PPIC Statewide Survey: Californians and the Environment

Mark Baldassare, Dean Bonner, Rachel Lawler, and Deja Thomas

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Key Findings

With California facing a severe drought and wildfire season, public awareness has risen of the impact of climate change as well as state policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A sharp increase in petroleum prices has led to discussions about expanding oil production and renewable energy sources. These are among the key findings of a statewide survey on environmental issues conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California from July 8 to 15, 2022:

- **Californians are most likely to name water supply and drought, followed by wildfires and climate change, as the most important environmental issue facing the state today.** Nearly nine in ten likely voters say candidates’ positions on the environment are important—and 45 percent say they are very important—in voting for governor in 2022. Fifty-nine percent approve of Governor Newsom’s handling of the environment, with partisans divided.

- **Sixty-eight percent of Californians say that the supply of water is a big problem in their part of California.** Strong majorities also feel that neither the state and local government nor people in their part of California are doing enough in response to the drought. Forty-five percent say they have done a lot to reduce water use recently in response to the drought. Seventy-seven percent say climate change has contributed to the current drought.

- **Forty-five percent of Californians say that the threat of wildfires is a big problem in their part of California.** Majorities say that they are at least somewhat concerned about the threat of power shutoffs to prevent wildfires where they live. Three in ten have a great deal of confidence in the government’s readiness to respond to wildfires in their part of California. Seventy-six percent say climate change has contributed to the recent wildfires.

- **Sixty-nine percent of Californians say that the effects of climate change have already begun.** Eight in ten Californians say that climate change is a very or somewhat serious threat to California’s future economy and quality of life. A strong majority favors the state government making its own policies, separate from the federal government, to address climate change. Support for the state’s climate change policies is deeply divided along party lines.

- **Fifty-eight percent of Californians say the condition of oceans and beaches is very important to California’s future economy and quality of life.** Majorities say that plastics and marine debris are a big problem on the coast near them. Overwhelming majorities favor wind power and wave energy projects and building desalination plants. A strong majority oppose allowing more oil drilling off the California coast.
Forty-four percent of Californians are upset about the current rate of inflation, and 55 percent say that recent gas prices have caused them financial hardship. Overwhelming majorities favor developing renewable energy sources over expanding oil, coal, and natural gas production. Forty-nine percent have seriously considered getting an electric vehicle. Forty-nine percent approve of President Biden’s handling of environmental issues.

Water and Drought

As the state grapples with water conservation and critically low reservoirs in the ongoing drought, three in ten or more Californians (30% adults, 36% likely voters) mention water supply and drought as the most important environmental issue facing California today. Californians mention wildfires (13% adults, 14% likely voters) and climate change (11% adults, 14% likely voters) in lower and similar shares. When asked about the supply of water in their part of California, about two in three adults (68%) and more than three in four likely voters (77%) say it is a big problem—up from a year ago (63% adults, 69% likely voters). Today, solid majorities across regions and political and demographic groups say this.

When it comes to responding to the current drought, most (68% adults, 75% likely voters) say state and local governments are not doing enough; less than three in ten say they are doing the right amount (27% adults, 21% likely voters), and far fewer say they are doing too much (4% adults and likely voters). The share saying the government is not doing enough is similar to last July. Today, majorities across partisan and demographic groups and across regions are dissatisfied.

Mirroring their dissatisfaction with governmental response, 69 percent of Californians (72% likely voters) say the people in their part of the state are not doing enough to respond to the current drought, about a quarter say they are doing the right amount (26% adults, 24% likely voters), and few say they are doing too much (4% adults, 3% likely voters). Solid majorities across partisan and demographic groups and across regions say people are not doing enough.
Most Californians don't think enough is being done to respond to the current drought

While most Californians are dissatisfied with the efforts of their neighbors, 45 percent say they have done a lot to reduce water use (39% done a little; 16% have not taken steps to reduce use). About half or fewer across racial/ethnic, education, gender, and income groups say they have done a lot. Half or fewer across the state’s regions say this, with shares highest in Los Angeles (51%) and lowest in Orange/San Diego (38%). Adults with higher incomes (40% $80,000 or more) are somewhat less likely to say they have done a lot than those with lower incomes (49% $40,000 to $79,999, 47% less than $40,000).

SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey, July 2022. Survey was fielded from July 8–15, 2022 (n=1,648 adults).
When it comes to the pollution of drinking water, about half of adults say it is not too serious a health threat to them and their family in their part of California (52%), compared to about 47 percent who say it is a very serious (16%) or a somewhat serious threat (31%). Among racial/ethnic groups, African Americans (33%) and Latinos (24%) are most likely to say this is a very serious threat, compared to fewer Asian Americans (11%) and whites (10%). Nearly seven in ten Californians say polluted drinking water is a more serious health threat in lower income areas.
About half of Californians say polluted drinking water is not too serious of a threat to them and their families

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**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, July 2022. Survey was fielded from July 8–15, 2022 (n=1,648 adults, n=1,132 likely voters).

Wildfires

More than eight in ten Californians say the threat of wildfires is at least somewhat of a problem in their part of California—while 45 percent of adults and 47 percent of likely voters say it is a big problem. The share saying the threat is a big problem is lower than it was one year ago (55% adults, 57% likely voters). Today, half of Democrats, 46 percent of Republicans, and 40 percent of independents say this. Four in ten or more
across most demographic groups say it is a big problem, with the exception of 35 percent of Asian Americans. Residents of the Inland Empire are somewhat more likely than residents of other regions to say it is a big problem.

