

# Most Americans support government regulation to fight climate change. Including in Pittsburgh.

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By Lyle Scruggs and Clifford Vickrey June 5

On Thursday, President Trump withdrew the United States from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. In doing so, Trump said that he was “elected to represent the citizens of Pittsburgh, not Paris.” Trump also vowed to put cities such as Youngstown and Detroit ahead of Paris.

The president’s invocation of Pittsburgh was quickly denounced by Mayor Bill Peduto (D), who vowed to adhere to the Paris commitments, noting that Hillary Clinton defeated Trump quite handily in Pittsburgh.

But who is right? Does Trump’s decision represent what the citizens of Pittsburgh want? Our research suggests that it does not. Peduto is right: The citizens of Pittsburgh and surrounding suburbs favor government regulation of carbon emissions.

Nationally, public concern about climate change has been increasing. For example, according to Gallup polls, the percentage of people either very or somewhat “worried about global warming” reached 65 percent in March — near the level of concern expressed in 2008 just before the Great Recession. Other surveys tell a similar story.

What about regulating carbon emissions? The president’s speech, as well as Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt’s comments, suggested that these regulations were unpopular. That is where our research comes in.

We took advantage of a survey called the Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES), which has an extraordinarily large sample of about 40,000-50,000 Americans. In 2016, the CCES was fielded just before the election and asked this question: “Do you support or oppose the Environmental Protection Agency regulating carbon dioxide emissions?”

We then estimated a statistical model, known as “multilevel regression and post-stratification,” that allows us to use this large national sample to estimate the opinions of individual states and even congressional districts.

Here's what we found. Large majorities in the country, the Midwest states, and formerly industrial cities such as Pittsburgh, Youngstown, and Detroit favored the EPA regulating carbon emissions. For example, in Pennsylvania, 66 percent supported it, as did 67 percent in Ohio and 70 percent in Michigan. The same was true in other states where pluralities voted for Trump, such as Wisconsin (68 percent) and Iowa (66 percent). We found similar levels of support when we analyzed data from the 2014 CCES.

Support in and around formerly industrial cities such as Pittsburgh is even **higher** for regulating carbon dioxide. In the congressional districts that encompass Pittsburgh, Youngstown and Detroit, we estimate that more than 70 percent support EPA regulation. Support is somewhat lower in the suburban and rural districts surrounding these cities, but still almost always more than 60 percent.

Our analysis indicates there is only one state and congressional district where a majority of the population opposes the EPA regulation: Wyoming, which produces about 40 percent of the coal produced in the United States. In energy-producing areas of other states, such as Oklahoma, Texas, North Dakota, Kentucky and West Virginia, there is close to majority opposition.

Of course, our survey question was not specifically about the Paris agreement. But the question does center on a crucial policy question, given the Trump's administration's plan to roll back Obama-era rules that would allow the EPA to regulate greenhouse gases.

After Trump's speech, Pruitt said that Trump's decision showed his commitment to listen to the will of the people, who are "rulers of this country again." Our research suggests the opposite. Trump's plan is not in sync with public opinion — in Pittsburgh and in most other places.

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## #ENVIRONMENT

JANUARY 17, 2017 / 6:13 AM

### **Unlike Trump, Americans want strong environmental regulator - Reuters/Ipsos**

Chris Kahn

NEW YORK (Reuters) - More than 60 percent of Americans would like to see the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's powers preserved or strengthened under incoming President Donald Trump, and the drilling of oil on public lands to hold steady or drop, according to a Reuters/Ipsos opinion poll released on Tuesday.

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump speaks briefly to reporters between meetings at the Mar-a-lago Club in Palm Beach, Florida, U.S. December 28, 2016. REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst

The results could foretell stronger-than-expected public opposition to Trump's plans to boost energy development by slashing environmental regulations, an agenda shared by some of his top Cabinet picks slated for Senate confirmation hearings later this week. Trump takes office on Friday.

Some 39 percent of Americans would like to see the EPA, the nation's top environmental regulator, "strengthened or expanded," while another 22 percent hope for it to "remain the same," according to the poll. Just 19 percent said they would like to see the agency "weakened or eliminated" and the rest said they "don't know."

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Among Republicans, 47 percent wish for the EPA either to "remain the same" or be "strengthened or expanded," while 35 percent want it "weakened or eliminated".

The online poll of 9,935 people was conducted Dec. 16 to Jan. 12 and has a credibility interval, a measure of accuracy, of 1.1 percentage points.

"Trump is a businessman, and that's all he thinks about ... what will make money," said Terry Cox, a 61-year-old resident of Tennessee who voted for the New York real estate mogul in November's election. "But I'm hopeful there's a limit to what he can do when it comes to weakening protections for wildlife and the environment."

A Trump transition team official declined to comment.

