

## MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: GLEN BOLGER

RE: POST-ELECTION SURVEY – ATTITUDES TOWARD CLEAN ENERGY  
ISSUES 2016

DATE: NOVEMBER 28, 2016

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**Introduction**

We completed a national post-election survey of 1,000 voters who participated in the 2016 election. Methodology notes are at the end of this memo, and key findings are below.

**Key Findings**

1. ***Voters say the issue of energy was important to their vote, and that it is important that candidates share the voters' opinion on energy.***

Fully 73% of voters say the issue of energy was “important to your vote,” while 27% said it was not important. An even higher number, 85%, say that it is important to them “that a candidate for political office share your opinion on energy issues.”

Among Trump voters, 69% say energy was important to their vote, and 81% say it is important that a candidate share their opinion on energy issues.

2. ***A majority of voters want the country to put more emphasis on producing domestic energy from solar, wind, and hydropower.***

Asked about six sources of domestic energy, strong majorities backed the United States placing more emphasis on three clean energy sources, were opposed to two sources of domestic energy, and offered modest support for one source.

	<b><u>More Emphasis</u></b>	<b><u>Less Emphasis</u></b>	<b><u>Difference Score</u></b>
Solar power	76%	10%	+66
Wind	70%	13%	+57
Hydropower	61%	7%	+54
Natural gas	41%	23%	+18
Nuclear power	27%	39%	-12
Coal	23%	51%	-28

A majority of Trump voters support more emphasis on solar (61%), hydropower (56%), natural gas (52%), and wind (52%).

3. ***The concept of an “all-of-the-above energy strategy remains powerful with voters.***

Survey respondents were asked to agree/disagree with the following question:

“Our state should pursue an all-of-the-above energy strategy, which means lowering our heavy dependence on fossil fuels and allowing an increase in electricity generation from emerging technologies like renewable energy as well as more energy efficiency.”

Fully 84% agree and only 14% disagree with that statement. By intensity, 54% strongly agree and just 6% strongly disagree. Fully 71% of Trump voters agree, with 27% disagreeing.

Similarly, 86% of survey respondents support “taking action to accelerate the development and use of clean energy in the United States,” while just 11% oppose. Intensity is high – 59% strongly support compared to just 5% who strongly oppose.

While Trump voters are not quite as supportive, a significant 75% still support taking action to increase the development and use of clean energy.

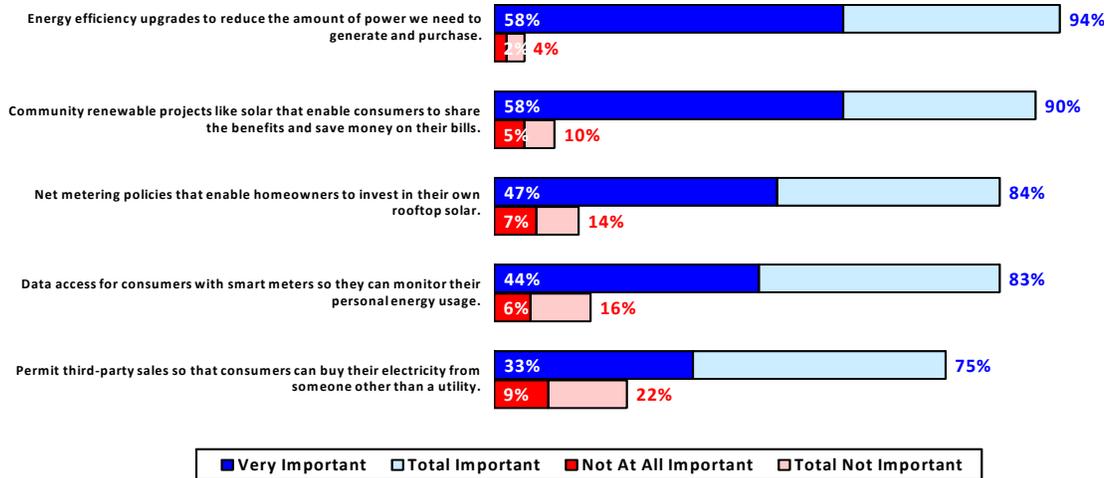
4. ***Specific policies to expand a state’s commitment to clean energy also scored well across the board.***

We tested five proposals that supporters of clean energy have prioritized, and all five are seen as important by voters. The chart on the next page shows those results.

## Almost 60% of voters believe that energy efficiency upgrades and renewable projects are **very important**.

*“Now I am going to read you a list of policies that advocates have prioritized to help expand our state’s commitment to clean energy. After I read each one, please tell me whether you think that policy is very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all.”*

*Ranked by % Very Important*



Post-Election Clean Energy Survey – November 10-13, 2016

35

### 5. ***Voters overwhelmingly believe their state should have a renewable portfolio standard, and also an energy optimization standard.***

Fully 69% say their “state should have a renewable portfolio standard, requiring a minimum amount of electricity generated by a utility to come from renewable sources like wind, solar, hydro, and biomass.” Only 28% say their state should not.

