Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates

FM3

Public Opinion Research & Strategy

MARKETING RESOURCES International Inc.

TO: Interested Parties

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RE: Findings from a National Survey of African Americans on Energy Issues

DATE: October 12, 2015

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) and Marketing Resources International, Inc. recently completed a national telephone survey and four focus groups among African-Americans to assess opinions on energy issues.[i] **The survey results show strong and broad support among African-Americans for a transition to more use of clean and renewable energy – including overwhelming support for the Clean Power Plan.** Majorities of African Americans express concern about air pollution and global warming, and are confident that fighting these problems by increasing the use of clean energy will both create jobs and lower energy costs. Taken together, the results indicate that African-Americans constitute a strong base of support actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Among the key findings of the survey are the following:

- **Three in five African-Americans rate global warming and air pollution as serious problems.** While crime, economic issues and education rank as the most-serious problems for African-Americans, fully 60 percent see *global warming* as an "extremely" or "very serious problem," as shown in **Figure 1** on the following page. An essentially equal proportion is concerned with *air pollution* more broadly (58%).

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FIGURE 1
Most-Serious Problems Facing the Black Community

Problem	Extremely/Very Serious
Crime	79%
The economy and unemployment	76%
Gangs and youth violence	76%
The cost of health care	76%
The quality of public education	75%
Police brutality	68%
Racial discrimination	67%
Pollution of rivers, lakes, streams and beaches	63%
Global warming	60%
The amount you pay in taxes	59%
Air pollution	58%
The cost of electricity	58%
Extreme weather, such as severe storms or hurricanes, floods and droughts	53%
Dependence on foreign oil	50%

- **African-Americans express greater desire for action on global warming than do adults nationally.** As shown in **Figure 2,** just three percent of African-Americans say that *concern about global warming is unwarranted,* compared with 13 percent in the population at large. In addition, more than two-thirds (67 percent) of black Americans believe at least some action should be taken against global warming.

FIGURE 2
Concern About Global Warming and Desire for Action
(Comparison to data from NBC/Wall Street Journal poll conducted June 2014)

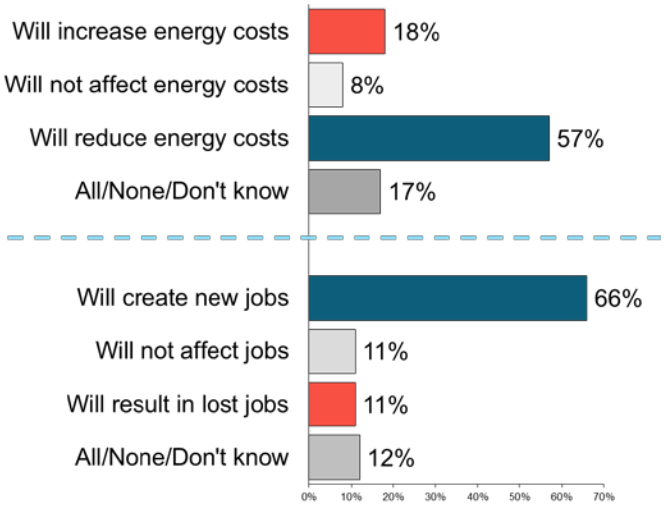
Statement	African-Americans	American Adults
Global warming has been established as a serious problem, and immediate action is necessary.	36%	31%
There is enough evidence that global warming is taking place that some action should be taken.	31%	30%
We don't know enough about global warming, and more research is necessary before we take action.	24%	24%
Concern about global warming is unwarranted.	3%	13%
Don't know	6%	2%

- **African-Americans believe that a shift to clean energy will lower energy costs and create jobs.** Two-thirds (66 percent) of those surveyed say that increasing the use of renewable energy sources will create new jobs – six times more than the proportion who say

that it will result in job losses. At the same time, more than half (57 percent) believe that shifting to sources such as wind and solar power will *reduce* their energy costs.

FIGURE 4
Clean Energy's Effect on Jobs and Energy Costs

"Which of the following comes closer to your point of view: Increasing the use of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power in the United States…"



- **Many African Americans recognize that their community bears a greater burden from the impacts of air pollution and climate change.** More than one-third (34 percent) say that *when it comes to potential harm from global warming or climate change, the black community is likely to face more harm than other Americans.* When asked the same question about *air pollution*, more than eight times as many (43 percent) say the black community faces "more" harm than say it faces "less" (5 percent), as shown in **Figure 4.**

FIGURE 4
Perception of Harm Caused to Black Community by Global Warming/Air Pollution, Relative to Other Americans

