

# Customer Satisfaction Analysis of Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Permitting Processes

## STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAM



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Michigan State University

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## I. Introduction

In January, 2009, a survey was sent out to determine the type and level of customer satisfaction of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). This survey covered the major permitting areas of the MDEQ including wetlands, air quality, aquatic nuisance, baseline environmental assessment, floodplain, critical dunes, Great Lakes bottomland, Groundwater discharge, Inland lakes and Streams, Storm water discharge, Surface Water, Wastewater facility and water supply construction. This survey was developed by the State and Local Government Program at Michigan State University based on a review of the literature related to government customer satisfaction analysis. It was based on scientifically sound principles of survey design.

## II. Survey Methodology

There were a total of ten questions in the survey. The questions asked the respondent about the type of organization the respondent represented, (or if the respondent was a homeowner), as well as which field office if any the respondent interacted with. There were also a series of questions regarding whether the respondent was satisfied within the overall permitting process as well as the respondent's satisfaction with the MDEQ staff. Survey questions included the respondent's experience with and clarity of the written materials that the MDEQ had available and the ease of

use of the website. Finally, set of questions regarding the respondent's perception of the overall fairness of the environmental regulations.

Survey respondents were selected out of a population of MDEQ permit applications in 16 permit programs for a 12-month period running from October 1, 2007 to September 30, 2008. Respondents were selected from those who requested and had a final disposition on their permit application (such as approved, denied, withdrawn or voided) during this time period. For this time period for these 16 programs, there were 3,883 permit applications. Out of this total permit population, a total survey sample of 1,850 respondents was identified via a random computer generation process by Michigan State University. Out of the 1,850, a total of 716 responses were obtained for a total response rate of 39%. This is very good response rate given this was mail type survey.

The customer satisfaction measures, based on previous questionnaires from state departments of environmental quality, are based on a series of perceptual assessments of satisfaction. Respondents were asked to react to statements regarding their customer service experience using the categories of, "strongly agree", "agree", "neither agree nor disagree", "disagree", "strongly disagree" and "don't know." These categories are standard satisfaction type questions used in the public and private sector.

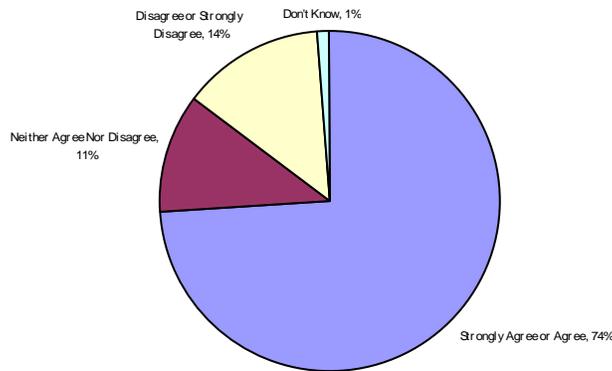
### **III. Survey Results**

The surveys were carried out per each of the 16 permit program areas selected for participation in the survey. The overall, compiled results for the survey will be reviewed first, followed by review of each of the individual permit areas participating in the survey. This analysis will be followed by an overall review of the findings regarding the level and quality of customer satisfaction.

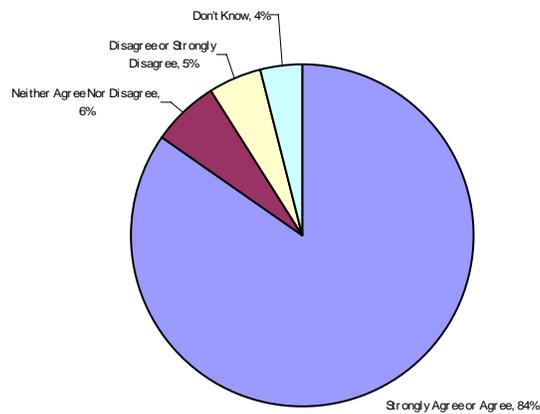
There were a total of 1850 surveys mailed, with 716 responses for a 39% overall response rate. The compiled results for all permits surveyed shows that 74% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their overall permit experience; 11% of respondents

neither agreed nor disagreed, and 14% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 84% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that MDEQ staff were professional and courteous; another 6% neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement, and 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed. 71% of respondents felt that their permit applications were processed in a timely manner. 13% of respondents nei-

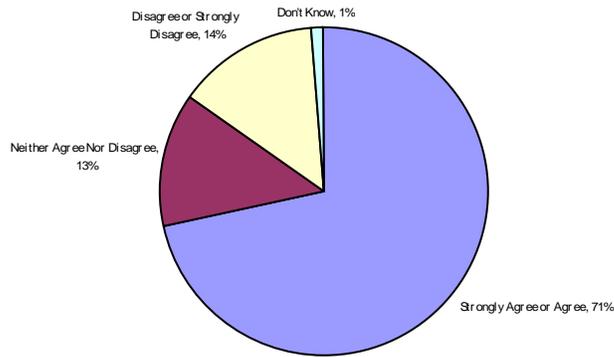
**MDEQ Customer Service Survey Results  
Compiled Results for All Permits Surveyed  
January, 2009**  
Question 2 - "Overall, I was satisfied with my experience seeking a permit or approval from the MDEQ."



**MDEQ Customer Service Survey Results  
Compiled Results for All Permits Surveyed  
January, 2009**  
Question 3 - "MDEQ staff members were professional/courteous in their interactions with me."



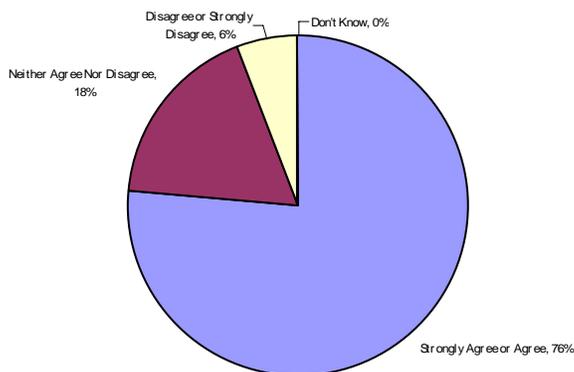
**MDEQ Customer Service Survey Results  
Compiled Results for All Permits Surveyed  
January, 2009  
Question 5 - "MDEQ staff members processed my application in a timely manner."**



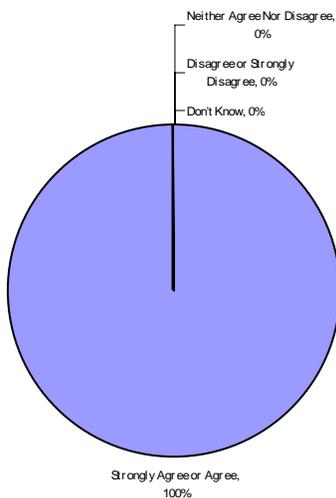
ther agreed nor disagreed, and 14% disagreed or strongly disagreed that their applications were processed in a timely manner.

