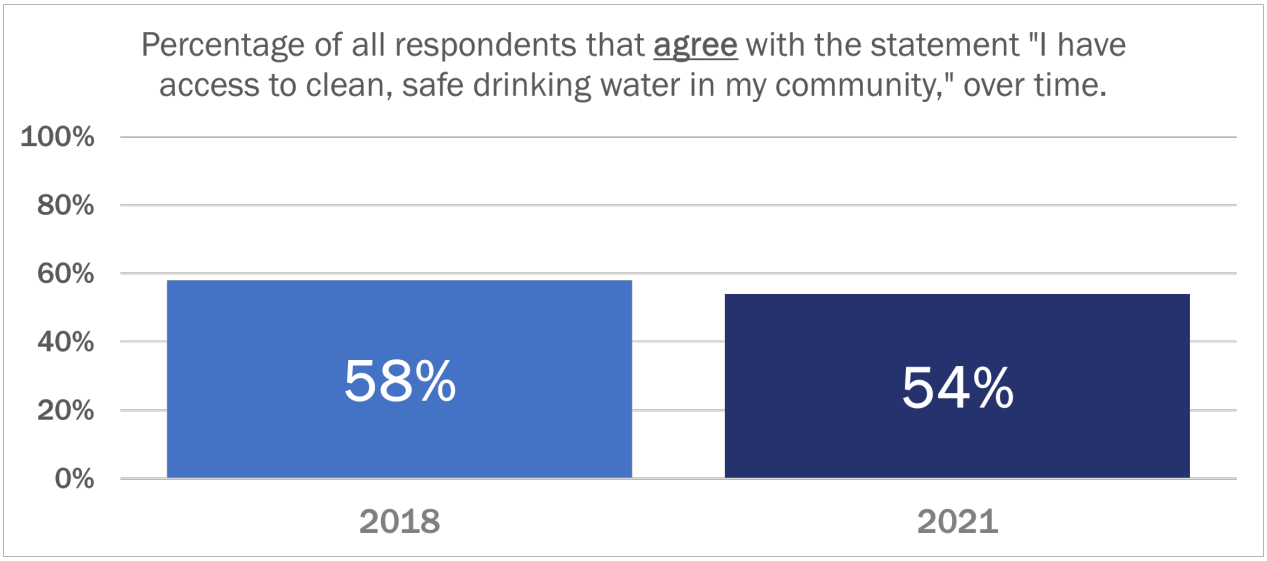
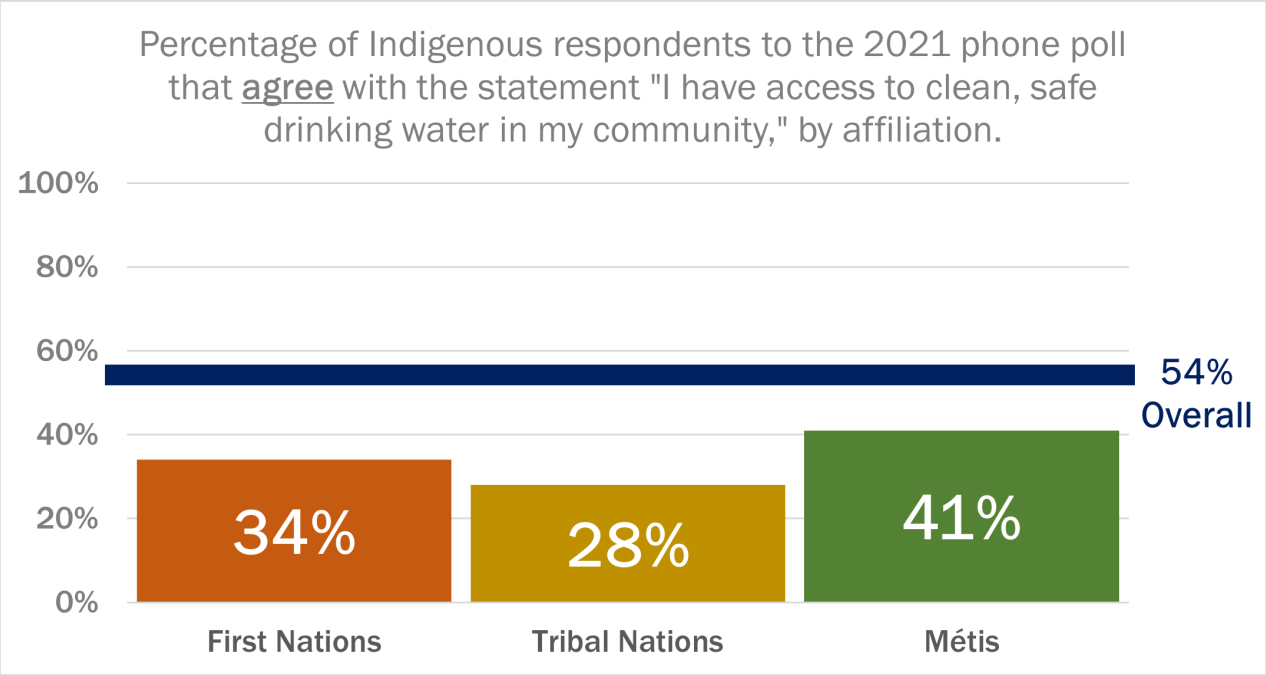
Do you have access to clean, safe drinking water in your community?





2021 phone poll question 24a: On a scale of 1 to 5: "I have access to clean, safe drinking water in my community." Results: 1-strongly disagree (9%); 2-disagree (15%); 3-neither agree nor disagree (17%); 4-agree (31%); 5-strongly agree (23%); don't know (6%).

