

**New Hampshire Department of
Environmental Services**

Strategic Planning Survey Results

November 2010



Original Survey Invitation

(Distributed March 2008)

Dear Friend:

I am writing to request your participation in the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) *Environmental Management in the 21st Century* Strategic Planning Survey.

The survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. Please respond by **Monday, April 7, 2008**. To access the survey, click on this link:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=LwLR39aoYZMI_2bX9Cz9vvsQ_3d_3d

Your feedback is welcome as we establish a new set of strategic directions to help guide our future actions. Our new Strategic Plan will reflect a strong belief that while building on our past successes, we will need to take some different approaches in the future if we are to proactively deal with the serious issues of climate change, energy use, and the potential negative impacts of growth on our natural resources and quality of life.

Thank you again for sharing your valuable insights, and weighing in on DES's future. If you have questions about this survey, please contact Vincent Perelli, DES Chief of Planning and Policy at Vincent.Perelli@des.nh.gov or (603) 271-8989. If you would like more information about DES, please visit our website at www.des.nh.gov.

Sincerely,

Thomas S. Burack, DES Commissioner

Privacy Statement – The NH Department of Environmental Services is committed to protecting your privacy. The information collected will only be used to guide the department's strategic planning efforts, and all information will be kept confidential. No results or analyses will identify or be attributed to any individual or individual responses.

Some Survey Facts and Disclaimers

- The survey was advertised/distributed in five ways: 1) DES “E-News” Mailing List (~2,600 recipients); 2) Customized stakeholder e-mail list for non-profit organizations, trade associations, key legislative committees, New Hampshire Executive Council, etc. (~250 recipients); 3) DES staff listing (~ 500 recipients); 4) DES Webpage under *What’s New*; and 5) DES Press Release.
- The survey tool was Survey Monkey - Professional License.
- The survey was an informal public opinion poll to help DES gather information to inform its strategic planning effort. It included multiple choice and open-ended questions. It was not conducted in a manner to obtain statistically- or demographically-valid results, but only to gather general views and opinions.
- We received 1,022 responses to the survey.
- The responses to open-ended questions were categorized, then condensed to one page.

21st Century Environmental Management in NH

1. Do you agree with the following statement.... "NH's environment is improving."			Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree			14.5%	146
Somewhat Agree			37.4%	375
Not Sure			17.6%	177
Somewhat Disagree			23.0%	231
Strongly Disagree			7.5%	75
			<i>answered question</i>	1004
			<i>skipped question</i>	18

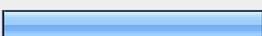
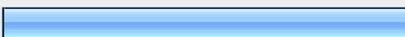
2. In what ways do you think NH's environment has improved or gotten worse?		Response Count
		813
		<i>answered question</i>
		813
		<i>skipped question</i>
		209

