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Americans' Shifting Views on Energy Issues

A growing majority of Republicans prioritize the development of fossil fuel energy sources like oil and natural gas

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About this research

This Pew Research Center report looks at Americans' views of energy sources and energy policy.

Why did we do this?

Pew Research Center does research to help the public, media and decision-makers understand important topics. This research builds on our long-standing work studying Americans' views of energy issues and policy.

Learn more about [Pew Research Center](#), our research on [public views of climate and energy issues](#) and other research on [science and society](#).

How did we do this?

For this report, we surveyed 3,524 U.S. adults from March 16 to 22, 2026, a few weeks into the U.S. military conflict with Iran. Everyone who took part in this survey is a member of the Center's [American Trends Panel](#). The survey represents the views of the full U.S. adult population.

Here are the [survey questions](#) used for this report, the [detailed responses](#) and the [survey methodology](#).

Table of contents

About Pew Research Center	2
About this research	3
Americans' Shifting Views on Energy Issues	5
Which is the bigger priority: Increasing renewable energy or fossil fuels?	6
What should be the federal government's role on energy issues?	7
Why are views changing on wind and solar energy?	10
How appealing are electric vehicles and hybrids to Americans?	13
Who is more or less likely to be interested in buying an EV?	14
Interest in hybrid vehicles	16
Views on federal government's role in EV use	17
Acknowledgments	18
Methodology	19
The American Trends Panel survey methodology	19

Americans' Shifting Views on Energy Issues

A growing majority of Republicans prioritize the development of fossil fuel energy sources like oil and natural gas

Key takeaways:

- The share of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents who say the country should prioritize oil, coal and natural gas over wind and solar power has doubled to 71% over the last six years.
- Majorities of Republicans see wind and solar power as less reliable than other energy sources, and decreasing shares of Republicans say wind and solar energy is better for the environment.
- An overwhelming majority of Democrats continue to prioritize wind and solar power and say the federal government should encourage their development.

A year into the second Trump administration, Republicans continue to sour on wind and solar energy: A majority says the United States should prioritize fossil fuels like oil, coal and natural gas, a reversal of Republican views in 2020. Meanwhile, Democratic support for wind and solar power remains very high, but support is slightly lower than earlier this decade.

These findings come from a new Pew Research Center survey of 3,524 U.S. adults conducted in March 2026, a few weeks into the U.S. military conflict with Iran that has led to [tumult in the energy market internationally](#) and [higher gasoline prices](#) in the U.S. This research builds on our long-standing interest in Americans' views on [energy sources and energy policy](#).

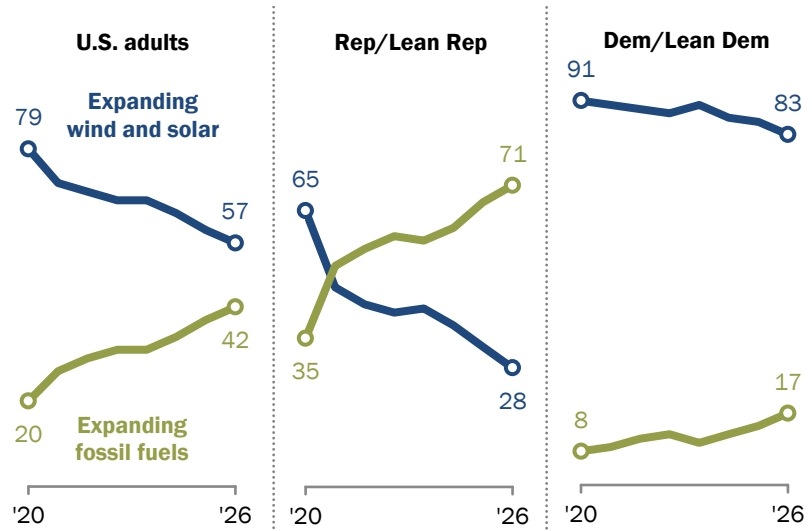
Which is the bigger priority: Increasing renewable energy or fossil fuels?

With [rising energy costs](#) and [increased demand](#), Americans are still more likely to say that renewable energy should be prioritized over fossil fuels. But that share continues to drop: 57% say this today, down from 79% in 2020.

This decline has been driven mostly by Republicans sharply shifting their views on fossil fuels and renewable energy in the last six years. In 2020, a majority of Republicans and those who lean to the Republican Party said the focus should be on renewables (65%). Now, just 28% of Republicans say this, while 71% say the priority should be on fossil fuels.

Support for the U.S. prioritizing renewable energy development over fossil fuels continues to decline

% who say the more important priority for addressing America's energy supply should be ...



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 16-22, 2026.
"Americans' Shifting Views on Energy Issues"

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About eight-in-ten Democrats and Democratic leaners (83%) say the country should give priority to developing wind and solar production, but this share has also ticked downward in the last few years.

