

# HOUSE RESEARCH

## Information Brief

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### A Recent History of Environmental Ballot Questions in Minnesota and Other States

This information brief is in response to the proposed environment and natural resources trust fund proposal on the November 1988 ballot. It consists of two parts.

Part I summarizes environmental ballot questions in Minnesota.

Part II gives the results of recent environmental ballot questions in other states in the form of tables for the years 1982-1987.

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#### ***PART I: ENVIRONMENTAL BALLOT PROPOSALS IN MINNESOTA***

During the 1988 legislative session, Minnesota enacted a law that will place an environment and natural resources trust fund proposal on the November 8 ballot. The purpose of the trust fund proposal is to provide a stable source of funding for long-term environmental and natural resources activities that do not receive traditional general fund appropriations.

The trust fund proposal is the first broad-based environment and natural resources constitutional amendment in Minnesota's history. There have been other constitutional amendments, both passed and failed, that affected only part of Minnesota's natural resources.

Most of the early (1910-1930) "environmental" constitutional amendments involved the creation of the state forest system, and promoted forestation and reforestation of public and private lands. In the 1930's, a series of constitutional amendments were enacted that authorized the exchange of state public lands for federal lands to improve consolidation and management. In 1984, the last year an environmentally related constitutional amendment was on the ballot, the voters approved authorizing the exchange of state

lands for other lands owned by the state or local government.

In 1950, the voters rejected, by 100,000 votes, an amendment question that would have allowed 25 percent of the net proceeds from the use or sale of state lands to be placed in a forestry revolving fund. The principal and interest in the fund would have been used to promote a forestry management and production program.

The 1988 Minnesota ballot question is phrased:

***"Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to establish a Minnesota environment and natural resources trust fund for environmental, natural resource, and wildlife purposes?"***

A separate ballot question on the November ballots asks voters if Minnesota should have a state lottery. Legislation authorizing the ballot questions (Chapter 690, Laws of 1988) statutorily credits one-half of the proposed net lottery proceeds for the first five fiscal years to the environment and natural resources trust fund.

***PART II: RECENT ENVIRONMENTAL BALLOT QUESTIONS IN OTHER STATES***

This part lists the results of environmental ballot questions over the last six years in other states. The questions may have been in the form of constitutional amendments, bond issues, or referenda.

Of the sixty-plus ballot questions listed below, the major category is pollution concerns, with 27 questions relating to air, water and waste pollution. Following in order are nuclear power questions (10), wildlife concerns (7), and land acquisition (6).

Seventy-two percent of the environmental ballot questions over the past six years were passed by the voters.

These abbreviations are used to indicate the origin of a particular initiative in the tables that follow:

- CAR = Constitutional amendment referred to the ballot as a result of legislative action or state constitutional provisions.
- SR = Statute referred to the ballot as a result of legislative action or state constitutional provisions.
- BI = Bond issue referred to the ballot by the legislature.
- CAI = Constitutional amendment placed on the ballot as a result of citizen petitioning.
- SI = Statutory initiative placed on the ballot as a result of citizen petitioning.
- PR = Popular referendum, a statute already enacted by the legislature but subject to popular approval as a result of citizen petitioning.

**TABLES: STATEWIDE BALLOT PROPOSITIONS 1982-1987**

**NOVEMBER 1987**

<u>STATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ORIGIN</u>	<u>PASSED</u>	<u>FAILED</u>	<u>VOTE %</u>
Louisiana	<i>Proposition 2:</i> Established the Louisiana State Wildlife and Fisheries Conservation Fund, stipulating that the legislature appropriate funds.	CAR	X		67.3
Maine	<i>Question 1:</i> Should power plants that generate high level nuclear waste, such as the Maine Yankee plant, operate after July 4, 1988?	SI	X		58.1
	<i>Question 2:</i> Eight million dollar bond issue to clean up and close solid waste landfills that pose a hazard to the public health and to ground water quality.	BI	X		70.3
	<i>Question 6:</i> Three million dollar bond issue for removal of all storage tanks and related ground water restoration.	BI	X		55.2
	<i>Question 9:</i> Twenty six and a half million dollars for various highway and airport improvements <u>and to reduce groundwater pollution from storage of highway materials.</u>	BI	X		62
	<i>Question 10:</i> Thirty five million dollars for the purchase of public land access over a four year period.	BI	X		65
	<i>Question 11:</i> Six million dollar bond issue for the detection and removal of asbestos hazards from state facilities and public schools.	BI	X		56.6
New Jersey	<i>Public Question 2:</i> One hundred and ten million dollars for cultural centers and historic preservation, loans to local governments for conservation and recreation.	BI	X		62.4

