

**PPIC Statewide Survey:  
Special Survey of the Central Valley  
*in collaboration with the*  
Great Valley Center**

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**Public  
Policy  
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California**

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## Preface

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The Central Valley Survey – an ongoing collaborative effort of the Public Policy Institute of California and the Great Valley Center – is a special edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey.

This is the second PPIC survey of the Central Valley. The first was conducted in October 1999, and the results were released in a survey report published in November 1999. The purpose of the surveys is to provide comprehensive, advocacy-free information on the opinions and public policy preferences of Central Valley residents. The Central Valley has been of considerable interest to researchers and state and national leaders for some time because of its increasing role in the social, economic, and political life of California. The current PPIC survey was co-sponsored by the Great Valley Center with support from the *Bee* newspapers and KVIE-TV in Sacramento.

The Central Valley – the inland area of California stretching 400 miles from Bakersfield to Redding – is home to 5 million residents and is one of the fastest growing areas of the state. Latinos now account for one-fourth of the Central Valley population, and growth in the Latino population is expected to accelerate over the next few decades. Because the region is the agricultural center of the state – and because agriculture is the state's leading industry – the urbanization of farmland in the Central Valley is of great concern to policymakers. The impacts of development on the water supply, open space, and natural resources are major concerns today throughout this region. Since neither of the major political parties has a large voter registration advantage in this region, the Central Valley is considered one of the most critical "swing regions" in the state, consisting of independent-minded voters who can have a tremendous effect on statewide elections.

This survey of 2,006 adult residents includes some of the "benchmark" questions from the 1999 survey in order to measure changes in key indicators over time and includes comparisons with other major regions of California and with the state as a whole. The following issues are explored in this edition of the survey:

- Local ratings, including evaluations of the city and community, satisfaction with local public services, and perceptions of local government effectiveness and the adequacy of local funding.
- Regional perceptions, including the severity of regional problems in the respondent's part of the Central Valley, perceptions of the major causes of the regional problems, and support for some of the proposals that have been suggested for resolving problems in the Central Valley.
- Public policy issues, including perceptions of the most important problem, and personal opinions about the economy, growth, water supply, air quality, electricity supply, the environment, and the future.
- Political, social, and economic trends, including attitudes towards government, civic and religious involvement, news attentiveness, and use of computers and the Internet.
- Variations in local ratings, regional perceptions, attitudes toward Central Valley issues, and political, social, and economic trends over time and across four different regions of the Central Valley (i.e., North Valley, Sacramento Metro, North San Joaquin, and South San Joaquin); between Latinos and non-Hispanic whites; between newcomers and long-term residents; and across the socioeconomic spectrum.

Copies of this report or the November 1999 report may be ordered by e-mail ([order@ppic.org](mailto:order@ppic.org)) or phone (415-291-4400). The reports are also posted on the publications page of the PPIC web site ([www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)).

# The Central Valley

Regional Groupings  
Used in This Report



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## Press Release

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### **CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM PREVAILS IN CENTRAL VALLEY, BUT CONCERNS LOOM LARGE OVER ENERGY, ECONOMY, GROWTH**

#### **Residents See Need for Regional Planning; Digital Divide Widens in Valley, in Contrast to Statewide Trends**

SAN FRANCISCO, California, March 8, 2001 — Despite concerns about job opportunities and quality of life, residents of California's Central Valley remain guardedly optimistic about the region and its prospects, according to a new survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) and the Great Valley Center. But consistent with statewide trends, Central Valley residents are also less confident about the economy and more anxious about energy issues than they were in 1999.

The large-scale public opinion survey of the 18-county Central Valley region found that three in four residents rate their community as an excellent (25%) or good (50%) place to live, ratings very similar to those in PPIC's first survey of the region in November 1999. And although the gap has closed somewhat since 1999, Central Valley residents today remain much more likely to say that the region is headed in the right direction rather than in the wrong direction (59% to 32%). Solid majorities say the quality of local public services they receive is also excellent or good, including local freeways, streets, and roads (58%), parks and other recreational facilities (65%), and public schools (58%). Forty-nine percent rate the region's economy as excellent (7%) or good (42%) — compared to 55 percent in 1999 — while 37 percent say it is fair and 13 percent describe it as poor.

Most residents (56%) expect that job opportunities and economic conditions will improve over the next ten years and that, overall, the Central Valley will be, if not a better place to live, about the same as it is now. Sixteen percent say the region will be a better place to live, 28 percent expect it to be worse, and 54 percent think it will be about the same. In November 1999, residents were evenly divided when asked if the Central Valley would be a better place (37%) or worse place (33%) to live in the future, while only one in four (26%) thought it would stay the same.

“Central Valley residents generally appear satisfied with their communities and are optimistic that one of the region's most pressing problems — a lack of job opportunities — will improve in the future,” said PPIC Statewide Survey Director Mark Baldassare. “However, they also believe that such improvements will come at a cost to their quality of life: Problems associated with growth and development create big worries today and cloud an otherwise rosy view of what's ahead.”

Indeed, along with the economy, Central Valley residents find growth-related issues at the heart of the region's problems. When asked to name the most important issue facing the region, residents say population growth (15%) and the electricity crisis (15%), followed by jobs and the economy (13%) and water (8%). Economic and growth-related concerns again top the list when residents are asked about a number of local problems: Strong majorities say that the lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs (73%), the loss of farmlands (67%), air pollution (64%), population growth and development (63%), traffic congestion (63%), and the availability of affordable housing (59%) are all at least somewhat of a problem in their region. More than half of Central Valley residents feel that

environmental conditions — such as air pollution and water quality — pose a serious threat to their own health and well-being.

Looking ahead to 2010, concern about growth and development persists. Seventy-five percent of residents say they expect that the population of the Central Valley will have grown rapidly and that the quality of the natural environment will have deteriorated. Sixty-eight percent also believe that the gap between the rich and poor will have grown a decade from now.

Large majorities support a series of proposals for solving problems in their region — from farmland protection (88%) and wetland preservation (81%) to public transit expansion (84%) and freeway construction (75%). But they have their limits: Although there is widespread concern about the energy crisis, a solid majority (61%) say they oppose relaxing the air quality standards that regulate power plants and, if new power plants are built in their area, prefer cleaner hydroelectric power (50%) to other types, including natural gas (25%), nuclear (12%), and coal (2%). Despite their interest in hydroelectric power, residents also say that the most important priority for the water supply in the Central Valley should be farms and agriculture (40%) rather than any other use, including environmental protection (27%) or residential use (25%).

### **Residents Want Better Government, Regional Planning**

When asked to rate five possible causes of their regional problems, government spending money on the wrong things was named as a major cause by the largest percentage of Central Valley residents (58%), followed by the lack of effective regional planning (47%) and too much growth in the wrong places (46%). And although most residents think well of their communities and local public services, far fewer give positive ratings to their local governments. When asked to rate the performance of county and city government in solving problems, only four in ten gave their local governments excellent or good ratings. In fact, residents are more likely to say they trust the state government (29%) to solve the important issues facing the Central Valley than county (26%) or city (21%) government.

Although residents are less than impressed with the performance of their local governments and view them as a cause of many problems, they still see a role for government in solving problems associated with growth. Indeed, a solid majority of residents (56%) favor a regional approach to growth and land use development in the Central Valley, where local governments would work together to develop a plan for dealing with population growth and land use development. Most residents (84%) also like the idea of government, business, and citizens' groups working together to tackle the region's problems.

“People in the Central Valley expect that government, with help from private sources, can do a better job of planning for the region's future,” said Carol Whiteside, President of the Great Valley Center. “This can best be accomplished by bringing the Valley's diverse interests together to address our common basket of concerns.”

### **Region Lacks Common Vision**

Indeed, there are significant regional differences *within* the Central Valley on many key issues, as there were in 1999, most notably between residents of the North Valley and people who live in the Sacramento area. For example, residents of the North Valley are far more likely than residents in the Sacramento area to see the lack of well-paying jobs as a big problem (60% to 15%), while more

Sacramento residents view traffic congestion as a big problem (49% to 16%). Interestingly, Sacramento residents are more likely than North Valley residents to say that the Central Valley is headed in the wrong direction (36% to 28%), even though they are also more likely to rate the region's economy as excellent or good (69% to 39%). The explanation for this paradox may have to do with attitudes about growth: Sacramento residents view population growth as the most important issue facing the Central Valley, while North Valley residents express greater concern about economic issues, including jobs.

### Digital Divide: A Troubling Trend

While Latinos in the state as a whole have narrowed the digital divide between themselves and non-Hispanic whites, Latinos in the Central Valley appear to have fallen further behind: A 15-point gap in Internet use in November 1999 has grown to a 28-point gap today. While the number of Latinos in the Central Valley who say they currently use the Internet (35%) is similar to the 38 percent who reported using the Internet in November 1999, the number of non-Hispanic whites reporting Internet use has increased considerably — from 53 percent in 1999 to 63 percent today.

