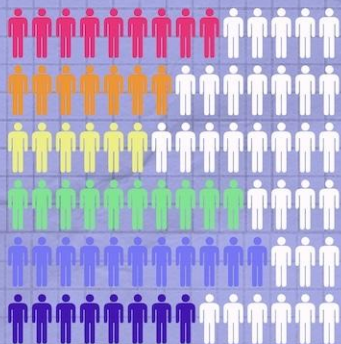




The American Perspective on Climate Policy

How Data Can Drive Climate
Communications and Bolster
Policy Initiatives

February 11th at 1:00PM ET



60%



40%



Introduction

Kristen Soares



State Climate Policy
Network Manager

CLIMATE **X** CHANGE
[SCP_N]

State Climate Policy Network



Network of **15,000+**

- State and local elected officials
- NGO advocates
- Researchers
- State agency staffers
- Organizers and activists
- Business leaders

... working on state climate policy

www.climate-xchange.org/network

CLIMATE **X**CHANGE
[SCPN]

Pro Bono Policy Assistance

We specialize in state climate policy design and analysis.
Reach out to kristen@climate-xchange.org with your requests on:

- **Example states** and **model rules** for a given policy
- **Gap analysis** of your state's climate policy landscape
- **Connections** to other actors working on similar issues

Or, check out our **State Climate Policy Dashboard**, which tracks 65+ state-level climate policies and relevant resources across all 50 states.

Our Annual Fundraiser

The future of federal climate policy may be uncertain, but the **critical role of state governments** is more clear than ever.

Help fund our programs:

- SCPN National Calls and Webinars
- State Climate Policy Dashboard
- Pro Bono Policy Assistance

Help us at carbonraffle.org



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The American Perspective on Climate Policy: How Data Can Drive Climate Communications and Bolster Policy Initiatives



Edward Maibach

*Director,
Mason's Center for Climate
Change Communication*



David Gold

*Director,
Environmental Polling
Consortium at The Partnership
Project*



Joshua Low

*Partnerships Director,
Yale Program on Climate
Change Communication*

Agenda

1. Climate Change in the American Mind
2. Climate Change in the 2024 Election
3. Tools and Best Practices for Communications
4. Q&A

Speaker

Edward Maibach



Director

Mason's Center for Climate Change
Communication

CLIMATE **X** CHANGE
[SCP_N]

CLIMATE CHANGE
IN THE AMERICAN MIND

Politics & Policy

FALL 2024



YALE PROGRAM ON
Climate Change
Communication



GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
CENTER for CLIMATE CHANGE
COMMUNICATION

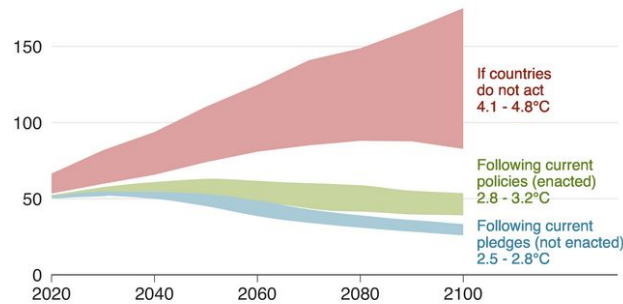
Most Americans understand that climate change is happening.

But they tend to see it as a distant threat...

in time

How much worse will the problem get?

Emissions* and expected warming by 2100



in space

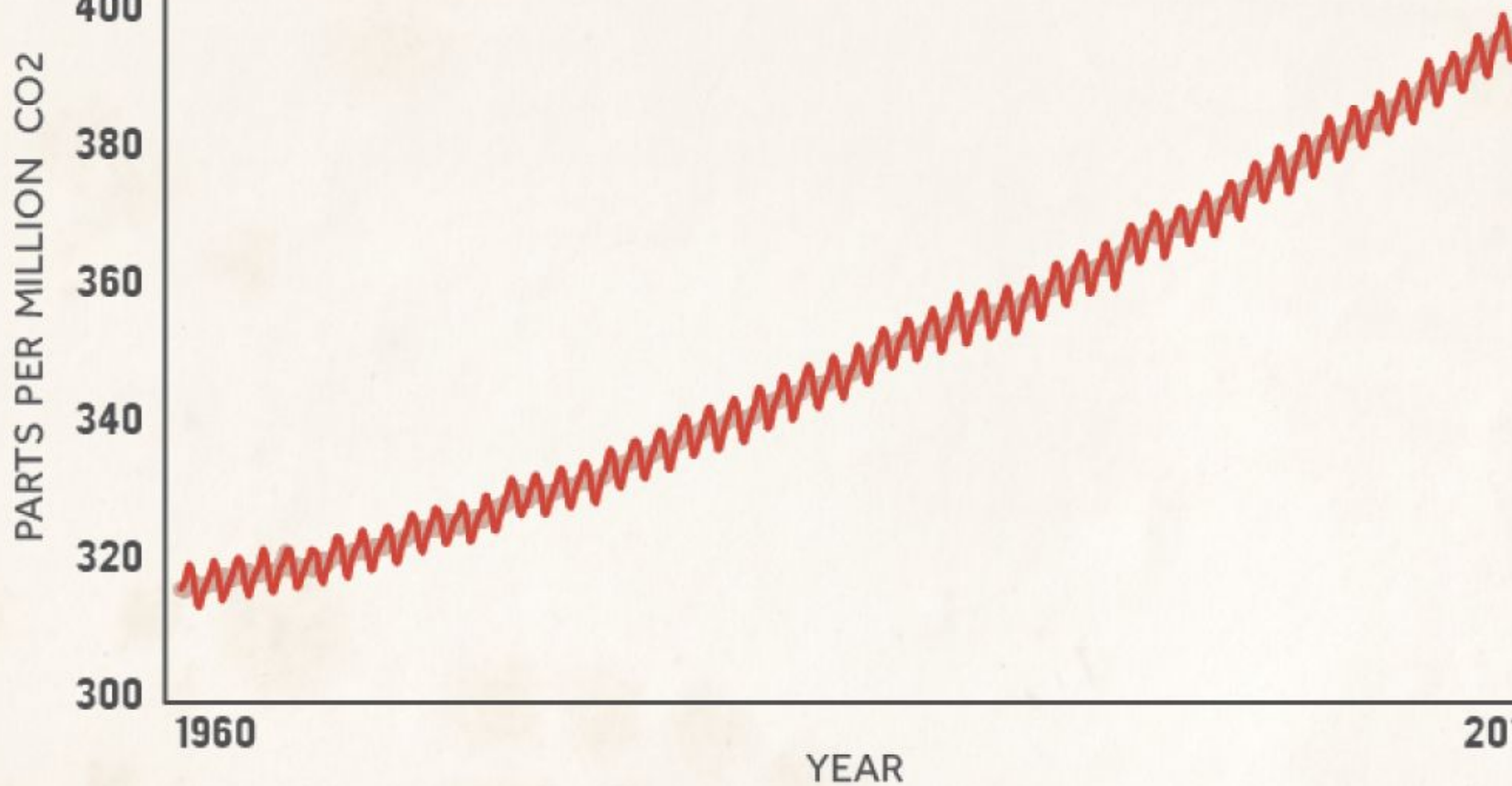


and in species.



What is the first thing
that comes to mind when you hear
global warming?





Data: Scripps Institute of Oceanography

CLIMATE  CENTRAL





Evidence-based guidance for
effective communication campaigns:

Simple clear messages,
repeated often,
by a variety of trusted and caring voices.



Six key facts about global warming in 12 words

IT'S REAL

Global warming is happening.

IT'S US

Human activity is the main cause.

EXPERTS AGREE

More than 97% of the world's climate experts are convinced, based on the data, that human activity is warming the planet.

IT'S BAD

The impacts are serious, and they affect people, especially our children and grandchildren.

THERE'S HOPE

There are actions we can take that will make a big difference.

OTHERS CARE

You're not alone.
Most people are worried about global warming, and they support climate action.

Who are the trusted sources of information about global warming?

