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Poll: Coloradans Support Carbon Emissions Reduction Fee

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Group will try to put initiative on the 2008 ballot that would raise energy costs but reduce Colorado emissions. A poll shows strong voter support for the idea.

By a wide margin, Coloradans say they are willing to spend an extra \$3.50 a month in energy costs to help reduce greenhouse gas pollution emitted in the state, according to a public opinion poll completed recently by the group [Clean Energy Progress](#).

According to the poll, 62 percent of the state's voters would approve of a measure that adds \$3.50 a month in energy costs, with the money raised funding renewable energy and energy efficiency projects around the state.

Clean Energy Progress on Monday submitted a ballot measure to the Colorado Legislative Council staff for review. According to ballot initiative rules of thumb, an initiative that polls above 60 percent in the early going - that is, before the opposition has a chance to beat on it - has a pretty good chance of passing. The groups hopes to place the measure on the 2008 general election ballot.

The support for an energy fee is very broad. The poll first asked whether the respondent believed that global warming was happening now, and whether Colorado should attempt to reduce its greenhouse gas contributions. A whopping 78 percent and 76 percent respectively agree with the assertion. When it came to whether humans were causing the warming, the agreement was less - 66 percent - but still very strong.

The poll looked at the opinions of "likely voters" across the state. Seventy-six percent agreed with the statement: "It is very important for Colorado to reduce global warming pollution in the state." Agreement was highest among women ages 18-24 (87 percent agreed) and lowest among men ages 50-64. But even this latter group agreed with the statement 64 percent of the time.

The only group identified in the poll in which a majority disagreed with the statement was Republican men, 50 percent of whom disagreed and 45 percent agreed. But even among Republicans, concern about climate change was pronounced. Among Republican men aged 18-49, fully 68 percent agreed that Colorado should reduce greenhouse pollution, and only 29 percent disagreed.

When voters were asked if they were willing to pay a fee to reduce warming pollution, the consensus was not as strong, but there was still considerable agreement. Sixty-two percent of those polled thought the state should institute a fee to fund renewables and energy efficiency. Only 35 percent opposed it. Again the agreement was strongest among women and Democrats, but the idea did well with independents, too. Republican men opposed the idea by about two to one,

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however.

"Colorado voters understand that renewable energy is key to our state's economic future and our energy security," Tom McKinnon, a member of the Clean Energy Progress steering committee, said of the results. "The voters indicated that they are ready to put some real resources behind making the state a true leader in renewable energy."

Colorado Energy Progress is a group formed specifically to explore options for market-based carbon reductions in Colorado. Until recently, the group was known as the Colorado Carbon Reduction Initiative.

The poll was conducted by Denver-based Research for Change of 500 likely voters around Colorado. It was conducted on December 3-5, 2007, and has a margin of error of +/- 4.4 percent.

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