

Post-Election Recap: Climate Change & Environmental Issues in the 2024 Election

December 2024

Sources

- This recap primarily draws from the results of a large-scale survey conducted by UChicago's National Opinion Research Center (NORC), which has been run in every general election since 2018.
- For the 2024 election, NORC surveyed 120,000+ voters across the 50 states between October 28 – November 5 using multiple survey modes (mail, phone, and online).
- NORC's survey results are shared with multiple news organizations (Fox News, PBS NewsHour, WSJ, and AP) and provide the underlying data for both [AP VoteCast](#) and the [Fox News Voter Analysis](#), which are cited in this deck.
- From AP VoteCast: *It is not an exit poll, as it is not based on in-person interviews conducted at polling locations. Instead, AP VoteCast uses a combination of mail, phone and online research to meet voters where they are — increasingly, that's casting a ballot before Election Day by mail, absentee or via in-person early voting.*

Executive Summary

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- **As expected, the economy dominated all other issues in the election.**
 - Climate change ended up being a mid-tier issue for the electorate overall.
 - Climate voters still played an outsized role in keeping the race competitive, as voters who named climate change as their top issue supported Harris by a wider margin than any other group.
- **Despite the result, this was a pro-climate electorate.**
 - Around two-thirds of voters said that they're concerned about climate impacts in their communities, and most also want the country to prioritize clean energy over fossil fuels.
 - Harris won by wide margins among the majorities of voters who are concerned about climate change and who support clean energy over fossil fuels. However, Trump was able to counter this by winning with even larger margins among the minorities who are dismissive of climate change and who want to prioritize fossil fuels.

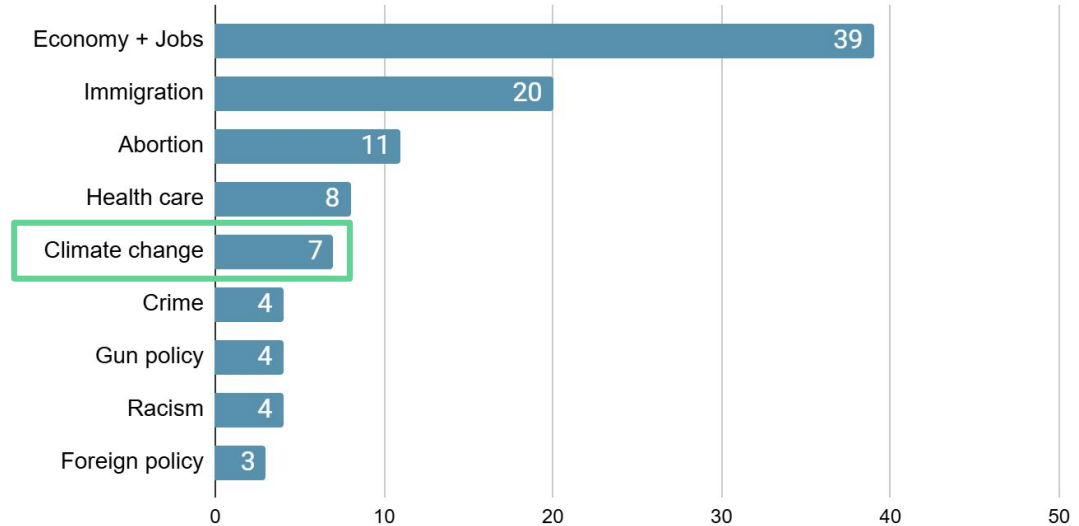
Executive Summary

- **Trump won in spite of his climate approach, which was a clear negative with voters.**
 - As predicted by pre-election polls, climate change and abortion were the two issues that voters widely trusted Harris more than Trump to handle.
- **Even within the Trump coalition, there are serious concerns about his handling of climate change.**
 - A significant minority of Trump voters (40%) say that they're concerned about climate change affecting their community.
 - Trump's voters are not aligned on his approach to climate change. While 90%+ of Trump voters say that they trust him over Harris on issues such as the economy, immigration, and the situation in the Middle East, only 56% trust him more than Harris on climate change.