More than eight in ten say the threat of wildfires is at least somewhat of a problem in their part of California

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**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, July 2022. Survey was fielded from July 8–15, 2022 (n=1,648 adults, n=1,132 likely voters).

A majority of Californians are at least somewhat concerned about the threat of power shutoffs to prevent wildfires where they live—including about two in ten who say they are very concerned (18% adults, 19% likely voters). Among partisans, Republicans (23%) are somewhat more likely to say they are very concerned, compared to 16 percent of both Democrats and independents. About two in ten or fewer across demographic groups say they are very concerned. Across the state’s major regions, residents of the Inland Empire are more likely than Californians in other regions to say they are very concerned. The share saying they are very concerned decreases as income levels increase.
Most Californians have at least some confidence in the government’s readiness to respond to wildfires, but only three in ten express a great deal of confidence (57% only some, 13% hardly any). Last year, a similar share (33%) said they have a great deal of confidence. Today, at least two in ten across demographic groups have a great deal of confidence, as do two in ten or more across regions. Central Valley residents are about twice as likely as residents in other regions to say they have hardly any confidence.

### Table: Confidence in Government’s Readiness to Respond to Wildfires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
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<th>Not too concerned</th>
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<td>Likely voters</td>
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**Source:** PPIC Statewide Survey, July 2022. Survey was fielded from July 8–15, 2022 (n=1,648 adults, n=1,132 likely voters).
Three in ten Californians have a great deal of confidence in the government's readiness to respond to wildfires

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<th>Hardly any</th>
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<td>57%</td>
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Climate Change Perceptions and Policies

Nearly seven in ten Californians think that the effects of climate change have already begun. Findings were similar last year, and majorities have said this since 2005. Today, 81 percent of Democrats, 73 percent of independents, and 45 percent of Republicans hold this view. Solid majorities across the state's regions and across age, education, income, and racial/ethnic groups think that the effects of climate change have already begun.
Eight in ten Californians say that climate change is either a top concern to them personally (24%) or one of several important concerns (57%); findings were similar a year ago. Today, there are differences across racial/ethnic groups in naming climate change as a top concern (31% Latinos, 19% Asian Americans, 18% whites, 16% African Americans). Partisans vary in naming climate change as a top concern (31% Democrats, 24% independents, 9% Republicans).

Eight in ten Californians say that climate change is a serious threat (47% very, 33% somewhat) to California’s future economy and quality of life. Findings were similar last July. Today, the perception of climate change as a very serious threat varies by age (56% 18 to 34; 43% 35 to 54; 43% 55 and older) and racial/ethnic group (54% Latinos, 44% whites, 42% Asian Americans, 41% African Americans). Partisans also vary in viewing climate change as a very serious threat for the future (65% Democrats, 45% independents, 20% Republicans).

In this context, 66 percent of Californians and 68 percent of likely voters favor the state government making its own policies, separate from the federal government, to address the issue of climate change. Majorities across regions and demographic groups hold this view, while partisans are deeply divided (89% Democrats, 63% independents, 25% Republicans). Moreover, 71 percent of Californians and 69 percent of likely voters say it is at least somewhat important for California to be a world leader in climate change efforts.

The state’s climate change efforts have varying degrees of public support today. Californians are overwhelmingly in favor of AB 32—which requires the state to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 (72% adults, 70% likely voters)—and of SB 100, which requires 100 percent renewable energy sources for the state’s electricity by 2045 (72% adults, 71% likely voters). Governor Newsom’s plan to ban new fracking permits has majority support (59% adults, 61% likely voters) while his executive order to ban the sale of gas-powered vehicles by 2035 has less support (48% adults, 49% likely voters). Partisans are deeply divided on all of these climate change policies.
What are the perceived economic impacts of the state’s climate change policies? Forty percent say there will be more jobs for people around the state, 26 percent say there will be fewer jobs, and 32 percent say policies won’t affect the number of jobs. Pluralities across regions and demographic groups—but a majority of Asian Americans (51%)—say there will be more jobs. Across partisan groups, majorities of Democrats (56%) and pluralities of independents (37%) think there will be more jobs, compared to 10 percent of Republicans.

What are the specific environmental concerns related to climate change today? In considering the possible impact of climate change, majorities say they are very concerned about droughts that are more severe (65%) and wildfires that are more severe (57%). Nearly half are very concerned about heat waves that are more severe (49%), while about one in four are very concerned about increased rising sea levels (26%). Across groups, Latinos are more likely than other racial/ethnic groups, women are more likely than men and Democrats are more likely than other voter groups to say they are very concerned about all four potential impacts. Lower-income residents are somewhat more likely than others to say they are very concerned about heat waves that are more severe.
### Concerns about the impact of climate change vary

<table>
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**Source:** PPIC Statewide Survey, July 2022. Survey was fielded from July 8–15, 2022 (n=1,648 adults, n=1,132 likely voters).

### Ocean, Coast, and Marine Life

An overwhelming majority of Californians say the condition of oceans and beaches is important (58% very, 33% somewhat) to California’s future economy and quality of life (6% not too important, 1% not at all important). About half or more across the state’s regions and across age, education, gender, homeownership, income, and racial/ethnic groups say this is very important. About half or more across parties (66% Democrats, 50% Republicans, 49% independents) say that the condition of oceans and beaches is very important for California’s future.
When asked about allowing more oil drilling off the California coast, 67 percent of adults and 65 percent of likely voters are opposed. Majorities across the state’s regions and across age, education, gender, homeownership, income, and racial/ethnic groups are opposed. Partisans are divided (83% Democrats, 66% independents, 31% Republicans) in their opposition to allowing more oil drilling off the California coast.