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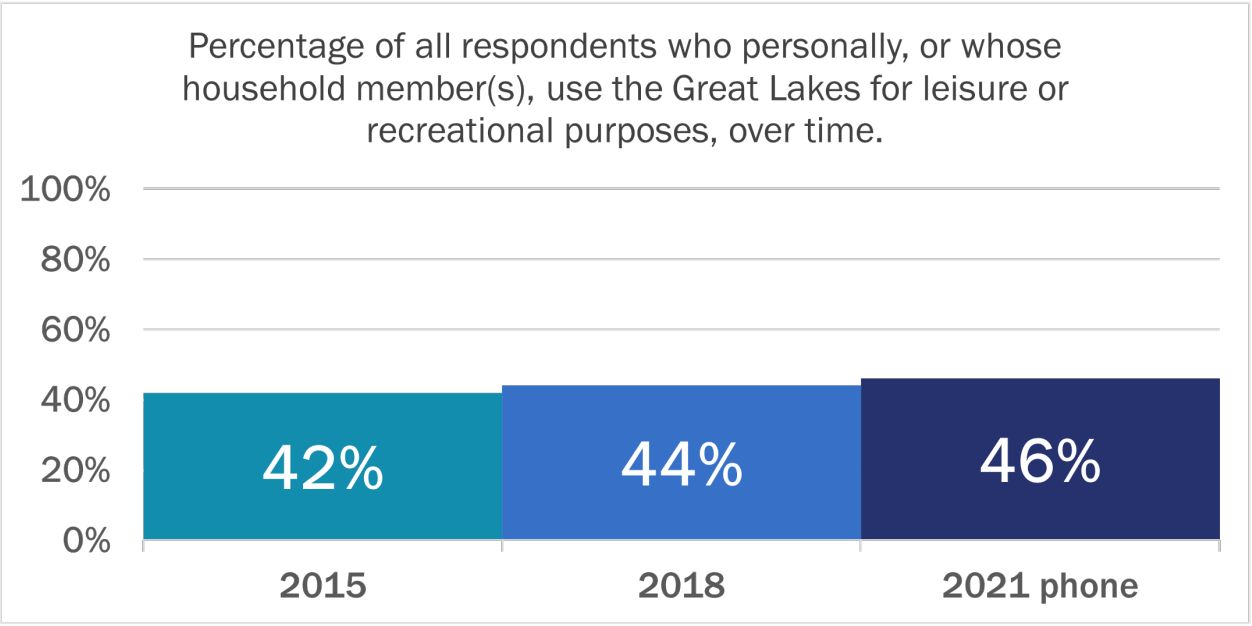
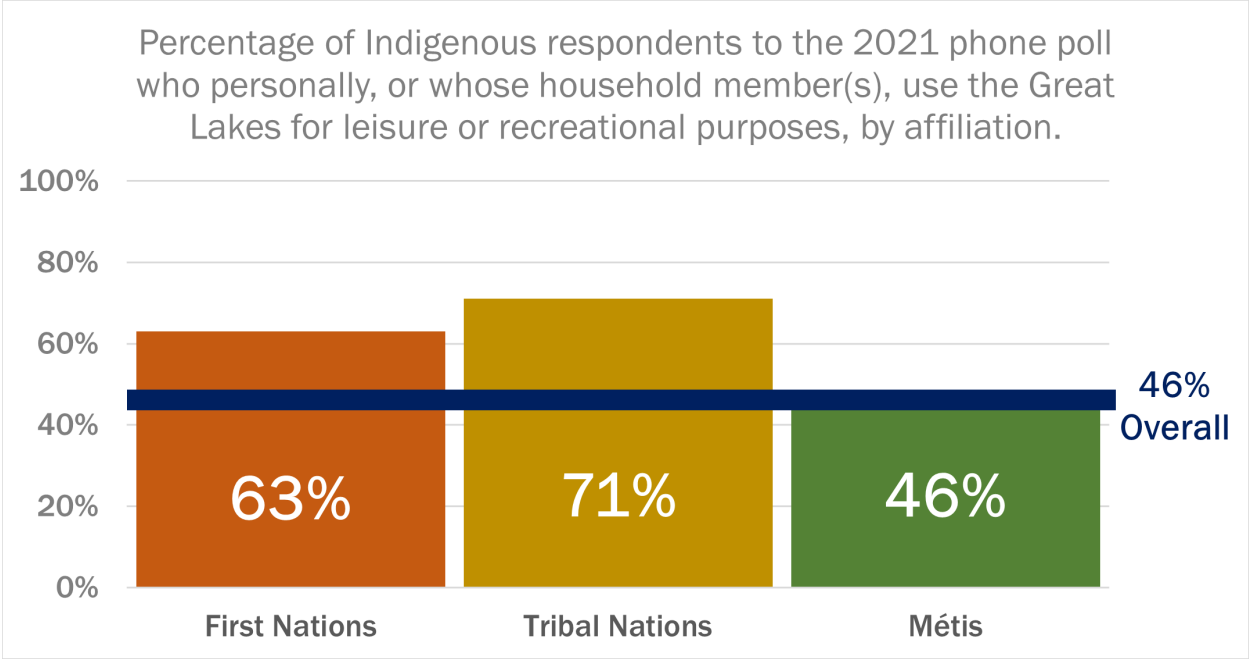
Use of the Great Lakes for leisure or recreation





2021 phone poll question 28: "Do you or any members of your household use the Great Lakes for leisure or recreational purposes?" Results: yes (46%); no (54%); don't know (0%).

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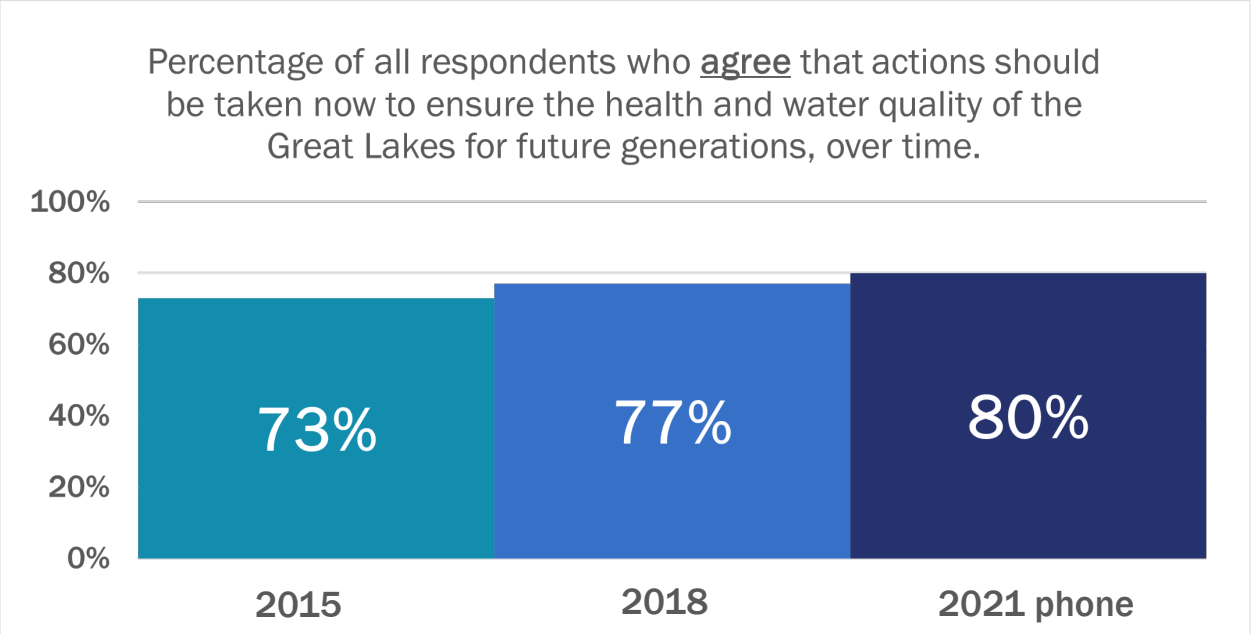
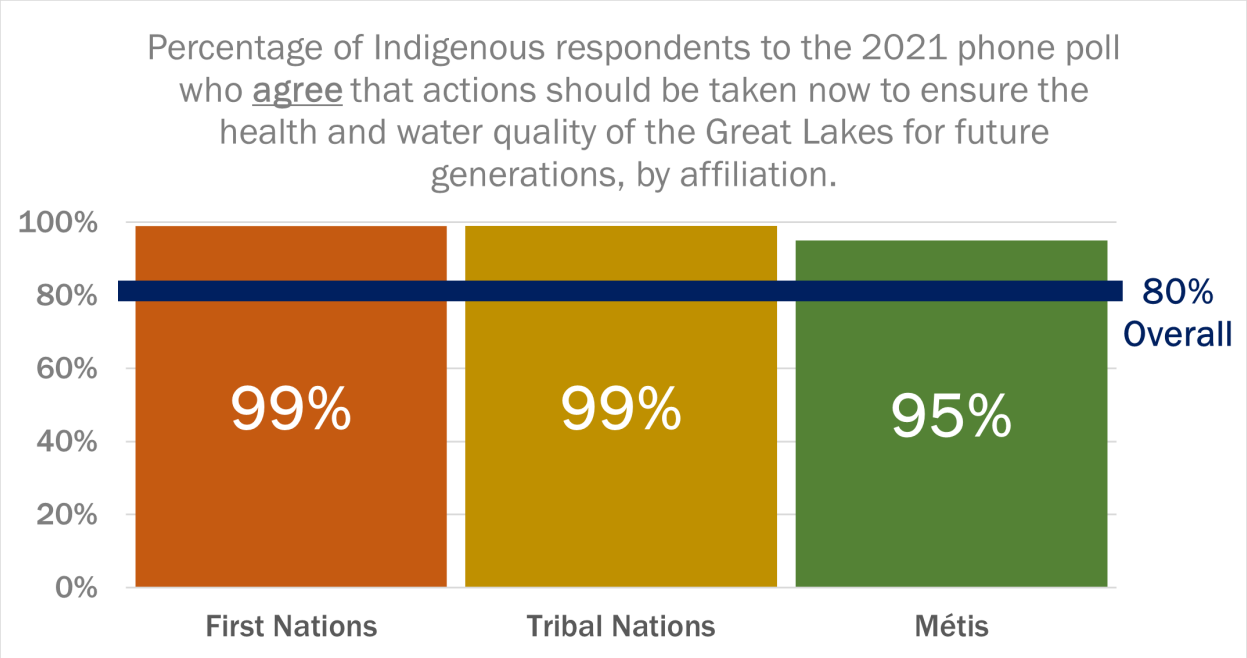
Belief that actions should be taken now to ensure the health and water quality of the Great Lakes for future generations





