

# **SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY**

# **AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT**

## **Public Opinion Survey**

PREPARED FOR

**San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District**

PREPARED BY

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# INTRODUCTION

This report details the findings of a telephone survey of the San Joaquin Valley Area for the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. Fieldwork for this survey was conducted in February and March, 2010. 640 telephone surveys were conducted and completed.

Key objectives of the survey include:

- More effectively direct the District's media campaigns.
- Determine educational priorities.
- Discover residents' level of understanding about air quality.
- Assess what behavioral changes residents are willing to make.

This report includes the following key sections: Key Findings, Detailed Results, Crosstabulated Tables and an Appendix. The Appendix of this report includes methodology, a copy of the questionnaire, and cross-tabulated tables.

On this report, the subgroups are defined as follows:

## Regions

North Region – The counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Merced

Central Region – The counties of Madera, Fresno, and Kings

South Region – The applicable area of Kern County and all of Tulare County

## Residential Areas

Rural – Towns, small cities, and unincorporated areas (less than 25,000 residents)

Mid – Midsized cities (25,000-100,000 residents)

City – Larger Cities (Over 100,000 residents)

## **Methodology and Margin of Error**

The survey was conducted as a phone questionnaire with residents in the San Joaquin Valley area. Fieldwork was conducted between Monday, February 8, 2010 and Thursday, March 4, 2010. The sample frame was adult residents of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. Sources included random digit dial (RDD), listed telephone numbers, and cell phone numbers.

Specific steps were taken to ensure the highest possible response rate. This included using professional, experienced surveyors on the project, making the questionnaire available in English and Spanish, and making multiple attempts to reach each usable number.

In total, 640 surveys were conducted, leading to a margin of error of +/- 3.9 . Responses are rounded to the nearest whole percentage. On some questions, due to statistical rounding the percentages may not add up to 100%. See the Appendix for additional detail on sampling methodology.

# KEY FINDINGS

## Air Quality

- Respondent views of air quality are widely spread.
  - While 28% rate air quality as excellent or good, 33% rate it as neutral (neither good nor bad), and 38% rate it as fair or poor.
  - Of the 28% who rate air quality as excellent or good, only 6% rate it as excellent.
  - Residents in the northern region and mid or rural residential areas rate their air quality the highest, while respondents in the southern region and in larger cities rate it the lowest.
- Only 15% of respondents feel that air quality has gotten at least somewhat better over the past five years, while the majority of respondents (51%) feel that it has stayed about the same and 34% feel that it has gotten worse.
- Many respondents feel that pollution reduction efforts will need to include areas outside of the San Joaquin Valley, but individuals in the Valley can make a difference.
  - Nearly half of respondents (44%) feel that most of the Valley's air pollution is produced somewhere else in California.
  - The majority of respondents (57%) hold motor vehicle traffic responsible for the air pollution in the Valley. Other major sources cited were factories and industries (22%), smog and pollution from cities and airports outside of the area (17%), and dust from harvesting or plowing or empty fields (14%).
  - Nearly eight in ten respondents (79%) feel that individuals can take action to significantly reduce air pollution.
  - Many respondents (67%) agree that businesses need tougher regulations to reduce air pollution and only 27% agree that economic growth and prosperity are more important than environmental issues.
  - Almost two thirds of respondents (65%) disagree that government laws regarding air quality are too strict and nearly two thirds (62%) also disagree that the Valley Air District has been too aggressive.

## The District and Its Programs

- Two thirds of respondents (65%) have seen or heard something in the last year about what residents can do to help reduce air pollution. Residents in larger cities and in the central region were the most likely to have heard these messages.
- Respondents were most commonly aware of No Burn Days/Call Before You Burn (42%), while only 7% could not recall a specific effort to reduce air pollution.
- Most respondents know of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, but few have interacted with it.
  - Nearly six out of ten (57%) of respondents have heard of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District. Respondents in the central region (69%) and in larger cities (61%) were the most likely to have heard of the District.
  - Many respondents (60%) had heard of the District through TV, newspapers, or magazines.
  - Only 15% of respondents have visited the District website, 9% have participated in a District workshop or interacted with its staff, and 4% have taken advantage of a grant or rebate through the District.

