

TO Interested Parties
FROM Andrew Baumann, Global Strategy Group
DATE April 2, 2019
RE **Pennsylvanians Strongly Support Limits on Carbon Emissions – Even After Opposition Messaging**

A new survey conducted by Global Strategy Group among 1,201 Pennsylvanians shows that Pennsylvanians strongly supports a limit on carbon emissions from power plants in the state.

Nearly eight in ten Pennsylvanians polled support a proposal to “create regulations to place a limit on carbon emissions from Pennsylvania power plants that would decline over time reaching zero emissions by 2040.” (79% support/21% oppose). Meanwhile, Democrats currently enjoy a 4-point lead on the generic legislative ballot (47% Democrat/43% Republican). But when the ballot is framed as a Democrat who supports this proposal versus a Republican who opposes it, that margin expands to 19 points (52% Democrat/33% Republican).

Even after Pennsylvanians are exposed to a balanced simulated debate that includes strong attacks from opponents of the proposal – including accusations that it would amount to a new energy tax and kill thousands of Pennsylvania jobs – support remains robust (68% support/32% oppose). The electoral impacts remain significantly positive, as well, with a Democrat who supports the proposal leading a Republican who opposes it by 14 points (49% Democrat/35% Republican). And even in the unlikely scenario in which Pennsylvanians are exposed to attacks from opponents without any response from proponents, the proposal maintains solid majority support.

Support for a proposal that creates economy-wide carbon limits in Pennsylvania dwarfs support for a proposal that “mandates that effectively half of the electricity sold to Pennsylvania customers must come from the state’s nuclear power plants, even if there are cheaper alternatives available” (36% support/64% oppose). Further, when Pennsylvanians are forced to choose between the two proposals, they support the carbon limit proposal over the nuclear power plant plan by over 40 points (71% carbon/29% nuclear).

The following memo outlines the key findings from this survey.

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

- **Pennsylvanians view regulations to limit carbon emissions, as well as legislators who support actions to prevent climate change, positively.** Pennsylvanians rate “regulations to reduce carbon emissions” highly (65% favorable/22% unfavorable). “Lawmakers who support strong action to combat climate change” benefit from these attitudes (55% favorable/33% unfavorable) and “lawmakers who oppose strong action to combat climate change” are negatively impacted (22% favorable/61% unfavorable). Registered Republicans favor regulations to limit carbon emissions, while independents view opponents of climate action very negatively.
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NET FAVORABILITY						
	Sorted by Favorable – Unfavorable		Overall	Dem.	Ind.	GOP
	Overall fav	Overall unfav				
Regulations to reduce carbon emissions	65%	22%	+43	+73	+46	+11
Lawmakers who support strong action to combat climate change	55%	33%	+22	+70	+25	-28
Lawmakers who oppose strong action to combat climate change	22%	61%	-39	-59	-58	-7

- Pennsylvanians overwhelmingly support a proposal to limit carbon emissions.** Pennsylvanians support a proposal to “to create regulations to place a limit on carbon emissions from Pennsylvania power plants,” by nearly 60 points (79% support/21% oppose). Strong majorities from each party back the proposal as do the state’s urban, suburban, and small town/rural Pennsylvanians.

CARBON LIMITS PROPOSAL SUPPORT							
<i>Support for a proposal to create regulations to place a limit on carbon emissions from Pennsylvania power plants</i>							
	Overall	Dem.	Ind.	GOP	City	Suburban	Small town/ Rural
Support	79	91	82	66	92	75	79
Oppose	21	9	18	34	8	25	21
<i>Net support</i>	<i>+58</i>	<i>+82</i>	<i>+64</i>	<i>+32</i>	<i>+84</i>	<i>+50</i>	<i>+58</i>

- Center-right Pennsylvanians and white women particularly respond positively to legislators supporting carbon limits.** As noted above, Democrats lead the straight generic ballot by four points. Pennsylvanians were then asked to consider a Democrat and a Republican in the frame of the carbon limit debate:

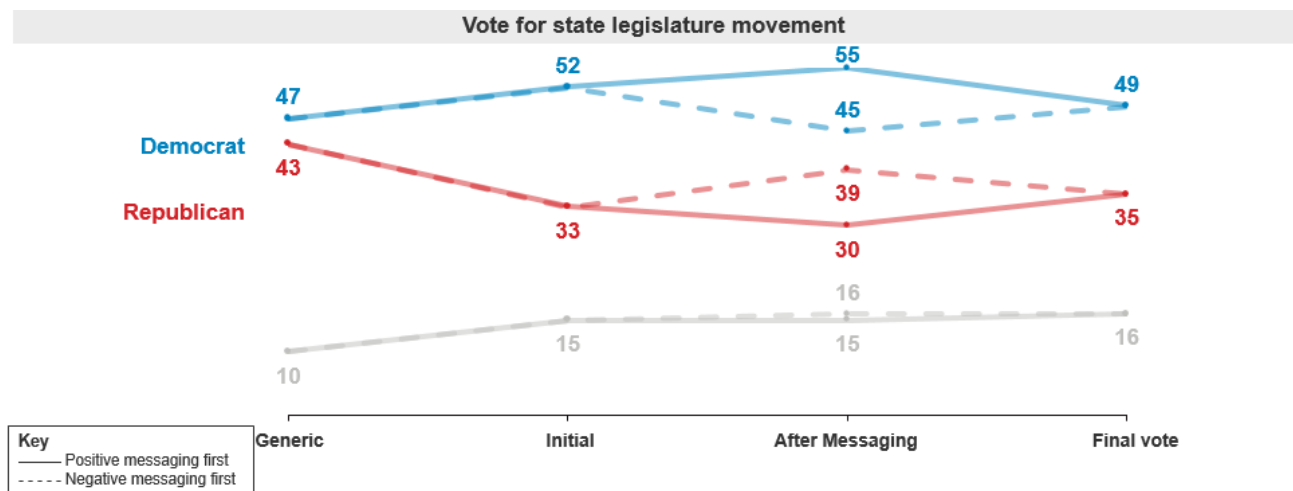
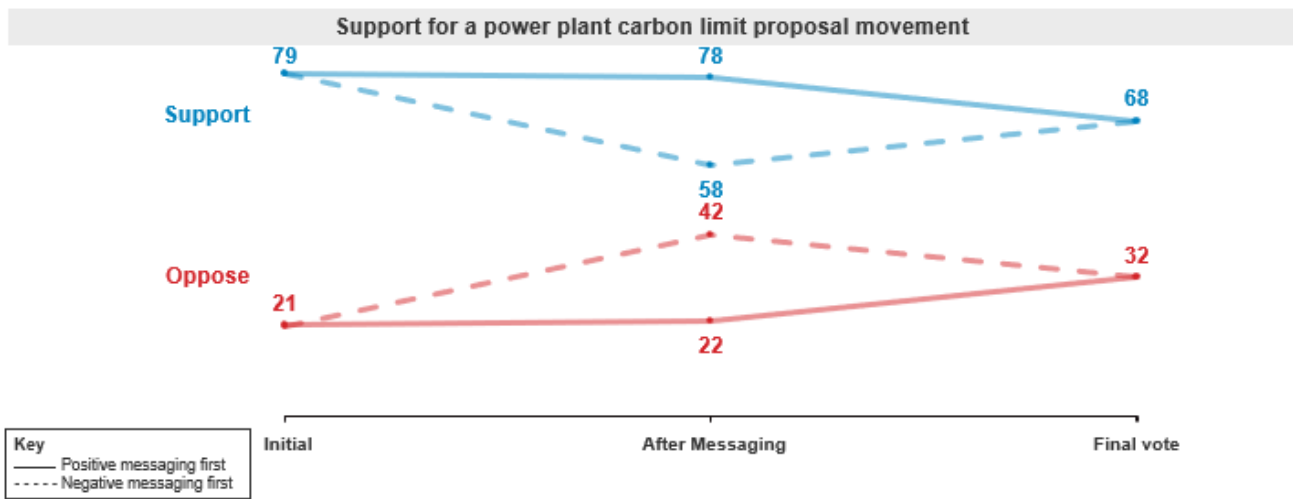
After reading about this proposal to create regulations to place a limit on carbon emissions from Pennsylvania power plants and thinking again about the election for state legislature, if the election were held today between a Democratic candidate who supports this proposal to limit carbon emissions and a Republican candidate who opposes this proposal to limit carbon emissions, for whom would you vote?

