

The AlaskaPoll



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ALASKAN OPINIONS AND PERCEPTIONS REGARDING PRIORITIES FOR THE 2008 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

February 2008

Prepared for

Alaska State House of Representatives

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Methodology



Overview

During the period February 19 through February 28, 2008, four hundred eight (n=408) Alaskans over the age of 18, located in 64 communities, were personally contacted via telephone by professional interviewing employees of the Dittman Research Corporation of Alaska. The views and opinions of the Alaska residents were recorded on a strictly confidential basis.

Research Design

A random sample design was featured which provided that all households listed in the most current telephone directory for each community had essentially an equal chance of being interviewed.

Sample Selection

Individual respondents were randomly selected from current telephone subscribers listed in the most current directory for each community.

Processing the Data

Dittman Research employees completed coding, editing, data entry and verification, while data processing was completed through the in-house Dittman Research Corporation computer system featuring the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The SPSS program is one of the most sophisticated research-oriented data processing and analytical systems available, and is designed specifically for the processing and analysis of survey research data.

Measurement History

Citizen opinion measurements by the Dittman Research Corporation, utilizing the previously described methodology, analytical procedures and data processing systems, have proven to accurately forecast the winner of every Primary and General election for Governor of Alaska for over 30 years.

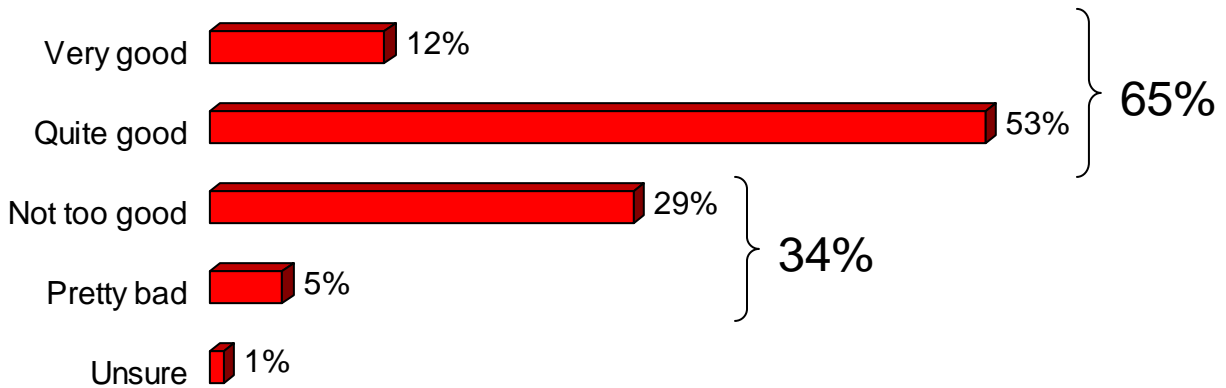


II Findings



Overall, it appears Alaska has largely escaped the negative economic environment associated with the sub-prime mortgage meltdown throughout much of the rest of the United States -- approximately two out of three respondents (65%) personally rate Alaska's economy as "very" or "quite" good as far as they're concerned.

Question: Generally speaking, how would you rate Alaska's economy these days as far as you're concerned?

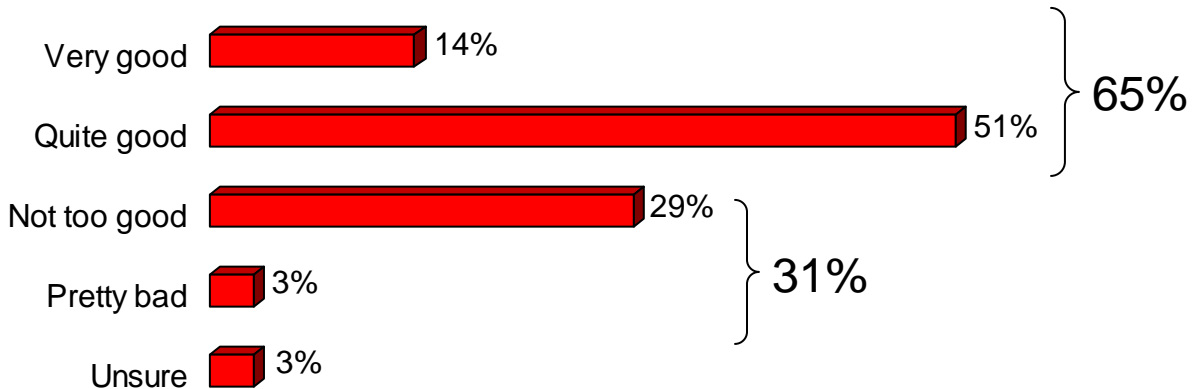


On a geographic basis, respondents in Anchorage are most positive (75% "very/quite good"), while respondents in Southeast are more pessimistic, with a majority (59%) rating the economy as "not too good/pretty bad". Democrats, Republicans and Undeclared/Non-partisan voters report very similar and optimistic opinions.

<i>"...rate Alaska's economy...?"</i>		
<u>Region:</u>	<u>Very good/ Quite good</u>	<u>Not too good/ Pretty bad</u>
Rural	65%	35%
Central	67%	31%
Southcentral	59%	40%
Anchorage	75%	24%
Southeast	41%	59%
<u>Registration:</u>		
Democrat	69%	31%
Republican	68%	31%
Non-Partisan	64%	36%

Looking ahead, most Alaskans believe the future looks good too -- perceptions are very similar to those for the current economy.