- The Healthy Air Living Program is not widely known. After learning about it, most respondents had a favorable opinion of it, primarily because it was addressing the problem of reducing air pollution.
  - Only 11% of respondents have heard of the Healthy Air Living Program. The majority of those who have heard of the program recognize the name but not what the program does.
  - After education, most respondents (79%) have a very or somewhat favorable opinion of the program.
- The Check Before You Burn Program is widely known. Most (83%) of respondents have heard of the Check Before You Burn Program. The majority of those who have heard of the program heard of it through TV.
- Nearly all respondents felt that the District's programs were important.
  - Nine out of ten (89%) felt that the District's programs were important in encouraging residents to reduce air pollution.
  - A number of respondents noted health reasons (28%), that programs educate and increase awareness about air pollution (16%), and the need to reduce air pollution/decreasing air quality (18%) as reasons they rated the District's programs as important.

### Household Behavior

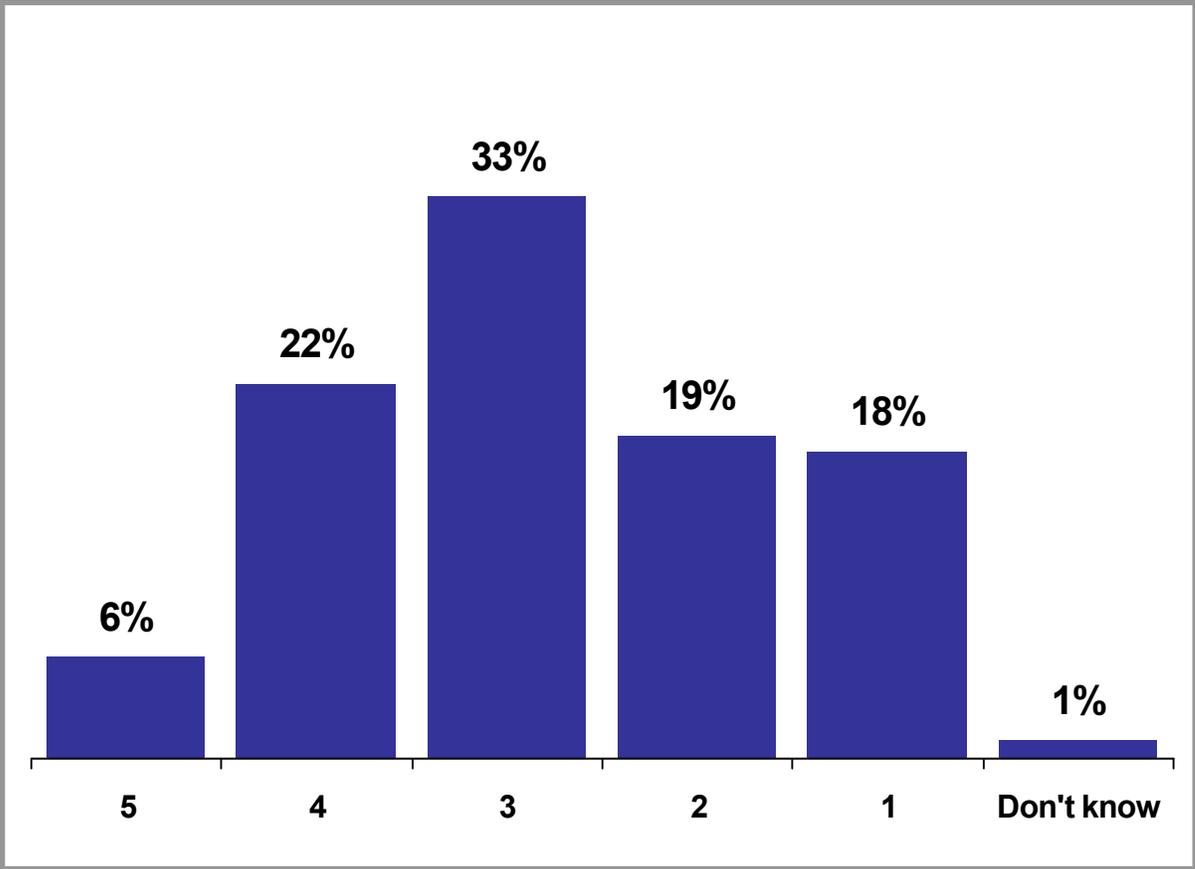
- The District's commuters largely drive alone. Half of respondents (51%) commute at least once a week. Three quarters (76%) of these commuters drive alone. Only 8% of these commuters use public transit, walk, or bike. Those in the central region and those in mid-size residential areas are more likely to commute.
- One in four (24%) respondent households own a vehicle made before 1990.
- Financial incentives are more likely to encourage carpooling than assistance in finding carpool members. While just over half of respondents (57%) are at least somewhat likely to carpool to work more often if their employer helped them find carpool partners, over two thirds of respondents (69%) would carpool to work more often if their employer provided financial incentives to do so.
- While many respondents have a fireplace or wood burning stove, about half use it in the winter. Those who do burn mostly wood logs.
  - Roughly four in 10 respondents (43%) have either a fireplace or a wood burning stove. Respondents in the north region and in larger cities were most likely to have a fireplace or a stove.
  - Nearly half of respondents (49%) who have fireplaces or wood burning stoves never use them during the winter. About one in six (17%) of those who do use them, use them several times a week during the winter. Respondents with a fireplace or stove in rural areas are most likely to use them; those in larger cities are the least.
  - Wood logs are burned by eight out of ten (79%) respondents who have fireplaces or wood burning stoves and use them during the winter.

