



Poll: Americans Support Strong Climate, Energy Policies

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FAIRFAX, Va.—Despite a sharp drop in public concern over global warming, Americans—regardless of political affiliation—support the passage of federal climate and energy policies, according to the results of a national survey released today by researchers at Yale and George Mason universities.

The survey found support for:

- Funding more research on renewable energy, such as solar and wind power (85 percent)
- Tax rebates for people buying fuel-efficient vehicles or solar panels (82 percent)
- Establishing programs to teach Americans how to save energy (72 percent)
- Regulating carbon dioxide as a pollutant (71 percent)
- School curricula to teach children about the causes, consequences, and potential solutions to global warming (70 percent)
- Signing an international treaty that requires the United States to cut emissions of carbon dioxide 90 percent by the year 2050 (61 percent)
- Establishing programs to teach Americans about global warming (60 percent).

“Surprisingly, majorities of both Republicans and Democrats support many of these policies, including renewable energy research, tax rebates, regulating carbon dioxide, and expanding offshore drilling for oil and natural gas,” said Anthony Leiserowitz, director of the Yale Project on Climate Change. “Further, majorities in both parties

support returning revenues from a cap-and-trade system to American households to offset higher energy costs, perhaps opening a pathway for Congressional action.”

Sixty percent of Americans, however, said they have heard “nothing at all” about the cap-and-trade legislation currently being considered by Congress. Only 12 percent had heard “a lot.”

When cap and trade is explained, 58 percent support the policy, but this support drops to approximately 40 percent if household energy costs increase by \$15 a month, or 50 cents a day. Sixty-six percent support cap and trade, however, if every household were to receive a yearly bonus of \$180 to offset higher energy costs. In addition, 59 percent of Americans said they would likely spend the bonus on home energy efficiency improvements. This increases to 71 percent likely if the government offered to double the bonus, if it was spent on energy efficiency improvements.

Sixty-two percent said the United States should make a “medium-” to “large-scale” effort to reduce global warming, even if doing so has “moderate” or “large” economic costs. This represents, however, a 12-point decline since the fall of 2008. Sixty-nine percent said global warming should be a “medium” priority to “very high” priority of President Obama and Congress, while approximately half want local, state, and federal officials to do more to address the issue. Both of those results represent 10- to 15-percentage-point declines since the fall of 2008.

“Most Americans continue to want their elected leaders at all levels of government to get on with the job of developing solutions to global warming,” said Edward Maibach, director of the Center for Climate Change Communication at George Mason University. “Two out of three also want to see ordinary citizens like themselves doing more about global warming.”

The results come from a nationally representative survey of 1,001 American adults, age 18 and older. The sample was weighted to correspond with U.S. Census Bureau parameters. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3 percent, with 95 percent confidence. The survey was designed by researchers at Yale and George Mason universities and conducted from December 24, 2009, to January 3, 2010, by Knowledge Networks, using an online research panel of American adults.

A copy of the report can be downloaded from [http://www.climatechangecommunication.org/images/files/PolicySupportJan2010\(1\).pdf](http://www.climatechangecommunication.org/images/files/PolicySupportJan2010(1).pdf)

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