



TO: Interested Parties  
FROM: Andrew Baumann and Katie Drapcho, Global Strategy Group  
DATE: December 8, 2022  
RE: **POLL RESULTS: Minnesota voters want state lawmakers to take action to address climate change and the issue generates political gains for candidates who support such action**

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A survey of likely Minnesota voters conducted by Global Strategy Group in September, which included oversamples in the Iron Range and in the Southern part of the state, not only finds that Minnesotans want state lawmakers to take action to reduce carbon emissions and tackle climate change, but also that such actions would give candidates who support strong climate action a political boost (and would damage candidates who oppose such action) with key voting blocs around the state – even after voters are exposed to a balanced debate on the topic.

Large majorities of Minnesota voters think that lawmakers should support policies to encourage more clean energy and implement stronger limits on pollution, in part because Minnesota voters agree that climate change is threatening Minnesota’s agricultural economy, rural communities, and clean water. Minnesota voters also reject the premise that clean energy is mutually exclusive with a strong economy. Instead, they agree that transitioning to clean energy will be good for Minnesota’s economy and save families money. As a result, Minnesota voters support several policies that would reduce carbon pollution in Minnesota.

#### KEY SURVEY FINDINGS:

**Minnesota voters see the impact that climate change is having on their communities, and they want to see lawmakers take stronger action to reduce carbon emissions and tackle climate change.** Over three quarters of Minnesota voters are favorable to clean energy (76% favorable/19% unfavorable), including all partisan groups (including Republicans) and voters in the Iron Range and Southern Minnesota. Large majorities of voters are also favorable to “regulations to reduce the carbon emissions that cause climate change” (59% favorable/34% unfavorable) and “lawmakers who support strong action to reduce climate change” (57% favorable/36% unfavorable). Minnesota voters agree that lawmakers “should support policies that encourage more use of clean energy like wind and solar” (71% agree/28% disagree) and over six in ten agree that “we need more regulations to protect our air, water, and climate from pollution in Minnesota” (61% agree/37% disagree). Minnesota voters are responding to the impact they see climate change having around them, with six in ten agreeing that “climate change is already having a serious impact on Minnesota’s agricultural economy and rural communities” and that “climate change is becoming an increasing threat to Minnesota’s supply of clean water.”

| NET AGREEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES  |               |                  |         |          |       |          |            |             |
|---|---------------|------------------|---------|----------|-------|----------|------------|-------------|
|   | Overall agree | Overall disagree | Overall | Dem Base | Swing | GOP Base | Iron Range | Southern MN |
| Minnesota lawmakers should support policies that encourage more use of clean energy like wind and solar     | 71%           | 28%              | +43     | +98      | +47   | -27      | +35        | +28         |
| Climate change is already having a serious impact on Minnesota's agricultural economy and rural communities | 62%           | 37%              | +25     | +91      | +31   | -62      | +19        | -1          |
| We need more regulations to protect our air, water, and climate from pollution in Minnesota                 | 61%           | 37%              | +24     | +87      | +35   | -62      | +13        | +30         |
| Climate change is becoming an increasing threat to Minnesota's supply of clean water                        | 60%           | 38%              | +22     | +91      | +22   | -65      | +16        | +27         |

**A factor boosting support for addressing climate change: Minnesota voters consider investing in clean energy as a way to boost the state's economy and save families money.** Voters reject the premise that Minnesota has to choose between acting on climate and protecting their economy, with nearly eight in ten agreeing with the statement that "we don't need to choose between a strong economy and a cleaner environment. We can have both" (79% agree/20% disagree). What's more, voters see clean energy as a way to strengthen the economy and save families money, with over six in ten agreeing with the statements "using more clean energy like wind and solar would create quality jobs and strengthen Minnesota's economy" (65% agree/35% disagree) and "using more clean energy like wind and solar would save Minnesota families money" (63% agree/36% disagree).

| NET SUPPORT FOR POLICY SOLUTIONS  |         |        |     |          |       |          |            |           |
|---|---------|--------|-----|----------|-------|----------|------------|-----------|
|   | Support | Oppose | Net | Dem Base | Swing | GOP Base | Iron Range | South. MN |
| Create opportunities for farmers and forest managers to get paid to change their practices in ways that allow Minnesota lands and forest to capture more carbon and reduce the impacts of climate change  | 68%     | 30%    | +38 | +91      | +68   | -43      | +42        | +30       |
| Join other states in the Midwest in an effort to combat climate change by capping carbon emissions from power plants and requiring power plants to pay for the carbon emissions they emit   | 65%     | 35%    | +30 | +92      | +39   | -55      | +18        | +26       |
| Place a limit on carbon emissions across all sectors in Minnesota's economy including electricity, industry, transportation, and agriculture that would decline over time, reaching a 50% reduction in emissions by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050 | 63%     | 37%    | +26 | +93      | +18   | -52      | +12        | +9        |
| Require that more new heavy-duty trucks and buses sold in Minnesota be zero-emission vehicles, reaching zero carbon emissions from trucks and buses by 2050   | 60%     | 39%    | +21 | +93      | +10   | -64      | +24        | -4        |

