



# Climate Change & Communities of Color

*Key Poll Findings and Top Lines*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The concern that environmental changes are threatening our way of life is a key issue among minority voters in established and emerging battleground states. A recent survey of minority voters looked at how these communities understand climate change and environmental issues.

KEY FINDINGS



Climate change is a high-profile issue for minority voters, who are increasingly interested in climate issues and are paying closer attention to new information.



These voters agree that climate change is not a problem for the future and feel that our country is not devoting enough attention or resources to the issue.



Minority voters are pragmatic about environmental issues and are most concerned about the immediate ways in which their communities are affected, particularly in terms of economic impacts.



Minority voters are optimistic about the economic benefits of addressing environmental and climate issues. They believe that investing in the green economy will create new industries and good-paying jobs.



At a more fundamental level, minority voters make sense of these issues through the prism of their values and believe that we have a moral obligation to address climate change.

POLL DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

WORK SITUATION	TOTAL	AFRICAN AMERICAN	LATINO
Employed	40%	35%	48%
Retired, disabled	42%	49%	33%
Unemployed	5%	5%	6%
Student	4%	3%	4%
Homemaker	6%	5%	6%
Refused/Don't Know	3%	3%	3%

INCOME LEVEL	TOTAL	AFRICAN AMERICAN	LATINO
Under \$40,000	38%	41%	34%
Over \$40,000	43%	36%	52%

EDUCATION LEVEL	TOTAL	AFRICAN AMERICAN	LATINO
Non-College	61%	64%	58%
College Grads	36%	32%	40%

RELIGIOUS SERVICE ATTENDANCE	TOTAL	AFRICAN AMERICAN	LATINO
Frequent	53%	59%	43%
Infrequent	35%	32%	41%
Secular	8%	5%	13%

AGE	TOTAL	AFRICAN AMERICAN	LATINO
Under 50	30%	26%	36%
50 and Over	67%	70%	62%
Refused/Don't Know	3%	4%	2%

MARITAL STATUS	TOTAL	AFRICAN AMERICAN	LATINO
Married	46%	37%	62%
Unmarried living w/ partner	4%	4%	4%
Single	19%	20%	15%
Separated/divorced	12%	14%	10%
Widowed	16%	22%	8%
Refused/Don't Know	3%	3%	2%

CHILDREN 18 OR YOUNGER LIVING IN HOUSEHOLD	TOTAL	AFRICAN AMERICAN	LATINO
Yes	27%	23%	33%
No	72%	75%	66%
Refused/Don't Know	2%	3%	1%

These findings are from a recent survey of 800 registered minority voters, including a base sample of African American and Latino voters, and an oversample of 100 Asian voters in battleground states, which include FL, GA, MI, NV, NC, OH, TX and VA, the 9 counties that make up California, Bay Area, and Los Angeles County. The survey was conducted by brilliant corners Research & Strategies Inc. on behalf of Green for All from June 30 to July 15, 2014. The survey was conducted by telephone using professional interviewers calling a randomly drawn sample from a list of African American, Latino and Asian registered voters who self-identify as likely voters. The sample was weighted by race to match their proportional representation within this universe of geographic locations. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3.5 %.

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# A Word From Nikki



**Nikki Silvestri**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

For me, environmental injustice is personal. I grew up in Los Angeles, with older foster brothers and dozens of extended family members who lived across the city. Air quality, and a multitude of other environmental factors, negatively impacted my family's health—I suffer from asthma myself, and know firsthand how the inability to breathe can change one's life.

I want our kids to be able to breathe easier than my foster brothers and I did. I want us all, and future generations, to meet a planet healthier than the one we have now— while being secure in our ability to make a living, too.

This is why I am so driven as the Executive Director of Green For All. I'm proud to have been a member of the founding team and continue to be humbled by what the organization has accomplished—but we still have a lot of work to do.

There is a lot of rumor and speculation surrounding what people of color think about the environment and climate change. Yet, too often the communities that are first and worst hit by the impacts of climate change are not part of the conversation. Green For All commissioned this poll of minority voters to clarify what communities of color think about environmental issues today—in 2014, the year that the National Climate Assessment is telling us we have to get serious or suffer the consequences; the year that the federal government is taking groundbreaking action to curb carbon emissions; the year that the President is leading a task force on climate resilience. It's the beginning of a new era for climate solutions, and we wanted to know: What do our communities think about climate change and environment in 2014?

