

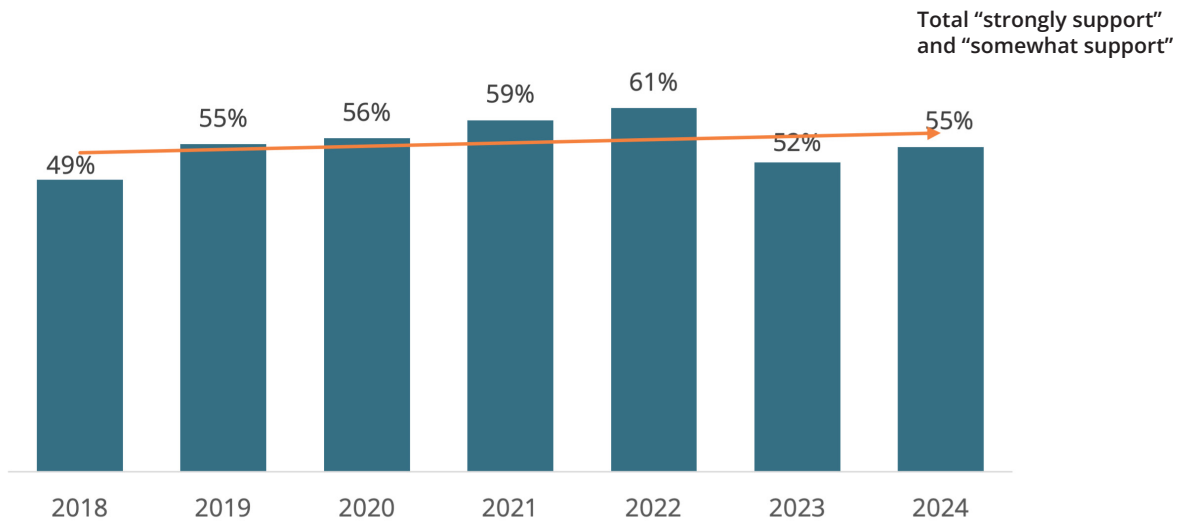
American Support for Nuclear Power Increased in 2024 as Concerns Wane

ecoAmerica’s latest survey reveals rising support for nuclear power, with Republicans, males, and Americans over 65 among the top supporters. Meanwhile, wind and solar power remain highly favored. The findings also show bipartisan support for funding research and development in wind, solar, and nuclear energy. Additionally, most Americans recognize oil and coal as polluting sources. And, while concerns about nuclear power remain in the majority, they have eased over time. Addressing climate change requires a rapid shift away from fossil fuels, and ecoAmerica’s new research points to opportunities for education, engagement, and action.

Over Half of Americans Support Nuclear Power

American support for nuclear power is increasing. ecoAmerica’s latest poll shows that 55% of Americans say they either “strongly” or “somewhat support” nuclear power, which is a 3-point rise from 2023 and a 6-point rise from 2018. Over the seven years of fielding this survey annually, ecoAmerica has consistently found that more than half of Americans have supported nuclear power, with a peak of 61% support in 2022.

More Americans voice support for nuclear power in 2024. America’s traditional nuclear power plants produce around 20% of our electricity. Which is closest to your opinion? Showing total for “Strongly support nuclear power” and “Somewhat support nuclear power”. 1,011 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



This chart shows blue bars from 2018-2024, showing the total support for nuclear power, with an orange trend line. In 2018, 49% of Americans said they either “strongly” or “somewhat support” nuclear power. In 2019, 55% of Americans said they either “strongly” or “somewhat support” nuclear power. In 2020, 56% of Americans said they either “strongly” or “somewhat support” nuclear power. In 2021, 59% of Americans said they either “strongly” or “somewhat support” nuclear power. In 2022, 61% of Americans said they either “strongly” or “somewhat support” nuclear power. In 2023, 52% of Americans said they either “strongly” or “somewhat support” nuclear power. In 2024, 55% of Americans said they either “strongly” or “somewhat support” nuclear power.