3. Please rate your level of concern for each of the following environmental issues:

	Not Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Very Concerned	Don't Know	Rating Average	Response Count
Acid Rain/Deposition	6.8% (68)	56.4% (566)	34.5% (346)	2.4% (24)	2.28	1004
Air Pollution/Air Toxics	3.8% (38)	40.8% (410)	54.2% (544)	1.2% (12)	2.51	1004
Mosquito/Tick-borne diseases	12.2% (122)	45.3% (455)	40.8% (410)	1.7% (17)	2.29	1004
Beach Closures	12.7% (128)	49.5% (497)	33.8% (339)	4.0% (40)	2.22	1004
Climate Change	11.4% (114)	30.7% (308)	56.6% (568)	1.4% (14)	2.46	1004
Contaminated Drinking Water (e.g., arsenic, radon, MtBE, salt)	3.0% (30)	26.6% (267)	69.5% (698)	0.9% (9)	2.67	1004
Contaminated Sites	5.7% (57)	45.6% (458)	47.1% (473)	1.6% (16)	2.42	1004
Degradation of Wetlands/Shorelands	5.8% (58)	29.9% (300)	62.2% (624)	2.2% (22)	2.58	1004
Energy Use	4.4% (44)	26.6% (267)	68.3% (686)	0.7% (7)	2.64	1004
Flooding	12.9% (130)	50.7% (509)	35.2% (353)	1.2% (12)	2.22	1004
Growth and Development Impacts	5.7% (57)	25.9% (260)	66.8% (671)	1.6% (16)	2.62	1004
Habitat Loss/Degradation	6.1% (61)	27.5% (276)	65.0% (653)	1.4% (14)	2.60	1004
Hazardous Wastes	9.4% (94)	44.0% (442)	45.2% (454)	1.4% (14)	2.36	1004
Indoor Air Quality (e.g. radon, "off-gassing," allergens)	21.4% (215)	52.6% (528)	23.3% (234)	2.7% (27)	2.02	1004
Invasive Species	9.6% (96)	51.0% (512)	37.1% (372)	2.4% (24)	2.28	1004
Construction and Demolition Debris	20.3% (204)	50.3% (505)	25.4% (255)	4.0% (40)	2.05	1004
Management of Sewage/Sludge	12.4% (124)	49.6% (498)	35.0% (351)	3.1% (31)	2.23	1004
Solid Waste Disposal	6.8% (68)	49.6% (498)	42.1% (423)	1.5% (15)	2.36	1004
Recycling Rates	11.3% (113)	45.2% (454)	41.4% (416)	2.1% (21)	2.31	1004
Mercury in Fish	10.7% (107)	43.8% (440)	43.1% (433)	2.4% (24)	2.33	1004
Ground-level Ozone/Smog	13.4% (135)	47.8% (480)	36.0% (361)	2.8% (28)	2.23	1004
Depletion of Ozone Layer	13.6% (137)	45.4% (456)	38.4% (386)	2.5% (25)	2.25	1004
Pesticides/Herbicides	12.5% (125)	51.4% (516)	34.9% (350)	1.3% (13)	2.23	1004
Petroleum/Chemical Spills	10.8% (108)	50.2% (504)	37.7% (379)	1.3% (13)	2.27	1004

Surface Water Quality	5.3% (53)	35.5% (356)	58.1% (583)	1.2% (12)	2.53	1004
Radioactive Waste	20.7% (208)	40.8% (410)	34.5% (346)	4.0% (40)	2.14	1004
Species Loss	9.2% (92)	36.5% (366)	51.4% (516)	3.0% (30)	2.44	1004
Stormwater	12.0% (120)	48.5% (487)	36.9% (370)	2.7% (27)	2.26	1004
Nanotechnology	26.1% (262)	31.2% (313)	10.0% (100)	32.8% (329)	1.76	1004
Drinking Water Supplies	4.4% (44)	26.1% (262)	68.6% (689)	0.9% (9)	2.65	1004
Toxics in Consumer Products	12.1% (121)	38.0% (382)	46.3% (465)	3.6% (36)	2.36	1004
Other Environmental Issue(s)? (Please specify)						190
answered question						1004
skipped question						18

4. If you selected more than five (5) environmental issues about which you are "Very Concerned," please narrow the list down to NO MORE THAN your top five.

		Response Percent	Response Count
Acid Rain/Deposition		9.3%	82
Air Pollution/Air Toxics		19.5%	172
Mosquito/Tick-borne diseases		16.5%	146
Beach Closures		5.7%	50
Climate Change		35.7%	316
Contaminated Drinking Water (e.g., arsenic, radon, MtBE, salt)		37.6%	332
Contaminated Sites		7.6%	67
Degradation of Wetlands/Shorelands		28.3%	250
Energy Use		36.8%	325
Flooding		11.1%	98
Growth and Development Impacts		44.3%	392
Habitat Loss/Degradation		36.8%	325
Hazardous Wastes		13.3%	118

Indoor Air Quality (e.g. radon, "off-gassing," allergens)		4.8%	42
Invasive Species		9.6%	85
Construction and Demolition Debris		3.7%	33
Management of Sewage/Sludge		5.9%	52
Solid Waste Disposal		11.9%	105
Recycling Rates		11.4%	101
Mercury in Fish		7.1%	63
Ground-level Ozone/Smog		3.5%	31
Depletion of Ozone Layer		5.2%	46
Pesticides/Herbicides		6.6%	58
Petroleum/Chemical Spills		6.8%	60
Surface Water Quality		23.0%	203
Radioactive Waste		4.9%	43
Species Loss		12.1%	107
Stormwater		11.4%	101
Nanotechnology		0.8%	7
Drinking Water Supplies		37.2%	329
Toxics in Consumer Products		11.0%	97
Other Environmental Issue(s)? (Please specify)		5.0%	44
	answered question		884
	skipped question		138

5. Twenty years from now, what will people say that DES and other state agencies should have been doing (starting in 2008) to better protect NH's environment and public health?