Question: Looking ahead what do you see -- how does Alaska's economy in the future look to you?

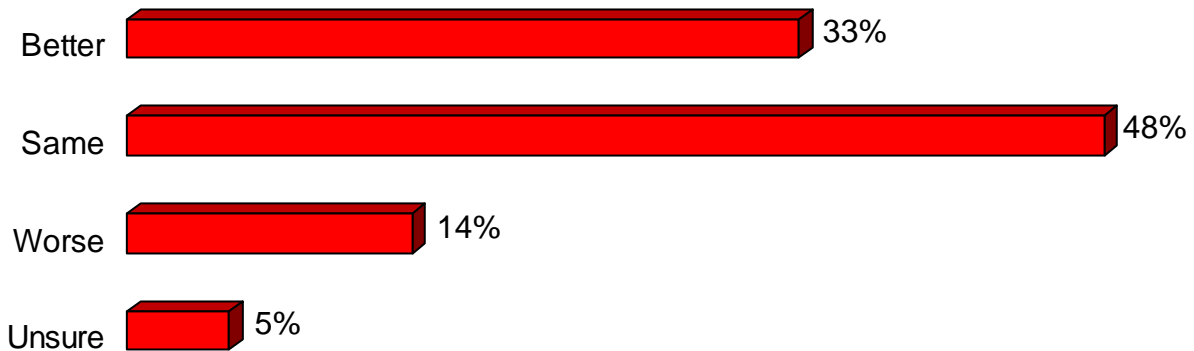


Respondents from Central Alaska are the most optimistic about the future (74% “*very/quite good*”), while Southeast respondents continue to be least optimistic (47% “*not too good/pretty bad*”).

<i>“...how does Alaska's economy in the future look...?”</i>		
<u>Region:</u>	<u>Very good/ Quite good</u>	<u>Not too good/ Pretty bad</u>
Rural	70%	26%
Central	74%	24%
Southcentral	61%	37%
Anchorage	68%	29%
Southeast	50%	47%
<u>Registration:</u>		
Democrat	68%	31%
Republican	69%	29%
Non-Partisan	63%	34%

Nearly half (48%) of Alaskans believe the leadership of the state legislature is working about the same as it has been in the past, however, by approximately a 2:1 ratio (32% “better” to 14% “worse”), Alaskans believe the current legislative leadership is an improvement.

Question: What’s your overall opinion of the leadership of the Alaska state legislature these days – does it seem to be working much better than it has in the past, about the same, or worse?



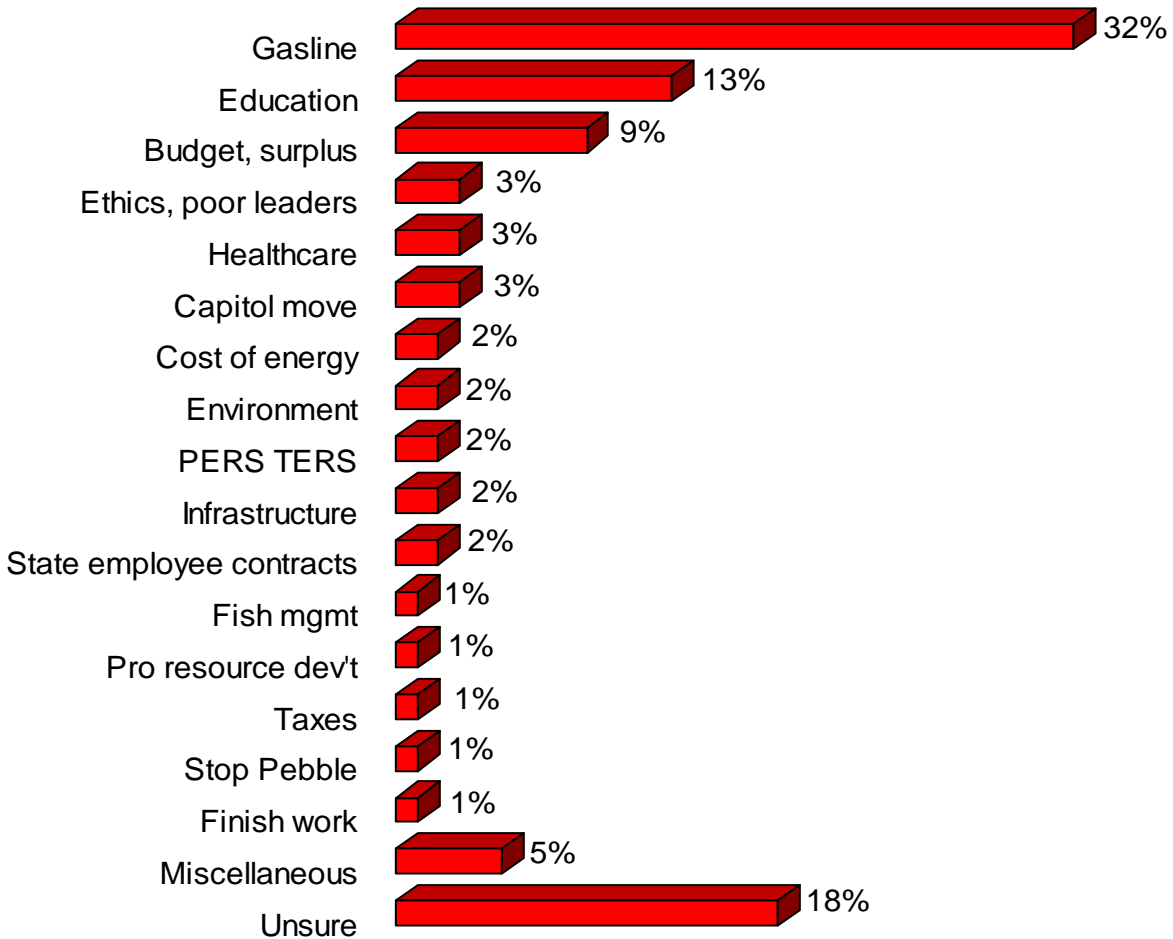
Rural respondents (48% “better”) are the most likely to indicate improvement.

