



The Upper Peninsula **Environment**

Newsletter of the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition • October 1990

Special Issue • Results of UPEC's 1990 Environmental Poll

Candidates tell views on key U.P. environmental issues

Perhaps more than anywhere else in Michigan, environmental issues are an immediate and ongoing concern for the people of the Upper Peninsula. As an educational service designed to inform the U.P. electorate, the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition (UPEC) has done a poll of candidates running this fall. The four-question poll was sent to major-party candidates running for the Michigan House and Senate seats that represent the U.P., the 11th Congressional District seat, the open U.S. Senate seat, and the Governorship. The results of the poll are being released to every Upper Michigan newspaper and the electronic media in early October. UPEC is also sharing the results with U.P. chapters of the League of Women Voters.

UPEC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, and thus does not endorse candidates. To ensure that the candidates' points of view have been articulated fairly and accurately, we have not edited the following responses in any way. The four questions are:

- 1. Do you support or oppose the International Joint Commission's recent recommendation to make the Lake Superior watershed a demonstration area for zero discharge of toxic pollutants? Please explain your position, and include your definition of "zero discharge."*
- 2. Do you support or oppose the building of more pulp and paper mills in Upper Michigan? Under what conditions, if any?*
- 3. Do you support or oppose Wild, Scenic, and Recreational designation of U.P. rivers? Under what conditions, if any?*
- 4. What do you think is the biggest environmental problem facing Upper Michigan, and what would you do in office to solve it?*

Here are the responses of the candidates:

For Governor

James Blanchard, Lansing:

1. "The levels of some toxic pollutants in the Great Lakes are down as much as 90 percent since the 1970s. We can do better. I will ask that the Environmental Protection Agency and the governments in the region establish standardized water quality regulations that match the toughest standards in place in the region. This strategy heads us toward zero discharge."

2. "I support economic development projects that meet or exceed our tough state and federal environmental protection standards. I also believe such projects should only proceed if they have local support. I know we need jobs in the Upper Peninsula and I know the Department of Natural Resources will not compromise in its role as a tough and demanding regulator."

3. "In my State of the State message in January, I endorsed the concept of a federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The Congressional process will examine the suitability of specific rivers for this designation. It is important that the legislation designating Michigan rivers includes language which clearly protects water quality and sea lamprey control programs and takes into account the rights of those who own property along designated stretches."

4. "I believe our biggest challenge is to substantially toughen our environmental enforcement laws. I strongly favor House Bill 5878, the "polluters pay" legislation. I believe that Michigan can fully advance environmentally only if our laws hold polluters—not taxpayers—fully accountable for cleanup costs."

John Engler, Mt. Pleasant:

"I strongly support the recommendation of the International Joint Commission to make the Lake Superior watershed a "zero discharge" demonstration area—compliance with the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement requires no less.

By "zero discharge" I mean the ending of point source discharges of persistent toxic substances into the Lake Superior basin. Currently, permits are issued allowing industry to discharge toxic pollutants into the Great Lakes. Because of the relatively undeveloped nature of the Lake Superior shoreline, there exists an excellent opportunity to implement the policy and study its effects on both the lake and the economy of the area. I would like to see this project represent a goal that the International Joint Commission sets as a standard in the remaining Great Lakes.

Governor Blanchard's attempt to illegally divert monies from the Resource Recovery Fund to support the building of a paper mill on Lake Superior was a flagrant violation of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement and the policy of zero discharge. This attempted diversion was fortunately halted in a successful suit brought by the National Wildlife Federation, and I, with the aid of my colleagues in the Michigan Senate, established the RRF to promote recycling and reuse, not new paper mills."

2. "Paper and pulp mills should not be treated differently than other proposed developments that have potential impact on our natural resources. Although much has been made in regard to the opportunities for employment created by these new mills, there is a great concern that natural resources may be sacrificed for such improvements in the economy.

Many parallels can be drawn between the Upper Peninsula of the 1990s and the Lower Peninsula of the early 1900s. The drive to convert resources to cash fueled widespread cutting of vast timber resources during the Great Logging Era. Little concern was given to the long-term effects of the cutting and poor management which resulted in a severe depletion of resources.

If a newly proposed pulp or paper mill can be built to strictly comply with a policy prohibiting the point discharge of any persistent toxic substances, including dioxins, and if our forest resources are carefully monitored and managed, then I would not oppose the building of such a facility. However, I would insist on continual monitoring for compliance subject to strong penalties for violations, and I would not encourage the building of such facilities by giving taxpayer subsidies."

