



***Post-Election Polling shows that American Voters  
Strongly Support Proactive Environmental Policies***  
**Voters prefer elected officials and federal nominees with strong environmental  
commitment; view clean air, water as top-tier concerns**

Bipartisan polling conducted immediately following the 2000 election demonstrates an overwhelming national attitude in support of widespread environmental protection. Republicans, Democrats and Independents support stronger, better enforced environmental and public health protections. American voters rate clean air and water as a top-tier concern, second only to education and health care. In addition, voters expect elected officials and political appointees to work to protect clean air, safe water and other important environmental issues.

The bipartisan poll was commissioned by the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund following the 2000 election, November 12-19, 2000. Greenberg-Quinlan Research, Inc., a Democratic polling firm, and The Tarrance Group, Inc., a Republican polling firm, conducted a telephone survey of 1,200 registered voters, 1,092 of whom actually voted on Election Day. The margin of error for a random sample of this type is +/-2.8% in 95 out of 100 cases.

**Clean air and water rank as top-tier concerns among voters.** Clean air and water (69 percent) rank in the top three concerns of issues tested, just behind education (76 percent) and health care (75 percent); and higher than several other high profile political issues like taxes (60 percent) and Social Security/Medicare (67 percent).

*“I am going to read you a short list of issues. For each one, please tell me how concerned you are about the issue on a scale of zero to ten, in which ten means you are extremely concerned about the issue, five means you are somewhat concerned and zero means you are not at all concerned.”*

**Mean Ranked 8-10**

|                              |     |     |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Education                    | 8.5 | 76% |
| Health care                  | 8.5 | 75% |
| Clean air and water          | 8.2 | 69% |
| Medicare and Social Security | 8.1 | 67% |
| Crime and drugs              | 8.0 | 64% |
| The environment              | 7.9 | 63% |
| Prescription drugs           | 7.8 | 62% |
| Taxes                        | 7.7 | 60% |



**Environmental issues, especially clean air and water, were central to Americans' vote decisions in November.** Fully 71 percent of voters said that issues involving clean air, clean water and open space were either the primary consideration or one of several factors when making their voting decisions.

**By a five-to-one margin, voters prefer candidates who support strong environmental laws over those who advocate reduced regulation on business.** When asked about two generic candidates, Candidate A who believes we must protect the environment and supports strong laws and enforcement of those laws, or Candidate B who believes there are too many government regulations and supports efforts to relieve the burden of regulation on business, voters overwhelmingly chose Candidate A, 73 percent to 14 percent over Candidate B.

**Environmental concerns were important to voters' decisions in the Presidential race.** The environment emerged as the strongest issue upon which voters based their support for Al Gore, with 14 percent of Gore voters citing the environment as the most persuasive reason in an open-ended question. Gore's stand on the environment (14 percent) led Social Security (11 percent), economy (ten percent), education (nine percent) and health care (seven percent) as the reason cited by voters for choosing Gore. In contrast, Bush voters identified moral/character issues (27 percent) as the most prominent single reason to support Bush, while nearly two-thirds (59 percent) supported him because of his stance on issues as a whole.

**Fully 82 percent of voters believe Cabinet appointees should be committed to protecting the environment.** When asked if the people nominated by the President to serve in the Cabinet should be primarily committed to protecting the environment, be primarily committed to reducing government regulations, or be committed to both, more than one-third (36 percent) said Cabinet appointees should be primarily concerned with protecting the environment. Additionally, almost half (46 percent) of all respondents said that Cabinet appointees should be committed to both environmental protections and reduction of regulations.



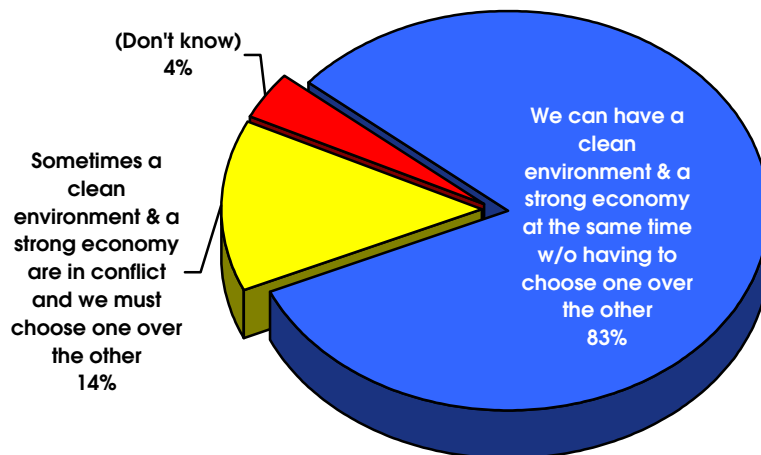
**Voters strongly believe that we can protect the environment and have a strong economy at the same time.** Environmental opponents routinely pit economic arguments and pro-business concerns against environmental protection, but this line of thinking has little credibility with voters. Eighty-three percent (83%) of voters reject the argument that there must be a tradeoff between the environment and the economy.

