

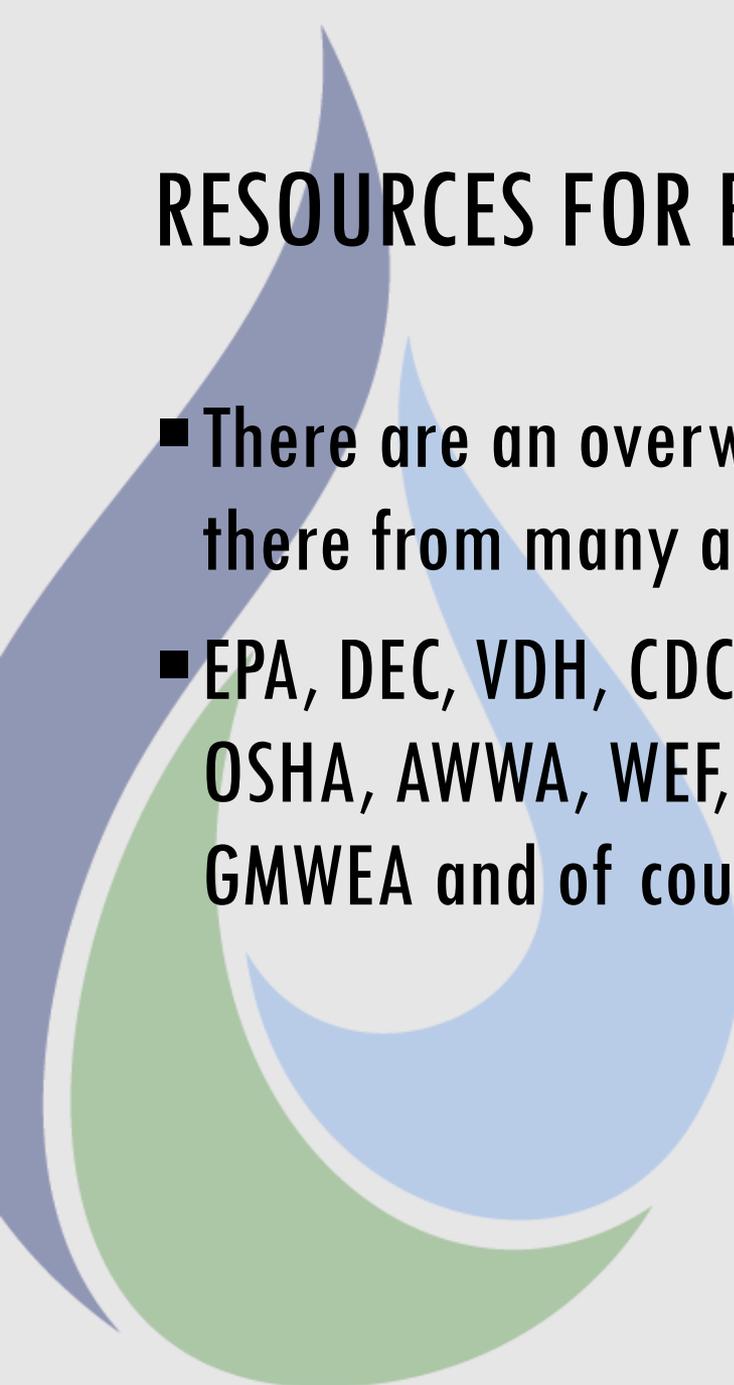
EMERGENCY PLANNING:

**Are you ready for the next wave of
COVID-19?**

July 22, 2020

RESOURCES FOR EMERGENCY PLANNING

- Today's training — 1 TCH
- VRWA is offering a more comprehensive three-hour class next week (July 29, 9am-12:30pm)
- Quick review of lessons learned — based on other classes, surveys, conversations with operators
- What can operators at smaller utilities do today to prepare for the next wave of COVID



RESOURCES FOR EMERGENCY PLANNING

- There are an overwhelming amount of resources out there from many agencies/organizations like....
- EPA, DEC, VDH, CDC, DOL, USDA, FEMA, DHS, ACCD, VEM, OSHA, AWWA, WEF, NRWA, RCAP, NEWWA, NEWEA, GMWEA and of course...VRWA

ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES

- Make sure your board, managers and other administrators know that water and wastewater employees are ESSENTIAL WORKERS protecting CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE
- Important to prevent layoffs and hours being cut
- Also to be able to travel during stay at home orders and to receive childcare when daycares and schools are closed

ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES

- **Make sure you have a STAFFING PLAN that can be implemented quickly and makes sense for your facility (not just who can work from home)**
- **What happens if your sole operator has to quarantine? Who else knows how to run the system? Do they have access to keys? FIND ANSWERS NOW**



ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES

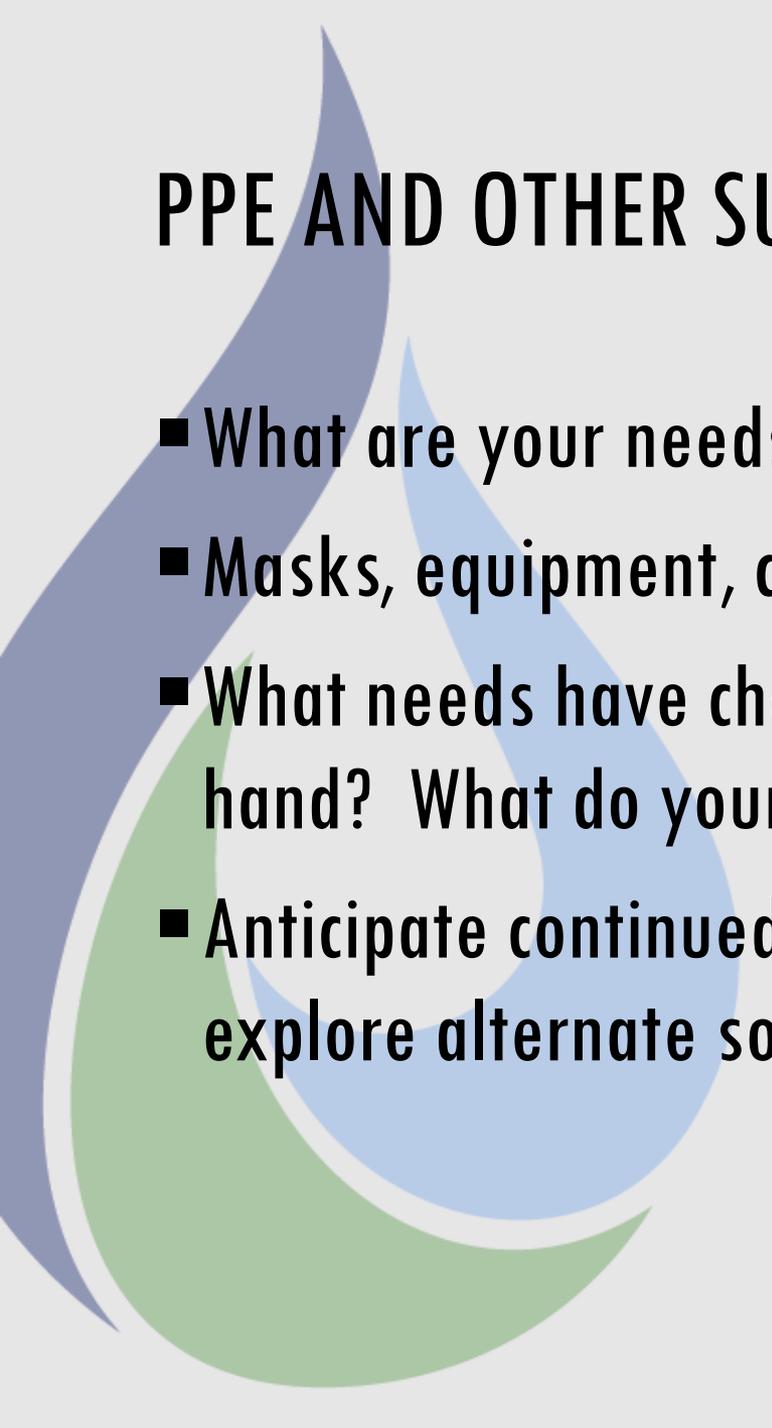
- VRWA maintains a list of substitute operators
- Currently have 65 water and wastewater operators who have volunteered
- All levels of certification in all corners of the state
- **CONTACT YOUR BACKUP OPERATOR(S) AND GIVE THEM A TOUR TOMORROW**

WRITTEN EMERGENCY PLANS

- **Have you updated your O&M Manual? SOPs?**
- **Is the contact information in your emergency response plan (or contingency plan) still accurate?**
- **Are these documents available electronically? Remotely? Could you email them if necessary?**

WRITTEN EMERGENCY PLANS

- Have you contacted critical customers such as hospitals and nursing homes?
- Have you thought about water quality issues as businesses, offices and schools reopen?
- Do you have a policy on non-payment of bills and shutoffs during a pandemic?



PPE AND OTHER SUPPLIES

- What are your needs in a typical year?
- Masks, equipment, chemicals, cleaning supplies, etc.
- What needs have changed? What do you have on-hand? What do your vendor agreements say?
- Anticipate continued supply chain problems and explore alternate sources

PPE AND OTHER SUPPLIES

- Many suppliers have PPE on backorder or prioritized for healthcare
- Can something of lower quality suffice?
(KN95 masks vs N95 masks)
- Does a neighboring or nearby system have enough to share or sell to you?
- VT WARN is available as a resource

VERMONT WARN

- WARNs exist to help in emergency situations
- VT WARN has never been activated
- Currently have ~ 60 members
- Revived VT WARN in March with strong push from EPA
- Currently co-chaired by VRWA and Dave DiDomenico from the DEC Wastewater Program
- Steering Committee of 10 includes four utilities, DEC, GMWEA, RCAP and other reps

