

Attitudes and Opinions About Environmental Issues in Indiana

2020 Survey Results

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Executive Summary

How important are environmental issues to Indiana residents?

To answer this question, Arizona State University's Morrison Institute for Public Policy created two different representative samples of 800 registered Indiana voters and surveyed them in March 2017 and January 2020 to gauge their attitudes about environmental issues and how those attitudes may have changed during the three-year gap. [Morrison Institute for Public Policy](#) designed the questionnaire and compiled and analyzed the data for [Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust](#). When a statistical significance comparison was appropriate, and the change in response rate from 2017 to 2020 was found statistically significant at a 95% confidence level, the figures are highlighted in gold.

One of the primary questions posed to survey participants was: "Will Indiana voters recognize increased coverage of environmental issues if the local newspaper increases its coverage?" Survey results indicate that the answer is "yes" for 36% of respondents, although more than half believe coverage has "stayed the same." It is, however, important to note that any increased coverage among other local media may have also impacted the findings.

The survey found that education, health care, the environment, and jobs rank, in that order, as the four top priorities for Hoosiers (among the choices provided). The percentage of voters who ranked the environment as their top choice is 14%. The environment was cited as the most important issue by 19% of Democrats.

Forty-seven percent of Hoosiers are not worried about the longevity of Indiana's water supply, although 19% are concerned, believing the state will have a water shortage at some point over the next 50 years (34% said they did not know).

As was true in 2017, environmental issues, overall, have a near-universal appeal to Hoosiers, with 98% of respondents saying they feel the state's parks, preserves, forests and open spaces are either "very important" (72%) or "somewhat important" (26%). Only 2% said such areas are "not very important" to them.

For the most part, Indiana's registered voters view the environmental issues facing their state as a serious problem. When asked whether environmental issues are "very serious and need to be addressed immediately," "serious but not critical," or "not very serious," 30% indicate the issues are "very serious" while 50% rate the issues as "serious." Only 17% responded "not very serious."

Similarly, about one-third of Indiana voters (31%) are "very concerned" about "the state's overall natural environment," 45% are "somewhat concerned" and 23% are "not too concerned."

Survey participants were asked which of the following is closest to their own position:

- "Protecting the environment should be given priority, even at the risk of slowing economic growth."
- "Economic growth should be given priority, even at the risk of damaging the environment."

Seventy-two percent selected "protecting the environment should be given priority." Seventeen percent selected economic growth.

The following quote from the 2017 report remains accurate: "Widespread affinity for the environment was consistent among all age categories, men and women, all ethnic groups and, to a lesser extent, political affiliations. That is not say there aren't differences among the various demographics on specific environmental issues because

there are divisions in everything from addressing climate change to accessing environmental-related news.”

Seventy-six percent of Indiana voters believe the earth’s average temperature is rising. Among that 76%, more than two-thirds agree that “climate change is primarily the result of human activity.” And seven in 10 Indiana voters believe both the federal and state governments need to do more to combat climate change.

In terms of getting environmental-related news, TV, social media, and local online news sites lead the way. More than half of Indiana respondents (52%) said they watch TV for environmental news and 45% cited social media as one of their choices. A printed local newspaper was cited by 37%. (Note: On this question, respondents could select as many choices as applicable.)

Predictably, there are differences by age when it comes to information gathering. As age increases, the likelihood of selecting traditional sources (TV, local newspaper) increases. Not surprisingly, young adults are more likely to use internet-based sources.

Methodology

Two representative samples of 800 Indiana registered voters were interviewed by telephone to determine their opinions and attitudes about environmental issues pertaining to Indiana. Interviews were conducted in January 2020 and in March 2017. The sample was quota-selected from 72 strata based on political party affiliation, age, gender, and race to match the political and demographic characteristics of Indiana according to the most recent voter data. The sampling frame included both landline and mobile telephones. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish (as requested by the respondent). This report does not report answers to survey questions by both location of residence and race because cutting the data that way results in sample sizes that are too small to be meaningful. The small numbers of responses create large margins of error and therefore the responses may not accurately represent the opinions of all residents in each geography.

