



# Californians & the Environment

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## CONTENTS

Press Release	3
Climate Change and Energy Policy	5
Environmental Issues, 2020 Context	11
Regional Map	19
Methodology	20
Questionnaire and Results	22

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**PPIC**

PUBLIC POLICY  
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

The PPIC Statewide Survey provides a voice for the public and likely voters—informing policymakers, encouraging discussion, and raising awareness on critical issues of the day.

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## News Release

EMBARGOED: Do not publish or broadcast until 9:00 p.m. PT on Wednesday, July 29, 2020.

*Note: Survey results on Californians' economic outlook, health and financial worries due to COVID-19, and views on race relations were **released publicly** on Monday, July 27, and are not under this embargo.*

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### PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## Solid Majorities Support State Policies to Address Climate Change

### LATINOS, AFRICAN AMERICANS MOST LIKELY TO VIEW POLLUTION AS SERIOUS HEALTH THREAT

SAN FRANCISCO, July 29, 2020—Even as the state confronts the COVID-19 pandemic, public support for California's policies to address climate change is high, with most residents approving of the state's targets for emission reduction and renewable energy, zero-emissions policies for commercial trucks, and the cap-and-trade system. While about half or more of Californians view air and water pollution in their area as health threats, Latinos and African Americans are more likely to see such threats as serious. These are among the key findings of a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California.

Solid majorities support key state policies that aim to address global warming. These majorities include 77 percent of Californians (76% of likely voters) approving of the state law requiring greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030; 77 percent (75% of likely voters) approving of climate change policies requiring all commercial trucks sold in California to be zero-emissions by 2045; 77 percent (74% of likely voters) approving of the law requiring all of the state's electricity to come from renewable sources by 2045; and 62 percent of adults and likely voters favoring the state's cap-and-trade system, designed to provide an incentive for companies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"In the midst of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis, Californians are highly supportive of the state's policies to address global warming," said Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO.

### Californians Place Greater Importance on Addressing Climate Change than Do US Residents Overall

Compared to adults nationwide, Californians place greater personal importance on addressing global warming, and most Californians are willing to change their own behavior. Most Californians say the issue of global warming is extremely important (25% adults, 28% likely voters) or very important (32% adults, 30% likely voters) to them personally. The 57 percent of Californians saying either extremely or very important is far higher than the 37 percent of US residents saying extremely or very important in an April poll from the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication and George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication. Strong majorities of Californians (73% adults, 70% likely voters) say they would be willing to make major lifestyle changes to address the issue of global warming.

"Californians are more likely than Americans nationwide to say the issue of global warming is extremely or very important to them personally, and most are willing to make major lifestyle changes," Baldassare said.

## Presidential Candidates' Environmental Views Are Important to Most Voters

About half of Californians (53% adults, 52% likely voters) say they can trust the state government just about always or most of the time to do what's right on environmental issues in California. Far fewer (24% adults, 20% likely voters) say they can trust the federal government just about always or most of the time when it comes to environmental issues in the US.

Similarly, while solid majorities approve of Governor Newsom (69% adults, 67% likely voters) and the California Legislature (62% adults, 61% likely voters) on handling environmental issues in California, far fewer approve of President Trump (24% adults, 29% likely voters) and Congress (20% adults, 20% likely voters) on environmental issues in the US.

"When it comes to handling environmental issues, trust in the state government is much higher than the federal government, and approval of Governor Newsom and the California Legislature is much higher than President Trump and Congress," Baldassare said.

Looking to the November election, an overwhelming share of likely voters say presidential candidates' environmental positions are important (43% very, 40% somewhat) in determining their vote. Asked which candidate would be better on handling environmental issues in the US, 70 percent say Joe Biden and 29 percent say Donald Trump. Nearly all Democrats (97%) say Biden would be better on the environment, while most Republicans (76%) say Trump. Independents favor Biden (71% to 27%).

"Eight in ten California likely voters say the presidential candidates' positions on the environment are important in determining their vote," Baldassare said, "and seven in ten say that Joe Biden would do a better job than Donald Trump on environmental issues."

## Health Concerns from Pollution Are Highest for Latinos, African Americans

Nearly two-thirds of Californians say air pollution is a very serious (21%) or somewhat serious (42%) threat to their own health and the health of their immediate family in their part of the state, while almost half of Californians say polluted drinking water is a very serious (16%) or somewhat serious (31%) health threat. However, there are notable racial disparities: whites (12% air pollution, 8% polluted drinking water) are far less likely than Latinos (33% air pollution, 24% polluted drinking water) and African Americans (29% air pollution, 20% polluted drinking water) and less likely than Asian Americans (17% air pollution, 19% drinking water) to say pollution in their area is a very serious health threat.

"African Americans and Latinos are more likely than others to say that air and water pollution in their part of California are very serious health threats to themselves and their families," Baldassare said.

## Overwhelming Majorities Oppose Offshore Drilling

As the Trump administration considers developing and expanding oil and gas leasing along the Pacific coast, more than seven in ten Californians overall (73%) and across regions (73% north and central coast, 74% south coast, 71% inland) oppose more oil drilling off the California coast. Around nine in ten overall (89%) and across regions (89% north and central coast, 90% south coast, 89% inland) support maintaining existing rules and boundaries for national marine sanctuaries and marine protected areas.

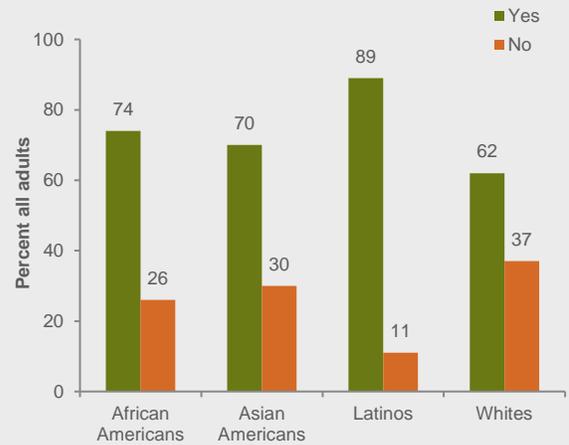
"Most Californians say that the conditions of California's oceans and beaches are important to the state's future," Baldassare said, "and they overwhelmingly oppose more offshore oil drilling and favor marine protected areas."

# Climate Change and Energy Policy

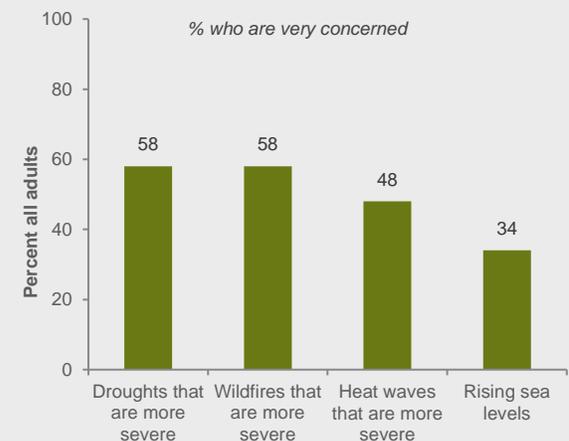
## Key Findings

- About two in three adults say the effects of global warming have already begun and that global warming is a serious threat to California’s future. Three in four Californians are willing to make major lifestyle changes to address global warming. *(page 6)*
- Six in ten Californians are very concerned about droughts and wildfires that are more severe as a result of global warming. About half say the same about heat waves, while one in three are very concerned about rising sea levels. *(page 7)*
- Seven in ten adults favor California making its own policies to address global warming. Three in four adults support the state laws requiring California to reduce its greenhouse gases and increase its electricity from renewable sources. Six in ten Californians favor the cap-and-trade system, and 78 percent say it is important for some of the funds to be spent on environmental improvements in lower-income communities. *(page 8)*
- Thirty-nine percent of Californians expect that the state doing things to reduce global warming would lead to more jobs. Half of adults expect that state action would lead to higher gasoline prices. Forty-seven percent of adults are willing and fifty-two percent are not willing to pay more for electricity from renewable sources. *(page 9)*
- Seventy-three percent of adults oppose more oil drilling off the coast. Seventy-seven percent favor the development of wind power and wave energy projects off the coast. An overwhelming majority support maintaining the rules and boundaries of national marine sanctuaries and marine protected areas. *(page 10)*

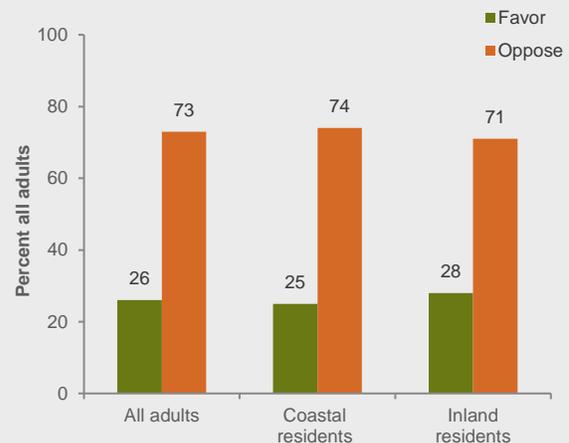
**Willingness to make major lifestyle changes to address global warming**



**Concern about possible effects of global warming**



**Support for allowing more oil drilling off the California coast**



## General Perceptions of Climate Change

When asked about their perceptions of climate change, about seven in ten Californians say that global warming has already begun (68% adults, 69% likely voters). Overwhelming majorities of Democrats (82%) and independents (71%)—compared to 37 percent of Republicans—say the effects have already begun. Majorities across regions, as well as across age, education, gender, income, and racial/ethnic groups hold this view. In a March Gallup national survey, 61 percent of American adults said the effects of global warming are already happening.

