

# THE FIELD POLL



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**CALIFORNIANS SEE GLOBAL WARMING AS A SERIOUS THREAT TO THE STATE'S OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE. STRONG BELIEF THAT ACTION IS REQUIRED. OPTIMISM THAT GREENHOUSE GASES CAN BE REDUCED WHILE AT THE SAME TIME CREATING JOBS AND EXPANDING THE ECONOMY.**

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*Majorities Support A Number Of Additional State Government Actions Aimed At Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions*

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According to the results of a special statewide *Field Poll* commissioned by Next 10, an independent, non-partisan, non-profit organization, Californians attach a high degree of importance to the issue of global warming and air pollution and believe actions should be taken now to address the problem. More than four in five see global warming as either a very or somewhat serious threat to the state's overall quality of life. Majorities also say it's a very serious threat to the health of residents living or working in areas with poor air quality, to the relationship between the Sierra snow pack and the state's water supply, to Central Valley farmers, and to California's coastal communities.

The public sees many entities as having the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The four groups seen as being most able to affect change are major corporations, gas and electric utility companies, the general public and the U.S. government, in order of efficacy.

Support for taking action on global warming includes majorities across all regions of the state and among both registered voters and adults not registered to vote. In addition, poll results show that the more people know about global warming, the more likely they are to feel immediate action should be taken about the problem. But, in the face of this pronounced state of concern and apprehension, Californians are bullish about the state's ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while expanding jobs and economic prosperity. Nine in ten Californians say the state can be a leader in new technologies to improve efficiency and reduce global warming.

*(Additional survey results will be included in Next 10's California Green Innovation Index, an analysis of the impact of innovation on California's economy and environment, to be released on November 14<sup>th</sup>.)*

Initial findings from the new survey were presented today in Sacramento at the Behavior, Energy and Climate Change conference, a national conference of academic, business, government and environmental leaders whose goal is to accelerate the transition to an energy-efficient and low carbon future. Results are based on a telephone survey conducted August 10-28, 2007 among a random sample of 1,003 California adults in English and Spanish.

Majorities of Californians support a number of possible state government actions aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. About eight in ten support offering incentives, such as tax credits, to encourage greenhouse gas emission reductions among businesses and individuals. A similar large majority (81%) also favors government regulations to require greenhouse gas emission cutbacks by businesses, although this declines to 61% if this increases prices of some goods and services.

Two in three (65%) favor the idea of establishing a “cap and trade” system, whereby business would be limited in the amount of greenhouse gas emissions they could produce, but would create a trading system to allow companies unable to meet this limit to pay other companies to cut back their emissions more than the required amount.

There is somewhat less support for imposing a carbon tax on businesses and individuals, although even here a majority of Californians are in favor. While the initial idea of a carbon tax on business is supported by 72%, this declines to just 53% if, as a result, prices that Californians pay for some goods and services increase. A similar narrow majority (52%) backs the idea of applying a carbon tax to individuals, although support grows if the tax proceeds are spent solely on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

When compared to a national poll of adults conducted earlier this year, Californians are more likely to describe global warming as an extremely important problem and more believe immediate action should be taken.

Below are some of the specific findings from the latest *Field Poll* survey:

- Three in ten Californians (29%) volunteer global warming as the world’s top environmental problem. Another 28% cite air pollution. No other problem is cited by more than 6%.
- About half of the state's residents (51%) say they’ve heard a great deal about global warming. Registered voters and those with a post-graduate degree are most likely to be closely attuned to the problem.
- Seven in ten Californians (70%) believe the issue of global warming is extremely or very important to them personally, significantly higher than the 52% of Americans who reported this in a national poll earlier this year.
- More Californians than U.S. residents also support taking immediate action on global warming. Statewide, 43% say the problem requires immediate action and another 32% believes some action should be taken. The proportions of U.S. residents who take these positions are 34% and 30%, respectively. In addition, the more a person knows about global warming, the more likely they are to believe immediate action is required.

- More than four in five (82%) say global warming poses a serious threat to California's overall quality of life. More specifically, about two in three believe global warming poses a very serious threat to the health of residents who live or work in areas where air quality is poor (66%) and nearly as many (63%) say it seriously threatens the snowpack in the Sierras and California's water supply. Majorities also say global warming poses a very serious threat to farmers in the Central Valley and to California's coastal communities.
- Despite these apprehensions, greater than eight in ten (85%) agree that the state can reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming and, at the same time, expand jobs and economic prosperity, and 90% agree that California can be a leader in new technologies to improve efficiency and reduce global warming.
- Californians believe many entities have the potential to reduce greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming. Major corporations, gas and electric utility companies, the general public and the U.S. government are seen as having the potential to do the most.
- There is strong support for the idea of the state government offering incentives like tax credits to businesses and individuals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Greater than eight in ten (81%) favor government tax credits to businesses and 79% support them for individuals.
- The idea of using regulations to require businesses to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is initially backed by 81%, although support drops to 61% if such regulations lead to price increases on some goods and services.
- Two in three residents (65%) favor the idea of establishing a "cap and trade" system for businesses, which would set an overall limit on the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that companies can release, and create a trading system to allow companies that can't fully reduce their emissions to pay other companies to cut back more than the required amount.
- Somewhat smaller majorities favor establishing a government-imposed "carbon tax" on businesses and individuals. The idea of establishing such a tax on businesses is initially embraced by 72%, but this declines to 53% if this increases the prices Californians pay for some goods and services. The idea of imposing a carbon tax on individuals is narrowly favored 52% to 43%. However, support grows to 65% if the money from the tax was spent solely on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

