



Asian American Environmentalists:

An untapped power for change in California

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As someone who has been active in environmental causes in California for over 15 years, being the only Asian American in the room has been a common occurrence. This puzzled me, as I figured there must be other Asian Americans who also cared about protecting the environment. If these diverse communities became involved, then the environmental movement would become stronger, more representative and therefore, more effective. As a critical first step to strategically engage Asian Americans in this movement, the California League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (CLCV Ed Fund) initiated research into the environmental views and attitudes of Asian American voters.

This research follows in the tradition of the CLCV Ed Fund's efforts to engage under-represented communities in the environmental movement. In 2000, the CLCV Ed Fund began this work with a bilingual, environmental survey of Latin American voters. The information from this survey helped to inform policymakers and advocates about the environmental views and attitudes of Latinos. The results fundamentally altered the perception that Latinos cared little about the environment. Since then, many more environmental organizations, in their efforts to fight for clean air, land, or water, actively reach out to Latinos and organizations serving Latinos. At the same time, more Latinos have stepped into positions of leadership on these issues.

Similarly, this report attempts to increase the involvement of Asian Americans in environmental causes. Our research shows that Asian Americans care deeply about the environment, and they are willing to engage in efforts to advance environmental reforms and programs.

The CLCV Ed Fund intends to use this information to involve Asian Americans in the ongoing efforts to improve and protect California's unique natural resources, heritage and beauty. We invite you to join us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Lau'.

James Lau,
Executive Director
CLCV Education Fund

Executive Summary

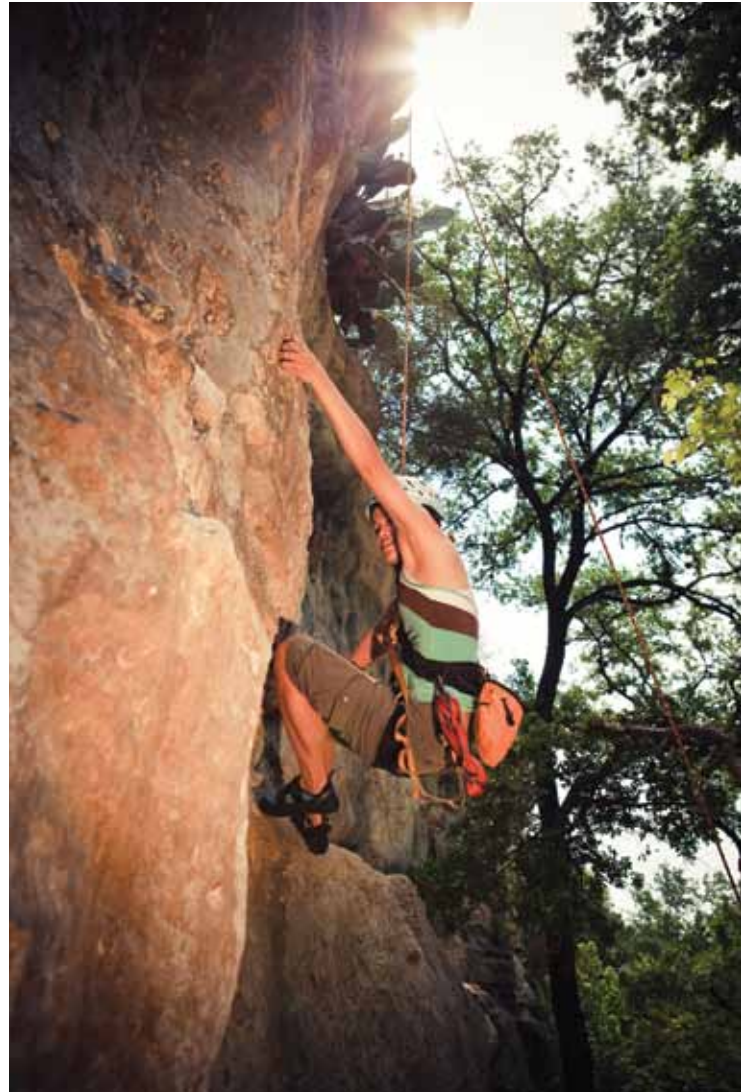
The California League of Conservation Voters Education Fund commissioned research and polling to learn about the views and attitudes of California's Asian American voters. The information from this research is intended to be used to engage Asian Americans to shape and advance environmental issues in California. Through focus groups and a ground-breaking survey, we conclude that Asian American voters in California are a prime—but untapped—constituency to help develop and support environmental policy.

In California, Asian Americans are emerging as a political force. This group is one of the fastest growing racial or ethnic groups in the state. From 1990 to 2000, the Asian American population grew 52%, outpacing the growth rate of Latinos (43%). From 2000 to 2005, their population grew 24%, from 3.8 million to 4.7 million, representing 38% of California's gain in population. By 2025, Asian Americans are projected to represent 18% of California's population.

This growth translates into potential political power. From 2000 to 2005, Asian Americans who are eligible to register to vote climbed 25%, from 2 million to 2.5 million. They represent over 12% of Californians who are eligible to register to vote.

Despite their current and projected population, Asian Americans represent an untapped and largely ignored constituency, one that could provide the critical support needed to advance environmental reforms and programs. Few organizations serving the Asian American community work on environmental policies or programs. At the same time, staff of environmental organizations report that it has been challenging to engage Asian Americans in environmental issues that directly affect their communities.

The California League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (CLCV Ed Fund) and the larger environmental community are eager to involve Asian Americans in efforts to protect environmental quality, natural resources and community health and well-being. To inform and shape our work to engage and involve Asian Americans, we sought information



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about their environmental views and attitudes. However, after an extensive background search, we found that little research has been done among the broader Asian American community on environmental issues.

To overcome this deficiency, CLCV Ed Fund commissioned work from Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research. The research showed that Asian American voters in California are an important—but untapped—constituency to involve in environmental issues. The key findings include:

- **Self-defined Environmentalists** — California’s Asian American voters care about protecting our air, land, and water, and are even more inclined to call themselves “environmentalists” than other voters statewide.
- **Support for Government Leadership** — Asian Americans believe strongly that government should take an active role in protecting our air, land, and water, and these voters support environmental regulations and laws to protect natural resources.
- **Willing to Pay** — Asian American voters support policies to protect our air, land, and water—even when it comes with a price tag in the form of higher revenue or fees.
- **Language Matters** — Asian American voters responded differently to wording, both in English and in Asian languages. For example, the term “environment” ranked lower on the issue priorities list than “protecting our air, land and water.” As an environmental issue of importance, “global warming” resonated strongly with Asian American voters and ranked much higher than “climate change.”

