2023

# TEXAS LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

## Energy

Hobby School of Public Affairs
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

Hobby School of Public Affairs
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

# Texas Legislative Issues 2023
# Energy

The Hobby School of Public Affairs at the University of Houston conducted an online survey of Texans ages 18 and older to assess their preferences and opinions regarding legislation that will be considered by the Texas Legislature during the 2023 legislative session. The survey was fielded between January 9 and January 19, 2023, in English and Spanish, with 1,200 YouGov respondents, resulting in a confidence interval of +/-2.8%. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race/ethnicity, and education and are representative of the population of Texas adults.

This is the seventh of seven reports. The first report examined the saving and spending preferences of Texans related to the state's current $33 billion budget surplus, support for legislation to reimburse universities and colleges for tuition benefits provided and expand Medicaid's postpartum coverage, and support for a series of proposed sales tax exemption bills. The second report focused on support for gambling legislation presently under consideration in the Texas Legislature. The third report addressed support for two forms of proposed school choice legislation, vouchers and tax incentives for donations to support attendance at private schools. The fourth report analyzed support for a set of bills considered to be part of the broader "cultural war" currently taking place in Texas, covering issues such as the gender identity of children, instruction on sexuality in public schools, the Texas Constitution's definition of marriage, and Confederate Heroes Day. The fifth report focused on support for legislation regulating marijuana in Texas. The sixth report examined support for legislation regarding abortion, gun safety, immigration, and election reform. This seventh, and final, report examines preferences regarding energy sources in the United States, support for using state funds to provide incentives for the construction of natural gas power plants, support for home solar power related legislation, and interest in installing solar panels and an energy storage system among homeowners.

## Executive Summary

64% of Texans favor expanding U.S. reliance on solar power plants as an energy source while 12% favor reducing U.S. reliance on solar power plants.

- 80% of Democrats, but only 50% of Republicans, favor expanding reliance on solar.
- 8% of Democrats and 15% of Republicans favor reducing reliance on solar.

57% of Texans favor expanding U.S. reliance on wind turbine farms as an energy source while 19% favor reducing U.S. reliance on wind turbine farms.

- 74% of Democrats, but only 38% of Republicans, favor expanding reliance on wind.
- 31% of Republicans, but only 10% of Democrats, favor reducing reliance on wind.

41% of Texans favor expanding U.S. reliance on onshore conventional oil and natural gas as an energy source while 31% favor reducing U.S. reliance on onshore oil and gas.

- 70% of Republicans, but only 17% of Democrats, favor expanding onshore oil and gas.
- 52% of Democrats, but only 10% of Republicans, favor reducing onshore oil and gas.
- 57% of Boomers/Silent Gen., but only 23% of Gen-Z, favor expanding onshore oil and gas.
- 48% of Gen-Z, but only 24% of Boomers/Silent Gen., favor reducing onshore oil and gas.

40% of Texans favor expanding U.S. reliance on offshore conventional oil and gas as an energy source while 33% favor reducing U.S. reliance on onshore oil and gas.

- 64% of Republicans, but only 21% of Democrats, favor expanding onshore oil and gas.
- 78% of Democrats, but only 12% of Republicans, favor reducing offshore oil and gas.
- 55% of Boomers/Silent Gen., but only 29% of Gen-Z, favor expanding offshore oil and gas.
- 59% of Gen-Z, but only 21% of Boomers/Silent Gen., favor reducing offshore oil and gas.

35% of Texans favor expanding U.S. reliance on fracking for oil and natural gas as an energy source while 42% favor reducing U.S. reliance on fracking.

- 61% of Republicans, but only 14% of Democrats, favor expanding fracking.
- 66% of Democrats, but only 18% of Republicans, favor reducing fracking.

42% of Texans favor expanding U.S. reliance on natural gas fired power plants as an energy source while 28% favor reducing U.S. reliance on natural gas fired plants.

- 61% of Republicans, but only 26% of Democrats, favor expanding reliance on gas fired plants.
- 45% of Democrats, but only 11% of Republicans, favor reducing reliance on gas fired plants.

27% of Texans favor expanding U.S. reliance on coal mining and coal fired power plants as an energy source while 47% favor reducing U.S. reliance on coal.

- 46% of Republicans, but only 12% of Democrats, favor expanding coal.
- 71% of Democrats, but only 22% of Republicans, favor reducing coal.

42% of Texans favor expanding U.S. reliance on nuclear power plants as an energy source while 29% favor reducing U.S. reliance on nuclear.

- 54% of Republicans, but only 32% of Democrats, favor expanding reliance on nuclear.
- 42% of Democrats, but only 16% of Republicans, favor reducing reliance on nuclear.

59% of Texans favor expanding U.S. reliance on geothermal power plants as an energy source while 14% favor reducing U.S. reliance on geothermal power plants.

- 63% of Republicans and 59% of Democrats favor expanding reliance on geothermal.
- 16% of Democrats and 10% of Republicans favor reducing reliance on geothermal.

57% of Texans favor expanding U.S. reliance on hydroelectric dams as an energy source while 12% favor reducing U.S. reliance on hydroelectric dams.

- 60% of Republicans and 57% of Democrats favor expanding reliance on hydroelectric.
- 14% of Democrats and 8% of Republicans favor reducing reliance on hydroelectric.

54% of Texans favor expanding U.S. reliance on hydrogen power plants as an energy source while 17% favor reducing U.S. reliance on hydrogen power plants.

- 58% of Republicans and 57% of Democrats favor expanding reliance on hydrogen.
- 17% of Democrats and 13% of Republicans favor reducing reliance on hydrogen.

42% of Texans favor expanding U.S. reliance on ethanol and other biofuels as an energy source while 27% favor reducing U.S. reliance on ethanol and other biofuels.

- 42% of Democrats and 42% of Republicans favor expanding reliance on biofuels.
- 28% of Democrats and 27% of Republicans favor reducing reliance on biofuels.

Between January 2021 (i.e., immediately before Winter Storm Uri) and January 2023 the proportion of Texans favoring the expansion of four energy sources increased significantly: ethanol and biofuels (increase of 11%), offshore conventional oil and natural gas (increase of 10%), fracking for oil and natural gas (increase of 8%), and coal mining and coal fired power plants (increase of 8%).

77% of Texans favor using some of the state's budget surplus to provide one-time tax credits or incentives to companies to promote the immediate construction of more natural gas power plants to increase the reliability of the electrical grid.

- 87% of Republicans and 69% of Democrats support using surplus funds for this purpose.

90% of Texans support (54% strongly) legislation that would allow homes and businesses with solar panels to sell any extra power they generate back to the electric grid for the same price that the utility charges consumers to buy the electricity (i.e., net-metering).

- 93% of Democrats and 90% of Republicans support this net-metering legislation.

82% of Texans support (49% strongly) legislation that would offer financial incentives (such as tax breaks or rebates) for individual homeowners and businesses to install rooftop solar panels and battery storage.

- 90% of Democrats and 76% of Republicans support this tax incentive legislation.

33% of Texas homeowners are very interested and 31% are somewhat interested in purchasing a solar energy system, compared to 16% who are not too interested and 20% who are not at all interested.

- 82% of Democrats and 52% of Republicans are either very or somewhat interested.

Over the past two years (e.g., after Winter Storm Uri hit Texas in February 2021), 44% of Texans have become more interested in purchasing a solar energy and energy storage system (e.g., rooftop solar panels and battery storage) while 8% have become less interested, and 48% maintain the same level of interest they had two years ago.

