



**PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES**

Turning Questions Into Answers.

ARIZONA: ENERGY RESOURCES AND PUBLIC OPINION

Public Opinion Strategies conducted this survey of 600 registered voters throughout the state of Arizona on February 20-22, 2007. The margin of error associated with a sample of this type is $\pm 4.0\%$.

KEY FINDINGS

An overwhelming majority of Arizona voters prefer that the state address its energy needs by increasing energy efficiency and the use of clean energy, rather than importing electricity from coal-fired power plants.

- A stunning 87% of the electorate prefers to address Arizona's current energy situation by "increasing energy efficiency and using more clean energy sources like wind and solar power" rather than by "importing more electricity from coal power in other states" (8%). Overwhelming majorities of voters across the state and of every demographic and partisan group side with a clean energy approach to address the state's energy needs, including 83% of Republicans, 89% of Independents and 91% of Democrats.
- This consensus among the electorate is not surprising given some of the core beliefs about clean energy that voters hold.
 1. *Voters clearly see clean energy as reliable.* For example, over three-quarters (77%) agree that, "Renewable energy like geothermal and solar power is one of the fastest, cheapest, most reliable ways to increase energy supplies and hold down energy prices." By similar numbers, they also say that, "Renewable energy like geothermal and solar power is more reliable than the traditional energy source of coal, because we will not run out of it" (74% agree).
 2. *Voters perceive taking these actions to be prudent and cost effective.* There is nearly unanimous agreement that "Investing in technologies that use energy more efficiently in our homes and businesses will save consumers money" (90% agree, 62% strongly agree).

In fact, voters go so far as to say that building new coal-fired power plants ought to be a "last resort" for the state.

- Three-quarters (77%) of the electorate agree that "building new coal-fired power plants ought to be a last resort, because of the pollution and health impacts associated with burning coal." More than six-in-ten voters in every key voter group across the state agree that more coal-fired plants should be a last resort strategy.

Arizonans vastly overestimate how much the state relies on renewable energy.

- Perhaps because of their very positive view of clean energy, the electorate dramatically overestimates its use in the state. Just 33% correctly observe that less than 5% of the state's energy needs are met by renewable energy sources such as wind, solar or geothermal, while 64% think a greater proportion of needs are met in this manner.

There is strong support for a variety of proposals to increase the use of renewable energy in the state.

- After being told that less than 1% of the state's energy needs are met by renewable energy, voters overwhelmingly support proposals to invest in energy efficiency and increasing the use of clean energy in Arizona homes, businesses and government. In fact....

88% favor "State government offering tax credits or other financial incentives to encourage the use of solar energy systems at homes and businesses."

84% favor "State government providing grants or low-interest loans to school districts and other government entities to invest in improving the energy efficiency of public buildings."

80% favor "State government providing a tax credit to builders who build homes that exceed current energy conservation standards to encourage investment in energy efficiency technologies."

- Support on all of these proposals is so strong that majorities of every key voter group and voters in every region of the state favor each proposal.

An overwhelming majority say they would be willing to pay higher energy prices to increase the use of clean energy.

- Perhaps the most compelling fact is that 89% of Arizonans say they would be willing to pay higher energy prices in order to increase the amount of the state's energy needs which are met by renewable energy. Given a range of amounts, more voters choose the highest possible increase in their own bills – 41% say they would be willing to pay \$15 or more. Another 24% would be willing to pay \$10, 13% would pay \$5 and 11% would pay \$1 or less.
- Willingness to pay higher energy bills is ubiquitous across the state, as fully 88% of the lowest income households and 82% of typically cost-sensitive seniors say they would be willing to pay more in order to increase the amount of Arizona's energy needs met by renewable energy sources.

In summary, there is overwhelming support across the political spectrum for increasing the use of clean energy and investing in energy efficiency in the state. By nearly a ten-to-one margin, they reject an approach to meeting Arizona's energy needs that relies on building more new coal-fired power plants, suggesting this instead should be a last resort in the state's strategy. Moreover, voters are willing to "put their money where their mouth is" by paying higher energy prices.

The survey was conducted by Lori Weigel, a partner with Public Opinion Strategies, the largest Republican polling firm in the nation with offices in Washington, Denver and Los Angeles. Public Opinion Strategies' clients include 55 Republican Members of Congress, 8 Governors, 18 U.S. Senators and numerous Fortune 500 companies. Weigel serves as the political pollster for *Rocky Mountain News* and *News4* in Denver. The firm is the GOP partner on both the *NBC/Wall Street Journal* and National Public Radio media polls.