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City of Eugene 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's 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. The survey oversampled several cities in the service territory, including Eugene. Service territory results have a margin of error of +/- 2.1%. The Eugene-specific survey consisted of 350 voters; its margin for error is ±5.2%. The highlights have been reviewed and approved by John Horvick, Senior Vice President of DHM Research.

- **Only 29% say Eugene is moving in the right direction – 56% say it is on the wrong track.** This is a standard context question, and the wrong track results are exceptionally high.
- **When asked an open-ended question about the most important issue that voters want elected officials to do something about, 42% say homelessness.** No other issue even approaches that level of concern: 9% mention COVID-19, 5% affordable housing and 5% public safety. Among a dozen other issues below 5%, 4% mention climate change.
- **70% of Eugene voters oppose a ban on new natural gas hookups in all homes and buildings.** Moreover, most voters (53%) go further and are “strongly opposed” to a ban. Only 23% support a ban.
- **75% 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 city councilors.** Only 21% thought otherwise.
- **76% of voters agree that all forms of renewable energy – hydro, wind, solar and renewable natural gas – are needed in a balanced, low-carbon future.**
- **78% of Eugene voters support city council encouraging the use of renewable natural gas.**
- **When asked how decisions should be made about proposals to ban new gas hookups, 84% believe it should be decided by a public vote.** Only 10% think the city council should act on its own.

Similar surveys were conducted in 2020 and 2019. Generally, Eugene 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 is increasing, as is the intensity of the 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.

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