

Report on the Findings  
**National Survey  
of Public Perceptions  
of Environmental Health Risks,  
California Component**

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California is famous not only for the computers of Silicon Valley, the glamour of Hollywood, and the Redwood forests of its north coast, but also the air pollution that chokes many major cities. A new survey finds that residents of the Golden State are much more likely to report exposure to air pollution than Americans living elsewhere in the country. More than Americans overall, Californians say their own communities battle an air pollution problem.

And Californians worry the environment does more than give their state a bad name. Most are anxious that pollution, and other environmental problems, are harming their health. Most see a link between environmental ills and human ones, particularly for children.

To change things, Californians want government to get involved and are disappointed it has not already done more about environmental health. Californians overwhelmingly support establishing government efforts to monitor and track environmental health risks, just as public health officials now do successfully for infectious diseases.

These are among the key findings of a new survey of 1,000 California registered voters conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA) and sponsored by Health-Track, a project supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts through a grant to Georgetown University. This survey was conducted in conjunction with a companion Health-Track survey of registered voters nationwide.

California voters say that environmental problems like pollution, toxic waste and chemicals play an important role in causing disease, including many chronic diseases. Like voters in the nationwide survey, Californians want more research done on the effects of the environment on health conditions and what can be done about them. Moreover, when it comes to mitigating environmental health risks, California voters are largely unimpressed with the efforts of the federal, state and local governments, as well as their own elected officials in Washington. One way California officials could improve their standing among voters is to establish a national strategy to monitor and track environmental health problems. California voters, like voters nationwide, are upset that such a program does not currently exist and overwhelmingly endorse its establishment.

Air pollution is one environmental threat that sets California and its voters apart from the United States electorate overall. Californians report higher exposure to air pollution, and are more likely to say air pollution is a problem in the community where they live than Americans nationwide. In fact, registered voters in California are twice as likely as Americans in general to say they have lived, or have close family members who have lived, in a community where air pollution was a problem. Similarly, Californians are more likely to say that air pollution is a problem in the community they are living in right now. Indeed, the American Lung Association ranked nine California metropolitan areas on its top 20 list for worst ozone air pollution in its State of the Air report released in early June. A total of 33 California counties received failing grades.

Topping the American Lung Association list is the Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County metropolitan area, and residents in this area are aware of this dubious distinction. Registered voters in the Los Angeles region are more likely than other Californians to say they have lived in a community where air pollution was a problem and that exposure to air pollution is a very serious health threat. Moreover, Los Angeles, Riverside and Orange County voters are twice as likely to say that air pollution is a very big problem in the community they currently live in.

The health consequences of air pollution dog some areas of California more than others, but concern about environmental health threats and support for a monitoring and tracking network to help address these concerns span all segments of California society. Californians young and old, male and female, rich and poor, well and less well educated are all anxious about how their community's environment may have harmed their health and want their concerns addressed. One way to address these concerns is to establish a national network to monitor and track exposure to environmental hazards and the rates of chronic illnesses like asthma, birth defects and childhood cancer. Public health professionals argue that this would yield a wealth of data to help focus prevention and treatment efforts and over the long term provide clues to the causes of chronic illnesses. Registered voters in California not only support the establishment of a national network, but a solid majority say this is a very important thing for the U.S. government to do.

The California survey was conducted between May 5 and May 14, 2000, by Princeton Survey Research Associates. For results based on the total sample, the margin of error is plus or minus 3 percentage points. When comparing national and California data, there is a 4 point margin of error for differences between the two polls. In addition to sampling error, question wording and the practical difficulties in conducting telephone surveys can introduce error or bias. A detailed discussion of the findings follows.

**California Voters Link Environment to Health Problems**

As residents of a state often in the vanguard of both environmental and health policy, California voters say they are very certain environmental factors and health problems are linked. Reflecting the sentiment of voters nationwide, a full nine in 10 (88%) Californians believe that environmental problems like pollution, toxic waste and chemicals play a very or somewhat important role in causing diseases. In fact, half (54%) of registered voters in California say environmental factors are very important in causing diseases.

