Americans’ Changing Views of Renewable Energy Policies

Hosted by
Warren Leon, Executive Director, CESA

December 4, 2018
Housekeeping

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RPS Collaborative

- With funding from the Energy Foundation and the U.S. Department of Energy, CESA facilitates the Collaborative.
- Includes state RPS administrators, federal agency representatives, and other stakeholders.
- Advances dialogue and learning about RPS programs by examining the challenges and potential solutions for successful implementation of state RPS programs, including identification of best practices.
- To sign up for the Collaborative listserv to get the monthly newsletter and announcements of upcoming events, see: www.cesa.org/projects/renewable-portfolio-standards
Webinar Speakers

Sarah Mills, Senior Project Manager & Lecturer, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan

Warren Leon, Executive Director, Clean Energy States Alliance (moderator)
Americans’ Changing Views of Renewable Energy Policies

Sarah Mills, PhD
University of Michigan

CESA Webinar – December 4, 2018
Outline

• Overview of NSEE
• Findings from NSEE@10 Report
• Latest findings from Fall 2018
National Surveys on Energy and Environment

• Public opinion
  o Random sample of U.S. adult residents
  o Telephone interviews
  o Sample size: 700-1000

• Frequency: Fall of 2008, 2009, then twice per year

• Covers climate belief and energy policy
National Surveys on Energy and Environment

• Partnership between University of Michigan and Muhlenberg College’s Institute of Public Opinion
  o All funding to-date from these colleges

• Committed to research transparency
  o Data tables, survey instruments online soon after survey
  o Full dataset available after initial reporting
NSEE @10

• In-depth reports pulling together all data from 10 years of NSEE surveys
  o Fossil fuels (Coal, Natural gas, Pipelines)
  o Federalism
  o Carbon pricing (Carbon tax, Cap-and-trade)
  o Transportation (Fuel economy, EV rebates, Gas taxes)
  o Renewables (Wind, Solar, RPS) – Released October 2018
  o Adaptation, Mitigation, & Geoengineering
  o Attitudes about climate change
Consistently high support for requiring renewable energy (RPS)
Net support for RPS across political spectrum
Net support for RPS even among climate skeptics
No difference in net support based on RPS status
Most don’t know if state has RPS; more (incorrectly) think don’t have RPS
Support for RPS drops once price applied

- No cost (n=751):
  - Strongly agree: 42%
  - Somewhat agree: 30%
  - Not sure: 6%
  - Somewhat disagree: 7%
  - Strongly disagree: 15%

- $25/year (n=751):
  - Strongly agree: 26%
  - Somewhat agree: 32%
  - Not sure: 4%
  - Somewhat disagree: 16%
  - Strongly disagree: 21%

- $50/year (n=751):
  - Strongly agree: 19%
  - Somewhat agree: 26%
  - Not sure: 5%
  - Somewhat disagree: 18%
  - Strongly disagree: 31%
Drop in support once cost applied happens across political spectrum.
Most willing to pay something more for renewable energy; growing portion say >$50/year
Democrats & Independents more willing to pay a premium (at least $100 per year)
Most think RPS will boost state economies

Question Text: “State governments will boost their economies by requiring greater use of renewable energy.”
But RPS leadership increasingly seen as competitive disadvantage

Question Text: “My state’s economy will be damaged if it requires greater use of RE while neighboring states don’t.”
Net agreement that RPS causes competitive disadvantage among Republicans, Independents
Apart from mandates, wide support for increasing wind, solar

![Survey Results]

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Strongly Support</th>
<th>Somewhat Support</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Somewhat Oppose</th>
<th>Strongly Oppose</th>
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<tr>
<td>Requiring renewable energy</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing wind energy</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<td>Increasing solar energy</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Requiring renewable energy</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<td>Increasing wind energy</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing solar energy</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Democrats vs. Republicans

- **Democrats**
  - Requiring renewable energy (n=282): 59%
  - Increasing wind energy (n=281): 64%
  - Increasing solar energy (n=282): 72%

- **Republicans**
  - Requiring renewable energy (n=214): 40%
  - Increasing wind energy (n=216): 53%
  - Increasing solar energy (n=214): 57%
Solar seen as more reliable than wind
Wind seen as **job-creator** more than climate solution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
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<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wind turbines create jobs (n=940)</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wind turbines help limit climate change (n=940)</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<td>Wind turbines create noise pollution (n=940)</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<td>Wind turbines produce visual or aesthetic problems (n=940)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wind turbines reduce nearby property values (n=940)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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Summary

• Wide support for renewables, slightly less for RPS ("mandate")

• Most don’t follow RPS policy closely

• Most willing to pay modest amount for more renewables; growing portion willing to pay much more

• Wide support likely due to non-climate benefits (e.g., job creation)
  o But mandates not necessarily seen as competitive advantage
Latest findings from Fall 2018
Large majorities of Americans of both parties support increasing the use of solar and wind energy in their state.
The gap between Democrats and Republicans is larger on state policies mandating or subsidizing renewable energy.
Democrats most likely to point to economic development, human health benefits of renewable energy.
Republicans point to energy independence, health benefits; not so much climate.
What Else Are We Working On?

• NSEE reports on carbon pricing, geoengineering

• How other state policies facilitate/hinder renewable energy (Renewable Energy Policy Initiative)
  o Property taxation
  o Siting authority
  o Farmland preservation
  o Equity within RPS, solar policies

• How renewables impact host communities; how local governments plan for energy infrastructure
Thank you!

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Thank you for attending our webinar

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Visit our website to learn more about the RPS Collaborative and to sign up for our e-newsletter:
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Tuesday, December 11, 1-2pm ET

Oregon’s New Energy Storage Project for Resiliency and Cost Savings
Tuesday, December 18, 2-3pm ET

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