- 54% of Democrats and 35% of Republicans are more interested today.
- 61% of Black, 51% of Latino, and 38% of white Texans are more interested today.
- 55% of Millennials and 33% of Boomers/Silent Generation are more interested today.

## Survey Population Demographics

Whites account for 45% of this survey population of Texans 18 and older, Latinos 37%, Blacks 12%, and others 6%. Women account for 51% of the population and men for 49%. Regarding generations, 29% of the population belongs to the combined Silent Generation (born between 1928-1945) and Baby Boomer (1946-1964) cohort, 25% to Generation X (Gen-X, 1965-1980), 30% to the Millennial (1981-1996) generation and 16% to the Generation Z (Gen-Z, 1997-2014) cohort. The highest educational attainment of 40% of the population is a high school degree or less, while 29% have either a two-year degree or have attended some college, and 31% have a four-year college degree or post-graduate degree as their highest level of educational attainment. Almost two out of three (64%) of the population is comprised of homeowners while 31% of the population consists of renters, and 5% of people in a variety of other living arrangements. Two-fifths (39%) of the population identifies as Democrat, 36% as Republican, 20% as Independent and 5% are unsure about their partisan identification.

## Expanding, Reducing or Maintaining 12 Sources of Energy in the United States

The survey asked the respondents their opinion about 12 different sources of energy in the United States, with the question, “Do you favor expanding, reducing or maintaining at the present level the following sources of energy in the United States?”

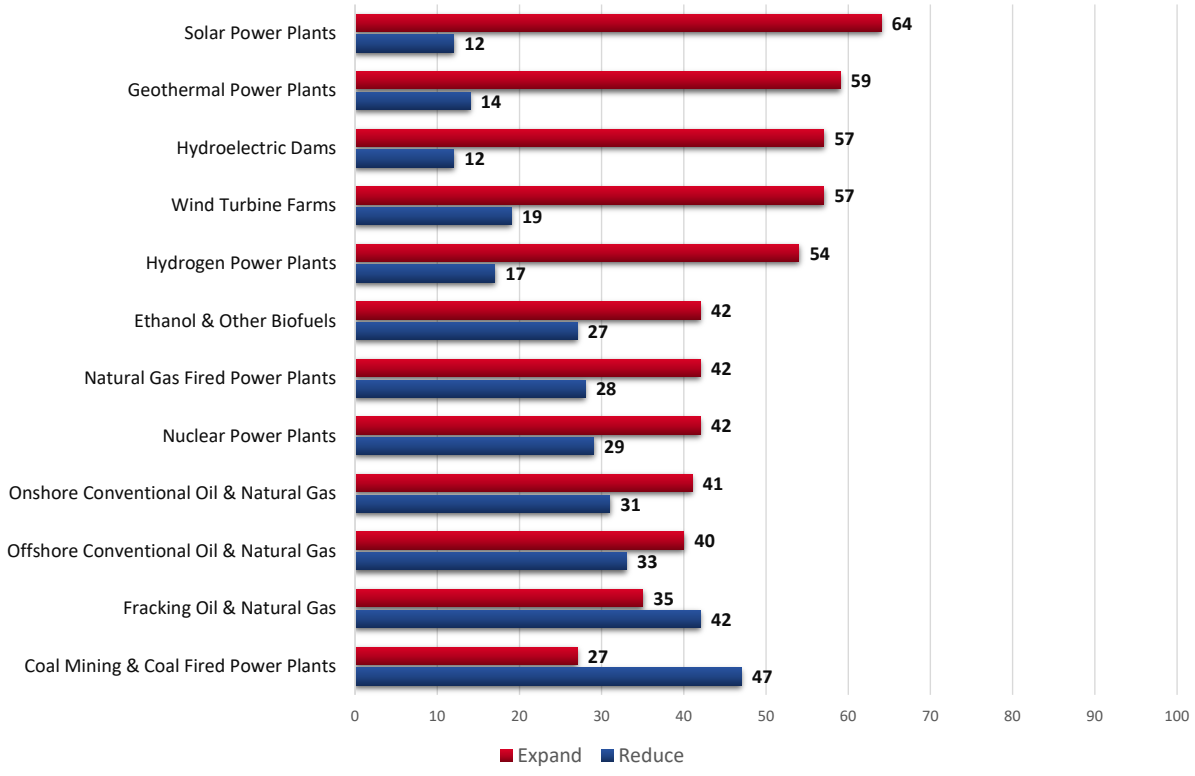
- Offshore conventional oil and natural gas
- Nuclear power plants
- Coal mining and coal fired power plants
- Solar power plants
- Onshore conventional oil and natural gas
- Hydraulic fracturing (fracking) for oil and natural gas production
- Wind turbine “farms”
- Ethanol and other biofuels
- Hydroelectric dams
- Geothermal power plants
- Natural gas fired power plants
- Hydrogen power plants

Table 1 provides the proportion of Texans that favors expanding, reducing, and maintaining each of the 12 sources of energy in the United States. Figure 1 displays the proportion that favors expanding and reducing the use of the 12 energy sources in the United States. The "don't know" responses are excluded from this analysis.

**Table 1: Texan Preference for Expanding, Maintaining or Reducing U.S. Energy Source (%)**

| Energy Source | Expand | Maintain | Reduce |
|---|---|---|---|
| Offshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 40 | 27 | 33 |
| Nuclear Power Plants | 42 | 29 | 29 |
| Coal Mining & Coal Fired Power Plants | 27 | 26 | 47 |
| Solar Power Plants | 64 | 24 | 12 |
| Onshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 41 | 28 | 31 |
| Fracking Oil & Natural Gas | 35 | 22 | 42 |
| Wind Turbine Farms | 57 | 24 | 19 |
| Ethanol & Other Biofuels | 42 | 31 | 27 |
| Hydroelectric Dams | 57 | 31 | 12 |
| Geothermal Power Plants | 59 | 27 | 14 |
| Natural Gas Fired Power Plants | 42 | 30 | 28 |
| Hydrogen Power Plants | 54 | 29 | 17 |

**Figure 1: Proportion of Texans Who Want to Expand & Reduce the Use of the Source of Energy in the United States (%)**



More than one-half of Texans favor expanding the use of five energy sources in the United States: solar power plants (64%), geothermal power plants (59%), hydroelectric dams (57%), wind turbine farms (57%), and hydrogen power plants (54%). Fewer than one in five Texans want to reduce the use of these energy sources, ranging from a low of 12% (solar power plants and hydroelectric dams) to a high of 19% (wind turbine farms).

A plurality of Texans wants to expand the use of five other energy sources, while more than a quarter of Texans also wants to reduce the country's reliance on these sources of energy: ethanol and other biofuels (42% want to expand reliance and 27% want to reduce reliance), natural gas fired power plants (42% and 28%), nuclear power plants (42% and 29%), onshore conventional oil and natural gas (41% and 31%), and offshore conventional oil and natural gas (40% and 33%).

A plurality of Texans wants to reduce the use of two sources of energy, with though more than a quarter of Texans also wanting to expand the country's reliance on these energy sources: coal mining and coal fired power plants (47% want to reduce reliance and 27% want to expand reliance) and fracking for oil and natural gas (42% and 35%).

In a similar survey to this one conducted in January 2021 (i.e., prior to Winter Storm Uri and at the very start of the 2021 regular session of the Texas Legislature), a comparable population of Texas adults was asked this same question, with the only difference being that the 2021 question did not evaluate natural gas fired power plants and hydrogen power plants.