Members of all demographic groups are quick to link the environment with health problems, but some are more sure than others. Again reflecting American voters as a whole, women, African-Americans, the less well educated and low-income voters are more likely to say the environment is a major contributor to the health problems that people suffer. The greatest difference in California is along racial lines, as blacks (81%) are far more convinced than whites (50%) or Hispanics (52%) that environmental factors play a very important role in causing diseases. Differences also prevail along gender lines, with women (59%) more convinced than men (48%). Political affiliation also makes a difference. Registered voters who self-identify as Democrats (61%) are more likely to say the environment is a major contributor to the health problems that people suffer than Republicans (43%).

**IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS IN CAUSING DISEASES**

	CALIF.	U.S.
Very important	54%	53
Somewhat important	34	37
Not too important	5	6
Not important at all	4	3

California voters were asked to identify the severity of particular environmental problems, such as pollution, contaminated drinking water and toxic waste, that might harm health. For each, a large majority of seven in 10 or more believe it is at least a somewhat serious health threat. Just one in 10 or fewer do not think that these environmental problems are threats.

**IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS IN CAUSING DISEASES**

	VERY SERIOUS	SOMEWHAT SERIOUS	SOMEWHAT MINOR	NOT A THREAT
Air pollution	43%	34	14	8
Water pollution	50	27	11	10
Drinking water with harmful chemicals	53	24	11	9
Pesticides in the food people eat	42	30	16	10
Toxic waste	58	19	12	9

### Californians Say Reducing Illnesses Should Be An Important Government Priority. . .

Not only does the voting public attribute health problems to environmental factors, but they also expect their government to do something about it. Californians have high expectations for their federal, state and local governments, with most claiming that the government should make reducing the number of illnesses caused by environmental problems at least an important priority. Nine in 10 (88%) registered voters believe the federal government should make this an important or top priority, mirroring sentiment of Americans in general (89%). Similarly, nine in 10 (90%) Californians say their state and local governments should give important or top priority to reducing the number of illnesses caused by environmental problems, again mirroring national opinion (89%).

These high expectations for the government to step up efforts are strong across demographic lines, but some groups have higher expectations of the federal government than others. By contrast, expectations of the California state government's role are relatively consistent among different social groups. For example, one in two women (47%) believe reducing the number of illnesses that may be caused by environmental problems should be a top priority of the federal government, compared with four in 10 men (40%) who feel the same. This gender gap disappears, however, regarding the California government's responsibility to reduce the number of illnesses. Equal percentages of women (51%) and men (47%) say that the California state and local government should make reducing illnesses that may be caused by environmental problems a top priority.

#### PRIORITY GOVERNMENT SHOULD GIVE TO REDUCING ILLNESSES

	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT		STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT	
	CALIF.	U.S.	CALIF.	U.S.

#### → How much priority should government give to reducing illnesses that may be caused by environmental problems?

Top priority	44%	44	49	48
Important, but not top priority	44	45	41	41
Not too important	4	6	4	6
Not a priority at all	6	4	4	2

Black (55%) and Hispanic (52%) voters are more likely to say environmental health should be a top federal government priority than whites (40%), but following the gender pattern, the gap between blacks, Hispanics and whites closes with regard to the priority the California government should give to this health concern. Similarly, high school graduates (49%) are more likely than college graduates (38%) to believe the federal government should give top priority to reducing environmental health problems, although this difference disappears with regard to state and local governments. Registered voters with lower incomes expect environmental health issues to be given more attention by the federal and state governments than wealthier Californians. In addition, those living in large (46%) and small (48%) cities expect environmental health issues to be given more

federal attention than suburban voters (37%). Finally, Democrats expect both the federal and state and local governments to give more priority to reducing illnesses caused by environmental problems than do Republicans.

