

# THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

## ENERGY POLL

### UT Energy Poll Shows Generation Gap on Vital Energy Issues

AUSTIN, October 28, 2014 — A new poll from The University of Texas at Austin reveals markedly different perspectives on energy issues based on the age of voters, a finding that could help determine the outcome of next week’s elections.

The latest UT Energy Poll, conducted Sept. 4-16, shows contrasting views and preferences among consumers in numerous areas, including energy policy, preferred sources of energy and financial support from the federal government.

Varying perspectives can be traced to several demographic variables, including gender and political affiliation, but the most pronounced differences reflect the age of survey respondents.

More likely to vote for a candidate who supports:	Age	
	<35	65+
Reducing carbon emissions	68%	50%
Natural gas export	41%	22%
Imposing a carbon tax	43%	22%
Increasing science/research funding	70%	53%
Expanding financial incentives for renewables	65%	48%
Decreasing coal use	57%	33%
Requiring utilities to obtain % of electricity from renewables	62%	48%
Expanding offshore oil development	38%	49%
Expanding natural gas development	56%	63%
Approval of Keystone XL Pipeline	38%	55%

For example, 41 percent of survey respondents under age 35 say the U.S. should permit export of natural gas to other countries, while just 22 percent of those age 65 and older support the policy.

Nearly half of the 2,105 U.S. residents surveyed (46 percent) say candidates’ views on energy issues will greatly influence their choices at the ballot box.

The online poll also corroborates a longstanding trend among likely voters: A much higher percentage of older respondents (87 percent) indicate they are likely to vote in the Nov. 4 election, compared with 68 percent of those age 35 or under.

“Consumer perspectives on energy issues continue to track political party lines, but we’re seeing a widening gulf among older and younger Americans,” said Sheril Kirshenbaum, director of the UT Energy Poll.

The generational divide surfaces in several areas, particularly the importance of environmental protection and support for renewable forms of energy:

- Fifty-six percent of younger consumers say they are willing to pay much higher prices to protect the environment, compared with only 20 percent of respondents age 65 and older.
- Sixty-eight percent of survey respondents under age 35 say they would be more likely to vote for candidates who support steps to reduce carbon emissions, compared with 50 percent of those age 65 and older.
- Support for renewable sources of energy is considerably stronger among younger consumers, with nearly 2 out of 3 (65 percent) favoring an expansion of financial incentives for companies engaged in renewable technologies. Less than half of older respondents (48 percent) say they would support candidates who endorse such incentives. Likewise, 62 percent of younger respondents favor requiring utilities to obtain a percentage of their electricity from renewable sources, versus 48 percent of older voters.
- Younger consumers also strongly support subsidies for renewable energy, with 72 percent saying they back federal government support, compared with 58 percent among Americans age 65 and older.
- Fifty-two percent of respondents 65 and older say they are familiar with hydraulic fracturing for fossil fuel extraction, compared with 39 percent of younger Americans. Among those familiar with the term, only 37 percent of younger survey respondents support its use, compared with more than half (52 percent) of Americans age 65 and older.

For complete topline survey results, charts and other information, visit [www.utenergypoll.utexas.edu](http://www.utenergypoll.utexas.edu).

Data from The University of Texas at Austin Energy Poll were weighted using U.S. Census Bureau figures, as well as propensity scores, to ensure the sample's composition reflects the actual U.S. population. The poll was developed by the McCombs School of Business to provide an objective, authoritative look at consumer attitudes and perspectives on key energy issues. It is designed to help inform national discussion, business planning and policy development. This is the seventh wave of the Energy Poll, which was launched in October 2011.

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