

**TO** Interested Parties

**FROM** Miranda Everitt and Denny Han  
FM3 Research

**RE:** California Voter Views of Key Climate Issues and Policies

**DATE** April 21, 2021

---

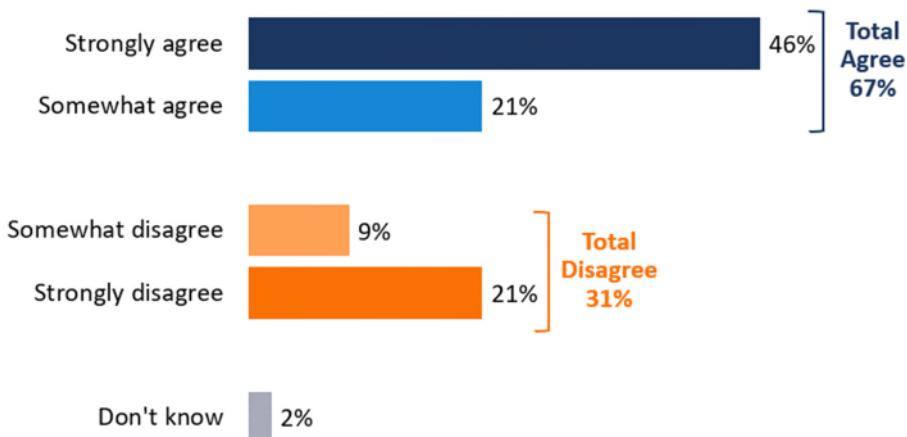
Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed a survey of California voters' views on climate change, renewable energy, infrastructure, and transportation.<sup>i</sup> The study found that a majority of Californians believe the state should act more quickly to address climate change, see economic promise in renewable energy; and support a range of policies to move away from fossil fuels.

More specific findings are as follows:

- **Two in three believe that the State should act quicker to address climate change.** As shown in **Figure 1**, two-thirds of California voters agree that the state should be moving more quickly to address climate change, and nearly half (46%) "strongly agree" with this assertion.

**Figure 1: Pace of Addressing Climate Change**

*Now I would like to read you some statements about energy and the environment in California. After I read one, please tell me if you agree or disagree: California should be acting more quickly to address climate change.*



This view is held especially broadly in key segments of the electorate, including:

- 83% of African American voters, 83% of Asian and Pacific Islander voters, 75% of Latinx voters, and 64% of white voters;
  - Nearly nine in ten Democrats (88%) and seven in ten independent voters (69%);
  - 72% of women and 63% of men;
  - 77% of voters under 50 and 63% of voters 50 and older;
  - Women and men under 50 (82% and 71%, respectively); and
  - 75% of urban residents, 70% of suburban residents, 59% of small-town residents, and 54% of rural residents.
- **Three in four view climate change as a serious problem for the state.** Seventy-five percent said they believed climate change is an "extremely," "very," or "somewhat serious" problem facing California and 38% categorize it an "extremely serious problem". Californians' perception of the gravity of climate change has been steadily increasing since 2012, when only 20% categorized climate change as "extremely serious."
  - **Californians believe that renewable energy could provide the same or greater number and quality of jobs than the oil and gas industry.** As shown in **Figure 2** below, two thirds (66%) of voters agree that the renewable energy sector's potential for the number of jobs is equal to, or greater than, that of the fossil fuel industry's. A similar share believe that renewable can provide the same or better job quality (65%).

**Figure 2: Job Potential of Renewable Energy Sector**

*Now I would like to read you some statements about energy and the environment in California.  
After I read one, please tell me if you agree or disagree.*

Statement	Total Agree	Total Disagree
Renewable energy has the potential to provide the same or a <u>greater</u> number of jobs for Californians as in oil and gas industries do today.	66%	28%
Renewable energy has the potential to provide the same or <u>better</u> quality of jobs for Californians as in oil and gas industries do today.	65%	27%

Voters across most segments broadly believe that renewables can provide jobs of the same or higher quantity and quality, including:

