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Oregon Statewide Poll Results: Voters Have Buyer's Remorse for Measure 37

To: Interested Parties

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Executive Summary

As voters in a number of Western states prepare to vote on "takings" measures on the November ballot, we conducted a statewide survey in Oregon to determine how voters in that state currently feel about a similar measure (Measure 37) that they passed in 2004. The survey found that Oregon voters now have serious regrets and concerns about the effects the measure has had on their communities. In fact, voters in Oregon now overwhelmingly oppose Measure 37 and believe it has resulted in many negative and unforeseen consequences. This stands in stark contrast to just two years ago when voters passed the initiative by a wide margin.

Currently,

- Oregonians are well aware of Measure 37 as most voters have heard something about the measure (83 percent);
- If an election were held today and voters had the opportunity to redo the vote on Measure 37, **Oregon voters would now reject Measure 37 by a wide margin (48 percent no to only 29 percent yes), and the margin is even wider among voters who have heard a lot about it (66 percent to 26 percent);**
- Oregon voters now have an unfavorable view of Measure 37 (45 percent unfavorable to only 27 percent favorable) and believe that it has generally been bad for Oregon;
- Specifically, Oregon voters believe Measure 37
 - was "a mistake" – 62 percent of voters who have heard a lot about Measure 37 agree, and a plurality of all voters (48 percent) agrees,
 - has created chaos and uncertainty (66 percent and 72 percent of all voters agree, respectively),
 - could cost taxpayers millions of dollars (61 percent agree), and
 - will lead to increased development, including previously protected open space (61 percent);
- Oregonians are greatly troubled by specific cases under Measure 37 and have an even less favorable opinion of the measure once they hear these actual occurrences. Voters were most disturbed by:
 - A mining company now permitted to mine in a national monument and scenic area (77 percent less favorable towards Measure 37);
 - Putting a gravel pit in a residential neighborhood (71 percent less favorable);

- Allowing a four story condominium building to be built in a neighborhood of single family homes (69 percent less favorable);
- Allowing 300 houses to be developed on previously protected farmland (66 percent less favorable).

Poll Findings

High Level of Awareness

An overwhelming majority of voters in Oregon (83 percent) has heard about Measure 37. A solid majority (56 percent) of voters say they have heard a lot or a fair amount about the measure while only 16 percent say they have not heard anything about Measure 37 which was passed by voters in 2004.

Voters Have Deep Regrets about Measure 37

In 2004, Measure 37 passed with 61 percent of the vote in Oregon. Yet, support for the measure has dropped precipitously. In fact, Oregon voters now oppose Measure 37 and if the election were held today, Measure 37 would lose by a wide margin. Opponents of Measure 37 now outnumber supporters by a nearly 2-to-1 margin as nearly half of the Oregon electorate (48 percent) says they would vote no while only slightly more than a quarter (29 percent) would vote yes to support the measure.

Familiarity breeds contempt: Opposition against the measure is even stronger among voters who have heard more about the measure. Two-thirds (66 percent) of those who have heard a lot about Measure 37 would now vote no if it were on the ballot today, while only one out of four (26 percent) would vote yes to support the measure.

Measure 37 Vote

	2004 Ballot Results	Vote on Measure Today	
		All Voters	Voters who have Heard A lot
Yes	61%	29%	26%
No	39%	48%	66%
Undecided	--	21%	7%

Voters Across the State Oppose Measure 37

When voters cast their ballots for Measure 37 in November 2004, all but one county in Oregon voted yes on the initiative, including the state's more progressive counties such as Multnomah (home to Portland) and its surrounding suburbs. That is simply no longer the case. Currently, voters in every region of the state now strongly oppose Measure 37 and would reject it if the measure re-appeared on the ballot. Multnomah County (Portland) voters are most strongly against it (59 percent would vote no if the election were held today to only 18 percent yes), but voters in eastern Oregon also oppose it by double digits (46 percent to 32 percent).

The survey also found that opposition to Measure 37 also transcends political ideology. Today, a strong majority of liberals (67 percent to 14 percent) and moderates (50 percent to 31 percent) would oppose Measure 37 if it was once again on the ballot. Measure 37 also fails to gain much support among conservatives, who are now much more divided on how they would vote if the

measure was on the ballot today (42 percent would vote yes while 31 percent would vote no with 24 percent unsure).

Voters Have an Unfavorable View of Measure 37

A plurality of those who have heard at least a little about Measure 37 have an unfavorable view of the measure (45 percent unfavorable to 27 percent favorable). Furthermore, 43 percent of Oregonians who have heard at least a little about Measure 37 think it has generally been a bad thing for Oregon, while 27 percent say it has been a good thing for the state.

- Voters who have heard a lot about the measure are far more likely to say that Measure 37 has been a bad thing (65 percent bad thing to 23 percent good thing).
- Nearly half of Oregonians (48 percent) agree that Measure 37 was a mistake. Furthermore, one in three (34 percent) *strongly* agree that it was a mistake.
- Among those who have heard a lot about the measure, the view of Measure 37 as a mistake is even more prominent with 62 percent agreeing that was a mistake while only 32 percent disagree. A strong majority (58 percent) of those who have heard a lot about the measure *strongly* agree that it was a mistake.