VERMONT WARN

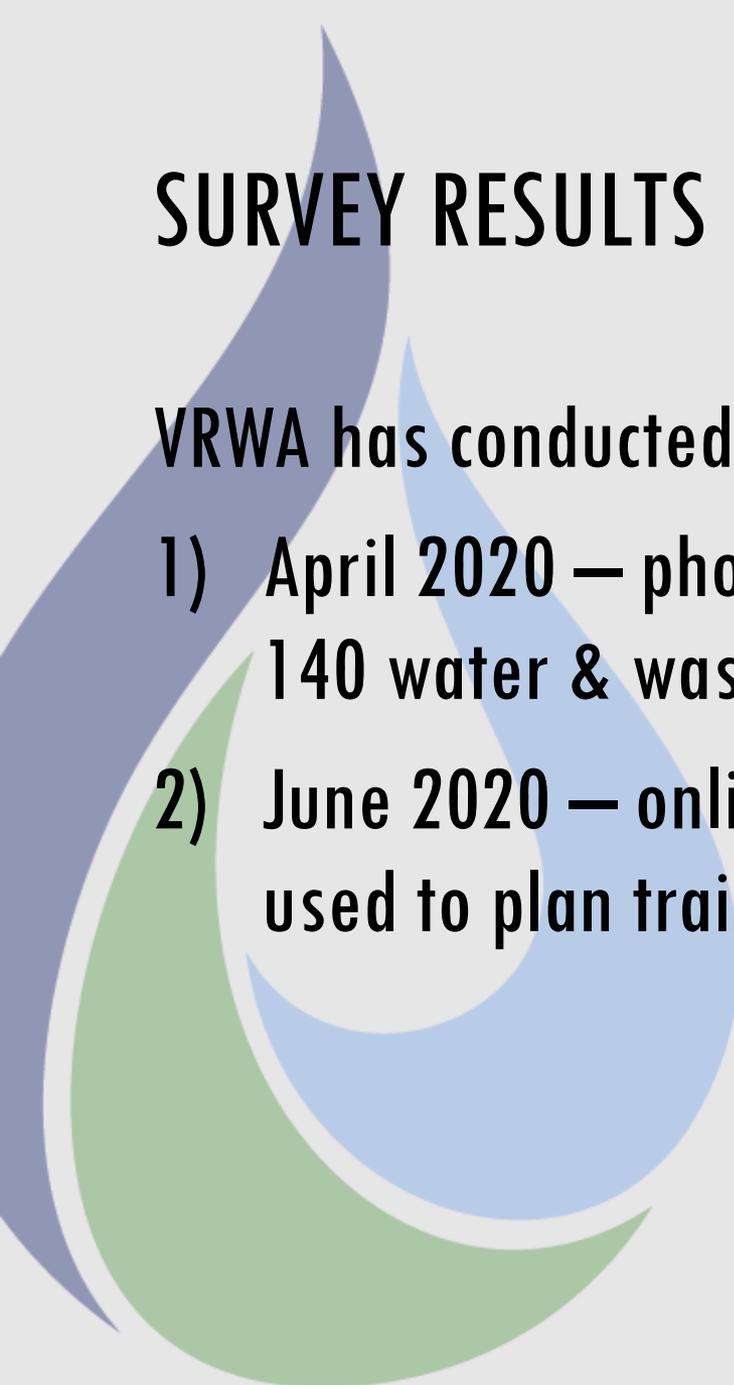
- VT WARN allows water and wastewater systems in Vermont to receive rapid mutual aid and assistance from other systems to continue providing services
- Could be unforeseen staff absences, materials shortages, equipment failures, etc.
- Join VT WARN by signing the mutual aid agreement - based on an EPA template, reviewed by attorneys

VERMONT WARN - AGREEMENT

- Covers reimbursement for costs, liability, worker's compensation, insurance and confidentiality to protect both parties.
- Signing it **DOES NOT OBLIGATE** the signer to provide aid, only signals a willingness to do so and speeds up process.
- Towns can exchange resources informally — but you must sign the agreement to seek FEMA reimbursement for costs!

VERMONT RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION

- We have ~5000 cloth face coverings still available (provided to VT WARN by FEMA and EPA)
- VRWA staff can provide on-site or remote assistance — by video if necessary
- Can assist with emergency planning
- Hoping to provide both online and in-person classes in the near future, can also provide training on-site



