



TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Andrew Baumann, Erin Farrell, and Christopher Stauffer, Global Strategy Group
DATE: March 14th, 2023
RE: New nationwide polling data reveals strong support for the EPA implementing stricter daily and annual soot standards

RESEARCH SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

A new national survey conducted by Global Strategy Group for the American Lung Association reveals that voters overwhelmingly support the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) implementing stricter limits on air pollution. It's no surprise, then, that voters overwhelmingly want to see the EPA strengthen daily and annual soot standards to meet the most protective standards that have been recommended by its scientific advisors.

Voters not only clearly see the health and environmental benefits that would come from such standards, but they also reject the notion that stricter standards will damage the economy or drive up the cost of living.

Moreover, even after being exposed to a simulated debate (that included arguments from opponents that current standards are strict enough and that stricter standards would supposedly hurt the economy), voters continue to support stricter soot standards by a more than two-to-one margin with support coming from across the political and demographic spectrum.

Voters overwhelmingly support stronger clean air laws – including stricter soot standards.

Voters view environmental protections favorably and want to see stronger clean air standards, generally. Majorities view the Clean Air Act (65% favorable/14% unfavorable) and the EPA (65%/20%) favorably. Moreover, 72% of voters nationwide support “the EPA updating standards with stricter limits on air pollution, generally.” This support is bipartisan: 91% of Democrats, 68% of independents, and 53% of Republicans are in favor of stricter limits on air pollution.

Voters want the EPA to listen to its scientific advisors and implement even stricter limits on particulate matter. When we asked voters if they support or oppose stricter limits on “fine particles, also called soot” on BOTH an annual and daily basis (see table below for the full language of the question), 74% support the stricter standards.

When we dug into the issue further, informing them that the EPA had decided to set new limits that are stricter than current standards but not as strict as the most protective standards recommended by its scientific advisors, a strong 65% majority agree that the EPA should “reconsider its decision and place stricter standards that align with the strong standards that were recommended by the scientific advisors” (full language also below).

- More than four in five moms support the EPA placing stricter limits on soot.

- Majorities of both independents and Republicans want the EPA to set stricter limits on soot – even 50% of very conservative Republicans support this idea.
- When asked if they agree or disagree whether the EPA should set stricter standards than they have in accordance with the advice of scientific advisors, majorities of Democrats and independents and a plurality of Republicans – including, again, even very conservative Republicans – agree with the statement.

| <i>Initial Asks:</i> | The Environmental Protection Agency is considering a proposal to update air pollution standards by placing stricter limits on the amount of fine particles, also called "soot," that power plants, oil refineries, and other industrial facilities can release. These standards would limit pollution on an average annual basis and a daily basis. Do you support or oppose the EPA setting stricter limits on fine particles, also called "soot"? | | | The EPA decided to set new limits on soot that are stricter than current standards but not as strict as the most protective standards recommended by the scientific advisors. Knowing this, please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statement: <i>The Environmental Protection Agency should reconsider its decision and place stricter limits on soot that align with the stronger standards that were recommended by the scientific advisors.</i> | | |
|---------------------------|---|--------|-------------|--|----------|-----------|
| | Support | Oppose | Net Support | Agree | Disagree | Net Agree |
| <i>Overall</i> | 74 | 16 | +58 | 65 | 20 | +45 |
| <i>Democrats</i> | 90 | 5 | +85 | 81 | 9 | +72 |
| <i>Independents</i> | 71 | 15 | +56 | 62 | 19 | +43 |
| <i>Republicans</i> | 57 | 29 | +28 | 48 | 32 | +16 |
| <i>Liberal Dem.</i> | 96 | 3 | +93 | 86 | 8 | +78 |
| <i>Non-liberal Dem.</i> | 82 | 7 | +75 | 75 | 11 | +64 |
| <i>Not very cons. GOP</i> | 61 | 23 | +38 | 51 | 28 | +23 |
| <i>Very cons. GOP</i> | 50 | 39 | +11 | 42 | 39 | +3 |
| <i>White</i> | 73 | 19 | +54 | 62 | 22 | +40 |
| <i>Black</i> | 72 | 6 | +66 | 65 | 13 | +52 |
| <i>Hispanic</i> | 75 | 17 | +58 | 73 | 19 | +54 |
| <i>Moms</i> | 81 | 12 | +69 | 70 | 15 | +55 |
| <i>Dads</i> | 67 | 30 | +37 | 67 | 18 | +49 |
| <i>Non-parents</i> | 74 | 15 | +59 | 64 | 21 | +43 |

Support is high because voters overwhelmingly see health benefits that easily outweigh any (limited) economic concerns.

Voters overwhelmingly believe stricter soot standards would have positive impacts on the "quality of the air we breathe," "future generations of Americans," and the "health of families like yours." As the table below shows, about three quarters of voters believe that stricter standards would have a positive impact on each of these items.

