

ENVIRONMENTAL SYNOPSIS

The Chairman's Corner

Rep. Scott E. Hutchinson, Chairman



This month's *Environmental Synopsis* is a little different. Instead of the usual Research Briefs normally found on pages 3-6, July's issue features the results of the committee's environmental questions asked as part of Mansfield University's statewide telephone survey entitled *The Public Mind*.

For the past several years the committee has sponsored a series of topical questions in order to gauge public opinion and sentiment on a variety of issues. You may recall two years ago, questions focused on water and sewer services and recycling, all "hot" issues at the time, when the General Assembly was considering raising tipping fees on solid waste to renew the state's recycling grant program and was also mulling local communities' needs in regard to upgrading water and sewer systems. These issues are again...or still...timely policy questions today.

**See pages 3-6 for the results
of *The Public Mind* survey**

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This year, the committee first repeated a series of questions focusing on environmental attitudes and behaviors of Pennsylvanians. It is interesting to see what people do – or won't do - in support of improving their environment (the Environmental Action Index) and to analyze the reactions of different demographic groups to certain environmental issues and actions.

In addition, those reviewing the special insert will find several questions having to do with environmental quality and public health. These new questions came about after a meeting with the Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

(continued on page 8)

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

CRAIG D. BROOKS, DIRECTOR

During the past decade, the Clean Cities Program (CCP) has been very successful in developing a national network of enthusiastic communities, organizations and individuals dedicated to increasing the use of alternative fuels. Ironically, this past fall the CCP decided to reevaluate its policy on foreign and domestic petroleum dependence and explore new ways to achieve greater impacts. The result has been an expanded, technology-neutral look at petroleum displacement through the use of fuel blends, hybrid vehicles, fuel economy and idle reduction, in addition to CCP's commitment to alternative fuels.

Familiar with E10, B5, B2 or HCNG? You may become more familiar with them soon

Because of the efforts of CCP, you may be hearing more about E10 (ethanol/gasoline), B5 and B2 (biodiesel/diesel) and HCNG (hydrogen/compressed natural gas) in the quest to increase the market for fuel blends. A large portion of the blends market, low-level ethanol blends, has been developed through the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Fuel Oxygenate Rules that require oxygenates in gasoline to reduce air pollution. In addition, the Department of Energy's (DOE) Biofuels Program researches the production of alternative fuels used in blends and supports the activities of the ethanol and biodiesel industries. Even the Department of Defense (DOD) is an important user of alternative fuel blends. In the past fiscal year, DOD contracted 5.2 million gallons of pure biodiesel, which is used in blends. CCP has also started to work with state and local governments to explore opportunities to expand mandates and other programs for increasing blended fuel use.

Given the current state of fuel prices, hybrid vehicles have seemed to strike a particular chord with consum-

ers. Worldwide sales of light-duty hybrid vehicles have exceeded 150,000 and hybrid systems in heavy-duty vehicles are also on the rise. In 2003, vehicle sales for the popular Honda Civic, Insight and Toyota Prius exceeded 50,000 and are expected to more than double this year. Under the expanded CCP portfolio, the program is working with fleets to increase demands for hybrids and has been exploring the opportunities to educate consumers about the benefits of these vehicles. The CCP has begun to focus on demonstration projects in areas that hybrids would have the biggest impact and explore the use of hybrids for rental cars and leasing activities in major metropolitan areas.

Alternative fuels will continue to be a main focus for CCP

Because many drivers idle their vehicles to keep engines warm, heat or cool their cabs, or to use on-board appliances, reducing vehicle idling represents another opportunity for reducing petroleum consumption. Fuel consumption for long haul trucks is staggering, with consumption topping more than 800 million gallons of fuel per year. CCP estimates that providing access points to plug into the electric grid for power or using onboard power generation would go a long way toward reducing fuel consumption in this area.

All these activities go a long way toward sustaining and establishing a market for alternative fuels and continue to be a work in progress. Alternative fuels will continue to be a main focus for the CCP. Under this expanded program, CCP has decided to focus its efforts on increasing petroleum displacement through alternative fuels and expand its relationships with fleet operators. The program will also help build alternative fuel infrastructure and fuel use, especially related to the 3-million bi-fuel and flexible-fuel vehicles on the road today.

