



TO: Pew Environment Group

FROM: The Mellman Group, Inc. And Public Opinion Strategies

RE: Voters Continue To Support Congress' Energy And Global Warming Plan And Prefer Stronger Standards Over Weaker Ones

DATE: June 24, 2009

This analysis represents the findings of a national survey of 1,000 likely 2010 general election voters. Interviews were conducted by telephone June 3 to June 7, 2009. 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.

As the debate over global warming and energy legislation has unfolded in Congress, public support for action to reduce the carbon pollution that causes global warming and move to clean energy remains overwhelming and robust. Large majorities believe global warming is real and represents a serious threat. Of course, as the debate expands and evolves, public opinion can change. For now, however, support for the energy plan Congress is considering remains strong and survives the counterarguments made by opponents. Most believe Congress should pass the congressional energy plan without weakening it because it already constitutes the bare minimum that needs to be done. In fact, even after hearing the opposition's tax and jobs arguments, voters continue to prefer the stronger standards over weaker ones.

Our recent research reconfirms what we found in March: at present, attacks alleging higher taxes and lost jobs do not diminish support for the plan because voters continue to believe that efforts to reduce global warming will create rather than eliminate new American jobs.

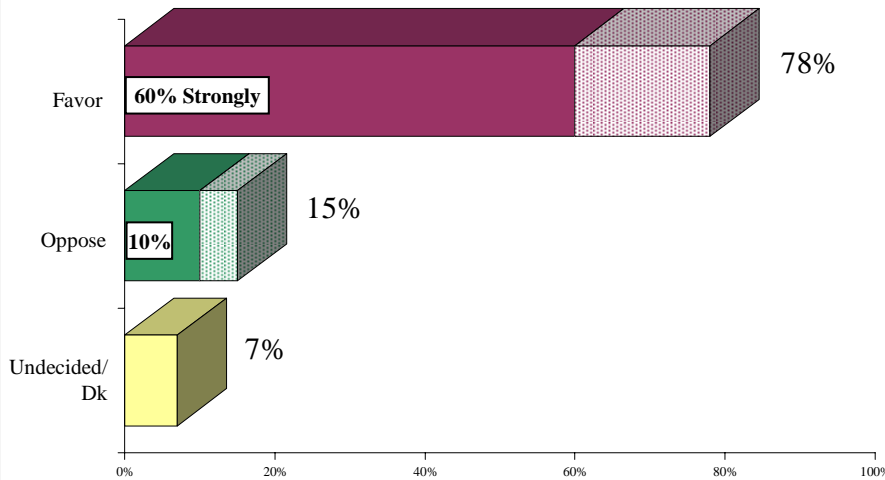
CONCERN ABOUT GLOBAL WARMING REMAINS DEEP AND THE DEMAND FOR ACTION STRONG

Americans are demanding action on global warming. A supermajority of voters (78%) wants the U.S. to reduce its emissions of carbon dioxide that cause global warming. What's more, support for action is intense, as 60% not only favor U.S. action but do so "strongly" (18% not so strongly). Just 15% are opposed (5% undecided, 2% don't know). Importantly, the demand for action has in no way diminished during the congressional debate. In March, by a nearly identical 77% to 15% margin, voters favored action to reduce carbon emissions.

Demands for action are not confined to any one region or party. Eighty-one percent (81%) of Northeasterners, 74% in the South, 82% in the Midwest, and 77% in the West all favor action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Strong majorities across party hold the same view (92% of Democrats, 72% of independents, and 66% of Republicans).

The Vast Majority Favor Action To Reduce Global Warming Emissions

Do you favor or oppose the United States taking action to reduce its emissions of gases like carbon dioxide that cause global warming?



Not only do voters support action on global warming, they believe it constitutes a serious threat and that it is happening right now. A 68% majority say the threat of global warming is either “very serious” (35%) or “somewhat serious” (33%), while just 29% say it is not serious, and 2% say they don’t know. An even larger 77% majority believe global warming either is happening now or will happen in the future, including a 53% majority who say it is happening now (24% in the future).