		Response Count
		841
<i>answered question</i>		841
<i>skipped question</i>		181

6. Please rate how well you think DES is living up to its current operating principles.

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Can't Evaluate	Rating Average	Response Count
DES promotes mutual respect, and effective, straightforward communications.	6.2% (58)	11.2% (104)	42.1% (391)	30.5% (283)	10.0% (93)	3.08	929
DES provides timely responses to all customers.	7.1% (66)	17.3% (160)	37.8% (350)	18.7% (173)	19.2% (178)	2.84	927
DES provides consistent responses to all customers.	7.8% (72)	18.6% (172)	29.4% (272)	13.9% (129)	30.3% (280)	2.71	925
DES encourages meaningful opportunities for public participation in meeting its responsibilities.	4.1% (38)	10.7% (99)	41.9% (387)	29.4% (271)	13.9% (128)	3.12	923
DES integrates environmental quality, public health and safety, and economic vitality, and considers the concerns and aspirations of all citizens, while pursuing its responsibilities under the law.	7.7% (71)	13.4% (124)	42.5% (394)	23.1% (214)	13.4% (124)	2.94	927
DES achieves high levels of effectiveness in all of its operations, based on a commitment to continuous improvement and innovative approaches.	8.4% (78)	21.1% (195)	39.2% (362)	11.0% (102)	20.2% (187)	2.66	924
DES facilitates scientifically and technically sound, cost effective, and environmentally-appropriate solutions.	5.9% (54)	17.6% (162)	42.0% (388)	17.2% (159)	17.3% (160)	2.85	923
DES leads NH state government in environmental and sustainability initiatives.	6.1% (56)	13.1% (121)	32.2% (297)	25.8% (238)	22.9% (211)	3.01	923

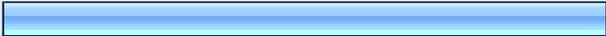
DES considers the long-term and cumulative effects of its policies, programs, and decisions.	8.9% (82)	19.2% (178)	36.4% (337)	13.6% (126)	21.8% (202)	2.70	925
DES fosters environmental awareness and stewardship through education, outreach, and assistance.	4.5% (41)	8.2% (75)	44.8% (412)	34.2% (315)	8.4% (77)	3.19	920
DES affords fair and equitable treatment for all citizens in the implementation of federal and state environmental laws, rules, programs, and policies, and in the management of the agency.	8.4% (78)	12.0% (111)	34.0% (314)	21.9% (202)	23.7% (219)	2.91	924
DES maintains a work environment that attracts and retains the most dedicated and talented staff.	7.2% (67)	15.9% (147)	25.8% (239)	10.4% (96)	40.6% (376)	2.66	925
DES ensures that environmental and public health risks are minimized to the greatest extent possible, especially for the most vulnerable populations.	6.8% (62)	13.0% (119)	39.8% (365)	18.2% (167)	22.3% (205)	2.89	918
	answered question						929
	skipped question						93

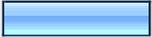
7. What do you consider DES's greatest STRENGTHS? Please List them.	
	Response Count
	675
	answered question
	675
	skipped question
	347

8. What do you consider DES's greatest WEAKNESSES? Please list them.	
	Response Count
	690
	answered question
	690
	skipped question
	332

9. The statements below are aspirational directions which are being considered for inclusion in DES's next Strategic Plan. These represent where DES could be within the next 5 to 10 years. What is your general reaction to them?