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

	All adults	Race/Ethnicity				Likely voters
		African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites	
Already begun	68%	70%	61%	71%	68%	69%
Within a few years	4	7	2	6	4	2
Within your lifetime	11	7	25	11	7	8
Not within your lifetime, but will affect future	9	9	8	8	9	10
Will never happen	7	4	4	3	11	10
Don't know	1	2	–	1	1	–

Eight in ten Californians say that global warming is a very serious (48% adults, 51% likely voters) or somewhat serious (32% adults, 27% likely voters) threat to California’s future economy and quality of life. An overwhelming majority of Democrats (71%) say global warming is a very serious threat, compared to 48 percent of independents and 11 percent of Republicans. Regionally, half or more in the San Francisco Bay Area (56%), Inland Empire (52%), and Los Angeles (50%) say it is a very serious threat, compared to fewer in the Central Valley (41%) and Orange/San Diego (35%). A majority of Latinos (59%) hold this view, compared to fewer than half in other racial/ethnic groups. Californians under age 35 (56%) are more likely than Californians age 35 and older (44%) to say it is a very serious threat. The share who hold this view ranges from 42 to 54 percent across education and income groups.

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

	All adults	Race/Ethnicity				Likely voters
		African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites	
Very serious	48%	48%	43%	59%	41%	51%
Somewhat serious	32	35	40	31	29	27
Not too serious	12	10	13	6	16	11
Not at all serious	8	5	5	4	13	11

A majority of Californians say that the issue of global warming is extremely important (25% adults, 28% likely voters) or very important (32% adults, 30% likely voters) to them personally. Democrats (42%) are much more likely than independents (24%) and Republicans (4%) to say it is extremely important to them. Regionally, one in three in the San Francisco Bay Area (34%) say it is extremely important to them, compared to fewer elsewhere. Three in ten Latinos (30%) say this, compared to about one in four in other racial/ethnic groups. According to an April poll by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication and George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication, Californians are far more likely than adults nationwide to say global warming is extremely or very important to them personally (57% to 37%). Strong majorities of Californians (73% adults, 70% likely voters) say they would be willing to make major lifestyle changes to address the issue of global warming. Overwhelming majorities of Democrats (90%) and independents (73%) say this, compared to 35 percent of Republicans.

## Perceived Impact of Climate Change

The effects of climate change may have serious and extensive effects on California’s future, and Californians are concerned about these potential effects. Overwhelming majorities of adults are very or somewhat concerned about wildfires that are more severe (89%), droughts that are more severe (88%), heat waves that are more severe (81%), or greater rises in sea levels (74%).

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

All adults	Droughts that are more severe	Wildfires that are more severe	Heat waves that are more severe	Increased rising sea levels
Very concerned	58%	58%	48%	34%
Somewhat concerned	30	31	33	40
Not too concerned	8	8	12	17
Not at all concerned	4	4	6	10

Majorities of Californians are very concerned about droughts that are more severe (58%) and wildfires that are more severe (58%), while about half are very concerned about heat waves that are more severe (48%); one in three are very concerned about increased rising sea levels (34%). Democrats are much more likely than independents and Republicans to say that they are very concerned about these potential effects.

The share of Californians who are very concerned about droughts that are more severe is higher in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area (63% each) than elsewhere. Latinos and African Americans are more likely than Asian Americans or whites to hold this view. Majorities across age, education, and income groups are very concerned about more severe droughts.

Majorities across regions, with the exception of Orange/San Diego (47%), are very concerned about wildfires that are more severe. Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans are more likely to say this than are whites. Majorities across gender, age, education, and income groups hold this view.

About half of adults in Los Angeles (54%), the Inland Empire (52%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (49%) are very concerned about more severe heat waves, compared to fewer elsewhere. Majorities of Latinos and African Americans say this, compared to fewer Asian Americans and whites. Women (53%) are more likely than men (43%) to be very concerned; the share holding this view declines with rising income levels.

When it comes to increased rising sea levels, residents in coastal areas of the state (36%) are somewhat more likely than residents in inland areas (28%) to say they are very concerned. Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos and African Americans are much more likely than Asian Americans and whites to be very concerned. The share holding this view declines with rising age and income.

Percent saying “very concerned”		Droughts that are more severe	Wildfires that are more severe	Heat waves that are more severe	Increased rising sea levels
All adults		58%	58%	48%	34%
Likely voters		60	62	47	35
Party	Democrats	74	73	62	48
	Republicans	35	38	19	12
	Independents	54	55	43	27
Race/Ethnicity	African Americans	66	60	54	42
	Asian Americans	55	62	46	28
	Latinos	68	63	62	45
	Whites	51	52	38	26

## California Policies

California remains a leader on climate change policy and has continued to set its own goals and standards. In doing so, it has clashed with the Trump administration, as state policies are at odds with policies supported by the federal government. Strong majorities of Californians (69%) and likely voters (70%) favor the state government making its own policies, separate from the federal government, to address the issue of global warming. Nine in ten Democrats and two in three independents are in favor, compared to one in three Republicans. At least six in ten across regions and age, education, income, and racial/ethnic groups support the state making its own policies. Additionally, more than seven in ten Californians (42% very, 32% somewhat) and likely voters (48% very, 25% somewhat) think it is important for California to act as a leader around the world in efforts to fight climate change.

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

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	69%	90%	32%	67%	70%
Oppose	29	9	67	32	29
Don't know	2	1	1	1	1

The 2006 Global Warming Solutions Act (Assembly Bill 32) set a goal for the state to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. With the state on track to meet this goal ahead of the 2020 deadline, policymakers passed Senate Bill 32 in 2016, setting a new goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. When asked about this goal, overwhelming majorities of adults (77%) and likely voters (76%) are in favor. Senate Bill 100, which sets the goal of getting 100 percent of California’s electricity from renewable sources by 2045, also garners overwhelming support among adults (77%) and likely voters (74%). Most Democrats and independents are in favor of both policies, compared to about four in ten Republicans. Both sets of goals receive broad-based support, with more than two in three across regions and across age, education, income, and racial/ethnic groups in favor.

**“Do you favor or oppose...?”**

		All adults	Party			Likely voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
The state law that requires California to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2030	Favor	77%	96%	42%	70%	76%
	Oppose	21	4	55	28	24
	Don't know	1	–	3	1	1
The state law that requires 100 percent of the state’s electricity to come from renewable energy sources by the year 2045	Favor	77	93	42	73	74
	Oppose	21	6	58	26	26
	Don't know	2	1	–	1	–

Californians and likely voters (62% each) are also in favor of the state’s cap-and-trade system, and 78 percent say it is important for some of the cap-and-trade funds to be spent on environmental improvements in lower-income communities. Overwhelming majorities also support state-level climate change policies requiring 100 percent of commercial trucks sold in California to be zero emissions by 2045 (77% adults, 75% likely voters). Large majorities also favor encouraging local governments to change land use and transportation planning so that people could drive less (76% adults, 75% likely voters) and requiring all automakers to further reduce emissions of greenhouse gases from new cars (81% adults, 80% likely voters).