2021 phone poll question 42: On a scale of 1 to 5 rank your agreement with the statement: "Actions should be taken now to ensure the health and water quality of the Great Lakes for future generations." Results: 1-strongly disagree (1%); 2-disagree (1%); 3-neither agree nor disagree (8%); 4-agree (12%); 5-strongly agree (68%); don't know (10%).

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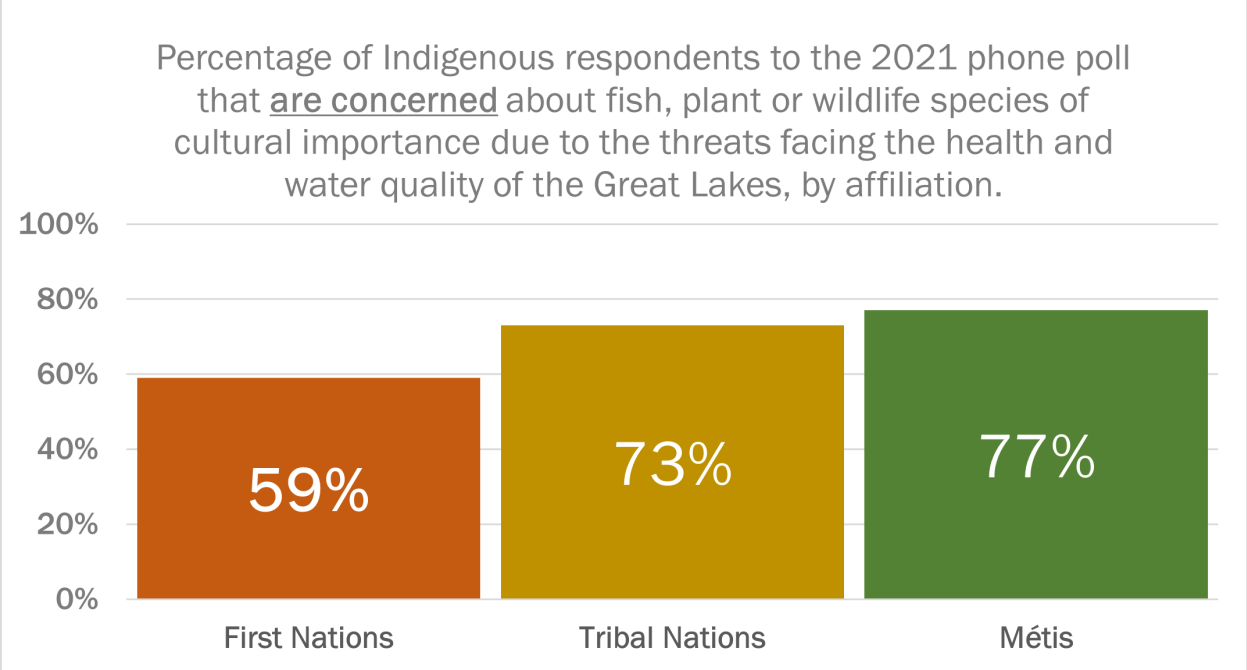
Concern about fish, plant or wildlife species of cultural importance due to the threats facing the health and water quality of the Great Lakes



2021 phone poll question 57: "Are there fish, plant or wildlife species of cultural importance you are concerned about due to the threats facing the health and water quality of the Great Lakes?" Results: yes (68%), don't know (6%), no (26%).

