



## SUMMARY: ECONOMY AND THE ENVIRONMENT 2013 OREGON VALUES & BELIEFS STUDY

*Project Background: This memo presents summary points related to the economy and the environment from the 2013 Oregon Values & Beliefs study. The summary draws from three surveys conducted in April and May 2013. Final sample sizes were 3971 respondents for Survey #1, 1958 for Survey #2, and 1865 for Survey #3. The questionnaires and findings are available at [www.oregonvaluesproject.org](http://www.oregonvaluesproject.org).*

*DHM Research and PolicyInteractive Research designed and conducted the surveys using telephone and online formats to aid accessibility and help obtain a representative sample. Enough interviews were completed in five geographic regions (Central, Eastern, Portland Metro, Southern, and Willamette) to permit statistically reliable analysis at the regional level. The research design used quotas and statistical weighting based on the U.S. Census to ensure representativeness within regions by age, gender, and income. The regions were then weighted proportionally by population per the U.S. Census to yield statewide results.*

*This study stands out from others in that, when asking questions about policy priorities with cost implications, we informed respondents that rating an item as "important" or "desirable" meant willingness to support some increase in taxes or reallocation of funds from other public services. The visual surveys used \$ symbols to emphasize the real-world implications of policy preferences.*

*Another distinctive feature of the study is that focal topics recur across the three surveys in a variety of question forms and contexts. High-quality research uses this "test-retest" or "triangulation" method to improve confidence in response validity.*

*This summary of key findings, observations and conclusions reflects the judgment of the research partners and not necessarily the views of the sponsoring organizations.*

### Findings

1. In an open-response to policy priorities, **Unemployment/jobs** is the most commonly mentioned problem Oregonians want their local and state government officials to do something about, volunteered by 11% of respondents (S1.4-5). **Economy/economic growth** ranks eighth for local officials and sixth for state officials, mentioned by 4% and 5% of respondents respectively. No problem related to the environment was mentioned by more than 2% of Oregonians.
2. Almost six in ten (57%) residents believe that the **protection of the environment should be given more priority even at the risk of slowing economic growth**, while just over a third (35%) believe that **economic growth should be given priority even if the environment suffers to some extent** (S1.27).
3. Residents volunteer that **environmental awareness** is the number one reason Oregon will be a better place to live 10 years from now (mentioned by



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24%) and that **stronger economics** is the number two reason (18%) (S2.2).

4. **Overpopulation** (volunteered by 18%) is the number one reason Oregon will be a worse place to live 10 years from now, while **unemployment/lack of jobs** (11%) is the number four reason, and **economy** is the number five reason (10%) (S2.3).
5. Nearly six in 10 (59%) Oregonians think it is very likely or somewhat likely that **economic growth will be more important than addressing climate change** over the next 10 years compared to just two in 10 (22%) who think it is very unlikely or somewhat unlikely. The numbers flip to 37% who think this trend is very desirable or somewhat desirable, compared to 40% who think it is undesirable (S2.17).
6. **A stronger economy** is the third most common reason Oregonians volunteer for why their communities will be a better place to live 10 years from now (11%). **Business growth** ranks fourth (10%), and **environmental awareness** ranks fifth (8%) (S3.2).
7. **Overpopulation** tied with **crime** as the most common reason Oregonians volunteer for why their communities will be a worse place to live in 10 years (12%). **Unemployment/lack of jobs** came up in 10% of responses, along with the **economy** and ranks fourth, while **environmental issues** are mentioned by 4%, just behind **traffic congestion** at 5% (S3.3).
8. Slightly under half (47%) of residents believe it is likely in 10 years that **environmental protection will become more important than economic growth** and a majority (52%) say that the trend would be desirable compared to 25% who feel it would be undesirable (S3.16).

## Observations and Conclusions

Unemployment is the problem Oregonians most commonly mentioned as to what they want their local and state government officials to do something about, volunteered by 11% of respondents. But when unemployment, jobs, and economic development are placed in competition against environmental or quality of life terms the picture changes somewhat.

Overall, Oregonians value economic growth and many feel a stronger economy will make Oregon a better place to live in the future. At the same time, they have strong concerns about the effects of overpopulation on their quality of life and want climate change addressed. Slightly over half feel it would be desirable if over the next 10 years environmental protection becomes more important in Oregon than economic growth. A quarter feel it would be undesirable.