



2004
*Permit Applicant
Survey*

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United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service
Washington State Office

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Department of Ecology
2004 Permit Applicant Survey

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Department of Ecology

2004 Permit Applicant Survey

Introduction

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) has embarked on an ambitious agenda to transform and focus the agency's permitting processes and interactions around the following vision:

The citizens of Washington trust that our employees will support and assist them in promoting the sustainable environmental and economic well-being of the state.

Ecology's intent is to improve the timeliness and predictability of its permitting and regulatory processes, and to cultivate a supportive and problem-solving culture built on helpful, responsive and knowledgeable governmental services without lowering environmental standards.

Ecology implemented a work plan in 2002 designed to meet its vision, which is posted on Ecology's Web Site at http://www.ecy.wa.gov/quality/service/svc_index.htm. The work plan is centered on the following two objectives:

1. Improve Ecology's business practices to achieve permit timeliness and predictability by:
 - Establishing and meeting permit timeliness targets focused on timely permit decisions,
 - Providing flowcharts and guidance materials to improve the clarity of our permit processes,
 - Increasing helpfulness of information on the internet,
 - Instituting pre-application conferences in our Regional Offices,
 - Continuously improving our processes, and
 - Advancing transportation permit streamlining.

2. Institute a problem-solving culture to achieve helpful, responsive and knowledgeable service by:
 - Establishing and conferring with Regulatory Performance Advisors,
 - Developing program-specific goals, strategies and measures, and
 - Soliciting feedback from staff and our customers through surveys.

In the fall of 2002, Ecology contracted with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Services (NASS) office in Washington state to conduct a survey of our permit applicants. The 2002 permit applicant survey established a baseline on customer opinion of our permitting services, the permitting process and customer service of our permitting staff. In the summer of 2004, Ecology contracted once again with NASS to conduct a follow-up survey of our permit customers.

Survey Scope

The Department of Ecology is Washington State's primary environmental management and protection agency. Ecology administers several environmental programs that issue permits to individuals, businesses and corporations. These permits spell out how the regulated entity must comply with environmental laws. Ecology, along with our federal, local and tribal regulatory partners, issues permits to control pollution discharges into the air and water, to ensure safe management of wastes and to protect natural resources.

Many people have their first encounter with Ecology through the permitting process. This interaction, between the regulated entity and Ecology, highlights the important aspects of customer service, permit clarity and process predictability in environmental permitting. In an ongoing effort to improve its permitting services, Ecology asked permit applicants their opinion of:

1. Satisfaction with Ecology's customer service,
2. The clarity, timeliness and predictability of Ecology's permitting processes, and
3. The reasonableness of the permit requirements.

Survey Methodology

Ecology contracted with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Services (NASS) Washington office in Washington state to independently conduct, collect and compile permit-applicant customer-service data. NASS conducts surveys for and lends technical assistance to other federal agencies and state government. NASS provided technical support and assistance to Ecology in developing the questionnaire. NASS administered the survey, data collection, data validation and data compilation.

Ecology provided NASS with a mailing list of 3,351 people or businesses that applied for a permit from Ecology between January 1, 2002 and May 31, 2004. For specific permit applicant populations greater than 325, NASS performed standard random-sampling

methodology to produce an efficient representative sample. For permit applicant populations fewer than 325, the entire population was sampled.

Ecology Permit Type	Total Population of Applicants	Total Number Sampled
Agricultural Burning	1,463	581
Air Quality (Air Operating and New Source Review)	94	94
Dangerous Waste	4	4
Dam Safety	13	13
Biosolids	62	62
Multimedia (Industrial Section)	5	5
Water Rights (New, Transfer and Change)	176	176
State and Federal Wastewater Discharge	724	325
General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System	467	325
401 Certification	343	250
Total	3,351	1,835

In July 2004, NASS mailed a letter to the target sample population to inform them that they had been selected to participate in a telephone customer-satisfaction survey on behalf of Ecology. In late summer 2004, NASS-trained phone enumerators conducted the telephone survey. NASS staff key-entered survey response data into Statistical Analysis Software and provided Ecology with the tabulated data in mid-September 2004.

To ensure confidentiality, NASS will retain all original survey responses and the identity of survey respondents.

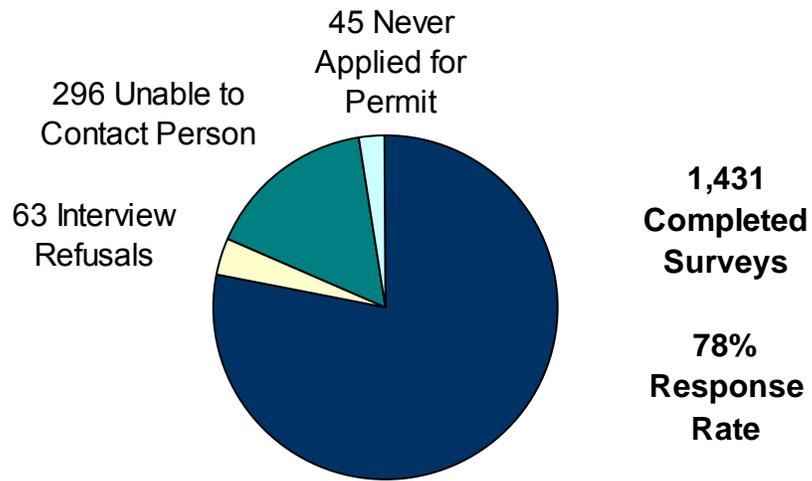
Survey Response Rate

NASS conducted 1,835 telephone surveys between July 19, 2004, and August 27, 2004. The number of calls that resulted in a completed survey was 1,431, or 78%. A small number of the sample population refused to complete the survey, 63 people. NASS was unable to reach another 296 people or business in the sample population. This was due, in part, to the fact that the person who may have originally applied for an Ecology permit on behalf of a business was no longer employed at the business. Another 45 people from the sample population either had no phone contact or stated they had never applied for an Ecology permit.

The 2002 response rate was 52% with 1,193 completed surveys. The 2002 data can be accessed at Ecology's Web site:

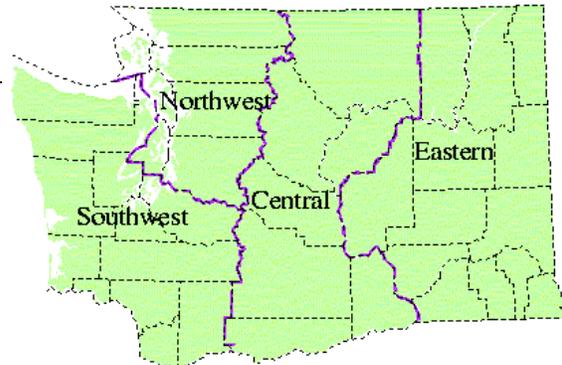
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/quality/survey/customersurvey.html#PermitApplicantsSurvey>

2004 Permit Applicant Response Rate

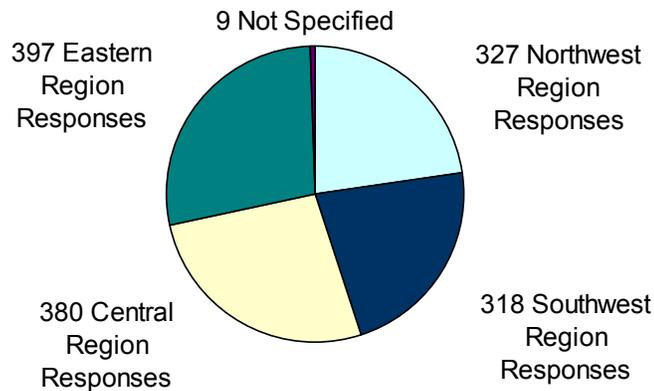


Responses by Region

Survey respondents were asked to state the county in which the facility or site being permitted was located. The county data were grouped into the four Ecology regional locations, as shown in the map.