The first individual permit area to be reviewed is the Air Quality Renewable Operating permits. In this first permit area, there were 50 randomly selected surveys sent out. Of these, 17 surveys

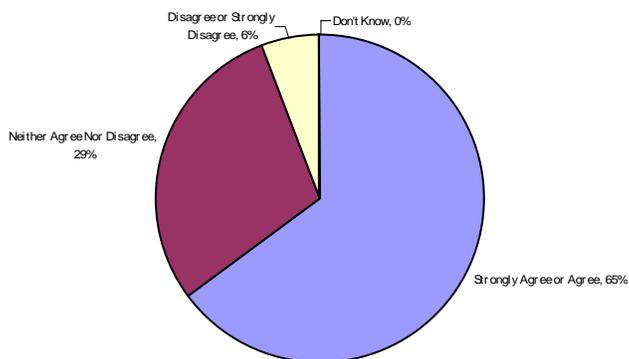
**MDEQ Air Quality Renewable Operating Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009  
Question 2 - "Overall, I was satisfied with my experience seeking a permit from the MDEQ."**



MDEQ Air Quality Renewable Operating Permits  
 Customer Service Survey Results  
 January, 2009  
 Question 3 - "MDEQ staff members were professional/ courteous in their interactions with me."



MDEQ Air Quality Renewable Operating Permits  
 Customer Service Survey Results  
 January, 2009  
 Question 5 - "MDEQ staff members processed my application in a timely manner."

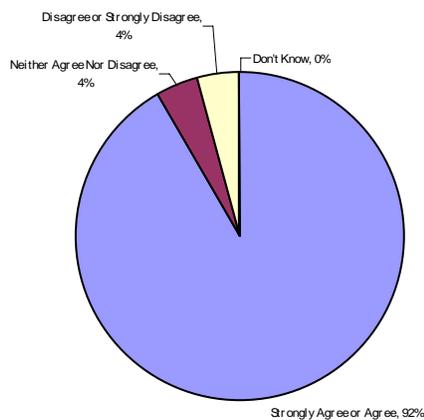


were returned. This translates into a 34 percent response rate. 76% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they were happy with the service they received in the permit process. Another 18% neither agreed nor disagreed with their overall satisfaction with their experience. Thus, the vast majority of respondents in this case were satisfied with their experience. With regards to

their specific experience with DEQ staff, the respondents indicated at the 100% level that they were very satisfied with the DEQ staff response and professional in their interactions with the customers. One area where there was less satisfaction was the time period it took to process a permit application. In this question, 65% of respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that they were served in a timely fashion while 29% were neutral on this question.

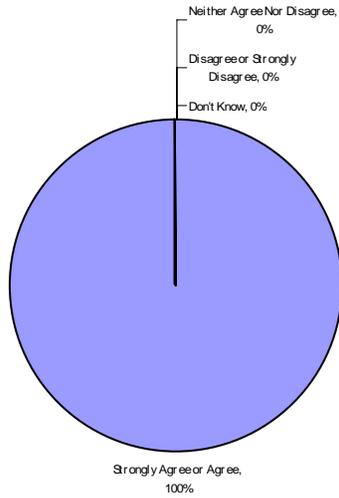
A second air quality area was that of the Air Quality Permit to Install. In this case, 150 randomly selected surveys were sent out. The response rate was 24 responses or a 16% response rate. This is a low figure and makes it more difficult to generalize an evaluation of the customer service from this sample to the total population. The results are therefore provided here for informational purposes only and with the appropriate cautions regarding interpretation. Those who responded were in support of the statement that they were satisfied with their overall experience with MDEQ, with 92% stating that they strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. Further, 100% felt that MDEQ staff were courteous and professional, and 88% felt that their permit was processed in a

MDEQ Air Quality Permit to Install  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009  
Question 2 - "Overall, I was satisfied with my experience seeking a permit from the MDEQ."



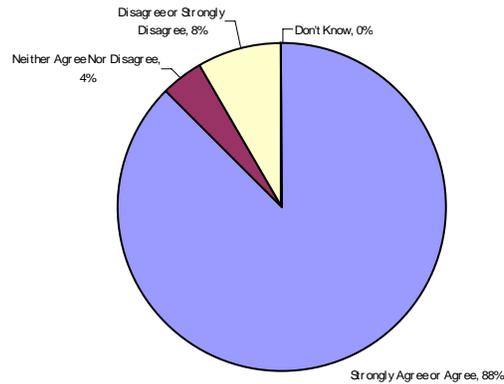
**MDEQ Air Quality Permit to Install  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**

**Question 3 - "MDEQ staff members were professional/courteous in their interactions with me."**



**MDEQ Air Quality Permit to Install  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**

**Question 5 - "MDEQ staff members processed my application in a timely manner."**

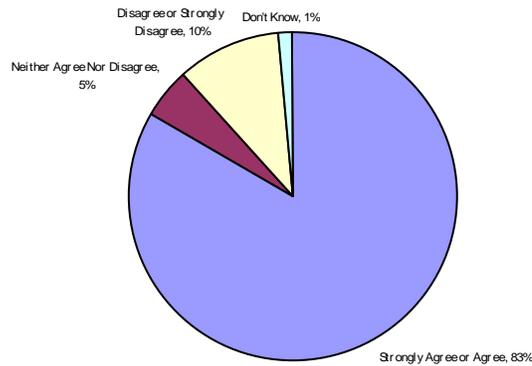


timely fashion. Again, these results are based on a very small sample so should be interpreted with caution.

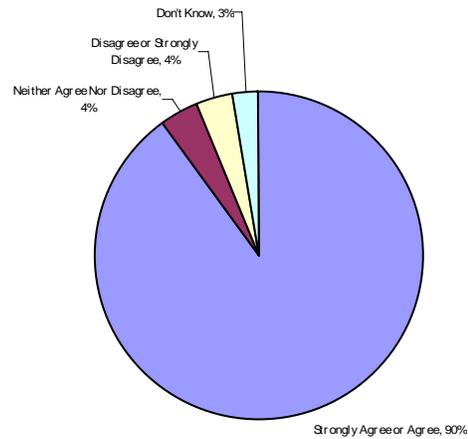
Switching gears, we can examine the Aquatic Nuisance Permit area. There were 135 randomly selected surveys sent out. In this case, 80 responses were received for a response rate of

59% which is more than adequate. In this permit area, 84% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that overall, they were satisfied with the permitting process in this arena of the MDEQ. In terms of interactions with staff, 90% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that

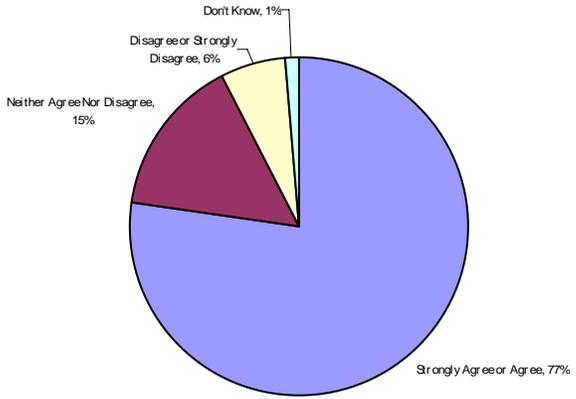
**MDEQ Aquatic Nuisance Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 2 - "Overall, I was satisfied with my experience seeking a permit from the MDEQ."



**MDEQ Aquatic Nuisance Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 3 - "MDEQ staff members were professional/courteous in their interactions with me."