## Perceived Impact of California Policies

When asked about the potential economic effects of California’s global warming policies, a plurality of adults (39%) and likely voters (43%) say the state’s efforts would lead to more jobs for people around the state. About three in ten adults (30%) and likely voters (28%) say it would not affect the number of jobs. Fewer than three in ten (28% adults, 27% likely voters) say it would result in fewer jobs. A majority of Democrats (57%), a plurality of independents (40%), and fewer than one in five Republicans (15%) say state action would produce more jobs. Pluralities of residents in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles say there would be more jobs, while residents in the Central Valley, the Inland Empire, and Orange/San Diego are more divided. Pluralities of Asian Americans (46%), Latinos (44%), and African Americans (40%) say there would be more jobs, while whites are more divided (34% more jobs, 34% fewer jobs, 31% wouldn’t affect the number of jobs). A plurality of adults across age, education, and income groups think the state’s efforts to reduce global warming would result in more jobs.

**“Do you think that California doing things to reduce global warming in the future would cause there to be more jobs for people around the state, would cause there to be fewer jobs, or wouldn’t affect the number of jobs for people around the state?”**

	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
More jobs	39%	35%	38%	42%	32%	46%	43%
Fewer jobs	28	32	36	25	34	20	27
Wouldn’t affect the number of jobs	30	30	22	32	33	33	28
Don’t know	2	2	4	2	1	2	2

While most Californians do not think efforts to address global warming will hurt jobs, half of Californians (52%) think state action to reduce global warming would increase gasoline prices around the state. Fewer than three in ten say that gas prices would decrease (27%) or be unaffected (19%). Majorities across regions think there would be an increase, with the exception of those in Los Angeles (46%). Republicans (75%) are by far the most likely across parties to say gas prices would go up (52% independents, 44% Democrats). While pluralities and some majorities across demographic groups say gas prices would increase, whites (59%), those 55 and older (62%), and those with household incomes of \$80,000 or more (61%) are more likely than others to say this.

Californians are divided when asked whether they are willing (47% adults, 50% likely voters) or not willing (52% adults, 50% likely voters) to pay more for electricity if it were generated by renewable sources like solar or wind energy. While a solid majority of Democrats (64%) are willing to pay more, 80 percent of Republicans and about half of independents (53%) are not willing to pay more for electricity generated by renewable sources. A majority of Latinos and Asian Americans say they are willing to pay more, while a majority of African Americans and whites say they are not willing.

**“In order to help reduce global warming, would you be willing or not willing to pay more for electricity if it were generated by renewable source like solar or wind energy?”**

	All adults	Race/Ethnicity				Likely voters
		African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites	
Willing	47%	46%	54%	52%	42%	50%
Not willing	52	54	46	48	57	50
Don’t know	1	–	–	1	1	–

## Ocean and Coastal Policies

Earlier in July, 30 members of California’s congressional delegation wrote a letter to the US secretary of the interior to express concern about the Trump administration’s reported plans to develop and expand oil and gas leasing along the Pacific coast. When asked about allowing more oil drilling off the California coast, 26 percent of adults are in favor of it, while 73 percent are opposed. Partisans differ greatly on this issue; overwhelming majorities of Democrats (86%) and independents (73%) oppose more oil drilling off the state’s coast, while a majority of Republicans (56%) support more drilling. Although there is a partisan divide, more than two in three across regions and across age, education, income, and racial/ethnic groups are opposed to more drilling. Notably, those who live along the coast and those who live inland express similar levels of opposition to more offshore oil drilling.

**“How about allowing more oil drilling off the California coast? Do you favor or oppose this proposal?”**

	All adults	Region			Age		
		North and central coast*	South coast*	Inland	18 to 34	35 to 54	55 and older
Favor	26%	25%	25%	28%	20%	27%	32%
Oppose	73	73	74	71	80	72	67
Don't know	1	2	1	1	1	1	1

*\* Here and in the rest of the report, “North and central coast” refers to the coastal counties northward from San Luis Obispo County to Del Norte County, including all of the San Francisco Bay Area counties. “South coast” includes coastal counties southward from Santa Barbara County.*

The Trump administration’s deliberations about opening up more of the nation’s coast to offshore oil drilling could alter existing national marine sanctuaries and impact California’s marine protected areas (MPAs). An overwhelming majority of Californians (89%) support maintaining the existing rules and boundaries of national marine sanctuaries and MPAs off the California coast. There is bipartisan agreement, with more than eight in ten registered voters across parties in favor. More than eight in ten adults across regions and age, education, income, and racial/ethnic groups favor maintaining the rules and boundaries of national marine sanctuaries and California’s MPAs.

**“How about maintaining the rules and boundaries of national marine sanctuaries and California Marine Protected Areas—or MPAs—to protect fish, wildlife, and their habitat off the California coast? Do you favor or oppose this proposal?”**

	All adults	Region			Age		
		North and central coast	South coast	Inland	18 to 34	35 to 54	55 and older
Favor	89%	89%	90%	89%	92%	87%	90%
Oppose	9	9	10	9	8	10	9
Don't know	2	2	1	3	–	3	1

While Californians don’t support more oil drilling, they do support other projects off the California coast. More than three in four adults (77%) and likely voters (81%) favor allowing wind power and wave energy projects off the coast. Support is widespread and includes strong majorities across parties (85% Democrats, 84% independents, 69% Republicans), as well as seven in ten or more across regions and across age, gender, income, and racial/ethnic groups.

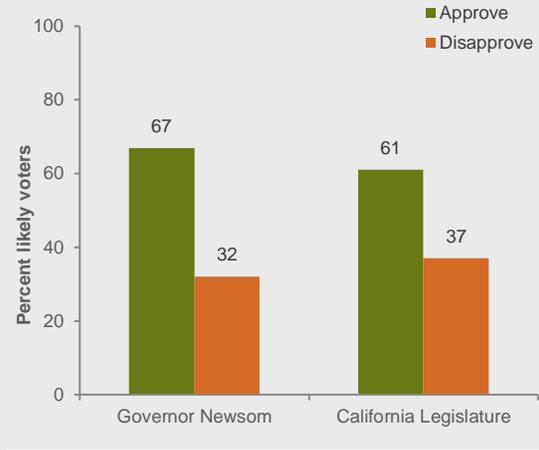
Californians (66%) and likely voters (73%) are also in favor of building desalination plants on the California coast. Once again, there is partisan agreement (73% Democrats, 73% Republicans, 63% independents). Across regions, support is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (72%) and lowest in the Inland Empire (58%), and majorities of residents in coastal (68%) and inland (61%) areas are in favor. Majorities across age, education, gender, income, and racial/ethnic groups are in favor, but support is higher among men (74%), whites (71%), those age 55 and older (73%), college graduates (72%), and those with incomes of \$80,000 or more (71%).

# Environmental Issues, 2020 Election Context

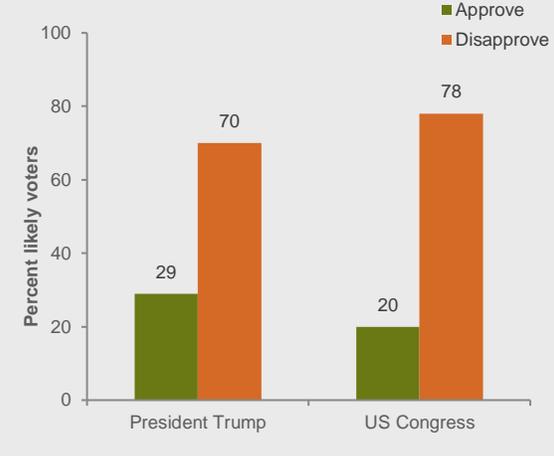
## Key Findings

- Californians most often name climate change as the most important environmental issue. A majority of adults (52%) and likely voters (54%) trust the state government more than the federal or local government to handle environmental issues in California. *(page 12)*
- A majority of adults trust the state government to do what is right just about always (9%) or most of the time (44%) when it comes to environmental issues. Fewer trust the federal government (2% just about always, 22% most of the time). Approval ratings for state and federal elected officials vary on environmental issues. *(page 13)*
- A majority of Californians say they are not at all likely to take a public bus or transit (70%) or fly in an airplane (63%) in the next three months. Fewer than four in ten say they are not at all likely to take a day trip to the beach (37%) or a driving vacation (34%). *(page 14)*
- Six in ten say stricter environmental laws and regulations in California are worth the cost. Californians are divided on whether the state government should take action right away on reducing greenhouse gas emissions (49%) or wait for the state economy and job situation to improve (49%). *(page 15)*
- A majority of Californians say the water supply, air pollution, and the threat of wildfires are problems in their region. *(page 16)*
- Forty-five percent of Californians say pollution along the coast is a big problem, and two in three say that plastics and marine debris are a big problem along the coast. *(page 17)*
- About four in ten likely voters say that the presidential candidates' stances on the environment are very important to them, and most prefer Joe Biden to Donald Trump (70% to 29%) when it comes to handling environmental issues. *(page 18)*

