



Embargoed Until:

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Statewide poll of conservative voters shows overwhelming support for clean energy policies

3 in 4 conservatives support protecting individual land owner's rights to lease their land

Columbus, OHIO --- In a poll released today by the Ohio Conservative Energy Forum (OHCEF), conservative voters throughout the state overwhelmingly supported public policies that encourage greater production of renewable energy. Among the key findings:

- **Two-thirds of Ohio conservatives believe that Ohio should diversify its energy generation portfolio by having at least half of Ohio's energy come from renewable sources.**
- **Additionally, nearly two-thirds of respondents say they are more likely to support a politician who voted for/supported renewable energy or energy efficiency legislation.**

The third annual poll was conducted by the Republican polling firm, Public Opinion Strategies, which specifically interviewed Ohio voters who identified as Republican or independents who also say they are conservative. Underscoring the conservative viewpoints of those polled, President Trump had an 81 percent favorable rating, up from previous OHCEF polls. Similarly, Governor Mike DeWine had a 71 percent favorable rating, up 16 percent from prior OHCEF polling.

Conservative voters also demonstrate **strong and significant support for establishing setback limits for wind projects** – with 75 percent supporting this issue. Additionally, 67 percent favor establishing reasonable setback distances of a quarter of a mile from residences for wind projects that will create additional revenue for local fire, police, and schools.

“Paulding County has seen over \$700 million in economic investment from 3 commercial wind projects since 2011,” said Jerry Ziekle, Director of Paulding County Economic Director. “Thanks to local wind development, our county’s bond rating has increased to Aa3 from A1 by Moody’s. Also, our schools are receiving money from PILOT payments and the Paulding County Area Foundation was able to award over \$100,000 in scholarships to graduating seniors in 2018.”

“It was not surprising that conservatives view protecting property owners’ rights as very important,” said Tyler Duvelius, Executive Director of OHCEF. “Fifty-two percent said protecting property owners’ ability to produce energy on their land was important to them. Simply put, it’s your land and your rules.”

Additionally, Ohio conservatives have the most **positive feelings about energy efficiency and natural gas** followed by solar, wind, coal, nuclear power and electric vehicles. In particular, conservatives' feelings toward **solar and wind have considerably increased** over the past several years. Voters say the most important energy issue is keeping electricity rates low followed by protecting lakes, rivers and streams, and reducing dependence on foreign oil.

“Conservatives as a whole find national security to be a critical topic, yet do not factor in how renewable energy plays a role in protecting our country,” said Lt. General Richard Zilmer, USMC (Ret.). “Companies are focused on renewable energy sources like solar and wind energy – for the simple reason that renewable energy is not only better for the environment than traditional sources, but is better for the security of our nation, and increasingly a better choice economically.”

It should also be noted that conservative voters continue to view increasing the use of renewable energy sources as a job creator. And, 82 percent support allowing utility customers who generate their own power through solar panels to be compensated for generating more power than they can use.

“The results speak for themselves,” said Duvelius. “Ohio currently generates just 3 percent of our electricity from renewable sources. We believe that the best approach for our state is a diverse, all-of-the-above energy portfolio – and the vast majority of conservative Ohioans agree. With this in mind, it is clear that Ohio conservatives want renewable energy to make up a larger portion of Ohio’s energy portfolio. Ohio lawmakers should heed this message from their constituents, rather than continuing to lag behind our neighboring states and losing out to them on economic development and job opportunities.”

Public Opinion Strategies conducted the survey from January 19-22, 2019 and completed 400 telephone interviews with registered voters who identify as conservative. The margin of sampling error for this statewide sample of conservative voters is +/-4.9%.

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Founded in 2015, the Ohio Conservative Energy Forum exists to provide a vehicle for individuals, organizations, and businesses to join the conservative conversation about Ohio’s energy future.

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