



Polling Exercise at Stockton College Energy Symposium Shows Support for Alternative Energy Development

For Immediate Release

Monday, February 27, 2012

Contact: **Tim Kelly**
 Office of Public Relations
 Galloway Township, NJ 08240
 Tim.Kelly@stockton.edu
 (609) 652-4950

GALLOWAY TWP., NJ – An instant polling exercise conducted at the 2012 Energy Symposium sponsored by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy found support for alternative energy development and for strong protection of the environment.

Nearly 300 New Jersey energy industry leaders, activists, academics, college students, and members of the public attended the daylong symposium at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey on Wednesday. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson was the keynote speaker.

As part of the symposium, Dr. Patrick Hossay, a Stockton associate professor of sustainability, used clicker technology to instantly gauge opinion on energy-related issues among attendees. Using hand-held “clickers” – electronic devices the size of a smart phone that resemble remote controls – attendees chose responses to questions projected onto a screen and a computer tallied the responses.

In general, majorities of attendees favored alternative energies over fossil fuels; expressed belief in the existence of global warming caused by human activities, and

placed a high value on environmental protection. Wind and solar power were the top choices when attendees were asked to pick their preferred energy sources.

Dr. Hossay cautioned that the clicker responses are not a statistically representative poll, but rather a sample of opinions at the symposium. However, he said, the results affirm widespread American support for prioritizing alternative energy development and concern about climate change.

The professor noted that symposium participants included industry leaders and environmental activists with differing views.

“The Hughes Center has brought together people who typically don’t sit in the same room, and for starting a conversation,” Dr. Hossay said.

“They engaged each other, and we were able to compare their opinions and see where there’s common ground,” he said. “That’s how you make good public policy.”

Dr. Hossay heads Stockton's new BA and BS degree programs in sustainability. He teaches courses in environmental policy, energy, and conservation, and has worked regionally and internationally on conservation and energy projects.

The following is a sample of questions posed during the Energy Symposium session with results from attendees and from national polls. National numbers may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding and unreported “Not sure” responses.

Is global warming real?	Symposium	National
Yes	82%	83%
No	18%	17%
What causes climate change?	Symposium	National
Mostly human caused	44%	27%
Partially human caused	43%	45%
A natural change	13%	27%
Do you support expanding off-shore oil drilling?	Symposium	National
Strongly opposed	33%	16%
Mildly opposed	28%	15%

Mildly favor	23%	24%
Strongly favor	16%	45%

Should we build the Keystone Pipeline?

	Symposium	National
No	50%	35%
Yes	50%	55%
Not sure		10%

Do you favor or oppose building more nuclear power plants at this time?

	Symposium	National
Favor	58%	33%
Oppose	42%	64%

Would you favor a nuclear plant within 50 miles of your home?

	Symposium	National
Favor	43%	30%
Oppose	57%	67%

This question was compared with a poll of Pennsylvania residents.

Fracking poses a major threat to water resources.

	Symposium	Pennsylvania
Strongly disagree	7%	15%
Somewhat disagree	13%	13%
Somewhat agree	22%	27%
Strongly agree	50%	33%
Not sure	8%	12%

Which is the most important?

	Symposium

Keeping energy prices low	7%
Reducing dependence on foreign oil	35%
Creating jobs in energy sector	15%
Protecting the environment	43%

Dr. Hossay is the author of *Unsustainable: A Primer for Global Environmental Justice* (Zed Books, 2006).

Prior to the clicker poll exercise, EPA Administrator Jackson, the symposium's keynote speaker, told attendees that renewable energy can create jobs that contribute significantly to post-recession economic growth. She said the green economy will influence four areas identified by President Barack Obama as driving growth: manufacturing, worker education and training, a return to American values, and a new era of American energy production and innovation.

"An economy built around the new challenge of going farther on a smaller tank of gas is an example of how a good investment in the economy can be a pillar of future growth," said Jackson, a former commissioner of the N.J. Department of Environmental Protection.

Other panel discussions throughout the symposium explored issues related to the energy industry and energy consumption in New Jersey.

Chris Wissemann, CEO of Fishermen's Energy, sparked strong interest from attendees with an outline of the company's plans to build a wind farm 2.8 miles off the coast of Atlantic City. Wissemann predicted the costs of offshore wind energy will decrease over time once infrastructure is built to allow for expansion.

Wissemann said the project timetable depends on state approvals, but that Fishermen's Energy hopes to begin construction in 2013.

Lively breakout sessions explored the issues of nuclear energy and hydraulic fracturing, or fracking. Jamie Mallon of PSEG and David Pringle of the N.J. Environmental Federation offered alternative viewpoints on "The Future of Nuclear Energy." The fracking panel included James Benton, executive director of the N.J. Petroleum Council; Jim Walsh, Eastern regional director of the Food and Water Watch; and Zoltan Szabo of the U.S. Geological Survey.

Other subjects touched upon in panel discussions included energy efficiency in buildings, large-scale alternative energy, and energy infrastructure.