Trump campaigned on a promise to drastically reduce environmental regulations in order to create jobs and pave the way for more oil, gas, and coal development. He has said he would refocus the EPA on its core mission to protect air and water quality.

He also accused the agency of using "totalitarian tactics" to enforce its regulations under President Barack Obama, who had made the EPA central to his broader effort to combat global climate change by cutting carbon emissions.

According to the Reuters/Ipsos poll, just over 60 percent of Americans think it would be wrong to weaken wildlife protections and air and water regulations to bolster the energy industry, while they were nearly evenly split on whether carbon emissions should be softened to help the industry.

The poll also showed that 39 percent of Americans want to see a decrease in coal mining and oil drilling on U.S. federal lands in the coming years, while 23 percent hope for it to stay the same. Just 22 percent said they wanted to see an increase, and the rest said they do not know.

The U.S. government holds title to about 500 million acres of land across the country, including national parks and forests, wildlife refuges and tribal territories, overlaying billions of barrels of oil and vast quantities of natural gas, coal, and uranium. Trump has promised to boost industry access to these reserves.

Trump nominated Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, a climate change skeptic who has repeatedly sued the EPA over its regulations, to head the agency. Pruitt is scheduled for Senate hearings on Wednesday, where lawmakers are expected to ask him about his ties to the energy industry.

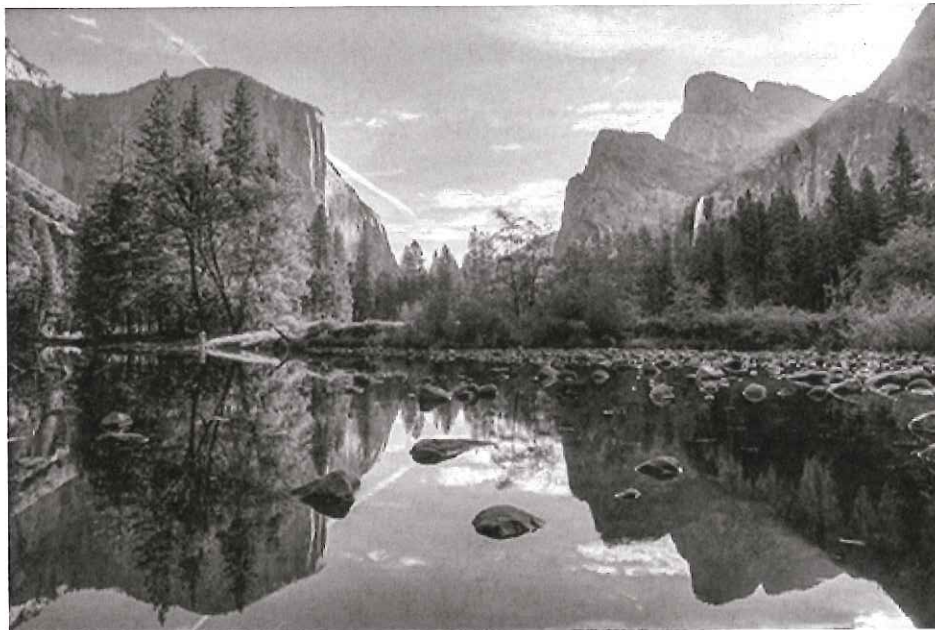
Trump also nominated U.S. Representative Ryan Zinke of Montana, an avid outdoorsman and former Navy SEAL commander who advocates for more coal mining on federal lands, to run the Department of the Interior that oversees public lands. Zinke will face Senate questions on Tuesday.

And Trump chose former Texas Governor Rick Perry to head the Department of Energy, a move that would put him in charge of the agency he proposed eliminating during his failed bid for the 2012 Republican presidential nomination. Perry will be questioned on Thursday.

Writing by Richard Valdmanis; Editing by Matthew Lewis

## News

# Poll: Majority of Americans oppose President Trump's proposed cuts to EPA's budget, withdrawing from Paris Climate Treaty



*Republicans and Democrats differ widely on most questions*

For immediate release: April 26, 2017

Boston, MA – According to a new POLITICO/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health poll, 60% of the American public as a whole opposes President Trump's recently proposed 31% cut in funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). However, constituents of the two major political parties are very far apart on



this issue. Among Democrats, 81% oppose these cuts, while nearly seven in ten Republicans (68%) support them.

Similarly, a 62% majority of the public as a whole supports the United States remaining in the Paris Climate Treaty, despite President Trump's suggestions that participating in the treaty would harm U.S. jobs. Once more, there are significant partisan divides: 87% of Democrats support continued participation in the Paris agreement, while 56% of Republicans would prefer to withdraw from the treaty. Among Independents, 61% support staying in the treaty.

Additionally, though President Trump and Republican leaders have argued that EPA regulation harms U.S. jobs, a majority of the public as a whole – including a majority of Republicans – disagree. Only 21% of all Americans and 31% of Republicans think government regulation designed to address climate change costs U.S. jobs.

