Voters Support Tax Policy That Lowers Energy Costs and Drives Job Creation

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As Congress seeks to extend the provisions of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), delivering tax relief to Americans, they are weighing whether to keep, pare back, or repeal several clean energy tax credits created by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

These clean energy tax credits are driving key investments in clean energy, particularly in conservative states and districts. To inform policymakers, Rainey Center conducted polling research on the clean energy tax credits and the TCJA.

METHODOLOGY

The Rainey Center conducted a survey with an online sample of 1,853 respondents fielded over web panels from May 10-12, 2025, and weighted to reflect national distributions of education, age, gender, race, and 2024 Presidential vote, with a margin of error of +/- 2.8 percentage points. Margins of error for subgroup means are larger.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Voters strongly favor the suite of clean energy tax credits.

Voters strongly favor the suite of clean energy tax credits that incentivize companies to invest in, produce and manufacture domestic clean energy and clean energy technologies, including solar panels, batteries, geothermal, nuclear energy, carbon capture projects, and hydrogen facilities. Support for these credits remains high even after voters read critical messages about cost, market distortion, or reliability.

To finance the TCJA, a plurality of Americans choose raising taxes on high-income earners, an option more popular among Democrats; eliminating waste and fraud in Medicaid or food-stamp programs is the most popular option for Republicans.

Increasing the deficit and ending the clean energy tax incentives ranks as the least popular way to pay for tax relief. However, preventing Chinese companies from benefiting from the tax credits was popular.

Clean energy credits are defended most effectively when framed around lower household energy bills, private investment and job creation and energy independence. The attacks against these credits were rejected by voters. Even the strongest fiscal conservative attack — the promise of saving $1 trillion over ten years — reaches only break-even persuasiveness with the electorate at large. In other words, even after treatment with negative messages, voters still support the clean energy credits, including the tech-neutral tax credits.

KEY FINDINGS

Strong Support for Clean Energy Credits

Six in ten adults back the credit for companies that build or produce clean electricity (26% strongly, 34% somewhat). Opposition is 16%, with 24% unsure, a net +45-point net margin. An identical 60% favor credits for U.S. manufacturing of clean-energy equipment (18 % oppose, net +42). Credits for hydrogen manufacturing (56% support / 15% oppose, net +40), carbon-capture deployment (56 / 16, +40), and the tech-neutral umbrella covering geothermal, solar, nuclear, natural-gas, and carbon capture and storage (58 / 17, +42) draw broad approval. Voters also support the nuclear energy production credit on net: 42% support, 26% oppose, 32% unsure.

Note: the specific tax credit titles (e.g. 45X) were not included in question wording.

Net Policy Support

	All	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.
Domestic Manufacturing (45X)	42%	61%	39%	26%
Clean Vehicles (30D)	2%	29%	2%	-24%
Clean Hydrogen (45V)	40%	47%	37%	37%
Nuclear (48U)	15%	13%	14%	19%
Carbon Capture (45Q)	40%	48%	39%	33%
Tech-neutral Credits (45Y, 48E)	42%	54%	39%	32%



Partisan Splitting Around the Electric Vehicle Credit

The $7,500 credit for individual EV purchases elicits 38% support and 36% opposition, driven by Republicans opposing it by 24 points on net and Democrats supporting it by 29 points on net.

Pay-Fors the Public Finds Acceptable

When allowed two choices to pay for their preferred outcome, 43 % of voters select “increase taxes on high-income earners,” making it the leading revenue option among Democrats and Independents. “Eliminate waste and fraud in SNAP” (29%) or Medicaid (28%) appeals mostly to Republicans. Only 8% of voters are willing to raise the deficit. Repealing clean energy incentives and tax incentives for the domestic production of clean energy components were the least supported options across all partisan groups.

Preferred Options for Paying for TCJA Extension

	All	Dem.	Ind.	Rep.
Increase Taxes on High-income Earners	43%	62%	43%	24%
Prevent Chinese Companies Access to Energy Tax Credits	30%	29%	31%	29%
End Waste, Fraud, and Abuse in Food Stamps	29%	15%	30%	42%
Eliminate Waste, Fraud, and Abuse in Medicaid	28%	15%	28%	40%
Repeal Tax Credits for Electric Vehicle Purchases	11%	9%	11%	12%
Reduce How Much the Government Pays for Prescription Drugs	11%	13%	9%	11%
Increase the Deficit	8%	11%	7%	6%
Repeal Tax Incentives for Clean Energy Investments	7%	8%	7%	7%
Repeal Tax Incentives for Domestic Manufacture of Clean Energy Components	5%	5%	5%	6%

Message Tests: What Moves Opinion

Voters evaluated short statements for and against the clean energy tax credits. After subtracting negative ratings ("not too convincing," "not at all convincing," or "false"), three positive frames remain comfortably above water: lower energy bills, energy independence and driving a manufacturing boom that is creating jobs that don't require college degrees.

The most popular messages were:

These credits have driven billions in private investment and could save American families billions on electricity bills through 2030. They support clean energy like solar, nuclear, and geothermal — while creating strong U.S. manufacturing jobs that don't require a college degree. They promote economic growth, energy innovation, and American energy dominance.

These credits are fueling an American energy renaissance and reducing our reliance on foreign countries. They've attracted hundreds of billions in investment to build a secure, reliable, and "America First" energy grid — ending dependence on foreign imports and securing U.S. energy independence.

These credits have rare bipartisan support in Congress — Republicans and Democrats alike back them. That's because they create good jobs, lower energy costs, and advance American energy dominance.

Net Policy Support

	Very / Somewhat	Not Too / Not at All / False	Net Convincing
Credits Drive Billions in Investment, Save on Electricity Bills, Create Manufacturing Jobs That Don't Require College Degrees	48%	27%	21%
Credits Fuel American Energy Renaissance, Reduce Foreign Reliance, Ensure Energy Independence, "America First"	47%	29%	18%
Credits Have Rare Bipartisan Support, Create Jobs, Lower Costs, Advance American Energy Dominance	44%	29%	15%

On the other hand, none of the arguments against the tax credits had net positive persuasiveness. The most persuasive message centered on the need to reduce deficits. After hearing the messaging battery, net support for the credits remains positive, at +13, suggesting these credits have durable support even after voters hear messaging.

We further tested the durability of the credits with a series of pro and con arguments. Asked whether Congress should end the credits because clean energy is less reliable than oil and coal, or keep them to prevent electricity bill hikes, voters choose to keep the credits 46% to 15%; 39% are unsure. Another argument focused on slowing nuclear energy development if credits disappear yields a similar 44% to 17% split.

If credits were restricted to U.S. companies, 36% of voters say they would be more likely to support them, 9% less likely, and 55% report no change.

CONCLUSION

American voters support energy incentives that promise domestic jobs that don't require degrees, energy bill savings, and independence from foreign energy.

Those benefits register across party lines. While fiscal arguments matter, especially for Republicans, they rarely outweigh pocketbook and industrial policy appeals.

Support for clean energy tax credits endures even through intensive negative messaging, whereas enthusiasm for individual consumer subsidies such as the EV credit is more fragile. When budget trade-offs are explicit, the public chooses raising taxes on high earners and cutting waste and fraud in SNAP and Medicaid rather than higher deficits and cuts to clean energy.

Americans remain open to investment-focused energy policy while insisting on fiscally credible ways to extend the TCJA.





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