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Rocky Mountain Poll

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CONCERNS ABOUT ENVIRONMENT BEGINNING TO COLOR PUBLIC VIEWS OF OFFICE HOLDERS: DEMOCRATS HAVE AN EDGE IN ARIZONA

Phoenix, Arizona, September 4, 2007. In the last several years, and particularly this year, public concerns in Arizona about the environment have risen significantly. So much so that environment is second only to illegal immigration as a top of the mind issue among voters and the general public. (*See BRCPolls.com; June 19, 07*)

Helping intensify these concerns have been increased scientific and political discussion about global warming, air pollution, rapid population growth and urban sprawl throughout the state. This discussion, coupled with heightened news media exploration of environmental issues, has registered parallel growth in public awareness, knowledge and interest in the health of the environment. And with that growth comes a greater tendency within the public to make distinctions between the performance on environmental issues among various public office holders.

In past years, voters were inclined to see all public officials in generally favorable terms and made no great distinctions between political parties and individual politicians as regards their efforts to protect the environment. This may also have traced to a general malaise about environmental policy. Today, however, casual interest has turned to intense concern about how public policy might affect the environment.

In the same earlier polls noted above for example, public willingness here to support tax and growth policies designed to curb population growth, urban sprawl and polluting industries has mushroomed. Additionally, we now register a much greater tendency to see some politicians as "good" on environmental protection and others as, well, "bad."

In Arizona, polar opposites can be found in public views of President George W. Bush and Governor Janet Napolitano. President Bush receives by far the most negative ratings with nearly half (46%) of Arizonans flatly rating his performance on environment as "Poor or Very Poor." Barely one in four (24%) regard him as doing a good job. Poor ratings jump to 68 percent among Democrats, 56 percent among Independents and even a quarter of Republican voters give Mr. Bush poor ratings. Barely a third of Republicans are willing to give him a good rating.

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In contrast, Governor Janet Napolitano is rated positively by 47 percent with only 14 percent in the negative column. This pattern may also reflect growing belief within the public that Democrats are more likely than Republicans to work to protect the environment. In June, for example, when Arizonans were asked whether Democrats or Republicans in the state legislature would do the best in protecting the environment, Democrats won 39 percent to 15 percent over Republicans.

The states two Republican U.S. Senators receive modestly favorable ratings, yet for neither of these office holders, do even forty percent of Arizonans feel comfortable rating their performance on environmental issues as exemplary (McCain 39% and Kyl 33%).

It seems unlikely that the environment in this growing state will subside as an issue any time soon, particularly given the strong position it already holds compared to such emotional charged and hotly debated issue as illegal immigration.

This report is based on a survey of 800 interviews with adult heads-of-household across Arizona, conducted between July 27th and August 4th, 2007 by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona as part of the Center's independent and non-partisan Rocky Mountain Poll series. The public is welcome to visit www.brcpolls.com for this and other poll results.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona (2007-IV-05), is based on 800 interviews with adult heads-of-household across Arizona, conducted between July 27th and August 4th 2007. Where necessary, figures for age, sex, race and political party were weighted to bring them into line with their actual proportion in the population. In a sample of this size, one can say with a 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 3.5 percent of what they would have been had the entire voter population been surveyed. The Rocky Mountain Poll is conducted by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona and is an independent and non-partisan research program sponsored by the Center.

This statement conforms to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

ENCLOSED: Statistical tables.

STATISTICAL DATA

Behavior Research Center
 Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona
 RMP (2007-IV-05)

For this and other polls, see www.brcpolls.com/results.

“Would you say the following public officials are doing an excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor job in their efforts to protect the environment in Arizona?” (ROTATE)

	Excellent/ Good	Fair	Poor/ Very Poor	Unsure
Governor Janet Napolitano	47%	30%	14%	9%
Senator John McCain	39	30	20	11
Senator Jon Kyl	33	32	17	18
President George W Bush	24	24	46	6
Arizona State Legislature	22	43	17	18

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