



Initiative on Agriculture

Improving lives through market solutions

Washington State Ag Policy Update

Farmers are Environmentalists



A disconnect exists between the consumers, public officials, & farmers



Farmers

Consumers trust farmers far more than scientists, nutritionists, government agencies, companies engaged in farming or agriculture, even social media contacts outside agriculture.



Consumers

Special interest groups push negative messages, attempting to describe farm practices.



Special Interest Groups

RESULT: An ever increasing burden of regulations for farmers with a high cost and little to no benefit



Ag Organizations

Multiple organizations lobby and work with public officials on behalf of agriculture.



Public Officials

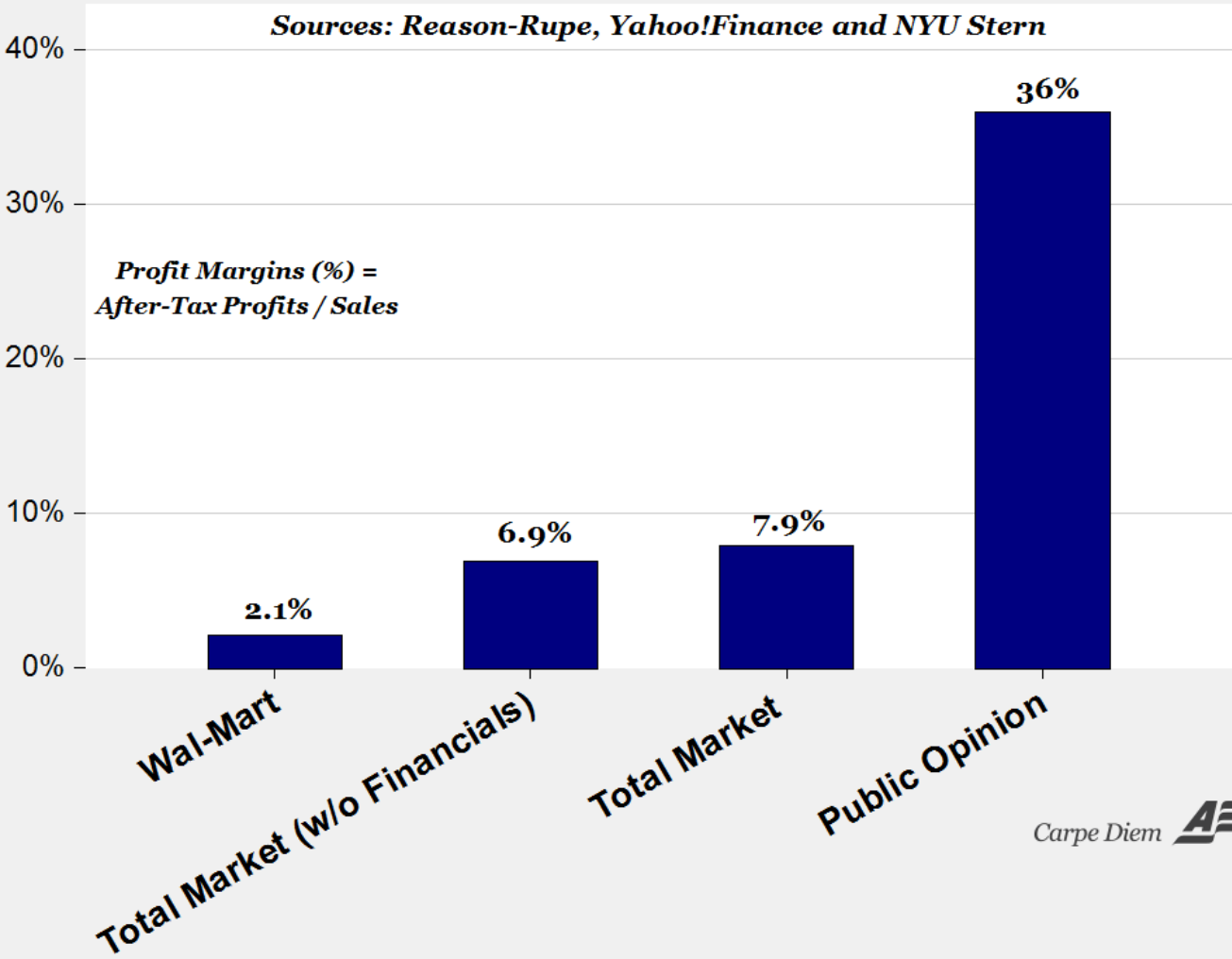
Special interest groups lobby "on-behalf of the consumer," claiming to represent their demands.

How do we combat this ever increasing burden of regulations?