The answer is clear: People of color care deeply about the environment and the impacts of climate change. We understand the urgency of addressing these threats because we experience the effects every single day.

We know that tackling these challenges won't be easy. Initial investment may be high, but we know that the long-term payoff will be higher. We're ready to come to the table to find solutions—and we'll support politicians who are willing to do the same. We have faith that building the green economy will make our environment cleaner *and* spur economic development that will create jobs and help lift our communities out of poverty.

Most importantly, addressing climate change is a moral imperative. We have an obligation to one another to make sure that *everybody* enjoys a healthy planet. This firmly held belief is a testament to the importance of family and community — our folks have survived historical oppression by joining together and taking care of each other. That we approach climate change in the same way reinvigorates me to continue fighting so that our children may breathe easier than we do.

*Nikki Silvestri*

# About Green For All



*Green For All is a national organization working to build an inclusive green economy strong enough to lift people out of poverty.*

## Our Mission

*Green For All is dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans through a clean energy economy. We work in collaboration with the business, government, labor, and grassroots communities to increase quality jobs and opportunities in the green industry – all while holding the most vulnerable people at the center of our agenda.*

A clean energy economy will move America past some of its most pressing challenges. By making us energy independent, it will improve our national and economic security. By radically reducing the pollution that causes global warming, it will improve the health of our families and neighborhoods. And by creating millions of quality jobs and careers, it will breathe new life into our economy, strengthen our middle class, and better protect us from future economic turmoil.

## Our Work

### Innovate Policy

Green For All develops and advocates for innovative policies that 1) promote a clean-energy economy to solve the urgent problems of both our economy and our environment, and 2) enable governments at the federal, state and local levels to expand access and opportunity in the clean-energy economy.

### Develop Capacity

Green For All helps develop and strengthen the capacity of— and partnerships among— business, government, labor, non-profits and grassroots communities.

### Build A Movement

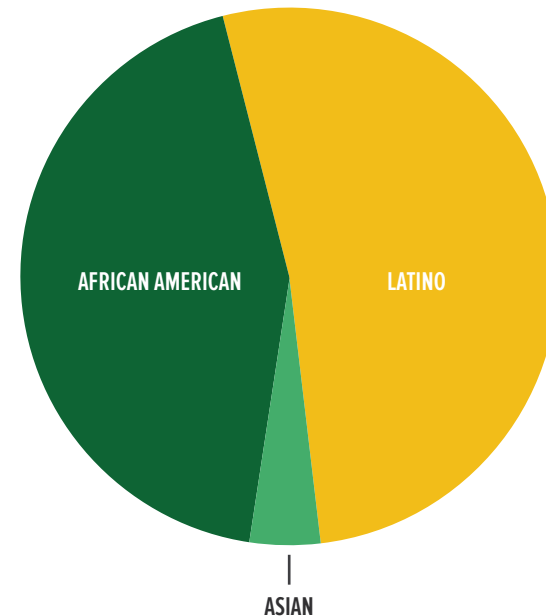
Green For All engages and equips diverse and nontraditional networks of leaders, organizations, and communities to build awareness and increase demand for policies and infrastructure that create clean energy jobs and investment in green industries.

## Climate Change Vs Global Warming

There is a statistically significant variation in the responses between African Americans and Latino respondents when using “Climate Change” vs “Global Warming.”

- “Climate Change” seems to resonate better with African American respondents
- “Global Warming” seems to resonate better with Latino respondents
- Asian respondents did not have significant variation in responses

Either way you frame it— as climate change or global warming— minorities overwhelmingly feel these changes threaten our way of life.



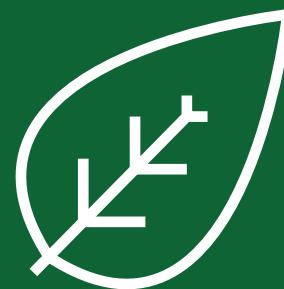
## Between The Generations



There was no significant difference in the urgency to address climate change between younger respondents and older.

## The Climate Candidate

Minority voters are more supportive of candidates willing to give resources to fight climate change than those who do not.



