

The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll

EMBARGOED — NOT FOR RELEASE UNTIL: SUNDAY, JULY 11, 1993

RELEASE: SL/EP 43-4 (EP 93-4)

CONTACT: KEN DAUTRICH
OR JANICE BALLOU

RELEASE INFORMATION

A story based on the survey findings presented in this release and background memo will appear in Sunday's *Star-Ledger*. We ask users to properly attribute this copyrighted information to "*The Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll*."

JERSEYANS ON THE ENVIRONMENT: SERIOUSNESS OF OCEAN POLLUTION DROPS AS RATING OF STATE GOVERNMENT IMPROVES

Half of New Jersey residents give positive ratings to state government's job performance in protecting the environment—a substantial improvement from three years ago when only 24 percent gave that rating.

The latest *Star-Ledger/Eagleton Poll*, conducted by telephone with 801 New Jersey residents between June 10 and 16, 1993, also finds that the number of residents saying that ocean pollution at the Jersey shore is a very serious problem continues to drop. Half now say this is a very serious problem compared to about three-quarters who felt that way four years ago and about 6-in-10 who felt that way last year.

Toxic waste disposal is viewed as a very serious state problem by three-quarters of residents; two-thirds say solid waste disposal is very serious, and about half feel water and air pollution are very serious problems in New Jersey.

Also, most New Jersey households now report that they recycle newspapers, bottles or cans. Fully 97 percent of residents say their household recycles, up from 70 percent in 1988, and from 49 percent in 1985.

-more-

ATTENTION RADIO STATIONS:

Audio is available after 8:00 A.M. on Monday, July 12, 1993, from (908)932-3605 (Rutgers Feature Phone).

RATING STATE GOVERNMENT ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The current survey finds that half of New Jersey's residents give state government positive marks of excellent (9%) or good (41%) in protecting New Jersey's environment. This represents a sharp increase of 26 points since 1990 when 24 percent rated state government's performance on environmental protection as either excellent (2%) or good (22%).

Ken Dautrich, Poll Associate Director, commented, "New Jersey's activist role in environmental protection appears to be well-received by state residents. Improved conditions at the Jersey shore, the push toward recycling, and a high level of monitoring of air and water quality are likely contributors to the jump in ratings people offer state government in protecting the environment."

By better than a 2-to-1 margin, New Jerseyans are more likely to feel that the natural environment in the state has improved rather than deteriorated over the past three years. Specifically, 36 percent say the natural environment has gotten better 15 percent say it has gotten worse and 45 percent report it has stayed about the same.

In thinking about the tradeoff between maintaining strict pollution laws and job growth, state residents continue to favor maintaining strict laws. Specifically, 64 percent say that strict anti-pollution laws should be maintained even though those laws might discourage the growth of jobs and industry, compared to 28 percent who favor relaxing those laws to create more jobs. Three years ago 60 percent favored maintaining strict anti-pollution laws and 30 percent favored relaxing those laws to stimulate job growth.

OCEAN POLLUTION PROBLEMS

New Jerseyans' perceptions of the seriousness of ocean pollution along the Jersey shore continue to ease. In the current survey half say that ocean pollution is a very serious problem, one-third say it is somewhat serious, and 13 percent say it is not too serious. The

- more -

50 percent saying ocean pollution at the shore is very serious is down 8 points from 58 percent in 1992, and down 23 points from 73 percent in 1989.

Also, New Jersey residents are more likely to feel that there will be fewer pollution problems at the Jersey shore this summer compared to last summer. In the current survey, 40 percent feel there will be fewer problems this summer, 8 percent say there will be more pollution

problems, and 47 percent feel there will be about the same amount. Last year only 30 percent felt there would be fewer ocean pollution problems at the Jersey shore.

Dautrich commented, "The ocean pollution problems many of New Jersey's beaches encountered during the late 1980's tarnished the public's image of the Jersey shore. This survey shows that the shore's image has not only bounced back rather dramatically since then, but that it continues to improve with each vacation season."

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS IN NEW JERSEY

The environmental problems of toxic waste disposal, solid waste disposal, water pollution, and air pollution are seen as very serious in New Jersey by at least half of the state's residents. Residents give highest priority to the problem of disposing toxic waste, where more than three-quarters (77%) feel this is a very serious problem in New Jersey. This is up 5 points since 1990 when 72 percent of residents said that toxic waste disposal was a very serious problem in the state.

The next highest priority is given to the disposal of solid waste. Two-thirds (66%) of residents say solid waste disposal is a very serious problem in New Jersey, which is about the same as the 64 percent who felt that way three years ago.

Fifty-five percent now feel that water pollution is a very serious problem, up 7 points from 48 percent who felt that way in 1990. The current survey also shows that about half of the state's residents (49%) say that air pollution is a very serious problem in New Jersey, up slightly from 46 percent who said that three years ago.

- more -

New Jerseyans are less likely to feel that the development of open spaces (31%) or noise pollution (20%) are very serious environmental problems facing the state.

