



2012 Survey Issue Brief

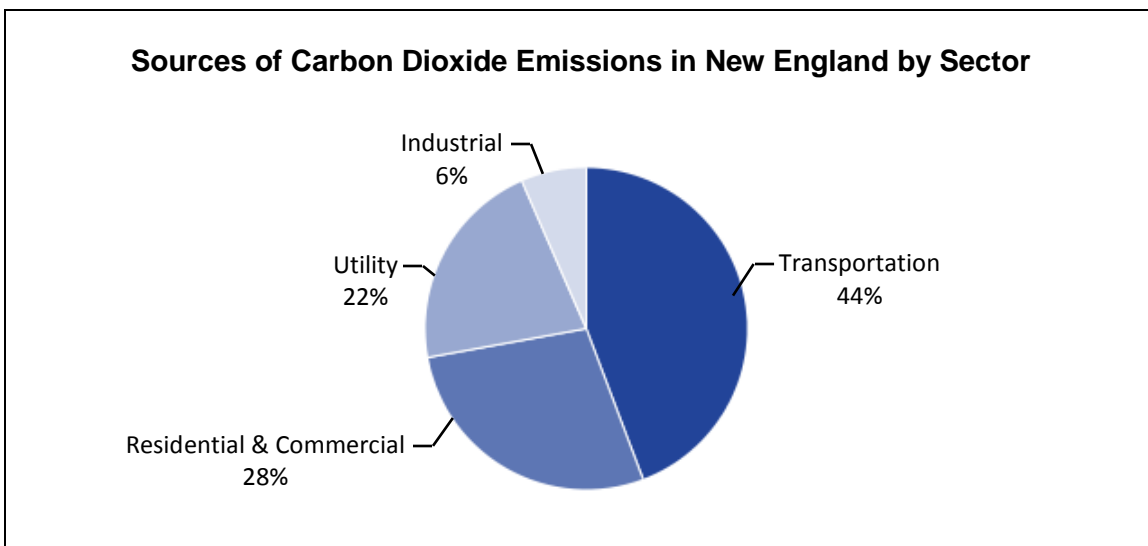
New Englanders Remain Concerned about Climate Change

An annual survey conducted by Opinion Dynamics for the New England Energy Alliance found that an overwhelming majority of New Englanders continue to be concerned about the effects of global warming or climate change. In addition, more are willing to contribute at least *something* extra every month on their electric bill to fund efforts to reduce carbon emissions from power plants.

Interestingly, while concern about climate change remains significant, support for New England's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), the nation's first cap-and-trade initiative to reduce carbon emissions from electricity generating plants, has significantly declined. In addition, New Englanders are apparently not convinced that ratepayer subsidized energy efficiency and green energy programs are helping to reduce global warming.

73% are concerned about the impacts of global warming or climate change

Carbon dioxide (CO₂), a leading greenhouse gas emission, is generated when fossil fuels are burned for electricity generation, transportation and manufacturing as well as to heat homes and businesses. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, New England's transportation sector is the largest generator of CO₂, followed by the residential and commercial sectors, the electric utility industry and the industrial sector.



Seventy-three percent (73%) of New Englanders are at least somewhat concerned about the effects of climate change – with 45% being *very concerned*. In comparison, a Gallup Poll

