



Opinion Survey

Small Business Owners Believe National Standards Supporting Energy Innovation Will Increase Prosperity for Small Firms

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Main Findings	4
Rising Costs, Not Regulation or Taxes, Top Cause of Small Business Struggles	5
Fuel Efficiency Standards.....	6
The Green Revolution in Small Business	7
Conclusion	7
Methodology	8
Poll Toplines	8

Introduction

In today's sluggish economy, American small business owners continue to face rising costs that hamper their ability to create jobs and grow the economy. Only one in four (24% of those surveyed) report their business is doing well. A 72% majority believe small businesses in America are on the wrong track. Equally striking is that 86% of these owners believe Washington doesn't understand how small business works and doesn't provide them help.

Nonetheless, these small business owners widely support bold environmental policies: 87% agree that improving innovation and energy efficiency are good ways to increase prosperity for small businesses. Three-quarters believe Washington should do more to spur innovation at American car companies and 80% support legislation requiring the auto industry to increase fuel efficiency standards to 60 miles per gallon. Additionally, 76% support the Environmental Protection Agency's regulation of carbon emissions for power plants, refineries and other emitters.

What's more, the small businesses surveyed debunked claims that regulations are crushing small businesses and our economic recovery. Only 13% believe regulation is the biggest problem facing their small businesses. Conversely, 46% believe their small business is hurt by uncertainty about the future economy and 43% believe their small business is hurt by the rising cost of doing business.

Small business owners know the future of small business depends on change and innovation. Many of the small business owners surveyed are already part of the green revolution. Almost all use recycled materials and a significant majority use energy-saving appliances such as efficient light bulbs. One in 10 have purchased hybrid, electric or alternative fuel vehicles. Many of those who have not taken these steps indicate willingness to do so in the future.

Many small business owners have had to innovate to survive, and they have set a precedent for fellow entrepreneurs who want to boost their bottom lines.

Main Findings

- **Small businesses are struggling:** 72% of respondents believe small businesses around the country are on the wrong track and only 24% report their businesses are doing well.
- **Economic uncertainty and rising costs are hurting small business more than taxes and regulation:** Despite rhetoric that regulation and taxes are the primary obstacles for small businesses, only 13% of owners believe regulation is the biggest problem, and only 23% report that taxes are a problem. In contrast, nearly half (46%) believe their small business is hurt by economic uncertainty and 43% suffer from rising costs of doing business.
- **Small business owners know they need to innovate and improve efficiency to survive:** 87% believe improving innovation and energy efficiency are good ways to increase prosperity for small businesses. Not only do small business owners know it's time for change, but many have already adopted energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly practices in their business.
- **Small businesses believe it's important to increase fuel efficiency now:** 87% believe it is important for the United States to take action now to increase fuel efficiency in cars and light trucks.
- **Small business owners strongly support increasing fuel efficiency to 60 mpg:** By a 4:1 margin (80%), small business owners support increasing fuel efficiency standards to 60 miles per gallon by the year 2025.
- **Small businesses believe American car companies need to innovate more:** 73% of small business owners believe the federal government should do more to make American car companies innovate and 71% believe American car companies do not innovate enough.
- **Respondents support EPA regulation of carbon emissions that adversely affect the climate:** 76% of small business owners support EPA regulating carbon emissions.
- **Few see allies in government:** 86% believe small businesses get no real help from the federal government and 86% also believe the federal government does not understand how small businesses really work.
- **Respondents were politically varied:** 41% identified as independent, 34% as Republican and 25% as Democrat.