When asked about wind power and wave energy projects off the coast, overwhelming majorities of adults (81%) and likely voters (85%) are in favor. Overwhelming majorities are in favor across regions and partisan and demographic groups. When asked about building desalination plants on the California coast, overwhelming majorities of adults (72%) and likely voters (79%) are in favor, as are solid majorities across regions and partisan and demographic groups.

**About six in ten adults say the condition of oceans and beaches is very important to the economy and quality of life for California’s future**

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<tr>
<td>SF Bay Area</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, July 2022. Survey was fielded from July 6–15, 2022 (n=1,648 adults, n=1,132 likely voters).
What specific concerns do Californians name when asked about the condition of coasts and beaches closest to them? A majority (58% adults, 58% likely voters) say plastics and marine debris are a big problem. Forty percent of adults and 39 percent of likely voters say that ocean and beach pollution is a big problem. By contrast, 17 percent of adults and 16 percent of likely voters say that limited access to the coast and beaches is a big problem.

Across the state’s major regions, majorities say that plastics and marine debris are a big problem. Lower-income residents are somewhat more likely than higher-income residents to view all three issues as big problems. Latinos are somewhat more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to say all three issues are big problems. Women are more likely than men to say that plastics and marine debris and ocean and beach pollution are big problems. Democrats are much more likely than Republicans and independents to say that plastics and marine debris and ocean and beach pollution are big problems in the part of the coast that is closest to them.

**There is widespread support for alternative energy and water projects along the coast**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All adults</th>
<th>Likely voters</th>
<th>Democrats</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Independents</th>
<th>Central Valley</th>
<th>Inland Empire</th>
<th>Los Angeles</th>
<th>Orange/San Diego</th>
<th>SF Bay Area</th>
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<td>80</td>
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<td>83</td>
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<td>77</td>
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<td>75</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>68</td>
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<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>Building desalination plants on the California coast</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>74</td>
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</table>
Environment, Economy, and Energy

California continues to have the highest gas prices in the country, averaging just shy of $6 per gallon. When asked if recent increases in gasoline prices have caused any financial hardship for them and their families, 55 percent of adults and 52 percent of likely voters say it has, although about twice as many say it has caused them moderate financial hardship as opposed to severe hardship. Among partisans, Republicans (26%) and independents (20%) are more likely than Democrats (11%) to say prices have caused them severe hardship. Across the state’s major regions, two in ten or more residents in the Inland Empire, Central Valley, and Los Angeles report severe hardship, compared to fewer in Orange/San Diego and the San Francisco Bay Area. Latinos and African Americans are the most likely across racial/ethnic groups to say gas prices have caused them severe hardship. The shares reporting severe financial hardship decrease sharply as

---

### Adults are most likely to say plastics and marine debris are big problems for the part of the California coast that is nearest to them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% big problem</th>
<th>Plastics and marine debris</th>
<th>Ocean and beach pollution</th>
<th>Limited access to the coast and beaches</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely voters</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>52</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange/San Diego</td>
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<td>SF Bay Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>35</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
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<td>Asian Americans</td>
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<td>Latinos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than $40,000</td>
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<td>$80,000 or more</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
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</table>

SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey. July 2022. Survey was fielded from July 8–15, 2022 (n=1,648 adults, n=1,132 likely voters).
educational attainment and income levels rise; those earning less than $40,000 annually are the most likely across demographic groups to say this (36%).

### Most Californians say recent gas prices have caused them financial hardship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, caused severe hardship</th>
<th>Yes, caused moderate hardship</th>
<th>No, have not caused hardship</th>
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<td>18</td>
<td>37</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td>Asian Americans</td>
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<td>Latinos</td>
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<tr>
<td>$80,000 or more</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, July 2022. Survey was fielded from July 6–15, 2022 (n=1,648 adults, n=1,132 likely voters).

Seventy-four percent of Californians say developing alternative energy sources such as wind, solar, and hydrogen technology is the more important priority for addressing America’s energy supply, while just one in four prioritize expanding exploration and production of oil, coal, and natural gas. Overwhelming majorities of adults also favored alternative energy in July 2021 (80% alternative energy, 18% fossil fuels). Today, partisans hold contrasting views on this issue: overwhelming majorities of Democrats and independents favor alternative energy, while six in ten Republicans favor expanding exploration and production of oil, coal, and natural gas. More than two in three across regions and demographic groups prioritize alternative energy over fossil fuels.
Amid record-setting fuel prices, 49 percent of adults have seriously considered purchasing an electric vehicle (EV), while 45 percent have not; 6 percent say they already have one. Among partisans, Democrats and independents are far more likely to have considered buying an EV than Republicans. Regionally, Los Angeles residents are the most likely and Central Valley residents are the least likely to have considered an EV purchase, while San Francisco Bay Area residents are the most likely to already own one. Among racial/ethnic groups, half or more African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos report they have contemplated an electric vehicle purchase, compared to fewer whites. However, Asian Americans and whites are more than twice as likely to own an EV as African Americans or Latinos. Across the remaining demographic groups, men are somewhat more likely than women to have considered buying an EV; consideration falls with increasing age and rises sharply as educational attainment and income increase.