Table 2 provides the change in the percentage of Texans between January of 2021 and January 2023 who favored expanding, reducing or maintaining U.S. reliance on the respective source of energy. While there were no significant changes in the proportion of Texans who wanted to reduce reliance on any of the 10 sources of energy over the past two years, the increase in the proportion of Texans who want to expand reliance on an energy source was significant for four sources: ethanol and other biofuels (increase of 11%), offshore conventional oil and natural gas (10%), fracking for oil and natural gas (8%), and coal mining and coal fired power plants (8%). The proportion in favor of expanding reliance decreased for only two energy sources, in neither case significantly: wind turbine farms (-6%) and solar power plants (-5%).

**Table 2: Change in Preference for Expansion, Reduction and Maintenance of U.S. Energy Sources Between January 2021 and January 2023 (%)**

| Energy Source | Expand | Maintain | Reduce |
|---|---|---|---|
| Offshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 10 | -7 | -3 |
| Nuclear Power Plants | 6 | -2 | -4 |
| Coal Mining & Coal Fired Power Plants | 8 | -5 | -3 |
| Solar Power Plants | -5 | 4 | 1 |
| Onshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 5 | -6 | 1 |
| Fracking Oil & Natural Gas | 8 | -8 | 0 |
| Wind Turbine Farms | -6 | 4 | 2 |
| Ethanol & Other Biofuels | 11 | -9 | -2 |
| Hydroelectic Dams | 1 | -2 | 1 |
| Geothermal Power Plants | 1 | -3 | 2 |

Tables 3 and 4 respectively contain the proportion of white, Latino and Black Texans who favor expanding and reducing U.S. reliance on these 12 energy sources.

**Table 3: Proportion of Texans Favoring Expansion of Energy Source: Ethnicity/Race (%)**

| Sources of Energy | White | Latino | Black |
|---|---|---|---|
| Offshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 51 | 29 | 30 |
| Nuclear Power Plants | 50 | 35 | 25 |
| Coal Mining & Coal Fired Power Plants | 34 | 21 | 16 |
| Solar Power Plants | 61 | 66 | 68 |
| Onshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 54 | 30 | 28 |
| Fracking Oil & Natural Gas | 45 | 25 | 27 |
| Wind Turbine Farms | 50 | 66 | 62 |
| Ethanol & Other Biofuels | 43 | 43 | 31 |
| Hydroelectric Dams | 60 | 53 | 56 |
| Geothermal Power Plants | 65 | 54 | 49 |
| Natural Gas Fired Power Plants | 50 | 31 | 39 |
| Hydrogen Power Plants | 63 | 42 | 50 |

**Table 4: Proportion of Texans Favoring Reduction of Energy Source: Ethnicity/Race (%)**

| Sources of Energy | White | Latino | Black |
|---|---|---|---|
| Offshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 26 | 41 | 30 |
| Nuclear Power Plants | 20 | 38 | 40 |
| Coal Mining & Coal Fired Power Plants | 39 | 55 | 51 |
| Solar Power Plants | 13 | 12 | 12 |
| Onshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 24 | 36 | 38 |
| Fracking Oil & Natural Gas | 33 | 54 | 45 |
| Wind Turbine Farms | 26 | 11 | 12 |
| Ethanol & Other Biofuels | 27 | 28 | 28 |
| Hydroelectric Dams | 12 | 11 | 17 |
| Geothermal Power Plants | 9 | 15 | 23 |
| Natural Gas Fired Power Plants | 23 | 38 | 25 |
| Hydrogen Power Plants | 12 | 22 | 21 |

On average, white Texans are notably more likely than Latino and Black Texans to favor expanding the use of fossil fuels via offshore, onshore and fracking for oil and natural gas, coal mining and coal, and nuclear and natural gas fired power plants. The four most noteworthy ethnic/racial differences are related to onshore conventional oil and natural gas (54% of white Texans want to expand its use compared to 30% of Latino and 28% of Black Texans), offshore conventional oil and natural gas (51% of white Texans want to expand its use compared to 30% of Black and 29% of Latino Texans), fracking for oil and natural gas (45% of white Texans want to expand its use compared to 27% of Black and 25% of Latino Texans), and nuclear power plants (50% of white Texans want to expand its use compared to 35% of Latino and 25% of Black Texans).

Latino and Black Texans on average favor reducing the use of fossil fuels via offshore, onshore and fracking for oil and natural gas, coal mining and coal, and nuclear and natural gas fired power plants to a greater extent than white Texans. The four most noteworthy ethnic/racial differences are related to coal mining and coal fired power plants (55% of Latino and 51% of Black Texans want to reduce its use compared to 39% of white Texans), fracking for oil and natural gas (54% of Latino and 45% of Black Texans want to reduce its use compared to 33% of white Texans), nuclear power plants (40% of Black and 38% of Latino Texans want to reduce its use compared to 20% of white Texans), and offshore conventional oil and natural gas (41% of Latino Texans want to reduce its use compared to 26% of white Texans).

Tables 5 and 6 respectively contain the proportion of women and men who favor expanding and reducing U.S. reliance on these 12 energy sources.

**Table 5: Proportion of Texans Favoring Expansion of Energy Source: Gender (%)**

| Sources of Energy | Women | Men |
|---|---|---|
| Offshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 37 | 43 |
| Nuclear Power Plants | 31 | 52 |
| Coal Mining & Coal Fired Power Plants | 27 | 27 |
| Solar Power Plants | 63 | 65 |
| Onshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 40 | 43 |
| Fracking Oil & Natural Gas | 32 | 38 |
| Wind Turbine Farms | 54 | 60 |
| Ethanol & Other Biofuels | 37 | 46 |
| Hydroelectric Dams | 54 | 60 |
| Geothermal Power Plants | 52 | 66 |
| Natural Gas Fired Power Plants | 36 | 47 |
| Hydrogen Power Plants | 45 | 62 |

**Table 6: Proportion of Texans Favoring Reduction of Energy Source: Gender (%)**

| Sources of Energy | Women | Men |
|---|---|---|
| Offshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 32 | 34 |
| Nuclear Power Plants | 35 | 24 |
| Coal Mining & Coal Fired Power Plants | 43 | 50 |
| Solar Power Plants | 11 | 14 |
| Onshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 31 | 30 |
| Fracking Oil & Natural Gas | 42 | 43 |
| Wind Turbine Farms | 18 | 20 |
| Ethanol & Other Biofuels | 24 | 30 |
| Hydroelectric Dams | 12 | 13 |
| Geothermal Power Plants | 14 | 13 |
| Natural Gas Fired Power Plants | 26 | 31 |
| Hydrogen Power Plants | 16 | 18 |

There are only three noteworthy gender differences in favor of expanding the U.S. energy matrix's reliance on these 12 energy sources, with men being significantly more likely than women to support expanding the use of the energy source in all cases: nuclear power plants (52% to 31%), hydrogen power plants (62% to 45%), and geothermal power plants (66% to 52%).

There is only one noteworthy gender difference in favor of reducing the U.S. energy matrix's reliance on these 12 energy sources, with women (35%) being significantly more likely than men (24%) to favor reducing reliance on nuclear power plants.

Tables 7 and 8 respectively contain the proportion of members of the Baby Boomer/Silent Generation cohort, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z who favor expanding and reducing U.S. reliance on these 12 energy sources.