This study is a follow-up to a 2017 study and has the same parameters. This report employs many of the same questions as the 2017 study for tracking and comparison purposes, but it also has a few new questions. The purpose of this study is two-fold:

- To determine whether attitudes toward and opinions about environmental issues changed during that three-year period and, if so, in what way.

- To measure whether Indiana voters perceive increased coverage of environmental issues by local media.

One of the principal reasons for conducting this study is to answer the question: “Will Indiana voters recognize increased coverage of environmental issues if the local newspaper increases its coverage?” Slightly more than one-third (36%) of survey respondents believe local coverage of the environment has increased during the past few years, 6% believe it has decreased, and slightly less than half (47%) believe it has “stayed about the same.” Ten percent of respondents said they don’t know. There are minimal differences of opinion among the subgroups analyzed (i.e., age, sex, political affiliation).

Importance of Issues

In an effort to determine the importance Indiana residents place on environmental issues relative to other pressing statewide issues, they were asked, “Which one of the following do you believe should be the top priority for the governor and the Legislature?”

The issues listed below were read to respondents (changing the order for each respondent). “Improving the public education system” and “making health care more accessible and affordable” rose to the top – cited by 28% and 26% of Indiana voters, respectively. They were also selected by 28% and 26% of Indiana voters, respectively, in 2017 – no change over the three-year test period. As the following table illustrates, “protecting the state’s air and water quality, land use and wildlife” (the measure used for environmental issues) is tied for third with “attracting and retaining businesses and jobs.”

“Which one of the following do you believe should be the top priority for the governor and the Legislature?”		
	2020	2017
Improving the public education system	28%	28%
Making health care more accessible and affordable	26%	26%
Protecting the state’s air and water quality, land use and wildlife	14%	11%
Attracting and retaining businesses and jobs	14%	15%
Lowering taxes	8%	10%
Reforming the state’s immigration policies	5%	4%
Improving public safety	5%	7%

As the following table shows, while there are some minor differences by age and political affiliation, the basic order of issue priorities remains unchanged. This is not to say, of course, that environmental issues are unimportant to the state's voters who did not select it as their top priority; it only indicates that education, health care and economic development are a higher priority for more Indiana voters than are environmental issues.

Percentage of Respondents Who Rank Each Statement as Their Top Issue, By Age Group and Political Affiliation						
	Age			Political Affiliation		
	18-35	36-64	65+	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.
Improving the public education system	34%	28%	23%	32%	27%	26%
Making health care more accessible and affordable	26%	27%	24%	30%	26%	22%
Protecting the state's air and water quality, land use and wildlife	15%	13%	17%	19%	14%	10%
Attracting and retaining businesses and jobs	12%	16%	12%	8%	14%	20%
Lowering taxes	6%	8%	11%	5%	8%	10%
Improving public safety	3%	4%	9%	3%	5%	7%
Reforming the state's immigration policies	4%	5%	6%	3%	7%	4%

Survey respondents were also asked to identify their second priority from the above list. Fewer than one-third of Indiana voters (31%) rank "protecting the state's air and water quality, land use and wildlife" as one of their top two priorities among the choices provided. Again, education and health care were at the top of the list.

Issues Identified as First or Second Priority	
Improving the public education system	52%
Making health care more accessible and affordable	44%
Protecting the state's air and water quality, land use and wildlife	31%
Attracting and retaining businesses and jobs	30%
Lowering taxes	18%
Improving public safety	15%
Reforming the state's immigration policies	11%

Attitudes Toward Environmental Concerns

Nearly all Indiana voters (98%) feel the state’s “parks, preserves, forests and open spaces” are either “very important” (72%) or “somewhat important” (26%) to them. Only 2% said they are “not very important” to them. As was the case in 2017, this finding is consistent among all age categories, men and women, all ethnic groups and all political affiliations. Clearly, Indiana voters feel strongly, and positively, about Indiana’s outdoor environment.

More than six in 10 Indiana voters (63%) feel Indiana should do more “to develop alternative energy sources such as solar and wind power,” compared to 60% in 2017. Again, while there are slight differences by age group and sex (young adults (76%) and women (67%) are more likely to feel too little is being done), the big differences are related to political affiliation – 78% of Democrats believe more should be done compared with 47% of Republicans. Two-thirds of Independents (65%) believe the state should do more to develop alternative energy sources.

