



**THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER**  
**For The People & The Press**

*NEWS Release*  
1615 L Street, N.W., Suite 700  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Tel (202) 419-4350  
Fax (202) 419-4399

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**Ethanol Research Loses Ground, Continued Division on ANWR**  
**PUBLIC SENDS MIXED SIGNALS ON ENERGY POLICY**

*FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:*

Andrew Kohut, Director  
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors  
Pew Research Center for the People & the Press  
202/419-4350  
<http://www.people-press.org>

## Ethanol Research Loses Ground, Continued Division on ANWR PUBLIC SENDS MIXED SIGNALS ON ENERGY POLICY

At a time of rising energy prices, the public continues to be conflicted in its overall approach toward energy and the environment. A majority of Americans say that developing new sources of energy, rather than protecting the environment, is the more important priority for the country. However, when asked specifically about energy policy priorities, 55% favor more conservation and regulation of energy, compared with 35% who support expanded energy exploration.

<i>Higher priority for country...</i>		%
Developing new sources of energy		54
Protecting the environment		36
Don't know		<u>10</u>
		100
<i>More important priority for U.S. energy policy...</i>		
More energy conservation/regulation		55
Expand exploration, mining, & drilling/ construction of new power plants		35
Don't know		<u>10</u>
		100

As in recent years, specific policies that address *both* energy and the environment draw overwhelming support. Nine-in-ten Americans favor requiring better auto fuel efficiency standards, while substantial majorities also support increased federal funding for alternative energy (81%) and mass transportation (72%).

By contrast, there is greater division over other energy policies. A majority (57%) favors increased federal funding on ethanol research, but support has fallen over the past two years (from 67% in February 2006).

The public continues to be almost evenly split over the idea of promoting more nuclear power (48% oppose vs. 44% favor). And a majority (53%) opposes giving tax cuts to energy companies to do more oil exploration.

	Favor	Oppose	DK
<i>Government energy policies...</i>	%	%	%
Require better auto fuel efficiency	90	8	2=100
More funding for alternative energy	81	14	5=100
More funding for mass transit	72	23	5=100
More funding for ethanol research	57	35	8=100
Promote more nuclear power	44	48	8=100
Tax cuts for more oil exploration	42	53	5=100
Increase gasoline taxes	22	75	3=100

With gas prices already high and expected to increase, the public overwhelmingly rejects boosting gas taxes to encourage carpooling and energy conservation. By greater than three-to-one (75% to 22%), Americans oppose raising gas taxes.

The latest nationwide survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted Feb. 20-24 among 1,508 adults, finds continued public divisions over drilling for oil and gas in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Currently, 50% oppose drilling in the Alaska

refuge while 42% are in favor. As recently as September of 2005, 50% of Americans favored allowing drilling in ANWR, while 42% were opposed.

### Half Oppose Drilling in ANWR

Opposition to drilling in ANWR is much more widespread among women than men, and among younger people – especially those under age 30 – than among older Americans. About twice as many Republicans as Democrats favor drilling in ANWR (63% vs. 31%). Yet both parties are divided ideologically over drilling in the Alaskan wildlife refuge.

	Favor %	Oppose %	DK %
Total	42	50	8=100
Men	51	45	4=100
Women	35	55	10=100
18-29	27	66	7=100
30-49	40	54	6=100
50-64	51	43	6=100
65+	52	34	14=100
Conserv Rep	66	30	4=100
Mod/Lib Rep	57	40	3=100
Independent	41	54	5=100
Cons/Mod Dem	37	54	9=100
Liberal Dem	21	73	6=100

Fully 73% of liberal Democrats, but a much smaller majority of the party’s conservatives and moderates (54%), oppose oil and gas drilling in ANWR. Two-thirds of conservative Republicans (66%) favor drilling in the Arctic refuge compared with 57% of the party’s liberal and moderate members.

### Partisans Agree on Some Energy Policies

However, there continues to be substantial agreement across partisan lines on several areas of energy policy. Roughly 90% of Republicans, Democrats and independents support tougher auto fuel standards, and about 80% in each group favor more federal funding for research into alternative energy sources, such as wind, solar and hydrogen technology.

Comparable majorities of Republicans, Democrats and independents also favor more funding for ethanol research, but support for this policy has slipped among all three groups since February 2006.

	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %	R-D gap
<i>% favor:</i>				
Better auto fuel efficiency	91	90	92	+1
Funding for alternative energy	83	80	83	+3
Funding for mass transit	65	73	76	-8
Funding for ethanol research	59	56	60	+3
More nuclear power	59	34	46	+25
Tax cuts for oil exploration	52	39	39	+13
Increase gasoline taxes	15	29	21	-14

Other energy policies are more divisive. Somewhat more independents (76%) and Democrats (73%) than Republicans (65%) favor increased funding for mass transit, including subway, rail and bus systems. Increased funding for mass transit also wins greater support from

people living in urban (73%) and suburban areas (74%) than among those living in rural areas (62%).

Roughly six-in-ten Republicans (59%), but just 46% of independents and 34% of Democrats, support promoting the increased use of nuclear power. Notably, there also is a substantial gender gap in views on the use of nuclear power: many more men than women support increased use of nuclear energy (58% vs. 31%, respectively).