	Worth Pursuing	Somewhat Worth Pursuing	Not Worth Pursuing	I'm Not Sure	Rating Average	Response Count
DES and its partners are proactively addressing the issue of climate change in NH.	59.6% (552)	25.6% (237)	10.8% (100)	4.0% (37)	1.49	926
DES and its partners are effectively protecting NH's natural resources and quality of life as the state continues to grow.	88.0% (812)	10.0% (92)	0.7% (6)	1.4% (13)	1.11	923
DES employs integrated pre-application, permitting, and enforcement approaches across all of its programs.	59.2% (546)	27.5% (254)	3.3% (30)	10.0% (92)	1.38	922
DES operates in a cooperative and integrated manner with its sister local, regional, state, and federal agencies.	68.0% (628)	26.2% (242)	1.8% (17)	4.0% (37)	1.31	924
NH's environment is improving, with DES remaining focused on environmental results and reporting them in a transparent manner.	62.2% (575)	27.1% (250)	3.4% (31)	7.4% (68)	1.36	924
Environmental compliance is high in NH, supported by partnerships, widespread accountability, and a broad environmental stewardship ethic.	71.4% (656)	20.7% (190)	2.7% (25)	5.2% (48)	1.28	919
DES provides high-quality customer service.	73.4% (675)	20.1% (185)	2.2% (20)	4.2% (39)	1.26	919
DES is one of the most desirable employers in state government.	45.2% (413)	25.4% (232)	5.3% (48)	24.1% (220)	1.47	913
Other aspirational direction(s)? (Please specify)						195
answered question						931
skipped question						91

10. Gender			Response Percent	Response Count
Male			66.4%	606
Female			33.6%	306
			<i>answered question</i>	912
			<i>skipped question</i>	110

11. Age			Response Percent	Response Count
< 20 Years Old			0.1%	1
20-29 Years Old			4.9%	45
30-39 Years Old			16.2%	149
40-49 Years Old			27.0%	248
50-59 Years Old			32.2%	295
60-69 Years Old			16.0%	147
70 or Older			3.5%	32
			<i>answered question</i>	917
			<i>skipped question</i>	105

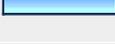
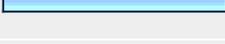
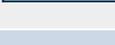
12. How many years have you lived in NH?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
< 1 Year		0.5%	5
1-5 Years		4.3%	40
6-10 Years		9.5%	88
11-20 Years		14.9%	138
21-30 Years		20.3%	188
> 30 Years		42.9%	396
I Don't Reside in NH		7.5%	69
answered question			924
skipped question			98

13. If you DON'T reside in NH, do you.....			
	Yes	No	Response Count
Recreate/vacation in NH?	87.0% (67)	13.0% (10)	77
Own a second home or property in NH?	43.8% (32)	56.2% (41)	73
Conduct business in NH?	81.0% (68)	19.0% (16)	84
		Other (Please specify)	21
answered question			96
skipped question			926

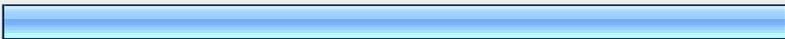
14. In which county do you reside?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Belknap		6.1%	56
Carroll		3.8%	35
Cheshire		4.0%	37
Coos		1.8%	17
Grafton		8.4%	78
Hillsborough		15.8%	146
Merrimack		23.6%	218
Rockingham		18.7%	173
Strafford		8.2%	76
Sullivan		2.5%	23
Out-of-state (please specify)		7.0%	65
		<i>answered question</i>	924
		<i>skipped question</i>	98

15. Which category best describes you?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Community Group		3.7%	34
Learning Institution		3.9%	36
Student		0.3%	3
Manufacturing		9.0%	83
Service Industry		4.0%	37
News Media		0.3%	3
Consultant		9.7%	90
Non-Profit Organization		5.5%	51
Government - City/County		12.2%	113
Government - State		24.5%	226
Government - Federal		2.8%	26
General Public		10.8%	100
Trade Association		0.8%	7
Other (please specify)		12.4%	115
		<i>answered question</i>	924
		<i>skipped question</i>	98

16. What brought you to our survey?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Direct E-mail Invitation		86.4%	795
Electronic/Hardcopy News Article		2.2%	20
Found it Directly on DES Website		2.5%	23
Word of Mouth		5.0%	46
Other (please specify)		3.9%	36
		<i>answered question</i>	920
		<i>skipped question</i>	102

17. If you have any other questions or concerns, please list them below, or directly contact Vincent Perelli, Chief of Planning and Policy at Vincent.Perelli@des.nh.gov or (603) 271-8989.

		Response Count
		115
		<i>answered question</i>
		115
		<i>skipped question</i>
		907

Summary of Strategic Survey Question 2

In what ways do you Think NH's Environment has Improved or Gotten Worse?

