

Oregon Energy Policy Survey

Results: Frequency Distributions



November 10, 2008

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The following are results for a survey of Oregon households conducted in September and October, 2008. The survey was administered to a statewide random sample of 1,200 households. A second mailing was administered to a random subsample of coastal households (i.e., households within approximately 20 miles of the coastline). The main purpose of the survey is to examine attitudes, knowledge and orientations toward energy policy issues in Oregon, including renewable energy sources. The response rate for the mail surveys is as follows:

	Sample Size:	Surveys Returned:	Response Rate:
State-wide Sample	1,200	674	56%
Coastal Sample	400	232	58%

We present preliminary results for several questions below for the state-wide sample, the coastal sample, and for respondents in the Portland metropolitan area and the Willamette Valley. Because of rounding, percentages may total between 99% and 101%.

The purpose of this survey was to get baseline data on general public orientations toward wave energy, attitudes toward renewable energy and the environment, reasons for support or opposition to the development of renewable energy sources, knowledge of Oregon energy sources and uses, information sources used to learn about energy, and a variety of demographic characteristics. Future surveys will focus specifically on coastal communities and will have many more specific questions concerning wave energy.

SECTION 1: How Much Do Oregonians Know And Are Concerned About Energy And Environmental Policy Issues?

The first section of the survey asked respondents several general questions about their interest, activities, and knowledge about energy and environmental policy issues.

Q-1 In general, how well informed would you consider yourself to be concerning renewable energy policy issues in Oregon—such as wind, solar, wave, and biofuel energy?

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
Not Informed	10%	5%	14%	14%
Somewhat Informed	56%	57%	57%	50%
Informed	28%	30%	24%	30%
Very Well Informed	6%	8%	5%	6%

Q-2 How often do you talk about issues related to renewable energy with your family, friends, or other acquaintances?

Never	5%	4%	6%	3%
Hardly Ever	22%	17%	23%	28%
Sometimes	47%	50%	47%	47%
Often	26%	30%	24%	22%

Q-3 Overall, how much impact do you think PEOPLE LIKE YOU can have in making Oregon's energy policy?

No impact at all	14%	8%	18%	18%
A small impact	44%	44%	42%	41%
A moderate impact	30%	39%	29%	25%
A big impact	12%	9%	11%	17%

Q-4 How familiar are you with specific renewable energy technologies including biofuel, wind, solar, geothermal and wave energy?

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
a. Wave Energy				
Not Familiar	38%	43%	30%	27%
Somewhat Familiar	39%	35%	50%	40%
Familiar	19%	18%	15%	26%
Very Familiar	5%	4%	5%	7%
b. Biofuel Energy				
Not Familiar	12%	12%	12%	9%
Somewhat Familiar	44%	42%	47%	47%
Familiar	31%	35%	26%	31%
Very Familiar	13%	11%	15%	14%
c. Wind Energy				
Not Familiar	6%	3%	4%	7%
Somewhat Familiar	35%	31%	47%	29%
Familiar	44%	45%	38%	49%
Very Familiar	16%	21%	10%	16%
d. Geothermal Energy				
Not Familiar	27%	25%	30%	30%
Somewhat Familiar	44%	56%	38%	39%
Familiar	21%	17%	22%	20%
Very Familiar	7%	3%	11%	11%
e. Solar Energy				
Not Familiar	7%	8%	5%	4%
Somewhat Familiar	32%	30%	41%	29%
Familiar	39%	35%	35%	45%
Very Familiar	23%	27%	19%	22%

Q-5 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements concerning energy policy?

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
a.	Decreasing our dependence on foreign oil and gas is important to our national security.			
Strongly Disagree	3%	3%	3%	2%
Somewhat Disagree	3%	2%	1%	3%
Neutral	11%	12%	11%	9%
Somewhat Agree	20%	20%	20%	20%
Strongly Agree	64%	63%	65%	66%
b.	I am concerned about foreign ownership of our energy resources.			
Strongly Disagree	2%	0%	3%	4%
Somewhat Disagree	3%	1%	2%	1%
Neutral	13%	10%	13%	14%
Somewhat Agree	21%	25%	20%	20%
Strongly Agree	62%	62%	63%	62%
c.	I am concerned that our country doesn't have enough energy resources.			
Strongly Disagree	12%	8%	12%	15%
Somewhat Disagree	16%	17%	19%	17%
Neutral	16%	16%	16%	17%
Somewhat Agree	26%	30%	21%	24%
Strongly Agree	30%	33%	28%	28%
d.	I am concerned about being personally affected by shortage of electricity in the next five years.			
Strongly Disagree	11%	8%	8%	17%
Somewhat Disagree	18%	19%	23%	18%
Neutral	29%	31%	26%	29%
Somewhat Agree	29%	27%	33%	30%
Strongly Agree	13%	15%	12%	10%

Q-5 How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements concerning energy policy?

