



March 19, 2012

## Voters Support New Carbon Emissions Standards, Stricter Boiler Standards Believe Stronger Environmental Safeguards Will Create Jobs

**To:** The American Lung Association and Interested Parties

**From:** Andrew Baumann and Oliver Gottfried, Greenberg Quinlan Rosner  
Marc DeSignore, Perception Insight

---

A new bipartisan national survey of 2,000 likely 2012 voters, which includes oversamples of three states,<sup>1</sup> finds that a significant majority of American voters supports the efforts by the EPA to strengthen standards on harmful emissions and believes the EPA should be doing more, not less, to reduce air pollution.

A bipartisan majority of voters across the country, including in Maine, Pennsylvania and Ohio, supports the view that it is possible to both protect the air and public health and have a strong economy over the notion that we must choose one or the other. And a solid majority believes that strengthening environmental safeguards will create, not destroy, jobs by encouraging innovation and investment in new technologies.

Asked specifically about the EPA implementing new carbon emissions standards for power plants and stricter limits on boiler pollution, a strong majority of voters favor these proposals, even after hearing balanced messaging from both sides of the debate.

### Key Findings

- **The Clean Air Act and EPA remain popular while ratings for Congress tank further**
  - Ratings for the EPA remain solid and are slightly higher than our survey from last February, at 42 percent favorable and 30 percent unfavorable.
  - Feelings about the Clean Air Act remain very positive (with a 2-to-1 favorable to unfavorable ratio). It is viewed very positively in both Pennsylvania and Maine, as well as among independents.

---

<sup>1</sup> Memo based on a national survey of 800 likely 2012 voters plus oversamples of 400 likely voters each in the following states: Maine, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Conducted for the American Lung Association by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner and Perception Insight, February 27- March 4, 2012. Margin of error for the full national sample is 3.5%. For each oversample region it is approximately 4.9% depending on sample size.

- Feelings towards Congress continue to drop, especially among Democrats and independents. Just 18 percent of voters nationally give it a favorable rating, while 56 percent rate it unfavorably, up 9 points since last June.
- **Voters strongly believe we can have both clean air and a strong economy at the same time**
  - Nearly three-quarters of voters nationally (73 percent) and in our oversample states believe we don't need to decide between the environment and the economy, and that we can both protect air quality and have a strong economy at the same time. This includes including 78 percent of independents, 60 percent of Republicans, and 62 percent of conservatives.
  - A 2-to-1 majority (60 percent to 31 percent) also feels that strengthening environmental safeguards will create jobs by increasing innovation and investment, rather than destroying jobs by increasing costs on businesses.
  - Voters don't believe we have to choose, but when forced to do so, a small majority of voters (51 to 43 percent) believe it is more important to implement strong clean air safeguards than it is to reduce regulations on businesses.

■ **Table 1:** Statement pairs: the environment versus the economy<sup>2</sup>

	<b>Do not have to choose/ Need to prioritize</b>	<b>Create jobs/ Destroy jobs</b>	<b>Ensure safeguards/ Prevent unnecessary regulations</b>
Total First	73	60	51
Total Second	21	31	43
Net	+52	+29	+9
Democrats	+69	+70	+52
Independents	+59	+17	+7
Republicans	+27	-9	-40
Maine	+52	+32	+6
Ohio	+43	+22	-11
Pennsylvania	+50	+29	+3

- **Voters across the country strongly support stronger EPA action on air pollution, including on smog, carbon and mercury emissions from power plants**
  - Voters nationally and in Maine, Pennsylvania and Ohio all strongly favor the EPA generally updating standards with stricter limits on air pollution – about two thirds of voters nationally (66 percent) and in Maine (64 percent) and Pennsylvania (64 percent) agree, while a strong majority of Ohio voters (57 percent) also favors EPA action.
  - Only about one-in-ten voters (11 percent) nationwide believe current laws and regulations on power plant emissions are too strict. Many more (37 percent) believe

<sup>2</sup> Please see the appendix for full text of these statement pairs.

that EPA rules are not strict enough. Independent voters especially say current laws are not strict enough, rather than too strict, by a 30-point margin (39 percent to 9 percent).

**Table 2:** Impressions of current laws on emissions

	Overall	Dems	Inds	Reps	ME	OH	PA
Not strict enough	37	50	39	18	35	31	36
About right	38	30	44	43	39	39	37
Too Strict	11	2	9	25	15	18	16
Net	+25	+48	+30	-7	+21	+13	+21

- Relatively few voters think the EPA is exceeding its mandate. Just 18 percent of voters believe the EPA is going further than the law allows, unchanged from our last survey in June.
- Strong majorities of voters (70 percent or more) favor the EPA updating standards on Mercury, smog, and CO<sub>2</sub>. A solid majority (60 percent) also favors stricter standards on tailpipe emissions.