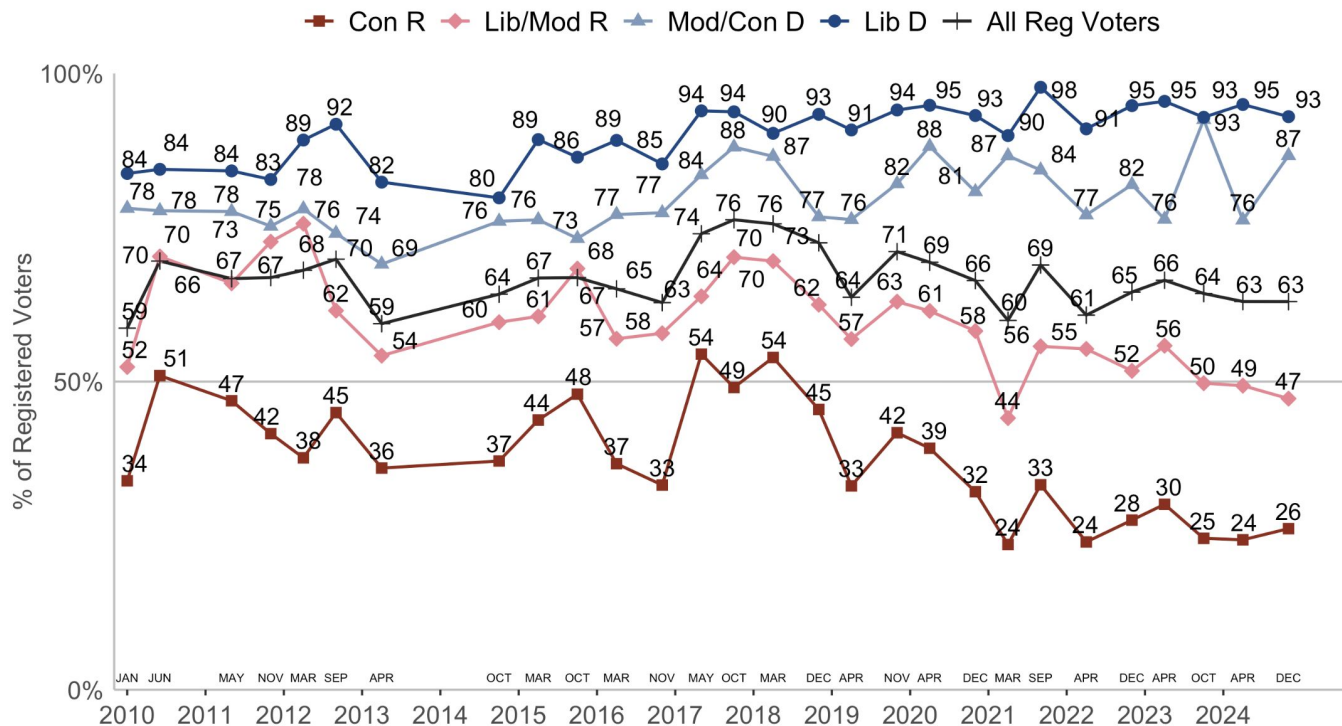
| Rank by trust | All Registered Voters | Liberal Democrats | Moderate/Conservative Democrats | Liberal/Moderate Republicans | Conservative Republicans |
|---------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | NASA | Climate scientists | Climate scientists | NASA | Family & friends |
| 2 | Family & friends | Environmental organizations | EPA | Family & friends | Your primary care doctor |
| 3 | Climate scientists | EPA | Environmental organizations | Your primary care doctor | NASA |
| 4 | Your primary care doctor | NASA | NASA | Climate scientists | The Fox News Channel |
| 5 | EPA | Teachers | Television weather reporters | EPA | Leaders in your religious faith |
| 6 | Television weather reporters | President Biden | American Medical Association | Television weather reporters | Television weather reporters |
| 7 | Environmental organizations | National Public Radio (NPR) | President Biden | U.S. military leaders | Climate scientists |
| 8 | Teachers | Television weather reporters | Your primary care doctor | Teachers | U.S. military leaders |
| 9 | American Medical Association | Family & friends | National network news | American Medical Association | American Medical Association |
| 10 | Your local newspaper | National network news | National Public Radio (NPR) | Environmental organizations | Teachers |
| 11 | National Public Radio (NPR) | American Medical Association | Your local newspaper | Your local newspaper | Oil, gas, and coal companies |
| 12 | Local TV news | Your local newspaper | Family & friends | Local TV news | EPA |
| 13 | National network news | CNN | Local TV news | National Public Radio (NPR) | Your local newspaper |
| 14 | President Biden | Your primary care doctor | Teachers | National network news | Environmental organizations |
| 15 | U.S. military leaders | MSNBC | CNN | The Fox News Channel | Your Congressperson |
| 16 | CNN | Local TV news | MSNBC | Leaders in your religious faith | Local TV news |
| 17 | MSNBC | Your Congressperson | U.S. military leaders | Your Congressperson | National Public Radio (NPR) |
| 18 | Your Congressperson | U.S. military leaders | Your Congressperson | CNN | National network news |
| 19 | Leaders in your religious faith | Leaders in your religious faith | Leaders in your religious faith | MSNBC | CNN |
| 20 | The Fox News Channel | The Fox News Channel | Oil, gas, and coal companies | Oil, gas, and coal companies | MSNBC |
| 21 | Oil, gas, and coal companies | Oil, gas, and coal companies | The Fox News Channel | President Biden | President Biden |

How much do you trust or distrust the following as a source of information about global warming?



Most registered voters think developing sources of clean energy should be a “high” or “very high” priority for the president and Congress

- % "very high" or "high" -

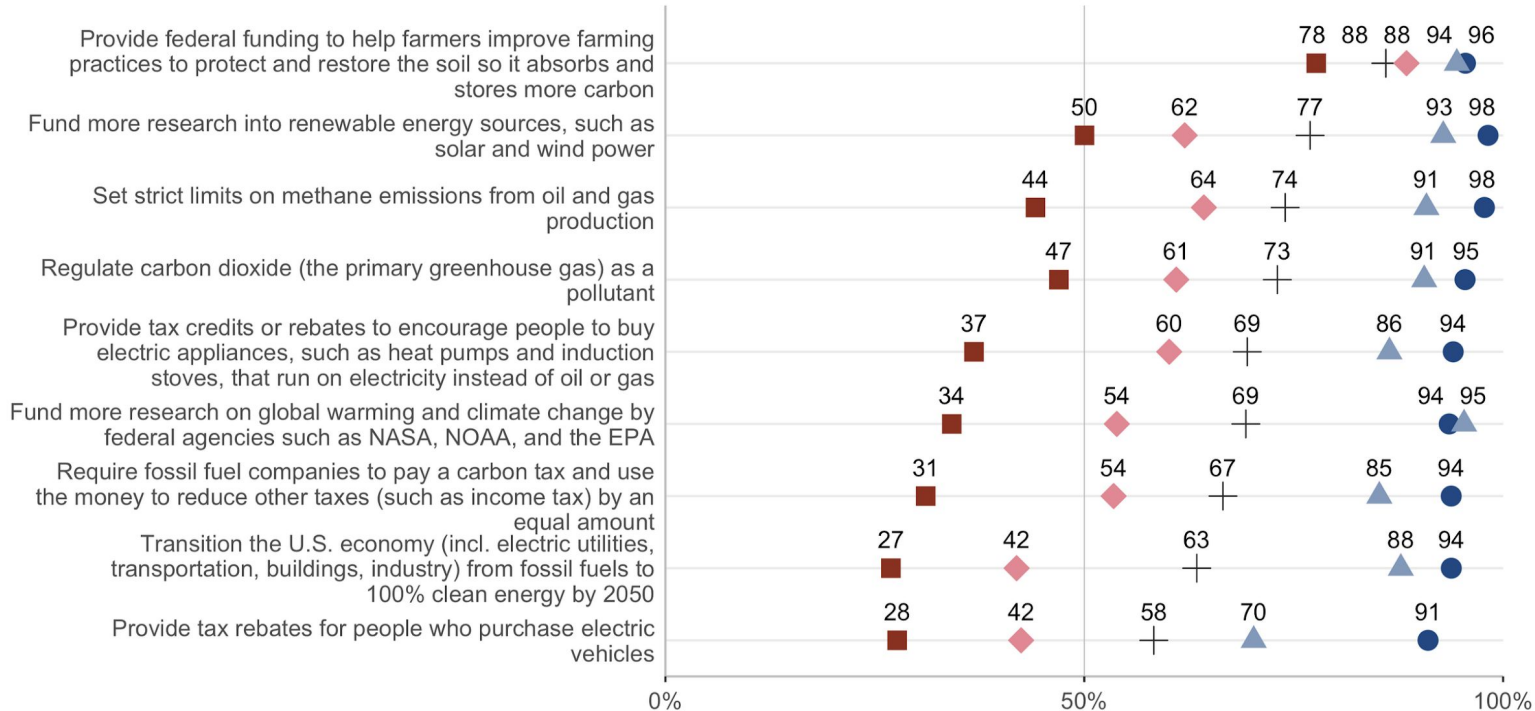


Do you think the following should be a low, medium, high, or very high priority for the president and Congress? [Developing sources of clean energy]

Most registered voters support climate-friendly policies

- % "strongly" or "somewhat" support -

■ Con R ◆ Lib/Mod R ▲ Mod/Con D ● Lib D + All Reg Voters



How much do you support or oppose the following policies?

