

Poll: Californians support global warming rules - unless gas prices rise

Dan Smith, Sacramento Bee, 7-23-14

Californians continue to strongly support their state's efforts to reduce greenhouse gases – until they find out it involves higher gasoline prices, according to a new poll released Wednesday.

The Public Policy Institute of California's annual environmental survey also found majorities oppose the greater use of fracking for oil exploration (54 percent), increased offshore oil drilling (51 percent) and building more nuclear power plants (64 percent).

California's cap-and-trade program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will include fuels as of Jan. 1. That has prompted an oil industry-backed campaign for a delay or repeal amid predictions that the cost of gas could rise by 15 cents or more per gallon. Though a group of moderate Democrats in the Legislature has asked for a delay, Gov. Jerry Brown has shown no interest in doing so.

More than two thirds of adults and 60 percent of Californians likely to vote this year support the state's greenhouse gas efforts, according to the poll. Three-fourths of adults like emissions limits on power plants and clean fuel requirements on gasoline

But support for the latter is halved to 37 percent when respondents are told that it will result in higher prices at the pump, according to the poll. Among likely voters, opposition to clean fuels requirements climbs to 57 percent if respondents believe it will result in higher gas prices.

The poll also found:

- 75 percent of adults – including 80 percent in Southern California – support mandatory water reductions during the drought.
- A bare majority – 51 percent – would support the \$11.1 billion water bond on the ballot. Lawmakers are negotiating a smaller bond they hope will prove more favorable to voters on Nov. 4.
- Large majorities of voters believe the state's drought and wildfires are a result of natural weather patterns as opposed to global warming.
- Brown is far ahead of Republican opponent Neel Kashkari in the Nov. 4 election, 52 percent to 33 percent among likely voters.