Are Californians willing to pay more for electricity generated by renewable sources, such as solar or wind energy? Forty-four percent are willing, and 55 percent are not. Majorities of Democrats (61%), college graduates (54%), 18- to 34-year-olds (53%), and San Francisco Bay Area residents (52%) are willing to pay more for electricity from renewable sources.
State and Federal Approval Ratings

As Governor Newsom faces reelection in November, about six in ten adults and likely voters approve of the way he is handling environmental issues in California. Majorities have approved of the governor’s handling of the environment since 2020. Today, an overwhelming majority of Democrats (87%) approve, while 85 percent of Republicans disapprove, and independents are divided (49% approve, 47% disapprove).

Californians are divided when it comes to seriously considering purchasing an electric vehicle and very few already have one

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Have considered</th>
<th>Have not considered</th>
<th>Already have one</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely voters</td>
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<td>Democrats</td>
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</table>

SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey, July 2022. Survey was fielded from July 8–15, 2022 (n=1,648 adults, n=1,132 likely voters).
Regionally, approval is higher in coastal areas (62%) than in inland areas (51%). Majorities across demographic groups approve of Governor Newsom’s handling of environmental issues, and approval rises with income levels. Across racial/ethnic groups, approval is higher among Latinos (67%) and African Americans (62%) than it is among Asian Americans (54%) and whites (53%). Nearly nine in ten likely voters say candidates’ positions on the environment are important (45% very, 42% somewhat) in voting for governor.

Fifty-five percent of adults and 53 percent of likely voters approve of the state legislature’s handling of environmental issues; views were similar 12 months ago. Most Democrats (77%) approve of the legislature on this issue, while majorities of Republicans (82%) and independents (53%) disapprove. Across regions, approval is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (63%) and lowest in the Central Valley (46%). About half or more across demographic groups approve of the legislature’s handling of environmental issues.

**Most adults approve of the governor's and legislature's handling of environmental issues**

About half of adults (49%) and likely voters (49%) approve of President Biden’s handling of environmental issues in the US. Approval was much higher last July (61% adults, 61% likely voters). Today, partisans hold opposing views: an overwhelming majority of Democrats approve of the president’s handling of environmental issues while an overwhelming majority of Republicans disapprove, as do 54 percent of independents. Regionally, most coastal area residents approve (53%), while most inland area residents disapprove (58%). Across racial/ethnic groups, African Americans (55%) are most likely to approve of Biden on this issue, while whites are least likely (42%). Approval of the president’s handling of environmental issues varies across age, education, and income groups.

In contrast, 25 percent of adults and 18 percent of likely voters approve of the way Congress is handling environmental issues in the US. Approval was higher among adults (35%) and likely voters (28%) a year ago, but majorities have disapproved since 2011. Strong majorities across political parties disapprove of Congress on this issue, and about six in ten or more across regions and across demographic groups
disapprove. When asked about the candidates in their district for the 2022 House election, 34 percent said the Republican candidate and 65 percent said the Democratic candidate in their district would do a better job handling environmental issues in the US.

Half of adults approve of Biden's handling of environmental issues while approval of Congress on the environment remains low

Approval on environmental issues varies among subgroups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Governor Newsom</th>
<th>State Legislature</th>
<th>President Biden</th>
<th>US Congress</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Men</td>
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<td>Latinos</td>
<td>67</td>
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<td>$80,000 or more</td>
<td>62</td>
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<td>21</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: PPIC Statewide Survey, July 2022. Survey was fielded from July 8–15, 2022 (n=1,648 adults, n=1,132 likely voters).

Regional Map

This map highlights the five geographic regions for which we present results; these regions account for approximately 90 percent of the state population. Residents of other geographic areas (in gray) are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes for these less-populous areas are not large enough to report separately.
Methodology

The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, president and CEO and survey director at the Public Policy Institute of California. Coauthors of this report include survey analyst Deja Thomas, who was project manager for this survey; associate survey director and research fellow Dean Bonner; and survey analyst Rachel Lawler. The Californians and the Environment survey is supported with funding from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Dirk and Charlene Kabcenell Foundation. The PPIC Statewide Survey invites input, comments, and suggestions from policy and public opinion experts and from its own advisory committee, but survey methods, questions, and content are determined solely by PPIC’s survey team.

Findings in this report are based on a survey of 1,648 California adult residents. The median time to complete the survey was 19.5 minutes. Interviews were conducted from July 8–July 15, 2022.

Regional Map

This map highlights the five geographic regions for which we present results; these regions account for approximately 90 percent of the state population. Residents of other geographic areas (in gray) are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes for these less-populous areas are not large enough to report separately.
The survey was conducted by Ipsos, using its online KnowledgePanel, in English and Spanish, according to respondents’ preferences. We chose these languages because Spanish is the dominant language among non-English-speaking adults in California. KnowledgePanel members are recruited through probability-based sampling and include both those with internet access and those without. KnowledgePanel provides internet access for those who do not have it and, if needed, a device to access the internet when they join the panel. KnowledgePanel members are primarily recruited using address-based sampling (ABS) methodology, which improves population coverage, particularly for hard-to-reach populations such as young adults and minority groups. ABS-recruited Latinos are supplemented with a dual-frame random digit dialing (RDD) sampling methodology that targets telephone exchanges associated with areas with a higher concentration of Latinos to provide the capability to conduct representative online surveys with Latinos, including those who speak only Spanish. KnowledgePanel’s recruitment was originally based on a national RDD frame and switched to the primarily ABS-based methodology in 2009. KnowledgePanel includes households with landlines and cell phones, including those with cellphones only and those without phones. ABS allows probability-based sampling of addresses from the US Postal Service’s Delivery Sequence File (DSF). The DSF-based sampling frame used for address selection is enhanced with a series of refinements—such as the appendage of various ancillary data to each address from commercial and government data sources—to facilitate complex stratification plans. Taking advantage of such refinements, quarterly samples are selected using a stratified sampling methodology that aims to retain the representativeness of the panel. KnowledgePanel recruits new panel members throughout the year to offset panel attrition.