<i>“...opinion of leadership of Alaska state legislature...?”</i>			
<u>Region:</u>	<u>Better</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Worse</u>
Rural	48%	43%	4%
Central	31%	60%	5%
Southcentral	31%	44%	19%
Anchorage	32%	47%	17%
Southeast	27%	50%	16%
<u>Registration:</u>			
Democrat	36%	54%	6%
Republican	34%	44%	16%
Non-Partisan	30%	51%	15%

As far as priorities are concerned, approximately one out of three Alaskans (32%) say that the “gasline” is the most important thing the Alaska State Legislature should accomplish this session. Also often-mentioned are “education” (13%) and “balance budget, allocate surplus” (9%).

Question: The regular 90-day session of the Alaska State Legislature has approximately 45 days remaining – what’s the one most important thing you’d like to see it accomplish before it goes out of session?

(asked as open-ended question)



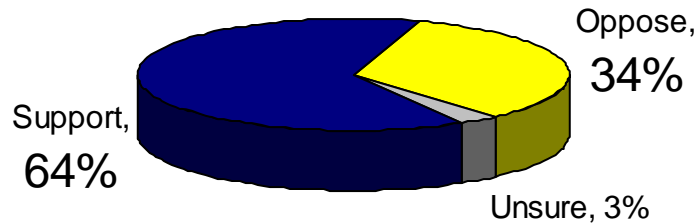
*NOTE: Please see Verbatim Comments, pg 22-38.

The “gasline” was most often mentioned in all regions (25-36%) and by all political registration categories (30-38%). “Education” and “budget/surplus” issues were mentioned most frequently in Southeast and Anchorage respectively.

<i>“...most important thing...?”</i>			
<u>Region:</u>	<u>Gasline</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Budget, Surplus</u>
Rural	26%	10%	2%
Central	25%	16%	7%
Southcentral	36%	18%	7%
Anchorage	36%	7%	13%
Southeast	25%	22%	6%
<u>Registration:</u>			
Democrat	35%	15%	7%
Republican	38%	12%	11%
Non-Partisan	30%	13%	9%

By a wide margin, Alaskans also support the state giving a \$500 “energy rebate” check to Alaskans who receive a PFD.

Question: Overall, do you support or oppose the State of Alaska giving a \$500 “energy rebate” check to each Alaskan who receives a Permanent Fund dividend?

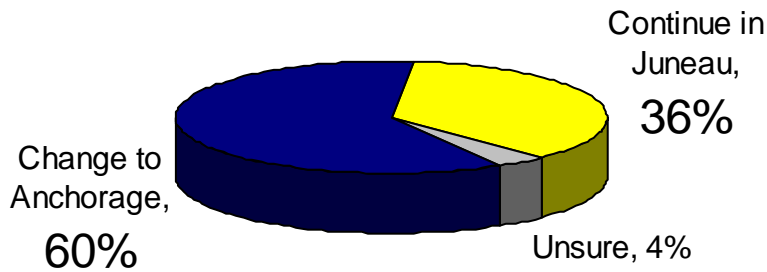


Although respondents in all regions support the “energy rebate”, support is higher in Rural (80%) and Southeast (74%) compared to other areas (57-65%).

<i>“...support or oppose ‘energy rebate’ check...?”</i>		
<u>Region:</u>	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>
Rural	80%	17%
Central	59%	35%
Southcentral	65%	34%
Anchorage	57%	40%
Southeast	74%	25%
<u>Registration:</u>		
Democrat	71%	28%
Republican	67%	31%
Non-Partisan	60%	36%

And by a similarly wide margin (60% to 36%), Alaskans support “changing where the state legislature meets from Juneau to Anchorage”.

Question: Would you prefer having the state legislature continue to meet in Juneau, or would you support changing where the state legislature meets to Anchorage?

