April 21, 2025

New Yorkers favor reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but only if it doesn't lead to higher energy costs

Summary

Little willingness to pay for green energy. Nearly half of New Yorkers are either unwilling to pay for clean energy or would contribute only a modest amount—less than $10 per month. Meanwhile, only 3 percent to 5 percent of respondents are open to spending $200 or more each month on clean energy.

Balance between affordable and green energy. Around two-thirds of New Yorkers believe the state should adopt policies that strike a balance between affordability and sustainability in energy production.

Sixty percent of New Yorkers support green policies, but only if they do not lead to higher energy costs. When choosing between reducing greenhouse gas emissions and keeping energy affordable, the same proportion—three-fifths—favor emission reduction efforts, as long as they don't result in price increases. This preference holds true across all demographics, including age, income, and political affiliation.

Twenty percent want lower energy costs even if it results in higher greenhouse gas emissions. Even though this holds among all demographics, this notion is especially pronounced among Republican-leaning respondents, with 30 percent preferring cheaper energy.

Twenty percent prioritize reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Similarly, approximately 20 percent of respondents across all demographics prefer reducing greenhouse gas emission even if it leads to higher prices, particularly among Democrat-leaning respondents, 32 percent of whom feel that way.

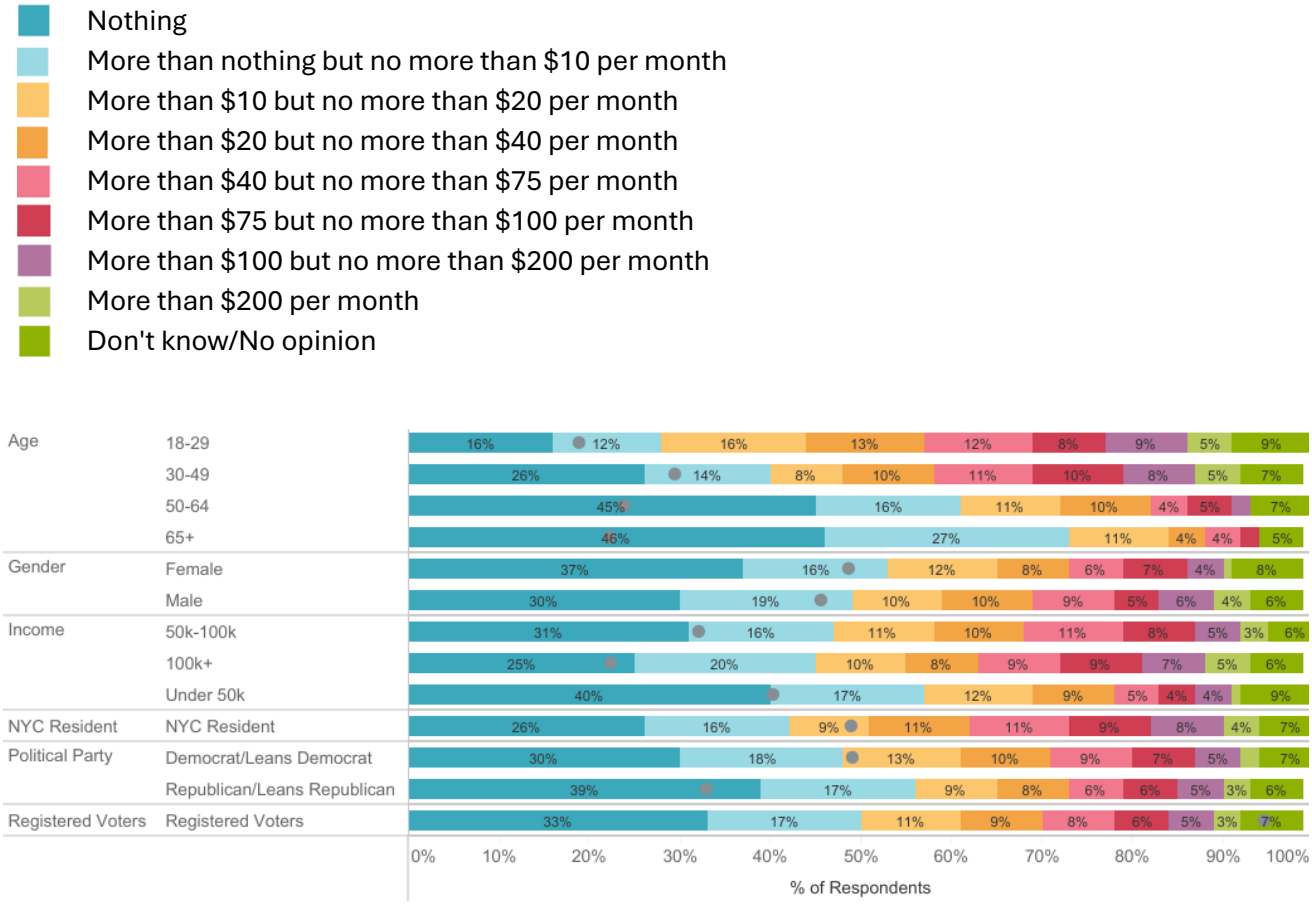
Half of New Yorkers have not heard of the Climate Leadership Community Protection Act (CLCPA), while another quarter have heard of it but do not know what it is. Only 12 percent believe they know what the CLCPA entails.