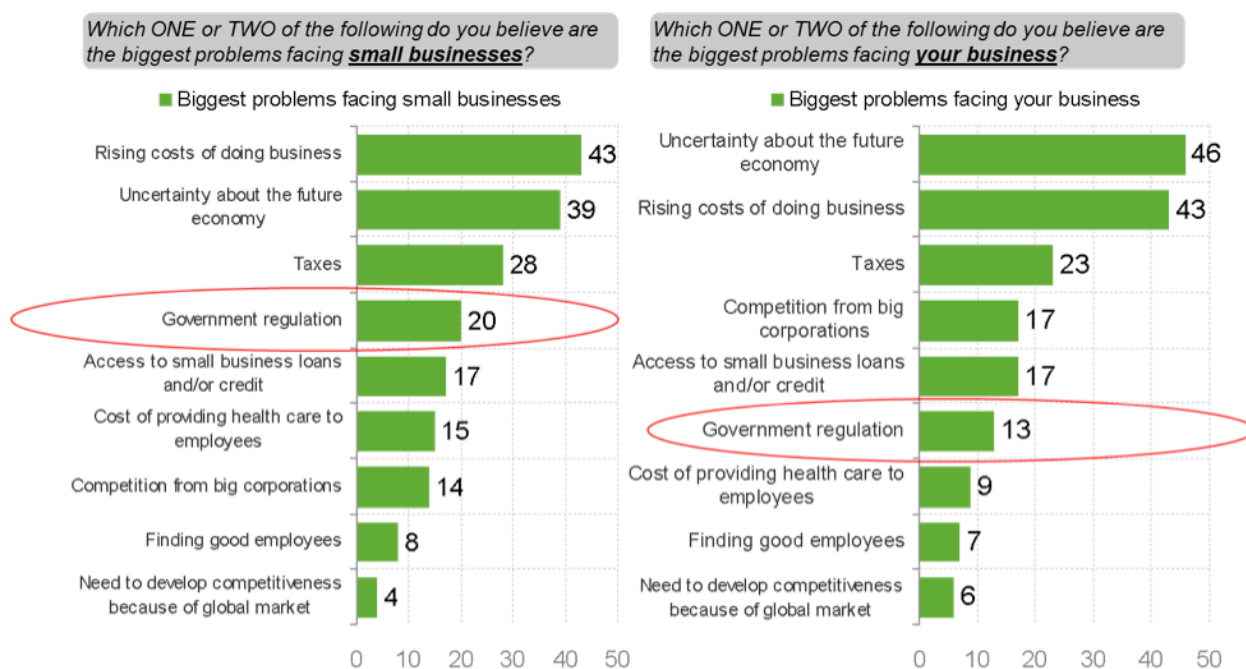
Rising Costs, Not Regulation or Taxes, Top Cause of Small Business Struggles

Small businesses are struggling. Asked to report on their own business, nearly half of those surveyed say they are doing “just OK.” Even more unfortunately, the number who say they are “not doing well” exceeds the number “doing well” by a 31 to 24% margin. When asked which factors most negatively affect business, the results were clear. Contrary to arguments that “regulation” or “taxes” are what mostly ail business owners today, economic uncertainty and the rising costs of doing business are ranked by entrepreneurs themselves as the biggest problems facing small business.

There is broad agreement about the direction of both the country and of small businesses. Both are heading toward disaster in the eyes of these business owners; a 77% majority believe the country is on the wrong track and 72% believe small businesses are on the wrong track.

Larger, more affluent business are, not surprisingly, doing better. Interestingly, however, green businesses’ optimism is above average (35% doing well), along with optimism of minority owned businesses (36%). By sector, construction businesses report struggling the most.