Most registered voters think the U.S. should use more renewable energy and less fossil fuels

| | All Registered Voters (%) | Liberal Democrats (%) | Moderate/Conservative Democrats (%) | Liberal/ Moderate Republicans (%) | Conservative Republicans (%) |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Use renewable energy sources (solar and wind) | | | | | |
| Much/somewhat more than today | 71 | 95 | 88 | 53 | 43 |
| Much/somewhat less than today | 12 | 1 | 4 | 13 | 27 |
| Same amount as today | 17 | 3 | 8 | 34 | 30 |
| Net: more - less | 59 | 94 | 84 | 40 | 16 |
| Use fossil fuels (coal, oil, and gas) | | | | | |
| Much/somewhat more than today | 17 | 2 | 7 | 26 | 38 |
| Much/somewhat less than today | 61 | 90 | 78 | 34 | 30 |
| Same amount as today | 21 | 8 | 15 | 40 | 31 |
| Net: more - less | -44 | -88 | -71 | -8 | 8 |

Do you think that in the future the United States should use more, less, or about the same amount of fossil fuels, like coal, oil, and gas, as it does today?

Do you think that in the future the United States should use more, less, or about the same amount of renewable sources of energy, like solar and wind, as it does today?

Registered U.S. Voters, Fall 2024

Source: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication; George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication

Speaker

David Gold



Director

Environmental Polling Consortium at
The Partnership Project

CLIMATE **X** CHANGE
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Climate Change in the 2024 Election & Public Opportunities & Challenges Ahead

Feb. 2025

Key Takeaways

Key Takeaways: The 2024 Election

- **Despite the result of the election, the 2024 electorate had a clear pro-climate tilt.**
 - 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.
- **Public opinion about our issues tends to be “thermostatic.”**
 - Environmental protection rose as a priority after Trump's first election, and decreased as a priority after Biden's election.
 - Americans also shifted substantially against clean energy under Biden, primarily due to drops among Republicans.

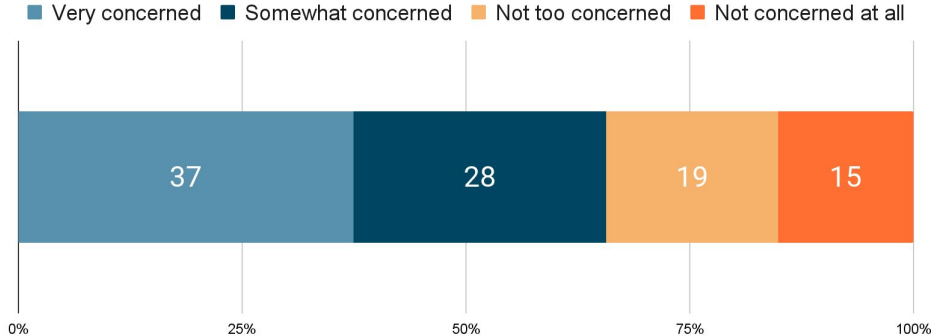
Key Takeaways: Opportunities, Challenges, & Messaging

- **There are clear public opinion opportunities for our movement, including that:**
 - Clean air/water protections are viewed as non-negotiable government responsibilities
 - Bipartisan majorities continue to say that we should be using more solar and wind power
 - Voters overwhelmingly want to keep rather than repeal IRA tax credits and incentives
- **Major public opinion challenges include that:**
 - Partisan polarization on our issues is greater than ever
 - Americans have mixed opinions about the economics of the clean energy transition
 - Awareness of the IRA policies that are under threat is still very low
- **The most persuasive messaging we've seen against attacks on the environment/climate focuses on tangible impacts for everyday people, such as polluted air and water and a higher cost of living.**

Climate Change in the 2024 Election

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

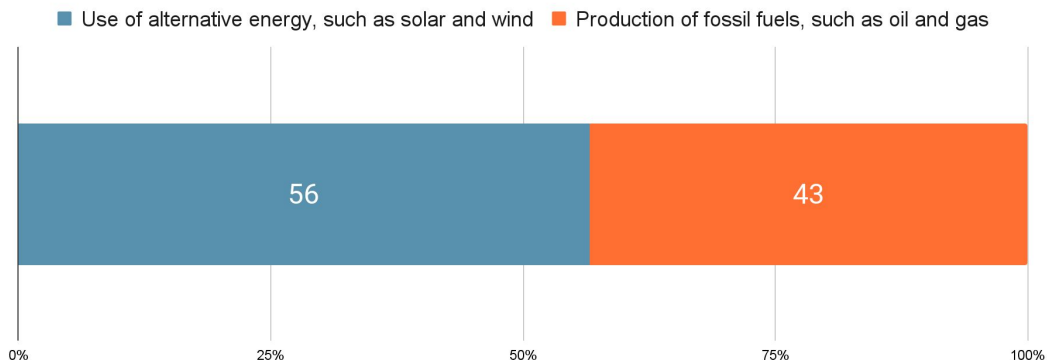
Thinking about your own community, how concerned are you about the effects of climate change?



Source: [Fox News Voter Analysis Survey](#), Nov. 2024



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](#), Nov. 2024

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](#), Nov. 2024

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% |

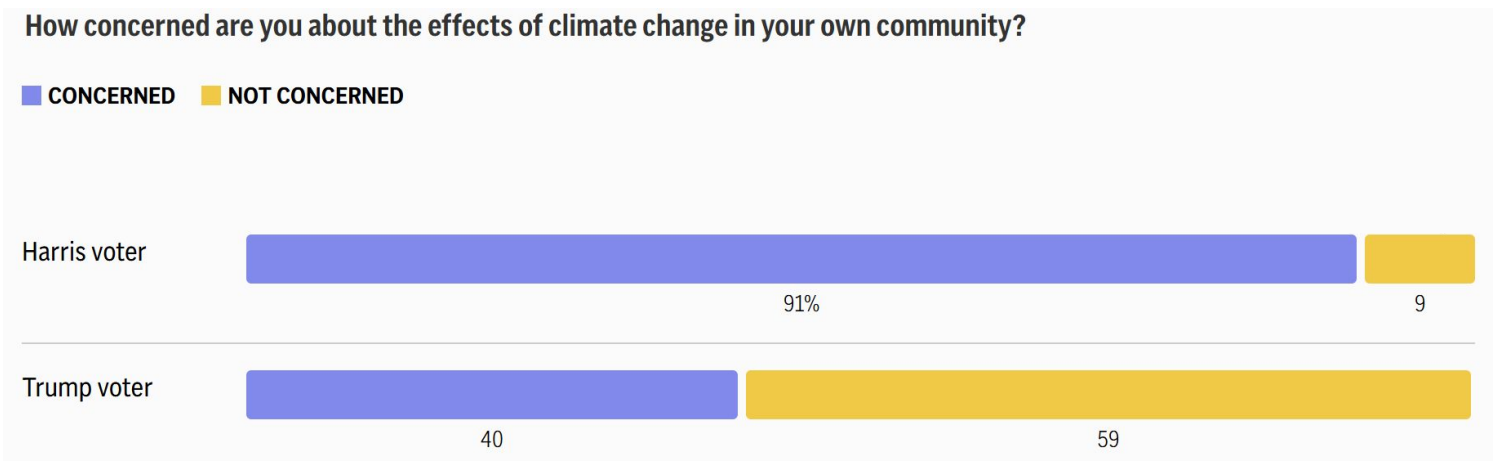
Source: [Fox News Voter Analysis Survey](#), Nov. 2024

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](#), Nov. 2024

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

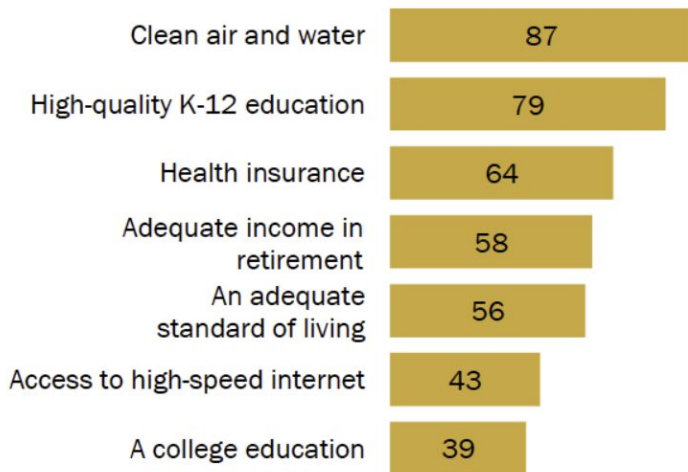


Source: [AP VoteCast](#), Nov. 2024

Public Opinion Opportunities & Challenges

Americans see clean air and water are non-negotiable, non-partisan responsibilities of the federal government

% who say the federal government has a responsibility to provide ____ for all Americans



77% of Republicans say that the federal government has a responsibility to provide clean air and water for all Americans

Source: [Pew](#), Apr. 2021

Water pollution is a particularly salient concern

Drinking Water Safety Tops Environmental Worries in the U.S.