To qualify for the survey, a panel member must be age 18 or older and reside in California. A general population sample of Californians was selected using Ipsos’s PPS (probability proportional to size) sampling procedure to select study-specific samples. Briefly, to select such samples, the panel is first weighted to population benchmarks and those panel weights are used as the measure of size for a PPS sample selection that yields a fully representative sample. A total of 1,699 respondents completed the survey out of 3,289 panelists who were sampled, for a response rate of 53 percent. To ensure the highest data quality, we flagged respondents who sped through the survey, which we defined as completing the survey in one-fourth of the overall median time (less than 4.89 minutes). We also flagged respondents if their self-reported age or gender did not match the data stored in their profile. A total of 51 cases were removed after this review process, resulting in 1,648 total qualified and valid cases.

Accent on Languages, Inc., translated new survey questions into Spanish, with assistance from Renatta DeFever.

Ipsos uses the US Census Bureau’s 2016–2020 American Community Survey’s (ACS) Public Use Microdata Series for California (with regional coding information from the University of Minnesota’s Integrated Public Use Microdata Series for California) to compare certain demographic characteristics of the survey sample—region, age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education—with the characteristics of California’s adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the ACS figures. We also used voter registration data from the California Secretary of State to compare the party registration of registered voters in our sample to party registration statewide. The sample of Californians is first weighted using an initial sampling or base weight that corrects for any differences in the probability of selecting various segments of the KnowledgePanel sample. This base weight is further adjusted using an iterative proportional fitting (raking) procedure that aligns sample demographics to population benchmarks from the 2016–2020 ACS data as well as party registration benchmarks from the California Secretary of State’s voter registration file.

The sampling error, taking design effects from weighting into consideration, is ±3.4 percent at the 95 percent
confidence level for the total unweighted sample of 1,648 adults. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 3.4 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for unweighted subgroups is larger: for the 1,437 registered voters, the sampling error is ±3.6 percent; for the 1,132 likely voters the sampling error is ±4.1 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.

We present results for five geographic regions, accounting 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 of other geographic areas are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes for these less populous areas are not large enough to report separately. Additionally, in several places, we refer to coastal and inland counties. Within coastal counties, the “north and central coast” region refers to the counties along the California coast from San Luis Obispo County northward to Del Norte County, including all of the San Francisco Bay Area counties. The “south coast” region includes Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego Counties. All other counties are included in the “inland” region.

We present results for non-Hispanic whites, who account for 42 percent of the state’s adult population, and also for Latinos, who account for about a third of the state’s adult population and constitute one of the fastest-growing voter groups. We also present results for non-Hispanic Asian Americans, who make up about 15 percent of the state’s adult population, and non-Hispanic African Americans, who comprise about 6 percent. Results for other racial/ethnic groups—such as Native Americans—are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes are not large enough for separate analysis. Results for African American and Asian American likely voters are combined with those of other racial/ethnic groups because sample sizes for African American and Asian American likely voters are too small for separate analysis. We compare the opinions of those who report they are registered Democrats, registered Republicans, and decline-to-state or independent voters; the results for those who say they are registered to vote in other parties are not large enough for separate analysis. We also analyze the responses of likely voters—so designated per their responses to survey questions about voter registration, previous election participation, intentions to vote this year, attention to election news, and current interest in politics.

Sample sizes and margins of error for each subgroup are presented in the table below.

The percentages presented in the report tables and in the questionnaire may not add to 100 due to rounding.

We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in our earlier online surveys. Numerous questions were adapted from recent national surveys by Gallup and the Pew Research Center. Additional details about our methodology can be found at www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/SurveyMethodology.pdf and are available upon request through surveys@ppic.org.
### Unweighted N-size and margin of error

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Unweighted N-size</th>
<th>Margin of Error</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>1,648</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered voters</td>
<td>1,437</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Party Preference/ Independents</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Valley</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inland Empire</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange/San Diego</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SF Bay Area</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>856</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Americans</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than $40,000</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>$40,000 to $79,999</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>$80,000 or more</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
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</table>

**Source:** PPIC Statewide Survey, July 2022. Survey was fielded from July 8–15, 2022 (n=1,648 adults, n=1,132 likely voters).
Questions and Responses

July 8–15, 2022
1,648 California adult residents; 1,132 California likely voters
English, Spanish

Margin of error ±3.4% at 95% confidence level for the total sample, ±4.1% for likely voters. Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

1. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Newsom is handling environmental issues in California?

59% approve
39% disapprove
2% don’t know

2. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Newsom is handling the issue of jobs and the economy?

59% approve
39% disapprove
2% don’t know

3. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling environmental issues in California?

55% approve
42% disapprove
3% don’t know

4. How much of the time can you trust the state government to do what is right when it comes to handling environmental issues in California? [rotate order top to bottom]

7% just about always
43% most of the time
49% only some of the time
– don’t know

5. Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?

