

# ***AIF POLL: FLORIDIANS CONCERNED ABOUT ENERGY ISSUES***

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## **Methodology:**

*McLaughlin & Associates conducted a Florida statewide survey of 600 likely general election voters between July 28th and 29th, 2007. All interviews were conducted via telephone by professional interviewers. Respondents were randomly selected within predetermined geographic units structured to correlate with actual voter distributions in a statewide general election. The survey of 600 likely general election voters has an accuracy of +/- 4.0% at a 95% confidence interval.*

## **Major Findings:**

Florida voters would like to see the Governor and State Legislature make economic issues (38%) their top priority, such as reducing taxes (18%), rising property taxes (10%), reducing unemployment, creating jobs and improving the economy (6%) and eliminating wasteful government spending (5%). Other top scoring issues facing the state of Florida include improving education (12%), rising insurance rates and getting insurance (12%), and providing affordable health care (11%). Only 6% of voters cite environmental issues such as protecting the environment (3%), dealing with Florida's water problems (2%), and reducing global warming (1%) as top priorities for the Governor and State Legislature.

***Specifically, from the following list, which issue facing the state of Florida would you like to see the governor and the state legislature make their top priority?***

<b>ECONOMIC</b>	<b>38</b>
Reducing taxes in general	18
Rising property taxes	10
Reducing unemployment, creating jobs and improving the economy	6
Eliminating wasteful government spending	5
<b>SOCIAL</b>	<b>23</b>
Improving education	12
Providing affordable health care	11
<b>Rising insurance rates and getting insurance</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Fighting crime and drugs</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>GROWTH</b>	<b>6</b>
Controlling growth and development	4
Improving local traffic and congestion problems	3
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>6</b>
Protecting the environment	3
Dealing with Florida's water problems	2
Reducing global warming	1
Don't know / Refused	6

While environmental issues are not necessarily top of mind issues to voters, when the subject of global warming is brought up, it is still a very important issue to voters. Regarding the issue of global warming, 85% of voters say that global warming is a problem, with 44% saying that it is a major problem that needs immediate action and 41% saying that it is a problem that needs some action over time. Another 12% of voters say that global warming is not a problem at all.

*Regarding global warming, which one of the following statements comes closest to your own personal opinion?*

<b>PROBLEM</b>	<b>Total</b>
Global warming is a major problem that needs immediate action	44
Global warming is a problem that needs some action over time	41
Global warming is not a problem at all	12
Don't know / Refused	4

Regarding the issue of energy in Florida, voters cite energy costs (30%) as the most important issue, followed by energy conservation (20%), energy independence (19%), energy's environmental impact (14%) and energy reliability (10%).

*Regarding the issue of energy in Florida, which one of the following issues is most important to you?*

	<b>Total</b>
Energy costs	30
Energy conservation	20
Energy independence	19
Energy's environmental impact	14
Energy reliability	10
Don't know / Refused	7

To address Florida's population growth, nearly two in three voters (74%) supports building more energy plants in Florida to increase energy production. In fact, nearly eight in ten voters (78%) agrees that with Florida's rapidly growing population, Florida will need to increase its local electricity production or find itself in the same situation as California did with skyrocketing energy costs and rolling blackouts. The majority of voters (52%) strongly agrees with this statement, while only 14% disagree.

*Do you support or oppose increasing Florida's energy production to meet the state's population growth by building more energy plants in Florida?*

	<b>Total</b>
<b>SUPPORT</b>	<b>74</b>
Strongly Support	40
Somewhat Support	34
<b>OPPOSE</b>	<b>17</b>
Somewhat Oppose	8
Strongly Oppose	9
Don't Know / Refused	10

*Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? “With Florida’s rapidly growing population, Florida is going to need to increase its local electricity production or find itself in the same situation that California did with skyrocketing energy costs and rolling blackouts.”*

	<b>Total</b>
<b>AGREE</b>	<b>78</b>
Strongly Agree	52
Somewhat Agree	26
<b>DISAGREE</b>	<b>14</b>
Somewhat Disagree	9
Strongly Disagree	6
Don't Know / Refused	8

More than eight in ten voters (82%) support the state government spending more tax dollars to develop alternative, more environmentally friendly energy programs such as solar, wind and ethanol. The majority of voters (56%) strongly supports this, while only 13% opposes it. However, only 38% of voters support the state government raising taxes on energy so people will use less of it and be forced to conserve. The majority of voters (56%) opposes raising taxes, with 41% of voters strongly opposing it.