Issue Priorities + Preferences

As expected, the economy was the electorate's dominant concern; climate change ranked as a mid-tier issue overall

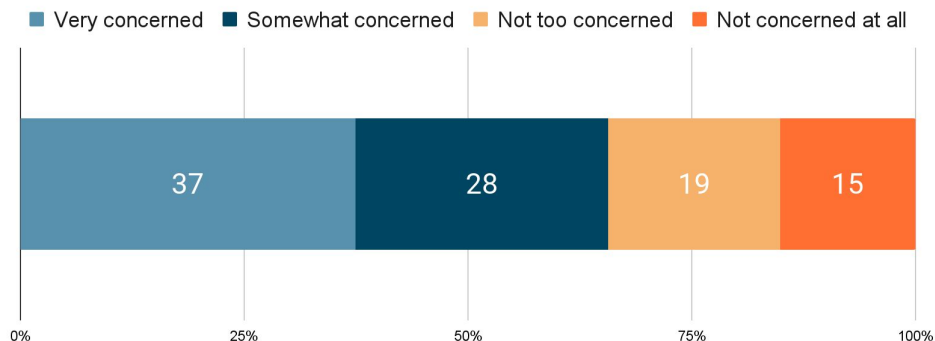
Which one of the following would you say is the most important issue facing the country?



Source: [Fox News Voter Analysis Survey](#)

Around two-thirds of 2024 voters say that they're concerned about climate impacts in their own communities

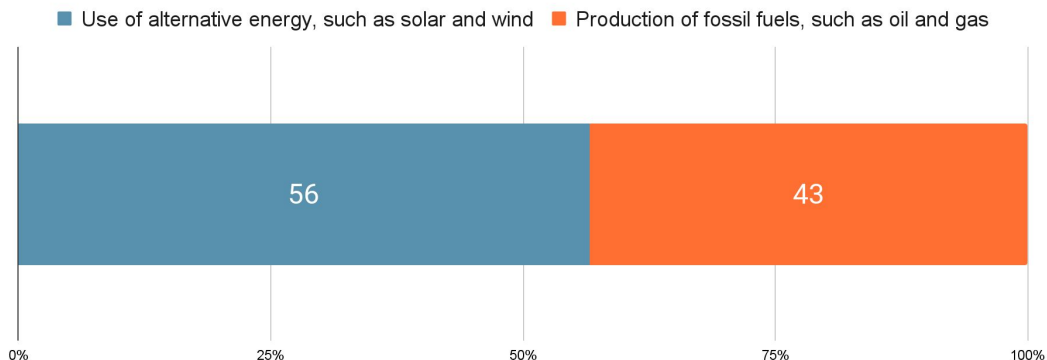
Thinking about your own community, how concerned are you about the effects of climate change?



Source: [Fox News Voter Analysis Survey](#)

Most voters also said that the country should be prioritizing clean energy over fossil fuels

Which is the better approach for U.S. energy policy? Is it better to focus on expanding...

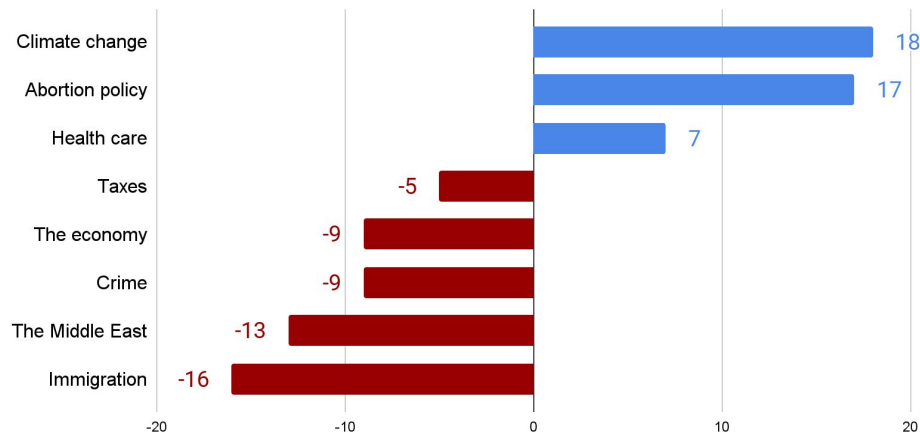


Source: [Fox News Voter Analysis Survey](#)