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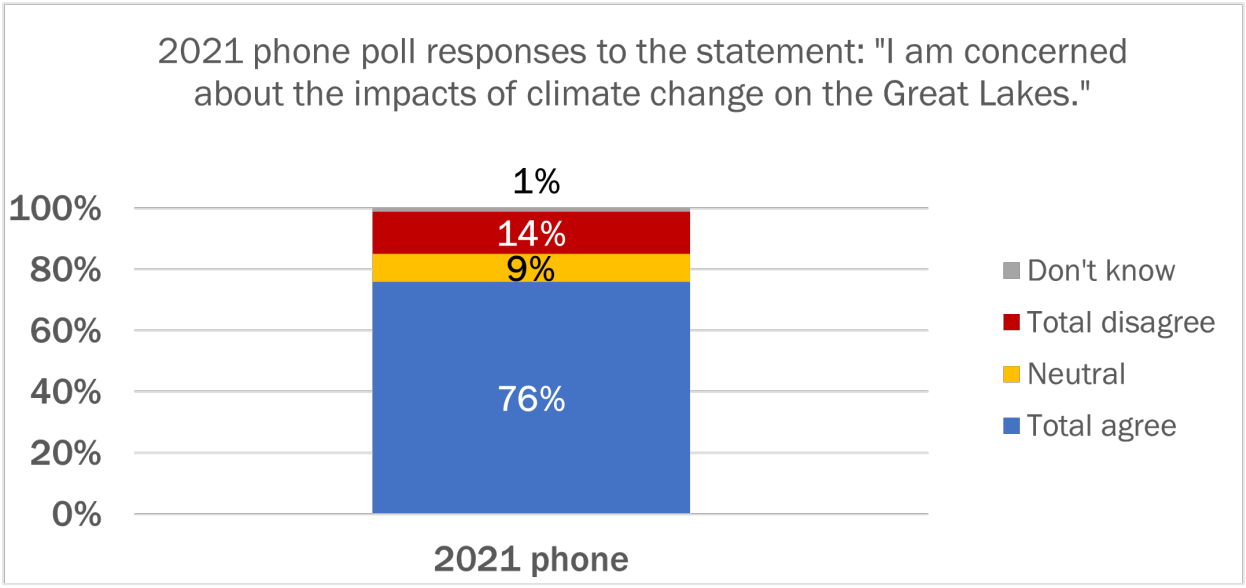
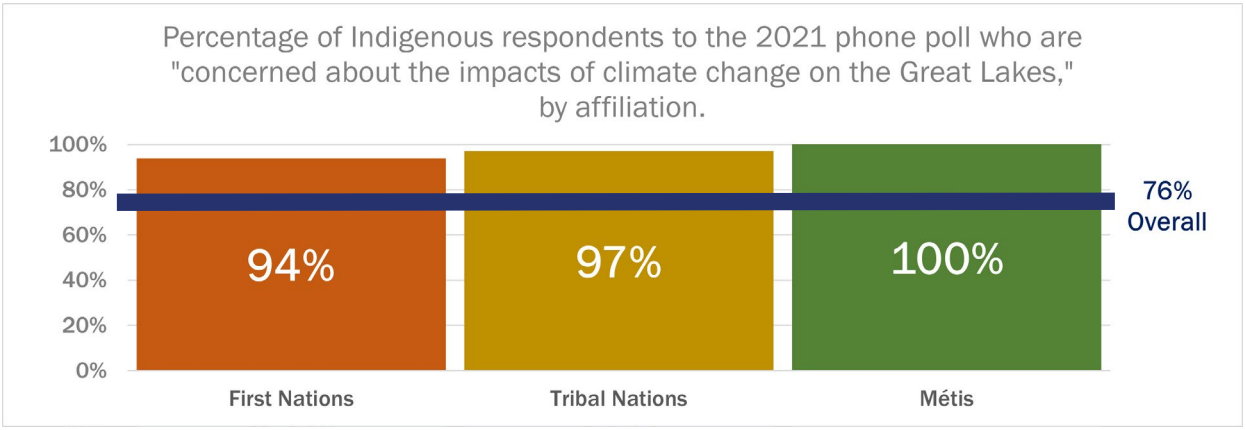
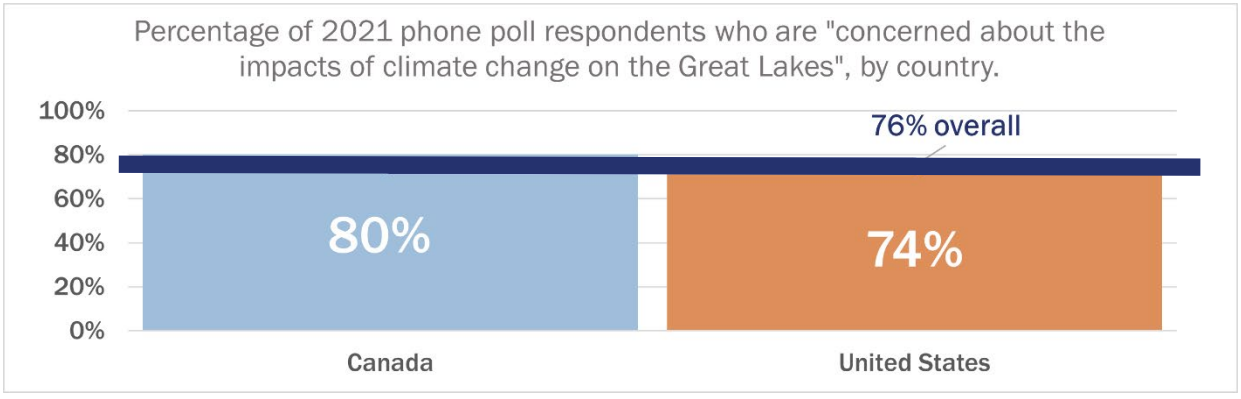
Concern about the impacts of climate change on the Great Lakes







2021 phone poll question 50: On a scale of 1 to 5 rank your agreement with the statement: "I am concerned about the impacts of climate change on the health and water quality of the Great Lakes." Results: 1-strongly disagree (5%); 2-disagree (9%); 3-neither agree nor disagree (9%); 4-agree (30%); 5-strongly agree (45%); don't know (1%).

Consider exploring the Great Lakes Water Quality Board's companion briefing booklet comparing the responses by country (Canada and US) for a similar subset of 2021 phone poll questions.

