

TO: Interested Parties

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RE: Washington Voter Attitudes About Climate Action in the Wake of Initiative 732

DATE: November 23, 2016

The bipartisan polling team of FM3 Research (D) and Moore Information (R) recently completed 602 telephone interviews with Washington voters who participated in the November 2016 election to examine perceptions of Initiative 732, motivations for their vote on the measure, and appetite for future state action on climate change.¹

The study found that most voters knew relatively little about the measure at the time they voted; it ultimately received the same support it showed in most pre-election polling. Voters in the center and on the right were heavily opposed, and there were significant defections among groups on the left such as liberals, Democrats, voters in King County, and supporters of climate action. At the same time, the survey results clearly demonstrate that **in the wake of the election, Washington voters' belief in the reality of climate change and their concern about its impact are undiminished – as is their strong desire for state action to address the issue.**

Among key specific findings of the survey were the following:

- **Initiative 732 won 41% of the vote and only two counties, largely due to overwhelming rejection by moderates and conservatives.** As shown in **Figure 1** on the next page, nearly every major demographic subgroup voted against I-732. The base of support for the measure was liberals and Democrats.

Figure 1: I-732 Vote by Demographic Subgroup

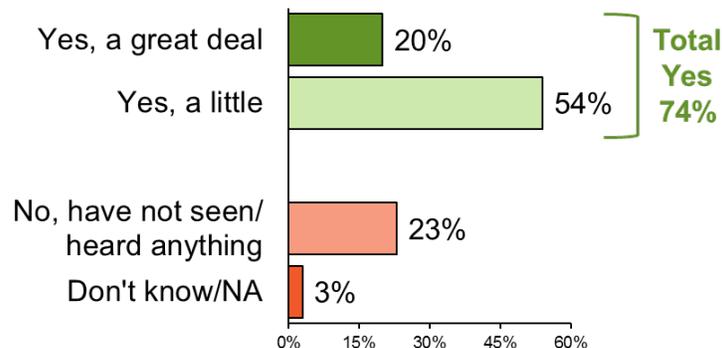
¹ **Methodology:** From Nov. 9-13, 2016, FM3 and Moore Information completed 602 telephone interviews (on both landlines and cell phones) with November 2016 voters in Washington state. The margin of sampling error for the study is +/-4.0% at the 95% confidence level; margins of error for population subgroups within the sample will be higher. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to 100%.

Demographic Group	Yes	No
Men	37%	63%
Women	44%	56%
Ages 18-49	43%	57%
Ages 50-64	38%	62%
Ages 65+	41%	59%
White Voters	40%	60%
Voters of Color	49%	51%
Liberals	73%	27%
Moderates	34%	66%
Conservatives	12%	88%
Democrats	68%	32%
Independents	33%	67%
Republicans	11%	89%

- Relatively few heard much about the measure -- from either supporters or opponents.** While nearly four in five were aware of I-732, fewer than one-quarter heard “a great deal” about the measure in advance of the election (**Figure 2**). Substantial majorities reported receiving no communications from *either* side via phone or in-person canvassing (97%), online posts from their personal networks (88%), online ads (87%), personal conversations with friends or family (64%), mail (63%), or news articles (51%).

Figure 2: Awareness of I-732

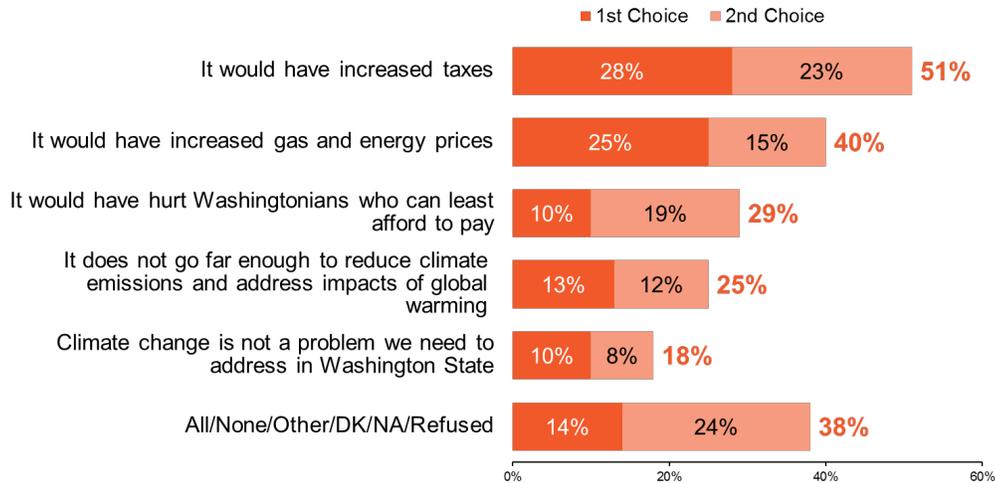
Before the election had you seen, heard or read anything about a measure on the state ballot called Initiative 732, which concerned a carbon emissions tax?



