



## New Englanders Remain Highly Concerned about Climate Change

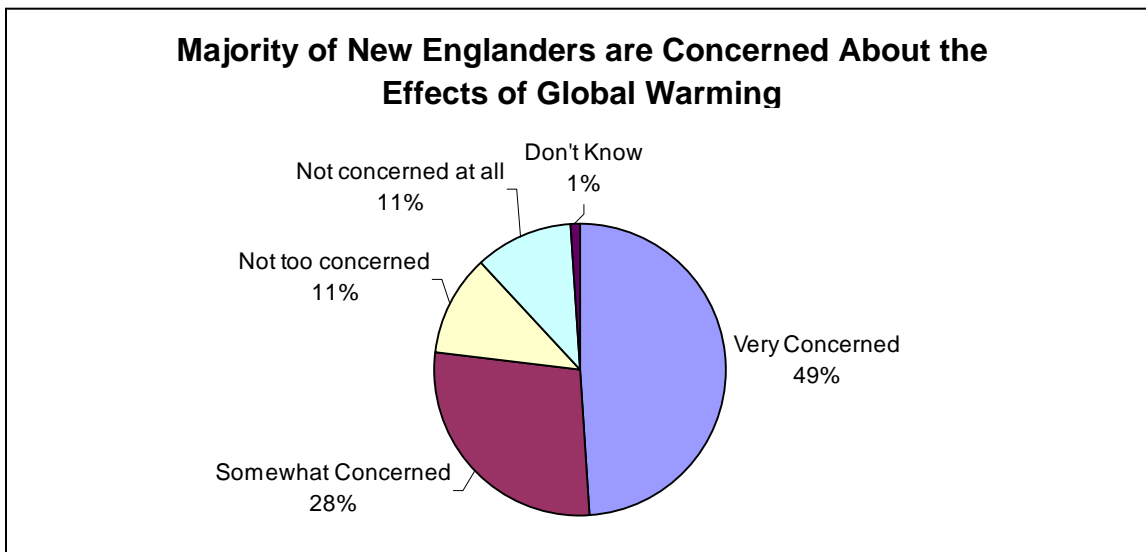
A survey conducted by Opinion Dynamics for the New England Energy Alliance found New Englanders continue to be overwhelmingly concerned about the effects of global warming. And, despite the economic recession, are willing to match their wallets with their convictions. Interestingly, a majority are agreeable to pay more for gasoline and electricity to reduce carbon emissions – which would help mitigate the threat of climate change. This support, however, has failed to gain political traction in the region’s state governments.

One caveat to the survey results bears highlighting. Specifically, gasoline prices averaged around \$1.84 per gallon during the survey period (mid-January) – lower than today’s average of about \$2.45 per gallon. It’s certainly possible that the following support could be weaker. Nevertheless, the level of concern of New Englanders about this issue is apparent.

### 77% say they are concerned – which is higher than the national average

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of New Englanders are at least somewhat concerned about the effects of climate change – with 49% being very concerned. In comparison, a recent Rasmussen survey found that 64% of Americans think global warming is at least a somewhat serious problem, with 41% saying it is very serious.

