American Climate Perspectives

Americans See Nuclear, Wind, and Solar as Key to Affordable Power and Clean Data Centers

As electricity demand grows, America faces important choices about how to power its future. For the ninth consecutive year, ecoAmerica's American Climate Perspectives Survey has tracked Americans' views on nuclear energy and the broader energy mix. This year's survey finds:

- **Americans Value Nuclear Alongside Wind and Solar:** 81% say using nuclear energy with wind and solar is important for affordable electricity, and 79% say the same for reliability.
- **Transpartisan Consensus:** Support is strong among Democrats, Republicans, and Independents alike.
- **Expanding Infrastructure Needs:** As data centers grow, Americans expect them to run on clean energy with robust community protections in place.
- **Evolving Perspectives:** While health, safety, and waste concerns have generally eased since 2018, cost remains a primary focus as new nuclear technologies are developed.

Together, these findings point to a public that wants nuclear, wind, and solar working together, with support for next-generation nuclear R&D at its highest level in nine years of tracking. Delivering on affordability will be key to building on that support.

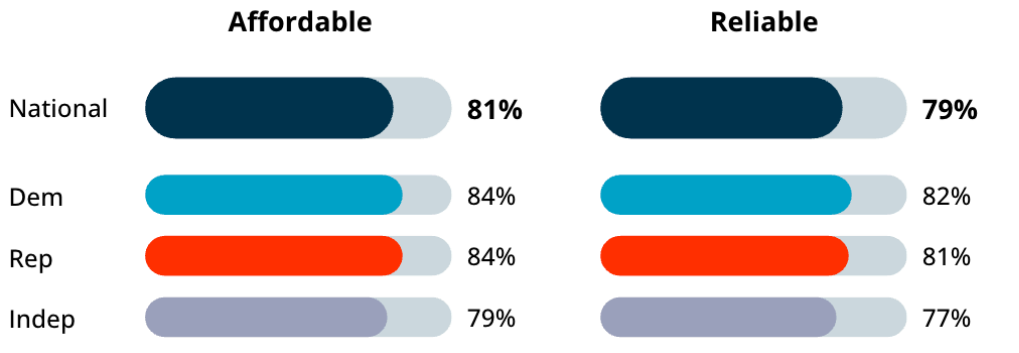
Americans Say Nuclear Alongside Wind and Solar is Important for Affordable, Reliable Electricity

81% of Americans say it is important for the United States to use nuclear energy together with wind and solar to help provide affordable electricity, including half (51%) who say it is very important. Nearly as many (79%) say the same for reliable electricity. Agreement is strongly transpartisan: 84% of Democrats, 84% of Republicans, and 79% of Independents say it is important for affordability, and 82%, 81%, and 77%, respectively, say the same for reliability. Strong majorities across ages, sexes, and races also agree.[1]

8 in 10 say nuclear alongside wind and solar is important for affordable, reliable electricity.

Q: How important is it for the United States to use nuclear energy together with wind and solar energy to help provide reliable and affordable electricity?

Showing total for "Very important" and "Somewhat important". 1,133 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



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[1] See toplines for full data across demographics.

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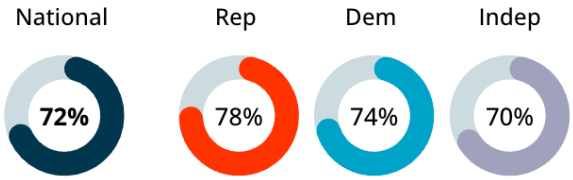
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72% of Americans also support converting retired coal-fired power plants into nuclear power plants if it could help provide cleaner and more reliable energy. Support spans party lines, with 78% of Republicans, 74% of Democrats, and 70% of Independents in favor.

Americans across the political spectrum support converting retired coal plants to nuclear for cleaner, more reliable energy.

Q: How much would you support or oppose converting retired coal-fired power plants into nuclear power plants, if it could help provide cleaner and more reliable energy?

Showing total for "Strongly support" and "Somewhat support". 1,133 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.



