



To: Interested Parties
From: Center for Climate Integrity and Data for Progress
Date: April 2, 2024
Re: MEMO: Los Angeles County Voters Support Polluters Pay Litigation

Summary

As the nation comes to terms with the increasing costs of adapting to climate change, communities across the country are debating who bears the most responsibility for this hefty price tag to protect residents and infrastructure.

The [Center for Climate Integrity](#) and [Data for Progress](#) recently [surveyed](#) likely voters in Los Angeles County, California, to understand the importance of climate change to them and to assess their openness to climate accountability lawsuits that seek to make major oil and gas companies pay their fair share of climate damages.

To gauge voter perceptions of climate change and its effects on the taxpayer, the survey showed respondents two opposing statements: one positing that climate change increases costs for taxpayers due to extreme weather events, and another proposing that extreme weather events do not cost taxpayers money. Over two-thirds of respondents (69%) identify with the former statement, saying that taxpayers face increased costs due to climate change.

This finding holds up across party lines, with half of Republicans in Los Angeles County identifying with the same statement. Democrats intensely identify with this statement (46% Statement 1, strongly), as do men (40% Statement 1, strongly) and white voters (40% Statement 1, strongly).

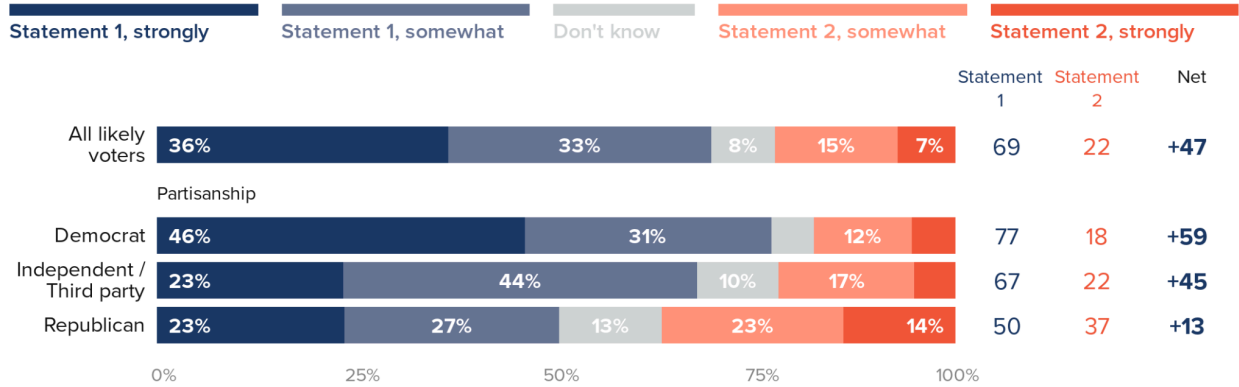
Across Party Lines, Voters Agree That Extreme Weather Events Lead to Increased Costs

Below is a statement pair. Please indicate which statement comes closest to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.

STATEMENT 1: *California taxpayers are facing increased costs from extreme weather events fueled by climate change.*

OR

STATEMENT 2: *Extreme weather events fueled by climate change largely do not cost taxpayers money.*



March 22-26, 2024 survey of 500 likely voters in Los Angeles County, California



Next, respondents were introduced to an estimate of the climate costs that Los Angeles County will be on the hook for in the coming decades and were asked about what portion, if any, of the costs different groups should be responsible for.

Eighty-seven percent of voters in the county say that major oil and gas companies should be responsible for **some** portion of the climate costs that Los Angeles County will face in the coming decades, while just under two-thirds (63%) believe that major oil and gas companies should be responsible for **all** or **most** of the climate costs that the county will face.

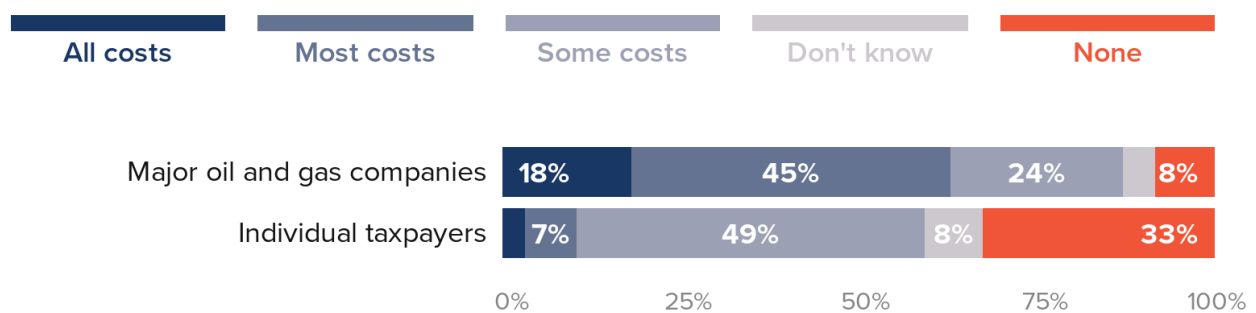
Nearly one-fifth (18%) say major oil and gas companies should be responsible for **all** climate costs in Los Angeles County, including 24% of Latino voters, 23% of voters under 45, and 22% of voters with a college degree.

