

MEMO

To: Interested Parties
From: Climate Power, Earthjustice, and Data for Progress
Date: May 3, 2023
Re: New Polling on Clean Energy and Permitting Reform

Summary

Following House Republicans' vote last week to repeal parts of the Inflation Reduction Act, permitting reform is once again a subject of national debate. With weather-induced [power outages](#) and [energy price volatility](#) still impacting people across this country, energy security continues to be top of mind for voters.

The choice between quickly building out the clean energy infrastructure of the future and protecting communities and safeguarding bedrock environmental laws is often presented as a binary choice, but recent polling from Climate Power, Earthjustice, and Data for Progress demonstrate that voters understand the need for both.

As permitting conversations continue in Congress and the White House, policymakers should look for solutions that quickly build the clean infrastructure of the future while ensuring that communities have a say in the projects impacting their homes and communities.

Climate Power, Earthjustice, and Data for Progress conducted a national [survey](#) from April 1-2, 2023, of 1,243 likely voters to assess their preferences surrounding permitting reform.

Key Takeaways

A few highlights:

- More than three-quarters of voters (76 percent) favor maintaining existing environmental and health protections, regardless of whether they believe permitting reform should prioritize clean energy (52 percent) or fossil fuel energy projects (24 percent).
- More than three-quarters of voters (78 percent) believe the U.S. should be doing more to strengthen its energy security, while a majority of voters (56 percent) think we should prioritize building out infrastructure for clean energy projects over fossil fuel ones in order to do so.
- Community input on new energy projects is paramount to voters. An overwhelming 87 percent of voters across party lines believe it is very important or somewhat important to incorporate the concerns of communities potentially impacted by new energy projects in project planning and decision making.

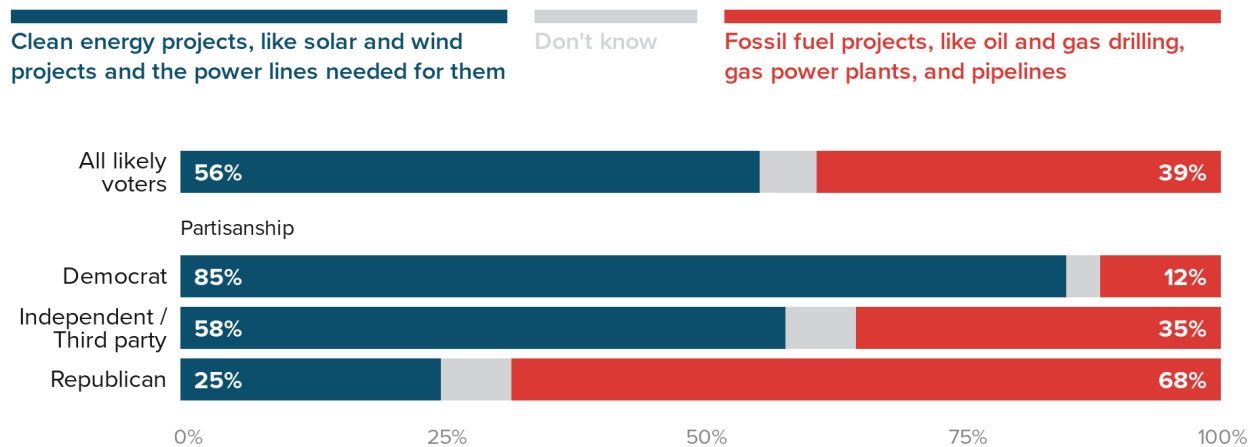
- The vast majority of voters (81 percent) across partisanship support the development of new energy transmission lines.

Findings

When it comes to strengthening energy security in America, a majority of voters (56 percent) think we should prioritize building out infrastructure for clean energy projects over fossil fuel ones, with 58 percent of Independents favoring clean energy projects. In line with this, the vast majority of voters (81 percent) across partisanship support the development of new energy transmission lines.

