

To: Interested Parties

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Re: Americans Broadly Support Biden Climate Orders; API Messaging Fails to Undermine Support

A new survey conducted on behalf of Accountable.US and Climate Power by GSG finds that Americans overwhelmingly view climate change as a real and immediate threat and see the recent extreme cold snap as further evidence of its impact – with Texans in strong agreement. Americans also view clean energy companies far more favorably than oil and gas companies, believe that they will be stronger job creators in the coming years, and place far more of the blame for the recent Texas energy crisis on the failure of gas power plants.

Consistent with their views on climate and clean energy, people across the country – including those in Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas – are broadly supportive of President Biden’s recent executive orders on energy and climate change as well as his nomination of Deb Haaland to be Secretary of the Interior.¹ While the oil and gas industry and its trade group, the American Petroleum Institute (API), are mounting an offensive against Biden’s actions, their messaging falls flat in the face of messaging from supporters, with support for Biden’s actions on Keystone XL and pausing oil and gas leases on public lands growing after a balanced debate.

This memo is based on a survey of 1,010 registered voters nationwide with oversamples that achieved a total of 409 registered voters in Colorado, 405 registered voters in New Mexico, and 546 registered voters in Texas conducted February 20-25.

Key Findings

Americans overwhelmingly view recent weather as more evidence of climate change and blame the Texas power crisis on the failure of gas plants, not renewables. By a two-to-one margin, Americans agree both that “climate change is already having a serious impact on my part of the country” (60% agree/29% disagree) and that “the recent extreme cold weather across the country is more evidence of the impact of climate change” (58%/29%). Despite their more conservative bent, Texans agree with the former statement by an even larger margin (63%/28%). Similar margins hold favorable views of “lawmakers who support strong action to combat climate change.” On all of these issues, independents align more closely with Democrats than Republicans. Americans also overwhelmingly say that the failure of gas power plants is more to blame for the Texas power crisis than the failure of renewable energy (61% gas/39% renewable), with Texans blaming gas power plants by a 10-point margin (55%/45%), independents by a 22-point margin, and even with Republicans breaking even (50%/50%).

	National		Net Favorable				
<i>Favorability</i>	<i>Fav</i>	<i>Unfav</i>	Nat	D	Ind	R	TX
Lawmakers who support climate action	52%	21%	+31	+73	+28	-14	+24
	National		Net Agree				
<i>Agree/Disagree Statements</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Nat	D	Ind	R	TX
Climate already having serious impact	60%	29%	+31	+76	+36	-21	+35
Recent weather more evidence of climate change	58%	29%	+29	+78	+23	-22	+20
	National		Net Gas to Blame				
	Gas	Clean	Nat	D	Ind	R	TX
More to blame for the Texas power crisis	61	39	+22	+40	+22	0	+10

¹ This poll was conducted before Haaland was confirmed as Interior Secretary.

Clean energy companies are much more popular than oil and gas companies and viewed as stronger job creators. While oil and gas companies are above water (38% favorable/28% unfavorable), their CEOs are viewed unfavorably by a two to one margin (20% favorable/40% unfavorable). Meanwhile, wind energy companies are enormously popular (55% favorable/13% unfavorable) nationwide and significantly more popular than oil and gas companies in the oil producing states of Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. This is driven, at least in part, by the fact that Americans overwhelmingly believe that the clean energy industry has more potential to create American jobs over the next five years than oil and gas (49% clean energy/31% oil and gas), something that independents (+32), Coloradans (+30) and New Mexicans (+12) agree with (while Texans are split).

Favorability	National		Net Favorable				
	<i>Fav</i>	<i>Unfav</i>	Nat	Ind	CO	NM	TX
Wind energy companies	55	13	+42	+47	+58	+44	+36
Oil and gas companies	38	28	+10	+1	+1	+18	+24
Oil and gas CEOs	20	40	-20	-19	-33	-20	0
More US Job Potential	National		Net Clean Energy				
	<i>Clean</i>	<i>O&G</i>	Nat	Ind	CO	NM	TX
	49	31	+18	+32	+30	+12	-1

Biden’s energy and climate executive orders are widely popular, and Americans strongly supported the confirmation of Deb Haaland as Interior Secretary. We tested seven different executive orders signed by President Biden and all but one were supported nationally by at least a 10-point margin, with most of them supported by margins of 24 points or more. Only Biden’s executive order to revoke the permit for the Keystone XL pipeline earned even support and opposition. Independents support all of these executive orders except Keystone by at least 13-point margins (and, as we discuss below, these independents shift strongly in favor of revoking Keystone’s permit after balanced messaging). Further, when given just the context that New Mexico Congresswoman Deb Haaland supports Biden’s executive orders and would be the first Native American cabinet secretary in US history, Americans supported her confirmation by a more than 30-point margin (52% support/19% oppose) with even stronger support in her home state of New Mexico (61%/21%), along with very strong support in Colorado (55%/16%) and Texas (43%/20%).

Executive Orders	National		Net Support				
	<i>Support</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	Nat	Ind	CO	NM	TX
Requiring the US to protect at least 30% of lands and coastal waters by the year 2030	65	18	+47	+44	+52	+46	+49
Create a Civilian Climate Corps to train and employ younger Americans on conservation and climate	60	21	+39	+32	+47	+38	+41
Rejoining the international Paris climate agreement to combat climate change by reducing carbon emissions	54	29	+25	+20	+38	+22	+18
Temporarily blocking oil and gas drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge	52	28	+25	+29	+29	+12	+9
Directing 40% of benefits from federal investments in clean energy to disadvantaged communities	51	27	+24	+15	+37	+34	+21
Pausing new leases for oil and gas drilling on public lands	46	35	+11	+13	+21	0	+2
Revoking the permit for the Keystone XL oil pipeline	37	40	-3	-8	-1	-3	-16
Haaland Confirmation	52	19	+33	+25	+39	+40	+23

After a balanced debate² between API’s attacks on Biden’s executive orders (using API’s actual language) and messaging from supporters, support for Biden’s executive orders increases – including Keystone. We exposed respondents to a simulated debate that included an equal amount of messaging from API about itself and against Biden’s executive orders (using API’s actual language) and from an “environmental organization that support Biden’s executive orders” critiquing API and oil and gas companies and defending Biden’s orders.

Not only do API’s attacks fail to undermine support for Biden’s executive orders, even in the face of these attacks, the messaging from environmental organizations boosts support for Biden’s orders to pause oil and gas leases on public lands and revoke the Keystone XL permit, moving the latter into positive territory. We see significant movement on Keystone with independents, who flip from opposing it by 8 points to supporting it by a similar margin.

	<i>Initial</i>	<i>Final</i>	Δ		<i>Initial</i>	<i>Final</i>	Δ
<i>Net Support for Biden EOs</i>				<i>Net Support for Biden EOs - Independents</i>			
Paris	+25	+24	-1	Paris	+20	+22	+2
ANWR	+24	+26	+2	ANWR	+29	+30	+1
Public Lands Leases	+11	+17	+6	Public Lands Leases	+13	+17	+4
Keystone	-3	+6	+9	Keystone	-8	+8	+16

² Respondents read an equal number of messages from each side of the debate, with messages from API attacking the executive orders using API’s actual language and messaging from “environmental organizations that support Biden’s executive orders” critiquing API and oil and gas companies and defending Biden’s orders.