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Oil, Gas, and Coal Attacks Have Little Impact Despite Millions in Attacks, Support for Renewables Strong

To: Interested Parties

From: Al Quinlan, Andrew Baumann, and Phil Zakahi; Greenberg Quinlan
Rosner Research

Despite tens of millions of dollars in advertisements from the oil, gas, and coal industry and their Republican allies attacking Democrats on energy issues, President Obama and Senate Democrats won decisive victories across the country last night. A new survey of voters in key battleground states demonstrates these energy attacks failed to resonate with voters, including voters in Midwestern states where the energy attacks were most heavily focused.

The survey also demonstrates that voters in these states remain strongly supportive of renewable energy, and government efforts to increase renewable energy use. It also suggests that voters have flatly rejected Republicans' continued assault on the EPA and pollution controls.

The following memo reflects the key findings from a survey of 1002 voters in eleven battleground states.¹ The survey was conducted from November 4th – 6th, 2012, and has a margin of error of +/-4.2 percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

Millions Spent Attacking Democrats on Keystone, Solyndra, and Coal had Little Impact

Voters appear to have largely ignored the millions of dollars in attacks on energy issues leveled at the President and Democratic Senate candidates. Groups backed by polluters spent more than 270 million dollars on TV ads in the past two months alone, and in some states—especially Midwestern states like Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Michigan—energy issue attacks were a critical component of Republican campaign strategy. Despite this, voters continue to support Democrats on renewable energy:

- **President Obama Swept States Where Republicans Attacked on Energy:** The president won Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, and Virginia, all states where Republicans spent millions of dollars attacking the President on the Keystone pipeline, Solyndra, and as being anti-coal. The attacks did not work--across all of the battleground states in this survey, the president won 51 – 47 percent.

¹ States surveyed: Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia.

- Attacks on Energy Did Not Stick to the President:** Of the six reasons to vote against the President, reflecting the actual campaign, the Republican message on energy fell far down the list to fifth and was cited by just 14 percent of voters as the best reason to vote against the President. This message ranked last among people who voted for Romney and last in the Midwest—where Republicans heavily focused this attack on the President. The six messages tested were on the debt and spending, Obamacare, failure to create jobs, blocking energy production, attacking family values, and job killing regulations. The message on the debt and spending was ranked the highest.
- Nor did Attacks Stick to Senate Candidates:** Again, of the six reasons to vote against Democratic Senate candidates, reflecting the campaigns, the energy attack against Democratic Senate candidates ranked near the bottom, fifth; with just 14 percent of voters saying this was their top concern about the candidate.
- President Obama and Democrats retain more credibility on energy than Republicans. Voters believe Obama will do a better job on energy than Romney by a 7 point margin, 51-44 percent.** And they think Democrats will do a better job on this issue than Republicans by a 50 – 43 percent margin. These advantages are significant and represent larger advantages for Obama and Democrats than they receive on either the economy or taxes.

Table 1: Better job on issues

| | Obama | Romney | Difference | Dem Party | Rep Party | Difference |
|-------------------------------|-------|--------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Energy | 51 | 44 | +7 | 50 | 43 | +7 |
| The economy & jobs | 46 | 51 | -5 | 44 | 50 | -6 |
| Taxes | 49 | 46 | +3 | 46 | 47 | -2 |

Swing State Voters Strongly Support Renewable Energy, Want Government to Support It.

Despite the paid ads pushing a fossil fuel drumbeat on Solyndra and against renewable energy, voters remain strongly supportive of renewables, and want to see the government doing more to support renewable energy production.

- Overwhelming Support for Renewable Energy:** Nearly 2 in 3 voters, 64 percent, say they have a favorable impression of renewable energy, compared to only 13 percent who say they have an unfavorable impression. This strength of support crosses demographic and partisan lines, with a wide variety of voters giving renewables high marks.

Furthermore, huge majorities favor increasing the United States’ use of wind and solar energy. Voters favor increasing wind power by a 71 – 9 percent margin, and favor increasing solar power by a 78 – 5 percent margin.

■ **Table 2: Favorability of renewable energy**

| | Renewable energy Fav/Unfav | Net |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|-----|
| Total | 64-13 | +51 |
| Democrat | 77-5 | +72 |
| Independent | 67-12 | +55 |
| Republican | 47-24 | +23 |
| Men | 63-16 | +47 |
| Women | 65-11 | +54 |
| 18-49 | 68-10 | +58 |
| 50+ | 60-17 | +43 |

■ **Table 3: Support for increases to wind and solar energy**

| | Increase | Stay the same | Decrease | Increase-Decrease |
|--------------|----------|---------------|----------|-------------------|
| Wind | 71 | 16 | 9 | +62 |
| Solar | 78 | 13 | 5 | +73 |

- **Voters Ready for Country to Invest in Renewables, Prepared to Pay More if Necessary:** By a 54 – 39 percent margin, voters side with an argument that favors investing in clean energy companies through tax credits over an argument that suggests the government should not be picking winners and losers in energy. By a 56 – 39 percent margin they also say they are willing to pay a few dollars extra on their electricity bills for renewable energy.

Voters Overwhelmingly Reject Assault on EPA

- **Strong Support for EPA and its Mission:** Voters give the EPA an impressive 50 – 27 percent favorable/unfavorable rating, including a 44 – 30 percent rating with Independents. Furthermore, by a 57 – 34 percent margin, they support EPA’s mission of making common sense rules over an argument that says rules and regulations should be left to congress.

■ **Table 4: Support for EPA**

| Statement | Much | Somewhat | Total |
|---|------|----------|-----------|
| The EPA should be allowed to make common sense rules to protect the health of the American people based on the best available science and free of the influence of politics | 37 | 20 | 57 |
| The EPA is an unelected bureaucracy and decisions about rules and regulations should be left to congress and elected officials. | 22 | 12 | 34 |