I'm going to read you a list of environmental problems. As I read each one, please tell me if you personally worry about this problem a great deal, a fair amount, only a little or not at all.

■ % Great deal ■ % Fair amount ■ % Only a little ■ % Not at all

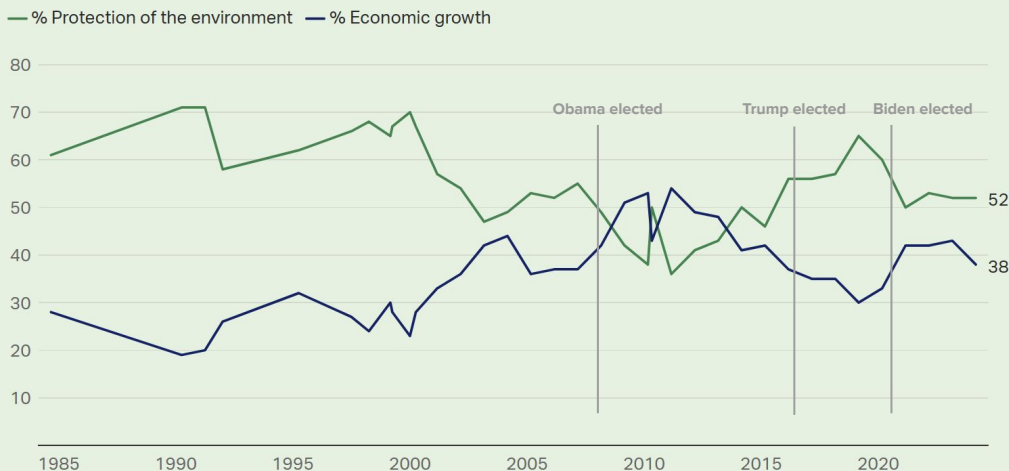


Source: [Gallup](#), March 2024

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

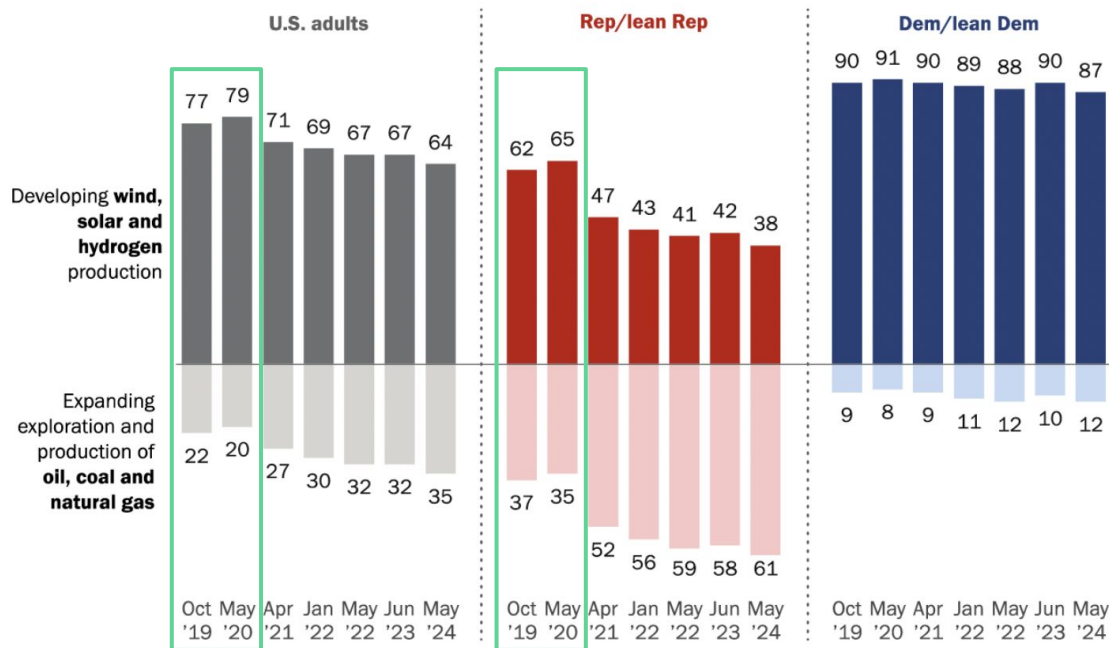
With which one of these statements do you most agree -- protection of the environment should be given priority, even at the risk of curbing economic growth (or) economic growth should be given priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent?



Source: [Gallup](#), Mar. 2024

A durable majority, including many Republicans, say that the country should prioritize clean energy over fossil fuels; there was more bipartisan agreement on this under Trump than under Biden

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

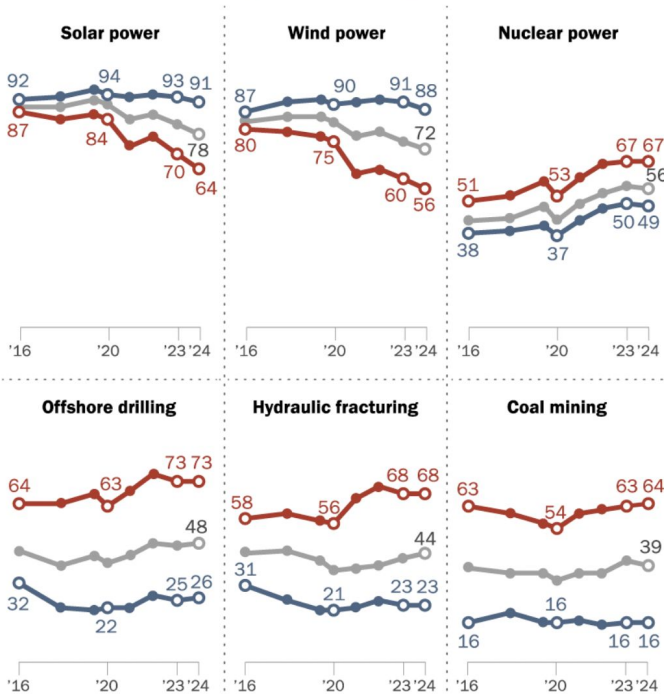


Source: [Pew](#), May 2024

Even with recent declines among Republicans, bipartisan majorities say that the country should be using more solar and wind

% who *favor* more ___ in the country

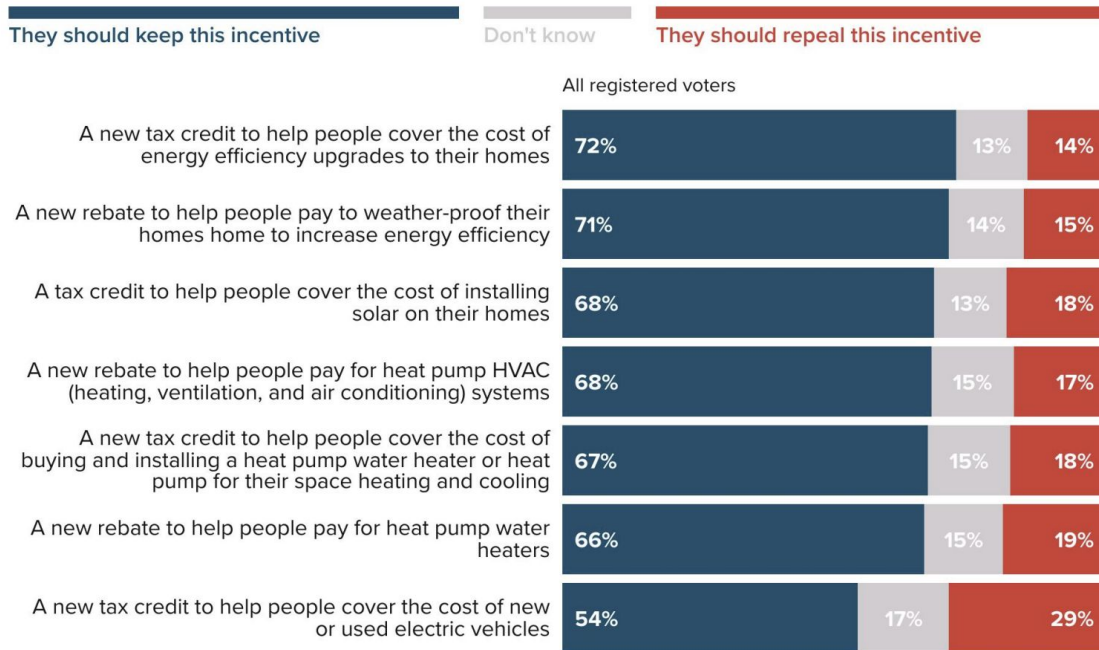
● U.S. adults ● Dem/lean Dem ● Rep/lean Rep



Source: [Pew](#), May 2024

By wide margins, voters say that Congress should keep rather than repeal IRA tax credits and incentives

Do you think Congress should **keep** or **repeal** each of the following incentives?