The public believes companies make more than 5x more than they do

Profit Margins: Public Opinion vs. Actual vs. Wal-Mart

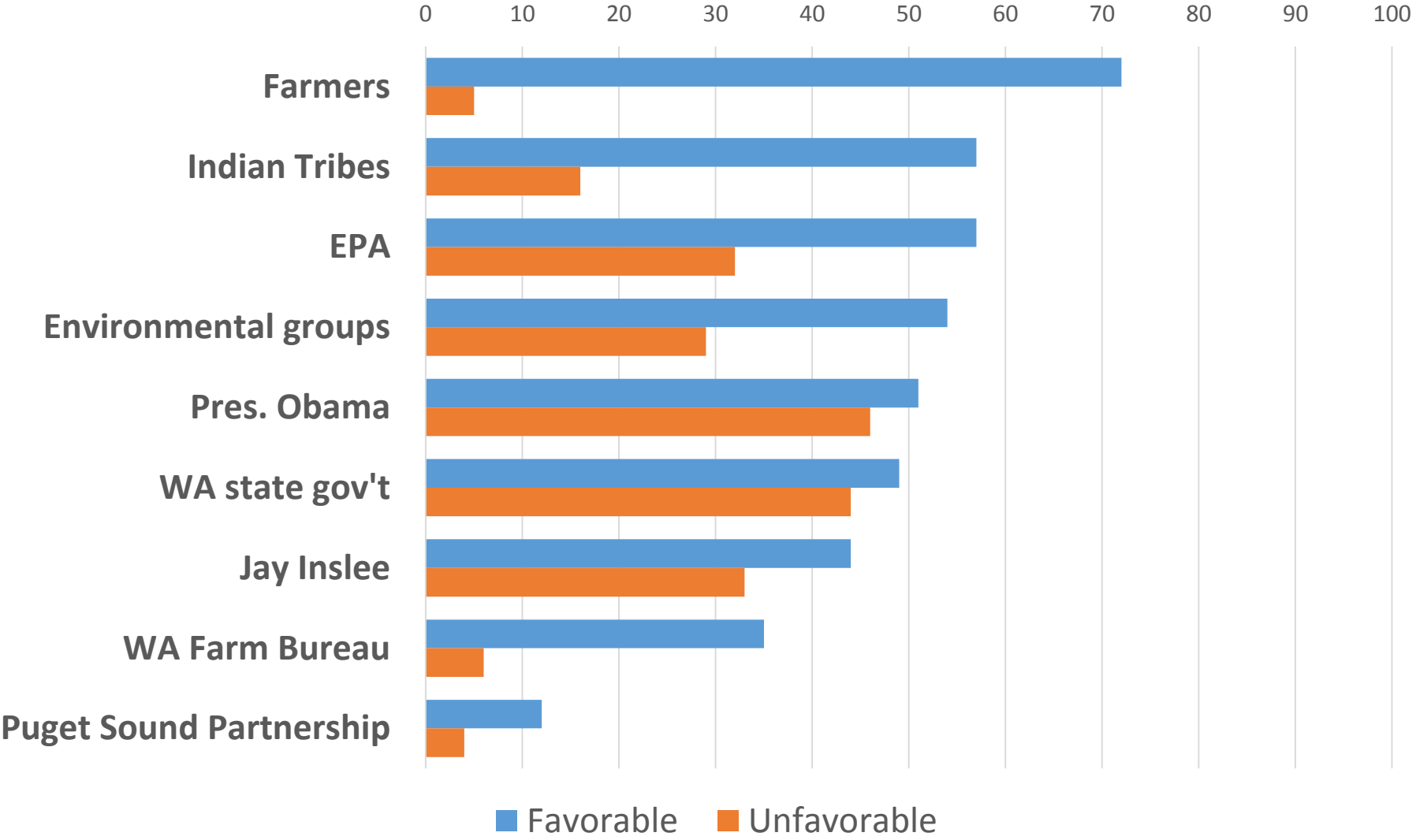
Sources: Reason-Rupe, Yahoo!Finance and NYU Stern



How do we convey the importance of something that to a farmer is obvious?