### Other Key Findings

- **Funding for Public Services** (page 1)  
Residents are equally divided about whether their local government has adequate funding for local services: Forty-seven percent say the funding is adequate, but 45 percent think it is not.
- **Latino Optimism** (page 12)  
Although they are less likely than Central Valley residents as a whole to rate the economy as excellent or good (42% to 49%), Latinos are more likely to say that things are headed in the right direction (70% to 59%).
- **Involvement in Faith-Based Institutions** (page 21)  
Six in ten residents say they are at least somewhat active in a church or other religious institution, with 23 percent saying they are “very involved.”
- **Local and Regional News** (page 22)  
Residents are tuned in to news about local government and regional issues. Seventy-two percent say they follow news about their local government very or fairly closely, and 78 percent say the same about news relating to issues facing the Central Valley.

### About the Survey

The Central Valley Survey — an ongoing collaborative effort of the Public Policy Institute of California and the Great Valley Center — is a special edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey. The purpose of this survey is to provide a comprehensive, advocacy-free study of the political, social, and economic attitudes and public policy preferences of Central Valley residents.

Findings of the current survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,006 adult residents in the 18-county Central Valley region, interviewed from February 5 to February 15, 2001. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. The sampling error for the total sample is +/- 2%. For additional information on survey methodology, see page 25.

Dr. Mark Baldassare is a senior fellow and program director at PPIC. He is founder and director of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which he has conducted since 1998. For over two decades, he has directed surveys for the University of California, Irvine, and major state news organizations. Dr. Baldassare is the author of numerous books, including *California in the New Millennium: The Changing Social and Political Landscape* (University of California Press, 2000).

PPIC is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to objective, nonpartisan research on economic, social, and political issues that affect the lives of Californians. The Institute was established in 1994 with an endowment from William R. Hewlett. The Great Valley Center is a private, nonprofit organization promoting the economic, social, and environmental well-being of California's Central Valley.

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## Local Ratings

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### City and Community Perceptions

Most residents of the Central Valley continue to give their cities and communities high ratings. Three out of four say their city or community is an excellent (25%) or good (50%) place to live, ratings very similar to those in the November 1999 Central Valley Survey. The ratings are mostly positive across regions, but people living in the Sacramento Metro area (82%) are more likely than those living in the North Valley (75%), South San Joaquin (72%), and North San Joaquin (71%) regions to rate their city or community as an excellent or good place to live. Ratings also differ across the major ethnic groups, with Latinos (68%) less likely than non-Hispanic whites (78%) to give their communities good or excellent ratings. Length of residence makes little difference in perceptions: Life-long residents (75%) and residents who arrived in the past five years (71%) are almost equally likely to give positive ratings to their cities and communities.

"Overall, how would you rate your city or community as a place to live?"

|           | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|-----------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|           |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| Excellent | 25%        | 28%          | 26%              | 24%               | 23%               | 20%    |
| Good      | 50         | 47           | 56               | 47                | 49                | 48     |
| Fair      | 20         | 20           | 15               | 22                | 22                | 21     |
| Poor      | 5          | 5            | 3                | 7                 | 6                 | 11     |

### Local Public Services

Central Valley residents are about equally divided on the question of whether their local government has adequate funding for public services: Forty-seven percent say the funding is adequate, but 45 percent think it is not. Nevertheless, residents are generally positive about the public services their local government manages to provide.

People in the North Valley (35%) are less likely than people in the Sacramento Metro (48%), North San Joaquin (49%), and South San Joaquin (50%) regions to say their local governments have adequate funding to provide public services. Perceptions also differ across groups: Latinos (57%) are more likely than non-Hispanic whites (45%) – and recent residents (53%) are more likely than life-long residents (46%) – to think that local funding is adequate. There are no differences in terms of political party registration.

In rating the quality of services their local governments provide, two in three residents give excellent or good ratings to parks and public recreation facilities (65%), and almost six in 10 say their freeways, streets, and roads (58%), and local public schools (58%) are excellent or good. Children's services and youth activities receive a lower rating. Only 46 percent say they are excellent or good; however, one in six has no opinion about these services.

The ratings of roads, schools, and parks were very similar in the 1999 Central Valley Survey. The most noteworthy change over time across regions has been a decline in the excellent ratings for

## Local Ratings

parks and recreation facilities in the Sacramento Metro (30% to 23%) and North San Joaquin (23% to 16%) regions. The previous survey did not rate children's services and youth activities.

As they did for funding, local service ratings vary across regions. Compared to residents of other regions, Sacramento Metro residents give higher or equal ratings to all local services except local schools. In the Sacramento Metro region, half the residents rank local public schools as excellent, compared with six in ten residents of the other regions. However, Sacramento Metro residents (62%) are more likely than residents in the North Valley (54%), South San Joaquin (57%), and North San Joaquin (55%) regions to rank their roads as excellent or good. Similarly, excellent or good ratings for parks and recreational facilities were more frequent among residents of the Sacramento Metro (71%) and North Valley (69%) regions than among their counterparts in the North San Joaquin (62%) and South San Joaquin (63%) regions.

Latinos and non-Hispanic whites differ very little in rating local public services. Non-Hispanic whites are more likely than Latinos to give excellent or good ratings to parks (68% to 61%) and less likely to give these ratings to schools (57% to 64%). The two groups rate roads about the same, while non-Hispanic whites (44%) are less likely than Latinos (52%) to give excellent or good ratings to children's services and youth activities.

People with children in a public school give high ratings to local public schools and also to children's services and youth activities. Sixty-four percent rate their local public schools as excellent or good, 25 percent say they are fair, and 11 percent describe them as poor. As for the local children's services and youth activities, 52 percent of those with children at home say these services are excellent or good, 26 percent rate them as fair, 16 percent say they are poor, and 6 percent have no opinion.

Recent residents of the Central Valley are less likely than life-long residents to give good or excellent ratings to public schools (53% to 59%). However, the recent residents are more likely than life-long residents to give positive ratings to their roads (66% to 52%) and parks (67% to 61%). The ratings of children's services and youth activities do not vary by length of residence.

Ratings also differ by income: Households earning \$80,000 or more were more likely than households earning less than \$40,000 to rank parks (72% to 65%), schools (63% to 58%), and children's services (52% to 46%) as excellent or good. Fifty-eight percent of both groups rated roads as excellent or good.

**"Overall, do you think your local government does or does not have adequate funding for public services, such as libraries, police, parks, roads, and schools? "**

|              | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|--------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|              |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| Does         | 47%        | 35%          | 48%              | 49%               | 50%               | 57%    |
| Does not     | 45         | 58           | 46               | 43                | 41                | 31     |
| Other answer | 1          | 1            | 0                | 1                 | 1                 | 1      |
| Don't know   | 7          | 6            | 6                | 7                 | 9                 | 11     |

"How would you rate some of the public services you receive in your local area?"

|   | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|---|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|   |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| <i>Freeways, streets, and roads</i>                   |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Excellent   | 10%        | 7%           | 11%              | 9%                | 9%                | 9%     |
| Good  | 48         | 47           | 51               | 46                | 48                | 48     |
| Fair  | 30         | 34           | 29               | 31                | 30                | 30     |
| Poor  | 12         | 12           | 9                | 14                | 13                | 13     |
| Don't know  | 0          | 0            | 0                | 0                 | 0                 | 0      |
| <i>Parks and other public recreational facilities</i> |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Excellent   | 19%        | 24%          | 23%              | 16%               | 18%               | 14%    |
| Good  | 46         | 45           | 48               | 46                | 45                | 47     |
| Fair  | 23         | 21           | 19               | 24                | 25                | 25     |
| Poor  | 8          | 8            | 5                | 11                | 9                 | 11     |
| Don't know  | 4          | 2            | 5                | 3                 | 3                 | 3      |
| <i>Local public schools</i>                           |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Excellent   | 16%        | 16%          | 14%              | 15%               | 19%               | 12%    |
| Good  | 42         | 48           | 36               | 43                | 44                | 52     |
| Fair  | 23         | 22           | 23               | 25                | 22                | 23     |
| Poor  | 9          | 7            | 9                | 11                | 8                 | 9      |
| Don't know  | 10         | 7            | 18               | 6                 | 7                 | 4      |
| <i>Children's services and youth activities</i>       |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Excellent   | 11%        | 11%          | 10%              | 12%               | 11%               | 15%    |
| Good  | 35         | 33           | 33               | 33                | 37                | 37     |
| Fair  | 24         | 26           | 23               | 26                | 24                | 25     |
| Poor  | 13         | 14           | 9                | 18                | 15                | 16     |
| Don't know  | 17         | 16           | 25               | 11                | 13                | 7      |

## Local Government

Although most Central Valley residents think well of their communities and local public services, far fewer give positive ratings to their local governments. When asked to rate the performance of city government in solving problems, four in 10 residents gave “excellent” (5%) or “good” (35%) ratings. Variations across regions were minimal, and the city government ratings were similar in the 1999 Central Valley Survey.

However, there are differences across groups: The likelihood of giving city government excellent or good ratings for problem solving is higher among Latinos (47%) than among non-Hispanic whites (39%), among recent residents (49%) than among lifetime residents (41%), and among Republicans and Democrats (41% each) than among voters outside the major parties (32%).