A Majority of Voters Support Prioritizing Clean Energy Projects Over Fossil Fuel Projects

To strengthen America's energy security, which of the following energy projects do you think America should prioritize **more**?



April 1–2, 2023 survey of 1,243 likely voters

While energy security is on voters' minds — more than three-quarters of voters (78 percent) believe the U.S. should be doing more to strengthen its energy security — only 35 percent support prioritizing oil and gas production to grow exports and “maintain our domestic energy security” over building clean energy in America to “create thousands of jobs for Americans” (60 percent).

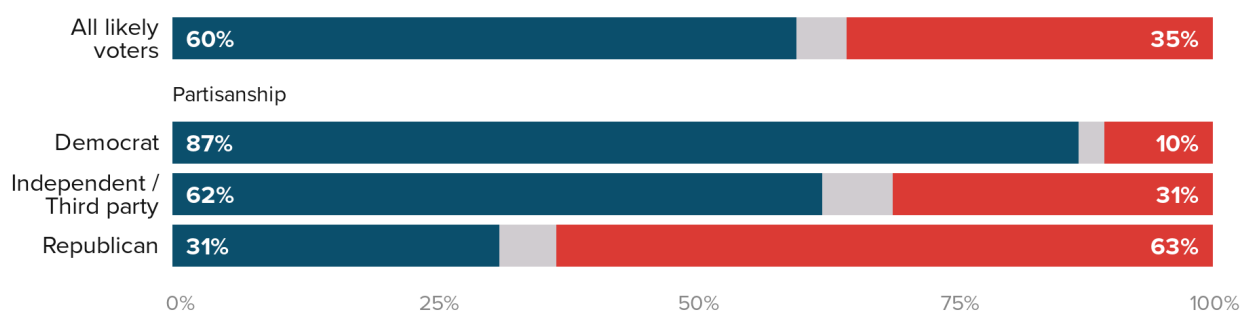
Voters Support Producing Domestic Clean Energy Over Exporting Oil and Gas

Which of these statements best describes your view, even if neither is exactly right?

We should prioritize building new, clean energy and investing in emerging energy technologies right here in the U.S., where we can create thousands of jobs for Americans and strengthen our economy.

Don't know

We should prioritize increasing existing oil and gas production to increase our oil and gas exports to foreign countries around the world and ensure we maintain our domestic energy security.

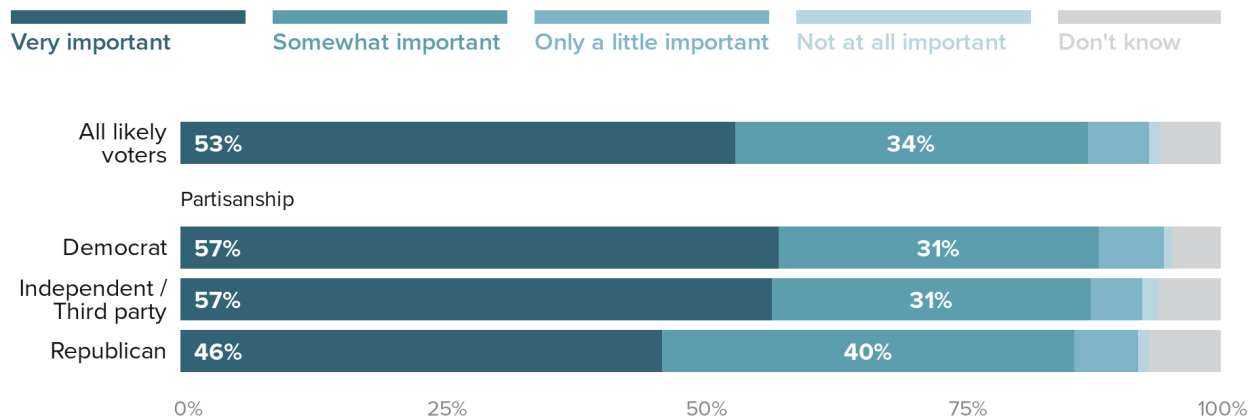


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Community input on new energy projects is paramount to voters. An overwhelming majority of voters across party lines (87 percent) believe it is very important or somewhat important to incorporate the concerns of communities potentially impacted by new energy projects in project planning and decision making.

