



To: Interested Parties

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Re: New Poll of Battleground State Voters Confirms that the Current Moment is a Massive Opportunity to Democrats and Supporters of Clean Energy

A new survey of battleground voters¹ conducted by Global Strategy Group for EDF Action shows that the current moment presents clean energy advocates and Democrats a massive opportunity if they engage aggressively and smartly on the issue of energy. With electricity prices rising, voters are desperate for action, and not the kind being taken by Donald Trump and his allies. Voters are already blaming Trump for rising prices and the actions that he and his MAGA allies have taken to roll back clean energy are massively unpopular. With demand and prices rising, voters want more energy, not less – and they want clean energy most of all.

Despite the fact that Donald Trump won all seven of these states in 2024, voters across these states already prefer Democrats over Republicans on clean energy by 5 points, but there is now a unique opportunity to shift the terms of the debate about energy in a fundamental way. While Democrats are preferred on holding utility companies accountable and keeping electricity prices lower, they are being held back by voters' belief that they are more likely than Republicans to "want to ban certain sources of energy." However, education about Trump's actions can totally reverse that perception. Combined with the right messaging (focused on accountability for utilities and data centers and the ability of clean energy to bring electricity online more quickly and cheaply), pro-clean energy Democrats can open up a massive lead on energy policy, shift views on which party is better on the overall cost of living, as well as shift the generic ballot solidly in their favor.

Key Findings

Battleground voters prefer to build new clean energy rather than new gas plants because they think it would be better for electricity prices, pollution, and being a long-term solution to our power generation needs. Nearly two-thirds of battleground voters would prefer to build new clean energy projects like wind and solar farms to meet increasing demand for electricity (62%) over building new gas power plants (34%). Nearly two thirds of independents (63%) and even a third of Republicans (34%) join nearly all Democrats (89%) in preferring new clean energy projects.

Battleground voters already associate clean energy with a myriad of positive traits, including doing a better job at reducing pollution and protecting public health (74% say this describes wind and solar farms better vs. 15% who say it describes gas plants better, +59), being a better long-term solution to our power generation needs (63% to 27%, +36), making America energy independent (61% to 31%, +30), and keeping electricity bills lower (53% to 33%, +20). However, voters start out less sanguine about clean energy on being reliable (43% to 43%, even), proven (39% to 47%, -8), and bringing electricity online more quickly (37% to 46%, -9).

But that changes dramatically after voters are exposed to messaging about the benefits of clean energy. Simple educational messaging not only boosts support for new clean energy over gas (+37 net clean energy post-education message, a +9 gain) it moves voters on these important metrics, particularly on the idea that new wind and solar can bring electricity online more quickly than new gas.

¹ AZ, GA, MI, NC, NV, PA, and WI

	Net Describes Clean Energy Better than Gas Power Plants		
	Initial	Final	Change
Would do a better job at reducing pollution and protecting public health	+59	+58	-1
Would be a better long-term solution to our power generation needs	+36	+36	0
Would do more to help make America energy independent	+30	+34	+4
Would do a better job keeping electricity bills lower	+20	+32	+12
Would create good-paying jobs	+5	+26	+21
Would do a better job at preventing blackouts and keeping our electricity reliable	0	+20	+20
Proven technologies	-8	+9	+17
Would bring electricity online more quickly	-9	+26	+35

Democrats are more trusted on energy policy than Republicans, though Democrats are viewed as wanting to ban certain sources of energy. Democrats have a 5-point advantage on trust on energy policy over Republicans initially (48% trust Democrats more/43% trust Republicans more), in part because they are viewed as being the party who will fight to prevent utility companies from unfairly raising rates (44% describes Democrats better/30% describes Republicans better, +14) and the party who is focused on keeping electricity prices lower (43%/36%, +7). However, Democrats are held back by the view that they are more likely to want to ban the use of certain sources of energy (51%/33%, +18).

Voters overwhelmingly oppose the actions Trump and his allies have taken on energy. Majorities of voters oppose each action taken by Trump and his allies we tested, with forcing states to keep coal plants open past their retirement dates (70% oppose, 50% strongly), canceling hundreds of wind and solar projects (69% oppose, 53% strongly), and implementing new rules and regulations to make it much harder to build new wind and solar projects (69% oppose, 49% strongly) topping the list as the most egregious actions.

Messaging gives Democratic Congressional candidates an electoral boost and gains them trust on key issues. Messaging on these issues more than doubles the Democrats' lead on the generic ballot (moving it from +6 to +13) with particularly large gains among center-right voters. This is just further confirmation that the GOP's war on clean energy has the potential to be a great wedge issue with their own base. What's more, after messaging, Democrats become more trusted on both energy policy and the cost of living – especially with center-right voters.

