

Most Would Pay Higher Energy Bills to Address Climate Change Says Global Poll

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[Full Report \(PDF\)](#)

[Questionnaire/Methodology \(PDF\)](#)



Most people say they are ready to make personal sacrifices -- including paying more for their energy -- to help address climate change, according to a new BBC World Service poll of 22,000 people in 21 countries.

(US Dept. of Energy photo)

Substantial majorities in all countries polled (83% overall) say it will be necessary for people in their country to "make changes in their lifestyle and behavior" to reduce the emission of climate-changing gases.

In 14 of the 21 countries, a majority (61% on average overall) say it will be necessary to increase energy costs to encourage conservation and reduce carbon emissions.

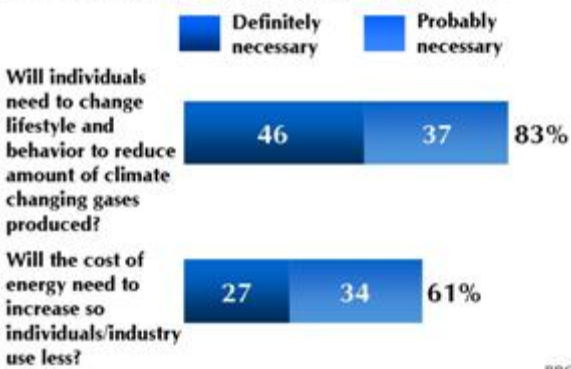
Support for increased energy taxes is conditional. Asked if they would support higher taxes on types of energy - such as oil and coal - that cause most carbon emissions, only half (50% overall) approve. But this rises to three out of four (77% overall) if the tax raised was specifically devoted to promoting energy efficiency or developing cleaner fuels. Such a tax receives majority support in all 21 countries polled.

These results hold true in the US and China, the two countries that emit the largest amounts of carbon dioxide. Urban Chinese are among those most ready to change their lifestyle (86%), to see the cost of energy go up (83%) and to pay higher taxes on coal and oil (85%).

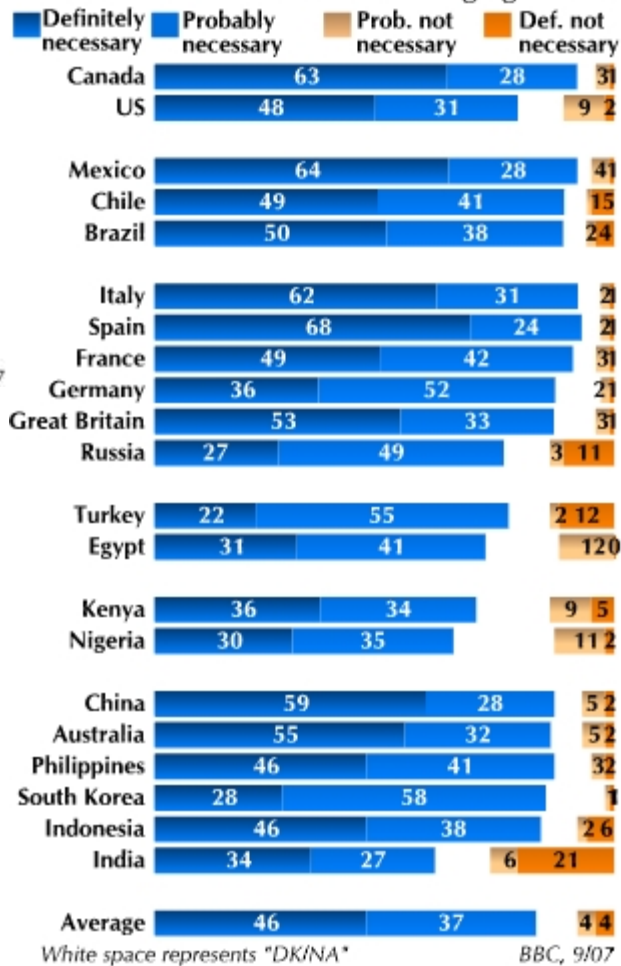
Seventy-nine percent of Americans agree that lifestyles in the United States will have to change and 65% say that energy costs will have to rise. Americans are initially divided about paying a higher tax on coal and oil (46% support), but this rises to 74% if the revenues are used to promote efficiency or develop new fuels.

Required Action on Climate Change

Percent Saying "Necessary," Average of 21 Countries



Will Individuals Need to Change Lifestyle to Reduce Amount of Climate Changing Gases?



