

The Public Has Major Concerns about Fracking, Part 2



This is part two of a two-part piece. [Part one can be found here](#) [1]. [1]

"The takeaway from this important poll is that access to clean, safe drinking water is first and foremost on Americans' minds as we dive headlong into a new era of energy production in the United States," said Heather White, executive director at Environmental Working Group.

"Americans are concerned about water quality, but also water availability when they look at how much is used in the quest for domestic sources of energy. Shale gas drilling or 'fracking', nuclear energy and coal production use vast amounts of the natural resource we the people need to survive. That is why the overwhelming majority of Americans want leaders in Washington to shift from coal and nuclear to wind and solar energy. Given the gridlock on Capitol Hill even on its basic responsibilities like avoiding the 'fiscal cliff,' most Americans understand that it'll be up to the public to push the federal government and the country on a truly clean energy path."

Wayne Russum, senior vice president, ORC International, said: "This new survey shows that Americans are fine with more energy production in the U.S., but they are not willing to trade away clean water and air to make it happen. The poll findings indicate that Americans want political leadership that takes a balanced approach to production of energy — protecting clean water and air, and also promoting expanded energy efficiency and clean energy sources. Significantly, views are largely the same regardless of whether Americans are asked in the 'abstract' about general energy issues or when the focus shifts to a concrete energy issue, such as shale gas fracking or the exporting of liquefied natural gas."

Anthony Ingraffea, Dwight C. Baum professor of engineering, Cornell University, and president, Physicians, Scientists, and Engineers for Healthy Energy, said: "These poll findings clearly indicate that Americans, regardless of political affiliation, can

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differentiate between a fossil fuel corporate business plan and a national clean-energy-now policy. They overwhelmingly recognize that the continued absence of such a policy invites continued threats to clean water and air, and accelerated global warming. They can see through the charade of LNG exports for what they would be: another fossil fuel industry afterthought that seeks to restore profitability to the shale gas industry at the expense of further abuse of the environment and human health.”

Other key survey findings include the following:

1. 86 percent of Americans think “the availability of ample clean drinking water should be a top national priority in the U.S.”
2. 80 percent of Americans think we “should get the facts first about health and environmental risks before the potential damage is done by energy production.” This “precautionary principle” approach is supported by 67 percent of Republicans, 82 percent of Independents, and 89 percent of Democrats.
3. 86 percent of Americans want leadership on addressing climate change and extreme weather. Relatively little partisan difference is seen on this point, with support for action coming from 75 percent of Republicans, 82 percent of Independents, and 95 percent of Democrats.
4. Only 17 percent of Americans favor development of U.S. energy resources for export purposes “to advance U.S. interests as a global economic power” versus 81 percent who think “America should produce enough energy to meet America’s needs in a way that doesn’t harm our clean water and air ...”
5. How concerned are Americans about the possible impact of “drought and shortages brought on by the diversion of water for energy and other purposes?” Approximately 91 percent are concerned about higher food prices; 90 percent are concerned about “possible shortages of safe drinking water.” More than three out of four Americans (76 percent) are “very concerned” about such shortages; 89 percent are concerned about higher gasoline prices; 87 percent are concerned about increased water utility bills; and 73 percent are concerned about diminished recreation opportunities.
6. 74 percent think a grassroots movement will be needed “to counter the influence of energy industry lobbyists and campaign contributions on politicians in Washington, D.C.”
7. 86 percent of Americans want leadership on standing up to pressure from coal, oil, natural gas, and nuclear power lobbyists.

On October 15, 2012, 100 grassroots organizations with roughly 2,000,000 members nationwide issued a “First 100 Days” clean-energy agenda for the next President of the United States. The full text of the agenda is available online at <http://www.AmericanCleanEnergyAgenda.org> [2]. The “American Clean Energy Agenda” was first agreed on in outline form by participating groups in June 2012.

ORC International conducted the telephone survey among two national probability samples, which, when combined, consisted of 809 adults, 426 men and 383 women

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18 years of age and older, living in the continental United States. Interviewing was completed on December 26-29, 2012. A total of 529 interviews were from the landline sample and 280 interviews from the cell phone sample. The margin of error for the combined samples is plus or minus 3 percent.

To read part one of this two-part series, [please click here](#). [1] What's your take? Please feel free to comment below! For more information, please visit www.civilsocietyinstitute.org [3], www.theclean.org [4], www.hybridownersofamerica.org [5] or www.ewg.org [6].

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- [2] <http://www.americancleanenergyagenda.org/>
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