■ **Figure 1: Problems Facing Small Businesses**

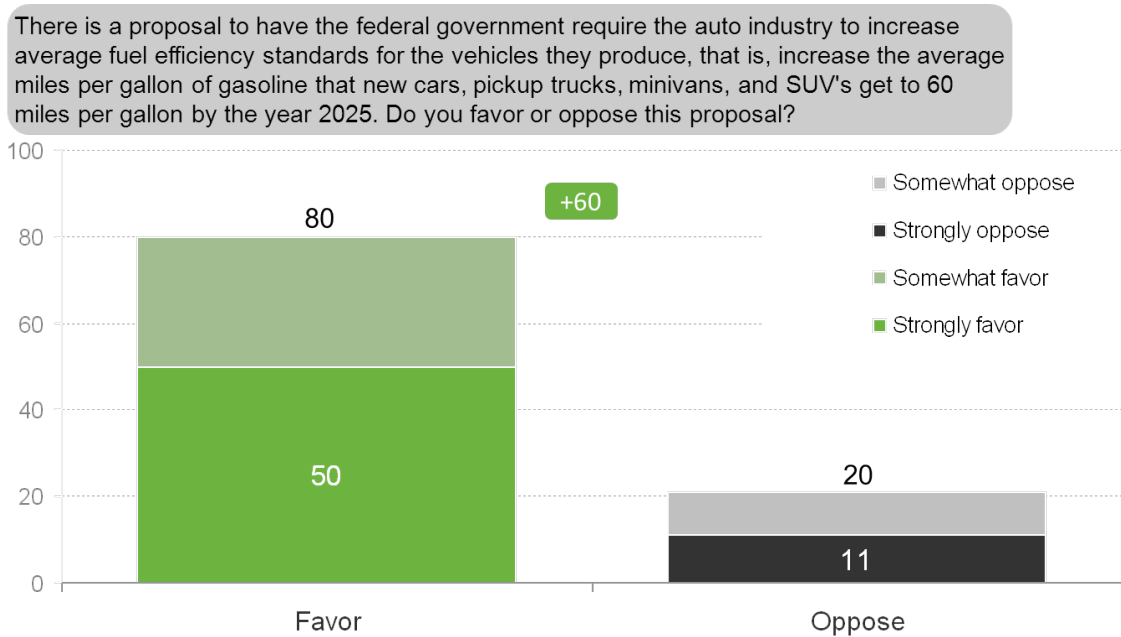


Fuel Efficiency Standards

An overwhelming majority of business owners in all states support higher fuel efficiency standards. The vast majority of survey respondents (87%) agree it is important “for the United States to take action now to increase fuel efficiency in cars and light trucks,” and 73% of respondents also believe the federal government should do more to make American car companies innovate.

Even more specifically, 80% of small business owners support increasing average fuel efficiency standards to 60 miles per gallon by 2025. Half of those surveyed *strongly* support this proposal.

■ **Figure 2: Large Majority Favors Increasing Fuel Efficiency Standards**



The Green Revolution in Small Business

The vast majority of small business owners (87%) believe “improving innovation and energy efficiency are good ways to increase prosperity for small business.” Small business owners put this conviction into practice. A majority have installed energy-saving appliances, use recycled paper and turn down the air conditioning and heat during appropriate seasons. A significant number use composted materials and provide opportunities for their employees to telecommute. Many owners who currently do not engage in these energy efficient practices say they are willing to do so.

■ **Figure 3: Large Majority Already Take Energy Saving Measures**

Practice	Yes	Willing	Either yes or willing
Recycled paper or other materials	78	65	85
Installed energy-saving measures such as energy-efficient light bulbs, appliances, windows and insulation	68	61	76
Reduced the heat during the winter or air conditioning in the summer	66	44	72
Composted degradable materials	33	49	44
Provided your employees the opportunity to telecommute	25	36	31
Purchased hybrid, electric or alternative fuel vehicles	12	47	31
Provided incentives for your employees to use mass transit	12	36	20

Conclusion

In today’s difficult economy, small business owners work long hours and often struggle to keep their businesses afloat. There are times when they feel government does not understand their unique needs. Nonetheless, these owners support government standards that would increase fuel efficiency in cars and light trucks, and the majority also favor protecting EPA regulation of carbon emissions. America’s entrepreneurs are steadfastly committed to innovation and efficiency as pragmatic long-term economic solutions for small business. Entrepreneurs believe higher fuel efficiency standards and efforts to protect the EPA’s right to do its job will help spark economic innovation, which is why they strongly support these standards. The poll reflects a valuable business lesson small business owners have learned over the last few years: Failure to innovate and improve efficiency is a failure to survive economically.

Methodology

This poll reflects an Internet survey of 1,257 small business owners across the country, commissioned by Small Business Majority and conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, with a margin of error of +/- 2.76%. The poll includes oversamples of small business owners in California, Michigan and Ohio. The survey was conducted between June 27 and July 17, 2011. This research is informed by a pair of focus groups among small business owners conducted in Columbus, Ohio on June 13, 2011.

Researchers used a random sample of small business owners obtained from Survey Sampling International (SSI) for the majority of the poll, and from Research Now to fill in the oversample(s).

