



The malaise of the voters

Posted by [Yankee](#) on October 10, 2005 - 9:31pm in [The Oil Drum: Local](#)

Topic: [Policy/Politics](#)

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Definitely depressing: "[Environment High in Personal Values, Low in Political Priorities for U.S. Voters](#)"

All I have to do is leave you with the following quote:

"There is a clear disconnect here," said William K. Reilly, former head of the US Environmental Protection Agency and chair of the advisory board of the Nicholas Institute. "Seventy-four percent of Republicans and 85 percent of Democrats say they support stronger environmental standards. Yet, when it comes time to vote, they rank the environment low on their list of priorities."

In focus groups, the environment ranked last out of nine leading political issues, trailing the economy and jobs, health care, Iraq, Social Security, terrorism, education, moral values, and taxes--in that order. Only 10 percent of voters identified the environment as one of their top concerns, compared to 34 percent for the economy and jobs.

I admit that I was definitely one of these people, although I think I would have ranked environmental concerns somewhere in the top 5. But I know better now, and there has to be a way to convince people that the state of the environment affects other political issues too. It certainly affects health care in obvious, tangible ways, and a case could be made for taxes (if we let companies pollute, taxpayers' money is used for cleanup). Moral values? If this isn't a moral value, what is?

Well, I guess I don't need to reinvent the mission of the [Sierra Club](#) or the [National Resources Defense Council](#), but let's just say I have a much greater appreciation for their struggles now.

Hat tip: [Gristmill](#)



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