



# MEMORANDUM

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD

*Rely on us.*

TO: Commissioners Barofsky, Schlossberg, Brown, Carlson, and Morris

FROM: Frank Lawson, General Manager; Jen Connors, Public Affairs & Communications Manager

DATE: February 21, 2025 (Board Meeting March 4, 2025)

SUBJECT: 2024 Residential Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

OBJECTIVE: Information

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## Issue

The 2024 customer survey provides valuable insights into how our customer-owners perceive EWEB's performance and priorities, as well as their awareness of and interest in utility programs and initiatives. This memo highlights key findings:

1. Related to EWEB's Mission and Vision, and
2. Within the framework of EWEB's Strategic Plan and Organizational Goals

## Background

EWEB regularly conducts customer surveys to measure satisfaction with services, gauge awareness of key issues, and assess interest in future offerings. The last residential survey was conducted in 2022, with results presented to the Board in September 2022 [[09.22Memo](#)].

EWEB again partnered with GreatBlue Research, Inc. for the 2024 survey, which was distributed via:

- Email invitations to 34,000 randomly selected residential customers
- Inclusion in EWEB's Current Connections e-newsletter (nearly 70,000 recipients)
- Social media promotion

With 1,292 responses at a 95% confidence level ( $\pm 2.7\%$  margin of error), this survey provides statistically significant insights. However, survey results offer a point-in-time snapshot of customer sentiment and should be considered alongside other engagement efforts. Although this survey was conducted digitally with residential customers, based on past results GreatBlue has indicated close correlation with telephone and small general service (commercial) surveys. Large general service (commercial and industrial) customers should be assessed separately.

## Discussion

Overall, EWEB’s ratings improved across the board, with nearly all characteristics receiving higher positive ratings in 2024 than in 2022.

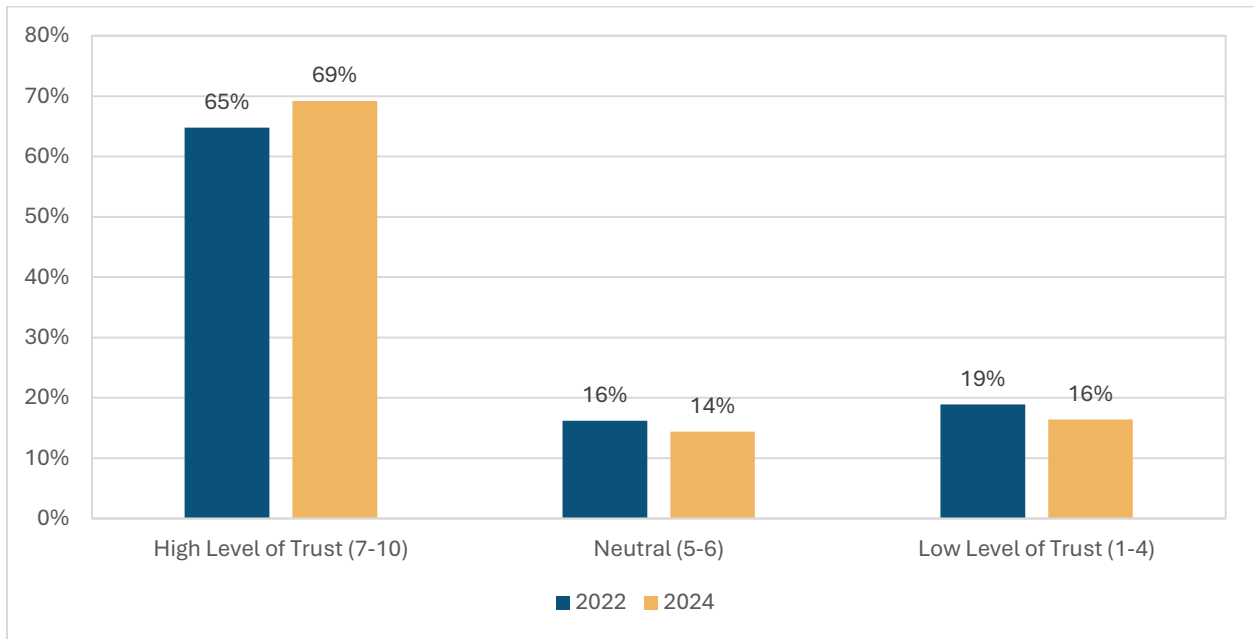
- Trust in EWEB has grown, and overall average satisfaction increased from 53% in 2022 to 65% in 2024, a 12-percentage point gain.
- Satisfaction with EWEB's core services received the highest average rating, with nearly 84% of respondents satisfied with water and electricity reliability and quality.
- Notably, the average rating for conservation, resiliency, and infrastructure characteristics increased by 21 percentage points from 2022 to 2024, primarily driven by a significant increase in positive ratings for EWEB's efforts to protect the local watershed.
- Survey responses indicate that customers largely support EWEB’s priorities and strategic direction but expect a strong focus on affordability and reliability.

