



PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES
FROM: NEIL NEWHOUSE, *PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES*
DATE: SEPTEMBER 19, 2019
RE: SUMMARY OF UTAH CLIMATE POLL

Public Opinion Strategies recently completed an on-line survey of 250 Utahns. The survey was conducted September 12-14, 2019 and has a margin of error of $\pm 6.2\%$. The memorandum below reviews the key findings of the poll.

By a five-to-one margin, Utahns say they are more concerned about climate change than they were a year ago.

- Fully 46% of Utahns say they are more concerned now about climate change than they were a year ago, with just 9% saying they were less concerned and 42% expressing about the same level of concern as a year ago.
- A plurality across partisan and ideological lines say they are more, rather than less, concerned compared to a year ago.

More than 60% of Utahns believe that some action should be taken to address climate change.

- Sixty-one percent of Utahns believe that some action should be taken to address climate change, while 13% believe that more research is necessary, and another 20% say that the concern about climate change has been greatly exaggerated.
- Fully 42% of Republicans believe that some action should be taken, while 94% of Democrats and 59% of Independents share the same opinion.

Three-quarters of Utahns believe that the state is being impacted by climate change.

- Seventy-six percent believe that Utah is being impacted either “a great deal” or “some” by climate change, including 61% of conservatives, 66% of Republicans, 79% of Independents, and 90% of Democrats.

Fully 70% of Utahns support the Carbon Dividends climate solution.

- The solution described below won 70% across the board, including from two-thirds of Republicans and 65% of conservatives.

Business and environmental leaders are proposing a bipartisan climate solution that charges fossil fuel companies for their carbon emissions and gives all the money directly back to the American people through quarterly checks. This will cut harmful carbon emissions in half and a family of four will receive about \$2,000 per year.

- Utahns are drawn to this proposal because of their desire to address climate change, and they like the aspect of the proposal that provides quarterly checks. While some are concerned they will actually pay more for energy or need to be convinced that this will actually improve climate change, they seem willing to take a chance on a proposal that takes the first steps.

Utahns support all four pillars of the Carbon Dividends plan.

- *Charges fossil fuel companies a gradually rising fee for their carbon emissions -- 65% support / 24% oppose*
- *Gives all the money collected from the carbon emissions fee directly back to all Americans through quarterly checks – 70% / 19%*
- *Streamlines and reduces existing carbon dioxide regulations -- 74% / 11%*
- *Pushes other countries to adopt similar policies by charging foreign imports in the same way based on their carbon emissions – 69% / 21%*

Similar results were found in a separate poll of Ohioans, where 67% support the Carbon Dividends climate solution.

BOTTOM LINE

Utahns say they are more concerned than they were a year ago about the climate change issue, three-quarters say the state is being impacted by climate change and 60% say that “some action should be taken.”

The “carbon dividend” proposal wins support from fully 70% of Utahns, with significant levels of support across the board. Not surprisingly, this is a tougher sell for those on the ideological right, but the overall popularity of this proposal can help navigate that path.

For the most part, Utahns understand there’s a problem with climate change, and this data indicates they are open to a plan that begins to address the issue, cuts harmful emissions and puts money in their pockets. To assuage opponents of the plan, they need to be assured that this is really going to help the problem and that they will actually receive the promised dividend and not see it go to higher energy costs.