Environmental Issues + Vote Choice



As in pre-election polls, climate change and abortion ended up being Harris's clearest issue strengths

Regardless of which candidate you support, would you say Kamala Harris or Donald Trump is better able to handle...
(Showing Net Margin for Harris)



Source: [Fox News Voter Analysis Survey](#)



Climate voters were Harris's most reliable supporters

Which one of the following would you say is the most important issue facing the country?	Total	 Harris	 Trump
The economy and jobs	39%	37%	61%
Health care	8%	78%	19%
Immigration	20%	11%	88%
Abortion	11%	85%	14%
Crime	4%	49%	49%
Climate change	7%	89%	9%
Foreign policy	3%	54%	40%
Gun policy	4%	83%	16%
Racism	4%	87%	11%

Issue Group (% of Electorate)	How They Voted
Economy/Jobs Voters (39%)	Trump +24
Immigration Voters (20%)	Trump +77
Abortion Voters (11%)	Harris +71
Health Care Voters (8%)	Harris +59
Climate Change Voters (7%)	Harris +81
Crime Voters (4%)	Even
Gun Policy Voters (4%)	Harris +67
Racism Voters (4%)	Harris +76
Foreign Policy Voters (3%)	Harris +14



Source: [Fox News Voter Analysis Survey](#)

Harris won big among those who are “very concerned” about climate; however, Trump was competitive among the “somewhat concerned” and dominated among those who dismiss the problem

Thinking about your own community, how concerned are you about each of the following? The effects of climate change	Total		
		Harris	Trump
Very concerned	37%	78%	20%
Somewhat concerned	28%	54%	44%
Not too concerned	19%	19%	79%
Not at all concerned	15%	5%	93%




Source: [Fox News Voter Analysis Survey](#)

Trump overwhelmingly carried voters who couldn't say which candidate they trusted more on climate change, indicating a potential missed opportunity for Harris

Regardless of which candidate you support, would you say Kamala Harris or Donald Trump is better able to handle each of the following? Climate change	Total		
		Harris	Trump
Kamala Harris	47%	90%	9%
Donald Trump	29%	3%	97%
Both equally	9%	25%	72%
Neither	15%	21%	73%

Source: [Fox News Voter Analysis Survey](#)

While Harris built up a big margin among the majority who want the country to prioritize clean energy, Trump countered it with an even larger margin among the minority who prioritize fossil fuels

Which is the better approach for U.S. energy policy? Is it better to...	Total	 Harris	 Trump	 Other
Focus on expanding production of fossil fuels, such as oil and gas	43%	16%	82%	1%
Focus on expanding use of alternative energy, such as solar and wind	56%	74%	24%	2%

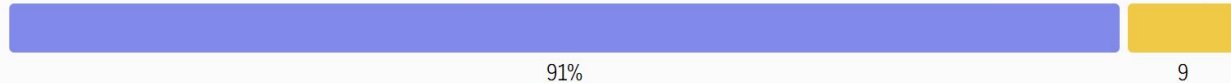
Source: [Fox News Voter Analysis Survey](#)

Trump voter ≠ climate denier: four in ten Trump voters are concerned about climate change

How concerned are you about the effects of climate change in your own community?