Voters Overwhelmingly Believe Community Concerns Are Important for New Project Planning

How important do you think it is to incorporate the concerns of communities potentially impacted by new energy projects in project planning and decision making?

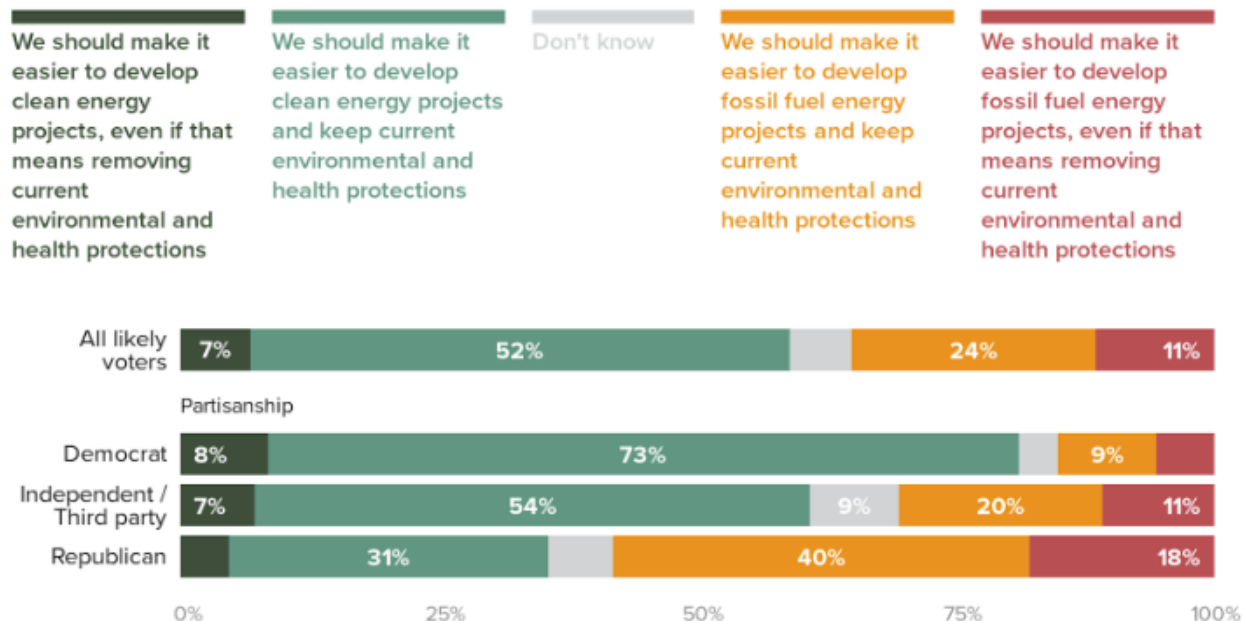


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Also, voters widely agree that we should expedite energy projects while maintaining existing environmental and health protection laws. Most voters favor expediting **clean energy** projects while maintaining existing environmental protection laws (52 percent), while 24 percent support expediting **fossil fuel** projects while keeping protection laws. Less than 20 percent of voters would like to see existing environmental protections removed to expedite building new energy projects of any kind.

Voters Support Keeping Environmental and Health Protections While Expediting Clean Energy Projects

When thinking about communities potentially impacted by new energy projects, which of these statements best describes your view, even if none are exactly right?