<u>STATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ORIGIN</u>	<u>PASSED</u>	<u>FAILED</u>	<u>VOTE %</u>
New York	<i>Proposal Number 2:</i> Increase the extent of ski trails on three mountains. Delete authorization for ski trails on a fourth mountain.	CAR	X		51.5
Rhode Island	<i>Question 1:</i> Sixty five million dollars for local cities and towns to buy land for recreation purposes and for preservation.	BI	X		77
Texas	<i>Amendment 23:</i> Texas water development bonds issued for four hundred million dollars for water supply, water quality and flood control purposes.	CAR/BI	X		64.1
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NOVEMBER 1986					
California	<i>Proposition 55:</i> One hundred million dollars for water treatment facilities.	BI	X		78
	<i>Proposition 65:</i> Prohibits discharge of toxic chemicals into drinking water and requires warnings of toxic chemicals exposure.	SI	X		62
Maine	<i>Question 3:</i> Twelve million dollars for sewage treatment facilities.	BI	X		57
	<i>Question 5:</i> Six million dollars to identify and correct asbestos problems in state facilities.	BI	X		54
	<i>Question 6:</i> Ten million dollars for coastal and harbor improvements and for a marine laboratory.	BI		X	failed by less than 1 %
	<i>Question 8:</i> Five million dollars for acquiring wildlife habitat.	BI	X		62
Massachusetts	<i>Question 4:</i> Require the state department of Environmental Quality Engineering to search for sites where oil or hazardous materials have been disposed of and take steps to clean up those sites within specific time limits.	SI	X		83

<u>STATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ORIGIN</u>	<u>PASSED</u>	<u>FAILED</u>	<u>VOTE %</u>
Massachusetts (cont.)	<i>Question 8:</i> Shall the state urge the President and Congress to enact a national acid rain control program requiring 50 percent reduction in sulphur dioxide emissions by the year 1995 and allocate costs among the states?	Non-bind Advisory Referendum	X		83
New Jersey	<i>Public Question One:</i> Use of 1981 hazardous waste monies independent of federal or state programs.	CAR	X		76
	<i>Public Question Two:</i> Hazardous Discharge Bond Act of 1986, authorizes two hundred million dollars to finance identification, cleanup and removal of hazardous discharges.	BI	X		66
New York	<i>Proposal Number One:</i> Authority for the state to issue 1.45 billion in bonds for environmental projects (1 billion for toxic waste clean-up and 450 million for other projects).	BI	X		NA
Oregon	<i>Measure 14:</i> Shall all Oregon nuclear power plant operations be prohibited until the federal government licenses a permanent radioactive waste disposal site?	SI		X	64 against
	<i>Measure 15:</i> Shall new legal definitions of "radioactive waste" supersede the present definition and, shall the process for applicants paying facility site study costs be changed?	SI		X	56 against
Washington	<i>Initiative 90:</i> Sales and use tax increase of one-eighth of one percent for conservation (fish and wildlife) funding.	SI		X	60 against
	<i>Referendum 40:</i> Require popular approval on any nuclear waste site, continue state challenge to federal plans for such a site.	SR	X		83

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NOVEMBER 1985

<u>STATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ORIGIN</u>	<u>PASSED</u>	<u>FAILED</u>	<u>VOTE %</u>
Maine	<i>Question 1:</i> 1a - MNRC initiative requiring popular vote on nuclear waste storage plans.	SI	X		50.3
	2a - Legislative alternative to 1a, calling for popular vote if state plan is not developed.	SR		X	73.4 against
	3a - Against both 1a and 1b.	SR		X	76.9 against
	<i>Question 2:</i> Fifteen million dollars for sewage treatment and water quality improvement.	BI	X		69.2
New Jersey	<i>Question 1:</i> One hundred ninety million dollar Wastewater Treatment Bond Fund.	BI	X		70.9
	<i>Question 2:</i> Eighty-five million dollars for a Resource Recovery and Solid Waste Disposal Facility.	BI	X		72.2
	<i>Question 3:</i> Thirty million dollars for Pineland Protection.	BI	X		63.6
	<i>Question 4:</i> Financing facilities from "Natural Resources Fund."	BI	X		66.2
Ohio	<i>Issue 1:</i> Allow bonds for coal research and to clean up high sulphur coal.	CAR	X		64.1
Rhode Island	<i>Referendum 7:</i> Two million dollars for agriculture land preservation.	BI	X		64.8
	<i>Referendum 9:</i> Twenty million for asbestos abatement.	BI	X		60.9
South Dakota	Nuclear Waste Compact (proposed waste compact with North Dakota).	SR		X	83.1 against
Texas	<i>Proposition 2:</i> Two hundred million dollars for water conservation.	CAR/BI	X		69.6

