

**Survey on American Attitudes on the Environment –
Key Findings**

May 2005

Yale University School of Forestry & Environmental Studies

KEY FINDINGS

The Spring 2005 Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies Survey on American Attitudes on the Environment reveals an overwhelming public desire for a new direction for United States energy policy.

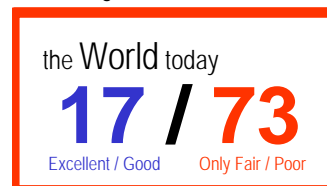
The State of the Environment: More than half of Americans believe the country's environment is getting worse, not better

?? A majority (52%) of Americans believe the environment in the United States is getting worse. Just 15% think it is getting better.

- Women are more downbeat about the direction of the environment (56% getting worse, 12% getting better) than are men (47% getting worse, 18% getting better).
- Among Democrats, 70% say the US environment is getting worse and just 6% say it is getting better. Among Republicans, 33% say it is getting worse, but just 25% say it is getting better. A majority of Independents say the environment is getting worse, and just 15% say it is getting better.
- 63% of residents in urban areas, 50% of suburbanites and 47% of rural Americans say the US environment is getting worse.

More than half of Americans believe the country's environment is getting worse.

Thinking about the environment... How would you rate the overall quality of the environment in...



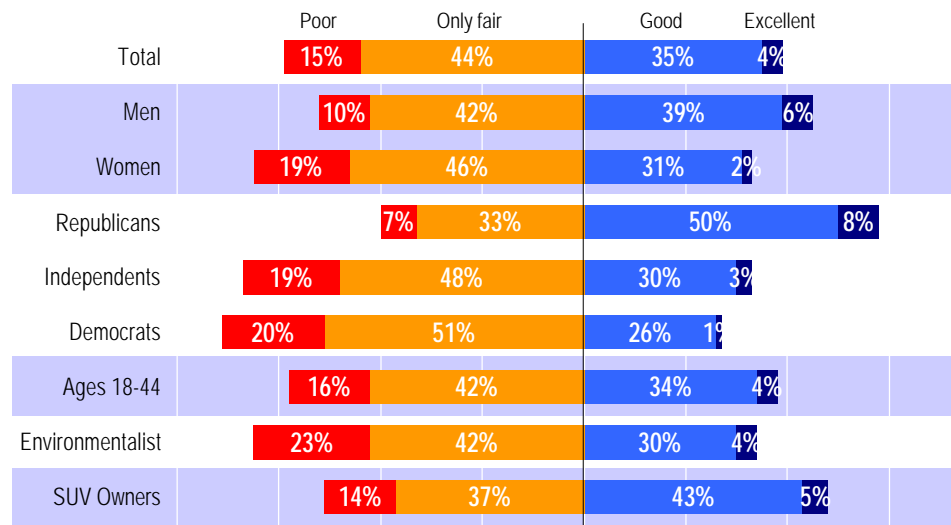
52% believe it is getting worse, including 47% of men, 56% of women, 33% of Republicans and 70% of Democrats

Just 15% of Americans think the quality of the environment in the United States is getting better.

Yale Environment Survey, May 15-22 2005, 1002 interviews

Three of five Americans rate the country's environment as only fair or poor. Just 4 per cent rate it as "excellent."

Q: How would you rate the overall quality of the environment in the United States today?



Yale Environment Survey, May 15-22 2005, 1002 interviews

?? More than two-thirds (68%) of Americans say the federal government doesn't do enough for the environment and should do more. 49% say the federal government should do 'much more.' 49% say the federal government should do 'much more.' 63% say the President doesn't do enough and should do more for the environment, too.

Q: Do you think [the federal government / your state government / your local government] does too much, about the right amount, or not enough for the environment?