County government did not fare any better than city government in ratings for solving problems. Forty-two percent of residents give county government good (37%) or excellent (5%) ratings. Again, there are no major differences across regions, and the responses were very similar in the 1999 Central Valley Survey. Latinos (49%) are more likely than non-Hispanic whites (39%) to rate the performance of county government as excellent or good. Voters outside the major parties (20%) are more likely than Republicans (11%) and Democrats (10%) to give poor ratings to county government. There are no differences by length of residence in the region.

**"How would you rate the performance of your city government in solving problems in your city or community?"**

|                                  | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|----------------------------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|                                  |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| Excellent                        | 5%         | 5%           | 4%               | 6%                | 5%                | 8%     |
| Good                             | 35         | 31           | 38               | 33                | 35                | 39     |
| Fair                             | 38         | 35           | 37               | 40                | 38                | 34     |
| Poor                             | 14         | 15           | 13               | 14                | 15                | 14     |
| Don't know, don't live in a city | 8          | 14           | 8                | 7                 | 7                 | 5      |

**"How would you rate the performance of county government in solving problems in your county?"**

|            | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|            |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| Excellent  | 5%         | 5%           | 5%               | 5%                | 4%                | 9%     |
| Good       | 37         | 38           | 40               | 35                | 36                | 40     |
| Fair       | 40         | 38           | 39               | 43                | 41                | 35     |
| Poor       | 13         | 14           | 12               | 11                | 14                | 11     |
| Don't know | 5          | 5            | 4                | 6                 | 5                 | 5      |

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## Regional Perceptions

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### Regional Problems

The survey asked residents to rate the severity of six problems in their part of the Central Valley. A majority ranked each of the six as a "big problem" or "somewhat of a problem," in the following order: lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs (73%), the loss of agriculture and farmlands (67%), air pollution (64%), population growth and development (63%), traffic congestion (63%), and the availability of affordable housing (59%).

Since the November 1999 Central Valley Survey, the perception of severity has increased for regional growth (56% to 63%), traffic (59% to 63%), and the loss of farmlands and agriculture (64% to 67%). In contrast, air pollution was rated as slightly less severe today than in 1999 (64% to 69%, but the previous survey was in the field during forest fires and the infamous "tire fire"). In 1999, we did not ask for problem ratings of job opportunities and the availability of affordable housing.

These overall ratings mask regional differences. Sixty percent of North Valley residents see lack of well-paying jobs in their region as a big problem, compared to only 15 percent of Sacramento Metro residents. Conversely, 49 percent of Sacramento Metro residents describe traffic as a big problem, while only 16 percent hold this view in the North Valley. Population growth and development are considered more of a problem in the Sacramento Metro and North San Joaquin regions than they are elsewhere. The loss of farmlands and agriculture is noted as a big problem by a greater percentage of North San Joaquin residents, while air pollution is viewed as a big problem by a greater percentage of South San Joaquin residents. These regional variations in perceptions of problem severity have persisted over time. However, the perception that traffic, growth, and the loss of farmlands and agriculture are big regional problems has increased in all regions since the November 1999 Central Valley Survey.

Although both Latinos and non-Hispanic whites see air pollution as a big problem, they differ considerably about other problems. Latinos are *less* likely than non-Hispanic whites to see traffic congestion (21% to 31%), growth (16% to 29%), and the loss of farmlands (23% to 38%) as big problems. Conversely, Latinos are *more* likely than non-Hispanic whites to see the lack of well-paying jobs (47% to 31%) and affordable housing (29% to 23%) as big problems.

Length of residence does not affect perceptions of traffic, growth, air pollution, the availability of affordable housing, or the lack of well-paying jobs. However, people who have lived in the Central Valley less than five years are much less likely than lifelong residents to see the loss of farmlands and agriculture as a big problem (25% to 39%).

Predictably, people with household incomes under \$40,000 a year are much more likely than those with household incomes of \$80,000 or more to say that the lack of well-paying jobs (43% to 22%) and the availability of affordable housing (32% to 13%) are big problems in their regions.

Regional Perceptions

"I am going to read you a list of problems other people have told us about. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in your part of the Central Valley."

|  | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|--|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|  |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| <b><i>Lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs</i></b> |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Big problem  | 35%        | 60%          | 15%              | 40%               | 41%               | 47%    |
| Some problem   | 38         | 30           | 37               | 40                | 40                | 38     |
| Not a problem  | 23         | 9            | 43               | 16                | 16                | 13     |
| Don't know   | 4          | 1            | 5                | 4                 | 3                 | 2      |
| <b><i>Loss of farms and agriculture</i></b>              |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Big problem  | 34%        | 24%          | 36%              | 41%               | 31%               | 23%    |
| Some problem   | 33         | 31           | 36               | 30                | 33                | 33     |
| Not a problem  | 28         | 38           | 22               | 26                | 30                | 38     |
| Don't know   | 5          | 7            | 6                | 3                 | 6                 | 6      |
| <b><i>Air pollution</i></b>                              |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Big problem  | 26%        | 12%          | 28%              | 18%               | 36%               | 23%    |
| Some problem   | 38         | 32           | 43               | 41                | 33                | 38     |
| Not a problem  | 35         | 56           | 28               | 40                | 30                | 38     |
| Don't know   | 1          | 0            | 1                | 1                 | 1                 | 1      |
| <b><i>Population growth, urban development</i></b>       |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Big problem  | 26%        | 15%          | 36%              | 30%               | 19%               | 16%    |
| Some problem   | 37         | 36           | 37               | 36                | 37                | 40     |
| Not a problem  | 36         | 47           | 25               | 33                | 42                | 43     |
| Don't know   | 1          | 2            | 2                | 1                 | 2                 | 1      |
| <b><i>Traffic congestion</i></b>                         |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Big problem  | 29%        | 16%          | 49%              | 31%               | 17%               | 21%    |
| Some problem   | 34         | 32           | 36               | 35                | 33                | 40     |
| Not a problem  | 36         | 51           | 14               | 34                | 49                | 38     |
| Don't know   | 1          | 1            | 1                | 0                 | 1                 | 1      |
| <b><i>Availability of affordable housing</i></b>         |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Big problem  | 26%        | 24%          | 31%              | 33%               | 18%               | 29%    |
| Some problem   | 33         | 32           | 39               | 33                | 29                | 37     |
| Not a problem  | 39         | 43           | 28               | 33                | 50                | 32     |
| Don't know   | 2          | 1            | 2                | 1                 | 3                 | 2      |

## Causes of Regional Problems

What do Central Valley residents see as the source of their regional problems? When they were asked to rate five suggested causes as major or minor contributors, government spending money on the wrong things was named as a major cause of problems by a larger percentage (58%) than any other cause. This was followed by a lack of effective regional planning (47%), too much growth in the wrong places (46%), over-development because of a lack of government regulation (34%), and a lack of development because of too much government regulation (32%).

Like the perception of problems, perception of causes differed by regions. Government spending money on the wrong things scored highest as a major cause of problems across all regions. A substantial percentage of residents in all regions also see lack of effective regional planning as a major cause. Beyond that, there were interesting differences: Residents of the Sacramento Metro and North San Joaquin regions are more likely than others to cite too much growth in the wrong places as a major contributor to problems in their regions. They are also more likely to see *over-development* because of a *lack* of government regulation as a major cause. In contrast, residents in the North Valley and South San Joaquin are more likely to believe that *lack of development* because of *too much* government regulation is a major cause of problems in their regions.

Ranking of causes also differed across groups:

- Life-long residents are more likely than recent residents to cite government spending money on the wrong things (66% to 50%) and too much growth in the wrong places (48% to 40%) as major causes of regional problems.
- Non-Hispanic whites (49%) are slightly more likely than Latinos (43%) to mention a lack of effective regional planning as a major cause.
- Democrats are more likely than Republicans to identify too much growth (52% to 41%) and too little regulation (41% to 30%) as major causes, while Republicans are more likely than Democrats to blame too much government regulation (36% to 26%) for regional problems. Yet, they were equally likely to view lack of effective regional planning and government spending money on the wrong things as major causes of their region's problems.

