
Top Takeaways from EV Messaging Research

The Sierra Club's Clean Transportation for All campaign commissioned research by HIT Strategies to identify language and messaging to drive up support for American-made EVs, as well as assess current views of the U.S. electric vehicle industry. We surveyed 1,513 adults online from December 11-20, 2024 and focused on the following automotive states: Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, and Ohio.

Top Takeaways

1. Feelings surrounding EVs remain lukewarm. Why? There is still a lack of information, with most people just thinking about Tesla or Elon Musk when they think of EVs, and majorities still believe that gas-powered vehicles are cheaper and more reliable.
2. Across the course of the survey, we saw notable shifts in support for the American EV industry across important audiences in each state surveyed. Overall, our best messaging to increase support for American EV manufacturing focuses on **lowering costs** for consumers, **creating local jobs**, and **protecting public health**.
3. Framing the objective as increasing American EV production **at the state level** is slightly more effective in these auto states than a nationwide approach to messaging.

Strategy Adjustments

1. Focusing on cost messaging to demonstrate how a strong American EV industry will **make people's lives better economically** – whether or not they personally drive an EV – and help **drive down costs** for consumers compared to gas-powered cars (i.e. tax incentives to purchase, easy to maintain, cheap to charge).
2. Reinforce the good perceptions (EVs are better for environment and health) and correct the wrong (that EVs are more expensive, that Tesla and Elon Musk are the top associations people have with U.S.-made EVs).
3. Demonstrate job creation potential - **especially at the state level** within these states - and make it clear that many of these jobs do not require four-year degrees to build support among the working class.
4. Localize messages whenever possible. Research shows that Michigan is a particularly interesting opportunity for us, as support for the U.S. EV industry doesn't start as strong there as it does in other states (like Illinois), but Michiganders respond very well to many of our messages.

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Top Convincing Messages

Bold indicates the most compelling portion of each message, according to a highlighting exercise.

- **Big Oil and other greedy corporations have been raking in record profits while the average person can barely afford a car.** It's time we make the automotive industry work for all of us, not just the rich. Increasing the production of American-made electric vehicles will **create new good-paying jobs** for people here at home and **save Americans money** in the long run when we **don't have to pay for gas** to fuel our cars.
- For too long, America has depended on other countries for energy. We need to increase the production of American-made electric vehicles so that **we can wean ourselves off unpredictable foreign oil markets and transition to cheaper, efficient renewable energy generated here in the United States.** It will give us more power on the international stage and make us independent from foreign governments to fuel our vehicles.
- Whether it's the devastating wildfires on the West Coast, droughts and tornadoes in the Midwest, or unusually strong hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico, **Americans are feeling the effects of climate change.** We all need to do our part to address the climate crisis and **expanding the electric vehicle fleet is one way to cut down the carbon pollution that drives global climate change.** By increasing electric vehicle manufacturing here in the United States, we can **combat the climate crisis and keep our communities safe.**
- Our country has **lost too many jobs to countries like China,** and it seems like no one is doing anything about it. But we have an opportunity to increase the production of American-made electric vehicles and **rekindle American industry right here at home.** More electric vehicle manufacturing means **more good-paying jobs that can't be outsourced and protected supply chains that keep prices low for working families.**
- **America's gas-powered cars are the single largest source of air pollution in the country, causing tens of thousands of premature deaths every single year.** Air pollutants, like benzene, formaldehyde, and carbon monoxide, are particularly harmful for babies and toddlers, and communities near freeways or other car-heavy environments have dramatically more cases of asthma, lung disease, and other preventable diseases. We can stop polluting our communities by increasing the production of American-made electric vehicles, **creating a cleaner and better future for our children and grandchildren.**

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