	Federal government	State government	Local government
Should do <u>much</u> more	49	45	42
Should do some more	19	17	17
Right Amount	20	29	32
Does too much	7	4	4

Not enough – should do more:

	Federal	State	Local	
Total	68	62	59	Total
Men	64	61	56	Men
Women	72	63	62	Women
Dem	85	77	70	Dem
Ind	73	66	65	Ind
Rep	48	43	41	Rep

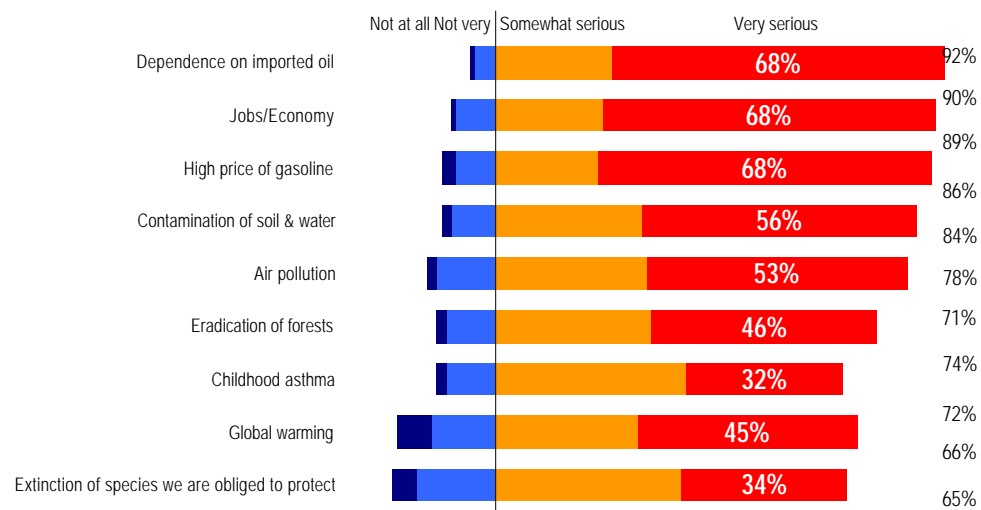
- Just 7% of Americans (including 2% of Democrats and 13% of Republicans) think the federal government does ‘too much’ for the environment.
- 48% of Republicans, 73% of Independents and 85% of Democrats think the federal government doesn’t do enough and should do more for the environment.
- 61% of SUV owners want the federal government to do more for the environment.

Top Concerns: Dependence on Imported Oil

?? Americans are nearly unanimous in the belief that dependence on imported oil is a very serious problem. Fully 92% say it is a serious problem and 68% say it is a ‘very’ serious problem.

Top Concerns

Now I am going to read you a few issues, and I would like you to tell me how serious a problem you think it is.

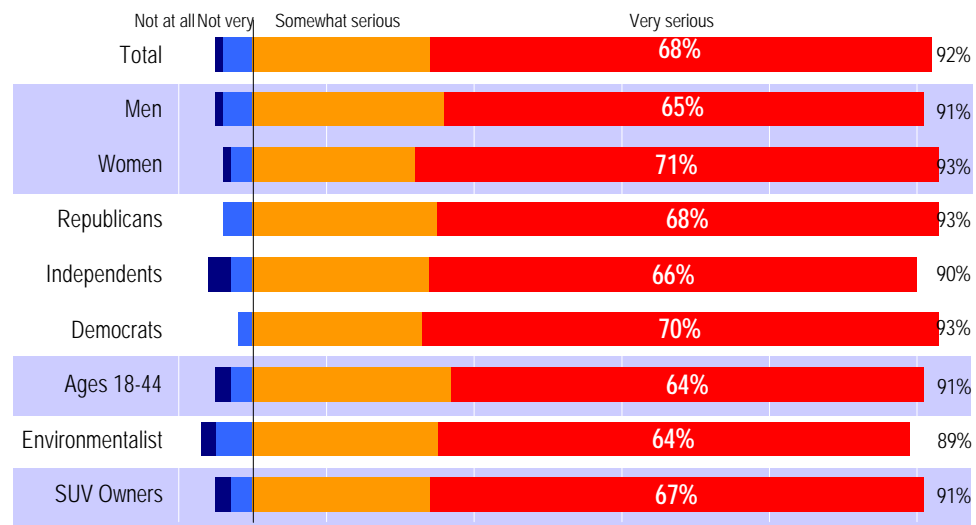


Yale Environment Survey, May 15-22 2005, 1002 interviews

- Americans are more concerned about our dependence on imported oil than about global warming (48% very serious problem), air pollution (53% very serious problem) or contamination of soil and water (56% very serious problem).
- Democrats (70%), Republicans (68%) and Independents (66%) all agree, this is a very serious problem.

More than nine out of ten Americans believe that dependence on imported oil is a serious problem

Q: How serious a problem is dependence on imported oil?

