

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Hart Research Associates and Chesapeake Beach Consulting
DATE: August 9, 2016
RE: Findings from a Survey in States Participating in RGGI

From July 19 to 24, 2016, Hart Research (D) and Chesapeake Beach Consulting (R) conducted a telephone survey in English and Spanish among 1,209 registered voters in the nine states that participate in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI)—Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

The purpose of this survey was to understand voters' views on climate change and their state's participation in RGGI, and to gauge their reaction to the proposal to tighten RGGI's carbon pollution cap and require states to reduce their carbon emissions by five percent annually.

This memorandum reports the key findings from this survey across the nine RGGI states and also provides state-level results for five of the states: Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New York. A more detailed methodology statement is included at the end of this memo.

RGGI Regional Findings from Nine States

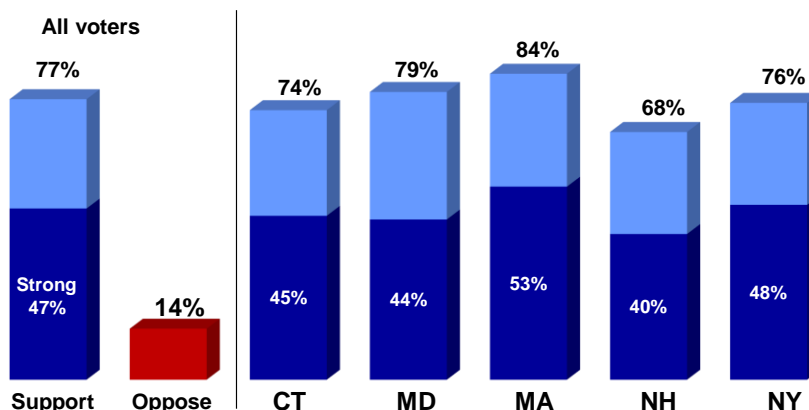
- **Three in four voters in these states say that climate change is a serious problem.** Fully 76% of voters say that they consider climate change to be a very serious (45%) or somewhat serious (31%) problem. This belief is not exclusive among younger voters—83% of voters under the age of 35 say climate change is a serious problem, but so do 74% of voters age 65 and older. More importantly, this belief crosses partisan lines, with 88% of Democrats, 76% of independents, and 54% of Republicans agreeing that climate change is a serious problem.
- **Three-quarters of voters endorse their state's participation in RGGI.** Respondents were read the following description of RGGI:

As you may know, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative is a program that nine states in the Northeast, including **[STATE]**, participate in. The program sets a cap on the amount of carbon pollution that power plants in the participating states can release, and companies that produce energy must buy credits for the carbon pollution they release. The revenue raised from selling these credits goes to things such as energy efficiency programs, development of clean and renewable energy sources, credits to help consumers pay their electric bill, and worker training for clean energy jobs. The program requires power plants in each state to decrease the amount of carbon pollution they release overall by 2.5% every year through 2020.

After hearing this description, 77% of voters say they support their state's involvement in RGGI, including 47% who *strongly* support it. By comparison, just 14% oppose it. Support is highest in Massachusetts (84%) and lowest in New Hampshire (68%), and is in the mid- to high 70s in Connecticut, Maryland, and New York.

Three in four voters across the region support their state's participation in RGGI.

Based on this description, do you support or oppose participation in this program?

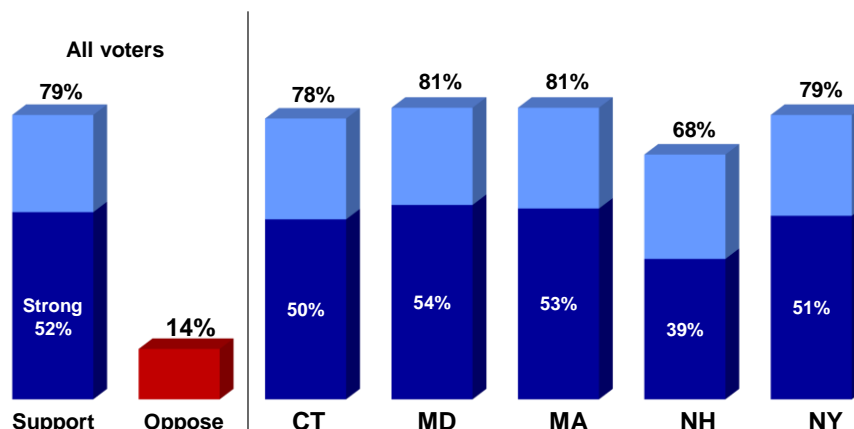


Further demonstrating the very high level of support RGGI enjoys is the fact that even voters who do not consider climate change to be a serious problem are more likely to support (48%) than oppose (40%) their state's involvement in the initiative.