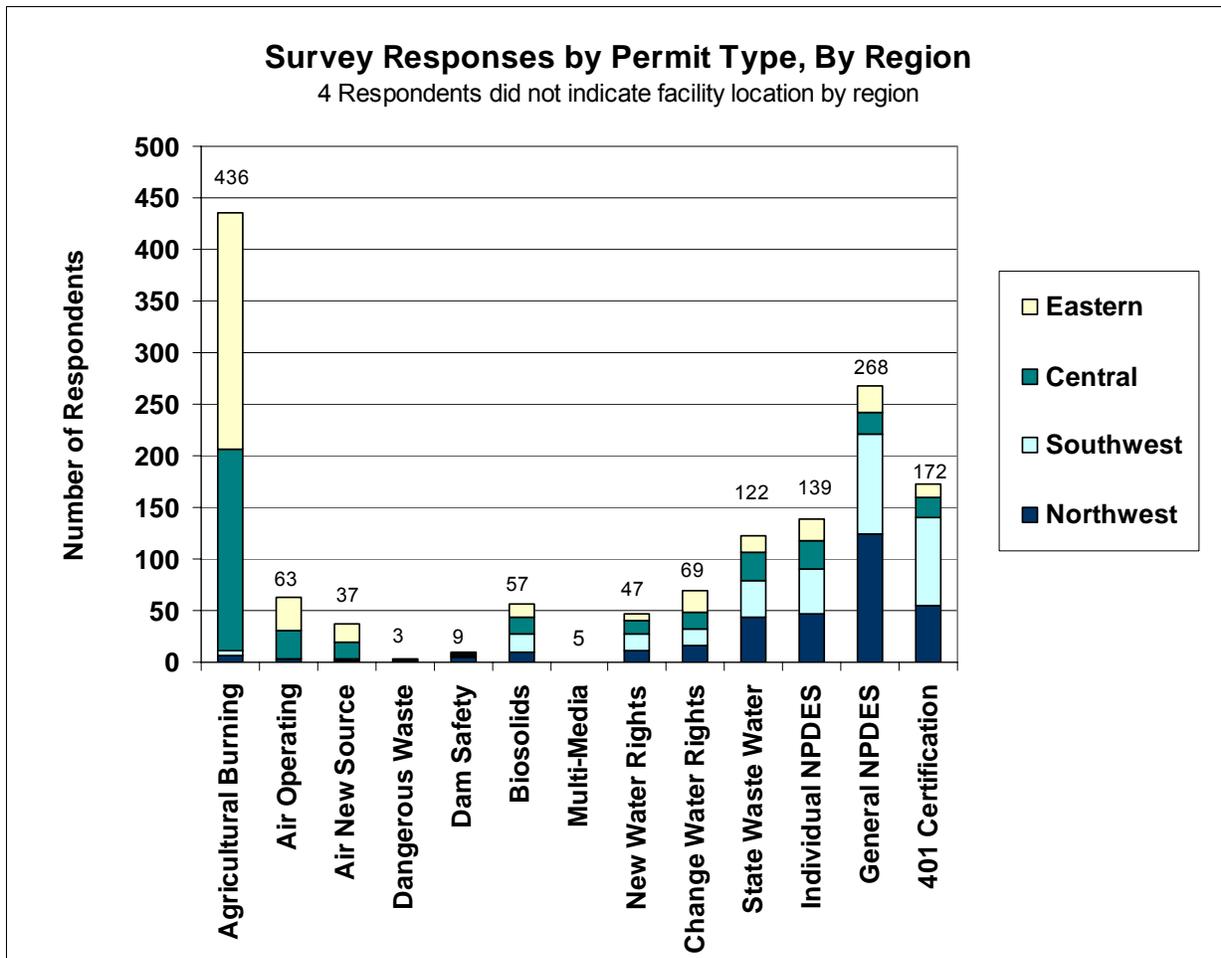


Survey Responses by Region



Permits in the Survey

Twelve different environmental permit processes were targeted in the survey. In addition, the survey included Ecology's permitting service for multimedia permits, which are managed out of its Headquarters Office. The following chart shows the number of responses by permit type (refer to Appendix C for a description of each permit type).



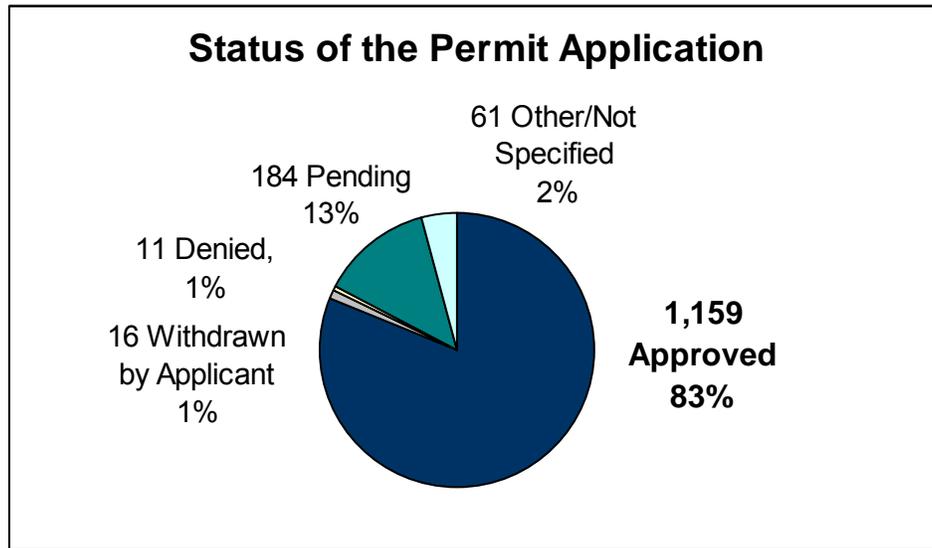
* NPDES – Water Quality National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

Note: the above data is based on where the facility or site being permitted is located. The permit application may or may not have been reviewed by Ecology employees located in the region where the facility is located. Some permit applications for a facility or site located in one of the regions may have been processed by employees located at the Department of Ecology Headquarters Office in Lacey, Washington.

Decision Status of Permit Applications

Survey respondents were asked if their application for an Ecology permit was:

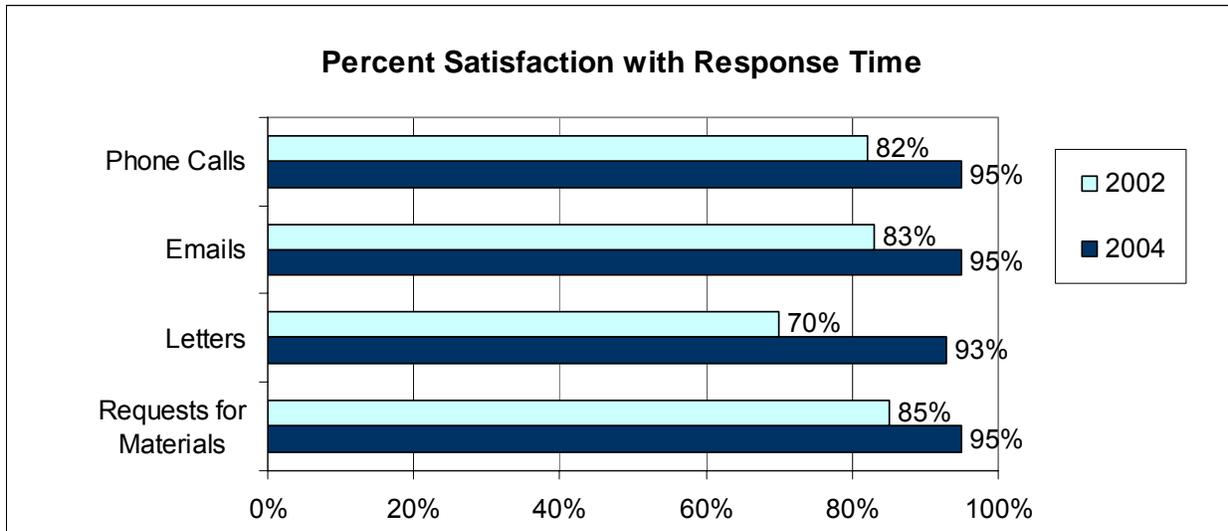
- Approved and issued by Ecology,
- Withdrawn by the applicant or the applicant's business,
- Denied by Ecology,
- Pending a decision by Ecology, or
- Other status.



Decision by Permit Type	Approved	Withdrawn	Denied	Pending	Other
Agricultural Burning	426	2	1	0	0
Air Operating	59	2	0	2	0
Air New Source	33	0	1	2	1
Dangerous Waste	2	0	0	0	1
Dam Safety	8	0	0	1	0
Biosolids	45	2	0	9	0
Multimedia	2	0	0	3	0
Water Rights New	15	0	2	27	3
Water Rights Change	31	3	2	31	1
State Wastewater Discharge	92	2	1	18	7
Federal NPDES	107	2	0	21	6
NPDES General	239	1	1	21	5
401 Water Certification	100	2	3	49	6
Respondent did not specify					31
Totals	1,159	16	11	184	61

Promptness in Responding to Phone Calls, E-mails, Letters and Requests for Materials

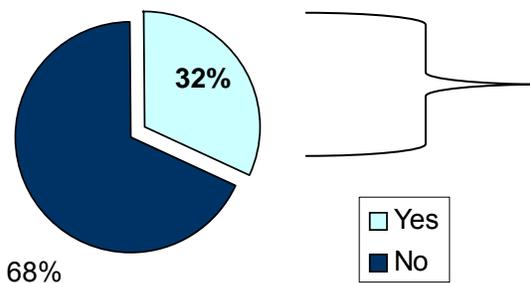
Survey respondents were asked their level of satisfaction in Ecology's response time to their phone calls, e-mail messages, letters and request for materials. The following chart shows the percent of respondents that were satisfied with response time compared with the same questions asked in the fall 2002 survey.



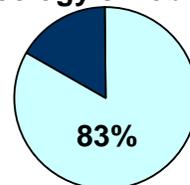
Use of Ecology's Web Site for Permit Information

Survey respondents were asked if they used Ecology's Web site for permit application information. If they answered yes, they were asked if the Web site is easy to use and helpful.

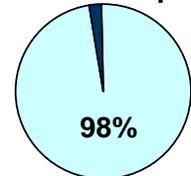
Was the Ecology web site used to find permit application information?



Was it easy to find permit information on Ecology's web site?

