



September 14, 2010

TO: Natural Resources Defense Council  
FROM: Graham Hueber, Infogroup/Opinion Research Corporation (ORC), (609) 452-5474  
RE: **SURVEY RESULTS – AMERICANS AND ATTITUDES ABOUT THE EPA**

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A new national telephone survey by Infogroup/ORC of 1,007 Americans conducted from September 10-13, 2010 shows the following:

- **More than four out of five Americans (82 percent) support the work of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, with 45 percent supporting it strongly compared to only 9 percent who strongly oppose it.**
  - Support for the EPA is consistent across regions: Northeast (79 percent); Midwest (82 percent); South (81 percent) and West (86 percent).
  - Support for the EPA was strong across political party lines: Republicans (71 percent); Independents (89 percent); and Democrats (93 percent).<sup>[1]</sup>
- **About three out of four Americans (73 percent) support “protecting the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s authority” to “take steps that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electric utilities and other major industrial polluters.”** Support is fairly evenly divided between “strongly” (38 percent) and “somewhat” (34 percent). By contrast, only about one in four Americans (24 percent) oppose the EPA’s authority to control carbon dioxide pollution, with just 15 percent in the “strongly oppose category.

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<sup>[1]</sup> “Republican” includes independents leaning Republican, “Democrat” includes independents leaning Democrat and “Independent” refers to those who no inclination towards one of the two major parties.

- Little variation is seen among regions in the level of support for the EPA’s authority to regulate greenhouse gas emissions: Northeast (75 percent); Midwest (68 percent); South (72 percent); and West (75 percent).
- A majority of Republicans (54 percent), Independents (78 percent) and Democrats (91 percent) favor protecting the EPA’s authority.
- **Seven out of 10 Americans (71 percent) agree with the following statement: “If Congress blocks the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency from doing its job of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from electric utilities and other major industrial polluters, it would send the wrong message to polluters, namely, that Congress isn't willing to hold polluters accountable.”** Support for this statement leans to those who “strongly agree” with this statement (39 percent) versus those who “somewhat agree” (32 percent). Only about one in four Americans (24 percent) disagree with the statement, including a bit more than one in 10 (12 percent) who “strongly disagree.”
  - Only modest differences in regional views about this question were found, with those agreeing accounting for the following: Northeast (76 percent); Midwest (68 percent); South (70 percent); and West (71 percent).
  - A majority of Republicans (55 percent), Independents (70 percent) and Democrats (89 percent) agree with this statement.
- **More than four out of five Americans (83 percent) think scientists and other experts at the EPA are “the most qualified to make decisions about how best to safeguard the American public when dealing with greenhouse gas emissions and other major pollutants,”** compared to fewer than one in 10 Americans (9 percent) who said Congress should make such decisions.
  - Relatively little variation in regional views about this question was found, with those favoring EPA decision-making accounting for the following: Northeast (75 percent); Midwest (86 percent); South (83 percent); and West (86 percent).
  - Most Republicans (83 percent), Independents (73 percent) and Democrats (88 percent) think the decision should be made by those at the EPA – not those in Congress.
- **About three out of four Americans (73 percent) favor keeping EPA funding the same (44 percent) or increase such funding (29 percent), compared to less than one in five (22 percent) who would slash EPA funding.**

## **METHODOLOGY**

These data are based on the findings of a telephone survey conducted among a national probability sample of 1,007 adults comprising 501 men and 506 women 18 years of age and older, living in private households in the continental United States. Interviewing for this CARAVAN® Survey was completed during the period September 10-13, 2010.

All CARAVAN interviews are conducted using Infogroup/ORC's computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system. The system is state-of-the-art and offers several distinct advantages such as: full-screen control which allows multi-question screens, fully-programmable help and objection screens to aid interviewing, an extremely flexible telephone number management system and powerful data checking facilities. CATI ensures that interviews are conducted in the most efficient manner and allows interviewers easy response recording. This interviewing method also allows for the most accurate form of data entry by guiding the interviewer through the programmed question flow and by providing on-screen interviewer instructions.

The most advanced probability sampling techniques are employed in the selection of households for telephone interviewing. ORC utilizes an unrestricted random sampling procedure that controls the amount of serial bias found in systematic sampling to generate its random-digit-dial sample. The sample is fully replicated and stratified by region. Only one interview is conducted per household. All sample numbers selected are subject to up to four attempts to complete an interview.