**. . .But California Voters Not Convinced Government Hears Their Concerns**

It is clear that, as a whole, California voters believe that federal, state and local governments all have an important role to play in reducing environmental health risks. What is actually being done by the government is another story altogether. Most feel the federal, state and local governments are not living up to public expectations. Less than one in 10 (6%) believe the federal government places top priority on reducing the number of illnesses that may be caused by environmental problems, while another three in 10 (28%) believe the federal government has made this an important, but not top priority. Similarly, just eight percent think the state and local governments have made reducing environmental health risks a top priority, and one in three (35%) believe this is made an important priority. This is right in step with how most American voters feel about their state and local government efforts, with four in 10 (43%) saying that the reduction of environmental health problems are given important or top priority.

African-Americans (48%) are more likely than whites (34%) and Hispanics (32%) to believe that the federal government has made reducing environmental health risks an important or top priority. Opinions about California state and local governments are quite similar, with African-Americans voicing more confidence than others in the efforts at the state and local level. Similarly, Californians over 65 (42%) are more likely than those 18-29 (31%) and 30-49 (32%) to say the federal government has made reducing illnesses caused by environmental problems an important or top priority. This age gap disappears when asked about state and local governments.

**PRIORITY GOVERNMENT ACTUALLY GIVES TO REDUCING ILLNESSES**

	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT		STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT	
	CALIF.	U.S.	CALIF.	U.S.
<b>→ How much priority does the government actually give to reducing illnesses caused by environmental problems?</b>				
Top priority	6%	9	8	9
Important, but not top priority	28	31	35	34
Not too important	38	38	35	36
Not a priority at all	21	14	13	12

By contrast, when we analyze opinion about the priority that federal, state and local government officials give to reducing environmental health risks, the opposite pattern exists by community size. Residents of large cities (33%) and those living in the suburbs (39%) are equally likely to believe the federal government has made reducing illnesses an important or top priority, but a gap exists between these two groups when asked about the efforts of state and local officials. Half (51%) of suburban residents believe their state and local government gives important or top priority to reducing the number of illnesses associated with environmental problems, compared with one in three (36%) urban dwellers.

Clearly, Californian voters are unimpressed with government performance on the national, state and local levels, despite the fact that California has been more active than most states in tracking and monitoring health problems associated with the environment. In fact, California's Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment is designed mainly to evaluate the risks to individuals threatened by hazardous substances. The office employs health and environmental experts who conduct scientific research on the health risks associated with air and water pollution, food, waste and consumer products. This year, the department has a budget of more than \$17 million, roughly a 20 percent increase from last year.

Moreover, California's other environmental departments seem to place a good deal of importance on human health risks. For example, the Air Resources Board, as part of its Children's Health Initiative, reviews air quality standards with the explicit goal of protecting the health of children and infants. The Air Resources Board has a substantial budget of over \$187 million. Similarly, the Department of Pesticide Regulation has a program designed to reduce children's exposure to pesticides at their schools, with the understanding that pesticides pose real health risks, especially to children. The other departments have similar programs designed to lower health risks in the areas of toxic waste and water pollution.

California voters are even less impressed with the efforts of their own senators and representatives in Washington. Only one in three (32%) think their senators and representatives are doing a good or very good job in their efforts to reduce environmental health threats in California. Just six percent of registered voters claim their senators and representatives have done a very good job reducing health risks caused by the environment. Rather, more than half (54%) rank their representatives' efforts as only fair or poor.

Although this generally negative outlook is shared by all demographic groups, black voters are more disenchanted than others. One in three (33%) African-Americans describe the efforts their senators and representatives in Congress have taken to reduce environmental threats in California as poor, compared with less than two in 10 whites (15%) and Hispanics (16%).

## Childhood Illnesses and Birth Defects Top List of Health Problems Caused by Environment

Experts say children are very vulnerable to environmental problems, and the public’s concerns fall right in line with this reasoning. Californians are more likely to link the environment to the health problems of children and newborns.