	Net Generic Democrat		
	Initial	Final	Change
Overall	+6	+13	+7
Democrat	+93	+93	0
Independent	+22	+28	+6
Republican	-88	-77	+11

	Net Trust Democrats More					
	Energy policy			The cost of living		
	Initial	Final	Change	Initial	Final	Change
Overall	+5	+17	+12	+5	+13	+8
Democrat	+85	+92	+7	+89	+93	+4
Independent	+13	+28	+15	+13	+22	+9
Republican	-78	-62	+16	-80	-71	+9

Messaging also leads to huge shifts on which party wants to ban certain sources of energy and other key traits. Critically, messaging utterly reverses perceptions of which party wants to ban certain sources of energy. It also more than doubles Democrats' already sizeable lead on being willing to fight to prevent utility companies from unfairly raising rates, which is an important focus for voters right now.

	Net Describes Democrats Better		
	Initial	Final	Change
Want to ban the use of certain sources of energy	+18	-11	-29
Will fight to prevent utility companies from unfairly raising rates	+14	+30	+16
Are focused on keeping electricity prices lower	+7	+16	+9
Are focused on what's best for America's future	+2	+9	+7
Are focused on the right things	+2	+9	+7

Messaging Imperatives

To meet this opportunity, Democrats and clean energy advocates need to lean into voters' desire for more energy more quickly. Democrats' biggest disadvantage on the issue of energy is that voters believe they want to ban certain sources of energy. Moreover, the two things holding clean energy back from even higher support are concerns about whether it is proven and how quickly it can be brought online. This survey shows that we have messaging that can massively shift those perceptions. That means educating voters about how much quicker (and cheaper) clean energy can be brought online. For Democrats, it also means proactively messaging about a desire to "maximize existing resources" including existing gas plants. To be clear, that does NOT mean embracing the need for NEW gas plants, but Democrats need to reassure voters that they don't want to get rid of existing gas plants.

The cost of electricity needs to be a central tenant of our messaging. This is no surprise, given the moment. And it ties to the point above – people understand that demand is rising and that is why they want more energy. Voters certainly have other important considerations when it comes to energy (including reliability, pollution and health and, to a lesser extent, climate), but cost is easily king.

Education about the costs of building new clean energy projects compared to NEW gas plants is critical. One thing that we have seen time after time in qualitative research is that when we ask voters about how moving to clean energy might impact costs, they invariably tell us that it should bring prices down in the long-term but they worry that it could increase prices in the short-term because, they believe, wind and solar farms must be quite expensive to build. However, they do NOT think naturally about the cost of new gas plants when they think about gas as an alternative. That's why it's critical to explicitly frame the choice between new wind and solar and NEW gas plants and to educate voters how much cheaper and quicker new clean energy can be brought online. Doing so changed the equation dramatically.

It is hard to overstate the salience of, or intensity around, utility and data center accountability. We have seen this in survey after survey: voters are already blaming monopoly utility companies for higher electricity prices, they overwhelmingly believe that those companies are unfairly gouging consumers, and both policies and messaging around greater accountability for utilities generate more intensity than anything else – with policies and messages around requiring data centers to pay for their own energy (so that regular people don't end up footing the bill) close behind. These kinds of policies and messages are the most immediate and potent ways to demonstrate to voters that Democrats want to do something that will keep their electricity bills lower.

Make the case that Republicans are the party of less energy (and higher costs) by leading with how they have canceled nearly complete solar and wind projects. Though voters also highly oppose the GOP's efforts to keep coal plants open past their retirement dates and how they are making it harder to build new clean energy projects, the fact that they have canceled hundreds of clean energy projects that were already underway, including some that were over 80% complete, drives the most anger and demonstrates to voters that the GOP is not focused on expanding the supply of energy to bring costs down.

Recommended Language

Clean Energy Education:

Note: The following is a longer narrative for education about clean energy, but the middle, **bolded**, paragraph is the most important piece.

Big Oil CEOs have spent millions spreading disinformation, but the truth is that clean energy is a proven technology that has been operating at commercial scale for decades and already provides nearly a quarter of electricity in the U.S.

Solar and wind farms can be built in just one year, unlike gas plants which can take up to 7 years and cost 35% to 60% more to produce the same amount of electricity (according to Lazard, an independent international economic firm). Even worse, while wind and solar would be a long-term solution to our power generation needs, building new gas plants would lock us into this expensive and volatile energy source for 50 years, even as solar and wind continue to get less expensive.

And despite what you might have heard, when winter storms hit Texas in 2021, many gas plants failed but, according to the grid operators involved, wind and solar "exceeded expectations."

Contrasting on Energy:

Note: The following is longer narrative that includes several strong pieces which fit well together. The **bolded** portions are the most important and can be used on their own to drive the core contrast.