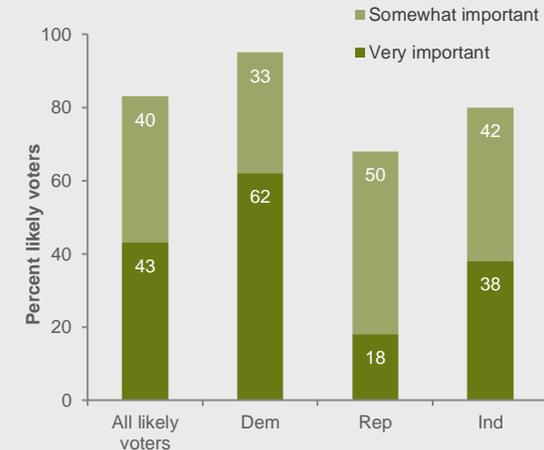
Approval ratings of state elected officials on environmental issues



Approval ratings of federal elected officials on environmental issues



Importance of presidential candidates' positions on the environment



## Most Important Environmental Issues

When asked to name the most important environmental issue facing California today, California adults (18%) and likely voters (21%) are most likely to mention global warming and climate change, followed by air pollution and vehicle emissions (14% adults, 13% likely voters), loss of forests and wildfires (11% adults, 11% likely voters), and water supply and drought (10% adults, 11% likely voters). Inland Empire (25%) and San Francisco Bay Area (24%) residents are more likely than those living in other regions to mention climate change. Across racial/ethnic groups, climate change is the most important environmental issue for 24 percent of Asian Americans, 19 percent of whites, 15 percent of Latinos, and 14 percent of African Americans. Democrats (27%) are more likely than independents (17%) and Republicans (7%) to say that climate change is the most important environmental issue in California.

### “What do you think is the most important environmental issue facing California today?”

Top five issues mentioned	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
Global warming, climate change, greenhouse gases	18%	11%	25%	17%	16%	24%	21%
Air pollution, vehicle emissions, smog	14	16	24	17	10	9	13
Loss of forests, forest fires, wildfires	11	13	5	7	9	18	11
Water supply, drought, reservoirs	10	13	5	7	10	15	11
Landfills, garbage, sewage, waste, recycling	8	6	6	10	9	5	7

Fourteen percent of California adults and likely voters say they have a great deal of optimism that we will have environmental problems in California well under control 20 years from now. Majorities of adults, likely voters, residents across the state’s regions, and Californians across partisan and demographic groups say they have only some optimism, while about one in five have hardly any optimism. Most had only some optimism in a June 2002 PPIC survey (18% great deal, 51% only some, 28% hardly any).

### “How much optimism do you have that we will have environmental problems in California well under control 20 years from now?”

	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
Great deal	14%	15%	19%	17%	7%	13%	14%
Only some	64	65	64	62	69	62	61
Hardly any	21	20	16	20	23	24	24
Don’t know	1	–	1	–	–	1	–

Which level of government is trusted the most when it comes to handling environmental issues in California? About half (52% adults, 54% likely voters) say it is the state government, and three in ten (30% adults, 30% likely voters) say it is local government, while fewer than one in six say that it is the federal government that they trust the most (15% adults, 14% likely voters). State government is trusted the most across regions and across racial/ethnic and other demographic groups. Democrats (72%) are far more likely than independents (48%) and Republicans (20%) to trust state government the most. While one in five Republicans trust state government, about half (48%) say that it is the local government that they trust the most.

## Attitudes Toward Government

How much do Californians trust the state government when it comes to handling environmental issues in California today? About half of adults (53%) and likely voters (52%) say that they can trust the state government just about always or most of the time. There are large partisan differences, however: a strong majority of Democrats (69%) and about half of independents (47%) say that they have this higher level of trust in state government when it comes to handling environmental issues, compared to far fewer Republicans (21%). Across racial/ethnic groups, whites (42%) are much less likely than African Americans (62%), Latinos (60%), or Asian Americans (59%) to have this level of trust in state government. Across regions, San Francisco Bay Area (60%) and Los Angeles residents (57%) are the most likely to express this level of trust (51% Orange/San Diego, 47% Central Valley, 42% Inland Empire).

**“How much of the time can you trust the state government to do what is right when it comes to handling environmental issues in California?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Just about always	9%	10%	2%	5%	6%
Most of the time	44	59	19	42	46
Only some of the time	47	31	78	53	48

Fewer consider the federal government to be trustworthy when it comes to handling environmental issues in the United States today. Twenty-four percent of adults and 20 percent of likely voters say that they can trust the federal government just about always or most of the time. Once again, there are partisan differences, with 33 percent of Republicans compared to 25 percent of independents and 15 percent of Democrats saying that they have this level of trust in the federal government when it comes to handling environmental issues. Fewer than three in ten across racial/ethnic groups have this level of trust (27% Latinos, 23% Asian Americans, 21% whites, 20% African Americans). Across regions, San Francisco Bay Area residents (16%) are the least likely to express this level of trust in the federal government (29% Central Valley, 28% Inland Empire, 27% Orange/San Diego, 24% Los Angeles).

**“How much of the time can you trust the federal government to do what is right when it comes to handling environmental issues in the United States?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Just about always	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%
Most of the time	22	13	29	23	18
Only some of the time	74	84	65	75	79
Don't know	1	1	1	–	1

Approval ratings for federal and state elected officials are consistent with levels of trust in government. Solid majorities of Californians approve of Governor Gavin Newsom (69% adults, 67% likely voters) and the California Legislature (62% adults, 61% likely voters) when it comes to handling environmental issues in California. By comparison, fewer than three in ten Californians approve of President Donald Trump (24% adults, 29% likely voters) and the US Congress (20% adults, 20% likely voters) when it comes to handling environmental issues in the United States. Democratic and Republican voters have starkly different views about the governor and the president on environmental issues. Moreover, majorities of Californians across regions and demographic groups approve of Governor Newsom’s handling of environmental issues, while majorities of California adults across the state’s regions and demographic groups say they disapprove of President Trump’s handling of environmental issues.

## COVID-19 Crisis and the Environment

As the number of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) cases and hospitalizations in California continue to rise, the lives of Californians are changing in ways that can have major effects on the environment. More than eight in ten Californians say their lives have been disrupted a lot (46%) or some (37%) by the coronavirus outbreak. About eight in ten report they are worried (41% very, 36% somewhat) that they or their family members will get sick from the coronavirus. In thinking about the coronavirus and their local areas, 74 percent of Californians say that people in their community should always wear a mask when they go to public places where they may be near other people. With long-standing health disparities exacerbating racial disparities in the impact of COVID-19, and with large and diverse protests to address systemic racism in America occurring, more than eight in ten Californians say racism is a problem in the US—including six in ten who say it is a big problem. Two in three adults and likely voters think the criminal justice system in the US is biased against African Americans. While 41 percent of Californians say they have experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly because of their race or ethnicity, there are wide differences across racial/ethnic groups (72% African Americans, 63% Asian Americans, 47% Latinos, 24% whites).

As California struggles to control the spread of COVID-19 while also reducing auto emissions, 13 percent say it is very likely (4%) or somewhat likely (9%) that they will take a public bus or transit in the next three months, while 87 percent say it is not too likely (17%) or not at all likely (70%). Solid majorities across age and racial/ethnic groups say this.

**“In the next three months, how likely, if at all, do you think it is that you will take a public bus or transit?”**

	All adults	Age			Race/Ethnicity			
		18 to 34	35 to 54	55 and older	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Very likely	4%	2%	6%	5%	7%	3%	4%	4%
Somewhat likely	9	10	10	6	4	14	12	5
Not too likely	17	19	16	16	18	16	21	14
Not at all likely	70	69	69	73	70	68	63	76

A reduction in air travel due to COVID-19 could have environmental benefits. Fifteen percent of Californians say it is very likely (6%) or somewhat likely (9%) that they will fly in an airplane in next three months, while 85 percent say it is not too likely (22%) or not at all likely (63%). On the other hand, increased automobile use has negative environmental consequences. Thirty-six percent say it is very (14%) or somewhat (22%) likely that they will take a driving vacation, while 64 percent say this is not too likely (30%) or not at all likely (34%) in the next three months.