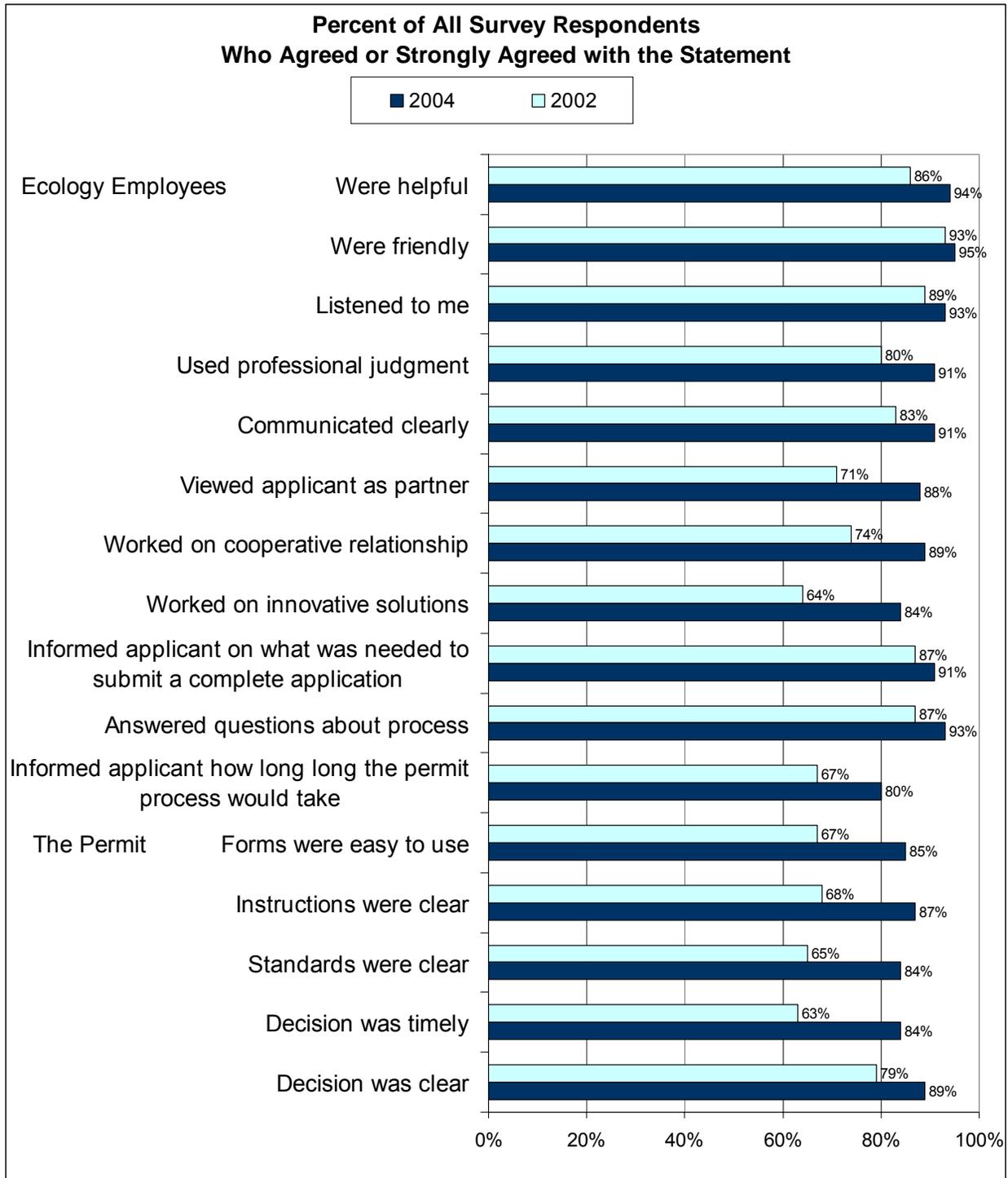


Was the permit information on the web site helpful?



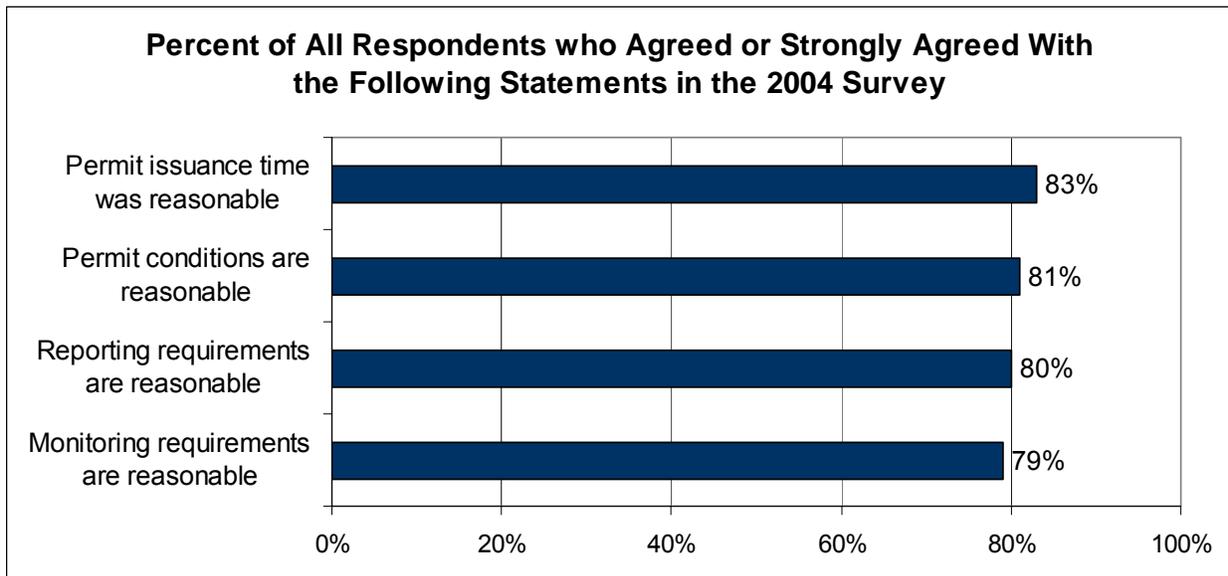
Customer Service and Permit Processes

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with several statements about their experience in applying for a permit from Ecology. The same questions were asked in the 2002 permit applicant survey.



Permit Requirements

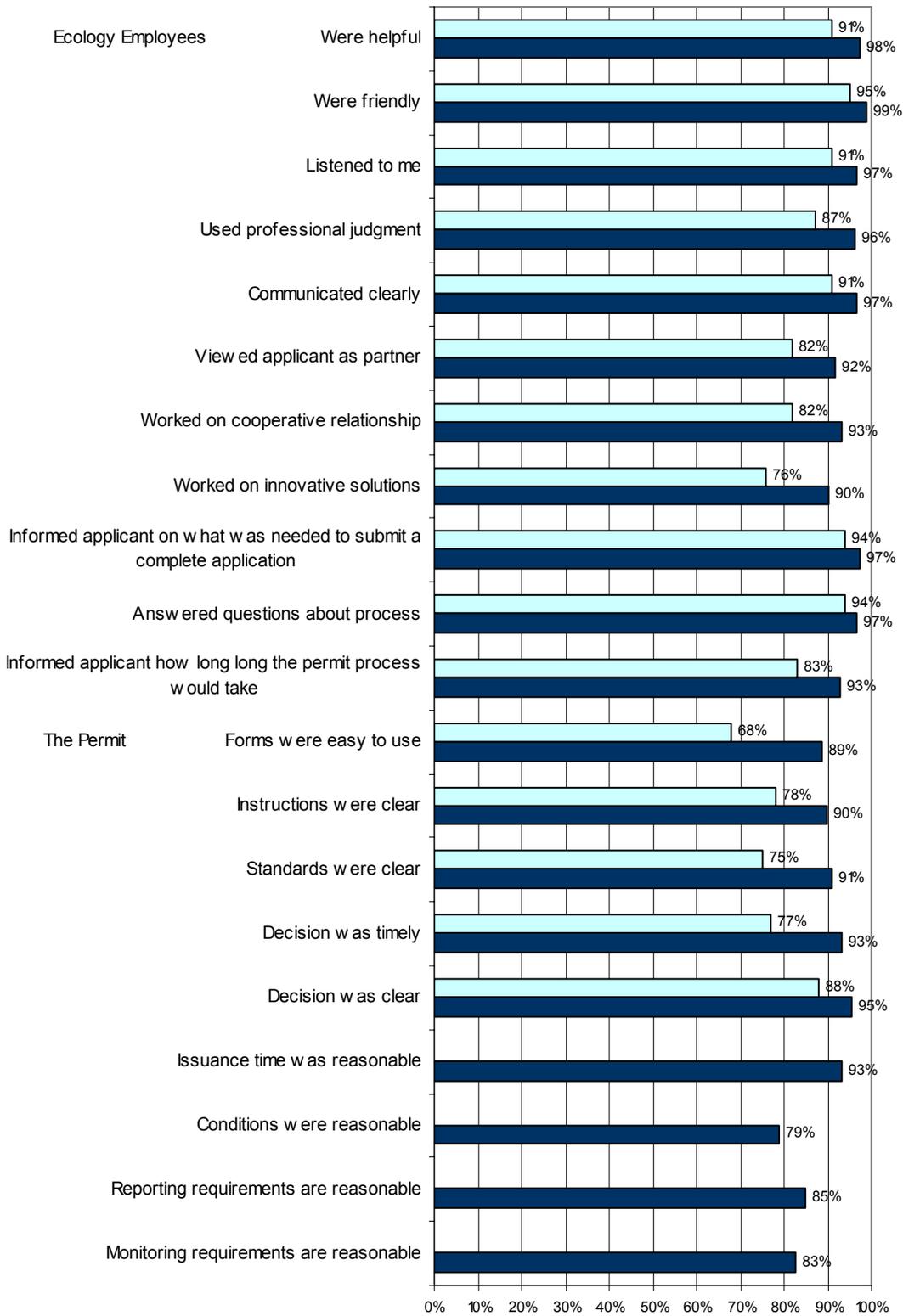
The 2002 Survey of Ecology Permit Applicants included questions regarding the economic competitiveness of environmental permitting and requirements. Because of the difficulty in interpreting the results of those questions, four new questions were included in the 2004 Permit Applicant Survey. The following chart shows the results for the 2004 questions regarding the permit applicant's opinion on the reasonableness of the permit process and requirements.