With energy prices already high and demand rising, we need to bring more energy online as quickly as possible, not limit our options – and independent economists confirm that wind and solar power projects are the fastest and cheapest way to bring new electricity online. Yet...

...during the 2024 presidential election campaign, Donald Trump promised Big Oil and Coal CEOs a “windfall” if they contributed hundreds of millions to his campaign. They came through for him, so now Trump is making good on his promise...

...Trump and his allies have canceled hundreds of clean energy projects that were already underway, even projects that were over 80% complete (including the Esmeralda 7 solar project in Nevada, which would have powered 2 million homes OR and they have created new regulations that make it nearly impossible to build new wind and solar projects)...

...And Trump and his allies are forcing states to keep inefficient coal plants open past their retirement dates, even when utilities don't want them because they are so much more expensive to operate. Their order to keep one Michigan coal plant open past its planned retirement has already cost consumers there \$80 million in just a few months...

...If they have their way, America will miss out on the energy sources that will power the 21st century and, instead, be locked into the outdated energy sources of the past...

...U.S. electricity bills are up 13% since Trump took office and independent economists say that these actions will drive them even higher...

...Meanwhile, Democrats have a plan to bring more electricity online right now, while making sure America leads on the energy sources that will power the rest of the 21st century...

...They want to make it much easier to build new wind and solar projects while also maximizing the existing resources on the grid including natural gas and rooftop solar.

Contrasting on Utilities and Data Centers:

Monopoly utility companies are making record profits and giving massive bonuses to their executives while overcharging consumers. Meanwhile, data centers are causing electricity demand to skyrocket, and most utility companies are raising rates on regular consumers to pay for the energy that data centers need.

Yet, Trump and Republicans want to give data centers rein to use as much of our electricity as they want with no accountability, even though that will cause electricity prices to skyrocket. And they have opposed every effort to increase accountability on monopoly utility companies (because these companies contribute millions of dollars to their campaigns).

Meanwhile, Democrats want to freeze utility rate hikes and increase accountability on monopoly utility companies to prevent them from gouging consumers. And their plan requires data centers to pay for the energy they need, so families and small businesses don't have to foot the bill.

Suggested Language for Quantitative Testing

Note: Items in parentheses could be excluded to keep the length of messages to be tested down.

Positives:

With energy prices already high and demand rising, we need to bring more energy online as quickly as possible, not limit our options – and independent economists confirm that solar and wind farms can be built in just one year, unlike gas plants which can take up to 7 years and cost 35% to 60% more to produce the same amount of electricity. That’s why [CANDIDATE] has a plan to make it much easier to build new wind and solar projects while also maximizing the existing resources on the grid, including natural gas and rooftop solar (so that we can bring down the cost of electricity right now, while making sure America leads on the energy sources that will power the rest of the 21st century).

Monopoly utility companies are making record profits and giving massive bonuses to their executives while overcharging consumers. Meanwhile, data centers are causing electricity demand to skyrocket, and most utility companies are raising rates on regular consumers to pay for the energy that data centers need. [CANDIDATE] wants to freeze utility rate hikes and increase accountability on monopoly utility companies to prevent them from gouging consumers. And [HIS/HER] plan requires data centers to pay for the energy they need, so families and small businesses don’t have to foot the bill.

Negatives:

With energy prices already high and demand rising, we need to bring more energy online as quickly as possible, not limit our options – and independent economists confirm that wind and solar power projects are the fastest and cheapest way to bring new electricity online. Yet Donald Trump and his allies have canceled hundreds of clean energy projects that were already underway, even projects that were over 80% complete. (And they are they are forcing states to keep inefficient coal plants open past their retirement dates, even when utilities don’t want them because they are so much more expensive to operate). Now, U.S. electricity bills are up 13% since Trump took office and independent economists say that these actions will drive them even higher.

Monopoly utility companies are making record profits and giving massive bonuses to their executives while overcharging consumers. Meanwhile, data centers are causing electricity demand to skyrocket, and most utility companies are raising rates on regular consumers to pay for the energy that data centers need. Yet, Trump and his allies want to give data centers free rein to use as much of our electricity as they want with no accountability, even though that will cause electricity prices to skyrocket. And they have opposed every effort to increase accountability on monopoly utility companies because these companies contribute millions of dollars to their campaigns.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH:

Global Strategy Group conducted 3 online focus groups in November 2025 among white non-college women swing voters in Michigan, Hispanic swing voters in Texas, and white college educated voters in North Carolina. Global Strategy Group conducted an online discussion board in December 2025 among swing voters in battleground states (Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Global Strategy Group conducted a survey of 1,000 likely 2026 voters in battleground states (Arizona, Nevada, Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Georgia) between January 15 and January 18, 2026 via telephone, text-to-web, and online panel. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic, political, and demographic divisions of the population of likely voters are properly represented.