Poll Toplines

June 27 - July 17, 2011

817 Small Business Owners (1257 Unweighted)

98 California Owners (197 Unweighted)

27 Michigan Owners (126 Unweighted)

14 Minnesota Owners (153 Unweighted)

31 Ohio Owners (130 Unweighted)

Q.1 Do you own your own business?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
Yes	100	100	100	100	100
No	-	-	-	-	-
Not sure	-	-	-	-	-
(ref:SBOSCR)					

Q.2 How many people are directly employed by your business or company, including yourself?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
1	31	30	37	48	35
2-5	48	38	39	39	42
6-10	9	16	13	6	9
11-50	10	14	8	7	12
51-100	2	2	3	0	2
More than 100	-	-	-	-	-
(ref:NUMEMPLY)					

Q.3 Generally speaking, do you think that things in this country are going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
Right direction	23	30	17	16	25
Wrong track.....	77	70	83	84	75
(Refused)	-	-	-	-	-
Right - Wrong	-55	-41	-65	-68	-49
(ref:DIRECT)					

Q.4 Thinking specifically about small businesses in America, do you think that things are going in the right direction, or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
Right direction	28	29	23	19	27
Wrong track.....	72	71	77	81	73
(Refused)	0	-	-	-	-
Right - Wrong	-45	-42	-54	-63	-46
(ref:DIRECT2)					

Q.5 Which of the following best describes how your own business is doing?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
Doing very well.....	5	7	4	3	6
Doing well	18	24	14	28	19
Just OK.....	45	42	53	47	45
Not doing well	20	16	19	17	24
Not doing well at all	11	11	10	5	5
Total Doing well	24	30	18	31	26
Total Not doing well	31	28	28	22	29
Doing well - Not doing well	-7	3	-10	9	-3
(ref:OWNBUS)					

[409 Respondents]

Q.6 (SPLIT A) Which ONE or TWO of the following do you believe are the biggest problems facing small businesses?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
Rising costs of doing business, such as higher fuel or electricity, heating and cooling costs	43	35	50	41	31
Uncertainty about the future economy	39	35	32	38	44
Taxes.....	28	24	31	34	16
Government regulation.....	20	27	24	24	24
Access to small business loans and/or credit	17	19	12	11	24
Cost of providing health care to employees.....	15	14	14	17	23
Competition from big corporations.....	14	16	13	15	18
Finding good employees	8	7	10	5	-
Need to develop competitiveness because of global market	4	10	1	4	7
(Refused)	-	-	-	-	-
(ref:BIGPROB1)					

[409 Respondents]

Q.7 (SPLIT B) Which ONE or TWO of the following do you believe are the biggest problems facing your business?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
Uncertainty about the future economy	46	46	42	49	50
Rising costs of doing business, such as higher fuel or electricity, heating and cooling costs	43	37	52	51	48
Taxes.....	23	25	17	19	22
Competition from big corporations.....	17	21	11	7	10
Access to small business loans and/or credit	17	17	19	13	14
Government regulation.....	13	14	13	13	15
Cost of providing health care to employees.....	9	16	9	10	11
Finding good employees	7	3	4	2	7
Need to develop competitiveness because of global market	6	7	7	7	7
(Refused).....	0	-	-	-	-

(ref:BIGPROB2)

Q.8 How important is it for the United States to take action now to increase fuel efficiency in cars and light trucks--is it very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?

	Total
Very important.....	59
Somewhat important	28
Not very important	10
Not at all important	4
(Refused).....	-
Total important	87
Total not important	13

(ref:MPT4)

Q.9 There is a proposal to have the federal government require the auto industry to increase average fuel efficiency standards for the vehicles they produce, that is, increase the average miles per gallon of gasoline that new cars, pickup trucks, minivans, and SUV's get to 60 miles per gallon by the year 2025. Do you favor or oppose this proposal?

	Total
Strongly favor.....	50
Somewhat favor	30
Somewhat oppose	10
Strongly oppose.....	11
(Refused).....	-
Total favor	80
Total oppose	20
Favor - Oppose.....	60

(ref:MPH2)

Q.10 Which of the following comes closest to your point of view?

We should require auto companies to meet higher fuel efficiency standards because our growing dependence on Middle East oil is a serious threat to our national security. Moreover, American car companies lost market share in this country because they built inefficient cars. We can reduce our dependence on oil and push American car companies to build more innovative cars.

We should not require auto companies to meet higher fuel efficiency standards because it will hurt American auto companies while helping foreign automakers, costing American jobs. 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.