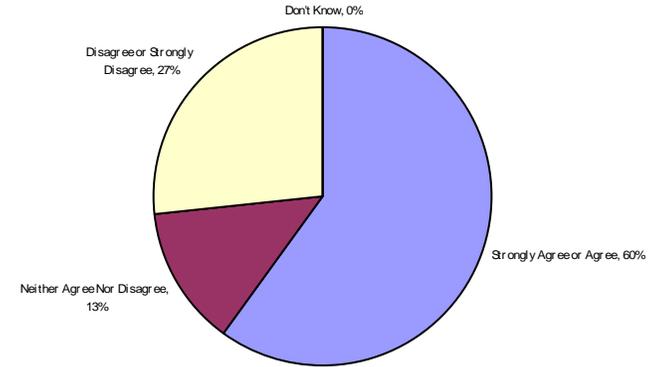
**MDEQ Aquatic Nuisance Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
**Question 5 - "MDEQ staff members processed my application in a timely manner."**



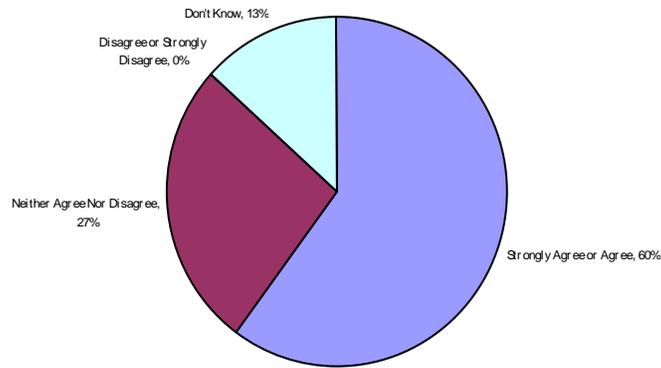
they were satisfied with their interaction with the MDEQ staff. This permit program therefore appears to be viewed very positively by the regulated community in terms of its customer service.

The Baseline Environmental Assessment area was also covered by the survey. Surveys were sent to 99 respondents; 15 responses were received, resulting in a 15% response rate. As

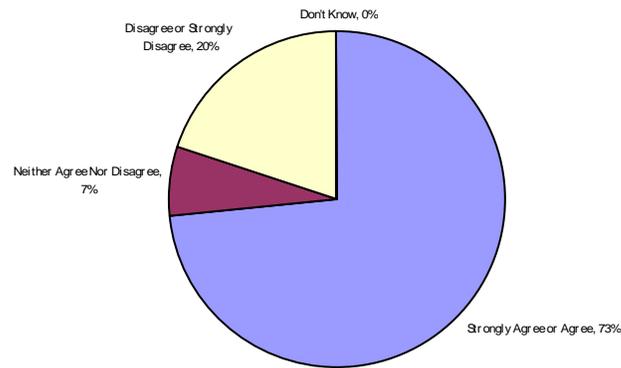
**MDEQ Baseline Environmental Assessments  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
**Question 2 - "Overall, I was satisfied with my experience seeking a permit or approval from the MDEQ."**



**MDEQ Baseline Environmental Assessments  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
**Question 3 - "MDEQ staff members were professional/courteous in their interactions with me."**



**MDEQ Baseline Environmental Assessments  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
**Question 5 - "MDEQ staff members processed my application in a timely manner."**

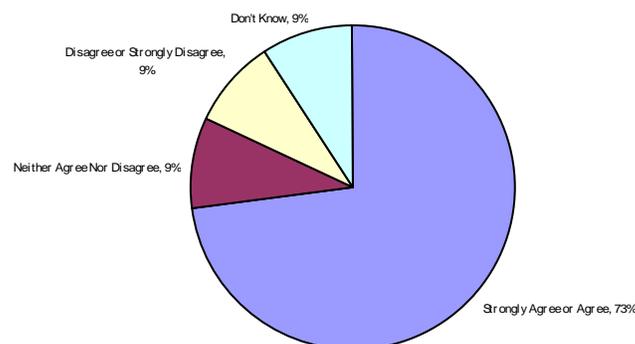


with the Air Quality Permits to Install, the response rate was too low to constitute a statistically valid sample. Results from a small response such as this are greatly affected by only one or two responses, and also affected by "outliers," or non-typical responses. It is therefore not possible to generalize the customer service of this permit program to the entire population due to the low re-

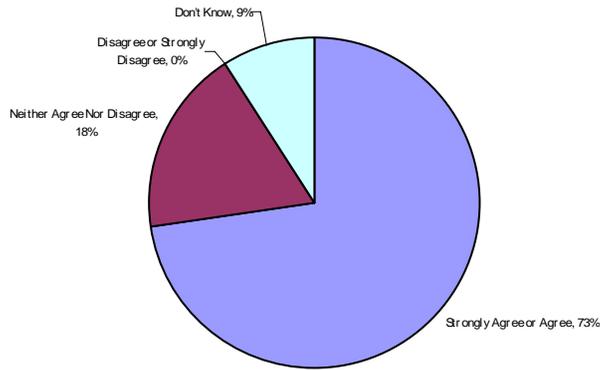
response rate. The survey data are therefore presented for informational purposes only and may not be representative of the program's customer service.

Those who supported the statement that they were satisfied with the overall condition of the MDEQ permitting process was lower than other areas at only 60%. 27% indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement regarding overall satisfaction. In terms of staff interactions, 60% indicated overall satisfaction and another 27% indicated that they were neutral regarding that statement. Finally, in terms of timeliness, 20% of respondents indicated that they strongly disagreed or disagree that permits were processed in a timely fashion. It is interesting to note there is a relatively strong correlation (45%) between the respondents' opinion of the fairness of the regulations and the respondents' evaluation of their overall permit experience. This means that there may be a relationship between a person's opinion of the regulations and how that person perceives his or her permit experience. It may be that respondents are expressing dissatisfaction with the regulations that the MDEQ administers and not MDEQ customer service. In the event a statistically valid response for this permit can be obtained in a future survey, this correlation should be reviewed again to determine if the survey results continue to show this relationship.

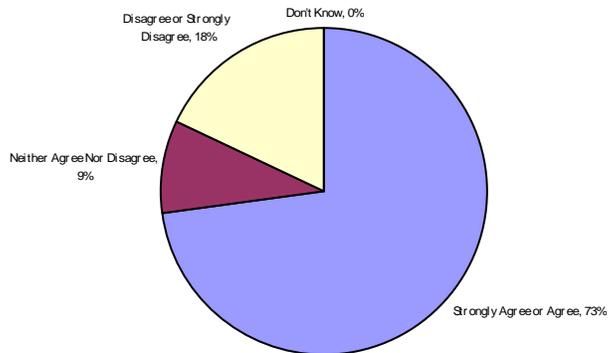
**MDEQ Brownfield Redevelopment Act 381 Workplan Reviews  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 2 - "Overall, I was satisfied with my experience seeking a permit/approval from the MDEQ."



