



January 2022

NW Natural Service Territory Highlights from a Survey of Voters on Natural Gas and Renewable Natural Gas Policy Options

From November 6-14, 2021, DHM Research conducted a survey of voters in NW Natural Service Territory – which includes the Willamette Valley, most of coastal Oregon, Clark County, WA, and the Columbia Gorge – to assess their opinions about proposals to ban new natural gas hookups. The survey consisted of 2,150 voters and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. Service territory results have a margin of error of +/- 2.1%. The highlights have been reviewed and approved by John Horvick, Senior Vice President of DHM Research.

- **Only 30% say their local community is moving in the right direction – and 59% say it is on the wrong track.** This is a standard context question, and the wrong track results are exceptionally high.
- In an open-ended question, **by far the most important issue that voters wanted locally elected officials to do something about was homelessness (29%),** followed by public safety (15%), COVID-19 (9%) and affordable housing (5%). **Climate change was mentioned by 2% of voters.**
- When presented with three opinions about natural gas, 36% agree that natural gas should be used because it is affordable and reliable. Another 42% said natural gas is critical to helping lower emissions during the transition to renewables. **That represents support of natural gas by 78% of voters.** Only 12% said it is a fossil fuel that should be banned now.
- In a related question, **70% of voters oppose having local government ban new natural gas hookups in homes and buildings.**
- **78% of voters support local government's efforts to encourage the use of renewable natural gas.**
- 77% of voters agree that all forms of renewable energy – **hydro, wind, solar and renewable natural gas** – are needed in a balanced, low-carbon future.
- **73% of voters agree that families and businesses should have a choice of energy options** to meet their needs and not have their choices mandated by their local government.
- **And an overwhelming majority (81%) of voters agree that communities with both natural gas and electricity are needed for energy reliability in case of heat waves, wildfires and winter storms.**

A similar survey was conducted in 2019. Generally, service territory voters want to reduce carbon emissions within the context of choice, reliability, affordability and transition to renewable sources of energy, including renewable natural gas. Majority opposition to a ban on new gas hookups has increased, as has the intensity of opposition.

DHM Research has been providing opinion research and consultation throughout the Pacific Northwest and other regions of the United States for more than 40 years. The firm is nonpartisan and independent and specializes in research projects to support public policy making. Its clients include media, governmental agencies, environmental organizations, business associations and corporations.

This communication and research are not paid for by customers.