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
e. Not enough money is being spent on research and development of alternative fuels.				
Strongly Disagree	3%	2%	1%	7%
Somewhat Disagree	6%	4%	7%	6%
Neutral	22%	18%	26%	20%
Somewhat Agree	23%	29%	23%	20%
Strongly Agree	46%	48%	44%	47%

f. It is possible to increase energy supplies while protecting the environment at the same time.				
Strongly Disagree	3%	1%	5%	3%
Somewhat Disagree	3%	4%	3%	3%
Neutral	12%	10%	15%	10%
Somewhat Agree	29%	30%	26%	32%
Strongly Agree	54%	56%	51%	53%

g. New technologies will make it possible to have enough electricity for all of us in the future.				
Strongly Disagree	2%	0%	2%	3%
Somewhat Disagree	6%	6%	7%	4%
Neutral	21%	20%	18%	25%
Somewhat Agree	33%	34%	36%	32%
Strongly Agree	39%	40%	37%	39%

Q-6 Here are a few specific questions about energy. Many people don't know the answers to these questions, so if there are some you don't know just leave them blank and continue.

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
a. The largest source of energy for electricity in Oregon is:				
Coal	9%	9%	10%	8%
Hydroelectric	82%	83%	80%	84%
Natural Gas	7%	7%	9%	4%
Nuclear	3%	1%	2%	4%
b. Most electricity in Oregon is used by the:				
Residential Sector (e.g., households)	36%	36%	35%	36%
Commercial Sector (e.g., retail stores)	20%	22%	15%	19%
Industrial Sector (e.g., factories and mills)	41%	39%	44%	45%
Transportation Sector	3%	3%	6%	0%
c. Being "off-grid" means:				
Producing one's own electricity	64%	63%	62%	70%
Getting electricity from another state	12%	16%	14%	6%
Having no electricity	19%	19%	18%	20%
Being energy efficient	5%	2%	6%	5%

Q-7 Wave energy refers to the extraction of electricity from the up-and-down motion of ocean waves using buoys or devices in the form of "wave energy farms." What is your general attitude toward the development of wave energy off of the Oregon coast?

Very positive	26%	22%	28%	29%
Positive	28%	27%	33%	30%
Neutral	11%	16%	7%	12%
Negative	1%	0%	2%	3%
Very negative	1%	0%	2%	3%
Do not have enough information to form an opinion.	32%	35%	29%	23%

Q-8 We would like to know which of the following information sources you currently use or would use to learn more about Oregon's energy situation and policy. Please circle the number of the frequency of your use.

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
a. Television news programs and specials				
Never	7%	7%	6%	8%
Infrequently	27%	27%	28%	27%
Frequently	45%	43%	47%	43%
Very Frequently	21%	23%	20%	23%
b. Oregon Public Broadcasting				
Never	17%	13%	19%	15%
Infrequently	35%	28%	37%	36%
Frequently	30%	36%	27%	32%
Very Frequently	19%	24%	17%	17%
c. Radio programs				
Never	23%	20%	27%	24%
Infrequently	41%	47%	41%	33%
Frequently	23%	19%	24%	27%
Very Frequently	13%	15%	8%	16%
d. The <i>Oregonian</i> newspaper				
Never	38%	15%	45%	62%
Infrequently	31%	32%	39%	22%
Frequently	20%	32%	13%	11%
Very Frequently	11%	21%	4%	5%
e. Other local newspapers				
Never	18%	26%	17%	10%
Infrequently	38%	48%	28%	34%
Frequently	31%	21%	37%	36%
Very Frequently	13%	6%	18%	20%

Q-8 We would like to know which of the following information sources you currently use or would use to learn more about Oregon's energy situation and policy. Please circle the number of the frequency of your use.

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
f. Local community leaders				
Never	34%	35%	36%	30%
Infrequently	53%	55%	53%	51%
Frequently	11%	6%	10%	18%
Very Frequently	2%	4%	1%	1%
g. State elected officials				
Never	28%	29%	28%	27%
Infrequently	58%	60%	62%	56%
Frequently	12%	9%	9%	16%
Very Frequently	2%	2%	1%	1%
h. Oregon Department of Energy				
Never	31%	31%	29%	31%
Infrequently	48%	42%	51%	52%
Frequently	18%	23%	18%	17%
Very Frequently	3%	4%	2%	1%
i. Universities and colleges				
Never	33%	35%	27%	29%
Infrequently	45%	42%	49%	45%
Frequently	17%	18%	22%	18%
Very Frequently	5%	5%	3%	9%
j. Utilities				
Never	10%	8%	11%	11%
Infrequently	45%	48%	41%	47%
Frequently	36%	33%	46%	33%
Very Frequently	8%	11%	3%	11%

Q-8 We would like to know which of the following information sources you currently use or would use to learn more about Oregon's energy situation and policy. Please circle the number of the frequency of your use.

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
k. Environmental groups				
Never	33%	26%	41%	33%
Infrequently	37%	36%	38%	35%
Frequently	22%	25%	18%	25%
Very Frequently	8%	13%	3%	7%

l. Information available on the Internet

Never	28%	24%	30%	32%
Infrequently	31%	28%	32%	30%
Frequently	29%	31%	29%	25%
Very Frequently	13%	18%	10%	13%

SECTION 2: What Are Oregonians' Attitudes And Values Regarding The Environment And Politics?