31% good times
68% bad times
1% don’t know

6. Thinking about the current rate of inflation, meaning rising prices, is this something you are upset about, concerned about but not upset, or not concerned about?

44% upset
53% concerned but not upset
3% not concerned about
– don’t know

7. Have recent price increases in gasoline caused any financial hardship for you or your household? (If yes, ask: “is that a severe hardship that affects your ability to maintain your current standard of living, or is it a moderate hardship that affects you somewhat but does not jeopardize your standard of living?”)

18% yes, caused severe hardship
37% yes, caused moderate hardship
45% no, have not caused hardship
– don’t know

8. Next, what do you think is the most important environmental issue facing California today?

30% water supply, drought, reservoirs
13% wildfires, loss of forests, forest fires
11% climate change, global warming, greenhouse gases
4% air pollution, vehicle emissions, smog
4% landfills, garbage, sewage, waste, recycling
3% government regulation—too much, overregulation, politicians, environmentalists
2% pollution in general
2% water pollution of ocean, rivers, lakes, streams, beaches
18% other (specify)
14% don’t know

Changing topics,

9. Some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote in California?

74% yes [ask q9a]
26% no [skip to q11]

9a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or are you registered as a decline-to-state or independent voter?

47% Democrat [ask q10]
24% Republican [ask q10a]
2% another party (specify) [skip to q12]
27% decline-to-state/independent [skip to 10b]

[likely voters only]
48% Democrat [ask q10]
26% Republican [ask q10a]
3% another party (specify) [skip to q12]
24% decline-to-state/independent [skip to 10b]

10. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?
53% strong
47% not very strong
– don’t know

[skip to q12]

10a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?
56% strong
44% not very strong
– don’t know

[skip to q12]

10b. [decline-to-state /independents only] In a few words, can you tell me the main reason why you are registered as a decline-to-state or independent voter and not as a member of a political party?
38% parties don’t reflect my views, not satisfied with parties
11% I vote for candidates, not parties
10% corruption
3% I vote for both Democrats and Republicans
2% don’t want political mailings or phone calls
1% privacy/confidentiality
27% other (specify)
7% don’t know

10c. Were you previously registered with a major party or have you always been a decline-to-state or independent voter?
44% previously registered [ask q10d]
56% always been a decline-to-state or independent voter [skip to q10e]
– don’t know [skip to q10e]

10d. What party were you previously registered with?
49% Democratic Party
37% Republican Party
9% American Independent
1% Libertarian
4% other (specify)
– don’t know

10e. Would you join a political party if it was a good reflection of your political views or do you prefer to be unaffiliated with any specific party?
26% join a political party
72% remain unaffiliated
1% don’t know
11. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

28% Republican Party
64% Democratic Party
7% neither (volunteered)
1% don’t know

On to another topic,

12. [likely voters only] In thinking about the California governor’s election in November, how important to you are the candidates’ positions on the environment in determining your vote?

45% very important
42% somewhat important
13% not too important
– don’t know

13. [likely voters only] Regardless of your choice in the 2022 election for US House of Representatives, which of these candidates would do a better job handling environmental issues in the U.S.: [rotate] the Republican candidate in your district or the Democratic candidate in your district?

34% the Republican candidate in your district
65% the Democratic candidate in your district
1% don’t know

14. Next, would you say that the supply of water is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem in your part of California?

68% big problem
24% somewhat of a problem
7% not much of a problem
– don’t know

[rotate questions 15 and 16]

15. Overall, do you think that the state and local governments are doing too much, the right amount, or not enough to respond to the current drought in California?

4% too much
27% the right amount
68% not enough
1% don’t know

16. Overall, do you think that the people in your part of California are doing too much, the right amount, or not enough to respond to the current drought in California?

4% too much
26% the right amount
69% not enough
1% don’t know

17. Do you think climate change has contributed to California’s current drought or not?

77% yes, has contributed
22% no, has not contributed
1% don’t know

18. Would you say that you and your family have taken steps to reduce water use recently in response to the current drought? *(If yes, ask: “Have you done a lot or a little to reduce water use?”)*

45% yes, done a lot to reduce water use
39% yes, done a little to reduce water use
16% no, have not taken steps
– don’t know

19. Do you think that pollution of drinking water is a more serious health threat in lower-income areas than other areas in your part of California, or not?

69% yes
29% no
2% don’t know

20. How serious a health threat is pollution of drinking water in your part of California to you and your immediate family?

16% very serious
31% somewhat serious
52% not too serious
1% don’t know

21. Next, would you say that air pollution is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem in your part of California?

31% big problem
47% somewhat of a problem
22% not much of a problem
– don’t know

22. Do you think that air pollution is a more serious health threat in lower-income areas than other areas in your part of California, or not?

59% yes
40% no
1% don’t know

23. How serious a health threat is air pollution in your part of California to you and your immediate family?

16% very serious
43% somewhat serious
40% not too serious
1% don’t know

24. Next, how much of a problem is the threat of wildfires in your part of California? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem?

45% big problem
37% somewhat of a problem
18% not much of a problem
– don’t know

25. How serious is the threat of wildfires in your part of California to your personal and economic well-being?

27% very serious
41% somewhat serious
32% not too serious
– don’t know

26. Do you think that climate change has contributed to California’s recent wildfires or not?

76% yes, has contributed
23% no, has not contributed
1% don’t know

27. How much confidence do you have in the government in terms of its readiness to respond to wildfires in your part of California?

30% a great deal
57% only some
13% hardly any
1% don’t know

Recently, there have been wildfires in California and utility providers have had power shutoffs when there have been high winds in their service areas to prevent wildfires.