As Californians look for local outdoor recreation, 35 percent say it is very likely (12%) or somewhat likely (23%) that they will take a day trip to the beach in the next three months. Younger residents (40% 18 to 34, 38% 35 to 54) are more likely than older adults to say that a day at the beach is likely (29% 55 and older). Asian Americans (40%) and whites (39%) are more likely than Latinos (30%) and African Americans (25%) to say that a day at the beach is likely. Thirty-eight percent of coastal residents and 31 percent of inland residents say that a day at the beach is likely in the near term.

**“In the next three months, how likely, if at all, do you think it is that you will take a day trip to the beach?”**

	All adults	Age			Race/Ethnicity			
		18 to 34	35 to 54	55 and older	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Very likely	12%	10%	15%	11%	12%	11%	6%	17%
Somewhat likely	23	30	23	18	13	29	24	22
Not too likely	27	29	28	25	21	30	28	26
Not at all likely	37	32	34	46	53	30	41	34

## Economic Recession

The COVID-19 crisis has shaken public economic confidence—80 percent expect bad times financially in the next 12 months—and Californians are divided on whether the state government should act right away to reduce greenhouse gas emissions rather than wait for the economy and job situation to improve (49% each). Likely voters hold similar views (51% take action right away, 49% wait for the economy to improve). Support among all adults for taking action right away fluctuated during the Great Recession (57% July 2008, 48% July 2009). Today, partisans are deeply divided: 67 percent of Democrats say take action right away, while 82 percent of Republicans say wait for the economy to improve; a slim majority of independents (52%) prefer to wait until the state economy and job situation improve to take action on plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Majorities in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles say the state should act now, while those elsewhere say the state should wait for the economy to improve. Latinos (56%) are the most likely across racial/ethnic groups to say the state should take action right away (50% African Americans, 49% Asian Americans, 45% whites). The shares holding this view decline as age and income levels rise.

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

	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
Take action right away	49%	43%	48%	51%	40%	60%	51%
Wait until the state economy and job situation improve to take action	49	56	52	48	59	38	49
Don't know	1	1	–	1	1	2	–

Nonetheless, solid majorities of California adults (61%) and likely voters (62%) say stricter environmental laws and regulations in California are worth the cost; about four in ten (38% adults, 38% likely voters) say they cost too many jobs and hurt the economy. Most Democrats (81%) and six in ten independents (61%) say stricter laws and regulations are worth the cost, while three in four Republicans (74%) say they cost too many jobs and hurt the economy. Majorities across all regions—with the exception of the Central Valley—see regulations as worth the cost. Latinos (70%), African Americans (65%), and Asian Americans (64%) are more likely than whites (53%) to hold this view. Majorities across age, education, and income groups view these laws as worth the cost.

**“Please indicate which statement comes closest to your view, even if neither is exactly right—stricter environmental laws and regulations in California cost too many jobs and hurt the economy, or stricter environmental laws and regulations in California are worth the cost?”**

	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
Cost too many jobs and hurt the economy	38%	49%	40%	33%	44%	29%	38%
Worth the cost	61	49	60	66	55	70	62
Don't know	1	2	–	1	1	2	–

## Water, Air, and Wildfires

About half of Californians (48%) say that the threat of wildfires is a big problem, while fewer say that the supply of water (38%) or air pollution (36%) is a big problem in their part of the state. About half of Democrats say wildfires (54%), air pollution (49%), and water supply (46%) are big problems, compared to fewer Republicans (45% wildfires, 35% water supply, 21% air pollution) and independents (46% wildfires, 44% water supply, 32% air pollution). Residents in the San Francisco Bay Area are the most likely to say wildfires (55%) and water supply (45%) are a big problem, while Los Angeles residents (50%) are the most likely to say air pollution is a big problem. Across racial/ethnic groups, whites (41%) are the most likely to say the supply of water is a big problem, while Latinos (47%) are the most likely to cite air pollution; just under half across all racial/ethnic groups say the threat of wildfires is a big problem.

**“Next, would you say that...is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem in your part of California?”**

		Region						Likely voters
		All adults	Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
The threat of wildfires	Big problem	48%	38%	50%	47%	46%	55%	52%
	Somewhat of a problem	36	36	44	35	37	32	32
	Not much of a problem	16	26	6	18	17	13	15
The supply of water	Big problem	38	40	35	33	37	45	46
	Somewhat of a problem	43	41	54	46	44	35	40
	Not much of a problem	18	19	11	20	19	19	14
	Don't know	1	–	–	1	–	1	–
Air pollution	Big problem	36	34	42	50	27	29	39
	Somewhat of a problem	46	48	46	41	49	52	42
	Not much of a problem	17	18	12	10	24	18	19

Majorities of adults say pollution of drinking water (70%) and air pollution (55%) are more serious health threats in lower-income areas. Most Democrats and independents say this, compared to fewer than half of Republicans. Solid majorities across regions see polluted drinking water as a serious threat, while half or more, with the exception of the Central Valley (46%), say the same about air pollution. Solid majorities across racial/ethnic groups say this about polluted drinking water and air pollution, with one exception: only 42 percent of whites see air pollution as a serious threat. The view that water and air pollution are more serious health threats in lower-income areas declines with rising income.

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

		All adults	Household income			Race/Ethnicity			
			Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Pollution of drinking water	Yes	70%	77%	69%	66%	69%	73%	76%	63%
	No	29	23	30	34	29	26	22	37
	Don't know	1	–	1	–	2	1	2	–
Air pollution	Yes	55	64	55	50	64	64	66	42
	No	44	35	45	50	36	35	33	57
	Don't know	1	–	1	–	–	1	1	–

Forty-seven percent of adults say polluted drinking water is a very serious (16%) or somewhat serious (31%) threat to them and their family in their part of the state; 63 percent say air pollution is a very serious (21%) or somewhat serious (42%) threat. Whites (12% air pollution, 8% polluted drinking water) are far less likely than Latinos (33% air pollution, 24% drinking water) and African Americans (29% air pollution, 20% drinking water), and less likely than Asian Americans (17% air pollution, 19% drinking water) to say they are a very serious threat to them and their families in their part of the state.

## Ocean, Coast, and Marine Life

More than nine in ten adults say that the condition of the ocean and beaches is very important (61%) or somewhat important (32%) to California’s future economy and quality of life. Majorities across regions and demographic groups say the condition of the ocean and beaches is very important.

Forty-five percent of Californians say that ocean and beach pollution is a big problem in the state today. A majority of Democrats (55%) say coastal pollution is a big problem, compared to fewer independents (46%) and Republicans (32%). Regionally, residents in Los Angeles (53%) are the most likely to say ocean and beach pollution is a big problem. Across racial/ethnic groups, African Americans (56%) and Latinos (54%) are more likely than whites (39%) and Asian Americans (35%) to hold this view. A majority of Californians age 18 to 34 (52%) say ocean and beach pollution is a big problem, compared to fewer than half of older Californians (44% 35 to 54, 40% 55 and older).

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

	All adults	Region			Race/Ethnicity			
		North and central coast	South coast	Inland	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Big problem	45%	43%	50%	40%	56%	35%	54%	39%
Somewhat of a problem	48	49	44	52	37	60	39	52
Not a problem	7	7	6	7	7	5	6	8

About two in three Californians view plastics and marine debris as a big problem (64%) in the part of the California coast closest to them. Majorities across regions view plastics and marine debris as a big problem, with those in Los Angeles (73%) the most likely to hold this view. About eight in ten Democrats (78%) say plastics and marine debris are a big problem, compared to 57 percent of independents and 51 percent of Republicans. Solid majorities across demographic groups see it as a big problem. A majority of Californians (52%) also view declining marine life in the part of the California coast closest to them as a big problem. Across parties, Democrats (63%) are most likely to say declining marine life is a big problem followed by independents (49%) and Republicans (34%). Those in Los Angeles (59%) and the Inland Empire (57%) are the most likely to hold this view. Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (64%) are the most likely to say declining marine life is a big problem.

When asked about the contamination of fish and seafood, about half of adults (48%) say it is a big problem on their part of the California coast. Los Angeles residents (56%) are the most likely to see the contamination of fish and seafood as a big problem. Democrats (56%) and independents (52%) are far more likely than Republicans (29%) to view fish and seafood contamination as a big problem. Majorities of Latinos (57%), African Americans (55%), and Asian Americans (55%) hold this view, compared to 38 percent of whites. Fewer Californians (19%) say limited public access to the coast and beaches is a big problem. Similar proportions of Democrats (23%), independents (19%), and Republicans (18%) view limited public access to the coast and beaches as a big problem. One in four or fewer across regions and demographic groups hold this view.

