



Is the public losing faith in EPA? You might think so from all the rhetoric from the Right. But Pew has just released the results of a [survey](#) on public attitudes toward government, which doesn't support this view at all. As it turns out, six out of ten Americans have favorable attitudes toward EPA. Nor has there been a noticeable downward trend.

Attitudes toward EPA are actually more favorable (by 5%) than they were in 2010. Today's approval rating is about the same as the average level in the 1980s. The unfavorables haven't moved much over time either.

Of course, not everyone approves of EPA. There's a definite partisan gap. Among Democrats, 77% approve of EPA, while only 47% of Republicans and 58% of independents approve. (That might underestimate the gap if some of the disapproving Democrats think EPA is too weak.) But there's also a surprisingly deep schism within the Republican party.

As reported [here](#), there's a really stark divide within the GOP. Among Tea Partiers, only 22% have favorable attitudes toward EPA, though even that's higher than you might have expected. (Interestingly, they are far more favorable toward the FDA.) But 57% of mainstream Republicans approve of EPA, almost exactly the same figure as independents.

In other words, we really have three groups in this country. Democrats love EPA.

Independent and mainstream Republicans are favorable but not head-over-heels. Only the Tea Party is truly anti-EPA. Since the percentage of Americans with unfavorable attitudes toward EPA haven't changed much over time, the same folks probably hated the EPA twenty or thirty years ago. The big change is that this segment of the population is much more visible today and has a much louder voice in Washington.