

# PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY

JULY 2009

# Californians & the environment



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## CONTENTS

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About the Survey	1
Press Release	3
Climate Change, Air Pollution, Energy Policy	7
Politics, Preferences, Planning	19
Regional Map	24
Methodology	25
Questionnaire and Results	27

in collaboration with  
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation



**PPIC**

PUBLIC POLICY  
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

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The institute's research focuses on the underlying forces shaping California's future, cutting across a wide range of public policy concerns, including economic development, education, environment and resources, governance, population, public finance, and social and health policy.

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# ABOUT THE SURVEY

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The PPIC Statewide Survey series provides policymakers, the media, and the general public with objective, advocacy-free information on the perceptions, opinions, and public policy preferences of California residents. Inaugurated in April 1998, this is the 100th PPIC Statewide Survey in a series that has generated a database that includes the responses of more than 214,000 Californians.

This survey is the ninth PPIC Statewide Survey on the environment since 2000. The current survey is part of an annual series conducted with funding from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and is intended to inform state, local, and federal policymakers, encourage discussion about environmental topics, and raise public awareness about environmental issues.

The current survey focuses on climate change, air pollution, and energy policy, because these are current topics of public policy discussion in local, state, and federal government. California public opinion is relevant for several reasons: The state's Climate Change Scoping Plan for implementing the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 is now being put into effect and will have implications for local governments, businesses, and Californians. Components of national legislation dealing with global warming and auto and diesel emissions are derived from earlier California ideas and policies. Tracking public opinion is also important in light of the state's budget situation and the economic downturn. In addition, the survey tracks opinions about the role of the federal government on global warming in the wake of the change in national leadership since our July 2008 survey.

This survey presents the responses of 2,501 adult residents interviewed in multiple languages and reached by landline and cell phone throughout the state, and includes their opinions on the following topics:

- Climate change, air pollution, and energy policy, including perceptions of global warming and its effects, preferences for regulating greenhouse gas emissions (including cap and trade, carbon taxes, greenhouse gas reduction goals, and requirements for auto companies, utilities, and industry), perceptions of regional air quality and the health threat of air pollution, policy preferences for reducing air pollution, and U.S. energy policy preferences.
- Politics, preferences, and planning, including general job approval ratings of the governor and president and ratings of their handling of environmental issues; attitudes about the adequacy of government action on global warming at the local, state, and federal levels; individual effects from gas price increases and commuting trends; and preferences for future planning for transportation and water needs.
- Time trends, national comparisons, and variations in environmental perceptions, attitudes, and preferences across the five major regions of the state (Central Valley, San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles County, Inland Empire, and Orange/San Diego Counties), among Asians, blacks, Latinos, and non-Hispanic whites, and across socioeconomic and political groups.

This report may be downloaded free of charge from our website ([www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)). For questions about the survey, please contact [surveys@ppic.org](mailto:surveys@ppic.org). View our searchable PPIC Statewide Survey database online at <http://www.ppic.org/main/survAdvancedSearch.asp>.



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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EMBARGOED: Do not publish or broadcast until 10:00 p.m. PDT on Wednesday, July 29, 2009.

**Para ver este comunicado de prensa en español, por favor visite nuestra página de internet:**  
**<http://www.ppic.org/main/pressreleaseindex.asp>**

### **PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

#### **Support for Policies to Curb Warming Slips as Economy Takes Toll**

**MOST RESIDENTS STILL FAVOR ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE BUT PARTISAN SPLIT WIDENS**

SAN FRANCISCO, California, July 29, 2009—Solid majorities of Californians favor state policies to curb global warming, according to a survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) with support from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. But in a year that has seen both a worsening recession and state budget crisis, residents' support for urgent action on climate change has slipped and a partisan divide on the issue has widened.

Most residents (66%) support the 2006 California law (AB 32) that requires greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020. Support has declined 7 points from July 2008 (73%) and 12 points from 2007 (78%). The decline is sharpest among Republicans (57% 2008, 43% today).

While most see global warming as a threat (47% very serious, 28% somewhat serious) to the economy and quality of life in the state, the percentage of residents who categorize the threat as very serious has declined over the past two years (54% 2007, 52% 2008, 47% today.) Residents are divided over whether the state government should take action to reduce emissions right away (48%) or wait until the economy and state budget situation improve (46%). In July 2008, when the plan to implement AB 32 was being discussed, a majority (57%) said the government should adopt it right away rather than wait (36%).

"Californians clearly support policies to improve the environment," says Mark Baldassare, president and CEO of PPIC. "But in the current economic climate their support has dropped a notch."

Baldassare also notes the partisan rancor over climate change in Congress—where the House of Representatives has passed the first federal global warming bill—that may affect attitudes in the state.

"On environmental issues where we saw more consensus in California, we're now seeing more partisanship, and that may reflect the national debate."

The survey finds partisan divisions on a number of questions related to climate change:

- **Effects of global warming:** Californians are nearly as likely today (61%) as they were last year (64%) to say the effects of global warming are already occurring, and they are more likely to say so than adults nationwide (53%), according to a March Gallup poll. Across parties today, solid majorities of Democrats (76%) and independents (61%) agree, compared to just 36 percent of Republicans. And one in three Republicans (34%) say global warming will never happen, an increase of 10 points since last year (24%).
- **Belief that government should regulate emissions:** While 76 percent of residents and majorities across party lines think the government should regulate greenhouse gas emissions from power

plants, cars, and factories, Democrats (86%), and independents (79%) are far more likely to think so than Republicans (54%).

- **A cap and trade system:** While a plurality of Californians (49% support, 40% oppose) support a cap and trade program to curb emissions, there is a sharp partisan split over the idea of buying and selling emissions permits: 57 percent of Democrats favor it and 55 percent of Republicans oppose it. Independents are divided (47% support, 44% oppose).
- **Carbon tax:** Californians are more in favor (56% support, 35% oppose) of taxing companies for their emissions but are sharply divided along party lines on this issue as well, with 73 percent of Democrats in favor and 60 percent of Republicans opposed.

However, Californians across party lines favor the requirement that automakers reduce emissions from new cars (90% Democrats, 81% independents, 55% Republicans). They also support proposals that utilities be required to increase use of renewable energy sources (91% Democrats, 85% independents, 71% Republicans), buildings be required to be more energy efficient (86% Democrats, 77% independents, 63% Republicans), industrial and commercial facilities be required to reduce emissions (91% Democrats, 81% independents, 63% Republicans), and local governments change land use and transportation planning so that people can drive less (87% Democrats, 79% independents, 62% Republicans).

### **EXPAND OFFSHORE DRILLING? 51 PERCENT SAY YES**

For only the second time since PPIC began asking the question in 2003, more Californians support expanding oil drilling off the coast than oppose it (51% favor, 43% oppose), the same as last year (51% favor, 45% oppose).

On the question of building more nuclear power plants, Californians are divided (46% favor, 48% oppose), as they were last year (44% favor, 50% oppose).

There is considerably more support for addressing the country's energy needs and reducing dependence on foreign oil in other ways. An overwhelming majority (82% favor, 16% oppose) say automakers should be required to improve fuel efficiency, and support is nearly as high (79% favor, 18% oppose) for increasing federal funding to develop wind, solar, and hydrogen energy technology.

### **SATISFACTION WITH AIR QUALITY INCREASES**

Californians' views about air quality have seen a significant shift. Twenty-three percent describe regional air pollution as a big problem, an 11-point drop since last year (34%) and the smallest percentage since PPIC began asking the question in June 2000. Today, residents in the Central Valley (36%), Los Angeles (30%) and Inland Empire (27%) are more likely to characterize air pollution as a big problem. This is a drop of 17 points in Los Angeles and 15 points in the Central Valley from last year. Among racial/ethnic groups, the percentage of Latinos who say air pollution is a big problem is down 15 points (30% today, 45% 2008).

About one in four Californians (24%) are very satisfied with the air quality in their region today, a 7-point increase from last year and a new high since PPIC first asked the question in 2006.

Yet, 42 percent of residents say they or an immediate family member suffers from asthma or respiratory problems, similar to last year and 5 points higher than in July 2003 (37%). Central Valley residents (51%) are the most likely to say this, followed by those in the Inland Empire (44%), Orange/San Diego Counties (42%), Los Angeles (40%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (40%). Among blacks, 61 percent say they or a household member has one of these health conditions, compared to less than half of Latinos (46%), Asians (41%), or whites (40%). Californians are divided on whether they think air pollution is a more serious health threat in lower-income areas than other areas in their region (48% yes, 46% no).

Residents are still supportive of toughening air pollution standards in four areas:

- Diesel engine vehicles, such as truck and buses (76% yes, 21% no)
- Commercial and industrial activities (75% yes, 21% no)
- New passenger vehicles, such as cars, trucks, and SUVs (71% yes, 26% no)
- Agriculture and farm activities (56% yes, 36% no)

## **GOVERNOR'S APPROVAL RATING HITS NEW LOW, OBAMA'S DIPS**

The PPIC Survey, which began before an agreement was announced on the state budget on July 20 and concluded just afterward, finds Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's approval rating at a record-low 28 percent. Approval of a California governor has not been this low since August 2003 (26% approve, 67% disapprove), when then-Governor Gray Davis was facing a recall and budget standoff with the legislature. The governor's approval rating for handling environmental issues has also declined (35% approve, 43% disapprove) since last July (46% approve, 36% disapprove).