28. How concerned have you been about the threat of power shutoffs to prevent wildfires where you live? Have you been very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

18% very concerned
38% somewhat concerned
32% not too concerned
12% not at all concerned
– don’t know

29. On another topic, which of the following statements reflects your view of when the effects of climate change will begin to happen? [rotate order top to bottom]

69% they have already begun to happen
4% they will start happening within a few years  
11% they will start happening within your lifetime  
8% they will not happen within your lifetime, but they will affect future generations  
8% they will never happen  
– don’t know  

And thinking about issues and activities that some people care deeply about and others do not...

30. Compared to other issues, would you say addressing global climate change is... [rotate order top to bottom]  
24% a top concern to me personally  
57% one of several important concerns to me  
19% not an important concern to me  
– don’t know  

31. How serious of a threat is climate change to the economy and quality of life for California’s future?  
47% very serious  
33% somewhat serious  
11% not too serious  
8% not at all serious  
1% don’t know  

Following is a list of a few of the possible impacts of climate change in the future in California. Please answer whether you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about each one.

[rotate questions 32 to 35]  

32. How about increased rising sea levels? Are you...  
26% very concerned  
37% somewhat concerned  
25% not too concerned  
12% not at all concerned  
– don’t know  

33. How about heat waves that are more severe? Are you...  
49% very concerned  
34% somewhat concerned  
13% not too concerned  
4% not at all concerned  
– don’t know  

34. How about droughts that are more severe? Are you...  
65% very concerned
25% somewhat concerned
8% not too concerned
3% not at all concerned
– don’t know

35. How about wildfires that are more severe? Are you...

57% very concerned
30% somewhat concerned
10% not too concerned
3% not at all concerned
– don’t know

36. Next, to address climate change, do you favor or oppose the state law that requires California to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2030?

72% favor
26% oppose
2% don’t know

37. Do you favor or oppose the state law that requires 100 percent of the state’s electricity to come from renewable energy sources by the year 2045?

72% favor
27% oppose
2% don’t know

Next, government officials are discussing other ways to deal with climate change. Please say if you favor or oppose the following plans to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

[rotate questions 38 and 39]

38. How about Governor Newsom’s executive order banning the sale of all new gasoline-powered vehicles by 2035? Do you favor or oppose this proposal?

48% favor
50% oppose
2% don’t know

39. How about Governor Newsom’s plan that would ban the issuance of new hydraulic fracturing—or “fracking”—permits in California starting in 2024? Do you favor oppose this proposal?

59% favor
38% oppose
3% don’t know

40. Next, do you favor or oppose the California state government making its own policies, separate from the federal government, to address the issue of climate change?

66% favor
32% oppose
2% don’t know

41. When it comes to efforts to fight climate change, how important is it to you that California acts as a leader around the world?

41% very important
30% somewhat important
14% not too important
15% not important at all
1% don’t know

42. Next, do you think that California doing things to reduce climate change in the future would cause there to be more jobs for people around the state, would cause there to be fewer jobs, or wouldn’t affect the number of jobs for people around the state?

40% more jobs
26% fewer jobs
32% wouldn’t affect the number of jobs
3% don’t know

43. In order to help reduce climate change, would you be willing or not willing to pay more for electricity if it were generated by renewable sources like solar or wind energy?

44% willing
55% not willing
1% don’t know

On another topic,

44. Would you say that you have or have not seriously considered getting an electric vehicle the next time you buy or lease a vehicle, or do you already have one?

49% have considered
45% have not considered
6% already have one
– don’t know

Changing topics,

45. Do you think that ocean and beach pollution along the California coast is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in California today?

40% big problem
49% somewhat of a problem
10% not a problem
1% don’t know

Following is a list of some specific problems that some people say affect our ocean and marine life in
California today. After each, please indicate whether you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in the part of the California coast that is closest to you.

[rotate questions 46 and 47]

46. How about plastics and marine debris? Do you think this is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in the part of the California coast that is closest to you?

58% big problem
37% somewhat of a problem
5% not a problem
– don’t know

47. How about limited public access to the coast and beaches? Do you think this is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in the part of the California coast that is closest to you?

17% big problem
45% somewhat of a problem
37% not a problem
1% don’t know

48. Next, how important is the condition of oceans and beaches to the economy and quality of life for California’s future?

58% very important
33% somewhat important
6% not too important
1% not at all important
1% don’t know

Next, please say if you favor or oppose the following proposals.

[rotate questions 49 to 52]

49. How about allowing more oil drilling off the California coast? Do you favor or oppose this proposal?

32% favor
67% oppose
1% don't know

50. How about allowing wind power and wave energy projects off the California coast? Do you favor or oppose this proposal?

81% favor
17% oppose
2% don’t know

51. How about expanding hydraulic fracturing, sometimes called “fracking,” for oil and natural gas? Do you favor or oppose this proposal?
34% favor
63% oppose
3% don't know

52. How about building desalination plants on the California coast? Do you favor or oppose this proposal?
72% favor
23% oppose
4% don't know

On another topic,

53. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that President Biden is handling environmental issues in the United States?
49% approve
48% disapprove
3% don't know

54. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the US Congress is handling environmental issues in the United States?
25% approve
71% disapprove
4% don't know

55. How much of the time can you trust the federal government to do what is right when it comes to handling environmental issues in the United States?
5% just about always
24% most of the time
69% only some of the time
1% don't know

56. Right now, which ONE of the following do you think should be the more important priority for addressing America's energy supply: developing alternative energy sources such as wind, solar, and hydrogen technology OR expanding exploration and production of oil, coal, and natural gas?
74% developing alternative energy sources
24% expanding exploration and production
2% don't know

57. Overall, would you favor or oppose the US expanding natural gas production to export large amounts of gas to European countries?
35% favor
60% oppose
5% don't know

58. As you may know, the Biden Administration has set a goal to become carbon neutral by 2050, meaning
the country would release no more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than it removes. Do you favor or oppose the US taking steps to become carbon neutral by 2050?