**Regional Perceptions**

"I am going to read some of the reasons people give for problems in the Central Valley. For each one tell me if you think it is a major cause or a minor cause of problems in your part of the Central Valley."

|   | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|---|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|   |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| <b><i>Government spending money on the wrong things</i></b>                 |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Major cause   | 58%        | 55%          | 55%              | 61%               | 61%               | 60%    |
| Minor cause   | 36         | 38           | 38               | 34                | 34                | 35     |
| Don't know  | 6          | 7            | 7                | 5                 | 5                 | 5      |
| <b><i>Lack of effective regional planning</i></b>                           |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Major cause   | 47%        | 42%          | 49%              | 49%               | 47%               | 43%    |
| Minor cause   | 46         | 50           | 45               | 45                | 46                | 49     |
| Don't know  | 7          | 8            | 6                | 6                 | 7                 | 8      |
| <b><i>Too much growth in the wrong places</i></b>                           |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Major cause   | 46%        | 32%          | 52%              | 49%               | 43%               | 44%    |
| Minor cause   | 50         | 62           | 46               | 48                | 52                | 49     |
| Don't know  | 4          | 6            | 2                | 3                 | 5                 | 7      |
| <b><i>Over-development because of a lack of government regulations</i></b>  |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Major cause   | 34%        | 18%          | 40%              | 38%               | 33%               | 37%    |
| Minor cause   | 60         | 76           | 53               | 56                | 62                | 57     |
| Don't know  | 6          | 6            | 7                | 6                 | 5                 | 6      |
| <b><i>Lack of development because of too much government regulation</i></b> |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Major cause   | 32%        | 43%          | 23%              | 32%               | 36%               | 39%    |
| Minor cause   | 61         | 49           | 70               | 63                | 57                | 53     |
| Don't know  | 7          | 8            | 7                | 5                 | 7                 | 8      |

## Solutions to Regional Problems

Finally, Central Valley residents were asked to rate six proposals as good or bad ideas for solving problems in their region. A large majority rated all of the proposals as good ideas. Protecting farms from development had the highest percentage (88%), followed by expanding public transit (84%), preserving wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas (81%), encouraging job centers to develop near existing housing (78%), establishing growth boundaries for development (76%), and building or widening freeways (75%).

Each of the proposals had strong support in every region and among various groups. Latinos and Non-Hispanic whites, recent and life-long residents, and residents across all age and income categories solidly endorsed each of the proposals. But there were some differences in level of support:

- The proposals generally had higher ratings in the Sacramento Metro and North San Joaquin areas than elsewhere.
- There was strong support across voter groups for protecting farms from development. However, Democrats were more favorable than Republicans towards growth boundaries (82% to 69%), expanding public transit (89% to 77%), preserving environmentally sensitive areas (89% to 69%), and encouraging job centers near existing housing (79% to 71%). Voters outside of the major parties expressed policy preferences closer to those of Democrats than of Republicans.

**Regional Perceptions**

**"I'm going to read you some proposals people have made for solving problems in the Central Valley. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a good idea or a bad idea for solving problems in your part of the Central Valley. "**

|   | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|---|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|   |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| <b><i>Protecting farms and agricultural lands from urban development</i></b>                          |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Good idea   | 88%        | 85%          | 90%              | 90%               | 87%               | 89%    |
| Bad idea  | 9          | 13           | 7                | 7                 | 10                | 6      |
| Don't know  | 3          | 2            | 3                | 3                 | 3                 | 5      |
| <b><i>Expanding bus, light rail, and public transit systems</i></b>                                   |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Good idea   | 84%        | 72%          | 90%              | 86%               | 82%               | 90%    |
| Bad idea  | 14         | 25           | 9                | 12                | 16                | 9      |
| Don't know  | 2          | 3            | 1                | 2                 | 2                 | 1      |
| <b><i>Preserving wetlands, rivers, and environmentally-sensitive areas</i></b>                        |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Good idea   | 81%        | 79%          | 85%              | 84%               | 76%               | 87%    |
| Bad idea  | 15         | 16           | 13               | 14                | 18                | 8      |
| Don't know  | 4          | 5            | 2                | 2                 | 6                 | 5      |
| <b><i>Encouraging job centers to develop near existing housing</i></b>                                |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Good idea   | 78%        | 78%          | 79%              | 79%               | 78%               | 87%    |
| Bad idea  | 18         | 19           | 16               | 17                | 19                | 11     |
| Don't know  | 4          | 3            | 5                | 4                 | 3                 | 2      |
| <b><i>Establishing growth boundaries that restrict the areas where development can take place</i></b> |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Good idea   | 76%        | 70%          | 80%              | 80%               | 73%               | 80%    |
| Bad idea  | 20         | 24           | 17               | 18                | 23                | 15     |
| Don't know  | 4          | 6            | 3                | 2                 | 4                 | 5      |
| <b><i>Building or widening freeways</i></b>   |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Good idea   | 75%        | 69%          | 77%              | 72%               | 75%               | 85%    |
| Bad idea  | 23         | 29           | 20               | 26                | 22                | 13     |
| Don't know  | 2          | 2            | 3                | 2                 | 3                 | 2      |

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## Central Valley Issues

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### Most Important Issue

According to residents, the most important issues facing the Central Valley today are the electricity crisis (15%), population growth (15%), and jobs and the economy (13%). Although two-thirds described air pollution and loss of farms and agriculture as problems in their regions (see p. 6), only 6 percent named either as the most important issue facing the Central Valley. Only 8 percent identified water as the most important issue, and 5 percent or less were most troubled by traffic, crime, schools, housing, or drugs. In the November 1999 Central Valley Survey, the list of top concerns was very different: Water (13%) and pollution (10%) received the top rankings, fewer named growth (8%) or the economy (5%), and no one mentioned electricity as an issue.

While the electricity crisis is seen as important overall, there are regional and ethnic differences in concern. In the North Valley, water tied with electricity as the most important issue. In Sacramento, growth (23%) was mentioned more often than anything else. In the North San Joaquin Valley, growth (18%) and the economy (16%) were rated slightly higher. In the South San Joaquin Valley, the economy (18%) was the top issue, with electricity (12%) and air pollution (10%) close behind. Latinos were much more likely than non-Hispanic whites to mention jobs and the economy (21% to 10%) and much less likely to name growth as the top Central Valley issue (7% to 16%).

**"What do you think is the most important issue facing the Central Valley today?"**

|                                | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|--------------------------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|                                |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| Electricity crisis             | 15%        | 18%          | 18%              | 15%               | 12%               | 13%    |
| Population growth              | 15         | 8            | 23               | 18                | 7                 | 7      |
| Jobs and the economy           | 13         | 13           | 5                | 16                | 18                | 21     |
| Water                          | 8          | 18           | 6                | 4                 | 8                 | 2      |
| Air Pollution                  | 6          | 3            | 4                | 2                 | 10                | 5      |
| Loss of farmlands, agriculture | 6          | 5            | 6                | 8                 | 5                 | 4      |
| Traffic and transportation     | 5          | 5            | 8                | 5                 | 3                 | 4      |
| Crime                          | 3          | 3            | 2                | 4                 | 4                 | 8      |
| Education                      | 3          | 4            | 4                | 1                 | 2                 | 3      |
| Environmental pollution        | 3          | 3            | 2                | 2                 | 3                 | 3      |
| Government                     | 2          | 0            | 1                | 1                 | 2                 | 1      |
| Housing                        | 2          | 2            | 3                | 3                 | 2                 | 3      |
| Drugs                          | 1          | 1            | 2                | 2                 | 2                 | 2      |
| Legal/illegal immigration      | 1          | 2            | 1                | 1                 | 2                 | 1      |
| Poverty                        | 1          | 1            | 1                | 1                 | 1                 | 1      |
| Other issues                   | 1          | 1            | 2                | 2                 | 2                 | 1      |
| Don't know                     | 15         | 13           | 12               | 15                | 17                | 21     |

## Overall Mood

The overall mood in the Central Valley today is more tempered than it was in the November 1999 survey. Just under half (49%) rate the economy in the region as excellent or good, while 37 percent say it is fair, and 13 percent describe it as poor. In November 1999, a majority (55%) said the Central Valley economy was in excellent or good shape. Regional and group variations in assessment of the economy are striking: Seven in 10 in the Sacramento region describe the economy as excellent or good, compared to four in 10 residents elsewhere. Latinos (42%) are much less likely than non-Hispanic whites (52%) to rate the Central Valley economy as excellent or good.

Central Valley residents are much more likely to say the region is headed in the right direction than in the wrong direction (59% to 32%). Nevertheless, and consistent with the drop in economic confidence, fewer now believe that the Central Valley is headed in the right direction than did so in the November 1999 survey (59% to 63%). Once again, there are regional and ethnic differences. Although Sacramento Metro residents rated the current economy much more highly, they were slightly more likely than people in other regions to think things in the Central Valley are headed in the wrong direction. Conversely, while Latinos rated the economy lower than did others, they were much more likely than non-Hispanic whites (70% to 55%) to say the Central Valley is going in the right direction.

The PPIC Statewide Survey in January 2001 found similar trends in the overall mood of Californians. Most residents are still feeling positive toward the state, but less so than in the past two years.

"How would you rate the economy in the Central Valley – is it excellent, good, fair, or poor?"

|            | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|            |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| Excellent  | 7%         | 2%           | 14%              | 4%                | 4%                | 7%     |
| Good       | 42         | 37           | 55               | 39                | 35                | 35     |
| Fair       | 37         | 45           | 25               | 41                | 42                | 39     |
| Poor       | 13         | 15           | 5                | 15                | 18                | 18     |
| Don't know | 1          | 1            | 1                | 1                 | 1                 | 1      |

"Do you think that things in the Central Valley are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?"

|                 | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|-----------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|                 |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| Right direction | 59%        | 58%          | 56%              | 58%               | 63%               | 70%    |
| Wrong direction | 32         | 28           | 36               | 33                | 30                | 23     |
| Don't know      | 9          | 14           | 8                | 9                 | 7                 | 7      |

## Electricity Supply

Central Valley residents are not willing to sacrifice air quality or set aside environmental concerns to ease the energy crisis that has emerged in recent months. A solid majority (61%) of residents oppose relaxing the air quality standards for power plants if it means more air pollution. In every region, only about one in three residents favored this idea for expanding the supply of electricity. Latinos (65%) were even more opposed to the idea than non-Hispanic whites (59%). Opposition to relaxing air quality standards is highest among younger adults, women, and Democrats.

