

FACT SHEET

Survey on the economy and the environment March 2009

About the survey

- A telephone survey was conducted in February 2009 to obtain opinions and attitudes toward issues related to the economy and the environment.
- 501 registered voters across Minnesota participated in the survey.

Most significant findings

The economy is our most pressing issue.

- 51 percent named jobs and the economy as the most important issue facing the state.
- 76 percent believe improving the economy should be the government's top priority, in contrast to 18 percent who think that combating global warming should be the top priority.

Minnesota should use a North American oil supply.

- 87 percent believe Minnesota's oil supply should come from North America (such as Canada).
- 72 percent are concerned about Minnesota depending on Middle Eastern nations for its oil supply.

Minnesota should not enact a low-carbon fuel standard.

- 61 percent believe a standard should not be passed.
- 51 percent would be less likely to support a standard if it affects the ethanol industry.

Minnesotans are unsure about the value of state or regional cap-and-trade policies.

- 48 percent of respondents said Minnesota should not participate in cap-and-trade policies, while 42 percent said Minnesota should.

Minnesota has done well on energy and environmental issues.

- 68 percent are satisfied with Minnesota's efforts to address energy and environmental challenges.
- 65 percent believe that the federal government or an international governing body (such as the United Nations) is most responsible for addressing global warming issues.

Low-carbon fuel standard

- Minnesota has some of the nation's most aggressive environmental laws, including the boldest ethanol mandate and one of the highest renewable energy standards.
- Proponents tout a low-carbon fuel standard as an even higher environmental standard for Minnesota transportation fuels. However, it could have serious economic consequences.
- A low-carbon fuel standard would force Minnesota fuel suppliers to find sources of lower-carbon crude oil than Minnesota's current – primarily Canadian – sources. Currently, more than 80 percent of Minnesota's crude oil comes from Canada.
- Abandoning the infrastructure that supports the flow of Canadian oil to Minnesota could lead to higher fuel prices, supply issues for Minnesota businesses and consumers, and job losses.
- The corn ethanol industry could also be adversely affected by such a standard, because the standard could consider land-use as part of the full life-cycle analysis used for measuring ethanol's carbon emissions. This means that the growing and harvesting of corn used to make ethanol would disadvantage it as a fuel option in Minnesota.

Cap-and-trade policies

- If Minnesota was to adopt a cap-and-trade program, a "cap" would be set for overall emissions and then divided into allowances that would be distributed to participating entities. A participant could "trade" credits depending on whether it exceeds or stays within its allotted emissions allowance. An entity that is unable to stay within its emissions allowance could buy credits from a firm that stays within its emissions allowance.
- A state or regional cap-and-trade program in which Minnesota participates could disadvantage Minnesota as a place for companies to locate or relocate. If Minnesota has stricter regulations, companies may choose to locate/relocate to a place where they can operate at a lower cost with less environmental oversight. This would hurt the state's economy and only relocate – not lower – global emissions.

About the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

- The Minnesota Chamber of Commerce represents 2,400 companies, more than 500,000 employees, and more than 130 local chambers on state public policy and regulatory issues.