

ACT

The Alliance for
Climate Transition

State Agency Communications in a Changing Energy Landscape

Why Affordability Should Lead the Conversation



The Communications Environment Has Fundamentally Changed

State agencies are communicating in a very different environment than they were even five years ago.

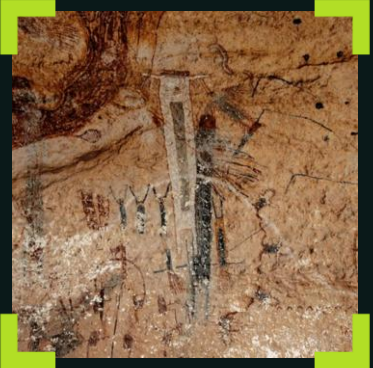
Today's audiences:

- ❖ Consume information primarily through digital and social media.
- ❖ Have fewer trusted local news sources.
- ❖ Are exposed to competing narratives every day.
- ❖ Make decisions quickly based on visual, concise content.

At the same time, organized opposition campaigns are increasingly framing energy investments around affordability, safety, and government spending rather than climate.

Bottom Line: Communications strategies must evolve to reflect how people receive, and evaluate information today.

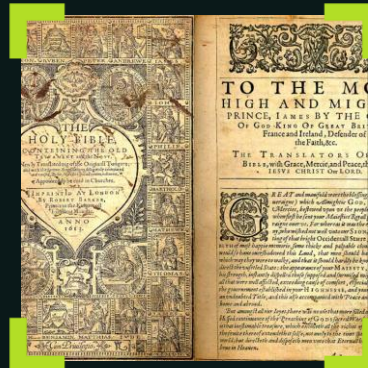
Communication Methods Have Changed



Cave Paintings



Printed Images for
Storytelling



Written Word



TV and Radio

We Need a New Approach



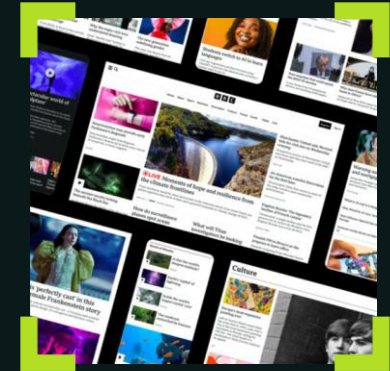