The poll is being published to coincide with BBC World Service's week of change, during events and change assessed.

programming on climate Taking the Temperature which the impact of the negotiations on climate throughout the year will be

The survey was conducted World Service by the polling firm GlobeScan with the Program on Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at University of Maryland. coordinated fieldwork May and 26 July, 2007.

for BBC international together International the GlobeScan between 29

Director of PIPA, Steven

"People around the world recognize that climate change requires that people change their behavior. And that to provide incentives for those changes there will need to be an increase in the cost of energy that contributes to climate change."

Kull said,

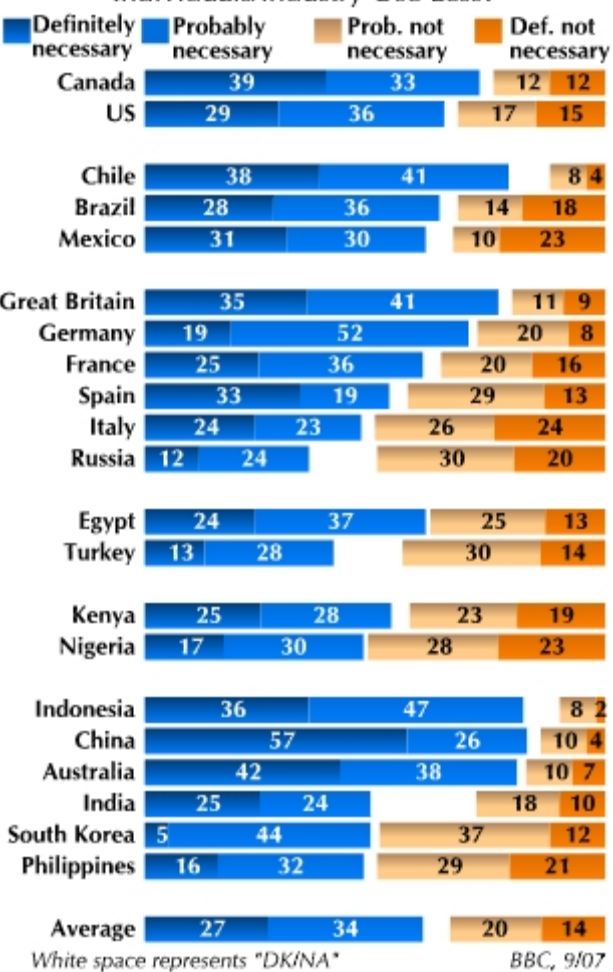
GlobeScan President, Doug Miller said, "While few citizens welcome higher taxes, the poll suggests that national leaders could succeed in introducing a carbon tax on energy. The key requirement is that their citizens trust that the resulting tax revenues will be invested in addressing climate change by increasing energy efficiency and developing cleaner fuels."

Detailed Findings

In all countries majorities agree that in order to address the problem of climate change it will be necessary for individuals in their country "to make changes in their life style and behavior in order to reduce the amount of climate changing gases they produce." On average 83 percent say it will be necessary with 46 percent saying it will be definitely necessary.

The countries with the largest percentages saying that it will be definitely necessary are Spain (68%) Mexico (64%), Canada (63%), Italy (62%), and China (59%). The countries with the largest numbers saying that lifestyle changes will not be necessary are Nigeria (33%), Egypt (29%), Kenya (25%), the United States (19%), and India (18%).

Will the Cost of Energy Need to Increase so Individuals/Industry Use Less?



Large majorities in most of Europe and the Americas believe that it will also be necessary to "increase the cost of the types of energy that most cause climate change, such as coal and oil, in order to encourage individuals and industry to use less:" Chile (79%), Great Britain (77%), Canada (72%), Germany (70%), United States (65%), Brazil (64%), Mexico (61%), France (61%) and Spain (53%).

There are two exceptions, however. Leaning instead toward the belief that such increases will not be necessary are Italians (50%) and Russians (50%). Italy's energy costs are already among the highest in Europe in part because it bans nuclear technology. Although Russia is a major oil producer, its consumers have faced rising energy prices in recent years.

Attitudes in Asia about whether increased energy costs will be necessary range from the overwhelming 83 percent majorities in China and Indonesia to the divided views in South Korea and the Philippines. Indians lean toward the view that higher costs are needed: half (50%) say that increasing the cost of energy will be necessary and only 27 percent say it will not, though large numbers do not answer (23%). Australia is the developed country with the largest

majority who believe energy costs will need to increase (81%).

The only country with a majority against increasing the cost of fuels that produce greenhouse gases is Nigeria, a major oil producer whose government subsidizes domestic fuel sales. Fifty-two percent of Nigerians surveyed say they do not think such an increase is necessary to decrease energy use, while 47 percent think it is. A modest majority of Kenyans (53%) say higher energy costs are needed.