**MDEQ Brownfield Redevelopment Act 381 Workplan Reviews  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
**Question 3 - "MDEQ staff members were professional/courteous in their interactions with me."**



**MDEQ Brownfield Redevelopment Act 381 Workplan Reviews  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
**Question 5 - "MDEQ staff members processed my application in a timely manner."**

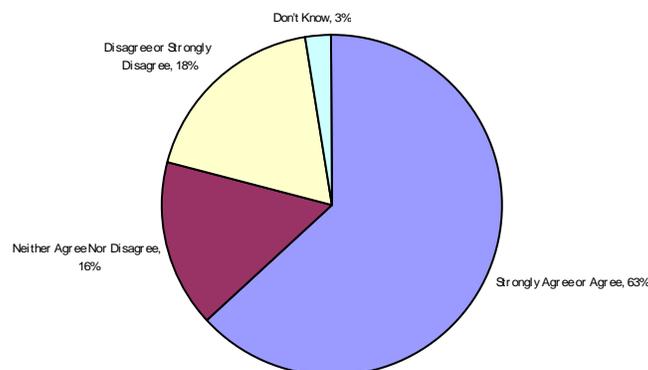


The next permit area surveyed was the Brownfield Redevelopment Workplan Reviews. There were 22 surveys mailed, with 11 responses received, for a 50% response rate. Because the survey sample is small, with a small number of responses, it is not possible to generalize customer service

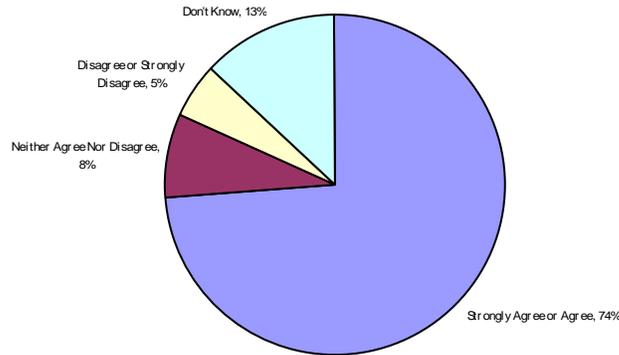
results to the entire population. Therefore, the following data is provided for information only. A significant majority (73%) of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with their experience seeking a workplan review, with another 9% who neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. The same percentage (73%) strongly agreed or agreed that MDEQ staff members were professional and courteous. Another 18% neither agreed nor disagreed. No respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that staff were professional and courteous. Regarding timeliness, 73% strongly agreed or agreed that action on their request was timely. 9% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The sixth area to be examined is the Critical Dunes Permit Area. 87 randomly selected surveys were sent out with 38 responses for a 44% response rate which is adequate for analysis. 63% of those who responded stated that they strongly agreed or agree that the overall MDEQ permitting process was good, and 16% neither agreed nor disagreed. 18% of respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with the overall process. However, 74% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the MDEQ staff were courteous and professional in their interaction with their clientele and an-

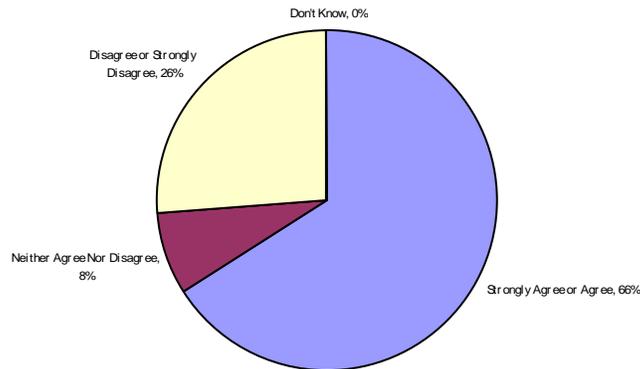
**MDEQ Critical Dunes Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 2 - "Overall, I was satisfied with my experience seeking a permit  
from the MDEQ."



**MDEQ Critical Dune Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 3 - "MDEQ staff members were professional and courteous in their interactions with me."



**MDEQ Critical Dunes Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 5 - "MDEQ staff members processed my application in a timely manner."

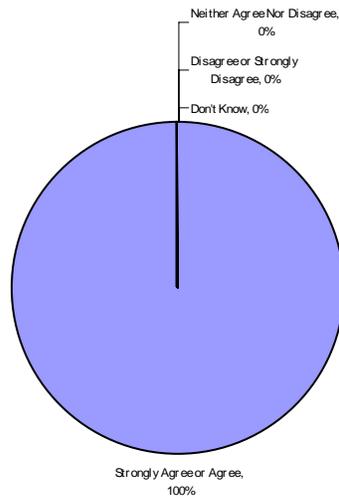


other 8% neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement. Despite their overall satisfaction with staff interaction, 26%, or 1 in 4, of respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with the timeliness of the permitting process. This points again to potential for improvement in the timely processing of Critical Dune permits. There was again a relationship between a person's opinion (positive or

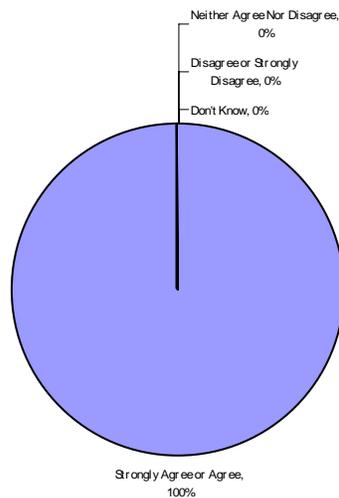
negative) of the regulations and how that person perceived his or her permit experience. The program may want to explore this relationship further as it reviews opportunities for improvement in timeliness and the respondents' overall satisfaction with the process.

The MDEQ Dam Construction/Reconstruction permits were also included in the survey. This

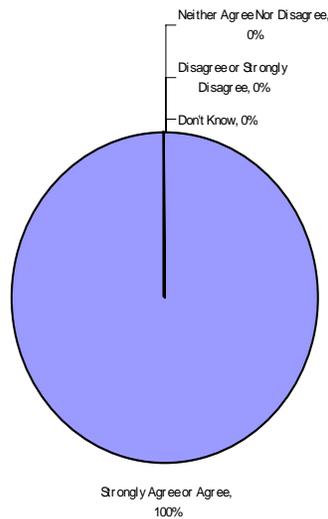
**MDEQ Dam Construction/Reconstruction Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 2 - "Overall, I was satisfied with my experience seeking a permit from the MDEQ."



**MDEQ Dam Construction/Reconstruction Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 3 - "MDEQ staff members were professional/courteous in their interactions with me."



MDEQ Dam Construction/Reconstruction  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009  
Question 5 - "MDEQ staff members processed my application in a timely manner."

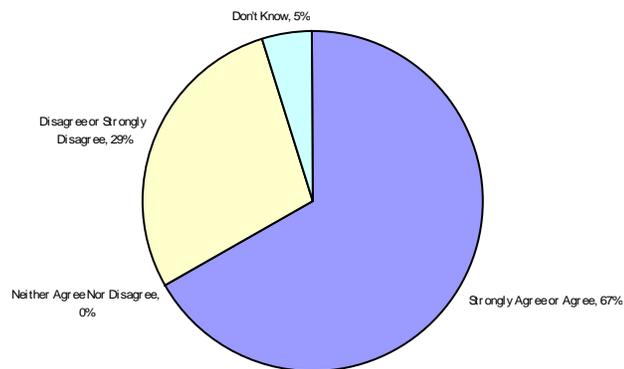


program area receives relatively few requests for permits during a year, so it was not possible to obtain a statistically valid sample using the survey population of one year's permit applicants. Surveys were sent to 18 respondents. Only 2 responses were received, yielding an 11% response rate. It is therefore not possible to generalize the customer service efforts of this permit program from the data. The survey data are presented for informational purposes only. The two respondents to this survey both strongly agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with their experience seeking a permit, that staff were professional and courteous, and that their applications were processed in a timely manner.