74% favor
23% oppose
3% don’t know

Changing topics,

59. How big of a problem is racism in the US today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, small problem, or not a problem at all?

48% big problem
34% somewhat of a problem
12% small problem
5% not a problem at all
– don’t know

60. Thinking about your own experience, have you ever experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly because of your race or ethnicity? *(If yes, ask: “would you say regularly or from time to time?”)*

5% yes, regularly
33% yes, from time to time
62% no
– don’t know

61. In general, do you think the criminal justice system in the United States is biased against African Americans, or do you think the criminal justice system treats people equally regardless of race?

60% criminal justice system in the United States is biased against African Americans
39% criminal justice system treats people equally regardless of race
1% don’t know

Changing topics,

62. How concerned are you about the threat of a mass shooting in the area where you live? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not concerned at all?

29% very concerned
42% somewhat concerned
21% not very concerned
8% not concerned at all
– don’t know

63. In general, do you think laws covering the sale of guns should be more strict, less strict, or kept as they are now? *(rotate options 1 and 2, keep 3 last)*

73% more strict
10% less strict
17% kept as they are now
1% don’t know

On another topic,

64. As you may know, the US Supreme Court has ended the constitutional right to abortion by overturning Roe v. Wade. Do you approve or disapprove of the Court overturning Roe v. Wade?

30% approve
68% disapprove
2% don’t know

65. Recently, the California legislature placed a constitutional amendment for voter approval on the November ballot that would prohibit the state from denying or interfering with an individual’s reproductive freedom, including their right to choose to have an abortion and their right to choose or refuse contraceptives. Do you favor or oppose this constitutional amendment on abortion rights?

68% favor
29% oppose
2% don’t know

Changing topics,

[rotate questions 66 and 67]

66. Do you have a [rotate] favorable or an unfavorable impression of the Democratic Party?

48% favorable
49% unfavorable
3% don’t know

67. Do you have a [rotate] favorable or an unfavorable impression of the Republican Party?

28% favorable
70% unfavorable
2% don’t know

On another topic, California uses the direct initiative process, which enables voters to bypass the legislature and have issues put on the ballot—as state propositions—for voter approval or rejection.

[likely voters only] In general, do you think it is a good thing or a bad thing that a majority of voters can make laws and change public policies about environmental issues by passing initiatives?

71% good thing
26% bad thing
3% don’t know

69. [likely voters only] Proposition 20 is the 1972 ballot measure passed by voters that established the California Coastal Commission and regional commissions to plan and regulate the use of land and water in
California’s coastal zone. Overall, do you feel that passing Proposition 20 turned out to be mostly a good thing for California or mostly a bad thing?

75% mostly a good thing
19% mostly a bad thing
1% mixed (volunteered)
5% don’t know

[rotate questions 70 and 71]

70. [likely voters only] In response to a citizen’s initiative eligible for the November ballot, the legislature passed and the governor signed into law a bill that requires state regulations to reduce plastic waste, tax producers of single-use plastics, and fund recycling projects. Do you favor or oppose this effort to reduce plastic waste?

83% favor
15% oppose
2% don’t know

71. [likely voters only] A citizens’ initiative on the November ballot provides funding for programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by increasing the tax on personal income over $2 million with the additional revenue used to support zero emission vehicle programs and wildfire-related activities. Do you favor or oppose this initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

63% favor
35% oppose
2% don’t know

[rotate questions 72 and 73]

72. [likely voters only] Overall, when it comes to environmental issues, overall how much would you say that the initiative process in California today is controlled by special interests—a lot, some, or not at all?

46% a lot
50% some
2% not at all
2% don’t know

73. [likely voters only] Overall, when it comes to environmental issues, overall how much would you say that the legislative process in California today is controlled by special interests—a lot, some, or not at all?

47% a lot
47% some
3% not at all
3% don’t know

74. Next, would you consider yourself to be politically: [read list, rotate order top to bottom]

11% very liberal
20% somewhat liberal
41% middle-of-the-road
18% somewhat conservative
9% very conservative
1% don’t know

75. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics—a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or none?

15% great deal
36% fair amount
36% only a little
13% none
– don’t know

[d1–d15 demographic questions]

Authors

Mark Baldassare is president and CEO of the Public Policy Institute of California, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is a leading expert on public opinion and survey methodology, and has directed the PPIC Statewide Survey since 1998. He is an authority on elections, voter behavior, and political and fiscal reform, authoring ten books and numerous reports on these topics. He often provides testimony before legislative committees and state commissions, and regularly hosts PPIC’s Speaker Series, a public forum featuring in-depth interviews with state and national leaders. Previously, he served as PPIC’s director of research. Before joining PPIC, he was a professor of urban and regional planning at the University of California, Irvine, where he held the Johnson Chair in Civic Governance. He has conducted surveys for the Los Angeles Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, and the California Business Roundtable. He holds a PhD in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley.

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