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Nearly Half of Americans Cite 'Too Little' Environment Regulation

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL ONLINE
October 13, 2005

Nearly three-quarters of U.S. adults agree that protecting the environment is important and standards cannot be too high, according to a Harris Interactive poll.

At the same time, nearly half of Americans surveyed say there is too little government regulation and involvement in the area of environmental protection, compared with about 19% who feel there is too much regulation and 32% who say it's just right.

The telephone poll of 1,217 adults indicates concern about too little environmental protection has risen slightly from 39% in 2000, when this poll was last conducted. But the percentage is far below the 63% who said there was too little regulation back in 1991.

Americans view large corporations as one of the biggest culprits in environmental problems: 71% said they are doing less than their share to help reduce environmental problems. But 63% say the general public isn't doing its share.

Only 12% of U.S. adults describe themselves as active environmentalists. While more than half of U.S. adults say they are sympathetic to environmental concerns, nearly a quarter say they are neutral and 4% say they are unsympathetic.

Water pollution is the top concern among poll respondents, followed by air pollution. Other priorities included global warming, ozone depletion, and depletion of forest lands.

See full results of the poll:

* * *

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"Do you agree or disagree with this statement: Protecting the environment is so important that requirements and standards cannot be too high, and continuing environmental improvements must be made regardless of cost."

Base: All Adults

		Party ID			Political Philosophy		
	All Adults (n=1,217)	Republican (n=252)	Democrat (n=323)	Independent (n=210)	Conservative (n=315)	Moderate (n=350)	Liberal (n=177)
Agree (NET)	74%	60%	85%	75%	69%	77%	82%
Strongly Agree	40	23	56	43	33	45	52
Somewhat Agree	34	37	29	31	37	31	30
Disagree (NET)	24	39	15	23	30	22	17
Somewhat Disagree	16	24	12	13	20	15	12
Strongly Disagree	9	15	3	10	10	7	5
Not sure	1	1	-	3	1	1	2

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

* * *

"Do you agree or disagree with this statement: Protecting the environment is so important that requirements and standards cannot be too high, and continuing environmental Improvements must be made regardless of cost. And do you strongly or somewhat agree or disagree?"

Base: All Adults

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	Strongly or Somewhat agree

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2005	74%
2000	66
1999	64
1998	63
1997	76
1996	73
1995	72
1994	71
1993	58
1992	80
1991	69
1990	75
1989	80
1986	66
1983	58
1981	45

* * *

"Do you think there is too much, too little, or about the right amount of government regulation and involvement in the area of environmental protection?"

Base: All Adults

		Party ID			Political Philosophy		
	All Adults (n=1,217)	Republican (n=252)	Democrat (n=323)	Independent (n=210)	Conservative (n=315)	Moderate (n=350)	Liberal (n=177)

Too much	19%	29%	15%	17%	30%	14%	12%
Too little	47	23	61	55	27	56	67
About the right amount	32	45	23	23	40	27	19
Not sure	2	4	1	5	2	3	2

* * *

"Do you think there is too much, too little, or about the right amount of government regulation and involvement in the area of environmental protection?"

Base: All Adults

	Too Much	**Too Little**	**About the Right Amount**	**Not Sure**
2005	19%	47%	32%	2%
2000	22	39	33	5
1999	29	42	28	1
1998	29	41	29	2
1997	21	49	28	1
1996	24	41	30	5
1993	20	52	24	3
1991	11	63	23	3

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

* * *

"How high of a priority do you feel each of the following problems is, using a scale of 1 to 10, where '1' means the problem is a low priority and '10' means the problem is a high priority."

Base: All Adults

	Rating of 9 or 10
Water pollution	52%
Air Pollution	48
Global warming	41
Ozone depletion	41
Depletion of forest lands	41
Recycling more material	39
Insisting that other nations adhere to our level of environmental standards	26

* * *

"For each of the following, please tell me if you feel they've done more than their share, just about right, or less then their share to help reduce environmental problems."

Base: All Adults

	Less Than Their Share	**About Right**	**More Than Their Share**	**Not Sure**
Environmental groups	16%	39%	42%	2%
The media	44	37	18	1
State or local government	46	43	10	2
General public	63	26	10	1
Local businesses	50	38	9	3
The President	53	36	8	3
The Congress	57	31	8	3
Large corporations	71	21	6	1

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

* * *

"Do you think of yourself as an active environmentalist, sympathetic to environmental concerns, neutral, or unsympathetic to environmental concerns?"

Base: All Adults

	Environmentalist	Sympathetic	Neutral	Unsympathetic	Not Sure
2005	12	58	24	4	1
1999	10	56	30	4	1
1998	12	57	27	3	*
1997	11	57	27	4	--
1996	9	61	24	4	1
1995	11	53	29	5	2

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
** Less than 0.5%*

Methodology:
Harris Interactive conducted this online survey in the U.S., Aug. 9-16, 2005, among a nationwide cross section of 1,217 adults. Figures for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, income and region were weighted where necessary to align with population proportions. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online. In theory, with probability samples of this size, one can say with 95% certainty that the overall results have a sampling error of =/- 3 percentage points of what they would be if the entire U.S. adult population had been polled with complete accuracy.

About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is a world-wide market research and consulting firm, best known for The Harris Poll and its use of the Internet to conduct scientifically

accurate market research. For more information, see www.harrisinteractive.com. To become a participant in The Harris Poll Online and join future online surveys, see www.harrispollonline.com.

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