Maryland Sea Grant College and the Agriculture Law Education Initiative at the University of Maryland

Maryland Coastal Law and Policy Roundtable

Monday, December 2, 2019

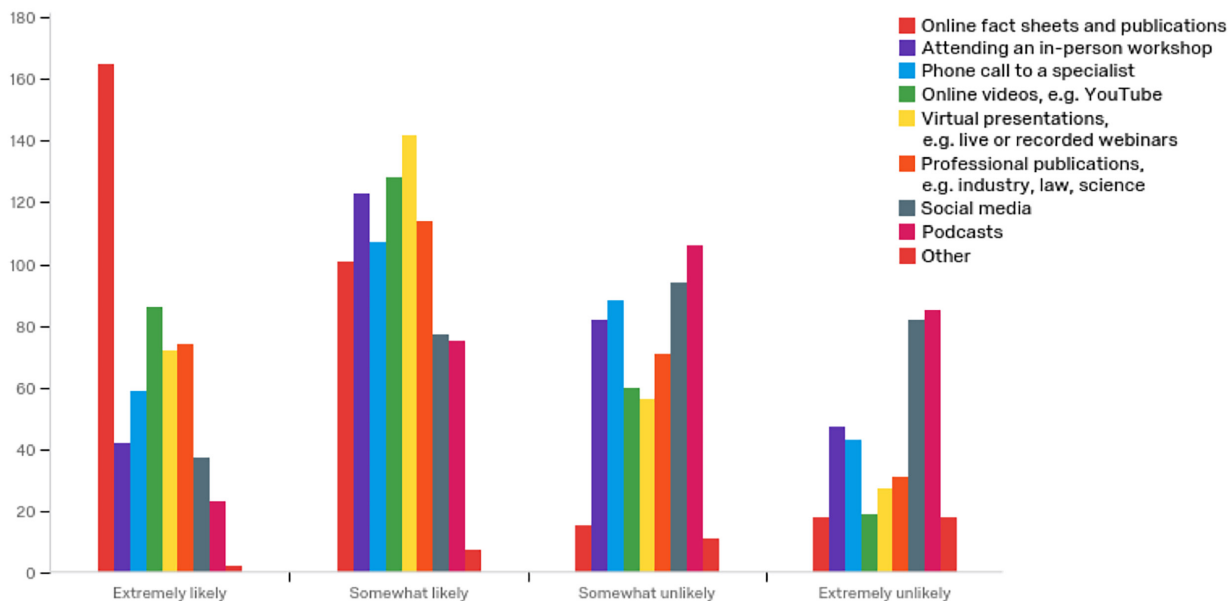Admiral Fell Inn, Baltimore, MD

Summary Report

Maryland Legal Capacity Needs Assessment Survey of Stakeholders, 2019

In summer 2019, Maryland Sea Grant College (MDSG) partnered with the University of Maryland Agriculture Law Education Initiative (ALEI) to survey Marylanders on their legal and policy needs. This effort was part of a grant awarded to MDSG and ALEI to support an investigation into the possible development of a collaborative coastal legal policy program which could support stakeholders' needs for legal analyses on coastal issues consistent with MDSG's mission. As part of this research effort we conducted this needs assessment survey to understand our stakeholders' interests and priorities in coastal legal policy capacity needs. The survey was sent to approximately 900 stakeholders, broadly distributed around the state. We received 370 responses (~30% response rate). A brief summary of the major findings from the survey are highlighted below.