Dr. Robert Blendon, who co-directed the poll, said: "This suggests that Republican support for cutting the EPA's budget is not based on the specific idea that environmental regulation costs U.S. jobs, but likely on a more general distaste for government regulation overall."

View the [complete poll findings](#).

## **Methodology**

These polls are part of an ongoing series of surveys developed by researchers at the [Harvard Opinion Research Program \(HORP\)](#) at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in partnership with POLITICO.

The research team at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health consists of: [Robert J. Blendon](#), Professor of Health Policy and Political Analysis and Executive Director of HORP; John M. Benson, Senior Research Scientist and Managing Director; Logan S. Casey, Research Analyst in Public Opinion; and Justin M. Sayde, Administrative

and Research Manager. The research team at POLITICO was led by Joanne Kenen, Executive Editor, Health Care at *Politico/Politico Pro*.

Interviews for the first poll were conducted with a nationally representative sample of 1,019 randomly selected adults, ages 18 and older, via telephone (including cell phones and landlines) by SSRS of Media, Pennsylvania. The interviewing period was March 22 – 26, 2017.

Interviews for the second poll were conducted with a nationally representative sample of 1,017 randomly selected adults, ages 18 and older, via telephone (including cell phones and landlines) by SSRS of Media, Pennsylvania. The interviewing period was March 29 – April 2, 2017.

The data for each of the polls were weighted to reflect the demographics of the national adult population as described by the U.S. Census. When interpreting these findings, one should recognize that all surveys are subject to sampling error. Results may differ from what would be obtained if the whole U.S. adult population had been interviewed. The margin of error for the first poll is  $\pm 3.7$  percentage points; for the second poll,  $\pm 3.8$  percentage points

Possible sources of non-sampling error include non-response bias, as well as question wording and ordering effects. Non-response in telephone surveys produces some known biases in survey-derived estimates because participation tends to vary for different subgroups of the population. To compensate for these known biases and for variations in probability of selection within and across households, sample data are weighted by household size, cell phone/landline use and demographics (sex, age, race/ethnicity, education, and region) to reflect the true population. Other techniques, including random-digit dialing, replicate subsamples, and systematic respondent selection within households, are used to ensure that the sample is representative.

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photo: iStock

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*Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health brings together dedicated experts from many disciplines to educate new generations of global health leaders and produce powerful ideas that improve the lives and health of people everywhere. As a community of leading scientists, educators, and students, we work together to take innovative ideas from the laboratory to people's lives—not only making scientific breakthroughs, but also working to change individual behaviors, public policies, and health care practices. Each year, more than 400 faculty members at Harvard Chan School teach 1,000-plus full-time students from around the world and train thousands more through online and executive education courses. Founded in 1913 as the Harvard-MIT School of Health Officers, the School is recognized as America's oldest professional training program in public health.*

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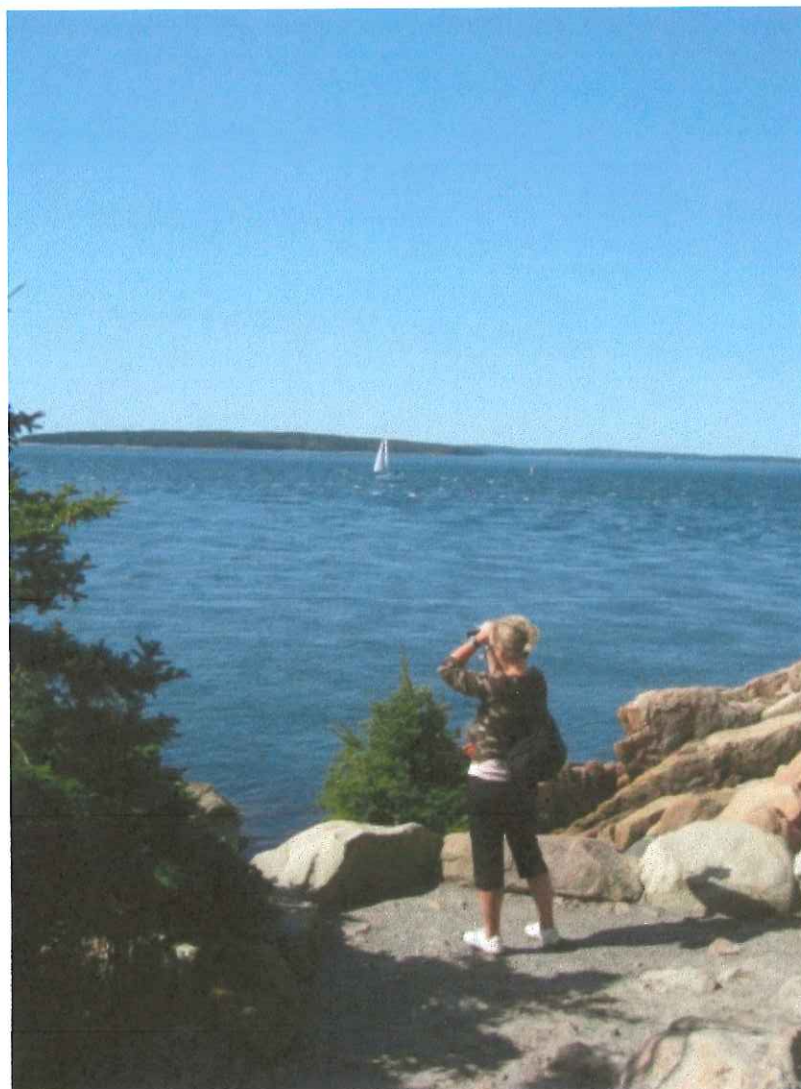




