

Californians and the Coast

JULY 2018

Mark Baldassare, Dean Bonner, Alyssa Dykman, and Lunna Lopes

➤ **Most Californians see ocean and beach conditions as very important to the state's future.**

Three in four Californians (74%) say the condition of the ocean and beaches is very important to California's future economy and quality of life. Across regions and age, income, education levels, and racial/ethnic groups, about seven in ten or more express this view. While strong majorities across parties say ocean and beach conditions are very important, Democrats (81%) are more likely than independents (74%) and Republicans (71%) to hold this opinion.

➤ **Ratings of the health and quality of the ocean along the coast are mixed.**

Four in ten Californians rate the overall health and quality of the ocean along the California coast today as excellent (9%) or good (30%); a plurality (38%) say it is fair, and one in five say it is poor (19%). Californians were less positive in a 2003 PPIC Statewide Survey (3% excellent, 25% good, 46% fair, 23% poor). Today, Republicans (48%) are more likely than Democrats (35%) and independents (30%) to say the overall health and quality of the ocean is at least good. When asked about the population of fish off the California coast, most Californians say it has decreased (53%) in the past ten years. An additional 22% say the population has stayed the same, and 12% say it has increased. Majorities of Democrats (59%) and independents (57%) say the population has decreased, compared to 46% of Republicans. About half or more across regions and across age, income, and education groups say the population has decreased.

➤ **Majorities are concerned about ocean warming and sea level rise.**

Half of Californians (50%) say they are very concerned about the impact of ocean warming on marine and coastal life (28% somewhat concerned, 13% not too concerned, 9% not at all concerned). Residents of the north and central coast (54%) and the south coast (51%) are similarly likely to be very concerned, while inland residents (44%) are slightly less likely to hold this view. A plurality of Californians say they are very concerned (45%) about sea level rise impacting flooding and beach erosion (29% somewhat concerned, 14% not too concerned, 11% not at all concerned). About half of residents in the north and central coast (51%) and those in the south coast (47%) are very concerned, while fewer inland residents (37%) hold this view. Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (51%) are the most likely to be very concerned, followed by Asian Americans (46%), African Americans (44%), and whites (40%). On both issues, concern is higher among Democrats (56% flooding and beach erosion, 65% marine and coastal life) than among Republicans (22% flooding and beach erosion, 27% marine and coastal life).

➤ **Strong majorities support national marine sanctuaries and marine protected areas.**

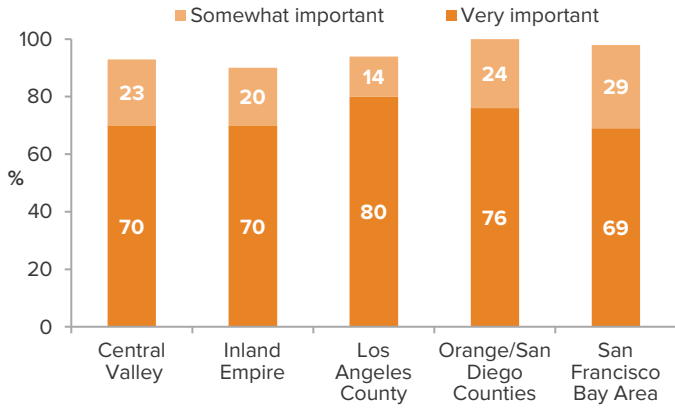
Nine in ten residents (88%) support maintaining the rules and boundaries of national marine sanctuaries and California's marine protected areas (MPAs) for fish, wildlife, and their habitats off the California coast. Fewer than one in ten Californians are opposed. More than three in four adults across regions and across age, education, income, and racial/ethnic groups support maintaining the rules and boundaries of national marine sanctuaries and marine protected areas. Overwhelming majorities of inland (86%) and coastal (89%) residents hold this view.

➤ **Two in three Californians oppose drilling off the California coast.**

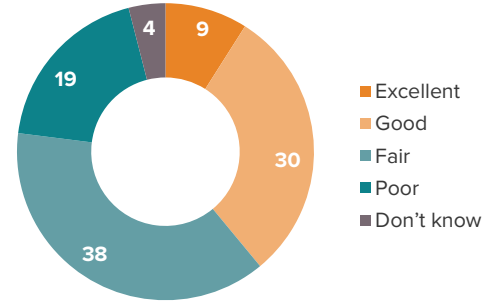
A strong majority of Californians (67%) oppose allowing more oil drilling off the California coast. Only 27% favor allowing more drilling off coast—close to the lowest level of support (25% in July 2017) since PPIC began asking about this in 2003. An overwhelming majority of Democrats (82%) and a strong majority of independents (66%) oppose more drilling, while a majority of Republicans (54%) are in favor. Residents of the north and central coast (72%) and the south coast (70%) are about equally likely to oppose more drilling off the California coast (59% of inland residents oppose). Solid majorities across age, education, income, and racial/ethnic groups are opposed.



