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THE  
TRUST  
*for*  
PUBLIC  
LAND

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*Laying the Groundwork for Voter Approved Funding*  
*Tom Gilbert*



# Overview

- TPL’s Conservation Finance Program
- Trends in Local Conservation Finance
- Steps to Successful Ballot Measures
- Adams County Campaign

# Conserving Land for People

The Trust for Public Land conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come.

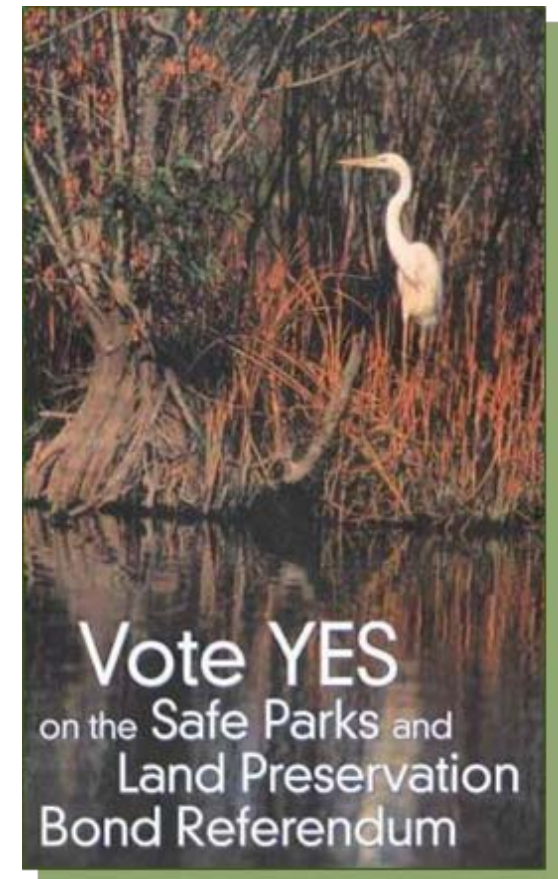
*TPL Mission Statement*

# TPL's Conservation Finance Program

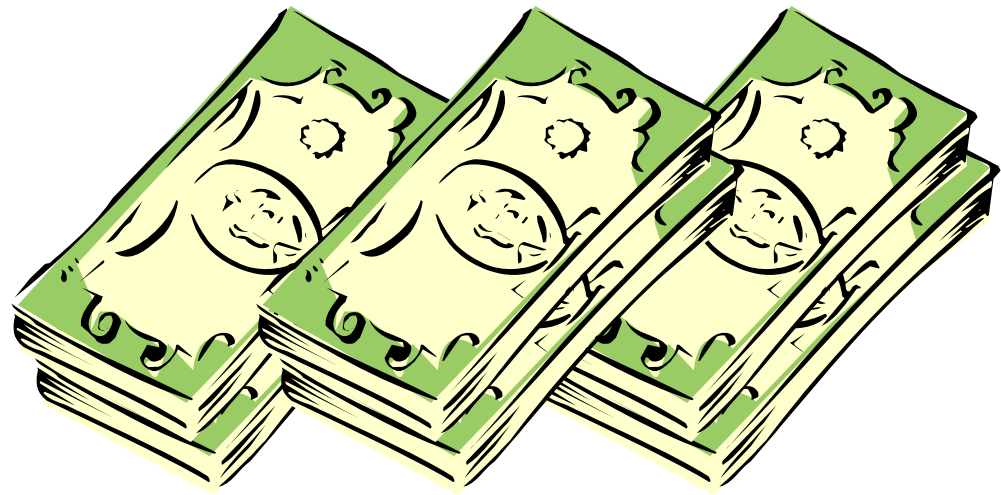
- Helps states and communities create funding to protect open space, preserve farmland and historic sites, and provide parks and recreation
- Provides technical assistance to state and local officials and non-profit partners to design and pass conservation finance ballot measures
- Is the leading provider of knowledge on conservation finance in the U.S. – LandVote, Conservation Almanac, economic and other research

## TPL's Conservation Finance Program

- Since 1996, we've helped pass over 400 ballot measures raising \$32 billion for parks and open space
- TPL's winning measure success rate is 84% since 1996.



