

# Environmental Polling Consortium

What We Learned in 2025 &  
What We're Planning for 2026

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**ENVIRONMENTAL  
POLLING CONSORTIUM**

# Year in Review

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As for so many of our partners in the advocacy community, 2025 was a blitz from start to finish for the EPC. Within days of the new administration taking office, we had fielded a series of message tests to help our community respond to the new administration's day one executive orders and actions on the environment.

We greatly expanded our focus on original research in 2025 as we joined with partners across the community to help our movement understand this new political moment and to collectively chart a path out of the wilderness. And as so many of our shared priorities came under attack, we saw record numbers of advocates utilizing the EPC's resources, attending our briefings, and signing up for our updates.

This report lays out some highlights of our work in 2025, major lessons from the year's polling data, and key priorities that we'll be focusing on in 2026. We know that the real impact of our research, analysis, and partnership comes from the advocates who put these tools into action, and would like to thank all of our partners who have been doing that work—whether it's in traditional media, new media, the courts, D.C., or in communities across the country.

Our dedicated allies and their hunger for evidence-based strategies fueled our work in 2025 and will continue to in 2026.

# Five Things (+1) We Learned in 2025

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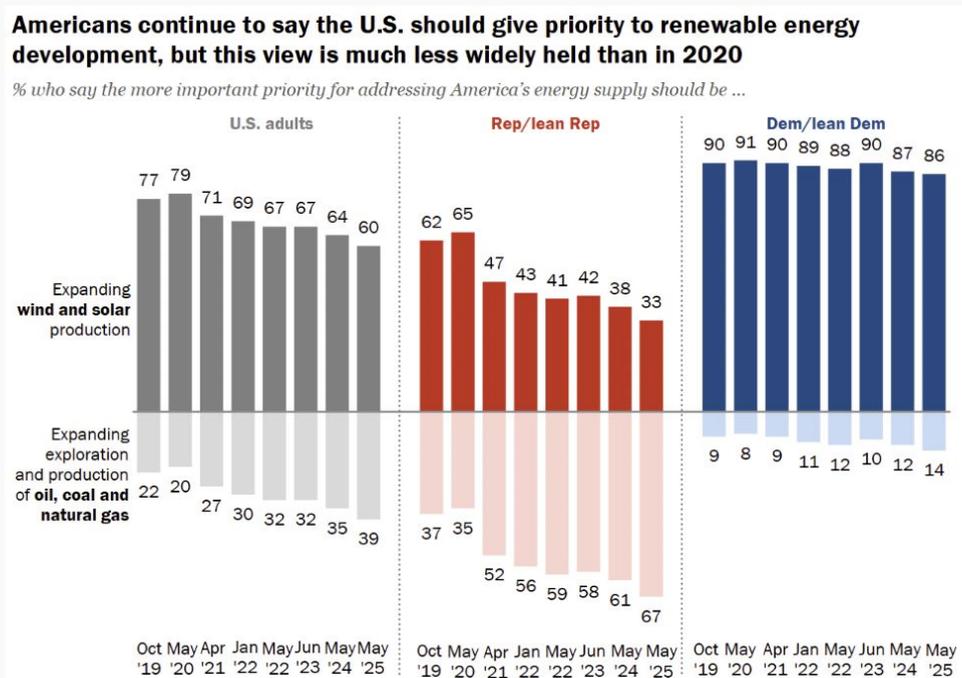
This report elaborates on six key lessons from 2025 that advocates should know in order to understand current public opinion on our issues, plus one bonus finding from our original research:

- 1.) **Partisan polarization on climate change and energy is deeper than ever**
- 2.) **Energy prices have broken through as a major, mainstream issue—and are politically up for grabs**
- 3.) **Voters really don't want to block solar and wind energy**
- 4.) **Clean drinking water remains Americans' top environmental priority**
- 5.) **Standing up to corporate polluter power is a winning message across the political spectrum**
- 6.) **Despite ongoing attacks, voters continue to support the goals of environmental justice**

# Partisan polarization on climate change and energy is deeper than ever.

The most recent waves of Yale and George Mason’s long-running [“Climate Change in the American Mind” study](#) have revealed wider gulfs between Democrats’ and Republicans’ prioritization of global warming and clean energy in 2025 than ever before in their tracking, which goes back more than 15 years.