Central, Trusted News Authority



Collapse of Local News & Trusted Authority



Short-Form, Visual Content

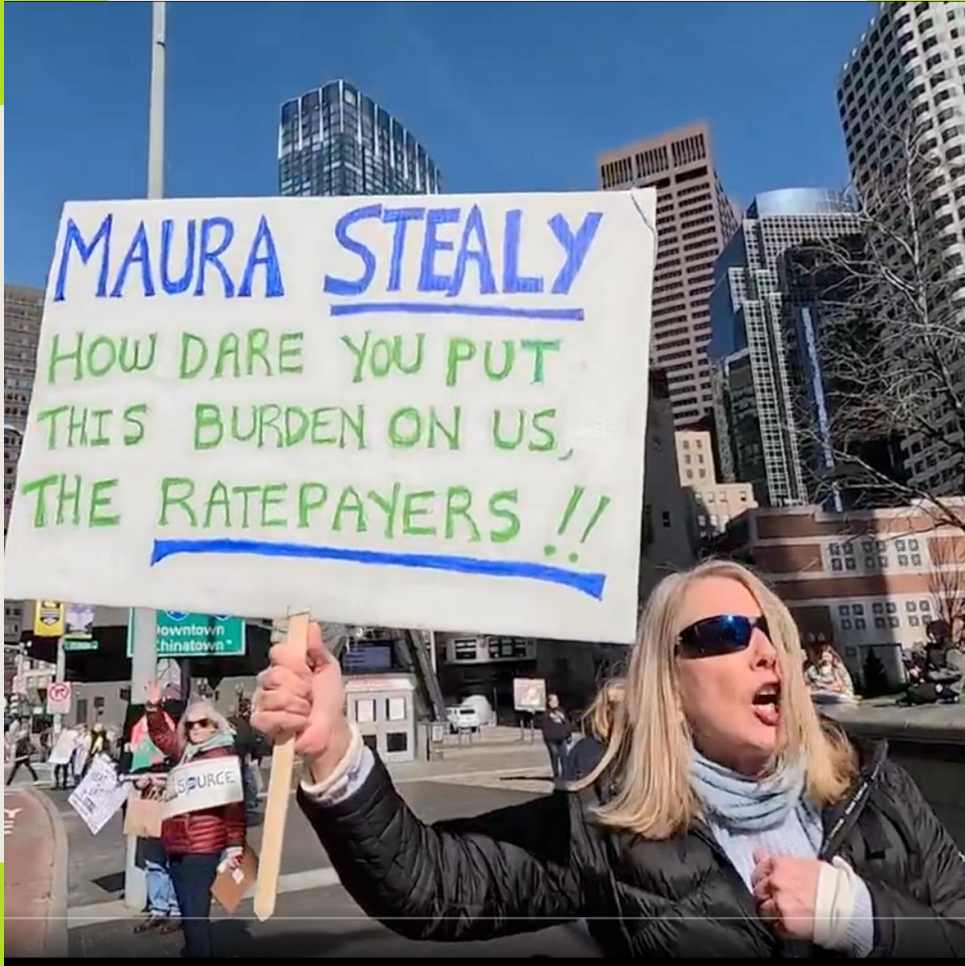


Multi-Channel, Fragmented Information Environment

30 sec.
Attention Span

Goldfish (9 sec.)

8 sec.



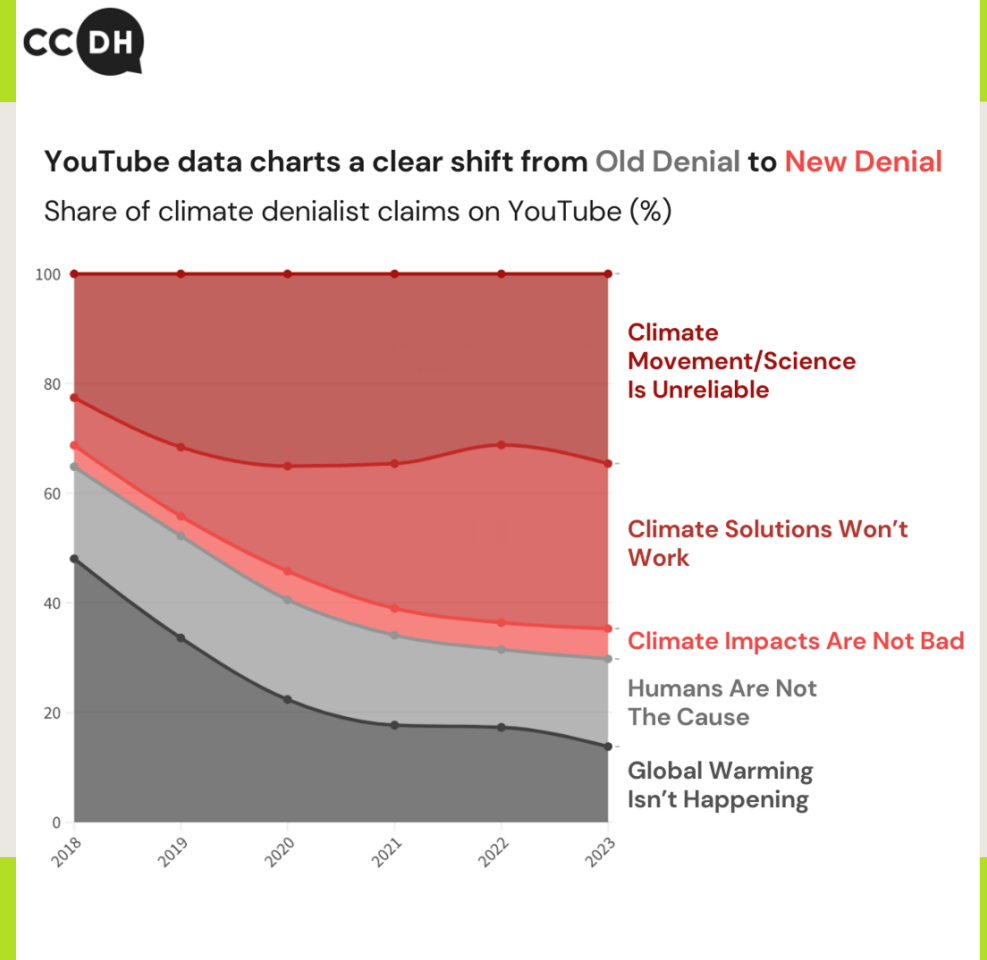
Online Opposition: The Big Picture

These groups are not just pushing disinformation online: they are taking to the [streets with protests](#), [holding press conferences](#), [publishing op-eds](#), producing [misleading podcasts](#) and [social content](#), and [bird-dogging Governors, Legislators, and climate champions](#) at every turn.

What We're Seeing: Social Media

About one in five U.S. adults and 37% of adults under 30 say they regularly get news from [social media influencers](#).

- [Climate skeptic posts](#) grew by 43% on YouTube from 2021 to 2024.
- Climate skeptic posts grew by 82% on X (Twitter) from 2021 to 2024.
- Claims that climate change is an instrument of control now represent about 36% of climate-skeptic content on YouTube and 40% of climate-skeptic posts on X (Twitter).



