2026 State of the Water Industry: American Water Works Association Report

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The American Water Works Association ("AWWA") has issued a document titled:

2026 State of the Water Industry ("Report").

AWWA describes the Report as providing:

… key insights into the priorities for water utilities and challenges they currently face.

The Report is the latest of an annual report that has been conducted yearly since 2004. Further, it is stated to be based on a voluntary, anonymous survey of water professionals.

A survey was undertaken from Sept. 21 to Oct. 31, 2025, in which 2,171 water professionals participated. Two-thirds of respondents work in water utilities.

The respondents were asked to rank the current health of the water industry. The result was an average of 4.72 on a scale of 1 to 7. This is noted to have "remained largely consistent over the 23-year history of the survey." However, when asked about what the state of the industry will look like five years from now, respondents express slightly less certainty with an average rating of 4.53.

The Report breaks down respondents in categories such as:

- Utility Respondents by Number of Connections.
- Respondents' Tenure in the Water Sector.
- Utility Respondents by Job Category.

A sampling of topics addressed by the Report include:

- Aging Infrastructure Meets Tighter Capital.
- Controlling the Uncontrollable: Tariffs, Supply Chains, and Natural Hazards.
- Digital Risk and Cautious Innovation.
- Water Availability and Climate Resiliency Plans Lag Behind Risk.
- A Workforce Adept at Old Pipes and New Technology.
- Public Trust Is an Operational Requirement.
- Strength Under Duress.

AWWA describes itself as an organization of water supply professionals in the world whose membership includes more than 4,300 utilities that supply roughly 80% of North America's drinking water and treat almost half of North Amierica's wastewater.

A copy of the Executive Summary of the Report can be found here.