Across demographics, it is clear that Los Angeles County voters **do not** believe that individual taxpayers should bear the brunt of the responsibility for climate costs in the county: One-third (33%) of voters say individual taxpayers should not be responsible for **any** climate costs in Los Angeles County and 49% believe that taxpayers should only be responsible for **some** costs.

Voters Say That Major Oil and Gas Companies Have the Most Responsibility to Pay for Climate Costs

New research shows that communities in Los Angeles County will have to spend more than \$12.5 billion by 2041 to protect against increasing extreme weather such as hotter temperatures and increased rainfall.

What portion of costs do you think each of the following groups should be **responsible** for?



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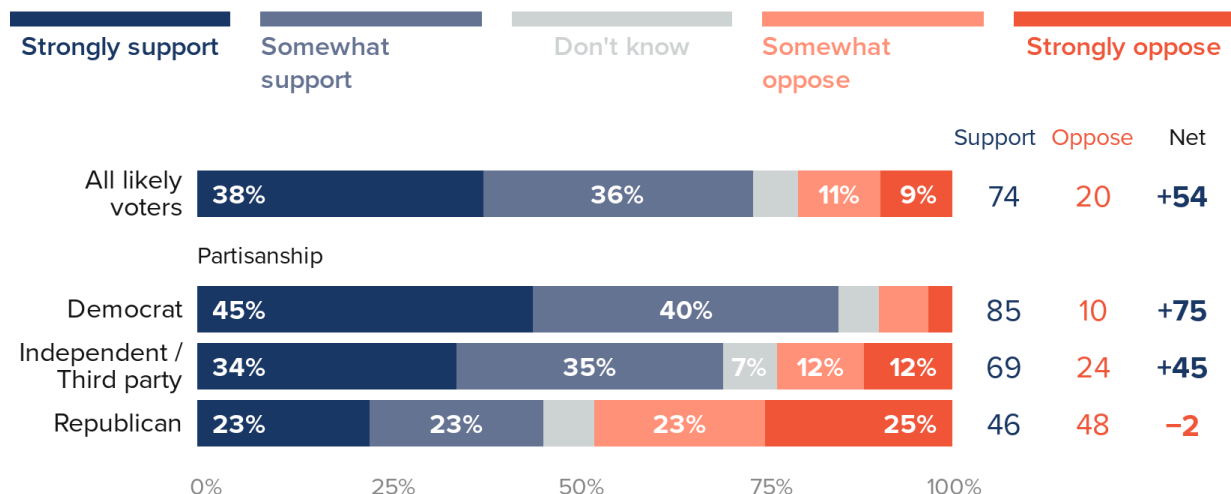
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Lastly, voters were asked directly about their support for litigation against oil and gas companies, like ExxonMobil, Chevron, BP, and Shell, to make them pay their fair share of climate costs that local communities in Los Angeles County will face in the coming decades. We find strong support among Los Angeles County voters for this proposal, with 74% supporting such litigation, including 85% of Democrats and 69% of Independents.

Republicans are split on this proposal, with 46% in support, 48% opposed, and 7% undecided. All other demographic groups surveyed strongly support suing oil and gas companies to make them pay their fair share of climate costs.

Los Angeles County Voters Strongly Support Suing Polluters to Make Them Pay Their Share of Climate Costs

Would you support or oppose suing oil and gas companies, like ExxonMobil, Chevron, BP, and Shell, to make them pay their fair share of the costs that local communities in Los Angeles County face in adapting to climate change?



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Conclusion

In the coming years and decades, Los Angeles County must figure out how to pay the rising costs of protecting residents and infrastructure from climate impacts. The data is clear: Los Angeles County voters support legal action to make oil and gas companies pay their fair share of climate costs.

Survey Methodology

From March 22 to 26, 2024, Data for Progress and the Center for Climate Integrity conducted a [survey](#) of 500 likely voters in Los Angeles County, California, using web panel respondents. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish. The margin of error for this survey is ± 4 percentage points.