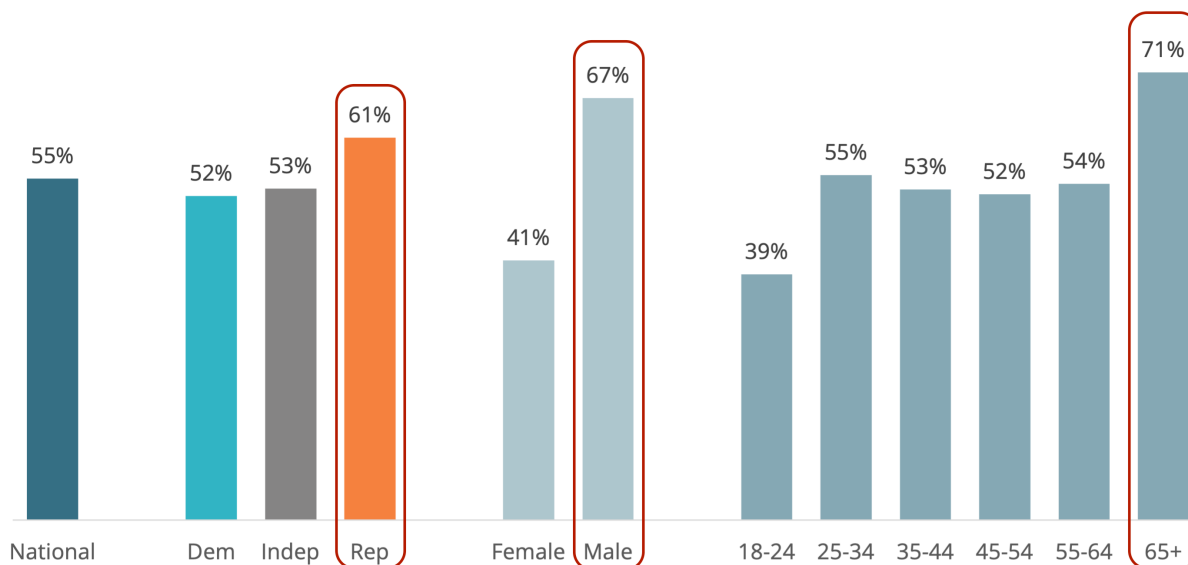
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Republicans, Males, and Americans Over 65 Among Top Nuclear Supporters

Republicans show the greatest support for nuclear power (61%) compared to just over half of Democrats and Independents (52% and 53%, respectively). Across the sexes, male-identifying Americans emerge as strong supporters of nuclear power (67%), whereas female-identifying Americans indicate weak support (41%). The strongest support across all demographic groups is among Americans over 65 years (71%), while the weakest support is among Americans between the ages of 18-24 (39%).

Republicans, Males, and Americans over 65 express greatest support for nuclear power.

America's traditional nuclear power plants produce around 20% of our electricity. Which is closest to your opinion? Showing total for "Strongly support nuclear power" and "Somewhat support nuclear power". 1,011 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



This chart shows that nationally, 55% of Americans either strongly or somewhat support nuclear power. Across parties, 52% of Democrats, 53% of Independents, and 61% of Republicans either strongly or somewhat support nuclear power. Across the sexes, 41% of females and 67% of males say they either strongly or somewhat support nuclear power. And, across ages, 39% of 18-24 years old, 55% of 25-34 years old, 53% of 35-44 years old, 52% of 45-54 years old, 54% of 55-64 years old, and 71% of 65 years old and above say they either strongly or somewhat support nuclear power.