The legislature's approval rating, at 17 percent, has also sunk to a record low.

A record-low 14 percent of Californians say the state is headed in the right direction. Just 18 percent expect good financial times, close to the record lows of 15 percent (June 2008, July 2008).

President Obama's approval rating (65% vs. 27% disapprove) remains high but has dipped since May (72% approve, 20% disapprove). Most Democrats (87%) and independents (65%) approve of the president, as do majorities across regions and demographic groups. But a majority of Republicans (64%) disapprove. Most Californians (58%) approve of Obama's handling of environmental issues, but they are divided along party lines (75% Democrats, 59% independents, 27% Republicans).

## **MORE KEY FINDINGS**

### ■ **Wildfire worries top list of concerns about warming** — page 9

Asked about specific possible effects of global warming, Californians are most likely to express concerns about wildfires (59%) and droughts (55%).

### ■ **Californians shift views on federal government action** — page 21

Last year, 66 percent of Californians said the federal government was not doing enough to address global warming, compared to 48 percent today. Opinions of state and local government action to address warming have changed less dramatically.

### ■ **Gas prices down, but residents still feel pain at the pump** — page 22

Californians (69%) are less likely than last year (76%) to report that gas prices are a financial hardship. But large majorities of some groups do, particularly Latinos (85%) and residents with annual household incomes under \$40,000 (83%). And although the percentage of Californians who drive to work alone has declined 12 points since 2002, commuting patterns among employed Californians (63% drive alone, 16% carpool, 9% take public transit) are similar to last year.

### ■ **Support for more efficient use of transportation resources, water** — page 23

Three in four residents (77%) say the state should focus transportation planning dollars on expanding public transit and using the existing network more efficiently, up 10 points since August 2004 (67%). Just 18 percent say the state should focus on building freeways and highways. Regarding future water needs, half (50%) prefer that the state focus on conservation and efficient use of the current supply, while 43 percent favor building storage systems and increasing the water supply.

■ **Concerns about water increase** — page 27

Air pollution and vehicle emissions still top the list when Californians are asked to name the most important environmental issue, as they have in the past (20% today, 23% 2008). But 18 percent name water supply and drought as most important issue, up 13 points from last year.

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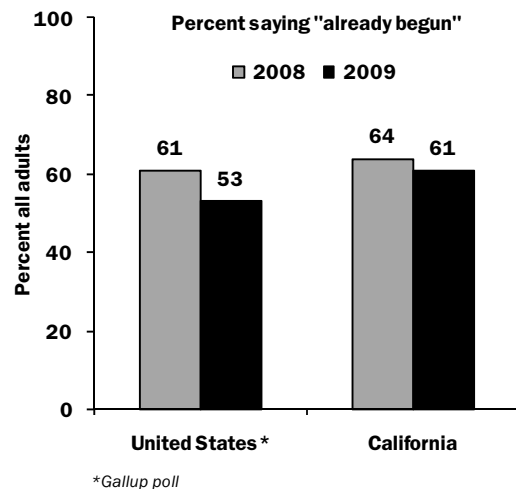


# CLIMATE CHANGE, AIR POLLUTION, ENERGY POLICY

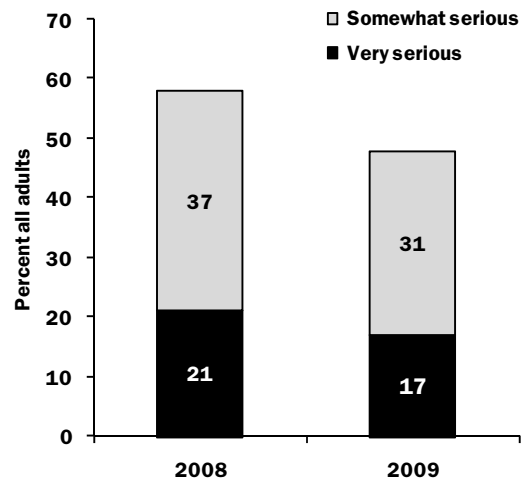
## KEY FINDINGS

- Californians are nearly as likely as last year and more likely than adults nationwide to say the effects of global warming are already occurring. Three in four state residents consider global warming a serious threat to California's future. (page 8)
- Californians strongly favor regulating greenhouse gas emissions; 49 percent would support using a cap and trade system and a majority (56%) would support a carbon tax. Support remains high for California's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and for specific ideas to reduce emissions. (pages 9-13)
- Californians are less likely today than in earlier years to say that air pollution is a big problem in their region or that it poses a serious health threat. Nearly half of residents continue to say that air pollution is a more serious health threat in lower-income areas. (pages 14, 15)
- Large majorities continue to support tougher air pollution standards for cars, commercial and industrial activities, and diesel engine vehicles; 56 percent of residents support tougher standards on agriculture and farming. (pages 16, 17)
- Strong majorities support greater fuel economy requirements and funding to develop renewable and alternative energy; Californians are less likely to favor increased oil drilling (51%) and are divided about expanding nuclear energy. (page 18)

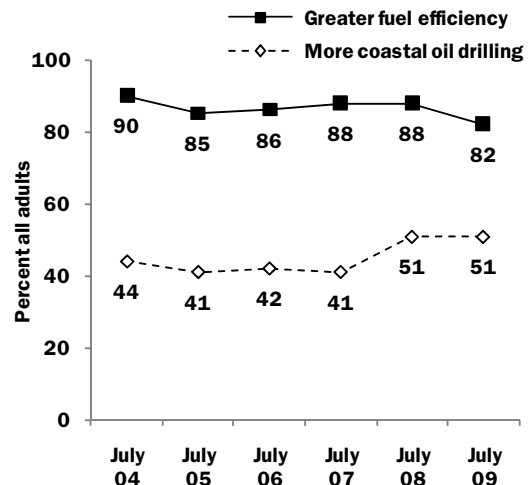
When Effects of Global Warming Will Begin



Health Threat of Regional Air Pollution



Percent Favoring Energy Proposals



## PERCEPTIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

A majority of Californians (61%) believe that the effects of global warming have already begun. This marks a slight, 3-point decline from last July (64%) and a 5-point decline from July 2007 (66%). Californians (61%) are more likely this year than adults nationwide (53%) to say the effects are already occurring, according to a March Gallup poll. The percentage holding this view nationwide declined 8 points since an earlier Gallup poll (61% March 2008 to 53% March 2009). In California today, solid majorities of Democrats (76%) and independents (61%) believe global warming is happening already, compared to just 36 percent of Republicans. One in three Republicans (34%) say global warming will never happen. The proportion of Republicans holding this view has risen 10 points since last year.

### “Which of the following statements reflects your view of when the effects of global warming will begin to happen...?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Already begun	61%	76%	36%	61%	58%
Within a few years	5	4	3	4	2
Within your lifetime	6	6	7	6	6
Not within lifetime, but will affect future generations	11	9	16	10	11
Will never happen	14	4	34	15	19
Don't know	3	1	4	4	4

The vast majority of Californians (75%) believe it is necessary to take steps right away to counter the effects of global warming. Today, 23 percent say it is unnecessary to take steps right away, up 6 points since last year and 7 points since 2007. Most Democrats (89%) and independents (75%) support the necessity for immediate action, but Republicans disagree (44% necessary now, 52% not necessary now).

Most Californians believe global warming is a serious threat (47% very, 28% somewhat) to the economy and quality of life in the state. The percentage categorizing the threat as very serious has declined somewhat over the past two years (54% 2007, 52% 2008, 47% today). Democrats (60%) are much more likely than independents (42%) and Republicans (22%) to say the threat is very serious. At least four in 10 residents across regions call it very serious; about half in the San Francisco Bay Area (49%) and Los Angeles (51%) hold this view. Latinos (63%) are the most likely racial/ethnic group to say global warming is a very serious threat, followed by blacks (56%), Asians (44%), and whites (37%). Perceptions of global warming as a very serious threat decline with older age and higher education and income.

### “How serious of a threat is global warming to the economy and quality of life for California’s future?”

	All Adults	Region				
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire
Very serious	47%	46%	49%	51%	42%	43%
Somewhat serious	28	24	31	28	25	28
Not too serious	10	10	9	7	14	9
Not at all serious	14	18	8	11	18	15
Don't know	1	2	3	3	1	5

**PERCEPTIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE (CONTINUED)**

When it comes to some of the specific effects of global warming on the state in the future, Californians are most likely to say they are very concerned about more severe wildfires (59%) and droughts (55%). Nearly half (48%) are very concerned about increased air pollution. Residents are less likely to be very concerned about increased coastal erosion (30%) and increased flooding (27%). Between 2005 and 2007, the percentage very concerned about droughts increased 19 points (from 41% to 60%); today, that percentage has dipped back down to 55 percent. Since 2005, the percentage very concerned about air pollution (52% 2005, 55% 2007, 48% today) and flooding (27% 2005, 37% 2007, 27% today) has also fluctuated. While coastal erosion was not addressed in 2007, the percentage very concerned about this issue in 2005 (28%) was about the same as today (30%). Wildfires were not addressed in past surveys.

