



Fairbank,
Maslin,
Maullin,
Metz &
Associates

FM3

Public Opinion Research
& Strategy

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: David Metz and Curtis Below
Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates

Lori Weigel
Public Opinion Strategies

RE: Key Findings from Recent Kentucky Voter Survey

DATE: June 16, 2011

The bipartisan research team of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (D) and Public Opinion Strategies (R) recently conducted a survey of 500 voters in the State of Kentucky to assess their attitudes on a variety of issues related to the conservation of land, water and wildlife in the state.¹ The survey results show that **Kentucky voters enthusiastically support a number of proposals to increase investment in conservation of the state's natural resources.** Most notably, four in five (83%) voters would vote for a ballot measure amending Kentucky's constitution to dedicate revenue from existing sales taxes on sporting goods for hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreation to land and water conservation in the state. This support remains strong despite voter concerns about the economy and unemployment. This is likely due to the fact that the vast majority of Kentucky voters believe a strong economy and clean environment are not in conflict with each other.

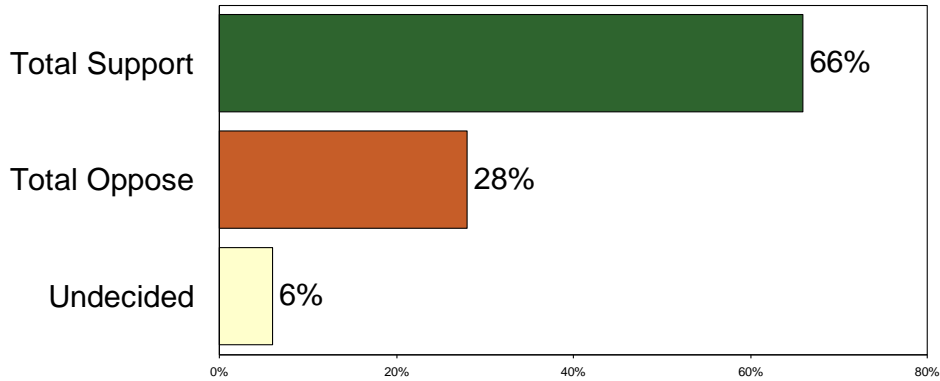
The balance of this memo details these and other key findings from the survey:

- **Two-thirds (66%) of voters support dedicating additional public funding for land, water and wildlife conservation in Kentucky.** When asked directly if they would “support or oppose dedicating additional public funding for land, water and wildlife conservation in Kentucky,” two-thirds (66%) of survey respondents indicated they would support such a dedication, including one-quarter (25%) who expressed “strong” support (**Figure 1**). Only a little more than one-quarter (28%) of respondents expressed opposition, with another six percent undecided.

¹ **Methodology:** From June 5-7, 2011, Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) and Public Opinion Strategies (POS) completed 500 telephone interviews with registered voters throughout the State of Kentucky. The sample is proportional throughout the state and demographically representative of the electorate. The margin of sampling error for the full sample is +/- 4.4%, margins of error for other subgroups within the sample will be higher. Percentages may not add to 100 because of rounding.

FIGURE 1:
Support for Dedicating Additional Funding for Conservation in Kentucky
(Split Sampled)

In general, would you support or oppose dedicating additional public funding for land, water and wildlife conservation in Kentucky?



- Protecting drinking water and flood prevention are top priorities for voters.** Survey respondents were also asked to rate the importance of a variety of specific types of projects that might be carried out if additional funding were available for conservation in Kentucky, indicating whether they found each to be “extremely important,” “very important,” “somewhat important,” or “not important.” As shown in **Figure 2**, more than 8 in 10 voters see it as “extremely” or “very” important to protect “sources of drinking water,” “water quality in lakes, rivers and streams,” and “natural areas along rivers to help prevent flooding.” Three-quarters (75%) also place a high priority on “protecting working farmland;” while more than two thirds see it as “extremely” or “very” important to protect “forests,” “natural areas,” and “fish and wildlife habitat.”