SURVEY RESULTS

The Public Mind 2004



To learn more about what Pennsylvanians are thinking about the environment, the Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee (JCC) again commissioned a series of questions through Mansfield University's annual statewide telephone survey, "*The Public Mind*." This year, the survey polled some 1,700 Pennsylvanians about their level of environmental concern and how they displayed that through their actions. The questions were similar to those posed by the committee in 2003, 2001 and 2000.

The committee's survey is timely in that recent nationwide public opinion surveys regarding the environment asked some similar questions and display some contradictory results.

The annual Gallup Earth Day poll reflected a significant change in the thinking of Americans in

regard to the environment. Thirty-five percent – only good enough for eighth place – say they worry a "great deal" about the quality of the environment. Forty-four percent felt economic growth should take precedence over environmental protection – a 21 percent increase over 2000. The environment has slipped from first to third (behind the economy and Social Security/Medicare) in ranking the top problem of the future.

Meanwhile, the survey taken by the Trust for Public Land and The Nature Conservancy is markedly different. Sixty-five percent of Americans say they would be willing to pay small increases in taxes (56 percent say they'd pay \$50 a year more) for programs to protect water quality, wildlife habitat and neighborhood parks. A nearly three-quarters majority consider themselves to be environmentalists (see below).

The nationwide results provide an interesting backdrop for the committee's statewide survey.

Self- Description – Do You Consider Yourself An Environmentalist?

The numbers on this question differ from state to nation. The committee's poll found that 59.7 percent of Pennsylvanians consider themselves to be environmentalists. While this percentage has varied slightly from year to year (59.0 percent low in 2001, 63.6 percent high in 2003), and is nearly four percent lower than last year, this year's 59.7 percent remains in the same general range as past years. It ranks well below the national figure of 73 percent in the Trust/Nature Conservancy survey, however.

I Am An Environmentalist...

2004 - 59.7 %

2001 - 59.0%

2003 - 63.6%

2000 - 60.0%

The Basics – 2004 Pennsylvania Survey Results / 2003 Comparisons

- 82.9 % - recycle aluminum cans (83.8% in 2003)
- 45.2% - have refused to buy something harmful to the environment (48.8%)
- 38.4% - have contributed money to an environmental group (44.4%)
- 40.9% - are more likely to vote for an environmental candidate (44.4%)
- 59.8% - are willing to pay more for wind-generated, non-polluting electricity (57.4%)
- 13.1% - are or were members of an environmental group (12.6%)
- 26.4% - have volunteered for an environmental improvement project (27.5%)

The Proof Is In The Pudding

Much as the Joint Committee poll showed last year, the self-description of those who consider themselves environmentalists is borne out in large part by their actions as shown below in the Environmental Action Index (EAI).

Of those who **do** consider themselves environmentalists:

- 90.5% recycle aluminum cans
- 59.8% have refused to buy something because it is harmful to the environment
- 53.4% have contributed money to an environmental group
- 58.4% are more likely to vote for an environmental candidate
- 67.5% are willing to spend more for electricity if it comes from wind power
- 33.3% have volunteered for an environmental improvement project
- 17.1% are or were a member of an environmental group

Of those who **do not** consider themselves environmentalists:

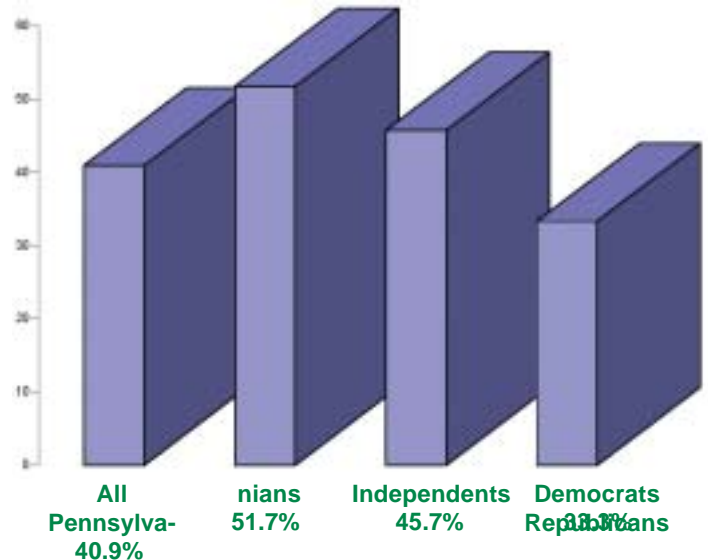
- 72.1% recycle aluminum cans
- 24.8% have refused to buy something because it is harmful to the environment
- 17.0% have contributed money to an environmental group
- 15.7% are more likely to vote for an environmental candidate
- 49.1% are willing to spend more for electricity if it comes from wind power
- 16.5% have volunteered for an environmental improvement project
- 7.1% are or were a member of an environmental group

