



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

RESEARCH SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

A new survey conducted by Global Strategy Group for the American Lung Association reveals that Pennsylvania voters overwhelmingly support the Environmental Protection Agency 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.

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

Keystone State voters view environmental protections favorably and want to see stronger clean air standards, generally. Majorities view the Clean Air Act (67% favorable/16% unfavorable) and the EPA (60%/26%) favorably. Moreover, 74% of Pennsylvania voters support “the EPA updating standards with stricter limits on air pollution, generally.” This support is bipartisan: 85% of Democrats and 60% 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 Pennsylvania 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), 78% 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 69% 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).

- Strengthening air pollution standards through stricter limits on soot is extremely popular across partisan lines – even 68% of Republicans support this measure.¹
- A strong majority of Pennsylvania voters also agree that the EPA should reconsider its soot emission limits and strengthen them to be more in line with what the scientific advisors had recommended.

<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>	78	15	+63	69	21	+48
<i>Democrats</i>	90	8	+82	79	11	+68
<i>Republicans</i>	68	22	+46	53	34	+19

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

Pennsylvania voters overwhelmingly believe stricter 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, more than 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, 66% of Pennsylvania voters reject the idea that that stronger standards would have a negative impact on the economy and 60% 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	83	6	11	+77
The health of families like yours	80	6	14	+74
Future generations of Americans	78	9	13	+69
The American economy	38	34	28	+4
The cost of living for families like yours	31	41	29	-10

When forced to choose between health benefits and costs, voters prioritize health. To dig

¹ We did not have a sufficient sample size in this oversample to look at registered independents with confidence.

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.*

Two-thirds (66%) of Pennsylvania voters say they agree more with the first statement vs. just 34% 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.*

66% of Pennsylvania voters agree more with the first statement vs. just 34% who agree more with the second (the same margin as with the previous statement).

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 (arguing that current standards are strict enough and that stronger standards would lead to higher energy costs and jobs losses)², **a strong majority continues to support the EPA setting stricter limits on soot** (68% total support). Similarly, 65% agree the EPA should reconsider its decision and place stricter limits on both annual and daily soot standards in accordance with the advice of scientific advisors (27% strongly agree).

This represents a slight decline from our initial ask as some Republicans move to their corner after hearing familiar opposition messaging. After the simulated debate, voters still support stricter standards (on both of the metrics below) by a more than two-to-one margin. Moreover, after the debate Democrats remain overwhelmingly in support, while Republicans still support the measures, albeit by a slimmer margin.

	<p>...Do you support or oppose the EPA setting stricter limits on fine particles, also called “soot”?</p>	<p>Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statement:</p> <p><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</i></p>
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² Statements from simulated debate are included in the Appendix.

				<i>advisors.</i>	
Net Support/Agree					
	Pre-Messaging	Post-Messaging		Pre-Messaging	Post-Messaging
<i>Overall</i>	+63	+42		+48	+39
<i>Democrats</i>	+82	+68		+68	+60
<i>Republicans</i>	+46	+14		+19	+17

ABOUT THE POLL

Global Strategy Group conducted an online national survey of 1000 registered voters plus an oversample of 300 additional registered voters in Pennsylvania between February 27 and March 5, 2023. This resulted in a total sample size of 331 registered Pennsylvania voters. The PA sample has a confidence interval of +/- 5.4%. 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.