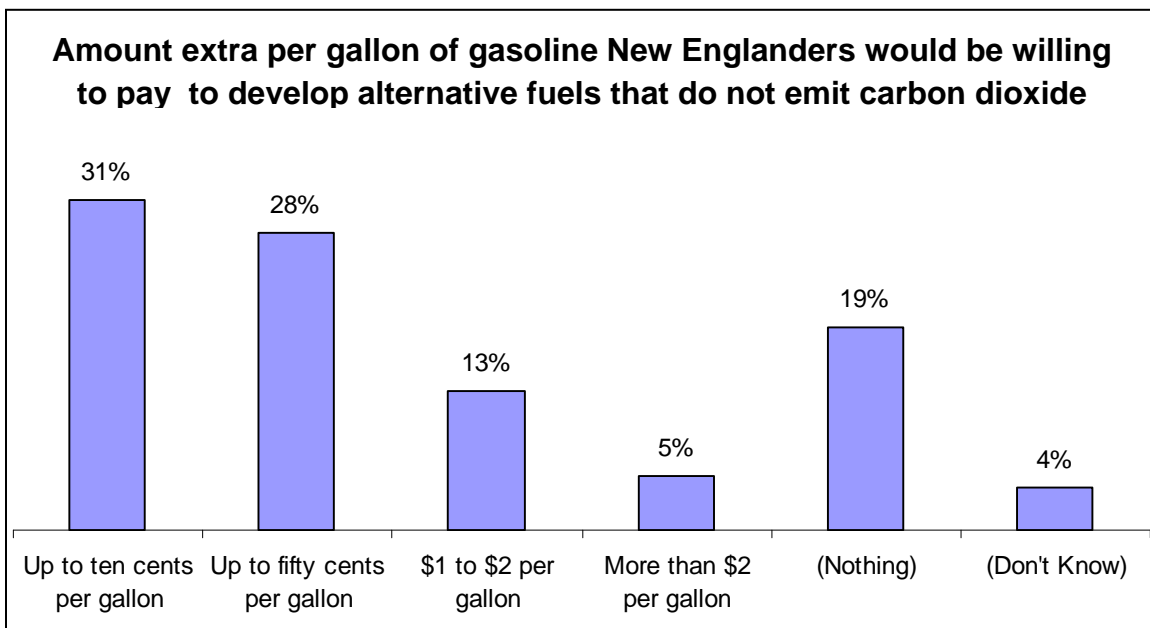
A very significant gender gap exists on this issue – with 52% of females surveyed in New England very concerned about the effects of global warming compared to just 38% of men. In addition, differences of opinion varied by political party affiliation. Democrats appear more concerned, with 57% being “extremely concerned”, compared to 44% of Independents and just 23% of GOP voters.





## **75% are willing to pay more for gasoline to develop alternative fuels or to subsidize new technologies to make them competitive with fossil fuels**

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of New Englanders surveyed said they are willing to pay up to ten cents more per gallon of gasoline to support government efforts to develop alternative fuels that do not emit carbon dioxide. Based on the average price of gasoline during the survey period and the average number of miles travelled, this is equivalent to approximately \$5 more per person per month. Interestingly, almost half (46%) said they would be willing to pay up to fifty cents more per gallon (about \$25 more per month). On this point, there is no gender gap, as both men and women indicated they were equally willing to pay more per gallon to help mitigate global climate change.



A similar percentage (73%) of New Englanders said they'd be at least somewhat willing to support federal tax subsidies for new energy technologies to make them more cost competitive with fossil fuel technologies.