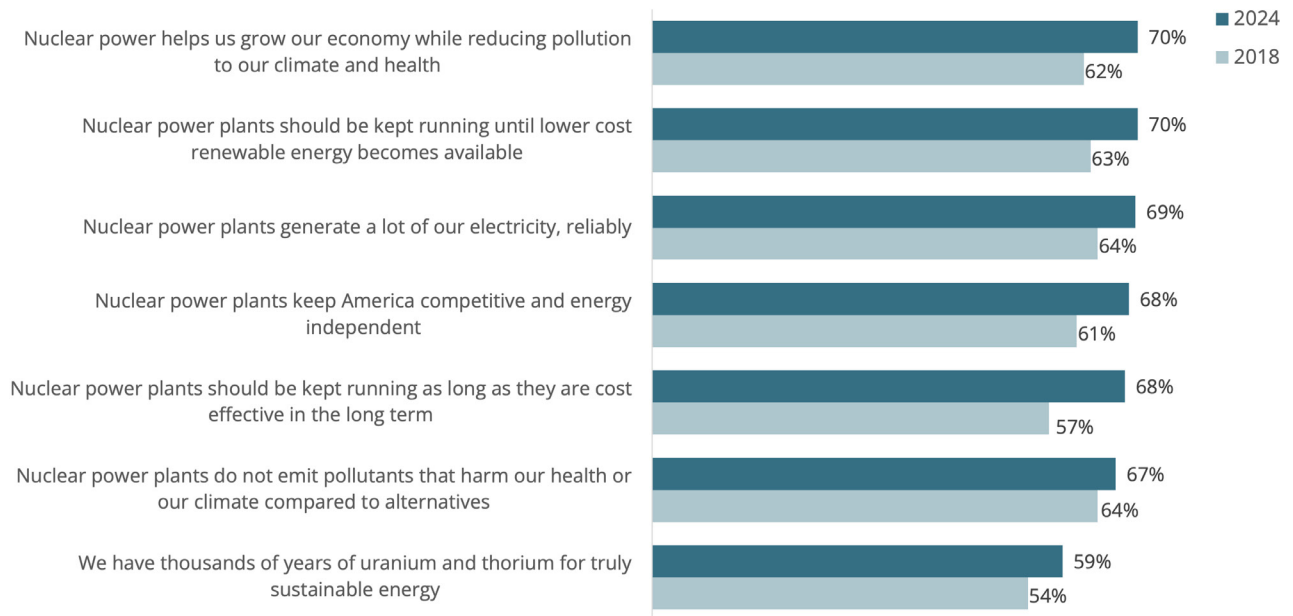
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More Americans Support Nuclear for Economy, Pollution Reduction, Reliability and Energy Independence

Support for nuclear power has grown for several key reasons. The majority of Americans (70%, 8-point rise since 2018) said nuclear power helps us grow our economy while reducing pollution that harms our climate and health. Most Americans also say nuclear power plants generate electricity reliably (69% in 2024 vs. 64% in 2018) and keep America competitive and energy independent (68% in 2024 vs. 61% in 2018).

Additionally, most Americans believe nuclear power plants should be kept running until lower-cost renewable energy becomes available (70%) or as long as they are cost-effective in the long term (68%). And 67% say they support nuclear power because it does not emit pollutants that contribute to climate change.

Growing number of Americans are supporting nuclear for economy, pollution reduction, reliability, and energy independence. What are the most important reasons for supporting nuclear energy? Showing total for “Very important” and “Somewhat important”. 1,011 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



This chart shows how national support for nuclear across important reasons has grown from 2018 to 2024.

70% of Americans in 2024 vs. 62% of Americans in 2018 say that it’s “very important” or “somewhat important” to support nuclear power because nuclear power helps us grow our economy while reducing pollution to our climate and health.

70% of Americans in 2024 vs. 63% of Americans in 2018 say that it’s “very important” or “somewhat important” to support nuclear power because plants should be kept running until lower-cost renewable energy becomes available.

69% of Americans in 2024 vs. 64% of Americans in 2018 say that it’s “very important” or “somewhat important” to support nuclear power because nuclear power plants generate a lot of our electricity reliably.

68% of Americans in 2024 vs. 61% of Americans in 2018 say that it’s “very important” or “somewhat important” to support nuclear power because nuclear power plans keep America competitive and energy independent.

68% of Americans in 2024 vs. 57% of Americans in 2018 say that it’s “very important” or “somewhat important” to support nuclear power because plants should be kept running as long as they are cost-effective in the long term.

67% of Americans in 2024 vs. 64% of Americans in 2018 say that it’s “very important” or “somewhat important” to support nuclear power because plants do not emit pollutants that harm our health or our climate compared to alternatives.