Oregonians believe Measure 37 has had troubling effects

When voters were asked if they agree or disagree with statements that have been made about Measure 37, overwhelming majorities agreed with statements highlighting the negative impacts of the measure.

- A strong majority of voters in Oregon (66 percent) agree that Measure 37 has caused a lot of chaos. Oregonians who have heard a lot about the measure are even more likely to agree that it has created chaos (88 percent agree to 20 percent disagree);
- An even greater number agree that it has caused a lot of uncertainty (72 percent agree to 21 percent disagree).
- Voters are worried about the fiscal impact that Measure 37 may have on taxpayers. Three out of five (61 percent) voters think that it may cost taxpayers millions of dollars. Those who have heard the most about the measure are even more likely to agree that Measure 37 may end up costing millions (73 percent agree to 20 percent disagree).
- Oregon voters are also concerned that Measure 37 will lead to increased development.
 - More than seven out of ten (71 percent) of voters and practically all of those who have heard the most about the measure (91 percent) worry that it will open the door to more development.
 - Voters also believe that Measure 37 will allow development on previously protected land (61 percent of all voters and 75 percent of those who have heard a lot about the measure agree).

Current Impressions of Measure 37

For each one, please tell me if you agree or disagree with the statement about Measure 37.	Total Agree	
	All Voters	Voters who have heard a lot
Has created a lot of uncertainty	72%	88%
Opens the door to more development	71%	91%
Has caused a lot of chaos	66%	74%
Allows development on what was previously protected farmland and open space	61%	75%
Could cost taxpayers millions of dollars	61%	73%
Was a mistake	48%	62%

Voters Do Not Like the Impact of Measure 37 Based on Actual Cases

After voters are read descriptions of specific cases under Measure 37, their opinion towards the measure grows even less favorable.

- Fifty-seven percent of voters in Oregon say they have a *much* less favorable view of Measure 37 after learning that a mining company may be permitted to develop a mine on a previously protected national monument area.
- Likewise, half of Oregonians say they have a *much* less favorable opinion of Measure 37 after being read the description of the claim filed by the Wildish Company under Measure 37 while a total of 71 percent of voters say it gives them at least a somewhat less favorable view.
- Voters who have heard a lot about Measure 37 are even more likely to have a less favorable view of the measure after being read descriptions of specific cases.
 - Forty-two percent of voters feel *much* less favorable and a total of 69 percent feel at much or somewhat less favorable towards Measure 37 after hearing that it would allow for a four story condominium to be built in a neighborhood of single family homes. Those who have heard a lot about Measure 37 feel even more unfavorable after hearing of this specific Measure 37 case with over three in four (76 percent) saying they have a less favorable view.
 - Voters' opinion of Measure 37 is similarly affected when they are told that the measure could allow for 300 houses to be developed on previously protected farmland. After hearing this specific case under Measure 37, 66 percent of Oregonians have a less favorable view of the measure. Of those most informed about Measure 37, 78 percent have a less favorable opinion (58 percent have a *much* less favorable opinion) of Measure 37.
 - Oregon voters also react negatively after hearing that a specific case under Measure 37 would allow for an industrial gravel pit to be developed in a residential neighborhood. Nearly half of voters (48 percent) say this causes them to have a *much* less favorable opinion of Measure 37. Seventy-one percent of Oregonians and 68 percent of those who have heard a lot about Measure 37 feel less favorable towards the measure after hearing that it would allow for an industrial gravel pit in a residential area.

Specific Measure 37 Cases

For each one, please tell me if it makes you have a more or less favorable opinion of Measure 37.	All Voters		Voters who have heard a lot	
	Much less favorable	Total less favorable	Much less favorable	Total less favorable
<i>In a specific Measure 37 case, a mining company would be permitted to develop a mine in a national monument and scenic area that was previously protected.</i>	57%	77%	72%	84%
<i>The Wildish Company filed a 15 million dollar claim under Measure 37 for 1400 acres it owns on Mount Pisgah along the Willamette River. This land is currently protected. Now, this big land developer now wants to mine the land and then build houses on it.</i>	50%	71%	60%	74%
<i>In a specific Measure 37 case, a proposed industrial gravel pit would be permitted in what is currently a rural residential neighborhood.</i>	48%	71%	51%	68%
<i>One Measure 37 case would allow 300 houses to be developed on what was previously protected farmland.</i>	45%	66%	58%	78%
<i>One Measure 37 case would allow a four story condominium building to be built in a neighborhood of single family homes.</i>	42%	69%	45%	76%

In sum, this poll has found that Oregon voters have deep regrets over Measure 37 and if they could do it all over again, they would vote no and reject this initiative. This is particularly true among voters who are most informed about Measure 37 as they view it the most unfavorably. Clearly, the message from this poll is that Oregon voters are telling voters in other states that have a takings initiative on the ballot to vote no and not make the same mistake they did so that they do not experience the problems Oregon is now experiencing as a result of Measure 37.

Appendix A: Methodology

From October 12-16, 2006, Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research conducted a statewide survey by telephone among 405 registered voters in Oregon who voted in the 2004 November general election that included Measure 37 on the ballot. The survey's margin of error is plus or minus 4.9 percent.