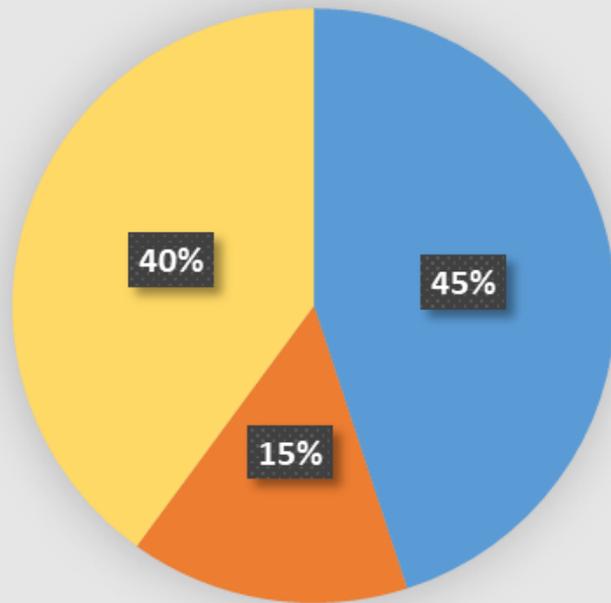
SURVEY RESULTS

VRWA has conducted two surveys during the pandemic:

- 1) April 2020 — phone calls to 101 utilities representing 140 water & wastewater systems**
- 2) June 2020 — online survey focused on financials — used to plan training and inform panel discussion**

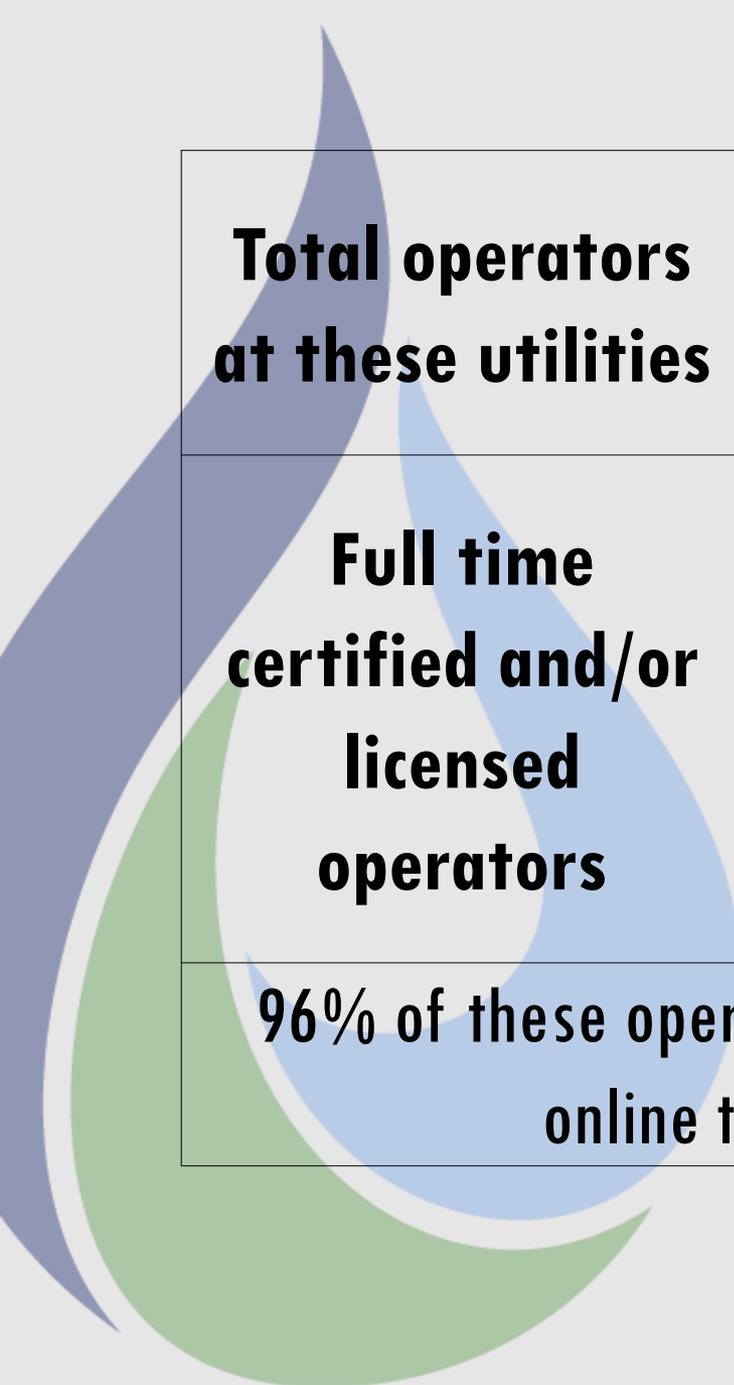
VRWA SURVEY RESULTS

Which services does your utility provide?