Concern about wildfires is highest in the Inland Empire (69% very concerned) and Los Angeles (64%); concern about drought is highest in Los Angeles (61%); air pollution concern is greatest in Los Angeles (55%) and the Central Valley (51%). For each possibility, Democrats express the highest levels of concern, then independents, and Republicans. About wildfires and droughts, for example, majorities of both Democrats and independents are very concerned; a majority of Democrats is also very concerned about air pollution. Fewer than half of Republicans are very concerned about the worsening of any effect.

**“Now I am going to read you a few of the possible impacts of global warming in the future in California, and I would like you to tell me whether you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about each one. How about...”**

	...wildfires that are more severe?	...droughts that are more severe?	...increased air pollution?	...increased coastal erosion?	...increased flooding?
<b>Very concerned</b>	59%	55%	48%	30%	27%
<b>Somewhat concerned</b>	21	26	30	35	28
<b>Not too concerned</b>	8	7	9	17	22
<b>Not at all concerned</b>	11	10	12	15	21
<b>Don't know</b>	1	2	1	3	2

**REGULATING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

With California passing its landmark Global Warming Solutions Act in 2006 and the U.S. House of Representatives passing the first federal global warming bill in late June, what do Californians think about the idea of government regulating greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in an effort to reduce global warming? An overwhelming 76 percent think government should regulate the GHG emissions from sources like power plants, cars, and factories, while 19 percent think it should not. Seven in 10 likely voters favor regulation. Compared to a nearly identical question in a June ABC News/*Washington Post* poll, 75 percent of adults nationwide said the federal government should regulate GHG emissions and 22 percent said it should not.

In California, majorities across parties say government should regulate GHG emissions, but Democrats (86%) and independents (79%) are far more likely than Republicans (54%) to hold this view.

**“Do you think the government should or should not regulate the release of greenhouse gases from sources like power plants, cars, and factories in an effort to reduce global warming?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Should</b>	76%	86%	54%	79%	71%
<b>Should not</b>	19	9	40	18	25
<b>Don't know</b>	5	5	6	3	4

**REGULATING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS (CONTINUED)**

Solid majorities of Californians across all regions and demographic groups believe the government should regulate GHG emissions. San Francisco Bay Area residents (83%) are the most likely to support GHG regulation, followed by Los Angeles (80%), Orange/San Diego (75%), Central Valley (72%), and Inland Empire (65%) residents. Latinos (84%), Asians (83%), and blacks (82%) are more likely than whites (71%) to express support. Support declines with increasing age and income.

A cornerstone of both state and federal efforts to curb global warming is a cap and trade system, the cap being limits (in the form of permits) placed on the amount of GHG companies can emit, the trade being the buying and selling of these emissions permits. A plurality of Californians express support for a cap and trade system (49% support, 40% oppose), while likely voters are divided (44% support, 46% oppose). ABC News/*Washington Post* found a slim majority of adults nationwide expressing support for cap and trade (52% support, 42% oppose) on the same question.

In California, a majority of Democrats (57%) support cap and trade, a majority of Republicans (55%) oppose it, and independents are divided (47% support, 44% oppose). At least half of Los Angeles (54%) and San Francisco Bay Area (53%) residents, and of Asians (62%), Latinos (61%), blacks (50%), and women (51%) support cap and trade. Support is higher among younger, less educated, and lower-income residents. Among those who favor regulation of GHG emissions, 58 percent support cap and trade.

**“There’s a proposed system called ‘cap and trade.’ The government would issue permits limiting the amount of greenhouse gases companies can put out. Companies that did not use all their permits could sell them to other companies. The idea is that many companies would find ways to put out less greenhouse gases, because that would be cheaper than buying permits. Would you support or oppose this system?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Support</b>	49%	57%	36%	47%	44%
<b>Oppose</b>	40	31	55	44	46
<b>Don’t know</b>	11	12	9	9	10

There is also discussion at the state level, and debate at the federal level, about a carbon tax on companies for their GHG emissions. Californians are somewhat more likely to support a carbon tax (56%) than a cap and trade system (49%). Likely voters (54%) are also more in favor of a carbon tax than cap and trade (44%). There is not a comparable national question about a carbon tax. A strong majority of Democrats (73%) favor a carbon tax, while most Republicans (60%) oppose it. Independents are more likely to support (52%) than oppose (39%) this idea. Across regions, support is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (64%) and in Los Angeles (60%). Across racial/ethnic groups, at least six in 10 blacks (70%), Latinos (66%), and Asians (63%) express support, compared to 49 percent of whites. Among those who favor regulation of GHG emissions, 68 percent support a carbon tax.

**“Would you support or oppose a carbon tax on companies for their greenhouse gas emissions?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Support</b>	56%	73%	33%	52%	54%
<b>Oppose</b>	35	20	60	39	39
<b>Don’t know</b>	9	7	7	9	7

**REGULATING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS (CONTINUED)**

To track opinions about California's own efforts to curb global warming, we repeated a question from previous surveys about the state's goal of reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, which was codified in the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. This year, 66 percent of residents say they favor this law, down 7 points since last year (73%) and 12 points since 2007 (78%). Support is similar to July 2006 (65%), just before the bill was signed into law.

Support for this law has declined since last year most dramatically among Republicans (from 57% to 43% today). Support declined 5 points among Democrats (83% to 78% today) and 10 points among independents (77% to 67% today). Today, at least six in 10 residents across regions and racial/ethnic and age groups favor this law reducing emissions. Two in three men (66%) and women (65%) agree.

**“To address global warming, do you favor or oppose the state law that requires California to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions back to 1990 levels by the year 2020?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Favor</b>	66%	78%	43%	67%	61%
<b>Oppose</b>	23	12	46	23	29
<b>Don't know</b>	11	10	11	10	10

For many years, in the absence of federal guidelines, California took the lead among states in crafting policy to address global warming. With President Obama and leaders in the U. S. Congress now making climate change a signature issue, do Californians still think the state should make its own policies, separate from the federal government? Nearly six in 10 Californians and likely voters believe the state government should still make its own policies to address global warming; however, this belief is down 8 points among adults since last year (from 66% to 58% today). Majorities of Democrats (66%) and independents (64%) support independent state action, but these levels have also declined since last year (9 points for Democrats and 6 points for independents). While a majority of Republicans supported independent action last year (54%), only 44 percent say the same today.

**“Do you favor or oppose the California state government making its own policies, separate from the federal government, to address the issue of global warming?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Favor</b>	58%	66%	44%	64%	57%
<b>Oppose</b>	34	28	50	29	36
<b>Don't know</b>	8	6	6	7	7

Californians may continue to express high levels of support for state policies to curb global warming and reduce GHG emissions, but they are divided about whether the state government should begin implementing these policies right away (48%) or wait until the economy and state budget situation improve (46%). When adoption of the scoping plan for the Global Warming Solutions Act was under discussion last year, a majority of residents (57%) said the state should adopt the plans right away rather than wait for the budget and economy to improve (36%).

Today, 58 percent of Democrats support immediate state government action, while 70 percent of Republicans think the state should wait for better times. Independents are more divided (50% act now,

**REGULATING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS (CONTINUED)**

44% wait). Support for acting right away is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area and in Los Angeles (54% each), while residents elsewhere think the state should wait until the economy improves.

**“When it comes to plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, should the state government take action right away or should it wait until the state economy and budget situation improve to take action?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Take action right away	48%	58%	24%	50%	43%
Wait until economy and budget improve	46	38	70	44	53
Don't know	6	4	6	6	4

**EMISSIONS POLICIES**

In June, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Obama administration granted California permission to set its own rules for automakers to reduce global warming emissions from new cars. The EPA had previously blocked this action under the Bush administration, denying California the ability to enact stricter state standards. The federal government recently passed a set of national standards modeled after California’s, which will begin to take effect in 2012. California’s waiver will allow California and at least 12 other states to further reduce GHG emissions from new cars immediately.

So how do Californians feel about requiring all automakers to further reduce the emissions of GHG from new cars? Seventy-eight percent of residents favor this action and 19 percent oppose it, while 74 percent of likely voters are in favor and 24 percent are opposed. Across parties, nine in 10 Democrats (90%) and eight in 10 independents (81%) favor it, as do 55 percent of Republicans. When we asked this question about the state law last year, 81 percent of residents favored it, and 16 percent opposed it. Similarly high percentages of residents have expressed support for this law since we began asking about it in 2002. Among residents who would like the state to take action right away to reduce GHG emissions, 93 percent favor this idea.

In addition to reducing auto emissions, we also asked residents about other proposals under discussion at the state and federal level that could reduce GHG emissions with the involvement of government, industry, public utilities, manufacturers, and residents. Among these proposals, Californians are in favor of requiring utilities to increase in the use of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power; 85 percent of residents favor this proposal, and 12 percent oppose it. Eight in 10 likely voters also favor an increase in renewable energy resources, with 16 percent opposed.