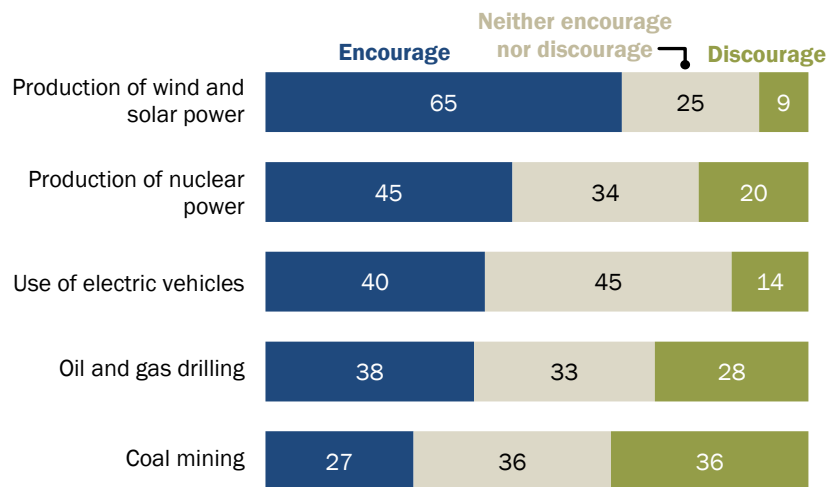
What should be the federal government's role on energy issues?

The Trump administration has [reduced or eliminated many of the subsidies for renewable energy](#) that started during the Biden administration. Instead, they have [encouraged increased production of fossil fuels](#) like oil, coal and natural gas. But what do Americans think the federal government should emphasize?

Wind and solar attract the most support, with about two-thirds (65%) calling for policies to expand production from these sources. And coal mining attracts the least support, with more saying the government should *discourage* (36%) this activity than *encourage* it (27%). Americans have more mixed views of other sources, with none attracting majority support, but also none facing large opposition.

Majority of Americans say the government should encourage the production of wind and solar power

% who say the federal government should ___ each of the following activities



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 16-22, 2026.
"Americans' Shifting Views on Energy Issues"

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How views have changed

For most sources, these reflect small increases in public support over the last few years.

But there has been a slight turn away from federal intervention in wind and solar. In 2022, 72% said the government should encourage this production, 7 percentage points higher than today.

In contrast, support has gone up slightly during that time for encouraging coal mining (7 percentage point increase since 2022) and oil and gas drilling (5-point increase). There has also been a small increase in support for more nuclear power.

How Republicans and Democrats differ on the federal government's role on energy issues

As is the case with which energy source should be prioritized, Republicans and Democrats increasingly differ in views of the federal government's role in the production of wind and solar and fossil fuel energy production. This is largely driven by shifting views among Republicans, while Democrats' views have remained relatively stable.

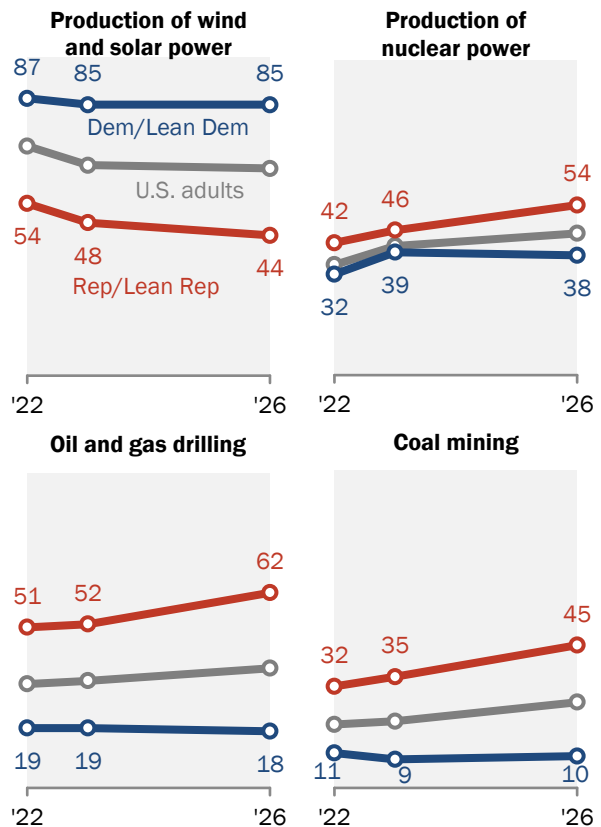
Wind and solar production

Republicans have long been less supportive of wind and solar production than Democrats.

In 2022, a slim majority (54%) of Republicans supported government policies to encourage production of these renewable sources. In four years, that has dropped 10 percentage points to 44%.