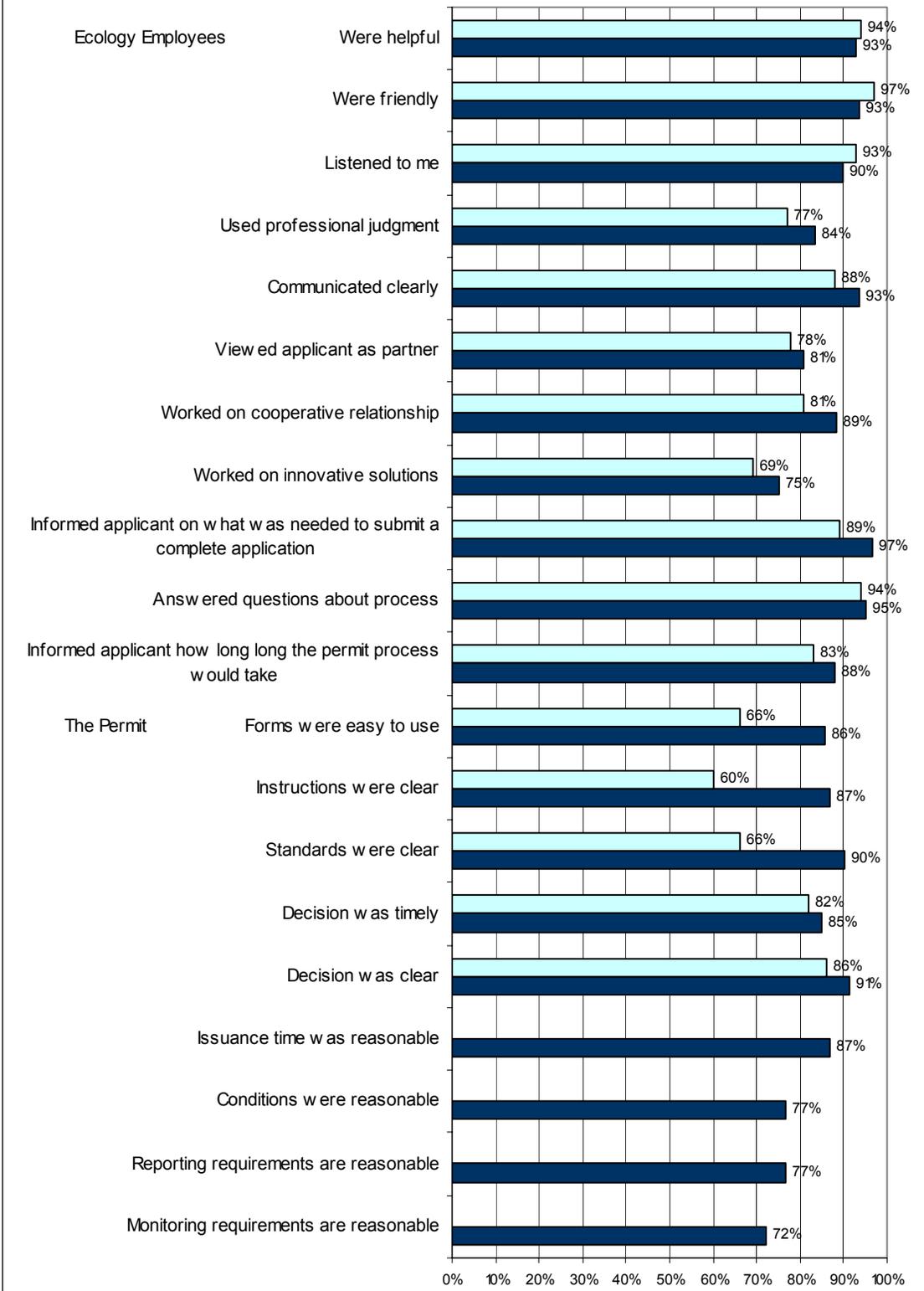
Appendix A

Survey Results by Permit Type

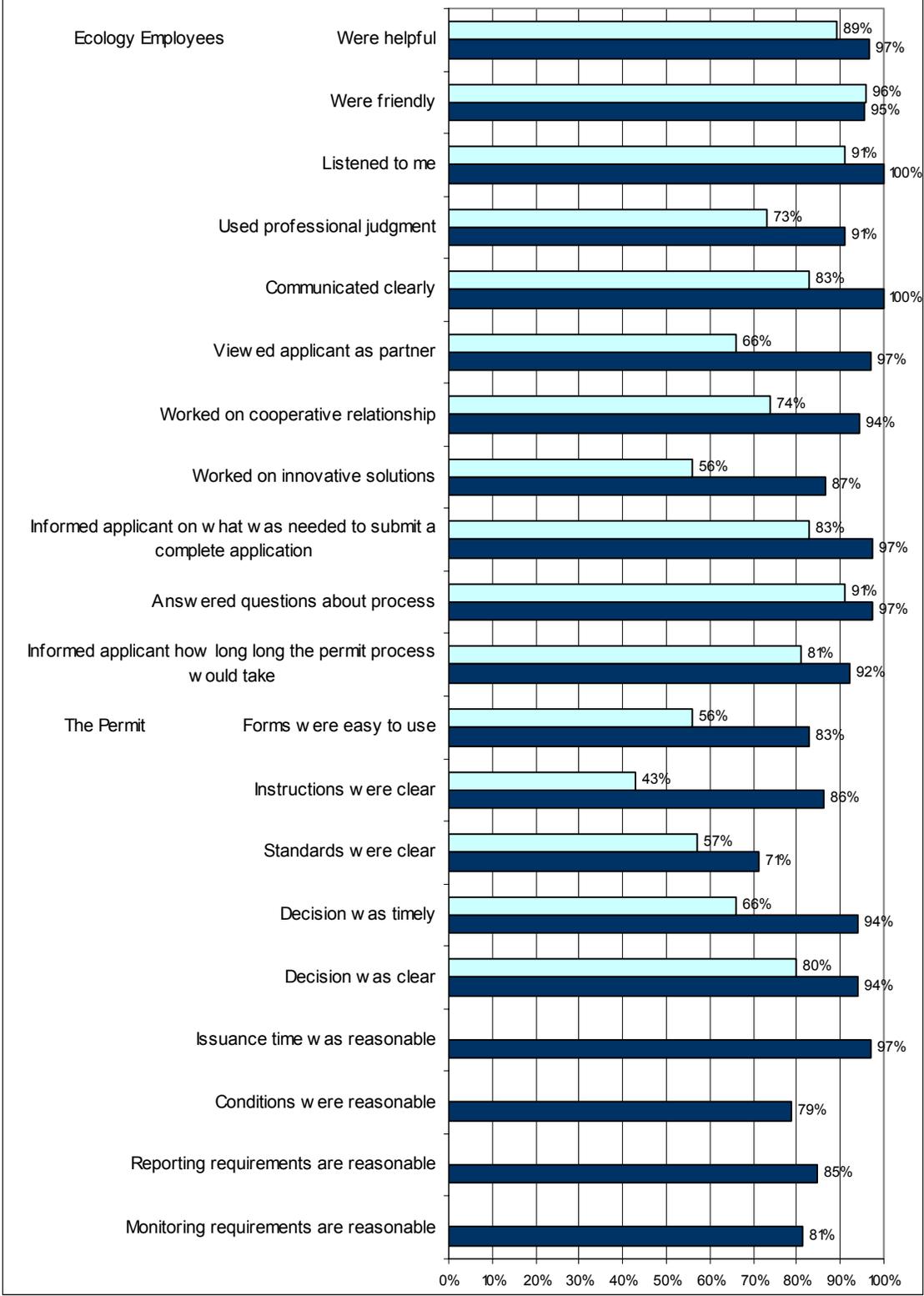
Agricultural Burning Respondents
Percent Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the Statement

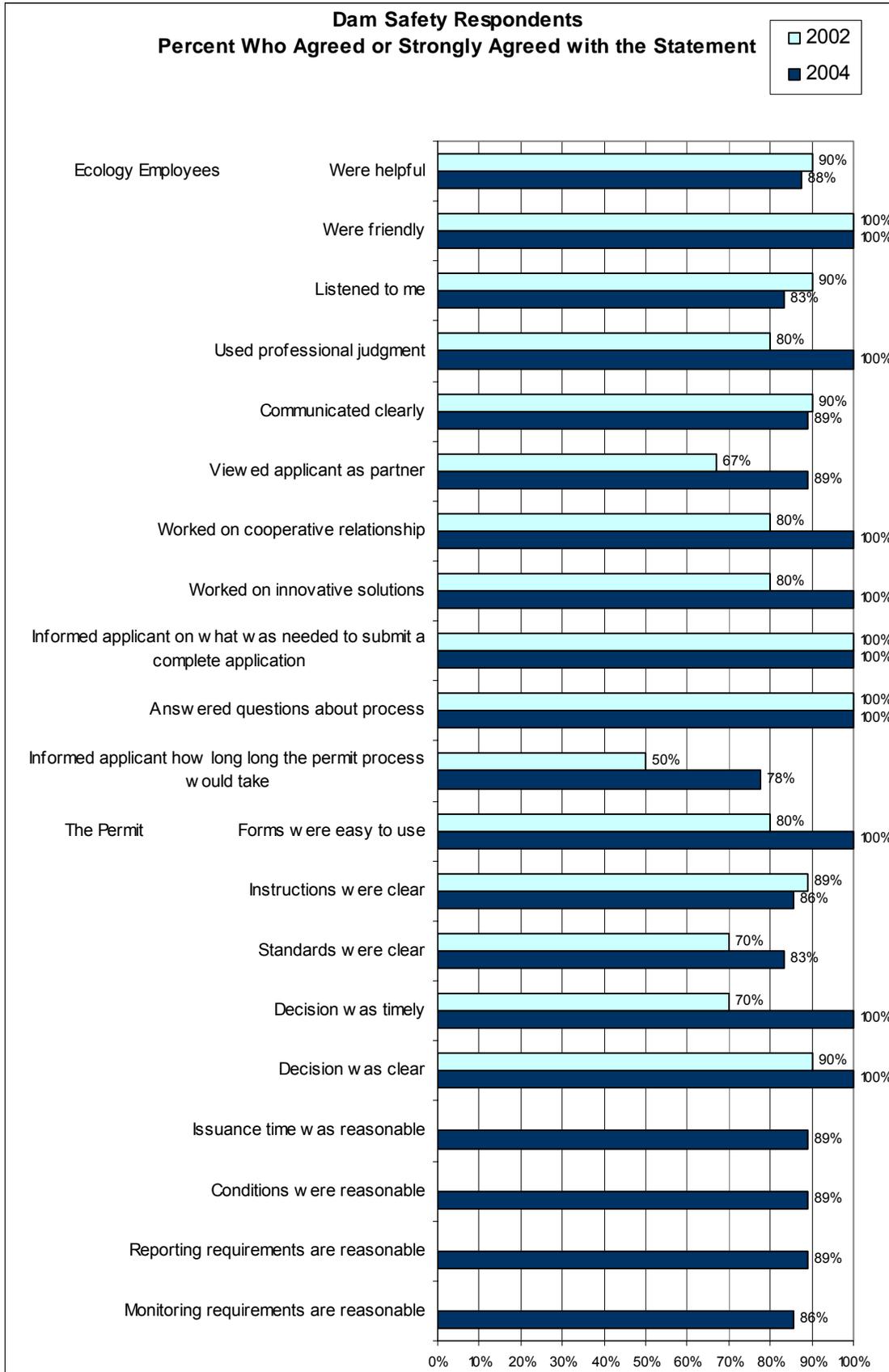


Air Operating Respondents
Percent Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the Statement