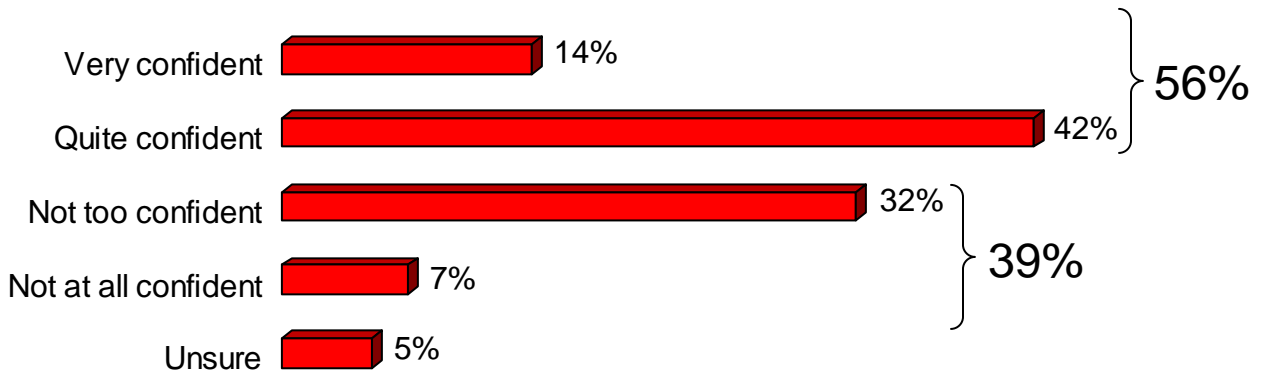


As may be expected, Southeast residents highly favored maintaining the legislature in Juneau (80%). Although Central respondents were approximately equally divided (48% Juneau, 47% Anchorage), the remaining regions and all political categories broadly support the legislature meeting in Anchorage.

<i>“...continue to meet in Juneau or change to Anchorage...?”</i>		
<u>Region:</u>	<u>Juneau</u>	<u>Anchorage</u>
Rural	29%	69%
Central	48%	47%
Southcentral	20%	74%
Anchorage	30%	67%
Southeast	80%	15%
<u>Registration:</u>		
Democrat	40%	55%
Republican	34%	62%
Non-Partisan	36%	61%

Although lower than the optimistic perceptions regarding Alaska’s overall economic future (65% “good”), most Alaskans (56%) are “very” or “quite confident” that Governor Palin’s AGIA gasoline plan will be successful.

Question: How confident are you that Governor Palin’s AGIA plan will be successful in getting a natural gas pipeline for Alaska?

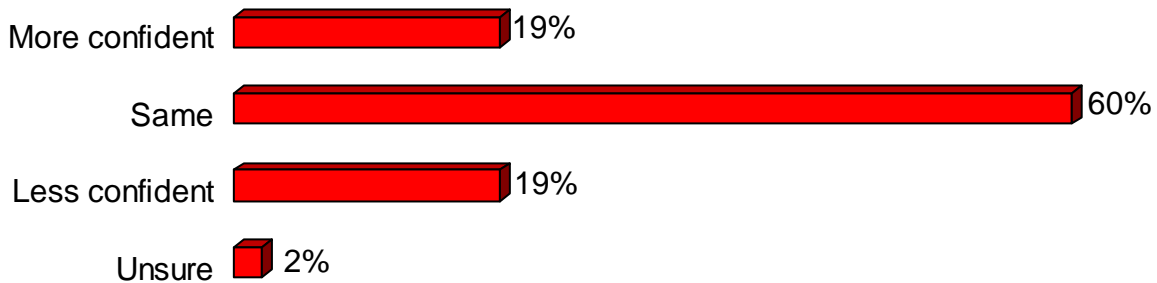


On a geographic basis, confidence in the future success of AGIA varies widely -- from a high of 68-74% in Rural and Central Alaska, to approximately half (43-45%) “not too/not at all confident in Anchorage, Southcentral and Southeast.

<i>“...confidence in AGIA being successful...?”</i>		
<u>Region:</u>	<u>Very / Quite</u>	<u>Not too / Not at all</u>
Rural	68%	29%
Central	74%	21%
Southcentral	50%	43%
Anchorage	52%	45%
Southeast	47%	44%
<u>Registration:</u>		
Democrat	61%	35%
Republican	58%	40%
Non-Partisan	53%	42%

Overall, public perceptions regarding the likely success of AGIA have remained unchanged over the past six months -- approximately one out of five (19%) have become more confident, the same percentage (19%) have become less confident, while 60% have remained the same.

Question: Has your opinion changed over the past six months or so -- are you becoming more confident, staying about the same, or less confident that a natural gas pipeline will be built?



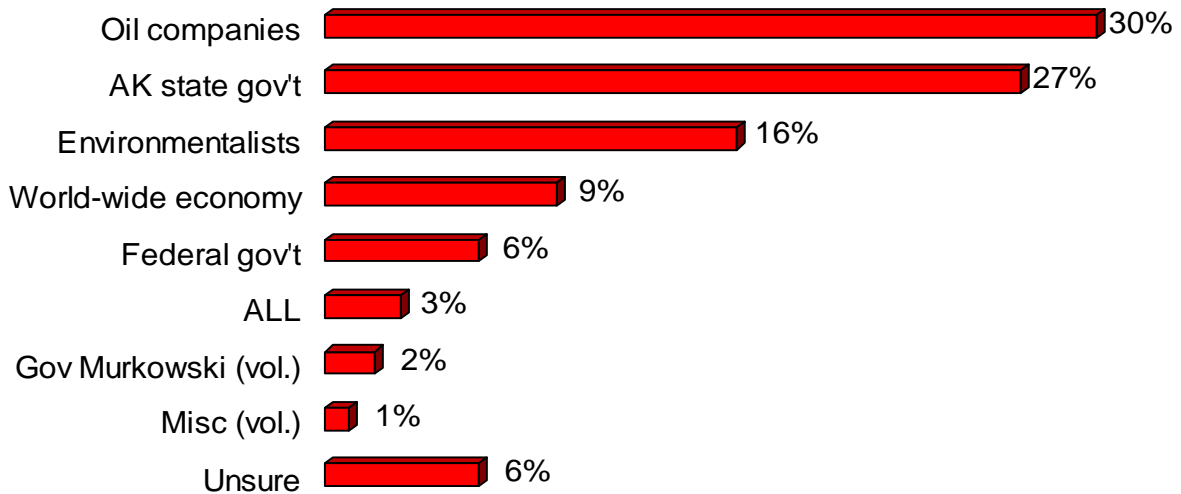
Geographically, Rural (32%) and Central (25%) respondents report they have become more confident, while approximately one out of four Anchorage respondents (28%) have become less confident.

