



Summary & Highlights
**National Study of Consumers' Opinions &
Perceptions Regarding Water Quality**
2017 Edition

WQRF | **Water Quality
Research Foundation**

*Courtesy of the Water Quality Research Foundation
A not-for-profit organization*

How the survey was conducted: This report presents the findings from a national online survey conducted by Applied Research-West, Inc. (ARW) between January 20 and February 15, 2017. Over 1,700 adults living in private households were interviewed. ARW used a random sampling procedure and the survey results are accurate within +/-2.1 percent. The results are representative of U.S. adults over 18.

This is the sixth time the Water Quality Association (WQA) has commissioned a third-party conducted national consumer opinion study. The Water Quality Research Foundation (WQRF) further supported the 2017 Consumer Opinion Study to add additional questions that resulted in a deeper understanding of consumer awareness and perceptions. This effort will continue to improve the value of WQA's future studies.

The survey results suggest increasingly, point-of-use/point-of-entry water treatment may present a viable solution for communities with problematic water supplies. Only 1% of the water coming into our homes is used for drinking. By installing protection at or near the tap, consumers can protect the water most important to them

Knowledge of water softening and filtration

Observations: When it comes to softening vs. anti-scaling, consumers acknowledged they were unclear about the difference. Asked whether they knew the difference between softening and anti-scaling, 15 percent said they did, while 85 percent said they did not.

When ranking the factors that went into the consumer's decision to purchase/rent a water softener, 72% said better feeling skin/hair was important to very important, 73% said remove scale buildup in pipes and water heaters was important to very important, and 75% thought it was important to very important to extend the life of appliances that use water.

What it means: Consumers can benefit from more education to understand the differences between softening and anti-scaling. Water treatment professionals should be prepared to take the time to explain the differences and what treatment options would apply.

Meeting the MCLG

Observations: When asked how likely the respondent would be to purchase a product to deliver drinking water that could meet the maximum contaminant level goal (MCLG), 40 percent said they were likely or very likely. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the MCLG is "the maximum level of a contaminant in drinking water at which no known or anticipated adverse effect on the health of persons would occur."

What it means: When making purchasing decisions, consumers are prioritizing removal of contaminants and a general concern of well-being and health for their family. Most respondents said they would be willing to pay more for home water treatment systems to remove lead (63%), arsenic (60%), pharmaceuticals (57%), and other contaminants. The survey also revealed boil water alerts tend to trigger the purchase of water filtration systems. Close to half of respondents (41%) said they purchased a water filtration device after a "unsafe water for use" or "boil water alert" was issued in their area. Several of these respondents said they purchased a filtered water pitcher, refrigerator filter system, or reverse osmosis.

Water Quality Experts

Observations: The majority of consumers perceive the water quality experts in their

What it means: Consumers place a high value on professional education and certification. In fact, when asked what are considered important attributes of a salesperson, having a license or professional certification (63%), product knowledge (80%), and ability to answer questions (81%) were the top responses.

Other Major Findings

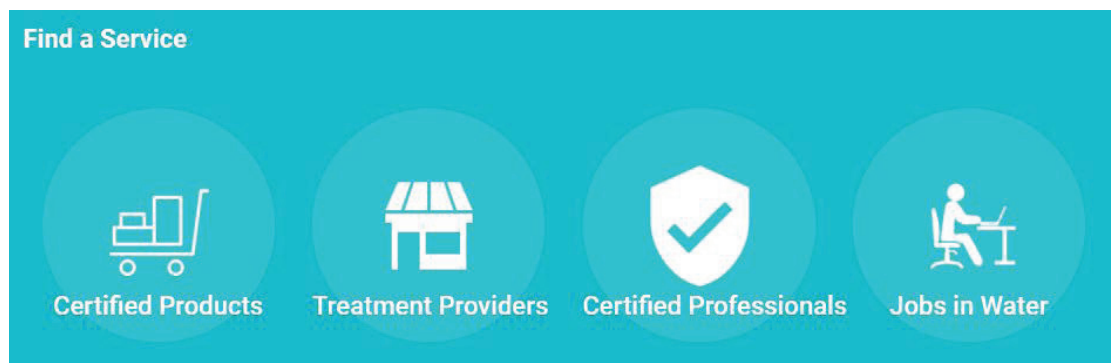
- When it comes to perceived water contaminants, the response for lead more than doubled since 2015
- The number of respondents who said they learned about health contaminants from the media rose from 27 percent in 2015, to 43 percent in 2017
- Over half (52%) of those surveyed perceived the federal laws governing drinking water quality are not strict enough
- A sizeable majority (75%) of those surveyed believe the primary responsibility for ensuring safe drinking water lies outside their home, with the municipality
- A majority (59%) of those who purchase a water softener tend to purchase it within one year of buying or leasing a home
- Ease of installation and continued maintenance were attributes of a water filtration system considered most important by consumers