For the most part, Indiana registered voters view the environmental issues facing the state as a serious problem. When asked whether environmental issues are “very serious and need to be addressed immediately,” “serious but not critical,” or “not very serious,” 30% indicated the issues are “very serious” while 50% rated the issues as “serious.” Only 17% responded “not very serious.” Democrats (42% said “very serious”) view environmental issues as more serious than do Republicans (19%) and Independents (31%). When broken down by county, there are no major differences in perceptions by residents of Marion and surrounding counties compared to the rest of the state.

Perception of environmental issues facing Indiana, such as water and air quality, land and water use and wildlife protection, by geography			
	Very Serious	Serious	Not Very Serious
Marion and Surrounding Counties	32%	48%	17%
All Other Counties	29%	51%	18%

In fact, 26% (36% in 2017) of registered Republicans indicate environmental issues are “not a very serious problem” compared with just 10% of Democrats. Independents fall

between the two political parties, with 15% rating environmental issues as a “not very serious” problem.

Similarly, about one-third of Indiana voters (31%) are “very concerned” about “the state’s overall natural environment,” 45% are “somewhat concerned” and 23% are “not too concerned.” There are few differences of opinion among the three age groups analyzed although 28% of 36- to 64-year-olds are “not too concerned” compared with 15% of 18- to 35-year-olds and 19% of those 65 and older. Women show higher levels of concern (82% are “very” or “somewhat concerned”) than men (70%). As is true for most questions asked in this survey, differences are greatest when comparing registered Democrats (87% are “very” or “somewhat concerned”) and registered Republicans (69%).

For most questions in the survey, young adults show somewhat greater interest and concern about the environment than do older adults – although the differences are not substantial. Further, women tend to be somewhat more sensitive to environmental issues than men. Similarly, Democrats tend to be more concerned about environmental issues than Republicans, and concern among Independents falls between the two.

Survey participants were asked which of the following statements is closest to their own position:

- “Protecting the environment should be given priority, even at the risk of slowing economic growth.”
- “Economic growth should be given priority, even at the risk of damaging the environment.”

Seventy-eight percent selected “protecting the environment should be given priority.” Nineteen percent selected “economic growth.” Young adults (90%) and women (83%) are more likely to make the environmental choice than adults 65 and older (72%) and men (74%) although, again, differences are not substantial. However, the percentage of Democrats (87%) who selected the environment over economic growth is almost 20 percentage points higher than Republicans (69%; 60% in 2017). And, as is true for most questions, the opinions of Independents fall between the two major political parties (80%).

Regardless of age, sex or political affiliation, Indiana voters generally believe that the air quality in the cities and large towns is “good” (49%) or “fair” (29%). Few rated it “excellent” (9%) or “poor” (7%).

Indiana Government Report Card

The governor and Legislature received mediocre reviews for their “care of the state’s natural resources” – 5% (5% in 2017) said their care of the state’s natural resources is “excellent;” 35% (30% in 2017) said “good;” 37% said “fair;” and 12% (17% in 2017) said “poor.”

There is a clear political divide on this issue, with 53% of Republicans rating the governor and Legislature’s “care for the state’s natural resources” either “excellent” (10%) or “good” (43%), while registered Democrats rate them at 3% and 22%, respectively. On the other end of the scale, 66% of Democrats rate the governor and Legislature’s “care of the state’s natural resources” either as “fair” (45%) or “poor” (21%), compared with 37% of Republicans (30% said “fair” and 7% “poor”).

As was true in 2017, more than six in 10 Indiana registered voters (64%) believe “the governor and Legislature should require further regulation to reduce greenhouse gases,” including 74% of adults age 18 to 35; 68% of women; 80% of Democrats; and 66% of Independents. Republicans are the only subgroup analyzed with fewer than half (44%) favoring additional regulation.

Respondents were asked to rate the Indiana state government’s performance on the three issues listed below as excellent, good, fair or poor.

“How do you rate the state government’s ... ?”				
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Protection of the state’s wildlife	8%	42%	30%	10%
Long-term plan to protect and preserve its water supply	4%	31%	29%	9%
Plan to ensure a high level of water quality for residential use and consumption	4%	40%	27%	9%

Overall, responses did not vary greatly between registered voters from Marion and its surrounding counties when compared to the rest of the state.