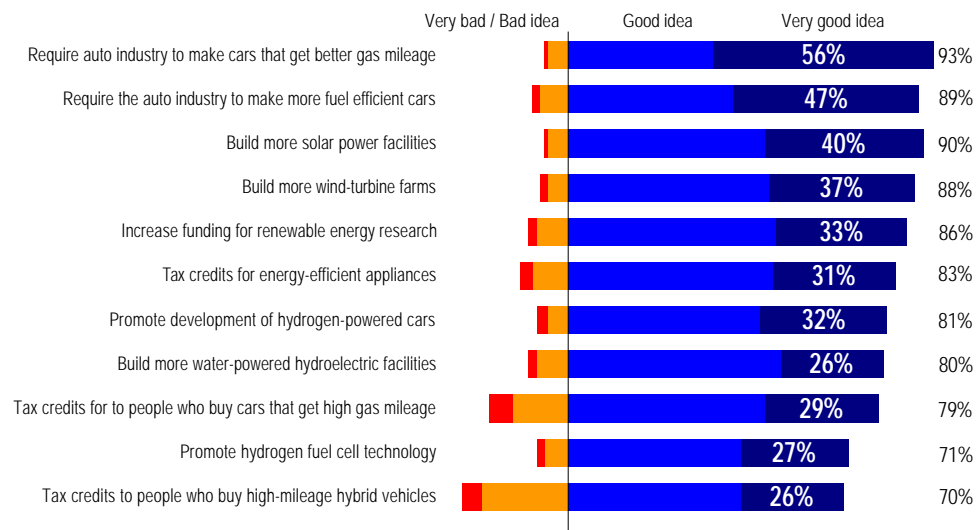


Yale Environment Survey, May 15-22 2005, 1002 interviews

?? The most popular remedy to America's dependence on imported oil: requiring the auto industry to make cars that get better gas mileage. 93% of Americans say this is a good idea. 56% say it is a 'very good' idea.

Best solutions to US dependence on imported oil

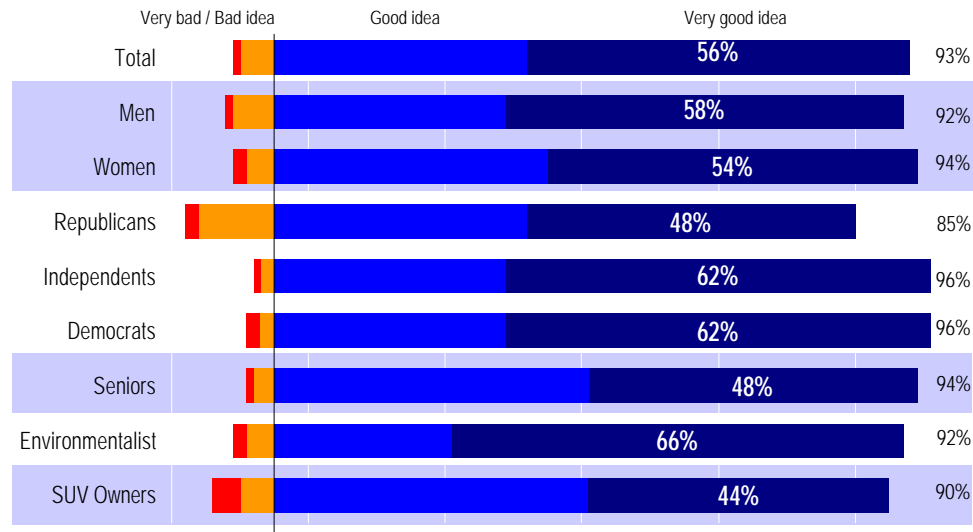
Now I am going to read you some possible ways of reducing U.S. dependence on imported oil. Please tell me if you think it is a...



Yale Environment Survey, May 15-22 2005, 1002 interviews

93% of Americans want the US Government to require the auto industry to make cars that get better gas mileage

Now I am going to read you some possible ways of reducing U.S. dependence on imported oil.
Require the auto industry to make more fuel-efficient cars. Is this a...