- **Voters widely approve of tightening RGGI's annual carbon pollution cap.** Respondents were told that there is a proposal to require power plants in RGGI states to decrease their carbon emissions by 5% every year, and that most companies already have been meeting this limit. When asked their feelings about *requiring* companies to meet this lower cap, four in five (79%) voters say they would support this—including a majority (52%) who would *strongly* support it—and 14% would oppose it. Again, support is very high across RGGI states, and, importantly, across the partisan spectrum—90% of Democrats, 71% of independents, and 65% of Republicans support this. Even a strong majority (60%) of self-identified conservative Republicans are in favor.

Support is equally strong and broad for changing the annual carbon decrease to 5%.

Do you support or oppose this change in the program?



- **Voters envision a range of benefits from locking in a new carbon pollution cap; and while some believe it would hurt electricity prices, most do not.** We asked voters whether they thought this revised carbon cap would have a positive effect, negative effect, or no real effect in a number of areas.

	Positive Effect	Negative Effect	No Real Effect
	%	%	%
Air quality	80	4	11
People's health	79	5	12
The quality of our environment, including things such as climate change	74	5	14
Development of renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar	73	5	15
Jobs and the economy	48	16	24
The reliability of the electricity system	42	11	30
The cost of electricity	37	32	17

In every case, voters are more likely to say the change would have a positive rather than negative effect. In the cases of air quality, health, the environment, and renewable energy, overwhelming majorities say the effect would be positive.

The cost of electricity is the only area in which a notable proportion (32%) of voters say there would be a negative effect. But even on this issue, voters are still more likely to say the effect would be positive (37%); moreover, another 17% say it would have no effect on electricity prices either way. These results are driven heavily by respondents in New York, who are much more apt to say

the effect on prices will be positive (43%) than negative (28%). In other states, these two reactions are more even, though in each one nearly one in five voters says they do not expect electricity prices to be affected at all.

- **After hearing arguments in favor and in opposition to tightening the RGGI carbon cap, supporters outnumber opponents by four to one; support drops nominally.** Respondents were read the following two statements and asked how convincing they found each one to be:

SUPPORTERS SAY: This program has already set participating states on the right path. They are on track to reduce carbon pollution from power plants by 50% by 2020, which is a great start, but will still mean tens of millions of tons of this pollution being released into the air every year. We can do better. Locking in reductions in carbon pollution will result in fewer health problems and a cleaner environment in [STATE]. At the same time, the program will raise billions of dollars more to develop clean, renewable energy, create thousands of new jobs, and save consumers billions of dollars through greater energy efficiency. This is a market-based solution that has been proven to work, and can work even better going forward. **(74% say this is very or somewhat convincing.)**

OPPONENTS SAY: This program is nothing more than an energy tax on consumers. Because power companies have to buy credits, they end up passing the costs along to consumers, meaning higher electricity prices for everyone, something that hits seniors and lower-income consumers especially hard. And the program is subject to how political winds blow—New Jersey previously left the program, saying that it did not help the state reduce pollution, and there's nothing to stop more states from leaving as well. Plus this program creates bureaucracy in [STATE] that is no longer even necessary, because new rules from the federal government may require the state to reduce its carbon pollution anyway. **(54% say this is very or somewhat convincing.)**

After hearing both sides, support for reducing the RGGI carbon cap to 5% declines slightly (from 79% to 72%), while opposition increases slightly (from 14% to 18%). But the key point is that supporters still outnumber opponents by a 54-point margin (72% to 18%). Support exceeds 60% in each state. And, as was the case in the initial question about the proposal, the support crosses partisan lines—87% of Democrats, 58% of independents, and 57% of Republicans remain in favor.

The Bottom Line: Voters' support for their state's continued participation in RGGI and for tightening the program's carbon emissions standards is about as close to uniform agreement as we can get in today's politically divided environment. Of course, most of these East Coast states lean more Democratic than the country as a whole, perhaps making this level of support somewhat less surprising. But this makes the agreement *across* partisan lines so important—it is not only Democrats who support these steps, but also large majorities of Republicans and independents. Moreover, in New Hampshire, the one state with equal proportions of Democrats and Republicans, RGGI supporters still outnumber opponents by better than three to one.