3. "The designation of certain U.P. rivers under the federal National Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers Act is clearly an issue to be resolved by Congress, not state government. I have supported on-site hearings by Congressional committees considering this legislation to provide ample opportunity for proponents and opponents to testify. I am concerned about the preservation of the rivers for sport fishing. I am also concerned about the potential condemnation of private lands by the federal government."

4. "The biggest environmental challenge facing Upper Michigan today is getting Lansing to pay attention to the unique needs of the U.P. for environmental protection, solid waste disposal alternatives, and natural resources management. Basically the Upper Peninsula needs a broad-based, long-term plan of action that inventories the vast resources of the area and plans for sensible development of the region.

The Upper Peninsula needs an administration that will make its environmental needs a priority in Lansing. As you know, Connie Binsfeld, the candidate for Lieutenant Governor, grew up in the Upper Peninsula and did not cross the straits until she attended college. She is also a member of the Great Lakes Commission. Her counsel on environmental problems specific to the Upper Peninsula will be invaluable and will ensure that Upper Michigan concerns are given the attention they merit, and placed at a higher priority than they have been under the present administration. As Governor, I will:

- Vigorously enforce tough, clear, and consistent discharge standards including a "zero discharge" standard for toxic substances in the Lake Superior basin.
- Support tough, but fair environmental enforcement laws to make those responsible for pollution also responsible for cleanup costs.
- Re-examine policies which permit clear-cutting of state hardwood forests and replacement with soft-woods. If this practice is found to be detrimental to wildlife habitat, then I will seek changes in this policy.
- Fight for expanded federal funding to eradicate the lamprey eel and other imported parasites. Continue to fight for expanded funds to eradicate the gypsy moth blight.
- Close unlicensed dumps and provide assistance to communities that implement solid waste reduction, recycling, composting, and reuse programs.
- Stimulate a Michigan industry based on resource recovery, recycling, and reuse by utilizing the vast procurement powers of state government to create markets for recovered materials.
- Make state government an example of environmental responsibility by forcing it to live up to the same or higher standards than those we impose on the private sector. It is embarrassing to know that state government is one of the largest polluters in the state, with more than 60 sites on state lists of environmental contamination.
- Work with our federal Congressional delegation and with President Bush to fight for more federal support in Michigan's effort to protect the Great Lakes, better manage federal forest lands, and return more federal tax dollars to Michigan."

For U.S. Senate

Carl Levin, Detroit:

1. "The concept of making the Lake Superior watershed a demonstration area for zero discharge of toxic pollutants is worth pursuing. The EPA agreed that the idea had merit at a June 13th hearing of my Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management. Implementation of such a concept would have to address, at a minimum, the short-term negative economic consequences, the international and interstate nature of the water body, and the problem of targeting air versus water sources of pollution. Exploring the demonstration project is essential if the International Treaty is to be effective. Such a project would be a key component of a regional Great Lakes pollution prevention program."

2. "I would support construction of new pulp or paper mills if there is ample support in the community and stringent environmental controls. Also, such mills should be able to demonstrate that they will not be dangerous to the public or environmental health."

3. "I am in the process of reviewing legislation that Senator Riegle has introduced. I am also awaiting the results of a survey of affected landowners being conducted by Senator Riegle. I have asked Senator Bumpers, Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on National Parks and Forests, to hold hearings on the bill in the Upper Peninsula. Our free-flowing rivers deserve adequate protection, but deciding which rivers should be protected is a complicated process that requires consultation and cooperation."

4. "The greatest challenge is preserving the land and water for future generations while providing opportunity for real economic growth. It is an extremely delicate balance, but one, I believe, that can be found. I have assisted with passage of wilderness legislation, working with competing interests to develop an acceptable plan for the Hiawatha Forest, and continuing the long-range plan for Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore."

Bill Schuette, Sanford:

1. "I support the attempt to achieve a zero discharge of toxic pollutants by initiating a watershed demonstration project. The selection of Lake Superior as the test case is practical and will provide us with the potential to reduce all toxic pollutants that may be entering the Great Lakes. However, the actual achievement of zero discharge is nearly impossible unless the pollutants are explicitly identified. Additionally, the toxic pollutants identified should be those that are strictly synthetic. If the toxins are produced naturally, then zero discharge would not be obtainable without altering the Great Lakes' natural chemical processes."