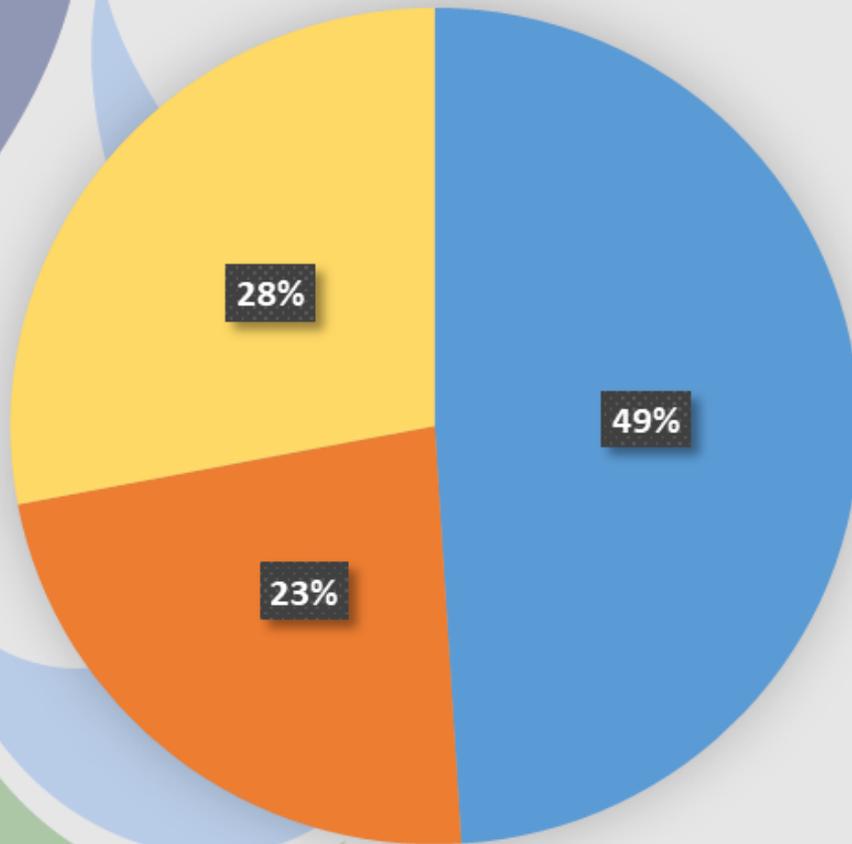
- Water
- Wastewater
- Both

This survey included 85 CWS and ~55 WWTPs:
58% - Town/City/Village
25% - Fire District
17% - Other (MHP, etc.)



Total operators at these utilities	286	Of the total operators, 237 are fully certified or licensed in water, wastewater or both
Full time certified and/or licensed operators	173	Of these full time operators: 21% plan on retiring in the next 2 years and 35% plan on retiring in the next 5 years
96% of these operators currently have the ability to take online training courses via webinar		

Emergency Staffing Plan*?



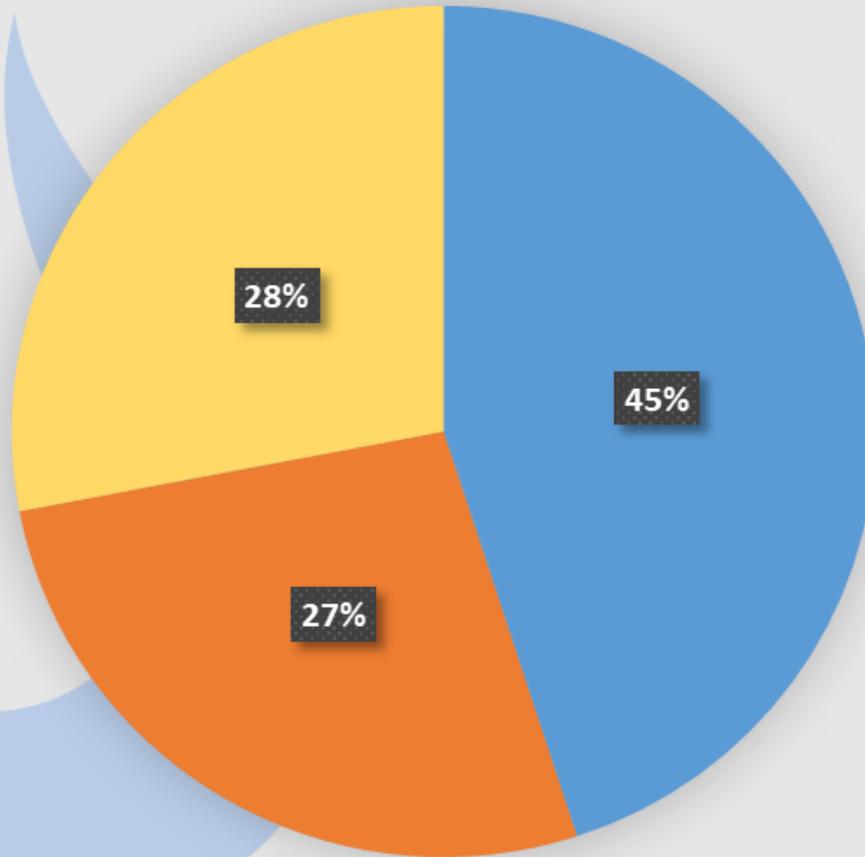
■ Yes

■ No

■ Working on it

*Plans varied from asking the neighboring system for help to splitting crews and cross training to comprehensive multi-page documents

Asset Management Plan?