HEALTH CONCERNS AND POLLUTION PROBLEMS

In thinking about their health, many New Jerseyans report being concerned about the quality of the water they drink and the air they breathe. About seven-in-ten (71%) say they are very concerned about the quality of their drinking water, and an additional 18 percent are somewhat concerned about this. The percent very concerned is up 6 points (from 65%) since 1987.

Sixty-three percent are very concerned about the quality of the air they breathe, and another 25 percent are somewhat concerned about this, which remains about unchanged from six years ago.

About one-quarter (23%) of residents feel that solid waste disposal is a very serious problem in their own community. This represents a decline in the perception of the seriousness of solid waste disposal problems from 1988 when 35 percent of New Jerseyans said it was a very serious problem where they live.

RECYCLING

The vast majority (97%) of New Jersey households are now recycling newspapers, bottles, or cans according to the survey. Fully 91 percent of New Jersey residents report that their household recycles these items all of the time, 5 percent say they recycle sometimes, and 1 percent recycles once in a while.

The 97 percent now recycling is up sharply from surveys conducted five and eight years ago when 70 percent and 49 percent, respectively, reported that their household recycled newspapers, bottles, or cans.

BACKGROUND MEMO — RELEASE SL/EP43-4 (EP93-4), SUNDAY, JULY 11, 1993

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eagleton Poll was conducted between June 10 and June 16, 1993, when a random sample of 801 New Jerseyans, 18 years and older, was interviewed by telephone. Figures based on this sample size are subject to a sampling error of about ± 3.5 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval. Sampling error is the probable difference in results between interviewing everyone in the population versus a scientific sample taken from that population. Sampling error does not take into account other possible sources of error inherent in any study of public opinion. The questions and figures referred to in this release are presented below. The location of each question on the actual questionnaire is in brackets.

"Overall, how good a job do you feel state government is doing in protecting the environment in New Jersey-- excellent, good, only fair, or poor?" [Q.43]

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Only Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Depends/ Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
June, 1993	9%	41%	37%	9%	4%	100%	(801)
<i>Party ID</i>							
--Democrat	13	46	31	7	4	101	(261)
--Independent	8	37	38	13	4	100	(315)
--Republican	7	38	42	8	4	99	(201)
<i>Age</i>							
--18 - 29	10	31	43	15	1	100	(139)
--30 - 49	8	43	36	10	3	100	(341)
--50+	11	44	34	5	6	100	(308)
<i>Region</i>							
--North	6	38	42	10	4	100	(378)
--Central	8	43	33	12	3	99	(213)
--South	15	43	31	7	4	100	(210)
<u>PAST SURVEYS</u>							
November, 1990	2	22	52	22	2	100	(800)
August, 1987	5	30	39	22	4	100	(800)

"And, in the past 3 years do you feel the overall natural environment in New Jersey has gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same?" [Q.44]

	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Stayed About The Same</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
June, 1993	36%	15%	45%	3%	99%	(801)
<i>Party ID</i>						
--Democrat	40	12	44	3	99	(261)
--Independent	35	18	44	3	100	(315)
--Republican	32	16	48	4	100	(201)
<i>Age</i>						
--18 - 29	27	17	56	1	101	(139)
--30 - 49	37	18	41	4	100	(341)
--50+	41	12	43	4	100	(308)
<i>Region</i>						
--North	31	18	48	3	100	(378)
--Central	38	15	45	2	100	(213)
--South	42	11	42	5	100	(210)

"Some people say that anti-pollution laws discourage the growth of jobs and industry. If you had to choose between maintaining strict anti-pollution laws or relaxing those laws to create more jobs in New Jersey, which would you choose?" [Q.45]

	<u>Maintain Strict Laws</u>	<u>Relax Laws</u>	<u>Both/ Neither</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
June, 1993	64%	28%	3%	5%	100%	(801)
<i>Party ID</i>						
--Democrat	68	27	1	5	101	(261)
--Independent	65	28	3	4	100	(315)
--Republican	59	30	5	6	100	(201)
<i>Age</i>						
--28 - 29	71	24	--	5	100	(139)
--30 - 49	62	33	1	4	100	(341)
--50+	63	26	5	5	99	(308)
<i>Total Annual Family Income</i>						
--Under \$20,000	53	34	2	12	101	(111)
--\$20,000 - \$30,000	57	36	3	3	99	(104)
--\$30,001 - \$50,000	71	24	2	4	101	(233)
--Over \$50,000	70	25	3	3	101	(284)

PAST SURVEYS

November, 1990	60	30	4	6	100	(800)
August, 1987	69	19	5	7	100	(800)

"Now I'm going to read you a short list of problems. For each, please tell me whether you think it is a very serious problem, somewhat serious, or not too serious. First, how about (START AT DESIGNATED POINT), is this very, somewhat, or not too serious?" [Q.46]

