



League of Conservation Voters Education Fund

Embargoed Until

February 28, 2000

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Georgia Voters Rate Clean Water and Air A Top Priority

Georgia voters rate environmental issues a top priority for elected leaders, and environmental actions figure strongly in voting decisions, says a new poll released today.

The Beth Schapiro & Associates poll of six hundred registered voters who are likely to vote in the November 2000 election indicates a strong commitment to environmental protection by voters in all parts of the state and across party lines. The poll was conducted January 12-19, 2000 for the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund.

“Georgia voters understand the inherent connection between a healthy environment and a strong economy. Almost three-quarters of voters, seventy-three percent, believe we can have a clean environment and strong economy simultaneously. The high quality of life most Georgians cherish hinges on the healthy balance between our natural resources and economic growth,” said Terrilyn Bayne, Georgia Director for the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund.

Three quarters of likely voters support a proposal requiring the preservation of a percentage of undeveloped land

- Three out of four voters (75%) strongly or somewhat support a proposal “requiring Georgia counties to preserve a certain percentage of their undeveloped land.” Forty-five percent strongly supported the proposal, while only nine percent strongly opposed the proposal.

Clean water, clean air and land use concern a strong majority of voters

- Nine out of ten voters (89%) are concerned about water quality in their area. Voters are most concerned about pollution of rivers, lakes and streams, and pollution of the drinking water supply.
- Nearly nine out of ten voters (86%) are concerned about air quality in their area. Voters believe that automobiles are the number one source of air pollution, with coal-burning power plants second.
- Nearly nine out of ten voters (85%) are concerned about growth and sprawl in their area. Sixty percent of voters believe that local government should have primary responsibility for managing sprawl and growth issues.

Overwhelmingly, voters are persuaded by arguments to strengthen environmental laws for the benefit of Georgia's children

- Nine out of ten voters (93%) found the following argument for strengthened environmental laws very or somewhat convincing: "Our children and grandchildren deserve a future with the same scenic beauty and diversity of wildlife that we enjoy today. We owe it to them to be good stewards of our environment." Seventy-four percent found the argument very convincing.
- Eighty-six percent of voters found children's health a very or somewhat convincing argument: "Some scientists have attributed the recent increases in the rates of asthma and other respiratory diseases among children to pollutants in our air. We need stronger air quality laws to ensure that our children live in a healthy environment and breathe clean air." Fifty-nine percent of voters found the argument very convincing.
- Air and water pollution were convincing arguments for strengthening environmental laws (79%): "Over-development is causing air and water pollution that threatens our environment. We need stronger environmental laws to prevent further damage to our natural resources."

A strong majority of voters say environmental issues are important to them when deciding for whom to vote

- Nearly nine out of ten (89%) likely voters say clean water, air and open space issues are very or somewhat important to them when deciding how to vote. One-half say these issues are "a primary factor in deciding how to vote." (This question was asked of one half the sample, 300 voters.)

Voters prefer a "pro-environment" candidate over a "fewer government regulations" candidate by a significant margin

- Likely voters favor Candidate A who believes "we must protect the environment and supports strong laws and enforcement of those laws" over Candidate B who "believes there are too many government regulations, and supports efforts to relieve the burden of regulation on business" by a 47 point margin (71% to 24%). (This question was asked of one half the sample, 300 voters.)
- That margin increases to 58 points (74% to 16%) when voters are given the additional information that "Candidate A has taken campaign contributions from environmental groups" and "Candidate B has also taken campaign contributions from developers and corporations that are known polluters." (This question was asked of one half the sample, 300 voters.)

For more findings and downloadable graphics of the poll, please visit:

<http://www.bethschapiro.com/release/LCV022500.htm>

METHODOLOGY

This memo is based on the findings of a telephone survey conducted January 12-19, 2000. Six hundred (600) registered voters who are likely to vote in the November 2000 general election in the state of Georgia were selected at random and interviewed by professional telephone interviewers. The margin of error for the overall survey results is +/- 4 percent at the 95 % confidence interval.