



NEWS RELEASE

2024 Ecolab Watermark Study Reveals Water Concerns Shift Consumer Buying Behavior

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Second global study finds consumers in China, IMEA and Latin America have stopped purchasing products that use excessive amounts of water

ST. PAUL, Minn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Ecolab, a global sustainability leader offering water solutions and services, today announced findings from its second annual Watermark™ Study, which reports on the state of water stewardship around the world.

This year's research found that consumers remain very concerned about climate change and their immediate access to clean and safe water, and these concerns are translating to their buying habits. A majority of consumers across multiple regions state they have stopped purchasing products that use excessive amounts of water, most notably in China (80%), IMEA (69%) and Latin America (65%).

Consumers also claim they are willing to pay more for sustainably produced products, with a large majority across all regions willing to pay a 1-4% premium. This is most pronounced in China (93%), IMEA (86%) and Latin America (75%).

"No matter how you look at the data, sustainability is front of mind for consumers," says Christophe Beck, chairman and chief executive officer, Ecolab. "Businesses today find themselves between consumers who will stop buying their product and investors who insist on greater returns. Fortunately, prioritizing smart water management provides a way to satisfy both, delivering positive financial outcomes while also protecting this vital resource."

This year's study builds on **trends identified in 2023** and includes compelling new insights:



- Access to clean and safe water is still considered to be a paramount concern , and most regions are more concerned about their immediate access to clean and safe water than their access in the future. Those most concerned about water-related issues reside in Latin America (90%), China (88%) and the United States (80%).
- Consumers continue to hold businesses and governments most responsible for water conservation , but most still do not believe these parties care enough about this issue. This is particularly the case in the U.S., Europe, Asia Pacific and Latin America, where 42% to 51% of respondents believe these leaders care about water conservation.
- Consumers also hold certain industries more responsible for reducing water usage , with the agricultural, food & beverage, and manufacturing industries frequently cited for using the most water.
- Consumers are losing trust in businesses and governments to address the water crisis, as less than 50% of consumers in the U.S. and Europe believe businesses and governments care about water conservation.

The 2024 Ecolab Watermark Study also reports where consumers differ by region and other audience demographics. Population density was notably shown to correlate with consumers' level of concern about climate and water issues. In fact, consumers living in urban areas appear more concerned about climate change compared to their rural counterparts. This is most prominent for urban consumers in Asia Pacific (85%) and the U.S. (74%).

“While those in rural areas have long understood potential climate impacts, consumers in urban areas are showing a new awareness of these challenges,” said Emilio Tenuta, senior vice president and chief sustainability officer, Ecolab. “Whether it is a prolonged heatwave, strained infrastructure or unequal access to clean air and water, these concerns are now rising to the top for those living and working in major cities around the world.”

In addition to the study's findings from around the world, this year's U.S.-specific data reveals that:

- 73% of U.S. consumers believe that climate change is personally important to them, but less than 50% believe that business leaders and governments care.
- Concern about water persists among U.S. adults, with both access to (71%) and the availability of (80%) clean and safe water sparking significant concern for the future.
- U.S. consumers are willing to change their behavior to preserve water, with one-third (33%) refraining from buying products that overuse water, and more than two-thirds (71%) optimistic that water scarcity can be effectively addressed.

The second wave of the Ecolab Watermark Study was conducted in partnership with **Morning Consult** in early 2024 among a sample of general population adults and will continue to be conducted annually. To see the full global and country-specific results, please visit the interactive dashboard at watermark.ecolab.com .

About Ecolab:

A trusted partner for millions of customers, Ecolab (NYSE:ECL) is a global sustainability leader offering water, hygiene and infection prevention solutions and services that protect people and the resources vital to life. Building on a century of innovation, Ecolab has annual sales of \$15 billion, employs more than 46,000 associates and operates in more than 170 countries around the world. The company delivers comprehensive science-based solutions, data-driven insights and world-class service to advance food safety, maintain clean and safe environments, and optimize water and energy use. Ecolab's innovative solutions improve operational efficiencies and sustainability for customers in the food, healthcare, life sciences, hospitality and industrial markets.

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