



October 15, 2020

TO: Interested Parties

FR: Ben Greenfield, Change Research

RE: AD13 Voters Feel Urgent About Stronger Environmental Protections

A new survey of 318 registered voters in California's 13th Assembly District finds that voters in the district want the state to move more quickly towards 100% clean energy, and to prioritize a number of other initiatives to protect the environment and the health of California's communities -- particularly communities that are disproportionately impacted by environmental hazards.

The survey was taken as Californians are experiencing layers upon layers of crises, from the public health tragedies of the COVID-19 pandemic, to the economic inequality that has been exacerbated by the pandemic, to wildfires that have burned a record-breaking 4 million acres to date, along with smoke posing health hazards across the state and beyond, and extreme heat waves that have sent temperatures in Stockton soaring to 113° this August.

Voters in AD13 are overwhelmingly making the connection between climate change and the wildfires and extreme heat: 65% of voters in the district say that climate change has played a strong role in this year's fires and heat waves, with 51% saying that climate change has played a very strong role.

Young voters and voters of color feel particularly urgent about addressing climate change, and about taking a variety of additional measures to protect the environment and transition to a clean energy future. For example, 68% of all voters in the district believe that the state should take immediate action to address hazardous waste, while 23% think other issues should be addressed first. But among voters under 35, 79% want this problem addressed immediately, while 15% think other issues can be addressed first; among Latinx voters, it's 76% / 20%.

KEY FINDINGS

- **69% agree that the state should require a safety buffer zone to protect Californians living near oil and gas facilities, while 20% disagree.** Even among Republicans and independents who lean Republican, only 52% oppose buffer zones.
- **63% support and 32% oppose stronger oil regulations, even if it means some good-paying oil jobs will be disrupted.**
- **56% of voters believe the state should move faster towards 100% clean energy, while 29% think we should move more slowly.** 37% believe we should move *much* faster -- including 49% of voters under 35 and 43% of Latinx voters.

- **54% think the transition to clean energy should happen first in low-income communities in order to remove pollution and create jobs, while 34% disagree.** Among voters under 35, 67% agree with transitioning first in low-income communities, while 21% disagree.
- **94% of voters believe that local residents and other affected stakeholders should be directly notified about potentially harmful or polluting development projects, as well as educated on their effects and allowed to provide written and oral comments.** Across demographic and partisan lines, overwhelming majorities support such notifications.
- **When it comes to water policy, a majority, 55%, want to prioritize clean, sustainable drinking water.** Women and young voters feel this way particularly strongly, with 65% of women and 66% of those under 35 choosing this as their top priority on water policy.
- **Most voters also favor increased regulation on the agricultural industry to protect public health and the environment, even if it increases the cost of food.** Confronted with these tradeoffs, 53% support more regulation, while 39% oppose. Support is particularly strong among Latinx voters: 59% support more regulation, including 40% who strongly support.
- **69% support and 28% oppose stricter rules on pesticides.** Voters were again introduced to both sides of the argument: the environmental and public health impacts of pesticides, as well as their benefits to farms' efficiency as well as lower food prices.
- **71% of voters support a fracking ban in California, while 20% oppose; most supporters want the ban to take effect before 2024.** When informed that lawmakers are considering a ban that would take effect in 2024, 44% say it should be banned sooner than that, while 17% believe that 2024 is the right time for it to take effect. 11% think fracking should be banned, but think it should take effect later than 2024. Just 20% oppose a ban on fracking.
- **Voters overwhelmingly want the state to prioritize environmental protections and clean energy over oil and gas production.** Asked what the state should prioritize on upcoming decisions about California's public lands, 53% choose protections for things like clean air, water, and habitats, and 31% say the state should prioritize maximizing the use of public land for clean energy production. Just 16% say the state's priority should be maximizing the use of public land for oil and gas drilling. Among voters under 35, 4% say oil and gas production should be prioritized.

Change Research surveyed 318 registered voters in California's 13th Assembly District from October 9-October 13. The survey was conducted online, using Change Research's Dynamic Online Sampling Engine. Post-stratification was done on age, gender, race, education, and 2016 presidential vote.