



PROGRAM FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

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Large Majorities in States Suing Federal Government Favor Clean Power Plan

WASHINGTON – As litigators prepare oral arguments for the 26-state suit to stop the federal government from implementing the Clean Power Plan (CPP), a Citizen Cabinet survey finds that two-thirds of registered voters in the states party to the suit (67 percent) actually favor the Plan. Eight states were also surveyed, including three that are party to the lawsuit; in all three – Florida, Ohio and Texas – two-thirds or more also support the plan. In Oklahoma, which filed suit independently after the multi-state suit was filed, results were similar, with 68 percent approving the plan. Across the country as a whole, 69 percent approve of the CPP, with similar majorities in key swing states surveyed.

The Clean Power Plan seeks to reduce greenhouse gases from power plants two to three percent a year. The District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals is scheduled to hear arguments on September 27.

The in-depth national survey, which also includes statewide samples in California, Florida, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas and Virginia, was conducted by the Program for Public Consultation, School of Public Policy, University of Maryland (PPC), and released by the nonpartisan group, Voice Of the People.

“Clearly the forces driving this lawsuit are not arising from public resistance to the Clean Power Plan,” said PPC Director Steven Kull.

Interestingly, even among respondents who work in the coal industry or have family members that do, 62 percent support the CPP.

Support was not however, bipartisan. Nationally only 47 percent of Republicans are in favor, and a slight majority of 52 percent oppose the plan. Among Democrats 89 percent approve, as does 64 percent of independents.

But if the federal government were to make efforts to mitigate the effect of the Clean Power Plan on coal workers – either by providing support for coal industry workers who lose their jobs or providing support to the coal industry by enabling it to sequester carbon dioxide – support increases to a bipartisan majority, rising to 61 percent among Republicans, 94 percent among Democrats, and 78 percent overall. Between these methods, providing support for coal industry workers who lose their job is far more popular (overall 73 percent, Republicans 68 percent, Democrats 80 percent) than providing support for carbon sequestration (overall 48 percent, Republicans 44 percent, Democrats 46 percent).

There is bipartisan majority support, though, for specific measure to reduce carbon dioxide. Support for providing tax credits for installing fuel-efficient lighting, doors, windows and insulation, building new energy efficient homes and installing wind and fuel cells (overall ranging from 73-78 percent), ranges from 62-69 percent among Republicans, while Democratic support ranges from 84-87 percent.

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Bipartisan majorities also favor requiring higher fuel efficiency standards for light cars and trucks, heavy duty vehicles and requiring electric companies to have a minimum portion of their electricity come from renewable sources (overall 71-74 percent). Republican support for these ranges from 56-57 percent, while for Democrats, 84-89 percent.

The CPP is central to the commitment as part of the United States participating in the international agreement negotiated in Paris and signed in New York in April, 2016, by which the U.S. has agreed to pursue the goal of reducing its greenhouse gases by 26-28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025, or about two percent per year. Seventy-one percent of American registered voters approve of participating in the agreement. Among Republicans a slim majority (52 percent) approve, but 61 percent said the agreement is at least tolerable. Democrats overwhelmingly approve (89 percent) as did independents (66 percent).

Support for reduction of carbon dioxide appears to be driven by concerns about the health effects of air pollution as much or more than concerns about climate change. While carbon dioxide does not have a direct effect on health, steps that reduce carbon dioxide also reduce soot and smog, which do have negative health effects. Seventy-four percent say that it should be a high priority to reduce air pollution from energy production (Republicans 51 percent, Democrats 93 percent). Seventy percent nationally say it should be a high priority to reduce greenhouse gases (Republicans 44 percent, Democrats 91 percent).

The Citizen Cabinet panel of 5,975 respondents was drawn from Nielsen-Scarborough's probability-based national panel, which was recruited by mail and telephone using a random sample of households. Additional recruiting by telephone and mail was conducted by Communication for Research. The margin of error is +/- 1.6 percent. State samples: Calif. 523 (MoE +/- 4.3 percent); Fla. 421 (+/- 4.8 percent); Md. 419 (+/- 4.8 percent); N.Y. 414 (+/- 4.8 percent); Ohio 449 (+/- 4.6 percent); Okla. 419 (+/- 4.8 percent); Texas 419 (+/- 4.8 percent); and Va. 441 (+/- 4.7 percent). The survey was fielded April 16-June 10, 2016.

Unlike a standard poll, Citizen Cabinet surveys take respondents through an online process called a 'policymaking simulation' that seeks to put them in the shoes of a policymaker, giving them essential information and presenting key arguments on both sides of each issue. The content of the simulation was vetted for accuracy and balance by Republican and Democratic congressional staffers, as well as experts from the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the World Resources Institute and the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy.

Once the survey results are released, a public version of the policymaking simulation is posted at vop.org for anyone to try. Citizens are encouraged to go through the simulation and then share their recommendations with their Congressional representatives at: <http://research.cfrinc.net/vop16128pub/>

The full report can be found at: http://vop.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/EE_Report.pdf

The full questionnaire with frequencies can be found at:
http://vop.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/EE_Quaire.pdf

Voice Of the People is a nonpartisan, non-profit organization using new methods and technology to give citizens a more effective voice in government.