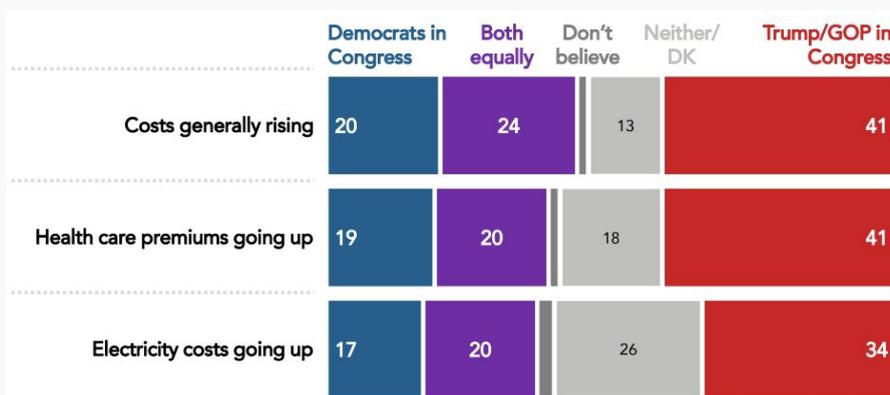
[Per Pew](#), meanwhile, the percentage of Republicans who say that the U.S. should prioritize clean energy production over fossil fuels has been cut roughly in half over the past five years—from 65% in 2020 to 33% in 2025. Over the same time period, Democrats have shown steady solidarity (86%-91%) in favor of the clean energy transition.



Source: [Pew](#), May 2025

# Energy prices have broken through as a major, mainstream issue—and are politically up for grabs.

Polls show that large majorities of Americans are noticing an increase in their utility bills. In fact, after groceries and housing, [Navigator finds](#) that utility prices are one of voters' most widely-cited examples of the rising cost of living as 74% say that their utility bills are going up. And compared to other cost of living issues such as health care and general inflation, Navigator also finds that voters are more likely to say that they don't know which party to blame for the rise in their electricity costs.



Source: [Navigator](#), Dec. 2025

[Post-election polling by Upswing Research & Strategy](#) in New Jersey and Virginia also revealed how the victorious Democratic governors-elect in those states had successfully defined their approaches to energy prices, whereas national Democrats have not. On the issue of utility costs, voters said that they trusted the Democratic candidates for governor over their Republican opponents by a nine-point margin in New Jersey and by a 15-point margin in Virginia. In the same polls, voters said that they trusted *congressional* Democrats over congressional Republicans to handle utility costs by only a three-point margin in New Jersey and by just a two-point margin in Virginia.

# Voters really don't want to block solar and wind energy.

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As political actors on both sides compete to shape the narrative on energy prices, public opinion has already settled on one key point: blocking new solar and wind energy is part of the problem.

[Pew found in May](#) that, even with recent declines in support for renewables among Republicans, solar and wind energy remain more popular with the American public than alternatives such as nuclear power, offshore drilling, fracking, or coal mining.

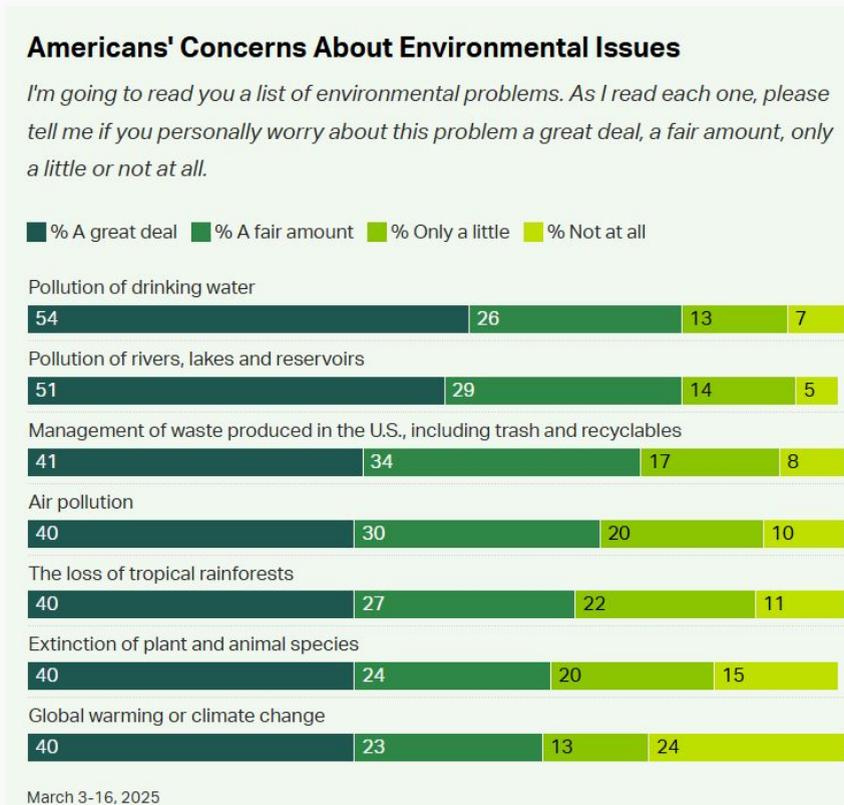
[An August poll commissioned by Climate Power](#) then found that majorities of voters believe each of the following statements to be true:

- With energy prices already high and electricity demand rising, now is the time to produce more clean energy like wind and solar, not less (68%)
- Adding more wind and solar power to the electricity grid will help keep my electricity rates lower (63%)
- The actions that Congress has taken to roll back the use of clean energy will cause energy prices to rise faster and hurt regular Americans (62%)

Polls also show that attempts by opponents of clean energy to pin the blame for rising costs on so-called “green energy mandates” are falling flat. [When Data for Progress asked voters in September](#) to choose the factor most responsible for rising utility bills, a plurality pointed to utility companies increasing their profits (38%). Increased reliance on wind and solar power (5%), meanwhile, ranked at the very bottom of the list of perceived causes.

# Clean drinking water remains Americans' top environmental priority.

While attitudes about many environmental issues are evolving and shifting, some have stayed remarkably consistent. In its annual tracking on Americans' environmental concerns, [Gallup found once again](#) that water pollution ranks at the very top—ahead of air pollution, climate change, and threats to wildlife.

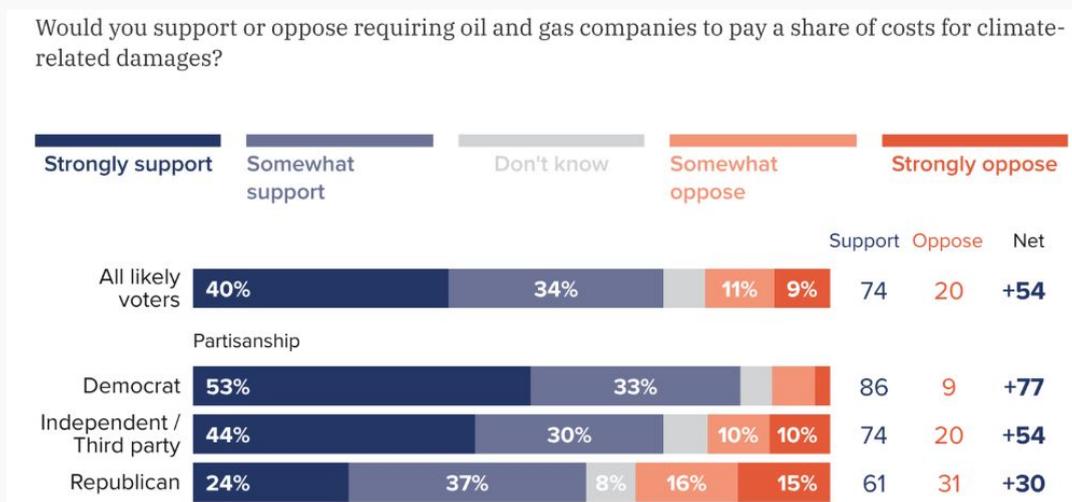


Source: [Gallup](#), Mar. 2025

This finding has direct implications on how we should talk about environmental threats and connect them to people's day-to-day lives. When the EPC partnered with the Combined Defense Project in March to test the most troubling potential consequences of the Trump administration's environmental funding cuts, for example, contaminated drinking water rose to the top of the list with 74% of voters expressing concern about it.