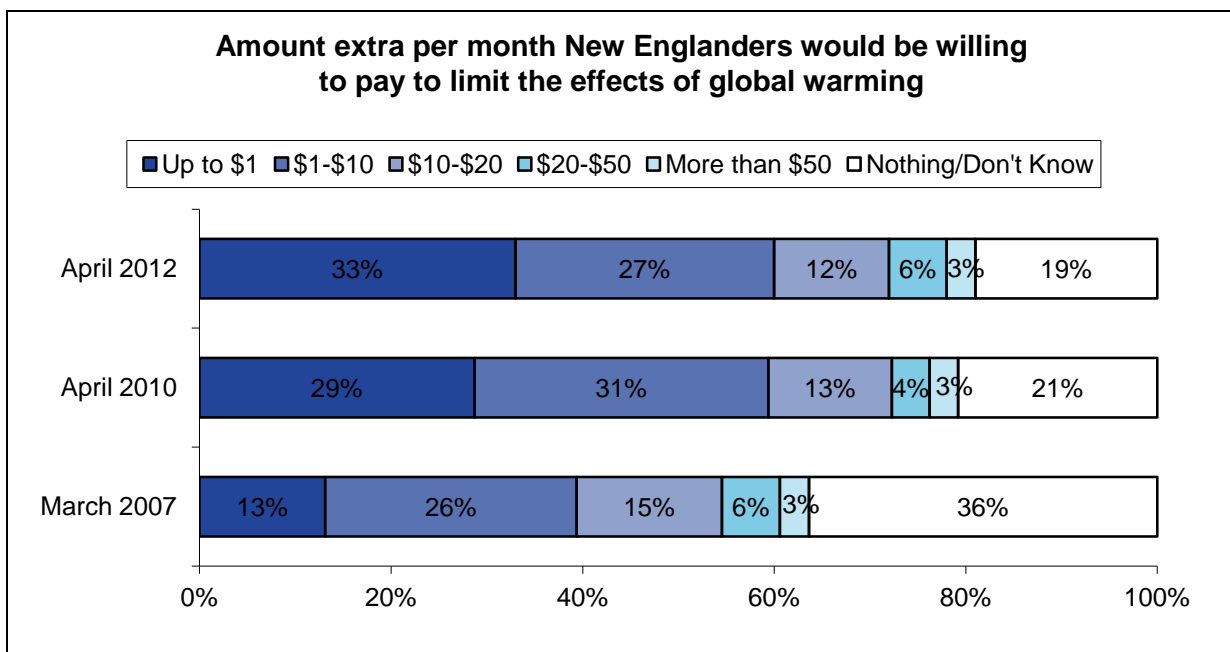


conducted earlier in the year (March 2012) found that only 52% of Americans say the effects of global warming have already begun to happen—down from 61% who felt that way in 2008.

81% are willing to pay more for electricity to reduce carbon emissions from power plants

About eight in ten (81%) said they would pay at least *something* extra every month – at least up to a dollar – on their electric bill to help mitigate the impacts of global warming – up substantially from 70% last year. Twenty-seven percent (27%) said they’d be willing to spend between \$1 and \$10 per month extra, and twenty-one percent (21%) said they would be willing to contribute more.

However, most are not willing to spend too much extra. Fewer than half (41%) would spend an additional \$30 more per month to purchase all their electricity from renewable resources to help the environment. Interestingly, this percentage dropped to just one-third (33%) when the cost was presented on an annual basis (\$360).



Drop in support for the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

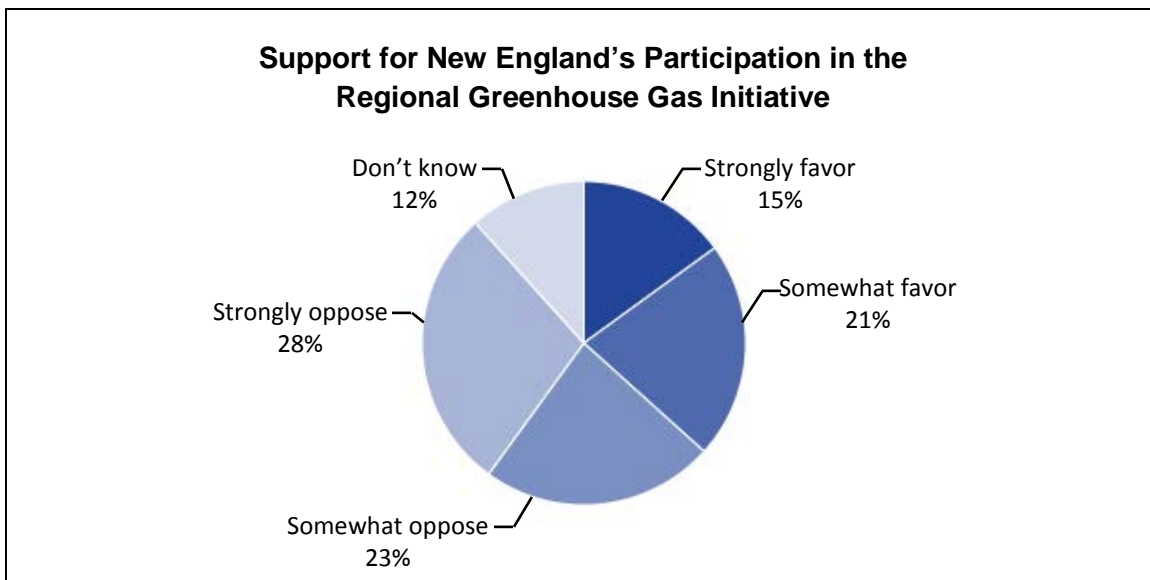
RGGI is a cooperative effort among nine northeastern states that involves: capping carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from power plants; auctioning CO₂ allowances; and investing the proceeds in energy programs that are designed to further reduce emissions – such as energy efficiency and green energy programs.

Supporters of RGGI say the money collected through this initiative is well-spent on energy programs that have created over 7,000 jobs in the region over the past few years. Opponents say



this ‘cap and trade’ program is just a carbon tax that has increased electricity prices by over \$270 million and hasn’t reduced emissions.

Despite strong global warming concerns, support for New England’s participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) has nevertheless decreased by 10 percentage points from last year to just 36%, while at least half somewhat oppose it. The underlying reasons for this decline are not readily apparent. However, the decline is in sync with the region’s increasing skepticism of government mandated efficiency and global warming related programs.



New Englanders not convinced rate-payer funded programs are reducing global warming

New Englanders are fairly evenly split on the effectiveness of rate-payer funded programs designed to promote wise energy use and reduce global warming. Forty-nine percent (49%) said such programs are effective while forty-four percent (44%) said they are wasteful.

The annual telephone survey was performed by Opinion Dynamics Corp for the New England Energy Alliance in April 2012 and included 600 registered voters proportionately distributed throughout New England. The margin of error is +/-4%. The complete results on a variety of energy issues are available at www.newenglandenergyalliance.org.

The New England Energy Alliance is a coalition of energy companies and trade organizations that advocates for action to ensure the availability, reliability, and affordability of future energy supplies.