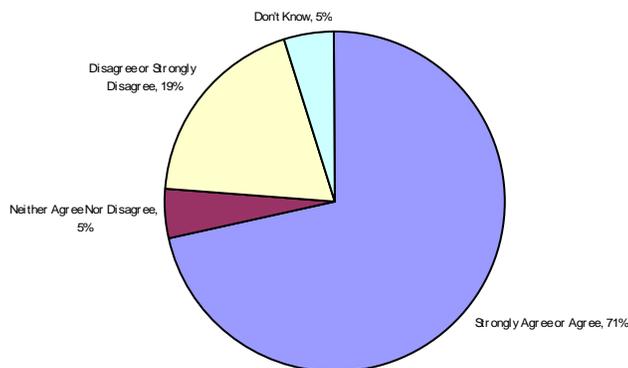
The MDEQ Floodplain permit area was also covered in the analysis. 60 randomly selected surveys were sent out with 21 responses for a survey response rate of 35%, again adequate for analysis. In this case, two thirds of respondents, 67%, were satisfied with the overall permitting process. A slightly higher percentage, 71% felt that the MDEQ staff were professional and courteous. 71% of respondents stated that staff processed their applications in a timely manner. Although the majority of respondents expressed satisfaction with the MDEQ in answers to all 3 questions, a

significant minority of respondents indicated that improvements are needed. 29% of respondents stated that they disagreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they were satisfied with their overall experience seeking a permit. 19% expressed dissatisfaction with their interaction with staff. 24% expressed dissatisfaction with the timeliness of their application processing. The program may

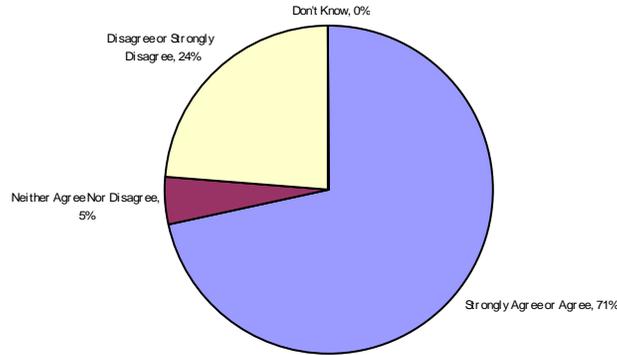
**MDEQ Floodplain Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 2 - "Overall, I was satisfied with my experience seeking a permit from the MDEQ."



**MDEQ Floodplain Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 3 - "MDEQ staff members were professional/courteous in their interactions with me."



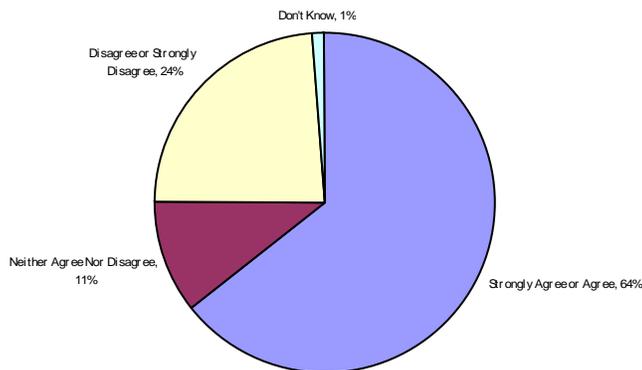
**MDEQ Floodplain Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 5 - "MDEQ staff members processed my application in a timely manner."



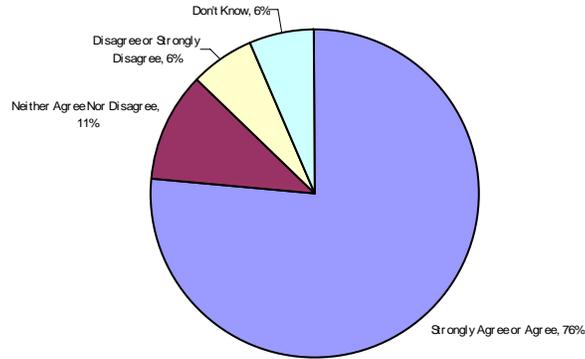
want to review the data in depth or collect additional data due to the potential for improvement identified by the survey.

For the Great Lakes Bottomland Permit area, there were 188 randomly selected surveys sent out with a response of 93 surveys returned for a response rate of 50% which is adequate for analy-

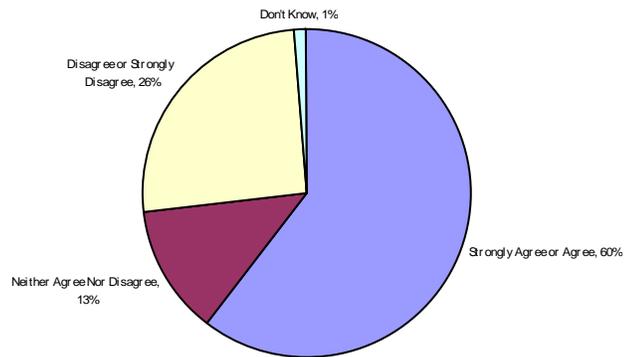
**MDEQ Great Lakes Bottomlands Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 2 - "Overall, I was satisfied with my experience seeking a permit from the MDEQ."



**MDEQ Great Lakes Bottomlands Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
**Question 3 - "MDEQ staff members were professional/courteous in their interactions with me."**



**MDEQ Great Lakes Bottomlands Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
**Question 5 - "MDEQ staff members processed my application in a timely manner."**

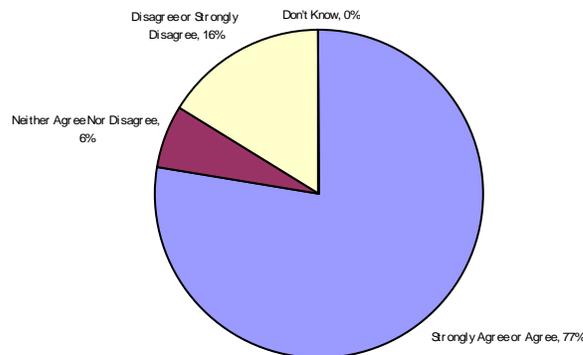


sis. The results for these permits are similar to the results for the Floodplain permits, which is not surprising given that both permits can affect individual homeowners' activities on their property. Out of this sample, 64% were satisfied with their overall experience with the MDEQ. Nearly 80% of respondents felt that the MDEQ staff members were professional and courteous with only a small per-

centage (6%) of respondents who were dissatisfied. 60% of respondents were satisfied with the timeliness of the staff response. A significant minority of survey respondents indicated that improvements are needed in the overall permit experience (24%) and in the timeliness of application processing (26%). The program may want to review the data in depth or collect additional data due to the potential for improvement in these areas.

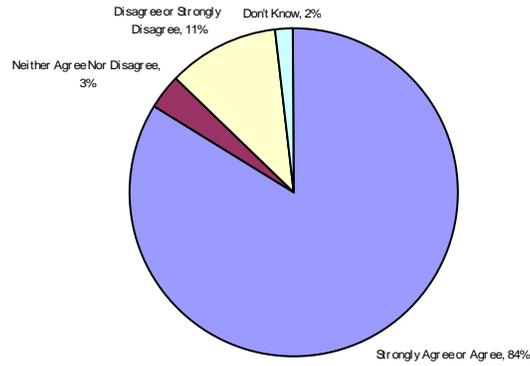
For the Wetlands permits, there were 150 randomly-selected surveys mailed to respondents; 62 surveys were returned, resulting in a 41% response rate. This is adequate for analysis. The responses suggest that a majority of respondents (77%) found their overall experience with the MDEQ to be “satisfactory-agree or strongly agree”. 84% of respondents stated that they strongly agree or agree that staff members were professional and courteous during their interactions. Of course, timeliness is a critical issue in any permitting process. Again, survey respondents felt that the MDEQ did respond in a timely fashion. Just over 70 percent of respondents indicated that the MDEQ staff had processed their application in a timely fashion. There was a group, involving about 15% of respon-

MDEQ Wetland Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009  
Question 2 - "Overall, I was satisfied with my experience seeking a permit from the MDEQ."



