

# AMERICAN VOTERS SUPPORT CLIMATE ACTION

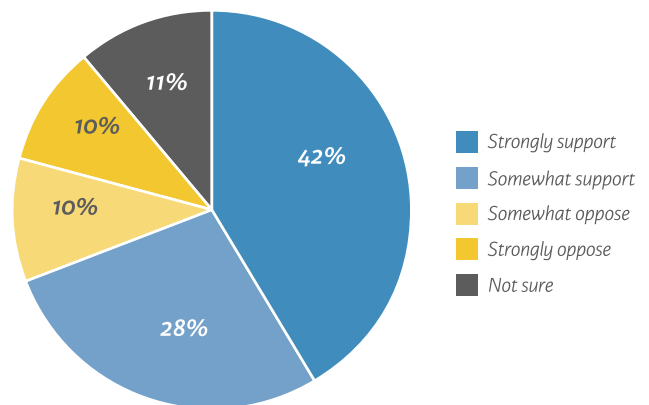


Americans are concerned about climate change and support policies to reduce carbon pollution and protect Americans from climate impacts, [according to a new survey of registered voters in the United States](#). Voters support a broad range of policies that would transition the United States from fossil fuels to renewable energy and refresh the nation’s infrastructure to be resilient to climate impacts. As climate change takes center stage in the Democratic primary – with two candidate forums on climate change and the third Democratic debate scheduled in September – and just ahead of the United Nations climate summit in New York, Democratic voters rate climate change a top issue in deciding who to support for president in 2020. Climate Nexus, in partnership with the Yale University Program on Climate Change Communication and the George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication, conducted a representative survey of 2,208 registered voters nationwide from August 20-22, 2019. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 2.1% at the 95% confidence level.

## AMERICAN VOTERS WANT ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

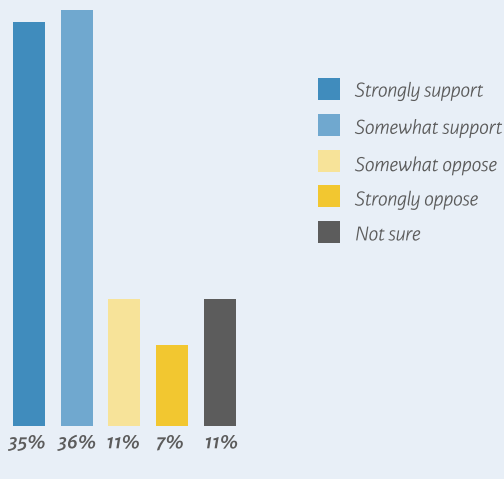
Seven in 10 (70%) American voters support government action to address climate change, including more than four in 10 (42%) who strongly support it. Americans want the federal government (71%), their state government (70%), and their own member of Congress (69%) to do more on climate change. Two-thirds (67%) say government action to address climate change will have a positive impact on the economy and jobs by encouraging businesses “to innovate and transition away from fossil fuels to clean alternatives” and doing so will help the U.S. “expand its clean energy economy, create high-paying jobs, and put itself in a stronger position to compete in a world economy that is rapidly moving to renewable energy and zero-emission vehicles.” Only a third (33%) say moving away from fossil fuels will have a negative impact on the economy.

**Q:** *Do you support or oppose government action to address climate change?*



*Due to weighting and rounding, percentages may not always add up to 100%*

**Q:** *Do you support or oppose requiring electric utility companies in the United States to generate 100% of their electricity from renewable sources, like wind and solar, by the year 2050?*



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Democratic voters say climate change is a top-tier issue they will consider when deciding who to support for president in 2020. When asked to state the two most important issues to their presidential vote, Democrats identify health care as the most important issue (40%), followed by climate change (28%) and gun policy (24%). Seventeen percent of registered voters overall select climate change as one of the two most important issues to their vote.

Voters overall are more likely to vote for candidates who support specific policies to address climate change. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of registered voters say they are more likely to support candidates who favor setting stronger pollution limits for business and industry, and seven in 10 say they are more likely to support candidates who favor setting stronger fuel efficiency standards for cars and trucks (70%), requiring fossil fuel companies to pay

a tax on their carbon pollution (70%), and providing assistance to communities losing jobs in the oil, gas, and coal industries (70%). More than six in 10 (62%) voters also say they are more likely to support candidates who favor ensuring protection of low-income and minority communities that are more vulnerable to climate change impacts.