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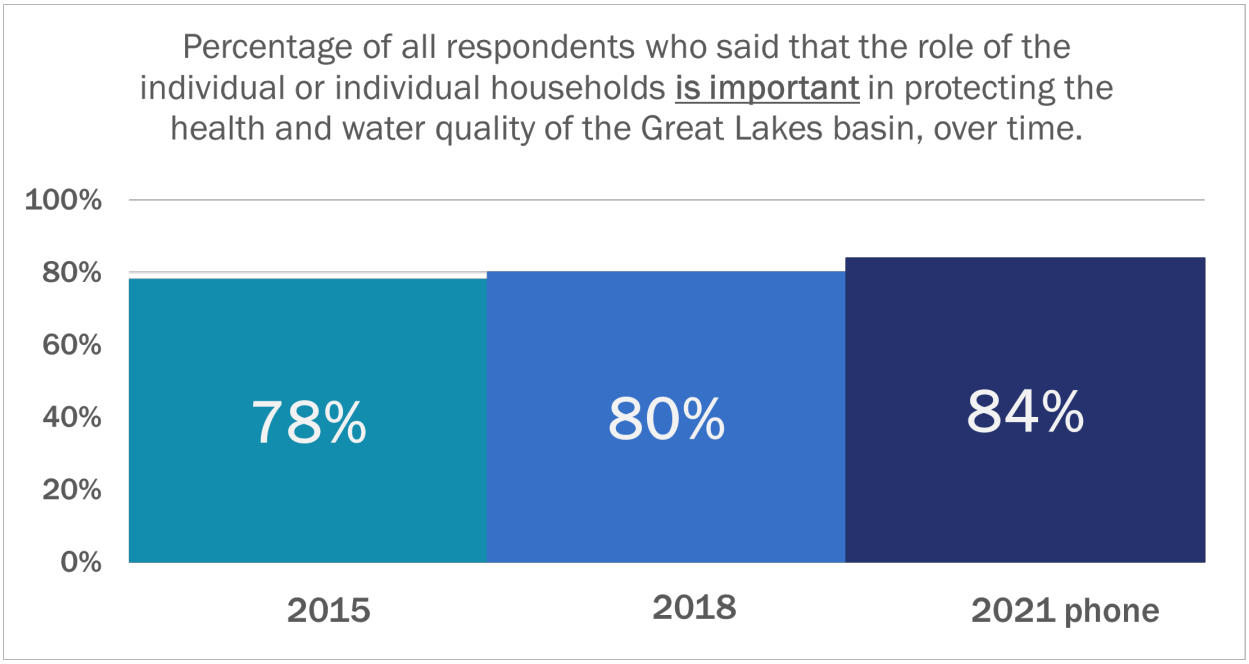
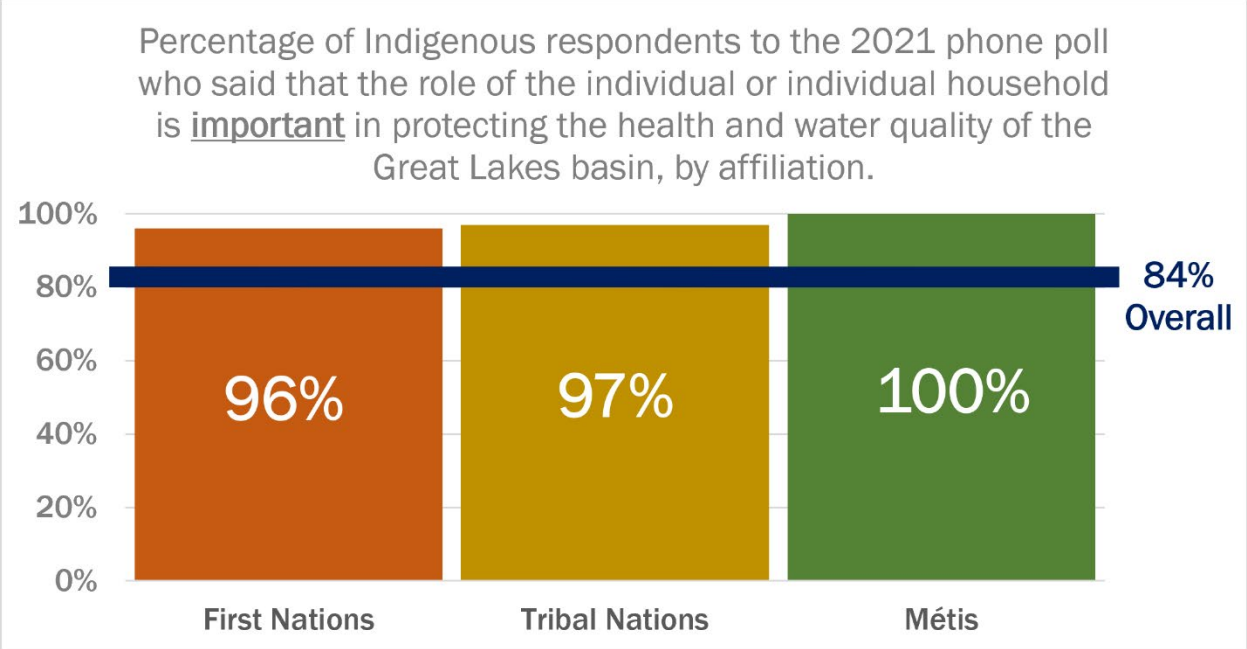
Importance of the role of the individual or individual household in protecting the Great Lakes





2021 phone poll question 14: On a scale of 1 to 5: "How important is the role of the individual or individual household in protecting the health and water quality of the Great Lakes basin?" Results: 1-not at all important (3%); 2-not important (5%); 3-neither important nor unimportant (4%); 4-important (19%); 5-very important (66%); don't know (4%).