Republicans increasingly likely to say the government should encourage fossil fuel production

% who say that the federal government should encourage each of the following activities



Note: Respondents who gave other responses of "neither encourage nor discourage," "discourage" or did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 16-22, 2026. "Americans' Shifting Views on Energy Issues"

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This is consistent with past Center surveys, which found that the shares of Republicans who say they support more wind power and solar power both [dropped by more than 20 points](#) from 2020 to 2025.

An overwhelming majority of Democrats (85%) continue to say the federal government should encourage the production of wind and solar power.

Fossil fuel sources

The opposite pattern emerges with fossil fuel sources: Republicans have been more supportive than Democrats of federal programs to encourage these sources, and the share in favor of such programs has grown.

- **Oil and gas drilling:** 62% of Republicans now say the federal government should encourage oil and gas drilling, up 11 percentage points since January 2022.
- **Coal mining:** 45% of Republicans say the federal government should encourage coal mining, up 13 points in four years.

Much smaller shares of Republicans say the federal government should discourage oil and gas drilling (8%) or coal mining (14%).

Just as in the Biden years, Democrats are far more likely to say the federal government should discourage rather than encourage oil and gas drilling and coal mining.

Nuclear power

Slightly more than half of Republicans (54%) and 38% of Democrats now say the federal government should encourage production of nuclear power.

These shares are larger than they were in 2022, when 42% of Republicans and 32% of Democrats said that the federal government should encourage nuclear power production (though the increase among Democrats took place between 2022 and 2023).

This is consistent with past Center surveys, which found that [support for more nuclear power plants](#) has increased among both Democrats and Republicans since 2020.

The partisan divide is smaller on nuclear power than on other energy issues.

Why are views changing on wind and solar energy?

While majorities view these sources as better for the environment than most others, the share who hold this view has dropped since 2021. And compared with views of these sources' environmental impact, views of their cost and reliability are far less positive.

Impact on the environment

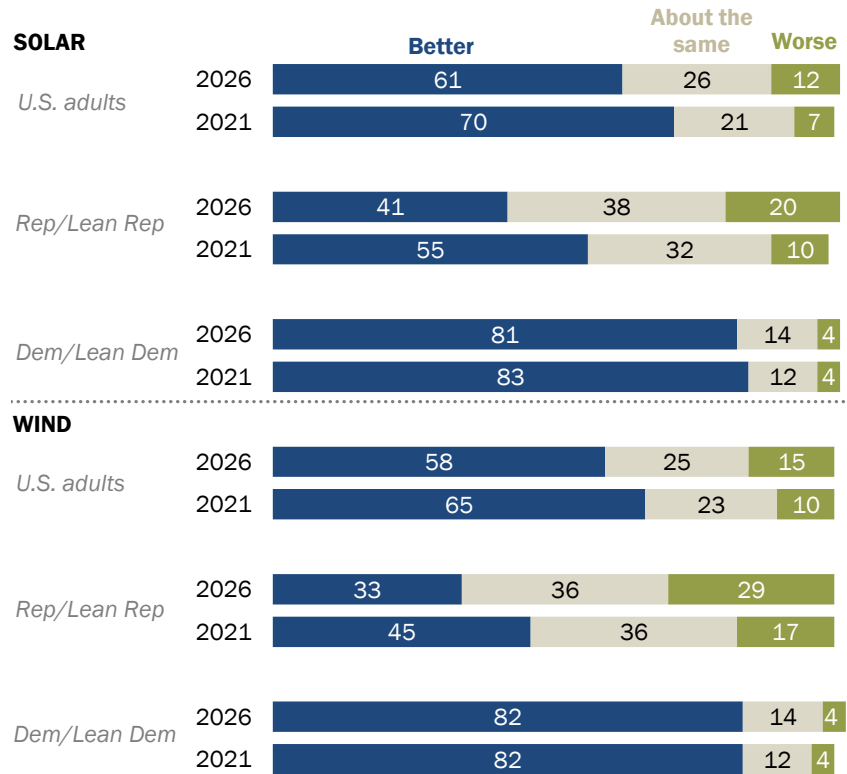
As with other attitudes around renewable energy, Republicans are less likely than they were five years ago to say solar and wind power are better for the environment.

- **Solar:** Republicans are 14 percentage points less likely now to say that solar power is better for the environment than most other energy sources. The share of Republicans who say solar power is *worse* for the environment has increased.

- **Wind:** Similarly, there has been a 12-point drop in the share of Republicans who say that wind power is better for the environment than most other energy sources. About three-in-ten Republicans (29%) now say wind power is worse for the environment, up 12 points from five years ago.

Republicans have become less likely to see wind and solar as good for the environment

Thinking about generating electricity, % who say each of the following is ___ for the environment compared to most other energy sources



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 16-22, 2026.
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Cost to consumers

Americans are slightly more likely to say that solar and wind power are cheaper compared with other energy sources than to say it is more expensive. Again, though, Republicans are more likely than Democrats to view these sources as more costly.