# Standing up to corporate polluter power is a winning message across the political spectrum.

Voters consistently say that companies should be held more accountable for their pollution. An [August poll by Fossil Free Media and Data for Progress](#) found that nearly three-quarters of voters (74%), including three in five Republicans (61%), support requiring oil and gas companies to pay a share of costs for climate-related damages.



Source: [Fossil Free Media + Data for Progress](#), Aug. 2025

[Navigator then found in September](#) that 87% of voters, including 85% of Republicans, support new regulations on corporations to prevent them from pouring chemicals into our air and water. And in a [July poll about the reconciliation bill](#), EDF Action found that voters widely oppose provisions of the bill that weaken regulations on corporate polluters.

As this data illustrates, the environmental movement is missing a massive opportunity if we don't lean into the populist political moment that we are in.

# Despite ongoing attacks, voters continue to support the goals of environmental justice.

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As the Trump administration sought to vilify the idea of environmental justice, the EPC used our [Community Poll](#)—an ongoing project to address unanswered research questions for the environmental movement—to assess how much these attacks were breaking through and how best to rebut them.

[We found in our July poll](#) that voters still have only a vague idea about what environmental justice is: only 15% said that they had heard “a lot” about the idea. To the extent that voters were hearing about it, however, they were much more likely to say that they had heard mostly positive things about the topic (33%) than to say that they had heard mostly negative things (18%).

Voters also support the principle of environmental justice. When we informed poll respondents that environmental justice policies “prioritize helping communities that have been most impacted by pollution and toxic waste, including many communities of color,” most voters said that they believe these types of policies do more good than harm (56% more good / 32% more harm).

Taken together, our poll findings show that advocates should not be afraid to lean into environmental justice. While attacks are not breaking through in any substantial way, it is important to make the idea more tangible by focusing on concrete problems and goals that the public can relate to. These include that:

- Oil and gas companies have too much influence over the government, which doesn't do enough to hold these companies accountable.
- The environment doesn't discriminate, but corporations do.
- We need strong environmental protections because every American, no matter who they are, deserves the basic rights of clean air, access to healthy food, and protection from toxic chemical pollution.

# Our 2025 Resources & Audience

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The EPC's resources are now reaching more advocates than ever before, as our **email list grew by 51%** in 2025. This includes **more than double** the amount of people signed up for our weekly emails as in previous years.

## Key Stats:

- **Our email list now includes 2,534 advocates** who are signed up to receive updates from the EPC.
- There are **647 advocates signed up to receive our weekly polling roundups**.
- There are now **363 users signed up for the EPC website** to access materials in our Polling & Resource Library.
- Our quarterly poll briefings in 2025 averaged **390 people registering and 149 people attending** live.
- Our new topic-specific briefing series, which in 2025 included briefings on Water, Public Lands, and Climate & Health, averaged **296 people registering and 126 live attendees**.
- The three briefings we held in 2025 on the results of our Community Poll project averaged **314 people registering and 170 live attendees**.
  - Our briefing on the results of message tests to respond to the Trump administration's executive orders and actions on energy and the environment drew our largest-ever audience, with **497 registrants and 243 live attendees**.

# Top Priorities for 2026

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The EPC has three overarching priorities for our work in the year ahead.

## 1.) Help advocates meet the moment with timely, actionable findings

As our political and issue landscapes evolve, the EPC will remain the go-to hub for the environmental movement to keep a pulse on public opinion.

How we'll do it:

- Continue to deliver our most utilized resources, including [weekly email roundups](#) of new polling and quarterly poll briefings.
- Maintain up-to-date resources and summaries on timely topics in our [Resource & Polling Library](#).

## 2.) Lift up and address long-term strategic priorities for our movement

While we continue to support our partners in the thick of today's narrative and policy battles, the EPC will also leverage our unique vantage point to make sure that our movement is preparing for longer-term challenges.

How we'll do it:

- Continue to explore under-researched topics and audiences in our ongoing [Community Poll project](#).
- Convene in-depth, issue-specific research to share what's working and examine remaining public opinion challenges.

## 3.) Grow the EPC

A larger network for the EPC means more actionable resources in the hands of more advocates, so we will build on our strong audience growth in 2025.

How we'll do it:

- Respond to community feedback to make sure that our programming is as relevant and actionable as possible for advocates' work.
- Work closely with our current partners to identify new connections and coalitions that could benefit from partnership with the EPC.

Thank You!

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