If more power plants were built in the Central Valley, half the residents would most prefer hydroelectric plants, while one in four would most prefer natural gas-powered plants. In contrast, only one in eight residents would choose nuclear-powered plants, and a scant two percent would prefer coal-powered generators. Although hydroelectric power plants are the top choice in all regions, they are most preferred in the northern regions of the Central Valley. Non-Hispanic whites overwhelmingly choose hydroelectric over natural gas plants (54% to 20%), while Latinos divide equally between these two power sources.

People who say that the electricity crisis is the most important issue facing the Central Valley are much more likely to oppose (55%) than to favor (39%) relaxing the air quality standards for power plants. They also strongly prefer hydroelectric power plants (59%) over natural gas plants (17%). Interestingly, both residents who support relaxing air quality standards, and those who do not, favor hydroelectric power over other energy sources for generating more electricity in the Central Valley.

**"Do you favor or oppose relaxing the air quality standards that regulate power plants, even if it means more air pollution in the Central Valley?"**

|            | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|            |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| Favor      | 34%        | 32%          | 34%              | 37%               | 34%               | 30%    |
| Oppose     | 61         | 64           | 63               | 57                | 61                | 65     |
| Don't know | 5          | 4            | 3                | 6                 | 5                 | 5      |

**"If new electric power plants were built in the Central Valley, which of the following would you most prefer?"**

|                            | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|----------------------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|                            |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| Hydroelectric              | 50%        | 58%          | 53%              | 53%               | 44%               | 38%    |
| Natural gas-powered        | 25         | 17           | 22               | 23                | 31                | 37     |
| Nuclear                    | 12         | 11           | 15               | 10                | 10                | 5      |
| Coal-powered               | 2          | 2            | 1                | 3                 | 3                 | 3      |
| Other answer (volunteered) | 2          | 1            | 2                | 1                 | 2                 | 1      |
| Don't know                 | 9          | 11           | 7                | 10                | 10                | 16     |

## Water Supply

Water supply may not be the highest priority today, but two in three residents say it is a big problem (25%) or somewhat of a problem (40%) in the Central Valley. The farther south one goes, the higher the percentage of residents who see water supply as a problem: 59 percent in the North Valley, 63 percent in the Sacramento region, 62 percent in the North San Joaquin Valley, and 69 percent in the South San Joaquin Valley. Non-Hispanic whites (71%) are more likely than Latinos (52%) – and life-long Central Valley residents (66%) are more likely than recent residents (54%) – to see the supply of water as a problem.

The contention over water rights in the Central Valley is reflected in the mixed responses to a survey question about the most important priority for the water supply. Four in 10 residents think that providing water for farms and agriculture most important, one in four chooses environmental protection, and another one in four says homes and residents. There are regional and group differences: Farms and agriculture take significant precedence over other water uses in the South San Joaquin and North Valley regions. Priorities are divided about equally among Sacramento residents. Latinos choose environmental protection over agricultural uses (45% to 22%), while non-Hispanic whites choose agricultural uses over environmental protection (48% to 20%). Recent residents favor environmental protection over agricultural uses (38% to 29%), while life-long residents choose agricultural uses over environmental protection (47% to 19%). Central Valley residents who think the water supply is a big problem place a high priority on providing water for agricultural uses (52%) rather than for homes and residents (21%) or protecting the environment (21%).

"How much of a problem is the supply of water in the Central Valley today – is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem?"

|                    | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|--------------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|                    |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| Big problem        | 25%        | 22%          | 24%              | 18%               | 30%               | 12%    |
| Somewhat a problem | 40         | 37           | 39               | 44                | 39                | 40     |
| Not a problem      | 33         | 39           | 35               | 37                | 29                | 46     |
| Don't know         | 2          | 2            | 2                | 1                 | 2                 | 2      |

"What do you think should be the most important priority for the water supply in the Central Valley – providing water for farms and agricultural uses, providing water for homes and residents, or protecting the environment?"

|                            | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|----------------------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|                            |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| Farms and agriculture      | 40%        | 42%          | 34%              | 40%               | 45%               | 22%    |
| Protect environment        | 27         | 30           | 30               | 27                | 24                | 45     |
| Homes and residents        | 25         | 19           | 28               | 25                | 24                | 26     |
| Other answer (volunteered) | 3          | 4            | 4                | 2                 | 3                 | 1      |
| Don't know                 | 5          | 5            | 4                | 6                 | 4                 | 6      |

## Environmental Conditions

Eight in 10 residents cite air pollution as at least somewhat of a problem in the Central Valley, while three in 10 residents describe it as a big problem. Problem perception differs regionally: Residents in the South San Joaquin (39%) and Sacramento (33%) regions are much more likely than those living in the North San Joaquin (21%) and North Valley (20%) regions to say that air pollution is a big problem. However, even in the North Valley, two in three residents cite air pollution in the Central Valley as at least somewhat of a problem. Non-Hispanic whites (34%) are more likely than Latinos (23%) to describe air pollution as a big problem in the Central Valley. Recent residents and life-long residents of the Central Valley have similar perceptions of air pollution.

More than half (55%) of Central Valley residents feel that environmental conditions – such as air pollution and water quality – pose a serious threat to their own health and well-being. One in six residents describes the environmental threat to their own health and well-being as “very serious.” Concerns about the personal consequences of environmental conditions increase as one moves from the north to the south: 43 percent in the North Valley, 55 percent in the Sacramento Metro area, 53 percent in the North San Joaquin region, and 59 percent in the South San Joaquin region. Many more Latinos (62%) than non-Hispanic whites (52%) express concern about the environmental conditions affecting their health and well-being.

Of those residents who cite air pollution as a big problem, eight in 10 say environmental conditions such as air pollution and water quality in the Central Valley are a very serious (32%) or somewhat serious (48%) threat to themselves.

**"How much of a problem is air pollution in the Central Valley today – is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem?"**

|                    | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|--------------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|                    |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| Big problem        | 31%        | 20%          | 33%              | 21%               | 39%               | 23%    |
| Somewhat a problem | 49         | 46           | 53               | 57                | 43                | 51     |
| Not a problem      | 19         | 33           | 13               | 21                | 17                | 24     |
| Don't know         | 1          | 1            | 1                | 1                 | 1                 | 2      |

**"Overall, how serious a threat to your own health and well-being are environmental conditions in the Central Valley today, such as air pollution and water quality – very serious, somewhat serious, or not too serious?"**

|                  | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|------------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|                  |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| Very serious     | 16%        | 12%          | 15%              | 15%               | 17%               | 17%    |
| Somewhat serious | 39         | 31           | 40               | 38                | 42                | 45     |
| Not too serious  | 44         | 55           | 45               | 46                | 40                | 36     |
| Don't know       | 1          | 2            | 0                | 1                 | 1                 | 2      |

## Future Outlook

Although Central Valley residents have some deep concerns about the future, they retain a guarded optimism. They expect considerable population growth between now and 2010. A large percentage believe that the quality of the environment will deteriorate and that the gap between rich and poor will grow. However, a majority expect that job opportunities and economic conditions will improve and that, overall, the Central Valley will be, if not a better place to live, about the same as it is now. These perceptions do, however, vary across regions, ethnic groups, and length of residence.

Nine in 10 residents assume that the population will be increasing in the Central Valley, and 75 percent anticipate rapid growth between now and 2010. A similar perception of rapid growth in the decade ahead was evident in the Central Valley Survey in November 1999.

An overwhelming majority of residents in every region expect growth, although the prediction of rapid growth is most common in the Sacramento Metro (81%) and North San Joaquin (79%) areas and less pronounced in the South San Joaquin area (71%) and the North Valley (62%). Non-Hispanic whites (76%) are more likely than Latinos (69%) to expect rapid growth in the Central Valley, although most members of each group anticipate some growth in the Central Valley. There are no differences between recent and life-long residents.

Seventy-five percent expect the natural environment to deteriorate, while only 20 percent expect improvement. Sixty-eight percent expect the gap between rich and poor to grow, while only 24 percent expect it to get smaller. However, residents are more optimistic about the economy: 56 percent expect job opportunities and economic conditions to improve, while 39 percent expect them to worsen.

Again, regional and group perceptions vary: Sacramento area residents are somewhat gloomier than others about the quality of the natural environment and the growing gap between the rich and the poor, but they are also a little more optimistic about job opportunities and economic conditions in the future. Latinos are less likely than non-Hispanic whites to think that the natural environment will deteriorate (69% to 78%) and that the gap between the rich and the poor will grow (60% to 71%). However, they are less likely to think that job opportunities and the economy will improve (49% to 58%). Recent residents are more likely than life-long residents to think job prospects in the future will improve (64% to 51%), but their views on the environment and income inequality are similar.