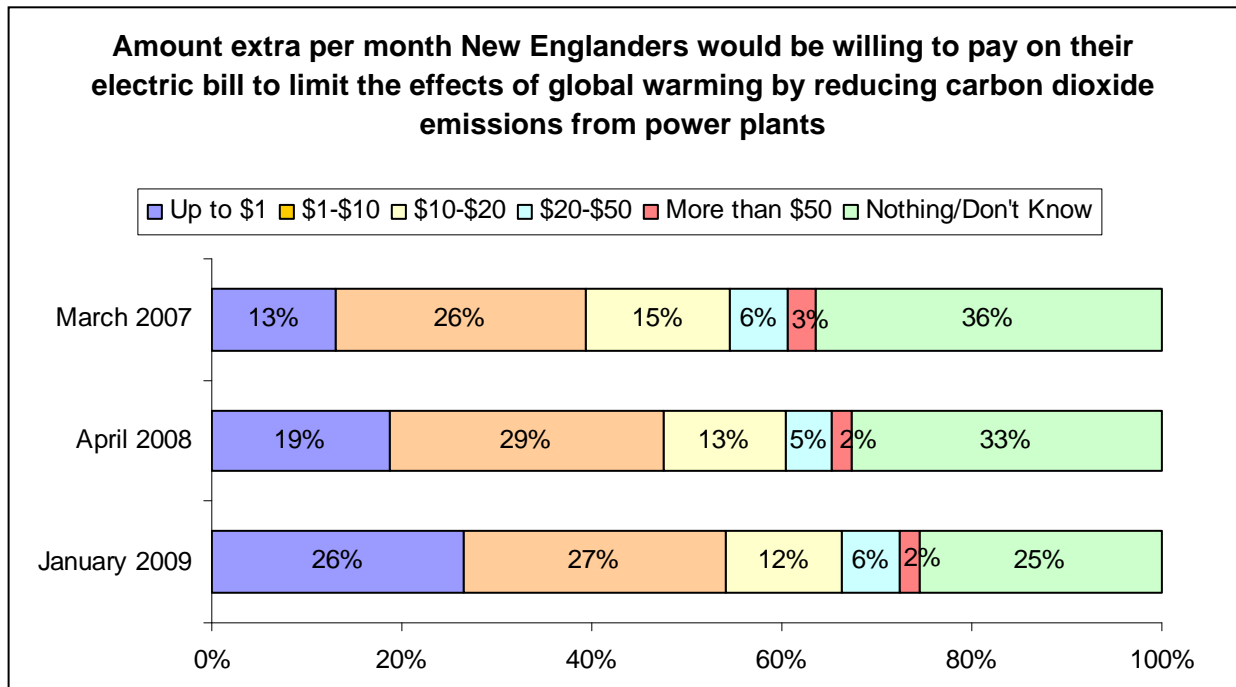
## **73% willing to pay more for electricity to reduce emissions from power plants**

Seventy-three percent (73%) of New Englanders said they'd be willing to pay up to \$1 more per month for electricity to support utility and government efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants.

As with the case for gasoline above, almost half (47%) said they'd be willing to spend even more – a higher percentage than in previous years. These findings are particularly compelling given



that New England’s electricity rates are already about 60% higher than the national average. Men and women were equally in favor of spending more to mitigate global warming.



## Assigned expenditure of revenue drives support for fossil fuel tax increases

In a separate line of questioning, New Englanders were asked about a proposal to make fossil fuels permanently more expensive by implementing a 50 cent per gallon tax on gasoline (which would require spending about \$25 more per month based on average mileage rates) and increasing the average electricity bill by \$20 per month (about 20% more per month based on average residential electricity consumption).

- 49% said they’d be somewhat willing to pay these taxes to make alternative energy more viable;
- 69% would be somewhat willing to pay if the tax revenues were to be used to fund needed social programs and to achieve a balanced federal budget; and
- 76% would be somewhat willing to pay if the tax revenues were directed to research and development of alternative sources of energy.



## **New Englanders favor a market-based approach to emissions reduction (such as cap-and-trade) rather than government mandates**

Less than a third favor government mandates to limit greenhouse gas emissions from electricity generating plants through the imposition of taxes and increasingly tougher mandates that a generating plant would have to comply with or face shutdown. Instead, the majority of New Englanders support a market-based approach (similar to a cap-and-trade program) that uses profit as a motive for companies to invent, improve, or acquire a way to cost-effectively and flexibly reduce their emissions. This type of approach has been successfully used since the early 1990s to reduce acid rain-causing emissions from electricity generating plants.

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The annual telephone survey was performed by Opinion Dynamics Corp for the New England Energy Alliance in January 2009 and included 600 registered voters proportionately distributed throughout New England. The margin of error is +/-4%. The complete results on a variety of energy issues are available at [www.newenglandenergyalliance.org](http://www.newenglandenergyalliance.org).

**The New England Energy Alliance** is a coalition of energy providers and trade organizations that advocates for action to ensure the availability, reliability, and affordability of future energy supplies.