This research was gathered in two stages: through focus groups and a ground-breaking, statewide survey. In late August and early September, 2008, CLCV Ed Fund hosted nine focus groups from throughout the state and among different ethnicities and nationalities within the broader Asian American community. These focus groups helped define the environmental issues of importance. They also guided and shaped survey questions and tested language for cultural and linguistic sensitivities of the six Asian ethnicities that we surveyed. Those communities included Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Asian Indian, Filipino and Vietnamese Californians.

Using the focus group results, we designed an in-depth, 20-minute phone survey. The survey covered a range of topics, including: which environmental issues are of highest importance; who Asian Americans trust as messengers of information; where Asian Americans get their information; and what types of actions they are willing to take to improve the environment. Between February 19, 2009 and March 9, 2009, over 1,000 Asian American registered voters were interviewed in English, Chinese, Vietnamese, or Korean, according to respondents’ preferences.

CLCV Ed Fund strongly recommends that those who are actively working to protect the environment—NGOs, government agencies, foundations, philanthropists, businesses, and policymakers—should aggressively reach out to and engage Asian American voters in these efforts.

This report is intended to help expand the Asian American audience that is involved in environmental action and policy. CLCV Ed Fund welcomes feedback about whether this information has been helpful in developing programs that broaden the audience that is taking action on environmental issues.

Suggestions of how this information can be used include:

Building grassroots support. NGOs mobilizing residents to take action can frame their messages around health and future generations. To increase the level of trust, have a scientist deliver the message. To bring your message directly to Asian American voters, attend and speak at groups where they either give their money or volunteer their time, including education-related groups, religious institutions, or charities.

Developing support for ballot measures. Asian American voters strongly support ballot measures that protect the environment. Those advocating for ballot measures should specifically target Asian American voter households. In designing mail pieces that appeal to Asian American voters, the most compelling combination seems to be one comprised of positive and negative messages that mix environmental threats coupled with the beauty of California’s surroundings. For example, the pieces should identify the “problem” (e.g. pollution) as well as provide the “solution/answer/ideal” (e.g. a pristine beach).



Informing the ethnic media. Asian American voters are willing to take personal actions to protect the environment. The ethnic media, both print and television, are frequently utilized news sources for naturalized Asian American voters. Asian Americans are a receptive audience for programs that focus on education, such as California’s conservation campaigns “Flex Your Power” or “Be Water Wise.” For those who allocate funding for these programs, directing funding into the Asian American community would be a smart investment. Such targeted efforts should receive sufficient funding for each individual Asian ethnic group, which needs to be treated as its own separate constituency rather than directing funding for the entire Asian American community.

Creating environmental awareness programs. Further capitalizing on Asian American voters’ willingness to take personal actions, NGOs serving Asian American populations can implement programs that provide information on how one can help address global warming or the shortage of water. For example, such an organization could design a course to help homeowners reduce their use of fossil fuels and water

through weatherization, solar paneling installation, and grey water usage.

Advocating for environmental policies. Asian American voters care about the environment, they support environmental policies, and they want an active government to protect the environment. NGOs serving Asian American populations should participate in developing and advocating for environmental policies. These policies should consider the needs and interests of the Asian American community, as well as provide benefits to their community. Some examples include park or water bonds, which have substantial funding to develop parks; transportation funding that could help reduce traffic congestion; and incentives to install solar paneling.

Background

The California League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (CLCV Ed Fund) believes that all Californians have a stake in the quality of our land, air, and water. The active involvement of our citizenry is vital for the protection of our environment. As a result, CLCV Ed Fund strives to reach out to and involve under-represented communities in the improvement of our environment.

One strategy to bring in new voices is through our opinion polling program. Opinion polling helps us better understand perceptions and views about the environment. This information then helps to guide strategies and efforts into the involvement of different communities.

CLCV Ed Fund's opinion polling and research began in 2000 with a bilingual survey on Latino attitudes on the environment. This survey showed that Latinos cared about the environment, particularly environmental justice. This information was provided to environmental leaders and policymakers, which helped to shape environmental policies and perceptions.

In further analysis of demographic trends, Asian Americans emerged as a good constituency to target. This group is one of the fastest growing racial or ethnic groups in the state. From 1990 to 2000, the Asian American population grew 52%, outpacing the growth rate of Latinos (43%).¹ From 2000 to 2005, their population grew 24%, from 3.8 million to 4.7



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With their current and projected population, Asian Americans represent an untapped and largely ignored constituency, one that could provide the critical support needed to advance environmental reforms and programs. However, few organizations serving the Asian American community work on environmental policies or programs. Further, environmental colleagues report that it has been challenging to engage Asian Americans in environmental issues that directly affect their communities.

California League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (CLCV Ed Fund) and the larger environmental community are eager to involve Asian Americans in efforts to protect environmental quality, natural resources and community health and well-being. To inform and shape our work to engage and involve Asian Americans, we sought information about their environmental views and attitudes. However, after an extensive background search, we found that little research has been done among the broader Asian American community on environmental issues.

To overcome this deficiency, CLCV Ed Fund commissioned work from Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research, under the direction of Ben Tulchin and Julie Lein. Also assisting with this research was a statewide advisory committee comprised of prominent Asian American community leaders, who helped to shape the methodology of the research.

To learn more, we conducted focus groups and a groundbreaking, statewide survey. CLCV Ed Fund hosted nine focus groups from throughout the state to gauge environmental issues of importance, guide and shape survey questions, and test language for cultural and linguistic sensitivities.

Using the focus group results, we designed a survey intended to last 20–25 minutes. The survey covered a range of topics, including: which environmental issues are of highest importance; whom Asian Americans trust as messengers of information; where Asian Americans get their information; and what types of actions they are willing to take.

In presenting this research, we recognize that the Asian American community is diverse. Each ethnic group has its own distinct culture, language, and history. While we recognize these differences, the results from the survey show striking similarities among the different ethnic groups. In the interest of brevity in this report, we have grouped all the ethnic groups under the label "Asian Americans." Where there are significant differences in responses among the ethnicities, we have highlighted them. The information we gathered from the qualitative and quantitative research is presented below.