- African American voters (83% and 65%, respectively), Latinx voters (75% and 77%), Asian American voters (74% and 73%), and white voters (63% and 61%);
- Women (69% in both cases) and men (63% and 62%);
- Voters under 50 (74% and 76%) and voters above 50 (60% and 57%);
- Women under 50 (81% and 80%) and men under 50 (68% and 72%);

- Democrats (85% in both cases) and independent voters (69% and 65%); and
  - Urban voters (74% and 78%), suburban voters (71% and 63%), and small-town voters (61% in both cases).
- **Majorities support a range of policies to move away from fossil fuels.** As shown in **Figure 3** below, support is most broad for providing energy upgrades to schools, libraries, and community centers. Voters also show a widespread willingness to fund clean transit infrastructure, wildfire protection, and water resilience through the issuing of bonds; as well as support for policies which bring clean energy to homes.

**Figure 3: Clean Infrastructure Policies**

*Now I am going to read you a list of other potential policy proposals for California. After I read each one, please tell me whether it sounds like something you would support or oppose.*

Policy	Total Support	Total Oppose
Upgrading public buildings like schools, libraries, and community centers to be more energy efficient	83%	14%
Upgrading public buildings like schools, libraries, and community centers to use renewable energy	80%	18%
Issuing bonds to fund clean transportation infrastructure, wildfire prevention, and water resilience	74%	22%
Creating policies that prioritize getting clean energy to low-income households	72%	23%
Changing zoning codes to encourage construction of new homes and businesses entirely powered by emission-free electric appliances	62%	32%

- **Eighty-six percent also believe that providing rebates and incentives to help Californians upgrade energy efficiency is an important funding priority.** Sixty percent say that providing rebates and incentives is "extremely" or "very important."
- **A majority of Californians are concerned about vehicle pollution.** Seventy-nine percent believe pollution from cars is a serious problem, and half (50%) classify car pollution as an "extremely" or "very serious" problem.
- **Californians support a variety of zero-emission transportation policies.** As shown in **Figure 4** on the next page, broad majorities of voters back policies that would cut pollution near ports and warehouses, using

renewable energy sources at ports, and they specifically support transitioning to a zero-emissions truck and bus fleet within the next 15 years.

#### **Figure 4: Zero-Emission Transportation Policies**

*Now I am going to read you a list of other potential policy proposals for California. After I read each one, please tell me whether it sounds like something you would support or oppose.*

Policy	Total Support	Total Oppose
Requiring large corporations to shift to zero-emission technologies to cut pollution in neighborhoods near ports and warehouses	70%	25%
Transitioning to a zero-emissions truck and bus fleet by 2035	69%	26%
Transitioning to renewable energy at ports, including plugging ships into a renewable grid and using only zero-emissions trucks	65%	29%

- **By an 11-point margin, voters see more harms from fossil fuel infrastructure than benefits.** Nearly half (48%) of voters believe that the harms caused by fossil fuel plants and infrastructure outweigh the benefits compared to over a third (37%) who believed the benefits are greater.

#### **Figure 5: Costs and Benefits of Fossil Fuel Infrastructure**

*Like many things, fossil fuel plants and infrastructure have harms and benefits. For example, they are a source of local jobs and of pollution and public health harms. I am going to read you a pair of statements and I'd like you to tell me which one comes closer to your opinion.*

Statement	% Chosen
Overall, the harms caused by fossil fuel plants and infrastructure outweigh the benefits	48%
Overall, the benefits from fossil fuel plants and infrastructure outweigh the harms	37%
Both/Neither/Don't know	15%

- **By a 39-point margin, voters say that they are less likely to vote for a state legislator who accepts campaign contributions from fossil fuel companies.** Half of California voters (50%) say that they would be less likely to vote for their state legislator if that official took campaign funds from fossil fuel companies, compared to the 11% who said they are more likely to vote for such a candidate.

Taken together, the findings of the survey show that California voters widely view climate change as a severe threat in need of rapid response, and support clean energy, infrastructure, and transportation policies which help to limit carbon emissions.

---

<sup>i</sup> **Methodology:** From February 3-10, 2021, FM3 completed 820 interviews with California voters online. The margin of sampling error for the study is +/-3.7% at the 95% confidence level; margins of error for population subgroups within the sample will be higher. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to 100%.