**Table 7: Proportion of Texans Favoring Expansion of Energy Source: Generation (%)**

| Sources of Energy | Boomer/Silent | Gen-X | Millennials | Gen-Z |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Offshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 55 | 40 | 32 | 29 |
| Nuclear Power Plants | 51 | 39 | 37 | 37 |
| Coal Mining & Coal Fired Power Plants | 36 | 27 | 20 | 22 |
| Solar Power Plants | 63 | 68 | 65 | 58 |
| Onshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 57 | 45 | 31 | 23 |
| Fracking Oil & Natural Gas | 45 | 33 | 33 | 25 |
| Wind Turbine Farms | 54 | 58 | 61 | 55 |
| Ethanol & Other Biofuels | 44 | 42 | 39 | 42 |
| Hydroelectric Dams | 65 | 53 | 56 | 50 |
| Geothermal Power Plants | 72 | 56 | 57 | 44 |
| Natural Gas Fired Power Plants | 57 | 40 | 33 | 31 |
| Hydrogen Power Plants | 63 | 48 | 54 | 47 |

**Table 8: Proportion of Texans Favoring Reduction of Energy Source: Generation (%)**

| Sources of Energy | Boomer/Silent | Gen-X | Millennials | Gen-Z |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Offshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 21 | 25 | 38 | 59 |
| Nuclear Power Plants | 18 | 30 | 35 | 39 |
| Coal Mining & Coal Fired Power Plants | 41 | 45 | 52 | 49 |
| Solar Power Plants | 10 | 8 | 16 | 17 |
| Onshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 24 | 20 | 38 | 48 |
| Fracking Oil & Natural Gas | 39 | 41 | 46 | 48 |
| Wind Turbine Farms | 23 | 15 | 20 | 17 |
| Ethanol & Other Biofuels | 27 | 23 | 29 | 32 |
| Hydroelectric Dams | 6 | 11 | 15 | 21 |
| Geothermal Power Plants | 4 | 13 | 16 | 30 |
| Natural Gas Fired Power Plants | 15 | 23 | 38 | 46 |
| Hydrogen Power Plants | 7 | 16 | 23 | 28 |

The starkest differences in favor of expansion are found at the opposite ends of the generational spectrum between members of the Baby Boomer/Silent Generation cohort and Generation Z, and, to a lesser extent Millennials. The four most noteworthy generational differences in regard to expanding U.S. reliance on an energy source include onshore conventional oil and natural gas (57% of Baby Boomers/Silent Generation favor expanding compared to 31% of Millennials and 23% of Generation Z), offshore conventional oil and natural gas (55% of Baby Boomers/Silent Generation favor expanding compared to 32% of Millennials and 29% of Generation Z), natural gas fired power plants (57% of Baby Boomers/Silent Generation favor expanding compared to 33% of Millennials and 31% of Generation Z), and geothermal power plants (72% of Baby Boomers/Silent Generation favor expanding compared to 44% of Generation Z).

The starkest differences in favor of reducing U.S. reliance on an energy source are also found at the opposite ends of the generational spectrum between Generation Z and members of the Baby Boomer/Silent Generation cohort, and, to a lesser extent, Generation X. The four most noteworthy generational differences in regard to reducing reliance on the energy source include offshore conventional oil and natural gas (59% of Generation Z favor reducing compared to 25% of Generation X and 21% of the Baby Boomer/Silent Generation cohort), natural gas fired power plants (46% of Generation Z favor reducing compared to 23% of Generation X and 15% of the Baby Boomer/Silent Generation cohort), onshore conventional oil and natural gas (48% of Generation Z favor reducing compared to 24% of the Baby Boomer/Silent Generation cohort and 20% of Generation X), and geothermal power plants (30% of Generation Z favor reducing compared to 4% of the Baby Boomer/Silent Generation cohort).

Tables 9 and 10 respectively contain the proportion of Texans in the three different categories of highest educational attainment who favor expanding and reducing U.S. reliance on these 12 energy sources.

**Table 9: Proportion of Texans Favoring Expansion of Energy Source: Educational Attainment (%)**

| Sources of Energy | High School | Some College/2Yr Degree | 4Yr/PostGrad Degree |
|---|---|---|---|
| Offshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 37 | 39 | 45 |
| Nuclear Power Plants | 40 | 37 | 48 |
| Coal Mining & Coal Fired Power Plants | 27 | 27 | 27 |
| Solar Power Plants | 59 | 62 | 71 |
| Onshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 39 | 40 | 46 |
| Fracking Oil & Natural Gas | 32 | 35 | 39 |
| Wind Turbine Farms | 56 | 50 | 64 |
| Ethanol & Other Biofuels | 40 | 38 | 46 |
| Hydroelectric Dams | 50 | 60 | 62 |
| Geothermal Power Plants | 53 | 57 | 67 |
| Natural Gas Fired Power Plants | 37 | 42 | 47 |
| Hydrogen Power Plants | 42 | 60 | 63 |

**Table 10: Proportion of Texans Favoring Reduction of Energy Source: Educational Attainment (%)**

| Sources of Energy | High School | Some College/2Yr Degree | 4Yr/PostGrad Degree |
|---|---|---|---|
| Offshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 35 | 34 | 30 |
| Nuclear Power Plants | 31 | 35 | 22 |
| Coal Mining & Coal Fired Power Plants | 47 | 49 | 44 |
| Solar Power Plants | 14 | 13 | 10 |
| Onshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 28 | 34 | 31 |
| Fracking Oil & Natural Gas | 41 | 48 | 40 |
| Wind Turbine Farms | 16 | 24 | 18 |
| Ethanol & Other Biofuels | 25 | 34 | 25 |
| Hydroelectric Dams | 13 | 15 | 10 |
| Geothermal Power Plants | 13 | 18 | 11 |
| Natural Gas Fired Power Plants | 31 | 31 | 24 |
| Hydrogen Power Plants | 21 | 15 | 15 |

There are very few differences in preferences for the expansion or reduction of reliance on the energy sources based on the respondents' highest level of educational attainment. Only three educational attainment based differences are worthy of note: Texans whose highest level of educational attainment is a four year or postgraduate degree or a two year degree or some college are significantly more likely than Texans whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school degree or less to favor expanding reliance on hydrogen power plants (63% and 60% vs. 42%), Texans whose highest level of educational attainment is a four year or postgraduate degree are significantly more likely than Texans whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school degree or less to favor expanding reliance on geothermal power plants (67% vs. 53%), and Texans whose highest level of educational attainment is a four year or postgraduate degree are significantly more likely than Texans whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school degree or less to favor expanding reliance on solar power plants (71% vs. 59%).

Tables 11 and 12 provide the proportion of Texas Democrats, Independents and Republicans who favor expanding and reducing U.S. reliance on these three energy sources. Figure 2 displays information on the proportion of Democrats and Republicans that favor expanding reliance each energy source while Figure 3 displays information on the proportion of Democrats and Republicans that favor reducing reliance on each energy source.