FIGURE 2:
Importance of Various Conservation Programs
(Split Sampled; % Rating Each Item “Extremely” or “Very Important”)

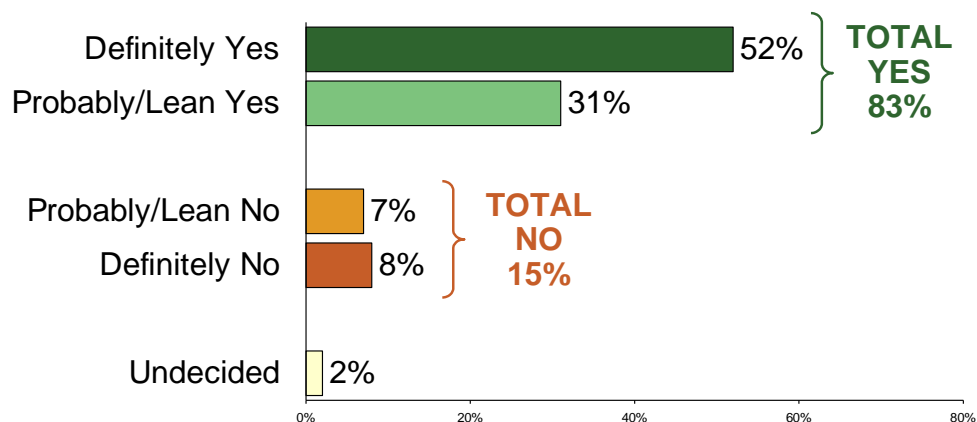
Project	Percentage (%)		
	Ext. Import.	Very Import.	Total Ext./Very
Protecting sources of drinking water	45	46	91
Protecting water quality in lakes, rivers and streams	41	42	83
Protecting natural areas along rivers to help prevent flooding	40	40	80
Protecting working farmland	35	40	75
Protecting forests	32	37	69
Protecting natural areas	31	36	67
Protecting fish and wildlife habitat	28	39	67

- **There is overwhelming support for a constitutional amendment dedicating existing sales taxes to protect land, water, and wildlife in Kentucky.** Survey respondents were offered the following draft ballot language for a potential measure amending the state constitution to finance land conservation.

“Are you in favor of providing additional state funding to: protect and restore the state’s lakes, rivers and streams, and wetlands; protect fish and wildlife habitat; preserve working farms and agricultural lands; create and expand parks, trails and natural areas; and promote tourism in the state, by dedicating the revenue from existing sales taxes on sporting goods for hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreation?”

Given that description, more than four in five (83%) survey respondents said that they would vote for the proposed constitutional amendment (**Figure 3**), including a majority (52%) who said they would “definitely” vote for the measure. Only 15 percent indicated they would oppose the measure and two percent were undecided.

FIGURE 3:
Support for a Constitutional Amendment Funding Conservation in Kentucky



The proposed constitutional amendment receives majority support from every major subgroup of the Kentucky electorate. For example, the measure is supported by:

- 88% of Democrats, 79% of Republicans, and 75% of independents;
- 84% of women and 82% of men;
- 83% of college-educated voters and 83% of those without a four-year degree;
- 87% of voters under age 50 and 81% of those age 50 and over;
- 92% of self-described liberal voters, 91% of moderates, and 78% of conservatives;
- 78% of those who support the Tea Party; and
- 86% of urban voters, 86% of rural voters, 83% of small town voters, and 68% of suburban voters.

Furthermore, nine in ten (91%) respondents indicated that no matter how they think they would vote on this amendment, they want the State Legislature to allow Kentucky voters the opportunity to vote on this issue. In fact, two-in-five (39%) said they would be *more* likely to re-elect their state legislator if they supported the amendment, compared to only nine

percent who said they would be *less* likely to do so. (51% indicated that a position on the amendment would not make a difference to them one way or another when voting to re-elect their state legislator.)