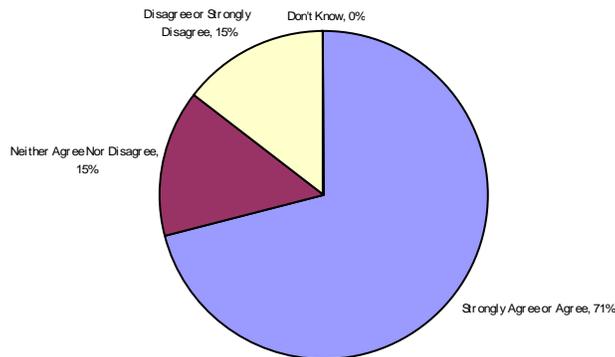
**MDEQ Wetlands Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**

**Question 3 - "MDEQ staff members were professional/courteous in their interactions with me."**



**MDEQ Wetlands Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**

**Question 5 - "MDEQ staff members processed my application in a timely manner."**

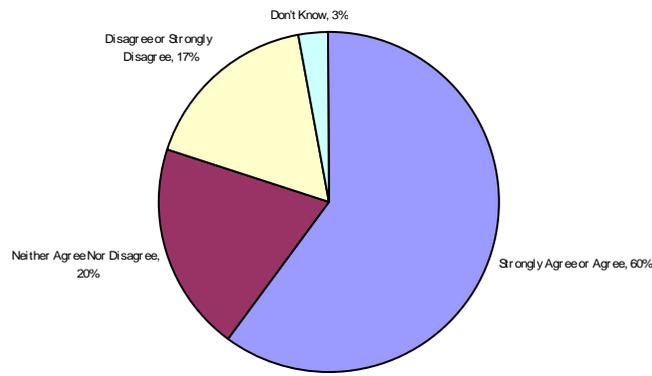


dents who indicated that they did not believe that the application processing was timely.

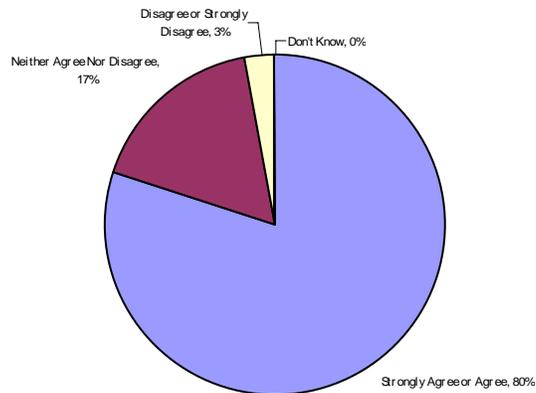
A total of 90 surveys were sent in the Groundwater discharge permit area. There were 35 responses received for a response rate of 39% which is adequate for analysis. Approximately 60% of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed they were satisfied with their overall ex-

perience with the MDEQ permitting process. Another 20% were neutral with this question and about 17% were negative in their perceptions. In terms of the staff themselves, the respondents were very favorable with 80% agreeing that the staff were professional and courteous. Two thirds of respondents were satisfied with the timeliness of the process and another one third was neutral. An impor-

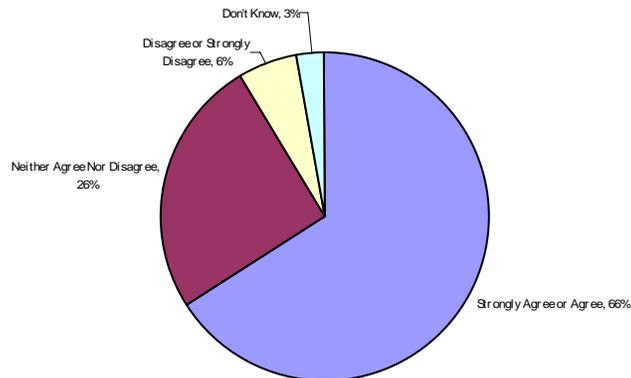
**MDEQ Groundwater Discharge Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 2 - "Overall, I was satisfied with my experience seeking a permit from the MDEQ."



**MDEQ Groundwater Discharge Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 3 - "MDEQ staff members were professional and courteous in their interactions with me."



**MDEQ Groundwater Discharge Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 5 - "MDEQ staff members processed my application in a timely manner."

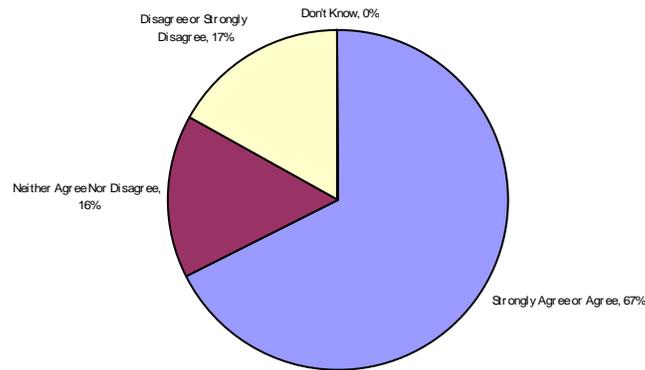


tant question in this permitting area is the reasons for the higher number of dissatisfied respondents with the overall process relative to their satisfaction with staff and timeliness. The department may want to pursue a randomly selected group of permittees in the future to determine their satisfaction with the process and determine what can be improved or altered. It is important to note that there was a very strong correlation, much stronger than in other permit areas (nearly 85%), of those who felt that laws and rules were fair/unfair and the respondents' overall satisfaction with the process. This indicates that there is a relationship between the respondents' feelings (positive or negative) about the regulations that require them to obtain a permit and their evaluation of the customer service they received. This may or may not mean that respondents' dissatisfaction with the overall process is related to respondents' unhappiness with the regulations, but it may be worth exploring further, especially since respondents rated staff interaction and timeliness as satisfactory.

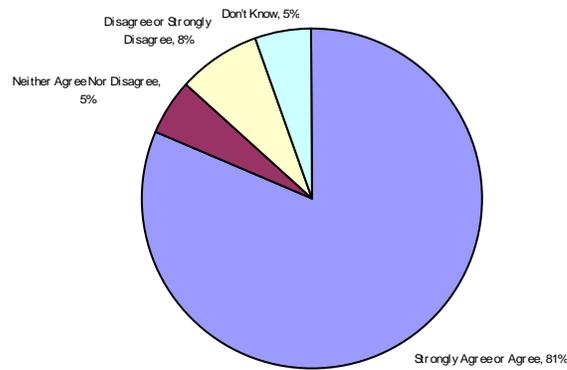
The inland lakes permitting area had a total of 319 surveys distributed with a total response of 137 for a response rate of 43%, which is again adequate for analysis. Two thirds of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the overall permitting process. 17% indicated that they were not

satisfied. More strongly, and patterned after other permit areas, over 80% of respondents felt that the staff were professional and courteous; only 8% disagreed that the staff were professional and courteous. However, there were some concerns with timeliness as about 19% of respondents were

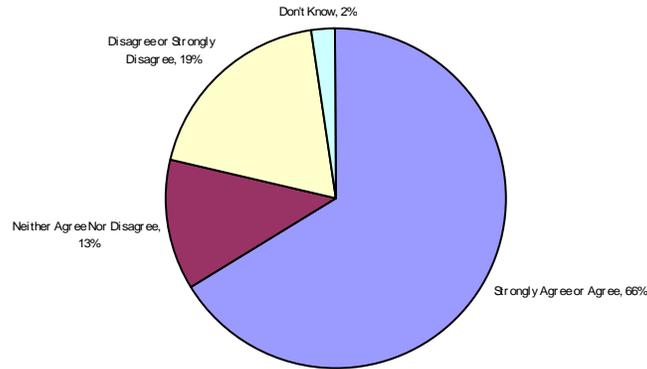
**MDEQ Inland Lakes and Streams Permits  
Customer Service Survey  
January, 2009**  
Question 2 - "Overall, I was satisfied with my experience seeking a permit from the MDEQ."



