



Results Embargoed Until Wednesday, October 8, at 12:01 a.m.

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Goucher Poll Gauges Marylanders' Perceptions of Pressing Environmental Issues

Baltimore – The Goucher Poll asked residents for their opinions about the key environmental issues the state is facing, which are detailed below.

Sixty-two percent of residents rate the health of the environment in Maryland as either “poor” or “fair,” while 36 percent rate it as “excellent” or “good.”

In general, Marylanders are concerned about pollution in the Chesapeake Bay. Sixty-one percent say they are “very” concerned, and 24 percent are “somewhat” concerned. Fourteen percent are either “not at all” or “a little” concerned.

To address the decline in the crab population in the Chesapeake Bay, 63 percent of residents would support a one-year moratorium on the harvesting of crabs; 26 would oppose a yearlong ban on crabbing.

“It’s clear that Marylanders care deeply about their bay, and a majority of residents are even willing to give up a year of crabbing if it could help stop the decline of Maryland’s signature dish,” said Mileah Kromer, director of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center. “It will be interesting to see what course of action the leading environmental scientists in the state suggest to address the decline in the crab population before next harvesting season.”

Climate Change

Fifty-nine percent of Marylanders believe climate change is caused mostly by human activity, while 31 percent think it is caused mostly by natural patterns in the earth's environment. Four percent of Marylanders do not believe climate change exists.

When asked whether climate change was a threat to the well-being of Maryland residents, 53 percent deem it a "major threat"; 31 percent, a "minor threat"; and 13 percent think climate change is "not a threat."

Hydraulic Fracturing, or Fracking

Marylanders are mixed on how much they have heard about hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. Twenty-eight percent say they have heard "a lot"; 15 percent have heard "some"; and 19 percent have heard only "a little" about the process. Thirty-four percent have heard "nothing at all."

Respondents who have heard "a lot," "some," or "a little" about hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, were then asked their perceptions.

Fifty-nine percent of respondents believe hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, poses an environmental threat in Maryland, while 21 percent do not. Another 20 percent indicate they "don't know" if the process is a threat.

A quarter of residents think the state should encourage fracking because of the potential economic benefits, while 58 percent think the state should discourage it because of the potential environmental impact. More than half of Marylanders (52 percent) would support a ban on hydraulic fracturing in the state, while 31 percent would oppose such a ban.



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About the Goucher Poll

The Goucher Poll is conducted under the auspices of the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center, which is housed in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Goucher College. Directed by Mileah Kromer, the Goucher Poll conducts surveys on public policy, economic, and social issues in Maryland.

Goucher College supports the Goucher Poll as part of its mission to instill in its students a sense of community where discourse is valued and practiced. The Goucher Poll is fully funded by the Sarah T. Hughes Field Politics Center endowment and does not take additional funding from outside sources.

The Goucher Poll seeks to improve public discourse in the state by providing neutral and nonbiased information on citizen perceptions and opinions. The data collected by the Goucher Poll are used to support faculty and student research.

Survey Methodology

To ensure all Maryland citizens are represented, the Goucher Poll is conducted using random digit dialing (RDD) of a county-level stratified random sample using landline and cellular telephone numbers. The sample of telephone numbers for the survey is obtained from Survey Sampling International, LLC (<http://www.surveysampling.com/>).

The survey was conducted Sunday, September 28, to Thursday, October 2. During this time, interviews were conducted 12-9 p.m. on Sunday and 5-9 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The Goucher Poll uses Voxco Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) software to administer its surveys. Interviews are conducted by a staff of professionally trained, paid, student interviewers.

Interviewers attempted to reach respondents with working phone numbers a maximum of five times. Only Maryland adults—residents aged 18 years or older—were eligible to participate. Interviews were not conducted with adults who were reached at business or work numbers. Fifty percent of the interviews were conducted on a cell phone, and 50 percent were conducted on a landline.

Interviews for this survey were completed with 708 Maryland citizens. For a sample size of 708, there is a 95 percent probability the survey results have a plus or minus 3.7 percentage point sampling error from the actual population distribution for any given survey question. Margins of error are higher for subsamples.

Survey Question Design

The Goucher Poll provides the questions as worded and the order in which they are administered to respondents.

BRACKETED ITEMS []: Items and statements in brackets are rotated to ensure respondents do not receive a set order of response options presented to them, which maintains question construction integrity by avoiding respondent agreement based on question composition.

Example: [agree or disagree] or [disagree or agree]

PROBE (p): Some questions contain a “probe” maneuver to determine a respondent’s intensity of opinion/perspective. Probe techniques used in this questionnaire mainly consist of asking a respondent if his or her response is more intense than initially provided.

Example: Do you have a [favorable or unfavorable] opinion of President Obama?

PROBE: Would you say very favorable/unfavorable?

OPEN-ENDED: No response options are provided for an open-ended question, i.e., it is entirely up to the respondent to provide the response information. Any response options provided to the interviewer are not read to respondent; they are only used to help reduce interviewer error and time in coding the response.

