

THE FIELD POLL

THE INDEPENDENT AND NON-PARTISAN SURVEY
OF PUBLIC OPINION ESTABLISHED IN 1947 AS
THE CALIFORNIA POLL BY MERVIN FIELD

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NEARLY TWO-TO-ONE SUPPORT FOR THE STATE WATER BOND, PROPOSITION 1.

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

Proposition 1 on the November ballot is a statewide water bond measure whose provisions have been debated by the legislature and Governor Jerry Brown for the last few years. It authorizes \$7.5 billion in bonds to improve the state's water quality, supply and infrastructure.

In the latest *Field Poll* a nearly two-to-one majority of likely voters (52% to 27%) say they are inclined to vote Yes in support of the passage of Prop. 1. Another 21% of likely voters are undecided.

At the time the poll was conducted, awareness of the bond was quite low, with just 36% of likely voters saying they had seen or heard something about the measure. However, among voters with some prior awareness, support for Prop. 1 expands to thirty-two points (57% to 25%).

Voter preferences on Prop. 1

Voters were first asked whether they had seen, read or heard anything about Prop. 1. The results show that only about one in three likely voters (36%) reported some prior awareness of Prop. 1, while 64% had not.

All voters, regardless of any prior awareness, were read a summary of the official ballot description of Prop. 1 and then asked if their inclination was to vote Yes or No.

Overall, results indicate relatively strong sentiment in favor the passage of Prop 1, with the proportion inclined to vote Yes (52%), nearly twice as great as the proportion voting No (27%). A relatively large 21% of likely voters are undecided.

Preferences for Prop. 1 expands among voters who had seen or heard of the bond. These voters divide 57% in favor and 25% opposed, with 18% undecided. Among voters with no prior awareness, the Yes side still holds a substantial lead, with 48% inclined to vote Yes, 28% inclined to vote No, and 24% undecided.

Table 1			
Likely voter preferences on Proposition 1 after reading a summary of its ballot description – overall and by prior awareness			
	Total likely voters	Have seen or heard of Prop. 1	No prior awareness
<u>Would vote</u>			
Yes	52%	57%	48%
No	27	25	28
Undecided	21	18	24

Preferences across voter subgroups

Democrats are overwhelming in their support of Prop. 1 – 66% Yes and 13% No. By contrast, Republicans are lining up against the bond issue – 49% No and 35% Yes. There is relatively a high degree (36%) of indecision about Prop. 1 among voters who have no party preference, but those who express a preference divide two-to-one in support – 47% Yes and 23% No.

Prop 1 is favored heavily among likely voters in the San Francisco Bay Area (62%) and Los Angeles County (56%). In other regions of the state the vote on Prop. 1 is much closer, although pluralities are still supporting the bond issue.

There is not a great deal of difference in preferences across other subgroups of the likely voter population.

Table 2			
Likely voter preferences on Proposition 1 across major demographic and regional subgroups			
	Would vote Yes	Would vote No	Undecided
Total statewide	52%	27	21
<u>Party registration</u>			
(.45) Democrats	66%	13	21
(.34) Republicans	35%	49	16
(.21) No party preference/other	47%	23	30
<u>Political ideology</u>			
(.35) Conservative	43%	41	16
(.39) Middle-of-the-road	45%	33	22
(.26) Liberal	76%	2	22
<u>Area</u>			
(.71) Coastal counties	55%	27	18
(.29) Inland counties	44%	28	28
<u>Region</u>			
(.23) Los Angeles County	56%	27	17
(.32) Other Southern California	40%	33	27
(.15) Central Valley*	43%	31	26
(.23) San Francisco Bay Area	62%	19	19
<u>Gender</u>			
(.47) Male	54%	27	19
(.53) Female	49%	27	24
<u>Age</u>			
(.25) 18 – 39	52%	25	23
(.43) 40 – 64	46%	30	24
(.32) 65 or older	58%	24	34
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
(.69) White non-Hispanic	50%	30	20
(.17) Latino*	59%	20	21
(.14) African American/ Asian American	47%	19	34
<u>Permanent mail ballot registrant</u>			
(.55) Yes	51%	27	22
(.45) No	52%	27	21

* Small sample base.

History of the Prop. 1 water bond

A statewide water bond was originally certified to be on California’s 2010 election ballot, but removed and placed on the 2012 ballot. However, in July 2012 the state legislature approved a bill to take the measure off the 2012 ballot and instead put it on the 2014 ballot.

Earlier this year the legislature approved a bond issue of \$11.1 billion, but it was vetoed by the Governor, who called it “pork-laden.” After considerable negotiations, the size of the water bond was reduced to \$7.5 billion and named Proposition 1 so it would appear at the top of the list of this year’s statewide ballot propositions.

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Information About the Survey

Methodological Details

The findings in this report are based on a *Field Poll* completed August 14-28, 2014 among 467 voters considered likely to vote in the November 2014 general election. Interviews were administered by telephone using live interviewers in English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, and Vietnamese.

The sample included supplemental interviews among the state’s ethnic voter population. Funding for the supplemental interviews with Asian American voters was provided by Professor Karthick Ramakrishnan of the University of California, Riverside as part of the National Asian American Survey project.

Individual voters were sampled at random from voters with telephones drawn from the statewide voter registration rolls. The supplemental sample of Asian Americans was developed from voter roll listings targeting Chinese American, Korean American and Vietnamese American voters based primarily on their ethnic surnames. Once a voter’s name and telephone number had been selected, interviews are attempted only with the specified voter on either their landline or cell phone, depending on the source of the listing from the voter file. After the completion of interviewing, the overall registered voter sample was weighted to align it to the proper distribution of voters by race and ethnicity, and to other political, demographic and geographic characteristics of the California registered voter population.

Sampling error estimates applicable to any probability-based survey depend on its sample size and the percentage distributions being examined. The maximum sampling error for results from the likely voter sample is +/- 4.8 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The maximum sampling error estimates are based on survey findings in the middle of the sampling distribution (i.e., results at or near 50%). Percentages at either tail of the distributions (i.e., results closer to 10% or 90%) have somewhat smaller margins of error. There are other potential sources of error in surveys of public opinion besides sampling error. However, the overall design and execution of this survey sought to minimize these other possible errors.

The Field Poll was established in 1947 as *The California Poll* by Mervin Field, who is still an active advisor. The *Poll* has operated continuously since then as an independent, non-partisan survey of California public opinion. *The Field Poll* receives financial support from leading newspapers and television stations that purchase the rights of first release to its reports in their primary viewer or readership markets. The *Poll* also receives funding from the University of California and California State University systems, who receive the *Field Poll* data files shortly after its completion for teaching and secondary research purposes, as well as from foundations, non-profit organizations, and others as part of the *Poll’s* policy research sponsor program.

Questions Asked

Have you seen, read or heard anything about Proposition 1, a state water bond on the November election ballot?

(As you know) Proposition 1 is the Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014. It authorizes 7.5 billion dollars in general obligation bonds for state water supply infrastructure projects, including surface and groundwater storage, ecosystem and watershed protection, and restoration and Bay-Delta Estuary sustainability. Fiscal impact: Increased state bond costs averaging 380 million dollars annually over 40 years. If the election were being held today, would you vote YES or NO on Proposition 1?