

# THE TARRANCE GROUP

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** JULY 12, 2013

**TO:** INSTITUTE FOR ENERGY RESEARCH

**FROM:** ED GOEAS  
NICHOLAS THOMPSON

**RE:** SURVEY FINDINGS ON ENERGY AND THE ECONOMY

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The Tarrance Group is pleased to present this summary of findings from the results of a national survey of N=800 registered voters. The survey was conducted via landline and cellular telephone by live telephone interviewers July 7-11, 2013, and the margin of error is +/- 3.5%.

### KEY FINDINGS

- New survey data from American voters shows the economy trumps all other issues in terms of what is most important, likely driven in part by voters poor views of the economy (just 25% say it is getting better).
- In thinking about a carbon tax specifically, a strong majority oppose (59%) a carbon tax, while barely more than one third (35%) of voters favor it.
- Half (50%) are less likely to vote to re-elect their Member of Congress if they support the carbon tax, while just one third (33%) are more likely.
- A majority of voters (51%) are not willing to pay any more per year for a carbon tax.

### ECONOMY TOP CONCERN TO VOTERS

- Voters remain highly concerned with the nation's economy, and pessimistic about its direction. The top two concerns to voters are the nation's economy and jobs (30%), followed by government spending and the deficit (20%). Driving this priority on the economy is negativity about how things are going – just 25% say the economy is getting better, while 38% say it is getting worse and 36% say it is staying about the same.
- When asked to name the more important priority, eight in ten (79%) say lawmakers should focus more on the economy, while just 17% say the focus should be on the environment.

## OPPOSITION TO CARBON TAX

- With voters holding negative views of the economy, they are highly opposed to a carbon tax. Just 35% favor and 59% oppose a carbon tax, with 46% of voters *strongly* opposed.

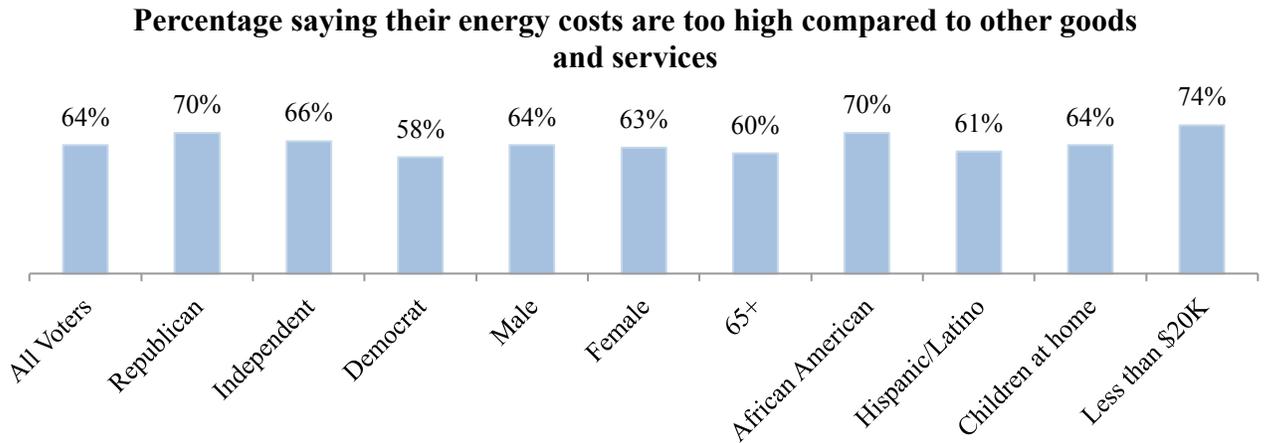
As you may know carbon dioxide emissions occur when fuels like gasoline, natural gas, and coal are used. Some people in Washington are considering a tax on these carbon dioxide emissions that would be paid by businesses of all sizes. Some people refer to this as a carbon tax. In thinking about this- would you favor or oppose a carbon tax?

	Favor	Oppose	Unsure
<b>Republican</b>	16%	80%	3%
<b>Independent</b>	29%	62%	9%
<b>Democrat</b>	54%	39%	7%
<b>Male</b>	33%	64%	3%
<b>Female</b>	37%	54%	9%
<b>18-44</b>	42%	55%	4%
<b>45-64</b>	29%	63%	7%
<b>65+</b>	31%	59%	10%
<b>White</b>	33%	62%	5%
<b>African American</b>	36%	52%	12%
<b>Hispanic</b>	47%	45%	8%

- Opposition to the carbon tax is high among low-income voters, with 58% of those earning less than \$20,000 per year opposing it. Additionally, opposition reaches 63% among middle-income voters earning between \$20-50,000 per year.
- When thinking about political implications from a carbon tax, half (50%) of voters are less likely to re-elect their member of Congress for supporting a carbon tax, while 33% are more likely. This includes 70% of Republicans, 54% of Independents, 52% of rural and suburban voters, and a majority of seniors (51%) who are less likely to re-elect their member of Congress.
- Additional questions asked in the survey reveal underlying concerns and skepticism with how a carbon tax would be used, and how it would impact Americans:
  - 58% trust Congress very little (38%) or not at all (20%) with the nation's energy situation.
  - 61% say members of Congress who support a carbon tax just want more government money to spend, while just 34% say they support the tax to improve the environment.
  - 73% say money from the carbon tax would be used to fund new government spending, while in a separate question 80% say money from a carbon tax should be used instead to pay down the federal debt.
  - 91% say companies who pay the carbon tax will just pass the increased costs on to consumers, while only 6% believe the companies will absorb the costs.

## HITTING AMERICAN POCKETBOOKS

- Any increased energy costs would come at a bad time for Americans. Two thirds (64%) say energy costs are already too high compared to other goods and services; 3% say their costs are too low and 31% say the costs are about right. This view of high energy costs is strong across multiple demographic groups:



- Voters also believe Americans have little flexibility in the amount of energy they consume, as 61% say people would still use the same amount of energy and gasoline even if costs went up. Just 38% believe people would use less energy and gasoline.
- There is also little appetite for voters to pay significantly more each year for a carbon tax. When asked to provide a dollar figure, a majority (51%) are not willing to pay a single cent. An additional 16% would pay up to \$100.

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