■ CONCERNED ■ NOT CONCERNED

Harris voter



Trump voter

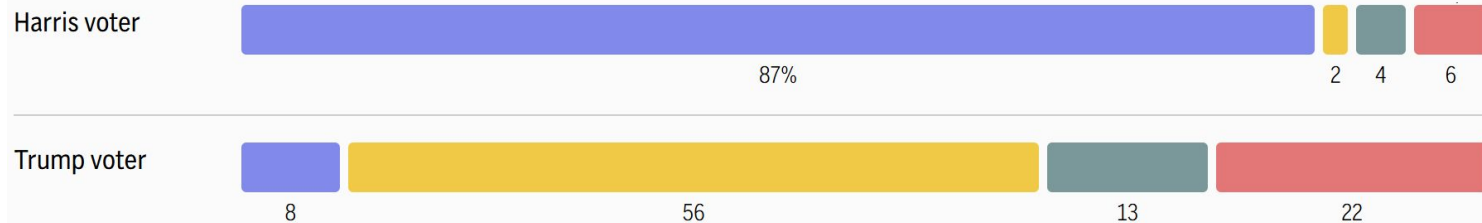


Source: [AP VoteCast](#)

Even within Trump's winning coalition, there are considerable doubts about his ability to handle climate change

Is Kamala Harris or Donald Trump better able to handle climate change?

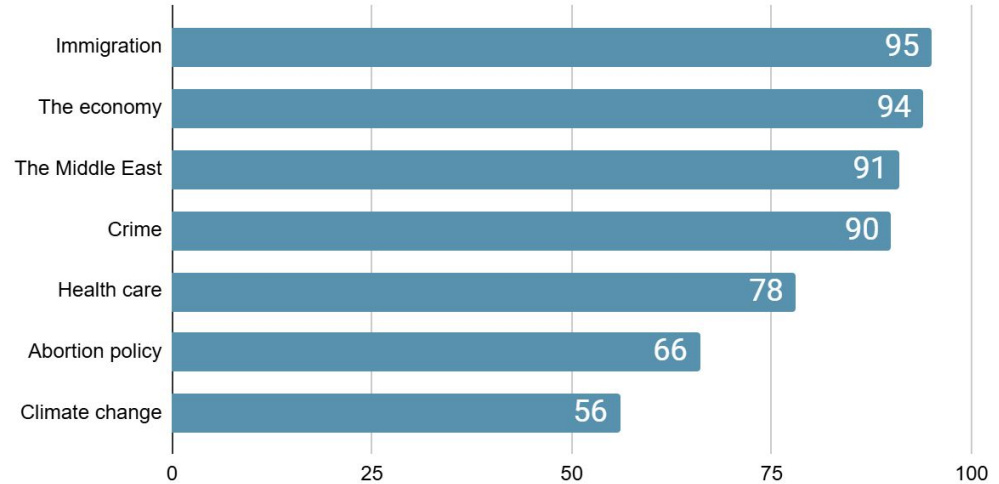
KAMALA HARRIS DONALD TRUMP BOTH EQUALLY NEITHER



Source: [AP VoteCast](#)

Trump voters are much less convinced about his approach to climate change than his approaches to other major issues

Share of Trump voters who say that he is better able to handle each issue than Harris



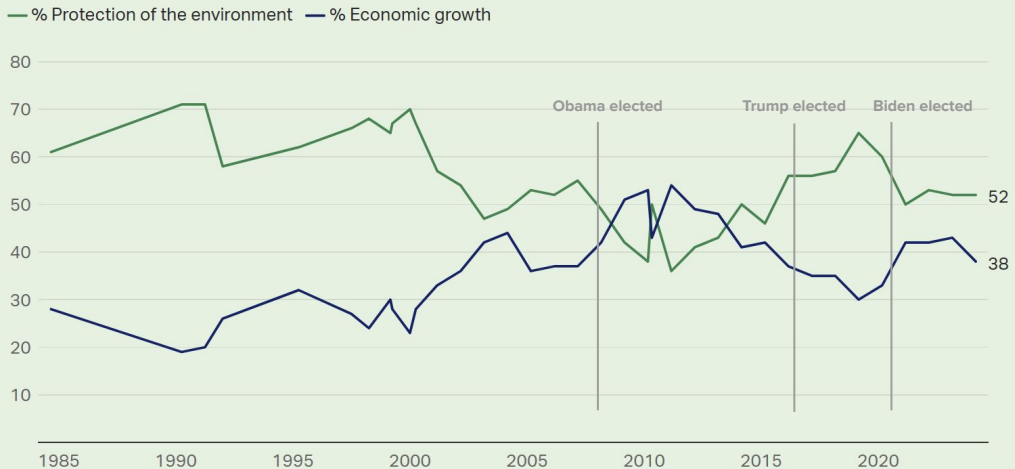
Source: [AP VoteCast](#)