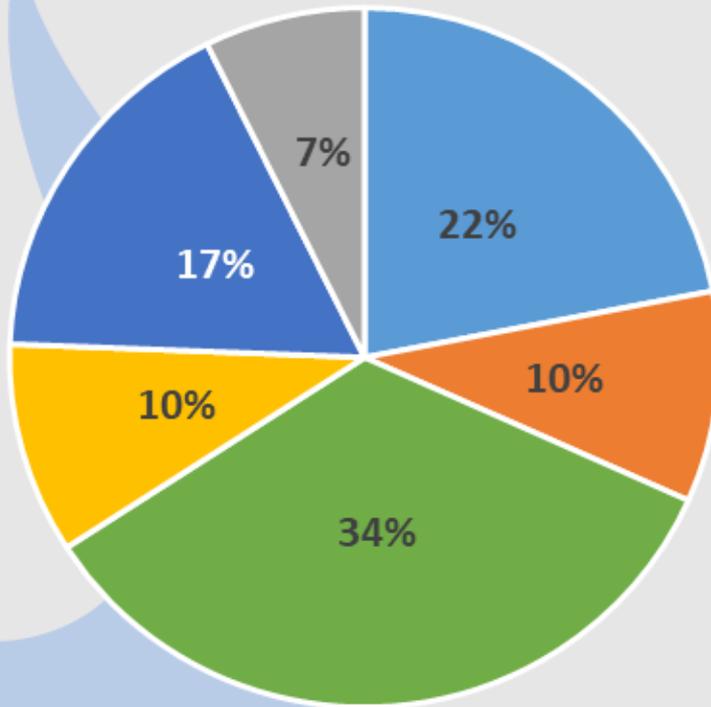


■ Yes

■ No

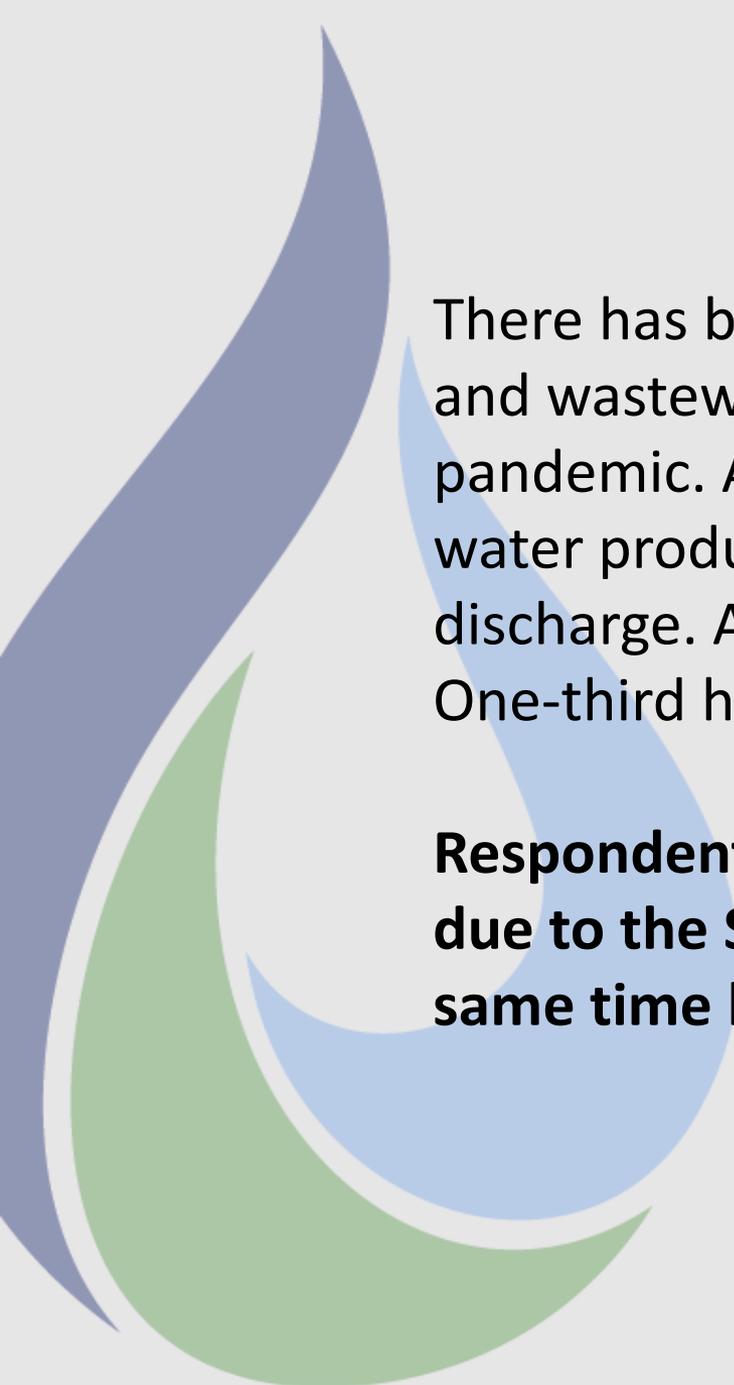
■ Working on it

Have you seen a change in water use or wastewater discharge compared to usual since the start of the pandemic?