Additional Resources

For more information go to: www.wqa.org

To find a water treatment provider go to: <http://www.wqa.org/find-providers>

To find a certified product go to: <https://www.wqa.org/find-products#/>



For more information contact:

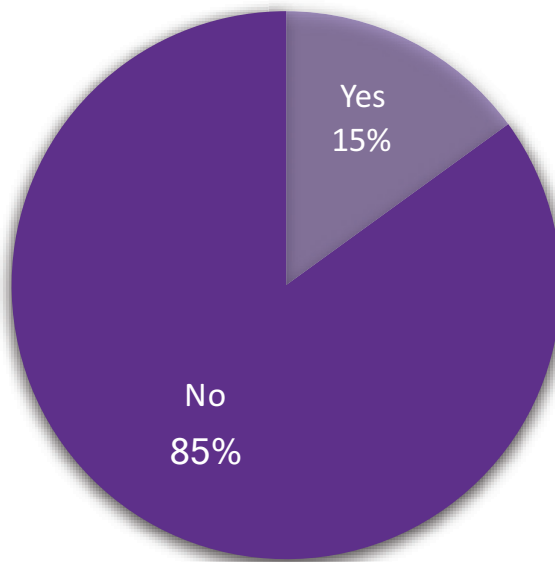
Phone: 630-505-0160

Fax: 630-505-9637

Website: www.wqa.org/wqrf or www.wqrf.org

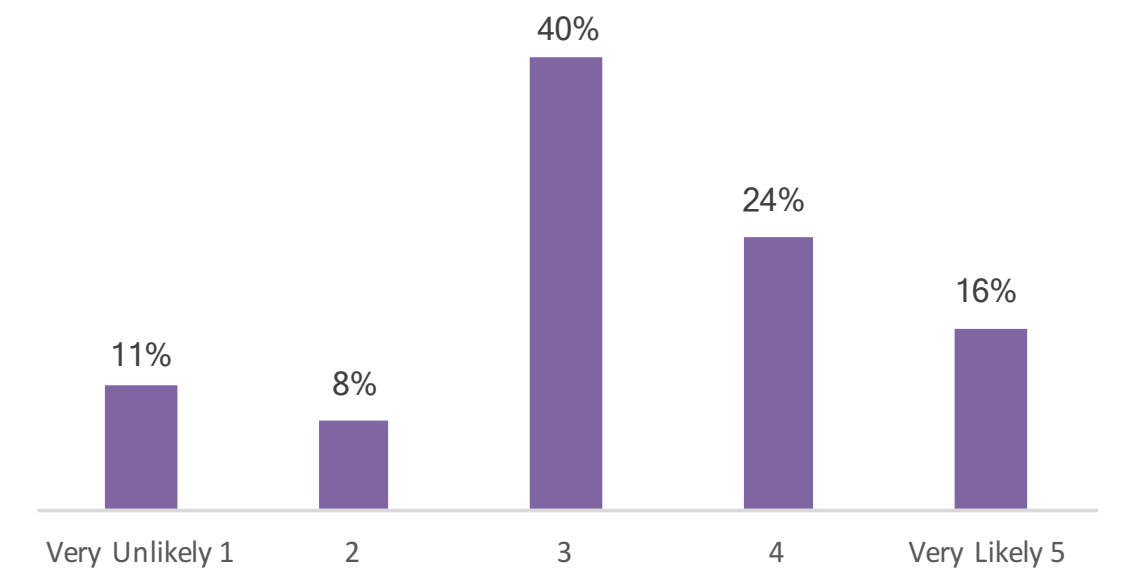
Email: foundation@wqrf.org

Softening vs. Anti-Scaling
(Do you know the difference between softening and anti-scaling?)

