

October 27, 2009

[CNN Poll: 6 in 10 back 'cap and trade'](#)

Posted: October 27th, 2009 05:00 AM ET

From [CNN Deputy Political Director Paul Steinhauser](#)

**WASHINGTON (CNN)** - Six in 10 Americans support a "cap and trade" proposal to cut pollution, according to a new national poll.

Sixty percent of those questioned in a CNN/Opinion Research Corporation survey say they favor "cap and trade," a Democratic sponsored plan in which the federal government would limit the amount of greenhouse gases that companies could produce in their factories or power plants. Thirty-seven percent oppose the proposal, which would penalize companies that exceed greenhouse gas limits with fines or by making those businesses pay money to other companies that producer smaller amounts of pollution.

### [Full results \(pdf\)](#)

The poll's release Tuesday morning comes as the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works holds a hearing on new "cap and trade" legislation. The bill, sponsored by committee chairwoman Barbara Boxer, D-California and Sen. John Kerry, D-Massachusetts), includes provisions to hold down costs to consumers and certain industries. Republicans say the bill would destroy jobs and increase taxes and energy costs for average Americans. The House of Representatives passed a "cap and trade" bill this summer along a party-line vote.

The survey indicates a generational divide, with 68 percent of Americans under age 50 supporting "cap and trade" but those 50 and older split on the issue.

"This is one more example of the growing generation gap that is shaping politics and policy in this country," says CNN Polling Director Keating Holland. "Younger Americans voted for Obama and tend to welcome change. Older Americans were less enamored of change in the 2008 election and senior citizens were the only age group that voted for John McCain."

The poll also suggests a partisan divide, with three in four Democrats backing the proposal and nearly six in 10 independents on board as well, but only four in 10 Republicans supporting "cap and trade."

"The support of independents will be crucial to any cap and trade proposal," Holland says. "Independents may not be red or blue, but they appear to be green. Earlier polls indicate that Independents believe in global warming and believe that the government can take steps to curtail the problem. But the environment is not a big priority for Independents, as it is with Democrats."

The CNN/Opinion Research Corporation poll was conducted October 16-18, with 1,038 adult Americans questioned by telephone. The survey's sampling error is plus or minus 3 percentage points.

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