1 *The Diverse Face of Asians and Pacific Islanders in California*, Asian Pacific American Legal Center (2006).

2 "The New 'Sleeping Giant' in California Politics: The Growth of Asian Americans", UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 2006.

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Key Environmental Findings

What Does the Term “Environment” Mean to Asian American Voters?

The word “environment” is used frequently and in different contexts; as such, it conjures up different thoughts and perceptions. When hearing this term, what did Asian American voters think? In both the focus groups and survey, the most dominant affiliations were both personal and issue-oriented.

In personal terms, at the core of the term “environment” is the cleanliness of communities and the individual impact on nature, the earth, and general surroundings. Asian American voters associated the environment with surroundings—with nearly one in five (17%) using an element of their surroundings to describe the environment. The personal approach and association account for Asian American voters’

heightened awareness of the importance of maintaining clean streets, picking up garbage, being green, and recycling on the individual level. In some Asian languages, the word “environment” also translates to “surroundings,” thereby fostering a broader outlook on the meaning of the term.

The term itself also denoted several major specific environmental issues, such as “air” and “air quality,” “global warming,” and “water quality.” Air and air quality were the most common associations across Asian American voters, with nearly one in three (31%) respondents mentioning air, clean air, or air pollution in relation to the environment. This association was even stronger among foreign-born Asian voters, with nearly two in five (37%) Asian American voters born outside of the U.S. mentioning air pollution compared to 18% American-born voters.

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES—THE ECONOMY DOMINATES, ENVIRONMENT IN THE MIDDLE

Please tell me how concerned you are about each issue on a scale from 0 to 10, in which 10 means you are extremely concerned and 0 means you are not at all concerned.

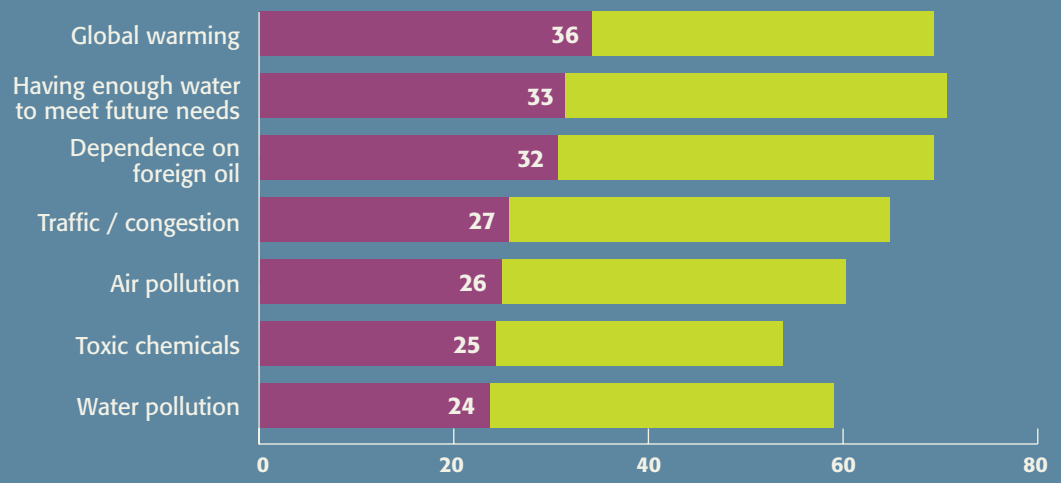
Responded “10”
Responded “8” or “9”



TOP ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES—GLOBAL WARMING TOPS THE LIST

For each issue, please tell me whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem.

Extremely serious
Very serious



General Issues of Importance

Among issues in general, the top concerns among Asian American voters were the economy and state budget deficit, mirroring the priorities of California voters statewide.⁵ Given the economic downturn and California's budget crisis, which dominated news coverage during the course of early 2009 and when the survey was conducted, the degree of importance placed on these issues fits into this broader political context. When asked to rate a series of issues on a 1 to 10 scale, with 10 indicating the highest concern and 1 indicating the lowest concern about a specific issue, over half (54%) of Asian American voters ranked the economy a 10—the highest concern. Nearly half (47%) considered the state budget deficit a top concern.

The list of priority issues included both "environment" and "protecting our air, land, and water." The survey found that wording matters. The environment scored lower on the issue priority ratings, with a mean concerns rating of 7.2—toward the bottom of the list. Notably, "protecting our air, land, and water", with an average concerns rating of 7.6, ranked above "the environment," clustered in the middle of the issue concerns between health care and taxes.

Important Environmental Issues

While Asian Americans are very concerned about environmental issues generally, global warming, in particular, stood out as a top priority. Over one in three Asian American voters (36%) identified global warming as an extremely serious concern, with nearly seven out of ten (69%) describing global warming as an extremely or very serious issue.

While Asian American voters tend to place a high value on issues like air pollution and water supply, which topped the list of environmental concerns among all voters statewide,⁶ the heightened interest in global warming is particularly striking. In addition to the survey results, we found that Asian American voters were more likely to discuss global warming in focus groups and through open-ended responses than the general California population. Based on the qualitative research, Asian American voters were particularly attuned to the global implications of environmental problems (i.e. in their homelands as well as in America), in addition to the impact of global warming on future generations.

While concern about global warming was consistent across nationalities, it was most prominent among Korean American

⁵ According to the February Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) survey, the economy and state budget were the two top issues among Californians.

⁶ PPIC Environmental survey, July 2009.

