



"What in the world people are really thinking"

**For Immediate Release**

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## ***Despite War, Overwhelming Majority Says Defense Department Should Follow Environmental Laws***

### ***Proposal to Exempt Defense Department Not Supported, New Zogby America Poll Shows***

(Utica, NY) -- Despite strong public support for the armed services during a time of war, voters feel just as strongly now as they did a year ago that government agencies, including the Department of Defense, need to follow the same environmental rules that apply to the rest of America. More than four out of five likely voters (84%) say that government agencies should have to follow the same environmental and public health laws as everyone else. Those numbers held true:

- among both men and women;
- in every region of the country; and
- among all age, race, income, and education subgroups.

Among Republicans and self-described "conservatives," more than two of out three oppose exempting the Defense Department from the Nation's environmental laws. And even among those who consider themselves to be "very conservative," a solid three out of five likely voters (60%) share the same view.

These results are almost identical to those found when the same question was asked in an April 2002 Zogby America survey, which indicates that support for the war and our troops does not translate into support for the proposal to exempt the DOD from health and environmental laws.

(more)

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*Q. Congress is considering a proposal that would allow the U.S. military to ignore the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and other environmental and public health laws. Do you believe that government agencies like the Defense Department should be exempt from America's environmental and public health laws, or should government agencies have to follow the same laws as everyone else?*

**Table 1. Environmental Laws and the Defense Dept.**

	% April '03	% April '02
Follow the laws	84	85
Exempt from environmental and public health laws	10	11
Not sure	5	5

Moreover, after hearing arguments for and against the proposal to exempt the Defense Department, voters remain overwhelmingly opposed. By a margin of 75% - 19%, voters agreed that no government agency should be above the law, especially when existing environmental and public health laws already provide the flexibility needed to balance environmental protection and military readiness by allowing exemptions on a case-by-case basis in the interest of national security (Statement B).

Once again, there was little change in the overall numbers from April 2002 to April 2003, despite the war in Iraq. More than two out of three voters in all demographic groups of region, race, religion, age, education, income, and gender agreed with Statement B. In addition, a strong majority of Republicans (63%) and self-identified "Conservatives" (65%) opted against the argument that environmental laws interfere with our ability to maintain military readiness and protect national security and, as a result, should not be given priority over the need to ensure that America's armed forces receive the greatest possible preparation for the hazards and rigors of combat (Statement A).

(more)

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*Q. I will now read you two statements about the proposal to exempt Defense Department from America's environmental laws. Please tell me which of the two statements comes closest to your own opinion.*

**Table 2. Views on Obeying Environmental Laws**

	% April '03	% April '02
<b>B:</b> No government agency should be above the law – including the laws that protect the environment around our military facilities and the health of the people who live nearby. U.S. laws already provide the flexibility needed to balance environmental protection and military readiness by allowing exemptions on a case-by-case basis in the interest of national security.	75	78
<b>A:</b> Environmental laws interfere with our ability to maintain military readiness and protect national security. U.S. government agencies should not have to place environmental protection above the need to ensure that America's armed forces receive the greatest possible preparation for the hazards and rigors of combat.	19	19
Neither	2	1
Not sure	4	3

The latest Zogby America survey, conducted for a coalition of public interest groups listed at [www.zogby.com](http://www.zogby.com), interviewed 1,076 registered voters at random nationwide from April 8-9, 2003 and has a margin of error of +/- 2.9 percent.

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