

What Ordinary Americans Are Doing To Cut Greenhouse Gas Emissions At Home

*Just as Likely to be Influenced by an Employee at a Home-Improvement Store (16%) as President George W Bush (16%) on
Environmental Issues*

Public Release Date: Monday, June 18, 6:00 a.m.



Ipsos Reid

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Toronto, ON – A new poll conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of Icynene finds that two thirds (64%) claim to have taken ‘some’ (54%) or ‘a lot’ (11%) of action in their own homes to reduce greenhouse gasses. For example, one third (32%) of homeowners say they have added insulation in the past two years to help reduce energy consumption, and 14% say they intend to add it this upcoming summer.

And where are Americans getting their advice? According to the findings, Americans are just as likely to be influenced by an employee working at a home-improvement store (16%) as by President George W. Bush (16%) when it comes to environmental issues and climate change.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Icynene from April 19 to April 23, 2007. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1236 adult homeowners was interviewed online. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 2.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure that the sample’s regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data.

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- 1 -

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Two Thirds (64%) Have Taken Action in Own Home...

Americans are putting their words into action, with two thirds (64%) of homeowners saying that they have done either 'some' (54%) or 'a lot' (11%) to personally help reduce greenhouse gases by increasing energy efficiency in their own homes. Conversely, one third (36%) say that they have 'done little' (30%) or 'nothing at all' (6%) to increase energy efficiency in their own homes.

- Older Americans are the most likely of all age cohorts to claim that they have done 'some' (61%) or 'a lot' (14%) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their own homes, with three quarters (75%) claiming to have done so.
- Not surprisingly, seven in ten (70%) residents of the west say that they have taken 'some' (58%) or 'a lot' (12%) of action. This might be explained by increased levels of awareness of energy conservation in California, in light of the high demand for energy in that state.
- Interestingly, almost half (47%) of young (aged 18-34) homeowners claim to have taken 'little' (39%) or 'no' (8%) action to increase energy efficiency in their own homes. This is notable, since younger generations are generally considered to be the most environmentally conscious age group within the United States.

Who Are American Homeowners Listening to for Their Advice?

Not President Bush...

Americans appear to have little faith in the guidance of their elected politicians on environmental issues. Four in ten homeowners (37%) say that they are likely to be influenced by a non-profit organization, such as the American Lung Association. Three in

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- 2 -

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ten (31%) suggest that they are likely to be influenced by an independent building organization, such as the U.S. Green Building Council. American homeowners are just as likely to be influenced by what an employee working at a building-improvement store has to say about the environment and climate change as by President George Bush (16%).

- Two in ten (19%) residents of the south say that they are likely to be influenced by George Bush. This is three points ahead of the national average (16%), and could be explained by the fact that most of the 'red states' are located in the south.
- Americans are more likely to be influenced by Ralph Nader (22%) than by President Bush (16%) on issues of the environment and climate change.
- Disproportionately, women (42%) are more likely than men (32%) to be influenced by an independent building organization, such as the U.S. Green Building Council.

Homeowners Don't Think that They're a Problem...

Whatever the means by which Americans get their advice, very few homeowners (4%) believe that homes and offices contribute most to the recent increases in greenhouse gasses. Despite the recent push to save energy in homes and offices, only a small portion of Americans feel that they are the biggest contributor to greenhouse gasses. Placing the blame primarily on industry (37%) and emissions from cars and trucks (36%), there is uniformity among all demographic groupings in America to the notion that homes and offices are not the biggest contributor.

However, Americans might not be all that accurate in their assessment of the leading causes of greenhouse gas emissions. Admittedly, nearly half (46%) of Americans either somewhat agree (35%) or completely (11%) agree with the statement that they 'do not

know much about environmental issues and the impact of greenhouse gas emissions on the environment', despite the increased coverage of this topic in the media over the past while. In this vein, only two in ten American homeowners (18%) believe that installing insulation is most important in helping to conserve energy at home.

- Women (52%) are much more likely than men (39%) to admit that they do not know much about environmental issues. To a similar degree, individuals whose household income is less than \$50,000 annually (54%) are more likely to claim that they do not know much about environmental issues and the impact of greenhouse gas emissions on the environment.
- Residents of the west claim to know more than any other region about environmental issues and the impact of greenhouse gas emissions on the environment, with six in ten (61%) disagreeing with the notion that 'they do not know much'. This is compared to the national average of 54% who disagree with this statement.
- Older Americans (aged 55 and over) are the most likely age group to say that insulation plays the most important role in conserving energy in their home, with one quarter (24%) saying so. Conversely, only 13% of young adults, aged 18 to 34, think the same.

Americans Installing Insulation to Help with Energy Conservation...

The most common methods among Americans of reducing energy in the home are turning down the heat in the winter (75%), turning down the air conditioner in the summer (63%), and sealing air leaks (52%). Despite the recent push towards the use of compact fluorescent light bulbs in homes, only 6% of Americans believe that this tactic is the most important in helping to conserve energy at home. In addition to these

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- 4 -

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commonly-used methods, one third (32%) of American homeowners have installed insulation over the past two years in order to be more energy efficient. Among those who have not already purchased insulation to increase energy efficiency in their own homes, 14% plan to add insulation in the next few months in order to better protect their homes for the coming summer.

- Despite the apparently high levels of environmental awareness in the west, only one in ten (8%) of westerners say that they will buy insulation to reduce their energy consumption during the coming summer months.
- Homeowners in the south (17%) and midwest (15%) are the most likely of all regions to install insulation in order to increase energy efficiency in the coming summer months.

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