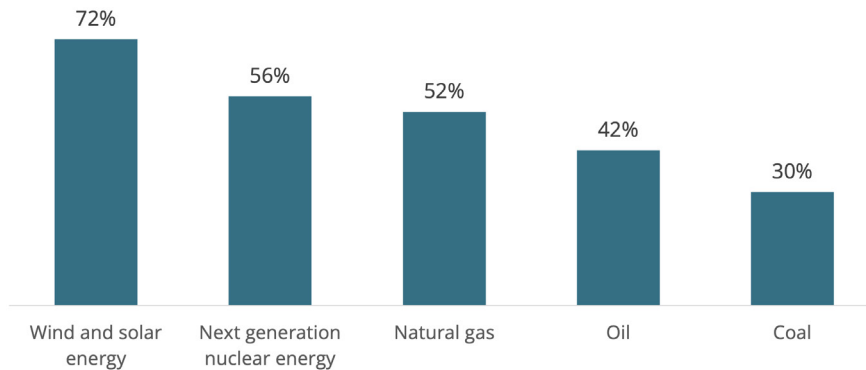
59% of Americans in 2024 vs. 54% of Americans in 2018 say that it’s “very important” or “somewhat important” to support nuclear power because we have thousands of years of uranium and thorium for truly sustainable energy.

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Americans Favor Wind, Solar, and Nuclear Over Oil, Coal, or Methane

Nearly three-quarters of Americans (72%) say wind and solar should receive more research and development (R&D) funding from the United States, and over half (56%) support more R&D funding for next-generation nuclear energy. 52% support R&D spending on natural gas (made up largely of methane), while few Americans support R&D spending on oil (42%) or coal (30%). These findings indicate ripening social conditions for accelerating the transition away from coal, oil, and gas.

Americans prefer R&D for clean energy sources. In the next few years, should the United States be spending more or less on research and development of each of the following energy sources? Showing total for “A lot more” and “More”. 1,011 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



This chart shows that nationally, 72% of Americans say the United States should be spending more on research and development of wind and solar energy. 56% say the United States should be spending more on research and development of next generation nuclear energy. 52% say the United States should be spending more on research and development of natural gas. 42% say the United States should be spending more on research and development of oil. And 30% say the United States should be spending more on research and development of coal.

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The results show that Republicans and Democrats are less divided on support for nuclear R&D than for other energy sources. 56% of Democrats and 62% of Republicans say that the United States should spend more on next-generation nuclear R&D, which is only a 6-point divide. In comparison, there is a 21-point difference between the parties for oil, 14-point difference for coal, and 12-point difference for gas.

Democrats and Republicans are least divided on nuclear R&D. In the next few years, should the United States be spending more or less on research and development of each of the following energy sources? Showing total for “A lot more” and “More”. 1,011 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.

	National	Dem	Rep	Dem-Rep
Wind and solar energy	72%	79%	65%	14
Next generation nuclear energy	56%	56%	62%	6
Natural gas	52%	50%	62%	12
Oil	42%	34%	55%	21
Coal	30%	26%	40%	14

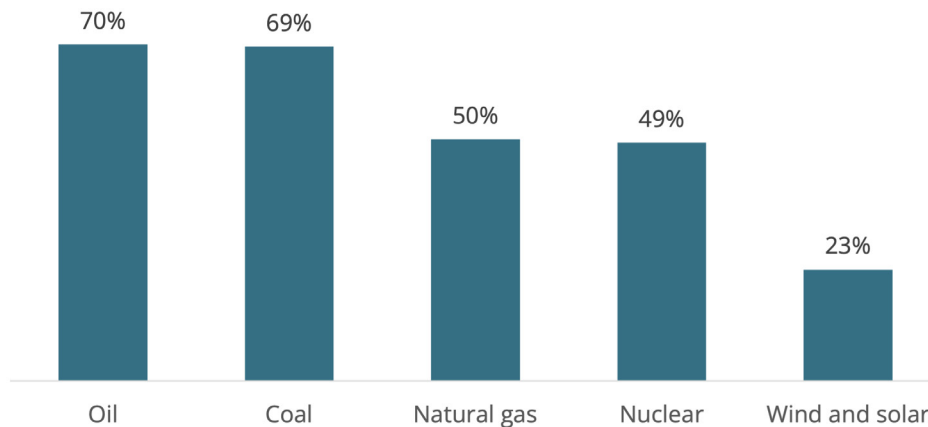
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Americans See Wind and Solar as Least Polluting

A majority of Americans recognize that oil (70%) and coal (69%) contribute to unhealthy air pollution and climate change. Half of Americans say natural gas (methane) contributes, too. Nearly half of Americans (49%) believe nuclear energy contributes to unhealthy air pollution and climate change, and under a quarter (23%) believe that wind and solar energy contribute. These findings indicate there is an opportunity for education on energy sources, pollution, and climate change.¹

Majority of Americans recognize oil and coal as polluting energy sources contributing to climate change.