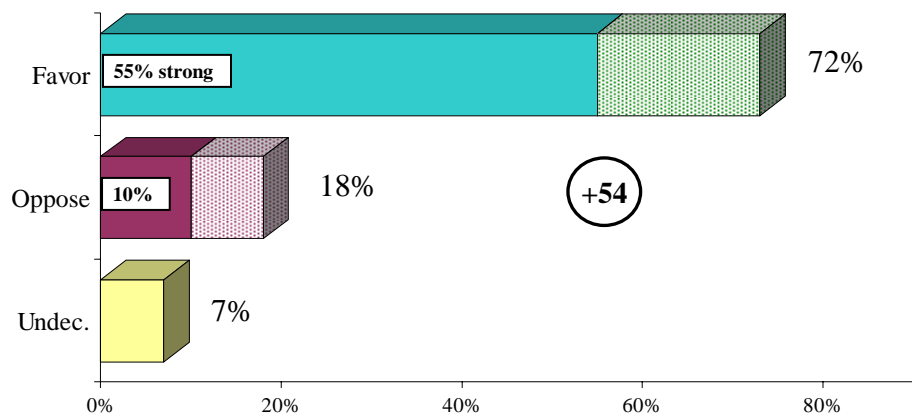
THE CORE ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN GARNER OVERWHELMING SUPPORT

By a ratio of 4-to-1, voters support the core principles of the energy plan currently being considered by the U.S. Congress. Seventy-two percent (72%) favor the 2-part plan to reduce emissions and require use of clean energy sources, including a 55% majority who “strongly” support the plan. Less than 1-in-5 (18%) oppose the plan, while 7% are undecided.

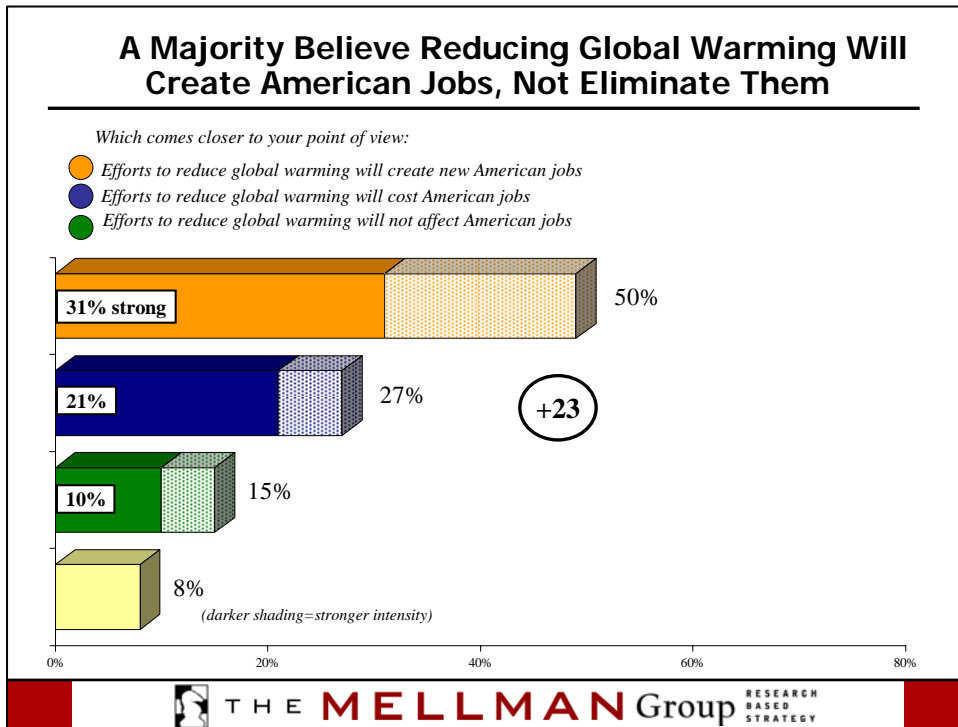
Support for the plan crosses demographic lines. Seventy-six percent (76%) of Northeasterners, 71% in the South, 75% in the Midwest, and 69% in the West all support the energy plan. Majorities across party lines hold the same view (88% of Democrats, 67% of independents, and 59% of Republicans).

Large Majorities Across Demographic Lines Support The Energy Plan Before Congress

Congress is considering an energy plan that has two key parts. One part would require factories and power companies to reduce their emissions of the carbon pollution that causes global warming by 20% by the year 2020 and by 80% by the year 2050. The other part would require power companies to generate 25% of their power from clean energy sources like wind and solar by the year 2025. Would you favor or oppose this entire plan?