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Americans Want Data Centers Powered by Clean Energy, Including Nuclear, Expecting Strong Community Protections

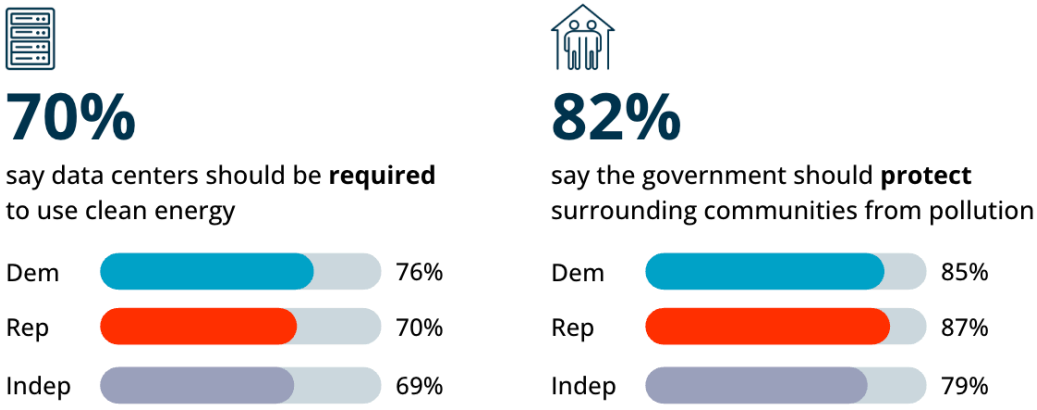
As data centers expand, Americans are sharing clear opinions about how they should be powered. 70% say data center operators should be required to use clean energy, such as wind, solar, and nuclear, to meet their electricity needs, while only 13% say they should not. 17% are not sure. Majorities across parties agree, including 76% of Democrats, 70% of Republicans, and 69% of Independents.

Even if data centers install and use clean energy on-site, Americans expect strong safeguards. 82% say it is important for the government to set and enforce rules that protect surrounding communities from impacts such as air, water, and soil pollution, including 59% who say it is very important. Consensus is strong across parties, led by Republicans (87%), followed by Democrats (85%) and Independents (79%). Majorities across ages, sexes, and races also agree, with consensus ranging from 74% to 88%.

Americans want data centers to use clean energy and communities protected from pollution.

Q: As demand for data centers grows, should data center operators be required to use clean energy, such as wind, solar, and nuclear, to meet their electricity needs?

Q: If data centers install and use clean energy on-site, how important is it for the government to set and enforce rules that protect surrounding communities from possible impacts, such as air, water, and soil pollution?



Showing "Yes" on the left. Showing total for "Very important" and "Somewhat important" on the right.
1,133 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.

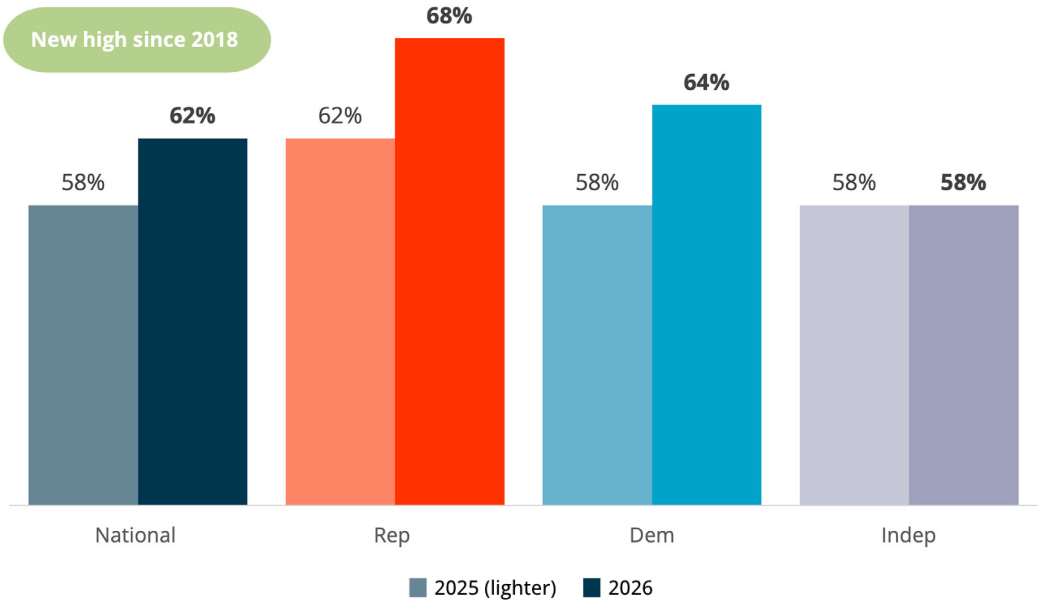
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Support for Nuclear R&D Climbs to a New High

Nearly two in three Americans (62%) say the US should spend more on research and development (R&D) of next-generation nuclear energy, the highest level since ecoAmerica's 2018 survey. National support is up 4 points from 2025, and bipartisan support has grown by 6 points over the past year, with Republicans rising from 62% to 68% and Democrats from 58% to 64%. Independents held steady at 58%.

