



## League of Conservation Voters Education Fund

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### **Wisconsin voters rate protection of clean air and water as important as crime & drugs, education, and health care**

Madison - Wisconsin voters are very concerned about the protection of clean air and clean water, and they rate this issue on par with crime & drugs, education and health care, and above taxes, says a new poll released today. The poll also found that voters think protecting clean air, water, and open space should be a top priority for elected leaders, and environmental actions figure strongly in voting decisions.

The Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates 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 May 17-21, 2000 for the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund.

“This poll shows that at a fundamental level, Wisconsin voters care a great deal about protecting clean air, water and open spaces. In fact, they rank clean air and clean water at the same level as crime and drugs, education and health care,” said Joy Strawser, LCV Education Fund Great Lakes program associate. “It is important to point out that people in Wisconsin translate their concerns about environmental issues to elections, ranking them as a primary concern in casting their vote, and in their support of candidates who want to protect air, water, and open space,” she continued.

Highlights of the poll include:

1. Voters in the state rated clean air and water as a top concern, following only education, crime and drugs, and health care. More voters indicated concern about clean air and water than taxes and the economy and jobs.
2. When asked how important issues involving clean water, clean air and open space are in making a voting decision, 90 percent of voters said those issues were important (58 percent very important and 32 percent somewhat important).

3. 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-- Wisconsin voters choose Candidate A, 77 percent to 18 percent, over Candidate B.
4. When asked what conservation or environmental concerns voters worried about the most, 31 percent said issues related to water quality were their greatest worry.
5. Seventy-two percent of voters in the state say there is no need to pick between the environment and the economy. Among those voters who believe there is a need to choose between a strong economy and a clean environment, a majority of voters (60 percent) would rather see a clean environment than a strong economy (29 percent).
6. Eighty-two percent of Wisconsin voters want either tougher enforcement of environmental laws or stronger laws.
7. Sixty-nine percent of those voters polled consider runoff from factory farms contaminating drinking water to be at least a “very serious” problem (32% “extremely serious,” 37% “very serious”).
8. Fifty-one percent of Wisconsin voters consider rates of lead poisoning among Wisconsin children to be at least a “very” serious problem (24% “extremely serious,” 27% “very serious”).
9. Sixty-seven percent of Wisconsin voters share the opinion that the State Department of Natural Resources should be run as an independent agency outside of the Governor’s control, as compared to 24% who believe that the State Department of Natural Resources should remain under the control of the Governor.

The telephone survey of 500 registered voters likely to vote in the 2000 election was commissioned by LCVEF and conducted by Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates. The survey was conducted May 17-21, 2000. A random sample of this type is likely to yield a margin of error of +/- 4.8 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](http://www.VoteEnvironment.org).