Within this framework, the Democratic margin increases to 19 points, with the debate giving legislative Democrats a significant boost among registered independents and suburban Pennsylvanians and particularly among registered Republicans, small town/rural Pennsylvanians and white women.

LEGISLATIVE VOTE WITH CARBON LIMITS PROPOSAL									
	Overall	Dem.	Ind.	GOP	City	Suburban	Small town/ Rural	White Men	White Women
Democrat who supports carbon limits	52	84	53	19	67	51	47	42	52
Republican who opposes carbon limits	33	6	21	65	19	34	39	44	31
<i>Net support</i>	<i>+19</i>	<i>+78</i>	<i>+32</i>	<i>-46</i>	<i>+48</i>	<i>+17</i>	<i>+8</i>	<i>-2</i>	<i>+21</i>
<i>Net Generic Democrat</i>	<i>+6</i>	<i>+72</i>	<i>+22</i>	<i>-72</i>	<i>+49</i>	<i>+6</i>	<i>-18</i>	<i>-14</i>	<i>-2</i>
<i>Total Lift</i>	<i>+13</i>	<i>+6</i>	<i>+10</i>	<i>+26</i>	<i>-1</i>	<i>+9</i>	<i>+26</i>	<i>+12</i>	<i>+23</i>

- **Support for the proposal to limit carbon emissions from Pennsylvania power plants, and Democratic candidates who support it, remains solid regardless of messaging against it.** The graphs below show movement throughout the debate as Pennsylvanians read either positive or negative messaging first. Even after a totally one-sided attack, with respondents reading only a battery of five messages against the proposal and none in favor of it (represented by the dashed lines in the graphs below), support for a limit on the total carbon emissions in Pennsylvania and the legislators who support it remains high; the proposal is still supported by a 58% to 42% majority, and Pennsylvanians still back a Democrat who supports the proposal over a Republican who opposes it by a 45% to 39% margin.

After a fully balanced debate, where both sides have a chance to communicate, nearly seven in ten Pennsylvanians still support carbon limits (68% support/32% oppose), and Democrats who support the proposal enjoy a 14-point advantage (49% Democrat/35% Republican) – more than three times their margin in the straight generic ballot. (Text of messages tested is in the appendix at the end of this memo.)



- **Pennsylvanians overwhelmingly oppose a proposal to create a mandate for nuclear power and strongly prefer the carbon limit proposal.** Initial support for a proposal that “mandates that effectively half of the electricity sold to Pennsylvania customers must come from the state’s nuclear power plants, even if there are cheaper alternatives available” is weak, supported by only 36% and opposed by 64%. After reading supporter and opponent statements (in the table below), Pennsylvanians shift slightly in support but still oppose the plan overall (41% support/59% oppose). And when forced to choose between this proposal and the previously presented carbon limit proposal, the carbon limit proposal outpaces the nuclear proposal 71% to 29%.

NUCLEAR PROPOSAL INFORMED STATEMENTS

Supporters say that Pennsylvania currently gets 42% of our electricity from nuclear power. But if we don’t act soon, several of the states’ nuclear power plants will close in the next two years, forcing us to rely more on dirty coal and natural gas, which will increase carbon and other kinds of pollution as well as cost thousands of high-paying jobs. If we want to ensure our carbon pollution doesn’t increase in Pennsylvania, we need to keep our nuclear power plants open.

Opponents say that this proposal amounts to a massive bailout for nuclear power companies who can’t compete in the market. It will force Pennsylvania families and businesses to pay drastically more for electricity in order to keep outdated, expensive, and dangerous plants like Three Mile Island open. We need to reduce toxic carbon pollution in Pennsylvania, but we should do it by putting limits on pollution and encouraging more renewable energy like wind and solar, not by paying to bail out failing nuclear plants.

