

February 16, 2011

## American Voters Strongly Oppose Congressional Action Against Clean Air Standards

### Voters Want EPA, Not Congress, To Set Standards

**To:** The American Lung Association and Interested Parties

**From:** Mike Bocian and Andrew Baumann, Greenberg Quinlan Rosner  
Jon McHenry and Dan Judy, Ayres, McHenry & Associates

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A new bipartisan national survey of likely 2012 voters finds American voters at odds with those in Congress pushing to strip the Environmental Protection Agency of its authority to update air pollution standards, including Carbon Dioxide.

An overwhelming bipartisan majority wants the EPA to set stricter limits on air pollution, with about three-quarters of voters backing tougher standards on Mercury, smog and Carbon Dioxide as well as higher fuel efficiency standards for heavy duty trucks.

More important, voters explicitly reject Congressional efforts to stop the EPA from updating these standards both as a whole and in a debate specific to Carbon Dioxide standards. After a balanced debate on the issue, with language based on that recently used by supporters of Congressional action, a two-to-one majority opposes Congressional action to stop the EPA. This includes a vast majority of independents who, on this issue, look much more like Democrats than Republicans.

### Key Findings

**1. Voters overwhelmingly support the EPA updating Clean Air Act standards.** 69 percent of voters think the EPA should update CAA standards with stricter limits on air pollution.

Moreover, on specific elements of the CAA:

- 79 percent support stricter limits on Mercury.
- 77 percent support stricter limits on smog.
- 77 percent support stricter limits on Carbon Dioxide.
- 74 percent support tougher fuel efficiency standards on heavy duty trucks.

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<sup>1</sup> Memo based on a national survey of 1021 likely 2012 voters conducted for the American Lung Association by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner and Ayres, McHenry & Associates, February 7-14, 2011. Margin of error for the full sample is 3.1%. For half samples it is 4.4%.

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**2. Voters overwhelmingly oppose Congressional action that impedes EPA from updating clean air standards.** 68 percent say that Congress should NOT stop the EPA from updating the four standards listed above. When asked specifically about updating standards for Carbon Dioxide, 64 percent say that Congress should NOT stop the EPA.

- After hearing a balanced debate on the issue, with messages based on the actual language used by opponents and supporters of the EPA, strong majorities continue to oppose Congressional action to stop the EPA. 63 percent oppose Congressional action on all four standards while 60 percent oppose Congressional action when the debate centers specifically on Carbon Dioxide. Independents oppose Congressional action by a two-to-one margin in both debates.

**3. Voters trust EPA more than Congress to set clean air standards.** Even after hearing strong arguments from opponents of the EPA, EPA supporters win every element of this debate. Taken as a whole, the survey clearly indicates that voters strongly trust the EPA to deal with clean air standards more than Congress.

- Congress is significantly less popular than either the EPA or the Clean Air Act.
- Only 18 percent of voters think the EPA is exceeding its legal mandate.
- A bipartisan 69 percent majority believes that EPA scientists, rather than Congress, should set pollution standards. This is despite opposing language arguing that our elected representatives in Congress would do a better job than “unelected bureaucrat at the EPA.”
- By a nearly 20-point margin, voters believe that updated EPA standards will boost, rather than harm, job creation.

### **EPA More Popular Than Congress, Protecting Air Quality More Important Than Cutting Regulations**

While this survey confirms that “getting the economy moving and creating jobs” is the most important issue for voters (95 percent rate it as extremely or very important), some in Congress are missing the mark by centering their efforts so heavily on cutting EPA regulations, particularly on stopping the EPA from updating standards under the Clean Air Act. In fact, protecting air quality is seen, by 17 points, as a higher priority than “reducing regulations on businesses.” And voters believe that updating clean air standards is more likely to create jobs by leading to innovation rather than cost jobs by restricting businesses by 55 to 36 percent. Meanwhile, the EPA enjoys relatively high ratings with a net +9 favorability rating (38 percent favorable, 29 percent unfavorable) compared to Congress (-13). The Clean Air Act has even higher net ratings at +17.

Consequently, voters want the EPA, and not Congress, to set pollution standards. An overwhelming 69 percent majority (including sizeable majorities of Democrats, independents and Republicans) agrees that “Scientists at the EPA should set pollution standards, not politicians in Congress” while only 21 percent agree that “our elected representatives in Congress should set pollution standards, not unelected bureaucrats at the EPA.”