**“Officials in the state and federal governments are discussing ways to address global warming. Please tell me if you favor or oppose the following plans to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. How about...”**

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>...requiring all automakers to further reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases from new cars?</i>	Favor	78%	90%	55%	81%	74%
	Oppose	19	7	41	19	24
	Don't know	3	3	4	–	2
<i>...requiring an increase in the use of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, by utilities?</i>	Favor	85	91	71	85	80
	Oppose	12	6	25	13	16
	Don't know	3	3	4	2	4

**EMISSIONS POLICIES (CONTINUED)**

Across political parties, strong majorities favor requiring utilities to increase the use of renewable energy sources, with Democrats (91%) and independents (85%) most in favor, and seven in 10 Republicans (71%) agreeing. At least eight in 10 across regional and demographic groups favor requiring utilities to use more renewable energy sources. Among residents who would like the state to take action right away to reduce GHG emissions, 93 percent favor this idea. When this question was asked last year specifically about the state government adopting the plan, 87 percent were in favor, and 11 percent were opposed.

Seventy-six percent of Californians and 74 percent of likely voters favor an increase in energy efficiency for residential and commercial buildings and appliances. This idea is also favored by strong majorities across parties, regions, and demographic groups. Among residents who would like the state to take action right away to reduce GHG emissions, 87 percent favor this idea. When this question was asked last year specifically about state action, 80 percent of residents were in favor, and 18 percent opposed.

Eighty percent of Californians and 78 percent of likely voters favor requiring industrial plants, oil refineries, and commercial facilities to reduce their emissions. The proposal receives the support of 91 percent of Democrats, 81 percent of independents, and 63 percent of Republicans. At least three in four across regions and demographic groups favor this proposal, although approval decreases with rising age and income. Among residents who would like the state to take action right away to reduce GHG emissions, 93 percent favor this idea. When this question was asked last year specifically about the state government, 83 percent of residents were in favor, and 13 percent were opposed.

Finally, 78 percent of Californians and 75 percent of likely voters favor encouraging local governments to change land use and transportation planning so that people wouldn't have to drive as much. This proposal also receives majority support across parties, again with Democrats (87%) and independents (79%) more likely to favor the idea than Republicans (62%). More than seven in 10 across regions favor this proposal, with residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (82%) and Los Angeles (81%) the most likely to agree. Strong majorities across demographic groups also favor this proposal, although favor decreases as age and income rise. Among employed residents who drive alone to work, 75 percent favor this idea. When this question was asked last year specifically about the state government, 81 percent of residents favored this idea, and 15 percent opposed it.

**"How about..."**

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>...requiring an increase in energy efficiency for residential and commercial buildings and appliances?</i>	<b>Favor</b>	76%	86%	63%	77%	74%
	<b>Oppose</b>	20	12	34	22	23
	<b>Don't know</b>	4	2	3	1	3
<i>...requiring industrial plants, oil refineries, and commercial facilities to reduce their emissions?</i>	<b>Favor</b>	80	91	63	81	78
	<b>Oppose</b>	16	6	34	18	19
	<b>Don't know</b>	4	3	3	1	3
<i>...encouraging local governments to change land use and transportation planning so that people could drive less?</i>	<b>Favor</b>	78	87	62	79	75
	<b>Oppose</b>	18	10	34	18	22
	<b>Don't know</b>	4	3	4	3	3

## REGIONAL AIR POLLUTION

More than six in 10 Californians describe air pollution in their region as a big (23%) or somewhat (40%) of a problem. Central Valley (36%), Los Angeles (30%), and Inland Empire (27%) residents are more likely than those in other regions to say air pollution is a big problem in their regions, but this perception has dropped significantly since last year in Los Angeles (down 17 points) and the Central Valley (down 15 points). Across racial/ethnic groups, blacks (39%) and Latinos (30%) are more likely than Asians (21%) and whites (19%) to say it is a big problem, but this perception among Latinos has dropped 15 points since last year. The belief that air pollution is a big problem is more widely held among those with only a high school education, those with annual household incomes less than \$40,000, and those reporting asthma or other respiratory problems in their household. The perception among all Californians that regional air pollution is a big problem has decreased 11 points since last year (34%) and is at its lowest point since we began asking this question in June 2000.

**“Would you say that air pollution is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in your region?”**

	All Adults	Region				
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire
<b>Big problem</b>	23%	36%	18%	30%	11%	27%
<b>Somewhat of a problem</b>	40	36	39	45	44	37
<b>Not a problem</b>	36	28	43	24	44	36
<b>Don't know</b>	1	–	–	1	1	–

About one in four Californians (24%) say they are very satisfied with the air quality in their region today, while 44 percent say they are somewhat satisfied, 22 percent are somewhat dissatisfied, and 10 percent are very dissatisfied. The percentage saying they are very satisfied has increased 7 points since last year and marks a new high since the question was first asked in 2006.

Today, residents in Orange/San Diego Counties (31%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (30%) are much more likely than residents elsewhere in the state to be very satisfied. Central Valley residents are the most likely to be very dissatisfied (19%). Across racial/ethnic groups, whites (30%) are the most likely to be very satisfied with regional air quality, followed by Asians (20%), Latinos (16%), and blacks (9%).

**“How satisfied are you with the air quality in your region today?”**

	All Adults	Region				
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire
<b>Very satisfied</b>	24%	18%	30%	12%	31%	17%
<b>Somewhat satisfied</b>	44	38	44	46	50	43
<b>Somewhat dissatisfied</b>	22	24	20	30	15	25
<b>Very dissatisfied</b>	10	19	5	11	3	14
<b>Don't know</b>	–	1	1	1	1	1

When asked about the sources of regional air pollution, more than four in 10 Californians (43%) respond correctly that vehicle emissions are the lead contributor; 25 percent say personal vehicle emissions, while 18 percent say commercial vehicle emissions. Other causes? About one in seven believe air pollution is mostly caused by industry and agriculture (14%) or by population growth and development (13%). Fewer mention pollution from outside their area (11%) or weather and geography (7%). At least four in 10 residents since July 2003 have blamed vehicle emissions for pollution.



## AIR POLLUTION AND HEALTH

Nearly half of Californians view air pollution in their region as a very (17%) or somewhat (31%) serious health threat to themselves and their immediate families, the lowest percentages since this question was first asked in July 2003. Today, blacks (30%) and Latinos (24%) are more likely than Asians (16%) and whites (12%) to say regional air pollution is a very serious health threat.

Across regions, residents in the Central Valley (25%), Los Angeles (22%), and Inland Empire (23%) are more likely than those in the San Francisco Bay Area (12%) and Orange/San Diego Counties (11%) to say air pollution is a very serious threat. This belief is greater among less educated and lower-income adults.

### “How serious of a health threat is air pollution in your region to you and your immediate family?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity			
		Asian	Black	Latino	White
<b>Very serious</b>	17%	16%	30%	24%	12%
<b>Somewhat serious</b>	31	36	24	41	26
<b>Not too serious</b>	47	41	43	34	57
<b>Not at all serious (volunteered)</b>	3	7	1	1	4
<b>Don't know</b>	2	–	2	–	1

Californians are divided on whether air pollution is a more serious health threat in lower-income areas than other areas in their region (48% yes, 46% no) and have been divided since 2006 (2006: 47% yes, 45% no; 2007: 50% yes, 42% no; 2008: 48% yes, 46% no). Today, Latinos (70%) and blacks (67%) are far more likely than Asians (49%) and whites (32%) to hold this view. Regional differences are also present today, with Los Angeles (63%) and San Francisco Bay Area (51%) residents more likely than those in Orange/San Diego Counties (44%), the Inland Empire (38%), and the Central Valley (34%) to think that air pollution is a more serious health threat in lower-income areas. The belief that this threat is greater in lower-income areas is more widely held by younger, less affluent, and less educated Californians as well as by renters. Partisan differences emerge, with 55 percent of Democrats saying air pollution is a more serious health threat in lower-income areas, while more than six in 10 Republicans (63%) disagree. Independents are divided.

### “Do you think that air pollution is a more serious health threat in lower-income areas than other areas in your region?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity			
		Asian	Black	Latino	White
<b>Yes</b>	48%	49%	67%	70%	32%
<b>No</b>	46	45	28	27	59
<b>Don't know</b>	6	6	5	3	9

About four in 10 Californians (42%) say they or an immediate family member suffer from asthma or respiratory problems, similar to last year, but 5 points higher than in July 2003 (37%). Residents in the Central Valley (51%) are the most likely to report that they or a household member suffer from asthma, followed by those in the Inland Empire (44%), Orange/San Diego Counties (42%), Los Angeles (40%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (40%). Six in 10 blacks (61%) say they or a family member suffer from asthma, while fewer than half of Latinos (46%), Asians (41%), or whites (40%) report such a condition.