<i>"...opinion changed about pipeline being built...?"</i>			
<u>Region:</u>	<u>More Confident</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Less Confident</u>
Rural	32%	56%	9%
Central	25%	67%	6%
Southcentral	17%	60%	17%
Anchorage	17%	55%	28%
Southeast	13%	69%	16%
<u>Registration:</u>			
Democrat	27%	57%	15%
Republican	16%	57%	26%
Non-Partisan	20%	59%	17%



In the eyes of the Alaskan public as a whole, the reason a gas pipeline hasn't been started or built yet is primarily equally shared between "oil companies" (30%) and the "Alaska state government" (27%).

Question: What do you feel has been the main reason a pipeline hasn't been started or built yet -- is it mostly the fault of the Alaska state government, the oil companies, the Federal government, environmentalist, world-wide economy, or something else?

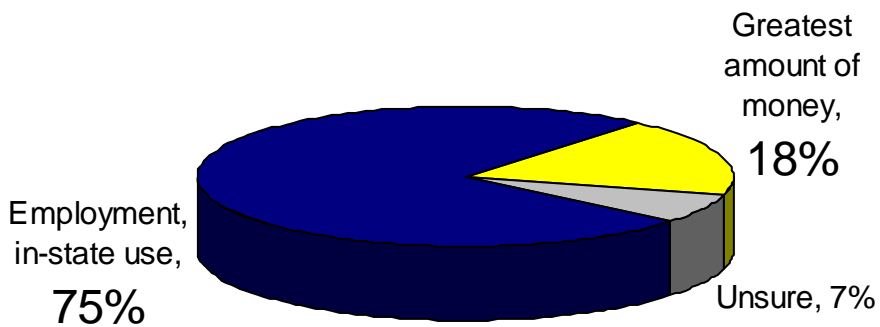


Public perceptions appear to be basically similar in all geographic regions with the exception of Southeast, where, possibly related to the decline of the timber industry, a large percentage (29%) believe "environmentalists" are to blame for the delay.

<i>"...main reason a pipeline hasn't been started or built yet...?"</i>			
<u>Region:</u>	<u>Oil companies</u>	<u>Alaska state government</u>	<u>Environmentalists</u>
Rural	26%	30%	17%
Central	34%	23%	10%
Southcentral	38%	20%	17%
Anchorage	33%	31%	13%
Southeast	5%	31%	29%
<u>Registration:</u>			
Democrat	32%	27%	12%
Republican	27%	36%	20%
Non-Partisan	29%	25%	17%

By a broad margin (75% to 18%), Alaskans believe that the “maximum benefit” of the state’s natural resources is for “employment and in-state use”, as opposed to “money to the state”.

Question: Alaska’s constitution states that Alaska’s natural resources are to be used for the “maximum benefit” of state residents. In your opinion, does “maximum benefit” primarily mean provide the greatest amount of money to the state, or does it mean providing employment and in-state use of the resources?



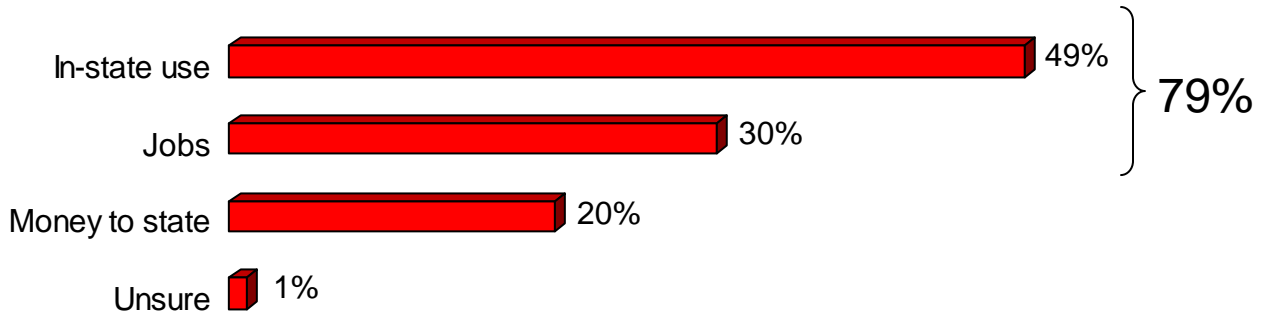
When comparing geographic regions and political affiliation, the vast majority of all groups (69-80%) agree that “maximum benefit” would be for “employment, in-state use”.