- In the absence of additional information, the ballot language became more critical – and few voters understood the measure’s impact on tax policy.** The ballot language for Initiative 732 focused almost entirely on its impact on taxes, and very little on its benefits for the climate. In fact, the measure’s subject clause stated solely that it “concerns taxes.” Perhaps not surprisingly, this became a focus of opposition to the measure. “No” voters were concerned about increased taxes (28 percent said it was their top motivation for a “no” vote, and half [51%] ranked it one of the top two reasons), higher gas and energy prices (the first or second choice for two in five [40%] “no” voters). This is shown in **Figure 3** on the next page.

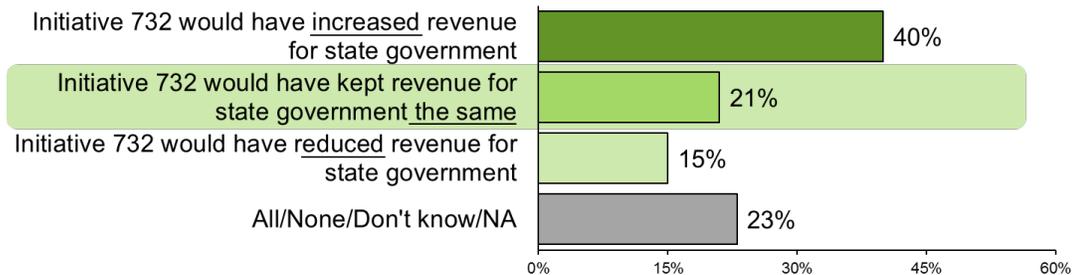
Figure 3: Motivations for a “No” Vote on I-732

*I am going to read you a list of reasons that different people gave for voting no on Initiative 732. Please tell me which of these reasons was most important to your no vote.
(Asked of “No” Voters Only)*



- **Relatively few voters perceived I-732 as revenue-neutral.** In fact, a plurality (40%) believed it would *increase* state government revenue (**Figure 4**), and about equal shares said they were unsure about the impact (23 percent) and knew it would keep revenue flat (21 percent).

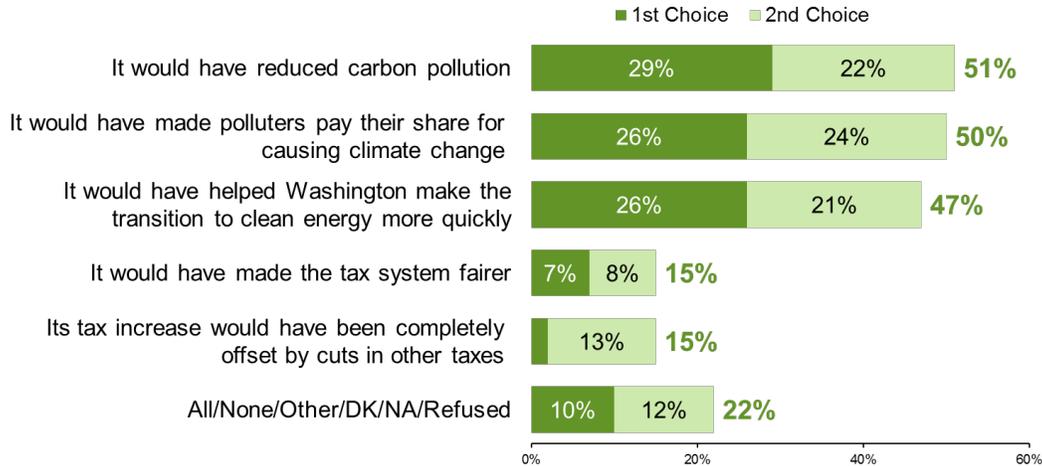
Figure 4: Perceived Tax Implications of I-732