National and bipartisan support for nuclear R&D has increased since last year.

Q: 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?



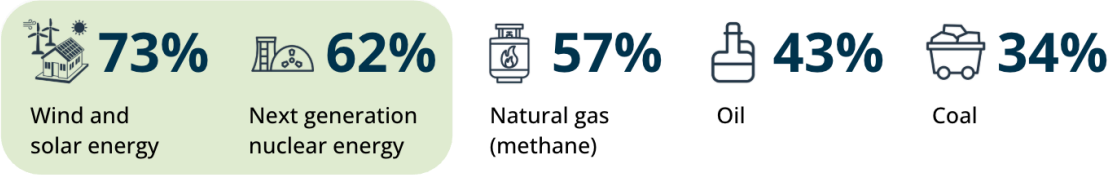
Showing total for "A lot more" and "More" for next-generation nuclear energy.
1,133 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.

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R&D support for wind and solar continues to lead at 73%, while support for nuclear R&D outpaces methane gas (57%), oil (43%), and coal (34%). These results suggest continued public support for investing in clean energy over fossil fuels.

American favor R&D for wind, solar, and nuclear.

Q: 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." 1,133 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.

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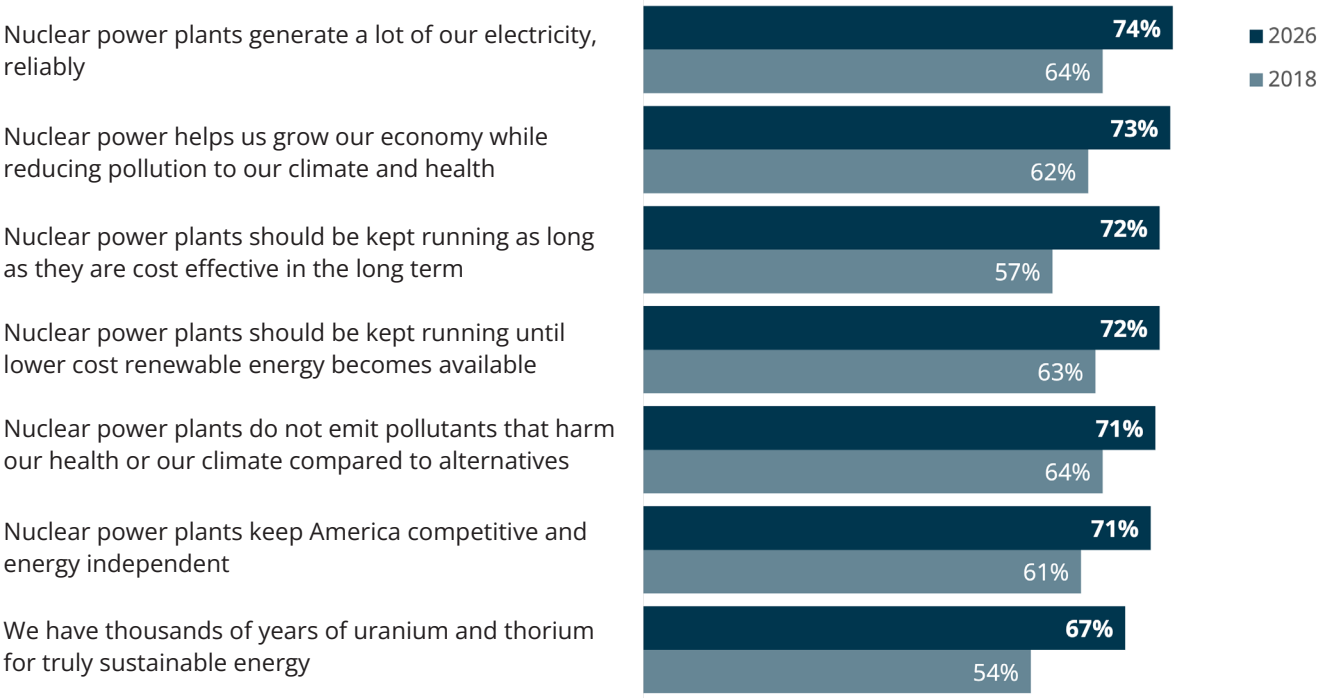
Growing Majorities See Nuclear's Benefits for Reliability, the Economy, Pollution Reduction, and Energy Independence