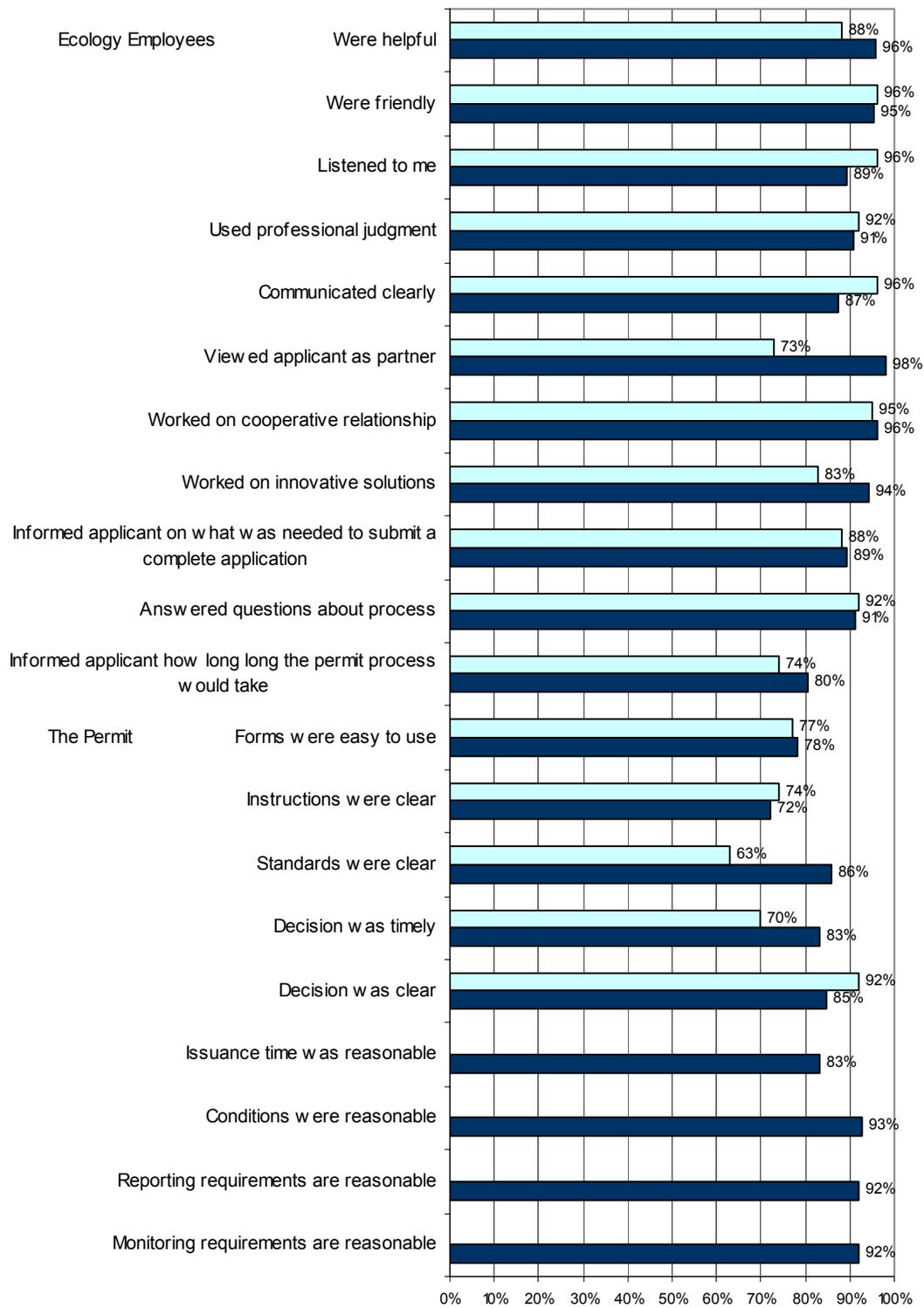


**Air New Source Review Respondents
Percent Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the Statement**

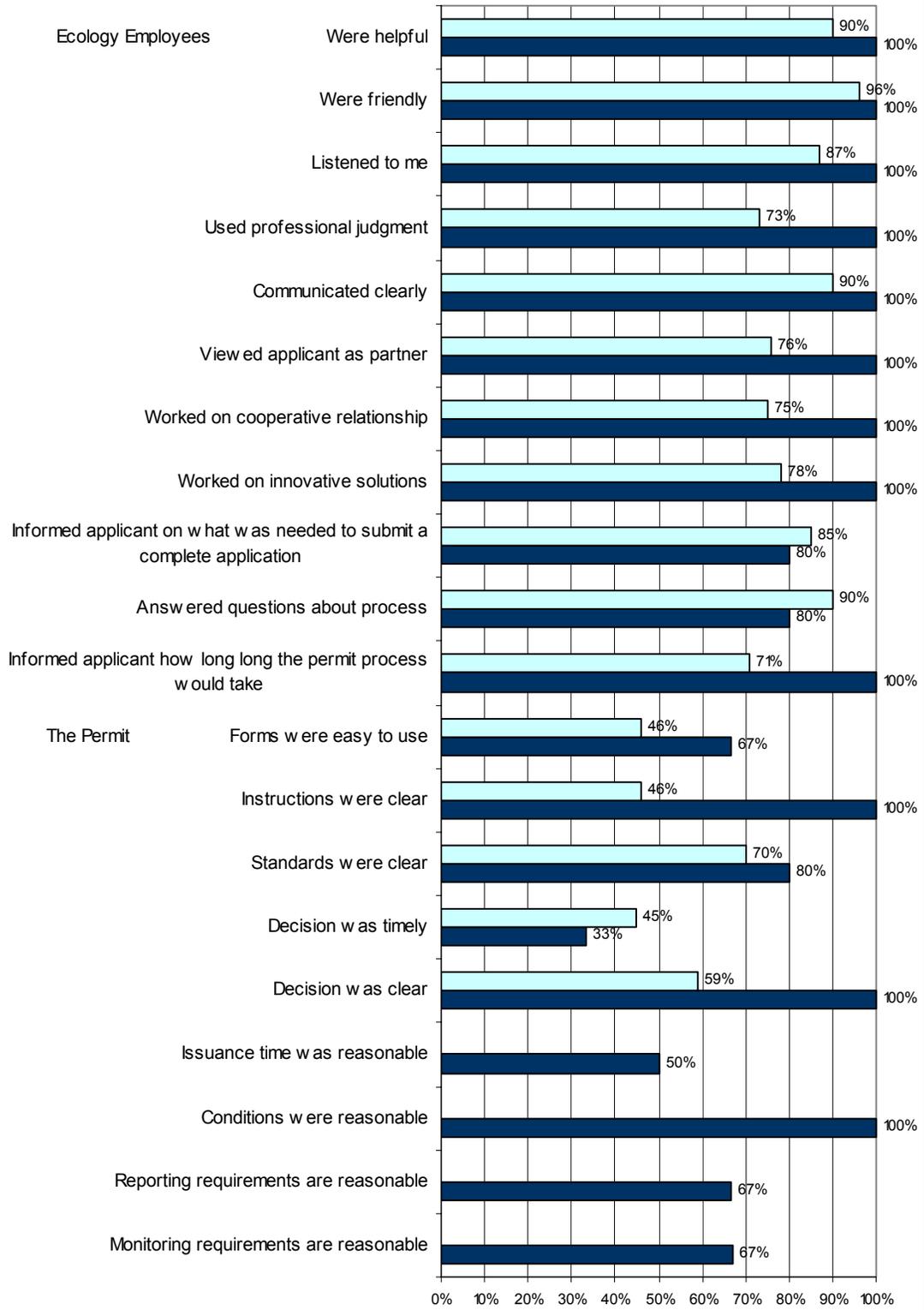




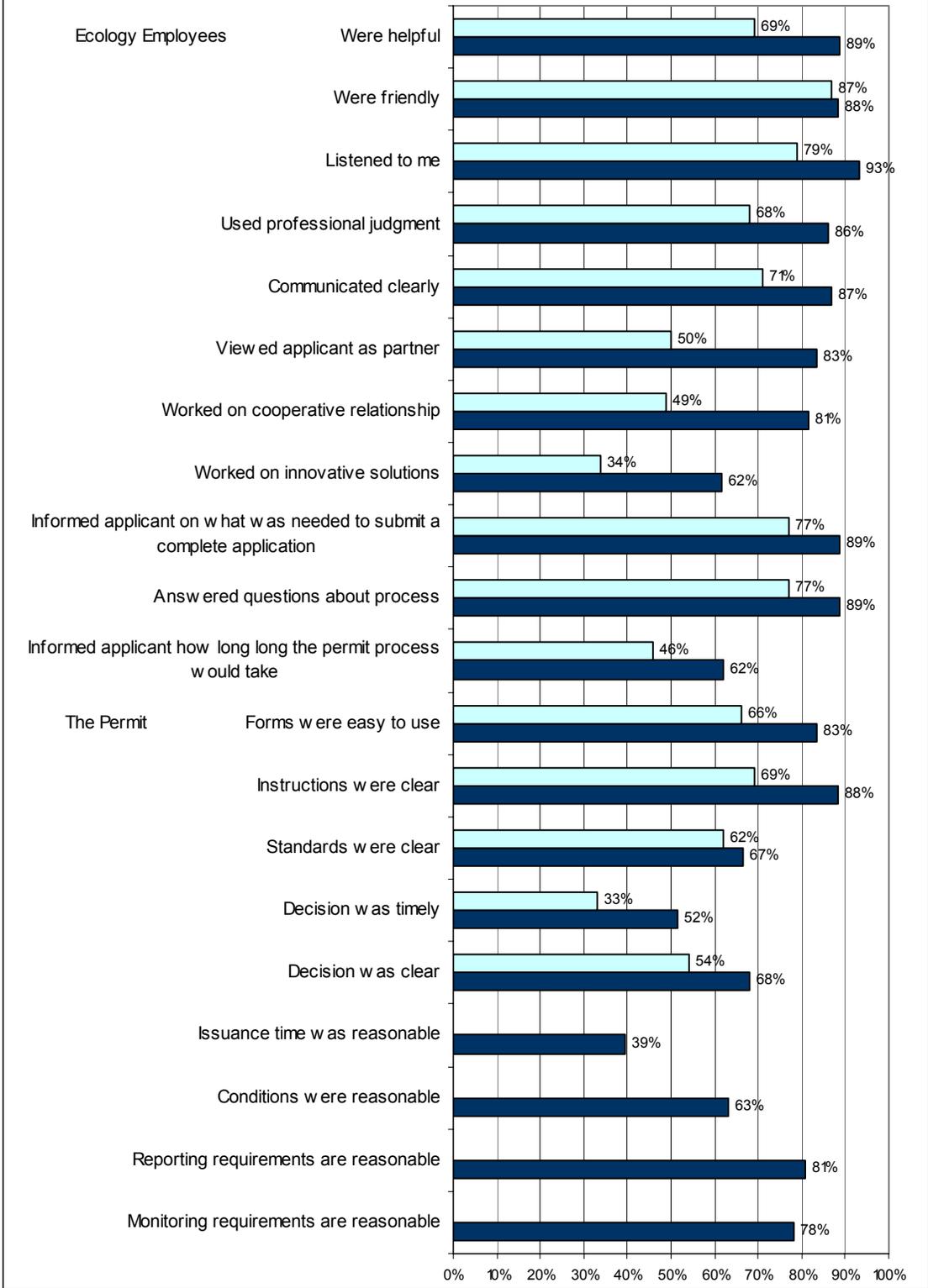
Biosolids Respondents
Percent Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the Statement