*Please tell me whether you support or oppose of each of the following?*

	Support	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Oppose	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Refused
The state government spending more tax dollars to develop alternative, more environmentally friendly energy programs such as solar, wind and ethanol	82	56	26	13	6	7	5
The state government raising taxes on energy so people will use less of it and be forced to conserve.	38	20	18	56	15	41	6

When it comes to the issue of oil drilling, the majority of voters (63%) says that it should be allowed. More specifically, 46% of those voters say the drilling should be allowed at least 125 miles off the coast, while 17% say it should be allowed anywhere off the coast. Another 27% of voters say that oil drilling should not be allowed off the coast of Florida at all.

*When it comes to the issue of oil drilling off the coast of Florida, which of the following comes closest to your own personal opinion?*

ALLOWED	Total
	63
Oil drilling should be allowed anywhere off the coast of Florida.	17
Oil drilling should only be allowed at least 125 miles off the coast of Florida.	46
Oil drilling should not be allowed at all off the coast of Florida.	27
Don't Know / Refused	9

When thinking about the environment, 85% of voters think of themselves as pro-environment, with 28% who consider themselves active participants in the environmental movement who make significant lifestyle changes to conserve natural resources, and 57% who care about the environment and do the best they can without necessarily changing their lifestyle to do things like conserve and recycle. Another 10% of voters think of themselves as someone who cares about the environment, but doesn't necessarily go out of their way to help the environment and 3% say they don't care much about the environmental movement.

When it comes to making personal changes to their daily lifestyle to conserve more energy, nearly seven in ten voters (68%) say they would be likely to use a smart meter and 66% say they would be likely to buy a hybrid vehicle. The majority of voters (59%) also says they would be likely to use less air conditioning and heating by adjusting their thermostat to 78 and 68 degrees, respectively. However, taking public transportation instead of driving their own car (50%) and carpooling to work (49%) were less popular with voters.

***Now thinking specifically about the environment and the environmental movement, do think of yourself as...?***

	<b>Total</b>
<b>PRO-ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>85</b>
An active participant in the environmental movement who makes significant lifestyle changes to conserve natural resources.	28
Someone who cares about the environment and tries to do the best they can without necessarily changing their lifestyle to do things like conserve and recycle.	57
Someone who cares about the environment, but doesn't necessarily go out of their way to help the environment.	10
Someone who really doesn't care much about the environmental movement.	3
Don't know / Refused	3

***How likely would you be to make each of the following personal changes to your daily lifestyle as a way to conserve more energy? Would you say very likely, somewhat likely or not likely at all?***

	Likely	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not Likely	Already Do It	DK/Ref
Using a smart meter that automatically shuts off power or hot water to your home during peak hours to conserve energy and reduce your energy bills. The smart meter allows you to override the automatic shut off if you need hot water or power at that time.	<b>68</b>	44	23	16	12	5
Buying a hybrid vehicle that gets more miles per gallon.	<b>66</b>	38	28	26	3	6
Using less air conditioning by turning up the temperature on your air conditioning to 78 degrees during the summer and using less heating by turning down your temperature to 68 degrees during the winter time.	<b>59</b>	42	17	12	26	3
Taking public transportation instead of driving your own car.	<b>50</b>	29	21	41	3	6
Carpooling to work instead of driving by yourself.	<b>49</b>	30	19	33	5	13

### Conclusions:

1. Voters cite economic issues as the top priority for the Governor and State Legislature. While environmental issues such as global warming are not necessarily top of mind issues to voters, when the subject of global warming is brought up, it is still a very important issue to voters.
2. When it comes to energy, the most import issues tend to relate to the cost and environmental impact.
3. Voters do understand that the state will have to build more energy plants in response to the growing population. Voters agree that Florida will need to increase its electricity production to avoid cost and supply problems like California.
4. While voters are willing to make changes to their daily lifestyle in order to conserve energy, the majority of voters opposes the state government raising taxes on energy so that people will use less of it and be forced to conserve.