More information. The report is based on an opinion poll conducted on behalf of the Empire Center for Public Policy in December 2024 by Morning Consult. Topline data is here, crosstabs can be found here, and interactive database is here.

Most New Yorkers don't want to pay anything, or would agree to pay very little for clean energy

A significant share of New Yorkers, especially those aged 50 and older, oppose any additional charges on their energy bills for cleaner energy, while 18 percent and 17 percent would agree to pay $10 per month. Only 3-5 percent would agree to pay $200 or more per month for cleaner energy. Individuals with the lowest incomes and those aged 50 and older are the least inclined to support extra charges for cleaner energy. Notably, the gap between Democrat-leaning and Republican-leaning respondents is minimal, with 30 percent and 39 percent, respectively, unwilling to pay anything, and 18 percent and 17 percent willing to pay less than $10 per month.

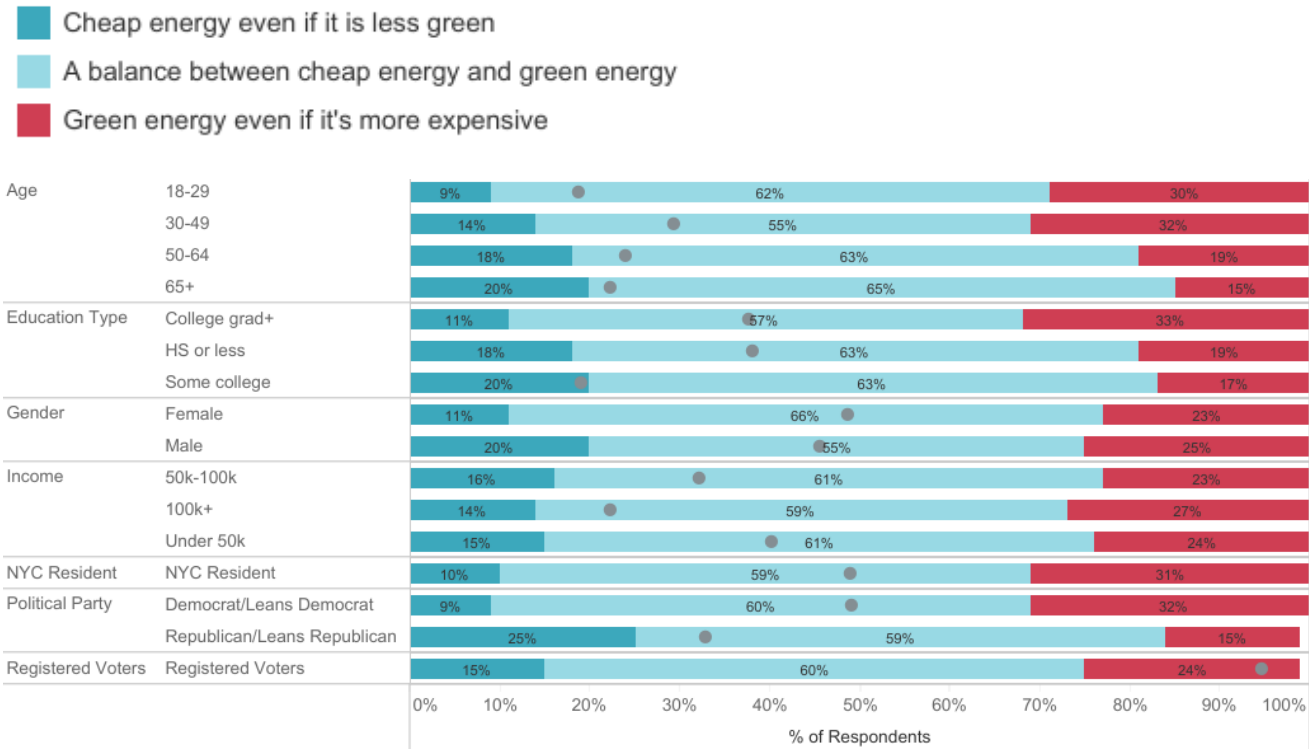
How much more would you be willing to pay on your monthly energy bill for cleaner energy?