**Table 11: Proportion of Texans Favoring Expansion of Energy Source: Partisan ID (%)**

| Sources of Energy | Democrat | Independent | Republican |
|---|---|---|---|
| Offshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 21 | 35 | 64 |
| Nuclear Power Plants | 32 | 40 | 54 |
| Coal Mining & Coal Fired Power Plants | 12 | 22 | 46 |
| Solar Power Plants | 80 | 61 | 50 |
| Onshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 17 | 37 | 70 |
| Fracking Oil & Natural Gas | 14 | 31 | 61 |
| Wind Turbine Farms | 74 | 57 | 38 |
| Ethanol & Other Biofuels | 42 | 43 | 42 |
| Hydroelectric Dams | 57 | 58 | 60 |
| Geothermal Power Plants | 59 | 61 | 63 |
| Natural Gas Fired Power Plants | 26 | 38 | 61 |
| Hydrogen Power Plants | 57 | 45 | 58 |

**Table 12: Proportion of Texans Favoring Reduction of Energy Source: Partisan ID (%)**

| Sources of Energy | Democrat | Independent | Republican |
|---|---|---|---|
| Offshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 78 | 29 | 12 |
| Nuclear Power Plants | 42 | 28 | 16 |
| Coal Mining & Coal Fired Power Plants | 71 | 47 | 22 |
| Solar Power Plants | 8 | 14 | 15 |
| Onshore Conventional Oil & Natural Gas | 52 | 26 | 10 |
| Fracking Oil & Natural Gas | 66 | 39 | 18 |
| Wind Turbine Farms | 10 | 17 | 31 |
| Ethanol & Other Biofuels | 28 | 28 | 27 |
| Hydroelectric Dams | 14 | 14 | 8 |
| Geothermal Power Plants | 16 | 10 | 10 |
| Natural Gas Fired Power Plants | 45 | 31 | 11 |
| Hydrogen Power Plants | 17 | 24 | 13 |

**Figure 2: Proportion of Texas Democrats & Republicans Who Want to Expand the Use of the Source of Energy in the United States (%)**

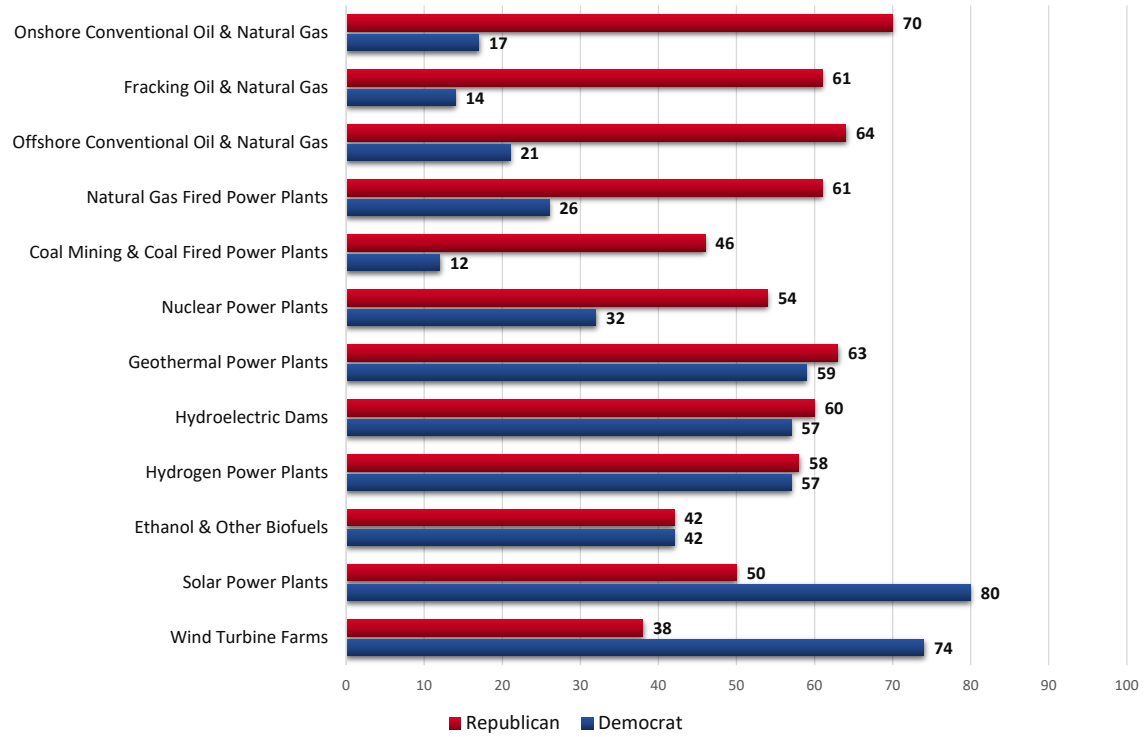
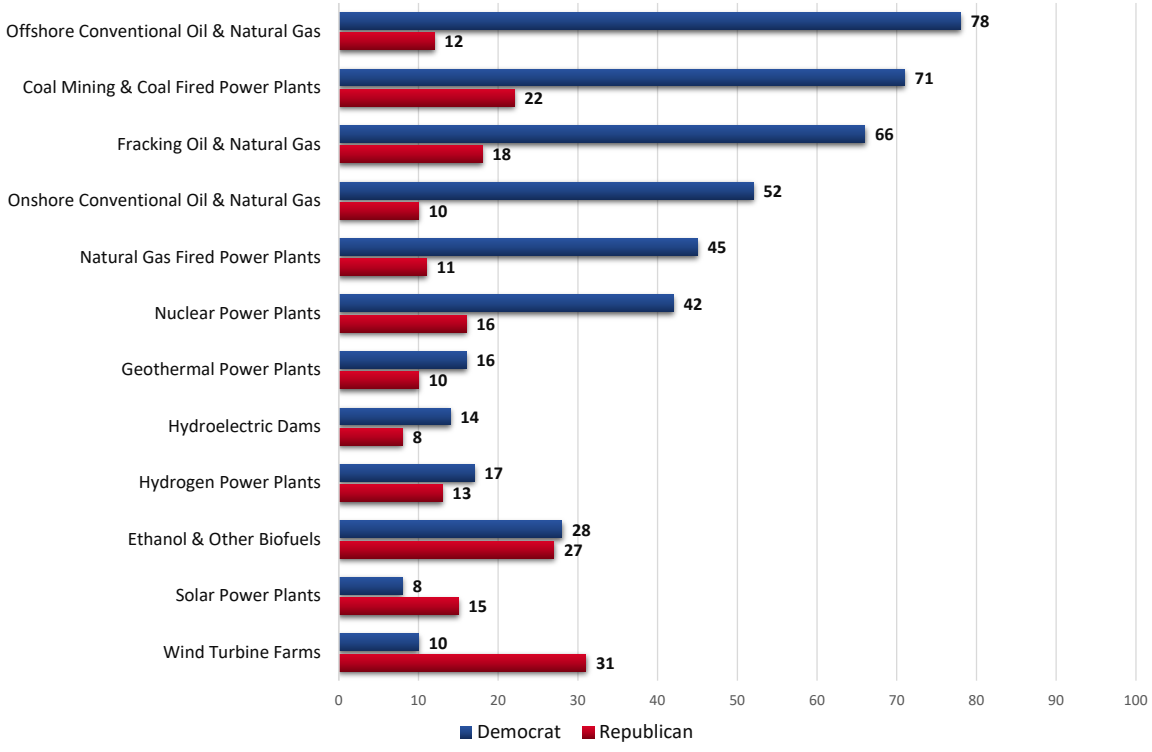



**Figure 3: Proportion of Texas Democrats & Republicans Who Want to Reduce the Use of the Source of Energy in the United States (%)**



Republicans are significantly more likely than Democrats to favor expanding the use of six energy sources: onshore oil and natural gas (70% vs. 17%), fracking for oil and natural gas (61% vs. 14%), offshore oil and natural gas (64% vs. 21%), natural gas fired power plants (61% vs. 26%), coal mining and coal fired power plants (46% vs. 12%), and nuclear power plants (54% vs. 32%).