Political Ramifications - Do Citizens Take The Environment To The Polling Place?

Intentions versus actual actions vary. The committee poll found that of the general population surveyed, 40.9 percent were more likely to vote for an environmental candidate. That is remarkably close to the findings of the Nature Conservancy/ Trust for Public Land survey, which found that more than four in 10 voters nationally "voted for candidates because of their support for the environment."

The Pennsylvania results indicate that Democrats are more likely than Republicans to vote for an environmental candidate, while those who consider themselves to be registered "Independent" voters are more likely than either party to do so. More than 51 percent (51.7%) of Independents responded that way, compared to 45.7 percent Democrats and 33.3 percent of Republicans.

Are You More Likely to Vote for an Environmental Candidate?



Of the 40.9 percent of Pennsylvanians more likely to vote for an environmental candidate, the survey showed that individuals age 65 and over were most likely (49.5 percent) to vote for an environmental candidate and those aged 35-49 least likely (34.5 percent). More women (43.8 percent) than men (36.8 percent) would favor such a candidate. And the environmental message seems to sell the best in the Northeast region where 48.9 percent would favor an environmental candidate, and worst in the Southwest, where the percentage was only 32.6 percent. The Central (43.1), Southeast (42.6) and Northwest (40.1) regions were tightly grouped, percentage wise.

News to Use in the Environmental Synopsis... share it with a friend

The *Environmental Synopsis* is issued monthly. The newsletter examines timely issues concerning environmental protection and natural resources.

If someone you know would like to receive a copy of the *Synopsis* each month, please contact the committee office at 717-787-7570.



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In the Conservancy/Trust national poll, 79 percent said a candidate's positions on such issues are important factors in deciding whom they would support. Half of Democrats, 39 percent of Independents and 36 percent of Republicans (42 percent of GOP women) say the environment has been a factor in how they voted in past elections. And, in the 17 states expected to be the most contested electoral states, 77 percent said conservation issues would be important in making their choices.

Whither Wind Energy?

The Joint Committee continues to try to gauge the level of support for non-polluting alternative forms of energy, focusing for the second year on wind power, which has shown the most growth of such alternatives.

Not much has changed in a year. The percentage of Pennsylvanians willing to pay more for wind power increased slightly (59.8 percent in 2004, 57.4 percent in 2003) but is within the margin of error (2.4 percent). In 2004, 73.4 percent of those willing to pay more would pay between \$5 and \$9 a month more, 17 percent would pay \$10 a month more and 9.6 percent would pay greater than \$10 a month more. In 2003, 65 percent were willing to pay \$5 a month more, 25.3 percent \$10 a month more and a nearly identical 9.7 percent more than \$10 a month.

Some Statistical Samples

- Looking for a volunteer for an environmental improvement project? Go for a college grad, male, aged 18-34 who's registered Independent
- Residents of the Southeast (85.8%) and the Northwest (85.6%) do the best job of recycling aluminum cans, while the Southwest (76.8%) lags behind the rest of the state

- Geographically, Northeast residents (67.8%) also lead the way in considering themselves to be environmentalists. The Northwest is next (62.4%) followed by Central PA (59.8%), the Southeast (58.2%) and the Southwest (57.6%).
- Women are much more likely (49.8% versus 39.2%) than men to refuse to buy something harmful to the environment
- Fund raising? Independent college grads between the ages of 50-64 are most likely to contribute money to an environmental group

Environmental Quality and Public Health...Linkages?