**Voters consider federal investment in clean energy a good start, but want to see Minnesota do more.**

Asked specifically about the Inflation Reduction Act's investment in clean energy to combat climate, over six in ten voters agree with the statements "the action by the federal government is a good start, but Minnesota still needs to do more to move to clean energy and reduce the pollution that causes climate change" (62% agree/38% disagree) and "now is the time for Minnesota to double down on its plans to move to clean energy and combat climate change, because the action taken by the federal government means Minnesota will have new resources to do so" (61% agree/39% disagree).

**Minnesota lawmakers have a mandate to address climate change and large majorities support proposals to limit carbon emissions.** A 61% to 38% majority of voters agree that Minnesota lawmakers need to do more to combat climate change, including majorities of voters in the Iron Range and Southern Minnesota. As such, voters support a wide array of policies to limit carbon emissions in Minnesota. In particular, over six in ten voters support joining with other Midwestern states to cap carbon emissions from power plants and limiting carbon emissions in Minnesota to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

**Putting the generic legislative ballot in the context of "strong climate action" significantly boosts supportive Democrats and harms opposing Republicans.** In September, Minnesota Democrats had a 4-point lead on the generic ballot, with 48% of voters supporting a Democratic candidate and 44% supporting a Republican. However, putting the race in the context of a Democrat who *supports* strong

action to combat climate change versus a Republican who *opposes* action on climate gives the Democratic candidate a boost. A Democrat who supports taking strong action on climate change leads a Republican who opposes it 53% to 41% (a net lift of 8 points relative to the straight generic ballot). As the table below shows, reframing the generic ballot gives supportive Democrats a lift (and damages opposing Republicans) among women and in Southern Minnesota.

| LEGISLATIVE VOTE WITH CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION                   |            |           |            |            |             |
|---|------------|-----------|------------|------------|-------------|
|   | Overall    | Men       | Women      | Iron Range | Southern MN |
| Democrat who supports strong action on climate change         | 53         | 44        | 61         | 51         | 44          |
| Republican who opposes strong action to combat climate change | 41         | 49        | 33         | 45         | 49          |
| <i>Net support</i>  | <i>+12</i> | <i>-5</i> | <i>+28</i> | <i>+6</i>  | <i>-5</i>   |
| <i>Net Generic Democrat</i>                                   | <i>+4</i>  | <i>-8</i> | <i>+16</i> | <i>+2</i>  | <i>-17</i>  |
| <i>Total Lift</i>   | <i>+8</i>  | <i>+3</i> | <i>+12</i> | <i>+4</i>  | <i>+12</i>  |

**Support for taking action on climate change – and its positive impact on supportive Democrats - hold up after voters hear a balanced debate from both sides.** After hearing a simulated debate that includes balanced statements in support and in opposition to taking action on climate change, with opposition messaging primarily focused on costs, large majorities of voters continue to want to see the state take action on climate change and believe moving to clean energy will benefit Minnesota’s economy and families. Notably, even after the simulated debate, a Democrat who supports strong action on climate change maintains a 12-point lead on the generic ballot for state legislature (and an 8-point boost relative to the generic ballot).

#### ABOUT THE POLL

Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of 806 likely 2022 general election voters in Minnesota between September 13-19, 2022, with additional oversamples of 150 voters in the Iron Range and 85 voters in Southern Minnesota. The survey had a margin of error of +/- 3.5%. The margin of error on subgroups is greater.

## APPENDIX

## CLIMATE CHANGE DEBATE

**Supporters say** that taking action to combat climate change and move Minnesota to clean energy would dramatically reduce the carbon, sulfur, and arsenic pollution that disrupt our climate, make our families sick, and pollute our lakes and rivers while creating tens of thousands of quality jobs for all kinds of people, from installers to factory workers. And since the cost of wind and solar is already lower than coal and gas – and still dropping – using more clean energy would save consumers money. In fact, Stanford University researchers say that moving to clean energy will save the average Minnesota family hundreds of dollars a year.

**Opponents say** that the cost of gas and energy is already too expensive and taking unnecessary action on climate change will only make things worse. By forcing us to phase out less expensive energy sources, these proposals would drive up electricity bills by hundreds of dollars per year and make the cost of gasoline even more expensive, leading to higher prices on groceries and everything else we buy. What's more, by raising electricity bills and gas prices, this proposal will force businesses to move to other states and overseas where costs are lower, killing thousands of jobs and hurting Minnesota's economy.