Democrats are significantly more likely than Republicans to favor expanding the use of two energy sources: wind turbine farms (74% vs. 38%) and solar power plants (80% vs. 50%).

There do not exist any salient partisan differences in the proportion favoring the expansion of four energy sources: geothermal power plants, hydroelectric dams, hydrogen power plants, and ethanol and other biofuels.

Democrats are significantly more likely than Republicans to favor reducing U.S. reliance on six energy sources: offshore conventional oil and natural gas (78% vs. 12%), coal mining and coal fired power plants (71% vs. 22%), fracking for oil and natural gas (66% vs. 18%), onshore conventional oil and natural gas (52% vs. 10%), natural gas fired power plants (45% vs. 11%), and nuclear power plants (42% vs. 16%).

Republicans are significantly more likely than Democrats to favor reducing U.S. reliance on wind turbine farms (31% vs. 10%).

There are not any salient partisan differences in the proportion favoring the reduction of five energy sources: geothermal power plants, hydroelectric dams, hydrogen power plants, ethanol and other biofuels, and solar power plants.

## Support For Using Texas Budget Surplus to Support Construction of Natural Gas Power Plants

The survey respondents were asked about their support for or opposition to using some of the State of Texas's approximately $33 billion dollar budget surplus to provide one-time tax credits or incentives to businesses to promote the immediate construction of more natural gas power plants to increase the electric grid's reliability. The response options were strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose and strongly oppose, along with don't know. The "don't know" responses are excluded from the analysis below.

Figure 4 reveals that 77% of Texans support (39% strongly) spending some of the state's budget surplus to promote the construction of more natural gas power plants. Nearly one quarter of Texans (23%) oppose (10% strongly) using some of the budget surplus for this purpose.

**Figure 4: Support For & Opposition To Providing One-Time Tax Credits or Incentives to Promote the Immediate Construction of More Natural Gas Power Plants to Increase Grid Reliability (%)**

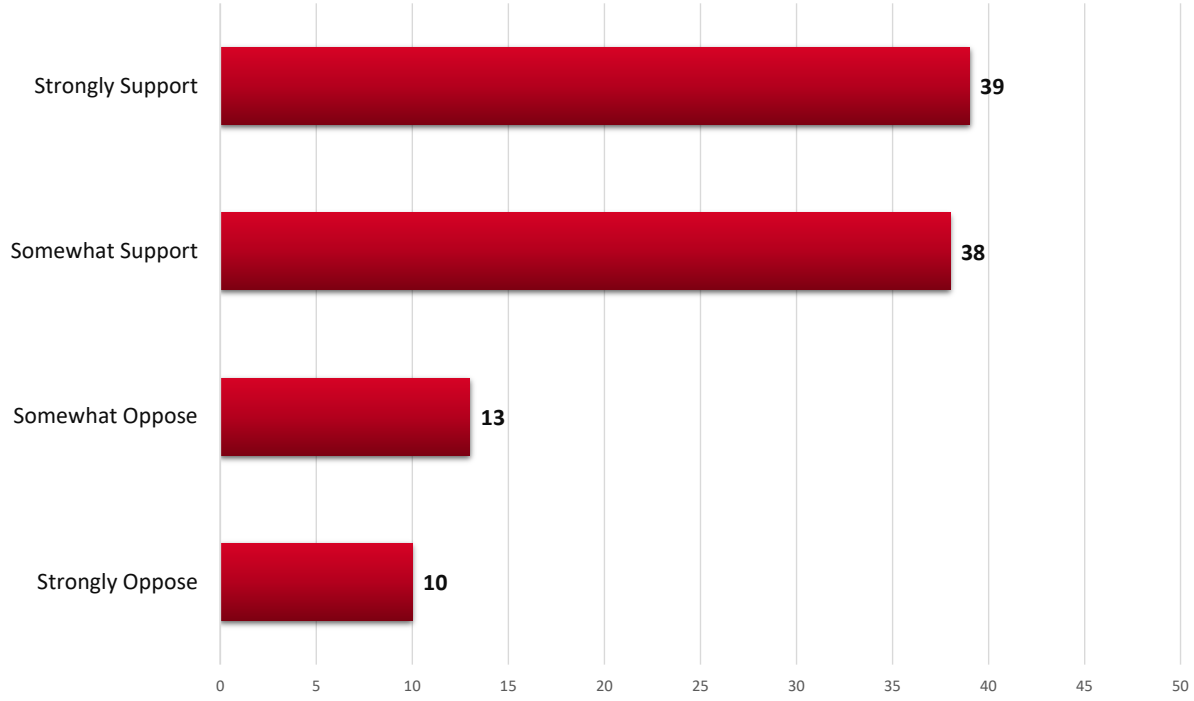


Table 13 provides the proportion of Texans who support (strongly and somewhat) using some of the budget surplus for the construction of natural gas power plants broken down by ethnicity/race, gender, generation, partisan ID, and educational attainment. There exists only one instance where sub-group differences were statistically distinct: partisan ID. Republicans (87%) are significantly more likely than Independents (72%) and Democrats (69%) to support using surplus funds to construct natural gas power plants, although it is important to note that more than two-thirds of Democrats support this initiative.

**Table 13: Support for Providing Tax Credits or Incentives for Construction of Natural Gas Power Plants (%)**

| Group | Sub-Group | Support |
|---|---|---|
| Overall | Overall | 77 (39) |
| Ethnicity/Race | White | 78 (39) |
| | Latino | 74 (36) |
| | Black | 77 (41) |
| Gender | Women | 76 (36) |
| | Men | 78 (43) |
| Generation | Silent/Boomers | 81 (44) |
| | Generation X | 72 (35) |
| | Millennials | 75 (39) |
| | Generation Z | 79 (35) |
| Partisan ID | Democrat | 69 (34) |
| | Independent | 72 (35) |
| | Republican | 87 (46) |
| Educational Attainment | High School or Less | 81 (45) |
| | Some College/2-Yr Degree | 76 (36) |
| | 4-Yr Degree/Postgrad | 74 (35) |

Percentage strongly in support in parentheses.

## Support For and Interest in Solar Energy Related Policies

The respondents were first asked about their support for or opposition to legislation that would mandate net-metering in Texas, and then about their support for or opposition to legislation that would provide tax benefits to homeowners and businesses to install rooftop solar panels and battery storage.

