

Opinion Survey

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

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Small Business Majority

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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.

Which ONE or TWO of the following do you believe are Which ONE or TWO of the following do you believe are the biggest problems facing small businesses? the biggest problems facing your business? Biggest problems facing small businesses Biggest problems facing your business Uncertainty about the future Rising costs of doing business 43 46 economy Uncertainty about the future 43 39 Rising costs of doing business economy 28 23 Taxes Taxes Competition from big 20 17 Government regulation corporations Access to small business loans Access to small business loans 17 17 and/or credit and/or credit Cost of providing health care to 13 15 Government regulation employees Cost of providing health care to 9 Competition from big corporations 14 employees Finding good employees Finding good employees 8 7 Need to develop competitiveness Need to develop competitiveness 6 because of global market because of global market 50 50 10 20 30 40 0 20 30 40 10

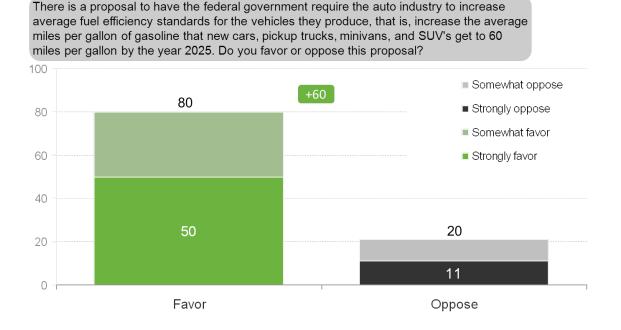
Figure 1: Problems Facing Small Businesses

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	ОН
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	ОН
1		30	37	48	35
2-5		38	39	39	42
6-10		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		70	83	84	75
(Refused)		-	-	-	-
Right - Wrong (ref:DIRECT)	55	-41	-65	-68	-49

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?

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

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

	Total	CA	MI	MN	ОН
Doing very well		7	4	3	6
Doing well	18	24	14	28	19
Just OK		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		30	18	31	26
Total Not doing well	31	28	28	22	29
Doing well - Not doing well (ref:OWNBUS)	7	3	-10	9	-3

[409 Respondents]

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

Τα	otal CA	A MI	MN	ОН
Rising costs of doing business, such as				
higher fuel or electricity, heating and				
cooling costs4	3 35	5 50	41	31
Uncertainty about the future economy		5 32	38	44
Taxes2	28 24	31	34	16
Government regulation2	20 27	⁷ 24	24	24
Access to small business loans and/or				
credit1	17 19	12	11	24
Cost of providing health care to				
employees1	15 14	. 14	17	23
Competition from big corporations 1		13	15	18
Finding good employees	8 7	10	5	-
Need to develop competitiveness				
because of global market	•) 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	ОН
Uncertainty about the future economy46	46	42	49	50
Rising costs of doing business, such as				
higher fuel or electricity, heating and				
cooling costs43	37	52	51	48
Taxes23	25	17	19	22
Competition from big corporations 17	21	11	7	10
Access to small business loans and/or				
credit17	17	19	13	14
Government regulation13	14	13	13	15
Cost of providing health care to				
employees9	16	9	10	11
Finding good employees7	3	4	2	7
Need to develop competitiveness				
because of global market6	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?

Very important Somewhat important Not very important Not at all important (Refused)	28 10 4	CA 56 24 15 5	MI 43 39 15 3	OH 49 38 9 3 1
Total important Total not important (ref:MPT4)		80 20	81 19	86 13

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	CA	MI	OH
Strongly favor	50	50	32	43
Somewhat favor	30	30	41	35
Somewhat oppose	10	8	15	12
Strongly oppose	11	12	13	10
(Refused)		-	-	-
Total favor	80	80	72	78
Total oppose	20	20	28	22
Favor - Oppose (ref:MPH2)	60	59	45	56

your business has done the following:		Does		Yes
Vor	No	Not	Not	- No
11 Installed energy-saving measures such as energy-	No	Apply	Sure	No
efficient light bulbs, appliances, windows and insulation	12	19	1	56
CA	9	14	2	66
MI	13	15	2	58
MN	13	18	2	54
OH 55	17	22	5	38
12 Purchased hybrid, electric or alternative fuel vehicles12	39	48	2	-27
CA	41	39	1	-22
MI	49	38	1	-37
MN6	46	45	3	-40
OH 3	36	56	5	-33
13 Provided your employees the opportunity to				
telecommute	16	58	2	9
CA	10	46	2	31
MI	14	61	2	10
MN	17	65	4	-4
OH18	18	60	4	1
14 Reduced the heat during the winter or air conditioning				
in the summer	12	20	2	53
CA70	12	16	2	58
MI	7	16	1	68
MN	12	14	3	58
OH58	15	23	4	43
15 Provided incentives for your employees to use mass				
transit12	20	66	2	-8
CA 15	23	61	2	-8
MI7	22	70	1	-14
MN6	21	71	2	-16
OH3	21	72	4	-18
16 Composted degradable materials	21	45	2	13
CA	21	44	2	12
MI	19	41	2	19
MN	19	46	3	13
OH30	18	48	4	11
17 Recycled paper or other materials	8	12	2	71
CA	6	7	2	80
MI69	14	15	2	55
MN	8	10	3	55 71
OH73	8	15	4	65
(ref:EFFEC1)	-	0		