TOP ISSUE CONCERNS BY NATIONALITY (EXTREMELY OR VERY SERIOUSLY CONCERNED)

	Total	Asian Indian	Chinese	Filipino	Japanese	Korean	Vietnamese
Global warming	69%	72%	66%	67%	60%	86%	71%
Having enough water to meet our future needs	70%	79%	64%	72%	79%	71%	66%
Dependence on foreign oil	68%	76%	69%	70%	67%	60%	61%
Traffic and congestion	64%	60%	66%	63%	62%	78%	53%
Air pollution	60%	50%	51%	67%	56%	70%	67%

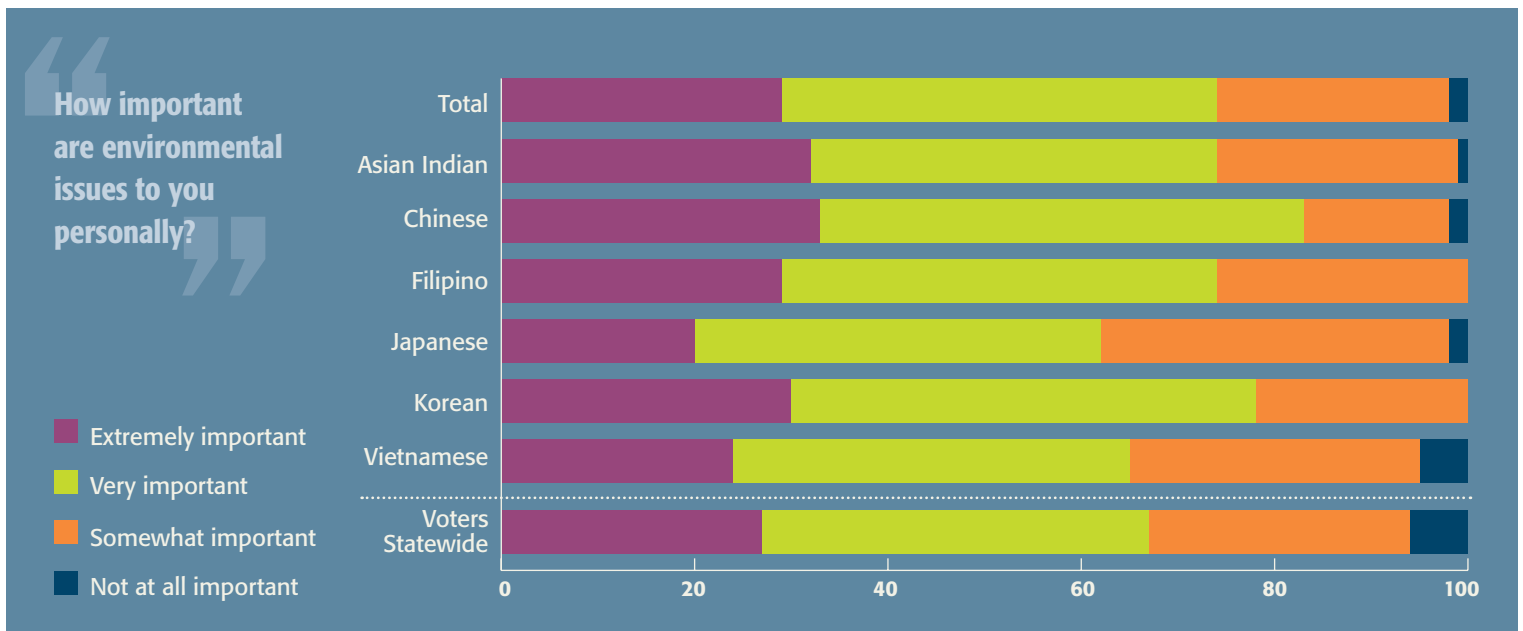
voters. Half of Korean American voters described global warming as an extremely serious concern and 86% designated global warming as an extremely or very serious issue. Nearly nine in ten foreign-born Korean American voters (89%) described global warming as an extremely or very serious issue. Additionally, voters who completed the survey in a native language were more likely to consider global warming an extremely or very serious concern than English survey respondents (73% in-language respondents—64% English-language respondents).

Again, wording matters. This question also included climate change as an environmental issue. Climate change scored 16

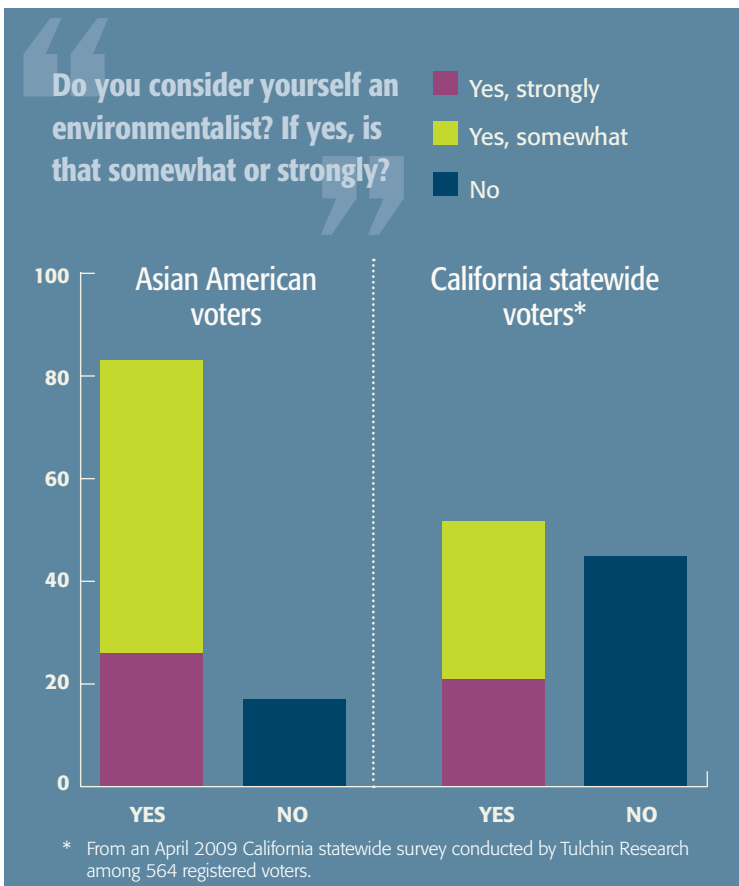
points lower than global warming. Climate change registered as 21% extremely serious and 53% in total for extremely serious or very serious issue.

Other top issue priorities for Asian American voters varied slightly across nationality. Among Asian Indian and Japanese voters, nearly four in five voters (79%) said that “having enough water to meet our future needs” was an extremely or very serious concern compared to two in three Chinese (64%) and Vietnamese (66%) voters. Concern about our dependence on foreign oil was more pronounced among Asian Indian (76%) voters, and less so among Korean (60%) and Vietnamese (61%) voters.

PERSONAL IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES



ASIAN AMERICANS IN CALIFORNIA ARE MORE LIKELY TO CALL THEMSELVES ENVIRONMENTALISTS



Asian Americans as Strong Environmentalists

Asian American voters in California view the environment as an important issue, and are even more likely to consider themselves environmentalists than voters statewide. On average, three in four Asian Americans (74%) are extremely or very concerned about environmental issues personally, with higher interest among Chinese (83%) and Korean (78%) voters. This level of concern is slightly higher than voters statewide, with two in three Californians (67%) indicating extreme or very high importance of environmental issues personally.