**MDEQ Inland Lakes and Streams Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 3 - "MDEQ staff members were professional/ courteous in their interactions with me."

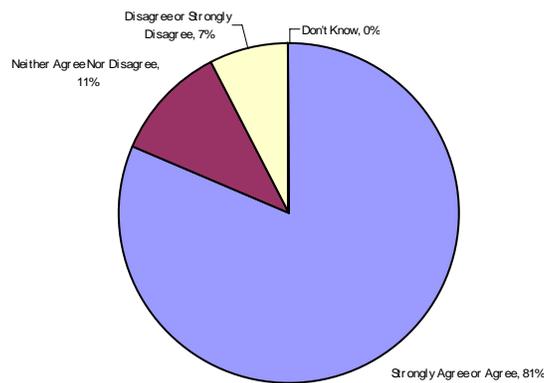


**MDEQ Inland Lakes and Streams Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 5 - "MDEQ staff members processed my application in a timely manner."

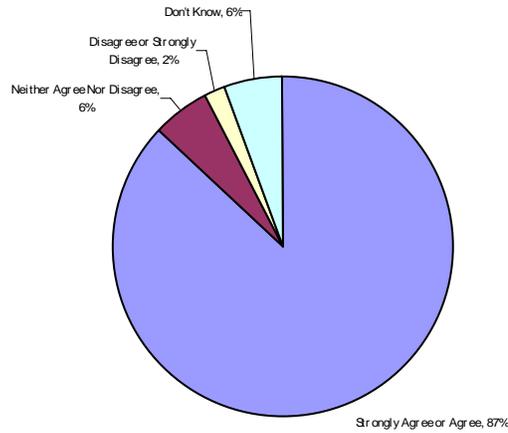


dissatisfied with the amount of time required to process a permit application. In this case, there was a fairly strong correlation of .54 between perceptions of the fairness of the rules and their overall satisfaction with the permitting process, again indicating that, for this permit, there is a relationship between respondents' view of the regulations and their overall satisfaction with their permit experience.

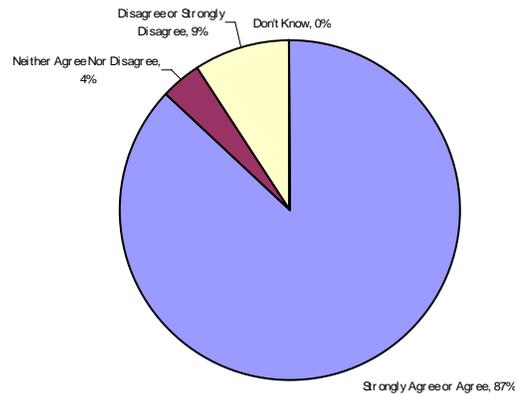
**MDEQ Stormwater Discharge Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 2 - "Overall, I was satisfied with my experience seeking a permit from the MDEQ."



**MDEQ Stormwater Discharge Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 3 - "MDEQ staff members were professional/courteous in their interactions with me."



**MDEQ Stormwater Discharge Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 5 - "MDEQ staff members processed my application in a timely manner."

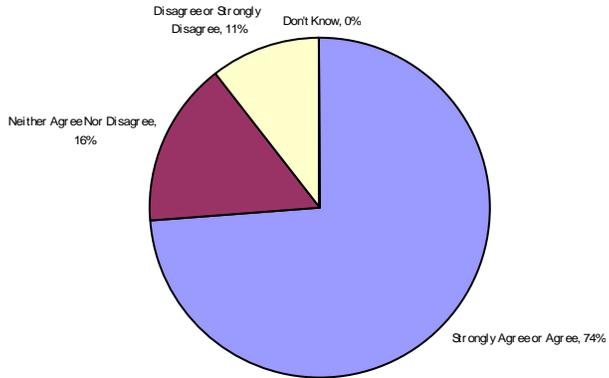


A total of 170 surveys were sent out for the Stormwater Discharge permit area with a response rate of 32% or 54 responses. In this area, over 80% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall process. An even higher percentage of respondents, nearly 87% felt that the staff were professional and courteous during the process. 87% of respondents also agreed or

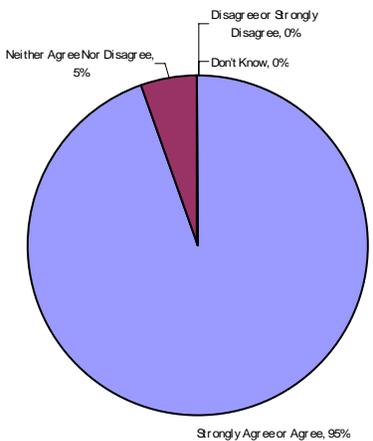
strongly agreed that the MDEQ processed their applications in a timely manner. There was also a fairly strong correlation (.57) between perception of the overall process and fairness of the rules and laws.

A total of 60 surveys were sent out in the Surface Water Discharge permit area with a total

MDEQ Surface Water Discharge (individual NPDES) Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009  
Question 2 - "Overall, I was satisfied with my experience seeking a permit from the MDEQ."

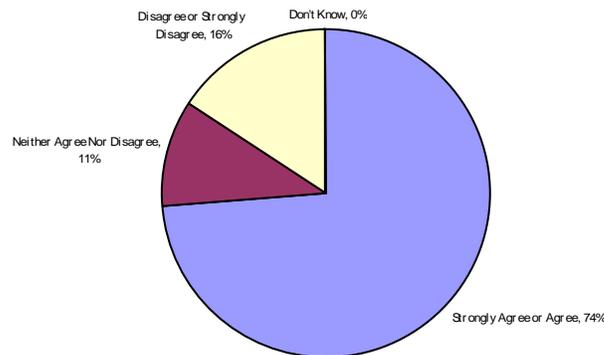


MDEQ Surface Water Discharge (individual NPDES) Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009  
Question 3 - "MDEQ staff members were professional/courteous in their interactions with me."



**MDEQ Surface Water Discharge (individual NPDES) Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**

**Question 5 - "MDEQ staff members processed my application in a timely manner."**

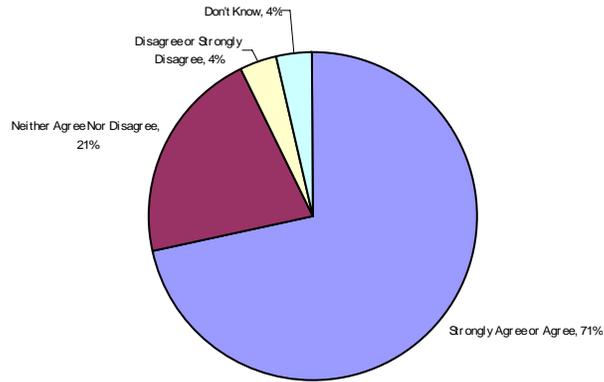


number of responses of 19 and a 32% response rate. In terms of overall satisfaction of the process, 74% of respondents had a positive perception of the overall permitting process with 16% who neither agreed nor disagreed, and 11% dissatisfied. Following the trend, 100% of respondents agreed that the staff were professional and courteous. 74% of respondents were satisfied that their applications were processed in a timely manner, with 11% who neither agreed nor disagreed, and 16% who were dissatisfied with the timeliness of their application processing.

