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**New Poll: Independents, Democratic Base Favor More Big Oil Accountability**

*The results of the poll hang over Big Oil’s CERAweek in Houston, as oil majors contend with a wave of new lawsuits and souring public opinion.*

**Washington, D.C –** A new [poll](https://www.filesforprogress.org/datasets/2024/3/dfp_ffm_mpp_crosstabs.pdf) released yesterday by Fossil Free Media and Data for Progress shows that a majority of Independent, Black, Latino, and young voters believe that oil companies caught misleading the public should be held accountable for their actions. The news comes as a growing number of US cities and states sue fossil fuel companies for deceiving consumers and downplaying their role in driving the climate crisis.

The findings also set the scene for a tense CERAweek in Houston this week. Rather than addressing the industry’s role in exacerbating climate change, Big Oil executives are using the conference to make excuses for falling far-short of their emissions reductiongoals. “We’re not on the path to make net-zero by 2050,” remarked Exxon CEO Darren Woods. The executive—who has come [under fire](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/mar/04/exxon-chief-public-climate-failures) recently for blaming the industry’s sluggish clean energy transition on consumers unwilling to pay for it—doubled down on those remarks at CERAweek, saying, “One of the challenges here is while society wants to see emissions reduced, no one wants to pay for it.”

The poll found that **78% of Americans support taking action against oil and gas companies that “knew about the polluting impact of burning fossil fuels” and lied about it.** With 78% of Independents, 79% of young Americans, 85% of Black Americans and 82% of Latino Americans agreeing that fossil fuel companies must be held accountable for misleading the public, the matter enjoys broad support. Building on the findings of a 2023 [poll](https://www.filesforprogress.org/datasets/2023/10/dfp_oil_and_gas_accountability_tabs.pdf) that highlighted Americans’ declining trust in fossil fuel companies, the poll results show 2/3 of Republicans agreeing that companies caught misleading the public about the impact of burning fossil fuels should be held accountable— highlighting a rare area of bipartisan agreement.

Additionally, **80% of Democrats polled said that the Biden administration should place “stricter limits on climate pollution produced by fossil fuels” in 2024**—sending a clear message to a campaign actively working to energize its base over the coming months. Asked the same question, 63% of young Americans, 61% of Black Americans and 63% of Latino Americans—who comprise [core voting constituencies](https://www.dataforprogress.org/blog/2022/3/28/young-voters-want-biden-to-act-on-climate-and-fossil-fuel-industry-accountability) for the Democratic party—agreed that the Biden Administration should impose pollution limits on oil and gas companies. 84% of all individuals polled—including 77% of Republicans—expressed concern over oil companies enjoying growing profits while Americans shoulder higher energy costs.

Speaking to the salience of these results, Center for Climate Integrity President Richard Wiles remarked, “While oil executives are plotting ways to keep fueling the climate crisis, the public overwhelmingly agrees that Big Oil cannot be trusted and must be held accountable for decades of climate lies. Elected officials should embrace this growing consensus among voters and realize that taking on the fossil fuel industry is not just the right thing to do for the climate, the economy, and public health—it’s also smart politics.”

Indeed, a recent spate of lawsuits from across the country is showing that Big Oil’s deception does not need to go unchecked. Chicago is the [latest city](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/feb/21/chicago-sues-bp-chevron-fossil-fuel-climate-change) to take legal action against the fossil fuel industry for their role in stoking the climate crisis. Citing flooding, shoreline erosion and the deaths of over 700 citizens during a 1995 heatwave, the lawsuit is expanding Americans’ understanding of what holding oil and gas companies accountable for climate change can look like.

The lawsuit includes clear language on the ways oil companies’ deception negatively impacted Black and Brown communities throughout Chicago. “Many of the victims of the 1995 heat wave were elderly, low-income, and Black,” explains the lawsuit. “While all Chicagoans directly experience climate change impacts, frontline communities experience the most immediate and worst effects,” the lawsuit goes on to say.

Taken together, the polling results and recent wave of legal actions flow from a groundswell of anti-fossil fuel organizing spearheaded by the frontline communities most impacted by oil companies’ duplicity. Fossil Free Media’s Make Polluters Pay campaign—a movement pushing to make the companies responsible for pollution pay their share of the damage—demonstrates the power of collaboration between communities on the frontlines of climate change and the legislators forging climate policy.

“We’re reaching a tipping point for the effort to hold Big Oil accountable for climate impacts,” said Jamie Henn, founder and director of Fossil Free Media. “The public overwhelmingly supports making polluters pay for the damage they’re doing to our climate and communities. Now, they’re demanding action.”

As more cities consider suing oil companies for their role in driving climate change—and as the Biden administration looks to galvanize its base of supporters in the run-up to Election Day—the poll results should embolden lawmakers to take decisive action against the corporations driving our climate crisis. Ultimately, lawmakers must realize now is as good a time as any to show constituencies that holding Big Oil accountable for deceiving the American public is possible.

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