# Trends in Public Conservation Finance in the U.S.



## Public Land Conservation Funding in the United States (1998 – 2005)

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Annual Avg.</b>	<b>Share</b>
Local	\$16 billion	\$2 billion	67%
State	\$6.75 billion	\$844m	28%
Federal	\$1.02 billion	\$128m	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$23.77 billion</b>	<b>\$2.97 billion</b>	

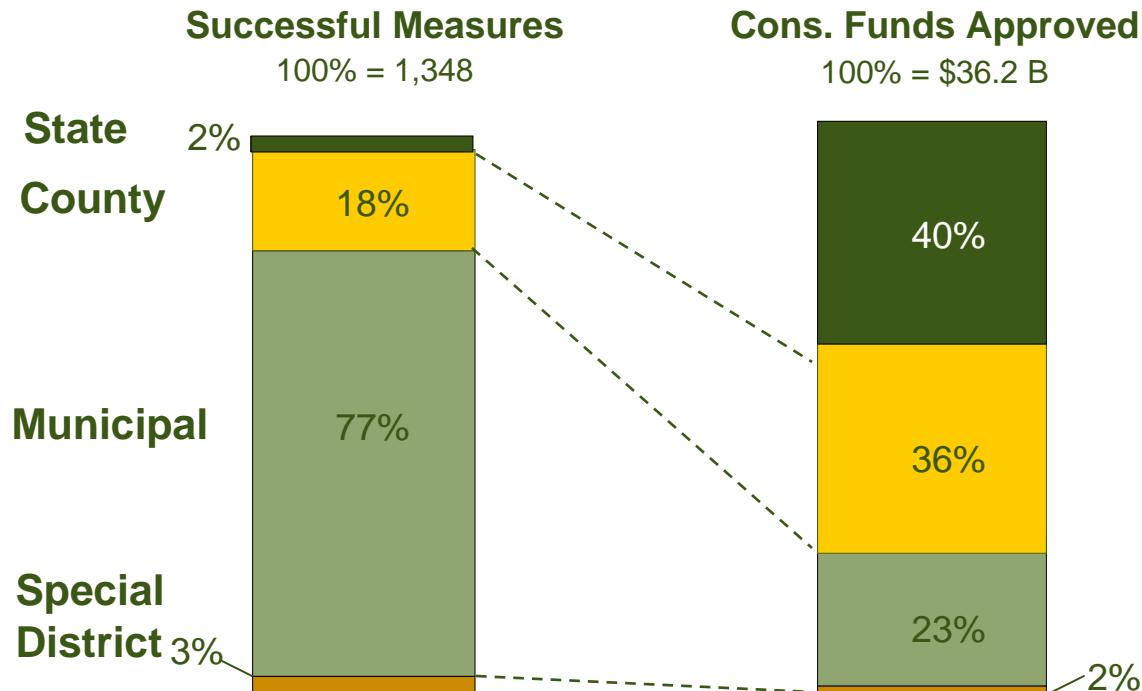
State and federal = actual spending

Local = spending authorizations

Source: TPL Conservation Almanac, TPL LandVote Database

## Who is Creating Funding at the Ballot?

Since 1996, Voters Have Approved 1,348 Open Space Ballot Measures, Authorizing \$36.2 Billion in Conservation Funding\*



# State and Local Ballot Measures 2004–2008



## Passage Rates Consistently High

Since 1988, Conservation Ballot Measures Pass Over 75% of the Time, With Voter Support Nearly 60% Across All Jurisdictions