## AIR QUALITY POLICIES

Californians support four proposals to reduce regional air pollution. Seven in 10 Californians (71%) and two in three likely voters (67%) would be willing to see tougher air pollution standards on new passenger vehicles, such as cars, trucks, and SUVs. Among all adults, willingness to see tougher standards has been greater than 70 percent each time we have asked this question since 2005, but support is 4 points lower than last year (75%) and 6 points lower than in 2006 or 2005 (77% each).

A strong majority of Democrats (84%) and independents (71%) support tougher auto standards, while Republicans are more divided (50% yes, 46% no). At least two in three Californians across regions and among racial/ethnic groups voice support for this proposal, with San Francisco Bay Area residents (78%), Asians (82%), and blacks (80%) the most likely to be supportive. Willingness to see tougher air pollution standards on new passenger vehicles is highest among younger and less affluent Californians. Eight in 10 Californians who view regional air pollution as a big problem and a serious health threat are supportive of these tougher standards.

**“Would you be willing to see tougher air pollution standards on new passenger vehicles, such as cars, trucks, and SUVs?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Yes</b>	71%	84%	50%	71%	67%
<b>No</b>	26	14	46	26	30
<b>Don't know</b>	3	2	4	3	3

Three in four Californians (76%) and likely voters (75%) are also willing to see tougher air pollution standards on diesel engine vehicles, such as trucks and buses. This is slightly lower than last year (80% adults and likely voters). Today, at least six in 10 across parties, regions, and racial/ethnic groups are willing to see tougher standards on diesel engine vehicles. Democrats (87%), residents in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles (80% each), and Asians (92%) are the most willing to support these tougher standards. At least seven in 10 across age, education, income, and gender groups are supportive. Again, 82 percent Californians who view regional air pollution as a big problem and a serious health threat support these tougher standards.

**“Would you be willing to see tougher air pollution standards on diesel engine vehicles, such as trucks and buses?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Yes</b>	76%	87%	64%	74%	75%
<b>No</b>	21	12	33	23	22
<b>Don't know</b>	3	1	3	3	3

**AIR QUALITY POLICIES (CONTINUED)**

More than seven in 10 Californians (75%) and likely voters (73%) are willing to see tougher air pollution standards on commercial and industrial activities. At least three in four of all adults have expressed willingness to see tougher standards each of the three times we have asked this question.

Today, more than half across political parties are supportive, but Democrats (88%) and independents (76%) express more willingness than Republicans (57%). More than seven in 10 across regions are also supportive, with San Francisco Bay Area residents the most willing to see tougher standards. At least seven in 10 Californians across racial/ethnic groups are supportive of such standards, with Asians (84%) and blacks (84%) the most supportive. Strong majorities across age, education, income, and gender groups support tougher standards on commercial and industrial activities. Again, 83 percent of Californians who view regional air pollution as a big problem and a serious health threat are supportive of these tougher standards.

**“Would you be willing to see tougher air pollution standards on commercial and industrial activities?”**

	All Adults	Region				
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire
<b>Yes</b>	75%	72%	79%	76%	73%	72%
<b>No</b>	21	25	17	19	26	20
<b>Don't know</b>	4	3	4	5	1	8

Fifty-six percent of Californians and 53 percent of likely voters are willing to see tougher air pollution standards on agriculture and farm activities, the lowest level of support among the four proposals. Findings among all adults are similar to last year (58%) and a majority of Californians have been supportive each July since 2005 (61% 2005, 63% 2006, 57% 2007, 58% 2008, 56% today). Today there are stark partisan differences: majorities of Democrats (69%) and independents (57%) are willing to see tougher standards, while only 37 percent of Republicans are similarly willing.

Across regions, residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (61%) and in Los Angeles (58%) are the most supportive, followed by those in the Central Valley (54%), Orange/San Diego Counties (54%), and the Inland Empire (50%). Fewer than half of whites (48%) are willing to see tougher standards, while more than six in 10 Asians (63%), Latinos (67%), and blacks (69%) support tougher standards. Support declines as age increases. Two in three Californians who view regional air pollution as a big problem and a serious health threat are supportive of these tougher standards on farming.

**“Would you be willing to see tougher air pollution standards on agriculture and farm activities?”**

	All Adults	Region				
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire
<b>Yes</b>	56%	54%	61%	58%	54%	50%
<b>No</b>	36	40	31	32	41	41
<b>Don't know</b>	8	6	8	10	5	9

## U.S. ENERGY POLICIES

To address the country’s energy needs and reduce dependence on foreign oil, 82 percent of Californians favor requiring automakers to significantly improve the fuel efficiency of cars sold in the United States, a slight decline since last year (88% favor, 11% oppose). Still, support has been above 80 percent since July 2004. Support for this proposal today is high among likely voters (81%) and among all political, regional, and demographic groups.

Californians (79%) strongly support increasing federal funding to develop wind, solar, and hydrogen energy technology. Californians are as supportive as adults nationwide, according to a similar question asked in April by the Pew Research Center (82% favor, 15% oppose). In California, findings among likely voters are similar to those of all adults, with strong majorities across parties favoring this proposal. When a similar question was asked last year, support was as favorable (83% favor, 15% oppose).

**“Thinking about the country as a whole, to address the country’s energy needs and reduce dependence on foreign oil sources, do you favor or oppose the following proposals? How about...”**

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>...requiring automakers to significantly improve the fuel efficiency of cars sold in this country?</i>	<b>Favor</b>	82%	93%	65%	81%	81%
	<b>Oppose</b>	16	5	32	18	18
	<b>Don't know</b>	2	2	3	1	1
<i>...increasing federal funding to develop wind, solar, and hydrogen technology?</i>	<b>Favor</b>	79	87	67	76	77
	<b>Oppose</b>	18	10	30	22	21
	<b>Don't know</b>	3	3	3	2	2

Californians are far less likely to favor expanding offshore oil drilling and building more nuclear power plants. Fifty-one percent of Californians favor allowing more oil drilling off the California coast, with 43 percent opposed. Among likely voters, 55 percent favor and 41 percent oppose. Among all adults, approval for more oil drilling is the same as last year (51% favor, 45% oppose), continuing a trend reversal that began last year when for the first time since July 2003, more favored than opposed drilling. Republicans (76%) and independents (54%) favor more drilling, while most Democrats (57%) are opposed.

Forty-six percent of Californians favor building more nuclear power plants, and 48 percent are opposed, similar to last year’s findings (44% favor, 50% oppose). At least half of likely voters (52%), Republicans (66%), and independents (50%) express support, while Democrats are opposed (57%). Californians are less supportive of more nuclear plants than adults nationwide, according to a recent Pew survey (51% favor, 42% oppose). Approval for building more plants increases with rising age, education, and income.

**“Thinking about the country as a whole, to address the country’s energy needs and reduce dependence on foreign oil sources, do you favor or oppose the following proposals? How about...”**

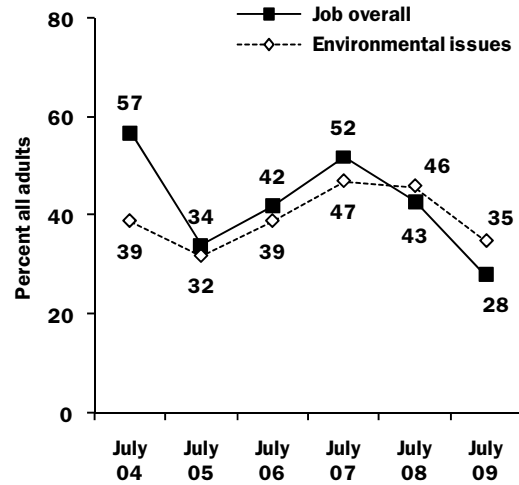
		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>...allowing more oil drilling off the California coast?</i>	<b>Favor</b>	51%	37%	76%	54%	55%
	<b>Oppose</b>	43	57	20	41	41
	<b>Don't know</b>	6	6	4	5	4
<i>...building more nuclear power plants at this time?</i>	<b>Favor</b>	46	38	66	50	52
	<b>Oppose</b>	48	57	28	44	41
	<b>Don't know</b>	6	5	6	6	7

# POLITICS, PREFERENCES, PLANNING

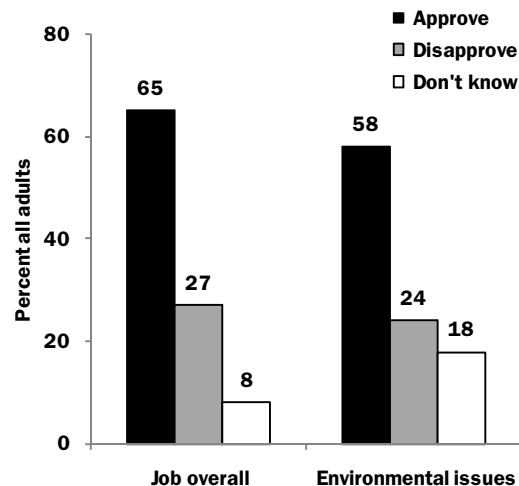
## KEY FINDINGS

- Californians express record low overall job approval ratings for Governor Schwarzenegger and near record low approval ratings for his handling of environmental issues. (page 20)
- Two in three Californians approve of President Obama's overall job performance; nearly six in 10 residents approve of the president's handling of environmental issues. (page 20)
- When it comes to addressing global warming, similar percentages of Californians say that federal (48%), state (46%), and local (46%) governments are not doing enough. Since President Obama took office, the percentage saying the federal government is not doing enough has declined 18 points. (page 21)
- Seven in 10 Californians say that gas price increases have caused financial hardship in their households, with lower-income residents and Latinos most affected. Many residents report changing their driving habits. (page 22)
- In planning for their region's future, a strong and growing majority believe the focus should be on expanding mass transit and more efficiently using existing roads rather than building new freeways and highways. Californians are more divided on handling future water demands, with half favoring greater conservation and more efficient water use and 43 percent favoring building new water storage systems and increasing supply. (page 23)