VOLUNTEER (v): Volunteer responses means the interviewer did not offer that response option in the question as read to the interviewer. Interviewers are instructed not to offer “don’t know” or “refused” or “some other opinion” to the respondent, but the respondent is free to volunteer that information for the interviewer to record.

Sample Demographics

	MD Population Parameter	Weighted Sample Estimate
Gender		
Male	.48	.49
Female	.52	.51
18 to 24 Years	.13	.13
25 to 34 Years	.18	.18
35 to 44 Years	.17	.16
45 to 54 Years	.20	.20
55 to 64 Years	.16	.17
65 Years and Older	.16	.16
White	.63	.59
Black	.29	.31
Other	.08	.10
Capitol	.36	.31
Central	.46	.52
Eastern	.08	.07
Southern	.06	.06
Western	.04	.04

*Population parameters are based on Census estimates as of July 2011.
Sample is weighted by age, gender, and race.*

Distribution of Regions

Capitol–Frederick, Montgomery, Prince George’s

Central–Anne Arundel, Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, Howard

Eastern–Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne’s, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, Worcester

Southern–Calvert, Charles, St. Mary’s

Western–Allegany, Garrett, Washington

Other Sample Demographics

Generally speaking, do you consider yourself to be a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

If respondent indicates they are an Independent:

Because you indicated you were an Independent, do you typically lean toward the Republican or Democratic candidate during elections?

Party Identification	
Republican	.28
Democrat	.55
Independent	.09
Other	.05
Don’t know/refused (v)	.03

Survey Results¹

Q: HEALTH

Next, changing topics to the environment ... how would you rate the overall health of the environment in Maryland today—[**excellent, good, fair, or poor**]?

	Percent
Poor	14.4
Fair	48.0
Good	31.3
Excellent	4.6
Don't know (v)	1.6
Refused (v)	0.1
Total=	100.0 708 +/-3.7

Q: BAYCONCERN

How concerned—[**very, somewhat, a little, not at all**]—are you about pollution in the Chesapeake Bay?

	Percent
Not at all concerned	3.6
A little concerned	10.2
Somewhat concerned	23.8
Very concerned	60.6
Don't know (v)	1.8
Total=	100.0 708 +/-3.7

¹ Percent totals may not add up to 100 due to weighting and/or rounding.

Q: MANMADE

Next, I'm going to read you three statements about climate change. Please tell me which one comes closest to your view:

[STATEMENTS ROTATED]

#1 Climate change is caused mostly by human activity.

#2 Climate change is caused mostly by natural patterns in the earth's environment.

#3 Climate change does not exist.

	Percent
Statement #1	58.9
Statement #2	31.3
Statement #3	3.8
Some other opinion (v)	3.6
Don't know (v)	2.3
Refused (v)	0.1
Total=	100.0 708 +/-3.7

Q: THREAT

Do you believe climate change is a [major threat, a minor threat, or not a threat] to the well-being of Maryland residents?

	Percent
Not a threat	13.1
A minor threat	30.7
A major threat	53.1
Don't know (v)	3.2
Refused (v)	0.0
Total=	100.0 708 +/-3.7

Q: CRAB

Would you [**support or oppose**] a moratorium—a one-year ban—on harvesting crabs in the Chesapeake Bay to address the decline in the crab population?

PROBE

	Percent
Strongly oppose (p)	11.8
Oppose	13.7
Support	34.8
Strongly support (p)	27.8
Don't know (v)	12.0
Total=	100.0 708 +/-3.7

Q: FRACK1

How much have you heard—[**a lot, some, little or nothing at all**]**—**about hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as fracking?

	Percent
Nothing at all	33.5
A little	19.4
Some	14.7
A lot	27.7
Don't know (v)	4.1
Refused (v)	0.5
Total=	100.0 708 +/-3.7

If the respondent indicates “Nothing at all,” he or she is not read FRACK2, FRACK3, or FRACK4

[FRACK2 to FRACK4 ROTATED]

Q: FRACK2

Do you [**agree or disagree**] that hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, poses an environmental threat in Maryland?

PROBE

	Percent
Strongly disagree (p)	7.7
Disagree	13.1
Agree	28.7
Strongly agree (p)	29.9
Don't know (v)	19.9
Refused (v)	0.7
Total=	100.0 470 +/-4.52

Q: FRACK3

Next, I'm going to read you two statements about hydraulic fracturing, or fracking.
Please tell me which one comes closer to your view:

[STATEMENTS ROTATED]

#1 The state should encourage hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, because of the potential economic benefits.

#2 The state should discourage hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, because of the potential environmental impacts.

	Percent
Statement #1	24.9
Statement #2	57.9
Some other opinion (v)	3.2
Don't know (v)	13.2
Refused (v)	0.8
Total=	100.0 (470 +/-4.52

Q: FRACK4

Would you [**support or oppose**] a ban on hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, here in Maryland?

PROBE

	Percent
Strongly oppose (p)	12.8
Oppose	17.9
Support	21.7
Strongly support (p)	30.4
Don't know (v)	16.6
Refused (v)	0.6
Total=	100.0 470 +/-4.52