# **National Park Service Visitor Values & Perceptions of Clean Air, Scenic Views & Dark Night Skies**

*1988-2011*

Natural Resource Report NPS/NRSS/ARD/NRR-2013/632





## Results

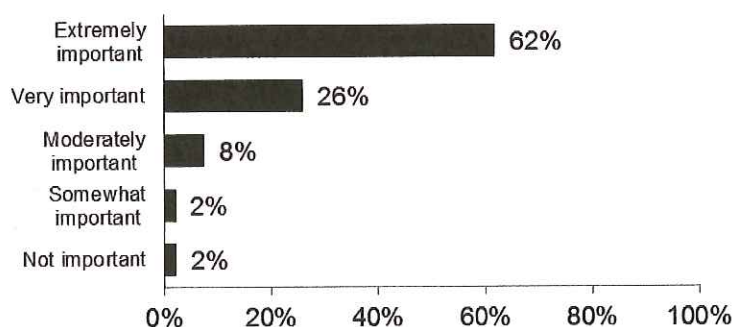
### Clean Air

Many resources in parks are affected by air pollution. For example, the ability to appreciate scenic vistas is highly dependent on good visibility. Poor visibility caused by air pollution can affect park visitors' enjoyment of scenic views. Human-made pollution can harm ecological resources, including water quality, soils, plants, and animals. Air pollution may also cause or intensify respiratory symptoms for some visitors and employees at NPS areas. The harmful effects of air pollution on a variety of park visitor experiences could ultimately cause impacts on park visitation and subsequent economic impacts in surrounding communities.

### Service-wide

Clean air, and up to 14 other resource attributes, were rated in 64 studies conducted from 1988–2011 in 49 NPS units. These studies gathered survey responses from 30,319 separate visitor groups. Each visitor group rated *clean air* on a five point scale with 1 being *not important* and 5 being *extremely important*.

As shown in Figure 2, clean air was *extremely important* or *very important* to 88% of all visitor groups (n=30,319), 8% thought it was *moderately important*, and 4% responded that clean air was *somewhat important* or *not important*.



**Figure 2.** Importance ratings for clean air. n=30,319 visitor groups from 64 studies in 49 NPS units from 1988–2011.

Responses are also analyzed based on the year the study was conducted to see if visitor values related to clean air have changed over time. In this analysis, responses for each year from visitor groups are combined if they responded that clean air was an *extremely important* or *very important* attribute to protect. Results show that from 1988–2011, the percentage of visitor groups that placed high value on clean air varied between 42% and 98% (Table 2). The percentage appears to be trending up with 80% of the responses in the 1990s and 91% of the responses in the 2000s considering clean air to be *extremely important* or *very important*.





# Top 12 Parks Most Harmed By Air Pollution: Report Card

RANK	PARK (STATE)	HEALTHY AIR			SEEING CLEARLY		CHANGING CLIMATES <sup>2</sup>	
1 <sup>1</sup>	Sequoia National Park (CA)	F	D	D				
1	Kings Canyon National Park (CA)	F	D	D				
3	Everglades National Park (FL)	B	D	D				
4	Joshua Tree National Park (CA)	F	C	F				
5	Carlsbad Caverns National Park (NM)	C	D	F				
6	Acadia National Park (ME)	B	C	F				
7	Yosemite National Park (CA)	F	C	F				
8	Guadalupe Mountains National Park (TX)	C	D	D				
9	Big Bend National Park (TX)	C	D	D				
10	Mammoth Cave National Park (KY)	D	F	B				
11	Great Smoky Mountains National Park (TN,NC)	D	D	C				
12	Saguaro National Park (AZ)	C	D	C				

1. Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are tied for “most harmed park.” Because they are so close together, they are often measured by the same air quality monitor, so their ratings are the same.

2. In recognition of the current and increasing impacts of climate change to all national parks, no parks received higher than a “B” grade in this report.