## Where It Ranks

When asked to rank on a scale of 0-10 the importance of addressing climate change, the average was 7.9.

7.9/10

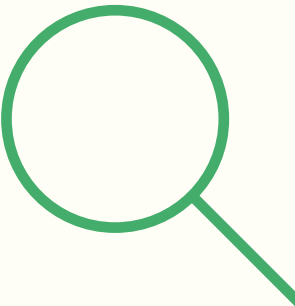
## Misleading Data

There is seemingly contradicting data. Greater than 50% of respondents agreed carbon emission standards were likely to cause job loss, and an even larger percentage thought that they would create jobs and spur innovation.

## The Minority Vote

75%

Of minority voters say they are following new information about climate change more closely now.



68%

of minority voters feel climate change is an issue we need to be worried about right now, not something we can put off into the future.

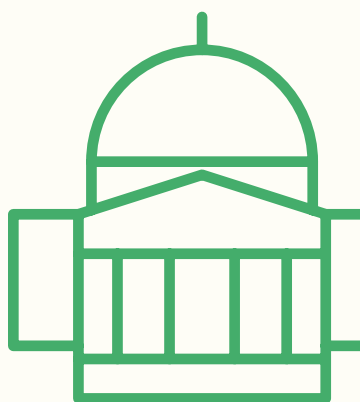


62%

say not enough devoted toward climate change.

55%

feel not enough devoted to global warming.



70%

of minority voters said that they were more likely to support candidates willing to expand resources to tackle the issue and grow new industries over those arguing that addressing climate change will cost jobs and hurt our economy.





Onto a crowded issue-angst plate, the concern that environmental changes are threatening our way of life is emerging as an issue among registered voters in battleground states. The poll conducted by Brilliant Corners revealed a great deal of information. While there is no silver bullet, there are a number of overall takeaways.

These findings are from a recent survey of 800 likely minority voters, including a base sample of African American and Latino voters and an oversample of 100 Asian voters in battleground states, which include FL, GA, MI, NV, NC, OH, TX and VA and the 9 counties that make up California’s Bay Area and Los Angeles County. The survey was conducted by brilliant corners Research & Strategies Inc. on behalf of Green for All from June 30 – July 15, 2014. The survey was conducted by telephone using professional interviewers calling a randomly drawn sample from a list of African American, Latino and Asian registered voters who self-identify as likely voters. The sample was weighted by race to match their proportional representation within this universe of geographic locations. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 3.5%.



Brilliant Corners is a nationally and internationally recognized polling firm that conducted ground breaking work on behalf of the Democratic National Committee, which culminated in its widely successful 50 state strategy.

As lead pollster for the DNC, Brilliant Corners was instrumental in expanding the electorate and provided the foundation for the historic gains of the 2008 presidential election. In addition to its critical role as a member of the Obama for America polling team, brilliant corners continues to assist high profile corporate clients with their branding and reposition needs.

Brilliant Corners also operates as a boutique polling firm specializing in strategies for targeting and constructing alliances with specific audiences that include youth and culturally diverse and emerging markets. In today’s swiftly evolving environments we offer our clients continuous consultation using a more agile hands-on service model that enables the brilliant corners team to assist our clients in forging new pathways through difficult terrain in the political, policy, opinion and market research arenas.

At Brilliant Corners, we’ve dispensed with the formulaic approaches still in heavy rotation by too many in the field that at best can provide a road map for the roads already traveled. Our eyes are always focused on expansion.

Our goal is to help clients stake out new territory that can impact critical electoral and market segments by providing thoughtful, relevant, and values-driven communication frameworks. Currently, our next-step approach to research design is relied upon by a number of major progressive organizations and high-profile corporate clients.



Key Findings

Overall the data does not show a large divide amongst respondents on how they view these issues



Transactional issues rank as most the important amongst those polled

Respondents see hope in the green economy



Protecting the environment was widely viewed as a moral as well as fiscal responsibility



## Green & Clean Jobs



*75% agree that new carbon emission standards will spur research and innovations that will not only keep costs down but, more importantly, create new industries with good-paying jobs.*



## A Moral Responsibility

At a more fundamental level, minority voters make sense of these issues through the prism of their values.



