



League of Conservation Voters Education Fund

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“Vote Environment” advertising in Minnesota designed to make environment a top-tier issue in 2000 elections

With release of ads and public opinion research, conservation group dedicates almost \$690,000 to raise environmental issues with Minnesota candidates and voters

ST. PAUL – Based on polling analysis released today, conservationists predict Minnesota voters will make the environment a top-tier voting issue in the 2000 elections. To help make that claim a reality, the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (LCVEF) launched a \$690,000 “Vote Environment” advertising program in the Twin Cities media market. The Minnesota effort is part of a \$7.4 million national advertising, polling and grassroots public education effort designed to encourage candidates running for all levels of public office to address environmental issues and to urge voters to find out where the candidates stand on such issues.

The ads highlight threats from polluted air and water and inform viewers that “Who We Elect Matters,” urging them to “Vote Environment.” The ads begin airing today on KARE, KMSP, KSTP, and WCCO television stations and are also airing nationally on select cable stations. Similar advertising efforts have been launched in Washington, D.C., Austin, Texas, Nashville, Tenn., Atlanta, Ga., Columbus, Ohio and Lansing, Mich.

“Throughout the country, voters are paying more attention to issues that directly affect the quality of their lives, from the safety of the water they drink and the quality of the air they breathe, to suburban sprawl that is eating away at green space and increasing traffic congestion,” said Lisa Wade Raasch, LCVEF communication director. “This is the year in which the environment will emerge as a critical election issue that candidates seeking all levels of elective office will be well-served to address.”

The “Vote Environment” advertising launch coincides with the release of a statewide poll indicating that Minnesota voters are as concerned about clean air and water as they are about education and crime and drugs. The poll reports that clean air and water outpace health care, Medicare and Social Security, and taxes as concerns for voters. More than 60 percent (44 percent strongly) of voters say they would be more likely to support a candidate for public office who will work to protect the environment and who supports strong laws and enforcement of those laws.

“The poll released today shows that Minnesota voters are deeply concerned about clean air and clean water and they are willing to back that concern up with their vote,” said Lisa Doerr, LCVEF Minnesota State Director. “The ‘Vote Environment’ campaign will inform and educate voters about the connection between environmental concerns like clean air and water and voting – candidates running for state house to White House should take notice.”

(more)

Poll findings confirm that clean air and water are top-tier voting issues and that Minnesota voters strongly support environmental issues and prefer candidates who share that view. Following is a summary of findings from the statewide survey conducted March 14 - 16, 2000.

1. Minnesota voters rated clean air and water as a top-tier concern, following only education and crime, and ranking higher than taxes and health care. Thirty-three percent said clean air and water was extremely important and 27 percent felt they were very important.
2. When asked how important issues involving clean water, clean air and open space are in making a voting decision – 87 percent of voters said those issues were important (36 percent “very important” and 51 percent “somewhat important”).
3. Seventy-nine percent of Minnesota voters said there is simply no tradeoff between a strong economy and protecting the environment. In fact, voters across the state feel the biggest draw for business to move to Minnesota is the environment itself.
4. Seventy-five percent of state voters would favor increasing funding to state parks. This coincides with the fact that 29 percent of Minnesota voters chose the scenic beauty as one of the best reasons to live in Minnesota—far higher than any other reason.
5. Seventy percent of Minnesota voters would like to see the state surplus used to build alternative means of transportation. Only 21 percent called for building more roads as a way to relieve traffic congestion in the state. Seventy-three percent (41 percent strongly) of Minnesota voters would support using at least some of the funds in the state surplus to support alternative forms of transportation
6. Minnesota voters overwhelmingly favor candidates who support the environment. When given a choice between two candidates, Candidate A who believes we must protect the environment and supports strong laws and enforcement of those laws and Candidate B who believes there are too many government regulations and supports efforts to relieve the burden of regulation on business, Minnesota voters choose Candidate A, 60 percent to 28 percent, over Candidate B.
7. When asked what conservation or environmental concerns voters worry about most, 29 percent reported water quality as their greatest worry, 11 percent mentioned sprawl or over development and another 11 percent mentioned polluting companies.

LCVEF commissioned The Tarrance Group, Inc. of Alexandria, Va. to conduct the telephone survey of 500 registered Minnesota voters who are likely to vote in the 2000 election. A random sample of this type is likely to yield a margin of error of +/- 4.5 percent in 95 out of 100 cases.

The League of Conservation Voters Education Fund is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to raising awareness about environmental issues, increasing the capacity and effectiveness of state and local environmental groups, and encouraging citizens to participate in the democratic process. For more information, visit www.VoteEnvironment.org.