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## MEMO

**TO:** AB 32 Implementation Group  
**FROM:** Alex Evans; EMC Research, Inc.  
**RE:** Executive summary of survey results  
**DATE:** August 19, 2008

### Objective

EMC Research recently conducted a telephone survey of California voters on behalf of the AB 32 Implementation Group. The goal was to measure current attitudes toward California Assembly Bill 32, also known as the Global Warming Solutions Act, and to gauge how both positive and negative arguments affect voter support for the bill.

### Key findings

- California voters are pessimistic, and there is a high level of distrust in government in general;
- Issues related to the economy are voters' top-of-mind concerns;
- Voters are largely unaware of AB 32, but they initially support its goals. Support for the bill significantly decreases as voters are given more information, particularly about the costs of implementing the bill;
- Most voters say they, as consumers, will bear most of the costs associated with implementing AB 32; and
- Voters are supportive of a more market-based approach that is coordinated with other Western states and a national climate change program.

### Expanded findings

*California voters are pessimistic, and there is a high level of distrust in government in general.*

Nearly three in four (72%) voters said things in California have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track, as opposed to fewer than one in five (17%) who said things are generally going in the right direction.

Voters are skeptical that the government will act in their interests. Two thirds (66%) of voters agreed with the statement: "I think the state will try to underestimate the true costs of implementing AB 32" — implying intent by the state to deceive.

*Issues related to the economy are voters' top-of-mind concerns.*

When asked an open-ended question about the biggest problem facing California, voters volunteered concerns about the economy. Nearly one in five (18%) named the state budget or budget deficit, and about one in ten named the economy in general and gas prices (12% and 9%, respectively). These are the top three current voter concerns.

Similarly, when voters are asked about their level of concern about specific issues, economic ones predominated. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of voters said fixing the state budget should be the state's highest priority, and over half (56%) said the same about improving the economy and creating jobs.

In the open-ended question, few voters (2%) named global warming or other environmental issues, and when asked specifically how high a priority addressing global warming should be for the state, only about one in four (26%) said it should be the highest priority.

*Voters are largely unaware of AB 32, but they initially support its goals. Support for the bill significantly decreases as voters are given more information, particularly about the costs of implementing the bill.*

At the beginning of the survey, most (78%) voters had not heard anything recently about AB 32. After hearing information both in favor of and in opposition to the bill, twice as many voters strongly opposed the bill (28%) as strongly supported it (15%).

While voters are sympathetic with the aims of AB 32, they are sensitive to the bill's costs. Half of the survey respondents were asked a series of questions about regulations and requirements for vehicles, electricity, housing and transportation fuels. Support for each item ranged from one-half to three-fourths. The other half of the respondents were asked about the same issues, but with their corresponding costs to the economy and individuals. These respondents consistently supported the regulations and requirements at about half the level of those respondents who were not given the information about the costs.

*Most voters say they, as consumers, will bear most of the costs associated with implementing AB 32.*

Nearly three in four (73%) voters said they have had to make significant changes to their lifestyle in the last three or four months because of the economy and gas prices. They also felt that changes in the law would directly affect them. Three in four (73%) voters agreed with the statement: "Placing additional regulations on California businesses ultimately leads to higher prices for consumers for gas, electricity, food and other consumer goods."

When asked who would end up paying the majority of the costs of implementing AB 32, three-fourths (77%) of voters said it would be consumers, compared with significantly fewer voters who said it would be business and industry or the government (5% and 3%, respectively).

**Who do you think is likely to actually end up paying the majority of the costs for implementing A.B. 32?**



*Voters are supportive of a more market-based approach that is coordinated with other Western states and a national climate change program.*

Two-thirds (67%) of voters said they would be more likely to support AB 32 if its aims were accomplished by a plan that relied more on market-based programs, such as incentives to reduce emissions, rather than on regulations. Similarly, two-thirds (62%) of voters said they favor phasing in the regulations of AB 32 over time to reduce costs to consumers and help the state's businesses remain competitive.

### **Methodology**

EMC Research conducted a total of 1,000 interviews, with a margin of error of  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, of a random sample of registered California voters. The survey was conducted from August 3-10, 2008, by trained, professional interviewers.