



MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Evans/McDonough Company, Inc.
DATE: April 4, 2006
RE: Yolo County Voter Survey: Countywide and District by District Analysis

This memorandum summarizes the results of a countywide survey of likely voters in Yolo County, completed on March 5, 2006 and conducted by Evans/McDonough Company Incorporated (EMC), a full service opinion research and strategic consulting firm serving a broad range of corporate, political and institutional clients. A summary of the methodology, sample size, and margin of error can be found at the end of the memorandum.

U.S. Eminent Domain Ruling

Before discussing the Yolo County issue specifically, respondents were read a brief description of the *Kelo vs. New London* 2005 Supreme Court ruling, and asked whether they support or oppose the Court's decision. Four out of five likely voters countywide (79%) strongly oppose the court's ruling, with another 9% somewhat opposing the decision. Supervisorial District 2 registered the strongest opposition (77% strongly oppose/13% somewhat oppose), followed by District 4 (73% strongly oppose/16% somewhat oppose), District 1 (67% strongly oppose/18% somewhat oppose), District 5 (57% strongly oppose/22% somewhat oppose), and finally District 3 (52% strongly oppose/28% somewhat oppose). It is worthwhile to note that even in the Supervisorial District with the comparatively weakest opposition to the Court's ruling, four out of five likely voters there (80%) still oppose it.

Eminent Domain & Conaway Ranch

Following the questioning about the Supreme Court ruling on eminent domain, all survey respondents were read an initial description of the issue of ownership of Conaway ranch, followed by a question that asked them if they support or oppose the County's efforts to condemn Conaway Ranch.

Conaway Ranch is a 17 thousand three hundred acre piece of land in Yolo County, in the triangle formed by the cities of Woodland, Davis, and West Sacramento. More than two thirds of the Ranch is in a federal floodplain, and nearly half is in the Yolo Bypass. Currently, the privately owned Conaway Ranch is leased to local farmers and a duck club. Yolo County is interested in owning and managing Conaway Ranch, but the owners are not interested in selling.

Recently, Yolo County decided to use its power of eminent domain to seize the Conaway Ranch from the current ownership group, the Conaway Preservation Group, who does not want to sell the

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Ranch. Eminent domain, or condemnation, allows the government to take private property for a public use for fair market value without the consent of the owner.

After being given this information and asked whether they support or oppose the county's condemnation action, support is at just 23%, with 71% in opposition. Opposition is particularly strong in Supervisorial Districts 5 (82% oppose) and 3 (81% oppose). Just over three-quarters (76%) of the residents in Supervisorial District 1 oppose the county's action, followed by 64% in District 4, and finally 56% in District 2.

Respondents were then read the following description of the Rumsey Band of Wintun Indians' involvement in the County's eminent domain action:

The Rumsey Band of Wintun Indians, which owns the Cache Creek Casino Resort in Yolo County, has agreed to finance the county's eminent domain action to acquire the Ranch.

Involvement by the tribe does essentially nothing to shore up support for the county's position: Following this information, 20% support the county position (a 3 point drop from the prior question), while opposition drops slightly to 69%. The strongest opposition remains in District 5 (78%), which is joined by District 1 (78%), followed by District 3 (71% opposed), District 4 (63%) and District 2 (56%).

Over the remainder of the survey, a campaign was simulated in which respondents heard several arguments being used by each side of the issue. Every effort was made to present the issue in a fair and balanced manner, with the arguments being stated as their proponents have been using them in free and paid media and other public information sources.

The county's eminent domain action following the campaign simulation exercise gathers support from one-third of county voters (33%), with a majority (61%) remaining in opposition. Supervisorial District 1 voters have the highest level of opposition to the county action, at 74% opposed and 21% supporting, District 5 ends up at 72% opposed and 23% support, District 3 ends at 71% oppose and 21% support, District 4 at 52% opposed and 41% support, and District 2 voters are still the most supportive of the plan (in fact, the only District with majority support), at 42% opposed and 53% support.

Following the campaign simulation, respondents were asked how important it was to them that candidates for the Board of Supervisors agree with their position on Conaway Ranch. Countywide, 91% of likely voters thought that it was important (48% thought it was very important). This holds true across all Supervisorial Districts, with 95% in District 4 thinking its important (50% very important), 93% in District 1 thinking its important (52% very important), 90% in District 5 thinking its important (52% very important), 89% in District 3 thinking its important (51% very important), and 86% in District 2 thinking its important (34% very important).

By and large, the voters of Yolo County side with the current owners by a wide margin over the county in the dispute over Conaway Ranch. They question the necessity of eminent domain for preservation of current land uses, as well as the propriety of the involvement of the Rumsey Band of Wintun Indians. This places the burden of proof squarely on the county to show that their actions are appropriate and necessary. Given the results of this survey, the county may find it impossible to overcome the strong opposition to their eminent domain action.

Methodology

This memorandum is based on a survey of five hundred eighty five (585) likely voters in Yolo County, California conducted March 1 through 5 by trained, professional interviewers, which has a margin of error of plus or minus four point one (4.1) percentage points at the 95% confidence interval. Quotas were set in each of the four incorporated cities in the county in order to insure there were enough interviews to analyze for each area. For analysis, countywide results were weighted back to the actual population distribution.