



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2015 Bay Area Council Poll: Residents Say Soaring Economy May Be Reaching a Plateau; Drought, Housing and Crime Surface as Top Issues

Lower earning residents less sanguine in their outlook for the regional economy than those making higher incomes

BAY AREA, CA – Bay Area residents think the region’s super-heated economy may be reaching a plateau, according to results of the *2015 Bay Area Council Poll* released today, although they are generally bullish about the overall direction the region is heading. And, there are some stark differences depending on how much residents make and where they live.

California’s historic drought easily topped residents’ list of concerns, followed closely by housing costs and overall cost of living. Only in San Francisco did the drought take second to housing costs as the leading problem, and residents in the East Bay counties of Alameda and Contra Costa identified crime and public safety high on their list of concerns. Detailed results on residents’ attitudes about the drought, housing, transportation and other issues will be released separately in the coming days. The results also examine attitudes based on age, county of residence, employment status and income level.

[View the 2015 Bay Area Council Poll top issues, economic outlook>>](#)

On the economic front, 46 percent of residents said the Bay Area is doing at least somewhat better than six months ago while 40 percent say things are about the same and 11 percent think things are worse. But looking ahead, confidence is somewhat weaker than the outlook only a year ago. Today, 39 percent think the Bay Area economy will be performing somewhat better in six months, a 12-point drop from 2014 when it was more than a majority.

“As hot as the Bay Area economy has been, residents may be thinking something has to give,” said Jim Wunderman, President and CEO of the Bay Area Council. “Intensifying concerns about the drought, housing crisis and growing traffic also may be coloring residents’ economic outlook, although they remain generally upbeat about the overall

direction the Bay Area is heading. It's imperative that to avoid eroding confidence we as a region continue to focus on the problems we can address."

Lower income residents are decidedly less optimistic about the Bay Area economy. While 58 percent of residents from households making \$125,000 or more per year think the economy is doing better today than six months ago, only 43 percent of residents from households making \$75,000 or less annually think the economy is doing better. Looking ahead, the poll found that 48 percent of higher income residents think the economy will get better over the next six months while just 38 percent of lower income residents think the economy will continue its upward trajectory.

More broadly, the poll found that 55 percent of residents think the Bay Area overall is heading in the right direction. Millennials (18-33 years) are decidedly more upbeat, with 62 percent saying the region is on the right track and 20 percent saying it's on the wrong track. Older residents (65 years and older) are less impressed with the direction of things, with only 49 percent saying we're headed in the right direction and 34 percent saying we're off track.

Residents are little happier with things close to home, with 59 percent saying their local community is headed in the right direction. They are less enamored of the state overall, with 51 percent agreeing California is headed in the right direction.

Gov. Jerry Brown gets very high marks from Bay Area residents, with 66 percent approving the job he is doing. His biggest fans are among the older set, with 77 percent of residents 65 years and older approving of the job the governor is doing. Among millennials, the governor's approval rating dips to 56 percent. The normally beleaguered state Legislature gets some credit for decreasing their squabbling, with residents bumping their approval of lawmakers from 36 percent in 2014 to 48 percent in 2015.

Residents are unhappy about taxes. The *Bay Area Council Poll* found 73 percent of residents think the amount of taxes they pay is somewhat too high (41%) or much too high (32%). Another 22 percent said their taxes are about right. Attitudes towards taxes are fairly consistent across counties, with residents in Contra Costa (78%) and Alameda (76%) feeling most over-burdened.

The poll also explored residents' use of smartphone technology, with 41 percent saying they rely a great deal on their device to accomplish day-to-day tasks, an increase of eight points from 2014. Another 29 percent have a moderate reliance on their smart phone and only 11 percent of Bay Area residents surveyed don't have a smart phone. While 60 percent of residents say they currently have a landline telephone, 42 percent say it's likely they'll cut the cord in the five years.

The *2015 Bay Area Council Poll*, which was conducted by Oakland-based public opinion research firm EMC Research, surveyed more than 1,000 residents online about a range of issues related to economic growth, housing and transportation, drought, education and workforce.

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About the Bay Area Council

The Bay Area Council is a business-sponsored, public-policy advocacy organization for the nine-county Bay Area. The Council proactively advocates for a strong economy, a vital business environment, and a better quality of life for everyone who lives here. Founded in 1945, the Bay Area Council is widely respected by elected officials, policy makers and other civic leaders as the voice of Bay Area business. Today, approximately 275 of the largest employers in the region support the Bay Area Council and offer their CEO or top executive as a member. Our members employ more than 4.43 million workers and have revenues of \$1.94 trillion, worldwide.