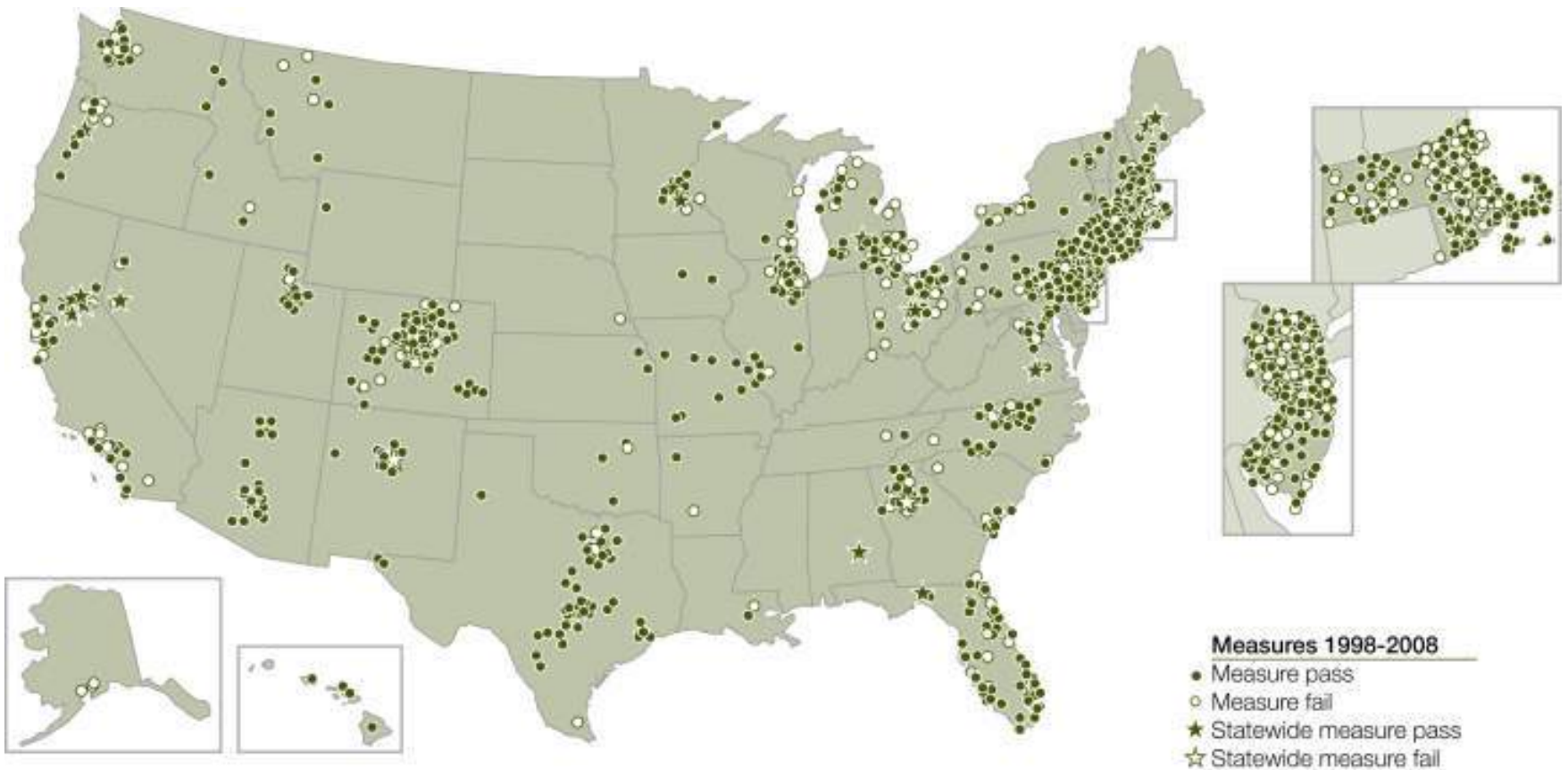
### Success Rates by Jurisdiction

<u>Jurisdiction Type</u>	<u># Fail</u>	<u># Pass</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>\$ Approved (\$ billion)</u>	<u>% Pass by Juris</u>	<u>Avg. "Yes" of Successful Measures</u>
State	12	56	68	\$24.3	82%	59%
County	115	335	450	\$17.5	74%	57%
Municipal	389	1,246	1,635	\$11.2	76%	58%
Special District	35	48	83	\$1.3	58%	56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>1685</b>	<b>2236</b>	<b>\$54.3</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>58%</b>