Looking Ahead

Public support for environmental protection has recently shown a “thermostatic” effect: rising in response to Trump’s first win, and dropping in response to Democrats taking office

Environmental Protection vs. Economic Growth

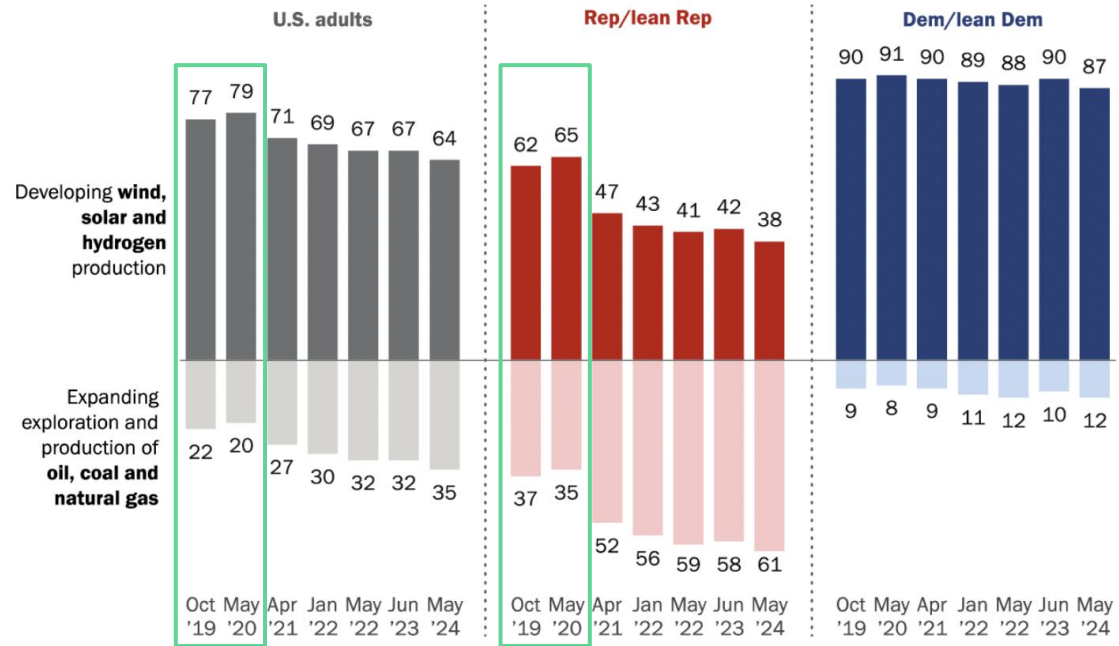
With which one of these statements do you most agree -- protection of the environment should be given priority, even at the risk of curbing economic growth (or) economic growth should be given priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent?