**“Thinking about the part of the California coast that is closest to you, please tell me whether you think each of the following is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem today. How about ...?”**

All adults	Plastics and marine debris	Declining marine life	Contamination of fish and seafood	Limited public access to the coast and beaches
Big problem	64%	52%	48%	19%
Somewhat of a problem	30	37	40	45
Not a problem	5	9	11	35
Don't know	–	1	1	1

## November Election

About eight in ten likely voters say they are following the news about the presidential election very (35%) or fairly (43%) closely. Today, about eight in ten likely voters say the presidential candidates' positions on the environment are important (43% very, 40% somewhat) in determining their vote. Democratic likely voters (62%) are far more likely than independents (38%) and Republicans (18%), and Latinos (57%) are much more likely than whites (36%) and those in other racial/ethnic groups (47%) to say the environment is very important in determining their vote. (Sample sizes for Asian American and African American likely voters are too small for separate analysis.)

**“In thinking about the presidential election in November, how important to you are the candidates’ positions on the environment in determining your vote?”**

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Race/Ethnicity		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Latinos	Whites	Other racial/ethnic groups
Very important	43%	62%	18%	38%	57%	36%	47%
Somewhat important	40	33	50	42	38	40	41
Not too important	17	5	33	20	6	24	12

When asked which candidate for president would do a better job handling environmental issues in the US, 70 percent of likely voters say Joe Biden and 29 percent say Donald Trump. Nearly all Democrats (97%) prefer Biden, while most Republicans (76%) prefer Trump; independents think Biden would do a better job than Trump (71% to 27%). Eight in ten Latinos and three in four likely voters in other racial/ethnic groups prefer Biden on environmental issues, compared to about six in ten whites. Majorities across regions and demographic groups prefer Biden. Majorities across age groups prefer Biden; younger likely voters (89% 18 to 34) are much more likely than older Californians (71% 35 to 54, 59% 55 and older) to hold this view. Likely voters who say environmental issues are very important in their vote for president prefer Biden to Trump on environmental issues (88% to 12%).

**“Regardless of your choice in the November 2020 presidential election, which of these candidates would do a better job handling environmental issues in the US?”**

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Race/Ethnicity		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Latinos	Whites	Other racial/ethnic groups
Joe Biden	70%	97%	22%	71%	82%	62%	75%
Donald Trump	29	3	76	27	16	37	25
Don't know	1	–	1	1	1	1	1

Two in three likely voters (67%) say the Democratic candidate in the election for the US House of Representatives would do a better job handling environmental issues in the US, while three in ten (32%) say the Republican candidate would do better. Partisans overwhelmingly prefer candidates in their own party, and two in three independent likely voters (67%) support the Democratic candidate in handling environmental issues. In the eight districts deemed competitive in California by the [Cook Political Report](#), 56 percent of likely voters prefer the Democratic candidate when it comes to handling environmental issues. When asked whether it is more important that candidates for the US House of Representatives work with or push back against the Trump administration on environmental issues, 62 percent prefer candidates to push back, while 37 percent prefer that they work with the administration. There is a wide partisan divide, and six in ten independents prefer pushing back against the Trump administration.

When asked in a separate question which political party they trust to do a better job handling environmental issues in the US, 69 percent say they trust the Democratic Party and 30 percent say they trust the Republican Party.

# Regional Map



# Methodology

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

Findings in this report are based on a survey of 1,561 California adult residents. The median time to complete the survey was 20 minutes. Interviews were conducted from July 8–17, 2020.

The survey was conducted in English and Spanish by Ipsos, an international market and opinion research organization, using its online research panel KnowledgePanel. KnowledgePanel members are recruited through probability-based sampling and include both those with Internet access and those without. KnowledgePanel provides internet access for those who do not have it and, if needed, a device to access the internet when they join the panel. KnowledgePanel members are primarily recruited using address-based sampling (ABS) methodology, which improves population coverage, particularly for hard-to-reach populations such as young adults and minority groups. ABS-recruited Latinos are supplemented with a dual-frame random digit dialing (RDD) sampling methodology that targets telephone exchanges associated with areas with a higher concentration of Latinos to provide the capability to conduct representative online surveys with Latinos, including those who speak only Spanish. KnowledgePanel's recruitment was originally based on a national RDD frame and switched to the primarily ABS-based methodology in 2009. KnowledgePanel includes households with landlines and cell phones, including those with cellphones only and those without phones. ABS allows probability-based sampling of addresses from the US Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File (DSF). The DSF-based sampling frame used for address selection is enhanced with a series of refinements—such as the appendage of various ancillary data to each address from commercial and government data sources—to facilitate complex stratification plans. Taking advantage of such refinements, quarterly samples are selected using a stratified sampling methodology that aims to retain the representativeness of the panel. KnowledgePanel recruits new panel members throughout the year to offset panel attrition.

To qualify for the survey, a panel member must be age 18 or older and reside in California. A total of 1,633 respondents completed the survey out of 2,908 panelists who were sampled, for a response rate of 56%. To ensure the highest data quality, we flagged respondents who sped through the survey, which we defined as completing the survey in one fourth of the overall median time (less than 4.9 minutes). We also flagged respondents if their self-reported age or gender did not match the data stored in their profile. A total of 72 cases were removed after this review process, resulting in 1,561 total qualified and valid cases.

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

Ipsos uses the US Census Bureau's 2014–2018 American Community Survey's (ACS) Public Use Microdata Series for California (with regional coding information from the University of Minnesota's Integrated Public Use Microdata Series for California) to compare certain demographic characteristics of the survey sample—region, age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education—with the characteristics of California's adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the ACS figures. We also used voter registration data from the California Secretary of State to compare the party registration of registered voters in our sample to party registration statewide. The sample of Californians is first weighted using an initial sampling or base weight that corrects for any differences in the probability of

selecting various segments of the KnowledgePanel sample. This base weight is further adjusted using an iterative proportional fitting (raking) procedure that aligns sample demographics to population benchmarks from the 2014–2018 ACS data as well as party registration benchmarks from the California Secretary of State’s voter registration file.

The sampling error, taking design effects from weighting into consideration, is  $\pm 3.4$  percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the total unweighted sample of 1,561 adults. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 3.4 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for unweighted subgroups is larger: for the 1,298 registered voters, the sampling error is  $\pm 3.5$  percent; for the 1,032 likely voters, it is  $\pm 3.9$  percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

We present results for five geographic regions, accounting for approximately 90 percent of the state population. “Central Valley” includes Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. “San Francisco Bay Area” includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. “Los Angeles” refers to Los Angeles County, “Inland Empire” refers to Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, and “Orange/San Diego” refers to Orange and San Diego Counties. Residents of other geographic areas are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes for these less populous areas are not large enough to report separately. Additionally, in several places, we refer to coastal and inland counties. Within coastal counties, the “north and central coast” region refers to the counties along the California coast from San Luis Obispo County northward to Del Norte County, including all of the San Francisco Bay Area counties. The “south coast” region includes Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego Counties. All other counties are included in the “inland” region. We analyze the results of those who live in competitive house districts as determined by the [Cook Political Report’s 2020 House Race Ratings](#), updated July 16, 2020. These districts are 4, 10, 21, 22, 25, 39, 45, and 48; a map of California’s congressional districts can be [found here](#).

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

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

We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in our earlier surveys and to those in national surveys by Gallup, Kaiser Family Foundation, New York Times/Sienna College Research Institute, Pew Research Center, and the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication/George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication. Additional details about our methodology can be found at [www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/SurveyMethodology.pdf](http://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/SurveyMethodology.pdf) and are available upon request through [surveys@ppic.org](mailto:surveys@ppic.org).

