TO: **Environment America, The National Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, & Union of Concerned Scientists**

FROM: **The Mellman Group, Inc.**

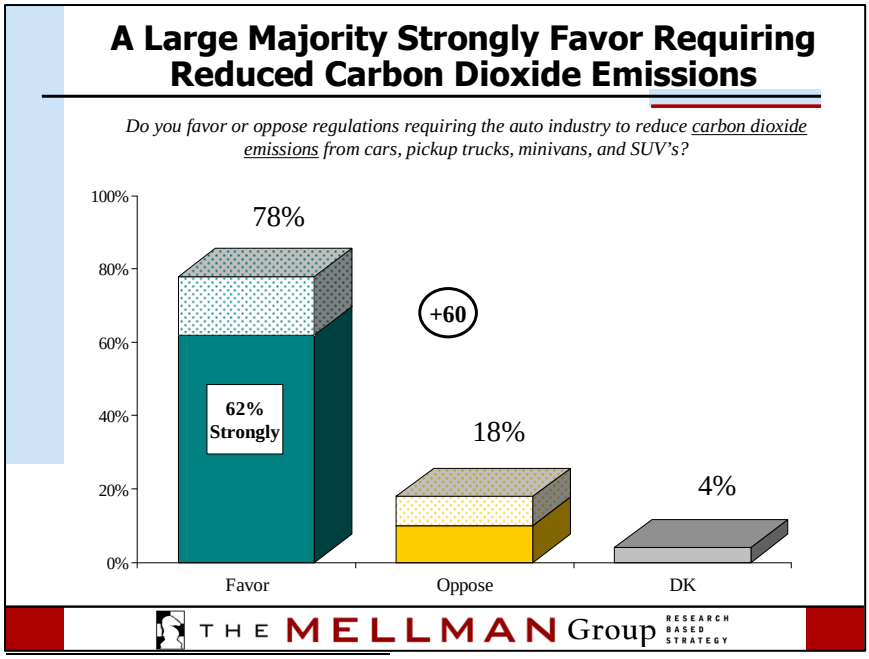
RE: **Voters Overwhelmingly Support Stricter Fuel Efficiency Standards**

DATE: **September 15, 2010**

This analysis represents the findings of a national survey of 1000 likely 2010 general election voters. Interviews were conducted by telephone September 9-13, 2010. To insure an unbiased sample, random-digit-dialing techniques were used and respondents screened for being likely voters. The margin of error for this survey is +/-3.1% at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error is higher for subgroups.

Voters strongly support requiring the auto industry to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from cars, pickup trucks, minivans, and SUVs. They also support—in overwhelming numbers—requiring the auto industry to increase the average fuel efficiency standard to 60 miles per gallon, a policy which they deem important for our country to act on now. Support for increased fuel efficiency is robust because voters believe achieving this standard is possible without undue cost and because they see increased efficiency as bringing along with it a variety of valuable benefits, including more jobs, less pollution, lower fuel costs, and reduced dependence on Middle East oil.