*Note to Editors: See attached California Opinion Index report for a more detailed accounting of the data referenced in this report.*

## **Information About The Survey**

### **Sample Details**

The findings in this report are based on a telephone survey of 1,003 California adults conducted August 10-28, 2007 in English and Spanish. The survey was commissioned by Next 10, an independent, non-partisan, non-profit organization based in Palo Alto. The survey questionnaire was developed in partnership with Collaborative Economics, a strategic consulting group based in Mountain View, with advice from Next 10's advisory committee.

Telephone households were sampling using a random digit dial methodology, which randomly selects operating landline telephone exchanges within all area codes serving California household in proportion to population. Within each exchange a random sample of telephone numbers are created by adding random digits to the selected telephone exchange. This method gives each phone listing an equal chance of being selected and permits access to all landline telephone numbers both listed and unlisted.

After the completion of interviewing, the results were weighted slightly to estimates of the demographic and regional characteristics of California's adult population. According to statistical theory 95% of the time results from the overall sample have a sampling error of +/- 3.2 percentage points. There are other possible sources of error in any survey other than sampling variability. Different results could occur because of differences in question working, sampling, or sequencing or through undetected omissions or error in interviewing or data processing. Extensive efforts were made to minimize these errors.

### **Questions Asked**

What in your opinion is the single biggest environmental problem the world faces at this time?

Global warming is a term used to describe changes in the temperature of the Earth's atmosphere, which could result in changes in the environment. How much have you heard or read about global warming – a great deal, some, a little or nothing at all?

How important is the issue of global warming to you personally – extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not too important or not at all important?

From what you know about global warming, which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion?

1. Global warming has been established as a serious problem and immediate action is necessary.
2. There is enough evidence that global warming is taking place and some action should be taken.
3. We don't know enough about global warming and more research is necessary before we take any actions.
4. Concern about global warming is unwarranted.

Is reducing global warming something that (ITEMS READ IN ORDER) can do a lot about, can do something about or cannot do much about?

- the U.S. government
- governments in other countries
- state and local government
- farmers and agricultural companies
- major corporations
- gas and electric utility companies
- small businesses
- start-up companies promoting clean or alternative energy technology
- non-profit organizations dedicated to reducing global warming
- the general public

I am going to read some different ways that global warming could potentially pose a threat to life here in California. For each, please tell me how serious a threat you think global warming poses. How serious a threat does global warming pose to **(ITEM)** – a very serious, somewhat serious, not too serious or not a serious threat? **(ITEMS READ IN RANDOM ORDER)**

- the California economy
- California's overall quality of life
- farmers in the Central Valley
- California's vintners and winemakers
- California's coastal communities and those living at sea level
- the snow pack in the Sierras and California's water supply
- the health of Californians who live or work in areas where air quality is poor, such as near freeways and industrial sites

I am going to read some statements about global warming and energy conservation. For each please tell me whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly. **(ITEMS READ IN RANDOM ORDER)**

- I believe California can reduce greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming and expand jobs and economic prosperity at the same time.
- I believe California can be a leader in new technologies to improve efficiency and reduce global warming.

Please tell me if you favor or oppose the state government implementing any of the following approaches to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, such as carbon dioxide into the air. **(ITEMS READ IN RANDOM ORDER, ASKING:)** Would you (then) favor this strongly, favor it somewhat, oppose it somewhat or oppose it strongly?

- Use incentives, such as tax credits, to encourage California businesses to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions they produce.
- Use incentives, such as tax credits, to encourage individual Californians to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas emissions they create in their everyday lives.
- Use regulations to require California businesses to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions they produce. **IF FAVOR, ASK:** What if these regulations increased the prices that Californians pay for some goods and services?
- Tax California businesses based on the amount of greenhouse gases they produce. **IF FAVOR, ASK:** What if this tax increases the prices that Californians pay for some goods and services?
- Establish a tax on individual Californians based on the amount of greenhouse gases they generate in their everyday lives. **IF OPPOSE, ASK:** What if the money from the tax was spend solely on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and nothing else?
- Establish a "cap-and-trade" system, which would set an overall limit on the amount of greenhouse gases that companies can release, and create a trading system to allow companies that can't fully reduce their emissions to pay other companies to exceed their cutback totals.