



Opinion Research
Strategic Communication

MEMO

DATE: May 25, 2012

TO: Interested parties

FROM: Emma White and John Russonello

RE: Ohio voters and the Great Lakes

The statewide Ohio survey, conducted May 14 through May 18, indicates that Ohioans of all political colors agree that the federal government should be protecting and spending money to restore Lake Erie and all the Great Lakes.

Majorities of Democrats, Republicans and independents indicate support for continued funding of Great Lakes restoration, and for an expansive view of the Clean Water Act, which will come up for renewal soon in Congress.

The survey of 804 general election voters was conducted by Fallon Research of Ohio, from questions written by Belden Russonello Strategists LLC in Washington, DC.

Specific highlights are as follows:

- 1) A large majority of Ohio voters (72%) supports continuing Great Lakes restoration funding, including 63% of Republicans, 72% of independents, and 79% of Democrats. Nearly half overall (47%) strongly support continued funding, including a majority of men (55%). A majority of voters (54%) rejects the idea that the Great Lakes should take a budget cut along with everything else.
- 2) Although the potential entrance of Asian Carp into the Great Lakes is not something most Ohio voters have heard a great deal about, a brief description of the problem leads a majority (57%) to say they would be very concerned if the fish got into Lake Erie. Familiarity and concern are both higher among men, while political party makes little impact.

- 3) Half of Ohio voters (49%) support erecting a barrier in the Chicago River to keep out the Asian Carp while only three in ten (29%) oppose that idea. Two in ten (22%) are unsure, not a surprising finding given the unfamiliar issue. Men are more likely to favor the barrier (53%), but views are equal across parties (Republicans 49%, independents 50%, Democrats 48%).
- 4) There is broad bipartisan support for an expansive reading of the Clean Water Act. When presented with arguments on both sides, 68% overall say that the Clean Water Act should cover wetlands and small streams, including 55% of Republicans, 66% of independents, and 79% of Democrats.

Support for Continued Restoration Funding

Over the last three years, the U.S. federal government has spent over \$300 million dollars a year to improve the condition of the Great Lakes by cleaning up toxic waste and bacteria, reducing run-off pollution from cities and farms, and protecting and rebuilding wetlands. In your opinion, should the federal government continue that funding for Great Lakes restoration, or should it reduce the funding? Follow-up: Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	Strongly continue	Somewhat continue	Somewhat reduce funding	Strongly reduce funding	DK/NA
Total	47%	25	14	9	6
Men	55%	22	10	9	5
Women	40%	28	17	9	6
Republican	40%	23	17	12	8
Democrat	53%	26	11	6	5
Independent	46%	26	14	10	5

Restoration Funding Cuts

Which point of view do you agree with more? The government should focus on creating jobs and reducing the federal budget deficit and the Great Lakes should take a budget cut along with everything else...OR...the government should maintain spending to keep the Great Lakes healthy and protect the health of the millions of people who rely on them for drinking water?

	Great Lakes should take a budget cut along with everything else	Government should maintain spending to keep the Great Lakes	DK/NA
Total	37%	54	9
Men	34%	58	9
Women	40%	50	10
Republican	49%	43	7
Democrat	27%	62	11
Independent	40%	52	9

Familiarity with Asian Carp

How much have you heard or read about a fish called the Asian Carp? Is it a lot, some, only a little or nothing at all?

	A lot	Some	Only a little	Nothing at all	DK/NA
Total	16%	21	20	42	1
Men	23%	26	21	30	1
Women	10%	17	20	53	1
Republican	17%	27	17	39	*
Democrat	14%	18	24	44	1
Independent	16%	19	19	44	1

Concern about Asian Carp

The Asian Carp is a very large invasive species that breeds rapidly and experts say could destroy the other fish and ecosystems of Lake Erie and the other Great Lakes. If the Asian Carp were to get into Lake Erie, how concerned would you be? Would you say that you would be very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not at all concerned?

	Very	Somewhat	Not very	Not at all	DK/NA
Total	57%	33	4	4	2
Men	63%	28	3	4	1
Women	52%	36	5	4	3
Republican	55%	33	4	5	3
Democrat	58%	33	4	3	3
Independent	57%	32	5	5	1

Support for Carp Barrier

One solution for protecting Lake Erie from the Asian Carp is to construct a physical barrier in the Chicago canals to keep the Asian Carp from swimming from the Mississippi River to Lake Michigan and the other Great Lakes. Some people say this barrier should be built to protect fishing, recreation and the overall health of the Great Lakes... other people oppose the barrier because it would prevent some barges from transporting goods which they say will hurt the economy and cost jobs. With whom do you tend to agree with more, the people who want to erect the barrier in the Chicago canals or those opposed to the barrier?

	Erect the barrier	Oppose the barrier	DK/NA
Total	49%	29	22
Men	53%	28	19
Women	45%	30	25
Republican	49%	27	24
Democrat	48%	34	19
Independent	50%	24	26

Should Clean Water Act Cover Small Streams and Wetlands

The Clean Water Act allows the Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, to control water pollution. There is currently a debate in Congress over whether the Clean Water Act should apply to wetlands and small streams. Do you agree more that we should NOT apply the Clean Water Act to wetlands and small streams, because it will hurt the economy by making businesses comply with unnecessary regulation...OR...more that we SHOULD apply the Clean Water Act to wetlands and small streams, to protect our health and important habitats from dangerous pollution?

	Should not apply	Should apply	DK/NA
Total	23%	68	10
Men	23%	69	8
Women	22%	67	11
Republican	34%	55	12
Democrat	15%	79	7
Independent	22%	66	12