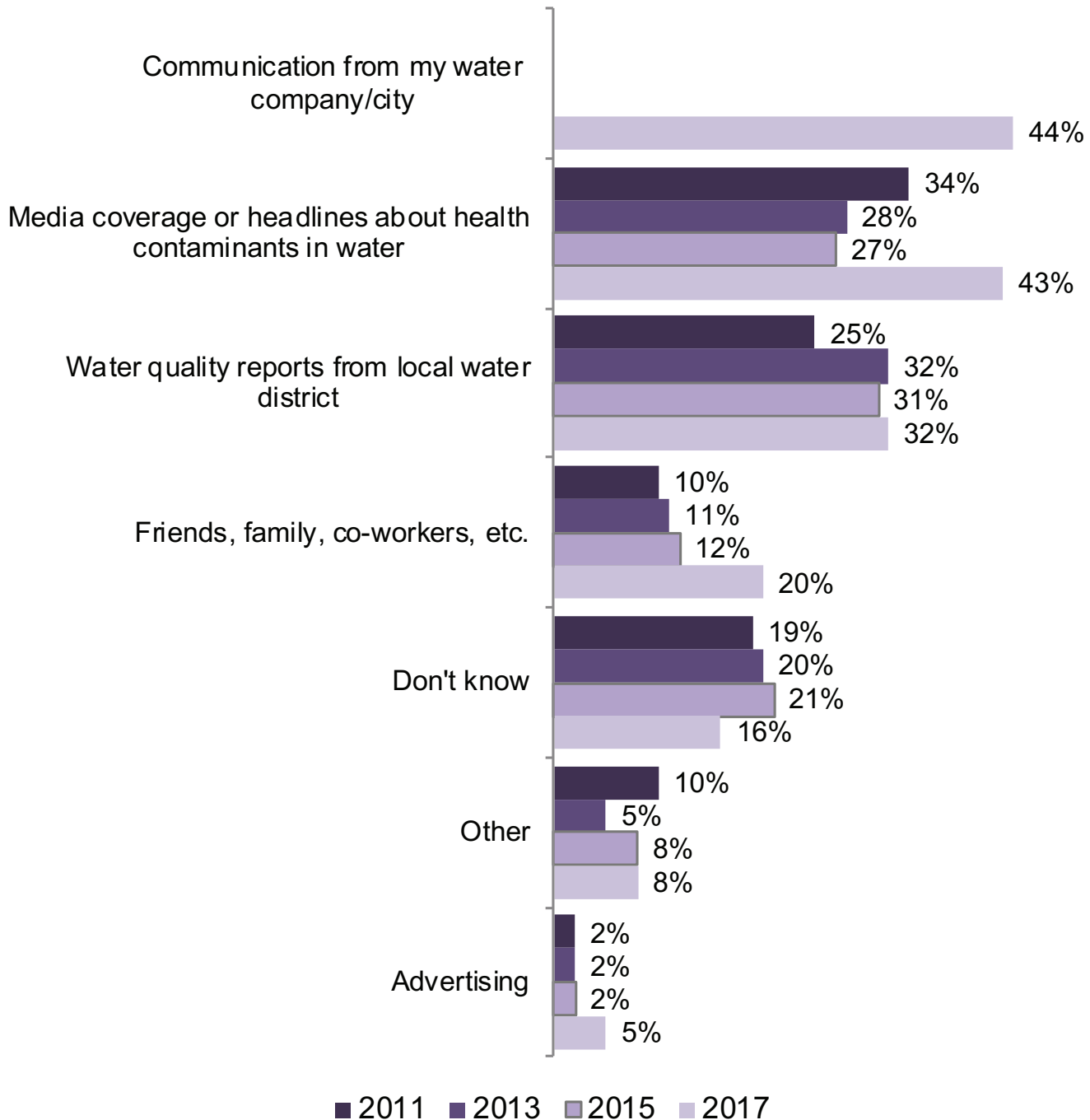


Likelihood of Purchasing Product that Meets MCLG Standard

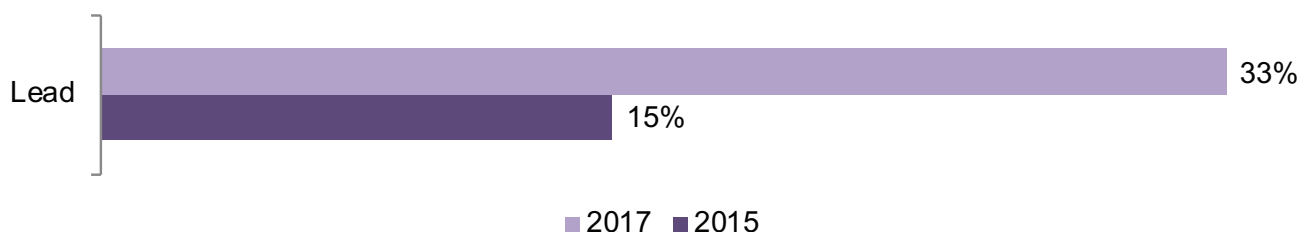