This question proved to be the most subjective of the open-ended questions. Among the 800 comments received, there was a wide spread in whether respondents thought the environment has improved or worsened. For example, 113 people commented that water quality has improved, but 60 thought it has gotten worse. Air quality fared worse: 74 people thought it has gotten worse and only 64 thought it has gotten better. Several respondents who said it was worse explained that the increase in the number of “ozone action days” was the cause, and that they did not remember having seen such notices in prior winters, although the data show that the overall trend in ozone levels is downward.

Overwhelmingly, the biggest concern was about the environmental impacts of development (259), growth (68) and increased population (69). Many people felt that environmental gains have been offset by development. There were 118 comments that development and growth are the reason that the environment is now worse than before.

Summary Highlights

- Many people commented that water quality has improved (113); half as many thought it has gotten worse (60).
- Slightly more people thought that air quality had gotten worse (74) than had improved (64).
- “Environment” was defined by some very broadly, including things like natural habitat and quality of life in addition to water and air pollution.
- Many comments reflected an interest in more enforcement (35) or stronger/more strict regulations; there were only a handful of comments about over-regulation.
- Although it was not often linked to any specific improvement, many responders (112) felt that more people are aware of environmental issues and the need to protect the environment.
- Overwhelmingly, the biggest concern was about the environmental impacts of development (259), growth (68) and increased population (69). Many people felt that environmental gains have been offset by development. There were 118 comments that development and growth are the reason that the environment is now worse than before.
- In the water arena, there were specific comments about wetlands (83) and stormwater (27).
- In the area of waste, there were 54 comments about recycling issues and 12 about litter problems.

Summary of Strategic Survey Question 3

Other Environmental Issues

Water Issues (51)

- Water Quality/Protection (14)
- Endocrine disruptors/pharmaceuticals (11)
- Water Quantity/Availability (14)
- Wastewater (5)
- Water Levels up and down (5)
- Water General (2)

Growth Issues (39)

- Overdevelopment (20)
- Loss/Protection of Agricultural Lands (10)
- Loss/Protection of Forests (5)
- Preservation of Cultural Resources (4)

Solid Waste Issues (18)

- General Disposal Problems (7)
- Litter (4)
- North Country Environmental Services (2)
- Out of State Waste (3)
- Packaging (2)

Other

- DES (permitting, staff, funding, etc.) (10)
- Energy Issues (9)
- Too Much Environmental Regulation (8)
- Overpopulation (7)
- Climate Change Issues (6)
- More Compliance/Enforcement (5)
- Air Pollution (5)
- Education/Outreach (5)
- Transportation/Traffic (3)
- Noise Pollution (3)
- Mercury (3)
- Wildlife (3)
- Local Control (2)
- Public Lands (Private Incursions, Accessibility to) (2)
- Public Health and Welfare (2)
- Leadership (Intersection of Leadership and Politics, Lack of) (2)
- Cynicism (2)
- Nanotechnology (2)
- Limited Impact Development (2)
- General (11)
- Miscellaneous (7)

Summary of Strategic Survey Question 5

Twenty Years from now, what will People say that DES and Other State Agencies should have been Doing (starting in 2008) to Better Protect NH's Environment and Public Health?

- Growth/Development/Land Use (control growth: 160; relax regulation so as to not stop it: 1)
- Water Quality + Quantity (128)
- Energy (107)
- Enforcement (should be more proactive, better, stricter) (78)
- Solid + Hazardous Waste (72)
- More/Better Outreach/Education (52)
- Air Quality/Pollution (better air quality: 37; better indoor air quality: 2)
- Climate Change (should be a concern: 35; should not be a concern: 2)
- Funding (23)
- Staff (pro: 13; con: 2)
- Toxics (11)
- Business Slant (10)
- More Technical Assistance (8)
- Political Influence (8)
- Bureaucracy (6)
- Permitting Issues (6)
- Good Job (6)
- Flooding (flood control: 4; prohibit development within flood plains: 2)
- Better Technology/Information (2)
- General (221)
- Miscellaneous (24)
- Don't Know (17)

Summary of Strategic Survey Question 7

What do you Consider DES's Greatest Strengths?

