

CLIMATE POWER

To: Interested Parties

From: Climate Power

Date: July 16, 2025

Re: Cost of Living Messaging: Recommendations Based on Recent Polling for Local Elected Officials

The cost of living crisis will define the foreseeable future of American politics at all levels. Nearly 8 in 10 (78%) Americans say they are [concerned](#) about the impacts of the cost of living on them and their family. In fact, Americans are listing inflation and the cost of living as the top concerns and believe that the US is off on the wrong track.

This memo overviews recent polling and provides guidance for local elected officials on how to effectively communicate about climate and clean energy to align with Americans' economic concerns. **Our core recommendation: keep messages simple, focused, and personal—centered on the direct costs people are experiencing in their daily lives.**

BACKGROUND

An important contributor to Americans' concerns about the cost of living is the increasing costs of energy.

- More than half of Americans (51%) say the main **goal of the US energy policies should be to lower energy prices**. ^[1]
- 85% of voters believe policymakers should **do more to lower energy costs** and 83% believe they should **do more to lower electricity bills**. ^[1]
- In addition to energy prices, Americans are also **worried about the personal financial impacts of extreme weather** on their pocketbooks. 59% are [concerned](#) that extreme weather disasters will **increase their property insurance premiums**, and 55% are concerned that the impacts could mean **higher energy costs**. ^[2]

As Americans increasingly become disillusioned with the current state of politics—69% [say](#) they think the federal government is not doing enough to lower prices^[3]—they will look for politicians and voices that can work on their behalf and focus on the issues that directly or indirectly impact their economic circumstances and their quality of life.



RECENT POLLING

We tested a battery of different arguments to better understand what types of energy and climate messages resonate with Americans—from macroeconomic to microeconomic arguments, and from financial impacts to national security and economic stability.

RECOMMENDATION: Whenever we talk directly to Americans about what is impacting them personally and their finances, without over-explaining issues, those messages resonate more than any other approach. In this way, clean energy is about American energy independence, our energy costs and electricity bills, and ultimately, what helps with our overall cost of living.

Messages Shown to Respondents [4]	Very Persuasive	Somewhat Persuasive	Total Persuasive
[MICROECONOMIC: COSTS] With energy prices already high, now is the time to produce more energy to drive down costs. Cutting clean energy means America produces less energy overall, and that means families will pay even more to keep the lights on.	43%	31%	74%
[ENERGY INDEPENDENCE] Clean energy gives us reliable, homegrown power we can produce, store, and use here, so we don't have to rely on foreign countries or send billions overseas.	38%	36%	74%
[RELIABILITY] Extreme weather puts lives at risk. Eliminating these investments would leave the electric grid weaker and more vulnerable when we need it most.	39%	35%	74%

We see similar conclusions when it comes to climate-related disasters. The damage to property, increased energy costs, higher home insurance rates, and less affordable housing resonate better as they communicate a more tangible impact.

RECOMMENDATION: When communicating on extreme weather disasters, the target audience should be top of mind. Direct references to “climate disasters” resonate with *base Democrats*. However, to appeal to a broader audience outside the base, it is preferable to describe what people see (i.e., “extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and severe”)—without having to highlight the cause or using ideologically charged language.

[1] Climate Power and LCV collaborated with Hart Research to conduct a post-election poll across 2,128 registered voters from November 23 to 26, 2024 nationwide.

[2] The Associated Press NORC February 6 to 10, 2025 poll across 1,112 adults nationwide.

[3] CBS/YouGov April 28 to 30 2025 across 2,635 adults nationwide.

[4] Climate Power collaborated with Hart Research to conduct a Reconciliation poll across 1,285 registered voters from June 3 to 5, 2025 nationwide.

[5] Climate Power and LCV collaborated with Hart Research to conduct a messaging poll across 1,520 registered voters from March 19 to 25, 2025



Messages Shown to Respondents [5]	Very Persuasive	Somewhat Persuasive	Total Persuasive
[CLIMATE DIASTER COSTS] Climate disasters are already hitting Americans in their wallets, showing how costly climate change is. Wildfires, hurricanes, and floods are becoming more frequent, severe, and expensive-driving up home insurance rates , disrupting food supplies, and forcing massive disaster recovery spending.	42%	36%	78%
[COST OF BUILDING/RELIABILITY] The cost of solar and wind power is already up to 50% cheaper than electricity from fossil fuels , and solar and wind are far more reliable than coal or gas.	38%	40%	78%

As we saw during the presidential campaigns last year, energy was [directly linked](#) to the cost-of-living crisis and inflation. As people search for champions on a local and national level to pay attention to this issue, there is an opportunity to talk about how access to more energy will be impacting the cost of living landscape in the US (remember: clean energy is the cheapest source of energy and fastest to deploy).

CONCLUSION

Energy costs are now central to the economic conversation. Expanding clean energy isn't just good for the climate—it's a practical solution to lower utility bills, strengthen the power grid, and ease the burden of rising living costs for families.

We are living in a political era defined by the 'cost of living crisis'—local leaders have a unique opportunity to be seen as champions for solutions that address what Americans care about most: **making life more affordable**.

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