More than half (55%) believe the environment strongly contributes to asthma in children, and an additional 27 percent say the environment plays a minor role. Some schools in California, like George Washington Carver Elementary School in San Francisco, have reported as much as 20 percent or more of their student body suffering from asthma.<sup>1</sup> Californians also believe the environment plays a role in causing other serious childhood health problems. Large majorities believe that environmental factors play a major or minor role in causing birth defects (79%), cancer in children, such as leukemia (68%) and learning disabilities (60%).

ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS IN CAUSING SPECIFIC ILLNESSES			
	MAJOR ROLE	MINOR ROLE	NO ROLE AT ALL
Sinus and allergy problems	64%	25	6
Asthma in children	55	27	8
Birth defects	42	37	10
Cancer in children, such as leukemia	37	31	11
Colds and flues	35	38	20
Breast cancer	26	35	17
Infertility	24	37	15
Learning disabilities	23	37	23
Brain tumors	23	35	15
Prostate cancer	19	31	19
Parkinson’s disease	11	28	18

California parents of young children under 5 years of age are most concerned about the effects of environmental conditions on young children. Those with children under 5 (66%) are significantly more likely than those without young children (53%) to believe the environment plays a major role in causing asthma in kids.

California voters also link the environment to other serious health conditions. Two in three (64%) California voters believe environmental factors play a major role in causing sinus and allergy problems, and a quarter (25%) say it plays a minor role. One in three (35%) believe that environmental factors play a major role in causing colds and flues, while another four in 10 (38%) believe the environment plays a minor role in causing colds and flues. Another six in 10 registered voters feel the environment plays a major or minor role in causing breast cancer (61%), infertility (61%) and brain tumors (58%).

There are some illnesses for which the public is less likely to believe environmental factors are the major cause. California voters are most skeptical about the role of environmental factors in causing Parkinson’s disease and prostate cancer, but many still believe the environment plays at least a minor role in causing these diseases as well (39% and 50% respectively).

<sup>1</sup> “Making a Difference: Program Offers Tools for Improving Indoor Air Quality At Schools”, American Lung Association of California web site, [www.californialung.org/support/toolsforschools.html](http://www.californialung.org/support/toolsforschools.html)

## Californians' Fear of Environmental Health Problems Stems from Experience – Especially Air Pollution

Exposure to environmental health problems are a reality for most California voters, often hitting close to home. Eight in 10 California voters (82%) say they or a close family member has been exposed to one or more environmental health threats, including polluted air or water, pesticides in food or toxic waste. This tops the sizable majority of voters nationwide (74%) who say they or a close family member has been exposed to one or more environmental health threats. Moreover, the health consequences of environmental threats have a human face for many Californians. Three in 10 (30%) say they know someone personally whose health has been damaged by environmental factors, and this holds steady across all demographic groups. This mean more Californians than Americans nationwide (23%) say they personally know someone whose health has suffered due to environmental factors.

### NUMBER OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED

	CALIF.	U.S.
None	18%	26
1	26	31
2	25	21
3 or more	31	22

In general, Californians report about the same level of exposure to environmental factors that

### EXPERIENCED ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

	YES		NO	
	CALIF.	U.S.	CALIF.	U.S.
<b>→ Have you or a close family member ever...?</b>				
Lived in a community where air pollution was a problem	57%	32	42	66
Lived in a community where water pollution was a problem	21	19	76	79
Lived in a community where the water sometimes wasn't safe to drink	24	25	73	73
Lived in a community where many people had the same health problem, such as cancer, asthma or birth defects	18	22	79	74
Eaten foods treated with pesticides	56	49	33	38
Been exposed to toxic waste	15	10	81	84

may cause health problems as other Americans, with one big exception. California voters report more exposure to air pollution. Six in 10 (57%) registered voters in California say they have lived in a community where air pollution was a problem, compared with 32 percent of American voters in general.

Among California voters, exposure to air pollution is reported more by college graduates (69%) than those with only some college (56%), a high school diploma (48%) or less (49%).

Reported exposure to air pollution also varies by age. Senior citizens (42%) are less likely to say they have lived in a community where air pollution was a problem than all other California voters.