## Multiple Polls Show Americans Support EPA and Carbon Limits; Oppose Efforts to Block EPA

Recent polling by Democratic and Republican polling firms demonstrates clear support across party lines for the Environmental Protection Agency and the Clean Air Act.

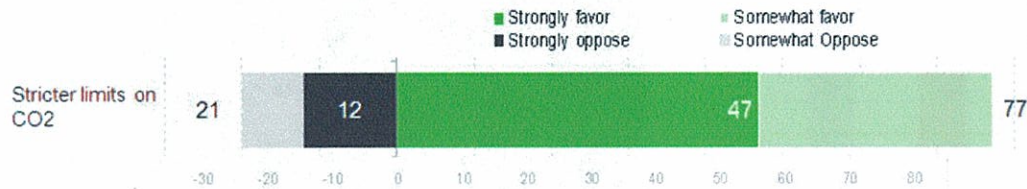
Greenberg Quinlan Rosner and Ayres, McHenry & Associates polling of 1,021 likely 2012 voters conducted for the American Lung Association February 7-14, 2011 with a margin of error for the full sample of 3.1%.

- More than three out of four voters support the EPA setting tougher standards carbon dioxide, including 78% of Independents and 62% of Republicans.



### About Three Quarters Support Various Updated Standards

Now let me read you some specific air pollution standards the EPA is proposing. For each one, please tell me whether you favor or oppose the EPA updating these standards.

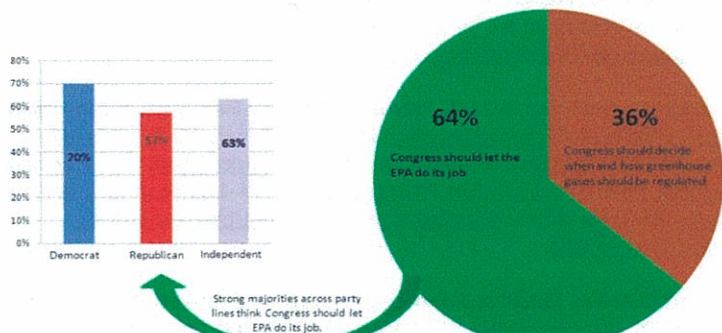


(See frequency questionnaire for full wording of each proposed standard)

Public Policy Polling (PPP) February 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> national and district-specific polling for the Natural Resources Defense Council:

- 64 percent of Americans – including 57 percent of Republicans and 63 percent of Independents -- think “Congress should let the EPA do its job” versus “Congress should decide when and how greenhouse gases should be regulated,” which was favored by only about a third of Americans (36 percent).

### Should Congress Decide When and How to Regulate Greenhouse Gases or Should Congress Let EPA Do its Job?



Some special interests say Congress should step in and prevent the EPA from limiting carbon dioxide pollution. For example, the head of the America Petroleum Institute says Congress should decide when and how greenhouse gases should be regulated. But other public interest groups say Congress should let EPA do its job. The head of the American Public Health Association says that blocking the EPA's work to reduce carbon pollution could mean the difference between a healthy life for many Americans or battling chronic debilitating illness. Which view do you support?

For more information see [http://climateboard.nrdc.org/files/2011/02/strong\\_opposition\\_nationally\\_8.html](http://climateboard.nrdc.org/files/2011/02/strong_opposition_nationally_8.html) Source: PPP Polling for NRDC, released 2-25-11.

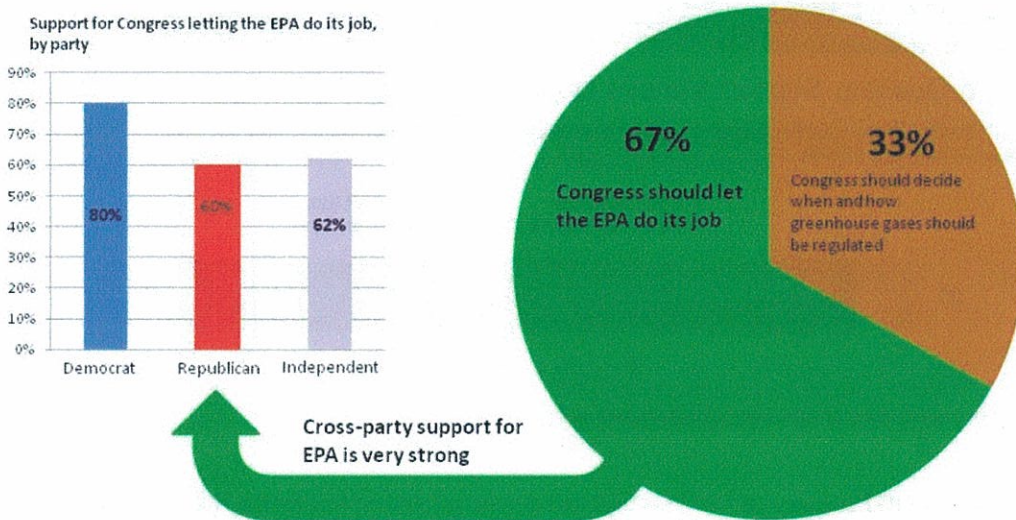
- More than two thirds of Americans (68 percent) – including 54 percent of Republicans and 59 percent of Independents -- said the EPA should move ahead to “reduce carbon pollution without delay.”

