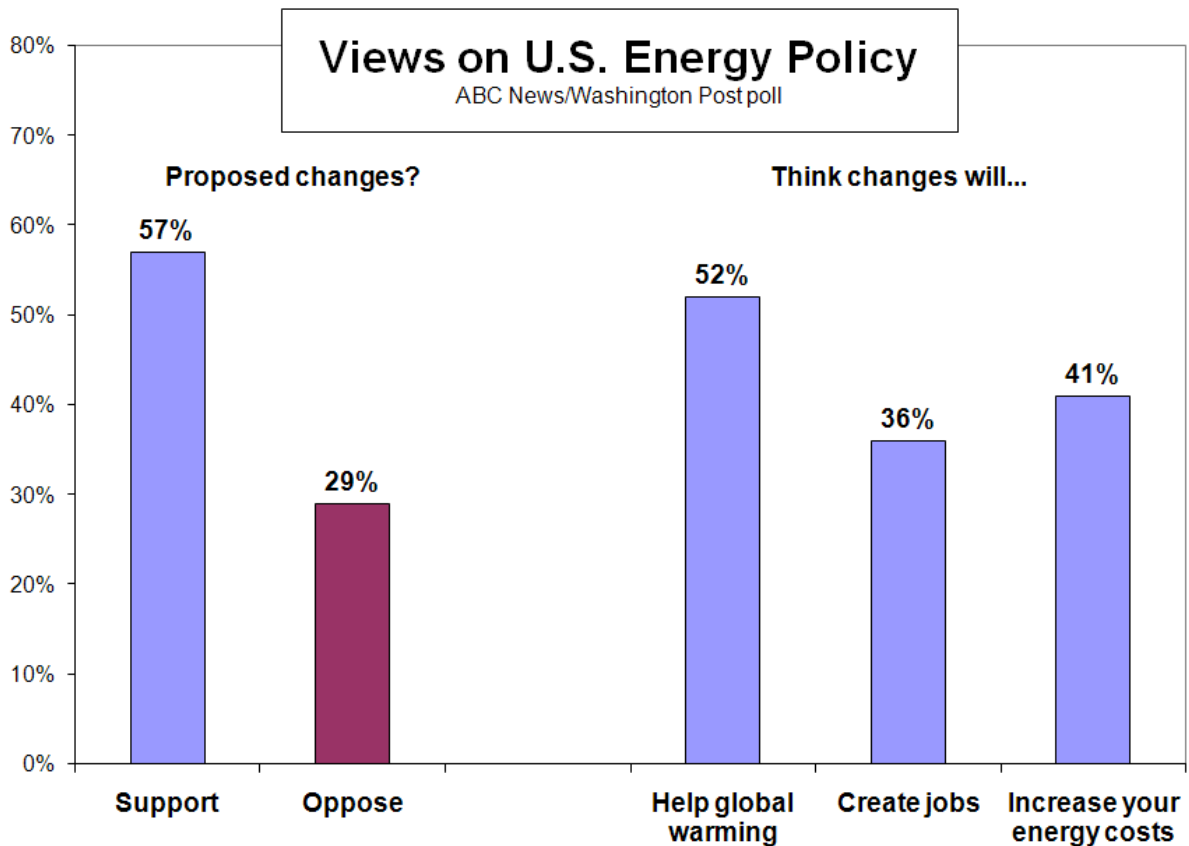


Energy Policy has Initial Support; Impact on Jobs, Costs Looks Crucial

Support for fossil fuel plants is down, support for nuclear power is up (though with a strong not-in-my-back-yard component) and hopes are reasonably high that a new U.S. energy policy will create jobs and help address global warming – albeit at some cost.

A substantial 41 percent of Americans in this ABC News/Washington Post poll think proposed changes being developed by Congress and the Obama administration will raise their energy costs. Yet enough of them back those changes nonetheless to give the effort 57 percent support among all Americans – well higher than support for health care reform, 45 percent.



President Obama, likewise, has 55 percent approval for handling energy policy, compared with his 46 percent approval rating on health care.

This may be, in part, because energy policy hasn't (yet) withstood the withering debate that's raked health care reform. But there are other reasons: Fifty-two percent of Americans think it'll help address global warming. And by 36 percent to 15 percent they're more apt to think it'll create rather than take away jobs in their state.

Where these and other views go from here is an open question, and there are challenges: A cap-and-trade system to control emissions gets a somewhat tepid 52 percent support. That rises to 58 percent if it works, and costs households \$10 a month – but falls to 39 percent support, a new low in ABC/Post polling the past year, at \$25 a month.