Source: [Gallup](#)

Americans were more supportive of clean energy under Trump than under Biden, as a stable majority of Republicans actually backed the clean energy transition before Biden was elected

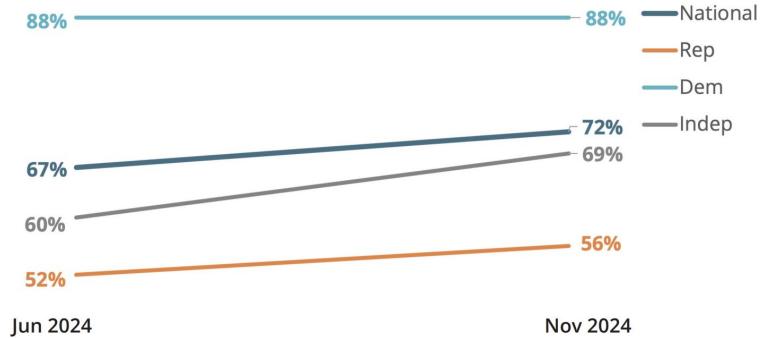
% who say the more important priority for addressing America's energy supply should be ...



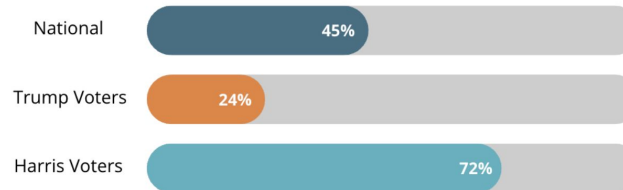
Source: [Pew](#)

While we need more data, there are early signs of a pro-climate public reaction to Trump's election

Republicans and Independents express rising climate change concern. How concerned are you about climate change? Showing total for "Very concerned" and "Somewhat concerned". 1,088 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



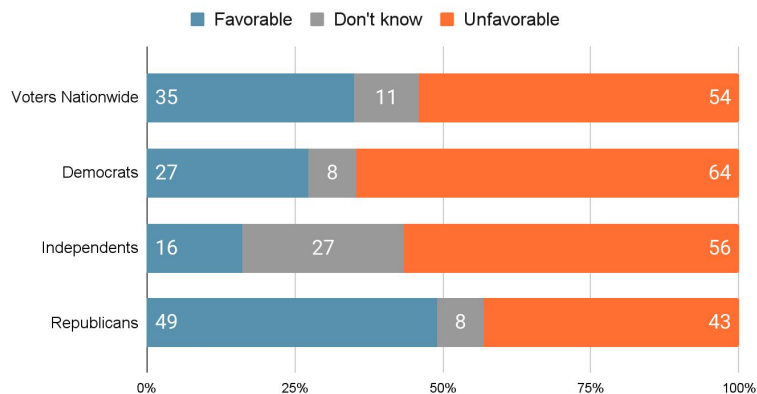
Nearly a quarter of Trump voters report increase in climate concern since U.S. election results. Have the U.S. election results shifted your concern about climate change? Showing total for "My concern has increased a lot" and "My concern has increased somewhat". 1,088 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



Source: [ecoAmerica](#)

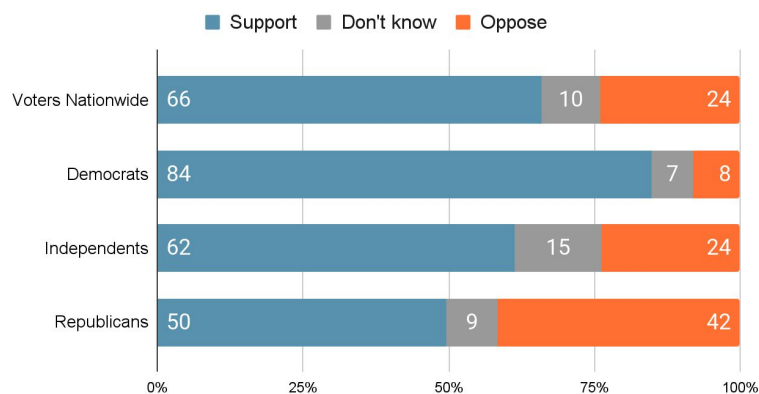
With voters angry about prices, there is clear opportunity to steer their frustrations toward corporate polluters

Favorability of Oil & Gas Companies



Source: [Navigator](#), Sep. 2024

Support for Polluters Pay Climate Fund Act



Source: [Data for Progress](#), Sep. 2024

Thank You!