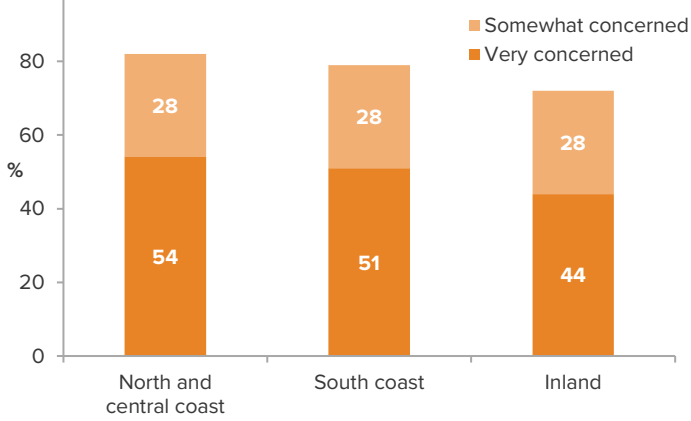
Importance of the condition of the ocean and beaches for California's future



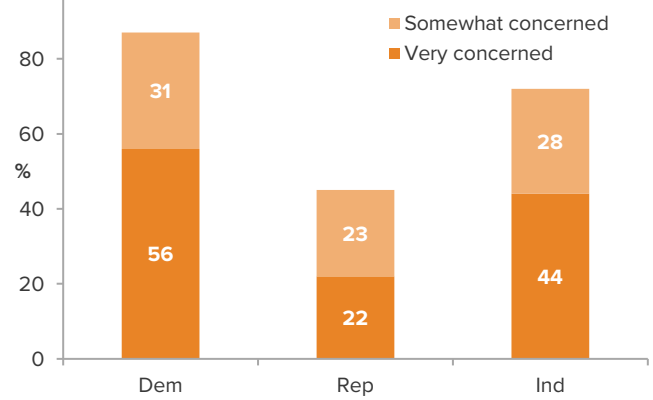
Rating of the overall health and quality of the ocean along the California coast



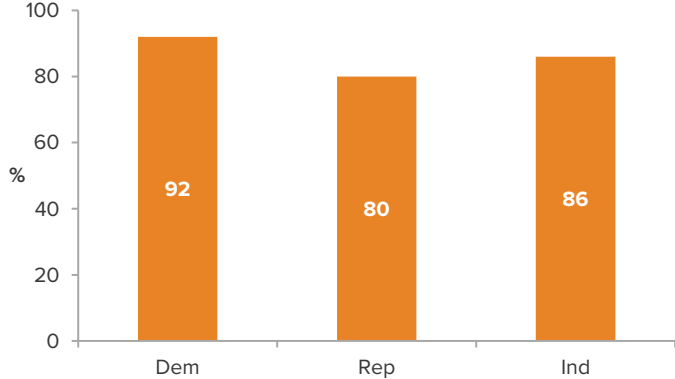
Concern about ocean warming having an impact on marine and coastal life



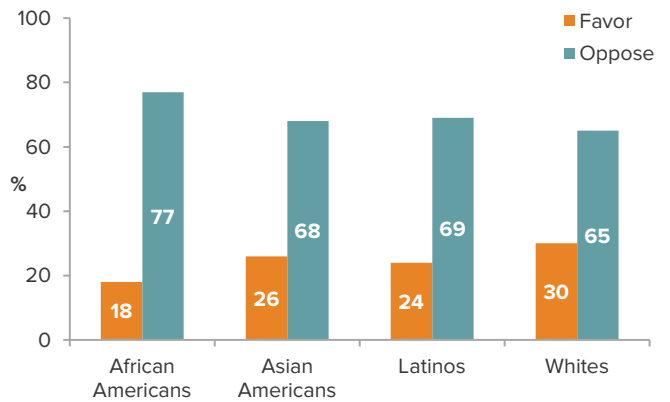
Concern about sea level rise having an impact on flooding and erosion



Support for maintaining national marine sanctuaries and California's MPAs



Support for oil drilling off the California coast



Source: PPIC Statewide Survey, July 2018. The margin of error for all adults is ±3.4%. The margins of error for subgroups are larger.

Contact: surveys@ppic.org

Supported with funding from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and Dirk and Charlene Kabcenell Foundation

