



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday, May 10, 2012

Contact:

Mary Huttlinger

513-239-7443

mhuttlinger@smallbusinessmajority.org

POLL: Virginia's Small Businesses Want Government Investments in Renewable Energy Technologies and Support EPA Clean Air Standards

Vast majority of small business owners believe clean energy investments spur job creation and economic growth, even after being reminded of Solyndra's bankruptcy

Virginia small business owners overwhelmingly support government investments in clean energy and believe such investments have an important role in creating jobs and boosting the economy, according to an opinion poll released today by Small Business Majority.

The poll, conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, found that 78 percent of Virginia small business owners agree government has a role in driving our country toward a cleaner, more competitive economy. Small businesses support continued government investment in clean energy technologies, even when asked specifically about Solyndra—a manufacturer of solar cells that went bankrupt after receiving a \$535 million federal loan guarantee. The poll also found strong support for new and current Environmental Protection Agency air quality standards that require a reduction in greenhouse gas and other harmful emissions, even if it means a possible increase in utility prices.

"Small businesses are eager for pragmatic energy policies that can help them develop new technologies and increase business opportunities," said John Arensmeyer, founder and CEO of Small Business Majority. "They understand that to survive in this tough economy they need creative solutions to curb costs and increase their competitive edge. These include continued government investments in clean energy and the enforcement of standards that reduce harmful emissions in their communities. Right now, giving small businesses the incentives and tools needed to drive job creation and increase market competitiveness should be a top priority."

When asked about the biggest problems facing their small business, 65 percent¹ of respondents cited the rising costs of doing business—such as higher material and supply costs (34 percent) and higher fuel and electricity costs (31 percent). Twenty-seven percent cited a lack of consumer demand as a top problem, 23 percent said it was taxes and only 16 percent felt government regulations were a primary concern.

Small business owners demonstrated strong support for recently released EPA standards that require new power plants to reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases. The vast majority—79 percent—favor the EPA's federal rule that new power plants reduce previously unlimited emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.

With regard to incorporating clean energy into their business practices, 62 percent of Virginia small business owners are willing to install solar panels or some other source of clean energy.

¹ multiple responses accepted; percentages exceed 100 percent

"The American solar industry is still very small; we're sort of emerging from the cave, so to speak," says Richard Good, President of Solar Services in Virginia Beach, Virginia. "But its potential is huge for creating manufacturing jobs, for expanding the use of solar panels on homes and businesses and more. I compare our position to Silicon Valley just before computer technology took over. And now look out there—it's exploded; there are computer jobs everywhere in Silicon Valley. That can and should happen with solar."

While respondents indicated overall support for government investment in general, specific government actions are even more popular. Small business owners expressed overwhelming support for 14 separate actions the federal government could take to support moving to a clean energy economy. The *least* two popular programs—setting standards that require utilities to meet a certain percentage of energy demand through renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and bio-fuels, and increasing automotive efficiency standards to 54.5 miles per gallon in cars and light trucks—tied and are supported by an astonishing 79 percent.

"I believe government should invest in helping small businesses become more energy efficient, not only because it can save them money but because it makes good business sense," said Larry Brown, owner of GreenHomes, LLC in Fairfax, Virginia. "Any time a small business can operate more efficiently they become more competitive. Small businesses want to become more energy-efficient, but they need a little help. The more we can do to give them that help, the more successful they and our economy will be."

Other findings from the poll include:

- 84 percent of respondents support EPA rules to reduce the emissions of mercury, arsenic, chromium, nickel and acid gases from new and existing power plants. Nearly half (48 percent) strongly support it—that's almost ten times those who strongly oppose it (five percent).
- An overwhelming majority (80 percent) of small business owners favor proposed rules to reduce smog and soot pollution that crosses state lines (the "Good Neighbor Rule").
- The vast majority (80 percent) of Virginia small business owners believe government should play an important role in creating financial incentives that encourage people to take energy efficiency measures, like installing energy efficient light bulbs. Seven out of 10 business owners believe government should provide incentives through funding and policy efforts.
- Small business owners polled were politically diverse: 40 percent identified as Republican, 43 percent as Democrat, and 9 percent as independent.

For more information visit: <http://www.smallbusinessmajority.org/small-business-research/clean-energy/>

Poll results in this statement represent findings from an Internet survey of 600 small businesses in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, Michigan, Nevada and Colorado. The poll was conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research for Small Business Majority with a margin of error of +/- 4%.

[Small Business Majority](#) is a national small business advocacy organization, founded and run by small business owners, to support America's 28 million small businesses. We conduct extensive opinion and economic research and work with our rapidly growing network of small business owners across the country to ensure their voices are an integral part of the public policy debate. Learn more about us on [Wikipedia](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

#