ABOUT THIS POLL

Global Strategy Group conducted a voter-file matched online survey from March 19-26, 2019 with 1,201 likely 2020 general election voters in Pennsylvania. Questions about the proposal to place a limit on carbon emissions from power plants were asked of a half sample of 601 likely voters. Care has been taken to ensure the political, geographic, and demographic divisions of the expected electorate are properly represented based on historical turnout.

MESSAGES FOR CARBON LIMITS PROPOSAL

[SPLIT SAMPLED] [LANDS AND WATER] This proposal will protect Pennsylvania’s public lands, rivers, and streams by encouraging clean energy like wind and solar and reducing the mercury pollution that contaminates our state’s water.

[PUBLIC HEALTH AND AIR] By encouraging clean energy, this proposal will dramatically reduce the carbon, sulfur, and arsenic pollution that comes from burning dirty fuels like coal. Doctors say that it would reduce asthma, heart disease, lung disease, and even cancer – especially for children and seniors.

[COSTS] Renewable solar and wind energy is cheaper than ever before and is getting cheaper. This proposal will encourage a transition to these sources and save consumers money by encouraging more energy efficiency. In fact, Stanford University researchers say that moving to renewable energy will end up saving the average Pennsylvania family hundreds of dollars a year in electricity and health care costs.

[LEGACY] We have a basic responsibility to leave our kids and grandkids a healthy future, but climate change and unchecked air and water pollution from dirty energy sources are putting that at risk. This proposal will help us leave a better world to our children and grandchildren.

[SPLIT SAMPLED] [CLIMATE] The Department of Defense and NASA say that climate change poses an increasingly dangerous threat to the country, which we’re already seeing in the form of more severe flooding, droughts, wildfires, hurricanes, and other strong storms. By reducing the carbon pollution that causes climate change, this proposal would help prevent the devastating impacts of climate change from getting even worse.

[SPLIT SAMPLED] [ECONOMY AND JOBS] By encouraging the use of more wind and solar power, this proposal will drive a clean energy boom across Pennsylvania, making us a national leader and creating thousands of high-paying jobs that can’t be moved out of state for all kinds of people, from engineers, to factory workers, to administrative staff.

[SPLIT SAMPLED] [LEFT BEHIND] Every other state in the northeast has enacted regulations to limit carbon pollution because they know that such policies will encourage cleaner air and a stronger economy driven by renewable energy. If we don’t act, Pennsylvania will be left behind while these other states reap the environmental and economic benefits of moving to wind and solar.

MESSAGES AGAINST CARBON LIMITS PROPOSAL

[SPLIT SAMPLED] [SELF-INTEREST] This proposal would force utilities to buy energy from the same corporations who are backing the proposal, even if it costs more. These companies have already received hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies. Pennsylvania families shouldn’t have to pay higher electricity bills just so these companies can profit even more.

[JOBS] This proposal will kill thousands of Pennsylvania jobs by raising electricity bills for Pennsylvania businesses by thousands of dollars, making it harder to start or maintain a business in our state. Companies will be forced to send good-paying jobs to other states and overseas where costs are lower, hurting Pennsylvania’s economy.

[TRADE SCHEME] This proposal would set up a complicated, overly bureaucratic and unfair cap and trade scheme that would let big corporations avoid requirements to reduce pollution and, instead, actually trade and profit off the right to pollute our air.

[COSTS] This proposal amounts to a new energy tax. By forcing us to phase out less expensive energy sources, this proposal would not only drive up electricity bills for the average family by hundreds of dollars per year but also raise costs for Pennsylvania businesses. That means higher prices for groceries and everything else we buy.

[WAR ON RURAL] By phasing out Pennsylvania’s homegrown coal and natural gas, this proposal will decimate industries that provide many of the jobs in Pennsylvania’s rural communities.

[SPLIT SAMPLED] [REGRESSIVE] This measure is unfair to low-income and minority communities because the higher energy prices it will cause will hurt them more than anyone else, without even shutting down the dirtiest polluters near low-income neighborhoods.