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## **NEW JERSEY GOING SOUR ON SANDY RECOVERY**

*Public says state aid distribution is too slow*

Public satisfaction with New Jersey's Superstorm Sandy recovery effort has dropped below 50% for the first time since the storm hit nearly 18 months ago, according to the latest ***Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll***. Nearly 3-in-4 Garden State residents say that the aid process has been too slow and place the blame more on state management of the process than on federal regulatory requirements.

Just under half of New Jersey residents say they are either very (14%) or somewhat (34%) satisfied with the state's Sandy recovery effort. A similar number are either very (21%) or somewhat (22%) dissatisfied. This marks the first time less than half the state expresses satisfaction with the recovery's progress. Statewide satisfaction surpassed two-thirds throughout 2013, topping out at 76% in September. Satisfaction stood at 66% in December 2013 before falling to 55% in February of this year and then to 48% in the current poll.

Among those residents who live in New Jersey's hardest hit communities, only 41% are satisfied with the state's recovery efforts while a decided majority (54%) are dissatisfied. In the remainder of the state, 49% are satisfied while 41% are dissatisfied. This marks the first time that residents of hardest hit communities have shown a significant difference in satisfaction levels when compared to residents in other parts of the state. In prior polls, these two groups' satisfaction levels differed by no more than five percentage points.

Broadening the geographic scope, the current poll finds that most residents of the state's four shore counties are now unhappy with recovery efforts; specifically, just 43% are satisfied and 52% are dissatisfied. Residents along the northern stretch of the turnpike are evenly divided – 43% satisfied to 43% dissatisfied in the Northeast counties and 47% satisfied to 47% dissatisfied in the Route 1 corridor

counties. Only residents of the less impacted western portion of the state are still satisfied with New Jersey's recovery efforts – 60% satisfied to 34% dissatisfied in the Northwest counties and 55% satisfied to 35% dissatisfied in the Southwest counties

“New Jerseyans remained very optimistic for the first year after Sandy hit, but their approval of the state's recovery efforts have plunged by nearly 30 points over the past six months,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute. “Recent news about Sandy-funded projects being built far from impacted areas and the firing of state contractors responsible for processing aid application certainly haven't helped perceptions.”

A bare majority (51%) of New Jerseyans remain at least somewhat confident that the state's relief funds are being wisely spent, while 45% are not confident. However, this confidence is a drop from prior poll results on this question which ranged between 60% and 64% confident in 2013 and 57% confident just two months ago. Among residents of the state's hardest hit communities, 45% are confident and 48% are not confident. This marks the first time that residents of the state's high-impact areas have been more likely to express little or no confidence in how the state is using the relief funds.

An overwhelming number (73%) of New Jerseyans say that the pace of getting relief funds to impacted residents has been too slow. Only 21% say the pace has been about right. The public is more divided, though, on whether the state has done a bad job (47%) or good job (43%) helping residents who still need to repair their homes given the circumstances.

Some critics have charged that the state's application and disbursement process has been flawed. The Christie administration maintains that the pace of recovery has been hampered by onerous federal regulations. New Jerseyans who feel the pace of recovery has been too slow are more likely to feel that the state's management of the relief program (46%) rather than required federal regulation (36%) is to blame for the delays.

The *Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll* was conducted by telephone with 803 New Jersey adults from March 30 to April 1, 2014. This sample has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.5$  percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute and originally published by the Asbury Park Press and its sister publications (Courier-Post, Courier News, Daily Journal, Daily Record, and Home News Tribune). The Monmouth University Polling Institute has produced the most extensive set of polling data on Sandy's impact on New Jersey, including seven statewide polls, one survey of coastal residents and four poll releases from a panel of residents who suffered significant damage from the storm. All the polls can be found at: <http://www.monmouth.edu/polling/reports.asp>

**Methodological Note:**

For this survey, the classification of “Hardest Hit Area” includes zip codes covering coastal communities – on both beach and bay – in the four Jersey Shore counties as well as flooded urban communities in the northern part of the state (e.g. Moonachie, Little Ferry, Hoboken, parts of Jersey City, Perth Amboy, etc.). These areas represent 15% of the survey sample.

The “Region” classification for this Sandy-specific survey is defined by county: Northeast (Bergen, Passaic, Essex), Route 1 (Hudson, Union, Middlesex, Mercer), Northwest (Somerset, Hunterdon, Morris, Warren, Sussex), Shore Counties (Monmouth, Ocean, Atlantic, Cape May), and Southwest (Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland).

**DATA TABLES**

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

(\* Some columns may not add to 100% due to rounding.)

1. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with New Jersey’s Sandy recovery effort so far? [Is that very or somewhat (satisfied/dissatisfied)?]

