



TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Joel Benenson
DATE: January 20th, 2010
RE: Public opinion on the energy and climate bill

Methodology

- The Benenson Strategy Group conducted 800 interviews with likely 2010 voters in 16 battleground states (AK, AR, IN, ME, MI, MO, MT, NC, NV, ND, NH, OH, PA, SD, VA, WV). All interviews were conducted from January 6-10, 2010, by telephone using a sample of registered voters.
- The total data set has a margin of error of ± 3.5% at the 95% confidence level, and it is larger among subgroups.

Key Findings

- As 2010 begins, public support for an energy and climate bill remains strong. Overall, 58% of likely 2010 voters support the bill and just 37% oppose it when told the following:

This past summer, the U.S. House of Representatives passed an energy bill that limits pollution and greenhouse gas emissions through what's been called a Cap and Trade plan and also invests in clean, renewable energy sources in America. Soon, the Senate will debate it.

- Democrats are strongly united in support of the bill, while Republicans are opposed but far less united. Support among Independents for the bill outweighs opposition by 11 points.

Support/Oppose for Energy Bill that Contains Cap and Trade

	Total	Dem	Rep	Indep
Support	58	82	37	52
Oppose	37	15	58	41

- The energy and climate bill also provides supporters with a strong issue going into the 2010 elections:
 - ✓ 56% would be more likely to re-elect their Senator if he or she voted *in favor* of the bill (just 35% would be less likely to re-elect).
 - ✓ 50% would be less likely to re-elect their Senator if he or she voted *against* the bill (just 39% would be more likely).

- With the right messaging, support for the bill holds even after harsh opposition attacks. After the following argumentation, support for the bill was at 57% support and 39% oppose.

<Some people> say "Cap and Trade" is nothing more than a "job killing energy tax" that represents the biggest tax increase in American history – and that it will destroy jobs and raise middle class families' energy bills by almost two thousand dollars. They say even Obama admits that families' energy bills would "skyrocket." First the bailouts, then health care... now Congress wants another \$660 billion of taxpayers' hard-earned money for another big wasteful Washington program that will kill jobs across the country.

<Other people> say opponents of this bill – oil companies and corporate lobbyists – have fought energy reform for decades to protect their profits. They've made America more dependent on oil from hostile nations – hurting our economy, helping our enemies, and putting our national security at risk. We spend a billion dollars a day on foreign oil and this bill will cut that figure in half – creating secure, clean energy sources made right here in America instead of sending that money overseas to countries that support and finance terrorists groups.

- The public's desire to regulate carbon polluters is so strong that, by large margins, voters believe the EPA should act if Congress doesn't.
 - ✓ 59% of voters agree and just 39% disagree that "if Congress doesn't pass this energy bill, the Environmental Protection Agency should take action to regulate carbon polluters."
 - ✓ Among Independents, support for EPA action is even stronger: 61% agree and only 37% disagree.

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