In a December 1999 PPIC Statewide Survey, Californians expressed more optimism than Central Valley residents about the economy and job opportunities, with 60% believing conditions would get better, and less pessimism about the environment, with 60% saying the quality of the natural environment would get worse. Californians overall were similar to Central Valley residents in their assessment of growing income inequality in the future.

While most Central Valley residents feel that things are going well today, few think that the Central Valley will be a better place to live in the future. In fact, a higher percentage expect the Central Valley to be a worse place (28%) than a better place (16%) to live in 2010. Still, over half (54%) expect it to be about the same as it is today. Although the gap is the largest in the Sacramento Metro area (32% to 13%), pessimists outnumber optimists in every region. Non-Hispanic whites (31%) are more likely than Latinos (20%) to expect the region to be a worse place to live. Recent residents (25%) are more likely than life-long residents (15%) to expect the Central Valley to be a better place to live in 2010.

Those who expect the Central Valley to be a worse place to live in 2010 paint a grim picture of the future: 95 percent predict the quality of the natural environment will deteriorate, 87 percent expect rapid population growth, 79 percent expect that the gap between the rich and the poor will grow. Of those who predict a *better* future, 82 percent are expecting job opportunities to improve.

"Looking ahead to the year 2010, which is more likely to happen in the Central Valley?"

|   | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|---|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|   |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| <i>The population of the Central Valley will ...</i>      |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Grow rapidly  | 75%        | 62%          | 81%              | 79%               | 71%               | 69%    |
| Grow slowly   | 15         | 22           | 10               | 13                | 18                | 17     |
| Stay about the same                                       | 7          | 10           | 5                | 7                 | 9                 | 9      |
| Decline   | 2          | 4            | 2                | 1                 | 1                 | 2      |
| Don't know  | 1          | 2            | 2                | 0                 | 1                 | 3      |
| <i>The quality of the natural environment will ...</i>    |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Improve   | 20%        | 24%          | 16%              | 21%               | 22%               | 26%    |
| Get worse   | 75         | 73           | 81               | 75                | 71                | 69     |
| Neither/no change (vol.)                                  | 2          | 2            | 2                | 1                 | 2                 | 1      |
| Don't know  | 3          | 1            | 1                | 3                 | 5                 | 4      |
| <i>The gap between the rich and the poor will ...</i>     |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Grow  | 68%        | 69%          | 72%              | 66%               | 66%               | 60%    |
| Get smaller   | 24         | 23           | 22               | 27                | 24                | 27     |
| Neither/no change (volunteered)                           | 4          | 5            | 3                | 4                 | 4                 | 8      |
| Don't know  | 4          | 3            | 3                | 3                 | 6                 | 5      |
| <i>Job opportunities and economic conditions will ...</i> |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Improve   | 56%        | 55%          | 61%              | 54%               | 53%               | 49%    |
| Get worse   | 39         | 41           | 33               | 42                | 40                | 43     |
| Neither/no change (volunteered)                           | 1          | 1            | 1                | 1                 | 2                 | 2      |
| Don't know  | 4          | 3            | 5                | 3                 | 5                 | 6      |
| <i>Overall, the Central Valley will be ...</i>            |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| A better place to live                                    | 16%        | 13%          | 13%              | 16%               | 18%               | 19%    |
| A worse place to live                                     | 28         | 30           | 32               | 31                | 24                | 20     |
| About the same  | 54         | 55           | 53               | 51                | 56                | 58     |
| Don't know  | 2          | 2            | 2                | 2                 | 2                 | 3      |

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## Political, Social, and Economic Trends

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### Trust in Government

When it comes to tackling the issues that confront the Central Valley, residents do not express great trust in any one branch of government. However, a greater percentage trust state government (29%) than trust either county government (26%) or city government (21%), while fewest mention the federal government (13%).

Looking at the findings another way, residents of the Central Valley trust their local (city/county) governments only slightly more than they trust higher levels of government (state/federal) to solve the Central Valley's problems, 47 percent to 42 percent.

The fact that fewer than half of the residents trust their city and county governments the most to solve Central Valley issues is consistent across regions. State government is favored over either branch of local government in every region except the North Valley.

Latinos express *more* trust in the federal government than do non-Hispanic whites (17% to 10%) and *less* trust in state government (26% to 31%). Latinos (20%) are also less likely than non-Hispanic whites (29%) to trust county government to solve their region's problems.

Democrats (40%) and independent voters (32%) are most likely to say they trust state government, while Republicans (36%) are most likely to say they trust their county government to solve the problems at hand. There are no major differences by length of residence in the Central Valley.

**"Which level of government do you trust the most to solve the most important issues facing the Central Valley today?"**

|                            | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|----------------------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|                            |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| State government           | 29%        | 25%          | 31%              | 33%               | 27%               | 26%    |
| County government          | 26         | 28           | 27               | 24                | 25                | 20     |
| City government            | 21         | 19           | 20               | 22                | 22                | 19     |
| Federal government         | 13         | 15           | 12               | 11                | 13                | 17     |
| Other answer (volunteered) | 3          | 4            | 2                | 3                 | 3                 | 3      |
| Don't know                 | 8          | 9            | 8                | 7                 | 10                | 15     |

## Regional Governance

A solid majority of residents (56%) favor a regional approach to growth and land use development in the Central Valley, while four in 10 would prefer that each city and county government set its own policies. The concept of regional planning is especially popular with residents in the Sacramento Metro area (65%), but majorities also support this approach in the South San Joaquin (54%), North San Joaquin (51%), and North Valley (52%) regions. Latinos (56%) and non-Hispanic whites (55%) are equally supportive of this approach.

A higher percentage of Democrats (62%) and independents (59%) favor regional planning, compared to Republicans (52%), but a majority in each of the voter groups favors a regional approach. Support for a regional approach to growth and land use planning is stronger among recent arrivals (61%) than life-long residents (47%).

Residents throughout the Central Valley overwhelmingly favor having a nonpartisan organization bring together government, business, and citizens' groups to work on Central Valley issues. Eighty-four percent think this is a good idea, and only thirteen percent think it is a bad idea. Republicans (81%) are somewhat less likely than Democrats (86%) and independents (88%) to call it a good idea. There are no differences between Latinos and non-Hispanic whites or across other demographic groups.

**"Do you think that the local governments in the Central Valley should get together and agree on a regional plan for population growth and land use development, or should each city and county in the Central Valley decide on its own the amount and type of growth and development within its border?"**

|                              | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|------------------------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|                              |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| Agree on regional plan       | 56%        | 52%          | 65%              | 51%               | 54%               | 56%    |
| Each city and county decides | 41         | 45           | 33               | 46                | 42                | 38     |
| Don't know                   | 3          | 3            | 2                | 3                 | 4                 | 6      |

**"What do you think about an independent and nonpartisan organization in the Central Valley bringing government, business, and citizens' groups together to work on the issues facing the Central Valley?"**

|            | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|            |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| Good idea  | 84%        | 83%          | 86%              | 84%               | 83%               | 88%    |
| Bad idea   | 13         | 13           | 10               | 13                | 14                | 10     |
| Don't know | 3          | 4            | 4                | 3                 | 3                 | 2      |

## Civic and Religious Life

About one in four Central Valley residents is highly active in faith-based institutions, while one in six is very engaged in neighborhood activities and a similar number in volunteer organizations. Altogether, six in ten residents say they are at least somewhat involved in a church or other religious institution, while a slightly higher percentage report being involved with neighbors and neighborhood groups (64%) and a slightly lower percentage participate in volunteer and charity organizations (58%). The 1999 Central Valley Survey indicated similar levels of religious activity and volunteerism, while the question on local participation was different.

Involvement with faith-based institutions is higher in the North San Joaquin (64%) and South San Joaquin regions (65%) than in the Sacramento (53%) and North Valley regions (56%). Participation in neighborhood activities and charity involvement do not vary much by region. Overall, civic involvement increases with length of residence in the Central Valley, while religious involvement does not vary over time.

Latinos are much more likely than non-Hispanic whites to report church and religious activities (72% to 56%), somewhat more likely to report involvement with neighbors and neighborhood groups (69% to 63%), and slightly less likely to volunteer or participate in charity groups (56% to 60%).

Church involvement is higher in the lower-income groups, while neighborhood and charity group involvement increases with education and income. There are no major variations by age and gender.