In short, from the public's perspective, having their state stay in RGGI and having the initiative tighten its carbon reductions to 5% per year are "no brainers" that have cross-partisan appeal.

Individual State Findings

Connecticut

Connecticut's voters favor RGGI overwhelmingly, with three-quarters supporting the state's involvement and nearly four in five favoring tightening the annual emissions cap. They envision a range of positive effects of tightening the cap—from better air quality, to improved health, to increased development of renewables. And while about a third (35%) say it would have a negative effect on electricity costs, about half (49%) say it would have a positive effect (30%) or no real effect (19%) in this area.

Summary of Connecticut Findings

- Governor Dan Malloy's approval rating: 31% approve, 58% disapprove
- 76% see climate change as a very serious or somewhat serious problem, 20% not that much of a problem/not a problem at all
- 74% support Connecticut's involvement in RGGI (including 45% strong support), 14% oppose
- 78% support tightening the RGGI cap to 5% annual decrease in carbon emissions (including 50% strong support), 14% oppose
- Perceived effect of tightening the RGGI carbon cap on different areas:
 - ✓ Air quality: 75% positive, 2% negative, 17% no real effect
 - ✓ People's health: 72% positive, 1% negative, 19% no real effect
 - ✓ Quality of our environment, including climate change: 68% positive, 3% negative, 19% no real effect
 - ✓ The development of renewable energy, such as wind and solar: 69% positive, 4% negative, 19% no real effect
 - ✓ Jobs and the economy: 39% positive, 16% negative, 32% no real effect
 - ✓ The reliability of the electricity system: 37% positive, 8% negative, 38% no real effect
- After messaging, 67% support tightening the RGGI cap (including 40% strong support), 23% oppose

Maryland

Maryland's voters favor RGGI substantially, with four in five supporting the state's participation and backing tightening the annual emissions cap—including a majority who *strongly* support the latter. They agree with a range of positive effects of tightening the cap, including better air quality, improved health, increased development of renewables, and improved reliability of the electricity system. And while more than a third (37%) say tightening the cap would have a negative effect on electricity costs, more than half (53%) say it would have a positive effect (35%) or no real effect (18%) in this area.

Summary of Maryland Findings

- Governor Larry Hogan's approval rating: 63% approve, 20% disapprove
- 77% see climate change as a very serious or somewhat serious problem, 21% not that much of a problem/not a problem at all
- 79% support Maryland's involvement in RGGI (including 44% strong support), 13% oppose
- 81% support tightening the RGGI cap to 5% annual decrease in carbon emissions (including 54% strong support), 11% oppose
- Perceived effect of tightening the RGGI carbon cap on different areas:
 - ✓ Air quality: 84% positive, 3% negative, 11% no real effect
 - ✓ People's health: 81% positive, 4% negative, 9% no real effect
 - ✓ The development of renewable energy, such as wind and solar: 74% positive, 5% negative, 12% no real effect
 - ✓ Quality of our environment, including climate change: 73% positive, 5% negative, 13% no real effect
 - ✓ Jobs and the economy: 45% positive, 17% negative, 25% no real effect
 - ✓ The reliability of the electricity system: 44% positive, 12% negative, 30% no real effect
- After messaging, 71% support tightening the RGGI cap (including 43% strong support), 18% oppose

Massachusetts

Of the five states in which we analyzed data individually, Massachusetts voters express the highest level of support (84%) for their state's participation in RGGI. Similarly, four in five approve of tightening the annual emissions cap. The range of positive outcomes to tightening the cap that Massachusetts voters foresee include better air quality, improved health, and increased development of renewables. Though more than a third (36%) say it would have a negative effect on electricity costs, about half (51%) say it would have a positive effect (33%) or no real effect (18%) in this area.

Summary of Massachusetts Findings

- Governor Charlie Baker's approval rating: 68% approve, 13% disapprove
- 81% see climate change as a very serious or somewhat serious problem, 19% not that much of a problem/not a problem at all
- 84% support Massachusetts's involvement in RGGI (including 53% strong support), 10% oppose
- 81% support tightening the RGGI cap to 5% annual decrease in carbon emissions (including 53% strong support), 14% oppose
- Perceived effect of tightening the RGGI carbon cap on different areas:
 - ✓ People's health: 83% positive, 3% negative, 12% no real effect
 - ✓ Air quality: 79% positive, 3% negative, 14% no real effect
 - ✓ The development of renewable energy, such as wind and solar: 78% positive, 3% negative, 15% no real effect
 - ✓ Quality of our environment, including climate change: 75% positive, 5% negative, 17% no real effect
 - ✓ Jobs and the economy: 48% positive, 11% negative, 30% no real effect
 - ✓ The reliability of the electricity system: 38% positive, 8% negative, 34% no real effect
- After messaging, 75% support tightening the RGGI cap (including 43% strong support), 20% oppose