In a striking finding, more than four in five Asian Americans voters (83%) described themselves as environmentalists, outnumbering voters statewide by a three-to-two margin.

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES ENVIRONMENTALISTS

	Yes	No
Chinese	96%	4%
Korean	88%	12%
Total Asian American	83%	17%
Vietnamese	78%	17%
Filipino	78%	22%
Asian Indian	75%	25%
Japanese	63%	37%
CA Voters statewide	52%	45%

Specifically, a narrow majority (52%) of all California voters consider themselves environmentalists. This result was one of the most notable findings in the survey results.

In fact, each of the six major Asian ethnicities outnumbered California voters

statewide in self-reporting as “environmentalists.” Notably, Chinese voters were nearly unanimous, with 96 percent describing themselves as environmentalists. The other major ethnicities hovered around three-quarters in self-identified environmentalists, drawing slightly lower numbers from Japanese voters.

Policy Proposals and Fiscal Issues

Asian American voters in California are highly supportive of policies to protect our air, land, and water. In testing a range of proposals, all the environmental policies garnered a majority of support. Nevertheless, fiscal concerns still factored into the equation. Policies without a price tag gained considerably more support than policies with a tax component.

Specifically, Asian American voters overwhelmingly favor strong environmental measures without a financial component, holding steadily across ethnicities. Asian American voters voiced very strong favorability toward using recycled water (92% support with explanation of recycled water; 89% support without explanation), with higher support among Chinese (95% favor) and Asian Indian (96% favor) voters. Four in five Asian voters (80%) favored providing rebates for fuel-efficient vehicles such as hybrids, and that support is consistent across nationalities and particularly pronounced among Vietnamese voters (88% favor).

Environmental policies with a revenue component garnered a majority of support among Asian American voters. Three in

five Asian American voters (61%) voiced support for an SUV surcharge that would redistribute funds to rebates for hybrids and other fuel efficient vehicles. Each nationality favored the surcharge by a healthy margin, with the exception of Korean voters (43% favor; 48% oppose). A majority of Asian American voters also supported a sales tax (50%), parcel tax (53%), wastewater tax (54%) and gas tax (58%).

The tax measure that galvanized the most support was an increase in the gas tax in order to fund alternative energy, such as wind, solar, and clean fuels. Nearly three in five Asian American voters (58%) favor an increase in the gas tax, with particularly high support among Chinese American (62% favor) and Filipino American (62% favor) voters.

Although the other tax measures varied in support across nationalities, Chinese American voters were more sensitive to a parcel tax (48% support) and sales tax (42% support) than other ethnicities. U.S.-born voters were also more receptive to proposals with a financial component, supporting a sales tax by a 16-point margin over foreign-born voters (62% support among U.S.-born; 46% foreign-born) and the gas tax by a 12-point margin (67% gas tax among U.S.-born, 55% foreign-born).

Asian Americans Want an Active Government Role in Protecting Air, Land, and Water

Asian American voters see the need for government to take an active role in protecting our air, land, and water. Overall, Asian American voters feel that environmental regulations provide an important benefit to society (71%), with only 12% saying they do more harm than good. By a two-to-one margin, Asian voters believe we can protect our air, land, and water while encouraging job growth (61%), with only 28% indicating that businesses should be permitted to bypass environmental regulations.

The clear preference for government involvement, with nearly seven in ten voters (69%) identifying a government entity for environmental enforcement, indicates that Asian American voters look to government for stewardship in protecting our air, land, and water. In terms of ensuring environmental laws are followed, Asian voters split their trust between the federal government (22%), state government (19%) and local government (28%), with only 4% saying they trust

ASIAN AMERICANS VOTERS BELIEVE WE CAN PROTECT ENVIRONMENT AND STRENGTHEN ECONOMY



businesses to carry out environmental regulations. U.S.-born Asian voters are even more prone to prefer government involvement, with four in five (80%) U.S.-born Asian American voters choosing local, federal, or state oversight.

This preference also plays out at the ballot box. Specifically, four in five Asian American voters (80%) are very or somewhat willing to vote for a candidate with a strong environmental record. An even stronger majority—85 percent—indicate a likelihood of voting for a ballot measure to protect the environment.

From our experience in California and elsewhere, voters believe that the government must play an important role in setting and enforcing environmental standards. However, we also usually see a resistance to government action due to voters' sense that government does not function well. With Asian Americans, we see a much stronger leaning toward an active government role—yet another indication of the potential to engage California's Asian communities.

Reaching Out to Asian Americans

As presented in the previous section, data from this research show Asian American voters strongly support environmental issues. Given Asian American voters' support for environmental policies, even those with fiscal implications, turning out their vote is important for the many environmental issues that are decided at the ballot box. CLCV Ed Fund believes that Asian American voters could play a more significant role in helping to advance efforts that improve our environment.

For those who are working to protect our environment—environmental organizations, foundations, philanthropists, policymakers, and businesses—there is a clear opportunity to engage and involve this community. For those serving this community, Asian Americans' high level of interest in and support for environmental issues indicate that environmental programs and services should be provided to the community.

This section briefly discusses how we in the environmental community can better reach out to the Asian American community. The information from this section is limited to our own research; there is more extensive research from others, such as from Dr. Janelle Wong and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, who have studied and tested voter modeling and turnout to increase voter turnout of Asian American voters.

While this report omits a discussion about effective voter turnout strategies for Asian American voters, incorporating a voter contact program within the Asian American community is critical, as many environmental policies are decided at the ballot box.