Multimedia (Industrial) Respondents
Percent Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the Statement

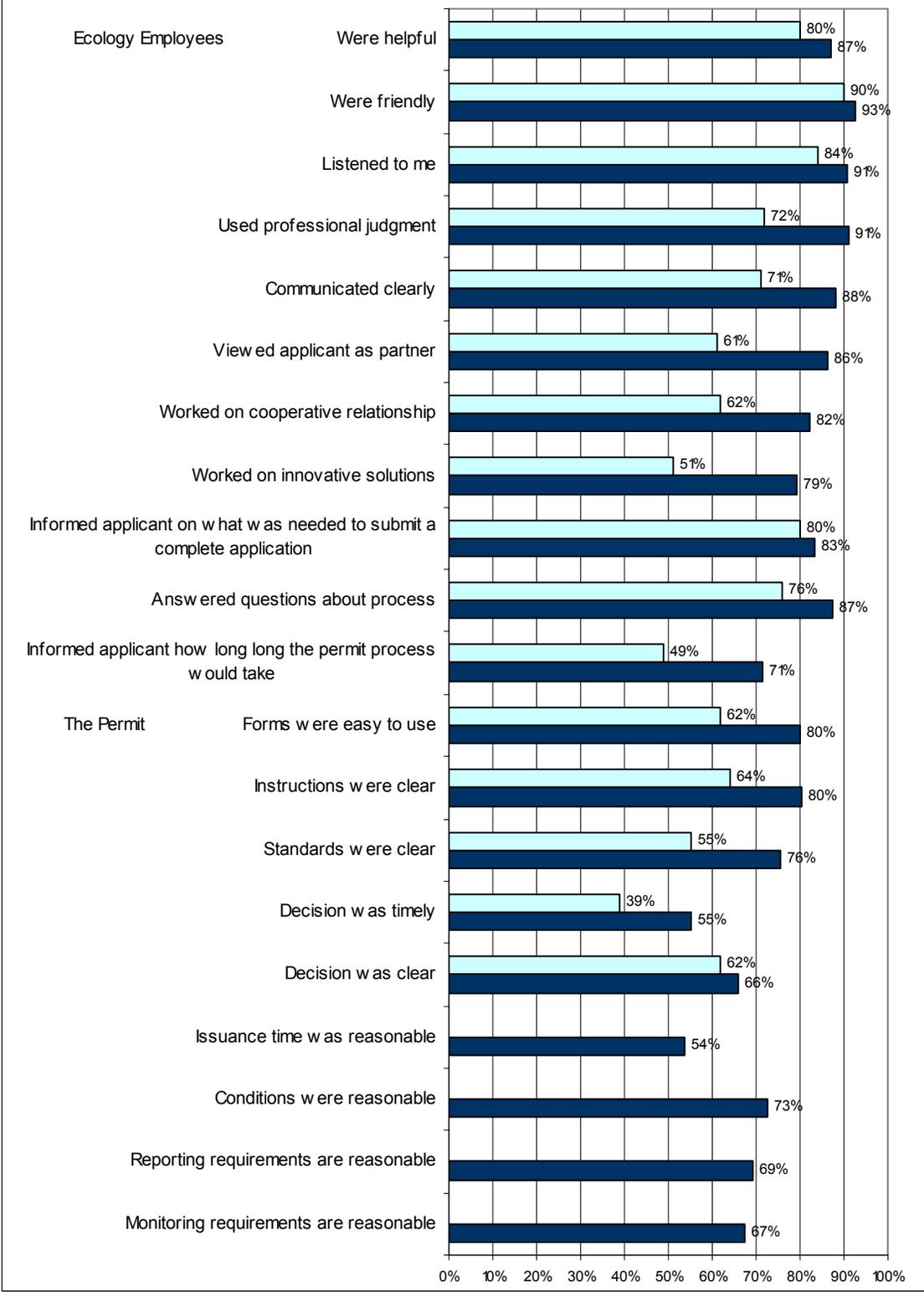


New Water Rights Respondents
Percent Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the Statement

