

TEXAS VOTERS SUPPORT CLIMATE ACTION



Ahead of the third Democratic primary debate in Houston, Texas, a [new survey](#) finds Texas voters support a broad array of policies to address climate impacts and shift the state from fossil fuels to renewable energy, and they want their elected officials to support those policies as well. Climate Nexus, in partnership with the Yale University Program on Climate Change Communication and the George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication, conducted a representative survey of 1,660 registered voters in Texas from August 20-25, 2019. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 2.4% at the 95% confidence level.

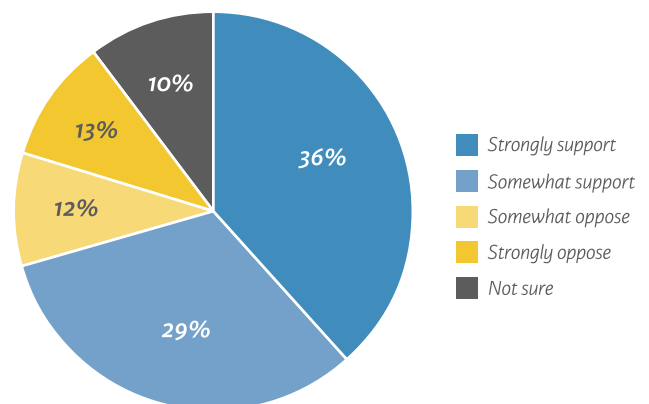
CLIMATE CHANGE IS POLITICALLY SALIENT IN TEXAS

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of Texas voters support government action to address climate change, including more than one-third (36%) who strongly support it. Texas voters also want their state government (70%), the federal government (69%), and their own member of Congress (68%) to do more on climate change.

Not only do Texans support climate action, but climate change ranks as a top-tier issue for Democrats in the state when considering their presidential vote. When asked to identify the two most important issues to their vote for president in 2020, Texas Democratic voters are most likely to identify health care (36%), gun policy (29%), climate change (21%), and the economy and jobs (21%). The heightened importance of gun policy reflects the survey's proximity to the August 3 mass shooting in El Paso, which dominated headlines in Texas and nationwide throughout the month. Eleven percent of voters overall in the state say climate change is one of the two most important issues to their vote for president in 2020.

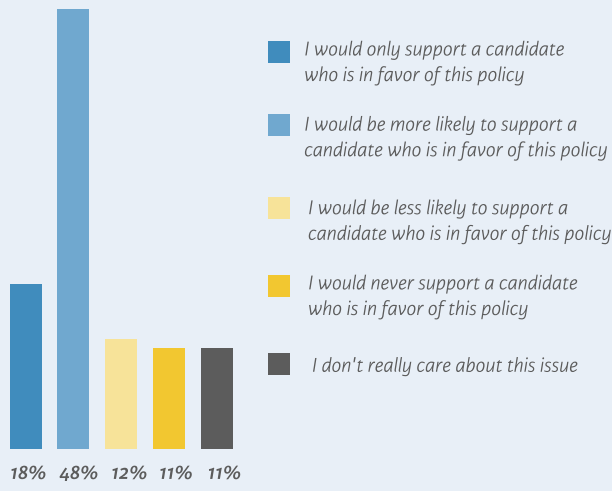
Texas voters are also more likely to support candidates who are in favor of specific policies to address climate change. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of Texas voters say they would be more likely to support a candidate for political office who favors extending government funding for renewable energy. Roughly two-thirds say they would be more likely to support candidates who favor establishing a national renewable portfolio standard (RPS)

Q: *Do you support or oppose government action to address climate change?*



Due to weighting and rounding, percentages may not always add up to 100%

Q: Please indicate how likely you would be to support a candidate for political office who is in favor of requiring electric utility companies in the United States to generate 100% of their electricity from renewable sources, like wind and solar, by the year 2050. If you don't care about this policy, just say so.



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requiring 100% of electricity to be generated from renewable sources by 2050 (66%), setting stronger fuel efficiency standards for vehicles (66%), and requiring fossil fuel companies to pay a tax on their carbon pollution (64%). More than eight in 10 (83%) Texas voters say they would be more likely to support a candidate who favors requiring background checks for all firearms purchases, and nearly two-thirds (64%) say they would be more likely to support a candidate who favors banning the sale of semi-automatic weapons.