How much does each of these energy sources contribute to unhealthy air pollution and climate change? Showing total for "A lot and "Some". 1,011 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



This chart shows that nationally, 70% of Americans say oil contributes to unhealthy air pollution and climate change. 69% say coal contributes to unhealthy air pollution and climate change. 50% say natural gas contributes to unhealthy air pollution and climate change. 49% say nuclear contributes to unhealthy air pollution and climate change. And 23% say wind and solar contribute to unhealthy air pollution and climate change.

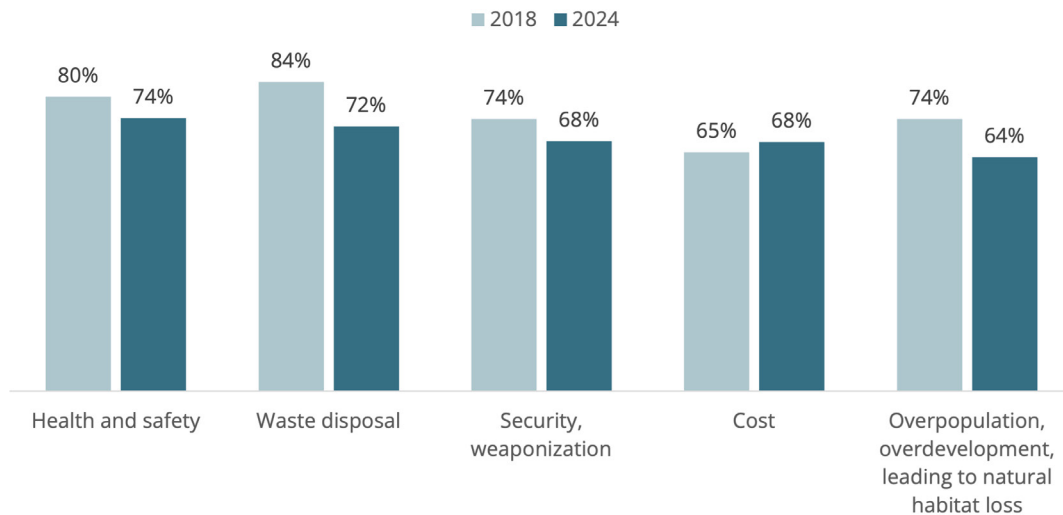
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¹ Coal, oil, and natural gas cause far more deaths from air pollution, mining, and plant operations than nuclear, solar, or wind. Solar, nuclear, and wind account for the [lowest death rates and greenhouse gas emissions](#), in that order.

Nuclear Energy Concerns Wane But Remain in the Majority

As seen in the chart below, while overall concern about nuclear power remains high, fewer Americans report concerns about health and safety, waste disposal, security and weaponization, and overpopulation in 2024 versus 2018. However, in the 2024 survey, ecoAmerica finds a 3-point rise in concern about the cost of nuclear energy.²

American concern about nuclear power over time. People have concerns about upgrading nuclear energy. Which of the following make you concerned? Showing total for “A lot” and “Some”. 1,011 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



This chart shows how American concerns about upgrading nuclear energy have changed over time from 2018 to 2024.

80% of Americans in 2018 vs. 74% of Americans in 2024 say health and safety make them concerned about upgrading nuclear energy.

84% in 2018 vs. 72% in 2024 say waste disposal makes them concerned about upgrading nuclear energy.

74% in 2018 vs. 68% in 2024 say security & weaponization make them concerned about upgrading nuclear energy.

65% in 2018 vs. 68% in 2024 say cost makes them concerned about upgrading nuclear energy.