## Election Day: November 4, 2008

- 89 ballot measures; 63 were approved by the voters
- 71% passage rate
- Largest Amount Ever: **\$7.3 billion** in new funds for land conservation
- Minnesota Clean Water, Land & Legacy constitutional amendment approved by 56% statewide: **\$5.5 billion** – largest single conservation measure ever

# LandVote Ballot Measures 1998 - 2008



# Local Conservation Ballot Measure Summary

- Measures on ballot in 44 states
  - Approved in 41 states
- Approval rate nationwide = 75%
- PA is among the leaders

## Most Active States

Local Ballot Measures 1996-2006

Rank		Total	Pct
1	NJ	399	82%
2	MA	246	66%
3	PA	114	81%
4	CO	114	76%
5	NY	79	91%
6	FL	70	81%
7	IL	68	66%
8	TX	67	88%
9	CT	58	91%
10	CA	55	60%
11	OH	51	67%
12	MI	44	61%
13	RI	38	97%
14	WA	35	46%
15	NC	32	88%

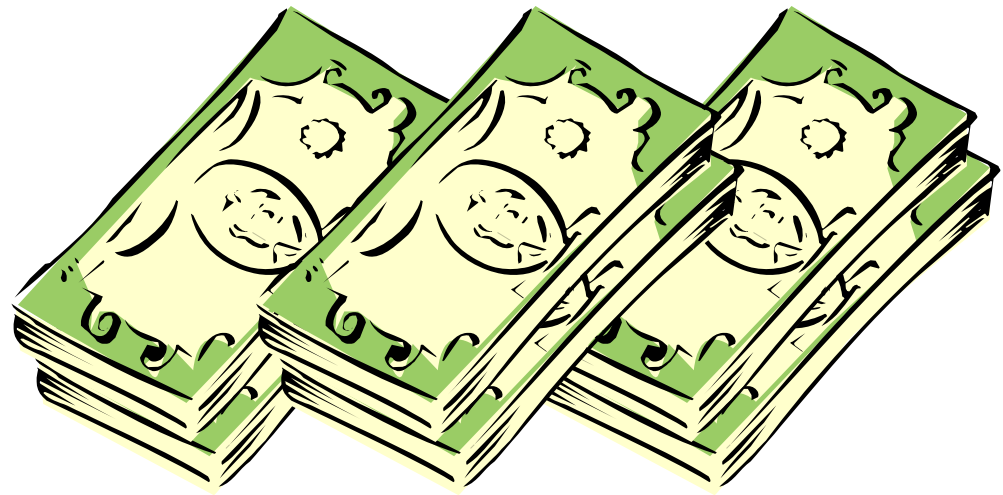
## Pennsylvania Local Conservation Finance Ballot Measure Summary (1988-2008)

- 111 of 138 local measures approved (80%) raising \$1.04b
- 6 of 8 measures approved in 2008 (75%)
- Measures have been passed by 8 counties and 75 Townships
- Median “Yes” Vote = 67%
- Median Township Measure = \$4.5m
- Median County Measure = \$30m

# Pennsylvania County Ballot Measure Summary

County	Date	Rev. Source	Amount	Pct. Yes
Adams	11/4/2008	Bond	\$10,000,000	75.2%
Bucks	11/6/2007	Bond	\$87,000,000	74.0%
Bucks	11/8/1994	Bond	\$3,500,000	66.9%
Chester	11/7/1989	Bond	\$50,000,000	80.1%
<i>Delaware</i>	<i>4/23/1996</i>	<i>Bond</i>	<i>\$100,000,000</i>	<i>Fail</i>
Lehigh	5/21/2002	Bond	\$30,000,000	70.6%
Monroe	5/19/1998	Bond	\$25,000,000	52.0%
Montgomery	11/4/2003	Bond	\$140,000,000	77.6%
Northampton	11/5/2002	Bond	\$37,000,000	64.8%
Pike	11/8/2005	Bond	\$10,000,000	67.4%