VOTERS STRONGLY SUPPORT REGULATIONS REQUIRING REDUCED CARBON EMISSIONS FROM VEHICLES



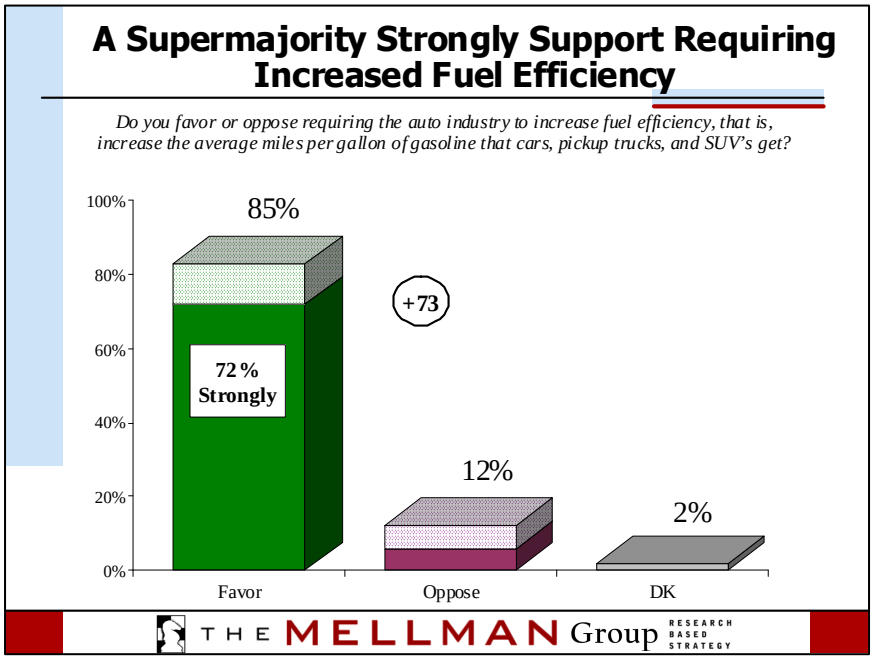
A very large 78% majority favor requiring the auto industry to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from cars, pickup trucks, minivans, and SUV's (62% strongly favor), compared to just 18% who are opposed[1]. These views are widespread across demographic lines. Ninety-four percent (94%) of Democrats favor requiring reduced carbon emissions, along with nearly three-quarters (74%) of independents, and nearly two-thirds (66%) of Republicans. Support for reduced carbon emissions from vehicles extends to every region of

[1] " Do you favor or oppose regulations requiring the auto industry to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from cars, pickup trucks, minivans, and SUV's?"

the country as well, with 77% in the Northeast, 81% in the Midwest, 79% in the South, and 76% in the West all favoring requiring the emissions reductions.

Even those who live in households dependent on agriculture and the automobile industry support reduced emissions in large numbers, with 80% of agricultural household voters favoring reduced emissions (18% oppose) and 77% of auto industry households in favor as well (19% oppose).

VOTERS OVERWHELMINGLY DEMAND TOUGHER FUEL EFFICIENCY STANDARDS



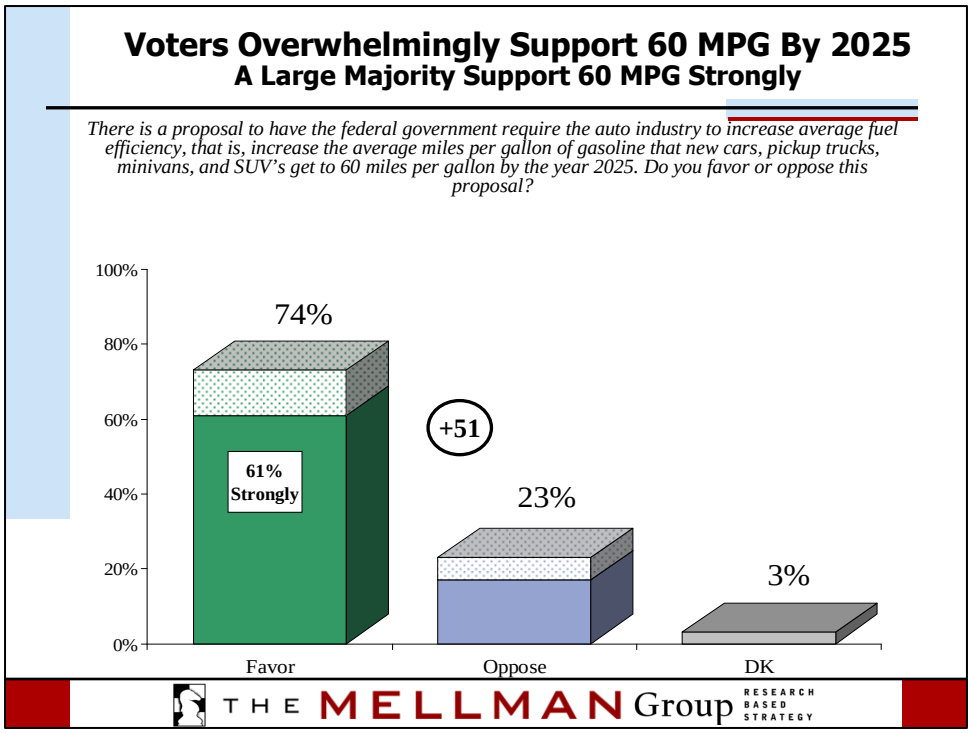
Most all voters (85%) favor requiring the auto industry to increase fuel efficiency for cars, pickups, and SUVs, while only 12% are opposed. There is a clear intensity to these views as well, with nearly three quarters (72%) *strongly* favoring required increases in fuel efficiency, while only 7% are strongly opposed.