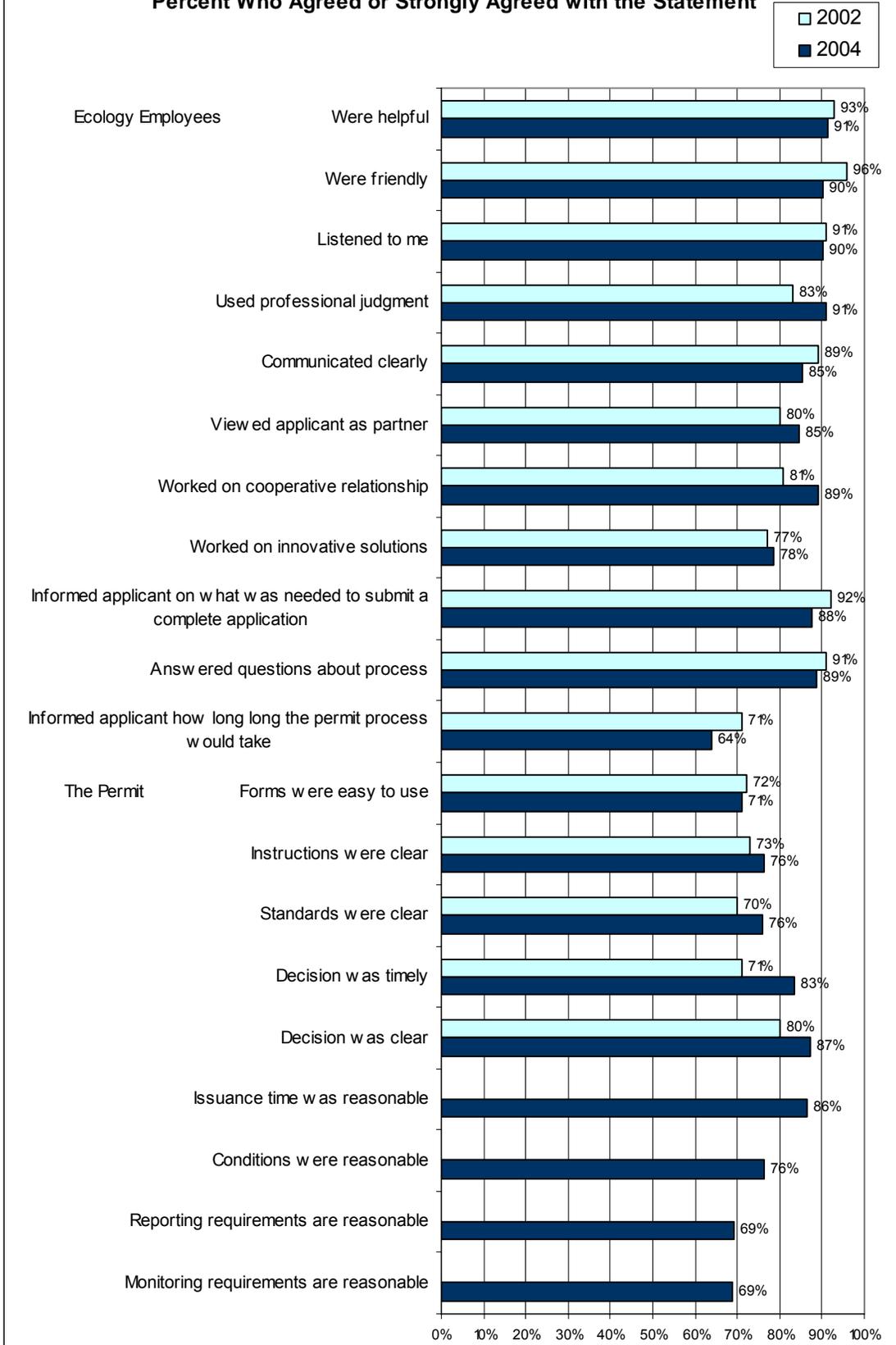


**Change Water Rights Respondents
Percent Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the Statement**

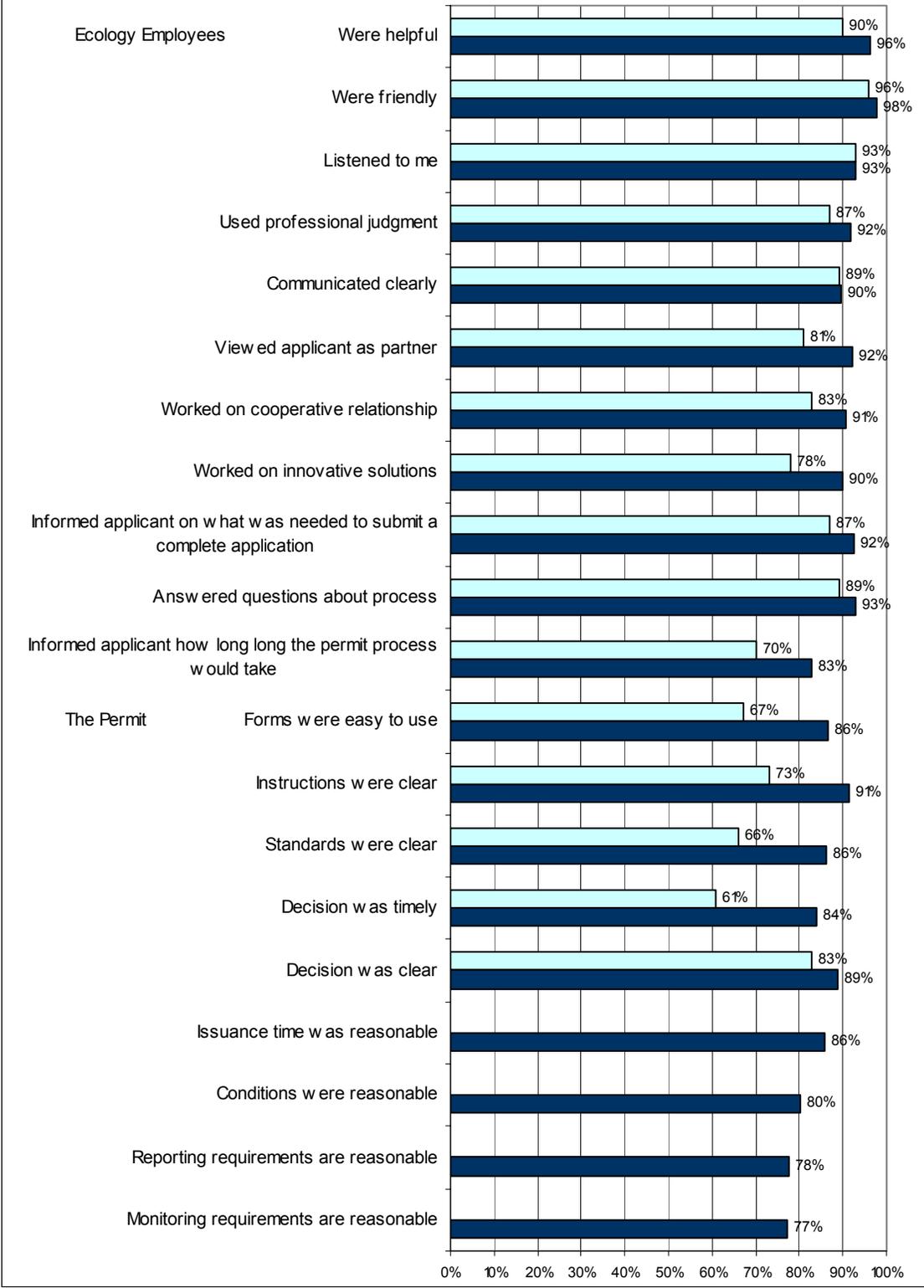
□ 2002
■ 2004



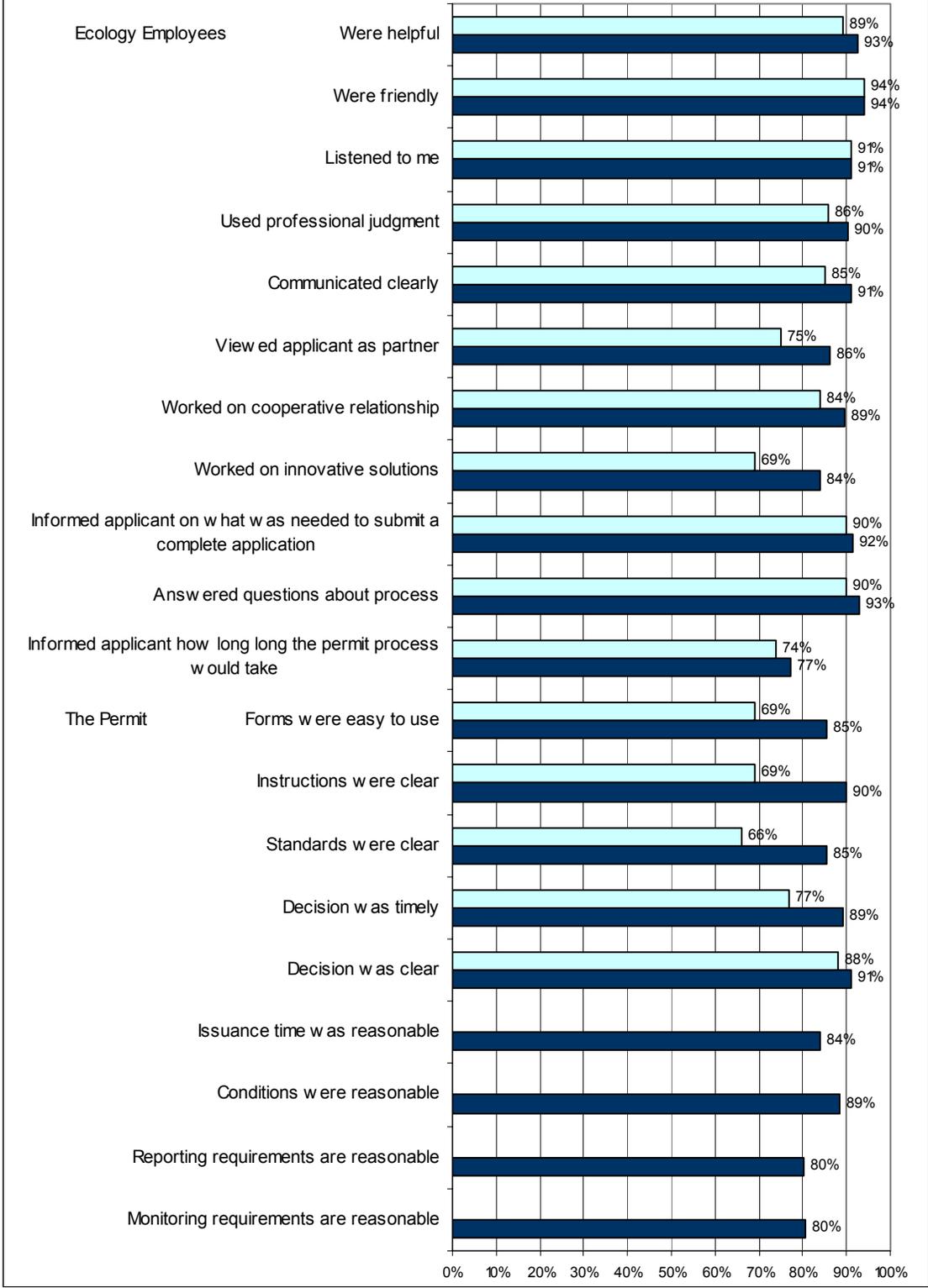
**State Wastewater Discharge Respondents
Percent Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the Statement**



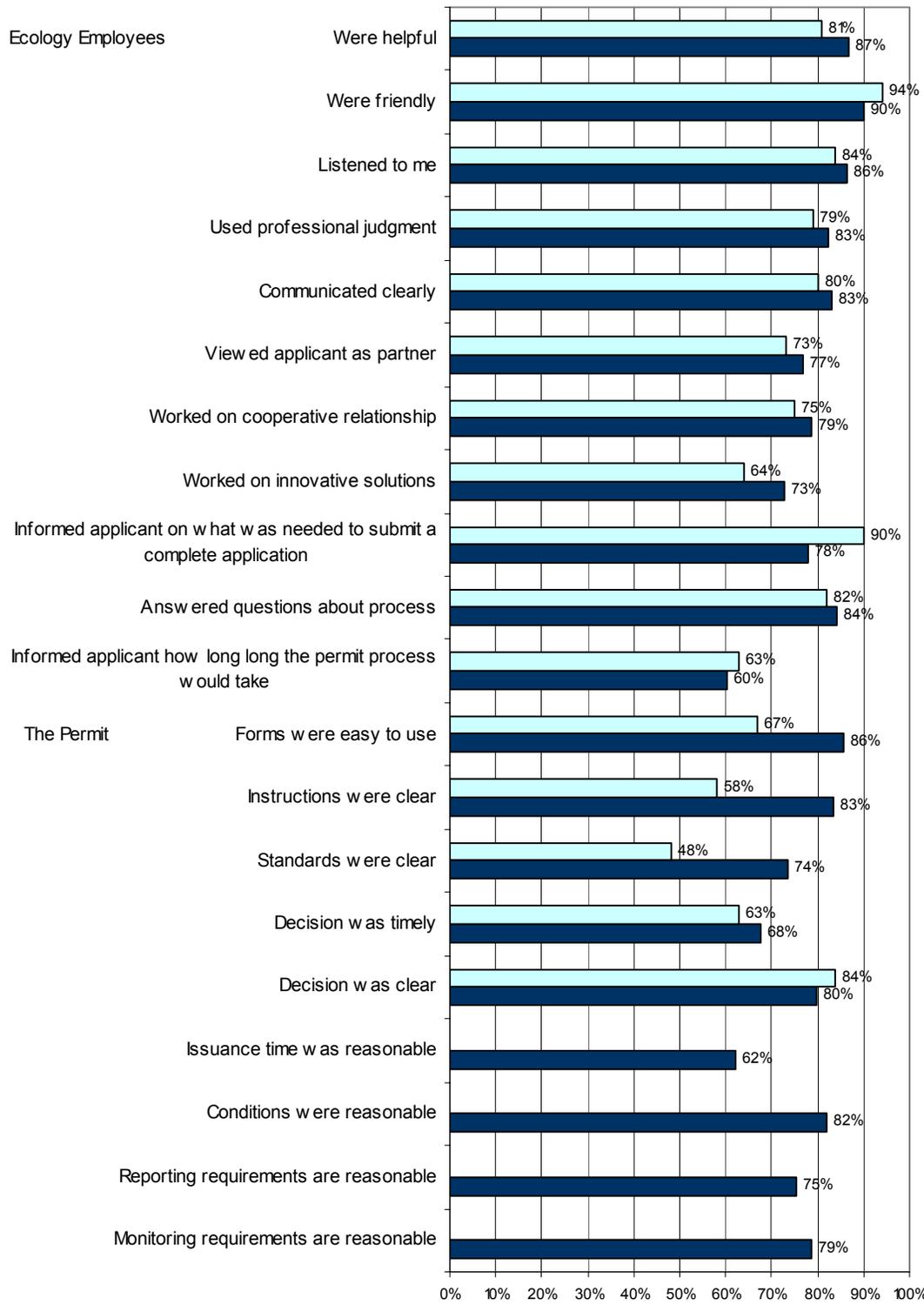
**Individual Wastewater Discharge (NPDES) Respondents
Percent Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the Statement**



**General Wastewater Discharge (NPDES) Respondents
Percent Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the Statement**



**401 Water Quality Certification Respondents
Percent Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with the Statement**



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Appendix B

2004 Permit Survey Questionnaire



SURVEY OF PERMIT CUSTOMERS

for the Washington State Department of Ecology July 2004

(360) 902-1940
FAX: 800-265-6275

Date	Time	Enum.	Date	Time	Enum.

