



behavior research center's

Rocky Mountain Poll

NEWS RELEASE 2001-I-03

Contact: Earl de Berge
info@brc-research.com

AIR POLLUTION COMPLAINTS DROP ACROSS ARIZONA, YET HALF ARE STILL EXPERIENCING PROBLEMS

PHOENIX, Ariz. (January 23, 2001) –For the first time since 1996, the proportion of Arizonans who complain that they or someone else in their household suffered vision or breathing problems as a direct result, in their opinion, of wintertime air pollution has declined from peak readings of 66 percent last year to 47 percent this year. While the lower level of complaints is common across the state, nearly half remain affected by air pollution, a figure that rises to 53 percent in Maricopa County.

Complaints about specific respiratory problems declined to 35 percent, from 50 percent last year. The milder winter and fewer days with serious temperature inversions in the urban areas may have contributed to this year's lower readings. The leading respiratory problems continue to be breathing difficulties, aggravation of existing lung diseases and sore or irritated throat not attributable to a cold or other illness. For pollution-related eye irritation, the proportion reporting declined to 35 percent from 46 percent in 2000.

-more-

The current survey marks the eighth annual January survey in which adults across the state have been asked whether they or anyone in their household experienced vision or breathing problems they attribute directly to air pollution. The current readings remain noticeably higher than during 1993, 1994 and 1995, when these studies were first completed, despite the subsidence from the peak reading reported in 2000.

For the first time ever, the proportion adversely affected by air pollution is greater in rural Arizona than in at least one urban area, Tucson. Thus, 38 percent of rural residents, but only 34 percent of Pima residents say they or another member of their family have had adverse reactions to air pollution in recent months. This undoubtedly traces to rapid population growth rates in some of Arizona's rural counties.

Importantly, the three most serious conditions, major eye irritation, major breathing problems and aggravation of existing lung disease problems such as asthma or emphysema, are now reported by only 10 to 15 percent, compared to being reported by a fifth to a quarter of all adults surveyed in 2000.

The findings outlined in this report are based on interviews with a random sample of 702 adults throughout Arizona conducted in January by the Behavior Research Center's independent and non-partisan Rocky Mountain Poll series.

- 30 -

EDITOR'S NOTE: This Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona (2001-I-03), is based on 702 interviews with adult heads of household throughout Arizona between January 10 and January 15, 2001. 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 3.7 percent of what they would have been had the entire adult 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 2001-I-03

"In the past several years, air pollution in some areas of Arizona reached the alert level. During the past several months, did you or other members of your household experience any of the following kinds of problems which you felt were directly the result of the air pollution?"

STATEWIDE

PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH
ONE OR MORE PERSONS EXPERIENCING
ADVERSE REACTION TO AIR POLLUTION

	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993
<u>VISION</u>									
Minor eye irritations	33%	44%	37%	37%	32%	38%	26%	29%	24%
Major eye irritations	16	25	22	22	18	7	6	7	6
(Any vision problems)	(35%)	(46%)	(40%)	(41%)	(35%)	(39%)	(27%)	(30%)	(26%)
<u>RESPIRATORY</u>									
Minor breathing difficulty	22	35	27	32	27	33	21	24	22
Sore or irritated throat not attributed to a cold or other illness	23	35	29	30	28	33	25	24	21
Aggravation of an existing lung disease such as asthma or emphysema	14	24	21	21	17	19	14	13	15
Major breathing difficulty	11	20	17	19	16	11	8	10	10
(Any respiratory problems)	(35%)	(50%)	(42%)	(45%)	(40%)	(44%)	(34%)	(34%)	(35%)
<u>(ANY VISION OR RESPIRATORY PROBLEMS)</u>	(47%)	(59%)	(51%)	(53%)	(48%)	(54%)	(39%)	(41%)	(39%)

~~~~~

STATISTICAL DATA

Behavior Research Center  
Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona  
RMP 2001-I-03

ANY RESPIRATORY OR VISION PROBLEMS

|      | MARICOPA | PIMA | RURAL |
|------|----------|------|-------|
| 1993 | 48%      | 36%  | 22%   |
| 1994 | 48       | 30   | 32    |
| 1995 | 47       | 34   | 23    |
| 1996 | 64       | 52   | 32    |
| 1997 | 60       | 37   | 28    |
| 1998 | 60       | 49   | 40    |
| 1999 | 58       | 47   | 37    |
| 2000 | 66       | 52   | 47    |
| 2001 | 53       | 34   | 38    |

~~~~~

ANY RESPIRATORY
OR VISION PROBLEM