More Republicans say wind (44%) and solar (43%) cost consumers *more* than other energy sources than say these cost *less* than other sources (19% and 24%, respectively).

[A 2023 Center survey](#) found that most Republicans said a transition from fossil fuel to renewable energy sources would make their home energy prices worse.

Democrats follow the opposite pattern: More say that wind and solar cost less than other energy sources (48% each) than say they cost more (20% for solar and 14% for wind).

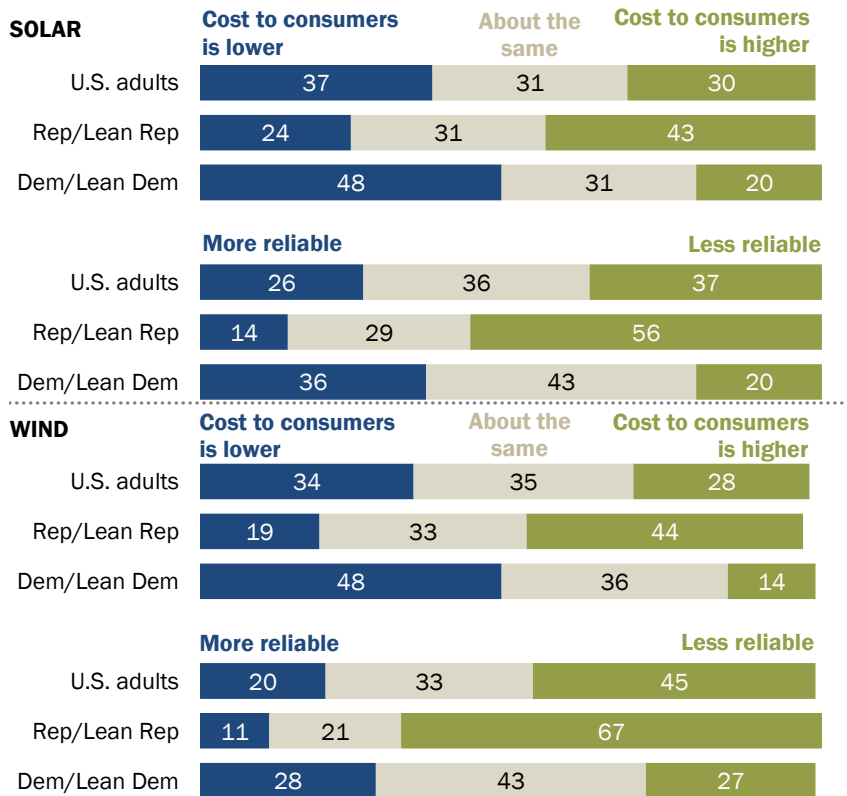
Reliability

Americans view both solar and wind power as less reliable than other energy sources (though more Americans say wind is less reliable than say the same about solar). Republicans are especially negative about these sources' reliability.

In [a 2023 Center survey](#), most Republicans said they expected that a transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy would lead to a less reliable energy grid.

Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say solar and wind power are more costly than other energy sources

Thinking about generating electricity, % who say the following about solar and wind power compared with most other energy sources



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 16-22, 2026.
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This year, Republicans are far more likely to say solar and wind power are less reliable rather than more reliable compared with other energy sources, while Democrats are more mixed. Democrats are split on the reliability of wind power, and they're more likely to think solar power is more reliable than less reliable.

How appealing are electric vehicles and hybrids to Americans?

Key takeaways:

- Americans remain more likely to seriously consider purchasing a hybrid vehicle than an electric vehicle (44% vs. 32%). Interest in EVs is similar to what it was last year, but down from four years ago.
- Democrats, younger Americans and those who live in urban and suburban areas are more likely to seriously consider buying an EV or a hybrid.

About a third of Americans say they would very or somewhat seriously consider purchasing an electric vehicle as their next vehicle. This is a similar share as last year but down from 42% in 2022.

Roughly half (53%) say they are not too or not at all likely to seriously consider purchasing an EV, and 15% say they do not expect to purchase a vehicle.

Americans continue to be more interested in purchasing a hybrid vehicle than an electric vehicle.