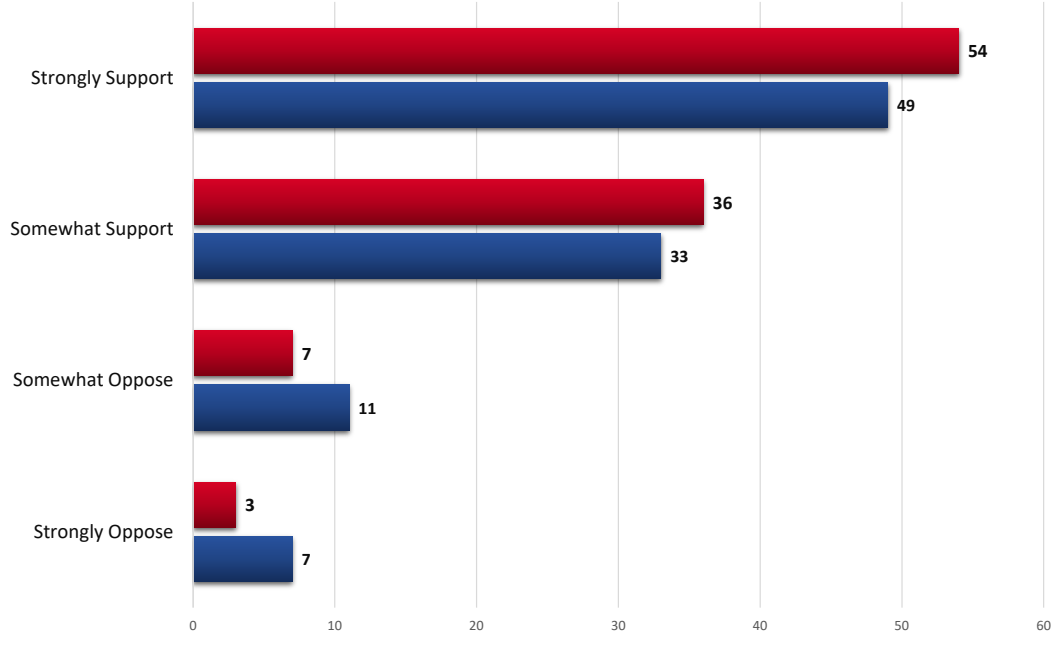
The two questions utilized were as follows:

> "Legislation has been proposed that would allow homes and businesses with solar panels to sell any extra power they generate back to the electric grid for the same price that the utility charges consumers to buy the electricity. This policy is called net-metering, since the customers' electric meters run both forward and backward. Would you say you support or oppose this type of policy?"
>
> and
>
> "Do you support or oppose legislation that offers financial incentives (such as tax breaks or rebates) for individual homeowners and businesses to install rooftop solar panels and battery storage?"

The response options were strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, strongly oppose and don't know. "Don't know" responses are excluded from the analysis below.

Figure 5 provides the proportion of Texans who strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose and strongly oppose each piece of legislation.

**Figure 5: Support For & Opposition To Net-Metering For Homes With Solar Panels and Tax Incentives For Home and Business Solar & Battery Storage (%)**



Nine out of ten (90%) Texans support (54% strongly) legislation that would establish net-metering, which would allow homeowners and businesses with rooftop solar panels to sell electricity back to their electric utility at the same rate that the utility charges consumers. Only one in ten (10%) Texans oppose (3% strongly) this legislation.

Eight out of ten (82%) Texans support (49% strongly) legislation that would provide tax breaks or tax rebates for homeowners and businesses to install rooftop solar panels and battery storage. Only two out of ten (18%) Texans oppose (7% strongly) this tax incentive legislation.

Table 14 provides the level of support for both pieces of legislation broken down among six socio-demographic groups: ethnic/racial, gender, generation, partisan identification, educational attainment, and home ownership status.

**Table 14: Support For Legislation Establishing Net-Metering & Tax Incentives for Solar Energy Systems Among Texas Demographic Groups (%)**

| Group | Sub-Group | Net-Metering | Tax Incentives for Solar/Battery |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall | Overall | 90 (54) | 82 (49) |
| Ethnicity/Race | White | 91 (58) | 81 (48) |
| | Latino | 89 (50) | 83 (50) |
| | Black | 83 (47) | 83 (48) |
| Gender | Women | 89 (48) | 83 (49) |
| | Men | 91 (60) | 81 (48) |
| Generation | Silent/Boomers | 93 (63) | 82 (54) |
| | Generation X | 92 (59) | 85 (50) |
| | Millennials | 89 (47) | 86 (45) |
| | Generation Z | 83 (45) | 70 (44) |
| Partisan ID | Democrat | 93 (60) | 90 (64) |
| | Independent | 85 (48) | 80 (47) |
| | Republican | 90 (53) | 76 (34) |
| Educational Attainment | High School or Less | 90 (54) | 82 (43) |
| | Some College/2-Yr Degree | 87 (52) | 77 (50) |
| | 4-Yr Degree/PostGrad | 93 (57) | 87 (54) |
| Home Ownership | Own | 91 (58) | 83 (51) |
| | Rent/Other | 89 (48) | 81 (44) |

Percentage who strongly support in parentheses.

There do not exist any significant socio-demographic differences in support for the net-metering legislation, with proportions in support that range narrowly from a low of 83% to a high of 93%.

There only exists one significant socio-demographic difference in support for the legislation which would provide tax incentives to homeowners and businesses that installed solar panels, with significantly more Democrats (90%) than Republicans (76%) supporting this legislation, although it is important to note that three out of four Republicans are supportive of the legislation.

The three-fifths of respondents who are homeowners (rather than renters or something else) were asked two questions related to their interest in purchasing a solar energy and energy storage system. The questions posed were as follows:

> "Generally, how interested are you in purchasing a solar energy and energy storage system, such as rooftop solar panels and battery storage?"
>
> and
>
> "Over the past two years, given the concerns which have been raised about the Texas electrical grid after the February 2021 winter storm, would you say you have become more interested or less interested in purchasing a solar energy and energy storage system, such as rooftop solar panels and battery storage, or has your level of interest not changed?"

Figure 6 displays the proportion of Texas homeowners who indicated they were very interested, somewhat interested, not too interested, or not all interested in purchasing a solar energy and energy storage system such as rooftop solar panels and battery storage. One-third (31%) of Texans are very interested in purchasing a solar energy system and 31% are somewhat interested, while 16% are not too interested, and 20% are not at all interested.