	Total
Require, strongly.....	46
Require, not strongly	27
Not require, not strongly	15
Not require, strongly.....	12
(Refused).....	-
Total Require	73
Total Not require	27
Require - Not require	46
(ref:MPH4)	

Q.11 Here are some things some businesses have done to improve energy efficiency. Please indicate if your business has done the following:

	Yes	No	Does Not Apply	Not Sure	Yes - No
11 Installed energy-saving measures such as energy-efficient light bulbs, appliances, windows and insulation	68	12	19	1	56
CA	75	9	14	2	66
MI	71	13	15	2	58
MN	67	13	18	2	54
OH.....	55	17	22	5	38
12 Purchased hybrid, electric or alternative fuel vehicles.....	12	39	48	2	-27
CA	19	41	39	1	-22
MI	12	49	38	1	-37
MN	6	46	45	3	-40
OH.....	3	36	56	5	-33
13 Provided your employees the opportunity to telecommute.....	25	16	58	2	9
CA	42	10	46	2	31
MI	23	14	61	2	10
MN	14	17	65	4	-4
OH.....	18	18	60	4	1

	Yes	No	Does Not Apply	Not Sure	Yes - No
14 Reduced the heat during the winter or air conditioning in the summer.	66	12	20	2	53
CA	70	12	16	2	58
MI	75	7	16	1	68
MN	70	12	14	3	58
OH	58	15	23	4	43
15 Provided incentives for your employees to use mass transit.	12	20	66	2	-8
CA	15	23	61	2	-8
MI	7	22	70	1	-14
MN	6	21	71	2	-16
OH	3	21	72	4	-18
16 Composted degradable materials.	33	21	45	2	13
CA	33	21	44	2	12
MI	38	19	41	2	19
MN	32	19	46	3	13
OH	30	18	48	4	11
17 Recycled paper or other materials.	78	8	12	2	71
CA	86	6	7	2	80
MI	69	14	15	2	55
MN	79	8	10	3	71
OH	73	8	15	4	65

(ref:EFFEC1)

Q.18 How willing would you be to have your business do the following:

	Very Will	Smwt Will	Smwt Unwil	Very Unwil	Does Not Apply	Not Sure	Total Will	Total Unwil	Will - Unwil
[108 Respondents]									
19 (IF NO OR NOT SURE ON EFFEC1 1) Install energy-saving measures such as energy-efficient light bulbs, appliances, windows and insulation	19	42	12	12	6	8	61	24	37
CA	17	31	16	17	7	13	48	32	15
MI	14	45	9	10	14	8	59	19	40
MN	9	38	8	19	12	14	47	27	20
OH	27	33	6	7	11	15	60	14	46
[332 Respondents]									
20 (IF NO OR NOT SURE ON EFFEC1 2) Purchase hybrid, electric or alternative fuel vehicles	16	31	12	21	11	8	47	33	14
CA	15	31	6	27	14	6	47	33	14
MI	17	25	28	14	13	3	42	41	1
MN	16	25	13	30	11	5	41	43	-2
OH	10	29	17	12	24	8	39	29	10

[142 Respondents]

21 (IF NO OR NOT SURE ON

EFFEC1 3) Provide your employees the opportunity to

telecommute.....	10	25	17	14	24	9	36	31	5
CA	13	34	14	4	25	9	47	18	29
MI	14	46	4	8	15	13	61	12	48
MN	8	12	12	13	43	12	20	25	-5
OH	-	23	2	26	37	11	23	29	-6

[118 Respondents]

22 (IF NO OR NOT SURE ON

EFFEC1 4) Reduce the heat during the winter or air

conditioning in the summer	11	34	25	15	6	9	44	40	4
CA	5	10	40	35	2	8	15	75	-60
MI	16	61	-	8	-	14	78	8	69
MN	-	17	13	40	16	14	17	53	-36
OH	-	56	15	2	8	18	56	18	38

		Very Will	Smwt Will	Smwt Unwil	Very Unwil	Does Not Apply	Not Sure	Total Will	Total Unwil	Will - Unwil
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[176 Respondents]

23 (IF NO OR NOT SURE ON

EFFEC1 5) Provide incentives for your employees to use mass

transit	9	27	14	17	21	12	36	31	5
CA	12	17	19	17	28	8	29	35	-7
MI	7	24	11	17	35	5	32	28	3
MN	-	8	18	39	19	15	8	58	-49
OH	3	27	14	9	32	16	30	22	7