"How involved are you with ..."

|  | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|--|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|  |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| <b><i>A church or some other religious institution</i></b> |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Very involved  | 23%        | 25%          | 20%              | 23%               | 24%               | 20%    |
| Somewhat involved  | 37         | 31           | 33               | 41                | 41                | 52     |
| Not involved   | 40         | 44           | 47               | 36                | 35                | 28     |
| <b><i>Neighbors and neighborhood groups</i></b>            |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Very involved  | 17%        | 19%          | 17%              | 21%               | 15%               | 17%    |
| Somewhat involved  | 47         | 48           | 46               | 44                | 49                | 52     |
| Not involved   | 36         | 33           | 37               | 35                | 36                | 31     |
| <b><i>Volunteering and charity groups</i></b>              |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Very involved  | 16%        | 16%          | 15%              | 15%               | 18%               | 10%    |
| Somewhat involved  | 42         | 44           | 46               | 43                | 39                | 46     |
| Not involved   | 42         | 40           | 39               | 42                | 43                | 44     |

## News Attentiveness

Most Central Valley residents appear to be tuned in to the news about their local government and the issues facing the region. Seventy-two percent say they follow news about their local government very or fairly closely, and 78 percent say the same about news relating to issues facing the Central Valley. One in four residents follow this type of news “very closely.”

Local and Central Valley news interests are strong across the regions. North Valley residents (69%) are slightly less likely than others to say they closely follow news about their local government. Those living in the North San Joaquin (80%) and South San Joaquin (79%) regions are a little more likely than others to say they closely follow news about issues facing the Central Valley.

There are ethnic differences in news attentiveness. Latinos are less likely than non-Hispanic whites to closely follow news about local government (62% to 76%) or the Central Valley (69% to 81%).

Attentiveness to both local government news and news about Central Valley issues increases with age, income, education, and the number of years living in the Central Valley.

"How closely do you follow news about ..."

|  | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|--|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|  |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| <b><i>Your local government</i></b>            |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Very closely                                   | 23%        | 20%          | 24%              | 22%               | 24%               | 20%    |
| Fairly closely                                 | 49         | 49           | 49               | 52                | 48                | 42     |
| Not too closely                                | 23         | 27           | 22               | 22                | 22                | 33     |
| Not at all closely                             | 5          | 4            | 5                | 4                 | 6                 | 5      |
| <b><i>Issues facing the Central Valley</i></b> |            |              |                  |                   |                   |        |
| Very closely                                   | 25%        | 19%          | 23%              | 27%               | 27%               | 22%    |
| Fairly closely                                 | 53         | 58           | 53               | 53                | 52                | 47     |
| Not too closely                                | 19         | 19           | 21               | 19                | 18                | 29     |
| Not at all closely                             | 3          | 4            | 3                | 1                 | 3                 | 2      |

## Computers and the Internet

Rates of computer use in the Central Valley are unchanged since PPIC's 1999 Central Valley Survey. In the previous survey, 70 percent of residents said they used a computer – 69 percent say so now. Among computer users today, 36 percent say they use a computer in more than one place, 21 percent say only at home, and 11 percent say only at work or school.

If the rate of computer use has not changed much in the Central Valley since November 1999, what has changed is *how* the computers are used. Internet use in general has increased (54% to 60%), and the number of adults saying they use the Internet often has increased (37% to 42%).

As in the previous Central Valley Survey, the Sacramento Metro area leads all other areas in computer and Internet use: Eight in 10 say they use computers, and 7 in 10 say they use the Internet. In fact, computer use in the Sacramento Metro region is identical to statewide computer use (79% each) and Internet use is a little ahead of the state as a whole (72% to 69%), based on the findings of our January 2001 PPIC Statewide Survey. Taken in its entirety, however, the Central Valley lags behind the state as a whole in both computer use (69% to 79%) and Internet use (60% to 69%).

Finally, the “digital divide” is strongly apparent in the Central Valley. While Latinos in the state as a whole have narrowed the gap between themselves and non-Hispanic whites in Internet use, Latinos in the Central Valley appear to have fallen further behind. In November 1999, 38 percent of Latinos in the Central Valley said they used the Internet; the number from the latest survey is statistically unchanged at 35 percent. By contrast, 53 percent of non-Hispanic whites in the Central Valley used the Internet in November 1999, and today the number is 63 percent. In other words, a 15-point gap in Internet use has grown to a 28-point gap. In stark contrast, the PPIC Statewide Survey found that a 15-point gap between Latinos and non-Hispanic whites in September 1999 shrank to an 8-point gap in January 2001.

### "Do you yourself ever use a computer?"

|                               | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|-------------------------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|                               |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| Yes, only at home             | 21%        | 24%          | 22%              | 22%               | 20%               | 12%    |
| Yes, only at work or school   | 11         | 10           | 12               | 10                | 10                | 13     |
| Yes, only at another location | 1          | 1            | 1                | 2                 | 1                 | 1      |
| Yes, more than one place      | 36         | 31           | 44               | 32                | 32                | 21     |
| No                            | 31         | 34           | 21               | 34                | 37                | 53     |

### "Do you ever go on-line to access the Internet or world wide web or to send or receive e-mail?"

|                     | All Adults | Region       |                  |                   |                   | Latino |
|---------------------|------------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------|
|                     |            | North Valley | Sacramento Metro | North San Joaquin | South San Joaquin |        |
| Yes, often          | 42%        | 38%          | 53%              | 38%               | 35%               | 16%    |
| Yes, sometimes      | 18         | 15           | 19               | 20                | 18                | 19     |
| No                  | 9          | 13           | 7                | 8                 | 10                | 12     |
| Don't use computers | 31         | 34           | 21               | 34                | 37                | 53     |

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## Survey Methodology

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The Central Valley Survey is a special edition of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which is directed by Mark Baldassare, senior fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California, with research assistance from Eric McGhee and Mina Yaroslavsky. The survey was conducted in collaboration with the Great Valley Center; however, the survey methodology and questions and the content of this report were solely determined by Mark Baldassare. The survey benefited from consultation with Carol Whiteside and her staff members and from meetings organized by the Great Valley Center.

The findings of the survey are based on telephone interviews with 2,006 adult residents in the 18-county Central Valley region, interviewed from February 5 to February 15, 2001. Interviewing took place on weekend days and weekday nights, using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers, ensuring that both listed and unlisted telephone numbers were called. All telephone exchanges in the Central Valley were eligible for calling. Telephone numbers in the survey sample were called up to four times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. Once a household was reached, an adult respondent (18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing using the “last birthday method” to avoid biases in age and gender. Each interview took an average of 20 minutes to complete. Interviewing was conducted in English or Spanish, as needed.

We used recent U.S. Census and state figures to compare the demographic characteristics of the survey sample with characteristics of the Central Valley’s adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to U.S. Census and state figures. The survey data in this report were statistically weighted by age, gender, and region to account for any demographic differences.

The sampling error for the total sample of 2,006 adults is +/- 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 the Central Valley were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger. Sampling error is just 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 this report, we refer to four geographic regions in the Central Valley. “North Valley” includes Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Shasta, Sutter, Tehama, and Yuba Counties (12 percent of the Central Valley’s adult population). “Sacramento Metro” includes Placer, Sacramento, and Yolo Counties (30 percent of the population). “North San Joaquin” includes Merced, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus Counties (22 percent of the population). “South San Joaquin” includes Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, and Tulare Counties (36 percent of the population).

We contrast the results for Latinos with results for non-Hispanic whites. Latinos account for about 22 percent of the Central Valley's adult population and constitute one of the fastest growing groups in this region. The sample sizes for the African American and Asian subgroups are not large enough for separate statistical analysis.

**PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: SPECIAL SURVEY OF THE CENTRAL VALLEY  
 FEBRUARY 5-15, 2001  
 2,006 CENTRAL VALLEY ADULT RESIDENTS; ENGLISH AND SPANISH  
 MARGIN OF ERROR +/- 2% AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE**

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I would like to begin by asking you some questions about you, your community, and the region you live in.

1. Which of the following best describes the place where you now live – a large city, a suburb, a small city or town, or a rural area?

- 26% large city
- 11 suburb
- 47 small city or town
- 15 rural area
- 1 other

2. How long have you lived in this city or community?

- 23% less than five years
- 15 five to ten years
- 25 ten to twenty years
- 27 more than twenty years
- 10 all of your life

3. Overall, how would you rate your city or community as a place to live? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, or poor?

- 25% excellent
- 50 good
- 20 fair
- 5 poor

I'd like to ask how you would rate some of the public services in your local area. (*rotate questions 4 to 7*)

4. How about local freeways, streets, and roads? Would you say they are excellent, good, fair, or poor?

- 10% excellent
- 48 good
- 30 fair
- 12 poor
- 0 don't know

5. How about parks and other public recreational facilities? Would you say they are excellent, good, fair, or poor?

- 19% excellent
- 46 good
- 23 fair
- 8 poor
- 4 don't know

6. How about local public schools? Would you say they are excellent, good, fair, or poor?

- 16% excellent
- 42 good
- 23 fair
- 9 poor
- 10 don't know

7. How about children's services and youth activities? Would you say they are excellent, good, fair, or poor?

- 11% excellent
- 35 good
- 24 fair
- 13 poor
- 17 don't know

8. How would you rate the performance of your city government in solving problems in your city or community – excellent, good, fair, or poor?

- 5% excellent
- 35 good
- 38 fair
- 14 poor
- 8 not applicable, not in a city

9. Overall, how would you rate the performance of county government in solving problems in your county – excellent, good, fair, or poor?

- 5% excellent
- 37 good
- 40 fair
- 13 poor
- 5 don't know

10. Overall, do you think your local government does or does not have adequate funding for public services, such as libraries, police, parks, roads, and schools?