In addition, far more Republicans (52%) than Democrats (39%) favor giving tax cuts to energy companies to spur oil exploration. And while increased gasoline taxes are broadly unpopular, about twice as many Democrats as Republicans favor increasing gas taxes to encourage carpooling and conservation (29% vs. 15%, respectively).

About four-in-ten liberal Democrats, (41%) support higher gas taxes compared with just 22% of moderate and conservative Democrats. There also are ideological differences in the GOP over raising gas taxes, with a quarter of moderate and liberal Republicans favoring such an approach compared with 11% of conservative Republicans.

### Support for Ethanol Research Slips

Although a majority of Americans (57%) favor increased federal funding for research on ethanol, support has declined 10 points from February 2006. Support for greater funding for ethanol research has declined substantially among college graduates: 56% favor this research currently, down from 77% two years ago.

In addition, support for ethanol research has also declined considerably in the Midwest (from 78% to 63%) and the South (from 67% to 53%), though somewhat less in other regions.

	Feb 2006	Feb 2008	<i>Change</i>
<i>% favor:</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	
Total	67	57	-10
Republican	72	59	-13
Democrat	65	56	-9
Independent	68	60	-8
College grad+	77	56	-21
Some college	70	66	-4
HS or less	61	55	-6
East	67	61	-6
Midwest	78	63	-15
South	67	53	-14
West	57	55	-2

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a nationwide sample of 1,508 adults, 18 years of age or older, from February 20-24, 2008. The following table shows the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Plus or minus...</b>
Total sample	1,508	3.0 percentage points
Form 1 sample	769	4.0 percentage points
Form 2 sample	739	4.0 percentage points

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

## ABOUT THE CENTER

The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of eight projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

The Center's purpose is to serve as a forum for ideas on the media and public policy through public opinion research. In this role it serves as an important information resource for political leaders, journalists, scholars, and public interest organizations. All of our current survey results are made available free of charge.

All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

Andrew Kohut, Director  
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research  
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors  
Kim Parker, Senior Researcher  
Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Robert Suls, Shawn Neidorf, Leah Christian and Jocelyn Kiley, Research Associates  
Kathleen Holzwart, Research Analyst  
James Albright and Alec Tyson, Research Assistants

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**LATE FEBRUARY POLITICAL SURVEY**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**February 20 - February 24, 2008**  
**N = 1,508**

**QUESTIONS 1-62 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

On a different subject...

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=739]:**

Q.63F2 Right now, which ONE of the following do you think should be a more important priority for this country...  
**(READ AND ROTATE)?**

		<u>June</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>Mid-</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>May</u>
		<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>
36	Protecting the environment [OR]	35	36	42	45	42
54	Developing new sources of energy	60	57	49	48	49
<u>10</u>	<b>(DO NOT READ)</b> Don't know/Refused	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=769]:**

Q.64F1 Right now, which ONE of the following do you think should be the more important priority for U.S. energy policy... **(READ AND ROTATE; READ RESPONSE NUMBER TO CLARIFY OPTIONS)**

		<u>June</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mid-Sept</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>May</u>
		<u>2006</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>
35	Expanding exploration, mining and drilling, and the construction of new power plants [OR]	35	41	43	37	44
55	More energy conservation and regulation on energy use and prices	57	52	48	54	49
<u>10</u>	<b>(DO NOT READ)</b> Don't know/Refused	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>7</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100

**ASK ALL:**

Q.65 Would you favor or oppose allowing oil and gas drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska?

		<u>May</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Mid-</u>	<u>Late</u>	<u>Mid-</u>
		<u>2006</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>Sept 2005<sup>1</sup></u>	<u>March 2005</u>	<u>March 2005</u>
42	Favor	46	44	50	46	42
50	Oppose	44	47	42	49	46
<u>8</u>	Don't know/Refused	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>12</u>
100		100	100	100	100	100

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1 In Mid-September 2005 and earlier the question was worded "... drilling in the Alaskan Arctic National Wildlife Refuge."

**ASK ALL:**

Q.66 As I read some possible government policies to address America's energy supply, tell me whether you would favor or oppose each. First, would you favor or oppose the government [INSERT ITEM, RANDOMIZE]? How about the government... [INSERT NEXT ITEM]

		<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	Don't know/ <u>Refused</u>
a.	Promoting the increased use of nuclear power	44	48	8=100
	February, 2006	44	49	7=100
	Mid-September, 2005	39	53	8=100
b.	Spending more on subway, rail and bus systems	72	23	5=100
	February, 2006	68	26	6=100
	Mid-September, 2005	68	27	5=100
c.	Increasing taxes on gasoline to encourage carpooling and conservation	22	75	3=100

**ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=769]:**

d.F1	Giving tax cuts to energy companies to do more exploration for oil	42	53	5=100
	February, 2006	44	52	4=100
	Mid-September, 2005	52	44	4=100
e.F1	Requiring better fuel efficiency for cars, trucks and SUVs	90	8	2=100
	February, 2006	86	12	2=100
	Mid-September, 2005	86	12	2=100

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=739]:**

f.F2	Increasing federal funding for research on wind, solar and hydrogen technology	81	14	5=100
	February, 2006	82	14	4=100
g.F2	Increasing federal funding for research on ethanol	57	35	8=100
	February, 2006	67	22	11=100

**NO QUESTION 67**

**QUESTIONS 68-81 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**NO QUESTIONS 82-84**

**QUESTIONS 85-88 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**