Strong support is both deep and wide. Overwhelming majorities of every demographic subgroup strongly support tougher fuel efficiency standards. Support for stricter fuel efficiency standards cuts across partisan lines as 96% of Democrats, 81% of independents, and 75% Republicans all agree on tougher fuel efficiency standards. Similarly, voters in every region agree, with 85% in the Northeast, 89% in the Midwest, 84% in the South, and 82% in the West all supporting stricter standards.

What's more, voters see this as a critical issue. A huge 88% majority believe that it is "important to take action now" to increase fuel efficiency, including two thirds (65%) who say it is "very important" to take action now.

BY A VERY LARGE MARGIN, VOTERS SUPPPORT A SPECIFIC GOAL OF 60 MPG BY 2025 AND SEE IT AS ACHIEVABLE

When a specific standard is proposed—an average of 60 miles per gallon by 2025 for new cars, pickup trucks, minivans, and SUVs—support is almost as strong with nearly three-quarters (74%) in favor and fewer than 1-in-4 (23%) opposed.



Support for this specific proposal is also widespread, crossing party and occupational lines. Ninety percent (90%) of Democrats join with 69% of independents and 60% of Republicans in supporting this proposal. Once again, those who live in households dependent on agriculture and the automobile industry look much like everyone else, with 67% of voters in agricultural households favoring the 60 MPG standard (28% opposed) along with 76% of those whose income is dependent on the auto industry (18% opposed).

Moreover, support is quite robust, with a majority continuing to support the proposal even when told[2] it would add $3,000 to the price of a new car (66% favor, 29% oppose, 5% don't know). When the cost increase is mitigated by the fact that the additional cost would be offset within four years by reduced gasoline consumption [3] support grows to 83% with 12% opposed. Later in the survey, 60% align themselves with the view that technology prices tend to fall, while just 34% take the view that a $3000 increase is "simply too expensive for hard-pressed working people."[4]

This robust support is due in part to the widespread belief that the technology needed to increase fuel efficiency to an average of 60 miles per gallon "already exists" (51%) or that "the technology does not already exist but could be developed if we made a serious effort" (35%). Only 1-in-10 (10%) believe "The technology does not already exist and would be very difficult to develop." There is little disagreement along partisan lines, with 55% majorities of both Democrats and independents and a 44% plurality of Republicans agreeing that the technology already exists.

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[2] "Would you favor or oppose that proposal if it added $3,000 to the price of a new car in the year 2025?"

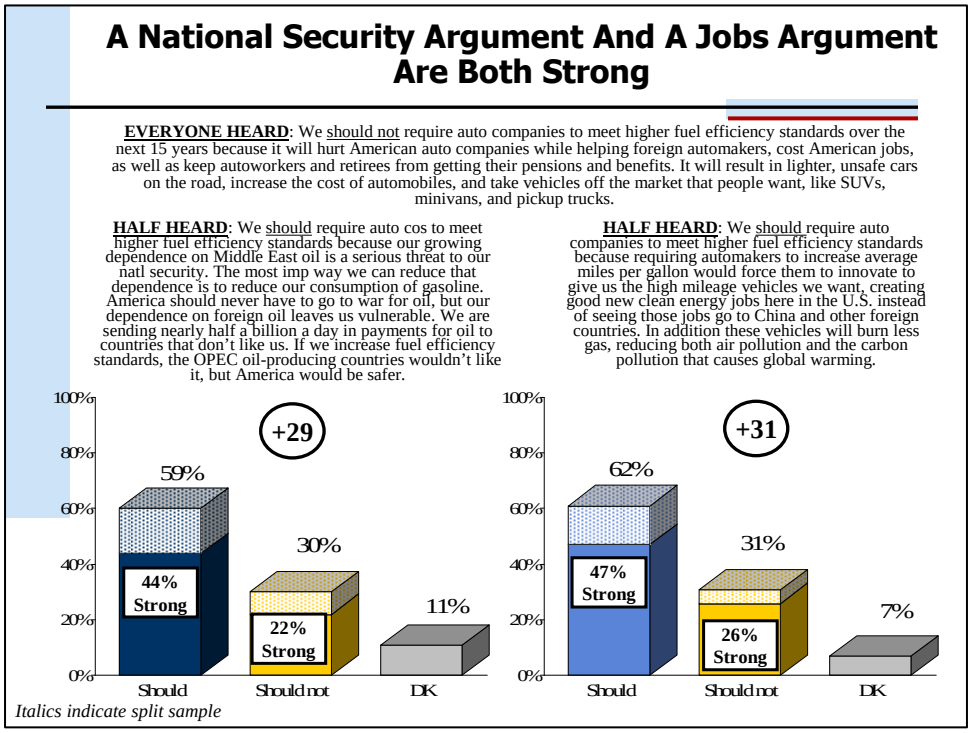
[3] "Would you favor or oppose that proposal if it added $3,000 to the price of a new car in the year 2025, but also saved new car buyers $3,000 within 4 years by reducing gasoline consumption?"