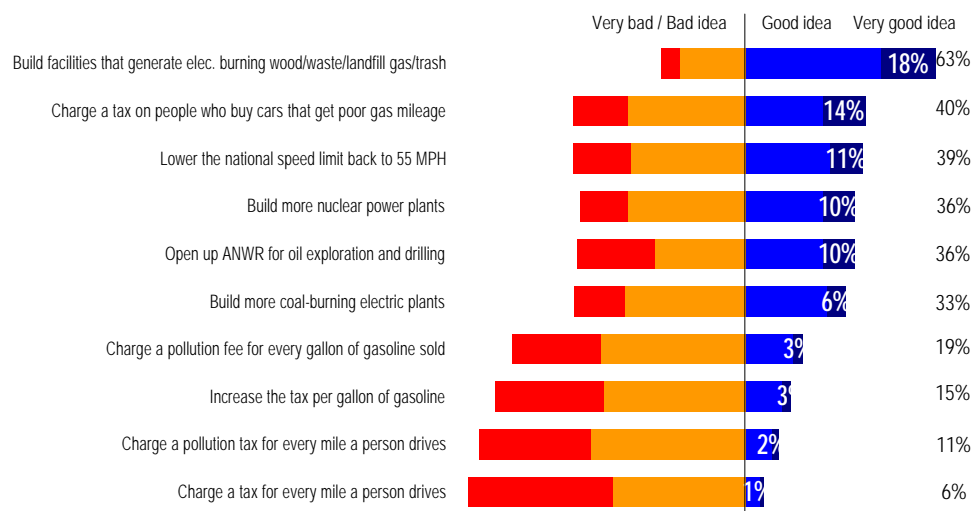


Yale Environment Survey, May 15-22 2005, 1002 interviews

- ?? There is broad support for a new emphasis on finding alternative energy sources.
- Building more solar power facilities is considered “a good idea” by 90% of the public;
 - 87% support expanded wind farms, and
 - 86% want increased funding for renewable energy research.

Less-popular solutions

Now I am going to read you some possible ways of reducing U.S. dependence on imported oil.
Please tell me if you think it is a...



Yale Environment Survey, May 15-22 2005, 1002 interviews

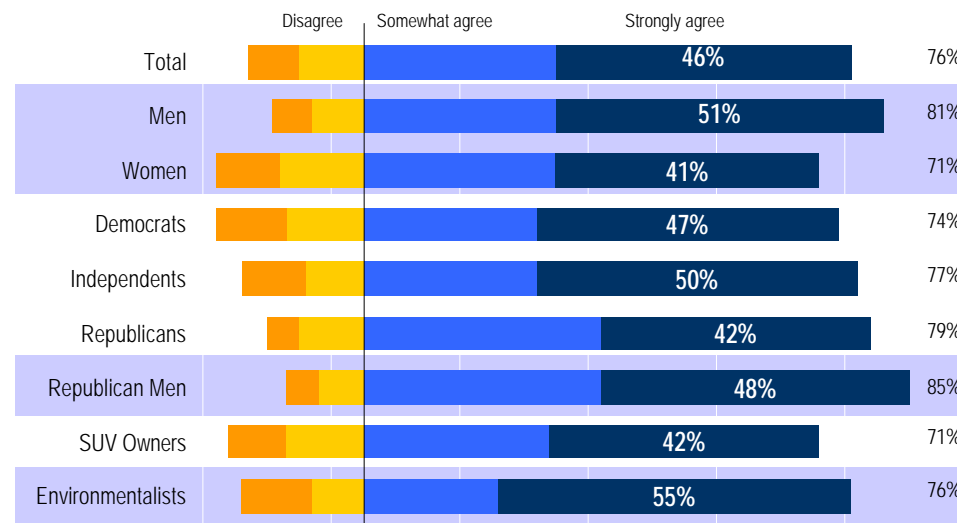
- ?? The least popular ideas are those that involve increasing taxes on consumers.
- 15% support increasing the tax per gallon of gasoline.
 - Just 6% of Americans think it's a good idea to charge a tax for every mile a person drives – this idea has been recently touted on the op-ed page of the Wall Street Journal and floated by Oregon legislators.

Americans believe we can protect the environment and still have strong economic growth.

- ?? Three-fourths of Americans agree with the following statement: *“You don't have to sacrifice environmental protection to get economic growth. The choice between jobs and environment is a false one: we can have both.”* Respondents to the survey were not told that this statement was made by former President Bill Clinton in 1992.

