



TO: Interested Parties  
 FROM: Andrew Baumann and Nicole Jaconetty, Global Strategy Group  
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 RE: Coloradans Are Tuned in to Climate Change and Air Quality; Want Lawmakers to Take Further Action

A new Global Strategy Group survey of Colorado voters conducted for Conservation Colorado shows that after a summer of extreme weather and dirty air, Colorado voters are increasingly tuned in to the state’s recent poor air quality and the impact that climate change is already having on the state, as **there has been an eight-point increase in the percent of Colorado voters who strongly agree that climate change is already having a serious impact on Colorado** since January.

As a result, nearly three-quarters of Colorado voters believe that it’s important for the state to meet the carbon emissions targets that it set in 2019, **by a more than two-to-one margin (65% to 31%), Colorado voters want to see their own state legislator take strong action this year to combat climate change**, and by a similar margin, Colorado voters say that state lawmakers have not yet done enough to combat climate change.

Perhaps even more important, the survey shows that climate is an issue that will cause Coloradans to change their vote, which makes it a potential political winner for Democrats who support strong climate action, not only in the Denver Metro area but throughout the rest of the state as well.

Meanwhile, Colorado voters also believe by a two-to-one margin that the state government should do more to ensure that the oil and gas industry is meeting their pollution targets and cleaning up their pollution, and by a **three-to-one margin that oil and gas companies should be required to pay more to clean up their pollution.**

## KEY FINDINGS

**Coloradans are increasingly concerned about climate change and air quality.** Colorado voters are tuned in to the impacts of climate change and acutely aware of the impact that climate change, pollution, and fires have had on the state’s air quality. Overwhelming majorities of Colorado voters agree that the air quality in Colorado this summer was the worst it’s ever been, that climate change is already having a serious impact on the state, and that if we allow climate change to go unchecked, it will be a crisis that dominates our kids’ lives. **And there has been a significant shift in the intensity of these beliefs over the course of this year**, as 47% now strongly agree that climate change is already having a serious impact on Colorado, up eight points from when we asked this question in January. On all three of these questions, registered unaffiliateds side overwhelmingly with Democrats in agreeing.

## STATEMENTS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AND AIR QUALITY

	% Agree	% Disagree	Total	NET Agree		
				Dem	Unaf.	Rep
The air quality in Colorado this summer has been worse than ever before.	77	17	+60	+79	+64	+33
If we fail to act, climate change will be a crisis that dominates life for our kids.	67	29	+38	+80	+43	-16
Climate change is already having a serious impact on Colorado.	66	29	+37	+77	+47	-26

Colorado voters believe that it's important for the state to meet its carbon emissions target and think the state should do more to reduce carbon and other emissions. Given these findings, it's no surprise that Colorado voters strongly support efforts to reduce emissions. When asked in an open-ended manner what would help improve Colorado's air quality the most, the most frequent response focused on reducing emissions, particularly from vehicles (ahead of getting control of wildfires). To help achieve such a reduction in emissions from vehicles, a 66% to 27% majority of Colorado voters agree that "The Colorado Department of Transportation should implement policies that would encourage more use of walking, biking, and mass transit."

### IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT WOULD HELP IMPROVE COLORADO'S AIR QUALITY THE MOST?



Moreover, 73% of Colorado voters believe that it's important for the state to meet the carbon emission targets that it set in 2019, including 50% of voters who believe it is very important, and with no difference when the question was framed as reducing emissions by at least 90% by 2050 or at least 50% by 2030. About three quarters of unaffiliateds and even half of Republicans join nearly all Democrats in saying that it is important for the state to meet these targets.

### How important is it that the state meet its target of reducing the carbon emissions that cause climate change by at least (90% by 2050)/(50% by 2030)?

	90 by 50	50 by 30	Total	Combined		
				Dem	Unaf.	Rep
% Important	72	74	73	92	76	48

More specifically, a strong majority of Colorado voters say that they want to see their legislator support STRONG (emphasis added) action this year to both reduce air pollution and to combat climate change. And even in the wake of the action taken by the state legislature in this past session, Colorado voters still believe that their lawmakers need to do more, with 63% of voters saying state lawmakers need to do more vs. just 35% who say that they've done enough.