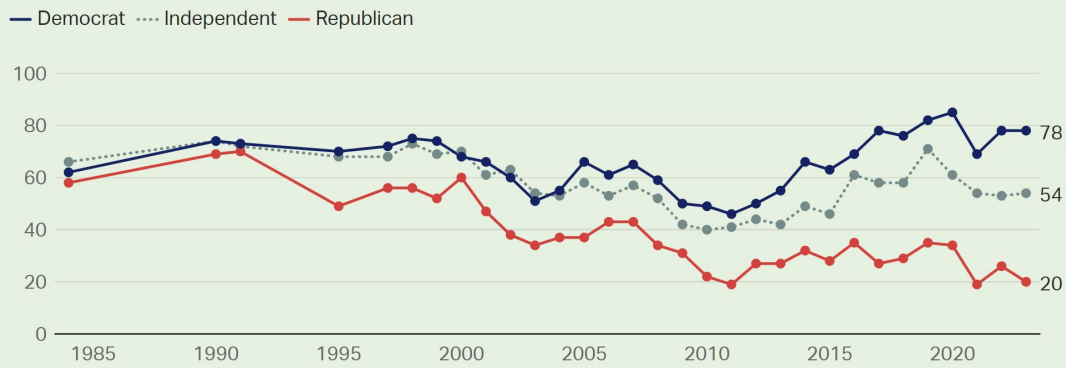
Source: [EPC + Data for Progress](#), Oct. 2024

Democrats and Republicans have never been more divided in how much they prioritize the environment

Priority for Environmental Protection Over Economic Growth, by Political Party

With which one of these statements about the environment and the economy do you most agree --
[ROTATED: 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]?

Figures are the percentage who prioritize environmental protection

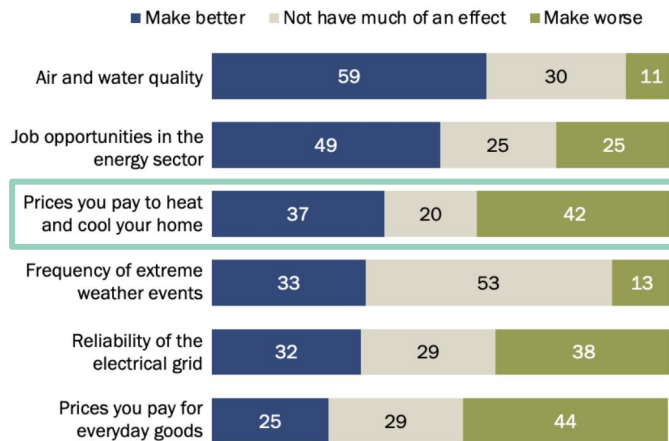


Source: [Gallup](#), March 2023

Americans recognize many benefits of the clean energy transition, but are unsure about the cost implications

Americans think an energy transition would have a more negative than positive impact on consumer prices

If the U.S. greatly reduces energy production from fossil fuel sources and increases production from renewable sources, % of U.S. adults who say it would ___ each of the following in their local area



Source: [Pew](#), June 2023

The notion that clean energy is more expensive stems more from a lack of awareness than a lack of belief.

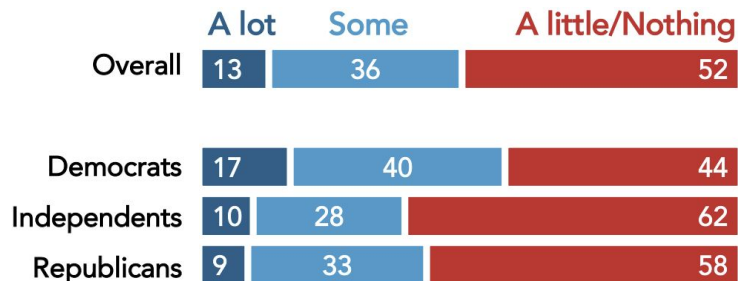
In an Oct. 2024 survey, we asked voters to rate the validity of the following statement: ***“Because of the declining costs of solar and wind power, clean energy like wind and solar is now cheaper to produce than fossil fuels like coal and natural gas.”***

Most voters (57%) said that this was definitely/probably true, with just one-quarter (25%) saying that it was definitely/probably false.

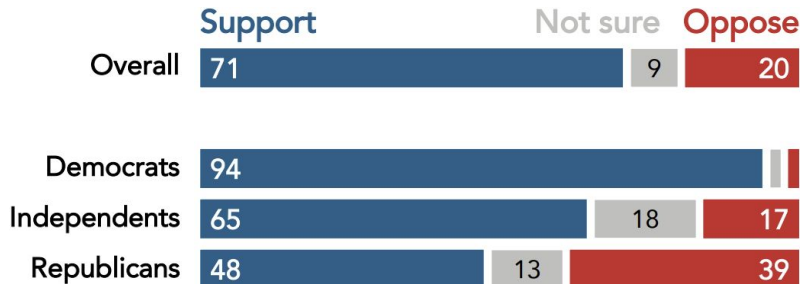
Source: [EPC + Data for Progress](#), Oct. 2024

Voters overwhelmingly support the IRA when they learn about it, but they still haven't heard much about it

How much have you seen, read, or heard about the legislation called the Inflation Reduction Act passed by Democrats in Congress and signed by President Biden?



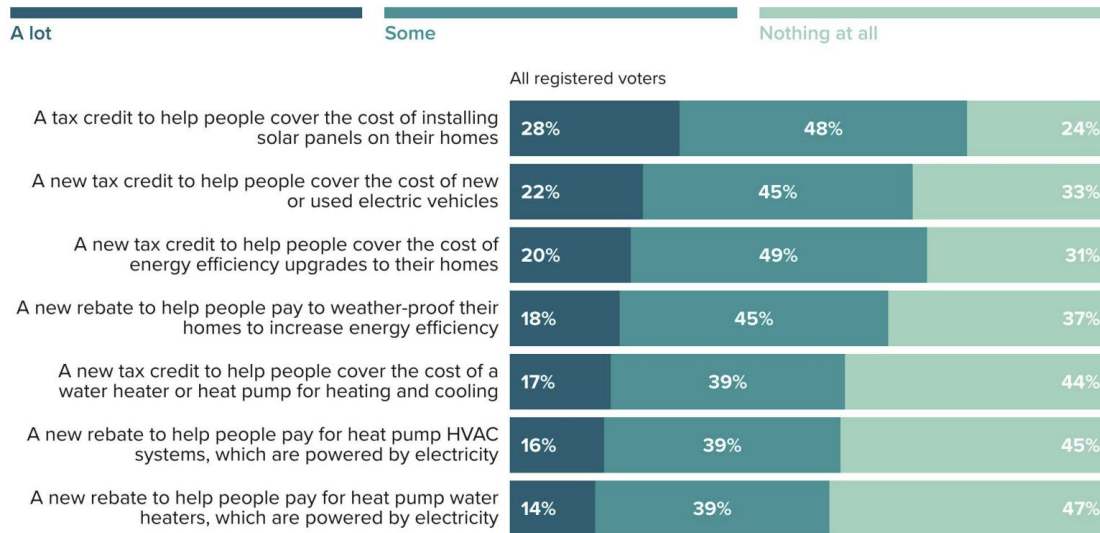
As you may know, Biden and Democrats' legislation that was passed by Congress is called the Inflation Reduction Act, which will give Medicare the power to negotiate lower drug prices, bring down health insurance premiums, and invest in clean energy like wind and solar power. Knowing this, do you support or oppose this economic plan?



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

Voters also have limited awareness of the specific IRA tax credits and incentives that are under threat

How much have you heard, read, or seen about each of the following tax credits or rebates?