[THE CENTER FOR COUNTERING DIGITAL HATE](#)



Media Giants Aren't Helping

Following Trump's election victory, Mark Zuckerberg has abandoned third-party fact-checking on Facebook and Instagram, while misleading posts about climate have flourished on X since Elon Musk took control of the site.

More than 300 influencers are spreading content about climate change that ranges from scepticism to misinformation.

The National Science Foundation is no longer funding "research with the goal of combating 'misinformation,' 'disinformation,' and 'malinformation.'"



Heart of the Work: *Reclaim the Narrative*

We must correct the record, reach the undecided middle, and equip local leaders and champions.

Making Content Stick: Forgettable messages don't move people; *memorable ones do.*

Frequency Builds Familiarity

Repeat your message across channels and time. People don't absorb on the first pass — they remember what they see often.

Consistency Builds Trust

Say it the same way, every time. Use the same tone, values, and visual identity to reinforce recall and credibility.

Simplicity Cuts Through the Noise

One idea per message. One message per moment. Got Milk?" sticks because it's simple, specific, and visual.

Make it Concrete, Not Abstract

Use tangible examples, not vague concepts. People remember what they can picture, like "the milk mustache."

Tell a Story

People remember narratives, not facts. Tie your message to a person, a moment, or a change — and watch it last.

What the Polling Tells Us

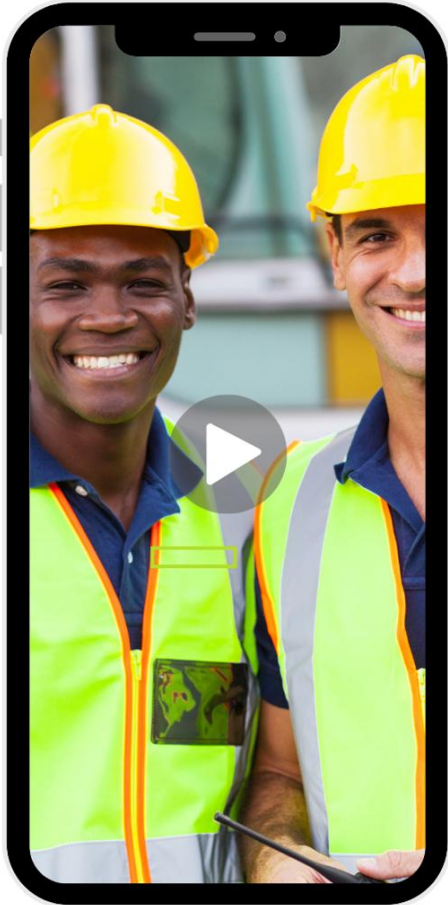
Key Findings:

- 84% of Americans are concerned about electricity costs.
- Energy affordability has become the #1 energy issue.
- Broad affordability messaging consistently performs better than technology-focused language.
- People respond most positively to messages about low-cost, reliable energy.
- Nearly half of Americans now rely primarily on digital news sources.

What This Means:

People increasingly evaluate energy policies based on their perceived impact on household budgets—not simply environmental outcomes.





Top Messaging Tips

1. Lead with Affordability

2. Emphasize Reliability

3. Make It Local – People care most about impacts in their own communities.

4. Explain Benefits Before Technology

- ❖ lower costs
- ❖ reliable service
- ❖ healthier communities
- ❖ economic opportunity

5. Use Plain Language

6. Use Visual Storytelling

Why Traditional Messaging Is Becoming Less Effective

Historically, public communications often emphasized:

- ❖ Climate benefits
- ❖ Carbon reductions
- ❖ Technology deployment
- ❖ Long-term environmental outcomes

Today's audiences are asking different questions:

- ❖ Will this lower my electric bill?
- ❖ Will it make the grid more reliable?
- ❖ Does it improve my community?
- ❖ Does it create jobs?
- ❖ Is it worth the investment?

State agencies should ensure their communications answer these questions first.

Messaging Principles for State Agencies

Lead with Outcomes

Instead of:

- ❖ Investing in battery storage
- ❖ Building electrification
- ❖ Clean energy innovation

Technology becomes the supporting evidence—not the headline.

Lead With:

- ❖ Helping stabilize electricity costs and improve grid reliability.
- ❖ Helping families reduce heating costs while improving comfort.
- ❖ Growing local jobs, strengthening the economy, and lowering long-term energy costs.



**“With public sentiment,
nothing can fail; without it,
nothing can succeed.”**

Abraham Lincoln



Questions?

The logo consists of a square frame made of four bright green lines. The top and bottom lines are horizontal, while the left and right lines are vertical. The word "ACT" is centered within the square in a large, white, bold, sans-serif font.

ACT

**The Alliance for
Climate Transition**