Messages and Trusted Messengers

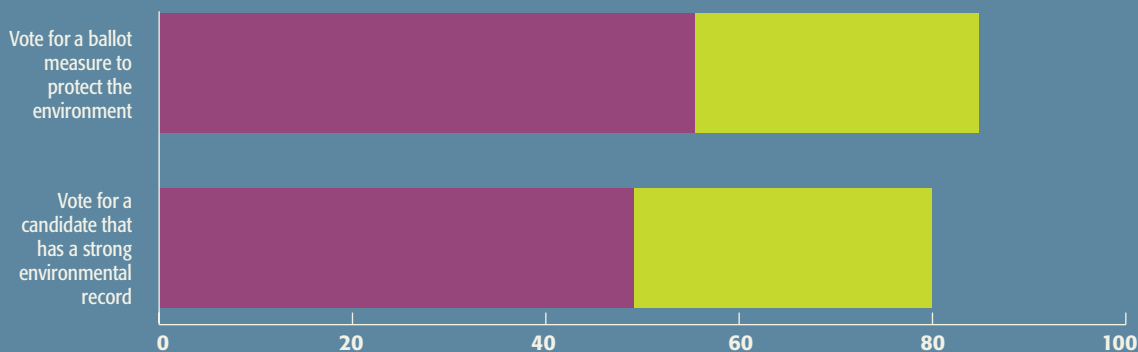
As a way to reach out to Asian American voters, we tested several environmental messages to determine what messages were convincing to Asian American voters. The ubiquitous strength of the message to protect our air, land, and water provides an important opening to capture the attention of Asian American voters.

All the messages—from economic arguments to protecting our environment for future generations—garnered extremely strong support, the most compelling statements for Asian American voters were those that focused on health (mean 8.9 on a 10-point convincing scale, with 58% indicating that health is a 10, the most convincing reason to protect our environment) and a clean and healthy environment (mean 8.8, with 57% most convincing).

ASIAN AMERICAN VOTERS WILLING TO TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

How likely would you be to take the following actions to protect the environment?

Very likely
Somewhat likely



TOP MESSAGES FOCUS ON HEALTH AND GLOBAL WARMING

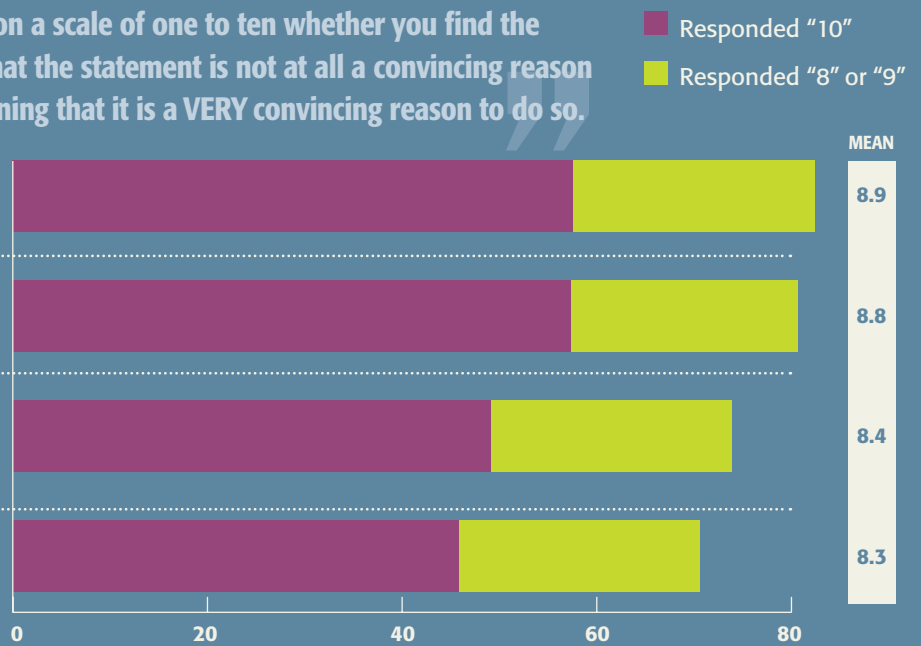
For each of the statements, please tell me on a scale of one to ten whether you find the statement convincing, with one meaning that the statement is not at all a convincing reason to protect our air, land and water, ten meaning that it is a VERY convincing reason to do so.

Clean air and water are essential for our health. We should work to reduce toxins and carcinogens from our air and water.

All people have the right to a clean and healthy environment where they live, work and play.

Global warming is a worldwide problem that is already affecting us with an increase in floods, hurricanes and other natural disasters. We must reduce harmful emissions and pollution in order to stop global warming and preserve the planet, since this is an issue that affects everyone.

We should increase the use of renewable energy, such as solar and wind power, so we can reduce our dependence on foreign oil, clean up our air and water, create jobs, strengthen our economy and achieve energy independence.



These messages were particularly powerful among Vietnamese voters, with 87% citing health and 79% of Vietnamese voters describing a “clean and healthy environment” as very convincing reasons to protect our environment. While economic arguments, such as saving money, earned strong support, they ranked at the bottom of all the tested messages.

To better understand the most trusted figures to deliver these messages, we also surveyed Asian American voters about the individuals and organizations they trust. The most powerful environmental messengers were scientists (80% trust a great deal or somewhat), family members (76%), President Obama (71%), and local TV news in English (71%). The degree of trust placed in environmental news sources varied considerably based upon language preference, with 43% of in-language voters placing a great deal of faith in family members—the top source for in-language voters. Comparatively, only 26% of English speakers mentioned family members as a trusted news source, ranking below scientists, President Obama, and the American Lung Association for this cohort.

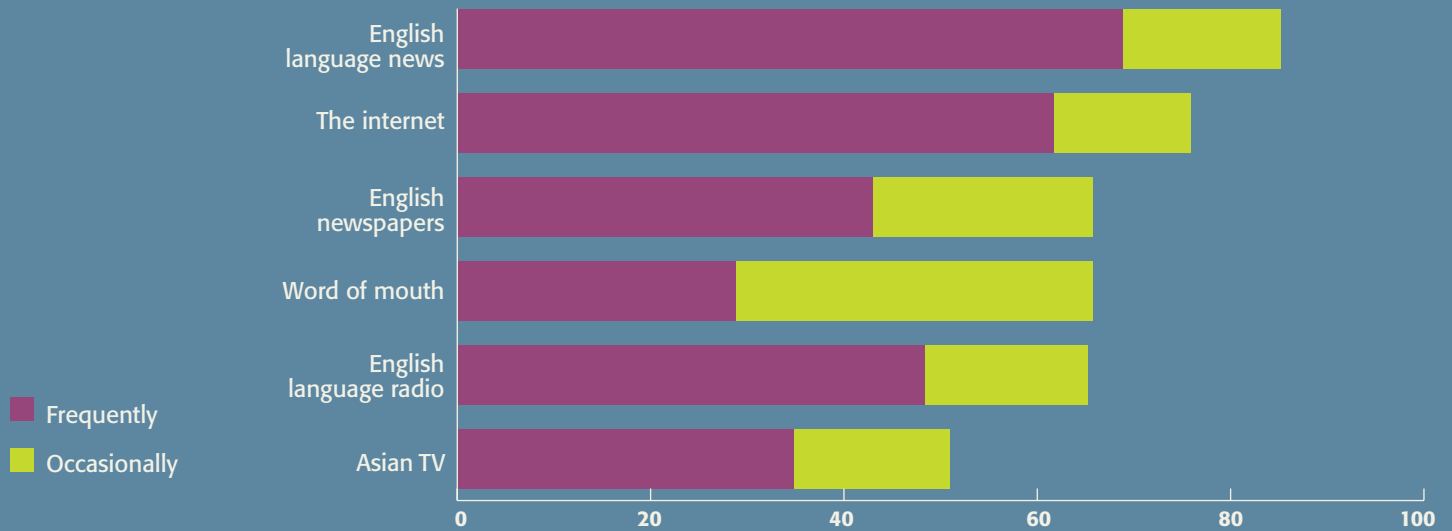
Media Sources Used by Asian American Voters