Protection of the state's wildlife				
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Marion and Surrounding Counties	5%	33%	36%	12%
All Other Counties	8%	44%	29%	9%

The only ranking that differs by a statistically significant margin between Marion County and surrounding counties to all other counties is the “good” category.

Long-term plan to protect and preserve its water supply				
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Marion and Surrounding Counties	3%	26%	28%	11%
All Other Counties	4%	32%	29%	9%

There are no statistically significant differences between the perceptions of Indiana's long-term plan to protect and preserve its water supply by residents of Marion and its surrounding counties when compared to all other counties.

Plan to ensure a high level of water quality for residential use and consumption				
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Marion and Surrounding Counties	4%	36%	27%	11%
All Other Counties	4%	41%	27%	8%

There are no statistically significant differences by any ranking by county of residence.

The only major differences in the assessment of the state government's performance in protecting wildlife are among political party affiliations and between men and women. While nearly two-thirds (63%) of Republicans rate the government as either “excellent” (10%) or “good” (54%) at “protecting the state's wildlife,” less than one-third of Democrats feel the same way (36% rate the state either “excellent” or “good”). As is the

case throughout the study, Independents fall between the two extremes (47%). Men are more favorable to the state's performance in protecting wildlife (58%) than are women (41%).

Voters give a mediocre assessment of the state's long-term plan to protect and preserve its water supply. More respondents rate the plan as "fair" or "poor" (38%) than rate it as "excellent" or "good" (35%). Almost three in 10 respondents (27%) said they don't know. The split between Democrats (24% rate the long-term water plan either "excellent" or "good") and Republicans (47%) is consistent with the political polarization apparent throughout the study.

Voters are skeptical of the state's "plan to ensure a high level of water quality for residential use and consumption" and the "plan to preserve and protect its water supply." Forty-four percent rate the state's plan to "ensure a high level of water quality" as "excellent" (4%) or "good" (40%) while 36% rate it as "fair" (27%) or "poor" (9%). The only notable difference, again, is between Democrats (29% rate the "plan to ensure a high level of water quality" as "excellent" (1%) or "good" (28%)) compared with 57% of Republicans (8% "excellent;" 49% "good").

Climate Change

The climate change divide remains alive and well in Indiana although, based on responses to the following statements, two-thirds to three-quarters of Indiana voters feel more should be done to combat it. Respondents were asked whether they "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with each of the following statements – responses from the 2017 study are listed below the 2020 findings.

Percent in Agreement with Statements about Climate Change, by Political Affiliation								
	Strongly Agree/Agree				Strongly Disagree/Disagree			
	Total	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	Total	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.
The federal government needs to do more to combat climate change	72%	86%	76%	55%	26%	11%	21%	43%
2017	71%	88%	80%	47%	29%	12%	20%	53%
The state government needs to do more to combat climate change	70%	84%	76%	53%	26%	10%	21%	44%
2017	71%	87%	77%	50%	29%	13%	23%	50%
Climate change is a made-up problem and does not need to be addressed	23%	12%	21%	32%	75%	85%	75%	67%
2017	24%	10%	18%	41%	77%	90%	82%	59%
Climate change is one of the most serious problems facing the world today	66%	82%	71%	47%	33%	17%	28%	51%
2017	63%	84%	68%	42%	37%	17%	32%	58%

While political divides are apparent, even among Republicans nearly half see a need to more aggressively address climate change. Seven in 10 voters believe both the federal and state governments need to do more to combat climate change. As the above table shows, there are few meaningful changes between 2017 and 2020. The story is the same, if slightly stronger, that the vast majority of Indiana voters recognize climate change and support addressing it more aggressively. And, the demand for this will likely continue to rise since young adults, those 18 to 35, are more supportive of combatting climate change. For example, 83% of young adults either “strongly agree” or “agree” that “climate change is one of the most serious problems facing the world today.” This compares with 60% of 36- to 64-year-olds and 60% of those 65 and older.

Half of respondents (50%) believe “Indiana has experienced an increase in rain and flooding” over the past 10 years. There are no large differences among the subgroups

analyzed other than a higher percentage of Democrats (64%) noted an increase in rain and flooding.

