

Energy Conservation- Personal Choice

Imagine that you are part of a consumer focus group being asked to evaluate public opinion on a variety of environmental issues. The major goals of the initiative are to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and to address the environmental impacts associated with energy use. For each of the following groups of statements, rank each statement as 1 (your first choice), 2 (your second choice), or 3 (your third choice). For each question, give your reasons for answering as you did. Answer honestly.

1. One way to reduce the need for foreign oil is to reduce the number of vehicles on the highways. If your cooperation in a voluntary conservation program were requested, how would you respond?

- a) If it was available, I would use public transportation.
- b) I would join a car pool, and I would only drive my own car only if I had to stay late when the others didn't.
- c) If I could afford it, I would continue to drive my car to work each day.

2. Another way to reduce dependence on oil is to make government regulations that allow drivers to use their cars only on certain days.

- a) If I could afford it, I would drive my car every day and pay the fine if I was caught.
- b) I would use public transportation or a car pool only on those days when government regulations prohibit me from driving my own car.
- c) I would use public transportation as much as possible.

3. A third way to reduce the amount of oil used is to increase the price. The government might increase the gasoline tax to try to discourage its use.

- a) To encourage the use of public transportation, a tax should be placed on gasoline or diesel fuel used in all private automobiles, and the money should be used to build or maintain mass transit systems.
- b) There are already enough taxes on gasoline. The government should not increase the gasoline tax.
- c) A tax should be placed on fuel used in larger cars but not on fuel used in smaller cars that are more energy efficient.

4. All petroleum is not used in vehicles. Some is used as a source of energy or as a raw material for industries.

- a) I am not in favor of taxes on petroleum used by industry because it would cause prices to increase and lower my standard of living.
- b) A tax should be placed only on nonessential items made from petroleum.
- c) A tax should be placed on all petroleum whether it is used as a source of energy or as a raw material to make consumer goods.

5. One of the reasons why Canadians use more oil than other countries is the large size of the country. One way to reduce the amount of oil used is reduce the speed limit. After the Arab Oil Embargo the speed limit in the United States was reduced to 55 mph (88 km/hr). In 1987 Congress voted to allow states to increase the speed limit on interstate highways. In Canada, the speed limit on most highways was increased to 110 km/h.

- a) Government should not have increased the speed limit because this increases our dependence on oil. Instead they should have imposed stiffer fines for speeding.
- b) Government should have allowed an increase only on those highways where there is little traffic and a great distance between cities.
- c) Congress should have increased the speed limit on all interstate highways instead of allowing the states

to decide.

6. Families with a larger number of children need bigger cars and homes and use more products than a family with fewer children. People with more money buy bigger cars, bigger homes, more products, and take more vacations than people who do not have as much money. Cars, homes, products, and vacations all require energy, much of it from petroleum.

- a) An energy use tax should be placed on incomes so that people who make more money will pay more taxes, but couples with more children should not have to pay higher energy taxes even though the children will increase the need for petroleum.
- b) No energy use tax should be placed on income or family size.
- c) An energy use tax should be determined by a formula that considers both family size and family income.

7. Much of our petroleum is used to heat water and keep our homes at a comfortable temperature. At various times throughout our history, taxpayers were allowed a tax credit for making their homes more energy efficient.

- a) If I could afford it and a tax credit was available to reduce the cost, I would make changes to conserve energy, such as weather-stripping, new storm doors, and possibly a new furnace.
- b) If I could afford it and a tax credit was available to reduce the cost, I would install a solar hot water heater, a windmill to produce electricity, or some other technology that uses renewable energy sources.
- c) Unless the tax credit would cover the entire cost, I would not make any changes to reduce the energy used.

8. Pollution controls on vehicle exhaust, and smoke stacks at power plants and industries require energy to remove the pollutants.

- a) Because they increase the use of energy, pollution controls on automobiles and smoke stacks should not be used.
- b) Pollution control equipment that will reduce the pollution to the lowest possible level should be required regardless of how much energy is needed to remove the pollutants.
- c) Methods of pollution control that are chosen should consider both the amount of energy used and the amount of pollution eliminated.

9. The oil reserve in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is estimated by the US Bureau of Land Management to contain 3,200,000,000 barrels of oil. This amount of oil would supply 100% of the oil needed by the US for 213 days. Drilling for this oil may destroy the habitat of a large number of wildlife. Is the oil worth it?

- a) No, if wildlife will be harmed, the oil should not be retrieved. Conservation measures should be put in place to reduce the need for oil.
- b) We need the oil to maintain our lifestyle, so we must drill even though it may cause damage to the habitat.
- c) Do not drill until a wildlife study has been made and precautions have been taken to try to minimize the damage to wildlife.

10. Some people feel that conservation is not necessary. They think the energy shortage was arranged by the oil companies so that they could increase prices.

- a) As long as s/he can afford it, a person should be able to use all the energy s/he wants.
- b) Instead of oil, coal should be used to produce electricity, but there should not be any restrictions on oil used for transportation.

c) We need to conserve energy, but we also need to increase the amount of money spent on research for renewable energy sources and technology that uses energy more efficiently.

11. Which of the following energy conservation or energy alternatives do you think local governments should encourage? Rank your choices.

a) recycling of aluminum, glass, papers

b) incineration of wastes at a WTE facility

c) require industries using oil as a raw material to use make their products to switch to some other material