

Poll: N.J. residents split on using federal Sandy relief funds for buyouts

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New Jerseyans are divided on whether federal funds earmarked for the Hurricane Sandy recovery effort should be spent on buying up and tearing down storm-damaged properties, according to findings from a Rutgers-Eagleton poll released today.

The poll, conducted by the Eagleton Institute of Policy at Rutgers University, found that 43 percent of New Jersey residents surveyed preferred buying out Sandy-damaged homes and leaving them as open space.

Meanwhile, the poll also found that an identical percentage would rather partially fund the rebuilding efforts of victims, as long as they stayed at their properties for at least two years.

Locations and age appeared to make a difference in the poll results, said David Redlawsk, director of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll and political science professor at Rutgers. Buyouts were strongly supported by middle-aged and older residents and people in the northwest counties, he said in a news release.

New Jerseyans under 30 years old, however, preferred to fund rebuilding efforts, he said.

The New Jersey poll was done in conjunction with one in New York conducted by Siena College in Loudonville, N.Y. That poll found that 48 percent of New Yorkers preferred to use federal Sandy relief dollars for rebuilding, while 33 percent supported buyouts.

The federal government has allocated nearly \$60 billion in January to help states hit by Sandy recover from the devastation.

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