Price sensitivity is important, and therefore likely to be central to the debate. Among Americans who think an energy policy overhaul will raise their energy costs, 54 percent oppose it – although a perhaps surprising 36 percent are in favor nonetheless. Support rises to 74 percent among those who think it won't impact costs and 88 percent of those who think it'll reduce them.

Support also is far lower among those who see energy reform as costing jobs, and higher among those who think it'll create them; and higher among those who think it'll help address global warming than among those who think otherwise.

Changes would...	Changing energy policy	
	Support	Oppose
Decrease costs	88%	6
Increase costs	36	54
No difference	74	17
Add jobs	86%	8
Take away jobs	15	78
No difference	55	34
Address GW	83%	10
Not address GW	35	58

ENERGY SPECIFICS – On specific aspects of energy policy beyond cap-and-trade, alternative energy and conservation continue to be particularly popular, while building power plants and increasing the use of coal are far less so.

Compared with an ABC/Post poll in 2001, the biggest changes are on power plants – an 11-point drop in support for building more fossil-fuel plants, from 62 percent eight years ago to 51 percent now; and a smaller 6-point rise in support for more nuclear plants, from 46 percent then to 52 percent now. However, support for nuclear power drops to 35 percent if the plant would be closer than 50 miles away.

Those pale, in any case, in comparison with longstanding support for developing more solar and wind power (91 percent) and fuel-efficiency standards (85 percent); for electric car technology (82 percent support) and for requiring more energy conservation in the commercial sector (78 percent) and by consumers (73 percent).

The just-ended cash-for-clunkers car rebate program enjoyed 69 percent support; 64 percent favor increased oil and gas drilling, 52 percent coal mining.

There also are differences in “strong” support for these items. A vast 79 percent strongly favor solar and wind power, compared with 48 percent for oil and gas drilling, 36 percent for nuclear plants and 33 percent for building more fossil-fuel power stations. Also, “strong” support for mandated conservation by consumers drops off to 56 percent, albeit still a majority.

	% Support	
	NET	Strongly
Solar/wind power	91%	79%
Fuel-efficient vehicles	85	74
Electric cars	82	67
Require conservation by businesses	78	62
Require conservation by consumers	73	56
Cash for clunkers	69	51
Oil/gas drilling	64	48
Nuclear plants	52	36
Fossil-fuel plants	51	33
Coal mining	52	31

PARTISAN – As in so many issues on the political plate, partisanship is a sharp divider. Republicans are 27 points more apt than Democrats to support more oil and gas drilling, 20 points more apt to support building more nuclear plants, 14 points more apt to back more coal mining. (The NIMBY effect, though, is essentially the same in both parties – about a 15-point drop in support for nuclear plants if they’re within 50 miles.)

Democrats, for their part, are 25 points more apt to favor mandatory conservation by business and individuals and 11 to 18 points more likely to support developing electric cars, increasing fuel-efficiency standards and the cash-for-clunkers program.

However, there’s little difference between the parties in views on building more fossil fuel plants – supported by 53 percent of Democrat and 58 percent of Republicans alike, while “strongly” supported by about a third in each group.

There are even sharper partisan and ideological divisions on support for energy reform overall – 78 percent among Democrats, 56 percent among independents, but just 33 percent among Republicans. Similarly it’s 76 percent among liberals, 63 percent among moderates, 40 percent among conservatives.

There are differences beyond the strictly political: Support for energy policy changes overall is lowest in the West (47 percent) and highest in the East (63 percent); lowest among seniors (42 percent) while highest among young adults (73 percent in this core Obama support group); and 74 percent among nonwhites vs. 52 percent among whites. And among individual items, nuclear power gets far more support from men, 64 percent, than from women, 40 percent.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Aug. 13-17, 2009, among a random national sample of 1,001 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results for the full sample have a 3.5-point error margin. Click [here](#) for

a detailed description of sampling error. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, PA.

Analysis by Peyton Craighill and Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1 previously released.

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Obama is handling [ITEM]? Do you approve/disapprove strongly or somewhat?

e. Energy policy

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
8/17/09	55	24	31	30	9	21	15

Compare to G.W. Bush:

	----- Approve -----			----- Disapprove -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
4/24/05	35	NA	NA	54	NA	NA	10

3-16 previously released.

17. On another subject, overall, given what you know about them, would you say you support or oppose the proposed changes to U.S. energy policy being developed by (Congress) and (the Obama administration)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
8/17/09	57	29	29	29	11	19	14

18. Do you think the proposed changes to U.S. energy policy would (add) jobs in your state, (take away) jobs or won't make much of a difference?