Source: [EPC + Data for Progress](#), Oct. 2024

Messaging Guidance

Messaging Guidance

- **Focus on how environmental attacks tangibly impact Americans in ways that they care about.**
 - Increasing the cost of living
 - Polluting our air and water
 - Creating a worse quality of life for future generations
 - Destroying our shared public lands and waters
 - Making us more dependent on foreign energy sources
- **Make your narrative easy to follow.** Remember, under a Trump administration, you are competing with a very chaotic media environment and an overflow of information. The more clear and intuitive your message, the more likely it is to break through.
 - **Example:** *Canceling wind energy projects will kill thousands of American jobs and increase Americans' energy costs by reducing the supply of cheap, renewable energy.*
 - **Example:** *Weakening vehicle emissions and efficiency standards will increase pollution and require more trips to the gas station, forcing Americans to spend even more of their money at the pump while oil companies are making record profits.*

Thank You!

Speaker

Joshua Low



Partnerships Director,
Yale Center for Climate Change
Communications

CLIMATE **X** CHANGE
[SCPN]



Applying Public Opinion Insights

Building Public and Political Will for Climate Action

Presentation for ClimateXChange, Feb 2025

Joshua Low, Partnerships Director

Yale Program on Climate Change Communication



Building Public and Political Will

1st Rule of Communications:

Know your audience.

Your audience will not, and may not need to, think about climate change the way you do



ays

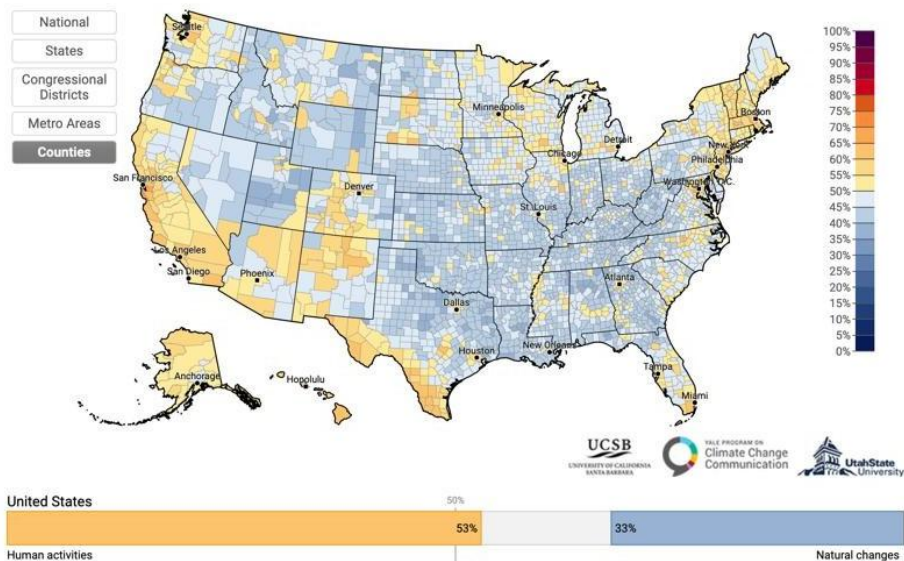
Yale Climate Opinion Maps

<https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/ycom-us/>

Estimated % of adults who think global warming is mostly caused by human activities (53%), 2019

Select Question: Global warming is caused mostly by human activities Absolute Value

Click on map to select geography, or: Select a State Select a County

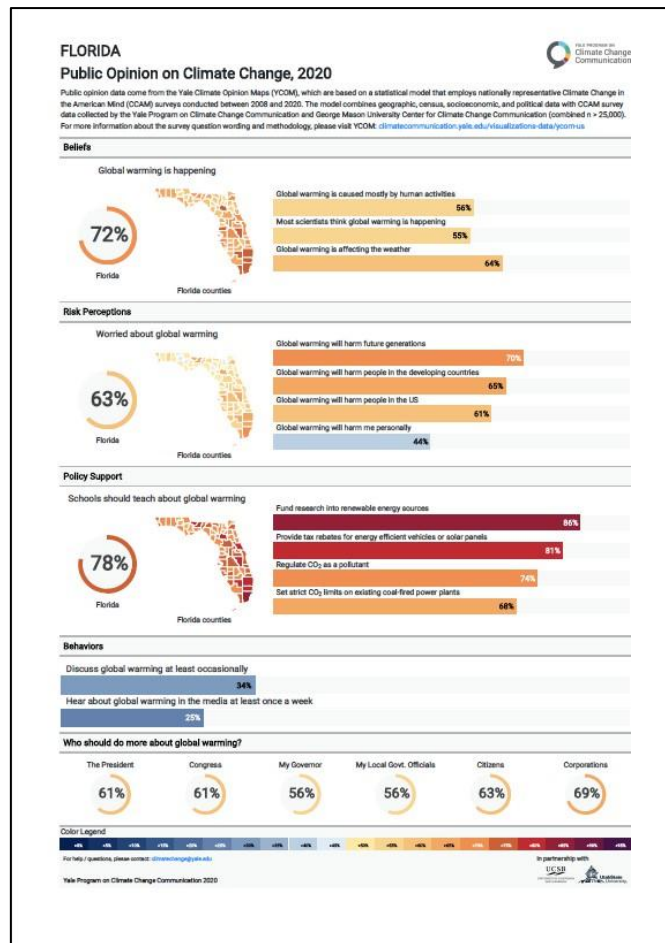


Yale Climate Opinion Factsheets

What is surprising you?

How will you change your communications approach?

<https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/factsheets/>



Global Warming's "Six Americas"

