



TO: Interested Parties  
FROM: Andrew Baumann, Erin Farrell, and Christopher Stauffer, Global Strategy Group  
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RE: New nationwide polling data reveals strong support for the EPA's decision to implement stricter soot standards

## RESEARCH SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

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A new national survey conducted by Global Strategy Group for the American Lung Association reveals that voters overwhelmingly support the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recent decision to implement stricter limits on soot pollution.

Voters not only clearly see the health and environmental benefits that would come from such standards, but they reject the notion that stricter standards would drive up the cost of living or hurt the economy. In fact, voters prioritize the health benefits of stricter soot limits over their potential impact on costs, and they also believe that these stricter standards will create jobs and boost the economy by encouraging innovation.

Support for the tougher standards remains robust after a balanced debate with messaging from both sides (including arguments from opponents that the stronger standards would, supposedly, kill jobs and increase energy prices). Even after that debate, large bipartisan majorities of American voters remain in support of tougher standards.

### **Voters overwhelmingly support cleaner air regulations and stricter soot standards.**

**Voters view environmental protections favorably: they want to see stricter air pollution standards, and they support a priority on cleaning up America's most polluted neighborhoods.** Majorities view the Environmental Protection Agency (65% favorable/19% unfavorable) and the Clean Air Act (62% favorable/12% unfavorable) favorably. Moreover, 74% of voters nationwide support "the EPA updating standards with stricter limits on air pollution," and 83% support placing a priority on standards that clean up pollution in the most polluted American neighborhoods. Support for both ideas is bipartisan: 91% of Democrats, 65% of independents, and 58% of Republicans are in favor of stricter limits on air pollution; 92% of Democrats, 76% of independents, and 74% of Republicans support placing a priority on standards that clean up pollution in the most polluted American neighborhoods.

**Voters want the EPA to update air pollution standards by placing limits on the soot that power plants, oil refineries, and other industrial facilities can emit.** When we ask voters if they support or oppose stricter limits on "fine particles, also called soot" (see the following table for the full language), 78% of voters say they support the stricter standards.

- More than four in five Black voters (84%) and three in four Hispanic voters (75%) support the EPA placing stricter limits on soot.
- Majorities of Democrats, independents, and Republicans want the EPA to set stricter limits on soot. Even 61% of very conservative Republicans support these limits.

The Environmental Protection Agency is updating air pollution standards by placing stricter limits on the amount of fine particles, also called "soot," that power plants, oil refineries, and other industrial facilities can release. Do you support or oppose the Environmental Protection Agency setting stricter limits on fine particles, also called "soot"?			
	Support	Oppose	Net Support
<i>Overall</i>	<b>78</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>+65</b>
<i>Democrats</i>	<b>90</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>+86</b>
<i>Independents</i>	<b>67</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>+51</b>
<i>Not very cons. GOP</i>	<b>71</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>+52</b>
<i>Very cons. GOP</i>	<b>61</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>+36</b>
<i>White</i>	<b>77</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>+62</b>
<i>Black</i>	<b>84</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>+75</b>
<i>Hispanic</i>	<b>75</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>+69</b>
<i>Dads</i>	<b>77</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>+63</b>
<i>Moms</i>	<b>79</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>+69</b>
<i>Non-parents</i>	<b>77</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>+64</b>

Voters prioritize health over the economy and see clear environmental and health benefits from the standards – but they also believe they will have a positive impact on the economy.

The majority of voters believe stricter soot standards would have positive impacts on the “quality of the air we breathe,” “future generations of Americans,” and the “health of families like yours.” As the following table shows, about three in four voters believe that stricter standards would have an overwhelmingly positive impact on each of these items.