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

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

Very Will		Smwt 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
MI14	45	9	10	14	8	59	19	40
MN9	38	8	19	12	14	47	2 7	20
OH27	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	31	12	21	11	8	47	33	14
CA	31	6	27	14	6	47	33	14
MI	25 25	28 12	14 30	13 11	3	42 41	41	1 -2
OH10	25 29	13 17	30 12	24	5 8	41 39	43 29	10
	_,	-/		-1	C	J)	_,	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	F
CA13	25 34	17	4	24 25	9	30 47	18	5 29
MI 14	46	4	8	_5 15	13	61	12	4 8
MN8	12	12	13	43	12	20	25	-5
ОН	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 summer11	34	25	15	6	9	44	40	4
CA5	10	40	35	2	8	15	75	-60
MI	61	-	8	-	14	78	8	69 26
MN OH	17 56	13 15	40 2	16 8	14 18	17 56	53 18	-36 38
011	50	13	2	0	10	20	10	30
[176 Respondents]								
23 (IF NO OR NOT SURE ON								
EFFEC1 5) Provide incentives								
for your employees to use mass	~ -		-		10	<i>c(</i>		_
transit	27 17	14 10	17 17	21 28	12 8	36 20	31 25	5 -7
MI	17 24	19 11	17 17	28 35	o 5	29 32	35 28	-7 3
MN	8	18	39	35 19	15	3 <u>-</u> 8	5 8	-49
OH 3	27	14	9	32	16	30	22	7

				Does				Will
Very Will	Smwt Will	Smwt Unwil		Not Apply	Not Sure	Total Will		- Unwil
[182 Respondents] 24 (IF NO OR NOT SURE ON EFFEC1 6) Compost								
degradable materials15	34	16	8	20	8	49	24	25
CA 12	27	16	16	22	7	39	32	7
MI14	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 materials28	37	10	7	6	11	65	17	48
CA	13	24	11	4	18	43	35	8
MI27	52	9	-	4	8	79	9	70
MN	38	5	21	3	20	51	26	25
OH28 (ref:EFFEC2)	28	-	7	16	21	56	7	50

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

		Smwt Agree	Smwt Dis	Strng Dis	DK/ Ref	Total Agree	Total Dis	Agree - Dis
understand how small businesses								
really work5	-	33	10	4	-	86	14	72
CA 4	-	34	13	4	-	83	17	66
MI		27	11	4	-	85	15	70
MN5		34	13	2	-	85	15	69
OH4	4	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 3	8	48	9	4	-	87	13	73
CA3	87	45	10	8	-	82	18	63
MI2	24	49	22	4	-	74	26	47
MN3	.0	38	17	12	-	72	28	44
OH 2	21	56	20	3	-	77	23	54
[409 Respondents] 28 (SPLIT A) American car companies do not innovate enough 2	:8	43	25	4	_	71	29	41
CA 2	27	38	29	6	-	65	35	30
MI2	0	34	38	8	-	54	46	9
MN2	27	41	26	6	-	68	32	36
OH 1	7	38	40	5	-	54	46	9
[409 Respondents] 29 (SPLIT B) The federal government should do more to make American car companies innovate3	17	35	15	12	0	73	27	45
CA		32	10	11	-	79	-/ 21	5 8
MI	.,	37	24	18	-	58	42	16
MN		36	21	14	-	66	 34	31
OH2		39	23	10	-	67	33	34
30 Small businesses get no real help	0		-	c				
from the federal government		39	10	3	-	86 80	14	73
CA		37	15	2	-	83	17	67 77
MI	•	37	10	3	-	88	12	75
MN		42	12	4	-	84	16	68 50
OH 4	4	35	15	5	-	80	20	59

31 Small businesses get no real help	Agree	Smwt Agree		Strng Dis	DK/ Ref	Total Agree	Total Dis	Agree - Dis
from the state government	43	41	14	2	-	84	16	68
СА		37	13	1	-	86	14	72
MI	41	46	11	2	-	87	13	75
MN		41	21	1	-	7 8	22	55
OH (ref:AGREE)	35	46	18	2	-	80	20	61

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?

Tota	d CA	MI	MN	ОН
Strongly favor40	44	25	34	35
Somewhat favor	31	49	36	41
Somewhat oppose10	10	15	13	14
Strongly oppose11	15	11	16	10
(Refused)	0	-	-	-
Total favor78 Total oppose22	75 24	73 27	71 29	76 24
Favor - Oppose57 (ref:CAREMMIT)	51	47	42	53

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?

Т	otal CA	MI	MN	ОН
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

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	ОН
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 Not much/No real impact		57 43	54 46	46 54	50 50
(ref:IMPACT)	•••••••	40	40	J 4	50

[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	ОН
Good way	58	61	41	45	50
Bad way		39	59	54	50
(Refused)	0	-	1	1	-
Good - Bad	17	22	-18	-9	1

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

•	Total	CA	MI	MN	ОН
Professional services	35	49	32	38	36
Retail or wholesale		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		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	ОН
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 (ref:GREEN)	70	-74	-78	-85	-79

Q.38 In what year were you born?

	Total	CA	MI	MN	ОН
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		12	10	9	7
(No answer) (ref:AGE)	0	-	-	-	-

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

	Total	CA	MI	MN	ОН
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		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	ОН
Extremely interested	33	37	31	31	29
Very interested	35	40	39	32	41
Somewhat interested		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 (ref:INT)	32	23	30	37	30
Q.41 What is your race?					
	Total	CA	MI	MN	OH
White	81	69	88	93	88
African American or Black		4	4	-	8
Hispanic or Latino		12	4	2	1
Asian or Pacific Islander	2	9	1	2	0
American Indian or Native American		-	-	-	1
Other	1	1	0	0	1
Biracial or multiracial	1	2	2	-	-
Prefer not to say (ref:RACE)	1	3	1	2	0

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

	Total	CA	MI	MN	ОН
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 (ref:MINOWN)	•••• 47	55	39	39	47

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	ОН
Male	60	60	60	60	60
Female	40	40	40	40	40
(ref:GENDER)					