Importantly, the survey found the majority of respondents (from across many sectors) agreed they had a need for more legal information about regulations and policies in Maryland related to coastal management (top priorities were: sea level rise, shoreline stabilization, stormwater management, and government's role in protecting communities from extreme weather and coastal flooding) and in fisheries and aquaculture (top priorities were: nutrient management and nutrient trading, leasing and legal compliance, user conflicts, food safety, and tax laws).
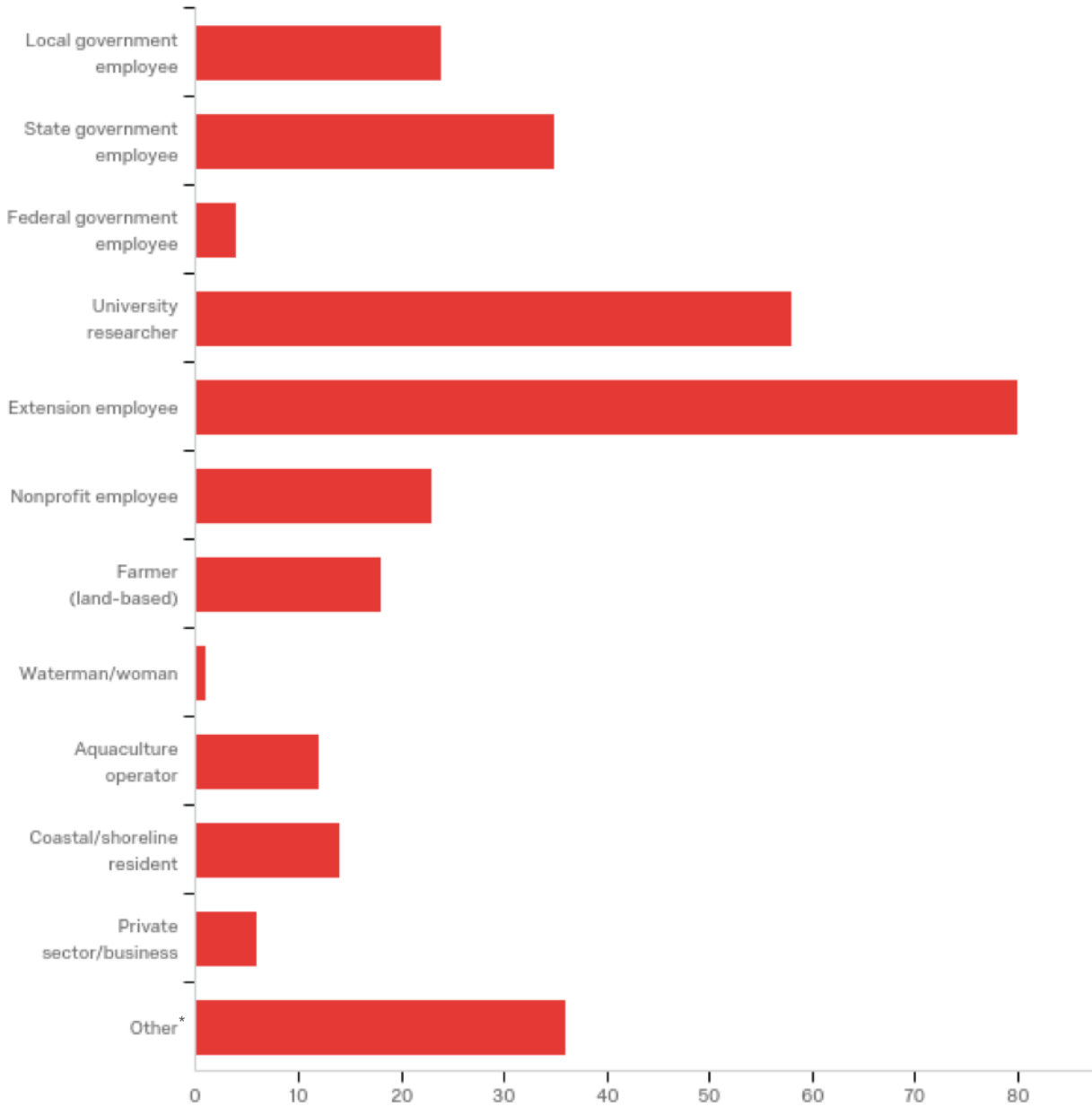
Most respondents (91%) also agreed that they would use resources provided by Maryland Sea Grant College if those resources were available. They also indicated how likely they would be to access different types of information in varying formats, which can be seen in the chart below that displays responses from Question 4. The respondents most preferred information resource delivery mechanism was online factsheets and publications. The least preferred mechanism was podcasts.

Question 4: How likely would you be to access Maryland Sea Grant resources using the following mechanisms?

Below, the Question 7 graph provides a breakdown of survey respondents' backgrounds. The two dominant responses came from participants with the perspective of university researchers (~60 respondents) and extension employees (~80).

Question 7: Which one of the following best describes the perspective from which you answered the survey?

* Other includes: Local government elected official; potential aquaculture operator; legislative advocate; homeowner (2); self-employed vegetation management specialist; community advocate; Extension volunteer; education; Political Subdivision of the State; volunteer master gardener (10); retired (2); journalist, author; concerned citizen (2); Nonprofit board member and activist; Environmental consultant—commercial real estate; University employee/staff (2).