TEXANS SUPPORT SPECIFIC CLIMATE POLICIES

Texas voters support policies to move the state away from fossil fuels and toward more renewable energy. Two-thirds (67%) of Texas voters say developing

more renewable energy sources should be the most important priority for addressing Texas's energy needs, significantly more than those who say building more natural gas (12%) or nuclear (7%) power plants should be the top priority. Additionally, seven in 10 (70%) Texas voters support establishing a 100% RPS in Texas, including nearly four in 10 (38%) who strongly support such a policy. More than three-quarters (77%) support extending government funding for renewable energy.

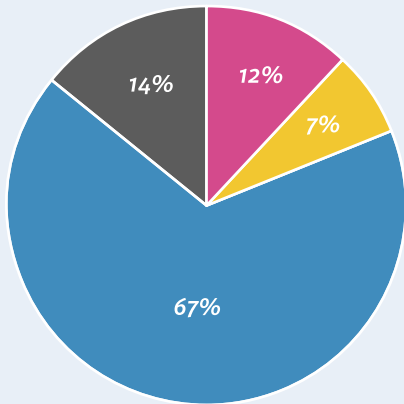
Texas voters also believe requiring utilities in the state to generate 100% of their electricity from renewable sources by 2050 will have positive impacts across Texas. More than three-quarters (76%) say a 100% RPS in Texas will benefit the state's environment, and at least six in 10 say this policy will bring down electricity costs (64%), improve the economy (62%), and have a positive impact on rural and farming communities (60%). Pluralities also believe a 100% RPS policy in Texas will improve wages (46%), benefit communities of color (46%), and bring down the state's unemployment rate (45%).

Texans support a variety of other policies to address and reduce impacts from climate change. Roughly eight in 10 Texas voters support setting stronger pollution standards for business and industry (81%) and requiring new infrastructure to be built to withstand extreme weather events, even if it costs taxpayers more (80%). More than three-quarters (76%) support setting stronger fuel efficiency standards for cars, trucks, and SUVs, and nearly seven in 10 (69%) agree the federal electric vehicle tax credit should extend beyond a manufacturer's first 200,000 customers.

TEXANS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT CLIMATE IMPACTS

Voters in Texas are concerned about climate impacts, including pollution and infrastructure, in their state. More than three-quarters say pollution of rivers, lakes, and streams (76%) and the quality of infrastructure (76%) are serious problems in their

Q: Right now, which of the following do you think should be the most important priority for addressing Texas's energy needs?



- Developing more renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar
- Building more natural gas power plants
- Building more nuclear power plants
- Not sure

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local area. Roughly seven in 10 say air pollution (71%), extreme weather (70%), and drought (67%) are serious problems where they live, and more than six in 10 (61%) say explosions of oil and gas facilities are a serious issue as well. Nearly half (49%) of Texas voters say sea-level rise is a serious problem for their local area.

Texas voters recognize the impact climate change is having throughout their state. Two-thirds say climate change is having an effect on agriculture (67%) and extreme weather (67%) in the state. Nearly six in 10 (59%) say climate change is impacting the health of Texas residents, and a majority (54%) say climate change is impacting Texas' economy.

While a majority (52%) of Texas voters believe the state's environment will be about the same for the next generation as it is now, more than one-

third (35%) believe it will be worse for the next generation. Only 13% believe it will be better for future generations than it is now.

TEXANS ARE EXPERIENCING A VARIETY OF EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

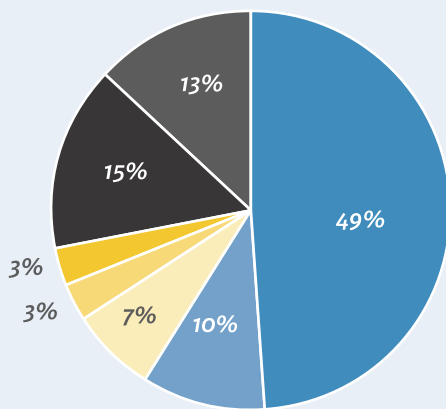
A majority of Texans trust their state government to handle a major hurricane, though fewer say the same about the federal government. More than half (52%) of Texas voters think Texas's state government is adequately prepared to deal with a major hurricane this year. By contrast, only about one-third (36%) think the federal government is adequately prepared to deal with a major hurricane this year, and nearly four in 10 (39%) think the federal government is not adequately prepared to handle a hurricane this year. Over four in 10 (45%) Texas voters are also worried they or someone in their family might have to temporarily or permanently relocate if there is a major hurricane.