In its newly released list of the top metropolitan areas with the worst ozone air pollution, the American Lung Association listed nine California metropolitan areas in the top 20, including the four worst.<sup>2</sup> Registered voters in the Los Angeles metropolitan area (63%) are more likely than other Californians (54%) to say they or a close family member has lived in a community where air pollution was a problem, as well as to say air pollution is a problem where they now live (52% to 40%). This assessment parallels the American Lung Association report, which cited the Los Angeles/Riverside/Orange County metropolitan area as the worst in the country for ozone air pollution. Nearly twice as many LA voters (18%) as other Californians (11%) believe air pollution is a very big problem. Half (49%) say that air pollution poses a very serious health threat, compared with four in 10 (40%) statewide.

A majority of Californians (56%) say they have either personally or have a close family member who has eaten foods treated with unsafe levels of pesticides. Again, this means more Californians than Americans nationally (49%) say they have eaten foods treated with unsafe levels of pesticides. This is the case even though California has a Department of Pesticide Regulation dedicated to ensuring both strong environmental protection and public health.

White California voters (62%) are far more likely than blacks (34%) or Hispanics (42%) to report exposure to pesticides in the food they or family members eat. Self-reported exposure to pesticides also varies by educational attainment, income and age. College graduates (71%) are more likely than those with a high school diploma (45%) to report exposure to pesticides. Similarly, as family income increases, California voters are more likely to report having eaten foods treated with pesticides. With regard to age, those between 30 and 64 are more likely than voters 18-29 or 65 and older to say they or a close family member have eaten foods treated with unsafe levels of pesticides.

Sizable minorities of registered California voters report exposure to unsafe drinking water, water pollution and toxic waste. At least two in 10 Californians say they or a close family member has lived in a community where water pollution was a problem (21%), where the water wasn't safe to drink (24%) or where many people had the same health problem, such as cancer, asthma or birth defects (18%). Another 15 percent say they or a close family member has been exposed to toxic waste.

<sup>2</sup> "State of the Air 2000 Backgrounder", American Lung Association web site, May 23, 2000, [www.lungusa.org/press/association/sota2000\\_backgrounder.html](http://www.lungusa.org/press/association/sota2000_backgrounder.html)

California voters who say they have been exposed to environmental threats are concerned about the potential health consequences. Most Californians (87%) who have lived, or who have a close family member who has lived, in a community where many people had the same health problem are concerned about the negative health effects this may have caused. Nearly as many of those who say they have lived in a community with air pollution (77%), toxic waste (76%), water pollution (72%) or unsafe drinking water (70%) say they are very or somewhat concerned that this has had harmful health consequences. Six in 10 (61%) Californians who report having eaten foods treated with unsafe levels of pesticides share these concerns.

	<b>CONCERN THAT ENVIRONMENTAL FACTOR HAS HARMED HEALTH</b>				n
	VERY CONCERNED	SOMEWHAT CONCERNED	NOT TOO CONCERNED	NOT AT ALL CONCERNED	
Lived in community with air pollution	34%	43	15	8	572
Lived in community with water pollution	42	30	16	11	214
Lived in community where water wasn't safe to drink	50	20	14	17	239
Lived in community where many people had same health problem	58	29	8	5	181
Eaten foods treated with pesticides	24	37	23	15	568
Been exposed to toxic waste	48	28	12	12	140

Concern about exposure to these environmental health risks varies among racial and ethnic groups. Majorities of all racial and ethnic groups who have lived in a community where many people had the same health problem are worried about the negative health effects, although black voters show much more concern than either whites or Hispanics. A full 85 percent of African-Americans who have lived or who have close family members who have lived under such conditions, say they are very concerned, compared with six in 10 (59%) Hispanics and half (53%) of whites. Similarly, six in 10 (61%) African-American voters are very concerned that exposure to air pollution has harmed their family's health, compared with just four in 10 (37%) Hispanics and three in 10 (30%) whites.