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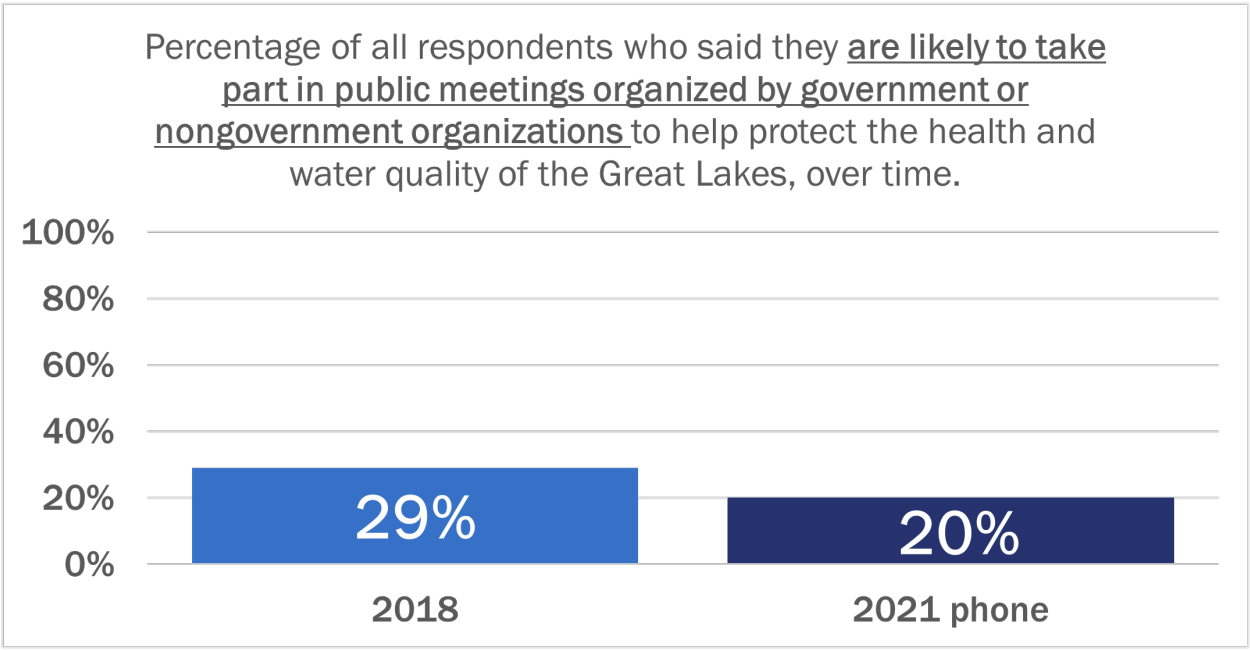
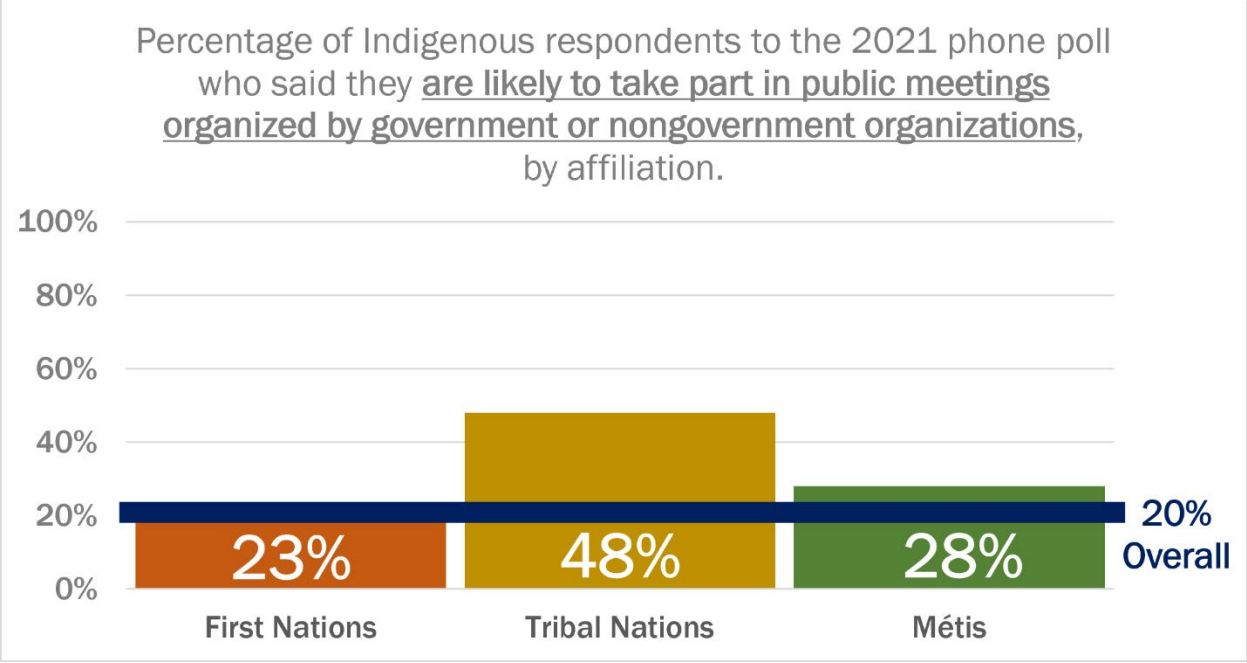
Likelihood to take part in public meetings to help protect the Great Lakes





2021 phone poll question 15a: "Which of the following actions would you be likely to take part in to help protect the water quality of the Great Lakes? a) Attend a public meeting organized by government or nongovernment organizations?" Results: yes (20%); no (80%); don't know (0%).

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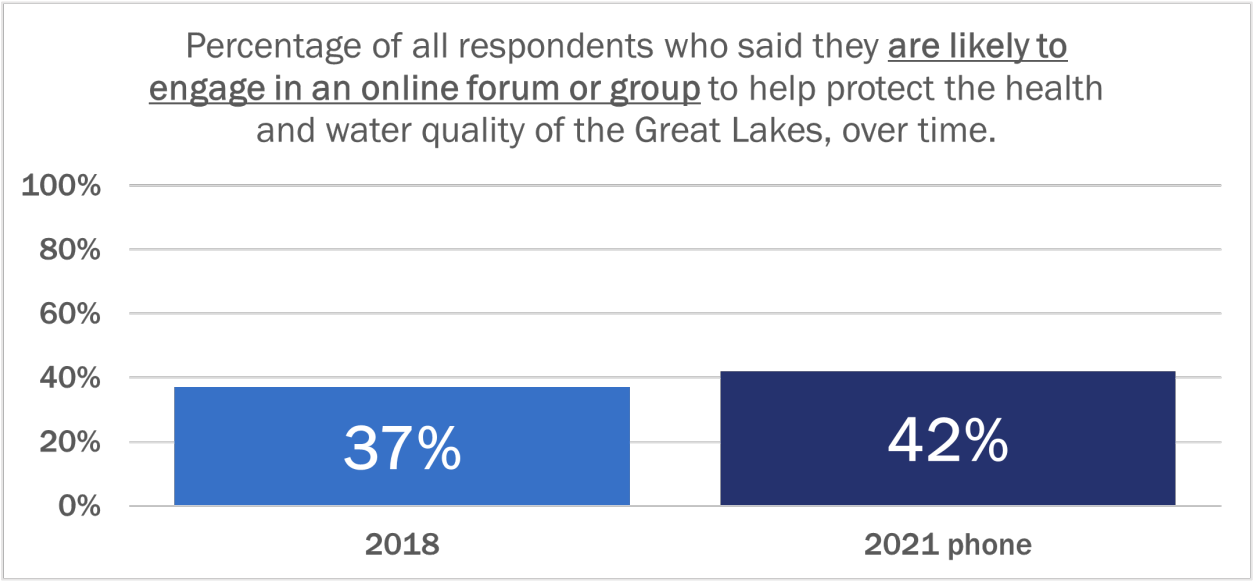
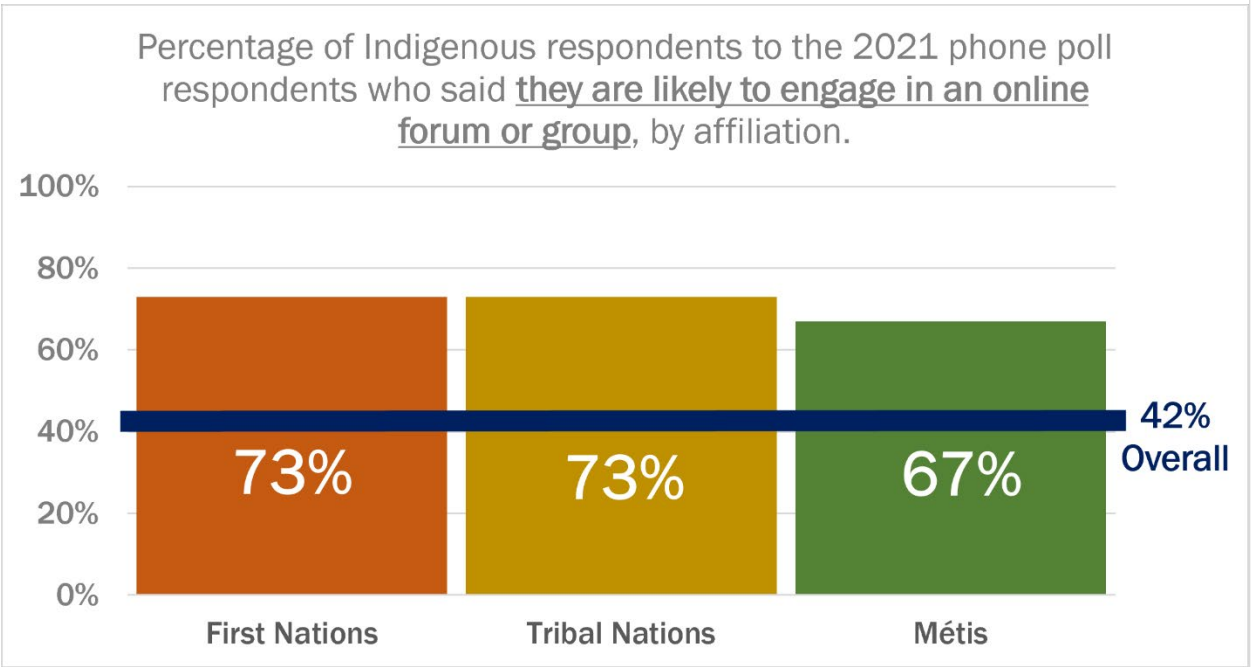
Likelihood to engage in an online forum or group to help protect the Great Lakes