Majority support for nuclear power holds steady. In 2026, nearly three in five Americans (58%) strongly or somewhat support nuclear power, unchanged from 2025 and up 9 points since 2018. Across demographics, adults aged 65+ (69%), males (68%), and Republicans (67%) are the top supporters.[2]

Support for nuclear has grown across all reasons, by 7 to 15 points since 2018. 74% of Americans say nuclear plants generate a lot of our electricity reliably, and 73% say nuclear energy helps grow our economy while reducing pollution to our climate and health. Additionally, 72% say nuclear plants should be kept running as long as they are cost-effective in the long term, and the same share say they should run until lower-cost renewable energy becomes available. 71% say nuclear plants keep America competitive and energy independent. Majorities across parties support every reason.

More Americans are supporting nuclear for reliability, economic growth, pollution reduction, and energy independence.

Q: What are the most important reasons for supporting nuclear energy?



Showing total for "Very important" and "Somewhat important." 1,133 national respondents.
+/- 3% margin of error.

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[2] See toplines for full data across demographics and survey years.

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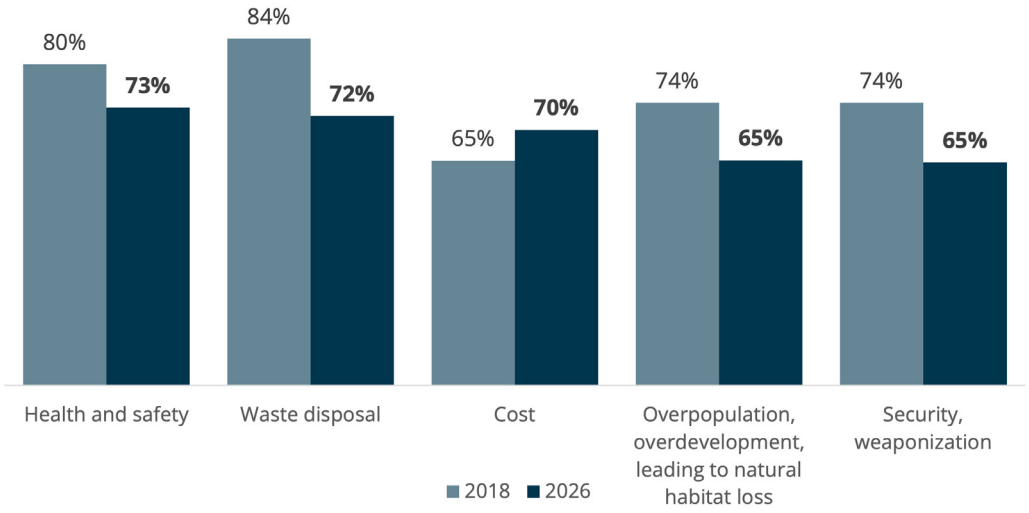
Nuclear Concerns Ease, Except for Cost

Majorities of Americans still have concerns about nuclear power, but most concerns have eased since 2018. Concern about nuclear energy costs, however, has risen to 70%, up 5 points since 2018, and now ranks third among Americans' nuclear concerns.

Affordability is a clear priority for Americans, and the survey indicates that nuclear energy will be expected to deliver affordable power (81% say using nuclear alongside wind and solar is important for affordable electricity; see p. 1). This finding underscores the importance of ensuring new nuclear plants are cost-effective. Recent research suggests significant cost reductions as more plants are built and lessons learned are applied.[3] At the same time, nuclear regulators and contractors are working toward reactors built in factories, much like airplanes, rather than on the cathedral-scale construction sites of past decades.[4] Sharing these developments can help address cost concerns while building on Americans' strong support for nuclear as part of an affordable clean energy mix.

American concern about nuclear power over time.

Q: People have concerns about upgrading nuclear energy. Which of the following makes you concerned?



Showing total for "A lot" and "Some." 1,133 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.