<i>“...what does ‘maximum benefit’ mean...?”</i>		
<u>Region:</u>	<u>Greatest amount of money</u>	<u>Employment, in-state use</u>
Rural	18%	80%
Central	18%	77%
Southcentral	22%	72%
Anchorage	17%	74%
Southeast	13%	75%
 <u>Registration:</u>		
Democrat	24%	69%
Republican	19%	78%
Non-Partisan	17%	77%

Similarly, when evaluating the benefits of a natural gas pipeline from the North Slope, approximately half of all respondents (49%) report that “in-state use” is the most important benefit of a natural gas pipeline, followed by “the jobs it will provide” (30%) -- while one out of five (20%) believe “money to the state and Permanent Fund” is most important.

Question: *Which do you think is the most important benefit of a natural gas pipeline from the North Slope...*

the jobs it will provide;
the in-state use for heating, electricity and industrial development;
the money it will provide to the state and Permanent Fund?

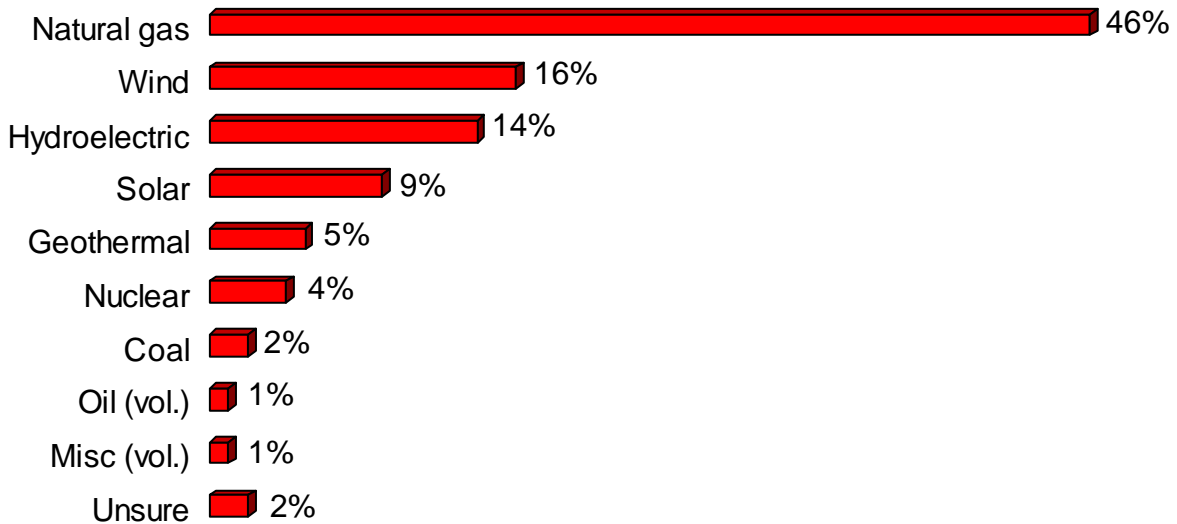


“In-state use” is considered the most important benefit by the largest number of respondents in each regional and political category (41-63%), although Republicans are almost as likely to say “jobs” (40%) compared to 41% for “in-state use”.

<i>“...most important benefit of a gas pipeline...?”</i>			
<u>Region:</u>	<u>In-state use</u>	<u>Jobs</u>	<u>Money</u>
Rural	52%	20%	25%
Central	63%	24%	13%
Southcentral	51%	26%	21%
Anchorage	41%	35%	23%
Southeast	49%	39%	12%
<u>Registration:</u>			
Democrat	53%	28%	18%
Republican	41%	40%	19%
Non-Partisan	51%	24%	23%

As far as energy needs in their community is concerned, nearly half of all respondents (46%) report they support using “natural gas” for energy, distantly followed by “wind” (16%) and “hydroelectric” (14%).

Question: As energy needs in the area where you live continue to grow, which source of energy do you support the most for the future?



This issue of energy sources is greatly dependent on geography -- “wind” (37%) is preferred in Rural areas, Central, Southcentral and Anchorage respondents favor “natural gas” (41-64%), while “hydroelectric” is by far the preferred source in Southeast (64%).

<i>“...which source of energy do you support...?”</i>					
<u>Region:</u>	<u>Natural Gas</u>	<u>Wind</u>	<u>Hydroelectric</u>	<u>Geothermal</u>	<u>Solar</u>
Rural	29%	37%	3%	15%	7%
Central	41%	6%	5%	3%	23%
Southcentral	41%	19%	10%	9%	8%
Anchorage	64%	13%	7%	3%	6%
Southeast	13%	13%	64%	--	6%
<u>Registration:</u>					
Democrat	39%	29%	12%	4%	10%
Republican	60%	13%	12%	1%	4%
Non-Partisan	41%	14%	16%	7%	10%

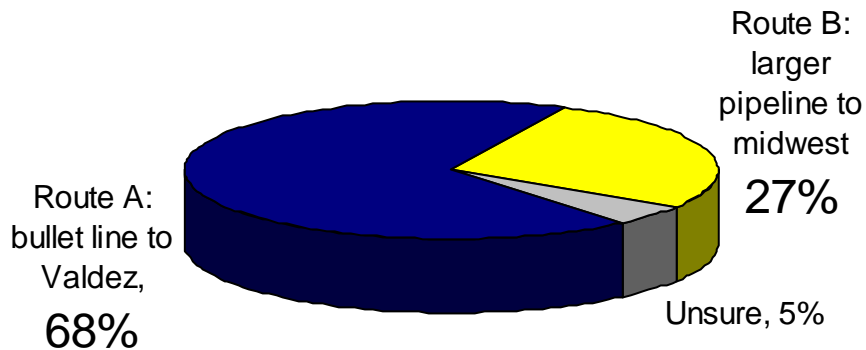
Considering two basic options, described as Route A and Route B, approximately two out of three respondents (68%) prefer a “bullet line” to Valdez rather than the larger, longer pipeline through Canada to the Midwest U.S.