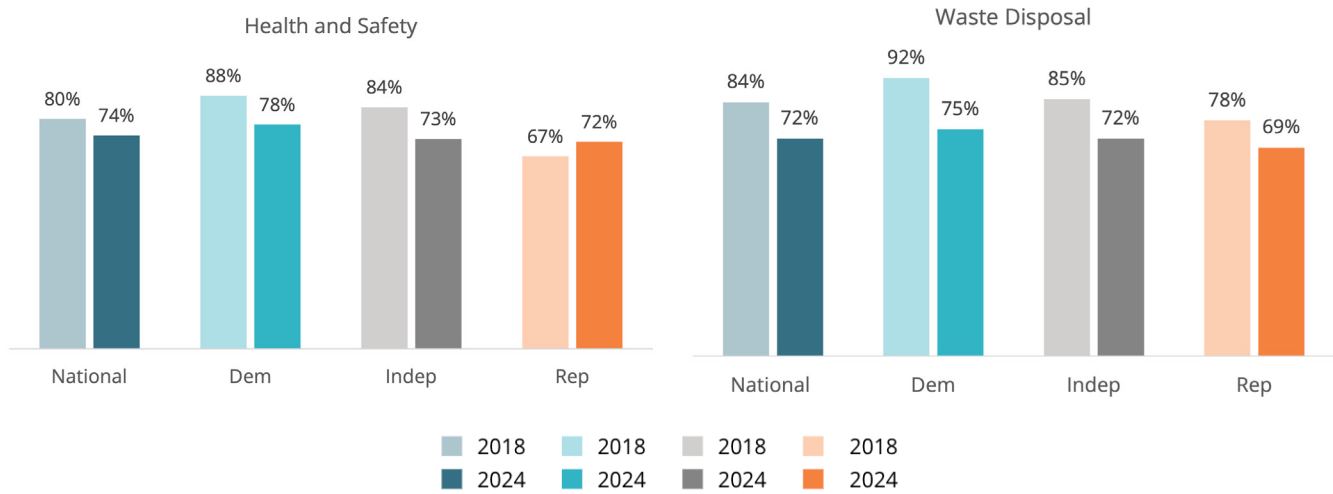
74% in 2018 vs. 64% in 2024 say overpopulation and overdevelopment leading to natural habitat loss makes them concerned about upgrading nuclear energy.

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Health and safety and waste disposal remain top nuclear concerns in 2024, with 74% and 72% of Americans concerned, respectively.

² Department of Energy (DOE) research shows that combining nuclear with renewables and storage can [lower decarbonization costs by about 37%](#) by reducing energy generation and transmission costs.

Health and safety and waste disposal remain top nuclear energy concerns. People have concerns about upgrading nuclear energy. Which of the following make you concerned? Showing total for “A lot” and “Some”. 1,011 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



This chart compares concerns about nuclear energy in 2018 to concerns in 2024 among political parties. In 2018, 80% of Americans were concerned about health and safety, compared to 74% in 2024. Across parties, 88% of Democrats in 2018 vs. 78% in 2024, 84% of Independents in 2018 vs. 73% in 2024, and 67% of Republicans in 2018 vs. 72% in 2024 expressed concern about health and safety.

In 2018, 84% of Americans were concerned about waste disposal, compared to 72% in 2024. Across parties, 92% of Democrats in 2018 vs. 75% in 2024, 85% of Independents in 2018 vs. 72% in 2024, and 78% of Republicans in 2018 vs. 69% in 2024 expressed concern about waste disposal.

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Over time, Democrats and Independents show a 10-point and 11-point drop, respectively, in health and safety concerns. While Republican concern remains lower than other political parties, their concern for health and safety has risen since 2018, from 67% to 72%.

Concern for waste disposal has decreased across all parties since 2018. The greatest 17-point drop is observed in Democrats, with concern dropping from 92% in 2018 to 75% in 2024. For Independents, concern drops by 13 points, and for Republicans, it drops by 9.

Full data is available in the accompanying [toplines](#).

Methodology

ecoAmerica designed and administered this survey, which was conducted online from July 24 – August 9, 2024, using Survey Monkey. The survey yielded a total of 1,011 complete adult responses and used the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey to weigh the national general population and reflect the demographic composition of the US. The sample was drawn from an online panel, and the respondents were screened to ensure that they were over the age of 18. The margin of error for the sample is +/-3%. In interpreting the survey results, it is important to note that all sample surveys are subject to possible sampling errors. Thus, the results of a survey may differ from the results that would be obtained if the entire population were interviewed. The size of the sampling error depends upon both the total number of respondents in the survey and the percentage distribution of the responses to a particular question. For example, if 50% of the respondents in a sample of 1,011 respondents answered “Yes” to a particular question, we can be 95% confident that the true percentage would fall within 3 points or range from 47% to 53%.

Suggested Citation

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