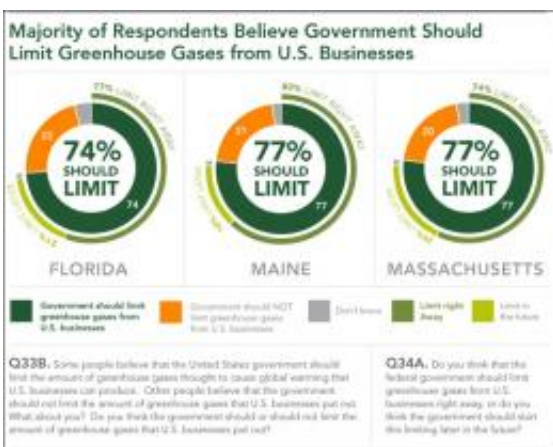


New state surveys affirm Americans' support for government action on climate change

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This shows the results of public opinion surveys on global warming conducted in Florida, Maine and Massachusetts in July 2010. Credit: Resource Media

Large majorities of the residents of Florida, Maine and Massachusetts believe the Earth has been getting warmer gradually over the last 100 years (81 percent, 78 percent and 84 percent, respectively), and large majorities favor government action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, according to new public opinion research by Professor Jon Krosnick, a senior fellow at the Woods Institute for the Environment at Stanford University.

Following up on a national survey done in June, Krosnick and his team conducted in-depth polling between July 9 and 18 in the three states.

Mirroring the national survey, the statewide research conducted in July shows that very large majorities think that if the world has been warming, it has been due primarily or at least partly to "things people do" - 72 percent in Florida, 76 percent in Maine and 80 percent in Massachusetts, compared to 75 percent nationally.

The new research also shows that majorities of residents in these states - 74 percent of Floridians, 77 percent of Maine residents and 77 percent of Massachusetts residents - think the U.S. government should take action to limit the amount of [greenhouse gases](#) emitted by businesses. Of those supporting such federal action, 74 percent or more of the respondents from each state thought this should start "right away." Respondents also indicated that they were very likely to vote for candidates who gave a public statement supporting action to combat climate change, with residents of every state indicating that they were more likely to vote for a candidate who had given such a statement than one who had not.

"These in-depth studies of three interesting states suggest that in these key regards, they closely resemble the nation overall and support the notion of climate protection legislation," said Krosnick, a professor of communication and of [political science](#) at Stanford.

Safety of economy and jobs

Most respondents said that implementing programs to reduce global warming in the future was unlikely to have a negative effect on their state economy or the national economy. When asked about the effects that ameliorative measures might have on the national economy, only 22 percent of Floridians, 22 percent of Maine and 17 percent of Massachusetts residents said that the economy would suffer. Additionally, few people thought that the number of jobs would be reduced by ameliorative efforts, with no more than 20 percent of the

respondents in each state thinking that there would be fewer jobs in either their home state or nationwide as a result of the "United States doing things to reduce global warming in the future."

"This result contradicts the claim that most residents of these states believe that [climate change](#) legislation will be a jobs-killer," Krosnick said.

Support for cap-and-trade

When presented with a brief description of a "cap-and-trade" permit trading system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by businesses, majorities of respondents favored implementing the system. The largest proportions of respondents in favor of cap-and-trade were found in Massachusetts (77 percent favor) and Maine (72 percent), followed closely by Florida (68 percent). These numbers are on par with the national survey conducted in June, which showed that 74 percent of all Americans favor a cap-and-trade system.

Willingness to pay

Krosnick's research also revealed that more than half of the respondents in the three states would vote for a law to reduce national greenhouse gas emissions by 85 percent by 2050, if the cost to their household would be a \$150 tax increase per year. And even more said they favored a law to accomplish emissions reduction at an annual cost to them of \$100 (66 percent in Massachusetts, 62 percent in Maine and 60 percent in Florida).

This result is relevant in light of a recent Environmental Protection Agency analysis of the economic impact of the Kerry-Lieberman American Power Act to address [greenhouse gas emissions](#). The EPA

estimated that the cost per U.S. household would be between \$79 and \$146 if the act were implemented.

"Our survey results suggest that many residents of these states are willing to pay real money to make significant progress in emissions reduction along the lines that legislators have been considering," Krosnick said.

The new state surveys were conducted with funding from the Woods Institute for the Environment at Stanford, whose mission is to provide third-party non-advocacy research to inform public policy. The survey results are based on telephone interviews conducted July 9-18 with 600 randomly selected adults from each of the three states. These state surveys are follow-up research to a [national survey](#) Krosnick conducted in June that found similar results.

More information: Krosnick's June 2010 national survey on global warming is available at: [woods.stanford.edu/research/am ... -global-warming.html](http://woods.stanford.edu/research/am...-global-warming.html)

Provided by Stanford University

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