Fall 2023
N = 1,033

Alarmed



Concerned



Cautious



Disengaged



Doubtful



Dismissive



Highest Belief in Global Warming
Most Concerned
Most Motivated

Lowest Belief in Global Warming
Least Concerned
Least Motivated



Alarmed



Concerned



Cautious



Disengaged



Doubtful

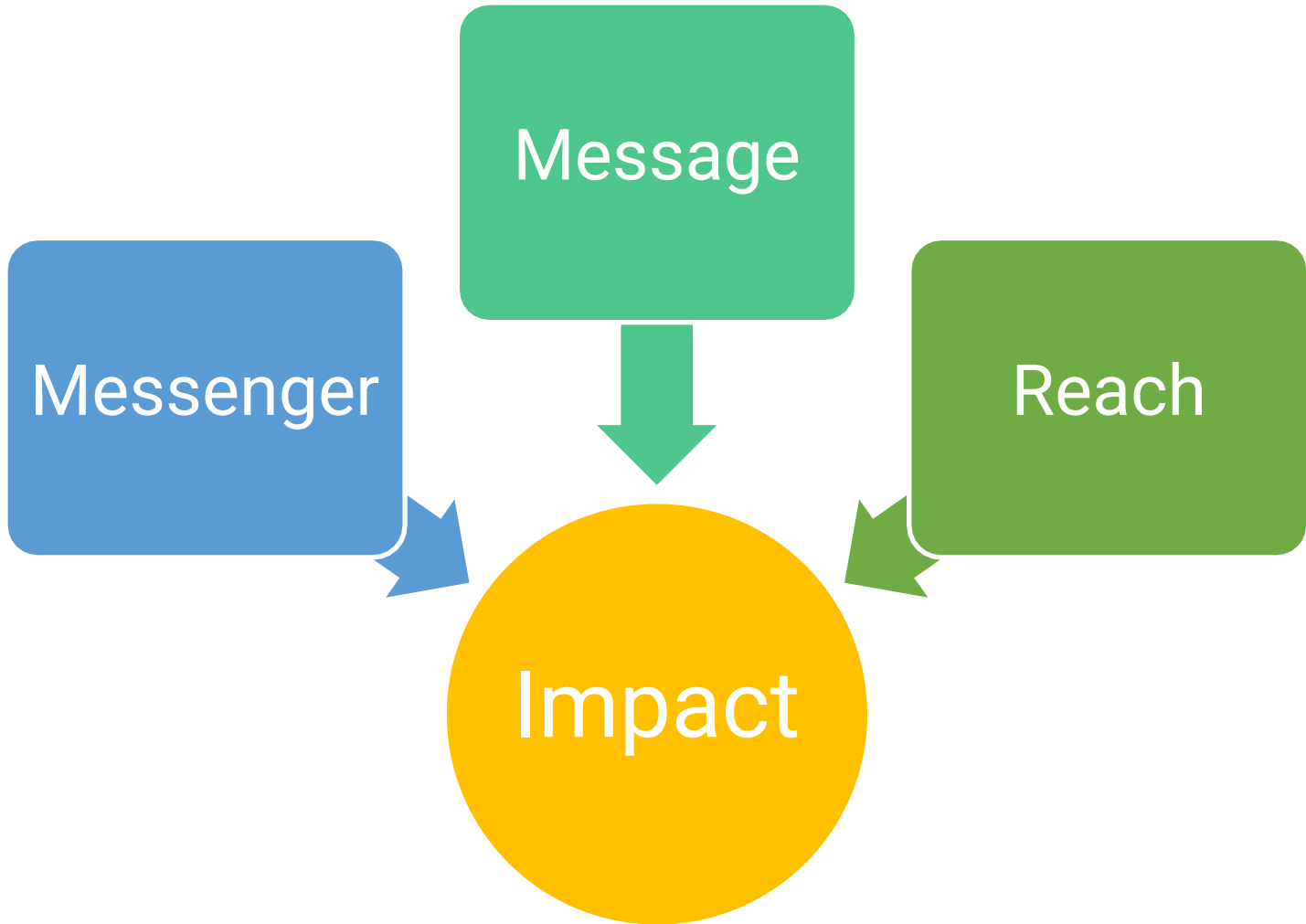


Dismissive

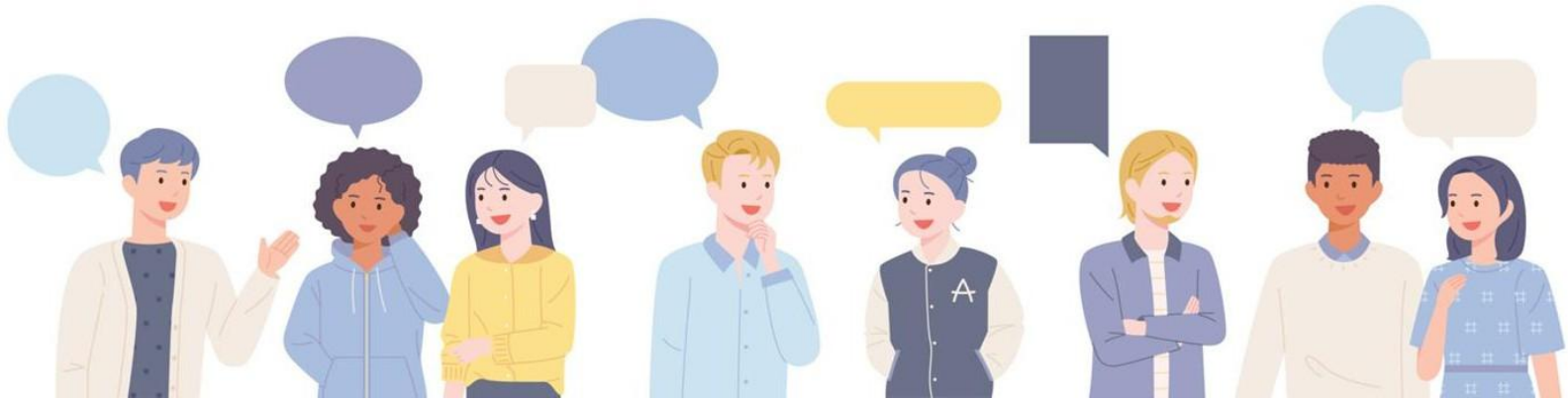
Illustration
by Michael
Sloan

What works:

**Actionable insights from YPCCC
and our partners**

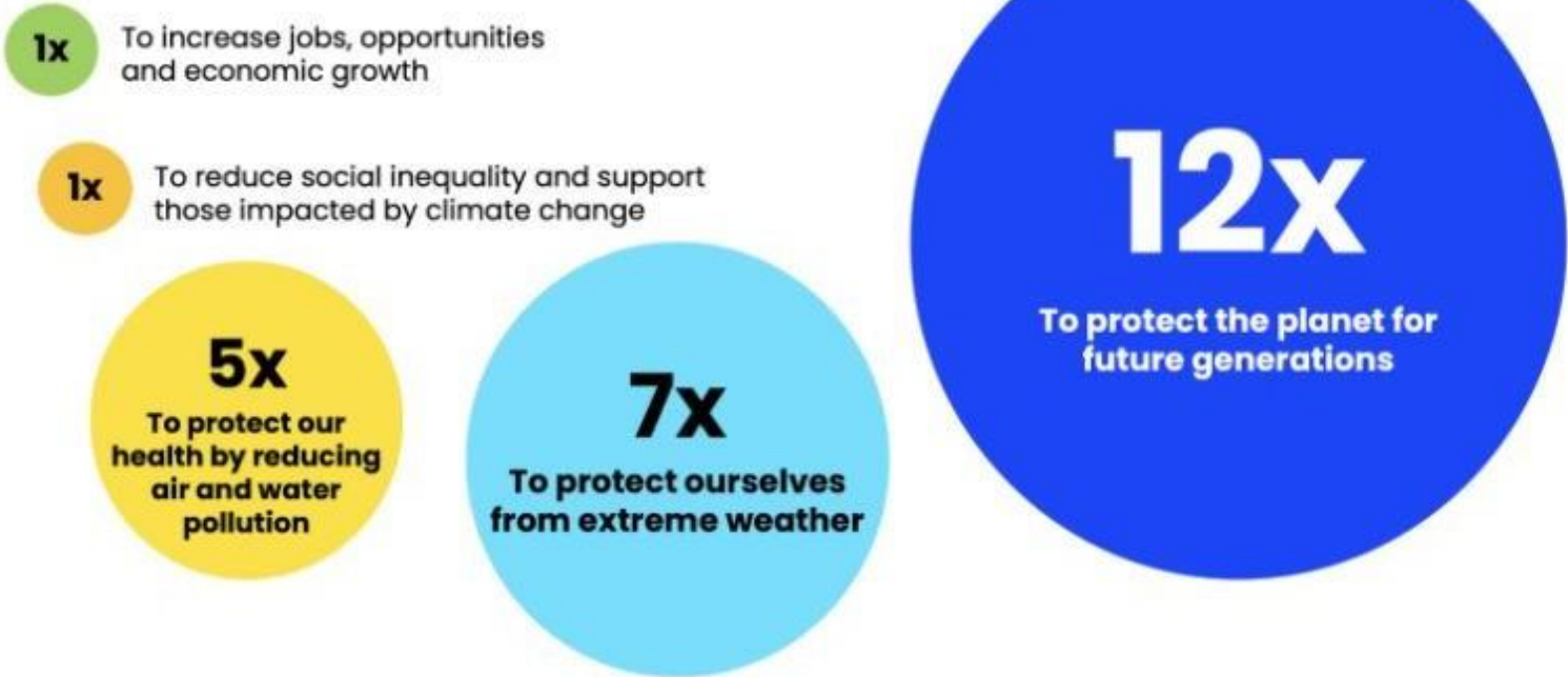


Trusted messengers are crucial



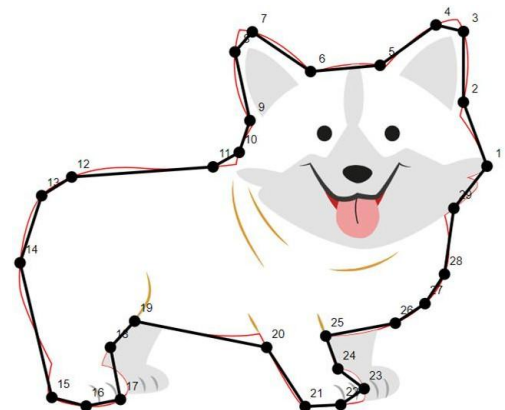
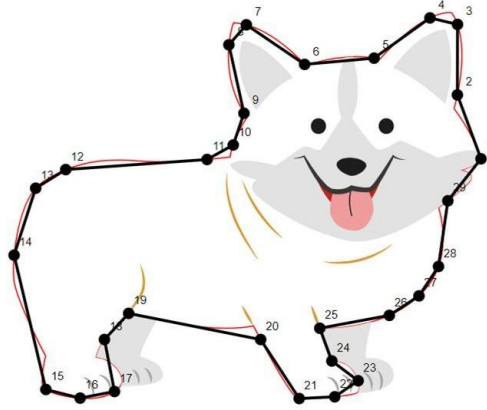