- **Support for I-732 focused heavily on climate action, not tax reforms.** As shown in **Figure 5** on the next page, half of “yes” voters (51%) said reducing carbon pollution was a top motivation for their vote, and another half (50%) said making polluters pay their share for causing climate change was their first- and second-ranked reason for a “yes.” Despite being designed to appeal to voters who would support a revenue-neutral policy, fewer than one in six (15%) ranked the tax implications as an important reason to support I-732.

Figure 5: Motivations for a “Yes” Vote on I-732

*I am going to read you a list of reasons that different people gave for voting yes on Initiative 732. Please tell me which of these reasons was most important to your yes vote.
(Asked of “Yes” Voters Only)*



- Washingtonians remain quite sure climate change is occurring, and they increasingly believe it is related to human activity.** The rejection of I-732 does not represent any fall-off in voter concern about climate change or desire to address it at the state level. A series of post-election questions about climate change show no meaningful shifts from surveys conducted last year. Four-in-five voters think climate change is happening; more than three-in-five attribute it primarily to human activities; and a consistent one-half of Washington voters think climate change will cause them at least moderate personal harm (**Figure 6**).

Figure 6: Washington Voter Views of Climate Change

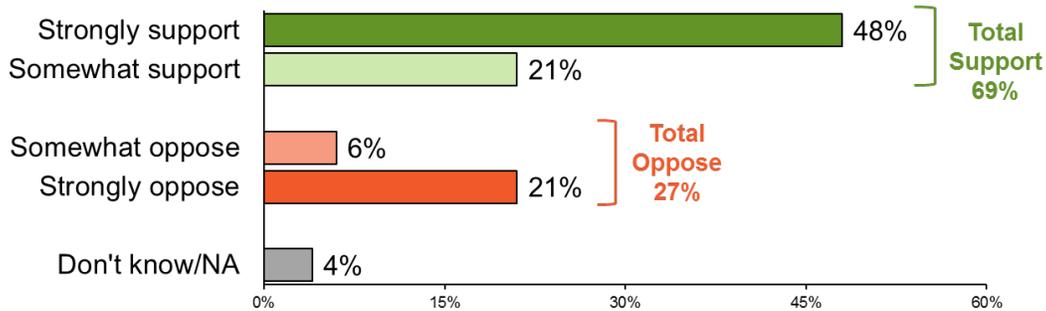
View on Climate Change	May 2015	Sept. 2015	Nov. 2016	Difference
It is happening	83%	83%	81%	-2%
It is not happening	14%	15%	16%	+1%
Don't know	3%	3%	4%	+1%
It is caused mostly by human activities	55%	56%	62%	+6%
It is caused mostly by natural changes in the environment	30%	29%	23%	-6%
Neither, because it isn't happening/Don't know	15%	14%	14%	--
Climate change will harm me a great deal personally	17%	23%	17%	-6%
A moderate amount	34%	32%	31%	-1%
Only a little	25%	22%	27%	+5%
Not at all/Don't know	24%	25%	30%	+5%

- Washington voters clearly have an appetite for state-level action to address carbon pollution.** Over two-thirds of Washington voters support climate action at the state level (**Figure 7** on the next page) – nearly half “strongly support” it. Support is broad across demographic subgroups, including:

- ✓ More than three-quarters (77%) of women and 61 percent of men;
- ✓ Three-quarters (75%) of voters under age 50, and 63 percent of those 50 and older;
- ✓ Nearly all liberals (98%) and almost three-quarters of moderates (63%);
- ✓ More than two-thirds of voters at every income level, from 68 percent support among those earning less than \$50,000 annually to 72 percent support from those earning more than \$100,000 a year; and
- ✓ Nearly seven in ten (69%) white voters and 81% of voters of color.