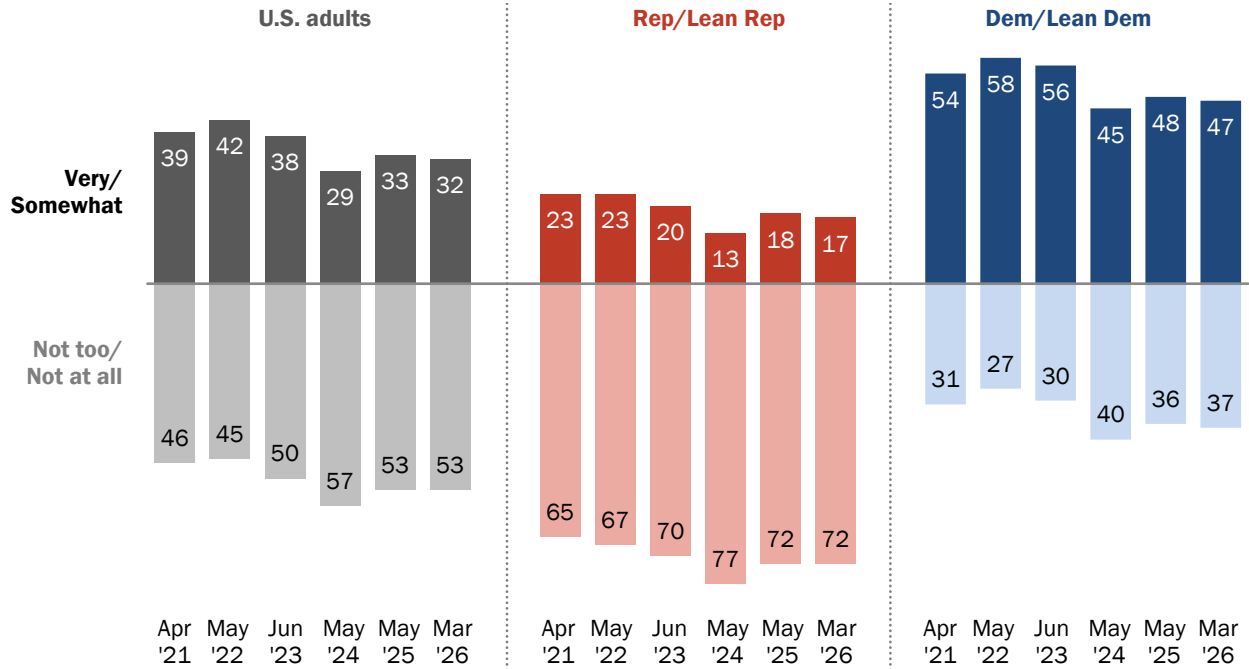
(This survey was conducted March 16-22, 2026, a few weeks into the U.S. military conflict with Iran. [Gas prices have soared](#) and electric vehicle [search interest has gone up](#) in the past few weeks.)

This analysis is part of a broader Pew Research Center study looking at Americans' shifting views on energy issues. For more, refer to "[Americans' Shifting Views on Energy Issues](#)"

Who is more or less likely to be interested in buying an EV?

32% of Americans say they would seriously consider buying an electric vehicle

% who say the next time they purchase a vehicle, they are ___ likely to seriously consider purchasing an electric vehicle (EV)



Note: Respondents who gave other response of "I do not expect to purchase a vehicle" or did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 16-22, 2026.

"How appealing are electric vehicles and hybrids to Americans?"

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Democrats and those who lean toward the Democratic Party continue to be more likely than Republicans and GOP leaners to say they would seriously consider purchasing an EV as their next vehicle (47% vs. 17%). But Democrats are 11 percentage points less likely to say they're interested than in 2022, when 58% said they would seriously consider purchasing an EV.

Younger Americans, including both young Democrats and Republicans, express greater interest than older adults in purchasing an EV. Adults younger than 30 are split on whether they would seriously consider purchasing an EV or not, while greater shares of those 50 and older say they would *not* seriously consider buying one.

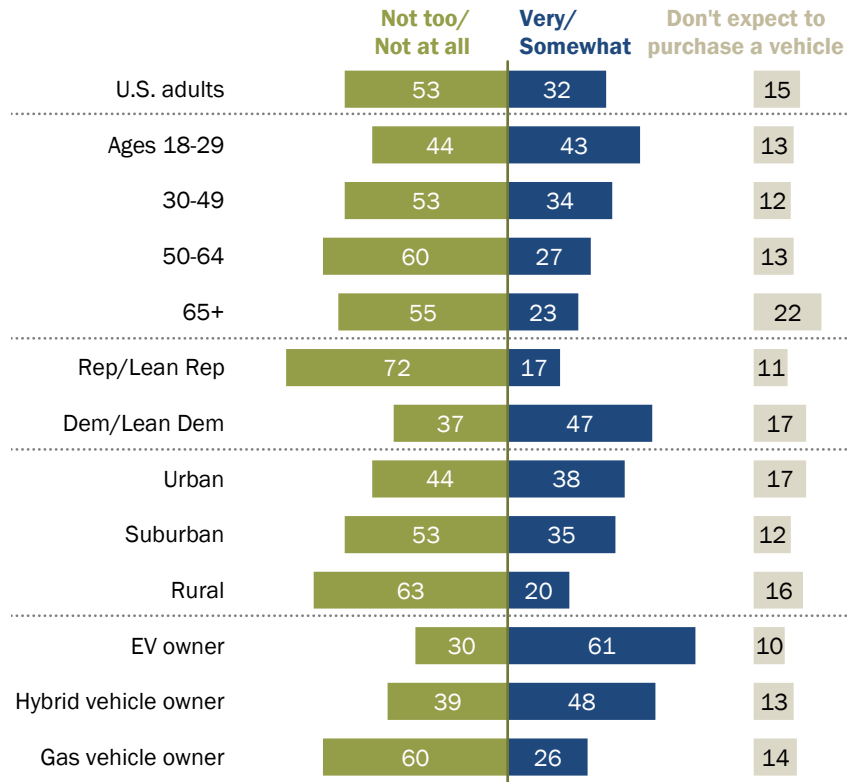
Urban and suburban Americans are also more likely than those who live in rural areas to seriously considering purchasing an EV.