2. "To completely oppose the building of new and environmentally safe pulp and paper mills in Upper Michigan would be contrary to the goal of reducing unwanted discharge from existing, out-of-date facilities. The pulp and paper mills are heavily regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency through the Clean Air and Water Acts. It is important that EPA monitoring shows a strong relationship between the discharge of toxins, like dioxin, and the daily operation of mills before more stringent legislative and regulatory action are planned."

3. "I do support the Wild, Scenic, and Recreational designation of Upper Peninsula rivers so long as the majority of those immediately affected are in agreement with the classification of the rivers. It is vital that those who must live and work near the proposed rivers agree and support the river or stream designation. Protecting our rivers and streams is important to me as I know it is for those living in the U.P. However, it is critical that any legislation preserving our rivers and streams heavily consider the implications on communities that are affected."

4. "The Upper Peninsula is an area of exceptionally pristine qualities. Protecting the pristine environment is the responsibility of those who live in the U.P. Stewardship has been second nature to the residents; for new industry to build and expand in the U.P. it must mold to the high environmental standard set by the U.P. If the pristine environment is tarnished by careless developers, then all who live in the U.P. are affected. Therefore, maintaining the beauty and cleanliness of the U.P. from unwanted pollutants is extremely important to everyone in Michigan, particularly those in the U.P."

For U.S. Congress, 11th District

Robert Davis, Gaylord:

1. "The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement has a goal of zero discharge. I support this goal."

2. "While I have always been a strong advocate of economic development and job creation, I am also committed to ensuring that such development does not come at the cost of the environment or quality of life. I remain convinced that we can build environmentally safe pulp and paper mills in the Upper Peninsula. It is important in building these mills that studies be conducted to determine the impact they will have on Upper Peninsula water, air, wildlife, and plant life. We must explore all of the potential consequences and make informed decisions to preserve the natural beauty that makes the Upper Peninsula so unique."

3. "Although I am opposed to the present Michigan Scenic Rivers bill, I support the concept of protecting rivers from damming and erosion. My opposition to the legislation lies primarily in my concern for private landowners on rivers in the Upper Peninsula who are unsure of the effect this designation will have on their property. Under current law, management plans for the rivers are to be developed after rivers are designated Wild, Scenic, or Recreational, which makes it impossible to answer specific questions landowners may have. There are hundreds of river miles in the Upper Peninsula which are not bordered by a large amount of private land. I would support including these miles in the Wild and Scenic River System."

For State House of Representatives, 108th District (Baraga and Marquette counties)

Steven Gust, Marquette: Did not respond.

D.J. Jacobetti, Negaunee: Did not respond.

For State House of Representatives, 109th District (Delta, Dickinson, Menominee counties)

Dave Anthony, Escanaba: Did not respond.

Craig Woerpel, Escanaba: Did not respond.

For State House of Representatives, 110th District (Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, and Ontonagon counties)

Stephen P. Dresch, Hancock:

1. "At this stage "zero discharge" appears to me to be little more than a vacuous slogan (as implicitly suggested by your request for my definition of the term) which serves to submerge in heated rhetoric the truly important social issue. Human activity inevitably involves some degree of environmental impact. The question which society confronts is: Do the benefits of any activity warrant its environmental impact, and is that impact itself appropriately minimized (given the costs involved)? With reference to the most toxic effluents the environment has some degree of absorption capacity, and risks associated with excessive discharge are greater in the case of some toxics (e.g., plutonium) than others. There are factors which society must weigh in determining rates of permissible discharge. Ideally, these rates would be determined in the aggregate, with bidding for effluent rights (thus insuring that these rights would be secured for the relatively most highly valued effluent-generating activities). With advances in knowledge, increases in income, etc., permissible rates of aggregate discharge could be modified with consequences only at the margin (for the least valued of actual uses or most valued of potential uses). In general, the impact of marginal increments in effluent will be greater in relatively unpolluted areas, suggesting that optimal permissible discharge rates will be lower for areas such as the Lake Superior watershed."

2. "It is *not* the appropriate role of state government to make (or directly participate in) private investment decisions. Government does, appropriately, determine much of the environment within which these private decisions are made; *inter alia*, government is responsible for setting environmental standards and insuring that these are effectively, objectively, and even-handedly enforced on all potential effluent generators. In addition, local governments can influence land use through their zoning powers. If there are perceived costs of mills (or benefits of mills foreclosed by current regulations), these (environmental standards and zoning) should be the focus of attention, not the private investment activity *per se*. Finally, individuals and property owners damaged by any economic activity should have rights or recovery under tort law."