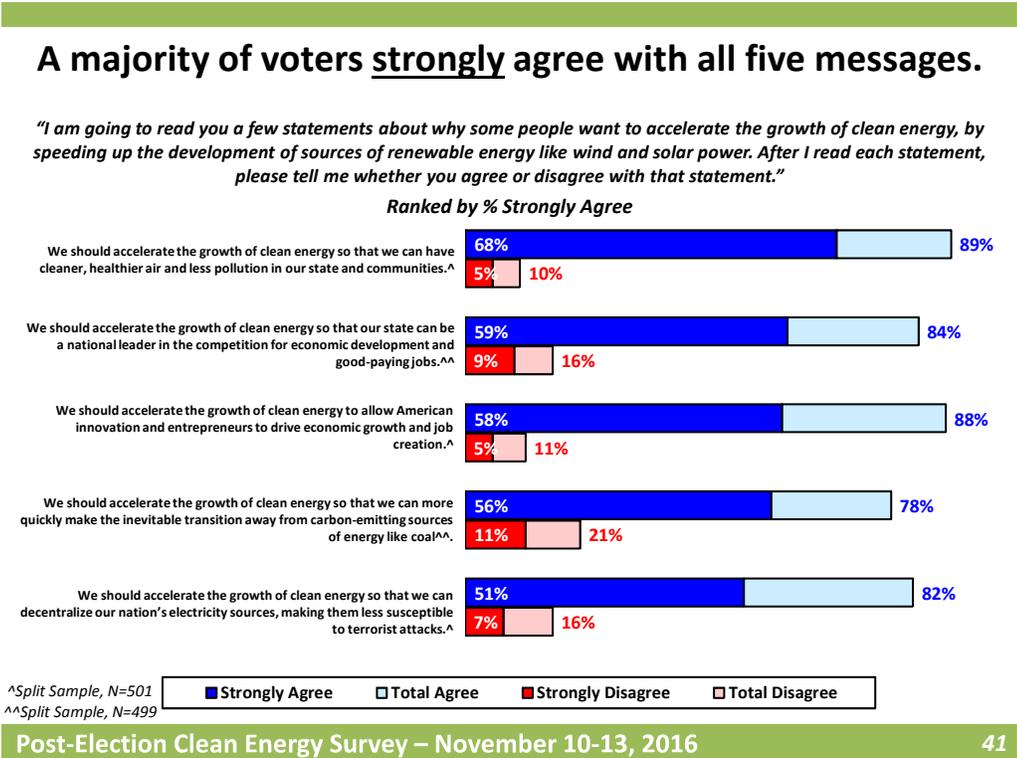
Trump voters are evenly divided on that question – 48% back a renewable portfolio standard for their state, while 49% do not.

An even higher number, 80%, say their “state should have an energy optimization standard, requiring a utility to help its customers reduce their electricity consumption through energy efficiency programs and products.” Only 18% say their state should not.

Two-thirds (66%) of Trump voters back an energy optimization standard.

6. **Messages in favor of clean energy test very highly with survey respondents.**

We tested five agree/disagree statements from supporters of growing clean energy. Support ranged from a “low” of 78% to a high of “89.” The number who strongly agree with each statement ranged from 51% to 68%.



7. **By nearly two-to-one, voters say they are willing to pay a bit more in short term for energy as long as there is more stable, cleaner, and cheaper energy in the long term.**

By 64%-34%, voters say they would be willing to pay a little be more for a long term result of stable, cleaner, and cheaper energy. Trump voters split more evenly on this question – 46% say they would pay a little more, while 50% say they would not.

8. ***Net metering is supported by two-to-one.***

After hearing pro and con arguments about net metering, voters back it by 60% to 31%. Here's the question wording:

As you may know, forty-two states have a policy called net metering that allows homeowners, businesses, local school districts, and other organizations to get full retail credit for the extra energy their rooftop solar panels produce. This extra solar energy goes onto the electricity grid for the utility company to sell at the full retail rate to other customers. I am going to read you two statements about this, and please tell me which one comes closer to your own point of view. **(ROTATE)**

**60%** Some people say net metering is fair because it encourages the development of solar resources, and other customers benefit from the extra solar energy that goes onto the electricity grid.

...while...

**31%** Other people say net metering is unfair because solar customers use the electricity grid, too, and need to pay a fair rate for their use. They say that otherwise, solar customers' use of the electricity grid becomes subsidized by non-solar customers.

By 53%-38%, Trump voters say net metering is fair.

9. ***Voters say that they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who opposes increasing the development and use of clean energy in the United States.***

We split sampled a question asking survey respondents if they would be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate if that candidate opposes increasing the development and use of clean energy in the United States. Half the respondents were asked the question prior to the message testing section, while the other half were asked after it.

There was not much difference between the results:

	<u>Pre-Messages</u>	<u>Post-Messages</u>
More Likely	22%	18%
Less Likely	65%	70%
No Difference	8%	9%

These data underscore the impact of support for increasing the development and use of clean energy. Even without the messages, the issue is powerful among voters, and becomes even more so after the messages.

Trump voters are also less likely to back candidates opposed to clean energy. Fully 46% on the pre-message are less likely, as are 56% on the post-message. Only 31% (pre) and 24% (post) of Trump voters are more likely to back a candidate who opposes clean energy.

**Methodology**

*Public Opinion Strategies conducted a national survey on the topic of clean energy. The survey was completed November 10-13, 2016 among 1,000 respondents who voted in the 2016 election, with 400 of the interviews being done among cell phone respondents. The survey has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.10\%$  in 95 out of 100 cases.*