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Attitudes

A growing majority of Americans support nuclear energy.

- The majority of Americans (57%) favor more nuclear power plants to generate electricity in the United States. This figure has been steadily trending upward in Pew's polling, from 43% in 2020 to 54% in 2022 and 57% in 2023. [\[Pew\]](#), June 2023
 - Support for nuclear power has been rising among both Democrats (from 37% in 2020 to 50% in 2023) and Republicans (from 53% in 2020 to 67% in 2023).
- Gallup similarly found that support for nuclear energy reached its highest point in a decade in 2023, with 55% of Americans saying that they favor the use of nuclear energy to provide electricity for the country. [\[Gallup\]](#), Mar. 2023
 - Support for nuclear energy tends to rise and fall with oil prices, as Gallup noted in the release of their March poll: *"Throughout the course of Gallup's trend, Americans have generally been more amenable to the use of nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity for the U.S. when oil prices have been high and less open to it when oil prices are low."*

Republicans consistently outpace Democrats in their support for nuclear energy, though partisanship generally plays less of a role in attitudes about nuclear energy than it does for other energy sources.

- Republicans (62%) are 16 points more likely than Democrats (46%) to say that they favor the use of nuclear energy as a way to provide electricity, and Republicans' support for nuclear energy has typically been 10-20 points higher than Democrats' support in Gallup's tracking going back to 2001. [[Gallup](#), Mar. 2023]
 - Support for nuclear power also varies by gender and education, as men (67%) are 25 points more likely than women (42%) to favor using nuclear energy for electricity and college graduates (63%) are 12 points more likely than adults without college degrees (51%) to support it.
- Republicans (67%) are 17 points more likely than Democrats (50%) to say that they favor more nuclear power plants to generate electricity. [[Pew](#), June 2023]
 - This 17-point partisan gap on expanding nuclear power plants is less than for fossil fuel development such as offshore oil and gas drilling, hydraulic fracturing, and coal mining (which Republicans are 45-48 points more likely than Democrats to favor expanding) or for solar and wind farms (which Democrats are 23-31 points more likely than Republicans to favor expanding).

Americans are still uncertain about nuclear energy's safety and environmental impacts.

- Roughly half of Americans (54%) believe that nuclear energy contributes at least "some" to unhealthy air pollution and climate change, placing nuclear energy on par with natural gas (52%) but lower than oil (71%) or coal (68%) in its perceived level of pollution. [[ecoAmerica](#), Sep. 2023]
- Majorities of Americans say that they have at least "some" concern about health and safety (74%), waste disposal (73%), security/weaponization (68%), habitat loss (65%), and costs (63%) from upgrading nuclear energy. However, all of these concerns decreased in ecoAmerica's polling on the topic between 2018 and 2023. [[ecoAmerica](#), Sep. 2023]

Messaging

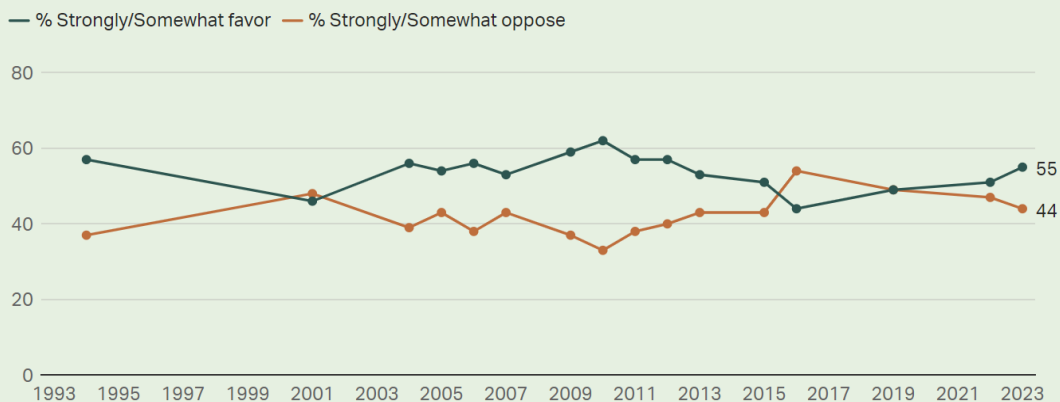
Several positive proof points for nuclear energy resonate, including its reliability, cost effectiveness, and benefits for U.S. energy independence. Americans also respond positively to arguments that nuclear energy is better for people's health and the climate than other energy sources. Future research should explore which of these arguments resonate best with different partisan audiences.