	<u>Very Serious</u>	<u>Somewhat Serious</u>	<u>Not Too Serious</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<u>Disposal of toxic wastes</u>						
June, 1993	77%	16%	4%	3%	100%	(801)
November, 1990	72	17	7	3	99	(798)
<u>Disposal of solid waste or garbage in New Jersey</u>						
June, 1993	66	23	9	3	101	(801)
November, 1990	64	23	11	2	100	(800)
August, 1987	69	23	5	3	100	(800)
February, 1987	67	23	6	3	100	(800)
<u>Water pollution in New Jersey</u>						
June, 1993	55	29	13	3	100	(801)
November, 1990	48	35	16	2	101	(800)
August, 1987	61	24	11	3	99	(800)
<u>Air pollution in New Jersey</u>						
June, 1993	49	38	12	1	100	(801)
November, 1990	46	35	19	1	101	(800)
August, 1987	42	39	17	2	100	(800)
<u>The development of open space</u>						
June, 1993	31	36	27	7	101	(801)
November, 1990	37	33	25	5	100	(799)
<u>Noise pollution</u>						
June, 1993	20	39	40	1	100	(801)
November, 1990	18	39	43	--	101	(800)

"Thinking about your family's health, how concerned are you with the quality of the air you breathe--very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not very concerned?" [Q.47]

	<u>Very Concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat Concerned</u>	<u>Not Very Concerned</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
June, 1993	63%	25%	11%	1%	100%	(801)
<i>Region</i>						
--North	25	39	34	1	99	(378)
--Central	16	45	37	2	100	(213)
--South	15	32	51	1	99	(210)

PAST SURVEYS

August, 1987	61	28	10	--	99	(800)
--------------	----	----	----	----	----	-------

"Thinking again about your family's health, how concerned are you about the quality of the water you drink--very concerned, somewhat concerned, or not very concerned?" [Q.48]

	<u>Very Concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat Concerned</u>	<u>Not Very Concerned</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
June, 1993	71%	18%	11%	1%	101%	(801)
<i>Region</i>						
--North	74	15	11	--	100	(378)
--Central	69	23	8	1	101	(213)
--South	67	19	12	1	99	(210)

PAST SURVEYS

August, 1987	65	18	14	3	100	(800)
--------------	----	----	----	---	-----	-------

"And how serious is the problem of garbage and solid waste disposal in your community--very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not serious at all?" [Q.49]

	<u>Very Serious</u>	<u>Somewhat Serious</u>	<u>Not Very Serious</u>	<u>Not Serious At All</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
June, 1993	23%	32%	41%	--	4%	100%	(801)
<i>Region</i>							
--North	27	33	36	--	4	100	(378)
--Central	20	35	42	--	3	100	(213)
--South	21	26	48	--	5	100	(210)

PAST SURVEYS

June, 1988	35	32	19	11	4	101	(800)
August, 1987	25	34	24	13	4	100	(800)
February, 1987	26	28	31	13	2	100	(800)

"Does your household recycle newspapers, bottles or cans? (IF YES, PROBE: Is this something you do all the time, sometimes, or just once in a while." [Q.50]

	<u>Yes, All The Time</u>	<u>Yes, Sometimes</u>	<u>Yes Once In Awhile</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
June, 1993	91%	5%	1%	3%	--	100%	(801)
<u>Age</u>							
--18 - 29	85	9	--	6	--	100	(139)
--30 - 49	92	5	1	2	--	100	(341)
--50+	94	2	3	1	--	100	(308)

PAST SURVEYS

June, 1988		*70		28	1%	99	(800)
August, 1987		*65		35	--	100	(800)
February, 1987	36	11	4	49	--	100	(798)
May, 1985	32	13	4	49	2	100	(498)

"From what you may have read or heard, how serious is the problem of ocean pollution along the Jersey shore-- would you say it is very serious, somewhat serious, or not too serious?" [Q.51]

	<u>Very Serious</u>	<u>Somewhat Serious</u>	<u>Not Very Serious</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
June, 1993	50%	33%	13%	3%	99%	(801)
<u>Age</u>						
--18 - 29	60	28	11	1	100	(139)
--30 - 49	48	38	11	2	99	(341)
--50+	46	31	17	6	100	(308)
<u>Region</u>						
--North	50	37	10	3	100	(378)
--Central	58	27	13	1	99	(213)
--South	44	32	19	4	99	(210)

PAST SURVEYS

April, 1992	58	31	10	1	100	(800)
June, 1989	73	20	6	1	100	(800)
May, 1988	73	19	4	4	100	(800)

* Probe was not asked in June, 1988 or August, 1987.

"Do you think there will be more pollution problems at the Jersey shore this summer than there were last summer, fewer problems, or about the same amount as last summer?" [Q.52]

	<u>More</u>	<u>Fewer</u>	<u>About The Same</u>	<u>Depends/ Don't Know</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
June, 1993	8%	40%	47%	5%	100%	(801)

PAST SURVEYS

June, 1992	9	30	54	7	100	(800)
June, 1989	16	43	38	3	100	(800)
May, 1988	23	18	45	14	100	(800)