Three-quarters of Indiana voters (76%) believe the earth's average temperature is rising, including 86% of 18- to 35-year-olds, 80% of women, 88% of Democrats, and 79% of Independents. Among those who do not believe the earth's average temperature is rising, the subgroup with the largest share is Republicans (33%).

Eight in 10 Indiana voters (79%) who believe the earth's average temperature is rising believe "climate change is primarily the result of human activity." The only subgroup analyzed where less than 70% believe climate change is primarily the result of human behavior is registered Republicans (although even among Republicans a large majority, 67%, believe climate change is primarily caused by human activity). This finding is consistent with the 2017 study when about three-quarters of those who said they believed the earth's average temperature is rising attributed it to humans.

Slightly more than one-third (35%) of those who believe the earth's average temperature is rising are "very concerned" about the rising temperatures, 45% are "somewhat concerned" and only 19% are "not concerned." Political preference is again related to these attitudes and opinions. While only 17% of Republicans are "very concerned," 56% of Democrats and 37% of Independents fall into that category. In fact, nearly one-third of Republicans (29%) who believe the earth's temperature is rising are "not concerned."

Water and Waterways

Forty-seven percent of voters believe Indiana "has enough water to cover all its needs for the next 50 years" and 19% said there will not be enough. One-third (34%) said they don't know. Thirty-five percent or more of all subgroups (other than Democrats) agree Indiana has sufficient water. In comparison, Democrats show some skepticism (25% do not believe the state has sufficient water to cover all the state's needs, compared with 13% of Republicans and 20% of Independents).

These findings differ markedly from 2017, but the question was worded differently in 2020: "into the foreseeable future" rather than "over the next 50 years," which appears to have influenced responses. In 2017, 58% of respondents believed Indiana had enough water to "cover all its needs into the foreseeable future" (versus 47% in 2020 who said Indiana "has enough water to cover all its needs for the next 50 years"); 17% did not believe the state had sufficient water resources; 25% said they didn't know.

When asked, “Assuming that having enough water for home use is the highest priority, which of the following do you consider to be the second highest priority – water for landscaping, swimming pools and non-essential home uses; water to support new industries in the state; water for further development and new homes; water to support agriculture; or sustaining flows for rivers and wildlife?” Half of Indiana voters (50%) said “water for agriculture” and 35% selected “sustaining flows for rivers and wildlife.” Young adults, those 18 to 35, was the group most likely to select “sustaining flows for rivers and wildlife” (43%). None of the other choices provided was selected by more than 8% of respondents.

Overall, there are no major differences in opinion regarding the second highest priority for water use, and none of the differences are statistically significant.

Second highest priority for water use, by geography					
	Landscaping, swimming pools and non-essential home uses	Support new industries in the state	Further development and new homes	Support Indiana agriculture	Sustaining flows for rivers and wildlife
Marion and Surrounding Counties	2%	6%	8%	49%	36%
All Other Counties	2%	5%	7%	51%	36%

When this question was asked in 2017, the choice “sustaining flows for rivers and wildlife” was not offered. Consequently, 76% of respondents cited “water for agriculture” as their choice. Because the environmental choice was added for the 2020 study, we can be sure that concern for “rivers and wildlife” is prominent among Indiana voters.

As the following table illustrates, six in 10 registered Indiana voters (59%) believe the state will have enough water to meet its needs into the foreseeable future. While Democrats are slightly less optimistic than Republicans, even among Democrats one-half (51%) believe there will be enough water to meet Indiana’s water needs into the foreseeable future.