- More than two-thirds of Americans rate each of the rationales below as “very” or “somewhat” important reasons to support nuclear energy. [[ecoAmerica](#), Sep. 2023]
 - Nuclear power helps us grow our economy while reducing pollution to our climate and health - 71% important, including 38% “very” important
 - Nuclear power plants generate a lot of our electricity, reliably - 71% important, including 35% “very” important
 - Nuclear power plants keep America competitive and energy independent - 69% important, including 35% “very” important
 - Nuclear power plants should be kept running until lower cost renewable energy becomes available - 69% important, including 35% “very” important
 - Nuclear power plants do not emit pollutants that harm our health or our climate compared to alternatives - 68% important, including 36% “very” important
- Statewide polling in California has similarly found that a range of arguments for maintaining nuclear power resonate with voters, including its reliability, cost effectiveness, and the notions that it can reduce climate pollution and aid in the transition to renewable energy sources. More than seven in ten California voters rated each of the statements below as “extremely” or “very” important reasons for keeping a nuclear power plant operating in the state, with roughly half rating each as an “extremely” important reason. [[Carbon Free California](#), Jan. 2022]
 - Reducing the likelihood of electricity blackouts and brownouts - 53% “extremely” important
 - Saving Californians \$2.6 billion on their electricity bills over the next 8 years - 53% “extremely” important
 - Reducing the pollution that causes climate change - 49% “extremely” important
 - Providing reliable electricity as the state transitions to wind and solar - 48% “extremely” important

Charts

Americans' Opinions of Nuclear Energy, 1994-2023

Overall, do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the use of nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity for the U.S.?

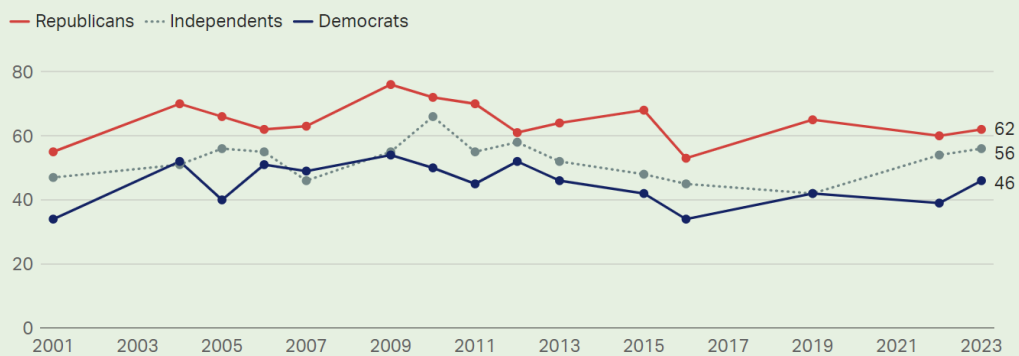


[Gallup](#), Mar. 2023

Americans' Opinions of Nuclear Energy, by Party Identification, 2001-2023

Overall, do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose the use of nuclear energy as one of the ways to provide electricity for the U.S.?