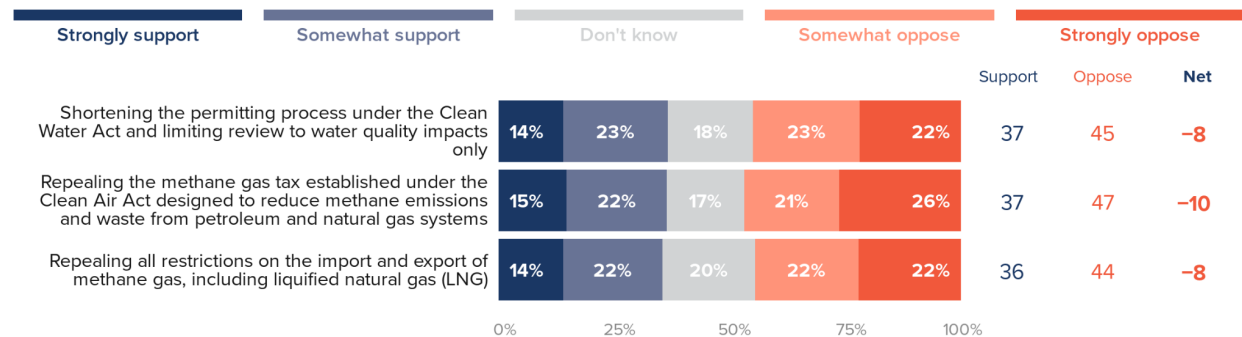
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Moreover, voters disapprove of efforts to overturn key elements of the Inflation Reduction Act, including repeals of the methane fee and tax rebates for energy-efficient appliances. A plurality of voters (49 percent) oppose repealing the methane fee for oil and gas companies, including majorities of Democrats (57 percent) and Independents (51 percent). Just over half of voters (52 percent) oppose repealing rebates for Americans who purchase energy-efficient electric appliances for their homes, including majorities of Democrats (53 percent) and Independents (56 percent), as well as a plurality of Republicans (46 percent).

Voters Are Unfavorable Toward Proposals in Republican Permitting and Energy Legislation

Republicans in Congress have proposed legislation that would reform the permitting process to streamline the development of energy infrastructure and increase domestic energy exports.

For each of the following components of this legislation, please say whether you would support or oppose that specific component of the bill:



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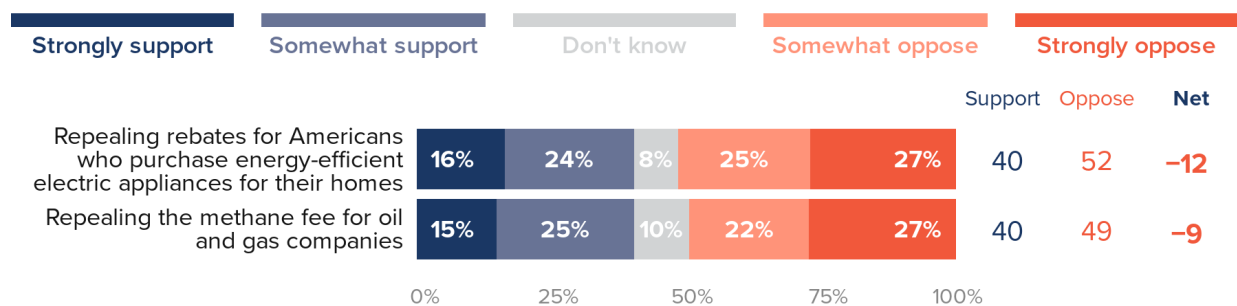
A plurality of voters oppose repealing all restrictions on the import and export of methane gas, including liquified natural gas (LNG), as well as shortening the permitting process under the Clean Water Act and limiting review to water quality impacts. Voters also oppose (by a -10-point margin) repealing the methane gas tax established under the Clean Air Act designed to reduce methane emissions and waste from petroleum and natural gas systems.

Plurality of Voters Oppose Repealing Methane Fee, While Majority Oppose Repealing Rebates for Energy-Efficient Appliances

Lawmakers in Congress are considering legislation to shorten the federal permitting process for new energy infrastructure projects.

As part of this proposed legislation, some lawmakers are considering repealing sections of the recently passed clean energy law.

Would you support or oppose each of the following?



