

Conservative Energy Network: Midwest voter support for clean energy continues to grow

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Region's Conservative Voters Want Candidates to Support Clean Energy Expansion, Monopoly Reduction

Lansing, Mich - According to [newly released polling](#) commissioned by the Conservative Energy Network (CEN), an examination of Midwest responses across the board demonstrates more than 82 percent of Midwest voters surveyed indicated it is important for elected officials to share their views on energy. Conservatives expressed strong support for acceleration of clean energy development, particularly when such development improves the economy and creates jobs.

“Clean energy is not just about powering homes, cars, and buildings – more and more, it’s also about powering our state and local economies,” said **Mark Pischea**, president of the CEN, which supports and connects state-based conservative clean energy and energy efficiency organizations across the U.S. “Midwesterners overwhelmingly acknowledge our nation’s inevitable transition to clean energy, and want all policymakers, including conservatives, to play a greater role in participating in the development of policies that facilitate that transition.”

Glen Bolger of Public Opinion Strategies (POS), one of the nation’s top GOP polling firms, conducted the polling and unveiled this new data. POS found that a majority of voters increasingly want national and statewide policies that encourage the generation and use of electricity from renewable and clean energy sources.

“A majority of voters, including those who voted for President Trump, are supportive of our nation’s clean energy transition, understand the inevitability of such transition, and desire policies that encourage it—in contrast with many politicians seeking the status quo,” said Bolger. “In particular, voters want more electricity competition—the freedom to choose who generates their power and what source it comes from, whether that be renewables like hydro, solar, and wind power, or even clean coal.”

Additionally, the poll showed overwhelming voter support toward encouraging competition in the electricity market (see chart below). Voters were asked how they would vote on a referendum in their state to open and establish competitive electricity markets, and prohibit the creation of monopoly electricity utilities. This is the essentially the same referendum language that voters in Nevada approved in record numbers in November of 2016.

From a policy perspective (see chart below), 94 percent Midwestern voters want more opportunities to realize energy efficiency savings in their states, and 91 percent believe the state should not restrict a property owner’s ability to do what they want with their land – including adding solar panels or even a wind turbine.

Other significant findings from the survey include:

- 74 percent of Midwesterners want more emphasis placed on solar development, 65 percent want more wind and 54 percent want more hydropower. They are less excited about biomass and “clean coal” at 31 percent each, and nuclear, which is at 25 percent while 30 percent want less of it. Only 16 percent want more coal while 56 percent want less.
- Midwestern voters rank efficiency upgrades as the most important policy objective at 94 percent, followed by property owners’ right to develop renewable resources on their land at 91 percent, community solar at 87 percent, data access to monitor energy usage at 84 percent, and allowing third party Sales at 79 percent.
- 86 percent of all Midwestern voters agreed that their state should pursue an “All of the Above” energy policy, 45 percent strongly agreed.
- 73 percent of Midwesterners think a candidate who supports clean energy policies cares more about their family’s future, while only 21 percent wants a candidate who “prefers keeping things the way they are now”.

Pischa concluded: “Midwestern voters are ready for a change. According to this

poll they want access to clean, affordable energy and they want candidates who are committed to help make that happen. This is true of all demographics, including Republicans, conservatives, and Trump voters. All experts seem to agree that 2018 is going to be a challenging year for Republicans. To overcome this political environment, GOP candidates will need a way to communicate with key independent voters—including college educated voters, young voters, and women—that does not alienate their base. Being able to articulate a positive clean energy message will be critical to that strategy.

“The Conservative Energy Network brings together conservatives from all backgrounds to help our states and nation lead the world’s clean energy economy by building support for policies that grow the sector and are consistent with the conservative principles of individual liberty, less government, and free markets.”

The poll surveyed 245 voters across the region from February 10 - 14. The margin of error is +/- 6.3%. Midwest states included in the sample were **Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Wisconsin**