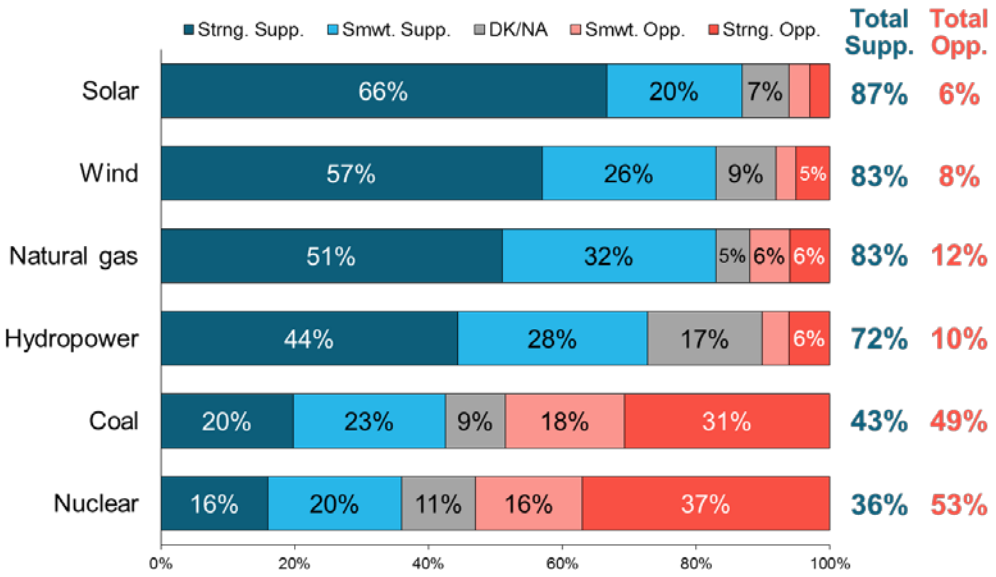
"When it comes to potential harm from global warming or climate change/air pollution, would you say that the black community is likely to face more harm, about the same amount of harm, or less harm than other Americans?"

Issue	More Harm	Less Harm
Global warming or climate change	34%	5%
Air pollution	43%	5%

- **African-Americans overwhelmingly support increasing the use of renewable energy.** More than four in five support increased use of solar and wind power – with majorities "strongly" backing its increased use. In contrast, nearly half (49 percent) oppose increased use of coal power (see **Figure 5**).

FIGURE 5
Support for Increased Use of Sources of Energy

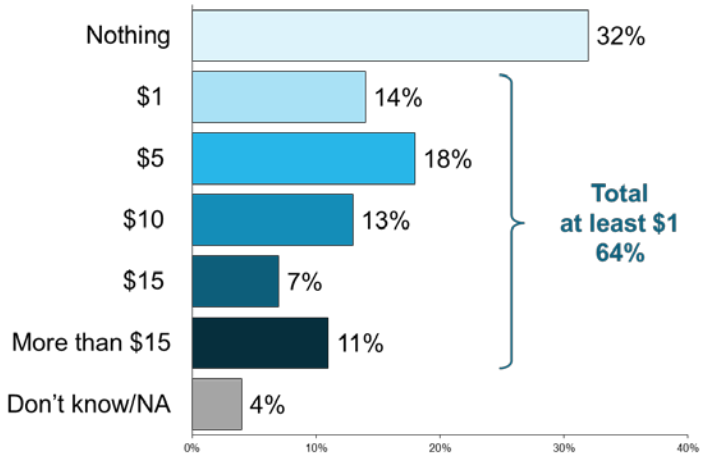
"Here is a list of ways to meet our nation's future energy needs. Please tell me whether you would support or oppose increasing the use of each option."



- **African-Americans are willing to pay more in order to support expanded use of clean and renewable energy.** They not only voice more support for use of clean and renewable energy, but are willing to pay more to make it a reality. As shown in **Figure 6** on the following page, nearly two-thirds say they would be willing to pay more on their monthly electrical bill in order to ensure that more of their energy is coming from clean and renewable sources. In fact, nearly half (49 percent) are willing to pay as much as five dollars more per month.

FIGURE 6
Willingness to Pay for Cleaner Energy

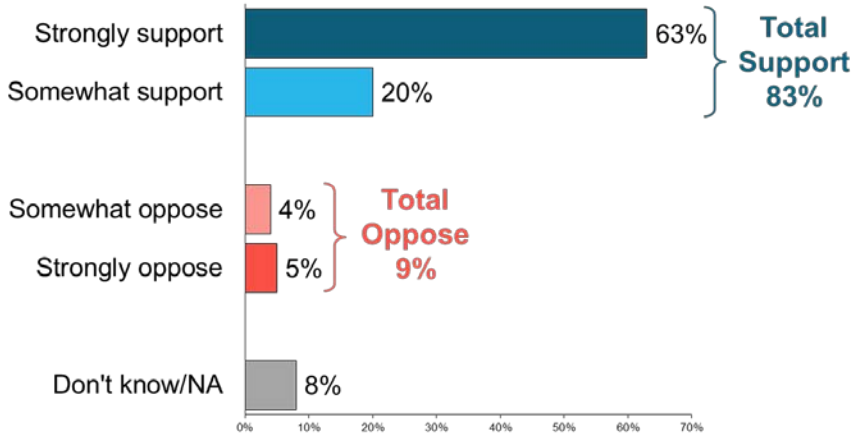
"How much more would you be willing to pay on your monthly electric bill for cleaner energy to reduce carbon pollution from power plants? Stop me when I reach your limit."