# Ballot Measure Basics





# Critical Steps for a Successful Ballot Measure

- Step 1 Feasibility Research
- Step 2 Public Opinion Survey
- Step 3 Program Recommendations
- Step 4 Ballot Language
- Step 5 Campaign

## Step 1 – Feasibility Research

Conservation programs & priorities

Finance options

Fiscal capacity

Political profile

Election history

Election requirements

Ballot language requirements

Opposition analysis

Best practices (ballot language)

# Adams County Feasibility Study

## Adams County Bond Financing Costs

20-year Bond Issues at 5.0% Interest Rate

Total 2008 Assessed Value = \$2 billion

Bond Issue Size	Annual Debt Svce	Mill Levy Increase	Cost/ Year/ \$200K Value	Cost/ Year/ Average Home*
\$10,000,000	\$802,426	\$0.3918	\$17.32	\$15.60
\$15,000,000	\$1,203,639	\$0.5878	\$25.98	\$23.39
\$20,000,000	\$1,604,852	\$0.7837	\$34.64	\$31.19
\$25,000,000	\$2,006,065	\$0.9796	\$43.30	\$38.99
\$30,000,000	\$2,407,278	\$1.1755	\$51.96	\$46.79

\*Based on the County's predetermined ratio of 50% of the 1990 home value. 1990 average home value was \$79,600

U.S. Census Data, Adams County Treasurer


## Step 2 – Public Opinion Survey

- Reality test- what will voters support?
- Perspective- what matters to them?
- Messages- what resonates with them?
- Messengers- who is influential?

## Polling Overview - Methodology

- Professional pollsters, telephone survey
- Random - Not self-selected
- Sample - Representative slice of population
- Voters - People who are likely to vote

## Polling Overview - Polling Goals

- Affordable proposal- source & amount
- Compelling purposes- uses of funds
- Accountability provisions- independent audit, citizen oversight committee, etc.