Among current EV owners, a majority would consider an EV for their next car (61%), but three-in-ten would *not* consider one.

The majority of gas vehicle owners (excluding those who also own an EV or hybrid) also say they would not seriously consider an EV for their next car (60%).

Younger Americans and Democrats are among those most likely to say they're interested in buying an EV

% who say the next time they purchase a vehicle, they are ___ likely to seriously consider purchasing an electric vehicle (EV)



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 16-22, 2026.
 "How appealing are electric vehicles and hybrids to Americans?"

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Interest in hybrid vehicles

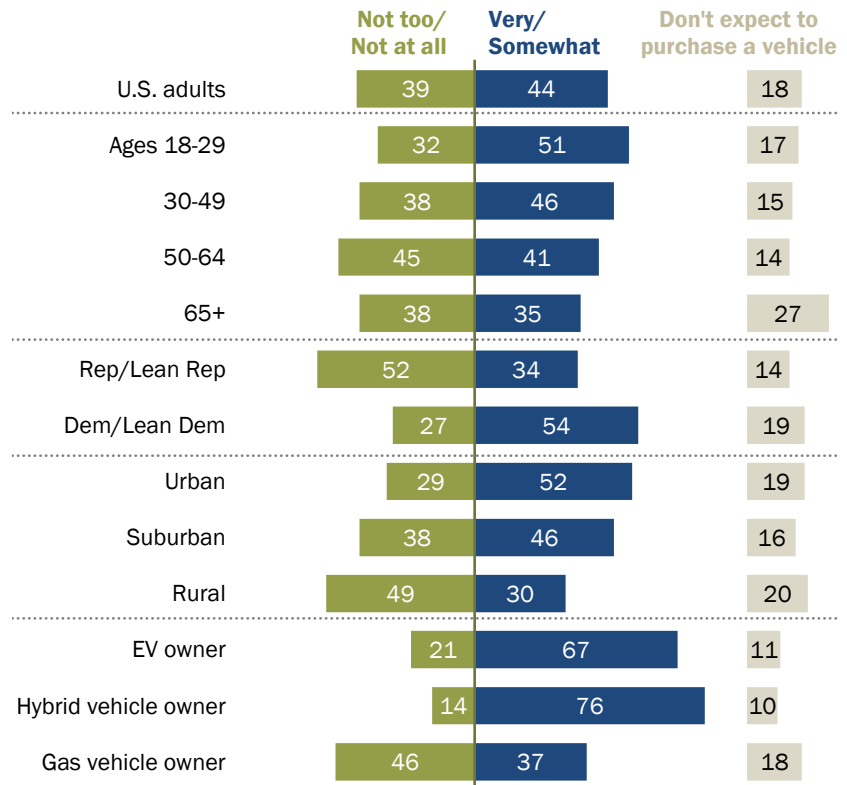
Americans show more interest in purchasing a hybrid vehicle: 44% say they would seriously consider buying one. This is about the same as in 2024.

As with electric vehicle interest, Democrats, younger Americans and those who live in urban and suburban areas are all particularly likely to seriously consider buying a hybrid.

Additionally, current hybrid owners largely plan to stick with that type of vehicle for their next purchase: 76% say they would seriously consider it. Gas car owners (who do not own an EV or hybrid) express some interest in hybrid vehicles (37%), but more still do not plan to seriously consider it (46%).

44% of Americans say they would seriously consider buying a hybrid vehicle

% who say the next time they purchase a vehicle, they are ___ likely to seriously consider purchasing a hybrid vehicle



Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.
 Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 16-22, 2026.
 "How appealing are electric vehicles and hybrids to Americans?"