# Questionnaire and Results

## CALIFORNIANS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

July 8–17, 2020

1,561 California Adult Residents:

English, Spanish

MARGIN OF ERROR ±3.4% AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE  
 PERCENTAGES MAY NOT ADD TO 100 DUE TO ROUNDING

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

69% approve  
 29 disapprove  
 1 don't know

**2. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling environmental issues in California?**

62% approve  
 36 disapprove  
 3 don't know

**3. How much of the time can you trust the state government to do what is right when it comes to handling environmental issues in California—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?**

9% just about always  
 44 most of the time  
 47 only some of the time  
 – don't know

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

19% good times  
 80 bad times  
 1 don't know

**5. For the following issue, please indicate which statement comes closest to your view, even if neither is exactly right. [rotate order] [1] Stricter environmental laws and regulations in California cost too many jobs and hurt the economy; [or] [2] stricter environmental laws and regulations in California are worth the cost.**

38% stricter environmental laws and regulations in California cost too many jobs and hurt the economy  
 61 stricter environmental laws and regulations in California are worth the cost  
 1 don't know

**6. When it comes to the state government's plans for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, should it [rotate order] [1] take action right away; [or] [2] wait until the state economy and job situation improve to take action?**

49% take action right away  
 49 wait until the state economy and job situation improve to take action  
 1 don't know

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

*[open-ended, code]*

- 18% global warming, climate change, greenhouse gases
- 14 air pollution, vehicle emissions, smog
- 11 loss of forests, forest fires, wildfires
- 10 water supply, drought, reservoirs
- 8 landfills, garbage, sewage, waste, recycling
- 6 coronavirus, COVID-19
- 5 pollution in general
- 4 too much government regulation, politicians, environmentalists
- 3 water pollution of ocean, rivers, lakes, streams, beach pollution
- 18 other *(specify)*
- 3 don't know

**8. Which level of government do you trust the most when it comes to handling environmental issues in California? *[rotate order] [1] federal government; [or] [2] state government; [or] [3] local government.***

- 15% federal government
- 52 state government
- 30 local government
- 1 none *(volunteered)*
- 1 don't know

**9. How much optimism do you have that we will have environmental problems in California well under control 20 years from now?**

*[rotate order top to bottom]*

- 14% great deal
- 64 only some
- 21 hardly any
- 1 don't know

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

- 84% yes *[ask q10a]*
- 16 no *[skip to q11b]*

**10a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or are you registered as a decline-to-state or independent voter?**

- 49% Democrat *[ask q11]*
- 26 Republican *[skip to q11a]*
- 2 another party *(specify) [skip to q12]*
- 23 independent *[skip to q11b]*

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

- 63% strong
- 36 not very strong
- don't know

*[skip to q12]*

**11a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?**

- 61% strong
- 39 not very strong
- don't know

*[skip to q12]*

**11b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?**

- 34% Republican Party
- 59 Democratic Party
- 6 neither *(volunteered)*
- don't know

**12. *[likely voters only]* Regardless of your choice in the November 2020 presidential election, which of these candidates would do a better job handling environmental issues in the US—*[rotate] [1] Joe Biden, the Democrat, [or] [2] Donald Trump, the Republican?***

- 70% John Biden, the Democrat
- 29 Donald Trump, the Republican
- 1 don't know

13. *[likely voters only]* In thinking about the presidential election in November, how important to you are the candidates' positions on the environment in determining your vote—very important, somewhat important, or not too important?
- 43% very important
  - 40 somewhat important
  - 17 not too important
  - don't know
14. *[likely voters only]* How closely are you following the news about candidates for the 2020 presidential election—very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?
- 35% very closely
  - 43 fairly closely
  - 20 not too closely
  - 2 not at all closely
  - don't know
15. *[likely voters only]* Regardless of your choice in the 2020 election for the US House of Representatives, which of these candidates would do a better job handling environmental issues in the US—*[rotate order]* [1] the Republican candidate in your district; *[or]* [2] the Democratic candidate in your district?
- 32% the Republican candidate in your district
  - 67 the Democratic candidate in your district
  - 1 don't know
16. *[likely voters only]* Which of the following is more important to you in candidates for the US House of Representatives in your district when it comes to environmental issues—*[rotate order]* [1] that they work with the Trump administration; *[or]* [2] that they push back against the Trump administration?
- 37% that they work with the Trump Administration
  - 62 that they push back against the Trump Administration
  - don't know
17. *[likely voters only]* Which political party do you trust to do a better job in handling environmental issues in the US—*[rotate order]* [1] the Democratic Party *[or]* [2] the Republican Party?
- 69% Democratic Party
  - 30 Republican Party
  - 1 neither (*volunteered*)
  - 1 don't know
18. Next, would you say that the supply of water is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem in your part of California?
- 38% big problem
  - 43 somewhat of a problem
  - 18 not much of a problem
  - 1 don't know
19. Do you think that pollution of drinking water is a more serious health threat in lower-income areas than other areas in your part of California, or not?
- 70% yes
  - 29 no
  - 1 don't know

**20. How serious a health threat is pollution of drinking water in your part of California to you and your immediate family? Do you think it is a very serious, somewhat serious, or not too serious of a health threat?**

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

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

- 36% big problem
- 46 somewhat of a problem
- 17 not much of a problem
- don't know

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

- 55% yes
- 44 no
- 1 don't know

**23. How serious a health threat is air pollution in your part of California to you and your immediate family? Do you think it is a very serious, somewhat serious, or not too serious of a health threat?**

- 21% very serious
- 42 somewhat serious
- 37 not too serious
- don't know

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

- 48% big problem
- 36 somewhat of a problem
- 16 not much of a problem
- don't know

**25. Do you think that global warming has contributed to California's recent wildfires or not?**

- 71% yes
- 28 no
- 2 don't know

**26. How much confidence do you have in the government in terms of its readiness to respond to wildfires in your part of California—a great deal, only some, or hardly any confidence?**

- 35% a great deal
- 56 only some
- 9 hardly any
- don't know

**27. On another topic, which of the following statements reflects your view of when the effects of global warming will begin to happen?**

*[rotate order top to bottom]*

- 68% they have already begun to happen
- 4 they will start happening within a few years
- 11 they will start happening within your lifetime
- 9 they will not happen within your lifetime, but they will affect future generations
- 7 they will never happen
- 1 don't know

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

- 48% very serious
- 32 somewhat serious
- 12 not too serious
- 8 not at all serious
- don't know

**29. How important is the issue of global warming to you personally? Is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?**

- 25% extremely important
- 32 very important
- 25 somewhat important
- 9 not too important
- 9 not at all important
- don't know

**30. Would you be willing to make major lifestyle changes to address the issue of global warming?**

- 73% yes
- 26 no
- 1 don't know

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

*[rotate questions 31 to 34]*

**31. How about increased rising sea levels? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?**

- 34% very concerned
- 40 somewhat concerned
- 17 not too concerned
- 10 not at all concerned
- don't know

**32. How about heat waves that are more severe? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?**

- 48% very concerned
- 33 somewhat concerned
- 12 not too concerned
- 6 not at all concerned
- don't know

**33. How about droughts that are more severe? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?**

- 58% very concerned
- 30 somewhat concerned
- 8 not too concerned
- 4 not at all concerned
- don't know

**34. How about wildfires that are more severe? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?**

- 58% very concerned
- 31 somewhat concerned
- 8 not too concerned
- 4 not at all concerned
- don't know

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

- 77% favor
- 21 oppose
- 1 don't know

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

- 77% favor
- 21 oppose
- 2 don't know

**36a. Recently, the state proposed the Advanced Clean Truck Regulation that would accelerate a large-scale transition from diesel to zero-emission trucks. Do you favor or oppose requiring 100 percent of commercial trucks sold in California to be zero emissions by 2045?**

- 77% favor
- 21 oppose
- 2 don't know

**37. Next, how much, if anything, have you heard about the state government policy called “cap and trade” that sets limits on greenhouse gas emissions? Have you heard a lot, a little, or nothing at all?**

- 8% a lot
- 37 a little
- 54 nothing at all
- don’t know

**38. In the system called “cap and trade,” the California state government issues permits limiting the amount of greenhouse gases companies can put out. Companies that do not use all their permits can sell them to other companies. The idea is that many companies will find ways to put out less greenhouse gases, because that will be cheaper than buying permits. Do you favor or oppose the cap and trade system?**

- 62% favor
- 34 oppose
- 3 don’t know

**39. Next, how important to you is it that some of the cap and trade revenues are spent on projects to improve environmental conditions in lower-income and disadvantaged communities? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all?**

- 39% very important
- 39 somewhat important
- 13 not too important
- 8 not important at all
- 2 don’t know

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

*[rotate questions 40 and 41]*

**40. How about encouraging local governments to change land use and transportation planning so that people could drive less? Do you favor or oppose this proposal?**

- 76% favor
- 22 oppose
- 1 don’t know

**41. How about requiring all automakers to further reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases from new cars? Do you favor or oppose this proposal?**

- 81% favor
- 18 oppose
- 1 don’t know

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

- 69% favor
- 29 oppose
- 2 don’t know

**43. When it comes to efforts to fight climate change, how important is it to you that California acts as a leader around the world? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all?**

- 42% very important
- 32 somewhat important
- 13 not too important
- 12 not important at all
- don’t know

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

- 39% more jobs
- 28 fewer jobs
- 30 wouldn’t affect the number of jobs
- 2 don’t know

**45. Do you think that California doing things to reduce global warming in the future would cause gasoline prices at the pump around the state to increase, or to decrease, or wouldn’t affect gasoline prices at the pump around the state?**