### STATEMENTS ABOUT POLITICAL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

	% Agree	% Disagree	Total	NET Agree		
				Dem	Unaf.	Rep
I want to see my state legislator support strong action this year to reduce air pollution.	71	26	+45	+81	+53	-10
I want to see my state legislator support strong action this year to combat climate change.	65	31	+34	+78	+38	-25
	% More	% Enough	Total	NET More		
Colorado lawmakers (need to do more)/(have done enough) to combat climate change.	63	35	+28	+74	+35	-34

**Coloradans want to see regulators enforce stricter limits on carbon emissions.** By a 63% to 33% margin, Colorado voters support “Colorado regulators enforcing stricter limits on the carbon emissions that cause climate change.” This includes sizeable majorities of Democrats and unaffiliateds, white voters, and Latinos.

### SUPPORT FOR ENFORCING STRICTER LIMITS ON CARBON EMISSIONS

	Overall	Dem.	Unaf.	Rep	Latino
% Support	63	85	65	36	66
% Oppose	33	13	32	60	28
<i>NET Support</i>	<i>+30</i>	<i>+72</i>	<i>+33</i>	<i>-24</i>	<i>+38</i>

**Taking stronger action to combat climate change is a political winner for Democrats.** Voters not only want to see strong climate action, but they are ready to vote on it, and this makes climate action a winning political issue for Democrats who support it. “Lawmakers who support strong action to combat climate change” are viewed favorably by an overwhelming 64% to 27% majority of voters, with 43% viewing such lawmakers very favorably – a number that is up five points since January.

Perhaps more important, when we reframe the generic ballot as a choice between a “Democrat who supports enforcing stricter limits on the carbon emissions that cause climate change” and a “Republican who opposes enforcing stricter limits on the carbon emissions that cause climate change,” the Democrat wins by a 16-point margin – a net increase of 9 points from the straight generic ballot that we asked at the beginning of the survey (43% Democrat/36% Republican for a +7 margin). This indicates that for many voters, this issue can overcome partisanship to shift people’s vote. And, as the table below shows, Democrats make the most gains among voters on the center-right and actually make bigger gains outside of the Denver Metro area than inside it.

### LEGISLATIVE VOTE WITH CLIMATE ACTION

	Overall	Dem.	Unaf.	Rep	Denver Metro	Rest of State
Democrat who supports stricter limits	52	82	55	14	59	46
Republican who opposes stricter limits	36	13	28	77	29	43
<i>NET Dem</i>	<i>+16</i>	<i>+69</i>	<i>+27</i>	<i>-63</i>	<i>+30</i>	<i>+3</i>
<i>NET Generic Democrat</i>	<i>+7</i>	<i>+68</i>	<i>+14</i>	<i>-74</i>	<i>+22</i>	<i>-8</i>
<i>Total Lift vs. Straight Generic Ballot</i>	<i>+9</i>	<i>+1</i>	<i>+13</i>	<i>+11</i>	<i>+8</i>	<i>+11</i>

**Strong majorities of Colorado voters believe the oil and gas industry needs to be held accountable.** Nearly three quarters of Colorado voters believe that “oil and gas companies should be required to pay more to clean up their pollution so that taxpayers don’t get stuck with the bill.” Moreover, 60% of voters agree that “the state government should do more to ensure that the oil and gas industry is meeting their pollution reduction targets,” while only 37% believe the oil and gas industry is already regulated enough. Again, here, unaffiliated voters side even more strongly with the argument that the state government should do more.

## STATEMENTS ABOUT GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF OIL AND GAS

	% More	% Enough	Total	NET Agree		
				Dem	Unaf.	Rep
(The state government should do more)/(We don't need further state action) to ensure that the oil and gas industry is meeting their pollution reduction targets and cleaning up their pollution.	60	37	+23	+67	+31	-41
	% Agree	% Disagree	Total	NET More		
	Dem	Unaf.	Rep			
Oil and gas companies should be required to pay more to clean up their pollution so that taxpayers don't get stuck with the bill.	72	23	+49	+82	+63	-14

### ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

*Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of 800 registered voters in Colorado, plus an oversample of 100 registered Latino voters (for a total of 211 Latino voters) between August 30 and September 8, 2021. The survey was conducted over the phone and online, with voters chosen at random from the voter file, and with respondents who were recruited from multiple opt-in online panel vendors. Respondents were verified against a voter file, and special care was taken to ensure the demographic composition of our sample matched that of Colorado's registered voter population across a variety of demographic variables including party registration, race, gender, age, education, region, and population density.*