## STRONG SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC CLIMATE POLICIES

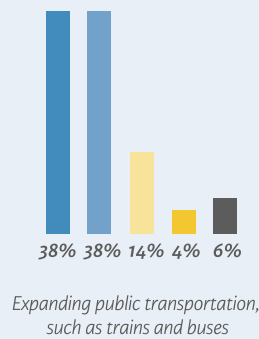
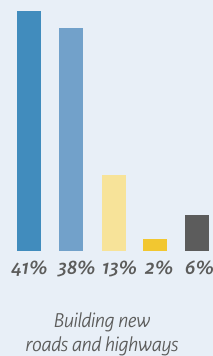
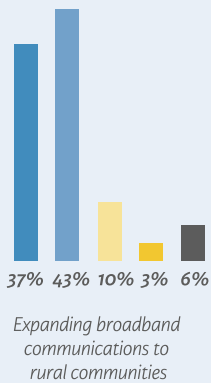
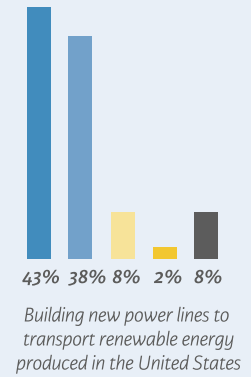
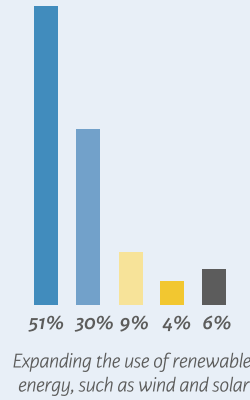
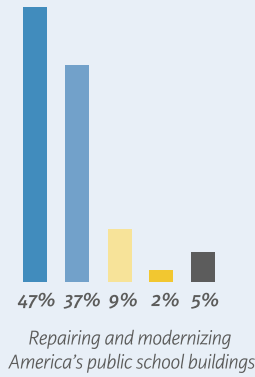
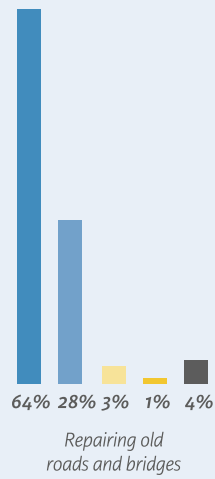
A large majority (71%) of voters supports establishing a national renewable portfolio standard (RPS) requiring 100% of electricity to be generated from renewable sources by 2050, and nearly half (49%) of voters would approve of the federal government using their tax dollars to help pay for the transition to 100% renewable-generated energy.

Majorities say enacting a national 100% RPS would have a positive impact on the environment in the U.S. (77%) and the U.S. economy (61%), bring down electricity costs (61%), and benefit rural and farming communities (56%). Pluralities think a 100% RPS policy would help bring down the unemployment rate (46%), improve wages for American workers (46%), and benefit communities of color (42%). More than twice as many voters say focusing on increasing domestic production of renewable energy (53%) will increase the number of good jobs available in their state than those who say good jobs are more likely to come from focusing on increasing domestic oil and gas production (24%).

American voters say it's important to prioritize a variety of improvements to infrastructure, including modernizing and improving the resilience of energy infrastructure and the power grid. Voters say infrastructure investments should repair old roads and bridges (92%), repair and modernize America's public school buildings (84%), expand the use of renewables (81%), build new power lines for transmission of renewable energy (81%), expand rural broadband (80%), build new roads and highways (79%), and expand public transportation (76%).



**When it comes to investing in infrastructure, how important are the following objectives?**



- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not too important
- Not at all important
- Not sure

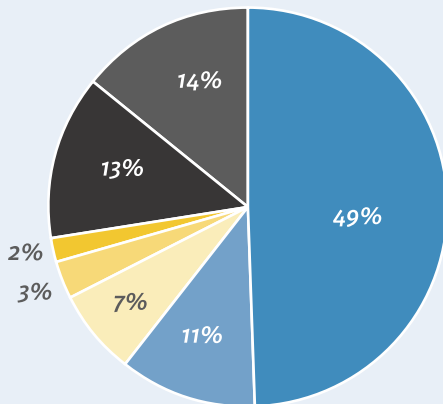
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More than three-quarters (76%) say it's important to invest in building infrastructure to withstand the effects of climate change, including 43% who say it's very important to do so. Approximately the same number (74%) say it's important that when investments in existing infrastructure are made, those upgrades make infrastructure better able to withstand the effects of climate change, even at a higher cost to taxpayers, and 75% support requiring new infrastructure projects to be built to withstand extreme weather, even at a higher cost. Nearly two-thirds (65%) say infrastructure legislation should also include specific targets for reducing carbon pollution and other greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change.

Voters also support other policies to address the causes of climate change and reduce its impacts, including setting stronger pollution limits for business and industry (78%), setting stronger fuel efficiency standards (75%), providing assistance to communities losing jobs in the oil, gas, and coal industries (75%), requiring fossil fuel companies to pay a tax on their carbon pollution (71%), and ensuring protection of low-income and minority communities who are more vulnerable to climate change impacts (66%).

**Q:** *When extreme weather events (such as hurricanes, floods, or heat waves) occur, when do you think is the proper time for the news media to talk about how climate change impacts these events?*

- Talk about climate change as the event is occurring
- Wait about a day or two after the event
- Wait about a week after the event
- Wait about a month after the event
- Wait longer than a month after the event
- Never talk about climate change and its role in weather-related disasters and extreme weather events
- Not sure



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## AMERICAN VOTERS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT CLIMATE IMPACTS

Nearly seven in 10 (69%) voters are worried about climate change, including more than a third (35%) who are very worried about climate change. Voters say climate change is impacting U.S. agriculture (73%), extreme weather events in the U.S. (72%), the health of Americans (61%), the U.S. economy (59%), and their own family's health (50%). Although only roughly four in 10 (39%) see climate change as having an effect on U.S. national security, fully seven in 10 (70%) believe global climate change is a serious threat for the United States.

## AMERICAN VOTERS WANT THE MEDIA TO TALK ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AND EXTREME WEATHER

When extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, floods, and heat waves occur, six in 10 voters prefer the media discuss how climate change impacts extreme weather events as they unfold or immediately after. Nearly half (49%) say the media should talk about how climate change impacts extreme weather events while the event is occurring, and another 11% say the media should discuss climate change in the first couple of days after an extreme weather event. Roughly one in 10 say the media should wait a week (7%), a month (3%), or longer than a month (2%) to discuss how climate change affects extreme weather.