



**MEMORANDUM**

**January 15, 2017**

**TO: CALIFORNIA WATER SERVICE**

**FROM: PAUL GOODWIN**  
**Goodwin Simon Strategic Research**

**RE: Key Findings from Oroville Voter Survey**

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A telephone survey recently conducted with Oroville voters shows strong opposition to a government takeover of the water system, especially when told this would require the use of eminent domain. Cal Water earns high favorable ratings among voters familiar with it, and its customers are very satisfied with the service it provides. Voters are alarmed by the potential cost in tax dollars and water rates of a takeover.

**Strong Opposition to a Local Government Takeover of the Water System**

|             |     |
|-------------|-----|
| All favor   | 29% |
| All oppose  | 52% |
| Str. favor  | 16% |
| SW favor    | 13% |
| SW oppose   | 20% |
| Str. oppose | 32% |
| Not sure    | 19% |

A telephone survey recently conducted with Oroville voters shows a majority of voters oppose making a *“local government agency responsible for providing water service to most homes and businesses in Oroville, instead of Cal Water.”* Not only does overall opposition outweigh support, but by two to one voters *“strongly”* oppose a takeover over *“strongly”* favoring it.

**Nearly Eight in Ten Voters Oppose Takeover of Cal Water Via Eminent Domain**

Opposition to a takeover of the water system from Cal Water reached 78% when voters were told that this would require local government to use eminent domain, with just 14% in favor. Nearly two thirds (63%) strongly opposes the takeover when told it would require the use of eminent domain.

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## **Cal Water Earns a Favorable Rating from Most Voters Familiar with It/Huge Majority of Cal Water Customers Satisfied with Its Water Services**

About 70% of Oroville voters are familiar enough with Cal Water to have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of it. Among those voters, Cal Water earns a solid 58% favorable rating. Further, 75% of the Oroville voters who live in its service area are satisfied with how Cal Water is delivering on its core responsibility of providing reliable water service to its customers.

## **Voters Are Very Concerned about the Cost of a Takeover**

Fully 88% said they would be concerned, including 62% who would be “very” concerned, to learn that the cost to Oroville taxpayers for a takeover would likely be in the tens of millions of dollars. Even more voters, 91%, would be concerned (66% very concerned) to learn that water rates would also have to increase to pay for the takeover.

### Methodology:

Goodwin Simon Strategic Research conducted a telephone survey with 301 registered voters in Oroville between January 8 and January 11, 2017. We conducted interviews using both land lines and wireless numbers. The margin of error is plus or minus 5.5% at a 95% confidence level.