Completed interviews are weighted by four variables: age, sex, geographic region, and race, to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total population, 18 years of age and older. The raw data are weighted by a custom designed program which automatically develops a weighting factor for each respondent. Each respondent is assigned a single weight derived from the relationship between the actual proportion of the population with its specific combination of age, sex, geographic characteristics and race and the proportion in our CARAVAN sample that week. Tabular results show both weighted and unweighted bases.

The margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points at the full sample size.

*Topline results of 1,007 telephone interviews with American adults,  
conducted September 10-13, 2010.*

On another subject...

R1 As you may know, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is the federal agency that protects the environment and public health by regulating pollution to keep it out of our air and our water.

In general, do you support or oppose the work of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency -- the E-P-A? Would you say you . . .

(READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER)

	Total	REGION				PARTY		
		North East	Mid-west	South	West	Rep/lean Rep	Dem/lean Dem	Ind
(n=1,007)								
Strongly support	<b>45%</b>	47%	42%	49%	42%	26%	66%	43%
Somewhat support	<b>36%</b>	31%	40%	32%	43%	46%	27%	46%
Somewhat oppose	<b>7%</b>	8%	7%	8%	4%	11%	4%	2%
Strongly oppose	<b>9%</b>	8%	11%	9%	9%	16%	2%	8%
DON'T KNOW/ NOT SURE	<b>2%</b>	5%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%

R2 How should Congress prioritize funding to ensure the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency can minimize pollution and uphold strong clean air and clean water regulations?

Would you say . . .

(READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER)

	Total	REGION				PARTY		
		North East	Mid-west	South	West	Rep/lean Rep	Dem/lean Dem	Ind
(n=1,007)								
Increase spending on the EPA	<b>29%</b>	32%	27%	30%	28%	19%	38%	34%
Keep the same	<b>44%</b>	40%	45%	42%	49%	40%	50%	37%
Cust spending on EPA	<b>22%</b>	25%	23%	22%	20%	37%	10%	16%
DON'T KNOW/ NOT SURE	<b>4%</b>	3%	4%	6%	3%	3%	2%	14%

R3 As required by the federal Clean Air Act and as directed by the Supreme Court, the EPA is beginning to take steps that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electric utilities and other major industrial polluters.

Do you support or oppose protecting the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s authority to take this action? Would you say you . . .

(READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER)

	Total	REGION				PARTY		
		North East	Mid-west	South	West	Rep/lean Rep	Dem/lean Dem	Ind
(n=1,007)								
Strongly support	<b>38%</b>	48%	29%	35%	43%	18%	61%	33%
Somewhat support	<b>34%</b>	27%	38%	37%	32%	36%	30%	45%
Somewhat oppose	<b>9%</b>	7%	8%	10%	8%	14%	4%	6%
Strongly oppose	<b>15%</b>	12%	20%	14%	14%	28%	4%	12%
DON'T KNOW/ NOT SURE	<b>4%</b>	5%	4%	3%	2%	3%	2%	3%

R4 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

If Congress blocks the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency from doing its job of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from electric utilities and other major industrial polluters, it would send the WRONG message to polluters, namely, that Congress isn't willing to hold polluters accountable.

Do you . . .

(READ LIST. RECORD ONE ANSWER)

	Total	REGION				PARTY		
		North East	Mid-west	South	West	Rep/lean Rep	Dem/lean Dem	Ind
(n=1,007)								
Strongly agree	<b>39%</b>	44%	38%	42%	31%	22%	55%	48%
Somewhat agree	<b>32%</b>	32%	30%	28%	39%	33%	34%	21%
Somewhat disagree	<b>12%</b>	8%	16%	11%	14%	19%	5%	15%
Strongly disagree	<b>12%</b>	12%	12%	13%	12%	21%	3%	11%
DON'T KNOW/ NOT SURE	<b>5%</b>	4%	4%	7%	4%	5%	3%	5%

R5 Who do you think is MOST qualified to make decisions about how best to safeguard the American public when dealing with greenhouse gas emissions and other major pollutants?  
 Would you say . . .  
 (READ ENTIRE LIST BEFORE RECORDING ONE ANSWER)  
 [ROTATE]

		REGION				PARTY		
	<b>Total</b>	North East	Mid-west	South	West	Rep/lean Rep	Dem/lean Dem	Ind
(n=1,007)								
Scientists and experts at EPA	<b>83%</b>	75%	86%	83%	86%	83%	88%	73%
Politicians in Congress	<b>9%</b>	14%	10%	8%	6%	6%	10%	18%
DON'T KNOW/ NOT SURE	<b>8%</b>	11%	4%	9%	7%	11%	2%	10%