[182 Respondents]

24 (IF NO OR NOT SURE ON

EFFEC1 6) Compost

degradable materials.....	15	34	16	8	20	8	49	24	25
CA	12	27	16	16	22	7	39	32	7
MI	14	32	15	3	22	14	46	18	28
MN	10	19	22	16	23	10	29	39	-9
OH	14	32	14	5	19	16	45	20	26

[76 Respondents]

25 (IF NO OR NOT SURE ON

EFFEC1 7) Recycle paper or

other materials	28	37	10	7	6	11	65	17	48
CA	30	13	24	11	4	18	43	35	8
MI	27	52	9	-	4	8	79	9	70
MN	13	38	5	21	3	20	51	26	25
OH	28	28	-	7	16	21	56	7	50

(ref:EFFEC2)

Q.26 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the statements below.

	Strng Agree	Smwt Agree	Smwt Dis	Strng Dis	DK/ Ref	Total Agree	Total Dis	Agree - Dis
26 The federal government in Washington, D.C. does not understand how small businesses really work.....								
	53	33	10	4	-	86	14	72
CA	49	34	13	4	-	83	17	66
MI	58	27	11	4	-	85	15	70
MN	50	34	13	2	-	85	15	69
OH	44	38	15	3	-	82	18	63
[409 Respondents]								
27 (SPLIT A) Improving innovation and energy efficiency are good ways to increase prosperity for small businesses.								
	38	48	9	4	-	87	13	73
CA	37	45	10	8	-	82	18	63
MI	24	49	22	4	-	74	26	47
MN	33	38	17	12	-	72	28	44
OH	21	56	20	3	-	77	23	54
[409 Respondents]								
28 (SPLIT A) American car companies do not innovate enough.								
	28	43	25	4	-	71	29	41
CA	27	38	29	6	-	65	35	30
MI	20	34	38	8	-	54	46	9
MN	27	41	26	6	-	68	32	36
OH	17	38	40	5	-	54	46	9
[409 Respondents]								
29 (SPLIT B) The federal government should do more to make American car companies innovate.								
	37	35	15	12	0	73	27	45
CA	47	32	10	11	-	79	21	58
MI	21	37	24	18	-	58	42	16
MN	30	36	21	14	-	66	34	31
OH	28	39	23	10	-	67	33	34
30 Small businesses get no real help from the federal government.....								
	48	39	10	3	-	86	14	73
CA	46	37	15	2	-	83	17	67
MI	51	37	10	3	-	88	12	75
MN	42	42	12	4	-	84	16	68
OH	44	35	15	5	-	80	20	59

	Strng Agree	Smwt Agree	Smwt Dis	Strng Dis	DK/ Ref	Total Agree	Total Dis	Agree - Dis
31 Small businesses get no real help from the state government.	43	41	14	2	-	84	16	68
CA	48	37	13	1	-	86	14	72
MI	41	46	11	2	-	87	13	75
MN	37	41	21	1	-	78	22	55
OH	35	46	18	2	-	80	20	61
(ref:AGREE)								

Q.32 Do you favor or oppose regulations requiring the auto industry to reduce carbon emissions that cause climate change from cars, pickup trucks, minivans, and SUVs?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
Strongly favor	40	44	25	34	35
Somewhat favor	38	31	49	36	41
Somewhat oppose	10	10	15	13	14
Strongly oppose.....	11	15	11	16	10
(Refused)	0	-	-	-
Total favor	78	75	73	71	76
Total oppose	22	24	27	29	24
Favor - Oppose	57	51	47	42	53
(ref:CAREMMIT)					

Q.33 Under the authority of the Clean Air Act, the Environmental Protection Agency decided to regulate carbon emissions that cause climate change and set standards for power plants, refineries and other major emitters. Generally speaking, do you favor or oppose EPA regulating carbon emissions?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
Strongly favor	43	41	28	31	37
Somewhat favor	33	30	45	42	38
Somewhat oppose	11	12	12	9	9
Strongly oppose.....	14	16	15	17	16
(Refused)	0	0	-	-	-
Total favor	76	71	73	73	75
Total oppose	24	28	27	27	25
Favor - Oppose	51	43	45	46	50
(ref:EPA1)					