The final two permit areas were reviewed were Wastewater Facility Construction and Water Supply Construction permits. For the Wastewater permit, 77 surveys were sent out with 28 respondents and a 36% response rate. Over 70% of respondents were satisfied with the overall permitting process and another 21% were neutral leading to general favorable perceptions. Nearly all respondents indicated that the staff were professional and courteous. Finally, there was a drop off in the perception of the timeliness of the permitting process. Only 57% of respondents felt that they were satisfied with the timeliness of the permit while another 32% were neutral on this point. Timeliness is an area of potential for improvement for this program.

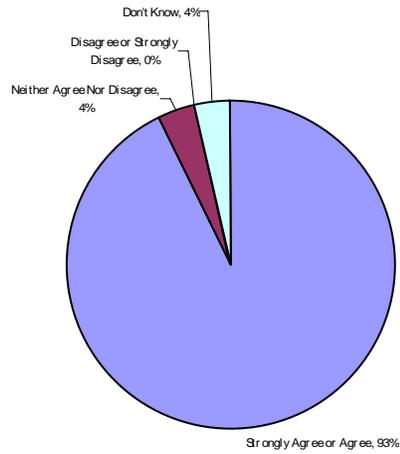
**MDEQ Wastewater Facility Construction Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**

**Question 2 - "Overall, I was satisfied with my experience seeking a permit from the MDEQ."**

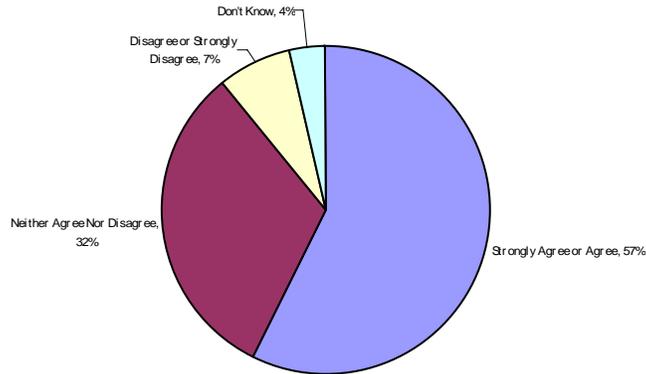


**MDEQ Wastewater Facility Construction Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**

**Question 3 - "MDEQ staff members were professional/ courteous in their interactions with me."**



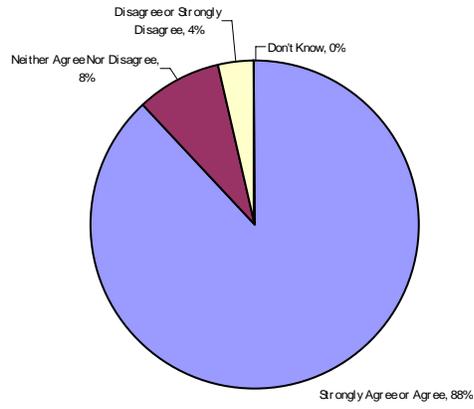
**MDEQ Wastewater Facility Construction Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 5 - "MDEQ staff processed my application in a timely manner."



For the Water Supply Construction permits, there were 175 surveys sent out with a total number of responses of 84 which is a response rate of 48% which is very good for a mail survey. A vast majority of respondents (88%) felt that the overall quality of the process was satisfactory. Even stronger, over 94% felt that the MDEQ staff were professional and courteous. There was only a slight drop off with 82% of respondents indicating that they were satisfied with the timeliness of the permitting process and only 5% stating that they were dissatisfied. This permitting program demonstrated strong positive customer service responses in the survey.

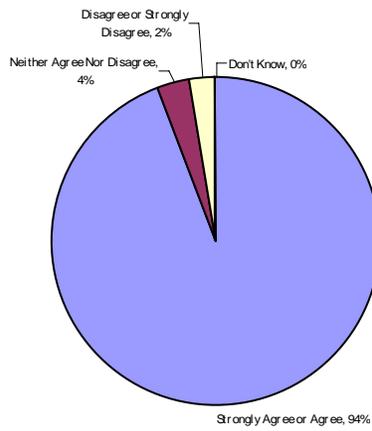
**MDEQ Water Supply Construction Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**

**Question 2 - "Overall, I was satisfied with my experience seeking a permit from the MDEQ."**

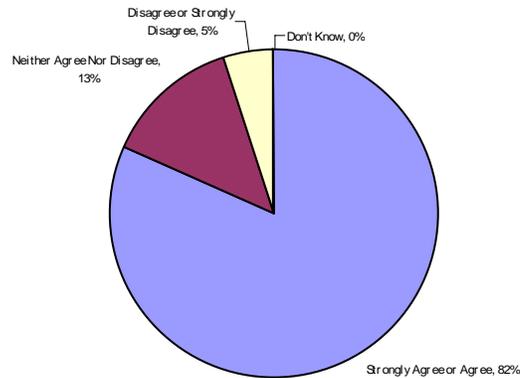


**MDEQ Water Supply Construction Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**

**Question 3 - "MDEQ staff members were professional/courteous in their interactions with me."**



**MDEQ Water Supply Construction Permits  
Customer Service Survey Results  
January, 2009**  
Question 5 - "MDEQ staff members processed my application in a timely manner."



#### IV. Conclusion

Overall, the MDEQ customer satisfaction survey identified several important general results. First, the statistical analysis indicates that there is a general high level of satisfaction with the quality of the permitting process. This finding stands across all the permitting areas. There are some permitting areas where this result is stronger than others, such as Aquatic Nuisance permits, Stormwater Discharge permits and Water Supply Construction permits.

One area of competence and strength was the overall satisfaction with the MDEQ staff. Across all permit areas, there was strong satisfaction with the quality, professional courteousness of the staff. The few programs that saw disagree/strongly disagree responses of 15% or more relative to staff interaction may want to conduct a more in-depth review to take advantage of the potential for improvement. While most respondents were satisfied overall with the MDEQ timely handling of their permit application, timeliness appeared as the item that has the most potential to improve customer service in Critical Dunes, Floodplain and Great Lakes Bottomlands permits. These programs may

want to engage in further analysis to determine if changes can be made to improve customer satisfaction.

One final important conclusion to make. In many cases, there was a fairly strong correlation between both the respondents' evaluation of their interaction with staff and the overall permitting process and the perceived fairness of the environmental regulatory laws. This is not a surprising finding but it does suggest that there is perhaps the need for more education to ensure that customers understand the distinction between the regulations (enacted by Congress and the State Legislature) and the administration of those regulations (for which the MDEQ is responsible). This may improve customer relations among that group who had negative perceptions of the MDEQ. Overall, these are strong favorable results in terms of customer satisfaction with the MDEQ based on a random sample of permit customers from the 2008 fiscal year.

Of course, as in any organization, the MDEQ should use these results to spur innovation and the continued enhancement of customer satisfaction with the processes. It is recommended that the MDEQ continue to monitor at least on an annual basis customer satisfaction as part of a regular set of performance measures to ensure the cost efficient and customer service effective delivery of service.