- 47% does have adequate funding
- 45 does not have adequate funding
- 1 other answers
- 7 don't know

Next, a few questions about the part of the Central Valley that you live in. I am going to read you a list of problems other people have told us about. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in your part of the Central Valley. (*rotate questions 11 to 16*)

11. How about traffic congestion on freeways and major roads?

- 29% big problem
- 34 somewhat of a problem
- 36 not a problem
- 1 don't know

12. How about population growth and urban development?

26% big problem  
37 somewhat of a problem  
36 not a problem  
1 don't know

13. How about air pollution?

26% big problem  
38 somewhat of a problem  
35 not a problem  
1 don't know

14. How about the lack of opportunities for well-paying jobs?

35% big problem  
38 somewhat of a problem  
23 not a problem  
4 don't know

15. How about the loss of farms and agricultural land?

34% big problem  
33 somewhat of a problem  
28 not a problem  
5 don't know

16. How about the availability of affordable housing?

26% big problem  
33 somewhat of a problem  
39 not a problem  
2 don't know

Next, I am going to read some of the reasons people give for problems in the Central Valley. For each one, tell me if you think it is a major cause or a minor cause of problems in your part of the Central Valley. (*rotate questions 17 to 21*)

17. What about too much growth in the wrong places?

46% major cause  
50 minor cause  
4 don't know

18. What about government spending money on the wrong things?

58% major cause  
36 minor cause  
6 don't know

19. What about a lack of effective regional planning?

47% major cause  
46 minor cause  
7 don't know

20. What about over-development because of a lack of government regulations?

34% major cause  
60 minor cause  
6 don't know

21. What about a lack of development because of too much government regulation?

32% major cause  
61 minor cause  
7 don't know

I'm going to read you some proposals people have made for solving problems in the Central Valley. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a good idea or a bad idea for solving problems in your part of the Central Valley. (*rotate questions 22 to 27*)

22. How about establishing growth boundaries that restrict the areas where development can take place?

76% good idea  
20 bad idea  
4 don't know

23. How about encouraging job centers to develop near existing housing?

78% good idea  
18 bad idea  
4 don't know

24. How about expanding bus, light rail, and public transit systems?

84% good idea  
14 bad idea  
2 don't know

25. How about protecting farms and agricultural lands from urban development?

88% good idea  
9 bad idea  
3 don't know

26. How about building or widening freeways?

75% good idea  
23 bad idea  
2 don't know

27. How about preserving wetlands, rivers, and environmentally-sensitive areas?

81% good idea  
15 bad idea  
4 don't know

28. We are interested in your opinions about the broader geographic region you live in—the Central Valley – which is the inland area of California stretching from Bakersfield to Redding. First, what do you think is the most important issue facing the Central Valley today? (*code, don't read*)

- 15% electricity cost/supply/demand, utility deregulation
- 14 growth, overpopulation
- 13 jobs, the economy
- 8 water, quality and availability
- 6 air pollution
- 6 loss of farmlands, agriculture
- 5 traffic and transportation
- 3 crime, gangs
- 3 environmental pollution, pollution
- 3 schools, education
- 2 housing, housing costs, housing availability
- 1 drugs, methamphetamines
- 1 government regulations
- 1 immigration, illegal immigration
- 1 local government
- 1 poverty, the poor, homeless, welfare
- 1 sprawl
- 1 other (*specify*)
- 15 don't know

29. Do you think that things in the Central Valley are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?

- 59% right direction
- 32 wrong direction
- 9 don't know

30. In general, how would you rate the economy in the Central Valley – is it excellent, good, fair or poor?

- 7% excellent
- 42 good
- 37 fair
- 13 poor
- 1 don't know

31. How much of a problem is air pollution in the Central Valley today – is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem?

- 31% big problem
- 49 somewhat of a problem
- 19 not a problem
- 1 don't know

32. Currently, state officials are looking at ways to increase electricity supply. Do you favor or oppose relaxing the air quality standards that regulate power plants, even if it means more air pollution in the Central Valley?

- 34% favor
- 61 oppose
- 5 don't know

33. And if new electric power plants were built in the Central Valley, which of the following would you most prefer:

- 50% hydroelectric power plants
- 12 nuclear power plants
- 2 coal-powered plants
- 25 natural gas-powered plants
- 2 other answer (specify)
- 9 don't know

34. On another issue, how much of a problem is the supply of water in the Central Valley today – is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem?

- 25% big problem
- 40 somewhat of a problem
- 33 not a problem
- 2 don't know

35. What do you think should be the most important priority for the water supply in the Central Valley – providing water for farms and agricultural uses, providing water for homes and residents, or protecting the environment?

- 40% farms and agriculture
- 25 homes and residents
- 27 protecting the environment
- 3 other answer (specify)
- 5 don't know

36. Overall, how serious a threat to your own health and well-being are environmental conditions in the Central Valley today, such as air pollution and water quality – very serious, somewhat serious, or not too serious?

- 16% very serious
- 39 somewhat serious
- 44 not too serious
- 1 don't know

37. On another topic, in the next 10 years, do you think the population of the Central Valley will grow rapidly, grow slowly, stay about the same, or decline?

- 75% grow rapidly
- 15 grow slowly
- 7 stay about the same
- 2 decline
- 1 don't know

Looking ahead to the year 2010, which is more likely to happen in the Central Valley?

38. (a) The quality of the natural environment will improve; (b) the quality of the natural environment will get worse.

- 20% improve
- 75 get worse
- 2 neither/no change (*volunteered*)
- 3 don't know

39. (a) Job opportunities and economic conditions will improve; (b) job opportunities and economic conditions will get worse.
- 56% improve
  - 39 get worse
  - 1 neither/no change (*volunteered*)
  - 4 don't know
40. (a) The gap between the rich and the poor will grow; (b) the gap between the rich and the poor will get smaller.
- 68% will grow
  - 24 will get smaller
  - 4 neither/no change (*volunteered*)
  - 4 don't know
41. Overall, in 2010, do you think the Central Valley will be a better place to live than it is now, a worse place to live than it is now, or about the same?
- 16% better place
  - 28 worse place
  - 54 same
  - 2 don't know
42. On another topic, which level of government do you trust the most to solve the most important issues facing the Central Valley today – federal government, state government, county government, or city government?
- 13% federal government
  - 29 state government
  - 26 county government
  - 21 city government
  - 3 other answer (*specify*)
  - 8 don't know
43. Do you think that the local governments in the Central Valley should get together and agree on a regional plan for population growth and land use development, or should each city and county in the Central Valley decide on its own the amount and type of growth and development within its border?
- 56% agree on regional plan
  - 40 each city and county decides
  - 3 don't know
44. What do you think about an independent and nonpartisan organization in the Central Valley bringing government, business, and citizens' groups together to work on the issues facing the Central Valley? Is this a good idea or a bad idea?
- 84% good idea
  - 13 bad idea
  - 3 don't know
45. On another topic, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain you are registered to vote? (*if yes*: Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or independent?)
- 32% yes, Democrat
  - 31 yes, Republican
  - 3 yes, other party
  - 11 yes, independent
  - 23 no, not registered
46. How closely do you follow news about your local government – very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?
- 23% very closely
  - 49 fairly closely
  - 23 not too closely
  - 5 not at all closely
47. And how closely do you follow news about issues facing the Central Valley – very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?
- 25% very closely
  - 53 fairly closely
  - 19 not too closely
  - 3 not at all closely
48. On another topic, we are interested in how people spend their time. How involved are you with a church or some other religious institution – would you say you are very involved, somewhat involved, or not involved?
- 23% very involved
  - 37 somewhat involved
  - 40 not involved
49. How involved are you with neighbors and neighborhood groups – would you say you are very involved, somewhat involved, or not involved?
- 17% very involved
  - 47 somewhat involved
  - 36 not involved
50. How involved are you with volunteering and charity groups – would you say you are very involved, somewhat involved, or not involved?
- 16% very involved
  - 42 somewhat involved
  - 42 not involved
51. On another topic, do you yourself ever use a computer? (*if yes*: Do you use it at home, at work or at school, at another location, or at more than one place?)
- 21% yes, at home (*ask q. 52*)
  - 11 yes, at work or school (*ask q. 52*)
  - 1 yes, at another location (*specify; ask q. 52*)
  - 36 yes, at more than one place (*ask q. 52*)
  - 31 no (*skip to q. 54*)

52. Do you ever go on line to access the Internet or World Wide Web or to send or receive e-mail? (if yes: Do you do this often or only sometimes?)

- 42% yes, often (*ask q. 53*)
- 18 yes, sometimes (*ask q. 53*)
- 9 no (*skip to q. 54*)
- 31 don't use computers (*skip to q. 54*)

53. Do you have any type of personal computer, including laptops, in your home? These do not include game machines such as Nintendo or Sega. (if yes: Do you use your home computer often or only sometimes?)

- 37% yes, often
- 13 yes, sometimes
- 10 no
- 40 don't use computers, Internet

[54-61. Demographic Questions]

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