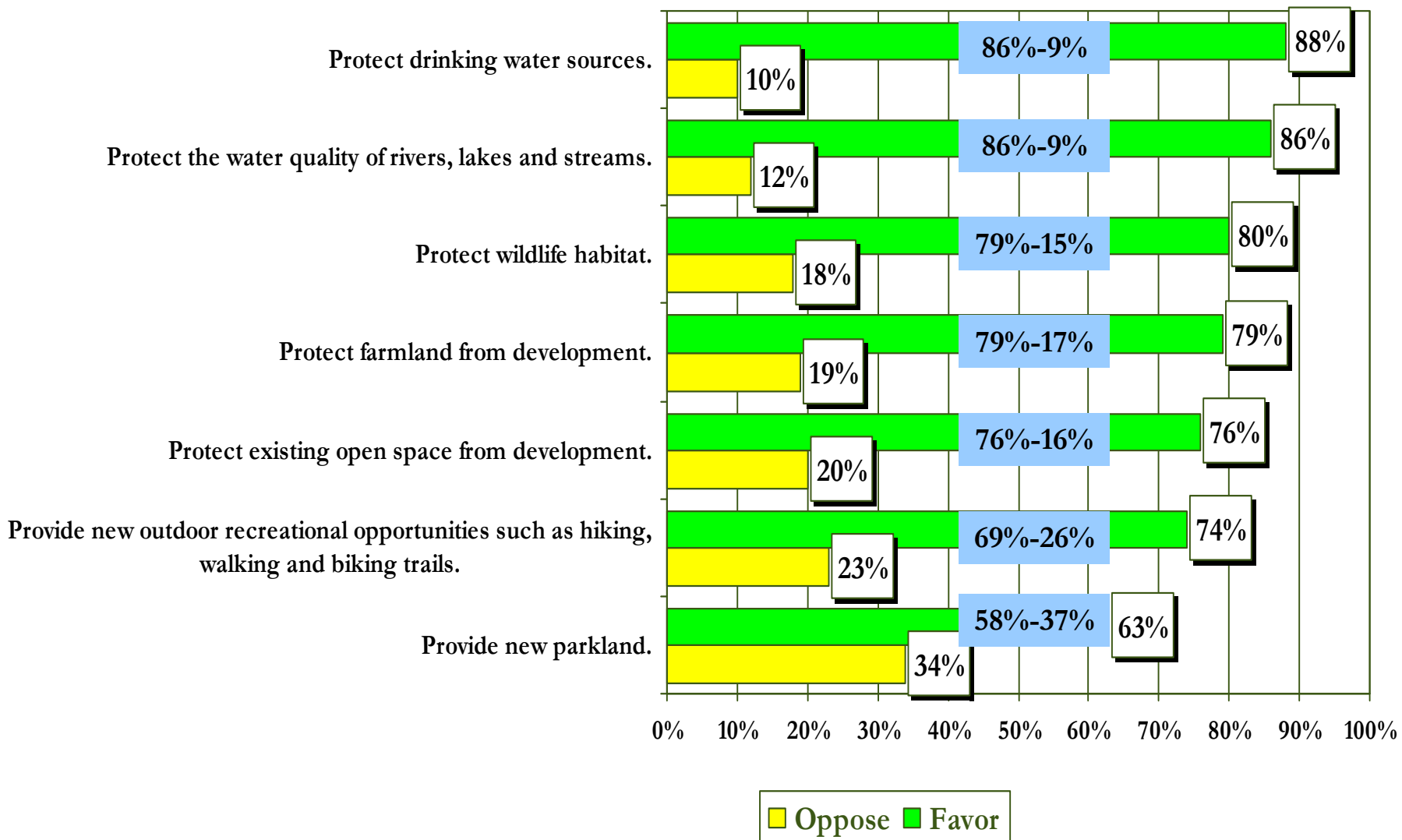
*Findings from a survey of 500 likely voters in  
Adams County*

**Bob Carpenter, Vice President  
American Viewpoint, Inc.  
June 2008**

300 North Lee Street, Suite 400 · Alexandria, Virginia 22314 · 703.684.3325 · FAX 703.684.9295

## ***Key Poll Findings***

- 1. Strong support for a \$10 million bond issue exists.**
  - **Initially, voters favor it by a margin of 58% to 28%.**
  - **When the price of \$17.32 per year for the owner of a \$200,000 house is introduced, voters continue to favor the bond by a margin of 52% to 40%.**
  - **Following descriptions of the types of projects this bond will finance as well as proponent and opponent statements about the bond, voters favor it by a margin of 60% to 31%.**
- 2. Voters are more favorable to the bond issue with an annual public audit. Secondly, they like that only land from willing sellers will be purchased.**
- 3. Protecting water sources is also very important to these voters, followed by protecting wildlife habitat and protecting farmland.**
- 4. The most persuasive argument in support of the bond issue is the responsibility to our children and grandchildren.**





## Step 3 – Program Recommendations

Funding Source

Amount (and duration)

Purposes/Uses of Funds

Accountability Measures

Timing (choice of election date)



## Adams County Program Recommendations

Source- bond measure

Amount- \$10 million

Purposes- water, wildlife habitat, farmland, open space, recreation

Accountability Measures- annual public audit, land purchased from willing-sellers only