- **Voters strongly support a variety of other mechanisms to support conservation in Kentucky.** Survey respondents were also presented with several other ways to support conservation in Kentucky, from dedicating portions of existing taxes to providing tax credits for land donations. As shown in **Figure 4**, several of these alternatives were particularly popular with Kentucky voters. For example, four in five (82%) expressed support for “providing state tax credits to those who voluntarily donate land for conservation purposes.” Additionally, at least seven in ten supported dedicating some portion of existing sales taxes or gas and oil extraction taxes to fund land and water conservation in Kentucky.

FIGURE 4:
Support for Alternative Mechanisms to Support Conservation in Kentucky

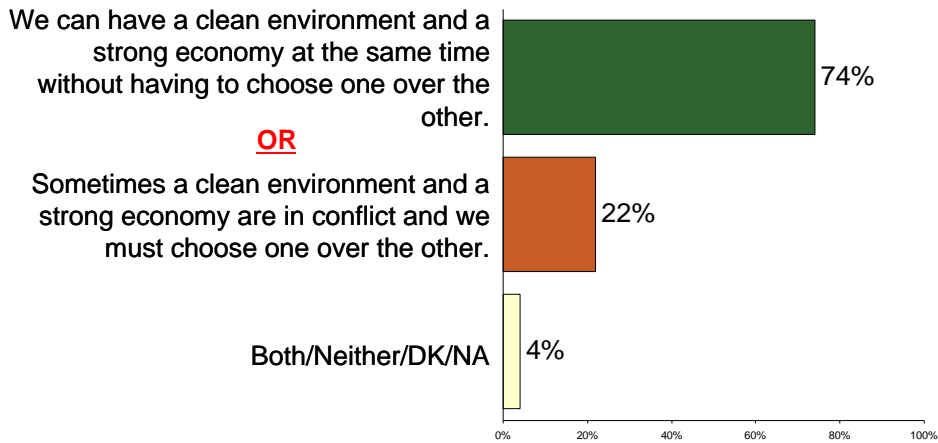
Mechanism	Percentage (%)		
	Total Support	Total Oppose	Undecided
Providing state tax credits to those who voluntarily donate land for conservation purposes	82	14	3
Dedicating one-eighth of one percent of existing state sales tax revenues, with no increase in taxes*	75	21	4
Dedicating some of the existing taxes collected from companies that extract gas and oil in Kentucky, as is currently done with coal mining	71	22	7
Dedicating the existing state sales tax revenue from sales of sporting goods for hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreation	71	24	6

*Split-sampled

- **Kentucky voters’ support for conservation is strong despite significant concern about economic issues.** Strong support for each of the potential approaches to funding and/or promoting land and water conservation in Kentucky comes despite voters’ grave concerns about the economy. For example, nine in ten survey respondents indicated that “jobs and the economy” (90%) and “the price of gasoline” (89%) were “extremely” or “very” serious problems facing Kentucky.

This is likely due to the fact that the vast majority of voters believes that a strong economy and clean environment are not in conflict with each other. When presented with two different statements about the relationship between the environment and the economy, three-quarters (74%) of survey respondents agreed that Kentucky can have a “clean environment and a strong economy at the same time” (**Figure 5** on the following page). This sentiment is shared by voters across the ideological spectrum, including two-thirds (66%) of conservative Republicans and 63 percent of those who support the Tea Party.

FIGURE 5:
Voters' Perceptions of the Relationship between the Environment and Economy



Overall, the survey results show that Kentucky voters value conservation, and in particular say it is important to protect the state's water, wildlife habitat, and working farmlands. Despite significant concerns about economy – particularly jobs and gas prices – **voters are highly supportive of amending the State Constitution to dedicate additional funding to support land and water conservation in Kentucky.**