2021 phone poll question 15b: "Which of the following actions would you be likely to take part in to help protect the water quality of the Great Lakes? b) Attend a public meeting organized by government or nongovernment organizations?" Results: yes (42%); no (58%); don't know (0%).

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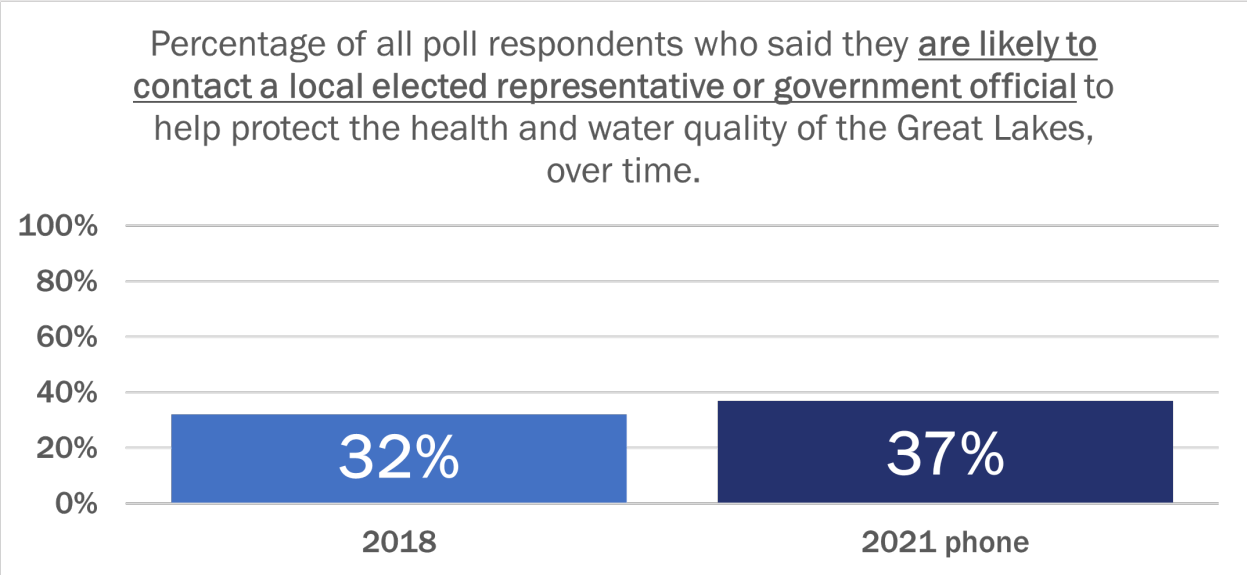
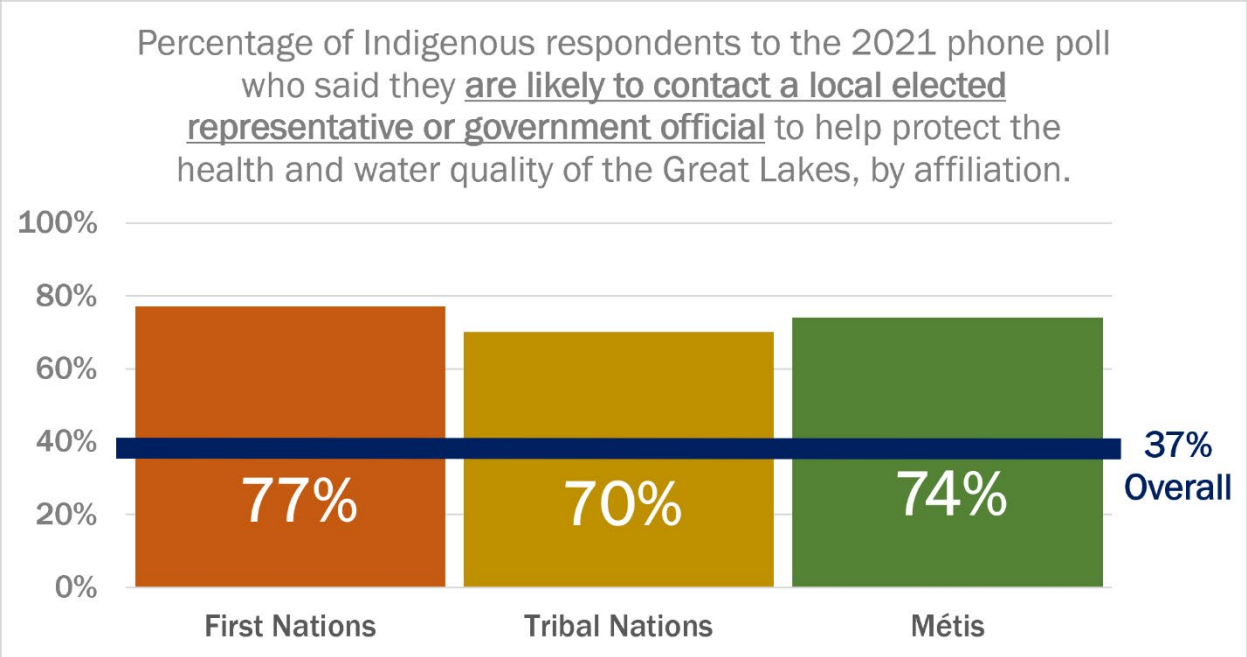
Likelihood to contact a local elected representative or government official to help protect the Great Lakes





2021 phone poll question 15c: "Which of the following actions would you be likely to take part in to help protect the water quality of the Great Lakes? c) Attend a public meeting organized by government or nongovernment organizations?" Results: yes (37%); no (63%); don't know (0%).

