



TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Ben Patinkin
Grove Insight, Ltd.

RE: Findings from a Survey of Registered Voters in Oregon Communities

DATE: July 8, 2010

This analysis is based on results from a survey of 600 registered voters living in selected Oregon communities within Jackson, Marion, Deschutes and Clackamas counties. The survey was conducted June 9-13, 2010. The margin of error is plus or minus 4.0 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

Registered Republicans represented 43% of the sample, registered independents were 22% and registered Democrats made up 35%.

A Significant Majority of Oregon Voters Say That Environment Issues Are an Important Factor When Deciding Whether to Support a Public Official

Nearly one-half of those surveyed said that “issues involving clean water, clean air, open spaces and energy consumption” are “very important” factors in deciding whether to support a public official. An even higher number, 82%, indicated that these issues play an “important” roll in their decision making process.

Compared to other issues like the economy, health care and education, how important are issues involving clean water, clear air, open spaces and energy consumption for you in deciding whether to support an elected public official?		
Very important	48%	82%
Somewhat important	34%	
Not too important	15%	
DK/NA	4%	

Those who say the issue is one of the things they worry about “most” or a “great deal”	
Devastation caused by the BP oil spill	76%
The declining health of Oregon’s watersheds	62%
The spread of invasive species	60%
Our continued reliance on fossil fuels	57%
The declining health of Oregon’s oceans	57%
The development of oil platforms off OR’s coastal waters	53%
Unchecked growth and development	53%

When asked about specific environmental concerns that worry them personally, the “devastation caused by the BP oil spill” was far and away the biggest concern, with three-quarters indicating it worried them “most” or a “great deal.” Majorities of these Oregon voters also worried about “the declining

health of Oregon’s watersheds,” “the spread of invasive species,” “our continued reliance on fossil fuels,” “the declining health of Oregon’s oceans,” “the development of offshore oil platforms in Oregon’s coastal waters” and “unchecked growth and development.”

A Majority Agreed That Protecting the Environment Helps Create Jobs and Improve the Economy

These voters did not equate increased environmental protections with job loss. Indeed, a majority (53%) indicated that “protecting the environment helps create jobs and improves our economy.” This said, one third (34%) do believe the opposite, that “protecting the environment costs too many jobs and hurts our economy.”

Partisanship and voter registration played a key role in perceptions on this issue. Democrats heavily leaned towards the belief that protecting the environment can create jobs (72%). A majority of independent voters (53%) agreed with this assessment, while Republicans were fairly divided with just a slim seven-point margin indicating protecting the environment is more likely to cost than create jobs (39% create jobs; 46% cost jobs).

Voters Were Supportive of Conservation Proposals That Address Their Key Concerns

Do you favor or oppose this proposal?	
Require the State of Oregon to develop a statewide plan to eliminate toxic chemicals from our water and food supply that have been identified as major threats to public health.	88%
Create a balanced approach to state forest management that bans logging in critical watersheds, protecting salmon, creating more recreational opportunities and preserving clean water supplies.	81%
Require the state to manage its natural resources through the processes of scientific evaluation and monitoring. The state would be required to make the results of its natural resource studies available for public input	81%
Create new regulations requiring balanced growth in cities and communities that emphasizes livable and sustainable neighborhoods, smart transportation options and the preservation of farms, critical watersheds, open spaces and forest lands.	78%
Protect and increase funding for tax credits for renewable energy industries like wind and solar, recycling and energy efficiency.	78%

Voters’ belief in the importance of environmental issues in making decisions about support for an elected official, their strong concerns about specific conservation issues and their willingness to equate protecting the environment with job growth translates into broad support for a number of conservation-minded proposals. Key among these were policies that promote

renewable energy (78% favor), eliminate toxics from food and water (88% favor), require a balanced approach to forest management (81% favor) and growth (78% favor) and ensure that the state manages natural resources through scientific evaluation and monitoring (81% favor).

A Strong Majority Say They Prefer a Public Official Who Supports Laws That Balance Growth and Jobs, While Enhancing Environmental Protections

Exactly six in 10 Oregonians in these communities say they are “more likely” to prefer an elected public official who “favored more enforcement of existing laws or passing new laws, in order to help balance growth and jobs, protect the health of our oceans, forests and watersheds and increase the use of renewable energy sources.” Of these, nearly four in 10 (38%) say they would be “much” more likely to support such an official. Less than one in 10 (9%) say they would be “less likely” to support this type of official.

These preferences held true when voters were asked to choose between the following two generic public officials:

Public Official "A," who believes Oregonians have a responsibility to be good stewards of our environment, ensuring a good quality of life, the availability of good paying jobs and a positive legacy for our own families and for future generations. The only way we're going to attract good employers and create good jobs in Oregon is by protecting the quality of life that comes with tough but fair environmental regulations.

Public Official "B," who believes that in our zeal to protect Oregon's spectacularly beautiful environment we have overreached with devastating effects for rural communities and the economy. While agriculture, timber and mining will never again dominate Oregon's economy, we should loosen existing environmental regulations so that these industries can once again create good jobs.

In this scenario, over six in 10 (61%) of these Oregonians indicated they were more likely to support “public official ‘A.’” On the other hand, three in 10 (30%) said they had a preference for “public official ‘B.’”