While black voters show far more concern than Hispanics about exposure to some environmental health risks, this gap closes with regard to other problems. For example, blacks (47%) and Hispanics (44%) feel equally worried about having eaten foods treated with pesticides, but whites (20%) are half as likely to say they are very concerned that this harmed their health. Similarly, three out of four blacks (77%) and Hispanics (72%) are very concerned about having been exposed to toxic waste, compared with just 41 percent of whites.

## California Voters Lack Confidence about How to Protect Against Environmental Health Threats

### HOW MUCH CAN WE DO TO PROTECT AGAINST HEALTH PROBLEMS?

	INFECTIOUS DISEASES		HEALTH PROBLEMS CAUSED BY ENVIRONMENT	
	CALIF.	U.S.	CALIF.	U.S.
A great deal	55%	51	21	22
Moderate amount	27	29	37	37
A little	7	10	25	23
Nothing at all	7	7	14	14

Closely mirroring the views of registered voters across the country, Californians draw clear distinctions between their ability to protect themselves against infectious diseases and their ability to protect themselves against environmental health problems. Although most California voters are rather confident in their ability to protect against infectious diseases such as measles, tuberculosis and hepatitis, many feel helpless with regard to environmental health problems.

More than half (55%) of registered voters in California say there is a great deal they can do to protect against infectious diseases, while just 14 percent believe they can do little or nothing at all. By contrast, California voters are far less confident about their prospects for protecting themselves against environment-related health problems. Just one in five (21%) believe they can do a great deal to protect themselves from health problems caused by environmental factors. Another two in five (37%) say they can do a moderate amount to protect against illnesses caused by environmental factors, but a full 39 percent believe they can do little or nothing at all.

## Californians Split on Need for Information About Environment and Health Risks

Mirroring sentiment of voters across the nation, California voters are split down the middle as to whether they need more information about the state of the environment in their communities, and what they can do to protect themselves and their families from environmental problems. Half (49%) of California voters would like more information about environmental problems in their individual communities, while half (49%) say they already have enough information. Californians also split evenly over whether they know enough about how to protect against these

### HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION ABOUT ENVIRONMENT AND PROTECTION

	YES, HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION		WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION	
	CALIF.	U.S.	CALIF.	U.S.
The state of the environment in their community	49%	48	49	49
What they can do to protect themselves and their family from environmental health problems	49	49	50	50

environmental health problems. Half (50%) say they would like more information about what they can do to protect their families from health problems caused by the environment.

Hispanics (60%) are more likely than whites (47%) to say they would like more information about the state of the environment in their community, while both Hispanic (61%) and black (64%) voters want more information about what they can do to protect themselves and their families than whites (47%). With regard to gender, women are more likely than men to say they do not have enough information about the environment (56% and 41% respectively) and what they can do to protect themselves from potential health risks (57% and 44% respectively). Younger voters seek more information about the environment and protecting themselves from health problems than older Californians.

The type of community where voters live also seems to affect whether they would like more information. Residents of large cities (57%) are more likely to want additional information about the state of the environment in their community than small city (45%) or rural (44%) dwellers. Urban voters (59%) are also more likely than suburban (51%), small city (48%) and rural (41%) residents to say they do not have enough information about how to protect themselves and their families from environmental health problems. Finally, Democrats would like more information about both the environment and protection against the health effects than Republicans.

**California Voters Want More Research On Environmental Health Problems**

As a whole, California voters believe that more research needs to be done to learn about the negative health effects of exposure to environmental problems. With relatively little being done to track and monitor environmental health problems, the public’s call for more research is quite consistent with the views of many health professionals and environmentalists. Nine in 10 (91%) registered voters in California believe it is at least somewhat important that the United States do more research to learn about the health effects of environmental problems, mirroring sentiment of voters nationwide (92%). In fact, two in three (64%) Californians believe it is very important that we do more research to understand these effects.