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Views on federal government's role in EV use

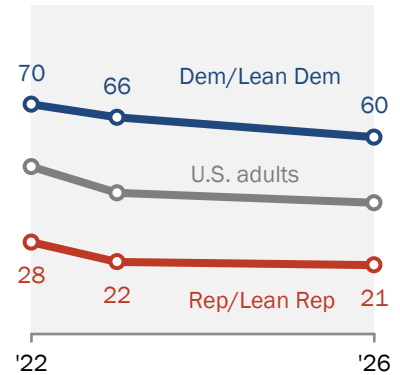
[Federal tax credits for buying an electric vehicle expired](#) on Sept. 30, 2025. Four-in-ten Americans now say the federal government should encourage the use of EVs. This share has ticked down since the Biden administration.

A slightly larger share (45%) now say the federal government should neither encourage nor discourage the use of EVs. And 14% say the federal government should discourage their use.

Democrats continue to be much more likely than Republicans to say the government should encourage the use of electric vehicles (60% vs. 21%). However, **the shares of both Democrats and Republicans who say the government should encourage the use of electric vehicles have gone down** since 2022 (down 10 and 7 percentage points, respectively).

Declining shares say the government should encourage the use of EVs

% who say the federal government should encourage the use of EVs



Note: Respondents who gave other responses of “neither encourage nor discourage” or “discourage” or did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 16-22, 2026.

“How appealing are electric vehicles and hybrids to Americans?”

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Methodology

The American Trends Panel survey methodology

Overview

Data in this report comes from Wave 189 of the American Trends Panel (ATP), Pew Research Center’s nationally representative panel of randomly selected U.S. adults. The survey was conducted from March 16 to March 22, 2026. A total of 3,524 panelists responded out of 4,053 who were sampled, for a survey-level response rate of 87%.

The cumulative response rate accounting for nonresponse to the recruitment surveys and attrition is 3%. The break-off rate among panelists who logged on to the survey and completed at least one item is 1%. The margin of sampling error for the full sample of 3,524 respondents is plus or minus 1.8 percentage points.

The survey includes an [oversample](#) of non-Hispanic Asian adults in order to provide more precise estimates of the opinions and experiences of this smaller demographic subgroup. Oversampled groups are weighted back to reflect their correct proportions in the population.

SSRS conducted the survey for Pew Research Center via online (n=3,383) and live telephone (n=141) interviewing. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish.

To learn more about the ATP, read “[About the American Trends Panel](#).”

Panel recruitment

Since 2018, the ATP has used address-based sampling (ABS) for recruitment. A study cover letter and a pre-incentive are mailed to a stratified, random sample of households selected from the U.S. Postal Service’s Computerized Delivery Sequence File. This Postal Service file has been estimated to cover 90% to 98% of the population.¹ Within each sampled household, the adult with the next birthday is selected to participate. Other details of the ABS recruitment protocol have changed over time but are available upon request.² Prior to 2018, the ATP was recruited using landline and cellphone random-digit-dial surveys administered in English and Spanish.

A national sample of U.S. adults has been recruited to the ATP approximately once per year since 2014. In some years, the recruitment has included additional efforts (known as an “oversample”)

¹ AAPOR Task Force on Address-based Sampling. 2016. “[AAPOR Report: Address-based Sampling](#).”

² Email pewsurveys@pewresearch.org.

to improve the accuracy of data for underrepresented groups. For example, Hispanic adults, Black adults and Asian adults were oversampled in 2019, 2022 and 2023, respectively.

Sample design

The overall target population for this survey was noninstitutionalized persons ages 18 and older living in the United States. It featured a stratified random sample from the ATP in which non-Hispanic Asian adults were selected with certainty. The remaining panelists were sampled at rates designed to ensure that the share of respondents in each stratum is proportional to its share of the U.S. adult population to the greatest extent possible. Respondent weights are adjusted to account for differential probabilities of selection as described in the Weighting section below.

Questionnaire development and testing

The questionnaire was developed by Pew Research Center in consultation with SSRS. The web program used for online respondents was rigorously tested on both PC and mobile devices by the SSRS project team and Pew Research Center researchers. The SSRS project team also populated test data that was analyzed in SPSS to ensure the logic and randomizations were working as intended before launching the survey.

Incentives

All respondents were offered a post-paid incentive for their participation. Respondents could choose to receive the post-paid incentive in the form of a check or gift code to Amazon.com, Target.com or Walmart.com. Incentive amounts ranged from \$5 to \$15 depending on whether the respondent belongs to a part of the population that is harder or easier to reach. Differential incentive amounts were designed to increase panel survey participation among groups that traditionally have low survey response propensities.

Data collection protocol

The data collection field period for this survey was March 16 to March 22, 2026. Surveys were conducted via self-administered web survey or by live telephone interviewing.

For panelists who take surveys online:³ Postcard notifications were mailed to a subset on March 16.⁴ Survey invitations were sent out in two separate launches: soft launch and full launch. Sixty panelists were included in the soft launch, which began with an initial invitation sent on

³ The ATP does not use routers or chains in any part of its online data collection protocol, nor are they used to direct respondents to additional surveys.

