

Baton Rouge Area Foundation



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EBR Survey: Majority Support Government Action on Climate Change

Annual poll signals shift toward electric vehicles, deep support for universal pre-K

A majority of East Baton Rouge residents believe storms are becoming fiercer. They want government to mitigate global warming by offering alternatives to driving, shifting tax incentives to renewable energy sources, and building electric vehicle charging stations. Residents are split, though, on the idea of ending government subsidies for flood insurance, which encourage building in areas of East Baton Rouge that are flooding more often.

These are some of the findings from the Baton Rouge Area Foundation's annual survey for its CityStats project, which has measured the quality of life in the parish for 13 years.

The poll found deep support for universal childcare and pre-K education funded by the federal government, a plank of the \$3.5 trillion package that many Democrats are supporting in Congress.

In the field from late June through early August, the poll sampled 549 EBR residents. It is representative of people who live in East Baton Rouge Parish. The error margin is plus or minus 4.2%. LSU's Public Policy Research Lab conducted the survey under contract with The Foundation, as it has done for 12 of the 13 annual polls. **The poll was conducted before Hurricane Ida.**

Select results from the CityStats poll:

Global Warming

Global warming is becoming a hot matter. 55% say it's **an important issue** for them, the first time a majority have said so in our surveys. Respondents are divided by politics. 76% of Democrats but only 17% of Republicans say global warming is an important issue.

Extreme weather and its causes

67% say the weather in East Baton Rouge is becoming more extreme. Why so? 26% blame global warming, while 32% say global warming and natural variation together are causing more extreme weather, and 5% say natural variations only. The rest, 37%, didn't know or didn't answer.

Government action on climate change

52% want the government to do more to **regulate greenhouse gasses** and 29% want the government to do about the same. Again, a political divide: 71% of Democrats want more government action on climate change, only 13% of Republicans do.

What do respondents want from their government to mitigate global warming? 77% want **more bike lanes**, pedestrian paths and mass transit as an alternative to driving; 73% want to transition **tax incentives to renewable energy**; 60% want more **fast-charging EV stations**.

But respondents are **divided over flood insurance**, which reduces the risk of building in areas that are more prone to flood. 43% want to keep subsidizing flood insurance, while 40% are against the subsidies.

The surveyed are also divided over changing zoning to encourage building of more dense communities, with 46% against the idea and 44% for it.

Electric Vehicles

Electric vehicles are coming to Baton Rouge. In the survey, 51% said they would consider buying **an EV in the next decade**, with half of those saying they are very likely to do so. 84% of 18- to 29-year-olds are considering an EV purchase in the next 10 years.

Respondents who want to buy an EV are interested for practical reasons: to **save on gas** and maintenance (77%) and for the convenience of **charging at home** (76%). Also, 65% want an EV because they are **better for the environment**.

People who don't want an EV in the next 10 years say they prefer gas-powered cars (62%) and that EVs are too expensive (50%). Only 33% said EV range is a concern.

New electric fee

Residents are divided about paying more to reduce power disruptions, which have become more common as stronger storms strike Louisiana more often. 48% oppose a fee to reduce outages. 46% are for a fee.

Note: The poll was taken before Hurricane Ida left more than 1 million Louisiana residents in the dark.

Pre-K and early Childcare

A majority of residents are for universal education and childcare before kids start kindergarten. They also want a living wage for people who educate and care for infants to four-year-olds.

- 89% support ensuring people who work in childcare earn **a living wage**.
- 86% support offering pre-K in East Baton Rouge to **all three- and four-year-olds**.
- 82% support guaranteeing **assistance to low-income and middle-class** families for childcare and pre-K.
- 81% support efforts in **Congress to increase funding for childcare** assistance and to expand access to early childhood education.
- 64% support **universal, free childcare** available from birth to age five.

Though there's big support for caring for and educating all children before they enter kindergarten, **58% oppose raising EBR property taxes** to do so, while 38% would pay more.

Trains

77% of EBR residents want the state to **match federal funding**, if available, for passenger rail service between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. A majority in all demographics – age, income, political ideology – support state funding.

The Baton Rouge Area Foundation leads a project to start regular train service between the two cities, with stops in downtown Baton Rouge and near Bluebonnet/Essen, Gonzales, LaPlace, the New Orleans airport and next to the Superdome.

The CityStats project is underwritten by Newton B. Thomas Support Foundation, a supporting nonprofit of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.