*32% of voters identified our moral duty to leave our children a habitable planet as the most significant reason for supporting new carbon emissions standards.*





# Key Takeaway Points

Either way you frame it—as climate change (59 percent) or global warming (62 percent)—minorities overwhelmingly feel these changes threaten our way of life.

Heightened awareness of environmental issues coincides with growing interest in climate change and environmental issues: 77 percent say they have become more interested in climate change over the last couple of years (39 percent much more interested). A plurality (38 percent) point to increases in natural disasters as the reason why they have become more interested.

Minority voters are paying more attention to climate issues: A staggering 75 percent of these voters say they are following new information about climate change issues more closely now (26 very closely and 48 percent somewhat closely).

Not surprisingly, given the rise in concern about environmental issues, minority voters don't feel our country is devoting enough attention and resources to the issue: 62 percent say not enough devoted toward climate change and 55 percent feel not enough devoted to global warming.

*The environment isn't an issue that minorities feel is something we can put off, an overwhelming 68 percent majority of minority voters feel climate change is an issue we need to be worried about right now, not something we can put off into the future.*



Environmental issues are seen as a problem not only on the health front, but even more intensely as one on the economic front for these voters. Rising gas (8.3 means) and energy cost (8.1) along with health issues like asthma (7.4), toxic waste (7.4), water pollution (7.4) and shortages (7.3) and carbon pollution (7.2) are the top problems minorities associate with environmental issues when we tested a list of issues on a scale of zero to ten with ten being something you personally worry about a great deal and zero being something you don't worry about at all.

While minority voters may agree that rising carbon emission standards for power plants might raise prices and cost some jobs (50 percent agree), 76 percent agreed that ultimately new standards will spur research and innovations that will help keep costs down and, more importantly, create new industries with well-paying jobs. In fact, they feel their communities can benefit from investing in climate mitigation in important ways, identifying the following as among the most important positive impacts: providing training opportunities for workers to transition out of shrinking industries (7.4 means on a zero to ten scale of importance); the nearly 2 million jobs the EPA estimates that will be created by basic repairs to our water infrastructure (7.3); stimulating growth in manufacturing sectors (7.1); and helping the United States lead the world once again in technology and innovation (7.1).

*Politicians looking to compete for votes from the increasingly diverse electorate of battleground states would do well to support efforts to address climate change. By an overwhelming margin (70 percent to 20 percent), minority voters are more likely to support a candidate willing to expand resources to tackle the issue and grow new industries over a candidate who rejects these efforts based on the argument that it will cost millions of jobs and hurt our economy.*

*For these voters, protecting the environment isn't simply about economics or a transactional calculation—it is first and foremost a values issue for these voters. In fact the most significant reason for supporting new carbon emissions standards was fulfilling a moral duty to leave our children a habitable planet (32 percent), followed by creating jobs (23 percent), and reducing catastrophic weather events (17 percent).*



### Minority voters support implementation of carbon pollution standards.

- Minority voters' opinions on carbon pollution standards reflects a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of this issue and reflects their pragmatism: Even though they believe that carbon emission standards will cause energy prices to rise in the short-term, minority voters overwhelmingly agree (77 percent) that ultimately new standards "will spur research and innovations to keep prices low and create whole new industries with good paying jobs."
- Further, carbon pollution standards are in line with minority voters' values. The primary reason for supporting the new standards was to "fulfill our moral duty to leave our children a habitable planet" (33 percent); followed by "new clean-energy industries and efficiency will create good-paying jobs that can't be outsourced" (23 percent); and "reduce health related costs linked to carbon pollution" (18 percent).

### Minority voters will support candidates who care about the environment.

- Minority voters overwhelmingly agree that climate change is threatening our way of life and is a problem that we need to be worried about right now. Moreover, 62 percent of minority voters agree that our country does not devote enough attention and resources to address the issue of climate change (53 percent for global warming).
- Thus, environmental and climate issues represent a potential avenue for engaging with minority voters, and poll data suggest a map for how to do so effectively: frame the issue in terms of moral duty to appeal to voters' values; focus on economic impacts and benefits first and foremost; choose wording based on the voting group (global warming vs. climate change).
- The overall takeaway is that the electorate in battleground states is becoming increasingly diverse and the green economy is one way to garner support from these voters.



# Climate Change & Communities of Color

*Key Poll Findings and Top Lines*