[4] "Which of the following comes closer to your point of view? Statement A: Increasing average fuel efficiency standards to 60 miles per gallon will add $3,000 to the price of a new car. That is simply too expensive for hard pressed working people. OR Statement B: Increasing average fuel efficiency standards to 60 miles per gallon will increase the price of a new car at first, but as with most new technologies like computers and DVD players, the price will then fall significantly and the greater fuel efficiency will save enough money on gas to pay for the increase within four years.

VOTERS BELIEVE TOUGHER FUEL EFFICIENCY STANDARDS WILL LEAD TO A VARIETY OF POSITIVE OUTCOMES LIKE LOWER FUEL COSTS, MORE JOBS AND LESS POLLUTION

Voters believe tougher fuel efficiency standards will be good for their pocketbooks, the environment, and the economy as a whole. They judge the most likely outcomes of increased fuel efficiency standards to be "us[ing] less gasoline and spend[ing] less money on gas" (76% likely, 49% very likely), followed by "air pollution will decrease" (79% likely, 45% very likely), "the U.S. will become less dependent on Middle East oil" (68% likely, 42% very likely), and "American car companies will be encouraged to innovate, increasing their sales and protecting the jobs of American auto workers" (73% likely, 38% very likely).

Half the electorate (50%) believes "Efforts to increase average miles per gallon for new cars, pickup trucks, minivans, and SUV's will create new American jobs." Fewer than 1-in-5 (18%) say it "will cost jobs," and 25% say it will not affect American jobs." Even among Republicans, a 36% plurality think tougher standards will result in job creation. Arguments on the other side have little impact. When voters are presented with an opposition argument charging that new standards would hurt American auto companies, a counterargument focusing on the clean energy jobs that would be created wins outs by a 2-to-1 margin (62% to 31%)[5].



WHETHER FRAMED IN TERMS OF NATIONAL SECURITY OR JOBS, LARGE MAJORITIES SIDE WITH A PRO-FUEL EFFICIENCY ARGUMENT OVER A STRONGLY WORDED OPPOSITON STATEMENT