**Figure 6: Level of Interest in Purchasing a Solar Energy & Energy Storage System Among Texas Homeowners (%)**

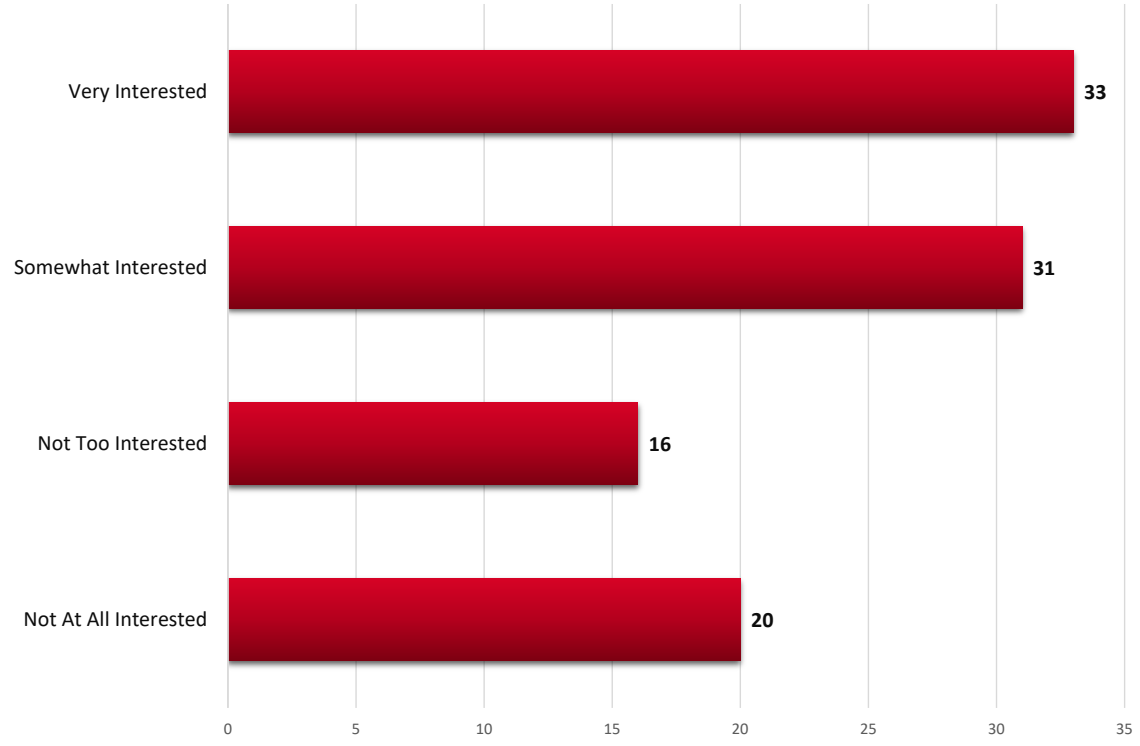


Figure 7 displays the proportion of Texas homeowners who over the past two years have become more interested, less interested, or seen no change in their level of interest in purchasing a solar energy and energy storage system. Compared to two years ago (before Winter Storm Uri in February of 2021), 44% of Texans are more interested in purchasing a system and 8% are less interested, while 48% have not seen their level of interest change.

**Figure 7: Change in Interest in Purchasing a Solar Energy & Energy Storage System Over the Past Two Years Among Texas Homeowners (%)**

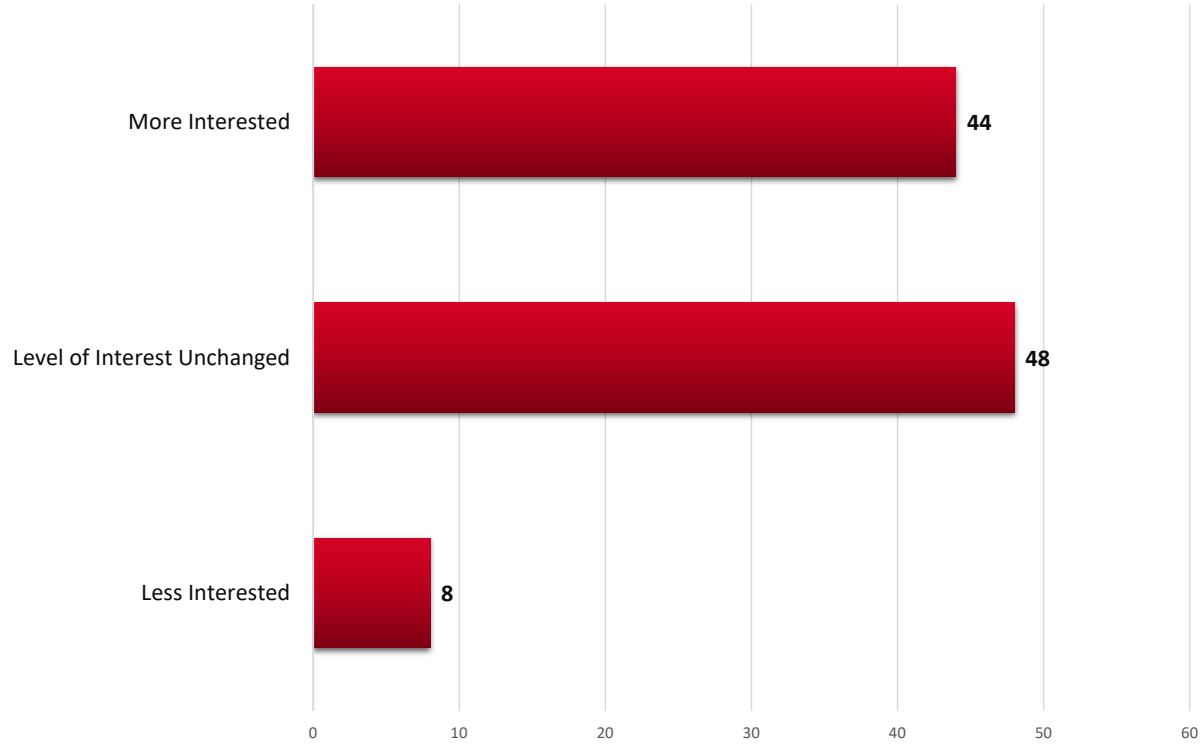


Table 15 provides the proportion of Texas homeowners who are very interested or somewhat interested in purchasing a solar energy system and the proportion of Texas homeowners who are more interested today in purchasing a system than they were two years ago broken down by ethnicity/race, gender, generation, partisan identification and educational attainment.

**Table 15: Proportion of Texas Homeowners by Demographic Group Interested in Solar Energy Systems and More Interested Today Than 2 Years Ago (%)**

| Group | Sub-Group | Very or Somewhat Interested | More Interested Now Than 2 Years Ago |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall | Overall | 64 (33) | 44 |
| Ethnicity/Race | White | 62 (31) | 38 |
| | Latino | 65 (34) | 51 |
| | Black | 66 (32) | 61 |
| Gender | Women | 61 (26) | 40 |
| | Men | 66 (39) | 48 |
| Generation | Silent/Boomers | 50 (21) | 33 |
| | Generation X | 63 (31) | 47 |
| | Millennials | 79 (48) | 55 |
| | Generation Z | 70 (35) | 49 |
| Partisan ID | Democrat | 82 (43) | 54 |
| | Independent | 54 (29) | 37 |
| | Republican | 52 (24) | 35 |
| Educational Attainment | High School or Less | 57 (29) | 41 |
| | Some College/2-Yr Degree | 59 (32) | 41 |
| | 4-Yr Degree/Postgrad | 73 (36) | 48 |

Proportion very interested in parentheses.

Although there are not any salient ethnic/racial or gender differences in interest in purchasing a solar energy system, generational, educational and partisan differences are substantial.

Millennials (79%) and members of Generation Z (70%) are significantly more likely than members of the Baby Boomers/Silent Generation cohort (50%) to be very or somewhat interested in purchasing a solar energy system.

Texans whose highest level of educational attainment is a four year degree or postgraduate degree (73%) are significantly more likely than Texans whose highest level of educational attainment is a two year degree or some college (59%) or high school or less (57%) to be very or somewhat interested in purchasing a solar energy system.

Democrats (82%) are significantly more likely than Independents (54%) and Republicans (52%) to be very or somewhat interested in purchasing a solar energy system.

While there are no salient gender or educational differences in the proportion of Texas homeowners who are more interested in purchasing a solar energy system now than they were two years ago, ethnic/racial, generational and partisan differences are substantial.

White Texans (38%) are significantly less likely than Black Texans (61%) to be more interested now in purchasing a solar energy system than they were two years ago.

Members of the Silent Generation/Baby Boomer cohort (33%) are significantly less likely than members of the other three generational groups to be more interested now in purchasing a solar energy system than they were two years ago.

Republicans (35%) and Independents (37%) are significantly less likely than Democrats (54%) to be more interested now in purchasing a solar energy system than they were two years ago.

## Report Authors

Renée Cross, Senior Executive Director & Researcher, Hobby School of Public Affairs

Mark P. Jones, James A. Baker III Institute for Public Policy's Fellow in Political Science, Rice University; Senior Research Fellow, Hobby School of Public Affairs

## Research Team

Maria P. Perez Argüelles, Research Associate, Hobby School of Public Affairs

Savannah Sipole, Research Associate, Hobby School of Public Affairs

Agustín Vallejo, Post-Doctoral Fellow, Hobby School of Public Affairs