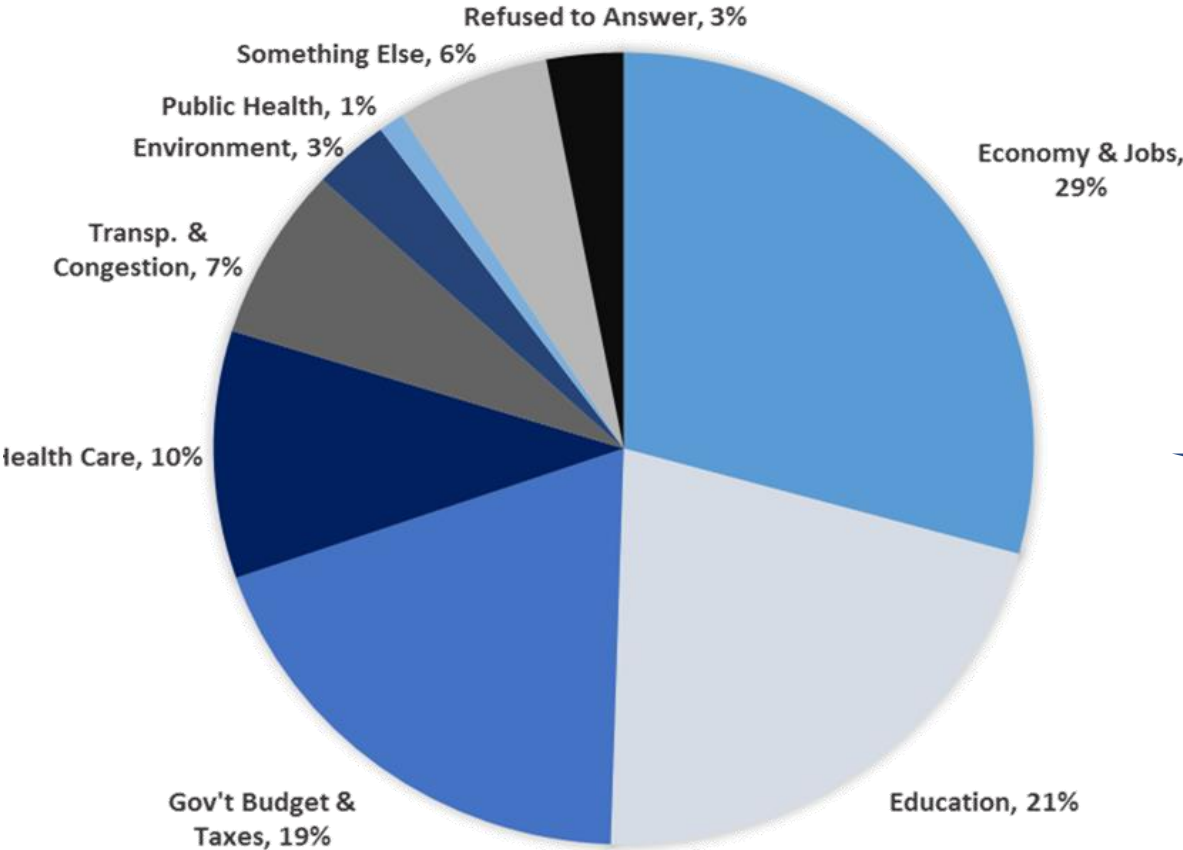


Washingtonians trust farmers more than any other group



Survey results versus interpretation varied significantly

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR WASHINGTON



The survey takes advantage of people's good intentions to protect the environment. Most people will choose to not pollute rivers.

Very few are in a socio-economic position to put the environment first

WA state's divide between rural and urban populations is widening

3 court cases upset the balance

Swinomish v. Ecology (2013)

Foster v. Ecology and City of Yelm (2015)

Hirst v. W. Wash. Growth Mgmt (2016)

Hirst placed WA water law in conflict with GMA and all these cases work together to stop development.



In regards to the One Washington Water Act

KRETZ: "I think it's easy for an urban legislator to say, 'Well, let's keep supporting that kind of policy when it doesn't affect their people. Its similar to the proposals that they want to enact on rural Washington. And so we feel like, One Washington, baby! Let's spread the love all around the state and all be living under the same kind of regulations.'"

Ag Policy Issues in 2018

CARBON TAX

- Governor Inslee's proposal was heard in the Senate
- Likely that a ballot measure that places a carbon tax in front of the voters in 2018 is very likely
- Would it be more prudent to pass legislation and "beat" the voters to prevent a more painful carbon legislation alternative?
- Rep. Debolt (Chehalis Republican) is working on a bill that would classify hydropower as green energy

Farm Bill

- The Federal Farm Bill is expected in 2018, though rumors are surfacing that it will not be wrapped up until 2019
- Reps. Newhouse and McMorris Rodgers have held Farm Bill Listening Sessions
- Various opinions exist on how to reform the current Farm Bill because the crop insurance program is proving more costly than promised in 2014

Reg.

- Challenges with Department of Ecology are becoming costly to Washington state and driving jobs out of rural Washington
 - Millennium Bulk Terminal barred from Cowlitz County
- Pesticide usage challenges are becoming more frequent

SESSION STARTED ON MONDAY, JANUARY 8TH

Senate Bill 6529

4 Day Notification

Pesticide Use Reporting System

- **Costly to farmers, farm workers, and rural communities**
 - Destructive of crops because of delayed applications
 - Expensive database reporting system
 - Duplicative of other regulations and policies

Changed into a workgroup that will develop recommendations for improving the safety of pesticide applications. Recommendations for the legislature must be made by November 1, 2018.

WPC's Current Research Priorities

1

Washington State Income Tax

- State law prohibits local income tax
 - For 8 decades the state courts have ruled that income is property and a progressive income tax is unconstitutional
 - Local governments can only have taxing authority by legislative approval
 - State law prohibits a local government from imposing a tax on net income
- Currently, no personal or corporate income tax is a selling point for Washington
- November 17th trial in King Co. Superior Court ruled against Seattle's attempts
- An appeal is a "long shot" however Seattle Mayor said they are going to try
 - The legal way to obtain an income tax is through a constitutional amendment

2

Making Washington State a Right to Work State

- WA is currently one of 22 states with a right to work law
- Right to work gives workers choice and allows them not to fear firing for not joining a union
- The current Janus legal challenge will be heard early next year by the US Supreme Court, with the potential of making all 22 a right to work state

3

Providing a Hirst Fix to Washington Families

- Failed to provide a solution during the 2017 legislative session
- A Solution was provided within the first few weeks of the 2018 session

Thank-You!

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