NOVEMBER 1984

<u>STATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ORIGIN</u>	<u>PASSED</u>	<u>FAILED</u>	<u>VOTE %</u>
Alabama	<i>Proposed Amendment Three:</i> Hunting fees in certain counties.	CAR		X	68.3 against
Arkansas	<i>Proposed Constitutional Amendment:</i> Impose a one-eighth of one percent sales and use tax to fund the Game and Fish commission's Game Protection Fund.	CAI		X	55.8 against
California	<i>Proposition 25:</i> Three hundred twenty-five million dollar bond issue to fund water clean-up projects.	BI	X		72.9
	<i>Proposition 27:</i> One hundred million dollar bond issue to fund hazardous waste removal projects.	BI	X		72
	<i>Proposition 28:</i> Seventy-five million dollar bond issue to finance projects that enhance drinking water quality.	BI	X		73.5
Michigan	<i>Proposal B:</i> Establish a natural resources trust fund and a state board to administer it, specifying and limiting the expenditure of the revenues.	CAR	X		64.6
Minnesota	<i>Amendment 1:</i> Allowing the exchange of public lands.	CAR	X		66
Oklahoma	<i>State Question 570:</i> Authorize additional property tax levy of up to three mills for construction, maintenance, and improvement of county parks.	CAR		X	64.5 against
Oregon	<i>Measure 9:</i> Disposal of wastes containing naturally occurring radioactive isotopes, "zero radiation release standard" for nuclear waste materials.	SI	X		55
Rhode Island	<i>Referendum 6:</i> Five million dollars for environmental management, improvement of port facilities in support of fishing industry.	BI	X		60.7

<u>STATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ORIGIN</u>	<u>PASSED</u>	<u>FAILED</u>	<u>VOTE %</u>
<i>New Jersey (cont.)</i>	<i>Referendum 8:</i> Five million dollars for an environmental response fund.	BI	X		66.4
South Dakota	<i>Initiated Measure 1:</i> Require popular approval on questions of disposal of nuclear waste or participation in nuclear waste disposal compacts.	SI	X		62
Washington	<i>Initiative 456:</i> S/SPAWN initiative, removing special fishing rights for Indians, allowing others to fish for salmon.	SI	X		52.6
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<b>NOVEMBER 1983</b>					
Maine	<i>Question 1:</i> SMOOSA (anti-hunting) initiative.	SI		X	60.4 against
New Jersey	<i>Public Question 2:</i> Fifty million dollar shore protection fund.	BI	X		60.1
New York	<i>Proposition 6:</i> Exchange of property between Adirondack Park reserve and Sagamore Institute for historic preservation.	CAR	X		62.9
Rhode Island	<i>Referendum 4:</i> 10.1 million dollar bond for water resources.	BI	X		56.6
<b>NOVEMBER 1982</b>					
Alaska	<i>Ballot Measure 5:</i> Tundra rebellion.	SI	X		72.7
	<i>Ballot Measure 7:</i> Subsistence initiative.	SI		X	57.7 against
Arizona	<i>Proposition 200:</i> Bottle bill.	SI		X	68.1 against
California	<i>Proposition 11:</i> Bottle bill.	SI		X	55.9 against
	<i>Proposition 13:</i> Water resources initiative.	SI		X	64.6 against

<u>STATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ORIGIN</u>	<u>PASSED</u>	<u>FAILED</u>	<u>VOTE %</u>
Colorado	<i>Issue 5:</i> Bottle bill.	SI		X	74.5 against
Maine	Nuclear power question, phased in shut-down/anti-nuke.	SI		X	55.9 against
Massachusetts	<i>Question 3:</i> Popular approval for plant or waste facility/anti-nuke.	SI	X		67.4
	<i>Question 4:</i> Bottle bill repeal.		X		59.1
Montana	<i>Referendum 89:</i> Repeal of Initiative 84 passed in 1980 (pro-nuke).			X	75.7 against
Nevada	<i>Question 1:</i> Property tax cut/environment.	CAR	X		63
Oregon	<i>Measure 6:</i> Anti-state land use planning/pro-development.	SI		X	55.2 against
Rhode Island	<i>Referendum 9:</i> Funds for environmental management.	SR	X		58.1
Washington	<i>Initiative 414:</i> Bottle bill.	SI		X	70.7 against

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