**Table 3:** Support for stricter emissions standards<sup>3</sup>

	Favor	Oppose	Net
Mercury	78	17	+61
Smog	72	24	+48
CO <sub>2</sub>	70	27	+43
Tailpipe Emissions	60	35	+24

- **A substantial majority supports implementing new standards on carbon emissions from power plants, even after opposition arguments**
  - Initially, 72 percent of voters nationwide support the EPA implementing new standards on carbon emissions, including overwhelming majorities of Democrats and independents and even a majority of Republicans.

<sup>3</sup> Please see the appendix for full text of the proposals tested

- Voters overwhelmingly believe such carbon standards will have a positive impact on air quality (74 percent) and public health (73 percent) and, more importantly, a 44 to 25 percent plurality believe they will have a positive impact on the economy and jobs.
- After a balanced debate with messages in support of and opposition to new carbon standards,<sup>4</sup> support still remains robust, near a 2-to-1 margin (63 percent favor, 33 percent oppose) nationally.
  - Even after the balanced messaging, independents continue to support the new standards by a 32-point margin (65 percent to 33 percent).
  - Support remains very robust in Maine and Pennsylvania (64 percent in each state), and also achieves a majority in Ohio (52 percent).

**Table 4:** The debate over carbon emissions standards

	Overall	Dems	Inds	Reps	ME	OH	PA
<b>Initial</b>							
Favorable	72	87	72	54	71	63	69
Unfavorable	24	8	24	44	23	34	26
Net	+47	+79	+48	+10	+48	+29	+43
<b>Final</b>							
Favorable	63	83	65	37	64	52	64
Unfavorable	33	12	33	59	31	44	31
Net	+29	+71	+32	-22	+34	+7	+33

- **Voters show strong support for stricter standards on industrial boilers**
  - Initially, 69 percent of voters nationwide support the EPA implementing stricter standards on boiler emissions. Voters in Maine and Pennsylvania show similar levels of support to the national average and a solid 61 percent of Ohio voters also support stricter standards.
  - After hearing messaging from both sides of the issue,<sup>5</sup> voters nationally continue to support stricter boiler standards by a nearly 20-point margin (56 percent favor, 37 percent oppose).
    - Voters in Maine and Pennsylvania actually show stronger support for boiler standards than voters nationally after the message debate (both states at 60 percent). A majority of Ohio voters also continue to support stricter standards (51 percent favor).
    - A solid majority of independents continues to support stricter standards by a 17 point margin (55 percent to 38 percent).

<sup>4</sup> Please see the appendix for full text of messages

<sup>5</sup> Please see the appendix for full text of messages

**Table 5:** The debate over stricter boiler emissions standards

	Overall	Dems	Inds	Reps	ME	OH	PA
<b>Initial</b>							
Favorable	69	86	68	50	69	61	68
Unfavorable	25	8	26	46	27	35	26
Net	+43	+78	+42	+4	+42	+26	+42
<b>Final</b>							
Favorable	56	74	55	37	60	51	60
Unfavorable	37	18	38	59	35	45	34
Net	+19	+56	+17	-22	+25	+6	+27

- **On nearly every issue tested, independents are closer to Democrats than Republicans.**
  - Just as we saw in our surveys in 2011, on nearly every important question in this survey (such as the crucial question on whether the country must choose between air quality and the economy), independent voters align solidly with Democrats in favor of stronger environmental safeguards. Similarly, moderates align with liberals on the issue.

---

## Appendix A: Statement Pairs on the Environment and the Economy

Now let me read you some short pairs of statements. After I read each pair, please tell me which statement is closer to your own view, even if it is not exactly right. Is that much closer or somewhat closer?

- *It is possible to protect our air quality and public health and have a strong economy with good jobs at the same time. We don't have to choose one over the other.*  
OR  
*Creating more environmental regulations will increase costs, hurt our economic recovery and destroy jobs. We have to prioritize between the environment and the economy.*
- *Strengthening safeguards against pollution will create more jobs because it will encourage innovation and investment in new technologies.*  
OR  
*Creating new environmental regulations will destroy jobs by increasing costs and making American businesses less competitive.*
- *While we should streamline unnecessary environmental regulations on American businesses, it is MORE IMPORTANT to ensure that we have strong safeguards that protect our air quality and public health.*  
OR  
*While we should make sure we have the proper safeguards on air quality and public health, it is MORE IMPORTANT to prevent unnecessary regulations that drive up energy prices and destroy jobs.*

---

## Appendix B: Favorability of EPA Updating Air Pollution Standards

Now let me read you some specific air pollution standards the EPA is proposing. For each one, please tell me whether you favor or oppose the EPA updating these standards. Do you favor or oppose the EPA updating this standard? Is that strongly favor/oppose or just somewhat favor/oppose?