# CHARTS

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## AIR QUALITY

Q4. Overall, how would you rate the air quality in your county on a 5 point scale where 5 is excellent and 1 is poor?



MEAN (Out of 5.00) - 2.79

(See Statistical Table 4)

Base: All respondents (640)

# MAIN SOURCES OF AIR POLLUTION IN THE VALLEY

Q7. What would you say are the main sources of air pollution in the Valley?

	%
Cars/Motor vehicle exhaust/Traffic .....	57%
Factories/Industries.....	22%
Smog/Pollution for urban areas and airports outside of the area .....	17%
Dust from plowing or harvesting/empty fields .....	14%
Agricultural pesticides, fertilizers, chemicals.....	13%
Trucking/Shipping – Trucks, Freight trains .....	9%
Agriculture (other – unspecified) .....	8%
Dairies/Dairy farms/Cows.....	6%
Fireplaces/Wood stoves/Heating/Wood burning.....	4%
Agricultural burning.....	4%
Oil refineries/Oil fields .....	4%
Topography/Prevailing winds/Temperature/Lack of water etc.....	4%

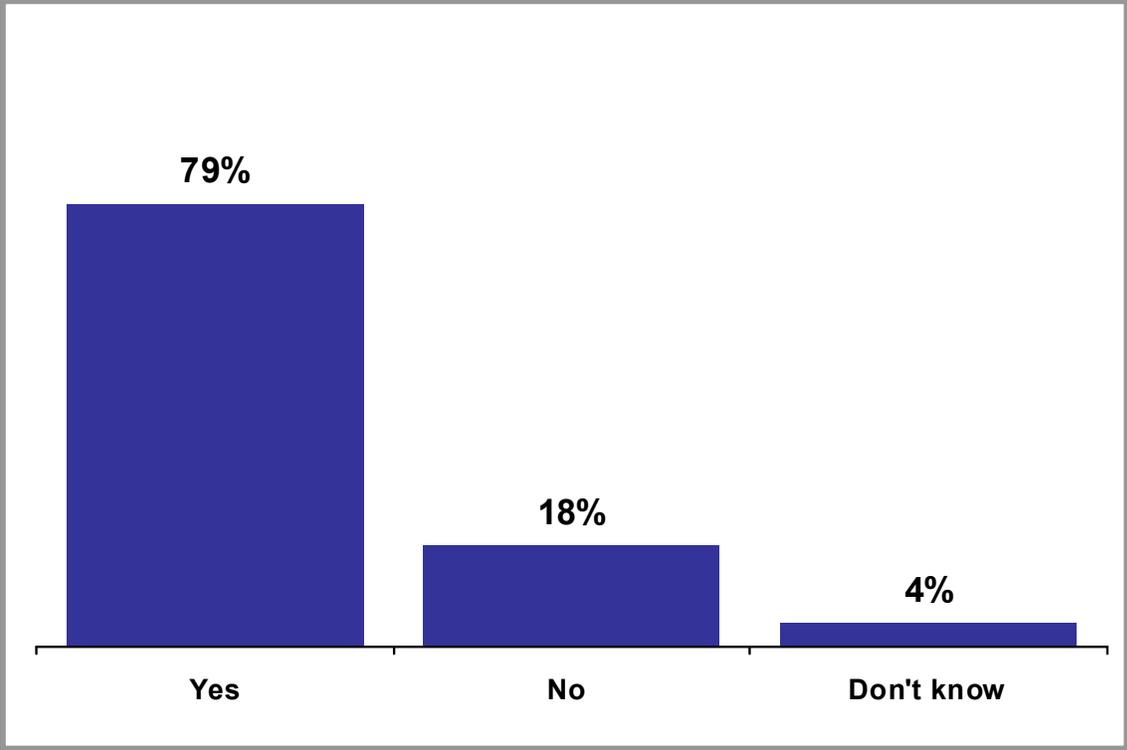
Note: Multiple responses accepted. Only responses cited by 4% or more of respondents are shown. See Statistical Table 7 for a complete list

(See Statistical Table 7)

Base: All respondents (640)

# BELIEF IN INDIVIDUAL'S ABILITY TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE AIR POLLUTION

Q8. Do you think that there are actions that individuals can take to significantly reduce air pollution in your area?