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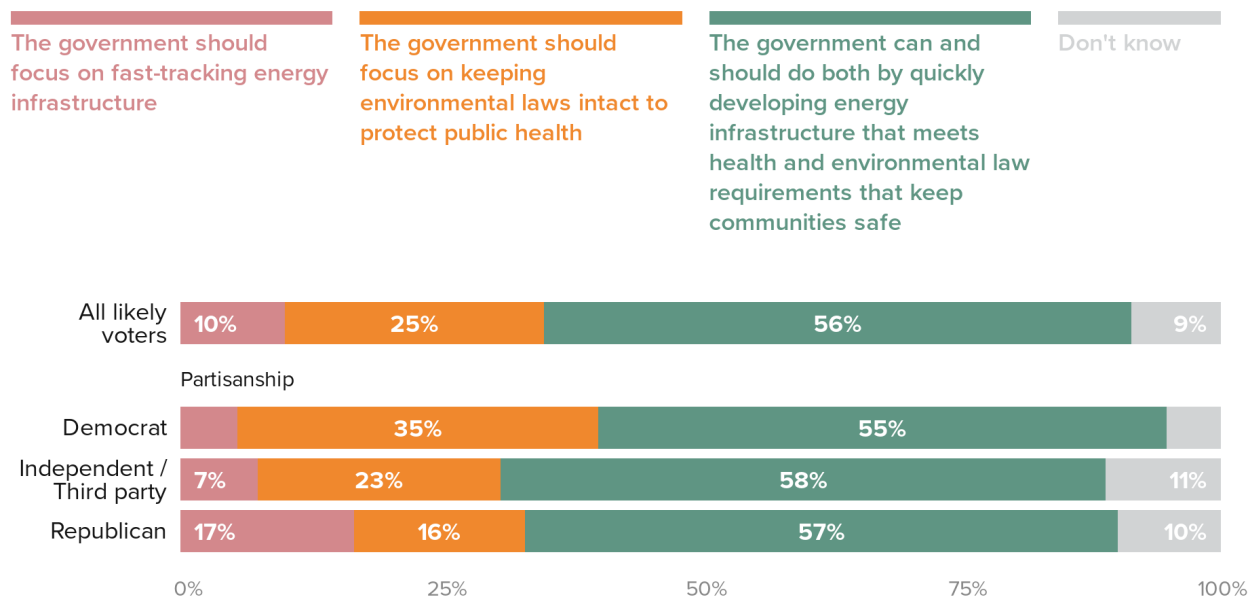
H.R. 1 establishes permitting reform as a zero-sum game, where the outcomes are either easier buildout of energy infrastructure, or the continued protection of communities and the environment under existing regulations. After reading a description emphasizing this dichotomy, voters were asked which approach the government should take with permitting reform. More than half of respondents across party lines (56 percent) agree that the government should not focus on either outcome at the expense of the other, but rather “do both by quickly developing energy infrastructure that meets health and environmental law requirements that keep communities safe.”

Voters Want Politicians to Prioritize Energy Buildout Alongside Community and Environmental Health

Republicans in Congress have proposed legislation that would eliminate environmental and health protections to streamline the development of energy infrastructure and increase domestic energy exports.

This proposal implies that the government can either make it easier to build new energy infrastructure to increase domestic oil and gas production or keep several environmental protections in place that safeguard people's health, but that the government cannot do both.

Which do you believe should be the approach the government should take on energy infrastructure development and environmental protections?



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Conclusions

- Voters want lawmakers to prioritize clean energy projects over new fossil fuel projects.
- Voters widely agree that community members should have a say in the development of new energy infrastructure projects in their area.
- Voters think that lawmakers can — and should — make it easier to build new clean energy projects while also protecting environmental health and safety.

Survey Methodology

From April 1 to 2, 2023, Data for Progress, in collaboration with Climate Power and Earthjustice, conducted a [survey](#) of 1,243 likely voters nationally using web panel respondents. The sample was weighted to be representative of likely voters by age, gender, education, race, geography, and voting history. The survey was conducted in English. The margin of error is ± 3 percentage points.