Percent in Agreement with Statements about Water and Waterways, by Political Affiliation								
	Strongly Agree/Agree				Strongly Disagree/Disagree			
	Total	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.	Total	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.
There is plenty of water available in Indiana to cover all its needs into the foreseeable future	59%	51%	58%	67%	24%	30%	24%	20%
2017	72%	66%	69%	82%	28%	34%	31%	18%
Indiana's drinking water is healthy and unpolluted	58%	47%	57%	65%	34%	40%	34%	27%
2017	57%	46%	56%	66%	43%	54%	44%	34%
Indiana's waterways are polluted and need to be cleaned up	69%	82%	70%	58%	21%	9%	19%	33%
2017	72%	84%	72%	63%	28%	16%	28%	37%
Healthy, unpolluted waterways increase the state's property values	89%	89%	88%	91%	7%	8%	8%	6%
2017	90%	90%	87%	90%	11%	10%	11%	10%
Indiana's waterways are well maintained	51%	42%	50%	59%	36%	45%	36%	30%
2017	55%	48%	54%	63%	45%	53%	46%	37%
Indiana's waterways are easily accessible to the general public	81%	75%	80%	86%	13%	19%	13%	9%
2017	82%	82%	78%	87%	18%	18%	22%	13%
I take pride in Indiana's waterways	79%	73%	80%	83%	15%	18%	16%	11%
2017	81%	77%	79%	86%	19%	23%	21%	14%
The White River is polluted and needs to be cleaned up	63%	66%	64%	60%	8%	2%	9%	11%
2017	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

While the majority of registered voters (58%) believe Indiana’s drinking water is healthy and unpolluted, more than one-third (34%) are not convinced of the purity of Indiana’s drinking water, including nearly half of Democrats (47%).

Seven in 10 voters (69%) agree Indiana’s waterways are polluted and need to be cleaned up, including 82% of Democrats and 70% of Independents.

Nearly everyone (89%) agrees that healthy, unpolluted waterways increase the state’s property values.

Only 53% of registered voters agree that Indiana’s waterways are well maintained, including fewer than half of registered Democrats (42%) compared with 59% of Republicans.

As was true in 2017, registered voters agree that Indiana’s waterways are easily accessible to the general public (81% concur), and eight in 10 (79%) take pride in Indiana’s waterways.

Nearly two-thirds of voters (63%) believe the “White River is polluted and needs to be cleaned up.” An additional 29% said they “don’t know.” This question was not asked in the 2017 survey.

Nearly one-quarter of registered voters (23%) use Indiana’s waterways for recreational purposes at least one a month, including one in 10 who use the waterways once a week or more often. Four in 10 (43%) use the waterways only a few times a year and 23% never use them. This pattern of behavior matches the 2017 findings.

Indiana’s waterways are polluted and need to be cleaned up, by geography				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Marion and Surrounding Counties	21%	50%	15%	2%
All Other Counties	22%	46%	21%	2%

The White River is polluted and needs to be cleaned up, by geography				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Marion and Surrounding Counties	28%	52%	8%	0%
All Other Counties	19%	38%	7%	1%

Concern About Environmental Issues

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of concern about each of the issues listed below. The findings indicate the highest levels of concern are for “pollution in the rivers, lakes and reservoirs” and, secondly (a tie), for “protection of the state’s wildlife” and “greenhouse gas emissions from coal-fired power plants.”

For all the listed environmental issues, there is a difference in level of concern between Democrats and Republicans (with Independents’ level of concern falling between the two parties). For example, while 59% of Democrats are “very concerned” about “greenhouse gas emissions from coal-fired power plants”, only 25% of Republicans indicate they are “very concerned.” Six in 10 registered Democrats (59%) are “very concerned” about “pollution in the rivers, lakes and reservoirs,” compared with 32% of registered Republicans and 49% of Independents. This pattern persists for all environmental issues addressed in this research.

Level of Concern about Environmental Issues, 2020 and 2017		
	2020	2017
Greenhouse gas emissions from coal-fired power plants		
Very concerned	40%	37%
Somewhat concerned	35%	39%
Not at all concerned	23%	23%
Don't Know	2%	N/A
Vehicle emissions		
Very concerned	30%	N/A
Somewhat concerned	44%	N/A
Not at all concerned	25%	N/A
Don't Know	2%	N/A
Pollution in the rivers, lakes and reservoirs		
Very concerned	46%	50%
Somewhat concerned	42%	40%
Not at all concerned	11%	11%
Don't Know	1%	N/A
Air quality in the state's cities and large towns		
Very concerned	29%	34%
Somewhat concerned	48%	46%
Not at all concerned	22%	20%
Don't Know	1%	N/A
Pollution from concentrated animal feeding operations		
Very concerned	32%	28%
Somewhat concerned	37%	43%
Not at all concerned	25%	30%
Don't Know	6%	N/A
The protection of the state's wildlife		
Very concerned	40%	41%
Somewhat concerned	41%	43%
Not at all concerned	17%	16%
Don't Know	1%	N/A
Land use policies		
Very concerned	22%	21%
Somewhat concerned	46%	52%
Not at all concerned	20%	27%
Don't Know	12%	N/A