While there is no single medium that can successfully reach a community as diverse as California’s Asian Americans, there is ample opportunity to connect to these voters through in-language and English-language news sources. The most effective type of news outlet—whether it be a Chinese newspaper in San Francisco or a statewide internet advertisement—depends heavily on the generation of the voter and language preference.

For Asian American voters as a whole, the most heavily frequented mediums for news were English language news (68% frequently, 85% frequently/occasionally) and the Internet (62% frequently, 76% frequently/occasionally). However, the use of these outlets varied considerably based on country of birth. Nearly four in five U.S.-born Asian American voters (78%) reported using the Internet as a news source, whereas only 56% of foreign-born voters use the Internet frequently. This 22-point discrepancy is testament to the generational differences among Asian American voters.

FREQUENCY OF NEWS SOURCES: TOP TIER

“How often do you use the following sources of news?”



Language preferences are also a major driver of news sources, with the top form of news for in-language voters being Asian television (61% frequently, 80% frequently/occasionally). Comparatively, only 7% of English-speaking voters report frequently watching Asian television. Similarly, Asian newspapers were commonly cited as a major news source by in-language voters (49% frequently, 72% frequently/occasionally), whereas only 4% of English-speaking voters frequently used this news source. The tendency to use the Internet was also driven by language preferences, with English-speaking Asian American voters 23 points more likely to frequently use the Internet (77%) than in-language Asian American voters (54%).

Thus, while Asian American voters rely on similar news mediums to California voters statewide, there is also a unique opportunity to narrowcast messages to specific communities through Asian television, newspapers, and radio. Although these forums do not necessarily reach all Asian American voters in California, they present an important option for those

FREQUENCY OF NEWS SOURCE BY SURVEY LANGUAGE (% FREQUENTLY)

	English	In-Language
Asian TV	7%	61%
English language news	66%	55%
The Internet	77%	54%
Asian newspapers	4%	49%
Asian radio	3%	38%

who wish to reach predominantly foreign-born or first generation voters who prefer to speak another language. Given the strong environmental tendencies of this constituency, these Asian-specific forums provide a unique opportunity for communication.

Challenges and Opportunities

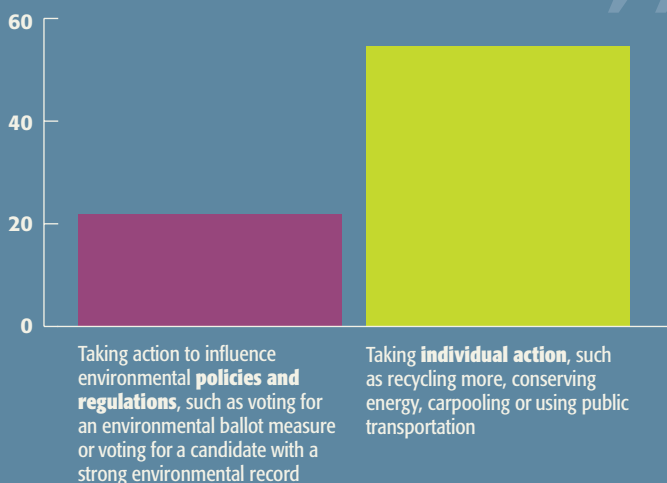
Individual vs. Political Action

CLCV Ed Fund believes that taking both individual actions and political actions are equally important in protecting our air, land, and water. In terms of the latter, ensuring that elected officials support tough environmental policies makes a difference in enacting strong environmental policies, such as reducing auto tailpipe emissions or toxic chemicals in products. These types of policies change industry practices for the improvement of our environment.

While Asian American voters care deeply about environmental issues and values protecting our air, land, and water, Asian American voters overall believe individual action (55%) has more impact than political action (22%) in helping our environment. While Asian American voters are willing

A CHALLENGE: EMPHASIS ON INDIVIDUAL ACTION OVER INFLUENCING GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Which of the following approaches do you think has a greater impact in protecting our air, land and water?



to advocate for environmental issues, they tend to value personal actions like recycling and cleaning up trash over political actions. Organizations that spend their time and resources on developing and advancing policies and on relying upon citizens to apply pressure on their elected representatives may find that motivating Asian Americans to take political action is a clear challenge.

On the other hand, organizations and agencies working to change personal behaviors for the environment, such as using compact fluorescent light bulbs, installing low-flow toilets, or picking up trash, should be made aware that Asian American voters are willing to take these actions.

Involvement in Environmental Organizations

A gateway to taking political action on behalf of the environment is through participation in environmental organizations. According to our research, Asian American voters have limited exposure to environmental organizations. Specifically, less than one third of Asian American voters (29%) have donated money or time to an environmental organization.

Their absence presents an opportunity for environmental organizations. Notably, one in five Asian American voters (18%) indicated a high likelihood and three in five (59%) said they were very or somewhat likely to donate to an environmental organization. Nearly one in three voters (32%) described themselves as likely to volunteer for an environment organization.

Moreover, compared to other types of civic organizations, there is a potential for growth. Asian American voters are active in non-profits (77% have donated money or time), religious organizations (68%), and schools (58%).

