

TO: League of Conservation Voters and Climate Power
FROM: Hart Research Associates
DATE: August 15, 2022
RE: Key Themes from New Survey on the Inflation Reduction Act

The new online nationwide survey of 1,310 respondents* finds substantial support for the recently-passed Inflation Reduction Act (IRA): 63% say they feel favorable toward it, while just 22% feel unfavorable. Importantly, favorability is over 60% among swing voters (69%) and those who are undecided on their vote for Congress (68%). The survey tested various elements of the legislation and message themes in order to determine how to make the strongest possible case on behalf of its climate and clean energy components.

An important contextual note: communicating the elements and benefits of the IRA is essential. Just 29% of individuals say they have heard a lot about it, and awareness drops a bit further among key constituencies such as those under age 35 (20%), Black adults (24%), and especially undecided voters (14%). Moreover, awareness is no higher among the core audience of Democrats than it is among Republicans (both 29%). As outlined below, there is a compelling story to tell about the IRA, but there needs to be a concerted effort to tell it.

- **Addressing climate change is as important—and likely more important—an element of the legislation as consumer cost savings.** The fact that the bill “reduces carbon pollution by 40% by 2030 and ramps up the use of clean energy sources in order to address climate change” is deemed very important by 50% of people; 39% say the same of the fact that it “lowers the cost for consumers to buy solar panels, energy-efficient home appliances, electric vehicles, and other products that use less energy and reduce pollution”. The discrepancy is due largely to Democrats, women, and seniors placing greater weight on the climate/clean energy element.

* Conducted August 11-15, 2022. Credibility interval (similar to margin of error) for the poll is ± 2.8 percentage points.

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- **That said, the economic benefits—both in jobs and energy savings—are among the central selling points of the climate aspects of the legislation, along with climate pollution reduction and energy independence.** When people assess the discrete climate and energy components, those that rise to the top are:
 - It will create 1.5 million good-paying jobs in communities across the country in construction, manufacturing, clean energy production, and other industries – 53% very important; 43% choose as one of the most important
 - It will reduce the (toxic/carbon) pollution that causes climate change by 40% by the year 2030 – 51% very important; 41% choose as one of the most important (Whether the pollution was labeled “toxic” or “carbon” had no real impact on the results.)
 - It will reduce the United States’ dependence on foreign oil by increasing the use of American-made energy sources like solar and wind power – 52% very important; 39% choose as one of the most important
 - It will save the typical household \$1,800 per year in energy costs by helping people use more affordable clean energy – 48% very important; 37% choose as one of the most important

Public health provides another significant talking point for the IRA, especially with key constituencies. The fact that “it will prevent up to 3,900 premature deaths and up to 100,000 asthma attacks in the next eight years by reducing carbon pollution and making air cleaner” is a strong message for people under age 35 and is the top-scoring message for Black adults.

- **Energy independence and future generations remain important proof points for the need to deal with the threat of climate change more broadly.** These two themes rise to the top among reasons to deal with climate change generally speaking (i.e., not just in the context of the IRA):
 - It will protect the planet for future generations – 36% one of the most important reasons
 - It will make the United States energy independent and less reliant on oil from countries like Saudi Arabia and Russia – 35% one of the most important reasons

Independents and swing voters place these two points substantially above the other climate messaging points in this question. The future generations

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message also stands out for those under age 35—40% choose it as a top reason in favor of climate action (the next highest being energy independence, at 29%). It is clearly a talking point that generates a lot of agreement, but we strongly recommend always pairing it with a “hard benefit” message (e.g., cost savings, specific health impacts, job growth) in order to maximize the effectiveness of communications.

- **“An investment in the future” is the strongest characterization of the legislation.** This is by far the top choice (at 38%) when respondents are given several words and phrases to describe the IRA and is even higher (47%) among supporters of the legislation. Words like “historic,” “commonsense,” and “essential” are substantially less compelling.
- **Their desire to protect big corporations and the wealthy is the top attack theme against Republicans who opposed the IRA.** Two criticisms based on Republicans’ indebtedness to these groups are compelling:
 - They want to protect big corporations and the very rich from having to pay their fair share in taxes – 41% a top choice
 - They want to protect the huge profits of their campaign contributors in the oil, coal, and pharmaceutical industries – 40% a top choice

These are also the most broadly persuasive critiques for swing and undecided voters.