

Eugene Sustainable & Equitable Food Procurement Policy Report

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We surveyed 500 residents of Eugene, Oregon, on their perspectives on a policy that would require local government to purchase more plant-based foods as a way to reduce environmental and public health harms, as well as align with the county's *Community Climate and Energy Action Plan for Eugene*.

Takeaways:

- Residents of Eugene overwhelmingly support (71.7%) legislation to encourage plant-based food purchasing with taxpayer dollars and believe that Eugene in particular should implement such legislation (76.1%).
- Only 17.7% of residents said that their representatives were doing enough to encourage food sustainability—44.8% believed that their representatives were “definitely not” or “probably not” doing enough in this area.
- The majority (62.2%) of residents said that they were more likely to vote for candidates who pursue such legislation.

Background

Industrial animal agriculture is the leading cause of biodiversity loss, creates harmful air and water pollution, and emits a significant amount of greenhouse gas. Recent scientific **evidence** indicates that even if all other sectors became carbon-neutral, emissions from meat and dairy products alone will push us past 2°C of warming. The EAT-Lancet **report** found that meeting the Paris Agreement goals would require substantial shifts toward plant-based diets. The scientific consensus is that shifting from meat and dairy to a more plant-based diet is essential to meeting widely adopted climate commitments, like the Paris Agreement's 2°C benchmark, and unlocking a series of health benefits, such as lowered risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and overall mortality from a variety of causes.

Eugene has an ambitious **climate plan** for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 7.6% per year, including recommendations such as replacing meat and dairy products with plant-based foods. Although the plan encourages actions such as offering meat alternatives at schools, it notes uncertainty about community response to such measures.



How *do* Eugene residents feel about actions to urge city government to procure more sustainable plant-based foods? We asked the 500 respondents to review hypothetical legislation requiring their local government to take these actions:

- Calculate the city's food-related greenhouse gas emissions for one year.
- Increase and prioritize the amount of plant-based food in government facilities, hospitals, higher-learning institutions, and other food settings.
- Prioritize purchasing this food from local BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) farmers where feasible.

When asked how they felt about implementation of this legislation in Eugene, 71.7% of respondents said that they supported it (either strongly or somewhat).

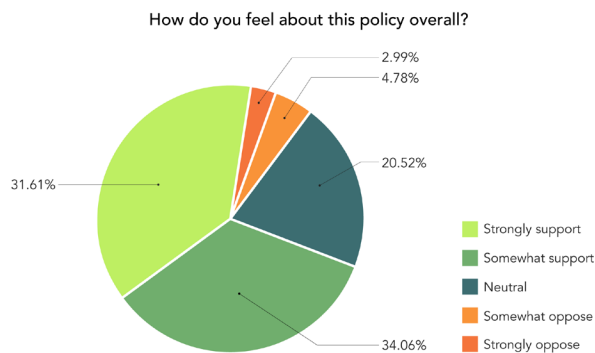


Figure 1. Pie chart reflecting respondent support for a hypothetical plant-based food purchasing policy.

Residents were also asked what was most appealing about the proposed legislation. Representative comments include the following:

Diets high in plants help to mitigate climate change by lowering greenhouse gas emissions linked to cattle production.

Healthier lifestyle, bring awareness to the city of Eugene.

I support the local government taking the first step with their own policies.



Figure 2. A word cloud of written responses about what residents liked most about the legislation.

When asked whether the government had a responsibility to buy climate-friendly food with taxpayer money, 53.8% answered yes.

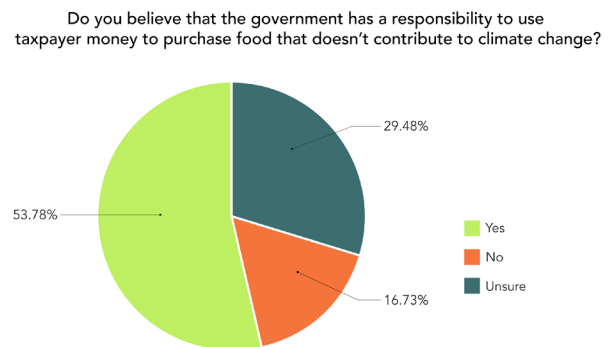


Figure 3. Pie chart reflecting respondent beliefs about government's responsibility to buy climate-friendly food.

Respondents were then asked whether Eugene should reduce food-related emissions in their area—76.1% responded yes.

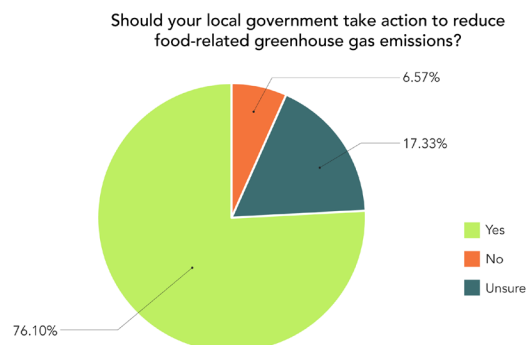


Figure 4. Pie chart reflecting respondent views on local government action to reduce food-related emissions.



The Eugene residents were also asked whether they felt that their representatives were doing enough on food-related emissions. Only 17.7% responded with either “definitely” or “probably” yes.

A minority (44.8%) responded that their representatives were “definitely not” or “probably not” doing enough in this area.

Do you believe that your representatives are currently doing enough on this issue?

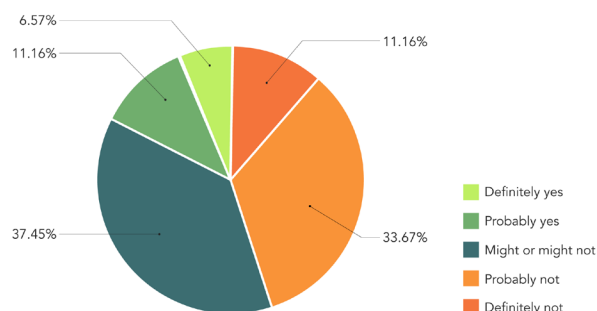


Figure 5. Pie chart reflecting respondent beliefs about the adequacy of government efforts to address food-related emissions.

Finally, Eugene residents were asked whether they would be more likely to vote for representatives who pursue climate-friendly food policies.

Most (62.2%) answered “definitely” or “probably” yes, and only 5.8% answered that they would not vote for representatives who pursue such policies.

Are you more likely to vote for someone who pursues this kind of climate-friendly food plan?

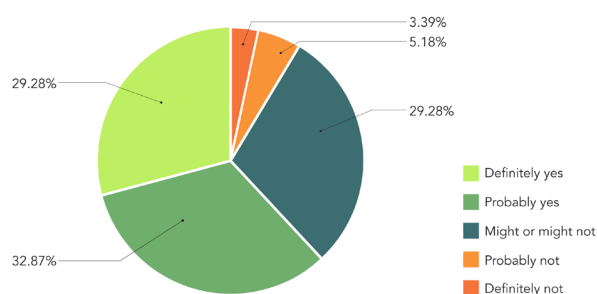


Figure 6. Pie chart reflecting respondent likelihood to vote for representatives who pursue climate-friendly food plans.