(See Statistical Table 8)

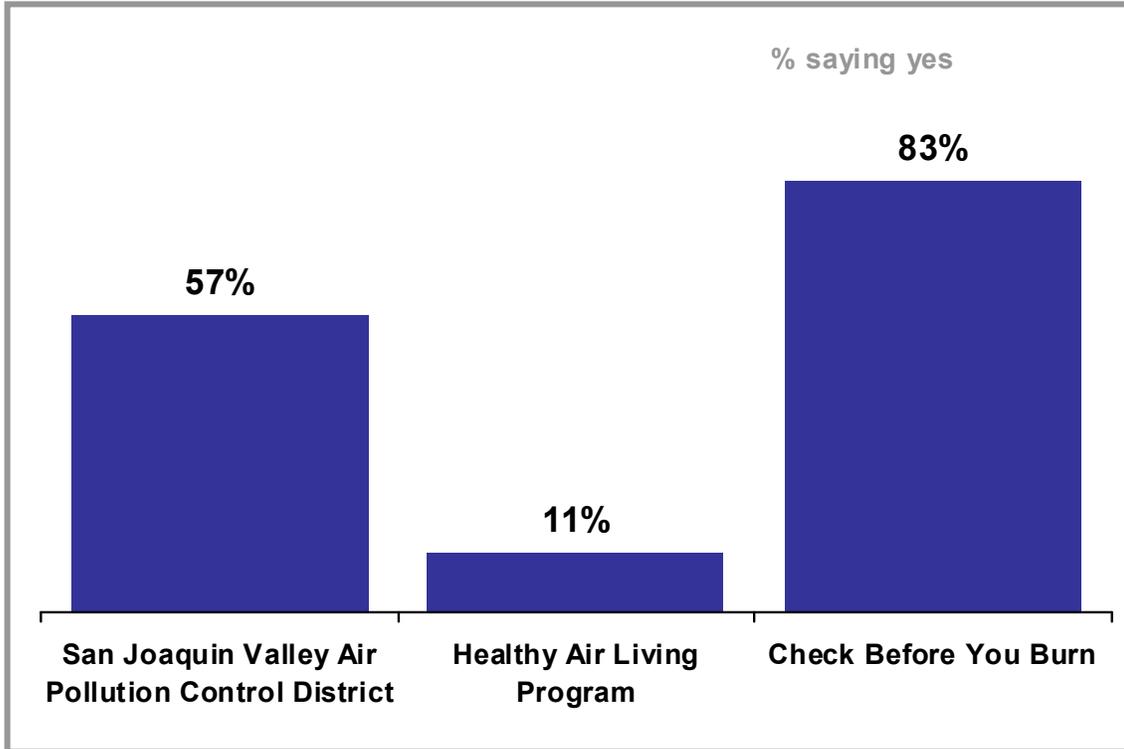
Base: All respondents (640)

# AWARENESS OF THE AGENCY AND ITS PROGRAMS

Q11. Have you ever heard of San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District?

Q14. Have you ever heard of the Healthy Air Living Program?

Q18. Have you ever heard of the Check Before You Burn Program?



(See Statistical Tables 11, 16, 21)

Base: All respondents (640)

Note: Other response options not shown above were: no, maybe and don't know.

# AIR QUALITY STATEMENTS

Q23. Now I am going to read you a series of statements. For each, please tell me if you agree or disagree with the statement.

	AGREE %	DISAGREE %	NOT SURE %	REFUSED %
<b>Tougher regulations are needed on businesses to reduce the air pollution caused by manufacturing facilities, refineries, and farms in the region. ....</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Economic growth and prosperity are more important than environmental issues. ....</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>Government laws regarding air quality are too strict.....</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>
<b>The Valley Air District has been too aggressive in enforcing air pollution regulations on businesses and residents.....</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>1%</b>

(See Statistical Tables 28, 29, 30, 31)

Base: All respondents (640)