- Moderate to Large Decrease
- Slight Decrease
- No Change
- Slight Increase
- Moderate to Large Increase
- Unknown

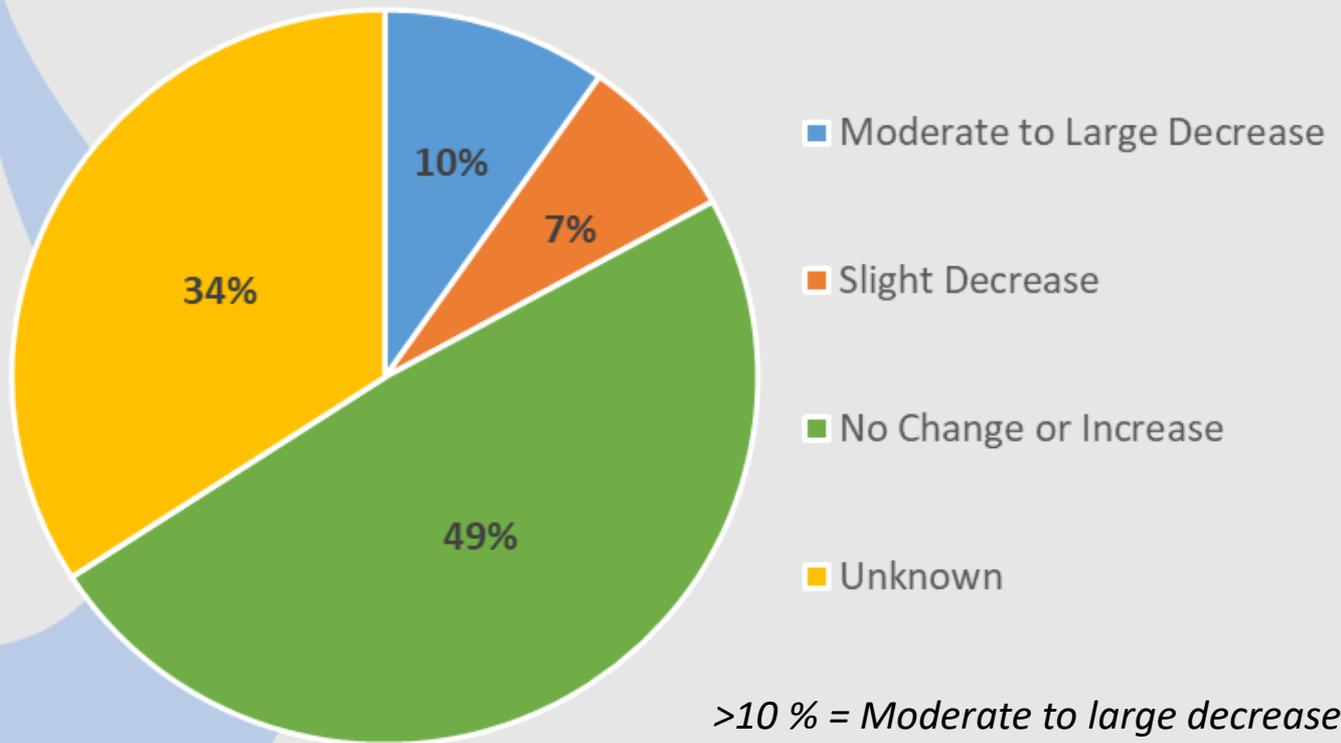
*>10 % = Moderate to large
<10% = Slight increase or decrease*