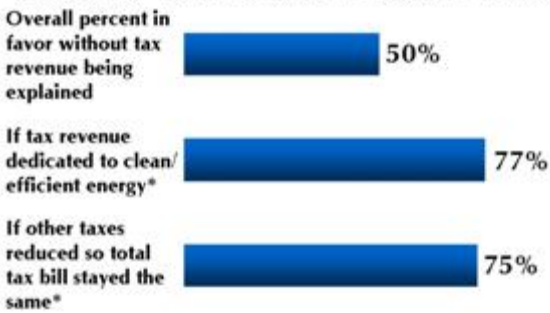
In the Middle East, a majority of Egyptians (61%) say that it will be necessary to increase costs. Turks are divided (44% do not think it is necessary to raise costs while 41% feel that it is).

Unlike the unanimity about the need for lifestyle changes and near unanimity on whether it will be necessary to increase the cost of energy, reactions are much more mixed to the question of whether people would favor raising taxes on energy sources that contribute to climate change so as to encourage people and industry to use less. Initially, majorities or pluralities in only nine countries favor such an energy tax increase, six are divided, and six are opposed. Overall, only 50 percent are in favor and 44 percent opposed.

Urban Chinese have the largest majority--85 percent--who would support raising taxes on the fuels that contribute most to climate change. The Chinese government is in the midst

Support for Higher Taxes on Most Harmful Types of Energy So that Individuals/Industry Use Less

"Strongly" and "Somewhat Favor," Average of 21 Countries



* Based on subsample results

BBC 907

of a campaign to increase energy efficiency and has already announced that it plans to impose fuel taxes beginning next year.

The proportion of Chinese respondents favoring higher energy taxes is 24 points greater than the next largest majorities in Australia and Chile (61% in both). This is followed by Germans (59%), Canadians (57%), Indonesians (56%), Britons (54%) and Nigerians (52%). Publics lean toward this measure in Mexico (50% to 46%) and they are divided in Kenya (50% to 48%), Spain (49% to 47%), France (47% to 48%), Turkey (42% to 43%), Russia (41% to 44%) and India (38% to 36%).

Majorities are initially opposed to higher energy taxes in Italy (62%), South Korea (59%), the Philippines (58%), Brazil (55%), Egypt (52%) and the United States (51%).

The poll then tested the relative influence of two different design options for an energy tax by asking those who initially did not support a higher energy tax whether they would favor this tax under one of two different conditions: if the revenues were "devoted only to increasing energy efficiency and developing energy sources that do not produce climate change" and if at "the same time as your other taxes were reduced by the same amount, keeping your total taxes at the current level."

Combined with those who initially supported an energy tax, the percentage who change their position under each condition produces a large majority in every country ready to favor an energy tax.

In the six countries where majorities initially oppose higher fuel taxes, adding the condition of devoting revenues to improving efficiency and seeking out new sources produces large majorities in favor: Italy (78%), South Korea (70%), the Philippines (69%), Brazil (65%), Egypt (73%) and the United States (74%).

The countries that were somewhat divided about tax increases also become supporters if revenues would be earmarked for energy programs: Mexico (74%), Kenya (81%), Spain (86%), France (79%), Turkey (75%), Russia (72%) and India (60%).

The same holds true, but to a slightly lesser extent, if those initially against higher energy taxes are told their other taxes would be reduced so their total tax bill would remain the same. Countries that were opposed to tax increases then become supporters: Italy (69%), South Korea (70%), the Philippines (66%), Brazil (65%), Egypt (82%) and the United States (64%). And countries that were divided also show large majorities in favor: Mexico (64%), Kenya (78%), Spain (73%), France (79%), Turkey (78%), Russia (75%) and India (66%).

Again, China stands out as exceptionally willing to consider higher taxes as a means of combating climate change. When those against or uncertain about higher taxes are asked whether they would support them to increase efficiency or develop new sources, the total

in favor of tax increases becomes a nearly unanimous 97 percent. And when asked whether they would favor such increases if their total tax bill remained the same, 93 percent say yes.

A total of 22,182 citizens in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Great Britain, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, the Philippines, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, and the United States were interviewed face-to-face or by telephone between May 29 and July 26, 2007. Polling was conducted for the BBC World Service by the international polling firm GlobeScan and its research partners in each country. In eight of the 21 countries, the sample was limited to major urban areas. The margin of error per country ranges from +/-2.4 to 3.5 percent.