Q-9 Listed below are statements about the relationship between humans and the environment. For each, please indicate your level of agreement.

a. The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset by human activities.

Strongly Disagree	8%	4%	6%	12%
Mildly Disagree	11%	5%	18%	14%
Neutral	14%	13%	19%	10%
Mildly Agree	27%	26%	28%	30%
Strongly Agree	40%	53%	30%	40%

b. Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs.

Strongly Disagree	23%	28%	18%	19%
Mildly Disagree	26%	27%	24%	27%
Neutral	20%	17%	18%	26%
Mildly Agree	24%	25%	30%	20%
Strongly Agree	7%	3%	9%	8%

Q-9 Listed below are statements about the relationship between humans and the environment. For each, please indicate your level of agreement.

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
c. We are approaching the limit of people the earth can support.				
Strongly Disagree	13%	9%	11%	16%
Mildly Disagree	14%	12%	19%	13%
Neutral	27%	27%	30%	25%
Mildly Agree	20%	21%	18%	20%
Strongly Agree	27%	31%	23%	27%

d. The so-called "ecological crisis" facing humankind has been greatly exaggerated.				
Strongly Disagree	32%	40%	23%	35%
Mildly Disagree	17%	19%	19%	15%
Neutral	18%	14%	22%	17%
Mildly Agree	16%	16%	19%	14%
Strongly Agree	17%	12%	18%	20%

e. Plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist.				
Strongly Disagree	10%	9%	14%	9%
Mildly Disagree	9%	6%	8%	10%
Neutral	16%	14%	15%	22%
Mildly Agree	22%	24%	25%	18%
Strongly Agree	43%	47%	38%	41%

f. Humans were meant to rule over the rest of nature.				
Strongly Disagree	36%	45%	29%	34%
Mildly Disagree	13%	13%	7%	16%
Neutral	20%	17%	26%	20%
Mildly Agree	12%	10%	14%	15%
Strongly Agree	19%	15%	24%	15%

Q-10 From what you've read and heard, is there solid evidence that the average temperature on earth has been getting warmer over the past few decades, or not?

Yes	71%	82%	64%	68%
No	16%	5%	26%	21%
Don't know	13%	13%	10%	11%

Q-11 Do you believe that the earth is getting warmer...?

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
Mostly because of human activity such as burning fossil fuels.	59%	68%	51%	57%
Mostly because of natural patterns in the earth's environment.	26%	20%	31%	28%
Don't know	15%	11%	18%	15%

Q-12 On domestic policy issues, would you consider yourself to be?

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
Very Liberal	9%	14%	4%	9%
Liberal	22%	31%	15%	21%
Moderate	38%	31%	44%	39%
Conservative	26%	21%	35%	25%
Very Conservative	5%	4%	2%	6%

Q-12 On domestic policy issues, would you consider yourself to be?

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
Liberal	31%	44%	19%	30%
Moderate	38%	31%	44%	39%
Conservative	31%	25%	37%	31%

Q-13 There is a lot of talk these days about what our country's goals should be for the next ten or fifteen years. Listed below are some goals that different people say should be given top priority. Please mark the one you consider the most important in the long run. What would be your second choice? Please mark that second choice as well.

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
Materialist	18%	17%	19%	13%
Mixed	57%	49%	61%	66%
Postmaterialist	25%	34%	19%	22%

SECTION 3: Socio-demographic Characteristics Of Survey Respondents

Q-14 What is your current age in years

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
Mean age	55	54	55	58
Standard deviation	16	18	17	18

Q-15 Please indicate your gender?

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
Male	52%	65%	36%	48%
Female	48%	35%	64%	52%

Q-16 What level of education have you completed?

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
Grade School	1%	0%	2%	1%
Middle or junior high school	4%	4%	6%	3%
High school	18%	12%	18%	20%
Vocational school	6%	3%	7%	7%
Some college	32%	34%	31%	34%
College graduate	29%	35%	27%	27%
Graduate school	10%	13%	7%	8%

Q-17 How long have you lived in Oregon?

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
Mean	35	36	36	34
Standard deviation	24	24	24	24

Q-18 Which of the following best describes your current work situation?

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
Employed full time	36%	33%	46%	32%
Employed part time	11%	11%	8%	11%
Not employed outside the home	1%	2%	0%	2%
Unemployed	3%	1%	1%	6%
Retired	44%	47%	41%	43%
Other	6%	6%	4%	6%

Q-19 Which category best describes your household income (before taxes) in 2007?

	State-wide Sample	Portland Metro	Willamette Valley	Coastal Sample
Less than \$10,000	4%	3%	2%	6%
\$10,000 - \$ 14,999	7%	5%	5%	10%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	15%	15%	17%	14%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	18%	19%	16%	18%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	20%	19%	19%	20%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	17%	19%	18%	13%
\$75,000 – \$99,999	10%	10%	13%	10%
\$100,000 – \$149,999	6%	7%	8%	7%
\$150,000 – \$199,999	3%	2%	2%	2%
\$200,000 or more	1%	1%	1%	0%