1. The Washington Department of Ecology records show *[name on label]* recently applied for a *[type of permit]*. I would like to ask a few questions about the service received from the Department of Ecology.

Type of Permit (Check Box)	Enumerator Instructions
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Burning Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Biosolids Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Dam Safety Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Water Quality General Permit (stormwater, dairy, fish farm, fruit packer or sand and gravel) <input type="checkbox"/> 401 Certification	 Go to question 2 on the next page
<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Section Permit	Was the permit ---- 024 <input type="checkbox"/> Air Operating? 025 <input type="checkbox"/> Dangerous Waste? 021 <input type="checkbox"/> State Wastewater Discharge Permit? 023 <input type="checkbox"/> Federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit? Go to question 2 on the next page.
<input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality	072 <input type="checkbox"/> Air Operating Permit? 073 <input type="checkbox"/> New Source Permit (Notice of construction, Prevention of Significant Deterioration or Temporary Source) Go to question 2 on the next page.
<input type="checkbox"/> Dangerous Waste Permit	081 <input type="checkbox"/> New Dangerous Waste Permit? 082 <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal Permit? Go to question 2 on the next page.
<input type="checkbox"/> Water Rights Permit	031 <input type="checkbox"/> New Water Rights Permit? 032 <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer or Change Water Rights Permit? Go to question 2 on the next page.
<input type="checkbox"/> Wastewater Discharge Permit	021 <input type="checkbox"/> State Wastewater Discharge Permit? 022 <input type="checkbox"/> Federal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit?

2. In which county is the facility or site for the permit application located?
 (List County Name) _____

Office Use
400

3. Was your application for a permit:
 501 () Approved, permit issued (including conditionally approved)?
 502 () Withdrawn by you or your company?
 503 () Denied?
 504 () Pending a decision?
 505 () Or something else? Specify.

Now I have some questions regarding the Department of Ecology staff and their customer service.

PROMPTNESS

4. When applying for the permit, how long did it usually take Ecology staff to respond to: [Check one for each category.]

	Within 1 Day	Within 1 Week	2-4 Weeks	Longer than a month	Does Not Apply	Is this response time satisfactory? (Check one)	
	(Check one)					YES	NO
4a. Phone calls?	601	602	603	604	605		
4b. Emails?	701	702	703	704	705		
4c. Letters?	801	802	803	804	805		
4d. Materials you requested	901	902	903	904	905		

Now we're asking about:

CUSTOMER SERVICE; BUSINESS RELATIONSIDP and PERMIT PROCESS:

Please indicate whether you strongly disagree (#1), disagree (#2), agree (#3) or strongly agree (#4) with the following questions. If the question does not apply, please tell me so.

COMMUNICATIONS with Ecology staff:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Does Not Apply
5. Were they helpful? 100	1	2	3	4	5
6. Were they friendly? 110	1	2	3	4	5
7. Did they listen? 120	1	2	3	4	5
8. Did they use professional judgment rather than personal opinion to influence their work on the application? 130	1	2	3	4	5
9. Did they communicate information clearly? 140	1	2	3	4	5
10. Did they view the applicant as a partner who is equally committed to a healthy environment? 150	1	2	3	4	5
11. Did they work to build a cooperative relationship? 160	1	2	3	4	5
12. Did they work with the applicant to find innovative ways to solve problems? 170	1	2	3	4	5

Now we are going to ask about the

PERMIT PROCESS:

13. Did they inform the applicant about what was needed to submit a complete permit application? 180	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

14. Did this answer questions about the permitting process? 5	190	1	2	3	4
15. Was the applicant informed about how long it would take to get a permit decision?..... 200	1	2	3	4	5

COMMUNICATIONS (continued)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Does Not Apply
----------------------------	-------------------	----------	-------	----------------	----------------

Now I have a few questions about the permit itself, using the same ratings.

16. The permit forms were easy to use. 210	1	2	3	4	5
17. The application instructions were clear 220	1	2	3	4	5
18. The environmental standards were clear 230	1	2	3	4	5
19. The decision was timely 240	1	2	3	4	5
20. The decision was clear 250	1	2	3	4	5
21. The time required to issue the permit was reasonable 260	1	2	3	4	5
22. The permit conditions are reasonable 270	1	2	3	4	5
23. The permit environmental reporting requirements are reasonable 280	1	2	3	4	5
24. The permit environmental monitoring requirements are reasonable 290	1	2	3	4	5

Now we would like to find out about WEB SITE use.

25. Was the Department of Ecology's web site used to find information about applying for this permit? **[Check Box]**

Yes= 1

No=2

Enter code 2, then go to question 27.

Enter Code

410

25a. Was it easy to find permit information on the Ecology's web site?

Yes= 1

No=2

Enter Code

420

25b. Was the permit information helpful?

Yes= 1

No=2

Enter Code

430

26. How should the Department of Ecology improve access to online permit information?

MISCELLANEOUS:

27. How should the Department of Ecology improve the process of getting a permit?

28. Any other comments?

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Appendix C

Description of Ecology Permits

Department of Ecology Permit Descriptions For the Purpose of the 2004 Permit Customer Survey

Air Quality

Agriculture or Outdoor Burning

In most cases the disposal of material to the atmosphere by open burning requires an air quality permit. Included among those activities are agricultural field burning; all types of burning at commercial, business, government, and industrial establishments; and firefighter training fires.

Air Operating Permit

Major sources of air pollution are required to obtain an air operating permit. Major sources are defined as those that emit greater than 100 tons/year of an air pollutant, 10 tons/year of a hazardous air pollutant, and/or 25 tons/year of a combination of hazardous air pollutants. These permits will be issued by Ecology and local air authorities and will authorize the source to operate for the duration of the permit (5 years).

New Source Review Permit (Notice of Construction, Prevention of Significant Deterioration, or Temporary Source)

Ecology or the local air authority has review and approval authority for the construction of new sources or modifications to existing sources of air pollution. Sources proposing to construct a new source or modify an existing source must submit a Notice of Construction Application to Ecology or the local air authority. The application must include a description of the new or modified source, the types of equipment used that will generate air pollution, the types and amounts of air pollutants released into the air, and proposed methods for air pollution control or prevention. A Prevention of Significant Deterioration Permit is required for facilities with very large releases of air pollutants.

Dangerous Waste

New Dangerous Waste Permit

Dangerous Waste Permits, designed to protect human health and the environment, are required for treating, storing, and disposing of dangerous waste. In general, dangerous waste is a substance that could pose, or threatens to pose, a hazard to human health and the environment.

Modification or Renewal Permit

Changes requested to an existing dangerous waste permit or renewal of an existing permit.

<p>Dam Safety</p>
<p>Dam Safety Permit</p> <p>A Dam Safety Construction Permit is required before constructing, modifying, or repairing any dam or controlling works for storage of 10 or more acre-feet of water, liquid waste, or mine tailings. This requirement may apply to dams and storage lagoons for: flood control; domestic or irrigation water; domestic, industrial, or agricultural wastes (including animal waste); and mine tailings.</p>
<p>Multimedia (Air, Water, Dangerous Waste)</p>
<p>Industrial Section Permits</p> <p>Pulp and paper, oil refining and aluminum smelting facilities in the state receive their air, water and waste permits from one organizational unit within Ecology. This is termed one-stop permitting where the facility only has to go to one place (Ecology's Industrial Section in Lacey) for multiple permits (air, wastewater and dangerous waste).</p>
<p>Solid Waste</p>
<p>Biosolids Permit</p> <p>Biosolids are a primarily organic, semisolid product resulting from the wastewater treatment proces. When wastewater is treated in a sewage treatment facility, biosolids are one of the byproducts. Because biosolids contain essential plant nutrients and organic matter, they can be treated, processed and used as a soil amendment and nutrient source (under permit) to improve and maintain productive soils and stimulate plant growth. The treatment process must meet all applicable requirements and regulatory standards under state law before the biosolids can be applied to the land.</p>
<p>Water Rights</p>
<p>New Water Rights Permit</p> <p>Ecology regulates the withdrawal of water from surface and ground sources. The waters of Washington State collectively belong to the public and cannot be owned by any one individual or group. Instead, individuals or groups may be granted rights to use them. A water right is a legal authorization to use a predefined quantity of public water for a designated purpose. This purpose must qualify as a beneficial use. Beneficial use involves the application of a reasonable quantity of water to a non-wasteful use, such as irrigation, domestic water supply, or power generation, to name a few.</p>
<p>Transfer or Change Permit</p> <p>With much of our water already allocated in Washington State, new water rights are increasingly difficult to obtain. As a result, more and more people are choosing to make changes to existing water rights. In many areas of the state, water is already claimed or over appropriated and no new water rights are being granted. The Washington Department of Ecology may consider changes or transfers to an existing water right permit, certificate, or claim.</p>

Water Quality

State Wastewater Discharge Permit

Planned discharges of wastewater to the ground or the discharge of wastewater, other than domestic sewage, to a municipal treatment plant requires a State Waste Discharge Permit. Discharges from industrial facilities to municipal wastewater treatment plants require a State Waste Discharge Permit if they haven't been issued a Pretreatment discharge permit by the municipality.

Federal Individual Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Wastewater Discharge Permit

The direct discharge (point) of pollutants into the state's surface waters is regulated through NPDES permits. Ecology issues these permits under authority delegated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This permit is typically issued to a commercial or industrial facility, or municipality for discharge of wastewater to surface waters.

Water Quality General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (Storm water, Dairy, Aquatic Pesticides, Sand and Gravel, Finfish, Boat Yards, Fruit Packing, Crop Preparation)

An NPDES general permit is a single permit that covers a group of dischargers that have similar wastewater discharges, pollution control technology, and regulatory requirements. General permits are written to cover a category of dischargers instead of an individual facility.

401 Water Quality Certification

Applicants receiving a section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, a Coast Guard permit or license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), are required to obtain a section 401 water quality certification from the Department of Ecology (Ecology). Issuance of a certification means that the Ecology anticipates that the applicant's project will comply with state water quality standards and other aquatic resource protection requirements under Ecology's authority. The 401 Certification can cover both the construction and operation of the proposed project. Conditions of the 401 Certification become conditions of the Federal permit or license.