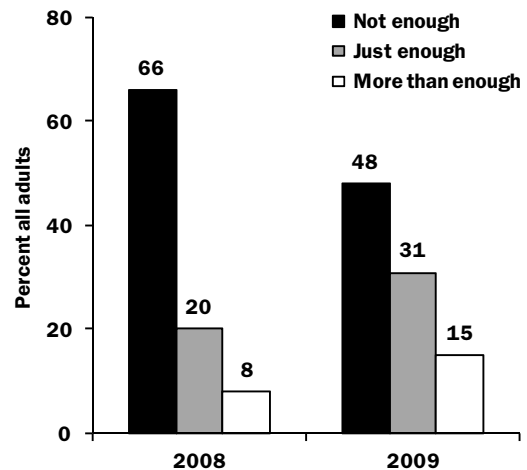
**Governor Schwarzenegger's Approval Ratings**



**President Obama's Approval Ratings**



**Federal Action on Global Warming**



## ELECTED OFFICIALS' APPROVAL RATINGS

Californians' outlook on the state is grim: just 14 percent say the state is headed in the right direction, a new low in PPIC Statewide Surveys. Californians are also downbeat about the state's economic outlook for the next 12 months, with 75 percent expecting bad financial times. Strong majorities across regions, parties, and demographic groups say the state is headed in the wrong direction and say they expect bad economic times.

Governor Schwarzenegger's overall job approval rating also falls to a new low (28% approve, 59% disapprove). Findings are similar among likely voters. Approval of a California governor has not been this low since August 2003 when then-Governor Davis (26% approve, 67% disapprove) was facing both recall from office and a budget standoff with the legislature. Today, the highest approval ratings of the governor are among Republicans (41%), while strong majorities of independents (58%) and Democrats (70%) disapprove. Majorities across regions and most demographic groups disapprove. In addition, the governor's approval ratings on his handling of environmental issues (35% approve, 43% disapprove) have fallen from last July (46% approve, 36% disapprove). Republicans and independents (40% approve, for each) are more positive than Democrats (31%) in their assessment of the governor on this dimension.

### "Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling..."

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>...his job as governor of California?</i>	<b>Approve</b>	28%	19%	41%	30%	29%
	<b>Disapprove</b>	59	70	48	58	61
	<b>Don't know</b>	13	11	11	12	10
<i>...environmental issues in California?</i>	<b>Approve</b>	35	31	40	40	37
	<b>Disapprove</b>	43	51	37	41	43
	<b>Don't know</b>	22	18	23	19	20

President Obama's approval rating (65%) remains high today, although it has declined somewhat since May (72% approve, 20% disapprove). Californians are more favorable in their assessment of the president than adults nationwide, according to a recent ABC News/*Washington Post* poll (59% approve, 37% disapprove). Majorities of Democrats (87%) and independents (65%) approve of the president, while a majority of Republicans (64%) disapprove. Majorities across regions and demographic groups approve of the president overall. Majorities also approve of the president's handling of environmental issues (58%), while 24 percent disapprove and 18 percent are unsure. His approval ratings on environmental issues vary widely across parties (75% Democrats, 59% independents, 27% Republicans).

### "Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that President Obama is handling..."

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>...his job as president of the United States?</i>	<b>Approve</b>	65%	87%	26%	65%	58%
	<b>Disapprove</b>	27	9	64	27	35
	<b>Don't know</b>	8	4	10	8	7
<i>...environmental issues in the United States?</i>	<b>Approve</b>	58	75	27	59	53
	<b>Disapprove</b>	24	10	54	23	32
	<b>Don't know</b>	18	15	19	18	15

## LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL ACTION

When it comes to the role of government in addressing global warming, Californians hold similar views of action by federal (48% not enough, 31% just enough, 15% more than enough), state (46% not enough, 33% just enough, 15% more than enough), and local governments (46% not enough, 32% just enough, 12% more than enough). Attitudes toward the federal government have shifted since President Obama took office. Last year, 66 percent of Californians said the federal government was not doing enough to address global warming, compared to 48 percent today. Three in ten (31%) now say the federal government is doing just enough, compared to 20 percent in 2008. Today, 34 percent of Republicans say that the federal government is doing more than enough to address global warming, compared to 14 percent of independents and just 4 percent of Democrats. Democrats (30%), Republicans (31%), and independents (31%) are equally likely to say that the federal government is doing just enough. Among likely voters, 46 percent say the federal government is not doing enough, 28 percent say it is doing just enough, and 20 percent say it is doing more than enough.

Opinions of state and local government actions to address global warming have changed less dramatically. Last year, Californians were slightly more likely to say that the state government was falling short (51% 2008, 46% today) and less likely to say the state was doing more than enough (10% 2008, 15% today). Attitudes toward local government action shifted similarly (not enough: 52% 2008, 46% today; more than enough: 9% 2008, 12% today). Independents and Republicans are somewhat more likely today than in 2008 to say that their state and local governments are doing more than enough to address global warming, while about six in ten Democrats still say that their state (59%) and local (58%) governments are not doing enough. About one in three voters across parties say that their state and local governments are doing just enough to address global warming.

Across regions, residents in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, and the Inland Empire are more likely than others to say that the federal and state governments are not doing enough to address global warming. Inland Empire residents (50%) are the most likely to hold this view of local government, followed by those in Los Angeles (48%), the San Francisco Bay Area (46%), Orange/San Diego Counties (45%), and the Central Valley (43%). Women and younger residents are more likely than others to believe all levels of government are falling short.

**“Overall, do you think that the \_\_\_\_\_ is doing more than enough, just enough, or not enough to address global warming?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters	
		Dem	Rep	Ind		
<b>Federal government</b>	<b>More than enough</b>	15%	4%	34%	14%	20%
	<b>Just enough</b>	31	30	31	31	28
	<b>Not enough</b>	48	61	27	49	46
	<b>Don't know</b>	6	5	8	6	6
<b>State government</b>	<b>More than enough</b>	15	6	33	15	20
	<b>Just enough</b>	33	31	34	34	32
	<b>Not enough</b>	46	59	26	46	43
	<b>Don't know</b>	6	4	7	5	5
<b>Local government</b>	<b>More than enough</b>	12	5	26	14	16
	<b>Just enough</b>	32	30	33	30	31
	<b>Not enough</b>	46	58	28	46	43
	<b>Don't know</b>	10	7	13	10	10

## GAS PRICES AND DRIVING

A strong majority of Californians (69%) report that gasoline price increases have caused financial hardship for themselves or their household. All adults and most demographic groups are currently less likely than they were last year to report financial hardship due to higher gas prices, but large majorities of some groups are still feeling pain at the pump: Latinos (85%), those with annual household incomes under \$40,000 (83%), and foreign-born residents (83%) are the most likely to report hardship.

**“Have price increases in gasoline caused any financial hardship for you or your household?”**

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Household Income		
		Asian	Black	Latino	White	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more
<b>Yes</b>	69%	68%	72%	85%	59%	83%	67%	53%
<b>No</b>	31	30	24	15	41	16	33	47
<b>Don't know</b>	–	2	4	–	–	1	–	–

Despite substantially lower gas prices this summer, the overall economic situation has significantly deteriorated since last year. Today, over half of Californians still say that as a result of gas prices they have seriously considered getting a more fuel-efficient vehicle (66%), cut back significantly on driving (62%), and used alternative means of travel (53%). Latinos and Asians are more likely than blacks or whites to consider a more fuel-efficient car or cut back on driving, and Latinos and blacks are more likely than Asians or whites to have used alternative transportation. Younger, less affluent, and less educated Californians are much more likely to have cut back on driving or used alternative means of travel. Majorities across demographic groups have considered buying more fuel-efficient cars, although younger and lower-income residents are more likely than others to say this.

