



**League of Conservation Voters
Education Fund**

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Environment will be top-tier issue in 2000 elections

Conservation group launches \$700,000 "Vote Environment" advertising effort in Puget Sound area to raise environmental issues with candidates and voters

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SEATTLE—Conservationists predict that voters will make the environment a top-tier voting issue in the 2000 elections. To make that claim a reality, the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (LCVEF) will launch a nearly \$700,000 "Vote Environment" advertising program in the Puget Sound area. The Washington advertising 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, airing on Seattle television stations June 6 through July 15, highlight children and clean water and inform viewers that "Who We Elect Matters," urging them to "Vote Environment." LCVEF also launched the ads in Washington, D.C., Austin, Texas, Nashville, Tenn., Atlanta, Ga., Columbus, Ohio, Lansing, Mich., and Minneapolis, Minn. and will soon launch air ads in Billings, Mont. and Sacramento, Calif.

"Washington voters care deeply about the quality of their air and water and they will factor these issues into their voting decisions," said Teresa Purcell, LCVEF northwest regional director. "As the elections near, it is important for voters to recognize that the people we elect at the city council, state legislature, congressional and presidential levels all have a significant influence on the laws that protect our oceans, rivers, and especially our drinking water, from pollution. Voters should find out where the candidates stand on protecting our water, air and land and use that information when casting their vote."

As a key component of the public education effort, LCVEF also launched a **www.VoteEnvironment.org** Web site that houses the television ads and encourages visitors to take an on-line pledge to ask the candidates where they stand on environmental issues and to "Vote Environment."

The Web site also contains the group's extensive environmental polling data. Over the course of the year, the LCVEF is evaluating the saliency of environmental issues and how these issues influence voter participation. Working with state environmental groups and a variety of pollsters, the group this year will conduct 23 state and three national polls on environmental and conservation issues and their relationship to civic participation. The polling analysis and commentary will be available over the Internet.

(more)

A survey of likely Washington voters conducted October 14-18, 1999, showed that clean air and clean water are top-tier voting issues for Washingtonians. According to the poll:*

- Clean air and water ranked as a top tier concern for voters, along with education, crime and drugs, Medicare and Social Security.
- Eight out of ten (80 percent) likely voters say conservation or environmental issues are very or somewhat important to them when deciding how to vote. One-third (34 percent) say environmental issues are “*a primary factor in deciding how to vote.*”
- Sixty-six percent of voters believe that we can have a strong economy and a healthy environment at the same time without having to choose one over the other.
- Eight out of ten (82 percent) likely voters think “protecting our streams, rivers, and lakes so that we have clean drinking water” should be a high priority for state spending.
- Two-thirds (66 percent) of voters think reducing the risk of oil spills from tankers by requiring escort tugs should be an important issue for their elected officials.

“Throughout the country, and especially in Washington, voters are paying 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 Deb Callahan, LCVEF president. “This year the environment will emerge as a critical election issue—an issue that candidates seeking all levels of elective office will be well-served to address.”

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 the LCVEF Web site at www.VoteEnvironment.org.

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* **Methodology**

The poll was conducted October 14-18, 1999 by Evans/McDonough a polling firm based in Seattle and Berkeley, Calif. Five hundred (500) likely November 2000 general election voters in Washington state, were selected at random and interviewed by trained, professional telephone interviewers. The margin of error for the overall survey results is ± 4.2 points at the 95% confidence interval.