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## **World Publics Strongly Favor Requiring More Wind and Solar Energy, More Efficiency, Even If It Increases Costs**

### **Most Think It Will Save Money in the Long Run**

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**Contact: Steven Kull, Director, WorldPublicOpinion.org, (202) 232-7500**

College Park, MD—A new [WorldPublicOpinion.org](http://WorldPublicOpinion.org) poll of 21 nations finds very strong support for the government requiring utilities to use more alternative energy, such as wind and solar, and requiring businesses to use energy more efficiently, even if these steps increase the costs of energy and other products. Fewer than half of the nations polled favor putting more emphasis on nuclear energy or on coal or oil.

In all nations most people reject the view that shifting to alternative energy sources would hurt the economy, believing instead that it would save money in the long run.

“It is quite remarkable that there is such unanimity around the world that government should address the problem of energy by emphasizing alternative energy sources and greater efficiency,” comments Steven Kull, director of WorldPublicOpinion.org. “Equally remarkable is how little the governments around the world are following the public’s lead.”

The poll of 20,790 respondents was conducted between July 15 and November 4, 2008 by WorldPublicOpinion.org, a collaborative research project involving research centers from around the world and managed by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland. Margins of error range from +/-2 to 4 percent.

Interviews were conducted in 21 nations, including most of the largest nations—China, India, the United States, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Russia—as well as Argentina, Azerbaijan, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, the Palestinian Territories, Poland, South Korea, Thailand, Turkey, and Ukraine. Interviews were also conducted in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau.

Asked how much emphasis their government should put on various approaches to the problem of energy, the most popular is for the government to put more emphasis on installing solar or wind energy systems. Majorities favor it in 20 of the 21 nations, led by South Korea (89%), Kenya (88%), France (88%), Italy (88%), and the US (87%). Only Russia (a major oil producer) lags behind with just 50 percent in favor.

Support was strong even when it was specified that the cost of energy would go up. Asked whether they favor the government “requiring utilities to use more alternative energy, such as wind and solar, even if this increases the cost of energy in the short run,” respondents in

all but two nations favor the idea, led by South Korea (96%), France (88%), Kenya (87%) and Jordan (77%). Russia again departs from the norm with a divided response and only a plurality in Azerbaijan (another oil producer) favors the idea.

One of the reasons that emphasizing increased costs in the short run has little impact on support may be that respondents are also optimistic that shifting to alternative energy sources will save money in the long run. Presented two competing arguments about the cost of “making a major shift to alternative energy sources, such as wind and solar” in all nations a majority takes the view that “with the rising costs of energy, it would save money in the long run.” In no nation does a majority favor the view that it “would cost so much money that it would hurt the economy.”

Another popular approach to the problem of energy is to put more emphasis on “modifying buildings to make them more energy efficient,” and is favored by majorities in all nations. Support ranges from 54 percent in India and the Palestinian Territories, to 89 percent in Great Britain and France.

Sixteen nations favor the idea, led by Britain (79%) and South Korea (74%), along with very high support in Taiwan (80%), Hong Kong (71%), and Macau (71%). The five nations that do not support the idea are all oil-producing countries: Azerbaijan (55%), Russia (43%) and Indonesia (47%) are opposed while Mexicans and Nigerians are divided.

Another possible energy conservation measure that would create costs for consumers receives more modest support. The idea of “having an extra charge for the purchase of models of appliances that are not energy-efficient” is supported by publics in 12 nations. However, it is also opposed in seven nations.

Support for such a charge is highest in Kenya (74%), Italy (69%), Indonesia (61%) and France (60%). The nations with a majority rejecting the idea include Thailand (64%), Argentina (62%), the Palestinian Territories (58%), Mexico (57%), Germany (54%) and the United States (52%).

An unpopular approach to dealing with the problem of energy is to put more emphasis on building nuclear energy power plants. Publics in only nine nations favor this idea. The most enthusiastic nations are China (63%), Jordan (58%), Kenya (57%) and Nigeria (56%). On the other hand, only four nations favor putting less emphasis on nuclear energy and only one by a majority: Germany at 63 percent.

The least popular approach to addressing the problem of energy is to put greater emphasis on “building coal or oil-fired plants.” Only seven publics favor doing so and only five of these are majorities. The countries most positive are Kenya (69%), Jordan (63%) and Argentina (60%). But here again there is little support for putting less emphasis on coal and oil. Germany is the only country where a majority (62%) prefers this approach. On average, just 31 percent favor less emphasis.

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