



## **League of Conservation Voters Education Fund**

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### **Clean water and a healthy environment are top concerns for Oregon Voters and part of how they make their voting decisions.**

Oregon voters rate environmental issues, especially clean air and clean water, as a top priority for elected leaders, and environmental actions figure strongly in voting decisions, says a poll released today.

The LGD Insight poll of five hundred likely November 2000 voters indicates a strong commitment to environmental protection by voters in all parts of the state and across party lines. The poll was taken from September 30 through October 3, 1999, with a + or - 4.4% margin of error. The research was conducted on behalf of the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund.

"It is clear that environmental issues matter to Oregonians when they are making a voting decision," said Teresa Purcell, Northwest Regional Director, League of Conservation Voters Education Fund. "Oregon voters are deeply concerned about clean water and clean air, and they believe that we do not have to choose between a clean environment and a healthy economy. These issues cross age, gender, and party lines," Purcell continued.

"The fact that nearly nine out of ten voters consider the environment an important issue when making a voting decision is critical for elected officials to understand as they make decisions that impact environmental issues," said Jonathan Poisner, Executive Director, Oregon League of Conservation Voters Education Fund.

Some of the results of the poll:

#### **Environment and Voting**

- 40% of voters say environmental issues are a primary concern
- 47% of voters say it is one of several issues they weigh at the ballot box.
- Combined, an overwhelming majority of voters (88%) across all subgroups, Democrats (96%), Independents (89%) and Republicans (78%), said environmental and conservation issues were somewhat important when making a voting choice.

### Environment and Economy

- 70% of Oregon voters believe that we can have a clean environment and a healthy economy at the same time, without having to choose one over the other. This is true with 68% of Republicans, 71% of Democrats and 73% of Independents.

### Environment Versus Other Issues

- Education 8.18
- Crime 8.07
- Clean air and water 7.75
- Medicare and Social Security 7.45
- Taxes 7.17
- Woman's Right to Choose 6.63
- Sprawl and over development 6.49

### Importance of Clean Air and Water by Party/Gender/Age

- Democrats 8.0
- Independents 8.1
- Republicans 7.3
- Women 7.9
- Men 7.6
- Under 50 7.8
- Over 50 7.7

### Open-Ended Question: What is Your Top Environmental Concern?

- Water Quality 26%
- Excessive Logging 15%
- Air Quality 10%
- Sprawl and uncontrolled growth 8%
- Traffic Congestion 6%
- Other 35%

Across age, gender, and party lines, water quality was the top environmental concern, although it was slightly higher for Democrats (30%) and Women (29%) than for Republicans (22%) or men (23%).

### Pro-Environment Versus Fewer Regulations Candidate

- A majority of voters, 58% to 25%, choose a candidate who will fight to safeguard the environment over a candidate who supports fewer environmental regulations.
- When the "fewer regulations" candidate has also taken campaign contributions from big developers and corporations, voters choose the pro-environment candidate by a 64% to 17% margin.

- The pro-environment candidate in this situation is preferred by:
  - 79% of Democrats
  - 64% of Independents
  - 50% of Republicans
  - 68% of Women
  - 59% of Men

#### Holding Polluters Accountable

- Voters favor by 91% to 6% stiffening penalties for companies that repeatedly break environmental laws.
- 88% said “Holding polluters accountable” was “one of the most important” or “very important” things for an elected official to be working on.
- “Enforcing the environmental laws we already have” and “holding polluters accountable” are two areas where voters are adamant that elected officials focus their attention. Indeed, only 13% believe elected officials are “doing a lot” to “hold polluters accountable.” Only 15% believe elected officials are “enforcing existing environmental laws.”

#### The Willamette River

- Dumping toxics into the Willamette River is unacceptable to a vast majority of voters statewide, particularly in light of its consideration as a drinking water source.
- 87% support a ban on the discharge of toxic chemicals into the Willamette River. Support for banning toxics in the Willamette River is consistent statewide. In other words, this is not just an issue on the minds of Portland Area residents.

#### Measure 66: Parks and Salmon

- Oregonians overwhelmingly feel their will was not followed when they voted for Measure 66. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of voters in Oregon feel the Legislature ignored their will by diverting \$25 million dollars that was earmarked to fund parks and salmon.
- 1998’s Measure 66 stipulated that 15% of lottery money should go directly to fund Oregon’s parks and salmon, yet the money was openly diverted to fund other state functions such as education and public safety.
- Two-thirds of women (67%), men (66%), and those over 50 (66%) feel their will at the ballot box was ignored. Just one-quarter or less of these subgroups believe that the state was right to divert the money to fund other “more pressing” needs.
- People of all political persuasions felt equally thwarted including Republicans (64%), Independents (64%), and Democrats (63%).