The Joint Committee authorized a new series of questions following some discussions with the Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) of the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). As discussed at one of the committee's Environmental Issues Forums (June 7, 2004), the CAC and the PA Department of Health (DOH) are seeking to establish a tracking system to determine if there is data that can show linkages between public health problems and environmental quality. Any data formulated would be used to reduce and eliminate negative public health outcomes.

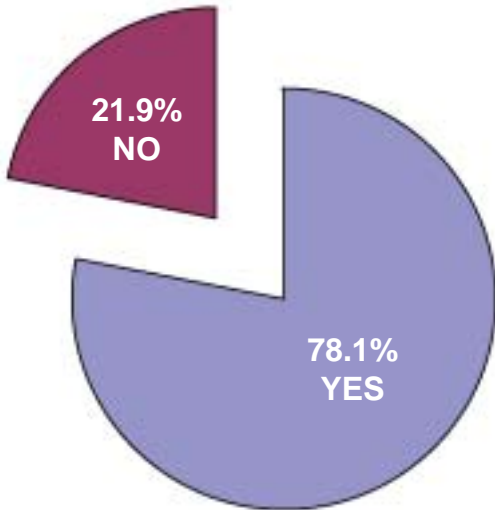
The *Public Mind Survey* questions are an attempt to measure public perception of a relationship between environmental quality and health and the public's perception of risk.

Among the survey's findings is that there is a relationship between environmental quality and public health, and the environmental quality of one's home and community is more beneficial than that in the workplace:

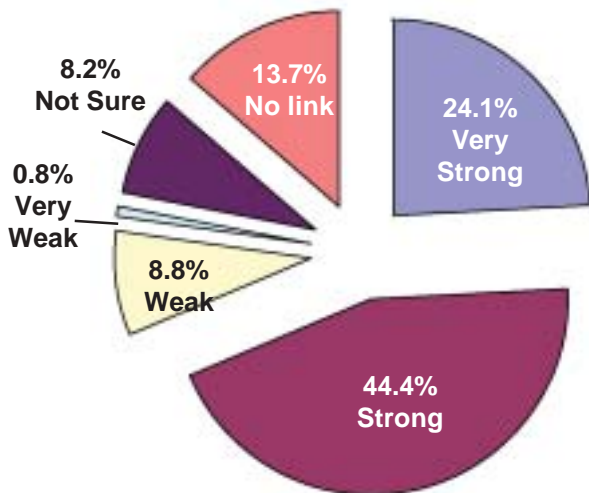
- ✓ 78.1 percent feel there is a relationship between the quality of the environment and public health — 24.1% feel the relationship is "very strong", 44.4 percent "strong", 8.8% "weak" and 0.8 percent "very weak". 13.7 percent feel there is no relationship and 8.2 percent aren't sure.
- ✓ 67.3 percent feel that the quality of the environment in their **community** has an impact on their health — Of those who believe so, 52.7% feel it is a positive impact and 47.3% negative.
- ✓ 67.5 percent feel the quality of the environment in their **home** has an impact on their health — 73.5% positive and 26.5% negative.
- ✓ 70.5 percent feel that the quality of the environment where they **work** has an impact on their health — 52.4% negative and 47.6% positive.

✓ 53.4 percent say they “have learned something about how the environment impacts human health” which has caused them “to change [their] environmental point of view.”

Are Environmental Quality and Public Health Linked?



How Strong Is the Link?



What is Pennsylvania’s “typical” environmentalist?

Generalizations are always subject to debate, but a profile does emerge, at least in how people see themselves. Those who describe themselves as environmentalists are generally:

— **Older** – 74.1 percent of those age 65+, trending downward to 45.5 percent of those age 18-34;

- **Female** - 61.9 percent of women compared to 56.6 percent for men;
- **Caucasian** – 61.9 percent compared to 43.4 percent Black and 48.9 percent other;
- **Rural Resident** – 67.0 percent compared to 57.3 percent of urban dwellers.

Cross checking the self-ratings with performance on the Environmental Action Index (EAI) actions, indicates that the 65+ age group is actually at the bottom of the EAI. The 50-64 age group performs the best, while the 18-34 and 35-49 age groups are about equal and in between the two.