### Findings for Congressional Districts

PPP polling of 27 congressional districts reveals similar patterns of support for the EPA, the Clean Air Act and limiting carbon pollution. For example, in Chairman Fred Upton's district (MI-6)

- 67 percent of registered voters -- including 60 percent of Republicans -- agreed with the statement that "Congress should let the EPA do its job," as opposed to the minority who believe that "Congress should decide" what actions are taken to curb carbon pollution.

## Most of Congressman Upton's Constituents Think Congress Should Let the EPA Do Its Job



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Source: PPP Polling for NRDC, released 2-23-11  
For more information see [http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/paltman/strong\\_opposition\\_nationally\\_a.html](http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/paltman/strong_opposition_nationally_a.html)

### Polling sources:

Greenberg Quinlan Rosner and Ayres, McHenry & Associates polling of 1,021 likely 2012 voters conducted for the American Lung Association February 7-14, 2011 with a margin of error for the full sample of 3.1%. For details: <http://www.lungusa.org/healthy-air/outdoor/resources/clean-air-survey.html>.

Public Policy Polling national and 19 district survey conducted for NRDC February 18-29 with including the following districts: [Joe Walsh](#), IL-8; [Robert Dold](#), IL-10; and [Bobby Schilling](#), IL-17; [Daniel Benishek](#), MI-1; [Mike Rogers](#), MI-8; [Michele Bachmann](#), MN-6; [Chip Cravaack](#), MN-8; [Denny Rehberg](#) (MT-At Large); Speaker [John Boehner](#), OH-8; [Patrick Tiberi](#), OH-12; and [Jim Renacci](#), OH-16; [Jason Altmire](#), PA-4; [Jim Gerlach](#), PA-6; [Patrick Meehan](#), PA-7; [Lou Barletta](#), PA-11; [Robert Hurt](#), VA-5; [Scott Rigell](#), VA-2; [Reid Ribble](#), WI-8; and [Sean Duffy](#), WI-7. For details: <http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/paltman/2-23%20Poll%20Table.pdf> and all reports: <http://bit.ly/fbzBaO>.

Public Policy Polling 9-district survey (including Chairman Upton' and districts in of registered voters in 9 districts conducted for NRDC February 4-5. Including following districts: [Mary Bono Mack](#) (CA-45); [Cory Gardner](#), (CO-4); [Adam Kinzinger](#), (IL-11); [Charlie Bass](#), (NH-2); [Leonard Lance](#), (NJ-7); [Mike Doyle](#), (PA-14); [Charles A. Gonzalez](#), (TX-20); and [Gene Green](#), (TX-29.) For details including press release and individual polling reports: [http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/paltman/voters\\_in\\_uptons\\_and\\_other\\_hou.html](http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/paltman/voters_in_uptons_and_other_hou.html).

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
Witness Disclosure Requirement - "Truth in Testimony"  
Required by House Rule XI, Clause 2(g)(5)

Name: David Doniger

1. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) you have received since October 1, 2008. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

None

2. Please list any entity you are testifying on behalf of and briefly describe your relationship with these entities.

Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)  
-employed by NRDC

3. Please list any federal grants or contracts (including subgrants or subcontracts) received since October 1, 2008, by the entity (ies) you listed above. Include the source and amount of each grant or contract.

Please see attached page titled "Federal Grants and Contracts NRDC Has Received over FY 2009-2011". Information provided by NRDC's Accounting and Finance Department.

I certify that the above information is true and correct.

Signature:

David Doniger

Date:

4-5-11