Figure 7: Support for State Action on Carbon Pollution

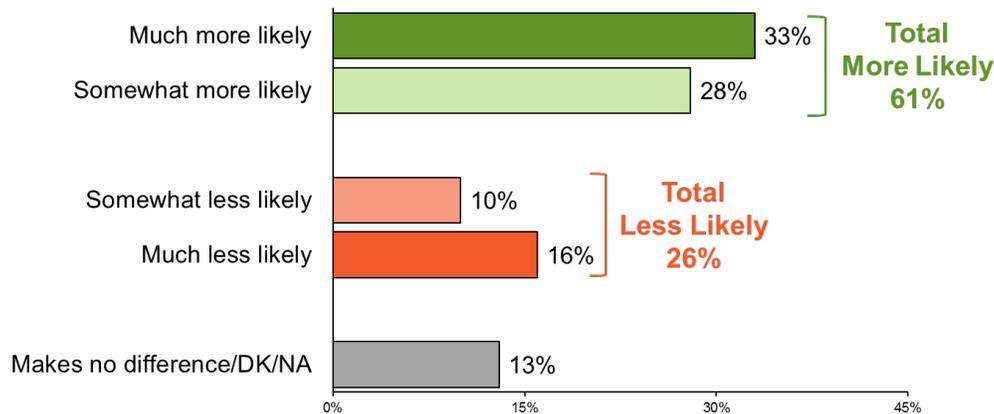
In general, do you support or oppose the State of Washington taking action to reduce the carbon pollution that causes climate change?



- They are also more likely to vote for a state legislator who takes action on climate change – a sentiment that is nearly unanimous among Democrats (91% “more likely”), and captures a plurality (48 percent) of independent voters (**Figure 8**).

Figure 8: Impact of State Legislator Support of Climate Action on Vote

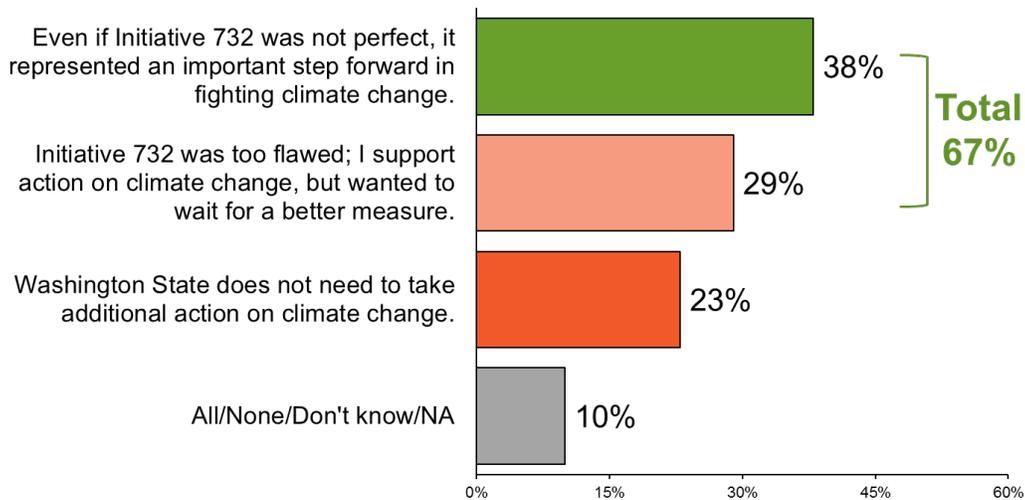
Suppose that your state representative supported Washington State taking action to reduce the carbon pollution that causes climate change. Would that make you more likely or less likely to vote for them?



- The defeat of I-732 is not an indication that voters oppose action on climate change.** As shown in **Figure 9**, a plurality (38 percent) characterized the measure as *an important step forward in fighting climate change*; nearly three in ten said it was *too flawed* – but that they *support action on climate change*. Taken together, this demonstrates the broad appeal of state-level climate action, despite the results of the I-732 vote.

Figure 9: Views on I-732 and Climate Action

I am going to read you several sets of statements about Initiative 732. Please tell me which statement comes closest to your personal opinion, even if it is difficult to choose.



In summary, the survey results show that the absence of a strong campaign in support of Initiative 732 – and voters’ lack of understanding and trust in its impact on tax policy – combined to produce a strong vote against the measure among all but the most-liberal voters. However, Washington voters’ rejection of I-732 is not a rejection of state action on climate. Voters clearly understand the harms caused climate change and remain strongly supportive of action to mitigate it at the state level.