*Which statement comes closest to your own views?*

*“We can have a clean environment and a strong economy at the same time without having to choose one over the other.*

*(or)*

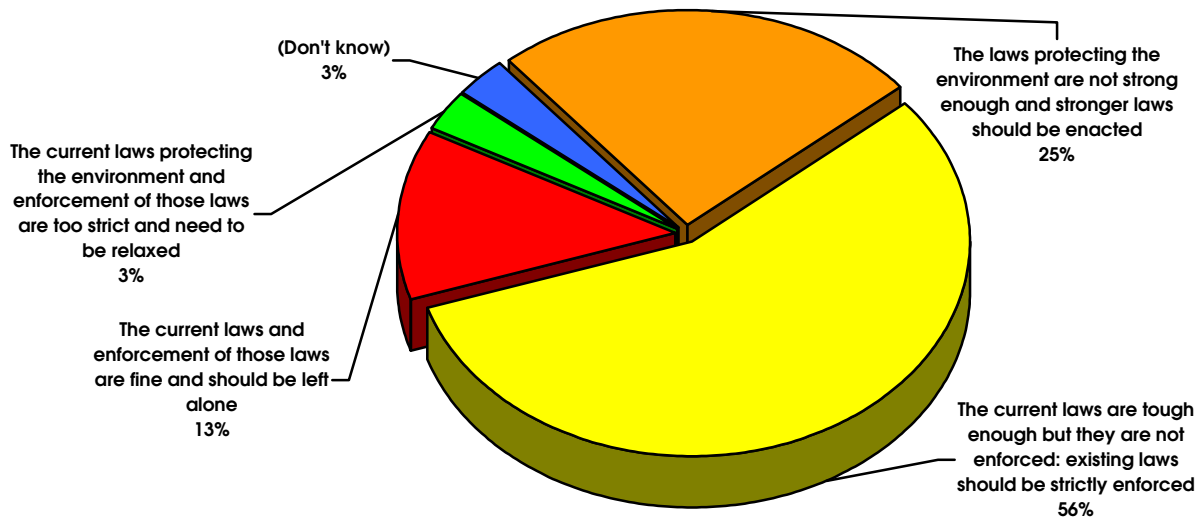
*Sometimes a clean environment and a strong economy are in conflict and we must choose one over the other.”*





**Eighty-one percent (81%) of voters believe that tougher enforcement of environmental laws or stronger environmental laws are needed.** Fifty-six percent (56%) of respondents believe that the current laws protecting the environment are tough enough but they are not enforced – existing laws should be strictly enforced. Only three percent of poll respondents indicate an interest in weakening current environmental laws. Voters do not support rollback of environmental laws, opting instead for the government to play a stronger role in promoting public health and environmental protections.

*“Now let me read you four statements about the environment and please tell me which comes closest to your own view?”*



By a two-to-one margin, voters choose strong government enforcement of environmental laws (62 percent) over the alternative of government working with business by using flexible regulations and economic incentives (31 percent).

*Government should strongly enforce environmental laws and require industry and businesses to follow those laws. .... 62*

*Government should work with industry and business to meet environmental goals using flexible regulations and economic incentives. .... 31*



**An overwhelming majority of respondents support stronger environmental laws on a range of specific environmental issues** – clean water (80 percent), fuel efficiency standards (69 percent), power plant standards (72 percent), and roadless policy (59 percent). Critical environmental issues, including protecting clean air and water, drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and roadless forest policy, will be the subject of much debate in the new Congress and in the new administration. By substantial margins, voters support the environmental position on these issues.

**Nearly two-thirds of voters (66 percent) want to preserve the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as a national monument and ban oil drilling in the protected land.** The desire to protect public land extends to the Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which is currently being considered for oil drilling. A resounding majority, 66 percent, want to preserve the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as a national monument and ban oil drilling, while just 25 percent favor opening it up for drilling and oppose monument designation. It is important to note that the case made for drilling was based on economic growth, lower gas prices and a diminished reliance on foreign oil – and voters still rejected it overwhelmingly.

**Voters support Roadless Forest Policies in places like the Tongass by a two-to-one margin.** When presented as a clear choice to either ban all logging and road building in roadless forests like the Tongass Rainforest or to allow road construction and logging to protect jobs, voters favor the ban by a 59 to 30 percent margin.

**Voters favor government protection of national parks and public lands over opening them for development.** By a margin of 72 percent to 21 percent, voters want government to continue its control of parks when contrasted with the alternative of giving up control and selling some public lands to be used for economic development.

**Eighty percent (80%) of voters support strengthening the Clean Water Act.** When faced with the choice of a stronger Clean Water Act that makes companies responsible for the runoff into waterways, or maintaining the current law and encouraging business to reduce pollution, an overwhelming 80 percent favor strengthening the Act. Respondents simply reject the notion of compromise on this issue and look for tough action to make polluters responsible.

**Over two-thirds of voters support raising fuel efficiency standards.** At a time when gas prices are on the rise, highways have become more congested, and air pollution seems more prevalent, respondents overwhelmingly support raising fuel efficiency standards to help cut pollution. As we have seen consistently, voters reject the trade off that they must choose between the environment and a strong economy. When respondents had to choose between raising fuel efficiency standards to cut pollution (69 percent) and the chance that raising standards will increase manufacturing costs and cost jobs (20 percent), they overwhelmingly reject the economic argument and opt to cut pollution.