



TO: Des Moines Water Works
FROM: Brock McCleary, President
Date: March 13, 2017
RE: Key Poll Findings—Des Moines Water Works Service Area HF 484 Survey

Current Water Utility Satisfaction

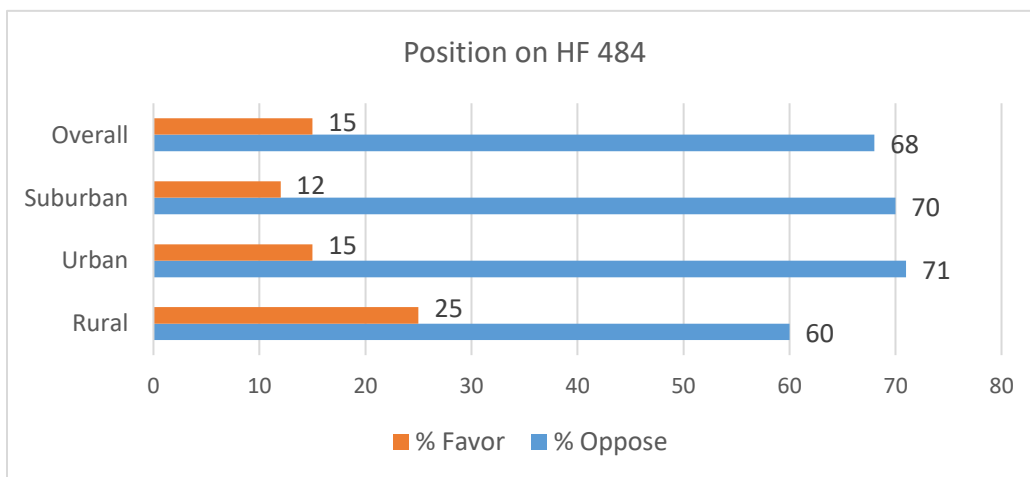
Registered voters in the Des Moines Water Works service area give high marks to the quality of and access to water in their area, as well as to the service provided by their local water utility.

Quality and Access: An overwhelming 85% of registered voters rate the “quality of and access to water in [their] area” as either ‘excellent’ (56%) or ‘good’ (29%). A majority of respondents in suburban (60%), urban (54%) and rural (53%) communities rate the quality of their water as ‘excellent.’

Service: An equally impressive 86% of voters say the “quality of service provided by the water utility in [their] area” is either ‘excellent’ (57%) or ‘good’ (29%). Satisfaction is high across municipalities, including Ankeny (93% excellent/good), Des Moines (82%), Urbandale (97%) and West Des Moines (92%). Suburban (60% excellent) and urban (62%) voters are somewhat more likely to describe their service as ‘excellent’ than rural voters (38%).

House File 484

Noting that House File 484 would “disband the independent governing boards of the Des Moines, Urbandale and West Des Moines water works, and turn over management of the water utility and its assets to local city councils,” **more than two-thirds of registered voters oppose this legislation** (15% favor/68% oppose). This includes a majority who *strongly* oppose House File 484 (50%). Republicans (52% oppose), Democrats (77%) and Independents (71%) all oppose this legislation, as do voters across the ideological spectrum (Very Conservative: 42%, Somewhat Conservative: 60%, Moderate: 78%, Somewhat Liberal: 84%, Very Liberal: 83%). Substantial majorities of voters in all three community types in the area oppose disbanding the independent water works governing boards. Support does increase slightly in the rural communities, and likely correspondingly with Republicans (22%) and Very Conservatives (31%).



Opposition also holds geographically in the four largest municipalities of the area (Ankeny: 72%, Des Moines: 70%, Urbandale: 61%, West Des Moines: 64%).

Independent Board is a Better Manager

Voters are clear on who they believe is better qualified to manage the local water utility: an independent board of trustees (55%) rather than the local City Council (23%). This is another topic that bridges political and ideological divides (Republicans: 51% independent board, Democrats: 59%, Independents: 55%, Somewhat Conservatives: 60%, Moderates: 58%, Somewhat Liberals: 55%). Majorities of suburban (54%), urban (66%) and rural voters (55%) all say an independent board of trustees would be a better manager than the city council.

Home Rule

A staggering 88% of voters believe that “people who live in the community” should have the final say over whether to remove an independent utility, not the state legislature (5%). This conviction of preference for the decision to be made by the people of the local community, rather than the state legislature, holds at a high value across all demographics. This includes the rural communities, who were slightly less stringent opponents of HF 484 throughout the survey (suburban: 88% people in community, urban: 91%, rural: 88%).

METHODOLOGY: The sample size for the survey is 600 registered voters in the Des Moines Water Works service area. The margin of error is +/-3.99%. Responses were gathered through land line interviews conducted using Interactive Voice Response (IVR). The survey was conducted March 9-12, 2017 by Harper Polling. The total percentages for responses may not equal 100% due to rounding.