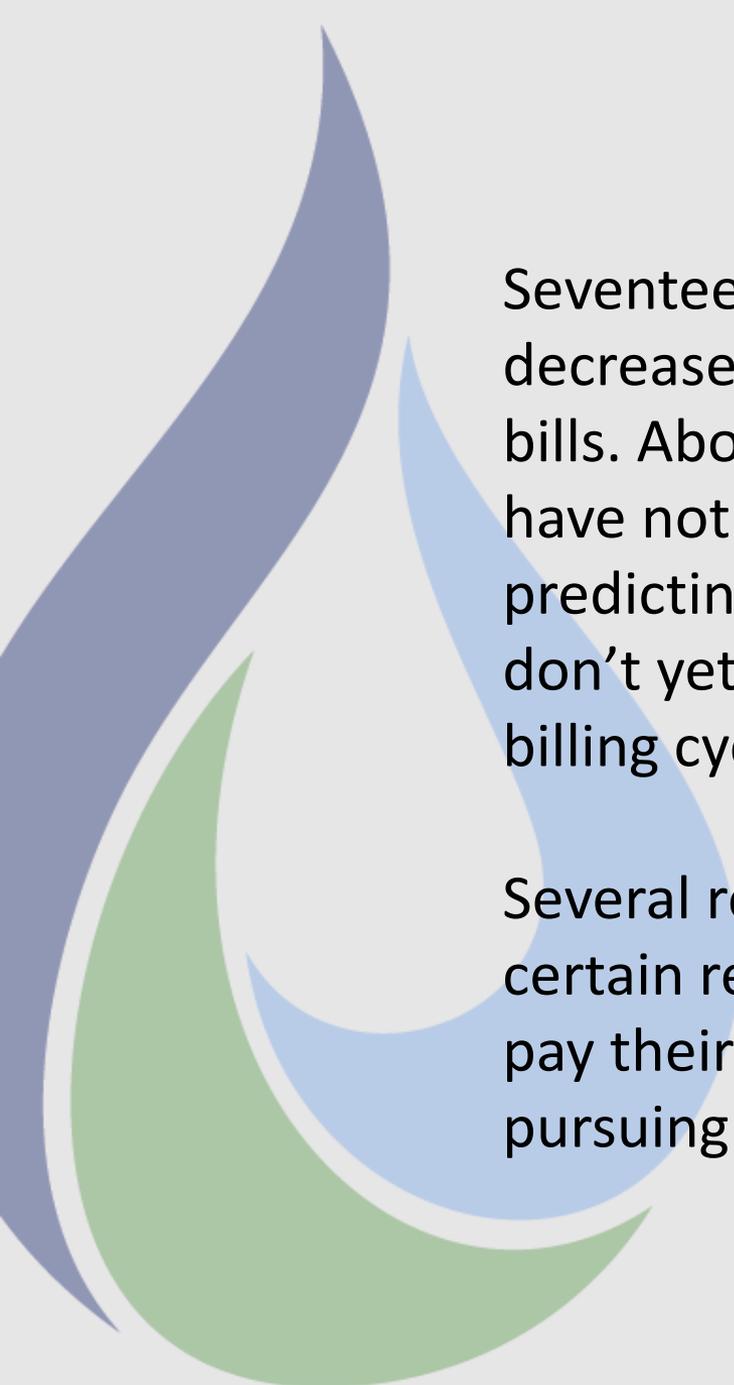
There has been a broad range of demand on water and wastewater utilities since the start of the pandemic. About one-third have seen a decrease in water production/ purchase or effluent (wastewater) discharge. About one-quarter have seen an increase. One-third have seen no change in demand.

Respondents noted that residential use increased due to the Stay Safe, Stay Home order, while at the same time business and school use decreased.

Have you seen a decrease in revenue due to customers not paying bills?



>10 % = Moderate to large decrease
<10% = Slight decrease

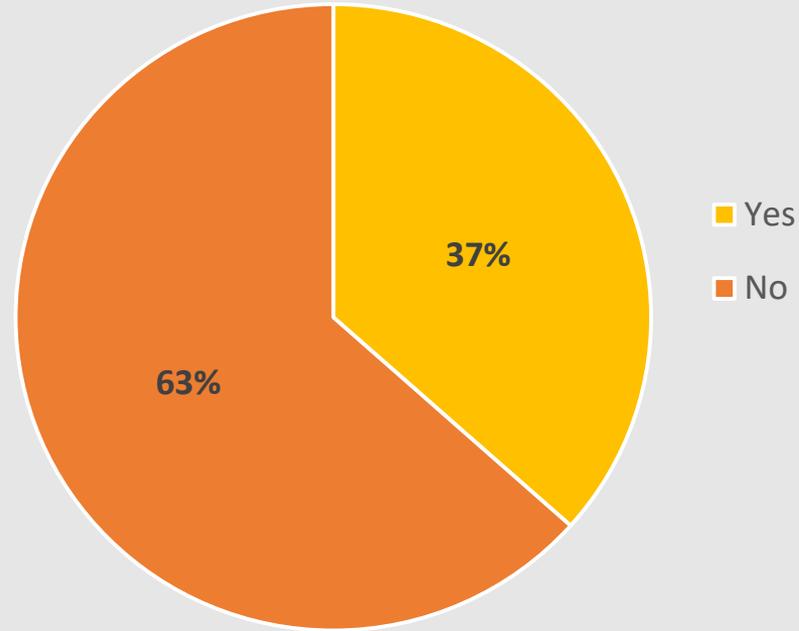


Seventeen percent of utilities are already seeing decreased revenue due to customers not paying bills. About half of water and wastewater utilities have not seen a decrease in revenue and are not predicting a budget shortfall this year. One-third don't yet know the financial impact because of billing cycles.

Several responders reported that they expect certain residents and businesses to be unable to pay their bills right now, and the utilities are not pursuing delinquencies as much as usual.



Is your utility planning any major construction projects this year?



Utilities reported cancelling or postponing projects due to budget concerns or moratoriums on non-essential work. This allows utilities to save money and protect worker safety this year but creates concerns for long-term maintenance of infrastructure.