Relative size of perceived benefits across countries

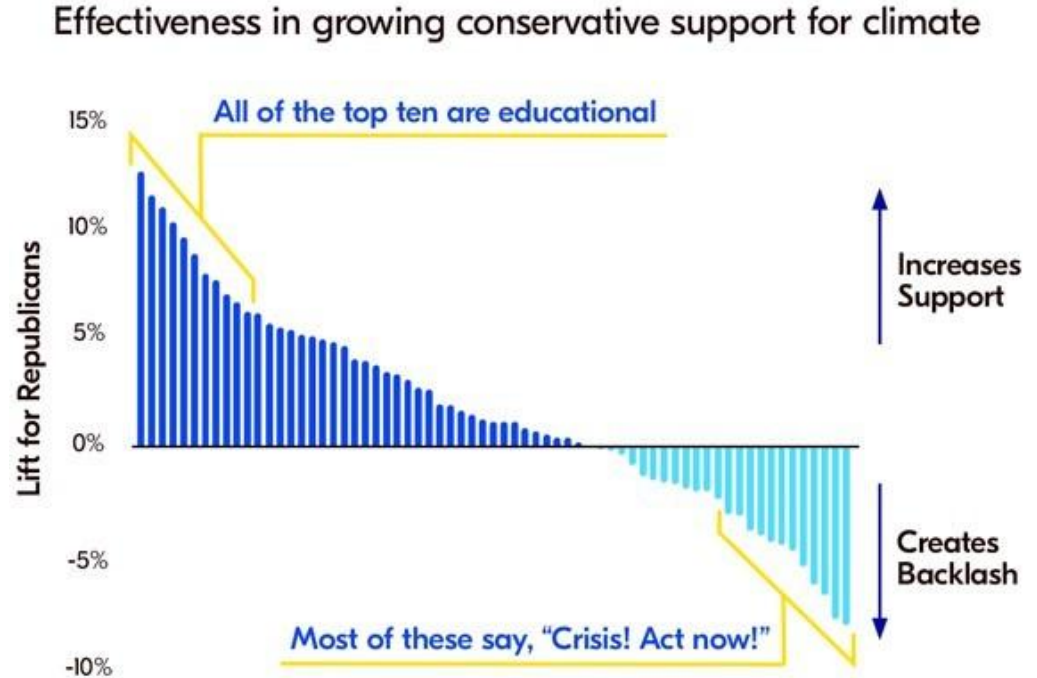


Connect the Dots (and tell a story)

This is my dog. His name is Bruno, and he likes treats.



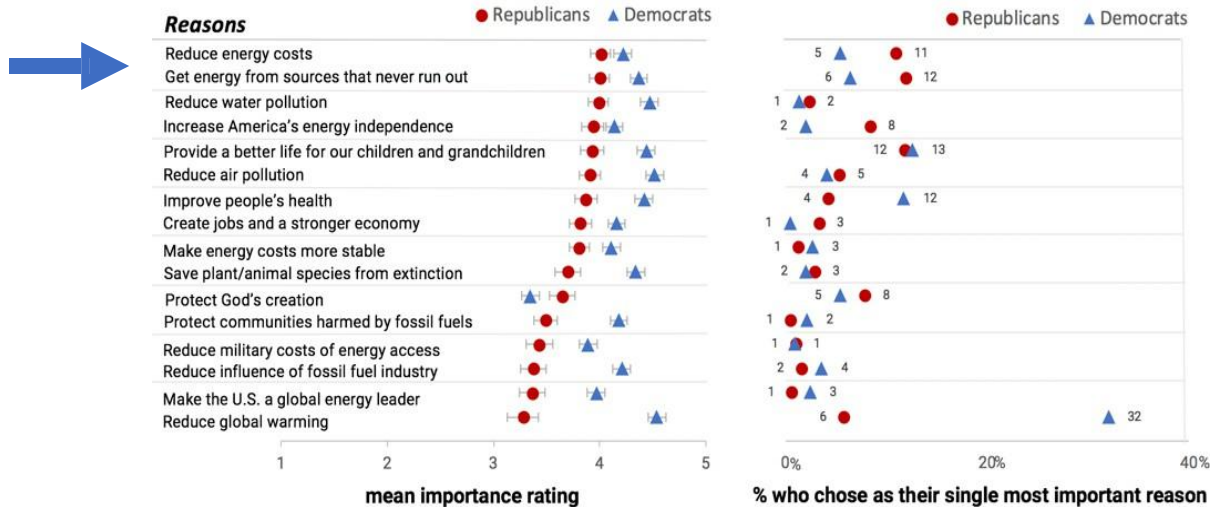
Messages that meet people where they are at



Source: Potential Energy Coalition, 12/22

Combining “cost savings” and environmental benefits tends to be a winning message in the US.

Which Reasons to Transition to Renewable Energy Do Republicans and Democrats Think Are Most Important?

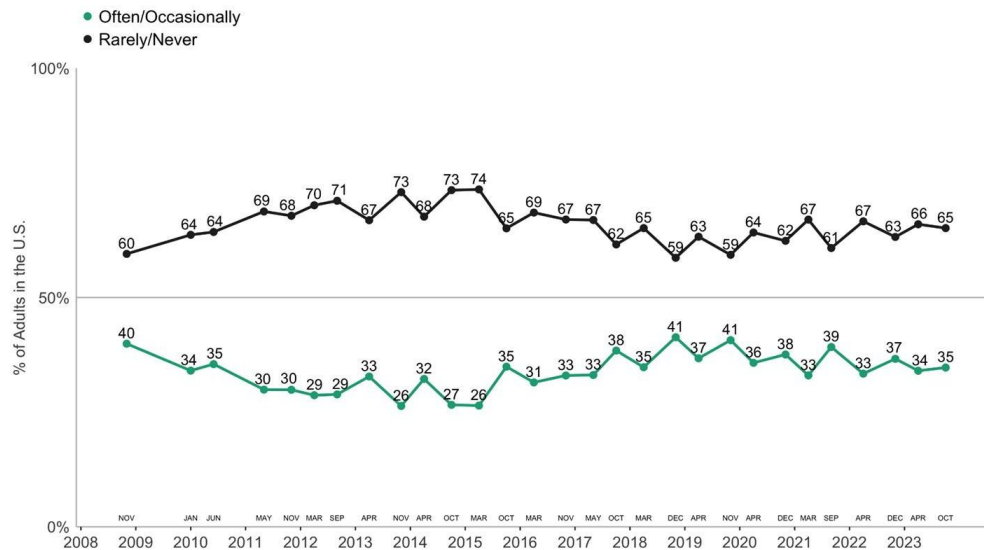


Base: Republican and Democratic registered voters (N = 822).
December, 2018.

Break the Spiral Of Silence



Most Americans "rarely" or "never" discuss global warming with family and friends



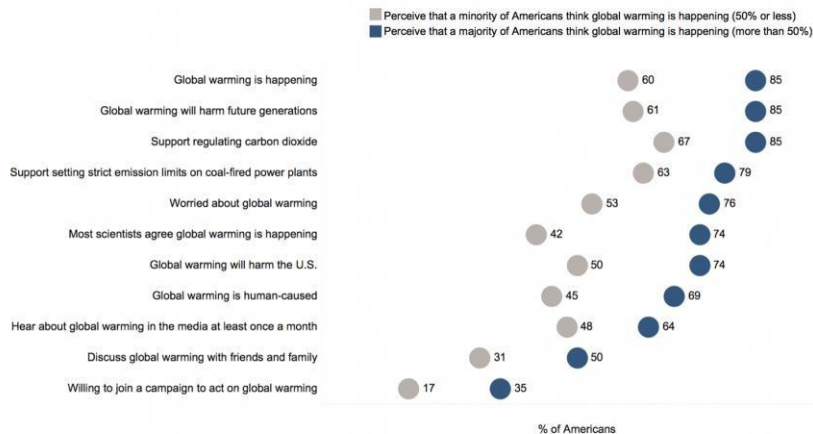
How often do you discuss global warming with your family and friends?

Fall 2023

Source: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication;
George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication

Power of Social Norms

Americans Who Perceive Greater Social Consensus are More Pro-Climate and Engaged than those who Perceive Less Consensus



To the best of your knowledge, what percentage of adults in the United States (18 years or older) think that global warming is happening? 0 – 100% with a "Don't know" option

April, 2019. Base: U.S. adults who said 0-50% (n=510) or 51-100% (n=545). Estimates are rounded to the nearest whole percentage point.



**THAT'S NEARLY 8 IN 10 ADULTS WHO SAY
STUDENTS SHOULD LEARN ABOUT
CLIMATE CHANGE AT SCHOOL.**

Screenshot

Messages that build a sense of efficacy and hope.



**AS AN EDUCATOR, YOU HAVE
THE POWER TO EQUIP
YOUNG PEOPLE...**

Organize for Power and Engage to Act



Educate and Persuade



How to partner with YPCCC



STRATEGIC
CONSULTING



APPLYING TOOLS TO
REACH KEY AUDIENCES



TRAINING CLIMATE
COMMUNICATORS



Keep in touch.

climatecommunication.yale.edu

Joshua Low
joshua.low@yale.edu

Q&A

Thank you for joining!

**Reach out to
kristen@climate-xchange.org with any
additional questions!**