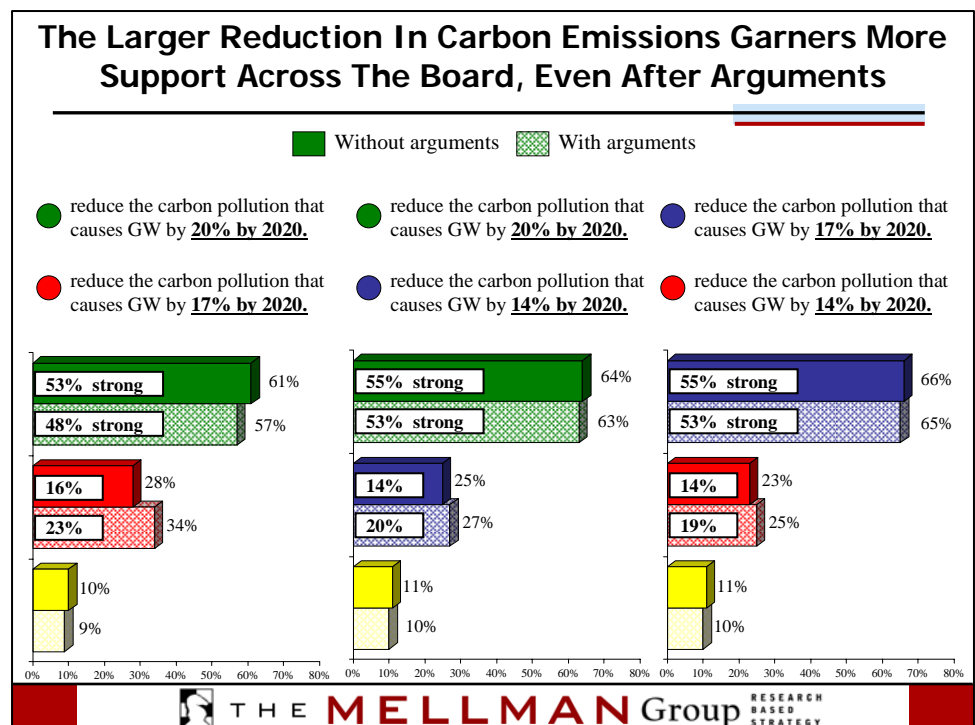
VOTERS BELIEVE EFFORTS TO CURB GLOBAL WARMING WILL CREATE JOBS



Every recent poll demonstrates that the economy and jobs are voters’ greatest concerns, and this survey makes clear that voters regard efforts to combat global warming as a source of job creation. Overall, two-thirds (65%) believe efforts to reduce global warming will either help create new jobs (50%) or have no effect on jobs (15%). Only about 1-in-4 (27%) believe such efforts will actually cost jobs. Once again those views cut across all sections of the country, with majorities in the Northeast (55%), in the Midwest (51%), and the West (52%), as well as a 44% plurality in the South, all expecting more jobs as a result of efforts to reduce global warming.

AFTER HEARING THE OPPOSITION’S ARGUMENTS, VOTERS PREFER THE STRONGEST STANDARDS OVER WEAKER ONES BY A SUBSTANTIAL MARGIN

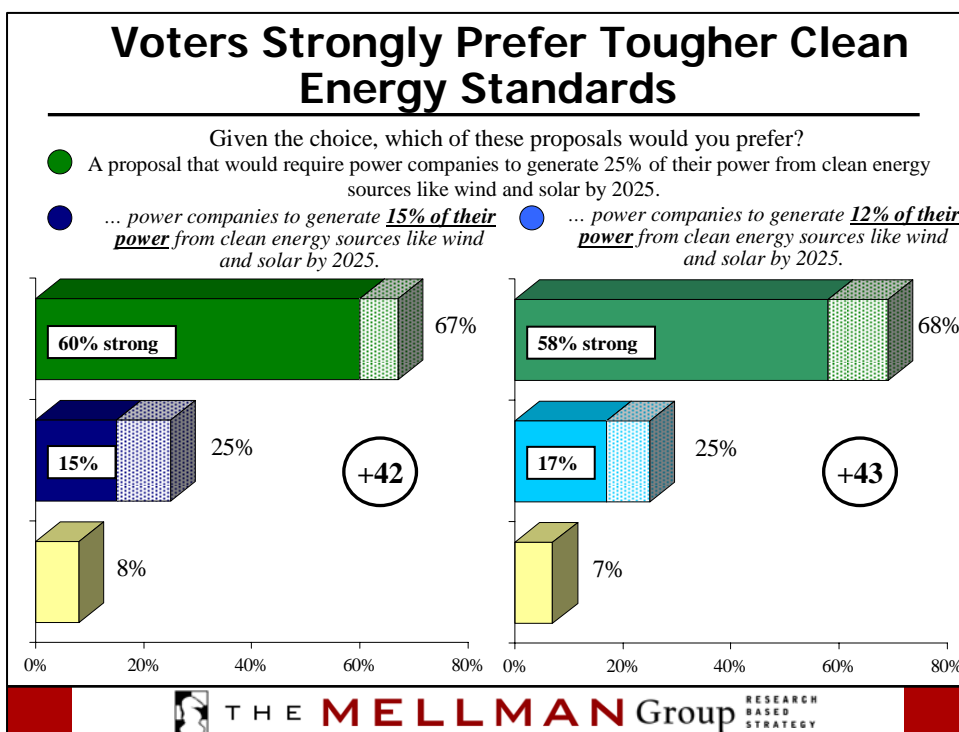
Digging deeper into voters’ views about some of the debates going on in Congress, we asked voters whether they would prefer a series of stronger or weaker standards in the bill. In every case, voters chose the tougher standard by large margins. We explored all possible combinations of 20%, 17%, and 14% reductions in carbon emissions—all by the year 2020. Again, in every case, large majorities of voters preferred the larger emissions reduction: 66% prefer a 17% reduction to a 14% reduction and 61% prefer a 20% reduction to a 17% reduction.