- *Stricter limits on the amount of Mercury that power plants and other industrial facilities can release*
- *Stricter limits on the amount of smog that power plants, oil refineries and other industrial facilities can release*
- *Stricter limits on the amount of carbon dioxide that power plants and other industrial facilities can release*
- *Stricter standards for gasoline and limits on the amount of tailpipe emissions from cars and SUVs.*

---

## Appendix C: Debate on Carbon Emission Standards

As you may know, there currently are no federal limits on the carbon emissions that come from power plants. The EPA is considering setting new standards to reduce these emissions. These are separate from standards on mercury, lead, and other pollutants. Now let me ask you, do you favor or oppose the Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, implementing standards with stricter limits on carbon emissions? Is that strongly favor/oppose or just somewhat favor/oppose?

Now let me read you two arguments some people on both sides of the issue make.

*(Some/other) people say: Pollution from carbon emissions increases smog, which worsens bronchitis and emphysema, triggers asthma attacks and harms sensitive lung tissue, especially in children. We need to establish carbon pollution safeguards in order to reduce smog and protect air quality and public health. And updating these safeguards will create a new generation of clean technology jobs by encouraging innovation and investment in new technologies, while modernizing the nation's power plants to make them more efficient and cleaner.*

*(Some/other) people say: Given the weak economy, now is the worst time for the EPA to enact costly regulations that kill jobs. These new burdensome regulations would lead to higher energy prices for consumers and cost American businesses hundreds of billions of dollars, making them less competitive and causing them to ship tens of thousands of American jobs to India and China. And these regulations wouldn't even impact toxic pollutants like lead and mercury, just carbon dioxide which we already breathe every day.*

Now let me ask you again, do you favor or oppose the Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, implementing standards with stricter limits on carbon emissions? Is that strongly favor/oppose or just somewhat favor/oppose?

---

## Appendix D: Debate on Boiler Emission Standards

Now let me ask you about something different. Industrial facilities across the country rely on boilers that burn natural gas, coal, or biomass to generate heat and power. These boilers emit mercury, arsenic, dioxins and other substances into the environment. The EPA is considering updating standards to reduce these emissions from industrial boilers and incinerators. Now let me ask you, do you favor or oppose the Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, updating standards with stricter limits on emissions from industrial boilers? Is that strongly favor/oppose or just somewhat favor/oppose?

Now let me read you two arguments some people on both sides of the issue make.

**(BASE & OH/PA OS ONLY)** *(Some/other) people say: Boilers emit toxic pollutants like mercury, dioxin, and arsenic that can harm our lungs, can cause respiratory and cardiovascular disease and can potentially cause cancer and even death. In children, these pollutants can impair brain development, neurological function, and the ability to learn. According to scientists at the EPA, cleaning up emissions from these boilers and incinerators will save over 8,000 lives, prevent over 5,000 heart attacks and prevent more than 52,000 asthma attacks every year.*

**(BASE & OH/PA OS ONLY)** *(Some/other) people say: Boilers serve an important function in many manufacturing facilities, refineries and other large institutions. In many cases, emissions from these boilers can barely be measured and most boilers are already well-controlled for pollutants. These new regulations are incredibly costly and difficult to comply with; industry experts say that compliance will cost manufacturers approximately 15 billion dollars and put over 200,000 jobs at risk, without significantly improving public health.*

**(MAINE OS ONLY)** *(Some/other) say: Boilers emit toxic pollutants like mercury, dioxin, and arsenic that can harm our lungs, can cause respiratory and cardiovascular disease and can potentially cause cancer and even death- and this problem is especially bad here in Maine. In children, these pollutants can impair brain development, neurological function, and the ability to learn. According to scientists at the EPA, cleaning up emissions from these boilers and heaters will save over 8,000 lives, prevent over 5,000 heart attacks and prevent more than 52,000 asthma attacks every year.*

**(MAINE OS ONLY)** *(Some/other) say: Boilers serve an important function in many manufacturing facilities, refineries and other large institutions, including pulp and paper mills here in Maine that are vital to our local economy. In many cases, emissions from these boilers can barely be measured and most boilers are already well-controlled for pollutants. These new regulations are incredibly costly and difficult to comply with; industry experts say that compliance will cost manufacturers approximately 15 billion dollars and put over 200,000 jobs at risk, without significantly improving public health.*

Now let me ask you again, do you favor or oppose the Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, updating standards with stricter limits on emissions from industrial boilers? Is that strongly favor/oppose or just somewhat favor/oppose?