- **African-Americans overwhelmingly support the Environmental Protection Agency's limits on carbon dioxide emissions from coal-fired power plants.** More than four in five (83 percent) support these rules for coal-fired power plants, known as the Clean Power Plan, including 63 percent who back them "strongly." Fewer than one in ten oppose these limits. In comparison, a June 2014 survey conducted for NBC and the *Wall Street Journal* found 67 percent total support among all Americans.

FIGURE 8
Support for EPA Limits on Carbon Dioxide Emissions

"Now, as you may know, President Obama has directed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, known as the EPA for short, to set strict carbon dioxide emission limits on existing coal-fired power plants with a goal to reduce emissions significantly by the year 2030."

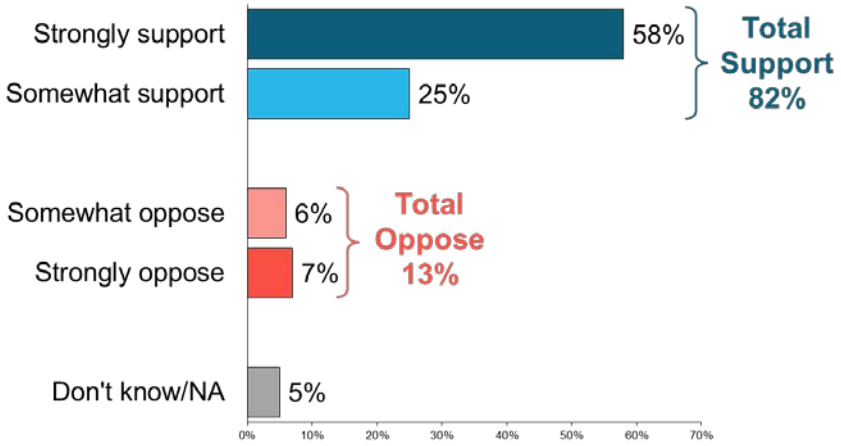


Support for the Clean Power Plan cuts across most subgroups of the African-American community. Three-quarters (76 percent) of those in low-income households support the rules, while nearly all (95 percent) in households earning more than $75,000 per year support them. Even three-quarters (76 percent) of black conservatives support the EPA's limits, while 88 percent of moderates and 85 percent of liberals do.

- **Support for the development of state clean energy plans to meet the EPA requirements is just as broad.** Fully 82 percent of black Americans support their state developing its own clean energy plan, and 58 percent do so "strongly." Just over one in ten – 13 percent – oppose the development of a state plans (see **Figure 8**). At least three-quarters of every major demographic subgroup support the development of such plans.

FIGURE 8
Support for Development of State Clean Energy Plans

"These new federal rules will require your state to reduce its emissions of carbon dioxide – the pollution that causes global warming. In order to meet these requirements, and to promote the use of clean energy and increased energy efficiency, many states are developing their own energy plans. Would you support or oppose your state developing its own state plan to reduce carbon pollution and increase the use of clean energy and energy efficiency?"



Moreover, as detailed in **Figure 9** on the following page, black Americans back a wide range of specific policies that might help to accomplish that overall objective – everything from increasing energy efficiency to closing older and highly-polluting coal-fired power plants.

FIGURE 9
Support for Potential State Clean Energy Plan Elements

Plan Element	Total Support	Total Oppose
Building homes and buildings that are more efficient and use less energy	93%	3%
Investing and preparing our communities for future weather events like storms, floods or hurricanes	92%	4%
Expanding utility programs to help consumers improve the energy efficiency of their homes and reduce their electric bills	91%	7%
Increasing use of clean and renewable energy like wind and solar	90%	7%
Setting limits on the amount of carbon pollution that power plants discharge into the air	86%	12%
Making greater use of existing natural gas power plants	85%	9%
Closing certain old, outdated and highly polluting coal power plants	79%	15%
Improving the efficiency of existing coal power plants	71%	23%

Taken together, the results show that African-Americans offer strong and broad support for action to address global warming and promote the use of clean energy. That support stems from broad concern about air pollution and global warming (which many believe disproportionately harm the black community); strong support for a transition to clean energy; and a firm belief that such a transition will both reduce energy costs and create jobs. As a result, black Americans offer overwhelming support for the Clean Power Plan and efforts to reach its pollution reduction targets at the state level – and are willing to pay more on their electrical bills to reach those goals.

[i] **Methodology:** From September 20-27, 2015, FM3 and MRI completed 800 telephone interviews on landlines and cell phones with randomly selected African-American registered voters nationwide. The margin of sampling error is +/-3.5% at the 95% confidence level; margins of error for population subgroups within each sample will be higher. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to 100%. The survey was preceded by four focus groups with African-Americans in Chicago, Illinois, and Richmond, Virginia.