**“As a result of the recent rise in gasoline prices would you say that you have...?”**

		All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Household Income		
			Asian	Black	Latino	White	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more
<b>...seriously considered getting a more fuel-efficient car the next time you buy a vehicle?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	66%	71%	65%	76%	60%	71%	64%	63%
	<b>No</b>	21	22	17	15	25	16	23	27
	<b>Don't know/NA</b>	13	7	18	9	15	13	13	10
<b>...cut back significantly on how much you drive?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	62	71	65	74	53	74	63	47
	<b>No</b>	31	22	28	20	40	19	32	47
	<b>Don't know/NA</b>	7	7	7	6	7	7	5	6
<b>...used alternative means of travel, such as bus, subway, bicycle, or walking?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	53	54	62	70	41	69	44	39
	<b>No</b>	46	43	34	29	57	29	55	60
	<b>Don't know/NA</b>	1	3	4	1	2	2	1	1

Commuting patterns among California workers today are nearly identical to last year's. Today, 63 percent of employed adults drive alone to work, 16 percent carpool, and 9 percent take public transit. Since 2002, the percentage driving alone has declined 12 points. There are significant demographic differences in commuting habits: Whites (70%) are far more likely than Latinos (50%) to drive alone, while Latinos (29%) are far more likely than whites (11%) to carpool. Those who are older and have more education and higher incomes are more likely to drive alone.



## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Given the state’s continued growth and current fiscal strains, have Californians’ opinions about transportation and water planning changed?

Californians are increasingly in favor of focusing the state’s transportation planning on expanding public transit and using existing transportation networks more efficiently rather than on building more highways and freeways. Over three quarters (77%) of residents favor expanding transit and using existing roads more efficiently, up 7 points from August 2006 (70%) and 10 points since August 2004 (67%). Democrats (83%) and independents (79%) are more likely than Republicans (68%) to favor this approach. An overwhelming majority across all demographic groups favors expanding transit and improving efficiency and capacity on existing roadways. Asians (84%), blacks (82%), San Francisco Bay Area residents (82%), women (81%), and college graduates (81%) are most likely to hold this view. Support for this approach is higher among those who carpool or take public transit to work.

**“For each of the following pairs of statements, which one is closest to your views about planning for 2025 in your part of California? ...We should focus on building more freeways and highways; or we should focus on expanding mass transit and using carpool lanes, pricing, and other strategies to more efficiently use the existing freeways and highways.”**

	All Adults	Region				
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire
Focus on building more freeways, highways	18%	21%	15%	18%	22%	17%
Focus on expanding transit, more efficient use	77	74	82	78	75	71
Don't know	5	5	3	4	3	12

Opinion is divided when it comes to addressing California’s water needs: half of residents (50%) favor strategies emphasizing conservation and efficient use of the current water supply, while 43 percent favor building new water storage systems and increasing the water supply. Support for water conservation and efficiency is down 5 points since August 2004 (55%) and 4 points since August 2006 (54%). Residents of the San Francisco Bay Area are most likely to favor conservation (54%), while residents of the Central Valley are least likely to do so (46%). Across racial/ethnic groups, Asians (63%) are the most likely to favor conservation, compared to 56 percent of Latinos, 52 percent of blacks, and 46 percent of whites. Across parties, Democrats are most likely to favor conservation (59%), followed by independents (47%) and Republicans (41%). Across demographic groups, many are divided on this issue, with the exception of women (54% conservation, 39% new storage), residents age 18–34 (58% conservation, 35% new storage), college graduates (54% conservation, 40% new storage), and those with annual household incomes under \$40,000 (53% conservation, 40% new storage).

**“...We should focus on building new water storage systems and increasing the water supply; or we should focus on water conservation, user allocation, pricing, and other strategies to more efficiently use the current water supply.”**

	All Adults	Region				
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire
Focus on building new water storage systems	43%	46%	39%	41%	45%	42%
Focus on conservation, more efficient use	50	46	54	52	50	50
Don't know	7	8	7	7	5	8

# REGIONAL MAP

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# METHODOLOGY

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The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, president and CEO and survey director at the Public Policy Institute of California, with assistance from Sonja Petek, project manager for this survey, survey research associates Dean Bonner and Jennifer Paluch, and survey intern Frances Zlotnick. This survey was conducted with funding from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation as part of a three-year grant on K–12 and higher education, environment, and population issues. We benefited from discussions with Hewlett program staff and others; however, the survey methods, questions, and content of the report were determined solely by Mark Baldassare and the survey staff.

Findings in this report are based on a telephone survey of 2,501 California adult residents, including 2,251 interviewed on landline telephones and 250 interviewed on cell phones. Interviewing took place on weekday nights and weekend days from July 7–21, 2009. Interviews took an average of 18 minutes to complete.

Landline interviews were conducted using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers that ensured that both listed and unlisted numbers were called. All landline telephone exchanges in California were eligible for selection and the sample telephone numbers were called as many as six times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. Once a household was reached, an adult respondent (age 18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing using the “last birthday method” to avoid biases in age and gender.

Cell phone interviews were included in this survey to account for the growing number of Californians who use them. These interviews were conducted using a computer-generated random sample of cell phone numbers. All cell phone numbers with California area codes were eligible for selection and the sample telephone numbers were called as many as eight times to increase the likelihood of reaching an eligible respondent. Once a cell phone user was reached, it was verified that this person was age 18 or older, a resident of California, and in a safe place to continue the survey (e.g., not driving). Cell phone respondents were offered a small reimbursement for their time to help defray the potential cost of the call. Cell phone interviews were conducted with adults who have cell phone service only and with those who have both cell phone and landline service in the household.

Landline and cell phone interviewing was conducted in English, Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese), Vietnamese, and Korean, according to respondents’ preferences. We chose these languages because Spanish is the dominant language among non-English speaking adults in California, followed in prevalence by the three Asian languages. Accent on Languages, Inc. translated the survey into Spanish, with assistance from Renatta DeFever. Abt SRBI Inc. translated the survey into Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean, and conducted all interviewing.

With assistance from Abt SRBI, we used recent U.S. Census and state figures to compare the demographic characteristics of the survey sample with characteristics of California’s adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the census and state figures. Abt SRBI used data from the 2007 and 2008 National Health Interview Survey and data from the 2005–2007 American Community Survey for California, both to estimate landline and cell phone service in California and to compare it against landline and cell phone service reported in the survey. The survey data in this report were statistically weighted to account for any differences in demographics and telephone service.

The sampling error for the total of 2,501 adults is  $\pm 2$  percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 2 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger: For the 2,019

## Methodology

registered voters, it is  $\pm 2.2$  percent; for the 1,457 likely voters, it is  $\pm 2.6$  percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

Throughout the report, we refer to five geographic regions that account for approximately 90 percent of the state population. “Central Valley” includes Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. “San Francisco Bay Area” includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. “Los Angeles” refers to Los Angeles County, “Inland Empire” refers to Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, and “Orange/San Diego” refers to Orange and San Diego Counties. Residents from other geographic areas are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes for these less populated areas are not large enough to report separately in tables and text.

We present specific results for respondents in four self-identified racial/ethnic groups: Asian, black, Latino, and non-Hispanic white. We also compare the opinions of registered Democrats, Republicans, and independents (i.e., those registered as “decline to state”). We also analyze the responses of likely voters—those who are the most likely to participate in the state’s elections.

We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in our earlier surveys and in recent national surveys by ABC News/*Washington Post*, Gallup, and the Pew Research Center.

# QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESULTS

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## CALIFORNIANS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

July 7–21, 2009

**2,501 California Adult Residents:  
English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese**

MARGIN OF ERROR  $\pm 2\%$  AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE

1. First, overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as governor of California?  
  
28% approve  
59 disapprove  
13 don't know
- 1a. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Schwarzenegger is handling environmental issues in California?  
  
35% approve  
43 disapprove  
22 don't know
2. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job?  
  
17% approve  
71 disapprove  
12 don't know
3. Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?  
  
14% right direction  
79 wrong direction  
7 don't know
4. Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?  
  
18% good times  
75 bad times  
7 don't know
5. On another topic, what do you think is the most important environmental issue facing California today? [*code, don't read*]  
  
20% air pollution, vehicle emissions  
18 water supply, drought  
9 energy, oil drilling  
6 global warming, global climate change, greenhouse gases  
5 water pollution  
3 landfill, garbage, waste  
3 loss of forests, forest fires, wildfires  
2 gas prices  
2 pollution in general  
16 other  
16 don't know
6. Next, we are interested in the region of California that you live in. Would you say that air pollution is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in your region?  
  
23% big problem  
40 somewhat of a problem  
36 not a problem  
1 don't know
7. How satisfied are you with the air quality in your region today—would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?  
  
24% very satisfied  
44 somewhat satisfied  
22 somewhat dissatisfied  
10 very dissatisfied

8. How serious of a health threat is air pollution in your region to you and your immediate family—do you think that it is a very serious, somewhat serious, or not too serious of a health threat?

- 17% very serious
- 31 somewhat serious
- 47 not too serious
- 3 not at all serious (*volunteered*)
- 2 don't know

9. Do you think that air pollution is a more serious health threat in lower-income areas than other areas in your region?

- 48% yes
- 46 no
- 6 don't know

10. Do you or does anyone in your immediate family suffer from asthma or other respiratory problems? (**if yes:** Would that be you or someone in your family?)