Q.34 Do you believe the EPA's regulation of carbon emissions will have a major impact, a minor impact, not much of an impact or no real impact on your business specifically?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
Major impact.....	22	24	17	21	17
Minor impact.....	31	34	36	24	32
Not much of an impact	26	23	20	37	25
No real impact.....	21	20	26	17	26
(Refused).....	-	-	-	-	-
Major/Minor impact	53	57	54	46	50
Not much/No real impact.....	47	43	46	54	50
(ref:IMPACT)					

[431 Respondents]

Q.35 (IF MAJOR/MINOR ON IMPACT) Do you believe EPA's regulation of carbon emissions will impact your business in a good way or a bad way?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
Good way.....	58	61	41	45	50
Bad way	41	39	59	54	50
(Refused).....	0	-	1	1	-
Good - Bad	17	22	-18	-9	1
(ref:IMPACT2)					

Q.36 These last questions are for statistical purposes only: Which of the following categories best describes your business?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
Professional services.....	35	49	32	38	36
Retail or wholesale.....	17	14	11	15	20
Construction.....	12	4	11	9	7
Education, health care or a non-profit organization	5	7	6	8	6
Transportation or utilities	3	4	4	4	1
Food services or production	3	2	7	1	3
Industry or manufacturing	2	4	3	7	2
Agriculture	2	1	4	1	3
Other (write in)	22	15	21	16	22
(Refused).....	-	-	-	-	-
(ref:BUSTYPE)					

Q.37 Does your business generate revenue directly through the new clean economy? Some examples would include installing solar panels, helping other companies reduce energy costs, recycling, providing alternative transportation, environmental marketing or LEED certification.

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
Yes	12	12	9	6	8
No	82	86	88	90	87
(Don't know/Prefer not to say).....	6	2	3	4	4
Yes - No.....	-70	-74	-78	-85	-79
(ref:GREEN)					

Q.38 In what year were you born?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
18 - 24.....	3	2	4	0	1
25 - 29.....	6	2	4	3	4
30 - 34.....	7	6	7	3	3
35 - 39.....	9	9	12	14	9
40 - 44.....	12	14	11	12	19
45 - 49.....	16	20	12	20	24
50 - 54.....	11	11	13	7	12
55 - 59.....	13	11	16	16	12
60 - 64.....	10	13	12	16	10
65 and over.....	13	12	10	9	7
(No answer).....	0	-	-	-	-
(ref:AGE)					

Q.39 Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something else?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
Strong Democrat.....	14	16	11	15	17
Weak Democrat.....	11	12	8	5	10
Independent-lean Democrat.....	10	8	11	14	11
Independent.....	18	21	16	20	19
Independent-lean Republican.....	13	13	20	16	13
Weak Republican.....	13	11	12	13	6
Strong Republican.....	21	18	22	17	23
(Refused).....	.	-	-	-	1
(ref:PTYID1)					

Q.40 How interested would you say you are in politics and national issues?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
Extremely interested.....	33	37	31	31	29
Very interested.....	35	40	39	32	41
Somewhat interested.....	25	20	20	27	22
Not very interested.....	8	3	10	10	8
(Refused).....	-	-	-	-	-
Extremely/Very interested.....	68	77	70	63	70
Somewhat/Not very interested.....	32	23	30	37	30
(ref:INT)					

Q.41 What is your race?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
White.....	81	69	88	93	88
African American or Black.....	6	4	4	-	8
Hispanic or Latino.....	7	12	4	2	1
Asian or Pacific Islander.....	2	9	1	2	0
American Indian or Native American.....	1	-	-	-	1
Other.....	1	1	0	0	1
Biracial or multiracial.....	1	2	2	-	-
Prefer not to say.....	1	3	1	2	0
(ref:RACE)					

Q.42 Is your business minority- or woman-owned?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
Yes, minority owned	10	12	9	1	9
Yes, women owned.....	29	31	22	33	34
Yes both.....	9	12	8	5	4
No	53	45	61	61	53
(Refused)	-	-	-	-	-
Total Yes	47	55	39	39	47
(ref:MINOWN)					

Q.43 Please answer a few questions about yourself to ensure that the survey has a representative sample. What is your gender?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
Male.....	60	60	60	60	60
Female	40	40	40	40	40
(ref:GENDER)					