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Health and safety (73%) and waste disposal (72%) remain the top nuclear concerns, but concern about each has dropped 7 and 12 points since 2018, respectively. Health and safety concerns have declined among Democrats (88% to 78%) and Independents (84% to 69%), while Republican concern has risen from 67% to 74%. Waste disposal concerns have decreased across all parties since 2018, led by Independents (down 19 points, from 85% to 66%), followed by Democrats (down 13 points) and Republicans (down 7 points). These shifts suggest long-standing concerns about nuclear may be more open to change than they appear.

[3] A 2025 Idaho National Laboratory study suggests that building about three more AP1000 reactors (advanced nuclear power plants) could bring costs low enough to compete in major U.S. markets, even without tax credits.

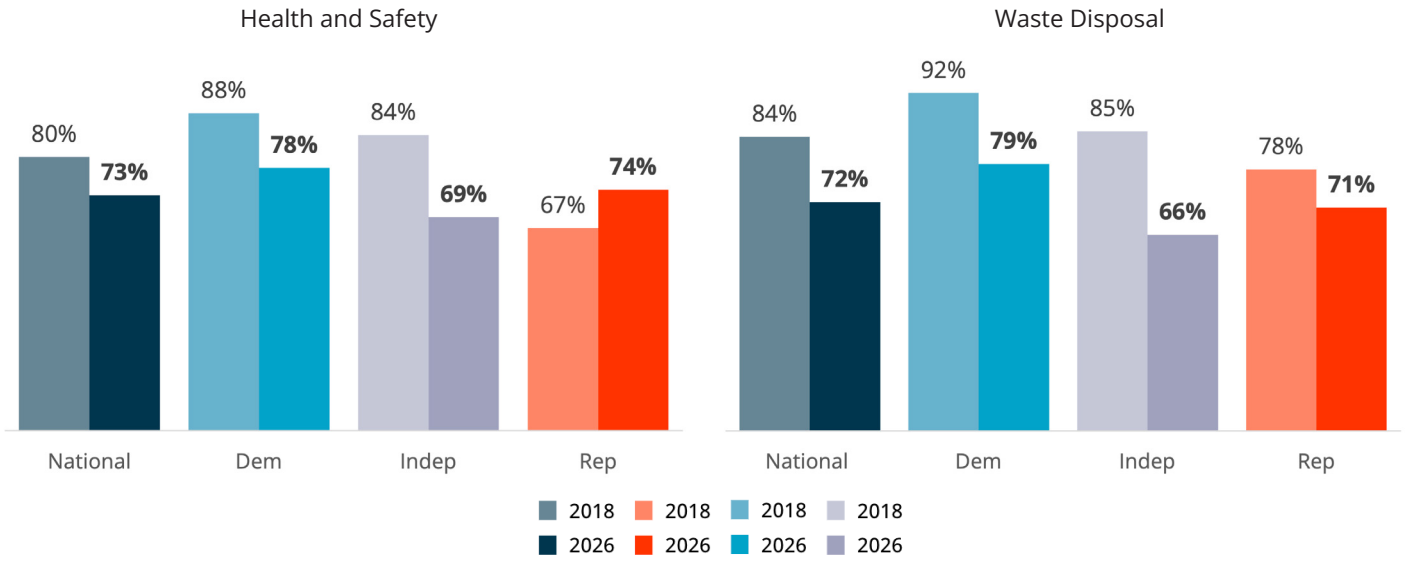
[4] A 2026 Nuclear Innovation Alliance study finds that building reactors in factories, as the aerospace industry does with airplanes, could significantly lower nuclear costs.

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Health, safety, and waste remain top nuclear concerns, but have dropped since 2018.

Q: People have concerns about upgrading nuclear energy. Which of the following makes you concerned?



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Full data is available in the accompanying toplines.

Methodology

ecoAmerica, a nonprofit organization, designed and administered this survey, which was conducted online from September 1–9, 2026, using SurveyMonkey. The survey yielded a total of 1,133 complete adult responses. It used the Census Bureau's American Community Survey to weight the national general population and reflect the demographic composition of the US. The sample was drawn from an online panel, and respondents were screened to ensure they were over 18. The margin of error for the sample is +/-3%. When interpreting survey results, it is important to note that all sample surveys are subject to possible sampling error. Thus, the results of a survey may differ from those obtained if the entire population was 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 1,133 respondents in a sample answered "Yes" to a particular question, we can be 95% confident that the true percentage falls within 3 percentage points, or ranges from 47% to 53%.

Suggested Citation

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ecoAmerica does not hold a formal position on nuclear energy.

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