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Opinion Dynamics Survey Reveals New Englanders' Preferences and Concerns on Energy Issues

Including climate change, energy prices, new supplies, industry competition

Survey results released today by the New England Energy Alliance (NEEA) finds that New Englanders continue to be concerned about economic issues as well as the effects of global warming. In addition, support has increased even more, from an already high level, for maintaining competition in the electricity industry -- which was introduced a decade ago in all the New England states, except Vermont.

Compared to last year, the survey also revealed a substantial increase in support for market-based approaches to addressing global warming and pursuing new energy supplies, rather than through more government programs and mandates.

New Englanders also have strong opinions on the types of energy facilities they'd like see built in the region -- with an increase in support for nuclear energy plants, continued strong endorsement of wind energy, solid majority backing of both new LNG facilities and transmission lines, and split support for clean coal facilities.

The survey revealed five major findings:

Economic concerns continue to dominate. Not surprisingly, three-quarters of the respondents identified the economy as the single most important issue facing the region. While significant, this is down almost ten percentage points from a year ago. On the other hand

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increased. Almost half identified high costs as the single most important energy-related issue facing the region with an overwhelmingly 83% concerned about impacts on family budgets and small businesses. Three-quarters are concerned that New Englanders pay 65% more for electricity than the national average, placing businesses at a significant competitive disadvantage.

Concerns about global warming remain significant. A substantial 70% are at least somewhat concerned about the effects of global warming -- although this is down from 77% a year ago. Nevertheless, even under current economic conditions, New Englanders are still willing to match their wallet with their convictions. Almost 80% are willing to pay up to \$1 per month more for electricity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions - with 31% willing to spend up to \$10 more.

Increasing support for electricity industry competition and choice. An overwhelmingly majority of 83% support the concept of consumer choice in the purchase of electricity, a five percent increase over last year. Sixty-three percent believe a competitive electricity marketplace -- without government intervention -- provides adequate financial incentives to spur investment in new electricity generating plants and infrastructure projects -- a very substantial sixteen percentage point increase compared to last year.

Strong preference for market-based approaches rather than government mandates. Market-based approaches, such as cap-and-trade, are preferred to combat global warming by 61% of New Englanders -- a ten percent increase from last year. Only twenty-six percent prefer a government-driven approach such as the imposition of taxes and increasingly tougher mandates that electricity generating plants would have to comply with.

Overwhelming endorsement of wind energy, increasing support for nuclear energy. A substantial 83% of New Englanders continue to support wind energy. Fifty-two percent now favor building new nuclear energy plants, up from 48% a year ago, and 62% support

percentage point increase from last year. Support for building new LNG facilities and above-ground transmission lines remains consistently above 60%, while about half continue to support building clean coal plants.

"Conducting this annual survey enables the identification of trends that are instrumental in the consideration of energy policy development throughout the region," said NEEA Executive Director Paul G. Afonso. "This year, we saw a substantial increase in support for market-based, rather than government, approaches to addressing energy-related concerns."

"New Englanders remain concerned about the effects of global warming and have increased their support of nuclear energy -- perceived by many as a solution to climate issues," said Ernie Paicopolos, Principal of Opinion Dynamics. "While concerns about the economy have declined a bit, New Englanders are still very much concerned about pocketbook issues. In addition, the region's increasing support for market-based approaches to solve energy and environmental challenges reflect the nation's shifting mood over the last year towards less government intervention in the marketplace."

The telephone survey was performed for NEEA by Opinion Dynamics Corporation (ODC) of Waltham, MA under the direction of ODC Principal Ernest Paicopolos. Interviewing was conducted between April 14 - 21 of 700 registered voters in New England. The margin of error is +/-3.7%.

About New England Energy Alliance, Inc.

The New England Energy Alliance is a coalition of energy companies and trade associations concerned about the reliability and affordability of future energy supplies.

Please visit www.newenglandenergyalliance.org for more information on the Alliance.