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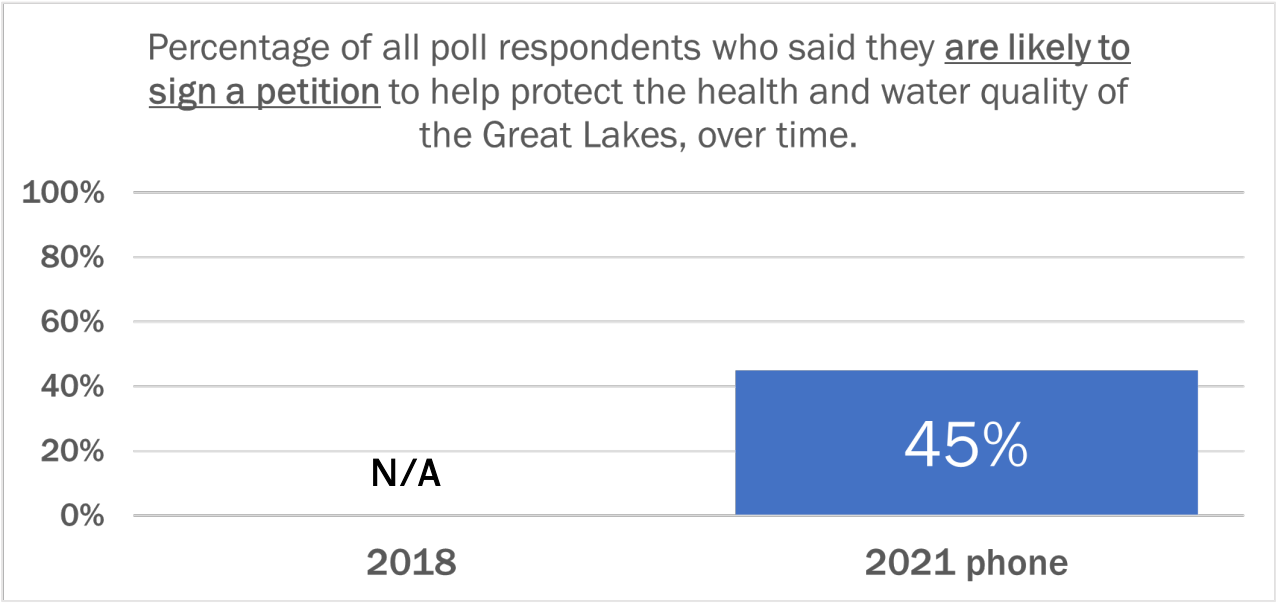
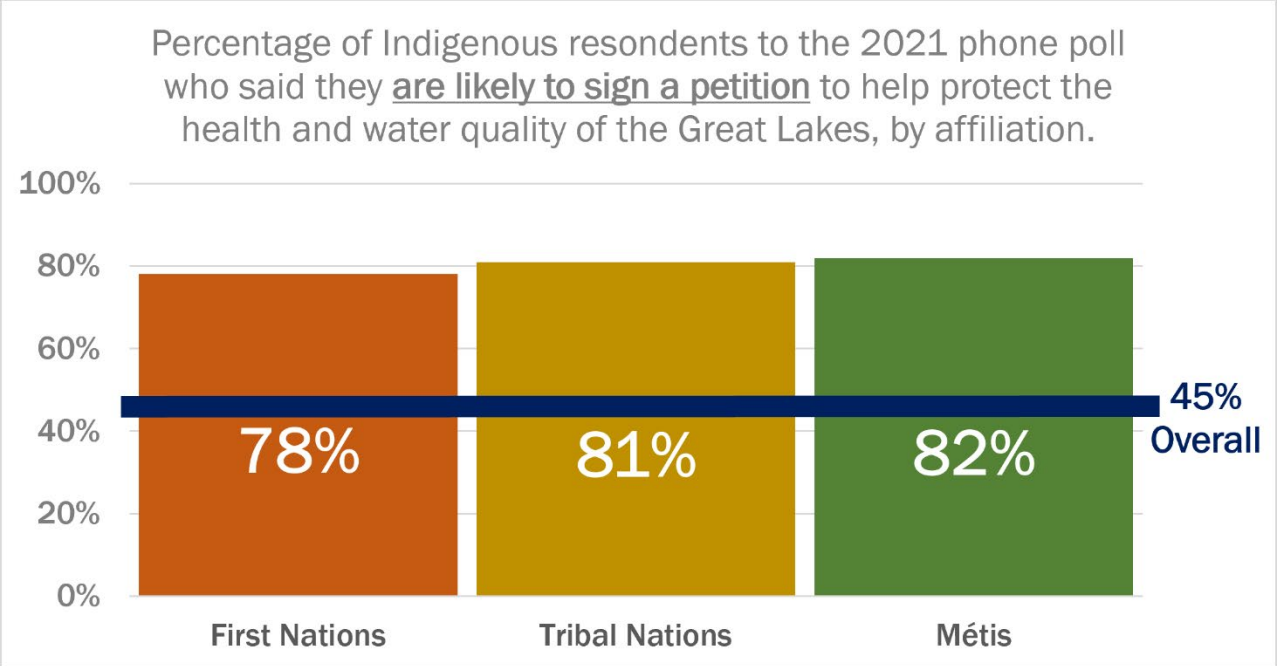
Likelihood to sign a petition to help protect the Great Lakes





2021 phone poll question 15j: "Which of the following actions would you be likely to take part in to help protect the water quality of the Great Lakes? j) Sign a petition?" Results: yes 45%); no (55%); don't know (0%).

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Additional information

About the International Joint Commission Great Lakes Water Quality Board

The International Joint Commission was established by the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 to help the governments of Canada and the United States prevent and resolve disputes over use of the waters shared by the two countries.

The IJC's Great Lakes Water Quality Board is the principal advisor to the IJC under the 2012 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. The board assists the IJC by reviewing and assessing progress by the governments of Canada and the United States to implement the Agreement, identifying emerging issues and recommending strategies and approaches to prevent and resolve complex challenges facing the Great Lakes, and providing advice on the role of relevant jurisdictions to implement these strategies and approaches.

Relevant web links and resources

- 2021 Great Lakes Regional Poll: results reports, media toolkit, informational webinar video and more
  - ijc.org/wqb/great-lakes-poll
- 2018 Great Lakes Regional Poll (née Great Lakes Binational Poll)
  - ijc.org/en/wqb/second-binational-great-lakes-basin-poll
- 2015 Great Lakes Regional Poll (née Great Lakes Binational Poll)
  - ijc.org/en/wqb/2015-binational-great-lakes-basin-poll
- 2021 Great Lakes Regional Poll First Nations/Metis/Tribal Nation Results Comparison Decision-Maker Briefing Booklet
  - ijc.org/sites/default/files/WQB_2021_Great_Lakes_Regional_Poll_US-CAN_BriefingBooklet.pdf
- About the IJC Great Lakes Water Quality Board
  - ijc.org/wqb
- About the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement
  - ijc.org/en/what/glwq

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