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Poll: Pennsylvania voters say, 'Drill, baby, drill'

By Brad Bumsted

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HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania voters, by a more than 2-1 margin, say the economic benefits of gas drilling in the Marcellus shale outweigh the environmental impacts, a statewide poll shows.

They also believe by a 69-24 percent margin that companies doing the drilling should be taxed, according to the poll of 1,277 registered voters by Quinnipiac University. The poll released today has a margin of error of plus or minus 2.7 percentage points

"'Drill, baby drill' is the call from Pennsylvania voters and 'tax, baby tax,' is the follow-up as voters see natural gas drilling in the Marcellus shale as an economic plus more than an environmental negative," said Tim Malloy, assistant director of the university's polling institute.

Republican Gov. Tom Corbett, who advocates regulated drilling but opposes a tax, saw his still-low approval rating begin to stabilize in the poll. His approval rating was 39 percent with 23 percent undecided, the poll found. Thirty-eight percent disapproved.

There's a growing gender gap with women disapproving of the job Corbett is doing by a 43-30 percent margin, the poll said. He took office in January and has proposed budget cuts to make up a \$4.2 billion state deficit.

"Gov. Tom Corbett gets a mixed overall approval rating, despite getting a negative approval rating for his handling of the budget. Voters like him personally more than they do his policies," Malloy said.

"The good news for the governor is that his numbers apparently stabilized after falling off sharply in our last poll in April. Also, he is not in the negative territory like other Republican governors such as Florida Gov. (Rick) Scott and Ohio Gov. (John) Kasich," Malloy said.

A May 25 Quinnipiac poll found just 29 percent of Florida voters approve of the job Scott is doing, compared to 57 percent who disapprove. Kasich has an approval rating of 38 percent, with a 49 percent disapproval rate, according to a May 18 Quinnipiac poll.

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