- 52% increase gasoline prices
- 27 decrease gasoline prices
- 19 wouldn’t affect gasoline prices
- 3 don’t know

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

- 47% willing
- 52 not willing
- 1 don't know

On another topic,

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

- 45% big problem
- 48 somewhat of a problem
- 7 not a problem
- don't know

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

*[rotate questions 48 to 51]*

**48. How about the contamination of fish and seafood? Do you think this is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in the part of the California coast that is closest to you?**

- 48% big problem
- 40 somewhat of a problem
- 11 not a problem
- 1 don't know

**49. How about declining marine life? Do you think this is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in the part of the California coast that is closest to you?**

- 52% big problem
- 37 somewhat of a problem
- 9 not a problem
- 1 don't know

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

- 64% big problem
- 30 somewhat of a problem
- 5 not a problem
- don't know

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

- 19% big problem
- 45 somewhat of a problem
- 35 not a problem
- 1 don't know

**52. Next, how important is the condition of oceans and beaches to the economy and quality of life for California's future? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?**

- 61% very important
- 32 somewhat important
- 4 not too important
- 1 not at all important
- 1 don't know

Next, thinking about the possible impact of global warming in California,

*[rotate questions 53 and 54]*

**53. How concerned are you about rising sea levels having an impact on flooding and beach erosion? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?**

- 39% very concerned
- 35 somewhat concerned
- 19 not too concerned
- 7 not at all concerned
- don't know

**54. How concerned are you about ocean warming having an impact on marine and coastal life? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?**

47% very concerned  
34 somewhat concerned  
13 not too concerned  
6 not at all concerned  
– don't know

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

*[rotate questions 55 to 58]*

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

26% favor  
73 oppose  
1 don't know

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

77% favor  
20 oppose  
3 don't know

**57. How about maintaining the rules and boundaries of national marine sanctuaries and California Marine Protected Areas—or MPAs—to protect fish, wildlife, and their habitat off the California coast? Do you favor or oppose this proposal?**

89% favor  
9 oppose  
2 don't know

**58. How about building desalination plants on the California coast? Do you favor or oppose this proposal?**

68% favor  
28 oppose  
6 don't know

On another topic,

**59. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that President Trump is handling environmental issues in the United States?**

24% approve  
74 disapprove  
2 don't know

**60. Do you approve or disapprove of the way the US Congress is handling environmental issues in the United States?**

20% approve  
78 disapprove  
3 don't know

**61. How much of the time can you trust the federal government to do what is right when it comes to handling environmental issues in the United States—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?**

2% just about always  
22 most of the time  
74 only some of the time  
1 don't know

On another topic,

**62. How much, if at all, has your life been disrupted by the coronavirus outbreak? Would you say a lot, some, just a little, or not at all?**

46% a lot  
37 some  
15 just a little  
3 not at all  
– don't know

*[rotate questions 63 and 64]*

**63. How worried, if at all, are you that you or someone in your family will get sick from the coronavirus? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not at all worried?**

41% very worried  
36 somewhat worried  
17 not too worried  
6 not at all worried  
– don't know

**64. How worried, if it all, are you that the coronavirus will have a negative impact on the personal finances of you and your family? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not at all worried?**

- 35% very worried
- 36 somewhat worried
- 20 not too worried
- 8 not at all worried
- don't know

**65. Do you feel that worry or stress related to coronavirus has had a negative impact on your mental health, or not? (if yes: "Was that a major impact or a minor impact?")**

- 21% yes, major impact
- 30 yes, minor impact
- 49 no
- don't know

**65a. Thinking about the coronavirus and your own local area, when people in your community go to public places where they may be near others, how often do you think they should wear a mask—always, most of the time, some of the time, rarely, or never?**

- 74% always
- 12 most of the time
- 9 some of the time
- 3 rarely
- 3 never
- don't know

The continuing threat of the coronavirus outbreak and the need for social distancing are making people think and act differently when it comes to their travel plans.

*[rotate questions 66 to 69]*

**66. In the next three months, how likely, if at all, do you think it is that you will take a public bus or transit? Is it very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?**

- 4% very likely
- 9 somewhat likely
- 17 not too likely
- 70 not at all likely
- don't know

**67. In the next three months, how likely, if at all, do you think it is that you will fly in an airplane? Is it very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?**

- 6% very likely
- 9 somewhat likely
- 22 not too likely
- 63 not at all likely
- don't know

**68. In the next three months, how likely, if at all, do you think it is that you will take a day trip to the beach? Is it very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?**

- 12% very likely
- 23 somewhat likely
- 27 not too likely
- 37 not at all likely
- don't know

**69. In the next three months, how likely, if at all, do you think it is that you will take a driving vacation? Is it very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?**

- 14% very likely
- 22 somewhat likely
- 30 not too likely
- 34 not at all likely
- don't know

On another topic,

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

- 60% big problem
- 25 somewhat of a problem
- 10 small problem
- 5 not a problem at all
- don't know

**70a. Thinking about your own experience, have you ever experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly because of your race or ethnicity? (if yes: “Would you say regularly or from time to time?”)**

- 5% yes, regularly
- 35 yes, from time to time
- 59 no
- don’t know

**71. In general, do you think—[rotate order] [1] the criminal justice system in the United States is biased against African Americans, [or] [2] do you think the criminal justice system treats people equally regardless of race?**

- 64% criminal justice system is biased against African Americans
- 35 criminal justice system treats people equally regardless of race
- 1 don’t know

**71a. From what you’ve read and heard, how do you feel about the Black Lives Matter movement?**

*[rotate order top to bottom]*

- 31% strongly support
- 37 somewhat support
- 13 somewhat oppose
- 18 strongly oppose
- 1 don’t know

**72. Next, would you consider yourself to be politically:**

*[rotate order top to bottom]*

- 12% very liberal
- 20 somewhat liberal
- 39 middle-of-the-road
- 19 somewhat conservative
- 9 very conservative
- don’t know

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

- 25% great deal
- 37 fair amount
- 29 only a little
- 9 none
- don’t know

*[d1–d16 demographic questions]*

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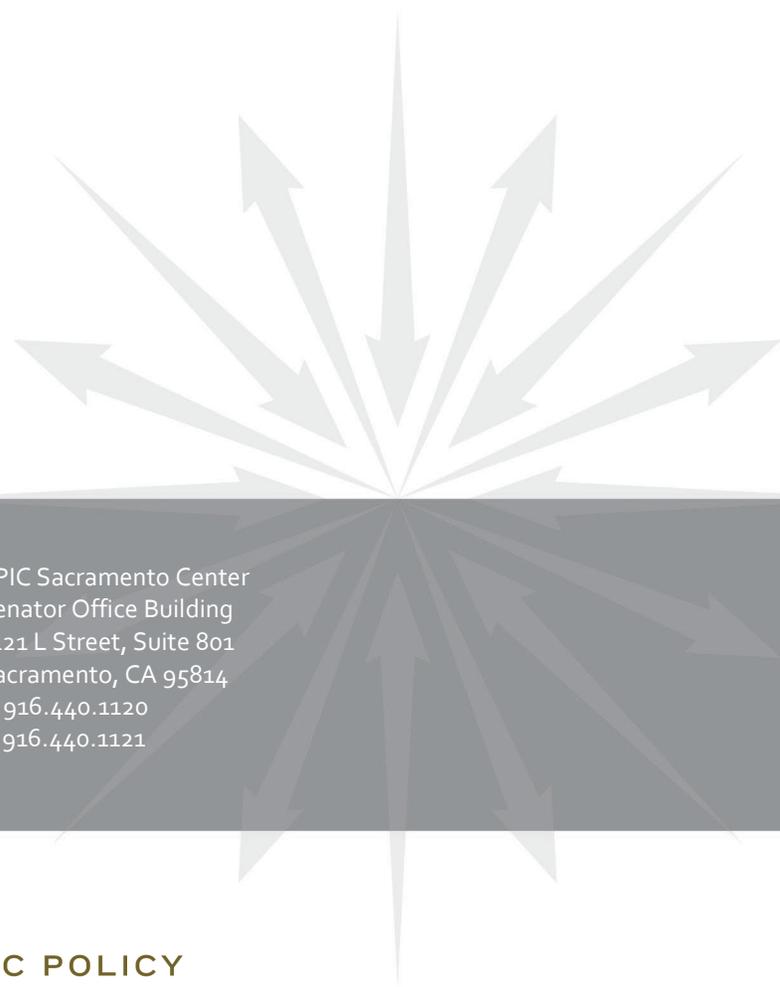
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