A plurality believes stricter soot standards would have a positive impact on the economy, and a strong majority rejects the idea that they would have a negative impact on costs. Even though voters prioritize the health impacts of these standards over their economic impacts (as discussed later), voters say the standards would have a positive impact on the economy by a 38% to 28% margin: this includes strong margins among Black (53% positive, 19% negative) and Hispanic voters (36% positive, 26% negative). Voters are also evenly divided on whether these new standards would have a positive or negative impact on the cost of living, with a plurality of voters unsure or saying they would have no impact (39%). That’s a great result for advocates of the standards. Given the overwhelmingly positive perceptions of the standards’ impact on other items, advocates don’t need voters to believe these standards will have a positive impact on costs; they just need them to reject the notion that they will have a negative one – and 69% of voters do reject the notion that the standards will have a negative impact (including 79% of Black voters and 71% of Hispanic voters).

Please indicate the impact you think the Environmental Protection Agency setting stricter limits on fine particles, also called "soot," would have on each of the following things.				
	Positive Impact	No impact/ not sure	Negative Impact	Total Non-Negative Impact
The quality of the air we breathe	77	16	7	93
Future generations of Americans	73	17	10	90
The health of families like yours	73	20	7	93
Communities that have been impacted the most by pollution from fossil fuels	70	21	9	91
Climate change	66	25	9	91
The American economy	38	34	28	72
The cost of living for families like yours	30	39	31	69

**When voters are forced to choose, they prioritize health over economic concerns.** To dig into this a bit more, we presented them with a choice between the following two statements:

- *These stricter limits on fine particles, also called "soot," are good because they will prevent thousands of premature deaths and over 1 million asthma attacks every year.*
- *These stricter limits on fine particles, also called "soot," are bad because they will drive up energy prices and kill American jobs.*

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of voters say they agree more with the first statement, while just 27% agree more with the second. This includes 89% of Democrats, 70% of independents, and 57% of Republicans who agree more with the first statement.

**Voters believe that stricter soot standards will encourage innovation, job growth, and new technology rather than hurt our economy.** Like the previous exercise, we presented voters with the following two statements:

- *These stricter limits on the fine particles called "soot" will encourage innovation and the development of new technologies, boosting the American economy and creating American jobs.*
- *These stricter limits on the fine particles called "soot" are unnecessary and burdensome regulations that will drive up costs for American businesses and kill American jobs.*

Roughly two-thirds (68%) of voters say they agree with the statement that these stricter limits will encourage innovation, while just 32% agree with the statement that they will drive up costs and kill jobs. Again, this includes 85% of Democrats, 71% of independents, and 50% of Republicans who agree more with the first statement.

**Voters support a range of other stricter emissions standards that the EPA is currently considering.** More than three-quarters of voters support stricter limits on mercury and other toxic air emissions, smog, and carbon emissions from power plants and other industrial facilities.

Below are some other policies that are being considered by the Environmental Protection Agency. Please indicate whether you support or oppose each of the following.			
	Support	Oppose	Net Support
Setting stricter limits on mercury and other toxic air emissions from power plants	82	10	+72
Setting stricter limits on smog from power plants, oil refineries, and other industrial facilities	78	15	+63
Setting stricter limits on carbon emissions from new and existing power plants	76	16	+60

Please indicate whether you support or oppose: Setting stricter limits on mercury and other toxic air emissions from power plants.			
	Support	Oppose	Net Support
<i>Overall</i>	82	10	+72
<i>Democrats</i>	92	2	+90
<i>Independents</i>	76	11	+65
<i>Not very cons. GOP</i>	79	13	+66
<i>Very cons. GOP</i>	58	30	+28
<i>White</i>	81	11	+70
<i>Black</i>	83	8	+75
<i>Hispanic</i>	80	8	+72
<i>Dads</i>	81	11	+70
<i>Moms</i>	82	7	+75
<i>Non-parents</i>	82	11	+71