“We can have both”

Q: Do you agree or disagree: “You don't have to sacrifice environmental protection to get economic growth. The choice between jobs and environment is a false one: we can have both.” (Bill Clinton, 1992)



Yale Environment Survey, May 15-22 2005, 1002 interviews

- 73% of Democrats, 78% of Republicans, and 85% of Republican men agree with this statement.
- (In 1994, a Times Mirror / Roper Starch Worldwide survey found that 66% of Americans believe that environmental protection and economic development go hand in hand.)

Sources for information: So many, Americans don't know who to believe.

- ?? There is a lot of confusion out there about the environment, and this survey shows that Americans are not exactly sure about which information they should believe and who they should trust.
- A majority (53%) of Americans says that “there is so much information and disagreement in the media that I don't know who to believe about what is best for the environment.”
 - Just 42% of Americans say “I have enough information to have a good idea about what is best for the environment.”

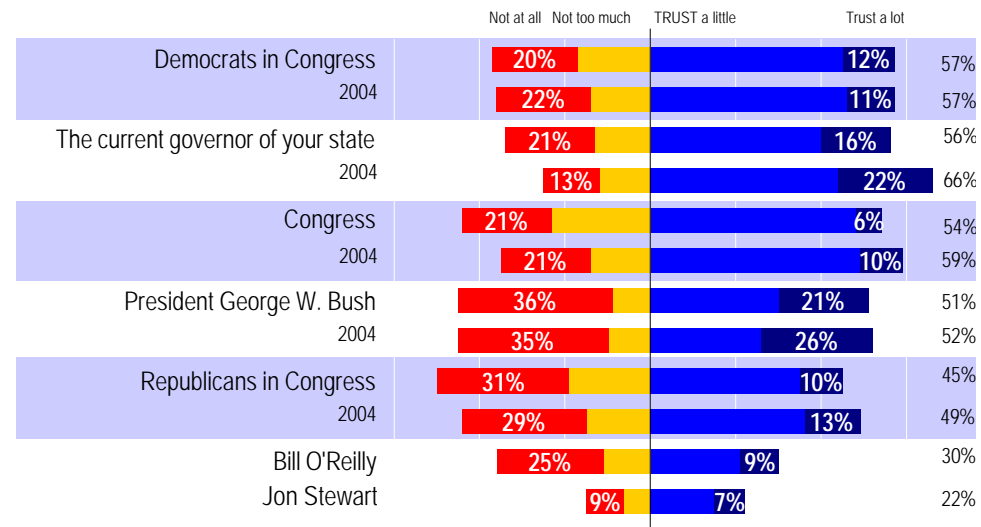
Q: With which statement do you agree more?
 “There is so much information and disagreement in the media that I don't know who to believe about what is best for the environment.”
 OR
 “I have enough information to have a good idea about what is best for the environment.”
(percentage of respondents)

	I don't know who to believe	I have enough information
All Respondents	53	42
Men	46	49
Women	60	36
18-44	52	44
45-64	53	45
Seniors	54	37
Democrats	56	40
Independents	53	41
Republicans	51	47
Environmentalists	40	58
SUV Owners	57	41
College Graduates	46	51

- ?? Two-thirds of Americans (67%) say they generally get news and information about the environment from television news programs.
- 50% say they get it from the newspaper, while 28% of Americans get environment news and information from the Internet.
- ?? Democrats in Congress are far more trusted than Republicans in Congress, 57% to 45%. (The Democratic number is unchanged from 2004. The Republican number is down from 49% in 2004.)
- ?? The most trusted sources of information about environmental issues are scientists at major universities. 38% of Americans say they trust them ‘a lot.’
- ?? Of Americans who know who Jon Stewart is, 59% say they trust him at least a little as a source for information about environmental issues. Of Americans who know who Bill O'Reilly is, 45% say they trust him at least a little.

