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RESIDENTS SAY NO TO JERSEY SHORE DRILLING

Opinion marks about-face from two years ago

Two years ago, most New Jerseyans supported off-shore drilling near the state's coast. Today, not so much. The latest *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Press Media Poll* also finds some concern that the Gulf of Mexico oil spill could eventually wash up on Jersey beaches.

Just 31% of Garden State residents are in favor of drilling for oil or gas off the New Jersey coast, while 63% are opposed. This marks a turnaround from two years ago, when a majority of 56% favored this energy option compared to only 36% who opposed it.

By comparison, support for both wind and nuclear energy remains basically unchanged. Fully 8-in-10 residents support the placement of energy-generating windmills off the New Jersey coast (80% today, compared to 82% in 2008) and just under 4-in-10 support building another nuclear power plant in the state (37% today, compared to 41% in 2008).

Interestingly, support levels for any of these energy options – drilling, wind, nuclear – are no different among those living in the state's six coastal counties (i.e. Monmouth, Ocean, Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, Salem) than they are for those living further inland.

“New Jersey has historically been concerned with environmental issues and the specter of anything washing up on our beaches may heighten anxiety over off-shore drilling. The fact that concern is the same for coastal and inland residents may speak to how much all New Jerseyans value our shore as a state asset,” said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

The three month old oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico has captured the attention of Garden State residents, with 85% saying they have read or heard a lot about this incident. More than half of New Jerseyans think that remnants of the oil spill washing up on our state's shores is a possibility. This includes 17% who consider it very likely to happen and 36% who say it is somewhat likely. Another

22% say the chances of this happening are not too likely and 20% rule it out entirely. [Note: the poll was conducted just prior to the tentative capping of the well on July 15.]

Only 25% of New Jerseyans approve of the U.S. government’s handling of the spill. Another 68% disapprove, including 83% of Republicans, 75% of independents, and 55% of Democrats.

Nearly 6-in-10 residents (59%) believe the accident indicates there are significant safety problems with off-shore drilling. Only 36% view this as an isolated incident that does not suggest there are fundamental problems with such drilling activity. Republicans (53%) are more likely than independents (37%) and Democrats (27%) to believe that the accident was unusual rather than indicative of systematic problems with off-shore drilling.

When asked to choose between two priorities for U.S. energy policy, more New Jerseyans would emphasize protecting the environment (55%) over keeping energy prices low (28%). Democrats (66%) and independents (56%) are more likely than Republicans (37%) to place a higher priority on environmental protection over lower energy prices.

The *Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Press Media Poll* was conducted by telephone with 801 New Jersey adults from July 7 to 11, 2010. This sample has a margin of error of ± 3.5 percent. The poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute and originally published by the New Jersey Press Media newspaper group (Asbury Park Press, Courier-Post, Courier News, Daily Journal, Daily Record, and Home News Tribune).

DATA TABLES

The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

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

1. Would you favor or oppose [READ ITEM]? [ITEMS WERE ROTATED]

Placing electricity-generating windmills off the coast of New Jersey

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			COASTAL COUNTY RESIDENT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Yes	No
Favor	80%	79%	85%	78%	83%	80%	81%	79%
Oppose	14%	14%	11%	14%	12%	18%	13%	15%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	7%	4%	8%	5%	2%	5%	7%
Unwtd N	801	747	54	240	349	195	182	605

TREND:	July 2010	July 2008
Favor	80%	82%
Oppose	14%	12%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	6%
Unwtd N	801	496

Building another nuclear power plant in New Jersey

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			COASTAL COUNTY RESIDENT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Yes	No
Favor	37%	38%	24%	31%	36%	53%	37%	36%
Oppose	58%	57%	67%	66%	58%	43%	60%	59%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	5%	9%	4%	6%	4%	4%	5%
Unwtd N	801	747	54	240	349	195	182	605

TREND:	July 2010	July 2008
Favor	37%	41%
Oppose	58%	51%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	8%
Unwtd N	801	496

Drilling for oil or gas off the coast of New Jersey

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			COASTAL COUNTY RESIDENT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Yes	No
Favor	31%	31%	28%	21%	32%	49%	32%	30%
Oppose	63%	61%	72%	75%	64%	43%	64%	63%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	8%	0%	4%	4%	8%	4%	7%
Unwtd N	801	747	54	240	349	195	182	605

TREND:	July 2010	July 2008
Favor	31%	56%
Oppose	63%	36%
(VOL) Don't know	7%	7%
Unwtd N	801	508

2. Right now, which of the following do you think should be the more important priority for U.S. energy policy – keeping energy prices low or protecting the environment?
[CHOICES WERE ROTATED]

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			COASTAL COUNTY RESIDENT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Yes	No
Keeping energy prices low	28%	29%	16%	25%	23%	45%	23%	29%
Protecting the environment	55%	53%	71%	66%	56%	37%	63%	53%
(VOL) Both equally	15%	15%	12%	8%	19%	17%	13%	16%
(VOL) Don't know	3%	3%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	2%
Unwtd N	801	747	54	240	349	195	182	605

3. How much have you heard or read about the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico – a lot, a little, or nothing at all?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			COASTAL COUNTY RESIDENT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Yes	No
A lot	85%	86%	80%	87%	84%	88%	89%	85%
A little	14%	13%	20%	12%	15%	12%	11%	14%
Nothing at all	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Unwtd N	801	747	54	240	349	195	182	605

[The following questions were asked only of those who heard at least a little about the oil spill: moe = ± 3.5%]

4. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. government is handling the oil spill?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			COASTAL COUNTY RESIDENT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Yes	No
Approve	25%	25%	27%	35%	21%	13%	20%	27%
Disapprove	68%	68%	70%	55%	75%	83%	77%	65%
(VOL) Don't know	6%	7%	3%	10%	4%	5%	2%	8%
Unwtd N	795	741	54	238	348	195	182	601

5. Does this oil spill indicate that there are significant safety problems with off-shore drilling or is this just an isolated incident and off-shore drilling is basically safe?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			COASTAL COUNTY RESIDENT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Yes	No
Significant safety problems	59%	60%	53%	68%	58%	45%	56%	61%
Isolated incident/Basically safe	36%	35%	43%	27%	37%	53%	39%	34%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%	2%	5%	5%
Unwtd N	795	741	54	238	348	195	182	601

6. How likely is it that the spilled oil will eventually reach New Jersey shores – very, somewhat, not too, or not at all likely?

	TOTAL	REGISTERED VOTER		PARTY ID			COASTAL COUNTY RESIDENT	
		Yes	No	Dem	Ind	Rep	Yes	No
Very likely	17%	17%	21%	21%	17%	10%	22%	16%
Somewhat likely	36%	37%	29%	33%	37%	38%	34%	36%
Not too likely	22%	22%	21%	20%	20%	27%	26%	21%
Not at all likely	20%	20%	24%	18%	22%	23%	16%	21%
(VOL) Don't know	5%	5%	6%	7%	5%	3%	2%	6%
Unwtd N	795	741	54	238	348	195	182	601

The Monmouth University/Gannett New Jersey Press Media Poll was conducted by the Monmouth University Polling Institute on July 7-11, 2010 with a statewide random sample of 801 adult residents. Sampling and data collection services were provided by Braun Research, Inc. 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	48% Male	28% 18-34	67% White
40% Ind	52% Female	41% 35-54	13% Black
22% Rep		31% 55+	12% Hispanic
			8% Asian/Other

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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