- 10% yes, respondent
- 24 yes, someone in immediate family
- 8 yes, both
- 57 no
- 1 don't know

11. Which of the following do you think contributes the most to air pollution in your region? [**read rotated list, then ask, "or something else?"**]

- 25% personal vehicle emissions
- 18 commercial vehicle emissions
- 14 industry and agriculture
- 13 population growth and development
- 11 pollution from outside the area
- 7 weather and geography
- 2 something else (*specify*)
- 7 all of the above (*volunteered*)
- 3 don't know

We are interested in knowing what people are willing to do in order to reduce air pollution in their region.

[**rotate questions 12 to 15**]

12. Would you be willing to see tougher air pollution standards on new passenger vehicles, such as cars, trucks, and SUVs?

- 71% yes
- 26 no
- 3 don't know

13. Would you be willing to see tougher air pollution standards on agriculture and farm activities?

- 56% yes
- 36 no
- 8 don't know

14. Would you be willing to see tougher air pollution standards on commercial and industrial activities?

- 75% yes
- 21 no
- 4 don't know

15. Would you be willing to see tougher air pollution standards on diesel engine vehicles, such as trucks and buses?

- 76% yes
- 21 no
- 3 don't know

16. On another topic, which of the following statements reflects your view of when the effects of global warming will begin to happen—[**rotate order**] (1) they have already begun to happen; (2) they will start happening within a few years; (3) they will start happening within your lifetime; (4) they will not happen within your lifetime, but they will affect future generations; [**or**] (5) they will never happen?

- 61% already begun
- 5 within a few years
- 6 within lifetime
- 11 not within lifetime, but will affect future generations
- 14 will never happen
- 3 don't know

17. Do you think it is necessary to take steps to counter the effects of global warming right away, or isn't it necessary to take steps yet?

75% right away  
20 not necessary yet  
3 neither, never necessary  
(volunteered)  
2 don't know

18. How serious of a threat is global warming to the economy and quality of life for California's future—do you think that it is a very serious, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not at all serious of a threat?

47% very serious  
28 somewhat serious  
10 not too serious  
14 not at all serious  
1 don't know

Now I am going to name a few of the possible impacts of global warming in the future in California, and I would like you to tell me whether you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about each one.

**[rotate questions 19 to 22a]**

19. How about increased flooding?

27% very concerned  
28 somewhat concerned  
22 not too concerned  
21 not at all concerned  
2 don't know

20. How about droughts that are more severe?

55% very concerned  
26 somewhat concerned  
7 not too concerned  
10 not at all concerned  
2 don't know

21. How about increased coastal erosion?

30% very concerned  
35 somewhat concerned  
17 not too concerned  
15 not at all concerned  
3 don't know

22. How about increased air pollution?

48% very concerned  
30 somewhat concerned  
9 not too concerned  
12 not at all concerned  
1 don't know

22a. How about wildfires that are more severe?

59% very concerned  
21 somewhat concerned  
8 not too concerned  
11 not at all concerned  
1 don't know

23. Next, to address global warming, do you favor or oppose the state law that requires California to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions back to 1990 levels by the year 2020?

66% favor  
23 oppose  
11 don't know

24. Do you favor or oppose the California state government making its own policies, separate from the federal government, to address the issue of global warming?

58% favor  
34 oppose  
8 don't know

25. When it comes to plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, should the state government [rotate] (1) take action right away [or should it] (2) wait until the state economy and budget situation improve to take action?

48% take action right away  
46 wait until economy and budget improve  
6 don't know

26. Do you think the government should or should not regulate the release of greenhouse gases from sources like power plants, cars, and factories in an effort to reduce global warming?

76% should  
19 should not  
5 don't know

Next, officials in the state and federal governments are discussing ways to address global warming. Please tell me if you favor or oppose the following plans to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**[rotate questions 27 to 31]**

27. How about requiring an increase in the use of renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, by utilities?

85% favor  
12 oppose  
3 don't know

28. How about requiring an increase in energy efficiency for residential and commercial buildings and appliances?

76% favor  
20 oppose  
4 don't know

29. How about requiring industrial plants, oil refineries, and commercial facilities to reduce their emissions?

80% favor  
16 oppose  
4 don't know

30. How about encouraging local governments to change land use and transportation planning so that people could drive less?

78% favor  
18 oppose  
4 don't know

31. How about requiring all automakers to further reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases from new cars?

78% favor  
19 oppose  
3 don't know

Next,

**[rotate questions 32 and 33]**

32. There's a proposed system called "cap and trade." The government would issue permits limiting the amount of greenhouse gases companies can put out. Companies that did not use all their permits could sell them to other companies. The idea is that many companies would find ways to put out less greenhouse gases, because that would be cheaper than buying permits. Would you support or oppose this system?

49% support  
40 oppose  
11 don't know

33. Would you support or oppose a carbon tax on companies for their greenhouse gas emissions?

56% support  
35 oppose  
9 don't know

34. Changing topics, overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Barack Obama is handling his job as president of the United States?

65% approve  
27 disapprove  
8 don't know

35. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that President Obama is handling environmental issues in the United States?

58% approve  
24 disapprove  
18 don't know

**[rotate order of questions 36 to 38]**

36. Overall, do you think that the federal government is doing more than enough, just enough, or not enough to address global warming?

15% more than enough  
31 just enough  
48 not enough  
6 don't know



37. Overall, do you think that the state government is doing more than enough, just enough, or not enough to address global warming?

- 15% more than enough
- 33 just enough
- 46 not enough
- 6 don't know

38. Overall, do you think that your local government is doing more than enough, just enough, or not enough to address global warming?

- 12% more than enough
- 32 just enough
- 46 not enough
- 10 don't know

Thinking about the country as a whole, to address the country's energy needs and reduce dependence on foreign oil sources, do you favor or oppose the following proposals?

**[rotate questions 39 to 42]**

39. How about requiring automakers to significantly improve the fuel efficiency of cars sold in this country?

- 82% favor
- 16 oppose
- 2 don't know

40. How about allowing more oil drilling off the California coast?

- 51% favor
- 43 oppose
- 6 don't know

41. How about building more nuclear power plants at this time?

- 46% favor
- 48 oppose
- 6 don't know

42. How about increasing federal funding to develop wind, solar, and hydrogen technology?

- 79% favor
- 18 oppose
- 3 don't know

43. On another topic, have price increases in gasoline caused any financial hardship for you or your household?

- 69% yes, caused hardship
- 31 no, have not caused hardship

As a result of the recent rise in gasoline prices would you say that you have—or have not—done each of the following?

**[rotate questions 44 to 46]**

44. Have you cut back significantly on how much you drive?

- 62% yes
- 31 no
- 4 don't drive/don't have a car (*volunteered*)
- 3 yes, have cut back, but not significantly (*volunteered*)

45. Have you seriously considered getting a more fuel-efficient car the next time you buy a vehicle?

- 66% yes
- 21 no
- 8 my current vehicle is fuel-efficient (*volunteered*)
- 4 don't drive/don't have a car/won't buy another vehicle (*volunteered*)
- 1 don't know

46. Have you used alternative means of travel, such as bus, subway, bicycle, or walking?

- 53% yes
- 46 no
- 1 already do this/don't drive/don't have a car (*volunteered*)

Next, for each of the following pairs of statements, which one is closest to your views about planning for 2025 in your part of California?

**[rotate questions and statements for q46a and q46b]**

46a. (1) We should focus on building more freeways and highways; *[or]* (2) We should focus on expanding mass transit and using carpool lanes, pricing, and other strategies to more efficiently use the existing freeways and highways.

- 18% build more freeways and highways
- 77 expand mass transit, more efficient use
- 5 don't know

46b.(1) We should focus on building new water storage systems and increasing the water supply; *[or]* (2) We should focus on water conservation, user allocation, pricing, and other strategies to more efficiently use the current water supply.

- 43% build new water storage systems
- 50 conservation, more efficient use
- 7 don't know

47. Next, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote in California?

- 81% yes *[ask q47a]*
- 19 no *[skip to q48b]*

47a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or as an independent?

- 45% Democrat *[ask q48]*
- 32 Republican *[skip to q48a]*
- 3 another party *(specify) [skip to q49]*
- 20 independent *[skip to q48b]*

48. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?

- 59% strong
- 38 not very strong
- 3 don't know

***[skip to q49]***

48a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

- 51% strong
- 45 not very strong
- 4 don't know

***[skip to q49]***

48b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

- 25% Republican Party
- 48 Democratic Party
- 21 neither *(volunteered)*
- 6 don't know

49. Next, would you consider yourself to be politically:

***[read list, rotate order top to bottom]***

- 11% very liberal
- 21 somewhat liberal
- 27 middle-of-the-road
- 24 somewhat conservative
- 15 very conservative
- 2 don't know

50. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics?

- 30% great deal
- 37 fair amount
- 27 only a little
- 6 none

***[d1-d5: demographic questions]***

D6. *[if employed full- or part-time]* How do you usually commute to work?

- 63% drive alone
- 16 carpool
- 9 take public bus or transit
- 4 walk
- 2 bicycle
- 5 work at home *(volunteered)*
- 1 other *(specify)*

D7. Do you personally own or lease an SUV?

- 23% yes
- 77 no

D7a. Do you personally own or lease a hybrid vehicle?

- 5% yes
- 95 no

***[d8-d19: demographic questions]***

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