Texas voters report experiencing a variety of extreme weather events in the last year. Nearly nine in 10 (87%) Texas voters say their local area has been impacted by extreme heat in the last year, and close to half say their local area has experienced flooding (48%) and drought (47%) in the last year. Roughly three in 10 (31%) say their local area has been impacted by tornados.

In addition to seeing the impacts of climate change where they live, many Texans report personally experiencing impacts from extreme weather. Nearly half (47%) of Texas voters say they or someone in their family has experienced more severe seasonal allergies in the last year. A notable number of Texas voters have experienced heat stress and heat-related illness (30%) or anxiety about extreme weather (35%), or have had to take a break from work or take a day off because of extreme weather (26%), extreme heat (19%), or poor air quality (10%). And, many Texas voters say they or someone in their family has experienced property damage or economic hardship (24%), made physical changes to their home (16%), or had to leave their home temporarily or permanently

Q: *When extreme weather events (such as hurricanes, floods, or heat waves) occur, when do you think is the proper time for the news media to talk about how climate change impacts these events?*

- Talk about climate change as the event is occurring
- Wait about a day or two after the event
- Wait about a week after the event
- Wait about a month after the event
- Wait longer than a month after the event
- Never talk about climate change and its role in weather-related disasters and extreme weather events
- Not sure



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(13%) specifically as a result of extreme weather.

Houston-area residents are experiencing some climate impacts including extreme weather more acutely than Texans in other parts of the state. Seven in 10 (70%) Houston-area voters, compared to roughly half (48%) of Texas voters overall, say their local area has been impacted by flooding in the last year. Houston-area residents are also more likely than Texans overall to say they or someone in their family has experienced anxiety about extreme weather (46%), had to take a break from work because of extreme weather (41%), or experienced property damage as a result of extreme weather (36%). Those in Houston are also more than twice as likely (28%) to have had to leave their home temporarily or permanently as a result of extreme weather than

Texans overall (13%). Houston-area voters are more likely to be worried they will have to temporarily or permanently relocate if Texas experiences a major hurricane (67%), compared to voters in Texas overall (45%).

When extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, floods, and heat waves occur, a majority of Texas voters think the media should discuss how climate change impacts extreme weather events as they unfold or immediately after. Nearly half (49%) say the media should talk about how climate change impacts extreme weather events while the event is occurring, and another 10% say the media should discuss climate change in the first couple of days after an extreme weather event. Only about one in 10 say the media should wait a week (7%), a month (3%), or longer than a month (3%) to discuss how climate change affects extreme weather.

AHEAD OF THIRD DEMOCRATIC DEBATE, BIDEN AND O'ROURKE HAVE THE EDGE

Ahead of the third Democratic presidential primary debate, Joe Biden leads the field among Democratic and Democratic-leaning likely voters in Texas, with nearly one-quarter (24%) selecting him as their top choice, followed by Texan Beto O'Rourke (21%). Twelve percent each pick Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, followed by Kamala Harris (7%), with none of the other candidates receiving more than 5%. Nine percent say they prefer another candidate or are unsure who they would likely to see as the Democratic presidential nominee.

When asked how they would vote if the election for president versus President Trump were held today, Joe Biden (43% to Trump's 43%) and Beto O'Rourke (44% to Trump's 45%) come within the margin of error to Trump. Other Democratic candidates, including Bernie Sanders (41% to Trump's 45%), Elizabeth Warren (39% to Trump's 45%), Julián Castro (37% to Trump's 45%), Kamala Harris (37% to Trump's 45%), and Pete Buttigieg (36% to Trump's 44%), trail the incumbent.