2017



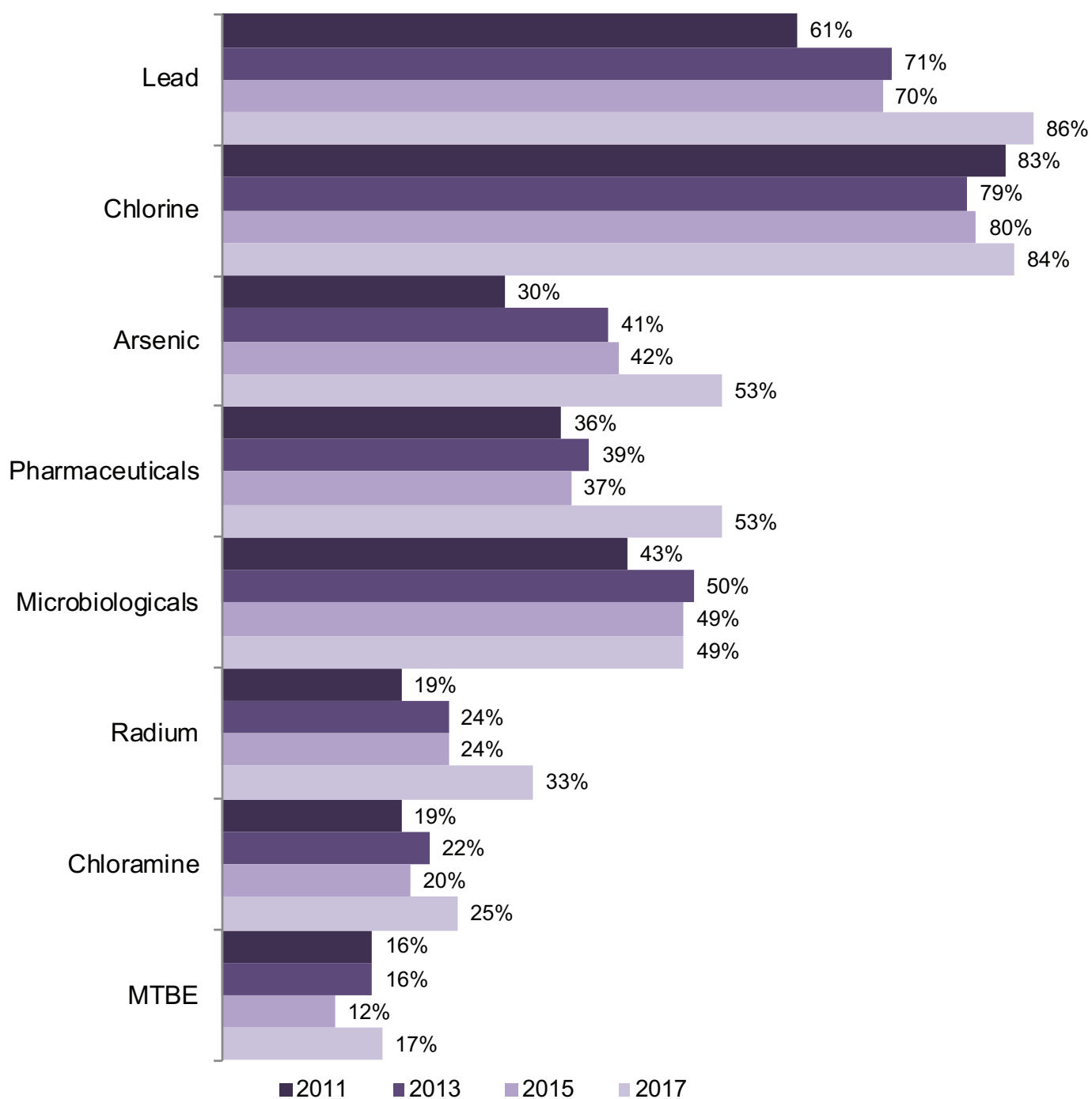
Sources of Information About the Quality of Water Supply



