



## **Oregon's Kitchen Table – First Consultation Findings for Economy and Jobs and Healthy Environment Outcome Areas**

### **Methodology**

An online consultation was conducted among members of Oregon's Kitchen Table to inform the Governor of public priorities in developing the state's 10 Year Plan and the 2013-15 budget. For comparison purposes, the survey was also administered independently to a statewide representative sample. Below are the results for the economy and jobs, and healthy environment outcome areas. Reports have already been sent for the other four sections of the questionnaire: education, healthy people, justice system, and revenue.

Research Design: DHM Research emailed all Oregon's Kitchen Table panel members and invited them to participate in a consultation between June 11 and June 24, 2012. Project partners also emailed invites to different groups to complete the questionnaire. A total of 2,790 Oregonians participated in the consultation.

An additional 423 Oregonians participated in a companion scientific survey which was administered separately by Knowledge Networks.<sup>1</sup>

**Note to the Reader:** Currently an experiment, Oregon's Kitchen Table gives Oregonians the chance to weigh in on tough public policy tradeoffs. The project gathers real-time feedback from every corner of our state to share with decision makers in Salem. In addition to providing participants an opportunity to prioritize public investments, the pilot consultation provided them an opportunity to record comments. This particular outreach effort engaged more than 3,000 Oregonians, generating 4,158 comments, at a much lower cost and less time than conducting a series of public meetings across the state. In the months ahead, Oregon's Kitchen Table is committed to involving more Oregonians in helping shape the state's future, targeting population subgroups that are currently not proportionally

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<sup>1</sup> Oregon's Kitchen Table would like to thank the Program for Public Consultation, a joint program of the Center on Policy Attitudes and the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland, for its assistance with the scientific survey and its contribution of time and money to the First Consultation.

represented in the panel. The project partners also look forward to conducting additional consultations which will involve administration of the full consultation, or parts of it, to a random sample of Oregonians for comparative analysis.

## Economy and Jobs

Oregon has been hit hard by the recession and is pursuing strategies to create at least 25,000 jobs a year while working to bring per capita income up above the national average in both urban and rural communities. Here are some strategies for promoting economic growth and creating jobs. Next to each one please enter how many of your \$100 dollars you want to allocate to that strategy. <sup>2</sup>

Public Investments	Oregon Kitchen Table	Representative Statewide Sample
Create more tax incentives and other financial incentives to retain and attract businesses that provide jobs	\$14.90	\$23.10
Provide access to capital for growing businesses in Oregon	\$14.40	\$17.30
Invest in more job training and adult education	\$18.70	\$17.10
Have the state invest in partnerships with local governments to pursue more bottom up strategies that address specific community needs and create jobs	\$16.80	\$15.60
Invest in public infrastructure to provide jobs and ensure Oregon has the necessary transportation, power, water and other resources to support growth	\$28.90	\$23.40

### Representative Comments

- "Infrastructure and workforce training have the broadest impact and pay off for the entire community."
- "Oregon doesn't need growth as much as we need resilient family-wage jobs. Most of these jobs are provided by local small and medium businesses. We should focus resources on cultivating already local businesses and helping them grow, rather than attracting businesses whose owners live out of state and contribute less back to our communities."
- "Reduce the regulations that private business faces to start up. Work with people to establish businesses without excessive government regulation."
- "I would end public subsidies for private development of lands. I would include enterprise zones, urban renewal, tax credits, and similar strategies of corporate welfare."

<sup>2</sup> The questionnaire instructed respondents that they did not have to allocate all \$100.

- “Enough with the tax breaks and handing out money to business. The American business community has more capital reserves than ever, right now. They just are sitting on it playing one group of politicians against the other for more.”

## Observations

Respondents chose to allocate the most money to invest in public infrastructure to provide jobs and ensure Oregon has the necessary transportation, power, water and other resources to support growth, with a mean amount of \$28.90 allocated by OKT panel members and a mean amount of \$23.40 allocated by respondents in the companion scientific statewide survey.

- With unemployment in Oregon currently over 8%, respondents were most likely to allocate funding in a way that would produce jobs quickly and be cost-effective, i.e. through infrastructure spending.
- Notably, while respondents of the statewide sample survey were very supportive of creating tax incentives to attract and retain businesses (\$23.10 mean allocation), OKT panel members were much less so (\$14.90). In fact, this represents the largest difference between the two surveys across all four outcome areas.
- As the survey focused on how the state should stimulate economic growth, one of the most popular opinions held by respondents was not covered: Removing public-sector regulations to allow for private-sector growth.