	Please indicate whether you support or oppose: Setting stricter limits on smog from power plants, oil refineries, and other industrial facilities.		
	Support	Oppose	Net Support
<b>Overall</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>+63</b>
<b>Democrats</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>+88</b>
<b>Independents</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>+58</b>
<b>Not very cons. GOP</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>+49</b>
<b>Very cons. GOP</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>+11</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>+60</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>+74</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>+68</b>
<b>Dads</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>+69</b>
<b>Moms</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>+64</b>
<b>Non-parents</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>+61</b>

	Please indicate whether you support or oppose: Setting stricter limits on carbon emissions from new and existing power plants.		
	Support	Oppose	Net Support
<b>Overall</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>+60</b>
<b>Democrats</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>+89</b>
<b>Independents</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>+57</b>
<b>Not very cons. GOP</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>+43</b>
<b>Very cons. GOP</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>+6</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>+57</b>
<b>Black</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>+74</b>
<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>+65</b>
<b>Dads</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>+61</b>
<b>Moms</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>+62</b>
<b>Non-parents</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>+59</b>

**Voters continue to support stricter soot standards after a balanced debate.**

After voters are exposed to messaging from supporters (focused on the health and economic benefits of strengthening standards) and opponents (which argues that previous standards were strict enough and that stronger standards will lead to higher energy costs and job losses)<sup>1</sup>, **a strong majority continues to support the EPA setting stricter limits on soot** (68% total support, 35% strongly support nationwide).

While this shows a slight drop from the initial ask as more conservative Republican voters move against stricter limits, support for the stricter standards remains strong. Democrats and independents remain overwhelmingly in support of stricter standards on soot even after opposition messaging, with non-very conservative Republicans still solidly in favor of stricter standards.

	...Do you support or oppose the EPA setting stricter limits on fine particles, also called "soot"?	
	Pre-Messaging	Post-Messaging
	Net Support	
<b>Overall</b>	<b>+65</b>	<b>+43</b>
<b>Democrats</b>	<b>+86</b>	<b>+77</b>
<b>Independents</b>	<b>+51</b>	<b>+37</b>
<b>Not very cons. GOP</b>	<b>+52</b>	<b>+21</b>
<b>Very cons. GOP</b>	<b>+36</b>	<b>-16</b>

**ABOUT THE POLL**

Global Strategy Group conducted an online survey of 1600 registered voters nationwide between January 29<sup>th</sup> and February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The survey had a confidence interval of +/- 2.5%. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic, demographic, and political divisions among registered voters are properly represented. 799 of those voters received questions related to the EPA's new standards on soot pollution, which is the focus of this memo. Those questions have a confidence interval of +/- 3.5%. The other 801 voters received questions related to strengthening limits on carbon emissions from heavy-duty vehicles. The latter results are detailed in a separate memo.

<sup>1</sup> Statements from the simulated debate are included in the Appendix.

### Simulated debate:

**Supporters of stricter limits on the fine particles also called “soot” say:** Studies indicate that soot is one of the most dangerous and deadly forms of pollution, especially for children. Doctors say that soot causes heart and lung damage and can lead to strokes, heart attacks, cancer, and premature death. Independent scientists say that setting stronger limits on soot pollution will prevent tens of thousands of premature deaths and over 1 million asthma attacks every year. And economists say that these commonsense limits on soot pollution would provide tens of billions of dollars in public health benefits, prevent hundreds of thousands of lost workdays due to illness, and encourage innovation and investment in new technologies.

**Opponents of stricter limits on the fine particles also called “soot” say:** Given high levels of inflation and rising energy prices, now is the worst time for the EPA to enact costly regulations that will kill jobs and increase energy costs. Previous limits on soot were strong and working well, but these new regulations are unrealistic, unattainable, and could endanger 500,000 American jobs. They will lead to higher energy costs for American families and essentially close areas of the country to new or expanded manufacturing businesses, resulting in American jobs being shipped overseas. The Environmental Protection Agency shouldn't be increasing energy prices or creating new barriers to job creation when our country is struggling with inflation.