Even when voters are exposed to opponents' arguments about job loss and price hikes, they prefer the tougher standards. We created an experimental design within the poll by splitting the sample into two randomly selected halves. One half was simply asked their preferences regarding the magnitude of reduction in carbon emissions they preferred, without hearing any arguments, while the other half first heard balanced arguments from both sides¹ before being asked which size reductions they wanted to see in the legislation (see chart on previous page). From supporters, voters heard an argument that the plan would create jobs, reduce dependence on foreign energy, and help prevent a global warming disaster. On the opponents' side, voters heard a statement that the plan would hurt business, cost jobs, and impose a hidden tax on consumers.

Hearing the opposition's arguments had almost no impact on voters' views in this survey, as long as supporters' views were presented as well. For example, among those who did not hear arguments before being asked the questions, 64% said they preferred a 20% over a 14% reduction, while among those who were exposed to the arguments beforehand, a nearly identical 63% said they preferred the 20% reduction.

VOTERS PREFER STRICTER CLEAN ENERGY REQUIREMENTS FOR POWER COMPANIES



The second key component of the energy plan currently before Congress requires power companies to generate more electricity from clean energy sources like wind and solar. Once again, the tougher standard was preferred by the overwhelming majority. Again half the sample was asked their preference between a requirement that 25% of energy be generated from clean sources versus 15%, while the other half were asked their preference between a 25% and a 12% requirement. In both cases, by more than 2-to-1, the

larger 25% requirement was greatly preferred (67% prefer a 25% over a 15% requirement, while 25% prefer the reverse; 68% prefer a 25% over a 12% requirement, while 25% prefer the reverse). Moreover, those preferences are intense, with fully 60% “strongly” preferring a 25% over a 15% requirement and 58% “strongly” preferring a 25% over a 12% requirement.

¹ Exact question text: (*Some/other*) people say we need to move quickly to significantly reduce the carbon pollution that causes global warming to create clean energy jobs here in the US, to help free us from our addiction to foreign oil, and to prevent a global warming disaster. (*Others/Some*) say we should not move too far too fast or these regulations will hurt U.S. businesses in the middle of a recession, costing jobs and putting a hidden energy tax on consumers by raising energy prices.

These majority preferences cut across demographic lines. Seventy-six percent (76%) of Northeatersers chose the 25% clean energy requirement over the 12% option as did, 67% in the South, 64% in the Midwest, and 69% in the West. What's more, majorities in each party concur with that preference, as 76% of Democrats, 72% of independents, and 57% of Republicans all choose the stricter requirement.

STRATEGIC CONCLUSIONS

This survey reconfirms the strong demand for action on energy and global warming and makes clear that, in the current context, opponents' messages, focused on taxes and jobs do not diminish support for action. The core benefits and message points in support of the energy legislation on the Hill remain that the energy plan:

- Creates clean energy jobs - millions of jobs and whole new industries;
- Reduces dependence on oil by moving to clean energy sources, and
- Reduces carbon pollution that causes global warming, enabling us to be good stewards of the earth now, because allowing global warming will cost a lot more than reducing it