Below are several representative comments further illustrating the interest in immediate job creation and concern with government spending/growth:

- *“Spending on needed improvements in infrastructure provide opportunities for jobs and at the same time providing the backbone for the tools and services which business needs to grow, feeding the other items on the list and allowing for investment for a upward spiral of improvements across the board. Slashing funds in this area is short sighted.”*
- *“Oregon needs rail line improvements to support transportation of goods made in rural areas, which in turn will support the economy of the failing rural towns. If a furniture manufacturing company could locate in a small town and be assured that it could ship its goods in a timely way, it could provide a base for the local economy, and not have to compete for high priced industrial land in a large urban area.”*
- *“State and local governments don’t create jobs, private businesses do. What the state can do is help provide a skilled workforce and create an environment that supports business and does not overburden them with taxes and regulations.”*

- *“Oregon has managed to chase more jobs way by its regulations and environmental rules; the state and/or cities need to get out of the way and let the private sector do what it does best.”*

## Healthy Environment

Oregonians value clean water, clean air, and careful stewardship of our farms and forests. Here are some strategies to protect and enhance the environment in Oregon. Next to each one please enter how many of your \$100 dollars you want to allocate to that strategy. <sup>3</sup>

Public Investments	Oregon's Kitchen Table	Representative Statewide Sample
Ensure communities have access to safe drinking water and healthy rivers and streams	\$19.80	\$18.90
Reduce toxic air pollution that may threaten health	\$13.60	\$13.60
Improve forest health and fish and wildlife habitat	\$14.10	\$15.90
Preserve open space and parks	\$14.90	\$13.60
Manage water resources so that there is enough water to go around	\$14.00	\$14.70
Manage land development in ways that maintain our working farms and forests	\$16.60	\$18.80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>

### Representative Comments

- “I think that land use laws need to have local control within the communities around the land. For example, folks in eastern Oregon do not have the same issues regarding property as the folks in Multnomah County do.”
- “If we don't manage development appropriately, these other concerns can't be resolved. Preserving our urban growth boundary system HAS to be our #1 environmental protection strategy.”
- “My focus would be on WORKING forests and farms. Logging should be encouraged as a renewable resource. Full production farms should be encouraged but not restrict conversion of farm property in or near metropolitan areas where it is in a maintenance mode waiting for development.”
- “Our environment should be our number one focus, and other major focus issues should wrap around this issue.”
- “We need a better balance between conservation and responsible use of our natural resources. Right now the environmental activists seem to be able to stop

<sup>3</sup> The questionnaire instructed respondents that they did not have to allocate all \$100.

anything. I treasure our resources but we need to factor in communities as well.”

## Observations

Respondents chose to allocate the most money to ensure communities have access to safe drinking water and healthy rivers and streams, with a mean amount of \$19.80 allocated by OKT panel members and a mean amount of \$18.90 allocated by respondents in the companion statewide survey. Compared to the other outcome areas, environmental allocations were notably even, with neither survey registering a mean allocation greater than \$20 for any public investment.

- Among OKT panel members, support for allocations for a safe water supply was strong across all regions, with all areas having a roughly five in ten ratio willing to give more than the mean allocation of \$19.80. As a safe water supply affects all regions equally, it is understandable that respondents should choose to allocate more for this issue than for more area-specific concerns such as land development for farms or the preservation of wildlife habitat. There is no urban/rural divide when it comes to ensuring access to safe drinking water. Notably strong support among Tri-County residents might be attributable to a desire to maintain the high water quality produced by the Bull Run watershed.
- It is worth noting that allocations for the reduction of toxic air pollution were much stronger among urban regions than rural ones, presumably because air pollution is less of an issue outside of metropolitan areas.
- Additionally, there was significant concern with how little of the state budget (1%) is dedicated to environmental issues.

Below are several representative comments further illustrating the interest in maintaining a clean water supply as a shared resource and expanding state investment in the environment:

- “I don't think 1% accurately depicts how much people care about clean water and air. This number should be more like 15% - 25%.”
- “The fact that this crucial component of the budget is so incredibly small, relative to any other category of expense, is very troubling. Without a significant increase in expenditures of this kind, fully meeting the other budgetary goals detailed here will be next to impossible. We cannot have a high level of health in the general population unless you have a healthy, fully-functioning environment. We cannot be sound fiscally unless our natural resource base remains sound. We cannot continue to be the kind of state most residents think we are unless we improve the manner in which we manage our land use activities. I believe that

we should increase this percentage to something on the order of 10% of the budget. That would be more in keeping with the spirit of Oregon's Goals."

### What Do You Think About Oregon's Kitchen Table?

(Statewide Representative Sample Only) Now that you have completed this process, we have a few questions about how you feel about this type of process.

Do you think that this process of citizens giving the Oregon government input on its priorities is:

	Rep. Statewide Sample
A very good idea	69%
A somewhat good idea	28%
A somewhat bad idea	0%
A very bad idea	1%
Don't know/refused	0%

How confident are you that the government will pay attention to the input from this process?

	Rep. Statewide Sample
Very confident	2%
Somewhat confident	29%
Not very confident	47%
Not confident at all	21%
Don't know/refused	1%

How confident are you that the views of Oregonians from this process will have some influence on government decisions?

	Rep. Statewide Sample
Very confident	4%
Somewhat confident	27%
Not very confident	50%
Not confident at all	18%
Don't know/refused	1%

Would you like to see the Oregon government consult the people on its priorities in this way in the future, or not? (Statewide Representative Sample Only)

	Rep. Statewide Sample
Would	95%
Would not	4%