Question: Here are two descriptions of a potential natural gas pipeline route. Please tell me which route you personally support the most:

Route A is...an 800 mile smaller diameter “bullet line” from the North Slope to Valdez where the gas would be liquefied and transported to world markets by tankers. Natural gas would be available along the route for use in Alaska. The “bullet line” would cost approximately \$8 billion and could be built within 10 years.

Route B is...a 2,000 mile larger diameter pipeline from the North Slope to Fairbanks, then east through Canada to the Midwestern United States. Take-off points would be provided for smaller pipelines to be built for Alaska in-state use. The large pipeline would cost approximately \$30 billion dollars and could be built in 20 years.

Which route do you personally support the most?

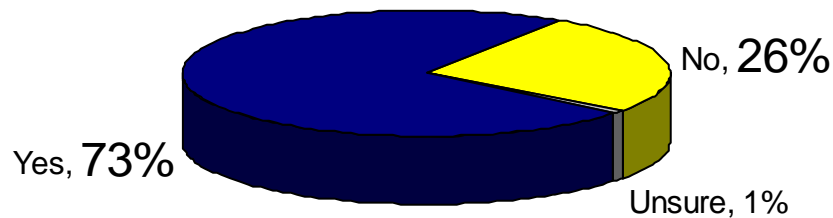


Although highly preferred in all geographic areas, support for a “bullet line” is strongest in Southcentral (75%) and relatively less in Central (57%).

<i>“...which route do you support...?”</i>		
<u>Region:</u>	<u>Route A: Bullet line to Valdez</u>	<u>Route B: Larger pipeline thru Canada</u>
Rural	69%	22%
Central	57%	36%
Southcentral	75%	17%
Anchorage	69%	28%
Southeast	62%	30%
<u>Registration:</u>		
Democrat	68%	27%
Republican	65%	30%
Non-Partisan	68%	25%

Approximately three out of four Alaskans (73%) report they have heard or seen advertising by ConocoPhillips regarding their gasline proposal.

Question: Have you heard or seen advertising by Conoco Phillips to encourage the governor and state legislature to consider its separate proposal to build a natural gas pipeline from the North Slope??

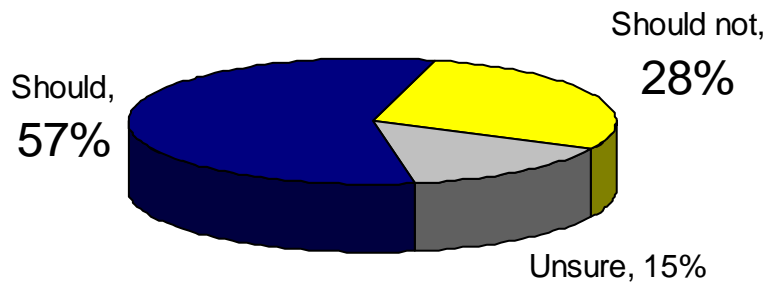


Residents of Southcentral and Anchorage are most likely to report awareness of the ads.

<i>"...heard or seen ConocoPhillips ads...?"</i>	
<u>Region:</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Rural	64%
Central	64%
Southcentral	82%
Anchorage	78%
Southeast	57%
<u>Registration:</u>	
Democrat	76%
Republican	78%
Non-Partisan	75%

And by a 2:1 ratio (57% to 28%), most Alaskans feel the state government should seriously consider the ConocoPhillips proposal.

Question: Do you feel the state legislature and Governor Palin should or should not seriously consider Conoco Phillips' proposal to build a natural gas pipeline?

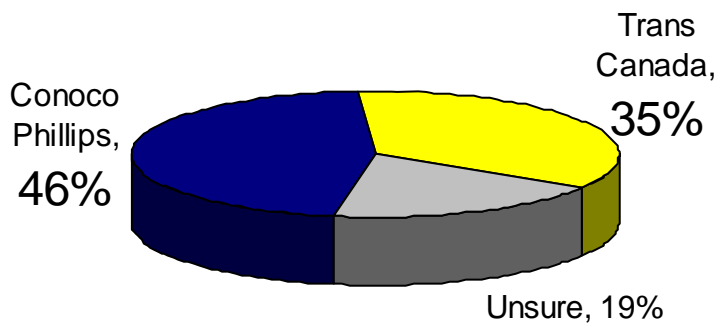


Anchorage residents most strongly think the proposal should be considered (70%), with the largest number of respondents (49-57%) in most other regions agreeing. On the other hand, nearly half (49%) of Central (Fairbanks area) respondents believe it should not be given serious consideration.