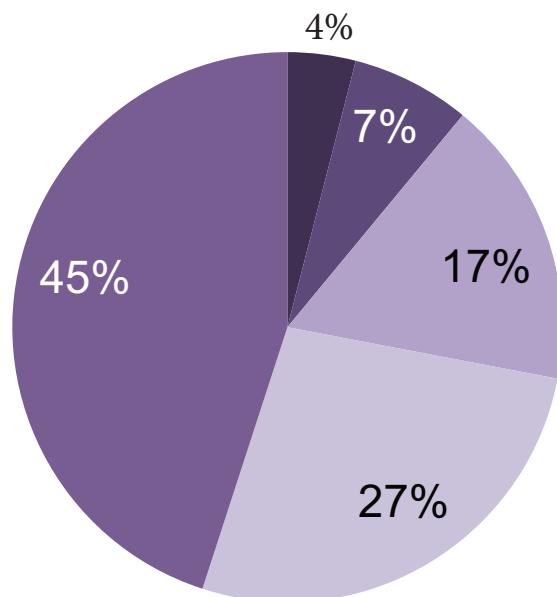
Perceived Tap Water Contaminants (What contaminants are in tap water? - Unaided)



Perceived Tap Water Contaminants (What contaminants are in tap water? - Aided)

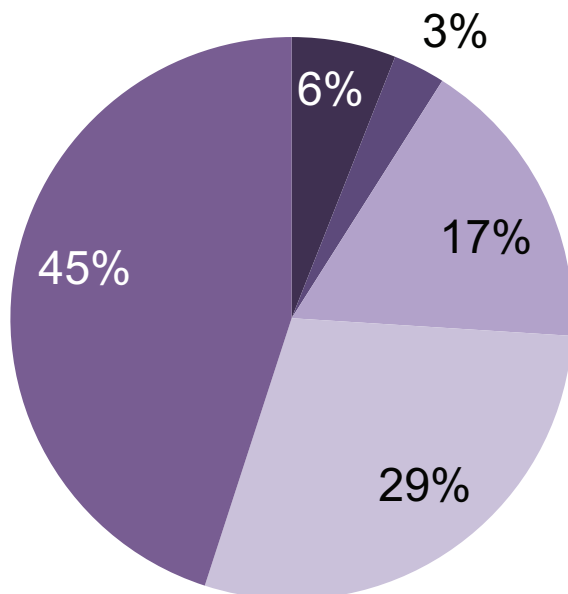


Importance of Better Feeling Skin/Hair when Purchasing a Water Softener



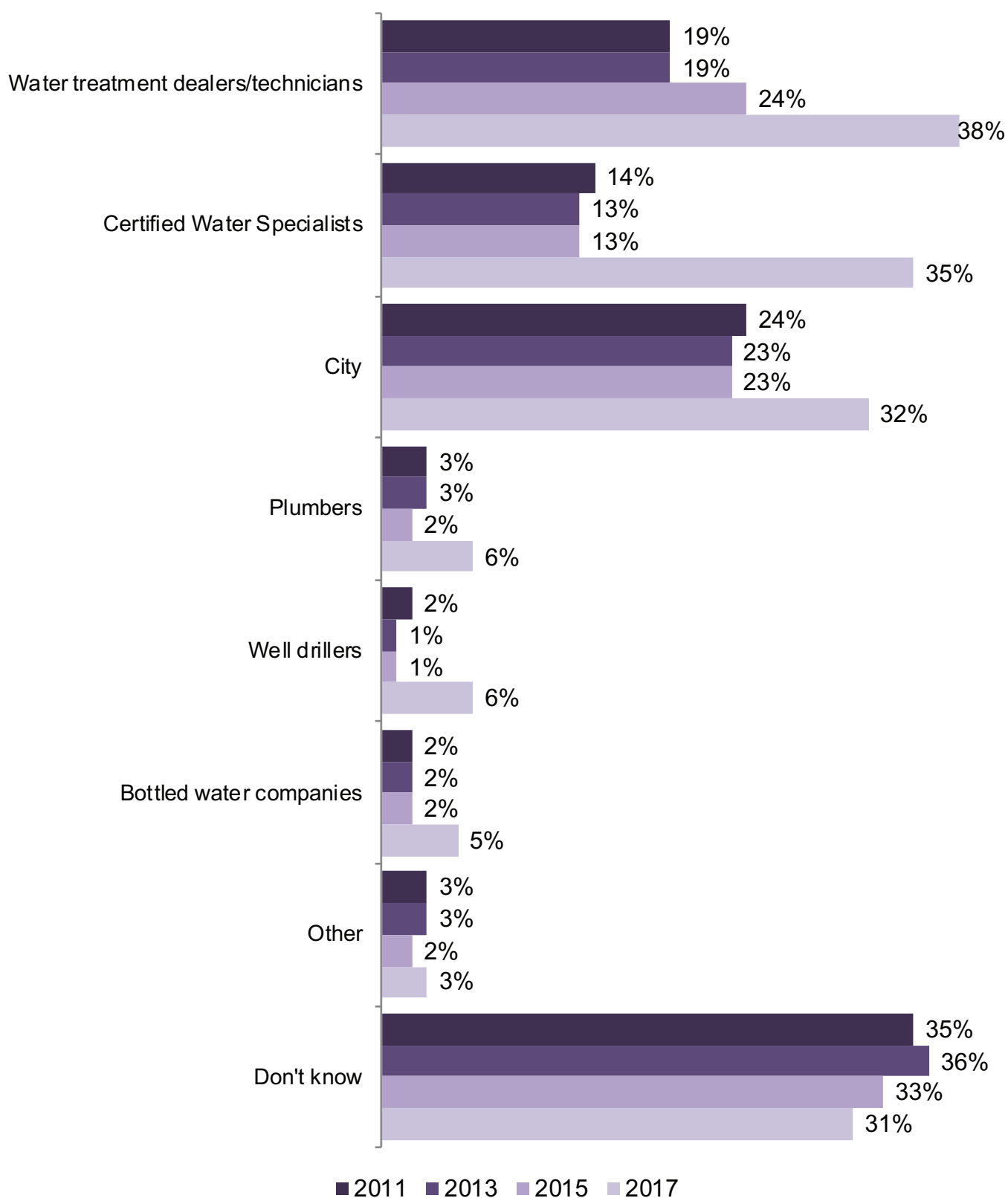
■ Not At All 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ Very Important 5

Importance of Concerns about Contaminants when Purchasing a Water Filtration System



■ Not At All 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ Very Important 5

Water Quality “Expert” in Your Area



More about The Water Quality Research Foundation

The Water Quality Research Foundation (WQRF), formerly the Water Quality Research Council (WQRC), was formed in 1949 to serve on behalf of the Water Quality Association (WQA) as a universally recognized, independent research organization. The long-term goal of WQRF is to achieve sustained growth to conduct and fund scientific research on subjects relating to the water quality improvement industry. To learn more visit www.wqa.org/wqrf



More about The Water Quality Association

WQA is a not-for-profit international trade organization representing the residential, commercial, and industrial water treatment industry. Its membership consists of both manufacturers and dealers/distributors of equipment. WQA is a resource and information source, a voice for the industry, an educator of professionals, a laboratory for product testing, and a communicator with the public. To learn more about WQA and its professional certification programs, visit wqa.org



*Published by the Water Quality Research Foundation
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