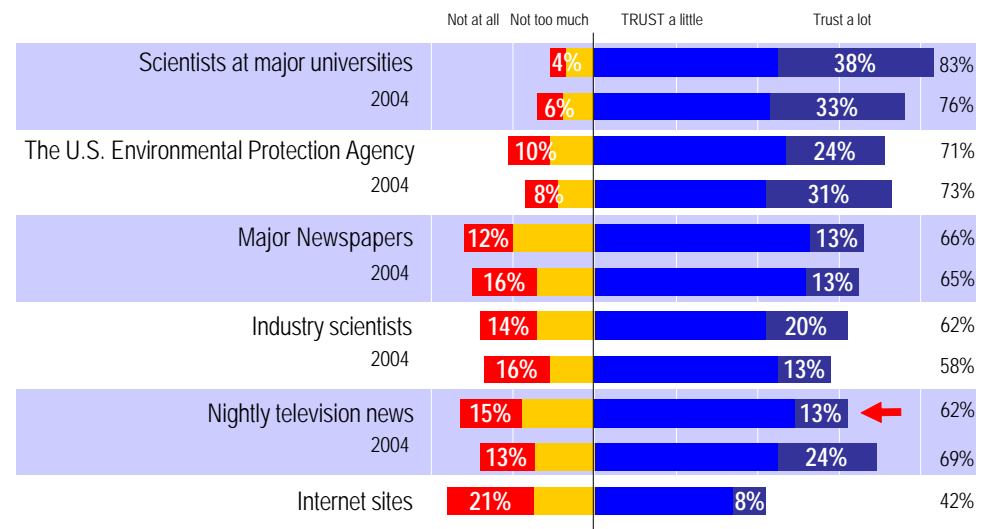
Sources of Information

Q: I am going to read you the names of some public figures and organizations who may be sources of information about environmental issues...



?? A dramatic difference from last year's poll: Just 13% say they trust nightly television news 'a lot' as a source for information about the environment. That's down from 24% in 2004

Q: I am going to read you the names of some public figures and organizations who may be sources of information about environmental issues...



Americans are interested in higher-mileage cars, though one in four Americans say they would ‘never’ buy a hybrid.

- ?? 23% of Americans say they would ‘never’ buy a hybrid car.
- Two-thirds (66%) of Americans say they would consider buying a hybrid (including 3% who say they already have).
 - But just 6% say they would never buy a car that gets 35 miles or more to the gallon.
 - There are real differences between the differing levels of education. Among those with a high school education or less, fully 38% say they would never buy a hybrid. Among college grads, just 13% say they wouldn’t buy one.
 - Among the least likely to consider buying a hybrid: Americans with children at home – 31% say they would never buy a hybrid, compared to just 16% of those with no children.
 - In the West, fully 81% say they would consider buying a hybrid, while just 11% say they would never buy one.

- ?? 43% of Americans say they would never buy an S.U.V.
- 42% say they have bought or would consider buying an S.U.V.

Americans support new hydrogen fuel cell technology – despite their low awareness of the technology.

- ?? Just 8% of Americans claim to be ‘very familiar with “hydrogen fuel cell” technology. 38% say they are at least somewhat familiar with it, while 61% say they are not very or not at all familiar.
- Men are more than twice as likely as women (53% to 25%) to say they are familiar with hydrogen fuel cells.
 - 71% of blog readers are familiar with hydrogen fuel cells, compared to just 30% of those who have never read a blog.
 - Just 52% of self-described environmentalists are at least somewhat familiar with hydrogen fuel cell technology.
 - Awareness of hydrogen fuel cell technology is highest in the West (43% familiar) and Mountain region (44%).
- ?? Despite their low awareness of the technology, 71% of Americans think it is a good idea to promote the use of hydrogen fuel cell technology.

ABOUT THE POLL

The survey was conducted on behalf of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies by Global Strategy Group from May 15-22, 2005.

- ?? The survey was conducted using professional phone interviewers.
- ?? The nationwide sample was drawn from a random digit dial (RDD) process.
- ?? Respondents were screened on the basis of age, i.e., to be over the age of 18.
- ?? The survey has an overall margin of error of $\pm 3.1\%$ at the 95% confidence level.
That is, if the same survey were conducted among similar respondents, the results would fall within the range of $\pm 3.1\%$ in 19 out of 20 cases.
- ?? Interview quotas were set by region based on 2000 Census data, and are defined as follows:

WEST 15% California, Washington (State), Oregon

MOUNTAIN 10% Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming

MIDWEST 20% Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin

SOUTH 33% Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia

NORTHEAST 22% Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia

This survey is one element of a broader research project at Yale's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies focused on environmental attitudes and behavior. Funding for this project, directed by Associate Dean Dan Abbasi, is being provided by the Betsy and Jesse Fink Foundation and United Technologies Corporation.

The survey questions and full results can be found at the website of the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy: www.yale.edu/envirocenter.