<i>"...seriously consider ConocoPhillips' proposal...?"</i>		
<u>Region:</u>	<u>Should</u>	<u>Should not</u>
Rural	49%	37%
Central	32%	49%
Southcentral	53%	31%
Anchorage	70%	19%
Southeast	57%	17%
 <u>Registration:</u>		
Democrat	46%	37%
Republican	66%	23%
Non-Partisan	57%	27%

On an overall, “off the top of your head” basis, more than two out of five respondents (46%) personally favor the ConocoPhillips proposal over TransCanada’s (35%).

Question: A company known as TransCanada has submitted a proposal through Governor Palin’s AGIA process to build a natural gas pipeline. Overall, just off the top of your head, which gasline proposal do you think you would personally favor the most – TransCanada’s or ConocoPhillips’?



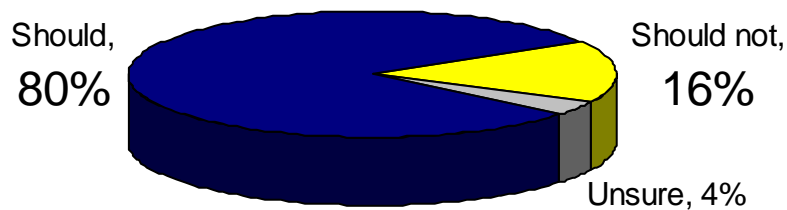
Although Central residents prefer the TransCanada proposal (61%), and Southeast respondents are more or less evenly split (33% ConocoPhillips; 31% TransCanada), the remaining areas (notably Anchorage) favor the ConocoPhillips proposal.

<i>“...which proposal do you favor the most...?”</i>		
<u>Region:</u>	<u>ConocoPhillips</u>	<u>TransCanada</u>
Rural	49%	38%
Central	25%	61%
Southcentral	43%	38%
Anchorage	58%	23%
Southeast	33%	31%
<u>Registration:</u>		
Democrat	45%	36%
Republican	56%	33%
Non-Partisan	41%	34%



In addition to competing proposals to transport Alaskan gas from the North Slope to the Mid-western United States, four out of five respondents (80%) would like to see the state government explore the option of a “bullet line” to Valdez.

Question: In addition to a potential 30 billion dollar, 2,000 mile natural gas pipeline from the North Slope to the mid-western United States that would take 15-20 years to build, do you feel the governor and state legislature should or should not give serious attention to supporting a smaller 800 mile “bullet line” from the North Slope to Valdez that could be built more quickly and provide gas for in-state use as well as for export?



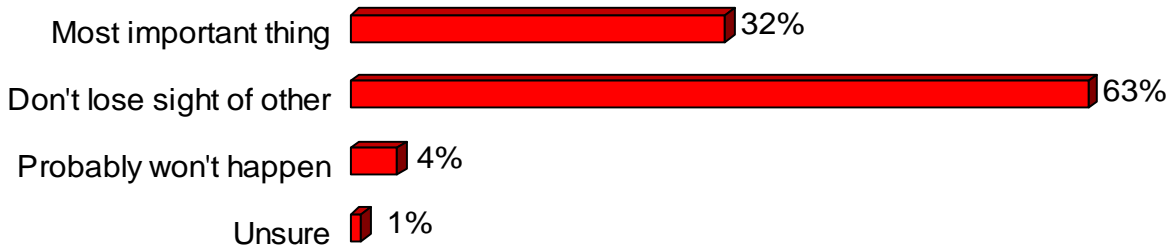
Support for a smaller “bullet line” is strong in all regions and among all political parties (65-88%).

<i>“...attention to ‘bullet line’...?”</i>		
<u>Region:</u>	<u>Should</u>	<u>Should not</u>
Rural	80%	14%
Central	65%	28%
Southcentral	83%	15%
Anchorage	82%	16%
Southeast	88%	10%
<u>Registration:</u>		
Democrat	81%	15%
Republican	76%	22%
Non-Partisan	83%	13%

In total, approximately one out of three Alaskans (33%) report they believe a natural gas pipeline from the North Slope is “the most important thing for Alaska’s future”, while nearly two out of three (63%) believe Alaska should not “...lose sight of other economic opportunities”. Significantly, and consistent with the highly optimistic findings described previously, very few Alaskans (4%) report they believe a natural gas pipeline is “...a waste of time and a boondoggle that probably won’t happen”.

Question: I’m going to read three different points of view regarding a natural gas pipeline from the North Slope, please tell me which description comes closest to your own personal point of view...?

*It’s by far the most important thing for Alaska’s economic future; it’s important, but we shouldn’t lose sight of other economic opportunities;
it’s a waste of time and a boondoggle that probably won’t happen*



A majority of respondents from all regions and political affiliations say the natural gas pipeline is “important, but don’t lose sight of other opportunities”; however, Anchorage residents and Republicans are almost as likely to report that the gasline is the “most important thing for Alaska’s future”.

<i>“...which description of gas pipeline...?”</i>			
<u>Region:</u>	<u>Most important</u>	<u>Don’t lose sight of other</u>	<u>Waste of time prob won’t happen</u>
Rural	22%	73%	5%
Central	23%	65%	4%
Southcentral	27%	73%	1%
Anchorage	42%	52%	6%
Southeast	26%	68%	3%
<u>Registration:</u>			
Democrat	21%	72%	6%
Republican	46%	51%	3%
Non-Partisan	27%	68%	4%