Timing- Nov. 2008 General Election



## Step 4 – Ballot Language

Legal Constraints

Best Practices

Integrate Survey Findings

Negotiate with public attorney, bond counsel

# Ballot Language Checklist

Meets Legal Standards

Includes Benefits

Presents Costs in Understandable Ways

Includes Accountability Provisions

Includes a Title

# Adams County Ballot Language

## Adams County Water and Land Protection Referendum

Shall Adams County incur debt in sum not to exceed ten million dollars for the purposes of financing land conservation for the protection of **drinking water sources, water quality of streams, wildlife habitat, farmland, open space and recreation lands for future generations** be authorized to be incurred as debt approved by the electors, with **lands preserved in cooperation with willing sellers, and an annual independent audit of how funds are spent?**

**YES 75%**

## Step 5 – Campaign

Campaign committee

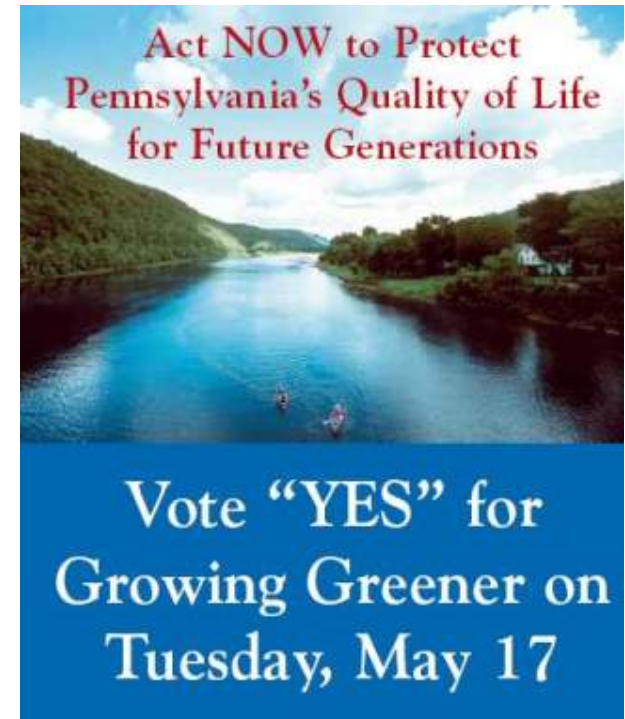
Fundraising

Endorsements

Communications (media)

- Earned media
- Campaign literature
- Direct mail
- Paid media

Election Day visibility, GOTV

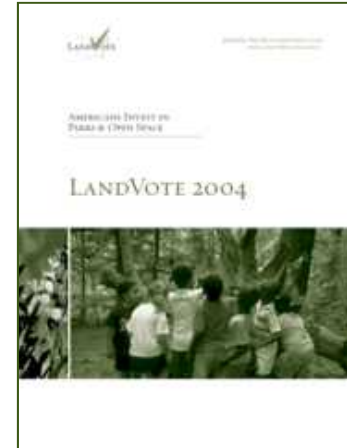
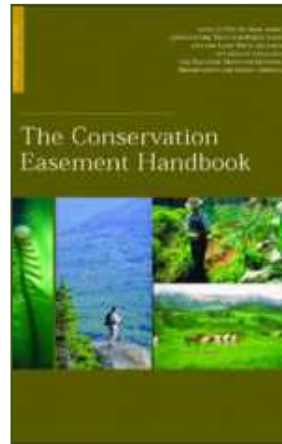
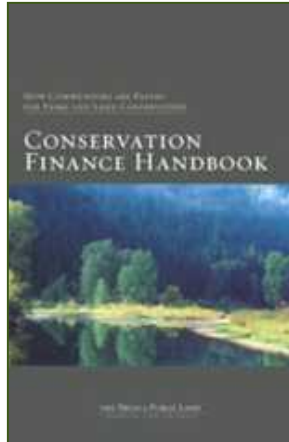


# Conservation Finance Services Available from TPL

- Feasibility Research
- Public Opinion Surveys
- Program Recommendations
- Ballot Language
- Campaign Assistance
  - Campaign Finance Law
  - Campaign Strategy
  - Direct Mail, Communications



# Resources Available- [www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org)





**THANK YOU!**

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