

December 17, 2020

To: Climate Action Campaign

Fr: ALG Research

Re: Targeted States Support Bold Action to Combat Climate Change

A recent poll of registered voters in 2020/2022 targeted states finds **strong support for President-elect Biden and Congress to take bold action to combat climate change and protect America's great outdoors**. Nearly three-quarters of voters (73%) believe combating climate change should be an important priority for the President-elect and Congress to address, and strong majorities back President-elect Biden's plan for a historic investment in clean energy. This memo is intended to help CAC develop messages to persuade Democrats, Republicans, Independent voters, the new Administration, and Members of Congress to take action on Climate.

- **Overall, 60% of voters support President-Elect Biden's plan to make a historic, \$1.7 trillion dollar investment in clean energy.** While it already has super majority support as detailed, support is even higher for a more generic plan that omits Biden's name and the price-tag - a "major investment in combating climate change that would create clean energy jobs, grow the economy, safeguard our air and water, and protect America's great outdoors for future generations," is supported by 74% of voters overall, and across party lines with 90% of Democrats, 74% of Independents, and 58% of Republicans.
- **Voters are more likely to favorably view Members of Congress who call for a major investment in combating climate change.** After reading statements in favor of taking action to combat climate change, 59% of voters say they would be more likely to have a favorable view of any Member of Congress who supports such an investment.
- **Nearly three-quarters (73%) of voters overall and an even higher percentage of Independents (74%) believe combating climate change should be an important priority for the President-elect and Congress.** Combating climate change is an especially important legislative priority for Democrats (93% total important priority), voters of color (84%), and voters under 50 (80%).
- **Voters see taking action on climate change as more than environmental or public health policy, they see climate action as a net positive for the economy too.** By an 18-point margin, more voters believe combating climate change will create jobs and economic growth that are worth the investment (51%) rather than costing more than it's worth in jobs and economic growth (33%). Independents are

These findings are from an online survey, conducted by ALG Research November 11-17, 2020 among N=2703 registered voters. Just over N=200 interviews were collected in Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin while N=450 interviews were collected in Georgia.

even more likely to hold this opinion, seeing combating climate change as a net economic benefit by a 23-point margin (54% to 31%). “Investing in America’s public lands, iconic wildlife, and beautiful coastlines” is also seen as providing an economic benefit by a 40-point margin among voters overall (59% create / 19% cost).

- **Moral imperative and urgency messages focused on safeguarding our air, water, and lands for future generations and on the need to address climate change now emerged as the most effective.** These were the clear top two messages overall and among swing voters. The message focused on how time is running out to address climate change was especially effective with Democrats, while the message focused on future generations was the clear top choice with Republicans.

[FUTURE GENERATIONS] *“Our children should be able to experience America’s great outdoors. For the sake of future generations, we need to safeguard our air and water, protect America’s public lands, and take bold actions combating climate change, even if it means ending oil and gas drilling on those public lands.”*

[RUNNING OUT] *“Wildfires, hurricanes, drought, extreme heat: we’re living with the impacts of climate change and we are running out of time to do something about it. It’s time to end the obstruction and denial and work together to act on climate change by reducing carbon pollution and investing in clean energy.”*

- Ultimately, we believe a combination of these messages, emphasizing that **we are running out of time and need to work together to address climate change, protect our air and the great outdoors for future generations**, is our best overall message.
- **Communications to Black voters should also talk about how combating climate change can address racial and environmental injustice.** While messaging to Latino voters largely fell in line with the overall messaging results referenced above, Black voters’ top message specifically included how people of color live in places that are disproportionately affected by pollution and experience negative health effects as a result.

[RACIAL INJUSTICE] *“In the United States, people of color disproportionately live in places that are polluted with toxic waste and air pollution, leading to negative health effects. It’s time to end the environmental and racial injustice in our energy system and hold the industry responsible for the damage they cause.”*

- **Messaging on our opponents should focus on the actions of oil and gas CEOs** instead of the oil and gas industry as a whole. The oil and gas industry in general is

viewed favorably by a 9-point margin (48% favorable / 39% unfavorable). On the other hand, oil and gas CEOs are viewed unfavorably overall by a 35-point margin (23% favorable / 58% unfavorable), including both Independents (16% favorable / 51% unfavorable) and Republicans (37% favorable / 43% unfavorable).

- **Our top messengers overall are nurses and doctors, and NASA scientists.** These two groups were the most trusted sources of information when it comes to addressing climate change overall, and by more than 77% of voters across party lines. Farmers, ranchers, timber, and agriculture workers are also effective messengers with Republicans (87% trustworthy) and can help vouch for the job creation benefits of clean energy.
- **We need to make sure we have an effective way to reassure voters on the costs of a plan to combat climate change.** The most effective opposition messaging overall and with moveable voters focuses on the cost of a major investment in combating climate change, and that it would mean new taxes to families who are already struggling. Noting that the plan could be paid for by rolling back the Trump tax breaks for the super wealthy and closing tax loopholes for big corporations offers effective reassurance, as this was cited as how Biden's \$1.7 trillion dollar plan would be paid for, which generated 60% support in the poll. An attack on the impact on jobs is less effective and more easily countered by emphasizing the economic benefits of clean energy and investing in public lands.