Again, although all groups support the need for more research, there is a good deal of variability across demographic lines. Women (67%) are more likely than men (60%) to say it is important that we do additional research, while black voters (73%) voice more support than whites (61%). Similarly, those earning under \$30,000 a year (71%) are more likely than those at the top of the income ladder (59%) to say we should do more research to understand the health effects of environmental problems. Moreover, California voters in large cities (71%) want more research

**IMPORTANCE OF MORE RESEARCH**

→ **Importance of U.S. doing more research on the health effects of environmental problems?**

	CALIF.	U.S.
Very important	64%	62
Somewhat important	27	30
Not too important	5	5
Not important at all	2	2

than those living in small cities (59%), rural areas (59%) or the suburbs (63%). Democrats (73%) are more likely than Republicans (55%) to view additional research as very important

**National Environmental Health Monitoring Program an Important Priority to Most Voters in California**

One thing government leaders can do to study the health effects of environmental problems is to develop a national monitoring and tracking strategy that would quantify the incidence of chronic diseases in each community, identify potential environmental correlates and measure exposure to these dangers. Such an effort would provide an early warning system to alert the public about the possibility for disease and give public health professionals information that could lead to better prevention approaches. The United States does not have such a program, a fact that is news to many California voters. In fact, a large majority (68%) of registered voters believe we already have a national network that monitors environmental problems and tracks the prevalence of diseases like asthma, birth defects and childhood cancer (38%), or are not sure (30%). Just one in three (32%) Californians know we do not currently have such a program. African-American voters (50%) are somewhat more likely than whites (36%) to believe we already have a national monitoring system.

Upon learning that there is no national monitoring system, most California voters are not pleased. Half (50%) say they are concerned a great deal that there is not a national system that monitors exposure to environmental threats and tracks chronic diseases, while a third (31%) say they are somewhat concerned. Just 17 percent say it does not concern them too much or not at all.

Black voters (75%) express a great deal of concern more often than Hispanics (60%), while both groups express more concern than whites (45%). Similarly, four in 10 (43%) men say they are concerned a great deal that

**FEELINGS ABOUT NATIONAL MONITORING SYSTEM**

	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	WHITE	BLACK	HISP.
<b>→ Concern that a national monitoring system is not in place.</b>						
A great deal	50%	43	56	45	75	60
Some	31	33	30	34	18	24
Not too much	11	14	8	13	1	8
Not at all	6	8	4	6	5	5
<b>→ Support for national monitoring system.</b>						
Strongly support	52%	43	60	49	57	61
Somewhat support	36	43	31	39	30	29
Somewhat oppose	4	5	3	5	2	3
Strongly oppose	3	4	3	4	4	1

there is not a national monitoring and tracking program, while 56 percent of women feel the same. Income also seems to matter, as those earning less than \$50,000 (56%) are likely than earning more than \$75,000 a year (40%) to express a great deal of concern. Democrats (58%) express a great deal of concern more often than Republicans (39%) and independents (45%).

Consistent with this concern, California voters voice a good deal of support for creating a national network that will track and monitor environmental health problems, as well as respond to

chronic diseases. Nine in 10 (88%) registered voters in California, like the nation as a whole, at least somewhat support the establishment of a national monitoring system, with half (52%) voicing strong support. Only seven percent of Californians somewhat or strongly oppose creating such a system.

Here we find an even greater gender gap, as a full six in 10 (60%) women strongly support establishing a national tracking and monitoring network compared with just four in 10 (43%) men. Hispanics (61%) show somewhat stronger support than white voters (49%), and younger voters are more enthusiastic about creating a national system than older voters. Again, lower earners are more supportive of the idea than those with higher incomes, and Democrats (64%) are more likely to express strong support than Republicans (39%).

Not only do registered voters in California favor establishing a national tracking and monitoring network, but a large majority (68%) believe it is very important or one of the most important things we can do. One in five (19%) California voters say that creating a national system of tracking and monitoring chronic diseases is one of the most important things we can do, and half (49%) describe creating a new system as very important. Just seven percent say that creating a national monitoring system is not too or not at all important.

	IMPORTANCE OF NATIONAL MONITORING SYSTEM	
	CALIF.	U.S.
One of the most important	19%	22
Very important	49	48
Somewhat important	24	24
Not too important	5	3
Not important at all	2	2