



TO: Interested Parties
FROM: EMC Research, Inc.
RE: Recent Survey of Suburban Ohio Voters
DATE: August 25, 2022

This memo details results from a recent poll¹ conducted by EMC Research on behalf of the Ohio Environmental Council. EMC conducted a multi-modal survey of suburban voters in Ohio to understand sentiment and attitudes surrounding a variety of environmental-related issues. For more details or answers to any questions, please contact Molly O’Shaughnessy (molly@emcresearch.com) or Aaron Kelley (aaron@emcresearch.com).

Suburban voters care about climate change and the environment.

The recent poll asked voters to rate their concern over a variety of issues using a 1 to 10 scale, and three-in-five (60%) of suburban voters say that climate change is an at least somewhat convincing concern. That figure includes two-in-five (40%) suburban voters who say climate change is an “extremely important concern.” Among all issues tested, “safe drinking water” rose to the top, with two-thirds (67%) of suburban voters saying that is an extremely important concern. Various other issues, including health insurance costs, jobs and the economy, gas prices, taxes and education funding were rated with more intensity than was climate change; however, suburban voters gave higher mean ratings to safe drinking water, pollution of lakes, pollution of rivers and streams, and air pollution, indicating that these issues matter to voters and may provide inroads among suburban voters to communicating more directly about climate change and renewable energy.

Overall, three-in-five (63%) suburban voters consider themselves to be environmentalists, including 87% of Democrats, 55% of independents, and 42% of Republicans. College graduates and women were also more likely to identify as environmentalists.

A 62% majority of suburban voters in Ohio say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supports Ohio’s growing renewable energy sector.

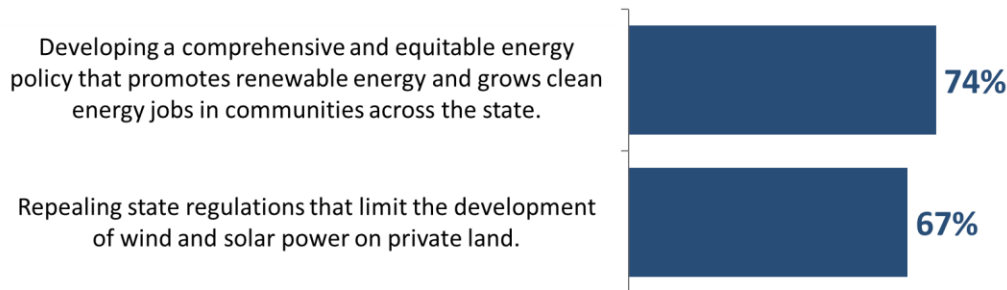
This figure includes two-in-five (42%) suburban voters who say they would be much more likely to support such a candidate. Key groups of suburban voters who were most likely to say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate supporting renewable energy include Democrats (97% more likely), women under 50 (73% more likely), men over 65 (72% more likely), college graduates (68% more likely), and suburban voters in the Central Ohio area (67% more likely). Half (50%) of independent voters would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supports renewable energy.

¹ This memo represents findings from a recent poll conducted by EMC Research among 600 likely November 2022 voters in Suburban areas of Ohio. Suburban voters were identified using defined Metro counties and subtracting from those counties any voters living within the boundaries of Census-defined Places with populations above 50,000. Interviews were conducted via live telephone interviews, email- and text-to-web methodologies between August 3-8, 2022. The survey has a margin of error of ± 4.0 percentage points at the overall level.

Suburban voters are open to various proposals related to growing Ohio's renewable energy sector.

Three separate proposals were tested in the poll to gauge support for growing Ohio's renewable energy sector and making it easier to build wind and solar power in the state. Results show that a minimum of three-in-five suburban voters support each of the proposals tested. Proposals to develop a comprehensive and equitable energy policy as well as policy that would repeal state regulations that limit the development of solar and wind on private land receive overwhelming support from Democrats as well as support from half of Republican voters.

% Total Support for Renewable Energy Proposals



Suburban voters value a pragmatic approach to climate change and renewable energy.

The survey presented voters with a variety of questions asking agreement with attitudinal statements related to climate change. More than three-in-five (63%) suburban Ohio voters agree with the statement “transitioning to renewable energy and slowing climate change is an economic opportunity for Ohio.” Furthermore, Suburban Ohio voters reject the notion that we are in too deep to reverse the impacts of climate change – only one-in-five (21%) agree with the statement “there is nothing we can do to slow or reverse the impacts of climate change – we are in too deep,” with four-in-five (79%) disagreeing. Conversely, more than three-in-five (62%) of suburban voters agree with the statement “we are completely able to find solutions to climate change and successfully implement them.” Suburban voters recognize an opportunity for pragmatic problem solving and want the state to take action, viewing renewable energy as an opportunity to boost Ohio's economy.

Various communications themes are effective among suburban voters.

Suburban voters also ranked these communications themes as convincing reasons to support investment in renewable energy in Ohio:

- Air pollution and referencing the high rates of allergies, asthma, and lung cancer in Ohio
- Clean drinking water and the historic pollution of the Ohio River and Lake Erie
- Corruption related to HB6 and taxpayer subsidies of coal and nuclear energy
- The unfair regulations that prevent family farmers to profit from solar and wind energy by restricting the development of renewables on private property

A unifying concept across the communications themes rated most convincing is a positive, pragmatic, and solutions-focused approach that does not directly reference climate change while still emphasizing the need for renewable energy.