	Add	Take away	No difference	No opinion
8/17/09	36	15	42	7

19. Do you think the proposed changes to U.S. energy policy would (increase) your energy costs, (decrease) them or won't make much of a difference?

	Increase	Decrease	No difference	No opinion
8/17/09	41	16	36	7

20. Do you think the proposed changes to U.S. energy policy would or would not help address the global warming issue?

Global warming isn't

	Would	Would not	an issue (vol.)	No opinion
8/17/09	52	34	5	10

21. There's a proposed system called "cap and trade." The government would issue permits limiting the amount of greenhouse gases companies can put out. Companies that did not use all their permits could sell them to other companies. The idea is that many companies would find ways to put out less greenhouse gases, because that would be cheaper than buying permits. Would you support or oppose this system?

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
8/17/09	52	43	6
6/21/09	52	42	6
7/28/08	59	34	7

22. (HALF SAMPLE) What if a cap and trade program significantly lowered greenhouse gases but raised your monthly electrical bill by 10 dollars a month - in that case would you support or oppose it?

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
8/17/09	58	40	1
6/21/09	56	42	2
7/28/08	57	41	2

23. (HALF SAMPLE) What if a cap and trade program significantly lowered greenhouse gases but raised your monthly electrical bill by 25 dollars a month - in that case would you support or oppose it?

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
8/17/09	39	59	1
6/21/09	44	54	1
7/28/08	47	51	2

24. To address the country's energy needs, would you support or oppose action by the federal government to (ITEM)? Do you support/oppose that strongly, or not strongly?*

a. Build more nuclear power plants

	Support			Oppose			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Not strongly	NET	Strongly	Not strongly	
8/17/09	52	36	16	46	30	15	2
6/3/01	46	29	17	51	36	15	3

b. Develop more solar and wind power

	Support			Oppose			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Not strongly	NET	Strongly	Not strongly	
8/17/09	91	79	12	8	5	3	1
6/3/01	90	80	10	8	3	4	2

c. Increase oil and gas drilling

	Support			Oppose			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Not strongly	NET	Strongly	Not strongly	
8/17/09	64	48	16	33	21	12	3
6/3/01	67	49	19	29	19	11	3

d. Increase coal mining

	Support	Oppose	No

	NET	Support	Not strongly	NET	Support	Not strongly	opinion
8/17/09	52	31	21	45	27	18	3
6/3/01	54	33	21	39	23	15	7

e. Develop electric car technology

	NET	Support	Not strongly	NET	Support	Not strongly	No opinion
8/17/09	82	67	15	17	9	8	2

f. Require more energy conservation by businesses and industries

	NET	Support	Not strongly	NET	Support	Not strongly	No opinion
8/17/09	78	62	16	20	12	8	2

Compare to: Encourage more energy conservation by businesses and industries

	NET	Support	Not strongly	NET	Support	Not strongly	No opinion
6/3/01	90	79	12	8	4	4	2

g. Require more energy conservation by consumers like yourself

	NET	Support	Not strongly	NET	Support	Not strongly	No opinion
8/17/09	73	56	17	25	15	9	3

Compare to: Encourage more energy conservation by consumers like yourself

	NET	Support	Not strongly	NET	Support	Not strongly	No opinion
6/3/01	90	78	12	8	6	3	2

h. Require car manufacturers to improve the fuel-efficiency of vehicles sold in this country

	NET	Support	Not strongly	NET	Support	Not strongly	No opinion
8/17/09	85	74	11	14	9	4	1
6/3/01	89	81	7	10	6	4	2

i. Build more power plants that burn oil, coal or natural gas

	NET	Support	Not strong	NET	Support	Not strong	Gas only (vol.)	No opin.
8/17/09	51	33	18	41	23	17	1	6
6/3/01	62	43	19	31	18	13	3	5

j. Use cash rebates to encourage people to buy more fuel efficient cars

	NET	Support	Not strongly	NET	Support	Not strongly	No opinion
8/17/09	69	51	18	30	22	8	1

* Half sample asked items a-e; other half sample asked items f-j.

25. (IF SUPPORT BUILDING MORE NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS) Would you favor or oppose building a nuclear power plant within 50 miles of your home?

	Favor	Oppose	No opinion
8/17/09	66	33	*

24a/25 NET

	Favor	NET	At first	Oppose Within 50 miles	No opinion
8/17/09	35	63	46	17	2

26-34 previously released.

END