

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

SURVEY OF THE EPA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

A survey was sent by email to 1,550 members of the EPA Alumni Association in November 2018. Of these, 871 emails were opened, and 381 surveys were filled out for a response rate of 24.5 percent.



381
ANSWERED
THE SURVEY

871
READ
THE EMAIL

1,550
CONTACTED
BY EMAIL

1

Climate change is far and away viewed as the most important environmental challenge of the future.

When asked to select four top challenges from a list of eight future environmental challenges, climate change was ranked the most serious challenge. Other important challenges are water resource management, energy sustainability, and protection of biodiversity and ecosystems.

MOST SERIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES



82.1
PERCENT
311 VOTES
CLIMATE
CHANGE



63.9
PERCENT
242 VOTES
WATER
RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT



59.6
PERCENT
226 VOTES
ENERGY-
RELATED
IMPACTS



49.3
PERCENT
187 VOTES
BIODIVERSITY
AND ECOSYSTEMS
PROTECTION

2

An “all of the above” approach for climate change is strongly supported, including incentives, partnerships, and mandates.

In written comments, EPA alumni expressed concern about climate change and supported a broad range of potential responses. They called for a sense of urgency. One respondent wrote that *“An ‘Apollo Moonshot’ to decarbonize our economy is needed.”* Another wrote that: *“Fifty years from now, EPA will be judged by how well it pivoted to recognize implications of [greenhouse gases] ... for human health and the environment ... we should be asking the question, ‘What do we need to do to move in that direction ASAP?’”*

CLIMATE CHANGE POLICIES



81.4
PERCENT

301 VOTES
SOME FORM OF
CARBON TAX



55.9
PERCENT

207 VOTES
TECHNOLOGY-
BASED
STANDARDS



65.9
PERCENT

251 VOTES
GOVERNMENT
INVESTMENT
IN ENERGY
TECHNOLOGIES



64.9
PERCENT

244 VOTES
GLOBAL
LEADERSHIP
ON TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE,
TRAINING, AND
AGREEMENTS

3

EPA alumni see science as a critical foundation for EPA’s actions and future role, especially science directed toward developing tools and solving problems.

“Nothing is more important than a solid foundation of peer-reviewed science on which to set all regulatory actions and even proactive innovative approaches.” — Survey respondent

4

Public awareness and consumer information are powerful sources for moving industry toward sustainability, yet regulations will still be needed to deal with poor performers.

“Increased transparency, expanding right-to-know, and encouraging voluntary actions are critical. These support actions ‘beyond compliance.’” — Survey respondent

PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY



67.2 PERCENT

252 VOTES
PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE
SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES



54.1 PERCENT

203 VOTES
INVESTING IN PROGRAMS LIKE
SAFER CHOICE OR ENERGY STAR



50.1 PERCENT

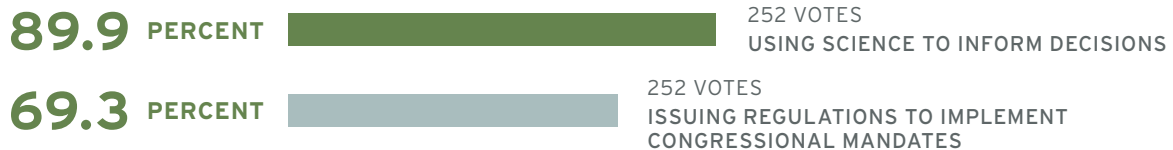
188 VOTES
RECOGNITION FOR
PERFORMING SUSTAINABLY

5

Strengthening the essential EPA-state relationship is critical, but *how* remains a challenge. There are no simple solutions.

Most respondents favored moving in the direction of cooperative strategic planning and joint prioritization. The suggestion of “*certifying state/tribal-wide programs, with periodic audits or reviews*” and “*expansion of EPA’s current Performance Partnership system*” were supported by 69.4 percent and 70.4 percent of respondents. Many alumni said EPA must continue an active oversight role, with more emphasis on technical assistance.

EPA HISTORICAL STRENGTH



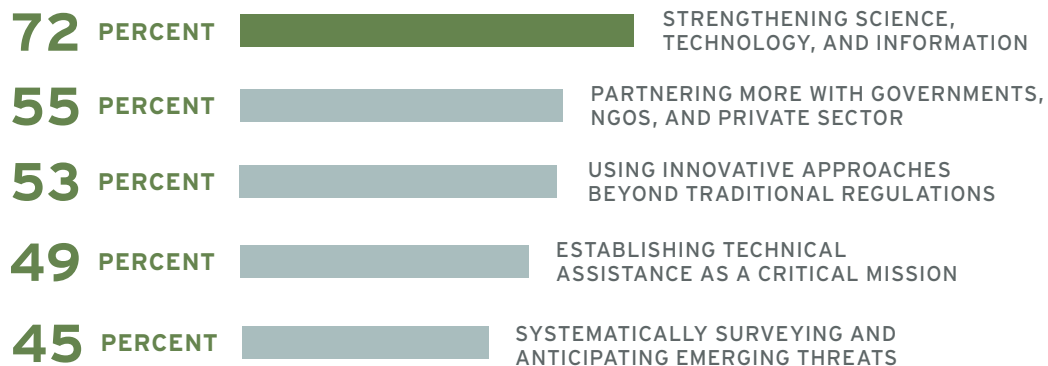
6

Public understanding and engagement on environmental issues is critically important for tackling future challenges. EPA must use new tools to reach broader audiences with credible information on science, solutions/policies, and progress.

“Far too many people think that we have already solved the environmental problems and that little else needs to be done...” — Survey respondent

PROMISING DIRECTIONS FOR EPA

Rated “strongly agree” by EPA Alumni



7

EPA's historical strengths in regulation, science, and technology provide a sturdy foundation for the future, but EPA should improve its ability to adopt new approaches and form partnerships.

8

Clarity of mission, motivated staff, scientific excellence, and openness to new approaches are essential ingredients of a successful future EPA.

Other topics frequently mentioned include promoting education/public relations, stakeholder communication, and working at the local level with communities.

INTEREST IN WORKING FOR EPA

Rated "very important" by EPA Alumni