*Table 1: Overall Satisfaction*

	2022	2024
Water service reliability	77%	88%
Drinking water quality	70%	84%
Electric service reliability and outage restoration	68%	79%
<b>Utility Service Average Rating</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>84%</b>
Communication and outreach with customers	55%	68%
Prompt response to customer questions and needs	61%	67%
<b>Communication Average Rating</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>67%</b>
Efforts to protect the local watershed (drinking water source)	49%	75%
Efforts to increase resiliency and emergency preparedness	44%	69%
Investments in infrastructure resiliency	-	62%
Efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change	43%	58%
<b>Conservation, Resiliency, and Infrastructure Average Rating</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>67%</b>
Programs that help customers reduce energy use	44%	55%
Programs that help customers reduce water use	39%	53%
Efforts to control prices and costs	38%	40%
<b>Programs and Cost Assistance Average Rating</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Overall Average Rating</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>65%</b>

*Customers were asked to rate their satisfaction with EWEB's performance on a scale of one (1) to ten (10) where ten is very satisfied and one is very unsatisfied. Ratings of 7-10 shown.*

Table 2: Trust in EWEB



Customers were asked to rate their overall level of trust and confidence in EWEB on a scale of one (1) to ten (10) where ten is very high trust and one is no trust.

⇒ **KEY TAKEAWAY: Customer trust and satisfaction have improved, suggesting growing public confidence in EWEB’s priorities and initiatives.**

- Nearly 70% of respondents now report high trust, up 4.4 percentage points from 2022.
- Satisfaction with communication and outreach is at 67%, an improvement of 12 percentage points, reflecting efforts to enhance awareness and understanding of utility programs and initiatives.
- Customer interest in partnering with EWEB is high:
  - 66% of respondents are willing to pay more on their water bill to fund McKenzie River and Willamette River watershed protection, with nearly one-third willing to pay \$1-4 more per month. However, this willingness decreases among lower-income customers, reflecting the financial constraints some may face.
  - 81% of respondents are interested in demand response programs, showing a willingness to adjust their energy usage to support grid stability and efficiency.
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⇒ **KEY TAKEAWAY: EWEB is delivering reliable service, but customers see room for improvement in outage prevention, response, and communication.**

- In forced ranking questions, respondents ranked reliability (electric and water) as their top priority.
- EWEB is delivering on this top priority for our customers:
  - Satisfaction with water service reliability: 88% (+11 points)
  - Satisfaction with drinking water quality: 84% (+14 points)
  - Satisfaction with electric service reliability and outage restoration: 79% (+11 points)

- However, when asked how EWEB can improve, 18% of respondents mentioned at least one of the following:
  - Infrastructure & Reliability
  - Outage Communication
  - Underground Lines

⇒ **KEY TAKEAWAY: *Affordability concerns remain a significant issue for customers.***

- Despite affordability being a high priority for customers—second only to reliability—only 40% of respondents are satisfied with EWEB’s efforts to control prices and costs, showing no significant improvement from 2022.
- When asked how EWEB can improve, 32% of respondents mentioned "Affordability Concerns & Rate Assistance."
- Awareness of EWEB’s bill assistance program is high at 70%.
- Satisfaction with EWEB’s efficiency programs increased, indicating growing recognition of their value.
  - Energy efficiency programs: 55% (+11 points)
  - Water efficiency programs: 53% (+14 points)

⇒ **KEY TAKEAWAY: *Future rate design changes should reflect customer concerns about costs.***

- Interest in Time-of-Use (TOU) rates declined by 13.4 percentage points, suggesting increased skepticism about the benefits of shifting usage.
- However, 79% of respondents are aware that when energy demand is high, purchased power may be more expensive and/or have a higher carbon footprint, suggesting a willingness to support future rate design or demand response efforts.
- While 81% support demand response programs, many prefer manual control, indicating a preference for flexibility over automation.
- Nearly 55% of respondents support the use of tiered rates, indicating interest in structures that encourage conservation.
- Support for a reduced rate for low-income customers is divided, with approximately 40% for and against.

⇒ **KEY TAKEAWAY: *Customers value EWEB’s environmental and climate actions but expect reliability and affordability to remain the primary focus.***

- Satisfaction with environmental initiatives is increasing:
  - Watershed protection: 75% (+26 points)
  - Efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions: 58% (+15 points)
- Despite customer support for environmental initiatives, participation in voluntary programs such as GreenOptions remains low.
  - Customers cite cost as a primary barrier to participation, indicating a preference for affordability over voluntary contributions to programs aimed at GHG reductions.
- Sustainability ranks lower than other priorities, suggesting that while customers support environmental efforts, they value dependable and cost-effective energy over additional investments in renewables.

- 66% of customers support increased water bills to fund watershed protection, showing stronger support for environmental efforts tied to core utility services.

⇒ **KEY TAKEAWAY: *Customer awareness of EWEB's emergency preparedness efforts is increasing.***

- Helping customers prepare for emergencies is a high priority for EWEB's role in the community, ranking above providing limited income assistance, addressing climate change, and providing support to schools.
- Satisfaction with EWEB's emergency preparedness efforts increased by 25 percentage points, reaching 69%.
- 66% of respondents are aware of emergency water stations, an increase of 14 percentage points since 2022.
- More than one-third of respondents (38%) are aware of plans to construct an earthquake-resilient water treatment plant on the Willamette River, even at this early stage of the project.

### **Next Steps**

Survey findings will undergo further analysis and data segmentation at the business unit level to inform planning, priorities, service/program improvements, and additional customer engagement opportunities. This deeper analysis will help guide work on organizational goals related to rate design (Goal #5) and customer program development (Goals #4 and #8). As staff continue to refine strategies based on customer feedback, future updates will provide more detailed insights to support ongoing efforts.

### **Recommendation/Requested Board Action**

No Board action is required. This memo is for informational purposes only.