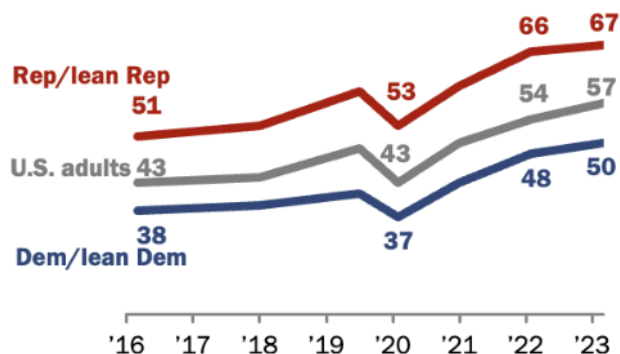
% Strongly/Somewhat favor



[Gallup](#), Mar. 2023

Support for nuclear power is up among both Democrats and Republicans

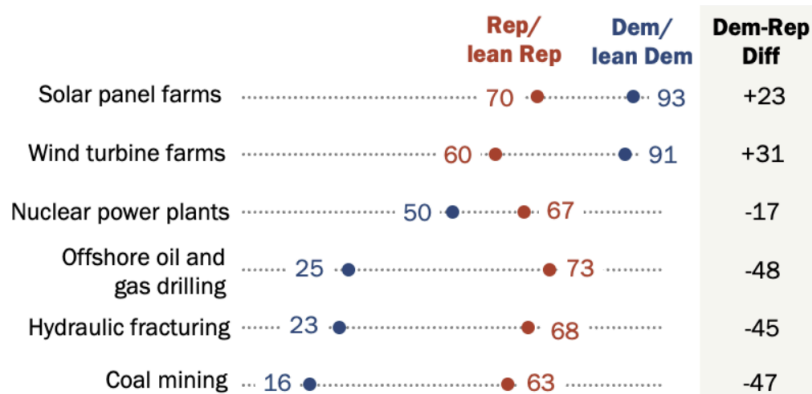
% of U.S. adults who say they *favor* more nuclear power plants to generate electricity in the country



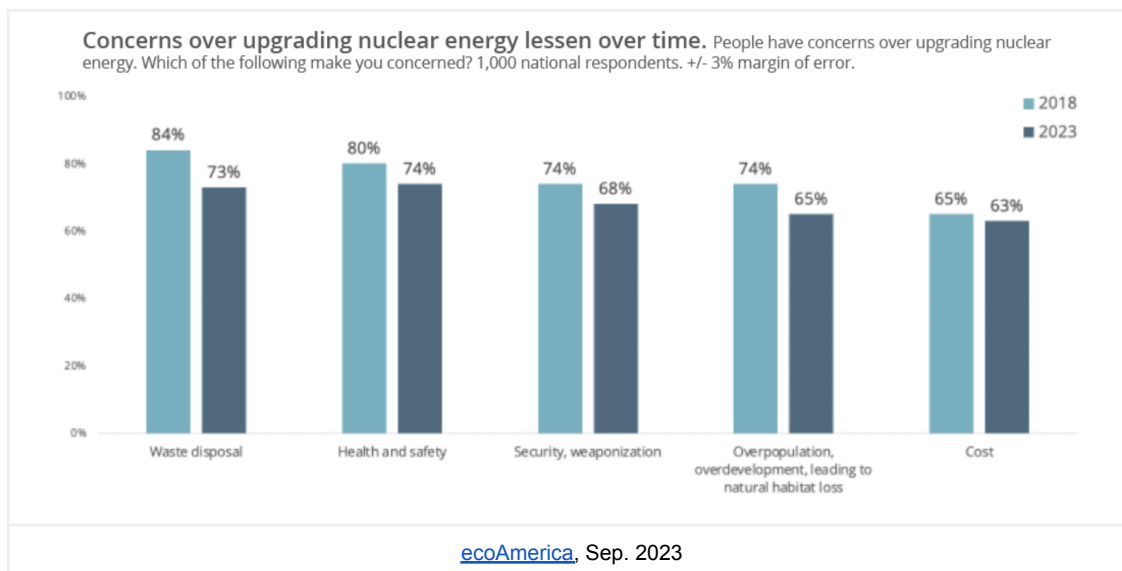
[Pew](#), June 2023

Republicans and Democrats less divided on favoring more nuclear power than on fossil fuel sources

% of U.S. adults who say they favor more ...



[Pew](#), June 2023



Additional Resources

[*American Attitudes on Nuclear Energy* \(ecoAmerica, Nov. 2023\)](#)

[*Growing Share of Americans Favor Nuclear Power* \(Pew, Aug. 2023\)](#)

[*Americans' Support for Nuclear Energy Highest in a Decade* \(Gallup, Apr. 2023\)](#)

[*California Voter Views of Nuclear Energy for Electricity* \(Carbon Free California + FM3 Research, May 2022\)](#)

[*Voters Support Community Ownership and Federal Investments in Advanced Nuclear Energy* \(Good Energy Collective + Data for Progress, July 2021\)](#)