Recommendations

CLCV Ed Fund strongly recommends that those who are actively working to protect the environment—NGOs, government agencies, foundations, philanthropists, businesses, and policymakers—should aggressively reach out to and engage Asian American voters.

This report is intended to help expand the Asian American audience that is involved in environmental action and policy. CLCV Ed Fund welcomes feedback about whether this information has been helpful in developing programs that broaden the audience that is taking action on environmental issues.

Suggestions of how this information can be used include:

Building grassroots support. NGOs mobilizing residents to take action can frame their messages around health and future generations. To increase the level of trust, have a scientist deliver the message. To bring your message directly to Asian American voters, attend and speak at groups where they either give their money or volunteer their time, including education-related groups, religious institutions, or charities.

Developing support for ballot measures. Asian American voters strongly support ballot measures that protect the environment. Those advocating for ballot measures should specifically target Asian American voter households. In designing mail pieces that appeal to Asian American voters, the most compelling combination seems to be one comprised of positive and negative messages that mix environmental threats coupled with the beauty of California's surroundings. For example, the pieces should identify the "problem" (e.g. pollution) as well as provide the "solution/answer/ideal" (e.g. a pristine beach).

Informing the ethnic media. Asian American voters are willing to take personal actions to protect the environment. The ethnic media, both print and television, are frequently utilized news sources for naturalized Asian American voters. Asian Americans are a receptive audience for programs that focus on education, such as California's conservation campaigns "Flex Your Power" or "Be Water Wise." For those who allocate funding for these programs, directing funding into the Asian American community would be a smart investment. Such targeted efforts should receive sufficient funding for each individual Asian ethnic group, which needs to be treated as its own separate constituency rather than directing funding for the entire Asian American community.

Creating environmental awareness programs. Further capitalizing on Asian American voters' willingness to take personal actions, NGOs serving Asian American populations can implement programs that provide information on how one can help address global warming or the shortage of water. For example, such an organization could design a course to help homeowners reduce their use of fossil fuels and water through weatherization, solar paneling installation, and grey water usage.

Advocating for environmental policies. Asian American voters care about the environment, they support environmental policies, and they want an active government to protect the environment. NGOs serving Asian American populations should participate in developing and advocating for environmental policies. These policies should consider the needs and interests of the Asian American community, as well as provide the benefits to their community. Some examples include park or water bonds, which have substantial funding to develop parks; transportation funding that could help reduce traffic congestion; and incentives to install solar paneling.

Research Methodology

To assist with this research, CLCV Ed Fund assembled a statewide advisory committee comprised of prominent Asian American community leaders, who helped to shape the methodology of this research. The advisory committee examined demographic research from the Asian Pacific American Legal Center and the U.S. Census Bureau. In determining which ethnic groups to include in this research, the advisory committee considered population growth rates, current voter populations, limited English proficiency rates, in-language ballot request rates, and ethnic geographic concentrations. From this, the advisory committee decided to focus on six ethnic groups: Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, and Asian Indians.

The data from this research was collected in two stages by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner (GQR) Research, under the direction of Ben Tulchin and Julie Lein. On August 19–21 and September 2–3, 2008, GQR Research conducted nine focus groups in six locations around California on Asian-American attitudes toward the environment. The locations were chosen to represent the different geographical blocs of California voters. Each group was divided by ethnic origin, and several were held in the native language of the participants, in order to get at the generational effects of immigration. The following ethnic groups were represented: Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, Asian-Indian, and multi-ethnic Asian (comprised of all the aforementioned ethnic groups as well as some Japanese participants). Interviews with each ethnic group except Korean were conducted in English. The following ethnicities also had an in-language group: Korean, Cantonese (Chinese), and Vietnamese.

From February 19, 2009 to March 9, 2009, over 1,000 Asian American registered voters were interviewed in English, Chinese, Vietnamese, or Korean, according to respondents' preferences. Bilingual interviewers at Interviewing Services of America Inc. of Van Nuys and Alhambra, California conducted the survey under the supervision of GQR. Translation of the questionnaire was completed by Icon Linguistics.

In order to accurately reflect the Asian American community in California, GQR employed a proportional representation model, with a slight adjustment. This approach takes a representative sample of each ethnic group based on the Census figures of the Asian population in California. With a total sample size of 1000 voters, the number of respondents surveyed in each ethnic group was proportional to their Census population. For example, Chinese represent 29.8% of the Asian population in California, and therefore 29.8% of the 1000 total interviews were conducted among Chinese voters.

Results of the survey were slightly adjusted based on three factors: 1) Proportional representation of each ethnicity to the California population; 2) the American Community Survey (ACS) population counts of US and foreign born Asians in California within each ethnicity; and 3) gender, age, and region information based on registered voter counts in the voter file.

The first data adjustment was used to assume a truly proportional representation model and involved weighting back the number of Japanese and Asian Indian interviews while adding slightly to the larger ethnicities in order to represent each group's actual proportion. By weighting back the Asian Indian and Japanese samples, GQR was still able to look at these groups with greater confidence than by employing a purely proportional representation model.

As a result, the survey included 1002 Asian American voters in California, with the following ethnic and US born breakdowns:

- 96 Asian Indian voters, 30% US born
- 298 Chinese voters, 21% US born
- 279 Filipino voters, 25% US born
- 88 Japanese voters, 81% US born
- 105 Korean voters, 20% US born
- 136 Vietnamese voters, 20% US born

In-language interviews were conducted among Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese voters. Seventy-six percent of Chinese interviews were conducted in-language (Cantonese); 74% of Korean interviews were conducted in-language; and 84% of Vietnamese interviews were conducted in language.

About California League of Conservation Voters Education Fund

California League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (CLCV Ed Fund) is a nonpartisan 501 (c)(3) organization dedicated to improving the quality of the environment for all Californians. Our programs elevate the importance of environmental issues by educating Californians and involving them in the democratic process. In addition, we build the capacity of environmental organizations by developing and providing tools and resources to help them more effectively protect the environment.

Since the 1990s, CLCV Ed Fund has brought environmental advocates together to build their capacity to act on environmental issues. CLCV Ed Fund programs serve to strengthen the national and state-based environmental movement and help to illuminate the connection between the environment, public health and civic participation. By building bridges between community-based, statewide and national organizations and by providing advocates with tools, education programs and information, CLCV Ed Fund elevates the environmental movement and empowers communities to protect their health and community's well-being.

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