⁴ Postcard notifications for web panelists are sent to 1) panelists who were recruited within the last two years and 2) panelists recruited prior to the last two years who opt to continue receiving postcard notifications.

March 16. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking sampled online panelists were included in the full launch and were sent an invitation on March 17.

**Invitation and reminder dates for web respondents,
ATP Wave 189**

	Soft launch	Full launch
Initial invitation	March 16, 2026	March 17, 2026
First reminder	March 19, 2026	March 19, 2026
Final reminder	March 21, 2026	March 21, 2026

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Panelists participating online were sent an email invitation and up to two email reminders if they did not respond to the survey. ATP panelists who consented to SMS messages were sent an SMS invitation with a link to the survey and up to two SMS reminders.

For panelists who take surveys over the phone with a live interviewer: Prenotification postcards were mailed on March 13. Soft launch took place on March 16 and involved dialing until a total of nine interviews had been completed. All remaining English- and Spanish-speaking sampled phone panelists' numbers were dialed throughout the remaining field period. Panelists who take surveys via phone can receive up to six calls from trained SSRS interviewers.

Data quality checks

To ensure high-quality data, Center researchers performed data quality checks to identify any respondents showing patterns of satisficing. This includes checking for whether respondents left questions blank at very high rates or always selected the first or last answer presented. As a result of this checking, eight ATP respondents were removed from the survey dataset prior to weighting and analysis.

Weighting

The ATP data is weighted in a process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the panel survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of recruitment into the panel. These weights are then calibrated to align with the population benchmarks in the accompanying table to correct for nonresponse to recruitment surveys and panel attrition. If only a subsample of panelists was invited to participate in the wave, this weight is adjusted to account for any differential probabilities of selection.

Among the panelists who completed the survey, this weight is then calibrated again to align with the population benchmarks identified in the accompanying table and trimmed at the 1st and 99th percentiles to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights. Sampling errors and tests of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

American Trends Panel weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Age (detailed)	2024 American Community Survey (ACS)
Age x Gender	
Education x Gender	
Education x Age	
Race/Ethnicity x Education	
Race/Ethnicity x Gender	
Race/Ethnicity x Age	
Born inside vs. outside the U.S. among Hispanics and Asian Americans	
Years lived in the U.S.	
Census region x Metropolitan status	
Volunteerism	2023 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Frequency of internet use	2025 National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS)
Religious affiliation	
Party affiliation x Race/Ethnicity	
Party affiliation x Age	
Validated 2024 presidential election turnout and vote choice	Candidate vote share is based on official results from the Federal Election Commission. Turnout is based on estimates from the Election Lab at the University of Florida. The size of the voting-eligible population is based on the 2023 ACS.

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on noninstitutionalized adults. For weighting to the 2024 presidential election results, panelists are considered validated voters if their self-report of having voted was confirmed after matching to a national voter registry.

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The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

Sample sizes and margins of error, ATP Wave 189

Group	Unweighted sample size	Weighted %	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	3,524		1.8 percentage points
Half form	At least 1,753		2.6 percentage points
Rep/Lean Rep	1,567	46%	2.7 percentage points
Half form	At least 767		3.8 percentage points
Dem/Lean Dem	1,800	48%	2.6 percentage points
Half form	At least 877		3.7 percentage points

Note: This survey includes oversamples of non-Hispanic Asian adults and adults ages 18-to-29 respondents. Unweighted sample sizes do not account for the sample design or weighting and do not describe a group's contribution to weighted estimates. See the Sample design and Weighting sections above for details.

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Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

Dispositions and response rates

Final dispositions, ATP Wave 189

	AAPOR code	Total
Completed interview	1.1	3,524
Logged in (web) / Contacted (CATI), but did not complete any items	2.11	88
Started survey; broke off before completion	2.12	23
Never logged on (web) / Never reached on phone (CATI)	2.20	410
Survey completed after close of the field period	2.27	0
Other non-interview	2.30	0
Completed interview but was removed for data quality	2.90	8
Total panelists sampled for the survey		4,053
Completed interviews	I	3,524
Partial interviews	P	0
Refusals	R	111
Non-contact	NC	410
Other	O	8
Unknown household	UH	0
Unknown other	UO	0
Not eligible	NE	0
Total		4,053
AAPOR RR1 = I / (I+P+R+NC+O+UH+UO)		87%

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Cumulative response rate, ATP Wave 189

	Total
Weighted response rate to recruitment surveys	12%
% of recruitment survey respondents who agreed to join the panel, among those invited	74%
% of those agreeing to join who were active panelists at start of Wave 189	40%
Response rate to Wave 189 survey	87%
Cumulative response rate	3%

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