The overwhelming majority of Indiana voters (91%) have made personal changes to help protect the environment such as recycling, using LED lighting, volunteering or using low-flow faucets. This means the overwhelming majority of virtually every subgroup analyzed in this research has made personal changes to help protect the environment.

Responses by individuals living in Marion County and surrounding counties do not vary significantly from surrounding counties.

Pollution from concentrated animal feeding operations, by geography			
	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Not Concerned
Marion and Surrounding Counties	32%	41%	21%
All Other Counties	32%	36%	26%

There are no significant differences in concern about pollution from concentrated animal feeding operations.

Land use policies, by geography			
	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Not Concerned
Marion and Surrounding Counties	26%	42%	15%
All Other Counties	22%	46%	22%

Registered voters in “all other counties” were more likely to be “not concerned” about the state’s land use policies compared to “Marion County and surrounding counties” by a statistically significant margin.

Environmental Organizations

Respondents were asked, “Overall, would you say that environmental organizations are “very effective,” “somewhat effective,” or “not very effective.” The vast majority, 68%, responded “somewhat effective” while 19% said “not very effective.” Only 6% responded “very effective.” Overall, there are no statistically significant differences in opinion by residents of Marion County and surrounding counties compared to all other counties.

Perception of environmental organizations, by geography			
	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Very Effective
Marion and Surrounding Counties	9%	67%	18%
All Other Counties	6%	67%	19%

Information Gathering

Respondents were asked, “From which of the following sources do you get your information about the state’s environmental issues and problems?” The following list of choices was presented to the respondents (read in a different order to each respondent). The table below shows the percentage of respondents who selected each of the choices in 2017 and 2020 (respondents could select as many choices as applicable).

Predictably, there are differences by age. As age increases, the likelihood of selecting TV (selected by 70% of those 65 and older and 37% of those 18 to 35) and/or a printed local newspaper (selected by 54% of those 65 and older compared with 26% of those age 18 to 35) increases. The likelihood of selecting a computer-based/internet source decreases as age increases (61% of those 18 to 35 years of age selected social media, compared to only 26% of those 65 and older).

Sources of Information about Environmental Issues and Problems, 2020 and 2017		
	2020	2017
TV	52%	56%
Social media	45%	38%
A local online news site	40%	37%
Friends and family	42%	41%
A printed local newspaper	37%	41%
Radio	33%	35%
A non-news online site	26%	24%
Advocacy groups	22%	18%
Or some other source	21%	4%

A statistically significant change between how registered voters consume information about environmental issues and problems in “Marion County and surrounding counties” between 2017 and 2020 is that more voters are using “a local online news site” in 2020. In “All Other Counties” there is a significant increase in usage of “social media.”

Sources of Information about Environmental Issues and Problems by Marion County and Surrounding Counties, and All Other Counties, 2020 and 2017				
	Marion County & Surrounding		All Other Counties	
	2020	2017	2020	2017
TV	49%	56%	52%	56%
Social media	37%	42%	48%	36%
A local online news site	48%	36%	42%	38%
Friends and family	38%	38%	42%	42%
A printed local newspaper	31%	38%	39%	42%
Radio	31%	35%	33%	35%
A non-news online site	27%	24%	26%	25%
Advocacy groups	19%	15%	22%	19%

As noted at the outset of this report, slightly more than one-third (36%) of survey respondents believe local coverage of the environment has increased during the past few years, 6% believe it has decreased, and slightly less than half (47%) believe it has “stayed about the same.” These percentages are similar to opinions of both residents in

Marion County and surrounding counties and all other counties, and there are no statistically significant differences in opinion between these two geographic groups. Ten percent of respondents said they don't know. There are minimal differences of opinion among any of the subgroups analyzed (i.e., age, sex, political affiliation).