- Quality of Staff (313)
- Good Working Relationship/Cooperation with the Public + Regulated Community (78)
- Education & Outreach/Website/Communication (78)
- Accountability/Management (66)
- Environmental Protection (56)
- Specific Programs/Areas (49)
- New + Improved Leadership (17)
- Customer Service (13)
- Work Environment (7)
- Good Laws/Sound Programs (3)
- No Insight (33)
- No Strengths (10)

Summary of Strategic Survey Question 8

What do you consider DES's Greatest Weaknesses?

- Inadequate Funding (86)
- Not Enough Staff (60)
- Too Much Politics and Not Enough Science (43)
- Program/Topic Specific (34)
- Not Enough Enforcement of Existing Laws (32)
- Management Issues (31)
- DES Staff Complaints/Workplace Issues (30)
- Poor Communication/Coordination within DES (27)
- Inconsistency in Interpretation or Application of Rules (27)
- Inadequate Relationship with the Public (26)
- Not Enough Education and Outreach (25)
- Staff Turnover/Loss of Talented Staff (25)
- Red Tape/ Bureaucracy (21)
- Too Business Focused Vs. Public or Environment (21)
- Permit Timeliness (19)
- General/Multiple Problems (19)
- Poor Relationship between DES and Municipalities (19)
- Timeliness – Not Permitting Specific (18)
- Quality of Staff (18)
- Poor Relationship between DES and Other State Agencies (15)
- Too Much/Over-Enforcement of Existing Laws (11)
- Not Enough Authority (10)
- Confusing Regulations (10)
- Inefficiency (10)
- Permitting Issues (9)
- Insufficient Political Support (8)
- DES Lack of Responsiveness (6)
- DES Mission Not Visible Enough (6)
- Poor Communication (General) (6)
- Miscellaneous (6)
- Not Sensitive Enough to Business (5)
- Reactive Vs. Proactive (3)
- No Weaknesses (3)
- Don't Know (12)

Summary of Strategic Survey Question 9

Other Aspirational Directions?

- Continued/Additional Environmental Protection (28)
- Continue/Additional Education/Outreach (17)
- Staffing Quality Issues (11)
- DES Workplace Issues (10)
- Energy/Climate Change Concerns (10)
- Continued/Additional Local Coordination/Assistance (8)
- Enforcement/Regulations Are Not Tough Enough (8)
- Land Use/Growth Concerns (9)
- Don't be so Easy on Business (6)
- Increase Staffing (5)
- Improve Permitting Processes (5)
- Ask for Help from Business, Citizens, Communities, and Other State Agencies (5)
- Be Consistent in Rule Interpretation and Enforcement. (4)
- Establish Measurable Goals (4)
- Solid Waste/Recycling (3)
- Be More Proactive (3)
- Improve Relationship with Business/Regulated Community (3)
- Advice on Strategic Planning (3)
- Balance the Environment with Economy (2)
- Stay Clear of Politics (2)
- Increase Efficiency (2)
- Establish More Partnerships (2)
- Establish a Better Funding Mechanism (2)
- Increase Influence with Legislature (2)
- Decrease/Reform Bureaucracy (2)
- Make Cultural Heritage a Higher Priority (2)
- Address Environmental Health (1)
- Be Fair and Impartial (1)
- Meet Regulatory Goals without Overly Regulating Landowners. (1)
- Listen and Act on Public Concerns (1)
- Develop a geologic and natural resource inventory/data base for general use in evaluating the impact of land-use proposals. (1)
- Work with NH Fish & Game to Ensure Effective Implementation of the Wildlife Action Plan. (1)

Other Comments

- Skepticism (6)
- Compliments (4)
- Keep doing what you're doing. (4)
- Stick to what's relevant for New Hampshire. (4)
- Non-Germane Responses (10)
- No Other Ideas/Recommendations (6)

Summary of Strategic Survey Question 17

Other Questions or Concerns?

- Thank You for Asking my Opinion (27)
- General Advice to DES (10)
- I Like the Survey (9)
- General Complaints about DES (8)
- Good Job, DES (7)
- Questions/Complaints about the Survey (6)
- Suggestions for Improvement (6)
- Water Issues (6)
- General Comments (6)
- Good Luck! (3)
- Offers of Help (3)
- Waste Issues (3)
- Hopeful Messages (3)
- Air Issues (1)