Most New Yorkers want a balance between affordable and green energy

Across all demographics and socioeconomic groups, roughly two-thirds of New Yorkers believe the state should aim for a balance between affordable and sustainable energy. Additionally, around one in six prioritize cheaper energy, while one in four favor greener energy despite higher costs.

When making decisions about energy, what direction should New York pursue?



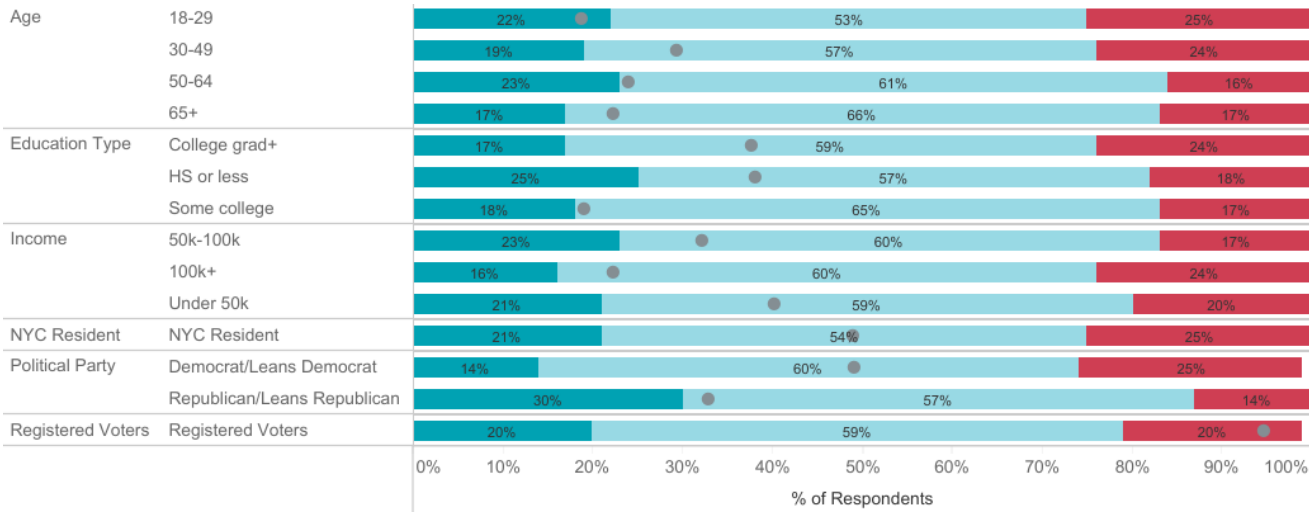
New Yorkers want to reduce greenhouse gas emissions only if it does not increase the price of energy

The majority of New Yorkers favor emission reductions —provided they don't lead to higher energy costs. Interestingly, public opinion is split when considering more extreme approaches: 20 percent prioritize lowering energy prices even if it results in higher emissions, while another 20 percent support accelerating emission reductions even if costs increase.

These opposing preferences are consistent across demographic groups, with political leanings being the key differentiator. Republican-leaning respondents tend to favor affordability, while Democrat-leaning individuals prioritize reducing emissions. Still, the overwhelming majority in both groups prefer policies that do not drive up energy prices.

New York is currently behind in its plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. New York could reduce greenhouse gas emissions faster if it implemented strategies like imposing higher taxes on energy, restricting use of natural gas sooner, and mandating people to buy electric vehicles, etc. Which of the following comes closest to your opinion, even if no option is exactly right?

- New York should do everything to reduce the price of energy for customers even if it means higher greenhouse gas emissions
- New York should only implement strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that do not increase the price of energy for customers, even if it means progress to reduce emissions is slower
- New York should do everything it can to reduce greenhouse gas emissions faster, even if it means higher energy prices for customers



New Yorkers do not know what the Community Protection and Climate Leadership Act (CLCPA) is or what it means

Enacted six years ago, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) aims to transform how New Yorkers generate and use energy. Despite the sweeping nature of the proposed changes, public awareness remains low, especially among individuals with lower incomes and those over the age of 65.

How familiar are you, if at all, with the provisions of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (also known as CLCPA or the Climate Act) that was signed into law in New York in 2019?

- I have never heard of it
- I have heard of it, but I don't know what it is
- I have heard of it, and I have a general sense of what it is
- I have heard of it, and I have a detailed sense of what it is
- I know exactly what it is