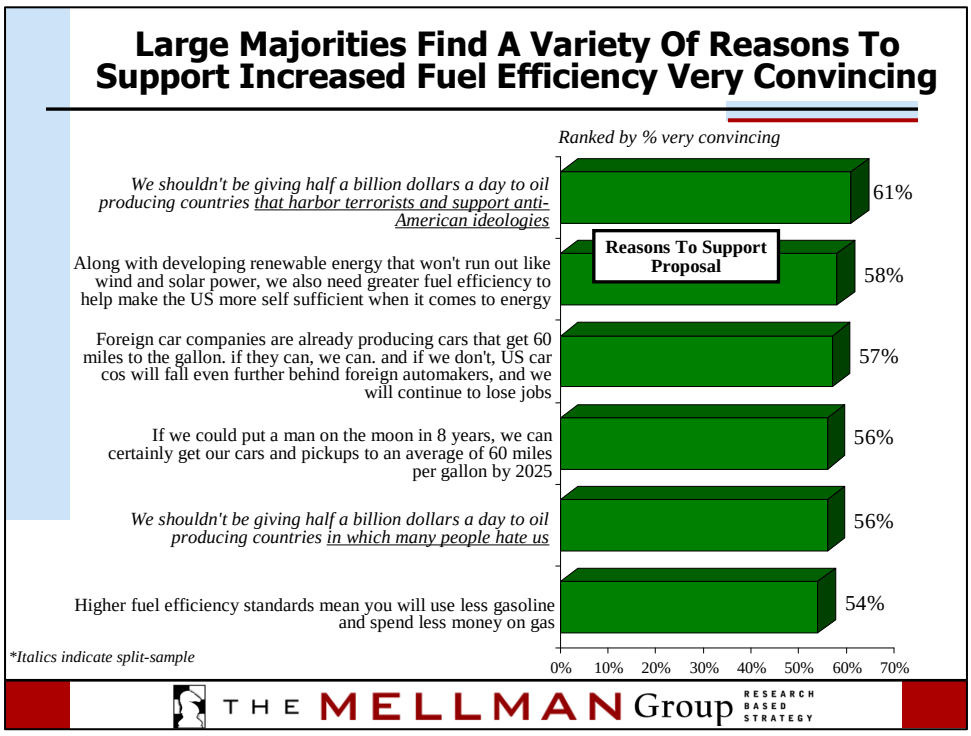
Every respondent heard a strongly worded message from opponents arguing that higher fuel efficiency standards would hurt American business, cost jobs, and reduce vehicle safety, while reducing consumers' choices. We randomly split survey respondents in half, with each half being

[5] "Which of the following comes closest to your point of view? Statement A: We should not require auto companies to meet higher fuel efficiency standards over the next 15 years because it will hurt American auto companies while helping foreign automakers, cost American jobs, as well as keep autoworkers and retirees from getting their pensions and benefits. It will result in lighter, unsafe cars on the road, increase the cost of automobiles, and take vehicles off the market that people want, like SUVs, minivans, and pickup trucks." OR "We should require auto companies to meet higher fuel efficiency standards because requiring automakers to increase average miles per gallon would force them to innovate to give us the high mileage vehicles we want, creating good new clean energy jobs here in the U.S. instead of seeing those jobs go to China and other foreign countries. In addition these vehicles will burn less gas, reducing both air pollution and the carbon pollution that causes global warming."

exposed to a different counterargument, one of which was couched in terms of benefits to national security and the other in terms of jobs. Large majorities side with the pro-fuel efficiency position in either formulation. Sixty-two percent (62%) said the jobs version of the pro-efficiency argument was closer to their own view, compared to just 31% who sided with opponents. Similarly, by 59% to 30%, voters chose the national security version of the pro-efficiency argument over the opposition argument.

VOTERS FIND A WIDE VARIETY OF REASONS TO SUPPORT THE PROPOSAL QUITE COMPELLING

After assesing voters atttitudes toward the proposal, we presented them with several arguments in support of requiring automakers to increase average miles per gallon. For each one, they could have said that they found the argument "very convincing," "somewhat convincing," "not too convincing," or "not at all convincing." For eleven out of thirteen arguments, majorities said the reasons were not only convincing but "*very* convincing" (see the top performing reasons in the chart above).



A variety of jobs, economic and national security concerns underlie support. Arguing that “We shouldn’t be giving half a billion dollars a day to oil producing countries that harbor terrorists and support anti-American ideologies” was the most effective, with 61% saying they found the statement a "very convincing" reason to support the proposal. Other top-tier reasons include the argument that "*Along with developing renewable energy that won’t run out like wind and solar power, we also need greater fuel efficiency to help make the U.S. more self sufficient when it comes to energy*" (58% very convincing), the argument that "*Foreign car companies are already producing cars that get 60 miles to the gallon. If they can, we can. And if we don’t, U.S. car companies will fall even further behind foreign automakers, and we will continue to lose jobs*" (57% very convincing) and a statement averring that "*If we could put a man on the moon in 8 years, we can certainly get our cars and pickups to an average of 60 miles per gallon by 2025*" (56% very convincing).

In short, support for a 60 mile per gallon fuel economy standard is overwhelming, strong, and robust, as voters see economic and national security rationales for such a policy. Because they believe the requisite technology already exists, or could be developed easily, and that it will create jobs, reduce pollution, and increase national security, that support remains strong even when the costs are noted.