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			NJ REGION					HARDEST HIT AREA	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	North-east	Route 1	North-west	Shore counties	South-west	Yes	Other
Very satisfied	<b>14%</b>	9%	17%	19%	14%	12%	16%	10%	18%	10%	14%
Somewhat satisfied	<b>34%</b>	32%	34%	42%	29%	35%	44%	33%	37%	31%	35%
Somewhat dissatisfied	<b>22%</b>	28%	20%	15%	21%	27%	13%	29%	17%	30%	21%
Very dissatisfied	<b>21%</b>	24%	18%	16%	22%	20%	21%	23%	18%	24%	20%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>9%</b>	7%	11%	8%	14%	5%	5%	5%	11%	5%	9%

TREND:	Apr 2014	Feb 2014	Dec 2013	Sep 2013	Apr 2013	Feb 2013
Very satisfied	14%	16%	25%	38%	31%	26%
Somewhat satisfied	34%	39%	41%	38%	42%	45%
Somewhat dissatisfied	22%	20%	15%	10%	11%	12%
Very dissatisfied	21%	19%	12%	6%	9%	10%
(VOL) Don't know	9%	6%	7%	8%	6%	7%
Unwtd N	803	803	802	783	806	803

2. How confident are you that the funds for New Jersey's Sandy recovery effort are being spent wisely – very, somewhat, not too, or not at all confident?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			NJ REGION					HARDEST HIT AREA	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	North-east	Route 1	North-west	Shore counties	South-west	Yes	Other
Very confident	<b>8%</b>	6%	7%	13%	9%	7%	8%	4%	10%	3%	8%
Somewhat confident	<b>43%</b>	39%	47%	46%	42%	39%	39%	43%	50%	42%	43%
Not too confident	<b>22%</b>	26%	20%	14%	19%	23%	27%	23%	19%	19%	22%
Not at all confident	<b>23%</b>	24%	22%	22%	25%	26%	23%	25%	15%	29%	21%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>5%</b>	5%	4%	5%	5%	5%	3%	5%	5%	7%	4%

TREND:	Apr 2014	Feb 2014	Sep 2013	Apr 2013	Feb 2013
Very confident	8%	9%	15%	12%	13%
Somewhat confident	43%	48%	47%	48%	51%
Not too confident	22%	21%	17%	19%	17%
Not at all confident	23%	20%	13%	17%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	2%	8%	3%	4%
Unwtd N	803	803	783	806	803

\* Note: prior version of this question used the term “federal funding.” The current poll used this for half the sample and “the funds” for the other half. The results for the two question versions differed by no more than two percentage points. This table presents the combined results.

3. Do you think the state has been doing a good job or bad job helping New Jersey residents who still need to repair their homes?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			NJ REGION					HARDEST HIT AREA	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	North-east	Route 1	North-west	Shore counties	South-west	Yes	Other
Good job	<b>43%</b>	38%	42%	55%	40%	44%	43%	43%	43%	48%	42%
Bad job	<b>47%</b>	52%	48%	36%	49%	49%	47%	49%	44%	47%	47%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>10%</b>	11%	10%	9%	11%	8%	10%	8%	13%	5%	11%

4. Do you think that getting rebuilding funds to impacted residents has been too slow or has taken about the right amount of time?

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			NJ REGION					HARDEST HIT AREA	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	North-east	Route 1	North-west	Shore counties	South-west	Yes	Other
Too slow	<b>73%</b>	79%	70%	68%	76%	77%	65%	73%	69%	73%	73%
Right amount of time	<b>21%</b>	17%	24%	26%	17%	18%	27%	24%	25%	22%	21%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>6%</b>	4%	6%	7%	6%	5%	8%	3%	6%	4%	6%

[The following question was asked only of people who said getting funds to impacted residents has been TOO SLOW: moe=+/-4.0%]

5. Do you think this delay is caused more by required federal regulations or more by how the state has managed the relief program? [ITEMS WERE ROTATED]

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			NJ REGION					HARDEST HIT AREA	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	North-east	Route 1	North-west	Shore counties	South-west	Yes	Other
Federal regulations	<b>36%</b>	26%	38%	54%	30%	33%	39%	44%	39%	43%	34%
How the state has managed relief program	<b>46%</b>	55%	40%	34%	45%	53%	45%	40%	44%	42%	47%
(VOL) Other	<b>5%</b>	5%	7%	1%	8%	1%	6%	4%	6%	6%	5%
(VOL) Don't know	<b>13%</b>	13%	15%	11%	16%	14%	10%	12%	11%	8%	13%

The Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press Poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute from March 30 to April 1, 2014 with a statewide random sample of 803 adult residents, including 601 via live interview on a landline telephone and 202 via live interview on a cell phone. Monmouth is responsible for all aspects of the survey questionnaire design, data weighting and analysis. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling has a maximum margin of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported by gender or party identification, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

POLL DEMOGRAPHICS (weighted)			
38% Dem	49% Male	28% 18-34	63% White
43% Ind	51% Female	40% 35-54	13% Black
19% Rep		32% 55+	15% Hispanic
			9% Asian/Other

	TOTAL	PARTY ID			NJ REGION					HARDEST HIT AREA	
		Dem	Ind	Rep	North-east	Route 1	North-west	Shore counties	South-west	Yes	Other
Unweighted N	803	285	329	163	197	192	119	133	146	106	656
moe	3.5%	5.8%	5.4%	7.7%	7.0%	7.1%	9.0%	8.5%	8.1%	9.5%	3.8%

It is the Monmouth University Polling Institute's policy to conduct surveys of all adult New Jersey residents, including voters and non-voters, on issues that affect the state. Specific voter surveys are conducted when appropriate during election cycles.

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