Strong majorities also reject the idea that stricter soot standards would have a negative impact on the economy or costs. While voters don't expect stricter soot standards to have the same level of positive impact on the economy or the cost of living, they also don't believe stronger standards would have a negative impact. In fact, 69% of voters reject the idea that that stronger standards would have a negative impact on the economy and 68% reject the idea that they would have a negative impact on the cost of living.

| If the Environmental Protection Agency were to set stricter limits on fine particles, also called "soot," what impact do you think it would have on the following things? Please indicate whether you think it would have a positive impact, negative impact, or no impact on each. | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|------------------------|------------------------|
| | Positive | Negative | No impact/ not sure | Net positive impact |
| The quality of the air we breathe | 77 | 8 | 15 | +69 |
| Future generations of Americans | 74 | 11 | 16 | +63 |
| The health of families like yours | 73 | 8 | 19 | +65 |
| The American economy | 38 | 31 | 31 | +7 |
| The cost of living for families like yours | 29 | 32 | 39 | -3 |

When forced to choose between health benefits and costs, voters prioritize health. To dig into this a bit more, we presented voters with a choice between the following two statements:

- *We need stricter limits on the fine particles also called "soot" because they will prevent thousands of premature deaths and over 1 million asthma attacks every year.*
- *We can't afford stricter limits on the fine particles also called "soot" because they will drive up energy prices and kill American jobs.*

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of voters nationwide say they agree more with the first statement vs. just 35% who agree more with the second.

Similarly, we presented voters with a choice between these two statements:

- *The EPA should listen to scientists and health experts who say that we need even stronger limits on the fine particles also called "soot".*
- *The EPA shouldn't let government scientists dictate a policy that will drive up energy prices and kill American jobs.*

65% agree more with the first statement vs. just 35% who agree more with the second (the same margin as with the previous statement pair).

Support for stricter soot standards remains strong after a simulated debate.

After voters are exposed to a balanced debate between a statement from supporters (focused on the health benefits of strengthening standards) and an opponents' statement (that argues that current standards are strict enough and that stronger standards would lead to higher energy costs and jobs losses)¹, **a strong majority continues to support the EPA setting stricter limits on soot** (63% total support, 34% strongly support nationwide). Similarly, 63% agree the EPA should reconsider its decision and place stricter limits on both

¹ Statements from simulated debate are included in the Appendix.

annual and daily soot standards (30% strongly agree).

This represents a slight decline from our initial ask as some more conservative voters move to their corner after hearing familiar opposition messaging. After the simulated debate, voters still support stricter standards (on both of the metrics below). Moreover, after the debate, Democrats and independents remain overwhelmingly in support, while Republicans are split nearly evenly.

| | ...Do you support or oppose the EPA setting stricter limits on fine particles, also called "soot"? | | Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statement: <i>The Environmental Protection Agency should reconsider its decision and place stricter limits on soot that align with the stronger standards that were recommended by the scientific advisors.</i> | |
|---------------------|--|----------------|--|----------------|
| | Pre-Messaging | Post-Messaging | Pre-Messaging | Post-Messaging |
| | Net Support/Agree | | | |
| <i>Overall</i> | +58 | +38 | +45 | +38 |
| <i>Democrats</i> | +85 | +76 | +72 | +67 |
| <i>Independents</i> | +56 | +37 | +43 | +30 |
| <i>Republicans</i> | +28 | -4 | +16 | +8 |

ABOUT THE POLL

Global Strategy Group conducted an online survey of 1,000 registered voters nationwide between February 27 and March 5, 2023. The survey had a confidence interval of +/- 3.1%. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic, demographic, and political divisions among registered voters are properly represented.

APPENDIX

Simulated debate:

Supporters of stricter limits on the fine particles also called "soot" say: Studies indicate that soot is one of the most dangerous and deadly forms of pollution, especially for children. Doctors say that soot causes heart and lung damage and can lead to strokes, heart attacks, cancer, and premature death. Independent scientists say that setting stronger limits on soot pollution will prevent tens of thousands of premature deaths and over 1 million asthma attacks every year. And economists say that these commonsense limits on soot pollution would provide tens of billions of dollars in public health benefits, prevent hundreds of thousands of lost workdays due to illness, and encourage innovation and investment in new technologies.

Opponents of stricter limits on the fine particles also called "soot" say: Given high levels of inflation and rising energy prices, now is the worst time for the EPA to enact costly regulations that will kill jobs and increase energy costs. Current standards on soot are strong and working well, but these new regulations are unrealistic and unattainable. They will lead to higher energy costs for American families and businesses and essentially close areas of the country to new or expanded manufacturing businesses, resulting in American jobs being shipped overseas. The EPA shouldn't be increasing energy prices or creating new barriers to job creation when our country is struggling with inflation and on the verge of recession.