Politically, more Democrats (64.8 percent) than either Republicans (55.9 percent) or Independents (61.3 percent, but a much smaller raw number sample) judged themselves to be environmentalists. However, Independents had the highest percentage in virtually every action in the EAI. Of those not registered to vote at all, 55.6 percent considered themselves to be environmentalists.

Educationally, a slightly higher percentage of high school grads (60.8 percent) than college grads (59.9 percent), considered themselves to be environmentalists, but the difference is well within the survey’s margin of error and the two groups often shared the top percentages in the EAI actions. Just over 57 percent (57.3) of non-high school graduates considered themselves environmentalists. In 2003, college grads led the way with 66.2 percent, while high school grads came in at 63.1 percent.

The Public Mind Survey

The *Public Mind Survey* of Mansfield University is an annual statewide telephone survey, begun in 1990, of randomly selected Pennsylvania adults, which focuses upon issues facing the Pennsylvania General Assembly. The JCC sponsors a series of environmental questions.

More than 1,700 Pennsylvanians were contacted for the 2004 survey. Respondents are proportionately represented in terms of geographical regions, sex and political party preference within the state to ensure an accurate sample. The margin of error in the 2004 survey is plus or minus 2.4 percent.

The 2004 survey was conducted in February and March under the direction of Mansfield University Professor of Sociology Dr. Timothy Madigan, PhD.

ON THE HORIZON . . .

A LOOK AT UPCOMING EVENTS



There are no new events at this time. Environmental Issues Forums will resume with the fall legislative session. Visit our website (<http://jcc.legis.state.pa.us>) or check future editions of the *Environmental Synopsis* for upcoming events.

COMMITTEE CHRONICLES . . .

REVIEW OF SOME MEMORABLE
COMMITTEE EVENTS

As described in the Chairman's Corner on page 1, the committee hosted a June 7 Environmental Issues Forum on the joint effort of the PA Department of Health (DOH) and the Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) of the PA Department of Environmental Protection to establish a database linking environmental quality and public health.

Guest speakers for the event were Joel H. Hersh, director of the Bureau of Epidemiology of the PA DOH (photo at far right) and Jolene E. Chinchilli of the CAC (photo at near right). Hersh described the progress of the Health Department's health tracking system while Chinchilli spoke on "How Does the Public Perceive Risk? – Why the facts are not enough."

In the photo at right, committee chairman Rep. Scott E. Hutchinson (left) joined (l. to r.) Chinchilli, Health Department Deputy Secretary for Health Planning And Assessment Michelle S. Davis, Hersh and CAC Executive Director Susan Wilson for a chat and a photo after the presentation.



Council representatives described a cooperative project they are working on with the state Health Department seeking to establish a database by which links could be discerned between environmental quality and public health issues – if such exist – with the goal of informing Pennsylvanians about risk assessment and preventing negative health outcomes.

CAC and the Department of Health presented a progress report on their efforts at the committee's June 7 Environmental Issues Forum. The Health Department has been working with the National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program for a couple of years and has undertaken a study of asthma in Pennsylvania school children as one of its initial projects. To continue the success of a statewide health tracking program, the department sees the need for:

- well coordinated surveillance efforts;
- collaboration with other network partners (such as CAC);
- effective data collection and analysis;
- effective communication of realistic expectations; and
- effective follow-up to ensure public health in Pennsylvania is well served.

**Scenes from the June Environmental Issues Forum
can be found on page 7.
Information from the presentations is available
by contacting the committee office.**

Of particular interest was a presentation on how the public perceives risk, sub-titled tantalizingly "Why the facts aren't enough." The report noted that public perception of risk can influence the level and quality of public participation and can either help or hinder whether the public works together with government or business. The public's perception is not always accurate, but not necessarily irrational and can be and often is affected by a number of factors that can skew the ways in which the public evaluates risk and how it will affect them.

The survey results clearly show that members of the public do perceive a relationship between environment and public health. It also demonstrates that citizens have a higher sense of risk in the workplace than they do in either their communities or their homes.

I invite you to peruse the survey results on pages 3-6. Our Research Briefs will resume next month.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe, healthy and fun summer season. "See" you in these pages again next month.



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