3. "I am particularly suspicious of increased control by federal bureaucracy. In general such control has been inconstant (with inefficient and inappropriate gyrations in land management policies) and primarily of benefit to narrow vested interests. I see no evidence that private owners, subject to local zoning determinations, have inappropriately weighed the values of alternative (present and future) uses of land. In short, I am generally opposed to bureaucratic controls such as those which would be imposed under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act."

4. "Government impresses me as the greatest environmental threat, especially in light of the relative weakness (in numbers and competence) of the Upper Peninsula's legislative delegation. From solid to low-level radioactive wastes, recent history indicates the relatively low weight placed on the U.P.'s environment by the legislature. Imposing responsibility for waste treatment and disposal on those private parties and activities generating the

waste will be less threatening than shifting the responsibility to a state government making decisions politically and possessing extraordinary powers to impose its decisions."

Richard Sofio, Bessemer:

1. "I agree that "zero discharge" is a goal to be achieved. I do, however, expect the definition of "zero discharge" to be the same domestically as well as internationally and that these standards be the same for both existing facilities as well as new construction."

2. "I am supportive of the expansion of the pulp and paper industry in the U.P. This support is based on the developers' ability to meet the air and water quality standards in effect at the time of applying for the needed permits."

3. "I support, to an extent, the concept of the wild and scenic rivers bill. That support is based on the fact that the Kildee Bill adheres to the enabling legislation's reference to both the quality and quantity of water, as well as the U.S. Forest Service being able to do the needed study for classification of *all* rivers."

4. "At this point in time, the most immediate problem is that of solid waste. I feel the most prudent approach is through recycling. The U.P., however, must be assured of considerations and support needed of rural areas. I have questioned how these areas are going to generate, both individually and collectively, a "waste stream" large enough to generate a market for their recyclables."

For State Senate, 37th District (Chippewa, Delta, Luce, Mackinac, Schoolcraft, downstate counties)

George McManus, Traverse City:

1. "I believe that any business that wants to locate in Michigan must first demonstrate that they can do so safely without affecting the purity of our water resources. Given the advances in technology, I believe the goal of zero discharge should be worked towards. Until a zero discharge capability is actually reached, I believe that facilities should be placed in areas which are not as environmentally sensitive."

2. "Pulp and paper mill construction provides economic development in the Upper Peninsula. The Upper Peninsula certainly needs continued economic development. However, environmental impacts must be considered. Any paper mill development must consider the environmental impact on the resources of this state."

3. "As presently proposed, this is a federal issue. However, I believe that we must plan for development of the Upper Peninsula. Current laws provide provisions from overdevelopment such as the Wetlands Protection Act. However, sensitivity to the environment must be shown while still maintaining developmental and recreational opportunities. Public use, private property rights, and loss of revenue to local governmental units must be considered."

4. "The biggest environmental problem facing Upper Michigan is the balance between preservation of resources and economic development. With vast, undeveloped land being available, developmental pressure will continue to mount. Upper Michigan must balance these two issues."

Tom Weiss, Gaylord: Did not respond.

For State Senate, 38th District (Alger, Baraga, Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Marquette, Menominee, Ontonagon counties)

Don Koivisto, Ironwood:

1. "Obviously I do not want *toxic* pollutants discharged into Lake Superior. I would have to work with groups like UPEC to examine the feasibility of zero discharge."
2. "Yes, if the proposed mills meet State and Federal environmental standards."
3. "Oppose. The proposed legislation has not protected the rights of landowners."
4. "The biggest problem is the potential for the State to locate a nuclear waste dump in the U.P. There will have to be a unified effort by the public and elected State officials to effectively oppose a dump."

Peter M. Koski, Baraga:

1. "I support the idea, but "zero discharge" is probably an impossible idea, because even natural materials contain toxins. It would probably be better to identify a level of toxins that is identifiable and will not cause long-term damage. "Zero" is probably not identifiable and certainly not possible."
2. "I support mills as long as they are made to meet reasonable standards that will not cause harm to the environment."
3. "At this time, I oppose such designation for our U.P. rivers. There does not seem to be any immediate problem that current laws do not cover."
4. "At the moment, the landfill question appears to be the largest immediate threat. More emphasis on mandatory recycling and "common sense" use of current landfills until some other means of disposal are in place would seem to be the prudent solution."

**The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition
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dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of the unique environmental quality of the Upper Peninsula

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