New Hampshire

More than two-thirds of New Hampshire's voters support the Granite State's involvement in RGGI, and an equal proportion favor tightening the annual emissions cap. These voters agree that tightening the cap can result in a range of positive effects, which include better air quality, improved health, increased development of renewables, and quality of the environment. And while 42% say that tightening the cap would have a negative effect on electricity costs (the highest of any of the individual states we analyzed), slightly more (48%) say it would have a positive effect (29%) or no real effect (19%) in this area.

Summary of New Hampshire Findings

- Governor Maggie Hassan's approval rating: 52% approve, 34% disapprove
- 68% see climate change as a very serious or somewhat serious problem, 30% not that much of a problem/not a problem at all
- 68% support New Hampshire involvement in RGGI (including 40% strong support), 20% oppose
- 68% support tightening the RGGI cap to 5% annual decrease in carbon emissions (including 39% strong support), 19% oppose
- Perceived effect of tightening the RGGI carbon cap on different areas:
 - ✓ Air quality: 73% positive, 6% negative, 17% no real effect
 - ✓ People's health: 70% positive, 3% negative, 21% no real effect
 - ✓ The development of renewable energy, such as wind and solar: 69% positive, 7% negative, 16% no real effect
 - ✓ Quality of our environment, including climate change: 63% positive, 3% negative, 24% no real effect
 - ✓ Jobs and the economy: 39% positive, 23% negative, 26% no real effect
 - ✓ The reliability of the electricity system: 34% positive, 12% negative, 34% no real effect
- After messaging, 61% support tightening the RGGI cap (including 36% strong support), 28% oppose

New York

Three in four New York State voters support the state's participation in RGGI, and nearly four in five support tightening the annual emissions cap. They believe tightening the cap will result in a range of positive outcomes—from better air quality, to improved health, to increased development of renewables. And a majority (52%) say it would have a positive effect on jobs and the economy, the highest of any individual state we analyzed. Additionally, a plurality (43%) say changing the cap would have a positive effect on electricity costs (also the highest), while just 28% say it would have a negative effect (the lowest of any state).

Summary of New York Findings

- Governor Andrew Cuomo's approval rating: 51% approve, 36% disapprove
- 73% see climate change as a very serious or somewhat serious problem, 26% not that much of a problem/not a problem at all
- 76% support New York's involvement in RGGI (including 48% strong support), 15% oppose
- 79% support tightening the RGGI cap to 5% annual decrease in carbon emissions (including 51% strong support), 15% oppose
- Perceived effect of tightening the RGGI carbon cap on different areas:
 - ✓ Air quality: 81% positive, 5% negative, 8% no real effect
 - ✓ People's health: 80% positive, 7% negative, 11% no real effect
 - ✓ Quality of our environment, including climate change: 76% positive, 6% negative, 12% no real effect
 - ✓ The development of renewable energy, such as wind and solar: 73% positive, 5% negative, 14% no real effect
 - ✓ Jobs and the economy: 52% positive, 17% negative, 21% no real effect
 - ✓ The reliability of the electricity system: 45% positive, 12% negative, 28% no real effect
- After messaging, 73% support tightening the RGGI cap (including 50% strong support), 17% oppose

METHODOLOGY

Interviewing was conducted from July 19 to 24, 2016, on landlines and cell phones, and was offered in both English and Spanish. A total of 1,209 registered voters across nine states were interviewed. The survey employed a quota sampling methodology wherein five of the states had approximately 200 interviews each and four states had 50 interviews each. Every sample is statistically representative of voters in that state. After interviewing, statistical weights were applied to the data to reflect each state's proper size in relation to the other states. Additional weights were applied to account for demographic inconsistencies. The number of interviews in each state is as follows:

	Unweighted Number of Respondents	Weighted Number of Respondents	Weighted Percentage of All Respondents
	#	#	%
Connecticut	200	102	8
Delaware	50	32	3
Maine	50	50	4
Maryland	203	195	16
Massachusetts	200	181	15
New Hampshire	202	44	4
New York	204	548	45
Rhode Island	50	36	3
Vermont	50	21	2

The margin of error for the full data set of 1,209 is ± 3.9 percentage points. Tolerances are higher for subgroups of this total. The margin of error in each individual state analyzed is ± 6.9 percentage points.