



Presidential Climate Action Project

NEWS RELEASE

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**TWO-THIRDS OF AMERICANS WANT NEXT PRESIDENT TO ACT ON CLIMATE
CHANGE, NEW POLL SHOWS**

Sixty-three Percent Want Strong Action Soon After New President Takes Office

April 22, 2008—LOS ANGELES, Calif.— A new poll released today shows that two-thirds of all U.S. adults (66%) believe it is important that the next president of the United States have a policy which addresses climate change. Almost half, or 44%, believe it is extremely or very important, and only 14% believe it is not at all important. A significant majority of Americans – sixty-three percent (63%) of U.S. adults – say it is important that the new president, soon after taking office, initiates strong action to address global warming/climate change.

The findings of the poll, commissioned by the non-partisan Presidential Climate Action Project (PCAP) and conducted by Harris Interactive, may surprise experts. “As some polls show, when asked broadly about what issues are important, the environment or climate change do not rank near the top of those lists,” said Bill Becker, PCAP’s executive director. “But when asked about the overall importance of climate change, it is clear from these numbers that strong majorities of American voters want action on the issue, and expect our next president to do something soon after taking office.”

The poll found that more women than men want a president with such a policy (69% versus 63%). The poll also found that the importance of the next president having a climate change policy is significantly stronger in the Northeast (74%) followed by the West (68%). Both Hispanic

Americans (75%) and African-Americans (72%) say it is important that the new president have a policy on climate change.

Asked about the urgency they place on the next president initiating strong action to address climate change soon after taking office, 63% of likely U.S. voters believe such urgent action is important. Seven out of 10 Hispanic Americans (70%) and 68% of African-Americans support urgent presidential action. Forty-one percent (41%) of likely U.S. voters believe it is extremely or very important that the president takes strong action to address climate change soon after taking office, and only 16% believe it is not at all important.

The poll found that people who are more certain to vote are more likely to believe it is important for the next president to have a policy for climate change; and that he or she initiate action in this area soon after taking office.

Asked about voter preference for the three major-party candidates among people who are absolutely certain to vote, 22% believe that Obama is the candidate who offers the strongest policy on climate change; 21% believe it is Clinton and 8% believe it is McCain. Importantly, almost half of those absolutely certain to vote – 49% – do not yet know.

Among the total sample the same overall pattern holds; when naming their preference for the candidate with the strongest climate change policy 19 percent believe it is Obama; 18% believe it is Clinton; 8% believe it is McCain, and 55% are uncertain.

“Here the poll identifies a clear disparity,” Becker said. “The overwhelming majority of Americans want a strong, urgent climate change policy, but in the voters’ minds, none of the presidential candidates has yet emerged as the leader on climate change issues. A clear need exists for candidates to make the issue of climate change and their policies more prominent in the current race.”

As might be expected, women ages 45-54 are much more likely to see Clinton as the candidate with a strong climate change policy (28%). Interestingly, more men than women (24% versus 16%) see Obama as having a strong climate change policy, this occurs across all age segments and is highest among men over 55 years old (27%). Among the 8% who favor McCain, the largest group is in the South (11%), and men over 55 (11%) are more likely to see him as the candidate with the strongest climate change policy.

The Presidential Climate Action Project is a non-profit, non-partisan initiative of the Wirth Chair at the University of Colorado Denver School of Public Affairs. In December of 2007 the project issued a preliminary report that includes more than 300 proposals for changes in climate-related federal policies and programs for the next President to undertake in the first 100 days after inauguration. The full text of the report can be accessed at www.climateactionproject.com

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of The Presidential Climate Action Project between April 9 – April 11, 2008 among 2,092 U.S. adults (aged 18+). No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

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